



When in Rome...

Negin Janati tells us how she experienced the Eternal City through Italian language training and an internship with an Italian company

After eight hours of travel, I arrived at my home for the next three months. I was pleasantly surprised to find a spacious flat overlooking a piazza, as



I had prepared myself to make do with a cot in a closet. I unpacked, and my hosts and I sat down over tea and exchanged the few words we could translate.

The next morning I walked into my Italian language school, overconfident. I sat down to take the placement exam, and quickly realized that a background in French and Spanish does little in the way of understanding Italian grammar. Upon entering my level one classroom, I was immediately greeted with “*Buongiorno! Benvenuta! Come ti chiami?*” Instead of answering, I began to explain, in English, why I felt I needed to start off in a more advanced class. In a class of seventeen people, all but one stared at me blankly. The long silence was finally broken when the teacher offered, in a beautifully heavy accent, “*We don’t all speak Inglese here.*”

I spent the next month learning Italian beside students of all ages from Guatemala, Chile, Argentina, Switzerland, Denmark, Spain, Germany, Israel, Japan, Iraq, India, Nigeria and Russia. It was incredible to see how quickly we all picked up the language. There was very little English spoken in the classroom...not surprising when one considers the international



background of the class. The private lessons were a tremendous aid in understanding the language and our teachers were truly committed to making our lives in Rome as easy as possible. Outside of the classroom, our twenty-minute cappuccino breaks were where our closest friends were made. A lively international potluck party marked the end of my studying the Italian language and the beginning of living Italian life, for better or worse, to the fullest.



I began my professional internship at WHERE Magazine, an international publication that maps more than eighty cities for the affluent traveler. Within a few hours, I was assigned a few translations, reviews, and even a full-page article. During my next two months with the magazine, I was sent to world famous monuments, grand openings, and museum unveilings. The people I worked with could not have been sweeter or more caring. I learned so much from them about the business as well as the city and its culture. Many of them became good friends with whom I continue to keep in touch.

My time in Rome remains ineffable. I witnessed the May Day concert, the marathon, endless



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peace rallies, Rome’s birthday parade, the beginning of soccer season, and the longest Roman winter in over forty years. I stood next to a friend of Giuliana Sgrenà’s when we found out she was kidnapped; and at the diocese of Rome when they announced the death of Pope John Paul II.

There is no feeling to match that of relaxing with friends on the Spanish Steps, or waiting for a bus ten yards away from the coliseum. I came back from Rome feeling completely fulfilled. Global Experiences provided a program that

had allowed the perfect mix of independence and safety. I felt fully immersed in the new city, but when I came across the need for help or counsel, everyone from the program rushed to my side. I truly recommend this program to anyone considering life in Italy. Every aspect surpassed all of my expectations, and I am counting the days until I return. ☺

Negin Janati is a 2005 Global Experiences program alumna from Westport, Connecticut

This Page, above: The famous ancient Roman sports arena Coliseum (sometimes spelled Colosseum,) built in 72 AD; People sitting on the Scalinata di Spagna – The Spanish Steps that leads up to French church, Trinità dei Monti.
Below: Mosaic art in the Vatican; The Vatican.
Opposite: Rome street scene; Interior details from the Vatican Museum