

## Olivia Jenks

What are the three top challenges preparing for your time abroad and how do you plan to overcome them? PADUA, ITALY EDITION

### 1. WHAT WILL I EAT?

I'm vegan and lactose intolerant, so eating out has a number of different challenges—even more so abroad due to the language barrier! I did worry that I would miss out, or have to eat lettuce the entire time... BUT I WAS WRONG! Not only are 10% of Italians vegan, there are also entire restaurants that just serve vegan food! Countless options can be made plant-based just by omitting the cheese (for pizza!), adding fresh vegetables, or choosing dry pasta over fresh!

I'm doing lots of research, and will continue to! It's important to know the correct phrases ("sono vegana", I am vegan!) and to find out where the best vegan places are in Italy

Resources:

<https://www.thenomadicvegan.com/vegan-italy/>

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/italy-for-vegan-travellers/>

<https://www.happycow.net/europe/italy/padua/>

### 2. WHAT WILL I DO?

I wondered whether I would be bored in Italy as my sandwich year is going to have a lower workload than usual and some activities might be restricted due to COVID ... I love to stay in and read books or watch movies, but I also really enjoy going out, shopping, and exploring culture! I also like the gym, and going on bike rides! Luckily for me, this is all going to be available to do in Italy! There are so many amazing places to visit and I am so lucky to have so much free time alongside my sandwich year to be able to see all the lovely attractions! I will need to research the COVID restrictions beforehand, as we need to stay safe whilst we have fun!

Resources:

[https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attractions-g187867-Activities-Padua\\_Province\\_of\\_Padua\\_Veneto.html](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attractions-g187867-Activities-Padua_Province_of_Padua_Veneto.html)

<https://www.thecrazytourist.com/15-best-things-padua-italy/>

### 3. WHO WILL I HANG OUT WITH?

Or - how do I make sure I'm not lonely? I'm studying abroad for a whole academic year, so that's a long time to be in a different country! I am an introvert so I don't need a lot of friends, but I do get lonely if I haven't spoken to anyone in a couple of days and I love to share experiences with others!

I was worried that since I am only just beginning to learn Italian, that it would be difficult to make friends with local people straight away - so I decided to get proactive! I found the other people from my university going to Italy and added them to a group chat, so we're friends now! Then I got in touch with other universities to ask them to pass on my email to other outgoing students - now we have a group chat of 15 students and we're all getting along great!! I'm excited to meet them, and my year is going to be much more enjoyable now.

Honestly, it's a very universal need to have close connections, and I would recommend trying to be as brave as possible and get to know a few people before you go

Resources:

<https://www.noodle.com/articles/an-introverts-guide-to-making-friends-while-studying-abroad>

<https://uniacco.com/blog/ways-to-make-friends-when-studying-abroad>