



# Cinque Terre Riviera Program

STUDENT MANUAL



# MISSION

Enriching Students through Cultural Integration, Community Engagement, and Experiential Learning.

## **FUA was founded to:**

Promote and renew creative disciplines in a city renowned for its history-changing innovations.

Offer challenging academic programs that shape inquisitive minds capable of:

- Approaching academic disciplines with the mindset to deeply understand the principles of the past and how they are present in today's context.
- Transforming learning, knowledge and cultural experiences into instruments that shape tomorrow's future.
- Contributing to the local culture with the findings, research, and creations developed over the course of study.
- Provide excellent professional and academic facilities at each campus, which not only offer learning spaces but also enhance and inspire learning potential.
- Go beyond classroom learning by promoting student interaction with the convergence of the multicultural societies and creative presences in the city of La Spezia.

# Cultural Integration

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# *Community Engagement*

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# Experiential Learning



## VISION

**American-style, community-oriented education in La Spezia that transcends disciplines and cultural traditions.**

FUA is a multidisciplinary institution that seeks to offer dynamic study opportunities through a diverse selection of academic programs and departments.

FUA unites communities, nationalities, compelling projects, and studies capable of shaping the cultural landscape of La Spezia.

FUA encourages students to engage in both classroom learning and service learning for civic involvement, while also critically engaging with La Spezia's rich heritage to contribute to its future with fresh perspectives.

FUA strives to provide its students with an experience that transcends the historic façade of La Spezia, emphasizing that identity and experience go beyond cultural stereotypes.

FUA believes that through critical analysis and evaluation of one's own cultural norms and values in relation to those held by others, FUA program graduates will develop a profound cross-cultural, global perspective.

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## VALUES

A rich and stimulating course offering taught by an international faculty, spanning all areas of the institutions grouped under FUA and their specific departments and courses. An academic structure based on lectures, workshops, seminars, and laboratories that promote student learning and creation.

High-quality, state-of-the-art facilities housed in historic palaces throughout La Spezia's city center. Opportunities for students to engage with local culture through civic participation, service learning at both academic and extracurricular levels, and ongoing cultural integration projects.



# STUDENT LIFE & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



## WELCOME TO RIVIERA

The Student Life & Development Department (SLD) is happy to welcome you to the Riviera!

The time you will spend studying with us will be one of the most memorable experiences of your university career. The university is committed to diversity and the exchange of ideas and cultural experiences between students and staff, and we welcome students and faculty from across the world to facilitate this interchange. In this booklet you will find information about our extracurricular activities and cultural insights about life in Riviera, information on how to become involved with the community, opportunities to expand your personal growth through our unique programs, and much more. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the useful information provided by SLD; being well prepared for your experience in Riviera will help you start your studies off on the right track! Our Student Life Department is open to students on a walk-in basis to assist with the transition to life in Riviera, from organizing activities for students, information on cultural activities and tips

on living abroad, as well as assistance with medical issues and information on how to cope with culture shock. Our advisors are always available during office hours, and also on call after hours, in case of emergencies, through our Health and Safety Emergency phone.

Our housing department is also available to assist students with any housing issues that may arise during their stay in Riviera, ensuring a comfortable and pleasant stay abroad.

## LIVING IN RIVIERA

No matter how much pre-departure research you do before your trip, life in La Spezia will likely not be exactly what you expect. The following section includes a selection of topics and information to assist you with the transition to life in Riviera, more specifically the city you will be staying at in the Riviera: La Spezia. If you need further information or assistance with a specific location, service, or resource, please feel free to stop by the Student Life Department office.





## TOP FACTS ABOUT LA SPEZIA

**Size:** 51.39 square kilometers (19.8 mi)

**Population:** 92,828

**Time Zone:** Central European Time (CET)

**Climate:** the highest temperatures are in the month of August and can be as high as 81°F (27°C). The cool season lasts for 4 months, from November to February, with an average daily high temperature below 57°F (14°C).

The city of La Spezia is one of the main Italian military and commercial harbours.

**Fun Fact:** The origin of the name “La Spezia” remains uncertain, with several theories proposed. One suggests it comes from the ancient word “hospitia,” meaning a place of hospitality or haven, reflecting the city’s role as a safe harbor. Another theory links the name to “expedio,” relating to the shipment of salt produced in the Gulf’s saltworks. While both ideas are plausible, the true origin of the name is still a mystery, adding to the city’s historical intrigue.

## LIFE IN LA SPEZIA

### SHOPPING FOR FOOD

#### Markets

In Italy, it’s common to buy vegetables, fruits, cheese, bread and fish at local food markets. Be aware that some stands might not accept credit card payments so be sure to bring cash with you. The products at the market are usually very fresh and cheap!

#### **La Spezia Food Market**

Piazza Cavour, 1

This market is open Mon - Fri 8:30am - 7:30pm, Sat 8:30am - 2pm and 4:00pm - 7:30pm. It’s closed on Sundays. In the afternoon you can find only vegetable and fruit stands.

#### **Mercato Ortofrutticolo e Ittico**

Piazza Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour

The market is morning-only. Mon-Sat 7:30am - 1:30pm. It’s closed on Sundays.

#### Supermarkets

In Italy supermarkets can be quite small, especially in city centers, but in most of them you can find fresh bread, pastries and vegetables. Here are some of the most famous supermarkets you can find in La Spezia:

- Basko
- Pam
- Lidl
- Carrefour
- Esselunga
- Coop
- Eurospin

#### Special Dietary Needs

**Vegetarian/Vegan:** Most stores have sections offering plant-based meals. NaturaSì is a store with good quality vegetarian and vegan food.



**Celiac disease:** Most stores have a dedicated gluten-free section. If not, you can check the back of the package for the certified gluten-free symbol to ensure the product is safe to consume.



## OTHER SHOPPING NEEDS

When shopping for items other than food, you can either walk around the city center, where you will find stores ranging from clothing and electronics to bookshops, or you can go to the mall, where you will also find a wide variety of stores. Below are some specific stores and shopping malls.

**Clothing Stores:** Zara, H&M, OVS, Stradivarius, Benetton, Terranova

**Electronics:** MediaWorld

**Cleaning and Personal Hygiene:** Tigotà

**Stationery:** Flying Tiger, Cartoleria

**Bookstores:** Feltrinelli, Giunti, Mondadori

**Libraries:** Biblioteca Civica Pietro Mario Beghi (*Via del Canaletto, 100*), Biblioteca Civica Ubaldo Mazzini (*Corso Cavour, 251*)

**Shopping Malls:** Le Terrazze (*Via Fontevivo, 17*), Centro Commerciale Il Faro (*Viale Giovanni Amendola, 220*)



## MONEY MATTERS

Electronic payment methods are widely accepted in Italy, but cash transactions are still commonplace. You should always carry a small amount of euros with you for small daily transactions. However, we strongly suggest that you do not carry large amounts of cash while in La Spezia, anywhere else in Italy or abroad. Only take with you what you need according to your plans for the day, and make sure the rest of your cash is kept somewhere safe. Most international debit and credit cards are accepted in Italy.

### Atm

ATM machines, or Bancomats, can be found outside most banks. Some locations may require you to enter by swiping your card through a reader as a safety precaution. Most bank machines have an option for instructions in English, and allow a maximum withdrawal of €250 per day. Please check with your home banking institution for specific information on service charges, maximum daily withdrawal amounts, and an updated list of associated bank ATMs. Generally speaking, cash machines in storefronts will charge higher fees.

### Exchange Services

There are several exchange offices in the center of La Spezia. Most are open seven days a week and offer both currency exchange and cash advance. If you need to have money wired to you while in La Spezia, the best way to do this is through services such as Western Union or MoneyGram.

You will need to use your full legal name as it appears on your passport.



## LUGGAGE STORAGE

We do not offer luggage storage services and students cannot leave their luggage in their apartments or at school between sessions for any reason. Please contact the Student Life Department for a current list of locations that provide storage services.





## CELL PHONES

For non-European citizens there are different options to have a working smartphone in Italy:

1. Buy a SIM card from one of the main phone companies operating in Italy: Vodafone, TIM, Wind/3, or PosteMobile. Most monthly plans vary between €15 – €20 for a combination of minutes, SMS, and data, PLUS the one-time cost of the SIM card (approximately €10 - €15). Although websites are mostly in Italian, staff on site will be able to help you in English.
2. Get an International Plan. You can do this through your phone company back home. You should contact them directly about costs. Make sure the plan you decide on works everywhere throughout Europe, not only Italy, mostly if you plan to travel around.
3. Buy an eSIM online. There are different apps and websites where you can do this (e.g. Airalo, Holafly). It's very simple

and the process can easily be done online. Additionally you don't need to change your current SIM card. In this case, also make sure to get a plan that lasts the whole length of your stay abroad and that works everywhere throughout Europe.

To make an international call from an Italian number dial:

+(country code)(area code) (number)

To receive calls on an Italian number, make sure your caller dials their country's international access code, followed by 39 and your phone number. Examples of international codes to call Italy:

- From USA & Canada: 01139
- From most other countries: 0039

To find your country's access code, please check [www.countrycallingcodes.com](http://www.countrycallingcodes.com)



## TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

The best way to get around the center of La Spezia is on foot, although there are times when you may want to use public transportation. If you are planning a trip outside of the city center, regional buses and trains are a great, inexpensive way to travel.

- Taxi number (available 24/7): 0187523523
  - Bus/Train companies: Italo, Trenitalia, Flixbus
  - Nearby Airports: Bologna, Pisa, Florence, Genova
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## FUA ACTIVITIES

The Student Life Department offers a rich and varied calendar of activities, to provide an array of experiences that will suit the diverse needs and interests of our student body.

### ORIENTATION ACTIVITIES

#### ***Pre-departure and Orientation***

All students will receive pre-departure information from their home institutions or providers. After arrival in La Spezia, all students will attend a mandatory detailed Orientation in which specific Health and Safety information will be provided. Further information can be found in this Student Manual, including specific information regarding health, medical care, and general safety advice for living in La Spezia.

The Student Life and Development Department offers a series of activities during orientation in order to make the transition to life in La Spezia as

easy as possible, such as the Explore Your Neighborhood and Living in La Spezia seminars. The Explore Your Neighborhood tour helps you learn about your neighborhood and how to shop for your basic needs in La Spezia, as well as discover malls, supermarkets and other stores near the city center, making La Spezia your new cozy home!

The Living in La Spezia Seminars help you learn all about your new home and covers topics such as ways to explore the city, leisure-time activities, and how to adapt to life in your host country.





## **EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

### ***WEEKLY ACTIVITIES***

#### ***City Walks***

This series of activities allows students to maximize their experience in La Spezia through guided walks through the most significant neighborhoods in the city. Through this activity, students gain an understanding between the past and contemporary La Spezia, while exploring new neighborhoods they might not venture into on their own, connecting with both the urban territory and the community.

#### ***Mind & Body***

“Mens sana in corpore sano”, a sound mind in a sound body, is the philosophy behind the Mind and Body series of activities. This series includes fitness opportunities meant to inspire and empower students through guided runs/power walks in new neighborhoods to help you keep fit and embrace the La Spezia terrain at the same time, as well as special workshops aimed at empowering students during the study abroad experience.





### **Sports Night**

This activity is a great way to keep in shape while expanding your knowledge of Italian fitness culture. Whether it's a soccer game, a volleyball match or an evening spent kayaking through the coast of La Spezia, it's a good opportunity for every student to get out and try something new.



### **Cineforum**

Movie Night is the activity where students can enjoy a carefully selected film in a cozy, laid-back atmosphere. Whether it's a recent release, a classic, or something in between, each screening offers a chance to unwind and enjoy a great movie with friends. It's the perfect way to spend an evening in good company while immersing yourself in the world of cinema.



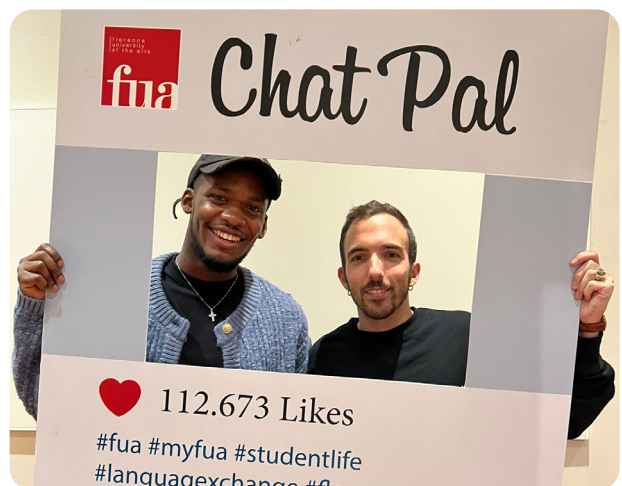
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## **CONNECTING CULTURES: SEMESTER-LONG ACTIVITIES**

These activities are designed to enhance cultural awareness and guide students in their educational outcomes and personal growth during their time in La Spezia. Through Connecting Cultures, students have the opportunity to interact with the community of La Spezia.

### **Chat Pal**

This language exchange activity connects Italians with students in order to facilitate a meaningful connection with a member of the community and, at the same time, improve your Italian language skills. The Chat Pal program requires conversation partners to meet at least once a week (one hour). Partners should speak in Italian for 30 minutes and 30 minutes in the student's native language. Specific time and locations are arranged between the partners.





## **Community Outreach**

This activity offers volunteer opportunities for our students within the community of La Spezia, allowing them to truly integrate and give back to their host city. Each of our partner associations is unique, and volunteers are often the fundamental element that keep these organizations in operation!

Most of the organizations do not require particular skills or the ability to speak Italian, but they all require a serious commitment from volunteers in order to accomplish their goals.

## **Weekend Activities & Trips:**

### **Educational Field Learning**

The mission of EFL (Educational Field Learning) is to provide students with first-hand learning experiences, leading them away from the typical tourist mindset and giving them the opportunity to experience Italy through a native perspective. EFL's aim is to create experiences rich in positive emotions, facilitating a cultural exploration and understanding of Italy.

EFL's Academic Field Learning enriches the content of courses in an enjoyable way, contextualizing the information received in class through hands-on involvement, site visits, participation in local events, and communication with other participants and Italians.

At the same time, EFL offers a well-organized and safe environment that makes the students feel as comfortable and secure as possible so far away from their home. EFL experiences are planned for a student budget, while providing very comfortable accommodations and travel arrangements (3 star hotels, private charter buses), as well as entrance to all the museums and guided tours.

EFL experiences are for the most part "all inclusive." For extra expenses, see section: "the fee does not include" for each destination





## ACTIVITIES IN RIVIERA • WHAT TO DO IN YOUR FREE TIME



### *Museums to Visit in La Spezia*

#### 1. **CAMEC: Centro d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea La Spezia**

Dive into the world of modern and contemporary art at CAMEC, where you'll find a dynamic collection of works from both Italian and international artists. The museum also hosts rotating exhibitions and cultural events, making it a perfect spot for art enthusiasts.

#### 2. **Castello di San Giorgio**

This historical castle, perched on a hilltop, offers a fascinating glimpse into La Spezia's past. It features archaeological artifacts and beautiful, breathtaking panoramic views of the city and harbor, making it a must-visit for history lovers.

#### 3. **Museo Civico Amedeo Lia**

Home to an impressive collection of ancient art, the Museo Civico Amedeo Lia showcases everything from Renaissance paintings to classical sculptures. It's a great place to explore Italy's rich

artistic heritage and immerse yourself in centuries of history.

#### 4. **Museo Etnografico Giovanni Podenzana**

This anthropology museum offers a deep dive into the local culture and traditions of La Spezia and the surrounding region.

With exhibits showcasing tools, clothing, and artifacts from everyday life, you'll get a sense of the region's rich, diverse history of the area.

#### 5. **Museo Tecnico Navale della M.M. (Naval Technical Museum)**

Located along the waterfront, this museum celebrates the city's maritime history, featuring models of ships, naval instruments, and exhibitions on naval warfare. It's a fascinating stop for anyone interested in technology, naval history, and La Spezia's strategic importance as a port city.



*Museo Tecnico Navale della M.M. (Naval Technical Museum)*



## 6. Museo Civico del Sigillo

A unique museum dedicated to the art of seals and ancient inscriptions, Museo Civico del Sigillo showcases a stunning collection of historical seals, coins, and other items that were once used for official and personal purposes.

It's a lesser-known gem that offers a glimpse into the administrative and legal practices of ancient civilizations.

## 7. Cathedral of Cristo Re

While primarily a religious site, the Cathedral of Cristo Re is also a historical monument with beautiful stained-glass windows and architectural details that reflect the city's spiritual heritage. It's an excellent place to soak in the local

culture and art while appreciating the craftsmanship of La Spezia's landmarks.

## 8. Church of S. Maria Assunta

Another beautiful religious site, the Church of S. Maria Assunta blends local history with artistic flair. Inside, you'll find stunning frescoes and altars, making it a serene stop for anyone interested in sacred art and architecture.

## 9. Bridge Thaon di Revel

This bridge isn't just a vital transport link but also a historic landmark of La Spezia. Built in the 19th Century, it serves as an interesting architectural feature to explore during a stroll through the city, connecting the historical and modern elements of the town.

Each of these sites offers something unique, providing a rich tapestry of La Spezia's culture, history, and artistic heritage for you to explore during your free time.



*Bridge Thaon di Revel*

## **Outdoor Activities to Do in Riviera**

### **1. Canoeing and Kayaking along the Ligurian Coast**

For a more adventurous way to explore the coastline, rent a canoe or kayak and paddle along the crystal-clear waters of the Ligurian Sea. Whether you're taking a leisurely ride or exploring hidden coves, this is an unforgettable way to connect with the area's natural beauty.

### **2. Visit Parco Naturale Regionale di Porto Venere**

Just a short trip from La Spezia, this natural park offers a variety of outdoor activities, including hiking, birdwatching, and enjoying beautiful seaside views.

The park is home to lush vegetation, rocky cliffs, and the picturesque town of

Porto Venere, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

### **3. Stroll Through Parco della Maggiolina**

A peaceful park located in the heart of the city, Parco della Maggiolina offers a perfect escape from the urban hustle. With walking paths, lush green spaces, and peaceful areas to relax, it's a lovely spot for an afternoon stroll or picnic.

### **4. Beach Days at Lerici**

Just a short train ride from La Spezia, the town of Lerici offers beautiful beaches with soft sand and clear waters.

Spend a day lounging by the sea, swimming, or exploring the charming town of Lerici, known for its medieval castle and scenic views.



*Canoeing and Kayaking along the Ligurian Coast*



### 5. Mountain Biking in the Hills Surrounding La Spezia

The hills and mountains surrounding La Spezia are a paradise for mountain biking enthusiasts. With a variety of trails ranging from beginner to advanced, you can explore rugged landscapes, ancient pathways, and enjoy sweeping views of the city and coastline.

### 6. Sailing or Boating Around the Gulf of Poets

Experience the Gulf of Poets—so named for the many famous writers who lived here—by taking a boat trip around the gulf. Sailing or boating through the calm waters offers an incredible view of La Spezia and its charming surroundings, including the islands of Palmaria and Tino.

### 7. Visit the Palmaria Island

A short boat ride from La Spezia, Palmaria Island is an idyllic spot for nature lovers.

You can hike the island's scenic paths, swim in its crystal-clear waters, or explore its fascinating caves and cliffs, making it the perfect destination for a day of outdoor adventure.

### 8. Take a Scenic Walk Through the Lerici Promenade

The Lerici Promenade is a beautiful coastal walk that offers stunning views of the sea and the surrounding hills. The path connects the town of Lerici with its famous castle and is perfect for a leisurely walk to enjoy the fresh air, sea breeze, and picturesque landscapes.

These outdoor activities showcase the diverse natural beauty of La Spezia and the surrounding region.

Whether you're into hiking, water sports, or simply enjoying scenic views, there's no shortage of ways to get outside and make the most of your free time!



*Palmaria Island*



## **Day Trips from La Spezia**

### **1. Cinque Terre**

Just a short train ride away, Cinque Terre is a must-see for anyone visiting La Spezia. This UNESCO World Heritage site is famous for its five colorful villages, each perched on dramatic cliffs above the turquoise sea. You can hike between the villages, relax on the beaches, or savor fresh seafood at a waterfront restaurant.

### **2. Pisa**

A quick train journey from La Spezia will take you to Pisa, home of the world-famous Leaning Tower. Aside from the iconic tower, you can visit the beautiful Piazza dei Miracoli, explore medieval churches, and stroll along the Arno River. Pisa offers a mix of history, culture, and classic Italian charm.

### **3. Lucca**

Known for its well-preserved Renaissance walls and historic center, Lucca is the perfect day trip for history buffs and architecture lovers.

You can rent a bike and cycle along the top of the city's impressive walls or wander through the quaint streets, visiting charming piazzas, towers, and the stunning Cathedral of San Martino.

### **4. Portovenere**

Just a short distance from La Spezia, Portovenere is called the "Sixth Cinque Terre" for its charm. Explore the medieval castle, visit St. Peter's Church, and enjoy views of the Gulf of Poets.

This UNESCO site offers a peaceful blend of history and natural beauty.



*Pisa, Piazza dei Miracoli*



## 5. **Genoa**

A vibrant port city, Genoa offers a rich mix of history, culture, and stunning architecture. Visit the UNESCO-listed Palazzi dei Rolli, the historic center with its narrow streets, or the beautiful Aquarium of Genoa. Genoa is an ideal destination for those looking to explore a lively city with a rich maritime past.

## 8. **La Versilia**

For a more relaxing day trip, head to the Versilia region, known for its beautiful sandy beaches and glamorous seaside towns like Viareggio and Forte dei Marmi. Whether you're lounging on the beach, strolling along the promenade, or dining at a seaside restaurant, the Versilia coastline offers a perfect escape.

## 9. **Carrara and its Marble Quarries**

Just north of La Spezia, the town of Carrara is famous for its marble, which has been used in some of the world's most renowned sculptures, including Michelangelo's David. Take a guided tour

of the marble quarries, where you can see the massive white stone being extracted, and visit the local museum to learn about Carrara's centuries-old marble industry.

## 10. **Portofino**

Portofino is a picturesque fishing village renowned for its colorful harbor, charming streets, and breathtaking coastal views. A visit offers a perfect mix of relaxation and exploration, from strolling through the quaint Piazzetta to enjoying panoramic vistas from Castello Brown. With its stunning natural beauty and rich history, Portofino is a serene and iconic destination on the Ligurian coast.

These day trips provide a variety of experiences, from natural beauty and historic towns to vibrant cities and relaxing beachside retreats. Whether you're after cultural immersion, outdoor adventure, or a day of relaxation, there's no shortage of incredible places to explore just a short distance from La Spezia.



## ***Cultural and Religious Services***

Although Italy is predominantly a Catholic country, religious services of various denominations may be found in the city center:

Protestants: Chiesa Evangelistica Battista (Via Milano, 40)

Methodists: Chiesa Evangelista Metodista (Via Manfredo da Passano, 29)

Church of Latter-Day Saints (Via Emanuele Gianturco, 31)

Islam: Moschea (Via Paolo Mantegazza, 11)

Synagogue: Piccola Opera Regina Apostolorum (Via Ventisette Marzo, 44)

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