

# The BEST four months of your life!!!!



First off I want to say “OMG YOU SHOULD 100% GO TO BOCCONI!!!” It is by far one of the best exchange destinations and experiences you can get, I promise! I’m definitely super biased but in this “little” write-up (I can tell you now it’s probably not going to be little and that’s because I loved it so much and I just want to give you all the info possible) I am going to convince you that you ARE in for the best four months of your life if you choose Bocconi!!! DISCLAIMER: This will be long but I promise it will be worth reading all of it :D

Firstly, here are the main reasons why you should absolutely come to Bocconi:

- You’re an Otago student so partying is a big part of your life so....Alcohol is out of this world cheap!!! I never would pay more than €2 (\$3.50) for a decent bottle of wine and spirits are around €10.
- It’s soooooo cheap to travel to other countries. Milan is central to all of Europe!!!
- The trips and parties organised by ESN (the Italian exchange committee) are like nothing you’ll experience anywhere else!
- Food, transport and general costs of living are so much cheaper than other countries, especially Scandinavian ones.
- There are more than 850 exchange students so you’re going to make friends you will never want to leave!
- It’s super hard to fail exams.
- There’s this thing called aperitivo which is where you pay \$12 for any drink you want and then you can eat as much as you want from this buffet of amazing Italian food!! I have no idea why this isn’t a thing anywhere else in the world!
- The Italian life style and weather is to die for. It’s so relaxed and in the summer you can lie in the park under the hot Italian sun in your togs and it’s totally acceptable!
- One semester will never seem long enough I promise!!
- Ohhh and I can’t forget..... You’ll be living in the pizza, pasta and gelato capital of the world!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Ok where should I start.... Maybe with the less interesting stuff.... Na I’ll put that at the end :D

I’ll start with what I was studying and what year I was in. I was lucky enough to be in my final semester of study (4<sup>th</sup> year) doing a double major in management and economics. I took three eco and two management papers. I’ll talk about how I found them in the University section. Because it was my final semester I was able to travel for four months once I’d finished which I would highly recommend!

## Bocconi and it’s exchange committee:

One of the first things you will learn once getting to Bocconi is that there is this International Student Organisation called Erasmus Student Network (ESN) and I reckon Bocconi has the best in the world. ESN Bocconi is a group of Italian students who have been on exchange and are now on a committee which organises the craziest events and trips you’ll ever experience! Here is just a run-down of a few of the events and trips:

Trips: extremely cheap for what you get!! They always include a guided tour of the cities, food, accommodation, transport and a truck load of booze!

*Cinque Terre* – the craziest trip of my life!!! We had an all you can drink wine dinner, then partied in a park with



music blaring and more drinks provided by ESN. Then went to a club right on the water until 4am. Me and 5 other girls decided to go "swimming" at the beach and then at a 5 star hotel! Absolutely crazy night!!

*Florence* – you'll eat the BEST steak (Florentine steak) of your life here!! It's super beautiful and the clubs you go to are insane! Beautiful leather goods to buy and you see Siena, Florence, San Gimignano and Pisa all in three epic days.

*Lake Garda* – Is prettier than Como!! We had a 1.5hr long party on the bus to a club. If you have never partied on a regular bus before I'm telling you now it's sooo much fun!! We were climbing all over the seats, dancing in the walk way and playing the speaker so loudly. The bus driver for these trips is a legend and doesn't blink an eyelid!

*All you can drink wine dinner* – Had an Otago mate who was on exchange in Switzerland staying when this event was on and he couldn't believe how cheap this event was. It was non-stop wine all night along with a 3 course delicious Italian meal all for €15. He ended up drinking so much he forgot there was a coin in his glass from playing "Save the Queen" (which we had taught everyone) and ended up swallowing it.... Another fab night!

There are also Quiz Nights, a Prom, Karaoke nights and a cocktail night.

The clubs in Milan are 100% better and bigger than Dunedin ones and the cool thing is, is that every week night a different club has an ESN deal where it's only €10 entry and you get 2 free drinks of any kind. Also ESN always holds pre-drinks just down the road from the club (in Italy you're allowed to drink in public so you can drink ANYWHERE). A cool social thing to do with friends is to take a bottle of wine down to the big Navigli canal and chill there listening to music or go to the Colonne San Lorenzo (big open space around a statue) and drink there.

Go on all the trips you can because you'll meet loads of people and the trips are way cheaper than if you did them yourself.



### Food:

Like I said above aperitivo is the best thing the Italians have ever invented after pasta, pizza and gelato.

The food is hella good and cheap! I didn't actually eat out at restaurants that much because Italians eat so late!! Restaurants will only start filling up at around 9.30 and by then I'm starving, plus at nice restaurants you have to pay something called corpetto which is a service charge which makes the meal a wee bit more expeny. Mainly I did aperitivo because it's cheap and there is always a great atmosphere.

Places to try:

Along the Navigli canals are where you will find loads of aperitivo places. The best ones I went to were:

- Spritz, Mayas, StraRipa (does pina coladas in whole pineapples) but they're all about the same. The BEST place is called La Hora Feliz and it's off Corso di Porta Ticinese.

Pizza places:

- Lunarosso (€6 each in Navigli), Pomodoro Rosso, Pizza AM (get free slices on arrival and lemoncello shots when you leave).

Bars:

- La Fontenella in Navigli does huge vessels of beer (up to 12L)

The big supermarkets (like PaknSave) are Esselunga and Pam Superstores. They are huge and fun to explore. The smaller ones are called Pam and Carrefour and they're like Four Squares but the prices are still cheap.

Gelato: So the secret to finding a good gelato place is: Don't go to places where the gelato is all piled up. The best gelato is always when it comes out of circular steel tubs. My favourite flavours are pistachio and hazelnut (niccola), but all flavours are usually amazing. Btw there is a difference between ice cream and gelato, ice cream is made with cream while gelato is made with milk.



Markets: each suburb usually has a weekly market. The food here is amazing! The fruit and vege is really cheap and the cheese and salamis are delicious! You can also find beautiful linen clothing.

#### Attractions:

- Duomo is the number one thing you're likely to do/see. It's stunning. I'd recommend going inside and up on to the roof when friends come and stay with you otherwise you're likely to put it off and then run out of time at the end of the semester.
- The Castle is in a huge park close to Duomo and is great to walk around.
- Brera is a super lively neighbourhood close to Duomo with lots of cool bars and shops.
- The Last Supper is the huge painting by Leonardo Di Vinci. Make sure you book well in advance. It shouldn't be more than €27.
- La Scala is the gorgeous opera theatre. You can go inside during the day for €5, or you can get cheap €7 tickets to a show by going to the ticket office at La Scala at 12.30 on the day you want to go and booking a spot. Then come back at 5.30 to get the tickets.
- San Siro Stadium to watch Inter play football.
- The four roads of the fashion district just north of Duomo are cool to walk down and see all the super stylish Italians shopping while their husbands drive the Porsches around.
- Actually, just people watching is an attraction in itself! The Italian men and women dress like they are walking down the catwalk every day especially in winter, however they do wear a lot of black.
- The Bocconi park will become one of your number one hangouts. When you're tired of studying come and chill here with friends, drink a beer, throw a frisbee or have a big party in it like we did. Tanning in togs is totally acceptable too.



#### University life:

I thought taking five papers would be quite tricky because I have always been a very diligent student who would go to all my lectures.... That changed at Bocconi once they told me it was very hard to fail and all I needed was a pass. I'm going to be honest and say that I maybe went to 40% of my lectures, never bought the very expensive recommended text books and still breezed the exams (there was a hard week and a half of study before the exams though). However, the papers I took and the lecturers were great! I had two sustainability papers that I loved and my eco papers were completely different from Otago ones and really insightful. Bocconi is a very prestigious business university (22<sup>nd</sup> in the world) which is why they attract so many exchange students. It's also the best university in Italy which is why all the Italian students are dressed impeccably! They all dress like runway models and carry Louis Vuitton bags. It's funny because you can instantly pick out the exchange students!

Bocconi always attracts fantastic speakers. While I was there they had the CEO of Starbucks, The Blonde Salad blogger (who is actually a former Bocconi student) and the head designer at Yves Saint Laurent and many other influential people come and do talks.



#### Language:

I came to Milan with the intention of leaving speaking fluent Italian.... That didn't happen at all. This is because a) All Italian Bocconi students speak great english and want to improve theirs so only speak english to you, b) You can get away with knowing hardly any Italian in shops, c) The Bocconi crash course is not very practical. You can do the course to meet people but in all honesty it didn't help me that much. Rosetta Stone and Duolingo were more helpful and cheaper.

### Visa, Permit of Stay and Accommodation:

Sorry can't help you with the Visa or Permit of Stay as I had an Italian passport. However, all I do know is that you have to basically pay €75 for the permit and all you need to do is book an appointment, keep that appointments receipt and you don't technically need to go to the appointment.

You'll get way more info when you arrive and Bocconi has sessions to help you sort it out. The visa is an annoying process and you will need to have some form of confirmed accommodation for when you arrive in Milan. Now this is actually really important. You may think that means you need to find a place to live before you get to Milan, however, that is not the case at all. It just means you need to have a confirmed booking at a hostel or with a family friend for the first 10 days of your stay. It can be an extremely big hassle to try and find accommodation when you are not in the city and there is always the problem of the language barrier.

The number one recommendation that I have for you (and this is probably the most important because it was the catalyst to me having the best four months ever) is to stay in a hostel when you arrive in Milan with other Bocconi students!! Once you are added to the Bocconi Exchange Facebook page hopefully someone will make a separate FB page for people who are coming to Milan without an apartment already organised.

If someone doesn't make a page YOU SHOULD! This is where you can all organise to stay at the same hostel. With this page I was able to organise a whole group of us to stay in New Generation Hostel Urban Navigli, the other hostel people stayed at was called Madama Hostel and Bistro. The first two guys I met there became my flat mates and ultimately my big brothers for life!! I met so many people at that hostel and I'm 100% sure my exchange would have been completely different if I hadn't have stayed there. By staying in a hostel with lots of other students it means that you can pick and choose who you want as flat mates, whereas if you try and find an apartment beforehand you'll need to find other students to live with and I heard some horror stories from friends who had never met their flatmates before moving in with them.... I was just extremely lucky to get along so well with the first 3 guys I met. One thing I do recommend though is to start looking at accommodation sites before you arrive and get in contact with some landlords to say you will be arriving and would like to come and see some apartments when you arrive. There will be facebook pages that the Bocconi fb group will recommend you add yourself to to help you find rooms for rent.

The areas you should try and get an apartment in are Porta Romana or Navigli. Both areas are right next to Bocconi and are lively and a short tram trip from the city centre (the Duomo). I was paying €500 a month (all rent is done in months not weeks), however I was sleeping on a mattress in the living room so that we could divide the price of the apartment by 3 instead of two to make it way cheaper. Accommodation isn't cheap so if you are willing or you find someone else willing to do something like what I did, I would 100% recommend it. Most people I know were paying up to €650 a month. Also, DO NOT STAY IN THE BOCCONI DORMS (Arcobelano or any of the other ones)!!! They are super expensive (€700 a month), they're a 30 minute tram ride from Bocconi (I was a 5 minute walk away and paying €200 less). There is only wifi in the common rooms, it's over run with Americans and you can't have guests stay.... So don't go there! Ok I think that's accommodation etc done.

### Transport:

It's so cheap and easy to use! There are trams, metros and buses. You can get a monthly transport pass for €22 and that lets you use any transportation, get the pass at Central Station or at the Duomo



station. Trams stop at 1 and the Metro at 12.30 and start up again at 5.30am. Get a taxi companies number early on because you don't want to be stranded in town late at night by yourself. I downloaded "Taxiapp" which was really handy.

Cell phone networks:

There are three main carries, TIM, 3 and Wind. I used TIM which gave me 1000 calling minutes but only 500gb of data for a month which wasn't enough and no texts for €10. I think 3 had the best plan and you get data when you went to some other countries. But I'd recommend visiting all three carries to see who has the best, they all have shops close to Bocconi. The more data you have the better because everyone uses Whatsapp (so download it now). Can't believe NZ isn't using it yet because everywhere else in the world is and texts are non-existent!

Ciao ragazzi!

Alright so I think that is everything, well actually it's not, but if you have any other questions just flick me an email on [samanthaswa1@gmail.com](mailto:samanthaswa1@gmail.com) or facebook me. If you do get accepted into Bocconi please get in contact with me because I can give you super useful tips on where to find accommodation, what courses are good to take, how much \$\$ you need and the best places to visit etc etc.

I don't know if you realised from this write up but I fell in love with Italy. I've decided I want to marry an Italian (lol) and move to the "good life" at some point! If you do not end up loving your exchange here I'll give you a 100% money back guarantee haha!

