

SE05EP03

Riley Munson

Hard of Hearing Abroad

H: Welcome to Noles Abroad, a podcast by Florida State University International Programs! I'm Hannah

Z: And I'm Zoe! And we are your hosts. On this podcast we'll talk about study abroad from the perspective of the students, faculty, staff, and alumni who make it an experience worth sharing. We'll also bring you travel tips and fun facts from around the globe.

H: On this episode we talk with Riley Munson, a hard of hearing student at FSU. She shares about her experience working with the Office of Accessibility Services while preparing for her experience abroad, how her accommodations were met by the study center staff, and some of her favorite parts of her time in Florence. Let's go to our conversation now!

H: Hey Riley, how are you doing today?

Riley (R): I'm doing good, how are you?

H: I'm doing well! Can you introduce yourself to our listeners?

R: Yes, my name is Riley Munson. I'm a junior in college and I'm saying criminology, minoring in sociology and I went to Florence for study abroad.

Z: Awesome! So as an FSU Pathways student, what made you the most excited about starting your college career abroad?

R: What made me the most excited was the fact that it was like my first college experience and I really liked the fact that it was going to be unique in a sense, like not everyone was going to have the same experience that I was going to have. And I love traveling so I was like really excited and I've always been wanting to like study abroad because I was really excited to like live abroad with kids that also were doing this for like the first time and I really was excited about like traveling out of Florence and stuff.

H: Awesome, those are all great things to be excited about. What made you choose Florence?

R: What made me choose Florence? I was already kind of familiar with it. My family had gone to Italy like a few summers prior and I think Florence was like my favorite place that we went, we went to like three other cities. And I just really loved how like familiar it honestly felt and it was it wasn't too big, and also wasn't too small, so they were still places to like explore. And I really loved how Italy really like focuses on local restaurants so I knew I was going to be able to like kind of stay away from like things like I already knew so I can try new things.

Z: Awesome, those are all great reasons. So shifting a little bit, International Programs encourages students to register and work with the Office of Accessibility Services for accommodations as needed prior to studying abroad. Can you tell us about your experience with OAS while prepping to study abroad in Florence?

R: Yeah so before you even start college they not really required but they suggest that you come in and meet with them like in person before like you start classes either abroad or in person in their main Tallahassee campus. So they assign you like an advisor and he kind of gets you started what you should be doing like already with your services, like how you should oh, like he told me oh like you should email your teachers at least two weeks in advance so that they're familiar with you and so that when you go they'll have an idea of like the services you need. And it was just a really nice transition and they were like ensuring everyone, or me, that you would have services even abroad so if you needed to contact them like you were able to contact them through email. So it was like really nice.

H: Can you talk a little bit more about how FSU Florence accommodated your needs while you were abroad?

R: Yeah so I was able to have like really good discussions before classes started with some of my professors. One of my professors was one of the advisors that was on campus there, so I was able to like talk with him and he was able to we were able to coordinate. One of my accommodations was the note taking accommodation, where someone would take notes for me, and if some of them weren't able to like get a note taker for me, they would print out PowerPoints for me to read as they were teaching the PowerPoints or read beforehand so I can take like extra notes that they already had, so that was really nice. And the classrooms were already small so that was nice too.

H: Yeah that small class size is really nice for a lot of folks and I can imagine that it's a good way to accommodate students who need that smaller space, that's awesome.

R: Yeah it's really nice.

Z: So we want to hear a little bit more about Florence and your time there so, can you tell us what was your favorite class while you were abroad?

R: My favorite class, this is probably the most common you'll probably hear, it's the International Wine and Culture course. The professor, he was super cool. And he would take us into the market, I forgot like what day before class, and he would get like cheese or something like "oh this is what we're going to try with this wine today." and he was really cool. And he like knew stuff about wine, he would say like when we have projects he'd be really cool and he'd say like "oh like there's probably nothing like I don't already know about wine," but it was really like he was really funny and he was really cool.

Z: That's awesome.

H: Yah, we hear lots of great things about our professors abroad so I'm glad you had that experience, it sounds really fun! What was your favorite aspect of living in Florence?

R: I really liked being able to walk everywhere. I really like taking walks by myself just to like observe everything. And my dorm was across the Ponte Vecchio so like I would have to walk across the Ponte Vecchio and everything, usually like every evening there would be like a street performer so there would be like a violinist, or there would be like a singer on her guitar, like it would be really peaceful and nice. And like you just see everyone like checking out the shops and stuff and if you wanted to stop for ice cream you could stop for ice cream, it was really nice.

H: Wow, that sounds like a dream to walk home and there just be like performers. That, it's like an actual dream, that is really lovely.

R: Yeah, it was like really nice especially when the weather got cool too. Like that's what made it, like around Christmastime.

Z: It sounds beautiful.

H: Yeah that sounds really enjoyable.

Z: Okay well our last question for you is a question that we ask everyone who comes on this podcast and that is just what advice do you have for students who are considering studying abroad?

R: I would honestly say like look at every single option that they have because while you might have a location already set in mind, you never know if they could have like another location that also like kind of fits like what you're looking for as well. Because like every single one of them will like fit what you're looking for, like the people, like the classes, just like look to see like what would be like the best fit for you and your needs and wants and like at for your experience. Just have an open mind, is what I should say.

H: Amazing that is such good advice especially to keep an open mind that's always a key mindset to have whenever you're traveling or studying abroad or anything like that, so thank you for that advice Riley. Thank you so much for coming on the podcast today and for sharing your experience and your story and thanks for telling us about your time in Florence.

R: No problem, anytime.

H: Before we disembark, we want to talk about some things happening this October!

First off, we want to recognize Disability Awareness Month. This October, FSU is amplifying the voices of students with disabilities through various events and media. IP and the Office of Accessibility Services are teaming up for "Studying Abroad with a Disability," a student panel featuring study abroad and OAS students. You can check out a list of other events as well as IP resources on our blog at nolesabroad.international.fsu.edu.

Z: Also happening next week is IP's annual Study Abroad Week! We will be celebrating all things study abroad with opportunities for alumni to reflect on your experience abroad as well as a chance to learn about our programs if you are looking for the adventure of a lifetime! There will also be a chance to win an airfare scholarship on our Instagram so be sure to follow @fsuip where you can find details for the giveaway and all the events!

Z: This podcast is a production of FSU International Programs. The music for this podcast was composed by John Bartmann. Our logo was designed by Vanessa Guirey, who also does our sound engineering. Editing, transcription, and research is done by us, Zoë Crook and Hannah Meister.