

# IMPORTANT FOOD ALLERGY CONSIDERATIONS WHILE ABROAD



Food is central to Italian life, and that's both a good and bad thing when you're a visitor who has a restrictive diet of any kind. The good news is that Italians want you to enjoy your dining experience, so they're almost always eager to work with you to create something that you can eat. The bad news is that if you don't eat a certain food group for anything other than medical reasons, that doesn't really compute. Italians have food allergies just like anyone else, but it's a rare Italian who'll voluntarily give up – for instance – meat and dairy, although today it is quite mainstream in Italy to be a vegetarian or to have celiac disease (gluten free).

Life threatening allergies, such as a seafood allergy or nut allergies, can be quite tricky in Italy. Many non-seafood dishes can have fish broth or be cooked with seafood that you cannot always see. The same thing goes for nuts! The other dangerous issue is contamination. For example, ordering a non-nut flavored gelato that has been served with an ice cream scoop that was used to serve nut-filled gelatos, like hazelnut or pistachio. All of these scenarios could end up meaning a visit to the Emergency Room for you. In large cities, like Rome, busy restaurants may be less likely to have time to tailor meals to individual diners.

**What this means is that in Italy the burden is on you to be as specific as possible about what you can't eat or don't eat.** You must always be **VERY** specific and you alone are responsible for your own body. We encourage those coming to the Duquesne in Rome campus with **severe allergies** to discuss with their families and their doctor whether studying abroad is right for them. **You must always have your emergency medication on you at all times throughout the program.** The Duquesne in Rome staff is more than happy to help at group meals and on campus to communicate your allergies, but you alone must be responsible for what you decide to eat.