

KSU ITALY

STUDENT GUIDEBOOK



**KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY**

GLOBAL EDUCATION
Education Abroad

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PRE-DEPARTURE

Passport

Hold a passport that is valid for six months after the completion of the program. Keep copies of your passport on you and lock your passport in your hotel room when possible. Never pack your passport in your checked luggage.

Itinerary

Be familiar with the travel itinerary and details of the program to prepare you for what to expect. While most items are planned for you, it is good to be well versed in what you will experience. Also, know what is included and excluded in the program. Some programs may include free days or weekends for you to do as you please.

Travel Information

Try to become familiar with currency regulations, exchange rates, weather conditions, and customs procedures of the country you are visiting. While this guide and your Program Director will be great resources for you, you are encouraged to do extra research on your own to help prepare you for this experience.

Excursions

Work with the Program Director if you choose to do excursions outside the itinerary. Time may be limited during the dates of travel for extended periods, but travelers may choose to travel independently before or after the itinerary dates.

Air Information

Be familiar with your flight schedule for the program as well as any airline regulations. Travelers should be at the airport at a minimum of 3 hours before their scheduled flight. Keep a copy of your airline information including a confirmation/booking number and your ticket number on you for travel. Know who you will travel with and when you will need to arrive at your destination.

Travel Insurance

Please bring a copy of any travel or international health insurance cards. Your international health insurance policy will be sent to your KSU email before departure.

Luggage

Make sure all of your bags are labeled. Pack layers & washable fabrics in modest styles. In churches, Italians expect visitors to dress appropriately. This means shoulders and knees should be covered. A rain jacket or small folding umbrella is advisable in case of rain (Spring, Early Summer, Late Fall).

Health, Safety & Security

Be aware of any safety and security guidelines that you should follow on the program. Some cultural differences will also need to be understood in order to avoid an uncomfortable or offensive situation. All students must abide by the KSU Code of Conduct and the laws of the country.

Culture

Italian culture tends to be more laid back than American culture. The four big areas of culture for Italy are Food, Faith, Family, and Art.

CONTACTS

KSU CONTACTS

Education Abroad:

- (+1) 470.578.6336
- educationabroad@kennesaw.edu

Office of International Safety & Security:

- (+1) 470.578.6336
- globalsafety@kennesaw.edu
- If you are experiencing an emergency abroad, the **24/7 KSU International Emergency Phone can be reached at (+1) 470.578.6666**. Please identify yourself as a student, faculty, or staff member experiencing an emergency abroad to be routed appropriately.

ITALY CONTACTS

Scuola di Italiano il Sasso:

- Heike Wilms

Terre Toscane:

- Virginia Vannuccini

ITALY EMERGENCY CONTACTS

In case of emergencies, before calling the local police (112) while in Montepulciano, first contact your Program Director (at the phone numbers listed above) unless it is a true emergency and cannot wait.

- **KSU 24/7 International Emergency Phone: (+1) 470-578-6666**
- **Local Police (Italy): 112**
 - General emergencies: 113
 - Medical Emergencies: 118
 - Fire: 115
- U.S. Embassy (Rome): (+39) 06.46741
- U.S. Consulate (Florence): (+39) 055.266.951
- OnCall International (Medical/Health Insurance): (+1) 978-651-9219

KSU ITALY



KSU'S MONTEPULCIANO EDUCATIONAL SITE (KSU ITALY)

Kennesaw State University's first permanent international education site is located in the Renaissance town of Montepulciano, Italy. KSU Italy offers students of all backgrounds and interests the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live and study in Italy while earning course credit toward your degree! KSU Italy provides a home-away-from-home with fellow KSU Owls, faculty, and staff and the chance to immerse yourself in a new rich culture.

Housed in Montepulciano's Fortezza Medievale, the facility features classroom space, made possible by the KSU Foundation and Global Education.

From the beginning, KSU has worked closely with the Comune di Montepulciano (local administration), Il Sasso Italian Language School, Terre Toscane (a local travel agency), and the Consorzio del Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. In addition, based on the idea of the original consortium, KSU Italy continues to collaborate with other universities from Georgia such as Georgia Southern, Georgia College & State, and Valdosta State.

Thank you for being part of KSU Italy — we hope you enjoy Montepulciano!



MONTEPULCIANO



THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MONTEPULCIANO & ITALY

Montepulciano, the largest hill town in southern Tuscany, sits in the heart of the Vino Nobile wine region. Perched on a tufa limestone ridge, it boasts stunning vineyard-lined landscapes and rich Renaissance charm.

Renowned for its wine, Pecorino cheese, pasta, and honey, Montepulciano hosts around 200 annual events, including concerts, theater performances, the wine barrel-racing contest "Bravio delle Botti" held in August every year, and a festive Christmas market. These traditions, cherished for centuries, captivate both locals and visitors.

KEY LANDMARKS IN MONTEPULCIANO

Porta al Prato

The main gate for both pedestrians and traffic to enter the town. It's located at the bottom of the main street (the Corso) on the north end of the walled town. Wherever you are, just keep going downhill and you will likely come to the Porta al Prato.

The Corso

The commercial spine of the town, the Corso is the main street for restaurants and shopping. The Corso runs almost the length of the town, from Porta al Prato at the bottom up to a sharp switchback to the right that leads to the Piazza Grande at the top.

Piazza del Erbe

This is a T-shaped intersection about one-third of the way up the Corso with an open loggia (a columned, covered space) that was once a vegetable market.

Piazza Grande

Piazza Grande is the large open square at the top of the town with the cathedral, bell tower, city hall, the Medici well, restaurants, and a café. No matter where you are, go uphill and you will reach it.

The Fortezza

With site origins dating back to 200 BCE, the Fortezza is where students have classes. It is the home base for KSU and is located at the top of the hill behind the cathedral (walk through the gate and up the shaded drive to the door). To give you a sense of scale, the distance from the Fortezza to Porta al Prato is half a mile or about a 15-20 minute walk.

The Bus Station (Autostazione)

Walk down the Corso, go out Porta Prato, continue walking down to the traffic circle in front of Santa Agnese church; take the soft right sharply down the hill. Walk past the Conad and take the first street to the right. You will see the "Stazione" ahead on the left.

Chiesa di Sant'Agostino

This church was built in the 13th century and is one of the first large churches you will see inside the gates of the town. To the right of the church, just beyond the side wall, is where our Partner Il Sasso is located.

LOCALS & LANGUAGE

Montepulciano's residents, Poliziani, are familiar with KSU students and tourists. Many speak English but appreciate efforts to speak Italian.

- Greet shopkeepers with “buongiorno” (good morning) or “buonasera” (good evening).
- Say “grazie” (thank you) or “arrivederci” (goodbye) when leaving.
- Use “ciao” only in informal settings with friends.

Please see “Language” in the culture section for more.

DINING DIFFERENCES

- Bars (Cafés): Popular for coffee, snacks, light meals, and drinks.
 - Prices vary based on standing at the bar vs. sitting at a table.
 - Paying is often done first; bring the receipt to the barman for them to make your order.
- Water: Restaurants charge for water—choose “frizzante” (sparkling) or “naturale” (still).
- Often outside seating, especially with a view, at a restaurant will charge more for the table than inside.
- Tipping: Service charges are included in restaurant bills, so tipping isn't required, but a few euros is appreciated. In bars and taxis, rounding up the bill is common.

LIVING IN MONTEPULCIANO

- Apartments: Shared with 2-4 students within 300-year-old buildings but equipped with modern amenities.
 - Includes furniture, linens, and cooking equipment for preparing your own meals.
 - Most apartments do not have WiFi. The best WiFi is available at the Fortezza.
- Laundry: Some apartments have laundry units; if not, a self-service laundromat is available in town.
 - Sheets and towels will be washed by a local cleaning service once a week.

Montepulciano apartments follow KSU's housing standards, and the Student Code of Conduct applies. Students must review and follow all policies. Visit scai.kennesaw.edu/codes.php for details.

ONLY KSU students, faculty, and staff may enter your apartment. Authorized personnel (owners, cleaning staff, Il Sasso staff, KSU staff, and the program director) may visit anytime but will be announced.

Italy follows a strict trash and recycling schedule. You'll receive a schedule and bags during the on-site orientation—place the correct waste outside each morning. Failure to comply may result in fines.

CLIMATE

Check the weather before packing and adjust accordingly. Layered clothing is recommended in case the weather varies during your time. Montepulciano's climate is similar to Georgia's:

- Early summer: Highs in the 60s–80s°F, Lows in the 50s–60s°F
- Mid-summer: Highs in the 80s°F, Lows in the 60s–70s°F
- Late summer: Highs in the 90s–100s°F, Lows in the 70s°F

Most buildings and ALL apartments in Montepulciano will NOT have air conditioning due to the architecture. Keep windows closed during the day and open at night to regulate temperature. Fans are available to borrow from the Fortezza or buy at Conad.

TERRAIN

Expect more walking and standing than usual. In Montepulciano:

- Class days: Average 2–5 miles
 - Field trips: Typically 6–9 miles (Not hikes, but walking is part of the culture.)
- Terrain: Uneven, steep ground and cobblestone streets.
- Accessibility: Limited for walking-impaired individuals.
- Tip: Wear comfortable shoes—avoid heels and flip-flops.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

During free time, the trains are the main way to get around Italy.

- Best station for Montepulciano: Chiusi-Chianciano Terme
 - Train types:
 - Regionale Veloce (RV): Slow, many stops, least expensive.
 - Validate RV tickets or check in on your app before boarding to avoid heavy fines
 - Intercity: Fewer stops, mid-priced.
 - Freccia (rossa, bianca, argento): High-speed, most expensive
- To check schedules or buy tickets, visit [Trenitalia.com](https://www.trenitalia.com) or download the app.

How to get from FCO Airport in Rome to Montepulciano:

- From the airport, follow signs for the “Leonardo Express” train to bring you to the Roma Termini train station.
- At Roma Termini, take a train to “Chiusi-Chianciano Terme.”
 - The intercity non-stop is recommended.
 - There will be stops between Roma Termini and Chiusi-Chianciano Terme, so listen for your stop.
- From the Chiusi station, you can either get a local bus (about €4, 1 hour) or a taxi (about €70–90, 30 minutes) to Montepulciano. The bus drops you outside the city walls, while the taxi takes you inside.

GROCERY STORES

Light Groceries (fruit, pasta, bread, veggies, etc.)

There are several small shops throughout the Corso that offer grocery items. To give an idea of where they are located, they are located near: the Fortezza, the Trattoria, Piazza del Erbe, and Saint Agostino Church. It is common in Italy for shops that have produce to not allow customers to touch the produce. It is always good to ask first before doing so.

Every Thursday from 7 am - 1 pm there is a market by the bus station "Autostazione" where you can buy produce, fresh food, clothes, and more.

Major Groceries (large selections of food, school/office supplies, some clothing, towels, etc.)

Conad Supermarket

How to get there: Walk down the Corso, exit Porta al Prato, and continue to the traffic circle by Santa Agnese Church. Take a soft right, then go sharply downhill—Conad is on the right.

The Conad is more affordable than in-town shops and offers food, toiletries, and essentials.

- When buying produce, wear the provided gloves, weigh your items, and print a price sticker per type of item.
- You will need to bring your own bag or buy a reusable one at checkout (€1-2).

PHARMACIES IN MONTEPULCIANO

There are two Farmacias (Pharmacies) in town.

- Farmacia Franceschi - Up the Corso from Piazza del Erbe about 100 meters
- Farmacia Sorbini - Just outside the Porta al Prato straight down the hill on the left after the Tourist Information parking lot.

Usually, if one is closed, the other is open. They can also be recognized by the green cross outside the store which is their universal symbol.

For all medicines, including over-the-counter, you must describe your symptoms to a pharmacist. Knowing the chemical name of your medicine will help but brand names do not. The pharmacists typically speak good English. Please note that the pharmacy can only deal with minor health problems, but can often help more than a US pharmacy (CVS, Walgreens, etc.).

If you have a major health problem or emergency, please report it to your Program Director.



Montepulciano



Main Monuments	
1	Chiesa e convento di S. Agnese (Church and Convent of St. Agnese)
2	Giardino di Poggiofatti (Poggiofatti Park)
3	Palazzo Comunale (Municipal Palace)
4	Palazzo Vecchio (Old Town Hall)
5	Palazzo Comunale (Municipal Palace)
6	Chiesa di S. Benedetto (Church of St. Benedict)
7	Palazzo Comunale (Municipal Palace)
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Parcheggi / Parking	
1	Piazza Don Mezzacorona (Piazza Don Mezzacorona)
2	Piazza del Duomo (Piazza del Duomo)
3	Piazza del Campo (Piazza del Campo)
4	Piazza del Palazzo (Piazza del Palazzo)
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A photograph of a rustic stone building facade. The wall is made of light-colored, irregular stones. A large, bushy green plant with many red roses is climbing the wall. In the foreground, there is a large, rectangular, light-brown planter box filled with various green plants and flowers. To the right of the planter, there is a wooden chair with a woven seat. The background shows a doorway leading into a dimly lit interior space.

PREPARATION

PREPARING FOR TRAVEL

PACKING YOUR BAGS

Pack for comfort with layered clothing and broken-in walking shoes. Proper attire is required for many religious sites, including the Vatican—men should wear long pants, and women should wear pants or a skirt that covers the knees with a sleeved shirt to cover the shoulders.

Avoid bringing valuables, expensive gadgets, or anything you can't afford to lose (sentimental items). Airline baggage rules vary, so check with your airline for weight limits and fees. Generally, one 50-pound bag is allowed, but you'll need to carry your own luggage—many places do NOT have elevators or ramps.

It is very expensive to have bags shipped home or consigned at an airport or train station. Most students find that they can get by on much less than they brought.

Pack light, and don't forget to save room for souvenirs to bring home!

Helpful Packing Tips:

- Keep essential items—passport, money, jewelry, medication, and travel documents—in your carry-on, not checked luggage.
- Pack a change of clothes and toiletries in your carry-on in case of delays. Follow TSA guidelines for carry-on items.
- Bring enough medication for your trip, plus extra, in original containers with prescriptions. Pack spare contact lenses and glasses.
- Expect lots of walking, so wear well-broken-in, flat, comfortable shoes—Montepulciano has uneven, hilly roads.
- Opt for a versatile, layered capsule wardrobe. Europeans typically avoid sweatshirts, shorts, sweatpants, flip-flops, or ripped jeans. While dressy clothes aren't necessary, nice shirts, blouses, sweaters, and well-kept jeans or pants will help you blend in.
- Dress respectfully for church visits or you will NOT be allowed to enter—cover shoulders and wear knee-length pants, skirts, or dresses. A lightweight scarf is a great option for covering shoulders.
- Bring your favorite brand-name toiletries and OTC medications, as they may not be available abroad.
- Pack three photocopies of your passport's photo page in separate locations from the original.

TSA LIQUIDS RULE

You are allowed to bring a quart-sized bag of liquids, aerosols, gels, creams and pastes in your carry-on bag and through the checkpoint, with additional screening. These are limited to travel-sized containers that are 3.4 ounces (100 milliliters) or less per item. Placing these items in the small bag and separating them from your carry-on baggage facilitates the screening process. Pack items that are in containers larger than 3.4 ounces or 100 milliliters in checked baggage.

Exemptions:

- Medications
- Infant and child nourishments

For additional information on what you can bring on your flight, please visit:
<https://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/whatcanibring/all>

CUSTOMS & IMMIGRATION

For expensive foreign-made items (cameras, watches, etc.), bring receipts or register them with U.S. Customs before departure to avoid duty fees upon return.

U.S. Customs allows up to \$800 in duty-free purchases. Alcohol, tobacco, and perfume have stricter rules. Keep all receipts for mailed or carried purchases.

For more information about U.S. Customs Service, please visit:
<http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/know-before-you-go>

USING ELECTRICITY ABROAD

An **adapter** is a small device that allows you to physically plug a U.S. device into a foreign outlet. It does not change the voltage; it only modifies the plug shape to fit the socket. In Italy, you will need a Type C, F, or L adapter to connect your device.

A **converter** (or voltage transformer) changes the voltage from 220V (common in Europe) to 110V (used in the U.S.). This is necessary for devices that are not dual voltage, so they don't overheat or get damaged. Many modern devices like phone chargers and laptops are dual voltage (100-240V) and only require an adapter, not a converter.

It is recommended to NOT bring hairdryers, curlers, straighteners, and similar electronics as they often will not work and blow fuses.

For more information about travel adaptors for Italy, please visit:
<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/advice-for-you/when-travelling/travel-adaptor-for-italy/>

USING YOUR PHONE ABROAD

While you may not be on your phone as much exploring the wonders of Italy, you will still need a phone abroad. Group communications are usually carried out on GroupMe and WhatsApp.

Here are four options for phone use abroad:

- **Wi-Fi Only** – Free but limited; available at the Fortezza and most hotels. No data or texting.
- **International Plan** – Check with your carrier for coverage and costs.
- **eSIM** – Purchase data via apps like Airalo; add more as needed. Ensure your phone supports eSIMs.
- **Local SIM Card** – Unlock your phone before departure and buy a SIM in Italy (not at the airport) for a local number and data access.
 - TIM Store in Montepulciano: Via Elio Bernabei, 27, 53045 Montepulciano SI

NOTE: the new iPhone models only have eSIMs and not physical SIM cards. You may also need to have an unlocked phone (often this means paid off) to use eSIMs or local SIMs with your carrier.

DATES AND TIMES

Europeans write the date differently than Americans. Whereas we write February 1, 2022, as 2/1/22, Europeans put the day first, then the month: 1/2/22.

The 24-hour clock is used most frequently throughout Europe. Instead of 6:00 PM, you will most often see 18.00. To convert from the 24-hour clock to the 12-hour clock, simply subtract 12 from all hours after noon. Times between midnight and 10 AM are written with a 0 in front of the hour (e.g. 09:45 is 9:45 AM). Another common notation is 9h45 or 9H45.

In addition, Italy is in Central European Standard Time (GMT+1), so they are 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (GMT-5).

Holidays

Please check to see if any Italian holidays could affect your program, including independent travel.

In the summertime, public transportation employees will often go on strike around holidays.

MONEY



MONEY MANAGEMENT

THE EURO

The euro (€ or EUR) is the currency in the EU.

Exchange rates fluctuate daily. Check out the most current exchange rate at www.xe.com.

ATMs offer the best exchange rates, while cash dollars are hard and costly to exchange. You can buy euros from your bank before traveling. Carry a mix of cash, debit, and credit cards—avoid traveler's checks.

Monete (Coins). There are 100 cents in 1 euro. Coins come in denominations of 1 cent, 2 cents, 5 cents, 10 cents, 20 cents, 50 cents, 1 euro, and 2 euro.

Banconote (Bills). Euro bills vary in size and color. You may encounter denominations of €5, €10, €20, €50, €100, €200, and €500.

Note: commas and periods are reversed in European monetary notation. For example, 1,00 is what we would consider 1.00.

CREDIT & DEBIT CARDS

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Italy, especially for larger purchases, but markets and small vendors often require cash.

VISA is most accepted, followed by Mastercard, while American Express is less common. Chip and tap cards work best.

Credit/debit payments may have less favorable exchange rates and foreign transaction fees. Notify your bank before traveling to avoid account freezes.

ATM WITHDRAWALS

Bring an ATM/debit card linked to your U.S. checking account for easy access to cash at Italian ATMs (bancomats). This is by far the easiest way to access your money overseas, and you will receive a more favorable exchange rate.

Check with your bank about international fees, overseas compatibility, withdrawal limits, and affiliate banks in Italy.

Ensure your PIN is four digits, as longer or alphabetic PINs may not work abroad. Also, confirm your daily withdrawal limit and any foreign ATM fees.

CULTURE



ITALIAN CULTURE

Italian culture is generally slower-paced and more relaxed than in the US. Meals are a major part of life and therefore take a long time. Service will be slower-paced as well. Most shops will also close for an extended lunch which can go into the early afternoon.

FAMILY LIFE

The family (la famiglia) is the most important aspect of an Italian's life. Their family solidarity is focused on extended family rather than the immediate family. There is also a deep respect for elders in the culture. Italian families have frequent gatherings (usually centered around food), often help support each other, and are the basis for their social circles. Families also have their own traditions and regularly spend quality time together.

RELIGION AND ART

Roman Catholicism is the major religion in Italy, with 80% of the population identifying as Catholic, though only one-third are practicing. The Vatican, in Rome, is the center of Catholicism.

Many cities feature a "Duomo" (cathedral of the town) and smaller churches, which can often be home to famous artworks like frescoes and sculptures by artists such as Michelangelo, Caravaggio, and Bernini.

Churches are typically free to enter, with a suggested donation or for some a donation is required.

Even if you don't have the same religious affiliation, visiting religious centers in Italy is an exciting experience because of the ornate architecture and art.

CUISINE

Italian cuisine has influenced food culture around the world. Pasta comes in a wide range of shapes, widths, and lengths all over Italy, but each region of Italy has its own featured pastas and its own unique cuisine:

- Northern regions tend to consume more meat than southern regions, and polenta or rice often replaces pasta on traditional menus. Fish, potatoes, rice, sausages, pork, and cheese are the most common ingredients.
- Central regions feature pastas, soups, game like wild boar, and sometimes seafood. These dishes tend to be a mix of northern and southern cuisines.
- Southern regions will have tomato-forward dishes, and they are either served fresh or cooked into sauce. Southern cuisine also includes fish, capers, peppers, olives and olive oil, garlic, artichokes, eggplant, ricotta cheese, and lemons.

LANGUAGE

The official language is Italian, but you will find English is spoken in most places. Bigger cities like Rome often have more people speaking English than smaller towns. Below are some common phrases that will be helpful to you while in Italy.

We suggest learning some Italian before departure to help familiarize yourself with the language. Students will often also take Italian lessons, from our partners Il Sasso, within a few days of departure.

General Phrases and Greetings	
English	Italian
Yes	Si
No	No
Hello, bye	Ciao
Good morning	Buongiorno
Good evening	Buonasera
Goodnight	Buonanotte
Goodbye	Arrivederci
Thank you	Grazie
Please	Per Favore
You're welcome	Prego
Cheers!	Salute!
Excuse me (For attention)	Scusi
Excuse me (to pass by)	Permesso
Where's the bathroom?	Dov'è il bagno?

Food	
English	Italian
Tomato	Pomodoro
Chicken	Pollo
Beef	Carne
Fish	Pesce
Eggplant	Melanzana
Cheese	Il formaggio, cacio
Wine (red, white)	Vino (rosso, bianco)
Clams	Vongole
Cake	Torta
Coffee	Caffè
Bread	Pane
Garlic	Aglio
Orange	Arancio
Honey	Miele
Chocolate	Cioccolato

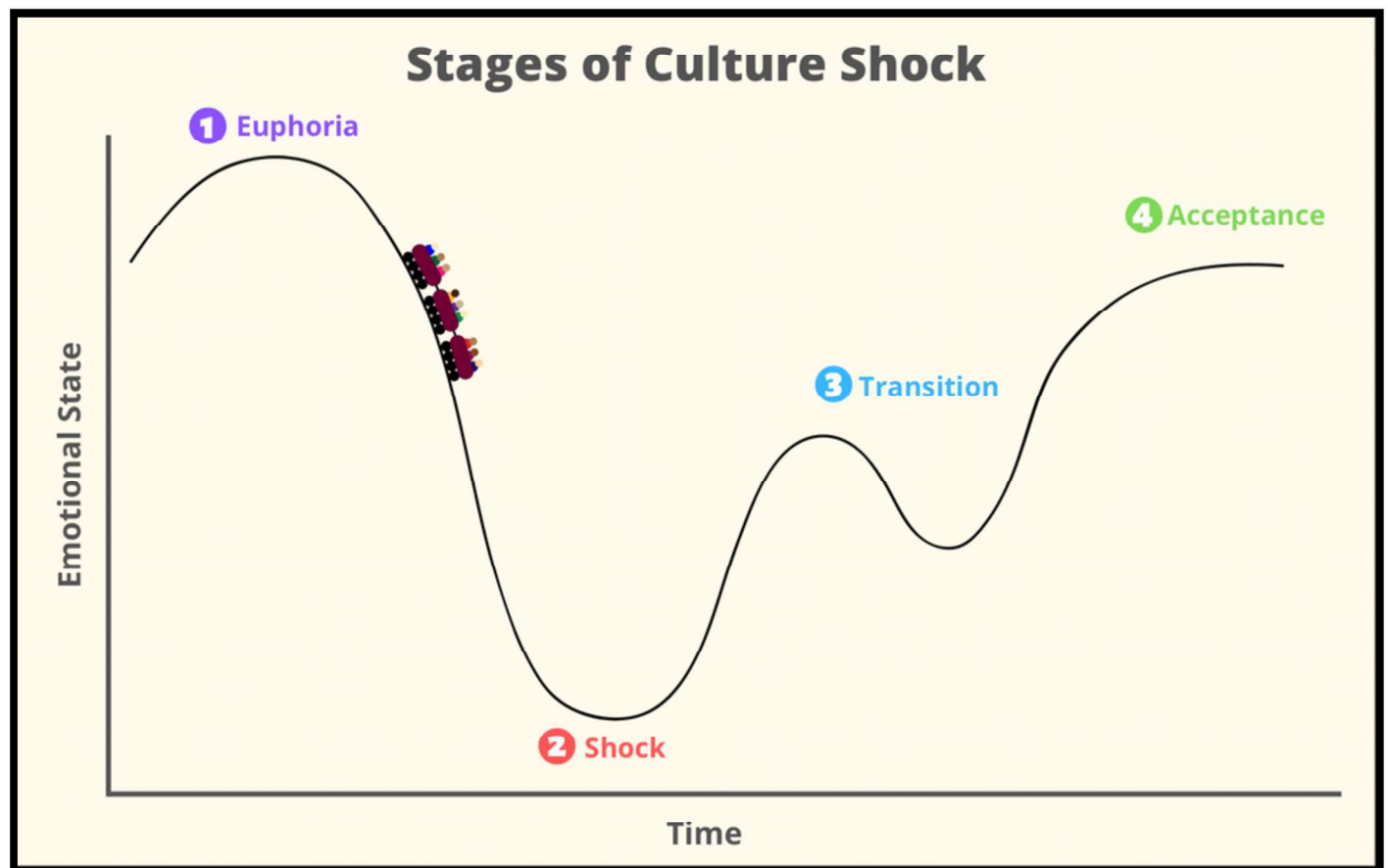
CULTURE SHOCK

Adjusting to a new environment, diet, or culture can affect your health and may cause stress or anxiety. To ease culture shock, stay in regular contact with family and friends, and engage with group activities or peers who may feel the same way.

Also, communicate your feelings to your faculty, who may also have tips and can help guide you to resources to overcome the culture shock or stress.

If you feel like you need or would like additional or professional support, please feel free to contact your program director or program coordinator to get details on meeting with a mental health professional.

For some resources before you go, please see the International Safety and Security website, here: <https://www.kennesaw.edu/global-education/safety-and-security/index.php>





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