

## Useful information

### OPENING/CLOSING TIMES

Opening times in Italy are often a point of contention with visitors. Shops and facilities may not be open when you expect them to be. Although many touristic places, especially in the center, now have non-stop hours, showing up at a museum or shop to find it closed is still a common mishap. Below are some general guidelines.

- Shops - generally open 10AM to 1PM and then 4PM to 7PM.
- Museums - usually closed on Mondays.
- Grocery Stores/ Greengrocers - closed on Wednesday afternoons.
- Pharmacies - marked by green crosses outside are usually open 9AM to 1PM and then 4PM to 7PM.
- Banks - generally open 8:30AM to 1:00PM and then 2PM to 3:30PM.
- Post office.

### BARS

In Italy the word bar is used to refer to a type of coffee bar where beer and liquor is also served. Most bars also sell pastries in the morning and sandwiches and pizzas in the afternoon. Tips for ordering a coffee in Italian: *Un caffè* will get you an espresso coffee. *Un caffè Americano* will get you the traditional coffee served in the UK or USA.

There is a bar located across the street from the university. Stamps are also sold here as it doubles as a tobacconist shop. Hours from 6AM to 10:30PM daily.

There is also a bar on the second floor of the shopping center next to the university.

### STAMPS AND POSTING LETTERS

- Where to get stamps: Post office or any smoke shop "Tabaccaio" where you see a T sign displayed above the door.
- Where to post your letters: In the red boxes outside the post office.
- There is a POST OFFICE across the street and to the left from the university. Hours Mon-Fri 8:15AM to 7PM, Sat 8:15AM to 12:30PM.

### TELEPHONING

- Private mobiles are probably the most convenient way of communication but you need to activate them for international use before leaving home.
- Public telephones are more difficult to find now (there are no available public phones at the university). There are two public phones at the train station, just outside the pharmacy entrance.

### INTERNET CAFE

Numerous places can be found in the city for small fees. See <http://www.aboutsiena.com>.

### SHOPPING

Most shops are boutique-like places where you need to ask for what you want. Most shop assistants know enough English to help you. The university is conveniently connected to a small shopping mall.

If you want to shop without assistance there is a department store called *UPIM* in the center of the city in Piazza Matteotti and there is a large supermarket called the COOP

behind the train station within walking distance of the university as well as Pam Supermarket located in the shopping mall next to the university.

### **PHARMACY**

There is a pharmacy across the street from the university, next to the station. From the station exit it is on the right. Open every day 8AM to 8PM. They claim to always have one staff member on duty who speaks English.

### **TAXIS**

There is no hailing of taxis in Italy. They are usually reserved with a telephone call. There is, however, a taxi rank across the street from the university at the train station in Siena. When you exit the front of the station it is to your right (in front of the pharmacy). You cannot pick the taxi you prefer, you must ask for the next available taxi. A simple "Which taxi?" will do as most speak some limited English. You can ask hotel reception to call a taxi for you when leaving your hotel.

### **BANKS**

There are many ATM or cash point machines around to withdraw money from. There is one across the street and to the right of the university called Monte dei Paschi di Siena. They can also exchange your currency. Although they offer competitive rates they will charge you a flat 10 Euro fee on any exchange transaction. The bank manager suggested using the ATM /cash point machine located outside the bank which is open 24 hours a day and usually will cost you less in commissions in the end.

- Monte dei Paschi di Siena bank, located at the train station, hours: 8:20AM to 1:20PM, 2:20PM to 4:00PM Monday to Friday. Closed on Saturdays.
- You are advised to notify your home bank of your travel plans, as at times Visa cards are blocked by banks suspicious of international activity.

### **WEATHER**

For information on weather and events in Tuscany see [www.ilmeteo.it](http://www.ilmeteo.it).

### **NEWSAGENTS**

Located inside the train station. They sell newspapers in English.