Erasmus Story-My Semester in Rome

My Erasmus journey began in the heart of Italy-Rome. I studied for one semester at the University of Niccolò Cusano, where I pursued courses in Economics, majoring in Business Management and Administration. This experience turned out to be not just academic but deeply transformative, both personally and culturally. The university is known for its innovative teaching methods and strong international focus. With over 30,000 students, including many from abroad, it offers a vibrant and diverse academic environment. The modern campus is equipped with advanced facilities, a well-stocked library, and welcoming study spaces that encourage collaboration and creativity.

I lived in a student dormitory, where I met some of the most amazing people I now proudly call my friends. Our group was truly international-students from Turkey, Croatia, Belgium, Germany, Russia, Austria, and of course, local Italian students. Every day, we gathered at one table in the dorm dining area, sharing meals and life stories. Despite coming from different cultures and backgrounds, we bonded over our curiosity and openness. Those conversations taught me a lot about the world and broadened my perception of life.

Outside of university, we made the most of our time in Rome. We explored the Colosseum, Trevi Fountain, Pantheon, Roman Forum, Piazza Navona, and visited world-famous museums like the Vatican Museums, Galleria Borghese, Capitoline Museums.

To immerse ourselves deeper in Italian culture, we took part in experiences such as a "How to Cook Authentic Italian Pasta" workshop and art and painting classes. We also attended open-space cinema nights, where we gathered outdoors to watch movies under the stars-an unforgettable community experience.

During weekends and breaks, I traveled across Italy and Europe. I visited Florence, Venice, Gaeta, and the Vatican. One of the most magical experiences was in Venice, where we happened to visit during the famous Venetian Carnival 2025-a historical celebration full of masks, costumes, music, and street performances. Since the carnival is held only during a specific time of year, it felt incredibly special to witness it live. This world-famous event, known for its rich history and breathtaking pageantry, is not held every day, but only during a specific time of the year, which made it feel like an extraordinary stroke of luck to be there. The city was alive with color and energy-people dressed in elaborate masks and 18th-century costumes filled the narrow alleys and grand squares. The atmosphere in the city was absolutely unforgettable. Florence was especially unforgettable-a youthful and artistic city full of energy. While exploring its streets, I met a local Italian photographer. We visited the Uffizi Gallery together, and she kindly offered to take professional photos of me-all for free. That spontaneous connection became one of the most beautiful memories of my exchange.
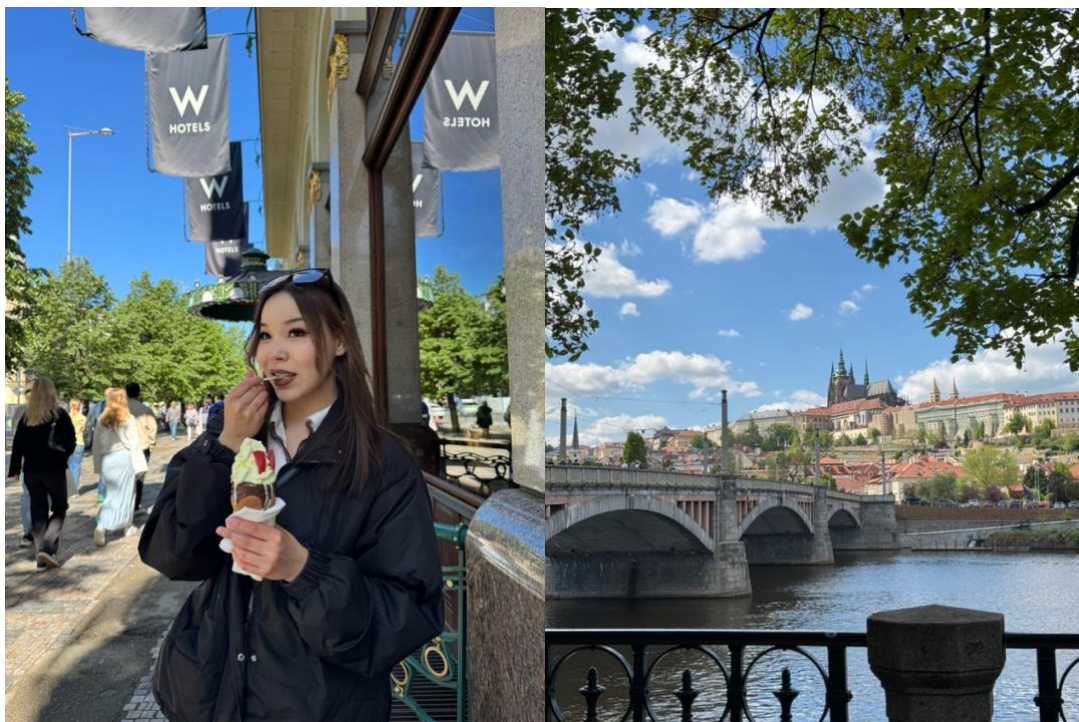
I also explored Prague in the Czech Republic and Barcelona in Spain-two cities with completely different atmospheres but equally unforgettable.

Prague amazed me with its fairy-tale architecture, narrow cobblestone streets, and historical charm. Walking across the Charles Bridge, visiting Prague Castle, and watching the astronomical clock in the Old Town Square felt like stepping back in time. I loved the peaceful vibe of the city and how every corner told a story.

Barcelona, on the other hand, was full of life and colors. I was fascinated by Gaudí's architecture, especially the breathtaking Sagrada Família and Park Güell. The city's relaxed, beach-side energy combined with rich Catalan culture made me instantly fall in love with it. I enjoyed the local food, the street performances, and long walks along La Rambla. Both cities left a deep impression on me, and I'm incredibly grateful that I had the chance to visit them during my Erasmus semester.

What I appreciated most about Italy was the warmth and openness of Italian people. Whether I was lost in the city or needed help, locals were always happy to guide me, often with a smile and kind words. Their positivity inspired me to be more open and expressive in my own daily life.

At university, my professors were incredibly supportive. Even with their tight schedules, they always took the time to explain things and guide us whenever needed. I felt genuinely cared for as a student.

This Erasmus semester has given me so much more than academic knowledge. It gave me lifelong friendships, cultural understanding, unforgettable adventures, and a new outlook on life. I am grateful for every moment and I will carry these memories with me always.