

THE MONTE CASTELLO ACADEMY

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



2026

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Primary Contacts for The Monte Castello Academy

Valentina Polito is The Monte Castello Academy's primary point of contact for travel coordination, airport transfers, and general pre-arrival questions. Participants are encouraged to reach out to her if they need assistance while preparing for their arrival in Monte Castello di Vibio.

Valentina Polito

Director

Email: icarts.srl@gmail.com

WhatsApp: +39 328 968 7606

The Monte Castello Office in Italy

Email: icarts.info@gmail.com

Phone: 075 878 0059

Safety & Emergency Information

While Monte Castello is a safe and welcoming community, it is important to be familiar with local emergency services during your stay. In the event of an urgent situation, the following national emergency numbers are available throughout Italy:

Police: 112 | Ambulance: 118 | Fire: 115

Welcome to The Monte Castello Academy

The Monte Castello Academy is an arts and humanities center offering workshops and residencies in the Visual and Performing Arts, Wine and Viniculture, Culinary Arts, Music and Performing Arts, Writing, History, and Literature and Natural Sciences. We also provide study abroad programming or host high school, college and university groups. We also host independent artists, writers and scholars leading small groups in our Atelier Programs, accompanied by cultural excursions in Italy.

The Academy is in the medieval hilltop village of Monte Castello di Vibio in Umbria. Inspired by community-centered models, the Academy fosters an atmosphere of creativity while providing a rich and immersive experience of Italian culture and daily village life. Our programs integrate focused artistic work, communal meals, regional excursions, and engagement with the rhythms of a traditional Italian village.

Mission & Philosophy

The Monte Castello Academy exists to nurture meaningful artistic growth within the living context of place. Existing in the context of the medieval Umbrian village of Monte Castello di Vibio, our programs integrate focused artistic and scholarly practice with cultural immersion, shared meals, regional exploration, and daily engagement with Italian life. We believe creative work deepens when artists are given time, space, community, and connection to history and landscape.

- Support sustained artistic growth through immersive, place-based practice.
- Encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and the exchange of ideas across mediums and perspectives.
- Foster authentic cultural engagement grounded in respect for local traditions and community life.
- Build a vibrant, inclusive creative community where collaboration, conversation, and shared experience enrich the artistic process.
- Honor the rhythms of the village and the Umbrian landscape as active influences on creative work.

The Village and Surroundings

Located 34 miles from the exact geographic center of Italy, our facilities are housed in a complex of historic buildings within the walls of this well-preserved Umbrian hill town. Monte Castello is a safe and friendly place with a mild climate and spectacular views. Serene and unassuming, yet connected to nearby towns with shopping facilities, sports centers, and local transportation connections, Monte Castello offers the best of many worlds. Its central location provides ready access to major centers such as Florence or

Rome and a range of smaller cities whose names are no less legendary. These are places with rich histories: Assisi, where St. Francis lived and where Giotto's work foreshadowed the Renaissance; fashionable Tuscan Arezzo, with its masterworks by painter Piero della Francesca; the nearby cities of Perugia and Spoleto, each with world-famous music festivals; and the jewel-like striped cathedrals and masterful sculptures of Orvieto and its Tuscan counterpart Siena, along with neighboring Todi, once determined to be the "most livable town in the world."

Through our location, the program is well situated to offer an experience in which participants feel intimately connected to both the past and present cultures of Central Italy. It is thought that the ancient hill town of Monte Castello di Vibio was built over four eras—Etruscan, Roman, Medieval, and Renaissance—and one can see and feel the presence of these past civilizations while wandering its ancient stone streets. Overlooking the lush Tiber River valley, the village appears much as it did 500 years ago—a fortress wall surrounds the town, and a tranquil park sits at one edge.

The surrounding landscape is quilted with vineyards, olive groves, and sunflower fields, stitched together with rows of cypresses and umbrella pines. In fact, the surrounding countryside is home to one of the richest areas of farmland in the country, hence the designation for Umbria as "the green heart of Italy." The rich and bountiful harvest from these farms yields equally rich traditions in cooking, olive oil production, and wine and cheese making. Program participants directly benefit from this agricultural richness, with three traditional Umbrian meals prepared each day using fresh, locally grown ingredients.

Perched on its mountaintop, Monte Castello is home to about 300+ residents, most of whom are descended from generations of Montecastelesi. These local residents are directly involved in the day-to-day functioning of the school. The heart shape of the village is itself a metaphor on many levels—on one hand relating to its central location within Italy and, on another level, evoking something more emotional or spiritual in nature. Within the embrace of its walls, Monte Castello provides a unique kind of solitude—creating a relaxed and contemplative atmosphere free of distractions. Clarity of thought is fostered in this environment, where one is surrounded by hills and distant mountains and rewarded by panoramas at every overlook. The imagination is stirred by echoes of the civilizations that have passed through this small mountaintop village.

There is something deeply genuine about this place and its inhabitants. Monte Castello is not a tourist town; there are no busloads passing through eager to take snapshots of monuments. It is a real place where people continue to live out rich traditions in a picturesque village whose foundations predate ancient Rome. It is not unusual to meet farmers returning from their fields or families on their way to church to celebrate a wedding or baptism. At the same time, Monte Castello exists firmly in the contemporary world. In the local bar, one hears political discussions, speculation on the outcome of the World Cup, and opinions on the latest European fashions. It is commonplace to enjoy a

morning cappuccino in the central piazza overlooking the Tiber Valley, standing alongside a shopkeeper or retired craftsman whose life has been spent within these walls. It is also a place to join residents in a festive night of dancing and a bottle of excellent local wine. Monte Castello is truly a special place—one where participants can explore, connect, and immerse themselves in both the culture of Italy and their own creative and personal journey.

The Saint Cecelia Foundation

The Monte Castello Academy operates in association with The Saint Cecelia Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports artists through scholarships, subsidized residencies, and community partnerships. While we cannot guarantee funding for activities held at our center, through its philanthropic support, the Saint Cecelia Foundation helps ensure access to meaningful creative experiences for participants. Contact the Saint Cecelia Foundation at: <https://saintcecelia.org/>.

About the village of Monte Castello di Vibio

The Monte Castello Academy is based in the village of Monte Castello di Vibio, which serves as its campus. Here, one finds a living medieval village overlooking the Tiber Valley, where centuries of history remain woven into daily life. Rather than a tourist destination, it is a small, active Umbrian community shaped by tradition, agriculture, family life, and seasonal rhythms.

As workshop participants, you are welcomed as guests in our village. We encourage you to engage thoughtfully with residents in shared spaces, learn from local traditions, and experience daily life here with curiosity and care.

Home to approximately 300+ residents, many from families rooted here for generations, Monte Castello remains fully alive.

Conversations unfold in the bar, bakery, restaurant, or piazza overlooking the valley and small park. Life here blends history with the present and The Monte

Castello Academy benefits from the unique interaction.



Photo: Monte Castello di Vibio

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monte_Castello_di_Vibio

Workshop Costs, Deposits & Refund Policy

Regardless of the program you are attending, the workshop fee includes lodging, three meals per day M-Th, a scheduled group excursion on Friday and or as outlined in your program package, and brunch and dinner on weekends. We provide ground transportation to and from Leonardo da Vinci International Airport (FCO) at the designated arrival and departure times on the first and last day of your session.

Throughout your stay we provide 24/7 bi-lingual site support and access to all facilities.

Not included: Airfare (international or domestic), meals on designated excursion days, admission to museums, unless stipulated, and personal expenses such as shopping or independent or individual travel outside of Monte Castello di Vibio not connected with a workshop or class.

For example, during a three-week program, participants should expect to cover three lunches and three dinners independently. On those days, you may plan to spend approximately €10–€30 per meal, depending on location and preference.

Please note: Admission fees for museums and historic sites during planned excursions typically range from €50–€100 per trip, particularly in cities such as Rome or Florence.

Optional: Private Rental Accommodations at the Academy

For additional information, please see our accommodation overview in this document.

Single-room accommodations with shared bathrooms in our 14th-century convent are included in our program price. Rooms with a private bathroom may be reserved for an additional fee. Availability of these options are limited and assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. If you are interested in requesting a single room, please contact our staff at icarts.srl@gmail.com.

All program fees must be paid in full prior to arrival in Monte Castello, according to the payment schedule outlined below.

Workshop Payments

Payment for workshops and residencies are made online through our website. Although Arts and Humanities International, LLC - the Monte Castello Academy parent company is based in the United States, our programs operate in Italy and participants are the clients of our Italian subsidiary, ICARTS, SRL.; therefore, all fees are quoted in Euros (€).

We offer a few options to make payments, including Bank Transfer, Zelle, PayPal, and Credit Card. If using a credit card, please note: credit card processing fees will be applied (approximately 3%). All workshops and residencies as well as other offerings are priced in Euros.

We have delayed payment options through Affirm. Our secure payment platform protects your financial information and provides a clear record of each transaction. If you have used similar services in the past, the process will be straightforward. First-time users simply complete a brief registration before submitting payment. If you need to make a payment outside our website/secure payment platform, please contact our staff and they will be happy to assist you.

Cancellations/Refund Policy

Because our programs operate in a small village with limited housing and advance financial commitments to faculty, staff, and local vendors, the following cancellation terms apply:

- **90 days or more before the start of the workshop:** 100% refund of payments made (excluding your non-refundable deposit).
- **60–89 days before the start of the workshop:** 50% refund of total program fees.
- **0–59 days before the start of the workshop:** No refund.

No refunds are available once the program has started.

Session Cancellation by The Monte Castello Academy

The Monte Castello Academy reserves the right to cancel or reschedule a workshop session if necessary. While such situations are uncommon, they may occur due to insufficient enrollment, faculty illness or emergency, facility issues, government restrictions, or other circumstances beyond the Academy's reasonable control.

If a session must be cancelled by the Academy, participants will be notified as soon as possible and will be offered the options to:

- Transfer their registration to a future session (subject to availability), without increased cost
- or
- Receive a full refund of all program fees paid to the Academy, minus the deposit which can be applied to a future workshop later in the season, or the next year.

The Monte Castello Academy cannot be responsible for airfare, travel arrangements, or other personal expenses incurred by participants. For this reason, we strongly recommend purchasing travel and trip cancellation insurance when making travel plans.

Required Forms for Workshop

After you register for a workshop at The Monte Castello Academy, you will need to complete several forms in preparation for the workshop. To access the forms on our website, [click this LINK](#).

- Emergency Contact and Medical Information
- Liability Waiver
- Cancellation & Refund Policy
- Proof of Insurance & Travel Insurance
- Itinerary & Passport
- Housing/Studio Preference Form

Workshop Schedule

A workshop itinerary will be provided to you in an advance email, or on the first day of the workshop. However, a typical workshop is likely to follow a schedule similar to this:

- Breakfast
- Morning studio instruction
- Communal lunch featuring local cuisine
- Afternoon studio work or critique
- Independent work
- Communal dinner on our terrace
- Evening artist talks or social/cultural engagement
- Pre-scheduled regional excursions to complement your workshop and add to your cultural experience in Italy

Travel Planning & Arrival Information

To avoid passport or entry issues, please ensure your passport is valid for at least 90 days beyond your departure from Italy. Also, please review both your country's, as well as Italy's Visa requirements, especially if your passport needs renewed as there can be delays.

All our airport transfers are from and to the Rome/Fiumicino Leonardo da Vinci International Airport (FCO). In order to participate in scheduled airport transfers, participants must fly into FCO.

Arrival & Transportation to Monte Castello di Vibio

Our incoming bus departs FCO promptly at noon, so participants must schedule their flights to arrive at Rome's Leonardo da Vinci–Fiumicino Airport (FCO) before 11:00 AM

on the designated transportation day. This allows sufficient time to pass through passport control, collect baggage, and meet the group that will take the bus to Monte Castello di Vibio.

Workshop participants will meet at a designated location inside Terminal 3, where Academy staff will gather the group and escort participants to the Provenzani bus or transport vans for travel to Monte Castello. The journey to The Monte Castello Academy takes approximately 2–2.5 hours.

If you arrive after this time and miss the scheduled bus leaving shortly after this time, you will need to arrange transportation to Monte Castello independently. We can assist in this by providing a private driver for pick up at a rate of €. Alternately there are several methods of public transport to the environs of Monte Castello as described below.

Steps if You Miss the Group Transportation

If you miss the scheduled group transfer, please do not worry. Travel to Monte Castello di Vibio is still very manageable. Our goal is to help you get to The Monte Castello Academy with minimal stress.

For assistance:

Please contact the Academy (Valentina Polito) as soon as possible to notify the Academy of your delayed arrival and if you need assistance.

Primary Contact for Transportation Issues

Valentina Polito

Phone/WhatsApp: +39 328 968 7606

Depending on arrival time, participants who miss the group transport may travel to Monte Castello di Vibio by train, bus, or taxi from Rome. You can ask the airport information desk for assistance and/or call the Academy for additional guidance as well.

- **Arrival:** Schedule your flight to arrive at FCO before 11:00 AM on the designated transportation day.
- **Meet** at a pre-arranged location inside the airport, where Academy staff will escort the group to the van(s) or bus for transfer to Monte Castello.
- **Departure Following the Workshop:** Schedule your return flight no earlier than 11:00 AM on the departure day. This allows sufficient time for group transportation to the airport and standard security procedures. Our airport transfer cannot accommodate flights departing earlier than 11:00 and private transport must be arranged.

Meeting Location at Fiumicino Airport (FCO)

After arriving at Leonardo da Vinci – Fiumicino Airport (FCO):

1. Proceed through Passport Control.
2. Collect your luggage from Baggage Claim.
3. Exit through Customs and continue through the glass doors into the main arrivals area of Terminal 3 (T3).

Once in the arrivals hall, turn left and remain on the ground floor of Terminal 3.

Straight ahead you will see a café with large orange signs reading “Market – Bar Chef Express – Pizza & Vini.” This café serves as our meeting point.

You may want to purchase food and drink here if you arrive early. The café serves coffee, drinks, and light meals. ATMs are also located throughout this area if you wish to withdraw euros (€) upon arrival.

A representative from The Monte Castello Academy will meet the group at this location and escort participants to the transport vehicle.



Your workshop instructor may also pre-establish a WhatsApp chat room for everyone to meet earlier in Italy or at the designated meeting location. Your instructor will establish this prior to workshop attendees’ travel to Italy (approximately 1 week prior to the start of the workshop).

Arriving in Monte Castello by Car

Driving from Rome Fiumicino Airport (FCO) to Monte Castello di Vibio is straightforward and typically takes about 2½ hours. If you plan to rent a car, it is highly recommended to request GPS or map-assistance navigation, which makes the route much easier to follow. In Italy, non-EU visitors are required to carry a valid International Driving Permit (IDP) along with their driver's license.

Address for The Monte Castello Academy for your car's navigation system:

Via Unità di Italia, no. 2
Monte Castello di Vibio
Perugia 06057

From Fiumicino Airport (FCO):

1. Follow signs from the airport toward Roma and merge onto the G.R.A. (Rome's ring road).
2. Take the exit toward Firenze (A1 Autostrada) heading north.
3. After about 40 minutes, exit at Orte and follow signs toward Terni / Perugia.
4. Continue onto the E45 toward Perugia.
5. After about 30 minutes, exit for Fratta Todina – Monte Castello di Vibio.
6. Follow the signs uphill to Monte Castello.

Keeping in Touch While You Are Away

While the Monte Castello Academy offers a peaceful retreat from the pace of everyday life, we understand that participants may wish to remain in touch with family, friends, or professional responsibilities while abroad.

High-speed Wi-Fi is available in the main areas of the Academy, allowing participants to check email, make online calls, and stay connected as needed. Many participants also find WhatsApp to be a convenient and free way to communicate with fellow workshop attendees and Academy staff while in Italy.

For those who would like reliable cellular service during their stay, purchasing a short-term local SIM plan for your phone is often an easy and affordable option for calls, text messages, and mobile data while traveling. To avoid any disruption in your cellular service, be sure to activate your SIM plan either before departure or shortly after landing at the airport. This will ensure your phone is ready to use throughout your travel and during your time in Monte Castello.

Accommodations Overview

Accommodations for participants are integrated throughout the village and reflect the historic character of Monte Castello di Vibio. Depending on availability and selected options, housing may include rooms within the convent/main building, village apartments, or traditional palazzi—large, multi-level residences that once housed extended families. The following sections outline the types of accommodations available, including standard rooms with shared bathrooms, upgraded private bath options, and additional housing both within and just outside the village.

Rooms with Shared Bathrooms

In our “all-inclusive” model, single-occupancy accommodations with shared baths (2–3 rooms per bath) are provided in our “Asilo” building, a 14th-century convent. These rooms are included in our program/workshop pricing. The rooms contain a single bed, nightstand, closet, and sink/vanity. All rooms provide views over the Tiber Valley and surrounding mountains.

Rooms with Private Bathrooms

Upgraded accommodations with private baths onsite are also available for an additional fee.

Additional Accommodations in Monte Castello di Vibio and Outside the Village

Depending on availability and program needs, participants may also be housed in a range of historic spaces within the village. For larger or specialized groups, private villas located just outside the village are available. These restored countryside homes typically include multiple bedrooms, common gathering spaces, full kitchens, and occasionally pools. Villa accommodations are limited and book well in advance; additional fees apply.

Accessibility for Travelers with Special Needs

Monte Castello di Vibio is a well-preserved medieval hilltop village located approximately 30 miles from Perugia. While its historic character is central to the Academy experience, it also presents physical limitations. The village includes hills, uneven stone streets, narrow doorways, and multiple stairways. Wheelchair access and step-free routes are limited.

Our programs involve walking, standing, climbing stairs, carrying luggage or materials, and navigating uneven terrain. Participants should be prepared for a moderately active schedule and consider their physical stamina and medical needs before registering.

We make every effort to accommodate individual needs whenever possible, including assigning ground-floor rooms, adjusting classroom locations, and arranging meals in accessible spaces.

If you have medical concerns, mobility limitations, allergies, or other health considerations, please contact us in advance and note them on your Medical Assessment Form. We are happy to discuss whether our facilities can comfortably meet your needs.

Meals & Cultural Life

Communal meals highlight fresh Umbrian ingredients and traditional regional cooking. Sharing meals together is an important part of the Academy experience, offering time to connect with fellow participants, enjoy local cuisine, and experience the rhythms of Italian food culture. Please complete the dietary restrictions form prior to your arrival so our staff can plan accordingly.

Typical mealtimes are as follows. Please note, the mealtimes may be adjusted during your stay to accommodate workshop itineraries and the spring, summer, or fall seasonal weather:

Breakfast 8:00–9:00 AM Lunch 1:00–2:00 PM Dinner 8:00–9:00 PM

Plumbing and Water

The tap water in Monte Castello is safe to drink and is also used for washing, brushing your teeth, and making coffee or tea. However, the water is naturally high in calcium and has a strong mineral taste, so most residents prefer bottled water for drinking. Bottled water is inexpensive and widely available in Italy, and The Monte Castello Academy provides bottled water at meals and in common areas.

Climate Control

Air conditioning is uncommon in many Italian buildings, especially in historic villages like Monte Castello di Vibio. Rooms are typically equipped with fans for warmer days, and space heaters or extra blankets when temperatures drop. If you prefer an air-conditioned room, please contact our staff in advance. Availability is limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

Many rooms also have traditional wooden shutters, which are an effective and time-tested way to regulate temperature in historic Italian buildings. Opening them in the morning allows natural light into the room, while closing them during the hottest part of the day helps keep interiors cool by blocking direct sun. In the evening, shutters can be opened again to allow fresh air to circulate and enjoy the village views.

Shutters also help reduce insects. Closing shutters or partially closing them when lights are on at night helps prevent mosquitoes and small insects (“no-see-ums”) from being drawn inside, while still allowing airflow through the window. Using shutters in this way

is a simple daily rhythm in many Italian homes and helps keep rooms comfortable and bug-free.

Laundry

Washing machines are available in the main building, and some nearby accommodations also provide laundry access. Italian washing machines often run longer cycles than those in North America. Also, clothes dryers are uncommon in Italy. Instead, clothes are typically air-dried on racks or lines, which are provided at the Academy.

Each participant may use the shared laundry free of charge; however, pre-measured laundry detergent tablets are available on site for €0.50 each. There is also a local mini-market in town that sells detergents and other laundry supplies. Please be sure to follow the instructions and remove your laundry promptly so that other participants can also use the shared accommodation.

Health, Insurance & Accessibility

To help ensure a safe and well-supported experience for all participants, the following items are required when attending a Monte Castello Academy workshop. Please complete or obtain these prior to arrival:

Required:

- International health insurance
- Emergency evacuation coverage
- Signed participant waiver

Shipping Items to The Monte Castello Academy

Participants who wish to ship materials, tools, or personal items in advance of their workshop may do so with prior coordination. Because the Academy is located within a historic hilltop village with limited vehicle access and specific delivery windows, it is essential to notify staff before sending any packages. Please clearly label all shipments with your full name, the workshop name and dates to ensure proper handling upon arrival. We recommend using a reliable international courier service with tracking and allowing ample time for customs clearance. Please bear in mind that if you declare a value, your shipment could likely be subject to import tariffs, which must be paid before receiving the package (see below). For this reason, we strongly encourage not shipping supplies and instead carrying them with you as checked baggage or purchasing them in Monte Castello.

Our shipping address is:

The Monte Castello Academy
C/O: ICARTS srl
Attn: Valentina Polito
Via Unità d'Italia, n. 2
Monte Castello di Vibio - 06057
Perugia - Italy

When preparing your shipment, clearly label the package with:

- Your full name
- The workshop session you will be attending
- “Workshop Materials – No Commercial Value” (when appropriate)

Please note: Any shipping expenses paid in advance by the Monte Castello Academy to facilitate deliveries to or from your home will be your responsibility.

Before sending your package, please email Valentina Polito at icarts.srl@gmail.com to notify her of the expected delivery date and provide any tracking information you may have. This helps ensure that Academy staff are aware that a package is arriving and can assist with receiving it if necessary.

Tips to Help Reduce Delays or Fees:

- Complete ALL customs forms accurately. Keep the declared value under €150 when possible.
- Declare “No Commercial Value” or a minimal value (for example, \$10) for personal workshop materials to help avoid high VAT charges. Note that packages declared with no value cannot typically be insured, and low declared values may also limit insurance coverage.
- Use a reliable carrier with tracking.

Because customs inspections and fees vary, participants are responsible for any duties, taxes, or processing fees charged by Italian customs.

Shipping Artwork or Purchases Home from Italy

Participants who create artwork or purchase items during their stay may wish to ship them home rather than travel with them. The Monte Castello Academy can assist and advise you with shipping arrangements, including packing guidance, documentation, and

identifying available carriers in the region. However, we cannot pack and ship artwork for you.

In many cases, the least expensive option is shipping through Poste Italiane (the Italian postal service) or another ground-based international shipping service. Courier services such as DHL, UPS, or FedEx are also available, though they are typically more expensive.

When shipping items internationally, packages entering your home country may be subject to import duties, customs processing fees, or local taxes based on the declared value of the shipment. In the United States, artwork that you personally created is often allowed to enter duty-free, but purchased goods or high-value items may be subject to customs duties depending on their declared value.

Proper packaging and insurance are recommended when shipping valuable or fragile items. Please note that The Monte Castello Academy cannot assume responsibility for lost, delayed, or damaged shipments, and participants ship items at their own risk.

Art & Ceramic Supplies for Your Workshop

Each instructor will provide a required supply list, including materials participants should bring and those that will be provided by The Monte Castello Academy. If you have any questions about supplies or preparation for your workshop, please contact the Academy, and our staff will be happy to assist you.

For ceramics participants, the studio provides essential materials which vary by workshop. These items may include clay, glazes or slips/engobes, and kiln firing fees. However, some participants may also prefer to bring a few personal tools regularly used.

If you choose to bring supplies from home, please follow all TSA and airline regulations when packing art materials. Do not pack art tools, paints, or studio materials in your carry-on luggage. These items should be placed in checked baggage and packed securely. Always check the most current TSA and airline guidelines before departure.

Please note that flammable liquids are not permitted in airline baggage. Oil paints themselves are generally permitted because they are made with vegetable oils and do not contain solvents. If traveling with oil colors, pack them securely in sealed containers and wrap them individually.

Because airline safety regulations change periodically, participants should review TSA and airline guidelines prior to departure to ensure that all materials are packed and transported in accordance with current regulations.

ATM Access & Banking While Traveling

ATMs are widely available throughout Italy and are often the most convenient way to obtain euros during your stay. Many travelers find that withdrawing cash directly from an ATM provides a favorable exchange rate compared to currency exchange counters.

Before traveling, it is important to notify your bank and credit card companies of your international travel dates. This helps prevent transactions from being flagged as suspicious activity, which could temporarily block access to your accounts.

A few helpful tips:

- Inform your bank of your travel dates and destination (Italy).
- Confirm your daily ATM withdrawal limit.
- Ask about international transactions or ATM fees.
- Bring at least one backup credit or debit card in case of loss or technical issues.

While credit cards are widely accepted in Italy, cash is still commonly used in open-air markets, small shops, cafés, and taxis, particularly in smaller villages such as Monte Castello di Vibio.

Planning ahead will help ensure smooth and convenient access to funds during your time at The Monte Castello Academy.

Code of Conduct & Community Standards

The Monte Castello Academy is committed to cultivating a respectful, inclusive, and safe creative community. We ask all participants to contribute thoughtfully to an environment grounded in mutual respect and care. Harassment, discrimination, illegal substances, unsafe behavior, and excessive or disruptive intoxication are not consistent with our values and are not permitted. Conduct that compromises the safety, dignity, or creative focus of the community may result in dismissal from the program.

Participant Policies

All participants in programs at The Monte Castello Academy are expected to follow the policies below. Participants attending through a Study Abroad program from another institution must also comply with the policies of that institution. In addition, all participants are subject to the laws and regulations of Italy, and any violations may be subject to action by Italian authorities.

Failure to follow these policies may result in a warning, disciplinary review, or expulsion from the program without refund, at the discretion of a Director in consultation with faculty. Participants asked to leave the program must vacate the Academy facilities within 24 hours.

Drugs and Alcohol

- The possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited. This includes counterfeit substances and unauthorized use or sharing of prescription medications. Violations may result in immediate expulsion and may also carry serious penalties under Italian law.
- The legal drinking age in Italy is 18. Alcohol consumption by anyone under 18 is prohibited.
- In Italy, the legal age to purchase, possess, and use electronic cigarettes and related vaping products (including nicotine-free liquids) is 18 years or older.
- Alcohol abuse or disruptive intoxication will result in disciplinary action and may lead to expulsion.
- Excessive alcohol consumption is not permitted in Academy facilities, especially in residential rooms.
- Alcohol containers may not be left in rooms or common areas, and alcohol is never permitted on program buses.
- Drug paraphernalia (pipes, bongs, etc.) is prohibited on Academy premises.

Respectful and Safe Community

The Monte Castello Academy is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and professional learning environment. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, sexual misconduct, physical or verbal abuse, and intimidation of any kind are strictly prohibited and may result in expulsion.

Prohibited Conduct

Participants may not engage in behavior that disrupts the community or endangers others. Prohibited actions include:

- Dangerous behavior that could cause harm or create unsafe conditions
- Threats, intimidation, or physical violence
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Possession of weapons, including firearms or other dangerous items
- Disorderly or disruptive conduct that interferes with classes, programs, or the rights of others
- Harassment, assault, stalking, or non-consensual recording or photography in private settings
- Theft, dishonesty, or destruction of property

Fire and Safety

For safety reasons, the following are not permitted:

- Starting fires or creating fire hazards (including candles, incense, open flames, or flammable materials in studios or residences)
- Possession or use of fireworks or explosives
- False fire alarms or tampering with fire safety equipment

Facilities and Property

Participants are responsible for treating The Monte Castello Academy's facilities, equipment, and materials with care.

- Removal of books, furniture, or equipment without permission is prohibited. (Library books CANNOT leave the library.)
- Unauthorized entry into restricted areas is not allowed.
- Participants may be financially responsible for any damage to facilities, equipment, or furnishings.

These policies are intended to ensure that all participants can work, study, and live together in a respectful and supportive environment while participating in programs at The Monte Castello Academy, and while respecting the laws and customs of Italy.

Studio Guidelines & Materials

Our studios are shared creative spaces, and we ask all participants to help care for them so everyone can work comfortably and safely. Please take a few moments at the end of each session to leave your workspace tidy and ready for the next day. Visitors are not allowed in any ICA facilities without the permission of the Director. Studio hours will be determined by the instructor in coordination with The Monte Castello Academy and will be announced at the beginning of your workshop.

- Clean your workspace at the end of each work session.
- Wash and return shared tools and equipment after use.
- Dispose of materials properly and follow studio recycling or waste guidelines.
- Respect drying racks, storage areas, and labeled workspaces.
- Follow all kiln, glaze, and material safety instructions provided by faculty.
- Do not travel with flammable solvents or restricted materials.

Thoughtful care of the studio helps maintain a welcoming and productive environment for the entire community.

Model Protocols

If your class works with a live model, we ask that all participants follow these guidelines to help maintain a respectful and professional studio environment:

- Treat the model with courtesy and respect at all times. Inappropriate or disrespectful remarks or behavior are not acceptable and may lead to disciplinary action.
- Please do not touch the model. Any adjustments to a pose should be communicated through the instructor rather than directly to the model.
- Maintain a quiet and attentive atmosphere while the model is posing so that everyone can focus on their work.
- Photography or recording of the model is not permitted.
- Please do not request personal contact information from the model.

These practices help ensure that the studio remains a comfortable, professional, and focused environment for both artists and models.

Appendix A: Passport/ Visa Requirements and Document Checklist

Remember that for travel outside of the U.S., United States residents are required to have a valid U.S. Passport. For travel to Italy, citizens of the US, UK, Australia and many others do not need a visa to enter Italy for the purpose of tourism for a stay of less than 90 days. In most cases, your visit to the International Center for the Arts at Monte Castello will be considered tourism. It is also important to note that for U.S. citizens, your passport must be valid for 90 days beyond your departure from Italy. Please see http://www.esteri.it/visti/home_eng.asp Ministero degli Affari Esteri website for specifics for your country. Important items to carry with you:

- Passport
- Insurance documents
- Flight itinerary

Appendix B: Required Forms for Workshop - Explained

- **Registration and Contract**

This confirms your participation in the workshop and provides The Monte Castello Academy with essential contact information. It also outlines the program terms and policies so expectations are clear for both participants and the Academy.

- **Medical Questionnaire**

The Monte Castello Academy collects basic health information to help ensure participant safety during the workshop. This allows staff to respond appropriately in the unlikely event of a medical situation.

- **Allergy & Diet Restrictions Form**

Because meals are prepared communally and highlight fresh Umbrian ingredients, this information helps The Monte Castello Academy accommodate food allergies and dietary restrictions whenever possible.

- **Liability Waiver**

The Monte Castello Academy requires a signed waiver acknowledging participation in studio activities, excursions, and travel within a historic village environment, where uneven terrain, stairs, and studio tools are part of the experience.

- **Proof of Insurance**

Proof of personal health insurance ensures that participants have coverage while traveling and attending the workshop.

- **Travel and Health Insurance**

International travel insurance, including emergency medical and evacuation coverage, is required so participants are protected in the event of unexpected health or travel issues while abroad.

Appendix C: Packing List

Electrical Voltage in Italy

Participants traveling from the United States or Canada will typically need a plug adapter to use their devices in Italy. Most outlets use Type C, F, or L plugs, so a universal European adapter is recommended. Many modern electronics such as laptops, phone chargers, and cameras are dual-voltage (100–240V) and will work with just an adapter. However, appliances like hair dryers or curling irons may require a voltage converter or a European-compatible device. It is best to check your equipment before traveling to ensure it can safely operate on Italy's 230V / 50 Hz electrical system.

We recommend packing light but thoughtfully. Monte Castello is a hilltop village with cobblestone streets, changing seasonal temperatures, and limited access to large retail stores.

Studio Supplies

- Personal art or ceramic tools (if required for your program)
- Specialty materials not easily sourced locally
- Sketchbook or journal

Health & Personal Items

- Prescription medications (bring sufficient supply)
- Copies of prescriptions (recommended for international travel)
- Basic over-the-counter medicines (pain reliever, allergy medication, etc.)
- Personal toiletries (specific brands may not be available locally)
- Sunscreen and hat (especially late spring–summer)
- Refillable water bottle

Electronics & Travel Essentials

- European plug adapter (Type C, F, or L)
- Voltage converter (if needed for non-dual-voltage devices)
- Phone charger and backup battery
- Passport (valid 90 days beyond departure)
- Travel insurance documentation
- Small daypack for excursions
- Swimsuit (for villa stays or spa visits)
- Slippers (historic buildings may have stone floors)
- Lightweight scarf (useful year-round in Italy)

Appendix D: Emergency Contacts

- Police: 112
- Ambulance: 118
- Fire: 115

Appendix E: Additional Travel and Concierge Travel Services

Extend Your Journey in Italy

Many participants choose to explore more of Italy before or after their workshop. Below is a curated list organized by region and experience, with approximate travel times from Monte Castello di Vibio.

Outside of pre-established, programmed activities, participants are responsible for making their own arrangements for additional travel, cultural site and museum visits, and restaurant reservations during their time away from the Academy. We encourage participants to plan ahead, particularly during peak travel seasons when availability may be limited.

Concierge Travel Services

For those who would prefer assistance, concierge support is available. Monte Castello staff can help coordinate transportation, secure reservations, and organize customized excursions tailored to your interests during your stay. These Concierge Travel Services are offered for a flat fee of 10% of the total cost of the bookings arranged. Please contact Monte Castello Academy staff in advance if you would like support in planning your additional travel or experiences.

Umbrian Highlights – Easy Day Trips

Todi (Umbria) – ~20 minutes

Elegant piazzas and sweeping valley views.

Deruta (Umbria) – ~30 minutes

Historic majolica ceramics workshops and museum. Ideal half-day visit.

Montefalco (Umbria) – ~45 minutes

Sagrantino wine region with vineyards and hilltop views.

Perugia (Umbria) – ~45 minutes

Lively university town, historic center, festivals, and markets.

Spello (Umbria) – ~1 hour

Flower-filled streets and intimate trattorias. Perfect for a relaxed afternoon or dinner.

Assisi (Umbria) – ~1 hour

Basilica of St. Francis, Giotto frescoes, and the Hermitage of St. Francis in the hills above. Can be combined with Perugia, Deruta, or Madonna del Bagni.

Orvieto (Umbria) – ~1 hour

Magnificent striped cathedral and dramatic cliffside setting.

Marmore Falls (Umbria) – ~1.5 hours

One of Europe's tallest waterfalls; scenic hiking and nature experience.

Art & Renaissance Pilgrimages

Arezzo (Tuscany) – ~2 hours

Piero della Francesca frescoes and vibrant historic center.

Sansepolcro (Tuscany) – ~2 hours

Birthplace of Piero della Francesca; Renaissance masterpieces.

Monterchi (Tuscany) – ~2 hours

Home to Piero's Madonna del Parto.

Montevarchi (Tuscany) – ~2 hours

Charming Tuscan town and access point to the Valdarno region.

Dramatic Landscapes & Unique Sites

Civita di Bagnoregio (Lazio) – ~1.5 hours

"The Dying City," perched atop a dramatic volcanic plateau. (View from outside or enter via footbridge.)

Bomarzo – Sacro Bosco (Lazio) – ~1.5 hours

The "Monster Park," a surreal Renaissance sculpture garden.

Norcia (Umbria) – ~2–2.5 hours

Mountain scenery, truffles, and renowned cured meats. A longer but rewarding excursion.

Major Cities for Extended Travel

Rome – ~2–2.5 hours

Ancient ruins, Vatican Museums, and vibrant urban life. Primary arrival/departure city.

Florence – ~2.5 hours

Renaissance masterpieces, Duomo, Uffizi Gallery.

Milan – ~4–4.5 hours

Fashion capital and home to Leonardo's *The Last Supper*.

Venice – ~4–5 hours

Canals, Biennale exhibitions, and extraordinary architecture.

Appendix F: Open Air Markets

Monday

A wonderful way to begin the week is by visiting the markets in **Montefalco** or **Marsciano**, both lively local markets with fresh produce, cheeses, clothing stalls, and household goods. Montefalco is especially enjoyable because of its beautiful hilltop setting overlooking vineyards and olive groves, while Marsciano offers a larger local market atmosphere where residents gather to shop and socialize. These markets are perfect for experiencing everyday Umbrian life.

Tuesday

The **Deruta market** is a favorite for visitors, particularly those interested in ceramics, as the town is internationally known for its pottery traditions. Another excellent option is the **Foligno market**, one of the larger weekly markets in the region, where rows of stalls fill the streets with produce, regional foods, clothing, and household goods. Both provide a vibrant mid-week market experience.

Wednesday

On Wednesdays, **Spello** offers one of the most charming markets in Umbria. Set within the medieval streets of the village, the market combines local produce with artisan goods and is surrounded by historic stone buildings and flower-filled balconies. **Perugia** also hosts a lively mid-week market with a wide range of vendors and a bustling local atmosphere.

Thursday

The **Città di Castello market** is widely considered one of the best traditional markets in northern Umbria. It is a large and energetic market with fresh produce, cured meats, cheeses, clothing, and artisan goods. Another excellent Thursday option is the **Narni market**, where the historic town center fills with vendors and locals gathering for their weekly shopping.

Friday

The **Spoleto market** is one of the region's most appealing Friday markets, offering a mix of produce, local foods, clothing, and household goods set against the backdrop of the historic town. The **Terni market** is also notable for its size and variety, drawing vendors and shoppers from surrounding towns and providing a lively urban market atmosphere.

Saturday

Saturday is one of the best days for markets in Umbria. The **Todi market** is especially popular and beloved by locals, set in the scenic hilltop town near Monte Castello di Vibio. The **Perugia market at Pian di Massiano** is one of the largest in the region, with hundreds of stalls selling everything from farm produce and cheeses to clothing and antiques. For those who enjoy browsing vintage items, occasional **flea markets**

(mercatini delle pulci) can also be found in towns like **Perugia** and **Bastia Umbra** on Saturdays.

Sunday

Sunday is the best day to experience **antique and flea markets (mercatini dell'antiquariato)** across Umbria. The **Perugia antique market**, typically held on the **last Sunday of the month**, fills the historic streets with vendors selling vintage objects, books, ceramics, linens, and collectibles. **Orvieto** also hosts a well-known **monthly antique and flea market**, where visitors can browse antiques and handmade items while enjoying the atmosphere of the historic hilltop city. These markets are particularly enjoyable for strolling, treasure hunting, and soaking in the Umbrian village ambiance.