

# 2026 UGA Dodd Cortona Experience (DCE) — Participant FAQs

## 1. What should I do first now that I'm registered?

Once you've secured your spot, your next steps typically include:

- Pay program fee and non-refundable gift
- Sign, submit DCE Participation Agreement
- Confirm travel dates – Program dates: October 18 – 26, 2026
- Booking your flight to Italy
- Reviewing your passport validity (must be valid for at least 6 months after your return date)

Program staff will share specific deadlines and required documents.

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## 2. When should I plan to arrive and depart?

Participants should plan to depart the U.S. on or before October 18<sup>th</sup>, to arrive in Italy **on Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>**. The DCE guides will collect program participants at the Rome Fiumicino airport (FCO) on the morning of October 19<sup>th</sup> and provide a chartered coach transfer to Cortona.

The DCE program will provide:

- Chartered coach transfer to Cortona
  - Departure from Rome FCO, Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup> approximately 12:30pm (local time)
  - Travel to Cortona will be approximately 3hrs., ETA to Cortona 4:00pm
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## 3. If not arriving to Rome in time for the DCE bus transfer or if not arriving to Rome, how do I get to Cortona?

If not joining the group transfer from Rome FCO to Cortona, participants are responsible for their transportation to Cortona. Common airport options include:

- **Florence (FLR)** – closest option
- **Rome (FCO)** – typically more direct flights
- **Pisa (PSA)** – good alternatives depending on airline

If flying into Florence, Pisa or Rome, you have the option of arranging ground (taxi or train) transportation. If you have any questions about transportation to Cortona on your own, please feel free to reach out to us for recommendations.

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#### 4. What will the daily itinerary look like?

A detailed schedule will be provided, but most days include a balance of:

- **Guided tours** of Cortona's historic landmarks
- **Studio time** with optional prompts or open work periods
- **Excursions** to local highlights such as le Celle and Etruscan tombs
- **Wine and culinary experiences**
- **Group meals** highlighting local cuisine
- **Free time** for exploring, shopping, sketching, or relaxing

Expect structured mornings with some flexible afternoons and evenings.

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#### 5. Will I have free time?

Yes. The program is designed with a mix of planned activities and personal time. You will have opportunities to:

- Sketch and/or wander Cortona on your own
  - Enjoy cafés and shops
  - Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup> offers a range of options, including rest, relax, repose
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#### 6. What should I pack?

Here are recommended essentials:

##### **Clothing**

- Comfortable walking shoes (Cortona is steep and cobblestoned)
- Layers (weather can shift between warm days and cool evenings)
- Lightweight rain jacket
- Casual attire for studio or walking activities
- Smart-casual outfits for group dinners

## Art Supplies

Most participants bring:

- The program will provide some studio basics
- A sketchbook
- If you have referred pencils, pens, or watercolor sets

## Travel Essentials

- Passport and copies
  - European power adapter
  - Daypack for excursions
  - Medications and personal toiletries
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## 7. What is the lodging like?

Participants have the option of staying with the DCE hotel partner:

[Monastero di Cortona](#) occupies the same building once known as the “Albergo Athens,” the former living accommodations for UGA Cortona students for over 30 years. It is now a boutique hotel, recently renovated with unique, modern comfort in a historical setting.

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## 8. What meals are included?

Typically, the program includes:

- Several group meals (including a welcome or farewell dinner)
- Wine tastings and culinary experiences during some excursions

Some breakfasts and lunches are flexible and on your own, giving you the chance to explore Cortona’s cafés and markets.

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## 9. What level of physical activity should I expect?

Cortona is beautiful — and hilly. Participants should expect:

- Moderate walking
- Uneven stone streets
- Some steep streets and stair climbing

If you have mobility concerns, reach out to DCE program staff ahead of time.

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## **10. Are there any pre-trip meetings or orientation sessions?**

Yes. Before departure, participants will receive:

- Updated itinerary details
- A virtual orientation session
- A packing checklist
- Travel tips
- Contact information for on-site staff
- In-person orientation meeting

This ensures everyone arrives excited, prepared, and informed.

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## **12. Who can I contact during the program if something comes up?**

DCE program participants will be provided with:

- On-site coordinator contact information
- Emergency numbers
- A program email for pre-trip questions

This will be sent prior to departure.

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## **13. When should I plan to depart the DCE program?**

DCE program ends on Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>:

- Early morning, chartered bus transfer from Cortona to Rome Fiumicino airport (FCO) will be provided - travel from Cortona will be approximately 3hrs., ETA to FCO 8:00am
- Program participants have the option to book their own transportation, at their own expense to departure city