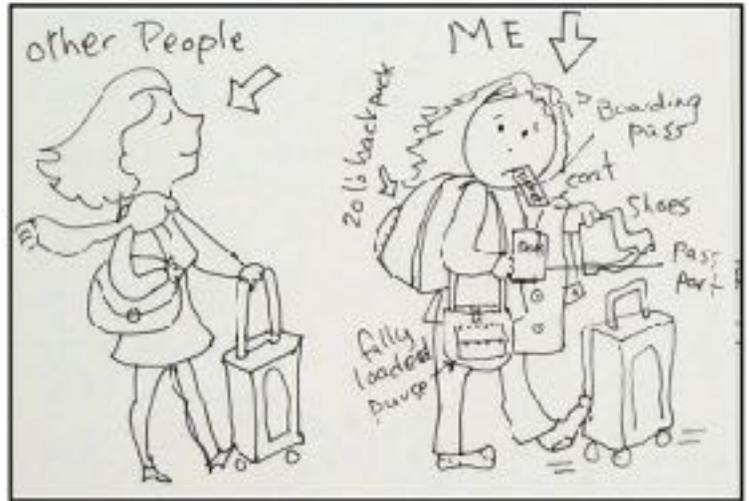


Bologna International Children's Book Fair

A note for those attending (or considering attending) the Bologna Book Fair.

By **Susan Eaddy**,
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I'm a worrier. If you're one of those supremely confident travelers; STOP right here! This article's not for you. If, however, you are a little bit scared, but intrigued and determined to see what the Bologna Book fair is all about, then read on.

My worries:

Navigating foreign systems; money, trains, buses, taxis, hotels
Blowing my budget
Being alone in a foreign country
Navigating the Fair
Making the most of my opportunities

Money:

Purchase some Euros through your bank before you leave the states. The fees may be higher, but worth it to avoid exchanging currency at the airport in your jet lagged state.
Once there: ATMs are your friend.

Transportation:

Book flights early. The 2018 Fair is March 26-29th. Start looking in August. Here's an article about timing:

<https://www.cheapair.com/blog/travel-tips/when-to-buy-international-flights/>

Another good resource is Google Flights for finding some occasional super sales:

<https://www.google.com/flights/>

Also check prices to Venice, Rome or Milan with train fares to Bologna. Flight plus train ticket may not be cheaper but if you plan to tack on some sightseeing it gives you an extra city to explore. Train reservations are available online.

<http://www.raileurope.com/index.html>

Once there: Get city and bus maps and bus tickets at Tourist Info in the Neptune Fountain Piazza. <http://www.bolognawelcome.com/en/>

Punch your ticket when you enter the bus. You may be tempted to ride for free. Only Jiminy Cricket and the occasional ticket checkers can help you decide if the fine and a public scolding are worth the risk. There's also an unreliable Fair shuttle, which will sometimes surprise you by showing up. Or double up with a friend or three and taxi to the fair.

Lodging:

Book early! There are apartments, hotels, Air B&Bs and my favorite, the monastery. <http://www.monasterystays.com>

The Fair:

Illustrators can submit five illustrations for consideration in the *Mostra degli Illustratori* and receive **free fair admission** whether your illustrations make the short list or not. Submission details are not yet published for the Bologna Fieri.

Submissions are in the Fall, check back on the Bologna Fieri website later for more info.

(NOTE: *This is NOT the SCBWI BIG gallery.*)

<http://www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it/en/professional-development/illustrators/881.html>

Even if you don't submit, Illustrators get a reduced price.

Writers will need to buy a pass.

All alone:

NOT! The SCBWI booth is your hub, and home away from home. You'll be surrounded by friends you've never met before.

Making the most of your opportunities

Apply for a personal or regional showcase with Chris Cheng

Schedule portfolio reviews

Bring promo materials

Read the program. Attend the talks.

Network!

SCBWI Bologna Website:

<http://bologna.scbwi.org>

For a blow-by-blow account, here are my Bologna Sketch Travel blogs:

2012

<http://tinyurl.com/lb85y6o>

2014

<http://tinyurl.com/pnttubr>

2016

<http://www.susaneaddy.com/claythings-susaneaddy/>

Finally, was it worth the money, time and worry? For me, YES! The opportunity to illustrate *My Love for You is the Sun* by Julie Hedlund, was a direct result of my 2012 trip. You NEVER know where connections will lead. But even if a book hadn't come to fruition, the inspiration and knowledge gained by being in the heart of the Children's Book World forever changed my outlook and was worth every penny, and even the wringing of hands.

Additional Bologna Tips

Money and Credit Cards

Alert your bank and your credit card companies that you will be traveling overseas. Few things are more frustrating than finding that your transaction is declined because they suspect fraud. ATMs are the easiest way to get Euros once you are there, so be sure to tell your bank you'll be using your ATM card overseas.

Check with your credit card company for overseas fees. American Express usually charges a transaction fee. Also, they are not as widely accepted as Visa and Master Card.

Travel- more info:

Book Early! Especially if you plan to use frequent flyer miles. Those "free" seats fill up FAST! Remember! This is business, so airfare should be tax deductible.

On most airlines, international flights open up for sale 335 days before departure, and a CheapAir study found that they don't typically drop that much from their initial price. Instead, they stay fairly flat for a few months, then start to creep up slowly, until about 90 days before departure when the pace of increase starts to accelerate.

Whereas with domestic flights you can often get a decent deal up until about a month before departure, with international flights that is the case much less often. The best fares to Europe can be found at 4 months out (120 days)

Fair Tickets

You can and should buy in advance online. You can print them at home and it is one less thing to worry about. I have found the website to be cranky about which credit cards it will accept. Don't bother with American Express... some Master Cards or Visas are accepted, others inexplicably are not. If at first you don't succeed... try your spouse's credit card. (which finally worked for me)

Budget Tips:

Have breakfast bars with you at all times. There are Food stands at the Fair, but they are pricey and packed & often a breakfast bar will get you through the day. Then you can splurge a bit on the dinner meal. Some lodging comes with a modest breakfast, but if you have the option of declining breakfast for a price break do so. You can generally get a cappuccino for much less and chomp on your breakfast bar.

If you have an apartment, buy groceries and make lunches, even some dinners. But DO eat out when you can. This is Italy! Home of spectacular food.

Share a room, a taxi, a bottle of wine. DO keep all receipts, again, remember this is a business trip.

Getting Around

Guidebooks like Lonely Planet and Fodors are great resources. Scour them! You can get them from the library or buy the latest. I like to download a guide on my iPad, so I don't need to carry a heavy book. The e-guides are more limited, however, so just be aware.

Being the worrier that I am...I like to figure out where I am going via Google Maps the day before I need to be somewhere. Since wi-fi is not always available on the streets, I take a screen shot of the map I need when I am connected, and can then access it through my phone or iPad photos whether I am connected or not.

Imessage works for iPhone users as long as you are connected to WiFi. Whats App is another useful and free messaging App.

Check with your cell provider for an International plan. These can usually be put into place one month at time. And follow their tips for turning off data when overseas.