Interview notes

1. General Information (age, gender, city of residence, main cities visited, ...)

My name is Sebastiano Callà, I am 23 years old, and I live in Sant'Antonino di Susa, a small town in the province of Turin. I have always enjoyed traveling, and over the years, I have tried to explore as much of Europe as possible, visiting cities such as Paris, Madrid, Barcelona, Prague, Krakow, Munich, and others.

2. Tell me 3 good and 3 bad aspects about trip planning.

Three positive aspects of organizing a trip:

a. Customization, which allows you to tailor the entire trip to your needs, choosing places that interest you the most, selecting hotels/apartments, and determining the best time to visit a specific city or location (for example, I chose to visit Paris in January because I believe the best times to visit are in winter and autumn).

b. Cost control, the ability to manage the entire trip cost in detail, searching for transportation deals, using public transport passes during your stay to avoid taxis or Uber, and finding more affordable dining options for lunches and dinners.

c. Creativity. Planning a trip is a cost-free activity that is enjoyable and encourages creativity in designing a customized trip that suits your needs. I enjoy spending my free time before a trip collecting information, imagining what I will do, and designing detailed itineraries to fit in all the activities I want to do and see.

Three negative aspects:

a. Unexpected events are the worst aspect, in my opinion, as even a single unexpected event can disrupt the entire trip. For example, a flight delay could lead to missing an entire day, causing a delay in the organized itinerary and the need to "sacrifice" a day that was already planned.

b. Time constraints can also be a negative aspect because it never seems like there's enough time. When planning a trip, I always try to do as much as possible, but with limited results because I never have enough time.

c. Bureaucracy, such as purchasing flight tickets, making various museum reservations, is the most tedious part of trip planning, although it is essential.

3. Describe the best and worst experience during a city visit

The best experience I had was in January in Paris. I was very captivated by the city's atmosphere, and I greatly appreciated the fact that most museums were almost free for young people under the age of 26.

The worst experience happened a few years ago when I went to visit Sarajevo, and I had booked a room at a B&B through Airbnb, but when I arrived, it was already occupied. Through Airbnb, a solution was found through another hotel room, but there was initially some panic.

4. How do you plan your city trips?

I plan my city trips primarily based on the distribution of various attractions (museums, monuments, etc.) and how the city is connected with public transportation. For example, when I went to Paris, I tried to visit it by zones to avoid wasting time on commutes and make the most of the time available.

5. How do you move during a city trip and why?

During a city trip, I try to use public transportation as much as possible because it is more economical than taking a taxi or renting a vehicle for transportation. In other cities, buses are available every 5 minutes, which allows for efficient exploration of the city.

6. How do you discover all the attractions to see during a city trip?

Usually, before visiting a city, I look at various maps, check websites of museums and other attractions, and create a list where I list all the attractions I want to visit.

7. How do you get tickets for the attractions?

I try to purchase tickets for attractions online through the official website because I find it more convenient than buying tickets at the ticket office or museum cashier. It also helps me avoid waiting in line.

8. Tell me about your meals during city trips.

I rarely plan my meals during city visits. For lunch, I tend to eat at fast-food restaurants, while for dinner, I try to dine at typical restaurants to sample local specialties. Sometimes, I use apps like Uber Eats to order takeout directly where I am staying.

9. Do you use tools during planning? Describe them.

I use several tools for planning, including:

- Google Maps to locate attractions, restaurants, and directions, and to plan the best itinerary as Maps estimates travel times.

- Apps for booking transportation.

- Travel blogger websites or blogs for advice from people who travel for a living.

- Apps like Booking and Airbnb to find accommodation.

10. Describe a failure during a city trip planning and how did you manage to recover from it.

When I planned a trip to Paris, I initially booked plane tickets but didn't realize that the tickets were for Beauvais Airport, which is about 150 km from Paris. I tried to change the ticket to a closer airport, but the remaining tickets were exorbitantly priced. So, I found an alternative solution and bought reasonably priced TGV train tickets, which would take me almost to the center of Paris.

11. What are the most important factors you consider when planning a city trip?

The most important factors in planning, in my opinion, are:

- The destination, i.e., choosing the right city to visit.

- Budget, dividing the budget correctly for accommodation, transportation, etc.

- Duration, deciding how long to stay in the city.

Other less important factors I consider include the weather, local transportation, the local currency, and the safety of the location.

12. What are the most crucial difficulties when planning a city trip?

Crucial challenges during planning can include managing the budget, handling documentation and visas for cities outside the EU, addressing safety concerns, language barriers, and finding accommodation.

13. What do you think about real-time information about attractions or local experiences?

Real-time information is extremely useful as it keeps you updated on local events, sudden openings and closures. This allows for better adjustment of your itinerary to make the most of your trip.

14. How would you improve your city trips?

I would like to be able to manage all reservations for various activities through a single app or website without having to navigate different sites each time.

15. How would you manage money and expenses during city trips?

I usually set a spending budget, dividing it between accommodation, travel, local transportation, and meals. The remaining budget is used for various attractions, shopping, etc.

As for using debit cards or cash, it depends on the location. In foreign cities where the euro is not the currency, I tend to use cards for most transactions to avoid exchange fees, although I exchange a small amount of cash for emergencies. However, I prefer to use cards exclusively to track my expenses more easily.