

Italy in a Nutshell

General Information for the detail-oriented

Its dreamy light and sumptuous countryside seem made for romance, and its three millennia of history, culture and cuisine seduce just about everyone.

You can visit Roman ruins, drink in Renaissance art, stay in tiny medieval hill towns, ski the Alps, explore the canals of Venice and stand in awe in beautiful churches. Naturally you can also indulge in the pleasures of la dolce vita: good food, good wine, good shopping, and maybe a little bit of flirting. In Italy everything is possible.

Any time of the year is ideal to enjoy Italy's treasures; history and beauty are always in season.

Italy's Time Zone: 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+1). Italy is six hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in the U.S. Daylight savings time goes into effect at the end of March and ends in late October.

Official Language: Italian. German is spoken in the northeastern region of Trentino-Alto Adige; there are small French-speaking populations in the Valle d'Aosta region to the northwest.

Origin of the Name: The first Greek settlers, who arrived in Calabria in Southern Italy from Euboea island in the 8th century B.C., named their new land Vitulia ("land of calves"). This name spread slowly northward, and it was only under Augustus that the whole country adopted the name.

Area: 301,323 km² (116,303 square miles)

Population: 58,751,711 (2006), an increase of 0.5% from 2005, mainly supplemented by immigrants, and an increasing life expectancy of 79.81 years.

Government: Republic

Constitution: Adopted January 1, 1948

National Holiday, Festa della Repubblica: June 2nd.

Nickname: Italy is sometimes called Belpaese (Italian for beautiful country) by its inhabitants, due to the beauty and variety of its countryside and for the world's largest artistic heritage. The country is home to the greatest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites (40 as of January 1, 2006).

Currency: Euro.

Calling Code: +39

Exports: \$371.9 billion (f.o.b., 2005 est.): engineering products, textiles and clothing, production

machinery, motor vehicles, transportation equipment, chemicals, food, beverages and tobacco, minerals and nonferrous metals.

Imports: \$369.2 billion (f.o.b., 2005 est.): engineering products, chemicals, transportation equipment, energy products, minerals and nonferrous metals, textiles and clothing, food, beverages and tobacco.

Capital: Rome, "The Eternal City" (population 2,553,873, city only), calling code 06.

Major Cities:

Milan (4,280,820), calling code 02

Turin (902,255), calling code 011

Genoa (620,316), calling code 010

Venice (271,663), calling code 041

Florence (366,488), calling code 055

Naples (4,200,000), calling code 081

Palermo (675,501), calling code 091

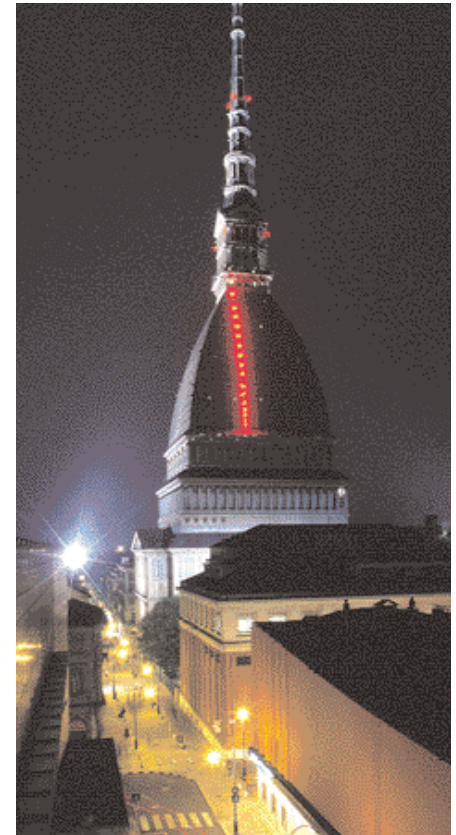
The Italian Peninsula is divided into 20 regions, two of which are islands. Each region holds unique customs, traditions, and dialects. Five regions have a Statuto Speciale (special statute): Valle d'Aosta, Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sicily, and Sardinia. The top travel destinations in Italy include the three cities of Rome, Venice, and Florence, the region of Tuscany, and the Amalfi Coast.

The Land

The Italian Peninsula is bounded by France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia to the north. Italy juts into the Mediterranean Sea, and is surrounded by the Adriatic Sea on the east, the Ionian Sea on the west, the Tyrrhenian on the west along most of the peninsula, and the Ligurian Sea on the north-west.

The Apennine Mountains form the peninsula's backbone, with the Alps on its northern boundary. The Alps are divided into regions called, from west to east the Occidentali, the Centrali, and the Orientali, and they border with France, Austria and Switzerland. The Dolomites, which are really part of the Alps, are located in the regions of South Tyrol, Trentino and Belluno. The highest point in Italy is Mont Blanc, in the Alps, at 15,770 feet. The largest of its many northern lakes is Garda (143 sq mi; 370 sq km); the Po, its principal river, flows from the Alps on Italy's western border and crosses the Lombard plain to the Adriatic Sea.

Mount Vesuvius, near Naples, is the only active



volcano on the European mainland. Mount Etna, on the island of Sicily, is one of the world's largest volcanoes.

THE TEMPERATURE

Italy enjoys a predominantly Mediterranean (mild) climate with a colder Alpine climate in the mountains to the north and a hot and dry climate in the south.

City	Latitude	Average winter temperature	Average summer temperature
Milan	45°28'	3 C–37 F	23 C–73 F
Turin	45°2'	2 C–35 F	22 C–71 F
Genoa	44°25'	8 C–46 F	23 C–73 F
Rome	41°52'	8 C–46 F	24 C–75 F
Palermo	38°5'	11 C–51 F	24 C–75 F
Sassari	40°45'	9 C–48 F	23 C–73 F