

# Italy



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## Overview

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### Overview

**Stylish, cultured**, good humoured and volatile – **Italy**, with its golden light, stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage, has inspired **poets and painters** for centuries. Perhaps more than any other country, it has influenced the course of European development, particularly in culture and political thought.

The most important **early settlers** were the enigmatic Etruscans, who had established settlements in northern and central Italy by the sixth century BC. By the third century BC, their culture had been displaced by the mighty city state of Rome, which was intent on extending its influence.

At its greatest extent, the **Roman Empire** stretched from Egypt to England and for several centuries conferred on its inhabitants the benefits of the Pax Romana: culture (mainly Hellenic in origin), law, relative peace and comparative prosperity.

In the 15th century, parts of Italy were at the heart of the greatest ever flowering of art and culture (the **Renaissance**), associated with artists such as Fra Angelico, Raphael, Botticelli, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci.

Today, besides the **renowned cities** of Venice, Florence, Siena and Naples, each with its own unique identity and **architecture**, Italy features romantic **medieval hill towns**, such as San Gimignano in Tuscany, and **unspoilt fishing villages**, like Positano on the Amalfi coast. **Operatic productions** are staged in Verona's ancient amphitheatre, while the influence of Federico Fellini is celebrated in Turin's museum of cinema.

Italy combines **art, history** and **contemporary fashion** with stunning natural landscapes: the **turquoise waters** of the Costa Smeralda offer one of Europe's most beautiful stretches of sand, sea and sunshine, while the snow-covered slopes of the **Dolomite mountains** are a haven for **winter sports** enthusiasts.

Throughout the country visitors can find **vineyards** and cellars to taste the very best regional wines, workshops where crafts are produced by hand, and **friendly trattorie** where simple but superb dishes are served.

## General Information

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Western Europe.

### Area

301,338 sq km (116,346 sq miles).

### Population

58.1 million (UN estimate 2006).

### Population Density

192.8 per sq km.

### Capital

Rome. **Population:** 2.6 million (2005).

### Government

Kingdom of Italy declared in 1861. Republic since 1946.

Italy is situated in Europe and attached in the north to the European mainland. To the north, the Alps separate Italy from France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia. **Northern Italy:** The Alpine regions, the Po Plain and the Ligurian-Etruscan Appennines. Piedmont and Val d'Aosta contain some of the highest mountains in Europe and are good areas for winter sports. Many rivers flow down from the mountains towards the Po Basin, passing through the beautiful Italian Lake District (Maggiore, Como, Garda). The Po Basin, which extends as far south as the bare slopes of the Appennines, is covered with gravel terraces and rich alluvial soil and has long been one of Italy's most prosperous regions. To the east, where the River Po flows into the Adriatic Sea, the plains are a little higher than the river itself; artificial (and occasionally natural) embankments prevent flooding. **Central Italy:** The northern part of the Italian peninsula. Tuscany (Toscana) has a diverse landscape with snow-capped mountains (the Tuscan Appennines), lush countryside, hills and a long sandy coastline with offshore islands. Le Marche, lying between the Appennines and the Adriatic coast, is a region of mountains, rivers and small fertile plains. The even more mountainous regioni (administrative districts) of Abruzzo and Molise are bordered by Marche to the north and Puglia to the south, and are separated from the Tyrrhenian Sea and to the west by Lazio and Campania. Umbria is known as the 'green heart of Italy'; hilly with broad plains, olive groves and pines. Further south lies Rome, Italy's capital and largest city. Within its precincts is the Vatican City. **Southern Italy:** Campania consists of flat coastal plains and low mountains, stretching from Baia Domizia to the Bay of Naples and along a rocky coast to the Calabria border. Inland, the Appennines are lower, mellowing into the rolling countryside around Sorrento. The islands of Capri, Ischia and Procida in the Tyrrhenian Sea are also part of Campania. The south is wilder than the north, with mile upon mile of olive trees, cool forests and rolling hills. Puglia, the 'heel of the boot', is a landscape of volcanic hills and isolated marshes. Calabria, the 'toe', is heavily forested and thinly populated. The Calabrian hills are home to bears and wolves. **The Islands:** Sicily (Sicilia), visible across a 3km (2-mile) strait from mainland Italy, is fertile but mountainous with volcanoes (including the famous landmark of Mount Etna) and lava fields, and several offshore islands. Sardinia (Sardegna) has a mountainous landscape, fine sandy beaches and rocky offshore islands.

## **Language**

Italian is the official language. Dialects are spoken in different regions. German and Ladin are spoken in the South Tyrol region (bordering Austria). French is spoken in all the border areas from the Riviera to the area north of Milan (border with France and Switzerland). German is spoken around the Austrian border. English, French and German are also spoken in the biggest cities and in tourism and business circles.

## **Religion**

90% Roman Catholic with Protestant minorities.

## **Time**

GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to last Sunday in October).

## **Social Conventions**

The social structure is heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic church and, generally speaking, family ties are stronger than in most other countries in Western Europe. Normal social courtesies should be observed. Dress is casual but smart in most places, and beachwear should be confined to the beach. Conservative clothes are expected when visiting religious buildings and smaller, traditional communities. Formal wear is usually indicated on invitations. Smoking is prohibited in public buildings, transport and cinemas.

## **Electricity**

230 volts AC, 50Hz.

## **Head of Government**

Prime minister Romano Prodi since 2006.

## **Head of State**

President Giorgio Napolitano since 2006.

## Contact Addresses

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### **Italian Embassy in the UK**

14 Three Kings Yard, London W1K 4EH, UK

Tel: (020) 7312 2200.

Website: [www.amblondra.esteri.it](http://www.amblondra.esteri.it)

*Political enquiries only.*

### **Italian Consulate General in the UK**

38 Eaton Place, London SW1X 8AN, UK

*Visa section:* 136 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SA, UK

Tel: (020) 7235 9371 or 7823 6519 (visa section) or 09065 540 770 (appointment booking; calls cost £1 per minute).

Website: [www.conslondra.esteri.it](http://www.conslondra.esteri.it)

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1200.

### **Italian State Tourist Board (ENIT) in the UK**

1 Princes Street, London W1B 2AY, UK

Tel: (020) 7408 1254.

Website: [www.enit.it](http://www.enit.it) or [www.italiantouristboard.co.uk](http://www.italiantouristboard.co.uk)

### **Embassy of the Italian Republic in the USA**

3000 Whitehaven Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008, USA

Tel: (202) 612 4400.

Website: [www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it](http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it)

### **Italian Government Tourist Board (ENIT) in the USA**

630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1565, New York, NY 10111, USA

Tel: (212) 245 5618 or 4822.

Website: [www.italiantourism.com](http://www.italiantourism.com)

## Passport/Visa

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### Passport/Visa

	Passport Required?	Visa Required?	Return Ticket Required?
British	Yes	No	No
Australian	Yes	No	No
Canadian	Yes	No	No
USA	Yes	No	No
Other EU	1	No	No

### Passport Note

(a) Italy is a signatory to the **1995 Schengen Agreement**. (b) The regulations stated below also apply to **San Marino** and the **Vatican City**.

### Passports

Passport valid for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all nationals referred to in the chart above except:

(a) **1.** EU nationals holding a valid national ID card.

**Note:** EU nationals are only required to produce evidence of their EU nationality and identity in order to be admitted to any EU Member State. This evidence can take the form of a valid national passport *or* national identity card. Either is acceptable. Possession of a return ticket, any length of validity on their document, sufficient funds for the length of their proposed visit should *not* be imposed.

### Visas

Not required by all nationals of countries referred to in the chart above for the following durations:

(a) nationals of EU countries for an unlimited period apart from nationals of Bulgaria and Romania who may stay for up to 90 days;

(b) nationals of Australia, Canada and the USA for stays of up to 90 days.

**Note:** Nationals not referred to in the chart above are advised to contact the embassy to check visa requirements (see *Contact Addresses*).

## Money

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### Currency

Euro (EUR; symbol €) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

### Currency Exchange

Traveller's cheques, cheques and foreign money can be changed at banks, railway stations and airports, and very often at major hotels (generally at a less convenient rate). Many UK banks offer differing exchange rates depending on the denominations of currency being bought or sold. Check with banks for details and current rates.

### Credit/Debit Cards and ATMs

Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted.

### Traveller's Cheques

Traveller's cheques are widely accepted. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in Euros, Pounds Sterling or US Dollars.

### Banking Hours

These vary from city to city but, in general, Mon-Fri 0830-1330 and 1500-1600.

### Exchange Rate Indicators

Date	Apr 07
£1.00=	€1.48
\$1.00=	€0.75

## Duty Free

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### Overview

The communes of Livigno and Campione d'Italia are treated as being outside of the EU for the Duty Free section. The following goods may be imported into Italy from outside the EU by persons over 17 years of age without incurring customs duty:

- 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 100 cigarillos or 250g of tobacco.
- 2l of wine and 1l of spirits (over 22%) or 2l of fortified or sparkling wine.
- 50g of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette.
- 500g of coffee or 200g of coffee extract (if over 15 years of age).
- 100g of tea or 40g of tea extract.
- Gifts not exceeding €89.96 (if entering from an EU country), €175 (if entering from a non-EU country).

### Abolition of duty-free goods within the EU

On 30 June 1999, the sale of duty-free alcohol and tobacco at airports and at sea was abolished in all of the original 15 EU member states. Of the 10 new member states that joined the EU on 1 May 2004 and the two states that joined on 1 January 2007, these rules already apply to Cyprus and Malta. There are transitional rules in place for visitors returning to one of the original 15 EU countries from one of the other new EU countries. But for the original 15, plus Cyprus and Malta, there are no limits imposed on importing tobacco and alcohol products from one EU country to another. Travellers should note that they may be required to prove at customs that the goods purchased are for personal use *only*. Member states may follow the EU's guide levels of: 10l of spirits; 20l of fortified wine; 90l of wine; 110l of beer; 800 cigarettes; 400 cigarillos; 200 cigars and 1kg of tobacco.

## Public Holidays

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Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2007-December 2008 period.

### 2007

- 1 Jan New Year's Day.
- 6 Jan Epiphany.
- 9 Apr Easter Monday.
- 25 Apr Liberation Day.
- 1 May Labour Day.
- 2 Jun Anniversary of the Republic.
- 15 Aug Assumption.
- 1 Nov All Saints' Day.
- 8 Dec Immaculate Conception.
- 25 Dec Christmas Day.
- 26 Dec St Stephen's Day.

### 2008

- 1 Jan New Year's Day.
- 6 Jan Epiphany.
- 24 Mar Easter Monday.
- 25 Apr Liberation Day.
- 1 May Labour Day.
- 2 Jun Anniversary of the Republic.
- 15 Aug Assumption.
- 1 Nov All Saints' Day.
- 8 Dec Immaculate Conception.
- 25 Dec Christmas Day.
- 26 Dec St Stephen's Day.

### Note

In addition, local feast days are held in honour of town patron saints, generally without closure of shops and offices. These include:

**Turin/Genoa/Florence:** 24 Jun (St John the Baptist).

**Milan:** 7 Dec (St Ambrose).

**Siena:** 2 Jul and 16 Aug, Palio horserace.

**Venice:** 25 Apr (St Mark).

**Bologna:** 4 Oct (St Petronius).

**Naples:** 19 Sep (St Gennaro).

**Bari:** 6 Dec (St Nichola).

**Palermo:** 15 Jul (St Rosalia).

**Rome:** 29 Jun (St Peter).

**Trieste:** 3 Nov (St Giusto).

## Health

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### Health

	Special Precautions	Certificate Required?
Diphtheria	No	
Hepatitis A	No	
Malaria	No	
Rabies	No	
Tetanus	Yes	
Typhoid	No	
Yellow Fever	No	

### Health Care

For European visitors who are taken ill or have an accident, free or reduced-cost treatment is available – in most cases on production of a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). The EHIC gives access to state-provided medical treatment only. Note that the EHIC replaces the Form E111, which is no longer valid. Most dentists are private.

### Note

## Getting There

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### Getting There by Air

The national airline is *Alitalia* (AZ) (website: [www.alitalia.com](http://www.alitalia.com)).

### Departure Tax

None.

### Main Airports

**Rome (FCO) (Fiumicino)** (website: [www.adr.it](http://www.adr.it)) is 32km (20 miles) southwest of the city (journey time – 30 to 55 minutes). **To/from the airport:** There is a direct rail link to Termini Station in central Rome and a bus service every 15 minutes. Taxis are also available to the city. **Facilities:** Outgoing duty-free shop, car hire, ATMs, bank and bureau de change and bar/restaurants.

**Rome (CIA) (Ciampino)** (website: [www.adr.it](http://www.adr.it)) is 15km (9 miles) from the city (journey time – 30 to 40 minutes). **To/from the airport:** Buses are available to the underground station Anagnina, and to the city centre. Taxis are also available. **Facilities:** Bank/bureau de change, car hire, duty-free shop and souvenir shop and cafe.

**Pisa (PSA) (Galileo Galilei)** (website: [www.pisa-airport.com](http://www.pisa-airport.com)), is 1.6km (1 mile) north of Pisa (journey time – 10 minutes). **To/from the airport:** Trains and buses run from Pisa airport to the centre of Florence (journey time – 1 hour). Rail services connect with arrivals and departures of all international flights and major domestic services. **Facilities:** Bank/bureau de change, car hire, shops and cafe.

**Milan (MXP) (Malpensa)** (website: [www.sea-aeroportimilano.it](http://www.sea-aeroportimilano.it)) is 45km (29 miles) northwest of the city (journey time – 30 minutes). **To/from the airport:** The *Malpensa Express* train connects terminal one with the centre of Milan; the journey takes 40 minutes. A free shuttle bus connects the airport terminals. Taxis are available. **Facilities:** Duty-free shops, banks/bureaux de change.

### Getting There by Water

**Main ports:** **Ancona** (website: [www.autoritaportuale.ancona.it](http://www.autoritaportuale.ancona.it)), **Brindisi** (website: [www.porto.br.it](http://www.porto.br.it)), **Naples** (website: [www.porto.napoli.it](http://www.porto.napoli.it)) and **Venice** (website: [www.port.venice.it](http://www.port.venice.it)).

Main **ferry** operators: *Superfast Ferries* (website: [www.superfast.com](http://www.superfast.com)), *SNAV* (website: [www.snav.it](http://www.snav.it)), *Ustica Lines* (website: [www.usticalines.it](http://www.usticalines.it)) and *Navigazione Libera del Golfo* (website: [www.navlib.it](http://www.navlib.it)). The main international routes are from Greece, the Greek islands and Croatia.

### Getting There by Rail

*Trenitalia* runs regular services covering national and international routes (website: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)). The *Artesia Service* is the fastest railway link between France and Italy. Travelling by train from the UK, the quickest way is by *Eurostar* (see *France* section).

### Rail Passes

**InterRail:** offers unlimited first- or second-class travel in up to 30 European countries for European residents of over six months with two pass options. The *Global Pass* allows travel for 22 days, one month, five days in 10 days or 10 days in 22 days across all countries. The *One-Country Pass* offers travel for three, four, six or eight days in one month in any of the countries except Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. Travel is not allowed in the passenger's country of residence. Travellers under 26 years

receive a reduction. Children's tickets are reduced by about 50%. Supplements are required for some high-speed services, seat reservations and couchettes. Discounts are offered on *Eurostar* and some ferry routes. Available from *Rail Europe* (website: [www.raileurope.co.uk/inter-rail](http://www.raileurope.co.uk/inter-rail)).

**Eurailpass:** offers unlimited first-class train travel in 18 European countries. Tickets are valid for 15 days, 21 days, one month, two months or three months. The *Eurailpass Saver* ticket offers discounts for two or more people travelling together. The *Eurailpass Youth* ticket is available to those aged under 26. The *Eurailpass Flexi* allows either 10 or 15 travel days within a two-month period. The *Eurail Selectpass* is valid in three, four or five bordering countries and allows five, six, eight or 10 travel days (or 15 for five countries) in a two-month period. The *Eurail Regional Pass* allows four to 10 travel days in a two-month period in one of 16 regions. Available from *The Eurail Group* (website: [www.euraildirect.com](http://www.euraildirect.com)).

**Greece 'n Italy Pass:** offers 4 to 10 days of rail travel over a two-month period on all *Trenitalia* trains within Italy and on Greek Railway trains (*OSE*). Available from *Trenitalia* (website: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)).

## Getting There by Road

Routes to Italy run through Austria, France, Slovenia and Switzerland and most routes use the tunnels under the Alps and Apennines. From the UK, the quickest way to travel by car is via **Eurotunnel** to France (see *France*). *Trenitalia* runs regular daily services called *auto al seguito* (**trains** carrying cars), especially during the summer holiday season, covering national and international routes. These services operate from special railway stations and are generally bookable at the departure station. Owners must travel on the same train. The **documents** required are the log-book, valid driving licence with Italian translation, Green Card insurance and national identity plate fixed to the rear of the vehicle. For more information on routes, contact the Italian State Tourist Board (see *Contact Addresses*).

**Coach:** *Eurolines* (tel: 0870 580 8080, in the UK; website: [www.eurolines.com](http://www.eurolines.com)) runs regular coach services from the UK to Italy. **Passes:** Travellers can book a 15- or 30-day pass. Available from *Eurolines* (website: [www.eurolines-pass.com](http://www.eurolines-pass.com)).

## Getting Around

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### Getting Around By Air

*Alitalia* (AZ) (website: [www.alitalia.com](http://www.alitalia.com)) and other airlines run services to all the major cities. There are over 30 airports. For details, contact the airlines direct or ENIT, the Italian State Tourist Board (see *Contact Addresses*).

### Getting Around by Water

**Main ports:** **Cagliari** (website: [www.porto.cagliari.it](http://www.porto.cagliari.it)), **Civitavecchia** (website: [www.port-of-rome.org](http://www.port-of-rome.org)), **Genoa** (website: [www.porto.genova.it](http://www.porto.genova.it)), **Livorno** (website: [www.portauthority.li.it](http://www.portauthority.li.it)) and **Naples** (website: [www.porto.napoli.it](http://www.porto.napoli.it)).

**Ferries:** A number of car and passenger ferries operate throughout the year linking Italian ports. Regular boat and hydrofoil services run to the islands of Capri, Elba, Giglio, Sardinia, Sicily and the Aeolian Islands. There are also some links along the coast.

### Getting Around by Rail

*Trenitalia* (FS) (tel: 89 20 21, within Italy only; website: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)) runs a nationwide network at very reasonable fares, calculated on the distance travelled, and there are a number of excellent reductions. Main routes include Turin-Milan-Venice; Milan-Bologna-Bari; Rome-Genoa-Turin; and Rome-Naples-Palermo. Visitors from the UK can book tickets with *Italia Rail* (tel: 0870 084 1414, in the UK; website: [www.italiarail.co.uk](http://www.italiarail.co.uk)).

### Rail Passes

**Trenitalia Pass:** only available to people resident outside Italy. This allows from three to 10 days of unlimited travel within a two-month period. Any train in Italy can be used, although a small supplement is payable on Eurostar Italia services. The pass also entitles the holder to discounts on some Italy-Greece ferry routes, hotels and other special offers. *Basic*, *Youth* and *Saver* passes are available.

**InterRail One-Country Pass:** offers travel for three, four, six or eight days in one month within Italy. Travel is not allowed in the passenger's country of residence. Travellers under 26 years receive a reduction. Children's tickets are reduced by about 50%. Supplements are required for some high-speed services, seat reservations and couchettes. Discounts are offered on *Eurostar* and some ferry routes. Available from *Rail Europe* (website: [www.raileurope.co.uk/inter-rail](http://www.raileurope.co.uk/inter-rail)).

### Getting Around by Road

There are more than 479,688km (298,064 miles) of roads in Italy, including over 6,000km (3,700 miles) of motorway (*autostrada*). Tolls are charged at varying distances and scales. Road signs are international. More information on the Italian motorway network is available from *Autostrade per l'Italia* (website: [www.autostrade.it](http://www.autostrade.it)). Traffic drives on the right.

**Coach:** Good coach services run between towns and cities and there are also extensive local buses.

**Car hire:** Self-drive hire is available in most cities and resorts. Many international and Italian firms operate this service. Generally, small local firms offer cheaper rates, but cars can only be booked locally. Many car hire agencies have booths at the airport.

**Regulations:** The minimum driving age is 18. Speed limits are 50kph (31mph) in urban areas, 90kph (55mph) on ordinary roads, 110kph (68mph) on dual carriageways and 130kph (80mph) on motorways. Dipped headlights are compulsory outside built-up areas

during the day. All vehicles must carry a red warning triangle. Seat belts are compulsory.

**Note:** Fines for driving offences are on-the-spot and particularly heavy.

**Emergency breakdown service:** In case of breakdown, dial 803 116. The operator will inform the nearest *Automobile Club of Italy (ACI)* office (website: [www.aci.it](http://www.aci.it)).

**Documentation:** A UK driving licence and EU pink format licences are valid in Italy but old-style green licences (without photos) must be accompanied by an International Driving Permit. Visitors must carry their log-book, which must be in their name as owner, or have the owner's written permission to drive the vehicle. A driving licence or a motorcycle driving licence is required for motorcycles over 49cc.

## Getting Around Towns and Cities

Travellers should be aware that tickets for public transport need to be endorsed in a ticket machine before the journey. Machines are located in entrances to platforms in railway and metro stations and on-board buses and trams. Failure to do so could lead to an on-the-spot fine of up to €60.

All the big towns and cities (Genoa, Milan, Naples, Rome, Turin and Venice) have good public transport networks. The Rome system is run by the City Transport Authority (*ATAC*) and *MetRo*. The Milanese system is run by the *Azienda Trasporti Milanesi (ATM)*.

**Underground:** In Rome there are two underground lines – Metropolitana A from Via Ottaviano via Termini station to Via Anagnina and also connecting with the Ottaviano-San Pietro link; and Metropolitana B, which runs between Termini Station, via Exhibition City and onwards to Rebibbia. Both day and monthly passes are available. Milan also has a three-line underground system, with tickets useable on both underground and bus.

**Tram:** There is an extensive network consisting of eight routes in Rome; Milan, Messina and Turin also have tram services.

**Bus:** Services operate in all main cities and towns. In Rome, the network is extensive and complements the underground and tram systems. In larger cities, fares are generally pre-purchased from machines or tobacconists (*tabacchi*). Bus tickets can be bought in packets of five and are fed into a stamping machine on boarding.

**Taxi:** Available in all towns and cities. Government-regulated taxis are either white or yellow. Visitors should avoid un-metered taxis. They are generally relatively expensive, with extra charges for night service, luggage and taxis called by telephone. **Water taxis** in Venice are extremely expensive; a much cheaper public ferry service is available. Taxis can only be hailed at official ranks or booked by telephone.

## Journey Times

The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from **Rome** to other major cities/towns in Italy.

	Air	Road	Rail
Florence	1.00	2.55	2.30
Milan	1.10	5.30	4.05
Naples	0.55	2.15	1.27
Cagliari	0.55	-	-
Turin	1.15	6.35	6.35

## Accommodation

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### Hotels

There are more than 30,000 hotels throughout the country. Charges vary according to class, season, services available and locality. The Italian State Tourist Board (see *Contact Addresses*) publishes the official list of all Italian hotels and pensions (*Annuario Alberghi*) every year. Service charges are included in the rates. VAT (*IVA* in Italy) operates in all hotels at 10% (19% in deluxe hotels) on room charges only. Visitors are required by law to obtain an official receipt when staying at hotels.

**Motels** are located on motorways and main roads.

**Grading:** Hotels are graded on a scale of **1** to **5 stars**.

### Pensions

Simple, family-run accommodation in basic rooms.

### Self Catering

Villas, flats and chalets are available for rent at most Italian resorts. Information is available through daily newspapers and agencies in the UK and from the Italian State Tourist Board or the tourist office (*Azienda Autonoma di Soggiorno*) of the locality concerned.

### Bed and Breakfast

Bed and breakfast, and home stays (where breakfast is not provided) are becoming increasingly popular in Italy. Visitors have the opportunity to meet local people in their own homes. Accommodation can range from simple to luxurious.

### Rural/Farmstay Accommodation

Known as *agriturismi*, accommodation in converted farm buildings, which ranges from self-catering accommodation in simple barns to luxurious hotels in former farm villas. Particularly popular in Tuscany. Accommodation is graded.

### Holiday Villages

These consist of bungalows and apartments, usually built in or near popular resorts.

### Camping/Caravanning

Camping is very popular in Italy. The local tourist office in the nearest town will give information and particulars of the most suitable sites. On the larger campsites, it is possible to rent tents/caravans. There are over 2,300 campsites and full details of the sites can be obtained in the publication *Campeggi e Villaggi Turistici in Italia*, published by the Touring Club Italiano (TCI). The Touring Club Italiano offers campsites already equipped with fixed tents, restaurants, etc.

### Youth Hostels

There are over 100 youth hostels run by the Italian Youth Hostels Association (see *Accommodation Information* below). During the summer season in the major cities, reservations are essential and should be made at least a week in advance. There are also student hostels in several towns.

### Accommodation Information

#### Federalberghi (National Hotel Association)

Via Toscana 1, 00187 Rome, Italy

Tel: (06) 4274 1151.

Website: [www.italyhotels.it](http://www.italyhotels.it)

**Italian Confederation of Campers**

Via Vittorio Emanuele 11, 50041 Calenzano (Florence), Italy

Tel: (055) 882 391.

Website: [www.federcampeggio.it](http://www.federcampeggio.it)

**Touring Club Italiano**

Corso Italia 10, 20122 Milan, Italy

Tel: (02) 85261.

Website: [www.touringclub.it](http://www.touringclub.it)

**Associazione Gestori Alloggi Privati (AGAP)** (bed and breakfast/home stays in Florence)

Via de' Neri 9, 50122, Florence, Italy

Tel: (055) 505 1012.

**Agriturismo**

Corso V Emanuele 101, 00168 Rome, Italy

Tel: (06) 852 1342.

Website: [www.agriturist.com](http://www.agriturist.com)

**Associazione Italiana Alberghi per la Gioventù (Italian Youth Hostels Association)**

Via Cavour 44, 00184 Rome, Italy

Tel: (06) 487 1152.

Website: [www.ostellionline.org](http://www.ostellionline.org)

## Entertainment

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### Food and Drink

Pasta and pizza plays a substantial part in Italian recipes, but there are many regional specialities. Tuscany, for example, is noted for its bean dishes; the Po Valley for its rich risottos. Cheeses include *mozzarella*, *pecorino* (hard, sheep's cheese) and *gorgonzola*.

#### National specialities:

##### Rome:

- *Gnocchi alla romana* (semolina dumplings).

##### Piemonte:

- *Bagna caoda* (an anchovy dip, served with vegetables).

##### Lombardy:

- *Panettone* (Christmas cake with sultanas and candied fruit).

##### Liguria:

- *Pesto* (sauce of basil, pine nuts and pecorino cheese).

##### Emilia-Romagna:

- *Parmigiano* (parmesan cheese).

#### National drinks:

- Wines are named after grape varieties, village or area of origin. The most widespread is the *Chianti* group of vineyards in Tuscany.
- Roman wines include *Albano* and *Frascati* (whites); *Barolo* in Valle d'Aosta; *Valpolicella* in Veneto; *Pinot Bianco* and *Pinot Grigio* (whites); *Cabernet* and *Pinot Nero* (reds) in Friuli-Venezia; and *Chianti*, *Nobile di Montepulciano* and *Brunello* in Tuscany.
- Vermouths are popular in Piemonte.
- Aperitifs such as *Campari* and *Punt e Mes* are excellent appetisers.
- Italian liqueurs include *Amaretto*, *Limoncello*, *Grappa* and *Strega*.

**Legal drinking age:** 16. The government has proposed raising it to 18.

**Tipping:** Service charges and state taxes are included in all hotel bills. It is customary to give up to 10% in addition if service has been particularly good.

### Nightlife

**Nightclubs**, **restaurants** and **bars** with **dancing** can be found in most major towns and tourist resorts. In Rome, English-language **films** can be found at the *Pasquine Cinema*, *Vicolo della Paglia*, just off Santa Maria in Trastevere, and at the multiscreen *Warner Moderno* (website: [www.warnervillage.it](http://www.warnervillage.it)) on Piazza della Repubblica. **Restaurants** and **cafes** throughout Italy will invariably have tables outside. Open-air **concerts** in summer are organised by the *Academy of St Cecilia* and the *Opera House*, while there is open-air **theatre** at the *Baths of Caracalla*. Jazz, rock, folk and country music can all be heard at various venues.

### Shopping

Many Italian products, especially clothes, shoes and bags, are world-famous for their style and quality. Florence, Milan and Rome are famous as important **fashion centres**. Some places are known for particular products, eg Carrara (Tuscany) for marble. In several parts of Sardinia writing paper made of cork is produced. Cremona (Lombardy) is famous for its handmade violins. Valenza (Piedmont) has a large number of goldsmiths, and Sulmona (Abruzzo) produces 'confetti', sugar-coated almonds used all over Italy for wedding celebrations. Ravenna (Emilia-Romagna) is famous for mosaics and Volterra (Tuscany) for alabaster goods.

**Rome:** Designer names are focused around the fashionable Via Condotti. Old books and prints can be bought from bookstalls of Piazza Borghese. Rome's flea market is at Porta Portese in Trastevere on Sunday mornings.

**Milan:** The city's industrial wealth is reflected in the chic, elegant shops of Via Montenapoleone. Prices tend to be higher than in other major cities.

**Venice:** Famous for its glassware made on the island of Murano, where there are also art dealers and skilful goldsmiths.

**Florence:** Boasts some of the finest goldsmiths, selling from shops concentrated along both sides of the Ponte Vecchio. Florentine jewellery has a particular quality of satin finish called *satinato*.

**Siena:** Full of individual shops selling *fatto a mano* (made by hand) goods, such as paper, clothes, ceramics and candles.

**Southern Italy:** In the south, there are still families handmaking the same products as their ancestors: filigree jewellery and products of wrought iron in Abruzzo; products in wood in Calabria; and a variety of textiles, including tablecloths, in Sicily and Sardinia.

**Shopping hours:** Generally Mon-Sat 0830-1230 and 1530-1930, with some variations in northern Italy where the lunch break is shorter and the shops close earlier.

## Business

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### Statistics

- **GDP:** US\$1.69 trillion (2005).
- **Main imports:** Engineering products, chemicals, transport equipment, energy products, minerals and nonferrous metals.
- **Main exports:** Engineering products, textiles and clothing, production machinery, motor vehicles and transport equipment.
- **Main trade partners:** Belgium, China, France, Germany and The Netherlands.

### Economy

Traditionally agricultural, Italy industrialised rapidly after 1945, to the point where less than 3% of the population is now engaged in agriculture. The majority of these live in the south of Italy, which is substantially poorer than the rest of the country. The principal crops are sugar beet, wheat, tomatoes and fruit (especially grapes, many used for wine, of which Italy is a leading producer).

As with most western European economies, the tourism industry now enjoys a major position in the economy alongside other service industries such as financial services. Italy continues to rely heavily on the export of manufactured goods. Its particular strengths are in advanced manufacturing techniques and systems, high-quality design and precision engineering.

Most industrial raw materials and more than 75% of energy requirements are imported. The economy has been sluggish since 2000 with growth in 2005 less than 1%. Inflation in 2005 was just under 2%; unemployment is just under 8%.

In Europe, despite some doubts about the size of its budget deficit (now at 3%), Italy was among the founding members of the Euro-zone in 1999. The current government has enacted some reforms to improve competitiveness and growth.

### Business Etiquette

A knowledge of Italian is a distinct advantage. Prior appointments are essential. Visitors should remember that ministries and most public offices close at 1345 and, except by special appointment, it is not possible to see officials in the afternoon. Genoa, Milan and Turin form the industrial triangle of Italy; Bologna, Florence, Padua, Rome, Verona and Vicenza also have important business centres. In all the above cities, major trade fairs take place throughout the year.

**Office hours:** Mon-Fri 0900-1700.

### Commercial Information

**Unione Italiana delle Camere di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura  
(Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture)**

Piazza Sallustio 21, 00187 Rome, Italy

Tel: (06) 47041.

Website: [www.unioncamere.it](http://www.unioncamere.it)

**Istituto nazionale per il Commercio Estero (National Institute for Foreign Trade)**

Via Liszt 21, 00144 Rome, Italy

Tel: (06) 59921.

Website: [www.ice.gov.it](http://www.ice.gov.it)

### Conferences & Conventions

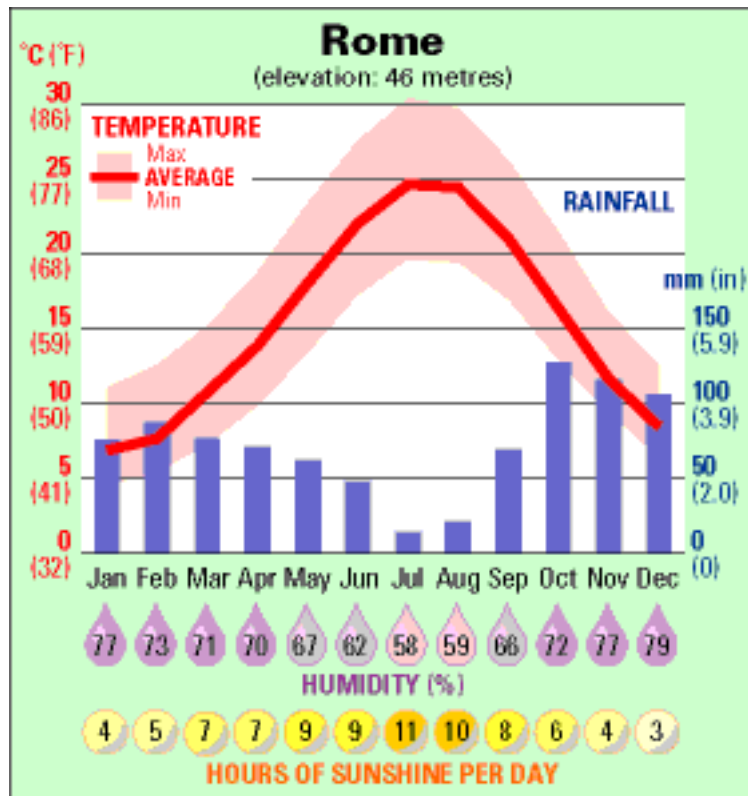
There are many hotels with facilities.

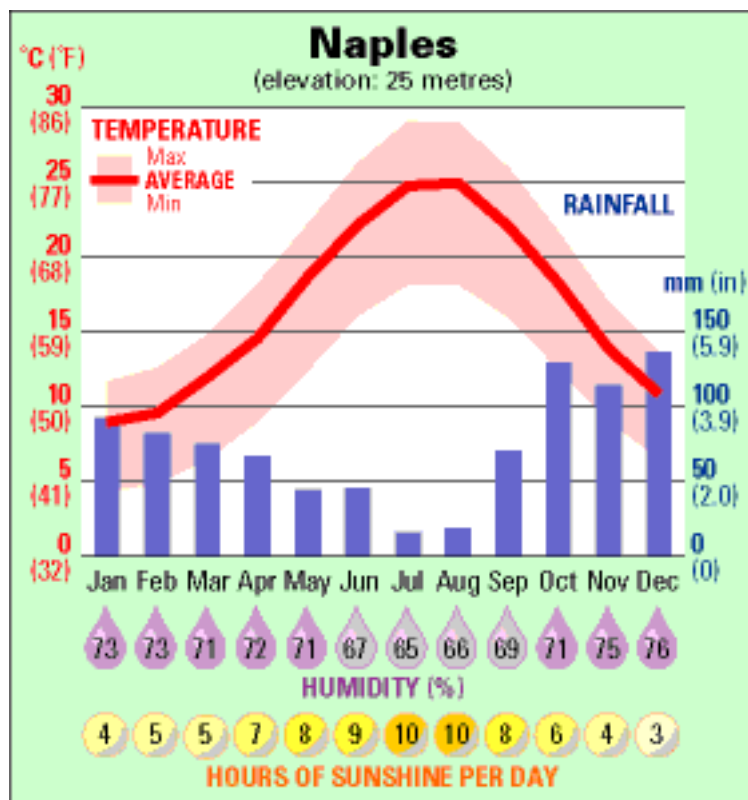
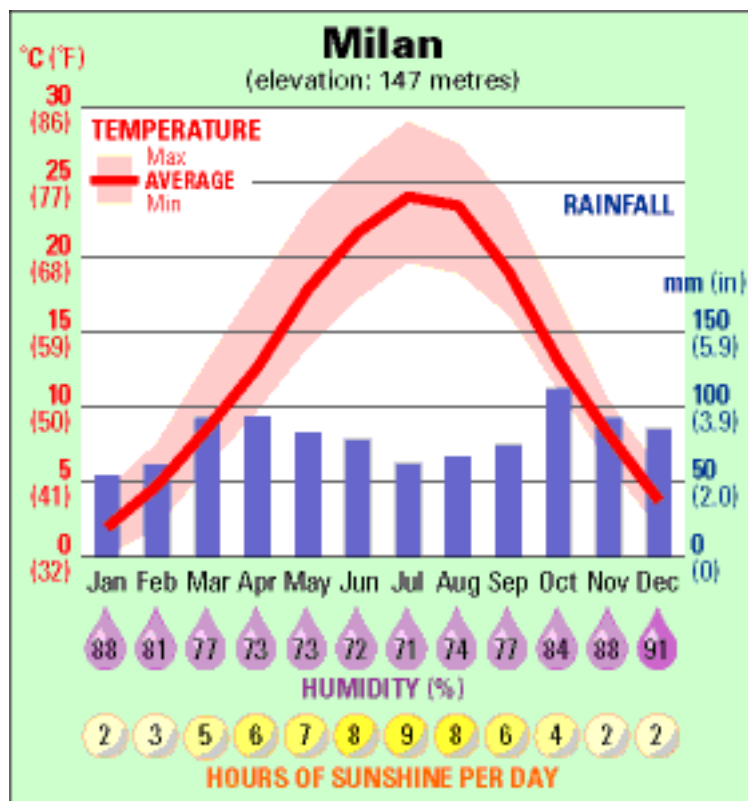
## Climate

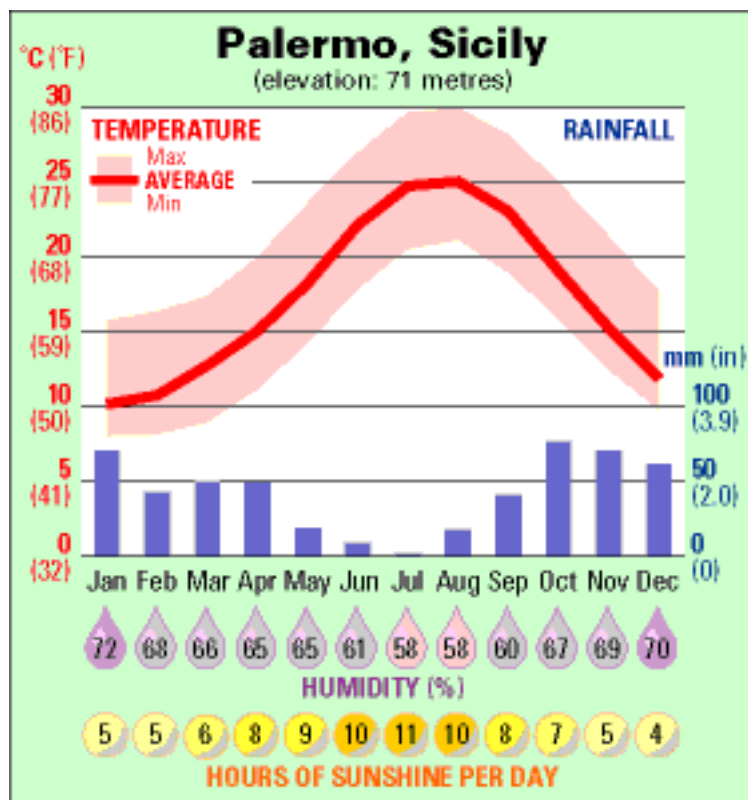
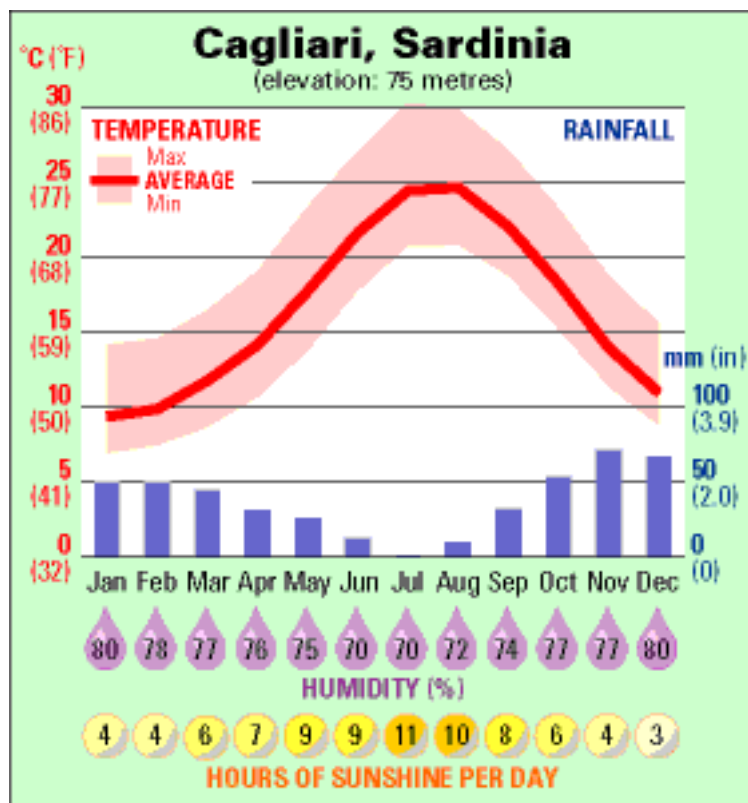
Summer temperatures in the south are far hotter than in the north – especially in the mountain regions which have heavy winter snowfalls. The north is the wettest area, while the wettest months are October to December.

### Required Clothing

Lightweight clothes are worn during the summer, except in the mountains. Winter demands light- to mediumweights in the south, but warmer clothes elsewhere. Alpine wear is advised for winter mountain resorts.







## Top Things To Do

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### Top Things To Do

- In **Rome**, wander around the district of **Trastevere**, the city's alternative focus which is home to numerous bars, restaurants and nightclubs.
  - Go shopping in **Milan (Milano)**, Italy's most sophisticated city.
  - Learn a new skill: Italian **language** and **art** courses are available throughout Italy. Language courses are often complemented by subjects such as **cooking** or **architecture**. Art courses are offered by the *Palazzo Spinelli* (website: [www.spinelli.it](http://www.spinelli.it)) and *Università Internazionale dell'Arte* (website: [www.uiafirenze.com](http://www.uiafirenze.com)) in Florence.
  - Rejuvenate at one of Italy's thermal spas, some famous since the Roman era. The best-equipped health resorts are **Abano Terme** and **Montegrotto Terme** (Veneto); **Acqui Terme** (Piedmont); **Chianciano Terme** and **Montecatini Terme** (Tuscany); **Fiuggi** (Lazio); and **Porretta Terme** and **Salsomaggiore Terme** (Emilia-Romagna).
  - Do not miss the chance to wear an elaborate costume and mask at the **Venice Carnival** (website: [www.carnivalofvenice.com](http://www.carnivalofvenice.com)).
  - Head to the coast: all types of **watersports** are available. Popular spots include the **Italian Riviera** in Liguria, the **Adriatic** and **Amalfi** coasts. Less busy are the beaches in **Sicily**, which has large sandy stretches on the southern coast, and in **Sardinia**.
  - Get wet: many of Italy's best **dive** sites are located in Sardinia, while Italy's first **surfing** school is based in Mauro.
  - In **Capri**, one of Italy's most visited islands, take a boat trip from the Marina Grande to the **Blue Grotto**.
  - Go **skiing** in the Italian Alps. To the west of Turin, in the Piedmont region, major resorts include **Bardonechia**, **Sauze d'Oulx** and **Sestriere**. Further north, the Aosta Valley's resorts include **Cervinia**, **Courmayeur** and **La Thuile**. Italy's most upmarket resort is **Cortina D'Ampezzo** in the Dolomites.
  - In the **Valle d'Aosta** region, go **hillwalking** or **climbing** in the **Gran Paradiso National Park** and **Mont Avic Regional Park**, home to wildlife including the chamois and ibex. The **Dolomites** on the Swiss border are also ideal for hiking and climbing.
  - Look out for Marsican brown bears (unique to Italy), wolves, chamois and eagles in the **National Park of Abruzzo**. In the Molise region, the **Matese mountain range** is still the haven of wolves and various birds of prey.
  - Make sure to see a **bareback horse race** on **Piazza del Campo** in **Siena**. The event, known as *Palio*, dates back to the 13th century and is held twice a year, in July and August, attracting crowds from all over the world.
  - Go **mushroom picking** in **Calabria**, the toe of the 'boot', a spectacularly beautiful region of high mountains and dense forests. *Porcini* (*boletus edulis*), fresh and dried, adorn the shelves of all the speciality shops of the region.
  - Visit **wine cellars** in **Tuscany**. The landscape of Tuscany is, typically, one of vine-covered hills, cypress woods, fields of sunflowers and remote hilltop villages. *Chianti*, the best-known Italian wine, is made in the area north of Siena, and several wine cellars are open to the public.
- See *Contact Addresses* for further tourist information.

## Top Things To See

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### Top Things To See

- Be fascinated by Rome's historical sites – the **Colosseum** (website: [www.archeorm.arti.beniculturali.it](http://www.archeorm.arti.beniculturali.it)), the **Forum** and the **Pantheon**. The elegant shopping streets include **Via Condotti** which leads to **Piazza di Spagna** (the Spanish Steps). At the **Trevi Fountain**, visitors guarantee their return to Rome by throwing a coin into the waters.
- Enter the **Vatican City** (website: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)), an independent sovereign state best known for the magnificent **St Peter's Basilica**. Among the principal features of the Vatican Palace (the Pope's residence) are the **Sistine Chapel** and the **Vatican Museum**.
- Explore **Venice (Venezia)**, a work of art in itself. **St Mark's Basilica** (website: [www.basilicasanmarco.it](http://www.basilicasanmarco.it)) and the **Doge's Palace** (website: [www.museiciviviceneziiani.it](http://www.museiciviviceneziiani.it)), overlooking **St Mark's Square**, have gained fame through Canaletto paintings. Fine gothic and Renaissance *palazzi* (buildings) line the **Grand Canal**. The **Galleria dell'Accademia** (website: [www.gallerieaccademia.org](http://www.gallerieaccademia.org)) displays hundreds of Venetian paintings.
- Discover **Turin**, *La Parigi d'Italia* (the Italian Paris). Its **Egyptian Museum** (website: [www.museoegizio.org](http://www.museoegizio.org)) is the second-largest in the world after Cairo. The city's symbol is the **Mole Antonelliana**, housing the **Museum of Cinema** (website: [www.museonazionaledelcinema.org](http://www.museonazionaledelcinema.org)). A copy of the famous **Turin Shroud** ([www.sindone.org](http://www.sindone.org)) may be viewed in the cathedral.
- In **Milan (Milano)**, appreciate Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece, *The Last Supper*, which may be viewed at the convent of **Santa Maria delle Grazie** (website: [www.santamariadellegrazie.it](http://www.santamariadellegrazie.it)). **La Scala** (website: [www.teatroallascala.org](http://www.teatroallascala.org)) remains the undisputed world capital of opera.
- Visit **Genoa (Genova)**, the birthplace of Christopher Columbus. The **Galleria di Palazzo Bianco** (website: [www.museopalazzobianco.it](http://www.museopalazzobianco.it)) has an exceptional collection of paintings by Genoese artists.
- Soak up the romance of **Verona**, the setting of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. The **Casa di Giulietta** (Juliet's House) attracts thousands of visitors each year. The **Roman Arena**, built in AD290, is the site of an annual opera festival.
- Discover early Byzantine and Christian monuments decorated with stunning mosaics in **Ravenna** (website: [www.turismo.ravenna.it](http://www.turismo.ravenna.it)), including the splendid **Mausoleum of Galla Placidia**, a UNESCO-listed World Heritage Site.
- Visit **Florence (Firenze)** and see Brunelleschi's revolutionary design for the **Duomo** (cathedral, website: [www.duomofirenze.it](http://www.duomofirenze.it)). Walk across the medieval shop-lined **Ponte Vecchio** bridge or see the impressive art collections of the **Uffizi Gallery** (website: [www.firenzemusei.it](http://www.firenzemusei.it)). Michelangelo's famous statue of *David* may be viewed at the **Galleria dell'Accademia**.
- Take a picture of the famous **Leaning Tower** (website: <http://torre.duomo.pisa.it>), a free-standing *campanile* or bell tower in **Pisa**.
- Visit the place where pizza was invented, **Naples** (website: [www.inaples.it](http://www.inaples.it)). The impressive **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** houses an excellent collection of Greco-Roman artefacts, including mosaics from Pompeii.
- Understand how first-century Romans lived their daily lives at the remains of **Pompeii** (website: [www.pompeiisites.org](http://www.pompeiisites.org)) and **Herculaneum**, engulfed in the great eruption of AD79.
- Visit the **Basilica di San Francesco** in Assisi, the birthplace of St Francis, founder of the Franciscan order of monks.

- Stand in the stunning **Piazza del Campo** in **Siena**, the shell-shaped heart of this walled medieval city in southern Tuscany.
  - Sail to **Sicily**, littered with the remains of successive invading cultures. The most important ancient Greek sites include the temples of the **Valle dei Templi** at **Agrigento**, said to be better preserved than any in Greece itself. The catacombs at the **Capuchin Monastery** contain thousands of mummified bodies.
- See *Contact Addresses* for further tourist information.

## Communications

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### Telephone

Country code: 39 (followed by 6 for Rome, 2 for Milan, 11 for Turin, 81 for Naples, 41 for Venice and 55 for Florence). Telephone kiosks only accept phonecards, which can be purchased at post offices, tobacconists and certain newsagents.

### Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies. Coverage is good.

### Internet

Public access is available in Internet Corner Kiosks operated by *Telecom Italia*. Kiosks have been installed at airports, major hotels and in other public places. There are also Internet cafes in all main towns.

### Media

Italy's newspapers are strongly regionalised, with many papers produced in Milan. The press is free but ties with politics can be strong – notably in broadcast media. RAI, the public broadcaster, has been subject to political influence and the vast Mediaset media empire is controlled by former premier Silvio Berlusconi.

### Post

The Italian postal system tends to be subject to delays. Letters between Italy and other European countries usually take seven to 10 days to arrive. Stamps are sold in post offices and tobacconists.

**Post office hours:** Mon-Fri 0830-1400, Sat 0815-1200. Central offices are open until 1700 during the week.

### Press

- Among the most important Italian dailies are *Corriere della Sera* (Milan), *Il Messaggero* (Rome), *La Repubblica* (Rome) and *La Stampa* (Turin).
- *Il Sole 24 Ore* is the daily financial publication.
- *The Informer* is a useful English-language online guide for expatriates living in Italy.
- The main towns publish a weekly booklet with entertainment programmes, sports events, restaurants, nightclubs, etc.
- There are several English-language publications: monthly magazines *Enigma Roma* (Rome), *Grapevine* (on the Luca area) and *Hello Milano* (Milan), as well as *Wanted In Rome*, published twice-monthly.

### Radio

- *RAI* is the public broadcaster. Its stations include *Radio 1*, *Radio 2*, *Radio 3* and *GR Parlamento*.
- Commercial stations include *Radio 24*, *Radio 101* and *Radio Italia*.

## Travel Advice

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### Warning

Most visits to Italy are trouble-free but you should be aware of the global risk of indiscriminate international terrorist attacks, which could be against civilian targets, including places frequented by foreigners. There continues to be isolated cases of domestic terrorism in Italy by extreme left wing and secessionist groups which are aimed primarily at official Italian targets.

There is currently a risk of unannounced wildcat strikes by municipal transport workers in cities across Italy. Travellers are advised to check local travel reports for dates of pre-planned strikes.

Visitors should be alert to the dangers of car and street crimes in cities.

There continues to be non-violent volcanic activity on the island of Stromboli. Italy is in an earthquake zone.

Visitors to ski resorts should take advice on weather and avalanche conditions before they travel and should make themselves aware of local skiing laws and regulations throughout their visit (see: [www.goski.com/italy.htm](http://www.goski.com/italy.htm) and [www.avalanches.org](http://www.avalanches.org)).

This advice is based on information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. It is correct at time of publishing. As the situation can change rapidly, visitors are advised to contact the following organisations for the latest travel advice.

**British Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Tel: 0845 850 2829.

Website: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

**US Department of State**

Website: <http://travel.state.gov/travel>