

a taste of Europe...

ITALY



GENERAL INFORMATION

> **Full country name:**

Italian Republic

> **Area:**

301,250 sq km

> **Population:**

57.6 million

> **Capital city:**

Rome (pop 2.6 million)

> **People:**

Italian

> **Language:**

Standard Italian and numerous dialects,
German, French, Slovene

> **Religion:**

85% Roman Catholic, 5% Jewish and Protestant

> **Major industries:**

Tourism, engineering, textiles, chemicals, food processing, motor vehicles, clothing & footwear

> **Currency:**

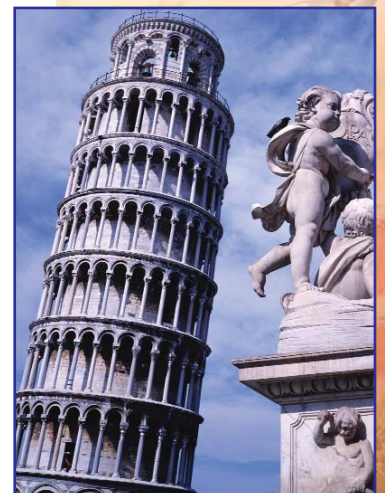
Euro € (The Euro replaced the Lira as the official currency on 1st January 2002)



Italy takes the shape of a quite famous boot, a 100-150 mile-wide peninsula, about 760 miles in length. It is a major economic force on the European continent and one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Some say the Italians invented tourism in the 16th century, and it is safe to say that no country has given the world more fine automobiles, fashions, paintings, sculptures, architectural styles, operas, and of course...food.

It's a rugged, mountainous country with two major islands (Sardinia and Sicily) off the southwestern coast. Italy is home to many amazing cities; there are the stylish centres of Milan, Turin, Naples and Venice, and then, of course, there's the historic beauty and tradition of Rome and the Vatican City.

Leaning Tower of Pisa



a taste of Europe...

ITALY



DID YOU KNOW...

> **The term** “spaghetti western” originated during the 1960’s. Moviemakers made low-budget western films in Italy because it was cheaper to do so there than in the United States.

> **The first city** to reach a population of 1 million people was Rome in 133 BC.

> **In Italy**, they do not have Christmas trees. They decorate small pyramid shaped wooden stands with fruit.

> **In Venice**, the floating city, the main means of transport is the boat. The postman comes down the canal, so does the fireman or the policeman if you need him. The rubbish is collected by boat, the plumber comes by boat, the vegetable vendor comes by boat, the school bus is a boat. Even the ambulance is a boat; a very fast boat!

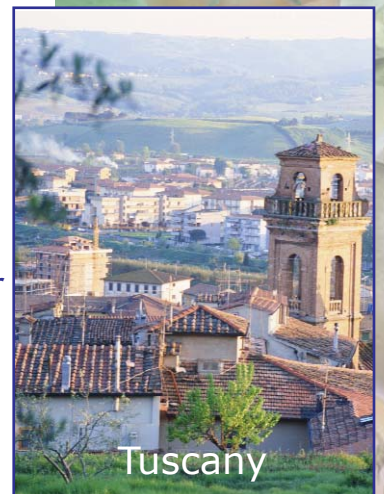
> **Florence, Italy**, was the first city to mint its own gold coins in 1252. This coin became known as the florin.

> **MAFIA is an acronym** for Morte alla Eranzia Italica anela, or ‘Death to the French is Italy’s Cry’.

> **The Vatican City**, as well as being the smallest city in the world, is also one of the only countries within another country (it is inside Italy). The other is San Marino, also inside Italy.

> **Jeans were named after Genoa**, Italy, where sailors were the first people to wear the garment.

> **Santa Claus is a witch** in Italy! *La Befana*, a kindly witch, rides a broomstick down the chimney to deliver toys into the stockings of Italian children. The legends say that *Befana* was sweeping her floors when the Three Wise Men stopped to ask her to come to see the Baby Jesus. She didn’t go. Later, when she changed her mind, it was too late. So, to this day, she goes out on Christmas Eve searching for the Holy Child, leaving gifts for him in each household!



Tuscany



Duomo in Milan

a taste of Europe...

ITALY



ITALIAN
FOOD

You're already thinking pizza and pasta, right? Well that's fair enough, and quite right to an extent. However, real Italian cuisine is quite different to the version eaten by millions of Brits every week!

Take Italian pizza for example. In order for a pizza to meet the Naples seal of approval it must meet some quite strict requirements; it must be made from only fresh Italian ingredients, be no larger than 12 inches in diameter, and it must not be cut using a knife as this can cause a metallic flavour in the cheese.

Pasta is the first course of most Italian meals and has more than 400 different forms. Types of pasta include *spaghetti*, *macaroni*, *ravioli* and *cannelloni*. There are also many different varieties of sauces, which are the undisputed counterparts of pasta dishes. The most popular ones include cream, tomato, cheese, meat or fish.

Most of the great Italian dishes come from peasant heritage and the common characteristic is that they can be prepared very quickly and economically. Nearly all Italian dishes are high in vegetables and carbohydrates and low in animal fat. It is probably the best known approach to a health conscious life-style without avoiding tasty food.

> Nibbles....

Canned herring were dubbed "sardines" because the canning process was first developed in Sardinia, Italy.

Espresso is becoming one of the most popular drinks in the world. In Italy alone, more than one billion pounds of the coffee are consumed each year.

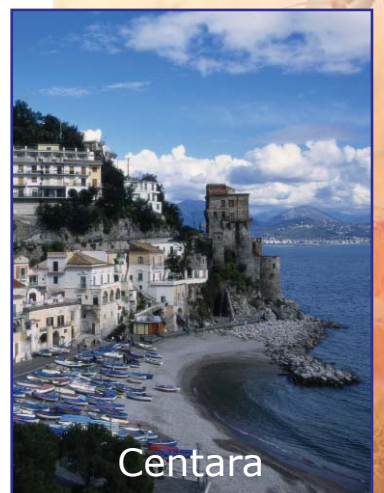
Olive oil is made only from green olives. Nearly the entire production of green olives grown in Italy is converted into olive oil.

McDonald's restaurants in Italy include some typical Italian dishes on its menu, including *Marinara* salad with shrimps and salmon in fresh lettuce and *Fiordiriso*, a salad with rice, tuna, ham and mushrooms.

Italians eat a lot of courgette flowers. A delicacy is courgette flowers in batter.



Colosseum
Rome



Centara

a taste of Europe...

ITALY



A LITTLE PIECE OF ITALY

Now one thing's for certain, the Italians know how to have fun! Italians have perfected the art of enjoying the good life. Look at what this country is famous for; food, wine, cars, and fashion! In fact, everything about the Italian way of life can be summed up in one word, *eloquio*; quite simply, *style!*

> Fashion

The Italian people certainly love their clothes. The fashion and clothing trade is Italy's second largest industry. Its products are admired the world over, and foreign buyers pack the twice yearly Milan *Collezione* (Collections) where some 30 shows are staged. Milan is the home of many of the world's most prestigious fashion houses such as Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace and Dolce & Gabbana.

> Sports Cars

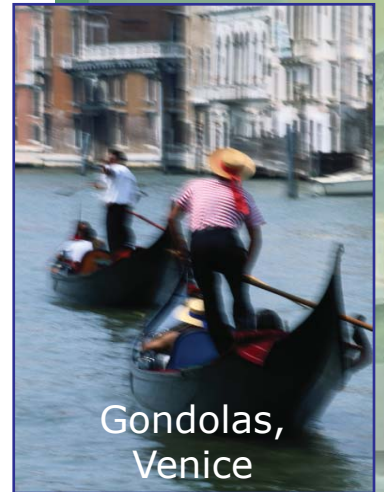
The Italians demand two things of their sports cars. They must look the part, oozing that famous Italian style, and they must have an engine that roars. It is this Italian love for the beautiful beast that has gifted the world with countless classic cars. Lamborghini, Maserati, Ferrari; for those who can afford the somewhat exuberant price tag, the Italian sports car is the ultimate designer label.

> Football

GoooooLazio!! In Italy there is a famous *proverbio* saying: the Italians love their mothers, their favourite football team and their cars. It is difficult to believe but football for the enthusiasts is almost a religion. 95% of Italians dedicate themselves for at least 2 hours every Sunday to the rituals of either going to the stadium or, if their team is playing away, they huddle around the radio to follow faithfully the ins and out of the game.

> The Arts

Dubbed the world's 'living art gallery', Italy has more "culture" than you can shake a paintbrush at. In fact, it has been calculated that this small country contains more than half of all the world's masterpieces. They have excelled not only in painting, sculpture and architecture, but also in literature, music and the cinema. Among Italy's most famous sons are Leonardo da Vinci, whose paintings include the Mona Lisa, and Michaelangelo, who famously painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.



Gondolas,
Venice

