

ITALY

Italy, a member of the European Union, is one of the most popular countries in the world, thanks to its history, culture, cuisine, and unique landscapes.

Italy is located in Southern Europe and resembles a "boot" surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea. It borders France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia. The **capital** of the country is **Rome**, also known as the “Eternal City,” a place full of monuments and historical significance.

Italy has a **population** of approximately 60 million people. It is a **parliamentary democracy**, and the official **language** spoken is **Italian**. The **currency** of Italy is the **euro (€)**, as it is a member of the **Eurozone**.



Italy is the birthplace of the **Roman Civilization** and the **Renaissance movement**. Since antiquity, it has been a center of trade and culture, while during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, **Florence**, **Venice**, and **Rome** were powerful hubs of art and science.

Italy is the country with the **most UNESCO World Heritage Sites**. Its most famous **landmarks** include:

- ➡ **The Colosseum (Rome)** – One of the largest ancient amphitheaters in the world and the most famous monument in Rome.
- ➡ **The Leaning Tower of Pisa** – Famous for its tilt, it stands as a global symbol of Italy.
- ➡ **The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican** – Renowned for its frescoes painted by **Michelangelo**.

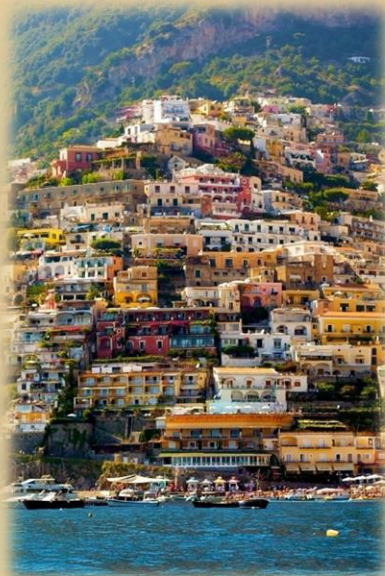


➡ **St. Mark's Square (Venice)** – One of the most beautiful squares in the world, surrounded by historic buildings.

➡ **The Milan Cathedral (Duomo di Milano)** – An impressive Gothic cathedral known for its breathtaking architecture.

➡ **The Amalfi Coast** – One of the country's most picturesque destinations, the Amalfi Coast enchants with its colorful houses clinging to steep cliffs and its heavenly beaches.

➡ **The ancient ruins of Pompeii** – An ancient Roman city buried by the volcanic eruption of Mount Vesuvius.



Italian cuisine is among the most famous in the world. Some of its most iconic dishes include:

- **Margherita Pizza** – The most well-known pizza, made with tomato, mozzarella, and basil. 🍕
- **Spaghetti Carbonara** – A traditional dish made with eggs, cheese, bacon, and black pepper. 🍝
- **Parmigiana di Melanzane & Lasagna** – Baked dishes made with layers of pasta, ground meat, and béchamel sauce. 🍷
- **Risotto** – A creamy rice dish that can be combined with a variety of ingredients, such as seafood or mushrooms. 🍷
- **Tiramisu** – A dessert made with coffee, ladyfinger biscuits, and a creamy cheese mixture. 🍰
- **Panettone** – A traditional Christmas cake from Milan, filled with raisins and nuts. 🍞
- **Limoncello** – A sweet lemon liqueur. 🍹



🍷 Among the most notable Italian drinks are **Chianti wine**, **Limoncello**, and **Espresso**.

Italy is also known for its rich **traditions** such as:

- **Catholic Easter**, celebrated with grandeur across the country, especially with the event known as “*Scoppio del Carro*” (Explosion of the Cart).
- **Carnivals**, with the most famous being the **Venice Carnival**, featuring colorful costumes and masks.
- **Ferragosto** (August 15th), a national holiday that marks the start of the summer vacation season for Italians.

Some of the most famous Italian **figures** include:

- ❖ **Leonardo da Vinci** – A polymath and artist, best known for works like the *Mona Lisa*.
- ❖ **Michelangelo** – A sculptor and painter who created the *Statue of David* and the frescoes in the *Sistine Chapel*.



Italy hosts many significant **festivals** every year, such as:

- 🏆 **The Venice Film Festival** – The oldest film festival in the world, held every September.
- 🏆 **The Venice Carnival** – Famous worldwide for its masks and costumes.
- 🏆 **The Palio di Siena (Horse Race)** – A traditional horse race held twice a year in the city of Siena.
- 🏆 **The Opera Festival at the Arena di Verona** – An important cultural event for opera lovers.

Italy remains a unique destination that blends history, culture, gastronomy, and art, always being one of the most significant centers in the world.



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