

# Italy

## Map of the country





# Italy

## Brief Historical Overview



- Italy has a population of 58,103,033 of Italians (including small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian-Italians and Greek-Italians in the south)
- It is predominately Roman Catholic with mature Protestant and Jewish communities and a growing Muslim immigrant community.
- 16 regions (regioni, singular - regione) and 5 autonomous regions\* (regioni autonome, singular - regione autonoma); Abruzzo, Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Emilia-Romagna, Friuli-Venezia Giulia\*, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardia, Marche, Molise, Piemonte, Puglia, Sardegna\*, Sicilia\*, Toscana, Trentino-Alto Adige\*, Umbria, Valle d'Aosta\*, Veneto
- on 1 January 1999, the European Monetary Union introduced the euro as a common currency to be used by financial institutions of member countries; on 1 January 2002, the euro became the sole currency for everyday transactions within the member countries
- 56 million cell phones for a population of 58 million!!!



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- Italy became a nation-state in 1861 when the city-states of the peninsula, along with Sardinia and Sicily, were united under King Victor EMMANUEL II. Rome is the capital city.
- An era of parliamentary government came to a close in the early 1920s when Benito MUSSOLINI established a Fascist dictatorship. His disastrous alliance with Nazi Germany led to Italy's defeat in World War II.
- A democratic republic replaced the monarchy in 1946 and economic revival followed.
- Italy was a charter member of NATO and the European Economic Community (EEC). It has been at the forefront of European economic and political unification, joining the Economic and Monetary Union in 1999.
- *Chief of state:* President Carlo Azeglio CIAMPI (since 13 May 1999)  
*Head of government:* Prime Minister (referred to in Italy as the president of the Council of Ministers) Silvio BERLUSCONI (since 10 June 2001)

*Information from the CIA World Factbook*



# Italy

## Major Holidays and Traditions

1: New Year's Day

January 6: Epiphany

March 28: Easter Monday (in 2005)

April 25: Liberation Day

May 1: Labor Day

June 2: Anniversary of the Founding of the Republic

August 15: Feast of the Assumption (also known as Ferragosto)

November 1: All Saints

December 8: Feast of the Immaculate Conception

December 25: Christmas Day

December 26: St. Stephen's Day (Boxing Day)



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## National Dish

There is a lot of variety in Italian cuisine, and no real national dish. Each region has its specialty, but one thing common to most regions is a good tomato sauce.

### The real way to make a tomato sauce

The key to a good tomato sauce is the sauté you start it with, giving the sauce a distinctive and full flavor.

1 carrot

1 stalk of celery

1 medium onion

3 cloves of garlic

2 16 oz cans of tomatoes

Olive oil

Pinch of sugar

Chop the carrot, celery, and onion very finely. Heat olive oil to medium heat in a saucepan, and add the three vegetables. Sauté for 3 minutes, then add the peeled cloves of garlic. After 2 more minutes, add the cans of tomatoes, adding a little sugar to offset the acidity of the tomatoes. Cook over medium heat for 30-40 minutes.

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## Major Languages

Italian is the official national language, but there are other languages present in Italy: German (parts of Trentino-Alto Adige region are predominantly German speaking), French (small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta region), Slovene (Slovene-speaking minority in the Trieste-Gorizia area).

In addition, there are many regional groups that go by their ethnic name, such as Genovesi, Milanesi, Lombardi, Siciliani, Sardi; and have their own dialects. These are mostly spoken by the older generations, but are not threatened by extinction.

## Basic vocabulary in Italian:

Hello – Ciao

Good day – Buon giorno

Good evening – Buona sera

Good bye - Arrivederci

Thank you – Grazie

You're welcome - Prego

How much does it cost? – Quanto costa?

Where is the restroom? – Dov'è la toilette?

Excuse me/I am sorry - Scusi / Mi dispiace

Yes – Sì

No – No

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## Travel Tips

When traveling to Italy, remember that the currency is the Euro, along with most European countries. This will save you from having to change currency between them.

Most people in large cities speak at least a little English, but once you leave metropolitan areas you may need to bring a phrase book with you!

There are many bed and breakfasts, called pensioni, that offer a more traditional stay than hotels.

Popular sports include soccer, rugby, skiing. There are many local soccer games on weekends in cities that have a professional team.

Although most think of Italy as a summer destination, the Alps and Apennine mountain ranges offer many good occasions for skiing and snowboarding in winter time.

*Information from the CIA World Factbook, Wikipedia, and other websites.*