

Italy Quick Facts:

- The name for Italy comes from the Greek "Italos", a legendary king
- The official name of Italy is the Italian Republic.
- Italy is the fifth most populous country in Europe.
- Rome, the capital of Italy, is almost 3,000 years old.
- Rome is also the biggest city in Italy, which is home to the Dome of St. Peter's, the Sistine Chapel, the Colosseum, and the Trevi Fountain.
- The most popular religion is Roman Catholicism.
- Italy became one nation only in 1861 and includes the islands of Sicily and Sardinia. It was a kingdom until 1946 after the second World War, where Italy sided with the German Nazis.
- Italy is founding member of the European Union (EU) and the NATO.
- Italy is the fourth most visited country in the world.
- Tourism is vital to Italy's economy and provides nearly 63% of Italy's national income.
- The colors of the flag represent these virtues: hope (green), faith (white), and charity (red).



- Italy lies in Southern Europe.
- The country is shaped like a boot.
- Italy is subdivided in 20 regions.
- Italy has 50 Unesco World Heritage Sites, the most of any country in the world.
- In terms of population, Italy is the third oldest country in the world, behind Japan and Germany.
- Many Shakespeare plays were set in Italy, including *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice*.
- The world's longest land tunnel is the Lötschberg Base Tunnel, which proves a 22-mile railway link between Switzerland and Italy.
- Italy has more than 7,600km (4,722 miles) of coastline as the peninsula is located for a large part in the Mediterranean sea.



- Italy has two bigger islands, Sicily and Sardinia, and many smaller ones such as Capri, Elba and Ischia.
- In the North, the mountain range of the Alps separates Italy from the other European countries France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia.
- The highest mountain of Italy, the Monte Bianco, can be found in the Italian Alps. The mountain is 4,807m (15,776 feet) tall.
- The Po is Italy's longest river.
- The Apennines are another big mountain range which go all along the boot and separate the East and the West of the country.
- In the South of Italy, there are three active volcanoes: Vesuvius near Naples, Etna on Sicily and Stromboli off the coast of Italy.
- Italy surrounds two of the world's smallest countries: San Marino in Northern Italy, the oldest republic in the world, and Vatican City in Rome, the smallest country in the world. Vatican City is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, led by the Pope.
- The University of Rome is one of the world's oldest universities and was founded by the Catholic Church in A.D. 1303. The University of Rome is also Europe's largest university with 150,000 students.



Italian Language:

- Italian is a Romance language descended from Vulgar Latin, the dialect spoken by the people living during the last years of the Roman Empire.
- Italian has more Latin words than any other Romance languages, and its grammatical system remains similar to Latin.
- Latin is still the official language of the Vatican City in Rome.
- Italian is a language which comes from Latin.
- Not all people in Italy speak proper Italian.
- The language of music is Italian. The word "scale" comes from scala, meaning "step." And andante, allegro, presto, and vivace are just a few of the many Italian musical notations.
- The pronunciation is soft and very melodic and so is still used in opera and is popular by young musicians.

Italian Culture:

- Italians love sports: cycling, skiing, soccer and motor racing. The Italian soccer league is followed by many Italians abroad too: Inter Milan, Lazio Roma and Juventus Turin.
- Italy is among the world's leaders of the fashion industry, as Milan being one of the fashion capitals of the world.
- Italians are famous for their inventions and discoveries. The Italian explorers Christopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci discovered the Americas while Marco Polo explored the East.
- Leonardo da Vinci was a scientist and artist who was the first to prove the world is round and not flat and Alessandro Volta, was the pioneer who did studies in electricity, hence the name 'Volt' describing a unit of electricity.
- Italians also invented the piano and the thermometer.
- Pizza is surely one of the most famous exports and in Italy it is usually baked in a wood-fired oven and very thin.
- Italy is responsible for introducing the world to gelato (ice cream), coffee, and fruit pies.
- Parmesan cheese originated in the area around Parma, Italy. Italians also created many other cheeses, including gorgonzola, mozzarella, provolone, and ricotta.

