General Information   
  
Location: In the northwest Italy borders to France (488 km), in the north to Switzerland (740 km) and Austria (430 km) and in the northeast to Slovenia (232 km). It also contains two other (very small) countries: Vatican City and San Marino. The distance between north to south is about 1200 kilometers. From east to west the distance is never more than 170 and never less than 54 kilometers (except in the north).  
Area: 301,230 sq.km.   
  
Relief: Mountain ranges higher than 2,300 ft (702 m) occupy more than one-third of Italy. There are two mountain systems: the scenic Alps, parts of which lie within the neighbouring countries of France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia; and the Apennines, which form the spine of the entire peninsula and of the island of Sicily. A third mountain system exists on the two large islands to the west, Italian Sardinia and French Corsica.

Climate: Italy has a predominantly Mediterranean climate; Alpine in far north; hot, dry in south. In summertime the average temperatures in the lowlands are 28°C in the south and 22°C in the north. The winter is very cold in the Alps, cold and foggy in the Po Plain and the central Apennines; mild and even warm on the Ligurian coast, the Neapolitan coast and in Sicilia.  
  
Population: Italy has almost 57 million inhabitants. The areas around the big cities have the largest population density. About 18% of the population lives in one of the cities with 350,000 inhabitants or more.

Language: Italian is the official language but in the provence Bolzano (southern Tirol) a lot of people speak German (about 200,000 people), in some of the valleys of Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta people speak French (about 100,000 people); in the valleys of the Dolomites and the region Friuli-Venezia Giulia some speak Raetoroman. In the provence of Basilicata, southern Italy, a part of the population even speaks Albanese.

Alphabet: Latin  
  
Religion: Roman Catholicism is, by far, the largest religion in the country, although Catholicism is no longer officially the state religion. In 2010, the proportion of Italians that identify themselves as Roman Catholic was 81.2%.  
  
State government: Italy has been a democratic republic since 2 June 1946  
  
Capital: Rome(population 4,321,244)   
  
Large Cities: Milan, Naples, Turin, Palermo, Genoa.