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**Italy** ([Template:Lang-it](/wiki/Template:Lang-it) [Template:IPA-it](/wiki/Template:IPA-it)), officially the **Italian Republic** ([Template:Lang-it](/wiki/Template:Lang-it)),[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) is a [unitary](/wiki/Unitary_state) [parliamentary republic](/wiki/Parliamentary_republic) in [Europe](/wiki/Europe).[[note 1]](#cite_note-5) Italy covers an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and has a largely [temperate seasonal climate](/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification) or [Mediterranean climate](/wiki/Mediterranean_climate); due to its shape, it is often referred to in Italy as *lo Stivale* (the [Boot](/wiki/Boot)).[[5]](#cite_note-6)[[6]](#cite_note-7) With 61 million inhabitants, it is the [3rd most populous EU member state](/wiki/List_of_European_Union_member_states_by_population). Located in the heart of the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea), Italy shares [open land borders](/wiki/Open_borders) with [France](/wiki/France), [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland), [Austria](/wiki/Austria), [Slovenia](/wiki/Slovenia), [San Marino](/wiki/San_Marino) and [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City).

Since [classical times](/wiki/Classical_antiquity), ancient [Phoenicians](/wiki/Phoenicia) and [Greeks](/wiki/Magna_Graecia), [Etruscans](/wiki/Etruscan_civilization), and [Celts](/wiki/Celts) have inhabited the south, centre and north of the [Italian Peninsula](/wiki/Italian_Peninsula) respectively, with various [Italic peoples](/wiki/Italic_peoples) dispersed throughout Italy alongside other [ancient Italian tribes](/wiki/List_of_ancient_peoples_of_Italy) and Greek, [Carthaginian](/wiki/Ancient_Carthage), and [Phoenician colonies](/wiki/Phoenician_colonies). The [Italic tribe](/wiki/Italic_tribe) known as the [Latins](/wiki/Latins) formed the [Roman Kingdom](/wiki/Roman_Kingdom), which eventually spread throughout Italy, [assimilating](/wiki/Romanization_(cultural)) and conquering other nearby civilizations and forming the [Roman Republic](/wiki/Roman_Republic). [Rome](/wiki/Ancient_Rome) ultimately emerged as the [dominant power](/wiki/Roman_Empire), conquering much of the [ancient world](/wiki/Ecumene) and becoming the leading cultural, political, and religious [centre](/wiki/Caput_mundi) of [Western civilisation](/wiki/Western_world). The [legacy of the Roman Empire](/wiki/Legacy_of_the_Roman_Empire) is widespread and can be observed in the global distribution of [civilian law](/wiki/Civilian_law), [republican governments](/wiki/Republican_government), [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) and the [Latin script](/wiki/Latin_script).

During the [Dark Ages](/wiki/Dark_Ages_(historiography)), Italy suffered [sociopolitical collapse](/wiki/Collapse_of_the_Roman_Empire) amid calamitous [barbarian invasions](/wiki/Migration_Period), but by the 11th century, numerous rival [city-states](/wiki/Italian_city-states) and [maritime republics](/wiki/Maritime_republics) rose to great prosperity through shipping, commerce, and banking, and even laid the groundwork for [capitalism](/wiki/Capitalism).[[7]](#cite_note-8) These independent city-states and regional republics, acting as Europe's main port of entry for [Asian](/wiki/Asia) and [Near Eastern](/wiki/Near_East) imported goods, often enjoyed a greater degree of [democracy](/wiki/Democracy) in comparison to the [monarchies](/wiki/Monarchies) and [feudal](/wiki/Feudalism) states found throughout Europe at the time, though much of [central Italy](/wiki/Central_Italy) remained under the control of the [theocratic](/wiki/Theocratic) [Papal States](/wiki/Papal_States), while [Southern Italy](/wiki/Southern_Italy) remained largely feudal, partially as a result of a succession of [Byzantine](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire), [Arab](/wiki/History_of_Islam_in_southern_Italy), [Norman](/wiki/Norman_conquest_of_southern_Italy), [Spanish](/wiki/Crown_of_Aragon), and [Bourbon](/wiki/House_of_Bourbon) conquests of the region.<ref name=natgeo>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

During the [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance), a period of renewed interest in [humanism](/wiki/Renaissance_humanism), [science](/wiki/Renaissance_science), [exploration](/wiki/Renaissance_exploration) and [art](/wiki/Renaissance_art), Italy and the rest of Europe entered the [modern era](/wiki/Modern_era). The Italian culture flourished at this time, producing famous scholars, artists, and [polymaths](/wiki/Polymaths) such as [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci), [Galileo](/wiki/Galileo), [Michelangelo](/wiki/Michelangelo) and [Machiavelli](/wiki/Machiavelli). Italian explorers such as [Marco Polo](/wiki/Marco_Polo), [Christopher Columbus](/wiki/Christopher_Columbus), [Amerigo Vespucci](/wiki/Amerigo_Vespucci), and [Giovanni da Verrazzano](/wiki/Giovanni_da_Verrazzano) discovered new routes to the [Far East](/wiki/Far_East) and the [New World](/wiki/New_World), helping to usher in the European [Age of Discovery](/wiki/Age_of_Discovery). Nevertheless, Italy's importance as a commercial and political power significantly waned with the opening of trade routes from the New World, as New World imports and trade routes became more influential in Europe and bypassed the East Asian and Mediterranean trade routes that the Italian city-states had dominated.[[8]](#cite_note-9)[[9]](#cite_note-10)<ref name=bouchard>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Furthermore, the Italian city-states constantly engaged one another in bloody [warfare](/wiki/Warfare), with this tension and violent rivalry culminating in the [Italian Wars](/wiki/Italian_Wars) of the 15th and 16th centuries, a series of wars and foreign invasions that left the Italian states vulnerable to [annexation](/wiki/Annexation) by neighboring European powers. Italy would remain politically fragmented and fall prey to [occupation](/wiki/Military_occupation), [colonization](/wiki/Colonization), [conquest](/wiki/Conquest_(military)), and general [foreign domination](/wiki/Foreign_domination) by [European powers](/wiki/Power_(international_relations)#Modern_Age_European_powers) such as [France](/wiki/French_First_Empire), [Spain](/wiki/Spanish_Empire), and later [Austria](/wiki/Austrian_Empire), subsequently entering a long period of decline.

By the mid-19th century, a rising movement in support of [Italian nationalism](/wiki/Italian_nationalism) and Italian independence from foreign control lead to a period of [revolutionary](/wiki/Revolutionary) political upheaval known as the [*Risorgimento*](/wiki/Risorgimento), which sought to bring about a rebirth of Italian cultural and economic prominence by liberating and consolidating the Italian peninsula and [insular Italy](/wiki/Insular_Italy) into an independent and unified nation-state. After various unsuccessful attempts, the [Italian Wars of Independence](/wiki/Italian_Wars_of_Independence), the [Expedition of the Thousand](/wiki/Expedition_of_the_Thousand) and the [capture of Rome](/wiki/Capture_of_Rome) resulted in the eventual [unification](/wiki/Italian_unification) of the country, now a [great power](/wiki/Great_power) after centuries of foreign domination and political division.[[10]](#cite_note-11) From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, the new [Kingdom of Italy](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Italy) rapidly [industrialized](/wiki/Industrialized), especially in the so-called *Industrial Triangle* of [Milan](/wiki/Milan), [Turin](/wiki/Turin) and [Genoa](/wiki/Genoa) in [the North](/wiki/Northern_Italy) , and soon acquired a [colonial empire](/wiki/Italian_Empire).[[11]](#cite_note-12)[[12]](#cite_note-13) According to one of the more common explanations, the term [*Italia*](/wiki/Italia_(Roman_Empire)), from [Template:Lang-lat](/wiki/Template:Lang-lat),[[21]](#cite_note-22) was borrowed through [Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek) from the [Oscan](/wiki/Oscan_language) *Víteliú*, meaning "land of young cattle" (*cf.* [Lat](/wiki/Latin) *vitulus* "calf", [Umb](/wiki/Umbrian_language) *vitlo* "calf").[[22]](#cite_note-23) The bull was a symbol of the southern Italic tribes and was often depicted goring the Roman wolf as a defiant symbol of free Italy during the [Social War](/wiki/Social_War_(91–88_BC)). Greek historian [Dionysius of Halicarnassus](/wiki/Dionysius_of_Halicarnassus) states this account together with the legend that Italy was named after [Italus](/wiki/Italus),[[23]](#cite_note-24) mentioned also by [Aristotle](/wiki/Aristotle)[[24]](#cite_note-25) and [Thucydides](/wiki/Thucydides).[[25]](#cite_note-26) The name *Italia* originally applied only to a part of what is now [Southern Italy](/wiki/Southern_Italy) – according to [Antiochus of Syracuse](/wiki/Antiochus_of_Syracuse), the southern portion of the Bruttium peninsula (modern [Calabria](/wiki/Calabria): province of [Reggio](/wiki/Reggio_Calabria), and part of the provinces of [Catanzaro](/wiki/Catanzaro) and [Vibo Valentia](/wiki/Vibo_Valentia)). But by his time [Oenotria](/wiki/Oenotria) and Italy had become synonymous, and the name also applied to most of [Lucania](/wiki/Lucania) as well. The Greeks gradually came to apply the name "Italia" to a larger region, but it was during the reign of [Emperor](/wiki/Roman_Emperor) [Augustus](/wiki/Augustus) (end of the 1st century BC) that the term was expanded to cover the entire peninsula until the Alps.[[26]](#cite_note-27)

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## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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### Prehistory and antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

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[thumb|The](/wiki/File:Colosseum_in_Rome,_Italy_-_April_2007.jpg) [Colosseum](/wiki/Colosseum) in Rome, built c. 70 – 80 AD, is considered one of the greatest works of [architecture](/wiki/Architecture) and [engineering](/wiki/Engineering) of ancient history.

Excavations throughout Italy revealed a [Neanderthal](/wiki/Neanderthal) presence dating back to the [Paleolithic](/wiki/Paleolithic) period, some 200,000 years ago,[[27]](#cite_note-28) [modern Humans](/wiki/Anatomically_modern_humans) arrived about 40,000 years ago. The [Ancient peoples](/wiki/Ancient_peoples_of_Italy) of pre-Roman Italy – such as the [Umbrians](/wiki/Umbri), the [Latins](/wiki/Latins) (from which the [Romans](/wiki/Ancient_Rome) emerged), [Volsci](/wiki/Volsci), [Oscans](/wiki/Oscans), [Samnites](/wiki/Samnites), [Sabines](/wiki/Sabines), the [Celts](/wiki/Celts), the [Ligures](/wiki/Ligures), and many others – were [Indo-European](/wiki/Indo-European) peoples; the main historic peoples of possible non-Indo-European heritage include the [Etruscans](/wiki/Etruscans), the [Elymians](/wiki/Elymians) and [Sicani](/wiki/Sicani) in Sicily and the [prehistoric](/wiki/History_of_Sardinia) [Sardinians](/wiki/Sardinians), which includes the [Nuragic civilization](/wiki/Nuragic_civilization). Other ancient Italian peoples of undetermined language families but of possible non-Indo-European origins include the [Rhaetian people](/wiki/Rhaetian_people) and [Cammuni](/wiki/Cammuni), known for their [rock carvings](/wiki/Rock_Drawings_in_Valcamonica).

Between the 17th and the 11th centuries BC [Mycenaean Greeks](/wiki/Mycenaean_Greece) established contacts with Italy[[28]](#cite_note-29)[[29]](#cite_note-30)[[30]](#cite_note-31)[[31]](#cite_note-32) and in the 8th and 7th centuries BC [Greek colonies](/wiki/Greek_colonies) were established all along the coast of [Sicily](/wiki/Sicily) and the southern part of the Italian Peninsula became known as [Magna Graecia](/wiki/Magna_Graecia). Also the [Phoenicians](/wiki/Phoenicia) established colonies on the coasts of Sardinia and Sicily.

[Rome](/wiki/Ancient_Rome), a settlement around a ford on the river [Tiber](/wiki/Tiber) conventionally [founded](/wiki/Founding_of_Rome) in 753 BC, grew over the course of centuries into a massive [empire](/wiki/Roman_empire), stretching from [Britain](/wiki/Britannia_(Roman_province)) to the borders of [Persia](/wiki/Mesopotamia_(Roman_province)), and engulfing the whole [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean) basin, in which Greek and Roman and many other cultures merged into a unique [civilisation](/wiki/Greco-Roman_world). The Roman [legacy](/wiki/Legacy_of_the_Roman_Empire) has deeply influenced the Western civilisation, shaping most of the modern world.[[32]](#cite_note-33) In a slow [decline](/wiki/Decline_of_the_Roman_Empire) since the third century AD, the Empire split in two in 395 AD. The [Western Empire](/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire), under the pressure of the [barbarian invasions](/wiki/Migration_Period), eventually dissolved in 476 AD, when its [last Emperor](/wiki/Romulus_Augustulus) was deposed by the Germanic chief [Odoacer](/wiki/Odoacer), while the [Eastern](/wiki/Eastern_Roman_Empire) half of the Empire survived for another thousand years.

### Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

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After the [fall of the Western Roman Empire](/wiki/Fall_of_the_Western_Roman_Empire), Italy was seized by the [Ostrogoths](/wiki/Ostrogoths),[[33]](#cite_note-34) followed in the 6th century by a brief [reconquest](/wiki/Gothic_War_(535–554)) under [Byzantine](/wiki/Byzantine) Emperor [Justinian](/wiki/Justinian_I). The invasion of another [Germanic tribe](/wiki/Germanic_peoples), the [Lombards](/wiki/Lombards), late in the same century, reduced the Byzantine presence to a rump realm (the [Exarchate of Ravenna](/wiki/Exarchate_of_Ravenna)) and started the end of political unity of the peninsula for the next 1,300 years. The Lombard kingdom was subsequently absorbed into the [Frankish Empire](/wiki/Frankish_Empire) by [Charlemagne](/wiki/Charlemagne) in the late 8th century. The Franks also helped the formation of the [Papal States](/wiki/Papal_States) in central Italy. Until the 13th century, Italian politics was dominated by the relations between the [Holy Roman Emperors](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor) and the Papacy, with most of the Italian city-states siding for the former ([Ghibellines](/wiki/Ghibellines)) or for the latter ([Guelphs](/wiki/Guelphs)) from momentary convenience.[[34]](#cite_note-35) It was during this chaotic era that Italian towns saw the rise of a peculiar institution, the [medieval commune](/wiki/Medieval_commune). Given the power vacuum caused by extreme territorial fragmentation and the struggle between the Empire and the [Holy See](/wiki/Holy_See), local communities sought autonomous ways to maintain law and order.[[35]](#cite_note-36) In 1176 a league of city-states, the [Lombard League](/wiki/Lombard_League), defeated the German emperor [Frederick Barbarossa](/wiki/Frederick_Barbarossa) at the [Battle of Legnano](/wiki/Battle_of_Legnano), thus ensuring effective independence for most of northern and central Italian cities. In coastal and southern areas, the [maritime republics](/wiki/Maritime_republics), the most notable being [Venice](/wiki/Republic_of_Venice), [Genoa](/wiki/Republic_of_Genoa), [Pisa](/wiki/Republic_of_Pisa) and [Amalfi](/wiki/Amalfi), heavily involved in the [Crusades](/wiki/Crusades), grew to eventually dominate the Mediterranean and monopolise trade routes to the [Orient](/wiki/Orient).[[36]](#cite_note-37) In the south, Sicily had become an [Islamic emirate](/wiki/Islamic_conquest_of_Sicily) in the 9th century, thriving until the [Italo-Normans](/wiki/Italo-Normans) conquered it in the late 11th century together with most of the Lombard and Byzantine principalities of southern Italy.[[37]](#cite_note-38) Through a complex series of events, southern Italy developed as a unified kingdom, first under the [House of Hohenstaufen](/wiki/House_of_Hohenstaufen), then under the [Capetian House of Anjou](/wiki/Capetian_House_of_Anjou) and, from the 15th century, the [House of Aragon](/wiki/House_of_Aragon). In [Sardinia](/wiki/Sardinia), the former Byzantine provinces became independent states known as [Giudicati](/wiki/Giudicati), although some parts of the island were under Genoese or Pisan control until the Aragonese conquered it in the 15th century. The [Black Death](/wiki/Black_Death) [pandemic](/wiki/Pandemic) of 1348 left its mark on Italy by killing perhaps one third of the population.[[38]](#cite_note-39)[[39]](#cite_note-40) However, the recovery from the plague led to a resurgence of cities, trade and economy which allowed the bloom of [Humanism](/wiki/Humanism) and [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance), that later spread in Europe.

### Early Modern[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_-_presumed_self-portrait_-_WGA12798.jpg)[Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci), the quintessential [Renaissance man](/wiki/Renaissance_man) (self portrait, c. 1512).

In the 14th and 15th centuries, northern-central Italy was divided into a number of warring [city-states](/wiki/Italian_city-states), the rest of the peninsula being occupied by the larger Papal States and the [Kingdom of Sicily](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Sicily), referred to here as Naples. Though many of these city-states were often formally subordinate to foreign rulers, as in the case of the [Duchy of Milan](/wiki/Duchy_of_Milan), which was officially a [constituent state](/wiki/Constituent_state) of the mainly Germanic [Holy Roman Empire](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire), the city-states generally managed to maintain de facto independence from the foreign sovereigns that had seized Italian lands following the [collapse](/wiki/Fall_of_the_Western_Roman_Empire) of the [Western Roman Empire](/wiki/Western_Roman_Empire). The strongest among these city-states gradually absorbed the surrounding territories giving birth to the [Signorie](/wiki/Signoria), regional states often led by merchant families which founded local dynasties. War between the city-states was endemic, and primarily fought by armies of mercenaries known as [*condottieri*](/wiki/Condottiere), bands of soldiers drawn from around Europe, especially Germany and Switzerland, led largely by Italian captains.[[40]](#cite_note-41) Decades of fighting eventually saw [Florence](/wiki/Republic_of_Florence), [Milan](/wiki/Duchy_of_Milan) and [Venice](/wiki/Republic_of_Venice) emerged as the dominant players that agreed to the [Peace of Lodi](/wiki/Peace_of_Lodi) in 1454, which saw relative calm brought to the region for the first time in centuries. This peace would hold for the next forty years.

The [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance), a period of vigorous revival of the arts and culture, originated in Italy thanks to a number of factors, as the great wealth accumulated by merchant cities, the [patronage](/wiki/Patronage) of its dominant families like the [Medici](/wiki/Medici) of [Florence](/wiki/Florence),[[41]](#cite_note-42)[[42]](#cite_note-43) and the migration of [Greek scholars](/wiki/Greek_scholars_in_the_Renaissance) and texts to Italy following the [Conquest of Constantinople](/wiki/Conquest_of_Constantinople) at the hands of the [Ottoman Turks](/wiki/Ottoman_Turks).<ref name=Britannica1>Encyclopædia Britannica, *Renaissance*, 2008, O.Ed.</ref><ref name=Harris>Har, Michael H. *History of Libraries in the Western World*, Scarecrow Press Incorporate, 1999, ISBN 0-8108-3724-2</ref><ref name=Norwich>Norwich, John Julius, *A Short History of Byzantium*, 1997, Knopf, ISBN 0-679-45088-2</ref> The [Italian Renaissance](/wiki/Italian_Renaissance) peaked in the mid-16th century as foreign invasions plunged the region into the turmoil of the [Italian Wars](/wiki/Italian_Wars). The ideas and ideals of the Renaissance soon spread into [Northern Europe](/wiki/Northern_Renaissance), [France](/wiki/French_Renaissance), [England](/wiki/English_Renaissance) and much of Europe. In the meantime, the [discovery of the Americas](/wiki/Voyages_of_Christopher_Columbus), the new routes to Asia discovered by the Portuguese and the rise of the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire), all factors which eroded the traditional Italian dominance in trade with the East, caused a long economic decline in the peninsula.

Following the [Italian Wars](/wiki/Italian_Wars) (1494 to 1559), ignited by the rivalry between France and Spain, the city-states gradually lost their independence and came under foreign domination, first under [Spain](/wiki/Habsburg_Spain) (1559 to 1713) and then [Austria](/wiki/Habsburg_Austria) (1713 to 1796). In 1629–1631, a new outburst of [plague](/wiki/Italian_plague_of_1629–31) claimed about 14% of Italy's population.[[43]](#cite_note-44) In addition, as the Spanish Empire started to [decline](/wiki/The_decline_of_Hapsburg_Spain_in_the_seventeenth_century) in the 17th century, so did its possessions in Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and Milan. In particular, [Southern Italy](/wiki/Southern_Italy) was impoverished and cut off from the mainstream of events in Europe.[[44]](#cite_note-45) In the 18th century, as a result of the [War of Spanish Succession](/wiki/War_of_Spanish_Succession), [Austria](/wiki/Empire_of_Austria) replaced Spain as the dominant foreign power, while the [House of Savoy](/wiki/House_of_Savoy) emerged as a regional power expanding to [Piedmont](/wiki/Piedmont) and [Sardinia](/wiki/Sardinia). In the same century, the two-century long decline was interrupted by the economic and state reforms pursued in several states by the ruling élites.[[45]](#cite_note-46) During the [Napoleonic Wars](/wiki/Napoleonic_Wars), northern-central Italy was invaded and reorganised as a new [Kingdom of Italy](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Italy_(Napoleonic)), a [client state](/wiki/Client_state) of the [French Empire](/wiki/Napoleonic_France),[[46]](#cite_note-47) while the southern half of the peninsula was administered by [Joachim Murat](/wiki/Joachim_Murat), Napoleon's brother-in-law, who was crowned as [King of Naples](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Naples). The 1814 [Congress of Vienna](/wiki/Congress_of_Vienna) restored the situation of the late 18th century, but the ideals of the [French Revolution](/wiki/French_Revolution) could not be eradicated, and soon re-surfaced during the [political upheavals](/wiki/Political_revolution) that characterised the first part of the 19th century.

### Italian unification[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

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[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:With_Victor_Emmanuel.jpg)[Victor Emmanuel](/wiki/Victor_Emmanuel_II_of_Italy) meets [Giuseppe Garibaldi](/wiki/Giuseppe_Garibaldi) near Teano. [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Altar_della_Patria_September_2015-1.jpg) [Altare della Patria](/wiki/Altare_della_Patria) in Rome, [resting place of the Unknown Soldier](/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Unknown_Soldier). More than 650,000 Italian soldiers died on the battlefields of [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I).

The birth of the [Kingdom of Italy](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Italy) was the result of efforts by Italian nationalists and monarchists loyal to the [House of Savoy](/wiki/House_of_Savoy) to establish a united kingdom encompassing the entire [Italian Peninsula](/wiki/Italian_Peninsula). In the context of the [1848 liberal revolutions](/wiki/Revolutions_of_1848) that swept through Europe, an unsuccessful [war](/wiki/First_Italian_War_of_Independence) was declared on [Austria](/wiki/Austria-Hungary). The [Kingdom of Sardinia](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Sardinia) again attacked the Austrian Empire in the [Second Italian War of Independence](/wiki/Second_Italian_War_of_Independence) of 1859, with the aid of [France](/wiki/Second_French_Empire), resulting in liberating Lombardy.

In 1860–61, general [Giuseppe Garibaldi](/wiki/Giuseppe_Garibaldi) led the drive for unification in Naples and Sicily,[[47]](#cite_note-48) allowing the Sardinian government led by the [Count of Cavour](/wiki/Camillo_Benso) to declare a united Italian kingdom on 17 March 1861. In 1866, [Victor Emmanuel II](/wiki/Victor_Emmanuel_II_of_Italy) allied with [Prussia](/wiki/Prussia) during the [Austro-Prussian War](/wiki/Austro-Prussian_War), waging the [Third Italian War of Independence](/wiki/Third_Italian_War_of_Independence) which allowed Italy to annex [Venetia](/wiki/Veneto). Finally, as France during the disastrous [Franco-Prussian War](/wiki/Franco-Prussian_War) of 1870 abandoned its garrisons in Rome, the Italians rushed to fill the power gap by [taking over the Papal States](/wiki/Capture_of_Rome).

The Piedmontese [Albertine Statute](/wiki/Statuto_Albertino) of 1848, extended to the whole Kingdom of Italy in 1861, provided for basic freedoms, but electoral laws excluded the non-propertied and uneducated classes from voting. The government of the new kingdom took place in a framework of parliamentary constitutional monarchy dominated by liberal forces. In 1913, male universal suffrage was adopted. As [Northern Italy](/wiki/Northern_Italy) quickly industrialised, the South and rural areas of North remained underdeveloped and overpopulated, forcing millions of people to migrate abroad, while the [Italian Socialist Party](/wiki/Italian_Socialist_Party) constantly increased in strength, challenging the traditional liberal and conservative establishment. Starting from the last two decades of the 19th century, Italy developed into a colonial power by forcing [Somalia](/wiki/Italian_Somalia), [Eritrea](/wiki/Italian_Eritrea) and later [Libya](/wiki/Italian_Libya) and the [Dodecanese](/wiki/Italian_Dodecanese) under its rule.[[48]](#cite_note-49) Italy, nominally allied with the [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire) and the Empire of [Austria-Hungary](/wiki/Austria-Hungary) in the [Triple Alliance](/wiki/Triple_Alliance_(1882)), in 1915 joined the [Allies](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_I) into the war with a [promise](/wiki/Treaty_of_London_(1915)) of substantial territorial gains, that included western [Inner Carniola](/wiki/Inner_Carniola), former [Austrian Littoral](/wiki/Austrian_Littoral), [Dalmatia](/wiki/Dalmatia) as well as parts of the [Ottoman Empire](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire). The war was initially inconclusive, as the Italian army get struck in a long [attrition war](/wiki/Trench_warfare) in the Alps, making little progress and suffering very heavy losses. Eventually, in October 1918, the Italians launched a massive offensive, culminating in the victory of [Vittorio Veneto](/wiki/Battle_of_Vittorio_Veneto). The Italian victory[[49]](#cite_note-50)[[50]](#cite_note-51)[[51]](#cite_note-52) marked the end of the war on the Italian Front, secured the dissolution of the [Austro-Hungarian Empire](/wiki/Austro-Hungarian_Empire) and was chiefly instrumental in [ending](/wiki/Armistice_with_Germany) the First World War less than two weeks later.

During the war, more than 650,000 Italian soldiers and as many civilians died[[52]](#cite_note-53) and the kingdom went to the brink of bankruptcy. Under the Peace Treaties of [Saint-Germain](/wiki/Treaty_of_Saint-Germain-en-Laye_(1919)), [Rapallo](/wiki/Treaty_of_Rapallo,_1920) and [Rome](/wiki/Treaty_of_Rome,_1924), Italy obtained most of the promised territories, but not Dalmatia (except [Zara](/wiki/Zadar)), allowing nationalists to define the victory as "[mutilated](/wiki/Mutilated_victory)". Moreover, Italy annexed the Hungarian harbour of [Fiume](/wiki/Rijeka), that was not part of territories promised at London but [had been occupied](/wiki/Impresa_di_Fiume) after the end of the war by [Gabriele D'Annunzio](/wiki/Gabriele_D'Annunzio).

### Fascist Regime[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

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[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Benito_Mussolini_Duce.jpg)[Benito Mussolini](/wiki/Benito_Mussolini), [*Duce*](/wiki/Duce) of [Fascist Italy](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Italy#Fascist_regime_(1922–1943)).

The [socialist agitations](/wiki/Biennio_Rosso) that followed the devastation of the Great War, inspired by the [Russian Revolution](/wiki/Russian_Revolution), led to counter-revolution and repression throughout Italy. The liberal establishment, fearing a Soviet-style revolution, started to endorse the small [National Fascist Party](/wiki/National_Fascist_Party), led by [Benito Mussolini](/wiki/Benito_Mussolini). In October 1922 the [Blackshirts](/wiki/Blackshirts) of the National Fascist Party attempted a [coup](/wiki/Coup_d'état) (the "[March on Rome](/wiki/March_on_Rome)") which failed but at the last minute, King [Victor Emmanuel III](/wiki/Victor_Emmanuel_III) refused to proclaim a state of siege and appointed Mussolini prime minister. Over the next few years, Mussolini banned all political parties and curtailed personal liberties, thus forming a [dictatorship](/wiki/Totalitarianism). These actions attracted international attention and eventually inspired similar dictatorships such as [Nazi Germany](/wiki/Nazi_Germany) and [Francoist Spain](/wiki/Francoist_Spain).

In 1935, Mussolini [invaded Ethiopia](/wiki/Second_Italo-Abyssinian_War), resulting in an international alienation and leading to Italy's withdrawal from the [League of Nations](/wiki/League_of_Nations); Italy [allied with Nazi Germany](/wiki/Pact_of_Steel) and the [Empire of Japan](/wiki/Tripartite_Pact) and strongly supported [Francisco Franco](/wiki/Francisco_Franco) in the [Spanish civil war](/wiki/Spanish_civil_war). In 1939, Italy [annexed Albania](/wiki/Italian_invasion_of_Albania), a *de facto* protectorate for decades. Italy entered World War II on 10 June 1940. After initially advancing in [British Somaliland](/wiki/Italian_conquest_of_British_Somaliland) and [Egypt](/wiki/Italian_invasion_of_Egypt), the Italians were defeated in East Africa, [Greece](/wiki/Greco-Italian_War), [Russia](/wiki/Italian_participation_in_the_Eastern_Front) and [North Africa](/wiki/Second_Battle_of_El_Alamein).

After the attack on Yugoslavia by Germany and Italy, suppression of the [Yugoslav Partisans](/wiki/Yugoslav_Partisans) resistance and attempts to [Italianization](/wiki/Italianization) resulted in the [Italian war crimes](/wiki/Italian_war_crimes)[[53]](#cite_note-54) and deportation of about 25,000 people to the [Italian concentration camps](/wiki/List_of_Italian_concentration_camps), such as [Rab](/wiki/Rab_concentration_camp), [Gonars](/wiki/Gonars_concentration_camp), [Monigo](/wiki/Monigo), [Renicci di Anghiari](/wiki/Renicci_di_Anghiari) and elsewhere. After the war, due to the [Cold war](/wiki/Cold_war), a long period of censorship, disinterest and denial occurred about the Italian war crimes and the Yugoslav's [foibe killings](/wiki/Foibe_killings).[[54]](#cite_note-55)[[55]](#cite_note-56)[[56]](#cite_note-57)[[57]](#cite_note-58) Meanwhile, about 250,000 Italians and anti-communist Slavs fled to Italy in the [Istrian exodus](/wiki/Istrian_exodus).

An [Allied invasion of Sicily](/wiki/Allied_invasion_of_Sicily) began in July 1943, leading to the collapse of the Fascist regime and the fall of Mussolini on [25 July](/wiki/25_Luglio). On 8 September, Italy [surrendered](/wiki/Armistice_between_Italy_and_Allied_armed_forces). The Germans shortly succeeded in taking control of northern and central Italy. The country remained a [battlefield](/wiki/Italian_Campaign_(World_War_II)) for the rest of the war, as the Allies were slowly moving up from the south.

In the north, the Germans set up the [Italian Social Republic](/wiki/Italian_Social_Republic) (RSI), a Nazi [puppet state](/wiki/Puppet_state) with Mussolini installed as leader. The post-armistice period saw the rise of a large [anti-fascist](/wiki/Anti-fascist) [resistance movement](/wiki/Resistance_movement), the [*Resistenza*](/wiki/Resistenza). Hostilities ended on 29 April 1945, when the German forces in Italy surrendered. Nearly half a million Italians (including civilians) died in the conflict,[[58]](#cite_note-59) and the Italian economy had been all but destroyed; per capita income in 1944 was at its lowest point since the beginning of the 20th century.[[59]](#cite_note-60)

### Republican Italy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumb|upright|left|](/wiki/File:Alcide_de_Gasperi_2.jpg)[Alcide De Gasperi](/wiki/Alcide_De_Gasperi), [first](/wiki/List_of_Prime_Ministers_of_Italy) republican [Prime Minister of Italy](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Italy) and one of the [Founding Fathers](/wiki/Founding_fathers_of_the_European_Union) of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union).

Italy became a republic after a [referendum](/wiki/Italian_constitutional_referendum,_1946)[[60]](#cite_note-61) held on 2 June 1946, a day celebrated since as [Republic Day](/wiki/Republic_Day_(Italy)). This was also the first time that Italian women were entitled to vote.[[61]](#cite_note-62) [Victor Emmanuel III's](/wiki/Victor_Emmanuel_III) son, [Umberto II](/wiki/Umberto_II), was forced to abdicate and exiled. The [Republican Constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Italy) was approved on 1 January 1948. Under the [Treaty of Peace with Italy](/wiki/Treaty_of_Peace_with_Italy,_1947) of 1947, most of [Julian March](/wiki/Julian_March) was lost to [Yugoslavia](/wiki/Socialist_Federal_Republic_of_Yugoslavia) and, later, the [Free Territory of Trieste](/wiki/Free_Territory_of_Trieste) was divided between the two states. Italy also lost all its colonial possessions, formally ending the [Italian Empire](/wiki/Italian_Empire).

Fears in the Italian electorate of a possible Communist takeover proved crucial for the first universal suffrage electoral outcome on [18 April 1948](/wiki/Italian_general_election,_1948), when the [Christian Democrats](/wiki/Christian_Democracy_(Italy)), under the leadership of [Alcide De Gasperi](/wiki/Alcide_De_Gasperi), obtained a landslide victory. Consequently, in 1949 Italy became a member of [NATO](/wiki/NATO). The [Marshall Plan](/wiki/Marshall_Plan) helped to revive the Italian economy which, until the late 1960s, enjoyed a period of sustained economic growth commonly called the "[Economic Miracle](/wiki/Italian_economic_miracle)". In 1957, Italy was a founding member of the [European Economic Community](/wiki/European_Economic_Community) (EEC), which became the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) (EU) in 1993.

From the late 1960s until the early 1980s, the country experienced the [Years of Lead](/wiki/Years_of_Lead_(Italy)), a period characterised by economic crisis (especially after the [1973 oil crisis](/wiki/1973_oil_crisis)), widespread social conflicts and terrorist massacres carried out by opposing extremist groups, with the alleged involvement of US and Soviet intelligence.[[62]](#cite_note-63)[[63]](#cite_note-64)[[64]](#cite_note-65) The Years of Lead culminated in the assassination of the Christian Democrat leader [Aldo Moro](/wiki/Aldo_Moro) in 1978 and the [Bologna railway station massacre](/wiki/Bologna_massacre) in 1980, where 85 people died.

In the 1980s, for the first time since 1945, two governments were led by non-Christian-Democrat premiers: one liberal ([Giovanni Spadolini](/wiki/Giovanni_Spadolini)) and one socialist ([Bettino Craxi](/wiki/Bettino_Craxi)); the Christian Democrats remained, however, the main government party. During Craxi's government, the economy recovered and Italy became the world's fifth largest industrial nation, gaining entry into the [G7](/wiki/G7) Group. However, as a result of his spending policies, the Italian national debt skyrocketed during the Craxi era, soon passing 100% of the GDP.

In the early 1990s, Italy faced significant challenges, as voters – disenchanted with political paralysis, massive public debt and the extensive corruption system (known as [*Tangentopoli*](/wiki/Tangentopoli)) uncovered by the '[Clean Hands'](/wiki/Mani_pulite) investigation – demanded radical reforms. The scandals involved all major parties, but especially those in the government coalition: the Christian Democrats, who ruled for almost 50 years, underwent a severe crisis and eventually disbanded, splitting up into several factions.[[65]](#cite_note-66) The Communists reorganised as a [social-democratic](/wiki/Social-democratic) force. During the 1990s and the 2000s (decade), center-right (dominated by media magnate [Silvio Berlusconi](/wiki/Silvio_Berlusconi)) and center-left coalitions (led by university professor [Romano Prodi](/wiki/Romano_Prodi)) alternatively governed the country.

In the late 2000s, Italy was severely hit by the [Great Recession](/wiki/Great_Recession). From 2008 to 2015, the country suffered 42 months of GDP recession. The economic crisis was one of the main problems that forced Berlusconi to [resign](/wiki/Resignation_of_Silvio_Berlusconi) in 2011. The government of the conservative Prime Minister was replaced by the technocratic cabinet of [Mario Monti](/wiki/Mario_Monti). Following the [2013 general election](/wiki/Italian_general_election,_2013), the Vice-Secretary of the [Democratic Party](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(Italy)) [Enrico Letta](/wiki/Enrico_Letta) formed a [new government](/wiki/Letta_Cabinet) at the head of a right-left [Grand coalition](/wiki/Grand_coalition_(Italy)). In 2014, challenged by the new [Secretary](/wiki/List_of_Secretaries_of_the_Democratic_Party) of the PD [Matteo Renzi](/wiki/Matteo_Renzi), Letta resigned and was replaced by Renzi. The new government started important constitutional reforms such as the abolition of the [Senate](/wiki/Italian_Senate) and a new electoral law.

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Topographic map of Italy](/wiki/File:Italy_topographic_map-blank.svg)

Italy is located in [Southern Europe](/wiki/Southern_Europe), between latitudes [35°](/wiki/35th_parallel_north) and [47° N](/wiki/47th_parallel_north), and longitudes [6°](/wiki/6th_meridian_east) and [19° E](/wiki/19th_meridian_east). To the north, Italy borders [France](/wiki/France), [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland), [Austria](/wiki/Austria), and [Slovenia](/wiki/Slovenia), and is roughly delimited by the [Alpine watershed](/wiki/Alps), enclosing the [Po Valley](/wiki/Po_Valley) and the [Venetian Plain](/wiki/Venetian_Plain). To the south, it consists of the entirety of the [Italian Peninsula](/wiki/Italian_Peninsula) and the two [Mediterranean islands](/wiki/Mediterranean_islands) of [Sicily](/wiki/Sicily) and [Sardinia](/wiki/Sardinia), in addition to many smaller islands. The sovereign states of [San Marino](/wiki/San_Marino) and the [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City) are [enclaves](/wiki/Enclave_and_exclave) within Italy, while [Campione d'Italia](/wiki/Campione_d'Italia) is an Italian [exclave](/wiki/Enclave_and_exclave) in Switzerland.

The country's total area is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), of which [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) is land and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) is water. Including the islands, Italy has a coastline and border of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) on the [Adriatic](/wiki/Adriatic_Sea), [Ionian](/wiki/Ionian_Sea), [Tyrrhenian](/wiki/Tyrrhenian_Sea) seas ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), and borders shared with France ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), Austria ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), Slovenia ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and Switzerland ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)). San Marino ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and Vatican City ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), both enclaves, account for the remainder.

The [Apennine Mountains](/wiki/Apennine_Mountains) form the peninsula's backbone and the [Alps](/wiki/Alps) form most of its northern boundary, where Italy's highest point is located on [Monte Bianco](/wiki/Monte_Bianco) (4,810 m/15,782 ft).<ref group=note>Official French maps show the border detouring south of the main summit, and claim the highest point in Italy is Mont Blanc de Courmayeur (4,748 m), but these are inconsistent with an 1861 convention and topographic watershed analysis.</ref> The [Po](/wiki/Po_river), Italy's longest river (652 km/405 mi), flows from the Alps on the western border with France and crosses the [Padan plain](/wiki/Padan_plain) on its way to the Adriatic Sea. The five largest lakes are, in order of diminishing size:[[66]](#cite_note-67) [Garda](/wiki/Lake_Garda) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), [Maggiore](/wiki/Lake_Maggiore) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), shared with Switzerland), [Como](/wiki/Lake_Como) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)), [Trasimeno](/wiki/Trasimeno_Lake) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) and [Bolsena](/wiki/Lake_Bolsena) ([Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)).

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Mont_Blanc_from_Aosta_Valley.JPG)[Monte Bianco](/wiki/Monte_Bianco), on the Franco-Italian border is the highest point in the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union).

The country is situated at the meeting point of the Eurasian Plate and the African Plate, leading to considerable [seismic](/wiki/List_of_earthquakes_in_Italy) and [volcanic activity](/wiki/Volcanism_in_Italy). There are [14 volcanoes in Italy](/wiki/List_of_volcanoes_in_Italy), four of which are active: [Etna](/wiki/Mount_Etna) (the traditional site of [Vulcan](/wiki/Vulcan_(mythology))’s smithy), [Stromboli](/wiki/Stromboli), [Vulcano](/wiki/Vulcano) and [Vesuvius](/wiki/Vesuvius). Vesuvius is the only active volcano in mainland Europe and is most famous for the destruction of [Pompeii](/wiki/Pompeii) and [Herculanum](/wiki/Herculanum). Several islands and hills have been created by volcanic activity, and there is still a large active [caldera](/wiki/Caldera), the [Campi Flegrei](/wiki/Campi_Flegrei) north-west of Naples.

Although the country comprises the Italian peninsula and most of the southern Alpine basin, some of Italy's territory extends beyond the Alpine basin and some islands are located outside the [Eurasian](/wiki/Eurasia) continental shelf. These territories are the *comuni* of: [Livigno](/wiki/Livigno), [Sexten](/wiki/Sexten), [Innichen](/wiki/Innichen), [Toblach](/wiki/Toblach) (in part), [Chiusaforte](/wiki/Chiusaforte), [Tarvisio](/wiki/Tarvisio), [Graun im Vinschgau](/wiki/Graun_im_Vinschgau) (in part), which are all part of the [Danube's drainage basin](/wiki/Danube#Drainage_basin), while the [Val di Lei](/wiki/Lago_di_Lei) constitutes part of the [Rhine's](/wiki/Rhine) basin and the islands of [Lampedusa](/wiki/Lampedusa) and [Lampione](/wiki/Lampione) are on the African [continental shelf](/wiki/Continental_shelf).

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### Environment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [Template:Category see also](/wiki/Template:Category_see_also) [thumb|National (green) and regional (orange) parks in Italy.](/wiki/File:Italy_natural_parks.png)

After its quick industrial growth, Italy took a long time to confront its environmental problems. After several improvements, it now ranks 84th in the world for ecological sustainability.[[67]](#cite_note-68) [National parks](/wiki/National_park) cover about five percent of the country.[[68]](#cite_note-69) In the last decade, Italy has become one of the world's leading producers of [renewable energy](/wiki/Renewable_energy_in_Italy), ranking as the world’s fourth largest holder of installed [solar energy](/wiki/Solar_energy) capacity[[69]](#cite_note-70)[[70]](#cite_note-71) and the sixth largest holder of [wind power](/wiki/Wind_power) capacity in 2010.[[71]](#cite_note-72) Renewable energies now make up about 12% of the total primary and final energy consumption in Italy, with a future target share set at 17% for the year 2020.[[72]](#cite_note-73) [thumb|left|Hilly landscape with vineyards in](/wiki/File:Panorama_vicino_certaldo.jpg) [Tuscany](/wiki/Tuscany).

However, air pollution remains a severe problem, especially in the industrialised north, reaching the tenth highest level worldwide of industrial carbon dioxide emissions in the 1990s.[[73]](#cite_note-74) Italy is the twelfth largest [carbon dioxide](/wiki/Carbon_dioxide) producer.[[74]](#cite_note-75)[[75]](#cite_note-76)Extensive traffic and congestion in the largest metropolitan areas continue to cause severe environmental and health issues, even if smog levels have decreased dramatically since the 1970s and 1980s, and the presence of smog is becoming an increasingly rarer phenomenon and levels of [sulphur dioxide](/wiki/Sulphur_dioxide) are decreasing.[[76]](#cite_note-77) Many watercourses and coastal stretches have also been contaminated by industrial and agricultural activity, while because of rising water levels, [Venice](/wiki/Venice) has been regularly flooded throughout recent years. Waste from industrial activity is not always disposed of by legal means and has led to permanent health effects on inhabitants of affected areas, as in the case of the [Seveso disaster](/wiki/Seveso_disaster). The country has also operated several nuclear reactors between 1963 and 1990 but, after the [Chernobyl disaster](/wiki/Chernobyl_disaster) and a [referendum on the issue](/wiki/Italian_nuclear_power_referendum,_1987) the nuclear program was terminated, a decision that was overturned by the government in 2008, planning to build up to four nuclear power plants with French technology. This was in turn struck down by a referendum following the [Fukushima nuclear accident](/wiki/Fukushima_Daiichi_nuclear_disaster).[[77]](#cite_note-78) Deforestation, illegal building developments and poor land-management policies have led to significant erosion all over Italy's mountainous regions, leading to major ecological disasters like the 1963 [Vajont Dam](/wiki/Vajont_Dam) flood, the 1998 [Sarno](/wiki/Sarno)[[78]](#cite_note-79) and 2009 [Messina](/wiki/2009_Messina_floods_and_mudslides) [mudslides](/wiki/Mudslide).

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[thumb|Southern Italy has a Mediterranean climate.](/wiki/File:**EXPLORED**_Back,_with_nice_memories_-_Di_ritorno,_con_buoni_ricordi.jpg) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Thanks to the great longitudinal extension of the peninsula and the mostly mountainous internal conformation, the climate of Italy is highly diverse. In most of the inland northern and central regions, the climate ranges from [humid subtropical](/wiki/Humid_subtropical) to [humid continental](/wiki/Humid_continental) and [oceanic](/wiki/Oceanic_climate). In particular, the climate of the [Po valley](/wiki/Po_valley) geographical region is mostly continental, with harsh winters and hot summers.[[79]](#cite_note-80)[[80]](#cite_note-81) The coastal areas of [Liguria](/wiki/Liguria), [Tuscany](/wiki/Tuscany) and most of the [South](/wiki/Southern_Italy) generally fit the [Mediterranean climate](/wiki/Mediterranean_climate) stereotype ([Köppen climate classification](/wiki/Köppen_climate_classification) Csa). Conditions on peninsular coastal areas can be very different from the interior's higher ground and valleys, particularly during the winter months when the higher altitudes tend to be cold, wet, and often snowy. The coastal regions have mild winters and warm and generally dry summers, although lowland valleys can be quite hot in summer. Average winter temperatures vary from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) on the Alps to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in Sicily, like so the average summer temperatures range from [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) to over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[81]](#cite_note-82)

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

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Italy has been a [unitary](/wiki/Unitary_state) [parliamentary republic](/wiki/Parliamentary_republic) since 2 June 1946, when the monarchy was abolished by a [constitutional referendum](/wiki/Italian_constitutional_referendum,_1946). The [President of Italy](/wiki/President_of_Italy) (*Presidente della Repubblica*), currently [Sergio Mattarella](/wiki/Sergio_Mattarella) since 2015, is Italy's [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state). The President is elected for a single seven years mandate by the [Parliament of Italy](/wiki/Parliament_of_Italy) in [joint session](/wiki/Joint_session). Italy has a written democratic [constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Italy), resulting from the work of a [Constituent Assembly](/wiki/Constituent_Assembly_of_Italy) formed by the representatives of all the [anti-fascist](/wiki/Anti-fascist) forces that contributed to the defeat of Nazi and Fascist forces during the [Civil War](/wiki/Italian_Civil_War).[[82]](#cite_note-83)

### Government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

Italy has a parliamentary government based on a [proportional](/wiki/Proportional_representation) voting system. The parliament is perfectly [bicameral](/wiki/Bicameral): the two houses, the [Chamber of Deputies](/wiki/Chamber_of_Deputies_of_Italy) (that meets in [Palazzo Montecitorio](/wiki/Palazzo_Montecitorio)) and the [Senate of the Republic](/wiki/Senate_of_Italy) (that meets in [Palazzo Madama](/wiki/Palazzo_Madama)), have the same powers. The Prime Minister, officially [President of the Council of Ministers](/wiki/President_of_the_Council_of_Ministers_of_Italy) (*Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri*), is Italy's [head of government](/wiki/Head_of_government). The Prime Minister and the cabinet are appointed by the President of the Republic, but must pass a vote of confidence in Parliament to come into office. The incumbent Prime Minister is [Matteo Renzi](/wiki/Matteo_Renzi) of the [Democratic Party](/wiki/Democratic_Party_(Italy)).

[thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Giuramento_Mattarella_Montecitorio.jpg) [Italian Chamber of Deputies](/wiki/Chamber_of_Deputies) in plenary section. The prime minister is the President of the [Council of Ministers](/wiki/Council_of_Ministers_of_Italy)—which holds effective executive power— and he must receive a vote of approval from it to execute most political activities. The office is similar to those in most other [parliamentary systems](/wiki/Parliamentary_system), but the leader of the Italian government is not authorized to request the dissolution of the [Parliament of Italy](/wiki/Parliament_of_Italy).

Another difference with similar offices is that the overall political responsibility for intelligence is vested in the President of the Council of Ministers. By virtue of that, the Prime Minister has exclusive power to: Coordinate intelligence policies, determining the financial resources and strengthening national cyber security; Apply and protect State secrets; Authorize agents to carry out operations, in Italy or abroad, in violation of the law.[[83]](#cite_note-84) A peculiarity of the [Italian Parliament](/wiki/Italian_Parliament) is the representation given to [Italian citizens](/wiki/Italian_nationality_law) permanently living abroad: 12 Deputies and 6 Senators elected in four distinct [overseas constituencies](/wiki/Parliament_of_Italy#Overseas_constituency). In addition, the Italian Senate is characterised also by a small number of [senators for life](/wiki/Senator_for_life), appointed by the President "for outstanding patriotic merits in the social, scientific, artistic or literary field". Former Presidents of the Republic are *ex officio* life senators.

Italy's three major political parties are the [Democratic Party](/wiki/Partito_Democratico), [Forza Italia](/wiki/Forza_Italia_(2013)) and the [Five Stars Movement](/wiki/Five_Stars_Movement). During the 2013 general election these three parties won 579 out of 630 seats available in the Chamber of Deputies and 294 out of 315 in the Senate.[[84]](#cite_note-85) Most of the remaining seats were won by a short-lived [electoral bloc](/wiki/With_Monti_for_Italy) formed to support the outgoing Prime Minister [Mario Monti](/wiki/Mario_Monti), the far left party [Left, Ecology, Freedom](/wiki/Left,_Ecology,_Freedom) or by parties that contest elections only in one part of Italy: the [Northern League](/wiki/Northern_League_(Italy)), the [South Tyrolean People's Party](/wiki/South_Tyrolean_People's_Party), [Vallée d'Aoste](/wiki/Aosta_Valley_(political_coalition)) and [Great South](/wiki/Great_South_(Italy)). On 15 November 2013, 58 splinter MPs from Forza Italia founded [New Centre-Right](/wiki/New_Centre-Right).

### Law and criminal justice[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Roma_2011_08_07_Palazzo_di_Giustizia.jpg) [Supreme Court of Cassation](/wiki/Supreme_Court_of_Cassation_(Italy)).

The Italian judicial system is based on [Roman law](/wiki/Roman_law) modified by the [Napoleonic code](/wiki/Napoleonic_code) and later statutes. The [Supreme Court of Cassation](/wiki/Court_of_Cassation_(Italy)) is the highest court in Italy for both criminal and civil appeal cases. The [Constitutional Court of Italy](/wiki/Constitutional_Court_of_Italy) (*Corte Costituzionale*) rules on the conformity of laws with the constitution and is a post–World War II innovation. Since their appearance in the middle of the 19th century, [Italian organised crime](/wiki/Organized_crime_in_Italy) and criminal organisations have infiltrated the social and economic life of many regions in [Southern Italy](/wiki/Southern_Italy), the most notorious of which being the [Sicilian Mafia](/wiki/Sicilian_Mafia), which would later expand into some foreign countries including the United States. The [Mafia](/wiki/Mafia) receipts may reach 9%[[85]](#cite_note-86)[[86]](#cite_note-87) of Italy's GDP.[[87]](#cite_note-88) A 2009 report identified 610 [comuni](/wiki/Comune) which have a strong Mafia presence, where 13 million Italians live and 14.6% of the Italian GDP is produced.[[88]](#cite_note-89)[[89]](#cite_note-90) The [Calabrian](/wiki/Calabria) ['Ndrangheta](/wiki/'Ndrangheta), nowadays probably the most powerful crime syndicate of Italy, accounts alone for 3% of the country's GDP.[[90]](#cite_note-91) However, at 0.013 per 1,000 people, Italy has only the 47th highest murder rate[[91]](#cite_note-92) (in a group of 62 countries) and the 43rd highest number of rapes per 1,000 people in the world (in a group of 65 countries), relatively low figures among developed countries.

#### Law enforcement[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumbnail|right|A](/wiki/File:Police_Lamborghini.jpg) [Lamborghini Gallardo](/wiki/Lamborghini_Gallardo) provided to the Polizia di Stato.

Law enforcement in Italy is provided by multiple police forces, five of which are national, Italian agencies. The [Polizia di Stato](/wiki/Polizia_di_Stato) (State Police) is the civil national police of Italy. Along with patrolling, investigative and law enforcement duties, it patrols the Autostrada (Italy's Express Highway network), and oversees the security of railways, bridges and waterways. The [Carabinieri](/wiki/Carabinieri) is the common name for the Arma dei Carabinieri, a [Gendarmerie](/wiki/Gendarmerie)-like military corps with police duties. They also serve as the military police for the Italian armed forces. The [Guardia di Finanza](/wiki/Guardia_di_Finanza), (English: Financial Guard) is a corps under the authority of the Minister of Economy and Finance, with a role as police force. The Corps is in charge of financial, economic, judiciary and public safety. The [Corpo Forestale dello Stato](/wiki/Corpo_Forestale_dello_Stato) (National Forestry Department) is responsible for law enforcement in Italian national parks and forests. Their duties include enforcing poaching laws, safeguarding protected animal species and preventing forest fires.

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Inauguration_EYE2014_Parlement_européen_Strasbourg_9_mai_2014.jpg) [European Parliament](/wiki/European_Parliament). Italy is one of the 28 EU members.

Italy is a founding member of the [European Community](/wiki/European_Community), now the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) (EU), and of [NATO](/wiki/NATO). Italy was admitted to the United Nations in 1955, and it is a member and strong supporter of a wide number of international organisations, such as the [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) (OECD), the [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade](/wiki/General_Agreement_on_Tariffs_and_Trade)/[World Trade Organization](/wiki/World_Trade_Organization) (GATT/WTO), the [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe) (OSCE), the [Council of Europe](/wiki/Council_of_Europe), and the [Central European Initiative](/wiki/Central_European_Initiative). Its recent turns in the rotating presidency of international organisations include the [Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe](/wiki/Conference_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe) (CSCE), the forerunner of the OSCE, in 1994; [G8](/wiki/G8); and the EU in 2009 and from July to December 2003.

Italy strongly supports multilateral international politics, endorsing the United Nations and its [international security](/wiki/International_security) activities. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Italy was deploying 5,296 troops abroad, engaged in 33 UN and NATO missions in 25 countries of the world.[[92]](#cite_note-93) Italy deployed troops in support of UN peacekeeping missions in [Somalia](/wiki/UNITAF), [Mozambique](/wiki/United_Nations_Operation_in_Mozambique), and [East Timor](/wiki/United_Nations_Integrated_Mission_in_East_Timor) and provides support for NATO and UN operations in [Bosnia](/wiki/IFOR), [Kosovo](/wiki/Kosovo_Force) and [Albania](/wiki/Operation_Sunrise_(Albania)). Italy deployed over 2,000 troops in [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) in support of [Operation Enduring Freedom](/wiki/Operation_Enduring_Freedom) (OEF) from February 2003. Italy still supports international efforts to reconstruct and stabilise [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq), but it had withdrawn its [military contingent](/wiki/Multi-National_Force_–_Iraq#2006_withdrawals) of some 3,200 troops by November 2006, maintaining only humanitarian operators and other civilian personnel. In August 2006 Italy deployed about 2,450 troops in Lebanon for the United Nations' [peacekeeping](/wiki/Peacekeeping) mission [UNIFIL](/wiki/UNIFIL).[[93]](#cite_note-94) Italy is one of the largest financiers of the [Palestinian National Authority](/wiki/Palestinian_National_Authority), contributing €60 million in 2013 alone.[[94]](#cite_note-95)

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The aircraft carrier](/wiki/File:Cavour_(550).jpg) [*MM Cavour*](/wiki/Italian_aircraft_carrier_Cavour_(550)).

The [Italian Army](/wiki/Italian_Army), [Navy](/wiki/Italian_Navy), [Air Force](/wiki/Italian_Air_Force) and [Carabinieri](/wiki/Carabinieri) collectively form the [Italian Armed Forces](/wiki/Italian_Armed_Forces), under the command of the Supreme Defence Council, presided over by the [President of Italy](/wiki/President_of_Italy). From 2005, military service is entirely voluntary.[[95]](#cite_note-96) In 2010, the Italian military had 293,202 personnel on active duty,[[96]](#cite_note-97) of which 114,778 are Carabinieri.[[97]](#cite_note-98) Total Italian military spending in 2010 ranked [tenth](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures) in the world, standing at $35.8 billion, equal to 1.7% of national GDP. As part of [NATO's nuclear sharing strategy](/wiki/Nuclear_sharing) Italy also hosts 90 United States [nuclear bombs](/wiki/Nuclear_bombs), located in the [Ghedi](/wiki/Ghedi) and [Aviano](/wiki/Aviano_Air_Base) air bases.[[98]](#cite_note-99) The Italian Army is the national ground defence force, numbering 109,703 in 2008. Its best-known combat vehicles are the [Dardo](/wiki/Dardo_IFV) [infantry fighting vehicle](/wiki/Infantry_fighting_vehicle), the [Centauro](/wiki/Centauro) [tank destroyer](/wiki/Tank_destroyer) and the [Ariete](/wiki/Ariete) [tank](/wiki/Tank), and among its aircraft the [Mangusta](/wiki/Agusta_A129_Mangusta) [attack helicopter](/wiki/Attack_helicopter), recently deployed in UN missions. It also has at its disposal a large number of [Leopard 1](/wiki/Leopard_1) and [M113](/wiki/M113_armored_personnel_carrier) armoured vehicles.

[thumb|A](/wiki/File:Eurofighter_Typhoon_02.jpg) [Eurofighter Typhoon](/wiki/Eurofighter_Typhoon) operated by the [Italian Air Force](/wiki/Italian_Air_Force).

The Italian Navy in 2008 had 35,200 active personnel with 85 commissioned ships and 123 aircraft.[[99]](#cite_note-100) It is now equipping itself with a bigger [aircraft carrier](/wiki/Aircraft_carrier) (the [*Cavour*](/wiki/Italian_aircraft_carrier_Cavour_(550))), new [destroyers](/wiki/Destroyer), submarines and multipurpose [frigates](/wiki/Frigate). In modern times the Italian Navy, being a member of the NATO, has taken part in many coalition peacekeeping operations around the world.

The Italian Air Force in 2008 had a strength of 43,882 and operated 585 aircraft, including 219 combat jets and 114 helicopters. As a stopgap and as replacement for leased [Tornado](/wiki/Panavia_Tornado) ADV interceptors, the AMI has leased 30 [F-16A](/wiki/General_Dynamics_F-16_Fighting_Falcon) Block 15 ADF and four F-16B Block 10 Fighting Falcons, with an option for more. The coming years will also see the introduction of 121 [EF2000 Eurofighter Typhoons](/wiki/Eurofighter_Typhoon), replacing the leased F-16 Fighting Falcons. Further updates are foreseen in the Tornado IDS/IDT and [AMX](/wiki/AMX_International_AMX) fleets. A transport capability is guaranteed by a fleet of 22 [C-130Js](/wiki/Lockheed_Martin_C-130J_Super_Hercules) and [Aeritalia G.222s](/wiki/Aeritalia_G.222) of which 12 are being replaced with the newly developed G.222 variant called the [C-27J Spartan](/wiki/C-27J_Spartan).

An autonomous corps of the military, the Carabinieri are the [gendarmerie](/wiki/Gendarmerie) and [military police](/wiki/Military_police) of Italy, policing the military and civilian population alongside [Italy's other police forces](/wiki/Law_enforcement_in_Italy). While the different branches of the Carabinieri report to separate ministries for each of their individual functions, the corps reports to the Ministry of Internal Affairs when maintaining public order and security.[[100]](#cite_note-101)

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Italy is subdivided into 20 regions (*regioni*), five of these regions having a [special autonomous status](/wiki/Autonomous_regions_with_special_statute) that enables them to enact legislation on some of their local matters. The country is further divided into 14 metropolitan cities (*città metropolitane*) and 96 provinces (*province*), which in turn are subdivided in 8,047 municipalities (*comuni*).[[101]](#cite_note-102) [Template:Italy Labelled Map](/wiki/Template:Italy_Labelled_Map)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Region** | **Capital** | **Area (km²)** | **Area (sq mi)** | **Population** |
| [Abruzzo](/wiki/Abruzzo) | [L'Aquila](/wiki/L'Aquila) | 10,763 | 4,156 | 1,331,574 |
| [Aosta Valley](/wiki/Aosta_Valley) | [Aosta](/wiki/Aosta) | 3,263 | 1,260 | 128,298 |
| [Apulia](/wiki/Apulia) | [Bari](/wiki/Bari) | 19,358 | 7,474 | 4,090,105 |
| [Basilicata](/wiki/Basilicata) | [Potenza](/wiki/Potenza) | 9,995 | 3,859 | 576,619 |
| [Calabria](/wiki/Calabria) | [Catanzaro](/wiki/Catanzaro) | 15,080 | 5,822 | 1,976,631 |
| [Campania](/wiki/Campania) | [Naples](/wiki/Naples) | 13,590 | 5,247 | 5,861,529 |
| [Emilia-Romagna](/wiki/Emilia-Romagna) | [Bologna](/wiki/Bologna) | 22,446 | 8,666 | 4,450,508 |
| [Friuli-Venezia Giulia](/wiki/Friuli-Venezia_Giulia) | [Trieste](/wiki/Trieste) | 7,858 | 3,034 | 1,227,122 |
| [Lazio](/wiki/Lazio) | [Rome](/wiki/Rome) | 17,236 | 6,655 | 5,892,425 |
| [Liguria](/wiki/Liguria) | [Genoa](/wiki/Genoa) | 5,422 | 2,093 | 1,583,263 |
| [Lombardy](/wiki/Lombardy) | [Milan](/wiki/Milan) | 23,844 | 9,206 | 10,002,615 |
| [Marche](/wiki/Marche) | [Ancona](/wiki/Ancona) | 9,366 | 3,616 | 1,550,796 |
| [Molise](/wiki/Molise) | [Campobasso](/wiki/Campobasso) | 4,438 | 1,713 | 313,348 |
| [Piedmont](/wiki/Piedmont) | [Turin](/wiki/Turin) | 25,402 | 9,808 | 4,424,467 |
| [Sardinia](/wiki/Sardinia) | [Cagliari](/wiki/Cagliari) | 24,090 | 9,301 | 1,663,286 |
| [Sicily](/wiki/Sicily) | [Palermo](/wiki/Palermo) | 25,711 | 9,927 | 5,092,080 |
| [Tuscany](/wiki/Tuscany) | [Florence](/wiki/Florence) | 22,993 | 8,878 | 3,752,654 |
| [Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol](/wiki/Trentino-Alto_Adige/Südtirol) | [Trento](/wiki/Trento) | 13,607 | 5,254 | 1,055,934 |
| [Umbria](/wiki/Umbria) | [Perugia](/wiki/Perugia) | 8,456 | 3,265 | 894,762 |
| [Veneto](/wiki/Veneto) | [Venice](/wiki/Venice) | 18,399 | 7,104 | 4,927,596 |

[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|A](/wiki/File:2015-03-03_Geneva_Motor_Show_3908.JPG) [Ferrari 488](/wiki/Ferrari_488). Italy maintains an innovative [automotive industry](/wiki/Automotive_industry), and is one of the world's largest exporters of manufactured goods.

Italy has a [capitalist](/wiki/Capitalist) [mixed economy](/wiki/Mixed_economy), ranking as the third-largest in the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) and the [eighth-largest](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)) in the world.[[102]](#cite_note-103) The country is a founding member of the [G7](/wiki/G7), [G8](/wiki/Group_of_Eight), the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) and the [OECD](/wiki/OECD).

Italy is regarded as one of the world's most industrialised nations and a leading country in [world trade and exports](/wiki/International_trade).[[103]](#cite_note-104)[[104]](#cite_note-105)[[105]](#cite_note-106) It is a highly [developed country](/wiki/Developed_country), with the world's 8th highest [quality of life](/wiki/Quality_of_life)[[14]](#cite_note-15) and the 25th [Human Development Index](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index). The country is well known for its creative and innovative business,[[106]](#cite_note-107) a large and competitive agricultural sector[[107]](#cite_note-108) (Italy is the world's largest wine producer),[[108]](#cite_note-109) and for its influential and high-quality automobile, machinery, food, design and fashion industry.[[109]](#cite_note-110)[[110]](#cite_note-111)[[111]](#cite_note-112) [thumb|left|Vineyards in the](/wiki/File:Chianti-colline2-2.jpg) [Chianti](/wiki/Chianti) region. The Italian food industry is well known for the high quality and variety of its products.

Italy is the world's sixth largest [manufacturing](/wiki/Manufacturing) country,[[112]](#cite_note-113) characterised by a smaller number of global multinational corporations than other economies of comparable size and a large number of dynamic [small and medium-sized enterprises](/wiki/Small_and_medium-sized_enterprises), notoriously clustered in several [industrial districts](/wiki/Industrial_district), which are the backbone of the [Italian industry](/wiki/Italian_industry). This has produced a manufacturing sector often focused on the export of [niche market](/wiki/Niche_market) and luxury products, that if on one side is less capable to compete on the quantity, on the other side is more capable of facing the competition from China and other emerging Asian economies based on lower labour costs, with higher quality products.[[113]](#cite_note-114) The country was the world's 7th largest exporter in 2009.[[114]](#cite_note-115) Italy's closest trade ties are with the other countries of the European Union, with whom it conducts about 59% of its total trade. Its largest EU trade partners, in order of market share, are Germany (12.9%), France (11.4%), and Spain (7.4%).[[115]](#cite_note-116) Finally, tourism is one of the fastest growing and profitable sectors of the national economy: with 48.6 million international tourist arrivals and total receipts estimated at $45.5 billion in 2014, Italy was the fifth most visited country and the sixth highest tourism earner in the world.[[116]](#cite_note-117) [thumb|Italy is part of a monetary union, the](/wiki/File:Eurozone.svg) [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) (dark blue), and of the [EU single market](/wiki/Internal_Market_(European_Union)).

Italy is part of the European single market which represents more than 500 million consumers. Several domestic commercial policies are determined by agreements among European Union (EU) members and by EU legislation. Italy introduced the common European currency, the [Euro](/wiki/Euro) in 2002.<ref name=euroc>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>[[117]](#cite_note-118) It is a member of the Eurozone which represents around 330 million citizens. Its monetary policy is set by the [European Central Bank](/wiki/European_Central_Bank).

Italy has been hit very hard by the [Great Recession](/wiki/Great_Recession) and the subsequent [European sovereign-debt crisis](/wiki/European_sovereign-debt_crisis), that exacerbated the country's structural problems.[[118]](#cite_note-119) Effectively, after a strong GDP growth of 5–6% per year from the 1950s to the early 1970s,[[119]](#cite_note-120) and a progressive slowdown in the 1980-90s, the country virtually stagnated in the 2000s.[[120]](#cite_note-121)[[121]](#cite_note-122) The political efforts to revive growth with massive government spending eventually produced a severe rise in [public debt](/wiki/Public_debt), that stood at over 135% of GDP in 2014, ranking second in the EU only after the Greek one (at 174%).[[122]](#cite_note-123) For all that, the largest chunk of [Italian public debt](/wiki/Italian_government_debt) is owned by national subjects, a major difference between Italy and Greece,[[123]](#cite_note-124) and the level of [household debt](/wiki/Household_debt) is much lower than the OECD average.[[124]](#cite_note-125) A gaping [North–South divide](/wiki/Economy_of_Italy#North–South_divide) is a major factor of socio-economic weakness.[[125]](#cite_note-126) It can be noted by the huge difference in statistical income between the northern and southern regions and municipalities.[[126]](#cite_note-127) The richest region, Lombardy, earns 127% of the national GDP per capita, while the poorest, Calabria, only 61%[[127]](#cite_note-128) The unemployment rate (11.9%) stands slightly above the Eurozone average,[[128]](#cite_note-129) however the average figure is 7.9% in the North and 20.2% in the South.[[129]](#cite_note-130)

### Infrastructure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Frecciarossa_1000_at_InnoTrans_2014.jpg)[FS'](/wiki/Ferrovie_dello_Stato_Italiane) [Frecciarossa 1000](/wiki/Frecciarossa_1000) high speed train, with a maximum speed of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert),[[130]](#cite_note-131) is the fastest train in Italy and Europe. In 2004 the transport sector in Italy generated a turnover of about 119.4 billion euros, employing 935,700 persons in 153,700 enterprises. Regarding the national road network, in 2002 there were [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of serviceable roads in Italy, including [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of motorways, state-owned but privately operated by [Atlantia](/wiki/Atlantia_(company)). In 2005, about 34,667,000 [passenger cars](/wiki/Automobile) (590 cars per 1,000 people) and 4,015,000 goods vehicles circulated on the national road network.[[131]](#cite_note-132) The [national railway network](/wiki/Rail_transport_in_Italy), state-owned and operated by [Ferrovie dello Stato](/wiki/Ferrovie_dello_Stato), in 2008 totalled [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of which [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) is electrified, and on which 4,802 locomotives and railcars run.

The national inland [waterways](/wiki/Waterways) network comprised [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of navigable rivers and channels in 2002. In 2004 there were approximately 30 main airports (including the two [hubs](/wiki/Airline_hub) of [Malpensa International](/wiki/Malpensa_International_Airport) in Milan and [Leonardo da Vinci International](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci_International_Airport) in Rome) and 43 major seaports (including the seaport of [Genoa](/wiki/Genoa), the country's largest and second largest in the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea)). In 2005 Italy maintained a civilian air fleet of about 389,000 units and a merchant fleet of 581 ships.[[131]](#cite_note-132) Italy needs to import about 80% of its energy requirements.[[132]](#cite_note-133)[[133]](#cite_note-134)[[134]](#cite_note-135) [Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Italy does not invest enough to maintain its drinking water supply and sanitation infrastructure, while water and sanitation tariffs are among the lowest in the European Union. The Galli Law, passed in 1993, aimed at raising the level of investment and to improve service quality by consolidating service providers, making them more efficient and increasing the level of cost recovery through tariff revenues. Despite these reforms, investment levels have declined and remain far from sufficient.[[135]](#cite_note-136)[[136]](#cite_note-137)[[137]](#cite_note-138)

### Science and technology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Justus_Sustermans_-_Portrait_of_Galileo_Galilei,_1636.jpg)[Galileo](/wiki/Galileo) is recognized as the Father of modern science, physics and observational astronomy.[[138]](#cite_note-139)

Through the centuries, Italy has fostered the scientific community that produced many major discoveries in physics and the other sciences. During the [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance) Italian polymaths such as [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci) (1452–1519), [Michelangelo](/wiki/Michelangelo) (1475–1564) and [Leon Battista Alberti](/wiki/Leon_Battista_Alberti) (1404–72) made important contributions to a variety of fields, including biology, architecture, and engineering. [Galileo Galilei](/wiki/Galileo_Galilei) (1564–1642), a physicist, mathematician and astronomer, played a major role in the [Scientific Revolution](/wiki/Scientific_Revolution). His achievements include key improvements to the [telescope](/wiki/Telescope) and consequent astronomical observations, and ultimately the triumph of [Copernicanism](/wiki/Nicolaus_Copernicus) over the [Ptolemaic model](/wiki/Ptolemaic_model).  
Other astronomers suchs as [Giovanni Domenico Cassini](/wiki/Giovanni_Domenico_Cassini) (1625–1712) and [Giovanni Schiaparelli](/wiki/Giovanni_Schiaparelli) (1835–1910) made many important discoveries about the [Solar System](/wiki/Solar_System). In mathematics, [Joseph Louis Lagrange](/wiki/Joseph_Louis_Lagrange) (born Giuseppe Lodovico Lagrangia, 1736–1813) was active before leaving Italy. [Fibonacci](/wiki/Fibonacci) (c. 1170 – c. 1250), and [Gerolamo Cardano](/wiki/Gerolamo_Cardano) (1501–76) made fundamental advances in mathematics. [Luca Pacioli](/wiki/Luca_Pacioli) established [accounting](/wiki/Accounting) to the world. Physicist [Enrico Fermi](/wiki/Enrico_Fermi) (1901–54), a Nobel prize laureate, led the team in Chicago that developed the [first nuclear reactor](/wiki/Chicago_Pile-1) and is also noted for his many other contributions to physics, including the co-development of the [quantum theory](/wiki/Quantum_mechanics) and was one of the key figures in the creation of the [nuclear weapon](/wiki/Nuclear_weapon). He, [Emilio G. Segrè](/wiki/Emilio_G._Segrè), and a number of Italian physicists were forced to leave Italy in the 1930s by [Fascist laws against Jews](/wiki/Italian_Racial_Laws), including [Emilio G. Segrè](/wiki/Emilio_G._Segrè) (1905–89) (who discovered the elements [technetium](/wiki/Technetium) and [astatine](/wiki/Astatine), and the [antiproton](/wiki/Antiproton)),[[139]](#cite_note-140) and [Bruno Rossi](/wiki/Bruno_Rossi) (1905–93), a pioneer in Cosmic Rays and X-ray astronomy.

Other prominent physicists include: [Amedeo Avogadro](/wiki/Amedeo_Avogadro) (most noted for his contributions to [molecular theory](/wiki/Molecular_theory), in particular the [Avogadro's law](/wiki/Avogadro's_law) and the [Avogadro constant](/wiki/Avogadro_constant)), [Evangelista Torricelli](/wiki/Evangelista_Torricelli) (inventor of [barometer](/wiki/Barometer)), [Alessandro Volta](/wiki/Alessandro_Volta) (inventor of [electric battery](/wiki/Electric_battery)), [Guglielmo Marconi](/wiki/Guglielmo_Marconi) (inventor of [radio](/wiki/Radio)), [Ettore Majorana](/wiki/Ettore_Majorana) (who discovered the [Majorana fermions](/wiki/Majorana_fermion)), [Carlo Rubbia](/wiki/Carlo_Rubbia) (1984 Nobel Prize in Physics for work leading to the discovery of the [W and Z particles](/wiki/W_and_Z_particles) at [CERN](/wiki/CERN)). In biology, [Francesco Redi](/wiki/Francesco_Redi) has been the first to challenge the theory of spontaneous generation by demonstrating that maggots come from eggs of flies and he described 180 parasites in details and [Marcello Malpighi](/wiki/Marcello_Malpighi) founded [microscopic anatomy](/wiki/Microscopic_anatomy), [Lazzaro Spallanzani](/wiki/Lazzaro_Spallanzani) conducted important research in bodily functions, animal reproduction, and cellular theory, [Camillo Golgi](/wiki/Camillo_Golgi), whose many achievements include the discovery of the [Golgi complex](/wiki/Golgi_complex), paved the way to the acceptance of the [Neuron doctrine](/wiki/Neuron_doctrine), [Rita Levi-Montalcini](/wiki/Rita_Levi-Montalcini) discovered the [nerve growth factor](/wiki/Nerve_growth_factor) (awarded 1986 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine). In chemistry, [Giulio Natta](/wiki/Giulio_Natta) received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1963 for his work on high [polymers](/wiki/Polymers). [Giuseppe Occhialini](/wiki/Giuseppe_Occhialini) received the [Wolf Prize in Physics](/wiki/Wolf_Prize_in_Physics) for the discovery of the [pion](/wiki/Pion) or pi-[meson](/wiki/Meson) decay in 1947. [Ennio de Giorgi](/wiki/Ennio_de_Giorgi), a [Wolf Prize in Mathematics](/wiki/Wolf_Prize_in_Mathematics) recipient in 1990, solved [Bernstein's problem](/wiki/Bernstein's_problem) about [minimal surfaces](/wiki/Minimal_surface) and the [19th Hilbert problem](/wiki/Hilbert's_nineteenth_problem) on the regularity of solutions of [Elliptic partial differential equations](/wiki/Elliptic_partial_differential_equations).

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|200px|Map of population density in Italy as at the 2011 census.](/wiki/File:Population_density_Italy_2011_census.png)

At the end of 2013, Italy had 60,782,668 inhabitants.[[140]](#cite_note-141) The resulting population density, at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), is higher than that of most Western European countries. However, the distribution of the population is widely uneven. The most densely populated areas are the Po Valley (that accounts for almost a half of the national population) and the metropolitan areas of Rome and Naples, while vast regions such as the Alps and Apennines highlands, the plateaus of Basilicata and the island of Sardinia are very sparsely populated.

The population of Italy almost doubled during the 20th century, but the pattern of growth was extremely uneven because of large-scale internal migration from the rural South to the industrial cities of the North, a phenomenon which happened as a consequence of the [Italian economic miracle](/wiki/Italian_economic_miracle) of the 1950–1960s. High fertility and birth rates persisted until the 1970s, after which they start to dramatically decline, leading to rapid population ageing. At the end of the 2000s (decade), one in five Italians was over 65 years old.[[141]](#cite_note-142) However, in recent years Italy experienced a significant growth in birth rates.[[142]](#cite_note-143) The total fertility rate has also climbed from an all-time low of 1.18 children per woman in 1995 to 1.41 in 2008.[[143]](#cite_note-144)The [TFR](/wiki/Total_fertility_rate) is expected to reach 1.6–1.8 in 2030.[[144]](#cite_note-145) From the late 19th century until the 1960s Italy was a country of mass [emigration](/wiki/Emigration). Between 1898 and 1914, the peak years of [Italian diaspora](/wiki/Italian_diaspora), approximately 750,000 Italians emigrated each year.[[145]](#cite_note-146) The diaspora concerned more than 25 million Italians and it is considered the biggest mass migration of contemporary times.[[146]](#cite_note-147) As a result, today more than 4.1 million Italian citizens are living abroad,<ref name= aire>[Statistiche del Ministero dell'Interno](http://www.interno.it/mininterno/export/sites/default/it/sezioni/servizi/legislazione/elezioni/0947_2010_02_01_DM27012010.html)</ref> while at least 60 million people of full or part Italian ancestry live outside of Italy, most notably in Argentina,[[147]](#cite_note-148) Brazil,[[148]](#cite_note-149) Uruguay,[[149]](#cite_note-150) Venezuela,[[150]](#cite_note-151) the United States,[[151]](#cite_note-152) Canada,[[152]](#cite_note-153) Australia,[[153]](#cite_note-154) and France.[[154]](#cite_note-155) [Template:Largest cities of Italy](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Italy)

### Metropolitan cities[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **align=center|**[**Metropolitan City**](/wiki/Metropolitan_cities_of_Italy) | **align=center|Area (km²)** | **align=center|Population 30 September 2014** |
| [**Rome**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Rome) | align=right|5,352 | align=right|4,336,915 |
| [**Milan**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Milan) | align=right|1,575 | align=right|3,190,340 |
| [**Naples**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Naples) | align=right|1,171 | align=right|3,128,702 |
| [**Turin**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Turin) | align=right|6,829 | align=right|2,293,340 |
| [**Palermo**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Palermo) | align=right|5,009 | align=right|1,276,525 |
| [**Bari**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Bari) | align=right|3,821 | align=right|1,251,004 |
| [**Catania**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Catania) | align=right|3,574 | align=right|1,116,168 |
| [**Florence**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Florence) | align=right|3,514 | align=right|1,007,435 |
| [**Bologna**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Bologna) | align=right|3,702 | align=right|1,003,027 |
| [**Genoa**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Genoa) | align=right|1,839 | align=right|864,008 |
| [**Venice**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Venice) | align=right|2,462 | align=right|858,455 |
| [**Messina**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Messina) | align=right|3,266 | align=right|647,477 |
| [**Reggio Calabria**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Reggio_Calabria) *(planned)* | align=right|3,183 | align=right|558,959 |
| [**Cagliari**](/wiki/Metropolitan_City_of_Cagliari) | align=right|1,248 | align=right|430,413 |
|  |  |  |

### Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumbnail|350px|Italy is home to a large population of migrants from Eastern Europe and North Africa.](/wiki/File:COB_data_Italy.PNG)

In 2014, Italy had about 4.9 million foreign residents,[[155]](#cite_note-156) making up some 8.1% of the total population. The figures include more than half a million children born in Italy to foreign nationals—second generation immigrants, but exclude foreign nationals who have subsequently acquired Italian nationality; this applies to about 130,000 people a year.[[156]](#cite_note-157) The official figures also exclude [illegal immigrants](/wiki/Illegal_immigration), that were estimated in 2008 to number at least 670,000.[[157]](#cite_note-158) Starting from the early 1980s, until then a linguistically and culturally homogeneous society, Italy begun to attract substantial flows of foreign immigrants.[[158]](#cite_note-159) After the [fall of the Berlin Wall](/wiki/Fall_of_the_Berlin_Wall) and, more recently, the [2004](/wiki/2004_enlargement_of_the_European_Union) and [2007](/wiki/2004_enlargement_of_the_European_Union) enlargements of the European Union, large waves of migration originated from the former socialist countries of [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe) (especially [Romania](/wiki/Romania), Albania, [Ukraine](/wiki/Ukraine) and [Poland](/wiki/Poland)). An equally important source of immigration is neighbouring North Africa (in particular, [Morocco](/wiki/Morocco), Egypt and [Tunisia](/wiki/Tunisia)), with soaring arrivals as a consequence of the [Arab Spring](/wiki/Arab_Spring). Furthermore, in recent years, growing migration fluxes from the Far East (notably, [China](/wiki/People's_Republic_of_China)[[159]](#cite_note-160) and the [Philippines](/wiki/Philippines)) and Latin America (mainly from [Peru](/wiki/Peru) and [Ecuador](/wiki/Ecuador)) have been recorded.

Currently, about one million [Romanian](/wiki/Romanian_diaspora) citizens (around one tenth of them being [Roma](/wiki/Romani_people)[[160]](#cite_note-161)) are officially registered as living in Italy, representing thus the most important individual country of origin, followed by [Albanians](/wiki/Albanians) and [Moroccans](/wiki/Moroccans) with about 500,000 people each. The number of unregistered Romanians is difficult to estimate, but the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network suggested in 2007 that there might have been half a million or more.[[161]](#cite_note-162)[Template:Refn](/wiki/Template:Refn) Overall, at the end of the 2000s (decade) the foreign born population of Italy was from: Europe (54%), Africa (22%), Asia (16%), the Americas (8%) and Oceania (0.06%). The distribution of immigrants is largely uneven in Italy: 87% of immigrants live in the northern and central parts of the country (the most economically developed areas), while only 13% live in the southern half of the peninsula.

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|350px|Geographic distribution of the Italian language in the world:](/wiki/File:Map_Italophone_World.png) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend) [Template:Legend](/wiki/Template:Legend)

Italy's official language is [Italian](/wiki/Italian_language).[[162]](#cite_note-163) It is estimated that there are about 64 million native Italian speakers[[163]](#cite_note-164)[[164]](#cite_note-165)[[165]](#cite_note-166) while the total number of Italian speakers, including those who use it as a second language, is about 85 million.[[166]](#cite_note-167) Italy has numerous regional dialects,[[167]](#cite_note-168) however, the establishment of a national education system has led to decrease in variation in the languages spoken across the country during the 20th century. Standardisation was further expanded in the 1950s and 1960s thanks to economic growth and the rise of mass media and television (the state broadcaster [RAI](/wiki/RAI) helped set a standard Italian).

Twelve historical [minority languages](/wiki/Minority_language) are legally recognised: [Albanian](/wiki/Arberesh_language), [Catalan](/wiki/Catalan_language), [German](/wiki/German_language), [Greek](/wiki/Greek_language), [Slovene](/wiki/Slovene_language), [Croatian](/wiki/Croatian_language), [French](/wiki/French_language), [Franco-Provençal](/wiki/Franco-Provençal_language), [Friulian](/wiki/Friulian), [Ladin](/wiki/Ladin_language), [Occitan](/wiki/Occitan) and [Sardinian](/wiki/Sardinian_language) (Law number 482 of 15 December 1999).[[168]](#cite_note-169) French is co-official in the [Valle d’Aosta](/wiki/Valle_d’Aosta)—although in fact [Franco-Provencal](/wiki/Franco-Provencal) is more commonly spoken there.[[169]](#cite_note-170) German has the same status in [South Tyrol](/wiki/South_Tyrol) as, in some parts of that province and in parts of the neighbouring [Trentino](/wiki/Trentino), does [Ladin](/wiki/Ladin_language). [Slovene](/wiki/Slovene_language) is officially recognised in the provinces of [Trieste](/wiki/Province_of_Trieste), [Gorizia](/wiki/Province_of_Gorizia) and [Udine](/wiki/Province_of_Udine).

Because of significant recent immigration, Italy has sizeable populations whose native language is not Italian. According to the [Italian National Institute of Statistics](/wiki/National_Institute_of_Statistics_(Italy)), [Romanian](/wiki/Romanian_people) is the most common mother tongue among foreign residents in Italy: almost 800,000 people speak Romanian as their first language (21.9% of the foreign residents aged 6 and over). Other prevalent mother tongues are [Arabic](/wiki/Arabic) (spoken by over 475,000 people; 13.1% of foreign residents), [Albanian](/wiki/Albanian_language) (380,000 people) and [Spanish](/wiki/Spanish_language) (255,000 people). Other languages spoken in Italy are [Ukrainian](/wiki/Ukrainian_language), [Hindi](/wiki/Hindi), [Polish](/wiki/Polish_language), and [Tamil](/wiki/Tamil_language) amongst others.[[170]](#cite_note-171)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Basilica_Sancti_Petri_blue_hour.jpg)[St. Peter's Basilica](/wiki/St._Peter's_Basilica), the largest church of Christendom.

[Roman Catholicism](/wiki/Roman_Catholicism) is, by far, the largest religion in the country, although Catholicism is no longer officially the [state religion](/wiki/State_religion).[[171]](#cite_note-172) In 2010, the proportion of Italians that identify themselves as Roman Catholic was 81.2%.[[172]](#cite_note-173) The [Holy See](/wiki/Holy_See), the [episcopal jurisdiction of Rome](/wiki/Diocese_of_Rome), contains the central government of the entire [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church), including various [agencies](/wiki/Roman_Curia) essential to administration. Diplomatically, it is recognised by other subjects of international law as a [sovereign](/wiki/Sovereignty) entity, headed by the [Pope](/wiki/Pope), who is also the [Bishop of Rome](/wiki/Bishop_of_Rome), with which [diplomatic relations](/wiki/Diplomatic_relations) can be maintained.[[173]](#cite_note-174)[[174]](#cite_note-175) Often incorrectly referred to as "the Vatican", the Holy See is not the same entity as the [Vatican City](/wiki/Vatican_City) State, which came into existence only in 1929; the Holy See dates back to early Christian times. Ambassadors are officially accredited not to the Vatican City State but to "the Holy See", and papal representatives to states and international organisations are recognised as representing the Holy See, not the Vatican City State.

Minority Christian faiths in Italy include [Eastern Orthodox](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox), [Waldensians](/wiki/Waldensians) and [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) communities. In 2011, there were an estimated 1.5 million Orthodox Christians in Italy, or 2.5% of the population;[[175]](#cite_note-176) 0.5 million [Pentecostals](/wiki/Pentecostals) and [Evangelicals](/wiki/Evangelicals) (of whom 0.4 million are members of the [Assemblies of God](/wiki/Assemblies_of_God)), 235,685 [Jehovah's Witnesses](/wiki/Jehovah's_Witnesses),[[176]](#cite_note-177) 30,000 Waldensians,[[177]](#cite_note-178) 25,000 [Seventh-day Adventists](/wiki/Seventh-day_Adventists), 22,000 [Latter-day Saints](/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints), 15,000 Baptists (plus some 5,000 Free Baptists), 7,000 [Lutherans](/wiki/Lutherans), 4,000 [Methodists](/wiki/Methodists) (affiliated with the Waldensian Church).[[178]](#cite_note-179) One of the longest-established minority religious faiths in Italy is [Judaism](/wiki/Italian_Jews), Jews having been present in [Ancient Rome](/wiki/Ancient_Rome) since before the birth of Christ. Italy has for centuries welcomed Jews expelled from other countries, notably Spain. However, as a result of the [Holocaust](/wiki/Holocaust), about 20% of Italian Jews lost their lives.<ref name=isbn0553343025>[Template:Cite bookp](/wiki/Template:Cite_book). 403</ref> This, together with the emigration that preceded and followed World War II, has left only a small community of around 28,400 Jews in Italy.[[179]](#cite_note-180) Soaring immigration in the last two decades has been accompanied by an increase in non-Christian faiths. In 2010, there were 1.6 million Muslims in Italy, forming 2.6 percent of population.[[172]](#cite_note-173) In addition, there are more than 200,000 followers of faiths originating in the Indian subcontinent with some 70,000 [Sikhs](/wiki/Sikhs) with 22 [gurdwaras](/wiki/Gurdwaras) across the country,[[180]](#cite_note-181) 70,000 [Hindus](/wiki/Hindus), and 50,000 [Buddhists](/wiki/Buddhists).[[181]](#cite_note-182) There were an estimated 4,900 [Bahá'ís](/wiki/Bahá'ís) in Italy in 2005.[[182]](#cite_note-183) The Italian state, as a measure to protect religious freedom, devolves shares of income tax to recognised religious communities, under a regime known as [Eight per thousand](/wiki/Eight_per_thousand) (*Otto per mille*). Donations are allowed to Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu communities; however, Islam remains excluded, since no Muslim communities have yet signed a concordat with the Italian state.[[183]](#cite_note-184) Taxpayers who do not wish to fund a religion contribute their share to the state welfare system. [[184]](#cite_note-185)

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Archiginnasio-bologna02.png)[Bologna University](/wiki/Bologna_University) is the oldest academic institution of the world, founded in AD 1088.

Education in Italy is free and mandatory from ages six to sixteen,[[185]](#cite_note-186) and consists of five stages: kindergarten (*scuola dell'infanzia*), primary school (*scuola primaria*), [lower secondary school](/wiki/Lower_secondary_school) (*scuola secondaria di primo grado*), [upper secondary school](/wiki/Upper_secondary_school) (*scuola secondaria di secondo grado*) and university (*università*).[[186]](#cite_note-187) Primary education lasts eight years. The students are given a basic education in Italian, English, mathematics, natural sciences, history, geography, social studies, physical education and visual and musical arts. Secondary education lasts for five years and includes three traditional types of schools focused on different academic levels: the [*liceo*](/wiki/Secondary_education_in_Italy#liceo) prepares students for university studies with a classical or scientific curriculum, while the [*istituto tecnico*](/wiki/Secondary_education_in_Italy#Istituto_tecnico) and the [*Istituto professionale*](/wiki/Secondary_education_in_Italy#Istituto_professionale) prepare pupils for vocational education. In 2012, the Italian secondary education has been evalued as slightly below the [OECD](/wiki/OECD) average, with a strong and steady improvement in science and mathematics results since 2003;[[187]](#cite_note-188) however, a wide gap exists between [northern](/wiki/Northern_Italy) schools, which performed significantly better than the national average (among the best in the world in some subjects), and schools in the [South](/wiki/Southern_Italy), that had much poorer results.[[188]](#cite_note-189) [Tertiary education](/wiki/Education_in_Italy) in Italy is divided between [public universities](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Italy), private universities and the prestigious and selective [superior graduate schools](/wiki/Superior_Graduate_Schools_in_Italy), such as the [Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa](/wiki/Scuola_Normale_Superiore_di_Pisa). The university system in Italy is generally regarded as poor for a world cultural powerhouse, with no universities ranked among the 100 world best and only 20 among the top 500.[[189]](#cite_note-190) However, the current government has scheduled major reforms and investments in order to improve the overall internationalisation and quality of the system.[[190]](#cite_note-191) [thumb|In 2013,](/wiki/File:DIETA_MEDITERRANEA_ITALIA.JPG) [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) added the [Mediterranean diet](/wiki/Mediterranean_diet) to the [Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity](/wiki/Representative_List_of_the_Intangible_Cultural_Heritage_of_Humanity) of Italy (promoter), [Morocco](/wiki/Morocco), [Spain](/wiki/Spain), [Portugal](/wiki/Portugal), [Greece](/wiki/Greece), [Cyprus](/wiki/Cyprus), and [Croatia](/wiki/Croatia).[[191]](#cite_note-192)[[192]](#cite_note-193)

### Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

The Italian state runs a universal public healthcare system since 1978.[[193]](#cite_note-194) However, healthcare is provided to all citizens and residents by a mixed public-private system. The public part is the *Servizio Sanitario Nazionale*, which is organised under the Ministry of Health and administered on a devolved regional basis. Healthcare spending in Italy accounted for 9.2% of the national GDP in 2012, very close the [OECD](/wiki/OECD) countries' average of 9.3%.[[194]](#cite_note-195) Italy in 2000 ranked as having the world's 2nd best healthcare system,[[193]](#cite_note-194)[[195]](#cite_note-196) and the world's [2nd best healthcare performance](/wiki/World_Health_Organization_ranking_of_health_systems_in_2000). Life expectancy in Italy is 80 for males and 85 for females, placing the country [6th in the world for life expectancy](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_life_expectancy). In comparison to other Western countries, Italy has a relatively low rate of adult obesity (below 10%<ref name=IOTF2008>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>), probably thanks to the health benefits of the [mediterranean diet](/wiki/Mediterranean_diet). The proportion of daily smokers was 22% in 2012, down from 24.4% in 2000 but still slightly above the OECD average.[[194]](#cite_note-195) Smoking in public places including bars, restaurants, night clubs and offices has been restricted to specially ventilated rooms since 2005.[[196]](#cite_note-197)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image)

For centuries divided by politics and geography until its eventual unification in 1861, Italy has developed a unique culture, shaped by a multitude of regional customs and local centres of power and [patronage](/wiki/Patronage).[[197]](#cite_note-198) During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, a number of magnificent [courts](/wiki/Court_(royal)) competed for attracting the best architects, artistis and scholars, thus producing an immense legacy of monuments, paintings, music and literature.[[198]](#cite_note-199) Italy has more [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) [World Heritage Sites](/wiki/List_of_World_Heritage_Sites_in_Italy) ([51](/wiki/Table_of_World_Heritage_Sites_by_country)) than any other country in the world, and has rich collections of art, culture and literature from many different periods. The country has had a broad cultural influence worldwide, also because numerous Italians emigrated to other places during the [Italian diaspora](/wiki/Italian_diaspora). Furthermore, the nation has, overall, an estimated 100,000 monuments of any sort (museums, palaces, buildings, statues, churches, art galleries, villas, fountains, historic houses and archaeological remains).[[199]](#cite_note-200)

### Architecture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Italy has a very broad and diverse architectural style, which cannot be simply classified by period, but also by region, because of Italy's division into several regional states until 1861. This has created a highly diverse and eclectic range in architectural designs.

Italy is known for its considerable architectural achievements,[[200]](#cite_note-201) such as the construction of arches, domes and similar structures during [ancient Rome](/wiki/Ancient_Rome), the founding of the [Renaissance architectural movement](/wiki/Renaissance_architecture) in the late-14th to 16th centuries, and being the homeland of [Palladianism](/wiki/Palladianism), a style of construction which inspired movements such as that of [Neoclassical architecture](/wiki/Neoclassical_architecture), and influenced the designs which noblemen built their country houses all over the world, notably in the UK, Australia and the US during the late 17th to early 20th centuries. Several of the finest works in Western architecture, such as the [Colosseum](/wiki/Colosseum), the [Milan Cathedral](/wiki/Milan_Cathedral) and [Florence cathedral](/wiki/Florence_cathedral), the [Leaning Tower of Pisa](/wiki/Leaning_Tower_of_Pisa) and the building designs of [Venice](/wiki/Venice) are found in Italy.

Italian architecture has also widely influenced the architecture of the world. British architect [Inigo Jones](/wiki/Inigo_Jones), inspired by the designs of Italian buildings and cities, brought back the ideas of Italian Renaissance architecture to 17th-century England, being inspired by [Andrea Palladio](/wiki/Andrea_Palladio).[[201]](#cite_note-202) Additionally, [Italianate architecture](/wiki/Italianate_architecture), popular abroad since the 19th century, was used to describe foreign architecture which was built in an Italian style, especially modelled on [Renaissance architecture](/wiki/Renaissance_architecture).

### Visual art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Leonardo_da_Vinci_(1452-1519)_-_The_Last_Supper_(1495-1498).jpg)[*The Last Supper*](/wiki/The_Last_Supper_(Leonardo_da_Vinci)) (1494–1499) by [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci). Church of [Santa Maria delle Grazie](/wiki/Santa_Maria_delle_Grazie), Milan.

The history of Italian visual art is part of [Western painting](/wiki/Western_painting) history. [Roman art](/wiki/Roman_art) was influenced by Greece and can in part be taken as a descendant of ancient Greek painting. However, Roman painting does have important unique characteristics. The only surviving Roman paintings are wall paintings, many from villas in [Campania](/wiki/Campania), in Southern Italy. Such painting can be grouped into 4 main "styles" or periods[[202]](#cite_note-203) and may contain the first examples of [trompe-l'œil](/wiki/Trompe-l'œil), pseudo-perspective, and pure landscape.[[203]](#cite_note-204) Panel painting becomes more common during the [Romanesque](/wiki/Romanesque_art) period, under the heavy influence of Byzantine icons. Towards the middle of the 13th century, [Medieval art](/wiki/Medieval_art) and [Gothic painting](/wiki/Gothic_painting) became more realistic, with the beginnings of interest in the depiction of volume and perspective in Italy with [Cimabue](/wiki/Cimabue) and then his pupil [Giotto](/wiki/Giotto). From Giotto on, the treatment of composition by the best painters also became much more free and innovative. They are considered to be the two great medieval masters of painting in western culture.

[thumb|left|150px|](/wiki/File:Michelangelo's_David_2015.jpg)[Michelangelo's David](/wiki/Michelangelo's_David) (1501–1504), [Galleria dell'Accademia](/wiki/Galleria_dell'Accademia), Florence.

The [Italian Renaissance](/wiki/Italian_Renaissance) is said by many to be the [golden age](/wiki/Golden_Age_(metaphor)) of painting; roughly spanning the 14th through the mid-17th centuries with a significant influence also out of the borders of modern Italy. In Italy artists like [Paolo Uccello](/wiki/Paolo_Uccello), [Fra Angelico](/wiki/Fra_Angelico), [Masaccio](/wiki/Masaccio), [Piero della Francesca](/wiki/Piero_della_Francesca), [Andrea Mantegna](/wiki/Andrea_Mantegna), [Filippo Lippi](/wiki/Filippo_Lippi), [Giorgione](/wiki/Giorgione), [Tintoretto](/wiki/Tintoretto), [Sandro Botticelli](/wiki/Sandro_Botticelli), [Leonardo da Vinci](/wiki/Leonardo_da_Vinci), [Michelangelo Buonarroti](/wiki/Michelangelo_Buonarroti), [Raphael](/wiki/Raphael), [Giovanni Bellini](/wiki/Giovanni_Bellini), and [Titian](/wiki/Titian) took painting to a higher level through the use of [perspective](/wiki/Perspective_(graphical)), the study of [human anatomy](/wiki/Human_anatomy) and proportion, and through their development of an unprecedented refinement in drawing and painting techniques. Michelangelo was an active sculptor from about 1500 to 1520, and his great masterpieces including his [*David*](/wiki/David_(Michelangelo)), [*Pietà*](/wiki/Pietà_(Michelangelo)), [*Moses*](/wiki/Moses_(Michelangelo)). Other prominent Renaissance sculptors include [Lorenzo Ghiberti](/wiki/Lorenzo_Ghiberti), [Luca Della Robbia](/wiki/Luca_Della_Robbia), [Donatello](/wiki/Donatello), [Filippo Brunelleschi](/wiki/Filippo_Brunelleschi), [Andrea del Verrocchio](/wiki/Andrea_del_Verrocchio).

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the [High Renaissance](/wiki/High_Renaissance) gave rise to a stylised art known as [Mannerism](/wiki/Mannerism). In place of the balanced compositions and rational approach to perspective that characterised art at the dawn of the 16th century, the Mannerists sought instability, artifice, and doubt. The unperturbed faces and gestures of [Piero della Francesca](/wiki/Piero_della_Francesca) and the calm Virgins of Raphael are replaced by the troubled expressions of [Pontormo](/wiki/Pontormo) and the emotional intensity of [El Greco](/wiki/El_Greco). In the 17th century, among the greatest painters of [Italian Baroque](/wiki/Italian_Baroque) are [Caravaggio](/wiki/Caravaggio), [Annibale Carracci](/wiki/Annibale_Carracci), [Artemisia Gentileschi](/wiki/Artemisia_Gentileschi), [Mattia Preti](/wiki/Mattia_Preti), [Carlo Saraceni](/wiki/Carlo_Saraceni) and [Bartolomeo Manfredi](/wiki/Bartolomeo_Manfredi). Subsequently, in the 18th century, [Italian Rococo](/wiki/Italian_Rococo_art) was mainly inspired by French Rococo, since France was the founding nation of that particular style, with artists such as [Giovanni Battista Tiepolo](/wiki/Giovanni_Battista_Tiepolo) and [Canaletto](/wiki/Canaletto). Italian Neoclassical sculpture focused, with [Antonio Canova's](/wiki/Antonio_Canova) nudes, on the idealist aspect of the movement.

In the 19th century, major Italian [Romantic](/wiki/Romantic_painting) painters were [Francesco Hayez](/wiki/Francesco_Hayez), [Giuseppe Bezzuoli](/wiki/Giuseppe_Bezzuoli) and [Francesco Podesti](/wiki/Francesco_Podesti). [Impressionism](/wiki/Impressionism) was brought from France to Italy by the [*Macchiaioli*](/wiki/Macchiaioli), led by [Giovanni Fattori](/wiki/Giovanni_Fattori), and [Giovanni Boldini](/wiki/Giovanni_Boldini); [Realism](/wiki/Realism_(arts)) by [Gioacchino Toma](/wiki/Gioacchino_Toma) and [Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo](/wiki/Giuseppe_Pellizza_da_Volpedo). In the 20th century, with [Futurism](/wiki/Futurism), primarily through the works of [Umberto Boccioni](/wiki/Umberto_Boccioni) and [Giacomo Balla](/wiki/Giacomo_Balla), Italy rose again as a seminal country for artistic evolution in painting and sculpture. Futurism was succeeded by the metaphysical paintings of [Giorgio de Chirico](/wiki/Giorgio_de_Chirico), who exerted a strong influence on the [Surrealists](/wiki/Surrealists) and generations of artists to follow.

### Literature and theatre[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:DanteDetail.jpg)[Dante](/wiki/Dante_Alighieri), poised between the mountain of [Purgatory](/wiki/Purgatory) and the city of Florence, displays the famous incipit *Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita* in a detail of [Domenico di Michelino's](/wiki/Domenico_di_Michelino) painting, 1465.

The basis of the modern [Italian language](/wiki/Italian_language) was established by the [Florentine](/wiki/Florence) poet [Dante Alighieri](/wiki/Dante_Alighieri), whose greatest work, the [Divine Comedy](/wiki/Divine_Comedy), is considered among the foremost literary statements produced in Europe during the [Middle Ages](/wiki/Middle_Ages). There is no shortage of celebrated literary figures in Italy: [Giovanni Boccaccio](/wiki/Giovanni_Boccaccio), [Giacomo Leopardi](/wiki/Giacomo_Leopardi), [Alessandro Manzoni](/wiki/Alessandro_Manzoni), [Torquato Tasso](/wiki/Torquato_Tasso), [Ludovico Ariosto](/wiki/Ludovico_Ariosto), and [Petrarch](/wiki/Francesco_Petrarca), whose best-known vehicle of expression, the [sonnet](/wiki/Sonnet), was created in Italy.[[204]](#cite_note-205) Prominent philosophers include [Giordano Bruno](/wiki/Giordano_Bruno), [Marsilio Ficino](/wiki/Marsilio_Ficino), [Niccolò Machiavelli](/wiki/Niccolò_Machiavelli), and [Giambattista Vico](/wiki/Giambattista_Vico). Modern literary figures and Nobel laureates are nationalist poet [Giosuè Carducci](/wiki/Giosuè_Carducci) in 1906, realist writer [Grazia Deledda](/wiki/Grazia_Deledda) in 1926, modern theatre author [Luigi Pirandello](/wiki/Luigi_Pirandello) in 1936, poets [Salvatore Quasimodo](/wiki/Salvatore_Quasimodo) in 1959 and [Eugenio Montale](/wiki/Eugenio_Montale) in 1975, satirist and theatre author [Dario Fo](/wiki/Dario_Fo) in 1997.[[205]](#cite_note-206) [Carlo Collodi's](/wiki/Carlo_Collodi) 1883 novel, [*The Adventures of Pinocchio*](/wiki/The_Adventures_of_Pinocchio), is the most celebrated children's classic by an Italian author.

Italian theatre can be traced back to the Roman tradition which was heavily influenced by the Greek; as with many other literary genres, Roman dramatists tended to adapt and translate from the Greek. For example, Seneca's *Phaedra* was based on that of [Euripides](/wiki/Euripides), and many of the comedies of [Plautus](/wiki/Plautus) were direct translations of works by [Menander](/wiki/Menander). During the 16th century and on into the 18th century, [Commedia dell'arte](/wiki/Commedia_dell'arte) was a form of [improvisational theatre](/wiki/Improvisational_theatre), and it is still performed today. Travelling troupes of players would set up an outdoor stage and provide amusement in the form of [juggling](/wiki/Juggling), [acrobatics](/wiki/Acrobatics), and, more typically, humorous plays based on a repertoire of established characters with a rough storyline, called [*canovaccio*](/wiki/Canovaccio).

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:GiacomoPuccini.jpg)[Giacomo Puccini](/wiki/Giacomo_Puccini), Italian composer whose operas, including [*La bohème*](/wiki/La_bohème), [*Tosca*](/wiki/Tosca), [*Madama Butterfly*](/wiki/Madama_Butterfly), and [*Turandot*](/wiki/Turandot), are among the most frequently worldwide performed in the [standard repertoire](/wiki/List_of_important_operas).[[206]](#cite_note-207)[[207]](#cite_note-208)

From [folk music](/wiki/Italian_folk_music) to [classical](/wiki/European_classical_music), music has always played an important role in Italian culture. Instruments associated with classical music, including the piano and violin, were invented in Italy, and many of the prevailing classical music forms, such as the [symphony](/wiki/Symphony), concerto, and [sonata](/wiki/Sonata), can trace their roots back to innovations of 16th- and 17th-century Italian music.

Italy's most famous composers include the [Renaissance composers](/wiki/List_of_Renaissance_composers#Italian) [Palestrina](/wiki/Giovanni_Pierluigi_da_Palestrina) and [Monteverdi](/wiki/Claudio_Monteverdi), the [Baroque composers](/wiki/List_of_Baroque_composers) [Scarlatti](/wiki/Alessandro_Scarlatti), [Corelli](/wiki/Arcangelo_Corelli) and [Vivaldi](/wiki/Antonio_Vivaldi), the [Classical composers](/wiki/List_of_Classical_era_composers) [Paganini](/wiki/Niccolò_Paganini) and [Rossini](/wiki/Gioachino_Rossini), and the [Romantic composers](/wiki/List_of_Romantic-era_composers) [Verdi](/wiki/Giuseppe_Verdi) and [Puccini](/wiki/Giacomo_Puccini). Modern Italian composers such as [Berio](/wiki/Luciano_Berio) and [Nono](/wiki/Luigi_Nono_(composer)) proved significant in the development of [experimental](/wiki/Experimental_music) and [electronic music](/wiki/Electronic_music). While the classical music tradition still holds strong in Italy, as evidenced by the fame of its innumerable opera houses, such as [La Scala](/wiki/La_Scala) of Milan and [San Carlo](/wiki/Teatro_di_San_Carlo) of Naples, and performers such as the pianist [Maurizio Pollini](/wiki/Maurizio_Pollini) and the late tenor [Luciano Pavarotti](/wiki/Luciano_Pavarotti), Italians have been no less appreciative of their thriving contemporary music scene.

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Luciano_Pavarotti_in_Saint_Petersburg.jpg)[Luciano Pavarotti](/wiki/Luciano_Pavarotti), one of the most influential tenors of all time.

Italy is widely known for being the birthplace of opera.[[208]](#cite_note-209) [Italian opera](/wiki/Italian_opera) was believed to have been founded in the early 17th century, in Italian cities such as [Mantua](/wiki/Mantua) and [Venice](/wiki/Venice).[[208]](#cite_note-209) Later, works and pieces composed by native Italian composers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as [Rossini](/wiki/Rossini), [Bellini](/wiki/Vincenzo_Bellini), [Donizetti](/wiki/Donizetti), [Verdi](/wiki/Verdi) and [Puccini](/wiki/Puccini), are among the most famous operas ever written and today are performed in opera houses across the world. La Scala operahouse in Milan is also renowned as one of the best in the world. Famous Italian opera singers include [Enrico Caruso](/wiki/Enrico_Caruso) and [Alessandro Bonci](/wiki/Alessandro_Bonci).

Introduced in the early 1920s, [jazz](/wiki/Jazz) took a particularly strong foothold in Italy, and remained popular despite the xenophobic cultural policies of the Fascist regime. Today, the most notable centres of jazz music in Italy include Milan, Rome, and Sicily. Later, Italy was at the forefront of the [progressive rock](/wiki/Progressive_rock) movement of the 1970s, with bands like [PFM](/wiki/Premiata_Forneria_Marconi) and [Goblin](/wiki/Goblin_(band)). Italy was also an important country in the development of [disco](/wiki/Disco) and [electronic](/wiki/Electronic_music) music, with [Italo disco](/wiki/Italo_disco), known for its futuristic sound and prominent usage of synthesizers and [drum machines](/wiki/Drum_machine), being one of the earliest electronic dance genres, as well as European forms of disco aside from [Euro disco](/wiki/Euro_disco) (which later went on to influence several genres such as [Eurodance](/wiki/Eurodance) and [Nu-disco](/wiki/Nu-disco)).

Producers/songwriters such as [Giorgio Moroder](/wiki/Giorgio_Moroder), who won three [Academy Awards](/wiki/Academy_Award) for his music, were highly influential in the development of [EDM](/wiki/Electronic_dance_music) (electronic dance music). Today, Italian pop music is represented annually with the [Sanremo Music Festival](/wiki/Sanremo_Music_Festival), which served as inspiration for the [Eurovision](/wiki/Eurovision) song contest, and the [Festival of Two Worlds](/wiki/Festival_of_Two_Worlds) in [Spoleto](/wiki/Spoleto). Singers such as [pop](/wiki/Traditional_pop) [diva](/wiki/Diva) [Mina](/wiki/Mina_(singer)), classical crossover artist [Andrea Bocelli](/wiki/Andrea_Bocelli), [Grammy](/wiki/Grammy) winner [Laura Pausini](/wiki/Laura_Pausini), and European chart-topper [Eros Ramazzotti](/wiki/Eros_Ramazzotti) have attained international acclaim.

### Cinema[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) The history of Italian cinema began a few months after the [Lumière brothers](/wiki/Auguste_and_Louis_Lumière) began motion picture exhibitions. The first Italian film was a few seconds, showing [Pope Leo XIII](/wiki/Pope_Leo_XIII) giving a blessing to the camera. The Italian film industry was born between 1903 and 1908 with three companies: the Società Italiana Cines, the [Ambrosio Film](/wiki/Ambrosio_Film) and the Itala Film. Other companies soon followed in Milan and in Naples. In a short time these first companies reached a fair producing quality, and films were soon sold outside Italy. Cinema was later used by [Benito Mussolini](/wiki/Benito_Mussolini), who founded Rome's renowned [Cinecittà](/wiki/Cinecittà) studio for the production of Fascist propaganda until World War II.[[209]](#cite_note-210) After the war, Italian film was widely recognised and exported until an artistic decline around the 1980s. [Notable Italian film directors](/wiki/List_of_film_directors_from_Italy) from this period include [Vittorio De Sica](/wiki/Vittorio_De_Sica), [Federico Fellini](/wiki/Federico_Fellini), [Sergio Leone](/wiki/Sergio_Leone), [Pier Paolo Pasolini](/wiki/Pier_Paolo_Pasolini), [Luchino Visconti](/wiki/Luchino_Visconti), [Michelangelo Antonioni](/wiki/Michelangelo_Antonioni) and [Dario Argento](/wiki/Dario_Argento). Movies include world cinema treasures such as [*La dolce vita*](/wiki/La_dolce_vita), [*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*](/wiki/The_Good,_the_Bad_and_the_Ugly) and [*Bicycle Thieves*](/wiki/Bicycle_Thieves). The mid-1940s to the early 1950s was the heyday of [neorealist films](/wiki/Italian_neorealism), reflecting the poor condition of post-war Italy.[[210]](#cite_note-211)[[211]](#cite_note-212) As the country grew wealthier in the 1950s, a form of neorealism known as pink neorealism succeeded, and other [film genres](/wiki/Film_genre), such as [sword-and-sandal](/wiki/Sword-and-sandal) followed as [spaghetti westerns](/wiki/Spaghetti_western), were popular in the 1960s and 1970s. In recent years, the Italian scene has received only occasional international attention, with movies like [*Life Is Beautiful*](/wiki/Life_Is_Beautiful) directed by [Roberto Benigni](/wiki/Roberto_Benigni), [*Il Postino: The Postman*](/wiki/Il_Postino:_The_Postman) with [Massimo Troisi](/wiki/Massimo_Troisi) and [*The Great Beauty*](/wiki/The_Great_Beauty) directed by [Paolo Sorrentino](/wiki/Paolo_Sorrentino).

Italy is the most awarded country at the [Academy Awards](/wiki/Academy_Awards) for [Best Foreign Language Film](/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Foreign_Language_Film), with 14 awards won, 3 [Special Awards](/wiki/Academy_Honorary_Award) and 31 nominations.

### Sport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Italia82.JPG) [*Azzurri*](/wiki/Italy_national_football_team) at the [1982 FIFA World Cup](/wiki/1982_FIFA_World_Cup) (one of the four won by Italy).

The most popular sport in Italy is, by far, [football](/wiki/Association_football).[[212]](#cite_note-213) Italy's [national football team](/wiki/Italy_national_football_team) (nicknamed *Gli Azzurri* – "the Blues") is one of the world's most successful team as it has won four [FIFA World Cups](/wiki/FIFA_World_Cup) (1934, 1938, 1982, and 2006).[[213]](#cite_note-214) Italian clubs have won 48 major European trophies, making Italy the [second most successful country in European football](/wiki/List_of_UEFA_club_competition_winners#By_country). Italy's top-flight club football league, [Serie A](/wiki/Serie_A), ranks as the [fourth best in Europe](/wiki/UEFA_coefficient) and is followed by millions of fans around the world.

Other popular team sports in Italy include [volleyball](/wiki/Volleyball), [basketball](/wiki/Basketball) and [rugby](/wiki/Rugby_football). Italy's [male](/wiki/Italy_national_volleyball_team) and [female](/wiki/Italy_women's_national_volleyball_team) national teams are often [featured among the world's best](/wiki/FIVB_World_Rankings). The [Italian national basketball team's](/wiki/Italian_national_basketball_team) best results were gold at [Eurobasket 1983](/wiki/Eurobasket_1983) and [EuroBasket 1999](/wiki/EuroBasket_1999), as well as silver at the Olympics in [2004](/wiki/Basketball_at_the_2004_Summer_Olympics). [Lega Basket Serie A](/wiki/Lega_Basket_Serie_A) is widely considered [one of the most competitive in Europe](/wiki/European_national_basketball_league_rankings). [Rugby union](/wiki/Rugby_union) enjoys a good level of popularity, especially in the north of the country. Italy's [national team](/wiki/Italy_national_rugby_union_team) competes in the [Six Nations Championship](/wiki/Six_Nations_Championship), and is a regular at the [Rugby World Cup](/wiki/Rugby_World_Cup). Italy ranks as a tier-one nation by [World Rugby](/wiki/World_Rugby).

Italy has a long and successful tradition in individual sports as well. [Bicycle racing](/wiki/Bicycle_racing) is a very familiar sport in the country.[[214]](#cite_note-215) Italians have won the [UCI World Championships](/wiki/UCI_Road_World_Championships_–_Men's_road_race) [more than any other country](/wiki/UCI_Road_World_Championships_–_Men's_road_race#Medalists_by_nation), except [Belgium](/wiki/Belgium). The [Giro d'Italia](/wiki/Giro_d'Italia) is a cycling race held every May, and constitutes one of the three [Grand Tours](/wiki/Grand_Tour_(cycling)), along with the [Tour de France](/wiki/Tour_de_France) and the [Vuelta a España](/wiki/Vuelta_a_España), each of which last approximately three weeks. [Alpine skiing](/wiki/Alpine_skiing) is also a very widespread sport in Italy, and the country is a popular international skiing destination, known for its ski resorts.[[215]](#cite_note-216) Italian skiers achieved good results in [Winter Olympic Games](/wiki/Winter_Olympic_Games), [Alpine Ski World Cup](/wiki/FIS_Alpine_Ski_World_Cup), and [World Championship](/wiki/FIS_Alpine_World_Ski_Championships). [Tennis](/wiki/Tennis) has a significant following in Italy, ranking as the fourth most practised sport in the country.[[216]](#cite_note-217) The [Rome Masters](/wiki/Italian_Open_(tennis)), founded in 1930, is one of the most prestigious tennis tournaments in the world. Italian professional tennis players won the [Davis Cup](/wiki/Davis_Cup) in 1976 and the [Fed Cup](/wiki/Fed_Cup) in 2006, 2009, 2010 and 2013. [Motorsports](/wiki/Motorsports) are also extremely popular in Italy. Italy has won, by far, [the most MotoGP World Championships](/wiki/List_of_Grand_Prix_motorcycle_racing_World_champions#By_country). Italian [Scuderia Ferrari](/wiki/Scuderia_Ferrari) is the oldest surviving team in [Grand Prix](/wiki/Grand_Prix_motor_racing) racing, having competed since 1948, and statistically the [most successful Formula One team in history](/wiki/List_of_Formula_One_Grand_Prix_winners_(constructors)) with a record of 224 wins.

Historically, Italy has been successful in the [Olympic Games](/wiki/Olympic_Games), taking part from the [first Olympiad](/wiki/1896_Summer_Olympics) and in 47 Games out of 48. [Italian sportsmen](/wiki/Italy_at_the_Olympics) have won 522 medals at the [Summer Olympic Games](/wiki/Summer_Olympic_Games), and another 106 at the [Winter Olympic Games](/wiki/Winter_Olympic_Games), for a combined total of 628 medals with 235 golds, which makes them the [fifth most successful nation in Olympic history](/wiki/All-time_Olympic_Games_medal_table) for total medals. The country hosted two Winter Olympics (in [1956](/wiki/1956_Winter_Olympics) and [2006](/wiki/2006_Winter_Olympics)), and one Summer games (in [1960](/wiki/1960_Summer_Olympics)).

### Fashion and design[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[thumb|150px|](/wiki/File:HK_TST_Peninsula_Hotel_Hong_Kong_Salisbury_Road_Prada_shop_window_Oct-2012.JPG)[Prada](/wiki/Prada) shop in Hong Kong. Italian fashion has [a long tradition](/wiki/History_of_Italian_fashion), and is regarded as one most important in the world. Milan, Florence and Rome are Italy's main [fashion capitals](/wiki/Fashion_capital). According to *Top Global Fashion Capital Rankings* 2013 by [Global Language Monitor](/wiki/Global_Language_Monitor), Rome ranked sixth worldwide when Milan was twelfth.[[217]](#cite_note-218) Major Italian fashion labels, such as [Gucci](/wiki/Gucci), [Armani](/wiki/Armani), [Prada](/wiki/Prada), [Versace](/wiki/Versace), [Valentino](/wiki/Valentino_SpA), [Dolce & Gabbana](/wiki/Dolce_&_Gabbana), [Missoni](/wiki/Missoni), [Fendi](/wiki/Fendi), [Moschino](/wiki/Moschino), [Max Mara](/wiki/Max_Mara), [Trussardi](/wiki/Trussardi), and [Ferragamo](/wiki/Ferragamo), to name a few, are regarded as among the finest fashion houses in the world. Also, the fashion magazine [Vogue Italia](/wiki/Vogue_Italia), is considered one of the most prestigious fashion magazines in the world.[[218]](#cite_note-219) Italy is also prominent in the field of design, notably interior design, [architectural design](/wiki/Architectural_design), [industrial design](/wiki/Industrial_design) and [urban design](/wiki/Urban_design). The country has produced some well-known furniture designers, such as [Gio Ponti](/wiki/Gio_Ponti) and [Ettore Sottsass](/wiki/Ettore_Sottsass), and Italian phrases such as *"Bel Disegno"* and *"Linea Italiana"* have entered the vocabulary of furniture design.[[219]](#cite_note-220) Examples of classic pieces of Italian [white goods](/wiki/White_goods) and pieces of furniture include [Zanussi's](/wiki/Zanussi) [washing machines](/wiki/Washing_machine) and [fridges](/wiki/Fridge),[[220]](#cite_note-221) the "New Tone" sofas by Atrium,[[220]](#cite_note-221) and the post-modern bookcase by Ettore Sottsass, inspired by [Bob Dylan's](/wiki/Bob_Dylan) song "[Stuck Inside of Mobile with the Memphis Blues Again](/wiki/Stuck_Inside_of_Mobile_with_the_Memphis_Blues_Again)".[[220]](#cite_note-221) Today, [Milan](/wiki/Milan) and [Turin](/wiki/Turin) are the nation's leaders in [architectural design](/wiki/Architectural_design) and [industrial design](/wiki/Industrial_design). The city of Milan hosts [Fiera Milano](/wiki/Fiera_Milano), Europe's largest design fair.[[221]](#cite_note-222) Milan also hosts major design and architecture-related events and venues, such as the "*Fuori Salone*" and the [Salone del Mobile](/wiki/Salone_del_Mobile), and has been home to the designers [Bruno Munari](/wiki/Bruno_Munari), [Lucio Fontana](/wiki/Lucio_Fontana), [Enrico Castellani](/wiki/Enrico_Castellani) and [Piero Manzoni](/wiki/Piero_Manzoni).[[222]](#cite_note-223)

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

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[thumbnail|Some of the most popular Italian foods:](/wiki/File:Italian_food.JPG) [pizza](/wiki/Pizza), [pasta](/wiki/Pasta), [gelato](/wiki/Gelato) and [espresso](/wiki/Espresso).

Modern Italian [cuisine](/wiki/Cuisine) has developed through centuries of social and political changes, with [roots](/wiki/Ancient_Roman_cuisine) as far back as the 4th century BC. Italian cuisine in itself takes heavy influences, including [Etruscan](/wiki/Etruscan_civilization), [ancient Greek](/wiki/Ancient_Greek_cuisine), [ancient Roman](/wiki/Ancient_Roman_cuisine), [Byzantine](/wiki/Byzantine_cuisine), and [Jewish](/wiki/Jewish_cuisine).[[223]](#cite_note-224) Significant changes occurred with the discovery of the [New World](/wiki/New_World) with the introduction of items such as [potatoes](/wiki/Potato), [tomatoes](/wiki/Tomato), [bell peppers](/wiki/Bell_pepper) and [maize](/wiki/Maize), now central to the cuisine but not introduced in quantity until the 18th century.[[224]](#cite_note-225)[[225]](#cite_note-226) Italian cuisine is noted for its regional diversity,[[226]](#cite_note-227)[[227]](#cite_note-228)[[228]](#cite_note-229) abundance of difference in taste, and is known to be one of the most popular in the world,[[229]](#cite_note-230) wielding strong influence abroad.[[230]](#cite_note-231) The [Mediterranean diet](/wiki/Mediterranean_diet) forms the basis of Italian cuisine, rich in pasta, fish, fruits and vegetables and characterised by its extreme simplicity and variety, with many dishes having only four to eight ingredients.[[231]](#cite_note-232) Italian cooks rely chiefly on the quality of the ingredients rather than on elaborate preparation.[[232]](#cite_note-233) Dishes and recipes are often derivatives from local and familial tradition rather than created by [chefs](/wiki/Chef), so many recipes are ideally suited for [home cooking](/wiki/Home_cooking), this being one of the main reasons behind the ever increasing worldwide popularity of Italian cuisine, from America[[233]](#cite_note-234) to Asia.[[234]](#cite_note-235) Ingredients and dishes vary widely by [region](/wiki/Regions_of_Italy).

A key factor in the success of Italian cuisine is its heavy reliance on traditional products; Italy has the most [traditional specialities](/wiki/List_of_Italian_products_with_protected_designation_of_origin) protected under [EU law](/wiki/Geographical_indications_and_traditional_specialities_in_the_European_Union).[[235]](#cite_note-236) [Cheese](/wiki/List_of_Italian_cheeses), [cold cuts](/wiki/Salumi) and [wine](/wiki/Italian_wine) are a major part of Italian cuisine, with many regional declinations and [Protected Designation of Origin](/wiki/Protected_Designation_of_Origin) or [Protected Geographical Indication](/wiki/Protected_Geographical_Indication) labels, and along with [coffee](/wiki/Coffee) (especially [espresso](/wiki/Espresso)) make up a very important part of the Italian [gastronomic](/wiki/Gastronomic) culture.[[236]](#cite_note-237) Desserts have a long tradition of merging local flavours such as [citrus fruits](/wiki/Citrus_fruits), [pistachio](/wiki/Pistachio) and [almonds](/wiki/Almonds) with sweet cheeses like [mascarpone](/wiki/Mascarpone) and [ricotta](/wiki/Ricotta) or exotic tastes as cocoa, vanilla and cinnamon. [Gelato](/wiki/Gelato),[[237]](#cite_note-238) [tiramisù](/wiki/Tiramisù)[[238]](#cite_note-239) and [cassata](/wiki/Cassata) are among the most famous examples of Italian desserts, cakes and patisserie.

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

* [Index of Italy-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Italy-related_articles)
* [List of English exonyms for Italian toponyms](/wiki/List_of_English_exonyms_for_Italian_toponyms)
* [Outline of Italy](/wiki/Outline_of_Italy)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

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## Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)
* Hibberd, Matthew. *The media in Italy* (McGraw-Hill International, 2007)
* Sarti, Roland, ed. *Italy: A reference guide from the Renaissance to the present* (2004)
* Sassoon, Donald. *Contemporary Italy: politics, economy and society since 1945* (Routledge, 2014)
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Online resources about Italy](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/italy.htm) at UCB Libraries GovPubs
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)
* [Template:Osmrelation-inline](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation-inline)
* [Italian Higher Education for International Students](http://www.study-in-italy.it/)
* [Italian National and Regional parks](http://www.parks.it/Eindex.html)
* [Italian tourism official website](http://www.italia.it/en/home.html)

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