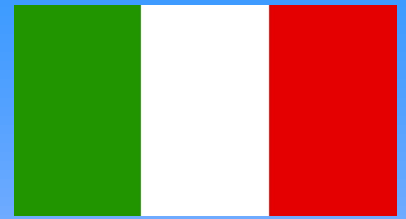


# Italy: quick facts



**Population**

61 Million

**Size**

More than 300,000 sq km, including 7,000 sq km water

**Climate**

Mediterranean—Warm dry summers/cool wet winters. Colder in the North; Hotter and drier in the South.

**Regions and Provinces**

Italy is divided into 20 regions and 109 provinces

**Large Cities**



Rome (Capital), Milan, Turin, Palermo, Naples, Genoa, Bologna, Florence, Bari, Catania, Venice

**Vatican City**

An independent territory with its own system of government. The Bishop of Rome, currently Pope Francis, is elected to govern the Catholic Church. He lives in the Apostolic Palace.

**Government**

Democratic Republic

**Head of Government**

President of the Republic; Prime Minister (Premier)

**Year of Unification**

1861

**Religion**

Roman Catholic (90%)

**Language**

Italian

**Currency**

Euro since 2002. Previously *lire*

**Geography**



A mountainous peninsula, shaped like a thigh-high boot. The Northern border is defined by the Alps. Italy has two large islands (Sicily and Sardegna) and 70 smaller Islands. There are 3 active volcanoes: Etna (Sicily); Vesuvius (Naples); Stromboli (north of Sicily)

**Sport**

Football (ie Soccer) is the most popular sport. The Italian National team has won the World Cup 4 times, most recently in 2006. Basketball in the second national team sport.



**Fashion**

Milan is one of the fashion capitals of the world. Famous Italian designers include: Armani; Dolce & Gabbana; Versaci; Benetton; Prada

**Food**



Each region has its signature dish. Some make a special point of celebrating seasonal produce. Italians enjoy eating pasta, pizza, *dolci* (sweets), *biscotti* (biscuits) and gelato and drinking wine and coffee