

Italy



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General Information



Italy is located in southern Europe and is connected to the Mediterranean Sea. The country shares its borders with Switzerland, France, Austria, and Slovenia. Italy's nickname is the *boot*, since the shape of it looks like one. The islands Sicily, Sardinia, and around seventy other small islands also are part of Italy. The total population for Italy is 58,742,000 and the capital is Rome. Over ninety percent of the population speak Italian, but there are a variety of dialects in different regions of the country. Other languages include German, French, and Slovene.

Geography

Italy's general layout is a mountainous peninsula extending into the Mediterranean Sea. Most of weather consists of warm, dry summers and a mild winter. Although, since the northern part of Italy is more mountainous, that area tends to have wetter and colder winters. The largest river is the Po, which flows eastward across Northern Italy and is 652 km long.



Mount Etna

There are many volcanoes located within Italy, and many of them are still active today. Etna, located in Sicily is the largest active volcano in Europe. Other famous active volcanoes are Vulcano, Stromboli, and Vesuvius. Due to there being a large number of volcanoes, earthquakes occur frequently throughout the country.

Economy

Italy has to import almost all of its raw materials and energy and the economy is centered around the production and processing of those materials. Industrial commodities include tourism, machinery, chemicals, iron, and steel. Many businesses are small or medium sized.



Agriculture is also an important commodity that is grown in the rich farmlands in the country and shipped to markets to be sold. A large variety of fruits and vegetables, like grapes and potatoes, are grown. Italy is well known for producing quality wine.

Economy

Italy exports a variety of completed manufactured goods, such as engineering products, textiles, clothing, production machinery, motor vehicles, and transport equipment. Milan and Rome are considered to be fashion capitals of the world. Fashion designers create elaborate textiles and extravagant clothing. Italian clothing stores, like Prada and Armani, are located worldwide. Fiat is the only automotive company in the country and their products are shipped to countries around the world.



Culture

Family is extremely valued in Italian culture. This includes extended family and not just “the nuclear family.” Italians enjoy spending time with family and family gatherings are very common. Food is also a focal point of family gatherings. Italian cuisine has influenced styles of food around the world. Traditional meals tend to include pasta, cheese, and wine.

Different regions of the country have certain ingredients appear more often in meals. Northern meals tend to have more butter, rice, and pork. Central Italian meals have more braised meats, and the South features more tomato and fish meals.



Religion

Italy's main religion is Roman Catholicism and that makes up around 90 percent of the population, but only a third of these people consider themselves to be active worshipers. Vatican City, which is located in Rome, is the home of government of the Roman Catholic Church, the Vatican.

The church located within the Vatican is Saint Peter's Basilica and it is considered to be one of the holiest Catholic shrines. It is the belief that the Basilica is the burial place of Saint Peter, who was one of Christ's Apostles and also the first Pope.



Saint Peter's Basilica

Art

Italy is extremely well known for producing beautiful works of art for centuries and has a deep root in artistic tradition. Many different styles of art have appeared throughout Italy's history. Museums and churches across the country are home to various pieces of art.



Column of Trajan

Roman Art

Roman art was one of the earliest styles that appeared. During this time, art and politics overlapped each other and many works of art depicted political topics. At this point, there was also a rise in popularity of artwork depicting historical events, portraits, and landscapes.

Renaissance Art

Originating in Florence, the Renaissance style began to spread all across Italy. This was considered a time of rebirth and was influenced by literature, music, philosophy, and science. Famous artists of this

time were Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, and countless others.



The School of Athens, Raphael

Baroque Art

The artists Carracci and Caravaggio began the transition from Renaissance to Baroque. Michelangelo was another famous artist during this time and was well known for his incredible sculptures. The one piece of work that increased his recognition was the creation of the Sistine Chapel. Many works of art created during this time were used as propaganda for the importance of the church.

The Sistine Chapel



Questions

- Where is Italy located?
- What is Mount Etna and why is it famous?
- Which foods consumed most often in the different regions of Italy?
- What is the main religion of Italy and what is the Vatican?
- What are the main exports of Italy?
- What were the three periods of art? What was the main focus for the artwork in them?

Glossary

Century: a period of one hundred years.

Cuisine: a style of cooking.

Dialect: a particular form of a language that is irregular to a specific region or social group.

Nuclear family: a family group that consists only of parents and children.

Philosophy: the study of knowledge and reality.

Pope: the spiritual leader of the world's Roman Catholics.

Propaganda: deliberate spreading of misleading information.

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Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY .RI.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY .RI.3.3

Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY .RI.3.7

Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

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