



ITALY



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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Western Europe.

Ente Nazionale Italiano per il Turismo (ENIT)
Via Marghera 2, 00185 Rome
Tel: (06) 49711. Fax: (06) 446 3379.
E-mail: sedecentrale.enit@interbusiness.it
Web site: <http://www.enit.it>

Italian Embassy
14 Three Kings Yard, Davies Street, London W1K 4EH
Tel: (020) 7312 2200. Fax: (020) 7312 2230.
E-mail: emblondon@embitaly.org.uk
Web site: <http://www.embitaly.org.uk>
Political enquiries only.

Italian Consulate

2 GENERAL

38 Eaton Place, London SW1X 8AN
Tel: (020) 7235 9371 or (09001) 600 340 (recorded visa information; calls cost 60p per minute).
Fax: (020) 7823 1609. Opening hours: 0900-1200 Monday to Friday.
E-mail: itconlond@talk21.com
Web site: <http://www.embitaly.org.uk>
Consulate General also in: Edinburgh. Consulate in: Manchester. Vice-Consulate in: Bedford.

Italian State Tourist Office (ENIT)
1 Princes Street, London W1R 8AY
Tel: (020) 7408 1254 or 7355 1557 (trade enquiries only) or (09001) 600 280 (brochure line; calls are charged at 60p per minute). Fax: (020) 7493 6695. E-mail: enitlond@globalnet.co.uk
Web site: <http://www.enit.it>

British Embassy
Via XX Settembre 80/A, 00187 Rome, Italy
Tel: (06) 482 5551 or 482 5441. Fax: (06) 487 3324 or 42 20 23 34 (consular section). E-mail: info@rome.mail.fco.gov.uk
Web site: <http://www.UKinItalia.it>

British Consulate General
Lungarno Corsini 2, 50123, Florence, Italy
Tel: (055) 284 133. Fax: (055) 219 112.
Consulates also in: Bari, Brindisi, Cagliari, Catania, Genoa, Messina, Milan, Naples, Palermo, Rome, Trieste, Turin and Venice.

Embassy of the Italian Republic
3000 Whitehaven Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008
Tel: (202) 612 4000 or 612 4407/08 (visa section). Fax: (202) 612 4400.
Web site: <http://www.italyemb.org>

Consulate General of Italy

690 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10021

Tel: (212) 737 9100. Fax: (212) 249 4945. E-mail: info@italconsnyc.org

Web site: <http://www.italconsulnyc.org>

Consulates General also in: Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

Italian State Tourist Office (ENIT)

630 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1565, New York, NY 10111

Tel: (212) 245 5618. Fax: (212) 586 9249. E-mail: info@italiantourism.com

Web site: <http://www.italiantourism.com>

Embassy of the United States of America

Via Veneto 119, 00187 Rome, Italy

Tel: (06) 46741. Fax: (06) 46 74 22 44 (passport section) or 46 74 22 17 (visa section).

Web site: <http://www.usis.it>

Embassy of the Italian Republic

21st Floor, 275 Slater Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9

Tel: (613) 232 2401-3. Fax: (613) 233 1484. E-mail: ambital@italyincanada.com

Web site: www.trytel.com/~italy

Consulates in: Edmonton, Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver.

Honorary Consulates in: Calgary and Hamilton.

Italian State Tourist Office (ENIT)

175 Bloor Street East, Suite 907, South Tower, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3R8

Tel: (416) 925 4882. Fax: (416) 925 4799.

E-mail: enit.canada@on.aibn.com (travel trade only). Web site: <http://www.italiantourism.com>

Canadian Embassy

Via G B de Rossi 27, 00161 Rome, Italy

Consular section: Via Zara 30, 00198 Rome, Italy

Tel: (06) 445 9811 or 44 59 84 21 (consular section). Fax: (06) 44 59 87 50.

or 44 59 81 92 (consular section). Web site: <http://www.canada.it>

Country dialling code: 39. The 0 preceding the area code should not be omitted.

General

Area: 301,323 sq km (116,341 sq miles).

Population: 57,587,985 (1998).

Population Density: 191.1 per sq km.

Capital: Rome. Population: 2,645,322 (1996).

Geography: Italy is situated in Europe and attached in the north to the European mainland. To the north the Alps separate Italy from France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia.

Northern Italy: The Alpine regions, the Po Plain and the Ligurian-Etruscan Appennines. Piedmont and Val d'Aosta contain some of the highest mountains in Europe and are good areas for winter sports. Many rivers flow down from the mountains towards the Po Basin, passing through the beautiful Italian Lake District (Maggiore, Como, Garda). The Po Basin, which extends

as far south as the bare slopes of the Appennines, is covered with gravel terraces and rich alluvial soil and has long been one of Italy's most prosperous regions. To the east, where the River Po flows into the Adriatic Sea, the plains are little higher than the river itself; artificial (and occasionally natural) embankments prevent flooding.

Central Italy: The northern part of the Italian peninsula. Tuscany (Toscana) has a diverse landscape with snow-capped mountains (the Tuscan Appennines), lush countryside, hills and a long sandy coastline with offshore islands. Le Marche, lying between the Appennines and the Adriatic coast, is a region of mountains, rivers and small fertile plains. The even more mountainous regioni (administrative districts) of Abruzzo and Molise are bordered by Marche to the north and Puglia to the south, and are separated from the Tyrrhenian Sea and to the west by Lazio and Campania. Umbria is known as the 'green heart of Italy', hilly with broad plains, olive groves and pines. Further south lies Rome, Italy's capital and largest city. Within its precincts is the Vatican City.

Southern Italy: Campania consists of flat coastal plains and low mountains, stretching from Baia Domizia to the Bay of Naples and along a rocky coast to the Calabria border. Inland, the Appennines are lower, mellowing into the rolling countryside around Sorrento. The islands of Capri, Ischia and Procida in the Tyrrhenian Sea are also part of Campania. The south is wilder than the north, with mile upon mile of olive trees, cool forests and rolling hills. Puglia, the 'heel of the boot', is a landscape of volcanic hills and isolated marshes. Calabria, the 'toe', is heavily forested and thinly populated. The Calabrian hills are home to bears and wolves.

The Islands: Sicily (Sicilia), visible across a 3km (2-mile) strait from mainland Italy, is fertile but mountainous with volcanoes (including the famous landmark of Mount Etna) and lava fields, and several offshore islands. Sardinia (Sardegna) has a mountainous landscape, fine sandy beaches and rocky offshore islands.

For more information on each region, see the Resorts & Excursions section below.

Government: Unification in 1861. Republic since 1946. Head of State: President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi since 1999. Head of Government: Prime Minister Giuliano Amato since 2000.

Language: Italian is the official language. Dialects are spoken in different regions. German and Ladin are spoken in the South Tyrol region (bordering Austria). French is spoken in all the border areas from the Riviera to the area north of Milan (border with France and Switzerland). German is spoken around the Austrian border. English, German and French are also spoken in the biggest cities and in tourism and business circles.

Religion: Roman Catholic with Protestant minorities.

Time: GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to Saturday before last Sunday in September).

Electricity: 220 volts AC, 50Hz.

Communications:

Telephone: Full IDD service available. Country code: 390 (followed by 6 for Rome, 2 for Milan, 11 for Turin, 81 for Naples, 41 for Venice and 55 for Florence). Outgoing international code: 00. Telephone kiosks now only accept phonecards, which can be purchased at post offices, tobacconists and certain newsagents.

Mobile telephone: GSM 900 and 1800 networks.

Fax: Some hotels have facilities.

Internet/E-mail: ISPs include Telecom Italia Net (<http://www.tin.it>). Public access is available in Internet Corner Kiosks operated by Telecom Italia. Kiosks have been installed at airports, major hotels and in other public places. Access costs L200 per minute, and phonecards can be used. There are also cybercafés in all main towns.

Telegram: Both internal and overseas telegrams may be dictated over the telephone.

Post: The Italian postal system tends to be subject to delays. Letters between Italy and other European countries usually take a week to ten days to arrive. Letters intended for Poste Restante collection should be addressed to Fermo Posta and the town. Stamps are sold in post offices and tobacconists. Post office hours: 0800/0830-1200/1230 and 1400/1430-1730/1800 Monday to Friday; Saturday mornings only.

Press: The main towns publish a weekly booklet with entertainment programmes, sports events, restaurants, nightclubs, etc. There are several English-language publications: monthly magazines Italy-Italy (Rome), Grapevine (on the Lucca area) and The Informer (Milan), as well as Wanted In Rome, published twice monthly, and the English-language newspaper, Daily American (Rome). Among the most important Italian dailies are La Stampa (Turin), Corriere della Sera (Milan), La Repubblica (Rome), Il Messaggero (Rome), Il Giorno (Milan) and Il Giornale (Milan).

BBC World Service and Voice of America frequencies: From time to time these change.

BBC:

MHz12.109.4106.1950.648

Voice of America:

MHz15.4811.979.7700.792

3 PASSPORT

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	Yes	No	No
Australian	Yes	No	No
Canadian	Yes	No	No
USA	Yes	No	No
OtherEU	1	No	No
Japanese	Yes	No	No

Note: (a) Italy is a signatory to the 1995 Schengen Agreement. For further details about passport/visa regulations within the Schengen area see the introductory section How to Use this Guide. (b) The regulations stated below also apply to San Marino and the Vatican City.

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for 6 months required by all except: 1. nationals of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Portugal, San Marino, Spain and Switzerland with a valid national ID card.

VISAS: Required by all except the following for stays of up to 90 days:

(a) nationals of countries referred to in the chart above;

(b) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Korea (Rep. of), Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Poland, San Marino, Singapore, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, Uruguay, Vatican City and Venezuela;

(c) transit passengers continuing their journey to a third country by the same or connecting aircraft within 48 hours, provided holding tickets with reserved seats and valid documents for onward travel (except nationals of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Congo (Dem. Rep.), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Somalia and Sri Lanka, who always require a visa). As the preceding list is liable to change at short notice, visitors are advised to check transit regulations with the relevant Embassy or Consulate before travelling.

Types of visa and cost: A uniform type of visa, the Schengen visa, is issued for tourist, business and private visits. Short-stay: £17.10 (for up to 30 days); £20.50 (for up to 90 days). Transit: £7. Airport Transit: Free.

Note: Spouses and children of EU nationals (providing spouse's passport and the original marriage certificate is produced), and nationals of some other countries, receive their visas free of charge (enquire at Embassy for details).

Validity: Short-stay (single- and multiple-entry): valid for 6 months from date of issue for stays of maximum 90 days per entry. Transit (single- and multiple-entry): valid for a maximum of 5 days per entry, including the day of arrival. Visas cannot be extended and a new application must be made each time.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see address section. Postal applications are not acceptable. Travellers visiting just one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of that country; travellers visiting more than one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of the country chosen as the main destination or the country they will enter first (if they have no main destination).

Application requirements: Tourism: (a) Passport valid for at least 3 months longer than validity of requested visa with 1 blank page to affix the visa. (b) Completed application form. (c) UK residence permit valid for at least 6 months beyond the expiry date for UK applicants. (d) 1 passport-size photograph. (e) Proof of sufficient funds to cover duration of stay (credit cards and cash are not accepted as proof of financial means). (f) Where applicable, marriage certificate showing proof of marriage to an EU national. (g) In some cases evidence of medical insurance required. (h) Proof of travel arrangements. (i) Letter from employer or school.

Transit: (a)-(e) and (f) Visa for the onward destination country if required and an airline ticket. If driving, driving licence, registration document and proof of ownership of the vehicle is required.

Business: (a)-(d) and, (e) Letter from employer addressed to the Italian Consulate General explaining the purpose and duration of the visit. If self-employed, a letter from an accountant, company secretary, solicitor or local Chamber of Commerce. Applicants should also arrange for an invitation from the host Italian company or firm to be faxed directly to the Italian Consulate General in London on (fax: (020) 7823 1609) at least 48 hours before submitting an application.

Working days required: Approximately 2 days, but varies according to nationality. No visas are issued within 24 hours. Check with Consular section at Embassy for details.

Temporary residence: Enquire at Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy).

4 MONEY

Currency: Italian Lira (L). Notes are in denominations of L100,000, 50,000, 10,000, 5000, 2000 and 1000. Coins are in denominations of L500, 200, 100, and 50. There is a plan to introduce a 'new Lira' worth 1000 times the present currency, but no firm date has been established for this at the time of writing.

Single European currency (Euro): The Euro is now the official currency of 12 EU member states (including Italy), although it is currently only used as 'written money' (cheques, bank transactions, credit cards, etc). The first Euro coins and notes will be introduced in January 2002; the Italian Lira will still be in circulation until July 1 2002, when it will be completely replaced by the Euro. 1 Euro = L1936.27.

Currency exchange: Travellers cheques, cheques and foreign money can be changed at banks, railway stations and airports, and very often at main hotels (generally at a less convenient rate). Many UK banks offer differing exchange rates depending on the denominations of Italian currency being bought or sold. Check with banks for details and current rates.

Credit cards: MasterCard, Diners Club and Visa are widely accepted. Check with your credit card company for merchant acceptability and other facilities which may be available.

Travellers cheques: Travellers cheques are accepted almost everywhere. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take travellers cheques in Pounds Sterling.

Exchange rate indicators

The following figures are included as a guide to the movements of the Lira against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date May '00 Aug '00 Nov '00 Feb

'01 £1.00=3219.49 3138.76 3268.47 3078.43 \$1.00=2168.88 2092.02 2257.78 2108.08

The following figures are included as a guide to the movements of the Euro against Sterling and the US Dollar:

Date May '00 Aug '00 Nov '00 Feb '01 1 Euro=£0.60 £0.62 £0.59 £0.62 1 Euro=\$0.89 \$0.93 \$0.86 \$0.92

Currency restrictions: Check with the embassy before departure. Import and export of both foreign and local currency is limited to L20,000,000. If it is intended to import or export amounts greater than this, the amount should be declared and validated in Italy on form V2.

Banking hours: These vary from city to city but, in general, 0830-1330 and 1500-1600 Monday to Friday.

5 DUTY FREE

The following goods may be imported into Italy without incurring customs duty by passengers over 17 years of age arriving from countries outside the EU with goods bought duty free: 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars or 100 cigarillos or 250g of tobacco; 2 litres of wine and 750ml of spirits (over 22%) or 2 litres of fortified or sparkling wine; 50g of perfume and 250ml of eau de toilette; 500g of coffee or 200g of coffee extract; 100g of tea or 40g of tea extract.

Abolition of Duty-free goods within the EU: On June 30 1999, the sale of duty-free alcohol and tobacco at airports and at sea was abolished in all 15 EU member states. Although there are now no limits imposed on importing tobacco and alcohol products from one EU country to another, (with the exceptions of Denmark, Finland and Sweden, where limits are imposed), travellers should note that they may be required to prove at customs that the goods purchased are for personal use only.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1 2001 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 16 Easter Monday. Apr 25 Liberation Day. May 1 Labour Day. Aug 15 Assumption. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Dec 8 Immaculate Conception. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 St Stephen's Day. Jan 1 2002 New Year's Day. Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 1 Easter Monday. Apr 25 Liberation Day. May 1 Labour Day. Aug 15 Assumption. Nov 1 All Saints' Day. Dec 8 Immaculate Conception. Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 St Stephen's Day.

In addition, local feast days are held in honour of town patron saints, generally without closure of shops and offices. These include:

Turin/Genoa/Florence: Jun 24 (St John the Baptist). Milan: Dec 7 (St Ambrose). Siena: Jul 2 and Aug 16, Palio horserace. Venice: Apr 25 (St Mark). Bologna: Oct 4 (St Petronius). Naples: Sep 19 (St Gennaro). Bari: Dec 6 (St Nicholas). Palermo: Jul 15 (St Rosalia). Rome: Jun 29 (St Peter). Trieste: Nov 3.

7 HEALTH

	<i>Special Precautions</i>	<i>Certificate Required</i>
Yellow Fever	No	No
Cholera	No	No
Typhoid and Polio	No	-
Malaria	No	-
Food and Drink	1	-

1: Tap water is generally safe to drink. Bottled water is available. The inscription 'Acqua Non Potabile' means water is not drinkable. Milk is pasteurised and dairy products are safe for consumption. Local meat, poultry, seafood, fruit and vegetables are considered safe to eat. Rabies is present. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered. If you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay. For further information, see the Health appendix.

Health care: A reciprocal health agreement with the rest of the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway allows reduced cost dental and medical (including hospital) treatment on presentation of form E111; a fee must be paid, plus part of the cost of any prescribed medicines. Insurance is advised for specialist treatment. Italy is well endowed with health spas, some famous since the Roman era. The most important and best-equipped health resorts in Italy are Abano Terme and Montegrotto Terme (Veneto), Acqui Terme (Piedmont), Chianciano and Montecatini Terme (Tuscany), Fuggi (Lazio), Porretta Terme and Salsomaggiore Terme (Emilia-Romagna), Sciacca

(Sicily) and Sirmione (Lombardy). At Merano (Alto Adige) it is possible to have a special grape-diet treatment.

Travel - International

AIR: Italy's national airline is Alitalia (AZ). A great number of major international airlines operate direct flights to various destinations in Italy from the USA, Canada, Australia and Europe. Owing to the number of flights available, ticket prices vary greatly and there is a wide range of discount fares and special tickets available. Further information can be obtained from the airline or a travel agent.

APPROXIMATE FLIGHT TIMES: From Rome to London is 2 hours 30 minutes, to Los Angeles is 15 hours 35 minutes, to New York is 9 hours 45 minutes, to Singapore is 13 hours 55 minutes and to Sydney is 24 hours 50 minutes.

INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS: Rome (FCO) (Fiumicino) (web site: <http://www.adr.it/it>), 26km (16 miles) southwest of the city (travel time - 30-55 minutes). A new terminal B was recently opened to cater primarily for flights to other European destinations. Airport facilities include outgoing duty-free shop (0800-2330), car hire, bank and 24-hour bureau de change and 24-hour bar/restaurant. There is a direct rail link to Termini Station in central Rome and a bus service every 15 minutes. Taxis are also available to the city.

Rome (CIA) (Ciampino) (web site: <http://www.adr.it/it>), 32km (15 miles) from the city (travel time - 60 minutes). Airport facilities include a bank/bureau de change, duty-free shop and souvenir shop and café. Buses are available to the underground station Anagnina. Taxis are also available. Bologna (BLQ) (G Marconi), 6km (4 miles) northwest of the city (travel time - 20 minutes) has good airport facilities. Buses and taxis are available to the city.

Genoa (GOA) (Cristoforo Colombo, Sestri) (web site: <http://www.airport.genova.it>), 6km (4 miles) west of the city (travel time - 20 minutes) has duty-free facilities. Buses are available to the city.

Milan (MXP) (Malpensa) (web site: <http://www.sea-aeroportimilano.it>), is 45km (29 miles) northwest of the city (travel time - 30 minutes) and has duty-free facilities.

Milan (LIN) (Linate) (web site: <http://www.sea-aeroportimilano.it>), is 10km (6 miles) east of the city (travel time - 30 minutes). Airport facilities include outgoing duty-free facilities, car hire, bank/bureau de change and bar/restaurant. Taxis and buses are available to the city.

Bergamo (BGY) (Milano Orio al Serio) is 45km (28 miles) east of Milan. Taxis and buses are available to both Milan and Bergamo.

Naples (NAP) (Capodichino) is 7km (4.5 miles) north of the city (travel time - 20-30 minutes) and has duty-free facilities.

Pisa (PSA) (Galileo Galilei), is 2km (1.5 miles) northeast of the city (travel time - 10 minutes) and has duty-free facilities.

NOTE: People travelling to Florence can fly to Pisa and then take the new train service directly from Pisa Airport to Florence, which takes one hour. The railway station in Pisa is practically inside the airport. Rail services connect with arrivals and departures of all international flights and major domestic services.

Palermo (PMO) (Punta Raisi), is 30km (19 miles) west of the city (travel time - 40 minutes).

Turin (TRN) (Citta di Torino) (web site: <http://www.airport.turin.it>) is 16km (10 miles) northeast of the city (travel time - 35 minutes).

Venice (VCE) (Marco Polo) (web site: <http://www.veniceairport.it>) is 10km (6 miles) northwest of the city (travel time - 20 minutes).

SEA: International sailings to Italy run from Croatia, Greece, Libya, South America, the Far East, Malta, Spain, France, Tunisia and Turkey. For details, contact shipping agents direct. The

quickest route from the UK is via France. The following companies run regular cross-channel ferries from the UK to France: Brittany Ferries from Plymouth to Roscoff, from Portsmouth to St Malo and from Poole to Cherbourg; Condor Ferries from Jersey, Guernsey, Poole and Weymouth to St Malo; Hoverspeed from Dover to Calais; and Folkstone to Boulogne; Seafrance from Dover to Calais. P&O Stena Line from Dover to Calais; and P&O European Ferries from Portsmouth to Cherbourg and Le Havre. These companies offer a variety of promotional fares and inclusive holidays for short breaks and shopping trips.

RAIL: Travelling from the UK, the quickest way is to travel by Eurostar through the Channel Tunnel to Paris (travel time - 3 hours) and, from there, to Italy. For further information and reservations contact Eurostar (tel: (01233) 617 599 (travel agents) or (0990) 186 186 (public; within the UK) or (01233) 617 575 (public; outside the UK only); web site: <http://www.eurostar.com>); or Rail Europe (tel: (08705) 848 848). Travel agents can obtain refunds for unused tickets from Eurostar Trade Refunds, 2nd Floor, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PD. Complaints and comments may be sent to Eurostar Customer Relations, Eurostar House, Waterloo Station, London SE1 8SE. General enquiries and information requests must be made by telephone. Rail travellers not using the Channel Tunnel link need to make some form of sea crossing, usually by ferry or catamaran; for details on sea crossings see also under Sea above. The cost of the crossing is usually included in the price of the rail ticket. For information and reservations contact Rail Europe (see contact details above). The main rail connections from London (Victoria) and Paris to Italy are: Palatino (Paris-Rome; couchettes and sleeping cars only); Naples Express (Paris, Turin, Genoa, Pisa, Rome, Naples); and Simplon Express (Paris, Lausanne, Brigue, Domodossola, Milan, Venice, Trieste).

ROAD: Travelling by car from the UK, the quickest way is via Le Shuttle trains which carry all types of vehicles through the channel tunnel (journey time - 35 minutes). For further details, see also Travel - International in the France section. For information and reservations contact Eurotunnel in the UK (tel: (08705) 353 535; or (08000) 969 992 (24-hour recorded timetable information); fax (01303) 288 784 (reservations); web site: <http://www.eurotunnel.com>). Routes from the UK to Italy run through France, Austria, Switzerland and Slovenia and most routes use the tunnels under the Alps and Apennines. Italian Railways run regular daily services called autotreno (trains carrying cars), especially during the summer holiday season. The main routes covered are: Milan-Genoa-Naples-Villa San Giovanni; Bologna-Naples-Villa San Giovanni. These services operate from special railway stations and are generally bookable at the departure station. Owners must travel on the same train. The documents required are the log-book, valid driving licence with Italian translation, Green Card insurance and national identity plate fixed to the rear of the vehicle. For more information on routes, contact the Italian State Tourist Office (see address section). For more information on required documentation and traffic regulations in Italy, see Travel - Internal section. Coach: Eurolines run coach services from the UK to the following destinations: Bologna, Florence, Milan, Padua, Rome, Turin, Venice and Verona. For information on timetables and fares, call Eurolines in the UK (tel: (08705) 143219; web site: <http://www.eurolines.co.uk>).

Travel - Internal

AIR: Alitalia (AZ) and other airlines run services to all the major cities. There are over 30 airports. For details, contact the airlines direct or ENIT, the Italian State Tourist Office (see address section).

SEA: Italy's principal ports are Venice, Genoa, La Spezia, Civitavecchia, Naples, Messina, Cagliari, Bari, Pescara, Ancona, Trieste, Palermo, Catania, Livorno and Brindisi. A number of car and passenger ferries operate throughout the year linking Italian ports. Ferries: Regular boat and

hydrofoil services run to the islands of Capri, Elba, Giglio, Sardinia, Sicily and the Aeolian Islands. There are also some links along the coast.

RAIL: There are nearly 16,000km (9400 miles) of track in the country, of which over half is electrified. The Italian State Railways (FS) (web site: <http://www.fs-on-line.com>) runs a nationwide network at very reasonable fares, calculated on the distance travelled, and there are a number of excellent reductions. A variety of tickets offering travel at a reduced rate are available:

Italy Railcard: Tickets offer either 8, 15, 21 or 30 days unlimited travel over the entire network of the Italian State Railways. Holders are entitled to unlimited travel on any Intercity or Eurocity train and on any 'Eurostar Italia' train upon payment of a small supplement. Only people not normally resident in Italy are eligible to buy this ticket; passports are required for ticket bookings. Prices vary from £128 (8 days 2nd class) to £328 (30 days 1st class).

Italy Flexicard: Valid for either 4, 8 or 12 days travel within a period of one month. Conditions are the same as for the Italy Railcard (see above). Prices range from £96 (4 days 2nd class) to £262 (12 days 1st class).

Kilometric Card: Valid for five people travelling together as a group or individually over a distance of maximum 3000km (1875 miles) or 20 separate journeys, whichever comes first. For children aged 4-14, half the kilometres are counted. The pass is valid for 2 months from the date of the first journey; tickets must be validated before boarding the train. Prices vary from £88 (2nd class) to £150 (1st class).

There are also reductions for larger parties: 20% off for 6-24 persons, 30% off for 25 persons or more. There are also several local railway companies, most of whom run short-distance trains on narrow-gauge track. On Sicily, frequent services run from Palermo and Catania/Siracusa to mainland destinations via the Messina train ferries. Local trains also run from Palermo to Agrigento and Catania. On Sardinia, several daily trains run from Cagliari to Porto Torres and Olbia. For further information, contact Railchoice (tel: (020) 7939 9915; fax: (020) 7939 9916; e-mail: sales@railchoice.co.uk; web site: <http://www.railchoice.co.uk>).

ROAD: There are more than 300,000km (185,500 miles) of roads in Italy, including over 6000km (3700 miles) of motorway which link all parts of the country. Tolls are charged at varying distances and scales, except for the Salerno-Reggio Calabria, Palermo-Catania and Palermo-Mazara Del Vallo stretches which are toll-free. Secondary roads are also excellent and require no tolls. Road signs are international. Many petrol stations are closed 1200-1500. Visitors are advised to check locally about exact opening times.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS: Traffic drives on the right. Speed limits are 50kph (30mph) in urban areas, 90/110kph (55/65mph) on country roads, 130kph (80mph) on motorways. Undipped headlights are prohibited in towns and cities, but are compulsory when passing through tunnels. All vehicles must carry a red warning triangle, available at border posts. Note: Fines for speeding and other driving offences are on-the-spot and particularly heavy. Breakdown service: In case of breakdown on any Italian road, dial 116 at the nearest telephone box. Tell the operator where you are, your plate number and type of car and the nearest Automobile Club of Italy (ACI) office will be informed for immediate assistance.

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS: Visitors must carry their log-book, which must either be in their name as owner or must have the owner's written permission to drive the vehicle. Customs documents for the temporary importation of motor vehicles (also aircraft and pleasure-boats) have been abolished. Bus: Good coach services run between towns and cities and there are also extensive local buses, including good services on Sicily and Sardinia. In more remote areas, buses will usually connect with rail services. Taxi: Services are available in and between all cities. Car hire: Self-drive hire is available in most cities and resorts. Many international and Italian firms operate this service with different rates and conditions. With the larger firms it is possible to book

from other countries through the car hire companies, their agents or through the air companies. Generally, small local firms offer cheaper rates, but cars can only be booked locally. Many car rental agencies have booths at the airport or information in hotels. Avis has offices in Rome at 38 Via Sardegna (tel: (06) 42 82 47 28; fax: (06) 42 01 02 82) or 1229 Via Tiburtina (tel: (06) 413 0812; fax: (06) 413 1414). Hertz are located at Ciampino Airport (tel: (06) 79 34 06 16; fax: (06) 79 34 00 95). Many special-rate fly/drive deals are available for Italy.

DOCUMENTATION: Visitors must either carry an international Green Card for their car or motor vehicle (also for boats) or other insurance. A UK driving licence and EU pink format licences are valid in Italy but green-coloured licences must be accompanied by an International Driving Permit. Motorcycles no longer require customs documents, but refer to the customs regulations above. A driving licence or a motorcycle driving licence is required for motorcycles over 49cc. Passengers are required by law to wear seat belts.

URBAN: All the big towns and cities (Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin, Genoa and Venice) have good public transport networks.

UNDERGROUND: In Rome there are two underground lines - Metropolitana A from Via Ottaviano via Termini station to Via Anagnina and also connecting with the new Ottaviano-San Pietro link; and Metropolitana B, which runs between Termini Station, via Exhibition City (EUR) (Via Laurentina) and then onwards to Rebibbia. Both day and monthly passes are available. Line B was expanded considerably at the beginning of the 1990s, when 10 new stations were added to its network. Line A has been expanded much more recently to include 5 new stations via the Ottaviano-San Pietro connection. Milan also has an underground system, with tickets usable on both underground and bus. Tram: There is a 28km (17-mile) network consisting of eight routes in Rome; Milan, Naples and Turin also have tram services. Bus: Services operate in all main cities and towns; in Rome, the network is extensive and complements the underground and tram systems. The fare structure is integrated between the various modes. Buy a flat-fare ticket or a weekly pass in advance from a roadside or station machine. Information is available from the ATAC booth in front of the Termini station. Trolleybuses also run in a number of other towns. In larger cities, fares are generally pre-purchased from machines or shops. Bus fares - generally at a standard rate per run - can be bought in packets of five or multiples and are fed into a stamping machine on boarding the bus. Taxi: Available in most towns and cities. In Rome they are relatively expensive, with extra charges for night service, luggage and taxis called by telephone. All charges are listed on a rate card displayed in the cab with an English translation. Taxis can only be hailed at strategically located stands or by telephone. Visitors should avoid taxis that are not metered. A 10% tip is expected by taxi drivers and this is sometimes added to the fare for foreigners.

CITY TOURS: Rome: Run by many travel agencies, these tours allow first-time visitors to get a general impression of the main sights and enable them to plan further sightseeing. Information is available from the local tourist office. Horse-drawn carriages are available in Rome. Charges are high. In Venice, privately hired boats and gondolas are available, as well as a public ferry service.

JOURNEY TIMES: The following chart gives approximate journey times (in hours and minutes) from Rome to other major cities/towns in Italy.

AirRoadRail
Florence0.452.302.30
Milan0.656.006.00
Venice0.656.006.30
Naples0.452.002.30
Palermo0.6010.0014.30

8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS: There are about 40,000 hotels throughout the country. Every hotel has its fixed charges agreed with the provincial tourist board. Charges vary according to class, season, services available and locality. The Italian State Tourist Office publishes every year the official list of all Italian hotels and pensions (Annuario Alberghi) which can be consulted through a travel agent or ENIT, the Italian State Tourist Office (see address section). In all hotels and pensions, service charges are included in the rates. VAT (IVA in Italy) operates in all hotels at 10% (19% in deluxe hotels) on room charges only.

Visitors are now required by law to obtain an official receipt when staying at hotels. Rome is well provided with hotels, but it is advisable to book in advance. Rates are high with added extras. To obtain complete prices, ask for quotations of inclusive rates. Many luxury hotels are available. Cheap hotels, which usually provide basic board (room plus shower), offer an economical form of accommodation throughout Italy, and there is a wide choice in the cities. Again, especially in the main cities, it is wise to book in advance (bookings should always be made through travel agents or hotel representatives). There are many regional hotel associations in Italy; the principal **national organisation is Federalberghi, Via Toscana 1, 00187 Rome (tel: (06) 42 74 11 51; fax: (06) 42 87 11 97; e-mail: info@italyhotels.it; web site: <http://www.italyhotels.it>).**

Grading: Hotels are graded on a scale of 1 to 5 stars.

MOTELS: Located on motorways and main roads.

SELF-CATERING: Villas, flats and chalets are available for rent at most Italian resorts. Information is available through daily newspapers and agencies in the UK and from the Italian State Tourist Office or the Tourist Office (Azienda Autonoma di Soggiorno) of the locality concerned. The latter are also able to advise about boarding with Italian families.

TOURIST VILLAGES: These consist of bungalows and apartments, usually built in or near popular resorts. The bungalows vary in size, but usually accommodate four people and have restaurant facilities.

CAMPING/CARAVANNING: Camping is very popular in Italy. The local Tourist Office in the nearest town will give information and particulars of the most suitable sites. On the larger campsites it is possible to rent tents/caravans. There are over 2100 campsites and full details of the sites can be obtained in the publication *Campeggi e Villaggi Turistici In Italia*, published by the Touring Club Italiano (TCI) and Federcampeggio. An abridged list of sites with location map, *Carta d'Italia Parchi Campeggio*, can be obtained free of charge by writing to Centro Internazionale Prenotazione, Federcampeggio, Casella Postale 23, 50041 Calenzano (Firenze) (tel: (055) 882 391; fax: (055) 882 5918). The Italian State Tourist Office (ENIT) may also be able to supply information.

The tariffs at Italian campsites vary according to the area and the type of campsite. There are discounts for members of the AIT, FICC and FIA. Usually there is no charge for children under three years of age. The Touring Club Italiano offers campsites already equipped with fixed tents, **restaurants, etc. For details contact Touring Club Italiano, Corso Italia 10, 20122 Milano (tel: (02) 85261; fax: (02) 852 6347 or 852 6320; e-mail: infotouring@touringclub.it; web site: <http://www.touringclub.it>).** To book places in advance on campsites belonging to the International Campsite Booking Centre, it is necessary to write to Centro Internazionale

Prenotazioni Campeggio, Casella Postale 23, 50041 Calenzano (Firenze), asking for the list of the campsites with the booking form.

Youth Hostels: There are 54 youth hostels run by the Italian Youth Hostels Association (Associazione Italiana Alberghi per la Gioventù), Via Cavour 44, 00184, Rome (tel: (06) 487 1152; fax: (06) 488 0492; e-mail: ait@uni.net; web site: <http://www.hostels-ait.org>). Listing and opening dates can be obtained from the Rome Tourist Office, Via Parigi 5, 00185 Rome (tel: (06) 48 89 92 53/5; fax: (06) 48 89 92 50). During the summer season, in the major cities, reservations are essential and must be applied for directly from the hostel at least 15 days in advance, specifying dates and numbers. There are also student hostels in several towns.

Northern Italy

For ease and speed of reference, the country has been divided into the following areas: Northern Italy (including the cities of Turin, Milan, Genoa, Venice, Vicenza, Bologna and Trieste); Central Italy (including the cities of Florence, Pisa, Ancona, Perugia, Rome, Pescara and Campobasso); Southern Italy (including the cities of Naples, Bari, Potenza and Catanzaro, as well as the resort towns in the Bay of Naples); and The Islands (Sicily and Sardinia). Main holiday resorts are included in each section, as well as important religious sites, business centres and a brief mention of the region's art history.

Administrative Regioni: Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria, Trentino-Alto Adige, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna and Friuli-Venezia Giulia.

VALLE D'AOSTA: VALLE D'AOSTA: A ruggedly scenic region at the foot of Europe's highest mountains - Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, Cervino (Matterhorn) and Gran Paradiso - bordering France and Switzerland. Valle d'Aosta is politically autonomous and to some extent culturally distinct from the rest of Italy; French is spoken as a first language by most of the inhabitants. The picturesque ruins of countless castles and other fortifications testify to the region's immense strategic significance before the era of air travel, it being the gateway to two of the most important routes through the Alps, the Little and Great St Bernard Passes. Tourism, wine-growing, pasturing and iron-working are the major industries.

Aosta: Aosta, the principal city, has many well-preserved Roman and medieval buildings. It was founded in the first century by the Emperor Augustus as a settlement (colonia) for discharged soldiers of the elite Pretorian Guard. The massive Roman city walls are almost complete and, within them, the old town retains the grid-iron street plan characteristic of all such military townships. Two impressive gateways, the Porta Pretoria, formed the main entrance into the old Roman town and a medieval noble family lived in its tower, which now houses temporary exhibitions. Further ancient Roman sites include the Teatro Romano, where theatrical presentations are still shown on a platform overlooking the old theatre; Arco di Augusto, erected in 25BC to honour the Emperor Augustus (for whom the city is named - Aosta being a corruption of Augustus); the Forum and the still well-intact Roman Bridge, which once arched gracefully over the River Buthier, now entirely dried up. There are several fine ski resorts in the area (see below under Ski Resorts), most notably Courmayeur and Breuil-Cervinia. Ibexes may be seen in the Gran Paradiso National Park, a popular destination for hill-walkers and climbers and offers the chance to see wildlife, including the ibex and chamois. The Mont Blanc Tunnel has largely superseded the St Bernard Passes as a major overland freight route.

PIEDMONT: PIEDMONT: The densely populated Upper Po Basin is the site of Italy's most important heavy industries, a vast plain pinned to the earth by gargantuan factories and held flat by a harness of motorways. By contrast, the mountains to the west, on the border with France, are sparsely populated and have a wholly pastoral economy. The wine region of Le Langhe offers

a landscape of terraced vineyards, old hill-top towns and, owing to the small number of visitors, is a quiet and peaceful region to stay. To the north is Lake Maggiore, the most elegant of the north Italian lakes and popular since Roman times as a retreat for city-dwellers.

The best-known wines of this region are Barolo, Italy's most celebrated red, and Asti Spumante, a sparkling white. Barolo wine is produced in the hills surrounding the town of Alba, where there are a number of wine museums. Alba itself is one of the region's most interesting towns, with medieval towers, Baroque and Renaissance architecture, and cobbled streets full of specialist delicatessens and shops. The most exciting time to visit is during the month of October, when the October Festival (involving a donkey race and displays of medieval pageantry) and the Truffle Festival are celebrated. Asti Spumante is produced just outside the town of Asti, a normally quiet little town, except during the month of September when it holds its annual Palio and comes suddenly alive with street banquets, medieval markets, an historic 14th-century parade and a bareback horse-race around the arena of Campo del Palio.

Turin: Turin (Torino) is the largest city in the region and the fourth-largest in the country. For the first few decades of this century, it was the automobile capital of the world. It was here that the Futurists became so excited with the potential of mechanised transport that they declared Time dead - henceforth, they naïvely declared, everything would be measured in terms of speed alone. The city remains the focus of Italy's automobile industry. Fiat offer guided tours of their headquarters, where a full-scale test track may be found on the roof. Turin does, of course, add up to far more than an infatuation with motor cars. The inhabitants boast that, with its broad, tree-lined avenues flanked by tall, handsome townhouses, it is La Parigi d'Italia, the Italian Paris. Uptown Turin is centred on the main shopping street, Via Roma, which links the city's favourite square, the Piazza San Carlo, with its most dramatic building, the baroque Palazzo Madama, which houses the Museum of Ancient Art, one of several nationally important museums in the city, and the Egyptian Museum, the second largest in the world after Cairo. The famous Turin Shroud may be viewed in the 15th-century white marble Cathedral.

LOMBARDY: LOMBARDY: A prosperous region with fertile soil, a temperate climate and, for the tourist, the spectacular lakes Como, Garda, Maggiore (shared with Piedmont) and Lugano. As in Piedmont, the Po Valley is the site of much heavy industry. High mountains in the north, marking Italy's frontier with Switzerland, provide excellent skiing and climbing. Lombardy's most famous culinary inventions are minestrone soup and osso buco - literally ox knuckles.

Milan: Milan (Milano) is Italy's most sophisticated city, a financial and commercial centre of world importance and a rival to Paris in the spheres of modern art and fashion. Its international character is marked by a concentration of skyscrapers found nowhere else in Italy, contrasting and competing with the landmarks of historic Milan, but built in the same boastful spirit of civic pride that, 500 years ago, gave the city its splendid Gothic Cathedral. Even today, this is the world's second-largest church, yet despite its size, it creates an impression of delicate and ethereal beauty due to its pale colour and the fine intricate carving that covers its exterior. The whole fabric of the city - its many palaces, piazzas and churches - speaks of centuries of continuous prosperity. The Castello Sforzesco, in the west of the city, is a massive fortified castle, begun by the Viscontis and finished by the Sforzas. It was the political and social bastion of the ruling Sforzas during Milan's peak as a political/cultural centre and many of the Renaissance elite were entertained in its luxurious domains. Its court artists included Leonardo da Vinci and Bramante and it now houses a number of museums. Leonardo da Vinci's famous fresco, The Last Supper, may be viewed at the convent of Santa Maria della Grazie. The Teatro della Scala (La Scala Theatre) remains the undisputed world capital of opera and is well worth viewing for its magnificent opulence.

Just south of Milano is the town of Pavia, the ancient capital known as 'the city of 100 towers'. One of these, the Torre Civica, suddenly collapsed in 1989, killing four people. The town also has many interesting churches, including the Renaissance Cathedral, thought to have been worked

on by Bramante and da Vinci; the Romanesque San Michele, with an elaborately carved façade; and the 12th-century San Pietro in Cielo d'Oro, with a magnificent 14th-century altarpiece. The Broletto, Pavia's medieval town hall, and the 14th-century Castello, housing an art gallery, archaeology museum and sculpture museum, are also worth visiting. Though sedate and resting in an air of dusty elegance by day, Pavia bursts into life at night when its people come out for their evening promenade and the streets seem to buzz with activity. The Certosa di Pavia, 10km (6 miles) outside of town, is a monastery famous for its lavish design. Originating as the family mausoleum of the Visconti family, it was later finished by the Sforzas and became the dwellings for a Carthusian order of monks sworn to deep contemplation and for whom speech is forbidden. However, a chosen few are allowed to give visitors a guided tour and tell the story behind their palatial surroundings.

Cremona: Cremona, the birthplace of the Stradivarius violin, is a charming haven of historic architecture. A walk around the medieval Piazza del Comune offers various architectural treats: the Torrazzo, one of Italy's tallest medieval towers; the Cathedral, with its magnificent astronomical clock; and the Loggia dei Militia, the former headquarters of the town's medieval army. There are also two interesting museums: the Museo Stradivariano, housing a wealth of Stradivarius musical instruments, and the Museo Civico, with more Stadivari and some interesting bits and pieces belonging to Garibaldi.

Mantua: Mantua (Mantova) was another Lombardian bastion of the ruling dynasties of the Viscontis and Sforzas. It is also the birthplace of a number of renowned Italians, ranging from Virgil (a statue of whom overlooks the square facing the Broletto, the medieval town hall) to Tazio Nuvolari, one of Italy's most famous racing drivers (for whom there is a small museum dedicated to his accomplishments). Its churches, Sant'Andrea (designed by Alberti and the burial place of Mantua's famous court painter, Mantegna) and the Baroque Cathedral in the Piazza Sordello are both important works of architecture. However, the most famous sites of Mantua are its two palaces: the Palazzo Ducale and the Palazzo del Te. The Palazzo Ducale, once the largest in Europe, was the home of the Gonzagas family, and has a number of impressive paintings by artists such as Rubens and Mantegna. The Palazzo del Te was built as a Renaissance pleasure palace for Frederico Gonzaga (known as a playboy) and his mistress, Isabella. The decorations by Giulio Romano are outstanding and well worth viewing.

Bergamo: Bergamo, nestled at the foot of the Bergamese Alps, is made up of two cities - the old and once Venetian-ruled Bergamo Alta (upper Bergamo) and the modern Bergamo Bassa (lower Bergamo). The old city is well appreciated for its ancient Venetian fortifications, palaces, towers and churches, including the 12th-century Palazzo della Ragione, the Torre del Comune, the Cathedral of Bergamo, Colleoni Chapel and the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The modern city's main attraction is the Accademia Carrara, one of Italy's largest art collections, with paintings by Canaletto, Botticelli, Mantegna, Carpaccio, Bellini and Lotto, amongst others. The two cities are connected by a funicular railway.

The great northern lakes lie in a series of long, deep valleys running down onto the plains from the Alps. Lake Como is perhaps the most attractive, Lake Maggiore the most elegant (and populous) and Lake Garda the wildest and most spectacular. South of Lake Garda lies the peninsula of Sirmione, renowned for its mild, Mediterranean climate, its beautiful countryside and the Caves of Catullo, an archaeological site of a former Roman villa situated on the tip of the peninsula. The Sirmione Spa, the largest privately owned thermal treatment centre in Italy, whose sulphurous waters originate from the depths of Lake Garda, has long been one of Sirmione's main attractions. There is plenty of accommodation available as well as frequent steamer and hydrofoil services to other lakeside towns and villages.

Resorts: Resorts on Lake Maggiore include: Pallanza (where the Villa Taranto has a fine botanical garden), Stresa, Arona, Intra and Orta; on Lake Como: Cadenabbia, Cernobbio,

Bellagio, Tremezzo and Menaggio; and on Lake Garda: Limone, Desenzano and Gardone. Lake Lugano lies for the most part in Switzerland.

The major mountain resorts, winter and summer, are Livigno (duty-free area), Madesimo, Stelvio, Santa Caterina Valfurva, Bormio, Aprica and Chiesa.

LIGURIA: LIGURIA 320km (200 miles) of rocky, wooded coastline running from France to Tuscany, where the Italian 'boot' begins. This is the Riviera, Italy's answer to the Côte d'Azur, and there are ample facilities for tourists even in the smallest of ports. The coastal hills are less developed.

Genoa: Genoa (Genova), capital of Liguria, has long been an important commercial and military port. The medieval district of the city holds many treasures, such as the Porta Soprana (the old stone entrance gate to the city), the Church of Sant'Agostino (next to the Museo dell'Architettura e Scultura Ligure), the beautiful Church of San Donato, the 12th-century Church of Santa Maria di Castello and the Gothic Cathedral of San Lorenzo. Outside the medieval district, Via Garibaldi, where many of the city's richest inhabitants built their palaces, is a beautiful walk, with Palazzo Podesta, Palazzo Bianco (now an art gallery with paintings by Van Dyck and Rubens) and the magnificently decorated Palazzo Rosso (adjacent to Palazzo Bianco and housing paintings by Titian, Caravaggio and Dürer). A tour (once daily in the afternoon) around the Genoa harbour is available, and the city is also recommended for its excellent shopping opportunities.

Ligurian resorts are very popular with holidaymakers. Portofino is one of the best known, with its small picturesque harbour full of sleek pleasure yachts, luxury clothes shops, its romantic villas owned by the rich and famous perched on the hillside and the Castello di San Giorgio, sitting high up on a promontory with magnificent views of the Portofino harbour and bay. The beach at Santa Margherita Ligure, just 5km (3 miles) south of Portofino, is an excellent place to swim, with an almost fairytale swimmer's-eye view of the surrounding cliffs and villas from the warm and crystal-clear aquamarine water. Nearby Rapallo, 8km (5 miles) south of Portofino, is a less fashionable but more reasonable town to stay in and is recommended for those seeking a more lively alternative to the quieter and more exclusive resorts of Portofino and Santa Margherita. Other resorts in this region include Ventimiglia, San Remo, Diano Marina, Alassio, Pietra Ligure, Spotorno, Sestri Levante, Lerici and the Cinque Terre, five relatively unspoilt fishing villages.

TRENTINO & ALTO ADIGE: TRENTINO & ALTO ADIGE: These wholly mountainous regions on the Swiss border straddle the valley of the River Isarco, which flows from the Brenner Pass, into the River Adige and thence into the Mediterranean. Germanic and Italian cultures blend here to the extent that, towards the north, German is increasingly found as the first language. The Dolomites to the east are a range of distinctively craggy mountains, isolated to such an extent from both Italy and Switzerland that in the more remote valleys the inhabitants speak Ladin, an ancient Romance language not much different from Latin.

Trento: Trento is the principal town of Trentino and is worth visiting for its wealth of art works, gathered by the dynasty of princes who ruled the area from the 10th-18th centuries. Many of these artistic acquisitions are viewable in the town's museums, which include the Castello di Buonconsiglio, Museo Provinciale d'Arte and the Museo Diocesano Trentino.

Bolzano: Bolzano is the principal town of Alto Adige, further north. A somewhat austere commercial town, it appears as an unlikely portal to one of the most extraordinary panoramic drives in Italy - the mountain route through the Dolomites to Cortina d'Ampezzo called La Grande Strada delle Dolomiti. Upon entering the Val d'Ega, at the beginning of the route, the scenery is suddenly lush with foliage and rocks as the light seeps through the forest trees. About 20km (12 miles) from the beginning of the route is Lake Carezza, a beautiful limpid pool of bright green water reflecting the trees and mountains around it. This is just the beginning of an awe-inspiring

passage through the Dolomites and its small alpine towns, ski resorts and endless panoramas of craggy peaks and tree-clad mountainsides.

One of the most famous mountain resorts and the second-largest town in this region is Merano, 28km (17 miles) north of Bolzano. Popular for its spas, thermal waters and moderate climate (the temperature tends to remain above freezing all winter, despite its close proximity to a range of snow-laden ski slopes), it is also visually rewarding, with extensive landscaped gardens and a charming mixture of architectural styles from Gothic to Art Nouveau. Other mountain resorts in the region include Solda, Selva di Val Gardena, Santa Cristina, Oritsei, Corvara, Bressanone, Brunico, Vipiteno, Madonna di Campiglio, Canazei, Moena, Pozza di Fassa, San Martino di Castrozza and Riva, which lies at the top of Lake Garda.

VENETO: VENETO: The Lower Po Valley, the eastern bank of Lake Garda and the eastern Dolomites, occupying what was once the Republic of Venice.

Venice: Venice (Venezia) stands on an island in a lagoon at the northern end of the Adriatic Sea, a position which gave it unique economic and defensive advantages over its trading rivals. Much of the wealth generated was, of course, invested in the construction of monuments to the glory of both God and the merchants, and Venice must be counted as one of the highlights of any tour of Italy.

The city's main monuments - the Doge's Palace, St Mark's Square and the Bridge of Sighs - have gained fame through the innumerable paintings representing them, not least by such artists as Canaletto, but the whole city is in many ways a work of art. Away from the main thoroughfares, it is characterised by little canals, small squares (often containing remarkable Gothic churches) and above all, since it contains no motor traffic, by serenity - the city's ancient name was 'La Serenissima'. One of the most evocative representations of Venice must be in Thomas Mann's book, *Death in Venice*.

Note: The causeway linking the city with the mainland can become very clogged with traffic. Although there is a large car park on the island, it is often easier to park at one of several near the north end of the causeway and continue by foot, bus or taxi; there are also trains connecting with boats.

The Venetian aristocracy built many villas in the surrounding countryside; some, including the Villa Pisani at Stra and the Villa Valmarana at Vicenza, are open to the public.

Popular Adriatic resorts include Lido di Iesolo, Bibione and Caorle.

The city of Padua (Padova) is famous for the great Basilica of St Antony; St Anthony was buried here and it is an important pilgrimage site. The city also contains works by Giotto (Scrovegni Chapel frescoes) and Donatello. Nearby, Abano and Montegrotto provide fully equipped thermal establishments for the treatment of many rheumatic complaints.

Vicenza: Vicenza has a number of fine buildings by Andrea Palladio, whose published analyses of ancient architecture did much to spread the Renaissance throughout Europe. His buildings here include the Basilica Palladiana and the Palazzo Chiericati.

Verona: Verona, historically associated with, among other things, Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*) contains a well-preserved Roman Arena (operas are staged there in summer), and the lovely but austere Church of San Zeno. This graceful city is surrounded by a river and there are many beautiful bridges, as well as churches, squares and markets.

Cortina d'Ampezzo: Cortina d'Ampezzo is Italy's best-known (but not most challenging) ski resort. The Winter Olympics were held here in 1956. It makes a fine base for exploring the Dolomites in summer.

EMILIA-ROMAGNA: EMILIA-ROMAGNA: A region of gentle hills between the River Po and the Appennines. As elsewhere in the Po Basin, intensive agriculture is pursued alongside heavy industry.

Bologna: Bologna is one of the oldest cities in Italy and the site of Europe's oldest university. Often overlooked as a tourist destination, it nevertheless possesses a distinctive charm, due largely to the imaginative use of brickwork. Arcades flanking many of the streets add to the appeal. Notable buildings include the Cathedral of San Pietro, the huge Gothic Church of San Petronio, numerous palaces and the Leaning Towers of the Piazza di Porta Ravegnana. The city is also the home of Bolognese meat sauce and the Bologna sausage.

Parma: Parma boasts a fine Romanesque cathedral and baptistry, and an opera house with strong connections with Verdi, who lived at nearby Sant'Agata. Italy's most celebrated poet, Dante, is buried at Ravenna, the ancient capital of the western Roman Empire during its decline under Gothic and Byzantine domination. The city's former importance is marked by the profusion of extravagant mosaics found in its many Romanesque buildings. The International School of Mosaics at Ravenna is open to foreigners.

Faenza: Faenza (known to the French as 'Faïence') is famed for its majolica pottery. This craft has enjoyed a resurgence in recent years under the direction of the Faenza International Institute of Ceramics.

Other cities in Emilia-Romagna include Modena and Ferrara, both with many fine palaces associated with the Este family; and Reggio, the old provincial capital.

Adriatic resorts: Adriatic resorts include: Rimini, Riccione, Cattolica, Milano Marittima and Cesenatico, all within easy reach of the tiny Republic of San Marino (see the San Marino section).

FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA: FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA: A region in the northeastern corner of Italy bordering Austria and Slovenia. It has changed hands many times over the centuries and Friulian society is a complex mix of cultures. Half of the population speak Friulian, a language closely allied to Latin.

In the 18th century, the Austrian Emperors commissioned the construction of a deep-water port at Trieste and so ended Venice's long domination of the Adriatic Sea. The port has remained the most important in the area and, following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after World War I, was ceded to Italy. This arrangement was not finally formalised until 1962, when a long-running border dispute with the then Yugoslavia was settled with the aid of the United Nations. Although there are several Roman remains (most notably the 2nd-century theatre), the most prominent buildings are no older than the port.

The coast west of Trieste has some excellent beach resorts. Sistiana, Duino, Lignano and Grado are among the most popular.

Inland are Udine and Pordenone, agricultural centres on the fertile Friuli plain. Further north are the foothills of the eastern Dolomites and the Julian Alps (part of Slovenia), where ski resorts are now being developed. The road from Udine to Villach in Austria is an important overland freight route; it winds up the dramatic valley of the Isonzo, a river rendered an astonishing shade of blue by minerals leached from the Julian Alps.

SKI RESORTS: SKI RESORTS: The majority of the Italian ski resorts are in the Alps and in the Dolomites, although there are also a few in the Appennines and it is possible to ski along the slopes of Mount Etna in Sicily (see relevant section). The following examples all have hotels, boarding houses and/or self-catering and are equipped with first-class lift systems. For further details, contact ENIT, the Italian State Tourist Office in London (see address section), tour operators or travel agents.

Valle d'Aosta: Cervinia, Courmayeur, Chamois, Gressoney, La Thuile, Pila, Valtournenche.

Piedmont: Bardonecchia, Claviere, Limone-Piemonte, Macugnaga, Sauze d'Oulx, Sestriere, Sportinia.

Lombardy: Aprica, Bormio, Chiesa di Valmalenco, Foppolo, Livigno, Madesimo, Ponte di Legno, Santa Caterina di Valfurva, Tonale.

Trentino: Andalo, Canazei, Madonna di Campiglio, Marilleva, Pozza di Fassa, San Martino di Castrozza.

Alto Adige (South Tyrol): Alpi di Siusi (Seiseralp), Campo Tures (Sand in Taufers), Colfosco (Kolfuschg), Corvara in Badia (Kurfar), Crontour area (ten localities), including Brunico (Bruneck) and San Vigilio di Marebbe (St Vigil in Enneberg), Dobbiaco (Toblach), Nova Levante (Welschnofen), Ortisei (St Ulrich), Passo Stelvio (Stilfserjoch) (summer skiing only), Renon (Ritten), San Candido (Innichen), Santa Cristina Valgardena (St Christina), Selva di Val Gardena (Wolkenstein), Val Senales (Schnalstal).

Friuli-Venezia Giulia: Piancavallo, Sella Nevea.

Veneto: Alleghe, Arabba, Ravaschetto, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Falcade.

Central Italy

Administrative Regioni: Tuscany, Marche, Umbria, Abruzzi, Molise and Lazio.

TUSCANY: TUSCANY: This fertile region lies between the northern Apennines and the Mediterranean Sea. The landscape of Tuscany is, typically, one of vine-covered hills, cypress woods, fields of sunflowers and remote hilltop villages. Chianti, the best-known Italian wine, is made here. There are a number of volcanic spas, most notably Montecatini, Bagni di Lucca, Casciana Terme and Chianciano.

Florence: Florence (Firenze), the principal Tuscan city, is the world's most celebrated storehouse of Renaissance art and architecture. Set on the banks of the Arno below the wooded foothills of the Apennines, this beautiful city has long been the focus of Italian arts and letters. Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Brunelleschi, Alberti, Masaccio, Donatello, Botticelli, Vasari and Fra Angelico are among the many associated with establishing the pre-eminence of the city. Brunelleschi's revolutionary design for the dome of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore is generally accepted as the first expression of Renaissance ideas in architecture. This dome still dominates the city's roofscape, just as the great Piazza del Duomo at its feet dominates life at street level. The square is ringed with cafés and is a popular meeting point. Between there and the river are many of the best-loved palaces - including Palazzo Strozzi, Palazzo Corsini, Palazzo Rucellai, Palazzo Vecchio and the Uffizi Gallery - whilst close by to the north are the churches of Santa Maria Novella and San Lorenzo (by Brunelleschi, Michelangelo and others), and the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi. The Palazzo Pitti and the Boboli Gardens are just across the river (via the Ponte Vecchio).

The Uffizi Gallery houses a celebrated art collection - indeed it claims to hold the finest collections of paintings anywhere in the world. Examples of work start from the transition period when Europe was emerging from the Middle Ages, largely represented by religious paintings and icons (notably by Lorenzo Monaco, Giotto and Gentile da Fabriano), through the highpoint of the Renaissance to the early 18th century. Some of the most famous paintings of each period are in the Uffizi, such as Botticelli's Birth Of Venus, Leonardo da Vinci's Annunciation, Michelangelo's Holy Family, Titian's Urbino Venus and Caravaggio's Young Bacchus. One of the most striking paintings is the Medusa by Caravaggio.

Michelangelo's famous statue of David may be viewed at the Accademia di Belle Arti near the University.

Siena's: Siena's most prosperous era pre-dated the Renaissance and consequently much of the fabric of the city is in the older Gothic and Romanesque styles. There is a fine Gothic and Romanesque Cathedral built in stunning black and white marble with a magnificent interior

(visitors dressed inappropriately, ie in short skirts, shorts or skimpy shirts, will be denied entry). The Piazza del Campo, overlooked by the giant campanile of the Palazzo Pubblico, is possibly the most complete Gothic piazza in Italy. The city is an important religious centre, being the birthplace of St Catherine, and there is a church here devoted to her worship. The 700-year-old university holds a summer school in Italian. Siena is probably most famous for its Palios, bareback horse-races which take place every year on July 2 and August 16 around the huge Campo in the centre of Siena. It has been a special event since the 14th century and attracts crowds from all over the world.

Pisa: Pisa, north of Siena, is famous for its Leaning Tower, a free-standing campanile or bell tower associated with the 11th-century Gothic Cathedral nearby. Near the Quadrilateral is the Campo Santo Cemetery. Built in the 13th century to enclose earth brought from Jerusalem, it is a unique collonaded quadrangle in the Tuscan Gothic style.

Arezzo: Arezzo, set on a hillside, has both a strong modern and medieval aspect. The Medici Fortress and the Cathedral, built in the 13th-16th centuries, stand majestically on a hilltop overlooking the modern part of town which sits on a plain below. The Piazza Grande is a wonderful medieval square with an old well at its centre, surrounded by impressive historic buildings on all sides: the Palazzo della Fraternità, the church of Santa Maria della Pieve and Loggiato del Vasari (once the residence of Vasari, art historian and patron of many of Italy's most famous painters). The Basilica di San Francesco contains the famous frescoes of Piero della Francesca, Story of the Cross. Amidst all this history, the city still thrives today and is now a centre for antique trade.

Other towns of note in Tuscany include Lucca, famous for its one hundred churches and robust city walls; San Gimignano, known as the 'city of beautiful towers' and one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Italy; Volterra, another beautifully preserved medieval town perched on a hilltop; Livorno (Leghorn), the principal commercial port; and Carrara, where high-grade white marble has been quarried since Etruscan times.

The coast of Tuscany offers many sandy beaches. Popular beach resorts include Viareggio, Forte dei Marmi, Lido di Camaiore, Marina di Pietrasanta, Marina di Massa, Tirrenia, Castiglione della Pescaia, San Vincenzo, Castiglioncello, Quercianella, Porto Santo Stefano, Porto Ercole, Ansedonia and Talamone.

The Tuscan Archipelago is a group of scattered islands lying between Tuscany and Corsica. The best known are Elba and Giglio. There are regular hydrofoil and ferry links with mainland ports. Elba is 28km (17.5 miles) long and 12km (7.5 miles) wide, and can be reached by steamer or hydrofoil from Piombino. Famous as the place where Napoleon was briefly exiled before his final defeat at Waterloo, it has lovely beaches and campsites shaded by pines. Napoleon's two homes **can be visited:** one, the Palazzina Napoleonica dei Mulini, which he created out of two windmills, situated near the Forte della Stella, Portoferraio and the other, 6km (4 miles) away, the Villa Napoleonica di San Martino, which he set up as his country seat. Near to this villa is the Pinacoteca Foresiana, a neo-classical art gallery built in 1851.

MARCHE: MARCHE: A mountainous agricultural region on the central Adriatic coast south of San Marino.

Ancona: Ancona, the regional capital and largest town in the region, is an important naval and commercial port with several well-preserved Roman remains such as the Arco di Traiano and the Resti di Anfiteatro Romano.

Urbino: Urbino was once Italy's greatest seat of learning and is now a pleasant Renaissance hilltown, its skyline a soaring vista of domes and towers. Also the birthplace of Raphael, several of his works may be viewed in the art gallery at the Ducal Palace, along with works by Piero della Francesca and Titian. Raphael's childhood home is also open for viewing.

Loreto: Loreto is said to be the site of the house of the Virgin Mary and attracts many pilgrims from around the world. According to legend, the house was moved from Nazareth in the 13th century to protect it from marauding Muslims. Angels carried it first to the Balkans then on to Loreto; the journey took four years. The house is enclosed in the elaborate Gothic Sanctuary della Santa Casa. The Madonna of Loreto was elected patron saint of airmen in 1920.

Popular beach resorts include: Gabicce, Pesaro (Rossini's birthplace), Fano, Senigallia, Civitanova, San Benedetto del Tronto, Porto Recanati and Porto Potenza Picena. As elsewhere on the Adriatic coast, beach resorts tend to be highly organised, with tables and sun loungers laid out in neat lines (often very close together). More informal beaches may be found below the spectacular Costa Conero cliffs a few miles south of Ancona.

UMBRIA: Sometimes referred to as 'the green heart of Italy', Umbria is a small, hilly and fairly untouched region between Tuscany and Marche, with little industry and few towns of any great size. The landscape is similar to that of Tuscany and combines austere medieval architecture and stone farmhouses with gently rolling hills and rivers. Towards the valley of the River Nera and the Sibilline Mountains, the landscape is more rugged, with deep gorges, towns perched on the rocks and wide open spaces, such as the well-known Piano Grande at Castelluccio. Umbria's rich history is still very much in evidence: traces of Umbri, Etruscan and Roman cultures exist alongside Medieval and Renaissance architecture in towns such as Assisi, Perugia, Spoleto and Orvieto or the lesser known towns of Spello, Montefalco, Città della Pieve, Città di Castello, Castiglione del Lago, Narni, Norcia and Montone.

Perugia: Perugia, the capital, has been continuously inhabited for more than 25 centuries and contains many Etruscan and Roman remains. Particularly notable are the ancient Etruscan city walls, the Piazza IV Novembre with the Cathedral, the Fontana Maggiore (Great Fountain) and the Palazzo dei Priori, the town hall, which also houses Umbria's National Gallery with its collection of paintings by Pietro Vannucci, Piero della Francesca, Pinturicchio, and Beato Angelico. The Università per Stranieri (University for Foreigners) offers courses for foreigners wishing to study Italian language and civilisation. Perugia is less than two hours by car from Rome, Florence and Urbino, and one hour from Siena.

Assisi: Assisi is a picturesque medieval hill town to the east of Perugia, famous as the birthplace of St Francis, founder of the Franciscan Order of monks. The life of St Francis is commemorated in 28 frescoes by Giotto in the Basilica di San Francesco, Italy's earliest Gothic church. Other interesting sites include the Roman Temple of Minerva; the Romanesque Cathedral di San Rufino; the Church of Saint Clare; and the 17th-century Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli, which rises above the Chapel of the Porziuncola, the oratory restored by St Francis at the start of the 13th century.

Orvieto: Orvieto is a medieval city perched on a volcanic outcrop. The well-preserved city centre has a number of monuments and buildings dating from the Etruscan period. Interesting sites include the Gothic Cathedral; the 13th-century Papal Palace; the Romanesque-Gothic Palazzo del Popolo; and the 16th-century St Patrick's Well.

The ancient city of Spoleto, situated on a steep hill at the foot of Monteluco, has many interesting archaeological, medieval and Renaissance monuments, including the classical Arch of Druso, the Roman Theatre, the famous Ponte delle Torri bridge and the Rocca, the fortress built by Gattapone and now used as an exhibition centre.

Other important Umbrian towns include Gubbio, a well-preserved medieval town situated at the foot of Mount Ingino and home to the famous Gubbio Tablets - the oldest surviving record of the Umbrian people; and Todi, overlooking the Tiber valley, whose beautiful medieval square is surrounded by a wealth of historic buildings, including the 13th-century Palazzo del Popolo, the Palazzo del Capitano and the Cathedral.

Umbria's many historic town centres are complemented by a regional network of museums, the most important of which are the National Gallery of Umbria in Perugia, the Art Gallery in Città di Castello (which includes the Burri collection of modern art) and the Montefalco Gallery. In addition, Umbria's countryside offers opportunities for a variety of outdoor activities, and there are a number of natural areas worth visiting. The Monti Sibillini National Park contains a number of medieval villages and abbeys scattered at the foot of the mountains as well as being home to a variety of native animal and plant species. The Monte Cucco Regional Park, known as 'the belly of the Apennines', contains a complex system of caves, underground waterways and mineral springs. Fossils abound, and the woodlands are untouched. The serene lakes and hills of the Trasimeno Regional Park, refuges for many species of migrating birds, have been reproduced in countless 15th-century paintings. The River Tiber Regional Park, designed to reflect the history of the great river, is characterised by oak woods and the archaeological sites reflecting traces of the Umbri, the Etruscans and the Romans. The River Nera Regional Park contains the rivers Velino and Nera, a lake and the Marmore waterfalls; small fortified towns, monasteries and watch towers are scattered along the river valley. Other parks worth visiting include the Monte Subasio Regional Park, home to the historic town of Assisi; and the Colfiorito Regional Park, where Mount Orve and its prehistoric fortified village are located.

ABRUZZO: ABRUZZO: This region encompasses the highest parts of the great Apennine chain. The northern mountains are generally too desolate for agriculture and much of the land is sparsely populated. A ski resort has been built in the limestone massif of Gran Sasso. The southern uplands are covered with a great forest of beech, which has been designated a national park. Marsican brown bears (unique to Italy), wolves, chamois and eagles may be seen here. L'Aquila, the principal city, contains an imposing castle. Celano is an interesting town, dominated by a turreted castle whose fortified walls provide a walkway around the castle offering picturesque views over the surrounding hilly countryside. The rest of the town appears to be thriving with active and trendy young people, which projects a surprising contrast to the staid medieval architecture.

Tagliocozzo: Tagliocozzo, named after the Greek muse of Theatre, appears at first sight to be just like any other town until one discovers the old Renaissance square with its 14th- and 15th-century houses and lantern-lit alleys twisting around behind it. A stroll through this area at night is a remarkable experience. The main Adriatic resorts are Giulianova, Silvi Marina, Francavilla and Montesilvano. Pescara is, as its name implies, primarily a fishing port.

MOLISE: MOLISE: One of the poorest parts of mainland Italy, this area is mountainous with poor soil and a scattered population. It does, however, possess its own rugged beauty. The Matese mountain range is still the haven of wolves and various birds of prey. It also offers some excellent skiing resorts and tends not to be as overcrowded as some of Italy's other skiing areas. The winter sports centre of Campitello Matese is well recommended and for those looking for a quiet place to retreat after a day's skiing, the town of San Massimo is an excellent place to stay, with its peaceful lamplit streets and hospitable people. The largest cities in the region are the industrial towns of Isernia and Campobasso. The only Adriatic resort of any size is Vasto.

LAZIO: LAZIO: On the western side of the Italian 'boot', this is a region of volcanic hills, lakes and fine beaches.

Rome: Rome the 'eternal city', exerts an enduring fascination over its countless visitors. Capital of Italy and the country's largest city, it is littered with the relics of over 2000 years of history. Only in very few places in the world is the visitor confronted with the past in such an immediate and forceful way. It has a unique atmosphere. The monuments of ancient times and the

splendours of the Baroque are the backdrop to the hectic buzz of swarming scooters, bellowing motorists and animated street cafés.

The streets contain reminders of all the eras in Rome's rich history - the Colosseum and the Forum are the most famous from the classical period, ancient basilicas bear witness to the early Christian era. As the major city of the Counter-Reformation, it is not surprising that Rome is also infused with the feel of the Baroque. It is, indeed, the influence of the 17th century which defines the city through the work of architects such as Bernini, Maderno and Borromini. The magnificent squares and flamboyant façades mask a wealth of painting and sculpture by some of the greatest high-Renaissance and Baroque artists - Michelangelo, Bernini, Caravaggio, Caracci and Raphael to name but a few.

The Via del Corso, Rome's main thoroughfare, cuts through the length of the city centre from the Piazza Venezia in the south with the vast marble Vittorio Emanuele Monument (erected in the late 19th century to honour Italy's first king and to commemorate the unification of Italy), to emerge in the Piazza del Popolo in the north, beyond which lies the cool green refuge of the Villa Borghese. To the east of the Via del Corso lie the elegant shopping streets including the Via Condotti and the Via Borgognona which lead up to the Piazza di Spagna and the famous Spanish Steps. At the nearby Trevi Fountain visitors guarantee their return to Rome by throwing a coin into the waters. To the west of the Via del Corso a maze of narrow streets winds its way down to the Tiber River. It is here, in the historic centre of Rome, that the most complete ancient Roman structure is found. The Pantheon, on Piazza della Rotonda, was the work of Emperor Hadrian and was finished in AD125. Monumental in scale, the diameter of the dome and its height are precisely equal, while the building's interior is illuminated by the sunlight entering through the 9m (30ft) hole in the dome's roof. Just beyond the Pantheon lies the Piazza Navona. It is a long thin square, on a classical site, but rebuilt in the 17th century at the behest of Pope Innocent X in the high-Baroque style. It is almost entirely enclosed and thronged with people night and day. It is here that the crowds come on a warm summer's evening to sit late into the night on one of the many café terraces and to watch the passing scene. Moving across to the right (west) bank of the Tiber, the Vatican City is an independent sovereign state. The Vatican City is best known to tourists and students of architecture for the magnificent St Peter's Basilica. Visitors are normally admitted to the dome 1615-1800. The Museum & Treasure House is open 0845-1300 and 0845-1600 during the summer months. Leading up to it is the 17th-century St Peter's Square, a superb creation by Bernini. On either side are semi-circular colonnades, and in the centre of the square is an Egyptian obelisk hewn in the reign of Caligula. It is also possible to visit the Necropoli Precostantiniana, the excavations under St Peter's, although permission has to be obtained in advance and is usually granted only to students and teachers with a professional interest in the work being carried out. Contact the Tourist Information Office in St Peter's Square. The Vatican Gardens can be visited only by those on guided tours or bus tours. Tickets are available from the Tourist Information Office in St Peter's Square; it is advisable to apply two days in advance. To the right of St Peter's stands the Vatican Palace, the Pope's residence. Among the principal features of the Palace are the Stanze, the Sistine Chapel, the Garden House or Belvedere, the Vatican Library and the Vatican Collections, containing major works of art and valuable pictures. The Museum & Treasure House includes the Collection of Antiquities, Museo Pio-Clementino, the Egyptian Museum, the Etruscan Museum and the Museum of Modern Religious Art. There is a restaurant in the museum and a bar and cafeteria on the roof of St Peter's. On the way to the Vatican the visitor will pass the circular hulk of the Castel Sant'Angelo, burial place of the Emperor Hadrian and in later times the papal city's main fortified defence. Moving south, the district of Trastevere is the city's alternative focus and is home to numerous bars, restaurants and nightclubs. The life-long inhabitants of Trastevere regard their home as separate from Rome across the river, an independence that is celebrated every year in July with its Festa Noiantri.

Tourist information line: Tourist information line tel: (06) 36 00 43 99 (general information from multi-lingual personnel).

Inland from Rome are the hill towns known as the Castelli Romani, which are popular for excursions. Tivoli, just 40km (25 miles) east of Rome, was once the haven of the rich, first in Roman times and later during the Renaissance. It is well-known for its magnificent villas and gardens, such as the Villa d'Este, Villa Gregoriana and, just outside of Tivoli, the Villa Adriana.

Frascati: Frascati, only 20km (12.5 miles) south of Rome, is famous for its Frascati wine, a light, delicate, dry white wine which has an international reputation. The town itself is also very pleasant. Many of the town's restaurants specialise in the local wine and it is widely available in all local shops. Other hill resorts include Genzano, Castel Gandolfo and Rocca di Papa.

The presence of malarial mosquitoes in the coastal marshes that once stretched the length of Lazio prevented settlement on any scale. The marshes have been drained and this quiet, gentle coastline can now be enjoyed without risk. Ostia, the ancient port of Rome, is now a well-organised beach resort. Terracina, further south, is a resort with miles of soft, white-sand beaches. The nearby town has a modern quarter offering plenty of shops, cafés and restaurants. The crumbling but lively old part of town is higher up on the hill. The Cathedral is appealing, as is the Roman Temple of Jupiter Anxurus, believed to have been built in the 1st century BC. On the very top of the hill overlooking the sea, it is a perfect place, either by day or night, to view the town of Terracina and, indeed, the entire bay spread out on either side.

One of the most popular resorts among the locals is Sperlonga, south of Terracina. The beach there is among the most beautiful in the region and the town itself is reminiscent of a Greek island village. Getting around town can be hard work. Seemingly endless steps wind up and around through white arches and vaulted ceilings only to suddenly open up with spectacular views of the sea and cliffs. Down below, on the far end of the beach, is a romantic-looking grotto beside the remains of the Villa of Tiberius. 30km (20 miles) offshore is the unspoilt island of Ponza.

Other resorts in the area include Anzio (site of the Allied Second World War landing), Sabaudia and San Felice Circeo. Civitavecchia is an important naval and merchant port; there are also regular sailings to Sardinia.

Southern Italy

Administrative Regioni: Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria.

CAMPANIA: CAMPANIA: Called Campania Felix ('blessed country') by the Romans because of its fertile soil, mild climate and (by southern Italian standards) plentiful water. Wine, citrus fruits, tobacco, wheat and vegetables are grown.

Naples: Naples, the third-largest Italian city, occupies one of the most beautiful natural settings of any city in Europe. It is a bustling city, full of history and narrow alley-ways. There are lively street markets selling fish and vegetables, as well as shops offering leather goods at discount prices set among churches, palaces, museums, tenement buildings, cafés and bookshops. The impressive National Museum houses a good collection of Egyptian, Roman and Byzantine artefacts, including many original wall-paintings and mosaics from Pompeii and Herculaneum. Above Naples is the bare cone of Mount Vesuvius, an active volcano, and beside it the broad sweep of the Bay of Naples and the Tyrrhennian Sea. A toll road leads most of the way up to the summit of Vesuvius (it is the local Lover's Lane; people also gather mushrooms here when the conditions are right); the final few hundred yards involve an easy hike up a well-maintained bare pumice track. The viewing platform is right on the rim of the caldera and provides a good view of both the steam-filled abyss and the whole of the Bay of Naples and Pompeii below. Nearby, the remains of Pompeii and Herculaneum, engulfed in the great eruption of AD79, are a unique record of how ordinary 1st-century Romans lived their daily lives. Moulds of people and animals found well-preserved, buried under the burning ash, can be seen at Pompeii, and the decoration

in some of the excavated villas is amazingly intact, including numerous wall paintings of gods and humans in scenes ranging from the heroic to the erotic.

The city of Caserta was the country seat of the Kings of Naples. The Baroque Royal Palace owes much to Versailles. There are imposing Greek temples at Paestum.

The peninsula just south of Naples is one of the most popular regions in Italy for holidaymakers, especially those in search of sun and sand. But the added bonus for many is the extraordinary **beauty of the region**: sheer craggy cliffs rise over the shimmering blue-green Mediterranean waters, and everywhere there are views of hills and sea. History and culture are also present in abundance and it is easy to understand the persistent attraction of the area for visitors.

Sorrento: Sorrento, located on the north side of the peninsula, has attracted artists for centuries. Wagner, Nietzsche and Gorky have spent some time here and Ibsen wrote *The Ghosts* while in Sorrento (the town does possess a somewhat haunted quality at night, with dimly but artistically lit ruins just visible in the depths of its plunging forested gorges). The Museo Correale in Sorrento has Roman relics and some furniture, paintings and porcelain belonging to the Correale family, but the outside part of the museum is by far the more interesting, with a walk through gardens and vineyards to a promontory overlooking the bay offering a spectacular view of the harbour and the surrounding towns and cliffs. Sorrento is also the closest link to the island of Capri, just off the coast (links are also available from Positano, Amalfi and Naples). Ferries and hydrofoils leave from the harbour throughout the day, arriving at the Marina Grande. Boats are then available from here to Capri's main tourist attraction, the Blue Grotto. Other sites worth seeing include the Villa Tiberio, built as the Roman Emperor Tiberius's retirement villa on the island and notorious for the pursuit of various pleasures which took place inside its once luxurious walls. Now reduced to an organised rubble of stones, it takes some imagining, but the views are superb and almost worth the strenuous 45-minute walk up the hill. The Garden of Augustus, south of the town of Capri, is pretty, but often crowded with tourists. From here there is access to a 'beach' down a winding road where visitors are permitted to swim off the rocks of this wild shore.

Ischia: Ischia, another island in the Bay of Naples, is easily accessible from Sorrento or from Naples. Although larger than Capri, it is not quite so popular with tourists, but well-visited by the locals who appreciate it more for its calm and scenic beauty.

Amalfi: Amalfi, situated in the middle of the south side of the peninsula, is perhaps the most well-known of the region's resort towns. However, the town still has an authentic air about it, despite its popularity with tourists. The mostly Romanesque Cathedral with its 13th-century bell tower, located in the main square, looks entirely untouched by the contemporary hustle and bustle around it. The Cloister of Paradise, just to the right of the cathedral, also makes good viewing. There are some excellent restaurants and the local wine, Sammarco, bottled in Amalfi, is superb and inexpensive.

Perched high above Amalfi, 'closer to the sky than the seashore', as André Gide wrote, is the former independent republic of Ravello. From here, the most spectacular views of the Amalfi Coast can be had, above all from the Villa Cimbrone where marble statues line a belvedere that is perched on the very edge of the cliff 335m (1100ft) up.

Positano: Positano, about 25km (16 miles) along the coast from Amalfi, is a small exclusive resort of great beauty. Heaped high above the coast, its brightly painted houses and bougainvillea have inspired a thousand picture postcards and draw crowds of visitors every summer.

Other Campanian resorts include: Maiori, Vietri sul Mare and Palinuro.

PUGLIA (Apulia): PUGLIA (Apulia): A southeastern region encompassing the forested crags of the Gargano spur, the mostly flat Salentine peninsula (the 'heel' of Italy) and, between them, the

Murge, a limestone plateau riddled with caves (notably at Castellana). With the exception of Bari and Taranto, both large industrial ports, the Apulian economy is wholly agricultural. The main products are tobacco, grapes, vegetables, almonds and olives.

Puglia was important in Roman times as the gateway to the eastern Mediterranean. The port of Brindisi, now eclipsed by Bari in commercial terms, was the terminus of the Via Appia, along which Eastern produce was conveyed to Rome and beyond. The Museo Archeologico Provinciale houses many relics from this prosperous era. Virgil died in Brindisi in 19BC.

On the Murge plateau between Alberobello and Selva di Fasano, the countryside is littered with thousands of extraordinary stone dwellings known as trulli. Circular with conical roofs (also of stone), they are similar to the more famous nuraghi of Sardinia.

At the northern end of the plateau is a unique octagonal castle, the Castella del Monte, built as a hunting lodge in the 13th century by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II (the self-styled Stupor Mundi, 'Wonder of the World'). Nearby, at Canosa di Puglia, are the extensive remains of the important Roman town of Canusium. The convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in San Giovanni Rotondo is an important pilgrimage site because of its connections with Padre Pio da Petralcina. There are fine beaches on the Adriatic coast between Barletta and Bari.

BASILICATA (Lucania): BASILICATA: (Lucania) A remote and mainly mountainous region between Puglia and Calabria. It is heavily forested in the north around Monte Vulture, a large extinct volcano; elsewhere, the hills are flinty and barren. Many rivers flow down from the southern Appennines into the Gulf of Taranto, irrigating the fertile coastal plain behind Metaponto (birthplace of Pythagoras). The population is small. The principal town, Potenza, was almost entirely rebuilt after a severe earthquake in 1857, only to suffer a similar scale of destruction in the Second World War.

CALABRIA: CALABRIA: The toe of the 'boot', a spectacularly beautiful region of high mountains, dense forests and relatively empty beaches. Chestnut, beech, oak and pine cover almost half of Calabria and are a rich hunting ground for mushroom enthusiasts. Porcini (*boletus edulis*), fresh, dried and pickled, therefore adorn the shelves of all the speciality shops of the region. Higher up in the mountains the land only sustains light grazing, but the meadows bloom with a multitude of wild flowers each spring. It is only on isolated patches of reclaimed land on the marshy coast that agriculture is possible and consequently the inhabitants are amongst the poorest in Italy. They are further tormented by frequent earthquakes. Some wolves still survive in the mountains, particularly in the central Sila Massifs. Catanzaro, Cosenza and Reggio, on the straits of Messina, are the major towns. The best beaches are on the west coast. A typical and especially picturesque little town is Tropea, built on the rocks above the Tyrrhenian Sea, with a high street that is at its most busy in the evening and ends abruptly at a panorama platform above the beach. A multitude of shy cats slink through the cobbled alleys undisturbed at siesta time; and secluded sandy coves among outcrops of rock alternate with long stretches of beach as far as the eye can see. The beaches on the east coast of Calabria are rockier and more rugged but even better for undisturbed beach adventures - especially during the often already very warm months of May and June.

The Islands

SICILY: SICILY: Strategically situated between Italy and North Africa and with fertile soil and rich coastal fishing grounds, Sicily has suffered an almost continuous round of invasion for as long as history has been recorded. The Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Angevins, Aragonese, Bourbons and, most recently, the Germans (and the Allies) during World War II - all have left their mark on this unique island, the most populous in the Mediterranean. The economy is based on the production of citrus fruit, almonds, olives, vegetables, wine (including Marsala), wheat and beans, together with mining, fishing (anchovies, tuna, cuttlefish and swordfish) and the raising of sheep and goats.

The capital, Palermo, is a splendid city in a grand style, opulent, vital, full of remarkable architecture, particularly Norman and Baroque. Notable buildings include the Martorana, Santa Maria di Gesu, San Giuseppe dei Teatini and San Cataldo churches, the Cathedral and the Palazzo dei Normanni. The catacombs at the Capuchin Monastery contain thousands of mummified bodies.

Syracuse: Syracuse is said to possess the best natural harbour in Italy. The old town stands on a small island just off the coast and contains many historic buildings. Archimedes lived and died here.

Catania: Catania is a spacious city dating mostly from the 18th century, having been rebuilt following a succession of earthquakes. Europe's largest and most active volcano, Mount Etna, stands nearby and with its fine beaches the city attracts many tourists.

Taormina: Taormina, further up the coast, is an immensely picturesque resort town. Perched on a cliff within sight of Mount Etna, it has fine beaches, a well-preserved Greek theatre, a castle and a cathedral.

Messina: Messina, a busy port with a deep natural harbour, was almost entirely destroyed by an earthquake in 1908. The Cathedral is an exact reproduction of that destroyed in the 1908 calamity, which was built in the 11th century by King Roger.

Sicily is littered with the remains of successive invading cultures and a full listing of important sites is beyond the scope of this entry. The following is a representative selection of sites and **buildings:** the Norman Cathedral at Monreale, containing an acre and a half of dazzling mosaics; the numerous Greek remains at Agrigento, said to be better preserved than any in Greece itself; the Greek theatre at Syracuse; the vast Temple of Apollo at Selinunte; and the Byzantine cliff dwellings at Cava d'Ispica near Modica.

Popular seaside resorts include Cefalú (near Palermo), Mondello, Acitrezza, Acireale, Taormina (see above) and Tindari. There are extensive sandy beaches on the southern coast.

Many attractive small islands surround Sicily, offering excellent facilities for underwater fishing. Accommodation is generally simple (although there are some excellent hotels). These islands are the Lipari Group (Lipari itself, Vulcano, Panarea and Stromboli), Ustica, Favignana, Levanzo, Marettimo, Pantelleria and Lampedusa.

SARDINIA: SARDINIA: This is the second-largest island in the Mediterranean. Much of Sardinia away from the coasts is an almost lunar landscape of crags and chasms and is largely uninhabited. In recent years, there has been much investment in tourist infrastructure, particularly in the northern area known as the Costa Smeralda and on the west coast near Alghero. This is the only region in Italy without motorways. The Sardinian language is closer to Latin than is modern Italian.

Cagliari: Cagliari, the capital, stands in a marshy valley at the south of the island. It was founded by the Phoenicians and subsequently expanded by the Romans, who knew it as Carales. It is today a busy commercial port and site of most of the island's heavy industry.

The only other towns of any size are Sassari, in the northwest near the resort area around Alghero; Nuoro, an agricultural town on the edge of the central massif, a good base from which to explore the interior; and Olbia, a fishing port and car-ferry terminus on the edge of the Costa Smeralda.

There are numerous Bronze Age remains throughout the islands, the best known being the nuraghi - circular (sometimes conical) stone dwellings. The largest collection of these may be found at Su Nuraxi, about 80km (50 miles) north of Cagliari.

Beach resorts: Beach resorts include: Santa Margherita di Pula, Alghero, Santa Teresa, Porto Cervo, Capo Boi and the island of La Maddalena.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Watersports: Watersports: Italy has some 8500km (5345 miles) of coastline and remains one of Europe's favourite destinations for beach holidays. Facilities such as sun loungers and deckchairs (which are common on Italian beaches) usually attract a small charge. All types of watersports are available at major resorts. The enduring appeal of the Italian Riviera in Liguria (a 350km/219-mile stretch from France to Tuscany), or of the Adriatic and Amalfi coasts, the latter known for its steeply terraced villages clinging to a rocky coastline, is witnessed by the ever-growing number of visitors. Less busy are the beaches on the islands, in Sicily, which has large sandy stretches on the southern coast, and in Sardinia, much of which is still relatively untouched. Many of Italy's best dive sites are located in Sardinia, and Italy's first surfing school is based in Mauro. Diving courses and equipment hire are also available on the Tremiti Islands (Puglia) in the Adriatic and along the coasts of Tuscany and Liguria. Fishing is excellent throughout Sardinian and Sicilian waters (also renowned for their healthy lobster population), while the rivers in northern Italy, Umbria and Tuscany can offer particularly scenic fishing holidays. For sea fishing, private or chartered boats can be rented. Genoa has frequent yachting regattas, as does Santa Margherita Ligure, where a canoe and small boat regatta is held in July. Sailing is popular on Italy's five major lakes near the Alps in the north - Maggiore, Lugano, Como, Iseo and Garda.

Wintersports: Wintersports: The skiing infrastructure has been greatly improved in recent years, and the facilities at resorts in the Italian Alps now rival those in neighbouring France, Switzerland and Austria. Ski resorts can be broadly split into four geographical areas. To the west of Turin, in the Piedmont region, major resorts include Bardonechia, Sauze, d'Oulx and Sestriere. Further north, the Aosta Valley and its main resorts, such as Courmayeur, Cervinia and La Thuile, are easily reached from France (via the Mont Blanc tunnel from Chamonix) or from Switzerland (via the St Bernard tunnel). To the east, the region across the Swiss border is fairly isolated and accessible via long, winding roads which can be treacherous in bad weather. Driving can be equally difficult in the Dolomites, still further east, but the beautiful scenery more than makes up for it, helping to make this one of Italy's prime skiing destinations; major resorts include Cortina D'Ampezzo (Italy's most upmarket resort), Selva/Sella Ronda and Madonna di Campiglio. Skiing is also possible in Central Italy, in resorts such as Abetone (Tuscany), Campo Imperatore (Lazio), and in several places in Abruzzo, down to Mount Etna in Sicily.

Equestrianism: Equestrianism: The biennial Palio bareback horse race in Siena, held on July 2 and August 16, draws thousands of spectators and has been a special event since the 14th century. One of Rome's most prestigious events is its international horse show held in May. There is also flat racing in February at the Capanelle track. Each of the three seasons lasts two months, the second starting in May and the third in September. Trotting races take place at the Villa Gloria track in February, June to November.

Cultural holidays: Cultural holidays: Italian language and art courses are available throughout Italy. Language courses are often complemented by subjects such as cooking or architecture. Well-known institutions offering a range of art courses include the Palazzo Spinelli and Università Internazionale dell'Arte in Florence; the Accademia Italia in Rome; the Centro Internazionale degli Studi per l'Insegnamento del Mosaico in Ravenna for mosaic making; and, for music courses, the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. Further information can be obtained from the Italian Cultural Institute in London (tel: (020) 7235 1461) or the Italian State Tourist Office (see address section).

Golf: Golf: There are first-class golf courses all over Italy, from Lombardy and Trentino in the north, through Tuscany and Lazio, down to Calabria and Sardinia where the golf season is very long, owing to the mild climate.

Italy's most popular spectator sport is football (the national team won the World Cup in 1934, 1938 and 1982, and hosted the 1990 event, in which they finished third). The Giro d'Italia is an internationally renowned cycling race through Italy attracting the world's top cyclists. Motor-racing is held at the Monza autodrome near Milan (Lombardy). Bocce bowling is as traditional in Italy as it is in France, especially in small villages where it is played on Sunday after High Mass.

10 SOCIAL PROFILE

Food & Drink: Table service is most common in restaurants and bars. There are no licensing laws.

Pasta plays a substantial part in Italian recipes, but nearly all regions have developed their own special dishes. Examples of dishes from each region are listed below. Italy has over 20 major **wine regions, from Valle d'Aosta on the French border to Sicily and Sardinia in the south.** **Drink:** Wines are named after grape varieties or after their village or area of origin. The most widespread is the Chianti group of vineyards, governed by the Chianti Classico quality controls (denoted by a black cockerel on the neck of each bottle). The Chianti area is the only area in Italy with such quality controls. Denominazione di origine controllata wines come from officially recognised wine-growing areas (similar to Appellation Contrôlée in France), while wines designated Denominazione controllata e garantita are wines of fine quality. Vermouths from Piemonte vary from dry and light pink to dark-coloured and sweet. Aperitifs such as Campari and Punt e Mes are excellent appetisers, while Italian liqueurs include Strega, Galliano, Amaretto and Sambuca. Examples of wine from each region are listed below.

Rome: Food: abbacchio (suckling lamb in white wine flavoured with rosemary), cannelloni (pasta stuffed with meat, calves' brains, spinach, egg and cheese), broccoli romani (broccoli in white wine), salsa romana (sweet-sour brown sauce with raisins, chestnut and lentil purée served with game) and gnocchi alla romana (semolina dumplings). Of Rome's cheeses the best include mozzarella, caciotta romana (semi-hard, sweet sheep cheese), pecorino (hard, sharp sheep's milk cheese) and gorgonzola. Wines: Frascati, Albano, Grottaferrata, Velletri, Montefiascone, and Marino (whites); Marino, Cesanese and Piglio (reds).

Piemonte: Food: bagna caoda (a traditional anchovies soup, served with vegetables), fritto misto piemontese (fried meat, vegetables and fruit), bonet (a chocolate cake made with coffee and local biscuits).

Valle d'Aosta: Food: fonduta (a hot dip with Fontina cheese, milk and egg yolks sprinkled with truffles and white pepper), lepre piemontese (hare cooked in Barbera wine and sprinkled with herbs and bitter chocolate), zabaglione (hot dessert with beaten egg and Marsala wine). Wines: Barolo, Barbera, Barbaresco, Gattinara and Grignolino.

Lombardy: Food: risotto alla milanese (rice with saffron and white wine), zuppa pavese (tasty clear soup with poached eggs), minestrone (thick soup with chopped vegetables), osso buco (shin of veal cooked in tomato sauce served with rice), panettone (Christmas cake with sultanas and candied fruit). Wines: Valtellina, Sassella, Grumello and Inferno.

Trentino and Alto Adige: Food: some excellent sausages and hams come from these regions. Wines: Lago di Caldaro and Santa Maddalena.

Veneto: Food: fegato alla veneziana (calves' liver thinly sliced and cooked in butter with onions), baccalà alla vicentina (salt cod simmered in milk), radicchio rosso di treviso (wild red chicory with a bitter taste). Wines: Soave, Bardolino and Valpolicella.

Friuli-Venezia Giulia: Food: pasta e fagioli (pasta and beans), prosciutto di San Daniele (raw ham). Wines: Tokaj, Malvasia, Pinot Bianco and Pinot Grigio (whites); Merlot, Cabernet and Pinot Nero (reds).

Liguria: Food: pesto (sauce made of basil, garlic, pine nuts and pecorino cheese with pasta), cima genovese (cold veal stuffed with calves' brains, onions and herbs), pandolce (sweet cake with orange flavour). Wine: Sciacchetteria.

Emilia-Romagna: Food: parmigiano (parmesan cheese), prosciutto di Parma (Parma ham), pasta con salsa bolognese (sauce of meat, cheese and tomato served with pasta), vitello alla bolognese (veal cutlet cooked with Parma ham and cheese), cotechino e zampone (pigs' trotters stuffed with pork and sausages). Wines: Lambrusco, Albana, Trebbiano and Sangiovese.

Tuscany: Food: bistecca alla fiorentina (thick T-bone steak grilled over charcoal, sprinkled with freshly ground black pepper and olive oil), minestrone alla fiorentina (tasty vegetable soup with slices of country bread), pappardelle alla lepre (pasta with hare sauce), tortina di carciofi (baked artichoke pie), cinghiale di maremma (wild boar from Maremma region near Grosseto) with dishes of ham, sausages and steaks. Sweets include panforte di Siena (confection of honey, candied fruits, almonds and cloves), castagnaccio (chestnut cake with nuts and sultanas) and ricciarelli (delicate biscuit of honey and almonds from Siena). Wines: Chianti, Vernaccia, Aleatico and Brunello di Montalcino.

Marche: Food: brodetto (many varieties of fish on toast, garnished with carrot, celery, tomato, laurel tips and white wine), pasticciata (pasta baked in oven, a method preferred by Marches). Wine: Verdicchio.

Abruzzo-Molise: Food: the favourite pasta in this region is known as maccheroni alla chitarra because it is cut in thin strips. Desserts include parrozzo (rich chocolate cake) and zeppole (sweetened pasta). Wines: Cerasolo di Abruzzo, Montepulciano (reds); Trebbiano (dry white). The district is also home of a strong liqueur known as Centerbe.

Umbria: Food: Extra virgin olive oil, black and white truffles, spaghetti, porchetta alla perugina (suckling pig), carne ai capperi e acciughe (veal with caper and herb sauce) and good-quality local sausages, salami and prosciutto famous throughout Italy. Local ingredients used in Umbrian cooking include pork and beef, cheeses, lentils from the Valerina, fish from Lake Trasimeno and the River Nera, mushrooms and potatoes from Colfiorito. Wine: Orvieto (white, sweet or dry) and numerous red and white wines (including Rubesco from Torgiano and wines from Sagrantino and Montefalco).

Campania: Food: pizza (the culinary pride of Campania) served in a great variety of recipes, bistecca alla pizzaiola (steak with sauce made from tomatoes, garlic and oregano), sfogliatelle (sweet ricotta cheese turnovers) and mozzarella cheese (originally made with buffalo milk). Wines: These come from the islands of Capri and Ischia.

Puglia: Food: coniglio ai capperi (rabbit cooked with capers) and ostriche (fresh oysters baked with bread crumbs). Wines: Sansevero, Santo Stefano, Aleatico di Puglia.

Calabria and Basilicata: Food: sagne chine (lasagne with artichoke and meat balls), zuppa di cipolle (onion soup with Italian brandy), sarde (fresh sardines with olive oil and oregano), alici al limone (fresh anchovies baked with lemon juice), melanzane Sott'Olio (pickled aubergines), mostaccioli (chocolate biscuits) or cannariculi (fried honey biscuits). Wines: Agliatico and Cirò.

Sicily: Food: pesce spada (swordfish stuffed with brandy, mozzarella and herbs, grilled on charcoal), pasta con le sarde (pasta with fresh sardines), caponata (rich dish of olives, anchovies and aubergines), pizza siciliana (pizza with olives and capers) and triglie alla siciliana (grilled mullet with orange peel and white wine). Excellent sweets are cassata (ice cream of various flavours with candied fruit and bitter chocolate) and frutti di marturana (marzipan fruits). Wines: Regaleali, Corvo di Salaparuta (both red and white, a highly aromatic wine ideal for fish), Marsala.

Sardinia: Food: the coastline offers a wide selection of fish, including lobster which is served in soup, stews and grills. Main dishes include burrida (fish stew with dogfish and skate) and calamaretti alla sarda (stuffed baby squid). Wines: Vernaccia, Cannonau, Piani, Oliena and Malvasia.

Nightlife: Nightclubs, discotheques and restaurants and bars with dancing can be found in most major towns and tourist resorts. In the capital, English-language films can be found at the Pasquine Cinema, Vicolo della Paglia, just off Santa Maria in Trastevere. Restaurants and cafés throughout Italy will invariably have tables outside: in Rome the Massimo D'Azeglio is a hotel restaurant famous for its classic food. Open-air concerts in summer are organised by the Opera House and the Academy of St Cecilia, while there is open-air theatre at the Baths of Caracalla. Jazz, rock, folk and country music can all be heard at various venues.

Shopping: Many Italian products are world-famous for their style and quality. Care should be taken when buying antiques since Italy is renowned for skilled imitators. Prices are generally fixed and bargaining is not general practice, although a discount may be given on a large purchase. Florence, Milan and Rome are famous as important fashion centres, but smaller towns also offer good scope for shopping. It is advisable to avoid hawkers or sellers on the beaches. Some places are known for particular products, eg Como (Lombardy) for silk, Prato (Tuscany) for textiles, Empoli (Tuscany) for the production of bottles and glasses in green glass, Deruta (Umbria) and Faenza (Emilia-Romagna) for pottery, Carrara (Tuscany) for marble. Torre Annunziata (Campania) and Alghero (Sardinia) are centres for handicraft products in coral, and in several parts of Sardinia business cards and writing paper made of cork are produced. Cremona (Lombardy) is famous for its handmade violins. Castelfidardo (Marche) is famous for its accordion factories, and for its production of guitars and organs. Two small towns concentrate on producing their speciality: Valenza (Piedmont), which has a large number of goldsmith artisans, and Sulmona (Abruzzo), which produces 'confetti', sugar-coated almonds used all over Italy for wedding celebrations. Vietri sul Mare (Campania) is one of the most important centres of ceramic paving-tiles, and Ravenna (Emilia-Romagna) is famous for mosaics. Main shopping areas are listed below.

Rome: offers a wide choice of shops and markets. Every shop in the fashionable Via Condotti-Via Sistina area offers a choice of styles, colours and designs rarely matched, but at very high prices. Equally expensive are shops along Via Vittorio Veneto, a street famous for its outdoor cafés. Old books and prints can be bought from bookstalls of Piazza Borghese. Rome's flea market is at Porta Portese in Trastevere on Sunday mornings, selling everything from second-hand shoes to 'genuine antiques'.

Milan's: industrial wealth is reflected in the chic, elegant shops of Via Montenapoleone. Prices tend to be higher than in other major cities.

Venice: is still famous for its glassware, and there is a great deal of both good and bad glass; that made on the island of Murano, where there are also art dealers and skilful goldsmiths, has a reputation for quality. Venetian lace is also exquisite and expensive; however, most of the lace sold is no longer made locally (only lace made on the island of Burano may properly be called Venetian lace).

Florence: boasts some of the finest goldsmiths, selling from shops largely concentrated along both sides of the Ponte Vecchio bridge. Florentine jewellery has a particular quality of satin finish called satinato. Much filigree jewellery can also be found. Cameos are another speciality of Florence, carved from exotic shells.

Southern Italy: In the south there are still families hand-making the same local products as their ancestors: pottery and carpets in each region; filigree jewellery and products of wrought iron and brass in Abruzzo; products in wood in Calabria; corals and cameos in Campania; a variety of textiles, including tablecloths, in Sicily and Sardinia. In Cagliari it is possible to find artistic copies of bronze statuettes from the Nuraghe period of the Sardinian Bronze Age. In the

larger towns such as Naples, Bari, Reggio, Calabria, Palermo and Cagliari there are elegant shops with a whole range of Italian products. Many smaller towns have outdoor markets, but souvenirs sold there are sometimes of very low quality, probably mass-produced elsewhere.

Shopping hours: 0830-1230 and 1530-1930 Monday to Saturday, with some variations in northern Italy where the lunch break is shorter and the shops close earlier. Food shops are often closed Wednesday afternoon.

Special Events: Traditional festivals are celebrated in most towns and villages in commemoration of local historical or religious events, the most notable and spectacular being the following:

Agrigento: Folklore. Almond Blossom Festival (March).

Arezzo: Joust of the Saracen with armoured knights, dating from the 13th century (first Sunday in September).

Ascoli Piceno: Joust of the Quintana. Historical pageant with over 1000 people (first Sunday in August).

Assisi: Celebration of Holy Week. Calendimaggio (early May). Music and Song contest (annually the first week in May).

Bari: 'Sagra di San Nicola', historical procession in costume (first Saturday and Sunday in May).

Cagliari: 'Sagra di Sant'Efisio', one of the biggest and most colourful processions in the world (May 1).

Florence: 'Scoppio del Carro', Explosion of the Cart in the Cathedral Square (Easter Sunday); and 'Gioco del Calcio', 16th-century football match in medieval costumes (June).

Foligno: 'Giostra della Quintana' 17th-century joust with 600 knights in costumes (second Sunday in September).

Gubbio: 'Festa dei Ceri' race. (May 15).

Lucca: 'Luminaria di Santa Croce'. Illuminations and procession (September 14).

Marostica: Human Chess Game (second weekend in September every two years in even years).

Naples: 'Festa di San Gennaro', gathering in the Cathedral to pray for the liquefaction of the saint's blood (September 19).

Nuoro: Festival of the Redeemer (last week in August).

Orvieto: Umbria Jazz Winter (New Year).

Perugia: Umbria Jazz (July).

Piana Degli Albanesi (Palermo): Celebration of Epiphany according to Byzantine rite (January 6); Easter celebrations (Easter Sunday).

Pisa: Historical regatta and illuminations (June).

Rome: Epiphany Fair (January 6). 'Festa de'Noantri' (July 16-24).

Sansepolcro (Arezzo): 'Palio dei Balestrieri', medieval contest (second Sunday in September).

Sassari: 'Cavalcata Sarda', traditional procession of over 3000 people on horseback wearing medieval costume (third Sunday in May).

Siena: Bareback horse-race (July 2 and August 16).

Spoleto: The Spoleto Festival.

Terni: Umbria Jazz Gospel & Soul Easter Festival. Venice: 'Carnevale' (February). 'Il Redentore', procession of gondolas, (mid-July Sat/Sun). Historical regatta (first Sunday in September).

Verona: Verona Opera (July-September).

Viareggio: 'Carnevale' (February).

Viterbo: Procession of the 'Macchina di Santa Rosa', commemorating the transport of the saint's body to the Church of Santa Rosa (September 3).

In addition to the above, the following events are taking place in 2001:

Jan-Mar 31 2001 Bernardo Bellotto Exhibition, Museo Correr, Venice. Jan-Jun The Etruscans Exhibition, Palazzo Grassi, Venice.

Social Conventions: The social structure is heavily influenced by the Roman Catholic church and, generally speaking, family ties are stronger than in most other countries in Western Europe. Normal social courtesies should be observed. Dress is casual in most places, though beachwear should be confined to the beach. Conservative clothes are expected when visiting religious buildings and smaller, traditional communities. Formal wear is usually indicated on invitations. Smoking is prohibited in some public buildings, transport and cinemas. Visitors are warned to take precautions against theft, particularly in the cities. Tipping: Service charges and state taxes are included in all hotel bills. It is customary to give up to 10% in addition if service has been particularly good; minimum L1000.

11 BUSINESS PROFILE

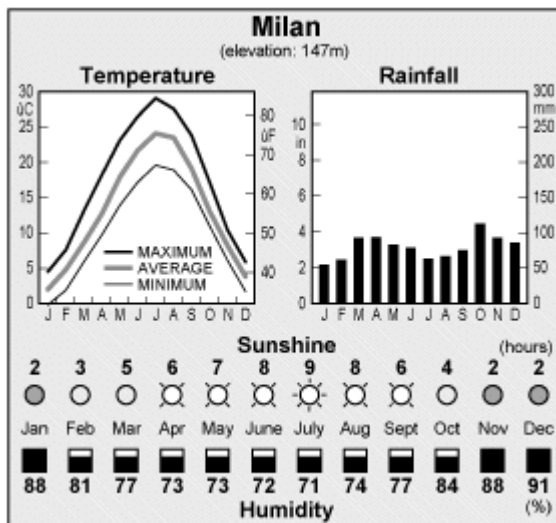
Economy: Traditionally agricultural, Italy industrialised rapidly after 1945, particularly in manufacturing and engineering, to the point where now just 7% of the population is engaged in agriculture. The majority of these live in the south of Italy, which is substantially poorer than the centre and north of the country. The principal crops are sugar beet, wheat, maize, tomatoes and grapes (many are used for wine, of which Italy is a leading producer). Italy relies heavily on the export of manufactured goods, particularly of industrial machinery, vehicles, aircraft, chemicals, electronics, textiles and clothing. The tourism industry now enjoys a major position in the economy. Other service industries, particularly financial services and communications media, are playing a significant and growing role. Italy's trade performance has been all the more impressive given the dearth of raw materials. All of the country's oil and many of its raw materials must be imported; yet annual figures regularly show a large trade surplus. In the manufacturing and service sectors, the role of a group of large state holding companies was vital in ensuring economic growth, although it is now widely felt that these have outlived their usefulness and should be broken up. The country's main economic problem is the huge public sector deficit, which recent governments have sought to tackle by reducing welfare expenditure. The particular importance of the deficit is that, while a major proponent of European integration, Italy's entry in monetary union has been threatened by its inability to meet the convergence criteria - including a ceiling (60% of GDP) on the public deficit - which are a condition of membership. Although Italy's deficit exceeds that limit, the lira was admitted to European Monetary Union (EMU) upon inauguration at the beginning of 1999. Italy's main trading partners are EU countries, Latin America, the USA, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Libya.

Business: A knowledge of Italian is a distinct advantage. Prior appointments are essential. Visitors should remember that ministries and most public offices close at 1345 and, except by special appointment, it is not possible to see officials in the afternoon. Milan, Turin and Genoa form the industrial triangle of Italy; Bologna, Florence, Padua, Rome, Verona and Vicenza also have important business centres. In all the above cities major trade fairs take place throughout the year. See under the relevant city sections in Resorts & Excursions. Office hours: 0900-1700 Monday to Friday.

Commercial Information: The following organisation can offer advice: Unione Italiana delle Camere di Commercio, Industria, Artigianato e Agricoltura (Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture), Piazza Sallustio 21, 00187 Rome (tel: (6) 47041; fax: (6) 487 1995; e-mail: segreteria.generale@unioncamere.it; web site: <http://www.unioncamere.it>).

Conferences/Conventions: There are many hotels with facilities. Further information can be obtained from Ente Nazionale per il Turismo (see address section).

12 CLIMATE



Summer is hot, especially in the south. Spring and autumn are mild with fine, sunny weather. Winter in the south is much drier and warmer than in northern and central areas. Mountain regions are colder with heavy winter snowfalls.

Required clothing: Lightweight cottons and linens are worn during the summer, except in the mountains. Lightweight to mediumweights are worn in the south during winter, while warmer clothes are worn elsewhere. Alpine wear is advised for winter mountain resorts.

13 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Although Italy has only been unified since 1861, the rich and complex history of the peninsula has, perhaps more than that of any other country, influenced the course of European development, particularly in the fields of culture and political thought. The most important early settlers in the area were the Etruscans, who had established settlements in northern Italy by the 6th century BC. By the 3rd century BC, the city state of Rome, having subdued most of the peninsula, was intent on extending its influence elsewhere. At its greatest extent the Empire (so called after 30BC) made the Mediterranean a Roman lake and for several centuries conferred on its inhabitants the benefits of the Pax Romana: culture (mainly Hellenic in origin), law, relative peace and comparative prosperity. By the 5th century, however, internal discord and external pressures resulted in the disintegration of the empires, although the Germanic peoples who assumed the rule of Italy, at first as representatives of the Eastern Emperor in Constantinople, were more concerned with the continuity of the Roman way of life than has often been supposed. From AD493 the Ostrogothic Kingdom of Theodoric maintained the unity of Italy, but the region was reconquered by Justinian (AD535-53). By the late 6th century, however, settlers from northern Europe had established a kingdom in Lombardy and before long Italy had fragmented into a dozen or so states. For the next 1000 years the exceedingly complex history of Italy can be seen in terms of a northern region (dominated by the Holy Roman Empire, the Papacy and the growing power of the city states) and a southern region (dominated first by the vestiges of Byzantine power, and later by the Muslims and then the Normans and their successors such as the Angevins, the Aragonese and the Bourbons). Charlemagne gained control

of northern Italy in the late 8th century, and for the rest of the medieval period his successors made repeated and largely unsuccessful attempts to recreate imperial power in the region. The 11th century saw the rise of the independent city states of Florence, Genoa, Milan and particularly Venice, all of which pursued an independent policy and soon began to wield a commercial and political influence out of all proportion to their size. In the south, Sicily was taken by the Muslims in the 9th century, but then fell to the Normans in 1059 who soon established control over most of the southern part of the peninsula. In the 12th century the kingdom was one of the greatest centres of culture in Europe, particularly under Roger II. Briefly reunited by marriage to the Hohenstaufen empire of Henry VI and Frederick II between 1189 and 1268, Naples and Sicily were then ruled respectively by the houses of Anjou and Aragon until the latter reunited the region in 1442. The popes played a leading role in the tortuous diplomacy of 15th-century Italy. The period witnessed arguably the greatest ever flowering of art and culture (the Italian Renaissance), associated with writers such as Machiavelli, Aristio and Guicciardini and notable patrons such as the Medici and several popes supporting a wealth of artists including Fra Angelico, Raphael, Botticelli, Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. Politically, the 16th century represented a victory for Spanish over French influence in Italy, and the Habsburgs established themselves particularly strongly in Milan, Naples and Sicily. Many of the smaller states changed hands on numerous occasions during the following two centuries, and although the large city states maintained their independence, their power was in general on the wane. The Enlightenment of the 18th century found particularly strong expression in the Kingdom of Naples and Sicily (by now ruled by the Bourbons), but elsewhere centralised power was largely absent. Opposition to Habsburg rule was led by Garibaldi and the house of Savoy (also Kings of Sardinia since 1720), and by 1861 the ruling princes of northern and central Italy had been deposed and Victor Emmanuel II became the first King of Italy, with Florence as the capital. The full annexation of Venice and Rome was not completed for another ten years. Italy's colonial conquests were limited (largely due to the failure of the Ethiopian campaigns) and the rulers enjoyed more success in their efforts to consolidate their own position at home, despite the considerable distractions of the various complex struggles in the Balkans. Despite being neutral in 1914, Italy joined the Allies in the following year and made some territorial gains in the peace which followed the First World War. The inter-war years were dominated by economic problems, further attempts at expansion and the rise of the Fascists under Mussolini. Italy supported Hitler's Germany in 1939, but after the surrender of Italian forces and the arrest of Mussolini in 1943, the new government backed the Allies for the remainder of the Second World War. King Victor Emmanuel III abdicated in 1946 and a republic was proclaimed. Elections rarely produce dramatic changes in Italy. The Christian Democrat Party (DC) has been the dominant power in each of the 51 governments since the war, although during the 1980s the premiership has been held by politicians from other smaller parties. However, the almost traditional instability of the Italian government seems to have little impact on the Italians as a nation. The Communist Party (PCI), the largest in Western Europe with just under 30% of the Italian vote, has dominated the opposition. In 1992, the PCI underwent a major revision of its political strategy, renouncing Marxism before reconstituting itself as the Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS). Hard-liners split off to form Rifondazione Comunista (Reconstructed Communists, although 'unreconstructed' might be a better description). The ensuing general election, held in April 1992, again produced an inconclusive result. It was left to the traditional parties to attempt to put together a government. Giuliano D'Amato of the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI) emerged as the country's 51st post-war premier. D'Amato was one of the few senior PSI figures untainted by the latest corruption scandal to break over Italy, involving the payment of large bribes to politicians by construction companies in exchange for public works contracts. This scandal, substantial even by Italian standards, and the upsurge during the summer of 1992 of Mafia violence, brought Italy to something of a social and moral crisis. With the Mafia continuing to operate with apparent impunity under the protection of corrupt politicians, administrators and law enforcement officers, it was clear that a complete overhaul of Italian public life was required. The emergence of a new breed of investigating magistrates who are prepared to take on the power-brokers and draft

indictments against them is an important feature of this sea-change. The D'Amato government collapsed in April 1993 under the weight of prosecutions launched against a bewildering array of senior politicians. D'Amato was replaced by Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, previously the Governor of the Bank of Italy but, lacking a working majority, his minority Government staggered through one parliamentary crisis after another until Ciampi offered his resignation to President Scalfaro in January 1994. The centre-right was now in deep crisis, with both the Christian Democrats and the Socialists terminally damaged by scandal. However, a temporary saviour appeared at the March 1994 poll in the form of one of the country's principal commercial magnates, Silvio Berlusconi. With the help of staff in his advertising agency, Berlusconi created a new political party, Forza Italia, from scratch in a remarkably short time. Using his unique access to the media - in the form of his own three television stations - Berlusconi ran a highly effective if vacuous campaign which overwhelmed the lacklustre efforts of the left. Forza Italia came out of the election with 21% of the vote, a marginal lead over the PDS, and joined with two other right-wing parties, Lega Nord (Northern League) and the Aleanza Nazionale, to form a government. The Aleanza Nazionale was the offspring of the Movimento Sociale Italiano, which in turn was the inheritor of the fascist tradition in Italian politics. The regionalist Lega Nord was a new phenomenon which drew on the resentment of northerners who felt that the poorer and less productive southern part of Italy represented a drain on the north. (Lega Nord militants propose the division of Italy and the creation of a new sovereign state, Padania, in the north). Upon taking office, Berlusconi found that the novelty quickly wore off and serious questions arose about the conflicts of interest between his business and political activities. Additionally, past activities had attracted the attention of Italy's new breed of investigating magistrates. Within months, Berlusconi was forced out of office. An interim government of non-aligned non-parliamentary professionals under the banker Lamberto Dini was chosen as the most acceptable option pending new elections, These were held in April 1996, and Romano Prodi's centre-left Ulivo (Olive tree) alliance, which was PDS-dominated, but which also took in several smaller parties, emerged as the largest bloc in the new assembly and was invited to form a government. However, the Prodi administration relied upon the support of Rifondazione Comunista which refused to back an austerity budget in the summer of 1998, at which point the Government fell. Prodi himself took over the recently-vacated presidency of the European Commission, while in October 1998 a new centre-left administration under PDS leader Massimo d'Alema took office. D'Alema's government has scored successes in a number of areas during its first nine months in office. The most important of these was the role of Italy in the Kosovo crisis: though criticised by enthusiasts for military intervention, the Italians' measured response guaranteed them a significant role in future diplomatic negotiations about the future of the region. The D'Alema government - a coalition of no less than 12 parties, including the RC, Greens and Catholic 'Liberals' - lasted until April 2000 when a catastrophic series of regional election results forced him from office. Finance Minister Giuliano Amato took over the premiership on what is widely recognised as a temporary basis pending national elections, due, at the latest in April 2001. Opposing Amato is a newly resurgent Berlusconi who, as the informally acknowledged leader of Italy's four centre-right parties, is hoping for another term of office. Italy's chronic governmental instability, which the constitutional reforms were supposed to tackle, has in fact been exacerbated by a new law on the funding of political parties which has led to 200 parliamentarians switching allegiance since the 1996 general election.

Government: Since changes to the 1948 constitution, agreed by referendum in 1993, both houses (325-member Senate and 630-member Chamber of Deputies) of the bicameral parliament are elected under a mixed system - three-quarters by majority vote in constituencies and one-quarter by direct proportional representation. The two chambers, plus a group of 58 regional representatives comprise an electoral college which elect a President as head of state for a 7-year term. The President appoints a Prime Minister (usually, but not always, the leader of the largest party in parliament) who leads a Council of Ministers with executive responsibilities. In June 1997 a parliamentary commission on constitutional reform announced its recommendations

(including a directly elected President) but as yet it has proved impossible to transmute these ideas into any kind of political reality.

14 OVERVIEW

Country Overview: What would it be like to wake in the heart of the Roman Empire, lunch in a sumptuous sixteenth-century Renaissance villa, and go to bed in the capital of twenty-first century designer chic? Visit Italy, taking in Rome, Florence and Milan, and the experience is yours.

But that's not all. Italy combines art history and contemporary fashion with stunning natural **landscapes:** the turquoise waters of the Costa Smeralda offer one of Europe's most beautiful stretches of sand, sea and sunshine, while the snow covered slopes of the Dolomite mountains are a haven for winter sports enthusiasts.

Besides the renowned cities of Venice, Genoa and Naples (each with its own unique identity - Italy was only unified in 1870), there are romantic medieval hill towns, such as San Gimignano in Tuscany, and unspoilt fishing villages, like the unforgettable Positano on the Amalfi coast. Visit **vineyards and cellars to taste the very best regional wines:** The Veneto, famed for the sparkling white prosecco, and Tuscany, home of the highly proclaimed robust red, Brunello di Montalcino. And to really get away from it all, take a boat to the islands of Sicily or Sardinia to experience rural hospitality in the blissful Mediterranean. Italy: still so much more to discover.

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