



Italy Fast Facts

Population:

58,103,033 (July 2005 est.)

Capital:

Rome

Currency:

euro (EUR)

Religion(s):

predominately Roman Catholic with mature Protestant and Jewish communities and a growing Muslim immigrant community

Language(s):

Italian (official), German (parts of Trentino-Alto Adige region are predominantly German speaking), French (small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta region), Slovene (Slovene-speaking minority in the Trieste-Gorizia area)

Major Events:

Republic Day, 2 June (1946)
Religious holidays

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Online Resources

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Syracuse University Abroad

<http://suabroad.syr.edu/programs/florence>

Study in Italy

(site of Italian Ministry of Education)

<http://www.study-in-italy.it>

Università di Bologna

<http://www.eng.unibo.it/PortaleEn/default.htm>

SACI Studio Art Centers International

<http://www.saci-florence.org>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

<http://www.unesco.org>

Gilman Undergraduate Scholarships

<http://www.iie.org/gilman>

NSEP – National Security Education Program

<http://www.iie.org/nsep>

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Italy at a Glance...

A land of romance and culture, of art and architecture, of modern cities and fascinating politics, Italy has had a major cultural influence on the world throughout history.

Italy is a peninsula extending southward from the European coastline nearly to the coast of North Africa. It is surrounded on three sides by the Mediterranean Sea and is well known for its distinctive boot-like shape on the map. Bordering France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia on land, the country also encompasses the islands of Sicily and Sardinia.

Although Italy was not unified until 1861, the rich history of the peninsula has included some of the most influential civilizations in the world including the Etruscans and the Romans, whose Empire extended through much of Europe for several centuries. Over the years, the country saw numerous migrations and invasions by many groups including Germanic tribes, Greeks, Celtic people, Franks, Byzantines, Muslims, Normans, French Angevins, Aragonese, and Bourbons. After the rise of the independent city states of Florence, Genoa, Milan, and Venice in the 11th century, Italy also boasted central importance and influence in philosophy, science, and art during the Renaissance of the Middle Ages. The modern republic was proclaimed in 1946 after the abdication of King Victor Emmanuel III.

Italy plays an important part in European higher education, and was influential in starting the higher education reform, known as “Bologna Process” (Bologna Declaration, June 1999) which is now being implemented all over Europe. Its higher education system includes 83 universities (58 of them sponsored by the State), as well as numerous non-university institutions such as academies of art, design and music, and institutes of technical education and specialized training.

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IIEPassport is the study abroad search engine. Find study abroad programs in Italy, Italian language programs and a WHOLE lot more!

Studying in Italy gives students access to some of the most influential art, architecture, and history in the world. The options for study abound. Italy is home to the Università di Bologna, which is said to be the oldest university in the western world. Historians cite the university as having been created in 1088. It boasts many famous historical figures as alumni, including Dante Alighieri.



International students can choose from a wide variety of Italian universities, and many are top in their fields. La Sapienza University in Rome is rated among the top 100 in the world, its strength lying in social sciences and humanities. The Politecnico di Milano and University of Torino are two of the top engineering and applied sciences universities in Europe. Centuries-old universities including those in Bologna and Padova have a long tradition in legal studies, politics, and international affairs. Florence and Venice naturally are incomparable places to study art and art history.

In addition to Italy's rich selection of universities and academies, numerous study abroad organizations offer excellent programs in Italy. Studio Art Centers International (SACI), based in a palazzo in Florence, offers US-accredited liberal arts and studio art courses ranging from drawing, design, and architecture to conservation, allowing international students to truly engage the world of Italian art. SACI is administered by the Institute of International Education. In addition to offering a variety of in-depth courses, programs like that of Syracuse University also offers students practical experience through internships.

Italy has more sites inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List than any other country, and it is said that approximately 60% of the world's most important artwork can be found there. Providing a laundry list of famous artwork wouldn't begin to cover the marvels Italy offers. Rest assured that you couldn't possibly see them all in the course of a program abroad.

Most people have at least seen parts of Italy's most famous cities as popular settings for many films: the canals and bridges of Venice, the plazas and statues of Florence, the famous architecture of the past from the imposing Coliseum to the beauty of the Trevi Fountain in Rome. Italy's cities have a modern cosmopolitan flavor while glorying in the wonders of the country's past.

After spending a semester in Rome, one student said, “My experience in Rome has also exceeded cultural encounters and tourist attractions. I have been exposed to history in a way that I never could have imagined, but that is just the way things are in Rome. You can't escape it. Around every corner whispers the heroes, legends, villains, triumphs, and tragedies of the past. Some were cemented in time thousands of years ago, others just last week.” Italy is alive with the echoes of the past, but it is also at the center of exciting events in the modern world.

Modern Italy provides an interesting study in contrasts. With Rome as the dividing point, the north and south of Italy demonstrate a dichotomy, economically, culturally, and politically. The economy of the south is built largely on agriculture. The economy of the north is more industrial, producing machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, textiles, motor vehicles, and ceramics. Italy ranks among the 8 most industrialized countries in the world. In addition to large state-owned and private companies, it has a network of small and medium-sized business and scientific parks, and is promoting basic and applied scientific research. Milan is a center of fashion, design, commerce, and industry for the entire world, and opportunities for internships abound.

Another fascinating aspect of Italy is the two enclaves within its borders – San Marino and Vatican City – which are sovereign independent nation states. Vatican City is extremely influential throughout the world as home to the Pope and the ecclesiastical seat of the Roman Catholic Church.

Between its modern cultural and religious influence, its historic impact on the world, and its ongoing charm, beauty, and grace, Italy offers international students a unique experience that is relevant to their own lives and academic studies.

