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LIECHTENSTEIN

SWITZERLAND

AUSTRIA

HUNGARY

SLOVENIA

CROATIA

SERBIA

Milan

Verona

Venice

Turin

Ferrara

Bologna

BOSNIA AND HERZ.

FRANCE

Genoa

Florence

SAN MARINO

Pisa

Ligurian Sea

CORSICA

Adriatic Sea

MONTENEGRO

VATICAN CITY

Rome

Naples

SARDINIA

Tyrrhenian Sea

Ionian Sea

Mediterranean Sea

SICILY

ALGERIA

TUNISIA

Mediterranean Sea

MALTA

ITALY



Italy

Italy's geographic location in the Mediterranean Sea has brought explorers, warriors, and travelers through Italy on their way to Europe, Africa, and the Far East. These groups all helped create a rich cultural history for ancient Italy. Modern Italy was formed as a single nation only in 1861. In 1946, Italy, or "Italia" became a democratic republic.

Official Name—*Repubblica Italiana* (Italian Republic)

Area—116,320 square miles (301,268 square kilometers)

Population—58,300,000. Approximately 65% of the people live in cities and 35% live in rural areas.

Major Cities—Rome, the capital and largest city; Milan, Naples, Turin, Florence, and Venice.

Currency—1 Lira = 100 Centesimi

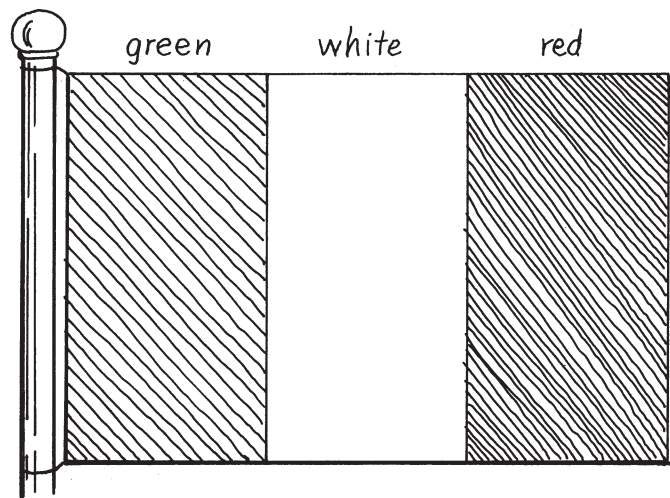
Climate—Mild winters and hot, dry summers in central and southern Italy; cold, icy winters and frequent precipitation in mountain regions.

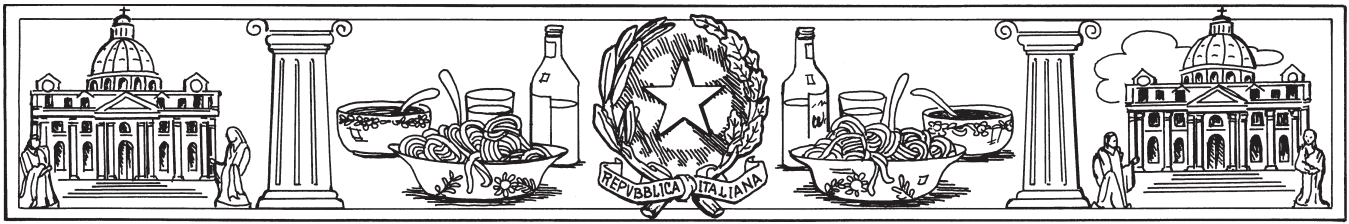
Elevation—Highest: Mt. Blanc 15,521 feet (4,731 meters)
Lowest: sea level

Language—The official language of Italy is Italian, a modern romance language developed from Latin.

Religion—95% of Italians are Roman Catholic. The other 5% are Protestant, Jewish, or Muslim.

Flag—The *tricolore* with three vertical stripes. Left to right, the stripes are green, white, and red.





Physical Features

Italy, a peninsula in southern Europe, is easy to find on a map because of its bootlike shape. Approximately the size of Arizona, Italy juts out into the Mediterranean Sea and almost reaches the coast of North Africa. Other smaller seas making up the coast line are the Adriatic, Ionian, Tyrrhenian, and Ligurian seas. With water surrounding three sides of the land, Italy has an enormous coastline (10,000 kilometers or 6,000 miles). This helps support large shipping and fishing industries and provides miles of sandy beaches for recreation.

In addition to the peninsula, Italy's national territory includes two large islands, Sardinia and Sicily; the offshore islands of Capri, Elba, and Ischia; plus several smaller islands.

Northern Italy borders France, Switzerland, Austria, and Slovenia. The Alps, the largest mountain range in Europe, stretch across the northern border of Italy. Another mountain range, the Apennines, runs down the center of Italy. Between the Alps and the Apennines is a fertile farming area known as the Northern Plain.

The Po River flows from the Alps east to the Adriatic Sea. Other rivers include the Adige, Tiber, and Arno rivers. The largest lakes in Italy are in the Alps: Lake Garda, Lake Maggiore, and Lake Como.

The tiny Italian island of Ischia

