



lonely planet

PULL-OUT
MAP

Discover Italy

Experience the best of Italy

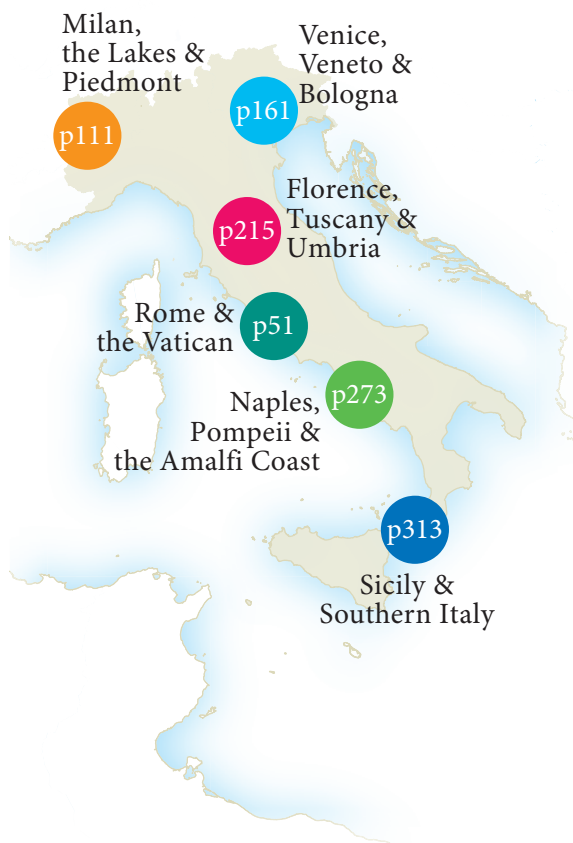


Discover **Italy**

Experience the
best of Italy

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This Is Italy

Italy positively overflows with charm and brilliance. It's endlessly amazing, ebullient and highly strung, like any bona fide genius.

This is a country that's blessed with natural splendour. Italy effortlessly combines knife-edge mountains, glimmering beaches, hilltop towns and the royal-blue Mediterranean. It's packed with artistic masterpieces: Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Verdi and Puccini have all left their mark. It's full of Unesco World Heritage Sites (49 at last count), with the evocative remains of lost empires ready to be explored. There are the exquisite cities: Florence, Venice and Rome, to name a few, and beautiful towns and villages, such as Lucca, Positano, Ravello, and Orvieto.

Italians themselves are full of warmth and wit, and often notably handsome.

The nation might sometimes feel more like a collection of regions, but there's a shared love of celebration, particularly if food's involved. Festivals take place all year round; you don't have to wait for Venice's Carnevale or yet another World Cup victory to party in the streets.

And oh, the food and wine... Most locals would argue, with good reason, that their cuisine is the best in the world. Thanks to ancient volcanoes and an unusually sunny disposition, there's always some seasonal speciality bursting with flavour, and it will be delivered to you atop the best pasta or risotto you will eat in this lifetime. City-state turf battles long fought by armies are now waged by *pizzaioli* (pizza makers) over the correct thickness of a crust – best not to get the Neapolitans and Romans started. Just eat and smile, which should be easy.

Italy wears its millennia of turbulent history extraordinarily well. Roman towns such as Pompeii, Herculaneum and Ostia Antica were stunningly preserved by their better-than-botox masks of mud and volcanic ash. And there are glimpses into the future, too, with myriad cutting-edge design showcases and some dazzling new contemporary art museums.

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