



# Italy

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Pizzeria da Baffetto, Rome (p700)
- » Osteria de' Poeti, Bologna (p730)
- » L'Osteria di Giovanni, Florence (p739)
- » Gelateria I Bastioni (p766)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Hotel in Pietra, Matera (p757)
- » Ca' Angeli, Venice (p722)
- » Hostel of the Sun, Naples (p751)
- » Beehive, Rome (p698)

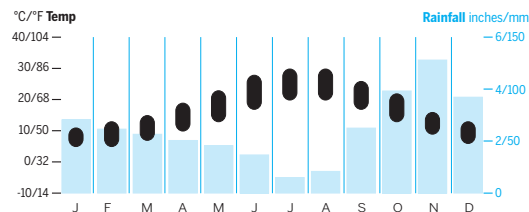
## Why Go?

The land that has turned its lifestyle into a designer accessory, Italy is one of Europe's great seducers. Ever since the days of the 18th-century Grand Tour, travellers have been falling under its spell and still today it stirs strong emotions. The rush you get when seeing the Colosseum for the first time or cruising down Venice's surreal canals are experiences you'll remember for life.

Of course, Italy is not all about Michelangelo masterpieces and frescoed churches. There's also the food, imitated the world over, and a landscape that boasts beautiful Alpine peaks, stunning coastlines and remote, silent valleys. So if the cities don't do it for you, if their noise, heat and chaos start getting to you – as they get to many locals – change gear and head out to the country for a taste of the sun-kissed slow life.

## When to Go

### Rome



**Apr–May** Perfect temperatures and Settimana della Cultura (Culture Week).

**Jun–Jul** Summer means gorgeous beach weather and a packed festival calendar.

**Sep–Oct** Enjoy the coast without the crowds and tuck into fabulous autumn food.

## Connections

Milan and Venice are northern Italy's two main transport hubs. From Milan, trains run to cities across Western Europe, including Barcelona, Paris, Vienna and Zürich. Venice is better placed for Eastern Europe with rail connections to Belgrade, Budapest, Ljubljana and Zagreb. You can also pick up ferries in Venice for Corfu, Igoumenitsa and Patra. Down the east coast, there are ferries from Bari to various Greek ports, as well as to Bar and Dubrovnik. At the other end of the country, Genoa has ferries to Barcelona and Tunis.

## ITINERARIES

### One Week

A one-week whistle stop tour of Italy is enough to take in some of the country's main cities. After a couple of days exploring Venice's canals, head south to Florence, Italy's great Renaissance city. Two days is not long there but it'll whet your appetite for the artistic and architectural treasures that await in Rome.

### Two Weeks

In the second week, continue south for some sea and southern passion. Spend a day dodging traffic in Naples, a day investigating the ruins at Pompeii and a day or two admiring the Amalfi Coast. Then backtrack to Naples for a ferry to Palermo and the gastronomic delights of Sicily. Or maybe Cagliari and Sardinia's magical beaches. You choose.

## Essential Food & Drink

- » **Pizza** Two varieties: Roman, with a thin crispy base, and Neapolitan, with a higher, more doughy base. The best are always prepared in a wood-fired oven (*forno a legna*).
- » **Gelato** Popular ice-cream flavours include *fragola* (strawberry), *nocciola* (hazelnut) and *stracciatella* (milk with chocolate shavings).
- » **Wine** Ranges from big-name reds such as Piedmont's Barolo to light whites from Sardinia and sparkling *prosecco* from the Veneto; sample wine at an *enoteca* (wine bar).
- » **Caffè** Join the locals for a morning cappuccino or post-lunch espresso, both taken standing at a bar.

## AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Euro (€)
- » **Language** Italian
- » **Money** ATMs widespread; credit cards widely accepted
- » **Visas** Schengen visa rules apply; see p1319

## Fast Facts

- » **Area** 301,340 sq km
- » **Capital** Rome
- » **Country code** 39
- » **Emergency** 112

## Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.74
Canada	C\$1	€0.74
Japan	¥100	€0.87
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.56
UK	UK£1	€1.16
USA	US\$1	€0.72

## Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €55 to €110 (double)
- » **Two-course evening meal** pizza meal €10 to €15, otherwise from €20
- » **Museum entrance** €6.50 to €15
- » **Beer** €2.50 to €5
- » **City transport ticket** €1

## Resources

- » **Italia** ([www.italia.it](http://www.italia.it)) Inspiration, ideas and planning tips.
- » **Italymag** ([www.italymag.co.uk](http://www.italymag.co.uk)) Online mag dedicated to everything Italian.
- » **Trenitalia** ([www.ferroviestato.it](http://www.ferroviestato.it)) Plan your train trips.
- » **Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com/italy](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/italy))