

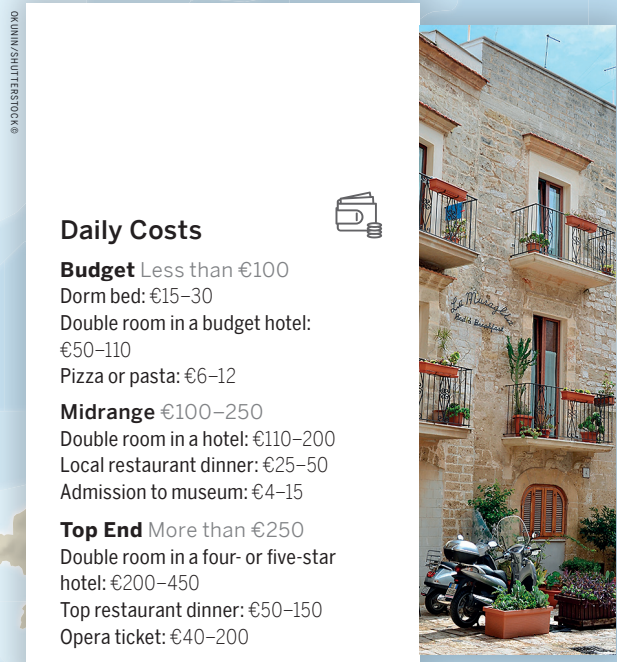
ITALY PLANNING MAP

Discover Italy's top regional sights, and experience it through an inspiring list of themes



When to Go

High Season Jul & Aug
Queues at sights and on the road, especially in August. Prices also rocket for Christmas, New Year and Easter. Late December to March is high season for skiing.
Shoulder Season Apr–Jun & Sep–Oct
Good deals on accommodation. Spring is best for festivals, flowers and produce. Autumn provides warm weather and the grape harvest.
Low Season Nov–Mar
Prices up to 30% less than in high season. Many sights and hotels closed in country areas. Good for cultural events.



Daily Costs

Budget Less than €100
Dorm bed: €15–30
Double room in a budget hotel: €50–110
Pizza or pasta: €6–12
Midrange €100–250
Double room in a hotel: €110–200
Local restaurant dinner: €25–50
Admission to museum: €4–15
Top End More than €250
Double room in a four- or five-star hotel: €200–450
Top restaurant dinner: €50–150
Opera ticket: €40–200



Opening Hours

The following are high-season opening hours.
Banks 8.30am to 1.30pm and 2.45pm to 3.45pm or 4.30pm Monday to Friday
Bars 10pm to 4am or 5am
Cafes 7.30am to 8pm
Nightclubs 10pm to 4am or 5am
Restaurants Noon to 2.30pm and 7.30pm to 11pm or midnight
Shops 9am to 1pm and 4pm to 8pm Monday to Saturday; some also open Sunday

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THE NORTH

MILAN B2
Milan is Italy's city of the future, a fast-paced metropolis with New World qualities: ambition, aspiration and a highly individualistic streak.

ALPS B2
Whether it's for a mid-winter search for the white stuff, a picturesque hike across lush springtime meadows or just seeking out some of the region's wine and cheese, there is something for everyone in these mountains.

ITALIAN LAKES B2
Travellers here will be greeted by a Mediterranean burst of colour: gardens filled with rose-red camellias, hot-pink oleanders and luxurious palms surrounding cerulean blue lakes. It's impossible not to be seduced.

VENICE C2
This incomparable union of art, architecture and life has been a fabled destination for centuries. And no matter how many photographs, films or paintings you've seen, the reality is more romantic than you could ever imagine.



ITALIAN RIVIERA & PIEDMONT

GENOA B2
History feels alive in Genoa, and no more so than in its extensive old city, a tightly twisting maze of narrow *caruggi* (laneways), largely intact and a compelling reminder of pre-modern life.

TURIN B2
An elegant, easy-going city of baroque palaces and cutting-edge galleries. Piedmont's capital is famously associated with all important things: 'F': football, Fiat and food.

CINQUE TERRE B2
Set amid some of the most dramatic coastal scenery on the planet, these five ingeniously constructed villages, with steeply terraced cliffs and gardens dating from medieval times, can beguile and bolster the most jaded of spirits.

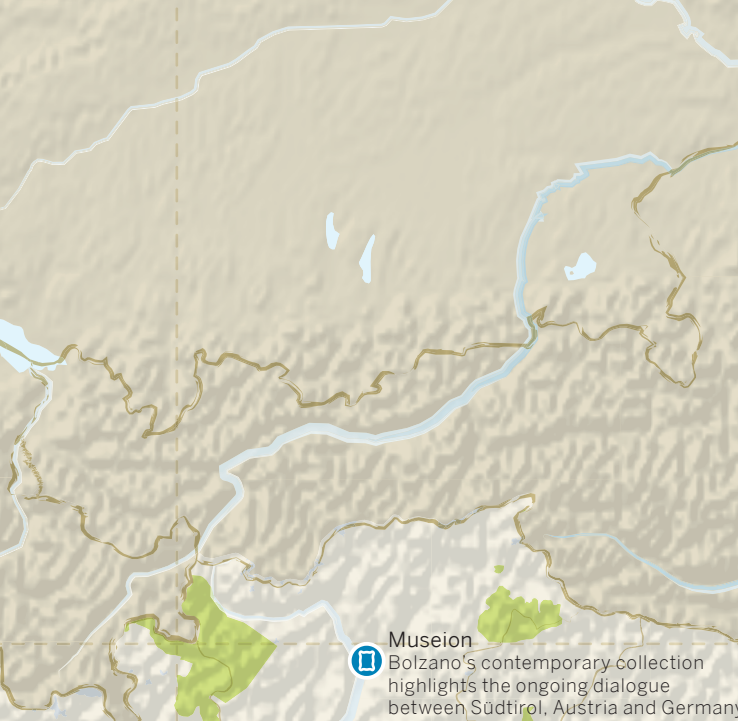


THE ISLANDS

SICILY D5
After 25 centuries of foreign domination and as the eternal meeting point between East and West, Africa and Europe, Sicily is heir to an impressive cultural legacy, diverse landscape, hybrid cuisine and flamboyant architecture.

SARDINIA B4
Whether you're swooning over the mega-yachts in the Costa Smeralda's bays or kicking back at a rustic *agriturismo* (farm-stay accommodation), you can't help but appreciate this island's love of the good life.

ELBA B3
A glorious haven of beach-laced coves, azure waters, vineyards, hairpin-bend motoring and mind-bending views, all supplemented by a fine seafaring cuisine.



TUSCANY

FLORENCE C3
Towers and palaces evoke tales of its medieval past, designer boutiques and artisan workshops dot its streets, and the local drinking and dining scene is second to none. Cradle of the Renaissance and home of Machiavelli, Michelangelo and the Medicis, Florence is magnetic, romantic and absorbing.

SIENA C3
Sienna is a Gothic masterpiece. Effectively a giant open-air museum, its spiritual and secular medieval monuments still sit in harmony.

SAN GIMIGNANO C3
Known as the 'medieval Manhattan', San Gimignano features more than a dozen 11th-century towers that soar above its hilltop *centro storico* (historic centre).

PISA B3
While Pisa's claim to fame remains an architectural project gone wrong, the leaning tower is but one of the many works of art and architecture that dot this vibrant and academic city.



LAZIO

ROME C3
A heady mix of haunting sights piled high atop one another, awe-inspiring art and a vibrant street life, Italy's Eternal City is truly one of the world's most beautiful capitals. Each corner turned brings a further famous spectacle into view.

OSTIA ANTICA C3
Ancient Rome's port and commercial centre, which once housed 50,000 people, was abandoned after the Empire fell and was slowly buried in river silt and forgotten about. The ruins are now wonderfully complete and evocative.

TIVOLI C3
A summer retreat for ancient Romans and the Renaissance rich, the hilltop town of Tivoli is home to two Unesco World Heritage Sites.



Palaces & Gardens
Italy's penchant for 'outdoor rooms' and extravagant living quarters has been going strong since the Roman emperors, but it was 19th-century aristocrats who really went to town.
Villa d'Este (Tivoli, C3)
Palazzo Ducale (Venice, C2)
Villa Rufolo (Ravello, D4)
Palazzo Reale di Capodimonte (Naples, D3)
Giardini Pubblici (Venice, C2)
Reggia di Venaria Reale (Turin, B2)



Food & Wine
If you came to Italy just for the food or wine you would not go home disappointed – this is one of the world's most revered cuisines for a reason. Has anything ever tasted so good?
Rome (C3)
Emilia-Romagna (B2)
Alba (B2)
Sicily (D5)
Veneto (C2)
Tuscany (C3)



Artistic Masterpieces
With more Unesco World Heritage Sites than any other country and a roll call of artists to make you swoon, Italy is the place to get your cultural rocks off.
Sistine Chapel (Rome, C3)
Galleria degli Uffizi (Florence, C2)
Museo del Novecento (Milan, B2)
Museion (Bolzano, C2)
Palazzo Grassi (Venice, C2)
Museo Archeologico Nazionale (Naples, D3)



Unspoilt Wilderness
Whether you fancy climbing a volcano, hiking along the coast or living luxe on Lago di Como, when you tire of ticking off the sights, there remains plenty to do.
Parco Nazionale del Gran Paradiso (Alps, B2)
Parco del Conero (Le Marche, C3)
Selvaggio Blu (Sardinia, B4)
Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini (Umbria, C3)
Northern Lagoon (Veneto, C2)
Riserva Naturale dello Zingaro (Sicily, C5)



Mosaics & Frescoes
From sparkling, hand-cut ancient Roman mosaics to floor-to-ceiling colourful 14th-century frescoes, Italy has always led the way in interior design.
Cappella degli Scrovegni (Padua, C2)
Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi (Assisi, C3)
Basilica di San Vitale (Ravenna, C2)
Villa dei Misteri (Pompeii, D4)
Basilica di Aquileia (Aquileia, C2)
Villa Romana del Casale (Agrigento, D5)



Local Markets
Frank, fascinatingly multi-cultural and the utmost of fun, Italian markets reflect the rambunctiousness of Italian life in all its glory.
Porta Nolana (Naples, D4)
Rialto Market (Venice, C2)
Mercato di Ballarò (Palermo, C5)
Porta Portese (Rome, C3)
Mercato Centrale (Florence, C3)
Fiera Antiquaria di Arezzo (Arezzo, C3)



AMALFI COAST

POMPEII D4
Sprawling and haunting, the ruins of ancient Pompeii provide a preserved slice of Roman life. You can walk down streets and snoop around millennia-old houses, temples, shops, cafes, amphitheatres and a brothel.

NAPLES D4
Its archaeological treasures are among the world's most impressive, its architectural riches make some better-known cities look positively provincial, and then there's centuries of its culinary know-how – this is Italy's most unlikely masterpiece.

POSITANO D4
Positano's steeply stacked houses are a medley of pastel hues and stepped streets lined with wisteria-draped hotels, smart restaurants and fashionable boutiques.

CAPRI D4
Capri is the perfect microcosm of Mediterranean appeal – a cocktail of chichi piazzas and cool cafes, Roman ruins, rugged seascapes and holidaying VIPs.



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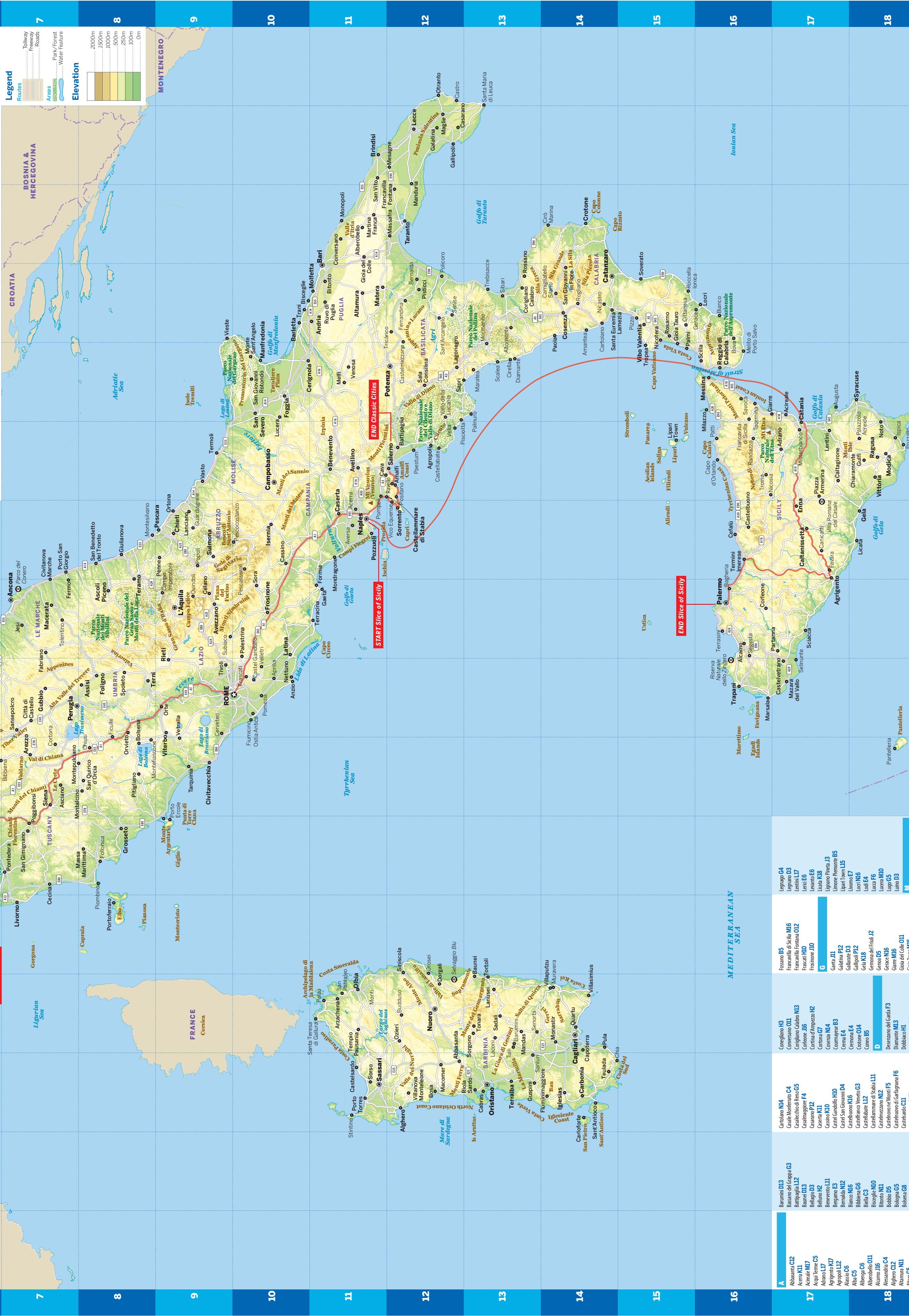
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