



ITALY

TOP SIGHTS, AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES



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Welcome to Italy

Home to some of the world's greatest artworks, architecture and gastronomy, Italy elates, inspires and moves like no other. The country's 20 regions feel like independent states, each with their own traditions, and glorious food.

Epicentre of the Roman Empire and birthplace of the Renaissance, this sun-kissed virtuoso groans under the weight of its cultural heritage: here you'll stand in the presence of Michelangelo's *David* and Sistine Chapel frescoes, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. In fact, Italy has more Unesco World Heritage cultural sites than any other country. Yet in few places do art and life intermingle so effortlessly. This may be the land of Dante, Titian and Verdi, but it's also the home of Prada, chef Gualtiero Marchesi and architect Renzo Piano. Beauty, style and flair furnish every aspect of life, from those immaculately knotted ties and perfect espressos to the flirtatious smiles of strangers. At the root of Italian psychology is a dedication to living life well and, effortless as it may seem, driving that dedication is a reverence for the finer things. So slow down, take note and indulge in a little *bella vita*.

Italy's fortes extend beyond its galleries, plates and wardrobes. The country is one of Mother Nature's masterpieces, its geography offering extraordinary natural diversity. From the north's snowy Alps to the south's volcanic craters, this is a place for doing as well as seeing.

*“this sun-kissed virtuoso
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Plan Your Trip

Italy's Top 12

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Rome

Italy's hot-blooded capital is an inspiring city

Once capital of the world, Rome was legendarily spawned by a wolf-suckled boy, grew to be Europe's first superpower, became the spiritual centrepiece of the Christian world and is now the repository of over two millennia of art and architecture. From the Pantheon and the Colosseum (pictured above; p38) to Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel (pictured right; p52) and countless works by Caravaggio, there's simply too much to see in one visit. So toss a coin in the Trevi Fountain and promise to return.

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SISTINE CHAPEL CEILING AND LUNETTES, 1508-12 (Fresco), (Post Restoration), BUONARROTI, MICHELANGELO (1475-1564)/VATICAN MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES, VATICAN CITY/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES ©



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Milan

Italy's financial and fashion capital

The de facto capital of northern Italy wows with its cosmopolitan, can-do atmosphere, vibrant cultural scene and sophisticated shopping options. The city's legendary boutiques, contemporary galleries and dedication to cutting-edge design make for a stylish, forward-looking city. But Milan is not all about models and money; see historic sights including Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, the immense Duomo (pictured above) and La Scala opera house.

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Sardinia

Wild island of peaks and beaches

Words fail to accurately describe the varied blue-green hues of the sea surrounding Sardinia. While models, ministers and permatanned celebrities wine, dine and sail along the glossy Costa Smeralda, much of Sardinia remains a wild, raw playground. Slather on that sunscreen and explore the island's rugged coastal beauty, from the hilltop citadel in Cagliari to the haunting caves of Grotta di Nettuno and out-of-this-world beaches.

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