**ITALY**



Located in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, Italy shares open land borders with France, Switzerland, Austria, Slovenia, San Marino and Vatican City. Italy covers an area of 301,338 km2 and has a largely temperate seasonal climate and Mediterranean climate. Due to its shape, it is often referred to in Italy as “lo Stivale” (the Boot). There are nearly 60 million inhabitants for this reason it is the fourth most populous EU member state.

Italy is subdivided into 20 regions, five of these regions having a special autonomous status that enables them to enact legislation on some of their local matters. The country is further divided into 14 metropolitan cities and 110 provinces, which in turn are subdivided in 7,982 municipalities.



Italy is a founding and leading member of the European Union and the member of numerous international institutions, including the UN, NATO, the OECD, the OSCE, the WTO, the G7/G8, G20, the Union for the Mediterranean, the Council of Europe, Uniting for Consensus and many more. As a reflection of its cultural wealth, Italy is home to 51 World Heritage Sites, the most in the world, and is the fifth most visited Country.

**Rome**

Rome is the capital of Italy. It is also the Italian largest and most populated municipality and fourth-most populous city in the European Union. The city is located in the central-western portion of the Italian Peninsula, within Lazio (Latium), along the shores of the Tiber. The Vatican City is an independent country geographically located within the city boundaries of Rome, the only existing example of a country within a city: for this reason, Rome has been often defined as capital of two states.

Rome's history spans more than 2,500 years. While Roman mythology dates the founding of Rome at only around 753 BC, the site has been inhabited for much longer, making it one of the oldest continuously occupied sites in Europe. Eventually, the city successively became the capital of the Roman Kingdom, the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and is regarded as one of the birthplaces of Western civilisation and by some as the first ever metropolis. It was first called The Eternal City (Latin: Urbs Aeterna) by the Roman poet Tibullus in the 1st century BC, and the expression was also taken up by Ovid, Virgil, and Livy. Rome is also called the "Caput Mundi" (Capital of the World).



After the fall of the Western Empire, which marked the beginning of the Middle Ages, Rome slowly fell under the political control of the Papacy, which had settled in the city since the 1st century AD, until in the 8th century it became the capital of the Papal States, which lasted until 1870.

Beginning with the Renaissance, almost all the popes since Nicholas V (1447–55) pursued coherently along four hundred years an architectonic and urbanistic programme aimed to make of the city the world's artistic and cultural centre. Due to that, Rome became first one of the major centres of the Italian Renaissance, and then the birthplace of both the Baroque style and Neoclassicism. Famous artists, painters, sculptors and architects made Rome the centre of their activity, creating masterpieces throughout the city. In 1871 Rome became the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and in 1946 that of the Italian Republic.



Rome ranked in 2014 as the 14th-most-visited city in the world, 3rd most visited in the European Union, and the most popular tourist attraction in Italy. Its historic centre is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site.

