

# Italy

By Tom Kirvan

## FROM ANCIENT RUINS TO RENAISSANCE SPLENDOR

A boot-shaped peninsula that juts deep into the Mediterranean Sea, Italy beckons with its rich history, stunning landscapes, and compelling cultural heritage. With a population of nearly 60 million residents, Italy stands as one of Europe's most populous countries. Its capital city, Rome, is a treasure trove of ancient ruins, Renaissance art, and Baroque architecture, serving as a living testament to the country's illustrious past.

Italy's distinctive geographic features are as diverse as they are breathtaking. From the snow-capped peaks of the Alps in the north to the sun-drenched shores of the Mediterranean in the south, the country offers a wealth of natural wonders. The Apennine Mountains form the backbone of the Italian peninsula, while picturesque waters such as Lake Como and Lake Garda dot the landscape. Italy's coastline boasts dramatic cliffs, sandy beaches, and charming seaside villages, offering endless opportunities for exploration and relaxation.

The highest point of elevation in Italy is Monte Bianco, also known as Mont Blanc, towering 15,781 feet above sea level in the Alps. This majestic peak draws mountaineers and outdoor enthusiasts from around the world, offering breathtaking views and challenging climbing routes.

One must-see tourist attraction that epitomizes the allure of Italy is the Colosseum in Rome. This ancient amphitheater, built in the 1st century AD, once hosted gladiator contests, chariot races, and other spectacles for the entertainment of the Roman populace. Today, it stands as an iconic symbol of the Roman Empire's architectural prowess and is one of the most visited landmarks in the world.

Beyond the Colosseum, Italy is home to a multitude of other major tourist destinations, each offering its own unique blend of geography, culture, and history:

- **Florence:** Known as the cradle of the Renaissance, Florence is a city steeped in art, architecture, and culture. Visitors can marvel at masterpieces by Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and Botticelli at the Uffizi Gallery, explore the magnificent Duomo and Baptistery in Piazza del Duomo, and stroll across the iconic Ponte Vecchio bridge spanning the Arno River.
- **Venice:** Dubbed the "City of Canals," Venice is a romantic and enchanting destination unlike any other. Visitors can glide along the picturesque waterways in a traditional gondola, admire the grandeur of St. Mark's Basilica and the Doge's Palace in Piazza San Marco, and get lost in the labyrinthine streets of the historic center.

## Fast Facts

Capital: Rome  
Language: Italian  
Population: 58.8 million  
Religion: Catholicism  
Highest Mountain: Mont Blanc, 15,781 feet  
Must-see Attraction: Colosseum in Rome

### Primerus Member: FDL Studio legale e tributario

Located in Milan, FDL Studio is an international business law firm that has been a Primerus member since 2011. It has been based for more than 20 years in the magnificent Palazzo Borromeo, a historically restored medieval residence in the heart of Milan.

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- **Rome:** As the capital of the ancient Roman Empire, Rome is a living museum of history and culture. Visitors can explore iconic landmarks such as the Vatican City, home to St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel, the Roman Forum, and the Pantheon, as well as indulge in delicious Italian cuisine at trattorias and gelaterias scattered throughout the city.
- **Amalfi Coast:** Stretching along the southern coast of the Sorrentine Peninsula, the Amalfi Coast is renowned for its stunning scenery, colorful cliffside villages, and azure waters. Visitors can drive along the scenic coastal road, hike the rugged trails of the Sentiero degli Dei (Path of the Gods), and relax on the sun-drenched beaches of Positano and Ravello.
- **Tuscany:** With its rolling hills, vineyards, and medieval hilltop towns, Tuscany embodies the quintessential Italian countryside. Visitors can sample world-renowned wines in the Chianti region, explore historic cities like Siena and Pisa, and savor the simple pleasures of rural life in the idyllic countryside.

Of course, the Leaning Tower of Pisa also ranks among the most popular tourist attractions in Italy and is less than a three-hour train ride from Rome. World-renowned for its 4-degree lean, the Tower of Pisa is 183 feet high and took nearly two centuries to complete. It is one of three structures in Pisa's Cathedral Square.

