

ITALY

Italy Quick Facts

Official Name: Italian Republic
Total area: 301,340 sq km
Population: 62,007,540 (July 2016 est.)
GDP: \$2.221 trillion (2016 est.)
Government: parliamentary republic
Capital: Rome
Motto: Italy is a democratic republic, founded on labor (common saying, not official motto)

Some of Italy's greatest port cities were Genoa and Pisa on the Ligurian Sea, Naples and Salerno on the Tyrrhenian Sea, and Venice and Ancona on the Adriatic Sea. Each city developed its own powerful navy to defend itself and its merchant ships from pirates and Muslim raiders. After the fall of the Roman Empire, each Italian city-state formed its own government. They often fought each other, as well as foreign invaders.

The mountains and coastal features of Italy helped to develop the city-states. Cities might be isolated by the mountains or coasts, and they were able to concentrate on ruling their local area. The mountains in northern Italy are part of the Alps. The Italian Alps contain some of the highest peaks in Europe. Gran Paradiso is 4,061 m (13,323 ft) high, Monte Cervino (the Matterhorn) is 4,478 m (14,691 ft) high, and a secondary peak of Mont Blanc located inside Italy is 4,748 m (15,577 ft) high. The Dolomites are part of the Alps in the northeastern part of Italy. The Apennines are the mountains that run down the length of Italy from northwest to southeast and then continue on to the island of Sicily. The Calderone glacier in the Apennines is the southernmost glacier in Europe.

Volcanoes are found on the Flegrei Plain near Naples and on the islands nearby. Mount Vesuvius is a dormant volcano that has had disastrous eruptions in the past. The city of Pompeii was completely buried in ash after an eruption in A.D. 79. Mount Etna is an active volcano located on the island of Sicily. Earthquakes are also common in the central and southern Apennines and on Sicily. These earthquakes kill many people when buildings collapse in populated areas. A village in central Italy was hit with a 6.2 magnitude earthquake in August 2016, and 300 people were killed.

The Italian government became a Fascist dictatorship under Benito Mussolini in the 1920s. He allied Italy with Germany during World War II. After Italy's defeat, the nation became a parliamentary republic with a constitution. Italians celebrate Republic Day on June 2 to commemorate the day in 1946 when they voted to abolish the monarchy and form the Italian Republic. Today, the president is the head of state and the prime minister is the head of government. The president is elected through an electoral college system, and the prime minister is appointed by the president with the approval of the parliament. The parliament consists of a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies. The highest courts in the land are the Supreme Court of Cassation and the Constitutional Court.

Italy is the long, narrow, boot-shaped peninsula that extends from southern Europe into the Mediterranean Sea. Its central position in the Mediterranean has meant that Italy was a crossroads for trade, exploration, and invasion. People from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia traveled to, from, and through Italy. The Roman Empire, based in Rome, once stretched throughout the known world in ancient times. Merchant ships, explorers, and armies were sent out from Italy's great port cities to the rest of the world. Eventually, Germanic and Asian tribes were able to conquer parts of the Roman Empire and even destroy the city of Rome.

Some of



A Waterfront Street in Venice

Name: _____ Date: _____

ITALY HIDDEN MESSAGE PUZZLE

Directions: Use the clues below to fill in the blanks at the right. When you are finished, unscramble the letters in the circled blanks and write them in the blanks to complete the hidden message at the bottom of the page.

1. A major port city on the Legurian Sea

_____○

2. Italy is a boot-shaped _____ surrounded on three sides by water.

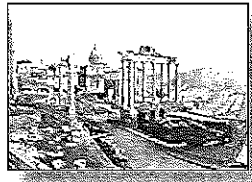
_____○_____

3. Mount _____ is a dormant volcano that destroyed the ancient city of Pompeii.

_____○

4. _____ is a major port city on the Adriatic Sea that once had its own powerful navy.

5. _____ is the southernmost glacier in Europe.



_____○_____

6. Italy was a crossroads for trade, exploration, and _____.

_____○_____

7. _____ are common in the central and southern Apennines.

_____○_____

8. Today, Italy's government is a _____.

_____○_____

9. _____ tribes were able to conquer parts of the Roman Empire and destroy the city of Rome.

_____○_____

10. Monte Cervino, also known as the _____, is one of the tallest peaks in Italy's Alps.



Hidden Message: This large island in the Mediterranean Sea belongs to Italy.
