



Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World



Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Rome, Italy, located at 41° N and 12° E.
- We have traveled approximately 35,102 miles (56,491 kilometers) from our starting point in California.



People and Culture

- Ancient Rome was founded in the 8th century B.C. It grew into the Roman Empire. At its height, in 117 AD, the area of control stretched from Portugal to Syria (east to west) and Britain to North Africa (north to south). The Roman Empire fell in 476 AD.
- Italy did not become a unified country until 1863. The current population is about 58 million, with 20% of the populace over the age of 65 and 85% Roman Catholic.
- Soccer is the most popular sport in Italy. It has won four World Cup championships, second to Brazil.
- Naples, located about 120 miles (193 kilometers) south of Rome, and is southern Italy's largest city. It was originally founded by the Greeks in 600 BC and conquered by the Romans in the 4th century BC.
- The island of Sicily was colonized by the Greeks in the 8th century BC. It was part of the Roman Empire for 600 years and under Arab control from 965 to 1072. These influences can be found today on the island. Palermo is the capital.
- Pizza and pasta are found throughout Italy. Naples is the birthplace of modern pizza. The average Italian consumes about 55 pounds (25 kilograms) of pasta a year.

Did you know?

Italy is famous for its art and architecture. For example:

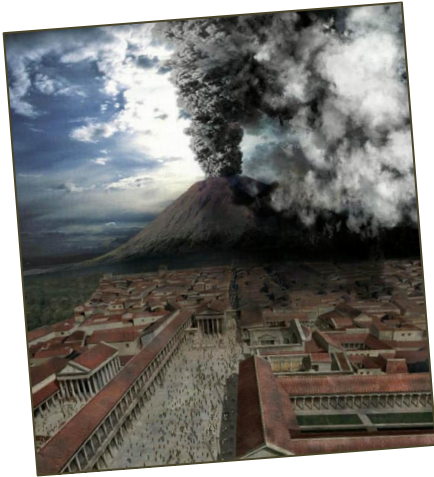
- The European Renaissance started in the 14th century in Northern Italy, inspiring Michelangelo and da Vinci
- The tale of Pinocchio was written by an Italian
- The Colosseum was built in 80 AD and was the largest structure of the Roman Empire
- Famous Italian operas were written by Mozart, Handel, Rossini, Verdi and Puccini



The Colosseum in Rome (source: [Flickr.com/nige_mar](https://www.flickr.com/photos/nige_mar/))



Palermo, Sicily (source: [wn.com](http://www.wn.com))



Painting of Mount Vesuvius erupting in 79 AD (source: Ask.com)

Sicilian Olive Oil

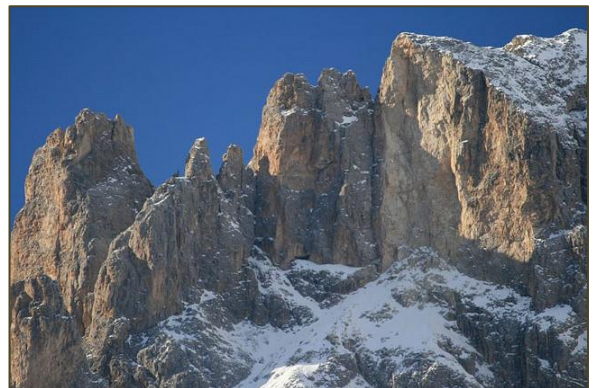
Olive trees were imported by the Greeks to Sicily in the 5th century BC. Olives has been grown for hundreds of years, with Sicily producing about 10% of Italy's olive oil. Harvest season takes place between September and November and most olives are harvested by hand.



Olive trees on Sicily
(sources: Flickr.com/sciascia, ThinkSicily.com)

Nature and Environment

- Almost 80% of Italy is mountainous or hilly. Three of Europe's active volcanoes are in the south of Italy.
- Mount Etna, on the island of Sicily, is the most active volcano, erupting almost uninterrupted for 3,500 years. It is 10,902 feet (3,350 meters) tall.
- Mount Vesuvius, located 5 1/2 miles (nine kilometers) from Naples, is best known for its eruption that destroyed the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 AD. It has had numerous other eruptions, including in 1944. Vesuvius is characterized by *plinian* explosive eruptions, meaning that it spews gas and ash high into the atmosphere.
- The Dolomites are a mountain range in Northern Italy which are part of the Alps. Within the range there are 18 peaks over 9,844 feet (3,000 meters) high. The Dolomites were added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2009.



The Dolomite Mountains source: Flickr.com/MattDrobnik

Our Plans

- We are in Italy twice during our journey. We are currently visiting Rome and the Dolomites. Included in our time in Rome is a trip to Vatican City, the smallest country in the world.
- After we visit Africa we will return to Rome before setting off to South America by sea. Once at sea, we will make stops in Naples and Sicily.
- As we make our final preparations for our time in Africa, send us your questions and comments so that we can include them in future updates.

More Information

- http://www.travelmuse.com/destinations/IT/04/NA/naples/_guide/6
- <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1237>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colosseum>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italian_opera
- <http://www.eupedia.com/italy/trivia.shtml>
- <http://www.propertyworld.com/Sicily>
- http://facts.randomhistory.com/2009/05/14_italy.html
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Vesuvius
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sicily>
- http://www.glo-con.com/article/article_no/9787/

Vatican City

Vatican City State was created in 1929. It is a walled area within Rome and its area (about 110 acres (44 hectares) and population (approximately 800) makes it the smallest independent state in the world in both categories. St. Peter's Basilica is the largest Christian church in the world and took 120 years to build (1506 to 1626).



St. Peter's Basilica (sources: Wikipedia.org, Fotopedia.com)

Our Partners



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