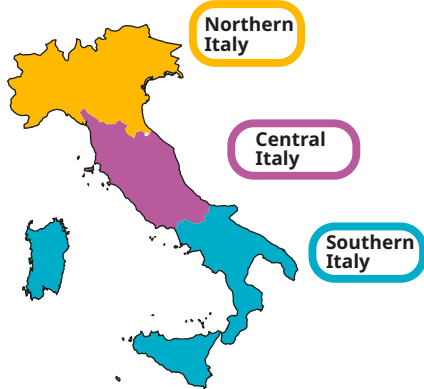


# Let me tell you about **Italy**

Where is it?



## Geographical division of Italy



## Italy is very long and narrow

Italy is located in the centre of the **Mediterranean Sea**. If we look at a map, we can easily recognise it: its **shape** resembles a **boot**. Italy is a **peninsula** of **Southern Europe**. It is surrounded on three sides by the Mediterranean Sea which is given different names: **Adriatic Sea** in the East, **Ionian Sea** in the south, **Tyrrhenian Sea** and **Ligurian Sea** in the west. Italy is very long and narrow. Its length is around 1200 km and its width around 550 km in the most extended point. Italy covers an area of approximately 300,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

## Italy is divided into three geographical parts and twenty regions

Italy can be divided into **three parts**:

- **Northern Italy** consists of **8 regions**: Aosta Valley, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, Trentino-Alto Adige, Veneto, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Emilia-Romagna;
- **Central Italy** consists of **6 regions**: Tuscany, Marche, Umbria, Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise;
- **Southern Italy** consists of **6 regions**: Campania, Apulia, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia.

## The hills occupy most of the territory

The **hills** occupy almost **half of the territory** and there are plenty of residential areas. Therefore the hilly landscape is the most widespread, especially in central and southern Italy.

A **hill** is an **elevation** between **300 and 600 meters** high; it has a **rounded shape** and its soil can contain clay so it can easily crumble and is prone to landslides. The Italian hilly landscape is very diverse: from the green Chianti hills in Tuscany, rich of vineyards and olive groves, to the wild and uneven ones of the «Murge plateau» in Apulia.

## The 20 regions



The Chianti hills in Tuscany



The Italian hills





The Mont Blanc in the Alps



The Matterhorn in the Alps

### Italian mountains

## The most important mountain ranges are the Alps and the Apennines

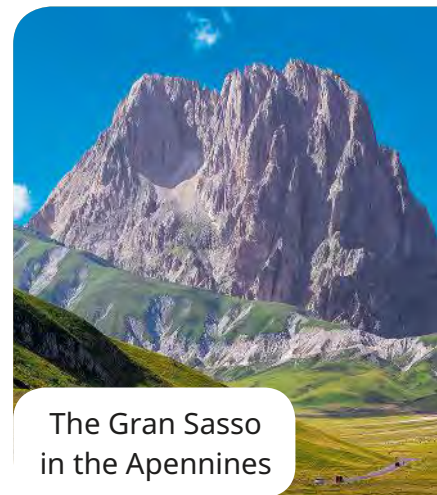
Approximately a **third** of the Italian surface area is covered by **mountains**. There are **two big mountain ranges**: the **Alps** and the **Apennines**. In the North, we find the big mountain range of the Alps. They form a big arch that separates Italy from France in the west, from Switzerland and Austria in the north, and finally from Slovenia in the east. In the **Alps**, there are the **highest peaks** in Europe: **Mont Blanc**, 4810 meters high, **Monte Rosa**, 4635 meters, and the **Matterhorn**, 4478 meters. Above 3000 meters, snow never melts. On the contrary, in the highest peaks, the accumulation of snow becomes ice: this is how glaciers are formed.

The Alps are **sparsely populated** due to the **cold climate** (called «Alpine»), sloping soil and difficulty to reach them. Nowadays tourism has transformed many mountain villages into crowded winter and summer holiday resorts where it is possible to ski and hike: this has brought economical advantages to the inhabitants.

Along Italy, from the north to the south, precisely from Liguria to Sicily, there is another mountain range: the **Apennines**. The highest mountains are in Abruzzo and they are named: **Gran Sasso**, 2912 meters high, and the **Maiella**, 2795 meters.

In the Apennines, as in the Alps, there is little arable land and a **low population density**. In the last decades, tourism has also developed in the Apennines, which has brought more wealth, transforming many locations into holiday destinations.

In Italy, there are also some **volcanos**, such as **Mount Etna** (3330 meters high) in Sicily, and **Vesuvio** (1281 meters ) in Naples.



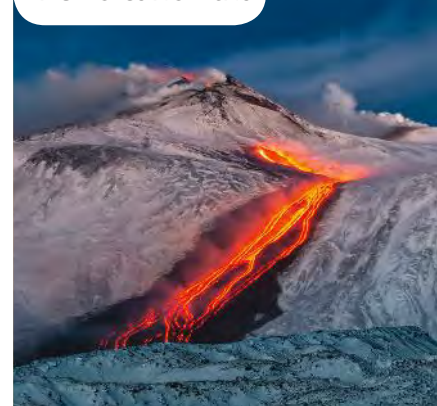
The Gran Sasso in the Apennines

## The Po Valley

In Italy, there are **few plains**, although they are the **most populated areas**, where **economic activities** are **more developed**.

The abundance of water, the fertile soil and the easy access to communication routes have fostered human settlement and trade. In the north of Italy, the **Po Valley** extends between the Alps and the northern Apennines. It is the biggest Italian plain and it expands into the Venetian plain. It is crossed by the Po river and its tributaries.

The volcano Etna







The Italian plains

Po Valley

The rivers formed the plain over hundreds of thousands of years by depositing rock debris from the mountains. This plain's climate is called Continental: foggy and cold winters and very hot summers.

### Rivers and lakes are numerous

In Italy, there are **many rivers**, but they span **short distances** compared to the big rivers in Europe and the rest of the world. The **longest** in Italy is **river Po** (652 kilometres) that runs through the Po Valley and flows into the Adriatic Sea.

There are **many lakes**, especially in Northern Italy. The **largest** is **Lake Garda** (376 km<sup>2</sup>). Lakes and rivers are fewer and smaller in central and southern Italy.

### The Italian coastline is varied

There are various types of **coastlines** and they expand for about **7400 km**. The shores of the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea are normally low and sandy, except for the coast of Apulia, which is low and rocky.

The Tyrrhenian Sea alternates sandy and low stretches to high and rocky stretches. The coasts of the Ligurian Sea, between the Maritime Alps and the Apennines, are rocky and high.

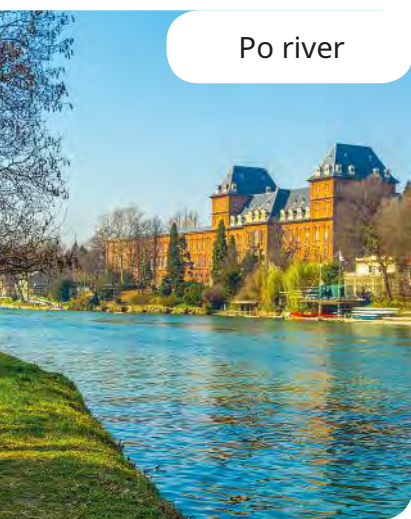
### Italy has a mild climate

Italy is located between the equator and the North Pole, therefore the climate is neither too cold nor too hot: it has a **mild climate**. There are some differences due to the characteristic of the area.

In **high altitudes**, the weather is **Alpine**: long harsh winters and short cool summers.

**Far from the sea**, the climate is **continental**: cold winters and hot summers. It rains especially in spring and autumn.

**Along the coasts** and on the islands, the climate is **mediterranean**: short mild winters and hot long summers. It rarely rains.



Po river



Lake Garda





Rome

### The majority of people live in cities

Italy has over **60 million inhabitants**. Its population density is **200 inhabitants per square kilometre** (200/sq. km), that is, an average of 200 people live on 1 square kilometre area of land.

**The distribution of the population is uneven:** the majority live in cities (seven out of ten inhabitants). These are plentiful and often have ancient origins.

**Rome** is the **capital**, where the powers of the state reside, that is, the President of the Republic, the parliament and the government. Moreover, political parties, trade unions, Bank of Italy and RAI (Italian public TV) have their headquarters in Rome.

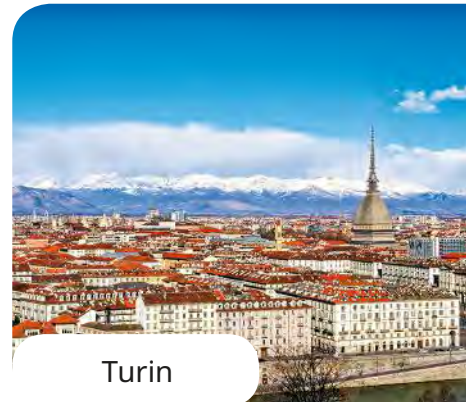
Around 3 million people live in Rome. Other cities with many inhabitants are **Milan**, **Venice**, **Naples** and **Turin**. In Italy, the **number of elderly people is increasing** while **the birth rate is decreasing**. This is the reason why the population is ageing. The number of **immigrants** (people who come to live permanently in Italy) is also **increasing**.

The percentage of **foreign resident** citizens is close to **9%** of the total population.

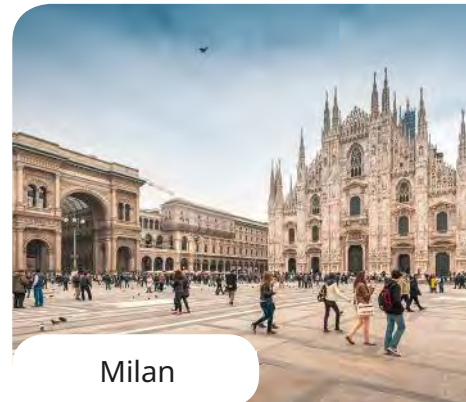
### The characteristics of the Italian economy

All of the activities that human beings do in order to satisfy their needs are called economic activities. The subject that studies them is Economics. The **economic activities** of a country are categorised into three groups named **productive sectors**:

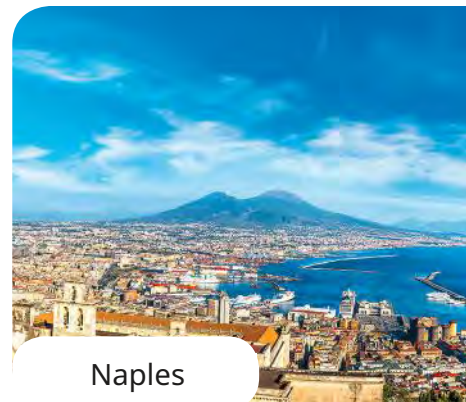
- **primary sector** involves: agriculture, livestock, fishing, exploitation of forest and extraction of minerals;
- **secondary sector** involves: all of the activities related to different types of industry and craftsmanship;
- **tertiary sector** involves: the supply of services to consumers and businesses and also to public services (healthcare, tourism, education etc.).



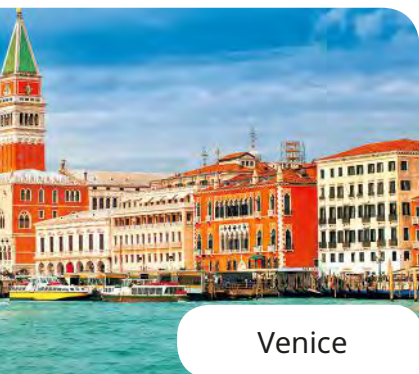
Turin



Milan



Naples



Venice



Florence

The main agricultural products are: wheat, rice, oil, wine, vegetables and fruit. Livestock includes cattle, pigs, sheep and goats. Fishing is not particularly developed. Mineral and energy resources are scarce.

**Italy** is one of the **ten industrial powers** in the world, although the production has decreased since 2008. There are all types of industries: manufacturing of cars, industries that transform agricultural and livestock products into packaged food, and others that make items of clothing.

Part of the industrial and handcraft production is highly esteemed all over the world: the products are called **Made in Italy**.

Many workers of the tertiary sector work in **trade** and **tourism**.

In fact, the historic and artistic wealth of cities such as **Venice**, **Florence**, **Rome**, **Naples** and **Palermo**, the beauty and variety of the landscapes and of the small hill villages make Italy an international tourist attraction.

Together, the three economic sectors produce national wealth. Those who come to Italy to work contribute to this wealth.

## Activity

- Look at the Italian map.
- Write in Italian the names of the 20 regions and the four Seas that surround the country.
- Colour in red the region where you live.

