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Italy: The Art Of Good Living

By Steven Cronin

Most people's perception of Italy is that of style, a country whose taste for the good life is matched only by its panache. The food is full of flavour, created with a desire to serve nothing but the best.

Variety is the spice of life; kitchens all over the country try to outwit one another with new recipes, each one tastier than their neighbours.

But what drives the Italian people is their passion, their zest for life. Nowhere else is life lived with so much enthusiasm.

The boys cruise by street cafes in their open top sports cars looking cool, trying to catch the eyes of the girls. The girls drink their coffees, dressed to the nines in their Versace designer dresses and pretend not to notice. This modern day mating ritual continues endlessly.

Elsewhere in Italy, tourists flock annually to this culturally diverse country, making it the fourth most popular destination in the world.

The majority of holidaymakers fly into Rome and make a beeline for the Colosseum. Brought to life in the recent Hollywood epic 'Gladiator', the ancient ruin makes no less impression in real life. Built in 80 AD, this bloodthirsty arena became graveyard for many a brave soldier, thrown to the lions with no mercy.

Within the walls of Rome lies the Vatican. Though technically not part of Italy, it is in fact an independent state and the smallest country in the world. Considered by many to be Christianity's finest Renaissance church, St Peter's Cathedral is a magnificent piece of architecture. Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel is another must see, though you may have to compete with large crowds. It is advisable to book your visit beforehand.

High up in the mountains sits the beautiful little town of Assisi, overlooking Perugia. The 14th century fortress of Rocca Maggiore sits predominantly, once the sentinel guarding this proud city. It is the birthplace of St Francis and well worth a visit, provided you can negotiate the religious pilgrims.

In the north of Italy sits the vogue city of Milan. The town is famous for its fashion businesses and exquisite shopping. Indeed, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele is believed to be the oldest shopping mall in the world.

The Biblioteca Ambrosiana holds sketches by Leonardo da Vinci amid its considerable resources of books and drawings. It is one of the main libraries of European culture.

Steven Cronin owns the City Breaks website featuring city break special offers from luxury hotels to budget accommodations. For more information please visit

<http://www.sargas.co.uk>

Learning Italian In Tuscany

By Luca B

Six reasons to study Italian in Tuscany.

Reason 1: The best way to learn a language, one knows, is to go abroad. But if the apprehension is combined with relaxation and enjoyment, one can obtain a double result. You learn in a more efficient way because you are always in contact with native speakers and can put into practice your new knowledge right away. You can also enjoy yourself because you can get to know and appreciate the country in depth, just like a vacation.

Thousands of students travel abroad each year to learn Italian language. They realize that the most effective way to learn Italian language is to learn in the country the language is spoken and may be used not only in the classroom, but all day and in the street, shops, restaurants...

Reason 2: Italy is a world leader in the culinary arts, interior design, fashion, graphic design, furniture design, etc. Those planning careers in such fields greatly benefit from knowing Italian and Italy.

Reason 3: Living in Italy can be a fantastic cultural experience. Although it can be said that Italian cannot be considered as a vehicular language, it is just as true that it cannot be relegated to a language of the past. Are you an art and culture enthusiast? Italy, the country with the highest concentration of art, history, culture, nature, good food and wine in the world, is one of the most popular vacation countries in Europe.

Wherever you choose to study Italian in Italy you will find something unique: beautiful natural scenery, history, customs, delicious food, colourful festivals and warm people.

Reason 4: The Italian welcome is warm everywhere, people are friendly and all seasons are good for a visit.

Reason 5: If you're serious about learning the Italian language, you should certainly learn it in Tuscany, the heart and birthplace of the Italian language. Florence was home to Dante, who Italians

call il padre della lingua italiana, the father of the Italian language. Still today, the best Italian is spoken in Florence and Tuscany.

Basically, the modern Italian language is the Florentine dialect of the 1300s.

Reason 6: Last but not least, Pisa is the main destination in Tuscany and in the central Italy (after Rome). Pisa Airport is served by 13 airlines operating 281 weekly flights to 22 national and international destinations (Summer 2004). Numerous companies offer charter flights to a number of European and non-European destinations. Fly to Pisa is really cheap and easy: the most important low cost flights companies reach Pisa and the airport is 5 minutes far from the centre of the town by bus, train or taxi.

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and in seaside city Viareggio. Offers courses on Italian language, intensive courses, semester and summer study abroad programs.



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