

## Do You Know These 20 Facts About Italy?

1. Italy has over 61 million people living in it as of 2012.
2. The famous children's story, Pinocchio, was written by an Italian.
3. Italy was the birthplace of the Renaissance, which was a period of great cultural achievements in poetry, painting and architecture. Famous artists such as Michelangelo, Raphael, Donatello, and Leonardo Da Vinci were part of the Renaissance.
4. The thermometer is an Italian invention.
5. The piano hails from Italy.
6. With almost 40 million visitors, Italy is the fourth most visited country in the world.
7. Famous Italian explorers include Christopher Columbus, Marco Polo, John Cabot, and Amerigo Vespucci.
8. The national sport of Italy is soccer (known as football outside of America).
9. Opera was created in Italy.
10. Bubonic Plague killed one-third of the Italian population in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
11. The violin and the cello were both invented in Italy.
12. Italian pizza originated in Naples during the 18th century. Other dishes such as spaghetti, lasagna and risotto all come from Italy.
13. Italy is famous for its sports cars like Ferrari, Alfa Romeo, Maserati and Lamborghini.
14. Italians invented optical eye glasses.
15. Italy has been making wines for over 2800 years.
16. The Roman Catholic Church is based in Italy.
17. Many of Shakespeare's plays were set in Italy, including Romeo and Juliet from Verona.
18. Italy is the largest wine-producing country in the world.
19. Italy is home to some of the world's greatest composers, like Vivaldi, Rossini, Verdi and Puccini.
20. The ice cream cone is an Italian invention.