



The *Giorno della Liberazione* (the Liberation Day), also called *Festa della Resistenza*, is held on April 25th each year and has been a public holiday in Italy since 1946. It celebrates the end of the Italian Civil War and the end of the Nazi Occupation of Italy during World War II.

HISTORY

In September 1943, Cassino had its first bombardments which caused a terrible damage to the houses and the death of a lot of people. The worst assaults happened in January-February-March and May 1944. On the 14th October the Austrian lieutenant colonel Schlegel arrived in Cassino. He informed the abbot Gregorio Diamare about the danger the abbey was going through; so the abbot could secure the treasure of the abbey. At the same time the population had been displaced but the abbey was not fortified until it was destroyed by the allies. On the 25th March the town of Cassino was an accumulation of ruins. The Americans arrived in the city on May 1st and German forces eventually officially surrendered on May 2nd. The Liberation is an important day in Italy's history as it led to a referendum on June 2nd, which resulted in the end of the monarchy and the creation of the Italian Republic. The Constitution of Italy was drawn up in 1947.

The Polish war cemetery

The Polish war cemetery at Monte Cassino has been placed to commemorate the contribution of Polish soldiers in the liberation of Italy and to promote knowledge about Poland. The lay out of the cemetery as you can observe it today, is in the shape of an amphitheatre with an altar and it was completed in 1963.

At the entrance of the graveyard two gateposts have been placed with the following inscription:

"We Polish soldiers for our freedom and yours have given our souls to God our bodies to the soil of Italy and our hearts to Poland".

It plays an important educational role for the Polish visitors as the visit to Monte Cassino is an integral point of the trip to Italy for the most of our countrymen. The place is visited by the Italian President every year on the 25th April.

Ministers visit the Ardeatine Caves mausoleum, where 335 Romans were killed by Nazis in 1944, and there are numerous official ceremonies across the country, including visits to the tombs of partisan soldiers.

Most Italian cities hold marches and parades, and political rallies will take place in Rome and Milan in the afternoon. You'll hear the song 'Bella Ciao' at most of these events. This was the anthem of the Italian resistance movement and today reminds listeners of the sacrifices made by those fighters.

Many shops and services including restaurants, post offices and public transport are likely to be closed or operating on a limited service.

On the other hand, it's a good day to visit a museum. Most major sites and museums are open and many towns hold fairs, concerts, food festivals, or special events. One of the more interesting events is the Palio di Bomarzo, north of Rome. In Venice it's also the feast day of Venice's patron saint, Saint Mark, celebrated with a procession and other festivities in Saint Mark's Square.

How do we celebrate this anniversary in Cassino ?

In Cassino we generally have the spring marathon that recurs every year; lots of people organize pic-nics in the public garden and in the same place the municipality organizes various initiatives.

Liceo classico Giosuè Carducci Cassino

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