

THE ITALIAN CULTURE

The famous elements of Italian culture are: history, art, music, fashion, literature and cuisine.

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THE ITALIAN HISTORY

- The territory which corresponds to today Italy has a long history, starting from prehistorical eras. We have a lot of archaeological remains such as incisions that depict humans and animals, arms for hunting and every day life's instruments.
- In the Pre-Roman age, Etruschi, a new population, developed their culture in the center of Italy where they created an advanced and refined civilization, which influenced ancient Rome and the Latin world.

THE ITALIAN HISTORY

- One of the most important date in Italian history is 753 b.C. This is the date of the foundation of Rome. According to the legend it was founded by Romolo on the Palatino's hill. Romolo established a monarc regime until the 509 b.C. Traditions say that Rome was ruled by seven kings who did a lot for the wealth of the city.

THE ITALIAN HISTORY

- In 509 b.C the monarch age finished and started the republican age that finished in 27 a.c. In this period, there were a lot of wars.
- In 27 b.C, the imperial age started. The Romans founded two empires: Western Empire and Eastern Empire. With the fall of the Western Empire, in 476 a.C, ancient Roman history finished.
- Pre-Romans and Roman age, left us other magnificent ruins such as: necropolis, bridges, churches, buildings, roads and towns.

ART

- In more recent time, during the Italian Renaissance, we have other glorious wonders. For example: frescos realized by famous Italian painters like Giotto, Michelangelo, Donatello and Raffaello.
- Other extraordinary heritage simbles of the Italian historical treasure are Leonardo's works. We just mention two paintings: "La Gioconda" and "l'Ultima cena."

ART

- The old first St. Peter's Church in Vatican's city, was probably the first significant early Christian "basilica", a style of church architecture that came to dominate the early Middle Ages. It was build in IV century. The one we admire nowadays is of the XVI century.
- The first significant buildings in the medieval Romanesque style, were churches built in Italy during the 800's. Several examples of the Byzantine architectural style were also built in Italy. The most famous Byzantine structure is the Basilica of St. Mark in Venice.
- The greatest flowering of Italian architecture took place during the Renaissance. Filippo Brunelleschi made great contributions to architectural design with his dome for the Cathedral of Florence.

MUSIC

- For more than 2000 years Italy was divided into many independent countries until 1861 when it became a Country. In that period the music developed and the opera was born. In fact Italy is the birthplace of opera.
- The most famous composer of those years was Giuseppe Verdi (1813 – 1901). He composed a lot of beautiful, important operas such as: “Nabucco”, “Traviata”, “Rigoletto” known worldwide.
- Verdi’s operas are famous because he was able to convey a strong love for his homeland. He was a true patriot.

FASHION AND DESIGN

- The Italian fashion industry is one of the country's most important manufacturing sectors as for the "made in Italy" brand. The majority of the famous Italian couturiers is based in Rome. However, Milan is considered the fashion capital of Italy because a lot of well-known designers are based there and it's the venue for the Italian designer collection . Many of Italy's top fashion designers have boutiques that can be found around the world. The best-know names are: Armani, Benetton, Fendi, Gucci, Versace and Prada. Currently, Milan and Rome, annually compete with other major international centres such as Paris, New York, London and Tokyo. Moreover, the fashion magazine "Vogue Italia", is considered the most prestigious fashion magazine in the world.

FASHION AND DESIGN

- Italy is also prominent in the field of design (interior, architectural, industrial and urban design). The country is the homecountry to some well-known furniture designers.
- Today, Milan and Turin, are the nation's leaders in architectural and industrial design. Milan hosts the “Fiera di Milano”, Europe's most famous and largest design fair.

LITERATURE

- Italian literature began after Rome's foundation in 753 b.C. Latin literature is to the base of Italian culture. In that period there were a lot of writers, poets, philosophers and historians.
- We talk about modern Italian literature in the Italian language with the early years of the 1200s. The first "Italian voice" in literature is considered Francis of Assisi.
- Guido Guinizelli is considered the founder of the "Dolce stil novo", a school that added a philosophical dimension to traditional love poetry. This new understanding of love influenced some Florentine poets, especially Dante Alighieri. Dante's "Divina Commedia", is a masterpiece in Italian literature and influenced other European writers.

LITERATURE

- The two famous writers of the 1300s, were Francesco Petrarca and Giovanni Boccaccio. Petrarca's literary most famous work is the "Canzoniere", a collection of poems. Instead, Boccaccio's literary most famous work is the "Decameron", one of the most popular collections of short stories ever written.
- Romanticism combined with some ideas of Risorgimento, the patriotic movement that brought Italy political unity and freedom from foreign domination. The time of Italy's rebirth was heralded by poets such as Alessandro Manzoni, Ugo Foscolo, Vittorio Alfieri and Giacomo Leopardi.
- In the late 1800s a realistic literary movement called «Verismo», played a major role in Italian literature and Giovanni Verga was the leading author of this movement.

LITERATURE

- A movement called Futurism influenced Italian literature in the early 1900s. Among the Italian literary authors of the early 20th century, Gabriele d' Annunzio, Luigi Pirandello, and Grazia Deledda who achieved international renown. Leading writers of the postwar era were Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, and the poets Salvatore Quasimodo and Eugenio Montale who won the Nobel Prize for literature.

CUISINE

- Italian cuisine has developed through centuries of social and political changes and it has its roots in ancient Rome. Significant changes occurred with the discovery of the New World and the introduction of potatoes, tomatoes, bell peppers and maize, now central to the cuisine but not introduced in quantity until the 18th century.

CUISINE

- Every region of Italy has its specialties. For example, Northern Italy is notable for the alpine cheese of the Valle d'Aosta, the pesto of Liguria and the Piemonte's Alba truffle. In the north, risotto and polenta, substitute the staple function taken by pasta across the rest of the country. Moreover, Italy's center includes the celebrated culinary regions of Emilia Romagna, home to prosciutto di Parma, parmigiano reggiano, and Bolognese sauce (ragù) and Tuscany, famous for its olive oil, Fiorentina (T-bone steake) and bread.

CUISINE

- Italy includes world known pizza, in Naples, parmigiana, and spaghetti with tomato sauce. The Islands of Sicily and Sardinia have different culinary traditions. In Sicily seafood is something deliciously cooked, special deserts and citrus fruit. Instead, Sardinian cuisine has traditionally looked to its hilly interior with a cuisine centered on lamb, sucking pig, breads and the famous pecorino sardo (a very tasty cheese).

QUIZ!!

- 1- TRUE OR FALSE? CORRECT THE FALSE
- Etruschi were a prehistoric population. T / F
- Rome was founded in 753 a.C T / F
- Rome was ruled by seven kings. T / F
- Eastern Roman Empire finished
in 476 a.C T / F
- Gioconda was painted by Raffaello. T / F
- St. Peter's church is in Florence. T / F
- Italy became a united state in 1861. T / F
- Verdi hated his homeland. T / F

2- CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD AND COMPLETE THE SENTENCES.

- _____ is considered as the fashion capital of Italy. (a- Florence / b- Milan / c- Venice)
- The basis of the modern Italian literature in the Italian language begins with the early years of the _____ (a- 1400s / b- 1300s / c- 1200s). The first “Italian voice” in literature is considered _____ (a- Guido Guinizelli / b- St. Francis of Assisi / c- Dante Alighieri).
- The Petrarca’s literary work most famous is the _____ (a- Canzoniere / b- Decameron / c- Divina Commedia).
- The Romanticism coincided with some ideas of _____ (a- Renaissance / b- Risorgimento / c- Fascism) .

3- ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

- Who was the most important author of Verismo?
- Which postwar era poets won the Nobel Prize for literature?
- When were some new products introduced in the Italian cuisine?
- Which are the specialties of Emilia Romagna?
- Which difference are there between Sicilian cuisine and Sardinian cuisine?