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ROME – ITALY GENERAL INFORMATION

Rome is the capital of Italy and the capital of Lazio. With 2.8 million residents it is also the country's largest and most populated comune and fourth-most populous city in the European Union by population within city limits.

The city is located in the central-western portion of the Italian Peninsula, on the Tiber River within the Lazio region of Italy. Rome is referred to as "The Eternal City", a notion expressed by ancient Roman poets and writers.

Rome's history spans more than two and a half thousand years, since its founding in 753 BC, with the union of rural villages. It was the capital city of the Roman Kingdom, the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, which was the dominant power in Western Europe and the lands bordering the Mediterranean for over seven hundred years from the 1st century BC until the 7th century.

After the Middle Ages, Rome was ruled by popes such as Alexander VI and Leo X, who transformed the city into one of the major centers of the Italian Renaissance, along with Florence.

The current version of St Peter's Basilica was built and the Sistine Chapel was painted by Michelangelo. Famous artists and architects, such as Bramante, Bernini and Raphael resided for some time in Rome, contributing to its Renaissance and Baroque architecture.

Its historic centre is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Monuments and museums such as the Vatican Museums and the Colosseum are amongst the world's 50 most visited tourist destinations.

Climate

Rome enjoys a Mediterranean climate with mild, humid winters and warm, dry summers.

Its average annual temperature is above 20°C during the day and 10°C at night. October has generally average temperatures around 18-21°C during the day and 11°C at night.

Language

Italy's official language is Italian. Ethnologue has estimated that there are about 55 million speakers of the language in Italy and a further 6.7 million outside of the country.

Italian is based on the Florentine variety of Tuscan and is somewhat intermediate between the Italo-Dalmatian languages and the Gallo-Romance languages. Its development was also influenced by the Germanic languages of the post-Roman invaders.

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Currency

The currency in Italy is the Euro (EUR). The current exchange rate is:

1 EUR = USD 1,29067

1 USD = EUR 0,77472

Source: Oanda.com / 04.10.2012

You can retrieve Euros at every ATM machine in the city. If you would like to change money you can also do so at the hotel reception, however remember that the rates at hotels are always higher than at a local bank.

Voltage

The voltage is 220 V 50 Hertz (Hz). You will require a voltage converter and an adapter if you are carrying a device that does not accept 220 Volts at 50 Hz.

Italian Cuisine

Modern Italian cuisine has developed through centuries of social and political changes, with roots as far back as the 4th century BCE. Italian cuisine in itself takes heavy influences, including Etruscan, ancient Greek, ancient Roman, Byzantine, and Jewish.

Italian cuisine is characterized by its extreme simplicity, with many dishes having only four to eight ingredients. Italian cooks rely chiefly on the quality of the ingredients rather than on elaborate preparation. Dishes and recipes are often the creation of grandmothers rather than of chefs, which makes many recipes ideally suited for home cooking.

This is one of the main reasons behind the ever increasing popularity of this cuisine, as cooking magazines in foreign countries popularize Italian recipes targeted at the home cook. Ingredients and dishes vary by region. Many dishes that were once regional, however, have proliferated with variations throughout the country.

Cheese, ham and wine are a major part of the cuisine, with many variations and Denominazione di origine controllata (DOC) (regulated appellation) laws. Coffee, specifically espresso, has become important in Italian cuisine.

Please note that all individuals are responsible for their own travel arrangements and visa matters.