

BEN VENUTI A LA BELLA ITALIA (ITALY)

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OTTALIL
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Table of Contents

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	THE ROMAN EMPIRE (5 th Century BC to 5 th Century AD).....	2
3.	The RENAISSANCE (14 th to 16 th Century)	3
4.	FOREIGN RULE (1559 to 1814)	3
5.	UNIFICATION (1814 to 1861)	4
6.	PRESENT DAY ITALY.....	4
7.	GENOVA, LIGURIA.....	4
7.1.	History.....	5
7.2.	What to see?	5
8.	MODERN HISTORY	7
9.	PIRATES (1986 Film)	7
9.1.	Plot summary	7
10.	LAKE GARDA	8
10.1.	Localities and sights	8
10.2.	Scaliger Castle in Malcesine.....	9
10.3.	Malcesine and Goethe.....	10
11.	VERONA.....	10
11.1.	Casa di Giulietta (Juliet's House)	11
11.2.	La Tomba di Giulietta (Juliet's Tomb).....	12
12.	ROME-VATICAN, POMPEI, VESUVIUS	13
13.	CONCLUSION	13

1. INTRODUCTION

The name Italy (Italia) is an ancient name for the country and people of Southern Italy. Coins bearing the name Italia were minted by an alliance of Italic tribes competing with Rome in the 1st century BC. By the time of Emperor Augustus, the multi-ethnic territory of Italy was



included in the Roman Italy as the central unit of the Empire. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire and the Lombard invasions, "Italy" gradually became the collective name for diverse states appearing on the peninsula and their overseas properties. Pallotino claims that the name was originally derived from the Itali settled in modern Calabria. The Greeks gradually came to use the name for a greater region, but it was not until the time of the Roman conquests that the term was expanded to cover the entire peninsula.

Augustus also created nine special legions, ostensibly to maintain the peace in Italy, keeping at least three of them stationed at Rome. These cohorts became known as the Praetorian Guard. In 27 BC, Octavian transferred control of the state back to the Senate and the People of Rome. The Senate refused the offer, which, in effect, functioned as a popular ratification of his position within the state. Octavian was also granted the title of "Augustus" by the senate, and took the title of Princeps, or "first citizen".

As the adopted heir of Caesar, Augustus preferred to be called by this name. Caesar was a component of his family name. Julio-Claudian rule lasted for almost a century (from Julius Caesar in the mid-1st century BC to the emperor Nero in the mid-1st century AD). By the time of the Flavian Dynasty, and the reign of Vespasian, and that of his two sons, Titus and Domitian, the term Caesar had evolved, almost *de facto*, from a family name into a formal title.

Augustus' final goal was to figure out a method to ensure an orderly succession. In 6 BC Augustus granted tribunician powers to his stepson Tiberius.

Despite its military strength, the empire made few efforts to expand its already vast extent; the most notable being the conquest of Britain, begun by Emperor Claudius, and Emperor Trajan's conquest of Dacia (101-102, 105-106). While armed insurrections (e.g. the Hebraic insurrection in Judea) and brief civil wars (e.g. in 68 AD the year of the four emperors) demanded the legions attention on several occasions.

In the 6th century AD the Byzantine Emperor Justinian reconquered Italy. The invasion of a new wave of Germanic tribes, the Lombards, doomed his attempt to resurrect the Western Roman Empire but the repercussions of Justinian's failure resounded further still. For the next thirteen centuries, whilst new nation-states arose in the lands north of the Alps, the Italian political landscape was a patchwork of feuding city states, petty tyrannies, and foreign invaders.



The Black Death in 1348¹ inflicted a terrible blow to Italy, killing one third of the population. The recovery from the disaster led to a resurgence of cities, trade and economy which greatly stimulated the successive phase of the Humanism and Renaissance (15th-16th centuries) when Italy again returned to be the center of Western civilization, strongly influencing the other



European countries with Courts like Este in Ferrara and De Medici in Florence.

Genoa (Genova) is the most important port in Italy and capital of the Province of Genoa in Liguria, Northern Italy. Genoa is a natural harbour and was once one of the most powerful Italian cities. Home of Christopher Columbus, Genoa greets the visitor with his statue on Piazza Acquaverde. The old town has narrow winding streets ideal for walking and exploring.

In 1809, Bonaparte occupied Rome, for contrasts with the pope, who had excommunicated him, and to maintain his own state efficiently, exiling the Pope first to Savona and then to France.

Italy gained its present-day single political identity only in 1861 but varieties of people have lived in the region from the early ages. The Etruscans were the first people to rule the peninsula around the 8th century BC and were eventually overrun by the Roman Empire. The ancient Greeks also set up a few colonies along the southern coast.

The rise of cities and a merchant class led to the Renaissance in the 15th century during which painters, architects, poets, philosophers and sculptors produced works of genius that prevail till today. In the next few centuries, Spain, Austria and France had their turns at controlling the peninsula until Italy was unified in 1861.

Industrialization and modernization increased through the 19th century but Italy's participation in the First World War extracted a heavy price. Economic and political instability made it easy for Benito Mussolini to seize power and establish his dark, fascist reign over the country in 1922. Italy was defeated by the Allied forces, and became a Republic following a popular referendum held on 2 June 1946.



Crown of the Holy Roman Empire, now held in the treasure chamber (Schatzkammer) in Vienna, Austria

2. THE ROMAN EMPIRE (5th Century BC to 5th Century AD)

Italia flourished under the Roman Empire, which ended in 476 AD with the death of Emperor Augustus. The Italian peninsula was later divided into separate kingdoms, with reunification only achieved in 1861.

In 756, when the Franks defeated the Lombards, they granted the popes authority over central Italy, and the Papal States were created. The northern states of Lombardy, Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany were ruled by the Germanic Holy Roman Empire² from 962.

¹ The Black Death was one of the most devastating pandemics in human history, peaking in Europe between 1348 and 1350. The Black Death is estimated to have killed 30–60 percent of Europe's population. The aftermath of the plague created a series of religious, social and economic upheavals, which had profound effects on the course of European history. It took 150 years for Europe's population to recover.

² Otto I was crowned King of Germany in 962, but he is nevertheless considered by some to have been the first Holy Roman Emperor (German: Römisch-Deutscher Kaiser) in retrospect, although the Roman imperial title was first restored to Charlemagne. In a decree following the 1512 Diet of Cologne, the name was officially changed to Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (German: Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation, Latin: Imperium Romanum Sacrum Nationis Germanicæ).

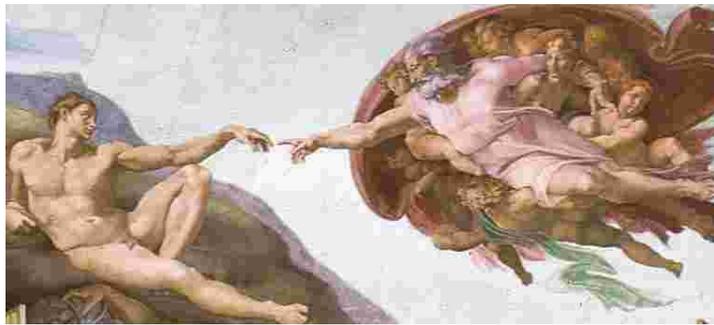
The Holy Roman Empire was an empire (Reich) that existed from 962 to 1806 in Central Europe. Its character changed during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, when the power of the emperor gradually weakened in favour of the princes. The empire's territory was centred on the Kingdom of Germany, and included neighbouring territories, which at its peak included the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Burgundy. For much of its history, the Empire consisted of hundreds of smaller sub-units, principalities, duchies, counties, Free Imperial Cities and other domains.

By the end of the 11th century, the worst of the invasions was over and trade began to flourish once again. Four Italian cities – Genoa, Pisa, Amalfi and Venice – became major commercial and political powers. In the twelfth century the Italian cities ruled by Holy Roman Empire campaigned for autonomy. The result was that northern Italy became a group of independent kingdoms, republics and city-states.

3. The RENAISSANCE (14th to 16th Century)

The Renaissance (French: *Renaissance* from ri- "again" and nascere "birth") was a cultural movement which encompassed a flowering of literature, science, art, religion, and politics, and a resurgence of learning based on classical sources. The movement began in Tuscany in the 14th century, spreading from Florence to Siena. A number of factors contributed to its emergence, including the influx of Greek scholars following the second invasion of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453. The patronage of the arts afforded by the Medici family was another contributing factor. The era gave rise to a number of artistic giants – Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Sandro Botticelli, Dante Alighieri and Francesco Petrarca, to name a few. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1440s also contributed to a free flow of information.

Reaching southwards to Rome, the Renaissance inspired the Italian popes to rebuild their city and Rome flourished once again. The movement also spread to Milan, Venice, and further north into Europe, influencing art, literature, philosophy, politics, science, religion and other intellectual arenas. Within Italy, the dominance of Tuscan culture led to the Tuscan dialect later becoming the official Italian language.



Traditionally, this intellectual transformation has resulted in the Renaissance being viewed as a bridge between the middle Ages and the Modern Era. It is best known for its artistic developments and the contributions of such polymaths as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, who inspired the term "Renaissance man".

4. FOREIGN RULE (1559 to 1814)

Once again in this brief history of Italy, a 'golden' era is followed by a dark one. In 1494, France invaded northern Italy and many of the city-states collapsed. In 1527 Spain and Germany attacked Rome. By the end of the "Italian Wars" in 1559, three Italian republics regained their independence – Piedmont Savoy, Corsica-Genoa and Venice. Both Savoy and Corsica were later sold to France – Corsica in 1764 and Savoy in 1860.

During the era of domination by Habsburg Spain (1559 to 1713) and Habsburg Austria (1713 to 1796), Italians enjoyed a period of relative peace. During the Napoleonic era (1796 to 1814), Italy was briefly united by Napoleon as the Italian Republic and later the Kingdom of Italy, becoming a client state of the French Republic.

After the defeat of Napoleonic France (The Battle of Waterloo fought on Sunday 18 June 1815), the Congress of Vienna divided Italy into eight parts, most under foreign rule: Parma, Modena and Tuscany were ruled by the Hapsburgs; Lombardy and Venetia were ruled by Austria; Piedmont-Sardinia-Genoa and the Papal States were independent; and Naples and Sicily were ruled by France. This abysmal condition was the impetus behind the Italian unification movement.

Otto I was crowned King of Germany in 962, but he is nevertheless considered by some to have been the first Holy Roman Emperor (German: Römisch-Deutscher Kaiser) in retrospect, although the Roman imperial title was first restored to Charlemagne. In a decree following the 1512 Diet of Cologne, the name was officially changed to Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (German: Heiliges Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation, Latin: Imperium Romanum Sacrum Nationis Germanicæ).

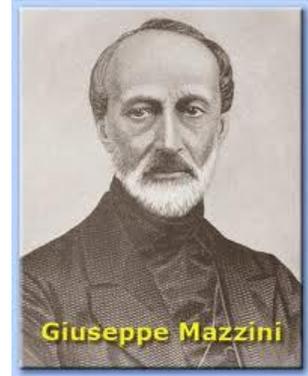
5. UNIFICATION (1814 to 1861)

At the climax of the brief history of Italy culminate in unification. The *Risorgimento*³ (The



Resurgence) was a complex process that eventually unified the different states of the Italian peninsula into the modern nation of Italy. The movement began in 1815 with a growing resentment towards the peninsula's domination by Austria.

Two prominent figures in the unification movement were Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi. A native of Genoa, Mazzini was imprisoned in 1830 for his role in the *Carbonari* secret society. From his exile in France and later England, he mounted a series of unsuccessful uprisings



in Italy, but eventually worked with Garibaldi to achieve their dream of unification.

Giuseppe Garibaldi was born in Nice (Nizza), and, like Mazzini, was a member of the *Carbonari* secret society. Italy was officially unified in 1861, with Rome and Latium annexed in 1870 and the Trieste region after World War I.

6. PRESENT DAY ITALY

Since unification, Italy has experienced a tumultuous period that saw a mass exodus of people and the disastrous consequences of two World Wars. Yet over the past 60 years the country has reclaimed its position as a major social and cultural player in world affairs. Italy remains one of the most popular tourist destinations in Europe. Italy was one of the founding members of the European Economic Community, and despite the turbulent nature of Italian politics, enjoys positive economic growth and a high standard of living.

The richness of its past and the 'live-life-to-the-fullest' attitude of its present, combine to make Italy a must-see travel destination.

This brief history of Italy can't do justice to the many events that make up the story of a nation. If history is your passion, there are many online sources for books on Italy.

7. GENOVA, LIGURIA⁴

Genoa, the capital of its province and of the Liguria region, is an important seaport in northern Italy.



It is the first Italian commercial port, with two passenger docks, Ponte dei Mille and Ponte Andrea Doria, and the second port in the Mediterranean after Marseille, France. Genoa was the birthplace of Christopher Columbus (although his birthplace is disputed between Italy and France), Admiral Andrea Doria, violinist Niccolò Paganini and Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini.

³ The *Risorgimento* refers to the process by which the modern country of Italy was forged from a collection of individual Italian States linked only by geography.

⁴ Liguria is a coastal region of north-western Italy, the third smallest of the Italian regions. Its capital is Genoa. It is a popular region with tourists for its beautiful beaches, picturesque little towns, and good food.

The port of Genoa is home to an ancient Lighthouse or "La Lanterna". It is the oldest working lighthouse in the world, one of the five tallest ones, and the tallest brick one.

7.1. History

During the middle Ages, Genoa was an independent and powerful republic (one of the so-called *Repubbliche Marinare*, with Venice, Pisa, and Amalfi). Genoa was the most persistent rival of Venice, and like Venice its nominal republic was presided over by a doge⁵.

Famous Genoese families such as the Dorias had practically complete control of the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Republic became part of the French Empire until 1815, when the delegates at the Congress of Vienna sanctioned its incorporation into Piedmont (Kingdom of Sardinia). In 1860, Giuseppe Garibaldi set out from near Genoa (actually Quarto) with a thousand volunteers⁶ to unify Italy, which was at the time split in several kingdoms.



7.2. What to see?

- The Lanterna, the old lighthouse, is a symbol of Genoa, and is visible from everywhere in the city.
- The Parco Urbano delle Mura, the green lung of the city, interspersed with ancient monuments, restoring areas, playgrounds and track and field paths.
- The Aquarium of Genoa is the largest in Europe.



- Piazza de Ferrari

Piazza De Ferrari is the main square of Genoa. Situated in the heart of the city between the historical and the modern centre, Piazza De Ferrari is renowned for its fountain, which was restored in recent years along with a major restyling of the square.

Piazza de Ferrari (Ferrari Square) was constructed in 1936. This relatively new square is large with beautiful bronze fountain in the middle. Today next to Piazza De Ferrari are numerous office buildings, headquarters of banks, insurances and other private companies, making it the financial and business centre of Genoa.

Other landmarks of the city are:

- The Palazzo Ducale or Doge's Palace.

⁵ The Doge of Venice Venetian: Doxe; Italian: Doge; both derived from Latin dux, "military leader" (often mistranslated Duke: the Italian word for duke is "Duca") was the chief magistrate and leader of the Most Serene Republic of Venice for over a thousand years. The "doge" was the senior-most elected official of Venice and Genoa; both cities were republics and elected doges.

⁶ The Expedition of the Thousand (*Spedizione dei Mille*) was a military campaign led by the revolutionary general Giuseppe Garibaldi in 1860. A force of volunteers defeated the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, leading to its dissolution and annexation by the Kingdom of Sardinia, an important step in the creation of a newly unified Kingdom of Italy.

- The Old Harbour or Porto Antico was transformed into a mall by architect Renzo Piano, Via Garibaldi with its superb palaces and the monumental cemetery on Staglieno's hill.
- The Museo d'Arte Orientale is one of the largest collections of Oriental art in Europe.
- The University of Genoa, with 40,000 students was founded in 1481.

The Churches:

- Cathedral of San Lorenzo, hosting the marvelous Museo del Tesoro di San Lorenzo, a rich collection of items from all ages and places.



La Lanterna, the ancient lighthouse is Genoa's best known landmark

- San Matteo, built in 1125, with a very peculiar façade in black and white bands, with a Byzantine mosaic over the portal, hosts the tomb of Admiral Andrea Doria.
- SS. Annunziata, with a majestic neoclassical façade and precious baroque interior.
- Santa Maria Assunta on the Carignano hill, with its typical twin bell towers, and huge Greek-cross interior.

The Palaces:

- Palazzo Doria, the ancient mansion of the rich Doria family, now the seat of the Province offices
- Palazzo Ducale, the seat of the Doge at the time of the



Porta Soprana: best known gate in the ancient Genoa city walls

Mariner Republic

- Palazzo Bianco, along Via Garibaldi one of the most beautiful streets in Italy, hosting an important Art Gallery
- Palazzo Rosso, always along the Via Garibaldi, richly decorated in frescoes and valuable items, the seat of a Gallery of art works belonging to the ancient Genoese families Brignole and Durazzo.

The Museums:

- Museo Navale, hosting ancient sea vessels, and historical ships.
- The House of Cristoforo Colombo, hosting a collection of ancient items and documents.
- The Aquarium of Genoa, the most important and largest in Europe.

The Cemetery of Staglieno, a true open-air museum with statues and chapels in different styles, gothic, byzantine, egyptian, Liberty, mesopotamic, neo-classical, designed in 1835 and inaugurated in 1851, now comprising over 18,000 square meters. It includes also an English cemetery (with the tomb of Oscar Wilde's wife, Mary Constance Lloyd), a protestant and a Jewish cemetery. Many famous Italians are buried here, among them Giuseppe Mazzini, Gilberto Govi and Rina Gaioni Govi, Nino Bixio, Fabrizio De Andrè, Stefano Canzio, Ferruccio Parri. The cemetery is a favourite destination for artists and men of culture for its beauty - as Ernest Hemingway said, "one of the world's marvels" *"Una delle meraviglie del mondo"*. Mark Twain described the place with admiring words in "The Innocents Abroad".



Christopher Columbus Monument

8. MODERN HISTORY

With the shift in world economy and trade routes to the New World and away from the Mediterranean, Genoa's political and economic power went into steady decline.

In 1797, under pressure from Napoleon, Genoa became a French protectorate called the Ligurian Republic, which was annexed by France in 1805. This affair is commemorated in the famous first sentence of Tolstoy's War and Peace:

"Well, Prince, so Genoa and Lucca are now just family estates of the Buonapartes (...) And what do you think of this latest comedy, the coronation at Milan, the comedy of the people of Genoa and Lucca laying their petitions [to be annexed to France] before Monsieur Buonaparte, and Monsieur Buonaparte sitting on a throne and granting the petitions of the nations?" (spoken by a thoroughly anti-Boanapartist Russian aristocrat, soon after the news reached St. Petersburg).

Although the Genoese revolted against France in 1814 and liberated the city on their own delegates at the Congress of Vienna sanctioned its incorporation into Piedmont (Kingdom of Sardinia), thus ending the three century old struggle by the House of Savoy to acquire the city.

In World War II the British fleet bombarded Genoa and one bomb fell into the cathedral of San Lorenzo without exploding. It is now available to public viewing on the cathedral premises.

The 27th G8 summit in the city, in July 2001, was overshadowed by violent protests, with one protester, Carlo Giuliani, killed amid accusations of police brutality.

In 2004, the European Union designated Genoa as the European Capital of Culture, along with the French city of Lille.

9. PIRATES (1986 Film)

Pirates is a 1986 adventure-comedy film written by Gérard Brach, John Brownjohn, and Roman Polanski and directed by Polanski. It was screened at the 1986 Cannes Film Festival.

Riding on the success of the highly acclaimed Chinatown, Roman Polanski began to write a screenplay for a swashbuckling adventure film called Pirates. Originally, Jack Nicholson was intended to play the central role of Captain Thomas Bartholomew Red, a grizzled old pirate, but complications arose partially due to the enormous fees Nicholson was demanding (according to Polanski, when Nicholson was asked what exactly he wanted, he replied, "I want more.") Following this, the production was delayed for a number of years when Polanski was arrested in California on a charge of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor, which caused him to flee the United States. The role of



Captain Red went to Walter Matthau and the film finally came out in 1986, 12 years after it was first conceived.

A full scale galleon was built for the film in a shipyard in the village of Port El Kantaoui, Tunisia, adjacent to the Tarak Ben Ammar Studios, which had been constructed exclusively for and is currently a tourist attraction in the port of Genoa, where its interior can be visited for a 5 euro entry fee.

9.1. Plot summary

The film begins with Captain Red (Walter Matthau) stranded aboard a raft at sea with his first mate, Frog (Cris Campion), both of whom are presumably close to death from dehydration. After Red, cracking under the starvation, tries to kill and eat Frog, the duo is picked up by a Spanish Galleon and is forced into slavery before instigating a ship wide mutiny with the other prisoners and taking control of the vessel. Frog falls in love with María-Dolores de la Jenya de la Calde (Charlotte Lewis), the niece of the governor of a Spanish colony. Red covets the golden throne that the Spanish have taken from an Aztec king. Big explosions and gunfights occur as they recruit a crew of



cutthroats to win over the gold (with Frog trying to romance the girl as well) throughout the remainder of the film. Ironically, the film ends in a Pyrrhic victory for the heroes, with Captain Red and Frog again stranded on a raft, Red sitting on the golden throne urging Frog to eat and "fatten up" (hinting at a possible relapse in his cannibalistic urges).

10. LAKE GARDA

Lake Garda (Italian: Lago di Garda), located in Northern Italy, is the largest lake in Italy (Max. length 51.9 km, Max. width 16.7 km, Surface area 369.98 km², Average depth 136 m, Max. depth 346 m, Water volume 50.35 km³, Surface elevation 65 m). It is, about half-way between Brescia and Verona, and between Venice and Milan. Glaciers formed this alpine region at the end of the last ice age. The lake and its shoreline are divided between the provinces of Verona (to the southeast), Brescia (southwest), and Trentino (north). Being easily accessible from the north via the Brenner Pass, the lake is a

major tourist



destination, with a number of exclusive hotels and resorts along its shore. The northern part of the lake is narrower, surrounded by mountains.

The lake has numerous small islands and five main ones, the largest being Isola del Garda. The main tributary is the Sarca River, while the only emissary is the Mincio River.

10.1. Localities and sights

The ancient fortified town of Sirmione, located on the south of the lake, is one particularly popular destination, home to the Virgilio and Catullo Spa Complexes, as well as numerous restaurants, bars, hotels, fashion stores and a market. Sirmione is one of Italy's most picturesque villages; better avoid it in the summer months, when it's overrun by vacationing tourists - just like Florence and Venice. The picturesque Scaliger castle dates from the 13th century. The Roman poet Catullus had a villa here, and visitors can see a ruined Roman spa named the Grotte di Catullo (Grotto of Catullus) although there is no evidence linking him to this particular building. The sulphur springs at the tip of the peninsula have a reputation



for the healing of catarrhal conditions. Nearby, there is Gardaland, one of the most famous theme parks in Italy.



Beautiful Lake Como⁷ in northern Lombardy - summer home of the wealthy for centuries - might be Italy's most famous lake. But Lake Garda, Italy's largest lake might also be the country's most renowned wine destination, at least for those who wish to combine the pleasures of lakeside living along with wine exploration.

I visited Lake Garda, splitting my time between Sirmione and Bardolino, a charming wine (red, rosé, and sparkling) village located on the eastern side of the lake.

Overproduction damaged the reputation of these three classic wines, and they are only now beginning to recover from it. But I'm happy to report that things are now looking up, at least for Bardolino and Soave.

Bardolino Classico, grown around the town of Bardolino and neighbouring communes around Lake Garda, when at its best, is a light, fresh, fragrant red wine. It should be lightly chilled, just like Beaujolais. Chiaretto and Chiaretto Spumante (the sparkling version) are best served cold.

Small, independent producers make up about one-third of Bardolino's production. Right now, about 60 percent of Bardolino's 32 million bottle production is exported, with 40 percent sold within Italy.

The city has been awarded world heritage site status by UNESCO because of its urban structure and outstanding architecture.

10.2. Scaliger Castle in Malcesine

The original fort was supposedly built by the Lombards. Destroyed in 590 and later rebuilt after the Hungarian invasions, the castle became part of the large estates of the bishops of Verona. Between 1277 and 1387 it belonged to the Della Scala family, and up until 1403 it was owned by the Visconti family. From 1405 to 1797 - apart from the decade starting in 1506 - it belonged to the Venetian Republic.



The French owned the castle during the days of Napoleon.

From 1798 to 1866 the Austrians took over the castle and also did extensive renovations. The castle of Malcesine was declared a national monument on August 22, 1902. Today it houses a

⁷ Lake Como (Lago di Como in Italian) is a lake of glacial origin in Lombardy. It has an area of 146 km², making it the third largest lake in Italy, after Lake Garda and Lake Maggiore. At over 400 m (1320 ft) deep it is one of the deepest lakes in Europe and the bottom of the lake is more than 200m (656 ft) below sea-level.

Lake Como has been a popular retreat for aristocrats and wealthy people since Roman times. Many celebrities have or had homes on the shores of Lake Como, such as Matthew Bellamy, Madonna, George Clooney, Gianni Versace, Ronaldinho, Sylvester Stallone, Richard Branson Lake Como is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful lakes in Italy.

small museum dedicated to the territory of Lake Garda and especially to the rocks, fossils, flora and fauna of the Mount Baldo area. A room dedicated to Johann Wolfgang Goethe: displays drawings that the poet sketched of the lake Garda during his trip to Italy.

10.3. Malcesine and Goethe

«I could have been in Verona tonight but there was still a magnificent vision of nature nearby that I did not want to miss - the delicious spectacle of Lake Garda - and I was amply rewarded for my detour» - Italian Journey, 12 September 1786

During his famous journey to Italy, a strong and sudden wind on Lake Garda forces Johann Wolfgang Goethe on 13 September 1786 to spend some time in Malcesine. He is fascinated by the Scaliger Castel and looks out for a quiet place in order to draw the castle. Some inhabitants believe him an Austrian spy and the poet is almost arrested. In Goethe's Italian Journey you can read this anecdote, which has contributed to the village's fame. Today Malcesine is one of the major tourist attractions of Lake Garda. Since 1983 some rooms of the castle have been dedicated to the village's first important visitor.

11. VERONA

As one of the oldest civilization that represented by the Roman Empire, Italy has many exotic travel destinations. The number one spot that attracts visitor is, of course, the Vatican. But, what's next? The water city, Venice? The great Colosseum? or Pisa Tower?



Well, according to the city councils of Verona, the second most favorite tourist spot in Italy is La Casa di Giulietta (House of Juliet). Whose not familiar with Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet? Fact or fiction, this place is believed as the home of Juliet Capulet, the heroine of the tragedy written by Shakespeare.

I must warn you first though, for those who's not interested in love story, there's no point of visiting this place. There are no spectacular views or many tourist attractions in here. But, if you are a romantic person and have a love wish, you'll be satisfied here.

The precise details of Verona's early history remain a mystery. The city became important because it was at the intersection of several roads. The splendour of the city in those days, dominated by its forty-eight towers, is described in a Latin ode. The increasing wealth of the burgher families eclipsed the power of the counts, and in 1100 Verona organised itself as a commune.

From 1508 to 1517 the city was in the power of Emperor Maximilian I. There were numerous outbreaks of plague, and in 1629–33 Italy was struck by its worst outbreak in modern times. In Verona an estimated 33,000 people (of a total of 54,000) died in 1630–1631.



Piazza delle Erbe

Verona was occupied by Napoleon in 1797, but on Easter Monday the populace rose and drove out the French. Verona became Austrian territory when Napoleon signed the Treaty of Campo Formio in October, 1797. They took control of the city on January 18, 1798. It was taken from

Austria by the Treaty of Pressburg in 1805 and became part of Napoleon's Kingdom of Italy, but was returned to Austria following Napoleon's defeat in 1814, when it became part of the Austrian-held Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia. In 1866, following the Six Weeks War, Verona, along with the rest of Venetia, became part of Italy.

In 1866, on the anniversary of the defeat of Königrätz, the Austrians evacuated Verona, their strongest fortress in Venetia, which thus became Italian.

The advent of fascism added another dark chapter to the annals of Verona. As throughout Italy, the Jewish population was hit by the anti-Semitic laws (1938) and after the invasion by Nazi Germany in 1943, deportations to Nazi concentration camps. An Austrian Fort (now a church, the Santuario della Madonna di Lourdes), was used to incarcerate and torture allied troops, Jews and anti-fascist suspects especially after 1943, when Verona became part of the Repubblica di Salò or "Social Republic".

As in Austrian times, Verona became of great strategic importance to the regime. Galeazzo Ciano, Benito Mussolini's son-in-law was accused of plotting against the republic during a mock trial staged by the Nazi and fascist hierarchy in Castelvechio. Ciano was executed on the banks of the Adige with many other officers on what is today Via Colombo. This marked another turning point in the escalation of violence that would only end with the final liberation by allied troops and partisans in 1945.

After World War II, Verona acquired once again its strategic importance, due to its proximity to the Iron Curtain. The city became the seat of the South European Allied Terrestrial Forces (SETAF) and had a strong American military presence during the whole duration of Cold War. Today Verona is an important and rich dynamic city, where the Roman past lives side by side with the Middle Age Verona, which in some senses brings about its architectural and artistic motifs.

11.1. Casa di Giulietta (Juliet's House)

Who doesn't know the love story between Juliet and Romeo? Immortalised by Shakespeare in the first line of his play, Verona holds the claim to having the houses of perhaps the greatest lovers in history. Hundreds of thousands of tourists from all over the world throng to see the *Casa di Giulietta*, or Juliet's House.

At the time of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, Italian tales were very popular among theatre patrons. Critics of the day even complained of how often Italian tales were borrowed to please crowds. Shakespeare took advantage of their popularity, as seen in his writing of both *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure* (from Italian tales) and *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare's version is an adaptation of the Italian *Giulietta e Romeo*, by Matteo Bandello.



The Balcony and Bronze Statue in the Inner Courtyard of Juliet's House

Bandello's story was translated into French and was adapted by Italian theatrical troupes, some of whom performed in London at the time Shakespeare was writing his plays.

The names of the families (in Italian, the *Montecchi* and *Cappelletti*) were actual political factions of the thirteenth century, mentioned by Dante in a short verse of his *Divine Comedy*.

From the courtyard you can see Juliet's Balcony. This is supposedly the very same balcony where the tragic heroine cried out to her Romeo. These days, do not be surprised to see many a young girl standing on the balcony, probably dreaming her own dreams.

Perhaps the highlight of the visit would be the bronze statue of Juliet in the courtyard. Though its origins cannot be determined, the most popular thing to do when visiting the statue is to rub its right breast, which will bring good luck. So don't be surprised if the right side of the bronze Juliet seems to be shinier than the rest of her! While for the bronze statue, the metal of its chest is worn bare due to a legend that if a person strokes the right breast, that person will have a good fortune. Numerous graffiti and stick notes can also be found on the walls and doors in the courtyard.

Inside the house is a small museum. All the items on display are genuine antiques from the 16th and 17th century. The frescoes, paintings, and ceramics all relate to Shakespeare's play.

Many people write their names and the names of their beloved one on the walls of the entrance, known as Juliet's Wall. Many believe that writing on that place will make their love everlasting. It is also a tradition to put small love letters on the walls (which is done by the thousands each year), which are however regularly taken down by employees to keep the courtyard clean.

Purists scoff at the idea that this house on Via Capello has anything to do with the great love story at all. However, that hasn't taken anything away from the enjoyment that countless people have had. So, whether or not it really was Juliet's house — that is if Juliet ever existed at all — the courtyard and her tomb is still worth a visit.

Not far from the house you can visit La Tomba di Giulietta, or Juliet's Tomb. The heroine's final resting place can be found in the San Francesco al Corso cloister on Via del Pontiere. If you are a die-hard romantic, be sure to take the time to visit this place.

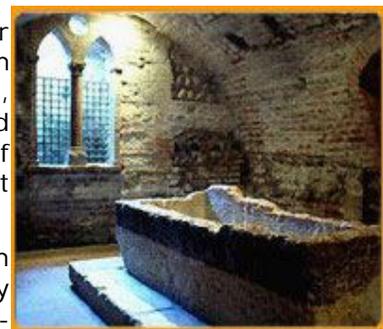
If you want to escape the crowds, time your visit to Juliet's House perfectly. Early in the morning or late in the afternoon would be best. There is no entrance fee for the courtyard but you have to pay to enter the house.

Address	Via Cappello 23, Verona, Italy
Phone Number	045 803 43 03
Cost of Entry	€3
Opening Hours	8.30 am - 7.30 pm Tue-Sun 1.30 pm - 7.30pm Mon

11.2. La Tomba di Giulietta (Juliet's Tomb)

Following Romeo and Juliet's legend with the Shakespeare Guided Tour of Verona you'll get to Juliet's Tomb. It is inside the monastery of San Francesco al Corso which has been indicated as the place where the final events of the tragedy took place. At the end of thirteenth century, the period in which it is believed that the story might have happened, San Francesco al Corso was the only Franciscan monastery outside Verona city walls.

It is a small monastery, with its church and an inner cloister characterized by a fascinating atmosphere. In a vaulted room inside the dark crypt under the church of San Francesco al Corso, among the old humidity covered tomb stones of monks buried there centuries ago, lays an empty, simple sarcophagus made of red Verona marble. It is believed to be the grave where Juliet rested after she drank the poison.



The old monastery has now been transformed into the Museum of Frescoes G.B. Cavalcaselle. In a beautifully decorated and cosy hall in the museum the civil unions of Verona conduct the so-called Juliet's Love Promise every year. It is a highly symbolic place, where the two lovers of Verona decided to stay together until the end.

What not everybody knows is that like in many legends, also in Juliet and Romeo's (Ladies first in Italy) story there is something true. The two families - Montecchi and Capuleti - the struggle for power that took place in Italy and in Verona at that time, the Scala family lords, is all true.

In Verona there are still the houses of the two families, nowadays of course called Romeo's house and Juliet's house, with its famous balcony where it is now also possible to get married.

12. ROME-VATICAN, POMPEI, VESUVIUS

For details on visit to Rome-Vatican, Pompeii and Vesuvius, please visit article on REMINISCENCES OF A MEMORABLE VISIT TO ROME-VATICAN, 22 – 29 MAY 2004 under Link Travelogues → Pilgrimages

13. CONCLUSION

Italy, united in 1861, has significantly contributed to the political, cultural and social development of the entire Mediterranean region. Culturally and linguistically, the origins of Italian history can be traced back to the 9th century BC, when earliest accounts date the presence of Italic tribes in modern central Italy.

After the Roman Republic and Empire dominated this part of the world for many centuries came an Italy whose people would make immeasurable contributions. Some of these contributions led to the development of European philosophy, science, and art during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Dominated by city-states for much of the medieval and Renaissance period, the Italian peninsula also experienced several foreign dominations. Parts of Italy were annexed to the Spanish, the Austrian and Napoleon's empire, while the Vatican maintained control over the central part of it, before the Italian Peninsula was eventually liberated and unified amidst much struggle in the 19th and 20th centuries.

In the late-19th century and early 20th century, or the new Kingdom of Italy, the country built a colonial empire, colonizing parts of Africa, and countries along the Mediterranean. Italy suffered enormous losses in World War I but came out on the winning side. The Fascists, led by Benito Mussolini, took over and set up an authoritarian dictatorship 1922-43. Italy was a junior partner of Nazi Germany and Japan in World War II, and after the southern regions had been liberated in 1943 the Fascists fought on until surrendering in 1945 as the "Republic of Salò". Italy was a hard-fought battlefield in 1943-45.

In 1946, due to a referendum, the Kingdom of Italy was abolished, and 2 June 1946 saw the birth of the Italian Republic. The 1950s and 1960s in Italy saw a period of rapid modernization and economic growth succeeding the disastrous consequences of World War II, and ever since, Italy has been one of the founding nations, or has joined, several organizations, such as the European Economic Community, which later became the European Union, the United Nations, NATO, UNESCO, the G7 which afterward became the G8, the G20, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. Italy is currently ranked as a regional power, and Italy has been classified in a study, measuring hard power, as being the 11th greatest worldwide national power.