

ITALY



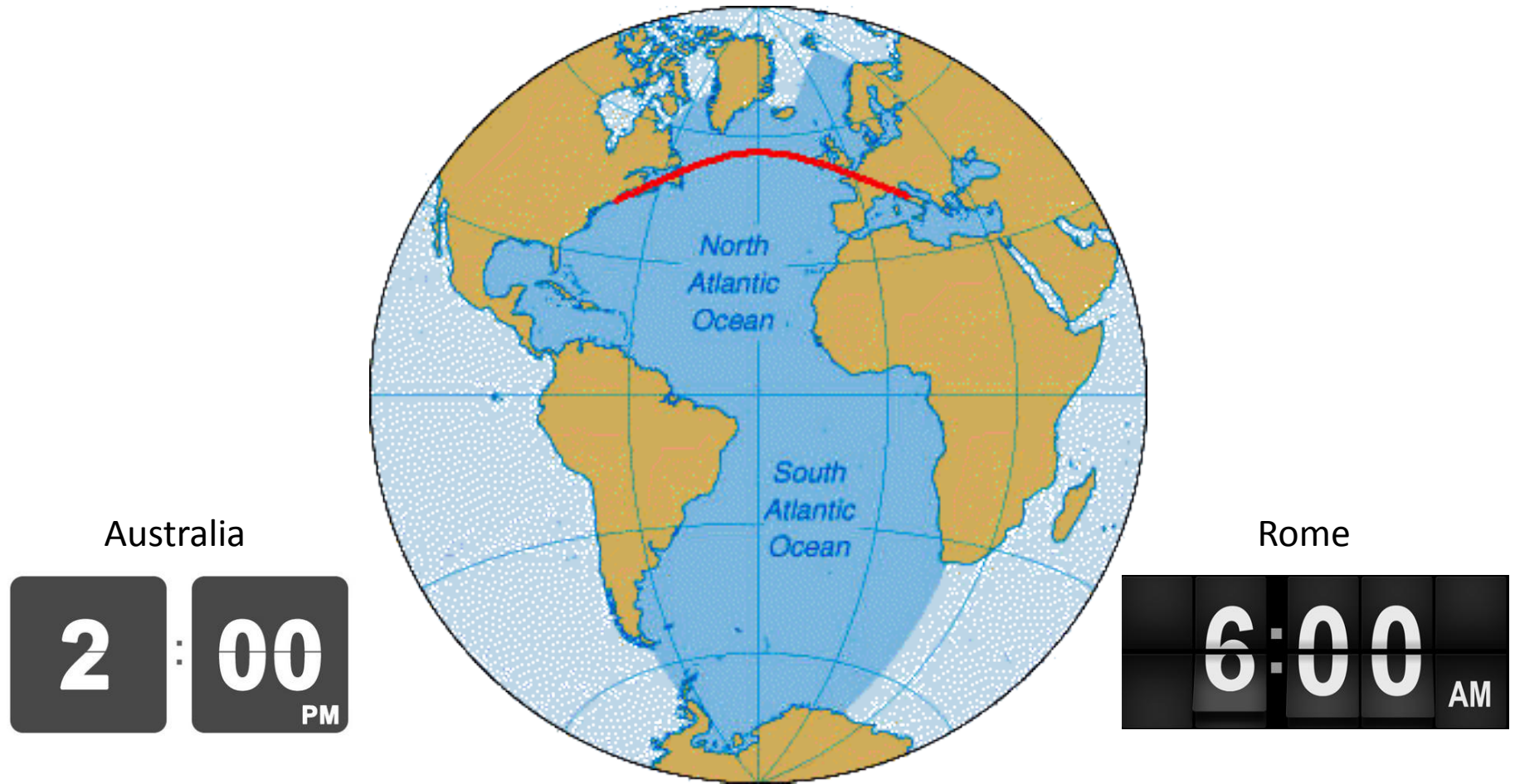
Italy (Italia in Italian) is located in southern Europe.

In red on the map below, it sticks out into the Mediterranean Sea like a boot. The island of Sicily is part of Italy. It is the piece that looks like a football at the toe of the boot. Sardinia, also part of Italy, is the island north of Sicily. The small island of Elba is not shown on the map but it is also part of Italy.





It takes about eight hours to fly from New York to Rome.
If you leave New York at 9pm you might arrive in Rome at about 11:00 the next morning. That is because of the different time zones you fly through.
If it is 10am in Australia (morning), it is 2am in the morning in Italy (they are sleeping).



Italy is surrounded by France, Switzerland, and Austria to the north. Slovenia and the Adriatic Sea are to the east and the Ionian Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and Africa are to the south. To the far west of Italy is Spain.



Rome, the Eternal City, is the capital of Italy and its largest city.

Rome was the capital of the ancient world. The Roman Empire extended from England, to Germany, all the way to Turkey and Iraq, and included the northern coast of Africa. Romans spoke Latin.

Legend has it that the city of Rome was founded in 753 BC on one the city's seven hills. Today, about 2,656,000 people live in Rome.



Italy is a beautiful country. The Alps (mountains) are located in northern Italy, providing opportunity for winter sports. The Apennine Mountains run the length of the country and provide fertile farmland. The cities of Italy are popular vacation spots for travellers from all over the world.



Italy is about 116,000 square miles in size. It is a little bigger than Arizona and a little smaller than New Mexico. About 58 million people live in Italy. Italy's climate varies depending on where you are. The northern areas are cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Snow can begin in the Alps as early as the middle of September.



As you travel south, the temperature becomes more mild. The warm winds of the Mediterranean provide spectacular weather. In the summer, winds from Africa can cause extremely hot temperatures in the areas south of Rome.

Italy's largest cities are Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin, and Palermo. Florence, Genoa, and Bologna are other important cities.



There is a famous saying, "All roads lead to Rome." In ancient times that was true. Rome is Italy's capital and its largest city.

Over 2,500,000 people live there. Rome is known as "the eternal city."

It is filled with some of the world's most famous buildings like the Colosseum and Trevi Fountain. If you throw a coin over your left shoulder while you have your back to the fountain, it is supposed to bring you good luck and a quick return to Rome.



Rome is also home to St. Peter's Basilica and Vatican City. The Pope lives here. He is the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican City is not part of Italy, it is an independent country only .17 square miles in size. About 1,000 people live in Vatican City.



Milan (Milano in Italian) is in northern Italy and about 1,300,000 people live in Milan. It is the center of Italian finance, commerce, and manufacturing. Milan is home to some of the world's most famous fashion designers. Milan is a mostly modern city with a subway system. You can visit La Scala Opera House and see The Last Supper painted by Leonardo Da Vinci. You can also visit Milan's Galleria, a beautiful street of stores and restaurants covered by an amazing glass roof.



Naples (Napoli in Italian) is the most important seaport in Italy. It is the center of Italy's exporting business. About 1,000,000 people live in Naples.



Nearly 2,000 years ago Mount Vesuvius (a volcano) erupted and buried the nearby city of Pompei in nearly 20 feet of ash. You can see Mount Vesuvius and visit the ruins of the city of Pompei if you go to Naples. The discovery of these ruins in the 1800s shows us what life was like in Italy 2,000 years ago.

Sicily (Sicilia in Italian) is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. Palermo is on the island of Sicily. It is the island's largest city and Sicily's main port. About 5 million people live on the island of Sicily and 680,000 of them live in Palermo.



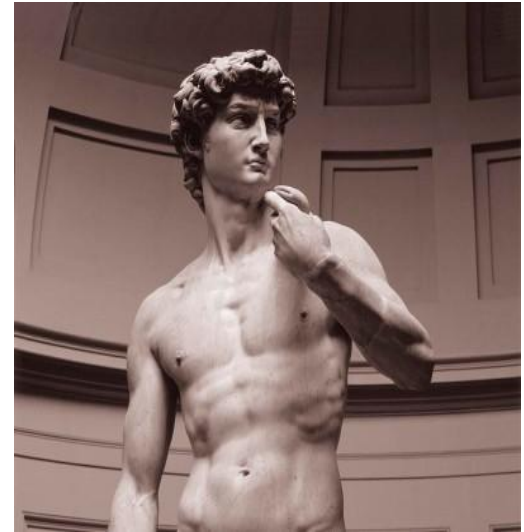
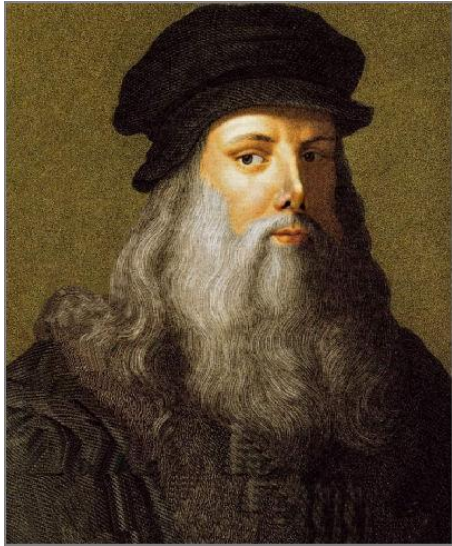
You can also find the volcano Mount Etna on Sicily. Farmers grow oranges and olives on some of the fertile lower mountain slopes. Wheat is its most important crop. The winds from Africa can cause draught in Sicily.

Turin (Torino in Italian) is in northern Italy. The Italian Alps spread the border of northern Italy and Turin is the doorway. Turin hosted the 2006 Winter Olympic Games. Turin is the center of Italy's automobile industry. It is home to the car company Fiat and two wonderful soccer teams; Juventus and Torino.



There are many magnificent castles nearby and beautiful 17th and 18th century buildings to see. You can visit the Egyptian Museum and see the Shroud of Turin (a cloth that many believe was wrapped around Jesus after he died.)

Florence (Firenze in Italian) is located in the Tuscany region at the foot of the Apennine Mountains. It is known for its famous museums, architecture, and artwork. Florence is one of the world's most visited cities because of the amazing paintings and statues that you can see here. Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci are two of the famous artists whose work you can see here.



Venice (Venezia in Italian) is in northeastern Italy. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Venice sits on 120 islands that are surrounded by canals. It is known as "the city of canals." In ancient times salt was their most important trading item. Salt was valuable in preserving meats and fish.



Today Venetians travel by motor launch to get from place to place. Tourists can still use a gondola to tour the city. Motor vehicles are not permitted on the islands and the city's 400 bridges are for pedestrians.



The national sport of Italy is soccer (il calcio in Italian). Italy has won four World Cup Championships and been to the Championship finals at least ten times. In 1990, Italy was host to the World Cup Championships.



Half of Italy's usable land is used for farming. In the south, olive trees grow on the mountainsides. Olive oil is a very important ingredient in Italian cooking. The figs in Italy are wonderful!





Italy is also famous for grapes used to make wine. In Tuscany they make Chianti and in Sicily they make Marsala wine.



Italian cheeses like parmesan and mozzarella are also popular around the world. Other important crops are wheat, citrus fruits, and tomatoes.



Italy is certainly one of the most beautiful places in the world. From the Leaning Tower of Pisa to the canals of Venice, Italy is truly breathtaking.



This is the Italian Flag.

The colors of the flag represent the three cardinal virtues:
Green - hope; White - faith; Red - charity.



Ciao!



<http://www.pocanticohills.org/italy/about.htm>