

# Culture

When I think of culture the first three things that come to mind are art, food, and symbols. The formal definition of culture is the shared products of human groups. Italy is one of the most rich and diverse cultures of the world. Italy is a land of art which is one of the main reasons it is rich in culture. It also over the years has developed some of the most popular foods all over the world. Throughout Italy there are various symbols dating back to the beginning of Italy's existence twelve thousand years ago.

Italians believe a country that does not appreciate art is a country with no soul. This clearly shows the impact that art has had on Italian culture. During Italy's twelve thousand years many of the most famous artists from sculptors to painters to musicians to architects have come from Italy. Think for a minute what modern art or any art since the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries would be like without the Renaissance. Renaissance Art was born in Florence, Italy and spread throughout all of Italy and Europe. Italy has been the home to two of the most famous painters Michelangelo and Leonardo de Vinci. Michelangelo was not only a painter but also a sculptor and an architect. Italy holds the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Cathedral, and the David; these are if not the three most famous pieces of art they are at the top. Italy also has a strong musical influence on its culture. The opera and ballet were both founded in Italy as well as many musical instruments including the violin, piano, and cello. An Italian monk, Guido D'Arezzo, invented a way to write music on paper. Architecture is another part of Italian art, there are many famous churches and other various buildings including the Coliseum, the Forum, and the Pantheon that architects today are still trying to figure out how they were built. Palladio, one of Italy's most famous architects, was loved by Thomas Jefferson and you can see his style in Monticello and the University of Virginia campus. As you can see, Italy has been the home to many artistic inventions and people which has a strong impact on their culture. Art also impacts the Italian culture in that it brings in thousands and thousands of tourists every year to see it.

Another major part of Italian culture that attracts many tourists is Italian food. Italian food differs from region to region, although, the main difference is between the north and the south. In the north butter is used and fat noodles are the pasta but in the south meals are cooked with olive oil and spaghetti is the pasta. Rice and Pastas are very important in Italian cooking. There are over forty types of pasta although the highest quality is produced in the south. Many meals Americans eat originated in Italy, two examples are pasta and pizza. The fork was also invented in Italy. Italians like to cook big meals for their families especially during the holidays. Italian cooking is a very important part of their heritage and culture.

Over the course of Italy's twelve thousand years it has inherited many symbols. Most of these symbols relate to either history or their religion. In Italy there are 100,000 monuments, 20,000 churches, and 3,000 historic sites. Among the most famous of these symbolizing their religious beliefs are the Sistine Chapel, the Basilicas in Rome, and the various churches throughout the country. The largest church in the world and home to the Catholic Pope is in Italy, the St Peters Cathedral. As you can see the Italian culture is very rich, well-rounded and diverse. Italians are a gentle and proud people. They know how to enjoy life and live relaxed and happy. They love to enjoy their culture and see all the wonderful art and symbols of their

country and cook all their wonderful food. "Made in Italy" means made with style and class and coming from a country with one of the richest cultures.