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Italy's majestic countryside includes such winter resorts as Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Alps. The Alpine ski slopes—together with the country's sunny seaside resorts, historic cities, and world famous art and architecture—have made Italy a leading tourist nation.

## Italy

Italy is a country in southern Europe. It is known for its rich cultural heritage and natural beauty. Its cities have spectacular churches and large central plazas. Their museums contain some of the world's best-known art. The countryside has warm, sandy beaches; high, glacier-topped mountain peaks; and rolling hills covered with green fields and vineyards.

Italy occupies a boot-shaped peninsula that extends into the Mediterranean Sea from southern Europe. The country also includes two large islands, Sicily and Sardinia. Two independent countries lie within Italy's borders: the tiny Republic of San Marino, in north-central

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Italy, and Vatican City, which is located completely within the city of Rome.

Italy's landscape is dominated by two mountain ranges—the Alps and the Apennines. The Alps tower across the northernmost part of Italy. The Apennines form a backbone that runs nearly the entire length of the peninsula.

Italy got its name from the ancient Romans. The Romans called the southern part of the peninsula *Italia*, meaning *land of oxen* or *grazing land*.

The country boasts several world-famous cities. Rome, the capital and largest city of Italy, was the center of the Roman Empire 2,000 years ago. Florence was the home of many artists of the Renaissance, a period of great achievements in the arts. Venice, with its intricate canal system, attracts tourists from all over the world.



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Outdoor restaurants, such as this one in Rome, are a common sight in Italian cities. People gather at such restaurants to enjoy good food in a pleasant urban setting.



E. Streichan, Shostal

The village of Positano lies on the Tyrrhenian Sea near Amalfi. Picturesque white houses are nestled on the rocky cliffs of this popular resort town.



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The Colosseum, in downtown Rome, is one of the most famous surviving architectural marvels of the Roman Empire. It is a reminder of the long and rich history of the Italian peninsula.

For hundreds of years, the history of Italy dominated the history of Western civilization. Ancient Rome began its overseas conquests during the 200's B.C., and by the A.D. 100's the Roman Empire controlled all the lands bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The empire influenced the government, the arts, and the architecture of many later groups of people. After the fall of Rome in the A.D. 400's, the Italian peninsula was divided among many different rulers.

Much of the Italian peninsula was united during the early 1800's, when Napoleon Bonaparte captured the region and made it part of the French Empire. Most of Italy was united as an independent country for the first time in 1861 under the constitutional monarchy headed by King Victor Emmanuel II.

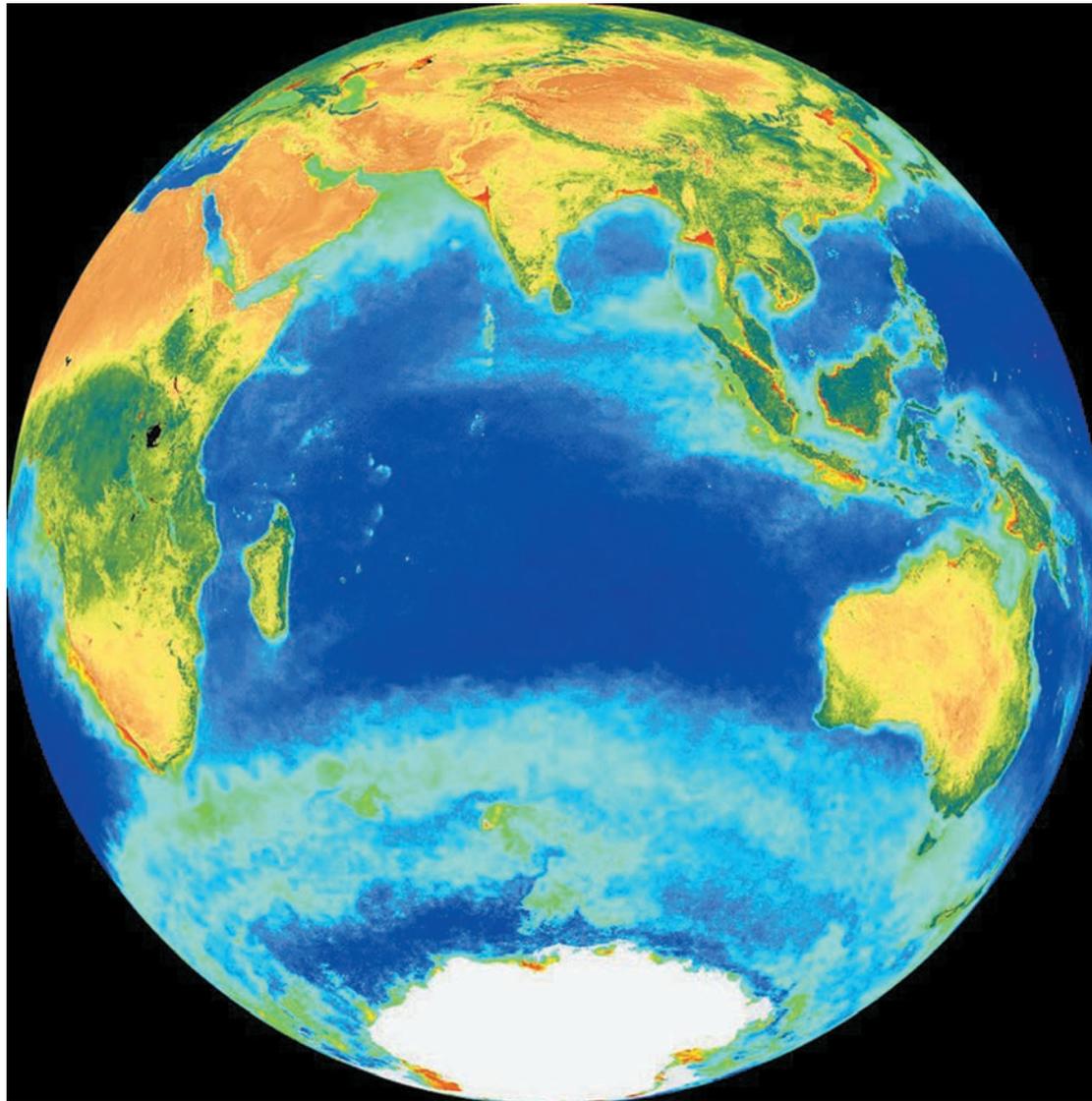
Benito Mussolini, a Fascist, took control of the Italian

government in the early 1920's (see Fascism). Mussolini ruled as a dictator until 1943, when he was overthrown as a result of Italy's declining fortunes in World War II (1939-1945). In 1946, the people of Italy voted to abolish the monarchy. Italy has had a republican form of government since that time.

Since World War II, Italy has experienced great economic and industrial expansion. Today, northern Italy is among Europe's wealthiest and most modern regions, but the south of Italy remains considerably poorer.

### Government

Italy set up its present form of government in 1946. That year, the people voted to change their nation from a monarchy ruled by a king to a republic headed by a president. King Umberto II (also spelled Humbert)



NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center & ORBIMAGE/SeaWiFS Project

**Ocean waters** cover most of Earth's surface. This satellite view shows the Indian Ocean, partly bordered by Africa, Asia, and Australia, and below it the Southern Ocean surrounding Antarctica.

## Ocean

**Ocean** is the great body of water that covers nearly 71 percent of Earth's surface. People also call it the sea. The ocean serves as a source of food, energy, minerals, and recreation. Ships sail the ocean to carry cargo between continents. The sea also plays a major role in Earth's climate system by regulating the air temperature and by supplying the moisture for rainfall. If there were no

ocean, life as we know it could not exist on our planet.

The ocean contains about 97 percent of all the water on Earth. Most of the remaining water occurs frozen in ice sheets and other ice formations. The rest is underground, in the air, or in such bodies of water as lakes and rivers.

The bottom of the ocean has features as varied as those on land. Huge plains spread across the ocean floor, and long mountain chains rise toward the surface. Volcanoes erupt from the ocean bottom, and trenches and valleys plunge to great depths.

Scientists called *oceanographers* work to discover the

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ocean's secrets. They study how the ocean moves and how it affects the atmosphere. They investigate the chemical composition of seawater and monitor the forces that shape the sea floor. They also study how organisms live in the sea and how people affect the ocean.

### The world ocean

The ocean forms one great connected body of water often called the *world ocean* or the *global ocean*. Geographers and oceanographers divide the world ocean into five major parts. They are the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, the Southern Ocean, and the Arctic Ocean. Each ocean includes smaller bodies of water called *seas*, *gulfs*, or *bays*, which lie along the ocean margins. For example, the Caribbean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea are part of the Atlantic, and the Bering Sea and the South China Sea are part of the Pacific. The word *sea* also refers to the ocean in general.

**Area.** The world ocean covers about 71 percent of Earth's surface. Most of the ocean lies in the Southern Hemisphere—that is, south of the equator. The Southern Hemisphere consists of about 80 percent ocean, and the Northern Hemisphere about 60 percent.

The Pacific Ocean ranks as the largest ocean by far. It

covers about 66 million square miles (171 million square kilometers)—about one-third of Earth's surface. Near the equator, the Pacific stretches about 11,000 miles (17,700 kilometers) from Panama to the Malay Peninsula. North and South America border the Pacific on the east, and Asia and Australia lie to the west. To the north, the Bering Strait links the Pacific with the Arctic Ocean. See **Pacific Ocean**.

The Atlantic Ocean covers about 34 million square miles (88 million square kilometers). Europe and Africa lie east of the Atlantic, and North and South America lie west. See **Atlantic Ocean**.

The Indian Ocean has an area of about 26.6 million square miles (69 million square kilometers). Africa lies to the west. Australia and Indonesia lie to the east. Asia borders this ocean on the north. See **Indian Ocean**.

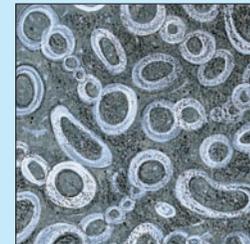
The Southern Ocean covers about 8.5 million square miles (22 million square kilometers). It surrounds the continent of Antarctica. See **Southern Ocean**.

The Arctic Ocean covers about 3.7 million square miles (9.6 million square kilometers). It is bounded by Asia, Europe, and North America. See **Arctic Ocean**.

**Depth.** The world ocean has an average depth of 13,000 feet (4,000 meters), but parts of the ocean plunge

### Interesting facts about the ocean

**Life began in the ocean** according to most scientists. Fossils of one sea creature, pictured here, which belongs to a group of soft-bodied animals called mollusks, show that the organism has remained unchanged for over 500 million years.



**There is a bit of "ocean" inside us.** The body of an adult male contains about 19 quarts (18 liters) of salt water. The composition of this fluid is similar to seawater.

**The Atlantic Ocean's floor spreads** about 0.6 inch (1.5 centimeters) yearly, widening the ocean basin. The Pacific floor spreads about 5 inches (13 centimeters) yearly. The edges of this floor sink under continents, so the basin does not widen.

WORLD BOOK illustrations by John Eggert and Robin Bouttell, WildLife Art Limited



**The world ocean would rise** about 200 feet (60 meters) if the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets should suddenly melt. New York City would be submerged, with only the tops of the tallest buildings above water.

**Tsunami waves**—powerful waves usually caused by an earthquake or underwater landslide—can reach speeds of 600 miles (970 kilometers) per hour and travel across an entire ocean.



**Giant kelp**, a large seaweed, may grow up to 200 feet (60 meters) long. Great underwater forests of kelp exist in many parts of the ocean. These forests provide shelter for numerous animals, including fish. Other animals, such as sea otters, roam the kelp forests in search of food.