

the knot



Marrying in Europe: Italy

Why wed in Italy? The question is not why you should go to Italy, the birthplace of the phrase *la dolce vita* (the sweet life), but where in this country of art, ancient history, ethereal vistas, top-notch cuisine, and abundant wine (Italy leads the world with more than four million acres of vineyards) is the ideal destination for you.

When To Go: April through June, September, and October are the best times to explore Italy, with mild temperatures and smaller crowds. August is uncomfortably hot, and it's the month when most Italians go on vacation, so many shops, hotels, and restaurants may be closed. Winters in the north are cold and rainy (you may even see snow), while the south stays on the warmer side, with temps averaging around 50 degrees.

Northern Italy

From the small village lining the Lake Como region to the big cities packed with art, architecture, fine dining, and fashion, northern Italy offers old-world culture mixed with modern cities and historic attractions.

Find info online at ItalianTourism.com

Guest Must-Dos: Shop 'til you drop in Milan (the epicenter of Italian design), and while there be sure to take a tour of the world's fourth largest cathedral. In Venice, hop on a gondola through the canals. In the lakes region, cruise around Lake Como and try to spot the celebrity-owned villas (George Clooney and Richard Gere both have homes there).

Hot Properties

- Fonte de' Medici, FontedeMedici.com
Fonte de' Medici is a cluster of farmhouses tucked away in the Tuscan vineyards between Florence and Sienna. The brightly colored walls and charm of the Chianti region will suit the couple that wants a relaxed atmosphere, great food and wine, and an intimate setting where guests can all get to know one another.
- Hotel Principe di Savoia, HotelPrincipediSavoia.com
A one-stop shop for couples looking to plan a sophisticated Italian weekend with a youthful edge. The staff here can help with everything: finding florists, booking spa treatments for the wedding party, and planning the menu. All you have to do is arrive, enjoy, and say "I do."
- Villa d'Este, Cernobbia, VilladEste.it
This amazingly regal lakeside property is a former sixteenth-century residence for European

aristocrats, and weddings here take on that same old-world, lavish feel. Set on the shores of Lake Como, guest rooms are uniquely decorated with period furnishings, and some have balconies with a view of the lake. Have your ceremony and reception in one of the many banquet rooms, terraces, or gardens.

- Grand Hotel et de Milan, GrandHoteletdeMilan.it
- Hotel Cipriani, HotelCipriani.com
- Hotel Certosa di Maggiano, CertosadiMaggiano.it
- Villa La Massa, Florence VillaMassa.com

Southern Italy

When it comes to picturesque settings, it's hard to beat southern Italy, with its majestic peaks, gentle valleys, and miles of lovely coastline.

Guest Must-Dos: Tour the Catacombs of the Capuchins, which contain thousands of mummified bodies; shop for local fare at the Ballaro street market in Palermo; visit the cathedral at San Giorgio dei Genovesi, where Sicily's kings and queens are buried; be at the cathedral of Messina at noon to see the world's largest animated clock perform; take a drive to Piazza Armerina, a town with a spectacular hilltop view and what's thought to be a hunting lodge with mosaics dating back to the fourth century AD; and gander at Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe.

Hot Properties

- San Domenico Palace, Taormina, THI.it
Built on the site of a fifteenth-century monastery, the San Domenico Palace offers sweeping views of the water and Mount Etna. Hold your ceremony in the property's lush garden, then move inside for the reception in one of the hotel's four banquet rooms, which can accommodate anywhere from 90 to 350 people.
- Massimo Plaza Hotel, MassimoPlazaHotel.com
The perfect setting for a princess bride, the palazzo has a striking outdoor staircase, which sets the tone for a weekend of royal treatment. The recent renovations (supported by the city of Palermo) have retained the hotel's character and modernized the amenities.
- Grand Hotel Ortigia, GrandHotelSr.it
- Hotel Villa Athena, AthenaHotels.com