

CITY OF MILAN

The hard-working Milanese run their busy metropolis with efficiency and aplomb. Milano is the country's economic engine room, home to Italy's stock market and business centres. This stylish city is also the world's design capital and rivals Paris as a leading fashion centre.

Milan is all about worldly pleasures. Shopping is of almost religious significance. Theatre and cinema flourish in this fashionable milieu, as does a hopping club scene and a slew of tempting restaurants. Apart from a few gems, the city is not renowned for its looks; it's the lifestyle that counts.



Image 1. Teatro la Scala



Image 2. Brera Museum



Image 3. Navigli

Orientation

Milan is a sprawling metropolis, but most of its attractions are concentrated in the city centre, between the Duomo (cathedral) and the Castello Sforzesco. The Duomo is the best place to begin exploring the city and is within strolling distance of dozens of historic sites. The city's efficient underground railway, the Metropolitana Milanese (MM) has a stop here. Apart from the city centre, another area deserving your attention is the Brera, immediately north of the Duomo, with its posh galleries and fashionable shopping streets. Also check out Navigli to the south.

History

Milan is said to have been founded by Celtic tribes, who settled along the Po river in the 7th century BC. In 222 BC, Roman legions marched into the territory, defeated the locals and occupied the town, which they called Mediolanum (middle of the plain).

From the mid-13th century, the city was governed by a succession of important families: the Torrianis, the Viscontis and the Sforzas. Under the latter dynasties, Milan enjoyed considerable wealth and power. The city came under Spanish rule in 1535 and was given to Austria in 1713 as part of the Treaty of Utrecht. Napoleon made Milan the capital of his Cisalpine Republic in 1797 and his Italian Republic five years later. It hosted his coronation as King of Italy in 1805. There are still many monuments attesting Milan's rich historical past. Among them:

Castello Sforzesco

Duomo

Pinacoteca Ambrosiana

Santa Maria delle Grazie with Leonardo da Vinci's famous "The Last Supper"



Image 4. The Last Supper



Image 5. Duomo Square

Events Overview

Milan likes to celebrate the spiritual and material worlds with equal gusto. The Festa di Sant'Ambrogio, on 7 December, is Milan's biggest feast day, and is marked with religious celebrations and traditional fairs around the Fiera di Milano. La Scala marks the solemn occasion by opening its opera season on this day.

Milan is the city of the most important industries of Fashion (Armani, Versace, Gucci, Prada and so on), the city of great sport events taking place at the famous Stadio of San Siro and a young city where you may find hundreds opportunities of enjoying nightlife.

The first 10 days of June are devoted to the Festa del Naviglio, a smorgasbord of parades, music and other performances. The Milan Jazz Festival rocks through the city in November. Make the tourist office your first port of call for finding out more about these and other festivals and events.

If you feel the need for speed, Milan has the raceway for you: the Monza Autodrome, 20km northeast of the city, hosts the Italian Grand Prix, where the top designers from Fiat, Jaguar and Ferrari show off their finest Formula One racers at an *average* speed of 250km/hr.



Image 6. The streets of shopping: via Montenapoleone



Image 7. San Siro