

SPORTS IN ITALY

2006 World Cup



Many sports are played in Italy today but **calcio** (*soccer*) is the most popular one. Italian fans cheer on their local teams, especially those promoted to Serie A, the Italian major league. Inter-urban rivalries, including those among Naples, Milan, and Rome, are intense. Italian sports fans, called **tifosi** (*fever boys*) are raucous and energetic.

The Italian National Team, **la Squadra Azzurra** (*the blue team*) is a major source of national pride. Some claim that Italy's victory in the **1982 World Cup** did more for national unity than any political movement. The National Football Team is widely considered as the second best in the history of the World Cup, next only to Brazil who has won five championships. Italy has taken a total of **four FIFA World Cup's** (1934, 1938, 1982, and 2006). The **Azzurri** also were twice the European champions (1968, 2020) as well as a two-time Central European International Cup winners.

When you think of auto racing you think of Ferrari.

Auto racing receives much attention in Italy, while the nation is host to a number of notable automobile racing events, such as the famed Italian Grand Prix.

The Italian flair for design is legendary, and it should come as no surprise that Ferrari has won more Formula Ones than any other manufacturer.



Bicycling is also popular in Italy. Besides manufacturing some of the best bikes in the world and hosting bike tours, Italians host the **Giro d'Italia**, a 25-day cross-country race in May.

Italians have won more World Cycling Championships than any other country except Belgium.

Italy also has a strong foothold in a number of sports such as **rugby, basketball, swimming, tennis, fencing**, as well as **winter sports** with champions in ski and luge winning the gold medal.