

Lesson Four: Zoom in on Italy

Factsheet on Venice

Name in Italian: Venezia

Region located in: Veneto

Population: 350,000

Historical background

Venice is a very particular and beautiful city. It is a city on water, built up around canals. People travel around Venice by foot, on water taxi or by the famous Gondola boats. No cars can be taken into Venice and there is a train line which crosses the water to get to the island.

Venice borders the Adriatic Sea, and therefore in the past it was an extremely important base for the navy and a busy trading port. It was founded in the 5th Century AD by refugees from Northern Italy whose home was constantly being invaded by wars and raids. These refugees made their living by fishing and trading salt.

Venice is under threat on a yearly basis by flooding. The city tries to prepare for this. However, it is a constant issue for the city. Venice is beginning to sink a little bit each year and some scientists blame the rising sea levels for this and others the way in which the city was built and developed. Work is being done to think about how to save this city from eventually sinking away forever.

Most famous tourist sights

Venice is one of the most visited cities in Italy. As soon as you arrive at the train station you are on the canals. There you can take the famous Gondola boats. There are a huge number of bridges in Venice so that people can access the different parts of the city. The most famous bridge is the Rialto Bridge. Tourists also visit the famous Saint Mark's Square and the Basilica of Saint Mark, the Doge's Palace and the Bridge of Sighs.

City economics

Venice is a tourist city. It relies heavily on tourism as it is one of the world's most popular destinations. People from all over the world come to Venice to see the famous sights. Venice also makes a special type of glass which is famous around the world. Shipping companies still operate from Venice: however, it is not as significant a port as it used to be, and the main economy is now tourism. The Carnevale and Venice Film Festival are two events which boost the city's economy every year.

Other information

One of Italy's most famous festivals is Carnevale ('carnival' in English). This takes place throughout Italy in February. The most famous city to visit for Carnevale is Venice. Thousands of people visit each year to see the parade of Venetian masks and festivities.