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Italy delights and stimulates with its magnificent cities and monuments, its stunningly beautiful landscapes, the glory of its art and architecture, the richness and variety of its food, the elegance of its design and fashion, and the vitality

and charm of its people. Italian style and culture have been exported all over the world. What is it like at home? Almost ten years after the 2008 banking crisis, Italy struggles to maintain its standard of living, the stability of the currency, and its ability to provide jobs for its school leavers and university graduates, many of whom now leave to work elsewhere in Europe. In addition, the influx of refugees from southeast Europe and across the Mediterranean is putting pressure on both its security and its economy. How are traditional Italian society and politics changing to deal with these challenges, with its most famous political personality of the last ten years, the former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi, still apparently waiting in the wings? The Italians are the most European-minded of nations, having emerged from a long history of regional fragmentation. Culture Smart! Italy introduces you to their history and culture and offers an insider's guide to their daily lives, passions, and preoccupations. This is your chance to get to know them better.