

Italy

Key facts in 1929

Area: 310,190 km²^[1,2]

With Colonies: 2,576,100km²^[3,4]

Population: 40 Million^[5]

With Colonies: 43.5 Million^[5,6,7,8]

Life expectancy: 52.7 Years^[9]

With Colonies: 50.8 Years^[5,6,7,8,9,10]

Literacy rate: 78.4%^[11]

With Colonies: ~72.5%^[5,6,7,8,11]

Biggest Minorities: German-speakers, French-speakers, Slovene-speakers, Albanian-speakers, Greek-speakers, Roma^[12]

Select Main Cities: Rome, Naples, Milan, Turin, Florence, Venice, Bologna, Palermo, Genoa, Bari^[1]

With Colonies: No major city in colonies

Neighboring countries: France, Switzerland, Austria, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, San Marino, The Vatican

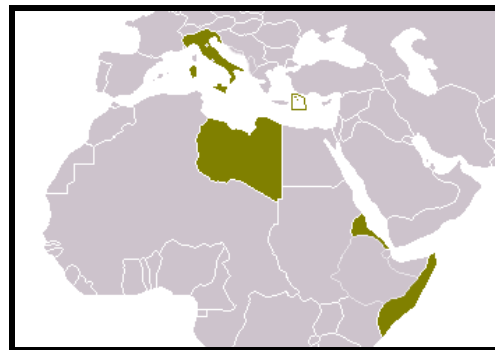
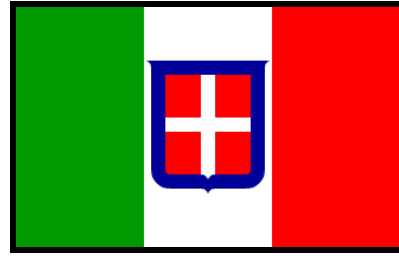
With Colonies: Ethiopia, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, French Somalia, British Somalia, British Kenya, British Egypt, French Tunisia, French Algeria.^[13,14]

Sea Access: Yes, Mediterranean Sea, Adriatic Sea

With Colonies: Red Sea, Indian Ocean

GDP: 16'400'000'000 \$1929^[15,16]

With Colonies: 16'500'000'000 \$1929^[15,16]



Recent Historical Background

The Kingdom of Italy was founded in 1861 as a constitutional monarchy in which the Monarch held the executive power and appointed ministers, while the bicameral Legislature held the legislative power.^[17] From 1866 to 1914 Italy fought several wars with their Neighbors Austria-Hungary, which helped Italy gain the territory of Venice, but also ending the papal states.^[18,19] Italy participated in World War I on the side of the Allied powers. In this war, Italy was promised to gain Trieste and other parts of

modern-day Croatia and Slovenia.^[20] Unfortunately for Italy, the promise was only held partly, which plunged Italy into a deep political Chaos. Amplified by the economic Woes and other broken promises to soldiers, a party called Fasci Italiani di Combattimento (“Italian Fighting Leagues”) with their ultranationalist leader Benito Mussolini came to power through violence and erosion of democracy.^[21,22] From 1924 on, Mussolini, with an ever-increasing cult of personality, ruled the country unopposed.^[3]

Political Situation

Although officially the monarch serves as the Head of State and the country remains a constitutional Kingdom, Mussolini effectively assumed control of Italy and governed with authoritarian rule. The regime was characterized by totalitarianism and nationalism, sacrificing individualism and liberty for a militaristic form of nationalism cultivated through propaganda and the cult of personality surrounding Mussolini. Domestically, the political landscape was stable for the regime, with opposition figures either imprisoned or executed, and the populace generally acquiescing to the government. However, externally, Mussolini faced pressure due to his aggressive foreign policies in the Balkans and Africa.^[3]

Economic Situation

In the early 1920s, Italy enjoyed a liberal market environment characterized by tax reductions, simplification of tax regulations, and the privatization of state-owned enterprises. The economy began to recover gradually from the aftermath of World War I, with a notable 20% growth from 1922 to 1925 and a significant 77% decrease in unemployment. However, this trajectory shifted with Mussolini's consolidation of power. Embracing an economic theory of corporatism, Mussolini aimed to resolve class conflicts by fostering collaboration among unions, workers, industrialists, and the state to achieve societal cohesion. Consequently, his government adopted more interventionist policies and increased spending on government programs, leading to a structural deficit. Italy's debt soared from 93 billion lira in 1922 to 143 billion lira in 1934. Despite these changes, Italy grappled with substantial challenges in industrialization. Much of the population remained engaged in agriculture, reflecting the country's underdeveloped status. Regional disparities persisted, with the Southern regions lagging behind in wealth, industrialization, and reliance on agriculture compared to the more prosperous and industrialized North.^[3,17,23,24]

Military Strength in 1929

In 1929, the Italian navy had many Ships, including 84 destroyers, 41 torpedo boats and 38 submarines.^[25] The total military funding of 1929 was 3.57% of the GDP and the military personnel comprised 315'000 people.^[26] Most of the Tanks the Italian Army used were Fiat 3000s, with about 152 built while it also used 25 Fast Tanks which had just been built in 1929.^[27] When it came to military aviation, it had 300 planes in 1923, and in 1925 the air force was organized in 78 squadrons.^[28]

Key Facts about Military Strength of Italy ^[25,26,27,28]	
Active personnel	315'000
Tanks	177
Other vehicles	unknown
Cavalry	unknown
Ships	278
Planes	~300
Funding in 1929\$	585'480'000

Allies/Enemies/Existing territorial disputes in 1929

Allies: Spain (good relations between Primo de Rivera and Mussolini)^[29], Albania (Albanian Kingdom)^[30]

Enemies: France, Yugoslavia, United Kingdom (Territorial disputes)^[31]

Territorial Disputes: Dalmatia (with Yugoslavia), Malta (with the United Kingdom), Corfu (with Greece), Ticino (with Switzerland), Corsica, Nice, and Savoy (with France)^[31]

Some of the Main Goals for the 1930s

1. Recovery from the great depression through stronger autarky (through the colonization of countries), nationalization of industries and massive investment in military projects
2. Expand influence in the Balkans, the Horn of Africa and in the eastern Mediterranean Sea
3. Increase collaboration with ultranationalist governments to be a counterweight to the alliance of Britain and France
4. Achieve the control of territories or influence with Italian minorities in neighboring countries (Switzerland, France, and Yugoslavia)

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