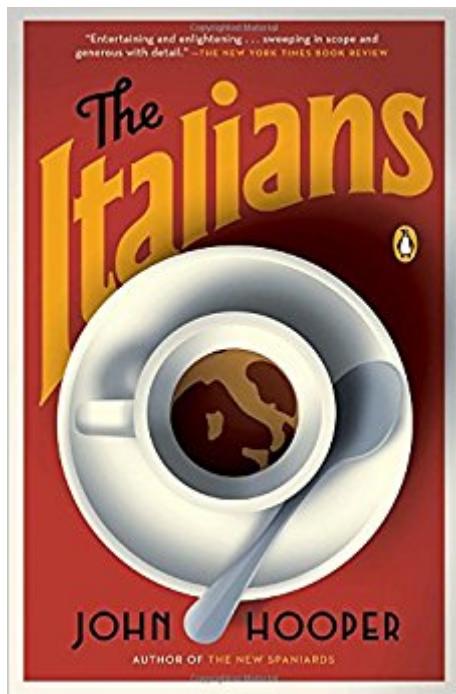


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The Italians



Synopsis

Washington Post bestsellerLos Angeles Times bestsellerA vivid and surprising portrait of the Italian people from an admired foreign correspondent How did a nation that spawned the Renaissance also produce the Mafia? And why does Italian have twelve words for coat hanger but none for hangover? A John Hooper's entertaining and perceptive new book is the ideal companion for anyone seeking to understand contemporary Italy and the unique character of the Italians. Fifteen years as a foreign correspondent based in Rome have sharpened Hooper's observations, and he looks at the facts that lie behind the stereotypes, shedding new light on everything from the Italians' bewildering politics to their love of life and beauty. Hooper persuasively demonstrates the impact of geography, history, and tradition on many aspects of Italian life, including football and Freemasonry, sex, food, and opera. Brimming with the kind of fascinating—and often hilarious—insights unavailable in guidebooks, *The Italians* will surprise even the most die-hard Italophile.From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

A compact but comprehensive study of the people of Italy. The author puts his finger on the vast diversity of the country through his descriptions of their linguistics, cultures, foods, economies and even journalism. What's not to love? A thoroughly researched, well-written, ageless narrative of a fascinating people. Kirkus, starred review A sophisticated portrait of the Italians at their best and their worst: charming, imaginative, generous, full of life but also unreliable, more or less corrupt and often downright infuriating. I found myself laughing out loud at

some of the humorous twists Mr. Hooper has put to his very perceptive analyses. A worthy and long-overdue successor to Luigi Barzini's classic *The Italians*.¹ Andrea Di Robilant, author of *A Venetian Affair*² John Hooper takes his readers deep into the Italian labyrinth. And they come out alive, with a smile on their faces! A remarkable achievement.³ Beppe Severgnini, author of *Ciao America* and *La Bella Figura*⁴ "In vivid and fluid prose, John Hooper has written an indispensable guide to life in Italy past and present. His incisive portrait, at turns hard-hitting and affectionate, reveals the Italians in all their complexity, from their *dolce vita* and transcendent art to their gut-wrenching social and political struggles."⁵ Joseph Luzzi, author of *My Two Italies*⁶ "Thanks to his great curiosity, his splendid comparative and analytical perspective, and a fine eye for telling details, John Hooper gets under the skin of a fascinating people in a remarkable and compelling way."⁷ Bill Emmott, co-author of the documentary about Italy⁸ "Girlfriend in a Coma"⁹ "Here is the history, passion, culture, and contradictions that make Italy and Italians so fascinating. John Hooper's *The Italians* is as enjoyable to read as taking a trip to my favorite country!"¹⁰ Ann Hood, author of *An Italian Wife*

John Hooper is the Italy correspondent of the *Economist* and a contributing editor of the *Guardian* (London). He has also written or broadcast for the BBC, NBC, and Reuters. His book¹¹ *The Spaniards*¹² won the Allen Lane Award and was revised and updated as¹³ *The New Spaniards*¹⁴ in 1995 and 2006. From the Hardcover edition.

For all those interested in modern Italy, this book is not to be missed. It's all here -- from the choking embrace of Italian history and the family to the chaotic political system and judiciary, from the influence of organized crime to the crumbling economy. Along with it, the happy side of Italian life -- beauty and culture, food and wine, an absence of alcoholism, and a great pride in just being Italian. Each chapter takes on one of these subjects and leads naturally into the next. It's an easy, engaging read by someone who has lived and worked in Italy for over two decades.

John Hooper is eminently qualified to write a book about what makes the Italians Italian: he's currently the Italy correspondent for "The Economist" and "The Guardian", and has lived the the country for many years. And he has produced a very good book, looking at the social and cultural phenomena that underlie Italy's political and economic malaise. Though he moves (amusingly) from topic to topic, some underlying themes emerge -- a deep conservatism, a focus on the family rather

than on broader social units, and a cautious approach to life in general. These conclusions reminded me of those I drew from Luigi Barzini's book "The Italians", published fifty years ago -- a book to which Mr. Hooper pays frequent and generous homage. Mr. Hooper's book is pleasant to read and full of interesting and amusing anecdotes. It may not quite measure up to the earlier "The Italians", but enough has changed to make an update well worthwhile.

We had an upcoming visit to southern and Northern Italy (Sorrento and Milano). This book was recommended and my friend was right. The people of the two areas were much easier to understand because of this book. The locals greatly appreciated my understanding their point of view. The time I spent reading this book greatly enhanced our trip! However, for my use, the later parts of the book began to drag and brought few new insights. Must read for travelers who want to get close to the locals.

Not finished yet but I don't want it to end. As a third gen Italian-Amer. with g-parents from the old country who lived till my 40's I have gained a lot of insight into why they were the way they were but mostly why I am the way I am. Even my inexplicable penchant for elaborately wrapping gifts has now been explained! I like that this is written by an American. He knows how to compare and contrast the aspects of Italian life which would be of greatest interest to Americans. I'm a political person and used to say that Italy utilizes the "Prime Minister of the Month Club" approach to governing. The background on the political development of what we now call Italy is illuminating. Having a family reunion in 2016 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of our grandparents marriage after they immigrated to Detroit. I'm recommending this book to the whole big family in preparation for the event. It might help us all get along. Maybe. We'll see. As Grandma Leone would say: "crossa you fings"

After living in Italy for many years, I can say with honesty that John Hooper does an excellent job in explaining and depicting life in Italy. If you are interested in the Italian culture or are thinking about traveling to Italy at some point, I believe that this is a must-read to truly appreciate the lifestyle.

Long on statistics, short on anecdotes, this account by a dispassionate Briton misses the mark. Look elsewhere.

This is a very entertaining and informative book; although it may reinforce some stereotypes of

Italians, it is also a very incisive look at some aspects of Italian philosophy, behavior, outlook, customs, and idiosyncracies that are often overlooked. Hooper has done an excellent job of describing Italian history and contemporary Italian culture. I like the rendering of Italy in the coffee cup on the cover - brilliant! It reminds me of one very artistic barista at a bar across from the U.S. Embassy annex in Rome who was adept at making unusual designs on the surface of cappuccino; it was worth the price of the coffee just to see what he could come up with next. I recommend this book to anyone even vaguely interested in Italy and/or the Italians.

Read during a recent trip to il bel paese and really appreciated the contextual history. Hooper's observations often mirror those I have made myself, but he digs deeper with his journalistic background to give stats and history to make them more meaningful. Heavy on politics and history, my favorite parts were when he focuses on cultural history. In the paperback edition, there were a smattering of caption-less b&w photos that I felt contributed little.

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