

Italy Ranks #1 in Cultural Influence in the World!

In a survey of the best countries in the world by U.S. World Report - guess which country came out as number one in cultural influence and heritage on a global scale?

You guessed it! *The Bel Paese*, the boot - in other words - ITALY!

The made in Italy label in everything Italians do assures you of quality, sophistication, creativity and beauty.

Italy beat out France, which came in number two, and the United States which squeezed into the number three spot.



PHOTO ABOVE: The Trojan Market, the first 'indoor shopping mall' in the world.

The boot-shaped European country sees more than 40 million tourists each year - and for good reason! It has ancient history, active volcanoes, pebble beaches, top-quality shopping and the best cuisine in the world. Not to mention some of the most beautiful people on Earth. When you're not drooling over its scrumptious cuisine, you can visit one of its many world heritage sites. It has more than any other country.

The nation is home to Mount Etna, Europe's tallest and most active volcano, and houses two countries within its borders - the Vatican and San Marino. Not to mention some of the highest peaks in the Alps, where intrepid skiers can challenge themselves.

Italy's history started with the Etruscans thousands of years ago, an ancient civilization that was eventually supplanted by the Romans in the third century B.C.

Later, Italy's city-states gave birth to the European Renaissance, when it became the cultural leader of the Western

world - and never stopped.

This rich history of genius, style and cultural influence - and above all, the country's historical cities, world-renowned cuisine and geographic beauty - put it to the top.

Voters rank Italy No. 1 in the cultural influence and heritage categories for its great food, fashion, attractions and accessibility.

PHOTO BELOW: View of the 'Ponte Vecchio' and other bridges of Florence over the river Arno.

