



**It's Italy in a nutshell. Here are some things you may not know and some that you might know about Italy. It's a little of this and a little of that.**



This is the last of "Italy in a Nutshell" messages. This message is "Odds and Ends." We hope you've enjoyed them all.

### Odds and Ends

▪ Unless you want to pay a hefty fine, don't eat or drink while sitting on church steps or within a church courtyard--including the Spanish Steps in Rome. Seems like the perfect spot to sit and enjoy a gelato or panino, right? But don't do it. The City of Rome has an ordinance, in an effort to keep the area clean, forbidding food on the Spanish Steps. They are very serious about this to the tune of 500€.



Then: Zero €



Now: 500€

▪ In 2012, the town of Falciano del Massico in Campania made it illegal for residents to die because the town's cemetery is full. The legal decree states "It is forbidden, with immediate effect, to all citizens resident in the municipality and to whoever passes by its territory, to cross the border of earthly life and to enter the afterlife." Anyone who died had to be buried in the nearby town of Mondragone--a town with a long-standing feud with Falciano del Massico. Citizens pay more for a cemetery plot there. The majority of residents in Falciano del Massico are retirees, and the mayor

requested that they "make every effort not to die until a new cemetery is built for the municipality." Unfortunately, well....



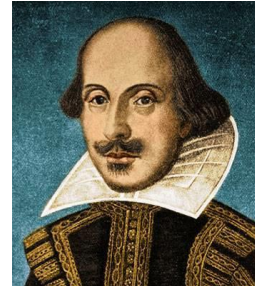
*Don't die. There's no space.*



*It's full up!*

- Italy's highest court ruled that stealing small amounts of food to stave off hunger is not a crime. This occurred when judges overturned a theft conviction against a homeless man after he stole cheese and sausages, saying he had taken the food "in the face of the immediate and essential need for nourishment."

- Thirteen of Shakespeare's plays are set either entirely or partially in Italy though there is no conclusive evidence that he every stepped foot outside of England.



- In the small town of Novara, Messina, (Sicily) the locals celebrate their produce every year in a very special way. Famous for its Maiorchino cheese, the festival consists of rolling wheels of this cheese (only well-aged wheels can participate) down a set of stairs that snakes through the town. The route is roughly 2km (about 1¼ miles) long, and 16 different teams play head-to-head to win. (The winner probably gets some cheese as a prize.) If you want to see the contest, [click here](#).

- Dog owners in Turin can be fined up to 500 euros (\$650) if they don't walk their pets at least three times a day. Also, pet owners are banned from dyeing their pets' fur or "any form of animal mutilation" for merely aesthetic motives such as docking dogs' tails. To enforce the law, Turin police rely largely on the help of tipsters.

▪ The island of Poveglia near Venice is said to be so haunted that public access is prohibited by the Italian government. It was the site of wars, a dumping ground for plague victims, and housed and insane asylum.



▪ Toilets in ancient Rome were bad enough to warrant prayers to the Gods of fortune written on the walls. Problems included bursts of flame from the methane buildup, and biting creatures emerging from below. (Ewww!!!) Since there was no toilet paper, did you ever wonder how they (ahem) cleaned up? A common

sponge on the end of a stick did the trick. Once it was used, it was dipped in the channel of water in front of the seats to rinse it off and then returned to a bucket with vinegar for the next customer. (Thank goodness for Costco!)

And speaking of toilets, in 2000, Luciano Faggiano planned to start a local trattoria business in Lecce, Puglia. Though old, his building was recently refurbished, but a sewage problem surfaced.

So he and his two sons crushed the floor in search of the broken pipe. They stumbled upon a false floor while looking for the pipe and then a second one further down. He tried to keep his discovery a secret, but his wife noticed a lot of dirty clothes and his neighbors wondered about all the rubble being brought out.

When officials visited the address, all activities were put to a halt and they determined it to be an unauthorized archaeological dig! A year later Faggiano was able to continue the dig and thousands of artifacts were brought up. Layers of history in the region were lurking beneath his broken toilet.

Faggiano now runs a privately-owned museum instead of a trattoria.