

Why *The Red Cat Guide*? Is this a book about Italian cats? Communist cats? Where to buy a cat in Italy? No! Then why not the Cocker Spaniel Guide to Italy? Because the author likes and identifies with all cats, and with red cats, or gatti rossi, as ginger colored cats are known in Italy, in particular. They personify the combination of a love of sensuous pleasures and a limitless curiosity, which we consider requisite to a full appreciation of this abundantly endowed country

The Red Cat has been roaming the streets and alleys of Rome and central Italy since the early 70's and learned where to eat well, sleep comfortably and have a good time. The Red Cat, more of a Gray Cat by now, may not know all you want or need to know, but he can probably tell you where to look to find what you seek. He also appreciates feedback to keep the guide updated.

Don't be put off by what you hear about strikes (not as many any more as there used to be), pick pockets, purse snatchers, terrorists or inflation. It may all be true but the streets of Rome are still far safer than those of Detroit, Atlanta or Houston, and probably even safer than those of New York too. Strikes are a nuisance at times, but they're usually brief and announced in advance. With the arrival of the Euro, foreigners no longer have to worry about the thousands of lire and what they're worth. At this writing the Euro is sort of a heavier dollar, in similar denominations, and cash is available at cash dispensing machines in every city using most major credit cards.

Some countries have beautiful cities or beautiful countryside; some have masterpieces of art and architecture, or 2000 year-old buildings. Some have good food and good wine at reasonable prices, elegant shopping, mountains, beaches, or attractive people, but no place in the world has all of them in quite the way that Italy does. So come on in, the wine is fine.

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