

Sydney travels to

MILAN

A Guide for Kids



Let's Go to Italy!

Written and Illustrated by

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Award winning artists and authors Keith Svagerko and Sydney Svagerko traveled to Milan, Italy to capture the city's old world charm and modern day fashion scene in a travel guide created from a kid's view. This kid's guide prepares children for Milan travel, with tips for grown-ups, too. Filled with descriptions, photographs, drawings and activities, this guide will educate and engage children while building anticipation for the trip. Sydney says, "This is Milan for kids!"

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First Edition

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Sydney's Travel Guides for Kids
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ARRIVING: THIS IS MILAN FOR KIDS

A City in the Po River Valley



An old castle among medieval churches; ancient Roman columns; nearly forgotten canals; Leonardo da Vinci's famous grand painting *The Last Supper*; a majestic cathedral with thousands of statues reaching to the sky—this is Milan for Kids!

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Milan is in Northern Italy, nestled below the Alps in the Po River Valley. While known widely for its fashion designers and fabulous shopping, it also has super museums and some of the oldest and largest Christian churches. Milan is capital of the Lombardy Region and is the second largest city in Italy after Rome. It is the home of wildly popular soccer teams, some major media organizations, and the *Borsa*, Italy's main stock exchange. Historical, yet hip and modern, Milan is the fashion and financial capital of Italy.

A Brief History of Milan

Ok, we know what you are thinking—don't worry, when we say brief, we mean it! Milan, or Milano as the Italians call it, was once called Mediolanum ("Mee-dee-o-lanum") which roughly means "in the middle of the plain" or the "central place." The area has a long history reaching back more than 2,500 years ago when it was home to the Etruscans ("ee-trusk-ins"). The Romans took over the area and made it a part of the growing Roman Empire. Later, in the year A.D.

293, Milan became the capital of the Western Roman Empire.

In 313, the Roman Emperor Constantine, told everyone that Christianity was to be accepted. His proclamation, also called an "edict", is referred to as the "Edict of Milan" or the "Milan Edict of Tolerance" and it granted Christians religious freedom throughout the Roman Empire. Milan would go on to become one of the leading Christian cities in Europe, especially under the leadership of an early Church Bishop named Ambrose. Ambrose lived from 339 to 397 and converted many people to Christianity, including a famous person known as Saint Augustine. Ambrose made a great contribution to the city and to the Church and is known today as Saint Ambrose—the patron saint of Milan. Sydney thought you would like to know that a "patron saint" is a special protector, or guardian of the city. Long ago, patron saints brought more visitors and fame to a city. You will have a chance to visit some of the churches Saint Ambrose started in the 4th Century.

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Since Milan is located in a convenient location, and considered the crossroads from the Alps, its history is filled with attacks by foreign powers including **Attila the Hun** in 452, **Charlemagne** (“char-la-mane”) in 773, **Barbarossa** in 1152, and **Napoleon** in 1796, to name just a few! You will have a chance to visit the very place where Napoleon was crowned the Emperor of Italy.

It was not until 1861 that Milan joined other Italian cities to form an Italian Kingdom under **Victor Emanuele II**, the first king of a united Italy. In 1946 Italy became a republic, and then in 2001 joined other countries in the current European Union.



Sydney Says...

“Look for the ancient Roman columns that remain in Milan!”

The Renaissance Home of Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) moved to Milan from Florence during a time now known as the *Renaissance*, a French word meaning "rebirth." What was reborn? The Renaissance was a rebirth of interest, understanding and appreciation, for the Greek and Roman cultures that had disappeared hundreds of years before. Greek writings such as those by Plato and Aristotle were translated into Italian. People like Leonardo da Vinci were amazed by the thinking and logic of Plato and Aristotle. For those who lived in Milan and Florence in the early 1400's, a new way of thinking about art, literature, science and life came about.



While the Renaissance came to life in the 1400's, there was a period of about three hundred

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years ranging from around 1350 to around 1650 now considered the "early" to the "high" Renaissance. Leonardo moved from Florence to Milan during the early Renaissance and this was an exciting period of amazing progress in the arts and sciences—it was a time of creativity and the making of new things. It was a time described by a famous author named Voltaire as one of the greatest times in world history.

It was during this time that Leonardo moved to Milan to work for **Lodovico Sforza**, the Duke of Milan. Lodovico, also known as "il Moro", which means "the Moor", lived from 1479 to 1508. Leonardo worked for Lodovico's court for more than 17 years. Leonardo was very active during those years of service in Milan and left his mark on the city and its history. Like other leading families in great Italian cities, the Dukes of Milan greatly helped and shaped the development and history of the city. Milan was especially defined by the **Visconti** and the **Sforza** families. The city grew quickly under Lodovico. He and his wife, **Beatrice de' Estes**, really liked art and

music and greatly supported the work of artists as patrons. This is likely one of the reasons Lodovico hired Leonardo da Vinci to work for his court in 1482. Leonardo was talented at singing and playing music on the lira, an instrument similar to a violin. Leonardo was talented at many things—a true “renaissance man.” Highly competitive with Florence, Milan’s Lodovico and Beatrice de’ Estes were patrons of the arts much like the **Medici** of Florence.

In the early 1480s, artists such as **Donato Bramante** and **Leonardo da Vinci** were very active in the city. Both were trusted by the Sforza family to advance the art of the Castle and other important buildings. Milan was to become one of the leading places for learning and advancement of new ideas; as a result, it was sometimes called the “new Athens” and it drew artists and thinkers from all around Europe.

Leonardo worked on lots of different things, including his continued work on several now famous paintings. He decided to leave the city when it was captured by the French in 1499 and the Sforza

family lost power. Lodovico Sforza was sent to a French dungeon and stayed there until he died in 1508.

In addition to the Visconti and Sforza families, the development of Milan was shaped by French, Austrian and Spanish control for several hundred years. In the late 1800's it joined other cities to unify in the formation of the modern day nation known as Italy.

The Fashion Capital of Italy

Milan is definitely the fashion capital of Italy, joining other top cities in the world like New York, Paris and London for setting fashion standards. While Florence was the top fashion city in Italy, Milan moved ahead and remains firmly at the top.

Many famous name brand designers like *Chanel* and *Gucci* can be found in the *Galleria* located in the historic center around the *Duomo*. Others top designers such as *Giorgio Armani*, *Dolce & Gabbana*, *Prada* and *Versace* can be found in the expensive,

world famous shopping area known as the *Quadrilatero d'Oro*, or the **Golden Quad**. The Golden Quad is an area along four adjoining streets just north of the Milan Cathedral (Duomo). The streets are *Via Montenapoleone*, *Della Spiga*, *Via Borgospesso* and *Via Sant'Andrea*. Of these, *Via Montenapoleone* is the most famous street in the fashion district. If you can talk your grown-ups into it, perhaps they will take you to *Armani Junior* on this very street!

Now, you may not care much about this fashion stuff, but your grown-ups might, so keep a watch on them as they pass by the store fronts gazing at all the big names of fashion! Even if you are not interested in the fashion scene, you may see some weird stuff here that other people think is really neat and cool. It is what the Italians call "bella figura"—making the best possible impression in all things, including good manners! As you stroll along these high fashion streets be sure to peek in the designer store windows and see some new ideas regarding style. It may be years before you see it back home!

NEAT PLACES TO VISIT

While not as heavily visited by tourists, Milan definitely has a large variety of things for kids and grown-ups to see and do, more than many other popular Italian destinations. There are more museums, churches and other neat places to visit in Milan than we share in this guide of course. The places we do share in the following pages make our list as very worthwhile and we hope you agree! Milan is a big modern city with some old world charm mixed in. Go explore with your grown-ups and have fun!



Sydney Says...

“Ok, this is a really big city to see,
but the Metro is super fast!”



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