

Winter Olympic Torch Traveling Across Italy



The 2006 Olympic Winter Games are being held in Torino, Italy, from February 10 to February 26. At the opening ceremony of the Games someone carrying a torch will light the Olympic cauldron, which looks like a huge pot. The cauldron will burn throughout the Games. Before getting to Torino, though, the fire for the Olympic flame will travel all over Italy!

The fire for the Olympic flame was lit in Olympia, Greece, during a special ceremony on November 27, 2005. The Olympic flame always is lit in Greece, because that is where the first Olympics were held thousands of years ago. After the flame was lit, it was sent to Rome, Italy, to begin its trip across the country.

Since the flame arrived in Rome, it has been carried by many different people, called *torchbearers*. By the time the Olympics begin, 10,001 torchbearers will have carried the flame all over Italy and into neighboring countries, including France, Austria, Switzerland, and Slovenia.

NEWS WORD BOX

Olympics	Torino
Italy	Greece
torch	cauldron
ceremony	official

The tradition of carrying the Olympic flame to the city where the games are held dates back to 1936. Often the name of the torchbearer who lights the Olympic cauldron during the opening ceremony is kept secret until the last minute. People around the world are waiting to see who will light the flame in Torino on February 10.

MORE FACTS ABOUT THE OLYMPIC GAMES

- The Olympic Games are held in the winter and summer every four years, but the winter and summer Olympics are not held in the same year. The last Olympic Winter Olympic Games were held in 2002 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The last Summer Olympics were held in 2004 in Athens, Greece.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

How do you think the torchbearers are chosen?
If the torch was to be carried through your community, who do you think might be chosen to be your community's torchbearers?