

DO I QUALIFY FOR ITALIAN DUAL CITIZENSHIP?





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Basic Requirements for Dual Citizenship.....	3
Section 1: Citizenship by Descent (Jure Sanguinis).....	5
Section 2: Citizenship by Marriage (Jure Matrimonii).....	8
Section 3: Citizenship by Residency.....	10
Section 4: Benefits of Italian Dual Citizenship.....	12
Section 5: Starting the Process.....	15

INTRODUCTION

BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Thousands of people have become Italian dual citizens since 1992, the year Italy legalized dual citizenship.

There are all kinds of reasons people decide to pursue Italian dual citizenship. Some want to connect with their heritage. Others want to study abroad. Some people simply fall in love with the culture and want to make Italy their forever home.

As an Italian dual citizen, you'll enjoy the many advantages that come with being an EU member. These include the ability to travel around Europe with ease; buy property with fewer restrictions; and live, work, and study abroad.

If you're wondering how to become an Italian citizen, there are three ways: by descent, by marriage, or by naturalization.

The most common way is by descent. In other words, through an Italian family member or ancestor—it could be your mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, or even a great-grandparent.

To qualify for citizenship by descent, you must meet these basic requirements:

- You are of Italian descent or were adopted as a minor by at least one person of Italian descent.
- At least one of your Italian-born ancestors was alive and was an Italian citizen after the year 1861 (when Italy became a country).
- Neither your Italian-born ancestor nor any of the ascendants in your Italian line became a naturalized citizen of the US (or any other country) before the birth of the next person in the Italian line.

If you meet these basic requirements and want to explore becoming an Italian citizen by descent (“jure sanguinis,” or “by blood right”), you should start gathering information about all the ascendants in your Italian line, including their:

- Full names
- Birthdates
- Places of birth
- Marriage information
- Dates of death (if applicable)
- The exact dates they became naturalized citizens of the United States (if applicable)

It may take some work to dig up this information, especially if your Italian ancestor is no longer alive. But if you're serious about getting dual citizenship, this information is essential.

Keep reading to learn more about the different ways to qualify for Italian dual citizenship, the benefits of becoming a dual citizen, and [how to apply for dual citizenship](#).



SECTION ONE:

**CITIZENSHIP BY DESCENT
(JURE SANGUINIS)**



If you have an Italian ancestor who was born in Italy, you may be eligible to claim Italian citizen by descent if:

Your father was an Italian citizen when you were born, and you never renounced your right to Italian citizenship.

Your mother was an Italian citizen at the time of your birth, you were born after January 1, 1948, and you never renounced your right to Italian citizenship.

Your paternal grandfather was an Italian citizen at the time of your father's birth, and neither you nor your father ever renounced your right to Italian citizenship.

Your paternal grandmother was an Italian citizen at the time of your father's birth, your father was born after January 1, 1948, and neither you nor your father ever renounced your right to Italian citizenship.

Your maternal grandfather was an Italian citizen at the time of your mother's birth, you were born after January 1, 1948, and neither you nor your mother ever renounced your right to Italian citizenship.

Your maternal grandmother was an Italian citizen at the time of your mother's birth, your mother was born after January 1, 1948, and neither you nor your mother ever renounced your right to Italian citizenship.

If your situation doesn't match one of the scenarios above, it doesn't necessarily mean you don't have a jure sanguinis claim. You might still be able to gain Italian citizenship through a great-grandparent or even a great-great-grandparent.

But you must meet these additional requirements:

- Your Italian ancestor must have been alive on March 17, 1861.
- If your ancestor naturalized, they must not have done so before June 14, 1912.
- If your ancestor naturalized, they must have done so after the birth of the next person in the ascendancy. For example, if your paternal grandfather (your dad's father) emigrated to the US and naturalized after your dad was born, you would be eligible to apply for Italian citizenship, as long as your grandfather naturalized after June 14, 1912.
- If your ancestor never naturalized, you must prove it with supporting documents.
- If you or anyone in the bloodline, was born outside the marriage, you must obtain the corresponding acknowledgement of paternity.
- Neither you nor any of your ascendants have ever renounced the claim to Italian citizenship.

Read more about all the steps to become an Italian citizen by descent on this [post](#).

Attenzione!

If your ancestor is from one of these regions, you must prove they left Italy after July 16, 1920, to qualify for Italian citizenship by descent:

- Veneto
- Friuli Venezia Giulia
- Trentino-Alto Adige

What If I Was Adopted?

You have a right to claim Italian citizenship if you were adopted by Italian citizens. But at least one of your adoptive parents must have been an Italian citizen on the date the adoption became official.

If you were adopted as a minor, you must provide a certified copy of your adoption decree translated into Italian. You'll also need to obtain an Apostille, which is a certificate of authenticity, similar to a notarization.

If you were adopted as an adult, you must become a legal resident of Italy and live there for at least 5 years after the official date of your adoption before you can apply for Italian citizenship.

The 1948 Rule

Italian women didn't gain the right to pass on citizenship to their children until January 1, 1948, the date Italy became a Republic.

This means that if your Italian ancestor is a woman born before January 1, 1948, her Italian citizenship can only be transferred to children born after January 1, 1948, and their descendants.

Many people consider the 1948 rule to be unfair or discriminatory. It has led to situations where some siblings qualify for Italian citizenship while others don't. You may be able to **challenge the rule in court**.

SECTION TWO:

**CITIZENSHIP BY MARRIAGE
(JURE MATRIMONII)**

If you are married to an Italian citizen, you may be eligible for Italian citizenship under the law of *jure matrimonii*. This is true even if you are a stateless citizen of a foreign nation.

You can apply for Italian citizenship after living in Italy for 2 years, or after residing in the US or another country for 3 years, with some exceptions. If you and your spouse have a minor child (even if adoptive), you can usually apply for citizenship in half that time.

As of 2016, the Italian government recognizes same-sex marriages and civil unions. If your spouse is an Italian citizen, you may be eligible for Italian citizenship even if you were married abroad, as long as your marriage or civil union was documented.

How to Apply for Italian Citizenship by Marriage

You must complete an application, provide documents, and meet certain requirements to become an Italian citizen by marriage. These include:

- **Applicant must possess an adequate knowledge of the Italian language**, certified by competent institutions belonging to the CLIQ system (minimum level: B1).
- **An Apostille certificate** of your vital records. An Apostille certificate is like a notarization; it's a way of authenticating documents as official and legitimate.
- **Marriage certificate**; if you have lost or misplaced your marriage certificate, you can obtain an official copy from your local consulate's office or Italian Vital Records (if you live in Italy). Please note that the Italian spouse must be alive and you must still be married.
- **Birth certificate** for the person applying for citizenship.
- **FBI and police background checks** for the person applying for citizenship.

- **Professionally translated versions** of all required documents into Italian.
- **Proof of valid US passport** for the person applying for citizenship.
- **Any other documents** specifically required by your Italian Consulate branch.

It's not always easy to get a hold of these documents, and the process can be confusing. An Italian citizenship assistance service can help you gather all the necessary documents, get them translated, and complete applications within the allotted time limits.

Marriages Before April 27, 1983

If you're a woman who married an Italian man before April 27, 1983, you are eligible for an expedited citizenship process. To claim Italian citizenship, you'll just need to fill out a form and provide any supporting documentation (i.e., marriage certificate).



SECTION THREE:

CITIZENSHIP BY RESIDENCY

The most complex way to gain Italian citizenship is by naturalization. To become a naturalized citizen, you must live in Italy for a specified amount of time, which will depend on your circumstances.

- If you're a non-EU foreigner, you must live in Italy for at least 10 years before you can apply for naturalization.
- If you're a citizen of the EU, you must live in Italy for 4 years before you can apply.
- If you're an adult foreigner adopted by an Italian citizen, you must live in Italy for 5 years before you can apply.
- If you're a stateless person or a political refugee, you must live in Italy for 5 years before you can apply.
- If you had a parent or grandparent who was an Italian citizen (born in Italy or Italian by descent) at the time of your birth, you must live in Italy for 3 years before you can apply.
- If you were born in Italy, but your parents were second-generation Italians at the time of your birth, you must live in Italy for 3 years before you can apply.

Residing in Italy is just one of the requirements to become a naturalized Italian citizen. You must also meet certain language and financial requirements and have a clean criminal record with no convictions.

You must also provide all required documents. These documents can include a copy of your passport, residence permit, birth certificate, criminal record, Italian language competency certificate, and others. You may be required to have some or all of these documents translated into Italian.



SECTION FOUR:

**BENEFITS OF ITALIAN DUAL
CITIZENSHIP**

Applying for dual citizenship can challenge your patience. But the benefits are huge. When you become an Italian citizen, you also reap the rewards of Italy's EU membership. Here are some of the advantages:



Travel

Italian dual citizens can travel, work, and live in any of the 27 European Union (EU) countries—from Austria to Ireland to Sweden (note that as of January 31, 2020, the United Kingdom is no longer part of the EU).

As a dual citizen, you'll hold an Italian passport and be able to travel easily across borders (in EU countries) with no visa requirements. And you'll be able to take advantage of Europe's well-developed transportation systems and explore the European continent in a way that simply isn't possible for foreign travelers.



Employment

Dual citizens are highly attractive to employers, especially international businesses with locations around the world. Companies love being able to send their dual-citizen workers abroad without having to apply or pay for work visas.

If you're an entrepreneur, you'll have an easier time starting a business abroad as a dual citizen, since you won't face the same restrictions and red tape as non-EU citizens. In most EU countries, you can set up a new company online for a small fee in a matter of days or weeks. In short, being a dual citizen gives you access to more work opportunities abroad.



Education

Italian dual citizens can study at any university in the European Union under the same conditions as nationals. Whether you want to pursue an undergrad degree, a graduate degree, or a certificate program, you'll have access to some of the best universities in the world. Tuition is very affordable in EU countries, and many types of degrees are subsidized.



Healthcare

Most EU countries have universal healthcare, which means there are no premiums and very low or no out-of-pocket costs. If you get sick, you will receive medical care when you need it, no questions asked. This is true whether you're traveling between EU member states, studying abroad, or residing permanently in Italy or another EU country.

Most European doctors and pharmacists speak at least some English, which makes visiting pharmacies, clinics, and hospitals less frustrating for Americans.



Voting

As an Italian citizen, you have the right to vote in Italian elections and certain EU elections. You can also run for public office, giving you the opportunity to help shape regional and national politics.



Property

It's easier and more affordable for dual citizens to buy property in Italy and other EU countries. Retiring in Italy (or any other EU nation) is your right as an Italian citizen. Unlike non-citizens, you won't be subject to restrictions on how long you can stay at your property.

You'll also be eligible for tax-free import of vehicles and other high-value personal property items. And you'll have access to investments available only to EU citizens.



Passing on Citizenship

When you obtain Italian dual citizenship, your minor children (under the age of 18) will automatically be recognized as Italian citizens. Any children you have in the future will also be Italian citizens, and so will their children. Becoming an Italian citizen is the gift that keeps on giving!

Did You Know?

As an Italian dual citizen, you can live, travel, work, and go to university in any of the 27 European Union (EU) countries.



SECTION FIVE:

STARTING THE PROCESS

Determining eligibility is just the first step. After that, the real work begins. Gathering all the official documents and records required to back up your citizenship claim can be a tedious process. But it's also a chance for people of Italian ancestry to learn about their family history and connect with their roots. Many people find this itself to be rewarding.

If you plan to apply for citizenship by descent, be aware that it can take 1 to 6 years to get an appointment with your **regional Italian Consulate office**. Make an appointment right away, then start gathering documents and vital records.

Once your application is accepted by the Consulate office it can take up to 18 months to receive proof of citizenship. This is why it's so important to make sure your application is right the first time.

Do your research, take careful notes, and make sure you know exactly what is required for your appointment. Missing or incorrect documents could seriously delay the process.

1 to 6 Years...

That's how long it can take to get an appointment at your **regional Italian Consulate office**. Don't wait. Make an appointment right away, then start gathering documents and vital records.

How ITAMCAP Can Help

The fastest way to find out if you qualify for Italian citizenship is to call the experts at the Italian American Citizenship Assistance Program (ITAMCAP). We'll help you understand the Italian dual citizenship requirements and whether you qualify to become a dual citizen. Then we'll work with you to secure all the necessary documents and records to prove your claim, including:

- Your Italian ancestor's naturalization records
- Your Italian ancestor's vital records (birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, death certificates, etc.)
- Translated documents (into Italian)
- US documents
- Apostille (certificates of authenticity)

Our Italian citizenship program has helped hundreds of people become dual citizens. Take advantage of our free 30-minute phone consultation, during which we'll answer all your questions and explain how the process works. **Get in touch** today and start the process of becoming a dual citizen!