



Consolato Generale d'Italia  
FILADELFIA

## **CITIZENSHIP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Q. When is Italian citizenship acquired automatically?

- A. When a child's parents are Italian citizens;  
When a child is born on Italian soil, on the condition that the child's parents:  
    are unknown or Stateless; or are foreigners who, pursuant to their country's  
    legislation or do not pass on their own citizenship to their child;  
In cases in which a child has been found abandoned on Italian soil;  
In cases of adoption.

Q. Who can apply for Italian citizenship?

- A. descendants of Italian citizens (up to the second degree);  
anyone who has served in the Italian Armed Forces;  
dependent employees of the Italian government, even abroad;  
residents in Italy for at least 2 years before reaching the legal age of 18.  
if born on Italian soil and residing legally and without interruption from birth until the  
legal age of 18.  
if residing on Italy after 2 years of marriage to an Italian citizen; if residing abroad,  
after 3 years of marriage to an Italian citizen. In the above periods the spouses must  
not be legally separated and there must be no dissolution or nullity of the marriage or  
cessation of its civilian effects. The terms are half-reduced if the couple has children

Q. Under what conditions does naturalization occur?

- A. after 10 years of legal residence in Italy;  
in the presence of sufficient income;  
in the absence of criminal record;  
upon renunciation of citizenship in country of origin (where required).

Q. Under what conditions can the requirement of 10 years legal residence be reduced?

A. 3 years of legal residence for descendants of former Italian citizens up to the second degree and for foreigners born on Italian soil;  
4 years legal residence for citizens of a European Union country;  
5 years legal residence for Stateless persons and refugees, as well as for adult foreigners over the age of 18 adopted by Italian citizens;  
7 years legally adopted by an Italian citizen;  
no period of legal residence is required for foreigners who have served the Italian Republic for a period of at least 5 years, also abroad.

Q. Where do I have to go to have citizenship recognized and what documentation is required?

A. Application for recognition of Italian citizenship must be made to the Italian consular office authorized for the place where you live, which we would suggest that you contact before starting to collect documentation since the documentation required depends on the citizenship history of the family of origin.

In any case, it will be necessary to prove that your ancestor was in possession of Italian citizenship at the time he/she left Italy and maintained it, thereby passing it on to descendants; the birth certificate of that ancestor, which can be requested from the Office of Civil Statistics (Ufficio di Stato Civile) of the city of birth and a document that specifies citizenship (old passport, certificate of historic citizenship, etc.). It will also be necessary, by going back through the generations and through all available records of civil status, to demonstrate the blood relationship between the ancestor and the applicant for citizenship.

Q. I am an Italian citizen but am living abroad. If I take another citizenship will I lose my Italian one?

A. Since 15 August 1992 the voluntary acquisition of foreign citizenship no longer leads to automatic loss of Italian citizenship, with the exception of citizenship in any of the following States: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Norway. (France allows for some exceptions in the cases of facilitated naturalization envisaged in the II Amendment Protocol to the Strasbourg Convention of 24.03.1995).

Q. I am a foreigner married to an Italian citizen. Am I entitled to Italian citizenship?

A. If you are a woman and you married before April 27th, 1983, you automatically acquired Italian citizenship at the moment of marriage. After April 27th, 1983, either husband or wife may acquire Italian citizenship after two years of marriage if the couple resides in Italy and after three years if they reside abroad. In both cases you need to file an application.

Q. I became an American citizen by naturalization before August 16th, 1992. Can I reacquire my Italian citizenship?

A. Yes, by declaring you intend to do so, and taking up residence in an Italian Comune within one year from such declaration.

Q. I became an American citizen after August 15th, 1992. Did I lose my Italian citizenship?

A. No. Those who acquired a foreign nationality after the above-mentioned date have retained their Italian citizenship.

Q. I was born in the US but I have an Italian direct ascendant. Am I entitled to dual citizenship?

A. You might, but this is a case-by-case matter. We need to check the original documents along with you and ascertain if you are eligible or not. Please Note: those who were born before January 1, 1948 may obtain Italian citizenship only through paternal ascendants and ancestors naturalized before June 14 1992 cannot pass on the Italian Citizenship.

Q. I was born in the United States, my father was an Italian citizen at the time of my birth and I have never renounced my Italian citizenship. Am I entitled to Italian citizenship?

A. Yes.

Q. I was born in the United States after January 1, 1948, I have never renounced my Italian citizenship, and my mother was an Italian citizen at the time of my birth. Am I entitled to Italian citizenship?

A. Yes.

Q. My father was born in the U.S. and my paternal grandfather was an Italian citizen at the time of my father's birth and neither I nor my father ever renounced Italian citizenship. Am I entitled to Italian citizenship?

A. Yes.

Q. I was born after January 1, 1948, my mother was born in the United States and my maternal grandfather was an Italian citizen at the time of my mother's birth and neither I nor my mother ever renounced Italian citizenship. Am I entitled to Italian citizenship?

A. Yes.

Q. I was born in Italy to non-Italian citizens who were permanent residents of Italy at the time of my birth. Now I live in the United States. Am I eligible to Italian citizenship?

A. No. Italian citizenship is based on “*jure sanguinis*” (blood line). As a general rule, foreigners born in Italy are not automatically Italian.