

# Andiamo! Finding Your Italian Family

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## Tips for Italian Research

- Start with what you know. Ask relatives for information.
- Start in the US. Find out everything you can about your Italian ancestors.
- Research the FAN club.
- Understand the geography of Italy.
- When you know the town, search in Italian records.
- Use a good pocket Italian-English dictionary.
- Be flexible with spelling.
- Read a novel about your ancestors' time and place.

## RESOURCES

Resources for Italian and Italian-American research are uneven. Those highlighted in **bold** are particularly recommended.

### Books: Reference

Adams, Suzanne Russo. *Finding Your Italian Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide*. Provo, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 2008.

Carmack, Sharon DeBartolo. *Genealogy at a Glance: Italian Genealogy Research*. Genealogical.com, 2012. Laminated guide.

Choate, Mark I. *Emigrant Nation: The Making of Italy Abroad*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

**Cole, Trafford R. *Italian Genealogical Records: How to Use Italian Civil, Ecclesiastical, & Other Records in Family History Research*. Salt Lake City: Ancestry, Inc., 1995.**

Colletta, John Philip. *Finding Italian Roots: The Complete Guide for Americans*, Second edition. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2009.

- Connell, William J. and Stanislao G. Pugliese, eds. *The Routledge History of Italian Americans*. New York: Routledge, 2018.
- Davis, John A., ed. *Italy in the Nineteenth Century: 1796–1900 (Short Oxford History of Italy)*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Diner, Hasia R. *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Fasano, Anthony. *Forty Days in Italy Con La Mia Famiglia: How to Research Your Italian Roots & Travel to Italy on Your Own Terms*. No place: Niche Content Press, 2017.
- Fucilla, Joseph G. *Our Italian Surnames*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2003.
- Holtz, Melanie D. “How to Find Italian Church Records.” *Family Tree Magazine*. n.d. [familytreemagazine.com/heritage/italian/church-keys](http://familytree.familytreemagazine.com/heritage/italian/church-keys).
- . *The Family Tree Italian Genealogy Guide: How to Trace Your Family Tree in Italy*. Cincinnati: Family Tree Books, 2017.
- Malpezzi, Frances M. and William M. Clements. *Italian-American Folklore*. Little Rock, Arkansas: August House, 1992.
- Mangione, Jerre and Ben Morreale. *La Storia: Five Centuries of the Italian American Experience*. New York: HarperCollins Perennial, 1993.
- Nelson, Lynn. *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your Italian Ancestors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Betterway Books, 1997.

## Books: Fiction/Autobiography

- Battigelli, Rosanna Micelotti. *La Brigantessa*. Toronto, Canada: Inanna Publications, 2015. In the aftermath of Italy's 1861 unification, a young Calabrian woman grapples with the drama of a turbulent time, known as “The Decade of Fire.”
- Chiarella, Peter. *Calabrian Tales*. Oakland, Calif.: Regent Press, 2002.
- Cusumano, Camille. *The Last Cannoli: A Novel*. Ottawa, Canada: Legas Publishing, 2005.
- D'Angelo, Pascal. *Son of Italy*. New York: Arno Press, 1975.
- Di Donato, Pietro. *Christ in Concrete*. New York: Signet Classic, 1993. Autobiographical odyssey of a boy who takes over his father's construction job after he is killed in a work accident.
- Laurino, Maria. *Were You Always An Italian?* New York: W. W. Norton, 2001.
- Lingley, Sarah E. Marone. *Memoirs: An Immigrant Story*. United States: Xlibris, 2003.
- Sella, Ilaria. *The Value of Worthless Lives: Writing Italian American Immigrant Autobiographies*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2010.
- Trigiani, Adriana. *The Queen of the Big Time*. New York: Random House, 2004.

## Online sources

*Alphabetical list of municipalities in Italy* —

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabetical\\_list\\_of\\_municipalities\\_of\\_Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabetical_list_of_municipalities_of_Italy).

*Comparison of Masculine and Feminine Sicilian and Italian Given Names* —

[www.conigliofamily.com/MasculineAndFeminineGivenNames.htm](http://www.conigliofamily.com/MasculineAndFeminineGivenNames.htm).

Facebook groups: Italian Genealogical Records, Italian Genealogy, Northern Italian Genealogy, Southern Italian Genealogy Network, Southern Europe Genealogy Research Community. In addition, there are groups for some regions and provinces.

**FamilySearch Wiki for Italy** — [www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Italy\\_Genealogy](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Italy_Genealogy). Links to online Italian records, Italian word list, and vital records translation template.

*Italgen* — [www.italiangenealogy.com](http://www.italiangenealogy.com). See the genealogy articles.

*Italian Cities and Towns* — [en.comuni-italiani.it](https://en.comuni-italiani.it). Italian towns by province.

*Italian Frazioni* — [www.italyheritage.com/regions/italian\\_frazioni](http://www.italyheritage.com/regions/italian_frazioni). Alphabetical list.

*Italian Genealogical Group (IGG)* — [www.italiangen.org](http://www.italiangen.org). Free databases. Membership organization.

*Italian Given Names and their English Equivalents* — [www.oocities.org/irishkenj/givename.html](http://www.oocities.org/irishkenj/givename.html).

*Italian Parish Records* — [www.italianparishrecords.org](http://www.italianparishrecords.org). Ambitious effort to establish an online research library of Italian Catholic parish records; currently has over 3M searchable records and is updated frequently.

*Italy GenWeb* — [www.italywgw.org](http://www.italywgw.org). Good starting point.

*Italy Surname Map* — [www.mappadeicognomi.it/en](http://www.mappadeicognomi.it/en). Maps Italian surname distribution.

**One Step Webpages by Stephen P. Morse** — [stevemorse.org](http://stevemorse.org). Makes it easier to find passengers arriving at major US ports by expanding search options.

*Portale Antenati* — <https://antenati.cultura.gov.it/?lang=en>. Italian State Archives.

*Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection, Italy* — [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/italy.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/italy.html).

*Searching the Italian Town Database in One Step* — [sites.rootsweb.com/~itappcnc/pipcncnwn.htm](http://sites.rootsweb.com/~itappcnc/pipcncnwn.htm). Search for the *frazione/comune* by name, flexible searches.

## Webinars

Adams, Suzanne Russo. *La Madre Chiesa – Italian Catholic Parish Records*. Legacy Family Tree. 2021. Subscription.

———. *Italian Local and Parish Censuses*. Legacy Family Tree. *Scheduled September 2023*. Subscription.

Fortier, Margaret R. *Get Started with Your Italian Family History Research*. Footnotes on Genealogy TV. 2018. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6lPsSFVteY&t=11s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6lPsSFVteY&t=11s).

Holtz, Melanie D. *Civil Law Notaries – Using Notarial Records to Build a Family History*. Legacy Family Tree. 2016. Subscription.

———. *From Venezia to Catania: The Basics of Italian Research*. Legacy Family Tree. 2019. Subscription.

## Key Databases [as of 27 June 2023]

### Antenati/Ancestors Portal

The Italian State Archives site has records from 84 of the 95 state archives. Most are not indexed but individual registers by year typically contain an index; some towns have a decennial index.



### Ancestry

Ancestry has 70 databases of Italian records. These are primarily Italian civil and church records with some Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA) collections as well as a collection of historical Italian post cards.



### FamilySearch

FamilySearch has 60 collections of indexed historical records and 127 collections of image-only historical records. Most of these collections are civil and church records. Twelve collections have been updated in 2023. You can also explore Historical Images for Italy by location which has close to 600,000 collections of unindexed images.



FamilySearch has many of the Antenati records available, usually some months after they are posted on Antenati. See the Italian Civil Registration wiki. For detailed instructions on accessing Antenati, see the Antenati section of the wiki which includes a link to *Finding Your Italian Ancestors Online Through Portale degli Antenati*, a RootsTech webinar presented by Lauren Wake, AG®.

I recommend monitoring Randy Seaver's blog, *Genea-Musings* [www.geneamusings.com], where he posts weekly updates to FamilySearch that indicate which collections are added, deleted, or changed. The before and after numbers of records indexed and records images are especially useful. He also provides updates to Ancestry collections. Ancestry does not publish the number of records added.

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*Research, Relate, Reveal*