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Italian citizenship by residence: the 2026 guide

If you have lived in Italy for years you can apply for citizenship by residence, also called naturalisation. This guide explains how many years you need, what income to prove, the Italian level required and the mistakes that cost time.

- Updated November 2026
- Free, no sign-up
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How many years of residence you need

NON-EU CITIZENS

10 years

Ten years of legal residence in Italy (article 9 of Law 91/1992).

EU CITIZENS

4 years

Four years of legal residence.

REFUGEES AND STATELESS PEOPLE

5 years

Five years of legal residence.

Other categories, for example descendants of Italian citizens or people born in Italy, have different periods: they must be checked case by case.

Legal residence is not the same as simply having a valid stay: you need continuous registration at the municipal registry, together with a valid residence permit if you come from outside the EU.

The income requirement

You must show stable income over the last 3 years. The reference amounts are about **€8,263** a year for a single person and **€11,362** if you have a dependent spouse, plus about €516 for each dependent family member. What counts is declared taxable income, so your CU, 730 or tax return for each year matters.

> **WATCH OUT**
>
> A single year below the threshold can block the application. Check all three years before you start.

The Italian level: B1

You need a **B1** certificate from a recognised certifying body (Universities for Foreigners of Perugia or Siena, Roma Tre, Società Dante Alighieri). Some categories are exempt: check before booking the exam.

The documents you need

- valid passport and residence permit;
- birth certificate, legalised or apostilled and translated;
- criminal record certificates from your home country and every country you lived in after age 14, plus the Italian record;
- historical residence certificate listing all addresses and dates, to prove the continuous years;
- tax returns for the last 3 years (CU, 730 or Redditi);
- B1 certificate, receipt for the €250 contribution and a €16 revenue stamp.

How to apply and how long it takes

The application is filed online through the Ministry of the Interior's ALI portal. The legal term is **24 months, extendable to 36** from submission. If approved, the decree and the oath follow: from the next day you are an Italian citizen.

The most common mistakes

- gaps in residence (deregistrations, late registrations);
- income below the threshold in one of the three years;
- a language certificate from an unrecognised body;
- mismatching names and dates between Italian and foreign documents;

- expired criminal records (valid for 6 months).

Frequently asked questions

How many years do I need for citizenship by residence? +

What income do I have to prove? +

Do I need B1 Italian? +

How long does the decision take? +

This guide is an educational summary, not legal advice, based on public information from the Italian Ministry of the Interior and consulates, updated to November 2026. Amounts and requirements can change: always check the rules in force before filing.