“Our people have to emigrate. It is a matter of too much boundless life and too much space.”

Pascal D’Angelo, Son of Italy

Begin your search at home! Interview relatives and gather documents from family members. If they are originals, ask for a photocopy or a scan. Pay particular attention to names, dates, places, and relationships.

After you have gathered information about your family—use records in the country your ancestor immigrated to build the story of their immigration and town of origin.

As an example, if you are researching in the United States you might consider the following resources.


To research your ancestor in Italy—you will need their
- Name
- An “about” date
- Place

Countries with highest Italian diaspora – Argentina
- Argentina - 1880-1920
- Australia – 1840-1860; 1880-1900; 1921-1945
- Brazil – 1880-1901; much slower 1902-1920
- Canada – 1900-1920; 1945-1970s
- United States of America – 1880-1920
- Uruguay – 1870-1960

Italian Emigration and Immigration-FamilySearch Wiki
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Italy_Emigration_and_Immigration
Resources on Immigration

General
Italian Migration Movements, 1876 to 1926 by A. Ratti (1931):
http://www.nber.org/chapters/c5116.pdf

Italian Immigration/Migration (very brief)

Outside the United States

Italian Given Names and Surnames

Surnames started to come into common use in the 1400s in Italy and are based on a few main categories:

- Patronymics (The surname comes from an ancestor’s first name)—d’Alberto, d’Angelo, d’Alessi
- Geographical areas—Lombardo, Di Genova, Napolitano
- Descriptives or Nicknames—Franco, Betto, Zello, Gambino
- Occupations—Ferraro, Carpenteri, Muratori

Some Italian surnames can be uncommon and only found in certain towns, provinces, or regions of Italy.
A few surname maps that can help locate origins of a family are very useful and a lot of fun to use.

Italian Surname Websites:
http://www.gens.info/italia/it/turismo-viaggi-e-tradizioni-italia#.X9gy19hKiUk
Enter surname in “cerca un cognome” and click “trova”. This will map the surname so that you can see where your surname is the most common in Italy.
http://italia.indettaglio.it/eng/cognomi/cognomi.html
Search for names by regions. Allows you to see which surnames are most prevalent in a town and province.

https://www.cognomix.it/mappe-dei-cognomi-italiani
Maps surnames and allows you to see where a surname is most common by region, province and town.

A few references for given names and surnames:
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Italy_Names,_Personal
https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/my-italian-last-name/

Italian Given Names and Their English Equivalents
https://www.oocities.org/irishkenj/givename.html?202021#M

For given names a typical naming pattern that continues to be used in some regions today. This practice is most typical beginning in the 1700s.
- The first male child was named for the paternal grandfather
- The second male child was named for the maternal grandfather
- The first female child was named for the paternal grandmother
- The second female child was named for the maternal grandmother

Brief Timeline- Italian Genealogy
1300 Tax assessment records and censuses begin in some parts of Italy
1340 Most notaries begin keeping records
1545-1563 Council of Trent (parishes begin keeping records)
1595 Papacy reinforces record keeping practices in Italy
1804-1814 Italy under rule of Napoleon Bonaparte
1806 Napoleon required civil records to be kept
1820 Stato Civile Borbonico civil records established in Sicily
1861-1870 Unification of Italy
1861 First nationwide census in Italy by newly formed government
1865 Military conscription of males who reach age eighteen instituted
1866 Civil Registration officially introduced in the Kingdom of Italy
1869 Passports required by Italian government
1871 All eighteen-year-old males required to report to draft board
1875 Forms began to be used for Italian civil records
1880-1920 Influx of Italian Immigrants to the United States
1911 First government census to name all family members with their ages, occupations, birthplaces, etc.
1929 Italian government accepts Catholic Church marriages
1974 Italian government legalizes divorce
Where to Find Italian Civil Records

**FamilySearch**
https://familysearch.org/search/collection/location/1927178
https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog
https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Italy_Civil_Registration
(This includes links to translations of documents)

**Portale Antenanti (Genealogy Portal- Italian State Archives)**
Portale Antentati (English)
http://www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it/en
Portale Antenati (Italian)
http://www.antenati.san.beniculturali.it/

Research in Italian civil archives - comune
http://www.comuni-italiani.it/

**Italian Genealogy Handbooks**

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