

Food And Culture Of Italy

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Italy is one of the most prominent countries that has been able to set apart its national culture over the years alongside its Italian Culinarian excellency, which has amazed the world and impressed people to the extent of looking up to the Italians (UNESCO, 2024).

Introduction:

Italy is home to almost 62 million people, with around 96% of the population being Italian. The Italian culture is usually depicted in art, music, and food (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica [ISTAT], 2026).

Italian Cuisine:

Italian cuisine plays a very influential part in almost all the corners of the world. The most important components of their meals are wine, pasta, and cheese.

The taste and food in Italy is actually the “gastronomy of the regions in Italy”.

Italian dishes are those rooted in their traditions and are widely imitated around the world. The most famous and widely accepted all across the globe in Italy are pizza, spaghetti, cornetto, espresso, lasagna, parmesan cheese, etc.

Italian cuisine has been able to make a reputation 2000 years ago during the reign of the Roman Empire. However, there are now vast differences and few similarities between the pre-Roman meals compared to meals of today (Lo et al., 2024).

Pizza, pasta, croissants, etc., all come from different parts of Italy. The food became prominent throughout the world after the fall of the Roman Empire, after which each city or state was able to hold and Maintain its different identity.

How Did The Italian Food Conquer The World?

The world is having a love affair with the Italian cuisine. The Italian Kitchen has traveled globally to almost all the countries in the world. Countries have adapted the traditional pasta from the Italians and have given some local touch to it to attract their natives. For example, in Japan, they serve wafu pasta, which is a famous Japanese sauce. Nonetheless, the food is made with local sauces, it's still classified an Italian cuisine (UNESCO, 2024).

History – The Birth Of Italian Taste:

The Italians agree with the facts when they state that the variety of tastes available in Italian dishes originated from the history of immigrants coming and settling in Italy during the era of colonization. Italians state that the flavored ice, rice, and pasta came from the Arabs during the time when they governed Sicily. Moreover, there have also been Greeks, Romans, Franks, Goths, Spanish, and many more who have left a mark on their culinary skills in the land of Italy (Lo et al., 2024).

Main Ingredients Of Italian Cuisine:

This is not going to be the only list of ingredients that an Italian dish includes, but these are crucial ingredients that are part of almost every Italian dish (UNESCO, 2024).

They are:

- Olive oil
- Canned tomatoes
- Capers
- Parmesan cheese
- Dried oregano
- Mushrooms
- Garlic
- Pasta

Food Culture And Festivals:

Italians have always been high on celebrating their love for their food by hosting many food festivals in their hometown. The very rich cultural attribute is that on very special occasions, they have linked certain foods with the specialty of that particular event (UNESCO, 2024).

A few of them are:

- New Year's Eve- this is attached with Pasta and Lentils, and this ensures good luck ahead for the New Year.
- February's carnival and Lasagna- they have attached lasagna as a dish to be specifically made and eaten in February.
- Christmas Eve with Fish- the Italians have named the Christmas Eve as the "The feast of the Seven Fish".
- Easter with Pastiera- This is a sweet dish made with cream and ricotta cheese filled with wheat. This is linked with the Easter festive celebrations.

Culture And Food Eating Habits Of Italy:

Italians are passive eaters and have a strong food culture that promotes a healthy lifestyle of in-taking a balanced yet delicious diet. It is just not about fulfilling or satisfying the rumbling of the stomach. For Italians, it is food that satisfies their appetite rather than just killing it (UNESCO, 2024).

The average Italian follows this eating culture in a day:

- The beginnings (Breakfast): Italians start their day quite simply, in contrast with Americans and British who are about all fried up eggs and toasts etc., the Italians are all about a croissant with wither cappuccino or espresso.
- Leisure lunch-Pranzo is the term that is called “Lunch.” This is the main meal of the afternoon, which is usually a three-level course of antipasto(appetizers), primo piatto(first plate), which is mostly soup or pasta, meat or fish, and ending with a fresh plate of fruits. Italians also love to have cakes for supper with a cup of coffee.
- Dinner – The Italians have the same three-level dinner, starting with appetizers and ending with a fresh fruit salad.

Culture Of Italy:

Italian culture has been known for years as a cultural superpower for many countries. Italy is located in Southern Europe and is famous for its Western civilization, which includes the most celebrated Roman Empire, Roman Catholic Church, Renaissance, etc.

Italy’s cultural diversity has been a cause of around 2000years of welcoming emigrants, thus the unified Italian culture today, could individually be rooted back to its origin (ISTAT, 2026).

Language Of Italy:

The Italian language is also, in many contexts, considered to be a “Romance Language” that is extracted from Latin.

The national and official language in Italy is Italian; about 93% of the population speaks Italian. However, there are other languages that the natives can speak, such as Greek, French, Croatian, Slovenian, and Walser (ISTAT, 2026).

Religion In Italy:

Almost 40% of the Italians are practicing Catholics, whereas the rest of the population are baptized, with a combination of Muslims, Jehovah’s, Jews, and Buddhists community.

There is absolute freedom of worship and the practice of an individual's religion within the country. This is because freedom of worship is mentioned in the Constitution of Italian law.

Italian Family Values:

Family formulates a core social structure in Italian society. In the South of Italy, usually, the immediate or nuclear family is seen to be residing together in one house, but as far as the Northern region is concerned, an extended combined family culture is prominent (Bacchini et al., 2024).

The Italians value family gatherings and have transferred exuberant family values in their children as they are taught to respect their family elders and all the other members.

People Of Italy (Basic Meeting Etiquettes):

The people in Italy are usually very friendly and well-equipped with the basic etiquette towards either strangers or acquaintances (International Trade Administration, 2026). Italians prefer a firm handshake when meeting for the first time, with proper eye contact while having a conversation. The culture is very enthusiastic about greeting whenever they meet or come across people.

Dressing properly is an important factor as it says a lot about the personality, and Italians believe in the impression that they get from their physical appearance. Elegant accessories have to be a part of the attire for both men and women. The people in Italy like to stand very close to each other when they talk and also prefer personal touches that should not be perceived wrong by the opposite gender. Moreover, when it comes to privacy, Italians value and respect each other's personal space (International Trade Administration, 2026).

Arts And Architecture In Italy:

Italian style and art have been crafted with the Renaissance emergence in the 14th Century.

Italian art history reached its crux point after the very noble Michael Angelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Raphael.

Art is a very obvious feature in Italy that is not only seen in the infrastructure but also in museums, churches, and public buildings. Music is another most celebrated form of expressing love and happiness among Italians. Opera has its origin in Italy. There are many famous Opera houses in the country, and Italy is home to many world-famous opera house artists like Enrico Caruso, Luciano Pavarotti, and Andrea Bocelli (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2024).

Fashion Of Italy:

The fashion industry of Italy is the world's most famous and elite. Milan is known to be the fashion city of the world. The sense of Italian fashion gives a sense of a high-end luxurious lifestyle. Many famous brands from Italy that represent the fashion style that is followed in Italy are brands like, "Dolce & Gabbana," "Versace," "Gucci," "Prada," "Fendi," "Bulgari," "Valentino" and many more (Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, 2024).

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