

THE WHITE EDIT

OUR FULL GUIDE TO GETTING MARRIED IN ITALY

You can legally marry in Italy without having to fulfil any residency requirements. Civil wedding ceremonies are by far the most popular choice, although it is also possible for couples to have a Catholic wedding ceremony.

Non-Catholic religious ceremonies are not legally recognised in Italy. Many couples choose to avoid the legalities and paperwork involved and have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK to fulfil the legal requirements, followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist Ceremony in Italy at a venue of their choice.

Civil Ceremony

In Italy, civil ceremonies are conducted by the mayor (or his representative) and normally take place in the Town Hall register office.

There are no residency requirements for couples wishing to have a civil ceremony. However, you will probably need to be resident in the country for a few days prior to the wedding in order to present your documents at the town hall and acquire your Nulla Osta (sworn statement).

Although same-sex couples cannot legally marry in Italy they are able to have a civil union ceremony (civil partnership).

Religious Ceremony

You can have a religious ceremony if...

- one/both of you are Catholic and neither of you are divorced.

No residency rules apply so it is perfectly okay if neither of you live in Italy. A Roman Catholic wedding is legally binding and will take place in a Roman Catholic Church.

Non-Catholic religious ceremonies are not legally recognised in Italy.

Wedding Blessing / Humanist Ceremony

The private, non-denominational, non-institutional nature of a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony gives you the flexibility to marry when, where and how you want. There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to take place in a licensed building. Therefore, you can hold your ceremony wherever you like — at your favourite restaurant, in a private villa, on a secluded beach or in the middle of an olive grove. The choice really is yours. There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to follow a set structure so it can be as formal or informal as you like — you can have a traditional Church Ceremony with the religious parts replaced with readings and vows or you can have a light-hearted ceremony with humorous readings and vows. Once again, the choice is yours. These ceremonies are usually performed by a celebrant who will be able to help you select the style, structure, readings, music and vows that reflect your tastes and feelings as a couple resulting in a highly personalised and unique, non-religious ceremony.

Please note: If you do choose to have a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony you will also need to have an official civil ceremony in order for your marriage to be legally binding.

Civil Ceremony

You can legally marry in Italy without having to fulfil any residency requirements. Civil wedding ceremonies are by far the most popular choice although it is also possible for couples to have a Catholic wedding ceremony. Non-Catholic religious ceremonies are not legally recognised. However, many couples choose to avoid the legalities and paperwork involved and have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK (to fulfil the legal requirements) followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist Ceremony in Italy at a venue of their choice.

**** A civil ceremony is easier to arrange than a religious ceremony in a Catholic church. ****

Civil ceremonies normally take place in the town hall register office, which is often a beautiful, historical building in its own right. However, some local authorities have also purchased, or made agreements with private venues such as medieval castles, enchanting villas, beautiful palaces and even museums in a bid to provide the most stunning and beautiful location in Italy. Although there are no residency requirements for the marriage to take place, you will probably need to be resident in the country for a few days prior to the wedding in order to present your documents at the town hall and acquire your Nulla Osta (sworn statement).

The process:

- 1.** Contact the local town hall register office (Ufficio di Stato Civile) of the municipality ('comune') where you wish to get married to find out about local marriage laws, including what documents you and your partner will need.
- 2.** Obtain a Nulla Osta from the Embassy/Consulate of your home country based in Italy. You will probably require the following documentation:
 - A CNI or equivalent from your home country. This document confirms you are not married in your home country and there are no other impediments to the marriage. A CNI is valid for 6 months under Italian law. Information about UK-issued CNIs can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/italy> Non-UK citizens can click here for details on how to obtain the relevant certificate from their home country.
 - A statutory declaration providing further information and signed in the presence of a solicitor or public notary. A bilingual (English/Italian) statutory declaration template is available to download from https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/italy/uk/opposite_sex · Birth certificate (long form version).
 - A valid passport
 - If you are widowed, you must provide both your previous marriage certificate and the death certificate of your husband/wife.

- If you are divorced or your marriage was annulled, you must provide the relevant certificates. In Italy, a divorced person cannot marry until at least 300 days have elapsed since the issuing of a Decree Absolute.
- You will require two witnesses (aged 18+) for the ceremony and will need to provide their names, addresses, occupations and photocopies of their passports.

Please note: Documents issued outside of Italy must be translated into Italian by an approved translator and have a Hague Apostille from the relevant issuing office in your country of residence (For UK issued documents go to www.gov.uk/get-document-legalised). If the name on any of your documents doesn't appear exactly as it does on your birth certificate, you will need to provide the Italian marriage authorities with evidence of your name change (Eg. marriage certificate; deed poll). If you fail to do this, the authorities may refuse to allow the marriage to go ahead.

3. The ceremony itself can be personalised with your own music, vows and readings. It will be conducted in Italian and translated into English by an official interpreter. Non-Italian residents must have an official interpreter even if they speak and understand Italian. It's a legal requirement.

4. Once the ceremony has taken place, you will be issued with an international wedding certificate.

Civil Union Ceremony

Although same-sex couples cannot legally marry in Italy they can have a civil union ceremony (civil partnership). The process and documents required are almost identical to that of the Civil Ceremony (above).

For more information go to https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/italy/uk/same_sex



Religious Ceremony

You can have a religious ceremony if...

- one/both of you are Catholic and neither of you are divorced.

No residency rules apply. A Roman Catholic wedding is legally binding and will take place in a Roman Catholic Church.

****** *If you wish to have a non-Catholic religious ceremony in Italy, you will need to have a civil ceremony first in order for your marriage to be legally binding.* ******

Couples planning to have a Catholic marriage ceremony in Italy need to allow at least six months for all the documentary requirements to be met.

The process:

- 1.** Contact the priest of the church where you would like the ceremony to take place as the priest must first give you permission to marry.
- 2.** Visit your local parish priest to discuss your plans to marry in Italy. He will be able to guide you through the process and documentation required. You will probably require the following documentation:

- A pre-nuptial enquiry form.
- A valid passport.
- Baptism Certificate issued from the parish of your baptism. Please note: the certificate must be dated within the six months prior to your wedding.
- Confirmation Certificate issued from the parish of your confirmation.

Please note: the certificate must be dated within the six months prior to your wedding.

- A CNI or equivalent from your home country. This document confirms you are not married in your home country and there are no other impediments to the marriage. A CNI is valid for 6 months under Italian law. Information about UK-issued CNIs can be obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-abroad/y/italy> Non-UK citizens can click here for details on how to obtain the certificate relevant to their country.
- A certificate confirming the completion of a pre-marriage course. Your priest will inform you whether this is required.

- Permission from your Parish Priest(s) to be married outside your own parish (Letter of Freedom)
- If one of you is not a Catholic, a dispensation, issued by the Bishopric of the home country, is required.

3. Documentation should reach the church where you wish to be married at least two months before the date of the wedding.

4. The priest will make a request for publication of the banns at the local Town Hall (Ufficio di Stato Civile) and publish the banns in the church where you wish to be married. Increasingly, many couples are choosing to have a low-key civil ceremony at a registry office in the UK to fulfil the legal requirements, followed by a Wedding Blessing/Humanist Ceremony in Italy—regarding this as their actual ‘Wedding Day’—where they share vows and exchange rings in the presence of their friends and family.



Wedding Blessing / Humanist Ceremony

The private, non-denominational, non-institutional nature of a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony gives you the flexibility to marry when, where and how you want. There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to take place in a licensed building. Therefore, you can hold your ceremony wherever you like—at your favourite restaurant, in a private villa, on a secluded beach or in the middle of an olive grove. The choice is yours. There is no legal requirement for the ceremony to follow a set structure so it can be as formal or informal as you like — you can have a traditional Church Ceremony with the religious parts replaced with readings and vows or you can have a light-hearted ceremony with humorous readings and vows. Once again, the choice is yours. These ceremonies are usually performed by a celebrant who will be able to help you select the style, structure, readings, music and vows that reflect your tastes and feelings as a couple resulting in a highly personalised and unique, non-religious ceremony.

Please note: If you do choose to have a Wedding Blessing or Humanist Ceremony you will also need to have an official civil ceremony in order for your marriage to be legally binding.

*** Although we have done our best to ensure the information above is correct, please note it is intended only as a guideline and should not be regarded as legal advice. ***

