

A Taste of Italy: Italian American Culture [B2]

Dalla cucina al mondo dello spettacolo o la politica, gli immigranti italiani provenienti da ogni ambito hanno cercato di vivere il cosiddetto sogno americano lasciando un segno indelebile.



Italian immigrants have had a [huge](#) impact on the [melting pot](#) that is American society. One of the most obvious areas of influence is food. When the first Italian immigrants arrived in the 1880s, US restaurants were [mostly](#) Germanic in style, with pork dishes served in [beer halls](#). Today, of the eight hundred thousand restaurants in the US, around one hundred thousand are Italian and Italian-American TV chefs are national celebrities.

FOOD

However, what are considered Italian dishes — pizza, spaghetti with [meatballs](#), [chicken parmesan](#) — are American versions of the real Italian dishes. Pizza was born in Naples and was [once](#) a street snack of pitta bread [dabbed with](#) tomato sauce. Transported to the US, immigrants added New World ingredients and started serving the dish in restaurants. Pizza is now as American as apple pie.

HOLLYWOOD

Pizza often goes together with a movie, and there is nothing more American than Hollywood. However, Italian-Americans have also been prominent in the film industry on both sides of the camera. Arguably, the first-ever sex symbol was the Italian- American actor Rudolph Valentino, who was followed by iconic stars such as Sylvester Stallone, John Travolta, Al Pacino, Robert de Niro and Leonardo DiCaprio. Italian-American directors include Frank Capra, Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola. Ironically, though, while Coppola's Godfather films are considered classics, they helped reinforce negative Italian-American stereotypes...

MUSIC

Italian-Americans have also risen high on the musical side of the entertainment industry. When television exploded in popularity in the 1950s, crooners such as Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett, Perry Como and Dean Martin became major celebrities with their own TV shows. Their careers as singers had often begun in Italian restaurants, entertaining people while they ate. Their successors include superstars Madonna, Bruce Springsteen and Lady Gaga.

Glossary

- **chicken parmesan** = parmigiana di pollo
- **once** = una volta
- **Arguably** = presumibilmente
- **crooners** = cantanti confidenziali
- **melting pot** = crogiolo
- **beer halls** = birrerie
- **though** = tuttavia
- **risen** = alzarsi, crescere
- **entertainment** = intrattenimento, spettacolo
- **huge** = enorme
- **mostly** = per la maggior parte
- **meatballs** = polpette
- **dabbed with** = dare delle pennellate
- **prominent** = illustri
- **sides** = lati
- **own** = propri