

Little Taste of Italy: Vibrant Italian Neighborhoods in the U.S.

Years between 1880 and 1920 mark one of the peaks in the history of human migration as United States' shores played host to millions who took part in the exodus. While some of these immigrants blended in and seamlessly lived the American way, others chose to stick to their mother land's culture and language, creating their own neighborhoods within numerous American cities.



Approximately four million Italians took part in the voyage to escape the burden of political and economic hard times. Many settled in New York and New Jersey after their arrival through Ellis Island as Ohio and Pennsylvania became attractive to those who wished to become industrial workers.

Others headed for Chicago and the country's central states whereas some found the opportunities offered by California and Northwest's wine and fishing industries irresistible. Their dash for New Orleans on the other hand explains why it's today possible to find Italian population in Louisiana.

The creation of Italian neighborhoods was a high ideal amongst this group of immigrants. They were consequently able to preserve their traditions and pass it down to subsequent generations, making it possible to spot and feel the vibrant cultural heritage that marks the realm of contemporary Italian-Americans across the U.S.



The start of the 20th century saw the growth of today's Little Italy in **San Diego** as fishermen and their families flocked in from Sicily and Genoa. A breakout of urban blight swept through the city for decades, thwarting the community's development but it was later successfully restored, preserving the feel of Italian culture in San Diego. Years on, the city's Little Italy ranks top of shelf as one of America's popular Italian neighborhoods amongst tourists and locals alike.

Another fascinating account about the survival of Italian culture in the U.S. is cuddled between **Clarksburg** city and the northern central parts of West Virginia. Though the 1856 rail construction in Ohio and Baltimore saw the influx of Italian immigrants that later settled there, Clarksburg has since 1979 been the American-Italian community of choice for Italian heritage events that bring together throngs of Italian families to create the country's mega Italian festival.

With deep cultural values in tow, Italian immigrants arrived in **New Orleans** as the 19th century came to a close. As a result, every 19th of March New Orleans hosts the Mardi Gras parade in Italian fashion to celebrate the Feast of St. Joseph. If you have tasted muffuletta sandwich, red gravy and listened to Louis Prima's legendary jazz tunes while in New Orleans then you have experienced the depth of Italian culture in the U.S.

Milwaukee is referred to as the city of festivals, having hosted Festa Italiana since 1978 while Pittsburgh's steel industry's boom at the start of the 20th century fueled the spread of Italian culture across the nation. Therefore, if you think Mario Puzo's Godfather is the best of Italian-American stories to ever make it to the U.S. entertainment scene then maybe you haven't heard about The City of Angles or attended the Italian Feast of San Gennaro. This is where you get the finest Italian entertainers, wines and delicacies.



Though **Chicago** is renowned for its healthy population of Italians, the city's Taylor Street stands out as Chicago's Little Italy. The mosaic of fountains, parks, a sports complex that pay tribute to Italian-American sports heroes and heroines makes a walk through Taylor Street a unique way of experiencing the Italian spirit and way of life.

Also known as the Italian Cathedral of the West, Saints Paul and Peter Church is a prominent landmark to the North of **San Francisco's** white sandy beaches, making it the city's Italian community of choice. Joe DiMaggio, a legendary baseball player who was brought up in this area, for instance took a photo with Marilyn Monroe at the church's stairway after their 1954 marriage ceremony that took place in the City Hall. Other than having an array of Italian restaurants, bakeries and cafes, North Beach is also home to Grant Avenue which is San Francisco's oldest street.

Manhattan has a Little Italy as well; a globally known tourists' hot spot though the Italian community in this city has shrank over the years. The city's Little Italy has also maintained vibrant Italian customs which makes it the place to catch an Italian festival at anytime of the year if you don't wish to make a trip to Bronx and Brooklyn which also harbor the Italian great traditional values that landed on shores of

America and lived on since then, fit as a fiddle.

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