

Italian Baby Names - Romantic, Yet Traditional

Italian baby names - like the language itself, can be very beautiful, flowing and romantic. Who can resist the beautiful sounding Allesandro (literal meaning "The protector and helper of mankind"), or Giovanni ("God is gracious") or Carmela ("A garden or orchard").

Italian is a romance language and this is reflected in the beauty of the names. However, surprisingly, the range of Italian baby names is actually quite narrow due to the historically very traditional methods used in naming babies.

In Italy, there has always been a very firm set of rules for naming children, i.e.:

The first male is always named after his paternal grandfather.

The second male is always named after his maternal grandfather.

The first female is always named after her paternal grandmother.

The second female is always named after her maternal grandmother.

The subsequent children can then be named after the parents, favorite aunts or uncles, a saint or a deceased relative. This all-pervasive custom has created the situation where many Italian families have several children, of similar ages, with exactly the same names. For example, if a man named Giovanni has 3 sons and each of them get married and have their own children, in all 3 cases, the first boy born into the family would be named Giovanni. Similarly, the first girl would be named after Giovanni's wife. Given that Italians have, traditionally been devout Catholics with a tendency to have large families, you can see how family gatherings could become quite confusing!!

If this isn't confusing enough, Italians often also have 2 birthday celebrations! As well as the birthday itself, Italians often celebrate their "Name Day", or Onomastico. Italian babies often have one of their names connected to a particular patron saint, e.g. the saint of their town, or a saint who has a special significance for their parents. Each of the many saints has a special feast day, for example the 3rd of March is the feast day of St. Tereza Verzeri - one of many different St Tereza's! The name day is celebrated just like the birthday and is seen as just as important.

But you don't have to be Italian, Catholic, or willing to have 2 birthday celebrations to start considering the use of an Italian name for your child. In this fast shrinking and individualistic world, Italian names are becoming more and more common in some of the most unusual places - witness how many Brazillian soccer players seem to have Italian names!!

So, what are currently, the most popular Italian names? Here are the top 10 most popular Italian baby names registered by baptism in Italy:

MALE / FEMALE

- 1.Giuseppe / Maria
- 2.Giovanni / Anna
- 3.Antonio / Giuseppina
- 4.Mario / Rosa
- 5.Luigi / Angela
- 6.Francesco / Giovanna
- 7.Angelo / Teresa
- 8.Vincenzo / Lucia
- 9.Pietro / Carmela
- 10.Salvatore / Caterina

Italian names are not only beautiful sounding, but also usually have very nice meanings. There are lots of good Internet sites featuring some excellent lists of Italian names, together with their meanings, so its quite easy to explore this option when choosing a baby name. Remember also that many Italian names are Latin derivatives of other names, so why not give them a try - after all, doesn't Gianni and Caterina sound a just little bit nicer than John and Catherine?

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Michael Barrows' website has great advice for choosing baby names, lots of baby name lists and lots of great baby resources. Get your free ebook

packed with baby tips for new parents, visit <http://www.all-about-baby-names.com>