

The AVERAGE ITALIAN FAMILY



Types of families

The average Italian family today is of one or two children (the average in statistics is 1.2 kids) with the two parents.

In the South of the country, families will have more children than those of the North, often more than two.

Another type of family now is the reconstituted-family, where a member is a commuter or lives in another part of the country for work.

The statistics carried out by ISTAT (The National Institute for Statistics) show that there has been a dramatic reduction in the number of family components. This is due to:

- a reduction in the number of births;
- a decrease in the number of marriages;
- a rise in the number of single-parents families.

Italy has gone through an important revolution in the types of family models.

In modern families, the role of women has changed. More women feel and are more independent and focus on their careers.

In addition, the concept of the family unit itself has changed from a hierarchical model to a more equal one. This has led to new types of family: singles, couples (not married), couples without children and single-parent families.

Figures referring to this situation: singles are 25.9%, couples without children are 19.8%, while the number of families with children (39.5%) and big families (5.1%) are decreasing. Factors:

- Children leave their parents' home later compared to the past (they get married later than in the past), depending economically on them;
- Education and expenses linked to attend university. Students are not economically independent;
- Moreover, nowadays, Italians have difficulty finding a steady job.

All this has caused a delay in the age of giving birth too. In fact, Italian women have their first child in their early thirties, compared to the other mothers in EU who have their babies between 26 and 30 years of age.

Reading statistics, it emerges that it's impossible to classify the Italian family under a single category as it was more likely in the past. Now new models of families coexist.

Expenses

According to ISTAT Italians are reducing the amount of money they spend on clothes (for the purchase of which we prefer markets to shops and boutiques) and education. About a third of the total monthly expense goes to the maintenance of the house and to the physical activity to keep in good shape.

Families in northern Italy spend the most, with the province of Bolzano at the top, where people spend on average of 1000 € monthly more than in Sicily.

The expenses on food is stable. In 2005 Italian spent on food and drinks more or less what they are spending now (456 € against 453 €).

The expenses have increased for transport. The increase is especially referred to private transport (for fuel and repairs).

Work and salary

The average salary of an Italian is about 28,977 € per year, 1560 per month. However, there are many differences in salary based on:

- professional qualifications,
- geographical area,
- sector,
- gender,
- age,
- education.

A manager earns more than a workman.

The product sector and the monetary field (banks and financial companies) are the most profitable. At the bottom of the list there are the agriculture workers.

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The stereotyped image of the large and traditional Italian family, with more than six children, is just an old memory. In fact, in the last forty years the structure of the Italian family has changed a lot from the traditional model.



In the past, Italian families, especially those of the South, were made up of a lot of children. We are talking about the patriarchal structure where women usually didn't work and took care of the children

Today the nuclear family, made up of the parents and one child is the most typical. This is because of many reasons...

First, adults seem to have less time to look after the kids, cook and take care of the family. Then growing up children is much more expensive and life is more expensive all together. In addition, it's important to remember that also the number of religious marriages is decreasing, while it's increasing that of civil marriages together with the divorces. However, these figures are typical of European Countries; we are living in a society giving more importance to the economical standard rather than values.

But what about **women**?

Usually in Italy, the husband earns a bit more than the wife or has a better considered job. This is very sad to admit but it's true, especially in the south, where a lot of women are still self-employed or housewives.

As opposed to other European countries such as England, France or Germany, here in Italy young people continue to live in their parent's house for more years till they find a job, sometimes even after having a job they do not leave. I personally think it's not so good. I really would prefer to live on my own and not to depend on my family. Anyway, I also understand that it's very difficult to find a job especially nowadays with the economic crisis and the uncertainty we are facing.

Figures:

39 Million: number of adults (from the age of 19 to 64)

13 Million: number of elderly (from 65 to 100)

9 Million: number of young people (from 9 to 18)

4 Million: number of people living in an absolutely poverty condition

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