



Italian arrival and settlement in the UK: a timeline

- 1820s** Beginnings of Italian economic migration to UK
- Craftsmen from the north of Italy, e.g. barometer and thermometer makers
- Migrants from Parma and Lucca mountains begin to arrive in London as street entertainers and statuette maker-sellers
- 1860s** Mass emigration from Italy begins after unification 1861
- Large inflow of poor Italians to London from Parma/Lucca mountain areas
- Street entertainers and statuette maker-sellers begin to move north and west from London
- 1870s** Migrants arrive in London from the Ciociaria area between Rome and Naples (Frosinone) and also begin to spread out across the country
- 1870s** Italian communities in Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and take root
- 1880s** Street musicians and other itinerants begin to sell street food
- 1880s** Italian communities in Scotland and Wales take root
- 1890s** Progression to fixed premises; shops and other businesses linked to foods
- 1900s** Immigration grows, catering niche continues to expand
- 1910s** Italians spread out from cities around the country to smaller towns
- 1914-18** First World War. Britain and Italy allies (from 1915)
- 1920s** Immigration to UK and emigration from Italy restricted
- 1930s** Growth of fascism
- 1939-45** Second World War. Britain and Italy enemies (from 1940)
- 1950s** Mass immigration from the deep south of Italy by bulk recruitment
- Italians create communities in England where few Italians had previously lived
- Historic chains of migration also reactivated



- 1960s** Immigration continues on personal basis through work permit scheme
Sicilians become the largest regional group to arrive
- 1970s** More people return to Italy than arrive
- 1973** Britain joins the EEC
Students begin to arrive in Britain from Italy
- 1980s** Highly qualified professional migrants begin to arrive, mainly to London
- 1990s** Immigration of young Italian graduates begins
- 2000s** Increase in number of professionals and young educated Italians arriving
Around half located in London
Young migrants without professional experience gravitate to catering sector
- 2016** Italian community in the London Italian consular jurisdiction becomes second largest Italian Community in the world after Buenos Aires, Argentina
Britain decides to leave the European Union

Written by: Dr Terri Colpi, Hon. Research Fellow, Department of Italian, University of St Andrews