

Got A Grandparent?

Get A Passport—
9 Countries That Offer Citizenship
Through Ancestry



Got A Grandparent? Get A Passport—9 Countries That Offer Citizenship Through Ancestry

Published by Live and Invest Overseas™
Calle Dr. Alberto Navarro, El Cangrejo, Casa #45, Panama City, Panama
Publisher: Kathleen Peddicord

Copyright © 2021 Live and Invest Overseas™. All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced by any means without the express written consent of the publisher. The information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be reliable, but its accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

www.liveandinvestoverseas.com™

Table Of Contents

- P. 4** [Greece](#)
- P. 4** [Hungary](#)
- P. 5** [Ireland](#)
- P. 5** [Italy](#)
- P. 6** [Israel](#)
- P. 6** [Poland](#)
- P. 7** [Portugal](#)
- P. 8** [Spain](#)
- P. 8** [U.K.](#)
- P. 8** [Other Countries With Jus Sanguinis Rights](#)

Got A Grandparent? Get A Passport

—9 Countries That Offer Citizenship Through Ancestry

The blood flowing in your veins, in other words, your family ancestry, is just as valid in the eyes of many nations regarding citizenship as the act of being born in those countries. In Latin this is known as “right of blood,” *jus sanguinis*.

Based on the laws of nationality by the following countries, you are eligible for citizenship regardless of where you were born by virtue of your father, your mother, or both... and, in some cases, generations much further back than that, being citizens of that country.

It's worth it to brush up on your family history and see what adventure could await you overseas.

Greece

Greeks believe in bloodlines. You're eligible for Greek citizenship if you have at least one biological parent or grandparent of Greek origin, i.e. born in Greece.

The name of the game is “Find As Many Supporting Documents As You Can”—birth, marriage, and death certificates; baptismal records, IDs, passports, even college records... extra points for a Greek municipality certificate certifying the ancestor's birth and municipality number.

Along with the family supporting documents, you'll need to provide a clean police report.

You can apply in Greece at registry office in Athens or you can apply at the Greek consulate in your home country.

A common concern with Greek citizenship is military service. Males 19 to 45 can circumvent the requirement by maintaining foreign resident status (possible as a Greek national), which permits up to six months of residency in Greece per year. Anything beyond six months automatically renders the citizen a permanent resident and may require up to 15 months of military service.

Hungary

“The Republic of Hungary bears a sense of responsibility for the fate of Hungarians living outside its borders and shall promote and foster their relations with Hungary.”

So says the country's Constitution.

In keeping with this mandate, in 2011 the Hungarian government liberalized its existing citizenship by ancestry program (inaugurated in 1993) to not only descendants of Hungarian parents and grandparents but descendants of all Hungarians. This creates a path to citizenship for descendants from the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire, which ceded two-thirds of its territory and one-third of its Hungarian speaking population under the 1920 Treaty of Trianon after World War I.

Furthermore, Hungary's new program, known as Simplified Naturalization, makes it quicker and easier than before to qualify by removing the original program's constitutional knowledge test and the one-year residency requirement before naturalization. Citizenship, once the application is processed and approved, is now granted immediately, and residency is never required.

The only remaining catch, then, is to demonstrate knowledge of the Hungarian language... a potentially deadly catch, as it's commonly regarded as one of the most difficult languages to learn (not to mention a relatively useless one).

But fret not, dear potential Hungarian, we've heard of applicants with no prior Hungarian language skills passing the test after just a few language lessons. As Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen put it, “anyone linked to the Hungarian culture and who speaks the language to some level can get Hungarian citizenship.” That said, the application process is entirely in Hungarian.

Being a criminal or a threat to national security are other potential catches, but hopefully the language requirement will give you more trouble.

Since the expansion of the program in 2011, over 320,000 applicants from 65 nations have successfully applied and taken their oath of citizenship. Most have come from Ukraine, Romania, and Slovakia, where large populations of ethnic Hungarians have remained since the Treaty of Trianon. Hundreds of U.S. citizens have likewise been successful.

Approximately 1.5 million U.S. citizens are eligible. Former New York Governor George Pataki has expressed interest in claiming Hungarian citizenship through his paternal grandfather who was born in Austria-Hungary in 1883 and immigrated to the United States in 1908.

If you believe you can prove you have even a few drops of Hungarian blood (and can pass the language test), you can apply for citizenship at any Hungarian embassy or consulate.

Work with the officials from the beginning. You'll need your normal personal identification and supporting documents, all with Hungarian translations, as well as the documents proving your relationship to your ancestor and your ancestor's relationship to Hungary.

For the ancestor, anything goes... passports, IDs, marriage certificates, death certificates, military documents, church birth certificates, baptism papers, rectorial certificates, Hungarian military service ID's... that kind of stuff. Try to get your hands on as many of these documents as possible, so you can prove your case quickly and easily. If you have your ducks in a row, you could be a Hungarian citizen in less than six months.

Ireland

Thinking you'd like to live or work in the EU? Good luck, my fellow North American. No problem, though, dear citizen of the Emerald Isle. Interested in traveling in the Middle East? In some countries, your blue passport with the eagle on the cover might be a liability, but your red one with the harp on the front won't raise anybody's eyebrows. The luck of the Irish...

For a country of only four million, Ireland's overseas presence is remarkable. In the United States alone, nearly 35 million souls claim some Irish descent. The worldwide number is estimated around 70 million.

Ireland recognizes these far-flung sons and daughters with one of the best ancestral citizenship programs around.

If either of your parents were an Irish citizen at your birth or any of your grandparents were born on the island Ireland (thus including Northern Ireland), congratulations, you're entitled to Irish citizenship and an EU passport. All you have to do is enter your birth into the Register of Foreign Births and apply for a passport.

To add your birth in the Foreign Births Registry, [apply online here](#) and send your printed application and the following official or officially certified copies of supporting documentation to the nearest Irish embassy or consular office, or, if you reside in Ireland, to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin.

You'll need the following documentation... From your Irish-born grandparent:

- Marriage certificate (if applicable);
- Passport or copy of the death certificate;
- Full, long-form civil Irish birth certificate or baptismal registers if born after 1864.

From the parent from whom you are claiming Irish descent:

- Marriage certificate (if applicable);
- Passport or official I.D.;
- If deceased, a certified copy of the death certificate;
- Full, long form civil birth certificate.

From you:

- Full, long-form civil birth certificate;
- Notarized copy of passport or official I.D.;
- Proof of address (bank statement, utility bill).

The registration process takes about five months. Once registered, you're an Irish citizen and can apply for a passport.

Italy

Italy's citizenship through ancestry program is similar to Ireland's but contains a bias in favor of paternal lineage.

If either of your parents were born in Italy, you have a right to Italian citizenship.

However, if you're using your mother to qualify, you have to have been born in 1948 or later (Italian law did not permit women to pass on citizenship until that year).

You can use any of your Italian-born grandparents, as well, but, again, your mother or father would have to have been born in 1948 or later since your grandmother could not pass on citizenship before then.

Below are the grandparent categories. There are categories for great-grandparents as well, again favoring the male side. That is, it's easiest if your great-grandfather from Italy had a son who is your grandfather who had a son who is your father.

Here are particular qualifying scenarios:

- Your father was born in the United States. Your paternal grandfather was born in Italy and was an Italian citizen at the time of your father's birth.
- Your mother was born in the United States. Your maternal grandfather was born in Italy and was an Italian citizen at the time of your mother's birth. You were born after Jan. 1, 1948.
- Your father was born in the United States. Your paternal grandmother was born in Italy and was an Italian citizen at the time of your father's birth. Your father was born after Jan. 1, 1948.
- Your mother was born in the United States. Your maternal grandmother was born in Italy and was an Italian citizen at the time of your mother's birth. Your mother was born after Jan. 1, 1948.

The best place to start is your local Italian consulate, where you'll be able to get answers to your questions and details on the procedure to follow.

Israel

Have you set your sights on the Mediterranean but want to look beyond Europe? Located on the southeastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, the State of Israel has put in place provisions to allow descendants of Israeli citizens to obtain citizenship even if they were not born there.

Since its birth as a modern-day nation in mid-May 1948, people of Jewish descent as well as others have settled here. Though initially founded as a nation

to resettle the Jewish diaspora, Israel has become a diverse nation with laws of nationality that can be taken advantage of by individuals regardless of religion, race, sex, or nationality.

You can apply for Israeli citizenship if you meet these requirements:

- If you were born outside Israel, but your father or mother holds Israeli citizenship, acquired by birth in Israel or according to the Law of Return (more on that below), by residence, or by naturalization.
- Although you may have been born after one of your parents has died, if the late parent was an Israeli citizen, then by means of the same provisions in the first point you can obtain Israeli citizenship.

On its [official immigration website](#) the State of Israel makes another interesting arrangement available to persons hoping to obtain citizenship:

On the establishment of the State, its founders proclaimed "...the renewal of the Jewish State in the Land of Israel, which would open wide the gates of the homeland to every Jew..." In pursuance of this tenet, the State of Israel has absorbed survivors of the Holocaust, refugees from the countries in which they had resided, as well as many thousands of Jews who came to settle in Israel of their own volition.

The Law of Return (1950) grants every Jew, wherever he may be, the right to come to Israel as an *oleh* (a Jew immigrating to Israel) and become an Israeli citizen.

In this case, the term "Jew" refers to someone whose mother is Jewish or has converted to Judaism.

Since 1970, the Law of Return has been extended to apply to children and grandchildren and their spouses in the case of an ancestor who is Jewish, all in an effort to ensure family unity in the immigration process.

Contacting the appropriate relatives and the Israeli Embassy or Consulate in the jurisdiction you live in is the best place to start. The [official government website](#) is also a convenient way to contact an official with more information.

Poland

Overseas descendants from Poland are eligible for citizenship through ancestry, But not all qualify, the

main condition being that the grandparent would have to have had Polish citizenship, an impossibility before 1918, the year modern Poland was established and began offering citizenship.

In other words, your Polish ancestor must have emigrated from Poland after 1918... otherwise your ancestor is considered a Polish national, not a citizen.

You must have your ancestor's citizenship papers if you want to get your own. If you have them, contact the nearest Polish consulate for information on how to apply for "Confirmation of Possession or Loss of Polish Citizenship," which will certainly require lots of paperwork and patience. Consular offices are dreadfully understaffed.

Unlike Hungary, though, you don't need to know the language (Polish) to obtain citizenship through this option.

Portugal

Portugal began granting citizenship to foreign-born grandchildren of Portuguese citizens in 2006.

In addition, in 2015 the Portuguese government approved a new law providing citizenship to descendants of exiled Jews.

In 1492, Spain's Catholic monarchs passed the Edict of Expulsion of the Jews, forcing Spanish Jews to either convert (*Anusim*) or leave the kingdom. Most found shelter in Portugal, but safe haven did not last. In 1497, the Portuguese King was pressured by the Spanish Kingdom to evict or force conversion upon all Portuguese Jews.

All non-converts left to North Africa, Amsterdam, Thessaloniki, Constantinople, France, Morocco, Brazil, Panama, and Curaçao or the Antilles, keeping the ladino (*Espanolit*) language.

Today, thousands of North American, Venezuelan, Turkish, Dutch, Panamanian, Brazilian, Argentinian, and Israeli citizens, among other nationalities, are of Sephardic descent. Our attorneys in Portugal have even encountered Russian citizens of Sephardic descent.

In 2015, 518 years after the exodus, Portugal enacted a new citizenship regime designed to make amends with its unfortunate Inquisitorial past. Sephardic Jews

and their descendants worldwide are now entitled to apply for Portuguese nationality, with all the associated benefits of having a European Union passport.

Those applying for Portuguese citizenship under this regime must prove their ancestral genealogical connection to Portugal; if you can trace and prove your Sephardic Jewish origins back to Portugal, you can apply for the Portuguese citizenship.

Evidence may include Sephardic Jewish traditions, family names, objects, and documents that allow applicants to prove a Portuguese Sephardic ancestral origin. The ability to speak ladino and the use of it as the family's primary language is regarded as one of the best connection factors.

In many cases, the easiest ways to prove ancestry is through families keeping the language, continuing to practice the rites of the oldest Jewish cult in Portugal, family names, or by presenting objects and/or documents which clearly demonstrate Portuguese origin. Failing all of that, proof can be obtained, even if the family is no longer practicing Jewish or has converted to other religions.

Documents that prove direct progeny or family relationship in the collateral line of a common parent from a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin and a tradition of his/her family belonging to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin are key.

Usually, proof is screened by the Portuguese Jewish Community and the person's ancestry is certified to belong to a Sephardic community of Portuguese origin.

Obtaining this certificate is a step that is key to be able to file a complete and successful application.

In fact, it is not required that an applicant is Jewish, only being required that he/she is of Portuguese Sephardic origin.

Previously, it was not necessary to either speak Portuguese, reside in Portugal or pay taxes there. However, the Portuguese government is working on a change to this citizenship option that would require showing a connection to Portugal before citizenship would be approved.

In some cases, Sephardic roots are buried and we engage the services of a genealogist specialized

in Sephardic ancestry to research the family's background. A valid opinion may be the difference between the success or failure of an application.

Citizenship applies to adult or emancipated foreigners that have not been convicted of a crime that, according to the Portuguese Penal Code, is not punishable with imprisonment for a minimum of three years. Spouses and children may apply for citizenship afterwards under the general naturalization regime available for all descendants of Portuguese nationals.

Spain

Spain had a similar Jewish repatriation program to Portugal's. However, it expired in 2019.

Spain has put in place a law that covers people who have parents or grandparents that were Spanish citizens, but the rules are narrow and meant to help children of people who were exiled during the civil war and dictator years to reclaim their Spanish citizenship.

United Kingdom

At its height, it was said "the sun doesn't set on the British Empire." Today, much of the former empire falls into the category of Commonwealth nations.

In recognition of its history and the movement of so many British citizens around the empire, the country has created an option for grandchildren of U.K. citizens to easily obtain residency although not citizenship.

The Ancestor Visa allows citizens of Commonwealth nations who have a British grandparent (born in the UK) to apply for residency that also allows them to work in the U.K.

With 54 countries in the Commonwealth, this visa option opens up residency potential to many who may not realize it.

You can find out more about this residency option [here](#).

Otherwise, the U.K. offers citizenship to children born outside of the country if one of their parents is a British citizen and was born in the U.K.

Note that individuals who acquire citizenship by descent but were not born in the U.K. cannot automatically, in turn, pass on U.K. citizenship to their children born abroad.

Jus Sanguinis

Jus sanguinis, or "the right of the blood," means that a country recognizes citizenship in its people primarily through blood connections (as opposed to, for example, jus soli, "the right of the soil," by which citizenship is granted based on the location of a child's birth instead of the nationality of his parents).

The following are countries that follow this practice to some extent (if not fully)...

- Austria
- Armenia
- Canada
- China
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Germany
- Haiti
- Iceland
- India
- Ireland
- Iran
- Israel
- Japan
- Malta
- Mexico
- Norway
- Philippines
- Poland
- Romania
- Slovakia
- South Korea
- Switzerland
- Thailand
- Tunisia
- Ukraine
- U.K.

Another form of jus sanguinis, called *leges sanguinis*, offers immigration privileges to those with ethnic ties to a country (ancestors having left due to diaspora, war, etc.). You might not get full citizenship, but if you can prove ties to the countries below based on their criteria, you might benefit from expedited naturalization times or easier paths to citizenship than you'd have otherwise.

These countries include:

- Afghanistan
- Armenia
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Finland
- Greece
- Hungary
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Kiribati
- Liberia
- Lithuania
- Rwanda
- Serbia
- Spain
- South Korea
- Turkey

Live and Invest
OVERSEASTM
Our Expertise Unlocks The World