

# 1 EURO HOUSES

**Where** to start and **how**  
**to** navigate 1€ houses  
projects in **Italy**



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# HOW DID THE 1€ HOUSES PROJECT START?

Imagine yourself sitting on a balcony overlooking a small Italian village, sipping on fine wine in good company and with great entertainment nearby. And what if that is not just a hotel balcony, but the balcony in your very own home?

The 1€ Houses project started on the premise that many share this exact dream. In 2009, Giuseppe Ferrarello, the mayor of Gangi, a small village in Sicily, drafted the first project. The idea was simple:

1. Sell, renovate and rebuild abandoned and run down houses at a low price.
2. Repopulate the rural areas of Italy.
3. Bring economic and demographic growth to small Italian villages and towns.

Over the following years, other Italian municipalities with similar dreams picked up on the idea and started developing their own 1€ houses projects.

Today, 1€ houses can be found not only all over Italy, but even in other European countries such as Spain, France and the UK.

With many successful sales and renovations, the 1€ Houses project – born of the aspirations of a mayor in Sicily – has become a reality for over 40 Italian municipalities, sparking media attention worldwide.

Over the years, the project attracted many new residents, moved millions of investments, and even repopulated several villages across the Peninsula.

Most importantly, it realized the dream of many to start a new life in Italy, to savor its rich gastronomy and relish the quiet, happy life the country is renowned for. This dream can be yours, too.

# WAIT, SO THIS IS REAL? THERE REALLY IS SUCH A THING AS A 1€ HOUSE?

1€ houses are very much real and getting more and more popular every day.

The dream of having an idyllic home in a typical Italian village and enjoying excellent local cuisine and wine while having friends and family over for the holidays can actually be a reality for many. Italian municipalities and 1€ houses projects can offer an opportunity for all of those who desire to move to Italy or have a holiday home at an affordable price.

As you can imagine, the mere act of purchasing a 1€ house does not necessarily make it inhabitable immediately. The 1€ houses are sometimes in need of renovation and may require complete rebuilding.

There is, however, a certain advantage to the purchase and renovation of a 1€ house. The cost is still relatively low compared to purchasing a house from the regular real estate market. The initial purchase alone can save you tens of thousands of euros, thus lowering the final cost of your new Italian home.

The 1€ house is a great option for those who dream of having a house in a typical Italian village, be it for permanent living, occasional visit or as an investment, but don't have a small fortune available to spend on it.

But how can you obtain such a house? Where are they located? Who do you need to talk to and how can you make a purchase? What costs are there in addition to the 1€ purchase and how do you calculate a realistic budget?





Photo by Bobby Disler Correll



# WHAT ARE THE PURCHASING OPTIONS IN ITALY?

We receive this question very frequently, so we decided to dedicate a small chapter to this topic as well. In addition to 1 Euro Houses, you have other interesting purchasing options that may interest you. In Italy, we differentiate roughly 4 categories. Each of these options have pros and cons and fill different selling and purchasing profiles.

## Houses on the real estate market

To purchase a house on the real estate market in Italy, you have to turn to a real estate agency and see what houses they offer. They offer very detailed information about the property, including photos. In Italy, there are many small and medium size real estate agencies that are region or province specific. In addition, you can always check the bigger real estate platforms which are available online.

House prices vary a lot here, as they are dictated by their location, size, status and the demand itself. In addition to the price of the house, you will pay a certain commission to the real estate agent who arranges the viewings and communication with the seller.

## Municipality owned real estate

As we mentioned above, Italy has a very big private real estate market (an individual or a company sells houses to another individual or company). But municipalities can also own real estate, including inhabitable houses. When a municipality decides to sell its property, they have to do it via auction.

These auctions are usually “blind”. A blind auction has certain rules: The property has an initial price which needs to be matched or raised. You make your offer for the property to the municipality with all other interested parties. Then the municipality

reviews the offers and reveals the winning (highest) offer. An appointed notary opens the envelopes with the offers in the presence of the city officials. The person who bid the highest gets the property. These auctions are time limited, which means you have to submit your offer no later than the designated deadline.

The pros of such a purchase is that you can directly control your maximum price, which can still be very low (lower than regular real estate).

### **Houses sold at a symbolic price**

Houses can be sold at a symbolic price, which are usually low, but still mirror the actual value of the house. Usually, houses at a symbolic price are newer houses (built in the '80s or '90s as an example) that need some work, but are already inhabitable. This can be an option for those who want to move immediately into a house which doesn't need extensive work beforehand.

Usually, the municipality works with the sellers and buyers as a guarantor or collaborator on the sale. They organize the publication of the properties and the gathering of interested buyers.

### **1€ Houses**

1€ Houses are usually abandoned old houses located in historic city centers of countryside villages. The houses have private owners which have no intention of living in the houses and know they cannot sell it their current state. However, the houses represent a cost for them, as they still pay property taxes.

In such cases, the municipality acts as guarantor and organizer of the sales with the goal of repopulating city centers, keeping them safe and maintained and developing property. We'll go into more detail later, but in general, 1€ Houses are sold as public listings and potential buyers need to fulfill certain requirements.



Generally speaking, you'll need to:

1. Present the interest of purchase via a form. The municipality requires your general information and the information on the specific house you're interested in.
2. Present a renovation plan for the chosen house. This can be a general renovation plan with certain restrictions. Example: Your plan will be considered unsuitable if it considerably changes the outside look, like making very modern window styles etc. This is because they still want to keep the look and feel of historic city centers.
3. Stipulate a surety policy to the municipality. This is usually a couple thousands of euros and is kept by the municipality as a guarantee that you will carry out the work initially agreed.
4. Realize the renovation project inside the designated time frame. Every 1€ house project needs to be finished within a specified time frame, usually a couple of years since the purchase.

When we talk about 1€ houses, we usually include in the discourse the municipality owned properties and houses at symbolic prices. An example of a municipality that did all three options is [Sambuca di Sicilia](#), which is one of the most famous municipalities for its 1€ houses project.

We'll mention this again in the future, but visiting the towns and choosing where to buy real estate in Italy is very important. This way, you can be sure of your purchase and make the most educated decision on what to buy, where and how.

We do offer assistance in the process of application for the project, communication with the municipalities and getting you in contact with who you'll have to work with. We can also accompany you to the specific villages and see the houses before purchase.

# WHO IS ELIGIBLE AND HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Maybe you still think this is simply too good to be true. Are you even eligible to buy a 1€ house in Italy? Are there any limitations to who can get involved in a 1€ house project, and to the whens and hows of it?

## Eligibility

Citizens of the EU, US, Canada and several other places can buy a house in Italy. If you come from another country, you can buy property in Italy only if your country has a reciprocity agreement with the Italian government. This means that if Italian citizens can buy property in your country, you can buy property in Italy. You can check [the list of eligible countries on our website](#), but please always consult with your local authorities or the consulate.

There are some conditions you need to be aware of if you wish to move to Italy permanently or have a form of residency here. As you can imagine, you need to check for VISA and residence options which differ from country to country, based on international agreements with the Italian government.

## Financial involvement

As already mentioned, other costs are going to surface once you purchase a 1€ house. Below is a general financial plan for a house of approximately 80 sq. meters with:

- 1 master bedroom
- 1 guest bedroom
- 1 bathroom
- 1 living room
- 1 kitchen
- 1 main entrance hall



The costs are calculated based on our experience and on the experience of those who made a purchase or sale of a 1€ house. They are an estimate for a medium house with average renovation costs.

- ➡ **Purchase of the house:** €1
- ➡ **Notary fees:** From €1,000 to €1,500.
- ➡ **Local and state taxes:** 10% of the cadastral value of the house or minimum €1,000 for a second home.
- ➡ **General renovation plan:** €3,500 for civil engineering and architectural plans which need to be approved before renovations start.
- ➡ **Renovation work:** From €700 to more than €1,400 per sq. meter, depending on how extensive this work may be (new roof, additional solar panels, boiler, new windows or insulation, paint jobs,...).

**Total amount for the house:** Approximately €70,000 € to €125,000 € (\$81,000 to \$147,000).

## Are there any financial aids or advantages available?

The answer is a resounding **YES**. At any given time, there is some fiscal or another advantage available to you if you are purchasing a 1€ house.

Currently, the most interesting tax refund advantage is the **Super Ecobonus 110%**. In short, the Super Ecobonus 110% is a tax refund of renovation costs of up to 110%. Additional refunds may be obtained if the house was damaged by seismic activity.

There are a couple of conditions for these tax refunds. One example: the renovation must bring a substantial energy efficiency improvement to the property. This may include a change or installation of better wall insulation, better roofs and windows, solar panels or the use of energy-efficient heating systems.

Make sure to talk to an accountant in Italy who will give you expert advice on your specific case. Talk to the engineers and renovation contractors who have experience on the subject as well.

## When will you be able to move in?

To make a sound purchase and choose the perfect 1€ house, we always suggest you:

1. **Do some research on your own.** You can use [our web page](#) as your first step.
2. **Come to Italy** and visit the locations and houses. We give tours of the houses and can organize meetings if you need help.
3. **Talk to local municipality officials**, local lawyers and accountants about legal processes, taxes, and purchase agreements.

Once this is done, you will be able to make an educated purchase of a 1€ house and start with renovations. The time it will take from the moment of purchase depends on:

1. The extent of renovations that are needed.
2. When you will obtain the building permit and residency approval from the government.



We suggest you always check on the builders' timelines, make sure everyone is on schedule (or trust someone else to do it) and be patient. We suggest you have good legal, accounting and administrative support to help you navigate the Italian bureaucratic world which can be difficult if you do not know the language.

Most people move in **within 4 to 8 months** from signing all the necessary purchase and building contracts. However, your specific journey may take longer, especially if the renovation work is more extensive.



Photo by Maurizio Berti

## Before and after



The before and after renovation of a 1 euro house.  
Photos by Maddalena Bussu, Municipality of Ollolai



## Before and after



The before and after renovation of a 1 euro house.  
Photos by Maddalena Bussu, Municipality of Ollolai

# OK, I AM READY TO DO THIS. WHERE DO I START?

Now that you have a general idea of eligibility, general costs and timeline, we can delve into more details about the ins and outs of the 1€ Houses project.

## Where do you want your 1€ house?

Do you want a house in the south of the country where the sun is always above the horizon and summer evenings are never cold? Or do you want it in the north, near the mountains and ski slopes? Are you a fan of the sea? Do you need to live near big city centers?

Italy is a **very diverse country** with many real estate opportunities. The choice of a location is therefore quite important when you explore the availability of your future 1€ home.

Another thing to consider is the **general infrastructure** available to you once you make the purchase. Do you need a school or a kindergarten for your children nearby? Are there services that you would like to have close by, like shopping centers, hospitals, airports, or car rentals? Would you prefer something small and more remote, away from the crowds and with only a few neighbors? Or a house right in the town square, with a café close by for your morning cornetto and espresso?

When looking for the perfect house, you should first choose the environment you want to live in. [Look at the information available about the municipalities and regions](#), to see which ones fit you best. Check the distances and nearby services and make sure you have a sense of the place before purchasing.





You can browse the map by clicking [here](#)

Once you have shortlisted a couple of potential areas, we suggest you plan at least one in-person visit. Our team can help you with the planning of the visit itself as we have experience in hosting visitors all over Italy and helping them find the perfect 1€ house.

Book a plane or a train ticket – or come by car and stay for a couple of weeks to explore. If your means permit it, visit at different times of the year to see how the seasons change and how people (tourists and local population) fluctuate. This way, you will have a pretty good idea if you want to move in or not.

## What type of house are you looking for?

The 1€ houses projects organized by municipalities usually offer old, abandoned housing options, so most of the real estate you will be looking at is old family apartments and houses fallen into disuse. Their current state may vary from a heap of rocks on a patch of land and run down houses in urgent need of renovation to apartments from the 60s or 80s, left behind by its occupants who moved to bigger cities.



Choose wisely and base your decision on your wishes and preferences! Not everyone wants to purchase and renovate an abandoned house that needs a thorough renovation.

Photo by Maurizio Berti

## What is your budget?

Now that you know the what and the where, you have to think of your budget. We have provided you with a general idea of costs, but the sum may vary depending on:

- ➡ the **size** of the house,
- ➡ the amount of **work** needed on the house,
- ➡ whether you will involve a large group of **consultants** (architects, civil engineers, craftsmen, electricians, plumbers, etc.),
- ➡ whether you will **outsource all of the work** or **DIY** where you can, and
- ➡ whether **other people** are interested in the same 1€ house as you.

Our advice is to choose a couple of options, so as not to put all your eggs in one basket. Be patient with the initial process and know your limits for the initial purchase to avoid going overboard.

The cost may also vary on the type of interior you want. Will you hire an interior designer? Will you choose affordable furniture and appliances or do you want everything top of the line?

You also have to consider administrative and bureaucratic costs (such as attorneys and accountants). We repeat this often, but we really suggest you contact and hire someone who understands Italian laws and taxes as they will save you time, effort and money.

## Rent out or live in?

Obviously, you may not wish to move to Italy full time (or even at all), but are more interested in the business opportunity of purchasing a house and making it a business venture (hotel, AirBnB, resale, etc.).



If you are weighing both options, consider these questions before making a decision:

- ➡ Can I actually move to Italy and live there full time? What does that mean for my family, business, job, etc.?
- ➡ What if I only spend the holidays in my new house? What kind of yearly costs and taxes am I to expect, which visas I need to apply for and can I afford it?
- ➡ What are the business and tax implications if I want to rent out the home?

Once you have weighed all the answers and are sure about the direction you are going in, make your commitments with people, get your papers sorted and start searching for the perfect real estate for you and your family or business. We suggest you talk to tax experts and lawyers as soon as possible to be sure about the process before continuing.

Things to consider here:

- ➡ A residential or tourist VISA if you are a citizen outside the EU.
- ➡ Applying for a tax number in Italy and possibly becoming a fiscal resident of Italy.
- ➡ Other permits of residence in Italy if you are a citizen of an EU country.

Talk to your accountant, check with both your country's and the Italian government and make sure you have all the documents necessary for yourself and your family to reside in Italy without any needless problems.

## Can you resell the property?

The answer here is also a yes, but beware of possible caveats or fiscal difficulties. Check your purchasing agreement where there may be limitations of when and how you can resell the 1€ house you have bought. There may be time limits or penalties if you try to sell it. Consult your local accountant to see if the resale may influence the advantageous tax refunds you took while renovating and rebuilding the house.

If there are no particular limitations, you can contact a local real estate agent and get your house evaluated before selling it. You can proceed to sell it via an agreement with the local real estate agency who will do it for a percentage on the sold house (costs of mediation and contracts preparation).

We want to take this opportunity to reiterate something we talk about throughout the book: we strongly suggest you take on a local accountant and an attorney, as they will give you invaluable inside information regarding taxes, residency and all the ins and outs of Italian bureaucracy. Having onboard someone who is well-versed in it will save you time, inner peace and probably money.



Photo by Maurizio Berti

# NEED HELP OR HAVE QUESTIONS?

Our team has been talking to mayors, municipalities, governmental entities, tax experts, lawyers, accountants, architects, and many other experts who work closely on 1€ houses projects.

We offer assistance and contacts you may need in order to buy your dream 1€ house. We can also help you when you visit Italy, show you around the country, review 1€ house listings and organize meetings with public administrators from municipalities. Book a flight to Italy and let us help you plan your visit here.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will gladly talk to you and help you with your search.

Check our [website](#) for more information on the currently available 1€ houses. For any questions, contact us via [email](#).



# OUR TEAM

Since the humble beginnings of the website, the team has expanded beyond our expectation. We are proud to be working on this amazing local project with many talented and dedicated people.



**Maurizio Berti**

Founder of [Casea1euro.it](https://casea1euro.it) and [1eurohouses.com](https://1eurohouses.com). Great enthusiast and dreamer who wishes to expand the 1€ houses projects across all Italy and beyond promoting the idea of repopulation of the European countryside.



**Alberta Paoli**

Supporter and creator of her 1 euro house dream. Alberta collaborates with Maurizio and takes care of the website's content, keeping it up to date for our visitors.



**Emanuele Feliziani**

Tech wizard who keeps the page and its servers in shape so we can make all the information, articles and photos available to our viewers all the time.



**Eva Konič**

Strategist and project manager, Eva ensures that everything is where it needs to be. She also helps Maurizio with emails and PR communication.



**Edoardo Sportelli**

Our precious designer with sharp eyes for user interfaces and pleasant experiences. Everything looks better once Edoardo touches it. He also has amazing hair.