Degrees of Kinship and Affinity Under Italian Law

The Italian Civil Code (Articles 74 ff) contain the criteria for determining the degree of kinship and affinity of your relatives. This degree is a fundamental concept in Italian law and is an essential part of, amongst other things, the rules of inheritance and succession.

Kinship is the legal relationship between persons descending from the same root and who are therefore bound by consanguinity.

Straight line relatives are people in a descending/ascending line while lateral relatives such as brothers, sisters and cousins who whilst having a common root (e.g. father or grandfather), do not descend from each other.

In the straight line, the degree of kinship is calculated by counting the persons up to the common root.

In the lateral line the degree of kinship/affinity is computed in terms of generations, going up from one of the relatives to the common root (who is not counted) and then descending from that root to the other relative.

Your relatives	Degree of Kinship
Parents	1st degree relatives in a direct ascending line
Grandparents	2nd degree relatives in a direct ascending line
Great-grandparents	3rd degree relatives in a direct ascending line
Children	1st degree relatives in a direct descending line
Grandchildren	2nd degree relatives in a direct descending line
Great-grandchildren	3rd degree relatives in a direct descending line
Brothers and sisters (Siblings)	2nd degree lateral relatives
Grandchildren (children of siblings)	3rd degree lateral relatives
Great-grandchildren (children of children of siblings)	4th degree lateral relatives
Children of great-grandchildren	5th degree lateral relatives
Paternal and maternal uncles and aunts	3rd degree lateral relatives
Cousins	4th degree lateral relatives
Children of cousins	5th degree lateral relatives
Children of children of cousins	6th degree lateral relatives
Great-grandsons (grandparents' brothers)	4th degree lateral relatives
Parents' cousins	5th degree lateral relatives
Children of the parents' cousins	6th degree lateral relatives