

## 1: Christmas in Italy? Everything You Need is Here!

*Christmas in Italy One of the most important ways of celebrating Christmas in Italy is the Nativity crib scene. Using a crib to help tell the Christmas story was made very popular by St. Francis of Assisi in (Assisi is in mid-Italy).*

Get the dates right Photo: Pexels The Italian festive season starts on December 8th with the celebration of the Immaculate Conception, and continues until the Epiphany on January 6th, when the Three Wise Men arrived in Bethlehem. The most important date of the celebrations is Christmas Eve. Know your Novena Picture: In rural areas in particular, children go from house to house dressed as shepherds and performing Christmas songs or poems, often in exchange for money or sweets. Keep an eye out for bagpipers Photo: Prepare the presepe Photo: Most churches, as well as other public areas and many Italian homes, will have at least one nativity scene on display. Styles vary and may depict just the holy family or a whole village, but the baby Jesus is usually added only on Christmas Eve. Sometimes, contemporary characters such as ex-PM Renzi or Italian footballers are included too. In Rome, an annual exhibition displays different cribs from all over the world, including miniscule versions carved into nuts, and all kinds of materials - even pasta. A feast of fish Photo: Clams and oysters are often used as they are seen as luxurious. The big dinner Photo: The meal is followed by panettone, a sweet bread loaf originating from Milan, and other desserts filled with nuts, which were historically a symbol of fertility for the coming year. Letters to loved ones Photo: The letters are usually decorated and tied up beautifully, and are read out after Christmas lunch. Wait for the witch Photo: Legend has it the Three Wise Men came to her house and invited her to join their search for Christ. She was too busy with housework so declined, but later changed her mind, and to this day is still searching for the child, leaving presents for any good children she comes across.

## 2: | Travel + Leisure

*Christmas season in Italy is traditionally celebrated from December 24 January 6, or Christmas Eve through Epiphany, which is often referred to as the Twelve Days of Christmas. If you're traveling to Italy during this festive season, you're certain to run into a variety of special events.*

Zimbabwe Christmas in Italy One of the most important ways of celebrating Christmas in Italy is the Nativity crib scene. Using a crib to help tell the Christmas story was made very popular by St. Francis of Assisi in Assisi in mid-Italy. The previous year he had visited Bethlehem and saw where it was thought that Jesus was born. A lot of Italian families have a Nativity crib in their homes. The city of Naples in Italy is world famous for its cribs and crib making. The first crib scene in Naples is thought to go back to and was in the Church of S. Maria del presepe Saint Mary of the Crib, this was even before St. Francis of Assisi had made cribs very popular! Cribs are traditionally put out on the 8th December. The shelves above the manger scene might also contain fruit, candy and presents. Naples is also the home to the largest crib scene in the world, which has over objects on it! In the street you can buy wonderful hand made crib decorations and figures - and of course whole cribs! You can see some pictures of crib scenes and figures from Naples on this page: Often a light seafood meal is eaten and then people go to the Midnight Mass service. The types of fish and how they are served vary between different regions in Italy. Embed from Getty Images For many Italian-American families a big Christmas Eve meal of different fish dishes is now a very popular tradition! The feast seems to have its root in southern Italy and was brought over to the USA by Italian immigrants in the s. It now seems more popular in American than it is in Italy! There are different theories as to why there are seven fish dishes eaten. Some think that seven represents the seven days of creation in the Bible, other say it represents the seven holy sacraments of the Catholic Church. But some families have more than seven dishes! You might have nine to represent the Christian trinity times three, 13 to represent Jesus and his 12 disciples or 11 for the 11 disciples without Jesus or Judas! Epiphany is also important in Italy. The story about Befana bringing presents is very similar to the story of Babushka. Children put stockings up by the fireplace for Befana to fill. In parts of northern Italy, the Three Kings might bring you present rather than Befana.

## 3: The Ultimate Guide to Christmas in Italy - The Roman Guy

*Christmas in Italy is celebrated over several weeks as Italians celebrate from early December, depending on the region, until the day of Epiphany, on the 6th of January. Especially the children look forward to the start of the Christmas season in December when Christmas trees are put up and houses are decorated.*

Christmas traditions in Italy Christmas traditions in Italy , including the dreaded brodo! The Italian Christmas Holidays: Christmas Eve - "la vigilia di Natale" - is on 24 December. Maremma in predominately Tuscany with some northern Lazio thrown in. And more than a sprinkling of flavours and traditions from the beautiful Tuscan cities of Firenze Florence and Siena, whose continual battle to reign of Maremma during the middle ages left its mark, not only in the number of hill top fortifications that were built and the legends they spawned, but also in the food that we eat today. These authentic Italian Christmas cookies may originate from medieval Siena in Tuscany just a short drive from the borders of Maremma, but that does not mean that the recipe requires anything you cannot easily put your hands on or that it will disappoint: Just as the last Rolo advert used to say, only your true love will give you the last one! Italian Almond Cookies - really easy to bake and very moorish Really easy to bake and one of the very best Italian cookie recipes you will ever try, these Tuscan almond cookies are made for dipping in sweet Vin Santo wine or caffe at the end of the meal. They keep for ages and can be transported without breaking-up, but I bet you have to make a second batch straight away before you can contemplate doing either! They make for perfect homemade gifts as well. An Italian Christmas Dessert from Maremma with a legend This wonderful warm honey and walnut Italian Christmas dessert is handmade in the tufa hill town of Pitigliano in Maremma and is now included amongst the protected Slow Foods of Toscana. In all probability the recipe dates back to Etruscan times in Maremma, but it is for its current shape and ingredients originating from the seventeenth century that it is famous in Maremma. The story it tells , and the really easy recipe. Panettone, Pandoro and Panforte Italian Christmas cake is a much lighter version than the liqueur soaked dried fruit variety that I was brought up on in the UK and still love, and is eaten in huge skyscraper high wedges! Both Panettone and Pandoro are traditional sweet breads made with yeast and, whereas Panettone is traditionally made with "uve" raisins, or candied citrus orange lemon and lime citrus peel, Pandoro with no fruit in it, but covered with a liberal dosing of vanilla flavoured icing sugar. Or, as is increasingly the case, filled with chocolate sauce, lemon sauce, both! The choice gets worse each year! At this point it is worth pointing out that - a bit like Marmite - you will find that the choice of with or without candied peel is black and white for most Italians: Which explains why most supermarket shelves clearly sign with "Con Candite" and without "Senza Candite" above the mountains of Panettone. Both can sometimes now also be found in the freezer cabinet And for the piece di resistance Panforte di Siena My absolute favourite in its every form and varied secret guarded recipe: No artificial flavours or colourings in this delight and with its ingredients of combinations of honey, sugar, almonds, various fruits from melon to figs and spices Italian Christmas dinner A traditional Italian Christmas dinner in Italy is a long meal of many many courses that will start around noon and take you through until late afternoon: I kid you not! Most of us have trouble keeping-up after the first courses note the plural! Luckily for our waistlines! Many family restaurants will open on Christmas day for lunch, "pranzo di Natale", where you can enjoy a true feast of Italian cooking. But you will need to book in advance. An Italian Christmas dinner in Tuscany. They are much smaller and more intimate affairs, where the offer from a stall holder to try one of his homemade Christmas biscuits will happily lead to a conversation about how he and his family collect the chestnuts from their woodlands to make the flour that is part of the ancient recipe together with the figs for the wonderfully tasting morsel now melting in your mouth Merry Christmas in Italian.

### 4: Christmas in Italy

*Christmas is a major holiday in Italy which means Italians celebrate lots of great, unique Christmas traditions! Across Italy, Natale tends to be a family-centric holiday, a time to stay at home (and eat!) with loved ones.*

Posted on December 13, by DreamDiscoverItalia. But have you ever stopped to wonder where these traditions came from or what other countries do? Angel decorations at the Christmas markets around Italy Christmas starts on 8th December Italians kick off the count down to Christmas with the Immacolata, the religious Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8th December. The day is a national holiday with banks and some offices closing as the faithful attend church to celebrate the conception of Mary herself, rather than Jesus. The idea of a crib scene actually started in Italy back in the 13th century when St Francis of Assisi asked a local villager to create a manger to help re-enact the nativity. Since then nativity scenes have become a big part of Italian Christmas folk art and handmade presepi remain a key artisanal tradition. Bellaria Igea Marina in Emilia-Romagna celebrates with 21 barrel presepe around the town – see how many you can find! Sand nativity scenes in Torre Predrera on the Romagnolo riviera. Using more than multicolored lights and with a 1 metre high star on top, the tree stands at an enormous meters high and has held the Guinness World Record since The tree lights are switched on each year on the 7th December, the eve of the Immaculate Conception. And this year Pope Francis did the honours firing the switch via video link from Rome. The tree is lit from dusk each day until January 10th, just after Epiphany. The famous Murano glass craftsmen make their own Christmas tree On Murano, the glass-making maestros of Venice also make their own Christmas tree, but instead of using lights they use glass to showcase their expertise and craftsmanship. And the folks down in the little town of Calimera, Puglia, have been known to build their eco-tree from over recycled plastic bottles collected by the residents throughout the year. They believe that the spirit of the festive season obliges them to be kinder over the coming year, not only to neighbours but also to the planet that is home to us all. The shape of its flowers is thought to represent the star of Bethlehem whilst the red leaves are the blood of Christ and the white ones his purity. Originally people would sing songs and dance round stone circles to celebrate the winter solstice. In fact carols were sung throughout the year at festive times and the word comes from the Latin for a circle dance or choraula. The first churches merged pagan and Christian celebrations and as early as AD worshippers were singing songs at Christmas services in Rome. Zampognari bagpipers play to herald the holy season. The new carols were popular and quickly spread across Europe. And today Italians continue the tradition, singing carols in front of nativity scenes during the 8 days running up to Christmas known as the Novena 16th to 24th Dec. Keep an eye out for the traditional shepherd bagpipers or zampognari, who accompany the carol singers too, especially in Rome, Southern Italy or Sicily, heralding the start of holy festivities. Christmas bonuses all round! Looking forward to your tredicesima Christmas bonus? The Yule log In the UK the only yule log we are familiar with is a log shaped chocolate cake. In Italy however, it is traditional in many homes to choose a log, the ceppo, large enough to burn all night through from la vigilia through to Natale. Alternatively some families will have a ceppo for each child in the family. A bowl, the urn of fate, is often placed on the hearth in front of the log. In some families the bowl contains a lucky dip of presents for all the family to be unwrapped in the morning on the 25th. For others like our friend Nonna Violante from Bellaria Igea Marina, the bowl contains water that she believes will be blessed by the Madonna overnight. Each member of the family then washes their eyes and face in the water first thing in the morning to receive the blessing of Mary. What a lovely way to start the day. Thousands of Italians travel home to their parents for the holidays, with the train and autostrada networks bearing the brunt of extra traffic in the run up to Christmas. And when it comes to celebrating an Italian Christmas food is an essential part of the proceedings. Up and down the country mamas, zias aunts and nonnas grandmothers spend days preparing pasta, sweet breads and all manner of dishes for the Vigilia Christmas Eve , Natale and the festa di Santo Stefano, otherwise known as boxing day. Italians traditionally eat fish and vegetables on Christmas Eve, not meat In line with most religious festivals Italians typically avoid meat on the day before Christmas in order to purify themselves. The idea is to eat a clean and lean meal – il cenone – which for a lot of families will

mean fish and vegetables although the evening meal can run to six or even seven courses before the family heads off to midnight mass. It can last all day with dessert coming in the shape of sweet breads like panettone, biscuits like ricciarelli and nutty pastries to round off the merriments. Instead children are told that their presents come from Jesus or their parents and are taught to be thankful to their family. Everyone exchanges presents as a gesture of love and appreciation although increasingly Babbo Natale is taking a greater role. Some northern Italians believe that St Lucia brings gifts on December 13th. The story goes that the old lady, dressed as a witch on a broomstick, was stopped by the 3 wise men asking for directions. La Befana was not able to show them the way but instead provided food and shelter before the men went on their way, inviting her to come with them as they left. The old dear declined saying she had too much housework to do, but later set off after the wise men with presents for the baby Jesus. According to legend, however, she never found the child and is still searching, flying around on her broomstick. Not a bad haul for a good behaviour eh? Counting down to Christmas with an advent calendar. Adalgisa Serio So as we count down to the big day you can see Christmas festivities vary across the Italian peninsula with many local traditions holding strong for centuries. If you celebrate it, how do you prepare? Have you written to Babbo Natale yet, put up a tree or presepe, or started stocking up the kitchen with enough food to feed the entire family for the next few weeks? Or maybe you just want some help with how to wish your Italian friends a happy Christmas in their mother tongue? Why not leave me a comment with your recollections of happy Christmases gone by. And whether you observe the celebrations or not, may I take this opportunity to wish you and yours happy holidays, or Buone feste!

### 5: Christmas in Italy: Around the World at Santa's Net.

*Christmas in Italy is a magical experience, but there are a few unique traditions you won't find in other countries. If you're hoping to have a truly Italian Christmas, make sure to incorporate at least some of the following. The Italian festive season starts on December 8th with the celebration of.*

Is Rome Crowded in Rome at Christmas? The answer is yes. Mostly Rome is not very crowded just up to Christmas and on Christmas. The Spanish Steps at Christmastime. It can be very crowded just before Christmas and through New Years, but there are quiet moments too. It starts getting pretty busy right after Christmas and leading up to New Years and then through January 6 Epiphany or befana. So for the dates leading up to Christmas you should be able to find inexpensive accommodations in Rome, but from the 26th, expect rates to go up. The Christmas tree in Vatican Square is without a doubt one of the most popular of the Christmas trees in Rome. A relatively new phenomenon, started in during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, the tree is lit up in the afternoon sometime around December 8. There is also an enormous life-sized nativity scene in the square, in addition to the one inside St. The Christmas tree and Nativity Scene in Vatican Square is one of the biggest attractions around the Christmas holidays, usually lit sometime around December 8, and staying up through January 6. The nativity scene and Christmas tree in Vatican square will be lit on December 7, at 4: They will stay lit through January 13. Every year, from sometime in early December until January 6 Befana, there was a traditional, family-oriented Christmas fair that took up almost all of piazza Navona, as you can see from the photo below. Piazza Navona in Rome at Christmas. This is the fair we used to have before the scandal! In, the fair nearly disappeared. The reasons are political see below. The point is that while you will find Piazza Navona festive, with a carousel, nativity scene, some lights, a handful of stands and maybe a tree, it is NOT the huge Christmas Market hub in Rome we once had. The idea is that Piazza Navona should be about families and children, and less about "commercial" things. In a nutshell, the mayor at the time Marino tried to "clean up" Piazza Navona, and bring it back to its more traditional roots, of just local artisans and food vendors. The number of concessions went from to Then, those vendors who signed up for their concessions did not go pick them up, to show solidarity with their kicked-out brethren. That year, there was mini-protest in Piazza Navona, with only a handful of vendors something like In, there were about stands, all with carnival-type games where you can win a stuffed animal. No food, no toys, no crafts, nothing to buy. In, we are still waiting for news. The first thing you may want to be aware of, is that Christmas markets are not part of Italian Christmas tradition. They tend to be more common, and much bigger, in northern European countries. We did have a pretty bustling market, Roman-style, in Piazza Navona. Here is a fairly complete list of the best markets you will find in the center of Rome at Christmas: From usually all of December - TBA for the market turns into a fairly large Christmas Fair it seems to be open daily during this time. You will find gifts, crafts, food, Christmas decorations and more. This is a year-round market, normally open mostly on weekends. But during Christmas, they are open on the above dates, daily, and with more of a Christmas feel. Now with 2 floors for twice the fun! Open daily 10am - 10pm, except Christmas Eve when it will close at 2pm. Food trucks, designers, artisans, Christmas food and decorations. You can easily reach this market from Rome center, with the Metro red line A, and then transferring to tram 2. Rome at Christmas - Year-Round Christmas store If you are looking for some seriously cute Christmas ornaments and decorations, check out the "Sempre Natale" store in Rome. That means "always Christmas", and it does feel like it inside. The shop is small but well stocked with a great assortment of ornaments. Via della Scrofa 93, not far from Piazza Navona and the Pantheon. Open Thurs - Tues 11am - 9pm. Whatever you call it, you will find them everywhere in Rome at Christmas, and they are amazing. But almost every church in Rome and frankly just about everywhere in Italy has a presepe during Christmas. There is a street I love to visit there, Via San Gregorio Armeno, where the artisans make the figures and figurines for nativity scenes around Italy and the world. One more year-round Christmas Store in Rome - Presepi Speaking of these little figurines for Christmas Nativity Scenes presepi, you may also want to check out the shop on via dei Coronari, that sells these year-round. So even if you are not in Rome at Christmas, you can get into the "Christmas Market" mood. The figurines are

mostly not made in Naples, but are made by Italian artisans from different parts of Italy, in particular Tuscany. Items range from Christmas-y to not, and very small to quite large. Via dei Coronari , open daily 10am - 8pm. But the good thing is that with a darker afternoon, you can enjoy all the lights even more! A rain coat or jacket Goretex or waterproof shoes Hat, gloves and a scarf A good camera that can take pictures in the dark - you will want lots of pictures of the lights and decorations! Some extra vitamin C and Zinc to keep the cold and flu away Want more information about what to pack for Rome? And, where to eat? I have a separate page about this. It actually starts at 10pm, not midnight. In fact, the procession begins at 9: You might try with any clergy you know, and request tickets many months in advance. Note the times given are for GMT, and Rome is one hour later than that. No tickets are required but if you want to be inside, you should get there early. Mass at the Pantheon begins at midnight on Christmas Eve. Many churches around Rome hold midnight mass on Christmas Eve. And they do it closer to midnight than at St. Want to share this page about Rome at Christmas on Pinterest?

### 6: Christmas in Italy -- Christmas Around the World -- whychristmas?com

*Holidays in Italy. Many Italians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day (Natale) on December 25 each year. Is Christmas Day a Public Holiday in Italy? Is Christmas Day a Public Holiday?*

Great idea and Venice, and the Veneto, should be your first your choice. Simply put Italian Christmas tradition is at its very best in the Veneto. Let me share a little of what you can expect The choice is extremely varied, ranging from the world famous ski resorts of the Veneto, to gorgeous traditional Christmas markets in Verona, Belluno and Bassano del Grappa. Of course very best of all is Venice. The traditional atmosphere, wonderful concerts and the Christmas Mass in St. Christmas markets are fabulous in both cities. Soaring mountains around town are covered in snow and the atmosphere is so warm and genuine. Christmas in Venice Italy Venice at Christmas time is truly magical. The misty grey weather makes Venice hauntingly beautiful and absolutely enchanting. Canals seem to belong, once again, to those long lost centuries past and ancient palaces seem to float upon white clouds. Most of the main squares have a market and the atmosphere is always very special. Christmas Concerts Plenty of delightful Christmas concerts are held throughout Venice. They are easily discovered by reading the posters around the city or asking your hotel for advice. The La Pietà church on the Riva degli Schiavoni, where Vivaldi was once choir master, hosts some of the best. Even if you are not Catholic a Christmas Mass is an unforgettably moving experience. A real work of art. Where to Stay in Venice at Christmas? If you would like to experience Venice in all its magnificence and you have a big budget for sumptuous luxury then these hotels are the ones I can recommend. To return home with a little money left in your bank account try these very good value alternatives. Italian Christmas Dinner or Lunch Finding somewhere to eat over Christmas can be tricky and you will need to make a booking well in advance. Some restaurants I enjoy in Venice are these but if you would like to try one of them do check if they will be opening this Christmas as many restaurants close. On Christmas Eve fish is the traditional Christmas meal whereas on Christmas day a roast is pretty typical although there is no specific meal as such. The one thing you can be sure of though is that there will be plenty of delicious Panettone Italian Christmas cake. The Weather in Venice at Christmas You will either get the misty days I mentioned earlier or else the most beautiful clear and crisp days. A particular joy of Christmas in Verona are the many small markets. Impressive too is the Nativity Exhibition held in the famous Roman Arena. The exhibition hosts incredible nativity scenes from all over the world. If you have the time visit the nearby village of Soave. The town hosts one of the most touching nativity displays you are ever likely to see and all the locals seem to turn extra warm and friendly, with plenty of time on their hands to chat with any visitor who shows an interest in their town. Roman Arena in Verona.

### 7: Rome at Christmas - What to do in Rome for the holidays in

*Rome is a top Italian city to visit during the Christmas holiday [www.enganchecubano.com](http://www.enganchecubano.com)'s also the place where the Christmas celebration originated. The first Christmas mass was said at the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore and the earliest known permanent nativity was created for the Rome Jubilee in*

And although Epiphany, celebrated on January 6th, may actually be a more important holiday than December 25th, the Italians love this season so much that they commemorate it for an entire month, beginning on December 8th. In Assisi it begins even earlier, on the evening of December 7, when the townspeople make a huge bonfire in front of the fortress, to simulate the light with which the angels guided the Three Kings to the Holy Manger. The next morning, children wake up to find a small gift on their pillow, left there by the Holy Virgin. The period between mid-December and early January was one constant celebration even in pagan Rome. It began with the Saturnalia, a winter solstice festival, and ended with the Roman New Year, the Calends. After Emperor Constantine adopted Christianity, instead of ending the holiday at the New Year, the celebration extended to January 6 when the Three Kings were believed to have reached the infant Jesus, and so the Romans, too, began to exchange presents on the Epiphany. Today in Italy, Christmas trees are decorated, but the focal point of decoration is the Nativity scene. Italians take great pride in the creation of the manger, which was a sort of clever publicity stunt thought up in by St. Francis of Assisi, who wanted to involve the peasants in celebrating the life of Jesus. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City possesses a presepio from Naples that contains figurines carved from wood and dressed in garments of satin, along with 30 gold-trimmed angels of the Magi, all framed by majestic columns. Bagpipes are the most common Italian Christmas sound. The zampognari, the shepherds who play the bagpipes, come down from their mountain homes at Christmas time and perform in the market squares. The playing of bagpipes is popular in the regions of Calabria and Abruzzo, and in the piazzas of Rome. The melodies played are adapted from old hill tunes. Modern zampognari wear the traditional outfits of sheepskin vests, leather breeches, and a woolen cloak. The tradition of bagpipes goes back to ancient Roman times. Legend says that the shepherds entertained the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. Today, the zampognari perform their own private pilgrimage, stopping before every shrine to the Madonna and every Nativity scene. Children in Italy believe in a female version of Santa Claus called La Befana, an old woman who flies on a broom and brings presents. La Befana was asked to join them but declined three times. It took an unusually bright light and a band of angels to convince La Befana that she must join the Wise Men, but she was too late. She never found the Christ child and has been searching ever since. On January 6, the Feast of Epiphany, La Befana goes out on her broom to drop off stockings filled with treats to all the sleeping children of Italy. Just as children in America leave milk and cookies for jolly Santa Claus, La Befana collects messages and refreshments throughout the night. Even though Christmas trees are not very Italian, did you know Italy has the tallest Christmas tree in the World? Practically every little town in Italy has some sort of colorful festivity for Christmas and Epiphany. Italian merchants are not as "sale-prone" as their American counterparts, but prices plummet in January generally right after Epiphany, but sometimes as early as December 26, the best time of year for sales in Italy. Wherever you are in Italy on Christmas eve, go to Midnight Mass.

### 8: Christmas in Italy: Traditions, Food, and Destinations

*T oday in Italy, Christmas trees are decorated, but the focal point of decoration is the Nativity scene. Italians take great pride in the creation of the manger, which was a sort of clever publicity stunt thought up in by St. Francis of Assisi, who wanted to involve the peasants in celebrating the life of Jesus.*

November 18, to January 7, Timing: But Arco Christmas Market has something very unique and enchanting! Christmas Market in Piazza Navona: November 26, to January 6, Timing: There are restaurants, shops, bakeries and also street artists which keep the market bustling as ever. This christmas market is also a perfect place to take small strolls and click selfies near the Fountain of Four Rivers. With a lot of stalls selling candy floss, decorations and figurines, this one is the biggest Christmas Market in Rome. Christmas Market in Piazza Santa Croce: November 30, to December 18, Timing: The most prominent being the one in Piazza Santa Croce. Just like Nuremberg Christmas Market, this one also has a heavy German influence. An annual German market, the Christmas Market in Piazza Santa Croce is also one of the most ancient markets in Italy with a legacy of about years. All year round But try heading there in November end and before Christmas Timing: While the others mentioned above in the list are temporary markets, but the Naples Christmas Market is open all year round. Also, this one is permanently dedicated to the Christmas festivities. From nativity figures, candies, decorations to caricatures of your favorite celebrities, this market has it all! December 7, to December 11, Timing: Then head straightaway to the Milan Christmas Market! From clothes to food and drinks, this market also witnesses some upbeat music with several bands playing on the streets, making it a sight, hard to miss! Christmas Market in Piazza Sant Ambrogio: November end, to December 23, Timing: Varies A Christmas market with a slight twist! Hence, if you are a nature lover, then this environmental friendly market will surely treat you. Christmas Market in Lazzate: December 10, to December 11, Timing: The Christmas Market in Lazzate is most prominently known for the mouth watering and lip smacking delicacies. The festive season is on, so why not treat your taste buds with a tinge of sugar and spice?! Three weeks before Christmas to December 24, Timing: Varies Lights, colour, aroma, music in the background and people all over! There are carnival masks, jewellery, Christmas trees and authentic Venetian crafts on display. Also available for sale are the traditional plum cakes, olive oils, and gourmet products to bring out the foodie in you! Christmas Market in Firenze Noel: Around Christmas time Image Source: Well, then you should definitely visit this Christmas market in Firenze Novel in Florence for its unique yet fun location. You can buy products such as fruits, vegetables, sweets, clothes and even shoes and make your Christmas, an affair to remember! December 11, to December 14, Timing: Opens at 1pm This Expo is rich in local flavors and culture and is one of the most popular Christmas markets in Rome. There are about stalls set up by local artisans and craftsmen which make the ambiance of the market, lively. Pick one of these amazing markets and shop your heart out. But during this process, make sure you have a lot of time as well as money.

### 9: 8 fascinating facts about Christmas in Italy

*The Christmas season in Italy goes for three weeks, starting 8 days before Christmas known as the Novena. During this period, children go from house to house reciting Christmas poems and singing. During this period, children go from house to house reciting Christmas poems and singing.*

Italian traditions in Italy are based heavily on the religion of Christianity. Christmas starts eight days before Christmas and lasts till after the Feast of Epiphany. Musical salutes are made at the shrine of the Virgin Mary and songs are played at the homes of carpenters in honor of St. Eight days before Christmas, a special Novena of prayers and church services begin. It all ends on Christmas Day. They receive money to buy Christmas treats. In cities like Rome real shepherds sometimes carry out the performance. A strict fast is observed 24 hours before Christmas after which a meal with many dishes but no meat is served. The traditional Christmas dinner, Cenone, is made up of spaghetti and anchovies, an assortment of fish, fresh broccoli, tossed salad, fruits, and sweets. A Yule log, the Ceppo, is burned, and toasts in wine and wishes for the future are expressed. The Urn of Fate, an old Italian tradition, is a large ornamental bowl that holds wrapped gifts for members of the family. When the family gets together, each member takes his turn at drawing a gift from the urn until all the presents are distributed. The presepio manger or crib represents in miniature the Holy Family in the stable and is the center of Christmas for families. Guests kneel before it and musicians sing before it. The presepio figures are usually hand-carved and very detailed in features and dress. The scene is often set out in the shape of a triangle. This is a wooden frame arranged to make a pyramid several feet high. Several tiers of thin shelves are supported by this frame. It is entirely decorated with colored paper, gilt pine cones, and miniature colored pennants. Small candles are fastened to the tapering sides. A star or small doll is hung at the apex of the triangular sides. The shelves above the manger scene have small gifts of fruit, candy, and presents. The ceppo is in the old Tree of Light tradition which became the Christmas tree in other countries. Some houses even have a ceppo for each child in the family. Each tries to outdo the other by displaying the biggest presepio. Children in Italy hang up their stockings on the Feast of the Epiphany, January 6. They celebrate the visit of the Three Kings to Bethlehem. Instead of Santa Claus, children are expecting Befana. She is a witch-like character who rides around on a broom. She said no, she was too busy. Later a shepherd asked her to join him in paying respect to the Baby Jesus. Again, Befana said no. Later when it was dark and she saw a great light in the skies, she thought perhaps she should have gone with the Wise Men. So, she gathered some toys that had belonged to her own baby, who had died, and ran to find the kings and the shepherd. But Befana could not find them or the stable. Now, each year she looks for the Christ Child. And each year since she can not find him, she leaves the gifts for the good children of Italy and pieces of charcoal for the bad ones.. No meat is eaten for twenty-four hours before Christmas Eve, but there follows a meal as big as the family can afford. A special New Year Banquet is eaten on the last day of the year, with raisin bread, turkey, chicken, rabbit, and spaghetti. Champagne is the drink of the evening.

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