

THE CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS 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. But customs also vary from city to city, from exactly which dishes are served, to when to open presents, making every region an interesting place to enjoy the holidays. In Italy Christmas officially kicks off with the Day of the Immaculate Conception of Mary on December 8. This is when decorations go up (both on the streets and inside Italian homes) and when some Christmas markets start.

On Christmas Day, eat away

After the "light" Christmas Eve dinner, on Christmas Day, Italians invite their family and friends for a large lunch that usually goes on all day. Many save up to have the most lavish celebration possible, serving up traditional dishes like pasta in brodo (pasta in broth), roasts and sweet bread desserts like panettone and pandoro and more!).

Celebrations often extend into December 26 with the national holiday of Santo Stefano; families get together and eat leftover Christmas dishes and sweets.

The official end of the Christmas season, though, isn't until January 6—the Day of the Epiphany, and the twelfth day of Christmas. On the eve of the Epiphany, families usually prepare a large dinner

to mark the end of the holiday season; children are given candy or coal (usually made of black sugar), depending on if they were naughty or nice. After January 6, you'll see Christmas markets close and decorations start to come down.



Xmas time in Santa Croce