

National and Religious Holidays in Italy



New Year's Day

The Solemnity of the Blessed Mary , Mother Of God is celebrated on 1st January. Catholic people celebrate Her Divine Motherhood and Jesus Christ's Circumcision and attend the Holy Mass.

Most people have big meals and spend the day with their relatives on New Year's Day.



Epiphany



Epiphany is a religious holiday in Italy and it is celebrated twelve days after Christmas, on 6th January. On this day the Catholic Church commemorates the day when the **Three Wise Men** or **Three Kings** (" **Re Magi**") - Caspar, Balthazar and Melchior -visited the Infant Jesus in Bethlehem of Judea a few days after His Birth .

The **Magi** , who came from the East , were led by a Star, the **Star of Bethlehem** , which revealed them the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, and led them to Bethlehem, where they worshipped Him and offered Him three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The word "Epiphany " means "manifestation " and "revelation" and Epiphany celebrates the manifestation of God to human beings through his Son , Jesus.

Epiphany is celebrated with particular enthusiasm by children, because ,according to the Italian tradition, an old, ugly but good white-haired woman, called the **Befana** flies on her broom in the sky with a special bag full of sweets, candies and presents on the night between the 5th and the 6th of January and she comes into their home through the chimney .

Italian children hang decorative Christmas stockings on the chimney so that the **Befana** can fill them with presents, chocolates and sweets.

Children, who have been good all through the past year, usually receive toys and sweets , while naughty children receive charcoal (made of sugar!!) as punishment for their bad behavior .This is just a joke because all children receive presents and sweets, as well. The **Befana** leaves her gifts not just at one house, but she also visits grandparents, uncles and other relatives 'homes; so on



Epiphany, Italian houses are always full of people and children unwrapping gifts.

On this day many Italian families usually have lunch together in order to spend a pleasant day before returning to their daily routine.

The name **Befana** derives from the Greek word, Epiphany. A legend says the Three Wise Men stopped on their way to Bethlehem to ask an old lady for directions. They invited her to go with them but she refused because she was too busy with her housework. Later she changed her mind so she prepared a basket of sweets and set off to find the Three Wise Men. She was unable to find them, so she gave her sweets to all the children she met on her way, hoping that one of them was the Infant Jesus.



Every year the **Befana** still flies around on her broomstick looking for the Infant Jesus and on her way she stops in every house to give gifts to the children in the hope that she might find the Infant Jesus.

In Tuscany there are celebrations in the main squares of cities and towns.

In Florence there is the famous **Cavalcade of the Wise Men**. It is a large parade in historical costumes. There are ladies and lords, knights, country folks, soldiers and flag-weavers .

In Pistoia the **Befana** comes down from the Cathedral giving children presents and sweets.

Many towns and cities have processions ending with a living Nativity Scene, **Presepe Vivente**, or markets , where toys, sugar charcoal and other candies are on sale. You can see women dressed up as the Befana wandering through the streets in many towns and cities.

In the **Vatican City** , Rome ,a procession of hundreds of people in medieval costumes walk along the wide avenue leading up to the Vatican City, carrying symbolic gifts for the Pope. The Pope says a morning Mass in **St.Peter's Basilica** to commemorate the visit of the Three Wise Men to the Infant Jesus.



There are poems about “**La Befana**”, which are known in slightly different versions throughout Italy.

*La Befana vien di notte
Con le scarpe tutte rotte
Col vestito alla romana
Viva, Viva La Befana!*

The English translation is:

*The Befana comes by night
With her shoes all tattered and torn
She comes dressed in the Roman way
Long life to the Befana!*

Another version is given in a poem by Giovanni Pascoli:

*Viene, viene la Befana
Vien dai monti a notte fonda
Come è stanca! la circonda
Neve e gelo e tramontana!
Viene, viene la Befana*

The English translation is:

*Here comes, here comes the Befana
She comes from the mountains in the deep of the night
Look how tired she is! All wrapped up
In snow and frost and the north wind!
Here comes, here comes the Befana!*

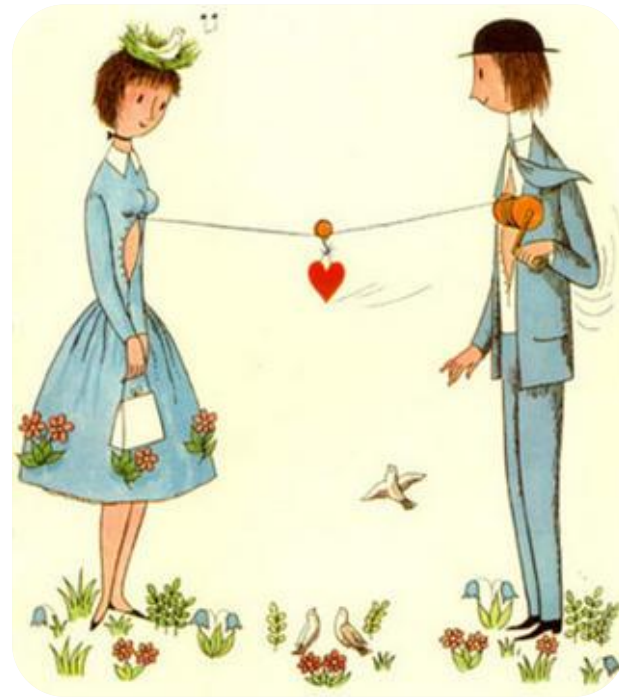


St. Valentine's Day



St. Valentine's Day is celebrated on 14 February and it is not a public holiday in Italy.

St. Valentine's Day began as a liturgical celebration of one or more saints named. The most popular legend was that he was imprisoned because he arranged and conducted for soldiers who were forbidden to get married and ministered to Christians, who were.



During his imprisonment, he fell in love with the daughter of his jailer, Asterius.

The legend says that before his execution he wrote her a letter and signed it "from your Valentine".

There are several ways to have a great time with your partner on **St. Valentine's Day** in Italy. Sweethearts usually give each other gifts, flowers and chocolates in heart-shaped boxes and have a nice dinner in a restaurant.



Carnival

Carnival celebrations begin 40 days before Easter and finish on the day before **Ash Wednesday**.

Martedì Grasso is the Italian word for **Mardi Gras** and it is the last day of **Carnival**. The name of this day refers to the practice of eating rich, fatty food before the beginning of **Lent**, which was the time of the year during which Catholic people were not allowed to eat meat in the past, a period of fasting and sacrifice. The name **Carnival** derives from the words “*carne levare*” (stop eating meat).

Carnival has very ancient origins. It is believed to have originated in Roman times when Saturnalia, the Saturn festival, and Lupercalia, the festival of the full moon, were celebrated.

In Italy **Carnival** is a great winter festival celebrated with parades, masquerade balls, entertainment, music and parties.

Children dress up and throw each other confetti. Mischief and pranks are also common during Carnival, hence the saying “A Carnevale Ogni Scherzo Vale”.

The most famous carnivals in Italy are those held in **Venice** and **Viareggio**.



The carnival in Venice dates back to 1268. Masks are an important part of Carnival and Venice is the best city for traditional Carnival masks. Carnival masks, ranging from cheap masks to elaborate and expensive masks, are sold during the year and can be found in many shops in Venice. The main events are gondola and boat parades along the Grand Canal, mask parades in St. Mark's Square and a great fireworks show on Mardi Gras.

Viareggio Carnival is one of the most famous in Italy: it lasts a month with night and day celebrations, floats, parades, masquerade balls and other performances.

The allegorical floats, which are made in papier-mâché and parade along Viareggio promenade, are inspired by Italian and international politics and other events.

Viareggio Carnival dates back to 1873, when a group of young men sitting around the tables of “Caffè del Casinò” had the idea of organizing a parade. They asked the best artisans and sculptors to build astonishing carriages and soon it was a popular event, a moment of joy in the city during the glorious days of the “Belle Époque” in Europe. Then World War I broke out and there was an interruption of the event until 1921 when Viareggio parade returned even more beautiful than before.

In 2001 the new "Cittadella del Carnevale"(Carnival town) was inaugurated; it is a great structure where floats are created. Since 2002 Viareggio Carnival has been named **Italian and European Carnival**.



The symbol of Carnival is **Burlamacco**.



The typical Carnival fritters are ribbons of sweet pasta fried and covered with sugar or honey. They have different shapes: squares, sheets, strips, diamonds, knots and twisted ribbons and different names such as **chiacchiere** (gossip) in the south of Italy, **frappe** (tassels) in Rome, **cenci** (rags-tatters) or *Donzelli* ("young ladies") in Tuscany, **bugie** (lies) in Piedmont, **sfrappe** in Le Marche, **sfrappole** in Emilia, **nastri** (ribbons), **lattughe** (lettuce), **guanti**(gloves), **fritole**, **crostoli**, ("crusts") or **galani** in Veneto.



Women's Day

The earliest Women's Day celebrations were held on different days: in Chicago on 3rd May 1908, in New York on 28th February 1909 and in New York on 27th February 1910.

This period was a time of great expansion and social unrest in the industrialized world.

In 1910 the Second International Conference of Women Workers was held in Copenhagen and Clara Zetkin, leader of Women's Office for the Social Democratic Party in Germany, had the idea of an International Women's Day. She proposed that Women's Day should be celebrated on the same day in every country every year in order to support women's demand for their right to vote, work and hold public office without any discrimination.



On 25 March 1911 more than 140 women workers died in the tragic “ Triangle Fire” in New York City; most of them were Italian and Jewish immigrants. This tragic event focused the attention on women's working conditions and became very important for the following Women's Day events .

On the last Sunday of February 1917 (8 March in the Gregorian calendar) Russian women organized a great protest in Saint Petersburg for bread and peace (food and the end of World War I). The Cossacks tried to repress the protest but they were not successful; this event just strengthened women's struggle for their rights. Women's Day has been celebrated on 8 March since then.

In Italy the milestones on the path towards women's equality were the following:

1946 Women voted to elect the Italian Constituent Assembly and to choose between Monarchy and Republic on 2 June.

1963 Women could no more be fired in the case of marriage.

1971 Women workers who had children were granted paid leave .

1975 Equality between the husband and the wife in a marital relationship. By this reform married couples had to agree on their residence and their children's education .

1977 Equal working conditions for men and women were granted.(Women were paid less than men until 1977)

2006 The Equal Opportunity Statement reinforced the principle of equality between men and women at work and in other areas.

The Celebration of the Festival

The U.D.I., the Union of Italian Women ,was created in Rome in September 1944. They established to celebrate Women's Day on 8th March 1945.

In the early fifties the newspaper "We Women" came out; this was considered an event that could disturb public order.

In 1959 the senators Luisa Balboni, Josephine Palumbo and Giuliana Nenni proposed a bill to make International Woman's Day a national holiday, but they were not successful.

On 8 March 1972 Women's Day celebrations were held in Rome and Jane Fonda, the famous actress, participated in these celebrations. 1975 was chosen as " Women's International Year" and women's organizations around the world celebrated Women's International Day on 8th March.



Two years later, a "United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace" was proclaimed. The role of women in peace efforts was recognized, together with the urgent need to put an end to all forms of discrimination and to increase the support to women's participation in civil and social life.

The symbol of 8th March ,the Mimosa flower, was chosen in Italy, exactly in 1946. The U.D.I. was preparing the first " March 8" of the post- war period, and it focused the attention on the problem of choosing a flower that could be a symbol for the day.

Women liked this very fragrant yellow flower, the mimosa flower, which also had the advantage of blooming at the right time. The choice of this flower was simple and casual, but it was a very successful idea and the mimosa flower is still the symbol of Women's Day. Girls, wives, friends and mothers are offered mimosa flowers by men and women. The mimosa flower is the "logo" of many posters, postcards and magazine covers .

Father's Day



Italian people celebrate **St. Joseph's Day** or **Father's Day** on 19th March. They commemorate “San Giuseppe” or Saint Joseph, the Blessed Virgin Mary ‘s husband and Jesus Christ’s foster father , a fatherly symbol of love, kindness and generosity.

Saint Joseph's Day has been celebrated on 19 March since the 10thh century. In 1870, Pope Pius IX declared Saint Joseph patron of the universal Church and instituted another day to celebrate him in the second week after Easter. This was abolished by Pope Pius XII, when in 1955 he established the “Day of St. Joseph the Worker” to be celebrated on 1 May.

On **Father's Day** fatherhood and the influence of fathers in society are celebrated. The Italian name for **Father's Day** is “**Festa del Papa’**”.

In Italy, this is the day when children show their fathers their love and offer them presents.

In the past this day was a national holiday in Italy and people went to church and offered their prayers to Saint Joseph. Nowadays few people attend the Mass on this day because it is not a public holiday.



On **Father's Day** families have big meals together and they have traditional desserts that vary from region to region. In the south of Italy, people usually have “zeppole” (deep-fried dough balls) and “bigné “ and in the north and in the centre of Italy they usually have “frittelle” (rice fritters).



In some places, people lit up bonfires to celebrate this day. In Sicily people place flowers, limes, candles, wine, beans, cakes and cookies and “zeppole “on St. Joseph's altar. Food containing bread crumbs is traditionally served to represent saw dust since St. Joseph was a carpenter. The altar usually has three tiers to represent the Trinity.



Rice fritters- a delicious Tuscan recipe to celebrate fathers and grandfathers!!



Receipe

Ingredients for 8 people

200 gr. rice for soups or desserts

1/2 litre of milk

2 cups of water

a pinch of salt

4 eggs

4 tablespoons of flour

30 gr. butter

1 small glass of “vinsanto “

1 teaspoon baking powder for cakes

vanilla sugar



Preparation:

The night before:

Boil the milk and water, add a pinch of salt then the rice and lower the heat;

a few minutes later add butter, sugar and the zest of a whole lemon.

The rice should be well cooked: be careful it does not stick to the pan!

Remove from the heat and cool at room temperature.

The next day, mix the cold rice with 4 egg yolks, the baking powder, the flour and 1 small glass of “vinsanto”.

Mix all the ingredients together and let the dough rest for a bit.

Whisk the 4 egg whites and mix them delicately with the dough.

Heat oil in a deep saucepan. Use a tablespoon to measure the amount and drop in the dough: every spoonful will become a "frittella"!

Warning: the fritters will be perfectly ready when they have a light, golden colour (they do not have to turn brown!)

Remove from the heat and drain them on paper. Dip in the granulated or vanilla sugar and enjoy them! They are delicious hot but we like them cold, too!



Maundy Thursday

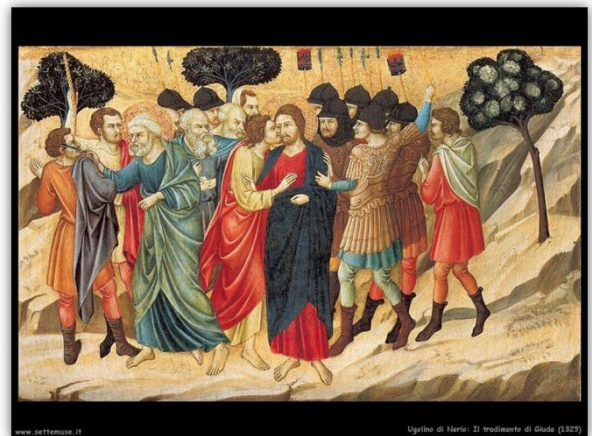
Maundy Thursday also called Holy Thursday, is the Thursday before Easter. It is the beginning of Easter celebrations. This period ,**The Triduum**, celebrates Jesus Christ 's Last Supper, Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection.

Maundy Thursday commemorates Jesus 's Last Supper with His Twelve Apostles, the institution of the Eucharist, the institution of priesthood and the commandment of brotherly love that Jesus gave after washing His disciples' feet .

The night of Maundy Thursday is the night on which Jesus was betrayed by Judas in the Gethsemane Garden.

The name **Maundy** derives from the Latin word **mandatum**, meaning "commandment". During the Last Supper, Jesus Christ said: *"And now I give you a new commandment: "Love one another as I have loved you"* .

On Maundy Thursday Catholic churches celebrate a special Mass in honour of Jesus' Last Supper and a symbolic foot-washing ceremony is held in order to commemorate Jesus's washing His disciples 'feet . Jesus washed His disciples' feet as an act of humility and service.



After the Holy Mass altars are left bare and crosses are removed from churches or veiled.



Good Friday

Good Friday, also known as Holy Friday, is the Friday before Easter. It commemorates Jesus Christ's crucifixion and death. Good Friday is a day of sorrow, penance and fasting.

Sacraments are not celebrated on Good Friday and altars are completely bare. It is a day of mourning.

Large processions are held and religious symbols such as crosses and statues of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ are paraded through cities and towns.

On Good Friday, the Pope celebrates the traditional **Via Crucis** (the Stations of the Cross) at the Colosseum in Rome. The Stations of the Via Crucis were placed at the Colosseum by Pope Benedict XIV in 1744. A huge cross with burning torches lights the sky as the Stations of the Cross are described in several languages. At the end, the Pope gives his blessing.



Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is a public holiday in Italy and it celebrates Jesus Christ 's resurrection on the third day after His crucifixion on the Calvary as described in the New Testament.

In 325 A.D. the First Council of Nicaea established the date of Easter on the first Sunday after the Paschal Full Moon following the March equinox.

The name **Easter** comes from Scandinavia, where people worshipped a spring Goddess called Oestre. Oestre's Day, which marked the rebirth of spring, became the Christian celebration of Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Easter is linked to the Jewish Passover. In many languages, the words for "Easter" and "Passover" are identical or very similar .In both Greek and Latin, the 2nd-century Christian celebration was called **Pascha**, derived from the Hebrew term Pesach , known in English as Passover, the Jewish festival commemorating the story of the Exodus.

Jesus died on the cross about 2,000 years ago in a city called Jerusalem. He was killed because he claimed to be the Messiah. When he was crucified , they put a sign over His head, which said "King of the Jews." The New Testament states that on the Sunday after Jesus was killed, some of His followers found out that his body was no longer in His tomb. Later, Jesus appeared to over 500 people and preached to them.



The New Testament teaches that Jesus' s resurrection is what Christianity is based on. His resurrection made people believe that Jesus was God 's Son.

Celebrations start on Holy Saturday's night with a Midnight Mass , which is the first official celebration of Jesus' s Resurrection.

On Easter Sunday Catholic people go to the Holy Mass and have big meals with their relatives.

The traditional Easter meal consists of “ crostini” , boiled eggs and “salumi”, Easter Pie (Torta Pasqualina), “ravioli “or “lasagne “,roast lamb with peas and potatoes, artichokes and “*colomba*” , a dove-shaped cake with almonds, symbol of peace.

At Easter children receive big chocolate eggs with a surprise inside. Chocolate eggs are typical Easter presents for friends and relatives.

Some children paint boiled eggs themselves and take them to church on Easter Sunday to have them blessed by the priest. Easter eggs are symbols of joy, rebirth and new life . At Easter shop windows are decorated with chocolate eggs of all sizes, shapes, and colours.

A famous Italian saying is: *“Natale con i tuoi, Pasqua con chi vuoi.”* (“Spend Christmas with your family, Easter with the people you want.”)



Easter Monday

Easter Monday, also known as **Pasquetta**, is a public holiday .Italian people have picnics ,go to restaurants or have trips with friends or relatives.

Easter Monday is also known in Italy as “Lunedì dell'Angelo” (The Angel's Monday) because it was the day when the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene visited Jesus ‘s sepulchre, found it empty and were comforted by an angel.



Liberation Day

Liberation Day is a national holiday in Italy and it is celebrated in Italy on April 25th. It commemorates the day when Italy was liberated from the Nazi occupation by the Allied troops in the Second World War. It also marks the end of Mussolini's dictatorship. Benito Mussolini was the leader of the Italian Fascist Party from 1922 to 1943 and a dictator.



Liberation Day also commemorates the soldiers and civilians who died during the Second World War and the people who fought against the Nazis and Mussolini's troops in order to defend Italy's freedom.

This date was chosen because Milan and Turin were liberated by the Partisans on 25th April 1945 and the death sentence for all Fascists(including Mussolini who was shot three days later) was announced.

Today the President of the Republic visits the Ardeatine Caves Mausoleum , where more than 300 people were killed by the Nazis in 1944.



Parades , marches, concerts, speeches, gatherings , remembrance ceremonies and marching bands with big Italian flags are organized on 25th April.

This date symbolically represents the beginning of the historical journey which led to the referendum on June 2, 1946, when the Italians voted for the end of the monarchy and the creation of the Italian Republic. Italy has been a Republic since 1946.

“Bella Ciao” is the anthem of the Italian Resistance Movement. It was often sung by the people who fought against The Nazis and Mussolini. It tells the tale of an Italian Partisan who died fighting for the freedom of Italy.

Italian partisans greet the Allied troops as they enter a Florence suburb south of the Arno



”Bella Ciao”

Una mattina mi son svegliato
O bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
una mattina mi son svegliato
e ho trovato l'invasor.

O partigiano portami via
O bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
o partigiano portami via
che mi sento di morir.

E se io muoio da partigiano
O bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
e se io muoio da partigiano
tu mi devi seppellir

Seppellire lassù in montagna
O bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
Seppellire lassù in montagna
sotto l'ombra di un bel fior

E le genti che passeranno
O bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
e le genti che passeranno
mi diranno che bel fior

Questo è il fiore del partigiano
O bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
questo è il fiore del partigiano
morto per la libertà.

Song

I woke this morning and all seemed
peaceful
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
I woke this morning and all seemed
peaceful
But oppression still exists.

Oh freedom fighter, I want to fight too
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
Oh freedom fighter, I want to fight too
Against their living death.

And if I die, a freedom fighter,
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
And if I die, a freedom fighter,
Then you'll have to bury me.

Let my body rest in the mountains
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
Let my body rest in the mountains
In the shadow of my flower.

And all the people who will pass by
there
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
And all the people who will pass by
there
Will show that lovely flower.

This is the blossom of those that died
here
Bella ciao, bella ciao, bella ciao ciao
ciao
This is the blossom of those that died
here

For land and liberty.

Labour Day

Labour Day dates back to the late 1800s .It started as an attempt to celebrate workers' achievements in their struggle for their rights and for better social and economic conditions.

Farmers and other workers traditionally took the day off to have a meal together, socialise and dance on May 1. Labour Day was abolished under the Fascist Regime and was immediately reintroduced after the Second World War, in 1945.



Now **Labour Day** is an important holiday in Italy. Many people spend **Labour Day** attending concerts in cities and public demonstrations. Special events are organized on Labour Day all over Italy.

The famous **Concerto del Primo Maggio** (1 May Concert), organized by the Italian Trade Unions in Rome, is attended by more than 500,000 people every year. Here you can enjoy the performances of some of the best artists in the country and from all over the world.

Labour Day is not only a day for special events and parades. This public holiday is at the beginning of May and the weather is usually quite warm, therefore Italian people take it as an opportunity to have some days off and go somewhere. Since it is so close to Liberation Day, many Italians have a holiday from April 25 to May 1 .



Nowadays **Labour Day** is more about having a short holiday and relaxing with friends and families, rather than remembering the reasons behind it.

The favourite destinations are cities of art and the countryside, although some people go to the seaside and enjoy an early taste of the summer to come. Many people organize a picnic in a park or a barbeque in a garden and enjoy the day with friends and relatives .



Mother's Day



Mother's Day is a celebration in honour of mothers ,motherhood and the importance of mothers in society. It is celebrated in many countries around the world, but it is not celebrated in all countries on the same day. Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in May In Italy but it not a public holiday.

Celebrations in honour of mothers date back to the spring festival dedicated to Rhea, the Mother of the Gods, in Ancient Greece.

The early Christians celebrated “Mothering Sunday” on the fourth Sunday of Lent in honour of the Virgin Mary.



In the 1600s there was an annual celebration called "Mothering Sunday" in England and it was celebrated during Lent. On that day, the servants, who generally lived with their employers, were encouraged to return home and honour their mothers.

Mother's Day was first celebrated in the U.S.A. in 1908, when Anna Jarvis organised a private Mother's Day celebration in memory of her mother, who had called for Mother's Day to be celebrated each year to encourage pacifism and disarmament among women. She then began a campaign to make "Mother's Day" a recognized holiday in the United States and she was successful in 1914. Jarvis's holiday was adopted by other countries and it is now celebrated all over the world.

Mother's Day is strongly associated with the **Virgin Mary** for the Roman Catholic Church.



In Italy **Mother's Day** was celebrated for the first time in a church in Assisi on 12 May 1957. This celebration was so successful that the following year Mother's Day was celebrated throughout Italy.

Mother's Day is a day when children buy their mothers gifts and flowers. Flowers, especially bunches of roses, are a very popular present on this day.

Many primary school teachers help their pupils to prepare a handmade card or a small gift for their mothers.



People usually have lunch together to celebrate their mothers. They usually have a big lunch : pasta, meat and vegetables and a heart-shaped cake for dessert. There are a lot of them in pastry shops.

Italian mothers are still very important for the whole family, especially for children and grandchildren.

If you are wondering how to say **Happy Mother's Day** in Italian, you can simply tell your mum: "Tanti Auguri Mamma!". You can also tell her how much you love her saying: "Ti Voglio Tanto Bene!" and this will be enough to make your **Mamma** truly happy.



Republic Day

Republic Day is an Italian national holiday, which is celebrated on 2nd June each year.

The day commemorates the referendum held by universal suffrage in 1946, in which the Italian people were called to the polls to decide on the form of government, the republic or the monarchy, after the Second World War and the fall of Fascism.

With 12,717,923 votes for the Republic and 10,719,284 for the Monarchy, Italy became a Republic and the monarchs of the House of Savoy were deposed and exiled .

In order to commemorate this event, a military parade is held in Rome, presided over by the President of the Italian Republic in his role as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

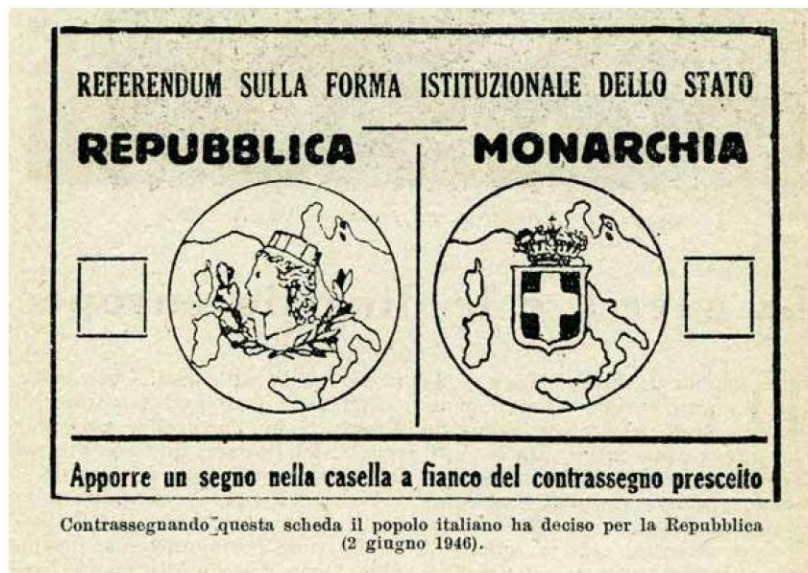


The Prime Minister, who is the Head of Government of the Italian Republic, and is formally known as the President of the Council of Ministers ,and other high officers also participate in the parade.

There are important celebrations in all Italian embassies and foreign Heads of State are invited. Even though in Rome there is the most important parade, many Italian cities celebrate the Republic Day as well.

Before the foundation of the Republic, this national holiday was on the first Sunday of June, anniversary of the Statuto Albertino (the Constitution) granted by King Carlo Alberto of Savoy.

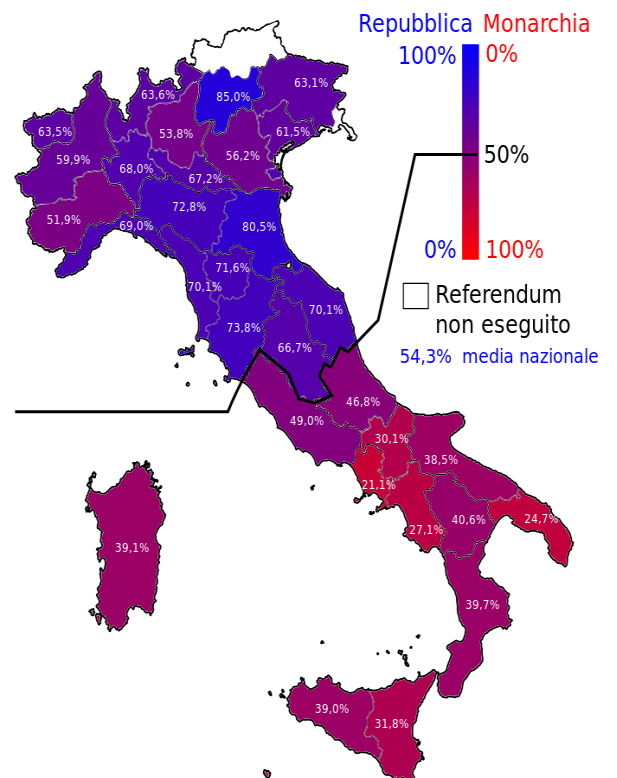
Women voted for the first time on 2 June 1946.



THE RESULT

The table of results shows some relevant differences in the different parts of Italy,

Collegi	Repubblica	Monarchia
Torino	800.772	536.594
Cuneo	412.313	380.770
Genova	611.849	275.764
Milano	1.153.027	541.872
Como	422.722	241.923
Brescia	399.986	344.637
Mantova	304.275	148.853
Trento	192.204	33.946
Verona	647.464	504.273
Venezia	403.329	252.478
Udine	339.183	198.388
Trieste	—	—
Bologna	879.201	212.373
Parma	638.288	238.681
Firenze	487.133	193.566
Pisa	456.164	194.821
Siena	388.165	119.984
Ancona	499.087	213.396
Perugia	335.835	168.610
Roma	713.875	745.845
Aquila	287.322	326.267
Benevento	103.969	241.361
Napoli	241.778	902.700
Salerno	152.570	415.641
Bari	320.867	509.476
Lecce	148.872	449.299
Potenza	104.471	153.960
Catanzaro	333.491	502.605
Catania	329.035	707.520
Palermo	379.951	595.488
Cagliari	206.939	321.305
Val d'Aosta	28.630	16.506
Totale	12.672.767	10.688.905



THE PARADE

In 1948, Via dei Fori Imperiali hosted the first military parade in honour of the new Italian Republic. The following year, with Italy's entry into the NATO, ten parades were held simultaneously across the country and in 1950 the parade became an official celebration.

The ceremony involves laying a laurel wreath on the Unknown Soldier's tomb inside the famous **Altare della Patria**, also called **il Vittoriano**, and a military parade. The Armed Forces, the Police Forces of the Republic, the National Body of Fire Brigades, the Italian Red Cross and military delegations of the UNO, the NATO and the European Union take part in the military parade.

The parade ends with the Frecce Tricolori ("Three-coloured Arrows"), officially known as the "313° Gruppo Addestramento Acrobatico", which is the aerobatic demonstration team of the Italian Air Force, flying over the **Vittoriano**.

The ceremony continues in the afternoon with the opening of the gardens of Quirinale Palace, seat of the President of the Republic, and with musical performances by the bands of the Italian Army, the Italian Navy, the Italian Air Force, the Italian National Military Police, the State Police, the Finance Guard and the Penitentiary Police.

Parades, fireworks, concerts, picnics and football games are held all over Italy.



Ferragosto



Ferragosto is an Italian public holiday celebrated on 15th August.

The term **Ferragosto** derives from the Latin name *Feriae Augusti* (Augustus's festivals), and it is a celebration introduced by the Emperor Augustus in 18 B.C.

During these celebrations, horse races were organised across the Empire, and oxen, donkeys and mules were decorated with flowers.



The popular tradition of having a trip at” **Ferragosto**” began during Fascism. In the second half of the 1920s, during the mid-August period, the Regime organised hundreds of train trips for Italian families .

The regime wanted to give less well-off social classes the opportunity to visit Italian cities or to reach seaside and mountain resorts.

The Catholic Church celebrates this date to commemorate the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven to join Her Son Jesus, taking Her place by His side to look after people remaining here on the Earth. Catholic people attend the Mass and families have a big lunch together. Many Italian people go to the seaside and have picnics or go to the restaurant . In many cities there are processions of people carrying the statue of Jesus’ s Mother Mary and fireworks.



All Saints' Day

All Saints' Day is celebrated on 1 November by the Catholic Church in honour of all the Saints and Martyrs.

All Saints' Day dates back to the fourth century when the Greek Christians celebrated a day on the first Sunday after Pentecost (in late May or early June) in honour of all the Martyrs and Saints . In 609 Pope Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon in Rome to the Virgin Mary and all the Martyrs and ordered an anniversary.

Pope Gregory III (741–731) consecrated a chapel in St. Peter's for the relics "of the Holy Apostles and of all Saints, Martyrs and Confessors in the world", and fixed **All Saints' Day** on 1 November . Pope Gregory IV made **All Saints' Day** an authorized holiday in 835 CE.



On June 1, 1949, the Italian Constitution listed the day of **All Saints' Day** as a public holiday. On **All Saints' Day** Catholic people attend the Mass and spend the day with their family.



Halloween

On **All Saints' Eve**, Italian people celebrate **Halloween**. Halloween costumes and decorations are on show in shop windows and can be found in many stores. Children's costume parties are mainly held during the day, but in the evening many nightclubs, bars, and restaurants now advertise special costume parties for young people. Many Italian people watch horror films and American Halloween movies at the cinema or at home.



All Souls ' Day

In the 11th century the Abbot Odilo of Cluny established that the day to remember the dead should follow the day celebrating all the Saints, mainly because it was believed that the dead could come into contact with the living.

The date was chosen for all the monasteries linked to the Abbey of Cluny and later it spread to other Benedictine monasteries and to the western Church in general.

In Italy the celebration is also known as the **Day of the Dead**.

All Souls' Day is a day to reflect on the dead people. It is also a Memorial Day and Italian people visit their loved ones' graves, praying that their souls may reach the Heaven. They place flowers on the tombs of their dead relatives and friends in cemeteries and attend the Mass.

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated on December 8, nine months before the Solemnity of the Nativity of Mary, which is celebrated on September 8. It is a public holiday in Italy.



The Immaculate Conception is a Catholic Church dogma about the chastity of the Virgin Mary.

It is believed that the Virgin Mary was sinless and was filled with grace after her conception.

The Immaculate Conception is one of the four dogmas of the Roman Catholic Mariology and the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is widely celebrated in various countries around the world.



The Eastern Christian Church celebrated the "Feast of the Conception of the Most Holy and All Pure Mother of God" on December 9, perhaps as early as the 5th century in Syria. In the Western Church it began to be celebrated on December 8, in the 8th century. It spread from the Byzantine area of Southern Italy to Normandy. From there it spread to England, France, Germany, and eventually Rome.



In the Constitution *Ineffabilis Deus* of 8 December, 1854, Pope Pius IX pronounced and defined that "The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin."

Four years later the Virgin Mary, appearing in Lourdes to St. Bernadette, confirmed the truth of the doctrine by saying: 'I am the Immaculate Conception'.

Nowadays this day is often celebrated with parades, fireworks and processions in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Catholic people attend the Holy Mass and spend the day with their family.



Christmas

Most Christians celebrate Jesus Christ's birth on 25th December. In Italy Christmas celebrations begin on 8th December, The Immaculate Conception's Day, and lasts on 6th January, the Epiphany.

Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem and His birth took place in a manger in a stable, surrounded by the Virgin Mary, Her husband, Joseph, and farm animals.

According to the Gospel of Luke, The Virgin Mary wrapped him in clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room available for them in Bethlehem. Shepherds from the fields surrounding Bethlehem were told of His birth by an angel and were the first to see the child.



La **Novena** , a special period of nine days, starts nine days before Christmas. On each day special prayers are recited and Christmas songs are sung in Italian churches.

Italian people usually decorate the main squares, streets, houses, churches and cities with lights , signs and Christmas Trees on 8th December and take these decorations down on 7th January.

The Christmas Tree is the most popular Christmas tradition. This is a fir decorated with coloured lights , small traditional objects, coloured baubles and garlands. A star representing the Star of Bethlehem is placed at the top of the Christmas Tree.

Christmas Cribs are set up in houses ,churches and other public places.



Saint Francis , patron Saint of Italy, started this tradition. He set up a Nativity scene in a forest near Greccio, in Umbria on Christmas Eve, in 1223.

Nativity Scenes, known as **Presepi Viventi** ,are re-created in many cities and towns nowadays.



Christmas Eve

On Christmas Eve, Italian people have a special evening meal called **Cenone di Natale**.

Christmas Eve is a day of abstinence from meat for Catholic people so most Italian families have fish on this day.

The typical dinner usually consists of “crostini” with smoked salmon and seafood salad, “ravioli”, roast or boiled fish with vegetables and potatoes and typical Christmas cakes such “panettone” and “pandoro”. After the meal many Italian families attend the Midnight Mass .





Most children open their presents after dinner on Christmas Eve, other children open them on the morning of Christmas Day.

Father Christmas, known as **Babbo Natale** in Italy ,leaves presents for children under the Christmas tree. People exchange presents on Christmas Eve or on Christmas Day.

Christmas Day

On Christmas Day most Italian families attend the Holy Mass and people celebrate Jesus Christ's birth.

Thousands of people from all over the world gather in St. Peter's Square in the Vatican City in order to receive the Pope's blessing. Millions of people watch the event on TV.

Christmas Day is celebrated with a family meal consisting of "crostini" with meat sauce, butter and smoked salmon or liver paté, meat soup with "tortellini", "ravioli" or "lasagne", boiled capon , roast capon or roast pork , "cotechino" or "zampone" , vegetables, fruit salad or pineapple and traditional Christmas cakes such as "panettone", "pandoro", "panforte", "ricciarelli", "cavallucci", "cantuccini" with "vinsanto" and "Spumante" . Most Christmas cakes contain nuts, almonds, raisins, candied fruit and hazelnuts.

People spend the day with their families at home, playing Bingo or cards, watching TV, or visiting Nativity Scenes in churches.



St. Stephen's Day

St. Stephen's Day is celebrated on 26th December. It is a public holiday in Italy and some people attend the Holy Mass in order to celebrate St. Stephen, the first martyr of the Catholic Church. St. Stephen was stoned to death around 34 A. D.

People spend the day with their families or visit cities of art.



New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve or San Silvestro's Day is celebrated on 31st December. Italian people usually celebrate New Year's Eve with friends. Some people organize parties at home, but most people have dinner in restaurants or go to discos.

On New Year's Eve dinner includes a large variety of starters, "ravioli", "lasagne" or "pasta" with different kinds of sauce, roast meat or fish with vegetables, vegetable pies, the traditional "zampone" with lentils, grapes and traditional Christmas cakes such as "panettone" or "pandoro". The traditional drink is "Spumante" (Sparkling wine).

It is said that on this day eating grapes brings good luck. The star of this dinner is lentils, which bring money and good luck for the coming year.

After dinner people gather in streets or go to concerts or discos and they dance, sing and have fun with friends.

At midnight people open bottles of champagne or “ Spumante” and have a toast, wishing one another good health and prosperity in the new year and saying “Buon Anno”.

The beginning of the New Year is celebrated with huge fireworks displays in Italian cities and towns. Most parties end at dawn on New Year’s Day.



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