

Buon Natale!



Christmas in Italy

Created by Mrs. Grooms' Room



Christmas festivities begin in Italy nine days before Christmas. During this time, shepherds come down from the mountains to play bagpipes announcing Christmas is near.

Presepios



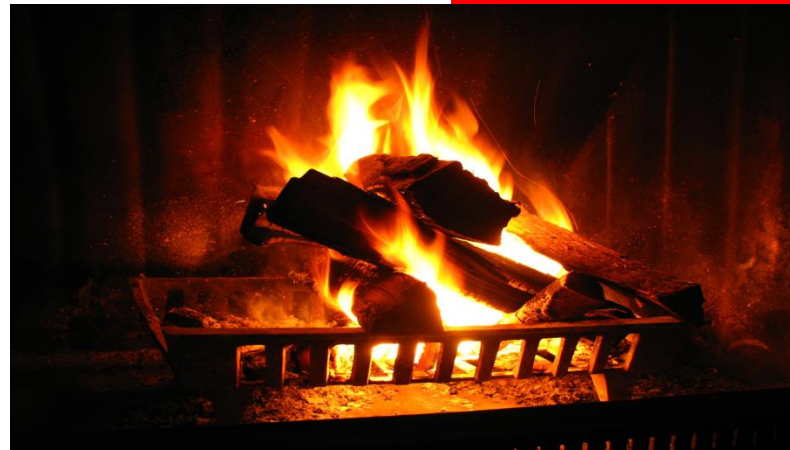
During the Christmas season, hundreds of presepio or manger scenes are displayed. In churches, visitors view life-size nativity scenes but in their homes, families carefully unwrap their own presepios that have been treasures handed down for generations.

Ceppo



The ceppo or Christmas pyramid is often displayed during the holiday season although many people are now decorating an artificial tree. This decoration has three or four shelves and is decorated with candles, ornaments, small gifts, family treasures, and the nativity scene.

Letters of Love



During the Christmas season, Italian children write letters to their parents promising to be good next year and telling their parents how much they love them. Children hide their letters under their parents dishes and their letters are read aloud at the dinner table. Often the letters are burned in the fireplace to seal the promise!

Italy's Gift-Givers



Children receive gifts on Christmas from a Santa Claus figure called "Babbo Natale" or Father Christmas. Most gifts are brought to the children on January 6th by an old lady called "Le Befana."



Le Befana

Legend says that La Befana was an old lady who refused to go with the three kings to Bethlehem because she was too busy cleaning her house. After finishing her work, she set out to find baby Jesus but she lost her way because she was behind. But even today, she still continues to search for Baby Jesus. On January 6th, children leave their shoes by the fireplace, hoping that La Befana will slip down the chimney on her broomstick and leave gifts for them.

Yummy!



panettone

On Christmas Eve, families come together for a special feast, that usually includes eel, pasta, and "panettone," a loaf shaped Christmas cake with nuts and fruits.

What did you learn while
visiting Italy?



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Happy Learning!



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