

# Italian Holidays - Holidays and Festivals Celebrated in Italy

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Italian holidays, festivals, and feast days reflect Italian culture, history, and religious practices. Some Italian holidays are similar to those celebrated throughout many other parts of the world, while others are unique to Italy. January 1, for example, is *Capodanno* (New Year's Day), while April 25 is the *Festa della Liberazione* (Liberation Day), an annual national holiday commemorating the 1945 liberation ending World War II in Italy.

Other Italian holidays include November 1, *Ognissanti* (All Saints Day), a religious holiday during which Italians typically bring flowers to the graves of their deceased relatives, and *Pasquetta* (Easter Monday), when traditionally, Italians *fare una scampagnata* (to go for an outing) in the countryside and have a picnic to mark the beginning of springtime.

In addition to national holidays (when government offices and most businesses and retail shops are closed), many Italian towns and villages celebrate the feast day of their *santo patrono* (patron saint), which differs from place to place. Keep in mind, too, when consulting an Italian calendar, that when a religious festival or holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday, Italians oftentimes *fare il ponte* (literally, to make a bridge), or make a four-day holiday, by taking off the intervening Monday or Friday.

## Italian Holidays, Festivals, Feast Days

Below is a list of the Italian national holidays plus feast days for some of the major Italian cities and a representative sample of festivals:

### January

1: Capodanno (New Year's Day)

6: Epifania/La Befana (Epiphany)

7: Giornata Nazionale della Bandiera (Flag Day)—celebrated principally in Reggio nell'Emilia

### February

3: San Biagio (patron saint of Doues)

9: San Rinaldo (patron saint of Nocera Umbra)

14: Festa degli Innamorati (San Valentino)

Movable: Martedì Grasso (Mardi Gras / Fat Tuesday)—part of Carnevale

Movable: Mercoledì di Ceneri (Ash Wednesday)

### March

8: La Festa della Donna

16: San Ilario and San Taziano (patron saints of Gorizia)

19: Festa del Papà (San Giuseppe)

19: San Proietto (patron saint of Randazzo)

Movable (can also occur in April): Domenica delle Palme (Palm Sunday)

Movable (can also occur in April): Venerdì Santo (Good Friday)

Movable (can also occur in April): Pasqua (Easter Sunday)

Monday after Easter (can also occur in April): Pasquetta, Lunedì di Pasqua (Easter Monday)

## **April**

**1:** Pesce d'Aprile (April Fool's Day)

**25:** Festa della Liberazione (Liberation Day)

**25:** San Marco (patron saint of Venezia)

## **May**

**1:** Festa del Lavoro (May Day)

## **June**

**2:** Festa della Repubblica (Republic Day)

**24:** San Giovanni Battista (patron saint of Firenze)

**29:** San Pietro and San Paolo (patron saints of Roma)

## **July**

**10:** San Paterniano (patron saint of Grottammare)

**15:** Santa Rosalia (patron saint of Palermo)

## **August**

**2:** San Alessio (patron saint of Sant'Alessio in Aspromonte)

**15:** Ferragosto / Assunzione (Day of the Assumption)

## **September**

**19:** San Gennaro (patron saint of Napoli)

**22:** San Maurizio (patron saint of Calasetta)

## **October**

**4:** San Petronio (patron saint of Bologna)

## **November**

**1:** Ognissanti (All Saints Day)

**2:** Il Giorno dei Morti (Day of the Dead)

**3:** San Giusto (patron saint of Trieste)

**11:** San Martino (patron saint of Foiano della Chiana)

## **December**

**6:** San Nicola (patron saint of Bari)

**7:** Sant'Ambrogio (patron saint of Milano)

**8:** Immacolata Concezione (Immaculate Conception)

**25:** Natale (Christmas)

**26:** Santo Stefano (St. Stephen's Day)

**31:** San Silvestro (St. Silvester's Day)

### **Suggested Reading**

- Christmas in Italy
- Easter in Italy
- Thanksgiving in Italy

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- Is Passover celebrated in Italy?
- Italians want to celebrate Christopher Columbus with a national holiday.
- What is the meaning of the phrase 'ponte 2 giugno'?

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