


December

2023



# Italy A&M CLUB

## Holidays in Italy

Christmas, New Years, Markets, Hanukkah and Everything in Between

The Legend of  
La Befana

Emila Romagna  
Region

Homemade  
Lasagna

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## CIAO A TUTTI! & HOWDY AGS!

*A*s the year draws to a close, we are delighted to present to you the December edition of our clubs e-newsletter/magazine, bringing you the latest updates, highlights, and festive cheer from the *Italy A&M Club*.

As we embrace the holiday season, our e-newsletter/magazine features articles on unique Italian traditions, recipes for festive delicacies, and recommendations for the best holiday destinations within this beautiful country. Whether you're celebrating the holiday season we hope these insights add a touch of magic to your December festivities.

We hope this issue will inspire you to embrace the allure of Italy in December, whether you live and work here, you're planning a visit or simply dreaming of future travels. We invite you to savor the flavors, culture, and breathtaking scenery that this wonderful country has to offer during the holiday season.

This month we will take a look at the *Holidays in Italy*, the bountiful region of *Emilia-Romagna*, the *Italian legend of La Befana*, *gift ideas for any time of year* and a wonderful recipe for *homemade lasagna*. In our *Ask an Italy Ag* we have a surprise interview with the big guy himself...yep, we got an exclusive interview with *Babbo Natale, a.k.a Santa Claus*, an *Aggie Sports Update* and *Campus News*, a *holiday coloring contest*, plus much, much more.

We hope you enjoy the format and if you have any questions let us know. We are committed to bringing you engaging and insightful content, and we look forward to sharing the wonders of Italy with you in the pages of each issue. As always, your feedback and suggestions are highly valued and we encourage you to reach out to us with your thoughts and ideas.

Be sure to download the material. Over time the issues will roll off and not be available for review.

Thanks, Ciao and Gig'em!

Ryan '91



# DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE ITALIAN CHEESE BANK?

## A BRIEF HISTORY THE PARMIGIANO REGGIANO CHEESE BANK

*I*n 1953, a local bank began accepting large Parmigiano Reggiano cheese wheels as collateral from local farmers seeking small business loans. This arrangement was advantageous due to the cheese's aging process, which takes a minimum of 12 months, with most wheels aging for 18 to 36 months. During this period, cheese makers deliver the cheese to buyers and receive payment.

However, some business owners cannot wait for up to 36 months to receive payment and require faster access to funds for cash flow. To assist them, the bank offers a "*Parmigiano Reggiano loan*" that helps farmers sustain their operations.

Credito Emiliano, the bank in question, stores a significant quantity of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese in a specialized warehouse. In an interview from April 2017, it was revealed that the bank stores over 300,000 cheese wheels, valued at more than 160 million euros (equivalent to over 142 million US dollars in 2017).

Rather than storing the cheese in a vault with other valuables, the bank built a dedicated warehouse for cheese storage. A specialized team, led by the bank manager, ensures the cheese's care from its arrival at the warehouse until it is returned to the farmers, typically within 1.5 to 3 years. The bank manager highlights their commitment to protecting the producer's investment and calls this process "from cow to the bank."

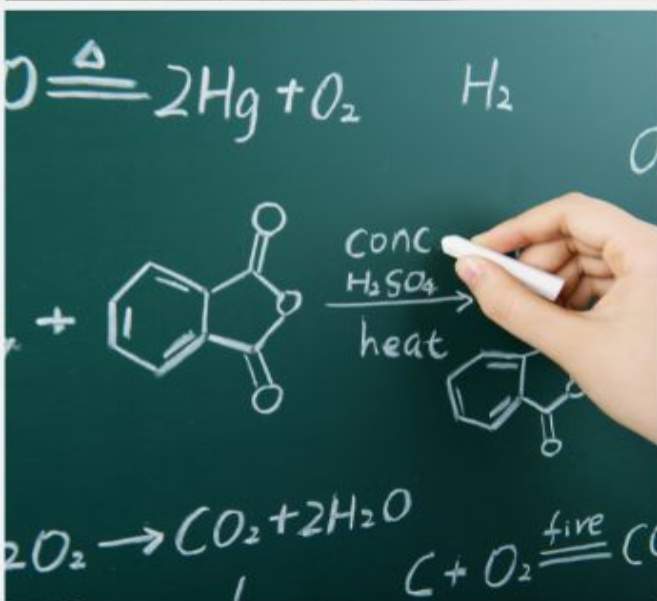
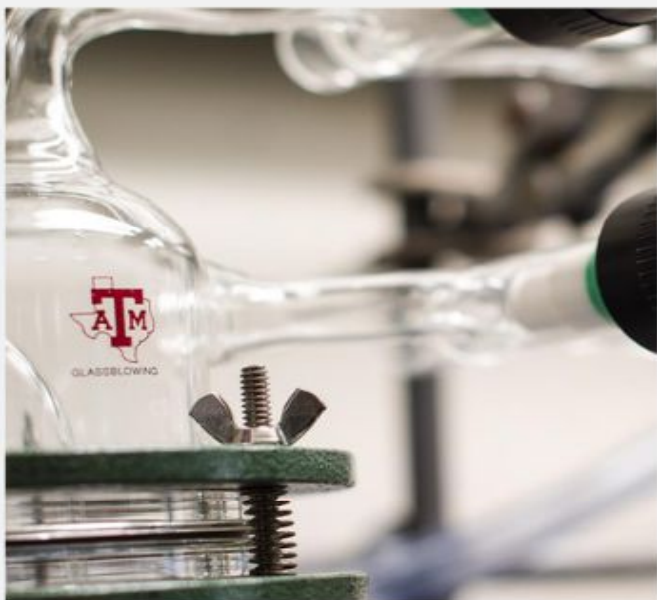
# TEXAS A&M CAMPUS REMEMBERED



## CHEMISTRY BUILDING

*T*he Chemistry Building (1929) was designed by S.C.P. Vosper using classical design proportions and details. It was extended to the east in 1981 and 1988. The ornamentation uses a variety of color schemes in tile patterns inspired from the art of the Mexican Americans, and includes patterns of animal heads, skulls, bones and fossils. The main entrance has a monumental stair leading to pedimented doorways. The entry ceiling has intricate painted gold grillwork against a background of dark panels with complementary lighting fixtures.





# MARK A. WELSH III NAMED SOLE FINALIST FOR TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

*Interim A&M President has served as Bush School dean, U.S. Air Force chief of staff.*



On Friday, November 17, the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents unanimously approved Mark A. Welsh III, as the sole finalist for the position of President of Texas A&M University.

“The Board is confident in General Welsh’s abilities to take Texas A&M to even greater heights,” Chairman Bill Mahomes said. “Everything points to him being the perfect person for this pivotal moment in the history of our beloved flagship.”

Chancellor John Sharp recommended to regents in a special-called meeting that Welsh become the sole finalist to lead the university.

Under state law, regents must name a finalist at least 21 days prior to making an appointment final at a subsequent meeting.

Sharp said he has been impressed with Welsh’s service as A&M’s interim president since July.

“Even in an interim role, General Welsh has moved decisively and effectively to advance the university’s mission,” Sharp said. “He has earned the trust of faculty, staff, students and former students and added to his long-standing reputation as a thoughtful, common-sense and collaborative leader.”

Prior to becoming interim president, Welsh was dean of the Bush School of Government and Public Service since 2016. His service as dean followed a four-decade career in the U.S. Air Force, where he was a fighter pilot, a four-star general and Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Additionally, Welsh commanded the U.S. Air Forces in Europe and NATO’s Air Command at Ramstein Air Base in Germany. And he served as associate director of military affairs at the Central Intelligence Agency as well as commandant of the United States Air Force Academy.

After the Board’s action Friday, Welsh released the following statement:

“Serving as interim president for the last several months has been an incredible privilege, and I’m truly honored to be named as the sole finalist for President of Texas A&M University. I love this university and everything it represents, and I’m grateful to the Board of Regents and Chancellor Sharp for their confidence in me. While I’m excited by the possibility of leading this remarkable institution in a more permanent capacity, I value the comprehensive decision-making process that will occur over the next few weeks.”

Congratulations President Welsh!

*Now we just need to get President Welsh to make a visit to the Italy A&M Club!*

*Whoop!*





# HOW TO MANAGE STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAY

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension experts offer tips on how to keep your holidays a little merrier.*



*W*hile the holidays are a time of joy, they can also be a time of both physical and mental stress. Texas A&M AgriLife experts say managing holiday stress requires setting priorities and avoiding or reducing as many stressors as possible.

“Many people begin to feel unhappy or lonely around the holidays,” said Miquela Smith, Texas A&M AgriLife

Extension Service health specialist for the agency’s Disaster Assessment and Recovery unit. “The reasons can range from the weather to personal loss, feeling disconnected, financial strain and a variety of other reasons.” In some instances, these winter blues can be more serious. They affect how a person feels, thinks and handles daily activities.

“Usually, holiday blues are temporary feelings of loss, anxiety, tension, frustration or loneliness,” said Smith, who is also a mental health first aid instructor. “But ongoing and more significant changes in mood or behavior could mean the person is suffering from seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, which is a type of depression.” She said stress, unrealistic expectations or even sentimental memories can be a catalyst for holiday blues. Other factors can be less sunlight, changes in diet or daily routine, financial strain or the inability to be with friends or family.

To read and find more ways to handle holiday stress click [this link](#).

## THE CHRISTMAS TREE IS A TRADITION OLDER THAN CHRISTMAS

*Evergreens have long served as symbols of life during the bleakness of winter. But Queen Victoria spurred the tradition that has become a global phenomenon.*

*W*hy, every Christmas, do so many people endure the mess of dried pine needles, the risk of a fire hazard and impossibly tangled strings of lights?

Strapping a fir tree to the hood of my car and worrying about the strength of the twine, I sometimes wonder if I should just buy an artificial tree and do away with all the hassle. Then my inner historian scolds me – I have to remind myself that I’m taking part in one of the world’s oldest religious traditions. To give up the tree would be to give up a ritual that predates Christmas itself.

The modern Christmas tree is a universal symbol that carries meanings both religious and secular. Adorned with lights, they promote hope and offer brightness in literally the darkest time of year for half of the world.

To read more about the history of the Christmas tree click [here](#).



# 'Twas the Night Before Christmas

*A Texas A&M associate history professor explains how the classic poem helped reframe the holiday as a family-friendly event*

Christmastime in the early-1900s was mostly observed by drinking copious amounts of alcohol and going door-to-door to raucously solicit contributions of food, money, or more drink (*this sounds a lot like tailgating before a big football game but who am I to judge.*)

Refusal often resulted in vandalism or other acts of retribution. Brian Rouleau, an associate professor of history in the Texas A&M University College of Liberal Arts, said New York writer Clement Clarke Moore hoped to end some of the disorder by evoking a more peaceful celebration when he penned "A Visit from St. Nicholas" nearly 200 years ago. "That story served a few purposes that are lost to us today. Christmas was at one time not a family-friendly holiday," Rouleau said. "It was most often celebrated in the streets by rowdy groups of teenagers and servants. It was considered a day where the ordinarily humble and subservient lower classes of society could engage in behavior we call 'wassailing.'"

In perhaps the most famous Christmas poem, better known as "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," Moore sets a quiet, domestic scene in which "not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."

Instead of rowdy wassailers banging at the door, Moore wrote of the jolly, non-threatening St. Nicholas coming down the chimney "dressed all in fur" to quietly leave presents for good girls and boys.

First published in 1823, Rouleau said the poem succeeded in popularizing the image of Santa Claus and turning Christmas into the family-centered holiday we know today.

"All of this was meant to transform Christmas into a holiday geared toward children and families, rather than the obnoxious and drunken mobs that Moore thought had corrupted the celebration," Rouleau said. Children's literature has often been designed to pass a society's core values from one generation to the next, he said, with the messaging usually intended to steer children along paths considered proper and acceptable. In the United States, many of the first children's books were religious in nature, the product of Puritan parents seeking to prevent their offspring from sinning.

But slowly, as children's place in society changed and views on parenting evolved, children's literature became kinder and gentler, and themes became less explicitly spiritual. Fairy tales, talking animals, and other fantastical settings took the place of the fire and brimstone from years past. Young people were less often threatened with punishment for their transgressions. Instead, it became more common to celebrate a child's innocence, wonder and capacity for creativity. Though Moore's story successfully changed the image of Christmas, Rouleau stresses the importance in understanding the resilience of children in resisting their own indoctrination.

"Literature might attempt to teach young people certain values, but this messaging isn't always absorbed," he said. "The most successful children's literature often consists of stories that offer youths the opportunity to think through some problem or dilemma on their own."

To read original article by Amber Francis '22, Texas A&M University College of Liberal Arts [click here](#).

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# ITALIAN GIFT GUIDE



December is one of the most beautiful times to be in Italy. The narrow streets of the historic center light up with strings of Christmas lights while enormous Christmas trees are erected in the most iconic piazzas, such as in front of the Colosseum and St. Peter's Basilica. The holiday atmosphere is rounded out by shop windows dressed with some of the best things Italy is known for: fashionable clothes and accessories.



1. Murano Glassware
2. Italian Leather
3. Formaggio Cheese Tool
4. Italian Pastas
5. Italian Spices
6. Limoncello
7. Moka Coffee Pot
8. Italian Ceramics
9. Bottle of Extra Virgin Olive Oil

There's no shortage of gift ideas for family, friends or even as souvenir items from Italy. Italy has everything from food and cooking essentials to designer clothing and cultural trinkets. Moreover, you will have no trouble finding shops that provide these items. Hopefully this will assist in selections, not break the bank or bust open your luggage from over packing. With that said, let's get started.

### **Fancy Things To Bring Back from Italy**

#### **Murano Glassware**

Be careful when handling fragile items such as Murano Glassware. The impressively-looking glassware might make you jump off your feet to purchase a piece, but you must handle it delicately. Murano glassware is native to the islands in Venice, hence why this type of glassware is often referred to as Venetian glassware.

You can find Murano Glassware items anywhere around Venice. In addition, the types of items made from Murano Glassware are truly astonishing. You can purchase cups, glasses, gems, ashtrays, key chains, figurines, and anything your heart desires. Murano glassware is the perfect home decor purchase to revitalize your living space. However, you should know that glassware items don't come cheap. It also makes a great gift from Italy for that special friend.

### **Luxury Things To Bring Back from Italy**

#### **Italian Leather**

There's a reason why Italian leather is so expensive. Prominent brands such as Gucci and Prada put exorbitant prices on their leather products. But what if we told you that you could find leather handbags of equal quality without the brand name for a much, much lower price?

For that, take a trip to Florence. The city of Florence is well-known for its handcrafted leather products. Thousands of small shops around the town offer high-quality leather products (all handmade). That means you can own an Italian leather handbag, gloves, luggage, etc. that doesn't cost thousands of dollars! And these leather items are of the highest quality, so you're not making a mistake. So take a trip down to San Lorenzo Market in central Florence to get acquainted with Italian leather. ***Watch out for pick pockets in the market. Nothing to be overly worried about but pay attention.***

### **Decadent Things To Bring Back from Italy**

#### **Formaggio Cheese Tools**

If you want to cut cheese right, consider getting a cutting tool set for Formaggio cheese. Formaggio cheese tool sets have everything you need to serve cheese the Italian way.

Cheese tool sets can be found anywhere in Italy, from gift shops to supermarkets. Most cheese tool sets have four types of knives. These will most likely be a small spade knife, a narrow plane knife, a flat chisel, and a serving fork.

### **Delicious Things To Bring Back from Italy**

#### **Italian Pasta**

What good is a trip to Italy if you don't bring back Italian pasta with you? Sure, there might be plenty of Italian pasta brands at home, but nothing beats the taste of homemade Italian pasta. That's why you should avoid pasta at supermarkets and instead find niche family-owned stores that make pasta the Italian way.

Fortunately, you won't have trouble finding these shops, as they're spread all over Italy. Additionally, some family-owned pasta stores sell to local supermarkets, so you might also find some luck on that front. But regardless, it would be a shame not to bring back homemade Italian pasta with you.







## Affordable Things To Bring Back from Italy

### Spices and Seasonings

If you're looking for a foodie souvenir that takes no luggage space, spices and seasonings are the way to go. I always recommend spices and seasonings as it is the perfect foodie item that transforms any dish. Moreover, spices and seasonings are exactly what you need to preserve the taste of Italy. If you're a fan of Italian cuisine, there aren't many more affordable gifts from Italy to bring back.

### Limoncello

You might think a bottle of red or white wine is the perfect drink to bring from your trip to Italy. However, I'd suggest you rethink that decision, especially if you're low on luggage space. Instead of a bottle of red or white, consider Limoncello. Limoncello is a famous Italian liqueur. And there are some very expensive Limoncello brands in Italy. However, you're not after big brand names – you're after small, family-owned beachfront stores in small towns. These make the best Limoncello liqueur, despite what some people might say. With that said, even the most affordable Limoncello is expensive, so expect to pay a hefty price if you want to bring back a bottle of Limoncello as an Italian gift.

### Moka Coffee Pot

Italians love making coffee. While they don't share the same enthusiasm for coffee as the French, they make a mean coffee. As a result, Italian bars are always packed in the morning. People love their coffee, and they will pay for it. When traveling across Italy, put Italian coffee on your bucket list. The more seasoned veterans have a trick up their sleeves – they make their coffee at home! The best way to make Italian coffee is a Moka coffee pot. You don't need an espresso machine to make good coffee, you need a Moka pot. Moka pots aren't expensive at all, especially compared to espresso machines. You can find Moka coffee pots all across Italy, and they are quite reasonable in price. We don't drink coffee but it's what we have in our home in Tuscany for our friends and guests. So what better way to sample Italian coffee culture than with a Moka pot?

### Italian Ceramics

If you're considering bringing home a piece of decor as an Italian souvenir, consider Italian ceramic goods. Italians make all kinds of ceramic goods, from vases to pasta dishes and even ashtrays. And if you remember what I said about Florence, that is also where you find the best Italian ceramics. More specifically, look for ceramic goods if you're traveling the Amalfi Coast, or Cinque Terre. There, you will find plenty of small shops that sell ceramic goods. Italian ceramics are good-looking and will do wonders for your home decor. But Italian ceramics are also quite functional. For example, a set of four pasta dishes will last for years, even if you use them daily. Wine stops, salad tongs napkin holders...the items and choices are endless.

### Olive oil

A wonderful gift that won't break the bank, that will linger for months after you present the gift, would be an exceptional bottle of Italian olive oil. Olive oil can be found in almost every region in Italy and each comes with their distinct flavor and textures based on the tree varietal and the soil it grows in. It's a wonderful gift for family, friends or coworkers alike.

Shopping in Italy is one of the best experiences. The land of designer names, breathtaking architecture, and unprecedented history presents the best opportunity to shop for something unique.

But to do that, you must leave plenty of room in your luggage.

Happy shopping!

# Christmas Movie list

◆ **Elf**  
2003

◆ **Home Alone**  
1990

◆ **A Chrsitmas Carol**  
1984

◆ **The Polar Express**  
2004

◆ **It's a Wonderful Life**  
1946

◆ **Miracle on 34th Street**  
1947

◆ **A Christmas Story**  
1983

◆ **The Grinch**  
2018

◆ **The Muppet Christmas Carol**  
1992

◆ **White Christmas**  
1954

◆ **Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer**  
1964

◆ **National Lampoom's Chrsitmas Vacation**  
1989

◆ **A Charlie Brown Christmas**  
1965

◆ **Scrooged**  
1988

◆ **The Holiday**  
2006

◆ **Die Hard \*\*\***  
1988

*Happy Holidays!*

\*\*\* Yes, it's a holiday movie \*\*\*



# THE LEGEND BEHIND PANETTONE



There are many legends behind panettone bread. Here is the most popular one:

It all started in Milan during the 15th century. Ludovico Sforza was the Duke of Milan, and like most other dukes during this time period, he threw a huge party for Christmas Eve.

Legend says that one of his cooks, Toni, ended up burning the dessert, and had to quickly make something up.

So he took the leftover dough from the original dessert and the ingredients that he had: eggs, butter, candied fruits, and raisins.

This dessert ended up a success and was known as “Pan de Toni” which means “Bread of Toni.” This eventually turned into Panettone.



Don't ever let a  
recipe tell you how  
many chocolate  
chips to use.  
You measure that  
with your heart!





THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE

# Christmas

## EDITION

1. YOU BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS
2. YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN SANTA CLAUS
3. YOU ARE SANTA CLAUS
4. YOU LOOK LIKE SANTA CLAUS

*Happy Holiday!*




# LA BEFANA THE ITALIAN CHRISTMAS WHICH





# THE LEGEND OF LA BEFANA – THE WITCH OF CHRISTMAS

he figure of *Babbo Natale* (Father Christmas) with a red hat and suit, white beard, bag full of presents and sleigh with reindeers, is famous all over the world.

In Italy, children eagerly wait for a visit from another figure known in their culture as *La Befana*. An old shabby lady, but good-hearted and hardworking, loved so much by the children is a woman also known as “*The Italian Christmas Witch*.”

## ***La Befana***

*La Befana* is a very friendly and amiable Italian witch who rides around on a broomstick. She often smiles and carries a sack full of candies and gifts. As everyone knows, in Italian folklore, *La Befana* brings presents to the good children on the morning of Epiphany, January 6.

The name *La Befana* originates from the Greek word *Epifania*, the Italian name for the religious festival of the *Epiphany*.

## ***The Two Legends***

The first legend is about three wise men who stopped at *La Befana*’s house to ask for the road to Bethlehem. They asked her to accompany them but she denied. She stayed at home to finish the cleaning and promised that she would catch up with them. By the time she finished her chores, they had gone too far away. She began running after them with the presents for baby Jesus, still carrying the broom in her hand. Somehow, she began to fly on her broomstick but couldn’t find the wise men. Since then, the story about the Epiphany feast started.

The second legend dates back during the reign of King Herod. He ordered the execution of each male child born in the year of Christ’s birth.

One lady couldn’t bear the loss of her child and tried to convince herself that her boy was not killed but lost instead. She wrapped up all the child’s belongings and started searching from house to house. Finally, she came upon a child. Convinced that she found her lost son, she placed all her son’s belongings next to the crib where the baby lay.


The child’s father looked at this stranger bearing presents to his child and wondered about her past.

This tale may date back to the Roman pagan festival of [Saturnalia](#). It lasts a week or two before the winter starts. At the end of this festival, Romans usually go to the Temple of Juno, to have their fortunes read by an old crone.

Every year on the 6th of January, Italians are celebrating [Epiphany](#), 12 days after Christmas. People celebrate it in many countries. In the USA is famous as “Three Kings’ Day”, in Mexico as “Dia de Los Reyes”. It’s traditionally the time when people give honor to the “Three Wise Men” who visited Jesus at his place of birth.

Epiphany is also a public holiday in Italy. People neither go to work, nor children to school. For banks, post offices, government, and other businesses, it is also a “non-working day.”

Epiphany is such a magical celebration, full of symbolic values, even animals can speak and say what they think to humans, it’s in believing.

 Each country has its way of celebrating this holiday. In Italy, the celebrations differ from one region to another. In some regions, people burn a bonfire with a figure of *La Befana* on top, in Southern Italy, they dress up in black with big bushy beards, parading on the streets with lanterns, knocking from one door to another and asking for food.

In the Le Marche region, the celebration lasts 4 days from January 2-6. This is a big celebration where children can meet *La Befana* in “La Casa della Befana.” In Venice, on the 6th of January, men dressed as “La Befana” have boat racing on the Grand Canal. In the region of Tuscany, since early in the morning horns and drums fill the streets and people march down the streets. The biggest bonfire ceremony takes place in Tarcento. On the evening of 6th January, a big bonfire is lit near the ruins of the ruined medieval castle. In Milan, the parade goes from the Duomo to the Church of Sant’Eustorgio.

This holiday marks the end of Christmas and New Year’s feasts which means that children have to go back to school, adults go back to work and Christmas spirit winds down.

### Chant Used By Italian Children

Many people believe in the existence of *La Befana* while the others believe it is an interesting story created for children.

**This is a children’s song chanted in her honor:**

*La Befana* comes at night  
In tattered shoes  
Dressed in the Roman style  
Long live *La Befana*!

She brings cinders and coals  
To the naughty children  
To the good children  
She brings sweets and lots of  
gifts.



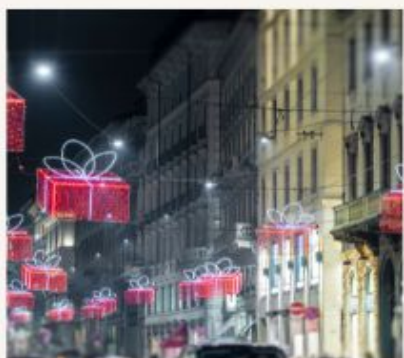
One of the many *La Befana* decorations you will find through out Italy during the holidays.





Milan, Italy is a jewel of a city best known as a hub for fashion and culture. But in December, Milan comes alive with holiday festivals, street fairs, and religious observances starting early in the month. For travelers prepared for cold weather (and perhaps even snow), Milan is a beautiful escape to enjoy the sights and sounds of the season.





Holidays in Italy

BUONE VACANZE





Merry  
Christmas

Every Christmas moment is  
a gift in itself.





# LA FESTA DI SAN SILVESTRO

NEW YEAR'S EVE  
IN ITALY



# LA FESTA DI SAN SILVESTRO

New Year's Eve, or "La Festa di San Silvestro" as it is known in Italy, is a time of joyous revelry and rich traditions. The celebration is deeply rooted in Italian culture, blending age-old customs with modern festivities that paint the night with a vibrant palette of colors and emotions.

One of the most iconic traditions in Italy is the feasting that takes place on New Year's Eve. Families and friends come together for a lavish dinner, often featuring regional specialties and delicacies. The meal is not just a culinary experience but a communal celebration, symbolizing the importance of shared moments and the coming together of loved ones.

As the clock approaches midnight, the streets come alive with lively gatherings and public celebrations. Piazzas in major cities like Rome, Florence, and Naples transform into hubs of excitement, adorned with dazzling lights and decorations. Fireworks, a spectacle deeply ingrained in Italian celebrations, light up the night sky, symbolizing the farewell to the old year and the welcoming of the new.

A fascinating tradition on New Year's Eve in Italy is the custom of throwing old objects out of windows. This symbolic act represents the desire to let go of the past and make a fresh start in the coming year. From clothes to furniture, the streets below become a whimsical display of discarded items, echoing the collective sentiment of leaving behind what no longer serves.

In smaller towns and villages, unique regional customs take center stage. For instance, in Venice, it is common for locals to gather in St. Mark's Square for a night of music, dancing, and a spectacular fireworks show over the iconic lagoon. In southern regions, grapes play a significant role in the celebrations. As the clock strikes midnight, Italians consume twelve grapes, each symbolizing good luck for the twelve months ahead.

An integral part of New Year's Eve in Italy is the tradition of wearing red underwear. It is believed that donning red undergarments on this auspicious night brings good fortune and prosperity in the coming year. This quirky custom adds a touch of whimsy to the festivities and showcases the Italians' penchant for blending the sacred with the lighthearted.

As the night progresses, many Italians attend Mass to welcome the New Year with prayers and reflections. The juxtaposition of religious observances and lively secular celebrations reflects the diverse cultural tapestry that defines Italy.

In essence, New Year's Eve in Italy is a harmonious blend of tradition, gastronomy, and merriment. It encapsulates the Italians' appreciation for the past, their joyous embrace of the present, and their optimistic anticipation of the future. It is a celebration that transcends time, weaving together the threads of history and modernity into a festive tapestry that epitomizes the spirit of "La Festa di San Silvestro."

Now matter how you celebrate we wish you Felice Anno Nuovo or Happy New Year!



## *How to cook a Christsmas Turkey in Italy*

- Step 1. Buy a turkey**
- Step 2. Have a glass of wine**
- Step 3. Stuff turkey**
- Step 4. Have a glass of wine**
- Step 5. Put turkey in oven**
- Step 6. Relax and have a glass of wine**
- Step 7. Turk the bastey**
- Step 8. Wine of glass another get**
- Step 9. Hunt for meat thermometer**
- Step 10. Glass yourself another pour of wine**
- Step 11. Bake the wine for 4 hours**
- Step 12. Take the oven out of the turkey**
- Step 13. Tet the sable**
- Step 14. Grab another wottle of bine**
- Step 15. Turk the carvey!**

*Follow me for more recipes*



A vintage New Year's Eve illustration. In the center, a large, ornate clock face is decorated with a garland of blue flowers. The clock hands are positioned at 12:00. Two children are depicted: a girl on the left in a white dress with a red bow, holding a bouquet of red flowers, and a boy on the right in a blue suit, holding a large, ornate silver horn. The horn is emitting a bright light. The children are standing on a wooden barrel or tub filled with red roses. The background is a soft, light blue. The overall style is characteristic of early 20th-century postcards.

I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT  
I'M WEARING TO THE LIVING  
ROOM NEW YEARS EVE.

I MAY NOT EVEN GO.

*A Happy  
New Year*



# EMILIA-ROMAGNA MORE THAN JUST THE BREAD BASKET OF ITALY





# EMILIA-ROMAGNA

*J*ust above the Tuscany region is the bread basket of Italy. The region of Emilia-Romagna is a captivating blend of history, art, and culinary excellence. From vibrant cities steeped in medieval charm to the serene beauty of the countryside, this region beckons travelers with a rich tapestry of experiences. This month, we embark on a journey through Emilia-Romagna, exploring the wonderful things to see and do in both its cities and countryside.

Bologna, the *Learned City* is the regional capital, it is a city that wears its history with elegance. Its UNESCO-listed historic center is a labyrinth of narrow streets and grand squares, adorned with medieval towers and porticoes. The Two Towers, Asinelli and Garisenda, stand as sentinels, offering panoramic views. The Piazza Maggiore, surrounded by architectural marvels like the Basilica di San Petronio and Palazzo Comunale, is a vibrant hub of activity. Explore the Quadrilatero, Bologna's ancient market district, where the aromas of fresh produce, cured meats, and handmade pasta fill the air. The **University of Bologna** (Italian: *Alma Mater Studiorum – Università di Bologna*, abbreviated **Unibo**) is a public research university in Bologna, Italy. Founded in 1088 by an organised guild of students (*studiorum*), it is the oldest university in continuous operation in the world, and the first degree-awarding institution of higher learning.

Ferrara, is a city frozen in the Renaissance era, enchants visitors with its perfectly preserved architecture. The Este Castle, a fortress surrounded by a moat, is a testament to the city's historical significance. The Cathedral of Ferrara, the Palazzo dei Diamanti, and the atmospheric medieval streets transport you to a bygone era. Biking along the ancient city walls provides a unique perspective, revealing a city where history seamlessly intertwines with the present.

Ravenna, renowned for its Byzantine mosaics, is a city where art and history converge. The Basilica di San Vitale, the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, and the Baptistry of Neon showcase dazzling mosaics that narrate tales of opulence and spirituality. Ravenna's tranquil streets and lively piazzas offer the perfect setting to immerse oneself in the city's artistic ambiance. A visit to Dante's Tomb adds a literary touch to this cultural journey.

Emilia-Romagna's countryside reveals a gastronomic paradise where traditional craftsmanship thrives. Explore the rolling hills adorned with vineyards and visit a Parmigiano-Reggiano dairy to witness the art of cheese-making. In Modena, delve into the world of balsamic vinegar, where aging is an art form. The sweet and tangy flavors of these culinary treasures provide a sensory journey through the heart of Emilia-Romagna's rural landscapes.



Inside The Basilica of Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy



The Adriatic coast of Emilia-Romagna invites travelers to unwind on its sandy beaches. Rimini and Cesenatico, with their lively beach scenes, historic harbors, and vibrant waterfronts, offer a perfect blend of relaxation and recreation. Stroll along the charming canals of Cesenatico, designed by Leonardo da Vinci, and indulge in fresh seafood at local markets for a taste of the sea.

Venture into the picturesque hills of Romagna, where vineyards, olive orchards, and medieval villages paint a serene landscape. The Strada dei Vini e dei Saporì (Wine and Flavors Road) winds through charming towns like Brisighella and Dozza. Here, visitors can savor local wines, explore historic castles, and witness the timeless beauty of the region.

Emilia-Romagna is a haven for food enthusiasts. Indulge in the region's culinary delights, from the richness of Bolognese ragù and handmade tortellini to the exquisite taste of Parmigiano-Reggiano and Prosciutto di Parma. Savor the velvety texture of traditional balsamic vinegar and complement your culinary journey with a glass of Sangiovese wine.

The Emilia-Romagna region, has also earned a distinguished reputation as a global automotive powerhouse. Renowned for its rich cultural heritage, picturesque landscapes, and culinary excellence, this region is also a thriving hub for the automotive industry. The convergence of tradition and innovation has shaped Emilia-Romagna into a dynamic center for automobile manufacturing, with a profound impact on the regional economy and global automotive landscape.

The roots of Emilia-Romagna's automotive prominence can be traced back to the early 20th century when several visionary entrepreneurs laid the foundation for what would become a robust industry. The region's strategic location, skilled workforce, and a tradition of craftsmanship provided a fertile ground for the development of automobile manufacturing. Emilia-Romagna is home to some of the most iconic names in the automotive industry. Companies such as Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, and Ducati have become synonymous with precision engineering, luxury, and high-performance vehicles. These brands not only contribute significantly to the regional economy but also elevate Italy's global standing in the automotive world. The automobile industry in Emilia-Romagna has been at the forefront of innovation and technology. Companies in the region have embraced advancements in electric and hybrid vehicles, sustainable manufacturing practices, and cutting-edge design. This commitment to technological progress ensures that Emilia-Romagna remains a trailblazer in the ever-evolving automotive landscape.

Emilia-Romagna, with its harmonious blend of cultural heritage, gastronomic excellence, natural beauty and modern innovation, is an invitation to explore the soul of Italy. Whether wandering through the historic streets of Bologna, marveling at the Byzantine mosaics of Ravenna, or savoring the flavors of the countryside, this region unfolds as a journey through time and taste. Emilia-Romagna, with its cities and countryside, beckons travelers to immerse themselves in its vibrant tapestry of experiences, creating memories that linger long after the journey ends.



*Ferrari, Lamborghini, Maserati, and Ducati are all manufactured in the Emilia-Romagna region. Don't blink or you'll miss it!*



# THE TASTY HISTORY OF BALSAMIC VINEGAR



Balsamic vinegar barrels aging in an attic in Modena, Italy 2019

The area of production of balsamic vinegar falls within the provinces of Modena and Reggio Emilia, in Emilia-Romagna, where there are ideal climatic conditions and grapes have the right concentration of sugars and acidity.


The practice of cooking grape goes back to the ancient Romans: the so-called *sapum* was used both as a medicine and in the kitchen, as a sweetener and for seasoning.

Beginning in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the production of this very particular vinegar was linked to the Modena and Reggio Emilia areas. In 1046, Henry III, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, passing through the Po Valley, was offered a "so very perfect vinegar" by Bonifacio, Marquis of Tuscany and father of Matilde di Canossa, an episode documented by the abbot and historian Donizone, biographer of the powerful countess Matilde, ruler in northern Italy.

Towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the art of producing vinegar was practiced extensively at the Estense court in Modena. It's not before 1747 that the adjective 'balsamic' appears for the first time, in the cellar records of the dukes of Este, with two differentiations: balsamic medium and fine balsamic, which correspond to the current Balsamic Vinegar of Modena/Reggio-Emilia and Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena/Reggio-Emilia PDO.

A few decades later, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, balsamic vinegar begins to be appreciated internationally; in fact, it was featured at the most important exhibitions of the time, from Florence to Brussels. Also in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first 'dynasties' of balsamic producers were established, some of which are still in business today, and members of the Consortium of Protection. It was at this stage that the production processes were codified. A more recent and important date in the history of this unique product is 2009, when the European Commission grants IGP status (Protected Geographical Indication), guarantee of origin for foods produced in specific areas, to balsamic vinegar, officially recognizing that the authentic balsamic can only be produced in the Modena and Reggio Emilia provinces; and, even more important, PDO status (Protected Designation of Origin) to traditional balsamic.

Today, balsamic vinegar is known to cooks around the world and available to shoppers everywhere. It can sell for as much as \$200 an ounce, or as cheaply as three dollars for a 16 ounce bottle. But how can one vinegar offer such a dramatic price range? How can one condiment be fit for an emperor *and* for a salad dressing? The answer, of course, is that there isn't just one balsamic vinegar. But understanding the differences takes a bit of work.



*T*raditional balsamic vinegar begins with grape must —whole pressed grapes complete with juice, skin, seeds and stems. The must from sweet, white locally grown and late-harvested grapes —usually Lambrusco or Trebbiano varieties— is cooked over a direct flame until concentrated by roughly half, then left to ferment naturally for up to three weeks, and then matured and further concentrated for a minimum of 12 years in a "batteria," or five or more successively smaller aging barrels. These barrels are made of different types of wood such as oak, chestnut, cherry, juniper, and mulberry, so that the vinegar can take on the complex flavors of the casks.

Once a year the vinegar is bottled from the smallest cask in the sequence. Each cask is then topped up with vinegar from the next cask up, with the largest cask getting filled with the new yield. None of the casks are ever completely drained. This aging process is similar to the solera process used for fine sherries, ports, sweet wines, and Spanish brandies. The vinegar gets thicker and more concentrated as it ages because of evaporation that occurs through the walls of the barrels—the vinegar in the smallest barrel will be much thicker and more syrupy than the liquid in the successively larger barrels.

Because of the multi-barrel process, it takes complex math to gauge the average age of the bottled product, so instead a tasting commission of five expert judges convenes to taste the vinegars and determine an appropriate grade, and no age is printed on the label. In Reggio Emilia, traditional balsamics are graded *affinato* (fine), with a red cap, which roughly corresponds to a 12-year vintage; *vecchio* (old), with a silver cap, which roughly corresponds to a 15-20 year vintage; or *extra vecchio* (extra old), with a gold cap, which roughly corresponds to a 20-25 year vintage. In Modena there's just *affinato*, with a white cap, or *extra vecchio*, with a gold cap.

Bring the taste of tradition to the table with the **Traditional Balsamic Vinegar PDO** and or the **Balsamic Vinegar of Modena IGP**.

You certainly won't regret it!





# Emilia = ROMAGNA

Emilia-Romagna, located in northern Italy, is a region renowned for its rich cultural heritage, culinary excellence, and diverse landscapes. Bologna, the regional capital, stands as a historical and academic hub, boasting well-preserved medieval architecture and one of the world's oldest universities. Emilia-Romagna is a gastronomic paradise, giving birth to iconic Italian delicacies such as Parmigiano-Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma, and traditional balsamic vinegar. The fertile plains yield a bounty of fresh ingredients, contributing to the region's renowned pasta dishes like tagliatelle and tortellini. Beyond the culinary delights, visitors can explore the picturesque towns of Ravenna, known for its Byzantine mosaics, and Ferrara, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The region seamlessly blends tradition with innovation, making it a captivating destination for those seeking a taste of authentic Italian culture.

# NONNA MARIA'S HOMEMADE LASAGNA





# NONNA MARIA'S HOMEMADE LASAGNA

The tradition of lasagna originated in Emilia Romagna, and from there it has become one of the symbols of Italian cuisine throughout the world. Abroad, lasagne alla bolognese, made with béchamel and meat sauce, is well known. The Neapolitan version of this recipe includes among its ingredients tomato sauce, mozzarella, meatballs and Roman ricotta cheese. In Liguria, pesto is used as a sauce, while in Venice the sauce is replaced with red radicchio. The lasagna you eat depends on where you are.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
- 2 cans (28 ounces each ) crushed tomatoes in puree
- 6 cups water
- 1 cup chopped fresh basil
- 2-1/4 teaspoons sugar, divided
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound bulk Italian sausage
- 4 Italian sausage links
- 1 carton (16 ounces) whole milk ricotta cheese
- 8 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1/4 teaspoon dried basil
- 12 sheets no-cook lasagna noodles
- 21 slices provolone cheese
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

## DIRECTIONS:

1. In a Dutch oven, cook onion in olive oil over medium heat until tender, 4-5 minutes. Add garlic; cook 1 minute. Stir in tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, 3-4 minutes. Add crushed tomatoes, water, fresh basil, 2 teaspoons sugar and salt. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Simmer 1 hour, stirring occasionally.
2. Meanwhile, cook bulk sausage in a skillet over medium heat until no longer pink, 8-10 minutes, breaking into crumbles; drain. Add to sauce; simmer until mixture is thickened, about 1 hour longer.
3. While sauce simmers, preheat oven to 350°. Place sausage links on a rimmed baking sheet; roast until cooked through, 35-40 minutes. Remove and let cool slightly; slice into 1/4-in.-thick pieces.
4. In a small bowl, mix ricotta cheese, 1 cup mozzarella cheese, egg, dried basil and remaining 1/4 teaspoon sugar.
5. In a greased 13x9-in. baking dish, spread 2 cups sauce. Arrange 4 noodles over sauce; spread with a third of the ricotta mixture. Add 7 provolone slices, a third of the sliced sausage and 1-1/2 cups mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers 2 more times, using only 1 cup sauce per layer. Spread with 2 cups sauce (reserve remaining sauce for serving on the side), remaining 2-1/2 cups mozzarella cheese and the Parmesan cheese (dish will be full).
6. Place dish on a rimmed baking sheet and bake, uncovered, until bubbly and deep golden brown, 60-65 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes before serving. Serve with remaining meat sauce.

**Buon Appetito!**

# BEST *Christmas* MARKETS *In Italy*

Italy is famed for beautiful Christmas markets that bring magic to the festive holiday season.

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The tradition of Christmas markets is centuries-old, dating back to the Middle Ages. A document written in Dresden in 1434 speaks of the first winter fairs for small artisans. Since then the markets have spread throughout northern Europe and can be found in every corner of the world, including Italy.

For those considering a festive holiday in Italy this year or any year, Italian Christmas markets are worth the trip. The 'Mercatini di Natale' in bigger cities are particularly famous but there are equally spectacular ones in small villages around the country.

There is nothing better to immerse yourself in the festive spirit than to visit a Christmas market and Italy has many beautiful ones worth experiencing.

The best Christmas markets in Italy are traditionally in the region of Alto Adige and Trentino, in the North East of the country, an area with strong influences from Austria and Germany, the cradle of European Christmas markets.

Everyone becomes a part of the merrymaking during the Christmas season in Italy, from Nonnas to little children. You'll be in awe of the festive spirit you'll feel in the vibrant piazzas, beautiful neighborhood cathedrals, brightly decorated city streets, and the osterias and trattorias that offer the most delicious holiday treats — need we say more?



# Trento

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01

Christmas markets in Italy are enchanting celebrations that bring festive cheer to various locations across the country. One of the most renowned markets is in Trento, located in the Trentino region. The Trento Christmas Market transforms the city's historic center into a winter wonderland, featuring wooden stalls adorned with twinkling lights and offering a plethora of local crafts, delicacies, and seasonal decorations.



# Bologna

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02

Moving south to Bologna, the Piazza Minghetti hosts a charming Christmas market. Visitors can immerse themselves in the holiday spirit while exploring stalls filled with handmade gifts, traditional sweets like panettone, and regional specialties. The market's lively atmosphere is enhanced by street performers and festive music.



# Venice

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03

Venice, with its unique charm, hosts a distinctive Christmas market in the Cannaregio district. Stalls line the waterfront, offering a selection of Venetian masks, Murano glass, and regional wines. The market's setting, with the city's historic architecture reflected in the canals, creates a magical atmosphere that captures the essence of Christmas in Venice.



# Florence

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04

In Florence, the Piazza Santa Croce is home to a spectacular Christmas market. Against the backdrop of the iconic Basilica di Santa Croce, visitors can browse through stalls selling high-quality artisanal products, including handcrafted ornaments, leather goods, and Tuscan wines. The market provides a unique opportunity to experience the city's rich cultural heritage intertwined with Christmas traditions.



# Bolzano

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05

The northern city of Bolzano, nestled in the Dolomite Mountains, hosts one of Italy's most picturesque Christmas markets. Surrounded by snow-capped peaks, the Bolzano market showcases a blend of Austrian and Italian influences. Visitors can savor delicious Alpine treats, shop for intricate wood carvings, and enjoy the festive ambiance in the shadow of the medieval cathedral.



# Naples

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06

Further south, in Naples, the Spaccanapoli Christmas Market takes place along the narrow streets of the historic city center. Known for its vibrant and bustling atmosphere, this market offers a wide array of Neapolitan nativity scenes, locally crafted decorations, and delectable street food. The traditional Presepe Napoletano, or Neapolitan nativity scene, is a highlight, displaying intricate figurines and scenes from daily life.





# BUON HANUKKAH!

Italians celebrate Hanukkah in various locations, with festivities often centered around Jewish communities in cities like Rome, Milan, Venice, and Florence. Synagogues and community centers become focal points for Hanukkah observances, where families gather to light the menorah, exchange gifts, and share traditional meals. Public menorah lightings, especially in prominent city squares, add a festive touch, fostering a sense of community and promoting cultural awareness. The historic Jewish ghetto areas in cities like Rome carry a special significance during Hanukkah, with their narrow streets adorned with lights and decorations. Additionally, Italian homes come alive with the warmth of the holiday spirit, as families invite friends and neighbors to join in the celebration, emphasizing the inclusive nature of Hanukkah in Italy.

Hanukkah 2023 runs from sundown on Thursday, Dec. 7 to sundown on Friday, Dec. 15.



Ask An Italy Ag - 12 Questions

# SANTA

Claus

WE ARE REALLY THRILLED TO SHARE OUR INTERVIEW WITH BABBO NATALE (ASL SO KNOWN AS SANTA CLAUS) WITH YOU!! YES, WE ACTUALLY HAVE MANAGED AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BIG MAN HIMSELF!

DURING THE BUILD UP TO CHRISTMAS, WE ALWAYS HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT SANTA & HOW HIS OPERATION WORKS. AFTER SOME GOOGLING, WE MANAGED TO GET A CONTACT EMAIL FOR SANTA & SENT HIM OUR QUESTIONS. WE ARE THRILLED THAT HE REPLIED WITH HIS ANSWERS.







# WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, HERE'S OUR INTERVIEW WITH

# Babbo Natale

**A.K.A. SANTA CLAUS**

**1. Santa, where is the North Pole? Is there ice there? Do animals live there?**

A. The North Pole is at the very top of the world. It is covered in ice & snow! Some of the animals that live there are reindeer, polar bear, arctic fox, walrus, & moose. They are very hearty animals & they are used to the cold weather.

**2. How do you go down the chimney & not get burned?**

A. Ho-ho-ho that's where Christmas magic comes in! Nothing in my operation would work without Christmas magic. I stand at the top of the chimney & sprinkle some Christmas magic dust then poof! I am inside the house, safe & sound!

**3. How do you find everyone's house?**

A. The reindeers have an amazing sense of direction. Rudolph leads the team with his red nose so we can see where we are going. We visit each town, one at a time & are certain to stop at every house that has children who are celebrating Christmas.

**4. How are you so quiet?**

A. As you well know, it's not easy being quiet. The reindeer train during the year & have perfected their landing so there's minimal impact with the roof. This way we don't make a big clatter when we land! I walk around your house carefully as to not wake anyone up.

**5. How do you deliver all of those toys in one night?**

A. Santa & the elves have carefully studied the space-time continuum. It's very hard to explain; basically we have mastered a way of moving against time. It kind of slows time down & we are able to get around very quickly in one night. You can follow my sleigh & where we are on Christmas eve night by using the [NORAD Santa Tracker](#). You will see how quickly we are able to move.

**6. How do you fit the big toys into the sack?**

A. This is another time when Christmas magic comes into play! The toys are magically shrunk into small sizes. When I get into the house & take out the toys, they expand to their proper size.

**7. How do you get in a house with no chimney?**

A. When we first started delivering presents, every house had a chimney. Now, many houses & apartments don't have a chimney. The elves solved this problem by crafting a universal key that allows me to enter any house. I prefer to go down the chimney because it's so much fun! But if there is no chimney then I use the key.



# Merry Christmas

And Happy New Year



**8. How do you eat all of the cookies & milk and what's your favorite snack & drink that children leave out for you?**

A. Delivering toys is so much work & I get really hungry! I don't always eat the whole snack that's left out for me. Sometimes I just have a bite of the treat & a sip of the drink.

Oh, I love every snack that's left out for me because I know the children who left it there made it out of kindness & love. I really enjoy tasting the different foods & drinks in each country. Did you know that children in each country leave different snacks for me & the reindeer?

In the U.K & Ireland, the children often leave me a mince pie. Sometimes I get a Guinness or glass of sherry. In America, the children leave me cookies & milk. In Denmark they leave rice pudding. In Chile, children leave me a slice of pan de pascua which is a sponge cake with ginger, honey & dried fruit. In some countries, the children don't leave me a snack, instead they leave water, carrots & hay for the reindeer. In Italy they leave me clementines, cookies & milk, plus some hay or carrots for the reindeer.

**9. Do the reindeer like anything besides carrots?**

A. Oh yes, the reindeer love all different vegetables & fruits too like berries & apples. They always appreciate it when children leave a snack for them.

**10. What are the elves' favorite toys to make?**

A. The elves love to make toys & they look forward to it every year! They each specialize in a type of toy production. For example, if an elf trains in bike making then he will make bikes that Christmas. Some elves test the toys to make sure they are working properly. There are a lot of different jobs for elves at the North Pole.

**11. Santa, how do you figure out who should be on the good & naughty lists?**

A. The scout elves are in charge of that. They travel around to every house & peek in the window to see if the children are behaving. They will check several times during the year. They report back to me with who should be added to the naughty list & who should go on the good list.






12. TAKE SIDES - CHOOSE YOUR PREFERENCE BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING DICHOTOMIES. THE BOLD AND RED COLORED ARE SANTA'S SELECTIONS:

1. **SLEEP IN ON CHRISTMAS DAY** OR HOP OUT OF BED EARLY?
2. **OPEN GIFTS SLOWLY** OR TEAR THROUGH THEM QUICKLY?
3. **MEET SANTA'S REINDEER** OR MEET HIS ELVES?
4. **NICE** OR NAUGHTY LIST?
5. ELF SHOES OR **ELF EARS**?
6. SNOW GLOBE OR **CHRISTMAS TRAIN**?
7. **CATCH SANTA** OR STAY IN BED?
8. **WHITE LIGHTS** OR COLORED LIGHTS?
9. **CLASSIC CHRISTMAS MOVIES** OR NEW HOLIDAY RELEASES?
10. **NUTCRACKER BALLET** OR A CHRISTMAS CAROL PLAY?
11. DONATE OR VOLUNTEER? **WHY NOT DO BOTH - HO-HO-HO!**
12. GARLAND OR **WREATHS**?
13. **HOT CHOCOLATE** OR EGGNOG?
14. WHICH MOVIE - **WHITE CHRISTMAS** OR HOLIDAY INN?
15. "HAVE YOURSELF A MERRY LITTLE CHRISTMAS" OR **"JINGLE BELL ROCK"**
16. BUILD A SNOWMAN OR **GO ICE SKATING**?
17. **WINTER HIKE IN THE MOUNTAINS** OR WINTER STROLL IN THE CITY?
18. **WINTER OLYMPICS** OR SUPERBOWL? **THE ONLY CORRECT ANSWER IS AGGIE FOOTBALL.**
19. **TINSEL** OR GLITTER?
20. **ANGEL** OR STAR ON THE TOP OF THE TREE?





My wife asked me to clean out some  
of my old clothes before the new  
year began.

I was going through the wardrobe  
and I turned to her and said:  
“Look at this.  
It still fits after 25 years.”

She smiled and said:  
“Those are socks.”



# WHAT'S IN THE GLASS



**Adami 2020 Rive di Farra di Soligo Extra Brut Col Credas Glera (Valdobbiadene) Prosecco Superiore)**

Dry and elegant, this radiant sparkler opens with enticing aromas of hawthorn and summer orchard fruit. Showing its Valdobbiadene pedigree, the gently sparkling palate features Bartlett pear, peach and apple before a citrusy finish. Crisp acidity keeps it balanced and energized.



**L'Antica Quercia 2020 Rive di Scomigo Matiù Brut Glera (Valdobbiadene) Prosecco Superiore)**

Made with organically farmed grapes, this has aromas of wisteria and white orchard fruit. Dry and creamy, the savory, elegant palate features white peach, yellow pear and lemon drop candy alongside crisp acidity and a weightless, polished perlage.



**Case Paolin NV Brut White (Asolo Prosecco Superiore)**

Made with organic grapes, this gentle sparkler opens with aromas of hay and white stone fruit. The dry, creamy palate offers green apple, pear and fennel before a saline close. Bright acidity lifts the fruity flavors.

Prosecco is an easy-drinking Italian sparkling wine that is meant to be enjoyed young and fresh. It's versatile enough to drink as an aperitif, as part of a celebration, paired with a meal, or used as an ingredient in a cocktail. Prosecco is often compared with Champagne, but the Italian bubbly offers a multitude of unique differences, not to mention everyday affordability. Perhaps the most urgent question, however, might be "is Prosecco sweet?" Not always. It comes in various sweetness levels, and can even be dry (depending on your tastes, it can even be dry enough for a Prosecco mimosa). Try one of these Proseccos that span from light to rich with your holiday meal.

Cheers!

# AGGIE SPORTS UPDATE



## Mike Elko Named Head Football Coach

The former Texas A&M Defensive Coordinator will return to Aggieland after a successful run as head coach at Duke.

[Click for more information](#)



## Texas A&M transfer portal tracker

Which players are the Aggies losing, gaining following 2023 season?

[Click for more information](#)



## No. 14 Aggies Fall to Virginia in ACC/SEC Challenge Clash

The No. 14 Texas A&M men's basketball team dropped a 59-47 decision to the Virginia Cavaliers in an ACC/SEC Challenge.

[Click for more information](#)



## HEADLINES

EQUESTRIAN: [Howdy! Class of 2024](#)

VOLLEYBALL: [Aggies Season Comes to a Close in NCAA First Round](#)

VOLLEYBALL: [Lednicky, Muoneke Earn SEC Honors](#)

BASKETBALL (W): [Aggies Extend Winning Streak to Five Games](#)

FOOTBALL: [York, Cooper Honored by Dave Campbell's Texas Football](#)

ATHLETICS: SEC Community Service Team - [Max Wright \(FB\)](#), [Lauren Hogan \(VB\)](#)





# THE ITALY A&M CLUB NEEDS YOUR ASSISTANCE



## The Italy A&M Club Needs Your Help!

### • BREAKING NEWS

**UPDATE** – The Association of Former Students is assisting us with building out our clubs website! I can't thank them enough for the help. We also will have a *Facebook* page to accompany our *Instagram* postings. These mediums will allow us to post news articles, our monthly newsletters, *Instagram* postings and other social media. So everyone is aware our newsletter reaches out to almost 1,000 readers each month. Thank you all for your contributions to its success.

### • Italy A&M Club Scholarship

The club is exploring the possibility of establishing a scholarship program. The scholarship would be available to club members who live in Italy but are attending Texas A&M, their family members who are attending Texas A&M or possibly students who are studying abroad from Texas A&M in Italy (semester abroad program).

We are considering hosting a silent auction to help raise funds for the scholarship. If you are interested in donating to the auction or in the establishment of the scholarship please reach out to me directly.



### • News – Extra, Extra Read All About it!

Please feel free to share any photos, news articles, announcements, births, graduations, Silver Taps, career changes or any other news you would like to share with the club. We will find ways to include them in the regular updates.

### • Logo

We are looking to create our clubs logo and will be asking for assistance from The Association of Former Students Marketing Department. We need to generate a few ideas for our logo. If you have any ideas or thoughts please let me know.

### • Recipes

Feel free to submit your favorite recipe(s) to be include with the monthly/periodic updates. We would love to share them with the group.

### • Feedback

Please provide feedback on this format, the content and any ideas you may have on ways we can generate additional engagement. Please encourage other people to join the club and to follow us on *Instagram*.

## Contact Information:

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Instagram: [italy\\_am\\_club](https://www.instagram.com/italy_am_club)

# A COLORFUL HOLIDAY SEASON!

LET'S HAVE SOME  
CHRISTMAS FUN

1 - PRINT OR DOWNLOAD THE  
NEXT PAGE.

2 - GET CREATIVE AND COLOR  
IT IN! (YOU, YOUR CHILDREN,  
FRIENDS, FAMILY,  
GRANDCHILDREN, EVERYONE IS  
ELIGIBLE!)

3 - TAKE A PHOTO OR SCAN IT  
AND SEND IT BACK TO US.

4 - WE WILL SELECT ON  
WINNER AND THEY WILL  
RECEIVE A SURPRISE GIFT FROM  
BABBO NATALE.

5 - GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!





# Italy A&M Club

December  
2023

COLOR  
YOUR  
CHRISTMAS







# Happy New Year

**When you realize  
that the last day of  
2023 will be  
123123**

**AH AH AAHH!!**







## PAROLE FINALI

*A*s we bid addio (farewell) to 2023 and embrace the spirit of the holiday season, we want to extend our warmest wishes to each and every one of you. The past year has been a journey filled with joy, laughter, and the unmistakable magic of the holidays in Italy.

In our December e-newsletter/magazine, we took a festive dive into the traditions that make an Italian holiday truly special. From a mouthwatering recipe to heartwarming stories, we hope our content added a touch of Italia to your celebrations.

As we wrap up 2023, we reflect on the incredible moments we've shared together. Your passion for our club has made this year truly exceptional, and we're excited for the adventures that await each of us in the coming year.

May the warmth of the season linger in your hearts, and may the new year bring you prosperity, good health, and countless moments of happiness.

Buone Feste e Felice Anno Nuovo!

Warmest wishes, Thanks, Ciao and Gig'em!

Ryan '91

P.S. Be sure to follow us on **Instagram** at: [italy\\_am\\_club](https://www.instagram.com/italy_am_club)