

## Italian Holidays - Questions

1. **Name of the holiday in English** **Name of the Holiday in Italian**  
All Saints Day **Festa di Ognisanti**

2. **Date in English** **Date in Italian**  
November 1st **il primo novembre**

3. **History of this holiday**

Just over a century later, November 1 was finally chosen as the date for the commemoration of the saints. It was Pope Gregory III who made this change official. Around 835, Pope Gregory IV even went so far as to make it a world holiday. In the 20th century, when Pius X was head of the papacy, All Saints' Day was added to the list of eight Christian feasts. At the same time, it became a public holiday.

All Saints Day is a holy day of obligation in the Catholic Church. Every Sunday, Catholics are obligated to attend mass. This holiday holds the same weight as a holy Sunday, regardless of the day of the week All Saints Day falls upon. Other days throughout the year honor particular saints that have been canonized. This means that the Church has declared a person or saint to be worthy of universal veneration and celebration. All Saints Day honors the saints that have not been canonized. This refers to loved ones who have lived a good moral life and are believed to be in heaven but were not canonized. Not to be confused with the very next day of celebration, All Souls Day, which refers to those who have passed and may not have made it to heaven yet and are in purgatory.

4. **Is it more of a regional holiday or is it celebrated all over Italy?**

This is a religious holiday that is celebrated nationally in Italy but varies by region and family.

5. **How is this holiday celebrated in Italy? Is it celebrated differently in different regions?**

All Saints Day is a national holiday, but is especially popular in Rome, due to its strong ties to Roman culture. Historically, the Romans would have a meal beside the grave of a deceased loved one to honor them. Many businesses, schools, and government offices are closed so that families and friends can spend time together. Families often visit their local parishes. Many people will pray to the Saints, especially their patron saint, and ask for intercession so that they might also become saints one day.

6. **Are there any special customs connected with the celebration of this holiday in Italy?**

It is not uncommon for families to visit the graves of their deceased loved ones, and lay flowers on their graves, and light candles.

7. **Are there any special foods/meals connected with this holiday?**

**Pane dei Santi**, which means All Saints' bread, is common all over Italy on All Saints' Day. The bread dough includes raisins, figs and walnuts. **Castagnaccio**, a cake made with chestnut flour, is another traditional All Saints Day treat.

8. **Are there any specific recipes you can share of foods prepared for this holiday?**

Recipes for **Pane dei Santi**, **Castagnaccio**, and other sweets are linked below.

9. **Are there special greetings Italians say to each other on this holiday? Any special Italian vocabulary connected with this holiday?**

**Auguri!** (happy holiday)

A common prayer recited on All Saints Day is as follows:

“Almighty ever-living God, by whose gift we venerate in one celebration the merits of all the Saints, bestow on us, we pray, through the prayers of so many intercessors, an abundance of the reconciliation with you for which we earnestly long.”

10. **Did your family immigrant ancestors celebrate this holiday? Does your family still celebrate it with Italian traditions?**

This is a Catholic religious holiday, and my family is protestant, so unfortunately, I have nothing to personally add. However, my family often will gather and share stories of our deceased loved one near the deceased’s birthday. We also try to also speak of them and their love during Memorial Day. We have planted flowers and named stars in their honor.

11. **Add any other information you consider pertinent or interesting.**

All Saints Day was originally only celebrated in Rome. In 837 Pope Gregory IV extended All Saints Day to the entire church, making it a holiday to be celebrated nationally.

12. **List as many ideas as possible on how we can incorporate these holiday celebrations at our lodges to foster interest in Italian culture, heritage, and language. Think of activities that would appeal to different age levels (children, young adults, other members, families, specific interest groups).**

- A cooking demo with the recipes listed below, along with a history lesson, would be a great activity. Links for recipes are below.

Pane dei Santi

<https://www.ilclubdellericette.it/ricetta/pane-dei-santi>

Castagnaccio

<https://www.cucchiaio.it/ricetta/ricetta-castagnaccio/>

Sweets for All Souls’ Day

<https://www.giallozafferano.it/ognissanti-dolci-tradizione>

- Hold a candlelight vigil honoring saints that members are named after. Learn what day is their specific saint’s day.
- Research and learn about Italian saints that members are named after. Who are some well-known Italian saints and why are they remembered/why do Italian Catholics pray to them? What are some unique Italian saint stories? What are some unique traditions that are connected to specific saints?
- Children could learn about a favorite saint and create a poster about that saint.