

Carnevale

1. Name of the holiday in English

Mardi Gras

2. Name of the Holiday in Italian

Carnevale

3. Date in English

The season before lent especially the Tuesday before Lent. Carnevale is the day before Ash Wednesday. However, in Venice and elsewhere in Italy celebrations begin weeks before.

4. Date in Italian

Martedì Grasso

5. A brief history of the holiday: What are the origins of this holiday in Italy? 6. Why is it celebrated in Italy? 7. What does it commemorate? 8. What famous people are connected to this holiday?

Although the **origins of Carnival** trace back to pagan festivities of Greeks and Romans, it is linked to the Catholic world. In fact, it is celebrated on Shrove Tuesday, the last day before the rigors of Lent set in. Consequently, it doesn't have a specific date but depends on which day Easter will be. The name *Carnival* (**Carnevale**) comes from Latin *carnem levare*, which literally means remove the meat. Specifically, Carnival was the last occasion for meat consumption, as people abstained from it during the following forty days of Lent.

Carnevale in Italy represents a way through which people can set aside their everyday life and simply have fun. During Carnevale, the streets are filled with cheerful masks, engaging music, and irresistible culinary delights. It's a time of carefree fun, where people are carried away by the magic of unique events and celebrations. People of all ages wear elaborate costumes and masks, throw confetti and streamers at each other, and take part in parades, street parties and other entertainment. Moreover, in almost every Italian city an important Carnival tradition is the creation of huge floats. Italians compete for the best **carro** (float) every year.

9. Is it more of a regional holiday or is it celebrated all over Italy? How is this holiday celebrated in Italy? Is it celebrated differently in different regions? Are there any special customs connected with the celebration of this holiday in Italy?

Italy has many Carnevale celebrations. Listed are some of the most famous or unique.

- One of the most famous celebrations of the Carnevale season takes place in **Venice** and starts about two weeks before the actual date of Fat Tuesday. Events and entertainment are held nightly throughout Venice, with people in costumes wandering around the city and reveling.

Venice's main Carnevale events are centered around the **Piazza San Marco**, but events are held in every **sestiere**, or quarter, of Venice. There are gondola and boat parades along the Grand Canal, a mask parade in Piazza San Marco, and a special Carnevale for Children event in the Cannaregio district. Fireworks show

in Piazza San Marco can be seen all over Venice and marks the event's climax. Most high-end hotels hold masked balls during Carnevale.

- **Viareggio** on the Tuscan coast has one of the biggest Carnevale celebrations in Italy. Festivals, cultural events, concerts, and masked balls take place throughout the Carnevale season both in Viareggio and its surrounding areas. The city is known for its giant, allegorical paper-mâché floats which are very often satirical and reflect current events and politics. The final parade is held on a Saturday night and is followed by huge fireworks show.
- The town of **Ivrea** in the northern Piedmont region has a unique carnival celebration with medieval roots. The carnival includes a colorful parade followed by orange-throwing battles in the center of town. The origins of the orange battle are murky, but local folklore cites the story of a young peasant girl named Violetta who rebuffed the advances of a ruling tyrant in either the 12th or 13th century. She decapitated him and chaos ensued, with other villagers eventually burning the castle where he lived. During the present-day reenactment, one girl is chosen to play the role of Violetta, and dozens of **aranceri** (orange-throwers) representing both the tyrant and the peasants throw oranges at each other. Oranges are meant to represent stones and other ancient weapons.
- On the **island of Sardinia** in the Barbagia villages outside of Nuoro, locals still live a rustic way of life, herding sheep and wearing traditional clothing. During Carnevale, ancient folklore is on display in the ghostly masks worn by the locals. In fact, each small town has its own distinct mask designs that are different from neighbors. In the west coast Sardinian town of Oristano, Carnevale is celebrated with a costumed parade, horse races, and a reenactment of a medieval jousting tournament in a festival called **La Sartiglia**.
- The town of **Acireale, Sicily** holds one of the most beautiful Carnevale celebrations, with flower and paper-mâché allegorical floats that are still very similar to the originals that were made as far back as 1601. There are several parades during Carnevale that travel through the town center, as well as music, a chess tournament, children's events, and a fireworks finale.
- **Pont-Saint-Martin in the Val d'Aosta region** of northwestern Italy celebrates Carnevale in Roman style with people dressed as nymphs and in togas. Sometimes, there's even a chariot race! On Fat Tuesday evening, festivities culminate with the hanging and burning of an effigy of the devil on the 2,000-year-old bridge.
- **Cento, in the Emilia-Romagna region**, is linked to the most famous Carnival celebration in the world: that of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Floats are very high quality and often include items from Brazil. The winning float in the Cento parade earns a trip to Brazil for Carnival festivities there. Participants arrive from all over Italy to march in the parade or ride along on their motorcycles, and some 30,000 pounds of candy are thrown to spectators along the parade route.

- **Verona** has one of the oldest Carnevale celebrations in Italy, dating back to 1531. On Fat Tuesday, Verona has a huge parade with more than 500 floats, but the most delicious tradition occurs on the Friday before: **venerdì gnoccolaro**, or Gnocchi Friday. Honoring the potato-based dumpling, a member of the community is elected as **Papa' de' Gnocco**, or the Father of Gnocchi. The potato patriarch earns his spot a month earlier, and everyone in attendance is welcome to the free gnocchi. On Gnocchi Friday this is the dish of choice in every bar and restaurant.
- The Alpine resort town of **Livigno** near the Swiss border celebrates Carnevale in the snow. Every year, a procession of downhill skiers takes to the slopes, and some participate in an obstacle race on the mountain. Meanwhile, in town, there's a ball and a traditional parade. The festivals here are very family-friendly with lots of entertainment for children.
- In the southern Italian region of **Calabria**, which has Albanian settlements, Lungro holds a Carnevale parade with people dressed in traditional Albanian costumes. The Carnevale of Pollino in Castrovillari includes women dressed in intricate local costumes and celebrates the Pollino wine of the region, *Lacrima di Castrovillari*. In northern Calabria, Montalto Uffugo holds an interesting wedding parade of men wearing women's dresses. They hand out sweets and tastes of Pollino wine. Following the parade, the kings and queens arrive for a night of dancing while wearing costumes that include giant heads.
- In **Abruzzo**, in particular, there are traditional sweets and dishes to enjoy during Carnival, such as **"cicerchiata"** and **"ravioli di ricotta con lo zucchero,"** particularly renowned in **Vasto**.

10. Are there any special foods/meals connected with this holiday? 14. Are there any specific recipes you can share of foods prepared for this holiday? Two from my region are below.

Cicerchiata is a wreath of little fried balls of sweet dough stuck together with honey and almonds. It's a traditional Abruzzo Carnival dessert.



In the past this dessert was made with special beans similar to sweet beans called “cicerchi”, similar to chickpeas. The name of this dessert derives from the fact that the little fried balls resemble the small beans.

Some recipes contain candied fruit, some contain liqueur, some contain sugar in the syrup, some contain colored sprinkles or chocolate on top. There are MANY varieties!

Cicerchiata

Ingredients:

- 800 g Flour
- 7 eggs
- 7 tablespoons of sugar
- 7 tablespoons of Extra virgin olive oil

(for each eggs one tablespoon of oil and one of sugar)

- Almonds
- 500 g Abruzzo's acacia honey
- Coloured sprinkles for decoration
- Vanilla powder

Cooking time: about 45 minutes

Preparation:

1. Put flour on your working surface and make a well in the center. After, break the eggs in the center and add a tablespoon of sugar for each egg and some vanilla powder.
2. Mix all the ingredients until a elastic dough forms. Add more flour if the dough is not compact.
3. Divide dough into smaller parts, then take each piece and roll it out slightly until you form long round strips. Then cut each strip into equal pieces about 1 centimeter long.
4. Sprinkle them with some flour to avoid them sticking together.
5. Heat the oil in large pot or deep fryer and fry the small dough pieces until golden.
6. Lay the dough bits on absorbent paper towel to get rid of oil in excess, then place them in a bowl.
7. Heat the honey in a very large pot and add one spoonful of sugar. Simmer for about 5 minutes on low heat until turns red. Then add the almonds.
8. Add the dough balls to the honey and stir for 10 more minutes.
9. Quickly turn the mixture onto your working surface (board or table) helping with a spoon try to shape the mixture into a round wreath, or the shape you like.
10. If you want to add a touch of color, sprinkle the wreath with some colored sprinkles.

Ravioli with Sugar



This recipe is an **alternative Abruzzo recipe** on the classic Ravioli with Spinach and Ricotta cheese.

The **Ravioli with Sugar** is a traditional favourite of Abruzzo cuisine during **Carnival time**, but there's no harm trying it all year round!

The adding of sugar in the filling gives to this classic dish a touch of originality for those who like rich strong tastes.

Ingredients for the ravioli dough:

- 600 gr Durum wheat
- 4 eggs

Ingredients for the filling:

- 400 gr spinach
- grated Parmesan cheese
- 700 gr Ricotta cheese (from Abruzzo farms)
- 2 tablespoons of sugar

Ingredients for the sauce:

- 4 pork ribs
- 2 pork rolls
- 2 sausages
- extra virgin olive oil
- nutmeg
- 500 gr. tomato sauce (possibly homemade)

Preparation:

Start with **the meat sauce**.

1. Take a large saucepan, heat the olive oil and add the pork ribs, the pork rolls, the sausages and a pinch of salt, some spices if you like it. Cook for about 10 minutes, until the meat is golden brown.
2. When the meat is browned add the homemade tomato sauce.
Cook on very low heat for about two hours. Stir occasionally and if it looks like drying out, add some hot stock.

Meanwhile make **the ravioli pasta dough**.

3. Put the flour on your working surface and make a well in the center. Break the eggs in the center and beat them inside. Add a pinch of salt. Mix all together and knead to form a dough.
Sometimes wet your hands with some water to help you knead the dough. Let the dough rest for a while.

Now, prepare **the ravioli filling**.

4. In a pot of boiling water, cook the spinach until tender. Squeeze out the water from the spinach and chop it up roughly. In a bowl mix all together spinach, ricotta, two eggs, Parmesan cheese and grated nutmeg. At the end add two tablespoons sugar.
5. Cut the dough into small pieces and roll out the pasta dough into thin sheets.
6. To assemble the ravioli, drop the filling mixture on the dough sheets by teaspoonfuls about one inch apart. Fold the dough and press firmly around the filling to seal. Cut into individual ravioli with a knife or pizza cutter.

7. Cook the ravioli in a large pot of lightly salted boiling water.
8. Take the pieces of meat out from the red sauce.
Pour some red sauce into a serving plate and add the ravioli. Add some more sauce on top and finally, sprinkle with some grated Parmesan cheese.

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).

- Make Venetian Carnevale masks.
- Have a Carnevale costume party/dance/dinner. Select the best costumes/masks and give prizes.
- Learn the Carnevale customs of different regions in Italy.
- Ask members if they celebrate Carnevale in any special "Italian" way.
- Watch videos about the Venice Carnevale.
- Watch movies set in Venice.
- Prepare typical Carnevale regional dishes and share with each other.
- Read about the events of the current Venice Carnevale celebration.