

La tradizione del Natale a Napoli

CHRISTMAS IN NAPLES

The Neapolitan Christmas, though also contaminated by the consumerist tendencies of contemporary society, still retains some strong aspects of the Neapolitan tradition that revolve around the fundamental symbols consisting of the **crib** and the **culinary traditions** of **Christmas Eve dinner** and **Christmas dinner**, which are accompanied by **bagpipers** and the game of **bingo**.

Christmas celebrations traditionally begin on December 8 (**Immaculate Conception**) day when you start the preparation of the crib and end all ' **Epiphany** (or Feast of the **Epiphany** , and is known especially in the south - January 6), when the crib is undone.

During the Christmas period the city and the many resorts on the coast are places of cultural and religious events of interest and tourist attraction. On 26 December, but the day dedicated to **St. Stephen** Martyr, the first saint to have given their lives to spread the gospel in 33 or 34 AD

The Neapolitan Crib

For beyond the religious symbols that it calls, the crib is also loved by those Neapolitan families or just looking decidedly secular, because the Neapolitan crib is the place where the sacred and profane, spiritual and daily life, prayer and humor as only live in Naples , a city of contradictions, it is possible.

Even if today the crib is more often accompanied or even replaced Christmas tree, the tradition is very much alive and handed down in many families.

The term Neapolitan 'or' Presebbio "(as the Italian nativity scene or crib) is derived from the Latin *Praesepe* or *Praeseptum* meaning "manger." And at the beginning (of 1025 is the first documented reference to a crib in Naples), the Neapolitan crib, as in all other regions where there was the tradition of the Christian nativity scene, depicting just the classic scene of **the Nativity** , with the child in manger Madonna and St. Joseph, the ox and the donkey.

Only in the seventeenth century Neapolitan crib grows starting to introduce scenes of everyday life, such as vendors of fruit or meat, the common people, shepherds with sheep. The news is welcomed and craftsmen make these scenes more detailed and detailed, reaching the peak representative in the eighteenth century, the golden age of the Neapolitan crib.

The construction of the Neapolitan crib traditionally begins on the eighth of December: the closet will *pull out* the "base" year (the skeleton of a cork board and placed on a wooden table, without pastors, and various decorations) and with the sons of discusses the possible extension. After a short consultation will decide the

interventions to be implemented: "Maybe this year you can add the wood stove or the little brook with water and a few more sheep in the flock."

After the planning of interventions, the walk to San Gregorio Armeno, the street of the Neapolitan nativity scenes, it becomes a must. This short, narrow street of the historic center of Naples, which develops between Spaccanapoli and via the Courts, is-despite small size-the undisputed heart of one of the most famous Neapolitan artisan traditions: the crib.

There are dozens of colorful shops and stalls where artisans display their creations of the crib. The range and variety of products is so vast that it is impossible to leave without having found the pastor tried and maybe some more than expected. Any object, the statue of an animal, a fruit basket, a basket of fish, a mill can enrich the choreographic scene of the manger-scene.

The construction of the crib can last from a few days until the Christmas period, but it is imperative that the evening of 24 everything should be ready, as warned Luca Cupiello in "**Christmas at Cupiello**", the protagonist of the unforgettable opera play by **Eduardo de Filippo**

Ovviamene everything ready, except the *little boy in the cradle*, which will be added exactly at midnight on Christmas.

The Neapolitan crib is not only craft and folk tradition, but has held and still higher forms of artistic expression, such as the famous **crib Cuciniello** and other mangers of the eighteenth century **San Martino Museum** and the magnificent and little known collection of German nativity Neapolitan **Bavarian National Museums** of Monaco of Bavaria.

The works of the past alongside the many accomplishments of contemporary artists who, during the Christmas holidays can be visited in Naples in the many public installations, and many churches in Campania.

Christmas table

The gastronomic tradition **Campana** for the period **Christmas** is varied and extensive.

With its wealth and prosperity of the territory, in fact, the imagination of cooks can indulge largely using the many resources and as many local products and ingredients that characterize the traditional cuisine of this region.

During the Christmas season, in particular, emerge the many culinary traditions, passed down from generation to generation, which are transformed into delicious dishes all to enjoy.

According to the most ancient tradition of bell, the **dinner 's Eve** should be completely based on fish and so are simple but tasty dishes like **spaghetti with clams**, the **salt cod stewed** or fried, the **fried eel** and **sea bass steamed**, the all served with a side of **salad reinforcement** from

papaccelle and tasty **steamed broccoli**.

The **Christmas lunch** is instead a real tribute to the flesh in all its forms, and vegetables.

A typical menu includes a classic definitely **married soup** , the **egg noodles** and topped with homemade r **AGU Naples** , **stuffed capon** and a **large fried Neapolitan** .

Everywhere the boundary may consist of a simple or the **nsalata broccoli** or delicious **baked potatoes** , all accompanied by wines and flavor as the "**Greek di Tufo**" , the "**-back**" , "**Aglianico del Taburno**" The "**Gragnano**" , or "**Taurasi**" .

Of course, the strength of **regional cuisine** are delicious **desserts** .

THE CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER

Appetizer of raw seafood and sauteed octopus all'insalata

Spaghetti with clams, white

Spaghetti with clams, red

Baked fish

Fried cod

Fried Eel

Fried calamari and shrimp

Seasonal fruit

Dried Fruit

Desserts Traditional Christmas Neapolitan

Panettone

Rococo

Struffoli
Susamielli

Sparkling
White wine

Christmas lunch

Antipasto salami, capicollo, sopressata, prosciutto, dried sausage

Soup married
Neapolitan Pasta with meat sauce
Chicken broth
Meat sauce

Reinforcement and broccoli salad with lemon

Seasonal fruit
Chestnuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, peanuts, dried figs and dates

Desserts Traditional Christmas Neapolitan

Panettone
Rococo
Struffoli
Susamielli

Sparkling

Red wine

Traditional sweets

The Neapolitan pastry is filled with traditional sweets for all year, but in the days of Christmas offers some unique pleasures that make the magic of the holiday.

The productions, more often, and home craft, ranging from *s truffoli* to *rococo* , from *susamielli* the *wisdom* and *mostaccioli* from *almond paste* or *marzipan* to the *Divine Love* in a succession of tastes and aromas that make the air fragrant with a thousand scents .

The Struffoli

This is a typical Christmas cake, whose form is based on balls covered with honey and multicolored *diavulilli* .

The origin of struffoli is Greek name, derived from strongulos, ie pasta spherical, rounded or hollowed out, even this preparation is well established in the tradition of Neapolitan pastry, were beautiful confections made by the nuns of the convents of the Cross of Lucca those of S. Maria dello Splendore.

The Rococo

A donut-shaped, suitable for those who have strong teeth, instead draws its origins from the French *rococo* and baroque to the round shape of a shell.

The susamielli

A form of 'S' the *Sosamielli* were mixed with honey and in the past were different in *sosamiello noble* , made with white flour and there was the custom to offer people to respect the *sosamiello for pipers* , mixed with flour and elements of waste, which was offered to staff on a visit to the farmers and those who were playing at home, and ultimately the *path of good sosamiello* stuffed with black cherry jam and that was offered only to men.

The Wisdoms

(Variant of susamielli)

They owe their name to the Convent of Santa Maria della Sapienza, which were very well prepared by the Poor Clares

The Mustacciuoli

From the diamond-shaped covered with chocolate icing, their name is linked to the old peasant recipe that used the must mustacea was in fact

their Latin name, with which they were prepared for them sweeter.

The almond paste or paste real

There are other cakes that find their origin in the convents of Naples, with delicate pastel colors ranging from pink to green to yellow, prepared with dollops of almond paste placed on a wafer that serves as a base and cut with a more 'variety.

Sweets of Christmas Eve, the Sisters prepared them according to the diet of skinny 'cause were prepared with flour, sugar, spices and finely chopped almonds and did not use any animal fat, being their only condiment made from oil pressed from the same almond.

The name marzipan appear to date back to **King Ferdinand IV** .

It is said that King went one afternoon to visit the convent of the Sisters of San Gregorio Armeno and, after visiting the chapel and convent, was accompanied by her sisters in the refectory, where a large table had prepared a buffet where they made beautiful show whether lobster, grilled fish, chickens and pheasants as well as the beautiful fruit.

The King was a big eater but he apologized by saying that he had just finished lunch and was not the case re-examined a meal like that. But the nun with the complicity prayed looks worthy of a King Ferdinand of taste, what was the surprise of the king when he realized that all that good things were nothing but sweet efficiently carved with almond paste and meticulous hand-painted.

This tradition of marzipan remains today especially in Sicily where there are skilled artisans of pasta martorana or real.

Divine Love

The divine love, is one of the most traditional Neapolitan sweet and fragrant aroma characterize the environment with their Christmas

These tasty treats are part of the Christmas tradition of Neapolitan cuisine, were prepared for the first time by the nuns of the convent eponymous **Divine Love** who was in Spaccanapoli in Naples, in honor of the mother of **Charles II of Anjou** .

THE EPIPHANY

The night between 5 and January 6 is the one that leads to the conclusion of the period and the Christmas holidays and is the night when all the children are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Befana, who will decide with soft coal or those who have been good and who less.

La Befanarepresents the arrival of the Magi in the night between 5 and 6 January went to bring gold, frankincense and myrrh to Jesus

One of the many legends has it that the Three Kings that night knock on the door of an old woman to ask the way to Bethlehem, which after giving indications he refused to join them.

Regretted it soon after went out to look for but not finding them began to knock on the door of every property in its path leaving a gift to each child in the hope that one of them was Jesus ...

This is why it is tradition that since the same night are donated cakes in the conclusion of the Christmas holidays.

Naples obviously also has its own traditions, the most important is to go to "make shoes" for the Epiphany in Piazza del Carmine for the occasion becomes a sweet little fair with stalls with all sorts of sweet, candy to buy for celebrate the coming of the Magi.

"TOMBOLA" - *THE NAPLES BINGO*

The Neapolitan tombola was born in 1734 to a dispute arose between the King Charles III of Bourbon, who had decided to formalize the lottery in the Kingdom, he would have been illegal because it would have taken revenues to state coffers, and the Dominican friar Gregorio Maria Rocco, who considered the game a lot of unethical and misleading to delight the faithful.

At the end we won the king, but as long as the week of Christmas play has been suspended because the people should not get distracted from prayers.

The people who did not want to give up play was organized in another way: the ninety lottery numbers were contained in a "Panariello" wicker and were drawn on the numbers of folders, so the fantasy became a commoner in a public game play family businesses.

The bingo name comes from a cylindrical piece of wood where the number is stamped and the noise that this is in the fall on the table by Panariello, who once had the shape of the pillow.

For the ninety numbers of the game were given different meanings, which vary from region to region, and those are almost all the Neapolitan tombola allusive and sometimes scurrilous.

Very popular in Naples are the bingo "femminiello" of the streets of the popular districts of the city.