

Capodanno in Italy

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On December 31, cultures across the world celebrate the arrival of il capodanno, the New Year. In Italy – a country that already loves festivals – it is especially auspicious for corresponding with the feast day of Pope San Silvestro. Explore the rich traditions, then join us at Eataly for more celebrations!

San Silvestro, called “Saint Sylvester” in English, died on December 31, 335 C.E. Today, he is a mysterious figure – not much was recorded of his papacy – and tales of his reign include baptizing Roman Emperor Constantine, curing leprosy, and slaying a dragon. The legendary pope is accordingly celebrated with a legendary night of fireworks every year.

While not an official public holiday in Italy, December 31 is widely celebrated across the 20 regions. City centers are crowded with the combined revelries of La Festa di San Silvestro and New Year’s Eve, which include fireworks, concerts, festivals, dancing, bonfires, and – our favorite – feasts. In parts of southern Italy, tradition still dictates that the locals throw their old things out of the window to symbolize their readiness to accept the New Year.



Unsurprisingly, food and drink feature strongly into the celebrations. Pork represents richness of life, and lentils symbolize wealth and money. Superstition dictates that the coming year will bring prosperity if these dishes are enjoyed on New Year's Eve. Accordingly, dinner often highlights the traditional cotechino con lenticchie, a sausage-and-lentil dish that promises coming riches. As always, an Italian sparkling wine is a must-have to begin and conclude the meal and toast the year to come.

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