

Celebrating The Legend Of La Befana



CELEBRATING THE LEGEND OF LA BEFANA

Each Year the Italian Cultural Society holds an annual children's festival in January – *La Festa della Befana* for the children of the Italian community of Sacramento. This year, since we cannot hold the festival at our Center, we encourage parents to celebrate *"The Legend of La Befana"* with their children at home by putting out treats and gifts on the day of the Epiphany on January 6th.

One of Italy's oldest and most renowned legends *"The Legend Of La Befana"* is honored with special events throughout Italy on this holiday. In Sacramento and other Italian American communities, it has been a tradition to celebrate the day with a children's festival.

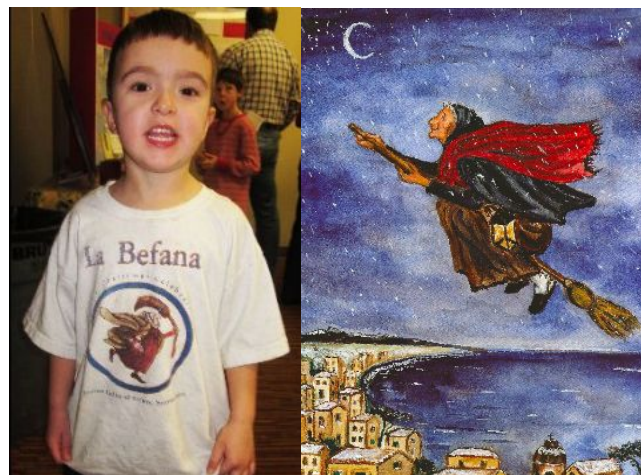


The Legend of La Befana originates from a tale about the Three Wise Men on the way to Bethlehem bearing gifts for the Christ child who stop at the house of an old woman for directions and ask her to join them. But she cannot because she is too busy. Later that night she decides to follow them but cannot find her way. She is believed to be searching for the baby as she brings presents and treats to the children of Italy.

On January 5th, the children of Italy go to bed hoping the kindly old woman they call "*La Befana*" will visit them with presents and treats for those who have been good. Or a lump of coal for those who have not. The children hang their stockings on the evening of January 5th and check them the next morning to see if La Befana has visited them.

Viva! Viva La Befana!

Each year the Italian Cultural Society hosts a large event featuring our own Bambini Dancers (shown below) and a visit from La Befana (shown above) on the first Sunday following the new year. BWatch our website for information on the 2022 La Befana Event.



“THE TRADITION OF BABBO NATALE“

Italians have a strong link to Christmas traditions, with a presepio in front of every church and government office, decorated Christmas trees and decorations in cities, towns and villages across Italy. The feast of the Epiphany is celebrated on January 6th and is a national holiday in Italy.

Babbo Natale (Father Christmas), Italy’s version of Santa Claus, is a popular gift giver on Christmas Day. Today’s *Babbo Natale* and Santa Claus have their roots in an Italian Saint. Saint Nicholas, known in Italy as San Nicola di Bari, is one of the most popular saints in Western Europe and is known for his gift giving and protection of children.

La Befana, the old woman who delivers gifts on the Epiphany on January 6 is still the more popular Italian Christmas figure.

