

THE LEGEND OF LA BEFANA

The Legend of La Befana originates from a tale about the Three Wise Men (the Maji) 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 as she is too busy cleaning her house. Later 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. January 6 is twelve days after Christmas, when Italians and Catholics celebrate the feast of the Epiphany to close the Christmas season.

In Italian Households, Christmas is not over till January 6, when the Three Wise Men arrive at the Manger to celebrate the baby Jesus. Italians don't take down their decorations till then.

“ On January 5th the children of Italy go to bed hoping the kindly old lady they call “**La Befana**” visits them like Santa Claus [Babbo Natale] and leaves presents and treats for those who are good and a lump of coal for those who are 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.

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.

Viva Viva La Befana!!

