

The 41st edition of “100 Presepi” in Rome

Joelle Grosso (December 02, 2016)



The holiday season marks the return of the beautiful Christmas tradition of the “100 Presepi” in Rome. Tourists and locals alike can admire these gorgeous works of fine craftsmanship in the Eternal City.

The spectacular display of the ["100 Presepi"](#) [2] began in [Rome](#) [3] at the Sale del Bramante in the [Piazza del Popolo](#) [4] on November 24th and will go on until January 8th. Children from the Giuseppe Mazzini elementary school in Rome opened the show and dedicated the presepi to those effected by the devastating earthquakes that took place in central Italy earlier this year. Italian Minister of Constitutional Reforms, [Maria Elena Boschi](#) [5], was also in attendance and remarked that “this show is recognized at an international level and it allows us to reflect on the importance of this tradition and on the beauty of making the presepe.”

[“Presepe”](#) [6] or “presepio” directly translates to “crib” which is a physical interpretation of the nativity scene and serves as a way of bringing the Bible to life. Presepi are very popular in Italy and can be found almost everywhere, even in the private homes of Italians. They are usually put up on December 8th on the [Feast of the Immaculate Conception](#) [7] and are taken down on January 6th, the day of the [Epiphany](#) [8]. The origins of this special tradition trace all the way back to 1223 when [Saint Francis](#) [9] performed the first nativity play and gave Mass outdoors. He even brought in animals in order to create a somewhat theatrical animated ceremony.

This year there will be more than 150 presepi on view from 13 regions of Italy as well as 40 foreign countries. The range of materials used is wide: from silk and crystal to pasta and chocolate. It’s an



interesting tradition because it allows for plenty of innovation and modernity which is very unique. Some artisans go beyond the conventional route and include pop culture figures such as soccer players and even politicians.

The creation of a presepe is not only a great way to bring some Italian culture into your home but it's also a fun experience for the whole family. The “100 Presepi” in Rome definitely provide inspiration and incentive to recreate one in the privacy of your own home!

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[3] <http://www.turismoroma.it/?lang=en>

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piazza_del_Popolo

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[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi