

Winter Emotions: Friuli Venezia Giulia Celebrates the Magic of Christmas

Beloved classics and exciting new attractions: from the stunning sand Nativity scene in Lignano Sabbiadoro to the *Winter Season* in Grado. In the mountains, visitors will find opportunities for regeneration and relaxation, atmospheric routes such as the captivating Advent trail *Advent Pur*, and the electrifying Krampus parades. In Trieste and other region's cities, visitors can look forward to inspiring art exhibitions.

The magic of more than 160 Nativity scenes, the charm of Christmas markets, and the comforting aromas of traditional cuisine revive the festive season. A tapestry of authentic experiences spanning nature, art, well-being, and culture.

Trieste, 27 November 2025 – Friuli Venezia Giulia is ready to ignite “**The Magic of Christmas**,” transforming cities, villages and mountains into one grand stage of lights, traditions, scents, culture and well-being. From the mountains to the coast, across hills and plains, each place invites visitors to rediscover the beauty of slowing down: the fascination of nativity scenes, the charm of Christmas markets, the shared joy of celebrating together – surrounded by crackling fireplaces and *fogolârs* – while landscapes just wait to be covered in white. It is a journey that blends spirituality and discovery, culture and nature, experiences, and wellness, offering true emotions and heartwarming atmospheres throughout the festive season. Hub of reference for the hundreds of Christmas events in Friuli Venezia Giulia is the dedicated section on the PromoTurismoFVG website [All the Christmas Events in Friuli Venezia Giulia](#)

The Fascination of Nativity Scenes: A Journey through Art and Faith

Organised in collaboration with Unpli Friuli Venezia Giulia Aps (Regional Pro Loco Committee), the **Giro Presepi FVG** makes its comeback with **over 160 Nativity initiatives** spread across a hundred municipalities. These include artisan installations, static, moving, or animated displays, as well as floating and underwater scenes, presented both outdoors and within historic villages. Designed for groups and families, the tour offers guided experiences and immersive visits.

This ideal 360-degree journey begins in **Porcia** (Pordenone), where Nativity scenes are housed within the picturesque Casello di Guardia. In the Pordenone foothills, **Poffabro** and **Polcenigo** transform homes and corners into open-air Nativity scenes.

Spilimbergo showcases its stunning mosaic statues, some of which will also be displayed in the **Sesto al Reghena** Abbey; meanwhile, in **Forgaria nel Friuli**, the **underwater Nativity scene** resurfaces from the emerald waters of Lake Cornino.

Iconic locations include **Sutrio** with ‘Borghi e Presepi’ (Artisan Nativity scenes in courtyards and the famous ‘Presepe di Teno’); **Moggio Udinese** with the exhibition hosted in the Medieval Tower; and the hills of **San Daniele del Friuli** featuring dioramas and Nativity scenes, also from Austria and Slovenia. In **Tricesimo**, gardens, niches, balconies, churches and votive chapels come alive with Nativity scenes. In **Udine**, the Friuli Ethnographic Museum hosts the exhibition ‘Presepio e l'espressione artistica della Natività’, whereas the **Cussignacco** district features static and animated Nativity displays. Not to be missed are the historic Nativity scene of the Ursuline nuns in **Cividale del Friuli**, the one at the sanctuary of **Castelmonte** in the municipality of Prepotto, and the exposition in **Aquileia**. In **Ruda**, the animated Nativity scene in Perteole, established a century ago, never cease to amaze. Following its display in Saint Peter's Square in the Vatican, **Gorizia** (European Capital of Culture 2025 with Nova Gorica) welcomes the lagoon Nativity scene created by the fishermen of Grado. Returning is also the famous moving Nativity scene in **Ronchi dei Legionari**, the result of over forty years’ work, featuring 500 figures activated by a single motor and accompanied by a voice narrator. In **Trieste**, the Nativity Museum offers a journey through the history and traditions of Nativity scenes from various regions and countries worldwide, showcasing approximately a thousand displays from the 20th and 21st centuries. Details and the full schedule are available at [presepifvg.it](#).

Krampus

In the Tarvisio area, Christmas moves to the ancient rhythm of Alpine legends. As evening falls, the crisp air fills with the sound of cowbells and the first torches pierce the darkness. Emerging from the forest depths are the **Krampus**, the unsettling and

boisterous masked creatures whose origins are lost in the mists of time and the mysteries of the Alpine woods. This is an unmissable opportunity to experience **the night of 5 December**: before sunset, Saint Nicholas, dressed as a Bishop and accompanied by the devils, moves from house to house to praise good children and admonish the naughty ones. Beyond this duty, Saint Nicholas (sometimes aided by angels) must appease the fury of the Krampus towards the spectators. **Fear and wonder blend in an ancestral ritual that combines sense of community, folklore and spirituality.** In Tarvisio, as well as in the areas of Camporosso, Fusine in Valromana, Rutte Piccolo and Malborghetto Valbruna, visitors can enjoy **parades, torchlight processions, bonfires, stalls and traditional sweets.** This celebration bewitches every generation, making Christmas in Friuli-Venezia Giulia a one-of-a-kind and unforgettable experience.

Markets, Forest Trails and Lanterns

In the woods of Malborghetto Valbruna, a **path illuminated by lanterns** immerses visitors in the ambiance of Advent, beneath the peaks of the Julian Alps: from 30 November to 21 December, **Advent Pur** makes its comeback with a trail of lights, sounds, and Alpine legends. Along the way, artisan Nativity scenes and wooden sculptures decorate hidden corners. Warm stoves invite visitors to pause for some hot tea, as the snow crunches underfoot and the crisp air evokes the Christmases of yesteryear. New this year: family activities at the Malga Alpina Kinderalm. The traditional **Christmas markets** will enliven villages and cities throughout the region: from mountain hamlets ([Sauris](#), Sappada) to regional capitals (Trieste, Udine, Pordenone, Gorizia), passing through some of the most beautiful villages in Italy and UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as Palmanova and Aquileia.

The Sea in Winter: Light, Calm and Traditions

Lignano Sabbiadoro will once again host 'Lignano Natale d'A...mare', an event that transforms the resort into an enchanted village where the magic of Christmas meets the charm of the winter sea. The iconic feature is the **Sand Nativity Scene**, now in its 22nd edition, promoted by Accademia della Sabbia and the Dome aghe savalon d'aur association. Confirmed highlights include the Villaggio del Gusto, the circular ice rink surrounding the large, illuminated tree in Piazza Fontana, and the Lignano Express. Moreover, from 5 December, PromoTurismoFVG will be present in the Villaggio del Natale with a typical mountain chalet where visitors can discover Friuli Venezia Giulia's gems and purchase discounted open-dated daily ski passes as a gift idea for skiing in the region's resorts, as well as 'Io sono Friuli Venezia Giulia' merchandise, the FVG Card and cycle route packages. Further new attractions will be unveiled very soon.

In **Grado**, Christmas begins on 6 December with the 'Presepi a Grado' exhibition, a widespread display of Nativity scenes from Italy, Austria and Slovenia, stretching from the Palazzo dei Congressi to the alleys of the historic centre (running until 1 February 2026). The most anticipated event is '**Arrivano le Varvuole**' (The Varvuole are coming), a **re-enactment of the ancient legend of the sea witches**, taking place at nightfall on 5 January at Mandracchio harbour. From 19 December to 6 January, the Winter Season 2025–2026 returns at the Imperial Beach, which is set to turn into an enchanted forest of lights and decorated trees. The heart of the experience is Bar Numero Uno, open daily from late morning until sunset and offering sun loungers and heated blankets to admire the sea; a heated hot tub; an outdoor sauna and a second cold tub for the 'after sauna' experience; grilled dishes cooked on the *spolert* (traditional stove); and a programme of events for all ages.

Culinary Flavours and Traditions

Christmas in Friuli Venezia Giulia is also about taste and conviviality: get ready for a journey through genuine flavours, open fires, the scent of spices and dishes narrating the history of a borderland. From the Carnia mountains to the coasts of Trieste and Grado, every valley and village guards a cuisine that unites diverse cultures, blending Central European and Adriatic influences to create dishes rich in character. In mountain taverns, **muset e brovada** is the true king of the holidays: this sausage plunges into the gentle acidity of turnips fermented in pomace, served with steaming polenta and a glass of full-bodied red wine. Another winter favourite is **frico** (whether soft or crispy) made with Montasio DOP cheese and potatoes, warming mountain huts and homes during the coldest days. **Rustic soups** are also abundant, such as the **Trieste Jota** featuring sauerkraut, beans and potatoes, or the **Carnia barley and bean soup**, symbols of simple yet genuine cuisine. On the tables of the Gorizia and Tarvisio areas, the Central European influence translates into rich and spiced dishes such as **beef or deer goulash** or **bread gnocchi**. In Carnia, the sweet-and-sour tradition finds its highest expression in **ciarsons**, one-of-a-kind ravioli

where herbs, ricotta and raisins coexist in a harmony of flavours that smells of winter and memory. In this season, the sea is dressed in calm and poetry. Here, the restaurants offer the [Grado boreto](#), the symbol of an essential yet refined cuisine made with fresh catch and the truest flavours. Winter encourages to live at a slower pace, perhaps over a glass of **Friulano wine** and a dish served at sunset. The traditional festive desserts round off the celebrations in style: [gubana](#) from the Natisone Valleys, [strucchi](#), and the [Trieste presnitz](#) rich with tasty nuts and spices and a slosh of grappa - the ideal end to an intimate evening of seasonal warmth and joy. Two themed routes are also worth highlighting: the [Fogolars route in Friuli-Venezia Giulia](#) dedicated to the 'hearth' - a symbol of Friulian culture, representing not only a large fireplace, but also a place where families meet and share - and the [Strada del prosciutto e della norcineria friulana](#), a tradition rooted in centuries of history and farming knowledge. Indeed, in this region pig ('purcìt' in the Friulian language) farming is shrouded in an almost sacred aura, a perfect synthesis of artisan expertise and respect for the land that gives rise to extraordinary products.

Christmas is also Wellness

Those seeking relaxation will find refuge in the [Arta Thermal Baths](#) and the [new mountain resorts](#) in Carnia or Valcanale-Canal del Ferro, where nature and comfort merge in an atmosphere of pure regeneration. Hay baths, massages with Alpine herbs and candlelit dinners complete an offering dedicated to body and soul, ideal for those wishing to grant themselves a Christmas of balance and inner peace. This experience is also available at the [Roman Baths of Monfalcone](#), which reopened at the start of November, and the new [Grado Marine Baths](#), which will reopen in the first weeks of December 2025 following a complete conservative restoration.

Art and Culture

Christmas also means art and major exhibitions. Five exhibitions conclude the year of **Nova Gorica–Gorizia European Capital of Culture**: 'Sul confine della pace. La grande bellezza scuote il mondo in fiamme' (Church of San Carlo and Palazzo del Seminario), featuring eleven masterpieces in dialogue with Picasso's Guernica cartoon (1955); at **Casa Morassi**, in Borgo Castello, 'Tre sguardi. Steve McCurry, Meta Krese e Alex Majoli'; at the Museum of Santa Chiara, 'Basaglia. Dove gli occhi non arrivano', featuring photos by Gianni Berengo Gardin, Raymond Depardon and Ferdinando Scianna; at **Palazzo Attems Petzenstein**, 'Da Capa a Bischof. La grande mostra sulla guerra e sulla pace dei fotografi Magnum'; finally, the opening of **DAG – Digital Art Gallery** in the restored **Bombi gallery**, a digital art project by **Refik Anadol**, one of the most important, influential and recognised artists in contemporary digital art.

Major exhibitions also continue beyond Gorizia: at **Villa Manin** in Passariano di Codroipo, 'Confini da Gauguin a Hopper' features over a hundred 19th and 20th-century masterpieces, whereas in **Pordenone**, the **Palazzo del Fumetto** presents 'L'Eroica Fifa Blu' dedicated to Lupo Alberto and the **Bertoia Gallery** holds the photographic exhibition 'Robert Doisneau. Lo sguardo che racconta'. **Olivia Arthur, Seiichi Furuya and Stefanie Moshammer** are also on display at the **Civic Art Museum Palazzo Ricchieri** and the new Pordenone cultural markets as a grand preview for **Pordenone Italian Capital of Culture 2027**. In **Aquileia**, the **National Archaeological Museum**'s 'Gli Dei Ritornano. I Bronzi di San Casciano' showcases exceptional Etruscan-Roman finds retrieved in Tuscany, revealing the spirituality, ingenuity and refinement of an ancient civilisation hidden for over two millennia. Finally, in **Trieste**, at the **Salone degli Incanti**, 'Tolkien. Uomo, Professore, Autore' (until 11 January 2026) offers an immersive experience among manuscripts and maps. 'Fashionlands – Clothes Beyond Borders' (until 4 January 2026) also continues, exploring clothing as a language between art, design and society. All information available at [Art and Culture](#)