

No Toy Guns Allowed this Christmas

Patrizia Orioli (December 09, 2011)



Holiday shopping in Italy is a fun and festive experience especially in outdoor Christmas markets. The mayor of Pomigliano d'Arco is encouraging the venture and forbidding anything reminiscent of war and violence.

Did you know that Italy is where people first began celebrating Christmas? Under the reign of Emperor Constantine Italians began celebrating the birth of Christ. To this day they have remained devoted, passionate and extravagant when it comes to enjoying Christmas. A holiday tradition, that is cherished and kept alive all over Italy, is that of the Christmas markets (in Italian, [mercatini di natale](#) [2]).

The stalls of [Piazza Navona](#) [3], one of Rome's most beautiful squares become an open-air shopping mall where kids can find their favorite sweets, toys, Christmas ornaments and most of all, characters for their crèches. Via [San Gregorio Armeno](#) [4], in the heart of Naples' old town, is often called the street of nativity workshops. Lining the narrow pedestrian street are artisan workshops making nativity scenes and terra cotta figures. Tiny shops sell Christmas crib figurines and souvenirs, ranging from very high quality to inexpensive. Besides the Jesus- and Madonna figurines you will also find detailed copies of all household objects, gastronomic delights, exotic animals, and sometimes



even caricatured politicians and entertainment stars.

Nativity scenes, decorations, toys, candles, lines and traditional products and crafts are just a few of the treats people can find in the Christmas Markets, for the first time ever as an experiment, scattered around [Pomigliano d'Arco](#) [5]'s three main squares: Piazza Mercato, Piazza Municipio and Piazza Primavera, in the period of time that goes from December 8th to the 30th. "This is an experiment," assessor Giacinto Farnese said, "that the municipal administration is promoting proudly."

Pomigliano d'Arco is a municipality in the province of Naples, near Mount Vesuvius. The city is home to several automobile (former Alfa Romeo Alfasud plant, now owned by [Fiat](#) [6]) and aeronautic manufacturing firms ([Alenia](#) [7]). It has recently been in the news because of the decision to exclude some specific items from the merchandise available for sale.

The stalls will be a total of 28, and they will be available to all those licensed to commercialize in public areas, individual entrepreneurs or companies, craftsmen, artists or whoever wishes to sell their creations. "The goal of this initiative," Farnese continues, "is to attract people to our area during the holiday season in order to give a new push to our trade in the present moment of economic crisis."

No matter what, all products sold must capture and respect the Christmas spirit and the administration is in charge of selecting and endorsing everything that will be on sale. This means, no firecrackers, no weapons of any sort, no firearms or ammunitions. Anything that resembles a weapon is forbidden too. That means no darts, water guns or toy knives or swords. But the list does not end here. Anything that is considered inappropriate will not be for sale, including any electronic device that can normally be purchased in any store. There is room only for the Christmas spirit and its manifestations in all different shapes and sizes.

Some of Italy's best markets are: Christkindlmarkt in Bolzano, Mercato Tedesco di Natale in Florence, Piazza Navona in Rome, the Arena market in Verona, Oh Bej, Oh Bej in Milan, Mercantino di Natale in Trento, and San Gregorio Armeno in Naples.

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[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/mercatinonatalebig1323461146jpg>

[2] <http://www.mercatinidinatale.com>

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piazza_Navona

[4] <http://www.portanapoli.com/Eng/naples/san-gregorio-armeno.html>

[5] <http://www.comune.pomiglianodarco.na.it/>

[6] <http://www.fiat.com>

[7] <http://www.aleniana.com>