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Carnival Is Coming to Europe

DESTINATION & TOURISM | [JAMES RUGGIA](#) | JANUARY 13, 2015



PHOTO: This year why not do St. Valentine's Day in Venice and then do Carnival as well?

Carnival is coming, with Fat Tuesday falling this year on Feb. 17 just three days after another popular holiday, St. Valentine's Day, which this year falls on a Saturday. Though Carnival is celebrated as a feast of abandon, it is for Catholics around the world a chance to indulge in the things one will do without during Lent, the

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period that runs from Ash Wednesday (Feb. 18 this year) until Easter Sunday.

Different cities celebrate Carnival differently. Though there are many different lengths of the feast, the real culmination will be on Feb. 17.

In northern Germany, where Carnival is called the Fool's Season, the celebration runs from Nov. 11 to Feb.

17. This year Venice will hold its Carnival from Feb. 6 to Feb. 17 and Rio will hold its celebration from Feb. 13 to 17 and in Trinidad the celebration is on Feb. 16 and 17. In New Orleans Mardi Gras focuses on Fat Tuesday (Feb. 17). In all of these celebrations, the culmination is on Feb. 17.

“Europeans have been staging festivals and celebrations for hundreds of years,” said Harry Dalgaard, the president of [Avanti Destinations](#). “Only in Europe will you find such a diversity of pageantry with historical costumes, time-honored rituals and good times.”

The Venice Carnival, with its 18th-century appeal, has a different feel than any other Carnival celebration. It's the elegance of Carnival in Venice, epitomized by the baroque masks that participants wear as they march out from Saint Marks Plaza throughout the city.

Barbara Calaba's [eGuide to Carnival in Venice](#) helps visitors to penetrate the complexities of the celebration. It gives a full rundown of the history, places, activities, current program, and historic figures of the Carnival. Knowing the details is essential. Every day, the free Carnival program on St. Mark's Square changes and helps you to find out where the various parades and “masques” are taking place, or where to purchase costumes or mask-making workshops.

Carnival in Venice appeals to a special kind of traveler. “These are people who are dedicated Italy travelers or travelers who have done other Carnivals in Rio or New Orleans,” said Debbie Faiola, a travel expert with [ItalyVacations.com](#), a division of [Perillo Tours](#).



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ItalyVacations' three day Carnival of Venice is priced from \$1,590 per person double and includes two nights at a four star hotel with breakfast, one day traditional costume rental and a gala dinner. The pricing depends on travel dates and doesn't include international airfare, arrival and departure transfers, and certain other details. "It works well as an add-on to a longer tour," said Faiola, "we can add it to a Perillo tour or custom build an itinerary for the traveler."

Avanti Destinations specializes in customizing travel. It's offering Carnival in Venice as one of five new customizable itineraries focused on traditional celebrations. Avanti's four-day/three-night Carnival of Venice, priced from \$1,295 per person double, operates between Jan. 31 and March 17 and includes a private gondola ride and private Secret Venice walking tour. The company also offers a four-day/three-night Fasching (Carnival) in Cologne, one of Europe's largest street festivals, traditionally presided over by a costumed trio: a virgin, a prince and a farmer. The celebration features parades, stage shows, and costumes.

The timing of these packages would work wonderfully with St. Valentine's Day. Traveler could fly out on Friday for their special romantic Valentine experience and then move right into the pageantry of Carnival.



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