

Genuine Mamoiada's festivals, feasts and rites

Feasts have always marked the passing of time of the island communities, especially today, after giving more importance to many minor festivals. They are connected to people's desire and need to express their own unique cultural identity. In Sardinia, *andare per feste* (going to feasts) means immersing yourself in an ancient culture: you discover emotional sounds and melodies, rhythmic dances, timeless poetic events, thrilling horse races, people who wear precious and colourful ancient costumes (the fabulous Sardinian costumes) and walk in procession or ride a horse.

These feasts often last several days and involve the entire community. For these occasions, typical desserts are made and everyone can enjoy traditional food in the banquets that are often organized.

Throughout the year, Mamoiada holds many festivals. Among these, of great interest are the fairs with food and agricultural products and on local handicraft, the feasts in honour of the saints Cosmas and Damian, saint Sebastian, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and Our Lady of the Snows. Until the 1960s, saint Isidore the Farmer was also celebrated, with one of the biggest and long-awaited festivals. This was the feast of the farmers and was related to the ancient agricultural tradition.

One of feasts Mamoiada's people like the most is the one of Sant'Antonio (Saint Anthony the Great), or *Sant'Antoni* in Sardinian Language. In honour of this saint, on the 16th and 17th of January, big bonfires are lit in the whole of Sardinia. During Holy Week, touching rites are celebrated.