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[illegible]

To carry a model of a ship called carrus navalis from the local lagoon temple to the sea or nearby river. A contracted carrus navalis forms Carnevale quite neatly, so this is an interesting thing to know and consider about the provenance of the term.

8. The Carnival of Venice Used to Last Months! The Modern Carnivale of Venice lasts on average two and half weeks. The main public events are spread throughout this period with the most important ones being: Opening night of the Venetian Carnival. This is when a large water parade takes place on Rio di Cannaregio - one of the main canals in Venice. It is a beautiful spectacle with lavishly decorated barges and boats on which acrobats perform gravity-defying acts. The event attracts incredibly large crowds to the point of being difficult to move around... Festa della Marie - usually on the Saturday before Shrove Thursday; Flight of the Angel - usually on the Sunday before Shrove Thursday; Flight of the Eagle - usually on the last Sunday of Carnival; Flight of the Lion - on the last day of Carnival; and Silent Regatta - on the last night of the Venetian Carnival. This is when the electricity along the Grand Canal is switched off and the lavish palaces there are illuminated with thousands of lit candles. Boats draped in black with crews in black then silently glide down the Grand Canal thus symbolising the end of the madness of Carnival.

9. The Carnival of Venice used to be even longer! For example, in 1989 it lasted a month. And back in the 11th-12th centuries, it would start on the Day of St. Stephen on 26th December and go on until Shrove Tuesday. In the centuries that followed, Carnival grew and grew in length. At one point, it started when the opera houses and the theatres of Venice opened their doors in October, then broke off for Christmas and resumed after Epiphany to last until Shrove Tuesday. Then, again, masks could be worn at several other times during the year. Not just for reasons of fun but also to provide discretion and anonymity. 5. Masks Are At the Heart of the Venetian Carnival

For many centuries, the Historic Carnival of Venice provided easy access to liberty and equality which were guaranteed by the wearing of masks. Behind the mask, everyone could be anyone and everyone commanded equal respect. Buongiorno, Siora Maschera! – ‘Good Day, My Mask!’ – was the standard greeting addressed to a person wearing a mask as he could be a man or a woman, a pauper or a prince. As the great social equaliser, the mask gave freedom and helped avoid scrutiny. The Modern Carnival of Venice upholds the custom of wearing a mask. Nowadays, Venetians make them predominantly a symbol of beauty and mystery. Handmade and sumptuously decorated, you will find them in artisan shops all around town. A big portion of the experience of being at the Venetian Carnival is the visual delight of seeing all the masked people standing at different iconic spots. From St. Mark's Square to the Church of San Zaccaria, from Cafe' Florian to numerous small squares, beautiful maschere - as these people are known - pose for endless photos hidden completely behind elaborate costumes and full-face masks. They don't accept payment for posing in public places and come from all over the world. Usually, there are many French, German, and Italian people between them. Many return year after year, each time with an even more splendid costume than the previous Carnival. Often, it has taken years of planning and preparation to get ready for the occasion. Some have been working on their look since childhood. Their patience to stand still while surrounded by thousands of people clamouring for a picture with them. Seeing them makes you want to have a Venetian mask for yourself. Something sumptuous and totally impractical to take home from Venice with you. Something that will bring beauty in your life even on the greyest of days. It's quite lucky then that the ancient craft of mask making has been revived in Venice over the last four decades. Nowadays, there are several artisan mask makers in the city of water. Visiting their shops is like finding yourself in a magical world. If you want to buy your own Venetian mask either to wear or to decorate your home with, then, have a look at this extensive blog post. It gives you all the practical information you need to make the perfect choice: Venetian Masks - 10 Things to Know Before You Buy 6. Nothing Stops the Carnival of Venice Unless It's Cancelled There is an old Venetian saying that goes like this: Il Carnevale non puo' essere interrotto. It basically means that the Carnival of Venice cannot be interrupted no matter what. In the past, the Venetians went to extremes in order not to interfere in any way with the progress of Carnival. To the point that in 1789, when Doge Paolo Renier died on 13th February in the middle of the Carnival, his passing was made public news only on the 2nd March after the celebrations had come to an end. Unfortunately, when in 1797 Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Venice he didn't hesitate to commit the greatest transgression - he actually cancelled all public Carnival events and banned masks to be worn outside. Since the Carnival's revival in 1979, it has been running smoothly unless you consider the following instances:

In 1991, the Carnival of Venice was cancelled because of the Gulf War. In 2013, the public events of the Carnival of Venice were suspended for a day due to the heavy snowfall that had befallen Venice that February. The snow was followed by an exceptionally high acqua alta, too. In 2020, the Carnival of Venice was cancelled with two days left to its end due to the escalating COVID pandemic. However, I think we may see some form of celebration next year, though they haven't decided yet. But if it doesn't happen, I'm pretty confident that the programme will be defined on the basis of the Covid-19 emergency trend. In any case, it would be comprehensible understandable if the Carnival's public events don't go ahead this year.

7. Before Confetti They Used to Throw Perfume-Filled Eggshells at the Venetian Carnival Throwing confetti with wild abandon is one of the great delights of celebrating the Carnival in Italy in general and Venice in particular. You simply haven't lived until you have thrown handfuls of colourful tiny pieces of paper at strangers around you while they are doing the same to you. It unlocks something very primal. It removes the fear of being silly in public and it makes you join full-heartedly in the fun. Nowadays, bag bags of confetti in different sizes are sold everywhere for the duration of the Carnival in Italy. At some Carnival events, they even employ confetti cannons! Puff! And you get covered in the tiny itchy things! Only to start grabbing at the confetti in your own bag and throw them thus spreading joy and cheer around. Well, many centuries before confetti were invented, the Venetians used to throw something else at their Carnival. Namely, perfume-filled eggshells! Apparently, this was a great lighting technique. For example, if you fancied a certain lady, you could throw rosewater-filled eggshell at her! However, some Venetian miscreants hidden behind a mask decided that they could throw eggshells filled with ink instead. Not to the ladies of their heart, I hope! This soon became a public hazard and the Venetian Senate had to intervene. So, a new law was voted in expressly forbidding anyone wearing a mask to throw eggshells! This happened in 1268, by the way! A long, long time ago but the lesson stuck!

In 1979, when the Carnival of Venice was revived, a special ordinance was passed in advance to prevent history from repeating itself. The ordinance forbade the throwing of flour, eggs, and other projectiles by the Carnival celebrants. Instead, paper confetti (called coriandoli in Italian) took off and to this day they are the most popular and cheapest way to celebrate. People love to throw confetti at others who are dressed in elaborate costumes. It adds to the festive atmosphere. Traditionally, the main Carnival celebrations took place on Fat Thursday. The focus of all events and performances was Piazzetta San Marco. This is the small but splendid extension that juts out of the majestic St. Mark's Square. Nowadays, Piazzetta San Marco is flanked by the pink and white Doge's Palace on one side and the solemn Sansovino Library on the other. At the start of the Historic Venetian Carnival though it was more of a market place with shacks selling meat and salami there. Still, for Carnival, they would clear out the square. The Doge would position himself on the small balcony which you can still see on the facade of the Doge's Palace. The dignitaries and nobility of Venice would stand in a specially erected tribune. Among the main acts stood out: The slaughtering of twelve pigs and a bull - This was done year after year and reenacted an important part of Venetian historic event. In 1162 the city of water had fought against the patriarchal city of Aquileia (nowadays a town with lots of Roman and early Christian ruins in the northeastern Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia). Venetians were victorious and captured the city's patriarch and his twelve canons. They brought them to Venice and to humiliate them, the doge dispatched them back to Aquileia commanding them to send back twelve pigs and one bull in their place. The animals were tried in the Ducal court, sentenced to death and slaughtered. Then the dignitaries of Venice entertained themselves by destroying wooden models of the castles and fortifications that were allies to Aquileia. The practice of beholding the animals with one clean strike in the midst of the Carnival celebrations survived more or less until the middle of the 16th century. This is when the Venetian society started favouring more refined forms of entertainment. A military dance called maresca - it was performed with daggers or wooden sticks by the workers in Venice's shipyard Arsenal. Forze d'Ercole (in English, Hercules' Labours) - these were acrobats forming human pyramids which seemingly defied the laws of gravity and strength and wogging men in the crowd. Another tradition involved blindfolded prisoners walking through narrow streets carrying a pot on their head and pouring wine. These traditions faded away in the late nineteenth century. Over the years, however, the carnival spirit remained alive. During the party would end in the cold waters of the canals. Especially popular were the fights between the warring family clans of the Castellani and the Nicolotti. They lived on the opposite sides of the Grand Canal and the tensions between them started even before their ancestors had moved to the islands in the Venetian Lagoon to escape the Barbarian Invasion on the mainland. The Ponte dei Pugni (literally, Bridge of Fists) in the Venetian sestiere of Dorsoduro is where some of the most ferocious battles took place. Nowadays, you can see on the bridge the marks where the warring men had placed their feet while waiting for the signal to start the fistfight. Ox hunts held at different spots around Venice were another popular Carnival event. The oxen were incited and dangerously agitated. Then a pack of dogs was set upon them. The aim was for the dogs to shred to tears the ears of the bulls. The bloodshed would excite the spectators and be perceived as a symbol of fertility. Hence the oxen - wounded and heavily bleeding - would be presented to the maidens of Venice. It was a reference to their future weddings with the hope that they would produce the male heirs to uphold and increase the glory of the Serenissima Republic of Venice. 9. The Carnival of Venice Sends an Angel Flying Down a Steel Rope The Volo dell'Angelo (in English, Flight of the Angel) is without a doubt the absolute highlight of the Modern Carnival of Venice. This is when a beautiful girl is suspended from a steel line and then slides slowly and gracefully between the top of the 99 metres high St. Mark's Bell Tower to the main Carnival stage at St. Mark's Square. It's breathtaking to watch and thousands of people flock to see it to the point that the square becomes a huge sea of faces looking upwards. This daredevil performance has its origins in the Volo del Turco - a tightrope act performed at the Historic Carnival of Venice since 1558. In 1, an acrobat walked from the top of the same bell tower to a boat anchored in the water lapsing the Piazzetta San Marco. The act owes its name to the fact that the turks and moguls often wore turbans and carried swords. He also sent flying a pair of birds, a dove and a falcon. Both were released safely. When the bird flew free, the acrobat jumped onto the ground and landed safely. In 1939, the acrobat tragically fell to his death. From then onwards, the flight of the angel replaced the volo del turco. On the first anniversary of the Doge's Palace fire in 1979, Venetians resorted to using wooden doves to glide down the rope while releasing flowers and gifts over the crowd below. With the start of the Modern Carnival of Venice, the tradition was revived. Nowdays, it is performed by a beautiful girl dressed in a splendid costume reflecting the Carnival theme which changes every year. The Flight of the Angel quickly became such a popular event that a second flight was introduced in recent years. It's known as the Flight of the Eagle and it's performed by a famous Italian personality on the last Sunday before the end of Carnevale. There is also a third flight performed down the steel rope. Called the Flight of the Lion it takes place on the last day of the Carnival. This is when a huge Venetian flag is slowly lowered from the top of St. Mark's bell tower to the Carnival stage thus symbolising the end of yet another Carnival. 10. The Carnival of Venice Gave Us the Word for Marionettes While string puppets have been around for millennia, many claim that it was the Carnival of Venice that gave us a name for them: Marionettes! If you look at the programme of the Modern Carnival, you will notice that the Festa delle Marie is one of the central events on it. This is when twelve of the most beautiful girls from the islands in the Venetian Lagoon walk from the Basilica of San Pietro in the sestiere of Castello all the way to St. Mark's Square. It's a big and splendid parade. Along the way , the girls are carried on modern boards supported on the shoulders of young and strapping Venetian men. The event's historic roots pre-date those of the Venetian Carnival. Back in 943, twelve girls were kidnapped from the Basilica of San Pietro by Istrian pirates. The girls were from the poorest families in Venice and the Doge had gifted them lavish dresses and dowries, coinciding with the possibility of escaping slavery and marrying well. The kidnapping was successful. After returning to the island, the pirates asked the girls to marry them. The girls refused. The pirates killed three of the girls and stole their riches. Since then, the Feast of the Twelve Girls has become a tradition of the Venetian Carnival. The feast took place between the 31st January and the 2nd February which coincide with the Day of the Purification of the Virgin Mary. With the advent of the Venetian Carnival, the Feast of the Twelve Maries was absorbed in it and soon became one of the main Carnival events. Each year, twelve poor girls were chosen to be gifted dowry and jewels by the Doge. Afterwards, they took part in a parade through the streets of Venice and feasted at the Doge's Palace. In 1349, a decision was taken to replace the girls with wooden dolls. Apparently, it was felt that the Feast of the Maries had become more of an occasion to meet the girls up close and personal rather than a celebration of the glory of Venice and the Purification of the Virgin Mary. Venetians, outraged by the change, soon took it upon themselves to throw eggs, rotten fruit and vegetables onto the wooden dolls. The event soon lost its veneer of respectability and was suppressed in the second half of the 14th century. Although the feast stopped being celebrated, it left us a linguistic reference. They say that the word marionette was inspired by the wooden dolls that stood in for the Twelve Maries. With the re-birth of the Modern Carnival of Venice, the Feast of the Twelve Maries has been restored, too. The event is a bit like a beauty pageant inspired in the Middle Ages. Girls from all around the Venetian Lagoon apply to take part. The chosen Twelve Maries then spent the Carnival period taking part in many different events and masked balls. At the end of Carnevale, one of them is crowned a winner. Her biggest prize is that she becomes the Angel who flies down from the top of St. Mark's Bell Tower during the following year's edition of the Carnival of Venice. 11. The Carnival of Venice Has a Sweet Tooth You might count this to the Carnival of Venice and not taste its traditional sweets. Just kidding! No, seriously, they do! One of the highlights of the festival is the opportunity to indulge in delicious Venetian confectionery. You'll find a lot of stalls offering various types of sweet treats, ranging from simple cakes to more elaborate pastries. The Carnival of Venice is famous for its unique culinary traditions, and indulging in these sweets is a must-do activity. Here are some of the most popular Venetian desserts you should try during your visit:

- Baci: Small almond cookies dipped in chocolate.
- Tiramisu: A creamy dessert layered with coffee-soaked biscuits and mascarpone cheese.
- Caneloni: Ravioli-like pasta stuffed with ricotta cheese and topped with tomato sauce and melted cheese.
- Dolci alla Veneziana: Assortment of small pastries and candies available at the Fondamenta della Biadene degli Ulivi.
- Frutti di Mare: Seafood-themed ice cream flavors featuring ingredients like shrimp, lobster, and scallops.
- Gelato Artigianale: High-quality gelato served in colorful cones or cups.
- Strudel: Flaky pastries filled with apples, raisins, and cinnamon.
- Crocchette: Fried dumplings filled with meat or vegetable mixtures.
- Polenta e Osei: Creamy polenta topped with fried fish bones (osei).

The Carnival of Venice offers a delightful blend of cultural heritage and gastronomic pleasure. By savoring these traditional sweets, visitors can truly immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of Venetian cuisine and festivities.

12. The Carnival of Venice Is Not the Only One in the Venetian Lagoon Known as a big celebration all over Italy. And while the Carnival of Venice is one of the largest and most well-known Carnivals in the world, Venice is