

Slow Italian, Fast Learning

Ep.401: Santa, elves under pressure as Christmas Eve nears

| Italian | English |
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| <p>Il Villaggio di Babbo Natale si trova ai margini del Circolo Polare Artico, a circa otto chilometri a nord di Rovaniemi, la capitale della Lapponia finlandese.</p> <p>In questo periodo dell'anno, il sole non sorge prima delle 11 del mattino, ma questo non impedisce a Babbo Natale e ai suoi fidati elfi di lavorare alacremente agli ultimi preparativi per la vigilia di Natale.</p> <p>"The preparations for Christmas are going so good because the elves have been very busy. And they are very skilful. They are hardworking and they have been doing a lot. There's lots to do with the gifts, for example. They have been training the reindeer, of course. And we have been polishing Rudolph's nose, of course, that's one thing you have to do for Christmas. There has been very much, and we have done almost all."</p> <p>Con la sua lista quasi completa, Babbo Natale è ora in grado di dare il suo verdetto sul comportamento dei bambini nel corso del 2025.</p> <p>"I think mostly they have been quite good almost all the time, and that's enough. I always say that if you try to do your best, that is enough. There was a rumour that I have been saying that you should be very nice and kind all the time. That's not possible. I think adults know that. It's not possible and that's not a demand. So, please try to do your best, that is enough."</p> <p>Secondo l'ente turistico locale, ogni anno oltre 700.000 persone visitano questa destinazione a tema natalizio per incontrare</p> | <p>Santa Claus Village sits perched on the edge of the Arctic Circle, about eight kilometres north of Rovaniemi, the capital of Finnish Lapland.</p> <p>At this time of year, the sun doesn't rise until around 11am, but that doesn't stop Santa and his trusty elves from busily making their final preparations for Christmas Eve.</p> <p>"The preparations for Christmas are going so good because the elves have been very busy. And they are very skilful. They are hardworking and they have been doing a lot. There's lots to do with the gifts, for example. They have been training the reindeer, of course. And we have been polishing Rudolph's nose, of course, that's one thing you have to do for Christmas. There has been very much, and we have done almost all."</p> <p>With Santa's list almost complete, he's now able to give his verdict on whether children have been naughty or nice during 2025.</p> <p>"I think mostly they have been quite good almost all the time, and that's enough. I always say that if you try to do your best, that is enough. There was a rumour that I have been saying that you should be very nice and kind all the time. That's not possible. I think adults know that. It's not possible and that's not a demand. So, please try to do your best, that is enough."</p> <p>According to the local tourist board, over 700,000 people typically visit the Christmas-</p> |

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| <p>Babbo Natale, giocare sulla neve e immergersi nell'atmosfera festiva.</p> <p>Visitatori provenienti dalla Gran Bretagna, da Singapore e dall'Italia hanno detto che è stata un'esperienza magica.</p> <p>VOXIE 1: "It's absolutely magical. It's just once you're here, you're in Father Christmas Land."</p> <p>VOXIE 2: "For me, it's very magical because it's kind of my second time seeing snow and this is my first time seeing such thick snow, so I feel really happy."</p> <p>VOXIE 3: "It's hard not to feel Christmas here. You have the snow, you have the lights, you have the elves..."</p> <p>Nel frattempo, per gli australiani Todd Pattison ed Evelyn Morris il bianco Natale innevato è diverso dalla loro tradizione.</p> <p>PATTISON: "Pretty different. I think it's like 42 degrees Celsius at home at the moment, so we're sending photos to the family and they're pretty shocked."</p> <p>MORRIS: "Yeah, everyone wears their Christmas jumpers but it's in rash vest form, so you can swim in the pool in them. We don't really have the classic Christmas jumpers."</p> <p>Babbo Natale è presente qui tutti i giorni dell'anno, anche in piena estate.</p> <p>Lui dice che a volte gli adulti reagiscono in modo strano e che talvolta si è trovato sotto lo sguardo attento di persone scettiche.</p> <p>"The first question is, 'where is the blue bicycle I wrote to you in my letter about 40 years ago', for example? Or the train set or something like that. It comes quite often they are asking for that. Then we are thinking about it. First thing I ask, did you write me a letter then? And then there's a quiet moment because they remembered that they didn't write me a letter."</p> | <p>themed destination every year to meet Santa, play in the snow and get in the festive spirit.</p> <p>Visitors from Britain, Singapore and Italy say it's been a magical experience.</p> <p>VOXIE 1: "It's absolutely magical. It's just once you're here, you're in Father Christmas Land."</p> <p>VOXIE 2: "For me, it's very magical because it's kind of my second time seeing snow and this is my first time seeing such thick snow, so I feel really happy."</p> <p>VOXIE 3: "It's hard not to feel Christmas here. You have the snow, you have the lights, you have the elves..."</p> <p>Meanwhile, for Australians Todd Pattison and Evelyn Morris the snowy white Christmas is different from their tradition.</p> <p>PATTISON: "Pretty different. I think it's like 42 degrees Celsius at home at the moment, so we're sending photos to the family and they're pretty shocked."</p> <p>MORRIS: "Yeah, everyone wears their Christmas jumpers but it's in rash vest form, so you can swim in the pool in them. We don't really have the classic Christmas jumpers."</p> <p>Santa Claus can be found here every day of the year - even in the middle of summer.</p> <p>Santa says sometimes he has a strange reaction from adults and has even found himself under close scrutiny from sceptics.</p> <p>"The first question is, 'where is the blue bicycle I wrote to you in my letter about 40 years ago', for example? Or the train set or something like that. It comes quite often they are asking for that. Then we are thinking about it. First thing I ask, did you write me a letter then? And then there's a quiet moment because they remembered that they didn't write me a letter."</p> |
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Per chi non può incontrare Babbo Natale di persona, c'è sempre la buona vecchia posta tradizionale.

Nell'ufficio postale vicino, gli elfi di Babbo Natale sono impegnati a smistare migliaia di lettere inviate da tutto il mondo.

Un elfo, Elina, dice che i tempi sono cambiati, ma il loro lavoro rimane lo stesso.

"Things like Legos are always popular, books as well. But nowadays, also of course electronics, new phones or laptops and things like that. And this year, I would say, Labubus have been a big, big hit as well."

Ogni Natale l'ufficio postale riceve oltre mezzo milione di lettere e richieste di regali.

Nei periodi di punta, il numero può superare le 30.000 lettere al giorno.

La maggior parte della posta proviene da Polonia, Italia, Taiwan e Giappone.

"Even though most people are now sending most of their messages through online ways, they still know that Santa Claus is an old-fashioned person and prefers the actual letters."

Quando tutte le lettere sono state lette e i regali impacchettati, Babbo Natale trasmette il suo messaggio natalizio al mondo, sperando che coloro che festeggiano possano condividere il suo desiderio di pace.

"This Christmas I hope that we all keep in mind that we have one world, one common home. And I hope this Christmas we could take a moment to think about how could Christmas bring us closer to each other? How could we all live in peace together around the world? So, I would say Merry and Peaceful Christmas."

For those who can't meet Santa in person, there's always good, old-fashioned mail.

In the nearby post office, Santa's elves are busily sorting through thousands of letters sent from all around the world.

One elf, Elina, says times have changed but their jobs remain the same.

"Things like Legos are always popular, books as well. But nowadays, also of course electronics, new phones or laptops and things like that. And this year, I would say, Labubus have been a big, big hit as well."

The post office receives over half a million letters and wish-lists every Christmas.

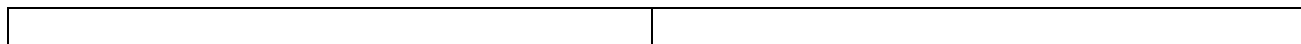
At peak times, it can rise to over 30,000 letters a day.

The most mail comes from Poland, Italy, Taiwan and Japan.

"Even though most people are now sending most of their messages through online ways, they still know that Santa Claus is an old-fashioned person and prefers the actual letters."

When all the letters are read and presents packed, Santa delivers his Christmas message to the world, hoping those who celebrate can share in his wish for peace.

"This Christmas I hope that we all keep in mind that we have one world, one common home. And I hope this Christmas we could take a moment to think about how could Christmas bring us closer to each other? How could we all live in peace together around the world? So, I would say Merry and Peaceful Christmas."



Report by Sam Dover for SBS News.

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