

# Tourism chiefs see future in medieval make-believe

## Italy

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Italy plans to draw history-loving tourists to ancient hilltop villages and towns by promoting local historical re-enactments, from costumed processions to horse races and military battles.

Enit, the country's tourism board, has signed a protocol to create a network of 28 locations — including San Gimignano, Perugia and Civita di Bagnoregio — with the aim of introducing visitors to re-enactments.

However, critics dismiss the scheme as doing little for community spirit. "Invented traditions are mere theatre," said Claudio Vernier, president of the Piazza San Marco residents' association in Venice. "Their only purpose is to draw curious spectators and tourists."

Enit plans to develop packages by this summer for visitors to participate in numerous re-enactments, run workshops to help councils develop existing or new events and promote the initiatives abroad through tour operators and online, a press official said.

Italy's re-enactments range from traditional costumed events going back hundreds of years to more recent celebrations marking significant landmarks or periods. The towns joining the new network include Narni, near Terni in Umbria, which hosts the annual Corsa all'Anello, a procession of locals in tunics and chainmail building to a climactic race that was founded in 1969.

These celebrations are mainly local affairs, in contrast with much older traditions — including the Siena Palio, dating from the 11th century, and the Venice Carnival, first documented in the 12th century — which draw hundreds of thousands of visitors between them.

L'Ente per il turismo vede un futuro nella riedizione delle tradizioni medievali

