What is Aperitivo?

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“L’appetito vien mangiando,” is one of our favorite Italian sayings. Why? It roughly translates to, “Eating awakens the appetite.” We could not agree more, which is why we love aperitivo.

An aperitivo is a pre-meal drink; the experience of aperitivo is a cultural ritual. Derived from the Latin aperire, the tradition is meant “to open” the stomach before dining. Accordingly, for centuries Italians have said cheers – cin cin – over drinks and appetizers in the early evening hours between work and dinner.

Traditionally, an aperitivo is a carbonated, bitter, and low-alcohol beverage, such as the spritz, which is made with Prosecco, Aperol, and mineral water. More flexible today, orders range from wine to beer to a variety of mixed drinks. At Eataly, we are especially partial to the Negroni, a classic cocktail made with equal parts Campari, sweet vermouth, and gin (learn how to make it here!).

Typical aperitivo fare includes crackers, olives, meats, cheeses, and bread. If you have ever enjoyed

a salumi-and-formaggi board with a glass of wine at La Piazza at Eataly, you have had an aperitivo – even if you did not realize it!

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