

Field Guide to Venetian Carnival Masks



The *Bauta*



Bauta masks cover the entire face, and have a big nose and pointed chin that sticks out, allowing the wearer to talk, eat & drink. Paired with a black cape, this mask was worn by men at political functions that required anonymity for purposes of voting and decision-making

The *Colombina*



[photo source](#)

The Colombina is a half-mask, held up by a baton or tied around the head with a ribbon.

Named after a stock character from the Commedia dell'Arte theater tradition, this mask is often decorated with gems and feathers and is a favorite among women!

The *Plague Doctor*

(Medico della Peste)



[photo source](#)

This mask started out as part of a method for physicians to visit patients without catching the plague.

It is usually white, with a long beak and round, often bespectacled eyeholes

The *Pantalone*



[image source](#)

The father figure Pantalone, the one who wears the pants as his name suggests, is another character from Italian Commedia dell'Arte theater.

He is usually represented with a large nose, high brow, and slanted eyes.

The Zanni



[image source](#)

The Zanni (also known as Brighella or Truffaldino), is a clever servant character from the Commedia dell'Arte tradition.

This is a half-mask with a furrowed brow. Its characteristic long, curved nose is similar to the Plague Doctor, but less beak-like

The Arlecchino

(Harlequin)



This joker-like character is actually a second type of Zanni, but instead of witty and clever he is foolish and clumsy!

This mask has a blunt nose, round eyes, and a bump on the forehead representing a devil's horn. It is usually part of a colorful clown or joker-like costume

The Volto



[image source](#)

This is the iconic Venetian Carnival mask. It covers the whole face and is secured around the head with a ribbon.

It is usually white and can be lavishly decorated as part of an equally elaborate costume.

Now you know all about the different types of Venice Carnival Masks!
These days there are endless variations and combinations to be found.
Look especially for Volto masks that include elements of other masks like
the Colombina or Arlecchino.

There are plenty of impressive masks and costumes to be seen in Venice
during Carnival! Don't forget to buy one for yourself to take home as a
reminder of your trip to one of the most famously decadent festivals in the
world.

