

Certain parts of Abruzzo can be quite backwards by British standards. Many of the more rural parts or isolated country areas are literally stuck in a time warp. It can be like going back in time. People live the same sorts of lives as they did 50 years ago and don't seem to notice that time goes on.

One aspect of this is that male attitudes to women can be quite chauvinistic. Mostly women are expected to stay at home and bring up the family and keep home. Very few Abruzzo men help out round the house. In fact most of the households we know the men will not even take out a plate after they have eaten. They are waited on hand and foot and expect it. This goes equally so no matter what the household situation. Even if both partners are retired and could be expected to take an equal share of household duties.

More commonly these days is that women are also expected to work and take care of all the household duties. In fact as time goes on it seems the duties of women folk seem to be getting more and not less.

I turned up at my local butcher just before 1pm. 1pm is firmly fixed with Italians as lunch time. Therefore all Italian men assume that the woman has planned what to make the man for his lunch, been out shopping in the morning, prepared a wonderful lunch and stands at their service to serve it with a flourish. Obviously I was behind schedule to prepare and serve my husband's lunch so the butcher rebuked me. He asked in all seriousness if my husband would be angry with me for running so late with his lunch. Then he told me that all the other wives came out shopping early so they could be home in good time to prepare their husband's lunch. Of course I replied that my husband would be honoured if I prepared any lunch for him and would appreciate my efforts regardless of what time they came.

"Italian Mamones"

Italian Mamones is a concept that is all too popular in Italy. Italian mothers do not like to let go of their children. Especially the boys. They like to keep them close. Sometimes this can be taken to ridiculous lengths.

Where we used to live there was a house at the end of the lane. The husband had died so the son of about 45 lived with his mother. The sister also lived with them she would be about 40. The Mum was in her 70s. Enzo the name of the son also had a girlfriend. So this man was lucky enough to be fussed by 3 different women. He knew how lucky he was and never did a thing. The women did all the heavy lifting, all the housework, all the maintenance, growing of crops etc. He never, ever lifted a finger. He let it all go on around him. Even though his girlfriend and his wife worked and he was jobless and his mum in her 70s. One day we saw him take great delight in this. The whole family were down at the plot planting in veggies. They were all digging away, bent over doing this backbreaking work for hours. After an hour, Enzo came down the hill on his moped and looked on at the work they were doing. He looked for about half an hour. We asked him why he was not helping. He replied why would I work when I have a sister and a mum to do it all? He smiled. Then it started to spit with rain a little. So he started up his moped and sped off up the hill. Laughing as he took off, he left his poor old Mum and sister there getting wet and to carry all the heavy things up the hill on their own.

Italians all know that Italian sons stay at home too long and that Mums do not like to let them go. In fact they have adverts with sobbing mothers basically mocking the concept.

For Italians the whole concept is that you stay with your parents until you marry. As people marry later now this means that kids stay at home for longer than ever. This is culturally expected, in fact if an Italian moves away from home early it is assumed that the child has seriously fallen out with the parents. Also the economy means that young people generally can't

Chauvinism in Abruzzo - Abruzzo Life - Your guide to Abruzzo

Written by Administrator

Sunday, 15 August 2010 12:54

afford to buy their own home so they just stay at home. Also most Italian country homes tend to be built bigger then split into apartments so they can fit many generations into the same home. Italian matriarchs

In Italy "la mama" is everything. She is worshipped, she is honoured, she is always held in high esteem. Her wishes are respected. It is truly a matriarchal society. So really chauvinism has an up side in some respects. While many British women are expected to go out to work and even if their husbands don't expect them too, society expects them to. In Italy it is a lot more expected that the woman stay home and keep home. This work is a lot more dignified and womans work is still considered to be a huge part of life that takes up a lot of time and is a respectable activity for women in general. Also the women are expected to group together at home, often many generations of the family will stay home and cook and clean and cluck together over the children. Basically they get to do what women all over the world love to do. Provide a nourishing and loving environment for their children. So there are good and bad sides to the chauvinism.