

Festivus: An Austere Christmas [B1]

Dimenticati delle tradizioni natalizie! Quest'anno, celebra le Feste con un palo senza decorazioni, una cena frugale e un'amara serie di lamentele.

Are you tired of the festive season? Perhaps you're [annoyed](#) by the incessant commercialisation and consumerism. If so, why not forget the usual traditions: the decorations, the obligatory [joy](#), the [lavish meal](#) and even the gifts... and celebrate Festivus instead. This parody festival was popularised by the US sitcom Seinfeld, and is known and loved by fans of the series all around the world.

THE STRIKE

Festivus was invented by the father of Seinfeld writer Dan O'Keefe in the 1960s, as a non-commercial alternative to Christmas. O'Keefe introduced the concept to popular culture by writing an episode of Seinfeld based on it. The episode, called "The [Strike](#)", first aired in December 1997. It centred on the family of George Costanza, one of the series' main characters. In this episode, it is 23 December and the family patriarch announces: "It's a Festivus for the rest of us!". The family then participate in a series of ridiculous Festivus traditions, including an [uninspiring](#) dinner around a pole, and strange rituals such as the [Airing](#) of [Grievances](#), Festivus Miracles, and [Feats](#) of Strength.

CELEBRATING FESTIVUS

If this sounds [right up your street](#), then this 23 December you too can celebrate Festivus by replicating the activities of the Costanza family. First, find a Festivus Pole, a simple one with no decorations. This will be your alternative to a Christmas tree, and one of the focal points of the celebration. Next, prepare a Festivus dinner for your family and friends. In the Seinfeld episode, the Costanza family eats [meatloaf](#) and lettuce, and many Festivus

fans enjoy replicating this meal. There should be no **turkey** or any other typical festive food on the table.

BIZARRE ACTIVITIES

At the dinner, everyone must participate in the **Airing** of **Grievances**, in which each guest tells another all the ways in which they disappointed them during the year. That's certain to put everyone in an unfestive mood. You can then **partake** in the tradition of Festivus Miracles, by declaring a mundane event — such as waiting at the bus stop, or **emptying** the **cat litter** — a miracle. The celebration traditionally ends with the **Feats** of Strength competition, in which the family patriarch is **wrestled to the ground**.

Glossary

- **Airing** = messa in onda, trasmissione
- **turkey** = tacchino
- **Strike** = sciopero
- **Feats** = imprese
- **right up your street** = fa al caso tuo, è nelle tue corde
- **emptying** = svuotare
- **wrestled to the ground** = lottare fino a buttare a terra
- **annoyed** = infastidire, irritare
- **joy** = gioia, felicità
- **Grievances** = lamentele, rancori
- **meatloaf** = polpettone
- **cat litter** = lettiera per gatti
- **lavish meal** = lauto pasto
- **uninspiring** = deludente
- **partake** = partecipare