



Florence

POP 357,300

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Il Santo Bevitore (p105)
- ➔ Trattoria Mario (p102)
- ➔ Obikà (p101)
- ➔ Antica Trattoria da Tito (p103)
- ➔ iO Osteria Personale (p105)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Hotel Scoti (p96)
- ➔ Antica Torre dei Via de' Tornabuoni 1 (p97)
- ➔ Palazzo Guadagni Hotel (p100)
- ➔ Villa Landucci (p99)
- ➔ Academy Hostel (p98)

Why Go?

Return time and again and you still won't see it all. Stand on a bridge over the Arno river several times in a day and the light, mood and view changes every time. Surprisingly small as it is, this riverside city is like no other. Cradle of the Renaissance and of tourist masses that flock here to feast on world-class art, Florence (Firenze) is magnetic, romantic and busy. Its urban fabric has hardly changed since the Renaissance, its narrow streets evoke a thousand tales, and its food and wine are so wonderful the tag 'Fiorentina' has become an international label of quality assurance.

Fashion designers parade on Via de' Tornabuoni. Gucci was born here, as was Roberto Cavalli who, like many a smart Florentine these days, hangs out in wine-rich hills around Florence. After a while in this absorbing city, you might want to do the same.

Road Distances

Pisa	69			
Lucca	61	23		
San Miniato	37	47	70	
Siena	51	87	30	77
	Florence	Pisa	Lucca	San Miniato

Getting Around

Regular buses link Florence and Pisa airports with Florence's central train station, Stazione di Santa Maria Novella, from where the city centre is a 10-minute walk. Florence itself is small and best navigated on foot, with most major sights within easy walking distance. There are bicycles for rent and an efficient network of buses and trams. Unless you're mad, forget a car.

THREE PERFECT DAYS

Day 1: David Tour

Follow the world's most famous naked man: start with Michelangelo's original in the Galleria dell'Accademia, saunter past Piazza della Signoria's famous copy, then hit Museo del Bargello to see versions by Donatello and Andrea Verrocchio. Enjoy other Michelangelo creations in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana and Basilica di Santo Spirito; watch the sun set from Piazzale Michelangelo.

Day 2: Both Sides of the Arno

Spend the morning at the Uffizi, followed by a gourmet sandwich at 'Ino, or a wine-bar lunch at Cantinetta dei Verrazzano or La Canova di Gustavino. Should you have organised it in advance, take a guided tour of the Vasarian Corridor, or take our Walking Tour (p90) with a detour along Via de' Tornabuoni for window-shopping and a truffle *panino* at Procacci. Come evening, cross the Arno for an *aperitivo* at Le Volpe e L'uva or Il Santino, and dinner at Il Santo Bevitore or Il Guscio.

Day 3: No Art Please!

Begin on Piazza della Signoria with breakfast at Caffè Rivoire, then visit the Gucci Museo and have a coffee in its cafe. Walk to the river, where Museo Galileo enthral. Cross Ponte Vecchio for lunch at Il Ristoro or Olio & Convivium, then walk to Palazzo Pitti, behind which the city's loveliest green space, Giardino di Boboli, unfolds. Indulge in afternoon tea with a view in Giardino Bardini, then head east to San Niccolò. Savour the sunset from Piazzale Michelangelo and dinner at a Piazza Santo Spirito eatery.

Where to Stay

- Florence is unexpectedly small, rendering almost anywhere in the centre convenient.
- Budget hotels are clustered around the Santa Maria Novella train station and Mercato Centrale in neighbouring San Lorenzo.
- Hip Santa Croce and the Oltrarno are packed with great dining addresses.

DON'T MISS

No frescoes better portray the humanist spirit of the Renaissance than those by Fra' Angelico in Florence's Museo di San Marco (p80). The climax is his superb *Annunciazione* (c 1440).

Best Frescoes

- Chiesa di Santa Trinita (p75)
- Basilica di Santa Maria Novella (p76)
- Palazzo Medici-Riccardi (p78)
- Museo di San Marco (p80)
- Cappella Brancacci (p85)

Best City Panoramas

- Dome & Campanile, Duomo (p69)
- Torre d'Arnolfo, Palazzo Vecchio (p72)
- Piazzale Michelangelo (p92)
- La Terrazza, Continental Hotel (p107)

Resources

- **Florentine** (www.theflorentine.net) English-language newspaper
- **Florence Museums** (www.firenzemusei.it)
- **Florence Tourism** (www.firenzeturismo.it)
- **Art Trav** (www.arttrav.com) Penned by a Florence-based art historian
- **Firenze Spettacolo** (www.firenzespettacolo.it) City entertainment guide