

# San Marco

## Neighbourhood Top Five

**1 Basilica di San Marco** (p50) Joining the chorus of gasps rippling through the crowd as you enter Venice's magnificent cathedral, looking up to discover angels dancing across 8500 sq metres of glittering golden mosaics.

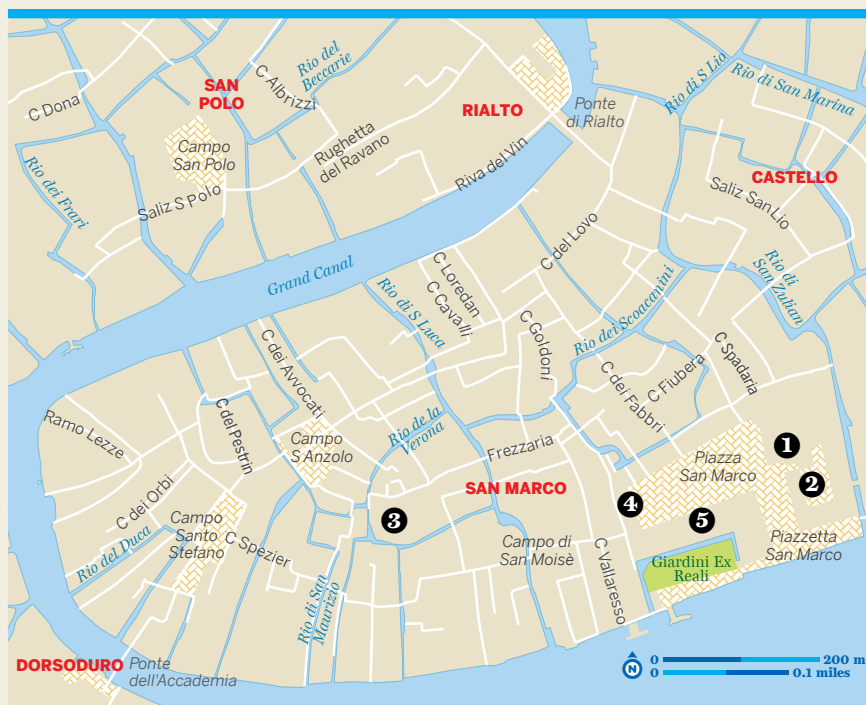
**2 Palazzo Ducale** (p53) Discovering over-the-top

state rooms, dark secrets, dingy prisons and blockbuster exhibitions behind the rosy facade.

**3 La Fenice** (p37) Shouting '*Brava!*' for encore performances from one of the boxes at Venice's jewel-box opera house.

**4 Museo Correr** (p57) Adopting a philosopher painted by Veronese or Tintoretto as your personal mentor at the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

**5 Caffè Florian** (p65) Tangoing across Piazza San Marco at sunset to the tune of the orchestra.



For more detail of this area see Map p266 and p267 →

## Explore: San Marco

The neighbourhood of San Marco is Venice's oldest and most famous. Everything started here in the 9th century, when Doge Partecipazio founded the modern settlement of Venice in the vicinity of the Rialto Bridge. Venice's fairy-tale golden basilica followed shortly after, built to house the bones of St Mark the Evangelist.

With the palace, prisons, government offices, mint and library crowding around the basilica, Piazza San Marco was the fulcrum of Venetian power and it still attracts throngs of visitors today. You could spend days here, so start early and choose one big sight a day. Just as in the past, your path from Campo San Moisè to Campo Santo Stefano is lined with purveyors of dazzling luxury goods. The throngs only thin out when narrow *calli* (lanes) disgorge them into sunny *campi* (squares) faced by the lavishly decorated churches of Santa Maria del Giglio, San Maurizio and Santo Stefano.

In the evening, the red carpets and gilt boxes of La Fenice and Teatro Goldoni beckon music and theatre enthusiasts. Alternatively, take a pew on the Gritti terrace for sunset views over Salute or dive down canyon-like *calli* near the Rialto for welcoming trattorias and endless glasses of *vino*.

## Local Life

➔ **Attend church** Venice's famous churches are far from museum pieces; attend Sunday Mass and you'll see locals keeping their age-old traditions alive.

➔ **Cheap eats** In this touristy neighbourhood, locals can be found propping up the counter at Rosa Salva (p64), Marchini Time (p64) and Rosticceria Gislón (p64).

➔ **Drinking dens** Locals hide out at unassuming bars like Bacarando (p66), Enoteca al Volto (p66) and Teamo (p66).

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Vaporetto** San Marco has six vaporetto stops (Rialto, Sant'Angelo, San Samuele, Giglio, San Marco Vallarosso and San Marco Giardinetti) served by Line 1. The faster line 2 stops at Rialto, San Samuele and San Marco Giardinetti. Line 10 stops at San Marco Giardinetti.

➔ **Traghetto** A gondola ferry crosses the Grand Canal from Santa Maria del Giglio.

➔ **Walking** Look out for yellow signs pointing the way to Rialto and San Marco. It's often quicker to walk.

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The Palazzo Ducale and Museo Correr are combined on one ticket, but if you upgrade to a Museums Pass you gain access to another seven civic museums (including Murano's Glass Museum, Burano's Lace Museum and the wonderful Ca' Rezzonico *palazzo*) for only €5 extra.

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Ristorante Quadri (p64)
- ➔ Bistrot de Venise (p65)
- ➔ Ai Mercanti (p64)
- ➔ Marchini Time (p64)
- ➔ Suso (p64)

For reviews, see p64. ➔

## Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Caffè Florian (p65)
- ➔ Bar Longhi (p65)
- ➔ Harry's Bar (p65)
- ➔ Grancaffè Quadri (p65)
- ➔ Osteria all'Alba (p66)

For reviews, see p65. ➔

## Best Interior Decor

- ➔ Museo Correr (p57)
- ➔ Palazzo Ducale (p53)
- ➔ Museo Fortuny (p58)
- ➔ Negozio Olivetti (p63)
- ➔ Palazzo Grassi (p59)

For reviews, see p50. ➔