

MUST-HAVE GUIDE TO FLORENCE

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TOP
FLORENCE
ATTRACTIONS

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1 Fun facts about Florence

- ✓ **According to UNESCO**, almost a third of the world's art treasures reside in Florence - not bad for such a small city. The main viewing galleries include the Uffizi, the Bargello and the Academy.
- ✓ **Specialties** of Florentine cuisine include tripe - the stomach lining from a cow – and slightly more appetizingly, bistecca alla Fiorentina, an enormous, char-grilled t-bone steak.
- ✓ After **torrential rainfall** in November 1966, the River Arno rose more than 5.2 meters. In two days 35 people were killed and hundreds left homeless as the city, and many of its treasures, was engulfed by silt, sewerage and water. 'Mud Angels' as they came to be known, flew in from around the world to help with the massive clean-up and restoration process.
- ✓ **The Duomo** in Florence is the 3rd largest in the world (behind St.Peter's Basilica in Rome and St. Paul's in London).
- ✓ **Between the 13th and 18th centuries**, lions were kept in a den in front of the Duomo for the amusement of the citizens and became the symbol of independence for Florence. You can see this proud symbol engraved on every cornerstone and doorstep of the Ponte Vecchio.
- ✓ Florence became the **first city in Europe** with paved streets instead of just wood or rock. The first paved streets were built in 1339.
- ✓ **Florence Nightingale**, an English nurse, was born in and named after the city of Florence.
- ✓ **Dante Aligheri**, a native Florentine, is credited with creating the standard Italian language that the entire country uses to this day in his native Florentine dialect.
- ✓ **The Ponte Vecchio** is the only bridge in Florence that survived World War II. Hitler said it was too beautiful to destroy.

2 Top Florence Attractions



Florence is filled with incredible sights. It is hard to see everything so we put together a list to guide you in exploring Florence. Florence is a fascinating place so don't just rush to see the sights.

Feel the life in Florence!



1. Il Duomo - Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore:

Florence's most popular site is its Duomo (cathedral), the *Cattedrale de Santa Maria del Fiore*. The huge Gothic duomo was begun in 1296, consecrated in 1436, and holds 20,000 people. Its exterior, made of green, pink, and white marble, has several elaborate doors and interesting statues. Inside, Brunelleschi's Dome is a masterpiece of construction. (You can buy a ticket to the top-463 steps). Early mornings and early evenings are when the line is the shortest.

2. Ponte Vecchio:

The *Ponte Vecchio* (old bridge), built in 1345, was Florence's first bridge across the Arno River and is the only surviving bridge from Florence's medieval

days (others were destroyed in World War II). The *Ponte Vecchio* is still lined with shops selling gold and silver jewelry. From the bridge, you'll have a great view along the Arno River and beyond.

3. Tour the Uffizi Gallery:

The *Galleria degli Uffizi* holds the world's most important collection of Renaissance art but it's also Italy's most crowded museum so it's a good idea to buy tickets ahead to avoid long ticket lines. The Uffizi holds thousands of paintings from medieval to modern times and many antique sculptures, illuminations, and tapestries. Artists whose works you'll see include *Michelangelo*, *Giotto*, *Botticelli*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, *Perugino*, and *Raphael*.

4. Galleria dell' Accademia:

Florence's *Galleria dell' Accademia* holds important paintings and sculptures from the 13th-16th centuries. Michelangelo's David, probably the most famous sculpture in the world, is in the *Galleria dell' Accademia* as well as other sculptures by Michelangelo. You'll also find an interesting collection of musical instruments, begun by the Medici family. Always long lines so either go early in the morning or late in the afternoon or buy tickets in advance. (In the summer, they often have passes to go at night. These passes allow you to get an aperitif while enjoying the museum when it isn't full of tourists.)

5. Boboli Garden and Pitti Palace: Cross the *Ponte Vecchio* to the *Giardino di Boboli*, a huge

hillside in the middle of Florence behind the Pitti Palace. Here you'll find beautiful gardens and fountains and a great view of Florence from the *Forte Belvedere*. Open daily at 8:15am (except some Mondays in winter) with seasonal closing times. European students bring your student ID for discounts.

The Pitti Palace- Florence's largest *palazzo*, was once the seat of the Medici family. You can visit 8 different galleries, including art, costumes, jewelry, and apartments.



6. Piazza Michelangelo:

hike the steps to get a beautiful view of Florence. During the summer, it is a great place to go at sunset. Bring some food and drinks and take in the amazing view of the city.

7. Piazza della Signoria and Palazzo Vecchio:

Florence's most famous square is *Piazza della Signoria*, the heart of the historic center and a free open-air sculpture exhibit. The *Loggia della Signoria* holds some important statues including a copy of Michelangelo's David. The *piazza* has been



Be sure not to miss a sunset at Piazza Michelangelo!

Florence's political center since the middle ages and Florence's town hall, the medieval Palazzo Vecchio, sits on the piazza.

The *palazzo* contains elaborately decorated public rooms and private apartments that can be visited. Around the *piazza* are cafes and restaurants.

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8. Piazza Santa Spirito:

The center of the artisan quarter, you will find great restaurants, bars as well as many local people. Some days there is a market where you can buy fresh vegetables. Make sure you check out the Basilica in the piazza.

9. Mercato Centrale:

A covered Tuscan market where you can find all the Tuscan food that you desire. From cheeses to truffles, from butchers to food stalls, this market has everything you could ever imagine to eat in Florence.



3 Restaurants



With **amazing** restaurants on every corner in Florence, we put together a list of places for all types of budgets. To get the full “Italian experience”, make sure to try a pizza, some delicious pasta or some **Tuscan** red wine before your visit finishes!



1. Trattoria CasaLinga

Via dei Michelozzi, 9r (Santo Spirito)-very inexpensive

2. Trattoria da Mario

Via Rosina 2. No credit cards accepted. This noisy, busy place is a legend.

3. Boccadama

Piazza Santa Croce. Lots of tourists during the day but evening has more locals.

4. **Acqua al 2** Via della Vigna Vecchia 40/r. Lots of tourists but this restaurant offers *assaggi di primi* (mini portions of first courses for tasting). Reservations suggested as it is always quite full.

5. **Teatro del Sale** Via dei Macci 111r. A great place to go in the evening for dinner when at 9:30, there is a live performance of drama, music or comedy. Advanced reservations are required.



6. La Mescita Via degli Alfani 70r. This is a great inexpensive place for lunch to sample Tuscan specialties.

7. Osteria del Gatto e la Volpe Via Ghibellina 151r Santa Croce. This cozy place has reasonable food and prices.

8. Il Latini Via dei Palchetti 6r. This has amazing crostini, great pasta and Tuscan meats. Expect to pay around 40 euros and reservations are

required. There are 2 seatings at 7:30 and 9.

9. Il Vinaino Via Palazzuolo 124. An average meal is 10 euros in this traditional osteria. If you can, try the wild boar sauce!

10. Da Vinattieri- Via Santa Margherita 4. In this tiny alleyway, you can expect to pay about 8 euros for a meal though it only has a few stools to sit on outside. This Tuscan bread should not be missed.

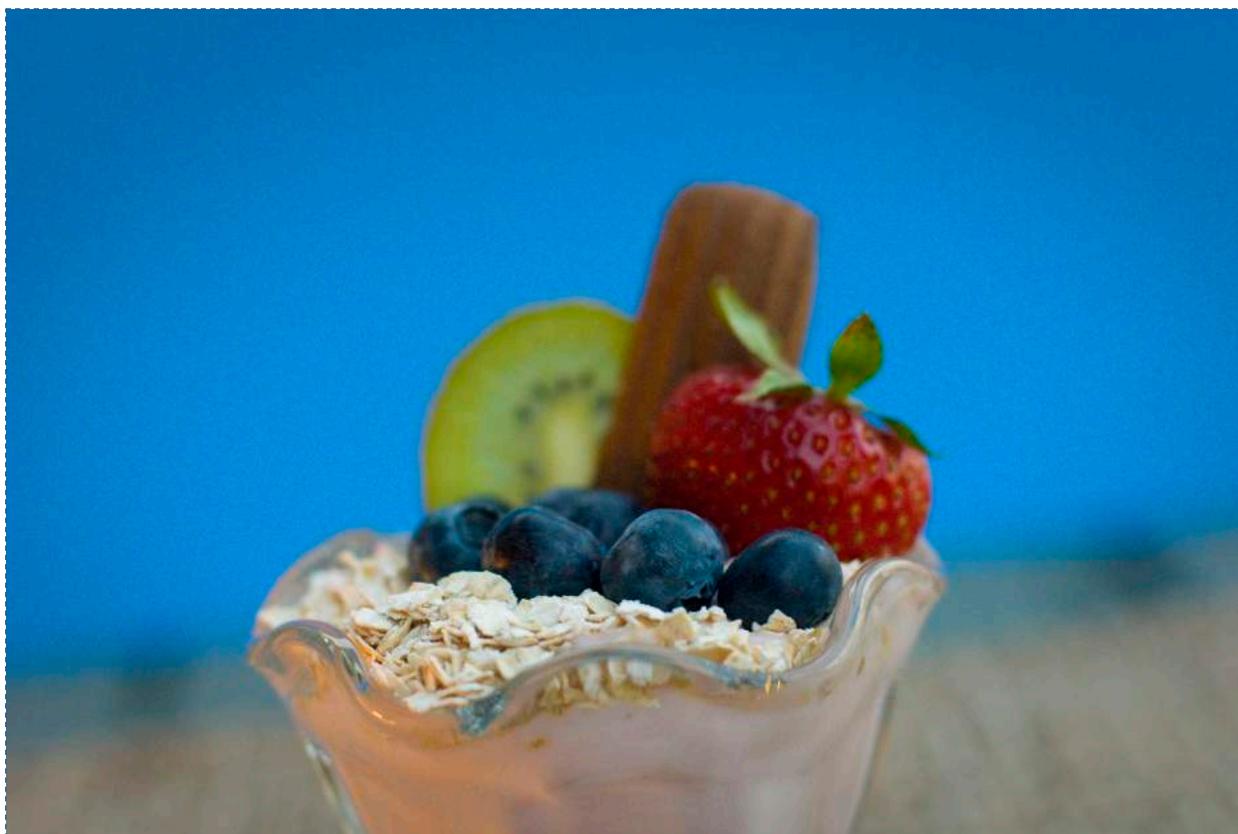
Tip!

One thing to be aware of is the service/cover charge. Restaurants sometimes have these charges added to each person. Often, tips are included. Look carefully at the bill.

Tip!

Sometimes you may be charged for bread. If you do not want it, do not eat it and ask it to be removed from your table.

4 Gelaterias



No trip to Italy is complete without sampling some Gelato (ice cream)

Italy's **best** ice cream is made in Florence so be sure to sample them. Try different flavors, mix different scoops and sample different **gelaterias**. You won't be disappointed!

1. **Gelateria Carrozze**

Piazza del Pesce 3 on riverfront 30 yards from Ponte Vecchio toward the Uffizi

2. **Gelateria dei Neri**

Via dei Neri 20-22r Close to Ponte Vecchio and Palazzo Vecchio

3. **Grom**

Via del Campanile - corner of Via delle Oche to the right side of the Duomo

4. **Innocenti**

Piazza Sauro Nazario, 25/R – Ponte alla Carraia



Tip!

Make sure you see what the price is **BEFORE** ordering because in many areas they overcharge (especially near the bridge).

Tip!

You can choose different flavors so if you order more than one scoop, you can choose more than 1 flavor.

5 Must Read Important Tips & Suggestions Before Your Trip

- ✓ **Walk through the leather markets**-Make sure you bargain!
- ✓ **Fiesole**-This is a mountain town outside of Florence and provides spectacular views of Florence. Bus #7 run regularly to Fiesole, a journey of around 20 minutes.
- ✓ **Cinque Terre**-Less than 3 hours outside of Florence (Take train to La Spezia), these 5 towns in the mountains will knock your socks off. Make sure to bring a camera and your bathing suit (if going in summer months), and comfortable shoes to do the famous hike.
- ✓ **Trains**-If you choose to take a side trip, you can purchase your train ticket at the ticket machines in the train station (waiting in line usually takes forever). **MAKE SURE YOU VALIDATE YOUR TICKET BEFORE GETTING ON BY PLACING THE TICKET INTO THE YELLOW MACHINE BEFORE GETTING ON THE TRAIN.**
- ✓ **Zippered purses**-Make sure you use zippered purses/bags as open ones tend to attract pickpockets.
- ✓ **Grocery stores**-Grocery stores in the center tend to be small and very expensive. Try to locate a bigger store outside the center and you will find much more affordable prices.
- ✓ **Local market**-Shop for food at the Indoor Market for great quality products.
- ✓ **Mosquitoes**-The summer months tend to attract mosquitoes from near and far. These are not regular mosquitoes. Their bites often cause reactions and intense itching. Bring anti-mosquito spray/cream and Benadryl if you tend to get allergic reactions. At night they seem to occupy bedrooms so if necessary, you can purchase an anti-mosquito device in the supermarket.

6 Recommended Websites

- <http://capaworld.capa.org/2012/12/18/top-10-reasons-to-study-abroad-in-florence/>
- <http://www.studyabroadspotlight.com/blog/top-10-florence>
- <http://wheninflorenceblog.wordpress.com/2013/03/04/packing-for-study-abroad-by-bobbie-watson>
- <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/italy/florence/things-to-do>

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Enjoy your time in Florence! What a wonderful place to be whether it is 2 days or 100! Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us!

