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- 1) **Fortezza da basso** A masterpiece of the military Renaissance architecture, the Fortezza da Basso was planned by Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane and commissioned by Duke Alessandro de' Medici, and it was built between 1534 and 1537. It has been the most important venue of the Florence Exhibition Center since 1967.



Chiesa di Santa Maria Novella

- 2) This was Florence's first major cathedrals; **it is located opposite the railway station** of the same name and is the principle Dominican church in the city. The church was completed in 1357 after 78 years in the making; it was built by Dominican friars. The Gothic church has a magnificent façade, the lower half is Romanesque and was created by Fra Jacopo Taleni and the upper part was completed 100 years later by Leon Battista Alberti. The façade is unique in being the oldest Florence church façade and the only church with its original façade. Brunelleschi is credited with the creation of the church layout and the church holds great works of art like Masaccio's *Trinity* (1424-25), Ghirlandaio and Giotto's *Crucifix* to name but a few. Duccio di Buoninsegna's *Enthroned Madonna and Child* once adorned this church but today you can see it in the Uffizi. To the side of the main altar is the Strozzi Chapel which is painted with frescoes by Filippino Lippi. The Tornabouni Chapel is where you can see floor to ceiling frescoes by Domenico Ghirlandaio. This is where Ghirlandaio's workshop was located and where Michelangelo came to serve as an apprentice. In the Bondi Chapel you can see Brunelleschi's wood carving of the Crucifixion. There are frescoes by Nardo and Andrea di Cione in the Strozzi di Mantova Chapel and the *crèche*, above the entrance door, was painted by Botticelli (c.1475). Buggiano created four bas-reliefs for the pulpit.



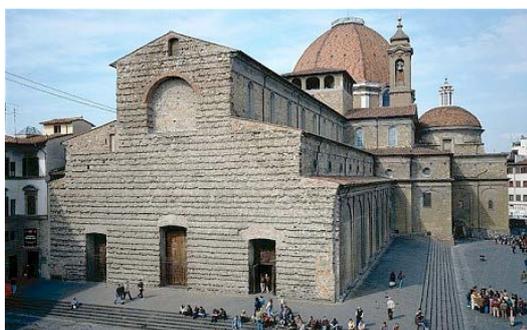
San Lorenzo & the Mercato Centrale

This wedge of streets between the train station and the Duomo, centered on the Medici's old family church of San Lorenzo and its Michelangelo-designed tombs, is market territory. The vast indoor food market is here, and many of the streets are filled daily with stalls hawking leather and other tourist wares. It's a colorful neighborhood, blessed with a range of local, affordable restaurants.



(market area) **Special tuscanbus.com customers : Save 15%**

Authentic Tuscan Cuisine , “Trattoria Vecchio Mercato” : Is a favorite of the locals. This lovely restaurant is worth to be tested. The food is incredible and the staff quite friendly. T-bone Florentine Steak, truffles and home made pasta!



Chiesa di san Lorenzo

- 3) This is one of Florence's oldest and biggest churches, it is located in the **city's market district**. The original building was constructed in 393 AD and it functioned as the city's Basilica before being superseded by Santa Reparata. As the parish church of the Medici family they funded the rebuilding of the church in 1419 and Brunelleschi was commissioned for the job. The building was completed but a façade designed by Michelangelo was never realized. The campanile was a later addition in 1740. The church is part of a monastic complex together with other buildings of note. The church has a cavernous interior which is sectioned off into several chapels; the oldest remaining part of the church is the Old Sacristy (Sagrestia Vecchia) where the Medici tombs are located. More Medici tombs, designed by Michelangelo, can be seen in the Sagrestia Nuova (New Sacristy). The Cappelle Medici is one of the most beautiful areas of the church, designed by Bernardo Buontalenti and here there are more Medici tombs, this time of family members who were less important .A huge dome rises above the Cappella dei Principi (Princes' Chapel) an octagonal shaped hall where the Grand Dukes were buried. The dome was begun in 1604 and the hall was intended to hold the Holy Sepulcher if it were ever to be brought to Florence from Jerusalem. The Laurentian Library (1523) designed by Michelangelo is within the monastic complex and is an example of Mannerism architecture. It holds valuable historic books and manuscripts. Notable works of art in the basilica include the frescoes by Bronzino; bronze pulpits and doors by Donatello;



4) **The Accademia Gallery**

4) The World's Most Famous Silhouette: Michelangelo's David. Florence's second most popular museum, also often has a long line *ticket*: Full euro 6,50 Reduced euro 3,25 (€ 11,00 with temporary exhibitions included. (opening time from 8:15 a.m. to 6:50 p.m). Long lines are inevitable Do not waste time during your holidays by standing in line. If you really want to see the Museum, Buy tickets online <http://www.florence-tickets.com/it/biglietti-galleria-dell-accademia-firenze.html?site=uffi#top>



San Marco

5) Was founded in the 13th century by Silvestrine monks. In 1437 Cosimo il Vecchio invited the Dominican monks of Fiesole to move into the convent and had it rebuilt by Michelozzo, as gesture said to be motivated by his guilt for having made so much money from banking (which was not theologically correct) and also by the fact that the Dominicans were useful allies. Ironically, Savonarola, who denounced the decadence of the Medici at the end of the 15th century, came to prominence as the Dominican prior of San Marco. The Chiostro di Sant' Antonino, the cloister through which you enter, is decorated with faded frescoes by Fra Angelico and other Florentine artists. In the Ospizio dei Pellegrini, where pilgrims were cared for, there is a superb collection of free-standing paintings by Fra Angelico and his followers.



Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore

6) **La cattedrale**, is the Roman Catholic mother church of the city. It was named for the lily (fiore), the city's symbol. Designed by Arnolfo di Cambio, the construction commenced in 1296, over time a number of architects took on the project including Francesco Talenti and Orcagna. In 1436 the building was completed with the help of Filippo Brunelleschi's engineering of the huge dome which is a symbol of the city. **The cathedral is part of a UNESCO complex of buildings** together with the Baptistery and campanile on Piazza del Duomo. The construction of the cathedral was inspired by grand cathedrals being built in other major Italian cities and was founded on the site of a previous church, Santa Reparata. You can see what remains of the original church in the crypt of the Duomo. The original façade was destroyed in 1587 and only in 1864 did Emilio De Fabis create the Gothic Revival replacement. Large bronze doors by Augusto Passaglia were added between 1899 and 1903. The building's exterior is covered with marble panels of various shapes and sizes in shades of green, white and pink. The dome has a unique octagonal design and was built without a supporting wooden frame, which was unheard of at the time. Horizontal tone and iron chains were used to reinforce the dome which is the world's largest masonry dome. To commemorate the great undertaking of Brunelleschi a statue of the architect now sits in the adjacent square looking up at his creation.

Campanile means "tower" and this Florence tower was built as a bell tower for the adjacent cathedral on Piazza del Duomo and is part of a complex of buildings. The tower was created by Giotto between 1334 and 1337 when he died and Andrea Pisano took over the task until 1348. Francesco Talenti completed the tower from 1350 to 1359. The exterior is covered in a geometrical pattern of Carrara green marble, white marble and red marble from Siena. It features seven hexagonal marble tiles with sculptured reliefs on each side of the bottom half of the tower. The tiles on the side facing the cathedral were a later addition by Luca della Robbia. On the second level of the tower there is another series of tiles, this time in a diamond shape and with a blue Majolica background by Andrea Pisano, Maso di Banco and their assistants. The fourth level is adorned with life-size sculptures by Donatello in niches on all sides of the tower. The top three levels were completed by Talenti, and feature large windows. The sculptures and relief tiles on the tower today are replicas and the originals can be seen in the Opera del Duomo Museum for Conservation. The tower is 84.7 meters high and visitors can climb 414 steps to a terrace at the top of the tower to get brilliant views across the city. The tower is divided into different levels and on each level one of the tower's seven bells is housed.

Battistero di San Giovanni is one of Florence' oldest and most important religious buildings, it is dedicated to the city's patron, John the Baptist. It was constructed on the site of a former 1st century Roman edifice. None of the original Roman building remains but the present Baptistery dates back to the 11th and 14th centuries. It was consecrated in 1059 and in those days needed to be large enough to accommodate the crowds that attended the biannual baptism ceremony. The Tuscan Romanesque style octagonal exterior is covered in white and green Prato marble and has elegant arches between polygonal columns on the upper level and semi-pilaster columns on the lower level. The exterior is topped with a 12th century roof and lantern. Lorenzo Ghiberti created the north and east facing doors and Andrea Pisano was responsible for the south facing door (1330). The eastern door, the Gates of Paradise, is the best known of the Baptistery doors, the originals are now housed in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo but exact replicas now stand in their place. The door has ten panels depicting scenes from the Bible. Above the door is a sculpture, The Baptism of Christ, which was created by Andrea Sansovino. The interior walls are covered with dazzling gold and from the ground Sardinian granite columns rise up around the periphery and are topped with gilded capitals. The floor has a marble geometric pattern (1209); there is a rectangular apse with mosaics dating back to 1225 created by Franciscan Jacopo di Torrita and the ceiling is covered with predominantly gold mosaics which cover the entire space including the interior of the dome. Several tombs belonging to important people are kept in the Baptistery including that of Antipope John XXIII designed by Donatello and Michelozzo.



Palazzo Medici-Riccardi (via Cavour n°3) near San Marco

This was the first, superb example of a noble home in Renaissance Florence. It was built between 1444 and 1462 by Michelozzo di Bartolomeo for the Medici family, who made their chief residence until 1540. Note the distinctive graduation of the external facing, progressing from the high-relief rustication of the ground floor to the hewn ashlar of the second floor and ending with the smooth surface of the third floor. The facades, with twin-light mullioned windows, are topped with by a sharply jutting cornice, in the classic style. Inside you can admire the wonderful Magi chapel, a masterpiece of the early Florentine Renaissance, frescoed by Benozzo Gozzoli. The chapel – square, with a small apse for the altar – contains carved and inland wooden stalls along the walls; the ceiling is also made of carved, painted, and gilt wood, while the floor is decorated with inlaid marble and porphyry. Palazzo Medici Riccardi, today, is the seat of the Prefecture and the Province of Florence. It is also an art exhibitions venue. *Open 9am-7pm. Admission: 4 euro*



Piazza della Repubblica

It's the old centre of the roman city, where the cardus and decumanus met, the two mayor streets of any Roman city. The present square was built in the XIXth century during works of requalification of the area and it became very famous thanks to its elegant cafés.

(**special:** with tuscanbus.com ticket you can have a free soda at the famous **HARD ROCK CAFÉ** located in **Piazza della repubblica**, a haven for fans of music, food and great times Whether you are down for a Legendary Burger, live music, a Classic Tee, a Rock Star Suite, or the latest collectible pin, there's something for everyone.)



Leonardo da Vinci's Museum

7) Is located in the heart of the city (Via dei Servi ,66), very close to Cathedral Santa Maria del Fiore. Visiting the exhibition hall you can discover the world, the life, the works of the universally recognized as a worldwide Genius, whom secrets are still not yet completely revealed. Here you can also test the functioning of his most important projects and designs, You will admire inventions of an extraordinary visual impact, operating and life-size machines, such as the " war machines " with the great tank, or the "civil engineering machines" such as the Brunelleschi's crane and the "flying machines": you will then walk back through the ambitious dream of Leonardo's life: the flight. In addition to his engineering projects you'll find in a unique exhibition space, the reproductions of his most important paintings, including the Last Supper, the Mona Lisa and the Annunciation. The rooms of the museum are enriched with multimedia displays which will help you in understanding the functioning of the machines and making your visit even more enjoying.
opening time From 10.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.



Synagogue of Florence

8) Built in the 1870s just after the Jewish community in Italy had gained full emancipation after centuries of persecution, this vast synagogue is a beautiful, polychrome hodgepodge of Islamic, Jewish and Christian religious architecture that recalls the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul. A small museum documents the history of Jewish Florence.



The Basilica of Santa Croce

9) Is the largest Franciscan church in the world; it is also called the "Temple of the Italian Glories" because many of the country's great heroes are buried here including Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Galileo and Rossini. At the time of the church's construction it stood outside the city walls in marshlands. The church was built in 1294 on the site of a former religious structure. Arnolfo di Cambio was commissioned to design the church which was consecrated in 1442. In the cloisters is the Cappella dei Pazzi which was a Chapter House designed by Filippo Brunelleschi who also designed the Inner Cloisters in 1453. Giorgio Vasari rebuilt the choir screen in 1560 and by doing so some of the original decoration of the altars was lost. Nicolo Matas, a Jewish designer, created the neo-Gothic polychrome marble façade in 1863 and included a Star of David into the design. Unfortunately he was not privileged to have been buried with the other fine artists in the church. Instead he was buried under the porch, because he was Jewish. The church holds many valuable works of art including an altar piece by Andrea della Robbia; frescoes in the Castellani Chapel and stained glass windows by Agnolo Gaddi; Giorgio Vasari designed Michelangelo's tomb and Rossellino designed Brunni's tomb as well as several other stunning works of art. The Piazza Santa Croce in front of the church is best known as the venue of the annual soccer game played here in medieval costume.



Museo Bargello

10) Was behind the stark walls of Palazzo del Bargello, Florence's earliest public building, that the podestà meted out justice from the late 13th century until 1502. Today the building safeguards Italy's most comprehensive collection of Tuscan Renaissance sculpture with some of Michelangelo's best early works and a hall full of Donatello's. Michelangelo was just 21 when a cardinal commissioned him to create the drunken grape-adorned Bacchus (1496–97), displayed in Bargello's downstairs Sala di Michelangelo. **Long lines are inevitable. Do not waste time during your holidays by standing in line.** If you really want to see the Museum, **Buy tickets online** <http://www.florence-tickets.com/it/biglietti>.



Piazza della Signoria

11) This is one of Florence's most popular squares, the historic L-shaped square got its name from the Palazzo Vecchi which is also called the Palazzo della Signoria and is just one of the important buildings lining the square. Throughout history the square has been a hub of political activity because of the buildings which surround the square and the role they played in civil service. The Palazzo Vecchi was the seat of United Italy's government and today houses the Town Hall, mayor's office and town council. The Uffizi Gallery which now houses a prestigious museum once was used for administrative offices, the Tribunal and the state archive. The Palace of the Tribunale della Mercanzia (1359) now houses the Bureau of Agriculture and once was used as a venue for merchant trials. The Palace of the Assicurazioni Generali (1871) was specifically built for commercial purposes to house the General Insurance Company.

The Loggia della Signoria (also called the Loggia dei Lanzi) is a corner building with high open archways that was used for public assemblies and ceremonies. Today it is used as an open-air gallery of Renaissance art and antiquities including the statues of *Medici Lions* by Fancelli and Vacca. The Palazzo Uguccioni (1550) has a façade which has been attributed to various well known Renaissance artists including Raphael and Michelangelo. Other palaces on the square are the Palazzo dei Mercatanti and the Palazzo dei Buonaguisti. At the entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio stands a copy of Michelangelo's *David* in the same spot where the genuine statue stood for 69 years after its completion in 1504. Next to *David* is Baccio Bandinelli's sculpture of *Hercules and Cacus*. There is a bronze equestrian statue of *Cosimo I* and *The Rape of the Sabine Women* by Giambologna; a copy of Donatello's *Judith and Holofernes* and Cellini's *Perseus with the Head of Medusa*. The Fountain of Neptune (1565) is a fountain in the square designed by Bartolomeo Ammannati. It was in the Piazza della Signoria that in 1497 the Dominican priest Savonarola instigated the Bonfire of the Vanities, a protest where a pile of gaming tables, books, dresses, cosmetics, art, poems and other sinful items were burnt. Unfortunately he was also burnt at the stake in the square in 1498.

12) **Palazzo Vecchio** With the rising success of the guilds of Florence, in 1293 the Priors and people of the city decided to commission the construction of a grand building which would be an impressive seat of the Signoria. The building was initially called the Palazzo dei Priori then the Palazzo della Signoria, Palazzo del Popolo and the Palazzo Ducale. Arnolfo Cambio was responsible for the core of the building which was erected between 1299 and 1304. The Romanesque fort-like palace has an open gallery at the top of the building and the thin Arnolfo tower which rises 94 meters. The belfry design mirrors the gallery of the palace. The palace is built of rusticated stonework and has two rows of Gothic windows, bas-reliefs and the coats of arms of the Florentine Republic painted on the building. Subsequently the palace was expanded and renovated first by Vasari in the 16th century and later by Buontalenti in the 17th century. The palace served as the seat of the local authorities before being taken over by the Medici family. Later the building returned to being office space for the government rulers, Chamber of Deputies and then the Foreign Ministry. Today the former palace operates as the Florence Town Hall. Above the main entrance is a marble decoration in bright blue guarded on both sides by lions. In front of the building stands a replica of Michelangelo's *David* together with Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus*.



Uffizi gallery

13) One of the world's top art museums (over 1.5 million visitors each year), it houses some of the most important works of the Renaissance, including works by Leonardo Da Vinci, Giotto, Botticelli and Michelangelo and a large collection of Greek and Roman sculptures. **Long lines are inevitable.** ticket: Full euro 6,50 Reduced euro 3,25 (€ 11,00 with temporary exhibitions included. (opening time from 8:15 a.m. to 6:50 p.m Tuesdays through Sunday)

Do not waste time during your holidays by standing in line. If you really want to see the Museum, Buy tickets online <http://www.florence-tickets.com/it/biglietti>.



Ponte Vecchio

14) The Old Bridge is one of the most striking of Florence's six bridges; it is thought to date back as far as the Romans who constructed stone pillars and wooden planks on this spot where the Via Cassia crossed the river. Until 1218 it was the only bridge that crossed the Arno River. The Roman construction collapsed from flood damage in 1117 and again in 1333, 12 years later it was rebuilt. The bridge has three graceful arches supporting the covered crossing which was topped with stores and houses under the porticos. The bridge was built again in 1565 during the reign of the Medici family when they wanted a route which would connect them directly between Uffizi and the Palazzo Pitti on the other side of the River, without even stepping foot outside. The covered "corridor" across the bridge was constructed on top of the bridge stores. It made their crossing as easy as going from one room in a house to another. This saved time crossing the river, protected them from the weather and meant that they wouldn't have to encounter any pesky commoners. Corridoio Vasariano, designed by Vasari, was literally a corridor which ran above goldsmith's stores crossing the river. Traders had set up shop along the covered bridge as far back as the 13th century. Today on the bridge you can see a bust of one of the 16th century goldsmiths, Benvenuto Cellini. In the middle of the bridge there is a break in the line of stores and there are two observation terraces overlooking the river. The bridge survived World War II when the German's destroyed all of the city's bridges except this one.

Santo Spirito, San Niccolò & San Frediano . Oltrarno neighborhoods to Explore

You will hit most all of Florence's major neighborhoods while exploring the sites, but it is the neighborhood across the river you don't want to miss. The Oltrarno, "Across the Arno" is the **artisans' neighborhood**, filled with quaint streets and wonderful shops and restaurants. It is, by far, the most missed gem by tourists in Florence. The Oltrarno's lively tree-filled center, Piazza Santo Spirito, is unique unto itself. Lined with bars and a more bohemian style crowd, this is where you will find the locals.



Santo Spirito Church

In 1252 the Augustinian monks built on this area a monastery and a church dedicated to «Saint Mary of Ognissanti and the Holy Spirit», which became soon known as the Church of the «Holy Spirit» - that is, *Santo Spirito*. In just a few decades the church became one of the most important in Florence, so that at the end of 13th Century the City council bought the buildings in front of it and demolished them in order to create a wide square.



Palazzo Pitti

15) Commissioned by banker Luca Pitta and designed by Brunelleschi in 1457, this vast Renaissance palace was later bought by the Medici family. Over the centuries, it served as the residence of the city's rulers until the Savoy family donated it to the state in 1919. Nowadays it houses an impressive silver museum, a couple of art museums and a series of rooms recreating life in the palace during House of Savoy times.



Out the map) Piazzale Michelangelo:

Offers panoramic views of Florence and the Arno valley. Filled with tourists, vendors, and a bronze replica of Michelangelo's *David* can be reached by taking either bus 12 or 13 from the center or **Firenze Citysightseeing** hop on - hop off. . It can also be reached by foot, climbing up from Piazza Poggi found at the base of Piazzale Michelangelo.



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- Gelato – Is there anything more important in Italy? You must know that not all gelato is the same! Don't be fooled by the pretty displays, go with the recommendations and where you see a line, there is a reason for it. Remember, it is essential to eat at least 2 scoops a day!