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An Insider's Guide to Where to Go, Eat and Stay in Florence

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Florence is an elegant city where history and culture are present everywhere. Set along the scenic banks of the Arno River, the city is celebrated as the birthplace of the Renaissance, a

pivotal era that reshaped science and philosophy, as well as produced some of the world's greatest artists. The Uffizi Gallery displays an incredible collection of Renaissance art, including works by Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli.

Easily walkable, Florence is home to iconic architectural landmarks. The Duomo was designed by Brunelleschi and dominates the skyline, while the Ponte Vecchio — a medieval stone bridge lined with jewelry merchants — spans the Arno and connects the city center with the creative Oltrarno district. Whether you're exploring the grandeur of the Palazzo Pitti, enjoying the blossoms at the Boboli Gardens or savoring a gelato in a charming piazza, Florence is sure to charm you with its beauty and heritage.

Connect with me to get started on your Tuscan adventure. I will get to know your preferences and craft an itinerary just for you.

Need to know:

Currency: €, Euro (EUR)

Languages: Italian

Airports: Florence Airport, Peretola (Aeroporto di Firenze-Peretola) (FLR)

Transportation: Santa Maria Novella (SMN) train station connects to major cities like Rome, Milan and Venice. Florence is a small and walkable city. Rental cars are not allowed in the central city, so public transport is recommended. Taxis and Ubers can be scarce at times, so I recommend scheduling your airport transfer.

Best time to visit: The most ideal times to visit Florence are during the spring (April to June) and fall (September to October). Summer months see soaring temperatures and increased crowds.

Ideal length of stay: For a quick visit, plan on 2–5 days, although there is plenty to explore in Florence and surrounding towns for a week.

Dress code: Stylish, comfortable clothing and comfortable walking shoes for the cobblestone streets. Dress modestly (covering shoulders, avoiding short skirts or shorts and refraining from wearing hats inside) for churches and upscale dining.

Signature dishes: Bistecca alla Fiorentina (Florentine steak), Ribollita (vegetable and bread soup), Pappa al Pomodoro (tomato and bread soup), Lampredotto (tripe sandwich), Crostini di Fegato (chicken liver pâté on toast), Panzanella (bread and tomato salad), Trippa alla Fiorentina (Florentine-style tripe), Cantucci (almond biscuits), Schiacciata (Tuscan flatbread), Vin Santo e Cantucci (sweet wine with almond biscuits).

Key words & phrases: Buongiorno (good morning), buonasera (good evening), ciao (hello/goodbye, informal), arrivederci (goodbye), per favore (please), grazie (thank you), prego (you're welcome), scusa/scusi (excuse me, informal/formal), mi scusi (I'm sorry)

What to do in Florence



When you think of Florence, the first thing that comes to mind is its incredible Duomo atop the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral. Book a timed ticket to climb the steep stairs early in the day — you'll pass less people descending the narrow stairway — and be rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views. Art enthusiasts can't miss both the Uffizi Gallery and the Galleria dell'Accademia (booking tickets ahead is a must to see Michelangelo's David).

Wander the magical cobblestone streets and make your way to the Ponte Vecchio bridge, with its unique shops and stunning Arno river views. Continue on to reach the Palazzo Pitti and the adjacent Boboli Gardens, once the residence of the powerful Medici family. (For a smaller, lesser known garden experience, visit Villa Bardini and its gardens — a short stroll from Boboli Gardens.)

Food lovers will be in heaven at the city food markets, Mercato Centrale (near the train station) and Mercato di Sant'Ambrogio (near the Santa Croce neighborhood). Taste-test regional cheese and fresh pasta, or grab some treats and head uphill to Piazzale Michelangelo to watch the sunset unfold over the city.

For a little retail therapy, there are plenty of big-name designer stores in the central neighborhood, but make sure to explore some of the smaller artisan boutiques. Discover hand-made marbled paper at Giulio Giannini e Figlio, hand-stitched leather gloves at family-run Madova and the city's famous Italian leather goods at the street markets outside Mercato Centrale.

Tours in Florence focus not only on the city's rich artistic history, but also food. Talk to me about booking a pasta-making class, olive oil tasting or vineyard visit.

Add-ons: If you have time to explore outside Florence, other stops within easy reach include Siena, San Gimignano, Chianti, Lucca and Pisa.

Where to eat in Florence



Image courtesy of Hotel Continentale

For quick snacks or a sweet treat, stop in at one of the small food shops that can be found on every street. Known for its delectable truffle sandwiches, Procacci is a charming gourmet shop dating back to 1885, offering fine wines, artisanal foods and truffled delicacies. La Prosciutteria makes fresh sandwiches with slabs of crusty focaccia paired with your choice of locally cured meats, spreads and vegetable toppings. And to experience Italian gelato at its best, order a cone of the creamiest flavors from Gelateria dei Neri near Santa Croce.

Florence is also known for its steak, called bistecca alla Fiorentina. For choice cuts, head to Regina Bistecca, near the Duomo, or Trattoria Marione, closer to the train station.

If you're celebrating a special occasion, book ahead for a table at Enoteca Pinchiorri, which boasts an extensive wine list, as well as three Michelin stars. For a more casual experience, Trattoria Cammillo is a family-run trattoria in the heart of Florence with authentic Tuscan plates and warm atmosphere. And Il Santo Bevitore is an unpretentious trattoria offering refined pasta and regional dishes a block from the Arno.

Other top spots I recommend: Antico Ristorante Paoli 1827, Trattoria 4 Leoni, Mangiafoco, Trattoria Garga and Il Parione.

Where to stay in Florence



Image courtesy of Dario Garofalo for The Place Firenze

The Place Firenze: Boutique hotel with 20 upscale rooms set on Santa Maria Novella Piazza. Fora Reserve perks include a \$100 food/beverage credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade & extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Hotel Lungarno: Elegant hotel with Arno views and spacious rooms (including apartments). One of four hotels owned by the Ferragamo family (also Portrait Firenze, Continentale and Gallery Hotel Art). Fora Reserve perks include \$100 food & beverage credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Rivoli Boutique Hotel: Classic rooms and suites within steps of the train station and Santa Maria Novella Church. Fora Reserve perks include a 30€ voucher for bar/restaurant, breakfast daily, complimentary spa entrance.

FH55 Hotel Calzaiuoli: Traditional hotel set in the bustling center of Florence. Fora Reserve perks include a welcome amenity, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Palazzo Vecchietti: Grand hotel set in a 16th-century manor house in the city center. Fora Reserve perks include a \$50 credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Grand Hotel Minerva: Family-friendly choice with contemporary vibes and a central location near the train station. Fora's VIP perks include a complimentary aperitif, a 20% discount at the on-site restaurant, a welcome amenity and an upgrade whenever possible.

Oltrarno Splendid: Charming 18th-century palazzo hotel with 14 rooms in the creative Oltrarno neighborhood. Fora's VIP perks include a complimentary bottle of wine, a welcome amenity and an upgrade whenever possible.



Image courtesy of Four Seasons Firenze

Four Seasons Hotel Firenze: Old-world, sophisticated hotel with expansive grounds and a pool. *When you book Four Seasons through me, you will enjoy exclusive Four Seasons Preferred Partner benefits. Your me and I will be pleased to give you more details.*

Helvetia & Bristol Firenze: Historic hotel in the city center offering upscale dining and a spa. Book with me to lock in perks like a \$100 hotel credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

St. Regis Florence: Majestic hotel with stunning river views and gorgeous atrium and terrace dining. Marriott STARS perks include a \$100 hotel credit, breakfast daily, an upgrade and extended check-in/out whenever possible.

Hotel Indigo Florence: Modern hotel with vibrant decor and on-site dining near the train station. IHG Luxury & Lifestyle perks include a \$50 amenity, late checkout and an upgrade whenever possible.

When you're ready for your Italian getaway, reach out to me and I'll match you with your ideal hotels, plus create a personalized itinerary just for you.

Get in touch with Gregory

Reach out for travel inspiration, hotel bookings or customized itineraries.

Please provide some details about your trip.

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