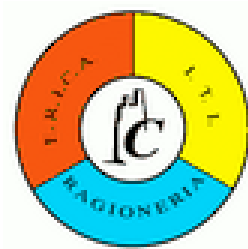




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I.T.C. "CATTANEO" SAN
MINIATO



Welcome to Florence!



FLORENCE

Country: Italy

Region: Tuscany

Province: Florence

Area: 102.41 km²

Population:

368.362



Our tour ends with the visit to the famous **Basilica of Santa Croce**, built by Arnolfo di Cambio in the 13th century. It has a splendid Neo-Gothic façade and contains some beautiful paintings by Giotto and a lovely stone Tabernacle by Donatello. It also houses the funeral monuments to many famous Italians such as Galileo Galilei, Michelangelo Buonarroti, Gioacchino Rossini, Ugo Foscolo, Niccolò Macchiavelli and Dante Alighieri.



If you want to get a breathtaking view of the city and the surrounding hills, you can go to Piazzale Michelangelo, an enormous panoramic terrace situated on the hills in the southern part of Florence.



Our walking tour continues towards **Ponte Vecchio**, which stands on the bank of the River Arno and is the oldest bridge in Florence. It has existed since Roman times but it was last rebuilt by Neri di Fioravante in 1345. It is an elegant structure with three arches, two terraces and two rows of houses on both sides. In the centre of the bridge the buildings are interrupted and an opening allows a fine view of the River Arno and the other bridges. Here you can admire "Benvenuto Cellini's Bust". Above the buildings, there is the famous **Vasari Corridor**, built by Vasari for Cosimo I dei Medici to go from Palazzo Pitti to Palazzo Vecchio. Nowadays the bridge is lined with expensive shops, souvenir shops and goldsmiths, jewellers and silversmiths' workshops.



From Ponte Vecchio it is easy to reach **La Loggia del Mercato Nuovo**, also known as **La Loggia del Porcellino**, where a market of typical Florentine handicrafts is held every day.

Walking down Via Calimala we get to **Piazza della Repubblica**. This square was built in the 19th century when

Florence was the capital of the Kingdom of Italy. It is one of the main squares in Florence. Here we can see a column called "Colonna dell' Abbondanza", which marks the site where there was a Roman "Cardus" and the Roman "forum".

In the Middle Ages the area around the column was densely populated and there were many churches, monasteries and buildings. In the 18th century the square was enlarged and Medieval towers, churches, workshops and houses were destroyed. Piazza della Repubblica is home to the historical "Caffè Gilli", "Caffè Paskowski" and "Caffè delle Giubbe Rosse", which were meeting places for famous artists and writers in the first decade of the 20th century.

The street that connects this square to Piazza del Duomo is **Via Roma**. It was the centre of the city's economic life in Roman times; now it is lined with 19th century buildings, expensive and exclusive shops and boutiques and famous hotels and cafés.

Via Strozzi connects Piazza della Repubblica and **Via dei Tornabuoni**, one of the most luxurious streets in the city center. The street, which has been the most elegant street in Florence since the Renaissance, is lined with Renaissance Palaces such as Palazzo Feroni and Palazzo Tornabuoni, ancient buildings, expensive cafés and famous designers' shops like "Gucci" and "Tiffany".



Florence, the capital of Tuscany, is located on the River Arno and is surrounded by the gentle hills of the Apennines. It is the cultural heart of Italy and it has a great reputation for art, literature, architecture and science. Florence is known as the Cradle of the Renaissance, because many famous artists such as Leonardo, Donatello and Michelangelo lived and created stunning works of art in this city.



HISTORY

Florence was founded by the Romans in 59 B.C. and was called Florentia. After the Barbarian invasions of the 5th and 6th centuries, the city was restored to its former dignity by the Carolingians. In 1183 Florence became a Free Commune. The first clashes between two factions: the Guelphs, who supported the Emperor and the Ghibellines, who supported the Pope, date back to those years. Despite the unstable social and political situation, this period witnessed an upsurge in the arts and literature. This was the time of Dante, Giotto and Arnolfo di Cambio.



In the 15th century Florence was an important trade centre and was considered the new cradle of Italian and European culture. This was the city's most flourishing period for art, culture, politics and trade. In 1860 the city was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy, of which Florence was the capital from 1865 to 1871.



THE ANNUNCIATION



The **Annunciation** is another important masterpiece painted by Leonardo and Verrocchio from 1472 to 1475. The technique used is oil on panel. In this painting there is a Virgin and an Angel. The Angel is sitting on the grass while the Virgin is sitting on a brown chair and she is opening a book with her right hand. The two women are wearing very elegant clothes. The Angel is wearing a white and red robe while the Virgin is wearing a red and blue dress. In the background there are a lot of trees and flowers. They are in a garden, probably the Virgin's garden. The colours used are quite light.



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI



This unfinished masterpiece was originally commissioned to Leonardo Da Vinci in March 1481. The technique used is oil on wood. In this painting, Mary is sitting with the Christ-Child in the centre of the composition. She is in front of a rocky landscape, surrounded by a large number of people, whose identity remains unclear. In the foreground the three Wise Men, who followed the Star of Bethlehem on their journey from the East, kneel to worship the Christ-Child. In the background we can see the ruins of King David's Palace and people on horseback who are fighting. Leonardo's Adoration represents the moment when the second King offers his gift to the Christ-Child who willingly received it. The colours used are very light. Yellow is the main colour in the painting, but the trees and some characters are brown.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST



The **Baptism of Christ** was painted by Leonardo da Vinci with his teacher Verrocchio from 1472 to 1475. The technique used is oil on wood. In the middle of this painting there is Jesus who is christened and near Jesus there are St. John the Baptist and two Angels on the corner. In the background there are rivers, trees and God's hands in the sky. The colours used are light. The two Angels are wearing pale blue clothes, Jesus is the only person who is almost naked. St. John the Baptist is wearing brown and white clothes. He is holding a very big cross and he is blessing Jesus.

ITINERARY

Our walking tour starts with **Piazza Santa Maria Novella**, one of the biggest squares in the centre of Florence. The **Church of Santa Maria Novella** with its famous Leon Battista Alberti's façade overlooks the square. Its Gothic marble façade is decorated with the Rucellai Family's Coats of Arms. Inside the church there are many works of art, such as Masaccio's "Trinity", a Crucifix by Giotto and frescoes by Botticelli.



Walking down **Via Panzani** and **Via dei Cerretani**, two of the most famous streets in Florence, lined with ancient buildings, shops, hotels, restaurants and cafés, we reach **Piazza del Duomo**,

where we can admire three marvellous buildings: the **Baptistery**, the **Cathedral**, dedicated to Santa Maria del Fiore, and **Giotto's Bell Tower**.

The **Baptistery**, which stands in front of the Cathedral, is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, Patron Saint of Florence. It was first built as a church dedicated to St. John between the 4th and 5th centuries so it is one of the oldest buildings in Florence. It has a white and green marble façade and three bronze doors decorated by Andrea Pisano and Ghiberti. The door of the eastern side of the Baptistery, known as "Porta Del Paradiso", and considered one of the greatest masterpieces of 15th- century sculpture, has three panels representing "Ghiberti's Stories from the Old Testament".



The **Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore** stands in front of the Baptistery. The building was started by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1296 and completed by famous artists such as Giotto, Andrea Pisano and Brunelleschi in the following centuries. Its white, green and pink Gothic-style façade dates back to the 19th century and it has three bronze portals with mosaic decorations and statues. The cathedral contains many works of art such as Luca Della Robbia's "Resurrection of Christ" and "Ascension" and Giotto's "Madonna". Over the altar there is a magnificent crucifix attributed to Benedetto da Maiano.



The famous **Brunelleschi's Dome**, dominating the skyline of Florence with its eight white ribs against a background of terracotta tiles, was frescoed by Vasari in the 16th century. A passage set in the dome leads to the frescoes and to the lantern at the top of the Cathedral.



Outside the Cathedral we can admire **Giotto's Bell Tower**, which is a wonderful example of Florentine Gothic architecture. The Bell Tower was designed and begun by Giotto, the famous painter and architect, but when he died, he had only completed the lowest part so it was finished by Andrea Pisano and Francesco Talenti a few years later. The building is 84.7 metres tall, it has five levels and 414 steps and it is decorated with relief panels, lovely columns and mullioned windows with two or three lights.



As soon as we enter this beautiful palace we can admire a nice courtyard surrounded by an elegant porch whose walls were frescoed by Vasari. In the centre there is a fountain by Francesco Del Tadda.



Near the courtyard there are two flights of stairs leading to the lovely **Salone dei Cinquecento** decorated by a team of painters chosen by Vasari. Michelangelo's sculpture of "Victory" is on the long wall on the right. A door leads to the **Studiolo of Francesco I**, the **Tesoretto of Cosimo I** and the **Salone dei Duecento** by Giuliano and Benedetto da Maiano and the **State Apartments**, which include many rooms full of paintings and frescoes. The **Hall of the Gigli**, so called because it is decorated with golden "fleur de lis" on a blue field, leads to the "**Sacristy**", which houses the portrait of Niccolò Machiavelli by Santi di Tito. In the adjacent clock-room there is the large **Map of the World** by Danti. A staircase leads to the **Quarter of the Mezzanino**, where Cosimo the Elder and

Savonarola were imprisoned, and from which it is now possible to enjoy a magnificent view of the city.

A trip to Florence has to include a visit to the **Uffizi Gallery**, which is the oldest art gallery in the world and one of the greatest in Europe. The Uffizi Gallery was begun by Vasari for Cosimo I dei Medici in 1560 and completed by Parigi and Buontalenti in 1580. The gallery has 45 rooms and houses very beautiful works of art by Italian and foreign artists like Giotto, Cimabue, Masaccio, Raffaello, Rubens, Rembrandt, Michelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci. Here we can admire a lot of paintings from the 13th to the 18th centuries such as Botticelli's "Allegory of Spring", Sandro Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus", Piero della Francesca's "Portrait of Federico da Montefeltro", Duccio di Buoninsegna's "Maestà", Filippo Lippi's "Madonna and Child with Two Angels", Botticelli's "Primavera" and Giotto's "Madonna in Glory". One of the most important rooms is **Room 15**, which contains **Leonardo Da Vinci's** paintings including "The Annunciation", "the Adoration of Magi" and "The Baptism of Christ".

After the visit to this gallery, we walk down **Via Dei Calzaiuoli**, which is one of the most famous streets in Florence and is lined with ancient buildings, exclusive shops, cafés and restaurants, and we reach **Piazza Della Signoria**. This square, which has been the political centre of the city since the Middle Ages, is one of the most spectacular squares in Italy. In Roman times there were houses and theatres in this area, but at the end of the 13th century the square was enlarged and started to be used for ceremonies, meetings and public executions.

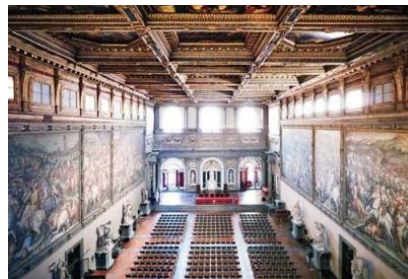


The imposing complex of **Palazzo Vecchio** towers on the north side. To the right of the Palace there is the lovely **Loggia dei Lanzi**, a late Gothic structure, which contains famous works of art by Giambologna and Benvenuto Cellini. To the left of the square there is Ammannati's **Fountain of Neptune** and **Equestrian Statue of Cosimo I**, Giambologna's **Rape of the Sabines** and

Hercules and the Centaur and Cellini's **Perseus with the Head of Medusa**.



Palazzo Vecchio, also known as **Palazzo Della Signoria**, is the most important civil building in Florence. It dates back to the 13th century and it was designed by the great architect Arnolfo di Cambio. The building is in rusticated ashlar of "pietra forte", giving the large three-storey building with its fine mullioned windows with two lights within round arches an air of severity.



Behind the apse of the Cathedral there is the **Cathedral Museum**, which houses famous works of art such as Michelangelo's "Pietà" and Donatello's "Mary Magdalen". From Piazza del Duomo it is easy to reach the **Academy Gallery**, one of the most important museums in Florence. The Academy Gallery houses extremely important sculptures by Michelangelo. The room that leads to the "**Tribune**" contains Michelangelo's "Palestina Pietà", "St. Matthew" and "Four Prisoners". In the centre of the "Tribune" there is Michelangelo's "**David**", a masterpiece of Renaissance sculpture.



The marble statue portrays the Biblical King David in the nude. Unlike previous depictions of David, which portray the hero after his victory over Goliath, Michelangelo chose to represent David before the fight contemplating the battle yet to come. It came to

symbolize the defence of civil liberties embodied in the Florentine Republic, an independent city state threatened by more powerful rival states and by the hegemony of the Medici Family. This interpretation was also encouraged by the fact that the sculpture was placed outside Palazzo della Signoria, the seat of the Civic Government in Florence. The completed sculpture was unveiled on 8 September 1504.

The room also contains an important collection of paintings from the 13th to the 14th centuries. Three small rooms are located to the right of the "Tribune" and contain various shrines attributed to Bernardo Daddi and a fine "Pietà" by Giovanni da Milano. To the left of the "Tribune" there are three small rooms containing works of art by famous 14th - century artists. The most remarkable are "Polyptych" by Andrea Orcagna, two series of panels representing scenes from the "Life of Christ" and scenes from the "Life of St. Francis" by Taddeo Gaddi. To the left of the "Tribune" there is also a large hall containing 15th - century works of art including Lorenzo Monaco's "Annunciation" and Filippino Lippi's "St. John the Baptist" and "Magdalen". We can also admire a collection of musical instruments owned by "The Conservatorio Musicale L. Cherubini di Firenze".

