

WELCOME TO PISA



Pisa is a city in Tuscany, in the centre of Italy. It is situated on the River Arno and it is 10 kilometres from the Tyrrhenian Sea. It is the capital city of the Province of Pisa. Although Pisa is known for its Leaning Tower all over the world, the city features more than twenty wonderful churches, several palaces and bridges across the River Arno. The city is also home to the University of Pisa, which has a history dating back to the 12th century.

HISTORY

Pisa's origins remain uncertain; some theories say the city has Greek origin. However, it was most probably founded by the Ligurians or the Etruscans. During the Roman Empire Pisa became a privileged centre due to the excellent disembarkation possibilities offered by its port. After the end of the Roman Empire, it remained a port of great importance for the Goths, the Lombards and the Carolingians.

During the Middle Ages, between the 11th and 12th centuries, Pisa reached its maximum prosperity; this Maritime Republic became one of the most important naval powers in the Mediterranean Sea and extended its power over the coasts of Tuscany, Sardinia and Corsica. Its fleet was involved in continuous battles against the Saracens and the Italian rival powers: Genoa, Venice and Amalfi. The success of the First Crusade enabled Pisa to establish commercial bases in Middle Eastern ports, ensuring the importation of the most precious materials. The amazing buildings in Piazza dei Miracoli were built in this period of great economic, political and cultural power, which made Pisa famous all over the world.

Under the Medici family, who took possession of Pisa in 1509, the city experienced a period of recovery thanks to its port, offering Florence a convenient gateway to the sea. The 16th century also saw the building of the famous university, where Galileo Galilei, one of the most famous Italian scientists, studied one century later.





ITINERARY

Our tour begins with the amazing **Pisa Walls**, which date back to the 12th century. The walls were built in a period of great prosperity for the city. Many types of stone were used and defensive towers were built on them; some of them are still intact. The walls were restored by the Medici Family after they had conquered the city in the 16th century. Leaving Porta Nuova, one of the four gates, behind us, we reach **Piazza**



dei Miracoli, the heart of the city, recognized as one of the main centres for Medieval art in the world. The name "Piazza dei Miracoli" was created by the Italian writer and poet Gabriele D'Annunzio. Piazza dei Miracoli, also known as "Campo dei Miracoli", is a miracle of architectural achievement. Four buildings: the Cathedral, the Leaning Tower, the Baptistery and the Monumental Cemetery form one of the most outstanding architectural complexes in Italy. Over the centuries there have been a few major changes and today we can enjoy "Campo dei Miracoli" in its original splendour.

The Baptistery is a round Romanesque building, which was built by an architect known as Diotisalvi in the mid-12th century. It is the largest baptistery in Italy. The portal, facing the façade of the cathedral, is flanked by two classical columns, while the inner jambs are in Byzantine style. The Baptistery has a two-colour scheme similar to other monuments in Pisa and four entrance doors. On top there is the gigantic bronze statue of St. John the Baptist dating back to the 15th century. The main portal is adorned with 13th-century reliefs illustrating stories from the life of St. John the Baptist and Giovanni Pisano's "The Statue of the Virgin" , which is in the lunette. Inside the Baptistery there is a huge baptismal font and the famous pulpit engraved by Nicola Pisano in the 13th century.



It is well-known for its perfect acoustics. If you get as close to the centre as possible and you sing a loud note, it will echo in the Baptistery. The Baptistery Guards often demonstrate this breathtaking effect.



The Cathedral is located to the west of the Baptistery. It is a Medieval cathedral, dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta. The designer and builder of the Cathedral was Bruschetto, whose tomb is located in a sarcophagus in the last blind arch of the façade. The façade of the Cathedral was built by a master named Rainaldo, Bruschetto's successor, as indicated by an inscription above the

middle door: "Rainaldus prudens operator". " Porta di San Ranieri" serves as the entrance to the Cathedral. "The life of Christ" is depicted on its bronze doors. Inside the Cathedral there is Nicola Pisano's pulpit and the tomb of St. Ranieri, the patron saint of Pisa. We can also admire a 15th-century chandelier, known as Galileo's Lamp. According to the tradition, Galileo figured out the law of pendulum movement by observing it swinging back and forth.

At the northern edge of the square we can see the **Monumental Cemetery**. It is a walled cemetery, which is the most beautiful cemetery in the world. The building of this huge, rectangular Gothic structure was begun in 1278 by the architect Giovanni di Simone in order to put all the tombs of the noble families from Pisa together.



The exterior is decorated with the same blind arch pattern used on the other buildings. Above one of the two entrances there is an elegant Gothic tabernacle. The courtyard of the Cemetery, with its lawn and cypress trees, gives people the impression of being in a cloister. The Roman sarcophagi and funerary monuments set along the corridors, previously scattered in Campo dei Miracoli, were placed here at the turn of the century.

On the south-western corner of Piazza dei Miracoli we can admire the **Cathedral Museum**, which dates back to the 13th century and houses some sculptures by Giovanni Pisano and Tino di Camaino, including "the Virgin and Child" in ivory, carved by Giovanni Pisano in 1300 for the high altar of the cathedral. It also houses paintings from the 15th century to the 17th century.



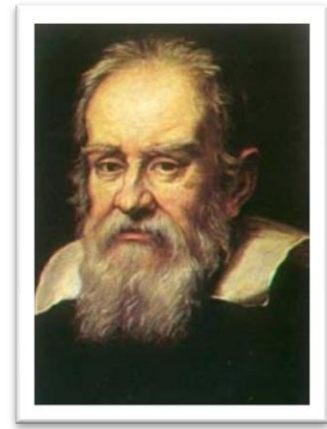
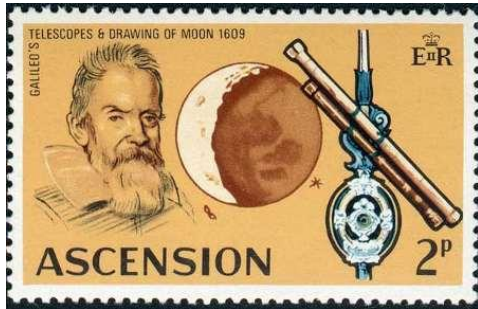
Leaving the Cathedral Museum behind us, we head to the **Leaning Tower**, which is the bell tower of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta. It is the symbol of Pisa and it is a unique monument in Romanesque style. This is a separate bell tower about 56 metres tall, built by Pisano between the 12th and 14th centuries. Its inclination is due to land subsidence occurred in the building.



The inclination of the building currently measures five inches from the vertical. The Leaning Tower is in equilibrium because the vertical line passing through its centre of gravity falls within the base. Some of the most recent studies attribute the project to Diotisalvi. The Leaning Tower is famous even because from its top and thanks to its inclination, Galileo carried out some of his most famous experiments concerning the gravitation of the bodies. The Tower is perfectly cylindrical in shape and the interior has a spiral staircase of 294 steps leading to the top.

Near Piazza dei Miracoli there is **Borgo Stretto**, a street full of cafés and shops. **Via Santa Maria** is the street that connects Piazza dei Miracoli with Lungarno Pacinotti. If we walk down this street, we reach the **Domus Galilaeana**, which houses a library specialized in the history of science with more than 40,000 books and important scientists' documents. The Domus Galilaeana is a centre for studies about Galileo Galilei and a museum of the great scientist's mementos.

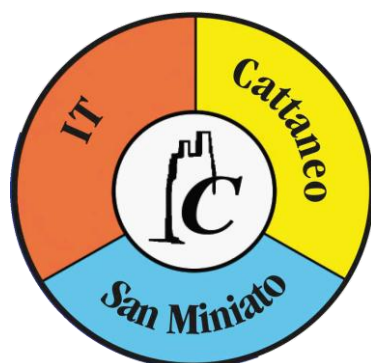




Galileo Galilei (15 February 1564 - 8 January 1642), commonly known as *Galileo*, was an Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer and philosopher who played a major role in the Scientific Revolution. His achievements include improvements to the telescope and consequent astronomical observations and support for Copernicanism. Galileo has been called the "father of modern observational Astronomy", the "Father of Modern Physics", the "Father of Science" and "the Father of Modern Science". Stephen Hawking said "Galileo, perhaps more than any other person, was responsible for the birth of Modern Science." Galileo was important for the University of Pisa, because he created the Mathematics and Physics department, which is still today one of the most important in the world. His contributions to observational astronomy include the telescopic confirmation of the phases of Venus, the discovery of the four largest satellites of Jupiter (named the *Galilean moons* in his honour) and the observation and analysis of sunspots. Galileo also worked in applied science and technology, inventing an improved military compass and other instruments. He was the first to use the Telescope to observe the heavens systematically.

Some of Galileo's most significant works were in the field of kinematics. He also identified the parabola as the ideal trajectory for uniformly accelerated motion in a plane. Galileo also studied the motion of a pendulum. Galileo believed that the universe operated according to mathematical principles. He held that if a physical model did not fit the mathematical properties of the phenomenon, the physical model was wrong. This would become the basis of a great shift in European knowledge: *Classical Mechanics*. Galileo's direct influence on science outside Italy was probably not very great. After 1610 he published his books in Italian and tried to persuade professional scholars either at home or abroad. His influence on educated laymen both in Italy and abroad was considerable.

Latin translations of his "Dialogue" appeared in Holland in 1635, in France in 1641, and in England in 1663. Galileo died of natural causes in 1642, after becoming blind. He was buried in the Basilica of Santa Croce in 1737. In 1741 Pope Benedict XIV authorized the publication of Galileo's complete works. Heliocentrism was formally considered as heresy in 1758. It was not until October 31, 1992 that the Church, under Pope John Paul II, expressed regret about how Galileo had been treated, in response to a Pontifical Council for Culture Study.



**I.T. CATTANEO
SAN MINIATO (PISA)
ITALY**

A.S. 2015-2016