



ACADEMY
TRAVEL

TAILORED
SMALL GROUP
JOURNEYS

FLORENCE STUDY TOUR

Overview

Since the Renaissance, Florence has been a key part of the Western imagination offering encounters with the great names of the artistic canon: Giotto, Masaccio, Botticelli, Michelangelo. This 12-day study tour takes advantage of the quietest time in Florence's calendar with a residential program to unpack the city's art, history and culture. Focusing on iconic collections, the itinerary has been planned to focus on both the highs of the Renaissance, excellent small museums and churches that preserve masterpieces and the artisan traditions that continue in the city to this day.

Academy Travel study tours provide in-depth intellectual stimulation via regular background lectures, morning site visits, and free afternoons for individual exploration. You'll 'live like a local' with accommodation in the historic centre.

Tour leader

Freya Middleton and Dr Nick Gordon. Freya holds an MA in Renaissance Studies from Warwick University, and has 20 years' experience as a guide in Florence. Nick holds a University Medal and PhD in history and has 15 years' experience leading tours to Italy.

Essential information

Tour dates: November 16-27, 2022

Price per person: \$5,960

Supplement for sole use of double room: \$920

Maximum number in group: 16

Start: 5.00pm November 16, hotel lobby

Finish: After breakfast in the hotel, November 27

Fitness level

★★★ Excellent overall fitness required

Itinerary

Florence (11 nights)

Further information and bookings

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Highlights

Cultural Innovation

Discover the great 15th-century achievements of the Florentine Renaissance: from the engineering of Brunelleschi's dome, to the mathematics of linear perspective, to the introduction of the oil medium.

World-Class Art, Rebooted

Enjoy iconic museums like the Uffizi, which recently doubled its exhibition space to open new rooms dedicated to Botticelli, Leonardo and Caravaggio; or the reopened Grande Museo del Duomo, dedicated to Brunelleschi's designs.

The Origins of the City

Uncover Florence's pre-medieval past and learn about how the struggle between the Etruscans of Fiesole and the victorious Romans affected the artistic legacies of the Florentines.

The Medici

Discover the extraordinary cultural patronage of the Medici family, from the colour and charm of Filippo Lippi and Benozzo Gozzoli, to Michelangelo and Giambologna's Mannerism and Galileo's radical theories.

Pisa and Lucca

Explore these two exceptional cities and the wondrous works of art and architecture they contain.

Detailed itinerary

Included meals are shown with the symbols B, L and D.

Wednesday 16 November - Arrival

The tour begins this evening, with an orientation walk of our neighbourhood. Dinner tonight is in a local restaurant. [D]

Thursday 17 November – The Urban Core of Florence

One of the best ways to understand the early history of Florence is to follow the 13th-century processional route from the city's Baptistery down to the Palazzo Vecchio. Florentine citizens were keenly aware of their urban centre as a kind of stage for civic rituals, and the sculptures, architecture and art that we see in the Baptistery (now cleaned and looking better than it has in centuries), Orsanmichele and at the Palazzo della Signoria are an artistic journey back to the medieval world view. After free time for lunch, there is the option of continuing to San Miniato al Monte, perched above panoramic Piazzale Michelangelo. Its stark Romanesque architecture and Renaissance chapels are testament to its long, pivotal role – it celebrated its 1000th anniversary in 2018. This evening there is a talk in our hotel. [B]

Friday 18 November - The Innovations of the Middle Ages

Increased trade, sophisticated accounting, luxury imports, self-government, a renewed interest in classical learning: many causes have been advanced for the cultural explosion of the Renaissance. Today we track its origins in medieval innovations, beginning at Santa Croce, where Giotto, Donatello and Brunelleschi experimented in art and architecture for wealthy private patrons. Continuing to the Bargello sculpture museum, we examine Ghiberti and Brunelleschi's landmark competition panels for the baptistery doors, Donatello's *David* (the first freestanding statue of a male nude since Antiquity) and the playful Mannerism of Michelangelo and Giambologna. Lunch is at leisure, and you may wish to use your combined baptistery ticket to book a climb of Brunelleschi's dome. After lunch, we continue to Santa Maria Novella, where in the 15th century Masaccio, Paolo Uccello and Ghirlandaio used linear perspective to push Giotto's experiments even further. There is a talk in the hotel this evening. [B]

Saturday 19 November – Pisa's Miracles

In recent years, scholars have suggested that the origins of the Renaissance are to be found in 12th-century Pisa. Today we have a full-day excursion to Pisa by train. We begin our day with a visit to the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, a little-visited museum that quietly conserves an outstanding collection of painted crucifixes, stunning

Sieneſe altarpieces and works by Fra Angelico, Donatello and Ghirlandajo. After time for lunch, we continue with our local guide to the ſo-called Square of Miracles: Piſa’s cathedral, baptiſtery, cemetery and tower were a monumental ſtatement of the city’s pre-eminence, thanks to its role in the Cruſades. (B)

Sunday 20 November – The Renaissance in Painting

The Galleria degli Uffizi is one of the moſt important collections of Western painting in the world, aſſembled thanks to the good taſte (and forced aſſiſtments) of the Medici Grand Dukes of Tuſcany, and recently renovated to double the ſize of its gallery ſpace. The works exhibited here are the foundation of many of our ideas about what conſtitutes “great art”. After a morning together exploring the collection, the afternoon is at leiſure, with the option to remain in the Uffizi as deſired. After an evening talk, we ſhare our impreſſions of this memorable muſeum over dinner. (B, D)

Monday 21 November – The Etruscans

From the 16th century, the Medici were keen to ſhowcaſe their Tuſcan conqueſt as the reunification of a proud, ancient ſtate: indeed, Coſimo I was “Magnus Dux Etruriae”, or Grand Duke of Etruria. Today we explore the Etruscan roots of Florence and nearby Fieſole, Florence’s earlieſt rival but now a pleaſant town with panoramic views. At Florence’s Muſeo Archeologico we admire the wonderful Arezzo Chimera and Aule Metele (Orator), fine examples of Etruscan bronze caſting. After a brief exploration of nearby Santiſſima Annunziata, we take a local bus to Fieſole, where there is time for lunch. At Fieſole’s Muſeo Archeologico there is evidence of the long ſettlement of this hillſide, from an Etruscan necropolis through to the Roman forum and later Lombard conqueſt. We return to Florence by bus, although there is the option to ſtay on if you wiſh. There is a talk in the hotel this evening. (B)

Tuesday 22 November – The Rise of the Medici

If any family embodies the grand ambitions of Renaissance dynaſties, it is Florence’s Medici. Originally rural folk, their 13th-century move to Florence was followed by a meteoric riſe as wealthy bankers, holders of lucrative papal contracts, cardinals and popes. This morning

we explore the origins of the family, beginning at their neighbourhoor church of San Lorenzo. Here, their patronage of Brunelleschi, Filippo Lippi and, eventually, Michelangelo at the Laurenziana Library, was a powerful ſign of growing viſibility. In the nearby family palace, we admire Benozzo Gozzoli’s frescoes in the Cappella dei Magi, a private chapel that glorifies the cultural contributions of Coſimo the Elder and Piero the Gouty. At the Muſeo di San Marco, the Medici financed the entire rebuilding of the monaſtery, paying for Fra Angelico’s workshop to fresco every cell. After lunch, we take a tour of the Muſeo Galileo Galilei, Florence’s ſcience muſeum, where artefacts, instruments and even relics aſſert to the Medici dukes’ intereſt in aſtronomy, medicine and ſcience, and to their ſponsorſhip of Galileo. There is a talk in the hotel this evening. (B)

Wednesday 23 November – How the Other Half Lives

Today we turn our attention to the leſs-privileged people of Renaissance Florence: the women, children, moeſt clerics and even paupers who made up the great number of Florence’s population, but whose lives have only been of ſerious intereſt ſince the 1960s. We begin with an optional viſit of the Buonomini di San Martino and the Muſeo degli Innocenti, the former a lay ſociety that cared for middle-class Florentines ſuffering financial ruin, the latter an orphanage that raiſed the city’s unwanted children for honeſt trades or good marriages; both 15th-century institutions have been recently reſtored. After lunch, we meet to viſit the Cappella Brancacci, a tour-de-force in fresco by Maſolino and Maſaccio that documents the precarity of the Renaissance city’s poor. Afterward, we explore the Oltrarno, viſiting Santo Spirito and Santa Felicità. There is a talk this evening in our hotel. (B)

Thursday 24 November – Pietra Dura

This morning we explore a beloved medium of the Medici Grand Dukes with our local guide. *Pietra dura*, or Florentine moſaic, is the careful arrangement of ſemi-precious and precious ſtones into intricate decorative forms. At the Cenacolo di Sant’Apollonia, we ſpy precious ſtones in Andrea del Caſtagno’s little-visited *Last Supper*; continuing to the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, we ſee the original workshop of the Grand Dukes’ moſaicists and ſplendid

Hotels

Hotel Pendini (11 nights)

www.hotelpendini.it

The Hotel Pendini, a recently renovated 3-star hotel in a 19th-century palace above Piazza della Repubblica. Classic rooms are simple but stylish. Breakfast is held in an elegant room overlooking the square and guests can unwind in the hotel's Tea Room in the early evening.

Weather

Temperatures can be low, averaging from 7-15 degrees, and it will likely rain on a few days during the tour. It is a good idea to bring waterproof shoes, a warm, windproof coat and clothing that can be layered.

Fitness requirements for this tour

GRADE THREE ★★★

This Grade Three tour is our most physically demanding. To participate on this tour, you should be able to:

- keep up with the group at all times
- walk for 5-7 kilometres at a moderate pace with only short breaks
- stand for a reasonable length of time in galleries and museums
- tolerate varying climatic conditions such as cold weather
- negotiate steps and slopes on uneven ground
- move your luggage unassisted

We regret that we are unable to accept bookings on a Grade 3 tour from those who are over 80 or who have restricted mobility.

examples of their work. The afternoon and evening are at leisure, and you may wish to continue exploring Florence's many fabulous museums. (B)

Friday 25 November – Decline and Rebirth

Florence was spared many depredations in the 16th and 17th centuries thanks to grand ducal diplomacy, but a feeble bloodline and a shift in European politics precipitated a long decline. We begin the morning with Michelangelo's glorious *Night and Day* in San Lorenzo's Cappelle Medicee - his wonderful Mannerism is seen as a last hurrah for Florentine art. At the Casa Martelli, the grand home of an ancient family, we admire the distinguished history behind their sculptures by Donatello and enviable art collection – from Piero di Cosimo to Luca Giordano and, at one point, Caravaggio. But in the 20th century, when the last Martelli women died without heirs, the palace was inherited by the Florentine Curia and many significant artworks disappeared. The museum was only recently opened after a forced acquisition by the State. There is more murky modern history after lunch, at the Museo Stefano Bardini, the personal collection of a 19th-century art dealer, who wasn't afraid to invent an attribution (or even assemble a new "masterpiece") if necessary. Bardini's designs for his collection directly inspired Isabella Stewart Gardner in Boston. There is the option to visit the panoramic garden of the nearby Villa Bardini. This evening we meet for a talk. (B)

Saturday 26 November - Lucca

Today we take an excursion by private coach to the Tuscan town of Lucca. We begin our day with a walking tour of Lucca's churches, fine exemplars of the refined Pisan Romanesque, from the cathedral of San Martino to San Frediano, the latter's baptismal font a fine piece of medieval sculpture, and the former housing Jacopo della Quercia's moving tomb of Ilaria del Carretto. At San Michele in Foro and the remains of the amphitheatre we survey Lucca's Roman origins. After a farewell lunch together, there is free time to browse the town's elegant shops and stroll along the city's immense Renaissance walls before we return to Florence. (B, L)

Sunday 27 November - Departure

Our tour concludes after breakfast in our hotel. Please check your individual travel plans for information about transfers. (B)

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