



48 HOURS IN

Florence

SUN · STONE · SEA

WELCOME

Welcome to Florence.

Florence is the city that invented the Renaissance and has been refining the idea ever since. Within a one-kilometer radius of the Piazza della Signoria, more great art was created, commissioned, and debated than in any comparable area in human history. Botticelli, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Donatello, Brunelleschi — the names are so well-known they have become abstractions. Florence makes them concrete again. The David is not a reproduction. The Uffizi is not a catalog. The Duomo, seen at dawn from the Piazzale Michelangelo, is not a postcard.

But Florence is also a city with one of the most developed food cultures in Italy — Tuscan simplicity at its most precise: bistecca alla Fiorentina, ribollita, lampredotto from a street cart on the Mercato Centrale, a glass of Chianti Classico at 11am because the wine bar opened and you were passing. The genius of Florence is that the art and the food exist at the same level — both requiring attention, both rewarding it.

Florence is especially good for solo travelers. The city is compact and walkable — the entire historic center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and almost every significant attraction is within 20 minutes on foot. The bar culture is generous to single visitors; the trattorias expect solo diners at the counter. Book the Uffizi, the Accademia, and the Brunelleschi dome climb in advance. The rest, let the city give you.

DAY ONE

Day One

Duomo • Uffizi • Oltrarno

The first day begins at the top — literally. Brunelleschi's dome before the heat builds, the Uffizi in the afternoon, and an evening in the Oltrarno, the neighborhood across the Arno where Florence has always done its serious eating and drinking.

MORNING

8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

8:00 AM

Brunelleschi's Dome Climb (Cupola del Brunelleschi)

The 463-step climb inside the dome of Santa Maria del Fiore: Brunelleschi's engineering masterpiece, completed in 1436 without a supporting framework — a feat that remained unexplained for centuries. The view from the lantern at the top takes in the entire Arno valley, the Apennines, and the terracotta roofscape of the city. Book timed entry at [duomo.firenze.it](https://www.duomo.firenze.it) — the dome fills weeks in advance. Arrive 15 minutes early.

INSIDER TIP

Climb at 8am before the heat and the crowds. The passage between the inner and outer shells of the dome — where you can see Vasari's Last Judgement fresco from inside — is one of the most disorienting and extraordinary architectural experiences in Europe.

10:00 AM

Piazza del Duomo & Baptistery

Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise on the Baptistery (east doors, facing the Duomo): ten gilded bronze panels depicting Old Testament scenes that Michelangelo reportedly called worthy of the gates of Paradise. The originals are in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo across the square — these are high-quality replicas, but remarkable nonetheless. The Campanile (Giotto's Bell Tower) climb is an alternative if dome tickets are unavailable.

12:00 PM

Lunch: Mercato Centrale

Via dell'Ariento: the covered iron-and-glass market building from 1874. Ground floor: butchers, cheese, and produce operating since the 19th century. Upper floor food hall: tripe sandwiches (lampredotto — the Florentine street food), fresh pasta, ribollita, and Tuscan wine by the glass. One of the best lunch stops in Florence.

AFTERNOON

2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

2:00 PM**Uffizi Gallery**

Piazzale degli Uffizi 6: the greatest collection of Italian Renaissance painting in the world. Botticelli's Birth of Venus and Primavera, Leonardo's Annunciation, Michelangelo's Doni Tondo, Titian, Raphael, Caravaggio. Book online at uffizi.it – the queue without pre-booking can exceed three hours in summer. Allow three hours minimum; the collection is inexhaustible.

INSIDER TIP

The Uffizi is large enough that even in peak season, the less-famous rooms – the Northern European masters, the later Baroque collection – are uncrowded. Don't rush Botticelli to get to Leonardo. The room with the Primavera is worth twenty minutes alone.

5:30 PM**Ponte Vecchio & the Oltrarno**

Cross the Ponte Vecchio – the only bridge in Florence not destroyed by the Germans in 1944 (legend holds Hitler ordered it preserved) – into the Oltrarno, the neighborhood south of the Arno. The goldsmiths' shops on the bridge have been operating since the 16th century. Walk the Via dei Serragli into the neighborhood's quieter streets.

EVENING

7:00 PM – Late

7:00 PM**Aperitivo: Buca Mario or Rasputin Wine Bar**

The Oltrarno wine bar tradition: a glass of Chianti Classico or Morellino di Scansano with crostini before dinner. Rasputin (Via dei Serragli) is the neighborhood favorite – no menu, the owner pours what he's opened, and the cheese plate arrives without asking. Or Volume on Piazza Santo Spirito for a livelier aperitivo scene with the young Florentines.

8:30 PM**Dinner: Buca dell'Orafo or Trattoria Sostanza**

Buca dell'Orafo (Via dei Girolami 28): a Florentine institution directly below the Uffizi – ribollita, bistecca, and pappardelle with wild boar in a vaulted stone room. Or Trattoria Sostanza (Via della Porcellana 25): the oldest restaurant in Florence (1869), famous for its burro e acciughe pasta and the butter-fried artichokes. Both require reservations.

DAY TWO

Day Two

Accademia · San Marco · Piazzale Michelangelo

The second day moves through Florence's greatest sculpture, its quietest monastery, and its finest view. A morning with Michelangelo and Fra Angelico, an afternoon in the Sant'Ambrogio market and the streets of the historic center, and a sunset from the hill above the city.

MORNING

8:00 AM – 1:00 PM

8:00 AM

Galleria dell'Accademia

Via Ricasoli 58–60: home of Michelangelo's David (1504). The original 5.17-metre marble statue carved from a single block of Carrara marble — not a copy, not a reproduction. Also houses Michelangelo's four unfinished Prisoners (Slaves), which may be more moving than the David: figures struggling to emerge from stone, intentionally or not, one of the most powerful metaphors in Western art. Book at accademia.org well in advance.

INSIDER TIP

The Accademia opens at 8:15am. Arrive before the doors open — the queue forms quickly even with pre-booked tickets. The David room is quieter for the first thirty minutes than at any other point in the day.

10:00 AM

Museo di San Marco

Piazza San Marco 3: the Dominican convent where Fra Angelico painted a fresco in every monk's cell (1438–1445). Each cell has a different scene from the life of Christ — intimate, contemplative, and entirely unlike the grand public frescoes in the churches. Savonarola's cell is preserved. One of the quietest and most affecting museum experiences in Florence.

12:00 PM

Lunch: Trattoria Mario or Mercato di Sant'Ambrogio

Trattoria Mario (Via Rosina 2, near Mercato Centrale): a legendary Florentine lunch counter — shared tables, no menu, daily pasta and secondi chalked on the board. Cash only, queue guaranteed, absolutely worth it. Or the Mercato di Sant'Ambrogio (Piazza Ghiberti): the neighborhood market with a lunch counter serving ribollita and lampredotto to market workers.

AFTERNOON

2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

2:00 PM**Palazzo Pitti & Boboli Gardens**

Piazza de' Pitti 1, Oltrarno: the Medici's later palace (larger than the Vatican's principal apartments) with the Palatine Gallery — Raphaels and Titians in room after room of gilded excess. The Boboli Gardens behind the palace are the finest Renaissance garden in Italy: terraced, cypress-lined, and quiet even in summer. Combined ticket covers both.

4:00 PM**Santo Spirito & Oltrarno Streets**

Piazza Santo Spirito: Brunelleschi's final church, still the neighborhood center. The piazza has a daily market and the best concentration of antique dealers and artisan workshops in Florence — leather, bookbinding, picture frames. Walk the Via Maggio for antique shops and the Via dei Serragli for the quieter residential Oltrarno.

INSIDER TIP

The streets immediately behind the Palazzo Pitti — Via Toscanella, Via Mazzetta, Borgo Tegnaio — are some of the least touristy in the historic center. The leather and paper artisan workshops here are genuine, not tourist-facing.

5:30 PM**Piazzale Michelangelo (sunset)**

The esplanade above the Oltrarno with the panoramic view over Florence: the Duomo, the Arno, the Apennines, the terracotta roofscape. One of the most celebrated views in Europe. Walk up via the rose garden stairs (Via dei Bastioni) rather than taking the bus — the climb is 20 minutes and the views open incrementally. Arrive 30 minutes before sunset.

EVENING

8:00 PM – Late

8:00 PM**Dinner: Buca Mario or Il Latini**

Il Latini (Via dei Palchetti 6): the ur-Florentine trattoria — long communal tables, prosciutto hanging from the ceiling, ribollita, bistecca fiorentina, and Chianti in ceramic jugs. Loud, festive, completely Florentine. No reservations for single diners; arrive at 7:30 to queue. Or Buca Mario (Piazza degli Ottaviani 16): Florence's oldest restaurant (1886), more refined, with the same Tuscan canon executed with precision.

10:00 PM**Nightcap: Volume or Rasputin**

Volume (Piazza Santo Spirito 5): the Oltrarno's best late-night bar — good natural wine, outside tables on the piazza, open until 2am. Or Rasputin (Via dei Serragli) for a quieter glass. The Piazza Santo Spirito in summer is one of the best free entertainments in Florence — neighborhood Florentines, students, and the occasional tourist who found it.

WHERE TO EAT

Florence's Table

BREAKFAST & COFFEE

Caffè Gilli

Piazza della Repubblica · €€

Florence's oldest café (1733): cornetti, cappuccino, and the most beautiful room in which to begin a morning in the city center. Stand at the bar as the Florentines do.

Ditta Artigianale

Multiple locations · €€

The best specialty coffee in Florence. Third-wave roasting with excellent espresso and pour-over. The Oltrarno location (Via dei Serragli 36) is the most comfortable for solo visitors.

Mercato Centrale (upper floor)

San Lorenzo · €

The food hall above the market: fresh pasta, lampredotto, Tuscan wine by the glass. Best quick breakfast or early lunch in the San Lorenzo neighborhood.

LUNCH

Trattoria Mario

San Lorenzo · €

Shared tables, no menu, daily pasta. The definitive Florentine workers' lunch counter since 1953. Queue outside Via Rosina 2 before noon. Cash only.

Nerbone

Mercato Centrale · €

The sandwich counter inside the covered market since 1872. The lampredotto (tripe) sandwich with salsa verde is the canonical Florentine street food. €4.

All'Antico Vinaio

Via dei Neri · €

The most famous sandwich shop in Florence — and the queues prove it. Schiacciata with prosciutto, burrata, truffle cream. Worth one visit. Via dei Neri 65.

WHERE TO EAT (CONTINUED)**DINNER****Buca dell'Orafo**

Near Uffizi · €€€

Ribollita, bistecca fiorentina, pappardelle al cinghiale in a vaulted stone room below the Uffizi. One of the most reliable restaurants in Florence. Via dei Girolami 28.

Trattoria Sostanza

Santa Maria Novella · €€€

Florence's oldest restaurant (1869). Famous for butter-fried artichokes, pasta al burro e acciughe, and bistecca. Reserve. Via della Porcellana 25.

Il Latini

Oltrarno · €€

Communal tables, prosciutto hanging from the ceiling, Chianti in ceramic jugs, ribollita. The experience is as Florentine as the food. No reservations for solo diners. Via dei Palchetti 6.

Enoteca Pitti Gola e Cantina

Oltrarno · €€

The best wine bar in Florence for serious Tuscan wine with excellent food. Small plates: crostini, cheese, cold cuts, seasonal pasta. Piazza de' Pitti 16.

Buca Mario

Santa Maria Novella · €€€

Florence's oldest restaurant (1886). More formal than Il Latini; the same Tuscan canon executed with greater precision. Piazza degli Ottaviani 16.

NAVIGATING FLORENCE

Getting Around

Walking

The entire historic center is walkable. Duomo to Uffizi: 5 minutes. Uffizi to Ponte Vecchio: 3 minutes. Ponte Vecchio to Piazza Santo Spirito: 8 minutes. Piazza Santo Spirito to Accademia: 20 minutes. Wear comfortable shoes — the streets are cobblestone.

Tramvia (Tram)

Line T1 connects Santa Maria Novella station to the airport and western suburbs. Line T2 runs to Piazza Beccaria. Useful for the airport; not necessary for the historic center itinerary.

Taxi / MyTaxi app

Taxis are white and metered. The MyTaxi app (or ItTaxi) allows pre-booking. Standard fare within the historic center: €8–12. Airport taxi: fixed rate €22.

Bicycle / E-scooter

The historic center has extensive bike lanes. Mobike and e-scooter shares (Lime, Dott) operate throughout. Not recommended in the highest-traffic tourist areas around the Duomo.

Train connections

Florence Santa Maria Novella station: 1.5 hours to Rome (Frecciarossa), 2 hours to Venice, 1 hour to Bologna. Excellent day-trip options if extending the itinerary.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Know Before You Go

Historic Center (Centro Storico)

The UNESCO World Heritage site containing the Duomo, Uffizi, Signoria, and Mercato Centrale. Tourist-dense but irreplaceable. Stay here if budget allows.

Oltrarno

The neighborhood south of the Arno: artisan workshops, the best wine bars, Palazzo Pitti and Boboli, Piazzale Michelangelo. More Florentine than the center; the best area for evenings.

San Lorenzo

The neighborhood north of the Duomo: Mercato Centrale, the Medici Chapels, and the street market. Working-class Florentine character surviving next to the tourist infrastructure.

Santa Croce

East of the center: the Basilica di Santa Croce (Michelangelo, Galileo, and Machiavelli are buried here), the Sant'Ambrogio market, and the most liveable residential streets.

San Frediano (Oltrarno)

The western Oltrarno: the quietest and most genuinely residential part of the historic city. The Sunday flea market on Piazza dei Ciompi is worth a morning.

Fiesole

The hilltop town 8km northeast via bus: Etruscan and Roman ruins, a Benedictine monastery, and the most dramatic view over Florence. A half-day excursion.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Before You Go

Getting There	Florence Airport (FLR) is 5km northwest; tram T2 to Santa Maria Novella (25 min, €1.70). Pisa Airport (PSA) is 1 hour by train. Many travelers fly into Rome or Milan and take the Frecciarossa high-speed train (1.5–2 hours).
Getting Around	The historic center is almost entirely walkable. A taxi is useful for the airport and for late-night returns from Piazzale Michelangelo.
Best Time to Visit	April–June and September–October: mild temperatures, fewer crowds than summer. July–August is very hot (35°C+) and extremely crowded. The museums are cooler than the streets.
Book in Advance	The Uffizi, the Accademia (David), and the Brunelleschi dome climb all require advance booking. In summer, same-day availability is essentially zero.
Solo Dining	Florence is excellent for solo travelers at the bar. Wine bars (enoteche) throughout the Oltrarno serve food; standing at the bar in any café is normal and expected.
Language	Basic Italian is appreciated but not required. English is widely spoken in tourist areas and restaurants. Menu Italian is worth a quick study — the dish names are specific.
Useful Apps	uffizi.it (Uffizi booking), accademia.org (David tickets), duomo.firenze.it (dome booking), Trenitalia / Italo (trains), MyTaxi (taxis), Google Maps offline.

Florence awaits.

F
l
o
r
e
n
c
e
,

I
t
a
l
y

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Uffizi tickets: [uffizi.it](https://www.uffizi.it)
- ☐ Accademia (David): [accademia.org](https://www.accademia.org)
- ☐ Dome climb: [duomo.firenze.it](https://www.duomo.firenze.it)
- ☐ Reserve dinner (Sostanza/Buca dell'Orafo)
- ☐ Trenitalia app for day trips
- ☐ Google Maps offline — download Florence

Your interactive map is one scan away.

All locations from this guide, colour-coded by day, open on your phone.



goingsolo.life/maps/florence

GoingSolo.Life

TRAVEL ALONE. LIVE FULLY.