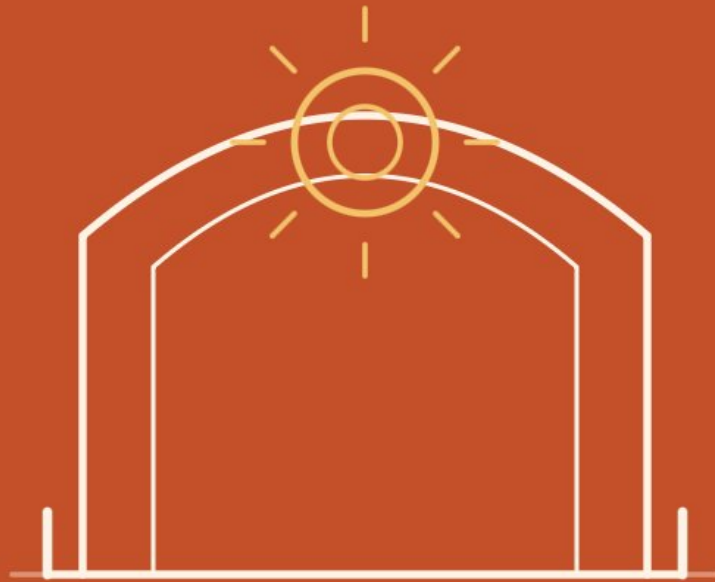




48 HOURS IN

Venice

SUN · STONE · SEA

WELCOME

Welcome to Venice.

Venice is the most beautiful city in the world. This is not a sentimental claim — it is the only city built entirely on water, its 118 islands connected by 400 bridges and navigated by boat, by gondola, and on foot along calli so narrow that two people can barely pass. There are no cars. There are no roads. The silence, when you turn off the tourist-crowded Ruga degli Orefici and find yourself alone in a campo at dusk, is the silence of a city built before engines were invented.

The Grand Canal — the city's main artery, tracing a reverse S through six sestieri — passes palaces that have been rotting beautifully into the lagoon for five centuries. The Basilica di San Marco took nearly a thousand years to complete. The Doge's Palace governed a maritime empire that stretched across the eastern Mediterranean. The Rialto Bridge has connected the two halves of the city since the 12th century. No destination covered by this series carries more history per square meter.

Venice rewards solo travelers who are willing to get lost. The crowds are in Piazza San Marco and on the Rialto. Thirty seconds in any direction leads to empty campi, neighborhood bacari (wine bars) serving cicchetti at the counter, and canals with nothing on them but a delivery barge. The city is small enough to walk end to end in forty minutes. It is complex enough that you will not exhaust it in a lifetime.

DAY ONE

Day One

San Marco · Dorsoduro · Rialto · Bacari

The first day covers the essential Venice — Piazza San Marco and the Doge's Palace in the morning before the crowds reach full density, the Accademia and Dorsoduro in the afternoon, and the bacaro circuit along the Rialto in the evening. Start early.

MORNING · 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

8:00 AM

Piazza San Marco & Basilica di San Marco

The symbolic heart of Venice: the only space in the city formally designated a piazza. The Basilica — begun in 828 CE to house the relics of Saint Mark, rebuilt and expanded through the 11th century — is the finest example of Byzantine architecture in Western Europe. The exterior mosaics, the interior gold ceiling, and the bronze horses above the portal (replicas; originals in the museum above) are worth an hour of genuine attention. Arrive by 8am before the cruise ship crowds. Book tickets at [venetoinside.com](https://www.venetoinside.com) to skip the queue — essential on summer mornings.

***Insider Tip** The Basilica's Museo Marciano (upstairs) has the original Greek bronze horses stolen from Constantinople in 1204 — four animals that have stood in this building for over 800 years. The rooftop terrace above gives a direct view down into Piazza San Marco from above. Included with basilica entry.*

10:00 AM

Doge's Palace (Palazzo Ducale)

The seat of Venetian government for over a thousand years: the pink-and-white Gothic palace adjoining the Basilica governed a republic that lasted from the 7th century until Napoleon ended it in 1797. The interior — the Great Council Chamber (the largest oil painting in the world, by Tintoretto), the Bridge of Sighs, the torture chambers — takes two hours minimum. Book at [palazzoducale.visitmuve.it](https://www.palazzoducale.visitmuve.it). The Museum Pass covers both the Doge's Palace and the Correr Museum.

12:30 PM

Lunch: Cantina Do Mori

Calle Do Mori, San Polo 429: the oldest bacaro in Venice, operating since 1462. Low ceilings hung with copper pots, wine served from the barrel, cicchetti (small plates) of baccalà mantecato, sarde in saor, and polpette laid out on the counter. No tables — eat standing. €10–15 for a full lunch with wine. The canonical Venetian midday meal.

AFTERNOON · 1:30 PM - 8:00 PM

1:30 PM

Accademia Galleries (Gallerie dell'Accademia)

The greatest collection of Venetian painting: Bellini, Carpaccio, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Tiepolo — the entire arc of the Venetian school from the 14th through 18th centuries. Allow two hours. Book ahead at [gallerieaccademia.it](https://www.gallerieaccademia.it) — the museum limits capacity and queues can be long in summer. The building itself (a former Scuola) is worth noting.

Insider Tip Room 20 contains Carpaccio's *Miracle of the Relic of the Cross* (1494) — a painting that shows the Rialto Bridge, the Grand Canal, and the Venetian skyline exactly as they appeared in the late 15th century. It is one of the most useful documents of how Venice looked before it started sinking.

4:00 PM

Dorsoduro & Campo Santa Margherita

Walk west from the Accademia through Dorsoduro — the neighborhood with the highest concentration of students, the fewest tourists, and the best aperitivo bars in Venice. Campo Santa Margherita is the social heart of the sestiere: a wide, sunny campo with café tables and local life that feels like a different city from San Marco. The Frari church (Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari) is two minutes north and contains Titian's *Assumption* — the most important painting in Venice.

6:00 PM

Aperitivo at Ai Do Draghi

Campo Santa Margherita: the best aperitivo hour in Venice. The spritz here — Aperol or Campari with prosecco and a splash of soda — is the official drink of the Veneto and €3 at any bacaro counter. Ai Do Draghi opens onto the campo; sit outside and watch the city slow down.

EVENING · 8:00 PM - LATE

8:00 PM

Bacaro Crawl: Rialto Circuit

The Rialto market neighborhood is the best evening circuit in Venice: a cluster of bacari serving cicchetti and ombra (small glasses of wine) within a five-minute walk of each other. Osteria al Squero (Dorsoduro), All'Arco (near the Rialto market), and Bancogiro (Grand Canal terrace) are all reliable. The ritual: order at the counter, eat standing, move to the next. Budget €25–35 for a full evening.

The Rialto Bridge at night — lit, reflected in the canal, emptied of the day's crowds — is one of the most beautiful things in Venice. Cross it after dinner.

DAY TWO

Day Two

Cannaregio · Murano · Castello · Sunset on the Lagoon

The second day leaves the tourist circuit entirely: a morning in Cannaregio — the most authentic sestiere in Venice — followed by the vaporetto to Murano, and an afternoon walking the quiet eastern districts of Castello to watch the sun set over the lagoon from the Riva degli Schiavoni.

MORNING · 8:00 AM - 12:30 PM

8:00 AM

Cannaregio: Jewish Ghetto & Local Venice

Take the vaporetto to the Cannaregio stop and walk northwest. The Ghetto — the oldest Jewish ghetto in the world, established by the Venetian Republic in 1516 — is a small campo of five-story buildings (built high because expansion was restricted) with a Jewish Museum and two synagogues open for tours. The surrounding Cannaregio streets are lined with neighborhood bakeries, bars serving breakfast at the counter, and hardware shops that have been here since the Doges. Buy a cornetto and a macchiato. Walk slowly.

***Insider Tip** The Strada Nova — Cannaregio's main artery — runs from the train station toward the Rialto and is lined with local fruit vendors, cheese shops, and the kind of alimentari that are disappearing from the tourist districts. Osteria L'Orto dei Mori (Campo dei Mori) opens for lunch at 12:30 and is worth building the morning around.*

10:00 AM

Vaporetto to Murano

Take line 4.1 or 4.2 from Fondamente Nove (15 minutes, covered by vaporetto pass). Murano is a separate island in the lagoon, famous for glass-blowing since 1291, when the Venetian Republic moved the furnaces off the main island for fire safety. The Museo del Vetro (Glass Museum) is excellent; the free factory demonstrations on the main canal are worth 20 minutes. Buy glass only in shops with 'Vetro Murano Artistico' certification — the tourist district is full of Chinese imports.

12:30 PM

Lunch: Return to Fondamente Nove

Return by vaporetto and walk the Fondamente Nove — the northern waterfront with a direct view across the lagoon to the island of San Michele (the city cemetery) and the mountains of the Dolomites on clear days. Lunch at Osteria Boccadoro (Cannaregio 5405A): one of the best fish restaurants in Venice, hidden behind Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo. The spaghetti alle vongole is the standard.

AFTERNOON · 2:00 PM - 8:00 PM

2:00 PM

Castello: The Quiet East

Walk east from San Marco through Castello — the largest sestiere and the most residential. The Arsenale (the shipyard that built Venice's naval empire, capable of launching a fully fitted warship per day at its peak) is closed to visitors but the exterior is extraordinary: the gate, built in 1460, is the oldest example of Renaissance architecture

in Venice. The Via Garibaldi is the widest street in Venice — wide enough for an outdoor market — and feels like a neighborhood that hasn't fully noticed tourism.

4:00 PM

Scuola Grande di San Rocco

Campo San Rocco, San Polo: the greatest cycle of paintings by Tintoretto, covering every wall and ceiling of two rooms with scenes from the Old and New Testament. Executed between 1564 and 1588, this is one of the most extraordinary decorative programs in European art — Ruskin called it one of the three greatest paintings in the world. The building rents mirrors on sticks to view the ceiling without breaking your neck. €10 entry; no booking required.

***Insider Tip** Arrive at San Rocco in late afternoon when the light comes through the windows at a low angle. The ceiling paintings — which Tintoretto painted lying on scaffolding — are dramatically different in different light conditions. Budget 45 minutes minimum.*

6:30 PM

Sunset: Punta della Dogana & Zattere

Walk to the tip of Dorsoduro at Punta della Dogana (the old customs house, now a contemporary art museum) and watch the sun set over the Giudecca Canal. The view — the dome of the Salute, the entrance to the Grand Canal, the Giudecca island across the water, the wide southern lagoon — is the quintessential Venetian panorama. Walk west along the Zattere waterfront as the light fails.

EVENING · 8:00 PM - LATE

8:00 PM

Dinner: Osteria alle Testiere

Calle del Mondo Novo, Castello 5801: the best small restaurant in Venice — eight tables, no written menu, whatever arrived at the Rialto market that morning. The focus is lagoon seafood: scallops, razor clams, mantis shrimp, cuttlefish in its own ink. Reserve at least two days ahead (+39 041 522 7220). Dinner for one with wine is €55–70. The only restaurant in Venice worth planning the entire trip around.

After dinner, walk back through the empty calli toward San Marco. The city at 10pm — the tourists mostly returned to the cruise ships and hotels, the stone lit by street lamps reflected in the canals — is as close to the Venice of the 18th century as any living person will experience.

WHERE TO EAT

Venice's Table

CICCHETTI & BACARI

Cantina Do Mori · San Polo · €

Venice's oldest bacaro since 1462. Baccalà mantecato, sarde in saor, and house wine from the barrel. Eat standing at the counter. The original.

All'Arco · Rialto · €

The best cicchetti bar near the Rialto market: tiny, crowded, and worth it. Arrive before 1pm or after 6pm for the full selection. Calle dell'Arco, San Polo 436.

Bancogiro · Rialto · €€

A bacaro with Grand Canal terrace seating — rare in Venice. Good wine list, excellent crostini. Campo San Giacometto, San Polo 122.

Osteria al Squero · Dorsoduro · €

Across from the last working gondola repair yard in Venice. Tables on the canal; excellent spritz and cicchetti. Fondamenta Nani 943.

RESTAURANTS

Osteria alle Testiere · Castello · €€€

Eight tables, market-driven seafood menu, no walk-ins. The best restaurant in Venice. Reserve days ahead. Calle del Mondo Novo 5801.

Osteria L'Orto dei Mori · Cannaregio · €€

Local favorite in a quiet campo away from the tourist circuit. Creative Venetian cooking; excellent for solo lunch or dinner. Campo dei Mori 3386.

Osteria Boccadoro · Cannaregio · €€

Small fish restaurant behind Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo. Exceptional spaghetti alle vongole and frittura mista. Cannaregio 5405A.

Trattoria alla Madonna · San Polo · €€

A classic Venetian trattoria open since 1954 — white tablecloths, brisk service, reliable fish. Calle della Madonna, San Polo 594.

COFFEE & BREAKFAST

Caffè Florian · San Marco · €€€

The oldest café in continuous operation in the world (1720). Sit inside for the frescoes and the orchestra; pay the surcharge without complaint. Once.

Torrefazione Cannaregio · Cannaregio · €

Where locals actually drink coffee: a roastery and bar with no tourist markup. Fondamenta dei Ormesini 2804.

Pasticceria Rizzardini · San Polo · €

The best pastry shop in Venice for fritole, zaleti, and bussolai. Campiello dei Meloni, San Polo 1415.

GETTING AROUND

Navigating Venice

MODE	COST	NOTES
Vaporetto	€9.50/ride	ACTV water buses — the primary public transit. Line 1 runs the full Grand Canal (slow, scenic). Line 2 runs faster. 48-hour pass: €35. Buy at any ACTV booth or the Venezia Unica app.
Walking	Free	Venice is best navigated on foot. Allow extra time — the calli are labyrinthine and Google Maps is unreliable in the tightest alleys. Download offline maps.
Traghetto	€2	Gondola ferries crossing the Grand Canal at seven fixed points. Faster than finding a bridge. Locals ride standing; tourists can sit.
Gondola	€90+	Romantic and genuinely beautiful, but purely for experience. €80–90 for 30 minutes (fixed rate). Best in the smaller canals of Cannaregio or Dorsoduro, not the Grand Canal.
Water Taxi	€15+	Private motorboat taxis: fast, expensive. From the airport to San Marco: €120–140 fixed rate. Useful for luggage; unnecessary otherwise.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Know Before You Go

AREA	NOTES
San Marco	The tourist center: Piazza San Marco, Doge's Palace, luxury hotels. Essential but crowded. Best before 9am and after 8pm.
Dorsoduro	The student and arts quarter: Accademia, Peggy Guggenheim, Campo Santa Margherita. The best aperitivo scene in Venice.
San Polo & Santa Croce	The Rialto market district: best food shopping, best bacari, most lived-in neighborhoods on this side of the Grand Canal.
Cannaregio	The most residential sestiere: the Jewish Ghetto, local bars, the train station. Feels like an actual city.
Castello	The largest sestiere: the Arsenale, the Biennale gardens, quiet campi, the best fish restaurants. Extends to the eastern tip of the island.
Giudecca	The island across the canal from Dorsoduro. Working-class Venice, a Palladian church, and good views back across to the main island.
Murano & Burano	Glass island (15 min by vaporetto) and lace/colorful houses island (45 min). Murano is worth a half-day; Burano is a full day trip.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Before You Go

Getting There	Venice Marco Polo Airport (VCE) is 12km from the city. Alilaguna water bus to San Marco: €15, 75 min. ACTV bus to Piazzale Roma (land): €8, 25 min. Water taxi: €120–140.
Crowds	Venice receives 30 million visitors per year. Summer mornings at San Marco are genuinely difficult. Go early, go late, go to other sestieri. The city empties after 6pm when day-trippers leave.
Day Visitor Fee	As of 2024, Venice charges a day visitor fee (€5) on peak dates. Overnight guests and residents are exempt. Check cda.venezia.it for current dates.
Getting Around	Vaporetto is the primary transit. Buy a 48-hour pass (€35) at any ACTV booth. Line 1 is the scenic Grand Canal route; Line 2 is faster.
Best Time	April–June and September–October: mild, manageable crowds. July–August: extremely hot and crowded. November–March: quiet, atmospheric, and occasionally flooded (acqua alta).
Solo Dining	Venice's bacaro culture is ideal for solo travelers — eating at the counter is the norm, not the exception. Osterie with shared tables are welcoming.
Acqua Alta	High water flooding in winter months (October–January primarily). Hotels provide boots; elevated walkways are deployed. Check tide forecast at comune.venezia.it .
Useful Apps	Venezia Unica (transit), Google Maps offline, cda.venezia.it (day visitor fee), gallerieaccademia.it (Accademia booking), venetoinside.com (Basilica tickets).

Venice awaits.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Book Basilica di San Marco tickets: venetoinside.com
- ☐ Book Doge's Palace: palazzoducale.visitmuve.it
- ☐ Reserve Osteria alle Testiere (2+ days ahead): +39 041 522 7220
- ☐ Buy vaporetto pass at ACTV booth on arrival
- ☐ Download offline Venice map — Google Maps unreliable in alleys
- ☐ Check day visitor fee dates: cda.venezia.it
- ☐ Book Accademia if visiting high season: gallerieaccademia.it

Your interactive map is one scan away.

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

goingsolo.life/maps/venice

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