

VENICE

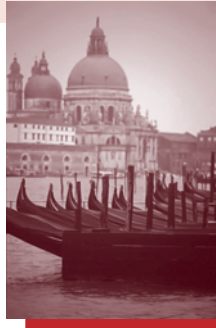
A serene world of elegant decay “floating” in a lagoon, **Venice** is unlike anywhere else in the world. Despite the tourists, the sometimes aromatic canals and the often inflated prices, Venice continues to be a dream destination. Many cities claim to be pedestrian-only, but Venice truly is car-free. Don't just take a day trip here. Once the day trippers leave, Venice becomes a quiet, romantic maze of streets with spectacular architecture. As many times as I have visited, I am always amazed by its beauty. If you can, visit Venice in the off-season so you can experience the quieter side of this incredible city.

Canal Grande (Grand Canal)

Winding its way for two miles through the city, the Grand Canal, Venice's “main street,” isn't a street at all. Lined with colorful *palazzos*, the canal is a highlight for all visitors to Venice.

You can ride in a *gondola* (make sure you know the price before boarding), a water taxi (even pricier), or the *vaporetti*, the water buses that are the main way to get around. For €5, hop on #1 (it stops at each *vaporetto* stop) and take a 45-minute tour of the Grand Canal. Try to get a seat up front for the best views (but don't stand up there or you'll be asked to move so the driver can see).

Take #82 for a faster trip down the Grand Canal with fewer stops. Note that some *vaporetti* finish at the Rialto Bridge. They're marked “Solo Rialto.” If you want to get on and off, buy a 24-hour card for €11. You can purchase tickets at the ticket booth at the stop or on board (but buy it from the conductor as soon as you board).





Venice

1. Basilica di San Marco (St. Mark's Basilica)
2. Canal Grande (Grand Canal)
3. Ca' d'Oro (House of Gold)
4. Ca' Rezzonico
5. Collezione Peggy Guggenheim (Peggy Guggenheim Collection)
6. Gallerie dell'Accademia (Academy Gallery)
7. Ghetto (Jewish Ghetto)
8. Giudecca
9. Madonna dell'Orto
10. Museo Civico Correr (Correr Civic Museum)
11. Museo Storico Navale (Naval Museum)
12. Palazzo Ducale (Doge's Palace)
13. Piazza San Marco (St. Mark's Square)
14. Ponte di Rialto (Rialto Bridge)
15. Santa Maria della Salute
16. Santa Maria della Salute
17. Scuola Grande di San Rocco
18. Scuola Grande di San Rocco
19. Teatro La Fenice

Take the Traghetto!

A *gondolaride* costs up to €100 for less than an hour ride (more in the evening). I like to get on a *traghetto*. These large *gondolas* take you across the Grand Canal for less than €1. It's a fun way to experience a *gondola* ride for a fraction of the cost. And since there are only three bridges that cross the Grand Canal, this can also save you lots of time walking to the nearest one.

Piazza San Marco*(St. Mark's Square)**Vaporetto: San Marco*

This vast square is the heart of Venice. Although it can be packed during the day with both tourists and pigeons, if you come here at night or in early morning you'll have one of the most fabulous locations in the world nearly all to yourself in the eerie mist and fog. The square is home to **Caffè Florian**. This elegant and expensive café has been in

business since 1720, and it's worth the splurge to sit and listen to the orchestra music.

Overlooking it all is the **Campanile San Marco** (St. Mark's Bell Tower), where you can take an elevator to the top for great views. Admission: €6, open daily 9am-7pm (until 9pm in summer). As you face the basilica, the small square to your



right (connecting St. Mark's Square with the Grand Canal) is the equally lovely **Piazzetta San Marco**. To your left as you face the basilica is the **Torre dell'Orologio** (Clock Tower) dating back to the mid-1400s. Two "Moors" strike the bell on the hour.

This is also the entry to the **Mercerie**, a retail area filled with touristy eateries, souvenir shops and high-end boutiques. Travelers continue to flock to **Harry's Bar** on Calle Vallaresso (just west of St. Mark's Square). Although dinner is extremely expensive (and many complain not worth the cost), most

come to have a martini or delicious *Bellini* (sparkling *Prosecco* wine and peach juice) at the bar.

Basilica di San Marco

(St. Mark's Basilica)

Piazza San Marco

Tel. 041/5225205

Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-5pm, Sun 2pm-4pm

Admission: Free to basilica. Treasury (Tesoro): €2. Pala d'Oro and Sanctuary (Santuario): €1.50. Galleria and Museum: €3
Vaporetto: San Marco

Under the five domes of this sumptuous, candlelit basilica, you'll find some of the world's most amazing mosaics. The oldest are in the atrium, and are scenes from the Old Testament. The basilica is said to house the bones of St. Mark, brought here in the 800s, and the mosaic above the far left door tells the story. The basilica is laid out in the form of a Greek cross. It's called the *Chiesa d'Oro* (Golden Church), as it's filled with riches pilfered from the Orient, many of which are housed in the treasury (*tesoro*).

Highlights of the basilica are the **Pala d'Oro**, a golden altar screen embellished with hundreds of jewels. Upstairs is the Galleria and Museum, where you'll not only find great views of St. Mark's Square but also the **Triumphal Quadriga**, four bronze horses dating back to the time of Alexander the Great in the 4th century. Note that you must be dressed appropriately to enter the basilica (no shorts, no bare shoulders).

Palazzo Ducale

(Doge's Palace)

Piazzetta San Marco

Tel. 041/2715911 (museum). 041/5209070 (tour reservations)

Open daily Nov-Mar 9am-5pm (Apr-Oct until 7pm)

Admission: €11. Secret Itinerary Tour: €13

Vaporetto: San Marco

The office of the doge was instituted in Venice around 700, and the elected doge served for life. This white-and-pink-marble palace, located next to the basilica, dates back to the

early 1300s. Not only was it the doge's home, it also contained government meeting chambers and a prison. Near the basilica is the ornate **Porta della Carta** (Gate of the Paper), dating back to the 15th century, where official decrees were posted. Enter the palace from the waterfront, and you'll soon be climbing the **Scala dei Giganti** (Giants' Stairway), overseen by the large Neptune and Mars statues. Some highlights are:

- Sala di Anti-Collegio, home to *Rape of Europa* by Veronese.
- Sala del Senato, with *Triumph of Venice* by Tintoretto.
- Sala del Maggiore Consiglio, featuring *Paradise* by Tintoretto, the largest oil painting in the world.

The palace is separated from the cells of the **Prigioni Nuove** (New Prisons) by a small canal. Over that canal is the **Ponte dei Sospiri** (Bridge of Sighs), said to have been given its name because the prisoners who walked over it on their way to the

Walking in Venice

When the tides roll in, low-lying sections of Venice become flooded (especially St. Mark's Square). The city sets up raised wooden planks so that you don't have to wade through the water. Also, chances are that you *will* get lost, but that's part of the beauty of visiting this wonderful place. To help you find your way, **yellow signs** point to major sights like the Rialto Bridge and San Marco.

cells on the other side would be seeing the beautiful lagoon, the island of San Giorgio, and freedom for the last time.

The "Secret Itinerary" tour takes you through the private apartment of the doge and secret passageways.

Museo Civico Correr

(Correr Civic Museum)
Piazza San Marco (west end of the square)
Tel 041/2405211
Open daily 9am-5pm (Apr-Oct until 7pm)

Admission: €11 (includes admission to the Ducal Palace)
Vaporetto: San Marco

Works from the 14th to 16th centuries are featured in this museum. You'll find everything from neo-Classical sculpture to silly shoes worn by the Venetians in the 16th century.

Teatro La Fenice*Campo San Fantin**Tel. 041/786511*

It was at this elegant opera house that Verdi's *La Traviata* was first performed (it bombed). It was destroyed by fire in 1773 and again in a suspicious fire in 1996. It reopened in 2004. See www.teatrolafenice.it for a schedule of events.

San Giorgio Maggiore

*Isola San Giorgio Maggiore
(across the canal from St.
Mark's Square)*

prison

*Tel. 041/5227827**Open daily 7:30am-12:30pm and 2:30pm-6pm**Admission: Free. Bell Tower: €3*

*Vaporetto: San Giorgio (reached from St. Mark's by taking #82
from the San Zaccaria Jolanda stop)*

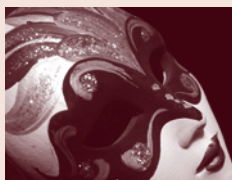
Look across the waterfront from St. Mark's Square and you'll see the majestic dome and tall campanile (bell tower) of this church. Two of Tintoretto's works are here: *The Last Supper* and *Gathering of Manna*. You can take the elevator to the top of the bell tower for a panoramic view of the city.

Ca' Rezzonico*Fondamenta Rezzonico, Dorsoduro 3136**Tel. 041/2410100**Open Wed-Mon 10am-5pm (Apr-Oct until 6pm). Closed Tue**Admission: €7**Vaporetto: Ca' Rezzonico*

This 17th-century *palazzo* with great views of the Grand Canal is stuffed with 18th-century Venetian art, tapestries, period furnishings, frescoes, and chandeliers.

Entertainment Tip

For ten days before Ash Wednesday, Venice celebrates **Carnevale**, a huge party throughout the city. Need a mask for the celebration? Try **Mondonovo**, *Rio Terrà Canal, Dorsoduro 3063. Tel. 041/5287344*, the most famous mask-maker in Venice.



Ponte di Rialto

(Rialto Bridge)

Vaporetto: Rialto

This stone bridge, one of three bridges crossing the Grand Canal, is the best place to see boat traffic. Great photo opportunity!

Food & Restaurant Tips

Venice has a wonderful **food market** at the west end of the Rialto Bridge (Rialto vaporetto). Open 7am–1pm, Mon–Sat. Near the market are a few places to try *cicheti*, the Venice version of *tapas*. Other good places in this area are:

OSTERIA ALLA BOTTE

5482 Calle della Bissa (east end of the Rialto Bridge near Campo San Bartolomeo). Tel. 041/5209775.

Closed Thu and Sun

OSTERIA SORA AL PONTE

1588 Ponte delle Beccarie (near the Rialto Bridge Market off of Campo de la Beccarie). Tel. 041/718208.

Closed Mon

BANCOGIRO

122 Campo San Giacometto (west end of Rialto Bridge along the Grand Canal). Tel. 041/5232061. Closed

Sun (dinner) and Mon

Ca' d'Oro

(House of Gold)

Calle Ca' d'Oro, Cannaregio 3933

Tel. 041/5200345

Open Tue-Sun 8:15pm-7:15pm (Mon until 2pm)

Admission: €11

Vaporetto: Ca' d'Oro

This fabulous building is just as much an attraction as the collection of art it houses. Highlights include its beautiful

courtyard and views of the Grand Canal. Among the treasures inside is the painting *Venus* by Titian.

Scuola Grande di San Rocco

Campo San Rocco, San Polo 3052

Tel. 041/5234864

Open daily 10am-4pm (Apr-Oct until 5:30pm)

Admission: €6

Vaporetto: San Tomà

Filled with nearly 60 large religious paintings by Tintoretto, this sumptuous hall is sometimes called “Tintoretto’s Sistine Chapel.”

Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari

Campo dei Frari, San Polo

Tel. 041/2750462

Open Mon-Sat 9am-6pm, Sun 1pm-6pm

Admission: €6

Vaporetto: San Tomà

This huge Gothic church is filled with incredible works of art, including Titian’s *Assumption* (over the main altar) and *Madonna Enthroned* (first altar to the right after you enter); Donatello’s wood carving of St. John the Baptist (to the right of the main altar); and Bellini’s *Madonna and Child with Saints* (in the sacristy).

Santa Maria della Salute

Campo della Salute, Dorsoduro

Tel. 041/5237591

Open daily 9am-noon and 3pm-5:30pm (Apr-Sep until 6:30pm)

Admission: Free. Sacristy: €2

Vaporetto: Salute

This church, with its huge dome, is dedicated to the Virgin Mary for saving the city from a plague that killed thousands of Venetians in 1630. The Sacristy contains works by Titian, and Tintoretto’s *The Wedding at Cana*.

Gallerie dell'Accademia

*(Academy Gallery)
Campo della Carità, Dorsoduro 1050
Tel. 041/5222247
Open Tue-Sun 8:15am-7:15pm (Mon until 2pm)
Admission: €7
Vaporetto: Accademia*

An incredible collection of Venetian art spanning the 13th to 18th centuries, including works by Bellini, Carpaccio, Tintoretto, Veronese and Titian.

Collezione Peggy Guggenheim

*(Peggy Guggenheim Collection)
Fondamenta Venier dei Leoni, Dorsoduro 701
Tel. 041/2405411
Open Wed-Mon 10am-6pm. Closed Tue
Admission: €10
Vaporetto: Accademia (then follow signs)*

The 20th-century art collection of heiress Peggy Guggenheim is housed in her former Grand Canal retirement *palazzo*. You'll find works by Picasso, Dalí, Chagall, Klee, Pollock and Kandinsky, to name a few. Lovely garden.

Ghetto

*(Jewish Ghetto)
Vaporetto: San Marcuola or Ponte Guglie*

In the early 1500s, Jews were confined to an island in the Cannaregio district named after its *geto* (Venetian for "foundry"). This neighborhood of narrow streets is still home to Jewish establishments and five synagogues built in the 16th century.

The **Museo Ebraico** celebrates the neighborhood's Jewish history, and offers tours of the synagogues and the neighborhood in both Italian and English. *Campo Ghetto Nuovo, Cannaregio 2902/b. Tel. 041/715359. Open Jun-Sep Sun-Fri 10am-7pm, last tour at 5:30pm (Oct-May until 6pm, last tour at 4:30pm). Admission: €3 (museum), €9 (tour).*

Madonna dell'Orto

Campo dell'Orto, Cannaregio 3512

Tel. 041/2750462

Open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 1pm-5pm. Closed Sun Jul-Aug

Admission: €3

Vaporetto: Madonna dell'Orto

Tintoretto is buried in this Gothic church at the northern end of the city. The main altar features two of his works: *Sacrifice of the Golden Calf* (to the left), and *Last Judgment* (to the right). (By the way, the **Cannaregio** is a great neighborhood to stroll and get away from the crowds.)

Giudecca

Vaporetto: Zitelle, Redentore or Palanca

This island is both a working-class neighborhood and the location of one of the most exclusive hotels in the world: the Cipriani.

Museo Storico Navale

(Naval Museum)

Campo San Biagio, Castello 2148

Tel. 041/5200276

Open Mon-Fri 8:45am-1:30pm (Sat until 1pm)

Admission: €2

Vaporetto: Arsenale

This museum celebrates Venice's naval history and has an impressive boat collection. (I personally like the collection of seashells.) Nearby is the huge **Arsenale** shipyard.

Excursions Around the Venetian Lagoon

Boats depart from the San Zaccaria stop near St. Mark's Square.

There are also departures for Murano, Burano, Torcello, and San Michele from the Fondamenta Nuove stop in Cannaregio.

Each island in the lagoon offers something different for the traveler.

Murano: Sort of like a little Venice with its own Grand Canal

Restaurant Tips around Venice

AVOGARIA

1629 Dorsoduro. *Calle della Avogaria (near Campo San Sebastiano)*, Tel. 041/2960491, Closed Tue, Vaporetto: San Basilio

Modern, sleek decor and southern Italian cuisine. You can also sit at the small bar and have appetizers. There's a small courtyard used in warm weather. Fun, friendly and worth the hike. Moderate.

AI GONDOLIERI

366 Fondamenta dell'Ospedaletto (near the Guggenheim Museum at Fondamenta Venier dai Leoni), Tel. 041/5286396, Closed Tue, Vaporetto: Accademia

Not for seafood lovers. This restaurant serves meat dishes. Delicious *fiore di zucca* (zucchini flowers filled w/cheese, then battered and fried). Moderate-Expensive.

DA IVO

1809 San Marco. *Calle dei Fuseri (near Campo S. Luca)*, Tel. 041/5285004, Closed Sun and Jan, Vaporetto: San Marco

Beautiful restaurant serving Venetian and Tuscan specialties. Try the delicious *bistecca alla Fiorentina* (T-bone steak). Expensive-Very Expensive.

VINO VINO

2007A San Marco. *Ponte delle Veste (between La Fenice and via XXII Marzo)*, Tel. 041/2417688, Closed Tue, Vaporetto: S. Maria del Giglio

Popular wine bar and restaurant serving typical Venetian cuisine and offering 350 Italian and imported wines. Inexpensive.

ENOTECA AL VOLTO

4081 San Marco. *Calle Cavalli (between the Grand Canal and Salizada San Luca)*, Tel. 041/5228945, Closed Sun, No credit cards, Vaporetto: Rialto

This wine bar has wooden tables and chairs, wine labels as wallpaper, an impressive wine list, and simple Venetian fare. A great deal. Inexpensive.

and islands connected by picturesque bridges. The famous glassworks are located here, and you can visit them to watch glass being handblown by artisans.

Burano: Brightly painted houses and lots of shops selling lace. You can visit the **Museo del Merletto** (Lace Museum) to see women creating lovely handmade (and expensive) lace (closed Tuesdays).

Torcello: Come here if you want to get away from it all. This nearly deserted island (less than twenty people live here) has a church with a small museum, but not much else.

San Michele: Venice's island cemetery.

Lido: Once one of *the* places to be seen, the Lido and its beaches have now seen better days. It still draws tourists to its luxury hotels and casino, but you won't find many swimming in the polluted waters.

VENICE GETTING THERE/GETTING AROUND

A two-mile-long causeway connects Venice with modern and bland Mestre on the coast. If you arrive by **car**, the road ends at a parking lot on the edge of the island (Autorimessa Comunale, Garage San Marco, or Tronchetto), costing about €20 per day. When you leave the car park or train station, you'll be right at the Grand Canal where you can board a *vaporetto* (**water bus**). See Grand Canal entry above for more information. You may want to store excess bags at the train station, because Venice is a nightmare for heavy packers trying to lug their bags over bridges and along narrow streets.

Marco Polo Airport is six miles north of Venice. You can take a **water taxi** to your hotel (easiest and most expensive) beginning at €80. **Buses** connect the airport with the Piazzale Roma *vaporetto* (water bus) stop for €3 (blue ATVO bus). You can then get on a *vaporetto* to reach your final destination. The Alilaguna **speedboats** also connect the airport to St. Mark's Square (€11 per person). The airport tourist information can help you with all these connections.