

What To Eat And See On Your Next Visit To Florence, Italy

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Aerial view of Florence from Piazza Michelangelo LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

Renowned for its rich history and stunning architecture, [Florence](#) is a must-visit destination for art enthusiasts and history buffs alike. From Michelangelo's David and the [Duomo](#), one of the largest churches in the world with its famous Brunelleschi-designed dome, to fashion museums from Gucci and Ferragamo and fabulous Tuscan food (including gelato), Florence offers endless opportunities for exploration and discovery.

See And Do

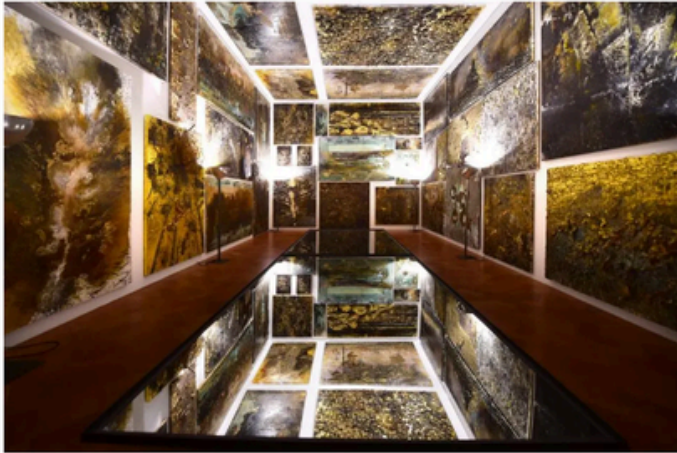
See And Do



Michelangelo's David in Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, Italy GETTY IMAGES

After seeing the famous Duomo (free to enter), preferably early before the crowds descend, head to see Michelangelo's *David* in the [Accademia](#), 17 feet high and made from a single block of marble. And don't miss the museum's other considerable Renaissance treasures by Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio and Filippino Lippi. It's best to use a tour company for tickets as the queues are madness. A good one is [Get Your Guide](#) where you go in an organised, timed queue with a guide who also offers interesting commentary.

For a break to contemplate the range of art and history that surrounds you in Florence, another beautiful historic building in the center offers respite. The [Odeon](#) cinema is in a Renaissance palace with a bookshop downstairs and 200 plush armchairs in the mezzanine gallery above to relax in. There's also a big screen showing free films in the afternoon.



Anselm Kiefer's "Fallen Angels" at Palazzo Strozzi in Florence, Italy. GETTY IMAGES

For contemporary art, [Palazzo Strozzi](#) is a must. The current show, *Fallen Angels*, is a tremendous exhibition in every meaning of the word (the works are massive) by Anselm Kiefer. The Renaissance architecture of Palazzo Strozzi provides an excellent backdrop for new and historical works by the German artist, including a new commission created for the palace's internal courtyard, free for everyone to view. And if you're at the Strozzi, do see the painting exhibition nearby at Hotel Savoy. [Abstract Perspectives: Annaya Sand's Tribute To Women](#) runs until 20 May 2024 in the hotel's public spaces.



One section of the handbag room at the Gucci museum, Florence PAUL ALLEN/ANDFOTOGGRAPHY2

Essential for fashionistas is the [Gucci Visions](#) exhibition inside the 14th-century Palazzo della Mercanzia on the lovely Piazza Signoria. The newly designed interior features a store with one-of-a-kind items, a restaurant and the Gucci Garden Galleria exhibition rooms upstairs that draw on Gucci's extensive archives including old advertising campaigns, artisans' images, objects and garments. Expect to be wowed by the beautifully displayed vintage dresses, shoes and luggage. There's even one incredible room with just handbags. A petite, red-velvet tented cinema auditorium, shows artist films with the general theme of beauty.



Ferragamo Museum, Florence PAUL ALLEN/ANDFOTOGRAPHY2

For a deep dive into the life and work of Tuscan fashion designer Salvatore Ferragamo, [Museo Ferragamo](#) provides a fascinating look at the incredible rise of a designer who came from extremely humble roots to become shoemaker to the stars. The exhibition details his early life and immigration to America, his first store in Hollywood in 1923 and his return to Florence where everything is made today. Ferragamo's creations are presented not only to highlight their value as works of art but to show their creator's skills as an entrepreneur and innovator, his passion for color and knowledge of the anatomy of the human skeleton and specifically the foot. The exhibition shows his exploration of new materials and the many sources of inspiration from the art world and ancient and contemporary culture.



View of the Tuscan hills just outside of Florence at Podere Castellare PAUL ALLEN/ANDFOTOGGRAPHY2

For an afternoon excursion or even a stay, just outside of Florence, head to the glorious Tuscan hills to visit [Podere Castellare](#), an agriturismo with 12 boutique guest rooms, restaurant and a pool. The Podere also houses a micro gin distillery, [Peter in Florence](#) which offers daily tours. Peter in Florence is a London dry gin, created where the world's best juniper grows. The gin is a carefully crafted blend of 14 botanicals, including the Iris flower, a symbol of the city of Florence. Book a [distillery tour](#) to see how the gin is distilled in a modern designed version of the classic 1831 Carter Head still, using 100% natural botanicals and ingredients.



Peter of Florence Gin Distillery at Podere Castellare PAUL ALLEN/ ANDFOTOGRAPHY2

The tour includes a stroll through the gardens to see the botanicals used in the gin, mostly all grown on site, followed by a tasting of the various gins including London Dry, a stronger Navy gin, a limited edition that includes chamomile and saffron, and bottled negroni and martini cocktails. Peter in Tuscany gin is only a few years old but is already served in all fine bars and restaurants in Florence and just won best gin of the year in the global [Bartender Spirits Awards](#).

Eat and Drink



Part of the tasting menu at Nugolo, Florence NUGOLO

It's no surprise that [Nugolo](#) was featured in Stanley Tucci's CNN series *Searching for Italy* because what a delight it is, from its rustic Tuscan farmhouse decor and design with an open-view kitchen, to the stellar menu. The restaurant was founded by Nerina Martinelli, who is keen to preserve the different varieties of produce that are slowly disappearing. Her creative young chefs use seasonal and local ingredients to create imaginative dishes like Agnolotti di ossobuco and Fusilloni infused with black tea from juniper and rabbit ragu. Tasting menus are excellent and good value at 60 euros for five courses or 80 euros for seven.



Il Paglio, Four Seasons Florence FOUR SEASONS

For the ultimate Florentine fine dining experience, [Il Palagio](#) at Four Seasons Hotel is incredible in both its setting, on the ground floor of the Palazzo della Gherardesca, surrounded by extensive mature garden and its gourmet menu. The Michelin-starred restaurant offers a la carte or a five or eight course tasting menu. The cuisine focuses on Italian culinary traditions reinterpreted by chef Paolo Lavezzini, who describes himself as “Italian by heart and Brazilian by soul” (he spent many years working in Brazil). Although born in the region of Emilia, Lavezzini’s dishes are Tuscan focused with the occasional Brazilian influence. Highlights include red potato gnocchi with seafood, grilled lobster glazed with hazelnuts and cockerel agnolotti with mushrooms. Vegetarians are also well catered for, with their own tasting menu.

[Irene](#) at Hotel Savoy features a satisfying mediterranean menu with delicious pasta dishes including long rectangular lasagna. Best known for his two Michelin-starred restaurant Gambero Rosso in San Vincenzo, Fulvio Pierangelini has worked with head chef Giovanni Cosmai and Florence’s best, local suppliers to create a menu based on the Tuscan classics.

For a casual breakfast, lunch or dinner, the bistro [Ditta Artigianale](#) is a top choice. Founded in 2013 by Patrick Hoffer and Francesco Sanapo, world-renowned barista and coffee taster champion, the bistro is now in four locations. Satisfying and filling, the menu includes hearty choices like club sandwich, caesar salad and croque monsieur. They also have incredible pastries and breads provided by their onsite bakery. Try the square tiramisu croissant with one of the best cups of coffee in the city.



Meze at the Calimala MEZE

[Meze](#) at Calimala hotel features Mediterranean cuisine using typical Tuscan flavors, Sashimi, homemade bread and house dips, a 12 year old balsamic from Modena, spicy red pepper spread, green pepper and spicy herb spread, steak on a skewer and beef tartare are all delicious.



Angel Bar at the Calimala SHAI EPSTEIN

[Angel Roofbar](#) on the rooftop of the Hotel Calimala is spread over four terraces and is one of the city's most popular bars. It also serves as a breakfast area for hotel guests.

[Loggia Roof Bar](#), overlooking Piazza Santo Spirito square in Hotel Palazzo Guadagni, offers expansive views of the city and its surrounding hills and is the ideal place for an aperitivo.

[Rifrullo](#), in the funky San Niccolò area on other side of the river, has been going since 1917. Located in the neighborhood historically known for artists and creative thinkers, Rifrullo Firenze is a great place for



Mercato Centrale, Florence PAUL ALLEN/ ANDFOTOGRAHY2

Dating back to the nineteenth century and open daily from 9 a.m. to 12:00 a.m. [Mercato Centrale](#) is a huge fresh food market over two floors, frequented by both locals and tourists, with plenty of tasty Italian dining options too.

It is said that the first in the world to produce real ice cream were the Florentines in the 16th century. Gelato [Badiani](#) isn't that old but it's been serving some of the city's best gelato since 1932.

Where to Stay



A suite at Calimala, Florence CALIMALA

[Hotel Calimala](#), a hip four star that opened recently in the center of the old town, is arranged over two historic buildings. Accommodation includes 38 rooms in the east building and 65 in the west of which 4 are suites. The rooms are spacious and comfortable, with high ceilings and some have balconies. Decor is contemporary: exposed stone and tricolor terrazzo floors, modern furnishings and marble finishes. A double room starts from 300 euros in low season, 450€ in high season.



Hotel Savoy façade, Florence HOTEL PHOTOGRAPHY

[Hotel Savoy](#) a five star [Roccoforte](#) property, was designed by Olga Polizzi and Laudomia Pucci (daughter of legendary fashion designer Emilio). The interior shows off Florence's fashion heritage and its history, with signature prints, shoe motifs and antiques. There are 80 elegant rooms, including 30 suites, some with balconies, each with chic carrara marble and mosaic bathrooms. The excellent Irene restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Double rooms start from 720 euros/night in low season.

Another luxury choice in the historic center, is [Hotel Helvetia and Bristol](#), part of the Starhotels group. Since the late 19th century, this sumptuous hotel, with 64 bedrooms and suites, has been offering travelers refined accommodation and excellent service.



The gardens at Four Seasons, Florence PAUL `ALLEN/ANDFOTOGRAPHY2

Just outside of the busy center is the [Four Seasons](#), an oasis of calm, located in Florence's biggest private garden with statues, fountains and contemporary sculptures. The hotel, housed in the magnificent Renaissance Palazzo della Gherardesca, formerly a Medici property, has 116 individually decorated bedrooms with lovely antiques, pictures, silks, velvets and brocades.

Getting there