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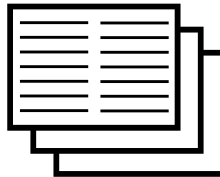
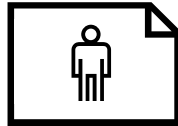
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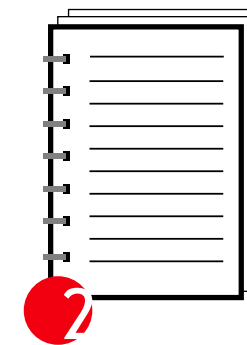
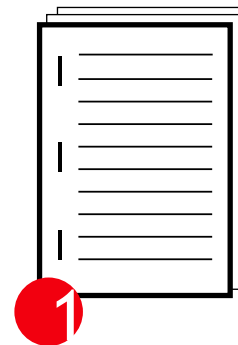
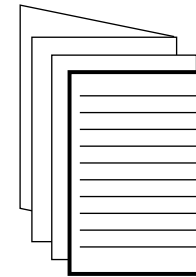
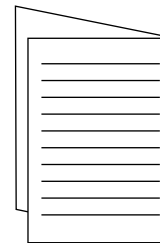
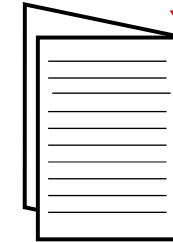
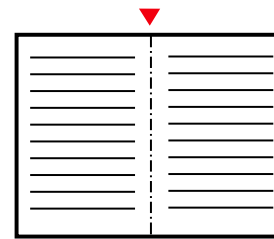
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# assembling the guide



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# THE FLORENCE CITY GUIDE





# Summary



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## History and culture



Florence: Dante Alighieri

In our tourists' guide to Florence there had to be a section dedicated to the history of this wonderful city. Let's discover it together;

Florence's origins date back to the Etruscan era, when Fiesole, an important center in Etruria, dominated the valley. Before conquering Fiesole in the first century B.C., the Romans set up camp by the River Arno in a place that then became **Florentia**, "destined to flower". Florence survived the dark centuries of the Middle Ages and then became an important city, until it became a Municipal Borough in 1115.

The dispute between the **Guelfs**, who were faithful to the Pope, and the **Ghibellines**, loyal to the Emperor Frederick II, that resulted in the Guelfs being exiled from the city, was extremely interesting. When the Emperor died, however, the Guelfs took the upper hand once more and Florence enjoyed a period of prosperity. Great importance was given to the **Corporazione delle Arti** and the architectural beauties, which make Florence such a unique city, began to be built.

Art & Culture were in great ferment and the people's desire to educate themselves gave rise to the first work in the vernacular language, in the poetic style of "Dolce stil novo", which then brought about the works of **Dante**, **Petrarca**, **Boccaccio** and finally, a century later, the "Accademia della Crusca". It was Boccaccio who documented the plague of Florence, a tragedy that started off the people's dissatisfaction, which culminated in the "tumulto dei Ciompi" riots in 1378.

After a short period in which the people ruled the city, the **Medici dynasty** then took over, first with Cosimo and then with **Lorenzo il Magnifico**, who brought the Humanist Age to Florence, together with the wonderful architecture by **Brunelleschi**. After Lorenzo il Magnifico's death (1492), and in later centuries, the city oscillated between Republican agitation and Medici revenge, while geniuses such as **Michelangelo** and **Leonardo Da Vinci** became famous names in art and literature.

In 1865, Florence was chosen to be the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and remained capital until 1871. In later years and until the beginning of the twentieth century, Florence was famous for its literary happenings, that produced works such as Pinocchio and which brought writers such as Papini, Palazzeschi, Pratolini to the fore, who were all members of the historical Literary Caffè group the "Giubbe Rosse".

## Churches and Museums



Florence: Santa maria del Fiore

The most magnificent and interesting churches from an artistic and architectural point of view:

### Duomo - Santa Maria del Fiore and Baptistery

Work on the Gothic cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore began in 1296 and was completed by Brunelleschi in 1436 with the famous **Dome**, which was painted inside with frescoes by Vasari and Zuccari. The square **Bell tower** designed by Giotto in 1334 stands on the right-hand side of the Cathedral and is covered in white, green and red marble. The **Baptistry of San Giovanni**, one of the oldest monuments in Florence (1128), is located opposite the Cathedral and is built in Florentine Romanesque style.

### Orsanmichele

This church was built with the intention of becoming the people's grain market, but was immediately used as a place of worship. 14 niches can be seen in the church's outer walls containing the same number of statues of

saints who are patrons of the arts and work "Corporations".

### Basilica di Santa Croce

This church in the Gothic-Florentine style was built in the second half of the 12th century. Santa Croce contains several masterpieces: the frescoes by Giotto, the Crucifix by Cimabue and the Cappella dei Pazzi, a chapel built by Brunelleschi. The Basilica is famous throughout the world because some famous people are buried inside it, such as Alfieri, whose tomb was sculpted by Canova.

### Basilica di San Lorenzo

The interior of this church was completed by Brunelleschi and later, by Michelangelo. The Basilica di San Lorenzo's façade is still not finished. There are some works of art inside: the two pulpits built by Donatello when he was already 74 years old, The Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana and the Tombe Medicee, works by Michelangelo, the Cappella dei Principi chapel with its magnificent decorations in marble and semi-precious stones.

### Santa Maria Novella

Built in the 13th century according to the wishes of the Dominican monks, the Church's façade is built in the Gothic-Romanesque style, with white and green marble. Important works of art inside are the frescoes by Masaccio portraying the Holy Trinity, the Crucifix by Brunelleschi and the one by Giotto.

All the museums and galleries to be seen:

### Galleria degli Uffizi

The Uffizi Gallery is one of the largest museums in the world. It was built in the mid-sixteenth century, following a project by the architect Giorgio Vasari and still houses some of the most famous works of art by Italian and foreign painters from the 13th to 19th centuries, such as Tiziano, Cimabue, Giotto, Masaccio, Tintoretto, Leonardo, Botticelli,



Michelangelo, Piero della Francesca, Raffaello, Caravaggio, Rubens, Rembrandt, Dürer and Goya.

#### Galleria dell'Accademia

This Gallery was founded in 1784 by the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo, who decreed that all the schools of painting should be joined together in a single Academy. One of the most popular museums in Florence, the Gallery houses many sculptures by Michelangelo, including the famous David.

#### Bargello

The National Museum, housed in a building that was the city prison dating back to 1200. It contains some of the best sculptures from the Tuscan Renaissance era. Some of the works of art in the Bargella are: the David by Donatello, Mercury by Gianbologna, and the bust of Brutus by Michelangelo.

#### Archeological Museum

The collection of artifacts on show in the Museum belonged to the Medici family, especially to Cosimo il Vecchio, and comprises objects from the Etruscan period: terracotta ornaments and sculptures in marble and bronze, including the Chimera di Arezzo and l'Arringatore. The Egyptian section, that was created thanks to the collection from another important family, the Lorena, is not to be missed.

#### History of Science Museum

This is an important collection of scientific instruments that are proof of the interest that 13th century Florence had in science. The collection includes sun dials and night-clocks, compasses, microscopes and a series of original instruments made by Galileo Galilei.

#### Casa Buonarroti

This palace was renovated in 1612 by Michelangelo Buonarroti "il giovane", who decorated all the interior area of the building

on his own, as a tribute to his ancestor. It is possible to see some early masterpieces by Michelangelo such as the Madonna della Scala and the Battaglia dei Centauri.

## Places and charm



Florence: Ponte Vecchio

A walk to discover Florence:

#### Ponte Vecchio

As its name suggests, this splendid Bridge is the oldest in Florence: the first construction already existed before the 11th century, but was destroyed by a flood of the Arno. The bridge was rebuilt in solid stone in 1345. Its banks are still full of goldsmiths', silversmiths' and jewelers' laboratories whose art has been passed down from generation to generation.

#### Piazza della Signoria

The magnificent Piazza della Signoria is a real open-air exhibition: Palazzo Vecchio, with its sixteenth-century hall full of frescoes by Vasari, the Fountain of Neptune by Ammannati, and the copy of Michelangelo's David all welcome the visitor when he enters the square. On the right-hand of the square there is the Loggia della Signoria that contains some fine statues such as the bronze Perseo by Cellini and il Ratto delle Sabine by Gianbologna.

#### Giardino di Boboli

The Boboli Gardens spread out alongside Palazzo Pitti. They were both created on the wishes of the Medici family in 1500. If we take a walk through these wonderful Renaissance gardens, we can see some charming monuments such as the amphitheater, the Grotta del Buontalenti, and the small island with the statues of the dancing country-folk.

#### The San Lorenzo Market

The Central San Lorenzo Market is housed inside a huge iron and glass building that was built in 1874. Even though it is now a tourist attraction, the Market has preserved a part of its charm. On the ground floor there are several delicatessens, selling Florentine and Tuscan delicacies, where it is possible to stop for a bite to eat. On the first floor there are flower stalls and fruit and vegetable stalls where all the local seasonal produce is displayed.

#### Spedale degli Innocenti

This building was opened in 1445, and was the first orphanage in Europe. A part of the building is still used for this purpose today. The portico, built by Brunelleschi, is decorated with glazed terracotta spheres that represent new-born children. It is still possible to see the "wheel" in the portico, a turning stone cylinder where mothers placed their unwanted children, who were then turned round to the inside of the building.

#### Palazzo Pitti

This palace was built for the banker Luca Pitti halfway through the fifteenth century. After he went bankrupt, the building became the Medici family residence. The family improved the building, starting with the large courtyard designed by Ammannati. The Medici collected their Baroque and Renaissance art collections here, which can now be viewed in the Palatina Gallery. The Palace contains other important museums too: the gallery of Modern Art, the Silver Museum and the Costume Gallery.

## Eating and Drinking



Florence: Chianti

The region that is home to Florence has one of the most versatile and varied-form cooking traditions in Italy, that we have already mentioned in our tourists' guide to Tuscany. We are going to try and provide a more specific view, limiting ourselves to the city of Florence and the area immediately around it.

Florentine cooking is linked to a tradition of simple dishes prepared with genuine, tasty but plain ingredients, which has recently been reconsidered by the world of more sophisticated cuisine. Cereals, bread, vegetable and oil (which must be extra-virgin) are the basis of many recipes that just have to be tried in one of the many restaurants in Florence.

Simple food, such as cannellini beans and other vaguely repulsive ingredients such as tripe and livers are transformed into pleasant, tasty dishes, served on both stalls and in local inns and also in luxury restaurants. We can therefore find: **fagioli all'uccelletto** (beans), boiled and then fried in oil and tomato

sauce; **trippa alla fiorentina**, (tripe) covered in tomato and grated parmesan cheese; **lampredotto**, the darkest part of tripe, used for soups and risottos, but also liked by many locals as a filling for a sandwich; **crostini toscani** with liver paté. And the unforgettable "**fiorentina**" a cut of meat from the Chianina cow, famous worldwide, to be tried in any restaurant in Florence.

The area surrounding Florence is famous for being the birthplace of **Chianti**, the most famous Tuscan wine. Four different types of Chianti are produced from the vines on the flourishing Florentine hills. Chianti "Classico" is produced between Florence and Siena, while the other names come from the geographic areas that the province of Florence is divided into: there is Chianti "Colli Fiorentini", Chianti "Rufina" and Chianti "Montespertoli".

Other wines from the area are **Pomino**, which has been appreciated since the beginning of the 1700s, and which owes its name to one of the smallest DOC vineyards in the world, and **Vin Santo**, which was already known in the fourteenth century, and which is closely linked to Florentine hospitality. The people offered it to guests accompanied by the traditional **cantuccini** biscuits.

## Shopping



Florence: fashion shop

Florence has an ancient tradition of craftwork: once upon a time, each area of the city was characterized by a certain type of work, each controlled by the powerful **Corporazione delle Arti**: sculptors' laboratories, leather goods makers, blacksmiths and goldsmiths. The corporations were based on strict rules and only the legitimate children of a member could join the profession. In this way, art and techniques have been handed down through the generations to the present day. Some old stores are still more or less in tact, such as the **Antica Officina di Santa Maria Novella**, one of the oldest pharmacies in the world, where it is possible to buy essences and perfumes made to formulas that were created in the sixteenth century for Caterina de' Medici, and liqueurs that are still made today following the antique formula used by the Dominican monks.

When walking along the Ponte vecchio you can see the famous Florentine goldsmiths' shops, while the handmade- shoe makers are spread around the city. This Florentine tradition was made famous by **Salvatore**

**Ferragamo**, shoemaker to the stars, whose creations can be admired in the museum carrying his name.

Whoever is planning a trip to Florence cannot forget its thriving food and wine culture. If you want to buy local products, there is no end of choice: tasty cheeses and sought-after salami attract food-lovers from the delicatessen shop windows; it is possible to taste and buy refined wines and fine extra-virgin oils in the many wine-cellars around the city. Don't miss out on a trip to San Lorenzo Market, located inside the splendid liberty-style building.

## Hotels and lodgings



Florence: David by Michelangelo

There is no end of choice of accommodation in Florence.

Depending on the budget you have available, you can choose from several options. Let's look at some of them together.

If you are looking for a solution that mixes excellent service with the comfort of being just a stone's throw from the old city center, you can choose one of the many hotels in Florence, shown in our guide to Florence, for all budgets and needs.

For anyone planning to stay longer, we recommend renting an apartment in Florence or nearby. Many agencies provide a wide range of possibilities, so that you can choose the one most suitable to your needs.

Are you traveling on a tight budget? Don't worry, there aren't just five-star hotels in the city!

There are many Bed & Breakfast where you can stay without spending too much, and without having to go without service or comfort.

Have you got an even smaller budget? You can stay in a hostel or in a **campsite**, which don't

cost too much. There are several in Florence both inside the city and just outside. In winter you can rent a caravan, or you can spend even less by bringing your tent with you during the warmer seasons.

If instead you want to go on trips outside the city and want to set up base in the Chianti hills, why not choose one of the rural country-house near Florence. You can find castles, old farmhouses, farms and country houses that are all perfectly equipped to welcome guests and ready to seduce them with the food and wine specialties of the area.

## Events



Florence: Pitti Immagine

Florence is a lively city, full of local and international artistic and cultural events. In our guide to Florence we just had to include a section dedicated to the events that regularly take place in this city. If you are planning a trip to Florence when one of these events is taking place, remember to book your room in one of the hotels in Florence that we recommend well in advance.

### Biennale Internazionale d'Arte Contemporanea di Florence December

The Florence Biennale for contemporary art is a recent event on the Florence scene, but it has already become enormously successful: in the 2002 edition, there were 600 artists, including painters, sculptors, digital artists and video art creators from all over the world.

### Mostra Internazionale dell'artigianato April-May

This international crafts show, organized each year, is set in the beautiful surroundings

of Fortezza da Basso. The event wishes to increase the value of the craftwork heritage from an economic and cultural point of view.

### Maggio Fiorentino

*From April to June*

Maggio Musicale Fiorentino is an international festival entirely dedicated to music that is held in the Municipal Theater in Florence. It was organized for the first time in 1937 and is one of the oldest festivals in Europe.

### Fochi di San Giovanni

*24 June*

For centuries, Florence has celebrated the birth of St John the Baptist, the city's patron saint, with celebrations and amazing fireworks displays.

### Pitti Immagine

For fifty years, Pitti Immagine has been an international window for Italian fashion, a reference point for the development of the Made in Italy industry in the world, thanks to the creation of the several annual events that take place.

Here are just a few:

Pitti uomo: November and June

Pitti casa: January-February

Pitti Moda pelle: September and February



## La Dolce Vita



Florence: Disco Music

To get to know Florence, and to fully understand the multi-faceted spirit of this city, you need to do more than visit the museums, see the churches, palaces and monuments. You will understand the true essence of Florence if you mix with the local people, trying to live like they do for one day only. A day full of study and work commitments (that we will gladly leave to those people who are not on holiday) and of free time. How do the Florentines enjoy themselves? Where do they go to have a good time? Our guide to Florence will take you on a journey to discover Florence night life, full of music, cocktails and lightheartedness.

First of all, let's talk of the meeting places that Florentines go to, where they get to know each other, socialize, drink an aperitif and organize their evenings. At a certain time of the evening, certain areas of Florence, like any other city, are invaded by hundreds of people, young and not so young. Each evening, especially Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, the **Lungarno** is literally besieged and the several pubs and wine bars are

overflowing with people.

For the second half of the evening, the Florentines all head to some of the clubs in the city. Which one depends on what day of the week it is. On Saturdays, getting into **Tenax** is what everyone wants to do. This is a club with live music and international names, but it is also a wine bar with chill-out music, for relaxing after a night on the town.

A famous club in Florence is **Yab**, which has been known since 1966 as the "8 Club". It is very busy on a Monday evening, the day dedicated to hip-hop music.

Non conventional people will favor **Central Park**, which has recently become a reference point for the fashion world: fashion shows organized by famous Made in Italy designers are often held here, in fact.

Let's end with a club that is considered by all to be a forerunner: **Jaragua**, the first Latin American only club that opened in Italy, a trend that then spread like wild fire.

## A special day



Florence: Palazzo Vecchio

If you are busy and in a hurry, but you don't want to miss out on the pleasures of life, **travelplan.it** has dedicated a Florence itinerary to you, that lasts from morning until evening.

Before beginning, here is a simple piece of advice: do you only have one day to visit Florence? Get it into your head that you will never manage to see everything, so go for quality rather than quantity and follow our tourists' guide to Florence to try and use your time as well as possible.

This itinerary is concentrated in the central-east area of Florence.

### Morning

To really throw yourself into the educated and artistic atmosphere of Florence, there is nothing better than having breakfast at the Historical Literary Coffee Shop "**Giubbe Rosse**" in Piazza Repubblica n° 13. It was opened at the end of the 19th century by two German brothers and in the first decade of the twentieth century it became the meeting

place for artist and literary experts of the time. Its tables have seen lively discussions between Marinetti and Papini, Prezzolini and Campana, Gadda and Boccioni, Montale and Quasimodo, and the projects for some historical futuristic magazines such as "La Voce" were planned here. The Coffee shop still organizes some cultural events for the intellectuals of Florence today.

Go on foot from Piazza Repubblica to the nearby **Piazza del Duomo** that is in the medieval area of Florence, where Dante Alighieri was born. Don't miss out on a visit to the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, or the Duomo of Florence, where it is possible to see the **Dome by Brunelleschi**, the **Bell tower by Giotto** and the **Baptistery**. Near the Duomo, there is Orsanmichele, the Gothic church whose walls are covered with the sculptures that represent the activities of the citizens' "corporations". If you still have enough time, you can take a taxi or bus and visit the Bargello, the home of the National Museum that houses a collection of Renaissance sculptures including the ones by Cellini.

Choose one of the restaurants in Florence, the one nearest to your next stop on this itinerary and get ready to taste some Tuscan delicacies, but try not to eat too much, as your afternoon will be spent visiting the city. We recommend some typical tasty dishes that are not so hard to digest: panzanella, zuppa di farro, fagioli all'uccelletto and ricotta alla toscana, served with olive oil. Pepper and honey.

### Afternoon

Make your way to the amazing Piazza della Signoria, the center of Florentine political life since the 14th century. Some of the open-air works on display are **Fountain of Neptune**, the copy of **Michelangelo's David**, the **Ratto delle Sabine** and **Perseo by Cellini**.

A trip to Florence has to include a visit, even if just a quick one to the Galleria degli Uffizi where we advise you to stop and see a few important paintings: il Duca e la Duchessa di

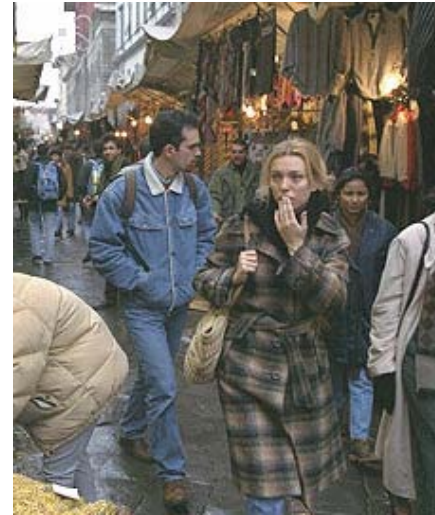
Urbino by Piero della Francesca, la Venere di Urbino by Tiziano, la Madonna d'Ognissanti by Giotto and the Nascita di Venere and la Primavera by Botticelli. There is still time for a romantic walk on the Ponte Vecchio.

### Evening

Choose one of the restaurants in Florence shown in our guide and allow yourself to try all those things that you had to pass up on at lunchtime: why not start off with an antipasto of mixed salami and crostini and then go on to a first course such as ribollita or le pappardelle al sugo di lepre. As a second course, don't miss out on the famous Fiorentina steak while for dessert, why not go for a slice of panforte and some ricciarelli. All washed down with a Chianti DOC, or, for the more sophisticated, a Brunello di Montalcino.

Staying in accommodation in Florence for at least one night is necessary so relax and enjoy your romantic evening in Florence. You will have plenty of time to rest after this hectic day in one of the many hotels in Florence and you can set off on your journey again tomorrow.

## Shopping in Florence



Florence: market shop

For fashion addicts and fashion victims who are already familiar with the city and who are planning another stay in Florence, here is a made-to-measure itinerary...

Home to the historical names of Made in Italy fashion such as **Gucci**, **Emilio Pucci** and **Salvatore Ferragamo**, Florence is an excellent opportunity to satisfy a few whims. So, go on, put your hand in your pocket and get ready to take some vintage souvenirs home to furnish your apartment with, or some food delicacies to please your taste buds and those of your friends and some accessories and famous-label clothes to show off and wear on special evenings.

### Morning

The morning is the best time to wander round the markets and flea markets looking for those unique items and best bargains. In Florence there are many markets to look round: the one in San Lorenzo is famous for its food delicatessens, then there is the **Mercato delle Pulci**, that is held every day in Piazza dei Ciompi with its antique stalls and the

Cascine market in viale Lincoln. Take a quick look at the **Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella**, the old pharmacy where you can buy essences and beauty products and at **Bojola** in via dei Rondinelli n° 25r, an old crafts shop opened in 1892 you can buy leather goods such as bags, suitcases and wallets.

### Afternoon

Your afternoon will be dedicated to a trip outside the city, for shopping, Around Florence there are many famous-label outlets. The most important is **The Mall** by Leccio Reggello (Via Artina n° 63, tel. 055 8657775), that can easily be reached by car, train or by Shuttle Bus from Florence (for bookings tel. +39 055 8657775). There is a wide choice here of clothes and accessories from past seasons by Armani, Gucci, Sergio Rossi, Bottega Veneta, Prada, Ferragamo, Roberto Cavalli and many other labels, at reduced prices.

### Evening

At this point, all you have to do is show off your purchases, throwing yourself into the Florentine night life. Choose a night club that is to your taste and enjoy yourself all night long. When you are exhausted from your shopping and dancing, drag yourself back to one of the hotels in Florence.

## Three places less than 40 km from Florence



Florence: Fiesole

The area around Florence is an excellent place to relax, enjoy yourself, get to know things and make your taste buds happy. All you need is a bit of time and **travelplan.it** can help you here, suggesting some trips outside the city near to Florence. If you have time to spare, book a hotel in Florence or nearby and use it as a base for your trips.

Our tourists', tries to account for all tastes:

### Fiesole

The Florence area has solid Etruscan roots, and the people are very proud of this fact. Fiesole is just 8 km from Florence on a hill that overlooks the entire valley. This is a much older city than Florence: the latter was founded by the Romans after they conquered the Etruscan city in the 1st century A.D. Many famous writers, from Boccaccio to Carducci have sung the praises of this beautiful town where the Etruscan and Roman ruins have survived the wearings of time. Don't miss out on visiting the archeological site with the Roman Theater from the 1st century B.C., the Thermal spas that date back to Silla's time

and the Etruscan Temple from the 3rd century B.C., and also the Archaeological Museum where several artifacts from the 15th and 14th century B.C. are kept.

### Vinci

A place that is popular with tourists from all over the world, the **Leonardo Museum** at Vinci (38 km from Florence) is housed in the Castello dei Conti Guidi and includes collections of machines and models designed by the great Tuscan scientist, such as the amazing parachute, and many drawing of incomplete projects. After visiting the museum, find a bit of time to walk along the Vinci streets, a charming place that was only made into a town in the 1950s, during the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of Leonardo. Information about the Leonardo Museum: Tel. 0571/56055

### Greve in Chianti

Greve is 30 km from Florence and is considered the "gate to Chianti", the area where the grapes of the famous Tuscan wine are grown, that are protected by the DOCG label in this area. Greve in Chianti has always been an important commercial and agricultural center and is also known for the production of excellent Tuscan extra-virgin olive oil and the many delicatessen shops spread around the town where it is possible to buy local products such as finocchiona and marzolino cheese. Don't miss Piazza Matteotti, the old asymmetric market square surrounded by porticoes and flower-filled terraces, and a glass of Chianti Classico in one of the picturesque wine cellars in the town.



### Florence web sites

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### Italy Guide

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- Campania
- Emilia Romagna
- Friuli Venezia Giulia
- Lazio
- Liguria
- Lombardy
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- Umbria
- Valle d'Aosta
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- Madonna di Campiglio
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- Rasusa
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- Rimini, Riccione, Cattolica
- Riviera del Fiori, Sanremo & Imperia
- Riviera del Brenta
- Rome
- Rovereto - Vallagarina
- Rovigo & Delta del Po
- Siena
- San Martino di Castrozza, Primiero, Val Venoi
- Siracusa
- Sorrento & Amalfi
- Taormina
- Terme & Colli Euganei
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