

The city of Lucca has secreted its treasures behind its thick walls and this is an itinerary to help you find them! The following is a suggestion for a one-day-trip (from Florence, for example), but also a list of what to see and what to do if you're staying longer in the city.

## A PORTA SANTA MARIA

From whichever direction you approach Lucca, the first thing that strikes everybody are the massive 16th century walls. Enter the city from Porta Santa Maria, then proceed on **Via Fillungo or the cardo maximus** (Roman main street), which runs from north to south. This is also the luxury-shopping zone of the city.

## B SAN FREDIANO CHURCH

The façade of the Basilica of San Frediano is adorned by an extraordinary **Byzantine-style mosaic depicting The Ascension on a shimmering gold background**. Inside, don't miss the entrance to a chapel containing the tiny mummified body of **Santa Zita** that can be seen through glass; this saint is mentioned in Dante's (*Inferno*, XI, 38) and in April the streets of Lucca are filled with flowers to celebrate her. [Opening hours: Mon-Sat 8:30am-noon and 3-5pm, Sunday 10.30am-5pm]

## C ANFITEATRO SQUARE

Walk back to Via Fillungo and look carefully for the signs indicating the Anfiteatro square: **an amazing arena made of 55 arches**, that stood once outside the walls and was used as a theatre by the Romans. It was transformed into a fortress during the Middle Ages; later houses were built in the ruins of the original walls and the area was used as a prison and warehouses. The Anfiteatro became the beautiful piazza that we see today in the late 1800s and now the arches are filled with shops and bars.

## D GUINIGI TOWER

The Guinigi tower is part of a palazzo complex that belonged to the Guinigi family who made their money from the silk trade, ruled Lucca and helped defend it from the Medici of Florence. The tower is an icon of the city because of the **Holm oak trees** that grow on its summit. The climb - **230 steps!** - is really worth the effort. [Opening hours: 9.30am-sunset. Tickets: 4€, reduced 3 €, free for children under 6]

📍 Via S. Andrea; Lucca

## E SAN MICHELE IN FORO CHURCH

At the end of Via Fillungo turn right into Via Roma and you will arrive in **Piazza San Michele**, the site of the old Roman *Forum* – the center of the city. Here is the extraordinary church of San Michele in Foro, a superb (but unfinished) example of Pisa/Lucca Romanesque architecture. On the top, the **huge bronze statue of the Archangel San Michele** slaying the dragon, dominates; he is supposed to have a diamond ring and if after dark you stand in the right spot and look up, you should see something shining on his finger! [Opening hours: 7.40 am-noon and 3-6pm]

## F PUCCINI'S HOME-MUSEUM

Take a little detour down Via del Poggio and you will come to **Corte San Lorenzo** and Piazza Cittadella: here is the **birthplace of Puccini**. A pleasing modern statue records this famous citizen... and this is a good place to stop for lunch!

[Opening hours: April-October 10am-6pm; November-March 11am-5pm; closed Tuesdays. Tickets: 7€, reduced 5 €, free for children under 10; ticket office – Piazza Cittadella 5]

📍 Corte San Lorenzo

## G NAPOLEONE SQUARE

Napoleone or **Piazza Grande**, as it is known by the locals, is where the teenagers hang out on a Saturday afternoon and where the main events and concerts take place. The Piazza is dominated by the **Palazzo Ducale**. In 1805 Elisa Baciocchi, sister of Napoleon Bonaparte, was made princess of Piombino and Lucca, then Grand Duchess of Tuscany; she completely remodeled the interior of the palace that had been partly designed by Bartolomeo Ammannati in 1578 and then enlarged by Filippo Juvarra in 1728. The palace now houses local government offices though a small section is open to the public and often houses exhibitions.

## H GIGLIO THEATRE

**Piazza del Giglio** adjoins Piazza Grande and is the home of the town's theatre. There has been a theatre on this site since the 1670s and all Giacomo Puccini's *operas* were performed here during his lifetime.

## I SAN MARTINO CATHEDRAL

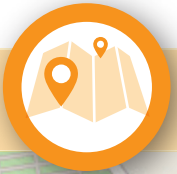
The building of the Cattedrale di San Martino was started in 1060. The main west façade is richly decorated in the **Pisa/Lucca Romanesque style** but lacks a pediment, perhaps due to a financial crisis at the time. **The pillars are all different:** local legend has it that a contest was held to find the best pillar; the citizens however decided to use all samples therefore saving money and contributing to their reputation of being tight fisted! The other oddity is that one of the end arches is smaller to accommodate the *campanile*. The **statue of San Martino** is a copy and the original can be seen inside the church. The interior is in the Gothic style. [Opening hours: March 15-November 2, Mon-Fri 9.30m-5.45pm, Saturday 9.30m-6.45pm, Sunday 9-10-15am and 11-10am-6pm; November 3-March 14, Mon-Fri 9.30am-4.45pm, Saturday 9.30am-6.45pm, Sunday 9.30-10.15am and 11.30am-5pm]

[www.museocattedralelucca.it](http://www.museocattedralelucca.it) (ITA)

## J THE WALLS

Now it's time to go up to enjoy the **4 kilometres and 223 metres** of imposing walls planted with centuries-old trees and ornamental species: a perfect ring around the city, to be explored either on foot or by bike (you can easily rent one), starting from Porta San Pietro. These wide low walls were made to resist cannon attacks from the neighbouring state of Florence and were constructed over a period of about 100 years; by the time the walls were completed they were really redundant, however, they eventually saved the city from being flooded when the River Serchio broke its banks in 1812. Lucca's city walls are now a **great circular park** in which you run, relax, meet friends and enjoy a **wonderful sunset**.

[www.lemuradilucca.it](http://www.lemuradilucca.it) (ITA)



## One day in Lucca MAP

