

What To Do With Your Free Time in Italy

Destination	Our Suggestion	Important Info
FLORENCE	Ponte Vecchio Best known of all Florence's sights, this bridge was the only one spared by the retreating Germans in 1944. Over centuries flooding took its toll and only a few traces of the 10th-century bridge remain. Built in the middle of the 14th-century, it was originally filled with a variety of shops that included wool merchants and green grocers. Grand Duke Fernandino I had these replaced with goldsmiths to gentrify royalty's route to Pitti Palace.	FREE Hours: Bridge open 24/7, shop and restaurant times will vary. Location: Ponte Vecchio, spanning River Arno in the Historic Center of Florence - Firenze.
	Uffizi Galleries The Medici family reserved rooms for their prestigious collection during use of the gallery as the magistrate's court in the 1700s. The gallery contains works by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Caravaggio and Botticelli. The corridors which feature ceilings with splendid frescoes are lined with Roman and sixteenth-century sculptures.	\$\$\$ Hours: 8:15 am - 6:50 pm; Tuesdays through Sundays. Location: Adjacent to the Piazza della Signoria in the Historic Center of Florence - Firenze. Pre-booking advised.
	Galleria dell'Accademia The Accademia Gallery is most well known for Michelangelo's "David," placed in a specially constructed hall after four centuries in Piazza Signoria. Other works by Michelangelo include some of his 'Slave' series and his sculpture of San Matteo. You can also find an impressive collection of paintings from the 13th to 16th-centuries, A Sienese School Crucifix from the 13th-century, 24 panels by Taddeo Gaddi representing scenes from the life of Christ and St Francis, and Giovanni da Milano's Pietà.	\$\$ Hours: 8:15 am - 6:50 pm; Tuesdays through Sundays. Location: Located near Piazza San Marco in the Historic Center of Florence - Firenze.
	Piazza del Duomo The legendary duomo is famous for its dome: Brunelleschi's Renaissance masterpiece. Completed in 1436, he created a double dome shell so that the dome is entirely self-supporting. Construction started in 1296 on the site of the Roman basilica of Santa Reparata, of which there are still visible remains. The existing Neo-Gothic façade was added in the 19th century. Covering a massive 3600 square meters, the frescoes inside the dome depict the Last Judgement.	FREE - \$ Hours: 10:00 am - 5:00 pm; Condensed hours on weekends, religious holidays Location: Main plaza, located in the heart of Florence. <i>As a religious site, respectful clothing is required.</i>

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ROME

Trevi Fountain

Tradition has it that throwing a coin over your left shoulder into the fountain guarantees a swift return to the eternal city. Actress Anita Ekberg's dip in the fountain was immortalized in Fellini's 'La Dolce Vita,' and Italian actor Toto even sold it to an American, passing himself off as its owner. Designed by Nicola Salvi for Pope Clemente XII, the fountain was completed in the second half of the 1700's. The statues in the center represent Neptune supported by Tritons on either side and the Rococo-style Poli Palace provides the perfect backdrop.

Pantheon

The Pantheon was commissioned by Marcus Agrippa, restored by Domitian, and subsequently rebuilt by Hadrian (who added the dome) before being turned into a church in the early 7th-century by Pope Boniface IV. The building's sole source of light is the opening at the dome's apex (the oculus). According to popular legend, this formed the base for the bronze pinecone that is now in the Vatican's 'Pigna' courtyard where it is used as a fountain. Many famous Italians are buried in the Pantheon, including Renaissance painter Raphael and King Vittorio Emanuele I.

Trastevere

This area of Rome was originally built at the time of Augustus as a port where storehouses held goods. Trastevere is a picturesque medieval neighborhood located on the west bank of the Tiber River. The heart of the district is Piazza di Santa Maria with its church, 17th-century palazzo and a fountain, designed by architects such as Bernini, Fontana and Della Porta. There are also some well-conserved medieval houses.

FREE

Hours: Accessible 24/7, visit first thing or later in the evening to avoid crowds. Illuminated after dark.

Location: In the heart of the city centre, best approached by foot from another attraction, possibly the Pantheon or the Spanish Steps, both signposted for pedestrians.

FREE

Hours: 9:00 am - 6:30 pm, Mon - Sat; 9:00 am - 1:00 pm on Sundays.

Location: In the heart of Rome and a short walk from the Tiber River.

The Pantheon is currently in use as a church. Avoid flash photography, keep your voice low and do not disturb people who may be worshipping.

FREE

Hours: This neighborhood is always accessible, shop and restaurant times will vary.

Location: West bank of the Tiber River.

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VENICE	St. Mark's Square Piazza San Marco, or St. Mark's Square, is Venice's most famous square. What appears to be a rectangle is actually a trapezium, and when you look up at the basilica, the piazza seems very large, although it is only 175m long. On both sides of the piazza are the 'Procuratie' buildings which housed the procurators of San Marco. While you're there, consider touring Saint Mark's Basilica, to admire it's golden Byzantine mosaics and ornate domes. In the campanile of Saint Mark's Basilica, you get a splendid view from the tallest bell tower in Venice. Even though the tower was erected at the beginning of the 20th century, it is an exact replica of the original 15th-century bell tower. In 1609, Galileo Galilei exhibited his telescope here, and during the carnival, the bell tower used to serve as a stage for the tight rope-walkers who entertained the doge with their acrobatics.	FREE - \$ Hours: Square is accessible 24/7. Basilica open 9:30 am - 5:00 pm (last admission 4:30 pm, closes early on Sundays). Location: Main square of Venice, San Marco. <i>Pre-book to skip the line at Saint Mark's Basilica.</i>
	Rialto Bridge For a long time this was the only way to cross the Canal Grande. A previous bridge was replaced by this one, designed by Antonio da Ponte, built 1554-1591. You find a variety of shops on the bridge selling souvenirs.	FREE Hours: Bridge is open 24/7, shop and restaurant times will vary. Location: Spanning the most narrow section of the Grand Canal in the heart of Venice.
Cinque Terre	Hike the Villages Hike between any of the five villages for a great adventure with an even better view. Choose your activity level, from hiking between two, to hiking through all five! No worries if you wear yourself out – the train runs between the five villages and you can always ride rather than hike if you need.	FREE - \$ Hours: Dawn to dusk; trains run every 15 minutes. Location: Along the coast of the 5 villages that make up Cinque Terre.
	Enjoy the Beaches From the secluded rock beach of Riomaggiore all the way to the more traditional sandy beach of Monterosso, enjoy a stunning view of the Ligurian sea, and a refreshing dip in the crystal clear water!	FREE Hours: Accessible 24/7 Location: Along the coast.

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LUCCA	<p>Walls of Lucca</p> <p>Helping Lucca to stand out from the other towns of the Tuscan countryside are its renaissance-era walls originally built to protect the city as a defensive rampart. After losing their military importance, the walls became a pedestrian promenade and serve as a great way to see the city from above. Our recommendation – rent a bike and ride along the walls for a truly unique Tuscan experience!</p>	<p>FREE - \$</p> <p>Hours: Dawn to dusk</p> <p>Location: Surrounding the perimeter of the city of Lucca.</p>
PISA	<p>Piazza dei Miracoli</p> <p>The must-see of Pisa: the main square that houses the Cathedral, the Baptistery and of course the Campanile, more famously known as the leaning tower of Pisa. Consider purchasing a ticket to enter all three if you wish to visit inside!</p>	<p>FREE - \$</p> <p>Hours: Piazza accessible 24/7, buildings open 10:00 am - 6:00 pm.</p> <p>Location: Piazza del Duomo, 56126 Pisa PI, Italy</p>