

# What To Do With Your Free Time in Italy

Toss a coin into the magical Trevi Fountain; sip coffee at a street-side cafe; visit a museum to admire the art and culture; indulge your taste-buds with traditional gelato. There are so many good options it would be easy to spend all of your time just deciding what to do! Let this be your guide in making the most out of your free time in Italy.

Destination	Our Suggestion	Important Info
FLORENCE	<b>Ponte Vecchio</b> Best known of all Florence's sights, this bridge was the only one spared by the retreating Germans in 1944. Over the 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 Ferdinando I had these replaced with goldsmiths to gentrify royalty's route to Pitti Palace, reached via the Vasari Corridor that passes over the bridge.	<b>FREE</b> <b>Hours:</b> Bridge open 24/7, shop and restaurant times will vary <b>Location:</b> Ponte Vecchio, spanning River Arno in the Historic Centre of Florence – Firenze.
	<b>Uffizi Galleries</b> 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.	<b>\$\$\$</b> <b>Hours:</b> 8:15am – 6:50pm; Tues. – Sun. <b>Location:</b> Adjacent to the Piazza della Signoria in the Historic Centre of Florence – Firenze. <b>Pre-booking Advised</b>
	<b>Galleria dell'Accademia</b> 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 Siennese 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.	<b>\$\$</b> <b>Hours:</b> 8:15am – 6:50pm; Tues. – Sun. <b>Location:</b> Located near Piazza San Marco in the Historic Centre of Florence – Firenze.
	<b>Piazza del Duomo</b> 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.	<b>FREE – \$</b> <b>Hours:</b> 10:00am – 5:00pm; Condensed hours on weekends, religious holidays <b>Location:</b> Main plaza, located in the heart of Florence. <i>As a religious site, respectful clothing is required.</i>

**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.

**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.

**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.

**FREE**

**Hours:** 9:00am – 6:30pm, Mon. – Sat.; 9:00am – 1:00pm 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.*

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

**Location:** West bank of the Tiber River.

**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 its 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.

**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:** Square is open 24/7. Basilica open 9:30am – 5:00pm (last admission 4:30pm, closes early on Sundays).

**Location:** Main square of Venice, San Marco.

[Pre-book to skip the line at Saint Mark's Basilica](#)

**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.