Acreat Reason for Every Season

FLORENCE

EVENTS&SPECIALITIES GUIDE



FESTIVALS & TRADITIONS
ART, CRAFTS & MUSIC
NATURE & SPORT
FOOD & WINE

by Veronica Ficcarelli



A Great Reason for Every Season

— FLORENCE —



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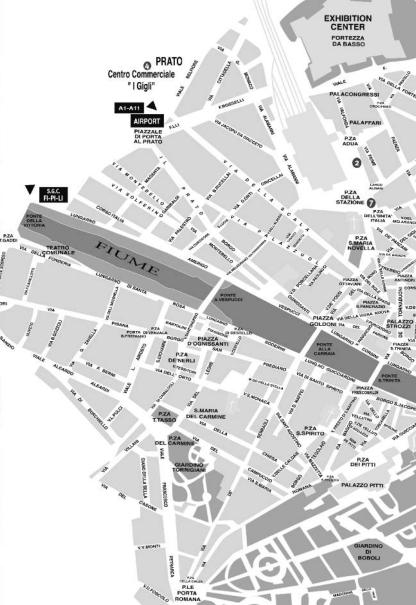
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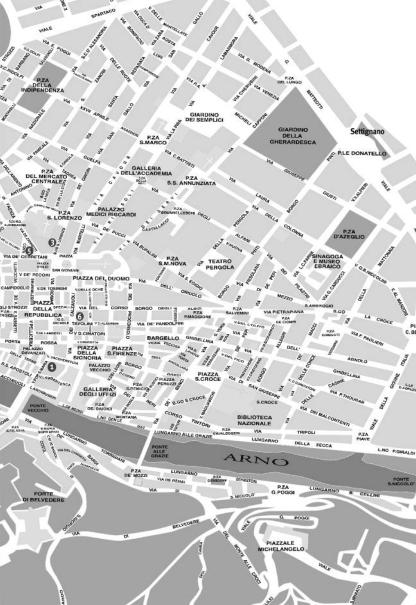
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Events & Specialities Guide







To my great-grandmother Piera





"Il mondo è un libro e chi non viaggia ne conosce solo una pagina"

(The world is a book and eveyone who doesn't travel, knows only one page)

Sant'Agostino

— HOW TO CONSULT THE GUIDE —

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— Introduction —

Florence — the place, the idea, the dream, is famed the world over. Everyone knows about the art, the landscape, the food and drink, and yes, Tuscans are both privileged and blessed. However, in this book I want to shed light on its hidden aspects, on the people whose lives and work have brought such renown to Tuscany. It seemed to me that something was needed that would give a voice to the many small businesses, artisans, restaurants, wine and olive oil makers, and shopkeepers who work tirelessly to strengthen the image of Tuscany as a land of creativity, culture and originality; the real core values of our region. I soon realised that the best people to show us how to produce a work of craftsmanship or make perfect pasta are the people who do it for a living.

And who better to reveal the secrets of the city than the people who were born and bred there, whose fragments of stories of work and fatigue, along with great achievement, deserve to be told. Stories of people who make our city and region what it is today. We would like to include them all but, after much soul searching, we've chosen the most significant. In the chapters for each season you'll find annual events listed by type – festivals and traditions, art and handicraft, nature and sport, food and wine – and set out month per month. In the various sections there are brief flashes to highlight villages and products. There are recipes linked with

food and wine events and special mention for museums, workshops, shops and restaurants. The Cities Of Art philosophy is to inspire the city and its inhabitants to take advantage of the strength of local tradition to move ahead in modern times. Florence is, without a doubt, a very beautiful city, but in today's global community we need to roll up our sleeves to be something more, to go the next step with new energy and purpose.

That Special Feeling...

How can you write a guidebook which spotlights Florentine food along side typical products and handicrafts and not talk about the land and the people who are so committed to making their work known worldwide? Florence seems to have a natural capacity for generating greatness. Why? Maybe it's the river air, or the scents from the countryside of grapes and wild flowers. We haven't figured it out yet but we have an idea. There are people who work tirelessly to create something new, or struggle to keep afloat a family business or rediscover forgotten places and crafts. They don't often make the headlines but they deserve a little limelight. It has been a fascinating adventure to search for what isn't obvious and a privilege to meet the people who work so hard to ensure that their traditions do not die.

These are the 4 reasons that make Florence, Firenze. And I will guide you through the events organized by our town and people, each with their own speciality, hand crafted object or gastronomic creation, which contribute to our city's renown the world over. In fact, at the end of each season I have included my personal favorite *trip tips* which give a helpful hand in organizing an itinerary based on all the contents and ideas of my guide.

(check out Veronica's Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall Trip Tips)



Now let's look at our 4 seasons to truly understand our city...



FLORENCE, A CITY FOR 4 S/REASONS



"Godi, Fiorenza, poi che se' si grande | che per mare e per terra batti l'ali, e per lo 'nferno tuo nome si spande!"

(Rejoice, O Florence, since thou art so great, That over sea and land thou beatest thy wings, And throughout Hell thy name is spread abroad!) Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy, Inferno Canto XXVI

Tlorence, the cradle of the Renaissance, is a L'city that was built by trade and entrepreneurs. Founded as a Roman colony in 59 B.C., the original name Fiorenza is tied to the Latin word flor, or flower, conjuring up images of green valleys and a flourishing settlement. Fittingly, the city's symbol is the iris, a particular strain that once grew in the valley of the Arno River, the growing centre's economic lifeline. Starting in the 1800's, the iris became one of the defining characteristics of the city along with its Lungarni (streets that run along the river banks), bridges and flourishing textile industry. Now the river is kept alive in part by the Florentine Rowers Society (Società Canottieri Firenze) and the City Rowers (Canottieri Comunali) where professionals and amateurs alike continue to take advantage of the river.

Florence, from the time of Dante (the celebrated poet of the Divine Comedy, 1265-1321), was already a bustling economy with its seven Arti Maggiori (the trade unions of

the Middle Ages), that oversaw the production and trade of textiles, medicine, wool, silk, leather and spices, and kept checks on notaries and lawyers. With the rise to power of the Medici family, whose roots were deep in trade and finance, the city's history and theirs became intertwined, and Florence was transformed into the city of art and culture it is famous for today.

The entrepreneurial and hard working spirit of the city can still be seen in the intense concentration of leather producers and artisans, including historic brands that are now synonyms with luxury such as Gucci and Ferragamo. There is an equally lively production of textiles, and other various manufacturing in and around the nearby town of Prato.

Perhaps the most visible surviving reminder of this past is a secluded world of small artisans and shops, which inherited ancient traditions passed down from generation to generation. You can find wrought iron, ceramics, crystal, and woodwork all over the city, but above all in the Oltrarno district.

The various markets around the city also deserve mention, from the fruit, vegetable and food markets of San Lorenzo and Sant'Ambrogio, to those that specialize in antiquities, like in piazza dei Ciompi or in Santo Spirito on Sunday mornings.

Exploring these daily and weekly rituals, you will come to see how tradition and history are in no way lacking in the Florentine modernity.

Part of the city's success is also due to the Tuscan land that Florence is situated on, one that naturally lends itself to producing high quality wine (Chianti Classico), extra-virgin olive oil, specialty cheeses, and delicacies like truffles and mushrooms (porcini and ovulo, otherwise known as Caesar's mushroom), considered to be some of the best in the world. Here you'll find the wealth of the local dining traditions, in particular dishes like fried artichokes, zucchini or fegatelli di maiale (pork liver wrapped in lace fat).

Tt's easy to indulge in treats like *cenci* (fried **■**dough strips sprinkled with sugar), *brigidini* (paper-thin anise flavoured wafer cookies), the famous Prato biscotti (crescent-shaped crunchy almond cookies) and *zuccotto* (a local pudding). Over the years Florence has developed a thriving restaurant scene, known both in Italy and abroad, for the quality of their chefs and for the use of high quality products. Good service and good food, above all at the renowned Enoteca Pinchiorri, can be found in spectacular locations from prestigious palaces to tiny, hidden piazzas. Every palazzo, church, monument and city-street contributes to this atmosphere, and walking around the centre is like visiting an open air museum. Here you will run into exceptional monuments from the 1400's and earlier, when Florence, along with its rival Siena, became the principal centre of trade and banking in Europe.

Going up the hill to piazzale Michelangelo,

you will find a copy of the statue of David, another great symbol of the city (the original is in the Accademia museum), surrounded by a breathtaking panorama: endless cupolas, steeples, towers, and rooftops crowded together like a concentrated synopsis of the city's history.

 Γ rom up there you begin to see how the city was laid out so that every monument is visible from every corner of the city: the Duomo, with its magnificent cupola designed by Brunelleschi; Palazzo Vecchio, built as the town hall in the 14th century by the architect Arnolfo di Cambio, later to become the residence of Cosimo I de' Medici and his wife Eleonora da Toledo, with the grand Salone dei Cinquecento; the 13th century Bargello or Palazzo del Podestà (the Palace of Justice), now a national museum and the oldest civic building in the city whose bells rings out on special occasions and major events such as floods, wars, etc.; the numerous Romanic, Gothic and Reniassance era churches, above all Santa Croce, which houses the remains of Gioacchino Rossini, Galileo Galilei and Michelangelo Buonarroti, as well as a monument honoring the memory of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio; and Ponte Vecchio, the only Florentine bridge to survive German demolition during the Second World War, which until the 1500's was a bridge lined with butchers, but is now home to high end gold and jewelery shops. What more is there to say about Florence and Tuscany, if not that their history and natural and artistic



The Fiorino

The florin was minted in Florence for the first time in 1252. The image of Saint John, the city's protector on one side of the coin gave the origin of the phrase 'San Giovanni non vuole inganni' (Saint John doesn't want any tricks!). The edge of the fiorino wasn't smooth like most coins, but had scales of gold left around the edges from when it was coined. So, Florentines who had the fortune of possessing a fiornino, even for a short period of time, would scrape these tiny particles of gold from its edge, leading to the use of the term grattare (literally 'to scrape') to mean steal or obtain something by means of trickery. The florin became a symbol for the city's exceptional wealth, and became the standard currency measure until 1533, when

The Picciolo

Alessandro de' Medici.

This Florentine coin was the same in value as a quattrino, a division of the soldo, which was already of little face value. This is where the modern term spiccioli comes from, meaning small coins, or just a few cents.

beauty go hand in hand, helping to make them famous around the world. Even the geographic locations of Tuscany and Florence, in the middle of the Italian peninsula, seem premeditated to make it easy for visitors to travel here from all parts of Italy with relative ease.

This is what makes Florence unique. And now it's our turn to explore it topic by topic, season by season from a local's point of view.



Firenze, the Name

The origins of the word Florence have always been a bit uncertain. Discussions about its origin were well underway already in the 1500's. For example, goldsmith and sculptor Benvenuto Cellini stated that the name was derived from *Fiorinus*, one of Julius Caesar's generals. Others have traced its origins to the flowers that grew along the Arno. If this was true, then the word Florence originated from the Latin word floris, making it 'the city of flowers.' Perhaps this name came from the wildflowers that could be seen in the valley, or maybe it referred to the fact that the city was actually founded in the spring, the flowering season. The Florentine fleur-de-lys has a particular shape, belonging to an iconography that appears throughout history, dating as far back as Mesopotamia. It's essentially a stylised flower design and is recognised most often as an iris flower, which had strong religious connotations in the 14th century, as it was used to represent the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Ghost). In Florence, some suggest that the fleur-de-lys had its origins in the white iris that grows in the Arno valley. The first Florentine flag was a white flower on a purple background, but after the defeat of the Ghibellines, the Guelphs switched the colors of the flag and made the background white with a purple iris flower. The same symbol was used for the gold *fiorino* (florin) coin. The Romans founded Florence as a strategic base at the point where the Mugnone and Arno Rivers

Interesting Details

Florence is full of marble plaques featuring inscriptions and quotes from famous people (check out DANTE), while other plaques mark where famous artists such as Vittorio Alighieri, Dante Alighieri, Alessandro Manzoni, Vasco Pratolini, Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Donatello lived in the

city.
The facades of famous palazzos and noble resi-

dences are also often embellished with family coats of arms. converge. In Roman times, the square-shaped centre was enclosed with 2 km or about 1-1/4 miles of walls. At the threshold of the 13th century, the city had expanded so much that a new wall was begun, extending the enclosure by another 4 km. Two hundred years later, that same wall grew to 10 km, as another extension to the fortification was added.

In Dante's time, Florence was already a busy commercial metropolis, where textiles like wool, silk and leather were artfully crafted (**check out GUILDS**). The Medici and the Speziali families set the cultural trends in the city.

Banking, notary and lawyer entrepreneurship further established the thriving city as a centre of business in the region.

GUILDS

The Florentine Guilds (associations of master craftsmen and tradesmen) traditionally formed the backbone of the Florentine economic system. In 1393, a poet described Florence as, 'la terra di mercantatia,' (the land of commerce) and indeed it was a land of merchants and manufacturing. The various guilds represented chief commercial enterprises, ranging from butchers to lawyers. There were seven Arti Maggiori (Major Arts) and fourteen Arti Minori (Minor Arts). Since only members of the former were eligible for election to public office, membership was essential for any man who had political aspirations. The seven Major Guilds were the Arte dei Giudici and Notai (Lawyers and Notaries), the Calimala or Mercatanti (Great Merchants), the Arte del Cambio (Money Changers), the Arte della Lana (Wool Masters), the Arte della Seta or Por Santa Maria (Silk Masters), the Arte dei Medici e Speziali (Doctors and Apothecaries), and the Arte dei Vaiai e Pellicciai (Furriers and Leather Masters).

The fourteen Minor Guilds were the Arte dei Beccai (Butchers), the Arte dei Calzolai (Shoemakers), the Arte dei Fabbri (Blacksmiths), the Arte dei Linaiuoli e Rigattieri (Linen Drapers and Used Clothes Dealers), the Arte dei Maestri di Pietra e Legname (Builders), the Arte dei Vinattieri (Wine Dealers), the Arte degli Albergatori (Innkeepers), the Arte degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli (Olive Oil Dealers and Sausage & Cheese Sellers), the Arte dei Cuoiai e Galigai (Minor Leather Masters), the Arte dei Corazzai e Spadai (Armorers), the Arte dei Coreggiai (Belt Makers), the Arte dei Chiavaioli (Locksmiths), the Arte dei Legnaioli (Carpenters), and the Arte dei Fornai (Bakers).

The minor arts are still well represented by small workshops around the city that continue creating refined products.





ARTE DEL CAMBIO

Art of the Money Changers

L'Arte del Cambio was one of the major Florentine guilds in the Middle Ages responsible for those who lent and changed money. One of the most famous clans in this business was the Strozzi family, known for the very high interest they charged on money lent. Playing on this fame, the Florentines coined a term 'strozzino' for loansharks. This marble counter, or banco, is where the modern term bank or banca come from.



BANCARELLE Street Vendors

Street vendors are part of the tradition of markets and fairs in Florence and Tuscany. Once they were always seen along the viali, the roads around the city centre and during strategic moments of the day. Now they can be found regularly in every fair and village event selling their wares according to the season. The vendors sell offer all sorts of things from sweet goodies such as liquorice, lollypops, caramelized nuts and brigidini (anise flavored wafers) to soft drinks, sandwiches and other street food. In the autumn a stop by the roasted chestnut vendor is a must.



A GREAT REASON FOR EVERY SEASON. FLORENCE

Events & Specialities Guide

Dedicated sections on Spring, Summer, Fall & Winter Events:

Celebrations & Traditions; Art, Crafts & Music; Food & Wine; Nature & Sport

Florentine Specialties from the Producers' Point of View:

Symbols of Florence, Architecture, the Duomo and the Museums
Tradition, Handicraft, Food & Wine,
Health & Well-Being,
Organic Food & Markets
Plus Helpful Tips, Suggestions, Recipes,
History, and Glossaries
(useful words and phrases)

WINTER

ourists rarely visit Florence in the winter, but the colder months hold many surprises for those willing to brave the weather (cold and damp though usually sunny). Besides the obvious advantages, fewer tourists and off-season rates, it's also a time when the city, and the countryside reveal their authentic nature to travelers.

Winter may have shorter days, but it allows peeks at vistas usually blocked by trees and vegetation, like glimpses through lit up windows into antique frescoed rooms. Empty streets echo with the sound of horses' hooves and carriages evoking times past.

Winter in Tuscany means carnival celebrations in small towns and at the seaside town of Viareggio, warming up with red wine, and enjoying the various specialities of the season. In the winter many famous Tuscan and Florentine products are at their best. The olive oil made in Autumn has aged just slightly by winter, rounding out its flavors and making it the perfect time to discover pinzimonio (raw vegetables dipped in olive oil), stews such as ribollita, pappa al pomodoro and onion soup, all great for warming up on cold winter days.





Fiesole & Firenze

In via della Piazzola, which was one of the major roads connecting Florence to Fiesole, near the junction with via Barbacane, a rectangular shaped plaque is still visible with this ancient inscription: a matre et filia aeque disto, signaling where the mother (Fiesole) is equidistant from the daughter (Florence). This parent/child relationship was commonly applied to the two cities, since Fiesole was at its economic height in the 3rd century before Florence had even been founded. In the Middle Ages Florence began its climb to become one of the most important cities in Europe, and Fiesole stayed behind watching her child grow in the same way a mother does.

DECEMBER EVENTS

ART, CRAFTS & MUSIC EVENTS

* ALL MONTH LONG MERCATINI DI NATALE

Christmas Markets

Florence and Surroundings

Christmas markets take place in villages across the region; get out and visit various towns and you'll be sure to enter the Christmas spirit.

* ALL MONTH LONG

SCOPERTA DEI LUOGHI RELIGIOSI ED ARCHEOLOGICI DI FIESOLE

Discovering The Religious And Archaeological Sites Of Fiesole

Fiesole (Florence)

Some of the most beautiful cultural attractions in this town open to the public for a limited time with guided tours.

www.comune.fiesole.fi.it

* 2ND WEEK OF DECEMBER BIENNALE DI ARTE CONTEMPORANEA

International Biennial of Contemporary Art Florence

(Odd numbered years). The largest exhibition of contemporary art in the world takes place at Fortezza da Basso. Concerts, conferences, performances and the artists themselves.

www.florencebiennale.org

EX 3 Contemporary Art Centre

EX3 takes its name from the contraction of the word 'exhibition' and the number of the Quartiere 3, the neighborhood where the centre is located. EX 3 is a contemporary art gallery whose goal is to investigate, broaden and promote the multiple vocabulary and practices of todays modern artist. The central hall is an open area of 700 sq. meters and caters to solo and group exhibitions while the smaller side rooms are dedicated to a frequent turnover of exhibitions by emerging artists. Opening hours are Wednesday-Sunday 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Friday 11 a.m.-10 p.m. (closed Monday and Tuesday) Viale Giannotti, 81/83/85 Florence Centre's reception Tel. 0556288966 www.ex3.it

FRITTELLI CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY

Carlo and Simone Frittelli began their adventure in the Santa Croce area in 1990.

Their new gallery, 2000 sq. m. in the northern area of Florence near the airport, was projected by the famous architect *Adolfo Natalini* and is a beautiful and vast space for modern art exhibitions. There are smaller rooms dedicated to the famous private collection of the Frittelli brothers and a multimedia room is available for conferences.

Via Val Di Marina, 15 Florence Tel 055410153 www.frittelliarte.it



ART GALLERIES



"El arte es la mentira que nos permite conocer la verdad"

(Art is the lie that permits us to know the truth)
Pablo Picasso (1881-1973)

GALLERIA D'ARTE MODERNA

Modern Art Gallery

This museum, created in 1922 on the second story of Palazzo Pitti, provides an overview of the development of Italian painting and sculpture from the neoclassical period through the early decades of the last century, with significant contributions from foreign artists. A visit to the museum offers a look at the Tuscan Macchiaioli, but also, thanks to the portrait gallery, a chance to catch a glimpse of period fashion. Artists such as Ary Sheffer, Puccinelli, Ciseri, Lega, Fattori, Cecioni, Winterhalter, Carolus Duran, Zandomeneghi, Boldini, Simi, and Elizabeth Chaplin show the gestures, postures and rituals spanning domestic intimacy and sophisticated social life. Palazzo Pitti, Piazza Pitti, 1

Tel. 055294883

www.firenzemusei.it

GALLERIA PANANTI CASA D'ASTE

Pananti Auction House

Open since 1967, this is one of the oldest and largest and most important galleries in the city. Located in via Maggio, they organise exhibitions and auctions of classical, modern and contemporary artists. Piero Pananti and his son

Filippo are famous in Florence for the alternative events they organise. In the past, they have offered jazz concerts during art exhibitions, dinners with famous chefs and evenings with the artist Dario Cecchini, the famous butcher of Panzano in Chianti.

Via Maggio, 15 Tel. 0552741011 www.pananti.com

GALLERIA D'ARTE FILIPPO PANANTI & C.

Filippo Pananti Art Gallery

This small gallery owned by Filippo Pananti is an offspring from the main Pananti gallery. Take a look since work of art is a unique and valuable way to take a piece of Italy home with you...

Via Della Condotta, 27 r Tel. 055215786

PANDOLFINI CASA D'ASTE

Pandolfini Auction House

Pandolfini Casa d'Aste has been dealing antiques for over 70 years. Beyond the traditional antiquarian sectors, such as antique, nineteenth-century, modern and contemporary paintings, furniture and accessories, jewellery and silverware, they have been branching out for some time now to collectors wines and both classical and Egyptian archaeology.

Palazzo Ramirez de Montalvo Borgo Albizi, 26 - Tel. 0552340888/9 www.pandolfini.it Via Poggio Bracciolini, 26 Tel. 055685698 – 6580242

poggiobracciolini@isveg.it

Via Maggio

At the beginning of the 12th century the area around via Maggio was open countryside and called la Casellina. The Velluti family who escaped from the castello di Semifonte, which was flattened by the Florentines in 1202, became very rich from the wool trade and eventually bought this land. They were the authors of the first palace in Florence, followed by many wealthy families like the Corsini, Pitti, Capponi and Ridolfi, whose palaces were all larger than anything that had previously been built in Florence. The road that was built here thus became the widest and the most sumptuous and came to be known as the Via Maggiore (the biggest road), though thanks to the corruption of the Florentine language over the years became abbreviated as via Maggio.

Pandolfini



ACCADEMIA LUIGI CAPPIELLO Via della Fornace, 33 Tel. 055681321 www.accademia-cappiello.it

ACCADEMIA RIACI Via de' Conti, 4 Tel. 055289831 www.accademiariaci.info

ART E Via delle Conce, 14 r Tel. 0552478510 www.arteschool.com

CENTRO LORENZO DE' MEDICI Via Faenza, 43 Tel. 055287360/055287203/0552398920 www.lorenzodemedici.it

FLORENCE ACADEMY OF ART Via delle Casine, 21 r Tel. 055245444 www.florenceacademyofart.com

IL BISONTE Via S. Niccolo, 24 r Tel. 0552342585 www.ilbisonte.it

ISTITUTO PER L'ARTE E IL RESTAURO SPINELLI' Via Maggio, 13 Tel. 055213086/055282951 www.spinelli.it

LE ARTI ORAFE Via dei Serragli, 104/124 Tel. 0552280131 www.artiorafe.it ORO E COLORE Via Toscanella, 18 r Tel. 055289415 www.oroecolore.com

POLIMODA – Fashion Design School Via Pisana, 77 Tel. 055739961 www.polimoda.com

SCUOLA INTERNAZIONALE D'ARTE 'LA BOTTEGA DELL'ACQUAFORTE' Via Chiantigiana, 3 r Tel. 0556820668 www.baicchi.atte it

STUDIO ART CENTERS INTERNATIONALE Via S. Gallo, 30 Tel. 055486164/055486072/055486230 www.saci-florence.org

UNIVERSITA' INTERNAZIONALE DELL'ARTE Via delle Forbici, 24 Tel. 055570216/055571503 www.uiafirenze.com



EVENTS IN TOWN-ART & CRAFTS

December - Christmas Markets

December 8 - American Christmas Market

Beg. of December - Florence Noel, Christmas Market

2ndweek of December - International Biennial of Contemporary Art

First 20 days in December - German Christmas Market

January-Fashion Event

End of January Beg. of Feb. - Vintage Fashion Fair

1stweek of March - Furniture Exhibition

Lastweek in April / Firstweek in May - A.R.T., Artisan Fair

End of April-End of June - Maggio Musicale Musical Event

2nd half of May-Artigianato e Palazzo, Handicraft Fair

End of June - Pitti Immagine, Fashion Event

The 1st and 2nd weeks in September-September in Piazza della Passera

Beginning of November - Wool, Cheese and Sheepherders Market

EVENTS IN TUSCANY-ART & CRAFTS

October - December - Arts and Crafts in piazza Mino - Fiesole (Florence)

Easter Monday - Antiques fair - Greve in Chianti (Florence)

End of April - Beg. of May - Antiques Market - Impruneta (Florence)

End of May - Antiques Fair - Castelfiorentino (Florence)

June-September Cutlery Fair - Scarperia (Florence)

2nd half of June - Ceramics Festival - Montelupo Fiorentino (Florence)

First weekend of October - Ceramic and Handicrafts Fair - Florence

2nd week in October - Flea Market - Greve in Chianti (Florence)

* DECEMBER 8

MERCATINO AMERICANO DI NATALE

American Christmas Market

Florence

One of the most famous holiday markets in the city, it takes place on December 8 in the Pagliere Medicee located on viale Machiavelli near Porta Romana. The American International League of Florence organizes the market and all proceeds go to charity www.ailoflorence.org

* BEGINNING OF DECEMBER

FLORENCE NOEL

Christmas Market

Florence

The event takes place in the magnificient space of the Stazione Leopolda. This event offers charity raffles, a bookshop food tastings, shows and games for children. It's a great place to find Christmas gifts.

www.florencenoel.it

* BEGINNING OF DECEMBER ANTICA FIERA DI CARMIGNANO

Old Fashioned Fair of Carmignano

Carmignano (Prato)

This old-fashioned style fair is great for buying Christmas gifts such as wine, olive oil, dried figs, honey and more, all produced in the Prato area. It is held for an entire week in piazza Vittorio Emanuele II and in the former Cantine Niccolini in piazza Matteotti.

www.comune.carmignano.po.it

* 1ST WEEK IN DECEMBER SAGRA DEGLI ANTICHI SAPORI

Antique Flavors Festival

Lastra a Signa (Florence)

Concluding with the Festa dell'Immacolata on December 8, this festival is a celebration of Tuscan culture and cuisine. Ribollita, olive oil. wine, bistecca alla fiorentina, and wood-ovenbaked bread are just a few of the marvels offered.

www.comune.lastra-a-signa.fi.it

STRAW WEAVING

Until 1800 Tuscany was mainly an agricultural region organised with a semi-feudal system. The navigability of the Arno and the great port of Livorno facilitated

trade in agricultural products. Millinery activity dates back to the 1300's, but it developed into an industry thanks to entrepeneurs like Domenico Michelacci, who came

from Bologna to Signa in 1714.

By the end of the 19th century, straw weaving was an important sector of the Tuscan economy, and this lasted until the crash of 1929.

MUSEO DELLA PAGLIA

Straw Museum

Lastra a Signa

This museum dedicated to straw and weaving is a point of reference for a craft as old as humanity, one that has enjoyed extraordinary success in Tuscany, in particular from the middle of the 18th century to the present day, though admittedly with ups and downs. The aim of the project is to recover a collective memory and to preserve a wonderful heritage which risks being lost because it is ignored or underestimated. The visitor will be able to see the results of the creativity and skill of the people, mainly women, who worked in the industry.

Via degli Alberti, 11 Lastra a Signa (Florence) Tel. 055875257 Lat: 43.78244 – Long: 11.09616 www.museopaglia.it





GREVI HATS

Around since 1875, Grevi hats have marked the most important historical and social events of the times. For example, after the Great Depression and financial crisis of 1929, the firm concentrated mainly on the Italian market where hats were in high demand. These were the felt and straw creations of the 1930's. With the casual bent of the 1960's. Grevi launched a Tuscan lambskin hat onto the world market. At the beginning of the 1980's, the brand name experienced a

Renaissance of its own, appearing in fashion magazines and some of the most prestigious shops in the world. Today their collections are still manufactured using traditional and hand made production, employing experts in weaving and crocher

GREVI

Shop:

Via della Spada, 11/13 r LAT: 43.77176 LONG: 11.25053

Florence

Factory: Via della Manifattura, 10 Signa (Florence) Tel

055876223/0558734081 LAT: 43.77446 LONG: 11.09435

www.grevi.com

* FIRST 20 DAYS IN DECEMBER IL MERCATINO DI HEIDELBERG

German Christmas Market

Florence

Piazza Santa Croce is packed to the brim with stands as it hosts one of Germany's oldest market where you can find Christmas tree decorations and Nativity scenes, traditional foods, spiced wine, beer and sweets in a festive atmosphere. Concerts and other performances accompany the market.

www.firenze.net



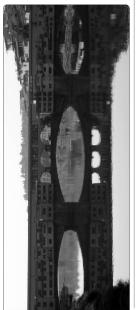
* MID-DECEMBER PONTE VECCHIO CHALLENGE

Golf Challenge in the Arno River

Florence

From December 18th to 20th, the Ponte Vecchio Challenge will transform once again the Arno River in a Golf course. The champions representing 12 Countries will challenge themselves from the Ponte Vecchio, in a unique worldclass competition. It's a good chance not only to see a great sport event in the beautiful Tuscan capital, but also to enjoy other pleasures that Florence and Tuscany can offer. The Calendar of side events is very rich: gastronomic tours, museums and exhibitions, wine tasting and much more.

www.pontevecchiochallenge.it



WATER & THE ARNO RIVER



"Flumina pauca vides de magnis fontibus orta: plurima collectis multiplicantur aquis"

(You see few rivers born from large springs: many grow larger by collecting from smaller sources)

Ovid, Remedia Amoris (vv. 97 s.)

There once was a time when Florentine city life revolved around the river. The Arno was the source of hydraulic energy for thousands of people who developed their businesses on and around the river. After 1800, with the mechanisation of the textile and wool industries, much of the activity on the river was moved to other locations.

The river divides the city in two and on each side there are the *Lungarno*, which are the riverbanks and streets running along the river.



Floods

Over the course of the past few centuries Florence has suffered many floods, but the worst two have been that of 1333 and of 1966. The curious fact is that they both occurred in the same day: November 4th.

In via de' Neri there are plaques marking the level of both floods. The one in 1966 is 30 cm higher than that of 1333.

Not many people know that when the flood struck

in '66, many people who loved the city came from all around the world (like, for example, the late Edward Kennedy) to Florence to help clean up and protect historic documents and works of art.



The Bust of Benvenuto Cellini

In the middle of the bridge, the shops are interrupted by two terraces, which provide a panoramic view of each side of the Arno. The Vasari corridor mounts the terrace on the eastern side, while the other has a monument to Benvenuto Cellini, the most famous Florentine goldsmith. More recently, the gate around the monument has been used for over two decades by lovers that placed padlocks with their initials and then tossed the key into the water, a symbol that no one can come between them. Outlawed by the town in 2006 (there's a 50 euro fine for anyone caught putting one on), young couples now use the nearby gate along the lungarno degli Archibusieri.

= PONTE VECCHIO

This is the only bridge not destroyed by German mines during the Second World War. In

the 1400's the businesses on the bridge were butcher shops, which would drop offal and other waste directly into the river below. In

1593, in order to clean up the noisy and smelly street, the Grand Duke Fernando I decided to install jewellers, goldsmiths and silversmiths here.

Along with Michelangelo's David, the bridge is a symbol of the city that has endured throughout the years.

There is a plaque on the Ponte Vecchio with a quote from Dante.

He wrote in the Divine Comedy, Inferno XIII, 146:

'...In sul passo d'Arno...at the crossing of the Arno...'

It is easily recognised by the two rows of shops lining the road, making it look like the extension of the city street. These shops have heavy wooden hatches that cover their windows when closed, and the rear walls that extend out over the river; a classic example of the city's *sporti*, supported by wooden beams.

At the four corners of the bridge there were once four towers to control the traffic coming in and out of the city, but only one, the Torre dei Mannelli has survived.

Vasarian Corridor Tip

Commissioned by Cosimo I de' Medici in 1565, Giorgio Vasari built the secret corridor connecting Palazzo Vecchio to Palazzo Pitti at the same time that Francesco, son of Cosimo I, was to marry Giovanna d'Austria. The idea was to create a way for the Grand Dukes to move freely and safely between the government seat and their home, especially as it was still uncertain at the time whether the population would support the new Duke and the change from Republic to monarchy.

Mussolini expanded the discreet Renaissance porthole windows, located along the passage-way over the bridge, into panoramic views over the river in 1939, the year that Hitler visited on his trip to consolidate the relationship with his ally. It is said that the Fuhrer greatly enjoyed the view, and this may be the reason why the bridge was saved from destruction when the Germans retreated from the city.

As immortalised in the film Paisà by Roberto Rossellini, the Vasari corridor was the only remaining connection left between the two sides of the river as the Nazis had mined both ends of the bridge to cut off communication. The partisans used this to sneak back and forth, while the allies occupied the southern bank of the Arno.

Once across the Arno, the corridor passes above the loggia of Santa Felicita's facade, with a private and very protected balcony on the inside that allowed the family to attend mass without



ACQUA SAN FELICE



Via Guastini Loc. San Felice Pistoia Tel. 057341049 LAT: 43.98151 LONG: 10.88388 www.sanfelice.org

ACQUA E TERME ULIVETO SPA

Via Provinciale Vicarese, 120 Vicopisano (Pisa) Tel. 050789511 LAT: 43.68725 LONG: 10.54269 www.uliveto.it

SORGENTE VERNA S.R.L. DOSSO ALTO SPA

Localita' Rio Chiusi della Verna (Arezzo) Tel. 0575596710 LAT: 43.66767 LONG: 11.89244

ACQUA FONTEVIVA

Via Capannelle 4 Prati della Ciocca Massa (MS) Tel. 0585319512 LAT: 44.05094 LONG: 10.16415 www.acquafonteviva.it risking an appearance in public. Today, the entire corridor is part of the Uffizi Gallery, and it houses a vast collection of portraits from the 17th and 18th centuries as well as many famous self-portraits. You can visit the corridor (only on appointment), starting in the Uffizi and ending in the Boboli Gardens near the Grotta del Buontalenti.

www.polomuseale.firenze.it/musei/vasariano

Acqua, Water Producers in Tuscany

SORGENTE CINTOIA SRL Via Cintoia Bassa, 55 Greve in Chianti (Florence) Tel. 0558572285 Lat: 43.63734 – Long: 11.34074

SORGENTE PALINA SAS Localita' Marcoiano, 33 Scarperia (Florence) Tel. 0558406883

Lat: 44.06004 – Long: 11.29406

ACQUA PANNA Loc. Panna (Scarperia) Lat: 44.06501 – Long: 11.28:

Lat: 44.06501 – Long: 11.28828 www.sanpellegrino.it/acquapanna

ACQUA TESORINO Via Costa al Bagno, 6 Montopoli In Val D'Arno (Pisa) Lat: 43.66006 Long: 10.76136 www.tesorino.com

= ROWING

The Arno River gradually lost its historical splendour over the



years, until the Florence Rowing Society, Società Canottieri Firenze and the Communal Rowing Association, Canottieri Comunali, recently brought life back to the waterway.

They gathered together top athletes and amateurs, and have animated the river with club activities. In fact, rowing is now very popular in Florence. The Canottieri Comunali Firenze is located below piazzale Michelangelo, and the Società Canottieri Firenze is between the Uffizi and the Ponte Vecchio: their rowers are recognisable by their red and white striped rowing gear. The view in particular from the Società Canottieri Firenze is wonderful, so I highly recommend a visit to their restaurant for dinner. They have tables right on the lawn overlooking the river with a one-of-a-kind view of Ponte Vecchio. You can also eat lunch there as well, but you must book a table.

--- RENAIOLI

The original navigators of the Arno River were called *renaioli*. These workers pushed their boats with poles and were responsible for digging the sand up from the river bed that was later mixed into mortar for the construction of all the Florentine palaces, walls, roads, etc. In the Renaissance, during the rebuilding of the town centre, the renaioli dug out from the riverbed, loaded it

FLORENCE ROWIN SOCIETY

The Società Canottieri Firenze is just next to the Ponte Vecchio near the Uffizi. Lungarno Anna Maria Luisa de Medici, 8

Tel. 0552381010 LAT: 43.76805 LONG: 11.25468 www.canottierifirenze.it

RISTORANTE ACQUA 8TTO

Open for lunch Thurs-Sat, and for brunch on Sundays by reservation only (no walk-ins!). Lungarno A.M.Medici, 8 Tel. 055211093 / Mob. 3387507562 or 3332067116

COMMUNAL ROWING ASSOCIATION

Lungarno Ferrucci, 2 Tel. 0556812151 LAT: 43.76395 LONG: 11.28062 www.canottiericomunalifirenze.it



FIRENZE RAFTING

in Florence

Offers guided tours on the Arno and Sieve Rivers with the choice of three different routes.

The trips are open to school groups, families, tourists and Florentines themselves who want to discover, in a marriage of sport and culture, stunning scenery and unusual perspectives of the city and territory. Tel. 3490921540

www.firenzerafting.it

onto their boats, and then rowed it to the riverbank, with sweat and toil and a pittance for pay. From there, carts would go back and forth from the banks of the Arno to the centre of Florence, maintaining a constant supply of this essential river sand.

Today you can get a feel of this ancient profession thanks to a new initiative, which let's you punt down the Arno River with a professional guide. After a spin around the river, you can have a romantic dinner at the private rowing club on the riverbank with its breathtaking view.

www.renaioli.it

GOLF CLUBS

GOLF CLUB PARCO DI FIRENZE

A 9-hole course only 4 km from piazza del Duomo, it is located along the Arno River on the southwest side of the Cascine Park. Coming from Porta a Prato, cross the Alla Vittoria bridge and turn immediately right, following the course of the Arno for 3 km. Follow the signs for GOLE From the Viadotto dell'Indiano (airport area), take the Isolotto exit and follow the GOLF signs (2 min. distance). From the train station, take bus number 9 towards Isolotto and get off at the Esselunga/Argingrosso stop.

Via dell'Isolotto, 10 Tel. 055785627 www.parcodifirenze.it

EVENTS IN TOWN-SPORT

May 10

Guarda Firenze, A Look Around Florence

End of May

Mille Miglia, Histocal Car Race Tuscany



Corri la Vita, Florentine Marathon

Last Sunday of November

Firenze Marathon, Florentine Marathon



Nature Train: All year long

Siena-Valdorcia

First Sunday in June

Regata Storica in Arno, Historical Boat Race Calcinaia (Pistoia)

Beginning of June

Italian Grand Prix, Motorcycle Race

Scarperia (Florence)

1stweek in June

Coppa Risi'atori, Historical Boat Race Livorno

September 8th

Fiera di San Celestina, Hot Air Balloon Launch - San Marcello Pistoiese (Pistoia)

EROICA Vintage Bike Race

A series of legs along the white dirt roads in the hills and valleys of Chianti and the Crete Senese, the Eroica race, held at the

end of September-beginning of October,

is open to riders exclusively on vintage bikes.



GOLF IN TUSCANY

COSMOPOLITAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Viale Pisorno, 60
Tirrenia (Pisa)
LAT: 43.62647
LONG: 10.30569
www.cosmopolitangolf.it

LE PAVONIERE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB Via Traversa il Crocifisso

Prato
Tel 0574620855
LAT: 43.84765
LONG: 11.06331
www.golfclublepavoniere.com

POGGIO DEI MEDICI GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB

Via San Gavino, 27 Scarperia (Florence) Tel. 0558435562 LAT: 43.99096 LONG:11.33634 www.poggiodeimedici.com

UGOLINO GOLF CLUB

Via di Poggio Ugolino, 1 Ugolino (Florence) Tel. 055230551 LAT: 43.69530

LONG: 11.29317 www.golfugolino.it

FOOD & WINE EVENTS

* ALL MONTH LONG

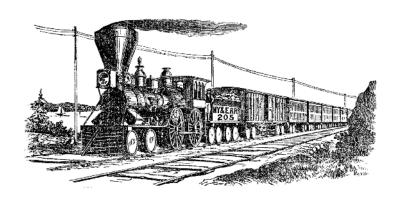
TRENO DEL VINO

The Wine Train

Montalcino (Siena)

From Siena to the Montalcino-Torrenieri Station Two train cars travel from the Siena train station to Torrenieri-Montalcino, the site of the Winestation. The train crosses the heart of the emerald Val d'Orcia, and its enchanting panoramas. The classic Wine Train includes a visit to the abbey of Sant'Antimo and the medieval hill town of Montalcino, while the Tuscany Slow Train is a day trip from Florence to visit Siena, the Winestation, Montalcino and then back to Florence.

www.winestation.it



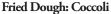
BREAD



"Cum sale panis, latrantem stomachum bene leniet"

(Bread with salt quiets the angry stomach)
Horace, Satire (2,2,17 s.)

A curiosity of traditional Tuscan bread is that it is unsalted, which comes as a shock the first time you try it! The reason for this is that centuries ago the Florentine Government placed a tax on salt. The bakers of the city, to to keep prices low, left this ingredient out. Tuscans are proud of their unsalted bread, and it is perfect as a scarpetta (little shoe) for mopping up the last of the sauce on one's plate, or simply with fresh olive oil and a sprinkling of salt. Bread is used in many famous Florentine dishes. As an ingredient, it usually works better if it's a little stale. Two days old is perfect for making panzanella, a typical summer salad with tomatoes. There are many varieties of bread, created in different towns, and even more than one variation in the same town!



All regional cuisines in Italy have dishes based on fried dough, but in Tuscany it's a downright passion. Each area has its own speciality: in Florence they have small, round *coccoli* (literally 'cuddles'), while in Prato they have *ficattole* (these delicious morsels can be found at the restaurant Sant'Agostino 23 in Florence!), in Versilia *panzanelle*, in the Lunigiana a specialty called *sgabei*, and last but not least, in Siena there are *rivolti*. Coccoli







Piazza del Grano



where this important business was supervised by the Ufficiali della Grascia, These grascini kept an eye on the quality and the quantity of the grain, as well as the regularity of the prices, an important duty since bread was the basis of the average diet and couldn't undergo large fluctuations in price. In fact jail time or exile was the normal penalty for any bakers who dared to alter or stretch the bread they sold with other substances. The *spiano* was the measure of grain allowed each baker each month, and when all was well (that is, there were no plagues or wars), they were allowed the entire spiano. On the contrary, difficult times could cause the rations to be halved to a mezzo spiano. From this, the expression a tutto spiano, referring to the full ration, is now used to mean 'to the max,' or 'with abandon.'

are a savoury treat that used to be eaten fresh at friggitorie as a snack at midday.

Nowadays there aren't too many friggitorie and coccoli are not so easy to come by.

The friggitorie were also known for fried strips of polenta (with a more crunchy surface than the cubes you usually find), *bomboloni* (doughnuts), and the holiday treat, rice *fritelle*.

LOGGIAS

The term *loggia* describes the arched, pillared porches and covered squares of the city.

There are many beautiful loggias hidden away in private courtyards or monasteries, but many can also be seen from the street.

You should know that loggias were used as shelters for poor people and pilgrims, though they were also places to celebrate power and luxury. Large public loggias had specific purposes, like the Loggia del Pesce (the fish market)

and the Loggia del Mercato Nuovo (the location of the New Market) today called 'del Porcellino.'

The covered markets and many of the public loggias were established in front of hospitals or hospice houses like the Loggia del Brunelleschi in piazza Santissima Annunziata, in front of the Hospital of the Innocents (Spedale degli Innocenti). Close to elegant and important buildings, there were loggias where celebrations were held, such as banquets, weddings and funerals. A typical loggia of this type

is the luxurious Loggia dei Priori, also called 'dell'Orcagna,' in piazza Signoria. The signoria (the governing body of Florence) used this beautiful place for public ceremonies and the proclamation of new laws. It later became known as the Loggia de Lanzi due to the name of the guards, the Lanzichenecchi (lancers), that Cosimo I established here after the Republic ended in the mid-1500's.

Recently, the government has restored some of the public functions of the Loggia dei Lanzi, and sometimes there are municipal ceremonies and classical music concerts held under it.

= PAN DI RAMERINO

Rosemary Bread

This is a soft bread bun with sultana raisins and rosemary, sold only in the period before Easter. Not all that long ago, the buns were sold by the Florentine bakers only on the day before Good Friday and then blessed by the local priest. These special buns belong to a general European tradition; every country has its own version. In Great Britain, hot cross buns were sold only on Good Friday. The original recipe was medieval, and naturally it has been modified over the centuries. These days sugar is added, and it's possible to find these buns all year round. Rosemary Bread should be set to rise for about an hour. The buns are brushed with olive oil, using a sprig of rosemary and then cooked until the surface becomes deep golden and shiny.



BEST BAKERIES IN TOWN

PUGI

Considered the best bakery in Florence. Pugi is famous for their schiacciata (flat bread baked with olive oil) and pizza with various toppings. Piazza San Marco, 9 b Tel. 055280981
Via S. Gallo, 62 r Tel. 055475975
Via De Amicis, 49 r Tel. 055669666
www.focacceria-pugi.it

SARTONI

This bakery, known locally as the *forno* on via de' Cerchi, sells bread, pizza and pastries. It's well worth the wait in line to buy a slice of pizza topped with seasonal vegetables. Be sure to try the schiacciata (flat bread baked with olive oil). (Closed Wednesday afternoons)
Via de' Cerchi, 34 r

Via de'Cerchi, 34 r Tel. 055212570

GIOVANNI GALLI

Two stores in town and one is even open on Sunday.

(7:30 a.m.-8 p.m.) Via M. Palmieri, 24 r Tel. 0552480336 (7:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Sun. 8 a.m.-7p.m.) Via S. Agostino, 8 r Tel. 055219703

The Legend of the Baker

On the top of a column on the left side of the Duomo, there is a statue of a bull's head. It was placed there to honor the many animals that labored throughout the centuries to build the Duomo. However there is also a legend attached to this particular sculpture.

It is said that a local carpenter took the baker's wife as his lover. When the baker (whose shop was opposite the carpenters) discovered the affair, he reported the lovers to the Tribunale Ecclesiastico (Ecclesiastical Court), which condemned them for adultery, putting an end to their relationship. The carpenter, to avenge himself, erected the bull's head in front of the baker's business to remind him every day of this episode.

So you might say, why would he do that? Well, in Italy, when one has been the victim of unfaithfulness you are considered *cornuto* (with horns) and an object of ridicule, especially for a man, proof that he is unable to satisfy and control his wife!





MAMA'S BAKERY, American Bakery

Located in the Oltrarno area, the bakery is a few steps from Santo Spirito, Pitti Palace and Ponte Vecchio. Here you find all kinds of American goodies such as bagels, muffins, quiches, brownies, cheesecake, club sandwiches, chocolate chip cookies, American coffee and pumpkin pie during the holidays. Open Mon. to Fri. 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat to Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (Closed Sundays)

Via della Chiesa, 34 r Tel. 055219214 www.mamasbakery.it

EVENTS AROUND TUSCANY-BREAD Second to last Sun. of May

'Pane e Companatico'

Bread Festival Marradi (Florence) www.pro-marradi.it

ARTE DEI FORNAI

Art of the Bakers

Membership to this group was only given to the best bakers of the city. Bread has always been an important staple in the Tuscan diet, and no table is complete without it.

Saint Lorenzo (who martyred by being baked alive) is the Patron Saint of the art of bread making, and he is portrayed in a fresco in the church of Orsanmichele, where the Consoli dell'Arte (the guild's guiding body) made offerings each year on August 10th.





DECEMBER RECIPE



RIBOLLITA or MINESTRA DI PANE or ZUPPA DI PANE

Bread, Vegetable and Bean Stew

14 of a cabbage
1 leek
1 onion finely chopped
2 potatoes
2 carrots
2 zucchini
2 celery sticks
300 gr cannellini beans, soaked
2 peeled tomatoes
extra-virgin olive oil
salt and pepper



250 gr of 1- to 2-day-old Tuscan bread
In a pot, saute the onions in olive oil.

Add all the other chopped vegetables and cook slowly for about 10 minutes.

Add half of the beans and their liquid. Incorporate the other half of the beans slowly.

Add salt and pepper and let cook at a low temperature for two hours. At this point, add the sliced bread, mix well and cook for another 10 minutes. Serve in earthenware bowls and top with olive oil. Ribollita literally means reboiled, because its also great reheated the day after.

La Berta

As you look up on the side of the Duomo while standing in via Cerretani, you can see a white marble bust of a woman. The story goes that this is Berta, la *cavolaia* (the cabbage seller), a market worker from the 13th century who never married or had any children.

Upon her death, she left all her possessions to the monks of the Santa Maria Maggiore church, who used this money for the casting of a church bell. It tolled every sunset to mark the end of the working day for the market workers. As a sign of their gratitude, the people in the neighbourhood erected this bust to remember and honour her.

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JANUARY EVENTS

ART, CRAFTS & MUSIC EVENTS

* JANUARY

PITTI IMMAGINE

Fashion shows and conventions

Florence

One of the most important appointments in fashion, Florence comes to life with thousands of visitors, fashion shows and parties all around the city for Pitti Uomo (men's collections), Pitti W (women's pre-collections) and Pitti Bimbo (children's collections).

www.pittimmagine.com

== FASHION IN FLORENCE

Florence has a long tradition in fashion, making it one of the most active hubs of the business in Italy and the world. Historic and well-known fashion houses the likes of Pucci, Salvatore Ferragamo and Gucci as well as Roberto Cavalli, Enrico Coveri and Patrizia Pepe all have roots here. The highest concentration of luxury boutiques are in the luxury district along via de' Tornabuoni and via della Vigna Nuova, with other stores around the centre and in factory outlets in the Tuscan countryside.

= FASHION MUSEUMS

The city has a museum dedicated to fashion and its history called the Galleria del Costume, the only museum of its kind in Italy. It gives a history of the many phases of fashion



EVENT IN TOWN FASHION

End of January and June
Pitti Immagine
Florence
www.pittimmagine.com
One of the major yearly
appointments in fashion, the city comes to
life with thousands of visitors, fashion shows
and parties all around
the city for Pitti Uomo
(men's collections), Pit-

ti W (women's pre-collections) and Pitti Bim-

bo (children's collec-

tions).

End of January Beginning of February Vintage Selection Florence www.stazioneleopolda.com throu the centuries with over 6,000 pieces such as clothing, accessories, theatrical and cinema costumes of great importance from Italian and foreign designers such as Valentino, Giorgio Armani, Gianni Versace, Emilio Pucci, Ottavio Missoni, Yves Saint Laurent and many more. In the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum in Palazzo Spini-Feroni (in via de' Tornabuoni), there are over 10,000 Ferragamo shoes as well as photographs, newspapers, sketches and wooden lasts belonging to celebrity clients.

The Museo Capucci opened in 2008 to house many of the designer Roberto Capucci's pieces created since 1950, including those created for the Biennale di Venezia in 1995.

Other museums related to fashion and its industries include the Fondazione Arte della Seta Lisio (silk museum), the Museo Della Paglia e dell'Intreccio in Signa (straw weaving museum), the Museo Degli Argenti and Museo Torrini, dedicated to gold, silver and jewels. There are additional examples of period clothing in the Museo Stibbert and a short drive away in Prato is the Museo Del Tessuto (textile museum).

FASHION SCHOOLS

POLIMODA, the International Institute for Fashion Design and Marketing, one of the best fashion schools in Italy and in Europe, is right here in Florence. Renowned for professional training in all areas of fashion design and marketing, the school has summer courses and masters' degrees. Their campus is spread out around the city including Villa Strozzi in via



Pisana, the Design Laboratory in via Baldovinetti, the Castello dell'Acciaolo and in via Faenza.

ACCADEMIA ITALIANA in Palazzo Pitti holds courses in styling, graphic design and communication, textile design and masters' in the art of fashion as well as industrial and furniture design.

SCUOLA DEL CUOIO in piazza Santa Croce, which was opened after the IInd World War, has courses and workshops for learning the art of working with leather.

FONDAZIONE ARTE DELLA SETA LI-SIO holds courses in traditional textile design, velvet in particular, and the IED MODA LAB in Florence has yearly courses in fashion design and marketing.

Fashion Library

The Centro di Documentazione Matteo Lanzoni di Polimoda is a very large archive available for those working and studying fashion from students to designers, professors and technicians.

SILK

Silk arrived in Florence in the XIV century when master weavers were exiled from the original centre of silk production in Tuscany, Lucca, that had been captured and sacked by Pisa in 1314.

In the XV century the Florentines began cultivating silk worm, and more importantly, it was in this century that they developed the velvets,



Via Por Santa Maria

This is considered the oldest road in Florence, because it's the extension of the Roman road that led up to the city on the opposite side of the Arno. The name comes from the passageway through the first city walls called Porta Santa Maria for the namesake church that burnt down centuries ago. During the Florentine Republic, this road was the hotbed of the silk trade.

Via Vacchereccia

The name of this ancient street comes from a time when the Vacca (literally, cow) family had their home in the area where Palazzo della Signoria was later built in the 14th century.



damasks, brocades and the lampas that were highly sought out in all corners of Europe.



The Arte della Seta regulated the silk economy in Florence from the 1400's through the 1700's. These artisans worked tapestries fashioned from gold, silver and other exotic vibrant colors, experiencing the greatest popularity during the second half of the 1400's. Silk became synonymous with the great families of Florence, and on the occasion of particularly important birth, the family would choose a fabric with a particular design and a precise color that would take the name of the newborn. The fabric was the exclusive property of the person to whom it was dedicated, and only after his death, could it returned to being produced freely.

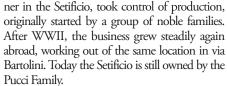
Toward the middle of the 18th century, around the time when the *Arte della Seta* was disbanded, some families, among them the Guicciardini, Della Gherardesca, Pucci, Corsini and Bartolozzi, combined efforts, creating a common workshop. They put the looms and designs that had previously been housed in their respective palaces together in one location. Serving to aid these families in the occasional replacements for wall decorations in their palaces and for costumes, the fabrics eventually brought such admiration that production was then expanded to satisfy requests pouring in from aristocratic palaces all over Europe. This establishment was located in Via de' Tessitori (Street of the Weavers).



ANTICO SETIFICIO FIORENTINO

The Setificio is where the majority of silk production took place during the growth of the industry in the late 18th century. In 1958 the Marquis

Emilio Pucci di Barsento, a part-



Besides continuing the tradition of weaving antique damasks, brocades, lampas and *ermisini* (special taffetas), the Setificio creates fabrics in thousands of shades, even for the most modern projects, with hand-dyed silk thread. You can find accessories for the home like picture frames, velvet pillows, notebooks, photo albums made in *Spinone* or in *Saia Fiorentina* (typical Florentine patterns) as well as silk and cashmere doublée scarves, small taffeta handbags, silk bags for poutpourri, miniature boxes, jewellery cases and more.

Via L. Bartolini, 4 Tel. 055213861 www.setificiofiorentino.it

FONDAZIONE ARTE DELLA SETA LISIO

Lisio Silk Foundation

Fidalma Lisio created this foundation in 1971 with the scope of perpetuating the technical knowledge and ancient methods involved in the manufacture of silk fabrics. The foundation



ARTE DEI MERCATANTI or ARTE DI CALIMALA

Art of the Great Merchants

In the Middle Ages, the *Calimala* (situated in via Calimala) was the most important of all the guilds, controlling the shops and merchants that imported textiles from foreign countries, which they would rework and resell.

Some say the origin of the name comes from kalima, a raw material imported from Arab countries that was used to dye the textiles. But most think that it comes from the Latin phrase callis mallus (dire street). The *malus* may have referred to either the poor condition of the road or perhaps the poor quality of some of the people (thieves, gamblers, prostitutes, etc.) that frequented the busy street.

In fact, back then the old women who kept bordellos in the area would light the streets at night with large torches to show off the ladies at their disposal. This is the origin of the phrase 'regger il moccolo' (to hold the candlestick), similar to the English 'third wheel' concept.

houses a valuable library and a collection of ancient fabrics with examples dating from the Middle Ages to the early 19th century. Over the years, fruitful collaboration has been established with important designers from the world of fashion such as Valentino, Versace, Gucci, and Fendi, for whom Lisio has created several exclusive, highly-prized fabrics for bags, and in particular for Fendi's Baguette model.

Via B. Fortini, 143 Tel. 0556801340 www.fondazionelisio.org

LISA CORTI

Lisa Corti's home textile emporium is bright, colorful and modern, with fabrics, home goods and clothing that reflect her eastern interpretation of the west. At the shop there are handmade goods like cushions, curtains, quilts, bedspreads, dresses, coats, skirts, as well as baby garments, furniture and pottery.

Piazza Ghiberti, 33 Tel. 0552001860 Via de Bardi, 58 r Tel. 0552645600 www.lisacorti.com



FONDAZIONE ROBERTO CAPUCCI Capucci Foundation

The foundation, in the 17th century Villa Bardini, boasts an incredible quantity of documentary materials on the career of the great Roman designer, who maintained close ties with Florence since his debut in 1951. The Museum houses over 60,000 artifacts with sev-



eral hundred couture creations and illustrations plus thousands of sketches that give insight into his dressmaking process.

Costa San Giorgio, 4
www.fondazionerobertocapucci.com

GALLERIA DEL COSTUME

Costume Gallery

This is the first state-operated museum dedicated entirely to the study and preservation of costumes, accessories, and fabrics. Opened in 1983, you can find it in the neoclassical Palazzina della Meridiana (commissioned by Duke Pietro Leopoldo of Lorraine in 1776) on the south side of Palazzo Pitti. Today the museum preserves more than 6,000 items, including ancient and modern garments, accessories, and costumes for the theatre and cinema of great documentary value. An important collection is from the Medici family, one of the world's oldest of its kind. Space is also dedicated to contemporary fashion.

Open Tues. to Sun. 8:15 a.m.-6:50 p.m. (Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, May 1st, and Dec. 25) Palazzo Pitti

Piazza Pitti, 1

Tel. 0552388801 / Bookings: 055294883 www.firenzemusei.it/moderna/index.html

MUSEO STIBBERT

Stibbert Museum

This historic home and museum is dedicated to Frederick Stibbert (1838-1906), an English citizen born in Florence. It preserves his living quarters, remodelled to resemble a neo-Gothic castle, and his extraordinary collection of exotic and applied arts, put together over the course of a lifetime of journeys and research, ranging from armour to porcelain, furniture and costumes. Hours: Mon. to Wed. 10

Hours: Mon. to Wed. 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Fri. to Sun. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

(Closed Thursdays) Via Frederick Stibbert, 26 Tel. 055475520 www.museostibbert.it



MUSEO DEL TESSUTO

Prato Textile Museum

Prato

The Textile Museum of Prato is one of the most important centres in Italy for the study, preservation and exhibition of textile heritage. It is housed in the Cimatoria Campolmi



& C, an extraordinary example of industrial architecture of the XIX and XX century near the city centre. The building, a complex 8.500 square meters wide, originally used to finish raw fabrics, is the symbol of the Prato textile manufacturing story and also houses the city library. The Museum exhibits a collection of textiles fragments with examples from ancient Peru (pre-Columbian), Egypt (Coptic fabrics), as well as from Italy, Europe, Middle and Far East, India, China, Japan and more, dating from the XIV to XX centuries. An introductory area with a "touch and feel" exhibition of fibres helps visitors to understand the complex process of textile production.

Also very interesting are the sections dedicated to local production, whose origin goes back to the Middle Ages. Today textile production represents the most important economic activity in the area and the museum offers the possibility to see a selection of contemporary fabrics, produced by companies in Prato, for the most important international fashion designers and firms. The museum also organizes temporary exhibitions, guided tours and activities such as practical workshops for adults and families.

Via Santa Chiara, 24

Prato

Tel. 0574611503

Lat: 43.87739 - Long: 11.09852

www.museodeltessuto.it

SHIRTS

LA BOTTEGA DI SETTIGNANO

Located on via Fra' Bartolomeo, Leonardo Bugelli takes measurements, prepares paper patterns, cuts the cloth by hand, and bastes it, before the final fitting and finishing touches (buttonholes, hand-embroidered monograms, etc.). Leonardo uses only the finest fabrics: cotton, cotton-linen blends, silk and pure linen, and the buttons are made of Austrian mother-of-pearl. Via Frà Bartolommeo, 21 r Tel. 0555776000

* END OF JANUARY, BEGINNING OF FEBRUARY

VINTAGE SELECTION

Vintage Fashion Fair

www.leonardobugelli.it

Florence

Held in the former train station, Stazione Leopolda, this fair was created for vintage clothing, accessories and designer objects.

Frequented by a large public of collectors and enthusiasts alike, fashion designers and style offices browse the stands for a dose of creative inspiration.

www.stazione-leopolda.com

GERARD LOFT Vintage store in Florence

Via de' Boni, 5 r Tel. 055282491 www.gerardloft.com

GERARD shop

Via Vacchereccia, 18 Tel. 055215942

GERARD COMPANY

Via Lambertesca, 24 r Tel. 0552654234

FLOW STORE

Via Vecchietti Tel. 055215504 www.flow-store.it

RASPINI VINTAGE OUTLET

The Raspini Vintage Outlet is located near piazza Signoria in via Calimaruzza. It carries famous brands of shoes, accessories and clothing for men, women and children at sale prices all year round.

Via Calimaruzza, 17 r Tel. 055213901 www.raspini.com

RASPINI shop

Via Por S. Maria, 72 r Tel. 055215796



The Baths in Via delle Bombarde

This small street between via delle Terme and borgo Santissimi Apostoli probably owes its name to the Bombarda family that owned houses in the area. The urban legend goes that the baths were once a meeting place for all the citizens of Florence, where they would spend hours relaxing and bathing in large pools, while instead the public toilets were right on via delle Bombarde ('bombings'), which makes people think that the name may be due to the unpleasant sounds once heard in the street!

FOOD & WINE EVENTS

* SECOND HALF OF JANUARY 1ST WEEK IN FEBRUARY VINO & PIZZA

Wine & Pizza

Empoli

Wine and pizza, a match made in heaven, star in this nearby event; it's the perfect excuse to go out for a fun evening in the quiet days that follow the holidays.

www.empolese-valdelsa.it

THERMAL BATHS, SPAS IN TOWN and GYMS

The Terme were the Roman baths of Florence, built in the second century but then destroyed by a fire in the fifth century. They were located in Borgo Santissimi Apostoli in front of Piazzetta del Limbo.



FONBLIÙ

Piazzale di Porta Romana, 10 r Tel. 0552335385 www.fonbliu.com

KLAB WELLNESS CENTRE

Via G.B. Lulli, 62 (also in Via de Conti and on the Marignolle hill) Tel. 055333621 www.klab.it

IL VORTICE

Via Lambertesca, 16 Tel. 055280212 www.clubilvortice.com

OLYMPUS

Via di Ripoli, 88 Tel. 055689618 www.olympusclub.it

SOUL SPACE

A magic place just a few steps from the Duomo of Florence, Soulspace offers treatments using natural products like olive oil, wine and chocolate.

Their inviting atmosphere, with delicate fragrances, soft lights and gentle music are a welcome respite for the city dweller (or explorer!) with treatments focusing on wellness, beauty, rest and relaxation. They have a day spa with a heated indoor pool, exfoliating and smoothing Turkish bath, spa lounge, and reading library. Treatments include aroma soul ritual massage, Indian (relaxing and detoxifying), Oriental (tranquillizing and rebalancing), and Mediter-

OULSPACI





YOGA SANCTUARY in the heart of Florence

Experience the peace and tranquillity of private yoga sessions, suitable for individuals or small groups, given in an air-conditioned studio in a private garden within the San Frediano district of old Florence (a 5 minute walk from the Santo Spirito Church). Michela, a certified yoga teacher with extensive international experience, will personally tailor sessions to your needs and abilities to ensure that your session is a memorable

Private Yoga Sessions by Michela Pacini Piazza Piattellina, 2 www.yogaflorence.com



HAIR-DRESSER BH SALON

www.bhsalon.it



Nicoletta is a top hairstylist with a passionate team that is ready to take care of their clients' every need. Tigi products are used exclusively. Borgo Ognissanti, 12 r Tel. 0552645561 ranean (draining and revitalizing) massages. They also offer a light and delicious spa menu with special herbal infusions, fruit, vegetables and yogurt.

Via Śant'Egidio, 12 Tel. 0552001794 www.soulspace.it

TROPOS

Via Orcagna, 20 a Tel. 055679746 www.troposfirenze.it

VIRGIN ACTIVE FIRENZE

An all-out fitness complex just a short bus ride away from the centre of town.

Via Generale dalla Chiesa, 11 Tel. 800914555 www.virginactive.it

Just outside the city...

HIDRON

Via di Gramignano, close to Esselunga, Campi Bisenzio (Florence) Tel.055892500

Lat: 43.82022 – Long: 11.12306 www.hidron.it

THERMAL BATHS IN THE SURROUNDINGS OF FLORENCE

TERME DI BAGNO VIGNONI

Bagno Vignoni, San Quirico d'Orcia (Siena) Tel. 0577887365

Lat: 43.02817 – Long: 11.61800 www.termedibagnovignoni.com

GROTTA GIUSTI

Wia Grotta Giusti, 1411 Monsummano Terme (Pistoia) Tel. 057290771 Lat: 43.86619 – Long: 10.83081 www.grottagiustispa.com

TERME DI GAMBASSI STABILIMENTO ACQUA DI PILLO

Piazza di Vittorio, 1 Gambassi Terme (Florence) Tel. 0571638141 Lat: 43.53962 – Long: 10.95419

TERME DI FIRENZE

Via Cassia, 217 Impruneta (Florence) Tel. 0552020151 Lat: 43.68540 – Long: 11.21407

TERME DI MONTECATINI

The thermal baths of Montecatini are the largest in Italy and among the best in quality in Europe. The spa offers a complete list of treatments overseen by experts and qualified medical personnel. This makes Montecatini the ideal city for getting back into shape and enjoying a pleasant and energising vacation. Viale Verdi, 41

Montecatini Terme (Pistoia) Tel. 05727781 Lat: 43.88410 – Long: 10.77223

info@termemontecatini.it www.termemontecatini.it





MONTECATINI Montecatini Almondfilled Wafer Cookies ar

filled Wafer Cookies are the gastronomic speciality of Montecatini.

BARGILLI is the place to find the best cialde in Montecatini.

Viale G. Verdi, 92 (and the other in Viale P. Grocco, 2) Montecatini (Pistoia) Tel. 057279459 www.cialdedimontecatini.it

TENNIS CLUBS IN TOWN

ALLE CASCINE

Viale Visarno, 1 Tel. 055354326



S. QUIRICHINO

Via S. Quirichino, 8 Tel. 055225687

MATCH BALL

Via della Massa Candeli (Florence) Tel. 055631572

MICHELANGELO

Viale Michelangelo, 61 Tel. 0556811880

RELAIS CERTOSA

Via Buca della Certosa, 1 Tel. 0552047171

ZODIAC SPORT

Via A. Grandi, 2 Tavarnuzze (Florence) Tel. 0552022847

TERME DI SAN CASCIANO DEI BAGNI FONTEVERDE

Località Terme, 1

San Casciano dei Bagni (Siena) Tel. 057857241

LAT: 42.86583 – LONG: 11.87514 www.fonteverdespa.com

TERME DI SATURNIA

Via della Follonata, Saturnia Manciano (Grosseto) Tel. 0564601061

LAT: 42.65849 – LONG: 11.51588 www.termedisaturnia.it

TERME CALIDARIO

Village of Venturina Campiglia Marittima (Livorno) Tel. 0565851066

LAT: 43.03947 – LONG: 10.59159 www.calidario.it



JANUARY RECIPE



ARISTA ALLA FIORENTINA

Florentine-style Roast Pork Loin

1 kg boneless, centre-cut pork loin roast (about 2 pounds) 3 tsp fresh rosemar,y chopped 3 large cloves of garlic, minced ½ tsp salt ½ tsp ground black pepper 2 tbsp olive oil

Mix the rosemary, garlic, salt and pepper together. Make deep cuts into the pork roast, stuff the incisions with the garlic mixture and spread any remaining mixture over the surface of the meat.

Pour the olive oil into a saucepan and heat over a medium flame. Add the pork roast and roll it around until you've browned all sides. Now place the roast on a baking dish and place it in the oven to cook at about 350°F (180°C) for about an hour and a half. Check the roast periodically and baste with the pan juices, turning the roast over every once in a while. Remove the roast to a cutting board, cover loosely with aluminium foil and let stand for 15 minutes. Slice the meat and serve with the pan juices.

Tasty Tidbit

cooking string

The term arista describes pork tenderloin roasted with rosemary and garlic. The name comes from the Greek word αριστος, meaning best; in fact it is considered the best cut of pork. According to tradition, a Greek clergymen visiting Florence in 1430, was served the Tuscan-style roast pork, and found it aristos. The dish has been called this ever since and easily lives up to its name.



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