



## Florence Revisited

Art off the beaten track and in private collections

25–31 March 2025 (ML 647)

7 days • £3,480

Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Designed for those already familiar with the main sites, concentrating on places that are lesser known, privately owned or not easy to access.

A medley of pleasures, from medieval to modern, pursuing a number of key themes.

A few places outside Florence – Fiesole, Poggio a Caiano, Carmignano, Artimino.

So abundant are Florence's artistic riches that some masterpieces elude all but the most regular visitors. And those that are in private ownership, or for which access is only by special arrangement, are beyond the reach of all but the well-connected resident – unless you join this tour, which has been designed specially for those who are already familiar with the main sights. As an introduction to Florence, it would be decidedly eccentric. As a week spent in pursuit of great art and architecture in one of the most beautiful cities in the world, it will be a delight. In quality and importance, the art seen far exceeds that on many of our tours to regions which have been less creative. But in Florence, even the second division is a world-beater.

One of the reasons why many of the items on this itinerary are usually missed is simply because they are, geographically, peripheral, being located in the suburbs, or, even if within walking distance of the centre, they are away from the main clusters of monuments and museums.

Subsidiary themes will emerge, such as depictions of the Last Supper, and the brief but brilliant episode of Mannerist painting. The visits we do make to the major museums and monuments are selective, picking up on these themes and threads. But the tour is a medley of pleasures, from medieval to (nearly) modern, from the famous to the little known, from the hard-to-find to the (nearly) impossible to get into. And then there is the beauty of Florence itself, and the charm of its surroundings.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Fly at c. 9.00am from London City to Florence. En route from the airport stop at the Villa Medicea della Petraia.



Florence, Uffizi, the Tribune, engraving 1820.

**Day 2.** The Cenacolo di Sant'Apollonia has a *Last Supper* by Andrea del Castagno; in the Museo di S. Marco, see the frescoes and panels of pious simplicity by Fra Angelico. Palazzo Corsini al Prato was begun in 1591 to designs by Bernardo Buontalenti; it was acquired in 1621 by Filippo Corsini and refurbished by him. Lunch here, hosted by the owner. The afternoon is devoted to S. Maria Novella, the Dominican church with many works of art (Masaccio's *Trinità*, Ghirlandaio's frescoed sanctuary).

**Day 3.** The *Last Supper* by Andrea del Sarto at San Salvi is the greatest 16th-century picture in Florence. Visit the Badia Fiesolana near Fiesole, a 15th-century church with a Romanesque façade. In Fiesole visit the cathedral and Roman theatre; also the Villa Medici, the first of its genre to provide a stunning view over Florence. It was built by Michelozzo in the 15th century and became home to Sibyl Cutting and her daughter Iris Origo.

**Day 4.** Avoid much of the daily crowd by heading early to the Uffizi, for a selective tour of Italy's most important art gallery, which has masterpieces by every major Florentine painter as well as international Old Masters. In the afternoon visit the redoubtable Palazzo Pitti, which houses several museums including the Galleria Palatina, outstanding particularly for High Renaissance and Baroque paintings. *Aperitivo* at Palazzo Gondi, designed in 1490

by Giuliano da Sangallo, favourite architect of Lorenzo de' Medici.

**Day 5.** Poggio a Caiano was the country retreat of Lorenzo il Magnifico, and a highly important monument in the history of grand country houses. At Carmignano is the exquisite *Visitation* by Pontormo. See another Medici villa at Artimino, viewed from the outside after lunch nearby.

**Day 6.** Visit Ghirlandaio's *Last Supper* at Ognissanti and the Opificio delle Pietre Dure to see exquisite furniture and ornaments made from semi-precious stones. This is followed by the Renaissance statuary at the church-cum-granary of Orsanmichele. In the afternoon, see the Masaccio/Masolino fresco cycle in the Brancacci Chapel, a highly influential work of art which guided all subsequent generations of Renaissance artists, and finish at the Rucellai Chapel in the deconsecrated church of S. Pancrazio, now part of the Museo Marino Marini.

**Day 7.** Private backstage tour of the Teatro della Pergola, a historic opera house. Fly from Florence to London City, arriving c. 5.00pm.

*Many of the visits are by special arrangement and are dependent on the generosity of owners or institutions. There is the chance that one or two visits may have to be withdrawn, but suitable alternatives will be arranged.*

Florence Revisited  
continued

## Lecturer

**Dr Michael Douglas-Scott** mixes scholarship with accessible discourse, wit with reasoned opinion, and is highly sought-after as an art history lecturer. He has lectured for New York University (London campus) and Birkbeck College, University of London, specialising primarily in 16th-century Italian art and architecture. He studied at the Courtauld and Birkbeck College and lived in Rome for several years. He has written articles for *Arte Veneta*, *Burlington Magazine* and the *Journal of the Warburg & Courtauld Institutes*.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £3,480 or £3,130 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,880 or £3,530 without flights.

*Suggested train itinerary: London – Paris – Turin – Florence: c. 20 hours.*

**Included:** flights (City Flyer) with British Airways (Embraer E190SR); private coach travel outside the city centre for the transfers and excursions; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Hotel Santa Maria Novella** ([hotelsantamarianovella.it](http://hotelsantamarianovella.it)): a delightful, renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** This is a particularly strenuous tour. The nature of Florence means there is quite a lot of walking, and the tour would not be suitable for anyone who has any difficulties with everyday walking or stair-climbing, or standing for long periods of time in museums. Average distance by coach per day: 24 miles.

**Group size:** between 8 and 18 participants.