



Venice Revisited

From prison to *palazzo*: art and life in historic Venice

11–16 November 2024 (MK 565)

6 days • £3,220

Lecturer: Dr Susan Steer

Explores treasures which are lesser-known, rarely accessible or simply off the beaten track.

Access to many is by special arrangement; some are still in private hands. Also an after-hours visit to the Basilica di San Marco.

Includes visits to the islands of Murano, San Lazzaro degli Armeni and Lazzaretto Nuovo.

This is a tour for those who are familiar with the main buildings and museums of Venice and who now want to explore some of the lesser-known places. 'Lesser-known' does not imply less beautiful or interesting; the riches of Venice are so profuse that few visitors, even the most regular, have seen all that is worth seeing.

A glance at the itinerary will show that some of the places are by no means obscure, merely a little off the beaten track or difficult to get into. Others are indeed alluringly arcane. But perhaps the greatest attraction of the tour is that there will be several visits to places not generally open to the public. Some are private institutions, one is a private home; all are accessible only by special arrangement.

There will also be some free time in which to revisit places not included on the tour or just to relax.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 1.30pm from London Heathrow to Venice (British Airways). Cross the lagoon by *motoscafo* (water-taxi); luggage is transported separately by porters.

Day 2. The morning walk looks at the identity and social make-up of the Castello *sestiere*. See two of the orphanages renowned as centres of musical excellence, the Ospedaletto and its church of Sta. Maria dei Derelitti, and the Pietà, where Vivaldi was director of music. Outstanding Renaissance paintings are seen in San Giovanni in Bragora (Cima da Conegliano's *Baptism*) and in the Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Carpaccio's stories of saints). In the supremely beautiful Palazzo Ducale visit areas only seen by special arrangement where prison cells rub shoulders with the Doge's apartments.

Day 3. Head off the beaten track for a guided tour of the Ghetto and its synagogues, around



Venice, Rialto Bridge, aquatint c. 1830.

the markets and former trading houses of the Rialto district, and Cannaregio, a tranquil area of the city little known to visitors. Cross to the glass-making island of Murano by private *motoscafo* to see SS. Maria e Donato, with 12th-century mosaics and pavement, and S. Pietro Martire, with paintings by Bellini and Tintoretto. After-hours visit to the Basilica di San Marco where the mosaic-encrusted interior is illuminated exclusively for your benefit.

Day 4. Visit the great Franciscan church of Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari with outstanding artworks including Titian's *Assumption*. The Venetian State Archives are the repository of a millennium of history, stored on some 60km of shelving (special arrangement). The afternoon is dedicated to Venice's confraternities: the Scuola Grande dei Carmini with paintings by Tiepolo and the Scuola Grande di S. Rocco, with compelling paintings by Tintoretto.

Day 5. Cross the *bacino* to the island of San Giorgio Maggiore to see the church, cloisters and conventual buildings of the Benedictine monastery. Here is the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, an impressive cultural centre. Continue to the tranquil Giudecca to see Palladio's most sophisticated church, Il Redentore, before a free afternoon. In the evening visit Palazzo Albrizzi, which has some of the finest stucco decoration in Venice (special arrangement).

Day 6. Head in the direction of the Lido by *motoscafo* to visit San Lazzaro, the Armenian monastery island and temporary residence of Lord Byron. Continue to Lazzaretto Nuovo, originally a Benedictine monastery which became a quarantine station for maritime travellers. Travel by *motoscafo* to Venice airport and fly to London Heathrow, arriving c. 7.15pm.

The tour is dependent on the kindness of many individuals and organisations, some of whom are reluctant to make arrangements far in advance, so the order of visits outlined above may change and there may be substitutions for some places mentioned.

Lecturer

Dr Susan Steer is an Art historian specialising in Venice. Her MA concentrated on the city's art and architecture and her PhD on Venetian Renaissance altarpieces. As post-doctoral researcher with the University of Glasgow and Neil MacGregor scholar at the National Gallery, she worked as a researcher and editor on the National Inventory of European Painting, the UK's online catalogue of European paintings. She has extensive experience of teaching History of Art for university programmes in the UK and Italy.

Venice Revisited
continued

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £3,220 or £3,050 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,690 or £3,520 without flights.

Suggested train route: London – Paris – Turin – Milan – Venice: c. 13 hours.

Included: flights (Euro Traveller) with British Airways (Airbus 320); travel between Venice Airport and the hotel by private water-taxi; a *vaporetto* pass for the duration of the tour; luggage portage between the airport and the hotel; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and three dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, porters, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. Hotel Splendid, Venice (starhotels.com): delightful 4-star hotel situated half-way between Piazza San Marco and the Rialto bridge. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? The nature of Venice means that the city is more often than not traversed on foot. There is a lot of walking along the flat, and also up and down bridges. Standing around in museums and churches is also unavoidable. Uneven ground and irregular paving are standard. A good level of fitness is essential. The tour should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing.

Group size: between 8 and 18 participants.