



Florence Revisited

Art off the beaten track & in private collections

21–27 November 2022 (MI 575)

7 days • £2,740

Lecturer: Dr Michael Douglas-Scott

Designed for those already familiar with the main sites, concentrating on places 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, Galluzzo.

The B list? An A list by the standards of nearly everywhere else in the world.

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 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. 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. There will also be free time in which you could re-visit some of the major museums and monuments.

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 There is the chance that one or two visits may have to be withdrawn, but suitable alternatives will be arranged.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, Uffizi, the Tribune, engraving 1820.

Itinerary

Day 1. Fly at c. 11.30am from London City to Florence. See Lippi's *Apparition of the Virgin to St. Bernard* in the Badia Fiorentina, an abbey and church now home to the Fraternity of Jerusalem.

Day 2. Visit Ghirlandaio's *Last Supper* at Ognissanti and the Opificio delle Pietre Dure to see exquisite furniture and ornaments made from semi-precious stones. 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. In the afternoon, see Villa La Pietra, once the property of Sir Harold Acton, and originally built by Francesco Sassetti, general manager of the Medici Bank in the 15th century.

Day 3. The morning starts with a selective tour of the Uffizi, Italy's most important art gallery, which has masterpieces by every major Florentine painter as well as international Old Masters. Walk through the Vasari Corridor from the Uffizi to the Pitti Palace, viewing the Medici collection of artists' self-portraits. In the afternoon there is a private visit to parts of the redoubtable Palazzo Pitti not usually open to the public.

Day 4. 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. *Aperitivo* at Palazzo Gondi, designed in 1490 by Giuliano da Sangallo, favourite architect of Lorenzo de Medici.

Day 5. The Cenacolo di Sant'Apollonia has a *Last Supper* by Andrea del Castagno, and there is another by Perugino's workshop at the Cenacolo di Fuligno. Private backstage tour of the Teatro della Pergola, a historic opera house. The afternoon is free.

Day 6. 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 before lunch nearby. The Carthusian monastery at Galluzzo has beautiful cloisters and paintings by Pontormo.

Day 7. In the morning visit the tiny Museo del Bigallo, a late-gothic structure which houses a small collection of paintings with a religious theme. Fly from Florence to London City, arriving c. 9.15pm.

Florence Revisited
continued

Lecturer

Dr Michael Douglas-Scott. He 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 is an Associate Lecturer at 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: £2,740 or £2,520 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £3,130 or £2,910 without flights.

By train: London – Paris – Turin – Florence: c. 13 hours. Contact us for more information.

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, 2 lunches 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): a delightful, renovated 4-star hotel in a very central location. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? 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.