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A day at the Duomo #florencetoptip

Enjoy a full day of explorations in the Duomo area, guided by Apartments Florence's Top Tips to live Florence like a local! Share your experience on Facebook or Instagram with [#florencetoptip](#) and [#apartmentsflorence](#)!



Shopping area



History and curiosities



Breakfast



Night life



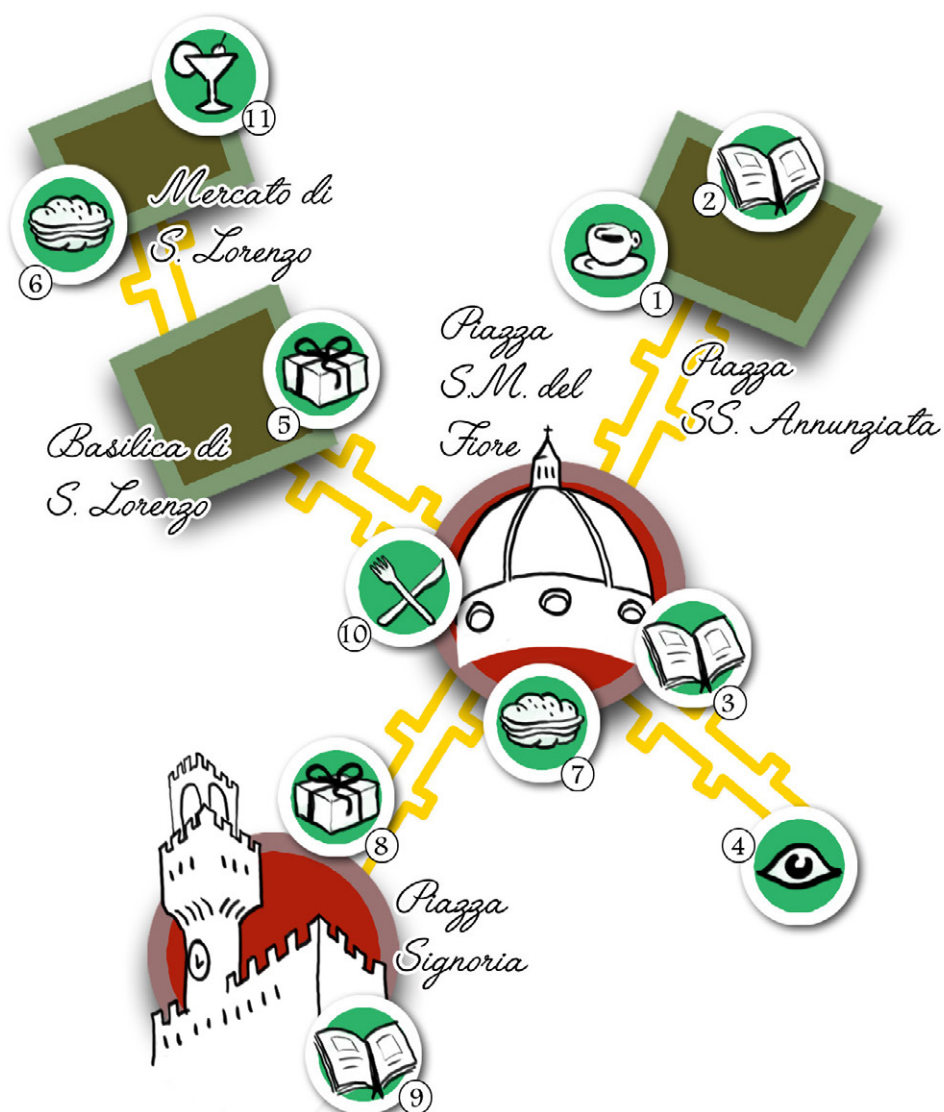
Restaurant

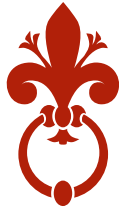


View



Quick lunch





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Starting point: Piazza Santissima Annunziata

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day: that's why you must select a nice bar or caffè wisely, without falling in some touristic trap with no real espresso and old pastries! Our top pick in this area is **Un Caffè ①**, right in Piazza SS. Annunziata, next to the church.

This tiny, charming caffè is filled with art works, books and recycled items and always plays really good Italian or international music as you sip your wonderfully brewed espresso with a nice slice of cake or a brioche. If this small caffè is too crowded, as it often fills up with students and aficionados, a marvelous alternative is located across the Piazza, in Via dei Servi: **Robiglio**, one of the most ancient and famous confectioneries in town.

After breakfast, **start exploring the Piazza ②**. This square is famous for its balance and architectural refinement, thanks to the distinctive loggias covering three sides of the quadrangle and the two specular fountains.

The church dates back to 1260, when this whole area was suburban and isolated, despite being only a few minutes from the Duomo.

Facing the church, on the right side of the Piazza, is the **Spedale Degli Innocenti**, a hospital and orphanage for children, built in 1426 by Brunelleschi and later modified in various ways.

You can still find traces of this building's ancient function: the **Ruota degli Esposti**, a wooden wheel functioning as a system to **deliver unwanted babies inside the hospital** without the mother being caught in the act. These were desperate young girls, mainly prostitutes who couldn't provide for their children and chose to abandon them to offer them a better future. Some recognition signs were often left with the child: a half medal symbolized the mother's hope for a future reunion with their baby.

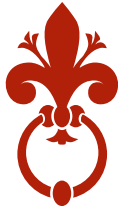
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Our favorite coffee place in SS. Annunziata is Un Caffè



Ruota degli Esposti, Spedale Degli Innocenti



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Above each column of the loggia you can see **Andrea Della Robbia's** distinctive ceramic Tondi, picturing newborns in swaddling clothes. A few of the Tondi are still the original ones, but some are nineteenth century copies.

Why? **Legend has it** that the author hid under one of the Tondi the **secret recipe** for his masterpiece ceramic mixture, and people did try to find it by randomly breaking some of these artworks.

Moving on, stop by under Ferdinando I de' Medici's horse figure and **try counting the bees** arranged in circles below the horse's tail.

So many Florentines have failed in counting the exact number of bees: you'll never get the same number twice!

Dive in: Piazza del Duomo

A pleasant stroll through **Via dei Servi** will lead you to the right side of the **Duomo ③**, right where the long line for the Dome's visit forms every day in high season, if you're not willing to stand in line to climb up and see Brunelleschi's work up close, suffice it to say that this particular **Cupola** is a one of a **kind architectural work**, with a built-in support system that provided a scaffolding free building process. To this day, **experts still don't know** exactly how Brunelleschi did it.

Take the time to walk around the Cathedral before entering inside: the outside is much more detailed and intriguing than the simple, clean, Romanesque inside. Also, be sure to enter **the Baptistry**, newly and carefully restored, admiring its stunning mosaics and the famous golden doors (the originals have been moved to the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo).

If your legs are strong, climb up to the top of **Giotto's Bell Tower** and enjoy the breathtaking view over Florence.

As you reach the back of the Dome, right beside the

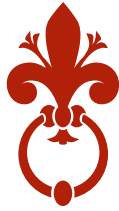
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Many street artists sell their art around the Duomo



Meet Valerio and his horse Lupo: a ride on chariot is a nice way to see the city!



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apse you'll see a white marble circle on the pavement, marking the place where the **huge copper golden sphere**, posed as a finish touch on the top of the Cupola by Verrocchio, **fell down** from the sky due to a **lightning storm in 1600**.

On the right side of the apse you'll notice a wide stretch in the road, a small square called Piazza delle Pallottole, where legend has it Dante often sat down to think and admire the Cathedral's building process. A stone with a metal plate states **"This is the original Dante's Stone"**.

Moving on in Via dell'Oriuolo let us tell you another fundamental Florentine anecdote, linked to the marble plate posed under the street's name: **"Canto dei Bischeri"**. The word "Bischero" is now used in Florence to describe a somewhat naïve and not-so-smart person.

The Bischeri were a **wealthy and rich family** in the late 1200. When the project for a new Cathedral was brought to the public, they understood that palaces and lands surrounding the soon to be Piazza Duomo were going to be bought by the Florentine Republic in order to be destroyed to make space for the Duomo. In order to secure a richer deal, the family decided to wait and stall the sale of their possessions, but after a few months a huge fire burnt to the ground all of their buildings, **resulting in a complete economic collapse** for the Bischeri. Hence, the **mockery tone** used nowadays towards the Bischeri's name.

In Via dell'Oriuolo stop by the **Oblate library ④** a newly restored convent turned into modern library. On the top floor, from the magnificent covered terrace you can admire the Duomo from a **privileged perspective** while sipping a nice cappuccino at the Café delle Oblate.

Lunch Break: San Lorenzo

Feeling hungry? Head on to the San Lorenzo neighbourhood, just taking Borgo San Lorenzo, beside

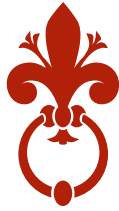
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A view of the Duomo from the Oblate library



Florentine tapestries at S. Lorenzo Market



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the Baptistry. The unfinished Basilica and the wonderful adjoining cloister, as well as the fabulous Medicean Chapels are worth a visit, before moving on to the famous **leather goods market** ⑤: a great souvenir and shopping opportunity, if you're careful and able to distinguish fake leather from the real deal.

Hidden behind the market stalls, in Via dell'Ariento, you'll find our suggested lunch spot: the **Casa del Vino** ⑥. A tiny, **ancient and typical winery**, owned by Gianni, expert panini maker and wine pourer. For another famous **panini** place head to **I Fratellini** ⑦ a real Florentine institution in Via dei Cimatori, off Via dei Calzaiuoli. Both these places offer little to no sitting room, but if the day is sunny, just do what all Florentines do: **sit on a bench** or a staircase and enjoy your Panino.

Afternoon: Via dei Calzaiuoli and Piazza della Signoria

With a full belly it's easier to resume explorations. Let's start with the famous **via dei Calzaiuoli** ⑧, home to some of the **finest and most ancient shops in Florence**, as well as recent and modern brands. Shopping opportunities will be everywhere, just take your pick.

On the right side of the street, almost halfway through, you'll see a building different in size, shape and decorations from all the others. It's **Orsanmichele**: an ancient convent, later a grain market and finally a **one of a kind church**. Statues of famous saints (works by Donatello, Verrocchio, Brunelleschi, Giambologna and Ghiberti) ornate the exteriors, while the interiors feature magnificent frescoes and glazed windows. A **rare example** of architectural adaptations over the centuries.

As you get closer to **Piazza della Signoria** ⑨, your view will become more and more wide until it will

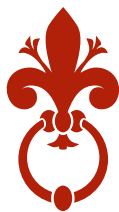
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Kholil works at San Lorenzo Market and is a big Fiorentina fan!



A view of Orsanmichele - One of a kind church



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comprehend the full extent of the square. Palazzo Vecchio dominates the scene with its crenelated tower, and **Michelangelo's David** (a copy – the original is to be found at the Galleria dell'Accademia) watches over the walking figures passing by. Palazzo Vecchio, built in 1299 by Arnolfo di Cambio in the exact spot where the **Roman Theater of Florentia** was, is still home to the city council and offices, but is open for visitors to see the **Salone dei Cinquecento** and dei Duecento, as well as the finely decorated halls and cloisters.

In the middle of the square is a round white plate, right where the monk **Savonarola** was burnt at the stake, guilty of having denounced clerical corruption and disobeying the Pope.

Under the Loggia dei Lanzi a beautiful collection of sculptures awaits: Giambologna's Ratto delle Sabine and **Cellini's Perseus** are the queens of this Loggia. All around the Piazza, historical and elegant cafès on display, for you to pick one and indulge in a hot chocolate or a (rather expensive) coffee.



Cellini's Perseus silhouette against Palazzo Vecchio

Evening and Nightlife

Wondering what to do in the evening? The Duomo area offers plenty of nice places to eat and drink or have a nice aperitif. Here are our top picks for the area. For a typical and unique Tuscan meal we suggest **Le Mossacce** ⁽¹⁰⁾, small and charming "Trattoria" in Via del Proconsolo. This tiny restaurant is mostly famous for high quality Florentine dishes and its rustic atmosphere: shared tables, cheerful staff and all at a good price! A nice aperitivo place is **Lo Sverso** ⁽¹¹⁾, hip and vintage style location under the loggias of San Lorenzo Central Market. This is the place for you if you're looking for old-fashioned cocktails and fresh, daily selected and warm atmosphere, international menu and a selection of the finest artisanal beers. plates. If you thoroughly enjoy local and artisanal beers, head on to the **Central Brewery – Antico Ristoro** in Piazza Cimatori: rustic and warm atmosphere, international menu and a selection of the finest artisanal beers.





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Practical Informations

Duomo Opening Hours

Cathedral: 10.00 – 17.00 pm

Dome: 08.30 – 18.20

Baptistry: 08:15-10:15 / 11:15-18:30

Bell Tower: 08:15-18:50

Museum: 09.00 - 19.00

Palazzo Vecchio Opening Hours

October – March

Every day 09.00 – 19.00

Thursday: 09.00 – 14.00

April – September

Every day: 09.00 – 23.00

Thursday: 9.00 – 14.00

Access to the Tower

Every day 10.00 – 17.00 (except Thursday only until 14.00)

Santissima Annunziata Opening Hours

Church: 7.30 – 12.30 and 16.00 – 18.30

Museo degli Innocenti

Monday to Saturday 09.00 – 18.30

San Lorenzo

Church: 10.00 – 17.00 (Sunday 13.30 – 17.00)

Medicean Chapels

8.15 – 18.00 (except 1st, 2nd and 5th Mondays of the month and 2nd and 4th Sundays)

San Lorenzo Central Market

Ground Floor Market

Mon – Fri 7.00 -14.00

Sat 7.00 – 17.00

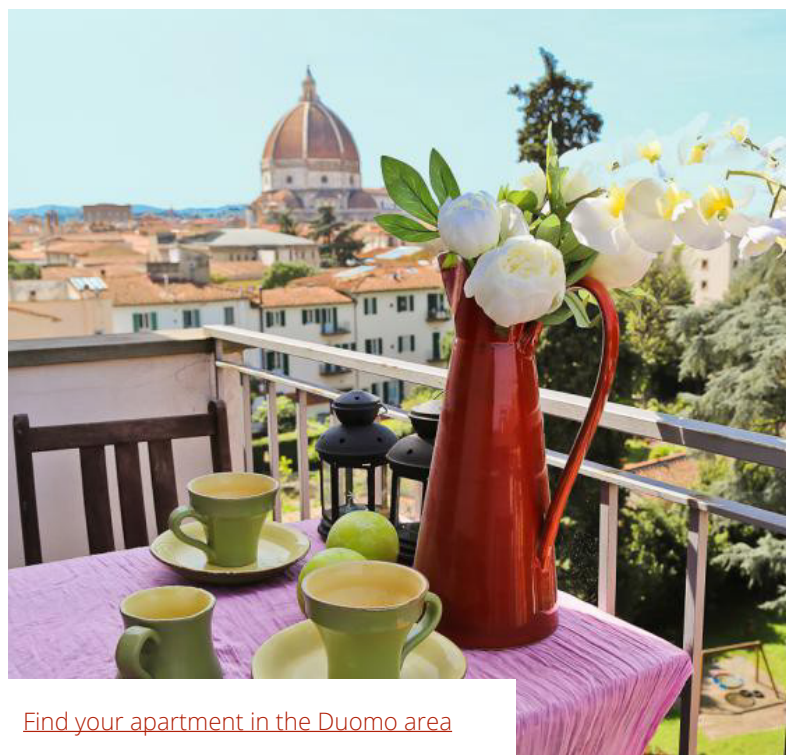
Food and Beverage area – 1st Floor

Every day 10.00 – 24.00

Seasonal events and markets

Santissima Annunziata hosts a variety of markets and fairs during winter time called Fierucola ("little fair"), with organic products, local artisans and farmers). In the summer an outdoor cinema is set in the square. Check online for updates and more info.

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[Find your apartment in the Duomo area](#)

NB: These informations are provided by Apartments Florence according to the informations found on the official websites of the museums, venues and monuments, but we cannot be held responsible for changes or errors in opening hours or conditions. It's always best to double check timetables and prices before you book a visit or arrange an activity.

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