

ESSENTIAL RENAISSANCE

The itinerary covers the quintessential of Renaissance architecture, some sculpture and some painting. The architecture is almost exclusively that of Filippo Brunelleschi, the great innovator and the person who in many ways initiated the Renaissance movement in Florence.

Santa Maria del Fiore or Duomo (opening times: 10-17 M-T-W-F, 10-16.30 Th, and 10-16.45 Sat and Sun): the Cathedral but moreover the Cupola or dome by Filippo Brunelleschi is an architectural wonder in itself. The huge drum at the base has a diameter of 140 feet, which remained uncovered for many years, due to lack of architectural solutions for its covering. Brunelleschi designed an incredible structure with no beams to uphold it. In the Cathedral also look out for the Sacristy, the Painted memorials to the warriors John Hawkwood and Niccolò da Tolentino.
If you wish to climb the several hundred steps of the Cupola the opening times are 10-19.

Church of San Lorenzo, Medici Chapels and Laurentian library (The Laurentian Library is open M-F-S 8.30- 16.30, T-W-Th 8.30-17.30): The Church designed by Brunelleschi illustrates classical Renaissance style, cream plaster and grey Pietra serena (serene Stone, typical of Florence). Also notice the façade of the Church, the only one that was left without a marble covering. On the rear of the Church, The Medici Chapels, with the wonderful New Sacristy with the statues of Day, Night, Dawn and Dusk, by Michelangelo. On the left of the church entrance, take the time to go and see the unique Laurentian library designed by Michelangelo from the start of 1524. Notice the floor and the ceiling which mirror each other.

The Museo dell'Opera del Duomo (opening times: M-Sat 9-18.50, Sun 9-13.30. Entrance ticket 6 Euro) (on the Piazza del Duomo close to the intersection with Via dei Servi) A comparatively recent museum, it is where the treasures once kept in the Cathedral are now stored and exhibited. Here you will find a selection of works of art of great importance including : the Pietà by Michelangelo designed by the artist intentionally for his own grave, the two superb choir-lofts by Luca della Robbia and Donatello respectively and the unique statue of Mary Magdalen by Donatello, in itself worth the visit. These examples suffice as a testimony to the new interest of the Renaissance artist, in Man and his emotions and no longer in the purely decorative and beautiful at all costs.

The Pazzi Chapel (Part of the Monumental complex of the Church of Santa Croce. Opening times: 9.30-17.30 M-Sat, 13.30-17.30 Sun. Entrance ticket 4 Euro). The chapel, at the end of the stunning cloister on the right hand side of the entrance to the Church of Santa Croce, was designed and built by Brunelleschi for the Pazzi family, the arch rivals of the Medicis. Brunelleschi here realises his ideal sacred architecture with a central plan. Surmounted by a dome and lantern it is also the only building by Brunelleschi with a façade designed by him. Indoors the beautiful roundels by Donatello and Desiderio da Settignano. The side roundels in the spaces between the arches are by Luca della Robbia and represent the 4 Evangelists.