

Ultimate Kid-friendly Itinerary to Spend 1, 2, 3 or 4 Days in Florence, Italy

Why do The 2 Idiots recommend Florence?

Florence is a historic and charming city, with some of the best markets for shopping. However, we found the city was similar to Venice: You'll walk along the streets and it's buzzing and exciting but 90 percent of people there are tourists. The only Florentine people were taxi drivers, tour guides and people servicing the tourists. Everyone lives outside of Florence, in the Tuscan countryside.

That said, if you are a history or art lover, you'll be fascinated by the history and art found at every turn. This is where the Italian Renaissance began, and museums and churches are filled with the works of the Italian Masters: Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Rembrandt. The Medici family, one of the most power rulers of Italian history, owned this city, and the imprint they left is everywhere.

CREATING AN IDEAL ITINERARY

We went to Florence via train from Rome. It was so beautiful but we were slightly off because Natasha was feeling worn down and Aarav had a cough and was getting sick plus he cut his finger so we had to find bandages for him. Our start wasn't perfect and we know we missed a lot of things during our trip, but we also don't think people should go with a checklist of sights to see, including our own checklist. You have to decide what you want to do, and if you tired, as we were, don't force yourself to see everything. Yes, you can go to Florence and miss the statue of David and tell people you missed it, like we did. (We didn't miss it on purpose; our tour got canceled.) But this is the thing about traveling: stuff happens.

Bottom line: There is a lot to see in Florence, so pace yourself. There are things on this itinerary we missed but we still suggest you see, if you can. We recommend going to Florence for three days, and if you have a fourth day, go outside of the city and explore Tuscany.

Logistics

Florence is a very large city, but if you stay in the historic center, near the Duomo, you'll be in walking distance of all of the city's biggest attractions. We stayed in an [Airbnb](#) which had a view of the Duomo, which was fantastic!

Vacation days	Itinerary	Estimated cost per person (only attractions)
Day 1	Walking tour of Florence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cattedrale di Santa Maria • Piazza degli Antinori • Piazza della Repubblica • Piazza della Signoria/Palazzo Vecchio/Loggia de Lanzi • Basilica de Santa Croce Visit Accademia gallery to see David	Free tour, but should you visit on your own the Cattedrale di Santa Maria (€18) and the Basilica de Santa Croce (€8) €16 Euro for Accademia gallery
Day 2	Visit Piazza de Duomo and the Cathedral di Santa Maria del Fiore Visit Uffizi gallery/museum Visit Ponte Vecchio in the evening	€18 €20 Free
Day 3	Go to the other side (Oltrarno District) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the trek to Ponte Vecchio again during the day • Visit Boboli gardens • Take a cab to Piazzale Michelangelo Walk around the markets or take a food tour of Florence	Free €6 Free
Day 4	Take a day trip outside of Florence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pisa • Livorno • Siena • Wine tasting in Chianti 	

Day 1: Experience the Renaissance

The best way to get acclimated to Florence is to begin with a [free walking tour](#) of the city. The most historic area is north of the river, and you can find many free walking tours, such as the one we highly recommend, in which our guide was passionate about Florence and had a PhD. Our tour took a few hours, which really helped us to get to know the city's biggest sites.

We began at the Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore, which is simply referred to as “the Duomo.” This gorgeous cathedral is the fourth largest in the world and the centerpiece of Florence since the 1400s. Your tour will give you details about the cathedral, but will not take you inside. If you want to see the Duomo, arrive before your tour and visit it before the tour meets, as the tour will not enter the cathedral. To enter, you’ll need a ticket, which we recommend [purchasing in advance](#), as the lines to enter are always long. Use your tour to decide what to see on your own free time and return to the sites on day two.

Your tour will walk you through the historic part of the city, including visiting many Renaissance structures and piazzas. At the Palazzo Antinori, a private residence for more than 500 years, you’ll see one of the highlights of Florentine architecture. (You cannot enter the home unless as part of a tour of the family wines through its cellar tour, which will go through the Antinori history.)

At the Piazza della Repubblica, you’ll discover a large pedestrian space where your children can play. Our son especially loved the carousel standing in what was originally the city’s forum and remains the city center. Nearby restaurants may display images of the square over the years, including during World War II, when Hitler and the Nazis marched through the archways. The small carousel features just 20 horses but has been operated by the same family for four generations (plus, our Airbnb was right by the Piazza so he got to play in the carousel almost everyday!).

You will continue on to Piazza della Signoria, an L-shaped square that sits before the Palazzo Vecchio, which has been Florence’s city hall since it was founded in the 1300s. A copy of Michelangelo’s statue of David can be found in this square, as the original was first placed here in 1504. On the corner of the piazza is also the Loggia de Lanzi, featuring wide arches that open to the street, connecting to the Uffizi Gallery and serving as an open-air gallery of Renaissance sculptures. The tour ends at Basilica di Santa Croce, where the likes of Michelangelo and Machiavelli are buried and you’ll find a memorial to Dante. Visit the Basilica after grabbing a bite to eat, at the end of your tour.

The walking tour is very intense but you see and learn so much. After our morning tour ended, our guide, who was connected by family to many restaurants in the city, invited the entire group to have lunch at a family restaurant. We all enjoyed the tour so much, everyone went to lunch together, bypassing a very long line to get into an intimate restaurant that didn’t even have a menu – you just ate what they had and we never saw a bill. It was a very cool experience.

As your day draws to a close, make your way to the Accademia Gallery, home to the real David. Lines wind around the block and can last up to two hours to visit this famous statue, designed by Michelangelo, so purchase [tickets online](#), in advance. You can find skip the line tickets with the last entrance time at 4:45 p.m., when the crowds have died down a little, but most tickets are sold in advance and you should book well before you arrive in Florence so you don’t arrive to discover all tickets are sold out (we recommend looking at least 2 weeks prior).

Day 2: Enjoy Art and Shopping

On your second day in Florence, return to the sites you first got a glimpse of on your walking tour but didn't have a chance to go into, especially the Duomo. Remember, to book the [tickets online](#) and choose the skip-the-line booking option.

After seeing the Duomo, make your way to the Uffizi Gallery, which is one of the most-visited art museums in the world and includes modern and Renaissance art spread throughout two floors. During our visit to Florence, we were worn out and tired of seeing museums, but we still suggest you attempt to see it, as it's rated the No. 1 spot to see in Florence on TripAdvisor. Just like the Accademia Gallery, buy your [tickets online](#) well in advance of your trip and get a reserved time to enter the Uffizi.

Near the museum is the Ponte Vecchio, the only bridge not destroyed by the Allies in World War II because of its historic significance. The oldest bridge in the city, it dates back to the early 1200s and remains one of the iconic images of Florence. The bridge is entirely a pedestrian bridge with markets for shopping spanning from one side of the river to the next, with merchants selling out of wooden stalls that, when closed at the end of the day, look like treasure boxes. The treasure boxes are befitting of the bridge, as the shops were designated in the 1500s to be only for jewelers and goldsmiths.

It should be said that the shopping in Florence is so great that Natasha was a bit sad that we didn't have enough room in our luggage to take home some of the great handiwork we saw. Florence is renowned for its leather products, and you'll find amazing shoes, bags and coats. Florence and Tuscany are big cow areas, as is also evident by the area's main dish: the Bistecca Fiorentina. You'll definitely want to sample this dish during one of your dinners, as the steak is melt-in-your-mouth delicious, and pairs perfectly with the area's best chiantis.

Day 3: Spend Hours in Florentine Gardens

Leave the historic district behind on day three by crossing over the river to see the Oltrarno District. Here, you'll still find beauty at every turn, but with a different vibe and less tourists. Cross to the other side via the Ponte Vecchio, seeing it again during daytime hours versus your evening tour on day two to experience the difference. The main attraction of the Oltrarno District is Boboli Gardens, which houses sculptures from the 16th through 18th centuries. The 11-acre gardens are wonderful for children, although our son fell asleep in his stroller en route and we found ourselves lifting him up and down stairs and very steep hills – we definitely got a workout that day!

You can spend hours in these gardens, which look back toward historic Florence across the river and provide awesome views and photo-worthy backdrops. The gardens are actually part of the Palazzo Pitti. We did not tour the palace that was designed in the 1400s and serving as the Medici's primary palace since the 1500s. Now a museum, the first floor of the Palazzo contains 16th and 17th century artwork with works by Raphael. You can tour the Royal Apartments and the Treasury of the Grand Dukes, which features historic furnishings and silver and precious

gems from the Medici family on another floor. On the top floor, a modern art gallery showcases works into the 20th century. The property also features a costume gallery and porcelain museum in a separate building.

It's a one-mile walk from the Boboli Gardens to Piazza Michelangelo, which provides the best views of Florence and a picture-perfect family portrait. We suggest grabbing lunch at Boboli Gardens, then taking a cab to the piazza, as you may be too exhausted to walk another mile.

In the late afternoon or evening, enroll in a food tour to sample the foods of Tuscany, which varies greatly from the foods you'll have tried in Naples and the Amalfi Coast, Rome and Venice. We had a horrible experience with our tour due to our guide, who not only showed up late, just seemed like she was in a hurry and didn't really engage with everyone. While we cannot recommend the specific tour, the foods we tried were still amazing and we suggest finding a tour you can fit into your schedule.

Day 4: Explore Tuscany

If you have a fourth day in Florence, use the day to leave the city behind and explore some of the nearby Tuscan destinations of Siena or Pisa. (See [our guide to a perfect cruise day in Pisa](#).) You'll also find many vineyards and winery options in the Tuscan countryside.

If you can, rent a car to explore the countryside. It's very easy to drive around Tuscany, and distances are not too great between destinations. It's just over an hour to Siena, San Gimignano, Lucca or Pisa, all of which are walkable cities with medieval structures, beautiful churches, and opportunities to delve deeper into central Italy's landscape and Renaissance history.

KID-FRIENDLY TIPS

- Take your [good travel stroller](#), as there is a lot of walking around Florence and the sites are large. You will be walking everywhere, every day.
- Florence is filled with squares and places for kids to run and play, although we didn't find any parks. The Piazza della Repubblica had a carousel he could ride, and was within steps of the Duomo. It's also an historical piazza: marches through the archways into the large, cobbled piazza were commonplace during war times.
- It was hard to find diapers in the grocery stores because they were pretty small in the center of Florence; we found some at pharmacies, which were everywhere.
- Take a tour in the biggest tourist places, including the Accademia and Uffizi. These can be great simply because you can skip the lines, which can save you hours of waiting in line with an antsy child. It's slightly pricier, but totally worth it, and then you also have a tour guide pointing out what you are seeing.

OTHER TIPS

- Florence had some of the best shopping and handcrafted products we have seen around the world, especially the Italian leather. Make sure you have room in your suitcase for some shopping in this city.
- Foods we enjoyed: The Florentine steak originated here and it's a must-have. The enormous steak is often cooked on an open flame in the window of restaurants so you can see it when strolling by and uses a simple recipe of olive oil, garlic and salt and pepper but there is something so absolutely delicious about it. A restaurant we enjoyed for its steak is l'Tuscany 2. Chianti wines come from this region of Italy and pairs extremely well with the Florentine steak.
- Take cabs to attractions. One of the reasons we were so exhausted in Florence -- and it's a lesson we learned over time -- is take a cab to places. There is so much walking, that you may wind up as exhausted as we were if you don't.