

Traveling

Venice is one of Italy's top travel cities and a beautiful, romantic destination with many attractions. Its small, traffic-free streets along the winding canals make for great walking. You'll find many magnificent churches and palaces, lively squares, and interesting shops. Venice actually consists of 117 bodies of land connected by more than 400 bridges over its 150 canals. The Grand Canal is like main street, cutting through the center of the city.

Venice Location and Weather:

Venice is in on northeast coast of Italy. It is protected from the Adriatic Sea by a strip of land called the Lido. The region around Venice is called the *Veneto*. (see Veneto Map) Since it's near the sea, Venice has moderate weather although there can be rain nearly year-round. Summers are humid and winters can be foggy and wet. To avoid the large crowds, spring and fall are the best seasons to visit. Venice experiences flooding or *aqua alta* about 60 days a year, October through early January (more). For more weather details, average daily temperatures and rainfall month by month, see: Venice Italy Weather.

Transportation to Venice:

The best way to arrive in Venice is by train at the Santa Lucia Train Station on the northwestern edge of the city. The bus terminal and parking garages are nearby but across the Grand Canal in Piazzale Roma. Venice has an international airport, the Marco Polo airport. From the airport you can take a bus or boat (see Venice Airport Transportation). There are also ferries to and from Greece and Dubrovnik.

Transportation in Venice:

The main public transport in Venice are the *vaporetti*, boats that ply the principal waterways. The #1 goes along the Grand Canal from the train station and makes many stops, so its a good way to cruise the main canal and get a good overview of the city. There are also more expensive water taxis and gondolas. See vaporetto information and fares for more about Venice's public transportation on the water. Gondolas are a romantic form of transportation but today they're used mainly by tourists and can be costly. Here are Tips for Taking a Gondola Ride in Venice.

Venice's Neighborhoods:

Venice is divided into six sections or *sestieri*. The *Cannaregio* is near the station. Also on the same side of the Grand Canal are *San Marco* and *Castello*. *Santa Croce* is across the Grand Canal from the train station and *San Polo* and the *Dorsoduro* are across the canal from St. Mark's. Venice Sestiere Map and Information

Venice Festivals:

Venice's Carnevale celebration is one of the most lively and colorful carnival festivals in Italy, held 40 days before Easter. The Venetians don festive masks and costumes for a 10-day street party. The *Redentore Regatta* is an important festival in July held on the Grand Canal.

Food Specialties of Venice and the Veneto:

Seafood is a big part of Venetian cuisine as are polenta and rice. *Seppia*, cuttlefish, is popular and *risotto nero* is a rice dish colored with its ink. Try *zuppa di pesce* fish soup here, too. *Radicchio trevisano*, red chicory, comes from nearby Treviso. *Cicchetti*, little appetizers, are found in the bars in Venice and are often eaten before lunch or dinner (similar to Spanish *tapas* but you can make them into a light meal. See Tips for Eating in Venice

What to Buy:

Venetian glass, especially from the island of Murano, is a specialty. Carnival masks make great gifts or souvenirs. Venice is also known for its marbled paper and you might find some good lace here, too. You will also see many nice watercolors of Venetian scenes.

Tourist Information Offices:

The train station tourist office is almost always very crowded but has lots of information and can help with hotel reservations. The main tourist office is by St. Mark's Square and also has lots of information. Most staff speak at least some English.

Venice Attractions:

Venice has many fine attractions and museums but one of the best things to do is take some time wandering along the canals off the main tourist track. You'll find more about what to see and do in our Top Venice Attractions and Free Sights in Venice. Enjoy a virtual look at sights and attractions with our Venice Photos.

Highlights:

- Saint Mark's Square – *Piazza San Marco* is the main square of Venice surrounded by chic sidewalk cafes and fancy shops. While it's a great place to enjoy the scenery and people, you will definitely pay top price to sit at an outdoor table. In the evening, you can listen to live music, too. Walking in the piazza and taking photos is, of course, free.
- **Saint Mark's Basilica** – *Basilica di San Marco* is a beautiful church blending the architecture of East and West. It was consecrated in 832 AD.
- Doge's Palace – Palazzo Ducale, also on St. Mark's Square, is the most impressive building in Venice and

well worth a tour. It was the political and judicial hub of Venetian government until the fall of the Venetian Republic in 1797. The palace was connected to its prisons by the famous “Bridge of Sighs.”

- **Grand Canal** – *Canal Grande* is the main thoroughfare of Venice. It’s full of all kinds of boats and lined with beautiful buildings.
- Rialto Bridge (*Ponte di Rialto*), the main bridge crossing the Grand Canal in the heart of Venice, is over 400 years old. Nearby is the Rialto Market, an interesting and lively food market with lots of little shops.
- *Galleria del’Accademia* is one of Italy’s best art museums with 24 rooms in 3 historic buildings. Get there early to avoid the crowds. See [Top Museums in Venice](#)
- Venice’s Top Islands – visit one or more of the islands on a day trip. Two of the most popular are Murano, famous for glass making, and Burano, full of colorful houses and famous for lace.