



The Italians call it Firenze, but by any name it is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The capital of the region of Tuscany was where the Renaissance evolved in the 15th and 16th Centuries, due to superb artists Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Donatello and many others. They lived and worked in Florence, nurtured by the picturesque city around them.

Among countless artistic and architectural wonders, consider five must-see sights.

**Gallerie dell'Accademia:** See the genius of Michelangelo's world-renowned statue of David as he prepared for battle with Goliath. Standing 17 feet tall, the 16th Century marble figure is on display in the Gallerie among other works of Renaissance art and sculpture. **Gallerie degli Uffizi:** Housed in the 16th Century Palazzo degli Uffizi, it features famous works of Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Built for the ruling Medici family, this museum is popular with both locals and tourists. Its courtyard a delightful combination of street performers and talented young art students offering to paint visitor portraits in Renaissance style.

**Ponte Vecchio:** The medieval arch bridge over the Arno River is great for strolling, viewing and shopping. On each side of the middle pathway are 400-year-old shops with apartments poking out above them. There's a tradition of young couples to attach small padlocks all along the bridge railings and other places, as symbols of their everlasting love.

**Piazza della Signoria:** This centrally-located square is the largest in Florence, with famous buildings and statues surrounding it. It's also infamous as the 15th Century site of the martyrdom of Savonarola and his religious followers, who were burned at the stake there for blasphemy.

**Piazza del Duomo:** Dominated by the golden dome over the Basilica de Santa Maria del Fiore, this is one of the most popular tourist sites that define the Renaissance city. It was designed by

15th Century masters Brunelleschi and Donatello. Alongside stands Giotto di Bondone's 277-foot-tall Campanile (bell tower). Climb the 414 steps to the top for a breathtaking view of Florence and surrounding hills.

Palazzo Pitti: On the southern bank of the Arno, Pitti Palace houses the Medici art collection. Outside are the Boboli Gardens, a great place to relax and rest before embarking on more Florentine adventures. The official website for the city of Florence, Italy, is [en.comune.fi.it](http://en.comune.fi.it)