24 hours in Florence

If you're an art lover, a food lover or a die-hard romantic, you can't fail to fall in love with this most captivating city...

**Florence** is one of Europe's most beautiful cities, located in northwestern Italy, it is famous for its terracotta domes, ornate palaces, awesome churches—and fabulous food. As the birthplace of Dante and home of some of Michelangelo's and da Vinci's greatest works, few cities can match Florence's cultural importance. And with a little planning, it's amazing what you can pack into 24 hours...

**Antelope di Cambio**, intended it to surpass all the great buildings of antiquity in size and splendour—and you'll be hard pressed to find anyone who disagrees! Don't forget to look inside the Duomo, too, open 9am-5:30pm Monday-Sunday, 10am-3:30pm Thurs., 9am-4:30pm Sat., 10am-3:30pm Sun. The main attraction is the terracotta dome (admission €10), open 8:30am-6:45pm Mon-Sun, 8:30am-6:00pm Fri. 8:30am-7:30pm Sat. 8:30am-4:30pm Fri. Set of month, closed Sun. In 1436, Filippo Brunelleschi won a public competition to design and build the cupola and it was completed, without the use of scaffolding, in 1446. At the top you'll experience stunning panoramic views over Florence.

**11AM**

North across the Piazza San Giovanni to the Baptistry, which is dedicated to the Patron Saint of Florence. St. John the Baptist (admission €8, open noon-7pm Mon-Sat, 10:30am-8pm Sun). It is believed to stand on the site of a sixth-century Roman temple.

**Lunch**

Enjoy a savory meal in Piazza della Signoria, next to Galleria dell'Accademia.

**5PM**

A short walk from both the Uffizi Gallery and the Boboli Gardens is the Piazza Michelangelo. Here you can visit and enjoy a drink in one of the many bars and the most amazing vista of Florence.

**Nightlife**

By now you'll be ready for dinner, and Florence has some superb restaurants. The staples of the region are olive oil and sumptuous bread (orecchiette with butter, salt and pepper, and cannelloni) and of course, Chianti wine.

**TOURIST INFO**

For general tourist information call the Italian State Tourist Board on 080 740 1024 or visit www.visitflorence.it. You can also book hotel accommodation and tours to Florence and Italy by visiting www.touristinfo.com. There is also a shuttle services between Florence and the airport.

**WHAT TO AVOID**

Queuing is a huge problem at all Florence's galleries and museums, but you can book online for an extra €5.79 (£3.99) at least a day in advance. 

**ESSENTIAL INFO**

Currency is the euro. €1 = approx. 700,690. Ask all staff for directions, as bus drivers are not always helpful. If you're learning to get there, they'll usually give you a free guide to the city. 

**GETTING THERE**

Direct flights from Alitalia from Heathrow take two hours 8 minutes and costs from £230 (0844 453 7959, www.alitalia.com). But the best-value option is to fly via a stop or Bologna and catch a train to Florence, for train times and prices visit www.trenitalia.com.


**TOURIST INFORMATION**

Tours are available from www.citytours.co.uk.