

2018



**[PISA]**

Posti nei dintorni da visitare, con itinerari e informazioni utili.

Pisa is best known for the leaning Tower and as the birthplace of Galileo; some make it a quick in and out hour trip and others take their time to explore this fascinating medieval city. Pisa is situated in Tuscany at the mouth of the River Arno. Pisa is three hours from Florence by train and not far from Lucca. The historic Pisa University is one of the best in the country, school to about 60,000 students and the city has a dynamic student life with parties, cultural events and many lively bars.

Pisa has about 20 historic churches, palaces and museums as well as stunning surrounding Tuscan countryside. If you are in Pisa in June (16<sup>th</sup> of the month) you can attend the magical Luminara when thousands of candles are lit on the Arno River. On the last Sunday in June there is the Gioco del Ponte, a costumed mock battle on the Ponte di Mezzo bridge. If you intend to visit a lot of sites it may be worthwhile getting the Pass to Tuscany

## ***Piazza dei miracoli***

The Cathedral Square or Square of Miracles is the religious center of the city and the site of Pisa's top attraction, the Leaning Tower. The square is surrounded by walls and as you enter you are met with an open green lawn and four monumental white structures. The monuments stand isolated in the large area which is located on the edge of the city, in the northwestern corner. In the square is the religious complex of the Camposanto Monumentale, bell Tower of Pisa, Pisa Baptistery and the Pisa Cathedral. Also on the square are the Cathedral Museum and the Ospedale Nuovo di Santo Spirito which houses the Sinopias Museum. The name "Miracle Square" or "meadow of miracles" was coined by writer Gabriele d'Annunzio in his novel *Forse che si forse che no* (1910). The square is a UNESCO site.

### 1- **Cattedrale Pisa**

*Pisa Cathedral* – This is a large five nave church constructed in 1064 and redesigned in 1595 following a fire. The cathedral holds many stunning works of art and architectural features. This is one of the four monuments on Cathedral Square, the heart of the city and the first place tourists should head to. The magnificent Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral towers above the Pisa skyline and is a large Gothic structure, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. Construction was begun under architect Arnolfo di Cambio in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and completed by Filippo Brunelleschi who added the dome in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The present church is built on the ruins of an earlier 7<sup>th</sup> century Santa Reparata Church and visitors can see the remains of the earlier church in the present crypt.

The stunning exterior is covered with decorative pink, white and green marble patterns. The façade was a later addition, 100 years later by Rainaldo. Inside the main attraction is the beautifully paved mosaic floor. The church has statues of the architects who had a hand in designing the cathedral. Above the entrance you can see a working clock dating back to 1443 designed by Paolo Uccello. The cathedral is rather plain but holds several outstanding works of art like the Giovanni Pisano pulpit. Other highlights include the fresco by Giorgio Vasari of the *Last Judgment* which covers the inner dome. It is possible to go to the top of the Brunelleschi cupola but you will have to climb 463 steps. There are no elevators but the

view is worth it. Another advantage of making the climb is that you get to see Vasari's frescoes up close.

## 2- **Baptistry**

*Pisa Baptistry* – St. John's Baptistry stands west of the cathedral and is a circular Romanesque structure built between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is Italy's largest baptistry and like the other buildings in the square is covered in white marble. The baptistry is famed for its excellent acoustics, font and pulpit.

The Pisa Baptistry of Saint John (Baptistry di San Giovanni) is one of the buildings on the Piazza dei Miracoli. The present structure replaced an earlier baptistry. The building was started by architect Diotisalvi in 1153 in the Romanesque style; continued by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano in the 1200s using the Gothic style and completed in 1363 with the addition of Cellino di Nese's Gothic dome. The Pisa Baptistry is the largest in the country reaching a height of 54.86 meters surpassing the adjacent leaning tower. The circular structure has a circumference of 107.24 meters. Like the nearby tower the baptistry also has a lean of 0.6 degrees due to the unstable ground. The building has elements of Romanesque and Gothic architecture and is made of marble. Inside the most stunning features are the central font created by Guido Bigarelli da Como and Nicola Pisano's pulpit. Be sure to see the 13<sup>th</sup> century reliefs on the main door. The baptistry has wonderful acoustics and you might be lucky enough to attend a choir concert here.

## 3- **Leaning Tower of Pisa**

*Leaning Tower* – Construction began on the cathedral's free-standing bell tower in 1173 but it was not completed until 200 years later. The tower began leaning before construction was complete and over the years various attempts have been made to stabilize the structure. The lean is caused by the tower sinking in to unstable ground due to inadequate foundations. The eight storey tower holds seven bells in bell chamber and visitors can climb the many steps to the top for brilliant views.

The iconic Torre pendente di Pisa is a landmark site and the city's top attractions. The leaning tower is located in Cathedral Square (Square of Miracles) together with three other monument buildings. Construction began in 1173 and continued over the course of 200 years due to interruptions by local wars. For this reason no single architect can take credit for the structure.

It was constructed to stand vertically but because of unstable ground it gradually began to "lean" to one side. The tower began "sinking" into the ground during construction probably due to the fact that it had been given only a three meter foundation. To try and compensate for the lean architects built one side taller than the other so that the tower is actually curved. The tower leans approximately 4°. Various attempts have been made over the years to straighten the tower. In the 1920s cement was injected into the foundations to help stabilize the ground.

This remarkable medieval structure stands approximately 60 meters tall. The tower was the last of the four monumental buildings on the square to be constructed as a free-standing bell tower of the neighboring cathedral. It has Romanesque architecture and is clad with

grey and white striped marble. The tower has 207 columns circling eight stories with a bell chamber at the top. On ground level there is a blind arcade (designed to look like a series of arches but with no actual openings) separated by columns topped with Corinthian capitals. On the lowest storey there are 15 marble arches supported by the columns and on the next successive six stories there are a further 30 arches. On the top storey there are 16 arches. In all there are 297 steps inside leading to the top of the tower. Visitors can climb to the bell tower and roof to get views across the city.

#### 4- **Camposanto**

*Camposanto Monumentale* – Gothic Cloisters surround this open lawn built around soil brought from the Holy Land. The walled cemetery is on the northern edge of the square. This monumental cemetery is one of the four top attractions in the Piazza del Duomo or Piazza dei Miracoli (Cathedral square). The monuments in this square together represent the heart of the city's religious life. The sacred burial ground (Camposanto) was established in 1277 and completed in 1464. It was designed by Giovanni di Simone. Rather than an open graveyard this ornate site consists of a holy field of land surrounded by monumental cloister buildings. The ground is said to have been brought from Golgotha where Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem. The soil was laid over the ruins of the former baptistery of Santa Reparata Church.

The buildings surrounding the holy ground form an oblong cloister built in the Gothic-style, the site was originally intended to be a church but plans changed during construction. The outer walls of the surrounding buildings have blind arches and two doorways. Most of the burial tombs are located under the arcades. On the inner walls there are graceful arches. The site also has three chapels. Highlights include the lamp which Galileo used to calculate pendulum movement. Together with the soil of Golgotha pieces of the cross, a thorn from Christ's crown of thorns, a piece of Mary's dress and relics of 11 of the Disciples were also brought back to Italy and are kept in the Dal Pozzo Chapel. You can see early frescoes on the walls and Roman sarcophagi.

#### **Piazza dei Cavalieri**

This is Pisa's second main square, it was a political hub in the Middle ages and later became the headquarters of the Order of the Knights of Saint Stephen. Today locals come to the square mainly to attend the adjacent Scuola Normale di Pisa which is part of Pisa University. The square has always played a role in the civil and political life of the city. In 1406 an emissary from Florence proclaimed the end of Pisan independence in the Knights' Square. The Church of the Knights' of the Holy and Military Order of St. Stephan is the only Renaissance church in Pisa. It was completed in 1569 and visitors can still see Turkish naval banners captured by the knights in battle.

Highlights on the Knights' Square are the surrounding buildings of the Palazzo della Canonica, the Santo Stefano dei Cavalieri Church, the Collegio Puteano Palace and the Consiglio dei Dodici Palace. The Knights' Palace dominates the square and has modernized Renaissance architecture by Giorgio Vasari. On the façade you can see sgraffiti decoration and niches carrying statues of

Tuscan grand dukes. Other features of the square are the fountain by Pietro Francavilla and the statue of Cosimo I de Medici of Florence by Pietro Francavilla.

- **Palazzo dei Cavalieri**

The Palace of the Knights was originally the Palace of the Elders until 1562 when Giorgio Vasari began to renovate, expand and rebuild the property turning it into the beautiful Palazzo della Carovana or Palazzo dei Cavalieri. It was the headquarters and site of training programs for the knights of the Order of St. Stephen. The knights (cavalieri) courses (carovane) continued until 1810 when Napoleon turned the palace into the Scuola Normale Superiore, an exclusive technical college for higher education. The building still houses the Scuola Normale which is part of the University of Pisa.

The building has an impressive façade decorated with the sgraffito technique, busts of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, zodiac signs, allegorical figures and the knights' coats of arms. There is a wide double staircase which sweeps up to the entrance. In front of the façade is an equestrian statue of Cosimo I by Piero Francavilla. You can see a clock tower nearby where the right part used to be the Hunger Tower and is where Count Ugolino della Gherardesca was imprisoned for treachery in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This episode of history is mentioned in Dante's *Inferno*.

### **Santo Sepolcro**

Pisa's Church of the Holy Sepulchre has a unique design by Diotisalvi forty years before he designed the Pisa Cathedral and the Baptistery. Record of the church dates back to 1138 when it was an annex to the settlement of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem (the Templars). The church then came under the control of the Knights of Malta until their suppression in 1817 when the church became property of the ruling royals.

The structure is of local stone and has an interesting octagonal shape with a pyramidal roof. Eight pillars are evenly spaced around the interior forming arches with bows reaching up to the inner dome. The church has an incomplete rectangular bell tower which bears a plaque stating the architect's name. There are three entrances to the church decorated with animal motifs. Over the years the church was renovated several times and structural changes were made. Until the 1500s the church was surrounded by a portico.

- **By Car**

If you want to arrive in Pisa by car the main road leading directly to Pisa is the so-called **SS1 Aurelia**, which must be resorted to by tourists coming, for instance, from Florence, Rome or Bologna, and from Genoa alike. You can get a park and take a shuttle to arrive at the Pisa Central Station. The parking rates for 18 hours are € 2.50 from Monday to Saturday and € 1.20 on Sundays and Holidays. For a ride combined with the car park, which includes the parking for 1 car and a return ticket for the shuttle, you must collect the parking ticket at the car park entrance, scan it at the shuttle entry turnstiles and keep it until you collect your car. Before leaving the car park, use the ticket to pay at the automatic tellers.

**The other passengers on the car can purchase reduced tickets for the shuttle introducing the parking ticket into the automatic ticket machines at the entrance of the shuttle station.**

The **FS / PISA CENTRAL STATION** is located next to platform number 14. It can be reached directly from the outside through Via Quarantola, in the district of San Giusto.

The **SAN GIUSTO/AURELIA STATION** is the intermediate stop, accessible from Via di Goletta and from the roundabout next to Via Aurelia. It has two big park'n'ride car parks.

- **By Train**

Pisa is reachable **by train** from a series of Tuscan cities, such as Florence, Livorno, Siena and Lucca, but railroad also links Pisa to other major cities of Italy – Rome and Genoa, for instance. The main two train stations in Pisa where trains arrive from or depart to various destinations are the San Rossore Station (close located to the Piazza del Duomo) and the **Pisa Central Station**, from where several busses transport their passengers to the center of the city. The price for 1 ticket is about 5,60 euro.

*From Rosignano to Pisa Centrale*

08:58 – 09:39 (0h 41')  
09:27 – 10:18 (0h 51')  
10:34 – 11:29 (0h 55')

*From Pisa to Rosignano*

17:45 – 18:19 (0h 34')  
18:32 – 19:09 (0h 37')  
18:58 – 19:36 (0h 38')  
19:45 – 20:19 (0h 34')  
21:50 – 22:29 (0h 39')

From Pisa Central Station you can walk or take a bus to arrive in Piazza dei Miracoli (you need to buy a ticket for the bus in the Station or on the bus). By walk, you have to go in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II (where is a statue of the ancient king of Italy when it was a Reign) and go on by the main street of fashion stores called Corso Italia until the bridge called Ponte di mezzo.

After the bridge you are in Piazza Garibaldi (the statue is Garibaldi who is a national hero because he united north and south of Italy), you go on in the Borgo Stretto street until Piazza dei Cavalieri.

Enjoy!