

The city, second capital of the Duchy of Tuscany after Florence, was chosen by Cosimo I de' Medici and his sons as the winter seat of the Medici court.

There were many Renaissance and Mannerist artists who worked for the Medici family in Pisa, including the sculptor Pierino da Vinci, grandson of the Renaissance genius Leonardo da Vinci, Pietro Francavilla, a pupil of the Flemish sculptor Giambologna, the painter, architect and art historian Giorgio Vasari and others, who redeveloped the look of the city.

Some examples of where you can find Medici in Pisa:

LOGGE DI BANCHI



Built starting from 1603, the **Logge di Banchi** (Banchi Loggias) were born at the behest of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de' Medici with the intention of transferring the grain market to the left bank of the river.

The building was made even more monumental thanks to the destruction of the Loggetta del Bargello, the city prisons located near the river.

The project was by **Bernardo Buontalenti** and was masterfully executed by Cosimo Pugliani who developed the building on 12 large pillars covered in marble. The upper floor, which is accessed via an overpass connected to the Palazzo Gambacorti, the location of the municipality, was enlarged in the 19th century to house the new **State Archive** (now in Palazzo Toscanelli) inaugurated in 1865.

Different types of markets alternated under the loggia, from silk to wool, to exchange counters, which gave the loggia its name.

In 1925, entrepreneur Cleopatro Cobiانchi obtained the permits to build an underground **daytime hotel**, now public bathrooms, with showers, bathtubs and various services for personal hygiene.

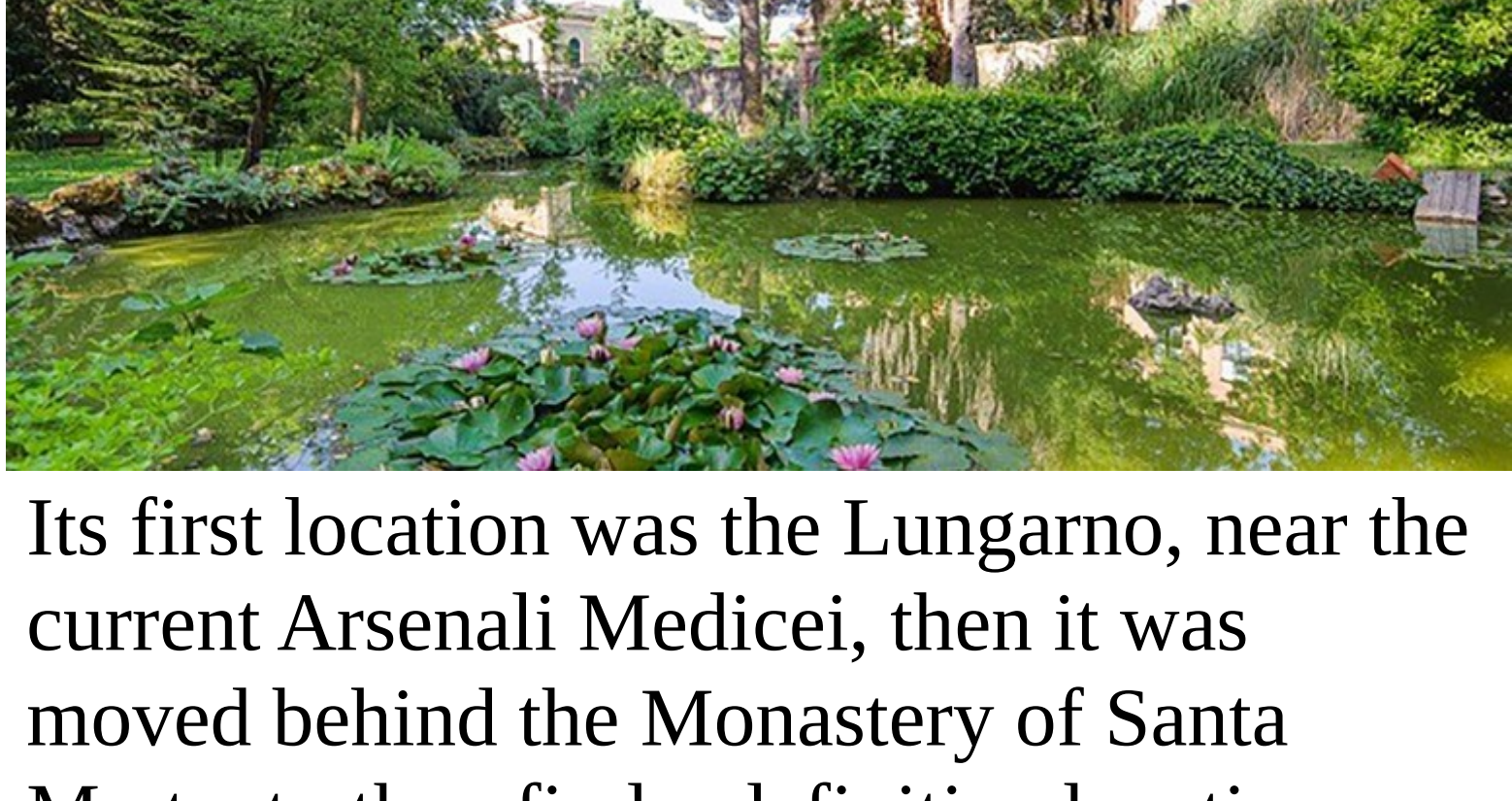
During the **Gioco del Ponte** (Game of the Bridge), a historic city event, the Banchi (as they are called in Pisa) represent the **Campo** on the **Southern part**, where the fighters prepare for the challenge and where the most important strategic decisions are made.



ORTO BOTANICO

One of Cosimo I's greatest projects was to reform the Pisan educational system.

The Botanical Garden, born as Giardino dei Semplici in 1543 created by naturalist Luca Ghini, is today the **oldest university botanical garden** in the world.



Its first location was the Lungarno, near the current Arsenali Medicei, then it was moved behind the Monastery of Santa Marta, to then find a definitive location with Ferdinand I in the current spaces (around 1590).

Three hectares of land, hundreds of species from all over the world, this great green lung of the city is a magical place, full of picturesque corners, such as the **bamboo forest** or the **water lily pond**.

It also hosts the **Botanical Museum**, introduced by a beautiful eighteenth-century facade decorated with the *grotesque* style, from the Gallery founded by Grand Duke Ferdinando I in 1591.

PALAZZO SPINOLA

Ancient residence owned by the noble Albitone in the 11th century, it was owned by the Appiano family, protected by the powerful Gambacorti, but responsible for their defeat.

From 1446, the **Medici** made the palace their residence in the city and Cosimo I, in 1545, started a **restoration** of the **building**, giving it a Renaissance taste.

After the Medici moved their residence to the current Palazzo Reale, on Lungarno Pacinotti, the palace on Lungarno Mediceo changed ownership several times and then went to Marchesa **Vittoria Spinola**, the morganatic daughter of Vittorio Emanuele II. It was in that period that architect Ranieri Simonelli completely restored the building, altering its Renaissance forms and proposing neo-Gothic solutions still visible on the façade. The tower is also the result of this change.

The building is now the seat of the Prefecture of Pisa.

