

# Hostelworld Guide for venice

It's a phrase used all too loosely when describing so many cities around the world, but there really is nowhere else on earth like Venice. Built on 117 small islands, 150 canals flow through the city centre and each and every one will have you grabbing for your camera. While its streets can be incessantly busy, something will urge you to propel yourself through as many of them as possible. It can be unashamedly expensive, but eat and drink where the locals do and a visit there won't be as costly as you think.

## In this Guide...

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Top Attractions  
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## The Essentials

### Getting There

**By plane:** Venice has two airports - Marco Polo and Treviso. Bus #5 from Marco Polo goes to Piazzale Rome in the city centre and costs €2 one-way. A shuttle bus from Treviso connects it to the same square. That journey costs €4.50 one-way.

**By train:** Trains going to Venice terminate at Stazione di Santa Lucia in the city centre.

**By bus:** Buses going to Venice also terminate in Piazzale Roma.

### Getting Around

**On foot:** Your feet will be your main mode of transport in Venice. All the city's main sights are within walking distance of each other.

**By vaporetto (water bus):** While they are expensive (€6 for a single journey), you will probably need to use a vaporetto at least once.

**By traghetto:** Traghetto are boats which cross the Grand Canal. Passengers stand and the journey, which lasts little over a minute, costs €0.50.

**By gondola:** As famous as they are, gondolas are only used by tourists, not as modes of transport.

### Useful phrases

**Hello:** Ciao / Bonjourno  
**Goodbye:** Ciao / Arrivederci  
**Please:** Per Favore  
**Thank you:** Grazie  
**You're welcome:** Prego  
**Yes:** Si  
**No:** No  
**Of course:** Certamente  
**Excuse me:** Scusa  
**How are you?:** Come stai?  
**Open:** Aperto  
**Closed:** Chiuso  
**What is your name?:** Come ti chiami?  
**My name is...:** Mi chiamo...  
**How much?:** Quanto costa?  
**The bill please?:** Il conto per favore.

## Climate

Venice's coldest months are January and February but temperatures begin to climb up the thermometer in March when spring finally arrives. Between March and June are the most pleasant months to visit as it can get unbearably warm in July and August, the hottest (and busiest) months of the year. In September temperatures become bearable once more, making it another of the best months to visit.

### Useful Information

**Language:** Italian  
**Currency:** Euro  
**Electricity:** 220 Volts AC/50Hz. 2-pin plug.  
**Area Code:** +39 (Italy). 041 (Venice).  
**Emergency Codes:** Ambulance 118 / Fire 115 / Police 113  
**Time Zone:** Central European Time (GMT+1)  
**Central Post Office:** Salizzada del Fondaco dei Tedeschi (2 minutes from the Rialto Bridge)  
**Main Tourist Office:** Piazza San Marco 71/F

### Embassies / Consulates

**USA:** +39 06 46 741\*  
**Canada:** +39 06 44 59 81\*  
**Australia:** +39 06 85 27 21\*  
**South Africa:** +39 041 524 1599  
**UK:** +39 041 522 7207  
**Ireland:** +39 06 697 9121\*  
**Germany:** +39 041 523 7675  
**Spain:** +39 041 520 3709  
**New Zealand:** +39 06 441 7171\*  
**France:** +39 041 522 2392

\* Embassy in Rome

## Cheap Eats

**Osteria alle Botteghe, Calle dell Botteghe, San Marco** For tasty pizza and pasta at prices that won't leave you wishing you opted for the cheaper snack option instead, locate this cosy restaurant just off Campo San Stefano. Pizzas range from €5-€8. It also has a wide range of cicchetti (Venetian version of tapas) and snacks. *Open daily from 11am-11pm.*

**Trattoria all'Antica Mola, Fondamenta degli Ormesini, Cannareggio** Of all the restaurants that decorate Fondamenta degli Ormesini, this is by far the most reasonable. Main courses will set you back anything between €7-€10 and the food is excellent. It is the perfect place to dine during the summer thanks to some tables on the canal and a garden terrace out the back. *Open daily from 8am-midnight.*

**Arca, Calle San Pantalon, Dorsoduro** Arca has been one of Venice's best-loved pizzerias for years and deservedly so. Pizzas are gloriously tasty and extremely reasonable (€5.50-€8). Due to its popularity it always has a nice atmosphere with a mix of locals and tourists streaming through its doors all day. *Open daily from 8am-midnight.*

**Snack bars/osterias** As eating out in Venice can be quite expensive it may not always be feasible to dine out. In such circumstances there are innumerable snack bars and osterias all over the city. Snack bars sell pizza slices for €2, paninis for €3, while osterias sell various cichetti such as clams and crab claws.

## Gelato! Gelato!

They say in Paris you are never more than 500 metres from a metro station. The same could be said about ice-cream parlours and Venice. Open from early morning until late at night, tourists wait patiently at various counters around the city for a nice (and cheap) treat any time of the day. A cone with one scoop costs €1, €2 for two, €2.50 for three or €3.50 for four. Flavours include nutella, pistachio, mint and peach.

## After Dark

**Paradiso Perduto, Fondamenta della Misericordia, Cannareggio** Nightowls flock to this jazz bar in the Cannareggio district every weekend for the live bands which perform between 9pm-11pm. After that it's Italian-flavoured music which prevails. This suits the local crowd just right as vino-filled Venetians serenade each other until the taps stop flowing. *Open daily from 11.30am-3.30pm and from 9.30pm-1am.*

**Orange, Campo Santa Margherita, Dorsoduro** Bright, bold, and always buzzing, 'Orange' is the coolest bar on the vibrant Campo Santa Margherita. Whether it's the orange-painted bar, the stainless steel seats out front or the beer garden to the rear, you'll find something in this newly opened bar that will make you want to return. *Open daily from 8am-2am.*

**Café Noir, Calle San Pantalon, Dorsoduro** Café Noir is a place which seems to attract a crowd up for fun every night of the week. This is largely due to Venice's large student population that spills from the nearby Campo Santa Margherita. Choose from a large selection of beers and spirits, but make sure to try a 'spritzer', a Venetian speciality. *Open daily from 7am-2am.*

## Gay / Lesbian Venice

There aren't really any gay venues or nights in Venice. Instead you need to travel to the mainland to Mestre to find something going on. **ArciGay Dedalo** (Via Costa 38/a) in Mestre is the nearest gay information centre, and they hold meetings every Tuesday. Buses and trains leave Venice for Mestre regularly.

**Campo San Marco** Just like all main sights in Italian cities, St Mark's Basilica looks even more beautiful at night than it does during the day. Wander down to Venice's illustrious square and you'll be treated to the sounds of a classical quartet entertaining crowds outside one of the square's exclusive cafés.

**Margaret Duchamp, Campo Santa Margherita, Dorsoduro** Of all the other bars dotted around Campo Santa Margherita, this one just across from Orange is the one most worthy of your attention. Attracting a young crowd from the nearby universities (like all bars in this square), tunes are chilled and there are chairs outside asking to be sat in. *Open daily from 8am-2am.*

## Don't Miss

**Basilica San Marco, Campo San Marco** Modelled on the Church of the 12 Apostles in Constantinople, construction of St Mark's Basilica began in 1063 after the original burnt down in 976. Highlights include St Mark's Treasure and the view over Campo San Marco from the balcony. *Open Mon-Sat 9.45pm-5pm, Sun 2pm-4pm, but times vary. Admission €4.*

## A Symbol of Venice

**Ponte di Rialto, San Polo/San Marco** Venice is built on 117 small islands which are connected by 409 bridges. Only three of them cross the Grand Canal that dissects this city. The best known of these, and Venice's most instantly recognisable landmark, is the Rialto Bridge. Built in 1592, this huge marble bridge boasts breathtaking views over the Grand Canal.

**Doge's Palace, Riva degli Schiavoni, San Marco** Initially built as a castle in the 9th century, 'Palazzo Ducale' is a Venetian Gothic building that was home to the Doge (Duke), the highest political figure in Venice. It was also the city's political hub for centuries. Today it's Venice's most popular attraction. *Open daily from 9am-4.15pm (Nov-Feb) and 9am-5.15 (Mar-Oct); admission €18.30 (this is for St Mark's Square Museum Card).*

**Galleria dell Accademia, Campo della Carita, Dorsoduro** This art gallery is home to the most important collection of paintings in Venice. The gallery's 24 rooms contain works by the earliest recorded Venetian painters like Paol Veneziano and Lorenzo Veneziano. *Open Mon 8.15am-2pm, Tues-Sun 8.15am-7.15pm; admission €12.50.*

**Cannaregio district** Trying to propell yourself through the hordes of tourists in San Marco's and San Polo's labyrinthine streets can get quite tedious. For a break from the crowds visit Cannaregio, home to markets, the Jewish Ghetto and some great bars and restaurants.

## Mark Your Calendar

**January - Witches on the Grand Canal** Held January 6th, this is one of over 100 regattas held on Venice's Grand Canal. Those taking part dress up as Epiphany witches on various types of boats.

**February - Carnival** Carnival is the biggest event on the Venetian calendar and has been since the 18th century. For seven days locals don masks and costumes for processions, masquerades and traditional ceremonies.

**April - Up and Down the Bridges** One of Venice's more unusual events, this 'race' sees competitors take part in a 14km run up and down the unknown bridges and areas of Venice.

**May - Vogalonga** First held in 1975, today this annual boat race attracts over 3,000 participants. The course is a long one, covering approximately 18km. The best place to watch it is along the Grand Canal as this is the home straight.

**June - Sagra di San Pietro** Each year in the final week in June Cattedrale di San Pietro in the Castello district of Venice is the site of a festival with dancing, eating and drinking.

**July - Festa del Redentore** Festa del Redentore is a spectacular event that sees fireworks displays light up the Venetian skies over the Dorsoduro district. It was first held in 1576 in thanks for the city's deliverance from the plague.

**September - Venice Film Festival** Each year the biggest names in Hollywood flock to Venice for this film festival, making it the biggest in the world after Cannes. The best film of the festival wins the coveted Golden Lion award.

**October - Venice Marathon** Venice's annual marathon is one of the world's most unique long-distance races and requires a lot from those who choose to compete in it. The finishing line is at Campo San Marco.

**November - Festival of La Salute** Just like the Feast of the Redeemer in July, this festival commemorates the end of a plague, this one in 1630. Its highlight is a procession across the Grand Canal to the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute.

**December - Christmas in the Lagoon** Campo San Stefano is the location for Venice's annual Christmas markets. Over 30 miniature wooden houses line the square selling seasonal goods and, of course, mulled wine.

## Get Connected

**Planet Internet, Lista di Spagna, Cannaregio** According to this internet café's flyer, they have a 'turbo connection'. They'd want to considering their rates. In saying that, rates are just as expensive in most of Venice's other internet cafés. They enjoy a location just three minutes from the train station. *Open 9am-midnight; €5 per 30 mins, €8 per hour.*

**ABC Color, Lista di Spagna, Cannaregio** This small cyber shop is located down a small lane at Campo San Geremia. Along with the obligatory internet access, here they specialise in CD burning and transferring photos from digital cameras to PC. They also offer cheap international calls to students. *Open daily from 9.30am-10pm; €4 for 30 mins, €6 per hour.*

**Venetian Navigator, Calle Stagneri, San Marco** There are two Venetian Navigators and both enjoy extremely central locations. This one is just minutes from the Rialto Bridge and offers all types of services, from email and internet access to laser printing and CD burning. They also have a collect call facility. *Open daily from 10am-10pm (8pm in winter); €4 for 30 mins, €7.50 per hour (also on Calle Casselleria near Campo San Marco).*

**Internet Point, Lista di Spagna, Cannaregio** Internet Point is one of the brighter internet cafés in Venice. There are 14 PCs to choose from meaning you're nearly always guaranteed to find one spare. They provide a webcam service, and sell stamps if you decide to go with the snail mail option rather than email. *Open daily from 9.15am-11pm; 30 mins costs €4.50, €8 per hour.*

### www.

www.hellovenezia.it  
www.carnivalofvenice.com  
www.venicebanana.com  
www.doge.it

## Retail Therapy

**Ruga dei Orefici/Ruga dei Speciali** Located in the San Polo district, these two streets are lined with stalls selling everything from masks to football jerseys to ties. Unfortunately this means they are constantly jammed with tourists, but there is lots to choose from, particularly if you're looking for gifts.

**San Marco District** If you're looking for something smart to swoon the local men/women during your stay in Venice, the streets between Rialto Bridge and St Mark's Square are where you will find well-known high street shops such as Benetton, Footlocker and Champion USA. The only thing is you won't find too many bargains.

### Venetian Masks

While the tradition of wearing masks has declined since the fall of the Venetian Republic in the 18th century, you can still pick them up anywhere in Venice. Styles include joker, Casanova and Pinocchio and you can expect to pay anything between €10-€20 for the ceramic ones from stalls. Hand-crafted ones from specialist shops are a lot more expensive.

**Rialto Produce Markets** These vibrant markets are noisy, colourful and always buzzing with activity, making them a must-see in Venice. You will first come across the fish markets, complete with live lobsters wriggling away in hope of escaping the claws (pun intended) of hungry Venetians, then you'll see the food markets which are a far more colourful affair. *Open daily from 7am-4pm.*

**Cannaregio** This district on the northern side of the Grand Canal has just as many shops as San Marco except the ones here aren't as costly. The streets between the Rialto Bridge and Strada Nuovo are peppered with shops, as is Lista di Spagna.

## Budget Tips

**Catch a traghetto** Fitting around twenty people, traghetti are boats that cross the Grand Canal. As only three bridges cross this 2½ mile-long canal, they can save you quite a lot of walking. Even if you don't need to cross the canal, go for the journey as it only costs 50c and trying to balance for the duration of the 90 second journey is extremely enjoyable.

### Wine will never taste so good

Due to the amount of walking required from you in Venice, a large bottle of water will be attached to your hand for the most part of each day there. Rather than throw them away, bring them to one of the numerous wine shops around the city where you can get them filled with sumptuous wine for as little as €2.10 per litre. You'll find them on Campo Santa Margherita, Fondamenta dei Ormeisini and Calle de la Bissa, just minutes from Rialto Bridge.

**Visit Venice's churches** Some of Venice's most beautiful buildings are its churches, most of which are free to enter. These include Chiesa San Salvador with its paintings from the 14th and 15th centuries, Chiesa San Rocco which represents the structure of a typical Venetian school and Chiesa San Giacomo di Rialto, the oldest church in Venice.

**Go to the beach** Twenty minutes from Venice via vaporetto is Lido, home to Venice's golden beach making it the perfect place to flake out for the day when the crowds in the city get too much.

**Buy the St Mark's Square Museum Card** Costing €11, the St Mark's Square Museum Card grants you entrance to a total of 4 museums. This includes Doge's Palace and Museo Correr, two of Venice's best. It also gains you entrance to the Archaeology Museum and the Monumental Rooms of the Marciana National Library.

## A Day in Venice...

After breakfast visit Ponte di Rialto, Venice's best known bridge. Savour the views over the Grand Canal. Those from the southern side of the bridge are breathtaking.

Make your way through the crowds to Campo San Marco. Visit Basilica di San Marco, one of Italy's great cathedrals.

Grab a panini from one of the Venice's numerous 'snack bars'. Unless you suffer from peristerophobia (fear of pigeons), find somewhere to eat it in Campo San Marco.

Marvel at the ornate rooms in Palazzo Ducale. Highlights include Doge's apartments and the palace's prisons.

Upon exiting the palace, chill out at the steps at Piazzetta San Marco overlooking Bacino di San Marco. Watch flush tourists part with hundreds for gondola rides.

Make your way back towards Rialto Bridge, en route for Cannaregio. You'll welcome the lesser number of tourists and enjoy exploring different parts like the Jewish Ghetto.

Enjoy a glass of wine and some cichitta (Venetian tapas) in a traditional Venetian osteria. There's one on Calle della Bissa near Rialto Bridge called Ai Rusteghi.

Arca, a restaurant in Dorsoduro, boasts some of the finest pizzas in Venice. Clear one off your plate in this pleasant eatery.

Finish the night off in Campo Santa Margherita, Venice's liveliest square. Its best spots are Orange and Margaret Duchamp.