



## Top 10 Things to Do in Venice

### 1. Get Lost in Venice

There is nothing that is as important when you're visiting Venice as just wandering aimlessly through its streets and alleys. Do this before you set foot inside a single museum or attraction. By wandering you can find Venice's many charming and often-empty squares and streets.

### 2. Visit St. Mark's Basilica

The Basilica embodies a magnificent blend of architectural and decorative styles, dominated by the Byzantine and ranging through Romanesque to Renaissance. Built on the plan of a Greek cross, the Basilica is crowned by five bulbous domes. The five large doorways are adorned with variegated marbles and sculptures. The interior's dazzling decoration combines the luminous mosaics and the marble pavement decorated with animal and geometric motifs. Behind the altar is the exquisite Pala D'Oro, a gold, enamel and jewel-encrusted altarpiece, a masterpiece of Gothic art. There's no fee to tour the main part of the basilica.

### 3. See St. Mark's Square When it's Empty

The key is to visit the square when everyone else isn't there. The best times to catch St. Mark's Square at her most vulnerable are early morning and late evening, before the day-trippers arrive or after they've left.

### 4. Take the #1 Vaporetto for a Grand Canal Tour

The slow #1 vaporetto that runs the length of the Grand Canal is the ideal equivalent to a city bus tour. Either bring along a self-guided tour so you can pick out the sights along the way, or just sit back and enjoying the view no matter what the significance of the buildings is. You'll enjoy the ride either way, even more so if you've got a good seat and some gelato.

### 5. Watch a Glass-Blowing Demonstration on Murano Island

Murano is closest it's the easiest one to visit. If you want to avoid the overly touristy glass demonstrations, catch a vaporetto to Murano and walk around the streets until you find a studio that looks relatively open. There are more glass-blowing studios on Murano than just the touristy ones.

### 6. Tour the Doge's Palace

The Doge's Palace is arguably the second most important "attraction" in Venice after the basilica (if you don't count the city itself as an "attraction"). Probably the most popular stop on the tour is when you get to walk over the famous Bridge of Sighs. You can see the bridge from the outside without buying an entry ticket, but the only way to walk on the bridge yourself is as part of a Doge's Palace tour.

### 7. Take the Elevator to the Top of the Campanile

For a view that includes both the basilica and the piazza, buy a ticket for the short elevator ride to the top of the Campanile, or bell-tower, that's in front of the church.

### 8. Wander the Streets of Burano Island

With a little extra time in Venice take a vaporetto further into the lagoon for a trip to Burano Island. Burano is usually less crowded than Murano, with its almost cartoon-like brightly colored buildings, it makes the perfect backdrop for a stroll.

### 9. Take a Hike on Torcello Island

It's a short trip from Burano, but it can take up to an hour if you go straight to Torcello from Venice. It's the ideal spot if you're in the mood for less structure and more nature. Most of Torcello is a nature reserve. There are roughly 20 people who still live on the island. The main "sight," is a 7th century church on the island with more exceptional mosaics.

### 10. "Window" Shop at the Rialto Market

Visiting the famous Rialto (food) market is a great way to see how real Venetians get their food supplies. The Rialto market is particularly known as a fish market, but there's plenty of fresh veggies and fruit for sale as well. Remember that you don't handle the merchandise until after you've paid for it.

### A gondola ride – not a top ten!

For many people it's one of those things that they feel like they *have to do* in Venice or they'll feel like they haven't been to Venice. But gondola rides are way overpriced, and not nearly the quiet/romantic experience you might expect them to be.