



Michelangelo in Florence

Some of the greatest works by Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) are to be found in Florence: drawings, sculpture, paintings, architecture. This great renaissance artist studied the works of Masaccio and Brunelleschi, and received his training in the workshops of Ghirlandaio and Bertoldo. He worked in Florence, Siena, Bologna, Lunigiana and especially in Rome, where he spent the last thirty years of his life. His tomb in Santa Croce, Florence, is by Giorgio Vasari.



This itinerary takes in the major Florentine works of Michelangelo, and begins in Piazza San Marco, opposite the former Medici gardens, where he served his apprenticeship as a sculptor. We then proceed to the Museum of the Accademia, where we find the original marble David (1501-04), transferred here from Piazza della Signoria, and a number of unfinished works: the St Matthew, the four Prisoners, and the late Palestrina Pietà. Passing the Palazzo Medici, where Michelangelo altered the loggia by closing it and adding "kneeling windows", we come to the basilica of San Lorenzo, whose unfinished façade might well have been one of his masterpieces (see the wooden model in the Casa Buonarroti).

Climbing the stairs in the cloister we reach the Biblioteca Laurenziana, built for Pope Clement VII. Next we come to the Museum of the Medici Chapels, and visit the New Sacristy with its world famous Medici Tombs. Here are the marble sculptures of the Madonna and Child, Giuliano Duke of Nemours, Lorenzo Duke of Urbino, and the four allegorical statues of Dawn and Dusk, Night and Day. Leaving the Museum we proceed first to the Opera del Duomo, to admire the Pietà with its famous self-portrait, sculpted in Rome in about 1550, and then to the Bargello, which has youthful pieces such as the Bacchus and the Pitti Tondo, as well as the Brutus (Rome, after 1537). Important drawings by Michelangelo, and his only Florentine painting, the Doni Tondo, are to be found in the Uffizi Gallery, while in the Room of the Five Hundred, in the next-door Palazzo Vecchio (where he worked on one of the world's great lost frescoes, the Battle of Cascina), we find the unfinished marble Victory.



Concluding stage of the itinerary is the Museum of the Casa Buonarroti, where we find drawings, youthful works and portraits of the artist, whom his nephew Michelangelo the Younger exalted in the 17th century as the presiding genius of the family. apotheosis of the "divine" Michelangelo came in the 19th century, with the erection of his monument (1875) in the famous Piazzale named after him, a favourite spot of all visitors to Florence.



Suggested Museums:

Academy of Fine Arts Museum, via Ricasoli, Firenze

Medici Chapels, piazza Madonna Aldobrandini, Firenze

Opera del Duomo Museum, piazza del Duomo, 1, Firenze

Bargello Museum, via del Proconsolo, Firenze

Uffizi Gallery and "Cabinet" of Drawings and Prints, piazzale degli Uffizi, Firenze

Palazzo Vecchio Museum, piazza della Signoria, Firenze

Casa Buonarroti Museum, via Ghibellina, n.70, Firenze.