

Touring Venezia

My first absolute, absolute, absolute **MUST-SEE** for Venice is the church of San Giorgio Maggiore. If you are familiar with the layout of Venice, you'll know that it is made up of islands and that you must take a Vaporetto (boat) to travel to a few of them. This church is on one such island catty-corner to the famous Piazza San Marco and named similarly as the island of San Giorgio Maggiore. This church will be substantially different from any other you'll see in Italy because it was built by an architect who created his own style: Andrea Palladio. The other plus is that this site in Venice is lesser known and therefore far less crowded. I highly recommend going up into the bell tower here because it will give you astonishing views of the city. Although not as tall as the bell tower at San Marco, you will get much better pictures of the beautiful St. Mark's Cathedral and surrounding piazza.

My second **MUST-SEE** suggestion is a bit more obvious. You just have to go see St. Mark's. **HAVE TO**. Within the piazza itself are few things to tour... the church, the Doge's Palace, palace grounds, and the Belltower. I would honestly suggest seeing all of these because they are the buildings that quite frankly represent Venice. As a note, **DO NOT** eat in this area! It is a tourist trap so the food is subpar at best, completely Americanized, and priiiiicey. In fact, as a rule, try to not eat at any restaurants with an English menu.

MUSEUMS (I actually only visited a couple of museums in Venice **BUT** both were outstanding and worth visiting)

Peggy Guggenheim One of the best in Italy, without a doubt. If you like more contemporary works (Cubism, Surrealism, Expressionism), this is the museum for you! Houses hundreds of works including Salvador Dali, Picasso, Jackson Pollack, and Mondrian. Even if you don't know art, **YOU WILL** recognize and appreciate a lot of these masterpieces.

Ca'Pesaro My friends and I went to this museum to waste a little time before we met up for an orchestra concert. I really enjoyed it, although my favorite part was a temporary mural exhibit that will most likely not be there anymore. However, one thing to mention is that this museum houses one bronze re-casting of Rodin's "The Thinker." Pretty cool to see in real life.

SITES

Rialto Bridge Of course! Another Venice staple. Go snap some pictures and walk around the shops, but again, avoid the ristoranti (restaurants).

Islands of Murano Perhaps you have heard about the famous Venetian glass goods. Well, this is where they come from! On Murano, you can walk around and into several different shops with fascinating gifts and trinkets made of Venetian glass. There are also glass factories to tour if you are interested in getting an up-close look at the glass-blowing and glass-molding trades that the city is known worldwide for.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Go walk the city. Start in the Piazza San Marco and wind your way through the streets. You'll find some great shopping, stumble upon beautiful architecture, and just get a better feel for the character of Venice that way.
2. As you may have noticed, I didn't give you any other church recommendations and that is simply because none stick out in my mind. While you are walking around the city, just pop into a few. They are free and you will undoubtedly come across some amazing ones.
3. As mentioned previously, stay away from the restaurants within the heavily trafficked areas. The best food at the best prices can be found in the backstreets, alleyways, and residential areas. These are also the restaurants that won't be haggling you to come eat as you pass by.
4. And on that note... if you are brave you should try Seppia al Nero, a pasta dish with squid covered in an ink sauce. It's a Venetian delicacy that you won't find prepared the same way anywhere else.
5. When I was in Venice, our group stayed on the island of Lido. I felt like it was a good central location and fairly quiet/uncongested. Buy a three-day pass for the Vaporetto and you're set!
6. You may consider taking a gondola ride but just know ahead of time that they cost around 80 Euro. I was content just taking pictures of them for free after hearing the price.
7. And lastly, have your umbrella and possibly a pair of rainboots handy. When it rains in Venice, which it often does, the streets flood. Let's just say I ruined a cute pair of flats and had to buy a pair of boots while there.

