The best places to eat, sleep and play in Venice this fall and winter

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If ever there was a place that should be described as magical, it’s Venice. This Italian city is flamboyant and decadent; its trademark accessory, after all, is the identity-obscuring mask. It nearly floats; cars are banned, replaced by gondolas, water taxis, even ambulance speedboats. Venice’s everywhere-you-look culture educates and delights. And its otherworldly beauty inspires nostalgia and romance. It’s also suffocatingly hot and crowded during peak tourist season, so even though it gets chilly between November and March, a winter visit has the benefit of breathing room.

To get the most out of Venice, visit the popular sights early in the day and spend the rest of your time getting lost on the side streets. In the late afternoon, walk from small bar to small bar and enjoy a half-glass, or ombra (shadow), of wine and antipasti. If you taste something you like, put your guidebook away and stay for a meal. It’s sure to be magical!

1. “Bring a corkscrew (in your checked luggage!) so you can buy a bottle of Italian wine and enjoy it back at the hotel.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

2. “Make sure you have some rest time in late afternoon and bring excellent walking shoes!”—TripAdvisor Member.

3. With all the bridges and unsteady gondolas, “don’t bring heavy bags because you’re the one that’ll be schlepping them around. Even wheeled bags don’t work well on the cobblestone, so don’t count on that either.”—TripAdvisor Member
VENICE'S BEST VIEWS

“The view from San Giorgio Maggiore is stupendous, as it is the ONLY place where you have the view of ALL of Venice with the Piazza San Marco in the middle. You’ll feel as if you happened upon one of Venice’s best kept secrets. Because you have!”—TripAdvisor Member, Orlando, Fla.
San Giorgio Maggiore, Isola di San Giorgio, 041 522 7827

Campanile di San Marco was originally built as a lighthouse to assist navigation in the lagoon. Take an elevator to the bell tower and savor the panorama. “The views were AMAZING! You could see the Santa Maria Della Salute, Basilica di San Marco, The Piazza, The Grand Canal...”—TripAdvisor Member, Helsinki, Finland
Campanile di San Marco, Piazza San Marco, 041 522 4064

The Rialto Bridge is Venice’s signature landmark, characterized by its 24-foot arch and built on thousands of wooden pilings that still support the bridge more than 400 years after it was built. “Make sure to get to the top; believe me, you will be at the very best spot in Venice. The view is just magical. And it’s free!”—TripAdvisor Member, Hermosillo, Mexico
Rialto Bridge

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions
1. Grand Canal
2. Campanile di San Marco, Piazza San Marco, 041 522 4064
3. Doge’s Palace (Palazzo Ducale), St. Mark’s Square, 041 271 5911
4. San Giorgio Maggiore, Isola di San Giorgio, 041 522 7827
5. St. Mark’s Square (Piazza San Marco)
6. Saint Mark’s Basilica (Basilica di San Marco), San Marco 328, 041 522 5697
7. Cannaregio
8. Torcello Island
9. Musica A Palazzo, Palazzo Barbarigo Minotto, San Marco, 040 971 7272
10. Basilica dei Frari, Campo dei Frari, San Polo, 041 522 2637

FAMILIES

“We did a mask making class at Ca’ Macana and it was a wonderful experience. The kids wanted to do it again the next day!”—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco, Calif.
Ca’ Macana, Calle delle Botteghe Dorsoduro, 041 277 6142

“...you’ll be rubbing your eyes in wonder!”

Introduce your children to the crayon-colored houses on Burano. “On your approach to the island, you’ll be rubbing your eyes in wonder! The town can probably be seen in less than an hour. However, it will take at least another hour for photos of the streets, canals and houses.”—TripAdvisor Member, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
Burano Island

ROMANCE

You can’t be in love in Venice and skip this: “Take a moonlit gondola ride. Magical and romantic!”—TripAdvisor Member, Canada
Gondola Ride, From various locations around Venice

“From the exterior, only an unassuming sign beckons you inside the Venice Jazz Club. I pulled open the heavy door and found soft red and gold candles illuminating a tiny stage set with a piano, drums, double bass and guitar.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England
Venice Jazz Club, Dorsoduro 3102, 041 523 2056

“Vaporetto down the Grand Canal: While your children will have fun riding the boat, you’ll be able to take in the breathtaking scenery of the palaces bordering the Grand Canal.”—TripAdvisor Member
Grand Canal, Various stops

“Soft red and gold candles illuminate a tiny stage.”

Don’t miss seeing a classical concert in one of Venice’s stunning locales, featuring the works of “Vivaldi, Corelli, Albinoni, Mozart, Rossini and others. You’ll see notices all over the city, with concerts in different venues, including churches and the Prisons of the Doge’s Palace.”—TripAdvisor Member, Australia
Concerts, Various venues

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**Where to PLAY**

**BUDGET**

“*Italia Telecom Future Centre* is situated in a beautiful old convent in San Salvador right near the Rialto. It’s free, and you’re given a computer card. There are up-to-the-minute computer games and, best of all, 30 minutes of free internet access in an upstairs internet cafe.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

*Telecom Italia Future Centre*, Campo San Salvador, San Marco, 4826, 041 521 3200

**ADVENTURE**

“If you want to rent a boat and drive yourself around The Lagoon, you can hire a small launch. Do be careful, as much is very shallow and it’s only too easy to get stranded on a mudbank if you leave the marked deep-water channels.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chorley, U.K.

**The Lagoon**

“Walk across the bridge and you’ll find the Rialto Market, a street lined with fruit, vegetable and fish stalls that have been there for centuries. Have an espresso in one of the many coffee shops, then buy some fruit for a picnic.”—TripAdvisor Member, Kent, U.K.

*Rialto Market*

“*If you enjoy a game of golf, then I recommend a round at Circolo Golf Venezia, on Lido at Alberoni. It’s home to the Italian Senior Masters and is a very fine course indeed, with the quirkiest par-three hole (the 9th) that I’ve played.*”—TripAdvisor Member, Surrey, U.K.

*Circolo Golf Venezia*, Via del Forte, Alberoni-Lido, 041 731 333

**EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL**

“Saint Mark’s Basilica is a ‘must see.’ It’s an extravaganza of gold, marble, glass and mosaics. Be sure also to visit the loggia, where there are magnificent views of St Mark’s inside, and then walk out onto the roof to view St. Mark’s square.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

*Saint Mark’s Basilica (Basilica di San Marco)*, San Marco 328, 041 522 5697

“Book a secret itineraries tour at the Doge’s Palace! It’s a few euros more but well worth it. You get a behind-the-scenes look into the history and inner workings of the Venetian republic. Then you get to wander by yourself through the palace.”—TripAdvisor Member, Seattle, Wash.

*Doge’s Palace (Palazzo Ducale)*, San Marco I, Piazzetta, 041 271 5911

**RELAXATION**

Originally built in the mid-13th century, “*Santa Maria dei Frari* held such a feeling of peace, I could have stayed there for hours.”—TripAdvisor Member, Huntersville, N.C.

*St. Mary of the Friars (Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari)*, Campo dei Frari, San Polo, 041 272 8618

“Ca’ Rezzonico “recreates an 18th-century Venetian Palace, and you really feel like you’re stepping back in time. I was there at a quiet time and could linger. There were plenty of places to sit and gaze at the wonderful art and decor.”—TripAdvisor Member, New Romney, England

*Ca’ Rezzonico*, Fondamenta Rezzonico, Dorsoduro 3136, 041 241 0100

**Piazza San Marco** costs nothing to enjoy—except maybe the cost of the bread to feed the pigeons. “Once at the square, you are able to find your way around the canals and alleys much more easily.”—TripAdvisor Member, Eden, Australia

**Piazza San Marco (St. Mark’s Square)**

Test your endurance at Merceria, the busiest shopping street in Venice. “It was like heaven. I could have shopped there for ages if I’d had enough money.”—TripAdvisor Member, Helsinki, Finland

*Merceria*

“In the Jewish Ghetto, it’s an eerie feeling to walk through the gates, when you know they were shut tight at night for many, many years. We were very happy to see that the Jewish population, though small, still thrives in Venice.”—TripAdvisor Member, New Jersey

*Jewish Ghetto and Museum (Ghetto Ebraico di Venezia)*, Campo del Ghetto Nuovo, Cannaregio 2902/b, 041 715 359

**“It was like heaven.”**

**“...an extravaganza of gold, marble, glass and mosaics.”**

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 8,000,000 traveler photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It’s almost like being there!

Discover some of the most beautiful works of Tintoretto at San Rocco. “I tell anyone who is touring Venice to visit. If not for a local introducing me to this part of Venice, I may have left without discovering it.”—TripAdvisor Member, Sydney, Australia

*San Rocco (Scuola of St. Rocco)*, San Polo 3052 Campo San Rocco, 041 523 4864

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"A gondola ride is a must, a once in a lifetime. Haggle as hard as you can and enjoy a lovely ride at dusk. You won’t regret it."—TripAdvisor Member, Madrid, Spain

Buy a mask and see how it was made with a mask-making tour at Ca' Macana. "This mask shop has something for everyone. There are masks covering every inch of space in the workshop."—TripAdvisor Member, Los Angeles, Calif.

“If you like glass, colors, arts and atmosphere, you definitely need to see Murano, an island almost entirely dedicated to the art of glass.”—TripAdvisor Member, France.
WHERE to eat

FAMILIES

“We had a great dinner at Taverna Ciardi. We had five teens, and our waiter didn’t blink an eye, just went on to charm everyone. Great food that encouraged our kids to try some true Venetian dishes.”—TripAdvisor Member, Eugene, Ore.

Taverna Ciardi, Cannaregio 1885, 041 524 1026

“A real treasure, Ae Cravate is bright and colorful without being gaudy. It’s laid out so it’s never crowded or noisy, even when quite full.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

Osteria ae Cravate, Salizzada S. Pantalon, Santa Croce 36/37, 041 528 7912

Gelateria Nico offers “super ice cream but also excellent coffee, spritz and bar food. It’s nice to sit outside overlooking the Giudecca Canal. Prices reasonable.”—TripAdvisor Member, Lancashire, U.K.

Gelateria Nico, Fondamenta Zattere, Dorsoduro 922, 041 522 5293

ROMANCE

“Bistrot de Venise is wonderful. The dining inside and outside is just perfect for a romantic evening for two in Venice. The food is excellent, and the wine list is extensive and priced for every taste. A great dining experience close to St. Mark’s Square.”—TripAdvisor Member, Bristol, U.K.

Bistrot de Venise, San Marco 4685, Calle dei Fabbri, 041 523 6651

“Yesterday, armed with our map, we went on a mission to have lunch at Algiubagio. We were rewarded with a warm welcome, fabulous food and exceptional wine. The restaurant is located in a charming old boathouse. We hope to return in summer and enjoy the terrace on the lagoon.”—TripAdvisor Member, Madrid, Spain

Algiubagio, Cannareggio 5039, Fundamente Nuove, 041 523 6084

Hidden in a former 15th-century chapel of the Zorzi family, Giardinetto Di Severino has “a lovely outdoor garden for dining, as well. Great authentic Venetian cuisine.”—TripAdvisor Member

Giardinetto Di Severino, Ruga Giuffa, Castello 4928, 041 528 5332

BUDGET

For “a lovely Venetian meal within a budget, try Trattoria Tre Spiedi, with a warm, family-restaurant feel and friendly service. It’s popular with the local residents.”—TripAdvisor Member, United Kingdom

Trattoria Tre Spiedi, SS. Apostoli — Cannaregio 5906, 041 520 8035

For a true taste of Venice, visit Da Mario. “It’s closed on Saturdays. Workmen only until 1 P.M. Rough and ready local workmen’s trattoria. Basic good cooking, reasonable prices, very informal – no menu!”—TripAdvisor Member, Lancashire, U.K.

Da Mario, S. Marco 2614, 041 528 5968

San Trovaso is a “reliable pizzeria/trattoria. Reasonably priced. Popular, must book table in evenings and queue until they open.”—TripAdvisor Member, Lancashire, U.K.

San Trovaso, Fondamente Priuli, Dorsoduro 1016, on Rio di S. Trovaso, 041 520 3703

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“The problem within a short distance of San Marco is the rip-off tourist establishments. Beware of anywhere with staff outside trying to tempt you to enter. Look carefully and cautiously at any ‘Menu Turisco.’ Many are reasonable value, but some offer poor quality.

“There is a lot to be said for walking the short distance into Dorsoduro or Cannaregio and checking out trattoria and ristorante in areas with slightly lower prices.”—TripAdvisor Member

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WHERE to eat

HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

At La Zucca, “the menu changes every day. There are lots of vegetarian-friendly dishes.”—TripAdvisor Member, Lancashire, U.K.
La Zucca, 1762 Santa Croce, Ponte del Megio, 041 524 1570

“Reputedly the best restaurant in Venice—certainly the only one with a Michelin star—is Da Fiore. They do a ‘fritto misto’ of vegetables and are unusual in offering a good selection of regional cheeses.”—TripAdvisor Member, Lancashire, U.K.
Ristorante Osteria Da Fiore, San Polo 2202, 041 721 308

“My husband and I enjoyed a wonderful meal at La Furatola. The place was filled with locals. They specialize in seafood only, and delicious fresh seafood is what you will eat! My sea bass was perfectly cooked and beautifully presented.”—TripAdvisor Member, Mountain Lakes, N.J.
La Furatola, Dorso Duro 2869, Calle Lunga San Barnaba, 041 520 8594

HIDDEN GEMS

Trattoria Borghi, a “lovely, small restaurant, away from the tourist areas, gives you a sight on the local life. It’s worth coming for the tasty spaghetti and other delicacies.”—TripAdvisor Member
Trattoria Borghi, S. Basilio 1526, 041 521 0028

“Hidden away in the backstreets of San Polo, Giardinetto serves traditional Venetian dishes such as salted cod, seafood risotto and a very heady zabaglione.”—TripAdvisor Member, York, U.K.
Osteria Antico Giardinetto, Calle dei Morti 2253, Santa Croce, 041 722 882

“Thoroughly enjoyed eating at a Rosa Rossa. The service, food and prices were excellent. Make a reservation and ask for an outside table. This family-owned restaurant is a gem.”—TripAdvisor Member, Pennsylvania.
Rosa Rossa, Calle della Mandola, San Marco 3709, 041 523 4605

“... a ‘fritto misto’ of vegetables”

SPECIAL EVENTS

Lace up your running shoes and get going at the Venice Marathon, a spectacular course beginning in the village of Stra and continuing through small Riviera towns and across bridges to its finish at the center of Venice. (October 23)
Venice Marathon, Stra – Venice, 041 532 1871, http://www.venicemarathon.it

Head to Mirano for Fiera de l’Oca, a unique historical celebration where teams reenact and reconstruct an 18th century town fair, focusing on the theme of the goose. (November 12 – 13)
Fiera de l’Oca, Piazza Martiri di Mirano, Mirano, 041 432 433, http://www.giocodelloca.it

Enjoy some holiday cheer—and shopping—during Natale in Laguna, a three-week Christmas market with vendors, food and concerts in Campo Santo Stefano. (December)
Natale in Laguna, Campo S. Stefano

Join hundreds of locals and visitors at Lido Beach to celebrate the New Year with dancing, swimming and feasting. (January 1)
New Year’s in Lido, Lido Beach

On the 12th Day of Christmas, let your true love give to you fifty-plus men, dressed up as Epiphany witches, racing their boats down the Grand Canal during the Witches’ Regatta. (January 6)
Witches’ Regatta, Grand Canal, 041 523 7933

Music, dance, food, comedy, performance, magic, artwork, elaborate costumes with the traditional Venetian masks, all of these and much more make up the Carnevale of Venice. The city’s most flamboyant and popular festival draws thousands of visitors every year. (February 11 – 21)
Carnevale of Venice, throughout Venice, http://www.carnevale.venezia.it

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**FAMILIES**

At **Residence Corte Grimani**, “we had a spacious, immaculate apartment. This was our children’s favorite trip ever! The gondoliers passed right by our windows (all four of them!), and we enjoyed their serenades without paying a ton of money for a gondola ride. A wonderful experience that we’ll remember forever!”—TripAdvisor Member, Germany

**Residence Corte Grimani, Corte Grimani, San Marco 4402, 041 241 0719**

“The **Residenza Ca’Foscolo** was a wonderful family hotel. The children loved being on the little balcony, watching the gondolas go by and the front desk couldn’t have been more helpful. They even tracked us down when my husband left an item behind!”—TripAdvisor Member, Santa Barbara, Calif.

**Residenza Ca’Foscolo, Castello 5526, 041 526 7123**

“Our room overlooked a canal, and it was fun for the boys to see the gondolas going past. We arrived by train and took a water taxi.” The **Hotel Becher** has its own private landing for arrivals by boat.—TripAdvisor Member, Melbourne, Australia

**Hotel Becher, San Marco 1857, 041 522 1253**

**ROMANCE**

“From the classic old world charm and decor to the modern bathroom and amenities, the **Hotel Palazzo Stern** is a truly fantastic find. Absolutely beautiful - a 13th century Venetian aura with a modern twist. This hotel was way beyond our expectations.”—TripAdvisor Member, Melbourne, Australia

**Hotel Palazzo Stern, Dorsoduro 2792-2794/A-2792/B, 041 277 0869**

“You simply must go to **Hotel Al Ponte Mocenigo**. We had a SPLENDID mini-suite with a dressing room, gorgeous marble bathroom and Venetian decor. Heavenly croissants filled with apricots fresh every morning and the BEST cappuccino of my life. It would make a perfect romantic rendezvous.”—TripAdvisor Member, Islamabad, Pakistan

**Hotel Al Ponte Mocenigo, S. Croce 2063, 041 524 4797**

“The magic of Venice is much enhanced by the **Locanda Orseolo** experience! Our hosts were the most amazing hoteliers we’ve ever met—very warm and welcoming and extremely professional. They’ll call you by your first name, will care whether you’re having a good time and will tell you to ‘feel at home.’ And they will mean it!”—TripAdvisor Member, Athens, Greece

**Locanda Orseolo, Corte Zorzi, San Marco 1083, 041 520 4827**

**BUDGET**

“Stay at **Hotel Mary** and have no worries! We had a blast. There’s a bus that takes you on the island in no time. I would stay there again in a heartbeat.”—TripAdvisor Member, Rome, Italy

**Hotel Mary, Via Orlando 152, Campalto, 041 542 0341**

“If you want a five-star experience in a three-star hotel, go to **Hotel Al Duca di Venezia**. Fantastic staff and high class materials in a classic design. It’s situated away from the busy parts of the city but still within comfortable walking distance to everything.”—TripAdvisor Member, Copenhagen, Denmark

**Hotel Al Duca di Venezia, Fontego dei Turchi 1739, Santa Croce, 041 812 3069**

**Hotel Ca’ Dogaressa** “is unimpressive from the outside, but our room, overlooking the Cannaregio Canal, was beautifully appointed, clean and spacious. Value was excellent as the hotel is outside the triangle of tourism but just a 20-minute stroll from everything.”—TripAdvisor Member, Montreal, Quebec

**Hotel Ca’ Dogaressa, Fondamenta di Cannaregio 1018, 041 275 9441**

**LUXURY**

“When my wife and I were shown to our room at the **Hotel Canal Grande**, we just looked at each other... speechless. It was stunning, luxuriously furnished, with a large bathroom which had a canal view! An enchanting room in a magical location!”—TripAdvisor Member, Sydney, Australia

**Hotel Canal Grande, Santa Croce 932, Campo San Simeone Grande, 041 244 0148**

“I sadly left Venice after a wonderful stay at the remarkable **Palazzo Sant’Angelo**. The hotel is quiet and well placed, with a vaporetto stop right at its doorstep. The bar is a comfortable place to relax and watch life on the Grand Canal float by.”—TripAdvisor Member, Brisbane, Australia

**Palazzo Sant’Angelo sul Canal Grande, San Marco, 3878/b – 3488, 041 241 1452**

“AD Place “has a magical feeling that overwhelms you. Bordering a small canal, it has a very romantic atmosphere, and the decoration is just beautiful. The staff was just amazing. They offered us a bottle of champagne and a bouquet of roses.”—TripAdvisor Member, France

**AD Place, San Marco Fondamenta della Fenice 2557/A, 041 241 3234**

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Where to STAY

HIDDEN GEMS

Three things “make the difference” between Ca’ dei Dogi and other hotels in Venice. “The first is its location! Right in the middle of all the action in Venice but in an absolutely quiet location. The other two reasons are Stephano and Susanna, the most kind and helpful hosts that we have found in any hotel!”—TripAdvisor Member, Coimbra, Portugal

Ca’ dei Dogi, Corte Santa Scolastica, Castello 4242, 041 241 3751

Oltre il Giardino is a “hidden oasis of peace and relaxation at the end of the street, along a canal and around the corner from a lovely square lined with shops. Tucked just far enough away from the crowds but close enough to the vaporetto to take you anywhere you want to go in minutes.”—TripAdvisor Member, Wilmington, Del.

Oltre il Giardino, Fondamenta Contarini, San Polo, 041 275 0015

“What a fantastic hotel! Antiche Figure is—the friendliest place I have ever stayed. Went there to confess my undying love for my man and the hotel staff made sure our stay (and the moment) was perfect. It was a magical trip and Antiche Figure sprinkled its own bit of magic to make it absolute perfection.”—TripAdvisor Member, Basingstoke, England

Antiche Figure, Santa Croce 686, 041 275 9486

Oltre il Giardino

Corte Santa Scolastica, Castello 4242, 041 241 3751

Ca’ dei Dogi

Oltre il Giardino

Fondamenta Contarini, San Polo, 041 275 0015

Antiche Figure, Santa Croce 686, 041 275 9486

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