

Maneuvering Through Milan: A Traveler's Guide

The second largest city in Italy, Milan functions as the country's chief center of finance, manufacturing, and international trade. The city is located in the plains of Lombardy, which lies in the northern part of Italy. Quite a number of tourists visit Milan to witness its priceless art pieces, architectural wonders, and its impeccable taste in fashion. A trip to the city will not be complete if you fail to see Milan's Cathedral, La Scala, the Sforza Castle, the Santa Maria delle Grazie, and if your budget allows you, you may even opt to go shopping.

Piazza del Duomo (Milan's Cathedral, Museum & the Galleria Vittoria Emanuele II)

Milan's Cathedral, or the Duomo, stands on the heart of the city, and the nearby areas include many cultural attractions like the Museum of Duomo and Galleria Vittoria Emanuele II. All of these structures are situated in and around the Piazza del Duomo.

The Duomo is a huge gothic cathedral that can comfortably accommodate approximately twenty-five thousand patrons. In the scale, this edifice ranks as the second largest Catholic Church and is the fourth largest cathedral on earth. The Duomo also offers other interesting art pieces like the reliquary near the roof that carries what is thought to be the nail from Jesus' Cross. Another is the sculpture of St. Bartholomew presented with his skin on top of his shoulders. This statue is a recollection of the death of the apostle due to flaking. Then if you want to have a bird's eye view of central Milan, hop on the lift and stroll about the rooftop. Remember, this is a church so proper clothes must be worn.

From the Cathedral, you can drop by the adjacent museum. On display are statues, relics, paintings, and other pieces of metalwork. Most pieces depict the church's 600 years of history. The Galleria Vittorio is but a shopping mall, not much history but offers great items at affordable prices.

La Scala

This is one of the world's most noted opera houses. If you are a music lover, you may want to schedule your trip matching an event or a festival. An example is the Jazz Festival held in the month of November or the Festa del Naviglio that takes place every June. With the festivities there will always be parades and musical performances. For the opera fan, witnessing a performance at La Scala will certainly hit the right note.

Sforza Castle

This was once a palace fortress designed to protect the Sforza family and the distinguished patrons of the city. Unfortunately, the structure obtained quite a beating from time. It was not until the turn of the last century that the castle received its much needed restoration. As for the attractions, the most popular is the unfinished sculpture of Michelangelo's Rondanini. But there are also noteworthy places like the Museo d'Arte Antica, which houses Gothic as well as Renaissance pieces.

Santa Maria delle Grazie

The Last Supper, Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper. This priceless painting is displayed within the walls of the Santa Maria delle Grazie Convent. With the hype created by the book (and full length film) 'Da Vinci Code', visiting the convent may be a tad difficult because the volume of sightseers who may enter is regulated. Reservation is recommended, particularly during the Easter season.

Shopping

If you are a shopaholic and your funds are everything but limited, then Milan is your paradise. To obtain designer clothes, top of the line shoes, or exquisite jewellery, you may chose to stroll along the streets framing the Montenapoleone Metro Station. The boutiques themselves are an architectural delight, so take time to observe these structures. If burning a hole in your pocket is not an option, visit the Galleria Vittoria Emanuele II.

These are a few of the places to go to when in Milan. Take your pick and take pleasure in it!

About the Author

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