



# The Veneto

Seen in the early rose light of dawn, the tranquil rhomboid of Piazza San Marco seems like an impossible dream. At the heart of Venice, which in turn lies at the core of one of Italy's most powerful regions, the square with its basilica, ducal palace and soaring bell tower, is an unforgettable sight. Countless lanes and canals weave around the world's most unique medieval city, floating on a lagoon.

Beyond spreads the Veneto, for centuries the mainland treasure chest of the Venetian Republic and today one of Italy's economic engines. Set aside a few days to behold Giotto's extraordinary frescoes in Padua, the Palladian pleasures of Vicenza and the romance of riverside Verona. Plenty of smaller centres equally ooze charm, as does the countryside. With time, you could explore the hamlets, vineyards and valleys of the Valpolicella wine-making region, the tight medieval centre of Treviso (Benetton country) and the elegant home to grappa (Italy's firewater), Bassano del Grappa. Explore hilltop beauties like Asolo and the castle of Soave, surrounded by vineyards. Further north, Belluno is the perfect base for spectacular hiking in the staggering eastern Dolomites.

The region's cuisine is founded on rice and polenta. Risotto is cooked with almost everything the Veneto has to offer – from baby peas to baby crabs. The single most popular tippale is *prosecco*, a generic bubbly that flows freely in bars across the region, but most locals finish the day with a biting afternoon *spritz* – the classic Veneto apéritif, made of one part *prosecco*, one part soda and one part bitters (like Campari or the slightly sweeter Aperol). *Cin cin!*

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Witness the golden splendour of the mosaics in Venice's **Basilica di San Marco** (p342)
- Check out the modern art of the **Peggy Guggenheim Collection** (p349) and **Ca' Pesaro** (p351) in Venice
- Be charmed by the pastel-hued houses of the lace-making isle of **Burano** (p355)
- Tour Palladio's villas, from the **Brenta Riviera** (p366) to **Vicenza** (p372)
- Judge Giotto's mastery in Padua's **Cappella degli Scrovegni** (p367)
- Enjoy summertime opera at the **Roman Arena** (p378) or the extraordinary art in the **Basilica di San Zeno** (p380) in **Verona**
- Walk in the Alpine pastures and craggy peaks of the **Dolomites** (p387)



■ POPULATION: 4.69 million

■ AREA: 18,378 sq km



## HISTORY

The bloody barbarian invasions of the 5th and 6th centuries AD obliged people of the Roman Veneto towns and along the Adriatic to flee to the marshy islands of the Venetian lagoon.

In the 6th century, the islands began to form a loose federation, with each community electing representatives to a central authority, although its leaders were under the sway of Byzantine rulers in Ravenna. Byzantium's hold over Italy weakened in the early 8th century and in AD 726 the people of Venice elected their first doge (duke), whose successors would lead the city for more than 1000 years.

By the late 11th century, Venice was a Mediterranean merchant power, prospering from the chaos caused by the First Crusade in 1095. At the beginning of the 13th century, under Doge Enrico Dandolo, Venice led the Fourth Crusade on a devastating detour to Constantinople. Venice not only kept most of the treasures plundered from that great metropolis, it also retained most of the territories won during the crusade, consolidating its maritime might in the Eastern Mediterranean. In 1271, the young Venetian merchant Marco Polo set out with his father and uncle on an overland trip to China, returning by sea more than 20 years later. Their adventure was symbolic of the enterprising spirit of Venice.

During much of the 13th and 14th centuries the Venetians struggled with Genoa for supremacy at sea, a tussle that culminated in Genoa's defeat in 1380 during an epic siege at Chioggia. The Venetians then turned their attentions to the mainland, absorbing most of the Veneto and portions of what are now Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna.

However, several events beyond Venetian control began to have a telling effect on the lagoon city. The increasing power of the Turks forced the Venetians to deploy forces to protect their Mediterranean interests. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the Venetian territory of Morea (in Greece) in 1499 gave the Turks control of access to the Adriatic Sea.

Worse still in the long term, the discovery of the Americas in 1492 and the rounding of Africa's Cape of Good Hope in 1498 by Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama opened up new trade routes that would eventually supplant the Mediterranean and allow European importers to avoid Venetian taxes and duties.

Even so, Venice long remained a formidable power. The *dogi*, the Signoria (a council

of 10 high ministers that effectively constituted the executive arm of government) and, later, the much feared judicial *Consiglio dei Dieci* (Council of Ten) ruled with an iron fist. They headed a complex system of councils and government committees, of which the *Maggiore Consiglio* (Great Council) was the equivalent of parliament. The doge, an elected leader, was the head of state and generally the most powerful individual in government, but a complex set of checks and balances limited his power and ensured that Venice was ruled by a tightknit oligarchy. A decree in 1297 virtually closed off membership of the *Maggiore Consiglio* to all but the most established patriarchal families. In all, Venetian government was among the most stable and, in a narrow sense, democratic in Italy and, for that matter, most of Europe.

For security reasons, Venetians were encouraged to spy on each other wherever the Venetian Republic had an interest. Acts considered detrimental to the state were punished swiftly. Trials were rarely public but executions commonly so – the classic location was between the columns bearing the statues of the Lion of St Mark and St Theodore on Piazzetta San Marco. On occasion, though, a body would just turn up on the street as a potent example to other potentially wayward citizens.

Venice was remarkably cosmopolitan, its commerce attracting people of all nationalities, from Parisians to Persians. And although Venice limited the activities of its Jewish community, which it concentrated in what was one of Europe's earliest ghettos, it did nothing to stifle Judaism. Similarly, the Armenians were permitted religious freedom for centuries and were given protection during the infamous Inquisition. That Muslim Turkish traders were granted use of a *fondaco* (major commercial building) in Venice was little short of astounding.

The city's wealth was made all the more conspicuous by the luxury goods traded and produced there. Venice had a European monopoly on the making of Murano glass, its merchants had reintroduced the art of making mosaics, and Venetian artisans made fine silks and delicate lace.

But even as her people wallowed in well-being, Venice was on the wane. Turkey and the Papal States made gains at the Republic's expense during the 16th and 17th centuries, and in 1669 Venice lost Crete (its last

Mediterranean stronghold) to the Turks after a 25-year battle.

Finally, in 1797 the Maggior Consiglio meekly opened the city's gates to Napoleon, who in turn handed Venice over to the Austrians. The movement for Italian unification spread quickly through the Veneto and, after several rebellions, Venice was united with the nascent Kingdom of Italy in 1866. The city was bombed during WWI but suffered only minor damage during WWII, when most attacks were aimed at the neighbouring industrial zones of Mestre and Porto Marghera.

The city's prestige as a tourist destination grew during the 19th century as it was surpassed as a trade port by Trieste. Today, Venice's modest permanent population (a third of what it was in the 1950s) is swollen by up to 20 million visitors each year, two-thirds of them day-trippers.

## ORIENTATION

Venice is built on 117 small islands and has some 150 canals and 410 bridges. Only three bridges cross the Grand Canal: the Ponte di Rialto, the Ponte dell'Accademia and the Ponte dei Scalzi. A fourth bridge should already be in place but the Ponte di Calatrava, between Piazzale Roma and Fondamenta di Santa Lucia (for the train station), has been beset by problems – a completion date now is anyone's guess.

To the north and south stretch the shallow waters of the Laguna Veneta, dotted by a crumbling mosaic of islands, islets and rocks. Among them, Murano, Burano and Torcello are all of interest and lie to the north. Acting as a breakwater to the east, the long and slender Lido di Venezia stretches 10km south, followed by another similarly sleek island, Pellestrina, which reaches like a bony finger down to the sleepy town of Chioggia. The latter marks where the mainland closes off the lagoon to the south.

The city is divided into six *sestieri* (districts): Cannaregio, Castello, San Marco, San Polo, Dorsoduro and Santa Croce. These divisions date to 1171. In the east, the islands of San Pietro and Sant'Elena, largely ignored by visitors, are attached to Castello by two and three bridges respectively.

You can drive your car to Venice and park on arrival. Ferries also transport cars to the Lido (although buses there are more than adequate). In Venice itself, all public transport is by *vapo-*

*retto* (small passenger ferry) along the canals. To cross the Grand Canal between the bridges, use a *traghetto* (literally ferry), a commuter gondola. Signs direct you to the *traghetto* points.

The alternative is to go *a piedi* (on foot). To walk from the train station to Piazza San Marco (St Mark's Square) will take a good half-hour – follow the signs to San Marco. Try to avoid the main routes – take a little time to get lost rather than making for San Marco like a bullet out of the gun (see p356).

For more on local transport, see p365.

## Maps

Aside from Lonely Planet's *Venice* map, one of the best is *Venezia*, produced by the Touring Club Italiano (scale 1:5000). If you plan to stay for the long haul, *Calli, Campielli e Canali* (Edizioni Helvetica) is for you. This book is the definitive street guide and will allow you to locate to within 100m any Venetian-style address you need. You can also check out the interactive online map at [www.ombra.net](http://www.ombra.net).

## INFORMATION

### Bookshops

**Giunti al Punto** (Map p352; ☎ 041 275 01 52; Campo San Geremia, Cannaregio 282; 🕒 9am–8pm Mon–Wed, 9am–10pm Thu, 9am–midnight Fri & Sat, 10am–10pm Sun) Late-night readers in need of a paperback (several languages catered for) can head here any day of the week.

**Studium** (Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 522 23 82; Calle de la Canonica 337a) A good selection of English-language guides and books on Venice.

### Emergency

**Police station** (Map pp338–9; ☎ 041 270 55 11; Fondamenta di San Lorenzo, Castello 5053) Head here if you have been robbed. There's a handy branch at Piazza San Marco 67 (Map pp344–5).

### Internet Access

**Planet Internet** (Map p352; ☎ 041 524 41 88; Rio Terà San Leonardo, Cannaregio 1519; per hr €8; 🕒 9am–11pm)

**World House** (Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 528 48 71; [www.world-house.org](http://www.world-house.org); Calle della Chiesa, Castello 4502; per hr €8; 🕒 10am–11pm)

### Laundry

**Laundry** (Map pp344–5; [www.laundry.it](http://www.laundry.it); Calle Chioverette, Santa Croce 665b; 8kg wash €4, 12kg dry €4; 🕒 7.30am–10.30pm)

**Speedy Wash** (Map p352; Rio Terà San Leonardo, Cannaregio 1520; 8kg wash €5, 15 min dry €3; 🕒 8am–10pm)

## Medical Services

Information on late-night pharmacies is listed in *Un Ospite di Venezia* (A Guest in Venice; available in many hotels) and daily newspapers such as *Il Gazzettino* and *La Nuova Venezia*.

**Ospedale Civile** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 529 41 11; Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo 6777) This is the main hospital. For emergency treatment, go straight to the *pronto soccorso* (casualty) section, where you can also get emergency dental treatment.

**Ospedale Umberto I** (☎ 041 260 71 11; Via Circonvallazione 50) A modern mainland hospital.

## Money

Several bank branches, most with ATMs, cluster around Ponte di Rialto and San Marco.

Numerous bureaux de change are scattered across the city and at the train station.

**American Express** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 08 44; Salizada San Moisè, San Marco 1471; 🕒 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat) Has an ATM for Amex cards.

**Travelex** Piazza San Marco (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 73 58; Piazza San Marco 142; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-5pm Sun); Rialto (Map pp344-5; Riva del Ferro 5126)

## Post

**Post office** (Map pp344-5; Salizada del Fondaco dei Tedeschi; 🕒 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) Near the Ponte di Rialto. Stamps are available at windows in the central courtyard. There is something special about doing your post in this former trading house. Stand by the well in the

### A STREET BY ANY OTHER NAME

The names for the types of street in use today in Venice go back to the 11th century and bear little relationship to the terminology used in mainland cities – Venice always did see itself as apart from the rest.

### Types of Streets

Of course, the waterways are not streets at all. The main ones are called *canale* (canals), while the bulk of them are called *rio*. Where a *rio* has been filled in it becomes a *rio terà*.

What anywhere else in Italy would be a *via* (street) is, in Venice, a *calle*. A street beside a canal is a *fondamenta*. A *ruga* or *rughetta* is a smaller street flanked by houses and shops, while those called *salizada* (sometimes spelt *salizzata*) were among the first streets to be paved. A *ramo* is a tiny side lane, often connecting two bigger streets. A *corte* is a small dead-end street or courtyard. A quay is a *riva*, and where a street passes under a building (something like an extended archway) it is called a *sotoportego*. A *piscina* is not a swimming pool but a once-stagnant pool that's been filled in.

The only square in Venice called a *piazza* is San Marco (St Mark's Square); all the others are called *campo* (except for the bus-station area, which is called Piazzale Roma). The small version is a *campiello*. On maps you may see the following abbreviations:

- Calle – C, Cl
- Campo – Cpo
- Corte – Cte
- Fondamenta – Fond, Fondam, F
- Palazzo – Pal
- Salizada – Sal, Saliz

### Street Numbering

Confused? You will be. Venice has its own style of street numbering, introduced by the Austrians in 1841. Instead of a system based on individual streets, each *sestiere* (district) has a long series of numbers. A hotel might give its address as San Marco 4687, which doesn't seem to help much. Because the *sestieri* are fairly small, wandering around and searching out the number is technically feasible. But there is precious little apparent logic to the run of numbers – frustration is never far away. Most streets are named, so where possible we provide street names as well as the *sestiere* number.

For suggestions on navigational aids, see opposite.

## VENICE





middle and imagine the bustle back in the Republic's trading heyday as German traders and brokers shuffled goods around the ground floor or struck deals in their quarters on the upper levels.

## Telephone

There is a bank of **telephones** (Map pp344-5; Calle Galeazza) near the post office. You will also find phones at the train station. Unstaffed phone offices can be found at:

**Cannaregio** (Map pp344-5; Strada Nova)

**San Marco** (Map pp344-5; Calle San Luca 4585)

## Tourist Information

**Azienda di Promozione Turistica** (APT; central information line ☎ 041 529 87 11; www.turismovenezia.it) has several branches around Venice that can provide information on the town and the province:

**Chioggia** (☎ 041 40 10 68; www.chioggiatourism.it; Lungomare Adriatico 101, Sottomarina; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm) Reduced hours in winter.

**Infopoint** (Map pp344-5; Venice Pavilion; ☎ 10am-6pm) Next to Giardini Ex Reali, a quick walk from Piazza San Marco.

**Lido** (Gran Viale Santa Maria Elisabetta 6a; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3.30-6pm Jun-Sep)

**Marco Polo airport** (arrivals hall; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm)

**Piazzale Roma** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 1.30-4.30pm Nov-Mar, 9.30am-6.30pm Apr-Oct) Next to Garage Comunale.

**Piazza San Marco** (Map pp344-5; Piazza San Marco 71f; ☎ 9am-3.30pm) Staff will assist with information on hotels, transport and things to see and do in the city.

**Stazione di Santa Lucia** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 8am-6.30pm) Open as late as 8pm in summer.

The useful monthly booklet *Un Ospite di Venezia*, published by a group of Venetian hoteliers, is available from some hotels. Ask also for *La Rivista di Venezia*, a free monthly magazine with a *Shows & Events* listings insert.

You can contact the tourist offices of the **Sportello di Conciliazione Turistica** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 529 87 10; complaint.appt@turismovenezia.it; Fondamenta di San Lorenzo, Castello 5050; ☎ 8.30am-1.30pm Mon-Fri) with complaints, although it doesn't promise much more than to listen.

## Travel Agencies

**CTS** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 56 60; www.cts.it in Italian; Calle Foscari, Dorsoduro 3252) The main Italian student-and-youth travel organisation.

**Gran Canal Viaggi** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 271 21 11; Calle del Lovo, San Marco 4759/4760)

## SIGHTS

After wafting down the Grand Canal, you will want to organise yourself to see some of the cream of Venice's countless extraordinary sights. The following section is roughly divided into the city's *sestieri*; together the sights form a circuit through the city, starting and ending in Piazza San Marco.

### Grand Canal

Described in the 15th century by the French writer Philippe de Commynes as 'the finest street in the world, with the finest houses', the Grand Canal still rivals the world's great boulevards. It weaves for 3.5km through the city like a huge, back-to-front 'S', with a depth of about 6m and a width ranging from 40m to 100m. Taking a *vaporetto* is the only way to see the incredible parade of buildings, including more than 100 *palazzi*, which date from the 12th to the 18th centuries. Board *vaporetto* No 1 at Piazzale Roma and grab a seat on the deck at the back.

Perhaps by the time you have this book in your hands you will pass first under the **Ponte di Calatrava** (see Map pp344-5 for all sights in this section unless otherwise indicated), a daring bridge designed by the Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava.

Not far past the train station are the **Ponte dei Scalzi** and the Canale di Cannaregio (the city's second-largest canal) and just after the Riva di Biasio stop (to the right) is the **Fondaco dei Turchi**. Once a Turkish warehouse and now housing the **Museo Civico di Storia Naturale** (Natural History Museum; Map pp344-5), the building is recognisable by the three-storey towers on either side of its colonnade.

The canal continues past the Rio di San Marcuola to **Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi** (Map p352) on the left. Richard Wagner died here in 1883 and it is now a fine Renaissance home for the casino (see p363).

Further on and to the right, just after the San Stae stop, **Ca' Pesaro** houses the Galleria d'Arte Moderna and Museo d'Arte Orientale.

Shortly after, to the left, is the **Ca' d'Oro** (Golden House), acclaimed as the most beautiful Gothic building in Venice. To the right, as the boat turns for the Ponte di Rialto, is the **pescaria** (fish market) on Campo della Pescaria, built in 1907 (there has been a fish market on the site for centuries).

On the right, just after the *pescaria*, are the **Fabbriche Nuove**, built in 1555 by Jacopo



## CUTTING ADMISSION COSTS

### Rolling Venice Concession Pass

If you are aged between 14 and 29 years, pick up the Rolling Venice card (€4), which offers significant discounts on food, accommodation, entertainment, public transport, museums and galleries. You can get the card at tourist offices, ACTV public transport ticket points and Hello-Venezia information and ticket stands. Two of the latter are located in front of the train station (Map pp344–5) and the Venice Pavilion Infopoint (Map pp344–5). The Rolling Venice map lists all the hotels, restaurants, shops, museums, cinemas and theatres where the card entitles you to reductions.

### Other Discounts

Admission to state museums is free for EU citizens under 18 or over 65. In Venice this means just a handful of locations: the Gallerie dell'Accademia, the Ca' d'Oro and the Museo d'Arte Orientale. Admission to these is also free for non-EU citizens 12 years old and under.

A handful of museums and galleries offer discounts for students and seniors regardless of where they are from. It never hurts to ask.

### Special Tickets

A Museum Pass (adult/EU senior over 65, EU student 15 to 29 years & Rolling Venice cardholder €18/12) covers admission to Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr, Museo Archeologico, Libreria Nazionale Marciana, Ca' Rezzonico, Museo Vetrario on Murano, Museo del Merletto on Burano, Palazzo Mocenigo, Casa di Goldoni, Ca' Pesaro and the Palazzo Fortuny. The ticket is valid for six months and can be purchased from any of these museums. A Museum Card (adult/student/child €12/5.50/3) covers Palazzo Ducale, Museo Correr, Museo Archeologico and Libreria Nazionale Marciana only.

Combined tickets (adult/EU student €11/5.50) are also available for the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Ca' d'Oro and Museo Orientale in Ca' Pesaro.

You can book tickets ahead for the Palazzo Ducale (including the Secret Itineraries tour; see p347), the Gallerie dell'Accademia and Ca' Rezzonico, Ca d'Oro and the Torre dell'Orologio at [www.weekendavenezia.com](http://www.weekendavenezia.com) and so avoid queues.

An organisation called **Chorus** (☎ 041 275 04 62; [www.chorusvenezia.org](http://www.chorusvenezia.org)) offers a ticket (family/adult/senior and student under 30 years €16/8/5), valid for a year, providing admission to 16 churches. Otherwise, admission to individual churches costs €2.50. The ticket is available from any of the churches, among the most worthwhile of which are: Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Santa Maria dei Miracoli, San Giacomo dell'Orto, Santo Stefano, San Polo and San Sebastian.

### Venice Card

A much touted all-inclusive transport and sights card, **Venice Card** (☎ 041 24 24; [www.venicecard.it](http://www.venicecard.it)) can save some hassle and a little money, depending on how much use you make of it.

There are two types of Venice Card. The blue card gives you unlimited use of ferries and buses throughout the Venice municipality for one, three or seven days. It also gives you free access to the public toilets (otherwise €1) scattered around town. Discounts are offered on exhibitions, and a series of bars, restaurants, shops and car parks. Senior card-holders also get free entry to the Casinò di Venezia.

The orange version throws in the Musei Civici (City Museums) and (if you take the three- or seven-day version) the churches covered in the Chorus scheme for free (see Special Tickets, in this boxed text), as well as a couple of other sights.

The junior blue card (for those aged under 30) costs €15/30.50/49 for one/three/seven days, while the senior version costs €17/34/52. The junior orange card costs €22/46/69 and the senior version €29/55/78. The passes are marginally cheaper if purchased online.

Sansovino as a courthouse. Next door is the city's produce market and then the **Fabbriche Vecchie**, built in 1522 to house markets and offices. Just before the Ponte di Rialto, on the left bank, the **Fondaco dei Tedeschi** was once the most important trading house on the canal and now serves as the main post office. It was rebuilt after a fire in 1505 and frescoes by Titian and Giorgione (remnants of which are on view in the Ca' d'Oro) once adorned its façade.

The stone **Ponte di Rialto** was built in the late 16th century by Antonio da Ponte, who had won the commission over architects including Palladio. The Renaissance **Palazzo Grimani**, on the left after the bridge and just before the Rio di San Luca, was designed by Sanmicheli. Further along the same bank, the **Palazzo Corner-Spinelli** was designed in the same period by Mauro Cordussi. On the right, as the canal swings sharply to the left, is the late-Gothic **Ca' Foscari**, commissioned by Doge Francesco Foscari. One of the finest mansions in the city, and the seat of the university, it is followed on the left by the 18th-century **Palazzo Grassi**, owned by French magnate François Pinault and used for major contemporary art exhibitions. Opposite, the massive **Ca' Rezzonico**, designed by Baldassare Longhena, houses a fine collection of 18th-century art.

The wooden **Ponte dell'Accademia** was built in 1930 to replace a metal 19th-century structure and itself may one day be replaced if the city council has its way. Past it and on the right is the unfinished **Palazzo Venier dei Leoni**, where American heiress Peggy Guggenheim lived until her death in 1979. It is home to her collection of modern art. Two buildings along is **Palazzo Dario**, built in 1487 and recognisable by the multicoloured marble façade and its many chimneys. It is said to be cursed.

On the left bank, at the Santa Maria del Giglio stop, is **Palazzo Corner**, an imposing, ivy-covered residence also known as the Ca' Grandia and designed in the mid-16th century by Jacopo Sansovino. On the right, before the canal broadens into the expanse facing San Marco, is Baldassare Longhena's **Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute**, which takes central place in many a postcard of the city.

## San Marco

Napoleon thought **Piazza San Marco** (Map pp344–5) to be the 'finest drawing room in Europe'. Enclosed by the basilica and the

arcaded Procuratie Vecchie and Nuove, the square plays host to competing flocks of pigeons and tourists. Stand and wait for the bronze **Mori** (Moors) to strike the bell of the 15th-century **Torre dell'Orologio** (Map pp344–5), which rises above the entrance to the Marzarie (Mercerie in Italian), the main thoroughfare from San Marco to the Rialto. Or sit and savour an expensive coffee at Florian (p362) or Quadri (p362), 18th-century cafés across from each other on the piazza.

The **Basilica di San Marco** (St Mark's Basilica; Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 522 52 05; www.basilicasanmarco.it; Piazza San Marco; admission free; ☎ 9.45am–5pm Apr–Sep, 9.45am–4.45pm Mon–Sat, 2–4.30pm Sun & holidays Oct–Mar) embodies a magnificent blend of architectural and decorative styles, dominated by Byzantine ideas and ranging through Romanesque to Renaissance.

Modest dress is essential for visiting the basilica. This means covering your arms and wearing skirts or pants at least down to the knees. The 'underdressed' will be turned away. You may not enter with any kind of bag either. The side entrance of the Ateneo San Basso, on Calle San Basso, just off Piazzetta San dei Leoni, has free **baggage storage** (Map pp344–5; ☎ 9.30am–5.30pm) for one hour.

The basilica, built on the plan of a Greek cross, with five bulbous domes, was modelled on Constantinople's (later destroyed) Church of the Twelve Apostles, and consecrated in 1094. It was built as the doges' private chapel and remained so until it became Venice's cathedral in 1807. For more than 500 years, the doges enlarged and embellished the church, adorning it with an incredible array of treasures plundered from the East, in particular from Constantinople, during the crusades.

The arches above the doorways in the **façade** boast fine mosaics. The one on the left, depicting the arrival of St Mark's body in Venice (his corpse is supposedly buried in the basilica), was completed in 1270.

On the loggia (balcony) above the main door stand copies of four gilded bronze horses; the originals, on display inside, were brought to Venice when Constantinople was sacked in 1204, during the Fourth Crusade. Napoleon moved them to Paris in 1797 but they were returned following the collapse of the French Empire.

Through the doors is the **narthex**, or vestibule, its domes and arches decorated with mosaics, mainly dating from the 13th century.

The oldest mosaics in the basilica, dating from around 1063, are in the niches of the bay in front of the main door from the narthex into the church proper. They feature the Madonna with the Apostles.

The **interior** of the basilica is simply dazzling; if you can take your eyes off the glitter of the mosaics, admire the 12th-century marble pavement, a geometrical whimsy made all the more curious because it has subsided in places.

The lower level of the walls is lined with precious Eastern marbles and above this decoration the extraordinary feast of gilded **mosaics** begins. Work started on the mosaics in the 11th century and continued until well into the 13th century. More were added in the 14th and 15th centuries in the baptistry and side chapels and, as late as the 18th century, still more were being added or restored.

To the right of the high altar is the entrance to the sanctuary. St Mark's body is contained in a sarcophagus beneath the altar. Behind the altar is the exquisite **Pala d'Oro** (admission €1.50; ☎ 9.45am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun & holidays Apr-Sep,

9.45am-4.45pm Mon-Sat, 1-4.45pm Sun & holidays Oct-Mar), a gold, enamel and jewel-encrusted altarpiece made in Constantinople for Doge Pietro Orseolo I in AD 976. It was enriched and reworked in Constantinople in 1105, enlarged by Venetian goldsmiths in 1209 and reset in the 14th century. It drips almost 2000 precious stones, including emeralds, amethysts, sapphires, rubies and pearls.

The **Tesoro** (Treasury; admission €2; ☎ 9.45am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun & holidays Apr-Sep, 9.45am-4.45pm Mon-Sat, 1-4.45pm Sun & holidays Oct-Mar), accessible from the right transept, contains most of the booty from the 1204 raid on Constantinople, including a thorn said to be from the crown worn by Christ.

Through a door at the far right end of the narthex, a stairway leads up to the **Galleria** (Museo di San Marco; admission €3; ☎ same as basilica), which contains the original gilded bronze horses and the **Loggia dei Cavalli**. The galleria affords a wonderful view of the church's interior, while the loggia has equally splendid vistas of the square.

## VENICE IN...

### Two Days

Combine the obvious with the left-field. Piazza San Marco, with visits to the Basilica di San Marco, Palazzo Ducale and a coffee at Caffè Florian could form the core of the first day, followed by a *vaporetto* ride across to San Giorgio Maggiore and then La Giudecca for a quiet wander and perhaps dinner. The following day could start with another pair of classics: the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Follow with a pilgrimage to the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute and then backtrack to Ca' Rezzonico. A drink in nearby Campo Santa Margherita is a must, and from there you could head north for a Tintoretto/Titian fest in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, and the Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. After all this, dinner in the maze of San Polo is the perfect way to end the day.

### Four Days

A third day could be devoted to exploring Cannaregio, with a tour of the Ghetto high on your list, followed by a visit to the Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Chiesa della Madonna dell'Orto and Ca' d'Oro. Cannaregio is also a great spot to simply explore aimlessly. For a change of pace, opt for an islands tour on the fourth day. Early birds could manage to fit in the classic trio of Murano, Burano and Torcello in a single busy day.

### One Week

With a week, further options open up. Exploration of the Castello area should be a priority. From the Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo and the less-visited Chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna, you could meander to the Arsenale and beyond into this profoundly Venetian quarter. Take a breather in the Giardini Pubblici and head for the distant Cattedrale di San Pietro di Castello. Back in the thick of things, nose about the Rialto area, with its markets, shops, churches, and thicket of tight lanes, *osterie* and bars. Another day could be dedicated to an excursion out of town: Padua and Verona are the two most obvious candidates.

## SAN MARCO, SAN POLO &amp; SANTA CROCE





<b>INFORMATION</b>			
American Express & ATM.....	1 F5	Museo Civico di Storia Naturale..... (see 44)	
CTS.....	2 C4	Museo Correr..... 48 F5	
French Consulate.....	3 H2	Museo d'Arte Orientale..... (see 23)	
Istituto Venezia.....	4 B4	Museo del Settecento Veneziano..... (see 24)	
Laundry.....	5 B2	Museo della Fondazione Querini-Stampalia..... (see 57)	
Ospedale Civil.....	6 H2	Palazzo Contarini del Bovolo..... 49 F4	
Police Station.....	7 G5	Palazzo Corner..... 50 E5	
Post Office.....	8 F2	Palazzo Corner-Spinelli..... 51 D4	
Stadium.....	9 H4	Palazzo Dario..... 52 E6	
Telecom Office.....	10 F3	Palazzo Ducale..... 53 G4	
Telecom Office.....	11 E1	Palazzo Franchetti..... 54 D5	
Telephones.....	12 F3	Palazzo Grassi..... 55 C4	
Tourist Office.....	13 A1	Palazzo Grimani..... 56 E3	
Tourist Office.....	14 F5	Palazzo Querini-Stampalia..... 57 H3	
Travelex.....	15 F3	Palazzo Venier dei Leoni..... (see 58)	
Travelex.....	16 G4	Peggy Guggenheim Collection..... 58 E6	
Venice Pavilion Infopoint.....	17 G5	Pescaria..... 59 E2	
World House.....	18 H4	Piazza San Marco..... 60 G4	
<b>SIGHTS &amp; ACTIVITIES</b>			
Basilica di San Marco.....	19 G4	Piazzetta di San Marco..... 61 G5	
Basilica di San Marco Baggage Storage.....	20 G4	Ponte dei Scalzi..... 62 B1	
Ca' d'Oro.....	21 F1	Ponte dei Sospiri (Bridge of Sighs)..... 63 H4	
Ca' Foscari.....	22 C4	Ponte dell'Accademia..... 64 D5	
Ca' Pesaro.....	23 E1	Ponte di Calatrava..... 65 A2	
Ca' Rezzonico.....	24 C4	Ponte di Rialto..... 66 F3	
Campanile.....	25 G4	Procuratie Nuove..... 67 G5	
Casa di Goldoni.....	26 D3	Procuratie Vecchie..... 68 G4	
Chiesa dei Gesuati.....	27 C6	RiviviviNatura..... 69 D5	
Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo.....	28 H2	Scuola Grande dei Carmini..... 70 A4	
Chiesa di San Giacomo dell'Orto.....	29 C1	Scuola Grande di San Marco..... 71 H2	
Chiesa di San Giacomo di Rialto.....	30 F2	Scuola Grande di San Rocco..... 72 C3	
Chiesa di San Giovanni Elemosinario.....	31 F2	Statue of Condottiere Colleoni..... 73 H2	
Chiesa di San Polo.....	32 D3	Statue of Lion of St Mark..... 74 G5	
Chiesa di San Salvador.....	33 F3	Statue of St Theodore..... 75 G5	
Chiesa di San Sebastian.....	34 A5	Torre dell'Orologio..... 76 G4	
Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Miracoli.....	35 G2	Zattere Ponte Lungo..... 77 B6	
Chiesa di Santa Maria del Giglio.....	36 E5	<b>SLEEPING</b>	
Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute.....	37 F6	Albergo agli Alboretti.....	78 D6
Chiesa di Santa Maria Formosa.....	38 H3	Ca' Angeli.....	79 E3
Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari.....	39 C3	Ca' Pisani Hotel.....	80 C6
Chiesa di Santo Stefano.....	40 D4	Foresteria Valdese.....	81 H3
Fabbriche Nuove.....	41 F2	Hotel Alex.....	82 C3
Fabbriche Vecchie.....	42 F2	Hotel Dalla Mora.....	83 B3
Fondaco dei Tedeschi.....	43 F2	Hotel Galleria.....	84 D6
Fondaco dei Turchi.....	44 D1	Locanda Antico Fiore.....	85 D4
Galleria Franchetti..... (see 21)		Locanda Art Deco.....	86 D4
Galleria d'Arte Moderna..... (see 23)		Locanda Ca' Foscari.....	87 C4
Gallerie dell'Accademia.....	45 C6	Locanda Casa Petrarca.....	88 F4
Gran Canal Viaggi.....	46 F3	Locanda Leon Bianco.....	89 F2
Museo Archeologico.....	47 G4	Locanda Orseolo.....	90 F4
		Oltre il Giardino.....	91 C3
		Palazzo Abadessa.....	92 F1
		Pensione Guerrato.....	93 F2
		Residenza Ca' Riccio.....	94 G2
		Residenza San Tomà.....	95 C3
<b>EATING</b>			
Ai Rusteghi.....	96 G2		
Alaska.....	97 B1		
All'Arco.....	98 E2		
Alla Rivetta.....	99 H4		
Antica Adelaide.....	100 F1		
Brek.....	101 B1		
Caffè Florian.....	102 G5		
Caffè Quadri.....	103 G4		
Cantina do Mori.....	104 E2		
Enoteca Mascareta.....	105 H3		
Fresh Produce Market.....	106 F2		
Fresh Produce Market.....	107 F2		
Fresh Produce Market.....	108 F2		
Ganesh Ji.....	109 C2		
Gelateria San Stae.....	110 D1		
Naranzaria.....	111 F2		
Osteria alla Botte.....	112 G3		
Osteria dalla Vedova.....	113 F1		
Osteria La Zucca.....	114 D1		
Ristorante La Bitta.....	115 B5		
Ristorante Oniga.....	116 B5		
Spizzico.....	117 F4		
Vecio Fritolin.....	118 E2		
Vini da Arturo.....	119 E4		
<b>DRINKING</b>			
Aurora.....	120 G4		
Centrale.....	121 F4		
Harry's Bar.....	122 F5		
Il Caffè.....	123 B4		
Muro Vino e Cucina.....	124 F2		
<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>			
Cinema Giorgione Movie d'Essai.....	125 G1		
HelloVenezia Ticket Outlet..... (see 137)			
HelloVenezia Ticket Outlet..... (see 138)			
Musica a Palazzo.....	126 E5		
Teatro Goldoni.....	127 F3		
Teatro La Fenice.....	128 E4		
Teatro Malibrán.....	129 G2		
<b>SHOPPING</b>			
Aliani.....	130 E2		
Ca' Macana.....	131 B4		
Vivaldi Store.....	132 G2		
<b>TRANSPORT</b>			
Gondola Service.....	133 F5		
Gondola Service.....	134 H5		
Gondola Service.....	135 A2		
Gondola Service.....	136 H4		
HelloVenezia Ticket Point.....	137 B1		
HelloVenezia Ticket Point.....	138 A1		
Water Taxi.....	139 A2		
Water Taxi.....	140 F3		
Water Taxi.....	141 B1		

The basilica's 99m-tall **Campanile** (Bell Tower; Map pp344-5; admission €6; ☎ 9.45am-8pm Jul-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Apr-Jun, 9.45am-4pm Oct-Mar), which was built in the 10th century, collapsed on 14 July 1902 and was rebuilt brick by brick. The views from the top are spectacular.

The former residence and offices of the procurators of St Mark (responsible for the upkeep of the basilica), the **Procuratie Vecchie** (Map pp344-5), were designed by Mauro Codussi and occupy the entire northern flank of Piazza San Marco. The towering timepiece here that is the **Torre dell'Orologio** (☎ 041 520

90 70; www.museiciviviceneziiani.it; Piazza San Marco; admission €12; ☎ visit by prebooked tour only, in English 9am, 10am & 11am Mon-Wed, 1, 2 & 3pm Thu-Sun) was erected in the 15th century. The clock face, decorated with blue enamel and gold leaf, shows not only the time but the position of the sun, the lunar phases and the signs of the zodiac. On the small terrace atop the tower, two bronze *Mori* (Moors, so called because of the darkened patina of the bronze rather than any intentional design by their makers in 1497) strike the hour on a huge bell.

On the south side are the **Procuratie Nuove** (Map pp344–5), planned by Jacopo Sansovino and completed by Vincenzo Scamozzi and Baldassare Longhena. Napoleon converted this building into his royal palace and demolished the church of San Geminiano at the west end of the piazza to build the Ala Napoleonica, which housed his ballroom.

The Ala Napoleonica houses the **Museo Correr** (☎ 041 240 52 11; www.museiciviviceneziiani.it; Piazza San Marco 52; ☎ 9am–7pm Apr–Oct, 9am–5pm Nov–Mar), which is dedicated to the art and history of Venice. Through this museum you first access the **Museo Archeologico**, with an impressive, if somewhat repetitive, selection of ancient sculptures, and Jacopo Sansovino's Renaissance **Libreria Nazionale Marciana**, which takes up the entire western side of Piazzetta di San Marco. The main reading hall is a sumptuous 16th-century creation, its ceiling decorated by a battalion of artists, including Veronese. For admission prices, see the boxed text on p341.

Stretching from Piazza San Marco to the waterfront, the **Piazzetta di San Marco** (Map pp344–5) features two columns bearing statues of the Lion of St Mark and St Theodore (San Teodoro), the city's two patron saints. Originally a marketplace, the area was also a preferred location for public executions.

The **Palazzo Ducale** (Doges' Palace; Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 271 59 11; www.museiciviviceneziiani.it; Piazzetta di San Marco; ☎ 9am–7pm Apr–Oct, 9am–5pm Nov–Mar) was, as the name suggests, the doges' official residence, but also the seat of the Republic's government, bureaucracy and main prisons. Established in the 9th century, the palace began to assume its present form 500 years later with the decision to build the massive Sala del Maggior Consiglio for the council members, who ranged in number from 1200 to 1700. It was inaugurated in 1419. For admission prices, see the boxed text, p341.

The palace's two magnificent Gothic façades, in white Istrian stone and pink Veronese marble, face the water and Piazzetta di San Marco. Much of the building was damaged by fire in 1577 but Antonio da Ponte (who designed the Ponte di Rialto) restored it.

The former main entrance (and now exit), the 15th-century **Porta della Carta** (Paper Door), to which government decrees were fixed, was carved by Giovanni and Bartolomeo Bon. Leading from the courtyard, the **Scala dei Giganti** (Giants' Staircase) by Antonio Rizzo takes its name from the huge statues of Mars and Neptune, by Sansovino, that flank the landing.

Past Sansovino's **Scala d'Oro** (Golden Staircase) is a labyrinth of rooms, including the **Sala delle Quattro Porte** (Hall of the Four Doors) on the 3rd floor, where ambassadors would be requested to await their ducal audience. The room's ceiling was designed by Palladio and the frescoes are by Tintoretto. Off this room is the **Anticollegio** (College Antechamber), featuring four Tintoretos and Veronese's *Ratto d'Europa* (Rape of Europa).

The route takes you through various splendid rooms to the immense **Sala del Maggior Consiglio** (Grand Council Hall) on the 2nd floor. Tintoretto's *Paradiso* (Paradise), one of the world's largest oil paintings, at 22m by 7m, dominates the hall at one end. The *Apotheosi di Venezia* (Apotheosis of Venice) by Veronese, in one of the central ceiling panels, is another masterpiece. In the frieze on the wall depicting the first 76 doges of Venice, note the black space. Doge Marin Falier would have appeared there had he not lost his head for treason in 1355.

Next, you will find yourself crossing the small, enclosed **Ponte dei Sospiri** (Bridge of Sighs; Map pp344–5) to reach the 'new prisons' (built when those in the Palazzo Ducale proved insufficient). The bridge is named because of the sighs prisoners made on their way into the dungeons.

The **Itinerari Segreti** (Secret Itineraries; ☎ 041 520 90 70; adult/student/child under 6 €16/7/free; ☎ tours in English 9.55am, 10.45am & 11.35am, Italian 9.30am & 11.10am, French 10.20am, noon & 12.25pm) is a 1½-hour guided tour that takes an intriguing look at lesser-known nooks of the palace. You pass from civil servants' offices to a torture chamber, the Inquisitor's office and upstairs to the **Piombi** (Leads; prison cells beneath the roof of the building). Here prisoners froze in winter and sweltered

### INSIDE THE FOSSIL WITH TIZIANO SCARPA

'We live in an urban fossil', declares Venetian writer Tiziano Scarpa, contemplating the scene around him in peaceful Campo San Nazario Sauro (Santa Croce), where he lives in one of a series of quaint, terrace-type houses.

The *campiello*, the little square, is a world of human relations. In 18th-century Venice, people hardly left their square. Women especially were kept on a short leash. Thus the intrigues of meaningful looks from windows! You see it in the writings of Goldoni – it's amazing, a kind of power maintained over the fertile female body.

This separation into many tiny communities was a method of urban control. Obviously things are different today, but in some ways not. Do you see all those tiny houses in front of us? It's mad! All attached and yet each has its own little entrance! Now, as then, we live in this square observed by all, and at the same time each of those doors declares a desire for privacy.'

Scarpa ('no, I'm no relation of the architect Carlo') was born in 1963 at a birth clinic (now gone) near Vivaldi's Pietà church in Castello but was brought up in the San Polo area. 'As kids, we all played in the gardens inside our housing block, and in the local square. I remember a game where we traced out a course with chalk in the lanes and *campo* and even into people's shops, and crawled along shooting corks ahead of us in a kind of race.

'In those days, as now, it was forbidden to ride bikes in Venice, but we all rode them. How we ran for it when the local coppers chased us! You don't see that any more.'

Funny that he was born near Vivaldi's church: 'I have more than a hundred CDs of Vivaldi's music! You know, in the 18th century, Venice was a little like Hollywood. Just as American filmmakers confidently make films about any epoch or culture, so Vivaldi wrote operas about the Aztecs, about the Romans...there was a sense of cultural power. At the same time, it was the Las Vegas of Europe: the casinos, the prostitution, the first theatres in Europe opened to a paying general public.'

Scarpa, who has published novels, verse and an intriguing 'guide' to Venice, *Venezia è un Pesce* (Venice is a Fish), has ambiguous feelings about his own city. In his early 30s he left for Milan, where he stayed happily for 11 years. Why did he come back? 'My last year in Milan was difficult. And I needed space and quiet to concentrate on writing. An opportunity came up to move into a nice place, and so I came back. But I don't know if I will stay for good.'

After the bright lights of Milan, he has reverted to the smaller world of his lagoon city. 'In Milan, you think nothing of getting trams for 40 minutes to get to a cinema, a show or go shopping. Here, to do some of those things you need to get to Mestre, and yet people don't. It takes less time to get to Mestre than to move around Milan, but you see, in the last six months I have only gone three times...'

Floods, decreasing population... does Venice have a future?

'I think so. It would take so little. Biotechnology and other hi-tech companies could be encouraged to come. [Centres] of excellence, laboratories, Masters courses could be created.

'We missed a big chance to be innovative when the Fenice theatre burned down. Instead of rebuilding it as it was, we should have built something exciting and new. It was ugly anyway!

'People are quite prepared to inflict masochism on themselves to come to Venice. I am sure some of my past girlfriends in other parts of the country came as much for Venice as to see me', Scarpa grins wickedly. 'I'm joking of course.'

in summer. Giacomo Casanova got five years but managed to escape.

### Around San Marco

The **Marzarie** (Mercerie; Map pp344–5), a series of streets lined with shops, connects Piazza San Marco and the Rialto in a tortuous manner. The **Chiesa di San Salvador** (Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 523 67 17; www.chiesasansalvador.it; Campo San

Salvador 4835; admission free; ☑ 9am–noon & 4–6pm Mon–Sat, 4–6pm Sun Jun–Aug, 9am–noon & 3–6pm Mon–Sat, 3–6pm Sun Sep–May), built on a plan of three Greek crosses laid end to end, features Titian's *Annunciazione* (Annunciation), at the third altar on the right as you approach the main altar. Behind the main altar itself is another of his contributions, the *Trasfigurazione* (Transfiguration).



The area immediately west of Piazza San Marco is a rabbit warren of streets and alleys lined with exclusive shops, mostly fashion labels but also anything from Murano glass to marbled paper.

First raised in 1792, the **Teatro La Fenice** (☎ 041 528 37 80, reservations ☎ 041 24 24; www.teatrolafenice.it; Campo San Fantin 1965; tours adult/student & senior €7/5; ♿ varies) is one of the world's finest opera houses. And well it should be. It was reopened in late 2003, carefully restored and equipped with the latest technology after fire gutted it in 1996. The foyer, with its columns and grand staircase, is the best-preserved part of the theatre. Four times are volatile. You need to book.

Duck northeast to admire and climb the graceful 15th-century external spiral staircase at the **Palazzo Contarini del Bovolo** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 271 90 12; Corte del Bovolo 4299; adult/child €3/2.50; ♿ closed for restoration until 2008).

The baroque façade of the **Chiesa di Santa Maria del Giglio** (Map pp344-5; Campo di Santa Maria del Giglio; admission €2.50; ♿ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun), also known as Santa Maria Zobenigo, features maps of European cities as they were in 1678. Proceed to Campo Santo Stefano (aka Campo Francesco Morosini) and the Gothic **Chiesa di Santo Stefano** (Map pp344-5; ♿ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun) is on your right. Of note are three paintings by Tintoretto in the little **museum** (admission €2.50): *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper), *Lavanda dei Piedi* (Washing of the Feet) and *Orazione nell'Orto* (Agony in the Garden). The church's bell tower leans disconcertingly.

At the bottom end of the square, poke your nose into **Palazzo Franchetti** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 240 77 11; www.istitutoveneto.it; Campo Santo Stefano 2842; adult/student €9/6; ♿ 10am-7pm), an eclectically decorated 16th-century Venetian mansion that frequently hosts exhibitions.

## Dorsoduro

The **Gallerie dell'Accademia** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 22 47, bookings ☎ 041 520 03 45; www.gallerieaccademia.org in Italian; Campo della Carità 1050; adult/EU citizen 18-25yr/child under 12yr & EU citizen under 18yr or over 65yr €6.50/3.25/free, video/audio guide €6/4; ♿ 8.15am-2pm Mon, 8.15am-7.15pm Tue-Sun) is a must for anyone with even a passing interest in art. The former church and convent of Santa Maria della Carità, with additions by Palladio, hosts a collection that follows the progression of Venetian art from the 14th to the 18th centuries. For other admission prices see boxed text, p341.

Room 1 contains works by the early 14th-century painter Paolo Veneziano, including the *Incoronazione di Maria* (Coronation of Mary). Rooms 4 and 5 feature Andrea Mantegna's *San Giorgio* (St George), several paintings of the Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione's fabulous *La Tempesta* (The Storm). Rooms 6 to 10 contain works of the High Renaissance, including Tintoretto's *La Creazione degli Animali* (The Creation of the Animals), and Titian's (including one of his last, *Pietà*), but one of the highlights is Paolo Veronese's *Convito in Casa di Levi* (Feast in the House of Levi) in Room 10. Originally called *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper), the painting's name was changed because the Inquisition objected to its depiction of characters such as drunkards and dwarfs. Gentile Bellini and Vittore Carpaccio appear with marvellous scenes of Venice in a series on the *Miracoli della Vera Croce* (Miracles of the True Cross) in Room 20. The collection ends in Room 24 with Tiepolo's beautiful *Presentazione di Maria al Tempio* (Presentation of Mary at the Temple).

Peggy Guggenheim called the unfinished Palazzo Venier dei Leoni home for 30 years until her death in 1979. She left behind the **Peggy Guggenheim Collection** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 240 54 11; www.guggenheim-venice.it; Palazzo Venier dei Leoni 701; adult/senior over 65yr/student to 26yr/child under 12yr €10/8/5/free; ♿ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) of works by her favourite modern artists, representing most of the major artistic movements of the 20th century. Picasso (with such Cubist efforts as *Pipe, Glass, Bottle of Vieux Marc*), Mondrian, Kandinsky (*Upward*), Ernst, Chagall, Klee, Miró, Pollock, Brancusi, Dalí, Magritte and Bacon are all represented. Wander around the sculpture garden (with works by Moore, Giacometti and Ernst), where Miss Guggenheim and many of her pet dogs are buried.

Dominating the entrance to the Grand Canal, the baroque **Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 55 58; www.marciatum.it/salute in Italian; Campo della Salute 1b; sacristy admission €1.50; ♿ 9am-noon & 3.30-6pm) was built in the 17th century in honour of the Virgin Mary, believed to have delivered the city from a plague outbreak. From inside Baldassare Longhena's octagonal main church you access the Great Sacristy, where Titian left his mark with three remarkable images: *Caino e Abele* (Cain and Abel), *David e Golia* (David and Goliath) and finally Abraham and his conscience in *Il Sacrificio di Isaaco* (The Sacrifice of Isaac).

The Fondamenta delle Zattere, aka the **Zattere** (Map pp344–5), runs along the Canale della Giudecca from Punta della Dogana to the old Stazione Marittima (ferry terminal). It is a popular spot for the traditional summer sunbathing and the evening  *Passeggiata* (stroll). The main sight is the 18th-century Santa Maria del Rosario, or **Chiesa dei Gesuati** (Map pp344–5; Fondamenta delle Zattere 909; admission €2.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun), designed by Giorgio Massari. Tiepolo's ceiling frescoes tell the story of San Domenico (St Dominic). At the end of the Zattere, over Rio di San Basegio, the **Chiesa di San Sebastian** (Map pp344–5; Campo San Sebastian 1687; admission €2.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun) was the local church of Paolo Veronese, who provided most of the paintings and lies buried in the church.

The 17th- and 18th-century **Ca' Rezzonico** (Map pp344–5), which faces the Grand Canal, houses the **Museo del Settecento Veneziano** (Museum of the 18th Century; ☎ 041 241 01 00; www.musei.civiviceneziani.it; Fondamenta Rezzonico 3136; adult/student & child €6.50/4.50; ☎ 10am–6pm Wed–Mon Apr–Oct, 10am–5pm Wed–Mon Nov–Mar). Designed by Baldassare Longhena and completed by Massari, it was home to several notables over the years, including the poet Robert Browning. A broad staircase by Massari ascends from the ground floor to the main floor and on to the ballroom, a splendid hall dripping with frescoes and richly furnished with 18th-century couches, tables and ebony statues. Noteworthy is Tiepolo's ceiling fresco in the Sala del Trono (Throne Room), the *Allegoria del Merito tra Nobiltà e Virtù* (Allegory of Merit Between Nobility and Virtue).

Tiepolo also had a hand in the 16th-century **Scuola Grande dei Carmini** (Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 528 94 20; Campo Santa Margherita 2617; adult/senior & student €5/4; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 9am–4pm Sun Apr–Oct, 9am–4pm Nov–Mar), near the church of the same name, just west of Campo Santa Margherita. Of its numerous works of art, the nine ceiling paintings by Tiepolo in the Salone Superiore (upstairs) depict the virtues surrounding the Virgin in Glory.

## San Polo e Santa Croce

The massive **Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari** (Map pp344–5; Campo dei Frari, San Polo 3004; admission €2.50; ☎ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 1–6pm Sun) was built for the Franciscans in the 14th and 15th centuries and decorated by an illustrious array of artists. Titian, who is buried in the church,

is the main attraction. His dramatic *Assunta* (Assumption; 1518) over the high altar represents a key moment in his rise as one of the city's greatest artists.

Just behind the Frari is another treasure chest. Built for the Confraternity of St Roch in the 16th century and decorated with more than 50 paintings by Tintoretto, the **Scuola Grande di San Rocco** (Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 523 48 64; www.scuolagrandesanrocco.it; Campo San Rocco, San Polo 3052; adult/18–26yr/under 18yr €7/5/free; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Easter–Oct, 10am–5pm Nov–Easter) is Venice's artistic equivalent of a 2kg box of Ferrero Rocher chocolates. Tintoretto devoted 23 years to decorating the building. Start upstairs (Scarpagnino designed the staircase) in the Sala Grande Superiore. You can pick up mirrors to carry around to avoid getting a sore neck while inspecting the ceiling paintings (Old Testament episodes). Around the walls are scenes from the New Testament. Downstairs, the walls of the confraternity's assembly hall feature a series on the life of the Virgin Mary, starting on the left wall with the *Annunciazione* (Annunciation) and ending with the *Assunzione* (Assumption) opposite.

A short walk east and across the Rio di San Tomà is the 15th-century **Casa di Goldoni** (Map pp344–5; ☎ 041 275 93 25; www.musei.civiviceneziani.it; Calle dei Nomboli, San Polo 2794; adult/senior, student & child €2.50/1.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat Apr–Oct, 10am–4pm Mon–Sat Nov–Mar), where Venice's greatest playwright, Carlo Goldoni, was born in 1707. The house is worth a visit and Goldoni fans will find a host of material on the playwright's life and works.

Heading towards the Ponte di Rialto from the Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, you arrive in **Campo San Polo** (Map pp344–5), the city's largest square after San Marco. Locals bring their children here to play, so if you are travelling with small kids they might appreciate some social contact while you take a cappuccino break. In its southwest corner is the **Chiesa di San Polo** (Map pp344–5; Campo San Polo 2115; admission €2.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun), of note for Tiepolo's *Via Crucis* cycle in the sacristy.

The area around the **Ponte di Rialto** (Map pp344–5), bursting with life as the scene of the daily produce market, was one of the earliest settled locations in Venice. Rialto, or *rivo alto*, means high bank, and the spot was considered one of the safest in the lagoon. There has been a market here for almost 1000 years.

The **Fabbriche Vecchie** (Map pp344–5) along the Ruga degli Orefici and the **Fabbriche Nuove** (Map pp344–5), running along the Grand Canal, were built by Scarpagnino after a fire destroyed the old markets in 1514.

Although there has been a bridge at the Rialto since the foundation of the city, the present stone construction by Antonio da Ponte was completed in 1592.

Virtually in the middle of the market, off Ruga degli Orefici, is the **Chiesa di San Giacomo di Rialto** (Map pp344–5). According to local legend it was founded on 25 March 421, the same day as the city. Nearby is the **Chiesa di San Giovanni Elemosinario** (Map pp344–5; Ruga Vecchia San Giovanni, San Polo 477; admission €2.50; ☞ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun), a beautiful Renaissance church built on the site of an earlier one by Antonio Abboni after the disastrous fire of 1514 that destroyed much of the Rialto.

The Renaissance **Ca' Pesaro** (Map pp344–5; ☞ 041 72 11 27; www.museiciviviceneziani.it; Fondamenta de Ca' Pesaro, Santa Croce 2076; adult/senior, student & child €5.50/3; ☞ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, 10am–5pm Tue–Sun Nov–Mar), further north and facing the Grand Canal, has housed the **Galleria d'Arte Moderna** since 1902. The collection lays a heavy emphasis on Italian and particularly Venetian art from the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. Artists include De Chirico, Miró, Chagall, Kandinsky, Klee, Klimt and Moore. The **Museo d'Arte Orientale**, in the same building on the top floor, is a fascinating old-time collection of Edo-period art and objects from Japan, including a notable set of warriors' armour.

In a broad, leafy *campo* (field) stands the 13th-century **Chiesa di San Giacomo dell'Orto** (Map pp344–5; Campo San Giacomo dell'Orto, Santa Croce 1457; admission €2.50; ☞ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun), one of the few good examples of Romanesque architecture (albeit somewhat disguised by Gothic additions) in Venice. In front of the main altar is a wooden crucifix by Veronese and on the wall at the rear of the central apse, a rare work by Lorenzo Lotto, *Madonna col Bambino e Santi* (Madonna with Child and Saints).

## Cannaregio

The long pedestrian thoroughfare connecting the train station and Piazza San Marco crawls with tourists – few venture off it into the peaceful back lanes. Do it!

Venice has the dubious honour of having furnished the world with a new and sinister

word after the area called the Ghetto. Most easily accessible from the Fondamenta di Cannaregio, through the **Sotoportego del Ghetto** (Map p352), this is often touted as the world's first ghetto, which is not wholly true: while the name was new, the concept of keeping Jews herded into one area of town was not (as Spanish Jews well knew). This area in Venice was once a *getto* (foundry), a word whose pronunciation later changed and took on a whole new meaning.

The city's Jewish population was ordered to move to the small island, the *Getto Novo* (Ghetto Nuovo, or New Foundry), in 1516. They were locked in at night by Christian soldiers and forced to follow a set of rules limiting their social and economic activities. They did retain full freedom of religious expression. Extreme overcrowding combined with building-height restrictions means that some apartment blocks have as many as seven storeys but with low ceilings. In 1797 after the fall of the Venetian Republic, Jews were allowed to live wherever they chose.

The **Museo Ebraico** (Map p352; ☞ 041 71 53 59; www.museoebraico.it; Campo del Ghetto Nuovo, Cannaregio 2902b; adult/student €3/2, tours incl admission €8.50/7; ☞ 10am–7pm Sun–Fri except Jewish holidays Jun–Sep, 10am–4.30pm Sun–Fri Oct–May, tours of Ghetto & synagogues half-hourly to hourly from 10.30am Sun–Fri except Jewish holidays) contains a modest collection of Jewish religious silverware. The three synagogues visited on the tours are the **Schola Canton** (Map p352), **Schola Italiana** (Map p352) and either the **Schola Levantina** (Map p352) during the summer or the **Schola Spagnola** (Map p352) in winter. Also inquire at the museum about guided tours to the old Jewish cemetery on the Lido.

Cross the iron bridge from the Campo di Ghetto Nuovo to reach the Fondamenta degli Ormesini and turn right. This is a truly peaceful part of Venice and there are some interesting bars and some good restaurants along the Fondamenta. Not far away, the 14th-century **Chiesa della Madonna dell'Orto** (Map p352; Campo della Madonna dell'Orto 3520; admission €2.50; ☞ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun) was Tintoretto's parish church and contains many of his artworks. Among them are the *Giudizio Finale* (Last Judgment) and *Adorazione del Vitello d'Oro* (Adoration of the Golden Calf). Tintoretto is buried with other family members in the church.

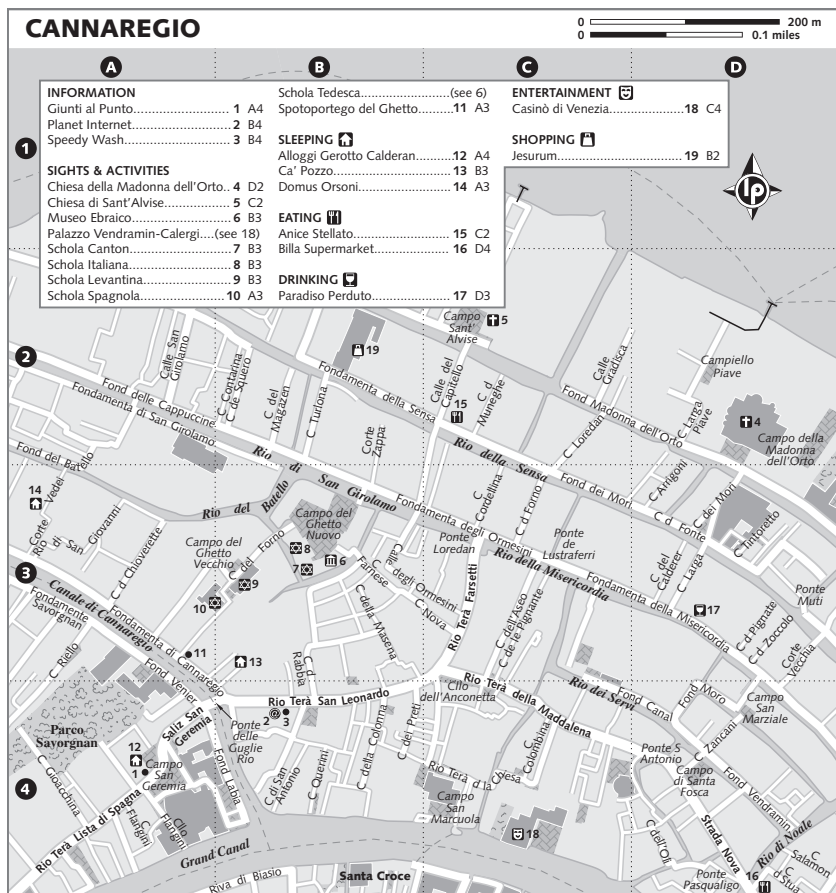
Further east the Jesuit church, known popularly as **I Gesuiti** (Map pp338–9; ☞ 041 528 65 79; Salizada dei Specchieri 4880; ☞ 10am–noon & 4–6pm),

and more properly as Santa Maria Assunta, dates from the early 18th century. Its baroque interior features walls with inlaid marble in imitation of curtains. Titian's *Martirio di San Lorenzo* (Martyrdom of St Lawrence) is first on the left as you enter the church, balanced by Tintoretto's *Assunzione della Vergine* (Assumption of the Virgin) in the northern transept. Across the street is the tiny 12th-century **Oratorio dei Crociferi** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 532 29 20; Campo dei Gesuiti 4095; admission €2; 🕒 3.30-6.30pm Fri & Sat Apr-Oct), brimming with frescoes and paintings by Palma il Giovane.

From here you could head towards the Grand Canal for the 15th-century **Ca' d'Oro** (Golden House; Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 03 45; www.ca.doro.org in Italian; Calle di Ca' d'Oro 3932; adult/EU student

under 26yr/EU citizen under 18yr or over 65yr €5/2.50/free; 🕒 8.15am-2pm Mon, 8.15am-7.15pm Tue-Sun), so named for the gilding that originally decorated the sculptural details of the façade. Visible from the Grand Canal, the façade stands out from the remainder of the edifice, which is rather drab by comparison. Ca' d'Oro houses the **Galleria Franchetti** (Map pp344-5), an impressive collection of bronzes, tapestries and paintings. On the 2nd floor is a series of fragments of frescoes saved from the outside of the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (p342). All but one are by Titian. The other, a nude work by Giorgione, is the most striking.

As you move east, stop by the utterly charming **Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Miracoli** (Map pp344-5; Campo dei Miracoli 6074; admission €2.50; 🕒 10am-5pm



Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun), a Renaissance chocolate box designed by Pietro Lombardo and seemingly lathered in magnificent sculptures. Pietro and his son Tullio Lombardo executed the carvings on the choir stalls.

From here it is a quick hop eastward over a couple of bridges into the neighbouring *ses-tiere* of Castello.

## Castello

In Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo you are confronted by the proud equestrian bronze statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni, one of Venice's more loyal mercenary mainland commanders. It is as though he stands guard in front of the huge Gothic **Chiesa dei SS Giovanni e Paolo** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 59 13; Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo; admission €2.50; ☞ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1-6pm Sun), founded by the Dominicans and built to rival the Franciscans' Chiesa di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari (p350) in size and grandeur. It was consecrated in 1430.

The beautiful stained-glass window (the largest in Venice) in the south transept was made in the 15th century in Murano to designs by various artists, including Bartolomeo Vivarini and Girolamo Mocetto.

Many of the tombs of 25 doges were sculpted by prominent Gothic and Renaissance artists. In the Cappella del Rosario, off the north arm of the transept, is a series of paintings by Paolo Veronese, including ceiling panels and an *Adorazione dei Pastori* (Adoration of the Shepherds) on the west wall.

At right angles to the main façade is the eye-catching marble frontage of the former **Scuola Grande di San Marco** (Map pp344-5). Pietro Lombardo and his sons worked on what was once one of the most important of Venice's religious confraternities (now the entrance to the city's main hospital). Codussi put the finishing touches on this Renaissance gem.

Almost directly south is another enchanting square, full of life and chatter and presided over by the church that gives it its name, the **Chiesa di Santa Maria Formosa** (Map pp344-5; Campo Santa Maria Formosa 5267; admission €2.50; ☞ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun). Rebuilt in 1492 by Mauro Cordussi on the former site of a 7th-century church, it contains an altarpiece by Palma Giovane depicting the santa Barbara. Just across a walkway off the southern end of the *campo* is the 16th-century **Palazzo Querini Stampalia**

## A SINKING CITY

Venice can be flooded by high tides. Known as *acque alte*, these mainly occur between November and April, flooding low-lying areas of the city such as Piazza San Marco. Serious floods are announced several hours before they reach their high point by 16 sirens throughout the city and islands. There is nothing new about the phenomenon (disastrous floods have been recorded since at least the 13th century), except for the increased frequency.

There are three main types of flooding: tidal, waters flowing back up drain pipes and water filtering up from underground. The latter two are caused by heavy rain.

When floods hit, *passarelle* (raised walkways) are set up in Piazza San Marco and other major tourist areas of the city (you can pick up a map of them at the tourist office), and the floods usually last only a few hours. If the flood level exceeds 1.2m you can be in trouble, as even the walkways are no use then. For lesser floods, the walkways are no longer needed as many streets have been raised in the past few years.

Since 1900 Venice has sunk by more than 23cm (some claim the real figure is anything up to 60cm), partly due to rising sea levels and partly due to subsidence. Climate change could cause a global rise in sea levels of 40cm to 60cm by 2100, which would make the city uninhabitable if no preventative measures were taken.

The controversial plan to install 78 mobile flood barriers (known as the Mose project) at the three lagoon entrances is scheduled for completion in 2012. They will be activated when floods of 1.1m or more above mean sea level (which occur about five times a year) threaten the lagoon. Many, however, do not believe the barriers will work.

In 2003, work also began to protect Piazza San Marco, one of worst-affected spots. The waterside has been raised to 1.1m above mean sea level and subterranean rainwater runoffs are being repaired. Similar work is being done along parts of Riva degli Schiavoni. When all this is finished, perhaps the flood days in Piazza San Marco will be largely a memory.

(Map pp344–5). Count Gerolamo Querini donated the mansion to the city in 1868. On the 2nd floor, the **Museo della Fondazione Querini Stampalia** (☎ 041 271 14 11; www.querinistampalia.it in Italian; Campiello Querini Stampalia 5252; adult/student & senior €8/6; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Thu & Sun, 10am–10pm Fri & Sat) has a collection of paintings, including a long series by Gabriele Bella (1730–99) depicting *Scene di Vita Veneziana* (Scenes of Venetian Life), and Venetian furniture.

East of Campo SS Giovanni e Paolo stands what seems to be the twin tower of the Campanile in Piazza San Marco. It is the bell tower of the **Chiesa di San Francesco della Vigna** (Map pp338–9; ☎ 041 520 61 02; Campo San Francesco della Vigna 2787; ☎ 8am–12.30pm & 3–7pm). Designed and built by Jacopo Sansovino, this Franciscan church is named for the vineyard that once thrived on the site. Its façade was designed by Palladio.

The **Arsenale** (Map pp338–9) was the greatest medieval shipyard in Europe, and a source of wonder to all who visited. The dockyards were founded in 1104 and at their peak were home to 300 shipping companies and employed up to 16,000 people, capable of turning out a new galley in a day. The Renaissance gateway surmounted by the Lion of St Mark commemorates the Christian victory over the Turkish fleet in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. It is still partly navy property, but you can visit substantial areas when it hosts exhibitions, such as the Venice Biennale art show.

The **Museo Storico Navale** (Map pp338–9; ☎ 041 244 13 99; Riva San Biagio 2148; admission €1.55; ☎ 8.45am–1.30pm Mon–Fri, 8.45am–1pm Sat) covers the Republic's maritime history, with a huge exhibition of paraphernalia, model boats, costumes and weapons. Among the exhibits is a gondola that once belonged to Peggy Guggenheim. The ticket for the museum gets you into the **Padiglione delle Navi** (Ships Pavilion; Map pp338–9), on Fondamenta della Madonna near the entrance to the Arsenale, with various boats on display.

At the eastern edge of Venice, the residential back lanes of Castello are worth wandering to see how the locals live. Beyond, the **Giardini Pubblici** (Map pp338–9), heart of the city's Biennale art festival, and the islands of **San Pietro** and **San'Elena**, are pools of peace far removed from the busy heart of Venice.

From the Museo Storico Navale you can meander west towards San Marco along the waterside **Riva degli Schiavoni** (Map pp338–9), long the main landing stage of La Serenissima.

About halfway along is the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Pietà, known simply as **La Pietà** (Map pp338–9), where Vivaldi was concert master in the early 18th century.

An unusual façade makes the 15th-century **Chiesa di San Zaccaria** (Map pp338–9; ☎ 041 522 12 57; Campo San Zaccaria 4693; ☎ 10am–noon & 4–6pm Mon–Sat, 4–6pm Sun) unique. Most of the Gothic façade is by Antonio Gambello, while the upper part, in Renaissance style, is by Codussi. On the second altar of the northern aisle is Giovanni Bellini's *La Vergine in Trono col Bambino, un Angelo Suonatore e Santi* (The Virgin Enthroned with Jesus, an Angel Musician and Saints). Admission to the Cappella di Sant'Anastasia is €1.

Venice was known for its religious tolerance. Among those to find refuge were Slavs from across the Adriatic. They established the **Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni** (Map pp338–9; ☎ 041 522 88 28; Calle dei Furlani 3259a; admission €3; ☎ 9am–1pm & 2.45–6pm Tue–Sat, 9am–1pm Sun, 2.45–6pm Mon) in the 15th century. The walls of the ground-floor hall are decorated with superb paintings by Vittore Carpaccio, depicting events in the lives of the three patron saints of Dalmatia: George, Tryphone and Jerome.

## Giudecca

Originally known as the *spina longa* (long fish bone) because of its shape, Giudecca's present name probably derives from the word Zudega (from *giudicato*, or the judged), which was applied to families of rebellious nobles at one time banished from Venice and later allowed to return. Some suggest the name refers to the Jews who lived here prior to the creation of the Ghetto. Rich Venetians later came of their own accord to build villas on the island. Its main attraction is the **Chiesa del SS Redentore** (Map pp338–9; Campo del SS Redentore 194; admission €2.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, 1–5pm Sun), built by Palladio in 1577 after the city was delivered from a savage outbreak of plague. On the third Saturday in July, the doge would pay a visit to the church, crossing the canal from the Zattere on a pontoon bridge.

The Festa del Redentore (Feast of the Redeemer; p358) remains one of the most important in Venice's calendar of events. *Vaporetti* 41, 42, 82 and N (night) call at several stops along Giudecca and run in both directions (that is, towards San Marco and Piazzale Roma).

## San Giorgio Maggiore

On the island of the same name, Palladio's Renaissance **Chiesa di San Giorgio Maggiore** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 522 78 27; 🕒 9.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm May-Sep, 9.30am-12.30pm & 2.30-4.30pm Oct-Apr) enjoys one of the most prominent positions in Venice. Built between 1565 and 1580, the church has an austere interior, in contrast to its bold, classicist façade. Its art treasures include works by Tintoretto: an *Ultima Cena* (Last Supper) and the *Raccolta della Manna* (Shower of Manna) on the walls of the high altar, and a *Deposizione* (Deposition) in the Cappella dei Morti (Chapel of the Dead). Take the lift (€3) to the top of the 60m-high bell tower for an extraordinary view. It is also possible, on weekends, to join a one-hour tour of the adjacent **Fondazione Giorgio Cini** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 528 99 00; www.cini.it; adult/senior & student/student 7-12yr/child under 7yr €12/10/8/free; 🕒 tours 10am-5pm Sat & Sun), housed in a former monastery built around the church.

*Vaporetti* 82 and N (night) call at San Giorgio Maggiore.

## San Michele

The city's cemetery was established on **Isola di San Michele** under Napoleon. Until then, Venetians had been buried in parish plots across town, not a very salubrious solution, as Napoleon's public administrators realised. The **Chiesa di San Michele in Isola** (Map pp338-9), begun by Codussi in 1469, was among the city's first Renaissance buildings. Among those pushing up daisies here are Ezra Pound, Sergei Diaghilev and Igor Stravinsky.

*Vaporetti* 41 and 42 that run between Fondamenta Nuove and Murano stop at San Michele.

## Murano

The people of Venice have been making crystal and glass since as early as the 10th century. The industry was moved to the island of Murano in the 13th century because of the fire hazard to the city. The methods of the craft were such a well-guarded secret that it was considered treason for a glass-worker to leave the city. You can see glass-workers in action in several outlets along Fondamenta dei Vetrai and a couple on Calle Bressaggio. Look for the *Fornace* (Furnace) signs.

The **Museo del Vetro** (☎ 041 73 95 86; www.musei.civici.veneziani.it; Fondamenta Giustinian 8; adult/EU senior &

student 6-14yr/child under 6yr €5.50/3/free; 🕒 10am-6pm Thu-Tue Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Thu-Tue Nov-Mar) traces the story of Venetian glass-making from its earliest days and contains some exquisite pieces from down the centuries.

The **Chiesa dei SS Maria e Donato** (☎ 041 73 90 56; Campo San Donato; 🕒 9am-noon & 3.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 3.30-7pm Sun) is a fascinating example of Veneto-Byzantine architecture. At first dedicated to the Virgin Mary, it was rededicated to San Donato after his bones were brought here from Cephalonia, along with those of a dragon he had supposedly killed (four of the 'dragon' bones hang behind the altar). The impressive mosaic of the Virgin Mary in the apse dates from the 12th century.

The island is most easily reached by the *Vaporetto* 42 (*Vaporetto* 41 the other way) from Fondamenta Nuove, Ferrovia and other stops.

## Burano

Famous for its lace industry, Burano is a cheerful fishing village, its streets and canals lined with bright, pastel-coloured houses. The **Museo del Merletto** (☎ 041 73 00 34; www.museicivici.veneziani.it; Piazza Galuppi 187; adult/EU senior, student & child €4/2.50; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Mon Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Wed-Mon Nov-Mar), the island's lace-making museum, is housed in the former lace-making school (which shut in 1970). Take the LN ferry from the Fondamenta Nuove to Burano.

## Torcello

This delightful island, with its overgrown main square and sparse, scruffy-looking buildings and monuments, was at its peak from the mid-7th to the 13th centuries, when it was the seat of the Bishop of Altinum and home to some 20,000 people. Rivalry with Venice and a succession of malaria epidemics systematically reduced the island's splendour and its population. Today, around 20 people call it home.

The Veneto-Byzantine cathedral, **Santa Maria Assunta** (☎ 041 296 06 30; Piazza Torcello; cathedral €3, bell tower €2, incl both & Museo di Torcello €6; 🕒 10.30am-6pm Mar-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Feb), should not be missed. Founded in the 7th century and rebuilt in the 11th century, it was Venice's first cathedral. On the cathedral's western wall is a vast mosaic depicting the Last Judgment, but its great treasure is the mosaic of the Madonna in the semidome of the apse. Starkly set on a pure gold background, the figure is

one of the most stunning works of Byzantine art you will see in Italy. Climb the bell tower for lovely views.

The adjacent, tiny **Chiesa di Santa Fosca** (☎ 10am-4.30pm) was founded in the 11th century to house the body of Santa Fosca. Across the square, in the Palazzo del Consiglio, is the **Museo di Torcello** (☎ 041 270 24 64; Piazza Torcello; admission €2, incl Santa Maria Assunta €6; ☎ 10.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), telling the history of the island. Part of the collection is in the adjacent **Palazzo dell'Archivio**. Both buildings date from the 13th century and together they formed the nerve centre of temporal power in Torcello.

To reach the island take an LN ferry from Fondamente Nuove to Burano and change to the T ferry.

### The Lido

The main draw here is the beach, but the water can be polluted and the public areas are often unkempt. Some of the beaches at the southern end of the island, such as those at Alberoni, are an exception. If you want to stay closer to the northern end of the island (and the *vaporetto* stops), you will pay a small fortune (up to €10 for a sun-lounge) to hire a chair and umbrella in the more easily accessible and cleaner areas of the beach.

The Lido became a fashionable seaside resort around the late 19th century and its more glorious days are depicted (in admittedly melancholy fashion) in Thomas Mann's novel *Death in Venice*.

The snappy **Palazzo del Cinema** hosts the Venice International Film Festival each September (see p358). You might trundle through on your way south to Chioggia via Pellestrina. From central Venice, the Lido can be reached by various *vaporetti*, including the *Vaporetti* 1, 51, 52, 61, 62, 82 and N, and the vehicle ferry from Tronchetto.

### Chioggia

Chioggia lies at the south end of the lagoon and is the second-most important city in it after Venice. Invaded and destroyed by the Venetian Republic's maritime rival, Genoa, in the late 14th century, the medieval core of modern Chioggia is a crumbly but not uninteresting counterpoint to its more illustrious patron to the north. Chioggia is a firmly practical town, its big fishing fleet everywhere in evidence.

From the Lido, bus 11 leaves from Gran Viale Santa Maria Elisabetta, outside the tourist office; it boards the car ferry at Alberoni and then connects with a boat at Pellestrina for Chioggia (the whole trip costs €5 one way). Or you can take the more prosaic overland bus from Piazzale Roma (€4, one hour).

### ACTIVITIES

A gondola ride is the quintessence of romantic Venice, although at €80 for 40 minutes (€100 from 7pm to 8am) the official price is a rather hefty return from the clouds to reality. The rates are for a maximum of six people – less romantic but more affordable. After the first 40 minutes you pay in 20-minute increments (€40, or €50 after 7pm). Several travellers have reported successfully negotiating below the official rates, so get your haggling skills in order!

Gondolas are available near main canals all over the city, and can be booked by phoning ☎ 041 528 50 75 or calling in at various gondola *stazi* (stops) such as those in **Rialto** (☎ 041 522 49 04) and at the **train station** (☎ 041 71 85 43).

### WALKING TOUR

When you arrive at the train station, don't follow the crowd down the main drag to Rialto and on to San Marco. Make a tour of it and take the long road! As far as **Ponte delle Guglie (1)** you have no choice. Turn left once over the bridge and right down Calle del Ghetto Vecchio. This leads to **Campo del Ghetto Nuovo (2)**; p351), the heart of the historic Jewish district. Cross three canals north to reach the **Chiesa di Sant'Alvise (3)** and then head east to the equally little-visited **Chiesa della Madonna dell'Orto (4)**; p351). Head south again before moving eastward to **I Gesuiti (5)**; p351) and then the **Fondamente Nuove (6)**, from which you can scan the northern lagoon to Murano. Continue eastward until you reach the hospital and turn down **Fondamenta dei Mendicanti** to reach the mighty **Chiesa di SS Giovanni e Paolo (7)**; p353). The square is a nice spot for a gelato

#### WALK FACTS

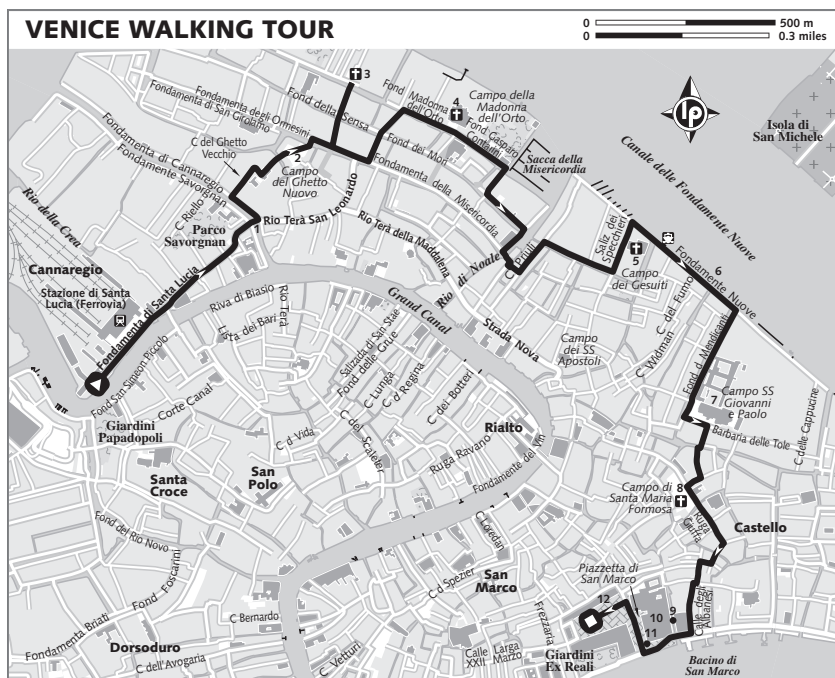
**Start** train station

**Finish** Piazza San Marco

**Distance** 4km

**Duration** Two hours if you take your time





halt. A zigzagging route takes you through Campo di Santa Maria Formosa – with its eponymous **church (8; p353)** – and on down Ruga Giuffa, Calle della Chiesa, across the little Campo di San Provolo and finally down Calle degli Albanesi to arrive on Riva degli Schiavoni. A short stroll west takes you past the **Ponte dei Sospiri (9; p347)** and **Palazzo Ducale (10; p347)** on your right and into Piazzetta di San Marco. As you stand below the column bearing the statue of the **winged lion of St Mark (11; p347)**, you look north into your objective: **Piazza San Marco (12; p342)**!

## COURSES

**Ca' Macana** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 277 61 42; www.camacanacourses.com; Calle delle Botteghe, Dorsoduro 3172), a mask-and-costume shop, runs a pair of short courses (2½ hours each) in mask-making and decorating. After the decorating course, you take home your own mask. Prices vary according to the number of people in the course but hover around €40 per person.

**Istituto Venezia** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 43 31; www.istitutovenezia.com; Campo Santa Margherita, Dorsoduro 3116a) offers language courses and one- or

two-week courses on subjects such as cooking, wine and Burano lace. Four weeks (80 hours) of intensive language classes cost €640.

## VENICE FOR CHILDREN

Venice isn't for art lovers and hopeless romantics alone. The city is varied enough to keep even the most recalcitrant juniors interested. Some of the stuff grown-ups like, such as gondola and *vaporetto* rides, taking time out on a beach, or a good gelato, will also appeal to kids.

Some museums should work too. Kids might get a kick out of the boats and model ships at the Museo Storico Navale (p354). The sculpture garden at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection (p349) may prove an educational distraction while you indulge your modern-art needs.

Climbing towers is usually a winner. Try the Campanile (p346) or Torre dell'Orologio (p342) in Piazza San Marco or the bell tower at San Giorgio Maggiore (p355).

Parco Savorgnan (part of Palazzo Savorgnan; Map p352) and the Giardini Pubblici (p354) have swings and the like.

Just kicking back and watching the boats go by along the Canale della Giudecca, or hanging out at the top of Ponte del Rialto doing the same thing will keep many children enthralled.

## TOURS

You can join free tours for a biblical explanation of the mosaics in the Basilica di San Marco (p342). They take place in Italian at 11am Monday to Saturday. Tours in English are at 11am on Monday, Thursday and Friday, and in French at the same time on Thursday. This timetable is subject to change. For more information, call ☎ 041 241 38 17 from 10am to noon, Monday to Friday.

The APT tourist offices (see p340) offer a series of guided tours, from a two-hour walk around San Marco (€30 per person) to a serenaded evening gondola jaunt (€38 per person).

**Heliair Venice** (☎ 041 527 47 62; [www.heliairvenice.com](http://www.heliairvenice.com)) offers quick helicopter tours over the city (around 10 minutes, €99 per person), the lagoon (around 15 minutes, €169) and a more wide-ranging tour over the region (about 25 minutes, €249).

**RiViviNatura** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 296 07 26; [www.rivivinatura.it](http://www.rivivinatura.it) in Italian; Calle dei Vitturi, San Marco 2923) organises offbeat day tours around the lagoon.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

The major event of the year is **Carnevale**, when Venetians and visitors don spectacular masks and costumes for a 10-day street party in the run-up to Ash Wednesday. The starting dates for Carnevale in the next few years are 13 February 2009, 5 February 2010 and 25 February 2011.

The city next hosts the **Palio delle Quattro Repubbliche Marinare** (Regatta of the Four Ancient Maritime Republics) in June 2011. The former maritime republics of Genoa, Pisa, Venice and Amalfi take turns to host this colourful rowing event.

Carnevale is largely the preserve of tourists, but Venetians celebrate the **Festa del Redentore** on the third weekend of July with gusto. Gondola regattas and other activities serve as the build-up to a spectacular midnight fireworks display. A pontoon bridge is slung between Fondamenta delle Zattere and Giudecca to allow people to walk across to the Chiesa del SS Redentore (see Map pp338-9). The feast

day was inaugurated in 1577 to give thanks for deliverance from a bout of plague.

The **Regata Storica** (Historic Regatta) is a series of gondola and other traditional boat races along the Grand Canal preceded by a spectacular parade of boats decorated in 15th-century style. It is held on the first Sunday in September.

The **Venice Biennale**, a major exhibition of international visual arts, is held every two years from June to October/November in permanent pavilions in the Giardini Pubblici (Map pp338-9), as well as in other locations (in particular the Arsenale) throughout the city. The next one is in 2009. Every other year the city hosts a less well known but equally prestigious architecture biennale.

The **Venice International Film Festival** (Mostra del Cinema di Venezia), Italy's version of Cannes, is organised by the Venice Biennale and is held annually in late August/early September at the Palazzo del Cinema on the Lido.

On 21 November, in a procession over a pontoon bridge to the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Salute, the **Festa della Madonna della Salute** gives thanks for the city's deliverance from plague in 1630.

## SLEEPING

Low season for the average Venetian hotelier means November, early December, January and the period between Carnevale and Easter. For some there is a dip in July and August as well.

Book in advance year-round in Venice but particularly in May, September, during Carnevale and other holidays (such as Easter, Christmas and New Year).

A booming sector is the B&B business. A good number of B&Bs in Venice are listed at [www.guestinitaly.com](http://www.guestinitaly.com). The city's **APT tourist board** ([www.turismovenetia.it](http://www.turismovenetia.it)) has some 200 B&Bs and 250 *affittacamere* (rooms for rent) on the books, although the definition in both cases seems a little loose.

If you are having trouble finding a hotel room, try [www.veniceby.com](http://www.veniceby.com) or the Venice Hoteliers Association website, [www.veneziasiti.it](http://www.veneziasiti.it).

Apartments are another good option to consider. **Dimora Veneziana** (☎041 241 16 97; [www.dimoraveneziana.com](http://www.dimoraveneziana.com)) has more than 25 apartments of greatly varying size and quality, with prices ranging from €720 for two people per week

to €1600 for five per week. Another worthwhile site is [www.veniceapartment.com](http://www.veniceapartment.com). See also p853.

## Camping

**Marina di Venezia** (☎ 041 530 25 11; [www.marinadivenezia.it](http://www.marinadivenezia.it); Via Montello 6, Punta Sabbioni; per person/tent €8.25/20.05; ☒ late Apr–Sep; (P) ☒) On the Litorale del Cavallino, this place has a private beach, shops, cinema, playground and bungalows. You can get the *vaporetto* from Punta Sabbioni to Fondamente Nuove (Cannaregio).

**Campeggio Fusina** (☎ 041 547 00 55; [www.camping-fusina.com](http://www.camping-fusina.com); Via Moranzani 79, Località Fusina; per person/tent & car €9/14; (P) ☒) This camping ground is reasonably well equipped. The bar hums on summer nights. The most direct link with Venice is on the Linea Fusina *vaporetto* straight into Venice (Zattere stop), which costs €6/10 one way/return.

## San Marco

**Locanda Casa Petrarca** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 04 30; [www.casapetrarca.com](http://www.casapetrarca.com); Calle delle Schiavine 4386; s/d €95/135, s/d without bathroom €70/112) A family-run place high up in an ancient apartment building with six simple but sparkling rooms. From Campo San Luca, follow Calle dei Fuseri, take the second left and then turn right into Calle delle Schiavine.

**Locanda Antico Fiore** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 79 41; [www.anticofiore.com](http://www.anticofiore.com); Corte Lucatello 3486; s/d to €125/145; ☒) This charming hotel is located in an 18th-century *palazzo*. The front door is on a narrow *rio* (river) just in from the Grand Canal, so you could arrive in style by water taxi. All rooms, over two floors, are tastefully decorated (with tapestries and timber furniture) and each has a different colour scheme.

**Locanda Art Deco** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 277 05 58; [www.locandaartdeco.com](http://www.locandaartdeco.com); Calle delle Botteghe 2966;

d €79-149; ☒) Art Deco has bright, whitewashed rooms with exposed-timber-beam ceilings. Iron bedsteads are attached to particularly comfy beds with orthopaedic mattresses – no chance of backache in this enticing hide-away.

**our pick** **Locanda Orseolo** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 48 77; [www.locandaorseolo.com](http://www.locandaorseolo.com); Corte Zorzi 1083; s/d €180/230; ☒ ☒ ☒) With 15 splendid, Carnevale-themed rooms in a key location close to the Bacino Orseolo, this gem is run by attentive young staff. Take breakfast in a cosy room with red leather banquettes.

## Dorsoduro

**Locanda Ca' Foscari** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 71 04 01; [www.locandacafoscari.com](http://www.locandacafoscari.com); Calle Marcona 3887b; s/d €68/98; ☒ mid-Jan–Nov) For a simple, family-run lodging house close to the Frari and Campo Santa Margherita, this is not a bad choice. A little aged, it nonetheless offers reasonably sized rooms (except the single), some with their own bathroom.

**Hotel Galleria** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 24 89; [www.hotelgalleria.it](http://www.hotelgalleria.it); Campo della Carità 878a; d to €165, s/d without bathroom €80/120) The only one-star hotel right on the Grand Canal near the Ponte dell'Accademia. Space is a tad tight, but the décor is welcoming in this 17th-century mansion. If you can get one of the rooms on the canal side, how can you possibly complain?

**La Calcina** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 520 64 66; [www.lacalcina.com](http://www.lacalcina.com); Fondamenta Zattere ai Gesuati 780; s €86-106, d €151-201; ☒) John Ruskin stopped in here while he wrote *The Stones of Venice* in 1876. This charming hotel has a smidgen of garden attached and looks across to Giudecca. The immaculate rooms with parquet floors and timber furnishings are sober but charming. Some enjoy views over the Canale della Giudecca.

## STUDENT DIGS

In summer only, **Esu** (☎ 041 72 10 25; [www.esuvenezia.it](http://www.esuvenezia.it)), the city's student administration agency, opens its residences to students and academics visiting town. Singles, doubles and triples are available and guests also get access to university refectories (*mense*). Of the five locations, **Residenza Junghans** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 521 08 01; [www.residenzajunghans.com](http://www.residenzajunghans.com) in Italian; Terzo Ramo della Palada 394, Giudecca; s/d €40/70) has rooms available year-round. The others are: **Residenza Maria Ausiliatrice** (Map pp338-9; Fondamenta San Gioacchin, Castello 454), **Residenza Abazia** (Map pp338-9; Fondamenta Misericordia, Cannaregio 3547), **Residenza Jan Palach** (Map pp338-9; Giudecca 186) and **Residenza San Tomà** (Map pp344-5; Campo San Tomà, San Polo 2846). Prices hover around €30/50 for singles/doubles. Student residences are open from mid-July to mid-September.

**Albergo agli Alboretti** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 00 58; www.aglialboretti.com; Rio Terà Antonio Foscarini 884; s/d €115/200; 🚰 🗺) This place almost feels like an inviting mountain chalet when you step inside. The bright, white-painted rooms are tastefully if simply arranged and mostly of a good size. Three sunny suites on the 4th floor can sleep up to four and have a terrace.

**Ca' Pisani Hotel** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 240 14 11; www.capisanihotel.it; Rio Terà Antonio Foscarini 979a; d €250-480; 🚰 🗺) The staid façade of this centuries-old building belies the self-conscious design interior, filled with 1930s and 1940s furnishings and items especially made for the hotel.

## San Polo & Santa Croce

**Hotel Alex** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 13 41; www.hotelalexinvenice.com; Rio Terà, San Polo 2606; s/d €48/76) Over three floors, this quiet hotel midway between the Frari and Campo San Polo offers an affordable place to lay your head. Rooms are mostly well lit and of a good size.

**Hotel Dalla Mora** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 71 07 03; www.hoteldallamora.it; Salizada San Pantalon, Santa Croce 42a; s/d €65/95; 🚰 🗺) Dalla Mora sits on a small canal just off Salizada San Pantalon. The hotel has clean, airy rooms, some with lovely canal views, and there is a terrace.

**Ca' Angeli** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 24 80; www.caangeli.it; Calle del Traghetto de la Madonnetta, San Polo 1434; s €90-140, d €115-195; 🚰 🗺) Facing the Grand Canal is this superb Escher-like house, with a variety of rooms filled with antique furniture. Among the best are one with canal views and another with a roof terrace. The sunny, canal-side reading room is delicious. Cash only.

**Pensione Guerrato** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 59 27; www.pensioneguerrato.it; Ruga due Mori, San Polo 240a; s/d €100/140, s/d without bathroom €70/95) Housed in a building that once served as a hostel for knights heading off on the Third Crusade, this offers beaut rooms, some with frescoes. From some you catch glimpses of the Grand Canal.

**ourpick Oltre il Giardino** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 275 00 15; www.oltreilgiardino-venezia.com; Fondamenta Contarini, San Polo 2542; d €150-380; 🚰 🗺) Enclosed behind a high wall, with its own garden, this place has timber floors, exquisitely chosen furniture and just six rooms, all of them different. One on the ground floor has a private corner of the garden.

## Cannaregio

**Alloggi Gerotto Calderan** (Map p352; ☎ 041 71 53 61; www.casagerottocalderan.com; Campo San Geremia 283; dm/

s/d/tr/q €25/50/90/105/120) For a simple budget deal this place has several advantages. It offers a large range of rooms with a commensurately bewildering battery of prices depending on size, views and whether there is a private bathroom.

**Residenza Ca' Riccio** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 23 34; www.cariccio.com; Rio Terà dei Birri 5394a; s/d €83/99; 🚰 🗺) This 14th-century residence has been lovingly restored, with exposed brick and stonework, timber ceiling beams and polished burnt-red floor tiles. Most rooms look out onto a garden or courtyard.

**Domus Orsoni** (Map p352; ☎ 041 275 95 38; www.domusorsoni.it; Corte Vedei 1045; d €120-160; 🚰 🗺) Five exquisite rooms are spread over the *piano nobile* (main floor) of this low Venetian house in a tranquil back lane. Out the back in the garden (where breakfast is served in summer), are the Orsoni mosaic works, in business here since 1885. Mosaic fantasies decorate the bathrooms, bed-heads and other furniture in the rooms.

**Locanda Leon Bianco** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 35 72; www.leonbianco.it; Corte Leon Bianco 5629; d from €200) Three wonderful rooms (out of eight) look right onto the Grand Canal. The undulating *terrazzo alla Veneziana* (Venetian-style floor using a marble-chip and plaster mix) and heavy timber doors with their original locks lend the rooms real charm. There are no singles but the price drops in small rooms without canal views.

**Ca' Pozzo** (Map p352; ☎ 041 524 05 04; www.capozzo.venice.com; Sotoportego Ca' Pozzo 1279; s/d €155/210; 🚰 🗺) A small-scale haunt of designer touches, this guesthouse is buried deep down a blind alley. Tastefully designed rooms each have modern artworks. In some you will find exposed ceiling beams, in others tiled floors.

**ourpick Palazzo Abadessa** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 241 37 84; www.abadessa.com; Calle Priuli 4011; d €295; 🚰 🚰 🗺) Each magnificent room in this opulent late-16th-century residence bears its own distinguishing marks, from wine-red décor to magnificent timber floors. Many rooms boast original ceiling frescoes. Out the back is a magnificent Venetian garden.

## Castello

**Foresteria Valdese** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 67 97; www.diaconiavaldese.org/venezia; Palazzo Cavagnis, Castello 5170; dm incl breakfast €21-24, d incl breakfast €60-93) A rambling old mansion near Campo Santa Maria Formosa. Double rates depend on the room

and whether or not it has a bathroom. Book well ahead.

**La Residenza** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 528 53 15; www.venicelaresidenza.com; Campo Bandiera e Moro 3608; s/d €100/160; 🚽) This grand 15th-century mansion presides over a square in the Castello area. The main hall upstairs makes quite an impression with its candelabras, elaborate decoration and distinguished furniture. The rooms are rather more restrained but they're good value.

## Giudecca

**Ostello Venezia** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 523 82 11; venezia@ostellonline.it; Fondamenta della Croce 86, Giudecca; dm incl breakfast €20; 🚽 check-in 1.30-11.30pm) The one HI hostel in Venice is located in a peaceful spot on Giudecca. Evening meals are available for €9.50. Catch *vaporetto* 41, 42 or 82 to Zitelle from the train station or Piazzale Roma.

## EATING

Venice is about the most expensive city in Italy for eating out, so you may find yourself resorting to *panini* or *tramezzini* (sandwich triangles) that cost from around €2.

Search out little trattorias and *osterie* tucked away along side lanes and canals away from the main tourist centres. A Venetian *osteria* is a cross between a bar and a trattoria, where you can usually sample *cicheti* (bar snacks), washed down with an *ombra* (small glass of wine). Some *osterie* also serve full sit-down meals.

Better areas to look include the backstreets of Cannaregio, San Polo and Castello. A sprinkling of good places can be found in Dorsoduro and the Giudecca.

## Restaurants & Osterie

### SAN MARCO

**Ai Rusteghi** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 22 05; Campiello del Tentor 5513; mini panini €1.50; 🍷 8am-9.30pm Mon-Sat) In a quiet back square away from the hubbub, this is the perfect stop for a great range of little filled *panini* and wine.

**Osteria alla Botte** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 97 75; www.osteriaallabotte.it; Calle Bissa 5482; meals €25-30; 🍷 lunch Wed-Mon, dinner Mon-Wed) This spirited backstreet *bacaro* (bar/eatery) near the Ponte di Rialto is ideal for munching *cicheti* over a glass of Prosecco. You can also take a seat for a robust meal.

**Vini da Arturo** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 69 74; Calle dei Assassini 3656; meals €85; 🍷 Mon-Sat) Welcome to

one of this fishy city's few meat emporiums. No prawns here, just tender slabs of land-going animals' flesh, healthy vegetable sides and sloshings of fine wine in an ageless, half-hidden restaurant.

### DORSODURO

**ourpick Ristorante Oniga** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 44 10; www.oniga.it; Campo San Barnaba 2852; meals €35; 🍷 Wed-Mon) A great new addition to the area, Oniga offers imaginative pasta firsts (such as the *tagliolini* done with spring onion, artichoke and fish) at €10, and a balance of fish and meat mains. Sit on the square.

**Ristorante La Bitta** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 05 31; Calle Lunga San Barnaba 2753a; meals €35-40; 🍷 dinner Mon-Sat) The short and regularly changing menu is dominated by a few first courses and tempting meat dishes (like the *coniglio in casseruola ai peperoni* – casserole of rabbit with capsicum), all presented in a romantic setting.

### SAN POLO & SANTA CROCE

**All'Arco** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 56 66; Calle dell'Arco, San Polo 436; *cicheti* €1.50-3; 🍷 7am-5pm Mon-Sat) Just the place if you are looking for a locals' spot for downing a few *cicheti* and a glass or two of wine.

**Cantina do Mori** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 54 01; Sotoportego dei do Mori, San Polo 429; snacks €3-4; 🍷 8am-8.30pm Mon-Sat) Hidden away near the Ponte di Rialto, this traditional institution has been serving up snacks and wine since the 15th century. It is known for its *francobolli* (literally 'stamps'), tiny stuffed bread snacks. Oozing history, it still attracts a lot of local custom.

**Ganesh Ji** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 71 90 84; Fondamenta Rio Marin, San Polo 2426; meals €20-25; 🍷 lunch & dinner Fri-Tue, dinner Thu) A rare, exotic flavour in Venice. Fancy a quick Indian curry? Forget it. But a good slow one can be had on the pleasant canal terrace. The place also offers a vegetarian lunch menu (€12) and a nonvegetarian lunch option (€13.50).

**Osteria La Zucca** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 524 15 70; Calle del Tentor, Santa Croce 1762; meals €30; 🍷 Mon-Sat) La Zucca is an excellent option for frustrated vegetarians. The menu is a Mediterranean mix and even the vegetable side orders are inspired and plentiful. Flesh-eaters are also well catered for.

**Naranzaria** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 724 10 35; www.naranzaria.it; Campo San Giacometto, San Polo 130; meals €30-40; 🍷 Tue-Sun) A hip hang-out for sushi, light dishes and a wine or two. Nibble and

jabber downstairs, take an upstairs table with a Grand Canal view or, in summer, sit out on the terrace overlooking the canal. This place doubles as a lively bar at night.

**ourpick** **Vecio Fritolin** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 28 81; Calle della Regina, Santa Croce 2262; meals €45-50; ☞ Tue-Sun) There's a touch of class to dining here. Unfailingly fresh ingredients are used to create a combination of classic and inventive local and more broadly Italian cuisine. Both the desserts and bread are homemade and are renowned around town.

### CANNAREGIO

**ourpick** **Antica Adelaide** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 26 29; Calle Priuli 3728; meals €25-30) The Ancient Adelaide was (under different names) in the food business as long ago as the 18th century. Drop by for tea or *cicheti*, or stick around for a good meal. Pasta comes in at €8 and you can opt for fish or such oddities as *arrosto di cuore* (roast heart) as a main.

**Osteria dalla Vedova** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 53 24; Calle del Pistor 3912; meals €35-40; ☞ lunch & dinner Mon-Wed, dinner Fri-Sun) One of the oldest *osterie* in Venice, the 'Widow's Hostel' (also known as Trattoria Ca d'Or) offers excellent, modestly priced food, mostly from the sea. Wander in for the *cicheti*, a cornucopia of snacks from battered artichokes to *folpeti* (teensy deep-fried octopi).

**Anice Stellato** (Map p352; ☎ 041 72 07 44; Fondamenta della Sensa 3272; meals €35-40; ☞ Wed-Sun) Heavy timber tables and wooden chairs invite you to a chatty, convivial meal. Try the *misto di cicheti* (a mixed selection of snacks as a starter for €12) or *tagliatelle alla Buranella con sugo di crostacei e bescimella* (tagliatelle with a seafood and béchamel sauce).

### CASTELLO

**Alla Rivetta** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 73 02; Ponte San Provolo 4625; meals €25; ☞ Tue-Sun) It has long been on the tourist list of 'must' places for a simple meal but you can still get edible seafood for not unreasonable prices. Local gondoliers still hang out here.

**Enoteca Mascareta** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 07 44; Calle Lunga Santa Maria Formosa 5138; meals incl wine €35-45; ☞ 7pm-2am Fri-Tue) Local character Mauro Lorenzon runs the 'Little Mask', a chaotically relaxed spot for anything from a mixed platter of cheese and cold meats to a limited range of hot meals, all washed down with a fine selection of wines.

### GIUDECCA

**Ai Tre Scaini** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 522 47 90; Calle Michelangelo 53c, Giudecca; meals €25; ☞ lunch Fri-Wed, dinner Tue, Wed & Fri-Sun) *The* popular local eatery. It's a no-nonsense place for seafood and other goodies. You can dine in the garden out the back.

### Cafés

Yes, the coffee-and-music surcharge are a little on the pricey side at Venice's centuries-old cafés on Piazza San Marco, but how many times in your life will you have a hot cuppa in such a setting? Go on, let your hair down!

**Caffè Florian** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 520 56 41; www.caffeflorian.com; Piazza San Marco 56/59; ☞ 10am-midnight Thu-Tue Apr-Oct, 10am-11pm Thu-Tue Nov-Mar) The more famous of the two. Lord Byron and Henry James used to take breakfast here (separately).

**Caffè Quadri** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 21 05; Piazza San Marco 120; ☞ 9am-midnight Tue-Sun) In much the same league as Florian, and equally steeped in history. Upstairs is one of the city's luxury restaurants.

### Gelaterie

Ice-cream prices range from about €1 for a small cup to €3 for a big cone. Prices don't vary much but the generosity of serves can.

**Alaska** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 71 52 11; Calle Larga dei Bari, Santa Croce 1159; ☞ 8am-1pm & 3-8pm)

**ourpick** **Gelateria San Stae** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 71 06 89; Salizada San Stae, Santa Croce 1910; ☞ 11am-7pm Tue-Sun)

### Quick Eats

**Spizzico** (Map pp344-5; Campo San Luca, San Marco 4475/4476; pizza slices €3-4.50; ☞ 10am-9pm Sun-Fri, 10am-11pm Sat) Not a bad chain if you're after a quick slice of pizza.

**Brek** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 244 01 58; Rio Terà Lista di Spagna, Cannaregio 124; meals €7-12; ☞ 7.30am-10pm) A much better place to do cheap fast-ish food than the average burger joint. You can get decent full meals at lunch and dinner and snacks throughout the day.

### Self-Catering

The best fresh-produce **markets** (Map pp344-5) take place on the San Polo side of the Ponte di Rialto. Grocery shops, where you can buy salami, cheese and bread, are concentrated around Campo Beccarie, which happens to lie next to the **pescaria** (Map pp344-5), the city's main fish market.

**Billa Supermarket** (Map p352; Strada Nova, Cannaregio 3660; ☎ 8.30am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9am-8pm Sun) is a well-stocked and handy supermarket option for self-caterers.

## DRINKING

The main areas for a night out drinking are in the Rialto market area, just on the San Polo side of the bridge, Campo Santa Margherita in Dorsoduro, and a handful of bars along Calle dei Preti near Chiesa di San Pantalon. Further from the centre, the area around Fondamenta della Misericordia and Fondamenta degli Ormesini is laid-back.

**our pick Aurora** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 64 05; www.aurora.it; Piazza San Marco 48-50; ☎ 8pm-2am Wed-Sun) Piazza San Marco's funkier bar, cunningly disguised as a typically historic café by day, offers a chilled lounge with local DJs by night.

**Centrale** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 296 06 64; www.centrale-lounge.com; Piscina Frezzaria, San Marco 1659b; cocktails €9-12; ☎ 7pm-2am Wed-Mon) Exposed-brick walls, emerald-green lighting, deep lounges and chilled music make this the closest thing to Manhattan in San Marco. There is food too.

**Harry's Bar** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 57 77; www.cipriano.com; Calle Vallaresso, San Marco 1323; cocktails €10-16; ☎ noon-11pm) As well as being one of the city's most notable restaurants, Harry's is first and foremost a bar. Everyone who is anyone and passing through Venice usually ends up here sooner or later. Have a Bellini in the place of its invention!

**Il Caffè** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 528 79 98; Campo Santa Margherita, Dorsoduro 2693; ☎ 7am-1am Mon-Sat) A lively student bar with snacks. It is known to locals as the *caffè rosso* because of the red sign. There's plenty of choice around this square.

**Muro Vino e Cucina** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 523 47 40; Campo Cesare Battisti, San Polo 222; ☎ 4pm-2am Mon-Sat) A metropolitan touch in Venice's bar scene, this place has brought some boisterous nightlife joy to the market squares of Rialto. Folks spread out into the square with their tipples. It is one of a half dozen bars around here that attract locals like bees to a honey pot.

**Paradiso Perduto** (Map p352; ☎ 041 72 05 81; Fondamenta della Misericordia, Cannaregio 2640; ☎ 11am-3pm & 6pm-2am Tue-Sun) Lost Paradise can be a rollicking barnyard of a spot, especially if there is some live music. Don't bother with the food.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Theatre and musical events continue throughout the year in Venice. Check the monthly listings magazine *VeNews*.

### Casinos

**Casino di Venezia** (Map p352; ☎ 041 529 71 11; www.casinovenezia.it; Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, Cannaregio 2040; admission €5, or incl €10 gambling token & discounted parking at Piazzale Roma €10; ☎ 2.45pm-2.30am Sun-Thu, 2.45pm-3am Fri & Sat) The elegant gambler's preferred haunt in the heart of Venice, in the palace where the composer Richard Wagner expired.

### Cinemas

**Summer Arena** (Campo San Polo) A cinema-under-the-stars held in July and August. Films are generally dubbed. About the only chance to catch cinema in the original language is during the September film festival (see p358).

**Cinema Giorgione Movie d'Essai** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 62 98; Rio Terà di Franceschi, Cannaregio 4612; adult/student €7/5) This modern cinema frequently presents quality movies, not just Hollywood schlock.

### Theatre, Opera & Classical Music

Tickets are available directly from the theatre concerned, usually one hour before the show. You can generally also call ahead or book online.

You can purchase tickets for the majority of events in Venice at **HelloVenezia ticket outlets** (☎ 041 24 24; www.hellovenezia.it), which are part of the ACTV city transport company. Various outlets are indicated on the San Marco, San Polo & Santa Croce map (pp344-5).

A handy website for checking what's on in which theatre is [www.culturaspettacolo.venezia.it](http://www.culturaspettacolo.venezia.it) (in Italian). Look also at [www.veneziaspettacoli.it](http://www.veneziaspettacoli.it) in Italian. A good general site for theatre information is at the city council website, [www.comune.venezia.it](http://www.comune.venezia.it) – click on 'Cultura'. Tickets to many Venice theatres can be acquired online at [www.vivaticket.it](http://www.vivaticket.it).

**our pick Musica a Palazzo** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 430 971 72 72; www.musicapalazzo.com; Fondamenta Barbarigo o Duodo, San Marco 2504; tickets €40; ☎ 8.30pm nightly) Enjoy a night at the opera (Barber of Seville, La Traviata or love duets) with top operatic performers in the intimacy of a centuries-old mansion on the Grand Canal.

**Teatro La Fenice** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 42 42; www.teatrolafenice.it; Campo San Fantin, San Marco 1977; tickets €20-1000) The grand opera theatre of Venice is

back in action. Destroyed by fire in 1996, it was reopened at the end of 2003, reproducing its old look but with the latest in theatre technology (and safety equipment).

**Teatro Malibran** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 42 42; www.teatrolafenice.it; Calle del Teatro, San Marco 5870; tickets €10-95) The bijou 17th-century Teatro Malibran takes some of the overflow from La Fenice.

**Teatro Goldoni** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 240 20 14; www.teatrostabileveneto.it; Calle Teatro Goldoni, San Marco 4650b; tickets €7-30; 📺 box office 10am-1pm & 3-7pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat when there is a performance, 10am-1pm Thu) Named after the city's greatest playwright, this is the main drama theatre in Venice. As well as Goldoni and Shakespeare, the theatre is used for concerts, ballet and more.

## SHOPPING

Most shops hoping to sell to tourists open all weekend during the high season (Easter to September).

The main shopping area for clothing, shoes, accessories and jewellery is in the narrow streets between San Marco and the Rialto, particularly the Marzarie and around Campo San Luca. The more upmarket fashion-shopping area is west of Piazza San Marco (Calle Larga XXII Marzo, Calle Vallaresso and Frezzaria, as well as Calle dei Fabbri).

Classic gift options include Murano glass, Burano lace, Carnevale masks and *carta marmorizzata* (marbled paper).

**ourpick Murano Collezioni** (☎ 041 73 62 72; Fondamenta Manin 1CD, Murano; 📺 10.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) In one elegantly presented showroom you can view an assortment of fine glassware by three of the most prestigious of Murano's creators, Barovier & Toso, Venini and Carlo Moretti. The accent is on objects you can use at home rather than florid artistic pieces.

**Ca' Macana** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 97 49; www.camacana.com; Calle delle Botteghe 3172) One of the best stores and workshops in Venice producing and selling Carnevale masks.

**Aliani** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 49 13; Ruga Vecchia di San Giovanni, San Polo 654) An outstanding collection of cheeses, wines and other delicatessen products has long made Aliani a favoured gastronomic stop in the Rialto area.

**Jesurum Outlet** (Map p352; ☎ 041 524 25 40; www.jesurum.it; Fondamenta della Sensa, Cannaregio 3219) Jesurum, the name in Burano lace since the 19th century, offers everything from pillowcases to doilies in this huge warehouse and workshop.

**Vivaldi Store** (Map pp344-5; ☎ 041 522 13 43; Salizada del Fontego dei Tedeschi, San Marco 5537; 📺 9.30am-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-7pm Sun) Can't get the sounds of Vivaldi out of your mind? If you need a CD of music related to Venice, pop by here.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

Venice's modern **Marco Polo airport** (VCE; ☎ 041 260 92 60; www.veniceairport.it) is 12km outside Venice and just east of Mestre. Some flights, notably Ryanair's budget services, use the minuscule **San Giuseppe airport** (TSF; ☎ 0422 31 51 11; www.trevisoairport.it), about 5km southwest of Treviso and 30km (about an hour's drive through traffic) from Venice. Airport bus services link both airports with Venice and Mestre, and the Alilaguna fast ferry runs from Marco Polo airport. For more details, see opposite.

### Boat

**Minoan Lines** (www.minoan.gr) and **Anek** (www.anekeitalia.com) run regular ferries to Venice from Greece. **Venezia Lines** (www.venezialines.com) runs high-speed boats to and from Croatia in summer.

### Bus

**Azienda del Consorzio Trasporti Veneziano** (ACTV; ☎ 041 24 24; www.actv.it) local buses leave from the **bus station** (Map pp338-9) on Piazzale Roma for surrounding areas, including Mestre and Chioggia.

**ATVO** (Azienda Trasporti Veneto Orientale; ☎ 041 520 55 30) operates buses to destinations all over the eastern Veneto. A handful of other companies have the occasional service to more-distant locations but, for most places in Italy, the train is an easier option. Tickets and information are available at the ticket office on Piazzale Roma.

### Car & Motorcycle

The congested A4 connects Trieste with Turin, passing through Mestre (and hence Venice). Take the Venezia exit and follow the signs. From the south, take the A13 from Bologna, which connects with the A4 at Padua.

Once over the Ponte della Libertà bridge from Mestre, cars must be left at one of the car parks on Piazzale Roma or Tronchetto. You will pay €20 or more for every 24 hours. Parking stations in Mestre are cheaper.

The car-rental companies listed here all have offices on Piazzale Roma, as well as at



Marco Polo airport. Several companies operate in or near Mestre train station too.

**Avis** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 523 73 77)

**Europcar** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 523 86 16)

**Expressway** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 522 30 00)

**Hertz** (Map pp338-9; ☎ 041 528 40 91)

## Train

Venice's **Stazione di Santa Lucia** (Map pp344-5) is linked by train to Padua (€2.70 to €10, 30 to 40 minutes, three or four each hour), Verona (€6.10 to €14, 1¼ to 2¼ hours, two each hour). Regular trains race further afield to Milan (€24, 2¾ to three hours), Bologna (€8.20 to €21, one hour 20 minutes to two hours 10 minutes), Florence (€15.90 to €30, three to four hours) and many other cities. You can also reach Venice by rail from major points in France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia and Croatia.

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

The **Alilaguna** (☎ 041 523 57 75; www.alilaguna.com) airport fast-ferry costs €12 to/from Venice or the Lido and €6 to/from Murano. You can pick it up at the Zattere, Fondamente Nuove or near Piazza San Marco, in front of the **Giardini Ex Reali** (Map pp344-5). The *arancia* (orange) line runs from the Guglie stop via Madonna dell'Orto and Murano to the airport. A faster direct service (the gold line) from San Marco (stopping only at nearby San Zaccaria) costs €25 and runs eight times a day.

The standard water taxi rate for the ride between Piazzetta di San Marco and Marco Polo airport is €45. To/from the Lido costs €55. Keep an eye out for night and baggage surcharges. A group of up to four people could expect to pay around €90 for the ride to San Marco from the airport.

**ATVO** (☎ 041 38 36 72; www.atvo.it) buses run to the airport from Piazzale Roma (€3, 20 minutes, 27 to 30 daily).

**Eurobus** (☎ 041 38 36 72; www.atvo.it), run by ATVO, connects with flights at Treviso's San Giuseppe airport. The trip to/from Piazzale Roma takes 65 minutes and costs €5 (€9 return, but the ticket is valid for one week only).

## Traghetto

The poor man's gondola, *traghetti* are used by locals to cross the Grand Canal where there is no nearby bridge. There is no limit (except common sense) on the number of

passengers who can stand. The *traghetto* ride costs €0.60.

*Traghetti* are supposed to operate from about 9am to 6pm, although on some routes they finish by noon. *Traghetto* crossings are indicated in the keys for the San Marco, San Polo & Santa Croce map (pp344-5) and the Cannaregio map (p352).

## Vaporetto

The city's main mode of public transport is *vaporetto*. Car ferry 17 transports vehicles from Tronchetto, near Piazzale Roma, to the Lido. From Piazzale Roma, *vaporetto* 1 zigzags down the Grand Canal to San Marco and then the Lido. It is a great introduction to Venice to travel this way but there are faster lines if you are in a hurry.

Tickets can be purchased from the Hello-Venezia ticket booths (www.hellovenezia.com) at most landing stations. You can also buy tickets when boarding (at a slightly higher price). You will be charged double if you have lots of luggage.

Catching these things can be confusing. Sometimes boats going both ways call at the same stop; occasionally boats have limited stops (for instance ferries heading down the Grand Canal from Piazzale Roma and Ferrovia sometimes only go as far as the Rialto). At the bigger stops (like Ferrovia) different landings are set aside for the different routes and directions.

Single *vaporetto* tickets cost €6 and are poor value. A 24-hour ticket is better value at €10.50 for unlimited travel. Better still is a *biglietto a tempo*, a ticket valid on all transport (except the Alilaguna, Linea Fusina and Linea Clodia services), including buses in Mestre and on the Lido, for unlimited travel during the specified time period from the first validation (*convalida*). You can get these tickets for 12/24/36/48/72 hours. They cost respectively €13/15/20/25/30. Routes and route numbers can change, so the following list is a guide only.

**DM (Diretto Murano)** Tronchetto–Piazzale Roma–Ferrovia–Murano and back.

**LN (Laguna Nord)** San Zaccaria (Pietà)–Lido–Litorale del Cavallino (Punta Sabbioni)–Treponti–Burano–Mazzorbo–Murano (Faro)–Fondamente Nuove and back.

**T** Torcello–Burano (half-hourly service) and back from 7am to 8.30pm.

**No 1** Piazzale Roma–Ferrovia–Grand Canal (all stops)–Lido and back.

**No 3** Fast circular line: Tronchetto–Ferrovia–San Samuele–Accademia–San Marco–Tronchetto (summer).

**No 4** Fast circular line in reverse direction to No 3 (summer).

**No 5** San Zaccaria–Murano and back.

**No 11** Lido–Pellestrina–Chioggia and back (bus and ferries).

**No 13** Fondamente Nuove–Murano–Vignole–Sant’Erasmo–Treporti and back.

**No 17** Car ferry: Tronchetto–Lido and back (extends to Punta Sabbioni in summer).

**No 18** Murano–Vignole–Sant’Erasmo–Lido and back (summer only).

**No 20** San Zaccaria–San Servolo–San Lazzaro and back.

**No 41** Circular line: Piazzale Roma–Sacca Fisola–Giudecca–San Zaccaria–San Pietro–Fondamente Nuove–Murano–Ferrovia.

**No 42** Circular line in reverse direction to No 41.

**No 51** Circular line: Piazzale Roma–Santa Marta–Zattere–San Zaccaria–Lido–San Pietro–Fondamente Nuove–Ferrovia.

**No 52** Circular line in reverse direction to No 51.

**No 61** Limited-stops, weekdays-only circular line: Piazzale Roma–Santa Marta–San Basilio–Zattere–Giardini–Sant’Elena–Lido.

**No 62** Limited-stops, weekdays-only circular line, reverse direction to No 61.

**No 82** San Zaccaria–San Marco–Grand Canal (all stops)–Ferrovia–Piazzale Roma–Tronchetto–Zattere–Giudecca–San Giorgio. A Limitato San Marco or Limitato Piazzale Roma sign means it will not go beyond those stops. Sometimes it goes only as far as Rialto. Ferry crew cry this out, but in Italian only. In summer the line extends from San Zaccaria to the Lido.

**N** All-stops night circuit: Lido–Giardini–San Zaccaria–Grand Canal (all stops)–Ferrovia–Piazzale Roma–Tronchetto–Giudecca–San Giorgio–San Zaccaria (starts around 11.30pm; last service around 5am).

**N** A second night service (aka NMU) from Fondamente Nuove to Murano (all stops) – three or four runs from midnight.

**N** A third night run, this time a nocturnal version of the Laguna Nord service (aka NLN) – a handful of services between Fondamente Nuove and Burano, Mazzorbo, Torcello and Treporti.

## Water Taxis

Venetian water taxis aren’t cheap, with an €8.70 flag fall, an extra €6 if you order one by telephone, €1.30 per minute thereafter and various other surcharges that can make a gondola ride look cheap. Up to 20 people can ride in a taxi, but that can be rather uncomfortable. There are surcharges for baggage, night trips (10am to 7am) and for each extra passenger above the first four.

# AROUND THE VENETO

## BRENTA RIVIERA

In the last centuries of the Venetian Republic, wealthy patricians built more than 100 villas along the river Brenta (which passes through Padua on its eastward journey, finally spilling into the Venetian lagoon). Some of the most outstanding are open to the public. The most important are **Villa Foscari** (☎ 041 520 39 66; www.lamalcontenta.com; Via dei Turisti 9; admission €7; ☎ 9am–noon Tue & Sat May–Oct, groups of 12 or more can book for other times at €8 per person), built by Palladio in 1571 at Malcontenta, and **Villa Pisani** (☎ 049 50 22 70; Via Alvise Pisani 7, Strà; adult/EU citizen 18–25yr/under 18yr €5/2.50/free, grounds only €2.50/1.20/free; ☎ 8.30am–7pm Tue–Sun Apr–Sep, 9am–4pm Tue–Sun Oct–Mar), also known as the Villa Nazionale and set in magnificent gardens, built near Strà for Doge Alvise Pisani. It was used by Napoleon and was the site of the first meeting between Hitler and Mussolini. ACTV buses running between Padua and Venice stop at or near the villas. Ask at the tourist offices in Venice or Padua for details on other villas. See p375 for more information on Venetian villas further inland.

You can take full-day tours along the river Brenta. The luxurious **Burchiello** (☎ 049 820 69 10; www.ilburchiello.it; adult/12–17yr/6–11yr/under 6yr one way €71/47/33/free; ☎ Mar–Oct) barge plied the river Brenta from Venice to Padua in the 17th and 18th centuries. Today’s more modern version cruises up and down the river between Venice and Strà (the price includes optional tours of Villa Foscari and a couple of other villas). Departures from Venice (Riva degli Schiavoni) are on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday; those from Strà are on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. Shuttle buses connect Strà and Padua’s main bus station. Other companies also operate tours along the Brenta, including **I Battelli del Brenta** (☎ 049 876 02 33; www.battellidelbrenta.it; half- & full-day tours €32.50–71), offering similar tours at similar prices.

## PADUA

pop 210,900

The city of St Anthony and home to Italy’s second-oldest university, Padua (Padova to the locals) is also the site of one of the most remarkable works of late Gothic art (prefiguring the Renaissance) in Northern Italy. Just 37km west of Venice, this dynamic student town, with its arcaded streets and fetching

medieval centre, deserves at least a day trip from the lagoon city. Wander bustling markets in the old town centre, admire Giotto's masterpiece of painting here and contemplate St Anthony's tongue.

The Veneti tribes of the northeast established a town here even before the Romans arrived, but Patavium was all but wiped off the map by Lombard invaders in AD 602. The city grew again as a powerful and wealthy city-state in the 13th and 14th centuries under the Carrara clan, who set up the *studium* (university) but who were also involved in incessant skirmishes with neighbours. Venice brought an end to this when it occupied Padua and its territories in 1405.

## Information

**Complesso Clinico Ospedaliero** (☎ 049 821 11 11;

Via Giustiniani 1) Hospital.

**Feltrinelli International** (Via San Francesco 14) For books in various languages.

**Police station** (☎ 049 83 31 11; Piazzetta Palatucci 5)

**Post office** (Corso Garibaldi 33; ☎ 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat)

**Tourist office** ([www.turismopadova.it](http://www.turismopadova.it)) train station (☎ 049 875 20 77; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-noon Sun); Vicolo Pedrocchi (☎ 049 876 79 27; ☎ 9am-1.30pm & 3-7pm Mon-Sat) Piazza del Santo (☎ 049 875 30 87; ☎ Mar-Oct)

## Sights

The **Padova Card** (€14) is a pass that's valid for 48 hours and allows you to visit the Cappella degli Scrovegni (plus €1 booking fee), Musei Civici agli Eremitani, Palazzo della Ragione, Museo del Risorgimento e dell'Età Contemporanea at Caffè Pedrocchi, the cathedral baptistry, the Orto Botanico, a couple of minor chapels and Petrarch's House in Arquà Petrarca. It's available from tourist offices and the monuments concerned. The ticket also gives discounts on other museums in and around Padua and free use of city public transport. A family museum card valid for 15 days for two adults and two children for all the above except the Orto Botanico costs €25. For the latest opening times, pick up a copy of *Padova Today* from the tourist office.

### CAPPELLA DEGLI SCROVEGNI

Art-lovers visit Padua just to see the lively Giotto frescoes in this **chapel** (☎ 049 201 00 20; [www.cappelladegliscrovegni.it](http://www.cappelladegliscrovegni.it); Giardini dell'Arena; adult/6-17yr & senior/under 6yr €12/5/1, Mon €8/5/free;

☎ 9am-7pm Nov-Feb, 9am-10pm Mar-Oct), just a five-minute walk from the train station. Enrico Scrovegni commissioned its construction in 1303 as a resting place for his father, denied a Christian burial because of his money-lending practices. Giotto's remarkable fresco cycle, probably completed between 1304 and 1306, illustrates the lives of Mary and Christ and is arranged in three bands. Among the most famous scenes in the cycle is the *Bacio di Giuda* (Kiss of Judas). The series ends with the *Ultima cena* (Last Supper) on the entrance wall and the Vices and Virtues are depicted around the lower parts of the walls. Keep in mind the era when the frescoes were painted – Giotto was moving well away from the two-dimensional figures of his medieval contemporaries. Effectively he was on the cusp between Gothic art and the remarkable creative explosion that was still decades away – the Renaissance. Booking at least 48 hours in advance by phone or online is obligatory (although if you get lucky you may find openings on the day) and visitors can spend a maximum 15 minutes inside the chapel. The night session (7pm to 10pm) costs (adult/child 6 to 17 years and seniors over 65 years/child under 6 years) €8/6/1 or €12/6/1 if you get a *doppio turno* (double session) ticket that allows a 30-minute stay in the chapel.

At the adjacent **Musei Civici agli Eremitani** (☎ 049 820 45 50; Piazza Eremitani 8; adult/child €10/6, incl Cappella degli Scrovegni €12/6; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) the collection of 14th- to 18th-century Veneto art and archaeological artefacts includes a crucifix by Giotto. On the same ticket as the above museum you can visit the nearby early-20th-century **Palazzo Zuckermann** (Corso di Garibaldi 33), which is home to an extensive applied- and decorative-arts museum and a private collection on the 2nd floor dominated by a treasure chest of ancient coins.

### CHIESA DEGLI EREMITANI

Completed in the early 14th century, this Augustinian **church** (☎ 049 875 64 10; Giardini dell'Arena; ☎ 8.15am-6.45pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon & 4.30-7pm Sun & holidays Mar-Oct, 8.15am-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-1pm & 4.15-7pm Sun & holidays Nov-Feb) was painstakingly rebuilt after it was bombed in WWII. The remains of frescoes created by Andrea Mantegna during his twenties are displayed in a chapel to the left of the apse. Most were wiped out in the bombing, the greatest single loss to Italian art during the war. The *Martirio*



*di San Jacopo* (Martyrdom of St James), on the left, was pieced together from fragments found in the rubble of the church while the *Martirio di San Cristoforo* (Martyrdom of St Christopher), opposite, was saved because it had been removed before the war.

### HISTORIC CENTRE

Via VIII Febbraio leads you to the **university** (☎ 049 827 30 47; Via VIII Febbraio; adult/student & child €5/2; 🕒 9.15am-12.15pm Tue, Thu & Sat, 3.15-6.15pm Mon, Wed & Fri), the main part of which is housed in the Palazzo Bò ('ox' in Veneto dialect – it's named after an inn that previously occupied the site). Established in 1222, the university is Italy's oldest after the one in Bologna. Europe's first anatomy theatre was opened here in 1594 and Galileo Galilei taught here from 1592 to 1610. The main courtyard and its halls are plastered with the coats of arms of the great and learned from across Europe. There are three guided tours a day, which are included in the admission price.

Continue along to Piazza delle Erbe and Piazza della Frutta, which are separated by the grand Gothic **Palazzo della Ragione** (☎ 049 820 50 06; Piazza delle Erbe; adult/child €4/2, €8/5 during temporary exhibitions; 🕒 9am-7pm Tue-Sun), also known as the Salone for the grand hall on its upper floor.

West from here is Piazza dei Signori, dominated by the 14th-century **Palazzo del Capitano**, the former residence of the city's Venetian ruler. South of the palazzo is the city's **cathedral** (☎ 049 66 28 14; Piazza del Duomo; 🕒 7.30am-noon & 3.30-7.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm & 3.30-8.45pm Sun & holidays), built from a much altered design of Michelangelo's. The 13th-century Romanesque **baptistry** (☎ 049 65 69 14; Piazza del Duomo; adult/child €2.50/1; 🕒 10am-6pm) features a series of frescoes of Old and New Testament scenes by Giusto de' Menabuoi, influenced by Giotto.

### PIAZZA DEL SANTO

At the south end of the old centre stands the majestic Basilica di Sant'Antonio, or simply the **Basilica del Santo** (🕒 6.30am-7pm Nov-Feb, 6.30am-7.45pm Mar-Oct), which houses the corpse of the town's patron saint, St Anthony of Padua (1193-1232), and is an important place of pilgrimage. Construction of what is known to townspeople as Il Santo began in 1232. The saint's tomb, bedecked by requests for his intercession to cure illness and thanks for having done so, is in the Cappella del Santo, in

the left transept. Look out for the saint's relics in the apse. The sculptures and reliefs of the high altar are by Donatello, master sculptor of the Florentine Renaissance. He remained in town long enough to carry out, in 1453, the Gattamelata equestrian statue that still dominates Piazza del Santo. This magnificent representation of the 15th-century Venetian mercenary leader Erasmo da Narni (whose nickname, Gattamelata, translates as 'Honey-eyed Cat') is considered the first great bronze of the Italian Renaissance.

On the south side of the piazza lies the **Oratorio di San Giorgio** (☎ 049 875 52 35; admission incl Scoletta del Santo €2; 🕒 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-7pm Apr-Sep, 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-5pm Oct-Mar), the burial chapel of the Lupi di Soranga family of Parma, with 14th-century frescoes. Next door is the **Scoletta del Santo**, containing works believed to be by Titian.

Just south of Piazza del Santo, the **Orto Botanico** (☎ 049 827 21 19; adult/student & child €4/1; 🕒 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Apr-Oct, 9am-1pm Mon-Sat Nov-Mar), laid out in 1545, is purportedly the oldest botanical garden in Europe.

### Tours

**CitySightseeing buses** (☎ 049 870 49 33; www.city-sightseeing.it; adult/child €13/6) do a one-hour circuit of the city from the train station, from Easter to the end of September. The tourist office also has an audio tour on CD (Sound Touring Padova) for you to download on to your iPod or similar device for visiting the Palazzo della Ragione and the surrounding squares.

### Sleeping

**Koko Nor Association** (www.bbkokonor.it) This association can help you to find B&B-style accommodation in family homes as well as furnished apartments (it has 12 places on the books) for around €60 to €80 for two people. If you have trouble with the website, try www.bbtbetanhouse.it. The tourist office has a list of about 30 B&Bs.

**Camping Sporting Center** (☎ 049 79 34 00; www.sportingcenter.it; Via Roma 123, Montegrotto Terme; per person/tent €7.80/12; 🕒 Mar-mid-Nov; 📍 🚰) The only camping ground in the province of Padua, this place is about 15km away from the city centre. It's big and boasts a swimming pool, access to spa facilities, shops and just about anything else your heart might desire. The ground can be reached by city bus M from the train station.

**ostello Città di Padova** (☎ 049 875 22 19; ostellopadova@ctgveneto.it; Via dei Aleardi 30; dm incl breakfast €16) Not bad as far as hostels go. To get there take bus 3, 8 or 12 from the train station to Prato della Valle and ask for directions. Dorms have 16 bunk beds and the hostel also has some family rooms (€16.50) with four bunk beds and bathroom.

**Hotel Sant'Antonio** (☎ 049 875 13 93; www.hotel santantonio.it; Via San Fermo 118; s/d €62/82; 🍷 📺) Here there are comfortable, airy rooms, and some cheaper singles (€42) with shared bathroom in the corridor. Décor is basic enough, with wine-red quilted bed covers. There is a café downstairs and the canalside hotel is located in a fairly quiet street in the shadow of one of the old city gates.

**Hotel Majestic Toscanelli** (☎ 049 66 32 44; www.toscanelli.com; Via dell'Arco 2; s/d to €115/175; 🍷 📺) Hidden away in a leafy corner of one of the lanes that twist away from Piazza delle Erbe, the hotel boasts classy rooms in various styles (ranging from imperial to what the owners call '19th-century English') and complete with all the usual mod cons. The Toscanelli opened in 1946 in what was once Padua's Jewish quarter. All but one floor is nonsmoking.

## Eating

**Caffè Pedrocchi** (☎ 049 878 12 31; www.caffepedrocchi.it; Via VIII Febbraio 15; ☎ 9am-10pm Sun-Wed, 9am-1am Thu-Sat) Fronted by a spruced-up neoclassical façade, this café has been in business since the 19th century. It was one of Stendhal's favourite haunts and remains a classy Padua coffee stop.

**Lilium** (☎ 049 875 11 07; Via del Santo 181; ☎ 7.30am-8pm winter, 7.30am-10pm Tue-Sun summer) A fine pastry shop that offers wonderful gelato and delicious sweet things.

**L'Anfora** (☎ 049 65 66 29; Via dei Scincon 13; meals €25-30; ☎ Mon-Sat) A good-natured place where locals crowd the bar for a wine or two and perhaps a few snacks. Or you can sit down for a hearty meal. Fancy some tripe?

**Osteria Dal Capo** (☎ 049 66 31 05; Via degli Obizzi 2; meals €30; ☎ Tue-Sat & dinner Mon) This carefully maintained *osteria* is known throughout town as the perfect spot for quality traditional Veneto cooking. Try the *bavette ai frutti di mare* (a seafood pasta dish), or classics ranging from *zuppa di pesce* (fish soup) to *spezzatino di puledro* (chunky horse stew).

**ourpick Trattoria San Pietro** (☎ 049 876 03 30; Via San Pietro 95; meals €30; ☎ Mon-Sat, closed Jul) Behind

the modest façade lies a restaurant of excellence, combining the food of the Veneto with Lombard cuisine, allowing you to try dishes you'd have trouble coming across elsewhere. You could start with *spaghetti al cacio e pepe* (cheese and pepper spaghetti, €7) and follow with *scaloppine ai carciofi* (veal fillets with artichokes, €12).

**Per Bacco** (☎ 049 875 46 64; www.per-bacco.it; Piazzale Pontecorvo 10; meals €40-50; ☎ Tue-Sun) It's away from the centre but a visit repays the effort needed to get here. The warm timber-and-yellow décor creates a romantic mood. The menu changes regularly and tends to combine the traditional with a little inventive spark. You might try the duck carpaccio or dove done in liquorice.

**Enoteca Angelo Rasi** (☎ 049 871 97 97; www.an gelorasi.it; Riviera Paleocapa 7; meals €50; ☎ dinner only Tue-Sun) Come in for *ombrete e cicheti* (little glasses of wine and snacks), or treat yourself to a full meal. This wine bar with kitchen is charmingly placed on a tree-lined stretch of cobblestone street along a canal. You can sip and nibble inside or out. Each dish, which might include a meat tartare with several sauces, can be accompanied with wines suggested by the house.

## Drinking

There are several traditional spots around Piazza delle Erbe for taking the evening *spritz*. In summer especially, hundreds of people clutching their favourite tipples spread out across the square in the early evening. Much the same thing happens on a reduced scale on Piazza dei Signori.

**Café El Pilar** (☎ 049 65 75 65; Piazza dei Signori 8; ☎ 8.30am-1am Mon-Sat) Beautiful people and others converge here and to other bars around nearby Piazza del Duomo for the evening *spritz*.

**Enoteca Da Severino** (☎ 049 65 06 97; Via del Santo 44; ☎ 10am-1.30pm & 5-9pm Mon-Sat) Wine-lovers are beckoned to taste tipples from around the region and beyond. The walls of this tiny wine bar are lined with bottles and appreciative drinkers spill out into the street in the warmer months.

**Paparazzi Fashion Café** (☎ 049 875 93 06; Via Marsilio da Padova 17; ☎ 8.30am-2am Mon-Sat) A young cool crowd gathers here, all sunglasses at night and designer stubble, low red lights, black-and-white décor and dark drinking corners.

**Q Bar** (☎ 049 875 16 80; www.q-bar.it; Via Dotto 3; ☎ 7pm-4am Tue-Sun) Q Bar is set over two

floors in a former cinema, with dining area, lounge bar and dance area, all done in opulent style.

## Entertainment

**Teatro Comunale Verdi** (☎ 049 877 70 11; www.teatrostabileveneto.it; Via Livello 32; tickets €10-35) Works of classic Italian and occasionally foreign theatre are staged here, ranging from those by local Veneto hero Goldoni to Goethe or more modern playwrights such as Brecht. It's a grand old theatre in the round but pretty much everything is performed in Italian.

## Getting There & Away

### BUS

Regular **SITA buses** (☎ 049 820 68 11; www.sitabus.it) from Venice (€3.35, 45 to 60 minutes) arrive at Piazzale Boschetti, 500m south of the train station.

From Padua you can get buses to Montegrotto Terme, the Colli Euganei and as far afield as Genoa. Often you are better off with the train.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The A4 (Turin–Milan–Venice–Trieste) passes to the north, while the A13, which connects the city with Bologna, starts at the southern edge of town. The two motorways are connected by a ring road.

### TRAIN

The easiest way to Padua from Venice is by train (€2.70 to €10, 30 to 40 minutes). The station is about 500m north of Cappella degli Scrovegni, from where it's a further 1km to the city centre. Local buses run into the centre from in front of the train station.

## AROUND PADUA Colli Euganei

Southwest of Padua, along the A13 or the SS16, the Colli Euganei (Euganean Hills) are dotted with vineyards and good walking trails: ask at the Padua tourist office for information about trails and accommodation. Villages, along with the occasional castle and abbey, are scattered about the countryside.

If driving (much easier than moving around by public transport), follow the signposted *Strada dei Vini dei Colli Euganei* (Euganean Hills Wine Road), which will take you on a tour of many vineyards. Pick up a map and itinerary from the tourist office in Padua.

## HOT SPRINGS

The area is also famous for its hot springs or *terme*. The water passes underground from the low mountains of the Prealps north of Padua, where it is heated to more than 85°C and collects mineral salts. This water bubbles up in the Colli Euganei area. The two main spa centres are Abano Terme and Montegrotto Terme.

For information, approach the tourist offices in **Abano Terme** (☎ 049 866 90 55; Via Pietro d'Abano 18) and **Montegrotto Terme** (☎ 049 79 33 84; Viale Stazione 60). Between the two towns, there are more than 100 hotels with hot-springs facilities.

## ARQUÀ PETRARCA

This quiet, hilly medieval village in the southern Colli Euganei was where Italy's great poet Petrarch (Petrarca) chose to spend the last five years of his life. You can visit his **house** (☎ 0429 71 82 94; Via Valleselle 4; adult €3; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-6.30pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 9am-noon & 2.30-5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), which is set in cheerful gardens and contains various bits and bobs that purportedly had something to do with the scribe. Buses run here from Este and Monselice, both a short distance to the south. Up to three daily buses from Padua (€2.70, 55 minutes) run a route to Este that takes them through here.

## Monselice

pop 17,600

An easy train trip south from Padua, Monselice was once wrapped in no fewer than five protective layers of fortifications. The main point of interest is the restored **castle** (☎ 049 7 29 31; adult/child €5.50/3; ☎ 1hr guided tours 9am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Nov). The complex contains buildings raised between the 11th and 15th centuries. To get there, take the Padua–Montagnana train (20 minutes).

## Este

pop 16,900

Heading west from Monselice along the road to Mantua (Mantova), this town is yet another in the chain of fortified strongholds in the area. Padua's Carrara clan were assiduous fortress builders – it seems they had a good number of enemies to keep at bay. Although the walls of their castle are in reasonable shape, the inside is pretty much a ruin. On the bumpy lane that climbs northwards behind the castle is the **Villa**

**Kunkler**, where Byron settled for a year or so in 1817. Shelley also stayed here.

You'll find a couple of hotels here, and the town is on the train line linking Montagnana (10 minutes), Monselice (10 minutes) and Padua (30 minutes).

## Montagnana

pop 9400

About 12km west of Este rise the magnificent defensive perimeter walls, dating to the 13th and 14th centuries, of this fortified plains town. Of all the Veneto's walled towns, this is the most impressive – there are almost 2km of walls studded with 24 towers and four gates. Once inside, however, there's not an awful lot to see.

**ourpick Ostello Rocca degli Alberi** (☎ 0429 80 41 02; info@ostellomontagna.com; Via Matteotti 104, Montagnana; per person €16; 🗓 Apr-Sep) is a unique HI youth hostel housed in a former watchtower of the town's extraordinary walls, and close to the town's train station.

The train from Padua (€3.15, 50 to 60 minutes) runs via Monselice and Este.

## VICENZA

pop 113,500

The great Renaissance architect Palladio left his mark all over this contented city (which has built much of its modern wealth on textiles and computer components). Indeed, Palladio didn't stop within the city limits, spattering the hinterland with villas for the grand families of the Venetian Republic. Unesco is so impressed that it declared Palladio's work in and around the city one grand World Heritage Site.

Vicenza flourished as the Roman Vicentia. In 1404 it became part of the Venetian Republic. Testimony to the close ties between the lagoon city and Vicenza are the many Venetian Gothic mansions, not to mention the statues of the lion of St Mark and St Theodore that grace Piazza dei Signori.

## Orientation

From the train station, in the gardens of Campo Marzo, Via Roma heads into Piazzale de Gasperi. From here, the main street, Corso Andrea Palladio, leads right through to the heart of town.

## Information

**Ospedale Civile** (☎ 0444 99 31 11; Viale Ferdinando Rodolfi 37) Hospital.

**Police station** (☎ 0444 54 33 33; Viale Giuseppe Mazzini 213)

**Post office** (Contrà Garibaldi 1; 🕒 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat)

**Tourist office** (www.vicenzae.org) Piazza dei Signori (☎ 0444 54 41 22; Piazza dei Signori 8; 🕒 10am-2pm & 2.30-6.30pm); Piazza Matteotti (☎ 0444 32 08 54; Piazza Matteotti 12; 🕒 9am-1pm & 2-6pm)

## Sights

Piazza Castello contains several grand edifices, including the oddly truncated **Palazzo Breganze** on the south side, designed by Palladio and built by Scamozzi (one of the city's leading 16th-century architects). Its couple of out-sized columns look strange now but had the building been completed it would have been one of the city's most imposing. Corso Andrea Palladio runs northeast from the square and is lined with fine buildings.

Piazza dei Signori is dominated by the immense **Basilica Palladiana** (☎ 0444 32 36 81; 🕒 only for temporary exhibitions), on which Palladio started work in 1549 over an earlier Gothic building (the slender 12th-century bell tower is all that remains of the original structure). Palladio's **Loggia del Capitaniato**, at the northwest side of the piazza on the corner of Via del Monte, was left unfinished at his death.

Contrà Porti, which runs northward from Corso Andrea Palladio, is one of the most majestic streets in Vicenza. At No 12, **Palazzo Thiene** (☎ 0444 54 21 31; entrance Contrà San Gaetano Thiene; admission free; 🕒 9am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Wed Oct-Apr; 9am-noon & 3-6pm Wed & Fri, 9am-noon Sat May-Sep) by Lorenzo da Bologna was originally intended to occupy the entire block. You must book ahead to visit. Palladio's **Palazzo Barbaran da Porto** (☎ 0444 32 30 14; adult/student €5.50/3.50; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Jul-Dec, 10am-6pm Fri-Sun Apr-Jun) at No 11 features a double row of columns. It is richly decorated and home to a museum and study centre devoted to Palladio. It frequently hosts architecture exhibitions. Palladio also built the **Palazzo Isopppo da Porto** at No 21, which is unfinished. His **Palazzo Valmarana** (Corso Antonio Foggazzaro 18) is considered one of his more eccentric creations.

North along Corso Andrea Palladio and left into Contrà di Santa Corona is the **Chiesa di Santa Corona** (🕒 8.30am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Sun, 4-6pm Mon), established in 1261 by the Dominicans to house a relic from Christ's crown of thorns. Inside are the *Battesimo di Gesù* (Baptism of Christ) by Giovanni Bellini and *Adorazione*





*dei Magi* (Adoration of the Magi) by Paolo Veronese.

Palladio started the **Teatro Olimpico** (☎ 0444 22 28 00; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun, 9am-7pm Tue-Sun Jul-Aug) in 1580 but it was Scamozzi who did much of the work after the former's death. Considered one of the purest creations of Renaissance architecture, the theatre design was based on Palladio's studies of Roman structures. Scamozzi's remarkable street scene, stretching back from the main façade of the stage, is modelled on the ancient Greek city of Thebes. Since its restoration in 1934, the theatre has become a prized performance space for opera and drama.

The nearby **Museo Civico** (☎ 0444 32 13 48; Palazzo Chiericati, Piazza Matteotti 37/39; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun, 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Jul-Aug), housed in yet another Palladian edifice, contains works by local artists as well as by the Tiepolos and Veronese. The **Museo Naturalistico e Archeologico** (☎ 0444 32 04 40; Contrà di Santa Corona 4; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-Jun, 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Jul-Aug) has a modest collection of local ancient artefacts.

The sober baroque façade of the **Gallerie di Palazzo Leoni Montanari** (☎ 800 57 88 75; www.palazzomontanari.com; Contrà di Santa Corona 25; adult/student €3.50/2.50; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) hides an extravagant interior. For a long time a private mansion and bank, it now contains a collection of more than 400 Russian icons (top floor) and mostly 18th-century Venetian paintings (1st floor), including some by Canaletto and Pietro Longhi. There are frequent temporary exhibitions, too.

The **Basilica di Monte Berico** (☎ 0444 32 09 98; Piazzale della Vittoria; 🕒 6am-12.30pm & 2.30-7pm Mon-Sat, 6am-7pm Sun & holidays), set on top of a hill south of the city centre, presents magnificent views. It was built in the 18th century to replace a 15th-century Gothic structure, itself raised

on the supposed site of two appearances by the Virgin Mary in 1426. An impressive 18th-century colonnade runs uphill to the church, roughly parallel to Viale X Giugno. Bus 18 (€1) runs here from Via Roma.

A 20-minute walk part of the way back down Viale X Giugno and then east along Via San Bastiano will take you to the **Villa Valmarana 'ai Nani'** (☎ 0444 32 18 03; www.villa-valmarana.com; Via dei Nani 2/8; admission €8; 🕒 10am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-noon & 2-4.30pm Sat & Sun Nov-Feb), which features brilliant frescoes by Giambattista and Giandomenico Tiepolo. The 'ai Nani' (dwarfs) part of the name refers to the statues perched on top of the gates surrounding the property.

A path leads on to Palladio's Villa Capra, better known as **La Rotonda** (☎ 0444 32 17 93; Via Rotonda 29; admission La Rotonda €6, gardens €3; 🕒 gardens 10am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Sun Mar-Nov, villa 10am-noon & 3-6pm Wed Mar-Nov). It is one of the architect's most admired (and copied) creations, having served as a model for buildings across Europe and the USA. The name comes from the low dome that caps this square-based structure, each side fronted by the columns of a classical façade. Bus 8 heading for Debba or Lumignano (€1.50) from Via Roma stops nearby. Groups can book to visit outside the normal opening hours; the price is hiked up to €13 per person in this case.

## Sleeping

Hotel options in the old town are limited. The tourist office has a list of about 25 B&Bs, a few of them in the old town.

**ostello Olimpico** (☎ 0444 54 02 22; ostello.vicenza@tin.it; Viale Antonio Giuriolo 7/9; dm €17.50; 🕒 7.30-9.30am & 3.30-11.30pm mid-Mar-mid-Nov) An HI youth hostel in a fine building right by the Teatro Olimpico.

**Casa San Raffaele** (☎ 0444 54 57 67; albergosanraffaele@tin.it; Viale X Giugno 10; d to €75; 📍 🚻) Located in a former convent behind the colonnade leading to Monte Berico, this is a charming spot to spend the night and is the best choice in the lower budget range. Rooms are spacious if a little Spartan.

**Albergo Due Mori** (☎ 0444 32 18 86; www.hoteldue-mori.com; Contrà do Rode 26; s/d to €48/80) Near Piazza dei Signori, this is a central cheapie with basic but attractive, and in most cases, fairly spacious rooms (it even has a suite). Some cheaper doubles (€52) have use of a common bathroom and the hotel offers disabled access.

## TICKETS PLEASE

The **Card Musei** (valid three days and available at any of the museums concerned) costs €8 and gives you entry to the Teatro Olimpico, Museo Civico (Palazzo Chiericati), Museo Naturalistico e Archeologico and the obscure Museo del Risorgimento e della Resistenza, dedicated to Italian reunification and the Resistance in the latter stages of WWII. It's located southeast of the train station at Viale X Giugno 115.



Vicenza's patricians joined the villa construction spree. Many of the thousands that were built remain, though many are run-down and closed to the public.

The tourist office in Vicenza can provide reams of information about the villas, including an illustrated map, *Ville dal 1400 al 1800*.

Drivers should have little trouble planning an itinerary. A loop-route south, of about 110km, would see you taking the SR11 west of Vicenza and turning north on the SS246 to **Montecchio Maggiore**, dominated by high hill-top twin castles and graced by one of the region's most elegant country mansions, the **Villa Cordellina Lombardi** (☎ 0444 90 81 41; Via Lovara 36; adult/student €2.10/1; 📄 9am-1pm Tue-Fri, 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct), 3km east of the Duomo (take Via de Gasperi). From there, turn back south and follow the SP500 about 10km towards **Sarego**, 3km short of which is the somewhat dilapidated Palladian complex of **Villa Trissino**. A couple of kilometres south of Sarego through rolling vineyard country, **Lonigo** was long known for its horse and cattle fair and is home to a trio of villas, the most striking of which is Scamozzi's hilltop **Rocca Pisana** (☎ 0444 83 16 25; visits by prior appointment only). It's a pretty, winding drive up (follow signs to the Rocca for 2km).

About 4km further south, the village of **Bagnolo** is home to the proud Palladian **Villa Pisani Ferri De Lazara** (☎ 0444 83 11 04; admission €7; 📄 10am-noon & 2-6pm Apr-Sep, visits must be pre-booked) and its gardens. From there, a series of winding back-country lanes lead southeast to **Pojana Maggiore** and another of Palladio's designs, **Villa Pojana**, just south out of town on the road to Legnago. Three kilometres east, in **Noventa Vicentina**, rises **Villa Barbarigo**, a striking, tall pile with two massive tiers of columns and adorned with fabulous frescoes. Nowadays it's home to the town hall.

Just west, the northbound SS247 takes you past **Finale** (just south of Agugliaro) and its splendid **Villa Saraceno** (☎ 0444 89 13 71, Landmark Trust in UK 01628 82 59 25; www.landmarktrust.org.uk; Via Finale 8, Finale di Agugliaro; per night UK€300-800; 📄 📄). Set back on a quiet enclosure off the SS247 road, this restored 16th-century Palladian country villa is a noble choice of lodgings. Up to 16 people can stay, and there's a pool. From April to October parts of the building can be visited by the public between 2pm and 4pm on Wednesday. Buses run to Finale di Agugliaro from Vicenza bus station.

About 22km up the road towards Vicenza, turn off west for the ancient and pretty village of **Costozza**, blessed with several villas. The star attraction is the complex known as the **Ville Da Schio** (gardens €5; 📄 9.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, tickets from neighbouring Botte del Covolo wine bar) with its fine buildings set in magnificent gardens. In the shadow of the **Colli Berici** (where there is some great walking), the village is worth a stroll and wine stop in the handful of *enoteche* (wine bars).

A few kilometres north, at **Longare**, take the country road heading northeast over the motorway to reach, some 8km away and on the SR11 road, **Vancimuglio**. Here spreads the slightly weather-worn **Villa Chiericati Da Porto Rigo** (in private hands but observable from the road). About 12km separate you from Vicenza to the west.

A northern circuit could again see you start with Montecchio Maggiore, from where you would head north along the Valdagno road (SP246) with a first stop in **Trissino** (take a detour along the SP87 for a few kilometres) for the memorable, ivy-covered **Villa Trissino Marzotto** (☎ 0445 96 20 29; villa €5, gardens €5; 📄 visit by appointment only Sep-Jul), set in sculpted gardens high up along a narrow winding lane.

After passing through the town of **Valdagno**, 12km north, you enter some pretty countryside with the so-called Piccole Dolomiti (Little Dolomites) ranged around **Recoaro Terme** and reaching an altitude of 2259m. A winding road takes you 10km northeast of Recoaro into another pretty valley and the SS46 road and a further 10km east into **Schio**, interesting above all for what remains of its 19th-century textile factories and workers' housing. Another 10km east lands you in **Thiene**, and its **Villa Da Porto Colleoni Thiene** (☎ 0445 36 60 15; www.castellodithiene.com; Corso Garibaldi 2; adult/child €6/4; 📄 tours 3-5pm Sun & holidays mid-Mar-mid-Nov), about 3km south of the town centre. A side trip of about 8km to the northeast (along Via Breganze and Fara Vicentino) leads to **Lugo di Vicenza** and its **Villa Godi Valmarana Malinverni** (☎ 0445 86 05 61; www.villagodi.com; admission €6; 📄 2-6pm Tue, Sat & Sun Mar-May & Oct-Nov, 3-7pm Tue, Sat & Sun Jun-Sep), Palladio's first villa project. Five kilometres south of Thiene, you could stop in **Villaverla**, where there is a couple of interesting mansions, or simply proceed south to **Caldogno** for another Palladian pleasure dome, **Villa Caldogno Nordera** (now part of the local cultural centre). From there it's a short drive back south into Vicenza.

## Bassano del Grappa

population 41,800

Known for its firewater, grappa, and to a lesser degree for its ceramics and even white asparagus, Bassano del Grappa sits astride the river Brenta, south of the first line of hills that are a prelude to the Dolomites. The Da Ponte family of Renaissance painters, known to us as the Bassano, came from here.

The **APT office** (☎ 0424 52 43 51; Largo Corona d'Italia 35, Bassano; ☎ 9am-1pm & 2-6pm) has information on the town and surrounding area.

The centre of Bassano is composed of two sloping, interlinking squares, Piazza Garibaldi and Piazza Libertà. In the latter, the winged lion of St Mark stands guard on a pedestal to remind you of who was long in charge here.

In the **Museo Civico** (☎ 0424 52 22 35; Via del Museo 12, Bassano; adult/student incl Museo della Ceramica €4.50/3; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Tue-Sat, 3.30-6.30pm Sun), attached to the Chiesa di San Francesco on Piazza Garibaldi, you can see an assortment of items, including paintings by members of the Bassano clan and archaeological finds such as ancient Greek ceramics and bronze figurines. A separate ceramics collection with more than 1000 porcelain pieces, the **Museo della Ceramica** (☎ 0424 52 49 33; Palazzo Sturm, Via Schiavonetti; adult/student incl Museo Civico €4.50/3; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Tue-Sat, 3.30-6.30pm Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-12.30pm Fri, 3.30-6.30pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar) is housed in Palazzo Sturm on the banks of the Brenta.

Follow Via Matteotti north off Piazza Libertà towards the remains of **Castello Ezzelini**, the stronghold that belonged to the medieval warlords of the same name.

Via Gamba slithers downhill from Via Matteotti to the river Brenta and the covered bridge designed by Palladio and known as the **Ponte degli Alpini** (aka Ponte Vecchio), after the mountain troops who rebuilt it in 1948.

While by the bridge, pop into the Poli grappa shop with its **Poli Museo della Grappa** (☎ 0424 52 44 26; www.poligrappa.com; Via Gamba 6, Ponte Vecchio; admission free; ☎ 9am-7.30pm), which outlines the drink's history. Although grappa is made all over Italy and indeed inferior versions are distilled well beyond the peninsula, the people of the Veneto have been doing it since at least the 16th century.

Back on the grappa theme, the Nardini company has a laboratory centre 3km south of central Bassano on the SP47 road to Padua (it's on the right). Known as the **Bolle di Nardini** (☎ 0424 22 77 41; Via Madonna Monte Berico 7), the most

eye-catching element is two transparent ellipsoid spheres used as labs. Call ahead to visit.

## Around Bassano del Grappa

For the most colourful game of chess you are ever likely to see, you need to be in the quiet medieval town of **Marostica** (population 13,300), a few kilometres west of Bassano, on the second weekend of September in even-numbered years (2008, 2010 and so on). Pretty enough to warrant a brief stop in its own right, Marostica comes into its own for the biennial Partita a Scacchi (Chess Match), with human beings for pieces, and six centuries of history. More information can be found at the **tourist office** (☎ 0424 721 27; www.marosticascacchi.it; Piazza Castello 1).

East of Bassano, **Asolo's** (population 8590) position high in the hills, surrounded by fields, farms and woods, makes it an enchanting village. For information, head for the **tourist office** (☎ 0423 52 90 46; Piazza Garibaldi 73; ☎ 9am-12.30pm Mon-Fri, 3-6pm Tue, Thu & Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Sat & Sun). Piazza Garibaldi forms the town centre, from where streets wind up in all directions between the tight ranks of golden-hued houses that lend this place so much of its charm. The cathedral lies below and just to the south of the square. It contains a few paintings by Jacopo Bassano and Lorenzo Lotto.

An arduous climb up Via Collegio from Piazza Brugnoli will get you to the Rocca, the town's medieval fortress.

Birth- and resting-place of Italy's master of neoclassical sculpture, Antonio Canova, **Possagno** (population 2150) is a good place to get an idea of how Canova worked. The **Gipsoteca** (☎ 0423 54 43 23; www.museocanova.it; Possagno; adult/student €4/3; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sat, 9am-12.30pm & 3-7pm Sun) is home to a long series of clay models and other preparatory pieces for his finished work. Canova also left the town his outside **Tempio** (Temple; ☎ 0423 54 40 40; admission free; ☎ 9am-noon & 3-6pm Tue-Sun), to all intents and purposes the parish church. Finished in 1832, it could be described as mongrel neoclassical, as it is an amalgam of Greek and Roman models.

Southeast of Bassano lie a couple of fortified plains towns worth a quick stop. **Cittadella** (population 19,500), a 12km bus ride south of Bassano on the busy SP47 to Padua, is enclosed by 1.5km of towering red-brick walls and a moat. Of the four gates, the northern Porta Bassano is the most elaborate. Padua

raised the fort in the 13th century to face off the one built by Treviso towards the end of the 12th century at **Castelfranco del Veneto** (population 32,900), 10km east.

## VERONA

pop 259,100

Wander the streets of Verona on a winter's night and you might believe the tragic love story of Romeo and Juliet to be true. Beyond the Shakespearean hyperbole, however, you'll find plenty to keep you occupied in one of Italy's most beautiful cities. Known as *piccola Roma* (little Rome) for its importance in imperial days, its truly golden era came during the 13th and 14th centuries under the Della Scala family (also known as the Scaligeri). The period was noted for the savage family feuding of which Shakespeare wrote in his play.

## Orientation

Old Verona is small and it's easy to find your way around. Buses leave for the centre from outside the train station, south of town; otherwise, walk north, past the bus station, and along Corso Porta Nuova to Piazza Brà, 1.5km away. From the piazza, walk along Via G Mazzini and turn left at Via Cappello to reach Piazza delle Erbe.

## Information

**Guardia Medica** (☎ 045 807 56 27; 🕒 8pm-8am)

Medical services; the staff usually come to you.

**Internet Etc** (☎ 045 800 02 22; Via Quattro Spade 3b; per hr €5.50; 🕒 2.30-8pm Mon, 10.30am-8pm Tue-Sat, 3.30-8pm Sun)

**Ospedale Civile Maggiore** (☎ 045 807 11 11; Piazza A Stefani) Hospital northwest of Ponte Vittoria.

**Police station** (☎ 045 809 04 11; Lungadige Galtarossa 11) Near Ponte Navi.

**Post office** (Piazza Viviani 7; 🕒 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat)

**Tourist office** (www.tourism.verona.it) train station (☎ 045 800 08 61; 🕒 8am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun); Verona-Villafranca airport (☎ 045 861 91 63;

🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun Apr-Nov, 9am-4pm Mon-Sat, 9am-3pm Sun Dec-Mar); Via degli Alpini (☎ 045 806 86 80; Via degli Alpini 9; 🕒 8.30am-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-5pm Sun)

## Sights

Remember that a lot of sights are closed, or open in the afternoon only, on Monday. If you are only planning to spend a day here, make it any other day of the week. There is

a joint ticket, the **Verona Card** (1/3 days €8/12) for getting into all the main sights (available at sights and tobacconists). The price of the ticket includes the use of town buses, entry to all the main monuments and churches, and reduced admission on a few places of lesser importance.

## ROMAN ARENA

This pink marble Roman **amphitheatre** (☎ 045 800 32 04; www.arena.it; Piazza Brà; adult/student/child €4/3/1; 🕒 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 1.45-7.30pm Mon Oct-Jun, 8am-3.30pm opera season Jul-Sep) was built in the 1st century AD and is now Verona's opera house. The third-largest Roman amphitheatre in existence, it can seat around 30,000 people. It is remarkably well preserved, despite a 12th-century earthquake that destroyed most of its outer wall.

## CASA DI GIULIETTA

Just off Via G Mazzini, Verona's main shopping street, is **Casa di Giulietta** (Juliet's House; ☎ 045 803 43 03; Via Cappello 23; adult/student/child €4/3/1; 🕒 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 1.45-7.30pm Mon). Romeo and Juliet may have been utterly fictional but here you can swoon beneath what popular myth says was her balcony (or, if in need of a new lover, approach a bronze statue of Juliet and rub her right breast for good luck). Others have made their eternal mark by adding to the slew of scribbled love graffiti (and more disgusting messages on paper applied with chewing gum) on the panels inside the access way to the courtyard. At least they don't dirty the house's walls now, as was once the case.

If the theme excites you, you could also seek out the **Tomba di Giulietta** (Juliet's Tomb; ☎ 045 800 03 61; Via del Pontiere 35; adult/student/child €3/2/1; 🕒 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 1.45-7.30pm Mon). Also housed here is the **Museo degli Affreschi**, which has a collection of frescoes of minor interest.

## PIAZZA DELLE ERBE

Originally the site of a Roman forum, this piazza remains the lively heart of the city. Although the permanent market stalls in its centre detract from its beauty, the square is lined with some of Verona's most sumptuous buildings, including the baroque **Palazzo Maffei**, at the north end, with the adjoining 14th-century **Torre del Gardello**. On the eastern side is **Casa Mazzanti**, a former Della Scala family residence. Its fresco-decorated façade stands out.



Separating Piazza delle Erbe from Piazza dei Signori is the **Arco della Costa**, beneath which a whale's rib is suspended. Legend says it will fall on the first 'just' person to walk beneath it. In several centuries, it has never fallen, not even on the various popes who have paraded beneath it. Ascend the nearby 12th-century **Torre dei Lamberti** (☎ 045 803 27 26; admission by lift/on foot €3/2; ☎ 9am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 1.30-7.30pm Mon), which was actually only completed in 1463, for a great view of the city. The building of which the tower is a part, **Palazzo della Ragione** (aka Palazzo Forti; ☎ 199 19 91 11; www.palazzoforti.it; admission depends on exhibition; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-9.30pm Sat-Sun), has since early 2007 been a central exhibition space for the city, putting on major art exhibits.

### PIAZZA DEI SIGNORI

The 15th-century **Loggia del Consiglio**, the former city-council building, at the northern end of this square, is regarded as Verona's finest Renaissance structure. It is attached to the **Palazzo degli Scaligeri**, once the main residence of the Della Scala family.

Through the archway at the far end of the piazza are the **Arche Scaligere** (Via Arche Scaligere; admission incl Torre dei Lamberti by lift/on foot €4/3; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 1.45pm-7.30pm Mon Jun-Sep), the elaborate tombs of the Della Scala family. You can see them quite well from the outside.

In the courtyard behind the Arche, *scavi* (excavation work) has been done on this part of medieval Verona. You enter the **Scavi Scaligeri** (☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Sun) through a building used to host international photographic exhibitions. You pay for the latter (admission charges vary), as the excavations are not in themselves overly interesting to the uninitiated.

### CHURCHES

A combined entrance ticket to all the churches listed here costs €5. Otherwise, admission to each costs €2.50. For more information, check out [www.chieseverona.it](http://www.chieseverona.it).

North of the Arche Scaligere stands the Gothic **Chiesa di Sant'Anastasia** (Piazza di Sant'Anastasia; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1-6pm Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-1pm & 1.30-4pm Tue-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Nov-Feb), which was started in 1290 but not completed until the late 15th century. Inside are numerous works of art including, in the sacristy, a lovely fresco by Pisanello of *San Giorgio che parte per liberare la donzella dal drago* (St

George Setting Out to Free the Princess from the Dragon).

The 12th-century **cathedral** (Piazza del Duomo; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat, 1.30-5.30pm Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-1pm & 1.30-4pm Tue-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Nov-Feb) combines Romanesque (lower section) and Gothic (upper section) styles and has some intriguing features. Look for the sculpture of Jonah and the Whale on the south porch and the statues of two of Charlemagne's paladins, Roland and Oliver, on the west porch.

At the river end of Via Leoni, the **Chiesa di San Fermo** (Stradone San Fermo; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1-6pm Sun Mar-Oct, 10am-1pm & 1.30-4pm Tue-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Nov-Feb) is actually two churches: a Gothic church was built in the 13th century over the original 11th-century Romanesque structure. The **Chiesa di San Lorenzo** (Corso Cavour; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1-6pm Sun) is near the Castelvecchio, and the Basilica di San Zeno Maggiore (below) is further to the west.

### CASTELVECCHIO

Southwest from the Piazza delle Erbe is the 14th-century fortress of Cangrande II (of the Della Scala family), on the banks of the river Adige. The fortress was severely damaged by bombing during WWII and restored in the 1960s. Today it houses a **museum** (☎ 045 806 26 11; Corso Castelvecchio 2; adult/student/child €4/2/1; ☎ 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 1.30-7.30pm Mon) and it showcases a diverse collection of paintings, jewellery, frescoes and medieval artefacts. Among the paintings are works by Pisanello, Giovanni Bellini, Tiepolo, Carpaccio and Veronese. Also of note is a 14th-century equestrian statue of Cangrande I. The **Ponte Scaligero**, spanning the river Adige, was rebuilt after being destroyed by WWII bombing.

### BASILICA DI SAN ZENO MAGGIORE

A masterpiece of Romanesque architecture, this **church** (Piazza San Zeno; ☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 1-6pm Sun Mar-Oct; 10am-1pm & 1.30-4pm Tue-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Nov-Feb), in honour of the city's patron saint, was built mainly in the 12th century, although its apse was rebuilt in the 14th century and its bell tower, a relic of an earlier structure on the site, was started in 1045. The basilica's magnificent rose window depicts the Wheel of Fortune. Before going inside, take a look at the sculptures on either side of the main doors. The highlight inside is Mantegna's *Maestà della Vergine* (The Majesty of the Virgin Mary), above the high altar. But the



interior of this mighty church is festooned with remarkable frescoes, dating from the 12th to the 15th centuries. St Zeno's eerily lit and robed corpse can be seen at the back of the crypt.

### ACROSS THE RIVER

Across Ponte Pietra is a **Roman theatre**, built in the 1st century AD and still used today for concerts and plays. Take the lift at the back of the theatre to the convent above, which has an interesting collection of Greek and Roman pieces in the **Museo Archeologico** (☎ 045 800 03 60; Regaste Redentore 2; adult/child €2.60/1.50; 🕒 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 1.45-7.30pm Mon). On a hill behind the theatre and museum is the **Castel San Pietro**, built by the Austrians on the site of an earlier castle.

The lush sculpted gardens known as **Giardino Giusti** (☎ 045 803 40 29; Via Giardino Giusti 2; admission €5; 🕒 9am-8pm Apr-Sep, 9am-sunset Oct-Mar) are named after the noble family that has looked after them and the mansion since opening the garden to visitors in 1591. The garden is an Italianate mix of the sculpted and natural, graced by soaring cypresses.

### Sleeping

If you are having problems finding a hotel room, you could try calling the **Cooperativa Albergatori Veronesi** (☎ 045 800 98 44; www.veronapass.com). It offers rooms starting with two-star hotels and the service is free. If you want to try a local home-stay, check **Verona Bed and Breakfast** (www.bedandbreakfastverona.com). Be aware that it has only a few options in the old centre. You can pick up the list at tourist offices. Another booking address is www.veronaitaly.it. There are more than 100 B&Bs in Verona, mostly outside the historic centre.

**Camping Castel San Pietro** (☎ 045 59 20 37; www.campingcastelsanpietro.com; Via Castel San Pietro 2; per person/tent €6/8; 🕒 May-mid-Oct) Not a bad camping ground, away from the bustle of the town below. Sites are leafy and you can relax on the two grand terraces. There's a minimarket, washing machines and other comforts. Catch bus 41 or 95 from the train station.

**Villa Francescati** (☎ 045 59 03 60; fax 045 800 91 27; Salita Fontana del Ferro 15; dm incl breakfast €17; 🕒 7am-11.30pm) A beautiful HI youth hostel housed in a 16th-century villa not far from the camping ground. The gardens are gorgeous and it has family rooms too. Meals cost €9.50 but there are no cooking facilities. Catch bus 73 (week-

days) or bus 90 (Sunday and holidays) from the train station.

**our pick Locanda Catullo** (☎ 045 800 27 86; locandacatullo@tiscali.it; Via Valerio Catullo 1; d €65, s/d with-out bathroom €40/55) A good cheapie with friendly management and clean, straightforward rooms. They have marble or parquet floors and the singles are a decent size. Decoration in the hallways is eccentric indeed, with tapestries, statuettes, indoor plants and an intriguing host of photos ranging from old Verona scenes to family shots from times past.

**Albergo Torcolo** (☎ 045 800 75 12; www.hoteltorcolo.it; Vicolo Listone 3; s €50-82, d €85-114) A quiet little building barely 50m off Piazza Brà, this spot has a variety of rooms. Some of the most attractive feature wrought-iron bed-heads and timber ceiling beams.

**Albergo Aurora** (☎ 045 59 47 17; www.hotelaurora.biz; Piazza XIV Novembre 2; s €90-120, d €98-140) The better rooms in this sprawling, central hotel are quiet and comfortable, with high ceilings and plenty of room. The terrace is a pleasant spot for a drink and a little sun.

**Hotel Bologna** (☎ 045 800 68 30; www.hotelbologna.vr.it; Piazzetta Scalette Rubiani 3; s/d €125/200; 📍 🚰) A good three-star very close to Piazza Brà, this place has comfortable if slightly anodyne rooms. The huge restaurant offers the distinct advantage of a generous buffet breakfast.

### Eating

Central Verona teems with inviting little *osterie* and trattorias serving hearty Veronese cooking, with its emphasis on meats and thick sauces.

**Trattoria alla Quercia** (☎ 045 834 99 47; Via Tonale 5; meals €15; 🕒 Thu-Mon & Tue lunch) The black-jacketed waiters and unaltered 1950s décor are a throwback to another time in this tree-lined residential street over the river. Tuck into some *pappardelle al lepre* (thick ribbon pasta in a hare-stew sauce) followed by *bollito misto*, a Veronese special for unsqueamish meat-eaters, consisting of boiled beef, tongue, cheek and sausage with an accompanying pepper sauce. The house Bardolino is light but fine and almost given away.

**Osteria Al Carro Armato** (☎ 045 803 01 75; Vicolo Gatto 2a; meals €25-30; 🕒 Tue-Sun) Sit down at long rough timber benches in the high-ceilinged dining hall in this perfect example of down-home Veronese *osteria*. Sip wine by the glass or bottle and add some hearty local dishes, like *tagliatelle con ragù* (a take on the so-called

### MAKE YOUR OWN GNOCCHI

For an insider's look at local cookery and wines, Antonella Bamper (a certified wine guide) can arrange cookery classes, and visits to wine cellars, oil presses, cheese-makers and more for groups in and around Verona. Make your own *tortellini di Valeggio* or potato gnocchi with an expert chef and eat the result. The three-hour cookery class and meal costs around €120 per person, while visits can be tailor-made to groups' needs. For more information, contact Ms Bampa (vipcellar@tmail.it).

'bolognese sauce'), or *tagliata di manzo* (thin-sliced beef dish served with rocket).

**our pick** **Al Pompieri** (☎ 045 803 05 37; Vicolo Regina d'Ungheria 5; meals €35-40; ☎ Tue-Sat & dinner Mon) The fireman's (*pompieri*) hat is still on the wall, along with a host of black-and-white photos from down the years. On display is a rich assortment of cheeses that you can try before tucking into, say, a plate of *bigoli con le sarde* (chunky spaghetti with sardines) followed by some hearty *pastissada de caval*, a horse-meat dish typical of Verona.

**Bottega del Vino** (☎ 045 800 45 35; www.bottegevini.it; Vicolo Scudo di Francia 3a; meals €60-70; ☎ Wed-Mon) A must visit if wine is your thing, this age-old wine cellar serves up some fine food, too. The wine list is endless and your choice will be served with all the ceremony you might expect at an upmarket wine-tasting. The cost of your meal can vary wildly depending on your choice of tipple. If nothing else, wander in to this perennially busy dining hall – the frescoes alone, complemented by shellloads of ancient bottles, are worth the effort.

**Il Desco** (☎ 045 801 00 15; Via Dietro San Sebastiano 7; meals €120-150; ☎ Tue-Sat & lunch Sun) What lies behind the green door? One of the best restaurants in all of Italy and a Michelin-star winner, this is an elegant dining option for meticulously prepared local cuisine. Take a seat beneath the heavy exposed timber beams and tuck into refined takes on northern cooking with exquisite wines. While waiting for the next course, admire the art on the walls.

### Drinking

**Osteria Sottoriva** (☎ 045 801 43 23; Via Sottoriva 9a; ☎ 10.30am-10.30pm Thu-Tue) Just the spot for wine-sipping. Glasses (€1.50 to €3.50) of various

local tipples can be sampled inside or out at a scattering of rough-hewn timber tables. It attracts quite a crowd and there are a few simple dishes for those with an appetite.

**Caffè Filippini** (☎ 045 800 45 49; Piazza delle Erbe 26; ☎ 8am-2am Thu-Tue) Where else do you want to be on a sunny afternoon but at an outdoor table at this classic Verona bar sipping the house speciality, a Filippini (mix of vermouth, gin, lemon and ice)? On Friday and Saturday night this and adjacent bars fill to bursting, with folks noisily quaffing wine and cocktails all over the square until the midnight hour.

**Osteria del Bugiardo** (☎ 045 59 18 69; Corso Portoni Borsari 17a; ☎ Tue-Sun) Not far off, on busy Corso Portoni Borsari, this spacious winery and eating stop stays open to serve a vast crowd wine, beer and more until midnight.

**Cortés** (Corso Porta Borsari 24a; ☎ 8am-10pm Mon-Thu, 8am-11.30pm Fri & Sat) A few paces down the road, this funky little wine bar with the splash-paint floor and clumpy cement bar does much the same as the others.

**Rococó** (☎ 045 800 84 65; Via Basso Acquar 61; ☎ 10pm-4am Thu-Sun). This club is a classic with its touch of decorative Oriental luxury. The music ranges from hip-hop and R & B nights to world music and soul. All washed down with colourful cocktails.

You can get a list of clubs from the tourist offices but all but two are in the countryside around Verona and the two in town are a reasonable trek from the centre.

### Entertainment

**Roman Arena** (☎ 045 800 51 51; www.arena.it; ticket office Ente Lirico Arena di Verona, Via Dietro Anfiteatro 6b; tickets €15-150; ☎ opera season Jul-Sep) Tickets are available online and at travel agents around the country.

**Teatro Filarmonico** (☎ 045 800 51 51; www.arena.it; Via dei Mutilati 4) This 18th-century theatre, just southwest of Piazza Brà, is also run by the Ente Lirico Arena di Verona. A winter programme of ballet and opera dominates the proceedings, but you might just as easily come across a jazz night.

### Getting There & Away

#### AIR

**Verona-Villafranca airport** (VRN; ☎ 045 809 56 66; www.aeroporoverona.it) is 12km outside town and accessible by APTV bus to/from the train station (€4.50, 15 minutes, every 20 minutes from 6am to 11pm). Flights arrive here from all over Italy

and some European cities, including Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, London and Paris. Ryanair flies in from several cities to **Brescia** (☎ 030 965 65 99; www.aeroportideldgarda.it) to the west. Airport buses (www.cgabrescia.it) connect the train station with Brescia airport (€11/16 one way/return, 45 minutes).

### BUS

The main intercity bus station is in front of the train station, in an area known as Porta Nuova. Although buses serve many big cities, they are generally only a useful option for those needing to reach provincial localities not served by train.

### CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Verona is at the intersection of the Serenissima A4 (Turin–Trieste) and Brennero A22 motorways.

### TRAIN

Verona has rail links with Milan, Mantua, Modena, Florence and Rome. There are also regular trains serving destinations in Austria, Switzerland and Germany (10 daily to/from Munich). The trip to/from Venice is easiest by train (€6.10 to €14, 1¼ to 2¼ hours).

### Getting Around

**AMT** (www.amt.it) city transport bus numbers 11, 12, 13 and 14 (bus 91 or 92 on Sunday and holidays) connect the train station with Piazza Brà (tickets cost €1 and are valid for an hour). Otherwise, it's a 20-minute walk along Corso Porta Nuova. Buy tickets from newsagents and tobacconists before you board the bus.

### AROUND VERONA

About 12km southwest of Verona, **Villafranca di Verona** has a largely 19th-century look but is dominated by its vast if partly dilapidated **Castello** (☎ 045 790 29 01; Piazza Castello; ☎ 3-6pm Sat, 3.30-6.30pm Sun), raised in the 13th century and expanded by the Scaligeri clan of Verona. The brick walls now enclose a vast, grassy courtyard, while its remaining central buildings are home to a museum dedicated to the story of Italian unification in the 19th century.

Verona's hinterland is like a dictionary of wine. From the west, around Lago di Garda (see p297), come the delicious Bardolino reds. To the north and northwest are the vineyards of the Valpolicella (where wine has been made since Roman times) and to the east, on the

road to Vicenza, the white-wine makers of Soave.

To explore the **Valpolicella** area, grab some wheels, follow the SS12 highway northwest out of town and turn off at **Parona di Valpolicella** to lose yourself along the narrow country roads that straggle north. About 10km northwest, stop in **San Pietro in Cariano** to visit the Pro Loco Valpolicella **tourist office** (☎ 045 770 19 20; www.valpolicellaweb.it; Via Ingelheim 7; ☎ 9.30am-1pm & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat). Vineyards dominate the countryside, sprinkled with villages, and the occasional 16th-century villa and Romanesque church. Most vineyards close on Sunday.

You could trundle about any which way. From San Pietro you might head a couple of kilometres east to **San Floriano** (where stands a 12th-century church). From there the SP34 road winds north along the east flank of the broad, vineyard-carpeted valley past **Negrar** (east over the hills closing off this part of the valley) and up through **Marano di Valpolicella**. As you continue north towards **Fosse**, the road rises towards the Monti Lessini mountains. From Fosse you could continue north into a small regional park (lots of walking trails) or bend back south through sleepy **Breonio** and on southwest to **Molina**, where you have hours of pleasant walking around the cool waterfalls of the **Parco delle Cascate** (☎ 045 772 01 85; www.cascatemolina.it; adult/child €4.50/3; ☎ 9am-7.30pm daily Apr-Sep, 10am-6pm Sun Mar & Oct), a limpid rush of water cutting a deep gash into the rocky woodland. The entire upper-valley area is a sea of cherry blossoms in early spring, and you'll notice that everything (brick houses, stone-slab roofs, farm fences and more) is made of locally quarried stone, ranging from stained white and rose to weather-beaten grey, lending all the upper-valley towns a strange and unique uniformity.

Back down in the south of the valley, a few kilometres west of San Pietro, **Gargagnano** is especially known for that smoothest of Valpolicella wines, Amarone. Next door, to the west, is **Sant' Ambrogio di Valpolicella**, from which a 3km uphill detour to **San Giorgio** is a must. At the pretty hill village's heart is dainty early Romanesque **Pieve di San Giorgio** (☎ 045 770 15 30; ☎ 7am-6pm), with frescoes dating from as early as the 11th century, some features dating back to the 8th century and a wonderfully crooked cloister. You can see the Lago di Garda beyond a cascade of terraced vineyards, and a handful of bars and eateries allow you to rest.

**our pick** **Trattoria Dalla Rosa Alda** (☎ 045 770 10 18; www.dallarosalda.it; meals €30-35; ☞ Tue-Sat & Sun lunch) is a bucolic haven serving fine local fare (try the *gnocchi* followed by beef braised in Amarone wine), it also offers a handful of rooms for overnighters.

Instead of screaming down the *autostrada* between Vicenza and Verona, you could exit at **Soave**, a couple of kilometres north of the highway (the nearest train station and *autostrada* exit are at San Bonifacio). Once again, the Scaligeri got to work here expanding the medieval fortress that already dominated the surrounding plains. The resulting **Castello** (☎ 045 68 00 36; adult/child €4.50/3; ☞ 9am-noon & 3-6.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-mid-Oct, 9am-noon & 3-5pm mid-Oct-Mar), just outside the centre of the medieval town but easily reached on foot (signposted) through gardens and vineyards, is a magnificent, soaring storybook ramble of crenellated walls, courtyards and central tower, visible from just about any point in the medieval walled town. All around, nice green grapes are readying themselves to become the famed Soave white wine. The main entrance to the castle is through a drawbridge on the north side, through which you penetrate two successive courtyards before climbing stairs to the Mastio, the central defensive tower that appears to have had a double role as a dungeon. During restoration work, a mound of human bones 2m high was unearthed inside.

You might want to hang around the town long enough to try the local wine. For more information on this subject, check out [www.ilsoave.it](http://www.ilsoave.it). To savour some over a plate of excellent pasta – the *bigoli con pomodorini*, *lardo di Colonnata ed erba cipollina* (pasta with cherry tomatoes, bacon and finely chopped spring-onion leaf) is fabulous – consider sitting down beneath the medieval vaults of **Enoteca Il Drago** (Piazza Antenna 1; meals €25-35; ☞ Tue-Sun). A strong word of warning: you can be waiting an hour (really!) for the pasta to arrive.

Soave is 3km off the Venice-Milan train line. Get off at San Bonifacio and catch the APTV bus (line 30).

## TREVISO

pop 82,200

Touted by the locals as 'little Venice', Treviso is the home of the Benetton fashion dynasty (along with *radicchio*, a tart red lettuce) and is blessed with a pretty historic centre. This much-overlooked town dates to Roman times

and was long the most faithful of Venice's subject cities.

Treviso is an easy day trip from Venice or a fine stop on the way north to Belluno and the Dolomites. If you're coming to Venice with Ryanair, stop in here overnight on your way in and out.

## Orientation

From the train station head north along Via Roma (over the canal), past the bus station and across the bridge (the nicely placed McDonald's on the river is an unmistakable landmark) and keep walking straight ahead along Corso del Popolo. At Piazza della Borsa veer left down Via XX Settembre and you arrive in the heart of the city, Piazza dei Signori.

## Information

**Tourist office** (☎ 0422 54 76 32; <http://turismo.provincia.treviso.it>; Piazzetta Monte di Pietà 8; ☞ 9am-12.30pm & 2-6pm Tue-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Sat & Sun, 9am-12.30pm Mon) Adjacent to Piazza dei Signori.

## Sights & Activities

The tourist office promotes Treviso as the *città d'acqua* (city of water) and compares it to Venice. While the river Sile, which weaves through the centre, and the handful of canals are quite beautiful in parts, the comparisons are more touching than realistic.

That said, it is delightful to wander around the city. Piazza dei Signori is dominated by the fine brick **Palazzo dei Trecento**, the one-time seat of city government beneath whose (unfortunately glassed-in) vaults you can stop for coffee and a bite. Here you can also wistfully contemplate the worn 16th-century **Fontana delle Tette** (Tits Fountain), from whose breasts red and white wine flowed for three days each year on the appointment of a new town governor. The practice ended with the fall of Venice in 1797.

The medieval main street is the arcaded Via Calmaggior, leading to the **cathedral** (Piazza del Duomo; ☞ 7.30am-noon & 3.30-7pm Mon-Fri, 7.30am-1pm & 3.30-8pm Sat & Sun), a massive structure whose main source of interest lies in the frescoes inside by Il Pordenone (1484-1539).

Backtrack to Piazza dei Signori and head east (around and behind the Palazzo dei Trecento) and you will soon find yourself in a warren of lanes that leads to five delightful bridges across the Canal Cagnan. This runs roughly north-south (you'll run into the colourful fish market along the way) and spills

into the river Sile at a pleasant corner where part of the city walls remains intact. Treviso is a comparatively leafy town and this is particularly the case at some points along the canal. You can also see the occasional mill wheel (the one by Vicolo Molinetto still turns).

While on the east side of the canal make a beeline for the **Museo Civico di Santa Caterina** (☎ 0422 54 48 64; Via di Santa Caterina; adult/student & senior €3/1; ☹ 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Tue-Sun). The church and its attached convent now house many of the city's treasures. The highlight is the church itself, which boasts remarkable frescoes attributed to Gentile da Fabriano (an artist who worked in the early 15th century), along with other artists. The beautiful 15th-century **Capella degli Innocenti** (Chapel of the Innocents), added by the endowment of a wealthy patron, contains frescoes carried out by two unknown masters and of such a freshness that it seems they were completed yesterday. To these have been added the extraordinary fresco cycle by Tomaso da Modena (1326-79) on the life and martyrdom of St Ursula (Santa Orsola or Orseola), recovered late in the 19th century from an already partly demolished church.

Over two floors of the former convent is part of the eclectic collection of Luigi Bailo, a 19th-century friar who made it his life work to collect ancient artefacts and artworks to preserve the memory of Treviso's past. At the time most townfolk thought him an eccentric. Today they owe him a debt of thanks. The collection starts with an archaeological section, proceeds with Romanesque statuary (including a rather striking terracotta funeral monument to some town toff, featuring the said toff in repose), and continues with a series of single paintings by Lotto, Titian, Tintoretto, Guardi and others (including among them three portraits by Rosalba Carrera).

Tomaso also left frescoes in the imposing **Chiesa di San Nicolò** (Via San Nicolò; ☹ 7am-noon & 3.30-6pm), on the other side of town. The star attraction here is the **Sala del Capitolo dei Domenicani** (☎ 0422 32 47; Piazzetta Benedetto XI 2; admission by donation; ☹ 8am-6pm) in the seminary alongside the church. Enter and follow the directions across a cloister to the room, adorned with the portraits of 40 Dominican friars by Tomaso da Modena, all intent on copying illuminated manuscripts. One of them, on the right as you enter, has a magnifying glass in his hand. This 14th-century depiction of a reading glass is thought to be the first ever.

In summer, you can take a day-long **boat cruise** (☎ 0422 78 86 63; per person €22) on the *Silis* or *Altino* down the Sile to the Venetian lagoon and back. The tours are by reservation only; call or ask at the tourist office. Boats do not leave from Treviso, but from several other villages along the river just southeast of Treviso.

## Sleeping & Eating

**Albergo Il Focolare** (☎ 0422 5 66 01; www.albergoilfocolare.net; Piazza Ancilotto 4, Treviso; s/d €65/95) This is the best choice (and one of very few) within the old city, just off Piazza dei Signori. Rooms have dark parquet floors, a soothing creamy décor, light white curtains and muted elegance. Three of the doubles have canal views. The hotel runs a 10-room B&B nearby.

Note that many restaurants stop serving lunch by 2pm and dinner by 10pm.

**Piola** (☎ 0422 54 02 87; www.piola.it; Via Carlo Alberto 11; pizzas & pasta €5-8; ☹ noon-2.30pm & 7pm-1am Mon-Fri, 7pm-2am Sat, 6.30pm-1am Sun) A slender, hip bar-cum-pizzeria, where you can sit outside on a tiny terrace or hide inside with Treviso's night crowd. The pizzas are good and you have a wide choice of toppings. This place has done well, opening branches as far away as Brazil – another local-business success story!

**Muscoli's** (☎ 0422 58 33 90; Via Pescheria 23; dishes €7-10; ☹ Mon-Sat) This old-style no-nonsense *osteria* with timber beams and knockabout tables out the back gets a mixed crowd of locals in for a glass or three of wine, a few snacks and the occasional dish in the dining area out the back, which looks over the Canal Cagnan. The day's offerings (like *seppie*, *piselli e polenta* – cuttlefish with peas and polenta) are posted outside on a blackboard.

**Osteria al Dante** (☎ 0422 59 18 97; Piazza Garibaldi 6; meals €20-25; ☹ Mon-Sat) An excellent budget eating option where you can sidle up to the bar for a host of *cicheti* or dine at one of the teeny tables. In summer you can sit outside and gaze across to the river. Typically people pop in for bar snacks and Prosecco, or perhaps a crisp Friuli white.

**All'Antico Portico** (☎ 0422 54 52 59; www.anticoportico.it; Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore 18; meals €40-45; ☹ Wed-Mon) Fine for lunch but better still for a more elaborate evening meal, this place doesn't seem much from the outside. Within, the timber ceiling and cluttering of antique bits and bobs makes it instantly likable. You

can opt for hearty mainland Veneto dishes and such specialties as *lumache al burro con aglio e prezzemolo* (snails done in butter, garlic and parsley).

## Shopping

**Benetton** (☎ 0422 55 99 11; Piazza dell'Indipendenza 5; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-7.30pm Tue-Sat, 3.30-7.30pm Sun-Mon) Treviso claims Luciano Benetton, the clothing manufacturer, as its favourite son. You will find this huge shop in the centre of town; factory outlets around the outskirts of town are the strict preserve of Benetton employees.

## Getting There & Away

Ryanair uses Treviso's tiny **San Giuseppe airport** (TSF; ☎ 0422 31 53 31), about 5km southwest of Treviso. Local bus number 6 runs past the airport into the centre of town.

The bus station is on Lungosile Mattei, near the train station in Piazzale Duca d'Aosta. ACTV buses connect Treviso with Venice, and La Marca buses link it to other towns in the province such as Conegliano (€3.10, 45 minutes) and Vittorio Veneto (€3.70, 65 minutes).

It often makes better sense to get the train. The journey from Venice (€2.20 to €4.50) takes 25 to 30 minutes. Other trains connect the town with Belluno (via Conegliano and Vittorio Veneto), Padua and major cities to the south and west.

By car, take the SS53 for Venice and Padua.

## AROUND TREVISO

**Oderzo** (population 18,800), 25km northeast of Treviso, is a microcosm of its grander neighbour. The central Piazza Grande is flanked by the 15th-century cathedral and a fine clock tower. The town's handful of peaceful canals is reminiscent of Treviso. For information try the **APT tourist office** (☎ 0422 81 52 51; Calle Opitergium 5; ☎ 9am-12.30pm Tue-Wed, 9am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Thu-Sun).

North of Treviso, on the road to Belluno, call in at **Conegliano** (population 35,700), dominated by a castle, which you can reach on foot or by car. For information, head for the **APT tourist office** (☎ 0438 2 12 30; Via XX Settembre 61; ☎ 9am-12.30pm Tue-Wed, 9am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Thu-Sun). The centre of town, a few minutes' walk straight ahead down Via Carducci from the train station, is notable for the long Scuola dei

Battuti on Via XX Settembre, decorated inside and out with frescoes. This was home to a religious lay group known as the Battuti, because they were enthusiastic self-flagellators. The cathedral, which you enter from the Scuola, is noteworthy for an altarpiece painted by local artist Cima da Conegliano between 1492 to 1493. Treviso province provides rivers of the region's Prosecco, a light white that comes in three general types: *spumante* (bubbly), *frizzante* (sparkling) and still.

The train from Venice via Treviso stops at Conegliano and proceeds to **Vittorio Veneto** (population 29,400). The **APT tourist office** (☎ 0438 5 72 43; Viale della Vittoria 110; ☎ 9.30am-12.30pm Tue-Wed, 9am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Thu-Sun) has info. A composite of two towns (Ceneda and Serravalle), Vittorio Veneto is most comfortably visited with your own transport. As you arrive from the south, follow signs for Ceneda, whose main attractions are the sweeping Piazza Giovanni Paolo I and Castello di San Martino, about a 1km hike up into the leafy hills. To reach the picturesque huddle of houses that is Serravalle, keep heading north, following signs for Belluno.

## BELLUNO

pop 35,600

Belluno is a beautiful town at the foot of the Dolomites. If you start early enough, you could just about combine it with Treviso in a day trip from Venice, either by train or bus. Better still, hang around for a few days and use it as a base to explore the mountains. For further information on walking in the Dolomites, see p305.

## Orientation & Information

Buses arrive at Piazzale della Stazione, in front of the train station. From here take Via Dante (which becomes Via Loreto) and then turn left at the T-junction down Via Matteotti into the central Piazza dei Martiri. The **tourist office** (☎ 0437 94 00 83; www.infodolomiti.it; Piazza del Duomo 2; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-12.30pm Sun) produces a feast of information on walking, trekking, skiing and other sporting activities. A privately run website on Belluno province is [www.dolomiti.it](http://www.dolomiti.it).

## Sights & Activities

Although no notable monuments await inspection, a wander around the old town is pleasant. The main square (really a broad

pedestrian avenue), **Piazza dei Martiri** (Martyrs' Square), takes its name from four partisans hanged here in the dying stages of WWII.

The heart of the old town is formed by **Piazza del Duomo**, dominated on one side by the early-16th-century Renaissance **Cattedrale di San Martino**, the **Palazzo Rosso**, from about the same period, and the **Palazzo dei Vescovi**. The latter's tower is one of three that belonged to the original, but long gone, 12th-century structure.

For most, the reason for reaching Belluno is to use it as a starting point for activities in the mountains, from **walking** in summer to **skiing** in winter. Stretching away to the northwest of Belluno is the **Parco Nazionale delle Dolomiti Bellunesi**, a beautiful national park laden with opportunities for those who want some fresh mountain air.

Six **Alte Vie delle Dolomiti** (high-altitude walking trails in the Dolomites) pass through the territory surrounding Belluno and along them you will find *rifugi*. Route 1 starts (or ends) in Belluno and stretches some 150km to Lago di Braies in Val Pusteria to the north. It is rated an easy walk, takes in some breathtaking mountain scenery and would take a reasonably fit walker 13 days (at an average four to five hours walking a day, with the exception of one long 12-hour day) to complete. Along the way, more-expert walkers can take some detours along *vie ferrate*. This walk should only be undertaken between late June and early September.

## Sleeping & Eating

A handful of hotels dot the town, as well as some B&Bs and *affittacamere*. Plenty more lodging options are scattered about the surrounding towns and villages, including a handful of *agriturismo* possibilities.

**ostello Imperina** (☎ 0437 6 24 51; valleimperia@dolomitipark.it; Località Le Miniere; dm incl breakfast €18; ☞ Apr–mid-Oct) The nearest youth hostel, 35km northwest of Belluno at Rivamonte Agordino, lies within the Parco Nazionale delle Dolomiti Bellunesi. In this cabin there are some family rooms, too. You must call ahead in April and

May. You can get there on the Agordo bus (50 minutes) from Belluno.

**Azienda Agrituristică Sant'Anna** (☎ 0437 2 74 91; www.aziendasantanna.it; Via Pedecastello 27, Castion; s/d €40/70) This old farmhouse is about 4km out of Belluno, on the east side of the Piave river towards the town of Ponte nelle Alpi. Rustic rooms with timber floors but all the mod cons have been carved out of this charming old stone house. There are activities on offer to help you get to know country life, as well as the option of taking Italian classes in Ponte nelle Alpi.

**Albergo Cappello e Cadore** (☎ 0437 94 02 46; www.albergocappello.com; Via Ricci 8; s/d €75/103; ☎ ☞) In a restored mid-19th-century establishment just off Piazza dei Martiri in the centre of town, you're literally in the pink (the dominant décor hue). Rooms are comfortable but don't exude much charm. Some doubles have Jacuzzi. For most of the year prices hover around €45/90.

**La Taverna** (☎ 0437 2 51 92; Via Cipro 7; meals €25-30; ☞ Mon-Sat) At La Taverna you have the option of snacking at the bar or proceeding through to the restaurant area, where you will be treated to hearty cooking. Around Christmas it serves a local speciality – a snail and eel combo that won't be to everyone's taste! A longstanding favourite, it is just off Piazza dei Martiri.

## Getting There & Away

**Dolomiti Bus** (☎ 0437 94 12 37; www.dolomitibus.it) buses depart from in front of the train station, on the western edge of town, for Agordo, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Feltre and smaller towns in the mountains and south of town.

Trains from Venice (€5.65, two to 2½ hours) run here via Treviso. They are none too regular and on most you will have to change once along the way. Some run from Mestre via Padua (where you change – it takes an eternity).

By car you can take the A27 motorway from Venice (Mestre) or follow the state roads via Treviso. The latter can be time-consuming because of heavy traffic.

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