

LUX EXPOSÉ

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Want to See Italy at Its Most Magical? Explore Florence and Venice During the Holidays

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If you're seeking a picturesque holiday experience in Italy, Florence and Venice offer some of the most enchanting settings for the festive season. Visiting these cities during the off-peak holiday period provides the added benefits of fewer crowds, reduced travel costs, and an opportunity to immerse yourself in Italy's unique holiday celebrations. Here's an insider's guide to discovering the festive charm of Florence and Venice during the winter holidays.

Venice, Italy

Known for its romantic ambiance year-round, Venice becomes a holiday wonderland in December. Gondolas glide through quieter canals, while the city lights up with seasonal decor that enhances its iconic beauty.

Seasonal Highlights:

- **Piazza San Marco's Christmas Tree:** This iconic square rivals New York's Rockefeller Center with its grand Christmas tree, drawing visitors for a festive photo opportunity.
- **Campo Santo Stefano Christmas Market:** Open for three weeks leading up to December 24, this market is filled with local crafts, gourmet treats, and festive decorations, offering a quintessential holiday shopping experience.

Where to Stay:

Londra Palace Venezia offers the perfect base for exploring Venice. Originally opened in 1853, this 52-room palazzo overlooks the San Marco Basin, with newly renovated interiors that blend Venetian elegance with modern luxury. Londra Palace enhances the holiday experience with a seasonal prix-fixe menu at its restaurant, LPV Ristorante, featuring decadent holiday dishes crafted from local ingredients.



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Exclusive Cultural Experiences:

Londra Palace is also known for its philanthropic program, The Place of Wonders (TPOW), through which guests can access exclusive artisan workshops in Venice. This foundation supports traditional Venetian craftsmanship by organizing visits to workshops that create glass beading, up-cycled textiles, and handcrafted leather goods. A highlight is a tour of Tessitura Bevilacqua, where guests witness fabric weaving on 18th-century looms. You can even purchase a piece of this tradition through Bevilacqua's luxurious handbag collection, crafted from Venetian fabrics and Italian leather.

These experiences, available through a donation to TPOW, make unique, thoughtful gifts that celebrate Italian artistry while giving back to local craftsmen.

Florence, Italy

Florence exudes a different kind of magic during the holidays, as historic landmarks are illuminated with artistic light displays. The annual Green Line Festival of Lights transforms Florence's monuments, piazzas, and buildings with vibrant projections, bringing a modern touch to the city's ancient beauty.

Cultural Must-Sees:

- **Basilica of Santa Maria Novella:** This iconic basilica remains open to visitors through the holiday season, offering an inviting space to appreciate Florentine art and architecture in a cozy, indoor setting.

Where to Stay:

For an intimate and luxurious stay, THE PLACE Firenze in Santa Maria Novella offers an elegant sanctuary in the heart of Florence. With only 20 rooms and suites, this recently renovated property, redesigned by Luigi Fragola Architects, combines contemporary flair with the timeless elegance of Florence. Steps away from Florence's best shopping and art galleries, this boutique hotel immerses guests in the city's vibrant culture.



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During the holiday season, THE PLACE Firenze offers seasonal menus inspired by Tuscan traditions for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's, allowing guests to savor the festive flavors of the region.

Artisan Experiences:

THE PLACE Firenze also partners with The Place of Wonders foundation to offer exclusive tours of six Florentine workshops, accessible through charitable donations. These experiences provide insight into traditional crafts such as:

- Porcelain and scagliola (plaster engraving): Try your hand at creating a unique piece to take home.
- Goldsmithery: Witness artisans working on the Ponte Vecchio using tools passed down through generations.
- Cashmere and silver: Visit workshops where these luxury materials are transformed into Florentine treasures.

Giftable Craftsmanship:

For those looking to bring a piece of Florence home, consider gifts from Ginori, a historic porcelain brand that has been creating fine Florentine ceramics since 1735. Their selection of handcrafted vases, espresso cups, and home decor items are perfect for luxury gift-giving.

Whether you're admiring Venice's festive decor from a gondola or experiencing the artistry of Florence, the holiday season in these Italian cities promises memories filled with charm and elegance. With exclusive stays, festive dining, and opportunities to engage with Italy's finest artisans, Florence and Venice invite you to celebrate the season with an appreciation for culture, tradition, and beauty.