

## A walk around Milan

This walk will take in the main sights of Milan, from the drop-dead gorgeous shops to the most extraordinary historical jewels of the city. It will be enough to give you a taste of the city in a day.

### From Stazione Centrale:

Take the yellow Metro line to Montenapoleone (3 stops). At street level you will emerge next to the Armani department store, a temple of understated style that is well worth a look. Don't feel intimidated by the black-clad security men – they are invariably charming! Cross over Via Manzoni and walk down Via Montenapoleone to see the designer shops. Go right to the end, take a left and then right almost immediately into Piazza San Babila, with its modern fountains. This is a popular meeting place for young people. You will see the church of San Babila across the square. Bear right, down the pedestrianised Corso Vittorio Emanuele. This brings you to the Duomo and the Piazza Duomo, the geographical and psychological heart of Milan. The duomo is not to be missed. Even if you are not particularly interested in churches, the architecture of this monumental cathedral is something to behold, and to spend a bit of time on. It can't really be called a masterpiece, because it took 700 years to build, and reflects the different styles that history passed through during its construction. But it is at least as interesting on the outside as on the inside. You can take a lift up to the roof, best done on a clear day, after rain, when the air will be so clear you will be able to see to the Swiss Alps to the North, and the Ligurian mountains to the south. The statues on the roof are a major surprise – there are over a thousand of them up there. An alternative to the roof trip is to go up to the restaurant of La Rinascente department store, from where you'll be able to appreciate the statuary and the amazing architecture of the cathedral. Inside there is much to see, but don't miss the gruesome statue of San Bartolomeo, with his skin slung almost casually over his shoulder, like a model with a raincoat.

On the right of Piazza Duomo is the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele, the most famous shopping arcade in the world, the perfect place for the Milanese to do their passeggiata even in bad weather. Find the bull in the mosaic and place your right heel on its testicles. Look up to the sky and spin three times, making a secret wish. It works, I have tested it! A local man told me that it doesn't work if you don't spin three times and don't look up. At the opposite end of the galleria you come out into Piazza della Scala, from where you can view La Scala opera House, and a statue of Leonardo da Vinci, who spent many years in Milan in the court of 'Il Moro' and worked on the cathedral, among other projects including a great network of canals, many of which now lie under streets.

Coming out of the Galleria the way you went in, turn right and walk into Piazza Dei Mercanti, where you will see some of the few remains of renaissance Milan, including the magnificent guildhall. Keep straight on up Via Dante towards the Castle, the Castello Sforzesco, a massive 16<sup>th</sup> century fortress. With luck the amazing fountain will be playing at the entrance.

The museum in the castle contains many treasures, including a touching 'Pieta' by Leonardo.

Coming out of the castle turn right as you are looking towards the fountain, and go down Via Carducci after crossing the square in front of Cadorna station (see the big sculpture with the needle and thread). Turn right up Corso Magenta. You will arrive at the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie, one of the most beautiful churches in Milan. It is the home of Leonardo's 'Last Supper', in the

