

# VENICE

Venice – the name evokes romantic rides in a gondola along the Grand Canal and watching people and pigeons from a caffè in Piazza San Marco. Though you might get lost in the labyrinth of narrow streets and waterways, it's part of the fun of exploring enchanting Venice.



## TRANSPORTATION

Walking is the best way to see Venice, but when you get tired, take a waterbus, called a *vaporetto*, which will allow you to see the beautiful facades of the many *palazzi* along the Grand Canal. One-day and three-day tourist ticket may be purchased in advance. If you get on the boat without a ticket, you will pay a higher fare on board. You must take at least one gondola ride while in Venice, but make sure to agree on a price with the gondolier before you step into the boat.



## BANKS AND CURRENCY

Banks are open weekdays 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, and 2:45–3:45 pm. Italy's currency is the Euro. Coins in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 cents and 1 & 2 Euros. Bank notes of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros are legal tender.



## POSTAGE

Post offices are open from 8:15 am to 1:40 pm weekdays, and Saturday mornings. The central post office is located at the foot of the Rialto Bridge at the corner of Campo San Bartolomeo. The Italian mail system moves at a snail's pace—allow

about 3 weeks for a letter to reach the U.S., and even longer for postcards. Postcards with a short greeting and signature cost approximately one Euro, but a letter rate is charged if the message is lengthy.



## TELEPHONES

Public phones are located in bars, caffès and tobacco shops that bear the round yellow sign outside. Pay phones take coins, a *gettone* (token), or a magnetic card. Avoid using hotel telephones, unless calling collect, since you'll be charged an exorbitant fee for long-distance calls. The cheapest way is to use an AT&T or Sprint calling card.



## SHOPPING

The main shopping areas are around Piazza San Marco and the Rialto Bridge. Venice is best known for its glass—some of the top showrooms are **Venini** (piazzetta dei Leoncini 314); **Salviati** (Piazza San Marco 78 and 110); **Cenedese** (Piazza San Marco 139). Two well-known department stores are **Coin** (off Campo San Bartolomeo), specializing in fashion and accessories, and **Standa**, with stores on Campo San Luca and Strada Nuova, where you can pick up medium-priced goods of all kinds.



## EATING

There are many types of restaurants in Venice: if you're in a hurry, short of cash, or just want a light meal, the stand-up bars have thick *tramezzini* (sandwiches) and hot food. A *rosticceria* offers a light snack or a full-course meal; you can stand and eat at the counter, wait for a counter seat, or have a picnic packed for good eating along the canal waters. An *osterie* (better known in Venice as an *enoteca*) serves little snacks and lots of good wine. *Trattorie*

are small, usually family-run, inexpensive restaurants serving good food, while *ristoranti* are more elegant places in which to dine. Some suggestions:

The Hotel Monaco's restaurant, **Grand Canal**, is very expensive and a favorite with Venetians, who enjoy eating on the canal-side terrace on sunny days, and in the cozy dining room in winter. A moderately priced trattoria off the Strada Nuova, **Da Gigio**, is also popular with locals, and serves excellently cooked, homemade pasta, fish and meat dishes, and high-quality draft wine. On the inexpensive side **L'Incontro**, on Rio Terra Canal 30672A, serves juicy steaks, wild duck, boar, and (with advance notice) roast suckling pig.



## PLACES TO VISIT

The heart of Venice is the Piazza San Marco, where even the pigeons have to fight for space. Although expensive, you should go for a break at Caffè Florian, the first coffee house in Europe (1720), in the piazza. The Basilica di San Marco, with its richly decorated facade, is surmounted by copies of the four famous gilded horses. The Grand Canal is Venice's main thoroughfare, lined with more than 200 palaces. And the city's most important art gallery is the Accademia Delle Belle Arti, which houses some of the finest works by Titian, Giorgione, Mantegna, and Carpaccio.