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## Florence and the machine now

Cancer is happening right now, which is why we're fundraising right now for Cancer Research UK. There's no time to lose! Donate today and help bring forward the day when all cancers are cured. Donating through these pages is simple, fast and totally secure. Your details are safe with Cancer Research UK. In case you slept in, live under a rock, or generally just missed out this past weekend, Vice's Creators Project took over Dumbo for two days of art, design, music mania. Florence + the Machine was also in the 'hood to rock the crowd Saturday night with a set that inspired through song and, of course, through Florence Welch's style. The auburn-hair songstress, fresh off the heels of serenading the Chanel spring '12 show and Thursday night's Interview party, channeled her inner sea siren in a deep, shimmering blue ensemble and also showed much love for BK with the debut of three fresh tracks. Peek a sneak at one of the performances below, and click through for some more Florence performance fabulousness. (Stereogum)

Milan may be famous for its place on the international fashion calendar, but for many, the real home of Italian style is Florence. With the amount of artisanal shoemakers, historic leather markets, and bespoke clothing shops that line the Tuscan city's medieval streets, it's not hard to see why. Legendary Italian luxury brands like Salvatore Ferragamo, Gucci, Emilio Pucci, and Roberto Cavalli were all proudly founded in Florence, and those that weren't — Prada, Armani, Missoni — all clamor to maintain major presences in the city's famed shopping quarters. But, don't go thinking these standby brands are all you'll find: sleek, new concept shops; innovative boutiques; and young designer flagships abound, too. Not to mention Pitti, Italy's largest fashion trade show, which attracts editors (including us right now!) and visitors alike. Here, the top 10 shopping spots you've got to add to your next Italian itinerary. Actively scan device characteristics for identification. Use precise geolocation data. Store and/or access information on a device. Select personalised content. Create a personalised content profile. Measure ad performance. Select basic ads. Create a personalised ads profile. Select personalised ads. Apply market research to generate audience insights. Measure content performance. Develop and improve products. List of Partners (vendors) Rome and Florence are two of Italy's most historic cities, separated by several centuries and 174 miles. The ruins of Rome hark back to its days as the then-capital of civilization over 2,000 years ago, while Florence flourished much later as the birthplace of the Renaissance. Both cities boast art, churches, history, and cuisine unlike anywhere else in the world, and a visit to both is standard for most travelers coming to Italy. Thankfully, Rome and Florence are easily connected by the train and you can reach one from the other in under two hours. The bus takes more than twice as long, but it's the cheapest way to move between them. A car is fun to explore the Tuscan countryside and for day trips, but it's a headache to have in the city. There are also direct flights, but they're pricey and end up taking longer than the train. How to Get From Rome to Florence Time Cost Best For Train 1 hour, 30 minutes from \$18 Fast and easy travel Bus 3 hours, 15 minutes from \$10 Traveling on a budget Flight 55 minutes from \$96 Airport transfers Car 3 hours 174 miles (280 kilometers) Exploring the countryside Travelers on a budget can use the bus for travel to Florence for dirt cheap prices on FlixBus, sometimes for as low as \$10. It takes about two to three hours longer than the train, but it's a viable option when euros are running short, especially for last-minute plans. Trains and buses both go up in price as your travel date gets closer, but if you're flexible with your departure time, you can often find bus tickets for under \$20 even for same-day trips. Buses leave Rome from Tiburtina station and arrive in Florence at Villa Costanza, which is about 25 minutes outside of the city center and accessible via the local tram, which takes passengers to the main train station. The tram only runs from 5:30 a.m. until midnight, so think twice before booking a late-night bus that arrives in Florence in the early morning or you may be stuck hiring a taxi, totally negating your savings by using the bus. The easiest way to travel around Italy is, without a doubt, the train, especially when traveling between major cities like Rome and Florence. Trains are comfortable, fast, and affordable—especially when booked with advance notice—and are the transport of choice for locals and visitors alike. You can reserve a train through Italy's state-run rail service, Trenitalia, or the privately owned Italo. Both companies are comparable in price and comfort, so look at tickets on both websites before making your purchase. You can also use RailEurope to compare the two companies on one website, although RailEurope charges a small commission when checking out. Less expensive regional trains are also an option, but they take two to four hours and do not have reserved seats. Trenitalia trains leave from Termini and Tiburtina stations in Rome, while Italo trains depart from Tiburtina and Ostiense stations. If you're staying in Rome near Termini or Ostiense, choose the respective company that serves that station in order to avoid crossing the entire city with all of your luggage. All trains arrive in Florence Santa Maria Novella Station—sometimes written as "Firenze SMN"—the main station of the Tuscan capital. This accessible city is easily traversed on foot, although taxis are allowed to enter the car-free city center if you need to haul luggage to your hotel. You won't need a car in Florence, and in fact, you can't even bring your vehicle into the historic city center, so having a car can actually be more of a headache than it's worth. Plus, trying to get out of the madness of Rome in a car is every driver's worst nightmare. When you add up the costs of the rental, gas, and tolls on Italy's autostrada highways, driving isn't very cost-effective either. Despite the inconveniences, the journey from Rome to Florence is a beautiful one, passing through the rich countryside of Umbria and Tuscany. And even though you can enjoy the same scenery from the window of a train or bus, only a car gives you the flexibility to stop in the charming Italian villages you'll pass along the way to enjoy a hearty lunch and a local Chianti wine. You can also take day trips from Florence if you have your own vehicle, such as to nearby Pisa with its famous leaning tower or Siena. Direct flights by Alitalia get you from Leonardo da Vinci Airport (FCO) in Rome to Florence Airport (FLR) in under an hour, but the total travel time taking into account transport to the airport, checking in, going through security, and waiting at the gate is actually much longer. The train is clearly the winner in terms of transport, taking only 30 minutes more but shuttling passengers directly from city center to city center. Plus, low-cost airlines don't fly to Florence, so in addition to being more of a hassle, the flight is also significantly more expensive. Florence is one of those cities that seems to be always packed with tourists, so the best time to visit is really a question of visiting when the city is busy or very busy. Late spring to early fall is the high season, especially the summer months when it's full of study abroad students and the temperatures are uncomfortably hot. Winter and early spring are when there are fewer tourists but the weather is more likely to be cold and rainy. To balance out crowds with the climate, aim for a trip in March or April, making sure to avoid the week leading up to Easter when most schools are on break. The easiest way to travel from the airport to Florence is via the Volainbus, which shuttles passengers directly to the Florence Train Station. Since only taxis are allowed in the historic center, you'll need to take a cab if you want door-to-door service. The taxi fare from the airport is a set price that varies based on the time of day, but it starts at 22 euros—or about \$26—for daytime rides, plus a small supplement for pieces of luggage. Lovers of art, history, food, wine, culture, and shopping all have something to enjoy in Florence. The local cathedral, or Duomo, is one of the most impressive in all of Italy with its bright pink and green facade and massive brick dome. The Ponte Vecchio, or Old Bridge, is the only remaining bridge from Florence's medieval days, offering unbeatable views of the city along the Arno River. The Uffizi Gallery and Galleria dell'Accademia are two of the most important art museums in Europe, the latter of which is home to Michaelangelo's "David". Travelers who love to shop will have plenty to keep themselves busy with while in Florence, from street stalls selling local handicrafts and genuine leather to high-end designer products, such as the original Gucci store. Apart from renowned Tuscan wines, other local items to try include artichoke panini, any kind of gelato, and the mouthwatering Florentine steak. Frequently Asked Questions How far is Florence from Rome? The distance between the two cities is 174 miles. What is the drive like from Florence to Rome? The three-hour drive is scenic, taking you through Umbria and Tuscany, but in the two city centers, it can be hectic. How can I travel by train from Florence to Rome? Rome and Florence are connected by a train that takes 1.5 hours. You can choose from a few different companies to find prices and schedules that suit your trip. Thanks for letting us know! Florence is one of the most popular travel destinations in Italy and is very often on the itinerary for first-time visitors along with Rome and Florence. One of the wealthiest cities during the Italian Renaissance, Florence is home to classical works of art, historic architecture, and of course, natural beauty as well as a rich history of culinary excellence. This capital city of the Tuscany region has a large number of impressive sights and attractions, including some of Italy's best museums and its most beautiful cathedrals and churches. Along with its picturesque streets and squares, elegant buildings and bridges, colorful markets, and excellent shopping areas, you'll also find some of the best restaurants in the country in this thriving urban center. Fortunately, Florence's centro storico (historic center) is compact, flat, and walkable. Meaning you'll be able to easily take in all of the city's top attractions—from its world-famous sites to some lesser-known discoveries. 01 of 20 Taylor McIntyre / TripSavvy Florence's most popular site is its Duomo (cathedral), the Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore. Construction on the Duomo began in 1296, but it wasn't consecrated until 1436. Its exterior, made of green, pink, and white marble, has several elaborate doors and interesting statues. Inside the cathedral, there are dozens of paintings and sculptures of tremendous historical and cultural significance, so give yourself some time to take it all in. While you're there, try to count all 44 of the stained-glass windows designed by notable Renaissance artists such as Donatello, which depicts Jesus, Mary, and some of the saints. The main attraction of this massive structure is Brunelleschi's Dome, a masterpiece of architecture and construction. You'll definitely want to buy a ticket to climb the 463 steps to its top. 02 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Set on Piazza del Duomo to the right of the church, the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo houses many of the original works and blueprints from art and architecture related to Florence's Duomo complex. The original versions of Lorenzo Ghiberti's panels for the Baptistery doors are here, as are exhibits of Duomo architect Brunelleschi's plans and Renaissance-era tools used to build the Duomo. 03 of 20 Taylor McIntyre / TripSavvy The Baptistery of John the Baptist, from the 11th century, is one of Florence's oldest buildings. Located in both the Piazza San Giovanni and the Piazza del Duomo across from Florence Cathedral and the Campanile di Giotto, its exterior is made of green and white marble and has three sets of amazing bronze doors, the most famous of which are the "Gates of Paradise," designed by sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti. You can buy one ticket that allows you to visit all the attractions within the Duomo complex, including the Baptistery. However, the massive exterior doors with scenes from the Bible and the interior dome's mosaics that show even more Biblical depictions make the Baptistery worth a visit all on their own. 04 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson The Campanile (Italian for "bell tower") is also in the Piazza del Duomo. Principal architect Giotto di Bondone began work on the structure in 1334, and the lower level is commonly called Giotto's Campanile, even though he died before the structure was completed. Inside the Campanile, you'll find intricately detailed relief carvings and sculptures as well as replicas of the 16 original life-sized statues created by artists such as Andrea Pisano and Donatello (the originals are in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo). If you climb the 414 stairs (there's no elevator in this Gothic tower), you'll be rewarded not only with great views of the Cathedral and its dome but of Florence and the surrounding area. Continue to 5 of 20 below. 05 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Address P.za della Signoria, 50122 Firenze FI, Italy Florence's most famous square is Piazza della Signoria, the heart of the historic center and a free open-air sculpture exhibit. The Loggia della Signoria holds some important statues, and a copy of Michelangelo's David stands on the square. The piazza has been Florence's political center since the middle ages and is the site of both Florence's town hall and the medieval Palazzo Vecchio. Inside the Palazzo are elaborately decorated public rooms and private apartments that are open to tourists. 06 of 20 Taylor McIntyre / TripSavvy Address Ponte Vecchio, 50125 Firenze FI, Italy The Ponte Vecchio (old bridge), built in 1345, was Florence's first bridge across the Arno River and is the only surviving bridge from Florence's medieval days (others were destroyed in World War II). The always-crowded Ponte Vecchio is still lined with shops selling gold and silver jewelry. From the bridge, you'll have a great view of the Arno River and beyond. 07 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Florence's Galleria dell' Accademia holds important paintings and sculptures from the 13th to 16th centuries. Along with works by important Renaissance artists like Uccello, Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, and del Sarto, you'll also find one of the most famous sculptures in the world, Michelangelo's "David," at the Galleria dell' Accademia. There is also an interesting collection of musical instruments here, which was started by the Medici family. It's generally a good idea to book your tickets ahead of time if you plan to stop by this popular destination; ticket lines to see the statue of David can be quite long. While admission is free, booking your ticket in advance online gives you access to a shorter line for ticket holders. 08 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson The Galleria degli Uffizi holds the world's most important collection of Renaissance art, as well as thousands of paintings from medieval to modern times and many antique sculptures, illuminated manuscripts, and tapestries. Also known as the Uffizi Gallery, this famous institute houses the works of artist such as Michelangelo, Giotto, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino, and Raphael. With all these artists in one place, allow plenty of time to fully appreciate all of their collected works, so set aside at least a few hours if you plan to visit. The Uffizi is Italy's most crowded museum so it's a good idea to buy tickets ahead of time to avoid long ticket lines. The gallery also features free admission on the first Sunday of each month, but expect higher than normal crowd levels if you attend that day. Continue to 9 of 20 below. 09 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Across the Ponte Vecchio, you'll find the Giardino di Boboli (Boboli Garden), a huge park on a hillside in the middle of Florence. Located behind the Pitti Palace, with its beautiful gardens and fountains offer a great view of Florence from the Forte Belvedere. This famous park is great for a picnic before stopping into the palace for a tour of its many galleries. The Palazzo Pitti, Florence's largest palace, was once the seat of the Medici family. Originally the home of a banker named Luca Pitti, this massive building houses the living quarters of its past inhabitants as well as eight different galleries that are full of art, period costumes, and jewelry. Petti Palace is open for tours on Tuesdays through Fridays from 8:15 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. but is closed on Mondays as well as New Years and Christmas days. Tickets are required to explore the palace, but discounts are available if you combine your visit with other museums in Florence. 10 of 20 Taylor McIntyre / TripSavvy Santa Croce, in Piazza Santa Croce, is the largest Franciscan church in Italy and holds the tombs of several important Florentines including Michelangelo, Galileo, and Machiavelli. Additionally, the vast interior contains some exceptional stained glass windows and frescoes, including one of Brunelleschi's most important works, the Cappella dei Pazzi. Families and individual guests can enter the complex of Santa Croce from Largo Bargellini, just around the corner from the Piazza Santa Croce, where you'll find the ticket booth. The complex is open Mondays through Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. as well as on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligations from 2 to 5 p.m. 11 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Address Piazza del Mercato Nuovo, Firenze FI, Italy Florence has some of the finest shopping in Europe, offering everything from leather goods and fine food to jewelry, souvenirs, and fine art. Whether you want to visit a luxury retailer or high fashion boutique or explore some of the open-air markets selling local goods and antiques, there's plenty of ways to shop in Florence year round. For open-air markets and antique sales, look around the famed Piazza San Lorenzo area, and across the Arno, Piazza Santo Spirito is the place to go for produce as well as vintage clothing, accessories, antiques, and pottery. Meanwhile, the Mercato Nuovo (Porcellino) on Via Porta Rossa and the Mercato Centrale also are great places to find local fashions and delicacies. 12 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Address Piazzale Michelangelo, 50125 Firenze FI, Italy Piazzale Michelangelo in Florence is an outdoor terrace on the south (or left) bank of the River Arno. Its position high on a hillside above the Arno means visitors who make the climb (or take the bus) are rewarded with breathtaking views of the city. The Piazzale is named after Michelangelo Buonarroti and is adorned with bronze copies of some of his most famous sculptures. The view at sunset, when the skyline of Florence is spread out before you, is one of the most unforgettable in Italy. While you're waiting for the sunset, wander around Giardino delle Rose and Giardino dell'Iris on either side of Piazzale Michelangelo or head over to the Basilica di Santo Spirito, a residential district featuring dozens of cafes and restaurants. Continue to 13 of 20 below. 13 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Address Piazza Santo Spirito, 50125 Firenze FI, Italy This lively piazza and the Santo Spirito neighborhood that surrounds it form part of Florence's "Left Bank," a colorful, slightly bohemian area favored by local residents as well as visitors seeking a slice of authentic Florence. By day there are produce vendors and interesting shops set up around the piazza, and by night, crowds from bars and restaurants spill out onto the main streets and nearby sidewalks. The Basilica di Santo Spirito, rather plain from the outside, contains several important works of art and is open to the general public most days out of the year. Next door, you'll also find the Museo della Fondazione Romano, which houses "Cenacolo di Santo Spirito," a piece of art by Andrea Orcagna. 14 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson If you've made the climb to Piazzale Michelangelo, continue on another 10 minutes or so to the Abbey of San Miniato al Monte, a beautiful 11th-century abbey where, on most days at 5:30 pm, monks still observe a Gregorian chant. The interior is every bit as lovely as the green and white marble exterior, so take the time to go in and look around. 15 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson The 13th-century building that houses the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, or more simply "The Bargello," was once a police barracks and a prison. Today it's a sculpture and decorative arts museum with works from Michelangelo, Donatello, Verrocchio, and Giambologna. Located in the historic Palazzo del Podestà and established in 1865 by royal decree, the National Museum of Bargello was Italy's first official national museum. You'll find fewer crowds at this museum than at other big museums in Florence. 16 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson For a bit of art history outside of Michaelangelo and the other famous Renaissance artists, visit the San Marco Monastery Museum to see the works of Fra Angelico, an Early Renaissance painter and monk, as well as the home of his predecessor, the revolutionary monk Savonarola. Now open as a museum, San Marco Monastery was once the home of Fra Angelico, who painted several of his best-known frescoes on its walls and in its humble cells. Visit the rooms of both Savonarola and Fra Angelico, which contains several of their personal effects as well as a famous portrait of Savonarola painted by their fellow monk Fra Bartolomeo. Continue to 17 of 20 below. 17 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Florence's National Archaeological Museum houses collections of Greek, Roman, and Egyptian works of art, much of which was amassed by the Medici family. The museum also has one of the best collections of Etruscan artifacts, including the priceless Chimera of Arezzo, an intact bronze statue of a mythological lion with a snake for a tail and a goat head protruding from its side. Part of the Tuscany Museum Complex, admission is required to explore the National Archaeological Museum of Florence, but you can pair your entry with entry to other nearby museums for a discounted price. 18 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Address Piazza di Madonna degli Aldobrandini, 6, 50123 Firenze FI, Italy Phone +39 055 064 9430 Florence's ruling Medici family was known for their ruthless ambition and grandiosity, and this was as true in death as it was in life. Constructed to house the remains of several of the royal family, Cappelle Medicee is an elaborate mausoleum for the Medici dukes that features enormous tombs with sculptures by Michelangelo. There's no place else in the world where you can observe the Renaissance master's work this close up, and the tomb sculptures, including allegories of Night, Day, Dawn, and Dusk, are among his most contemplative works. The museum is open year-round on Mondays to Sundays from 9:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. but is closed on the second and fourth Sunday of the month, on first, third and fifth Monday of the month, New Year's Day, May 1, and Christmas Day. 19 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Address Piazza del Mercato Centrale, Via dell'Ariento, 50123 Firenze FI, Italy Phone +39 055 239 9798 This large indoor and outdoor market has a lot of seemingly everything—from produce and clothing to leather goods and cheap souvenirs. The outdoor portion of the market starts at Piazza San Lorenzo and offers hundreds of stalls packed with merchandise. The indoor market, or Mercato Centrale, is foodie heaven, with stalls selling locally-sourced produce, meats, and cheeses as well as a dining hall where you can pick out lunch or a snack from one of a dozen or so gourmet vendors. 20 of 20 TripSavvy / Christopher Larson Head to the Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella for perhaps the most unique gifts—for yourself or friends back home—in all of Florence. Affiliated with Santa Maria Novella church, the Officina Profumo is one of the oldest apothecaries in the world and still makes perfumes, soaps, and elixirs according to centuries-old recipes developed by monks. A trip to the Officina is part shopping spree and part museum visit, as the fancily packaged soaps, creams, and perfumes are as tempting as the ancient bottles and fixtures are interesting.

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