



and façade and 26,000 square feet of 24 carat and brightly coloured mosaics line the interior of its 5 domes.

Outside in the sea of tourists, Manuella thrusts a multi-coloured folder aloft, almost reaching shoulder level. Our group re-forms and edges out of St. Mark's Square.

della Salute, the south part of the strip of land bisected by the Grand Canal. 3 doors up from Elton John's spectacular Venetian palace. In 2006, only a rock star can afford such a view, across the lagoon towards the Doge's Palace, the 300ft tall brick-built bell tower and St. Mark's basilica.

Early settlers made the most of these marshy islands' great sea-faring position, a trading crossroads between east and west. The 7th century 'Doges', derived from the Latin word 'dux', a non-hereditary dual role taken on by the richest citizens, used their wealth to build palaces and majestic buildings to show-off to the outside world, to beautify the Republic of Venice.

In 826AD 2 Christian merchants retrieved the body of the apostle, St. Mark from Egypt, delivered him to Venice and in 829, they built the first of 4 churches on a site at the head of St. Mark's square. The most recent one, built in 1063, was later adorned with the spoils of pillaging from the Byzantine Empire. A total of 60 colours and types of marble clad its columns



With its own private canal mooring and sea-front location, a short walk from St. Mark's Square, the 4* boutique Hotel Metropole, built on the site of an orphanage where Vivaldi taught music, is a sumptuous and charming hotel, ideally located for sight-seeing. Inside it is a veritable museum, draped with rich fabrics, with an exotic reception area and tea-room that transforms by night into a Michelin starred restaurant. Collections of fans, crucifixes, cork-screws, 1930s handbags, card cases and nutcrackers adorn the glass cabinets and walls and the piles of ancient luggage and the odd mannequin you'll stumble across on its four floors haven't been left by a careless porter, they're a part of the décor. The honeymoon suite (room 251) is dominated by a canopied bed, watched over by two putti in a stary ceiling, encased by gigantic twisted marble columns. Or ask for Room 403 for a roof-top terrace for stunning views over the lagoon and the red roof-tops of Venice.



The sumptuous and charming Hotel Metropole

Take a tour

Make the most of Venice by pre-bookng an English-speaking tour with Venice Events, tel 0039 041 5239979, e-mail incoming@veniceevents.com or visit www.veniceevents.com for full details of tour times and prices.

Fun facts

- ★ Venetians believe it's unlucky to walk between the 2 columns that mark the sea-facing entrance to St. Mark's square. It used to be the city's execution site.
- ★ If you kiss beneath the Bridge of Sighs, the covered bridge that led prisoners from the Doges Palace to their deaths, you are guaranteed eternal love.
- ★ The early Venetians invented income tax.
- ★ Both Michaelangelo and Palladio entered a contest for re-designing the Rialto Bridge in 1542, but the winner was a Venetian, Antonio da Ponte, who conceived today's single span with its shop-lined street above.
- ★ There are 2 MacDonald's in Venice.
- ★ St. Mark's Square used to be the highest point in Venice but, having sunk over centuries, is now the lowest and floods around 250 times each year. Global warming, tides and winds are responsible.
- ★ A combination of output from industry on the mainland and the sinking of buildings, as pockets of gas and water beneath the city escape, has raised water levels in the lagoon by around 23" in the last 100 years.
- ★ Stravinsky is buried in the city's graveyard, Wagner lived and died in what is now the city's Casino and Venetian sun, Vivaldi composed the 'Four Seasons' and many of his other 500 concertos and 70 sonatas in Venice.
- ★ In 1903 the campanile, St. Mark's Bell Tower, completely collapsed. There were 2 fatalities, a pigeon and a cat.

Fototeca ENIT Vito Arcomano
Basilica di San Marco

★ PRIZE

A 3-night break for 2 at the Hotel Metropole. Return flights to Venice with easyJet and all taxes are included.

For a chance to win, answer these 3 questions.

What are you guaranteed if you kiss beneath Venice's Bridge of Sighs?

In which year was the most recent church at the head of St Mark's square built?

Which room should you ask for at the Hotel Metropole for views over the lagoon?

Top 3 'must see'

- ★ The interior of St. Mark's basilica
- ★ The Scala Contarini del Bovolo, an exterior staircase, like an inverted snail-shell, in the San Marco district
- ★ Venice from the Grand Canal

Top Tips

Never, ever paddle barefoot, touch or drink the canal water.

If you want to discover the 'real' Venice, be on the streets by 7am

Buy a 24 hour Vaporetto pass for 12€ and ride Venice's water buses as frequently as you like, if nothing else, they provide a rest from the endless walking.

The 'Alilaguna' ferry from Marco Polo airport to the city, cost 12€ per person and takes just over an hour. The journey can also be made by bus, train or water taxi, the latter costing around 90€ each way.

For better value restaurants and shops, head away from the centre of the 'fish', for example, towards the Cannaregio district, in the north of Venice.

The best pizzas in Venice can be found at the Pizzeria ai Sportivi in the Campo Santa Margherita, plain wooden tables, great prices and excellent food. Don't encourage the pigeons.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

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