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FREE GUIDE · FLORENCE

Galleria dell'Accademia

Michelangelo, Giambologna, Giotto, Stradivari... — the 7 must-see stops of the Galleria dell'Accademia, from the David to the unfinished giants, explained one by one



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Your visit at a glance

This is where the David lives, the most famous nude in the world, and it doesn't disappoint: 5.17 metres of marble at the end of a corridor designed like an altar. But the Accademia is much more than a photo. This tour brings together the museum's seven must-see stops —from the David to the Prisoners struggling to break free of the stone, from Gothic gold to Stradivari's violins—, with the context to understand why they matter and 45-minute, 1-hour and 2-hour routes so you can choose according to the time you have. It's a compact museum you can savour without stress and remember forever.

At a glance

PRICE

€16 + €4 booking · €2 reduced

HOURS

Tue-Sun 8:15-18:50

WORKS HERE

The 7 must-sees

FREE ENTRY

1st Sunday of month · under-18s

TIME

1-2 h (the 7 stops)

GETTING THERE

Via Ricasoli, 5 min from the Duomo



Part of Tickets Visit

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With this free guide you already do a great visit: the essentials, with a route. If you want to make the most of it, at the end I'll show you the complete version.

Before you go in: book your skip-the-line ticket

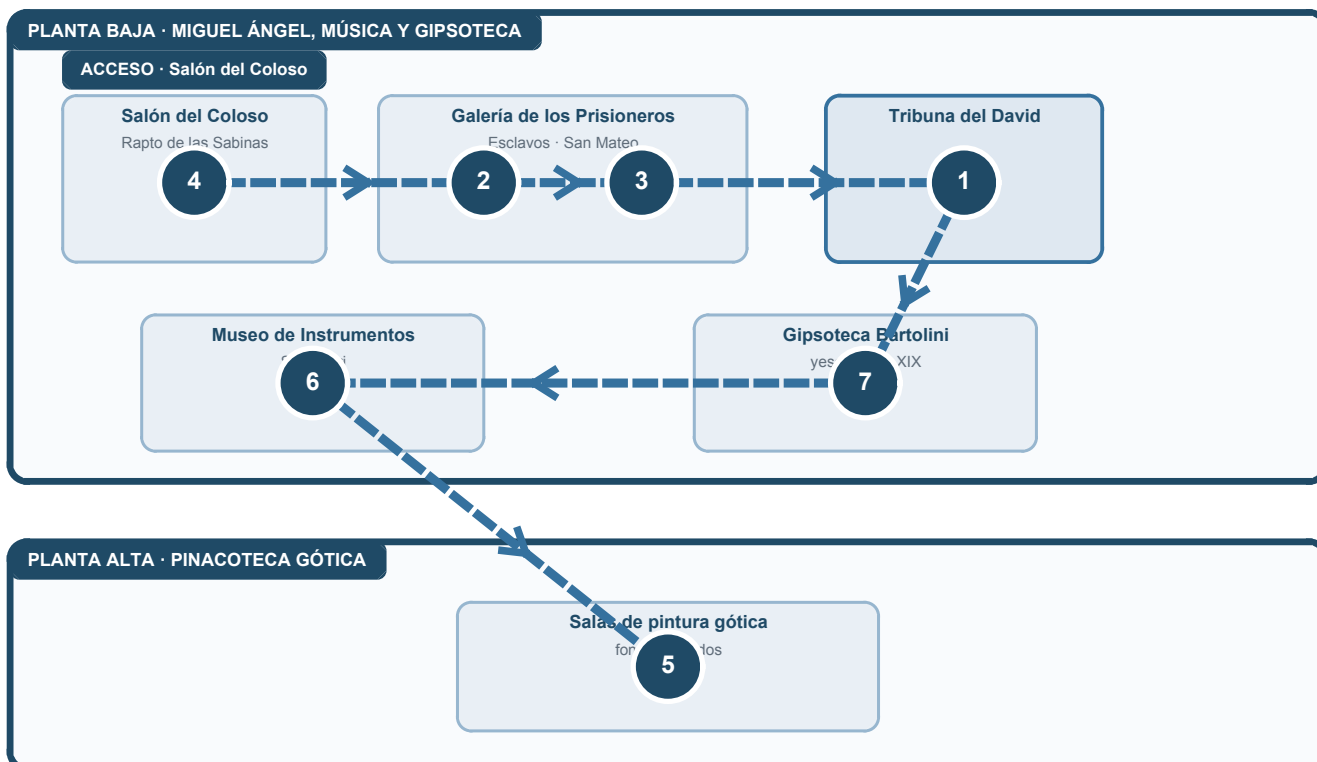
On Civitatis, with free cancellation. Skip the ticket-office queue.

» **Buy your ticket**

The map and the route

You come in through the Hall of the Colossus, where you're greeted by the great full-scale plaster model of Giambologna's Rape of the Sabine Women (4). From there, the Gallery of the Prisoners carries you in a perfect crescendo: on either side, the four Slaves (2) and Saint Matthew (3) emerge half-formed from the marble, building the tension until, at the far end and beneath the skylit dome of the Tribune, the David (1) appears. After that climax you can slow your pulse in the Gothic gold-ground painting rooms (5), pass through the Museum of Musical Instruments with its Stradivari (6) and finish in the Gipsoteca Bartolini (7), a forest of white 19th-century sculptures. Follow the numbers on the stops: they run in the most comfortable order for making your way around the museum.

GALERÍA DE LA ACADEMIA · EL EJE HACIA EL DAVID (ESQUEMA, NO A ESCALA)



Nada más entrar, un eje recto lleva del Salón del Coloso, por la Galería de los Prisioneros, hasta el David bajo su cúpula. La pinacoteca gótica está en la planta alta. Orientativo, no a escala.

Visiting order: 4 Hall of the Colossus (Rape of the Sabine Women) › 2 Gallery of the Prisoners (Slaves) › 3 Saint Matthew › 1 Tribune of the David › 7 Gipsoteca Bartolini › 6 Museum of Musical Instruments › 5 Gothic painting rooms (upper floor)

Schematic layout by area; the number shows the visiting order. Not to scale: follow the museum's own floor plans and signs on the day.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

1

Michelangelo's David

Tribune of the David · 20-25 min

Michelangelo's David (1501-1504) is the jewel of the Accademia: 5.17 metres carved from a block of marble that others had discarded. It captures the moment of tension before facing Goliath, not the victory. It was moved here in 1873 and a tribune with a skylit dome was built to protect it from the elements.



*David (1501-1504),
Michelangelo — Tribune of the
David, Galleria dell'Accademia,
Florence*

Photo: Livioandronico2013 · CC BY-SA
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LOOK AT IT LIKE THIS

Look at the swollen veins of the right hand and the tense gaze towards Goliath, with the sling barely visible over the shoulder.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

There's a very specific reason why the David's head and hands look 'too' big, and it has to do with the place it was actually carved for (which was neither this museum nor a square). In the full guide: that original destination and the story of the 'impossible' block nobody wanted.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

2

The Prisoners (unfinished Slaves)

Gallery of the Prisoners · 15 min

Four unfinished Slaves, or Prisoners, by Michelangelo (c. 1525-1530) flank the path to the David. They were carved for the tomb of Pope Julius II, which was never completed. Their power lies in being unfinished: figures that seem to struggle to break free of the marble, the chisel marks still in view.



The Prisoners / Slaves (c. 1525-1530), Michelangelo — Gallery of the Prisoners, Florence

Photo: Dimitris Kamaras from Athens · CC BY 2.0 · Wikimedia Commons



THE DETAIL

Compare how finished each one is: in the Atlas the head is still a prisoner of the block, while other figures' legs are already polished.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

Michelangelo had a radical theory about what a sculptor really does, and these four figures half-out of the stone are its best demonstration. In the full guide: that idea in his own words and how to tell each slave apart by how finished it is.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

4

The Rape of the Sabine Women (plaster model)

Hall of the Colossus · 10 min

The Hall of the Colossus is presided over by the full-scale plaster model of Giambologna's Rape of the Sabine Women, the study for the 1582 marble in the Loggia dei Lanzi. Its three spiralling figures are a peak of Mannerism, designed to be seen from any angle. The plaster reveals the creative process better than the final marble.



The Rape of the Sabine Women, plaster model, Giambologna — Hall of the Colossus, Galleria dell'Accademia

Photo: Francesco Bini · CC BY-SA 4.0 ·
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WALK AROUND IT

Walk all the way around it: you'll see it has no single front, but a spiral of three bodies that changes completely depending on where you stand.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

This group hides an oddity almost unique in the history of art: when Giambologna sculpted it, he didn't even know what scene he was depicting. In the full guide: the surprising story of its title and why this plaster tells you more about the artist than the marble in the street.

THE STOPS, ONE BY ONE

6

The Museum of Musical Instruments

Museo degli Strumenti Musicali room · 12 min

The Museum of Musical Instruments displays pieces from the Medici and Lorraine collections, with originals by Stradivari and Cristofori, who invented the pianoforte in Medici Florence. Highlights include Stradivari's Medici cello and one of the master's surviving tenor violas. A small room with audio to hear how they sound.



Stradivari's Medici cello — Museum of Musical Instruments, Galleria dell'Accademia

Photo: Sailko · CC BY 3.0 · Wikimedia Commons



LOOK FOR THIS

Look for Stradivari's richly decorated Medici cello and Bartolomeo Cristofori's first pianofortes.

» IN THE PREMIUM GUIDE

The full story of this stop (twice the text), its «ONE FACT» box and all 7 stops of the route, one by one.

Practical tips

Best times

Book the first slot of the morning (8:15) or the last of the afternoon: the David is far more enjoyable without the midday crowds. Avoid weekends and public holidays if you can.

Buy your ticket in advance

The Accademia is one of the most visited museums in Italy and the queue without a booking can be very long, especially from spring to autumn. Buying your ticket online and choosing your time slot lets you enter at your hour through the pre-booked access, with almost no wait. Book through the official sales channel and arrive a few minutes early.

Getting in free

On the first Sunday of every month admission is free for everyone (no time slot to book, first come first served, so arrive early). It's also free on 25 April, 2 June and 4 November, and under-18s always get in free; check the official calendar.

With children

It's a short, striking museum, ideal for little ones: the David fascinates them with its size and the Prisoners 'trapped in the stone' spark plenty of imagination. In a good hour you'll see it without them tiring; they usually like the musical instruments room.

Accessibility and services

The museum is wheelchair accessible, and people with disabilities (plus one companion) get in free; it's best to notify or book through the official channel. There's a cloakroom for leaving backpacks—compulsory for large items—and toilets; there's no café inside, but the area is full of spots for a break on the way out.

Combine it

It's 5 minutes from the Duomo and right next to the Museum of San Marco (Fra Angelico's frescoes). Many visitors chain the Accademia + Duomo in the morning, or buy the combined Accademia + Bargello ticket. Leave the Uffizi for another day so you don't overload yourself.

Practical info

Guide information (always check on the official website galleriaaccademiafirenze.it). Address: Via Ricasoli 58/60, Florence. Price: general admission €16 (+ €4 booking fee if you buy online or by phone); reduced €2 for EU citizens aged 18 to 25. Combined Accademia + Bargello National Museum ticket €26 (valid 48 h). Free for under-18s, on the first Sunday of every month and on certain special days (25 April, 2 June and 4 November); on free days there's no booking: entry is first come, first served. Hours: Tuesday to Sunday from 8:15 to 18:50 (last entry at 18:20). Closed: every Monday, 1 January and 25 December. Booking a time slot is highly recommended (all but essential in high season) through the official sales channel (B-Ticket); choose your day and entry time when you buy. Prices and hours can change: confirm them before you go.

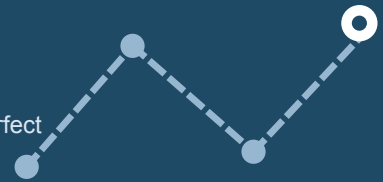
Official website: www.galleriaaccademiafirenze.it

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THE COMPLETE VERSION

Take the complete visit

With this free guide you already cover the essentials. The PREMIUM is your complete visit to Galleria dell'Accademia: every work with its story, a 3-step looking guide for every painting, the cheat-sheet for your phone and the tips to skip the queues. For less than the price of a coffee.

In the free guide you miss out on:

- 3 The unfinished Saint Matthew**
Gallery of the Prisoners · 8 min
- 5 The Florentine Gothic painting gallery**
Painting rooms (gold grounds) · 15 min
- 7 The Gipsoteca Bartolini**
19th-century Hall (Gipsoteca) · 12 min

PREMIUM Guide · Galleria dell'Accademia

€4.99

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- ✓ All 7 works (the free guide has only 4), each with its story.
- ✓ «What it represents» and «How to look at it» in 3 steps: a looking guide for every painting.
- ✓ The «Route on one page» cheat-sheet for your phone, plus 1-, 2- and 3-hour routes.
- ✓ The timeline, the keys, the artist bios and a glossary to understand it all.
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If the guide doesn't help on your visit, write to us and we'll refund the €4.99. No questions asked.

For comparison: a guided tour costs €30-60 per person. This guide walks you through with the same detail, everyone travelling with you can use it, and it's yours forever.

Still no ticket? Book skip-the-line

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» **Check availability and prices**

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