

**GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY
ROBINSON COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY**

PISA

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Pisa, renowned worldwide for its Leaning Tower, definitely deserves more than the usual day stop which traditionally occurs on tourist routes. The city boasts an ancient history which was at its most splendid during the era of the Marine Republic. For tourists, Pisa is a treasure chest full of surprises; from the bright Lungarni quays walled by noble buildings, to the web of narrow, medieval alleys leading to the famous Piazza dei Miracoli. Home of Galileo Galilei, Pisa is today an important university city and offers a lively student lifestyle.

Campo dei Miracoli. One of the most famous and admired squares in the world, it was requested by the city government at a time when Pisa was at its most splendid. It is formed by a complex of four buildings, constructed by the most genial architects of that era in a uniquely recognizable Pisan Romanesque style, which sees alternating rows of white and greenish-gray stone.

The Duomo was built between the 11th and 12th centuries, but was later subject to various restructuring work, especially after the great fire of 1595. The facade forms a scenic backdrop, with four rows of columns and decorations in colored marble on the lower part. All the external surfaces are emphasized by the horizontal rows of black and white, with a beautiful elliptical dome of clear Islamic influence. The interior forms a Latin cross, divided into five naves by heavy granite columns. The sight is incredible, thanks to the geometric decorations of polychrome marble and the seventeenth-century coffered ceiling. The original decorations were almost all destroyed during the fire of 1595. A masterpiece of Italian Gothic sculpture from the fourteenth-century remains, the beautiful Giovanni Pisano pulpit, as well as the apse mosaic.

The Leaning Tower represents one of the symbols of Italy around the world. Designed as a bell-tower for the cathedral, work began in 1174 based on a project by Bonanno Pisano. It was completed in the 14th century. The round tower is composed of a base with blind arches supporting six loggia tiers that culminate in an elegant bell chamber. The ground already began to show signs of subsidence in 1185 which caused the works to come to a halt for almost a century. In 1990 its gradient reached a worrying 4.5 meters and the tower was closed for restoration work. It was reopened to the public in 2001, after eleven years of difficult work on the building and the ground underneath, reducing the tower's gradient by 40 cm and bringing it back within safety standards. Visiting hours vary from season to season. Tours can take a maximum of 40 people accompanied by authorized staff. Tickets can be purchased from the ticket office near the Leaning Tower or on the "Opera Primaziale" website www.opapisa.it.

The Baptistery. Work began in 1152 on the construction of a new baptistry, which blends well with the cathedral in terms of position, size, materials and style. Construction lasted until the end of the fourteenth-century and included the work of various architects, explaining the Romanesque and Gothic mix in the monument. The shape of the baptistry had to evoke that of the Holy Sepulcher. In the 12th century, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano changed the original building, completing it with a crown of arches and pinnacles. Inside, one can admire the beautiful baptismal font and, near the altar, the pulpit, the work of the great Nicola Pisano.

Santa Maria della Spina. This small church on the banks of the Arno is an extraordinary gem from Gothic Pisa. The name derives from the fact that a thorn from the crown of Jesus Christ has been preserved here for centuries, now exhibited in the Church of Saint Chiara. The church is covered in dual-colored marble rows and decorated with elegant spires, tympanums and tabernacles. The rich sculpture decoration was carried out by important fourteenth-century Pisan sculptors. Inside, one finds the statue of Andrea Pisano.

Church of San Paolo a Ripa d'Arno. This beautiful church was built between the 9th and 10th centuries and is one of the most splendid examples of Pisan Romanesque architecture in existence. It was recently renovated and restored to its original shape. Inside, the church is huge with three naves with heavy granite columns and capitals featuring archaic figures; it hosts various works of art from medieval times. The beautiful Chapel of Sant'Agata is located beside the church. It dates back to the 11th century and has a unique octagonal shape.

San Michele in Borgo It was built between the 10th and 11th centuries in a transition style of Pisan Romanesque and Gothic architecture. The beautiful facade above the trusses hosts three rows of arches, a rose window and a tabernacle with statues dating from the fourteenth century. Inside, the three considerably sized naves are divided by columns and pillars and the church contains various works of art.

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San Zeno Abbey Reopened in 2000 following intense restoration work, this abbey hosts contemporary art exhibitions and concerts. San Zeno Abbey is unusual in its curious mix of architectural styles and orientation, as is easily noted by its facade. The facade has an ornate Romanesque geometrical design.

The Palazzo Reale National Museum was prepared in 1989 to host numerous works of art belonging to the successive courts of the city government, including the Medici, Lorena and Savoia courts, as well as some private collections. The location is one of the most important buildings in the city, the official residence of the Medici and Lorena courts, and today continues to maintain the appearance of an aristocratic residence, with fittings and furniture from the 17-19th centuries. The works exposed offer great variety: from official portraits of the courts to historic armors, right up to the Antonio Ceci collection with Italian and Flemish paintings.

The San Matteo National Museum hosts works originating from the main churches in the city and territory. The collection includes paintings, sculptures and ceramics. The medieval collection is very impressive with around two hundred paintings dating from the beginning of the XII to the sixteenth-century, with names such as Giunta Pisano, Simone Martini, Masaccio and Beato Angelico among the many artists.

Museum of Ancient Ships in Pisa. In 1998, during the works carried out in the area around Pisa San Rossore Station, the remains of the ancient port in Pisa were brought to light. At a depth of circa 5 meters, an impressive series of wrecks placed one on top of the other emerged, dating from between the end of the Hellenistic Period and the Late Roman Period. The Permanent Exhibition of Ancient Ships will be hosted in the ancient Medicei Arsenals, on Lungarno Simonelli. Currently, the exhibition is closed due to restructuring work on the arsenals and the restoration of the ships. Opening is scheduled by the end of 2006.

Piaggio Museum, in Pontedera. In three thousand square meters of exhibition you can admire the Vespa, Piaggio and Gilera collections. The most important part of the museum is the Vespa collection, with its 50 years of production. As well as the first prototypes, you can admire gems such as the Vespa "Montlhéry" and the Vespa "Siluro", two speed models, and unique models such as the "Vespa Dali", designed by the Catalan artist in '62. As well as the Vespas, all the transport vehicles produced over the one hundred and ten years of Piaggio history are on show.

The Camposanto Monumentale was founded in 1277 and completed in 1464. This cemetery is a cloister of vast galleries around the central area, which according to legend contains the "holy soil" from Palestine brought here by Pisan crusaders. Towards the middle of the fifteenth century, the Camposanto contained one of the largest painting series of its time: the walls were entirely covered in frescos, however they were destroyed following ally bombings during the Second World War.

The Jewish Cemetery is located within Piazza dei Miracoli and dates back to 1648. It is one of the oldest Hebrew cemeteries in Europe. The inscriptions on the tombs are not only in Hebrew, but also in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German and Czech. The cemetery presents an extraordinary historical artistic repertoire: from the parallelepiped burial mounds of Hebrew tradition dating from 17th to 18th centuries to the Liberty styles dating from the 19th and 20th centuries.

The beautiful **Piazza dei Cavalieri** was the political center of the Pisan Republic. During the 16th century it was radically transformed by Giorgio Vasari on the wishes of Cosimo I De Medici and became the seat of the new military order known as the Knights of St. Stephen. The center of the square is dominated by a statue of Cosimo I de Medici. The square hosts the Palazzo della Carovana dei Cavalieri, whose facade is completely covered in graffiti, and today hosts the Scuola Normale Superiore. Located on the left, the Palazzo dell'Orologio, an age-old hospital of the Order of Knights of St. Stephen, whose construction incorporated two pre-existing towers. One of these was where Count Ugolino and his sons were left to die of hunger following their suspected treason, as recalled by Dante Alighieri in his Inferno. Still in the square, one can find the Church of Saint Stephen of the Knights, a building designed by Giorgio Vasari, with a splendid marble facade. The interior of the church is covered by an impressive ceiling in engraved and gold painted wood. The church also hosts trophies of flags and parts of ships taken from the Turks during sea patrols carried out by the Knights. The south side of the square hosts the monumental facade of the Palazzo del Consiglio dei Dodici. The building, designed by Vasari, was restored in 1603 and has a noble facade decorated in white marble.

The "Lungarni" Quays. For centuries these quays were the heart of the city. Until the nineteenth century they were covered with piers and docks. These were later destroyed to reinforce the banks. The "Lungarni" are presented as a succession of beautiful noble buildings, interrupted by five bridges that unite the city. Mezzo Bridge, the most

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central, hosts the Game of the Bridge each June. You can admire some of the remarkable buildings while walking along the river. On Lungarno Mediceo: Palazzo Schiff, Palazzo Concioni and Palazzo Toscanelli; on Lungarno Pacinotti: Palazzo Agostani Venerosi, which hosts the age-old Caffé dell'Ussero; on Lungarno Galileo Galilei: Palazzo Lanfranchi, seat of the Municipality, Palazzo da Scorno, Palazzo Pretorio and Palazzo Gambacorti, in Pisan Gothic style.

The Mural by Keith Haring Keith Haring (1958 - 1990) was a young American artist who was known worldwide for his "Subway Drawings". Pisa's mural, measuring 180 meters, can be found on a wall in the Sant'Antonio Convent near Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. It is Haring's only work to have been planned from the beginning as a permanent work and is entitled: "Tuttomondo". The thirty characters featured in the mural move in a blend of metaphor that represents harmony and peace around the world.

Pisan craft is renowned for leather goods, shoes, terracotta, wooden furniture and naturally, food. You will find **Piazza delle Vettovaglie** in the heart of the medieval city. It is surrounded by an elegant sixteenth-century portico, which has always been the location of a colorful daily market. As well as the stalls in the square, the surrounding picturesque alleys offer the possibility of buying renowned Pisan specialties. Crossing Via delle Colonne you arrive to Borgo Stretto, one of the most beautiful streets in the city, with wonderful porticos. It is the heart of shopping in Pisa. You can then cross Mezzo Bridge and continue on to Corso Italia, another great shopping address in the city. Each second weekend of the month, except July and August, the streets around Piazza dei Cavalieri becomes a great open market. The Antiques Market in Pisa is one of the most interesting in Italy because Pisa is home to plenty of furniture manufacturers, shops and restorers.