

# The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

## Our top 15 Insider Tips



### INSIDER TIP ▶ Milan's Michelangelo

In the Castello Sforzesco, in the heart of the city is Michelangelo Buonarroti's unfinished sculpture Pietà Rondanini. With its upright composition it was very innovative work for an 80-year old man → p. 40

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Cappuccino and design

Post-industrial Milan: in the Bovisa district – which was an industrial area up until the 1990s – people now meet up in places such as the hip bistro at the Triennale Bovisa, the new exhibition venue for contemporary art and design → p. 52

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Milan from above

Impressive views from the Torre Branca in the Parco Sempione: on clear days – rare in Milan – you can see all the way to the Alps, but even if it is not clear you will always have panoramic views of the city's ever growing skyline → p. 42

### INSIDER TIP ▶ The rich colours of the Renaissance

The Renaissance artist Bernardino Luini painted the walls of the San Maurizio church in beautifully coloured frescoes. The patron was the Bentivoglio family and they are depicted in various scenes along with the biblical figures → p. 44

### INSIDER TIP ▶ World Heritage on the Adda River

The well-preserved historical workers' village of Crespi d'Adda has been declared a Unesco Site → p. 95

### INSIDER TIP ▶ The last resting place

The who's who of Milan have their final resting place in the Cimitero Monumentale cemetery with its Famedio (hall of fame) from the 19th century → p. 48

### INSIDER TIP ▶ The banker's chapel

The Portinari Chapel at the Basilica Sant' Eustorgio was commissioned by a representative of the Milanese branch of the Medici bank → p. 47

### INSIDER TIP ▶ First hand experience of the fashion scene

Bar Martini, in the Dolce & Gabbana men's boutique, is the liveliest 'cat-walk' in the city, but also ideal for a relaxed lunch → p. 53

### INSIDER TIP ▶ City history at a glance

Pettinaroli have been selling prints, maps, beautiful cityscapes of old Milan and nostalgic postcards for 130 years (photo left) → p. 66

### INSIDER TIP ▶ The Brescia wine region

Erbusco is the centre of the Franciacorta region, on the southern shores of Lake Iseo, with wines and *spumanti* at vintner prices (photo below) → p. 98

### INSIDER TIP ▶ A look behind the scenes

The set designs and costumes for the La Scala operas are produced in a renovated building that was once used as a steelworks factory → p. 37

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Rice, as far as the eye can see

A very different side to Italy: drive through the rice paddies of Lomellina. Risotto fans can stop off and buy directly from the farmers → p. 104

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Feast of St Ambrose

The opera season opens at the La Scala, and the locals gather around the market stalls of the Festival of Oh Bej oh Bej! → p. 109

### INSIDER TIP ▶ Art and culinary delights in Varese

The Villa Panza not only houses the world class contemporary art collection of art patron Giuseppe Panza di Biumo, but also has an excellent restaurant → p. 106

### INSIDER TIP ▶ The home of a sewing machine manufacturer

The stylish Villa Necchi Campiglio, with its 1930s art deco design, is situated in a particularly beautiful part of the city centre → p. 49



# BEST OF ...

## GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

FOR FREE

### ● **Aquarium**

The impressive art nouveau façade of the venerable *Aquarium* in Parco Sempione is decorated in sculptures and mosaics of fantastic sea creatures and once inside you will find out all about the creatures that thrive in the depths of the northern Italian lakes and the mountain streams of the Lombardian Alps → p. 38

### ● **Temporary Art**

The cultural foundations of the large fashion houses no longer present their exciting art exhibitions in permanent exhibition halls, but rather as *temporary events* usually in interesting places that are urbane and rich in association → p. 41

### ● **Beautiful view of the cathedral**

The cathedral roof, with its fairytale-like stone forest of Gothic spires and turrets, seems close enough to touch from the roof terrace of the *department store La Rinascente*, where you walk around for free → p. 74

### ● **Organ concerts**

Organ concerts in the churches of Milan have become very popular in recent years and the concert series, *Cantatibus Organis*, invites people to free concerts (which will hopefully continue despite the financial crisis) → p. 74

### ● **Modern art in Bergamo**

Thanks to generous donations by numerous private art collectors Bergamo's *Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea* has a fantastic collection of contemporary Italian art → p. 96

### ● **A museum just for shoes**

During the 1970s and 1980s Vigevano was the world capital of shoes. Here in the *Museo Internazionale della Calzatura* you can admire shoes worn by Renaissance princesses, Hollywood celebrities and popes (photo) → p. 96, 106



●●● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of ...' tips

## ONLY IN MILAN

Unique experiences

### ● **Teatro alla Scala**

The highlight of the city's social scene is the opening of the opera season which takes place in the world famous theatre on 7 December. Just how emblematic the name La Scala is for the city is shown in the way the Milanese refer to their football stadium, San Siro, as the 'La Scala of football' (photo) → p. 37



### ● **Basilica Sant'Ambrogio**

The city's spiritual heart beats in this wonderful Romanesque church where families wait patiently for a date to have their children baptised or to get married. When the Bishop holds a sermon here the church is filled to capacity and the Milanese recover from the stresses of worldly matters → p. 44

### ● **Triennale Design Museum**

Everyone knows the Sacco beanbag by the furniture brand Zanotto, the Pago Pago reversible plastic vase by Enzo Mari, or the comical, brightly coloured shelves of Ettore Sottsass. All these iconic and playful items of Italian design can be viewed in the Design Museum → p. 42

### ● **Residential palaces as museums**

Many noble residential palaces – which reflect the Milanese bourgeoisie lifestyle in their architecture, their furniture and their art collections – have been turned into museums such as the *Poldi Pezzoli* → p. 36

### ● **Quadrilatero della Moda**

A stroll around the Via Monte Napoleone, Via Spiga, Via Manzoni and Via Sant'Andrea, shows that Milan is a fashion metropolis on par with New York and Paris: this district is packed with exclusive boutiques! → p. 34

### ● **Cotoletta alla Milanese**

The crumbed veal cutlet dish is the epitome of Milanese cuisine, along with its saffron risotto, and it is especially good at *Le Vigne* → p. 57

ONLY IN

# THE PERFECT DAY

## Milan in 24 hours

### 09:00am BREAKFAST WITH A CATHEDRAL VIEW

Have a breakfast cappuccino in the **Zucca Campari** → p. 53 (photo left) at the entrance of the magnificent Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II shopping arcade. The sight of the vast cathedral square bustling people and the delicate, luminous stone of the **cathedral** → p. 30 will set the right tone for an intensive day in Milan.



### 09:45am STROLL THROUGH THE ARCADES TO LA SCALA

No visit to Milan would be complete without viewing Leonardo da Vinci's 'The Last Supper' in the refectory of the Santa Maria delle Grazie church. As this is only possible after making an appointment, organise your day around your appointment. If it is during the morning you can go for a walk through the **Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II** → p. 34 on the Piazza della Scala with its world famous **opera house** → p. 37. By now the cashier should be open and you may be able to snag a ticket for the evening performance, even at such short notice. The Via Santa Margherita will

take you to the Piazza Cordusio; from there you go down along the lovely pedestrian road Via Dante, which leads to the Castello Sforzesco and crosses Via

Meravigli, from where you can take the no. 16 tram to go up Corso Magenta.

### 10:30am 'THE LAST SUPPER' AND A SNACK

Get off at the station Santa Maria delle Grazie to view the **'The Last Supper'** → p. 43. Afterwards take a short walk to Milan's sacred heart, the ancient **Basilica di Sant' Ambrogio** → p. 44. The Università Cattolica is just around the corner, and the area is full of student life and snack bars for an afternoon snack.

### 02:00pm CASTLE AND PARK

Everything is within walking distance so after your lunch break it will only take you about ten minutes to get to the huge **Castello Sforzesco** → p. 39 (photo right). If you want to, you can spend



Get to know some of the most dazzling, exciting and relaxing facets of Milan – all in a single day

a whole day in the castle's museums. Behind the castle the beautiful city park, **Parco Sempione** → p. 41 stretches out, it is wonderful for a walk around but also has quite a few tourist attractions. Most notably the **Triennale Design Museum** → p. 42 with a café just waiting for you and your next break.

### 04:30pm BRERA, THE ARTISTS' QUARTER

East of the Castello is the Brera district, one of the nicest districts in Milan, with beautiful residential streets, quaint cafés, shops and art galleries and the **Pinacoteca di Brera** → p. 41 and its important collection of paintings. The old photos in the traditional bar **Jamaica** (Via Brera 32) recall the district's good old days as an artists' quarter.



### 05:45pm SHOPPING IN THE FASHION DISTRICT

The late afternoon – after all, shops only close at 8pm – is perfect for you to explore **Quadrilatero** → p. 60 fashion district. It is just a few steps to the Via Manzoni and at no. 31 you will find Milan's fashion king, Giorgio Armani's superstore with a shop, restaurant, café and hotel. Then enjoy your aperitif – the highlight of any Milanese's day – in the **Bar Martini** → p. 53 in Dolce & Gabbana's flagship store.

### 08:15pm DINNER ON THE CANAL

For the evening you have the choice between the restaurants along the canals in the picturesque **Navigli district** → p. 45 (photo above) – ideal for a balmy summer evening – or the more alternative restaurants on the **Via Savona** in the Tortona district towards the north or those in the lively Corso di Porta Ticinese.

### 10:15pm MILAN NIGHTLIFE

If you crave excitement after dinner, and do not have tickets to La Scala, you can jump right into the Milanese nightlife. The best place to start is at the clubs on the **Corso Sempione** at the Parco Sempione or on the **Corso Como** north of the centre at Porta Garibaldi.



In the city centre everything is within easy walking distance and if needs be a station or taxi is never far away.