



4 MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE – 1.4 km

From the Garage we head towards the [Ponte Vecchio](#) and pass into the northern area of the river, the oldest one where Roman Florence arose in the 1st century BC

After crossing the bridge we realize that the buildings near us are modern, in fact rebuilt after the Second World War because they were destroyed by Nazi bombs. However, as soon as we enter the first district on the left, [Borgo SS.Apostoli](#), here we are immersed in medieval Florence. Walking with your nose upwards you can in fact admire the 12th and 13th century tower houses, home to rich Florentine families. At the entrance to the road there is the [torre dei Baldovinetti](#) and then [the tower-houses of the Buondelmonti](#), located by [Dante](#) in the Paradise of his [Commedia](#). Continuing on, a small square opens up on the left, called [piazza del Limbo](#), where in the early Middle Ages, unbaptized infants were buried. Here stands the [chiesa dei SS.Apostoli](#), dating perhaps in the time of Charlemagne. A simple Romanesque facade that matches the simplicity of the interior, embellished by a Renaissance portal like some of the internal chapels, decorated in the Renaissance by the families of [Acciaiuoli](#) and above all of [Altoviti](#), whose building is attached to the church and shows the coat of arms with the rampant dog. Continuing through Borgo Ss. Apostoli you arrive at the [column of justice](#), erected in 1570 to honor the appointment of [Cosimo I de Medici](#) to grand duke of Tuscany. On our left one of the oldest private buildings in the city: [Palazzo Spini-Feroni-Ferragamo](#), now home to the design section of the famous brand's fashion collections. However, the building dates back to the end of the thirteenth century and has splendid Baroque frescoes inside. In front of it the [church of SS.Trinita](#), showing the its Renaissance facade created by [Buontalenti](#) in the mid-sixteenth century, while at its inside you can see the simplicity of the Romanesque accompanied by splendid frescoes of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Among all, the last chapel on the right in the transept stands out: the [cappella Sassetti](#), frescoed by [Ghirlandaio](#) in the 1480s with scenes from the life of St. Francis. [Francesco Sassetti](#) had himself, his wife, family and friends painted of him by confusing them in the stories of the saint's life. Francesco and his wife Nera are kneeling on the sides of the altarpiece and their elegant black porphyry sarcophagi inserted into the side walls of the chapel.

Leaving the church and walking north [via Tornabuoni](#), you meet many other Renaissance palaces, including the majestic [palazzo Strozzi](#), which began around to 1486, today home to interesting contemporary exhibitions. At the end of the street stands the simple but elegant [palazzo Antinori](#), again today owned by the same family and headquarters of their business. The [Antinori](#) have in fact been producers of wine since the mid-fourteenth century and are today the largest owners of land cultivated with vines in the world. Inside the building you can taste the production in the refined [Cantinetta Antinori](#). Taking the street to the left of the building, you will arrive in a few minutes in the [Piazza di Santa Maria Novella](#) where the homonymous church stands. The [Basilica of Santa Maria Novella](#) was begun at the end of the thirteenth century and became one of the most important monasteries of the city and cultural center entrusted to the Dominican fathers. The majestic facade was built in the second half of the fifteenth century by [Leon Battista Alberti](#) and was commissioned by the wealthy banker and scholar [Giovanni Rucellai](#). Its name and date stand out in Latin in the upper part of the facade itself, demonstrating the role that [Rucellai](#) occupied in Florentine society. The church and its convent now house a splendid museum with works by [Giotto](#), [Masaccio](#), [Ghirlandaio](#) and [Paolo Uccello](#). Leaving the church and taking via della Scala, one also arrives at the Pharmacy of [Santa Maria Novella](#), managed today by private individuals, but born as a convent workshop for the production of medicines, perfumes and liqueurs. The production is still based on the original recipes today. (Free Entrance)

