



## 5 THE OLTRARNO AND THE CAPITAL OF FLORENCE – 1,0 Km

A few minutes away from the Ponte Vecchio garage stands the majestic [palazzo Pitti](#), built for the banker [Luca Pitti](#) in the mid-fifteenth century and enlarged in later times both by [Medici family](#) and by [Lorena](#) [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casato\\_di\\_Lorena](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casato_di_Lorena).

The palace was bought around 1555 by [Eleonora di Toledo](#), wife of the Duke [Cosimo I](#), who wanted their children to be provided with a residence suitable for their rank. It was Eleonora who called the first architects to enlarge the building and create the garden behind her. The palace passed to the [Lorena](#) when the Medici dynasty died out and subsequently to the Savoy who lived there until the 1920s. The interior of the palace is divided into several museums. It is advisable to start from the ground floor and from the Medici treasure, housed in the summer apartment of [Ferdinando II Medici](#), who wanted it richly frescoed in the mid-seventeenth century. Rich frescoes also decorate the ceilings of the [galleria Palatina](#) on the first floor, as well to which we can admire paintings by [Raffaello](#), [Tiziano](#) and [Rubens](#), to name only the most famous. In the building it is also possible to visit the [Modern Art Gallery](#) [on the second floor, full of 19th and early 20th century Italian painters, among which the group of Macchiaioli](#) and the [costume museum](#) a>, the first Italian museum to deal with fashion. With another ticket you can enter the [Giardino di Boboli](#), with the its caves, fountains and amphitheater. From [Giardino di Boboli](#), using the same ticket, you can also the visit of the [Giardino Bardini](#), donated to the state by a famous Florentine antique dealer , which offers one of the most beautiful views of the city.

Florence became the capital of Italy for six years, from 3 February 1865 to 3 February 1871. [Palazzo Vecchio](#) welcomed the Chamber of Deputies (in the [salone dei Cinquecento](#) ) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the [Uffizi](#) the Senate of the Kingdom; [Palazzo Medici Riccardi](#) the Presidency of the Council and the Ministry of the Interior.

King Vittorio Emanuele II of Savoy, chose as private rooms of the [Palazzo Pitti](#) the side of the sundial, which allowed freedom of movement and also privacy when exiting and entering the building.

From [piazza Pitti](#) you enter the Sdrucchiolo di Pitti (sdrucchiolo in Tuscan means: small road going downhill with danger of slipping) to arrive, always going straight, to < a href='https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piazza\_Santo\_Spirito' target='\_blank' data-action='frame'>piazza Santo Spirito, a noisy square, full of life and clubs, much loved by the Florentines. Here stands the [Basilica di Santo Spirito](#) with its simple white facade . It is one of the Florentine Renaissance churches that has best preserved that character of simplicity, austerity and mathematical rigor, even if the project by [Brunelleschi](#) was partly changed during construction. The museum next to the church houses the wooden Crucifix, an early work by [Michelangelo](#), who came to dissect corpses right in the convent at the age of 15.

On the opposite side of the church, take a right to continue towards [piazza del Carmine](#), where the homonymous church stands. The [Basilica del Carmine](#) is one of the five great Florentine churches started at the end of the thirteenth century, but was partially destroyed by a fire in 1700. The internal decoration dates back to the eighteenth-century reconstruction, except for the [cappella Brancacci](#) (for visits, enter to the right of the church). Masterpiece by [Masaccio](#) and [Masolino](#), the chapel was begun in 1424 and never completed due to the exile inflicted on its client. Despite this, the frescoes were preserved with great care over the centuries as evidence of early Renaissance painting characterized by great realism and the perfect use of mathematical perspective