



## Venice Revisited

From prison to *palazzo*: art and life in historic Venice

**6–11 November 2026 (MM 229)**

6 days

Speaker: Dr Susan Steer

A deeper exploration of Venice for the seasoned traveller; see treasures which are lesser-known, rarely accessible or simply off the beaten track.

Access to many is by special arrangement; some are still in private hands. Also an after-hours visit to the Basilica di San Marco.

Includes visits to the islands of Murano, San Lazzaro degli Armeni and Lazzaretto Nuovo.

This is a tour for those who are familiar with the main buildings and museums of Venice and who now want to explore some of the lesser-known places. 'Lesser-known' does not imply less beautiful or interesting; the riches of Venice are so profuse that few visitors, even the most regular, have seen all that is worth seeing.

A glance at the itinerary will show that some of the places are by no means obscure, merely a little off the beaten track or difficult to get into. Others are indeed alluringly arcane. But perhaps the greatest attraction of the tour is that there will be several visits to places not generally open to the public. Some are private institutions, or we visit places outside of their usual opening hours; all are accessible only by special arrangement.

There will also be some free time in which to revisit places not included on the tour or just to relax.

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Fly at c. 7.45am from London Heathrow to Venice (British Airways). Cross the lagoon by *motoscafo* (water-taxi); luggage is transported separately by porters. Visit the Scuola di S. Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Carpaccio's stories of saints).

**Day 2.** The morning walk looks at the identity and social make-up of the Castello *sestiere*. See Sta. Maria della Pietà, one of the orphanages renowned as centres of musical excellence, where Vivaldi was director of music. Outstanding Renaissance paintings are seen in San Giovanni in Bragora (Cima da Conegliano's *Baptism*). In the afternoon head off the beaten track for a guided tour of the Ghetto and its synagogues

**Day 3.** Avoid the busiest of the daily crowds by heading early to the supremely beautiful



Venice, Rialto Bridge, aquatint c. 1830.

Palazzo Ducale; where we visit areas only seen by special arrangement, and prison cells rub shoulders with the Doge's apartments. In the afternoon visit the Fondazione Querini Stampaglia, and an art restoration laboratory. After-hours visit to the Basilica di San Marco where the mosaic-encrusted interior is illuminated exclusively for your benefit.

**Day 4.** Visit the great Franciscan church of Sta. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari with outstanding artworks including Titian's *Assumption*. The Venetian State Archives are the repository of a millennium of history, stored on some 60km of shelving (special arrangement). See also the Scuola Grande dei Carmini one of Venice's confraternities with paintings by Tiepolo. There is some free time in the afternoon.

**Day 5.** Head in the direction of the Lido by *motoscafo* to visit San Lazzaro, the Armenian monastery island and temporary residence of Lord Byron. Continue to Lazzaretto Nuovo, originally a Benedictine monastery which became a quarantine station for maritime travellers. Cross again to the glass-making island of Murano by private *motoscafo* to see SS. Maria e Donato, with 12th-century mosaics and pavement, and S. Pietro Martire, with paintings by Bellini and Tintoretto.

**Day 6.** Cross the *bacino* to the island of San Giorgio Maggiore to see the church, cloisters

and conventual buildings of the Benedictine monastery. Here is the Fondazione Giorgio Cini, an impressive cultural centre. Travel by *motoscafo* to Venice airport and fly to London Heathrow, arriving c. 7.15pm.

*The tour is dependent on the kindness of many individuals and organisations, some of whom are reluctant to make arrangements far in advance, so the order of visits outlined above may change and there may be substitutions for some places mentioned.*

### Lecturer

Dr Susan Steer is an Art historian specialising in Venice. Her MA concentrated on the city's art and architecture and her PhD on Venetian Renaissance altarpieces. As post-doctoral researcher with the University of Glasgow and Neil MacGregor scholar at the National Gallery, she worked as a researcher and editor on the National Inventory of European Painting, the UK's online catalogue of European paintings. She has extensive experience of teaching History of Art for university programmes in the UK and Italy. Susan taught for the

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University of Warwick in Venice and is now the Venice representative for the British charity, the Venice in Peril Fund.

## Practicalities

**Included:** travel between Venice Airport and the hotel by private water-taxi; a *vaporetto* pass for the duration of the tour; luggage portage between the airport and the hotel; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and three dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, porters, guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Hotel Splendid, Venice** (starhotels.com): delightful 4-star hotel situated half-way between Piazza San Marco and the Rialto bridge. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** The nature of Venice means that the city is more often than not traversed on foot. There is a lot of walking along the flat, and also up and down bridges. Standing around in museums and churches is also unavoidable. Uneven ground and irregular paving are standard. A good level of fitness is essential. The tour should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing.

**Group size:** between 8 and 18 participants.

*Details for combining this tour with Monteverdi in Venice, 12–17 November 2026, will be available shortly.*