



## Turin at Christmas

Palaces, porticos & piazze

**21–28 December 2026 (MM 267)**

8 days

Lecturer: Dr Luca Leoncini

A grand city and major cultural centre unaccountably neglected by tourists.

Great art and architecture, particularly rich in palaces.

The 5-star, family-owned hotel, located in central Turin is classified as a 'Historic Venue of Italy'.

Led by art historian Dr Luca Leoncini.

Spreading across a plain at the foot of the Alps and along the upper reaches of the River Po, the gracious, spacious capital of Piedmont takes visitors by surprise with the beauty of its location and its streetscape.

Turin was developed on a grand scale in the 17th and 18th centuries as the capital of Savoy, an independent state from the Middle Ages and a kingdom from 1720. Later exchanges of territory led to the title of Kingdom of Sardinia. In the 19th century Piedmont became administratively and industrially the most advanced state in Italy, and the springboard for the *risorgimento*. Turin was the first capital of the newly united and independent Italy (1861–65).

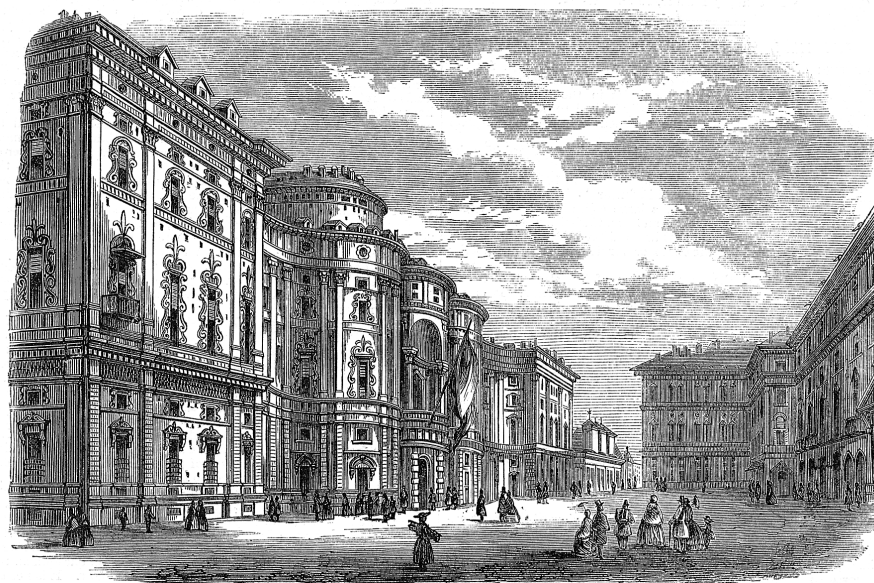
The historic centre is laid out on a regular plan with broad avenues and *piazze*. Guarino Guarini (1624–83) and Filippo Juvarra (1678–1736), among the best architects of their time, both worked here for much of their lives.

Though once a major industrial centre (a reputation which has unjustly deterred cultural tourists), this is not evident in the centre. Meanwhile, the 2006 Winter Olympics were the catalyst for an extensive programme of civic regeneration and restoration.

The proximity to the mountains not only brings visual benefits but helps to make the city one of the most agreeable in Italy in which to live. Turin now has a reputation for a high quality of life, and has repositioned itself as one of the major cultural centres in the north of the country.

### Itinerary

**Day 1:** Fly at c. 10.15am from London Heathrow to Milan Linate (British Airways). Transfer to the hotel in Turin.



Turin, Palazzo Carignano, wood engraving, 1861.

**Day 2: Turin.** Begin with Palazzo Reale, the principal royal residence, which is largely of the late 17th century but has interiors of the 18th and 19th centuries. Housed here are masterpieces from the Galleria Sabauda. After lunch a guided walk passes the Palazzo dell'Università, the metal dome and spire of the 19th century Mole Antonelliana and Piazza Vittorio Veneto.

**Day 3: Racconigi, Cherasco.** The Castello di Racconigi was one of the summer residences of the Savoys; the front overlooking the park is by Guarini (1676). Continue to Cherasco for a typical Piedmontese lunch and visit the 14th-century Visconti castle.

**Day 4, Christmas Eve: Venaria, Turin.** The Venaria Reale (Amedeo Castellamonte 1660, Juvarra 1714–28) is the largest of the suburban palaces, a magnificent complex which reopened in 2007 after comprehensive renovation. Return to Turin for a free afternoon, followed by Christmas Eve dinner.

**Day 5, Christmas Day: Turin.** Free morning, with the option of attending a church service. After Christmas lunch in a Michelin-starred restaurant, there is an afternoon walk to Consolata.

**Day 6: Stupinigi, Turin.** Visit the royal hunting

lodge at Stupinigi (Filippo Juvarra, 1730). Back in Turin, see the Palazzo Carignano with a remarkable curvaceous façade by Guarini.

**Day 7: Superga, Lingotto.** A short drive away is the Basilica di Superga, a votive church designed by Juvarra magnificently sited on a hill overlooking the city and mountains, and the burial site of the Italian Royal family. In the afternoon, see the Pinacoteca Giovanni and Marella Agnelli at Lingotto which has a small but excellent quality collection in a building designed by Renzo Piano.

**Day 8: Turin, homeward journey.** Piazza Castello is splendid, the greatest of the buildings being Palazzo Madama by Filippo

### Turin at Christmas continued

Juvarra (1721), now housing the art gallery. In the afternoon, drive to Milan Linate airport for a flight returning to Heathrow at c. 8.00pm.

### Lecturer

**Dr Luca Leoncini.** Art historian specialising in 15th-century Italian painting. His first degree and PhD were from Rome University followed by research at the Warburg Institute in London. He has published articles on the classical tradition in Italian art of the 15th century and contributed to the *Macmillan Dictionary of Art*. He has also written on Mantegna and Renaissance drawings.

### Practicalities

**Included:** private coach for excursions and transfers; accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 3 lunches and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips for waiters, drivers and guides; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Grand Hotel Silea, Turin** ([grandhotelsilea.com](http://grandhotelsilea.com)): 5-star hotel, comfortable, elegantly furnished and very central. *Single occupancy rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** The tour involves a lot of walking in town centres where vehicular access is restricted and standing in museums, and should not be attempted by anyone who has difficulty with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Average distance by coach per day: 53 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.