



10 Tips and Recommendations

A Save Vs. Splurge Guide to
Venice, Italy

1. Vaporetto vs. Water Taxi

TRANSPORTATION AROUND THE CITY



Venice (Island) is all walking paths and boating canals. There are no roads, excluding the single bridge that taxi's and buses tourists into the city from the mainland. Be prepared to do a lot of walking.

SAVE: *Vaporetto* – The Vaporetto is the ferry service used around the island by locals and tourists alike. It is the most common service used aside from a personal boat. A Single ride will run you a few euros.

SPLURGE: *Water Taxi* – Get your very own personal ride into Venice. Even more magical if you boat in during the evening; while the city is illuminated. Prices can be steep for single rides; about **90+ Euros** (steep!).

Recommendation: Save – Vaporetto – will also take you to Murano and Burano also!

TIP: Take a relaxing evening ride through the grand canal and gaze at the beautifully lit *Rialto Bridge*. **But**, wait around for a Vaporetto that has an open front area and seats. They are the best to see the sights around Venice. (And the pictures come out less shaky too!)

Extra Bonus Tip! : You can purchase a Multi- day Vaporetto ticket at the main Venice terminal (Roughly 22 Euros, depending on the season). It gives you unlimited rides throughout Venice, which will save you a goof chunk of walking (especially for tired feet after a long day). It also gives you access to Murano and Burano (Islands).

2. Good Eats

WHILE WALKING AROUND THE CITY



SAVE: You can find great food around the city just **outside** St. Marks Square; the closer you are to big sites, the higher the prices go. There are lots of little alleys throughout the city with quaint little eateries.

SPLURGE: Grab yourself a seat outside at a restaurant **within** St. Marks Square and enjoy live music, stunning views of the basilica and oodles of people watching. (Just watch out for the swarms of pigeons. Do not feed them please!)

Recommendation: Save

There is something about the intimacy of being hidden away in a little nook off the beaten path that has always appealed to me. And I have found that where the locals go, amazing food also follows.

TIP: Do not leave garbage behind, be respectful. Return glasses to vendors, they are kind enough to let you walk around the city with a glass of wine. This community runs on trust, don't ruin it for everyone else.

3. Main Land vs. Island Accommodations

YES, VENICE DOES INDEED HAVE A MAINLAND PORTION.



Save: There is a mainland portion of Venice and the island and mainland are connected by a single bridge. Accommodations are much cheaper on mainland. But a round trip on the bus to take you to the Island can run you as high as 20 Euros or more per day (watch out for tourist season prices!).

Splurge: I found the experience on the island much better as opposed to driving in. Being able to take a break away from the crowds to enjoy the view from our balcony whilst drinking some wine, was super enjoyable. As well, as being able to give those tired feet a rest. Early mornings were my favourite, chocolate croissant and a fine espresso while window watching the gentle waves billow in the canal.

Recommendation: Splurge (if you can)

Tip: For photographers and others alike, there is something magical about waking up early in a city before the crowds arrive. You get beautiful light around the city and watching the city awaken with morning routines and rituals is refreshing to observe.

4. Gondola's

A FLAT BOTTOM VENETIAN ROW BOAT



Save: If you choose a ride just outside St. Marks Square it will be much cheaper, as well as much more private and romantic (if that's what you are going for).

Splurge: The closer you get to St. Mark's Square the higher the price becomes. Expect to pay top dollar if you want a ride under the Bridge of Sighs. As well, expect maximum crowds in this area, making canals pretty full.

Tip: Most Gondola rides are a single price per group and not per individual. More people = Cheaper price.

Recommendation: Save

Fun Fact: The job of Gondolier is passed from generation to generation to maintain tradition. Only those born in Venice may practice and work as a gondolier.

5. Tickets: Doge's castle +



Save: You can purchase multi-site (cumulative) tickets just outside St. Mark's Basilica for around **24 Euros**. Or if you purchase online and pickup, most sites will give you line bypass; which will save you a ton of time while visiting.

Splurge: Full guided tours are available at a pretty penny depending on your group size. They do get you line bypass as a bonus.

Recommendation: Save & Splurge

Depending on how much information overload you would like, some guided tours are worth it for the history portion. I generally pick my battles ahead of time when I go about doing my research prior to travelling. For example, a guided tour of Bridge of Sighs is completely worth it!

6. Wine



Save: Convenience store 1+ Euro Wine: Wine is cheap and delicious all over Italy. Make sure to purchase a **Valpolicella** wine (the regional Venice wine), it is amazing. Even now i try to hunt it down in stores. I have only found a few types and most go for over 20\$'s or more back here in Canada.

Splurge: Sit down cafe/restaurant – Enjoy some wine by a canal and enjoy some people watching. Wine is always pricier served.

Recommendation: Splurge & Save!

Hey why not? Enjoy to the fullest!

7. Water Fountains

VENICE HAS MULTIPLE FOUNTAINS THAT RUN FRESH WATER.

Save: You can drink the water directly from fountains around the city (and tap water). The water is completely safe, bottled water is a tourist trap!

Splurge: Purchasing a water bottle at a convenience store is more expensive than a bottle of wine! Yay for **1 Euro** wine!

Recommendation: Save

Tip: At the beginning of your trip buy a large plastic bottle of water. Since all the fountain water is clean and drinkable, you can re-fill your bottle; No extra cost!

8. City Tours



Save: Map – Purchase a really good map on the first day of your trip at a kiosk. The ones purchased in the city are much better than the ones you can purchase ahead of time at home or online. Look for the one with 3 highlighted routes and marked major sites (seriously the best map!).

Splurge: Guided tours – Multiple companies provide guided tours throughout the city. Numerous options are available throughout the city depending on which sites you have your eyes on. But mind you, as always with guided tours, there is not a lot of time provided at each site.

Recommendation: Save

Part of the wonder of Venice is getting lost within the alleys. Go off the classic route, there is much to see! Can you find the super thin alley (only a single person's width!)? Probably the most hilarious interaction you will have crossing paths with someone coming from the other direction. I had to crouch, while the other person had to jump over; great way to share a laugh. How will you make it across?

Tip: Enjoy a day like the locals! We had the pleasure of meeting some of the locals. They told us a bit about the Venetian lifestyle. Most meals are eaten on the go, and in small quantities. The lifestyle is very much a walking one, grabbing a *Tramezzini* (fresh or hot pressed mini sandwiches) at one place and a cappuccino at another. Top off your night by enjoying some *Cicchetti* (local tapas) and walking around the city with a classic *Aperol Spritz* (the drink of Venice). Or, have a seat by the canal while sippin' your drink and watching the boats and gondola's go by.

9. Bridge of Sighs

A HISTORIC MONUMENTAL ARCH ABOVE A CANAL NEAR ST. MARK'S SQUARE



Save: A view of the Bridge of Sighs is easily accessible from the pathways. But **not** internal access. Be warned though, there will be crowds.

Splurge: As well as a view from outside, the best way to experience the history is with a guided tour through the palace and a walk through the inside of the Bridge of Sighs. If self guided, tickets are fairly priced (around **18-24 Euros**)

Recommendation: Splurge - Go Experience the History

10. Single Day Trip Vs. Multi-day

Save: A day is difficult in any city. Due to tourist crowds in the city, pick your top sites and stick to them.

Splurge: For a Multi-day trip, go for at least 3 days. You will be able to cover so much and you'll still be able to sit and relax as well. Enjoying the city at your own pace.

Recommendation: Splurge

There is something magical about seeing the city rise and go to sleep. I **personally enjoyed Venice 100% more on the island**. But I understand it's not always in the budget for everyone. Regardless I hope you all enjoy your adventure; however you choose to do it!

Note: Prices listed throughout this article may fluctuate depending on the season/inflation- These prices are accurate as of Jan 2018.