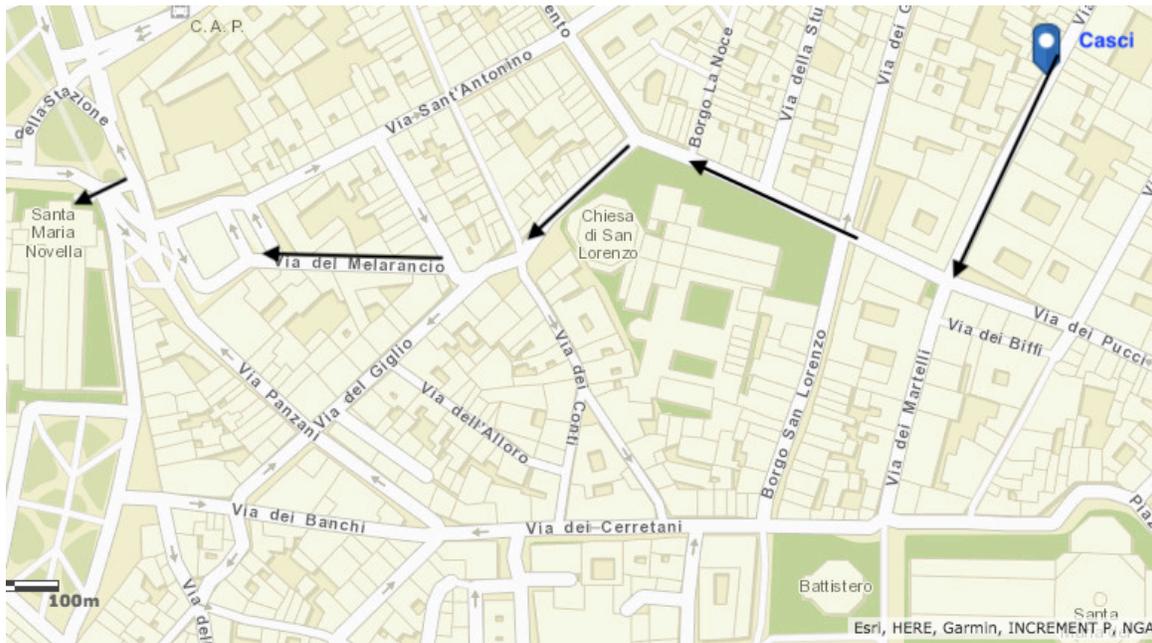


Fri, May 18 Florence, morning

It's the third day, and you maybe still haven't been inside the Duomo. It's easy to just walk by it. It's so big, so imposing. You could die inside that place and never be found. This morning ou might give yourselves an hour to check it out, or just bum around. Maybe go to the chocolate shop (Migone) and buy some panforte and panpetato. It's on Via de Calzaiuoli, walking toward Piazza della Signoria, on the right. Or go back to the Mercato Centrale and have that pork sandwich and 2 ounce glass of wine.

If you decide on Lucca (highly recommended) try to be on a train around 10:00. By the way, you can get to the train station walking through the mercato.



There's a train from Florence to Lucca that takes 1 hour 19 minutes. Try to get on that train. It's a local train. No assigned seats. It will stop 6-8 times.

Lucca is a town you walk with ease. Very fashionable. Lots of shops. I suggest you walk, stop for coffee, walk some more, stop for lunch, then get up and walk on the walls. It's an old walled city and is said, according to the New York Times, to have the best food in Tuscany. About the walls, from Visit Tuscany:

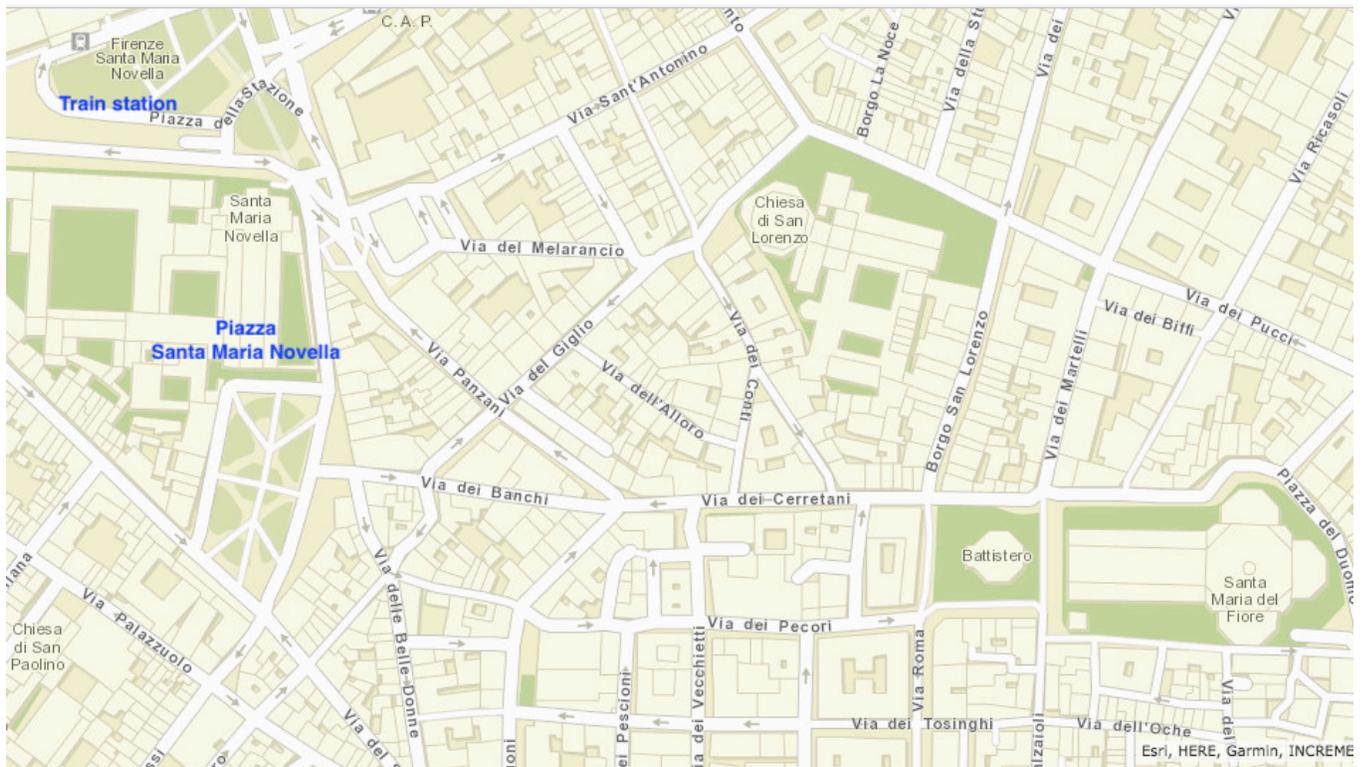
“The first [wall] was a traditional Roman square plan surrounding the city center, built around 200 BC. The second ring of walls dates back to 1100-1200, when the city's perimeter was increased on 3 sides (and the walls lost their square shape); at this point, almost all the important buildings fell within the walls. With the third ring (1400-1500), which led to the expansion of the north-east side, all the main buildings were included. Building work on the fourth circle began in 1513 and took more than a century to complete as well as involving citizens, who were forcibly recruited.”

In addition to the walls, in Lucca you will want to see the Roman amphitheater, the Guinigi Tower, and some of the 101 churches.

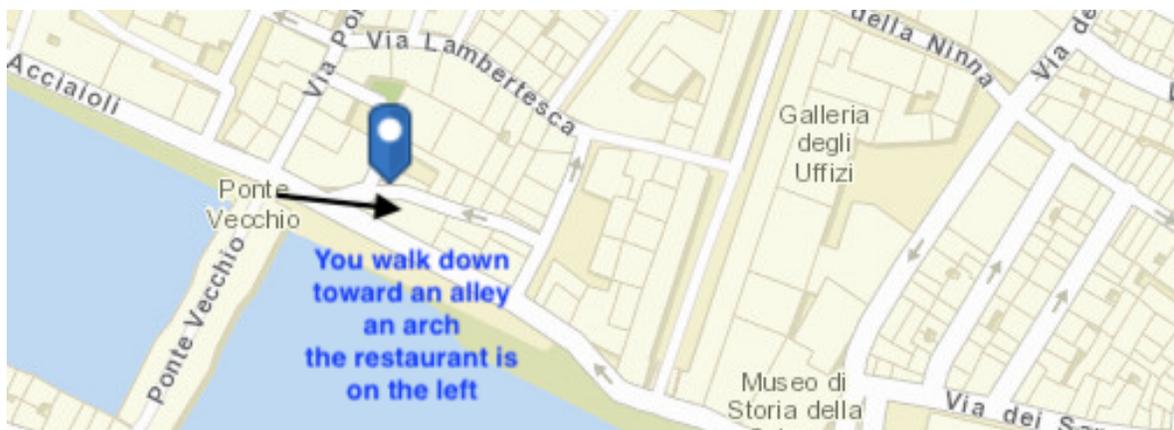


The faint blue line inside the perimeter of the city is the old wall. I suggest you enter the city, from the train station, around Porta San Pietro and walk in the direction of Piazza Napoleone, the Duomo, Torre Guinigi, Chiesa di San Michele Foro, heading for the

You'll probably want a train back to Florence around 4:00 p.m. Back in Florence, from the train station, I advise you to walk to the church and piazza of Santa Maria Novella, across the street from the station. The piazza is impressive. Look for the Duomo as your guide back to the hotel. You will no doubt have your bearings now.



For dinner this night, my recommendation is Buca del Orafo. It's the first place I ate in Florence, in 1978. And it's still good. Your reference point is the Ponte Vecchio. It will be pea season. I suggest taglierini ai piselli. No, I insist. It's a mid-blowing dish. Also maltagliati al sugo e pecorino. Also groppa scaloppata. It's a beef dish. I know, I know, don't eat the beef. If you're going to have beef, try it here. (Not the Fiorentino, the big steak.) I've eaten all these things at the Buca. Ask about what's fresh. Maybe they will have shaved artichoke appetizer. Will asparagus and wild strawberries will be in season. Also, it will be Friday. There will probably be a fish special. Be sure to have Casci make a reservation for you. Casci will be on the expensive side. But it is an experience.



Getting to the Buca:

