

TRAVEL JOANNE O'CONNOR



Take me there Milan

Why go?

The city is known for its fashion and football, but there's more to Milan than designer clothes and Serie A. It's also home to some of Italy's finest modern and contemporary art and an exciting restaurant scene. But perhaps the most compelling reason to visit is the Leonardo Da Vinci exhibition – Italy's largest ever – opening at the Palazzo Reale this spring, which promises to be an unmissable event (15 April-19 July, milanmuseumguide.com).

What to do

Once you've ticked off the big sights – the gothic Duomo (cathedral), La Scala Opera House, and the beautiful glass-domed Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II arcade – hotfoot it to the artsy Brera or Navigli districts, the best places for strolling and people-watching. Art aficionados won't want to miss the masterpieces housed in the medieval Castello Sforzesco, the Pinacoteca di Brera, and the Museo del Novecento with its collection of Italian art spanning the 19th and 20th centuries. The BikeMi cycle sharing scheme – the Milanese equivalent of “Boris bikes” (bikemi.com) – is a great way of getting around town. Head for the green spaces of the Parco Sempione to let off steam.



Under cover: Milan's colourful Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II shopping arcade

Where to stay

Ostello Bello is one of the city's best budget options with funky dorms and private rooms, and a sociable café-bar (doubles from €80, ostellobello.com).

Where to eat

A theatrical dining experience is guaranteed at Carlo e Camilla in Segheria, where Michelin-starred chef Carlo Cracco serves up inventive food at a single communal table in an

artfully distressed former sawmill (carloecamillainsegheria.it).

Insider tip

“The best cappuccino in Milan can be found at the Bastianello café (via Borgogna 5),” says Alice Salvagnin of Milan Private Tours (milanprivatetours.com). “The apple and cinnamon croissants made in the patisserie are delicious, but you need to get there early as they sell out.” ■



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Give me a break



HOME

See more Lincolnshire sites for less

Many of Lincolnshire's top visitor attractions will be offering free admission over the weekend of 28-29 March. Among the places offering free admission or discounts as part of the annual Discover Lincolnshire Weekend are Lincoln Cathedral, the city's open-top sightseeing bus Tour Lincoln, Tattershall Castle and the National Centre for Craft & Design in Sleaford (visitlincolnshire.com).



AWAY

Loire Valley by bike

Walking and cycling specialist Belle France will take £150 off the price of its Loire Valley trips when two people book before the end of March. A six-night half-board easy cycling holiday around the region's vineyards and chateaux starts from £899pp, before the discount, based on two people sharing. Quote the discount code Spring15 when booking (bellefrance.com).