

VENICE

2 x 60 minute lectures can be combined with an armchair tour of FLORENCE (SEE ABOVE) Since there is so much to see in Venice these lectures should be given together.

a. VENICE: THEN AND NOW – ON FOOT AND BY BOAT

This slide talk opens with an unforgettable trip down the Grand Canal and on each side of our water taxi we have some of the finest of Venice's Gothic and Renaissance palaces. The lecture juxtaposes the works of great artists who painted in Venice with the same views and buildings seen today, magnificent views of this most romantic of cities, loved and painted by more artists than any other city in the world. We compare the city in the days of Canaletto with his views over the Bacino, look at the cheapest way to ride in a gondola, use a *trahetto*, a retired gondola ferry, paid for by the city authorities and ridden in for a pittance. The lure of the East has left its stamp on the richness of colour in Venetian art and the individuality of its architecture. We tour The Doge's Palace with its pink and white marble walls richly decorated walls, dark dungeons and torture chamber where Casanova was once imprisoned and San Marco with its treasures stolen from Byzantium.. We leave the tourist track, visit quiet corners of the city and explore fascinating house museums like the Ca' Rezzonico which houses a display of *Venice in the 18th century*, see the treasures of Correr Museum which provides insights into the history of the city, the Sansovino Library and the island of San Giorgio with its magnificent Palladian church.

b. VENICE OBSERVED

As arguably the world's most romantic city Venice had an inauspicious start as a refugee centre on a series of mud banks. But by the end of the Middle Ages Venice had become the leading maritime power in Europe thanks to its domination of the profitable spice trade. We visit the splendid Naval Museum



VENICE: ST MARK'S SQUARE AND CHURCH



VENICE: ST MARK'S BELL TOWER



VENICE: DOGE'S PALACE



VENICE: THE ARSENAL ON THE GRAND CANAL



VENICE: THE NAVAL MUSEUM

with its dogal barge guarded by lions stolen by the Venetians from Delos and the Arsenale, centre of Venice's power in the days when the spice trade with the east made Venice the richest city in Europe. We explore the magical islands of Burano and Torcello with its great Byzantine cathedral and lunch at a magical place run by the famous Hotel Cipriani. This is one of Venice's best and relatively inexpensive restaurants in a city where many restaurants have become expensive rip-offs. On the island of Torcello we visit the hauntingly lovely cathedral built by the original refugees who settled the lagoon before Venice was founded. We explore the great Palladian villa farms of the Veneto (the word originally meant house as well as farm) in a modern interpretation of the traditional Burchiello used by Venetian nobleman to transport along the Brenta Canal their furnishings and possessions to their summer homes. As a result of these villas, Andrea Palladio, son of humble stonemason who used the idea of placing a classic temple façade onto a residential structure would become one of the world's most influential architects. We end with the great palace of Stra where Napoleon stayed — the conqueror of Venice who never fired a shot but who nevertheless removed some of its greatest art treasures to Paris including the gilded horses of St Mark.

