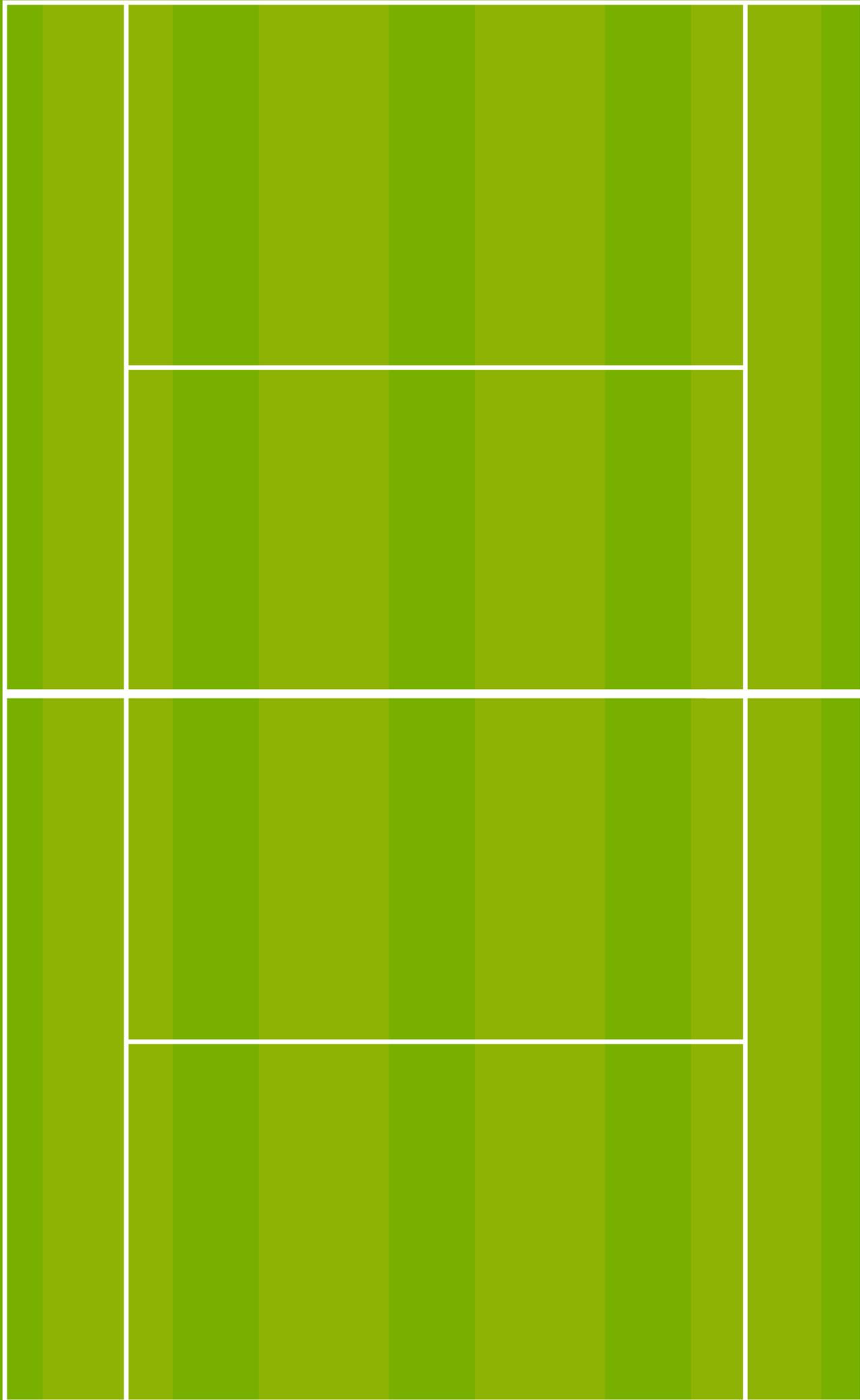


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Travel

Milan - Take a City Centre Tour with Praski

Never been to Milan? Then join Praski on a guided tour of this enchanting city.

Milan is much more than just a showcase for style and glamour. It's a small, compact city which is easy to navigate. As well as being Italy's financial and industrial capital, it's also steeped in history.

Let's start our tour with the city's most popular attraction, Leonardo da Vinci's painting, The Last Supper. To obtain a ticket is a difficult task, and it's best to plan at least a year ahead. You can find the peeling fresco in the refectory that belongs to the Santa Maria delle Grazie church and convent. A precious ticket allows each visitor 15 minutes to view the faces of the twelve disciples as they are told of Judas's treachery.

The Duomo is Italy's multitowered tribute to Gothic architecture, the largest Gothic cathedral in the world, brick-faced with marble.

Basilicas were built on this spot as far back as the 5th century, but it wasn't until 1075 that they were reconstructed into one building. In 1386, Archbishop Antonio da Saluzza set out to create a building whose presence would be felt by people from miles around. He succeeded - it's a masterpiece.

The top of the cathedral is packed with pinnacles divided by a grove of steeples, topped with figurines that look out over the city and the Alps. There are numerous gargoyles and towers, and the statue of the Madonna on top of the main spire stands at 109 metres. The roof top visit is not recommended if you suffer



The Duomo

from vertigo, asthma or a dodgy ticker. Queues to the top are long and waiting time can be anything from 35 minutes to over an hour.

Across from the Duomo is an enormous stone archway leading into the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. It is still as popular today with locals and visitors as it was on the first day of opening, in 1867. Under the central dome, there is a mosaic bull and it is customary for visitors to spin on the sensitive parts of the bull. You will see where the well-worn spot is! Spin once, make a wish and hope your dream comes true.

All the shops are beautifully presented and this is definitely a place where you can shop 'til you drop if you have sufficient readies. If you don't, you can always have your photo taken outside Prada. The Galleria is also where Gaspere Campari debuted his now famous aperitif in Caffé Campari in the late 1860s. Of course, the showpiece and famous landmark has to be the Zucca Café and Restaurant, You don't have to splash the cash on an expensive meal, instead, you can always pay five Euros for an espresso, sit outside on the terrace and watch the world go by.



The Duomo's rooftop

Teatro alla Scala is the centre of the opera universe and Milan's cultural centrepiece. It has premiered operas since opening its doors in 1778. Opera is popular with all ages and classes of Italians, who consider it to be their national music. La Scala's opening night is the highlight of the social calendar and good seats are like gold dust. Performing here is the lifetime ambition of every opera singer.

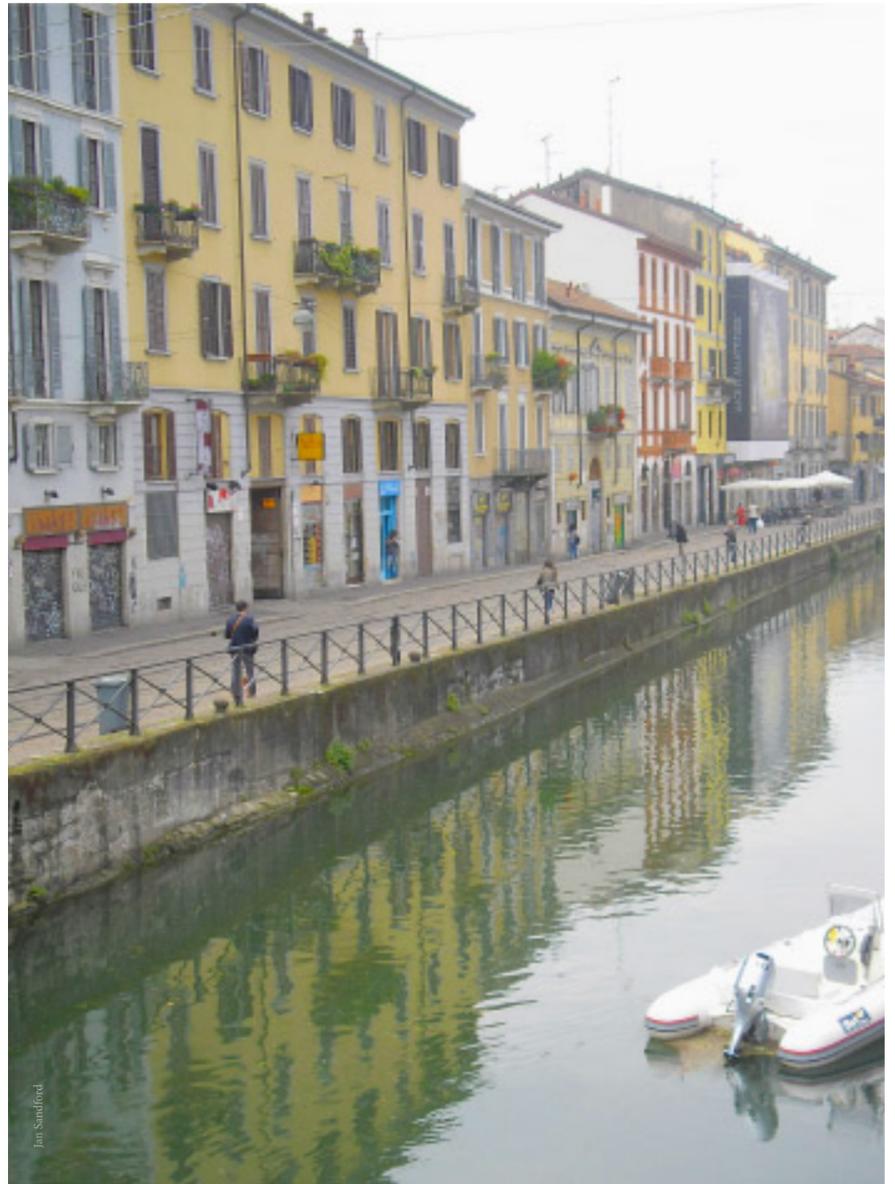
These are only a handful of attractions and beyond the city centre, you'll find plenty of other places of interests such as Leonardo's aquatic triumph, and the Navigli canal area, known for its bohemian cafes and restaurants.

There are countless beautiful and very old churches as well as Castello Sforzesco, from where, the Visconti and the Sforza families ruled most of northern Italy for centuries. The castle's main attraction is Michelangelo's Rondanini Pietà, a sculpture that depicts the dead body of Christ being held by the Virgin Mary. You'll find that whether your interests lie in designer chic, the arts, history or cuisine, Milan really is the place to be and to be seen.





Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II



The Navigli

Comprehension | Are the following statements true or false?

- 1) Milan depends for its income on tourism.
- 2) It is not possible to see the painting, *The Last Supper*, without booking well in advance.
- 3) Visitors are discouraged from going on the roof of the Duomo.
- 4) When Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II first opened, it was not very popular.
- 5) It is possible to enjoy being in the Galleria without spending a lot of money.
- 6) In Italy, opera is only popular with the social elite.
- 7) There are many places of interest outside the city centre.
- 8) Milan is only worth visiting if you are interested in history.

Vocabulary

Enchanting - delightful, charming, attractive

Showcase - something that presents something favourably

To be steeped in something - soaked, saturated or surrounded by

Peeling - coming off in small pieces or strips

Fresco - a painting in water colour done on plaster

Refectory - a room for communal eating in educational and religious places

Convent - a Christian community of nuns

The twelve disciples - the original followers, (Apostles) of Christ

Treachery - betrayal

Tribute - an act or statement that shows respect and gratitude

Gothic architecture - a style of architecture prevalent in Europe between the 12th and 16th centuries

Brick-faced - with bricks on the exterior

Marble - a hard, white form of limestone used in buildings

Basilica - a large, oval hall built in the Roman style

Spot - here: place, location

Miles around - from some distance

Masterpiece - an outstanding piece of work

Pinnacle - pointed turret for ornamentation on the top of a building

Grove - here: group, usually used in relation to trees

Steeple - a spire on the top of a church

Figurine - small statues in human form

Gargoyle - a grotesque carved figure in which water passes through the mouth

Spire - a conical structure on top of a church or high building

Vertigo - fear of heights

Asthma - a respiratory condition with breathing difficulties

Dodgy ticker - informal term for weak heart

Well-worn - made smooth or thin through constant wear or contact

To spin - to turn or whirl around quickly

To make a wish - to silently hope for a specific outcome

To shop 'til you drop - popular, informal phrase for retail shopping to the point of exhaustion

Readies - informal term for money, particularly in note form

Landmark - an object, geographical feature or building seen from a distance and easily recognised

Aperitif - a mildly alcohol drink taken before a meal

Debut - the first appearance or showing of something

Splash the cash - spend a lot of money

Watch the world go by - popular cliché for sitting in a café and watching passers by

To premiere - to show a film, play, opera or ballet to the public for the first time

Highlight - the best and most important part

Social calendar - sequence of social events

Like gold dust - very rare, hard to get

A handful - a small number

To depict - to show or represent

Designer - a top fashion designer or their products

Chic - elegant style and fashionableness

To be and to be seen - to be in with the social elite

