

A travel guide for kids by a kid, this book helps children prepare for a trip to Venice, Italy, through a child's view of the city. Photographs, descriptions and activities educate and engage children while building anticipation for their visit!

Sydney Travels to Venice: A Guide for Kids – Let's Go to Italy Series!

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# **Sydney Travels to Venice**

## **A Guide for Kids**

**Let's Go to Italy Series!**

**First Edition**

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Sydney's Travel Guides for Kids  
[www.SydneysTravelGuidesforKids.com](http://www.SydneysTravelGuidesforKids.com)

Email: [travel@sydneystravelguidesforkids.com](mailto:travel@sydneystravelguidesforkids.com)

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## Arriving: This is Venice for Kids



No streets, no cars, lots of water and boats *everywhere*. Speed boats, slow boats, bus boats, fire boats, mail boats, police boats, trash boats, ferry boats, tow boats, and long black beautiful sleek boats called **Gondolas**. Venice is known for its Gondolas and the men who make them go—they are called **Gondoliers**. There are boats just about

everywhere you look. In fact, we think there is no better way to enter Venice than by water as people have done for centuries. The Water Taxi is a great, but expensive, way to get to Venice from the airport. Once in Venice, have your grown-ups buy a pass and be prepared to hop on and off a motorized boat called a **Vaporetto**. Vaporetti are like city busses with convenient stops all over the city and the nearby islands of **Murano, Burano, Torcello** and the **Lido**, but if you get off between stops you *will* get very wet!

Once thought of as the richest place in the world, Venice is a city of grand and famous **palaces and churches**. Many of the city's amazing palaces are found along the **Grand Canal** that winds its way through the city. You can visit several of these palaces as well as the palace where the ruler of Venice lived called the **Doge's Palace**. Other neat palaces include the more modern **Ca' Rezzonico**, now a museum displaying life from Venice in the 1700's. No trip to Venice would be complete without seeing

some of the most beautiful churches in the whole world. **St. Mark's Church**, located in **St. Mark's Square**, is one of the most spectacular of all!

In addition to all of its boats, palaces and churches, Venice is known for its celebrations. One of the



largest celebrations is called the **Carnival**. Now, this is not like the carnival back home, this is a huge masked party! Since Venice is known for this large masked party, you are going to see lots of really neat handmade Carnival **masks**. If you want, you can visit a mask making factory and watch

them being made. Surely one of these masks will be just the right size for you!

You will also see a variety of pretty **colored glass** made on the nearby world famous island of **Murano**. Murano glass was known for hundreds of years as the best glass in the world and many glass making secrets have been handed down from generation to



generation. Many of the glass factories give tours and demonstrations that you can watch. You are going to *love* Venice! It is an exciting water adventure with so much water and really neat bridges, so wear comfortable shoes and get ready to explore an enchanting city in a big lagoon.

### **A City in a Big Lagoon**

Venice sits right in the middle of an enormous lagoon and has a famous history. Have you ever heard of Marco Polo? Marco Polo was from the big lagoon! When he was just a teenager, he set out with his father to the East and visited far away lands. When he returned more than 20 years later he wrote all about his journey. This was the first time most people had ever heard about these far away lands of the East and his adventure eventually opened new trading routes between the West and the East. He would probably be proud to know that many kids around the world remember his name when playing in the swimming pool.

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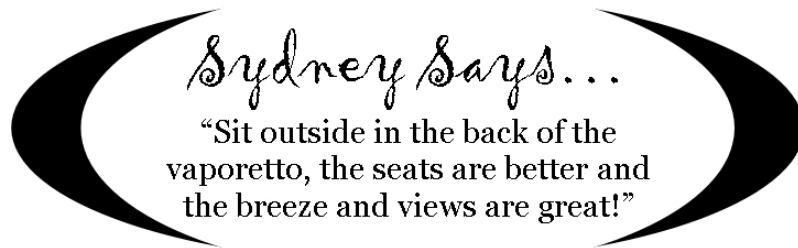
This collection of islands in a big lagoon that we call Venice is a water wonderland really made up of more than 100 islands and more than 200 canals. It is just about 3 feet above sea level and sometimes you may get your feet wet. In fact, the city often places benches in St. Mark's Square for people to walk on when the water is high, especially in the fall and winter.

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Winding right down the center of Venice is the Grand Canal. Here, amazing palaces and churches have been built in the mud! That's right; all of these buildings are built on trees driven into the mud! Over time, the trees petrified and became solid rock to provide a good foundation. The trees that were driven into the mud actually turned into rock! The early Venetians cleared many forests to create their foundations in the lagoon. Still, some of the buildings are slowly leaning and sinking! Don't worry though; they should still be standing by the time you arrive.

When visiting the beautiful city of Venice we highly recommend that you visit lots of neat places like palaces, churches, museums, and other islands in the lagoon. Take time to walk along the canals and see the people who live in Venice. Tourists love Venice and they always have. Get ready for lots of fun as you really enter another world, one that long ago was a super power in the Adriatic Sea and today is a tourist magnet.

## Boat Tour of the Grand Canal



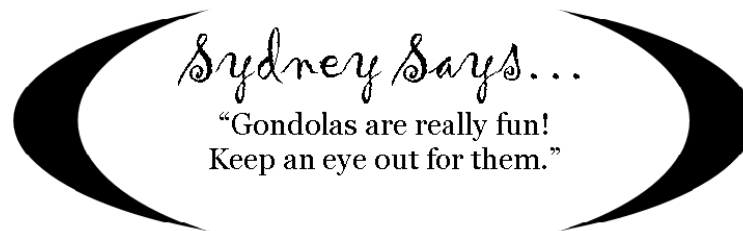
There is no better way to see the city than by taking a slow boat ride down the Grand Canal. Usually people start the tour from the Piazzale Roma, or train station, and end at San Marco, or St. Mark's Square. You can also go the other direction. We think the slower # 1 vaporetto boat is the best way to go as you make your way along the lovely  $2 \frac{1}{2}$  mile canal that divides the city in half. But if you are in a hurry you can still travel the Grand Canal on the faster # 82 Vaporetto.

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Along the way to St. Mark's Square you will see old interesting palaces like **Ca' Rezzonico**, **Ca' Pesaro** and **Ca' d'Oro** that line the canal. You will also see famous bridges that cross the canal including the famous **Rialto Bridge**. A lot of people try to sit near the front or near the entrances of the vaporetto to get a good view of these palaces and bridges, but Sydney says "sit outside in the very back, the seats are better and the breeze and views are great!" Strike up a conversation with a local.

## The Gondola Ride



Sydney says "I recommend a gondola." Encourage your grown-ups to save some money now for a gondola ride. Like the **Water Taxi**, it is a kind of expensive way to see parts of Venice, but Sydney says "I love the gondola and it is worth it." We think the best place for a gondola ride is along the smaller more narrow canal routes, away from the busy larger water ways.

While the small canals are wonderful, have your grown-ups ask your gondolier to include the Rialto Bridge area in your ride, preferably in the early evening. The night time gondola ride can be one of the most memorable experiences of your visit. Along the way, look for cats sitting along the sides

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of the canal watching the evening activities. All in all, the grace of the gondola sliding quietly across the still evening water is magical.

Now, if your grown-ups really don't want to spend the money on a gondola ride, you can still get a nice short one for very little money. At certain spots along the Grand Canal, gondolas are used to ferry people back and forth across the canal for less than the price of an ice cream (gelato) cone. These crossings are referred to as traghetto crossings. You have to stand up for these short rides, but they can be fun too and give you a chance to be in a real gondola. Since you have to stand up, you might want to hold your grown-up's hand so that you will not lose your balance. Look for small yellow signs, or find a local map for the locations, and enjoy your gondola ride!

Gondolas used to be the only way people traveled around Venice. They also used to be decorated and painted in wild colors, but it became so competitive between gondoliers that they were ordered to paint them all black, and they have remained that way for hundreds of years.

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