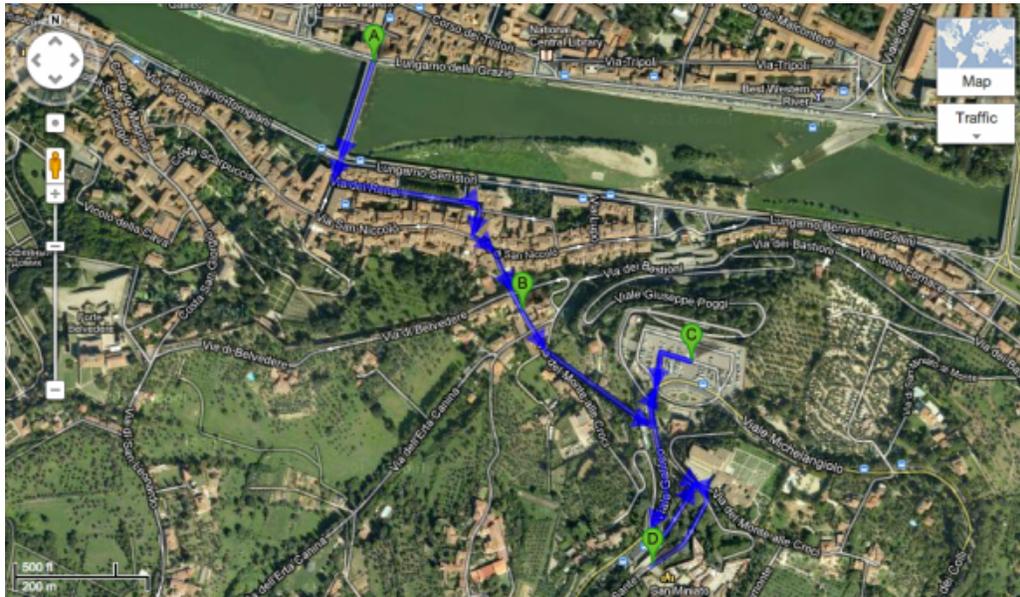


florence for free

free walks and work-arounds for rich italian adventures

walking tour: san miniato al monte



Distance: 2.5 km from city center (about 1.6 miles)

Time: 30 minutes (plus time to explore at the top)

Cost: \$0

Directions: Make your way to Ponte alle Grazie, one bridge west of the Ponte Vecchio and about .5 km from the Duomo. Keep heading straight onto Piazza de' Mozzi. You'll know you're on the right track if you see signs for Museo Bardini. Turn left at Via di San Niccolò as it curves out of the city. You'll know you're in medieval no-mans land once you walk under the massive arch. Follow the road up the staircase, cross Viale Gallileo, and climb the second staircase a little ways up on the right. San Miniato sits at the top.

Places to see:

- **The Rose Garden** – If adventuring in May or June, keep a lookout for an open door along the left wall (it is not well marked, so this part is a bit of a treasure hunt). Stealthily duck in and be rewarded with a space overrun with colorful roses and fruit trees. Wandering through the flower bushes is much more pleasant than hitting the stone pavement; there are more than a few benches to take a break and enjoy the view. Plus, you can score some incredible photos through the garden's leaves.
- **Piazzale Michelangelo** – This viewpoint has been praised over and over. Snap your pics along the wall, give your regards to bronze David, and bound back towards Viale Gallileo, past San Frediano.
- **San Miniato al Monte** – San Miniato dates back to around 1000, with its incredible Romanesque façade constructed some time in the 13th century. Once inside, don't forget to look up at the painted rafters as you head back towards the crypt. St. Minias' remains are kept here, and if you time it just right to arrive in the early evening hours, monks slip out into the crypt to sing the mass in Latin. Don't forget to check out their adjoining monastery, which sells famous homemade honey and liqueurs.
- **Cimitero delle Porte Sante** – The view from San Miniato is spectacular, but the cemetery is by far the most interesting thing to see at the top. Gravestones and chapels compete like antique skyscrapers for prominence in this sculpture garden. And be on the lookout for Carlo Collodi, author of *Pinocchio*, in his family chapel.