Venetian waterways by gondola

TOURS BY

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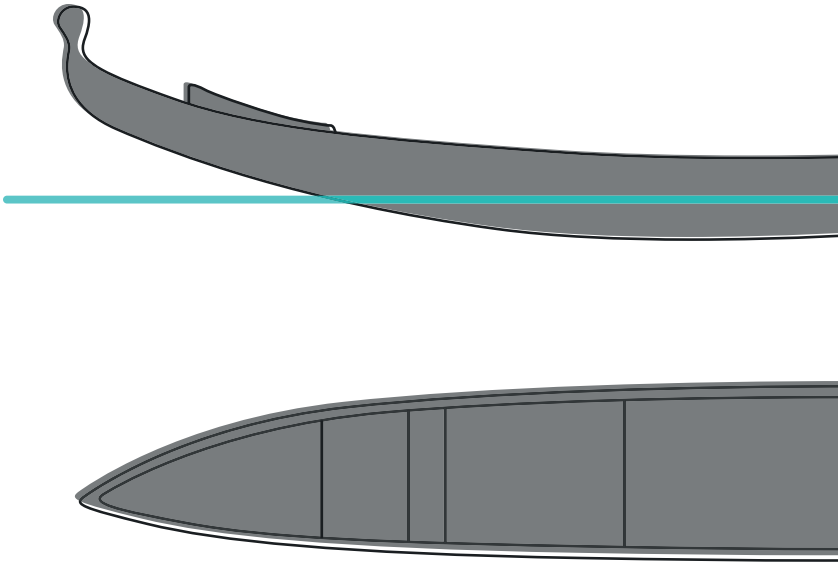
PONTE DE
LE COLONNE

venetian waterways by gondola

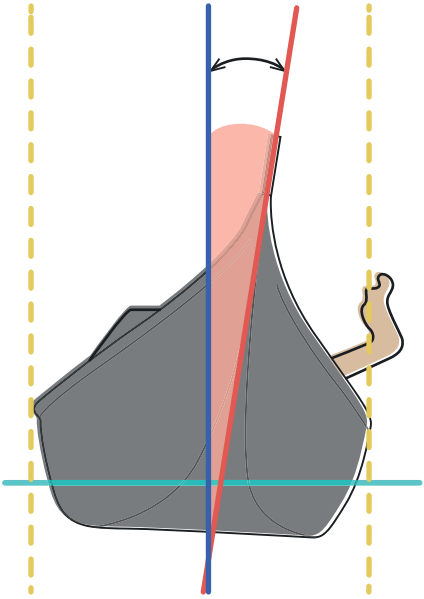
The gondola is a traditional boat, flat-bottomed, used also for the Venetian rowing, well suited to the conditions of the Venetian Lagoon. For centuries the gondolas were the main means of transportation and most common watercraft in Venice. In modern times these particular boats still have a role in public transport in the city, serving as traghetti (ferries) over the Grand Canal. They are also used in special Regattas (rowing races) held amongst gondoliers. The ornament on the front of the boat is called the ferro (iron) and can be made from brass, stainless steel, or aluminium. It serves as decoration and as counterweight for the gondolier standing near the stern. The Gondolas are hand made using 8 different types of wood (fir, oak, cherry, walnut, elm, mahogany, larch and lime) and are composed of 280 pieces.

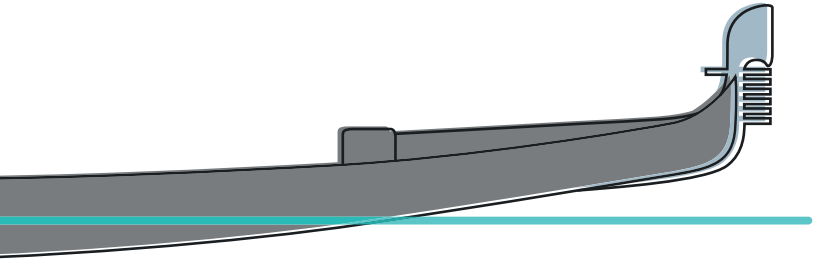
Gondola

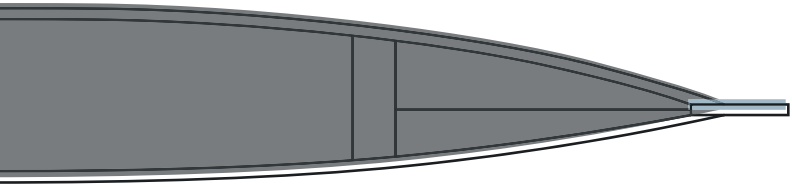
It's about 11 metres long with an asymmetric shape, having its left side wider than the right.
The asymmetry is a late development and of course a deliberate one, to compensate for being rowed by just one oar.
It may however be rowed by up to four people if they wish to practice the voga veneta style, that is standing and facing the prow with just one oar each. The long oar is manoeuvred by resting it on a rowlock called forcola, which has its own slot from which it can be easily removed after rowing.
The typical comb or ferro da prua at the prow (which translates in fact to prow iron) is designed to protect the gondola from collision, although it is now more of an ornamental piece than anything else.
The ferro's shape has typically come to symbolise Venice as a whole: the six dents facing outward being the six areas that make up the city (the sestieri), with the one dent facing inward



as the Giudecca; then we have the doge's hat at the top, under which the little arch above the uppermost dent represents the Rialto bridge; and finally the 'S' shape of the ferro itself reminds one of the Grand Canal, the home of a gondola.
Some of the more recently built gondolas also have three fancy finishing touches in between the ferro's dents, these are called foglie (leaves) and they represent the islands of Murano, Burano and Torcello.
Aside from its decorative uses, one the ferro's purposes is to counter balance the weight of the gondolier at the stern, allowing the gondola to stay as horizonal as possible on the water, thus avoiding needless pitching and rocking.

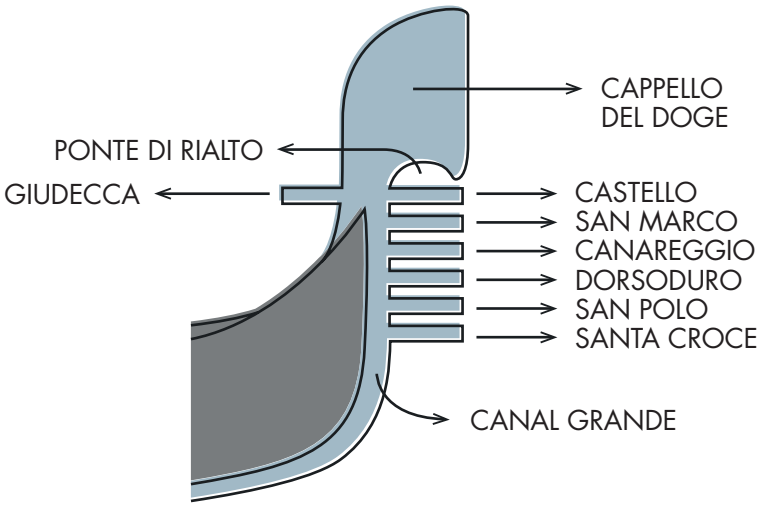


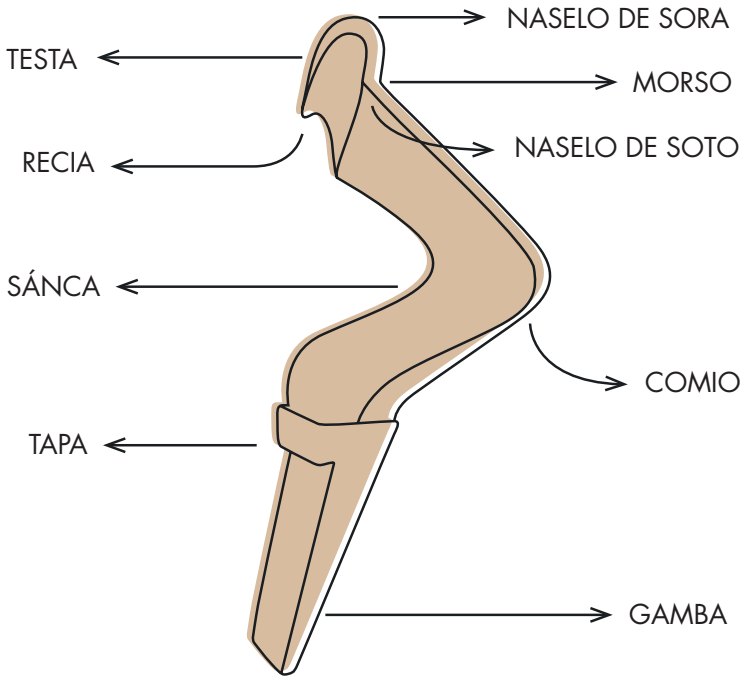




Above:
The inclination angle of a gondola.

Below:
Illustration of a Venetian gondola showing the level of the vessel's immersion, highlighting its asymmetrical form.


CAPPELLO
DEL DOGE
PONTE DI RIALTO
GIUDECCA
CASTELLO
SAN MARCO
CANAREGGIO
DORSODURO
SAN POLO
SANTA CROCE
CANAL GRANDE


NASELO DE SORA
TESTA
MORSO
NASELO DE SOTO
RECIA
SÁNCA
COMIO
TAPA
GAMBA

Forcola

The forcola is a type of rowlock used in the voga veneta, the typical Venetian rowing style.
After centuries of experimentation, it has finally reached its optimal shape: every curve, corner, inclination has a precise function during the rowing motion.

On Venetian boats, the oar is usually rested on the morso (the bit), which allows different motions with the oar, whose point of contact on the morso changes depending on the type of manoeuvre the rower wishes the boat to make.

The gondola's forcola is one of the most complex and complete, allowing up to 8 different rowing positions.
The design of the forcola depends on the use of precise shapes and profiles which vary according to the type of boat and to the rowing style.

On the right:
Illustration with diagram outlining parts of the prow ferro and the forcola.

Below:
Handmade production of a forcola.

Forcole are made of wood, and the remeri (expert craftsmen of forcole and oars) must assure that the final product has the perfect hardness and elasticity, and the types of wood used most are walnut, pear and cherry wood.

A forcola should ideally be extracted from a single log (the more precious and rare pieces being reserved for gondolas), but it is not uncommon to see attachments of different pieces with the adeguate veining.

ITINERARY

During your pleasant ride you will admire the Mozart House passing by the worldwide famous La Fenice Theatre proceeding along the Rio (Canal) "De le Ostreghe" leading into the Gran Canal, where you will admire the Peggy Guggenheim Collection. Once reached the Salute Church and Punta della Dogana you will enjoy the unique breathtaking view of the Doges Palace and of St. Marks' Belltower.

DEPARTURE - follow the trip on tha map (latest page)

Mozart house

Mozart visited Venice with his father during February and March of 1771, but the identity of the actual house where he stayed had, until recently, been a mystery. In the 1990s, a musicologist from the Venetian university, undertook detailed research into the specific location of Mozart's stay, and he concluded that he lived in Ca' Falletti (Palazzo Molin). The building is listed by the Belle Arti (Heritage Authorities) for the historical importance of its façades and its architecture.

La Fenice theatre

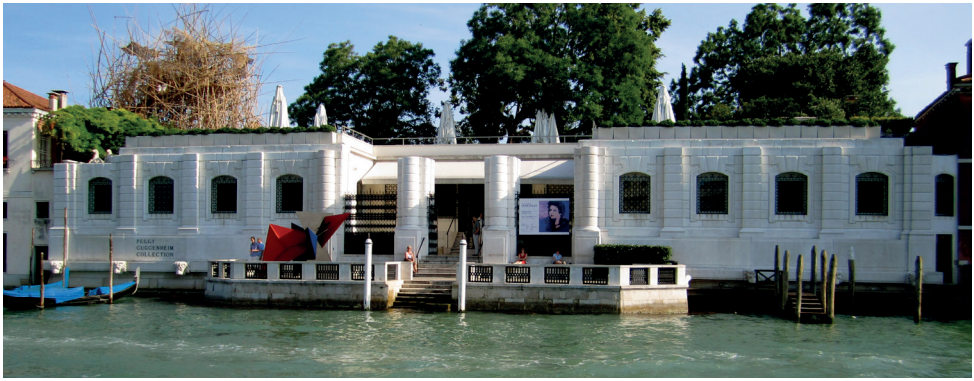
Venice's opera house is one of the most famous opera houses worldwide. Not without reason it is often called the queen of the opera houses. Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi composed their works for the Teatro La Fenice. Famous composers such as Richard Wagner and Igor Stravinsky also arranged performances of many of their works in Venice.

Below:
La Fenice theatre.

Above on the right:
Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

Below on the right:
La Salute Church.

Peggy Guggenheim Collection



It is among the most important museums in Italy, located in Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Peggy Guggenheim's former home. She was dedicated to the advancement of 20th century art. The Palace is an unfinished 18th century Grand Canal palace. The museum core mission is to present the personal collection of Peggy Guggenheim which holds major works of Cubism, Futurism, Metaphysical painting, European abstraction, avant-garde sculpture, Surrealism, and American Abstract Expressionism, by the greatest artists of the 20th century as Picasso, Duchamp, de Chirico, Mondrian, Kandinsky, Miró, Ernst, Magritte, Dalí, Pollock.

La Salute Church

It is a Roman Catholic church and minor basilica located in the Dorsoduro sestiere. In 1630 Venice experienced an unusually devastating outbreak of the plague. As a votive offering for the city's deliverance from the pestilence, the Republic of Venice vowed to build and dedicate a church to Our Lady of Health. The church was designed in the then

fashionable baroque style by Baldassare Longhena.

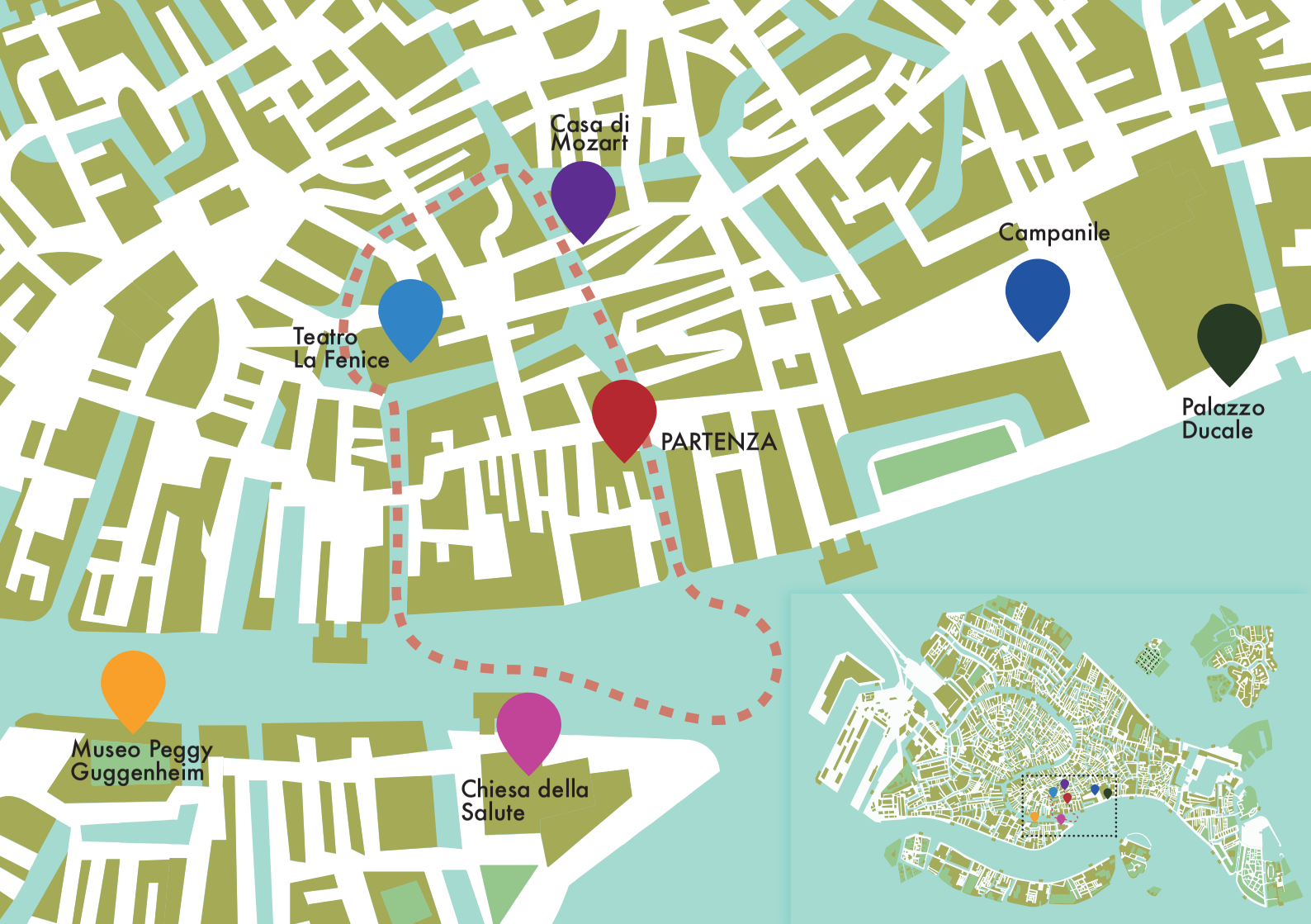
Doges Palace

A masterpiece of Gothic architecture, the Doge's Palace is an impressive structure composed of layers of building elements and ornamentation, from its 14th and 15th century original foundations to the significant Renaissance and opulent Mannerist adjunctions. The structure is made up of three large blocks, incorporating previous constructions. The wing towards St. Mark's Basin is the oldest, rebuilt from 1340 onwards. The wing towards St. Mark's Square was built from 1424 onwards. The canal-side wing, housing the Doge's apartments and many government offices, dates from the Renaissance.

St. Mark's Belltower

The campanile of St. Mark's is an imposing square plan tower about 99 metres high, crowned by a spire that was once a lighthouse for shipping. It was first built in the 12th century on the site of what was probably a watchtower and rebuilt in its current form early in the 16th century with the addition of a belfry and with the spire faced in copper and topped by a sort of rotating platform with a statue of the Archangel Gabriel which functioned as a weathercock. From the belfry loggia there is a spectacular view of the city and the lagoon. Against the base of the campanile is the balcony built by Jacopo Sansovino decorated with marbles and bronzes.

Below:
Doges Palace and St. Mark's Belltower.


Casa di Mozart
Campanile
Teatro La Fenice
Palazzo Ducale
PARTENZA
Museo Peggy Guggenheim
Chiesa della Salute

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