

## **Pisa – October 25, 2017 – Pisa, Italy**

Today we drove from Lucca to Siena by way of Pisa. And who doesn't know Pisa and the Leaning Tower of Pisa!

It is only about a 30-minute drive from Lucca to Pisa. This is one of those traveling mistakes in that being only a 30 minute drive we should have spent one or two more nights in Lucca and made Pisa a day long trip. Pisa is so much more than just the Leaning Tower and the four hours we visited.



To the left of the Leaning Tower is Duomo or Pisa Cathedral. We decided walking to the top of the Tower wasn't something we just had to do. We looked at it from the outside but decided between the length of the line to go up into the Tower and the wear and tear on our legs climbing to the top we would skip this adventure.

We bought our tickets for the Duomo, baptistery, Camposanto (final resting place for famous Pisans) and the museum. First venue was the museum that contains multiple frescos removed from the Camposanto. It was interesting to find out how the frescos were drawn and painted.

Next stop was the Romanesque Duomo begun in 1064 and consecrated in 1118 or 54 years from start to a basically finish cathedral.



The wood ceiling is enhanced by 24-carat gold. For those who have watched *Medici: Master of Florence* on Netflix (we watched this series a couple of weeks ago) the gold is a legacy of the Medici rule. I have to let you all know this was the largest cathedral in Europe when it was completed. The central nave is 288' long and 84' high.

A favorite religious painting composition is Virgin with Child. Melanese completed this painting about 1226.





One of the many beautiful details in the Duomo: a candlestick.



You never see everything when walking through the Italian churches, but we try. The Duomo has three sets of bronze doors installed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Each panel is different and some are very different. The religious stories make up most the panels:





Then again there is the rhinoceros Nancy found at the bottom of one door:



After about an hour exploring the Duomo we made the short walk to the Battistero. The Duomo was fast construction compared to the Battistero that began in 1152 but took 211 years to complete. It's the largest Baptistry in Italy being roughly 102' in diameter and 165' tall. Obviously they needed a professional construction management team and probably more money to complete the building in a reasonable time. Looking down upon the hexagonal marble pulpit.



I thought the overall design was much less ornate than previously visited baptisteries but at the same time more like today's modernistic minimalistic architectural designs.







I think it goes without saying that a bucket list Italian site is the Leaning Tower of Pisa. However, Nancy and I enjoyed our time in the Camposanto more than anywhere else in Pisa.

Our introduction to the Camposanto was one of the better-preserved frescos.



This illustration of hell would make anyone confess their sins to avoid any part of hell.



The remainder of the frescos were in bad condition because of time and World War II artillery shells.



But the Camposanto was more than frescos. There are many Roman sarcophaguses such as the one in this photograph.





You had to be careful not to walk over other grave markers.



There are also monument grave markers. This marker was for Leonardo Fibonacci and I am sure we all remember this mathematician.





Fortunately I travel with someone who does – Nancy. I will admit as soon as she said, “mathematician” I at least recognized the name. Think the sequence: 0,1,1,2,3,5,8,13,21, ..... Hint:  $0 + 1 = 1$  and  $1 + 1 = 2$  and  $2 + 1 = 3$  and  $2 + 3 = 5$  ....

A portion of one of the surviving frescos:



If you haven't decided upon your final resting place being the air may I recommend Pisa's Camposanto.