

My first experience of the Duomo.

Scritto da luca grillandini

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Friday 1st July – The Duomo.

With the grand exterior, excited lines of awaiting tourists and humid weather, the anticipation to get inside one of the world's most famous landmarks is almost intense. There are whispers from all around about the difficult climb to the top, the extraordinary architecture and blissful paintings, but once the waiting is over and you get inside, silence befalls you. For someone who has never had the honour of experiencing such awe, let me tell you, it is breathtaking.

Depending on which area of the Duomo you wish to explore, whether it be Giotto's Bell Tower or Choir Area and Dome, there are designated queues to assist you. I was, along with my fellow class mates, one of the many awaiting to attempt to scale to the top. As soon as you go into the hushed entrance, the first stairs lie ahead of you. From there it's a never ending, upward spin. Everybody is in the same boat so don't worry about having to take a breather or cool off mid stairwell.

Once you have successfully climbed the many spiral staircases however, you will reach the first and second interior tiers of the Duomo and already the trek seems worth it. Not only can you look down on a beautiful birds eye view of the cathedral beneath you but you also have an up close and personal angle from which to gaze at the painted decoration ceiling. Finally completed by Giorgio Vasari and Federico Zuccari (1572-1579) the iconic theme, The Last Judgement, is the same of that in the Baptistery. The 3,600 meters demonstrates the Catholic belief of a Heaven and Hell in which human beings are judged for their virtues or vices accumulated whilst living on earth. The wondrously detailed painting depicts everything from the depths and horrors of Hell to the saintly angels surrounding the Risen Christ in Heaven at the very top of the dome.

Once you have had your fill of the view, there are more steps to be conquered. After far few stairwells, that steepen the higher they get, you will reach the outer perimeter of the Duomo. With it's surprisingly vast surface area, the top of the dome is big enough for you to wander through the small crowds of people, and as close to the edge as you wish. Although the view is fantastic, it's probably not recommendable for the faint hearted. You can see the horizon of mountainous views, sitting cosily alongside the bustling city life. By all means go crazy with your

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camera, but why not also take a moment to just *look*. I guarantee you will see a lot more with your own eyes than you would through a camera lens. Breathtaking on even the most cloudy of days, the fabulous view is well worth the tiring climb.