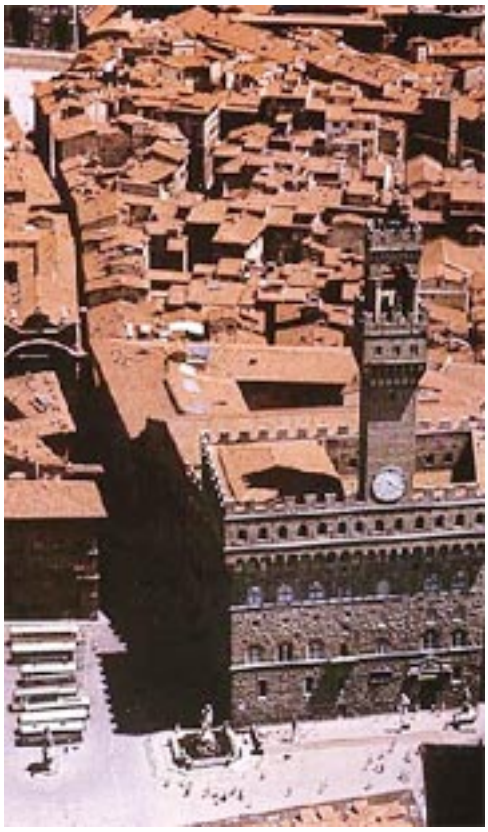

Piazza della Signoria is the lovely piazza in historical Florence hosting Palazzo Vecchio, once called Palazzo della Signoria. This remarkable open-air museum evokes centuries of strength and greatness. In the 1980's when the square was repaved, it was discovered that it had already been a main square in the original Roman town of Florentia long before it took its L-shaped form in 1268. The original square contained a theater, Roman baths, and a textiles workshop. Remains of a church, a loggia, and a large 5th century basilica were also discovered along with remains of a Neolithic site.

The history of the L-shaped piazza dates back to 1268, when the Guelph party re-gained control of the city and decided to demolish the houses of their Ghibelline rivals.

The first to be destroyed were the towers belonging to the Foraboschi and the Uberti families, in spite of the fact that the head of the family (the famous Farinata celebrated by Dante in his "Comedy"), had defended the city from destruction after its army had been disastrously defeated at the battle of Montaperti in September,1260 by the Ghibelline coalition led by Siena.

In the end, 36 houses were razed which explains the unusual "L" shape of the square and why the buildings around it are unaligned.

Nothing was ever built on the site again.

It was paved for the first time in 1385. In 1497, the historic Bonfires of the Vanities took place where, books, fine garments of clothing, and poetry were burned in the middle of the Piazza.

Today one could refer to the Piazza as the core of the city were numerous tourists, and locals alike, gather to admire art and architecture, market places and numerous bars, restaurants, cafes and shops that line it.

The Piazza contains numerous works of art like that of the copy of the original "David" by Michelangelo, (the original can be found in the Gallery of the Academy of Art)the bronze equestrian statue of Cosimo the I by Giambologna, the Fountain of Neptune by Bartolomeo Ammannati with a round marble plaque in front of it that marks the exact spot where Girolamo

Savonarola, found guilty of heresy, was hung and burned on May 23rd, 1498, a copy of Judith and Holofernes (the original is found inside the palace in the Hall of Lilies) by Donatello and the statue of Hercules and Cacus by Bandinelli.

Piazza delle Signoria also shares its square with the Loggia della Signoria, Uffizi Gallery, Palace of the Tribune della Mercanzia, the Uguccioni Palace and the Palace of the Assicurazioni Generali.

Inside Palazzo Vecchio, find a museum with a patrimony of art to be admired by all.