The origins of the original **Pitti Palace** date back to 1458 when it was the residence of Luca Pitti, a well-known Florentine banker and friend of Cosimo de'Medici.

It is said that Luca Pitti wanted to build a palace greater than that of the Medici's.

Later, in 1559, it was bought by the Medici family and became the official residence of the governing families of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

In the 19th century it was the base of Napoleon and later also served as a Royal Palace for the newly united Italy, In the 20th century the Palace was donated to the people by King Vittorio Emmanuele III and today is one of the largest art galleries in Florence housing priceless collections of art. The palace was to be done by Brunelleschi but his death preceded the actual building itself and therefore his less famous pupil Luca Fancelli carried on the task. The original Roman style architecture and design has withstood the test of time and was maintained during the subsequent additions done over the centuries.

Later, Luca Pitti suffered irreversible financial difficulties and died shortly after in 1472 before the building was completed. In 1549, the building was sold by Buonaccorso Pitti, a descendant of Luca Pitti, to the wife of Cosimo I de'Medici, Eleonora of Toledo of Tuscany. It was then that the land behind the Palace was acquired to create the elaborate gardens, centred on an amphitheatre, more well known today as the Boboli Gardens. The landscaping was done by Niccolo Tribolo and succeeded by Bartholomew Ammanati.

Later, Ammanati created a large courtyard behind the façade in which he also created the "kneeling windows". In the 17th century the faced was extended to its present length.

The palace remained the main residency of the Medic's until the fall of their dynasty in 1737 when it was taken over by the new Grand Dukes of Tuscany and became the Austrian House of Lorraine.

When, in 1860, the House of Lorraine passed to the House of Savoy, the Pitti Palace went along with it. During the brief time that Florence was the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele II resided there until 1871 and later in 1919, his grandson Vittorio Emanuele III, donated the Pitti to the nation.

It was then that the palace was divided into separate galleries and museums.

The galleries include the Palatine Gallery, probably the most famous, containing the "La Donna Velata" by Raphael as well as other priceless work by Raphael, Titan, Correggio, Reubans, and others.

The Royal Apartments consist of 14 rooms, formerly used by the Medici family and cantain a collection of portraits of the family Medici.

The Gallery of Modern Art extends through 30 rooms and includes work by artists of the Macchiaioli movement and other Italian schools from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Silver Museum contains a collection of priceless jewellery and silver decorated with frescoes from the 17th century. The porcelain Museum, first opened in 1973 can be found in the Boboli Gardens.

The Costume Gallery contains a collection of theatrical costumes and garments worn by the Medici family.

The Museum of Zoology and Natural History, which may seem out of text, is one of the first parts of Pitti Palace to be opened to the public. Today the museum extends through 34 rooms and displays a large collection of natural curiosities such as fossils, minerals, and exotic plants.

The Carriages Museum. On the ground floor, has exhibits of carriages and other conveyances used by the Grand Ducal court in the 18th and 19th centuries.