



A township of Florence, Fiesole is a lovely little town set in the hills at about 346 meters up, just north of Florence. Originally called Faesulae, Fiesole was an important part of the Etruscan confederacy with documentation dating back to 283 B.C. when it was conquered by the Romans. In 405 A.D. it fell into the hands of the Germans and for several centuries afterwards it became an independent municipal. Since 1125, Fiesole has been part of Florence.

Fiesole boasts a spectacular view of the city of Florence and one can admire its history through remnants such as the Etruscan walls, a Roman amphitheater and Roman baths, built by Augustus and later amplified by Hadrian. During the summer the amphitheatre, built at the beginning of the imperial period and later remodelled by Septemio and Claudio Severo, hosts the Estate Fiesolana, a music event staged in a very unique setting.

Other delightful and historic monuments to visit include the main square of Piazza Mino, once a Roman Forum, the Romanesque Cathedral of San Romolo, dating back to 1024, and the 14th century Municipal building.

The cathedral contains many important works of art such as the main altarpiece by Bicci di Lorenzo, and frescoes by Cosimo Rosselli.

Another gothic monument building to admire is the Abbey of San Francesco originally built in 1330 by a group of hermits but later taken by the Franciscan Friars who then enlarged it in 1407. Here one can find paintings which include the Annunciation by Raffaello del Garbo (at the main altar), and a Madonna with Saints Sebastian and Michael, by the School of Perugino. The Abbey also includes a museum, Museo Etnografico, which contains a remarkable collection of pieces, some dating back to the time of the Etruscans in Fiesole.

The Basilica of Saint Alexander was built upon the ruins of a Roman temple which was originally built on the ruins of an Etruscan temple, is said to date back to the 7th century but rebuilt again in the 11th.

In Fiesole's park one can enjoy a captivating view over the city of Florence. Also in the park one will find a statue dedicated to the three Carabinieri (government policeman) who gave their lives in exchange to save a group of hostages taken by the Nazis in 1944. Further down hill find the equestrian statue of Oreste Calzolari. Leaving Fiesole, and heading back down the hill to Florence, you can admire other lovely landscapes like the hamlet of San Domenico or the old road of Fiesole, the Vecchia Via Fiesolana, where you can see a tabernacle with the Virgin Mary and Saints.

The Villa Medici, built by Michelozzo is also found along this road. The house was built in 1458 for Cosimo the elder but was mainly used by Lorenzo the Magnificent for social gatherings.

If you turn right at San Domenico you will come upon Fiesole's original antique cathedral, Badia Fiesolana. The church was restored extensively in the 15th century but the 12th century

façade still remains.