



Florence as the sun sets

In the Footsteps of Florence: A Nightingale Nursing History Tour to Florence 8-13 May 2026



**JON BAINES
TOURS**

Level 3
MODERATE





Ponte Vecchio, Florence

Celebrate the legacy of Florence Nightingale with a journey to her birthplace – the historic city that shares her name. Trace the evolution of Florence, from its Roman roots through medieval alleys to the Renaissance grandeur of Piazza della Signoria. Admire the iconic Duomo and visit the Basilica di Santa Croce, where Galileo is buried.

Engage with the city's rich medical history at La Specola, one of Europe's oldest scientific museums, founded during the Medici era and home to the world's largest collection of 18th-century anatomical waxworks. Discover the Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella, a centuries-old monastic pharmacy renowned for its beautiful interiors and time-honoured herbal remedies.

Wander the Boboli Gardens, an expansive and elegant landscape once designed for the Medici court. Visit the Museum of the

Duomo, where an important collection of art and architectural works showcase the artistic spirit of the Renaissance era. For a final highlight, commemorate the birth of Florence Nightingale with a tour of Villa La Colombaia, the elegant Tuscan villa where she was born on 12 May 1820.

This tour follows *In the Footsteps of Florence: A Nightingale Nursing History Tour to Germany* (3–6 May 2026). Enhance your experience by combining both tours – we'll arrange train travel from Düsseldorf to Florence, including a two-night stop in Basel along the way.

THIS TOUR IS CLASSED AS:

Level 3 | Moderate



Regular walking at destinations, extended standing and /or increased travel distances. Good fitness is required.

5 nights Florence

Day 1: Florence (Fri, 8 May) **D**

Pm: Arrive at the city centre Executive Hotel Firenze. Check in and at leisure.

Eve: Welcome dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 2: Florence (Sat, 9 May) **B**

Am: Meet with a local guide for a walking tour of Florence. In Piazza della Repubblica, discover the city's beginnings as a Roman settlement. Wander through narrow streets onto the open Piazza della Signoria, the political centre of the city since the Middle Ages. See the Basilica di Santa Croce, where Galileo is buried.

Pm: At leisure for lunch before visiting the Great Museum of the Duomo, the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore, the Baptistry and the Crypt of Santa Reparata. Walk back to the hotel in the late afternoon.

Day 3: Florence (Sun, 10 May) **B**

Am: Visit La Specola Museum, an eclectic natural history museum containing the world's largest collection of eighteenth-century anatomical wax works.

Pm: At leisure for lunch, then walk to the magnificent Boboli Gardens, established by the Medici family in 1766, creating the Italian garden style that would become a model for many European courts.

Day 4: Florence (Mon, 11 May) **B**

Am: Walk to the historic Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella. Founded by Dominican friars in 1221, this perfumery and herbalist shop is considered the world's oldest pharmacy. Continue to the Museo degli Innocenti, housed in a beautifully preserved Renaissance building that once served as an orphanage. Today, it showcases a collection of significant artworks, including Botticelli's *Madonna with the Child and an Angel*.

Pm: Afternoon at leisure.

Day 5: Florence (Tue, 12 May) **B D**

Am: Enjoy a scenic drive through the Tuscan countryside to Villa La Colombaia, the birthplace of Florence Nightingale. Surrounded by rolling hills, this historic villa offers a glimpse into the early life of the pioneering nurse and social reformer.

Pm: Lunch and afternoon at leisure.

Eve: Farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 6: Florence (Wed, 13 May) **B**

Am: Depart hotel after breakfast.

All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.

Hospital of Innocents Florence



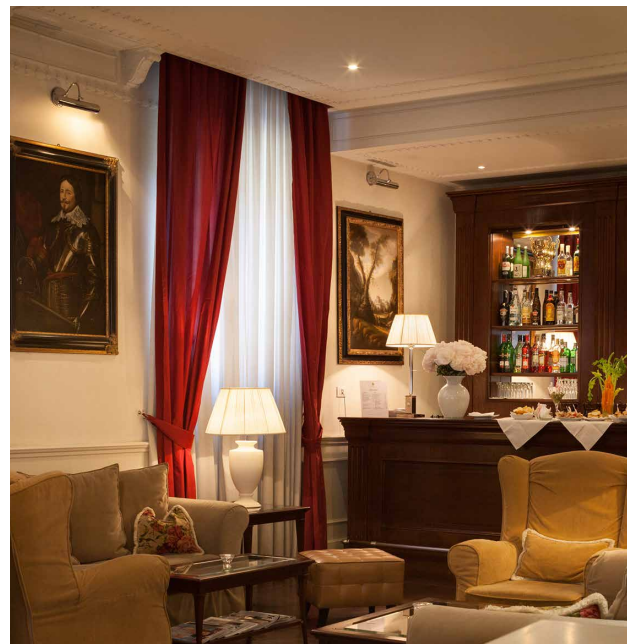


River and Minster view, Basel

Hotel

Executive Hotel Firenze (Florence) is a romantic boutique hotel located in Florence's historic centre, just steps from the River Arno. The elegant 19th century building was built as a noble house residence by the Granduca Ferdinando III and has retained the frescoes painted by Luigi Ademollo in 1816-1820 and many original antiques.

The classic double rooms reserved for the tour have a classic Florentine style, decorated with warm pastel colours and oak parquet floors. The hotel is also equipped with a cosy bar, a tea and coffee station and 24-hour concierge service.



Reception lounge, Executive Hotel Firenze

Pre Tour Extension to Basel

The tour can be combined with *In the Footsteps of Florence: A Nightingale Nursing History Tour of Germany* (3-6 May 2026).

Follow the Rhine south on a scenic train journey and connect two historic cities that shaped the early life of Florence Nightingale. Depart Düsseldorf by train on 6 May and

spend 2-nights in Basel, explore its wealth of iconic buildings, galleries and museums. Arrive in Florence late afternoon on 8 May for the start of the tour.

The package includes train travel and 2 nights at the historic and centrally located Hotel Rochat in Basel.

Tour Leader

Maddie Blackburn was awarded an OBE in the Kings New Year's Honours list 2025 for her services to people with life-shortening conditions. She is retired but remains academically and professionally active.

Maddie originally trained as a Nightingale Nurse and was previously a trustee for the former Nightingale Fellowship. She is a retired solicitor, senior health professional, clinician and academic. Over the decades, she has developed considerable experience in children's and young people's policy and legislation across health, social care, criminal justice, legal, regulatory and the charity sector. Her academic research and policy interests include the sexuality of young people with life-limiting and/ or life-threatening conditions.

Maddie was the founding Chair of the Open University Sexuality Alliance and has recently co-edited and authored a book for Routledge, Taylor & Francis: *Sex, Intimacy and Living with Life- Shortening Conditions* (2024).

Along with husband Paul Dennison, Maddie assisted Jon Baines Tours with a visit to Florence and Villa Colombaia in 2022.



The cost of the tour is €1,984 per person sharing

The cost of the tour with a room to yourself is €2,514

The cost includes:

- 5 nights' accommodation in a twin- or double-bedded room in a medium grade hotel
- The services of tour leader, Dr Maddie Blackburn OBE
- Breakfast daily and dinner as mentioned
- All internal transport
- A full programme of cultural visits with specialist guides as per the itinerary
- All admission fees, tips and taxes

The cost excludes:

- International flights
- Meals not mentioned
- Drinks with meals
- All optional excursions, tours and visits; all personal extras such as porterage, laundry and inoculation fees; travel insurance and visas

Pre tour extension to Basel:

Extension cost is is €494 pp sharing

Extension cost with a room to yourself is €550



Florence Nightingale statue

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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Fountain of Neptune, Piazza della Signoria (top);
A wine window, Florence; Santa Maria Duomo, Florence (above)



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