

Description of pisa, italy essay sample



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The town of Pisa is located in the Tuskany region on the western coast of Italy. From the 11th to the 13th centuries Pisa was the commercial empire of southern Italy, expanding Italy's power over the islands of Corsica, Sicily, and Sardinia and controlling most of the Tuscan coast. During this time and subsequent centuries, Pisa built up its power and economic fortitude, and its wealth allowed for the construction of the gleaming white marble complex of religious buildings known as the Campo dei Miracoli, the Field of Miracles. This assembly of magnificent construction is the most important example of Italian medieval architecture, and in this one location one can visit the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the monumental cemetery of the Campo Santo, and of course, the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

The Cathedral

The plan of the Cathedral is a Latin cross, but the interior of the church is as much a work of art as the outside, rich with precious decorations and works created by important artists of the period. Of important note is the marble pulpit, made by Giovanni Pisano, an exquisite example of Italian Gothic sculpture. So grand did the cathedral's architect Buscheto believe his masterpiece to be, that he did not hesitate to inscribe in Latin in the far left arch, " This marble church has no equal."

The Baptistery

The Baptistery, a lovely circular building, contains the most important work of art in Pisa—a hexagonal marble pulpit built by Nicola Pisano, father of Giovanni. The pulpit represents the transition from Romanesque to Gothic

art, and its polygonal form is quite rare for its period. The walls of the pulpit are decorated with scenes from the life of Christ.

Cemetery Of the Campo Santo

Campo Santo, the 13th-century cloistered cemetery, is reputedly built on earth brought by Crusaders from the Holy Land. Although severely damaged by bombs during WWII, the remarkable frescoes inside recently underwent restoration. The boundary of this cemetery is marked by a rectangular enclosure of marble, and the cemetery also contains several monuments, sculptures, and ancient sarcophagi of historical and artistic value. Today, most visitors come to the Campo dei Miracoli to see the Tower, the Cathedral, or the Baptistery; however, centuries ago it was the cemetery that was the most important meeting place in town, a place to visit to pray, chat, or just sit and rest.

Leaning tower (Torre Pendente Di Pisa)

The famous Leaning Tower is the cathedral's bell-tower, upon which construction began in 1173. It is considered to be one of the most amazing architectural wonders still standing. Soon after building began, by the original architect Bonanno Pisano, the foundation of dirt and sand settled unevenly causing an initial overhang of circa 5 cm. Construction was stopped, but was continued about 100 years later (1275) by Giovanni di Simone, who added three more levels, bringing the height of the building to 48 m. It then became very clear that the Pisa tower was leaning to the South since the inclination of the Tower had increased to more than 90 cm. Construction continued off and on for about 700 years.

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Since regular measuring of the tower began in 1911, the top of the tower has moved 1, 2 millimetres (0, 05 inch) per year. Today the top of the Tower of Pisa is some 5, 3m (17, 4 ft) off-center. Because the Tower tilted in different directions in its first years, it is slightly curved, like a banana. Engineers are working on the footing of the Tower rather than on the structure, hoping to ease the top back about 20 cm (about 8 inches). But it means that the 800-year old tower will remain leaning. Currently the round tower has eight-stories, is 55 m (180 ft) tall, and has a base diameter of 16 m (52 ft). There are 296 steps to the top and there are 7 bells, the largest one weighing about three and a half tons. At the base of the tower, the walls are 8 feet thick.