

## PISA

Everyone in the world knows about the leaning tower built in 1173, but the ancient city of Pisa can lay claim to a number of firsts and unique characteristics.

Nobody knows for sure who founded the city of Pisa. Ligurians, Ionians and Etruscans all have equal claim, but even though today the city is located a few miles from the coast due to silt accumulations, for most of its life Pisa was a port and its maritime power was remarkable.

Pisa fought against the Saracens and participated in the Crusades, evidence of which still can be seen in the Church of Saint Stephen of the Templars which is located in the appropriately named Piazza Cavalieri or the Knight's Square. This square dates back to roman times when it was the site of the Forum.

The city itself is a work of art waiting to be discovered. The city's university is the oldest one in Italy, and was founded by Napoleon.

Galileo taught there and many scholars were attracted there during the years, including Leopardi, Byron, Shelley and Elizabeth Barret Browning.

Last but not least not many people know that Pisa may be the very first Tuscan city in which the Jews settled beginning in the year 850 and flourishing there through the years and especially under the protection of the Medici family, the rulers of Florence.



