

“Index of Art Historical Sites: Milan, Italy: Milan Cathedral”

Mary Ann Sullivan

Milan Cathedral

1380's-19th century

Begun in the 1380's on a site where several churches had existed earlier, the building of this cathedral was fraught with difficulties. Over a number of years several different architects and consultants (including Leonardo and Bramante) were asked to work on the design.

The cathedral is white marble, over a brick core, and has a cruciform plan. One of the largest cathedrals in the world (14,000 square yards) it was designed to accommodate 40,000 worshippers. The forest of pinnacles, the tracery panels, and the rich embellishment with statuary identifies it as Late Gothic. Closer to France than most Italian cathedrals, it borrows more directly from the French "rayonnant" style.



The Cathedral at different times



The main Entrance Portal



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In the 1650's work was begun on the western facade but it was not completed until the 19th century. This facade is more classical in detail than Gothic.



Pinnacles and Flying Buttresses



Entrance and dome of the Galleria (far right) across from the Duomo Piazza

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The roof and the piazza from the roof



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The earliest part of the church and the most Gothic (French Gothic, in particular) is this eastern end with the apse. The large apse windows have beautiful tracery in the "Flamboyant" Gothic style. See also, for example, [St. Maclou in Rouen, France](#).



"Flamboyant" Gothic Tracery

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Details of the eastern exterior



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Interior



The central nave looking toward the altar.



One of the side aisles (there are two on each side)



One of the side aisles (there are two on each side)

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Looking back toward the entrance

The cathedral measures 520' x 250', with the central nave 148' high. In the form of a Latin cross, it contains 14,000 square yards of space, and can accommodate 40,000 worshippers.



The vaulting



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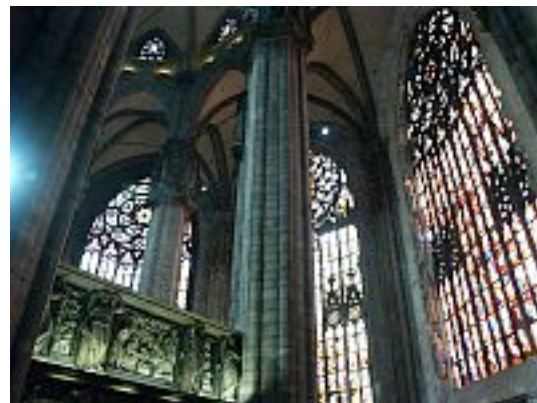
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The outer side aisle



The ambulatory of the apse



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