

Lucca Lights Up for Santa Croce



On the evening of 13 September the streets of Lucca are lined with candles for the Luminaria di Santa Croce. The origins of the festival have been lost, but it has an ancient feeling as the crowds gather in the beautiful cobblestone streets.

As night falls the citizens of Lucca form a procession through the streets from San Frediano church, wearing medieval costume, carrying religious articles and singing hymns, to the Lucca Cathedral to pray to *Il Volto Santo*, a wooden sculpture of Christ.

According to legend, the sculptor was Nicodemus, a disciple of Jesus. It was lost some time in the 8th century, but found and carried back to the town in 742.





The crowds gather as night falls, and thousands of candles light the way.

The church of San Michele is lit by candles, as is the entrance to the Duomo.

We hope for a cool, clear evening this year for the procession. Lucca looks even more beautiful than usual with its candle-lined streets and thousands of enthusiastic people watching on.

– text and photos by Debra Kolkka

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