

Fodor's Travel

# ROME



EASY PLANNING  
LOCAL WRITERS  
ITINERARIES  
USEFUL MAPS



# Fodor's Travel

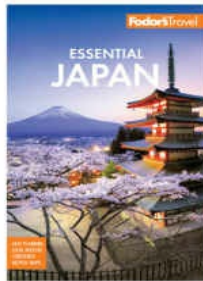


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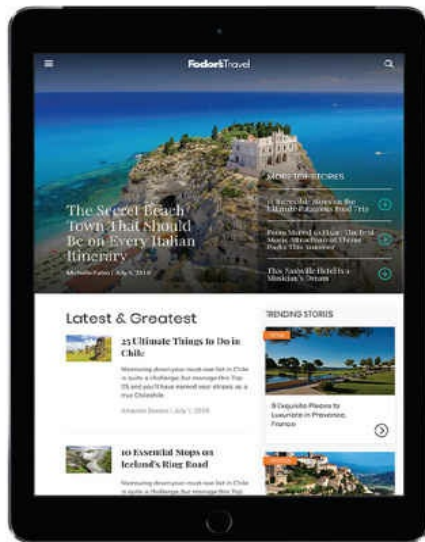
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# About This Book












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## Icons

Look for the following icons to help you identify our listings:

-  Sights
-  Hotels
-  Restaurants
-  Shops
-  Nightlife
-  Performing Arts
-  Activities
-  Beaches

Symbols used in our listings:

-  Address
-  Telephone
-  Fax
-  Website
-  Email
-  Admission fee
-  Closed times
-  Transit info
-  Directions
-  Number of hotel rooms
-  Hotel meal plans

 Reservations

 Dress code

 No credit cards

 Price

 Cross-reference

 Golf facilities



## **Fodor's Recommendations**

Everything in this guide is worth doing—we don't cover what isn't—but our favorite places are designated **Fodor'sChoice**★ to indicate our highest recommendation.

## **Sights and Activities**

We look high and low to find the most interesting things for you to see and do. For attractions, we always list adult admission fees; additional discounts are usually available for children, students, and seniors.

## **Restaurants**

Unless we state otherwise, restaurants are open for lunch and dinner daily. We classify every restaurant with a price category as well as listing the average cost of a main course at dinner (or if dinner is not served, at lunch). For more detailed restaurant reviews, visit [Fodors.com](https://www.fodors.com).



## Hotels

While we like all the hotels we recommend, we promise to always give you both the pros and cons. Unless otherwise specified, you can expect private bath, phone, and TV in your room. We classify every hotel with a price category as well as listing the average cost of a double room in high season. For more detailed hotel reviews, visit [Fodors.com](https://www.fodors.com).

## **Credit Cards**

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### EUGENE FODOR



Hungarian-born Eugene Fodor (1905–91) began his travel career as an interpreter on a French cruise ship. The experience inspired him to write *On the Continent* (1936), the first guidebook to receive annual updates and discuss a country's way of life as well as its sights. Fodor later joined the U.S. Army and worked for the OSS in World War II. After the war, he kept up his intelligence work while expanding his guidebook series. During the Cold War, many guides were written by fellow agents who understood the value of insider information. Today's guides continue Fodor's legacy by providing travelers with timely coverage, insider tips, and cultural context.



# Welcome to Rome

Italy's vibrant capital lives in the present, but no other city on earth evokes its past so powerfully. For over 2,500 years, emperors, popes, artists, and common citizens have left their mark here. Archaeological remains from ancient Rome, art-stuffed churches, and the treasures of Vatican City vie for your attention, but Rome is also a wonderful place to practice the Italian-perfected *il dolce far niente*, the sweet art of idleness. Your most memorable experiences may include sitting at a *caffè* in the Campo de' Fiori or strolling in a beguiling piazza.

## TOP REASONS TO GO

- ★ **History:** The Colosseum and the Forum are just two amazing archaeological musts.
- ★ **Food:** From pasta and pizza to innovative fare, great meals at trattorias or enotecas.
- ★ **Art:** Works by Michelangelo, Raphael, Bernini, and Caravaggio dazzle around the city.
- ★ **Churches:** Places of worship from the Byzantine to baroque eras hold artistic bounty.
- ★ **Landmarks:** The Pantheon, St. Peter's Basilica, the Spanish Steps—to name only a few.
- ★ **Shopping:** Chic boutiques around Piazza di Spagna, flea-market finds in Trastevere.

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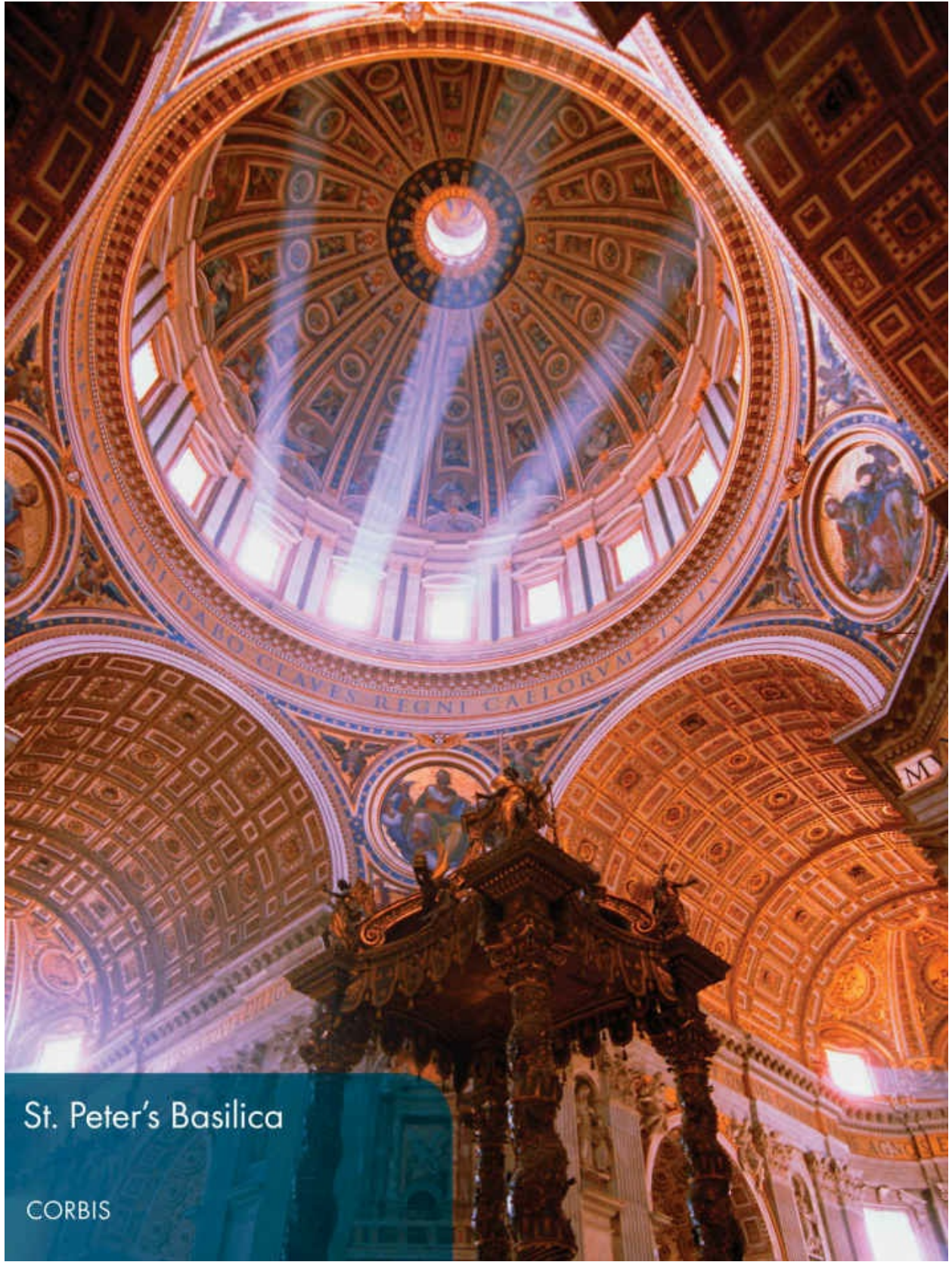
Rome Metro and Suburban Railway



# Colosseum

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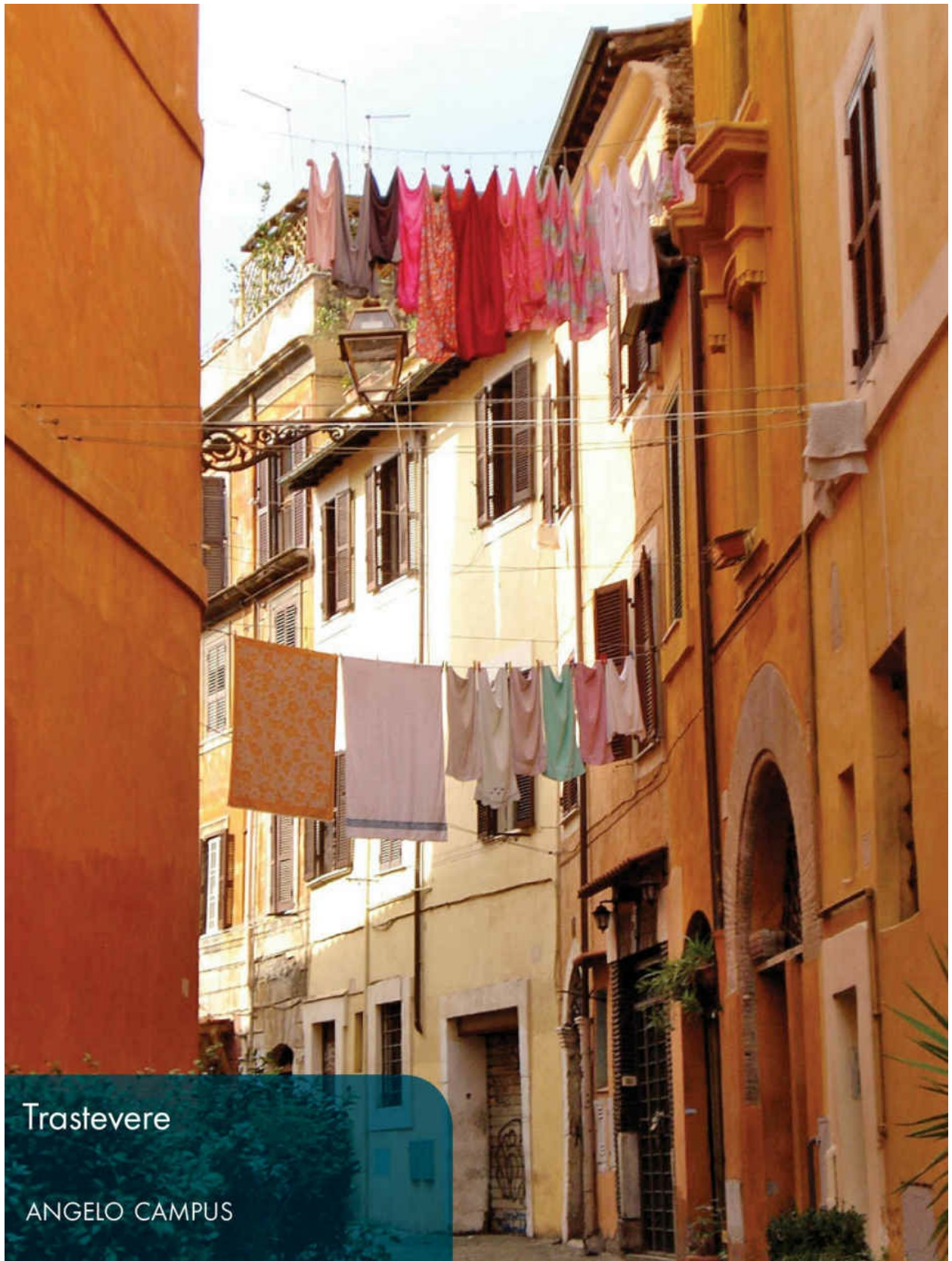




St. Peter's Basilica

CORBIS





Trastevere

ANGELO CAMPUS

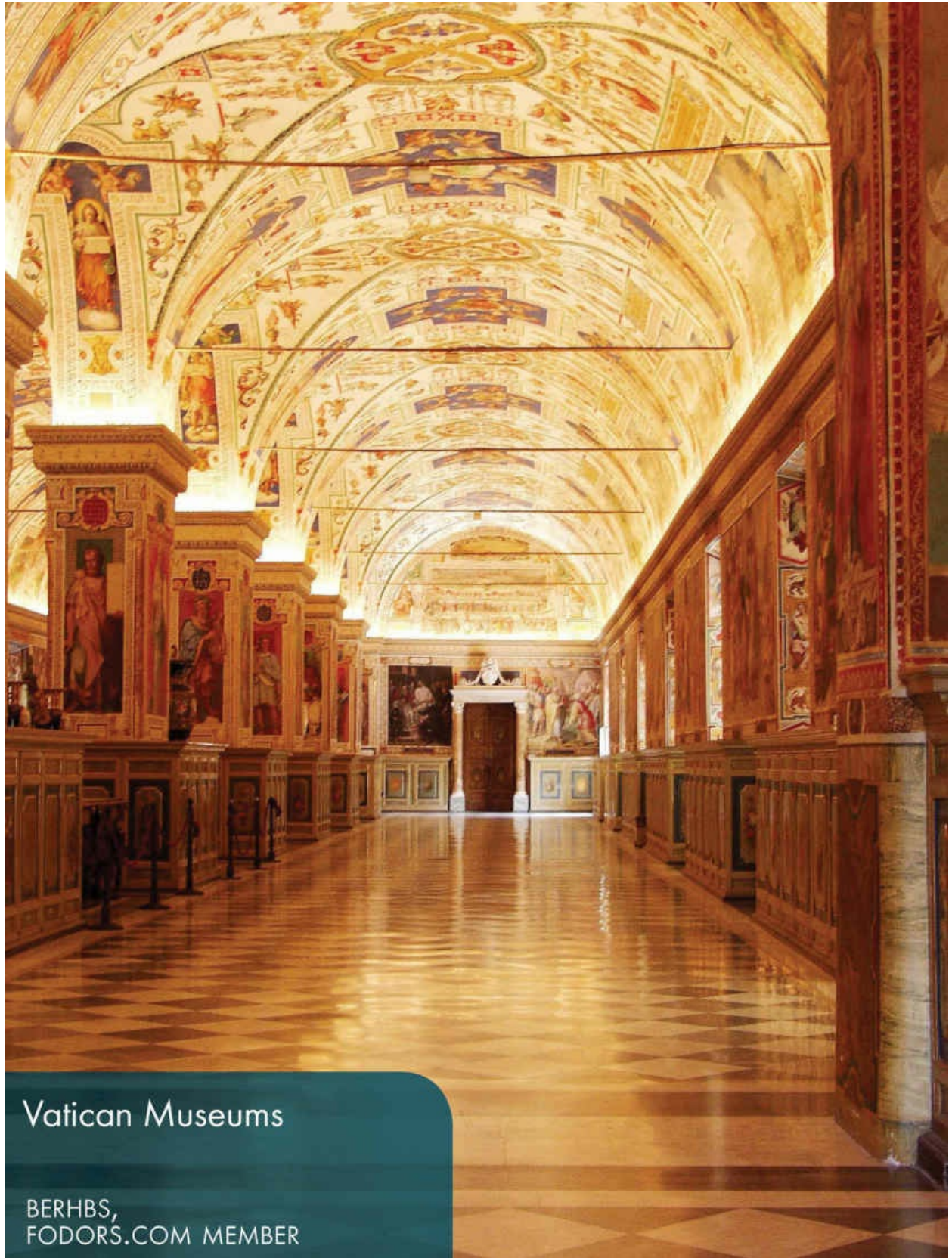




## Spanish Steps

BRUCE\_OF\_OZ/FICKR

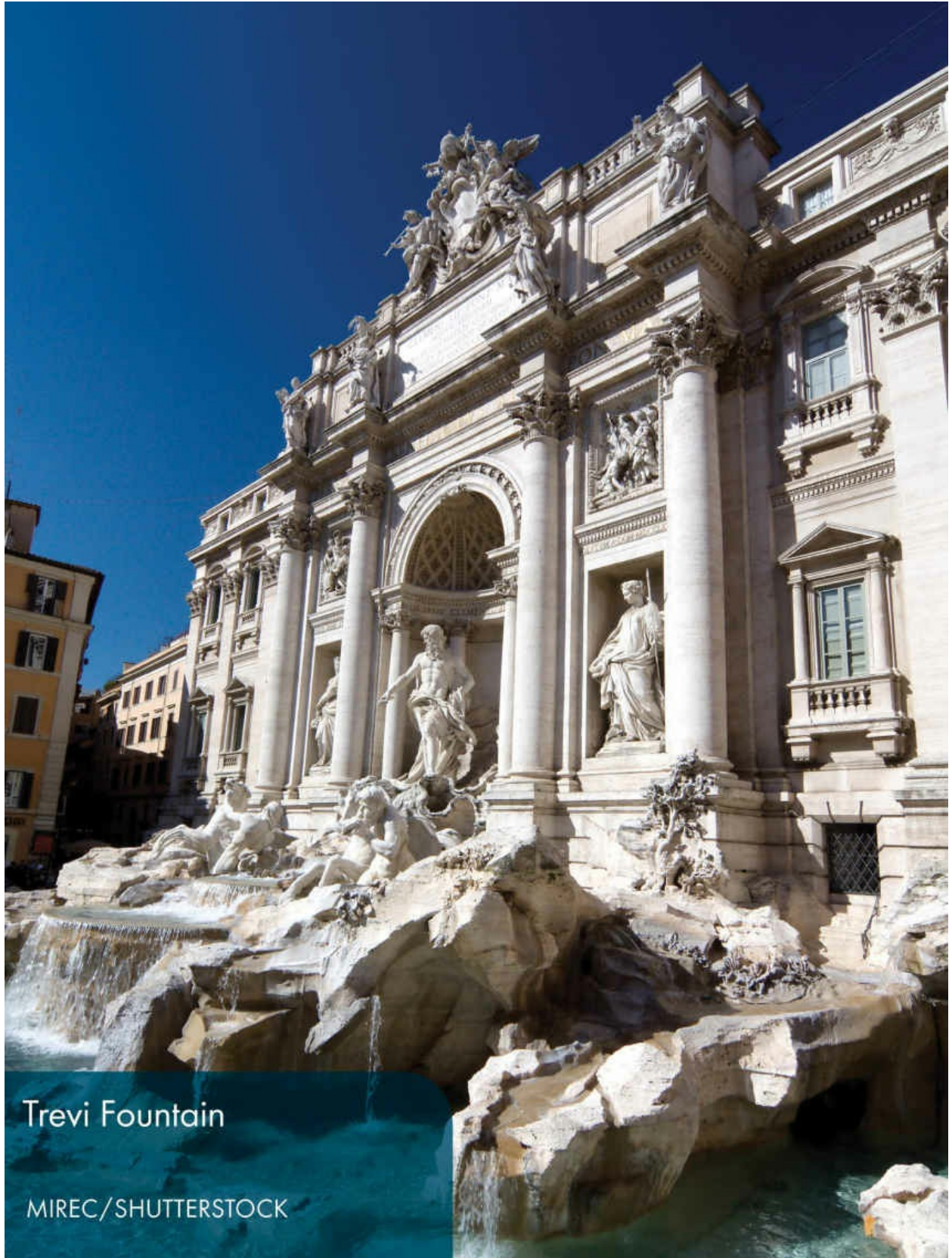




## Vatican Museums

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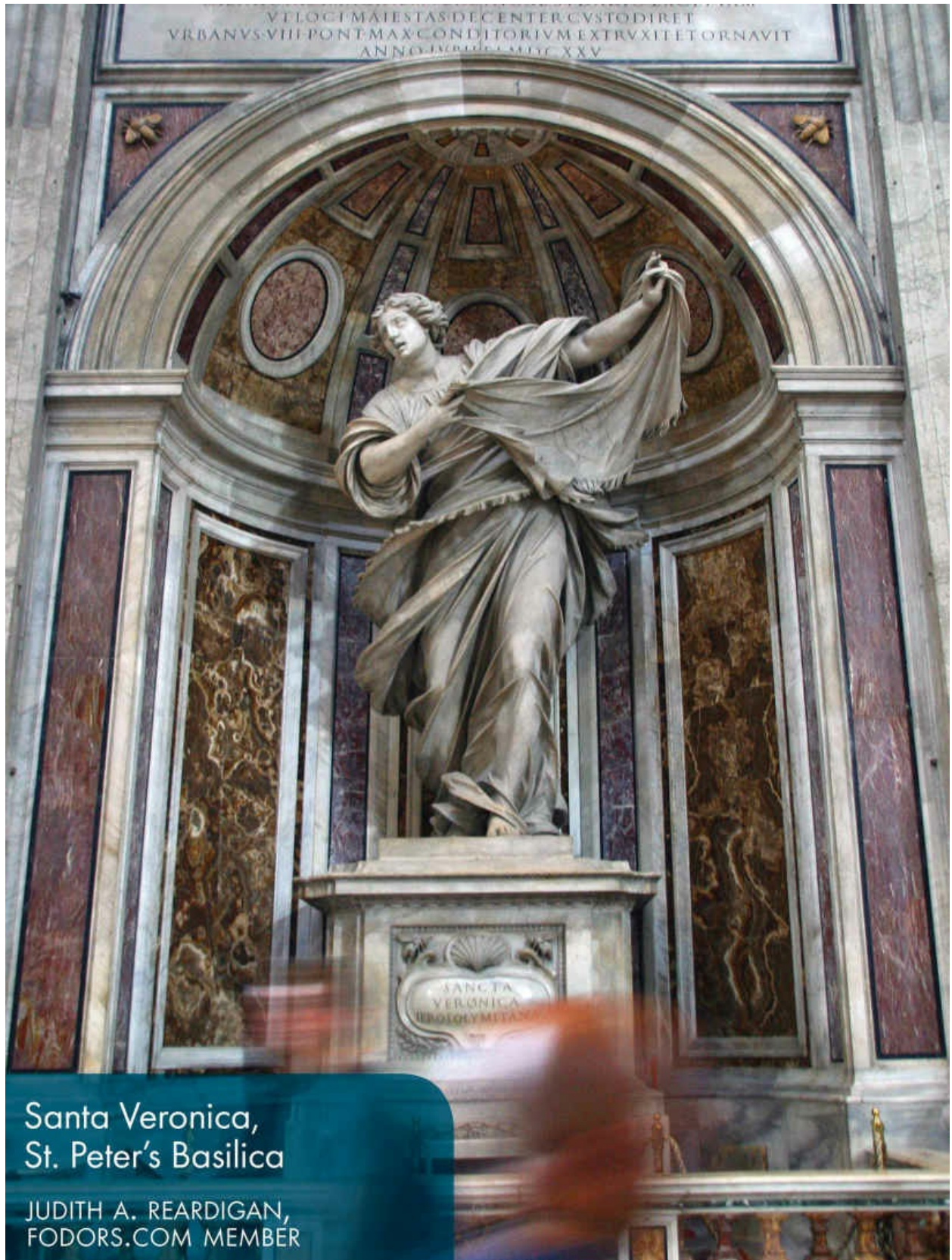




Trevi Fountain

MIREC/SHUTTERSTOCK



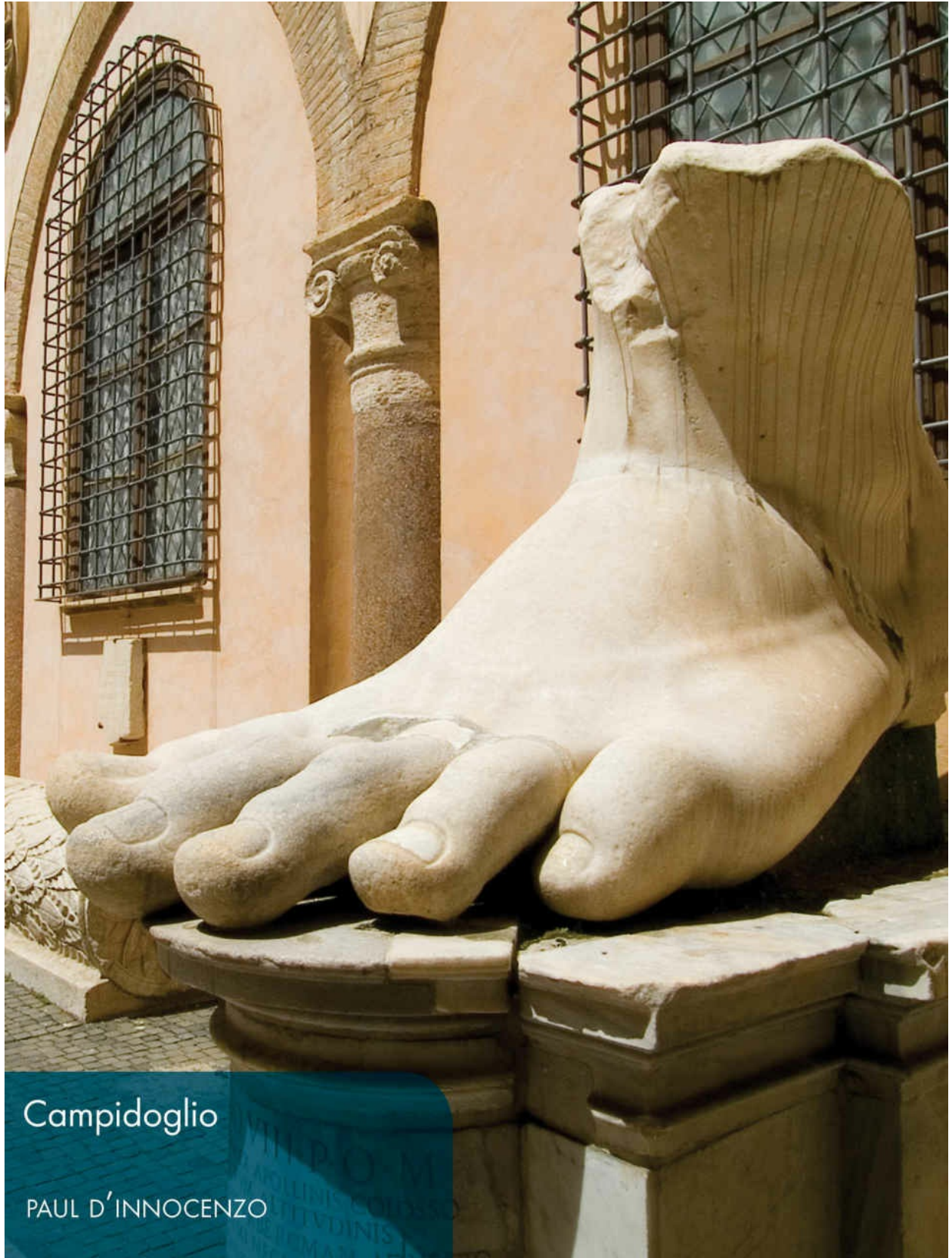


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VRBANVS VIII PONT MAX CONDITORIVM EXTRVXIT ET ORNAVIT  
ANNO MDCCLXXV

Santa Veronica,  
St. Peter's Basilica

JUDITH A. REARDIGAN,  
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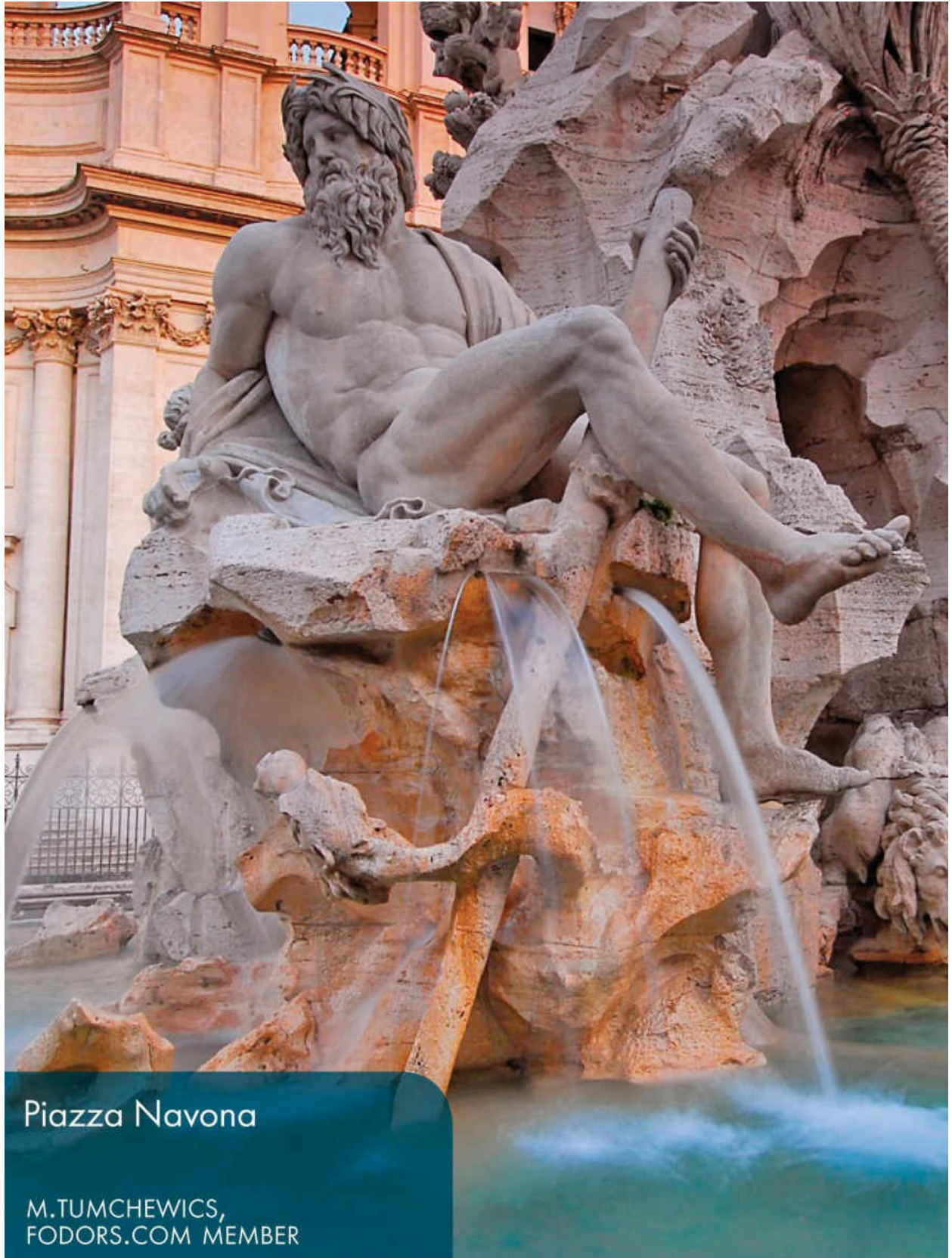




Campidoglio

PAUL D'INNOCENZO

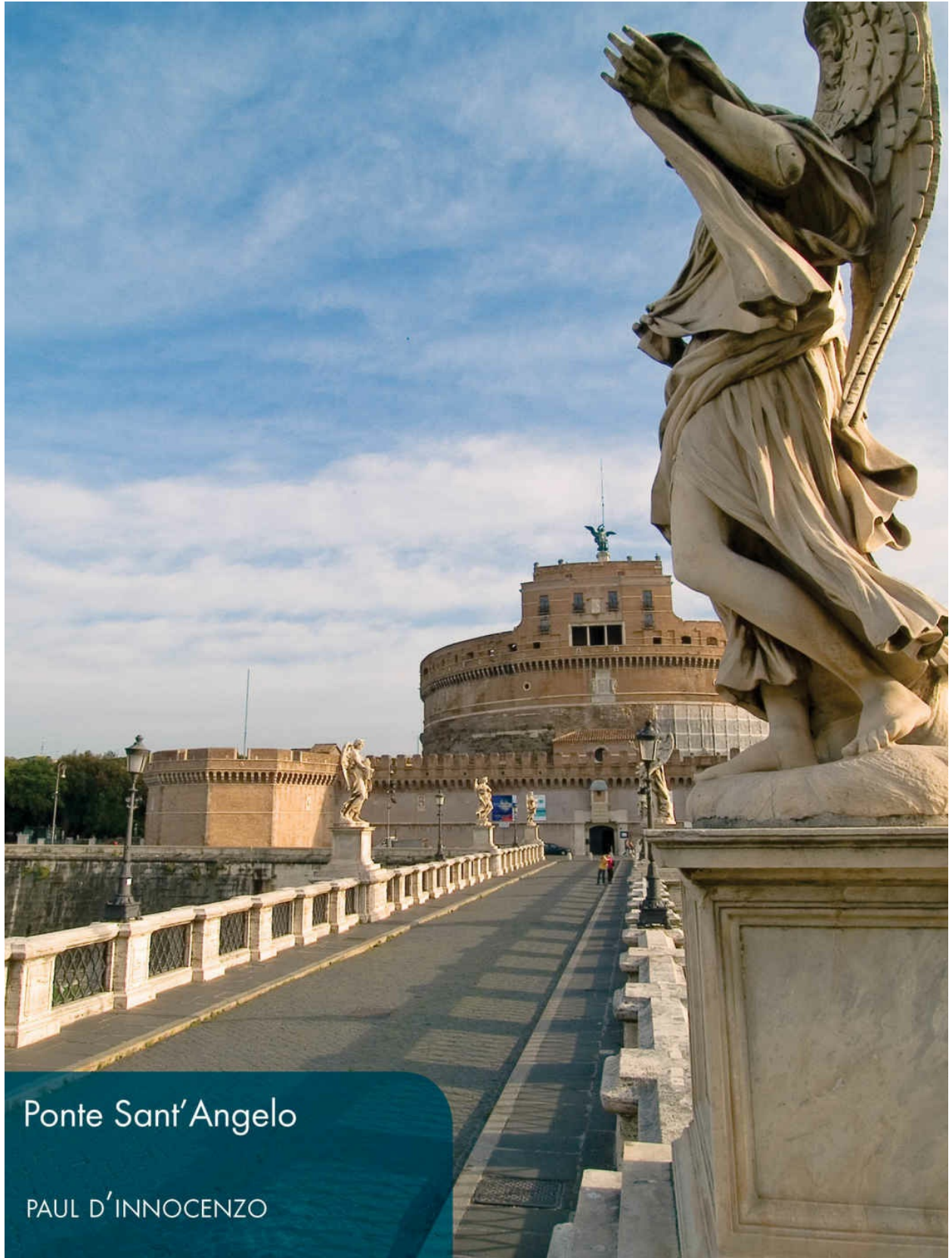




## Piazza Navona

M.TUMCHEWICS,  
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Ponte Sant'Angelo

PAUL D'INNOCENZO



## Chapter 1

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# EXPERIENCE ROME



## 24 ULTIMATE EXPERIENCES

Rome offers terrific experiences that should be on every traveler's list. Here are Fodor's top picks for a memorable trip.

### 1 **Piazza Navona**

One of the most popular public spaces in Rome, the magnificent, oval-shaped Piazza Navona is lined with restaurants, gelaterias, souvenir shops, and Baroque art by both Bernini and Borromini. (*Ch. 5*)

### 2 **MAXXI Museum**

It's easy to forget that Rome has some wonderful modern art museums; the best is the Zaha Hadid–designed MAXXI (Museum of 21st Century Art). (*Ch. 8*)

### 3 **Gelato**

A frozen mixture of custard, milk, and cream, gelato is generally denser and less fatty than normal ice cream. Rome has no shortage of excellent *gelaterias*, but it's smart to stick to the old-school shops. (*Ch. 3–11*)

### 4 **Palazzo Barberini/Galleria Nazionale**

This impressive palace was once home to the powerful Barberini family, and today, you'll find within a splendid collection of art, including works from famed Italian artists like Raphael and Caravaggio. (*Ch. 7*)

### 5 **Via Appia Antica**

Known as the Queen of Roads, this ancient road is lined with ruins and the underground graves of Rome's earliest Christians; the spooky yet mesmerizing catacombs can still be visited today. (*Ch. 11*)

## **6** The Jewish Ghetto

Rome's Jewish population lived in this closed community from the 16th century until 1870, and today it still is the cultural home of Jewish Rome, with historic synagogues and excellent Jewish bakeries. (*Ch. 5*)

## **7** Churches

Roman churches, from Santa Maria della Vittoria to San Luigi dei Francesi, are full of impressive art and architecture from Renaissance and Baroque masters. (*Ch. 3–11*)

## **8** Shopping in Piazza di Spagna

Piazza di Spagna and nearby Via dei Condotti and Via del Corso are where you can find major intentional chains and the flagship stores of Italian designer brands. (*Ch. 6*)

## **9** The Roman Forum

This fabled labyrinth of ruins once served as a political playground, a center of commerce, and a place where justice was dispensed during the days of the Roman Republic and Empire. (*Ch. 3*)

## **10** The Vatican Museums

As the home base for the Catholic Church and the papacy, the Vatican sees millions of visitors each year, who come to explore its museums and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel. (*Ch. 4*)

## **11** Espresso and Caffè

When in Rome, you must drink espresso (drip coffee and Starbucks don't even exist here). Stop by a classic *caffè* and sit down to enjoy one of the city's most beloved traditions. (*Ch. 3–11*)

## 12 Campo de'Fiori

Shopping for fresh fruit and vegetables at the *mercato* is a way of life for many Romans; one of the city's most popular is the daily (except Sunday) Campo de'Fiori. (Ch. 5)

## 13 Priory of the Knights of Malta

By the nondescript door to the Priory of the Knights of Malta up on the Aventine Hill, peep through the keyhole and you'll spy a perfect view of Saint Peter's Basilica across the city. (Ch. 10)

## 14 Ostia Antica

Located about 40 minutes outside Rome, this ancient port city is one of the best-preserved archaeological sites in Italy. (Ch. 12)

## 15 The Pantheon

Constructed to honor all pagan gods, this best-preserved temple of ancient Rome was rebuilt in the 2nd century AD, and has survived intact because it was consecrated as a Christian church. (Ch. 5)

## 16 Trastevere

This charming, village-like neighborhood is a maze of cobblestone streets, traditional Roman trattorias, and medieval houses. (Ch. 9)

## 17 The Colosseum

The most internationally recognized symbol of Rome, this mammoth amphitheater was the site of gladiatorial combats and animal fights. (Ch. 3)

## 18 St. Peter's Basilica

Within the world's most important Catholic church, visit the site of the

martyrdom and burial of St. Peter and marvel at Michelangelo's cupola. (Ch. 4)

## 19 **Aperitivo**

After work, Romans love to meet for *aperitivo*, the Italian happy hour. Any bar worth its salt offers snacks and a collection of cocktails, including the classic Aperol Spritz. (Ch. 3–11)

## 20 **The Spanish Steps**

Connecting the ritzy shops at the bottom with the ritzy hotels at the top, this is one of Rome's liveliest spots, with tourists and locals congregating on the steps and around the fountain at their base. (Ch. 6)

## 21 **Capitoline Museum**

On the smallest and most scared of Rome's seven hills, you'll find the world's first public museum, a greatest-hits collection of Roman art through the ages. (Ch. 3)

## 22 **La Cucina Roman**

Traditionally dubbed *la cucina povera*, Roman specialties tend to be simple, with a few ingredients prepared using tried-and-true methods. Classics include fried artichokes, carbonara, and *caio e pepe*. (Ch. 3–11)

## 23 **Trevi Fountain**

One the few fountains in Rome actually more absorbing than the people crowding around it, the Fontana di Trevi is nothing short of magical. (Ch. 6)

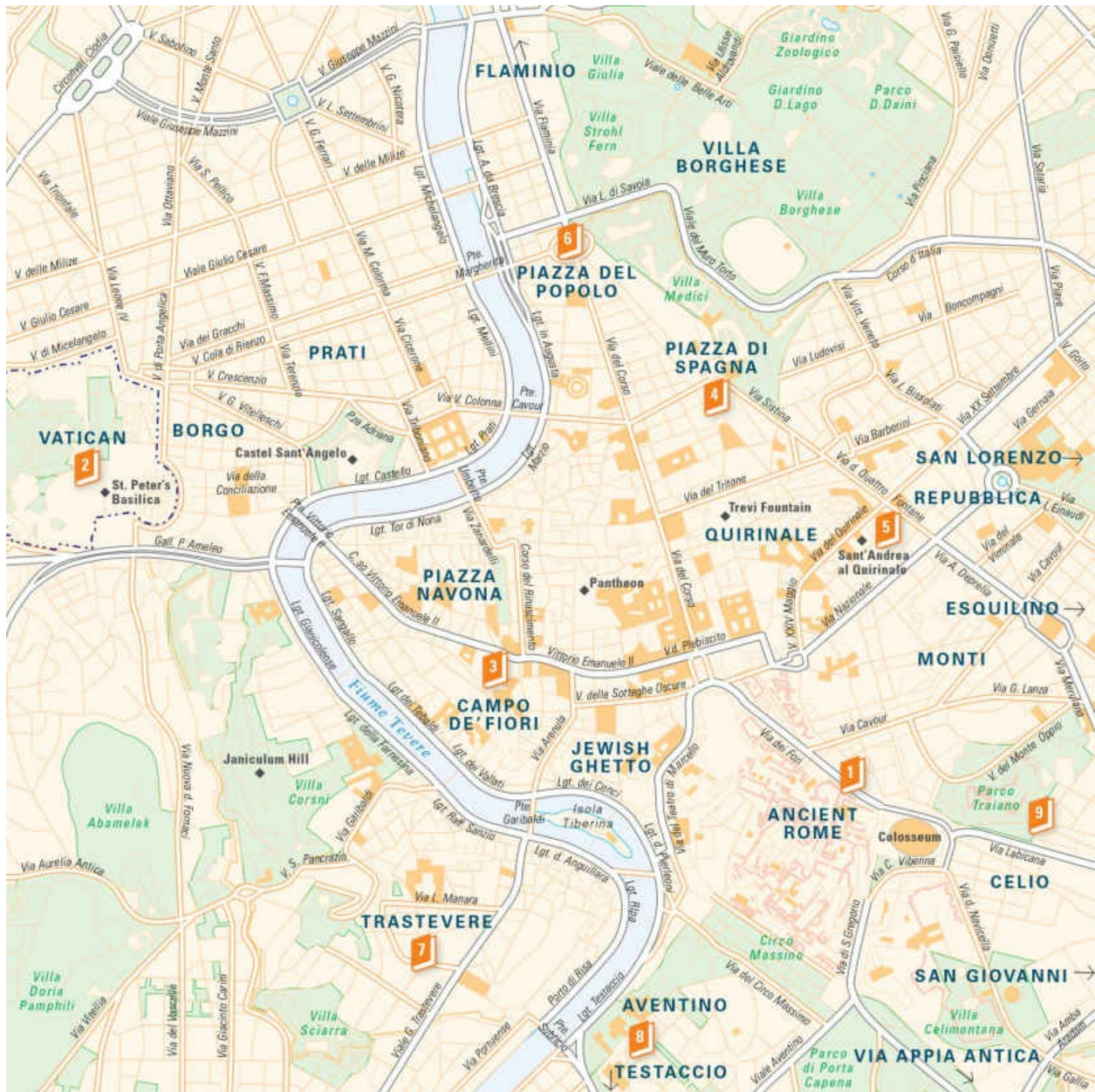
## 24 **Galleria Borghese**

Only the best could satisfy the aesthetic taste of Cardinal Scipione Borghese, whose artistic holdings within this museum evoke the essence of Baroque

Rome. (*Ch. 8*)



# WHAT'S WHERE



**1 Ancient Rome.** No other archaeological park in the world has so compact a nucleus of fabled sights; nearby Monti has artisanal shops, restaurants, bars, and high-end boutiques.

**2 The Vatican.** An independent sovereign state, the Pope's residence draws millions to St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums. Borgo and Prati are

the neighborhoods right outside the Vatican.

**3 Piazza Navona, Campo de' Fiori, and the Jewish Ghetto.** The Piazza Navona and Campo de' Fiori are busy meeting points, surrounded by restaurants and caffè, with the Pantheon nearby. The Jewish Ghetto is the historic center of Jewish life in Rome, and still home to Rome's main synagogue.

**4 Piazza di Spagna.** The Spanish Steps are iconic, and the surrounding area is the place to window-shop, thanks to upscale fashion boutiques. The Trevi Fountain is a short walk away.

**5 Repubblica and Quirinale.** These areas bustle with government offices during the day, but are also home to several churches and sights, including Bernini's Baroque Sant'Andrea al Quirinale.

**6 Villa Borghese and Around.** The Villa Borghese, Rome's vast city park, is home to dazzling museums while nearby Piazza del Popolo is prime people-watching territory.

**7 Trastevere.** This picturesque neighborhood attracts locals and visitors to its restaurants and wine bars. The Janiculum Hill has incomparable views.

**8 Aventino and Testaccio.** These neighborhoods are off the usual tourist track but have the vibrancy of true Rome. Aventino is an elegant residential area, while Testaccio is traditionally working-class, although rapidly gentrifying, and has a hip nightlife scene.

**9 Esquilino and Around.** These are some of Rome's least touristy and most beloved neighborhoods, with plenty of ancient sights and spectacular churches. The verdant Via Appia Antica leads past the landmark church of Domine Quo Vadis to the catacombs and beyond.



# What to Eat and Drink in Rome



## **SALUMI AND PROSCIUTTO AT ROSCIOLI**

This family-run deli/restaurant originally opened as a grocery store and today the counter is still piled high with 300 types of cheeses, 150 varieties of salami and cold cuts, and confections of olive oil, mustards, and sauces.

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## **PIZZA**

In Rome, there are two pizza styles to know: *pizza tonda* (round pizza) and *pizza al taglio* (by the slice). The latter has a thicker, focaccia-like crust and is cut into squares; these are sold by weight and generally available all day. The typical *pizza tonda* has a very thin crust and is cooked in a wood-burning oven that reaches extremely hot temperatures; these pizzerie, like Pizzeria ai Marmi, tend to open for dinner only.

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### CACIO E PEPE

Meaning “cheese and pepper,” this is a simple pasta dish from the *cucina povera*, or rustic cooking, tradition. It’s a favorite Roman primo, usually made with *tonnarelli* (fresh egg pasta a bit thicker than spaghetti), coated with pecorino-cheese sauce and lots of freshly ground black pepper. You can find it at most classic Roman trattorias.

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### GELATO

For many visitors, their first taste of Italian gelato is revelatory. Its consistency is a cross between regular American ice cream and soft-serve, and the best versions are extremely flavorful, and always made fresh daily. When choosing a *gelateria*, avoid the places hawking industrially made gelato in unnatural colors and flavors and opt for the places serving the artisanal stuff.

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### FRITTI

The classic Roman starter (especially at a pizzeria) is *fritti*, an assortment of fried treats, usually crumbed or in batter. Popular options include *filetti di baccala* (salt cod in batter), *fiori di zucca* (zucchini flowers, usually stuffed with anchovy and mozzarella), and *supplì* (rice balls stuffed with mozzarella and other ingredients).

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### AMARO COCKTAILS

You can find cocktails that include *amaro*, the popular bittersweet Italian liqueur, in most cocktail bars in Rome (it’s a main ingredient in drinks like the Aperol Spritz and Negroni). But the best place to sample this Italian staple is Il Marchese, Europe’s first amaro bar, where you can choose from around 550 different bottles.

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### ESPRESSO

Few Romans can live without *il caffè*, and there is no shortage of coffee bars to satisfy cravings. Real Italian espresso is a thimbleful of aromatic black liquid, prepared by a barista in a variety of ways, but always enjoyed leisurely while sitting down (to-go cups are not a thing here).

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### ARTICHOKES

Winter through spring is artichoke season in Rome, and restaurants all over the city put them on menus as appetizers or side dishes. There are two styles

to know: *carciofi alla romana*, i.e. Roman-style artichokes, which are stuffed with garlic and wild Roman mint and cooked in olive oil and water, and *carciofi alla giudia*, Jewish-style artichokes, which are smashed so the leaves open up and then fried to crispy perfection. The former can be found in trattorias all over the city, but the place to get the latter is in the Jewish Ghetto.

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#### **PASTA ALL'AMATRICIANA**

A classic Roman pasta, the origins of *amatriciana* are in the Lazio town of Amatrice, hence the name. Sometimes served with bucatini, mezze maniche, or rigatoni, it always consists of a tomato-based sauce with *guanciale* and pecorino. You'll find it just about everywhere Roman classics are served.

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#### **CODA ALLA VACCINARA**

Rome's largest slaughterhouse in the 1800s was in the Testaccio neighborhood, and that's where you'll still find dishes like this, "oxtail in the style of the cattle butcher." This dish is made from ox or veal tails stewed with tomatoes, carrots, celery, and wine, and usually seasoned with cinnamon. It's simmered for hours, and then finished with raisins and pine nuts or bittersweet chocolate.

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#### **LA GRICIA**

This dish is often referred to as a "white amatriciana," because it's precisely that: pasta (usually spaghetti or rigatoni) served with pecorino cheese and *guanciale*—thus *amatriciana* without the tomato sauce. It's a lighter alternative to carbonara (it doesn't contain eggs), and its origins date back further than the *amatriciana*.

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#### **TRAPIZZINO**

A cross between a *tramezzino* (a triangle-shaped sandwich made with two slices of white, crust-less bread) and pizza, the trapizzino is an original street-food creation that was born in Rome and has since expanded to Florence, Milan, New York, and beyond. The concept is simple: triangle-shaped pizza dough stuffed à la minute with fillings drawn from the tradition of Rome's *cucina povera*. Fillings differ, but you might find eggplant *parmigiana*, burrata and anchovies, tripe, or meatballs in tomato sauce. A chain fittingly called Trapizzino does them the best; locations include a shop in Trastevere

and a stall inside the Mercato Centrale in Termini station.

# What to Buy in Rome



## **JEWELRY**

Over the years, several delightful boutiques featuring unique handmade jewelry have made their debut in the Eternal City. Don't leave Rome without stepping foot in a specialized *oreficeria*.

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## **LAZIO WINE**

Lazio might not have the reputation of Piedmont or Tuscany when it comes to wine, but some local wineries are finally putting the region on the map. Roman wines can be purchased at *entotecas* (wineshops) across the city, and even in wine bars and supermarkets. Options include the versatile Cesanese, an earthy red wine.

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## **GOURMET FOOD PRODUCTS**

Thanks to the impressive selection of Italian produce, Rome luckily has no shortage of specialty food stores, gourmet outlets, and artisan shops. From Roman wine biscuits to locally produced olive oil, vinegar, condiments, and

coffee, the city is a great place to stock up on some basics for your kitchen.

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### **PECORINO ROMANO**

Rome's famed sheep's milk cheese, known as pecorino romano, is the star of many classic Roman dishes, from cacio e pepe to supplì. You can purchase some to take back home with you from multiple delicatessens and cheese stops around town, including La Tradizione by the Vatican.

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### **HANDMADE CHOCOLATE**

Roman desserts aren't quite as famous as say their Parisian counterparts, but they still have their charm thanks to tasty concoctions like amaretti or *brutti ma buoni* cookies (which literally translates to "ugly but good"). But for the best tasty treat to bring home, try some handmade chocolate from an old-school chocolate shop. Walking into Pasticceria Valzani in Trastevere is like stepping back in time: it first opened in the 1920s and hasn't been touched since. Or check out Moriondo and Gariglio, which first opened in 1850 in Turin before setting up shop in Rome with this opulent red store. Today, their chocolates are still prepared according to 19th-century recipes.

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### **SHOES**

When it comes to sexy stilettos, strappy sandals, or stylish *stivali* (boots), Rome has a *scarpa* (shoe) for every Cinderella. The best place to get your feet wet is in the swanky Piazza di Spagna area, but other high-end boutiques can be found around the Piazza Navona and Campo de' Fiori.

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### **DESIGNER CLOTHING**

Italians know fashion; that much is indisputable. There are plenty of upmarket flagship stores of world-famous brands in Rome, including the likes of Prada, Fendi, and Valentino. But be sure to browse the city's smaller boutiques, too; you'll be sure to find a piece or two from a lesser known designer to liven up your wardrobe.

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### **CERAMICS AND DECORATIVE ARTS**

Unique pottery, beautiful ceramics, and other decorative arts are at the top of most souvenir shoppers' lists, and Rome is a great place to search for Italian-made items. The best finds are at Rome's many artisan shops tucked away on winding cobblestone streets. Whether you fancy a quasi-authentic Roman



mask or a copy of that popular Roman relic, *La Bocca della Verità*, you won't go home empty-handed.

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### LEATHER ITEMS

Italian leather is renowned the world over for its high quality, supple feel, and sturdy craftsmanship. Roman stores that carry leather products abound, from high fashion designers to boutique shops. Everything from handbags and wallets to belts and jackets can make a unique (but be warned, very pricey) souvenir.

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### RELIGIOUS ITEMS

With the Vatican positioned in the heart of the city, religious tourism is a bit of a big deal in Rome. That means items like religious art or rosary beads can readily be found around town, particularly near St. Peter's Square and the Vatican Museums. In these areas, market stands and street sellers beckon with everything from kitschy priest calendars to more-devout Catholic items. Higher-quality rosary beads, Bibles, and artwork can be purchased at the Vatican Museums gift shop.

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### ANTIQUES AND PRINTS

Rome is one of Italy's happiest hunting grounds for antiques and bric-a-brac. You'll find streets lined with shops groaning under the weight of gilded Rococo tables, charming Grand Tour memorabilia, fetching 17th-century engravings of realistic scenes, and many intriguing curios.

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### VINTAGE CLOTHING

For many, looking good means not looking like anyone else. Luckily Rome has a wide range of vintage shops (mainly in the Monti and Piazza Navona areas), where you can find some great couture from the *Dolce Vita* days and other classic time periods. Spend some time going through the racks, and you'll never know what treasures you might find.

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### FLEA MARKETS

Treasure-seekers and bargain-hunters alike will appreciate Rome's *mercati all'aperto* (open-air markets). Roman flea markets are great spots to unearth some really good finds, whether you're hunting for something borrowed or something new. Every Sunday, all of Rome tends to gravitate to Trastevere

for the Porta Portese flea market, where tents overflow with cheap luggage, new and used clothes, vintage World War II memorabilia, and nearly everything else you can think of.

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### **GLOVES**

You just wouldn't be an Italian signora without a pair of fashionable handmade gloves, and you'll find plenty to choose from in Rome. Whether you're looking for cashmere, silk, lambskin, or other types of leather, there is a sea of colors and styles to choose from. Gloves make wonderful presents to bring back home, too.



# Best Museums in Rome

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## MACRO

Housed in the former Peroni brewery, this modern and contemporary art museum focuses on Italian art from the 1960s through the present. The building, with its striking red structure and glass walkways, was designed by French architect Odile Decq and is worth a visit in and of itself.

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## GALLERIA BORGHESE

It would be hard to find a more beautiful villa filled with a must-see collection of masterpieces by Bernini, Caravaggio, Raphael, Rubens, and Titian. Cardinal Scipione Borghese had the gorgeous Renaissance villa built in 1612 to display his collection, though it has undergone many changes since.

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## MUSEO NAZIONALE ETRUSCO DI VILLA GIULIA

The pre-Roman civilization known as the Etruscans appeared in Italy around 2,000 BC, though no one knows exactly where they originated. To learn more about them, plan a visit to this museum in Villa Giulia, which was built for Pope Julius III in the mid-1500s.

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## CAPITOLINE MUSEUMS

Second in size only to the Vatican Museums, the Capitoline Museums were the world's first public art museums. The two buildings on Michelangelo's famous piazza house a collection spanning from Ancient Rome to the Baroque era, with masterpieces including Caravaggio's *The Fortune Teller* and *St. John the Baptist*.

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## GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA

Located within Villa Borghese, this art museum in a huge white Beaux Arts building hosts one of Italy's most important collections of 19th- and 20th-century art. You'll find works by Degas, Monet, Courbet, Cézanne, and Van

Gogh, but the emphasis is on understanding Italian Modernism through a historical lens.

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#### **PALAZZO DORIA PAMPHILJ**

For a glimpse into aristocratic Rome, it's hard to beat this museum in the 15th century palazzo of the Doria Pamphilj family. Wander through the Hall of Mirrors—fashioned after the one at Versailles, naturally—but don't miss the Old Master paintings.

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#### **VATICAN MUSEUMS**

One of the largest museum complexes in the world, the Vatican palaces and museums comprise some 1,400 rooms, galleries, and chapels. By far the most famous (and most crowded) is the Sistine Chapel painted by Michelangelo and a team of other painters.

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#### **MAXXI**

Tucked away in the quiet Flaminio neighborhood, the Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo (National Museum of 21st Century Arts)—or MAXXI, for short—proves that there's more to Rome than ancient and Baroque art.

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#### **CENTRALE MONTEMARTINI**

Nowhere else is the theme of gods and machines more apparent than at this museum in Ostiense. Rome's first power plant now houses the runoff from the Capitoline Museums' collection, and the sculptures of men in togas and women in dresses form a poignant contrast to the machinery.

# Best Ancient Sites in Rome



## **COLOSSEUM**

Perhaps the monument most symbolic of ancient Rome, the Colosseum is one of the city's most fascinating—and popular—tourist attractions. It officially opened in AD 80 with 100 days of games, including wild animal fights and gladiatorial combat.

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## **FORO DI TRAIANO**

Trajan's Forum was the last of imperial Rome's forums—and the grandest. Comprising a basilica, two libraries, and a colonnade surrounding a piazza, it's connected to a market that once bustled with commercial activity.

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## **PANTHEON**

Built as a pagan temple to the gods, the Pantheon is Rome's best-preserved

ancient site, perhaps because it was later consecrated as a church. Step inside and you'll be amazed at its perfect proportions and the sunlight streaming in from the 30-foot-wide oculus. It's truly a wonder of ancient engineering.

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### **ROMAN FORUM**

One of the Eternal City's most emblematic sites, the Roman Forum stretches out between the Capitoline and Palatine hills. This vast area filled with crumbling columns, the ruins of temples, palaces, and shops was once the hub of the ancient world and the center of political, commercial, and religious life in the city.

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### **CIRCUS MAXIMUS**

It might be hard to imagine now, but the grassy area between the Palatine and Aventine hills was once the site of the largest hippodrome in the Roman Empire. The huge oval course was rebuilt under Julius Caesar and later enlarged by subsequent emperors. During its heyday, it hosted epic chariot races and competitions that sometimes lasted as long as 15 days.

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### **BOCCA DELLA VERITÀ**

Legend has it the mouth in this ancient stone face will bite off the hand of a liar, and tourists line up to stick their hand inside the mouth and put it to the test. (Gregory Peck's character tricks Audrey Hepburn's Princess Ann into thinking he lost a hand inside it in a scene from *Roman Holiday*.) You'll find the enigmatic face in the portico of the Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, near the Circus Maximus.

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### **TEATRO MARCELLO**

It may look a bit like a smaller version of the Colosseum, but the Teatro Marcello was once ancient Rome's largest and most important theater. Julius Caesar ordered the land for the theater to be cleared, but he was murdered before it was built. It was inaugurated in AD 12 by Augustus and hosted performances of drama and song. It's kept that purpose even today, at least during the summer when it hosts concerts.

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### **APPIA ANTICA**

Head to the southeastern edge of the city to the Appia Antica Park and you can walk on the same stones that ancient Roman soldiers and citizens once

trod. This ancient thoroughfare once stretched all the way to Brindisi, some 300 miles away on the Adriatic Coast. Today it's a perfect spot for bike rides and picnics in the grass under the shadow of Rome's emblematic umbrella pines.

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#### **BATHS OF CARACALLA**

A testament to ancient Rome's bathing culture, this site was essentially a massive spa, with saunas, baths, an Olympic-size pool, and two gymnasiums for boxing, weightlifting, and wrestling.

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#### **ARA PACIS AUGUSTAE**

Now housed in a modern glass-and-travertine building designed by American architect Richard Meier, the Ara Pacis Augustae has some of the most incredible reliefs you'll see on any ancient monument. It was commissioned to celebrate the Emperor Augustus's victories in battle and the Pax Romana, a peaceful period that followed.



# Best Churches in Rome



## **SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO**

It would be easy to pass by this church on the corner of Piazza del Popolo, but go inside and you'll find artistic treasures worth seeing. Raphael designed an entire chapel within the church, but perhaps the most amazing works are the two altar paintings by Caravaggio depicting the *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* and the *Conversion of Saint Paul*. The church also contains 16th-century stained glass, which is rare in this part of Italy.

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## **BASILICA DI SAN PIETRO**

The world's largest church and one of the world's holiest places for Catholics, St. Peter's Basilica was built on the site of Saint Peter's tomb. The greatest architectural achievement of the Renaissance, it's a testament to the Catholic Church's wealth and power.

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## **SAN LUIGI DEI FRANCESI**

Among art lovers, the secret's out about this small church dedicated to Saint Louis, the patron saint of France. Inside, the Contarelli Chapel is adorned by three Caravaggios, each one more splendid than the last. Gaze up at his three depictions of Saint Matthew (the *Calling of Saint Matthew*, *Saint Matthew and the Angel*, and the *Martyrdom of Saint Matthew*) and you'll understand why Caravaggio was the master of chiaroscuro.

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#### **SAN GIOVANNI IN LATERANO**

Built by the Emperor Constantine 10 years before the Basilica di San Pietro was constructed, this monumental church is actually the ecclesiastical seat of the Pope. Before you enter, look up to admire the 15 monumental statues depicting the 12 apostles, plus Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist. The intricate mosaic floors are the work of the Cosmati family. To learn more about them, join Personalized Italy's Cosmatesque Tour of Rome led by a charming art historian who illuminates the incredible craftsmanship that went into this and other churches.

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#### **PANTHEON**

Originally a pagan temple and later consecrated as a church, the Pantheon counts itself among Rome's most famous monuments for good reason. It's considered the world's only architecturally perfect building by some, because of its proportions (the diameter is equal to its height). Of Rome's many ancient sites, it's the best preserved. It's also the final resting place of Raphael and other important figures from Italy's history.

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#### **SCALA SANTA**

Devout Catholic pilgrims travel from far and wide to climb the Scala Santa—the marble staircase from Pontius Pilate's palace in Jerusalem—on their knees. At the top lies the Sancta Sanctorum (Holy of Holies), a small chapel ornately decorated with marble, elaborate frescoes and Cosmatesque mosaic floors, which was the Pope's chapel before the Sistine Chapel. You can reach the top via the non-sanctified side stairs to admire the incredible chapel.

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#### **BASILICA DI SAN CLEMENTE**

The Basilica di San Clemente is known as the “lasagna church” because the deeper you descend, the farther back in time you go. The 12th-century church was built on top of a 4th-century church, which was built on top of a 2nd-

century pagan temple dedicated to the cult of Mithras as well as a collection of 1st-century Roman houses. Pay the nominal entry fee to access the lower levels, where the mysterious cult once worshipped and you'll feel like you're peeling back the layers of ancient history.

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#### **SANTA MARIA DELLA VITTORIA**

Bernini's genius is on full display in this church near Piazza della Repubblica. Though the church's architect was Carlo Maderno, Bernini was responsible for the Cornaro Chapel, where you can admire his somewhat controversial sculpture, the *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*. Meant to depict the saint abandoning herself to the divine love of god, her facial expression seems to resemble a rather earthlier pleasure. Pay this church a visit and decide for yourself.

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#### **SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI**

The reason to visit this otherwise unremarkable church in Monti is to lay eyes on Michelangelo's *Moses*. Pope Julius II had commissioned the statue for his tomb, but after he died, his successor—a rival from the Medici family—abandoned the tomb and left the statue here instead. Scholars debate whether the two things on Moses's head are meant to be horns or rays of light. Either way, the statue is one of Michelangelo's best.

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#### **SANT'AGOSTINO**

This church tucked behind Piazza Navona contains a triple-whammy of incredible art. Not only is it home to Caravaggio's *Madonna of the Pilgrims*, but also Raphael's *Isaiah*, which may have been inspired by Michelangelo's prophets on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (the artist snuck a peek despite orders of secrecy) and Sansovino's sculpture *St. Anne and the Madonna with Child*. It's definitely worth a detour.



# Under-the-Radar Things to Do in Rome



### **STREET ART IN OSTIENSE**

South of the *centro storico*, the gritty neighborhood of Ostiense may not be at the top of your Rome bucket list, but it's a must-see for fans of street art. Entire buildings are covered top-to-bottom in murals and well-known street artists have left their mark.

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### **THE KEATS-SHELLEY MEMORIAL HOUSE**

You don't have to be a fan of the English Romantic poets to visit this house museum at the foot of the Spanish Steps, but it certainly helps. The home at 26 Piazza di Spagna was the final resting place of the poet John Keats, who died of tuberculosis at the tender age of 25.

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### **CULTURAL PROGRAMMING AT THE VILLA MEDICI**

You wouldn't know it from the outside, but this gorgeous Renaissance palace on the Pincio Hill houses the Academy of France in Rome, which hosts visiting artists and scholars and puts on cultural events.

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### **THE CAPUCHIN CRYPT**

As if preserving saintly relics wasn't creepy enough, the Capuchin order of monks used the bones of some 4,000 friars to decorate the crypt under the Church of Santa Maria della Concezione. This site isn't for the faint of heart. A sign that reads "What you are, we once were. What we are, you will someday be" serves as a poignant reminder of our mortality.

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### **CONCERTS AT THE ORATORIO DEL GONFALONE**

Hidden behind a nondescript door in Rome's historic center lies a room decorated wall-to-wall with incredibly well-preserved frescoes depicting scenes of the passion of the Christ. Painted in the 16th century by a team of Mannerist painters, the site has been called "the Sistine Chapel of Mannerism."

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### **SHOPPING ON VIA DI MONSERRATO**

Via del Corso and Via dei Condotti may be Rome's most famous shopping streets, but for truly unique finds, you need to get off-the-beaten path and head to Via di Monserrato. This charming cobblestoned street is home to a

collection of high-end boutiques.

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#### **PARCO DEGLI ACQUEDOTTI**

On the city's southeastern outskirts, this massive green park is a peaceful oasis where locals come to jog, walk their dogs, and just hang out. The aqueducts are relics of the Ancient Roman Empire and you can walk along the remains of an ancient cobblestone road that once formed part of the Appia Antica.

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#### **GARDENS ON AVENTINE HILL**

If you happen to be in Rome in the spring, when the Roseto Comunale on the Aventine Hill is in bloom, it's worth a stop. Once a Jewish cemetery, the garden's paths are fittingly shaped like a menorah. With more than 1,000 different varieties of roses, it's one of the most romantic spots in Rome.

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#### **THEATER AT THE REPLICA OF SHAKESPEARE'S GLOBE THEATER**

Hidden in plain sight in the bucolic Villa Medici Park, a replica of London's Globe Theater puts on performances of the Bard's plays in Italian. Like the original, the theater is built entirely out of wood and has seats arranged in a circle around the stage as well as standing room.



# Best Free Things to Do in Rome



## **VITTORIANO MONUMENT**

This building has polarized locals since its construction, but it still has some of the best views in the city. A monument to Italy's first king, Victor Emmanuel II, it also holds the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and its eternal flame.

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## **PANTHEON**

There has been much talk about imposing an entry fee for the Pantheon, but for now, there's no cost to visiting one of Rome's most impressive monuments.

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## **SPANISH STEPS**

The largest staircase in Europe definitely deserves a visit, and luckily it doesn't cost a thing. Located within the elegant Piazza di Spagna, you can walk up the stairs for great views from the famed church, Trinità dei Monti.

Or you can just sit on the stairs and watch the world go by. Bernini's fountain, La Barcaccia, stands at the bottom of the stairs and is a great example of Baroque art and design.

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#### **PIAZZA NAVONA**

For the finest example of Baroque Roman architecture, head to Piazza Navona. Here you'll find one of Bernini's most important masterpieces, the Fountain of the Four Rivers, topped by the obelisk of Domitian. The square is filled daily with street performers and artists. You can also enter the church Sant'Agnese in Agone by Borromini from the piazza.

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#### **CAMPO DE FIORI**

It may not be the most authentic, but Campo de Fiori is the oldest and most famous market in Rome. Watch the stand owners boisterously interact as they show off their wares, and admire the monument to the philosopher Giordano Bruno; it's the big statue in the middle of the square. Around the corner, you'll find some of Rome's best *pizza bianca* (focaccia-style bread) at Forno Roscioli or Forno Campo de Fiori.

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#### **KEYHOLE OF THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA**

High up on Aventine Hill, within the Villa del Priorato dei Cavalieri di Malta (belonging to the Knights of Malta), lies a special and unusual attraction. Through the tiny keyhole of a nondescript door, you can view the gorgeous dome of St. Peter's Basilica. This enchanting view gives you a unique taste of three separate nations: Malta, Italy, and the Vatican.

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#### **ORANGE GARDEN**

Located on elegant Aventine Hill, the Orange Garden (as it's known by locals) is officially named Savelli's Park, named for the family who lived there throughout the 13th century. Orange plants were planted during this time, hence the reason for its colloquial name. Today, it's an enchanting garden space perfect for a stroll or picnic. But most of all, visitors love coming here for the spectacular panoramic views of the city.

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#### **TIBER ISLAND**

The only island in Rome, Tiber Island sits in the middle of the Tiber River between the Jewish Ghetto and Trastevere. The small boat-shaped island is

home to a hospital (here since the 16th-century), a church, a pharmacy, and two restaurants. It's connected to the mainland by bridges on either side, one of which is pedestrian-only. From here, city views stretch out across the river, and in the summer months, there is an outdoor cinema and seasonal restaurants and bars.

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### **GIANICOLO**

While not officially one of the famed Seven Hills of Rome, the Janiculum (Gianicolo in Italian) is certainly the one Romans are fondest of. From it, sprawling panoramic views of the city stretch out like a postcard; it's often the location for a wedding photo shoot, first kiss, or proposal. Walk the paths that feature significant historical statues and busts, and take in the beauty of the Fontana di Acqua Paola; referred to by locals as the *fontanone* (the big fountain), it's said to be where you go to weep and mourn a broken heart.

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### **ROME'S BASILICAS**

It's completely free to walk right into Rome's four major papal basilicas. These churches are the four highest-ranking Roman Catholic church buildings in the world, and include Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran (which is the official seat and parish of the Pope), Saint Peter's Basilica, the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, and the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. Each is unique in their architecture and style, and you could easily spend an entire day exploring them all.

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### **VIA MARGUTTA**

Walk in Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck's footsteps à la *Roman Holiday* on a stroll down one of the city's prettiest streets. Via Margutta (at number 51, to be precise) was the location of Peck's character's apartment in the film, and where many scenes were shot. This short street with a long history is now filled with antiques stores and galleries.

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### **VILLA BORGHESE**

As the most famous park in Rome, Villa Borghese is a lush oasis in the northern part of the city center. It has a man-made lake where you can rent canoes, and there are plenty of spaces for a picnic. You could easily spend the entire day here, and there's a café for light meals and snacks, too.

# Rome Today

Rome, the Eternal City, is 28 centuries old and yet is still constantly reinventing itself. The glories of ancient Rome, the pomp of the Renaissance Papacy, and the futuristic architecture of the 20th and 21st centuries all blend miraculously into a harmonious whole here. The fact that you can get Wi-Fi in the shadow of 2,000-year-old ruins sort of sums things up, and it's this fusion of old and new and the casual way that Romans live with their weighty history that make this city so unique.

## THE 21ST CENTURY

Rome has changed a lot, relatively speaking, since the millennium. Much of the *centro storico* (historic center) has been pedestrianized or has had its access limited to residents, public transport, and taxis, so you can now stroll around landmarks like the Pantheon, the Trevi Fountain, and the Spanish Steps without having to dodge a constant stream of traffic. One radical change for Italy is that smoking is banned in all public places, including restaurants and pubs. And central areas such as Monti, Testaccio, and San Lorenzo have become gentrified or arty-chic, so you can extend your sightseeing range to spots tourists wouldn't have dreamed of visiting back in the 1980s or '90s.

## MULTICULTURALISM

While nowhere near as diverse as cities such as London and Paris, spend a day in Rome's Esquilino neighborhood, for instance, and you'll see that the Eternal City is slowly becoming more cosmopolitan. Once famous for its fruit and vegetable market at Piazza Vittorio, Esquilino has fast become a multiethnic stomping ground, with a vast array of Chinese, Indian, African, and Middle Eastern restaurants. The now world-famous Orchestra of Piazza Vittorio, made up of 16 musicians from North Africa, South America, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Italy, got their start in this district just steps from Rome's Termini station and now perform at festivals around the world. It's worth noting, too, that Rome, the stronghold of Roman Catholicism, is also home to one of the largest mosques outside of the Islamic world.

Located near the elegant Parioli district, the Mosque of Rome opened in 1995 and welcomes visitors of all faiths.

## **NEW ARCHITECTURE**

Rome may be firmly anchored in the distant past, but that's never been an obstacle to its journey into the new millennium. Just look at some of the architectural marvels that have emerged in the last 20 years: the Auditorium Parco della Musica (Renzo Piano, 2002), the new Jubilee Church (formerly Chiesa di Dio Padre Misericordioso; Richard Meier, 2003), the Museo dell'Ara Pacis (Richard Meier, 2006), and the MAXXI—Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo (Zaha Hadid, 2010). In 2011, Rome also built a new bridge: the grandiose Ponte della Musica over the Tiber River. The eco-friendly bridge, which looks like two giant white harps rising from the ground, can be used only by pedestrians and cyclists. And the Massimiliano Fuksas–designed Roma Convention Center, nicknamed “La Nuvola” for its futuristic suspended cloud shape, finally opened in 2016.

## **NEW TRANSPORTATION LINES**

Romans are anxiously awaiting the completion of the new Metro Linea C, which will cut through the city center at Piazza Venezia and link with both the A and B lines at Ottaviano for St. Peter's and the Colosseum, respectively. Expected to considerably ease surface-traffic congestion, progress on the new line has gone slowly, because every time a shaft is sunk in Roman ground, it reveals some new important archaeological site and all work halts for the ensuing excavation. Currently only the peripheral section of Line C is running, from Lodi eastward.

In addition, Italo, Italy's first private railway, now gives travelers an alternative to the high-speed Frecciarossa service offered by state-run Trenitalia. Both Italo and Trenitalia trains leave from Termini and the newly restructured Tiburtino station, connecting Rome with most of Italy's other major cities. Journey times are roughly the same, but Italo can be cheaper, especially when booking in advance online. Italo trains are fancier, especially in first class and above, and amenities include leather seats by furniture designer Poltrona Frau and free (although rather spotty) on-board Wi-Fi.

## WHAT'S NEW

Over morning cappuccinos Romans love especially to talk about two things: sports and politics. As a sort of ritual greeting, Romans discuss the latest news about the city's two soccer teams and the latest political scandal.

In the world of sports, the supporters of the football teams (that's soccer to Americans) Roma and Lazio are bitter enemies. Hostilities between fans of these two teams peak twice a year, during the "derby," the direct matches between the two teams. If you happen to be in Rome at this time, you'll witness surreal and unusual silences periodically overtaking the city, only to be broken by thunderous screaming and shouting when a goal is scored.

Politics-wise, after the controversial era of Silvio Berlusconi, Romans first embraced the young prime minister, Matteo Renzi when he gained power in 2014. The 39-year-old center-left politician was the youngest head of government Italy has ever had. But the recent tide of populism spreading through Europe reached Italy in late 2016, when a constitutional referendum to amend parts of the Italian Constitution was overwhelmingly defeated by voters and Renzi stepped down in response to what he saw as a vote against his government. In 2018, Giuseppe Conte was appointed PM, head of a newly formed coalition made up of the populist Five Star Movement and the right-wing Northern League, united by their anti-immigration policies. Eyes are on Italy now to see how the new government will play out in the midst of an ever-changing Europe.



# What to Read and Watch Before You Go

## **LA DOLCE VITA**

Just as the names Raphael, Botticelli, Michelangelo, and Da Vinci reign over the Italian art world, filmmakers like Fellini, Rossellini, De Sica, and Antonioni are essential for appreciating Italian (and Roman) cinema. Federico Fellini's classic *La Dolce Vita* follows the busy days and nights of journalist Marcello, taking viewers throughout Rome and its most notable landmarks. Among the film's more artistic and nuanced aspects are gorgeous scenes of nightlife, dining, and general folly in the ancient city's ruin and splendor.

## **THE HISTORY OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE BY EDWARD GIBBON**

Okay, so maybe you do get through all six volumes of this classic text, or maybe they just sit on your bookshelf looking pretty (we're not here to judge). But while there have since been many historical and archaeological discoveries that add to and challenge the conclusions Gibbon made in the late 1700s, this text remains famous and respected for its comprehensive attempt to understand ancient Rome and the causes of its decline. For a more contemporary and abridged source of Roman history, try *SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome* by Mary Beard.

## **BICYCLE THIEVES**

Many Roman films capture a spirit of unsettling resistance, confusion, and pain during the aftermath of Mussolini's fascist regime—a time that came to define much of contemporary Italy and its art. Vittorio de Sica's neorealist masterpiece captures this atmosphere through the story of a father, son, and one stolen bicycle, taking us through the desperate, dusty streets of life in Rome after World War II.

## **THE YOUNG POPE**

While it's unclear how realistic the Vatican politics depicted in this HBO

series actually are, this tale about the rise of an unlikely, power-hungry young pope and his ensuing deviance, manipulations, and power-grabs make for great television. The clever writing and skilled performances (especially by a creepy Jude Law as Pius XIII, the world's first American pope) elevate the show, as does the gorgeous cinematography.

### **THE AENEID BY VIRGIL**

Because so much of Roman literature (and history) has been built upon the early greats, it's helpful to get some classical poetry under your belt before a trip to Rome. Virgil, Ovid, Horace, or Catullus (and even Dante or Keats) will do just fine, but *The Aeneid* is arguably the most Roman poem in existence. The long harrowing journey of Aeneas and his soldiers, as they head out of Troy and towards the Italian peninsula, is outlined in this long epic poem, which ends with the early finding (and founding) of Rome, making it a unique literary origin story.

### **ROMAN HOLIDAY**

When all the fascism and papal politics start to get too heavy, turn instead to a light Roman film, the classic *Roman Holiday*. In it, the charms of Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn and their whirlwind romance make great vacation fodder, as they ride mopeds through Roman streets, and gallivant through the Piazza del Popolo, around the Coliseum, and other landmarks.

### **A CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS OVER AN ELEVATOR IN PIAZZA VITTORIO BY AMARA LAKHOUS**

While the plot centers around a murder that takes place in a small apartment building on the Piazza Vittorio, this novel is really about the tenants of said building, a culturally diverse group from all walks of life, whose differences shape the complexity of what it means to be Roman. An author of Algerian descent, Lakhous has a knack for voice and delving into shifting points of view, particularly shining a much needed light on the Muslim immigrant experience in Italy.

### **THE BORGIAS**

This historical television drama series gives a fictionalized tale of the very

real, very corrupt Borgia family that came from Spain and rose to power and the papacy in Renaissance Italy. While the show takes historical liberties to build drama, most of the juiciest scandals—torture, bribery, and even incest—are based on real events or longtime rumors about the infamous family.

### ***LA GRANDE BELLEZZA (THE GREAT BEAUTY)***

Paolo Sorrentino's Academy Award-winning film follows an aging writer in contemporary Rome as he examines both his past and present life choices. Moving through the protagonist's partying lifestyle, the film is a great cinematic journey, providing many a lavish and indulgent landscape of Roman life.

### ***THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY BY IRVING STONE***

Reading this 1961 novel provides great context for those who plan to visit the Vatican's most popular artistic sight, the Sistine Chapel. This fictionalized biography of Michelangelo's arduous process details the genius and struggle (along with the politics) that went into his masterful creation. As material for the novel, Stone sourced Michelangelo's original correspondence during the time (almost 500 letters), spent long periods in Rome and Florence, and even worked in a marble quarry and as a sculptor's apprentice.

### ***EAT, PRAY, LOVE***

Elizabeth Gilbert's memoir on what she ate, learned, and loved after leaving a failed marriage to travel the world is divided into three sections and her time spent in Italy, India, and Bali, respectively. The *Eat* portion of Gilbert's journey (the four months she spent in Rome) is perhaps the most enjoyable to read, and provides important travel advice: when in Rome, indulge with abandon. In the movie version, Rome and its feasts are less detailed but more cinematic (and on the plus side, you have Julia Roberts playing Gilbert).

### ***LOVE AND ANARCHY***

Much like her mentor Federico Fellini, Lina Wertmüller—one of Italy's most impressive female directors and the first woman to be nominated for the Best Director Oscar—has a knack for combining humor and folly with political critique and human heartbreak. The film's lovable, blundering star is a

countryman determined to murder Mussolini, finding love and friendship in a Roman brothel along the way. This beautiful work is full of Roman sentiment, style, and history, making it a must-see in Italian cinema, as is Wertmüller's slightly darker work, *Seven Beauties*.

### **GLADIATOR**

Russell Crowe takes on ancient Rome as a powerful general who, after a fall from political grace, is taken as a slave and forced to fight as a gladiator in the (digitally re-imagined) Colosseum. It's an epic film, full of high stakes and high emotions, and was a huge box-office hit when it opened in 2000. While it contains some historical inaccuracies, it's an enjoyable watch for those fascinated by the ins and outs of the political and social structures, power plays, and daily violence of ancient Rome.

## Rome with Kids

There are plenty of ways to keep the younger set occupied in Rome—with the added bonus that getting them to eat isn't usually a problem, with pizza, pasta, and gelato on the menus.

### ARCHAEOLOGY

If your kids are into archaeology or gladiators, traipsing the ruins of ancient Rome can provide hours of entertainment. Who can resist climbing the giant steps of the **Colosseum**? For the true enthusiast, the Roman Gladiator School offers group and private lessons in which your little one (or big one) can dress up like Spartacus and learn sword-fighting techniques and a bit about the lives of these warriors.

**Roman Gladiator School.** Two-hour lessons in how to be a gladiator include clothing to dress up in as well as “weapons” and shields—it's great fun and a great way to get some history lessons. The instructors are top-quality, and experienced at dealing with participants of varying levels. There's a viewing platform for those who prefer to observe their friends and family. [www.viator.com/tours/rome/roman-gladiator-school-learn-how-to-become-a-gladiator/d511-2466glad](http://www.viator.com/tours/rome/roman-gladiator-school-learn-how-to-become-a-gladiator/d511-2466glad) AFrom €55.

### EXPLORE THE PARKS

Take little ones to see the Teatrino Pulcinella's open-air **puppet show** weekdays on the Janiculum Hill, where you can also enjoy a great view of the city, or to the San Carlino puppet theater weekends on Viale dei Bambini in **Villa Borghese Park**. (Tips for the puppeteers are greatly appreciated.) Villa Borghese is also home to other kid-oriented attractions such as the **Bioparco** (zoo), with more than 1,000 animals in peaceful landscaped surroundings. Rent a bike (at Bici Puncio at Campo Marzo or on Quartiere III Pinciano) and explore the vast Borghese estate. You can also take a rowboat out on the Laghetto di Villa Borghese. At only €3 per person for 20 minutes, it's one of the best ways to explore the park's incredible sculptures, temples, and natural beauty.

## CREEPY STUFF

Rome's catacombs (underground cemeteries) are intriguing enough to wipe the boredom off most teenagers' faces, and the best is the **Catacombe di San Callisto** on the Via Appia Antica. It's hard not to be impressed by the labyrinth of dark corridors and grisly tales of Christian martyrs. The **Capuchin Crypt** under Santa Maria della Concezione is gruesomely mesmerizing, with the skulls and bones of 3,700 friars arranged on the walls and ceiling in fanciful patterns. Take the kids to the Bocca della Verità (Mouth of Truth) at **Santa Maria in Cosmedin**, and warn them that it bites off liars' hands.

## WATER FOUNTAINS

The public water fountains in Rome are free (and perfectly safe) to drink from; the only problem is figuring out how to do it without getting wet. A good trick is to block a hole under the spout with your finger to create a fountain, or bring bottles to fill up.



## Chapter 2

# TRAVEL SMART ROME

Updated by  
Ariston Anderson

★ **CAPITAL:**

Rome

👤 **POPULATION:**

2,872,800

🗨️ **LANGUAGE:**

Italian

€ **CURRENCY:**

Euro

📠 **COUNTRY CODE:**

39

🚑 **EMERGENCIES:**

113

🚗 **DRIVING:**

On the right

⚡ **ELECTRICITY:**

220V/50Hz; Continental-style  
plugs, with two or three  
round prongs

🕒 **TIME:**

6 hours ahead of New York

🌐 **WEB RESOURCES:**

[www.turismoroma.it](http://www.turismoroma.it),

[www.romeguide.it](http://www.romeguide.it),

[www.theamericanmag.com](http://www.theamericanmag.com),

[www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it)



# What You Need to Know Before You Visit Rome

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## **NAVIGATING THE CITY IS ACTUALLY PRETTY EASY.**

The centro storico of Rome comprises what stood inside the 3rd-century walls of the city, and today contains most of the city's major tourist sights. The borders are roughly the Vatican to the east, Villa Borghese to the north, Termini station to west, and the Colosseum to the south. This large area is easier to navigate when divided into smaller modern neighborhoods. Fortunately for tourists, many of Rome's main attractions are concentrated in the centro storico and can be covered on foot. In addition, Rome has a good network of public transport, both above and below ground. The Metro Linea A will take you to Termini station, the Trevi Fountain (Barberini stop), the Spanish Steps (Spagna stop), St. Peter's (Ottaviano), and the Vatican Museums (Cipro), to name a few.

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## **IT'S HELPFUL TO KNOW HOW TO READ ADDRESSES.**

In the centro storico, most street names are posted on ceramic-like plaques on the side of buildings, which can make them hard to see. Addresses are fairly straightforward: the street name is followed by the street number, but it's worth noting that Roman street numbering, even in the newer outskirts of town, can be erratic. Usually numbers are even on one side of the street and odd on the other, but sometimes numbers are in ascending consecutive order on one side of the street and descending order on the other side.

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## **BE AWARE OF EXTRA CHARGES.**

As is common in many big cities, tourists can be taken advantage of in establishments near major sights, and Rome is no different so always check your final bill carefully. It's common to see table service charges or cover charges on menus, but they should be specified and the cover charge should

include a bread basket. These charges mean tipping is not mandatory, although locals generally round up to the nearest euro of the total amount; at a casual trattoria or pizzeria, some coins on the table is good enough. If any surprise fees are on your final bill, don't be afraid to bring this up to the waitstaff. If you're at a bar having coffee, it's customary to leave a coin for your barista. Other charges to be aware of include paying to use the bathroom in some public places and the Tourist City Tax, imposed by the City of Rome—this is a compulsory per night, per person charge for all hotels, B&Bs, and even Airbnb bookings.

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#### **DRESS (AND ACT) APPROPRIATELY WHEN VISITING CHURCHES.**

If you're planning to visit the Vatican, in particular St. Peter's Basilica, appropriate clothing and attire must be worn and at a minimum, shoulders have to be covered. Low-cut or sleeveless clothing, miniskirts, and hats are not allowed. Scarves and shawls are available for purchase in and around the Vatican if you turn up unprepared. Modest dress and behavior should also be observed when visiting other religious sites and all churches in the city. Do not enter a church while eating or drinking—keep all food items in a bag. Avoid entering altogether when a service is being held. All mobile phones must be on silent. If there are signs reading *No photography* or *No flash photography*, abide by these rules.

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#### **PRACTICE SOME BASIC ITALIAN ETIQUETTE.**

Although you may find Rome much more informal than many other European cities, Romans will nevertheless appreciate attempts to abide by local etiquette. When entering an establishment, the key words to know are: *buongiorno* (good morning), *buona sera* (good evening), and *buon pomeriggio* (good afternoon). These words can also double as a goodbye upon exit. Italians greet friends with a kiss, usually first on the right cheek, and then on the left. When you meet a new person, shake hands and say *piacere* (pee-ah -chair-ay).

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#### **IT HELPS TO LEARN SOME ITALIAN, TOO.**

You can always find someone who speaks at least a little English in Rome, albeit with an accent. Remember that the Italian language is pronounced exactly as it's written, so many Italians try to speak English as it's written—sometimes with bewildering results. You may run into a language barrier

outside big cities, but a phrase book and close attention to the Italian use of expressive gestures will go a long way. Try to master a few phrases for daily use, and familiarize yourself with the terms you'll need to decipher signs and museum labels. Many museum exhibitions only have descriptions in Italian.

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#### **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ROMA PASS.**

In addition to single- and multiday transit passes, a three-day Roma Pass (€38.50 [www.romapass.it](http://www.romapass.it)) covers unlimited use of buses, trams, and the Metro, plus free admission to two museums or archaeological sites of your choice and discounted entrance to others. A two-day pass is €28 and includes one museum.

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#### **BE PREPARED FOR ROMAN TIME.**

In Italy, almost nothing starts on time except for (sometimes) a theater, opera, or movie showing. Italians even joke about a “15-minute window” before actually being late somewhere. In addition, the day starts a little later than normal here with many shops not opening until 10 am, lunch never happens before 1 pm, and dinner rarely happens before 8 pm. On Sunday, Rome virtually shuts down, and on Monday, most state museums and exhibition halls, plus many restaurants are closed. Daily food shop hours generally run 10 am–1 pm and 4 pm–7:30 pm or 8 pm; but other stores in the center usually observe continuous opening hours. Pharmacies tend to close for a lunch break and keep night hours (*ora rio notturno*) in rotation. As for churches, most open at 8 or 9 in the morning, close noon–3 or 4, then reopen until 6:30 or 7. St. Peter's, however, has continuous hours 7 am–7 pm (until 6 pm in the fall and winter); and the Vatican Museums are open Monday but closed Sunday (except for the last Sunday of the month).

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#### **IT'S USUALLY BEST TO AVOID AUGUST.**

If you can avoid it, don't travel at all in Italy in mid-August, when much of the population is on the move, especially around Ferragosto, the August 15 national holiday, when cities such as Rome are deserted and many restaurants and shops are closed. If you've done the tourist circuit several times, though, you may enjoy a quieter, emptier version of the city during this time. Other national holidays are New Year's Day (January 1); Epiphany (January 6); Easter Sunday and Monday; Liberation Day (April 25); Labor Day (May 1); Republic Day (June 2); Ferragosto (August 15); All Saint's Day (November

1); Immaculate Conception (December 8); Christmas Day and the feast of Saint Stephen (December 25 and 26). Rome-specific holidays are Rome's birthday (April 21) and St. Peter and Paul Day (June 29).

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**THERE ARE WAYS TO AVOID THE CROWDS.**

Millions of tourists visit Rome each year and you should plan your sightseeing ahead of time, especially for the most popular sights like the Colosseum and the Vatican. While travelers seem to be catching on to what used to be low season in Rome, January, February, and November are still when the city is a little quieter than usual. Advance tickets and private tours that let you skip the ticket lines are highly recommended to ensure hours aren't lost queuing for the major attractions. While the city center is the most aesthetically spectacular part of the city, spend some time in the less busy neighborhoods like Testaccio, Monti, or San Giovanni if tourist crowds aren't your thing.

# Getting Here and Around

## d Air Travel

Flying time to Rome is 7½–8½ hours from New York, 9–10 hours from Chicago, 11–12 hours from Los Angeles, and 2½ hours from London.

### AIRPORTS

The principal airport for flights to Rome is Leonardo da Vinci Airport, more commonly known as Fiumicino (FCO). It's 30 km (19 miles) southwest of the city. There is a direct train link with Rome's Termini station on the Leonardo Express train, and a local train to Trastevere and Ostiense stations. Rome's other airport is Ciampino (CIA), on Via Appia Nuova, 15 km (9 miles) south of downtown. Ciampino is a national and international hub for many low-cost airlines. There are no trains linking the Ciampino airport to downtown Rome, but there are a number of shuttle buses running daily.

### TRANSFERS BETWEEN FIUMICINO AND DOWNTOWN

If you're driving into the city, follow the signs for Rome and the GRA (the ring road that circles Rome). The direction you take on the GRA depends on where your lodging is located. If you're staying in the *centro storico* (historic center), follow indications for Roma Centro. Get a map and directions from the car-rental service, and if you aren't using one on your phone, considering renting a GPS as well.

A law implemented by the Comune di Roma requires all Rome taxi drivers to charge a fixed fare of €48 (including four passengers and luggage handling) if your destination is within the Aurelian walls (this covers the *centro storico*, most of Trastevere, most of the Vatican area, and parts of San Giovanni). To make sure your hotel falls within the Aurelian walls, ask when you book your room. If your hotel is outside of the walls, the cab ride can run you about €60 plus *supplementi* (extra charges) for luggage. (Of course, this also depends on traffic.) The ride from the airport to the city center takes about 30–45 minutes. Private limousines can be booked at booths in the Arrivals hall; they



charge more than taxis but can carry more passengers. The Comune di Roma now has a representative in place outside the International Arrivals hall (Terminal 2), where the taxi stand is located, to help tourists get into a taxi cab. Use only licensed white taxis. When in doubt, always ask for a receipt and write the cab company and taxi's license number down (it's written on a metal plate on the inside of the passenger door). Avoid unauthorized drivers who may approach you in the Arrivals hall; they charge exorbitant, unmetered rates.

**Airport Connection** charges €22 for one passenger, €28 for two, and minimal fees for each additional passenger. Booking ahead is required. **Airport Shuttle Express** offers a daily service from/to FCO. The shuttles stop at all major hotels in the center of Rome. It costs €20 one-way for one passenger, €30 for two, and €10 for each additional passenger. (The rate includes two bags per person.) **Airport Shuttle** provides door-to-door shuttle service, at a cost of €25 for one person and €6 for each additional passenger (up to eight). Advance booking is recommended.

Two trains link downtown Rome with Fiumicino—a nonstop express and a local. Inquire at the APT tourist information counter in the International Arrivals hall (Terminal 2) or train information counter near the tracks to determine which takes you closest to your destination in Rome. The 32-minute nonstop Airport–Termini express (called the **Leonardo Express**) goes directly to Tracks 23 or 24 at Termini station, which is well served by taxis and is a hub of Metro and bus lines. Departures to Termini station run every half hour beginning at 6:23 am from the airport, with a final departure at 11:23 pm. Trains depart Termini station from Tracks 23 and 24 to the airport starting at 5:35 am and the last train leaves at 10:35 pm. Tickets cost €14.

Trenitalia's **FL1**, the commuter rail, leaves from the same tracks and runs to Rome and beyond. The main stops in Rome are at Trastevere (26 minutes), Ostiense (31 minutes), and Tiburtina (48 minutes); at each you can find taxis and public transport connections to other areas of Rome. FL1 regional trains run from Fiumicino between 5:57 am and 11:27 pm, with departures every 30 minutes; the schedule is similar going to the airport. Tickets cost €8. For either train, you can buy your ticket at a vending machine or at ticket

counters at the airport and at some stations (Termini, Trastevere, Tiburtina). At the airport, stamp the ticket at the gate. Remember when using the train at other stations to stamp the ticket in the little yellow or red machine near the track before you board. If you fail to stamp your ticket before you board, you could receive a hefty fine, as much as €100 on top of the ticket price.

At night, take **COTRAL buses** from the airport to Tiburtina station or Termini station in Rome (50 minutes) and vice versa. Timetables are subject to last-minute changes so be sure to check before traveling. Tickets either way cost €5 (€7 if purchased on board).

### **TRANSFERS BETWEEN CIAMPINO AND DOWNTOWN**

By car, go north on the Via Appia Nuova into downtown Rome. The taxi fare law implemented by the Comune di Roma that affects Fiumicino applies to this airport, too. All taxi drivers are supposed to charge a fixed fare of €30 (including luggage handling) if your destination is within the Aurelian walls. If your hotel is outside the walls, the cab ride can run you about €60, plus supplementi for luggage. The ride takes about 30 minutes. Take only official white cabs with the “taxi” sign on top; unofficial cabs often overcharge disoriented travelers.

**Airport Connection Services** has shuttles that cost €22 for the first passenger and €28 for two. **Airport Shuttle** charges €25 for the first person, and €6 for each additional passenger. The **ATRAL bus** connects Ciampino airport with Termini station. Buses depart from in front of the airport terminal around 20 times a day 4 am–10:50 pm. The fare is €4.50, and tickets can be bought on the bus. Travel time is approximately 40 minutes.

### **TRANSFERS BETWEEN AIRPORTS**

It’s not easy to move from one airport to another in Rome—the airports aren’t connected by a railway system or by the Metro. The only way to make the transfer is by car, taxi, or a combination of bus, Metro, and train. The latter option is not advisable because it would take you at least two to three hours to get from one airport to the other. A taxi ride from Fiumicino Leonardo Da Vinci Airport to Ciampino Airport will take approximately 45 minutes and could cost roughly €50.

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## j Bus Travel

An extensive network of bus lines that covers all of Lazio (the surrounding geographical region of which Rome is the capital) is operated by **COTRAL** (Consortio Trasporti Lazio). There are several main bus stations. Long-distance and suburban COTRAL bus routes terminate either near Tiburtina station or at outlying Metro stops, such as Rebibbia and Ponte Mammolo (Linea B) and Anagnina (Linea A).

**ATAC**, Rome's city transport service, offers reasonable fares for travel in and around Rome, especially with the BIRG (Biglietto Integrale Regionale Giornaliero), which allows you to travel on all the lines (and some railroad lines) up to midnight on the day of the ticket's first validation. The cost of a BIRG depends upon the distance to your destination and how many "zones" you travel through. Because of the extent and complexity of the system, it's a good idea to consult with your hotel concierge, review ATAC's website, or to telephone COTRAL's central office when planning a trip. COTRAL has several buses that leave daily from Rome's Ponte Mammolo (Linea B) Metro station for the town of Tivoli, where Hadrian's Villa and Villa D'Este are located. Flixbuses leave from Rome's Tiburtina Metro and train station (Linea B) and will take you to Siena and other towns in Tuscany.

While the bus may be an affordable way of moving around, keep in mind that buses can be crowded due to commuter traffic. Just because you've managed to purchase a ticket doesn't mean you're guaranteed a seat. Make sure to arrive early and stand your ground in line. If you are not able to procure a seat, you may be standing for the entire ride.

If you're taking a city bus, make sure the bus you're waiting for actually runs during that part of the day or on that particular day of the week. For example, *notturmo* buses (late-night buses)—distinguished by the "N" sign just above the bus number—don't run until after midnight and then only a few times per hour. Tourists often get confused while waiting at the bus stop, since the *notturmo* bus schedules are listed side-by-side with the regular day bus schedules. Also, be aware that *deviata* buses are those that have been rerouted due to road construction or public demonstrations. And *festivi* buses are ones that only run on Sunday and holidays. Neither *notturmo* buses nor

festivi buses run as often as other buses do on weekdays and Saturday. Regular buses will either say *feriali*, which means “daily,” or won’t have any special distinction.

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## k Car Travel

Driving in Rome is generally not recommended. The main access routes from the north are the A1-E35 (Autostrada del Sole) from Milan and Florence and the A12–E80 highway from Genoa. The principal route to or from points south, including Naples, is the A1-E45. All highways connect with the Grande Raccordo Anulare Ring Road (GRA), which channels traffic into the city center. Markings on the GRA are confusing: take time to study the route you need. Be extremely careful of pedestrians and mopeds when driving: Romans are casual jaywalkers and pop out frequently from between parked cars. People on scooters tend to be the most careless drivers, as they weave in and out of traffic. For driving directions, check out [www.tuttocitta.it](http://www.tuttocitta.it).

### PARKING

Be warned: parking in Rome can be a nightmare. The situation is greatly compounded by the fact that private cars without permits are not allowed access to the centro storico on weekdays 6:30 am–6 pm, Saturday 2 pm–6 pm, or Friday and Saturday nights (11 pm–3 am). Other areas, including Trastevere, Testaccio, and San Lorenzo, are closed to cars at various times. Check the **Roma Mobilità** website for the most up-to-date information. These areas, known as Zona Traffico Limitato (ZTL), are marked by electric signs, and bordering streets have video cameras for photographing license plates. Fines are sent directly to car-rental companies and added to your bill. There is limited free parking in Rome; most parking is metered, on a pay-by-the-hour basis. Spaces with white lines are free parking; spaces with blue lines are paid parking; and spaces with yellow lines are for the handicapped only. All other color-coded spaces are usually reserved for residents or carpooling and require special permits. If you park in one of these spaces without a permit, your car could be ticketed or towed. Make sure to check with your hotel regarding appropriate places to park nearby. Meter parking costs €1–€1.50 per hour (depending on what area you’re in) with a limit on

total parking time allowed in many areas. Parking facilities near historic sights exist at the Villa Borghese and the Vatican.

## **RULES OF THE ROAD**

Driving is on the right. Regulations are largely similar to those in Britain and the United States, except that the police have the power to levy on-the-spot fines. Although honking abounds, the use of horns is forbidden in many areas; a large sign, “*zona di silenzio*,” indicates where. Speed limits are 50 kph (31 mph) in Rome, 110 kph (70 mph) on state and provincial roads, and 130 kph (80 mph) on autostrade, unless otherwise marked. Talking on a mobile phone while driving is strictly prohibited, and if caught, the driver will be issued a fine. Not wearing a seat belt is also against the law. The blood-alcohol content limit for driving is 0.5 gr/l with fines up to €6,000 and the possibility of 12 months imprisonment for surpassing the limit. Fines for speeding are uniformly stiff: 10 kph (6 mph) over the speed limit can warrant a fine in the hundreds and even thousands of euros; over 10 kph, and your license could be taken away.

Whenever the city decides to implement an “Ecological Day” in order to reduce smog levels, commuters are prohibited from driving their cars during certain hours of the day and in certain areas of the city. These are usually organized and announced ahead of time; however, if you’re planning to rent a car during your trip, make sure to ask the rental company and your hotel if there are any planned, because the traffic police won’t cut you any breaks, even if you say you’re a tourist.

## **CAR RENTALS**

When you reserve a car, ask about cancellation penalties, taxes, drop-off charges (if you’re planning to pick up the car in one city and leave it in another), and surcharges (for being under or over a certain age, for additional drivers, or for driving across regional or country borders or beyond a specific distance from your point of rental). All these things can add substantially to your costs. Request car seats and extras such as GPS when you book. Make sure to ask the rental car company if they require you to obtain an International Driver’s Permit beforehand (most do). These can generally be obtained for a fee through AAA in the United States. Rates are sometimes—

but not always—better if you book in advance or reserve through a rental agency’s website. There are other reasons to book ahead, though: for popular destinations, during busy times of the year, or to ensure that you get certain types of cars (automatic transmission, vans, SUVs, exotic sports cars).

Rates in Rome begin at around €40 per day for an economy car with air-conditioning, a manual transmission, and unlimited mileage. This includes the 20% value-added tax (V.A.T.) on car rentals. All international car-rental agencies in Rome have a number of locations. It’s usually cheaper to rent a car in advance through your local agency than to rent on location in Italy. Or book ahead online—you can save as much as €10 per day on your car rental. Within Italy, local and international rental agencies offer similar rates. Whether you’re going with a local or international agency, note that most cars are manual; automatics are rarer, so inquire about those well in advance.

In Italy, your own driver’s license is acceptable if accompanied by an official translation in Italian. But to be extra safe, an International Driving Permit is a good idea; it’s available from the American or Canadian Automobile Association and, in the United Kingdom, from the Automobile Association or Royal Automobile Club. These international permits are universally recognized, and having one in your wallet may save you a problem with the local authorities.

In Italy you must be 21 years of age to rent an economy or subcompact car, and most companies require customers under the age of 23 to pay by credit card. Upon rental, all companies require credit cards as a warranty; to rent bigger cars (2,000 cc or more), you must often show two credit cards. Debit or check cards are not accepted. Call local agents for details. There are no special restrictions on senior-citizen drivers.

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## **Q Public Transportation: Bus, Tram, and Metropolitana**

Although most of Rome’s sights are in a relatively circumscribed area, the city is too large to be seen solely on foot. Try to avoid rush hour when taking the Metro (subway) or a bus, as public transport can be extremely crowded.



Mid-morning or midday through early afternoon tends to be less busy. Otherwise, it's best to take a taxi to the area you plan to visit if it is across town. You should always expect to do a lot of walking in Rome, especially considering how little ground the subway actually covers, so plan on wearing a pair of comfortable, sturdy shoes to cushion the impact of the *sampietrini* (cobblestones). You can get free city and transit maps at municipal information booths.

Rome's integrated transportation system includes buses and trams (ATAC), the Metropolitana (the subway, or Metro), suburban trains and buses (COTRAL), and commuter rail run by the state railway (Trenitalia). A ticket (BIT), valid for 100 minutes on any combination of buses and trams and one entrance to the Metro, costs €1.50. Tickets are sold at tobacco shops, newsstands, some coffee bars, automatic ticket machines in Metro stations, some bus stops, in machines on some buses, and at ATAC ticket booths. You can purchase individual tickets or buy in quantity. It's always a good idea to have a few tickets handy so you don't have to hunt for a vendor when you need one. All tickets must be validated by time-stamping in the yellow meter boxes aboard buses and in underground stations, immediately prior to boarding. Failure to validate your ticket will result in a fine of €54.90. You can now pay for fines on the ATAC website. Pay immediately, or the fine will increase to €104.90 if you pay after five days. You can also pay fines in post offices, authorized shops, or by wire transfer. Do not pay the ticket inspectors in cash; some may be equipped for payment by mobile POS.

A Roma24H ticket, or *biglietto integrato giornaliero* (integrated daily ticket), is valid for 24 hours (from the moment you stamp it) on all public transit and costs €7. You can also purchase a Roma48H (€12.50), a Roma72H (€18), and a CIS (Carta Integrata Settimanale), which is valid for one week (€24). Each option gives unlimited travel on ATAC buses, COTRAL urban bus services, trains for the Lido and Viterbo, and Metro. There's an ATAC kiosk at the bus terminal in front of Termini station. If you're going farther afield, or planning to spend more than a week in Rome, think about getting a BIRG (daily regional ticket) or a CIRS (weekly regional ticket) from the railway station. These give you unlimited travel on all state transport throughout the region of Lazio. This can take you as far as the Etruscan city of Tarquinia or medieval Viterbo.

The Metro is the easiest and fastest way to get around Rome. There are stops near most of the main tourist attractions; street entrances are marked with red “M” signs. The Metro has three lines: A and B, which intersect at Termini station, and also C. Linea A (red) runs from the eastern part of the city, with stops at San Giovanni in Laterano, Piazza Barberini, Piazza di Spagna, Piazzale Flaminio (Piazza del Popolo), and Ottaviano/San Pietro, near the Basilica di San Pietro and the Musei Vaticani. Linea B (blue) has stops near the Colosseum, the Circus Maximus, the Pyramid (Ostiense station and trains for Ostia Antica), and the Basilica di San Paolo Fuori le Mura. Linea C runs from the eastern outskirts of the city through Pigneto. The Metro opens at 5:30 am, and the last trains leave the last station at either end at 11:30 pm (on Friday and Saturday nights the last trains on the A and B lines leave at 1:30 am).

Although not as fast as the Metro, bus and tram travel is more scenic. With reserved bus lanes and numerous tram lines, surface transportation is surprisingly efficient, given the volume of Roman traffic. At peak times, however, buses can be very crowded. If the distance you have to travel is not too great, walking can be a more comfortable alternative. ATAC city buses are orange, gray-and-red, or blue-and-orange; trams are orange or green. Remember to board at the rear and to exit at the middle: some bus drivers may refuse to let you out the front door, leaving you to scramble through the crowd to exit the middle or rear doors. Don’t forget that you must buy your ticket before boarding, and be sure to stamp it in a machine as soon as you enter. The ticket is good for a transfer and one Metro trip within the next 100 minutes. Buses and trams run 5:30 am–midnight, after which time there’s an extensive network of night buses with service throughout the city.

The bus system is a bit complicated to navigate due to the number of lines, but ATAC has a website ([www.atac.roma.it](http://www.atac.roma.it)) that will help you calculate the number of stops and bus route needed, and even give you a map directing you to the appropriate stops. To navigate the site, look for the British flag in the upper right-hand corner to change the website into English.

After a few days in the city, you'll quickly notice that mopeds/scooters are everywhere. Riders are required to wear helmets, and traffic police are tough in enforcing this law. Producing your country's driver's license should be enough to convince most rental firms that they're not dealing with a complete beginner; but if you're unsure of exactly how to ride a moped, think twice, as driving a scooter in Rome is not like you see it in the movies. It can be very dangerous, and Roman drivers tend to be ruthless; at least ask the attendant for a detailed demonstration. If you don't feel up to braving the Roman traffic on a moped, you can hire a Segway or electric bicycle to explore the seven hills of Rome.

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## 6 Taxi Travel

The best way to find a taxi in Rome is generally to hire a taxi at a taxi stand. Taxis do not cruise, but if free they may stop if you flag them down. They wait at stands, but can also be called by phone, in which case you're charged a supplement (the meter will already be running when you're picked up). The various taxi services are considered interchangeable and are referred to by their phone numbers rather than names. Taxicabs can be reserved the night before only if you're traveling to or from the airport or the train station. Only some taxis are equipped to take credit cards; inquire when you phone to make the booking.

The meter starts at €3 during the day, €6.50 10 pm–6 am, and €4.50 on Sunday and holidays. Supplemental charges, such as for luggage or even for pick up at Termini station, are added to the meter fare. When in doubt, ask for a receipt (*ricevuta*). This will encourage the taxicab driver to be honest and charge you the correct amount. Women traveling alone via taxi 10 pm–6 am are entitled to a 10% discount; the same discount applies if your destination is a public hospital. (Make sure to ask for it.) Use only licensed, metered white cabs, identified by a numbered shield on the side, an illuminated taxi sign on the roof, and a plaque next to the license plate reading “*servizio pubblico*.” Avoid unmarked, unauthorized, unmetered cabs (numerous at Rome airports and train stations), whose drivers actively solicit your trade and may demand astronomical fares.

While ride-sharing apps like Uber and Lyft are not yet big in Rome, a new app, Mytaxi, is a quick and easy way to book an official taxi with a smartphone. You can choose to pay by app or with cash, and can rate your driver after the ride.

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## Q Train Travel

State-owned Trenitalia trains are part of the Metrebus system and also serve some destinations on side trips outside Rome. The main Trenitalia stations in Rome are Termini, Tiburtina, Ostiense, and Trastevere. Suburban trains use all of these stations. The Ferrovie COTRAL line departs from a terminal in Piazzale Flaminio, connecting Rome with Viterbo.

Only Trenitalia trains such as Frecciarossa, Frecciargento, and Intercity Plus have first- and second-class compartments. Local trains can be crowded early in the morning and in the evening as many people commute to and from the city, so try to avoid traveling at these times. Plan on arriving early to secure a seat or be ready to stand. On long-distance routes (to Florence and Venice, for instance), you can either travel by the cheap (but slow) *regionale* trains, or the fast, but more expensive, Intercity, Frecciarossa, or Frecciargento, which require seat reservations, available at the station when you buy your ticket, online, or through a travel agent. The state railways' excellent and user-friendly site at [www.trenitalia.it](http://www.trenitalia.it) will help you plan any rail trips in the country.

Since 2012, Italy's rails have had a private competitor, Italo, whose gorgeous and very fast trains travel between large cities including Naples, Rome, Florence, Bologna, Milan, Venice, and Torino. In Rome, Italo trains stop at Termini and Tiburtina stations.

## **Before You Go**

### **U Passport**

All U.S., Canadian, Australian, and New Zealand citizens, even infants, need a valid passport to enter Italy for stays of up to 90 days.

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### **V Visas**

Visas are not required for stays in Italy under 90 days.

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### **W Immunizations**

No specific immunizations or vaccinations are required for visits to Italy.

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### **C When to Go**

Spring and fall are the best times to visit, with mild temperatures and many sunny days. Summers are often sweltering so come in July and August if you like, but we advise doing as the Romans do—get up and out early, seek refuge from the afternoon heat, resume activities in early evening, and stay up late to enjoy the nighttime breeze.

Most attractions are closed on major holidays. Come August, many shops and restaurants close as locals head out for vacation. Remember that air-conditioning is still a relatively rare phenomenon in this city, so carrying a small paper fan in your bag can work wonders. Roman winters are relatively mild, with persistent rainy spells.

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### **i Safety**

Rome is like any other major Western city: generally quite safe, but the occasional pick-pocketing does happen. Wear a bag or camera slung across your body bandolier-style, and don't rest your bag or camera on a table or underneath your chair at a sidewalk café or restaurant. If you have to bring a purse, make sure to keep it within sight by wearing it toward the front. In Rome, beware of pickpockets on buses, especially No. 64 (Termini–Stazione di San Pietro); the No. 40 Express, which takes a faster route; and No. 46, which takes you closer to St. Peter's Basilica; on subways and in subway stations; and on trains, when making your way through the corridors of crowded cars. Pickpockets often work in teams and zero in on tourists who look distracted or are in large groups. Pickpockets may be active wherever tourists gather, including the Roman Forum, the Spanish Steps, Piazza Navona, and Piazza di San Pietro.

Women traveling alone will feel safe, but they should take the same precautions as in any other major Western city. While Italy is still a rather conservative country (and gay marriage is not legal here), LGBTQ travelers should feel safe and welcomed in Rome, although it doesn't have as big of a gay-friendly scene as other European cities.



# Essentials

## h Lodging

When it comes to accommodations, Rome offers a wide selection of high-end hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, designer boutique hotels—options that run the gamut from whimsical to luxurious. Whether you want a simple place to rest your head or a complete cache of exclusive amenities, you have plenty to choose from.

Luxury hotels are justly renowned for sybaritic comfort: postcard views over Roman rooftops, silver flatware on white linen atop a groaning breakfast-buffet table, and the fluffiest towels. But in more modest categories, very often Rome's hotels are not up to the standards of space, comfort, quiet, and service taken for granted in the United States: you'll still find places with tiny rooms, lumpy beds, and anemic air-conditioning. The good news: if you're flexible, there are happy mediums aplenty.

One thing to figure out before you arrive is which neighborhood you want to stay in. There are obvious advantages to staying in a hotel within easy walking distance of the main sights. If a picturesque location is your main concern, stay in one of the small hotels around Piazza Navona or Campo de' Fiori. If luxury is a high priority, head for Piazza di Spagna or beyond the city center, where quality/price ratios are higher and some hotels have swimming pools.

### WHAT IT COSTS IN EUROS

\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$
<b>FOR TWO PEOPLE</b>			
under €125	€125– €200	€201– €300	over €300

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## I Dining

In Rome, simple yet traditional cuisine reigns supreme. Most chefs prefer to follow the mantra of freshness over fuss, and simplicity of flavor and preparation over complex cooking techniques. Rome has been known since antiquity for its grand feasts and banquets, and dining out has always been a favorite Roman pastime. Until recently, the city's *buongustaii* (gourmands) would have been the first to tell you that Rome is distinguished more by its enthusiasm for eating out than for a multitude of world-class restaurants—but this is changing. There is an ever-growing promotion of slow-food practices, a focus on sustainably and locally sourced produce. The economic crisis forced the food industry in Rome to adopt innovative ways to maintain a clientele who were increasingly looking to dine out but want to spend less; the result has been the rise of “street food” restaurants, selling everything from inexpensive and novel takes on the classic *supplì* (Roman fried-rice balls) to sandwich shops that use a variety of organic ingredients.

Generally speaking, Romans like Roman food, and that's what you'll find in many of the city's trattorias and wine bars. For the most part, today's chefs cling to the traditional and excel at what has taken hundreds, sometimes thousands, of years to perfect. This is why the basic trattoria menu is more or less the same wherever you go. And it's why even the top Roman chefs feature their versions of simple trattoria classics like carbonara, and why those who attempt to offer it in a “deconstructed” or slightly varied way will often come under criticism. To a great extent, Rome is still a town where the Italian equivalent of “What are you in the mood for?” still gets the answer, “Pizza or pasta.”

## Where Should I Stay?

	<b>Neighborhood Vibe</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
Around the Vatican: Borgo and Prati	Touristy near the Vatican but also with some upmarket restaurants and caffè; not especially atmospheric.	Close to the Vatican; pretty quiet at night.	Far from other tourist attractions and nightlife.
Piazza Navona, Campo de' Fiori, and Jewish Ghetto	Surrounding areas are filled with good restaurants and most of Rome's major attractions; the Jewish Ghetto is quieter.	Everything you need is within walking distance: good eats, shopping, and many of Rome's museums and monuments.	This is the height of hustle and bustle in Rome—convenient, but often pricey; street noise may be an issue.
Piazza di Spagna	Home to Rome's crème de la crème for lodging and shopping.	Where all the high rollers and A-listers like to reside.	Everything is expensive; not very close to central hot spots.
Repubblica	Repubblica, with its beautiful piazza, is near Termini station without the grungy feel.	Hotels are much cheaper than elsewhere in Rome; convenient to Termini station; great restaurants and hip bars.	Cheap, basic accommodations; the area surrounding Termini station can be iffy.
Villa Borghese and Piazza del Popolo, Monte Mario, and Parioli	Somewhat removed from the hubbub, this area is a bit more refined, with fancy boutiques and hotels.	Close to the Piazza di Spagna and shopping; lots of dining options nearby.	Pricey and a bit remote from Piazza Navona and Campo de' Fiori.
Trastevere	Villagelike Trastevere has winding cobblestone alleys, beautiful churches, and authentic mom-and-pop trattorias.	Fun area with great restaurants and caffè.	General area gets busy at night; can be rowdy and rambunctious on the weekends; full of students.
Aventino and Testaccio	Aventino is a relaxing hilltop retreat. Working-class Testaccio is the heart of Rome's nightlife.	Tranquility, amazing views, and spacious rooms await you in Aventino. Party like a rock star in Rome's famous nightlife district, Testaccio.	Transportation difficult on the Aventine Hill; Testaccio is crowded on weekends.
Esquilino	These are some of the more chic and funky neighborhoods in Rome.	Hotels are cheaper here than elsewhere in Rome; close to Termini station.	Far from main tourist attractions.

Nevertheless, Rome is the capital of Italy, and because people move here from every corner of the Italian peninsula, there are more variations on the Italian theme in Rome than you'd find elsewhere in Italy: Sicilian, Tuscan, Pugliese, Bolognese, Marchegiano, Sardinian, and northern Italian regional cuisines are all represented. And reflecting the increasingly cosmopolitan nature of the city, you'll find a growing number of good-quality international foods here as well—particularly Japanese, Indian, and Ethiopian.

Oddly enough, though, for a nation that prides itself on *la bella figura* (“looking good”), most Romans don't fuss about music, personal space, lighting, or decor. After all, who needs flashy interior design when so much of Roman life takes place outdoors, when dining alfresco in Rome can take place in the middle of a glorious ancient site or a centuries-old piazza?

## RESTAURANT TYPES

Until relatively recently, there was a distinct hierarchy delineated by the names of Rome's eating places. A **ristorante** was typically elegant and expensive, and a **trattoria** served more traditional, home-style fare in a relaxed atmosphere. An **osteria** was even more casual, essentially a wine bar and gathering spot that also served food, although the latest species of wine bars generally goes under the moniker of **enoteca**. All these terms still exist but their distinction has blurred considerably. Now, an osteria in the center of town may be pricier than a ristorante across the street.

Although Rome may not boast the grand **caffè** of Paris or Vienna, it does have hundreds of small places on pleasant side streets and piazze. The coffee is routinely of high quality. Locals usually stop in for a quickie at the bar, where prices are much lower than for the same drink taken at the table. If you place your order at the counter, ask if you can sit down: some places charge more for table service. Often you'll pay a cashier first, then give your *scontrino* (receipt) to the person at the counter who fills your order.

## HOW TO ORDER: FROM PRIMO TO DOLCE

In a Roman sit-down restaurant, whether a ristorante, trattoria, or osteria, you're expected to order at least two courses. It could be a *primo* (first course, usually pasta or an appetizer) followed by a *secondo* (second course,

really a “main course” in English parlance, usually meat or fish); an *antipasto* (starter) followed by a primo or secondo; or a secondo and a *dolce* (dessert). Many people consider a full meal to consist of a primo, a secondo, and a dolce.

If you’re not too hungry, try a pizzeria, where it’s common to order just one dish. The handiest places for an afternoon snack are bars, caffè, and pizzerie. For a quick lunch or dinner, head to a *tavola calda*, kind of like a cafeteria where you can order from what’s available at the counter and sit and eat at a table.

### MEAL TIMES AND CLOSURES

Breakfast (*la colazione*) is usually served 7 am–10:30 am, lunch (*il pranzo*) 12:30 pm–2:30 pm, dinner (*la cena*) 7:30 pm–11 pm. Peak times are around 1:30 pm for lunch and 9 pm for dinner. Enoteches are sometimes open in the morning and late afternoon for snacks. Most pizzerie open at 8 pm and close around midnight or 1 am. Most bars and caffè are open 7 am–8 or 9 pm. Almost all restaurants close one day a week (in most cases Sunday or Monday) and for at least two weeks in August. The city is zoned, however, so that there are always some restaurants in each zone that remain open.

Local regulations are in the process of changing in Rome to give proprietors greater leeway in setting their hours. This is meant to allow establishments to stay open later and make more money in a down economy, and to offer patrons longer hours and more time to eat, drink, and be merry. It has yet to be seen whether Italians will find the law “flexible” and use it as an excuse to close early when they feel like it. *Tutto è possibile*: anything’s possible in Rome.

### WHAT IT COSTS IN EUROS

\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$
<b>AT DINNER</b>			
under €14	€14–€24	€25– €34	over €34

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## ▮ Nightlife

For a great night out in Rome, all you need to do is to wander, because ready entertainment is sure to find you on every corner. It's important to follow Rome's rule of thumb: if you see an enoteca, stop in. Though most enoteche are tiny and offer a limited antipasti menu, they cover more ground in their wine lists and often have a charming gang of regulars. For the linguistically timid, there are also several stereotypical English and Irish pubs peppered around the city, complete with a steady stream of Guinness, darts, and rugby on their satellite televisions. Those oversize flat-screen TVs also show American football, baseball, and basketball—ideal for those who don't want to miss a playoff game.

Although Rome offers a cornucopia of evening bacchanalia, from ultra-chic to super-cheap, all that glitters is not gold. Insiders and visitors alike understand that finding “the scene” in Rome is the proverbial needle in the haystack: it requires patience and pursuit. Your best asset will be your ability to talk, since word-of-mouth is the most accurate source. Entertainment guides like *Roma 2night* provide great logistical information including up-to-date listings of bars and clubs. Most visitors head out in the centro storico to find some fun; Piazza Navona, Pantheon, Campo de' Fiori, and even Trastevere may be filled with tourists, but more recently, several niche and boutique bars have opened. (In contrast, the Spanish Steps area is a ghost town by 9 pm.) If you want to get out of the comfort zone, head to the Testaccio and San Lorenzo areas. And wherever you go, remember: Romans love an after-party, so plenty of nightlife doesn't start until midnight.

When it comes to clubs, discos, and DJs in Rome, Testaccio is considered a mecca. Testaccio's Via Galvani is Rome's Sunset Strip, where hybrid restaurant-clubs, largely identical in music and crowd, jockey for top ranking. On average, drinks range between €10 and €15, and one is often included with the entrance (€10–€20). In summer, many clubs relocate to the beach or the Tiber, so call ahead to confirm location and hours.

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## P Performing Arts

One of the pleasures of Rome is seeing a performance in one of the city's stunning venues, ancient or modern. This is the city where you might experience classical opera performed in the 3rd-century-AD Terme di Caracalla, or enjoy an experimental dance show in the postindustrial detergent factory Teatro India, or see a contemporary performance at the Renzo Piano–designed Auditorium Parco della Musica.

### HOW TO FIND EVENTS

With its foot firmly in the 21st century, Rome has a pantheon of publications heralding its cultural events. For city-sponsored events, Rome's official website [www.comune.roma.it](http://www.comune.roma.it) tries to remain as *au courant* as any governmental entity can. A broader range of event listings can be found in the Cronaca and Cultura section of Italian newspapers, including *Metro*, the free newspaper found at Metro stops and on trams.

On the Internet, check out this website written exclusively for the English-speaking community: [wrome.eventful.com](http://wrome.eventful.com). Its Italian-language counterpart Roma 2night ([www.2night.it](http://www.2night.it)) has an even more robust selection of nightlife, along with food spots. The monthly English-language periodical *Wanted in Rome* ([www.wantedinrome.com](http://www.wantedinrome.com)) is available at many newsstands and has good coverage of arts events. For directory information, like addresses, *060608* ([www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it)) has listings of every cultural site (monument, church, museum, art space, etc.) in the city.

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## b Shopping

In Rome, shopping is an art form. Perhaps it's the fashionably bespectacled commuter wearing Giorgio Armani as he deftly zips through traffic on his Vespa, or all those Anita Ekberg, Audrey Hepburn, and Julia Roberts films that make us long to be Roman for a day. But with limited time and no Hollywood studio backing you, the trick is to find what you're looking for and still not miss out on the city's museums and monuments—and, of course, leave yourself plenty of euros to enjoy the rest of your trip.

Since you may be pressed for time, knowing how and where to put your best fashion foot forward is crucial. Luckily for shop-till-you-droppers, you can still fit your shopping sprees in between sights. A visit to the Trevi Fountain means not only reliving the movie classic *Three Coins in a Fountain*, but puts you within striking distance of some of the city's best shopping. Pose for a picture-perfect snapshot at Piazza di Spagna, as you keep your eye on that delicious handbag in the window at Dolce & Gabbana.

There may be no city that takes shopping quite as seriously as Rome, and no district more worthy of your time than Piazza di Spagna, with its abundance of shops and designer powerhouses like Fendi and Armani. The best of them are clumped tightly together along the city's three primary fashion arteries: Via dei Condotti, Via Borgognona, and Via Frattina. From Piazza di Spagna to Piazza Navona and on to Campo de' Fiori, shoppers will find an explosive array of shops within walking distance of one another: a shop for fine handmade Amalfi paper looks out upon the Pantheon, while slick boutiques anchor the corners of 18th-century Piazza di Spagna. Across town in the colorful hive that is Monti, a second-generation mosaic artist creates Italian masterpieces on a street named for a pope who died before America was even discovered. Even in Trastevere, one can find one of Rome's rising shoe designers creating next-century *nuovo chic* shoes nestled on a side street beside one of the city's oldest churches.

### **DUTY-FREE SHOPPING**

Value-added tax (IVA) is 23% on clothing and luxury goods, but is already included in the amount on the price tag for consumer goods. All non-EU citizens visiting Italy are entitled to a reimbursement of this tax when purchasing nonperishable goods that total more than €180 in a single transaction. If you buy goods in a store that does not participate in the "Tax-Free Italy" program, ask the cashier to issue you a special invoice known as a *fattura*, which must be made out to you and includes the phrase *Esente IVA ai sensi della legge 38 quarter*. The bill should indicate the amount of IVA included in the purchase price. Present this invoice and the goods purchased to the Customs Office on your departure from Italy to obtain your tax reimbursement.

## ITALIAN SIZES

Unfortunately, Italian sizes are not standard—it is therefore always best to try things on. If you wear a “small,” you may be surprised to learn that in Italy, you are a medium. Children’s sizes are just as complicated; they are typically based on Italian children’s ages. Check labels on all garments, as many are dry clean–only or non–tumble dry. When in doubt about the proper size, ask the shop attendant—most will have an international size chart handy. At open-air markets, where there often isn’t any place to try on garments, you’ll have to take your best guess: if you’re wrong, you may or may not be able to find the vendor the next day to exchange.

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## Z Health

Smoking is banned in Italy in all public places. This includes trains, buses, offices, hospitals, and waiting rooms, as well as restaurants, pubs, and discotheques (unless the latter have separate smoking rooms). Fines for breaking the law are exorbitant. You’ll find that most people skirt the law by sitting outside on the many outdoor restaurant terraces. Sit inside if the smoke in outdoor seating areas bothers you. Many restaurants are now equipped with air-conditioning.

It’s always best to travel with your own trusted medications. Should you need medication while in Italy, you should speak with a physician to make sure it is the proper kind and in case a prescription is necessary. Aspirin (*l’aspirina*) can be purchased at any pharmacy, as can over-the-counter medicines such as ibuprofen or paracetamol. Other over-the-counter remedies, including cough syrup, antiseptic creams, and headache pills, are sold only in pharmacies. Pharmacists are happy to dispense advice and, in the city center especially, almost always speak some English.

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## y Tipping

In Italy, service is always included in the menu prices. It’s customary to leave an additional 5%–10% tip, or a couple of euros, for the waiter, depending on

the quality of service. Tip checkroom attendants €1 per person, restroom attendants €0.50. In both cases tip more in expensive hotels and restaurants. Tip €0.05–€0.10 for whatever you drink standing up at a coffee bar, €0.20–€0.50 or more for table service in a café. At a hotel bar, tip €1 and up for a round or two of cocktails, more in the grander hotels.

For tipping taxi drivers, it is acceptable if you round up to the nearest euro, minimum €0.50. Give a barber €1–€1.50 and a hairdresser's assistant €1.50–€4 for a shampoo or cut, depending on the type of establishment and the final bill; 5%–10% is a fair guideline.

On private sightseeing tours, tipping your guides 10% is customary. In museums and other places of interest where admission is free, a contribution is expected; give anything from €0.50 to €1 for one or two people, more if the guardian has been especially helpful. Service station attendants are tipped only for special services. On off-hours there may be station attendants not in uniform working just for tips. Give €0.50 to €1 if they fill up your tank.

In hotels, give the *portiere* (conciierge) about 15% of his bill for services, or €2.50–€5 if he has been generally helpful. For two people in a double room, leave the chambermaid about €1 per day, or about €4–€6 a week, in a moderately priced hotel; tip a minimum of €1 for valet or room service. Increase these amounts by one half in an expensive hotel, and double them in a very expensive hotel. In very expensive hotels, tip doormen €0.50 for calling a cab and €1 for carrying bags to the check-in desk, bellhops €1.50–€2.50 for carrying your bags to the room, and €2–€2.50 for room service.

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## † Tours and Guides

Some might consider them kitsch, but guided bus tours can prove a blissfully easy way to enjoy a quick introduction to the city's top sights—if you don't feel like being on your feet all day. Sitting in a bus, with friendly tour guide commentary (and even friendlier fellow sightseers, many of whom will be from every country under the sun), can make for a fun experience—so give one a whirl even if you're an old Rome hand. Of course, you'll want to savor these incredible sights at your own leisure later on.



The least expensive organized sightseeing tour of Rome is the one run by **CitySightseeing Roma**. Double-decker buses leave from Via Marsala, beside Termini station, but you can pick them up at any of their nine stopping points. A day ticket costs €23 and allows you to get off and on as often as you like. The price includes an audio guide system in six languages. The total tour takes about two hours and covers the Colosseum, Piazza Navona, St. Peter's, the Trevi Fountain, and Via Veneto. Tickets can be bought on board. Two- and three-day tickets are also available. Tours leave from Termini station every 20 minutes 9–7:30.

All operators can provide a luxury car for up to three people, a limousine for up to seven, or a minibus for up to nine, all with an English-speaking driver, but guide service is extra. Almost all operators offer “Rome by Night” tours, with or without dinner and entertainment. You can book tours through travel agents.

# Rome Festivals

The City of Eternal Festivals, Rome has a bevy of internationally recognized festivals. In the fall and spring especially, you can see local and international talent in some of the city's most beautiful venues, outside and in.

## DANCE

**Gay Village.** From the end of May through mid-September, the festival known as Gay Village hosts an outdoor mega-party held in a different central location each year. Each one more amazing than the last, Gay Village is larger than life with great bars, clubs, pop-up shops, and an international lineup of DJs and performance artists. ERome [www.gayvillage.it](http://www.gayvillage.it).

## FILM

**Festa del Cinema di Roma.** In the fall, cinephiles head to Rome for its annual film festival, two packed weeks of cinema celebration and celebrity spotting. The festival showcases Hollywood hits, Italian indie and experimental films, retrospectives and shorts, and conversations with global cinema icons. EViale Pietro De Coubertin 10, Flaminio [www.romacinemafest.it](http://www.romacinemafest.it).

## FINE ART AND THEATER

**RomaEuropa.** For six weeks in early fall, the RomaEuropa festival ignites stages and theaters as a collective, multi-venue avant-garde performing and visual arts program, showcasing international artists, installations, film, and performance. ERome P06/45553050 [www.romaeuropa.net](http://www.romaeuropa.net).

## MUSIC

**Estate Romana.** A summer-long, city-sponsored cultural series, many of these events are free and take place outdoors along the Tiber River and in piazzas all around the city. Look for cinema events, art programs, theater, book fairs, and guided tours of some of Rome's monuments by night. ERome [www.estateromana.comune.roma.it](http://www.estateromana.comune.roma.it).

**Il Tempietto.** This series of unforgettable concerts takes place throughout the year in otherwise inaccessible sites, like the 1st-century Teatro di Marcello. Music runs the gamut from classical to contemporary. *EJewish Ghetto P*  
[www.tempietto.it](http://www.tempietto.it).

**Rock in Roma.** From June through August, various locations throughout Rome, including the massive Ippodromo, host rock's top acts from all over the world. *EIppodromo delle Capannelle, Via Appia Nuova 1255, Via Appia Antica* [www.rockinroma.com](http://www.rockinroma.com).

**Roma Incontra il Mondo.** World-class headliners as well as its beautiful location in Villa Ada, a former monarch's residence, make Roma Incontra il Mondo one of Europe's most impressive world-music festivals. The summer concert series is held in the middle of the park and begins at 10 pm, followed by dancing until 2 am. *ELaghetto di Villa Ada, Via di Ponte Salaro 28, Parioli* [www.villaada.org](http://www.villaada.org).

# Great Itineraries

Rome is jam-packed with things to do and see. These are some of our suggested itineraries. Make sure to leave yourself time to just wander and get the feel of the city as well.

## Rome in 1 Day

Rome wasn't built in a day, but if that's all you have to see it, take a deep breath, strap on some stylish-but-comfy sneakers, and grab a cappuccino to help you get an early start. Get ready for a spectacular sunrise-to-sunset tour of the Ancient City.

Begin by getting a coffee at the bar of the Caffè Sant'Eustachio right when it opens at 9 am. Close by are two opulently over-the-top monuments that show off Rome at its Baroque best: the church of Sant'Ignazio, with its stunning painted ceiling, and the princely Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, packed with great Old Master paintings. Mid-morning, head west a few blocks to find the fabled Pantheon, still looking like Emperor Hadrian might arrive shortly. A few blocks north is San Luigi dei Francesi, home to Caravaggio's earliest major commissions.

Just before lunch, saunter a block or so westward into the gorgeous Piazza Navona, studded with Bernini fountains. Then take Via della Cuccagna (at the piazza's south end) and continue several blocks toward Campo de' Fiori's open-air food market. This is a great place to stop for lunch.

Two more blocks toward the Tiber brings you to one of the most romantic streets of Rome—Via Giulia—laid out by Pope Julius II in the early 16th century. Walk past 10 blocks of Renaissance palazzi and ivy-draped antiques shops to take a bus (from the stop near the Tiber) over to the Vatican.

Gape at St. Peter's Basilica, then hit the treasure-filled Musei Vaticani (for the Sistine Chapel) in the early afternoon. During lunch, the crowds thin out some, but you can avoid lines entirely if you book online at [wbiglietteriamusei.vatican.va](http://wbiglietteriamusei.vatican.va) (the €4 service fee is well worth the time

saved). Wander for about two hours and then head for the Ottaviano stop near the museum and Metro your way to the Colosseo stop.

Climb up into the Colosseum and picture it full of screaming toga-clad citizens enjoying the spectacle of gladiators in mortal combat. Follow Via dei Fori Imperiali to the entrance of the Roman Forum. Photograph yourself giving a “Friends, Romans, Countrymen” oration (complete with upraised hand) by a crumbling column. At sunset, the Forum closes and the floodlights come on.

March down the Forum’s ancient Via Sacra and back out into Via dei Fori Imperiali where you will head around “the wedding cake,” the looming Vittorio Emanuele II Monument (Il Vittoriano), to the Campidoglio. Here, on the Capitoline Hill, tour the great ancient Roman art treasures of the Musei Capitolini, and admire the view over the Forum from the Tabularium and toward St. Peter’s from the terrace by the museum’s caffè. If you’re not entering the museum, there is a spectacular view over the Forum from the Capitoline Hill (at the top of via Monte Tarpeo).

After dinner, hail a cab—or take a long passeggiata walk down *La Dolce Vita* memory lane—to the Trevi Fountain, a gorgeous sight at night. Don’t forget to toss a coin in over your shoulder to ensure a trip back to Rome.

## Rome in 3 Days

More time in Rome will allow you to explore more of the Roman Forum and the Vatican Museums, check out some less touristy sights, and drink your way through hip neighborhoods like Trastevere.

### **DAY 1: ANCIENT ROME**

Spend your first day in Rome exploring the likes of the Roman Forum, Musei Capitolini, and the Colosseum. This area is pretty compact, but you can easily spend a full morning and afternoon exploring its treasures. It’s best to try and beat the crowds at the Colosseum by getting there right when it opens at 8:30 am (advance tickets help, too). A guided tour of the Forum is also a good way to make the most out of your afternoon. After your day of sightseeing, stop for a classic Roman dinner in nearby Monti.



## **DAY 2: THE VATICAN AND PIAZZA NAVONA**

Another full day of sightseeing awaits when you make your way to the city-state known as the Vatican. You'll once again want to try and avoid the biggest crowds here, especially for a glimpse of the Sistine Chapel (the best way to do this is to make online reservations for an extra €4 ahead of time). Booking a tour of the Vatican Museums is a good way to take full advantage of the site; most tours last two hours. Be sure to stop in and marvel at St. Peter's Basilica, too. Stop for lunch in nearby Prati, but after you're done with the Vatican, cross the river to Piazza Navona. Spend some time exploring this glorious piazza and its sculptures, but make sure to stop by the Pantheon before heading to Campo de' Fiori for dinner at an outdoor restaurant. Afterwards, there are plenty of nearby bars to keep you occupied.

## **DAY 3: PIAZZA DI SPAGNA, VILLA BORGHESE, AND TRASTEVERE**

Start your morning with breakfast near the Trevi Fountain, before doing some window-shopping up Via Condotti and the many surrounding backstreets as you make your way to the Spanish Steps. Pose for some postcard-worthy photos there before heading to nearby Villa Borghese. If you're sick of museums, feel free to explore Rome's main park and enjoy the great views; if you're up for some more art, the Galleria Borghese is one of the city's best art museums. Afterwards, head to trendy Trastevere for dinner, and soak in the cobblestone streets and charming medieval houses as you bar-hop your last night in town.

## **IF YOU HAVE MORE TIME**

If your trip to Rome is on the longer side, be sure to put aside one day for a trip out to Ostia Antica, an ancient port city that is now one of the best preserved archaeological ruins in all of Italy. A train to the site leaves every 15 minutes from the Porta San Paolo station; the trip takes a mere 35 minutes. Take your time exploring these impressive ruins, and be sure to stop for lunch in town, too. Other great day trips include the gorgeous villas in the town of Tivoli, the charming small villages of the Castelli Romani, and the whimsical gardens of Bomarzo.

If you want to make the most of your time in the city itself, take your time

exploring the many churches and cathedrals like Sant'Ignazio or San Clemente. You can also stop by to explore gorgeous palaces like the Palazzo Doria Pamphili and check out lesser known but just as impressive museums like the MAXXI or the MACRO. Visiting the ancient Roman road known as the Via Appia Antica and its spooky yet mesmerizing catacombs is another great way to spend an afternoon immersed in Roman history.

# Rome of the Emperors: A Roman Forum Walk

Taking in the famous vista of the Roman Forum from the terraces of the *Campidoglio* (Capitoline Hill), you have probably already cast your eyes down and across two millennia of history in a single glance. Here, in one fabled panorama, are the world's most striking and significant concentrations of historic remains.

## THE COLOSSEUM

To kick things off, start just south of the Forum at ancient Rome's hallmark monument, the **Colosseum** (with its handy Colosseo Metro stop). Convincingly austere, the Colosseum is the Eternal City's yardstick of eternity. Nowadays, you can take one of the elevators upstairs to level one to glimpse the extensive subterranean passageways that used to funnel all the unlucky animals and gladiators into the arena.

## THE ROMAN FORUM

Leaving the Colosseum behind, admire the **Arch of Constantine**, standing just to the north of the arena. The largest and best preserved of Rome's triumphal arches, it was erected in AD 315 to celebrate the victory of the emperor Constantine (280–337) over Maxentius—it was shortly after this battle that Constantine converted Rome to Christianity. You have to walk down Via dei Fori Imperiali to the only Forum entrance, located about halfway down the street from the Colosseum and across from Via Cavour, to enter the Forum. From there, you can take a left up the ancient Via Sacra to start at the Forum's southwestern point with the **Temple of Venus and Roma**. Off to your left, on the spur of hillside jutting from the Palatine Hill, stands the famed **Arch of Titus**. Through the arch, photograph the great vista of the entire Forum as it stretches toward the distant Capitoline Hill.

Rome of the Emperors: A Roman Forum Walk

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

Arches of Septimius Severus, Titus, and Constantine; the Colosseum; the Via Sacra; the Roman Forum.

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**WHERE TO START:**

Piazza del Colosseo, with its handy Colosseo Metro stop.

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**WHERE TO STOP:**

Inside the archaeological ruins, there are drinking fountains and a couple of vending machines (on the Palatine and the via Nova in the Forum) for hot days. Just a five-minute walk from the Colosseum on Via di San Giovanni, fresh and creamy gelato and homemade Sicilian specialties await you at several genuine shops and restaurants.

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**LENGTH:**

Two to five hours, depending on your pace and how detailed you wish the visit to be.

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**BEST TIME TO GO:**

To avoid the harsh midday sun start your tour of the Forum early or in the late afternoon.

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**WORST TIME TO GO:**

Midday in high summer, when the sun is high and merciless in the Forum, particularly in the summertime—remember, there are no roofs and few trees to shelter under at these archaeological sites. The Palatine has more shade (and a small air-conditioned museum). Crowds are at their thickest after 10 am.

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## HAUNT OF THE VESTAL VIRGINS

Continue your walk toward the Capitoline Hill by strolling over to the **Temple of Castor and Pollux**, then head past the temple to the circular **Temple of Vesta**. In a tradition going back to an age when fire was a precious commodity, the famous vestal virgins kept the fire of Rome burning here. Of the original 20 columns only 3 remain, behind which stretch the vast remains of the **House of the Vestal Virgins**. Crossing the central square and walking back toward the towering Capitoline Hill, you are now entering the midsection of the open area of the Forum proper; you can see to your left the **Column of Phocas**.



## SEVERUS AND SATURN

Continue back down the Via Sacra, where towers one of the Forum's extant spectaculars, the **Arch of Septimius Severus**. Continuing left and up the Via Sacra, you reach the base of the celebrated **Temple of Saturn**. For a better sense of the whole area—a sort of archaeological gestalt—climb onto the Palatine (the stairs are very steep; easier access is up the path by the Arch of Titus) to the terrace at the Horti Farnesiani Gardens for a breathtaking view to put your walking into panoramic context.

## Contacts

### d Air Travel

**AIRPORTS Ciampino.** P06/65951 [www.adr.it/ciampino](http://www.adr.it/ciampino). **Leonardo da Vinci Airport/Fiumicino.** P06/65951 [www.adr.it/fiumicino](http://www.adr.it/fiumicino).

**AIRPORT TRANSFERS Airport Connection Services.** P338/9876465 [www.airportconnection.it](http://www.airportconnection.it). **Airport Shuttle.** P06/42013469, 06/4740451 [www.airportshuttle.it](http://www.airportshuttle.it). **Airport Shuttle Express.** P06/65017448 [www.airportshuttleexpress.it](http://www.airportshuttleexpress.it).

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### Emergencies

**GENERAL EMERGENCY CONTACTS Ambulance.** P118. **Emergency Telephone Number.** P112. **Fire Department.** P115. **Polizia (Police).** P113.

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### 5 Public Transport Travel

**ATAC.** P06/46951 [www.atac.roma.it](http://www.atac.roma.it) **COTRAL.** P800/174471 in Italy (from landline only), 06/72057205 [www.cotralspa.it](http://www.cotralspa.it). **Flixbus.** [www.flixbus.it](http://www.flixbus.it).

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### @ Scooter Travel

**RENTAL AGENCIES Bici & Baci.** P06/4828443 [www.bicibaci.com](http://www.bicibaci.com). **Rolling Rome.** EPiazza del Gesù 47 P320/8076437, 348/6121355 [www.rollingrome.com](http://www.rollingrome.com). **Treno e Scooter.** EPiazza dei Cinquecento, in the parking lot in front of the train station, Termini P06/48905823 [www.trenoescooter.com](http://www.trenoescooter.com).

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## 6 Taxi Travel

**TAXI COMPANIES Mytaxi.** [wus.mytaxi.com](http://wus.mytaxi.com). **Rome Taxis.** P06/6645, 06/3570, 06/4994, 06/5551, 06/4157 [www.3570.it](http://www.3570.it).

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## Q Train Travel

**Italo Treno.** P892020 customer service line within Italy, 06/0708 from abroad [www.italotreno.it](http://www.italotreno.it). **Trenitalia.** P892021 customer service line within Italy, 06/68475475 from abroad [www.trenitalia.it](http://www.trenitalia.it).

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## U U.S. Embassy

**U.S. Embassy Rome** E Via Vittorio Veneto 121 P06/46741  
[www.usembassy.gov/italy](http://www.usembassy.gov/italy).

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## Ì Visitor Information

**060608 (Tourist Services).** P06/0608 [www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it). **Roma Sito Turistico Ufficiale.** P06/0608 [www.turismoroma.it/?lang=en](http://www.turismoroma.it/?lang=en).

## Chapter 3

# ANCIENT ROME

## WITH MONTI AND CELIO

Updated by  
Agnes Crawford



 Sights  
★★★★★

 Restaurants  
★★☆☆☆

 Hotels  
★★★★☆

 Shopping  
★★☆☆☆

 Nightlife  
★★☆☆☆

# ANCIENT ROME SNAPSHOT

## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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This area is relatively compact, but extremely rich in history with plenty to see. Serious history buffs should allow a full day to do the area justice, including an hour in the Colosseum, a few hours in the Forum and on the Palatine Hill, and a couple more hours in the Musei Capitolini. Even for ancient Rome experts, taking a tour can be helpful, but be sure to book a guide in advance instead of picking up one of those trying to shill their expertise on-site.

The longest line in Rome, aside from the one at the Vatican Museums, is at the Colosseum, so book a timed slot online ahead of time ([www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it)). Even with timed entrances, the security line can be long and the interior crowded. From April through October and on weekends year-round, it's usually best to try and book your visit for before 10 am or for an hour or so before closing, when many tour buses have started to depart. There is little to no shade in the Forum, so it gets very hot and dusty in summertime—another reason to either go early or start late.

Outside of the main tourism area, make sure to give yourself some time to explore the neighborhood of Monti itself, which surrounds the Colosseum, with its artisanal shops, fine trattorias, and high-end boutiques—the best of old and new Rome, all in one tiny, proud *rione* (district).

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**The Colosseum:** Clamber up the stands above the imperial box and imagine the gory games as Trajan saw them.

**The Roman Forum:** Walk through crumbling, romantic ruins—a trip



back 2,000 plus years—to the heart of one of the greatest empires the world has ever seen.

**The Campidoglio:** Watch the sun go down over the Forum from the Campidoglio, the best view in town.

**Capitoline Museums:** See eye-to-eye with the ancients—the busts of emperors and philosophers are more real than ideal.

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## GETTING HERE

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■ The Colosseo Metro station is right across from the Colosseum and a short walk from both the Roman and Imperial forums, as well as the Palatine Hill. Walking from the very heart of the historic center will take about 20 minutes, much of it along the wide Via dei Fori Imperiali. The little electric Bus No. 117 from the center or No. 175 from Termini will also deliver you to the Colosseum's doorstep. Any of the following buses will take you to or near the Roman Forum: Nos. 60, 75, 85, 95, and 175.

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## QUICK BITES

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■ **Fatamorgana.** A short walk from the Roman Forum, this small Roman chain serves excellent gelato, including familiar favorites and adventurous flavors such as Gorgonzola, olive, and tobacco. A bench outside offers relief after a day of walking. *EPiazza degli Zingari 5, Monti P06/48906855 [www.gelateriafatamorgana.com](http://www.gelateriafatamorgana.com) mCavour.*

**If you ever wanted to feel like the Caesars—with all of ancient Rome (literally) at your feet—simply head to Michelangelo’s famed Piazza del Campidoglio. There, make a beeline for the terrace flanking the side of the center building, the Palazzo Senatorio, Rome’s ceremonial city hall. From this balcony atop the Capitoline Hill you can take in a breathtaking panorama.**

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Looming before you is the entire Roman Forum, the *caput mundi*—the capital of the known world—for centuries, and where many of the world’s most important events in the past 2,500 years happened. Here, all Rome shouted as one, “Caesar has been murdered,” and crowded to hear Mark Antony’s eulogy for the fallen leader. Here, legend has it that St. Paul traversed the Forum en route to his audience with Nero. Here, Roman law and powerful armies were created, keeping the rest of the world at bay for a millennium. And here the Roman emperors staged the biggest blow-out extravaganzas ever mounted for the entire population of a city, outdoing even Elizabeth Taylor’s entrance in *Cleopatra*.

But after a more than 27-century-long parade of pageantry, you’ll find that much has changed in this area. The marble fragments scattered over the Forum area makes all but students of archaeology ask: is this the grandeur that was Rome? It’s not surprising that Shelley and Gibbon once reflected, on the sense that *sic transit gloria mundi*—“thus passes the glory of the world.” Yet spectacular monuments—the Arch of Septimius Severus, the Palatine Hill, and the Colosseum (looming in the background), among them—remind us that this was indeed the birthplace of much of Western civilization.

Before the Christian era, before the Emperors, before the powerful Republic that ruled the Mediterranean, Rome was founded on seven hills. Two of them, the Capitoline and the Palatine, surround the Roman Forum, where the Romans of the later Republican and imperial ages worshipped deities,

debated politics, and wheeled and dealed. It's all history now, but this remains one of the world's most striking and significant concentrations of ancient remains: an emphatic reminder of the genius and power that made Rome the fountainhead of the Western world.

Outside of the actual ancient sites, you'll find neighborhoods like Monti and Celio, riones which are just as much part of Rome's history as its ruins. These are the city's oldest neighborhoods, and today are a charming mix of the city's past and present. Once you're done exploring ancient Rome, these are the easiest places to head for a bite to eat or some shopping.

# The Campidoglio

Your first taste of ancient Rome should start from a point that embodies some of Rome's earliest and greatest moments: the Campidoglio. Here, on the Capitoline Hill (which towers over the traffic hub of Piazza Venezia), a meditative Edward Gibbon was inspired to write his 1764 tome, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Of Rome's famous seven hills, the Capitoline is the smallest and the most sacred. It has always been the seat of Rome's government, and its Latin name echoes in the designation of the national and state capitol buildings of every country in the world.

## S Sights

### ★ The Campidoglio

**PLAZA** | Spectacularly transformed by Michelangelo's late-Renaissance designs, the Campidoglio was once the epicenter of the Roman Empire, the place where the city's first shrines stood, including its most sacred, the Temple of Jupiter. The Capitoline Hill originally consisted of two peaks: the Capitolium and the Arx (where Santa Maria in Aracoeli now stands). The hollow between them was known as the Asylum. Here, prospective settlers once came to seek the protection of Romulus, legendary first king of Rome—hence the term “asylum.” Later, during the Republic, in 78 BC, the Tabularium, or Hall of Records, was erected here.

By the Middle Ages, however, the Capitoline had become an unkempt hill strewn with ancient rubble. In preparation for the impending visit of Charles V in 1536, triumphant after the empire's victory over the Moors, his host, Pope Paul III Farnese, decided that the Holy Roman Emperor should follow the route of the emperors, finishing triumphantly at the Campidoglio. The pope was embarrassed by the decrepit goat pasture the hill had become and so commissioned Michelangelo to restore the site to glory. The resulting design added a third palace along with Renaissance-style facades and a grand paved piazza. Newly excavated ancient sculptures, designed to impress the visiting emperor, were installed in the palaces, and the piazza was

ornamented with the giant stone figures of the Discouri and the ancient Roman equestrian statue of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. A copy of this extraordinary statue is still the piazza's centerpiece (the 2nd-century original has been housed in the neighbouring Musei Capitolini since 1999).

While there are great views of the Roman Forum from the terrace balconies to either side of the Palazzo Senatorio, the best view is from the 1st century BC Tabularium, now part of the Musei Capitolini. The museum café is on the Terrazza Caffarelli, with a magical view toward Trastevere and St. Peter's, and is accessible without a museum ticket. *EPiazza del Campidoglio, including the Palazzo Senatorio and the Musei Capitolini, the Palazzo Nuovo, and the Palazzo dei Conservatori, Piazza Venezia mColosseo.*

### ★ **Le Domus Romane di Palazzo Valentini**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | If you find your imagination stretching to picture Rome as it was two millennia ago, make sure to check out this “new” ancient site just a stone's throw from Piazza Venezia. As was common practice in Renaissance-era Rome, 16th-century builders simply filled in ancient structures with landfill, using them as part of the foundation for Palazzo Valentini. In doing so, the builders also unwittingly preserved the ruins beneath, which archaeologists rediscovered during excavations in 2007. It took another three years for the two opulent, imperial-era *domus* (upscale urban houses) to open to the public on a regular basis.

Descending below Palazzo Valentini is like walking into another world. Not only are the houses luxurious and well preserved, still retaining their beautiful mosaics, inlaid marble floors, and staircases, but the ruins have been made to “come alive” through multimedia. Sophisticated light shows recreate what it all would have looked like, while a dramatic, automated voice-over accompanies you as you walk through the rooms, pointing out cool finds (the heating system for the private baths, the mysterious fragment of a statue, the porcelain left here when part of the site became a dump during the Renaissance) and evidence of tragedy (the burned layer from a fire that ripped through the home). If it sounds corny, hold your skepticism: it's an effective, excellent way to actually “experience” the houses as ancient Romans would have—and to learn a lot about ancient Rome in the process. A multimedia presentation halfway through also shows you what central Rome



would have looked like 2,000 years ago.

The multimedia tour takes about an hour. There are limited spots, so book in advance over the phone, online, or in person; make sure you book one of the three daily English tours (at 1:30, 2, and 2:30 pm). E Via Foro Traiano 85, Piazza Venezia P06/32810 [www.palazzovalentini.it](http://www.palazzovalentini.it) A€13.50, including booking fee C Closed Tues. m Colosseo.

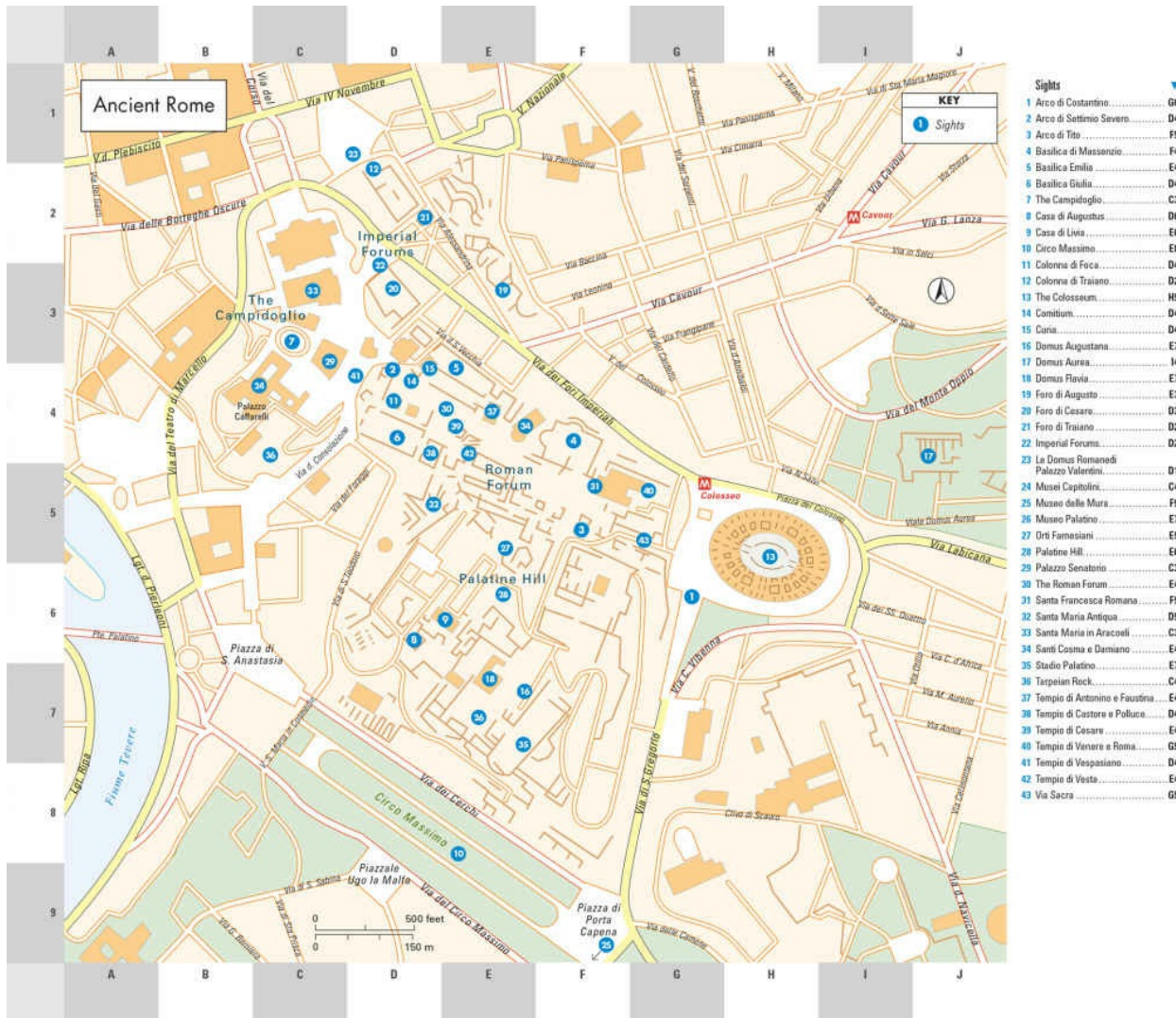
### ★ Musei Capitolini

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | Surpassed in size and richness only by the Musei Vaticani, this immense collection was the world's first public museum. A greatest-hits of Roman art through the ages, from the ancients to the Baroque, it's housed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori and the Palazzo Nuovo which mirror one another across Michelangelo's famous piazza. The collection was begun by Pope Sixtus IV (the man who built the Sistine Chapel) in 1473 when he donated a room of ancient statuary to the people of the city. This core of the collection includes the She Wolf, which is the symbol of the city, and the piercing gaze of the Capitoline Brutus.

Buy your ticket and enter the Palazzo dei Conservatori where, in the first courtyard, you'll see the giant head, foot, elbow, and imperially raised finger of the fabled seated statue of Constantine, which once dominated the Basilica of Maxentius in the Forum. Upstairs is the resplendent Salone dei Orazi e Curiazi (Hall of the Horatii and Curatii), decorated with a magnificent gilt ceiling, carved wooden doors, and 16th-century frescoes depicting the history of Rome's legendary origins. At both ends of the hall are statues of two of the most important popes of the Baroque era, Urban VIII and Innocent X.

The heart of the museum is the modern **Exedra of Marcus Aurelius** (Sala Marco Aurelio), which displays the spectacular original bronze statue of the Roman emperor whose copy dominates the piazza outside. To the right, the room segues into the area of the Temple of Jupiter, with the ruins of part of its vast base rising organically into the museum space. A reconstruction of the temple and Capitoline Hill from the Bronze Age to the present day makes for a fascinating glimpse through the ages. On the top floor, the museum's *pinacoteca*, or painting gallery, has some noted Baroque masterpieces, including Caravaggio's *The Fortune Teller* and *St. John the Baptist*.

To get to the Palazzo Nuovo section of the museum, take the stairs or elevator to the basement of the Palazzo dei Conservatori, where the corridor uniting the two contains the Epigraphic Collection, a poignant collection of ancient gravestones. Just over halfway along the corridor, and before going up into the Palazzo Nuovo, be sure to take the staircase to the right to the Tabularium Gallery and its unparalleled view over the Forum.



On the stairs inside the Palazzo Nuovo, you'll be immediately dwarfed by Mars in full military rig and lion-topped sandals. Upstairs is the noted **Sala degli Imperatori**, lined with busts of Roman emperors, and the **Sala dei Filosofi**, where busts of philosophers sit in judgment—a fascinating who's who of the ancient world. Within these serried ranks are 48 Roman emperors,

ranging from Augustus to Theodosius. Nearby are rooms filled with masterpieces, including the legendary *Dying Gaul*, the *Red Faun* from Hadrian's Villa, and a *Cupid and Psyche*. EPiazza del Campidoglio, Piazza Venezia P06/0608 [www.museicapitolini.org](http://www.museicapitolini.org) A€13 (€15 with exhibitions); €16 with access to Centrale Montemartini; audio guide €6 mColosseo; Bus Nos. 44, 63, 64, 81, 95, 85, and 492.

## Palazzo Senatorio

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | During the Middle Ages, this city hall looked like those you might see in Tuscan hill towns: part fortress and part assembly hall. The building was entirely rebuilt in the 1500s as part of Michelangelo's revamping of the Campidoglio for Pope Paul III; the master's design was adapted by later architects, who wisely left the front staircase as the focus of the facade. The ancient statue of Minerva at the center was renamed the Goddess Rome, and the river gods (the River Tigris remodeled to symbolize the Tiber, to the right, and the Nile, to the left) were hauled over from the Terme di Costantino on the Quirinal Hill. Today, it is Rome's City Hall and is not open to the public. EPiazza del Campidoglio, Piazza Venezia mColosseo.

## Santa Maria di Aracoeli

RELIGIOUS SITE | Sitting atop 124 steps, Santa Maria di Aracoeli perches on the north slope of the Capitoline Hill. The church rests on the site of the temple of Juno Moneta (Admonishing Juno), which also housed the Roman mint (hence the origin of the word "money"). According to legend, it was here that the Sibyl, a prophetess, predicted to Augustus the coming of a Redeemer. He in turn responded by erecting an altar, the Ara Coeli (Altar of Heaven). This was eventually replaced by a Benedictine monastery, and then a church, which was passed in 1250 to the Franciscans, who restored and enlarged it in Romanesque-Gothic style. Today, the Aracoeli is best known for the **Santo Bambino**, a much-revered olivewood figure of the Christ Child (today a copy of the 15th-century original that was stolen in 1994). At Christmas, everyone pays homage to the "Bambinello" as children recite poems from a miniature pulpit. In true Roman style, the church interior is a historical hodgepodge, with classical columns and large marble fragments from pagan buildings, as well as a 13th-century Cosmatesque pavement. The

richly gilded Renaissance ceiling commemorates the naval victory at Lepanto in 1571 over the Turks. The first chapel on the right is noteworthy for Pinturicchio's frescoes of San Bernardino of Siena (1486). *E* Via del Teatro di Marcello, at top of long, steep stairway, Piazza Venezia P06/69763838 mColosseo; *Bus Nos.* 44, 160, 170, 175, and 186.

## Tarpeian Rock

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | In ancient Rome, traitors were hurled to their deaths from here. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the Tarpeian Rock became a popular stop for people making the Grand Tour because of the view it gave of the Palatine Hill. Today, the Belvedere viewing point has been long shuttered for restoration, but you can proceed a short walk down to Via di Monte Tarpeo, where the view is spectacular enough. It was on this rock that, in the 7th century BC, Tarpeia betrayed the Roman citadel to the early Romans' sworn enemies, the Sabines, only asking in return to be given the heavy gold bracelets the Sabines wore on their left arm. The scornful Sabines did indeed shower her with their gold, and added the crushing weight of their heavy shields, also carried on their left arms. *E* Via del Tempio di Giove, Piazza Venezia mColosseo.

## An Emperor Cheat Sheet S

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**OCTAVIAN**, or Caesar Augustus, was Rome's first emperor (27 BC–AD 14). While it upended the republic once and for all, his rule began a period of prosperity and peace known as the Pax Romana.

The name of **NERO** (AD 54–68) lives in infamy as a violent persecutor of Christians and as the murderer of his wife, his mother, and countless others. Although it's not certain whether he actually played the fiddle (as legend has it) as Rome burned in AD 64, he was well known as an actor.

**DOMITIAN** (AD 81–96) declared himself "Dominus et Deus"—Lord and God. He stripped away power from the Senate, and as a result, after his death, he suffered "Damnatio Memoriae": the Senate had his name and image erased from all public records.

**TRAJAN** (AD 98–117), the first Roman emperor to be born outside Italy (in southern Spain), enlarged the empire's boundaries to include modern-day Romania, Armenia, and Upper Mesopotamia.

**HADRIAN** (AD 117–138) rebuilt the Pantheon as we know it today, possibly to his own design, constructed a majestic villa at Tivoli, and initiated myriad other constructions, including a famed namesake wall in northern Britain.

**MARCUS AURELIUS** (AD 161–180) is remembered as a humanitarian emperor and a Stoic philosopher whose *Meditations* are still read today. Nonetheless, he was an aggressive leader of the empire and devoted to expansion.

**CONSTANTINE I** (AD 306–337) made his mark by legalizing Christianity, an act that changed the course of history by legitimizing the once-banned religion and paving the way for the immense powers which would be held by the papacy in Rome.



## The Roman Forum

★ Whether it's from the main entrance on Via dei Fori Imperiali or by the entrance at the Arch of Titus, descend into the extraordinary archaeological complex that is the Foro Romano and the Palatine Hill, once the very heart of the Roman world. The Forum began life as a marshy valley between the Capitoline and Palatine hills—a valley crossed by a mud track and used as a cemetery by Iron Age settlers. Over the years a market center and some huts were established here, and after the land was drained in the 6th century BC, the site eventually became a political, religious, and commercial center: the Forum.

Hundreds of years of plunder reduced the Forum to its current desolate state. But this enormous area was once Rome's pulsating hub, filled with stately and extravagant temples, palaces, and shops, and crowded with people from all corners of the empire. Adding to today's confusion is the fact that the Forum developed over many centuries; what you see today are not the ruins from just one period but from a span of almost 900 years, from about 500 BC to AD 400. Nonetheless, the enduring romance of the place, with its lonely columns and great broken fragments of sculpted marble and stone, makes for a quintessential Roman experience.

There is always a line at the Colosseum ticket office for the combined Colosseum/Palatine/Forum ticket, but in high season, lines sometimes also form at the Forum and Palatine entrances. Those who don't want to risk waiting in line can book their tickets online in advance, for a €2 surcharge. Choose the print-at-home option (a PDF on a smartphone works, too) and avoid the line to pick up tickets. Your ticket is valid for one entrance to the Roman Forum and the Palatine Hill which are part of a single continuous complex. Certain sites within the Forum require a supplemental €6 S.U.P.E.R. ticket (this one fee includes access to all supplemental sites). Entrance at Via dei Fori Imperiali, Monti P06/39967700 [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€12 (combined ticket with the Colosseum and Palatine Hill, if used within 2 days); audio guide €5 mColosseo.

## S Sights

### ★ **Arco di Settimio Severo** (*Arch of Septimius Severus*)

**MEMORIAL** | One of the grandest triumphal arches erected by a Roman emperor, this richly decorated monument was built in AD 203 to celebrate Severus's victory over the Parthians. It was once topped by a bronze statuary group depicting a chariot drawn by four (or perhaps as many as six) life-size horses. Masterpieces of Roman statuary, the stone reliefs on the arch were probably based on huge painted panels depicting the event, a kind of visual report on his foreign campaigns that would have been displayed during the emperor's triumphal parade in Rome to impress his subjects (and, like much statuary then, were originally painted in florid, lifelike colors). *EWest end of Foro Romano, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Arco di Tito** (*Arch of Titus*)

**MEMORIAL** | Standing at the northern approach to the Palatine Hill on the Via Sacra, this triumphal arch was erected in AD 81 to celebrate the sack of Jerusalem 10 years earlier, after the First Jewish–Roman War. The superb view of the Colosseum from the arch reminds us that it was the emperor Titus who helped finish the vast amphitheater, begun earlier by his father, Vespasian. Under the arch are two great sculpted reliefs, both showing scenes from Titus's triumphal parade along this very Via Sacra. You still can make out the spoils of war plundered from Herod's Temple, including a gigantic seven-branched candelabrum (menorah) and silver trumpets. During his sacking of Jerusalem, Titus killed or deported most of the Jewish population, thus initiating the Jewish diaspora—an event that would have far-reaching historical consequences. *EEast end of Via Sacra, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Basilica di Massenzio** (*Basilica of Maxentius*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Only about one-third of the original of this gigantic basilica (in the sense of a Roman courthouse and meeting hall) remains, so you can imagine what a wonder this building was when first erected. Today, its great arched vaults still dominate the north side of the Via Sacra. Begun under the emperor Maxentius about AD 306, the edifice was a center of judicial and commercial activity, the last of its kind to be built in Rome. Over the centuries, like so many Roman monuments, it was exploited as a quarry

for building materials and was stripped of its sumptuous marble and stucco decorations. Its coffered vaults, like that of the Pantheon's dome, were later copied by many Renaissance artists and architects. E*Via Sacra, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Basilica Emilia**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Once a great colonnaded hall, this served as a meeting place for merchants and as a court house from the 2nd century BC; it was rebuilt by Augustus in the 1st century AD. To the right as you enter the Forum from via dei Fori Imperiali, a spot on one of the basilica's preserved pieces of floor testifies to one of Rome's more harrowing moments—and to the hall's purpose. That's where bronze coins melted, leaving behind green stains, when Rome was sacked and the basilica was burned by the Visigoths in 410 AD. The term “basilica” refers here to the particular architectural form developed by the Romans: a rectangular hall flanked by colonnades, it could serve as a court of law or a center for business and commerce. The basilica would later become the building type adopted for the first official places of Christian worship in the city. E*On right as you descend into Roman Forum from Via dei Fori Imperiali entrance, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Basilica Giulia**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | The Basilica Giulia owes its name to Julius Caesar, who ordered its construction; it was later completed by his adopted heir Augustus. One of several such basilicas in the center of Rome, it was where the Centumviri, the hundred-or-so judges forming the civil court, met to hear cases. The open space between the Basilica Emilia and this basilica was the heart of the Forum proper—the prototype of Italy's Renaissance piazzas, and the center of civic and social activity in ancient Rome. E*Via Sacra, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Colonna di Foca** (*Column of Phocas*)

**MEMORIAL** | The last monument to be added to the Forum was erected in AD 608 in honor of the Byzantine emperor Phocas who had donated the Pantheon to Pope Boniface IV. It stands 44 feet high and remains in good condition. E*West end of Foro Romano, Monti mColosseo.*

## Comitium

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | The open space in front of the Curia was the political hub of ancient Rome. Julius Caesar had rearranged the Comitium, moving the Curia to its current site and transferring the imperial **Rostra**, the podium from which orators spoke to the people (decorated originally with the prows of captured ships, or *rostra*, the source for the term “rostrum”), to a spot just south of where the Arch of Septimius Severus would be built. It was from this location that Mark Antony delivered his funeral oration in Caesar’s honor. On the left of the Rostra stands what remains of the **Tempio di Saturno**, which served as ancient Rome’s state treasury. The area of the Comitium has been under excavation for several years and is currently not open to visitors. *EWest end of Foro Romano, Monti mColosseo.*

## Curia

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | This large brick structure next to the Arch of Septimius Severus, restored during Diocletian’s reign in the late 3rd century AD, is the Forum’s best-preserved building—thanks largely to having been turned into a church in the 7th century. By the time the Curia was built, the Senate, which met here, had lost practically all of the power and prestige that it had possessed during the Republican era. Still, the Curia appears much as the original Senate house would have looked. Today, the Curia is only open occasionally when hosting an exhibition. Definitely peek inside if it’s open, and don’t miss the intricately inlaid 3rd-century floor of marble and porphyry, a method called *opus sectile*. *EVia Sacra, northwest corner of Foro Romano, Monti mColosseo.*

## Santa Francesca Romana

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | This church, a 10th-century edifice with a Renaissance facade, is dedicated to the patron saint of motorists. On her feast day, March 9, cars and taxis crowd the Via dei Fori Imperiali below for a special blessing—a cardinal and *carabinieri* (Italian military) on hand, plus a special siren to start off the ceremony. The incomparable setting continues to be a favorite for weddings. *E Piazza di Santa Francesca Romana, next to Colosseo, Monti mColosseo.*

## Santa Maria Antiqua

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | The earliest Christian site in the Forum was originally part of an imperial structure at the foot of Palatine Hill before it was converted into a church sometime in the late 5th century. Within it are some exceptional frescoes dating from the 6th to the 9th century. Buried by a 9th-century earthquake, the church was abandoned and a replacement was eventually built on top in the 17th century. This newer church was knocked down in 1900 during excavation work on the Forum, which revealed the early medieval church beneath. Santa Maria Antiqua is only accessible on Tuesday, Thursday, and weekends after 2 pm (1 pm in late October through March) with the S.U.P.E.R. Roman Forum ticket. This costs €6 more than the regular entrance fee to the Forum and is available both online and at all ticket offices. It also offers access to the Temple of Romulus (with the same opening days as Santa Maria), Palatine Museum (open every day), Neronian Cryptoporticus (open every day), the Houses of Augustus and Livia, and the Aula Isiaca (open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday mornings). *ESouth of Tempio di Castore and Polluce, at foot of Palatine Hill, Monti A€6 S.U.P.E.R. ticket includes access to the Houses of Augustus and Livia, the Palatine Museum, Aula Isiaca, and Temple of Romulus CClosed Mon., Wed., and Fri. mColosseo.*

### **Tempio di Antonino e Faustina**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Erected by the Senate in honor of Faustina, deified wife of Emperor Antoninus Pius (AD 138–161), Hadrian's successor, this temple was rededicated to the emperor as well upon his death. Because it was transformed into a church (San Lorenzo in Miranda), it's one of the best-preserved ancient structures in the Forum. *ENorth of Via Sacra, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Tempio di Castore e Polluce**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | The sole three remaining Corinthian columns of this temple beautifully evoke the former grandeur and elegance of the Forum. This temple was dedicated in 484 BC to Castor and Pollux, the twin brothers of Helen of Troy, who carried to Rome the news of victory at Lake Regillus, southeast of Rome—the definitive defeat of the deposed Tarquin dynasty. The twins flew on their fabulous white steeds 20 km (12 miles) to the city to bring the news to the people before mortal messengers could arrive. Rebuilt



over the centuries before Christ, the temple suffered a major fire and was reconstructed by the future Emperor Tiberius in 12 BC, the date of the three standing columns. *EWest of Casa delle Vestali, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Tempio di Cesare**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Built by Augustus, Julius Caesar's successor, what survives of the base of the temple stands over the spot where Caesar's body was cremated. A pyre was improvised by grief-crazed citizens who kept the flames going with their own possessions. *EVia Sacra, opposite the Tempio di Antonino e Faustina, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Tempio di Venere e Roma**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Once Rome's largest temple, this was in fact originally two temples back-to-back. The half dedicated to Venus, facing the Colosseum, is the section we see today, while its twin, which once faced over the Forum, was dedicated to the goddess Roma, and is now the foundation of the church of Santa Maria Nova. Begun by Hadrian in AD 121, the temple is accessible from the end of the Forum near the Arch of Titus, and offers a great view of the Colosseum. *EEast of Arco di Tito, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Tempio di Vespasiano**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | All that remains of Vespasian's temple are three graceful Corinthian columns. They marked the site of the Forum through the centuries while the rest was hidden beneath overgrown rubble. Nearby is the ruined platform that was the **Tempio di Concordia**. *EWest end of Foro Romano, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Tempio di Vesta**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Although it's just a fragment of the original building, the remnant of this temple conveys the sophisticated elegance architecture achieved in the later Roman Empire. Set off by florid Corinthian columns, the circular *tholos* was rebuilt by Emperor Septimius Severus when he restored this temple around AD 205. Dedicated to Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, the highly privileged vestal virgins kept the sacred flame alive. Next to the temple, the **Casa delle Vestali** gives you a glimpse of the splendor in which these women lived out their 30-year vows of chastity.

Marble statues of the vestals and fragments of mosaic pavement line the garden courtyard, which once would have been surrounded by lofty colonnades and at least 50 rooms. Chosen when they were between six and 10 years old, the six vestal virgins dedicated the next 30 years of their lives to keeping the sacred fire burning, a tradition that dated back to the very earliest days of Rome, when guarding the community's precious fire was essential to its well-being. Their standing in Rome was considerable: among women, they were second in rank only to the Empress. Their intercession could save a condemned man, and they did, in fact, rescue Julius Caesar from the lethal vengeance of his enemy Sulla. The virgins were handsomely maintained by the state, but if they allowed the sacred fire to go out, they were scourged by the high priest, and if they broke their vows of celibacy, they were buried alive (a punishment doled out only a handful of times throughout the cult's 1,000-year history). The vestal virgins were one of the last of ancient Rome's institutions to die out, enduring until the end of the 4th century AD—even after Rome's emperors had become Christian. *ESouth side of Via Sacra, Monti mColosseo.*

## **Via Sacra**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | The celebrated “Sacred Way,” paved with local volcanic rock, runs through the Roman Forum, lined with temples and shrines. It was also the traditional route of religious and triumphal processions. Pick your way across the paving stones, some rutted with the ironclad wheels of Roman wagons, to walk in the footsteps of Julius Caesar and Marc Antony. *EMonti mColosseo.*

## The Palatine Hill

★ Just beyond the Arco di Tito, the Clivus Palatinus—the road connecting the Forum and the Palatine Hill—gently rises to the heights of the **Colle Palatino** (Palatine Hill), the oldest inhabited site in Rome. Now charmingly bucolic, with pines and olive trees providing shade in summer, this is where Romulus is said to have founded the city that bears his name, and despite its location overlooking the Forum’s traffic and attendant noise, the Palatine was the most coveted address for ancient Rome’s rich and famous. During the Roman Republic it was home to wealthy patrician families—Cicero, Catiline, Crassus, and Agrippa all had homes here—and when Augustus (who had himself been born on the hill) came to power, declaring himself to be the new Romulus, it would thereafter become the home of emperors. The Houses of Livia and Augustus (which you can visit with the S.U.P.E.R. ticket, a €6 supplement to the Roman Forum admission) are today the hill’s best-preserved structures, replete with fabulous frescoes. If you only have time for one, the House of Augustus is the more spectacular of the two. After Augustus’s relatively modest residence, Tiberius extended the palace and other structures followed, notably the gigantic extravaganza constructed for Emperor Domitian which makes up much of what we see today. *EEntrances at Piazza del Colosseo and Via di San Gregorio 30, Monti P06/39967700 [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€12 combined ticket, includes single entry to Palatine Hill–Forum site and single entry to Colosseum (if used within 2 days); S.U.P.E.R. ticket €18 (€20 with online reservation) includes access to the Houses of Augustus and Livia, the Palatine Museum, Aula Isiaca, Santa Maria Antiqua, and Temple of Romulus mColosseo.*

## S Sights

★ **Casa di Augustus** (*House of Augustus*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | First discovered in the 1970s and only open to the public since 2006, this was the residence of Octavian Augustus (27 BC–AD 14) after his victory at Actium. (Archaeologists have recently found two courtyards rather than one, though, in the style of Rome’s ancient Greek

kings, suggesting Augustus maintained this house after his ascension to prominence.) Four rooms have exquisite examples of decorative frescoes on the walls; startlingly vivid and detailed are the depictions of a narrow stage with side doors, as well as some striking comic theater masks. An exquisitely painted upper room has been identified as the Emperor's study. Access is only possible with the €6 supplemental S.U.P.E.R. ticket and online reservations are advised for a timed slot for the excellent 40-minute audiovisual tour; the tour runs both in Italian and in English on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday mornings. *ENorthwest crest of Palatine Hill, Monti P06/39967700 [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) C€6 S.U.P.E.R. ticket, includes access to the House of Livia, the Palatine Museum, Aula Isiaca, Santa Maria Antiqua, and Temple of Romulus mColosseo.*

### **Casa di Livia** (*House of Livia*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | First excavated in 1839, this house was identifiable from the name inscribed on a lead pipe, Iulia Augusta. In other words, it belonged to the notorious Livia who—according to Robert Graves's *I, Claudius*—made a career of dispatching half of the Roman imperial family. (There's actually very little evidence for such claims.) She was the wife of Rome's first, and possibly greatest, emperor, Augustus. He married Livia when she was six months pregnant by her previous husband, whom Augustus "encouraged" to get a divorce. As empress, Livia became a role model for Roman women, serving her husband faithfully, shunning excessive displays of wealth, and managing her household. But she also had real influence: as well as playing politics behind the scenes, she even had the rare honor (for a woman) of being in charge of her own finances. Here, atop the Palatine, is where she made her private retreat and living quarters. The delicate, delightful frescoes reflect the sophisticated taste of wealthy Romans, whose love of beauty and theatrical conception of nature were revived by their descendants in the Renaissance Age. As at the House of Augustus, access is only possible with the €6 supplemental S.U.P.E.R. ticket and by timed entrance on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday morning. Online reservations are advised. *ENorthwest crest of Palatino, Monti P06/39967700 [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€6 S.U.P.E.R. ticket, includes access to House of Augustus, the Palatine Museum, Aula Isiaca, Santa Maria Antiqua, and Temple of Romulus mColosseo.*

## **Circo Massimo** (*Circus Maximus*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | From the belvedere of the Domus Flavia on the Palatine Hill, you can see the Circus Maximus; there's also a great free view from Piazzale Ugo La Malfa on the Aventine Hill side. The giant space where once 300,000 spectators watched chariot races while the emperor looked on is ancient Rome's oldest and largest racetrack; it lies in a natural hollow between the two hills. The oval course stretches about 650 yards from end to end; on certain occasions, there were as many as 24 chariot races a day and competitions could last for 15 days. The charioteers could amass fortunes rather like the sports stars of today. (The Portuguese Diocles is said to have totted up winnings of 35 million sestertii.) The noise and the excitement of the crowd must have reached astonishing levels as the charioteers competed in teams, each with their own colors—the Reds, the Blues, etc. Betting also provided Rome's majority of unemployed with a potentially lucrative occupation. The central ridge was the site of two Egyptian obelisks (now in Piazza del Popolo and Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano). Picture the great chariot race scene from MGM's *Ben-Hur* and you have an inkling of what this all looked like. *Between Palatine and Aventine hills, Aventino* mCirco Massimo.

## **Domus Augustana**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | In the imperial palace complex, this area, named in the 19th century for the “Augustuses” (a generic term used for emperors, in honor of Augustus himself), consisted of private apartments built for Emperor Domitian and his family. Here Domitian—“Dominus et Deus,” as he liked to be called—would retire to dismember flies (at least, according to Suetonius), before eventually being assassinated. *Southern crest of Palatine Hill, Monti* mCirco Massimo.

## **Domus Flavia**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Domitian used this area of the imperial palace complex for official functions and ceremonies. It included a basilica where the emperor could hold judiciary hearings. There was also a large audience hall, a *peristyle* (a columned courtyard), and the imperial *triclinium* (dining room)—some of its mosaic floors and stone banquettes are still in place. According to Suetonius, Domitian had the walls and courtyards of this and



the adjoining Domus Augustana covered with the shiniest marble to act as mirrors to alert him to any knife pointed at his back. They failed in their purpose: he died in a palace plot, engineered, some say, by his wife Domitia. *ESouthern crest of Palatine Hill, Monti mCirco Massimo.*

## **Museo Palatino**

**MUSEUM** | The Palatine Museum charts the history of the hill from Archaic times, with quaint models of early villages (on the ground floor), to Roman times (on the ground and upper floors). There is a good video reconstruction of the hill in Room V on the ground floor, and a collection of colored stones used in the decorations of the palace, with a map showing the distant imperial regions whence they came. Upstairs, the room dedicated to Augustus houses painted terra-cotta moldings and sculptural decorations from various temples—notably the Temple of Apollo Actiacus, whose name derives from the god to whom Octavian attributed his victory at Actium (the severed heads of the Medusa in the terra-cotta panels symbolize the defeated Queen of Egypt). There is also a selection of imperial portraits on the upper floor, including a rare surviving image of Nero. Access is only available with the €6 supplemental S.U.P.E.R. ticket; reservations typically aren't required. *ENorthwest crest of Palatine Hill, Monti [www.lazio.beniculturali.it](http://www.lazio.beniculturali.it) A€6 S.U.P.E.R. ticket, includes access to Houses of Augustus and Livia, Aula Isiaca, Santa Maria Antiqua, and Temple of Romulus mColosseo.*

## **Orti Farnesiani**

**GARDEN** | Alessandro Farnese, a nephew of Pope Paul III, commissioned the 16th-century architect Vignola to lay out this archetypal Italian garden over the ruins of the Palace of Tiberius, on the northern side of the Palatine, with a spectacular view over the Forum. This was yet another example of the Renaissance renewing an ancient Roman tradition. To paraphrase the poet Martial, the statue-studded gardens of the Flavian Palace were such as to make even an Egyptian potentate turn green with envy. *EPalatine Hill, Monti mColosseo.*

## **Stadio Palatino**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Built by Domitian and erroneously referred to since the 19th century as the “stadium,” this was in fact a sunken garden that

created a terrace on the slopes of the hill. It may also have been used to stage games (but not chariot races) and other amusements for the emperor's benefit. *ESoutheast crest of Palatine Hill, Monti mCirco Massimo.*

## The Imperial Forums

A complex of five grandly conceived complexes flanked with colonnades, the Fori Imperiali contain monuments of triumph, law courts, and temples. The complexes were tacked on to the Roman Forum, from the time of Julius Caesar in the 1st century BC until Trajan in the very early 2nd century AD, to accommodate the ever-growing need for buildings of administration and grand monuments.

From Piazza del Colosseo, head northwest on Via dei Fori Imperiali toward Piazza Venezia. Now that the road has been closed to private traffic, it's more pleasant for pedestrians (it's closed to all traffic on Sunday). On the walls to your left, maps in marble and bronze, put up by Benito Mussolini, show the extent of the Roman Republic and Empire (at the time of writing, these were partially obstructed by work on Rome's new subway line, Metro C). The dictator's own dreams of empire led him to construct this avenue, cutting brutally through the Fori Imperiali, and the medieval and Renaissance buildings that had grown upon the ruins, so that he would have a suitable venue for parades celebrating his expected military triumphs. Among the Fori Imperiali along the avenue, you can see the Foro di Cesare (Forum of Caesar) and the Foro di Augusto (Forum of Augustus). The grandest was the Foro di Traiano (Forum of Trajan), with its huge semicircular Mercati di Traiano and the Colonna Traiana (Trajan's Column). You can walk through part of Trajan's Markets on the Via Alessandrina and visit the Museo dei Fori Imperiali, which presents the Imperial Forums and shows how they would have been used through ancient fragments, artifacts, and modern multimedia. *EVia dei Fori Imperiali, Monti P06/0608 [www.mercatiditraiano.it](http://www.mercatiditraiano.it) AMuseum €15 mColosseo.*

## S Sights

### **Colonna di Traiano** (*Trajan's Column*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | The remarkable series of reliefs spiraling up this column celebrate the emperor's victories over the Dacians in today's

Romania. It has stood in this spot since AD 113. The scenes on the column are an important primary source for information on the Roman army and its tactics. An inscription on the base declares that the column was erected in Trajan's honor and that its height corresponds to the height of the hill that was razed to create a level area for the grandiose Foro di Traiano. The emperor's ashes, no longer here, were kept in a golden urn in a chamber at the column's base; his statue stood atop the column until 1587, when the pope had it replaced with a statue of St. Peter. *EVia del Foro di Traiano, Monti mCaveur.*

### **Foro di Augusto** (*Forum of Augustus*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | These ruins, along with those of the **Foro di Nerva**, on the northeast side of Via dei Fori Imperiali, give only a hint of what must have been impressive edifices. The three columns are all that remain of the Temple of Mars Ultor. *EVia dei Fori Imperiali, Monti mColosseo.*

### **Foro di Cesare** (*Forum of Caesar*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | In an attempt to rival the Roman Forum, Julius Caesar had this extension built in the middle of the 1st century BC. Each year without fail, on the Ides of March, flowers are laid at the foot of Caesar's statue. *EVia dei Fori Imperiali, Monti P06/0608 mColosseo.*

### **Foro di Traiano** (*Forum of Trajan*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | Of all the Fori Imperiali, Trajan's was the grandest and most imposing, a veritable city unto itself. Designed by architect Apollodorus of Damascus, it comprised a vast basilica, two libraries, and a colonnade laid out around the square—all at one time covered with rich marble ornamentation. Adjoining the forum were the **Mercati di Traiano** (Trajan's Markets), a huge, multilevel brick complex of shops, taverns, walkways, and terraces, as well as administrative offices involved in the mammoth task of feeding the city. The **Museo dei Fori Imperiali** (Imperial Forums Museum) takes advantage of the Forum's soaring vaulted spaces to showcase archaeological fragments and sculptures while presenting a video re-creation of the original complex. In addition, the series of terraced rooms offers an impressive overview of the entire forum. A pedestrian walkway, the Via Alessandrina, also allows for an excellent (and free) view of Trajan's

Forum.

To build a complex of this magnitude, Apollodorus and his patrons clearly had great confidence, not to mention almost unlimited means and cheap labor at their disposal (readily provided by slaves captured in Trajan's Dacian wars). The complex also contained two semicircular lecture halls, one at either end, which are thought to have been associated with the libraries in Trajan's Forum. The markets' architectural centerpiece is the enormous curved wall, or *exhedra*, that shores up the side of the Quirinal Hill excavated by Apollodorus's gangs of laborers. Covered galleries and streets were constructed at various levels, following the *exhedra*'s curves and giving the complex a strikingly modern appearance.

As you enter the markets, a large, vaulted hall stands in front of you. Two stories of shops or offices rise up on either side. Head for the flight of steps at the far end that leads down to Via Biberatica. (*Bibere* is Latin for "to drink," and the shops that open onto the street are believed to have been taverns.) Then head back to the three tiers of shops and offices that line the upper levels of the great *exhedra* and look out over the remains of the Forum. Empty and bare today, the cubicles were once ancient Rome's busiest market stalls. Though it seems to be part of the market, the **Torre delle Milizie** (Tower of the Militia), the tall brick tower that is a prominent feature of Rome's skyline, was actually built in the early 1200s. E *Via IV Novembre 94, Monti P06/0608* [www.mercatiditraiano.it](http://www.mercatiditraiano.it) A€15 mCavour; Bus Nos. 85, 175, 186, 810, 850, H, 64, and 70.

### ★ Santi Cosma e Damiano

RELIGIOUS SITE | Home to one of the most striking early Christian mosaics, this church was adapted in the 6th century from two ancient buildings: the library in Vespasian's Forum of Peace and a hall of the Temple of Romulus (dedicated to the son of Maxentius who had been named for Rome's founder). In the apse is the famous AD 530 mosaic of Christ in Glory. It reveals how popes at the time strove to re-create the splendor of imperial audience halls into Christian churches: Christ wears a gold, Roman-style toga, and his pose recalls that of an emperor addressing his subjects. He floats on a blue sky streaked with a flaming sunset—a miracle of tesserae mosaic-work. To his side are the figures of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, who represent



Cosmas and Damian (patron saints of doctors), two Syrian benefactors whose charity was such that they were branded Christians and condemned to death. Beneath this awe-inspiring work is an enchanting mosaic frieze of holy lambs. E*Via in Miranda 11, Monti P06/6920441 mColosseo; Bus Nos. 85, 850, 87, and 571.*

# The Colosseum and Around

Legend has it that as long as the Colosseum stands, Rome will stand—and when Rome falls, so will the world. No visit to Rome is complete without a trip to the obstinate oval that has been the iconic symbol of the city for centuries. Looming over a group of the Roman Empire’s most magnificent monuments to imperial wealth and power, the Colosseum was the gigantic sports arena built by Vespasian and Titus. To its west stands the Arco di Costantino, a majestic, ornate triumphal arch, built solely as a tribute to the emperor Constantine; victorious armies purportedly marched under it on their return from war. To the east of the Colosseum, hidden under the Colle Oppio, is Nero’s opulent Domus Aurea, a palace that stands as testimony to the lavish lifestyles of the emperors; it is accessible on weekends by joining a guided tour. Check [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) for details and reservations.

## S Sights

### **Arco di Costantino** (*Arch of Constantine*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | This majestic arch was erected in AD 315 to commemorate Constantine’s victory over Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge. It was just before this battle, in AD 312, that Constantine—the emperor who converted Rome to Christianity—legendarily had a vision of a cross and heard the words, “In this sign thou shalt conquer.” Many of the rich marble decorations for the arch were scavenged from earlier monuments, both saving money and placing Constantine in line with the great emperors of the past. It is easy to picture ranks of Roman centurions marching under the great barrel vault. *EPiazza del Colosseo, Monti mColosseo.*

### ★ **The Colosseum**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | The most spectacular extant edifice of ancient Rome, the Colosseum has a history that is half gore, half glory. Once able to house 50,000 spectators, it was built to impress Romans with its spectacles involving wild animals and fearsome gladiators from the farthest reaches of the Empire. Senators had marble seats up front and the vestal virgins took the

ringside position, while the plebs sat in wooden tiers at the back, then the masses above on the top tier. Looming over all was the amazing velarium, an ingenious system of sail-like awnings rigged on ropes and maneuvered by sailors from the imperial fleet, who would unfurl them to protect the arena's occupants from sun or rain.

From the second floor, you can get a bird's-eye view of the hypogeum: the subterranean passageways that were the architectural engine rooms that made the slaughter above proceed like clockwork. In a scene prefiguring something from Dante's *Inferno*, hundreds of beasts would wait to be eventually launched via a series of slave-powered hoists and lifts into the bloodthirsty sand of the arena above. Designed by order of the emperor Vespasian in AD 72, and completed by his son Titus in AD 80, the arena has a circumference of 573 yards and its external walls were built with travertine from nearby Tivoli. Its construction was a remarkable feat of engineering, for it stands on marshy terrain reclaimed by draining an artificial lake which formed part of the vast palace of Nero. Originally known as the Flavian amphitheater (Vespasian's and Titus's family name was Flavius), it came to be known as the Colosseum thanks to a colossal gilded bronze statue which once stood nearby.

The legend made famous by the Venerable Bede says that as long as the Colosseum stands, Rome will stand; and when Rome falls, so will the world...not that the prophecy deterred medieval and Renaissance princes and popes from using the Colosseum as a quarry. In the 19th century, poets came to view the arena by moonlight; today, mellow golden spotlights make the arena a spectacular sight at night, and evening visits are possible with guided tours from May through October.

One way to beat the notoriously long ticket lines is to buy a Romapass ([www.romapass.it](http://www.romapass.it)) ticket, which includes the Colosseum. You can also book a timed ticket in advance online for a €2 surcharge. Aim for early or late slots to minimize lines, as even the preferential lanes get busy in the middle of the day. Alternatively you can book a tour online with a company (do your research to make sure it's reputable) that lets you skip the line. Avoid the tours sold on-the-spot around the Colosseum; although you can skip the lines, the tour guides tend to be dry, the tour groups huge, and the tour itself rushed.

*EPiazza del Colosseo, Monti P06/39967700 [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€12 (combined ticket with the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill, 1 entry for either site if used within 2 days) mColosseo; Bus 117, 75, 81, 673, 175, 204.*

### **Domus Aurea** (*Golden House of Nero*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Legend has it that Nero famously fiddled while Rome burned. Fancying himself a great actor and poet, he played, as it turns out, his harp to accompany his recital of “The Destruction of Troy” while gazing at the flames of Rome’s catastrophic fire of AD 64. Anti-Neronian historians propagandized that Nero, in fact, had set the Great Fire to clear out a vast tract of the city center to build his new palace. Today’s historians discount this as historical folderol (going so far as to point to the fact that there was a full moon on the evening of July 19, hardly the propitious occasion to commit arson). But legend or not, Nero did get to build his new palace, the extravagant Domus Aurea (Golden House)—a vast “suburban villa” that was inspired by the emperor’s pleasure palace at Baia on the Bay of Naples. His new digs were huge and sumptuous, with a facade of pure gold, seawater piped into the baths, decorations of mother-of-pearl, fretted ivory, and other precious materials, and vast gardens. It was said that after completing this gigantic house, Nero exclaimed, “Now I can live like a human being!” Note that access to the site is currently only on weekends and exclusively via guided tours that use virtual reality headsets for part of the presentation. Booking ahead is essential. *EVia della Domus Aurea, Monti P06/39967700 booking information [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€16 including booking fee and guided visit CClosed weekdays mColosseo.*

### **Museo delle Mura**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Rome’s first walls were erected in the 6th century BC, but the ancient city greatly expanded over the next few centuries, and when Rome was at its peak, it didn’t need walls. But in the 3rd century AD, Emperor Aurelian commissioned a 12-mile wall to protect the city, which was considered by many a sign of weakness. Indeed just over a century later, those walls were breached for the first time in a siege which would herald the end of the Empire. The ancient walls would eventually become the fortifications of the papal city, and would remain in use for 16 centuries until the Unification of Italy in 1870. Studying the Aurelian Walls were 18 main

gates, the best preserved of which is the Porta di San Sebastiano at the entrance to the Via Appia Antica. That gate is also home to a small museum that allows visitors to walk a section of the ancient ramparts, from which there are wonderful views. Note that the museum closes relatively early at 2 pm. E*Via di Porta San Sebastiano, Via Appia Antica P06/060608*  
[www.museodellemuraroma.it](http://www.museodellemuraroma.it) CClosed Mon. mBus No. 118.



## Monti

As the hill starts to slope downward from Termini station, right around Santa Maria Maggiore, the streets become cobblestone, the palazzos prettier, and the boutiques higher-end. This is the area known as Monti, the oldest rione in Rome. Gladiators, prostitutes, and even Caesar made their homes in this area that stretches from Santa Maria Maggiore down to the Forum. Today, Monti is one of the best-loved neighborhoods in Rome, known for its appealing mix of medieval streets, old-school trattorias, and hip boutiques.

## S Sights

### ★ San Pietro in Vincoli

RELIGIOUS SITE | Michelangelo's *Moses*, carved in the early 16th century for the never-completed tomb of Pope Julius II, has put this church on the map. The tomb was to include dozens of statues and stand nearly 40 feet tall when installed in St. Peter's Basilica. But only three statues—*Moses* and the two that flank it here, *Leah* and *Rachel*—had been completed when Julius died. Julius's successor as pope, from the rival Medici family, had other plans for Michelangelo, and the tomb was abandoned unfinished. The fierce power of this remarkable sculpture dominates its setting. People say that you can see the sculptor's profile in the lock of Moses's beard right under his lip, and that the pope's profile can also be seen. As for the rest of the church, St. Peter takes second billing to Moses. The reputed sets of chains (*vincoli*) that bound St. Peter during his imprisonment by the Romans in both Jerusalem and Rome are in a bronze and crystal urn under the main altar. Other treasures include a 7th-century mosaic of St. Sebastian, in front of the second altar to the left of the main altar, and, by the door, the tomb of the Pollaiuolo brothers, two 15th-century Florentine artists. EPiazza di San Pietro in Vincoli, Monti P06/97844952 mCavour.

### ★ Santa Maria Maggiore

RELIGIOUS SITE | Despite its florid 18th-century facade, Santa Maria Maggiore is one of the oldest churches in Rome, built around 440 by Pope

Sixtus III. One of the four great pilgrimage churches of Rome, it's also the city center's best example of an Early Christian basilica—one of the immense, hall-like structures derived from ancient Roman civic buildings and divided into thirds by two great rows of columns marching up the nave. The other three major basilicas in Rome (San Giovanni in Laterano, Basilica di San Pietro, and St. Paul's Outside the Walls) have been largely rebuilt. Paradoxically, the major reason why this church is such a striking example of Early Christian design is that the same man who built the undulating exteriors circa 1740, Ferdinando Fuga, also conscientiously restored the interior, throwing out later additions and, crucially, replacing a number of the great columns.

Precious 5th-century mosaics high on the nave walls and on the triumphal arch in front of the main altar bear splendid testimony to the basilica's venerable age. Those along the nave show 36 scenes from the Old Testament (unfortunately, tough to see clearly without binoculars), and those on the arch illustrate the Annunciation and the Youth of Christ. The resplendent carved-wood ceiling dates to the early 16th century; it's supposed to have been gilded with the first gold brought from the New World. The inlaid marble pavement (called Cosmatesque, after the family of master artisans who developed the technique) in the central nave is even older, dating to the 12th century.

The **Cappella Sistina** (Sistine Chapel), in the right-hand transept, was created by architect Domenico Fontana for Pope Sixtus V in 1585. Elaborately decorated with precious marbles “liberated” from the monuments of ancient Rome, the chapel includes a lower-level museum in which some 13th-century sculptures by Arnolfo da Cambio are all that's left of what was the once richly endowed chapel of the *presepio* (Christmas crèche), looted during the Sack of Rome in 1527.

Directly opposite, on the church's other side, stands the **Cappella Paolina** (Pauline Chapel), a rich Baroque setting for the tombs of the Borghese popes Paul V—who commissioned the chapel in 1611 with the declared intention of outdoing Sixtus's chapel across the nave—and Clement VIII. The **Cappella Sforza** (Sforza Chapel) next door was designed by Michelangelo and completed by Della Porta. Just right of the altar, next to his father, lies Gian

Lorenzo Bernini; his monument is an engraved slab, as humble as the tombs of his patrons are grand. Above the loggia, the outside mosaic of Christ raising his hand in blessing is one of Rome's most beautiful sights, especially when lighted at night. The loggia mosaics can be seen close-up by following a 30-minute guided tour (€5). Tours run roughly every hour, though have no fixed timetable. For information or to join either tour, go through the souvenir shop inside the church on the right and down the stairs to the right to the museum entrance. *EPiazza di Santa Maria Maggiore, Monti P06/69886802 AMuseum tour €4, loggia mosaics tour €5 mTermini.*

### ★ **Santa Prassede**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | This small, inconspicuous 9th-century church is known above all for the exquisite **Cappella di San Zenone**, just to the left of the entrance. It gleams with vivid mosaics that reflect their Byzantine inspiration. Though much less classical and naturalistic than the earlier mosaics of Santa Pudenziana, they are no less splendid, and the composition of four angels hovering on the sky-blue vault is one of the masterstrokes of Byzantine art. Note the square halo over the head of Theodora, mother of St. Paschal I, the pope who built this church. It indicates that she was still alive when she was depicted by the artist. The chapel also contains one curious relic: a miniature pillar, supposedly part of the column at which Christ was flogged during the Passion. It was brought to Rome in the 13th century. Over the main altar, the magnificent mosaics on the arch and apse are also in rigid Byzantine style. In them, Pope Paschal I wears the square halo of the living and holds a model of his church. *EVia di Santa Prassede 9/a, Monti P06/4882456 mCavour.*

### ★ **Santa Pudenziana**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Apart from Ravenna, Rome has some of the most opulent mosaics in Italy, and this church has its earliest example. Commissioned during the papacy of Innocent I, its early 5th-century apse mosaic represents Christ Teaching the Apostles and sits above a Baroque altarpiece surrounded by a bevy of florid 18th-century paintings. The mosaic is remarkable for its iconography; at the center sits Christ Enthroned, shown as an emperor or as a philosopher holding court, surrounded by his apostles. Each apostle faces the spectator, literally rubbing shoulders with his companion (unlike later hieratic styles in which each figure is isolated), and bears an individualized

expression. Above these figures and a landscape symbolizing Heavenly Jerusalem float the signs of the four evangelists in a blue sky flecked with the orange of sunset, made from thousands of *tesserae* (mosaic tiles).

To either side of Christ, Sts. Praxedes and Pudentiana hold wreaths over the heads of Sts. Peter and Paul. These two women were actually daughters of the Roman senator Pudens (probably the one mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:21), whose family befriended both apostles. During the persecutions of Nero, both sisters collected the blood of many martyrs before suffering their fate. Pudentiana transformed her house into a church, but her namesake church was constructed over a 2nd-century bathhouse. Beyond the sheer beauty of the mosaic work, the size, rich detail, and number of figures make this both the last gasp of ancient Roman art and one of the first major works of Early Christian art. *EVia Urbana 160, Monti P06/4814622 mTermini.*

## r Restaurants

### Cavour 313

\$\$ | WINE BAR | This long-popular wine bar a stone's throw from the Roman Forum has a tight seating area in the front, so you might want to head back to the larger, albeit darker, back room. The atmosphere is festive, almost like a rustic beer hall, though the focus is definitely on wine: there are about 25 options by the glass and more than 1,200 bottles. **Known for:** extensive wine list; cozy hideaway close to the Forum; organic cured meats and cheeses. *DAverage main: €14 EVia Cavour 313, Monti P06/6785496 [www.cavour313.it](http://www.cavour313.it) CClosed Sun. in July and Aug. mCavour.*

### Terra e Domus - Enoteca della Provincia di Roma

\$ | ITALIAN | It's hard to find genuinely good food in this area, but this wine bar next to Trajan's Column is an exception. Ideal for coffee, a late lunch, early supper, or just an aperitivo, it's run by the Province of Rome to showcase local produce and is a great spot to rest after wandering amid the ruins. **Known for:** local wines; tourist-friendly Roman classics; fresh ravioli starter. *DAverage main: €12 ELargo del Foro di Traiano 82, Monti P06/67662424 [www.palazzoalvalentini.it/terre-domus](http://www.palazzoalvalentini.it/terre-domus) mCavour.*

## ★ Urbana 47

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | This restaurant serving breakfast through dinner embodies the *kilometro zero* concept, highlighting hyper-local food from the surrounding Lazio region. The local boho crowd comes in the morning for a continental or “American” breakfast (with free Wi-Fi); lunch means tasty “fast slow-food” options like grain salads and healthy panini as well as a few more substantial dishes, with a more extensive menu for dinner. **Known for:** healthy lunch options; aperitivo and tapas; hyper-local produce. **DAverage main:** €15 **E**Via Urbana 47, Monti P06/47884006 [www.urbana47.it](http://www.urbana47.it) mCavour.

## h Hotels

### Duca d’Alba

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | In Italy, it’s all about the *bella figura* (making a good impression), so when you step into this lovely little boutique hotel near the Colosseum, you’ll know you’ve hit the jackpot. **Pros:** great breakfast selection; good value for the area; central location to all major sites. **Cons:** some rooms are cramped and worn around the edges; the Irish pub across the way tends to attract late-night revelers; not all rooms in main building. **D**Rooms from: €220 **E**Via Leonina 14, Monti P06/484471 [www.hotelducadalba.com](http://www.hotelducadalba.com) a28 rooms XFree breakfast mCavour.

### Hotel Forum

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | A longtime favorite, this converted 18th-century convent has a truly unique setting on one side of the Fori Imperiali, with cinematic views of ancient Rome across the avenue so impressive that it has drawn celebrities and socialites, like Jackie Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, and Brigitte Bardot. **Pros:** bird’s-eye view of ancient Rome; “American” bar on rooftop terrace; discounts for advance bookings. **Cons:** small rooms; noisy pub-crawlers congregate on the street below; food and drinks are expensive. **D**Rooms from: €320 **E**Via Tor de’ Conti 25–30, Monti P06/6792446 [www.hotelforum.com](http://www.hotelforum.com) a80 rooms XFree breakfast mCavour, Colosseo.

### Hotel Italia

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Just one block from bustling Via Nazionale and some of Rome's great shopping, this friendly, family-run hotel feels like a classic pensione: low budget with a lot of heart. **Pros:** free breakfast; great price; individual attention and personal care. **Cons:** can be a bit noisy; Wi-Fi can be hit or miss; some rooms have shared baths. *DRooms from: €140 E*[Via Venezia 18, Termini P06/4828355](#) *w*[www.hotelitaliaroma.it](#) *a*36 rooms *X*Free breakfast *m*[Repubblica](#).

## Nerva

\$\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Step out of this charming, clean, well-run hotel and you'll feel like you've landed in the middle of an ancient imperial stomping ground; a stone's throw from the Forum, it's surrounded by the breathtaking splendor of ancient Roman ruins. **Pros:** close to the Forum in the lovely Monti neighborhood; friendly staff; free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** some showers are tiny; single rooms are only slightly bigger than a closet; not many amenities. *DRooms from: €230 E*[Via Tor de' Conti 3/4, Monti P06/6781835](#) *w*[www.hotelnerva.com](#) *a*19 rooms *X*Free breakfast *m*[Cavour, Colosseo](#).

## n Nightlife

Lately, Monti has been wearing the crown as the “it” neighborhood, reigning supreme as an all-ages hipster hangout with trendy bars, top-notch restaurants, and artisan shops, as well as picturesque piazze.

## BARS

### ★ Ai Tre Scalini

**CAFES—NIGHTLIFE** | An ivy-covered wine bar in the center of Monti, Rome's trendiest 'hood, Ai Tre Scalini has a warm and cozy menu of delicious antipasti and light entrées to go along with its enticing wine list. After about 8 pm, if you haven't booked, be prepared to wait—this is one extremely popular spot with locals. *E*[Via Panisperna 251, Monti P06/48907495](#) *w*[www.aitrescalini.org](#) *m*[Cavour](#).

## JAZZ CLUBS

### Charity Café



**MUSIC CLUBS** | An intimate jazz club with live music performances nightly, Charity hosts local and international jazz musicians in a relaxed atmosphere. E Via Panisperna 68, Monti P06/47825881 [www.charitycafe.it](http://www.charitycafe.it).

## p Performing Arts

### Palazzo delle Esposizioni

**ART GALLERIES—ARTS** | The late-19th-century Palazzo delle Esposizioni holds temporary exhibitions on everything from Etruscan art to Pixar movies. The complex also has a great bookshop (including some books in English), a coffee bar, and a restaurant. E Via Nazionale 194, Monti P06/39967500 [www.palazzoesposizione.it](http://www.palazzoesposizione.it) A€12; costs vary by exhibition.

## b Shopping

### CLOTHING

#### ★ Le Gallinelle

**CLOTHING** | This tiny Monti boutique may live in a former butcher's shop, but it houses some of the most sophisticated retro-inspired fashion garments around Rome. Its owner, Wilma Silvestri, cleverly combines ethnic and contemporary fabrics, evolving them into stylish clothing with a modern edge made for everyday wear. E Via Panisperna 61, Monti P06/4881017 [www.legallinelle.com](http://www.legallinelle.com) mCavour.

### FOOD

#### La Bottega del Cioccolato

**FOOD/CANDY** | Follow the scent of decadent chocolate down this tiny, picturesque street, and you'll stumble upon this chocolate lover's *paradiso*. La Bottega del Cioccolato churns out beautiful, mouthwatering treats thanks to its master chocolate maker Maurizio Proietti and his father. E Via Leonina 82, Monti P06/4821473 [www.labottegadelcioccolato.it](http://www.labottegadelcioccolato.it) mCavour.

### JEWELRY

#### Art Privé

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | Just off Monti's principal square is the small jewelry shop where Tiziana Salzano makes chunky, multistrand torsade necklaces using the finest silverwork and a combination of semiprecious gemstones. Each piece is unique, so if you feel something tug at your heart be sure to grab it. *EVia Leonina 8, Monti P06/47826347 CClosed Sun. mCavour.*

### **L'Artigianaio**

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | "The Artisan" is the place to go for handmade watches and rare vintage timepieces. The store's expert watchmakers specialize in nostalgic mechanical watches and chronographs from the early 1900s through the 1970s. Whether you are looking for a solid gold dress watch or a World War II military pilot's chronograph, chances are you'll find what you're looking for here. Have an heirloom piece that has stopped working or that needs a little fine-tuning? Bring it to the shop, and the owners will get it ticking again in no time. *EVia Urbana 103, Monti P06/4742284 mCavour.*

## Celio

Bordering Monti, from the Colosseum west toward Piazza San Giovanni, the Celio neighborhood is a tranquil, lovely residential area replete with medieval churches and ruins. Sights not to miss here include the Basilica of San Clemente, the church of Santi Quattro Coronati, and the church of Santo Stefano Rotondo.

## S Sights

### ★ Case Romane del Celio

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Formerly accessible only through the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, this important ancient Roman excavation was opened in 2002 as a museum in its own right. An underground honeycomb of rooms, the site comprises the lower levels of a so-called *insula*, or apartment block, the heights of which were a wonder to ancient Roman contemporaries. Through the door on the left of the Clivo di Scauro lane a portico leads to the Room of the Genie, where painted figures grace the walls virtually untouched over two millennia. Farther on is the Confessio altar of Saint John and Saint Paul, officials at Constantine's court who were executed under Julian the Apostate. Still lower is the Antiquarium, where state-of-the-art lighting showcases amphorae, pots, and ancient Roman bricks, with stamps so fresh they might have been imprinted yesterday. *EClivio di Scauro, Celio P06/70454544 [www.caseromane.it](http://www.caseromane.it) A€8 CClosed Tues. and Wed. mColosseo; Bus Nos. 60, 75, 81, 117, 118, 175; Tram No. 3.*

### ★ San Clemente

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | One of the most impressive archaeological sites in Rome, San Clemente is a historical triple-decker. A 12th-century church was built on top of a 4th-century church, which had been built over a 2nd-century pagan temple to the god Mithras and 1st-century Roman apartments. The layers were uncovered in 1857, when a curious prior, Friar Joseph Mullooly, started excavations beneath the present basilica. Today, you can descend to explore all three.

The **upper church** (at street level) is a gem in its own right. In the apse, a glittering 12th-century mosaic shows Jesus on a cross that turns into a living tree. Green acanthus leaves swirl and teem with small scenes of everyday life. Early Christian symbols, including doves, vines, and fish, decorate the 4th-century marble choir screens. In the left nave, the Castiglioni chapel holds frescoes painted around 1400 by the Florentine artist Masolino da Panicale (1383–1440), a key figure in the introduction of realism and one-point perspective into Renaissance painting. Note the large Crucifixion and scenes from the lives of Saints Catherine, Ambrose, and Christopher, plus the Annunciation (over the entrance).

To the right of the sacristy (and bookshop), descend the stairs to the **4th-century church**, used until 1084, when it was damaged beyond repair during a siege of the area by the Norman prince Robert Guiscard. Still intact are some vibrant 11th-century frescoes depicting stories from the life of St. Clement. Don't miss the last fresco on the left, in what used to be the central nave. It includes a particularly colorful quote—including “Go on, you sons of harlots, pull!”—that's not only unusual for a religious painting, but one of the earliest examples of written vernacular Italian.

Descend an additional set of stairs to the **mithraeum**, a shrine dedicated to the god Mithras. His cult spread from Persia and gained a foothold in Rome during the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD. Mithras was believed to have been born in a cave and was thus worshipped in cavernous, underground chambers, where initiates into the all-male cult would share a meal while reclining on stone couches, some visible here along with the altar block. Most such pagan shrines in Rome were destroyed by Christians, who often built churches over their remains, as happened here. *E*Via San Giovanni in Laterano 108, Celio P06/7740021 [www.basilicasanclemente.com](http://www.basilicasanclemente.com) *A*Archaeological area €10 *m*Colosseo.

## San Gregorio Magno

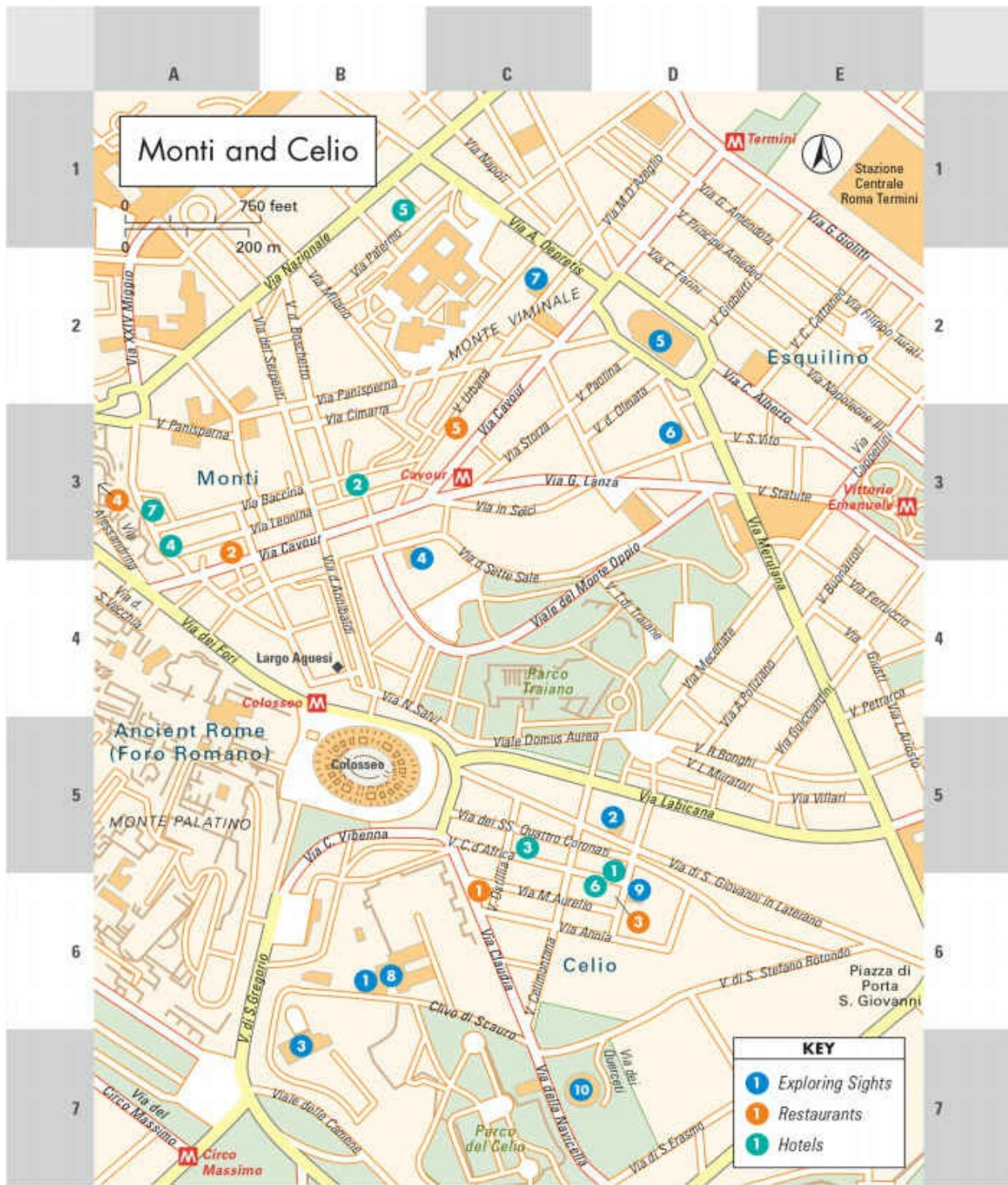
**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Set amid the greenery of the Celian Hill, this church wears its Baroque facade proudly. Dedicated to St. Gregory the Great (who served as pope 590–604), it was built about 750 by Pope Gregory II to commemorate his predecessor and namesake. The church of San Gregorio itself has the appearance of a typical Baroque structure, the result of

remodeling in the 17th and 18th centuries. But you can still see what's said to be the stone slab on which the pious St. Gregory the Great slept; it's in the far right-hand chapel. Outside are three chapels. The right chapel is dedicated to Gregory's mother, Saint Sylvia, and contains a Guido Reni fresco of the *Concert of Angels*. The chapel in the center, dedicated to Saint Andrew, contains two monumental frescoes showing scenes from the saint's life. They were painted at the beginning of the 17th century by Domenichino (*The Flagellation of St. Andrew*) and Guido Reni (*The Execution of St. Andrew*). It's a striking juxtaposition of the sturdy, if sometimes stiff, classicism of Domenichino with the more flamboyant and heroic Baroque manner of Guido Reni. EPiazza di San Gregorio, Celio P06/7008227 [www.camaldolesiromani.com](http://www.camaldolesiromani.com) mColosseo.

### ★ Santi Giovanni e Paolo

RELIGIOUS SITE | Perched up the incline of the Clivio di Scauro—a magical time-machine of a street, where the dial seems to be stuck somewhere in the 13th century—Santi Giovanni e Paolo is an image that would tempt most landscape painters. Marked by one of Rome's finest Romanesque bell towers, it looms over a picturesque piazza. Underneath, however, are other treasures, whose excavations can be seen in the **Case Romane del Celio** museum. A basilica erected on the spot was, like San Clemente, destroyed in 1084 by attacking Normans. Its half-buried columns, near the current church entrance, are visible through misty glass. The current church's origins date to the start of the 12th century, but most of the interior dates to the 17th century and later. The lovely, incongruous chandeliers are a hand-me-down from New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel, a gift arranged by the late Cardinal Francis Spellman of New York, whose titular church this was. Spellman also initiated the excavations here in 1949. EPiazza di Santi Giovanni e Paolo 13, Celio P06/772711 mColosseo.





**Monti and Celio**

- Sights**
- 1 Case Romane del Celio B6
  - 2 San Clemente D5
  - 3 San Gregorio Magno B7
  - 4 San Pietro in Vincoli B3
  - 5 Santa Maria Maggiore D2
  - 6 Santa Prassede D3
  - 7 Santa Pudenziana C2

- 8 Santi Giovanni e Paolo B6
- 9 Santi Quattro Coronati D6
- 10 Santo Stefano Rotondo C7

- Restaurants**
- 1 Caffè Propaganda C6
  - 2 Cavour 313 A3
  - 3 Enoteca Il Pentagrappolo D6
  - 4 Terra e Domus - Enoteca della Provincia di Roma A3
  - 5 Urbana 47 C3

- Hotels**
- 1 Capo d'Africa D5
  - 2 Duca d'Alba B3
  - 3 Hotel Celio C5
  - 4 Hotel Forum A3
  - 5 Hotel Italia B1
  - 6 Hotel Lancelot D6
  - 7 Nerva A3



## ★ Santi Quattro Coronati

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Situated on one of those evocative cul-de-sacs in Rome where history seems to be holding its breath, this church is strongly imbued with the sanctity of the Romanesque era. Marvelously redolent of the Middle Ages, this is one of the most unusual and unexpected corners in Rome, a quiet citadel that has resisted the tides of time and traffic. The church, which dates back to the 4th century, honors the Four Crowned Saints: the four brothers Severus, Severianus, Carpophorus, and Victorinus, all Roman officials who were whipped to death for their faith by Emperor Diocletian (284–305). After its 9th-century reconstruction, the church was twice as large as it is now; the abbey was partially destroyed during the Normans' sack of Rome in 1084 but reconstructed about 30 years later. This explains the inordinate size of the apse in relation to the small nave. Don't miss the **cloister**, with its well-tended gardens and 12th-century fountain. The entrance is the door in the left nave; ring the bell if it's not open.

There's another medieval gem hidden away off the courtyard at the church entrance: the **Chapel of San Silvestro**. (Enter the door marked "Monache Agostiniane" and ring the bell at the left for the nun; give her the appropriate donation through a grate, and she will press a button to open the chapel door.) The chapel has remained, for the most part, as it was when consecrated in 1246. Some of the best-preserved medieval frescoes in Rome decorate the walls, telling the story of the Christian emperor Constantine's recovery from leprosy thanks to Pope Sylvester I. Note, too, the delightful *Last Judgment* fresco above the door, in which the angel on the left neatly rolls up sky and stars like a backdrop, signaling the end of the world. *EVia Santi Quattro Coronati 20, Celio P06/70475427 AChapel of San Silvestro €2 mColosseo.*

## Santo Stefano Rotondo

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | This 5th-century church is thought to have been inspired by the design of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Its unusual round plan and timbered ceiling set it apart from most other Roman churches. So do the frescoes, which lovingly depict 34 of the goriest martyrdoms in Catholicism—a catalogue, above the names of different emperors, of every type of violent death conceivable. (You've been warned: these are not for the

fainthearted.) E*Via Santo Stefano Rotondo 7, Celio P06/421199* CClosed Mon. mColosseo.

## r Restaurants

### Caffè Propaganda

\$\$ | CAFÉ | Black and white tiles create the atmosphere of a Parisian brasserie at this hip all-day bar/restaurant, but the heart of the large food menu is still Italian. Signature dishes include red shrimp carpaccio, the justly popular artichokes cooked three ways, cacio e pepe–filled ravioli topped with crispy guanciale, and the house burger with fat chips. **Known for:** fancy cocktails; French-inspired desserts; late hours (rare for this area). DAverage main: €18 E*Via Claudia 15–19, Celio P06/94534255* [www.caffepropaganda.it](http://www.caffepropaganda.it) CClosed Mon. and 2 wks in Aug. mColosseo.

### ★ Enoteca Il Pentagrappolo

\$\$ | ITALIAN | With its exposed-brick arches, soft lighting, and close proximity to the Colosseum, this attractive wine bar has an ample spread of cheeses and salamis, salads, and a small selection of hot dishes. And don't forget to check out the menu of more than 250 wines. **Known for:** varied wine menu; intimate atmosphere; live music performances. DAverage main: €14 E*Via Celimontana 21/B, Celio P06/7096301* [www.ilpentagrappolo.com](http://www.ilpentagrappolo.com).

## h Hotels

### Capo d'Africa

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Hotels in Rome come a dime a dozen, but the posh contemporary design of Capo d'Africa combined with modern amenities and outstanding customer service make your stay worth every *centesimo*. **Pros:** quiet, comfortable rooms; fitness center; great food served at the hotel. **Cons:** hotel lacks a great view of Colosseum despite proximity; not a lot of restaurants in the immediate neighborhood; Wi-Fi is only free in the common areas. DRooms from: €250 E*Via Capo d'Africa 54, Celio P06/772801* [www.hotelcapodafrika.com](http://www.hotelcapodafrika.com) a65 rooms XFree breakfast mColosseo.

## Hotel Celio

\$\$ | HOTEL | There's much more to brag about than proximity to the Colosseum at this chic boutique hotel. **Pros:** beautiful rooftop garden; nice decor; comfortable beds. **Cons:** very small bathrooms; service can be iffy; breakfast not that substantial. DRooms from: €180 E Via dei Santissimi Quattro 35/c, Celio P06/70495333 [www.hotelcelio.com](http://www.hotelcelio.com) a22 rooms XFree breakfast mColosseo.

## Hotel Lancelot

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | This friendly home-away-from-home in a quiet residential area close to the Colosseum has been run by the same family since 1970. **Pros:** hospitable staff; secluded and quiet; very family-friendly. **Cons:** some bathrooms are on the small side; no refrigerators in the rooms; rooms are in need of redecorating. DRooms from: €220 E Via Capo d'Africa 47, Celio P06/70450615 [www.lancelothotel.com](http://www.lancelothotel.com) a60 rooms XFree breakfast mColosseo.

## Chapter 4

# THE VATICAN WITH BORGIO AND PRATI

Updated by  
Ariston Anderson



 Sights  
★★★★★

 Restaurants  
★★★★☆

 Hotels  
★★★★☆

 Shopping  
★★★★☆

 Nightlife  
★★★☆☆

# THE VATICAN SNAPSHOT

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling:** The most sublime example of artistry in the world, this 10,000-square-foot fresco took the artist four long, neck-craning years to finish.

**St. Peter's Dome:** Climb the twisting Renaissance stairs to the top for a well-earned view (the elevator to the right of the main church portico goes up to the base of the dome, but there are still a lot of stairs afterwards).

**Papal Blessing:** Join the singing, flag-waving throngs from around the world at the Wednesday general audience on St. Peter's Square (usually only in spring, summer, and early fall).

**Musei Vaticani:** Savor one of the Western world's best art collections—from the Apollo Belvedere to Raphael's *Transfiguration*. It can be overwhelming though, so don't plan to see everything in one day.

**St. Peter's Basilica:** Stand in awe of the largest church in the world.

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## GETTING HERE

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Metro stops Cipro or Ottaviano will get you within about a 10-minute walk of the entrance to the Musei Vaticani. Or, from Termini station, Bus No. 40 Express or the famously crowded No. 64 will take you to Piazza San Pietro. Both routes swing past Largo Argentina, where you can also get Bus No. 571 or 46.

A leisurely meander from the *centro storico* (historic center), across the exquisite Ponte Sant'Angelo, will take about a half hour.

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## HOW TO BEAT THOSE LONG LINES

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- Home to the Sistine Chapel and the Raphael rooms, the Musei Vaticani are among the most congested of all Rome's attractions, drawing up to 30,000 visitors per day in high season.
  - The best way to avoid long lines is to make reservations online for an extra €4 ([wbiglietteriamusei.vatican.va/musei/tickets/do](http://biglietteriamusei.vatican.va/musei/tickets/do)). Although reservations do minimize your wait time, it can still be extremely busy once you're inside, though afternoons are usually less busy. The free Sunday is best avoided altogether, unless you're feeling very brave and patient.
  - Another good idea is to schedule your visit during the Wednesday General Audience, held in the piazza of St. Peter's or at Aula Paolo VI, usually at 10:30 am when the pope is in town. To see the pope's calendar, visit [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).
  - Finally, you might book a tour, either with the Musei Vaticani directly or with a private agency that guarantees that you'll skip the line. The Vatican's own guided tour of the museums and Sistine Chapel, which can be booked online, costs €33 and lasts two hours.
-



**For many, a visit to the Vatican is one of the top reasons to visit Rome, and it is a vast and majestic place, jam-packed with things to see. The Borgo and Prati are the neighborhoods immediately surrounding the Vatican, and it's worth noting that, while the Vatican may well be a priority, these neighborhoods are not the best places to choose a hotel, as they're quite far from other top sights in the city.**

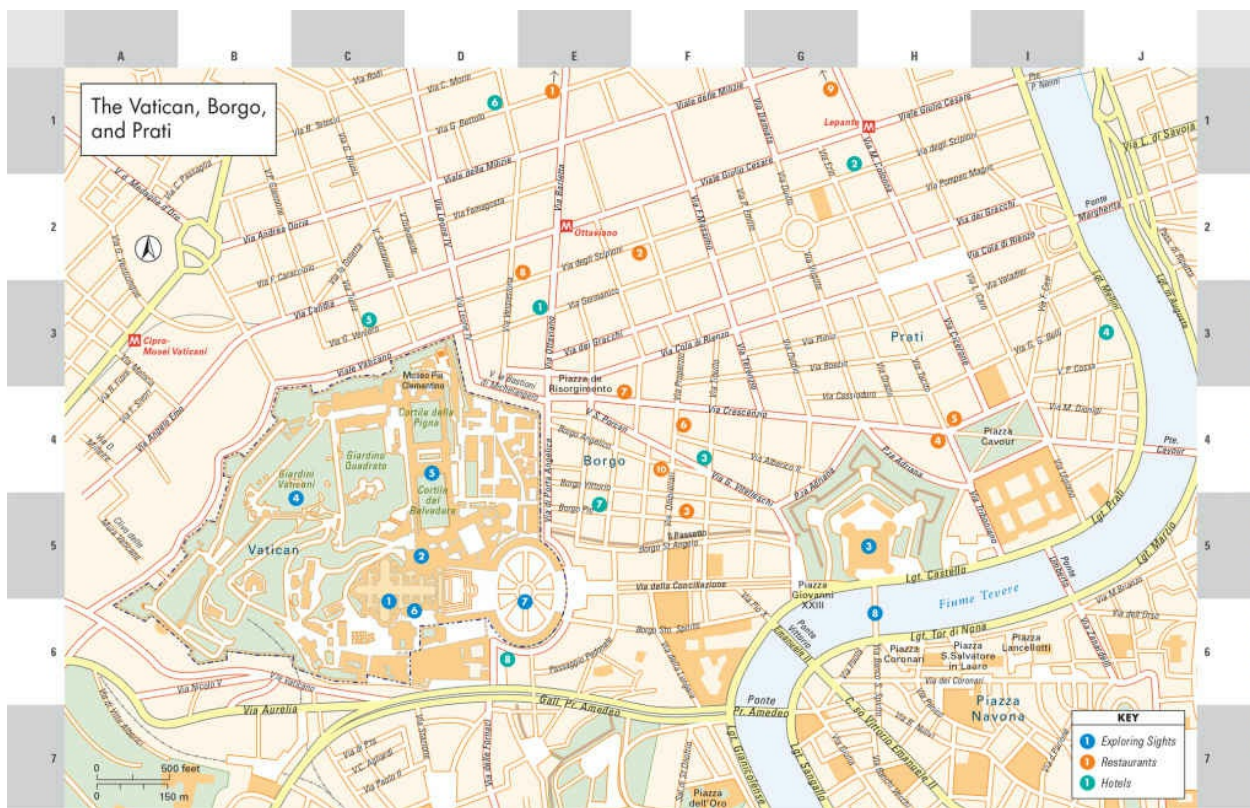
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## **The Vatican**

Climbing the steps to St. Peter's Basilica feels monumental, like a journey that has reached its climactic end. Suddenly, all is cool and dark...and you are dwarfed by the gargantuan nave and its magnificence. Above is a ceiling so high it must lead to heaven itself. Great, shining marble figures of saints frozen mid-whirl loom from niches and corners. And at the end, a throne for an unseen king whose greatness, it is implied, must mirror the greatness of his palace. For this basilica is a palace, the dazzling center of power for a king and a place of supplication for his subjects. Whether his kingdom is earthly or otherwise may lie in the eye of the beholder.

For good Catholics and sinners alike, the Vatican is an exercise in spirituality, requiring patience but delivering joy. Some come here for a transcendent glimpse of a heavenly Michelangelo fresco; others come in search of a direct connection with the divine. But what all visitors share, for a few hours, is an awe-inspiring landscape that offers a famous sight for every taste: rooms decorated by Raphael, antique sculptures like the Apollo Belvedere, famous paintings by Giotto and Bellini, and, perhaps most of all, the Sistine Chapel—for the lover of beauty, few places are as historically important as this epitome of faith and grandeur.

The story of this area’s importance dates back to the 1st century, when St. Peter, the first Roman Catholic pope, was buried here. The first basilica in his honor rose on this spot some 250 years later under Emperor Constantine, who legitimized Christianity. It wasn’t until the early 15th century, however, that the papacy decided to make this area not only a major spiritual center but the spot from which they would wield temporal power as well. Today, it’s difficult not to be reminded of that worldly power when you take in the massive Renaissance walls surrounding Vatican City—the international boundary of an independent sovereign state, established by the Lateran Treaty of 1929 between the Holy See and Mussolini’s government.



<b>Sights</b>	▼ 7 Piazza di San Pietro ..... E6	<b>Restaurants</b>	▼ 7 La Zanzara ..... E4	<b>Hotels</b>	▼ 7 Hotel Sant'Anna Roma ..... E5
1 Basilica di San Pietro ..... C6	■ Ponte Sant'Angelo ..... H6	1 Al Settimo Gulo ..... E1	7 L'Isola della Piazza ..... E2	1 Anselmi Hotel ..... E3	■ Residenza Paolo VI ..... D6
2 Cappella Sistina ..... D5		2 Del Frate ..... F2	3 Settembrini ..... G1	2 Cortar ..... G1	
3 Castel Sant'Angelo ..... H5		3 Herdara ..... F5	10 Taverna Angelica ..... F4	3 Hotel Atlante Staz. .... F4	
4 Giardini Vaticani ..... C5		4 Histaria Da Casara ..... H4		4 Hotel Dei Mollini ..... J3	
5 Musei Vaticani ..... D4		5 Il Simposio di Costantini ..... H4		5 Hotel Museum Rome ..... C3	
6 Necropoli Vaticana ..... D6		6 Il Sorpasso ..... F4		6 Hotel San Pietro ..... D1	

## Tips for Visiting the Vatican S

To enter the Musei Vaticani, the Sistine Chapel, and the Basilica di San Pietro, you must comply

with the Vatican's dress code or you may be turned away by the implacable custodians stationed at the doors. (Also: no penknives, which will show up in the metal detector.) For both men and women, shorts and tank tops are taboo, as are miniskirts and other revealing clothing. Wear a jacket or shawl over sleeveless tops, and avoid T-shirts with writing or pictures that could risk giving offense.

If you opt to start at the Musei Vaticani, note that the entrance on Viale Vaticano (there's a separate exit on the same street) can be reached by Bus No. 49 from Piazza Cavour, which stops right in front; on foot from Piazza del Risorgimento (Bus No. 81 or Tram No. 19); or a brief walk from the Via Cipro–Musei Vaticani stop on Metro Linea A.

The collections of the museums are immense, covering about 7 km (4½ miles) of displays. To economize on time and effort, once you've seen the frescoes in the Raphael rooms, you can skip much of the modern religious art in good conscience and get on with your tour.

You can rent a somewhat dry audio guide in English explaining the museums, including the Sistine Chapel and the Raphael rooms.

You cannot take any photographs in the Sistine Chapel. Elsewhere, you're free to photograph what you like—barring use of flash, tripod, or other special equipment, for which permission must be obtained.

With an average of 20,000 visitors per day, lines at the entrance to the Musei Vaticani can move slowly. It is always a good idea to reserve tickets in advance. It is sometimes possible to exit the museums from the Sistine Chapel into St. Peter's, saving further legwork.

Legally recognized as its own city-state, Vatican City covers 110 acres on a hill west of the Tiber and is separated from the city on all sides, except at Piazza di San Pietro, by high walls. Within the walls, about 840 people are permanent residents. The Vatican has its own daily newspaper (*L'Osservatore Romano*), issues its own stamps, mints its own coins, and has its own postal system (run by the Swiss). Within its territory are administrative and foreign offices, a pharmacy, banks, an astronomical observatory, a print shop, a mosaic school and art restoration institute, a tiny train station, a supermarket, a small department store, and several gas stations. The sovereign of the world's smallest state is the pope, Francis, elected in 2013 after his predecessor, Benedict XVI, stepped down (the first

time a pope has “resigned” from office since 1415). His main role is as spiritual leader to the world’s Catholic community.

Today, there are two principal reasons for sightseeing at the Vatican. One is to visit the Basilica di San Pietro, the most overwhelming architectural achievement of the Renaissance; the other is to visit the Musei Vaticani, which contain collections of staggering richness and diversity, from ancient Etruscan treasures and Egyptian mummies and an actual piece of the Moon.

Inside the basilica—breathtaking both for its sheer size and for its extravagant interior—are artistic masterpieces including Michelangelo’s *Pietà* and Bernini’s great bronze *baldacchino* (canopy) over the main altar. The Musei Vaticani, their entrance a 10-minute walk from the piazza, hold endless collections of many of the greatest works of Western art. The Laocoön, Leonardo’s *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, and Raphael’s *Transfiguration* are all here. The Sistine Chapel, accessible only through these museums, is Michelangelo’s magnificent artistic legacy, and his ceiling is the High Renaissance in excelsis in more ways than one.

## S Sights

### ★ Basilica di San Pietro

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | The world’s largest church, built over the tomb of St. Peter, is the most imposing and breathtaking architectural achievement of the Renaissance (although much of the lavish interior dates to the Baroque). No fewer than five of Italy’s greatest artists—Bramante, Raphael, Peruzzi, Antonio Sangallo the Younger, and Michelangelo—died while striving to erect this new St. Peter’s. The history of the original St. Peter’s goes back to AD 326, when the emperor Constantine completed a basilica over the site of the tomb of Saint Peter, the Church’s first pope. The original church stood for more than 1,000 years, undergoing a number of restorations and alterations, until, toward the middle of the 15th century, it was on the verge of collapse. In 1452, a reconstruction job began but was abandoned for lack of money. In 1503, Pope Julius II instructed the architect Bramante to raze all the existing buildings and build a new basilica, one that would surpass even Constantine’s for grandeur. It wasn’t until 1626 that the new basilica was completed and

consecrated.

Highlights include the Loggia delle Benedizioni (Benediction Loggia), the balcony where newly elected popes are proclaimed; Michelangelo's *Pietà*; and Bernini's great bronze baldacchino, a huge, spiral-columned canopy—at 100,000 pounds, perhaps the largest bronze object in the world—as well as many other Bernini masterpieces. There's also the collection of Vatican treasures in the Museo Storico-Artistico e Tesoro, and the Grotte Vaticane crypt. For views of both the dome above and the piazza below, take the elevator or stairs to the roof; those with more stamina (and without claustrophobia) can then head up more stairs to the apex of the dome. ■ **TIP** → **The Basilica is free to visit but a security check at the entrance can create very long lines. Arrive before 8:30 or after 5:30 to minimize the wait and avoid the crowds.** EPiazza San Pietro, Vatican [www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate/en/monumenti/basilica-di-s-pietro/la-piazza.html](http://www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate/en/monumenti/basilica-di-s-pietro/la-piazza.html) CClosed during Papal Audience (Wed. until 1 pm) and during other ceremonies in piazza mOttaviano.

### ★ Cappella Sistina (Sistine Chapel)

RELIGIOUS SITE | In 1508, the redoubtable Pope Julius II commissioned Michelangelo to fresco the more than 10,000 square feet of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling. (*Sistine*, by the way, is simply the adjective form of *Sixtus*, in reference to Pope Sixtus IV, who commissioned the chapel itself.) The task took four years, and it's said that for many years afterward Michelangelo couldn't read anything without holding it over his head. The result, however, was the greatest artwork of the Renaissance. A pair of binoculars helps greatly, as does a small mirror—hold the mirror facing the ceiling and look down to study the reflection. More than 20 years after his work on the ceiling, Michelangelo was called on again, this time by Pope Paul III, to add to the chapel's decoration by painting the Last Judgment on the wall over the altar. By way of signature on this, his late great fresco, Michelangelo painted his own face on the flayed-off human skin in St. Bartholomew's hand. ■ **TIP** → **The chapel is entered through the Musei Vaticani, and lines are much shorter after 2:30 (reservations are always advisable)—except free Sundays, which are extremely busy and when admissions close at 12:30.** EMusei Vaticani, Vatican [wmv.vatican.va](http://wmv.vatican.va) A€17 (part of the Vatican



Museums) Closed Sun. except the last Sun. of every month mOttaviano.

### **Giardini Vaticani** (Vatican Gardens)

**GARDEN** | Neatly trimmed lawns and flower beds extend over the hills behind St. Peter's Basilica, an area dotted with some interesting constructions and other, duller ones that serve as office buildings. The Vatican Gardens occupy almost 40 acres of land on the Vatican hill. They include a formal Italian garden, a flowering French garden, a romantic English landscape, and a small forest. There's also the little-used Vatican railroad station, which now houses a museum of coins and stamps made in the Vatican, and the Torre di San Giovanni (Tower of St. John), restored by Pope John XXIII as a retreat for work and now used as a residence for distinguished guests. To visit the gardens, join a two-hour guided walking tour or a 45-minute open-bus tour (no stops). Garden visits must be booked online. EVatican City, Vatican P06/69883145 tour info [wmv.vatican.va](http://wmv.vatican.va) A€33 for 2-hr walking tour, €37 for 45-min open-bus tour (both options include admission to Musei Vaticani) mOttaviano.

### ★ **Musei Vaticani** (Vatican Museums)

**MUSEUM** | Other than the pope and his papal court, the occupants of the Vatican are some of the most famous artworks in the world. The Vatican Palace, residence of the popes since 1377, consists of an estimated 1,400 rooms, chapels, and galleries. The pope and his household occupy only a small part; most of the rest is given over to the Vatican Library and Museums. Beyond the glories of the Sistine Chapel, the collection is extraordinarily rich; highlights include the great antique sculptures (including the celebrated Apollo Belvedere in the Octagonal Courtyard and the Belvedere Torso in the Hall of the Muses); the Stanzi de Raffaello (Raphael Rooms), with their famous gorgeous frescoes; and the Old Master paintings, such as Leonardo da Vinci's beautiful (though unfinished) *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, some of Raphael's greatest creations, and Caravaggio's gigantic *Deposition in the Pinacoteca* (Picture Gallery). To avoid lengthy queues, book your ticket in advance online ([wbiglietteriamusei.vatican.va](http://biglietteriamusei.vatican.va)) for a €4 surcharge.



# Basilica di San Pietro



## Meet the Pope S

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Piazza di San Pietro is the scene of large papal audiences, as well as special commemorations, Masses, and beatification ceremonies. When he's in Rome, the pope makes an appearance every Sunday at noon at the window of the Vatican Palace. He addresses the crowd and blesses all present, a ceremony that lasts about 10 to 15 minutes. The pope also holds general audiences in the square on Wednesday morning at about 10:30 am; a ticket is usually necessary for a seat, but even with a ticket you will have to arrive early, as about 40,000 people arrive every week, sometimes many more for special occasions. The general audience lasts between an hour and an hour and a half. In the winter and inclement weather, the audience is held in a hall adjacent to the basilica (Aula Paolo Sesto), which houses far fewer people than the square.

For admission to an audience, apply for free tickets by phone or fax, in advance, indicating your preferred date, preferred language, and your contact information during your stay in Rome. You can also apply for tickets at the Prefettura della Casa Pontificia, either by fax (P06/69885863), or by going to the office Tuesday 3–6 pm (7 pm in summer) or on the morning of the audience 7–10 am. You can reach the office through the Portone di Bronzo (Bronze Door) at the end of the right-hand colonnade. Or arrange your tickets for free for a Wednesday general audience only (not for the papal Mass) through the Mission of the Catholic American Community of St. Patrick's Church (EVia Boncompagni 31; P06/88818727); but the best way is to fill out a booking form directly online at [www.santususanna.org/popeVatican/tickets.html](http://www.santususanna.org/popeVatican/tickets.html). You can pick up your tickets Tuesday from 4:30 to 6:15 pm only. Note that in August no official tickets are issued; you just have to show up early and hope to get a seat.

For those interested in guided visits to the Vatican Museums, tours start at €33, including entrance tickets, and can also be booked online. Other offerings include a regular two-hour guided tour of the Vatican gardens and the semi-regular Friday- night openings, allowing visitors to the museums until 11 pm; call or check online to confirm. For more information, call P06/69884676 or go to [wmv.vatican.va](http://wmv.vatican.va). For information on tours, call P06/69883145 or P06/69884676; visually impaired visitors can arrange tactile tours by calling P06/69884947. EViale Vaticano, near intersection

with Via Leone IV, Vatican P06/69883145 [www.museivaticani.va](http://www.museivaticani.va) A€21 with online reservations, €17 without; free last Sun. of month CClosed Sun. (except last Sun. of month) and church holidays mCipro–Musei Vaticani or Ottaviano–San Pietro. Bus No. 64 or 40.

### **Necropoli Vaticana** (Vatican Necropolis)

**CEMETERY** | With advance notice you can take a 1½-hour guided tour in English of the Vatican Necropolis, under the Basilica di San Pietro, which gives a rare glimpse of Early Christian Roman burial customs and a closer look at the tomb of St. Peter. Apply by fax or in person (the entrance to the office is on the left of the Bernini colonnade) at least two months in advance (yes, those are the only two ways to make reservations), specifying the number of people in the group (all must be age 15 or older), preferred language, preferred time, available dates, and your contact information in Rome. Each group will have about 12 participants. Visits are not recommended for those with mobility issues or who are claustrophobic. *EUfficio Scavi, Vatican P06/69885318, 06/69873017 reservations [www.scavi.va](http://www.scavi.va) A€13 CClosed Sun. and Roman Catholic holidays mOttaviano–San Pietro.*

## Tips on Touring the Vatican Museums S

Remember that the Vatican’s museum complex is humongous: only after walking through what seems like miles of galleries do you see the entrance to the Sistine Chapel (which cannot be entered from St. Peter’s Basilica directly). Most people—especially those who rent an audio guide and must return it to the main desk—tour the complex, see the Sistine, then trudge back to the main museum entrance, itself a 15-minute walk from St. Peter’s Square.

However, there is an “insider” exit directly from the Sistine Chapel to St. Peter’s Basilica. Look for the “tour groups only” door on the right as you face the rear of the chapel and, when a group exits, go with the flow and follow them. This will deposit you on the porch of St. Peter’s Basilica. While this has served as a sly trick for years, if a guard is on watch you may not be able to slip in so smoothly. Also note that if you run to the Sistine Chapel, using the “shortcut” exit into the basilica, you will have missed the rest of the Vatican Museum collection.

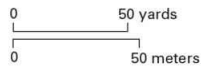
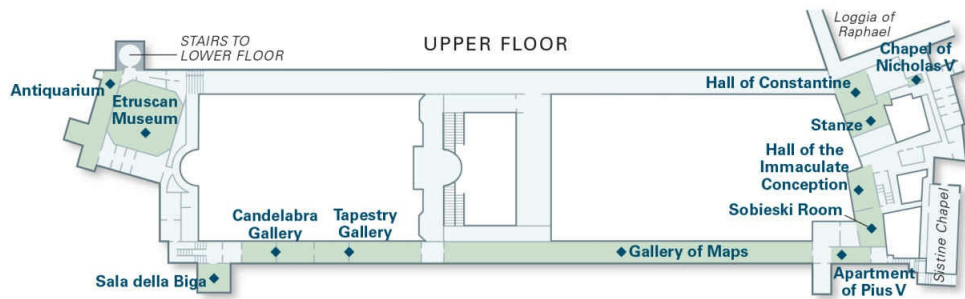
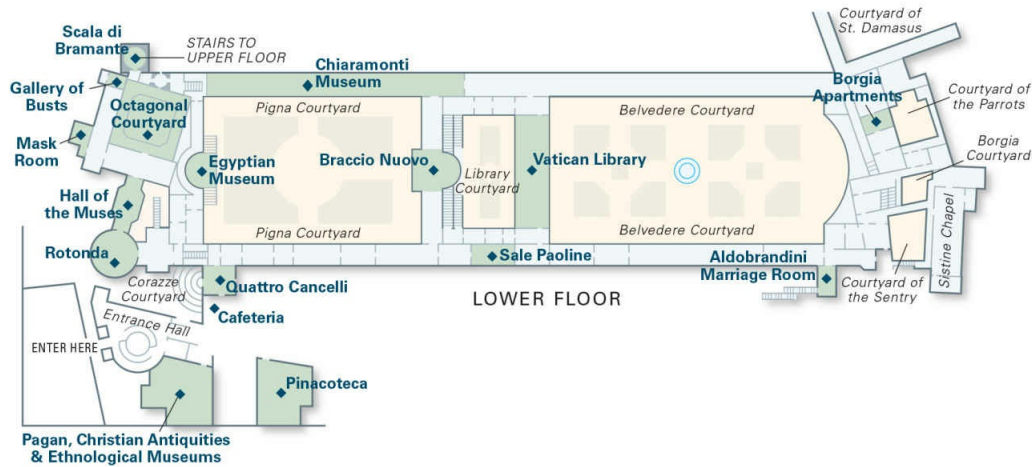
Another possibility is to visit in the evening. This experiment began in 2009 and has been running intermittently ever since, with the Vatican opening on Friday evenings 7–11 (final entry at 9:30), April–October. While the major hits, like the Sistine Chapel, are usually open during these special evenings, many more off-the-beaten-path rooms and galleries are not. Reservations are required (and possible to secure online at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)).

## ★ **Piazza di San Pietro**

**PLAZA** | Mostly enclosed within high walls that recall the papacy's stormy history, the Vatican opens the spectacular arms of Bernini's colonnade to embrace the world only at St. Peter's Square, scene of the pope's public appearances. One of Bernini's most spectacular masterpieces, the elliptical Piazza di San Pietro was completed in 1667 after only 11 years' work and holds about 100,000 people. Surrounded by a pair of quadruple colonnades, it is gloriously studded with 140 statues of saints and martyrs. At the piazza's center, the 85-foot-high Egyptian obelisk was brought to Rome by Caligula in AD 37 and moved here in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V. The Vatican post offices can be found on both sides of St. Peter's Square and inside the Vatican Museums complex and are open to the public. ■ **TIP** → **The main information office is just left of the basilica as you face it.** *Piazza San Pietro,* *Vatican*

[www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate/en/monumenti/basilica-di-s-pietro/la-piazza.html](http://www.vaticanstate.va/content/vaticanstate/en/monumenti/basilica-di-s-pietro/la-piazza.html) *mCipro–Musei Vaticani or Ottaviano–San Pietro.*

# Vatican Museums



## Borgo

Between the Vatican and the once-moated bulk of Castel Sant'Angelo—erstwhile mausoleum of Emperor Hadrian and now an imposing relic of medieval Rome—is the old Borgo neighborhood, whose workaday charm has largely succumbed to gentrification. Be wary of the tourist-trap lunch spots and souvenir shops right outside the Vatican walls.

## S Sights

### Castel Sant'Angelo

**CASTLE/PALACE | FAMILY** | Standing between the Tiber and the Vatican, this circular castle has long been one of Rome's most distinctive landmarks. Opera lovers know it well as the setting for the final scene of Puccini's *Tosca*. Started in AD 135, the structure began as a mausoleum for the emperor Hadrian, and was completed by his successor, Antoninus Pius. From the mid-6th century the building became a fortress, a place of refuge for popes during wars and sieges. Its name dates to AD 590, when Pope Gregory the Great, during a procession to plead for the end of a plague, saw an angel standing on the summit of the castle, sheathing his sword. Taking this as a sign that the plague was at an end, the pope built a small chapel at the top, placing a statue next to it to celebrate his vision—thus the name, Castel Sant'Angelo.

In the rooms off the Cortile dell'Angelo, look for the Cappella di Papa Leone X (Chapel of Pope Leo X), with a facade by Michelangelo. The Sala Paolina (Pauline Room) was decorated in the 16th century with lavish frescoes. In the Pope Alexander VI courtyard, a wellhead bears the Borgia coat of arms. The stairs at the far end of the courtyard lead to the open terrace for a view of the Passetto, the fortified corridor connecting Castel Sant'Angelo with the Vatican. In the *appartamento papale* (papal apartment), the Sala Paolina (Pauline Room) was decorated in the 16th century by Perino del Vaga and assistants with lavish frescoes of scenes from the Old Testament and the lives of Saint Paul and Alexander the Great. *ELungotevere Castello 50, Prati*



P06/6819111 central line, 06/6896003 tickets  
[wcastelsantangelo.beniculturali.it](http://wcastelsantangelo.beniculturali.it) A€14 mLepanto.

## Ponte Sant'Angelo

**BRIDGE/TUNNEL** | Angels designed by Baroque master Bernini line the most beautiful of central Rome's 20-odd bridges. Bernini himself carved only two of the angels (those with the scroll and the crown of thorns), both of which were moved to the church of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte shortly afterward at the behest of the Bernini family. Though copies, the angels on the bridge today convey forcefully the grace and characteristic sense of movement—a key element of Baroque sculpture—of Bernini's best work. Originally built in AD 133–134, the Ponte Elio, as it was originally called, was a bridge over the Tiber to Hadrian's Mausoleum. Pope Gregory changed the bridge's name after he had a vision of an angel sheathing its sword to signal the ending of the plague of 590. In medieval times, continuing its sacral function, the bridge became an important element in funneling pilgrims toward St. Peter's. As such, in 1667 Pope Clement IX commissioned Bernini to design 10 angels bearing the symbols of the Passion, turning the bridge into a sort of Via Crucis. *EBetween Lungotevere Castello and Lungotevere Altoviti, Borgo mOttaviano.*

## r Restaurants

Many tourists think the area around the Vatican is rip-off central when it comes to drinking and dining. Although there are an overwhelming number of tourist “trap-torias,” the Borgo area, just outside the Vatican walls, is home to some genuinely good restaurants off the usual tourist radar.

### Hedera

**\$ | ITALIAN** | This gelato shop is charming in its historic ivy-covered building in the Piazza del Catalone with its famous fountain for pilgrims. The products here are made according to tradition with just the essentials: milk, cream, sugar, and eggs, usually all from organic farms. **Known for:** soft brioche with mocha coffee granita; Calabrian truffles, hazelnut gelato balls with a liquid chocolate center; seasonal fruit gelato. *DAverage main: €4 EBorgo Pio*

179, Borgo P06/6832971 [www.hederaroma.it](http://www.hederaroma.it).

### Taverna Angelica

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | The Borgo area near St. Peter's Basilica hasn't been known for culinary excellence, but this is starting to change, and Taverna Angelica was one of the first refined restaurants in this part of town. The dining room is small, which allows the chef to create a menu that's inventive without being pretentious. **Known for:** eclectic Italian dishes; elegant surroundings; tiramisu with amaretti biscuits. *DAverage main: €22 EPiazza Amerigo Capponi 6, Borgo P06/6874514 [www.tavernaangelica.it](http://www.tavernaangelica.it) CClosed 2 wks in Aug. No lunch Mon.–Sat. mOttaviano.*

## h Hotels

Just east of the Vatican, the Borgo area has a certain medieval charm but can be overwhelming with tourists (and the tourist traps who love them). That said, there are a few appealing and atmospheric hotels here, and you can't beat the location for soaking up the Vatican sights.

### Hotel Atlante Star

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | The lush rooftop-garden terrace with a center-stage view of St. Peter's Basilica is just one reason to stay here; you'll also enjoy the proximity to the Vatican and superb shopping nearby. **Pros:** all rooms come with robes and amenity kits; panoramic roof garden and terrace is open from morning to night; full, hearty breakfast with beautiful views. **Cons:** some rooms are nicer than others; elevators are on the small side and a bit slow; bathrooms in some rooms are a little outdated. *DRooms from: €260 EVia Vitelleschi 34, Borgo P06/686386 [www.atlantehotels.com](http://www.atlantehotels.com) a65 rooms XFree breakfast mOttaviano.*

### Hotel Sant'Anna Roma

\$\$ | HOTEL | In the picturesque, medieval Borgo neighborhood in the shadow of St. Peter's, this small, fashionable hotel is a good value. **Pros:** street is a pedestrian-only zone during the day; beds are comfy; staff are friendly. **Cons:** no on-site bar or restaurant, and many nearby restaurants are tourist traps; the neighborhood is dead at night; they can charge extra for a late

checkout. DRooms from: €160 EBorgo Pio 134, Borgo P06/68801602 [www.santannahotel.net](http://www.santannahotel.net) a22 rooms XFree breakfast mOttaviano.

### ★ **Residenza Paolo VI**

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Set in a former monastery—still an extraterritorial part of the Vatican—magnificently abutting Bernini’s colonnade of St. Peter’s Square, the Paolo VI (pronounced “Sesto,” a reference to Pope Paul VI) is unbeatably close to St. Peter’s, with comfortable and amazingly quiet guest rooms. **Pros:** direct views of St. Peter’s from the rooftop terrace; quiet rooms; lovely staff and service. **Cons:** some rooms are really small; bathrooms are a tight space; far away from Rome’s historical attractions. DRooms from: €220 EVia Paolo VI 29, Borgo P06/684870 [www.residenzapaolovi.com](http://www.residenzapaolovi.com) a35 rooms XFree breakfast mOttaviano.

## n **Nightlife**

### **Bukowski’s Bar**

BARS/PUBS | This cozy spot outside the Vatican is furnished like a familiar living room with a giant velvet sofa and armchairs, making it easy to meet the people sitting next to you. In addition to a robust cocktail and wine menu, the owners regularly host art, theater, and shopping events. Aperitif is served every evening, which includes a drink and buffet for €15. EVia Degli Ombrellari 25, Borgo P06/64760105 [www.bukowskisbar.com](http://www.bukowskisbar.com) mOttaviano.

## b **Shopping**

Borgo is your destination for religious relics.

### **Savelli Arte e Tradizione**

CERAMICS/GLASSWARE | Here you’ll find a fully stocked selection of religious gifts: everything from rosaries and crosses to religious artwork and Pope Francis memorabilia. Originally opened for the Jubilee of 1900, this family business provides a place for pilgrims to pick up a souvenir from the Holy See. The store has three other locations: Galleria Savelli in St. Peter’s Square; Savelli Gift in Via della Conciliazione; and Art Studio Cafè in Via dei

Gracchi. E Via Paolo VI 27-29, Borgo P06/631164  
[www.savellireligious.com](http://www.savellireligious.com) mOttaviano.

# Prati

Outside the Vatican walls, but slightly upriver from the Borgo neighborhood, Prati is starting to come into its own as a foodie destination.

## r Restaurants

### Al Settimo Gelo

\$ | ITALIAN | The unusual flavors of gelato scooped up here include chocolate and red pepper and fig with cardamom and walnut, but the classics also get rave reviews. Ask for a taste of the *passito* flavor, if it's available; it's inspired by the popular sweet Italian dessert wine. **Known for:** organic Sicilian lemon sorbetto; homemade whipped cream; completely gluten-free shop. DAverage main: €5 EVia Vodice 21/a, Prati P06/3725567 [www.alsettimogelo.it](http://www.alsettimogelo.it) CClosed Mon., and 1 wk in Aug. mLeganto.

### ★ Del Frate

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | This impressive wine bar matches sleek, modern decor with creative cuisine and three dozen wines available by the glass. The house specialty is marinated meat and fish, but you can also get cheeses, smoked meats, and composed salads. **Known for:** adjacent to one of Rome's noted wineshops; daily aperitivo hot and cold buffet; wide selection of after-dinner drinks including mezcal (smoky agave liquor) and amari (bitter cordial). DAverage main: €19 EVia degli Scipioni 118, Prati P06/3236437 [www.enotecadelfrate.it](http://www.enotecadelfrate.it) CClosed Sun., and Aug. mOttaviano.

### Hostaria da Cesare

\$\$ | TUSCAN | An old standby in Prati, Hostaria da Cesare is dedicated to Roman culinary tradition. The general menu's tendency toward hearty, stick-to-your-ribs comfort food makes this a popular spot in the autumn and winter. **Known for:** fresh, local ingredients; saltimbocca (thinly sliced veal with prosciutto and sage); speciality pasta with white truffles. DAverage main: €20 EVia Crescenzo 13, Prati P06/6861227 [www.ristorantecesare.com](http://www.ristorantecesare.com) CClosed Easter wk, and 3 wks in Aug. mLepanto.

## Il Simposio di Costantini

\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | At the most upscale wine bar in town, you come for the wine but return for the food. Everything here is appropriately *raffinato* (refined): marinated and smoked fish, salads, and top-quality *salumi* (salted meat) and other cured meats and pâtés. **Known for:** favorite among locals; artichokes prepared three ways; roughly 80 cheeses to savor with your dessert wine. *DAverage main: €30 EPiazza Cavour 16, Prati P06/3241489 CClosed 2 wks in Aug. mLepanto.*

## ★ Il Sorpasso

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | The focus at this happening spot, open from early morning until late in the evening, is on using excellently sourced products to make simple but wonderful food. In the morning and afternoon, this is the perfect place to stop in for freshly baked sweet treats, while evenings are popular for aperitivo or hearty meals when people spill out into the street, cocktail in hand. **Known for:** meat and cheese board; strozzapretti (a short pasta) served with eggplant, pistachio, and chili bread crumbs; juicy steaks. *DAverage main: €15 EVia Properzio 31, Prati P06/89024554 [www.passaguai.it](http://www.passaguai.it) CClosed Sun., and Aug. mOttaviano.*

## La Zanzara

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | This bright and modern restaurant functions as a bar, caffè, and restaurant all in one, with plenty of indoor and outdoor seating. The menu runs the international gamut, with salads, pasta, steak, and seafood—standouts include the tuna tartare and the beef burger. **Known for:** Piedmontese beef tartare; artisan Italian beers; large grill for freshly cooked meats. *DAverage main: €16 EVia Crescenzo 84, Prati P06/68392227 [www.lazanzararoma.com](http://www.lazanzararoma.com) mOttaviano.*

## L'Isola della Pizza

\$ | PIZZA | FAMILY | Right near the Vatican Metro stop, the “Island of Pizza” is also known for its copious antipasti. Ask for the house appetizers, and a waiter will swoop down numerous plates of salad, seafood, bruschetta, prosciutto, and crispy pizza bianca to choose from. **Known for:** grilled porcini mushrooms; popular place to watch soccer matches; torta della nonna (grandma’s pie made with custard and pine nuts). *DAverage main: €13 EVia*



degli Scipioni 45, Prati P06/39733483 [www.isoladellapizza.com](http://www.isoladellapizza.com) CClosed Wed., Aug., and Christmas wk mOttaviano.

### ★ **Settembrini**

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | The modern, intimate dining room here hints at what to expect from the kitchen and staff: elegant and restrained cooking, friendly yet unobtrusive service, and an interesting and well-curated wine list. There's also a sister café just round the corner at Piazza Martiri del Belfiore 12; between them something is always open from 7 am until 1 am, perfect for lunch or dinner, or simply a coffee break, afternoon tea, or a snack after a visit to the Vatican. **Known for:** creative twists on classic Italian ingredients; neighborhood gem; handy sister café nearby. DAverage main: €20 EVia Luigi Settembrini 21, Prati P06/97610325 [www.viasettembrini.com](http://www.viasettembrini.com) CClosed 2 wks in Aug. mLepanto.

## h Hotels

Here you'll find small, friendly hotels that don't break the bank.

### **Amalia Hotel**

\$\$ | HOTEL | Convenient to St. Peter's, the Vatican, and Prati's Cola di Rienzo shopping district (and just a block from the Ottaviano stop of Metro Line A), this small, family-run hotel situated in a 19th-century palazzo is crisp and smart. **Pros:** good location for both visiting the Vatican and shopping; helpful staff; large beds. **Cons:** showers can be small; bedding could use a revamp; limited breakfast buffet. DRooms from: €150 EVia Germanico 66, Prati P06/39723356 [www.hotelamalia.com](http://www.hotelamalia.com) a34 rooms XFree breakfast mOttaviano.

### **Gerber**

\$\$ | HOTEL | Across the river from Piazza del Popolo on a quiet side street in the Prati neighborhood, this intimate, unpretentious hotel offers friendly service and simple, pleasant rooms. **Pros:** good value; great service; comfortable beds. **Cons:** elevator is tiny; decor is outdated; small showers. DRooms from: €168 EVia degli Scipioni 241, Prati P06/3216485 [www.hotelgerber.it](http://www.hotelgerber.it) a27 rooms XFree breakfast mLepanto.

## Hotel Dei Mellini

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | On the west bank of the Tiber between the Spanish Steps and St. Peter's Basilica (a five-minute stroll from Piazza del Popolo), this modern luxury hotel is tucked away from the chaos of the centro storico but still close enough for convenient sightseeing. **Pros:** spacious and spotless rooms; breakfast served until 11 am; free bicycles to use based on availability. **Cons:** not for those who want to be in the center of the action; few dining options right nearby; rooms facing courtyard can be dark. *DRooms from: €280 E* Via Muzio Clementi 81, Prati P06/324771 [www.hotelmellini.com](http://www.hotelmellini.com) a80 rooms XFree breakfast mLepanto.

## Hotel Museum Rome

\$\$ | HOTEL | A stone's throw from the Musei Vaticani, this family-run hotel offers good service and rates. **Pros:** friendly staff; rooftop terrace; good-sized rooms. **Cons:** breakfast is tasty but goes quickly; room decor is outdated; not much of interest besides the Vatican nearby. *DRooms from: €170 E* Via Tunisi 8, Prati P06/39723941 [www.hotelmuseum.it](http://www.hotelmuseum.it) a35 rooms XFree breakfast mOttaviano, Cipro.

## Hotel San Pietrino

\$ | HOTEL | This simple budget hotel on the third floor of a 19th-century palazzo offers rock-bottom rates at a five-minute walk from the Vatican. **Pros:** heavenly rates near the Vatican; air-conditioning and Wi-Fi; free parking. **Cons:** a couple of Metro stops from the centro storico; flat pillows and basic bedding; no bar or free breakfast. *DRooms from: €85 E* Via Giovanni Bettolo 43, Prati P06/3700132 [www.sanpietrino.it](http://www.sanpietrino.it) a12 rooms XNo meals mOttaviano.

# n Nightlife

## LIVE MUSIC

### Alexanderplatz Jazz Club

MUSIC CLUBS | The black-and-white-checker floors of Alexanderplatz, Rome's most important live jazz and blues club, are reminiscent of Harlem's 1930s jazz halls, and Alexanderplatz loves to promote this image with

excellent jazz programming featuring both Italian and international performers. The bar and restaurant are always busy, so reservations are suggested. EVia Ostia 9, Prati P06/83775604 [www.alexanderplatzjazzclub.com](http://www.alexanderplatzjazzclub.com).

## Fonclea

MUSIC CLUBS | Conveniently just around the corner from Castel Sant'Angelo, Fonclea jams with live music every night of the week—from jazz and Latin American to R&B and '60s cover bands. Entry is free. EVia Crescenzio 82/a, Prati P06/6896302 [www.fonclea.it](http://www.fonclea.it).

## b Shopping

Just a hop, skip, and jump from the Vatican, you'll find an array of religious relic shops, department stores, and gourmet food and wine shops.

### DEPARTMENT STORES

#### Coin

DEPARTMENT STORES | FAMILY | Department stores aren't the norm in Italy, but Coin comes close with its large selection of upscale merchandise including accessories, handbags, cosmetics, and clothing for men, women, and children. Searching for a pressure-driven espresso machine, a simpler stove-top Bialetti model, or a mezzaluna? You can find these and other high-quality, stylish cookware items that are difficult to find back home. There's a smaller version at Termini station, and nine total around Rome. EVia Cola di Rienzo 173, Prati P06/36004298 [www.coin.it](http://www.coin.it) mLepanto, Ottaviano.

### FOOD AND WINE

#### ★ Castroni

FOOD/CANDY | Opening its flagship shop near the Vatican in 1932, this gastronomic paradise has long been Rome's port-of-call for decadent delicacies from around the globe; there are now 13 locations throughout the city. Jonesing expats and study-abroad students pop in for local sweets, Twinings teas, and even some good old-fashioned Kraft Macaroni & Cheese. If you're just doing a little window-shopping, be sure to try their in-house

roasted espresso, some of the best coffee in Rome. E*Via Cola di Rienzo 196/198, Prati P06/6874383* [www.castroni.it](http://www.castroni.it) m*Lepanto, Ottaviano.*

## **SHOES AND ACCESSORIES**

### **Il Sellaio Serafini Pelletteria**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | For more than 70 years, artisan Ferruccio Serafini has been churning out some of the best handmade leather bags, shoes, and belts in Rome. Only a handful of these true saddler artisans still exist today. Marlon Brando, Elizabeth Taylor, and the Kennedy brothers were all faithful followers of Serafini's design and work in the 1960s. Today, the family business is run by Francesca, Ferruccio Serafini's youngest daughter. Choose from their premade stock or select your own style and accompanying leathers. E*Via Caio Mario 14, Prati P06/3211719* [www.serafinipelletteria.it](http://www.serafinipelletteria.it) m*Ottaviano.*

## Chapter 5

# PIAZZA NAVONA, CAMPO DE' FIORI, AND THE JEWISH GHETTO

Updated by Agnes  
Crawford



 Sights  
★★★★★

 Restaurants  
★★★★☆

 Hotels  
★★★★★

 Shopping  
★★★★☆

 Nightlife  
★★★★☆

# PIAZZA NAVONA, CAMPO DE' FIORI, AND THE JEWISH GHETTO SNAPSHOT

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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Start at Campo de' Fiori, where the popular market takes place every morning Monday–Saturday. The cobblestone streets that stretch out from the square are still lined with artisanal workshops. Wind your way west through the Jewish Ghetto, the historic home of Rome's once-vibrant Jewish community (and a good place for lunch); don't miss the area around the Portico d'Ottavia, with some of the city's most atmospheric ruins. Heading north will take you across busy Corso Vittorio Emanuele toward the Pantheon. Duck into the piazza of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, which contains Rome's most delightful Baroque conceit, the 17th-century elephant obelisk memorial designed by Bernini, and pop into the church, which has the only Gothic interior in Rome. Straight ahead is one of the wonders of the world, the ancient Pantheon, with that postcard icon, Piazza Navona, just a few blocks to the west. You could spend about five hours exploring, not counting breaks—but taking breaks is what this area is all about.

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Piazza Navona:** This is the city's most glorious piazza—the showcase for Rome's exuberant Baroque style. Savor Bernini's fantastic fountain, set off by the curves and steeples of Borromini's church of Sant'Agnese.

**Caravaggio:** Feel the power of 17th-century Rome's rebel artist in three of his finest paintings at the church of San Luigi dei Francesi.

**The Pantheon:** Gaze up to the heavens through the dome of Rome's best-preserved ancient temple—could this be the world's only



architecturally perfect building?

**Campo de' Fiori:** Stroll through the morning market for a taste of the sweet life.

**Portico d'Ottavia:** This famed ancient Roman landmark casts a spell over Rome's time-honored Jewish Ghetto.

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## GETTING HERE

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■ The Piazza Navona and Campo de' Fiori are an easy walk from the Vatican or Trastevere, or a half-hour stroll from the Spanish Steps. From Termini or the Vatican, take Bus No. 40 Express or the No. 64 to Largo Torre Argentina; then walk 10 minutes to either piazza. Bus No. 116 winds from Via Veneto past the Spanish Steps to Campo de' Fiori.

■ From the Vatican or the Spanish Steps, it's a 30-minute walk to the Jewish Ghetto, or take the No. 40 Express or the No. 64 bus from Termini station to Largo Torre Argentina.

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## QUICK BITES

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■ **Giolitti.** The Pantheon area is ice-cream heaven, with some of Rome's best gelaterias within a few steps of each other. But for many Romans, a scoop at Giolitti, which opened in 1900, is tradition. The scene at the counter often looks like the storming of the Bastille; remember to pay the cashier first, and hand the stub to the counter-person when you order your cone. E Via Uffizi del Vicario 40, Piazza Navona P06/6991243 [www.giolitti.it](http://www.giolitti.it).

**The area around Piazza Navona, Campo de' Fiori, and the Jewish Ghetto, also known as the Campo Marzio (Field of Mars) for its martial past, is one of the city's most beautiful, most atmospheric, and liveliest neighborhoods. More than almost anywhere else in Rome, this is an area worth getting lost in, with cobblestone side streets and artisanal shops just around the corner from the piazze and sights that crowd with tourists (and the establishments that cater to them).**

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## **Piazza Navona**

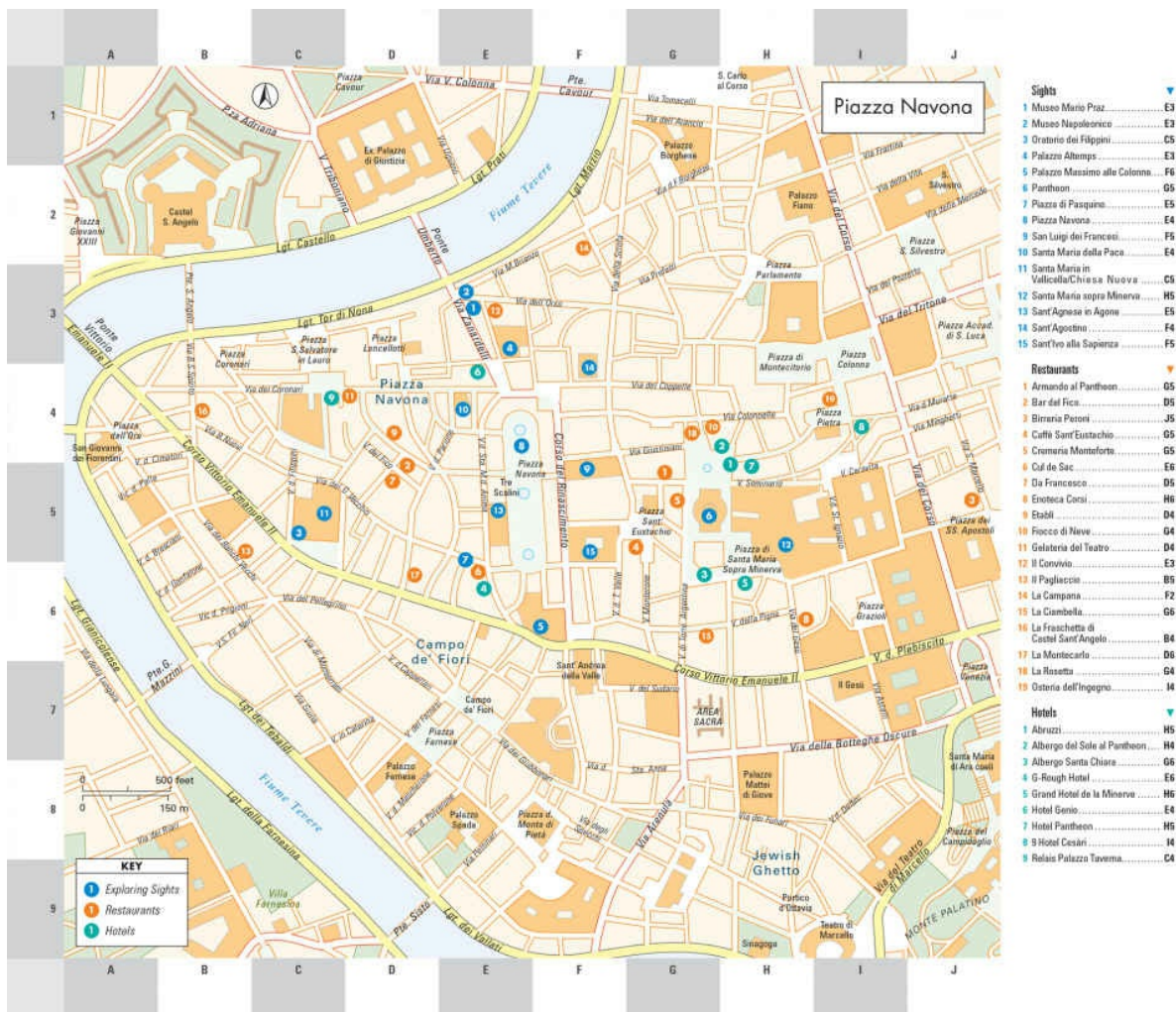
In terms of sheer sensual enjoyment—from a mouthwatering range of restaurants and caffè to the ornate Baroque settings—it's tough to top this area of Rome. Just a few blocks (and some 1,200 years) separate the two main showstoppers: Piazza Navona and the Pantheon. The first is the most beautiful Baroque piazza in the world, and it serves as the open-air salon for this quarter of Rome. As if this is not grandeur enough, across Corso di Rinascimento—and more than a millennium away—is the Pantheon, the grandest extant building still standing from ancient Rome, topped by the world's largest unreinforced concrete dome. Near the same massive hub, Bernini's delightful elephant obelisk proves that small can also be beautiful. And beautiful is the word to describe this entire area, one that is packed with Baroque wonders, charming stores, and very happy sightseers.

## **S Sights**

### **Museo Mario Praz**

**MUSEUM** | On the top floor of the Palazzo Primoli—the same building

(separate entrance) that houses the Museo Napoleonico—is one of Rome’s most unusual museums. As if preserved in amber, the apartment in which the famous Italian essayist Mario Praz lived survives intact, decorated with a lifetime’s accumulation of delightful Baroque and Neoclassical art and antiques, arranged and rearranged to create symmetries that take the visitor by surprise like the best trompe-l’oeil. As author of *The Romantic Sensibility* and *A History of Interior Decoration*, Praz was fabled for his taste for the arcane and the bizarre; here his reputation for the same lives on. You are obliged to follow a custodian through the museum; the visit takes about 50 minutes. E Via Zanardelli 1, Piazza Navona P06/6861089 [www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it) CClosed Sun.–Wed. mBus Nos. 492, 70, 628, 81, and 116.



## Museo Napoleonico

MUSEUM | Housed in an opulent collection of velvet-and-crystal salons that

hauntingly capture the fragile charm of early-19th-century Rome, this small museum in the Palazzo Primoli contains a specialized and rich collection of Napoléon memorabilia, including a bust by Canova of the general's sister, Pauline Borghese (as well as a plaster cast of her left bust). You may well ask why this outpost of Napoléon is in Rome, but in 1798 the French emperor sent his troops to Rome, kidnapping Pope Pius VII and proclaiming his young son the King of Rome—though it all ultimately came to naught. Upstairs is the Museo Mario Praz. *EPalazzo Primoli, Piazza di Ponte Umberto I, Piazza Navona P06/68806286 [www.museonapoleonico.it](http://www.museonapoleonico.it) CClosed Mon. mBus Nos. 70, 30, 81, 628, and 492.*

### **Oratorio dei Filippini**

**LIBRARY** | Housed in a Baroque masterwork by Borromini, this former religious residence named for Saint Philip Neri, founder in 1551 of the Congregation of the Oratorians, now contains Rome's Archivio Storico. Like the Jesuits, the Oratorians—or Filippini, as they were commonly known—were one of the new religious orders established in the mid-16th century as part of the Counter-Reformation. Neri, a man of rare charm and wit, insisted that the members of the order—most of them young noblemen whom he had recruited personally—not only renounce their worldly goods, but also work as common laborers in the building of Neri's great church of Santa Maria in Vallicella. The Oratory itself, once headquarters of the order, was built by Borromini between 1637 and 1662. Its gently curving facade is typical of Borromini's insistence on introducing movement into everything he designed. The inspiration here is that of arms extended in welcome to the poor. The building houses the Vallicelliana Library found by Philip Neri, and the courtyard is usually accessible during the library's opening hours. *EPiazza della Chiesa Nuova (Corso Vittorio Emanuele), Piazza Navona P06/6892537 [www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it) CClosed Sun.*

### **★ Palazzo Altemps**

**CASTLE/PALACE** | Containing some of the finest ancient Roman statues in the world, Palazzo Altemps is part of the Museo Nazionale Romano. The palace's sober exterior belies a magnificence that appears as soon as you walk into the majestic courtyard, studded with statues and covered in part by a retractable awning. The restored interior hints at the Roman lifestyle of the

16th–18th century while showcasing the most illustrious pieces from the Museo Nazionale, including the collection of the Ludovisi noble family. In the frescoed salons you can see the *Galata Suicida*, a poignant work portraying a barbarian warrior who chooses death for himself and his wife, rather than humiliation by the enemy. Another highlight is the large Ludovisi sarcophagus, magnificently carved from marble. In a place of honor is the Ludovisi Throne, which shows a goddess emerging from the sea and being helped by her acolytes. For centuries this was heralded as one of the most sublime Greek sculptures, but, today, at least one authoritative art historian considers it a colossally overrated fake. Look for the framed explanations of the exhibits that detail (in English) how and exactly where Renaissance sculptors, Bernini among them, added missing pieces to the classical works. In the lavishly frescoed Loggia stand busts of the Caesars. In the wing once occupied by early-20th-century poet Gabriele d’Annunzio (who married into the Altemps family), three rooms host the museum’s Egyptian collection. *EPiazza Sant’Apollinare 46, Piazza Navona P06/39967700 [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€10, or €12 including 3 other Museo Nazionale Romano sites over 7 days (Crypta Balbi, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Museo delle Terme di Diocleziano); €13, or €15 (including 3 other sites) if a special exhibit is on CClosed Mon. mBus Nos. 70, 81, 87, 116T, 186, 492, and 628.*

### **Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne**

**CASTLE/PALACE** | Following the shape of Emperor Domitian’s Odeon arena, a curving, columned portico identifies this otherwise inconspicuous palace on a traffic-swept bend of Corso Vittorio Emanuele. In the 1530s, Renaissance architect Baldassare Peruzzi built this new palace for the Massimo family, after their previous dwelling had been destroyed during the Sack of Rome. (High in the papal aristocracy, they claimed an ancestor who had been responsible for the defeat of Hannibal.) If you visit on March 16, you’ll be able to go upstairs to visit the family chapel in commemoration of a miracle performed here in 1583 by St. Philip Neri, who is said to have recalled a young member of the family, one Paolo Massimo, from the dead (expect a line). Any other day of the year, though, you’ll only be able to view the building from the outside. The palazzo’s name comes from the columns of the ancient Odeon; one is still visible in the square at the back of the palazzo.



ECorso Vittorio Emanuele II 141, Piazza Navona.

## ★ Pantheon

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | The best preserved ancient building in the city, this former Roman temple is a marvel of architectural harmony and proportion. It was entirely rebuilt by the emperor Hadrian around AD 120 on the site of an earlier Pantheon (from the Greek: *pan*, all, and *theon*, gods) erected in 27 BC by Augustus's right-hand man and son-in-law, Agrippa.

The most striking thing about the Pantheon is not its size, immense though it is, nor even the phenomenal technical difficulties posed by so massive a construction; rather, it's the remarkable unity of the building. The diameter described by the dome is exactly equal to its height. It's the use of such simple mathematical balance that gives classical architecture its characteristic sense of proportion and its nobility. The opening at the apex of the dome, the *oculus*, is nearly 30 feet in diameter and was intended to symbolize the "all-seeing eye of the heavens." On a practical note, this means when it rains, it rains inside: look out for the drainage holes in the floor.

Although little is known for sure about the Pantheon's origins or purpose, it's worth noting that the five levels of trapezoidal coffers (sunken panels in the ceiling) represent the course of the five then-known planets and their concentric spheres. Ruling over them is the sun, represented symbolically and literally by the 30-foot-wide eye at the top. The heavenly symmetry is further paralleled by the coffers: 28 to each row, the number of lunar cycles. In the center of each would have shone a small bronze star. Down below the seven large niches were occupied not by saints, but, it's thought, by statues of Mars, Venus, the deified Caesar, and the other "astral deities," including the moon and sun, the "sol invictus." (Academics still argue, however, about which gods were most probably worshipped here.)

One of the reasons the Pantheon is so well preserved is the result of it being consecrated as a church in AD 608. (It's still a working church today.) No building, church or not, though, escaped some degree of plundering through the turbulent centuries of Rome's history after the fall of the empire. In 655, for example, the gilded bronze covering the dome was stripped. The Pantheon is also one of the city's important burial places. Its most famous



tomb is that of Raphael (between the second and third chapels on the left as you enter). Mass takes place on Sundays and on religious holidays at 10:30; it's open to the public, but you are expected to arrive before the beginning and stay until the end. General access usually resumes at about 11:30. *EPiazza della Rotonda, Piazza Navona P06/68300230 [www.pantheonroma.com](http://www.pantheonroma.com) AFree; audio guide €5 mClosest bus hub: Argentina (Bus Nos. 40, 85, 53, 46, 64, 87, and 571; Tram No. 8).*

### **Piazza di Pasquino**

**PLAZA** | This tiny piazza takes its name from the figure in the corner, the remnant of an old Roman statue depicting Menelaus. The statue underwent a name change in the 16th century when Pasquino, a cobbler or barber (and part-time satirist), started writing comments around the base. The habit caught on; soon everyone was doing it. The most loquacious of Rome's "talking statues," its lack of arms or face is more than made up for with commentary of any topic of the day. *EPiazza di Pasquino, Piazza Navona.*

### **Piazza Navona**

**PLAZA** | Always camera-ready, the beautiful Baroque plaza known as Piazza Navona has Bernini sculptures, three gorgeous fountains, a magnificently Baroque church (Sant'Agnese in Agone), and under it all the remains of a Roman athletics track. Pieces of the arena are still visible near the adjacent Piazza Sant'Apollinare, and the ancient spirit of entertainment lives on in the buskers and mimes who populate the piazza today.

The piazza took on its current look during the 17th century, after Pope Innocent X of the Pamphilj family decided to make over his family palace (now the Brazilian embassy) and the rest of the piazza. Center stage is the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi, created for Innocent by Bernini in 1651. Bernini's powerful figures of the four rivers represent the longest rivers of the four known continents at the time: the Nile (his head covered because the source was unknown); the Ganges; the Danube; and the Plata (the length of the Amazon was then unknown). Popular legend has it that the figure of the Plata—the figure closest to Sant'Agnese in Agone—raises his hand before his eyes because he can't bear to look upon the church's "inferior" facade designed by Francesco Borromini, Bernini's rival.

If you want a caffè with one of the most beautiful, if pricey, views in Rome, grab a seat at Piazza Navona. Just be aware that all of the restaurants here are heavily geared toward tourists, so while it's a beautiful place for a coffee, you can find cheaper, more authentic, and far better meals elsewhere. *EPiazza Navona*.

### ★ **San Luigi dei Francesi**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | A pilgrimage spot for art lovers, San Luigi's Contarelli Chapel (the fifth and last chapel on the left, toward the main altar) is adorned with three stunningly dramatic works by Caravaggio (1571–1610), the Baroque master of the heightened approach to light and dark. They were commissioned for the tomb of Mattheiu Cointerel in one of Rome's French churches (San Luigi is St. Louis, patron saint of France). The inevitable coin machine will light up his *Calling of Saint Matthew*, *Saint Matthew and the Angel*, and *Martyrdom of Saint Matthew* (seen from left to right), and Caravaggio's mastery of light takes it from there. When painted, they caused considerable consternation to the clergy of San Luigi, who thought the artist's dramatically realistic approach was scandalously disrespectful. A first version of the altarpiece was rejected; the priests were not particularly happy with the other two, either. Time has fully vindicated Caravaggio's patron, Cardinal Francesco del Monte, who secured the commission for these works and stoutly defended them. *EPiazza di San Luigi dei Francesi, Piazza Navona P06/688271 [www.saintlouis-rome.net](http://www.saintlouis-rome.net) mBus Nos. 40 and 87.*

### **Sant'Agnese in Agone**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | The quintessence of Baroque architecture, this church has a facade that is a wonderfully rich mélange of bell towers, concave spaces, and dovetailed stone and marble. It's the creation of Francesco Borromini (1599–1667), a contemporary and rival of Bernini. Next to his new Pamphilj family palace, Pope Innocent X had the adjacent chapel expanded into this full-fledged church. The work was first assigned to the architect Rainaldi. However, Donna Olimpia, the pope's famously domineering sister-in-law, became increasingly impatient with how the work was going and brought in Borromini, whose wonderful concave entrance has the magical effect of making the dome appear much larger than it actually is. The name of this church comes from the Greek *agones*, the source of the word *navona* and a

reference to the agonistic competitions held here in Roman times. The saint associated with the church is Agnes, who was martyred here in the piazza's forerunner, the Stadium of Domitian. As she was stripped nude before the crowd, her hair miraculously grew to maintain her modesty before she was killed. The interior is a marvel of modular Baroque space and is ornamented by giant marble reliefs sculpted by Raggi and Ferrata. E *Via di Santa Maria dell'Anima*, 30/A, Piazza Navona P06/68192134 [www.santagneseinagone.org](http://www.santagneseinagone.org) CClosed Mon. mBus Nos. 87, 40, and 64.

### **Sant'Agostino**

RELIGIOUS SITE | Caravaggio's celebrated *Madonna of the Pilgrims*—which scandalized all of Rome for depicting a kneeling pilgrim all too realistically for the era's tastes, with dirt on the soles of his feet, and the Madonna standing in a less-than-majestic pose in a dilapidated doorway—is in the first chapel on the left. Pause at the third column on the left of the nave to admire Raphael's blue-robed *Isaiah*, said to be inspired by Michelangelo's prophets on the Sistine ceiling (Raphael, with the help of Bramante, had taken the odd peek at the master's original against strict orders of secrecy). Directly below is Sansovino's Leonardo-influenced sculpture, *St. Anne and the Madonna with Child*. As you leave, in a niche just inside the door, is the sculpted *Madonna and Child*, known to the Romans as the "Madonna del Parto" (of Childbirth) and piled high with ex-voto offerings giving thanks for the safe deliveries of children. The artist is Jacopo Tatti, also sometimes confusingly known as Sansovino after his master. E *Piazza Sant'Agostino, Piazza Navona* P06/68801962.

### **Santa Maria della Pace**

RELIGIOUS SITE | In 1656, Pietro da Cortona (1596–1669) was commissioned by Pope Alexander VII to enlarge the tiny Piazza della Pace in front of the 15th-century church of Santa Maria, to accommodate the carriages of its wealthy parishioners. His architectural solution was to design a new church facade complete with semicircular portico, demolish a few buildings here and there to create a more spacious approach to the church, add arches to give architectural unity to the piazza, and then complete it with a series of bijoux-size palaces. The result was one of Rome's most delightful little architectural set pieces. Within are several great Renaissance treasures. Raphael's fresco

above the first altar on your right depicts the *Four Sibyls*—almost exact replicas of Michelangelo’s, if more relaxed. The fine decorations of the Cesi Chapel, second on the right, were designed in the mid-16th century by Sangallo. Opposite is Peruzzi’s wonderful fresco of the *Madonna and Child*. Meanwhile, the octagon below the dome is something of an art gallery in itself, with works by Cavalliere Arpino, Orazio Gentileschi, and others as Cozzo’s *Eternity* fills the lantern above. Behind the church is its cloister, designed by Bramante (architect of St. Peter’s) as the very first expression of High Renaissance style in Rome. The cloister has an exhibition space and a lovely coffee bar on the upper level. E *Via Arco della Pace 5, Piazza Navona* P06/6861156 C *Closed Thurs., Fri., Sun., and Tues.* mBus Nos. 87, 40, and 64.

### **Santa Maria in Vallicella/Chiesa Nuova**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | This church, sometimes known as Chiesa Nuova (New Church), was built toward the end of the 16th century at the urging of Philip Neri and, like Il Gesù, is a product of the fervor of the Counter-Reformation. It has a sturdy Baroque interior, all white and gold, with ceiling frescoes by Pietro da Cortona depicting a miracle reputed to have occurred during the church’s construction: the Virgin and strong-armed angels hold up the broken roof to prevent it from crashing down upon the congregation below. The Church is most famous for its three magnificent altarpieces by Rubens. E *Piazza della Chiesa Nuova, Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, Piazza Navona* P06/6875289 [www.vallicella.org](http://www.vallicella.org).

### ★ **Santa Maria sopra Minerva**

**BUILDING** | The name of the church reveals that it was built *sopra* (over) the ruins of a temple of Minerva, the ancient goddess of wisdom. Erected in 1280 by Dominicans along severe Italian Gothic lines, it has undergone a number of more or less happy restorations to the interior. Certainly, as the city’s major Gothic church, it provides a refreshing contrast to Baroque flamboyance. Have a €1 coin handy to illuminate the **Cappella Carafa** in the right transept, where Filippino Lippi’s (1457–1504) glowing frescoes are well worth the small investment, opening up the deepest azure expanse of sky where musical angels hover around the Virgin. Under the main altar is the tomb of St. Catherine of Siena, one of Italy’s patron saints. Left of the altar

you'll find Michelangelo's *Risen Christ* and the tomb of the gentle artist Fra Angelico. Bernini's unusual and little-known monument to the Blessed Maria Raggi is on the fifth pier of the left-hand aisle. In front of the church, the little obelisk-bearing elephant carved by Bernini is perhaps the city's most charming sculpture. An inscription on the base of **Bernini's Elephant Obelisk** references the church's ancient patroness, reading something to the effect that it takes a strong mind to sustain solid wisdom. EPiazza della Minerva, Piazza Navona P06/6793926 [www.santamariasopraminerva.it](http://www.santamariasopraminerva.it).

### Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | The main facade of this eccentric Baroque church, probably Borromini's best, is on the stately courtyard of an austere building that once housed Rome's university. Sant'Ivo has what must surely be one of the most delightful "domes" in all of Rome—a dizzying spiral said to have been inspired by a bee's stinger. The apian symbol is a reminder that Borromini built the church on commission from the Barberini pope Urban VIII (a swarm of bees figure on the Barberini family crest), although it was completed by Alexander VII. The interior, open only for three hours on Sunday morning, is worth a look, especially if you share Borromini's taste for complex mathematical architectural idiosyncrasies. "I didn't take up architecture solely to be a copyist," he once said. Sant'Ivo is certainly the proof. ECorso del Rinascimento 40, Piazza Navona P06/6864987 [www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it) CClosed Aug., and Mon.–Sat. mBus Nos. 130, 116, 186, 492, 30, 70, 81, and 87.

## r Restaurants

The narrow, cobblestone *vicoli* (alleys) around Piazza Navona are home to a vast range of dining options. You'll find everything from casual pizzerie, where hurried waiters scribble your bill on a paper tablecloth, to several of the city's most revered gourmet temples, featuring star chefs and inventive cuisine, with decidedly higher bills placed on the finest high-thread-count damask tablecloths. The area around the Pantheon is full of classic, old-school trattorias and midrange to upscale restaurants, including many in gorgeous piazze that could double as opera sets. You'll feel the grandeur of Rome here, sometimes with prices to match.

## Armando al Pantheon

\$\$ | ROMAN | In the shadow of the Pantheon, this small family-run trattoria, open since 1961, delights tourists and locals alike. There's an air of authenticity to the Roman staples here, and the quality of the ingredients and the cooking mean booking ahead is a must. **Known for:** traditional Roman cooking beautifully executed; spaghetti cacio e pepe; good wine list. *DAverage main: €15 E*Salita dei Crescenzi 31, Piazza Navona P06/68803034 [www.armandoalpantheon.it](http://www.armandoalpantheon.it) *CClosed Sun., and Dec.–Jan. 6. No dinner Sat.*

## Bar del Fico

\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | Everyone in Rome knows Bar del Fico, located right behind Piazza Navona, so if you're looking to hang out with the locals, this is the place to come for a drink or something to eat at any time of day or night. Just about every evening of the year, it's packed with people sipping cocktails in the square. **Known for:** outside tables in a pretty square; Italian-style brunch; buzzy atmosphere. *DAverage main: €12 E*Piazza de Fico 26, Piazza Navona P06/68891373 [www.bardelfico.com](http://www.bardelfico.com).

## Birreria Peroni

\$ | NORTHERN ITALIAN | With its long wooden tables, hard-back booths, and free-flowing beer, this casual restaurant in a 16th-century palazzo might seem more like a Munich beer hall than a popular Roman hangout (around since 1906). But remember that in the far northern reaches of Italy, locals speak as much German as they do Italian, and that's where Birreria Peroni draws its inspiration. **Known for:** hearty German fare; convivial atmosphere; great location close to the Trevi Fountain. *DAverage main: €10 E*Via di San Marcello 19, Piazza Navona P06/6795310 [www.anticabirreriaperoni.it](http://www.anticabirreriaperoni.it) *CClosed Sun.*

## Caffè Sant'Eustachio

\$ | CAFÉ | Frequented by tourists and government officials from the nearby Senate alike, this is considered by many to make Rome's best coffee. Take it at the counter Roman-style: servers are hidden behind a huge espresso machine, where they vigorously mix the sugar and coffee to protect their "secret method" for the perfectly prepared cup (if you want your caffè without sugar here, ask for it *amaro*). **Known for:** gran caffè (large sugared



espresso); old-school Roman coffee bar vibe; '50s interior. *DAverage main: €2* EPiazza Sant'Eustachio 82, Piazza Navona P06/68802048 [www.santeustachioilcaffe.it](http://www.santeustachioilcaffe.it).

### Cremeria Monteforte

\$ | CAFÉ | Immediately beside the Pantheon is this gelateria, which is well known for its flavors, like mango, pistachio, and chocolate chip. The chocolate *sorbetto*—an icier version of gelato, made without the dairy—is also excellent, and even better with a dollop of whipped cream on top. **Known for:** artisanal gelato; location right next to the Pantheon; great value. *DAverage main: €3* EVia della Rotonda 22, Piazza Navona P06/6867720 CClosed Mon. and mid-Dec.–mid-Jan.

### ★ Cul de Sac

\$\$ | WINE BAR | This popular wine bar near Piazza Navona is among the city's oldest and offers a book-length selection of wines from Italy, France, the Americas, and elsewhere. Offering great value and pleasant service a stone's throw from Piazza Navona, since it's open until 4 pm, it makes a great spot for a late lunch or an early dinner when most restaurants aren't open yet. **Known for:** great wine list (and wine bottle-lined interior); eclectic Italian and Mediterranean fare; relaxed atmosphere and outside tables. *DAverage main: €14* EPiazza Pasquino 73, Piazza Navona P06/68801094 [www.enotecaculdesacroma.it](http://www.enotecaculdesacroma.it).

### Da Francesco

\$ | ROMAN | FAMILY | For good, hearty, Roman cuisine in an area filled with mediocre touristy restaurants, head to this authentic trattoria that's been on the scene since the late 1950s. Food-wise, stick to the classics: start off with a mixed salumi plate, then hit the primi—the gricia and the amatriciana are usually the standouts. **Known for:** informal atmosphere; outside tables in summer; traditional Roman cooking. *DAverage main: €13* EPiazza del Fico 29, Piazza Navona P06/6864009 [www.dafrancesco.it](http://www.dafrancesco.it).

### ★ Enoteca Corsi

\$ | ITALIAN | Very convenient for a good-value lunch in the centro storico, this trattoria is undeniably old-school—renovations were done a few years back,

but you wouldn't know it—and that's all part of the charm. It's packed at lunch with a mix of civil servants from the nearby government offices, construction workers, and in-the-know tourists, when a few specials—classic pastas, a delicious octopus salad, and some secondi like roast veal with peas—are offered. **Known for:** casual atmosphere; Roman specialities; brusque but friendly service. *DAverage main: €12 E*[Via del Gesù 88, Piazza Navona P06/6790821](#) [www.enotecacorsi.com](#) *CClosed Sun., and 3 wks in Aug. No dinner Mon.–Wed. and Sat.*

### ★ **Etabli**

\$ | **MEDITERRANEAN** | On a narrow *vicolo* (alley) off lovely cobblestone Piazza del Fico, this multifunctional restaurant and lounge space is decorated according to what could be called a modern Italian farmhouse-chic aesthetic, with vaulted wood-beam ceilings, wrought-iron touches, plush leather sofas, and chandeliers. The food is Mediterranean, with touches of Asia in the raw-fish appetizers. **Known for:** popular after-dinner spot for sipping; casually romantic boho-chic atmosphere; great location by Piazza Navona. *DAverage main: €12 E*[Vicolo delle Vacche 9/a, Piazza Navona P06/97616694](#) [www.etabli.it](#).

### **Fiocco di Neve**

\$ | **CAFÉ** | **FAMILY** | The gelato is certainly excellent—the chocolate chip and After Eight (mint chocolate chip) flavors are delicious—but this small spot is also known for its *granita di caffè* (coffee ice slush). Look for intriguing seasonal gelato flavors like pear-cinnamon. **Known for:** artisanal gelato; interesting seasonal flavors; great location near the Pantheon. *DAverage main: €4 E*[Via del Pantheon 51, Piazza Navona P06/6786025](#).

### **Gelateria del Teatro**

\$ | **ITALIAN** | **FAMILY** | Not far from Piazza Navona, this is one of the top gelaterie in the city. They make their creamy, artisan-style gelato from scratch every day, using top-quality products like pistachios from Bronte (Sicily) and hazelnuts from Piedmont. **Known for:** intriguing and seasonal flavors like lemon cheesecake and beer; pretty location on *via dei Coronari*; ability to sit and eat your gelato at no extra cost. *DAverage main: €5 E*[Via dei Coronari 65/6, Piazza Navona P06/45474880](#) *cNo credit cards.*

### ★ Il Convivio

\$\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | In a tiny, nondescript alley north of Piazza Navona, the three Troiani brothers—Angelo in the kitchen, and brothers Giuseppe and Massimo presiding over the dining room and wine cellar—have quietly been redefining the experience of Italian *alta cucina* (haute cuisine) since 1990 at this well-regarded establishment. Service is attentive without being overbearing, and the wine list is exceptional. **Known for:** fine dining in elegant surroundings; inventive modern Italian cooking with exotic touches; amazing wine cellar and a great sommelier. *DAverage main: €40 E*[Vicolo dei Soldati 31, Piazza Navona P06/6869432](#) *w*[www.ilconviviotroiani.it](#) *CClosed Sun., and 1 wk in Aug. No lunch.*

### ★ Il Pagliaccio

\$\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | Some of the most innovative interpretations of Roman fine dining can be found in this starkly chic restaurant on a backstreet between upscale Via Giulia and the popular Campo de' Fiori. Chef Anthony Genovese was born in France to Calabrese parents, and spent time cooking in Japan and Thailand, so it's no surprise that the food he turns out makes use of nontraditional spices, ingredients, and preparations—all of which have gained him a loyal following and multiple accolades. **Known for:** fine dining, including elaborate tasting menus; elegant surroundings; discreet location close to Piazza Navona. *DAverage main: €48 E*[129 Via dei Banchi Vecchi, Piazza Navona P06/68809595](#) *w*[www.ristoranteilpagliaccio.com](#) *CClosed Sun., Mon., and Aug. No lunch Tues.*

### La Campana

\$\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | Thought to be the oldest restaurant in Rome (a document dates it back to 1518), La Campana remains a favorite of both locals and visitors. It's well liked for its honest Roman cuisine and its old-school, slightly upmarket feel—think white tablecloths and unflappable waiters in black tie who have been there since the beginning of time. **Known for:** old-school elegance; traditional Roman cooking; fantastic oxtail stew. *DAverage main: €18 E*[Vicolo della Campana 18, Piazza Navona P06/6875273](#) *w*[www.ristorantelacampana.com](#) *cNo credit cards CClosed Mon. mSpagna.*

## La Ciambella

\$\$ | ITALIAN | The sprawling space is styled after American restaurants, with a lively bar in front, but the structure itself is all Roman, with brick archways, high ceilings, and a skylight in one of the dining rooms that allows guests to gaze at the fantastic Roman sky. The emphasis here is on high-quality ingredients and classic Italian culinary traditions. **Known for:** elegant setting; sophisticated classic Italian cuisine; great location near the Pantheon. *DAverage main: €17* E *Via dell'Arco della Ciambella 20, Piazza Navona P06/6832930* [www.la-ciambella.it/en/la-ciambella](http://www.la-ciambella.it/en/la-ciambella) CClosed Sun. No lunch in Aug.

## La Fraschetta di Castel Sant'Angelo

\$ | ROMAN | A *fraschetta* is the name given to one of the casual, boisterous countryside spots just outside of Rome, where the menu focuses on porchetta, the Italian version of roast pork. This is a city-styled version of the same, and the atmosphere is typical, with waiters yelling across the room and frequently breaking into song. **Known for:** jovial informal atmosphere; great value; excellent porchetta, of course. *DAverage main: €12* E *Via del Banco di Santo Spirito 20, Piazza Navona P06/68307661* [www.fraschettadicastelsantangelo.com](http://www.fraschettadicastelsantangelo.com) CClosed Sun. No lunch in Aug.

## La Montecarlo

\$ | PIZZA | FAMILY | The crusts on the pizza at this casual, perennially popular spot just off the Piazza Navona are super-thin and charred around the edges a little—the sign of a good wood-burning oven. This is one of a few pizzerie open for both lunch and dinner, and it's busy day and night. **Known for:** thin-crust pizza; outside tables; great value. *DAverage main: €12* E *Vicolo Savelli 13, Piazza Navona P06/6861877* [www.lamontecarlo.it](http://www.lamontecarlo.it) CClosed Mon., and 3 wks in Aug.

## La Rosetta

\$\$\$\$ | SEAFOOD | Chef-owner Massimo Riccioli may have taken the nets and fishing gear off the walls of the trattoria he inherited from his parents, but this is still widely known as *the* place to go in Rome for first-rate seafood. The experience here includes friendly staff and undeniably high-quality fish, but be prepared for simple preparations and high prices. **Known for:** elegant

restaurant close to the Pantheon; first-rate fish and seafood; outside seating. DAverage main: €50 EVia della Rosetta 9, Piazza Navona P06/6861002 [www.larosetta.com](http://www.larosetta.com) CClosed 2 wks in Aug. kJacket required.

### ★ Osteria dell'Ingegno

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | This casual, trendy place is a great spot to enjoy a glass of wine or a gourmet meal in an ancient piazza in the city center, but the modern interior—vibrant with colorful paintings by local artists—brings you back to the present day. The simple but innovative menu includes dishes like *panzanella* (Tuscan bread salad), beef *tagliata* (sliced grilled steak) with a red-wine reduction, and a perfectly cooked duck breast with seasonal fruit sauce. **Known for:** beautiful location on a pedestrian square; a great spot both for aperitifs and/or a meal; outdoor seating with views of ancient ruins. DAverage main: €19 EPiazza di Pietra 45, Piazza Navona P06/6780662 [www.osteriadellingegno.com](http://www.osteriadellingegno.com) CClosed 1 wk in Aug.

## h Hotels

Thanks to its Baroque palazzi, Bernini fountains, and outdoor caffè, Piazza Navona is one of Rome's most popular squares. The nearby Pantheon area, equally as beautiful but not as lively, offers great restaurants and shops. Hotels in this area offer postcard views of Rome and personalized service.

### Abruzzi

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This friendly, comfortable, family-run hotel has magnificent views of the Pantheon at relatively gentle rates, given the location. **Pros:** views of the Pantheon; sizable bathrooms; the piazza is a hot spot. **Cons:** area can be somewhat noisy; about a 10-minute walk from the Spagna Metro stop; elevator doesn't go to ground floor. DRooms from: €245 EPiazza della Rotonda 69, Piazza Navona P06/97841351 [www.hotelabruzzo.it](http://www.hotelabruzzo.it) a26 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

### Albergo del Sole al Pantheon

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | The granddaddy of Roman hotels and one of the oldest in the world—the doors first opened in 1467—this charming hotel is adjacent to the Pantheon and right in the middle of the lovely Piazza della Rotonda. **Pros:**

complimentary newspaper delivered to your room daily; rich breakfast buffet; fabulous location. **Cons:** rooms are a bit small; despite the double-glazed windows, street noise can be an issue; some rooms in need of updating. *DRooms from: €220 EPiazza della Rotonda 63, Piazza Navona P06/6780441 [www.hotelsolealpantheon.com](http://www.hotelsolealpantheon.com) a32 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini.*

### ★ **Albergo Santa Chiara**

\$\$\$ | **HOTEL** | If you're looking for a good location and top-notch service at great rates—not to mention comfortable beds and a quiet stay—look no further than this historic hotel, run by the same family for some 200 years. **Pros:** great location near the Pantheon; free Wi-Fi; lovely terrace/sitting area in front, overlooking the piazza. **Cons:** some rooms are on the small side and need updating; Wi-Fi can be slow; street-side rooms can be noisy. *DRooms from: €270 EVia Santa Chiara 21, Piazza Navona P06/6872979 [www.albergosantachiara.com](http://www.albergosantachiara.com) a102 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.*

### **G-Rough Hotel**

\$\$\$\$ | **HOTEL** | This conciously cool hotel is strategically located around the corner from the lively Piazza Navona, inside a 17th-century palazzo. **Pros:** organic continental breakfast; free Wi-Fi; free soft minibar that includes soda, juice, and water. **Cons:** rooms facing Piazza Pasquino can be noisy; no real reception desk area; hip decor might be too overdone for some. *DRooms from: €350 EPiazza Pasquino 69, Piazza Navona P06/68801085 [www.g-rough.com](http://www.g-rough.com) a10 rooms XFree breakfast.*

### **Grand Hotel de la Minerve**

\$\$\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Once one of Rome's landmark fixtures, this 17th-century palazzo used to be a favorite address for everyone from Stendhal to Sartre, along with a bevy of the crowned (and the uncrowned—Carlotta, the deposed empress of Mexico, resided here for a while). **Pros:** right by the Pantheon yet set on quiet Piazza della Minerva; some rooms have terraces; rooftop restaurant with amazing views. **Cons:** some rooms need updating and lack common five-star-hotel amenities; Internet can be spotty; plumbing problems in some of the rooms. *DRooms from: €450 EPiazza della Minerva 69, Piazza Navona P06/695201 [www.grandhoteldelaminerve.com](http://www.grandhoteldelaminerve.com) a135 rooms XNo meals mSpagna.*



## Hotel Genio

\$\$ | HOTEL | Just off one of Rome's most beautiful piazzas—Piazza Navona—this pleasant hotel has a lovely rooftop terrace perfect for enjoying a cappuccino or a glass of wine while taking in the view. **Pros:** breakfast buffet is abundant; free Wi-Fi; spacious, elegant bathrooms. **Cons:** rooms facing the street can be noisy; spotty Internet; beds can be too firm for some. *DRooms from: €160 E*[Via Giuseppe Zanardelli 28, Piazza Navona P06/6833781](#) [www.hotelgenioroma.it](#) a60 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

## Hotel Pantheon

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | On a quiet street around the corner from the Pantheon, this little hotel is warm and inviting, with trompe-l'oeil frescoes, a Liberty-style staircase, and terra-cotta floors. **Pros:** proximity to the Pantheon; big, clean bathrooms; comfortable beds. **Cons:** some rooms are on the small side; credit-card machine isn't always reliable; decor could use some restyling. *DRooms from: €280 E*[Via dei Pastini 131, Piazza Navona P06/6787746](#) [www.hotelpantheon.com](#) a13 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

## 9 Hotel Cesàri

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | On a pedestrian-only street near the Pantheon, this lovely little hotel has an air of warmth and serenity, and a rooftop bar with great views. **Pros:** prime location; free Wi-Fi throughout the hotel; beautiful rooftop bar. **Cons:** some rooms need a little updating; the area can be a bit noisy; rooftop bar not open in winter. *DRooms from: €270 E*[Via di Pietra 89/a, Piazza Navona P06/6749701](#) [www.9-hotel-cesari-rome.it](#) a48 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini.

## Relais Palazzo Taverna

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This little hidden gem on a side street behind the lovely Via dei Coronari is a good compromise for those looking for boutique-style accommodations on a budget. **Pros:** centrally located; spacious boutique-style accommodations at moderate prices; free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** staff on duty until 10 pm (can be contacted after-hours in an emergency); some rooms are starting to show wear and tear; walls are thin, so rooms can be noisy. *DRooms from: €210 E*[Via dei Gabrielli 92, Piazza Navona P06/20398064](#) [www.relaispalazzotaverna.com](#) a11 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

## n Nightlife

Piazza Navona is where you can find just about anything, from sophisticated caffè life and flirty cocktail bars to dance clubs and chess games. Expect to be easily understood, as there is a high concentration of English-speaking establishments.

### BARS

#### ★ Bar del Fico

CAFES—NIGHTLIFE | Bar del Fico looks a lot different from the days of yore when raucous outdoor chess matches accompanied cocktails at the once-bare-bones local hangout. Though the chess tables are still sitting in the shade of the historic fig tree, Bar del Fico is now a happening bar, restaurant, evening cocktail spot, and late-night hangout. E*Piazza del Fico 26, Piazza Navona P06/68891373* [www.bardelfico.com/en/bar](http://www.bardelfico.com/en/bar).

#### Enoteca al Parlamento Achilli

FOOD/CANDY | The proximity of this traditional enoteca to Montecitorio, the Italian Parliament building, makes it a favorite with journalists and politicians, who often stop in for a glass of wine after work. But it's the tantalizing smell of truffles from the snack counter, where a sommelier waits to organize your tasting, that will probably lure you into Enoteca al Parlamento Achilli. There's also a lovely little restaurant where you can book a table and munch on a tempting array of cheese, salumi, and other cured meats. Don't forget to check out their wineshop to take home a bottle of your favorite wine. E*Via dei Prefetti 15, Piazza Navona P06/6873446* [www.enotecaalparlamento.it](http://www.enotecaalparlamento.it).

#### ★ Etabli

WINE BARS—NIGHTLIFE | If you set up a wine bar in your living room, it'd feel a lot like Etabli. This is the perfect spot for meeting friends before a night out on the town. E*Vicolo delle Vacche 9, Piazza Navona P06/97616694* [www.etabli.it](http://www.etabli.it).

#### ★ Roof Garden Bar at Grand Hotel della Minerve

BARS/PUBS | During warm months, this lofty perch offers perhaps the most inspiring view in Rome—directly over the Pantheon's dome. The Roof

Garden has an equally impressive cocktail menu. Take advantage of summer sunsets and park yourself in a front-row seat as the dome glows. Even if you're just going for a drink, it's a good idea to book a table, especially on weekends. E*Grand Hotel della Minerve, Piazza della Minerve 69, Piazza Navona* P06/695201 [www.grandhoteldelaminerve.com](http://www.grandhoteldelaminerve.com).

## Shari Vari

CAFES—NIGHTLIFE | Shari Vari has reinvented itself as a sumptuous supper club, lounge, and disco. Its bistro and champagnerie are stocked with delicious delicacies and sought-after vintages. Its nightclub covers every genre of music from electronic and underground, to hip-hop, lounge, and international. E*Via di Torre Argentina 78, Piazza Navona* P06/68806936 [www.sharivari.it](http://www.sharivari.it).

## Terrace Bar of the Hotel Raphaël

BARS/PUBS | Want to sneak a peek at Rome's rooftops? Head to the small terrace bar at the Hotel Raphaël, noted for its bird's-eye view of the campaniles and palazzi of Piazza Navona. This is one of Rome's most romantic spots, so booking a table is advised. E*Largo Febo 2, Piazza Navona* P06/682831 [www.raphaelhotel.com](http://www.raphaelhotel.com).

## Vinoteca Novecento

WINE BARS—NIGHTLIFE | A lovely, tiny enoteca with a very old-fashioned vibe, Vinoteca Novecento has a seemingly unlimited selection of wines, proseccos, vini santi, and grappe, along with salami-and-cheese tasting menus. Inside is standing-room only; in good weather, sit outside on one of the oak barriques. E*Piazza delle Coppelle 47, Piazza Navona* P06/6833078.

## DANCE CLUBS

### La Cabala

DANCE CLUBS | Atop the medieval Hostaria dell'Orso, La Cabala is an after-dinner club and late-night dance party whose VIP room hosts wannabe models. Depending on the evening, the vibe can be chic, hipster, or clubby. Rome's version of a supper club, La Cabala is part of the Hostaria dell'Orso trio of restaurant, disco, and piano bar. The dress code is "stylish." E*Hostaria dell'Orso, Via dei Soldati 23, Piazza Navona* P06/68301192 [www.hdo.it](http://www.hdo.it).

## p Performing Arts

### FILM

#### Nuovo Olimpia

FILM | Just off Rome's Via del Corso in the center of the city, Nuovo Olimpia is *the* cinema for Rome's international community, showing new-release films in original language with Italian subtitles. E*Via in Lucina 16/b, Piazza Navona P06/6861068* w*nuovoolimpia.ccroma.circuitocinema.com*.

### THEATER

#### English Theatre of Rome

THEATER | The oldest English-language theater group in town, English Theatre of Rome has a repertoire of original and celebrated plays. Performances are usually held at Teatro Arciliuto. E*Piazza Monteverchio 5, Piazza Navona P06/4441375* w*www.rometheatre.com*.

## b Shopping

The area around Piazza Navona is filled with vintage boutiques and tiny artisan shops; unique gifts such as delicate Florentine stationery or hand-blown Murano glass can be found here. Near the Pantheon, you'll also find some classic Italian toys like wooden Pinocchios and cuckoo clocks.

### ANTIQUES

#### Galleria Biagiarelli

ANTIQUES/COLLECTIBLES | Rome's leading antiques dealer of 18th- and 19th-century Russian icons and religious artifacts resides in a superb setting in the former chapel of the Pre-Renaissance Palazzo Capranica. The shop also features an exquisite array of English watercolors, Eastern European antique china figurines, and a vast collection of Soviet-era artwork. E*Piazza Capranica 97, Piazza Navona P06/69940728* w*www.biagiarelli.it* CClosed Sun. and Mon.

#### Nardecchia

ANTIQUES/COLLECTIBLES | Since the 1950s, the Nardecchia family has been in

the business of selling beautiful 19th-century prints, old photographs, and watercolors that depict Rome in centuries past. Can't afford an 18th-century etching? They have beautiful postcards, too. E*Via del Monserrato 106, Piazza Navona* P06/6869318.

## BEAUTY

### Antica Erboristeria Romana

PERFUME/COSMETICS | Complete with hand-labeled wooden drawers holding more than 200 varieties of herbs, flowers, and tinctures, Antica Erboristeria Romana has maintained its old-world apothecary feel (it's the oldest shop of its kind in Rome, dating back to 1752). The shop stocks an impressive array of teas and herbal infusions, more than 700 essential oils, bud derivatives, and powdered extracts. E*Via Torre Argentina 15, Piazza Navona* P06/6879493 [www.anticaerboristeriaromana.it](http://www.anticaerboristeriaromana.it).

## CERAMICS AND DECORATIVE ARTS

### ★ IN.OR. dal 1952

CERAMICS/GLASSWARE | For more than 50 years, IN.OR. dal 1952 has served as a trusty friend for Romans in desperate need of an exclusive wedding gift or those oh-so-perfect china place settings for a fancy Sunday dinner. Entrance is via a secluded 15th-century courtyard and up a flight of stairs. The store specializes in work handcrafted by the silversmiths of Pampaloni in Florence and Bellotto of Padua. E*Via della Stelletta 23, Piazza Navona* P06/6878579 [www.inor.it](http://www.inor.it).

### Murano Più

CERAMICS/GLASSWARE | If you can't make it to Venice during your visit to the "Bel Paese," your next best option is to visit Murano Più for famous handblown Venetian glass pieces, including Murano jewelry (necklaces and pendants), tableware, vases, and extravagant chandeliers. Each individual piece is handcrafted from the furnaces of master glassblowers using ancient techniques kept alive by the island's artisans since 1291. E*Corso Rinascimento 53/55, Piazza Navona* P06/68301170 [www.murano-roma.com/en](http://www.murano-roma.com/en).

## CLOTHING

### Arsenale

CLOTHING | Roman designer Patrizia Pieroni's sleek, unique, high-end fashion items stand out no matter the season. Her store, Arsenale, features everything from cleverly cut, stylish overcoats and seductive bustiers to sexy, flowing dresses perfect for the summer. E*Via del Pellegrino 172, Piazza Navona* P06/68802424 [www.patriziapieroni.it](http://www.patriziapieroni.it).

### Davide Cenci

CLOTHING | Thanks to immaculate tailoring and custom-designed clothing, Davide Cenci is an Italian fashion powerhouse. The store features high-quality men's and women's clothing for every occasion. Cenci's clothiers will tailor most anything to fit your body like a glove and have it delivered to your hotel within three days. The label is famous for its opulent cashmere, sailing sportswear, and trench coats, and you will appreciate their customer service and attention to detail. E*Via Campo Marzio 1-7, Piazza Navona* P06/6990681 [www.davidecenci.com](http://www.davidecenci.com).

### Le Tartarughe

CLOTHING | A familiar face on the catwalk of Rome's fashion shows, designer Susanna Liso, a Rome native, adds suggestive elements of playful experimentation to her haute couture and ready-to-wear lines, which are much loved by Rome's aristocracy and intelligentsia. With intense, enveloping designs, she mixes raw silks or cashmere and fine merino wool together to form captivating garments that mix seduction and linear form. E*Via Piè di Marmo 17, Piazza Navona* P06/6792240 [www.letartarughe.eu](http://www.letartarughe.eu).

### Morgana

CLOTHING | When strolling down Via del Governo Vecchio, a street popular for funky and edgy clothing boutiques, you can't help but stop and stare inside this shop's windows. This family-run business displays some of their best hippie-chick and bridal-chic gowns *in primo piano*. Designer Luciana Iannace creates these highly original and highly-sought-after clothes and accessories that many of Rome's ladies are desperate to get their hands on. In addition to her own designs, she also sources inventive items from Paris and Florence. E*Via del Governo Vecchio 27, Piazza Navona* P06/6879995.



## Replay

**CLOTHING** | A typical example of young Italians' passion for American trends, Replay has jeans and T-shirts with American sports teams emblazoned on them—with that little extra Italian kiss that transforms sloppy hip into fashionable casual-chic. Styles range from punk to hip-hop, as well as more traditionally cut jeans. *E**Via della Rotonda 24, Piazza Navona P06/68301212* [www.replay.it](http://www.replay.it).

## SBU

**CLOTHING** | SBU stands for Strategic Business Unit, a hip menswear fashion label created by the Perfetti brothers in 1993. Just as their last name suggests, the jeans, casual clothing, shoes, and other sportswear sold here are just plain *perfetti*. In a 19th-century former draper's workshop, it's the place where Rome's VIPs buy their soft and supple vintage low-cut Japanese denims. The label also does well with its clothes among A-listers in Paris, London, and Los Angeles. *E**Via di San Pantaleo 68–69, Piazza Navona P06/68802547* [www.sbu.it](http://www.sbu.it).

## Vestiti Usati Cinzia

**CLOTHING** | Vintage clothes hunters, costume designers, and stylists alike love browsing through the racks at Vestiti Usati Cinzia. The shop is fun and very inviting and stocked with wall-to-wall funky 1960s and '70s apparel and loads of goofy sunglasses. There's definitely no shortage of flower power bell bottoms and hippie shirts, embroidered tops, trippy and psychedelic boots, and other awesome accessories that will take you back to the days of peace and love. *E**Via del Governo Vecchio 45, Piazza Navona P06/6832945*.

## FOOD AND WINE

### Moriondo e Gariglio

**FOOD/CANDY** | Not exactly Willy Wonka (but in the same vein), Moriondo e Gariglio is a chocolate lover's paradise, churning out some of the finest chocolate delicacies in town. The shop dates back to 1850 and adheres strictly to family recipes passed on from generation to generation. Whether you favor marrons glacés or dark-chocolate truffles, you'll delight in choosing from more than 80 delicacies. *E**Via Piè di Marmo 21, Piazza Navona P06/6990856* [www.moriondoegariglio.com](http://www.moriondoegariglio.com).

## HOME DECOR

### Society

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS/FURNITURE | Have decorator envy? Everything you need for do-it-yourself Italian home couture can be found at Society, the flagship store for Limonta, one of the most prestigious and historic textile brands made in Italy. Centering on the rarest and most sought-after fabrics, their designs give the appearance they come from a different era (the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries). You'll find everything from plush striped duvet covers and fancy table linens to comfy robes and other clothing perfect for lounging around the house. *EPiazza di Pasquino 4, Piazza Navona P06/6832480*  
[www.societylimonta.com](http://www.societylimonta.com).

### Tebro

CLOTHING | First opened in 1867 and listed with the Associazione Negozi Storici di Roma (Association of Historic Shops of Rome), Tebro is a classic Roman department store that epitomizes quality. It specializes in household linens and sleepwear, and you can even find those 100-percent cotton, Italian waffle-weave bath sheets that are synonymous with Italian hotels. *EVia dei Prefetti 48, Piazza Navona P06/6873441* [www.tebro.it](http://www.tebro.it).

## JEWELRY

### Delfina Delettrez

JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES | When your great-grandmother is Adele Fendi, it's not surprising that creativity runs in your genes. Young Roman designer Delfina Delettrez creates edgy, glam-rock accessories using human body-inspired pieces that blend skulls, wild animals, and botanical elements in her jewelry. Delettrez also daringly merges gold, silver, bone and glass, crystals, and diamonds to create gothic styles worthy of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, or *Blade Runner*. *EVia del Governo Vecchio 67, Piazza Navona P06/68136362*  
[www.delfinadelettrez.com](http://www.delfinadelettrez.com).

### MMM—Massimo Maria Melis

JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES | Drawing heavily on ancient Roman and Etruscan designs, Massimo Maria Melis jewelry will carry you back in time. Working with 21-carat gold, he often incorporates antique coins in many of his exquisite bracelets and necklaces. Some of his pieces are done with an

ancient technique, much-loved by the Etruscans, in which tiny gold droplets are fused together to create intricately patterned designs. E*Via dell'Orso 57, Piazza Navona P06/6869188* [www.massimomariamelis.com](http://www.massimomariamelis.com).

## **Quattrocolo**

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | This historic shop dating to 1938 showcases exquisite antique micro-mosaic jewelry painstakingly crafted in the style perfected by the masters at the Vatican mosaic studio. You'll also find 18th- and 19th-century cameos and beautiful engraved stones. Their small works were beloved by cosmopolitan clientele of the Grand Tour age and offer modern-day shoppers a taste of yesteryear's grandeur. E*Via della Scrofa 48, Piazza Navona P06/68801367* [www.quattrocolo.com](http://www.quattrocolo.com).

## **SHOES AND ACCESSORIES**

### **Spazio IF**

**ART GALLERIES** | In a tiny piazza alongside Rome's historic Via dei Coronari, designers Irene and Carla Ferrara have created a tantalizing hybrid between fashion paradise and art gallery. Working with unconventional designers and artists who emphasize Sicilian design, the shop has more to say about the style of Sicily and the creativity of the island's inhabitants than flat caps, puppets, and rich pastries. Perennial favorites include handbags cut by hand in a shop in Palermo, swimsuits, designer textiles, jewelry, and sportswear. E*Via dei Coronari 44a, Piazza Navona P06/64760639* [www.spazioif.it](http://www.spazioif.it).

### **Superga**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | In business for more than 100 years, Superga sells those timeless sneakers that every Italian wears at some point, in classic white or a rainbow of colors. Their 2750 model has been worn by everyone from Kelly Brook to the Duchess of Cambridge. If you are a sneakerhead stuck on Converse, give these Italian brethren a look. E*Via delle Vite 86, Piazza di Spagna P06/6787654* [www.superga.com](http://www.superga.com) mSpagna.

## **STATIONERY**

### **★ Cartoleria Pantheon dal 1910**

**BOOKS/STATIONERY** | Instead of sending a postcard home, head to the simply sumptuous Cartoleria Pantheon dal 1910 for fine handmade paper to write

that special letter. In addition to simple, stock paper and artisanal sheets of handcrafted Amalfi paper, there are hand-bound leather journals in an extraordinary array of colors and sizes. The store has two other locations in the neighborhood. E*Via della Rotonda 15, Piazza Navona* P06/6875313 [www.pantheon-roma.com](http://www.pantheon-roma.com) mSpagna.

## **Il Papiro**

**BOOKS/STATIONERY** | One of Rome's preferred shops for those who appreciate exquisite writing materials and papermaking techniques that are almost extinct, Il Papiro sells hand-decorated papers made using the 17th-century marbled technique called *à la cuve*. Their stationery and cardstock are printed with great care using exacting standards. Whether you are searching for unique lithography, engraving, or delicate watermarked paper, you'll find some indulgence here. They also carry a fine selection of wax seals, presses for paper embossing, Venetian glass pens, and ink stamps. E*Via del Pantheon 50, Piazza Navona* P06/6795597.

## **TOYS**

### **Al Sogno**

**TOYS | FAMILY** | If you're looking for quality toys that encourage imaginative play and learning, look no further than Al Sogno. With an emphasis on the artistic as well as the multisensory, the shop has a selection of toys that are both discerning and individual, making them perfect for children of all ages. Carrying an exquisite collection of fanciful puppets, collectible dolls, masks, stuffed animals, and illustrated books, this Navona jewel, around since 1945, is crammed top-to-bottom with beautiful, well-crafted playthings. If you believe that children's toys don't have to be high-tech, you will adore reliving some of your best childhood memories here. E*Piazza Navona 53, corner of Via Agonale, Piazza Navona* P06/6864198 [www.alsogno.net](http://www.alsogno.net).

### ★ **Bartolucci**

**TOYS | FAMILY** | For more than 60 years and three generations, the Bartolucci family has been making whimsical, handmade curiosities out of pine, including cuckoo clocks, bookends, bedside lamps, and wall hangings. You can even buy a child-size vintage car entirely made of wood (wheels, too). Don't miss the life-size Pinocchio pedaling furiously on a wooden bike. E*Via*

*dei Pastini 98, Piazza Navona P06/69190894 [www.bartolucci.com](http://www.bartolucci.com).*

### **La Città del Sole**

**TOYS | FAMILY |** Chock-full of fair-trade and eco-friendly toys that share shelf space with retro and vintage favorites, La Città del Sole is the perfect place for parents looking to stock up on educational toys. The store, which arranges toys by age group, is a child-friendly browser's delight crammed with puzzles, gadgets, books, and toys in safe plastics and sustainable wood. The knowledgeable sales staff can help you choose the perfect age-appropriate gift. *E**Via della Scrofa 65, Piazza Navona P06/68803805*  
[www.cittadelsole.it](http://www.cittadelsole.it).

## Campo de' Fiori

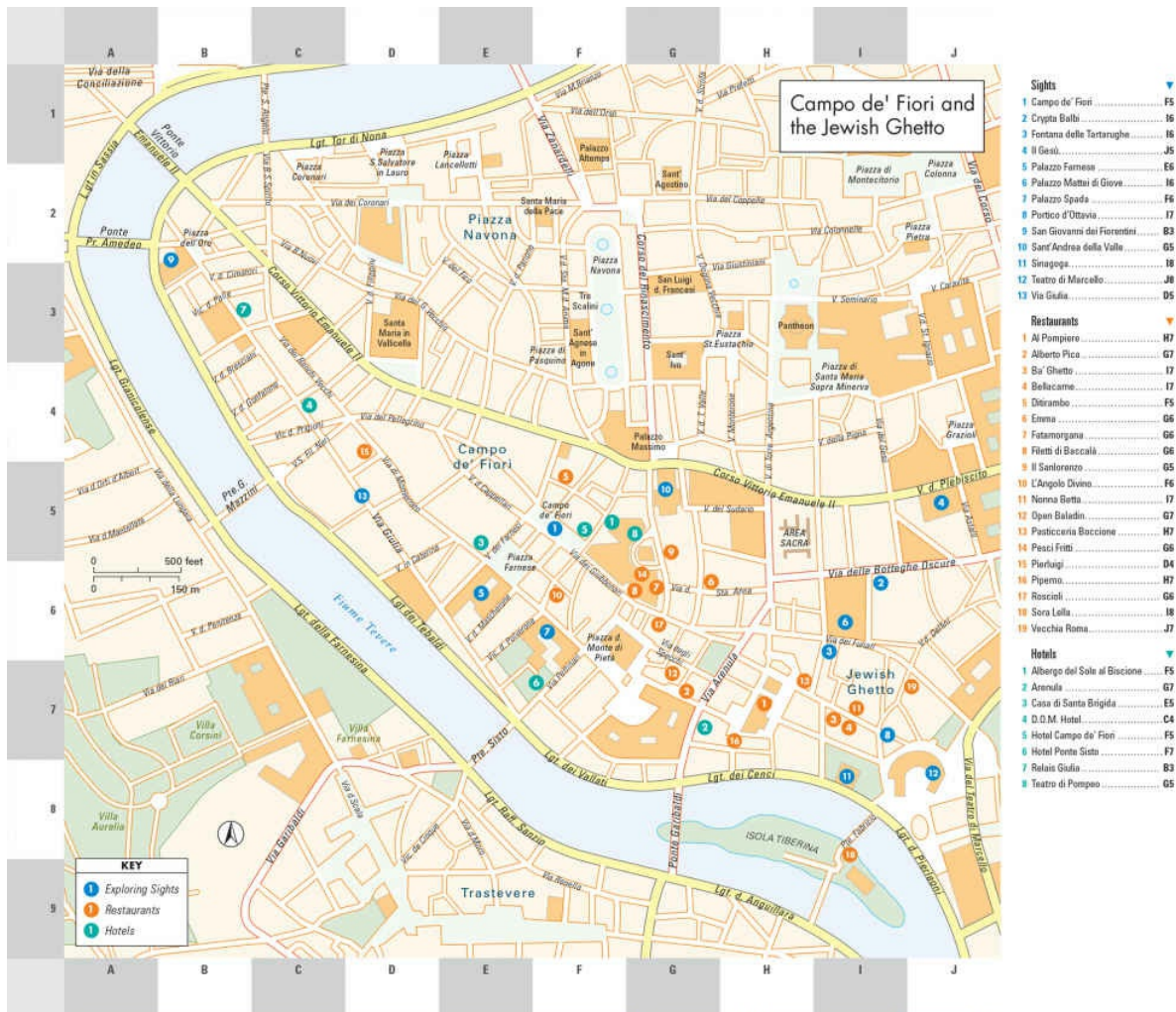
In the mornings, Campo de' Fiori, an evocative piazza ringed by medieval palazzi, is one of the city's most popular markets. The market, like the square, is no longer a mainly local haunt—some stalls now hawk souvenirs and T-shirts, and tour groups are as common as bag-toting nonnas—it remains one of the most beloved, and bustling, institutions in the centro storico. In the evening until past midnight, outdoor bars and restaurants transform this humble square into a hot spot.

## S Sights

### Campo de' Fiori

**MARKET** | A bustling marketplace in the morning (Monday through Saturday from 8 to 2) and a trendy meeting place the rest of the day and night, this piazza has plenty of down-to-earth charm. Just after lunchtime, all the fruit and vegetable vendors disappear, and this so-called *piazza trasformista* takes on another identity, becoming a circus of bars particularly favored by study-abroad students, tourists, and young expats. Brooding over the piazza is a hooded statue of the philosopher Giordano Bruno, who was burned at the stake here in 1600 for heresy, one of many victims of the Roman Inquisition. *EIntersection of Via dei Baullari, Via Giubbonari, Via del Pellegrino, and Piazza della Cancelleria, Campo de' Fiori.*





## ★ Il Gesù

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | The mother church of the Jesuits in Rome is the prototype of all Counter-Reformation churches, and its spectacular interior tells a great deal about an era of religious triumph and turmoil. Its architecture influenced ecclesiastical buildings in Rome for more than a century (the overall design was by Vignola, the facade by della Porta) and was exported by the Jesuits throughout the rest of Europe. Though consecrated in 1584, the interior of the church wasn't fully decorated for another 100 years. It was originally intended that the interior be left plain to the point of austerity—but, when it was finally embellished, the mood had changed and no expense was spared. Its interior drips with gold and lapis lazuli, gold and precious marbles, gold and more gold, all covered by a fantastically painted ceiling by Baciccia. Unfortunately, the church is also one of Rome's most crepuscular, so its

visual magnificence is considerably dulled by lack of light.

The architectural significance of Il Gesù extends far beyond the splendid interior. As the first of the great Counter-Reformation churches, it was put up after the Council of Trent (1545–63) had signaled the determination of the Roman Catholic Church to fight back against the Reformed Protestant heretics of northern Europe. The church decided to do so through the use of overwhelming pomp and majesty, in an effort to woo believers. As a harbinger of ecclesiastical spectacle, Il Gesù spawned imitations throughout Italy and the other Catholic countries of Europe as well as the Americas.

The most striking element is the ceiling, which is covered with frescoes that swirl down from on high to merge with painted stucco figures at the base, the illusion of space in the two-dimensional painting becoming the reality of three dimensions in the sculpted figures. Baciccio, their painter, achieved extraordinary effects in these frescoes, especially in the *Triumph of the Holy Name of Jesus*, over the nave. Here, the figures representing evil are cast out of heaven and seem to be hurtling down onto the observer. To appreciate in detail, the spectacle is best viewed through a specially tilted mirror in the nave.

The founder of the Jesuit order himself is buried in the Chapel of St. Ignatius, in the left-hand transept. This is surely the most sumptuous Baroque altar in Rome; as is typical, the enormous globe of lapis lazuli that crowns it is really only a shell of lapis over a stucco base—after all, Baroque decoration prides itself on achieving stunning effects and illusions. The heavy, bronze altar rail by architect Carlo Fontana is in keeping with the surrounding opulence. EPiazza del Gesù, Campo de' Fiori P06/697001 [www.chiesadelgesu.org](http://www.chiesadelgesu.org).

### ★ Palazzo Farnese

CASTLE/PALACE | The most beautiful Renaissance palace in Rome, the Palazzo Farnese is famed for its Galleria Carracci, whose ceiling is to the Baroque age what the Sistine Chapel ceiling is to the Renaissance. The Farnese family rose to great power and wealth during the Renaissance, in part because of the favor Pope Alexander VI showed to the beautiful Giulia Farnese. The massive palace was begun when, with Alexander's aid, Giulia's brother became cardinal; it was further enlarged on his election as Pope Paul

III in 1534. The uppermost frieze decorations and main window overlooking the piazza are the work of Michelangelo, who also designed part of the courtyard, as well as the graceful arch over Via Giulia at the back. The facade on Piazza Farnese has geometrical brick configurations that have long been thought to hold some occult meaning. When looking up at the palace, try to catch a glimpse of the splendid frescoed ceilings, including the **Galleria Carracci** vault painted by Annibale Carracci between 1597 and 1604. The Carracci gallery depicts the loves of the gods, a supremely pagan theme that the artist painted in a swirling style that announced the birth of the Baroque. Other opulent salons are among the largest in Rome, including the Salon of Hercules, which has an impressive replica of the ancient *Farnese Hercules*. The French Embassy, which occupies the palace, offers tours (in English) on Wednesday; book at least eight days in advance through the website, and bring photo ID. EFrench Embassy, Servizio Culturale, Piazza Farnese 67, Campo de' Fiori P06/686011 [www.inventerrome.com](http://www.inventerrome.com) A€9 CClosed Thurs.–Tues.

## Palazzo Spada

**CASTLE/PALACE** | In this neighborhood of huge, austere palaces, Palazzo Spada strikes an almost frivolous note, with its pretty ornament-encrusted courtyard and its upper stories covered with stuccoes and statues. While the palazzo houses an impressive collection of Old Master paintings, it's most famous for its trompe-l'oeil garden gallery, a delightful example of the sort of architectural games rich Romans of the 17th century found irresistible. Even if you don't go into the gallery, step into the courtyard and look through the glass window of the library to the colonnaded corridor in the adjacent courtyard. See—or seem to see—a 26-foot-long gallery quadrupled in depth, a sort of optical telescope taking the Renaissance's art of perspective to another level, as it stretches out for a great distance with a large statue at the end. In fact the distance is an illusion: the corridor grows progressively narrower and the columns progressively smaller as they near the statue, which is just 2 feet tall. The Baroque period is known for special effects, and this is rightly one of the most famous. It was long thought that Borromini was responsible for this ruse; it's now known that it was designed by an Augustinian priest, Giovanni Maria da Bitonto. Upstairs is a seignorial picture gallery with the paintings shown as they would have been, piled on

top of each other clear to the ceiling. Outstanding works include Brueghel's *Landscape with Windmills*, Titian's *Musician*, and Andrea del Sarto's *Visitation*. Look for the fact-sheets that have descriptive notes about the objects in each room. EPiazza Capo di Ferro 13, Campo de' Fiori P06/6861158 [www.galleriaspada.beniculturali.it](http://www.galleriaspada.beniculturali.it) A€5 CClosed Tues.

### **San Giovanni dei Fiorentini**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Imbued with the supreme grace of the Florentine Renaissance, this often-overlooked church dedicated to Florence's patron saint, John the Baptist, stands in what was the heart of the Florentine colony in Rome's *centro storico*. Many of these Florentines were goldsmiths, bankers, and money changers who contributed to the building of the church. Talented goldsmith and sculptor Benvenuto Cellini of Florence, known for his vindictive nature as much as for his genius, lived nearby. While the church was designed by Sansovino, Raphael (yes, he was also an architect) was among those who competed for this commission. Today, the church interior makes you feel you have wandered inside a perfect Renaissance space, one so harmonious it seems to be a 3-D Raphael painting. Borromini executed a splendid altar for the Falconieri family chapel in the choir. He's buried under the dome, despite the fact that those who committed suicide normally were refused a Christian burial. EVia Acciaiuoli 2, Piazza dell'Oro, Campo de' Fiori P06/68892059.

### **Sant'Andrea della Valle**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Topped by the highest dome in Rome after St. Peter's (designed by Maderno), this huge and imposing 17th-century church is remarkably balanced in design. Fortunately, its facade, which had turned a sooty gray from pollution, has been cleaned to a near-sparkling white. Use one of the handy mirrors to examine the early-17th-century frescoes by Domenichino in the choir vault and those by Lanfranco in the dome. One of the earliest ceilings done in full Baroque style, its upward vortex was influenced by Correggio's dome in Parma, of which Lanfranco was also a citizen. (Bring a few coins to light the paintings, which can be very dim.) The three massive paintings of Saint Andrew's martyrdom are by Maria Preti (1650–51). Richly marbled and decorated chapels flank the nave, and in such a space, Puccini set the first act of *Tosca*. EPiazza Vidoni 6, Corso Vittorio



*Emanuele II, Campo de' Fiori P06/6861339.*

## ★ **Via Giulia**

**NEIGHBORHOOD** | Still a Renaissance-era diorama and one of Rome's most exclusive addresses, Via Giulia was the first street in Rome since ancient times to be deliberately planned. Straight as a die, it was named for Pope Julius II (of Sistine Chapel fame), who commissioned it in the early 1500s as part of a scheme to open up a grandiose approach to St. Peter's Basilica, and it is flanked with elegant churches and palaces. Although the pope's plans to change the face of the city were only partially completed, Via Giulia became an important thoroughfare in Renaissance Rome. Today, after more than four centuries, it remains the "salon of Rome," address of choice for Roman aristocrats, although controversy has arisen about a recent change—the decision to add a large parking lot along one side of the street—that meant steamrolling through ancient and medieval ruins underneath. A stroll will reveal elegant palaces and churches (one, **San Eligio**, on the little side street Via di Sant'Eligio, was designed by Raphael himself). The area around Via Giulia is wonderful to wander through and get the feel of daily life as carried on in a centuries-old setting. Among the buildings that merit your attention are **Palazzo Sacchetti** (*Via Giulia 66*), with an imposing stone portal (inside are some of Rome's grandest staterooms, still, after 300 years, the private quarters of the Marchesi Sacchetti), and the forbidding brick building that housed the **Carceri Nuove** (New Prison; *Via Giulia 52*), Rome's prison for more than two centuries and now the offices of Direzione Nazionale Antimafia. Near the bridge that arches over the southern end of Via Giulia is the church of **Santa Maria dell'Orazione e Morte** (Holy Mary of Prayer and Death), with stone skulls on its door. These are a symbol of a confraternity that was charged with burying the bodies of the unidentified dead found in the city streets. Home since 1927 to the Hungarian Academy, the **Palazzo Falconieri** (*Via Giulia 1 P06/6889671*) was designed by Borromini—note the architect's rooftop belvedere adorned with statues of the family "falcons," best viewed from around the block along the Tiber embankment. (The Borromini-designed salons and loggia are sporadically open as part of a guided tour; call the Hungarian Academy for information.) Remnant of a master plan by Michelangelo, the arch over the street was meant to link massive Palazzo Farnese, on the east side of Via Giulia, with

the building across the street and a bridge to the Villa Farnesina, directly across the river. Finally, on the right and rather green with age, dribbles that star of many a postcard, the Fontana del Mascherone. E*Via Giulia, between Piazza dell'Oro and Piazza San Vincenzo Pallotti, Campo de' Fiori.*

## r Restaurants

Campo de' Fiori is home to one of Rome's largest open-air produce markets, and is historically the secular crossroads of the city: even in ancient Rome, pilgrims gathered here to eat, drink, and be merry. Today's shoppers at the market include local chefs who head here to concoct menus based on what looks good.

### Alberto Pica

\$ | CAFÉ | FAMILY | Beloved owner Alberto Pica sadly died in 2015, but his name lives on in the gelato shop he ran close to the river. Gelato production is artisanal, and the selection of seasonal *sorbetti* and *cremolate* (the latter is similar to sorbetto but made with the fruit pulp, rather than just fruit juice) is diverse. **Known for:** old-school vibes; brusque owners who keep the lines moving; *riso a cannella gelato* (cinnamon rice pudding). *DAverage main: €4* E*Via della Seggiola 12, Campo de' Fiori P06/6868405 CClosed Sun., and 2 wks in Aug. No lunch in summer.*

### Ditirambo

\$\$ | ITALIAN | Don't let the country-kitchen ambience fool you: at this little spot off Campo de' Fiori, the constantly changing selection of offbeat takes on Italian classics makes this a step beyond the ordinary. There are several good options for vegetarians. **Known for:** cozy and casual atmosphere; hearty meat and pasta dishes; good vegetarian options. *DAverage main: €16* E*Piazza della Cancelleria 74, Campo de' Fiori P06/6871626* [www.ristoranteditirambo.it](http://www.ristoranteditirambo.it) CClosed Aug. No lunch Mon.

### ★ Emma

\$\$ | ROMAN | FAMILY | Opened by Rome's renowned family of bakers, the Rosciolis, this large, sleek, modern pizzeria is smack in the middle of the city, with the freshest produce right outside the door. The wine list features



many local Lazio options. **Known for:** light and airy, casual atmosphere; thin-crust Roman pizza; tasty fritti (classic fried Roman pizzeria appetizers). *DAverage main: €15 E*[Via Monte della Farina 28–29, Campo de' Fiori P06/64760475](#) [www.emmapizzeria.com](http://www.emmapizzeria.com).

### **Fatamorgana**

\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | There are plenty of ordinary gelaterie around the Campo de' Fiori but it's worth searching out this branch of small Roman chain Fatamorgana. The highest-quality ingredients go into the gelato here and the flavors range from the traditional to the wonderfully unique (think Gorgonzola or tobacco and chocolate). **Known for:** quality gelato; seasonal fruit flavors; beloved local brand. *DAverage main: €4 E*[Via dei Chiavari 37, Campo de' Fiori P06/6893843](#) [www.gelateriafatamorgana.it](http://www.gelateriafatamorgana.it) *CClosed 1 wk in Aug.*

### **Filetti di Baccalà**

\$ | ITALIAN | The window reads “Filetti di Baccalà,” but the official name of this small restaurant that specializes in one thing—deliciously battered and deep-fried fillets of salt cod—is Dar Filettaro a Santa Barbara. The location, down the street from Campo de' Fiori in a little piazza in front of the beautiful Santa Barbara church, practically begs you to eat at one of the outdoor tables, where service is brusque. **Known for:** filetti di baccalà; functional “hole-in-the-wall” interior; tables outside on the pretty square. *DAverage main: €12 E*[Largo dei Librari 88, Campo de' Fiori P06/6864018](#) *cNo credit cards CClosed Sun., and Aug. No lunch.*

### ★ **Il Sanlorenzo**

\$\$\$\$ | SEAFOOD | This gorgeous space, with its chandeliers and soaring original brickwork ceilings, houses one of the best seafood restaurants in the Eternal City. Order à la carte, or if you're hungry the eight-course tasting menu is extremely tempting—it might include the likes of cuttlefish-ink tagliatelle with mint, artichokes, and roe, or shrimp from the island of Ponza with rosemary, bitter herbs, and porcini mushrooms—and, given the quality of the fish, a relative bargain at €90. **Known for:** top-quality fish and seafood; spaghetti con ricci (sea urchins); elegant surroundings. *DAverage main: €36 E*[Via dei Chiavari 4/5, Campo de' Fiori P06/6865097](#)

[www.ilsanlorenzo.it](http://www.ilsanlorenzo.it) CClosed Sun., and 2 wks in Aug. No lunch Sat. and Mon.

### L'Angolo Divino

\$\$ | WINE BAR | There's something about this cozy wine bar that feels as if it's in a small university town instead of a bustling metropolis. Serene blue-green walls lined with wooden shelves of wines from around the Italian peninsula add to the warm atmosphere, and the kitchen stays open until the wee hours on weekends. **Known for:** excellent wine selection and advice; cozy atmosphere; late-night snacks. DAverage main: €15 E Via dei Balestrari 12, Campo de' Fiori P06/6864413 [www.angolodivino.it](http://www.angolodivino.it) CClosed 2 wks in Aug.

### Open Baladin

\$ | BURGER | The craft beer movement has taken hold in Italy, and this hip, sprawling space tucked down a tiny side road near Campo de' Fiori is headed up by the Baladin beer company. Staff members take their jobs—and brews—seriously, and they're helpful with recommendations from the more than 40 options on tap and the more than 100 bottles to choose from. **Known for:** great craft beer; hand-cut potato chips; plenty of burger and sandwich options. DAverage main: €14 E Via Degli Specchi 5–6, Campo de' Fiori P06/6838989 [www.baladin.it](http://www.baladin.it).

### Pesci Fritti

\$\$ | SOUTHERN ITALIAN | This cute jewel box of a restaurant sits on the seating of the ancient Theatre of Pompey just behind Campo de' Fiori (note the curve of the street). Step inside, and the whitewashed walls with touches of pale sea blue will make you feel like you've escaped to the Mediterranean for seafood favorites. **Known for:** fried fish and seafood choices; spaghetti with clams; cozy setting. DAverage main: €18 E Via della Grottapinta 8, Campo de' Fiori P06/68806170 CClosed Mon., and Aug.

### Pierluigi

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | This popular seafood restaurant is a fun spot on balmy summer evenings with tables out on the pretty Piazza de' Ricci. As at most Italian restaurants, fresh fish is sold per hectogram (100 grams, or about 3.5 ounces), so you may want to double-check the cost after it's been weighed. **Known**

**for:** top-quality fish and seafood; tables on the pretty pedestrianized piazza; elegant atmosphere with great service. *DAverage main: €28 E*Piazza de Ricci 144, Campo de' Fiori P06/6861302 [www.pierluigi.it](http://www.pierluigi.it) *CClosed Mon.*

### ★ Roscioli

\$\$ | WINE BAR | The shop in front of this wine bar will beckon you in with top-quality comestibles like hand-sliced cured ham from Italy and Spain, more than 300 cheeses, and a dizzying array of wines—but venture farther inside to try an extensive selection of unusual dishes and interesting takes on the classics. There are tables in the cozy wine cellar downstairs, but try and bag a table at the back on the ground floor (reserve well ahead; Roscioli is very popular). **Known for:** extensive wine list; arguably Rome's best spaghetti alla carbonara; best prosciutto in town. *DAverage main: €22 E*Via dei Giubbonari 21/22, Campo de' Fiori P06/6875287 [www.salumeriaroscioli.com/restaurant](http://www.salumeriaroscioli.com/restaurant) *CClosed Sun., and 1 wk in Aug.*

## h Hotels

If you're looking to be in the *cuore della Roma vecchia* (or “heart of Old Rome”), there's no better place than Campo de' Fiori, a gorgeous piazza with lively merchants, outdoor caffè, and bars. The hotels here are not generally as lovely as their surroundings, however: many are cramped and could use updating.

### Albergo del Sole al Biscione

\$\$ | HOTEL | This affordable and comfortable hotel, centrally located just off Campo de' Fiori and built atop the ruins of the ancient Theatre of Pompey, has warm, cozy decor and a rooftop terrace with a stunning view of Sant'Andrea delle Valle. **Pros:** parking garage in the hotel; reasonable rates for the location; nice rooftop terrace. **Cons:** some rooms are small and lack air-conditioning; no elevator at the entrance of hotel; area can be a bit noisy. *DRooms from: €180 E*Via del Biscione 76, Campo de' Fiori P06/68806873 [www.solealbiscione.it](http://www.solealbiscione.it) a59 rooms XNo meals mBarberini.

### ★ Casa di Santa Brigida

\$\$\$ | B&B/INN | The friendly sisters of Santa Brigida oversee simple,

straightforward, and centrally located accommodations in one of Rome's loveliest convents, with a rooftop terrace overlooking Palazzo Farnese. **Pros:** insider papal tickets; large library and sunroof; free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** weak air-conditioning; no TVs in the rooms (though there is a common TV room); far from a Metro stop. DRooms from: €210 EPiazza Farnese 96, entrance around the corner at Via Monserrato 54, Campo de' Fiori P06/68892596 [www.brigidine.org](http://www.brigidine.org) a20 rooms XFree breakfast.

### **D.O.M. Hotel**

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | In an old convent on Via Giulia, one of Rome's romantic ivy-covered streets, the D.O.M. (Deo Optimo Maximo) is an ultrachic luxury hotel that resembles an aristocratic *casa nobile*. **Pros:** complimentary Aqua di Parma toiletries; heated towel racks; hip decor. **Cons:** an armed guard at the anti-terrorism headquarters opposite the hotel may be off-putting to some; delicious but expensive cocktails; standard rooms are small for a five-star hotel. DRooms from: €380 EVia Giulia 131, Campo de' Fiori P06/6832144 [www.domhotelroma.com](http://www.domhotelroma.com) a18 rooms XFree breakfast.

### **Hotel Campo de' Fiori**

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This handsome, ivy-draped hotel is a romantic refuge located right in the heart of Campo de' Fiori. **Pros:** free Wi-Fi; rooftop terrace; well-stocked library where one can relax and read. **Cons:** rooms are on the small side; some apartments are too close to the area's noisy bar scene; can get pricey in high season. DRooms from: €250 EVia del Biscione 6, Campo de' Fiori P06/68806865 [www.hotelcampodefiori.com/en](http://www.hotelcampodefiori.com/en) a25 rooms XFree breakfast.

### ★ **Hotel Ponte Sisto**

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Situated in a remodeled Renaissance palazzo with one of the prettiest patio-courtyards in Rome, this hotel is a relaxing retreat close to Trastevere and Campo de' Fiori. **Pros:** rooms with views (and some with balconies and terraces); luxury bathrooms; beautiful courtyard garden. **Cons:** street-side rooms can be a bit noisy; some upgraded rooms are small and not worth the price difference; carpets starting to show signs of wear. DRooms from: €260 EVia dei Pettinari 64, Campo de' Fiori P06/6863100 [www.hotelpontesisto.it](http://www.hotelpontesisto.it) a107 rooms XFree breakfast.

## Relais Giulia

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | In a 15th-century palazzo on one of Rome's oldest streets, Relais Giulia is a classic Roman Renaissance boutique hotel with sophisticated modern furnishings and fixtures. **Pros:** quiet area; great location in between Campo de' Fiori and Trastevere; thoughtful amenities. **Cons:** Wi-Fi can be patchy; some rooms and facilities could use updating; breakfast not included with price. *DRooms from: €220 E*[Via Giulia 93, Campo de' Fiori P06/95581300](#) *a13 rooms XFree breakfast.*

## Teatro di Pompeo

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Have breakfast under the ancient stone vaults of Theatre of Pompey, close to the site of Julius Caesar's assassination, and sleep under restored wood-beam ceilings that date to the days of Michelangelo at this hotel with simple (and perhaps slightly dated) rooms and wonderful, genuinely helpful staff. **Pros:** great location near Campo de' Fiori; helpful staff; an old-school Roman feel. **Cons:** can be a bit noisy; rooms are small, and some are dated; Wi-Fi is very spotty. *DRooms from: €220 E*[Largo del Pallaro 8, Campo de' Fiori P06/6872812](#) [www.hotelteatrodipompeo.it](http://www.hotelteatrodipompeo.it) *a12 rooms XFree breakfast.*

## n Nightlife

With plenty of college bars, Campo de' Fiori is Rome's magnet for the study-abroad scene.

## BARS

### Il Gocetto

CAFES—NIGHTLIFE | A rustic wine bar with a copious amount of elusive vintages, Il Gocetto specializes in wines from smaller vineyards from Sicily to Venice. Stay for a snack—its carefully chosen menu of Italian delicacies (meats and cheeses) represents the entire Italian peninsula. Il Gocetto is always busy and never accepts reservations. *E*[Via dei Banchi Vecchi 14, Campo de' Fiori P06/6864268](#) [www.ilgocetto.com](http://www.ilgocetto.com).

### L'Angolo Divino

**WINE BARS—NIGHTLIFE** | Nestled on a quiet side street around the corner from the ever-vivacious Campo de' Fiori, this wood-paneled enoteca is a hidden treasure of wines. Its extensive selection lists more than 1,000 labels to go along quite nicely with its quaint menu of delicious homemade pastas and local antipasti. And because it's open every night until 1:30 am, it's the ideal place for a late-night tipple. E*Via dei Balestrari 12, Campo de' Fiori* P06/6864413 [www.angolodivino.it](http://www.angolodivino.it).

### **The Sofa Bar & Roof Terrace Restaurant**

**BARS/PUBS** | The romantic rooftop terrace at Sofa has a 360-degree view of the Eternal City, so it's no surprise that it's a prime spot for a late-afternoon cocktail (weather permitting). Head downstairs in the cooler months for a wide selection of craft beers on tap. E*Via Giulia 62, Campo de' Fiori* P06/686611 [www.hotelindigorome.com](http://www.hotelindigorome.com).

## **p Performing Arts**

### **THEATER**

#### **★ Teatro Argentina**

**DANCE** | A gorgeous 18th-century theater, the Teatro Argentina evokes glamour and sophistication with its velvet upholstery, large crystal chandeliers, and beautifully dressed theatergoers, who come to see international productions of stage and dance performances. E*Largo di Torre Argentina 52, Campo de' Fiori* P06/684000311 [www.teatrodiroma.net](http://www.teatrodiroma.net).

## **b Shopping**

Campo de' Fiori, one of Rome's most captivating piazzas, comes to life early in the morning, when merchants theatrically sell their best tomatoes, salumi, artichokes, blood oranges, herbs, and spices. Around the piazza, labyrinthine streets are crowded with small shops to suit any budget.

### **BOOKS AND STATIONERY**

#### **Libreria del Viaggiatore**

**BOOKS/STATIONERY** | *Viaggiatore* means "traveler" in Italian, and this lovely



little bookstore, which is located on a quaint side street off Campo de' Fiori, welcomes wandering, curious travelers. The shop stocks guidebooks, maps, travel journals, and poetry from all over the world, with a good selection of books in English. *E* Via del Pellegrino 165, Campo de' Fiori P06/68801048.

## **CHILDREN'S CLOTHING**

### **Rachele**

**CLOTHING | FAMILY |** Rachele is a small, charming shop near the Piazza Campo de' Fiori that sells original and whimsical handmade children's clothing. If you're looking for something truly unique, Rachele (the Swedish owner and designer) makes only two of everything for tykes up to age 12. Your children can make a statement with any of her cute pants, skirts, or rainbow-color tops. *E* Vicolo del Bollo 6–7, Campo de' Fiori P06/6864975.

## **SHOES, HANDBAGS, AND LEATHER GOODS**

### **Ibiz–Artigianato in Cuoio**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS |** In business since 1970, this family team creates colorful, stylish leather handbags, belts, and sandals near Piazza Campo de' Fiori. Choose from the premade collection or order something made to measure; their workshop is right next door to the boutique. *E* Via dei Chiavari 39, Campo de' Fiori P06/68307297.

## Jewish Ghetto

Although today most of Rome's Jews live outside the Ghetto, the area remains the spiritual and cultural home of Jewish Rome, and that heritage permeates its small commercial area of Judaica shops, kosher bakeries, and restaurants. The Jewish Ghetto was established by papal decree in the 16th century. It was by definition a closed community, where Roman Jews lived under lock and key until Italian unification in 1870. In 1943–44, the already small Jewish population there was decimated by deportations.

The turn-of-the-20th-century synagogue, with its museum dedicated to the history of Jewish Rome, is a must for understanding the Ghetto. Tight, teeming alleys lead from there up to Giacomo della Porta's unmistakable Fontana delle Tartarughe; nearby is the picture-perfect Palazzo Mattei. Via Portico d'Ottavia is a walk through the olden days. Most businesses in the Ghetto observe the Jewish Sabbath, so it's a ghost town on Saturday. At its east end, the street leads down to a path past the 1st-century Teatro di Marcello. The Tiber River separates the Ghetto and Trastevere, with the lovely Isola Tiberina (Tiber Island) in the middle. Cross the river via the Ponte Fabricio, the oldest bridge in Rome.

## S Sights

### ★ Crypta Balbi

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | The fourth component of the magnificent collections of the Museo Nazionale Romano, this museum is unusual because it represents several periods of Roman history. The crypt is part of the Balbus Theater complex (13 BC) and other parts of the complex are from the medieval period, up through the 20th century. The written explanations accompanying the well-lit exhibits are excellent, and this museum is a popular field trip for teachers and school groups. *EVia delle Botteghe Oscure 31, Jewish Ghetto P06/39967700 [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€10 Crypta Balbi only; €12 includes 3 other Museo Nazionale Romano sites over a 3-day period (Palazzo Altemps, Palazzo Massimo, Museo Diocleziano) mBus Nos.*

64 and 40, Tram No. 8.

### **Fontana delle Tartarughe**

**FOUNTAIN** | Designed by Giacomo della Porta in 1581 and sculpted by Taddeo Landini, this fountain, set in pretty Piazza Mattei, is one of Rome's most charming. The focus of the fountain is four bronze boys, each grasping a dolphin spouting water into a marble shell. Bronze turtles held in the boys' hands drink from the upper basin. The turtles were added in the 17th century by Bernini. *EPiazza Mattei, Jewish Ghetto.*

### **★ Palazzo Mattei di Giove**

**CASTLE/PALACE** | Graceful and opulent, the arcaded, multistory courtyard of this palazzo is a masterpiece of turn-of-the-17th-century style. Designed by Carlo Maderno, it is a veritable panoply of sculpted busts, heroic statues, sculpted reliefs, and Paleo-Christian epigrams, all collected by Marchese Asdrubale Mattei. Inside are various scholarly institutes, including the Centro Studi Americani (Center for American Studies, [wcentrostudiamericani.org](http://wcentrostudiamericani.org)), which also contains a library of American books. Salons in the palace (not usually open to visitors) are decorated with frescoes by Cortona, Lanfranco, and Domenichino. It's publicly accessible on Monday through Saturday. *EVia Michelangelo Caetani 32, other entrance in Via dei Funari, Jewish Ghetto P06/68801613 Centro Studi Americani CClosed Sun.*

### **★ Portico d'Ottavia**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Looming over the Jewish Ghetto, this huge portico, with a few surviving columns, is one of the area's most picturesque set pieces, with the church of Sant'Angelo in Pescheria built right into its ruins. Named by Augustus in honor of his sister Octavia, it was originally 390 feet wide and 433 feet long, encompassed two temples, a meeting hall, and a library, and served as a kind of grandiose entrance foyer for the adjacent Teatro di Marcello. The ruins of the portico became Rome's *pescheria* (fish market) during the Middle Ages. A stone plaque on a pillar (a copy; the original is in the Musei Capitolini) states in Latin that the head of any fish surpassing the length of the plaque was to be cut off "up to the first fin" and given to the city fathers, or else the vendor was to pay a fine of 10 gold florins. The heads were used to make fish soup and were considered a great

delicacy. E*Via Tribuna di Campitelli 6, Jewish Ghetto.*

## **Sinagoga**

**MUSEUM** | This synagogue has been the city's largest Jewish temple, and a Roman landmark with its aluminum dome, since its construction in 1904. The building also houses the Jewish Museum, with its precious ritual objects and other exhibits, which document the uninterrupted presence of a Jewish community in the city for nearly 22 centuries. Until the 16th century, Jews were esteemed citizens of Rome. Among them were bankers and physicians to the popes, who had themselves given permission for the construction of synagogues. But in 1555, during the Counter-Reformation, Pope Paul IV decreed the building of the walls of the Ghetto, confining the Jews to this small area and imposing a series of restrictions, some of which continued to be enforced until 1870. For security reasons, entrance is via guided visit only, and tours in English start every hour at about 10 minutes past the hour; entrance to the synagogue is through the museum located in Via Catalana (*Largo 16 Ottobre 1943*). E*Lungotevere Cenci 15, Jewish Ghetto P06/68400661 [www.museoebraico.roma.it](http://www.museoebraico.roma.it) A€11 CMuseum closed Sat. and Jewish holidays mBus Nos. 46, 64, and 87; Tram No. 8.*

## **Teatro di Marcello**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Begun by Julius Caesar and completed by the emperor Augustus in 13 BC, this theater could house around 14,000 spectators. Like other Roman monuments, it was transformed into a fortress during the Middle Ages. During the Renaissance, it was converted into a residence by the Savelli, one of the city's noble families. Today the archaeological park around the theater is used as a summer venue for open-air classical music concerts. E*Via del Teatro di Marcello, Jewish Ghetto P06/87131590 concert info [www.tempietto.it](http://www.tempietto.it).*

## **r Restaurants**

Across Via Arenula from the Campo de' Fiori, the Ghetto is home to Europe's oldest Jewish population, who have lived in Rome uninterrupted for more than 2,000 years. There are excellent restaurants not just along its main

drag, Via del Portico d'Ottavia, but also hidden in the narrow backstreets that wind between the river, Via Arenula, and Piazza Venezia.

## Al Pompiere

\$\$\$ | ROMAN | The nondescript entrance on a narrow side street leads upstairs to the main dining room of this neighborhood favorite, where those in the know enjoy dining on classic Roman fare under arched ceilings. Fried zucchini flowers, battered salt cod, and gnocchi are all consistently excellent, and the menu has some nice, historic touches, like a beef-and-citron stew from an ancient Roman recipe of Apicius. **Known for:** traditional elegant setting; high-quality Roman cuisine; excellent porchetta. *DAverage main:* €25 *E* Via Santa Maria dei Calderari 38, Jewish Ghetto P06/6868377 [www.alpompiereroma.com](http://www.alpompiereroma.com) *C* Closed Sun., and Aug.

## Jewish Cured Pork ĩ

Variations on cured pork, such as guanciale, prosciutto, and pancetta, are signature flavorings for Roman dishes. When Jewish culinary culture started intermingling with Roman, it was discovered that Jewish cooks used *alici* (anchovies) to flavor dishes the way Romans used cured pork. For excellent-quality anchovies, check out the Jewish *alimentari* (food shops) in the Ghetto.

## ★ Ba' Ghetto

\$\$ | ITALIAN | This hot spot on the main promenade in the Jewish Ghetto has been going strong for years, with pleasant indoor and outdoor seating. The kitchen is kosher (many places featuring Roman Jewish fare are not) and serves meat dishes (so no dairy) from the Roman Jewish tradition as well as from elsewhere in the Mediterranean; down the street is **Ba'Ghetto Milky** (*Via del Portico d'Ottavia 2/a*), the kosher dairy version of the original. **Known for:** carciofi alla giudia (deep-fried artichokes) and other Roman Jewish specialities; casual family atmosphere; outside tables on the pedestrianized street. *DAverage main:* €22 *E* Via del Portico d'Ottavia 57, Jewish Ghetto P06/68892868 [www.kosherinrome.com](http://www.kosherinrome.com) *C* No dinner Fri. No lunch Sat.

## Bellacarne

\$\$ | ROMAN | *Bellacarne* means “beautiful meat,” and that’s the focus of the menu here, though the double entendre is that it’s also what a Jewish Italian grandmother might say while pinching her grandchild’s cheek. The kosher kitchen makes its own pastrami, though the setting is definitely more fine-dining than deli. **Known for:** house-made pastrami; deep-fried artichokes; outside seating. DAverage main: €17 EVia Portico d’Ottavia 51, Jewish Ghetto P06/6833104 [www.bellacarne.it](http://www.bellacarne.it) CNo dinner Fri. No lunch Sat.

## Nonna Betta

\$ | ROMAN | Right on the main street of the Jewish Ghetto, Nonna Betta is an institution in the neighborhood. All the Roman Jewish classics are on the menu here, and the carciofi alla giudia are outstanding, as are most of the fried starters. **Known for:** casual and busy atmosphere; kosher garbonara; outside seating. DAverage main: €12 EVia del Portico d’Ottavia 16, Jewish Ghetto P06/68806263 [www.nonnabetta.it](http://www.nonnabetta.it) CClosed Tues.

## Pasticceria Boccione

\$ | BAKERY | This tiny, old-school bakery is an institution in the Ghetto area and is famed for its Roman Jewish sweet specialties. Service is brusque, choices are few, what’s available depends on the season, and when it’s sold out, it’s sold out. **Known for:** ricotta and cherry tarts; pizza ebraica (“Jewish pizza,” a dense baked sweet rich in nuts and raisins); old-school bakery, so no frills and no seats. DAverage main: €4 EVia del Portico d’Ottavia 1, Jewish Ghetto P06/6878637 CClosed Sat.

## Piperno

\$\$ | ROMAN | *The* place to go for Rome’s extraordinary carciofi alla giudia, Piperno has been in business since 1860. The location, up a tiny hill in a piazza tucked away behind the palazzi of the Jewish Ghetto, lends the restaurant a rarefied air. **Known for:** old-school elegance; great fish dishes; fried stuffed zucchini flowers. DAverage main: €20 EMonte dei Cenci 9, Jewish Ghetto P06/68806629 [www.ristorantepiperno.it](http://www.ristorantepiperno.it) CClosed Mon., and Aug. No dinner Sun.

## Sora Lella



\$\$\$ | **ROMAN** | The draw here—in addition to the wonderful food—is the fact that this is the only restaurant on Isola Tiberina, the wondrously picturesque island set in the middle of the Tiber River between the Jewish Ghetto and Trastevere, that's open year-round. As for the food, try the delicious prosciutto and mozzarella to start, and move on to classics like pasta all'amatriciana, meatballs in tomato sauce, or Roman baby lamb chops. **Known for:** stuffed calamari in white wine sauce; elegant setting; unique location. *DAverage main: €26 E*[Via di Ponte Quattro Capi 16, Jewish Ghetto P06/6861601](#) *w*[www.trattoriasoralella.it/it](http://www.trattoriasoralella.it/it) *CClosed Tues., and 1 wk in Aug. No lunch Sun. in July and Aug.*

## Vecchia Roma

\$\$ | **SEAFOOD** | Though the frescoed dining rooms are lovely, when the weather is good the choice place to dine is outside on the piazza, under the big white umbrellas, in the shadow of Santa Maria in Campitelli. Seafood is the specialty, and simple southern Italian preparations, such as grilled calamari with Sicilian tomatoes, are excellent no-fail choices. **Known for:** large portions; fruit desserts; some of the best outdoor seating in the city. *DAverage main: €22 E*[Piazza Campitelli 18, Jewish Ghetto P06/6864604](#) *w*[www.ristorantevecchiaroma.com](http://www.ristorantevecchiaroma.com) *CClosed Wed., and 1 wk in Aug.*

## h Hotels

### Arenula

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | This hotel is known for no-frills bargain accommodations in the center of Rome with especially good deals off season, when a double room can be as little as €70. **Pros:** a real bargain; conveniently located, near Campo de' Fiori and Trastevere; spotless. **Cons:** totally no-frills accommodations; no elevator; breakfast is nothing to write home about. *DRooms from: €160 E*[Via Santa Maria dei Calderari 47, off Via Arenula, Jewish Ghetto P06/6879454](#) *w*[www.hotelarenula.secure-booking-online.com](http://www.hotelarenula.secure-booking-online.com) *a50 rooms XFree breakfast.*

## p Performing Arts

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

### **Il Tempietto**

**FESTIVALS** | Music festivals and concerts are organized throughout the year in otherwise inaccessible sites, such as the Teatro di Marcello, the Church of San Nicola in Carcere, and Villa Torlonia. Music covers the entire scope from classical to contemporary. E *Piazza Campitelli 9, Jewish Ghetto*  
P06/45615180 [www.tempietto.it](http://www.tempietto.it).

## Chapter 6

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# PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

Updated by Natalie  
Kennedy



 Sights  
★★★★★

 Restaurants  
★★★★★

 Hotels  
★★★★★

 Shopping  
★★★★★

 Nightlife  
★☆☆☆☆

# PIAZZA DI SPAGNA SNAPSHOT

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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This neighborhood is chock-full of postcard-worthy sights, including the Spanish Steps, the Trevi Fountain, and the Victor Emanuel monument (Il Vittoriano), which means a long, rewarding walk alongside plenty of tourists. Consider starting early or taking an evening stroll, when many of the area's must-sees (including the Trevi Fountain) are lighted. Shoppers flock to Via del Corso, though in recent years the street has been given over mostly to multinational chains. Poke through backstreets instead; Rome's swankiest boutiques and designers are on Via del Babuino and the surrounding streets.

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Trevi Fountain:** Iconic would be an understatement—this is the Elvis of waterworks: overblown, flashy, and reliably thronged by legions of fans.

**The Spanish Steps:** Lounge seductively on the world's most celebrated stairway—everyone's doing it.

**The Ceiling of San Ignazio:** Stand beneath the stupendous ceiling of San Ignazio—Rome's most splendiferous Baroque church—and, courtesy of painter-priest Fra Andrea Pozzo, prepare to be transported heavenward.

**Fabulous Palazzos:** Visit the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj and the Palazzo Colonna for an intimate look at the homes of Rome's 17th-century grandees.

**Luxe Shopping on Via Condotti:** You can flit from Bulgari to Gucci to Valentino to Ferragamo with no effort at all.

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## GETTING HERE

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The Piazza di Spagna is a short walk from Piazza del Popolo, the Pantheon, and the Trevi Fountain. One of Rome's handiest subway stations, Spagna, is tucked just left of the steps. Buses No. 117 (from the Colosseum) and No. 119 (from Piazza del Popolo) hum through the area; the latter tootles up Via del Babuino, famed for its shopping.

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## QUICK BITES

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■ **Babington's Tea Rooms.** At the left foot of the Spanish Steps is Babington's Tea Rooms, which has catered to the refined tea and scone cravings of travelers since opening in 1893. The blends are carefully designed and can be brought to the homey tables in this historic restaurant alongside a tower of tiny sandwiches or as an accompaniment to risotto and fully loaded salads. But remember that this is not a budgeteer's cup of tea. Linger over a homemade cake and ask the server about the history of the tearooms, which are still family-run 125 years later. *EPiazza di Spagna 23, Piazza di Spagna P06/6786027 [www.babingtons.com](http://www.babingtons.com) mSpagna.*

■ **Caffè Canova-Tadolini.** On chic Via del Babuino, the former studio of Neoclassical sculptor Antonio Canova and his student Adamo Tadolini is now a wonderfully atmospheric spot for coffee or a snack. Either go for the budget option and take your coffee at the bar while admiring the enormous plaster copies of the maestros' work, or pay for table service and sit amid vast sculptures in this eccentric spot. Food is run-of-the-mill, but the setting is splendid. *EVia del Babuino 150/A, Piazza di Spagna P06/32110702 [www.canovatadolini.com](http://www.canovatadolini.com) mSpagna.*

**In spirit, and in fact, this area of Rome is grandiose. The overblown Vittoriano monument, the labyrinthine treasure-chest palaces of Rome's surviving aristocracy—even the diamond-draped denizens of Via Condotti—all embody the exuberant ego of a city at the center of its own universe. Here's where you'll see ladies in fur as you walk through a thousand snapshots while climbing the famous Spanish Steps.**

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At the top of everyone's sightseeing list is that great Baroque confection, the Trevi Fountain. Since pickpockets favor this tourist-heavy spot, be particularly aware as you withdraw that wallet. Once you've chucked your change in the fountain, follow the crowds and get ready to take some serious time to explore this neighborhood.

If Rome has a Main Street, it's Via del Corso, which is often jammed with swarms of Roman teenagers, in from the city's outlying districts for a ritual stroll that resembles a strutting migration of lemmings in blue jeans. Along this thoroughfare it's easy to forget that the gray and stolid atmosphere comes partially from the enormous palaces lining both sides of the street. Many were built over the past 300 years by princely families who wanted to secure front-row seats for the frantic antics of Carnevale, which once sent horses racing down the street from Piazza del Popolo to Piazza Venezia. But once you make it past their chaste entrances, you'll discover some of Rome's grandest 17th- and 18th-century treasures, including golden Baroque ballrooms, glittering churches, and great Old Master paintings.

Via del Corso begins at noisy, chaotic Piazza Venezia, the imperial-size hub of all this ostentation, presided over by Il Vittoriano, also known as the Altare della Patria (Altar of the Nation)—or, less piously, “the typewriter,” “the wedding cake,” or “the Eighth Hill of Rome.” Sitting grandly off the avenue



are the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj and the Palazzo Colonna, two of the city's great art collections housed in magnificent family palaces.

Extending just east of Via del Corso, but miles away in style, Piazza di Spagna and its surrounding streets are where Rome's elite congregate for shopping sprees and gallery hopping. The piazza's main draw remains the 18th-century Spanish Steps, which connect the ritzy shops at the bottom of the hill with the ritzy hotels (and one lovely church) at the top. The reward for climbing the *scalinata* is a dizzying view of central Rome. Because the steps face west, the views are especially good around sunset.

## S Sights

### ★ **Ara Pacis Augustae** (*Altar of Augustan Peace*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | In a city better known for its terra cotta-colored palazzi, this pristine monument sits inside one of Rome's newer architectural landmarks: a gleaming, rectangular glass-and-travertine structure designed by American architect Richard Meier. Overlooking the Tiber on one side and the ruins of the marble-clad **Mausoleo di Augusto** (Mausoleum of Augustus) on the other, the result is a serene, luminous oasis right in the center of Rome. The altar itself dates back to 13 BC; it was commissioned to celebrate the Pax Romana, the era of peace ushered in by Augustus's military victories. Like all ancient Roman monuments of this kind, you have to imagine its spectacular and moving relief sculptures painted in vibrant colors, now long gone. The reliefs on the short sides portray myths associated with Rome's founding and glory; the long sides display a procession of the imperial family. It's fun to try to play "who's who"—although half of his body is missing, Augustus is identifiable as the first full figure at the procession's head on the south-side frieze—but academics still argue over exact identifications of other figures. This one splendid altar is the star of the small museum, which otherwise simply has a model of the monument and useful information about the Ara Pacis's original location. *ELungotevere in Augusta, Piazza di Spagna P06/0608 [www.arapacis.it](http://www.arapacis.it) A€9, €15 when there's an exhibit mFlaminio.*

### **Colonna di Marco Aurelio**

**MEMORIAL** | Inspired by Trajan's Column, this 2nd-century-AD column is composed of 27 blocks of marble covered in reliefs recounting Marcus Aurelius's victory over the Germanic tribes. A bronze statue of St. Paul, which replaced the original effigy of the emperor and his wife Faustina in the 16th century, stands at the top. The column is the centerpiece of Piazza Colonna. *EPiazza Colonna, Piazza di Spagna.*

### **Fontana della Barcaccia** (*Leaky Boat Fountain*)

**FOUNTAIN** | At the foot of the Spanish Steps, this curious, leaky boat fountain in Piazza di Spagna is fed by Rome's only surviving ancient aqueduct, the Acqua Vergine. The sinking ship design is a clever solution to low water pressure and was created by fountain genius Gian Lorenzo Bernini, together with his father Pietro. The project was commissioned by Barberini Pope Urban VIII, and the bees and suns on the boat are symbols of the Barberini family. Looking for more symbolism, some insist that the Berninis intended the fountain to be a reminder that this part of town was often flooded by the Tiber; others claim that it represents the Ship of the Church; and still others think that it marks the presumed site of the emperor Domitian's water stadium in which sea battles were reenacted in the glory days of the Roman Empire. *EPiazza di Spagna, Piazza di Spagna mSpagna.*

### **Gagosian Gallery**

**MUSEUM** | One of the most prestigious contemporary galleries in the world opened its Rome branch in 2007 in a former bank. The always highly anticipated temporary exhibitions have included megastars such as Cy Twombly, Damien Hirst, and Jeff Koons. *EVia Francesco Crispi 16, Piazza di Spagna P06/42086498 [www.gagosian.com](http://www.gagosian.com) CClosed Sun. and Mon. mSpagna.*

### ★ **Galleria d'Arte Moderna**

**MUSEUM** | The city of Rome's modern art gallery is housed in a former convent on the opposite side of Villa Borghese, from the entrance above the Spanish Steps. The 18th-century building in this quiet corner of Rome is the perfect spot for more than 3,000 19th- and 20th-century paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures by artists including Giorgio de Chirico, Gino Severini, Scipione, Antonio Donghi, and Giacomo Manzù. In fact, the permanent

collection is too large to be displayed at once, so exhibits rotate. A trip out to the museum offers a look at modern Roman art as well as at another side of the city—one where, in the near-empty halls, tranquility and contemplation reign. E*Via Francesco Crispi 24, Piazza di Spagna P06/0608* [www.galleriaartemodernaroma.it](http://www.galleriaartemodernaroma.it) A€7.50 CClosed Mon. mSpagna.

### **Keats-Shelley Memorial House**

**HOUSE** | Sent to Rome in a last-ditch attempt to treat his consumptive condition, English Romantic poet John Keats lived—and died—in this house at the foot of the Spanish Steps. At the time, this was the heart of the colorful bohemian quarter of Rome that was especially favored by English expats. He took his last breath here on February 23, 1821, and is now buried in the Non-Catholic Cemetery in Testaccio. Even before his death, Keats was celebrated for such poems as “Ode to a Nightingale” and “Endymion.” In this “Casina di Keats,” you can visit his final home and see his death mask, though all his furnishings were burned after his death as a sanitary measure by the local authorities. You’ll also find a rather quaint collection of memorabilia of English literary figures of the period—Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Joseph Severn, and Leigh Hunt, as well as Keats—and an exhaustive library of works on the Romantics. E*Piazza di Spagna 26, Piazza di Spagna P06/6784235* [www.keats-shelley-house.org](http://www.keats-shelley-house.org) A€5 CClosed Sun. mSpagna.

### **Monumento a Vittorio Emanuele II, or Altare della Patria** (*Victor Emmanuel II Monument, or Altar of the Nation*)

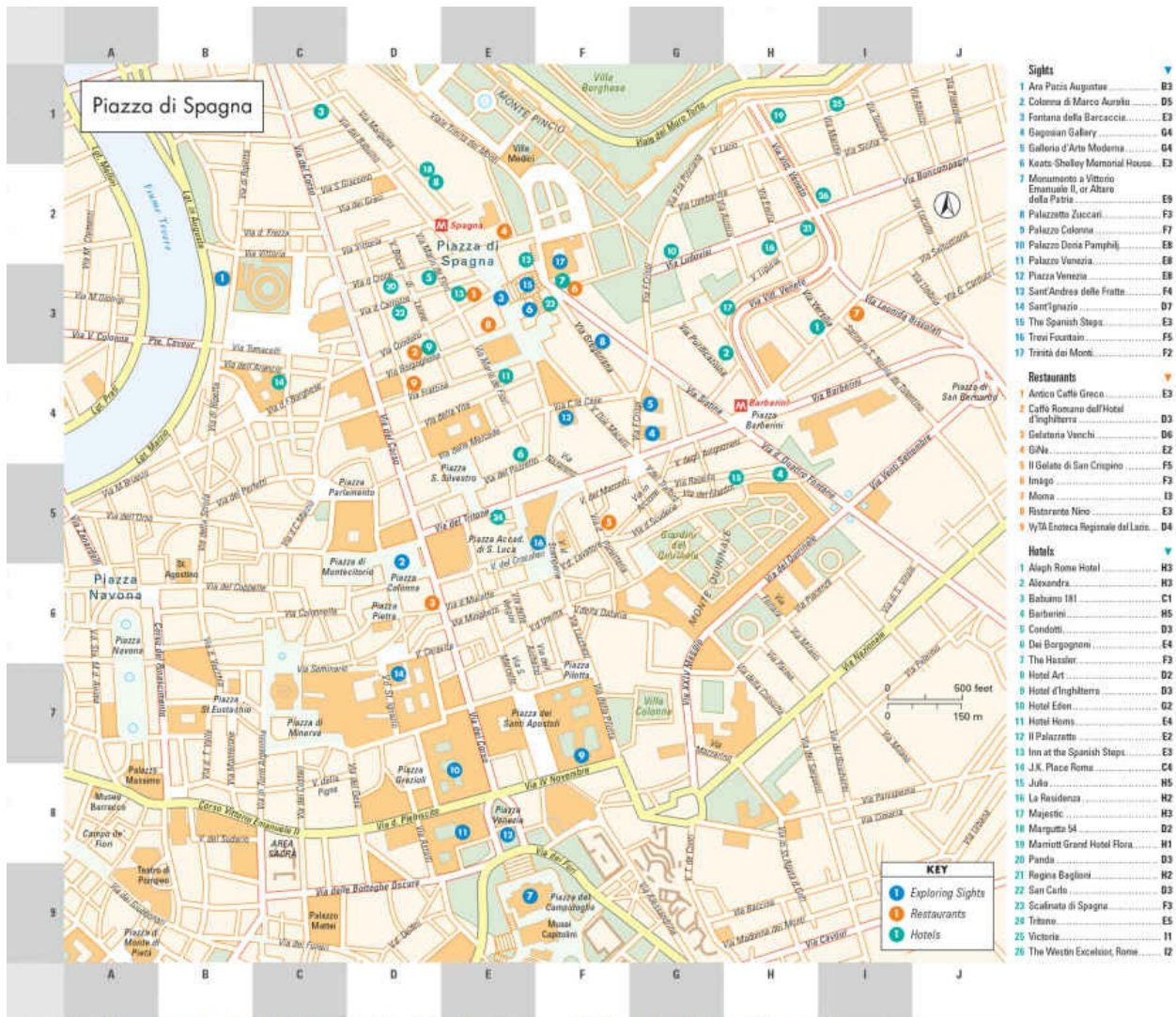
**MEMORIAL** | The huge white mass known as the “Vittoriano” is an inescapable landmark that has been likened to a huge wedding cake or an immense typewriter. Present-day Romans joke that you can only avoid looking at it if you are standing on it, but it was the source of great civic pride at the time of its construction at the turn of the 20th century. To create this elaborate marble monster and the vast piazza on which it stands, its architects blithely destroyed many ancient and medieval buildings and altered the slope of the Campidoglio (Capitoline Hill), which abuts it. Built to honor the unification of Italy and the nation’s first king, Victor Emmanuel II, it also shelters the eternal flame at the tomb of Italy’s Unknown Soldier, killed during World War I. You can’t miss the Monumento, so enjoy neo-imperial grandiosity at its most bombastic.

The underwhelming exhibit inside the building tells the history of the country's unification but the truly enticing feature of the Vittoriano is its rooftop terrace which offers some of the best panoramic views of Rome. The only way up is by elevator (the entrance is located several flights of stairs up on the right as you face the monument). EEntrances on *Piazza Venezia, Piazza del Campidoglio, and Via di San Pietro in Carcere, Piazza di Spagna* P06/0608 [www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it) AFree, elevator €7 mColosseo.

### ★ Palazzo Colonna

HOUSE | Rome's grandest family built themselves Rome's grandest private palace, a fusion of 17th- and 18th-century buildings that has been occupied by the Colonna family for more than 20 generations. The immense palatial residence faces Piazza dei Santi Apostoli on one side and the Quirinale (Quirinal Hill) on the other (with a little bridge over Via della Pilotta linking to the gardens on the hill). The palazzo is still home to some Colonna patricians, but it also holds an exquisite art gallery, which is open to the public on Saturday mornings. The gallery itself a setting of aristocratic grandeur; you might recognize the **Sala Grande** as the site where Audrey Hepburn meets the press in *Roman Holiday*. An ancient red marble column (*colonna* in Italian), which is the family's emblem, looms at one end but the most spectacular feature is the ceiling fresco of the Battle of Lepanto painted by Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi in 1675. Adding to the opulence are works by Poussin, Tintoretto, and Veronese, and a number of portraits of illustrious members of the family such as Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo's muse and longtime friend. There is a guided tour in English at noon that is included in your entrance fee and can help to navigate through the array of madonnas, saints, goddesses, popes, and cardinals to see Annibale Carracci's lonely *Beaneater*, spoon at the ready and front teeth missing. The gallery also has a café with a pleasant terrace. E*Via della Pilotta 17, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6784350 [www.galleriacolonna.it](http://www.galleriacolonna.it) A€12 CClosed Sun.–Fri. mBarberini.





## Rome's Fountains S

Anyone who's thrown a coin backward over their shoulder into the Fontana di Trevi to ensure a return to Rome appreciates the magic of the city's fountains. From the magnificence of the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi in Piazza Navona to the graceful caprice of the Fontana delle Tartarughe in the Jewish Ghetto, the water-spouting sculptures seem as essential to their piazzas as the cobblestones and other buildings that surround them.

Rome's original fountains date back to ancient times, when they were part of the city's remarkable aqueduct system. But from AD 537 to 1562, the waterworks were in disrepair, and the city's fountains lay dry and crumbling. Romans were left to draw their water from the Tiber and from

wells. During the Renaissance, the popes brought running water back to the city as a means of currying political favor. To mark the restoration of the Virgin Aqueduct, architect Giacomo della Porta designed 18 unassuming, functional fountains. Each consisted of a large basin with two or three levels of smaller basins in the center, which were built and placed throughout the city at points along the water line.

Although nearly all of della Porta's fountains remain, their spare Renaissance design is virtually unrecognizable. With the Baroque era, most were elaborately redecorated with dolphins, obelisks, and sea monsters. Of this next generation of Baroque fountaineers, the most famous is Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Bernini's writhing, muscular creatures of myth adorn most of Rome's most visible fountains, including the Fontana di Trevi (perhaps named for the three streets, or "*tre vie*," that converge at its piazza); the Fontana del Nettuno, with its tritons, in Piazza Barberini; and, in Piazza Navona, the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi, whose hulking figures represented the four great rivers of the known world: the Nile, the Ganges, the Danube, and the Plata.

The most common type of fountain in Rome, however, is a kind rarely noted by visitors: the small, inconspicuous drinking fountains that burble away from side-street walls, old stone niches, and fire hydrant-like installations on street corners. You can drink this water, and many of these *fontanelle* even have pipes fitted with a little hole from which water shoots up when you press your hand under the main spout.

## ★ Palazzo Doria Pamphilj

**HOUSE** | Along with the Palazzo Colonna and the Galleria Borghese, this dazzling family palace provides the best glimpse of aristocratic Rome. The main attractions in the gilded galleries are the legendary Old Master paintings, including treasures by Velázquez and Caravaggio; the splendor of the halls themselves; and a unique suite of private family apartments. The understated beauty of the graceful facade, designed by Gabriele Valvassori in 1730, is best admired by crossing to the opposite side of the street for a good view, but it barely hints at the opulence that awaits inside. The palace passed through several hands before becoming the property of the Pamphilj family, who married into the famous seafaring Doria family of Genoa in the 18th century. The family still lives in part of the palace.

The gallery contains 550 paintings, including three by Caravaggio—a young



*St. John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, and the breathtaking Rest on the Flight to Egypt.* Off the eye-popping **Galleria degli Specchi** (Gallery of Mirrors)—a smaller version of the one at Versailles—are the famous Velázquez *Pope Innocent X*, considered by some historians to be the greatest portrait ever painted, and the Bernini bust of the same Pamphilj pope. The delightful audio guide is included in the ticket price and narrated by the current heir, Prince Jonathan Doria Pamphilj, who divulges an intimate family history. E *Via del Corso 305, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6797323 [www.doriapamphilj.it](http://www.doriapamphilj.it) A€12 mBarberini.

### **Palazzo Venezia**

**MUSEUM** | The centerpiece of the eponymous piazza, this was Rome's first great Renaissance palace. It was originally built for Venetian cardinal Pietro Barbo (who eventually became Pope Paul II), but it was repurposed in the 20th century by Mussolini, who used it to harangue crowds with speeches from the balcony over the finely carved door. Lights were left on through the night during his reign to suggest that the Fascist leader worked without pause. The palace is now open to the public and rooms include frescoes by Giorgio Vasari and an Algardi sculpture of Pope Innocent X. There are many decorative art exhibits inside and the loggia has a pleasant view over the tranquil garden courtyard, a million miles away from the chaos of Piazza Venezia on the other side of the building. The ticket price includes an audio guide. E *Via del Plebiscito 118, Piazza di Spagna* P06/69994388 [www.museopalazzovenezia.beniculturali.it](http://www.museopalazzovenezia.beniculturali.it) A€10 CClosed Mon.

### **Palazzetto Zuccari**

**CASTLE/PALACE** | This amusing *palazzo* was designed in 1591 by noted painter Federico Zuccari (1540–1609), who frescoed the first floor of his custom-built home. Typical of the outré Mannerist style of the period, the two windows and the main door are designed to look like monsters with mouths gaping wide. Zuccari—whose frescoes adorn many Roman churches, including Trinità dei Monti just up the block—sank all of his money into his new home, dying in debt before his curious memorial, as it turned out to be, was completed. Today, it is home to the German state-run Bibliotheca Hertziana, a prestigious fine-arts library. Access is reserved for scholars, but the pristine facade can be admired for free. Leading up to the quaint Piazza

della Trinità del Monti, the nearby Via Gregoriana is quite charming and has long been one of Rome's most elegant addresses, home to such residents as 19th-century French painter Ingres and Valentino's first couture salon. E*Via Gregoriana 30, Piazza di Spagna* P06/69993242 *Bibliotheca Hertziana mSpagna*.

### **Piazza Venezia**

**PLAZA** | The geographic heart of the city, this is the spot from which all distances from Rome are calculated and the main center of city traffic. It was transformed in the late 19th century when much older ruins were destroyed to make room for a modern capital city (and a massive monument to unified Italy's first king). Piazza Venezia stands at what was the beginning of Via Flaminia, the ancient Roman road leading northeast across Italy to Fano on the Adriatic Sea. The Via Flaminia was, and remains, a vital artery, and the part which leads from Piazza Venezia to Piazza del Popolo is now known as Via del Corso, after the horse races (*corse*) that were run here during the wild Roman carnival celebrations of the 17th and 18th centuries. It also happens to be one of Rome's busiest shopping streets. The massive female bust near the church of San Marco in the corner of the piazza, a fragment of a statue of Isis, is known to the Romans as Madama Lucrezia. This was one of the "talking statues" on which anonymous poets hung verses pungent with political satire, a practice that has not entirely disappeared. E*Piazza Venezia, Piazza di Spagna*.

### **Sant'Andrea delle Fratte**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Copies have now replaced Bernini's original angels on the Ponte Sant'Angelo, but two of the originals can be found here, placed on either side of the high altar. The door in the right aisle leads into one of Rome's hidden gardens, where orange trees bloom in the cloister. Borromini's fantastic contributions—the dome and a curious bell tower with its droop-winged angels looking out over the city—are best seen from Via di Capo le Case, across Via dei Due Macelli. E*Via di Sant'Andrea delle Fratte 1, at Via della Mercede, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6793191 [www.santandreadellefratte.it](http://www.santandreadellefratte.it) mSpagna.

### **★ Sant'Ignazio**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Rome's second Jesuit church, this 17th-century landmark set on a Rococo piazza harbors some of the city's most magnificent trompe-l'oeil. To get the full effect of the marvelous illusionistic ceiling by priest-artist Andrea Pozzo, stand on the small yellow disk set into the floor of the nave. The heavenly vision above you, seemingly extending upward almost indefinitely, represents the *Allegory of the Missionary Work of the Jesuits* and is part of Pozzo's cycle of works in this church exalting the early history of the Jesuit Order, whose founder was the reformer Ignatius of Loyola. The saint soars heavenward, supported by a cast of thousands, creating a jaw-dropping effect that was fully intended to rival the glorious ceiling produced by Baciccia in the nearby mother church of Il Gesù. Be sure to have coins handy for the machine that switches on the lights so you can marvel at the false dome, which is actually a flat canvas—a trompe-l'oeil trick Pozzo used when the architectural budget drained dry. The dazzling church hardly stops there: scattered around the nave are several awe-inspiring altars; their soaring columns, gold-on-gold decoration, and gilded statues are pure splendor. The church is often host to concerts of sacred music performed by choirs from all over the world. Look for posters by the main doors or check the website for more information. *EPiazza Sant'Ignazio, Piazza Navona P06/6794406*  
[www.chiesasantignazio.it](http://www.chiesasantignazio.it).

### ★ **The Spanish Steps**

**BUILDING | FAMILY** | The iconic Spanish Steps (often called simply *la scalinata*, or “the staircase,” by Italians) and the Piazza di Spagna from which they ascend both get their names from the Spanish Embassy to the Vatican on the piazza—even though the staircase was built with French funds by an Italian in 1723. In honor of a diplomatic visit by the King of Spain, the hillside was transformed by architect Francesco de Sanctis with a spectacular piece of urban planning to link the church of Trinità dei Monti at the top with the Via Condotti below. In an allusion to the church, the staircase is divided by three landings (beautifully lined by potted azaleas mid-April–mid-May). Bookending the bottom of the steps are two beloved holdovers from the 18th century, when the area was known as the “English Ghetto”: to the right, the Keats-Shelley House, and to the left, Babington's Tea Rooms—both beautifully redolent of the era of the Grand Tour. For weary sightseers who find the 135 steps too daunting, there is an elevator at Vicolo del Bottino 8,

next to the Metro entrance. (Those with mobility problems should be aware that there is still a small flight of stairs after, however, and that the elevator is sporadically closed for repair.) At the bottom of the steps, Bernini's splendid "Barcaccia" (sinking ship) fountain dates to the early 17th century and still spouts drinking water from the ancient Aqua Vergine aqueduct. *EPiazza di Spagna mSpagna.*

### ★ Trevi Fountain

**FOUNTAIN** | Alive with rushing waters commanded by an imperious sculpture of Oceanus, the Fontana di Trevi has been all about theatrical effects from the start; it is an aquatic marvel in a city filled with them. The fountain's unique drama is largely due to its location: its vast basin is squeezed into the tight confluence of three little streets (the *tre vie*, which may give the fountain its name), with cascades emerging as if from the wall of Palazzo Poli. The dream of a fountain emerging full-force from a palace was first envisioned by Bernini and Pietro da Cortona from Pope Urban VIII's plan to rebuild an older fountain, which had earlier marked the end-point of the ancient Aqua Vergine aqueduct, created in 18 BC by Agrippa. Three popes later, under Pope Clement XIII, Nicolo Salvi finally broke ground with his winning design. Unfortunately, Salvi did not live to see his masterpiece of sculpted seashells, roaring sea beasts, and the diva-like mermaids completed; he caught a cold and died while working in the culverts of the aqueduct 11 years before the fountain was finally finished in 1762.

Everyone knows the famous legend that if you throw a coin into the Trevi Fountain you will ensure a return trip to the Eternal City, but not everyone knows how to do it the right way. You must toss a coin with your right hand over your left shoulder, with your back to the fountain. One coin means you'll return to Rome; two, you'll return *and* fall in love; three, you'll return, find love, and marry. The fountain grosses some €600,000 a year, and with every cent going to the Italian Red Cross, which is why Fendi was willing to foot the bill and fully funded the Trevi's marvelous recent restoration. *EPiazza di Trevi, Piazza di Spagna mBarberini.*

### Trinità dei Monti

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Standing high above the Spanish Steps, this 16th-century

church has a rare double-tower facade, suggestive of late-French Gothic style; in fact, the French crown paid for the church's construction. Today, it is beautiful primarily for its dramatic location and magnificent views. The obelisk in front was moved here in 1789, but dates back to the early years of the Roman Empire. *EPiazza della Trinità dei Monti, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6794179 [www.trinitadeimonti.net](http://www.trinitadeimonti.net) CClosed Mon. mSpagna.

## r Restaurants

During the day, the area around the Spanish Steps is a hotbed of tourists, shoppers, and office workers. It gets significantly quieter at night and, as a result, it's easy to fall into tourist traps and overpriced hotel dining. Stick to recommended restaurants.

### Antico Caffè Greco

\$ | CAFÉ | Pricey Antico Caffè Greco is a national landmark and Rome's oldest café; its red-velvet chairs, marble tables, and marble busts have seen the likes of Byron, Shelley, Keats, Goethe, and Casanova. Add to this the fact that it's in the middle of the shopping madness on the upscale Via dei Condotti, and you won't be surprised that the place is often filled with tourists. **Known for:** lavish historic design; perfect espresso; crystal goblets and high prices to match. *DAverage main: €12 E*Via dei Condotti 86, Piazza di Spagna P06/6791700 [www.anticocaffegreco.eu](http://www.anticocaffegreco.eu) mSpagna.

### Caffè Romano dell'Hotel d'Inghilterra

\$\$\$ | ECLECTIC | With *orario continuato*, or nonstop operating hours (noon till late at night), this sleek spot in the Hotel d'Inghilterra caters to jet-setters and hotel guests. The creative global menu can mean international misfires, so it's best to select from among the authentic northern Italian meat and southern Italian seafood dishes such as boar with polenta, seafood soup, or classic pastas. **Known for:** enviable outdoor seating; truffle pasta; signature Caesar salad with prawns. *DAverage main: €28 E*Hotel d'Inghilterra, Via Borgognona 4M, Piazza di Spagna P06/69981500 [www.starhotelscollezione.com/en/our-hotels/hotel-d-inghilterra-rome/dining/cafe-romano.html](http://www.starhotelscollezione.com/en/our-hotels/hotel-d-inghilterra-rome/dining/cafe-romano.html) mSpagna.

## Gelateria Venchi

\$ | ITALIAN | Established in 1878, Venchi is one of Italy's premier chocolate and confectionery makers, and you'll see the brand all over the country. At this brick-and-mortar shop, you can buy chocolate as well as artisanal gelato, made fresh daily. **Known for:** free-flowing melted chocolate; creamy gelato flavors; packaged candies. *DAverage main: €5 E* Via del Corso 335, Piazza di Spagna P06/69797790 mSpagna.

## GiNa

\$ | CAFÉ | "Homey minimalism" isn't a contradiction at this multilevel whitewashed caffè with a modern edge. The menu offers various bruschette, mixed salads, and sandwiches, making this a great spot for a light lunch or aperitivo at a reasonable price (considering the high-end neighborhood); and the sweets are top-notch, whether you're in the mood for gelato, pastries, fruit with yogurt, or even cheesecake. **Known for:** packed picnic baskets; light, fresh sandwiches; popular hot chocolate. *DAverage main: €10 E* Via San Sebastianello 7A, Piazza di Spagna P06/6780251 [www.ginaroma.com](http://www.ginaroma.com) CNo dinner mSpagna.

## Il Gelato di San Crispino

\$ | CAFÉ | Many people say this is the best gelato in Rome, and though it's hard to pick just one, this is definitely the place to go if you want a delicious iced treat around the corner from the Trevi Fountain. The shop even had a cameo in the movie *Eat, Pray, Love* and is known for keeping its gelato hidden under metal covers in order to best preserve the quality. **Known for:** seasonal fruit flavors; offerings only cups and no cones; wine-based gelato. *DAverage main: €4 E* Via della Panetteria 42, Piazza di Spagna P06/6793924 [www.ilgelatodisancrispino.it](http://www.ilgelatodisancrispino.it) mBarberini.

## Imàgo

\$\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | Excellence is at the forefront of everything at Imàgo, the Michelin-starred restaurant inside the legendary Hotel Hassler, and it's all a memorable ode to the international travels of executive chef Francesco Apreda. You can order à la carte, but this is the place to splurge on a tasting menu. **Known for:** tempting tasting menus; Asian-Italian spice fusions; sweeping city views from rooftop terrace. *DAverage main: €50 E* Hotel



Hassler, Piazza Trinità dei Monti 6, Piazza di Spagna P06/69934726  
[www.hotelhasslerroma.com/en/restaurants-bars/imago](http://www.hotelhasslerroma.com/en/restaurants-bars/imago) CNo lunch  
mSpagna.

### ★ Moma

\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | Across the street from Hotel Aleph, a favorite of the design *trendoisie*, modern, Michelin-starred Moma attracts well-heeled businessmen at lunch but turns into a more intimate affair for dinner. The kitchen turns out hits as it experiments with *nouvelle cuisine*, but the seared scallops, plump and sweet, are a real find, and the chestnut flour lasagna with Castelmagno cheese is extremely tasty. **Known for:** pasta with a twist; creative presentation; affordable fine dining. DAverage main: €25 E Via San Basilio 42/43, Piazza di Spagna P06/42011798 [www.ristorantemoma.it](http://www.ristorantemoma.it) CClosed Sun. mBarberini.

### ★ Ristorante Nino

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | Almost more of a landmark than an eatery, Nino has been a favorite among international journalists and the rich and famous since the 1960s and does not seem to have changed at all over the decades. The interior is country rustic *alla toscana*, and the menu accordingly sticks to the Tuscan classics. **Known for:** warm crostini spread with pâté; upscale old-school Italian vibe; ribollita (Tuscan bean soup). DAverage main: €28 E Via Borgognona 11, Piazza di Spagna P06/6786752 [www.ristorantenino.it](http://www.ristorantenino.it) CClosed Sun., and Aug. mSpagna.

### ★ VyTA Enoteca Regionale del Lazio

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | This sleek wine bar and restaurant is just a short walk from the Spanish Steps and its modern design looks the part among the fashion-forward streets. However, it's unique for the fact that it's owned and operated by the Regione Lazio (the state government within which Rome sits), and the mantra is all about showcasing Laziale products: everything from the cheeses to the wines to bottled water is local. **Known for:** chic contemporary style; excellent carbonara; extensive list of local wines. DAverage main: €16 E Via Frattina 94, Piazza di Spagna P06/87716018 [www.vytaenotecalazio.it/en](http://www.vytaenotecalazio.it/en) mBarberini.

## h Hotels

If being right in the heart of Rome's shopping district and within walking distance of major sights is a priority, this is the place to stay. You'll find a wide range of accommodations here—exclusive boutique hotels with over-the-top amenities as well as moderately priced urban bed-and-breakfasts and *pensioni* with clean, comfortable rooms.

### ★ Aleph Rome Hotel

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Fashionable couples tend to favor the Aleph, a former bank-turned-Rome luxury hotel where the motto seems to be “more marble, everywhere.” Now part of Hilton's Curio Collection, the hotel has ample facilities that include two pools (one in the spa and one on the roof), a cigar lounge, a cocktail bar, and a restaurant with an Italian-born but Japan-trained chef. **Pros:** free access to the spa for hotel guests; award-winning design; terrace with pool. **Cons:** rooms are too petite for the price; rooftop views don't showcase Rome's most flattering side; buffet breakfast not included. DRooms from: €380 E Via San Basilio 15, Piazza di Spagna P06/4229001 [walephrome.com](http://walephrome.com) a88 rooms XNo meals mBarberini.

### Alexandra

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | For nearly a century the hotel Alexandra has been a family affair, and distinguished style and moderate prices have allowed it to hold its own against its flashier big brothers and sisters on the upscale Via Veneto. **Pros:** great location near Piazza Barberini for sightseeing, restaurants, and transportation; decorated with authentic antiques; free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** mostly tiny rooms and tinier bathrooms; breakfast is standard fare; not all rooms have undergone updates. DRooms from: €280 E Via Veneto 18, Piazza di Spagna P06/4881943 [www.hotelalexandraroma.com](http://www.hotelalexandraroma.com) a60 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini.

### Babuino 181

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | On chic via del Babuino, known for its high-end boutiques, jewelry stores, and antiques shops, this discreet and stylish hotel is an ideal Roman pied à terre that has spacious rooms spread over two historic buildings. **Pros:** spacious suites; luxury Frette linens; iPhone docks and other

handy in-room amenities. **Cons:** rooms can be a bit noisy; breakfast is nothing special; annex rooms feel removed from service staff. *DRooms from: €350* EVia Babuino 181, Piazza di Spagna P06/32295295 [www.romeluxurysuites.com/babuino](http://www.romeluxurysuites.com/babuino) a24 rooms XNo meals mFlaminio, Spagna.

### Barberini

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This elegant four-star hotel, housed in a 19th-century palazzo near Piazza Barberini, has old-world luxury and charm an easy distance from the Metro, the Trevi Fountain, and sophisticated Via Veneto. **Pros:** beautiful views from the rooftop terrace; located on a quiet side street close to several important attractions; nice spa facilities. **Cons:** some rooms are on the small side; not all rooms have bathtubs; design feels a bit dated. *DRooms from: €250* EVia Rasella 3, Piazza di Spagna P06/4814993 [www.hotelbarberini.com](http://www.hotelbarberini.com) a39 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini.

### Condotti

\$\$ | B&B/INN | Near the most expensive shopping street in Rome, Via dei Condotti, and one block from the Spanish Steps, this delightful little hotel is all about peace, comfort, and location. **Pros:** soundproof rooms with terraces; individual climate control; gorgeous decor. **Cons:** small rooms; tiny elevator; annex rooms on a different street. *DRooms from: €200* EVia Mario de' Fiori 37, Piazza di Spagna P06/6794661 [www.hotelcondotti.com](http://www.hotelcondotti.com) a21 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

### Dei Borgognoni

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Travelers who love peace and tranquility appreciate the position of this quietly chic hotel set in a prestigious palazzo from the 1800s. **Pros:** free in-room Wi-Fi; some rooms have private balconies or terraces; small pets (6 kg [13 pounds]) are permitted. **Cons:** some rooms are small for the price; cramped bathrooms; breakfast lacks variety. *DRooms from: €280* EVia del Bufalo 126, Piazza di Spagna P06/69941505 [www.hotelborgognoni.it](http://www.hotelborgognoni.it) a51 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini.

### ★ The Hassler

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | When it comes to million-dollar views, the best place to stay in

the whole city is the Hassler, so it's no surprise that generations of fans, many rich and famous (Tom Cruise, Jennifer Lopez, Gwyneth Paltrow, and the Beckhams among them) are willing to pay top dollar to stay at this exclusive hotel atop the Spanish Steps. **Pros:** prime location and panoramic views; private rooftop with bar service upon request; sauna access included with each reservation. **Cons:** VIP rates (10% V.A.T. not included); breakfast not included (continental option is €29 plus 10% V.A.T. per person); rooms are updated on a rolling basis, leaving some feeling dated. *DRooms from: €600 EPiazza Trinità dei Monti 6, Piazza di Spagna P06/699340, 800/223–6800 in U.S. [www.hotelhasslerroma.com](http://www.hotelhasslerroma.com) a96 rooms XNo meals mSpagna.*

### Hotel Art

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | High fashion Rome meets chic contemporary art gallery at this hotel that sits on Via Margutta, “the street of painters.” As you glide through the stylish lobby, the smart furnishings and unique fixtures in the public spaces of the hotel feels positively eclectic, but the color-coordinated guest rooms have been done in a more standard contemporary style (sleek wood headboards accented with handmade Florentine leather, puffy white comforters, bathrobes, and high-speed Internet). **Pros:** hotel has an ultrahip art-gallery feel; free access to the fitness center with sauna and Turkish baths; comfortable beds. **Cons:** glass floors are noisy at night; courtyard bar crowd may keep you awake; sometimes more about form over function, and the air-conditioning can be iffy. *DRooms from: €260 EVia Margutta 56, Piazza di Spagna P06/328711 [www.hotelart.it](http://www.hotelart.it) a46 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.*

### Hotel d’Inghilterra

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Situated in a stately 17th-century building and founded in 1845, Hotel D’Inghilterra has a long, storied history: it has been used as a guesthouse for aristocratic travelers visiting a noble family who once lived across the cobblestone street, and has been the home away from home to various monarchs, movie stars, and some of the greatest writers of all time—Lord Byron, John Keats, Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, and Elizabeth Taylor among them. **Pros:** distinct character and opulence; turndown service (with chocolates); excellent in-house restaurant. **Cons:** elevator is small and slow; the location, despite soundproofing, is still noisy; some rooms badly in need of renovations and maintenance. *DRooms from: €400 EVia Bocca di*

Leone 14, Piazza di Spagna P06/699811  
[www.starhotelscollezione.com/en/our-hotels/hotel-d-inghilterra-rome](http://www.starhotelscollezione.com/en/our-hotels/hotel-d-inghilterra-rome) a88  
rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

### ★ Hotel Eden

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Once a favorite haunt of Ingrid Bergman, Hemingway, and Fellini, this superlative hotel combines dashing elegance, exquisitely lush decor, and stunning vistas of Rome with true Italian hospitality to create one of the city's top luxury lodgings. **Pros:** gorgeous rooftop terrace restaurant; tranquil spa facilities; 24-hour room service. **Cons:** breakfast not included (and very expensive, at €45); gym is standard but small; some rooms overlook an unremarkable courtyard. DRooms from: €700 EVia Ludovisi 49, Piazza di Spagna P06/478121  
[www.dorchestercollection.com/en/rome/hotel-eden](http://www.dorchestercollection.com/en/rome/hotel-eden) a98 rooms XNo meals mSpagna.

### Hotel Homs

\$\$ | HOTEL | Tucked away on a quiet street near the Spanish Steps, this midsize hotel is convenient to great caffè, serious shopping, and all the sights. **Pros:** walking distance to Piazza di Spagna; steps away from a big bus hub and close to the Metro; helpful staff. **Cons:** breakfast not included; small rooms and bathrooms; rickety old elevator. DRooms from: €170 EVia della Vite 71–72, Piazza di Spagna P06/6792976 [www.hotelhoms.it](http://www.hotelhoms.it) a59 rooms XNo meals mBarberini, Spagna.

### ★ Il Palazzetto

\$\$\$\$ | B&B/INN | Once a retreat for one of Rome's richest noble families, this 15th-century house is one of the most intimate and luxurious hotels in Rome, with gorgeous terraces and a rooftop bar where you can watch the never-ending theater of the Spanish Steps. **Pros:** location and view; free Wi-Fi; guests have full access to the Hassler's services. **Cons:** restaurant often rented out for crowded special events; bedrooms do not access communal terraces; often books up far in advance, particularly in high season. DRooms from: €350 EVicolo del Bottino 8, Piazza di Spagna P06/699341000  
[www.ilpalazzettoroma.com](http://www.ilpalazzettoroma.com) a4 rooms XNo meals mSpagna.

### **Inn at the Spanish Steps**

\$\$\$\$ | B&B/INN | Occupying the upper floors of a centuries-old town house it shares with Antico Caffè Greco, this elegant setting was once the Roman home of fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen. **Pros:** rooms with superb views of the Spanish Steps; afternoon snacks and outstanding breakfast buffet; impressive design. **Cons:** hefty charges for extras like early check-in; area can be noisy due to crowds at the Spanish Steps; rooms located in the annex don't always receive the same attention as those directly in the hotel. DRooms from: €420 E Via dei Condotti 85, Piazza di Spagna P06/69925657 [www.theinnatthespanishsteps.com](http://www.theinnatthespanishsteps.com) a27 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

### **J.K. Place Roma**

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Following in the footsteps of its sister hotels in Capri and Florence, this intimate boutique hotel is located a stone's throw from the mausoleum of Augustus, not far from the Spanish Steps and Piazza del Popolo. **Pros:** staff are eager to please; excellent meals at rooftop lounge; complimentary minibar. **Cons:** no fitness center; not all rooms have a balcony; some rooms are on the small side. DRooms from: €700 E Via Monte d'Oro 30, Piazza di Spagna P06/982634 [www.jkroma.com](http://www.jkroma.com) a30 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

### **Julia**

\$\$ | HOTEL | This small three-star hotel, situated on a small cobblestone street just behind Piazza Barberini and a short walk to the Trevi Fountain, offers clean, comfortable rooms in the center of Rome that won't break the bank. **Pros:** safe neighborhood; convenient to sights and transportation; moderate prices for a central area. **Cons:** some street noise at night; very basic accommodations; some of the rooms are dark. DRooms from: €180 E Via Rasella 29, Piazza di Spagna P06/4881637 [www.hoteljulia.it](http://www.hoteljulia.it) a33 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini.

### **La Residenza**

\$\$ | HOTEL | This cozy hotel in a converted town house near Via Veneto is widely popular among American travelers thanks to its location close to the embassy, American-style breakfast, and helpful staff. **Pros:** free breakfast buffet; spacious rooms with balconies; charming decor. **Cons:** the building's



exterior doesn't compare to its interior; disappointing views out windows; rooms are in need of restyling. DRooms from: €180 E Via Emilia 22/24, Piazza di Spagna P06/4880789 [www.hotel-la-residenza.com](http://www.hotel-la-residenza.com) a29 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

## Majestic

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | The first luxury hotel built on the Via Veneto, in 1889, the luxurious Majestic was long a favorite among Roman nobility and high society (it served as a backdrop in Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*). **Pros:** silky linens on big, plush beds; some rooms have private balconies overlooking Via Veneto; 24-hour fitness center. **Cons:** free Wi-Fi is slow; not all rooms are spacious; elevator needs to be upgraded. DRooms from: €400 E Via Veneto 50, Piazza di Spagna P06/421441 [www.hotelmajestic.com](http://www.hotelmajestic.com) a83 rooms XNo meals mSpagna.

## ★ Margutta 54

\$\$\$\$ | B&B/INN | Tucked away on a quiet, leafy street known for its art galleries, this four-suite property is like your very own hip, New York–style loft in the center of old-world Rome, with top-drawer amenities, contemporary design, and an ivy-draped courtyard. **Pros:** studio-loft feel in center of town; complete privacy; deluxe furnishings. **Cons:** breakfast not included (€20 per person) and served at sister hotel Babuino 181; no staff available on-site after 8 pm; no elevator to reach rooms on higher floors. DRooms from: €380 E Via Margutta 54, Piazza di Spagna P06/69921907 [www.romeluxurysuites.com/margutta](http://www.romeluxurysuites.com/margutta) a4 suites XNo meals mSpagna.

## Marriott Grand Hotel Flora

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This handsome hotel at the top of Via Veneto next to the Villa Borghese park is something of a beacon on the Rome landscape. **Pros:** convenient location and pleasant staff; spectacular view from the terrace; fitness center and spa. **Cons:** sometimes the noise from Via Veneto drifts in; crowded with businessmen and big tour groups; free Internet only for Marriott loyalty members. DRooms from: €415 E Via Veneto 191, Piazza di Spagna P06/489929 [www.hotelfloraroma.com](http://www.hotelfloraroma.com) a155 rooms XNo meals mBarberini, Spagna.

## Panda

\$ | HOTEL | Located near the Spanish Steps, this little gem of a hotel has excellent service that gives you more bang for your buck. **Pros:** free Wi-Fi; very high ceilings; on a quiet street, but still close to the Spanish Steps. **Cons:** dim lighting; no elevator directly to floor; some rooms share bathrooms. DRooms from: €120 EVia della Croce 35, Piazza di Spagna P06/6780179 [www.hotelpanda.it](http://www.hotelpanda.it) a28 rooms XNo meals mSpagna.

## Regina Baglioni

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | The former home of Queen Margherita of Savoy, the Regina Baglioni, which enjoys a prime spot on the Via Veneto, is still a favorite among today's international jet-setters. **Pros:** nice decor; luxury on-site spa; excellent on-site restaurant and bar. **Cons:** some rooms are noisy; service is hit-or-miss; spotty Internet. DRooms from: €380 EVia Veneto 72, Piazza di Spagna P06/421111 [www.reginabaglioni.com](http://www.reginabaglioni.com) a136 rooms XNo meals mBarberini.

## San Carlo

\$\$ | HOTEL | This renovated 17th-century-mansion-turned-hotel offers no-frills accommodation at reasonable rates, right around the corner from the Spanish Steps and the best luxury shopping in Rome. **Pros:** some rooms have balconies with views of historic Rome; rooftop garden; attentive staff. **Cons:** some rooms are on the small side; rooms can be noisy; not all rooms have been recently updated. DRooms from: €200 EVia delle Carrozze 92–93, Piazza di Spagna P06/6784548 [www.hotelsancarloloroma.com](http://www.hotelsancarloloroma.com) a52 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

## ★ Scalinata di Spagna

\$\$ | B&B/INN | Perched atop the Spanish Steps, this charming boutique hotel makes guests fall in love over and over again—so popular, in fact, it's often booked far in advance. **Pros:** friendly and helpful concierge; fresh fruit in guest rooms; free Wi-Fi throughout. **Cons:** hike up the hill to the hotel; small rooms; no porter and no elevator. DRooms from: €190 EPiazza Trinità dei Monti 17, Piazza di Spagna P06/45686150 [www.hotelscalinata.com](http://www.hotelscalinata.com) a16 rooms XFree breakfast mSpagna.

## Tritone

\$\$ | HOTEL | This trusty hotel offers modern accommodations in a great location, steps from Rome's majestic Trevi Fountain. **Pros:** walking distance to major attractions; modern rustic decor; friendly staff. **Cons:** rooms can be noisy despite soundproofing; breakfast isn't very exciting; spotty Wi-Fi. *DRooms from: €160 E* Via del Tritone 210, Piazza di Spagna P06/69922575 [www.tritonehotel.com](http://www.tritonehotel.com) a43 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini.

## Victoria

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Just across the street from Villa Borghese, this four-star boutique hotel, built in 1889 and decorated like a throwback to that era, is popular with American business travelers. **Pros:** view of the gardens; quiet and comfortable; rooftop bar and restaurant. **Cons:** it's a hike to most sights; rooms are small; no tea or coffeemakers in room. *DRooms from: €230 E* Via Campania 41, Piazza di Spagna P06/423701 [www.hotelvictoriaroma.com](http://www.hotelvictoriaroma.com) a110 rooms XNo meals.

## The Westin Excelsior, Rome

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | Ablaze with lights at night, this seven-layer-cake hotel—topped off by its famous cupola—is popular with visiting diplomats (who might be headed to the U.S. Embassy across the street), celebrities, and American conference groups. **Pros:** elegant period furnishings and decor; health club and indoor pool; excellent historic restaurant. **Cons:** worn floors distract from nice furnishings; decor is grand but in need of updating; expensive Wi-Fi. *DRooms from: €435 E* Via Veneto 125, Piazza di Spagna P06/47081 [www.westinrome.com](http://www.westinrome.com) a316 rooms XNo meals mBarberini, Spagna.

## n Nightlife

After 9 pm, Piazza di Spagna holds the title for being the quietest area in the centro storico. Don't expect a party here, but do come to seek out some lovely enotecas.

## BARS

### ★ Antica Birreria Peroni

**BARS/PUBS** | For beer lovers, the Art Nouveau–style halls of Antica Birreria Peroni will enchant you with their turn-of-the-20th-century atmosphere, not to mention the always-flowing taps. Expect casual and filling canteen-style meals with a side of big steins, which are filled with one of the many Peroni favorites on tap. There is a full Italian menu, but this is the place to go for hearty dishes like grilled meat, plus plenty of pints. E*Via di San Marcello 19, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6795310 [www.anticabirreriaaperoni.net](http://www.anticabirreriaaperoni.net).

### Antica Enoteca

**CAFES—NIGHTLIFE** | Piazza di Spagna’s staple wine bar literally corners the market on prime people-watching. Cozy up to the counter to sip a drink under the charming frescoes or snag a coveted outdoor table. In addition to a vast selection of wine, Antica Enoteca has delectable antipasti, perfect for a snack or a light lunch, as well as a full menu of pastas and pizzas. E*Via della Croce 76/b, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6790896 [www.anticaenoteca.com](http://www.anticaenoteca.com) mSpagna.

### Café Doney at the Westin Excelsior

**CAFES—NIGHTLIFE** | Nattily dressed businesspeople and harried tourists enjoy signature martinis at the street-side Café Doney, Via Veneto’s grand dame, in front of the Westin Excelsior. The outdoor tables offer prime people-watching, while the seats inside are set under impossibly sparkly chandeliers amongst impeccable Italian design. The café also offers fresh fruit juices and smoothies for a healthy option. E*Westin Excelsior, Via Vittorio Veneto 125, Piazza di Spagna* P06/47082783 [www.westinrome.com/en/cafe-doney](http://www.westinrome.com/en/cafe-doney).

### Il Marchese

**BARS/PUBS** | With high bar stools and midnight blue accents, Il Marchese feels every bit the sophisticated nightcap stop for trendy Romans. The hot spot is the first amaro bar in Europe, stocking more than 500 labels of the bitter, herbal liqueur which can be served straight or mixed into creative cocktails. Pop in for a tapas-style *aperitivo* or stay for dinner and watch the chef “shop” from his market of gourmet Italian ingredients that takes up part of the space in this swanky restaurant-bar. E*Via di Ripetta 162, Piazza di Spagna* P06/90218872 [www.ilmarcheseroma.it/en/home-en](http://www.ilmarcheseroma.it/en/home-en) mSpagna.

## **Wine Bar at the Palazzetto**

**BARS/PUBS** | The prize for perfect aperitivo spot goes to the Palazzetto, with excellent drinks and appetizers, as well as a breathtaking view of Rome's domes and rooftops—all from its fifth-floor rooftop overlooking Piazza di Spagna. Reach it by climbing the Spanish Steps or getting a lift from the elevator inside the Spagna Metro station. Just keep an eye on the sky, as any chance for a rainy day will close the terrace (as do special events). *EVicolo del Bottino 8, Piazza di Spagna P06/69934560 [www.ilpalazzettoroma.com](http://www.ilpalazzettoroma.com) mSpagna.*

## **p Performing Arts**

### **FILM**

#### **Cinema Barberini**

**FILM** | One of the most commercial and central theaters in the city, Barberini is guaranteed to have at least one film on offer in its original language. It's the best place to see the latest blockbuster without dubbing or find an art film or a recorded opera playing on one of its multiple screens. *EPiazza Barberini 24/26, Piazza di Spagna P06/42010392 [www.multisalabarberini.it](http://www.multisalabarberini.it) mBarberini.*

## **b Shopping**

The Piazza di Spagna area is considered to be the heart and soul of shopping in Rome, with all the international chains, as well as independent shops. If your budget isn't big enough to binge at the high-end fashion houses along Via dei Condotti, try the more moderate shops down Via del Corso, where young Romans come to shop for jeans and inexpensive, trendy clothes. As you move toward Piazza del Popolo, at one end of Via del Corso, you'll find more antiques shops and galleries.

### **ANTIQUES**

#### **Galleria Benucci**

**ANTIQUES/COLLECTIBLES** | With carved and gilded late Baroque and Empire

period furniture and paintings culled from the noble houses of Italy's past, Galleria Benucci is a literal treasure trove. An establishment favored by professionals from Europe and abroad, this conservative gallery next to a former sculpture studio has an astonishing selection of objects in a hushed atmosphere where connoisseurs will find the proprietors only too happy to discuss their latest finds. E*Via del Babuino 150/C, Piazza di Spagna P06/36002190* m*Spagna*.

## BEAUTY

### Antica Farmacia Pesci dal 1552

SPECIALTY STORES | In business since 1552, the Antica Farmacia—likely Rome's oldest pharmacy—is run by a family of pharmacists. The shop's 18th-century furnishings, herbs, and vases evoke Harry Potter's Diagon Alley; and while they don't carry potions, the pharmacists can whip up a just-for-you batch of composite powders, syrups, capsules, gels, and creams to soothe modern ailments. E*Piazza di Trevi 89, Piazza di Spagna P06/6792210* [www.anticafarmaciapesci.it](http://www.anticafarmaciapesci.it) m*Barberini*.

### Castelli Profumerie

PERFUME/COSMETICS | This straightforward Italian perfume shop has been in the business of heavenly scents for more than 50 years. Besides being a perfumed paradise offering an array of labels like Acqua di Parma, Bois 1920, Bond No. 9, and Comme de Garçons, their precise and courteous staff speak multiple languages and know their merchandise, making the experience a lot more pleasant than a dash through duty-free. There are three locations around the city: two on Via Frattina and one on Via Oslavia in the Prati neighborhood. E*Via Frattina 18 and 54, Piazza di Spagna P06/6790339* [www.profumeriecastelli.com](http://www.profumeriecastelli.com) m*Spagna*.

### Pro Fvmvm

PERFUME/COSMETICS | Started in 1996, Pro Fvmvm is fast on its way to becoming a new cult classic in Italian fragrance design. Each of the 20 scents is designed to be unisex and comes complete with a poem that describes the intention of the artisans. Pricey but worth it, their philosophy is that smell can trigger memories more powerfully than any photo so the scents are designed to evoke experiences like walking through a forest or listening to a



thundering Roman fountain. Some of their top-selling perfumes are Acqva e Zvcchero, Fiore d’Ambra, Thvndra, Volo Az 686 (named after a direct flight from Rome to the Caribbean), and Ichnvsa. E*Via Ripetta 10, Piazza di Spagna* P06/3200306 [www.profumum.com](http://www.profumum.com) mSpagna.

## BOOKS AND STATIONERY

### Anglo-American Book Co.

BOOKS/STATIONERY | A large and friendly bookstore with more than 40,000 books in English, Anglo-American Book has been a mecca for English-language reading material in Rome for more than 25 years. Whether you are a study-abroad student in need of an art history or archaeology textbook, or a visitor searching for a light read for the train, there is something for everyone here. Among shelves stuffed from floor-to-ceiling and sometimes several rows deep, book lovers can find both British and American editions and easily spend hours just browsing. The bilingual staff always go the extra mile to find what you need. E*Via della Vite 102, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6795222 [www.aab.it](http://www.aab.it) mSpagna.

### Ex Libris

ANTIQUES/COLLECTIBLES | Founded in 1931 and one of the oldest and largest antiquarian bookshops in Rome, Ex Libris has a distinctive selection of scholarly and collectible books from the 16th to 20th century that will make bookworms drool. The selection includes rare and early editions on art and architecture, music and theater, and literature and humanities as well as maps and prints. E*Via dell’ Umiltà 77/a, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6791540 [www.exlibrisroma.it](http://www.exlibrisroma.it) mBarberini.

### ★ Pineider

BOOKS/STATIONERY | This shop, near Piazza di Spagna, has been making exclusive stationery in Italy since 1774. The first Rome shop opened at the request of the royal household, and this is where the city’s aristocratic families still come for engraved wedding invitations and timeless visiting cards. They also use the best Florentine leather for their wallets, briefcases, and other desk accessories. There’s a second location on Via dei Due Macelli. E*Via di Fontanella Borghese 22, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6878369 [www.pineider.com](http://www.pineider.com) mSpagna.

## CERAMICS AND DECORATIVE ARTS

### Le IV Stagioni

CERAMICS/GLASSWARE | If you're looking to purchase some traditional Italian pottery, Le IV Stagioni has a colorful selection of glazed pots, vases, and charming ceramic-flower wall ornaments made by well-known manufacturers such as Faenza, Capodimonte, Vietri, and Deruta. All can be shipped internationally if you can't quite fit the gorgeous bowls and platters in your suitcase. E*Via dell'Umiltà 30/b, Piazza di Spagna* P06/69941029 m*Barberini*.

## CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

### I Pinco Pallino

CLOTHING | FAMILY | Recently relocated to a larger location, I Pinco Pallino has extraordinary clothing for boys and girls, be it a tulle petal jumper or couture maroon velvet suits. Parents will swoon over their über-fashionable lines for young ones. E*Via Vittoria 35, Piazza di Spagna* P06/3212741 [www.pincopallino.it](http://www.pincopallino.it) m*Spagna*.

### Pure Sermoneta

CLOTHING | FAMILY | Well-heeled moms shop for their budding fashionistas at Pure Sermoneta where you'll find garments straight off the catwalk. High-end luxury labels include Fendi, Diesel, Dior, Marni, Juicy Couture, Nolita, and Gucci, with the designer price tags to rival any adult-sized shopping spree. E*Via Frattina 111, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6794555 [www.puresermoneta.it](http://www.puresermoneta.it).

## CLOTHING

### ★ Brioni

CLOTHING | Founded in 1945, Brioni is hailed for its impeccable craftsmanship in creating made-to-measure menswear. The iconic brand hires the best men's tailors in Italy, who design bespoke suits to exacting standards, measured to the millimeter and completely personalized from a selection of more than 5,000 spectacular fabrics that the customer can select from. A single made-to-measure wool suit will take a minimum of 32 hours to create. Their prêt-à-porter line is also praised for peerless cutting and

stitching. Past and present clients include Clark Gable, Barack Obama, and, of course, James Bond. There is also a branch at Via dei Condotti 21a. *E Via del Babuino 38/40, Piazza di Spagna P06/484517 [www.brioni.com](http://www.brioni.com) mSpagna.*

### **Dolce & Gabbana**

**CLOTHING** | Dolce and Gabbana met in 1980 when both were assistants at a Milan fashion atelier, and they opened their first store in 1982. With a modern aesthetic that screams sex appeal, the brand has always thrived on excess and is known for its bold, creative designs. The Rome store has a glass ceiling above a sparkling chandelier to allow natural light to spill in, illuminating the marble floors, antique brass accents, and (of course) the latest lines for men, women, and even children, plus an expansive accessories area. *E Via dei Condotti 49–51, Piazza di Spagna P06/69924999 [www.dolcegabbana.it](http://www.dolcegabbana.it) mSpagna.*

### **Eddy Monetti**

**CLOTHING** | Eddy Monetti began as a hat shop in Naples more than 130 years ago, and is still known for classic, upscale men's clothing such as jackets, sweaters, slacks, and ties made out of wool, cotton, and cashmere. Sophisticated and pricey, the store carries a range of stylish British- and Italian-made pieces. *E Via Borgognona 36, Piazza di Spagna P06/6794117 [www.eddymonetti.com](http://www.eddymonetti.com) mSpagna.*

### **Elena Mirò**

**CLOTHING** | Elena Mirò is a high-end brand that specializes in sophisticated, beautifully feminine clothes for curvy, European-styled women size 46 (U.S. size 12, U.K. size 14) and up. There are several locations in Rome, including one on Via Nazionale. *E Via Frattina 11–12, Piazza di Spagna P06/6784367 [www.elenamiro.it](http://www.elenamiro.it) mSpagna.*

### **Ermenegildo Zegna**

**CLOTHING** | For more than 100 years, Ermenegildo Zegna has been a powerhouse of men's clothing. Believing that construction and fabric are the key, Zegna is the master of both, and prefers to produce all of the wool fabric they use in order to ensure the high standard of quality. Suits here start from

€1,500, with the top of the line, known as “Couture,” costing considerably more. There is also a line of sportswear and accessories, but this is the place to splurge on a formal, tailored suit. *EVia dei Condotti 58, Piazza di Spagna P06/69940678 [www.zegna.com](http://www.zegna.com) mSpagna.*

### ★ Fendi

**CLOTHING** | Fendi has been a fixture of the Roman fashion landscape since “Mamma” Fendi first opened shop with her husband in 1925. With an eye for crazy genius, she hired Karl Lagerfeld, who began working with the group at the start of his career. His furs and runway antics have made him one of the most influential designers of the 20th century and brought international acclaim to Fendi along the way. The atelier, now owned by the Louis Vuitton group, continues to symbolize Italian glamour at its finest, though the difference in ownership is noticeable. It’s also gotten new life in the Italian press for its “Fendi for Fountains” campaign, which included funding the restoration of Rome’s Trevi Fountain and for moving its global headquarters to a striking Mussolini-era building known as the “square Colosseum” in the city’s EUR neighborhood. The flagship store in Rome can be found on the ground floor of Palazzo Fendi. The upper floors are home to the brand’s seven private suites (the first ever Fendi hotel), and the rooftop hosts Zuma, a modern Japanese restaurant with an oh-so-cool bar that has sweeping views across Rome. *ELargo Carlo Goldoni 419–421, Piazza di Spagna P06/33450890 [www.fendi.com](http://www.fendi.com) mSpagna.*

### Galassia

**CLOTHING** | Classy, avant-garde women’s styles by A-list designers including Gaultier, Westwood, Issey Miyake, and Yamamoto can be found at Galassia. If you’re the type who dares to be different, prefers funky statement accessories, and are in need of some closet therapy, you will love the edgy selection, which gives the store a look that cannot be found elsewhere. *EVia Frattina 20, Piazza di Spagna P06/6797896 [www.galassiaroma.com](http://www.galassiaroma.com) mSpagna.*

### Giorgio Armani

**CLOTHING** | One of the most influential designers of Italian haute couture, Giorgio Armani creates fluid silhouettes and dazzling evening gowns with

sexy peek-a-boo cutouts; his signature cuts are made with the clever-handedness and flawless technique achievable only by working with tracing paper and Italy's finest fabrics over the course of a lifetime. His menswear collection uses traditional textiles like wide-ribbed corduroy and stretch jersey in nontraditional ways while staying true to a clean, masculine aesthetic. The iconic Italian brand has multiple locations in Rome, including another on Via del Babuino, but the flagship store is the best place to find pieces that range from exotic runway-worthy masterpieces to more wearable collections emphasizing casual Italian elegance with just the right touch of whimsy and sexiness. E*Via dei Condotti 77–79, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6991460 [www.giorgioarmani.com](http://www.giorgioarmani.com) mSpagna.

### ★ **Gucci**

**CLOTHING** | Guccio Gucci opened his first leather shop selling luggage in Florence in 1921 and as the glamorous fashion label approaches its centennial, the success of the double-G trademark is unquestionable. Tom Ford joined as creative director in 1994, helping the fashion house move into an era that continues today, maintaining the label's trendiness while bringing in a breath of fresh air, thanks to old-school favorites like reinterpreted horsebit styles and Jackie Kennedy scarves. Now helmed by Alessandro Michele, Gucci remains a fashion must for virtually every A-list celebrity, and their designs have moved from heart-stopping sexy rock star to something classically subdued and retrospectively feminine, making the handbags and accessories more covetable than ever. There's another store on Via Borgognona. E*Via dei Condotti 8, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6790405 [www.gucci.com](http://www.gucci.com) mSpagna.

### ★ **Laura Biagiotti**

**CLOTHING** | For 40 years Laura Biagiotti has been a worldwide ambassador of Italian fashion. Considered the Queen of Cashmere, her soft-as-velvet pullovers have been worn by Sophia Loren, and her snow-white cardigans were said to be a favorite of the late pope John Paul II. Princess Diana even sported one of Biagiotti's cashmere maternity dresses. In addition to stocking the luxe clothing line, the flagship store has a bold red lounge where shoppers can indulge in sampling her line of his-and-her perfumes, or to stay to have purchases customized with Swarovski crystals while sipping a Campari

cocktail. E*Via Belsiana 57, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6791205  
[www.laurabiagiotti.it](http://www.laurabiagiotti.it) m*Spagna*.

## **Missoni**

**CLOTHING** | Notable for its lightweight bohemian knitwear designs with instantly recognizable patterns of zigzags, waves, and stripes (some of which are influenced by folk art), the now high-end brand started in northern Italy producing tracksuits in the 1950s. Missoni now designs everything from elegant evening wear to must-have swimsuits, and is unlike other Italian fashion families: in three generations there have been neither vendettas nor buyouts by huge multinational conglomerates to stain their colorful history. E*Piazza di Spagna 78, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6792555 [www.missoni.it](http://www.missoni.it)  
m*Spagna*.

## ★ **Patrizia Pepe**

**CLOTHING** | One of Florence's best-kept secrets for up-and-coming designs, Patrizia Pepe first emerged on the scene in 1993 with an aesthetic that's both minimalist and bold, combining classic styles with low-slung jeans and jackets with oversize lapels that are bound to draw attention. Her line of shoes is hot-hot-hot for those who can walk on stilts. As a relative newcomer to the crowded Italian fashion scene, the brand's stand-alone fame is still under the radar, but take a look at this shop before the line becomes the next fast-tracked craze. E*Via Frattina 44, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6781851  
[www.patriziapepe.com](http://www.patriziapepe.com) m*Spagna*.

## ★ **Prada**

**CLOTHING** | Besides the devil, plenty of serious shoppers wear Prada season after season, especially those willing to sell their souls for one of their ubiquitous handbags. If you are looking for that blend of old-world luxury with a touch of fashion-forward finesse, you'll hit big here. Mario Prada first founded the Italian luggage brand in 1913, but it has been his granddaughter, Miuccia, who updated the designs into the timeless investment pieces of today. You'll find the Rome store more service-oriented than the New York City branches—a roomy elevator delivers you to a series of thickly carpeted rooms where a flock of discreet assistants will help you pick out dresses, shoes, lingerie, and fashion accessories. The men's store is located at Via dei



Condotti 88/90, while the women's is down the street at 92/95. E*Via dei Condotti 88/90 and 92/95, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6790897 [www.prada.com](http://www.prada.com) mSpagna.

### **Salvatore Ferragamo**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | A major fashion player when it comes to footwear, Hollywood's gliteratti and social butterflies trust their pretty little feet with one brand: Salvatore Ferragamo. With pretty shoes and handbags displayed on pillars like jewels, fans of the brand will think they have died and followed the white light when they enter this store. The Florentine design house also specializes in small leather goods, men's and women's ready-to-wear, and scarves and ties. Men's styles are found at Via dei Condotti 65, women's at 73/74. Want to sleep in Ferragamo-style? Their splendid luxury Portrait Suites Hotel is on the upper floors. E*Via dei Condotti 65 and 73/74, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6781130 [www.ferragamo.com](http://www.ferragamo.com) mSpagna.

### **Trussardi**

**CLOTHING** | Known for its leather-working, this classic design house creates coveted bags with contemporary lines but old-world craftsmanship. Newer ventures include ready-to-wear men's and women's collections and a line of jeans. The next steps for the brand, which was originally founded in Bergamo in 1911, remain to be seen after Gaia Trussardi's recent departure following four generations of keeping the role of creative director inside the family, but it seems to be moving in a more youthful direction. A smaller shop dedicated to accessories in Termini station offers a last chance to pick up a luxury purse or belt before hopping on a train. E*Via Frattina 130, Piazza di Spagna* P06/69380939 [www.trussardi.com](http://www.trussardi.com) mSpagna.

### **★ Valentino**

**CLOTHING** | Since taking the Valentino reins, creative director Pierpaolo Piccioli has faced numerous challenges, the most basic of which is keeping Valentino true to Valentino after the designer's retirement in 2008. He served as accessories designers under Valentino for more than a decade and understands exactly how to make the next generation of Hollywood stars swoon. Valentino has taken over most of Piazza di Spagna, where he lived for decades in a lovely palazzo next to one of the multiple boutiques

showcasing his eponymous designs with a romantic edginess; think studded heels or a showstopping prêt-à-porter evening gown worthy of the Oscars. Rock stars and other music lovers can also have their Valentino guitar straps personalized when they buy one at this enormous boutique. *EPiazza di Spagna 38, Piazza di Spagna P06/94515710 [www.valentino.com](http://www.valentino.com) mSpagna.*

## **Versace**

**CLOTHING** | Versace's Rome flagship is a gem of architecture and design, with Byzantine-inspired mosaic floors and futuristic interiors with transparent walls, not to mention, of course, fashion: here shoppers will find apparel, jewelry, watches, fragrances, cosmetics, and home furnishings in designs every bit as flamboyant as Donatella and Allegra (Gianni's niece), drawing heavily on the sexy rocker gothic underground vibe. *EPiazza di Spagna 12, Piazza di Spagna P06/6691773 [www.versace.com](http://www.versace.com) mSpagna.*

## **DEPARTMENT STORES**

### **La Rinascente**

**DEPARTMENT STORES** | Italy's best-known department store is located in a dazzling space that has seven stories packed with the best luxury goods the world has to offer. Here, one can find oodles of cosmetics on the ground floor, as well as a phalanx of ready-to-wear designer sportswear and blockbuster handbags and accessories, and kitchen and homeware in the basement. Even if you're not planning on buying anything, the basement excavations of a Roman aqueduct and the roof terrace bar with its splendid view are well worth a visit. *EVia del Tritone 61, Piazza di Spagna P06/879161 [www.rinascente.it](http://www.rinascente.it) mSpagna.*

## **FOOD AND WINE**

### **Buccone**

**FOOD/CANDY** | A landmark wineshop inside the former coach house of a noble Roman family, Buccone has 10 layers of shelves stretching impressively from floor to ceiling that are packed with quality wines and spirits ranging in price from a few euros to several hundred for rare vintages. The old atmosphere has been preserved in the original wood-beam ceiling, long marble counter, and an antique till. You can also buy jams, pasta, and

packaged candy perfect for inexpensive gifts. A simple lunch is available daily, and dinner is served Friday and Saturday (reservations required for dinner). However, it is the atmosphere and wine list rather than the food that makes the old shop noteworthy. For that reason, book a week in advance, and they can also give you a guided wine tasting, with highlights from many of Italy's important wine-producing regions. E*Via di Ripetta 19/20, Piazza di Spagna* P06/3612154 [www.enotecabuccone.com](http://www.enotecabuccone.com) m*Piazza del Popolo*.

## HATS

### **Borsalino Boutique**

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | Considered by many to be the Cadillac of fedoras, the dashing Borsalino fedora has been a staple of the fashionable Italian man since 1857. Adorning the heads of many silver-screen icons, including Humphrey Bogart (who donned one in *Casablanca*) and Harrison Ford (as Indiana Jones), Borsalino retains its unmistakable class, style, and elegance. Few hats are made with such exacting care and attention, and the company's milliners still use machines that are more than 100 years old. Borsalino also has boutiques near the Pantheon and Piazza di Spagna. E*Piazza del Popolo 20, Piazza di Spagna* P06/32650838 [www.borsalino.it](http://www.borsalino.it) m*Flaminio*.

## HOME DECOR

### **Frette**

**CLOTHING** | Classic, luxurious, colorful, timeless, and fun, there is nothing like Frette's bed collections. A leader in luxurious linens and towels for the home and hotel industry since 1860, sinking into their sophisticated cotton, satin, percale, or silk sheets is the perfect way to end the day. To create the full bedroom experience, they also offer pajamas and gorgeous silk robes. There is a second location nearby on Via del Corso near Piazza Colonna. E*Piazza di Spagna 11, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6790673 [www.frette.com](http://www.frette.com) m*Spagna*.

## JEWELRY

### **Bulgari**

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | Every capital city has its famous jeweler, and Bulgari is to Rome what Tiffany is to New York and Cartier to Paris. The

jewelry giant has developed a reputation for meticulous craftsmanship melding noble metals with precious gems. In the middle of the 19th century, the great-grandfather of the current Bulgari brothers began working as a silver jeweler in his native Greece and is said to have moved to Rome with less than 1,000 lire in his pocket. The recent makeover of the temple-inspired interior of the store pays homage to the brand's ties to both places. Today the mega-brand emphasizes colorful and playful jewelry as the principal cornerstone of its aesthetic. Popular collections include Parentesi, Bulgari-Bulgari, and B.zero1. *E Via dei Condotti 10, Piazza di Spagna P06/696261 [www.bulgari.com](http://www.bulgari.com) mSpagna.*

## LINGERIE

### Brighenti

**CLOTHING** | Brighenti looks like what it is: a traditional Roman shop from a gentler era, replete with a marble floor and a huge crystal chandelier suspended overhead. Silk nightgowns and classic sleepwear are available, as are lacy undergarments and sumptuous vintage-inspired swimsuits to bring out your inner pinup model. *E Via Frattina 7/8, Piazza di Spagna P06/6791484 [www.brighentiroma.it](http://www.brighentiroma.it) mBarberini, Spagna.*

### La Perla

**CLOTHING** | La Perla was founded in Bologna in 1954 and is now the global go-to for beautifully crafted lingerie and glamorous underwear for that special night, a bridal trousseau, or just to spoil yourself on your Roman holiday. If you like decadent finery that is both stylish and romantic, with plenty of well-placed frills, you will find something here to make you feel like a goddess. There are silk boxers for gents here, too. *E Via Bocca di Leone 28, Piazza di Spagna P06/69941934 [www.laperla.com](http://www.laperla.com) mSpagna.*

### Marisa Padovan

**CLOTHING** | The place to go for exclusive, made-to-order bathing suits, Marisa Padovan has been sewing for Hollywood starlets like Audrey Hepburn and the well-heeled women of Rome for more than 40 years. The cheery boutique has ready-made styles trimmed with Swarovski crystals and polished turquoise stones, colorful cover-ups, and even offers a service where you can design your own bespoke bikini or one-piece. Each piece of this

unique beachwear is carefully handmade right in Rome. E*Via delle Carrozze 81–82, Piazza di Spagna P06/6793946* [www.marisapadovan.it](http://www.marisapadovan.it) m*Spagna*.

## MALLS

### Galleria Alberto Sordi

SHOPPING CENTERS/MALLS | This gorgeous covered shopping arcade on the Piazza Colonna was envisioned in the late 19th century but not built until the 20th, and finally opened to the public in 1922. It's worth a visit as much to marvel at the unique building with its brilliant stained-glass ceiling as for its selection of classy shops. In recent years, space has opened up for some younger-focused chain shops to move in, but this is still the place to find some of Italy's most interesting brands in separate storefronts under a single Art Nouveau roof. E*Via del Corso 79, Piazza di Spagna* [www.galleriaalbertosordi.it](http://www.galleriaalbertosordi.it) m*Barberini*.

## MARKETS

### La Soffitta Sotto i Portici

OUTDOOR/FLEA/GREEN MARKETS | For an interesting jumble of stalls hawking antique jewelry, furniture, artwork, and other collectibles, check out this colorful vintage flea market held on the first and third Sunday of every month. It's open from 9 am until sunset. E*Piazza Augusto Imperatore, Piazza di Spagna* m*Spagna*.

## SHOES, HANDBAGS, AND LEATHER GOODS

### A. Testoni

JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES | Amedeo Testoni, the brand's founder and original designer, was born in 1905 in Bologna, the heart of Italy's shoe-making territory. In 1929, he opened his first shop and began producing shoes as artistic as the Cubist and Art Deco artwork of the period. His shoes have adorned the feet of Fred Astaire, proving that lightweight shoes can be comfortable and luxurious and still turn heads. Today the Testoni brand includes a line of enviable handbags and classically cool leather jackets—all found at this Roman boutique, exclusively dedicated to the women's collection. Gentlemen, don't despair: there are dreamy calfskin sneakers and matching messenger bags at the men's collection store on nearby on Via

Borgognona. E *Via del Babuino 152, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6787718 [www.testoni.com](http://www.testoni.com) mSpagna.

### ★ **Braccialini**

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | Founded in 1954 by Florentine stylist Carla Braccialini and her husband, Braccialini—currently managed by their sons—makes bags that are authentic works of art in bright colors and delightful shapes, such as London black cabs or mountain chalets. The adorably quirky tote bags have picture-postcard scenes of luxury destinations made of brightly colored appliquéd leather. Be sure to check out their eccentric Temi (Theme) creature bags; the snail-shape handbag made out of python skin makes an unforgettable fashion statement. E *Galleria Alberto Sordi 20/21, Piazza Colonna, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6784339 [www.braccialini.it](http://www.braccialini.it) mSpagna.

### **Di Cori**

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | A woman just isn't a signora without a good pair of gloves. Luckily the tiny Di Cori shop makes the most of their space by filling cubbyholes that reach to the ceiling full of technicolor gloves. All are made in Italy out of the softest lambskin, and lined with silk, cashmere, rabbit fur, or wool. They also carry a smaller selection of unlined, washable versions. E *Piazza di Spagna 53, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6784439 [www.dicorigloves.it](http://www.dicorigloves.it) mSpagna.

### **Fausto Santini**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | Shoe lovers with a passion for minimalist design flock to Fausto Santini to get their hands on his nerdy-chic shoes with their statement-making lines. Santini has been in business since 1970 and caters to a sophisticated, avant-garde clientele looking for elegant, classic shoes with a kick and a rainbow color palette. An outlet at *Via Cavour 106*, named for Fausto's father, Giacomo, sells last season's shoes at a big discount. E *Via Frattina 120, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6784114 [www.faustosantini.it](http://www.faustosantini.it) mSpagna.

### **Fratelli Rossetti**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | An old-world company with modern



aspirations, Fratelli Rossetti is the epitome of sophisticated men's and women's leather shoes, creating tasteful pumps and tasseled loafers named for the Milan neighborhood where the brand originated. While their focus has always revolved around sheer classic elegance with an emphasis on quality and luxurious craftsmanship, their new line also has a bit of playfulness, incorporating silk, velvet, and brocade. E*Via Borgognona 5/a, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6782676 [www.fratellirossetti.com](http://www.fratellirossetti.com) m*Spagna*.

## **Furla**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | Furla very well might be the best deal in Italian leather, selling high-end quality handbags and purses at affordable prices. There are multiple locations throughout the Eternal City (including one at Fiumicino Airport), but its flagship store can be found in the heart of Piazza di Spagna. Be prepared to fight your way through crowds of passionate handbag lovers, all anxious to possess one of the delectable bags, wallets, or whimsical key chains in trendy sherbet hues or timeless bold color combos. E*Piazza di Spagna 22, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6797159 [www.furla.com](http://www.furla.com) m*Spagna*.

## ★ **Saddlers Union**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | Reborn on the mythical artisans' street, Via Margutta, across the street from Federico Fellini's old house, Saddlers Union first launched in 1957 and quickly gained a cult following among those who valued Italian artistry and a traditional aesthetic. If you're searching for a sinfully fabulous handbag in a graceful, classic shape or that "I have arrived" attorney's briefcase, these preppy creations will always hit the mark. From the showroom, you can catch a glimpse of the workroom in the back with ready-to-be-cut leather hanging from the walls. Items here are made on-site with true artistry and under the watchful eye of Angelo Zaza, one of Saddlers Union's original master artisans. Prices are a bit steep, but the quality is definitely worth it. E*Via Margutta 11, Piazza di Spagna* P06/32120237 [www.saddlersunion.com](http://www.saddlersunion.com) m*Flaminio, Spagna*.

## **Schostal**

**CLOTHING** | A Piazza di Spagna fixture since 1870, the shop was once the go-to place for women looking to stock up on corsets, bonnets, stockings, and

petticoats. Today, it's the place to stop for those essential basics that are increasingly difficult to find, like fine-quality shirts, underwear, and handkerchiefs made of wool and pure cashmere at affordable prices. There's a second location at Piazza Euclide. E*Via della Fontanella Borghese 29, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6791240 [www.schostalroma.com](http://www.schostalroma.com) CClosed Sun. mSpagna.

### **Sermoneta**

**JEWELRY/ACCESSORIES** | Whether you're looking for some fancy gloves to wear to the opera or for a fashionable pair of warm leather gloves to get you through the winter, Sermoneta has a vast selection to choose from. Browse through stacks of nappa leather, deerskin, and even cashmere-lined capybara hand-stitched gloves in all colors. You can even head upstairs for a custom fitting, and then have your gloves personalized with your own initials, logos, or other designs. E*Piazza di Spagna 61, Piazza di Spagna* P06/6791960 [www.sermonetagloves.com](http://www.sermonetagloves.com) mSpagna.

### ★ **Tod's**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | First founded in the 1920s, Tod's has grown from a small family brand into a global powerhouse so wealthy that its owner, Diego Della Valle, donated €20 million to the Colosseum restoration project. The shoe baron's trademark is his simple, classic, understated designs and butter-soft leather. Sure to please are his light and flexible slip-on Gommini driving shoes with rubber-bottomed soles for extra driving-pedal grip. There is also a location on Via dei Condotti. E*Via della Fontanella di Borghese 56a-57, Piazza di Spagna* P06/68210066 [www.tods.com](http://www.tods.com) mSpagna.

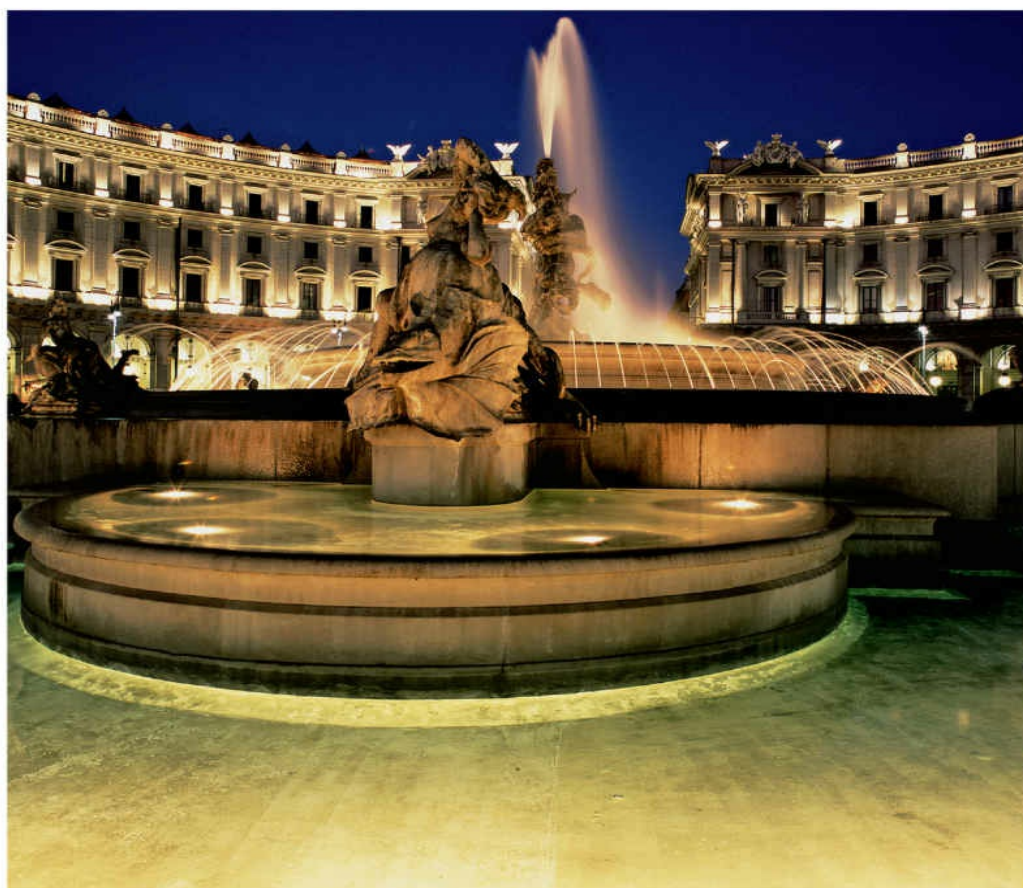
## Chapter 7

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# REPUBBLICA AND THE QUIRINALE

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Updated by  
Ariston Anderson



 Sights  
★★★★☆

 Restaurants  
★★★★☆

 Hotels  
★★★★★

 Shopping  
★★★★☆

 Nightlife  
★★★☆☆

# REPUBBLICA AND THE QUIRINALE SNAPSHOT

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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While slightly off Rome's bustling tourist path, this central (and well-connected) area has a number of intriguing sights, from the stunning sweep of Piazza della Repubblica and the excellent ancient art collection of the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme to the bones of the Capuchin Crypt and Bernini's breathtaking sculpture, the *Ecstasy of St. Theresa*. It's possible to walk the whole area, but this part of town is so well connected by bus and Metro that it's usually quicker to take public transport. When choosing a time of day to visit, remember that many churches (like Santa Maria della Vittoria, home of Bernini's Saint Teresa sculpture) close at midday, reopening around 3 or 4.

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Bernini's Ecstasy of St. Teresa:** Admire the worldly realism of Teresa's allegedly spiritual rapture. The star of the Cappella Cornaro, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Bernini's theatrical masterpiece is a cornerstone of the high Roman Baroque period.

**Palazzo Barberini:** Take in five centuries of art at one of Rome's greatest family palaces, where you can gape at Rome's biggest ballroom and Raphael's *La Fornarina*.

**Palazzo Massimo alle Terme:** Admire the spectacular Hellenistic *Boxer at Rest*, get your emperors straight in the portrait gallery, and marvel at breathtaking 2,000-year-old frescoes on the top floor.

**Capuchin Crypt:** Contemplate eternity in the creepy-yet-creative crypt under **Santa Maria della Concezione**, "decorated" with the skeletons of

4,000 monks, replete with fluted arches made of collarbones and arabesques of shoulder blades.

**Piazza del Quirinale:** Crowning the Quirinale—the loftiest of Rome’s seven hills—is the Piazza del Quirinale, with spectacular views over the city, its horizon marked by “Il Cupolino,” the dome of St. Peter’s. Framing the vista are enormous ancient statues of Castor and Pollux, the Dioscuri (Horse-Tamers).

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### GETTING HERE

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■ Located between Termini station and the Spanish Steps, this area is about a 15-minute walk from either. Bus No. 40 will get you from Termini to the Quirinale in two stops; from the Vatican take Bus No. 64. The very central Repubblica Metro stop is on the piazza of the same name.

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### QUICK BITES

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■ **Come il Latte.** Located just a five-minute walk from Piazza della Repubblica, Come il Latte has a serious following for its super-creamy, all-natural gelato. The pistachio may be the best in town, though you can’t go wrong with any of the flavors, some particularly creative (like rice and cinnamon). Top off your scoop with homemade *panna* (whipped cream) in a variety of flavors and either dark or white chocolate from the shop’s chocolate fountain. *E Via Silvio Spaventa 24/26, Repubblica P06/42903882 cNo credit cards mCastro Pretorio.*

**Just north of the modern Termini station, this area offers an extraordinary Roman blend of old and new. The stretch from Piazza della Repubblica to Piazza Barberini swarms with professionals going in and out of office buildings, as the Quirinale, home to the president of Italy, buzzes with political activity. More than just a workaday area, though, you will also find plenty of attractions for travelers, from the bizarre Capuchin Crypt to great Bernini sculptures.**

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## **Repubblica**

As a gateway, Piazza della Repubblica was laid out to serve as a monumental foyer between the Termini rail station and the rest of the city. The piazza's main landmark, the vast ruins of the Terme di Diocleziano (Baths of Diocletian) were subsequently transformed into a Renaissance monastery and then, by Michelangelo's design, to the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli. The ancient treasures at Palazzo Massimo delle Terme, Bernini's spectacular Capella Cornaro, and, farther afield, the modern Museo d'Arte Contemporanea (MACRO) will always be vying for your attention.

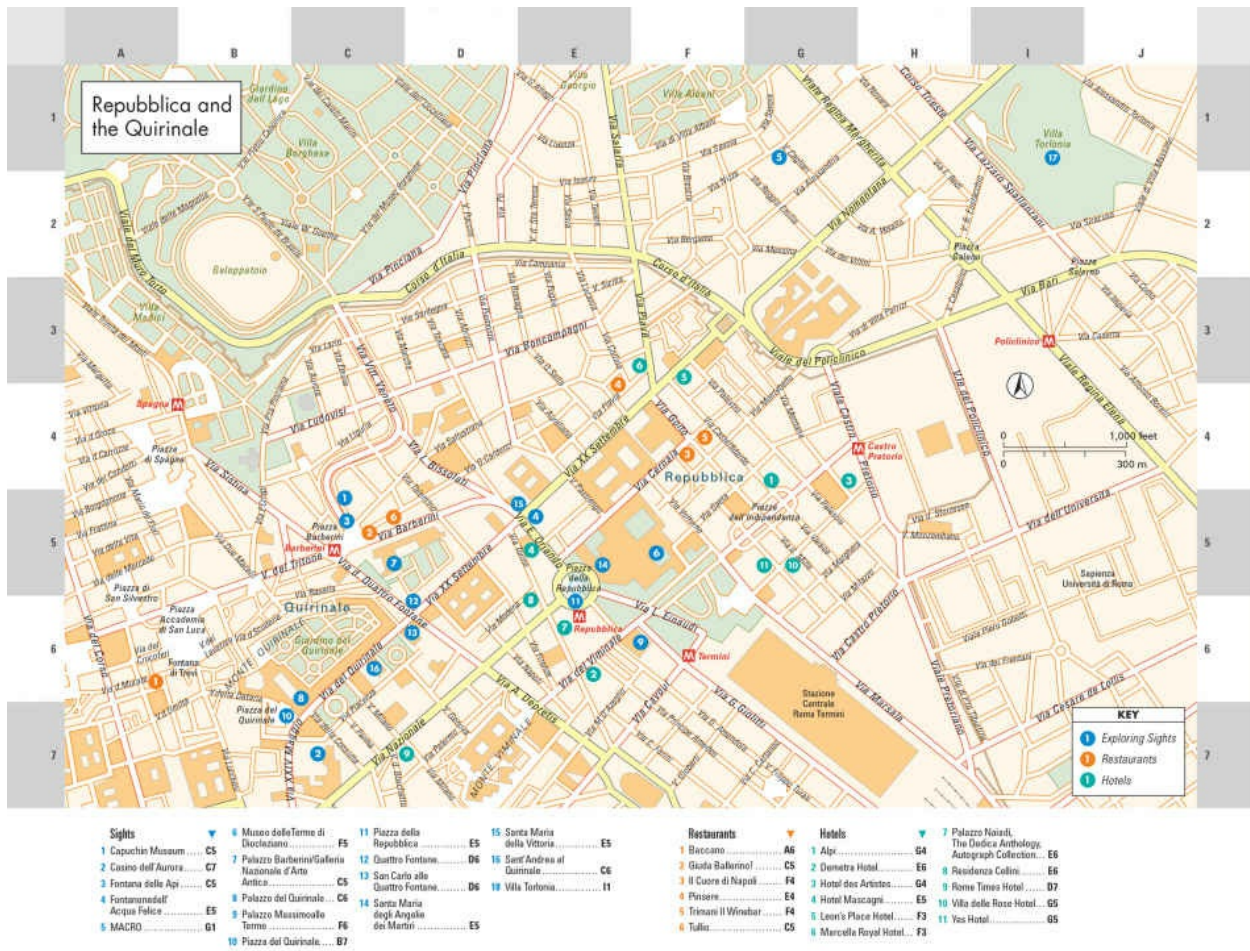
## **S Sights**

### **MACRO**

**MUSEUM** | Formerly known as Rome's Modern and Contemporary Art Gallery, and before that known as the Peroni beer factory, this redesigned industrial space has brought new life to the gallery and museum scene of a city formerly known for its "then," not its "now." The collection here covers Italian contemporary artists from the 1960s through today. Its sister museum,



MACRO Testaccio (*Piazza O. Giustiniani*) is housed in a renovated slaughterhouse in the Testaccio neighborhood, a sort of Roman “Left Bank,” and features temporary exhibits and installations by current artists. The goal of both spaces is to bring current art to the public in innovative spaces, and, not incidentally, to give support and recognition to Rome’s contemporary art scene, which labors in the shadow of the city’s artistic heritage. After a few days—or millennia—of dusty marble, it’s a breath of fresh air. ■ **TIP** → **Check the website for occasional late-night openings and events.** E *Via Nizza 138, Repubblica P06/696271 [www.museomacro.org](http://www.museomacro.org)* A *Free* C *Closed Mon.* m *Castro Pretorio; Bus Nos. 38 and 80.*



## Museo delle Terme di Diocleziano (*Baths of Diocletian*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | Though part of this ancient bath complex (the largest in the Roman world) is now the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, and other parts were transformed into a Carthusian monastery or razed to make

room for later urban development, a visit here gives you a sense of the scale and grandeur of this complex, which included a gymnasium, library, and public baths. Upon entering the church, you see the major structures of the baths, partly covered by 16th- and 17th-century overlay, some of which is by Michelangelo. The calm monastery cloister is filled with the Museo Nazionale Romano's collection of inscriptions; other rooms have pieces associated especially with remote Roman antiquity (think: huts), as well as archaeological finds from Rome's Republican and imperial periods, including a rare painted relief of the god Mithras. EViale Enrico de Nicola 79, Repubblica P06/39967700 [www.museonazionaleromano.beniculturali.it](http://www.museonazionaleromano.beniculturali.it) A €10, or €12 for a combined ticket including access to Crypta Balbi, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, and Palazzo Altemps (valid for 3 days) CClosed Mon. mRepubblica.

### ★ Palazzo Massimo alle Terme

**MUSEUM** | Come here to get a real feel for ancient Roman art—the collection rivals even the Vatican's. The Museo Nazionale Romano, with a collection ranging from striking classical Roman paintings to marble bric-a-brac, has four locations: Palazzo Altemps, Crypta Balbi, the Museo delle Terme di Diocleziano, and this, the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme. This vast structure holds the great ancient treasures of the archaeological collection and also the coin collection. Highlights include the *Dying Niobid*, the famous bronze *Boxer at Rest*, and the *Discobolus Lancellotti*. But the best part of the museum are the ancient frescoes on view on the top floor, stunningly set up to “re-create” the look of the homes they once decorated. These include stuccoes and wall paintings found in the area of the Villa della Farnesina (in Trastevere) and the legendary frescoes from Empress Livia's villa at Prima Porta, delightful depictions of a garden in bloom and an orchard alive with birds. Their colors are remarkably well preserved. These delicate decorations covered the walls of cool, sunken rooms in Livia's summerhouse outside the city. ELargo di Villa Peretti 1, Repubblica P06/39967700 [www.museonazionaleromano.beniculturali.it](http://www.museonazionaleromano.beniculturali.it) A€10, or €12 for a combined ticket including access to Crypta Balbi, Museo delle Terme di Diocleziano, and Palazzo Altemps (valid for 3 days) CClosed Mon. mRepubblica, Termini.

### Piazza della Repubblica

**FOUNTAIN** | Often the first view that spells “Rome” to weary travelers walking from Termini station, this round piazza was laid out in the late 1800s and follows the line of the caldarium of the vast ancient Terme di Diocleziano. At its center, the exuberant Fontana delle Naiadi (Fountain of the Naiads) teems with voluptuous bronze ladies happily wrestling with marine monsters. The nudes weren’t there when the pope unveiled the fountain in 1888—sparing him any embarrassment—but when the figures were added in 1901, they caused a scandal. It’s said that the sculptor, Mario Rutelli (grandfather of Francesco Rutelli, former mayor of Rome), modeled them on the ample figures of two musical-comedy stars of the day. The colonnades now house the luxe hotel Palazzo Naiadi and a branch of foodie superstore Eataly. *ERepubblica* *mRepubblica*.

### **Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | The curving brick facade on the northeast side of Piazza della Repubblica is one small remnant of the colossal Terme di Diocleziano, the largest and most impressive of the baths of ancient Rome. A gift to the city from Emperor Diocletian, the complex was completed in AD 306. In 1561 Michelangelo was commissioned to convert the vast *frigidarium*, the central hall of the baths, into a church. His work was later altered by Vanvitelli in the 18th century, but the huge transept, which formed the nave in Michelangelo’s plan, has remained. The eight enormous monolithic columns of red granite that support the great beams are the original columns of the tepidarium, 45 feet high and more than 5 feet in diameter. The great hall is 92 feet high. *E*[Via Cernaia 9, Repubblica P06/4880812](#) [www.santamariadegliangeliroma.it](#) *mRepubblica*.

### **★ Santa Maria della Vittoria**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Designed by Carlo Maderno, this church is best known for Bernini’s sumptuous Baroque decoration of the **Cappella Cornaro** (Cornaro Chapel, the last on the left as you face the altar), which houses his interpretation of divine love, the *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*. Bernini’s masterly fusion of sculpture, light, architecture, painting, and relief is a multimedia extravaganza with the chapel modeled as a theater, and one of the key examples of the Roman high Baroque. The members of the Cornaro family meditate on the communal vision of the great moment of divine love before

them: the swooning saint's robes appear to be on fire, quivering with life, and the white marble group seems suspended in the heavens as golden rays illuminate the scene. An angel assists at the mystical moment of Teresa's vision as the saint abandons herself to the joys of heavenly love. Bernini represented this mystical experience in what, to modern eyes, may seem very earthly terms. Or, as the visiting French dignitary President de Brosses put it in the 18th century, "If this is divine love, I know all about it." *E*[Via XX Settembre 17, Largo Santa Susanna, Repubblica P06/42740571](#) [www.chiesasantamariavittoriaroma.it](http://www.chiesasantamariavittoriaroma.it) *m*[Repubblica](#).

## **Villa Torlonia**

**CASTLE/PALACE | FAMILY |** Built for aristocrats-come-lately, the Torlonia family—the Italian Rockefellers of the 19th century—this villa became Mussolini's residence and now serves as a public park. Long neglected, the park's vegetation and buildings have recently been refurbished. The **Casina Nobile**, the main palace designed by the great architect Giuseppe Valadier is a grand, Neoclassical edifice, replete with a gigantic ballroom, frescoed salons, and soaring temple-like facade. While denuded of nearly all their furnishings and art treasures, some salons have important remnants of decor, including the reliefs once fashioned by the father of Italian Neoclassical sculpture, Antonio Canova. In the park, a complete contrast is offered by the **Casina delle Civette** (Little House of Owls), a hyper-charming example of the Liberty (Art Nouveau) style of the early 1900s: the gabled, fairy tale-like cottage-palace now displays majolica and stained-glass decorations, including windows with owl motifs—a stunning, oft-overlooked find for lovers of 19th-century decorative arts. Temporary exhibits are held in the small and elegant **Il Casino dei Principi** (The House of Princes), designed in part by Valadier. *E*[Villa Torlonia, Via Nomentana 70, Repubblica P06/0608](#) [www.museivillatorlonia.it](http://www.museivillatorlonia.it) *A*€6 *Casina delle Civette with exhibit, €9 Casino Nobile with exhibit; €11, includes both Casina delle Civette and Casino Nobile, with exhibit* *C*[Closed Mon. m](#)[Policlinico; Bus Nos. 36 and 84.](#)

## **r Restaurants**

The areas around Piazza della Repubblica and Termini station aren't known



as gastronomic hot spots, but there are some classic Roman wine bars.

## Il Cuore di Napoli

\$ | NEAPOLITAN | Once you've been in Rome long enough to familiarize yourself with Roman cuisine and, especially, Roman-style pizza, it's time to try something for comparison. At Il Cuore di Napoli the pizza is perfect Neapolitan style—that is, thin dough with a thick crust—and the classic margherita is a must. Paccheri pasta with fresh tomato and the sea bass are also winners. For dessert, try the *torta caprese*, a chocolate and almond torte that originates from the island of Capri. **Known for:** gluten-free pizza options; paccheri pasta with fresh tomatoes; torta caprese for an after-dinner chocolate fix. *DAverage main: €14 E* Via Cernaia 31, Repubblica P06/44340252 *w*[www.ilcuoredinapoli.info](http://www.ilcuoredinapoli.info) *C*No lunch Sun. *m*Castro Pretorio or Repubblica.

## The Rivalry of Bernini and Borromini S

Consider the famous feuding duos of Lennon vs. McCartney, Mozart vs. Salieri, Michelangelo vs. Raphael. None of them match the rivalry of Gian Lorenzo Bernini versus Francesco Borromini. In a pitched battle of anything-you-can-do-I-can-do-better, these two great geniuses of the Baroque style transformed 17th-century Rome into a city of spectacle, the “theater of the entire world.” While it was Bernini who triumphed and Borromini who wound up taking his own life, the real winner was Rome itself—a banquet for the eyes cooked up by these two Baroque masters.

United in genius, the two could not have been more different in fortune and character. Born within a year of each other at the turn of the 1600s, they spent decades laying out majestic squares, building precedent-shattering churches, all the while outdoing each other in Baroque bravado.

Compared and contrasted, the pair form the ultimate odd couple: Bernini, perhaps the greatest master showman of all time, exulted in Technicolor-hued theatricality; Borromini, the purist and reclusive genius, pursued the pure light of geometry, although with an artisan's hankering after detail. Bernini grew into the famed lover and solid family man; Borromini seems not to have had any love life at all. Bernini became a smooth mingler with society's great and worthy ranks; Borromini remained the quirky outsider. Bernini triumphed as the all-rounder, he of the so-called

“bel composto,” as in the Cornaro Chapel where his talents as sculptor/architect/dramatist come stunningly together. Borromini was an architect, pure and simple. Throughout their lives, they had tried to turn the tables—psychologically as well as architecturally—on each other, a struggle that ended with Borromini’s tragic suicide.

Both, however, fervently believed in the Baroque style and its mission to amaze, as well as edify. Thanks to the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic church discovered, and exploited, the effects on its congregants of such overtly Baroque tricks of the trade as chiaroscuro (light and dark) and trompe l’oeil (fool-the-eye) techniques. Using emotion and motion, Bernini and Borromini learned how to give stone wing. In Bernini’s famed *Pluto and Persephone*, the solid stone seems transmuted into living flesh—sculpted effects previously thought possible only in paint. Together transforming the city into a “giant theater,” the rivals thus became the principal dramaturges and stage managers of Baroque Rome.

## Bernini vs. Borromini: A Mini-Walk S

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In Rome, you may become lost looking for the work of one rival, then suddenly find yourself gazing at the work of the other. As though an eerily twinned path was destined for the two giants, several of their greatest works are just a few blocks from each other.

A short street away (Via Orlando) from mammoth Piazza Repubblica stands Santa Maria della Vittoria, famed for Bernini’s Cornaro Chapel. Out of favor with new anti-Barberini Pope Innocent X, Bernini was rescued by a commission from Cardinal Cornaro to build a chapel for his family. Here, as if in a “theater,” sculpted figures of family members look down from two marble balconies on the so-called “transverberation” of Carmelite Saint Theresa of Avila being pierced by the arrow of the Angel of Divine Love, eyes shut in agony, mouth open in rapture.

Leave the church and head down Via Barberini to Piazza Barberini where perch three of the largest bees you’ll ever see. The Fountain of the Bees is Bernini’s tribute to his arch-patron from the Barberini family, Pope Urban VIII. The bees were family emblems. Another Bernini masterpiece is the Triton Fountain in the center of Piazza Barberini. Turn left up Via delle Quattro Fontane. On your left is spectacular Palazzo Barberini, where Bernini and Borromini worked together in an uneasy partnership. The wonderful winding staircase off to the right is the



work of Borromini, while the other more conventionally angled staircase on the left is by Bernini, who also has a self-portrait hanging in the art gallery upstairs.

Borromini's prospects soon took a turn for the better thanks to the Barefoot Spanish Trinitarians, who commissioned him to design San Carlo alla Quattro Fontane, set at the crossroads up the road. One of the marvels of architecture, its dome—not much bigger than a down-turned bathtub— is packed immaculately throughout with hexagons, octagons, and crosses. In the adjoining cloister, revel in Borromini's rearrangement of columns, which transform what would be a conventional rectangle into an energetic octagon. Don't forget to stop and admire the church's facade.

On the same Via del Quirinale stands a famous Bernini landmark, the Jesuits' Sant' Andrea al Quirinale. With steps flowing out into the street, it could be viewed as Bernini's response to his rival's nearby masterpiece. Ironically, the commission for the Jesuit church was originally earmarked for Borromini (but transferred when Pope Alexander VII took over).

### ★ Pinsere

\$ | PIZZA | FAMILY | In Rome, you'll usually find either *pizza tonda* or *pizza al taglio*, but there's also *pizza pinsa*: it's an oval-shape individual pie, and a little thicker than the classic Roman pizza. Pinsere is mostly a take-out shop, with people eating on the street for their lunch break, so it's the perfect quick meal. There is a large selection of meat and vegetarian toppings. The big winners are the tomato and buffalo mozzarella and the mortadella and pistachio versions. **Known for:** budget-friendly options; seasonal mushroom toppings; mortadella and pistachio pizzas. *DAverage main: €5* E Via Flavia 98, Repubblica P06/42020924 [www.pinsaromana.info](http://www.pinsaromana.info) CClosed weekends, and Aug. No dinner mCastro Pretorio.

### Trimani Il Winebar

\$\$ | WINE BAR | This wine bar is run by the Trimani family of wine merchants, whose shop next door has been in business for nearly two centuries. Hot food is served at lunch and dinner in the minimalist interior, and it is also perfect for an aperitif or an early supper (it opens for evening service at 5:30). **Known for:** candlelit second floor for sipping; *torte salate* (savory tarts); 6,000 wines on sale from around the world. *DAverage main: €15* E Via Cernaia 37/b, Repubblica P06/4469630 [www.trimani.com](http://www.trimani.com) CClosed Sun.,

and Aug. mCastro Pretorio.

## h Hotels

With its beautiful piazza and fountain, Repubblica is the place to stay if you want to be near but not *too* near Termini station, Rome's central train hub. You'll find lodging here in all price ranges, and rooms tend to be a better value in this part of town.

### Alpi

\$\$ | HOTEL | You'll feel right at home from the moment you waltz into Hotel Alpi, where high ceilings with elegant chandeliers, white walls, and marble floors lend it both elegance and warmth—right around the corner from Termini station. **Pros:** clean and comfortable; lovely terraces and restaurant for dining and relaxing; boutique design and service. **Cons:** not all rooms are created equal; location is not very picturesque; you'll need to take transportation to most sights. DRooms from: €180 E Via Castelfidardo 84, Repubblica P06/4441235 [www.hotelalpi.com](http://www.hotelalpi.com) a48 rooms XFree breakfast mCastro Pretorio, Termini.

### Demetra Hotel

\$\$ | HOTEL | This hotel near the glorious Santa Maria Maggiore Basilica is also close to Termini station, and has modern comforts and a great concierge—all at moderate rates. **Pros:** free Wi-Fi; excellent central location; soundproof rooms. **Cons:** basic breakfast buffet; rooms can be on the small side; not a picturesque area, so views can be drab. DRooms from: €180 E Via del Viminale 8, Repubblica P06/45494943 [www.demetrahotelrome.com](http://www.demetrahotelrome.com) a27 rooms XFree breakfast mRepubblica.

### Hotel Des Artistes

\$ | HOTEL | This lovely hotel near Termini station is a perfect example of a family establishment: the three Riccioni brothers put their hearts and souls into running the place, while their parents oversee housekeeping and maintenance. **Pros:** good value; free Wi-Fi; relaxing rooftop garden. **Cons:** breakfast is nothing to write home about; flat pillows; bare-bones bathroom amenities. DRooms from: €120 E Via Villafranca 20, Repubblica

P06/4454365 [www.hoteldesartistes.com](http://www.hoteldesartistes.com) a48 rooms XFree breakfast mCastro Pretorio.

### Hotel Mascagni

\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | Situated on a side street around the corner from one of Rome's most impressive piazzas, this friendly hotel has staff that go out of their way to make you feel at home, public spaces cleverly styled with contemporary art pieces, and wood fixtures and furnishings accentuated by warm colors and handsome fabrics in the guest rooms. **Pros:** cozy library-style lobby; evening lounge serves light fare; special programs include a "Family Perfect" room option. **Cons:** elevator is too small and takes a while; breakfast options are basic; some bathrooms are smallish. DRooms from: €200 EVia Vittorio Emanuele Orlando 90, Repubblica P06/48904040 [www.mascagnihotelrome.it](http://www.mascagnihotelrome.it) a40 rooms XFree breakfast mRepubblica.

### Leon's Place Hotel

\$\$ | HOTEL | Located just around the corner from Piazza Repubblica, the chic Art Deco–inspired hotel has a lobby decked out with plush chairs and sofas, sparkling chandeliers sprouting black feathers, and a velvety black swing dangling from the ceiling. **Pros:** gourmet minibar; affordable rates; top-quality toiletries. **Cons:** hotel bar is pricey; some rooms face the courtyard; spotty Wi-Fi in rooms. DRooms from: €170 EVia XX Settembre 90/94, Repubblica P06/890871 [www.leonsplacehotel.it](http://www.leonsplacehotel.it) a54 rooms XFree breakfast mBarberini, Repubblica.

### Marcella Royal Hotel

\$\$ | HOTEL | You can do your sightseeing from the rooftop terrace of the Marcella, a midsize hotel with the feel of a smaller, more intimate establishment, where staff go the extra mile to make your stay pleasant. **Pros:** breakfast in the rooftop garden; aperitivo or nightcap at the piano bar; large bathrooms with excellent water pressure. **Cons:** some of the rooms are in need of restyling; spotty Internet; closet storage is minimal. DRooms from: €200 EVia Flavia 106, Repubblica P06/42014591 [www.marcellaroyalhotel.com](http://www.marcellaroyalhotel.com) a87 rooms XFree breakfast mRepubblica.

★ Palazzo Naiadi, The Dedic Anthology, Autograph Collection

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Located in one of the most spectacular piazzas in the city, you'll experience exquisite service and pampering at this Neoclassical landmark—this is the “it girl” of Rome’s hotel scene, where high-rollers come to party by the rooftop pool. **Pros:** top-notch concierge and staff; multiple romantic dining options; spa with steam room and gym. **Cons:** food and beverages are expensive; beyond the immediate vicinity of many sights; rooftop terrace can feel quite “scene-y”. DRooms from: €410 EPiazza della Repubblica 47, Repubblica P06/489381 [www.dahotels.com/palazzo-naiadi-roma](http://www.dahotels.com/palazzo-naiadi-roma) a238 rooms XNo meals mRepubblica, Termini.

### Residenza Cellini

\$\$\$ | B&B/INN | Fresh flowers in the foyer and personal attention from the staff help make this small, family-run residence close to Termini station feel like a gracious home. **Pros:** close to Termini station; Jacuzzi bathtubs and Hydrojet showers; personalized care from the staff. **Cons:** not close to the main attractions; rooms could use a bit of restyling; breakfast is standard continental fare. DRooms from: €205 EVia Modena 5, Repubblica P06/47825204 [www.residenzacellini.it](http://www.residenzacellini.it) a6 rooms XFree breakfast mRepubblica, Termini.

### Villa delle Rose Hotel

\$ | HOTEL | When the Eternal City becomes too chaotic for you, head to this relaxing 19th-century palazzo retreat in a charming Roman villa just minutes from Termini station. **Pros:** delightful garden with blooming roses and jasmine; delicious local breakfast; free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** some of the rooms are small (ask for a larger one); elevator is cramped; decor could use revamping. DRooms from: €110 EVia Vicenza 5, Repubblica P06/4451788 [www.villadellerose.it](http://www.villadellerose.it) a37 rooms XFree breakfast mTermini.

### ★ Yes Hotel

\$\$ | HOTEL | This chic hotel may fool you into thinking the digs are expensive, but the contemporary coolness of Yes Hotel, located around the corner from Termini station, actually comes at a bargain. **Pros:** around the corner from Termini station; discount if you pay in cash; a great value without the budget feel. **Cons:** small rooms; neighborhood can be noisy at night; not near many top sights. DRooms from: €140 EVia Magenta 15, Repubblica P06/44363836

[www.yeshotelrome.com](http://www.yeshotelrome.com) a40 rooms XFree breakfast mTermini, Castro Pretorio.

## n Nightlife

Piazza della Repubblica is by far one of Rome's prettiest and largest piazzas, but its proximity to Termini station means the nightlife scene can be a bit scruffy. There are a couple of spots worth visiting, though.

### BARS

#### ★ Tazio Bar

**BARS/PUBS** | A chic champagne bar named after the original Italian *paparazzo* Tazio Secchiaroli, this spot in the Palazzo Naiadi brings a very *dolce vita* vibe with its red, black, and white lacquered interior with crystal chandeliers. The favorite pastime at Tazio is sipping champagne while watching people parade through the colonnade of the lobby. In summer, the hotel's rooftop Posh bar is the place to be, with its infinity pool and terrace view overlooking downtown. EPalazzo Naiadi, Piazza della Repubblica 47, Repubblica P06/489381 [www.dahotels.com/palazzo-naiadi-roma](http://www.dahotels.com/palazzo-naiadi-roma) mRepubblica.

## p Performing Arts

### OPERA

#### ★ Teatro dell'Opera

**OPERA** | Long considered a far younger sibling of La Scala in Milan and La Fenice in Venice, the company commands an audience during its mid-November–May season. In the hot summer months, the company moves to the Terme di Caracalla for its outdoor opera series. As can be expected, the oft-preferred performance is *Aida*, for its spectacle, which once included real elephants. The company has lately taken a new direction, using projections atop the ancient ruins to create cutting-edge sets. EPiazza Beniamino Gigli 7, Repubblica P06/481601, 06/48160255 tickets [www.operaroma.it](http://www.operaroma.it) mRepubblica.

## **b Shopping**

In this neighborhood you'll find bookstores and souvenir shops, as well as various European clothing chains.

### **BOOKS AND STATIONERY**

#### **Libreria IBS**

**BOOKS/STATIONERY** | One of the best parts of Libreria IBS is the wide variety of European cinema and music selections. Another perk is the discount the store dishes out on its stock of remainders and secondhand books. The shop also has a modest selection of English-language paperbacks and DVDs. *E* Via Nazionale 254–255, *R*epubblica P06/4885405 [www.ibs.it](http://www.ibs.it) *m* Repubblica.

### **FOOD AND WINE**

#### **Trimani Vinai a Roma dal 1821**

**FOOD/CANDY** | In business since 1821, Trimani Vinai a Roma occupies an entire block near Termini station with one of the city's largest selection of wines from all over the world, plus champagne, spumante, grappa, and sundry liqueurs. With thousands of bottles to choose from and knowledgeable wine stewards to consult, Trimani will give you the opportunity to explore Italy's diverse wine regions without leaving the city. *E* Via Goito 20, *R*epubblica P06/4469661 [www.trimani.com](http://www.trimani.com) *m* Castro Pretorio.



## The Quirinale

Rome's highest hill, the Quirinale, has housed ancient Roman senators, 17th- and 18th-century popes, and, with the end of papal rule, Italy's kings. West from Via Nazionale, the hill is set with various jewels of the Baroque era, including masterpieces by Bernini and Borromini. Nearby stands Palazzo Barberini, a grand and gorgeous 16th-century palace holding five centuries of masterworks.

Crowning the Piazza del Quirinale is the enormous Palazzo del Quirinale, built in the 16th century as a summer residence for the popes; it became the presidential palace in 1946. Today, you can tour its reception rooms, which are as splendid as you might imagine. The changing of the guard outside on the piazza (Sundays at 4 pm, 6 pm in summer months) is an old-fashioned exercise in pomp and circumstance.

While Bernini's work feels omnipresent in much of the city center, the vast range of his work is particularly notable here and in Repubblica. The artist as architect considered the church of Sant'Andrea al Quirinale one of his best; Bernini the urban designer and water worker wrought the muscle-bound sea gods who wrestle in the fountain at the center of Piazza Barberini; and Bernini the master sculptor gives religious passion corporeal treatment in what is perhaps his greatest work, the *Ecstasy of St. Teresa*, in the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, in Repubblica.

## S Sights

### ★ Capuchin Museum

**MUSEUM** | Devoted to teaching visitors about the Capuchin order, this museum is mainly notable for a crypt visitable at the end of the museum circuit. Not for the easily spooked, the crypt under the church of Santa Maria della Concezione holds the bones of some 4,000 dead Capuchin monks. With bones arranged in odd decorative designs around the shriveled and decayed skeletons of their kinsmen, a macabre reminder of the impermanence of earthly life, the crypt is strangely touching and beautiful. As one sign

proclaims: “What you are, we once were. What we are, you someday will be.” Upstairs in the church, the first chapel on the right contains Guido Reni’s mid-17th-century *St. Michael Trampling the Devil*. The painting caused great scandal after an astute contemporary observer remarked that the face of the devil bore a surprising resemblance to Pope Innocent X, archenemy of Reni’s Barberini patrons. Compare the devil with the bust of the pope that you saw in the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj and judge for yourself. EVia Veneto 27, Quirinale P06/88803695 [www.cappucciniviaveneto.it](http://www.cappucciniviaveneto.it) A€8.50 mBarberini.

### **Casino dell’Aurora**

**CASTLE/PALACE** | Set just off the Piazza del Quirinale is the Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, and within its grounds you’ll find the *Casino dell’Aurora*, originally built for Cardinal Scipione Borghese. The *casino* (a summer pavilion) has a fabulous ceiling fresco of Aurora (the personification of the Dawn) painted by Baroque artist Guido Reni—a painting once thought to be the last word in 17th-century style. The casino is only open to the public on the first day of every month, in the morning and afternoon, except January. EVia XXIV Maggio 43, Quirinale P06/83467000 [www.casinoaurorapallavicini.it](http://www.casinoaurorapallavicini.it) AFree mRepubblica.

### **Fontana delle Api** (*Fountain of the Bees*)

**FOUNTAIN** | Decorated with the famous heraldic bees of the Barberini family, the upper shell and the inscription are from a fountain that Bernini designed for Pope Urban VIII; the rest was lost when the fountain was moved to make way for a new street. The inscription was the cause of a considerable scandal when the fountain was first built in 1644. It said that the fountain had been erected in the 22nd year of the pontiff’s reign, although in fact the 21st anniversary of Urban’s election to the papacy was still some weeks away. The last numeral was hurriedly erased, but to no avail—Urban died eight days before the beginning of his 22nd year as pope. The superstitious Romans, who had immediately recognized the inscription as a foolhardy tempting of fate, were vindicated. EPiazza Barberini, Quirinale mBarberini.

### **Fontanone dell’Acqua Felice** (*Fountain of Moses*)

**FOUNTAIN** | When Pope Sixtus V (Felice Peretti) completed the restoration of the Acqua Felice aqueduct toward the end of the 16th century, Domenico

Fontana was commissioned to design its monumental fountain. Sculptors Leonardo Sormani and Prospero da Brescia had the unhappy task of executing the central figure of Moses; the comparison with Michelangelo's magnificent *Moses* in the church of San Pietro in Vincoli was inevitable, and the giant sculpture was widely criticized. But the new fountain served to position the formerly rustic Quirinale neighborhood as a thriving urban center. EPiazza di San Bernardo, Quirinale mRepubblica.

### ★ Palazzo Barberini/Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica

CASTLE/PALACE | One of Rome's most splendid 17th-century buildings, the Palazzo Barberini is a landmark of the Roman Baroque style. The grand facade was designed by Carlo Maderno (aided by his nephew, Francesco Borromini), but when Maderno died, Borromini was passed over in favor of his great rival, Gianlorenzo Bernini. Now home to the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, the palazzo holds a splendid collection that includes Raphael's *La Fornarina*, a luminous portrait of the artist's lover (a resident of Trastevere, she was reputedly a baker's daughter). Also noteworthy are Guido Reni's portrait of the doomed *Beatrice Cenci* (beheaded in Rome for patricide in 1599)—Hawthorne called it “the saddest picture ever painted” in his Rome-based novel, *The Marble Faun*—and Caravaggio's dramatic *Judith Beheading Holofernes*.

The showstopper here is the palace's Gran Salone, a vast ballroom with a ceiling painted in 1630 by the third (and too-often-neglected) master of the Roman Baroque, Pietro da Cortona. It depicts the *Glorification of Urban VIII's Reign* and has the spectacular conceit of glorifying Urban VIII as the agent of Divine Providence, escorted by a “bomber squadron” (to quote art historian Sir Michael Levey) of huge Barberini bees, the heraldic symbol of the family. EVia delle Quattro Fontane 13, Quirinale P06/4814591 [www.barberinicornorsini.org](http://www.barberinicornorsini.org) A€12, includes Palazzo Corsini CClosed Mon. mBarberini; Bus Nos. 53, 61, 62, 63, 80, 81, 83, 160, and 492.

### Palazzo del Quirinale

CASTLE/PALACE | Pope Gregory XIII started building this spectacular palace, now the official residence of Italy's president, in 1574. He planned to use it as a summer home, but less than 20 years later, Pope Clement VIII decided to

make the palace—safely elevated above the malarial miasmas shrouding the low-lying location of the Vatican—the permanent residence of the papacy, which it remained until 1870. The palace underwent various expansions and alterations over time. When Italian troops under Garibaldi stormed Rome in 1870, making it the capital of the newly united Italy, the popes moved back to the Vatican, and the Palazzo del Quirinale became the official residence of the kings of Italy. After the Italian people voted out the monarchy in 1946, the palazzo passed to the presidency of the Italian Republic. The palace is now open to visitors, but you need to prebook a guided tour (in Italian only, although materials in English can be purchased). You will need your ID to enter the building. Outside the gates, you can see the changing of the military guard at 4 pm on Sunday (at 6 pm June through August), and occasionally you can glimpse the impressive presidential guard. *EPiazza del Quirinale, Quirinale P06/46991 [www.quirinale.it](http://www.quirinale.it) ABy tour only: Itinerary No. 1 free (€1.50 booking fee), Itinerary No. 2 €10 CClosed Mon. and Thurs. mBarberini.*

## **Piazza del Quirinale**

**PLAZA** | This strategic location atop the Quirinale has long been of great importance. It served as home of the Sabines in the 7th century BC—at that time, deadly enemies of the Romans, who lived on the Campidoglio and Palatino (all of 1 km [½ mile] away). Today, it's the foreground for the presidential residence, **Palazzo del Quirinale**, and home to the **Palazzo della Consulta**, where Italy's Constitutional Court sits. The open side of the piazza has an impressive vista over the rooftops and domes of central Rome and St. Peter's. The **Fontana di Montecavallo**, or Fontana dei Dioscuri, comprises a huge Roman statuary group and an obelisk from the tomb of the emperor Augustus. The group of the Dioscuri trying to tame two massive marble steeds was found in the Baths of Constantine, which occupied part of the summit of the Quirinale. Unlike just about every other ancient statue in Rome, this group survived the Dark Ages intact and accordingly became one of the city's great sights, especially during the Middle Ages. Next to the figures, the ancient obelisk from the Mausoleo di Augusto (Tomb of Augustus) was put here by Pope Pius VI at the end of the 18th century. *EPiazza del Quirinale, Quirinale mBarberini.*

## **Quattro Fontane** (*Four Fountains*)

**FOUNTAIN** | The intersection takes its name from its four Baroque fountains, which represent the Tiber (on the San Carlo corner), the Arno, Juno, and Diana. Despite the nearby traffic and the tightness of the sidewalk, it's worthwhile taking in the views from this point in all four directions: to the southwest, as far as the obelisk in Piazza del Quirinale; to the northeast, along Via XX Settembre to the Porta Pia; to the northwest, across Piazza Barberini to the obelisk of Trinità dei Monti; and to the southeast, as far as the obelisk and apse of Santa Maria Maggiore. The prospect is a highlight of Pope Sixtus V's campaign of urban beautification and an example of Baroque influence on city planning. *EIntersection of Via Quattro Fontane, Via XX Settembre, and Via del Quirinale, Quirinale mBarberini.*

## ★ **San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane**

**BUILDING** | Sometimes known as San Carlino because of its tiny size, this is one of Borromini's masterpieces. In a space no larger than the base of one of the piers of St. Peter's Basilica, he created a church that is an intricate exercise in geometric perfection, with a coffered dome that seems to float above the curves of the walls. Borromini's work is often bizarre, definitely intellectual, and intensely concerned with pure form. In San Carlo, he invented an original treatment of space that creates an effect of rippling movement, especially evident in the double-S curves of the facade. Characteristically, the interior decoration is subdued, in white stucco with no more than a few touches of gilding, so as not to distract from the form. Don't miss the cloister: a tiny, understated Baroque jewel, with a graceful portico and loggia above, echoing the lines of the church. *EVia del Quirinale 23, Quirinale P06/4883261 [www.sancarlino.eu](http://www.sancarlino.eu) mBarberini.*

## ★ **Sant'Andrea al Quirinale**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Designed by Bernini, this small church is one of the triumphs of the Roman Baroque period. His son wrote that Bernini considered it his best work and that he used to come here occasionally, just to sit and contemplate. Bernini's simple oval plan, a classic form in Baroque architecture, is given drama and movement by the church's decoration, which carries the story of St. Andrew's martyrdom and ascension into heaven, starting with the painting over the high altar, up past the figure of the saint

above, to the angels at the base of the lantern and the dove of the Holy Spirit that awaits on high. E*Via del Quirinale 30, Quirinale P06/4819399*  
*wsantandrea.gesuiti.it* CClosed Mon. mBarberini.

## r Restaurants

This area has lots of government offices, hotels, and museums, and the tourist traps and expense-account stalwarts that go with them. There are some reasonable standouts though.

### Baccano

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | There are plenty of options for good food at reasonable prices around the Trevi Fountain, but this large brasserie is a good bet, and is open for breakfast and dinner and everything in between. The extensive menu with a focus on seafood has something for everyone, from salads to pasta and entrées. For lunch, the burger is solid, but they also serve sandwich staples, like pastrami or lobster rolls. The full bar has an impressive list of poured or mixed drinks. **Known for:** oyster bar; champagne menu; tasty burgers. DAverage main: €16 E*Via delle Muratte 23, Quirinale P06/69941166*  
*www.baccanoroma.com* mBarberini.

### Giuda Ballerino!

\$\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | Chef Andrea Fusco has a Michelin star to his name, and his menu here is inventive and delicious. Add to that some of the most stunning views in all of Rome: the restaurant is on the roof of the old-world Hotel Bernini Bristol in Piazza Barberini. The city stretches out below, from the piazza to the dome of St. Peter's Basilica. The restaurant's name is a catchphrase from *Dylan Dog*, the classic Italian comic strip that also decorates the walls. **Known for:** nine-course Roman tasting menu; four-course vegetarian "Farmer's" menu; three-chocolate mousse. DAverage main: €35 EHotel Bernini Bristol, 8th fl., Piazza Barberini 23, Quirinale P06/42010469 *www.giudaballerino.com* CClosed Sun. mBarberini.

### Tullio

\$\$\$ | TUSCAN | Just off Piazza Barberini, this upscale trattoria has been serving Tuscan classics since 1950. They specialize in high-quality meat dishes



including prime cuts of beef, lamb, and veal. There are also a few key Roman dishes on the menu such as the juicy artichoke starter. The wine list favors robust Tuscan reds and thick wallets. The decor is basic wood paneling and white linens, with the requisite older—and often grumpy—waiters. **Known for:** bistecca alla fiorentina (Tuscan porterhouse); pappardelle al cinghiale (wide, flat noodles in a wild boar sauce); old-school style and brusque waiters. *DAverage main: €32 E*[Via San Nicola da Tolentino 26, Quirinale](#) *P06/4745560* [www.tullioristorante.it](http://www.tullioristorante.it) *CClosed Sun., and Aug. mBarberini.*

## h Hotels

### Rome Times Hotel

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This modern hotel has large, soundproofed rooms with contemporary furnishings, hardwood floors, and huge fluffy beds. **Pros:** free minibar on arrival and late checkout if booked through site; free use of Samsung smartphone for calls and Internet during your stay; large bright bathrooms. **Cons:** lower floors can be noisy; rooms in the annex don't come with all the benefits of the main hotel; lighting in rooms is not optimal. *DRooms from: €275 E*[Via Milano 42, Quirinale](#) *P06/99345101* [www.rometimeshotel.com](http://www.rometimeshotel.com) *a81 rooms XFree breakfast mCavour.*

## Chapter 8

# VILLA BORGHESE AND AROUND

WITH PIAZZA DEL POPOLO, FLAMINIO,  
MONTE MARIO, AND PARIOLI

Updated by  
Ariston Anderson



 Sights  
★★★★☆

 Restaurants  
★★★★☆

 Hotels  
★★★★☆

 Shopping  
★★★★☆

 Nightlife  
★★★★☆

# VILLA BORGHESE SNAPSHOT

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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Explore this area on a clear day: the Villa Borghese park is at its best (and most bustling with strolling Italian families) on beautiful days, while the view from the top of the Pincio provides a stunning panorama over Rome's pastel rooftops. The Galleria Borghese, one of several museums within the Villa Borghese, is a Roman gem and a must-see for art lovers; just remember to book your tickets in advance (you can do so online), as walk-ins are rarely accommodated. After your "walk in the park," head down to Piazza del Popolo, one of Rome's loveliest piazzas, and duck into Santa Maria del Popolo for its gorgeous paintings by Baroque master Caravaggio—keeping in mind that, like many of Rome's churches, it closes in the middle of the day.

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Piazza del Popolo:** At the end of three of the centro storico's most important streets—Via del Babuino, Via del Corso, and Via di Ripetta—the "People's Square" provides a front-row seat for some of Rome's best people-watching.

**Villa Borghese:** Drink in the fresh air in central Rome's largest park—stretches of green and plenty of leafy pathways encourage wandering, biking, or just chilling out.

**The Pincio:** Stroll through formal gardens in the footsteps of aristocrats out of a 19th-century fashion plate.

**Santa Maria del Popolo:** Marvel at the incredible realism of Caravaggio's gritty paintings in the Cerasi Chapel, then savor Raphael's Chigi Chapel.

**Galleria Borghese:** Appreciate the extravagant interior decor in one of Rome's most opulent—and pleasant—museums.

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### GETTING HERE

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■ The Metro stop for Piazza del Popolo is Flaminio on Line A. The Villa Giulia, the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, and the Bioparco in Villa Borghese are accessible from Via Flaminia, 1 km (½ mile) from Piazza del Popolo. Tram No. 19 and Bus No. 3 stop at each.

■ Bus No. 160 and No. 628 connects Piazza del Popolo to Piazza Venezia. Bus No. 116 goes into Villa Borghese.

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### QUICK BITES

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■ **Caffè delle Arti.** Attached to the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, inside the Villa Borghese, this elegant caffè with a pretty terrace is a favorite all-day rendezvous both for Romans from nearby upscale Parioli and for visitors to the Villa Borghese park and museums. E*Via Gramsci 73, Villa Borghese* P06/32651236 [www.caffedelleartiroma.it](http://www.caffedelleartiroma.it).

■ **Rosati.** A fixture of the Piazza del Popolo since 1922, this classic Roman caffè attracts locals and visitors for cappuccino and aperitivo. It's a prime people-watching spot, especially if you sit outside. E*Piazza del Popolo 5, Piazza del Popolo* P06/3225859 [www.barrosati.com](http://www.barrosati.com) m*Flaminio*.

**While it may not feel like it amid the dense warren of cobblestone streets in the centro storico (historic center), Rome is actually a very green city. All around the immediate city center are a number of vast public parks, the most central of which is the city's giant green lung: the Villa Borghese park, where residents love to escape for some serious R&R. But don't think you can completely avoid sightseeing—three of Rome's most important museums are inside the park, and Piazza del Popolo, which has more than one art-crammed church, is close by.**

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## **Villa Borghese**

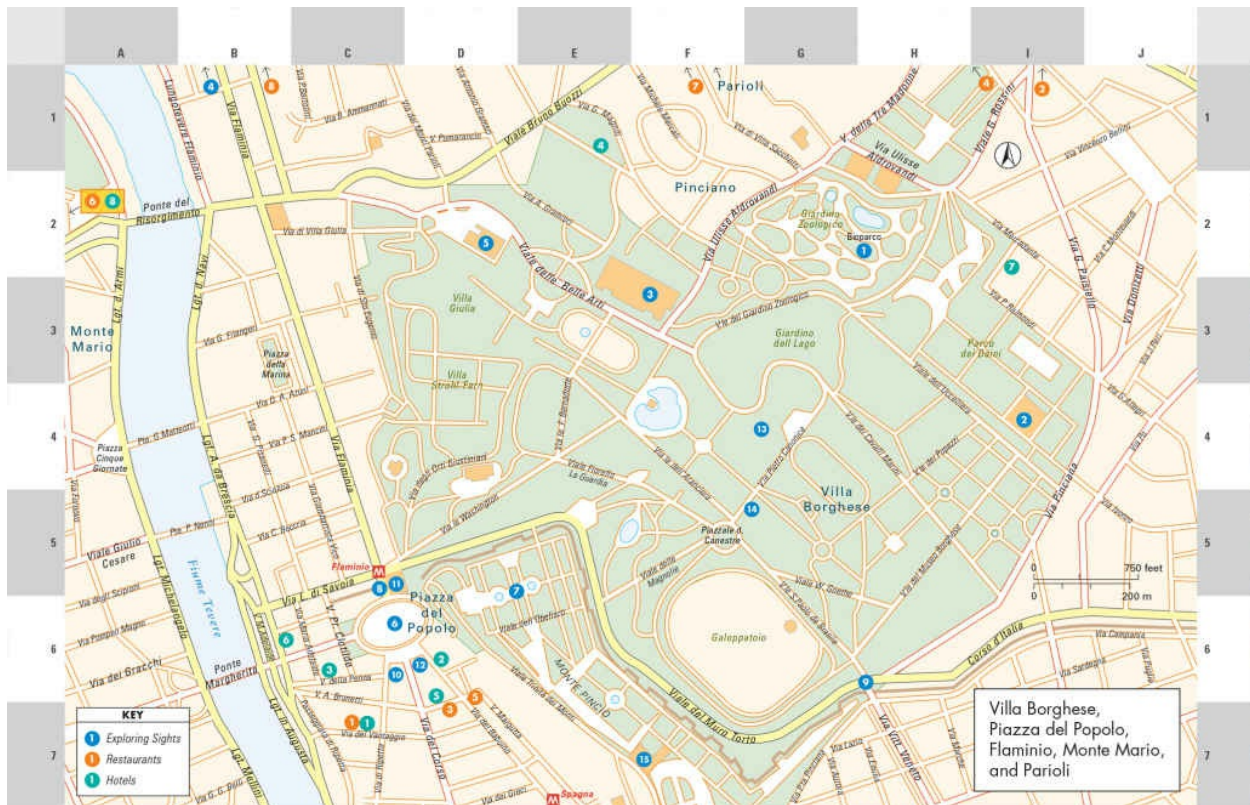
Central Rome's largest open space is filled with playful fountains, sculptured gardens, and picturesque forests of shady pine trees. But that's not the park's only purpose, for on the perimeter lie three of Rome's most important museums: the Galleria Borghese, for the very best of ancient, Renaissance, and Baroque art; the Villa Giulia, for the world's ultimate collection of Etruscan remains; and the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, with its collection of 19th- and 20th-century art (Italian and other). For theatergoers, there are summer performances of Shakespeare (in Italian) in a replica of London's Globe Theatre. All in all, there's enough here to satisfy the most avid culture lover. For an excellent day out with the children, head for the Bioparco, Rome's zoo.

## **S Sights**



## Bioparco

ZOO | FAMILY | Especially good for a day out with the children, this zoo has been remodeled along eco-friendly lines: there is now more space for the animals, most of which were brought from other zoos or born from animals already in captivity (rather than those snatched from the wild). There aren't any rhinos, koalas, pandas, or polar bears, but there are big cats, elephants, chimpanzees, and local brown bears from Abruzzo among others. Other features include the Reptilium, the Bioparco train (€1.50), a picnic area next to the flamingos, and a farm. EPiazzale del Giardino Zoologico 1, Villa Borghese P06/3608211 [www.bioparco.it](http://www.bioparco.it) A€16.



Sights	
1 Bioparco	H2
2 Galleria Borghese	I4
3 Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea	F3
4 MAXXI—Museum Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo	B1

5 Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia	D2
6 Piazza del Popolo	C6
7 Pincio Promenade	D5
8 Porta del Popolo	C5
9 Porta Pinciana	H6
10 Santa Maria dei Miracoli	C6
11 Santa Maria del Popolo	C5
12 Santa Maria in Montesanto	D6
13 Silvano Todi Globe Theatre	G4
14 Villa Borghese	G5
15 Villa Medici	F7

Restaurants	
1 Acquadina	C7
2 Ai Ceppi	I1
3 Brillo Restaurant	D7
4 Duke's Fine Casual Brand Restaurant	I1
5 Il Margutta	D6
6 La Pergola	A2

7 Metamorfosi Restaurant	F1
8 Tree Bar	B1

Hotels	
1 The First Roma Arte	C7
2 Hotel de Russie	D6
3 Hotel Locarno	C6
4 Hotel Lord Byron	E1
5 Hotel Valadier	D6
6 Palazzo Diana Hotel	B6

7 Parco del Principi Grand Hotel & Spa	I2
8 Rome Cavalieri, A Waldorf Astoria Resort	A2

## ★ Galleria Borghese

MUSEUM | It's a real toss-up as to which is more magnificent: the museum built for Cardinal Scipione Borghese in 1612, or the art that lies within it. The luxury-loving cardinal had the museum custom-built as a showcase for his



fabulous collection of both antiquities and more “modern” works, including those he commissioned from the masters Caravaggio and Bernini. Today, it’s a monument to Roman interior decoration at its most extravagant.

One of the most famous works in the collection is Canova’s Neoclassical sculpture *Pauline Borghese as Venus Victrix*. The next three rooms hold three key early Baroque sculptures: Bernini’s *David*, *Apollo and Daphne*, and *Rape of Persephone*. All were done when the artist was in his 20s, and all illustrate Bernini’s extraordinary skill. The *Apollo and Daphne* shows the moment when, to aid her escape from the pursuing Apollo, Daphne is turned into a laurel tree. Leaves and twigs sprout from her fingertips as she stretches agonizingly away from Apollo. In *Pluto and Persephone*, Pluto has just plucked Persephone (or Proserpina) from her flower-picking, or perhaps he’s returning to Hades with his prize. (Don’t miss the realistic way his grip causes dimples in Proserpina’s flesh.) This is the stuff that makes the Baroque exciting—and moving. Other Berninis on view in the collection include a large, unfinished figure called *Verità*, or *Truth*.

Room 8 contains six paintings by Caravaggio, the hotheaded genius who died at age 37. All of his paintings, even the charming *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*, seethe with an undercurrent of darkness. The disquieting *Sick Bacchus* is a self-portrait of the artist who, like the god, had a fondness for wine. *David and Goliath*, painted in the last year of Caravaggio’s life—while he was on the run, murder charges hanging over his head—includes his self-portrait in the head of Goliath. Upstairs, the Pinacoteca (Picture Gallery) boasts paintings by Raphael (including his moving *Deposition*), Pinturicchio, Perugino, Bellini, and Rubens. Probably the gallery’s most famous painting is Titian’s allegorical *Sacred and Profane Love*, a mysterious and yet-unsolved image with two female figures, one nude, one clothed. ■ **TIP → Admission to the Galleria is by reservation only. Visitors are admitted in two-hour shifts 9–5. Prime-time slots can sell out days in advance, so reserve directly through the Borghese’s website.** EPiazza Scipione Borghese 5, off Via Pinciana, Villa Borghese P06/32810 reservations, 06/8413979 info [www.galleriaborghese.it](http://www.galleriaborghese.it) A€15, including €2 reservation fee; increased fee during temporary exhibitions CClosed Mon. mBus No. 910 from Piazza della Repubblica; Tram No. 19 or Bus No. 3 from Policlinico.

## **Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea** (*National Gallery of Modern Art*)

**MUSEUM** | This massive white Beaux Arts building, built for the 1911 World Exposition in Rome, contains one of Italy's leading collections of 19th- and 20th-century works. It's primarily dedicated to the history of Italian Modernism, examining the movement's development over the last two centuries, but crowd-pleasers Degas, Monet, Courbet, Van Gogh, and Cézanne put in appearances, along with an outstanding Dadaist collection. You can mix coffee and culture at the Art Nouveau Caffè delle Arti in the columned alcove of the museum. *E*[Via delle Belle Arti 131, Villa Borghese P06/32298221](#) [www.lagallerianazionale.com](http://www.lagallerianazionale.com) A€10 CClosed Mon. mFlaminio, Tram No. 19 or 3, Bus Nos. 61, 89, 160, 490, 495.

## ★ **Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia** (*National Etruscan Museum*)

**HOUSE** | The world's most outstanding collection of Etruscan art and artifacts is housed in Villa Giulia, built around 1551 for Pope Julius III. Among the team called in to plan and construct the villa were Michelangelo and fellow Florentine Vasari. Most of the actual work, however, was done by Vignola and Ammannati. The villa's *nymphaeum*—or sunken sculpture garden—is a superb example of a refined late-Renaissance setting for princely pleasures. No one knows precisely where the Etruscans originated, but many scholars maintain they came from Asia Minor, appearing in Italy about 2000 BC, and creating a civilization that was a dazzling prelude to the ancient Romans. Among the most striking pieces are the terra-cotta statues, such as the *Apollo of Veii* and the serenely beautiful *Sarcophagus of the Spouses*. Dating to 530–500 BC, this couple (or Sposi) look at the viewer with almond eyes and archaic smiles, suggesting an openness and joie de vivre rare in Roman art. Also look for the cinematic frieze from a later temple (480 BC) in Pyrgi, resembling a sort of Etruscan Elgin marbles in terra-cotta. The exhibition of Etruscan jewelry, as well as the beautiful gardens, definitely make it worth a visit. *E*[Piazzale Villa Giulia 9, Villa Borghese P06/3226571](#) [villagiulia.beniculturali.it](http://villagiulia.beniculturali.it) A€8 CClosed Mon. mTram No. 19, Bus Nos. 3, 982.

## ★ **Pincio Promenade**

**NATIONAL/STATE PARK** | **FAMILY** | Redolent of the bygone era of Henry James

and Edith Wharton, the Pincian gardens have long been a classic setting for a walk. Grand Tourists—and even a pope or two—would head here to see and be seen among the beau monde of Rome. Today, the Pincian terrace remains a favorite spot for locals taking a springtime Sunday stroll. The rather formal, early-19th-century style contrasts with the far more elaborate terraced gardens of Lucullus, the Roman gourmand who held legendary banquets here. Today, off-white marble busts of Italian Risorgimento heroes and artists line the pathways. Along with similar busts on the Gianicolo (Janiculum Hill), their noses have been targets of vandalism.

A stretch of ancient walls separates the Pincio from the southwest corner of Villa Borghese. From the balustraded terrace, you can look down at Piazza del Popolo and beyond, surveying much of Rome. Southeast of the Pincian terrace is the **Casina Valadier** (P06/69922090 [wcasinavaladier.com](http://wcasinavaladier.com)), a magnificently decorated Neoclassical building, which houses an upscale restaurant and cafeteria with glorious views. *EPiazzale Napoleone I and Viale dell'Obelisco, Villa Borghese mFlaminio (Piazza del Popolo).*

### **Porta Pinciana** (*Pincian Gate*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Framed by two squat, circular towers, this gate was constructed at the beginning of the 5th century during a renovation of the 3rd century Aurelian Walls. Here you can see just how well the walls have been preserved and imagine hordes of Visigoths trying to break through them. Sturdy as they look, these walls couldn't always keep out the barbarians: Rome was sacked three times during the 5th century alone. *EPiazzale Brasile, corner of Via Veneto and Corso d'Italia, Villa Borghese.*

### **Silvano Toti Globe Theatre**

**ARTS VENUE** | Directed by prolific Roman actor Gigi Proietti, this theater replicates the London original inaugurated in 1576. Rome's homage to Shakespeare is built entirely of wood, and seats 1,250 with standing room for 420 groundlings (following Elizabethan custom). Performances run July–September and are usually works by Shakespeare translated into Italian. Set in the Villa Borghese park, it is roughly midway between the Bioparco and the Museo Carlo Bilotti. ■ **TIP** → **Check the website for admission, as prices vary.** *ELargo Aqua Felix on Viale Pietro Canonica, Villa Borghese*

P3314619622 box office, 06/0608 tickets [www.globetheatreroma.com](http://www.globetheatreroma.com)  
mFlaminio.

### ★ Villa Borghese

**NATIONAL/STATE PARK | FAMILY** | Rome's Central Park, the Villa Borghese was originally laid out as a recreational garden in the early 17th century by Cardinal Scipione Borghese. The word "villa" was used to mean suburban estate, of the type developed by the ancient Romans and adopted by Renaissance nobles. Today's gardens cover a much smaller area—by 1630, the perimeter wall was almost 5 km (3 miles) long. At the end of the 18th century, Scottish painter Jacob More remodeled the gardens into the English style popular at the time. In addition to the gloriously restored Galleria Borghese, the highlights of the park are Piazza di Siena, a graceful amphitheater, and the botanical garden on Via Canonica, where there is a pretty little lake as well as the Neoclassical faux–Temple of Aesculapius, the newly designed Biopark zoo, Rome's own replica of London's Globe Theatre, and the Villa Giulia museum.

The Carlo Bilotti Museum is particularly attractive for Giorgio de Chirico fans, and there is more modern art in the nearby Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea. The 63-seat children's movie theater, Cinema dei Piccoli shows films for adults in the evening. There's also Casa del Cinema, where film buffs can screen films or sit at the sleek, cherry-red, indoor-outdoor caffè (you can find a schedule of events at [www.casadelcinema.it](http://www.casadelcinema.it)). *Main entrances at Porta Pinciana, the Pincio, Piazzale Flaminio (Piazza del Popolo), Viale delle Belle Arti, and Via Mercadante, Villa Borghese mFlaminio (Piazza del Popolo).*

### **Villa Medici** (*The French Academy of Rome*)

**ARTS VENUE** | Purchased by Napoléon to create an academy where artists could study Italian art and put it toward the (French) national good, the villa originally belonged to Cardinal Ferdinando I de' Medici, who also laid out the immaculate Renaissance garden to set off his sculpture collection. In 1803, the building became the official host to the French Academy of Rome. Garden tours in English are offered, allowing you to walk in the footsteps of Subleyras, Fragonard, and Ingres, who all worked here. The guided tour is

the only way you can see the gardens and the incredibly picturesque garden facade, which is studded with Mannerist and Rococo sculpted reliefs and overlooks a loggia with a beautiful fountain devoted to Mercury. There is also a pleasant cafeteria (daily 8 am–7 pm) at the loggia level, by the Galleria del Cardinale Ferdinando de' Medici. EViale Trinità dei Monti 1, Villa Borghese P06/67611 [www.villamedici.it](http://www.villamedici.it) A€12, includes garden tour and exhibit CClosed Mon. mSpagna.

## r Restaurants

One of Rome's two large parks borders the famed-but-faded Via Veneto, the former haunt of the Hollywood-on-the-Tiber scene. The upscale neighborhood is home to historic dining destinations as well as the café culture that formed the backdrop for those living *la dolce vita*.

### Al Ceppo

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | The well-heeled, the business-minded, and those of refined palates frequent this outpost of tranquility. The owners hail from Le Marche, the region northeast of Rome that encompasses inland mountains and the Adriatic coastline, and these ladies dote on their customers as you'd wish a sophisticated Italian *mamma* would. **Known for:** “36 hours cooked” lamb rump and porcini mushrooms; authentic Le Marche cuisine; excellent wine list. DAverage main: €32 EVia Panama 2, Villa Borghese P06/8419696 [www.ristorantealceppo.it](http://www.ristorantealceppo.it) CClosed 3 wks in Aug. No lunch Mon.

## h Hotels

The area around the Villa Borghese gardens is a relaxing retreat from the hustle and bustle of the Eternal City. You won't get tired of waking up to views of the park.

### Parco dei Principi Grand Hotel & Spa

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | The 1960s-era facade of this large, seven-story hotel contrasts with the turn-of-the-20th-century Italian court decor and the extensive botanical garden outside, resulting in a combination of traditional elegance

and contemporary pleasure. **Pros:** quiet location on Villa Borghese; fitness room with wide variety of equipment; biosauna and sensory showers at spa. **Cons:** beyond the city center; staff can be distant and unhelpful; a bit of a hike to caffè and restaurants. DRooms from: €360 EVia Gerolamo Frescobaldi 5, Villa Borghese P06/854421 [www.parcodeiprincipi.com](http://www.parcodeiprincipi.com) a179 rooms XFree breakfast.

## p Performing Arts

### FILM

#### Casa del Cinema

FILM | Casa del Cinema is Rome's hub for all things film, with multiple screening rooms, a resource center with DVD library, laptops for private viewings, plus a caffè and restaurant. Yearly programming includes new and retro films from its vast archives as well as many original-language films often showcased from several festivals, including Rome Film Fest ([www.romacinemafest.it](http://www.romacinemafest.it)). In summer, the cinema heads outdoors to show a wide array of movies. ELargo Marcello Mastroianni 1, Villa Borghese P06/0608 [www.casadelcinema.it](http://www.casadelcinema.it).

#### Cinema dei Piccoli (Mickey Mouse Cinema)

FILM | FAMILY | This tiny quaint theater in the middle of the park has only 63 seats, and plays children's films during the day and adult new releases at night. Opened in 1934, many Romans still refer to it as "Casa di Topolino," thanks to the giant Mickey Mouse sign that appeared on the building until the 1970s. Warning to the very tall: leg room is minimal. EViale della Pineta 15, Villa Borghese P06/8553485 [www.cinemadeipiccoli.it](http://www.cinemadeipiccoli.it).



## Piazza del Popolo

The formal garden terraces of the Pincio, on the southwestern side of Villa Borghese, give way to a stone staircase down to Piazza del Popolo, a mercifully traffic-free piazza that is one of Rome's best people-watching spots. Very round, very explicitly defined, and very picturesque, the Piazza del Popolo (the People's Square) is one of Rome's biggest. Papal architect Giuseppe Valadier laid out this square around 1820 with twin churches at one end and the Porta del Popolo, Rome's northern city gate, at the other. Part of an earlier urban plan, the three streets to the south radiate straight as spokes to other parts of the city, forming the famed *tridente* that gives this neighborhood its nickname. The center is marked with an obelisk taken from Egypt, one so old it makes the Pantheon look like the Sears Tower; it was carved for Ramses II in the 13th century BC. Today, the obelisk is guarded by four water-gushing lions and steps that mark the end of many a sunset passeggiata (stroll). The most fascinating pieces of art—including masterpieces by Raphael and Caravaggio—are hidden within the northeast corner's often-overlooked church of Santa Maria del Popolo, snuggled against the 400-year-old Porta del Popolo.

## S Sights

### **Piazza del Popolo**

**PLAZA** | With its obelisk and twin churches, this immense square is a famed Rome landmark. It marks what was for centuries the northern entrance to the city, where all roads from the north converge and where visitors, many of them pilgrims, would get their first impression of the Eternal City. The desire to make this entrance to Rome something special had been a pet project of popes and their architects for more than three centuries. The piazza, crowded with fashionable carriages and carnival revelers in the past, is a pedestrian zone today. At election time, it's the scene of huge political rallies, and on New Year's Eve, Rome stages a mammoth alfresco party in the piazza.  
*EPiazza del Popolo mFlaminio.*

## **Porta del Popolo** (*City Gate*)

**BUILDING** | The medieval gate in the Aurelian walls was replaced by the current one between 1562 and 1565, by Nanni di Bacco Bigio. Bernini further embellished the inner facade in 1655 for the much-heralded arrival of Queen Christina of Sweden, who had abdicated her throne to become a Roman Catholic. *EPiazza del Popolo and Piazzale Flaminio, Piazza del Popolo mFlaminio.*

## **Santa Maria dei Miracoli**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | A twin to Santa Maria in Montesanto, this church was built in the 1670s, started by Carlo Rainaldi and completed by Bernini and Carlo Fontana as an elegant frame for the entrance to Via del Corso from Piazza del Popolo. The church is dedicated to “Our Lady of the Miracles.” Inside there is a gorgeous stucco, designed by Bernini pupil Antonio Raggi. *EVia del Corso 529, Piazza del Popolo mFlaminio.*

## ★ **Santa Maria del Popolo**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Standing inconspicuously in a corner of the vast Piazza del Popolo, this church often goes unnoticed, but the treasures inside make it a must for art lovers. Bramante enlarged the apse of the church, which was rebuilt in the 15th century on the site of a much older place of worship. Inside, in the first chapel on the right, you’ll see some frescoes by Pinturicchio from the mid-15th century; the adjacent **Cybo Chapel** is a 17th-century exercise in decorative marble. Raphael designed the famous **Chigi Chapel**, the second on the left, with vault mosaics—showing God the Father in benediction—as well as statues of Jonah and Elijah. More than a century later, Bernini added the oval medallions on the tombs and the statues of Daniel and Habakkuk. Finally, the **Cerasi Chapel**, to the left of the high altar, holds two Caravaggios: *The Crucifixion of St. Peter* and *The Conversion of St. Paul*. Exuding drama and realism, both are key early Baroque works that show how “modern” 17th-century art can appear. Compare their style with the much more restrained and classically “pure” *Assumption of the Virgin* by Annibale Carracci, which hangs over the altar of the chapel. *EPiazza del Popolo 12, near Porta Pinciana, Piazza del Popolo P3923612243 [www.smariadelpopolo.com/it](http://www.smariadelpopolo.com/it) CClosed Sun. mFlaminio.*

## **Santa Maria in Montesanto** (*Church of the Artists*)

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Located on the eastern side of the Piazza del Popolo, Santa Maria dei Miracoli's Baroque "twin church" was built in the 1660s–70s. It was originally designed by Carlo Rainaldi and finished by Carlo Fontana who was supervised by his brilliant teacher, Bernini (whose other pupils are responsible for the saints topping the facade). On the last Sunday of the month from October to June, a Mass is held in tribute to artists, with live musical accompaniment, earning the church its nickname of the Church of the Artists. *E*Via del Babuino 198, Piazza del Popolo P [www.chiesadegliartisti.it](http://www.chiesadegliartisti.it) mFlaminio.

## **r Restaurants**

This high-traffic shopping and tourist zone has both casual pizzerie and upscale eateries, as well as classic caffè where you can have a restorative espresso and a light bite.

### **Acquolina**

**\$\$\$ | SEAFOOD** | This Michelin-starred restaurant turns out delicious and high-quality seafood dishes reflecting, for the most part, the time-honored Italian tradition of letting great food speak for itself. The crudo is ultrafresh, and pastas are upscale aquatic riffs on Roman classics. **Known for:** raw seafood platter; linguine with clams; sophisticated desserts. *D*Average main: €28 *E*Via del Vantaggio 14, Piazza del Popolo P06/3337192 [www.acquolinaristorante.it](http://www.acquolinaristorante.it) *C*Closed Sun., and 10 days in Aug. No lunch.

### **Brillo Restaurant**

**\$\$ | WINE BAR** | The location near Piazza del Popolo makes Brillo especially convenient for lunch or dinner after shopping in the Via del Corso area. The menu is more extensive than the typical wine bar, with cured meats, crostini, pastas, grilled meats, and pizzas. **Known for:** squash blossom pizza; more than 400 types of wine; open late night, ideal for an after-show meal. *D*Average main: €16 *E*Via della Fontanella 12, Piazza del Popolo P06/3243334 [www.ilbrilloparlante.com](http://www.ilbrilloparlante.com) mFlaminio.

### **Il Margutta**

\$ | VEGETARIAN | Parallel to posh Via del Babuino, Via Margutta was once a street of artists' studios (including Fellini's), and this chic vegetarian restaurant, with changing displays of modern art, sits on the far end of the gallery-lined street. They turn out tasty meat-free versions of classic Mediterranean dishes, as well as more daring tofu concoctions. **Known for:** organic fruit and vegetable juices; marinated ginger tofu; arty atmosphere. *DAverage main: €14 E* Via Margutta 118, Piazza del Popolo P06/32650577 [www.ilmargutta.bio](http://www.ilmargutta.bio) mFlaminio.

## h Hotels

While Piazza del Popolo is still quite close to the centro action, it's just removed enough to feel relaxing after a day of sightseeing. Here, amid high-end boutiques and galleries, you'll find several smart, stylish hotels.

### ★ The First Roma Arte

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Set in a 19th-century Neoclassical palace, this cozy boutique hotel was remodeled to feature high-tech, elegant guest rooms while keeping the core structure intact, including unique vertical windows and tall ceilings, intact. **Pros:** fitness room with Technogym equipment; incredible staff that is eager to please; more than 200 works of art on display from Galleria Mucciaccia. **Cons:** some rooms can be a bit dark; many rates don't include breakfast; not a lot of in-room storage for luggage. *DRooms from: €450 E* Via del Vantaggio 14, Piazza del Popolo P06/45617070 [www.thefirsthotel.com/arte](http://www.thefirsthotel.com/arte) a29 rooms XNo meals.

### ★ Hotel de Russie

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | FAMILY | Occupying a 19th-century hotel that once hosted royalty, Picasso, and Cocteau, the Hotel de Russie is now the first choice in Rome for government bigwigs and Hollywood high rollers seeking ultimate luxury in a secluded retreat. **Pros:** big potential for celebrity sightings; well-equipped gym and world-class spa with hydro pool Jacuzzi, steam room, and sauna; excellent Stravinskij cocktail bar also has tables in the garden. **Cons:** faster Internet comes at a fee; breakfast not included; expensive. *DRooms from: €700 E* Via del Babuino 9, Piazza del Popolo P06/328881

[www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/hotel-de-russie](http://www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/hotel-de-russie) a122 rooms  
XNo meals mFlaminio.

### Hotel Locarno

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This hotel, originally established in 1925, is known for its charm, intimate feel, and central location off Piazza del Popolo. **Pros:** spacious rooms; complimentary bicycles; free Wi-Fi. **Cons:** some rooms are dark; annex rooms don't compare to main hotel; breakfast buffet is lacking in options. DRooms from: €350 EVia della Penna 22, Piazza del Popolo P06/3610841 [www.hotellocarno.com](http://www.hotellocarno.com) a66 rooms XFree breakfast mFlaminio.

### Hotel Valadier

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | Located just a quick walk from the Spanish Steps, this luxury hotel has captured the hearts of elite travelers over the years. **Pros:** excellent American-style breakfast buffet; spacious marble and travertine bathrooms; discount if booking directly through website. **Cons:** pillows are flat and outdated; fitness room is quite small; rooms can be very dark. DRooms from: €250 EVia della Fontanella 15, Piazza del Popolo P06/3611998 [www.hotelvaladier.com](http://www.hotelvaladier.com) a60 rooms XFree breakfast mFlaminio.

## n Nightlife

Like nearby Piazza di Spagna, Piazza del Popolo takes a turn for the quiet once the sun sets.

### BARS

#### Stravinskij Bar at the Hotel de Russie

BARS/PUBS | The Stravinskij Bar, in the Hotel de Russie's gorgeous garden, is the best place to catch a glimpse of la dolce vita. Celebrities, blue bloods, and VIPs hang out in the private courtyard garden where mixed drinks and cocktails are well above par. There are also healthy smoothies and bites if you need to refuel. EHotel de Russie, Via del Babuino 9, Piazza del Popolo P06/328881 [www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/hotel-de-russie/restaurant-and-bar/stravinskij-bar](http://www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/hotel-de-russie/restaurant-and-bar/stravinskij-bar) mFlaminio.

## Flaminio

The Flaminio neighborhood, in northern Rome near the Tiber, was the focus of urban renewal plans for many years. Renzo Piano's Auditorium Parco della Musica put the area on the map, and the MAXXI museum solidified the area as a destination.

## S Sights

**MAXXI—Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo** (*National Museum of 21st-Century Arts*)

**MUSEUM** | Designed by the late Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid, this modern building plays with lots of natural light, curving and angular lines, and big open spaces, all meant to question the division between “within” and “without” (think glass ceilings and steel staircases that twist through the air). The MAXXI hosts temporary exhibitions of art, architecture, film, and more. The permanent collection, exhibited on a rotating basis, boasts more than 350 works from artists including Andy Warhol, Francesco Clemente, and Gerhard Richter. *E* Via Guido Reni 4/A, Flaminio P06/3201954 [www.maxxi.art](http://www.maxxi.art) A€12 CClosed Mon. *m* Flaminio, then Tram No. 2 to Apollodoro; Bus Nos. 53, 217, and 910.

## r Restaurants

Long a residential area, Flaminio is starting to come into its own, with new and interesting bars and restaurants opening.

### **Tree Bar**

**\$** | **CAFÉ** | One of the influx of new dining spots in the area, Tree Bar is, as the name suggests, set amid lush greenery and decorated in wooden tree house style. Functioning as a bar, restaurant, and enoteca all at once, it's open for dinner as well as for aperitivi and late-night drinks and brunch on weekends. **Known for:** organic wines; pasta e ceci (pasta with chickpeas); free buffet with aperitivo. *D* Average main: €14 *E* Via Flaminia 226, Flaminio



P06/32652754 [www.treebar.it](http://www.treebar.it) CClosed 2 wks in Aug. No lunch weekdays.

## h Hotels

### Palazzo Dama Hotel

\$\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This former Roman villa was once home to the Malaspina family, who hosted high society gatherings throughout the 18th century, and today it is still a hot spot for nightlife, thanks to the underground dance club Raspoutine, open after hours. **Pros:** drinks and bites available all-day in garden; Acqua di Parma toiletries; swimming pool is open year-round. **Cons:** standard rooms are small with little storage space; room service is slow and portions are tiny; rooms can be noisy with nightclub below. DRooms from: €365 ELungotevere Arnaldo da Brescia 2, Flaminio P06/89565272 [www.palazzodama.com](http://www.palazzodama.com) a29 rooms XNo meals mFlaminio.

## p Performing Arts

### CLASSICAL MUSIC

#### Accademia Filarmonica Romana (Roman Philharmonic Academy)

MUSIC | Nearly two centuries old, this is one of Rome's historic concert venues, founded in 1821, featuring both symphonic and chamber-music presentations. The garden hosts occasional outdoor performances. EVia Flaminia 118, Flaminio P06/3201752 [www.filarmonicaromana.org](http://www.filarmonicaromana.org).

#### Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (National Academy of Santa Cecilia)

CONCERTS | One of the oldest conservatories in the world (founded 1585), this venue has a program of performances ranging from classical to contemporary and a lineup of world-renowned artists. The Renzo Piano–designed Auditorium Parco della Musica hosts Santa Cecilia's shows in its three music concert halls. EViale Pietro de Coubertin 30, Flaminio P06/80242501 [www.santacecilia.it](http://www.santacecilia.it) mFlaminio, then Tram No. 2 to Ankara/Tiziano; Bus Nos. 53, 168, 910, and 982.

#### ★ Auditorium Parco della Musica

CONCERTS | Architect Renzo Piano conceived and constructed the Auditorium

Parco della Musica, a futuristic complex made up of three enormous, pod-shaped concert halls, which have hosted some of the world's greatest music acts. The Sala Santa Cecilia is a massive hall for grand orchestra and choral concerts; the Sala Sinopoli is more intimately scaled for smaller troupes; and the Sala Petrassi was designed for alternative events. All three are arrayed around the Cavea (amphitheater), a vast outdoor Greco-Roman-style theater. The Auditorium also hosts seasonal festivals, including the Rome Film Fest, a Christmas market, and a gardening festival in May. EViale Pietro de Coubertin 30, Flaminio P06/80241281 [www.auditorium.com](http://www.auditorium.com) mFlaminio, then Tram No. 2 to Ankara/Tiziano; Bus Nos. 53, 168, 910, and 982.

## **DANCE**

### **Teatro Olimpico**

**DANCE** | Part of Rome's theater circuit, the 1930s-era Teatro Olimpico is one of the main venues for cabaret, contemporary dance companies, visiting international ballet companies, and touring Broadway shows. EPiazza Gentile da Fabriano 17, Flaminio P06/3265991 [www.teatrolimpico.it](http://www.teatrolimpico.it).

## Monte Mario

In the northwest part of Rome, perched on the city's highest hill, the neighborhood of Monte Mario has fabulous views. Although not the easiest to get to by public transportation, there are a few noteworthy hotels and restaurants here.

### r Restaurants

This neighborhood is home to some of Rome's fanciest restaurants.

#### ★ La Pergola

\$\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | Dinner here is a truly spectacular and romantic event, with incomparable views across the city matched by a stellar dining experience that includes top-notch service as well as sublimely inventive fare. The difficulty comes in choosing from among Michelin-starred chef Heinz Beck's alta cucina specialties. **Known for:** spaghetti cacio e pepe with white shrimps marinated in lime; award-winning wine list; weekend reservations that book up four months in advance. *DAverage main: €65 ERome Cavalieri, A Waldorf Astoria Resort, Via Alberto Cadlolo 101, Monte Mario P06/35092152 [www.romecavalieri.com/lapergola.php](http://www.romecavalieri.com/lapergola.php) CClosed Sun. and Mon., 3 wks in Aug., and Jan. No lunch kJacket and tie.*

### h Hotels

Travelers looking for a relaxing getaway at a distance from the city center will appreciate staying in Monte Mario, but beware: public transportation is sparse in this area. It's a 20- to 30-minute drive to the centro storico—as much as an hour on public transport. Some hotels offer shuttles, but if you'd rather not have to rely on them or on taxi service, consider renting a car.

#### Rome Cavalieri, A Waldorf Astoria Resort

\$\$\$\$ | RESORT | A hilltop oasis far from the noise of the centro storico, the Rome Cavalieri comes with magnificent views, an Olympic-size pool, and a

palatial spa perched atop the Monte Mario amid 15 acres of lush Mediterranean parkland. **Pros:** famed art collection including three Tiepolo works from 1725; complimentary shuttle to city center; impressive on-site restaurant. **Cons:** you definitely pay for the luxury of staying here—everything is expensive; outside the city center; not all rooms have great views. DRooms from: €405 EVia Alberto Cadlolo 101, Monte Mario P06/35091 [www.romecavalieri.com](http://www.romecavalieri.com) a370 rooms XFree breakfast.

## Parioli

The elegant residential neighborhood of Parioli, north of the Villa Borghese, is home to some of the city's poshest hotels and restaurants. However, it's not especially convenient if you're planning to do any sightseeing.

### r Restaurants

#### **Duke's Fine Casual Bar and Restaurant**

\$\$\$ | AMERICAN | It dubs itself an American West Coast-style restaurant, and the decor is very Malibu beach house, with a gorgeous patio out back. But the menu takes a few liberties: the California rolls contain tuna and carrot, and there are mint leaves in the Caesar salad. **Known for:** satisfying cravings for non-Italian food; homemade bread and biscuits; Angus steak tartare. *DAverage main: €26 EViale Parioli 200, Parioli P06/80662455 [www.dukes.it](http://www.dukes.it) CClosed Sun. and Mon. No lunch.*

#### **Metamorfofi Restaurant**

\$\$\$\$ | FUSION | Chef Roy Caceres heads up this chic but understated Michelin-starred restaurant. There are several tasting menus to choose from (as well as à la carte), but it's worth the splurge to partake of the surprising and satisfying wonders that come out of the kitchen, from prime smoked Wagyu beef with peanut puree to duck's liver with beetroot, blueberries, and truffle. **Known for:** lobster with grilled black cabbage; chicken liver ravioli; outstanding wine list. *DAverage main: €35 EVia Giovanni Antonelli 30, Parioli P06/8076839 [www.metamorfofiroma.it](http://www.metamorfofiroma.it) CClosed Sun. No lunch Sat.*

### h Hotels

Rome's poshest residential neighborhood attracts a well-heeled international crowd who are happy to be away from the centro storico hubbub. Luxurious lodgings and a great night's sleep might make you feel like you're in an elegant country home. Public transportation is limited in this area, but some hotels offer shuttles to major attractions.

## Hotel Lord Byron

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | This Art Deco retreat has a jewelry-box charm and feels like a small country manor. **Pros:** luxury bathrobes and slippers; gorgeous bar; huge bathrooms, some with soaking tubs. **Cons:** too far to walk to sights; not many caffè and shops in the area; cabs to the city center are expensive. DRooms from: €300 EVia Giuseppe de Notaris 5, Parioli P06/3220404 [www.lordbyronhotel.com](http://www.lordbyronhotel.com) a32 rooms XFree breakfast.

## p Performing Arts

### DANCE

#### Teatro Greco

DANCE | As part of Rome's rich and intense performance circuit, the Teatro Greco features international contemporary dance performances. Its own dance company, established in 1973, has performed all over the world. EVia Ruggero Leoncavallo 10, Parioli P06/8607513 [www.teatrogreco.it](http://www.teatrogreco.it).



## Chapter 9

# TRASTEVERE AND MONTEVERDE

Updated by  
Ariston Anderson



 Sights  
★★★★★

 Restaurants  
★★★★☆

 Hotels  
★★★★☆

 Shopping  
★★★★☆

 Nightlife  
★★★★☆

# TRASTEVERE AND MONTEVERDE SNAPSHOT

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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It's easy to get to Trastevere from Piazza Venezia: just take Tram No. 8 to the first stop on the other side of the river. You'll probably want to head right to the Piazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere, the heart of this lively area. Heading to the opposite side of Viale di Trastevere, though, is a treat many tourists miss. The cobblestone streets around Piazza in Piscinula and Via della Luce—locals peering down from balconies and the smell of fresh-baked bread floating from bakeries—are much more reminiscent of how Trastevere used to be than the touristic area to the north. Either way, remember that many of Trastevere's lovely small churches close, like others in Rome, in the afternoons. In the evenings, the neighborhood heats up with locals and students drinking, eating, and going for *passeggiate* (strolls)—a not-to-be-missed atmosphere, especially for those with energy to burn.

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Santa Maria in Trastevere:** Tear yourself away from the piazza scene outside to take in the gilded glory of one of the city's oldest and most beautiful churches, fabled for its medieval mosaics.

**Isola Tiberina:** Cross the river on the Ponte Fabricio—the city's oldest bridge—for a stroll on the paved shores of the adorable Isola Tiberina (and don't forget to detour for the lemon ices at La Grattachecca).

**Nightlife:** Trastevere has become one of Rome's hottest nighttime-scene arenas, with lively bars and people spilling into the streets at nearly every turn.

**Get a Feel for the Middle Ages:** With cobblestone alleyways and medieval houses, the area around Trastevere's Piazza in Pisciunula offers a magical dip into Rome's Middle Ages.

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## GETTING HERE

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■ From the Vatican or Spanish Steps, expect a 30- to 40-minute walk to reach Trastevere. From Termini station, take Bus No. 40 Express or No. 64 to Largo di Torre Argentina, where you can switch to Tram No. 8 to get to Trastevere. If you don't feel like climbing the steep Gianicolo, take Bus No. 115 from Largo dei Fiorentini, then enjoy the walk down to the northern reaches of Trastevere or explore the leafy residential area of Monteverde Vecchio on the other side of the hill. Monteverde is a 10-minute tram ride from Trastevere.

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## QUICK BITES

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■ **Caffè di Marzio.** Over a coffee or a cocktail, sit and gaze upon Santa Maria in Trastevere's glistening golden facade at Caffè di Marzio. The outdoor seating is lovely but the interior is warm and welcoming, too. *EPiazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere 15, Trastevere P06/5816095.*

■ **Rivendita.** The full name is "Rivendita: Libri Cioccolata e Vino," and that's exactly what you'll find in this charming hole-in-the-wall: books, chocolate, and wine. Options like Barolo, fruity cocktails, or coffee served in cups of pure chocolate are enticing. *EVicolo del Cinque 11/a, Trastevere P06/58301868 cNo credit cards.*

**Trastevere (“beyond the Tiber”) can feel a world apart from the rest of Rome and despite galloping gentrification, the bohemian neighborhood remains about the most tightly knit community in the city.**

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Perfectly picturesque piazzas, tiny winding medieval alleyways, and time-burnished Romanesque houses all cast a frozen-in-time spell, while grand art awaits at Santa Maria in Trastevere, San Francesco a Ripa, and the Villa Farnesina. The neighborhood’s greatest attraction, however, is simply its atmosphere—traditional shops set along crooked streets, peaceful during the day and alive with throngs of people at night. From here, a steep hike upstairs and along the road to the Gianicolo, Rome’s second-highest hill, earns you a panoramic view of the city.

The inhabitants of Trastevere don’t even call themselves Romans but Trasteverini, claiming that they, not the citizens east of the river, are the true remaining Romans. A visit here still feels a bit like entering a different time and place, as the district remains an enchanting mix of past and present.

# Trastevere

## S Sights

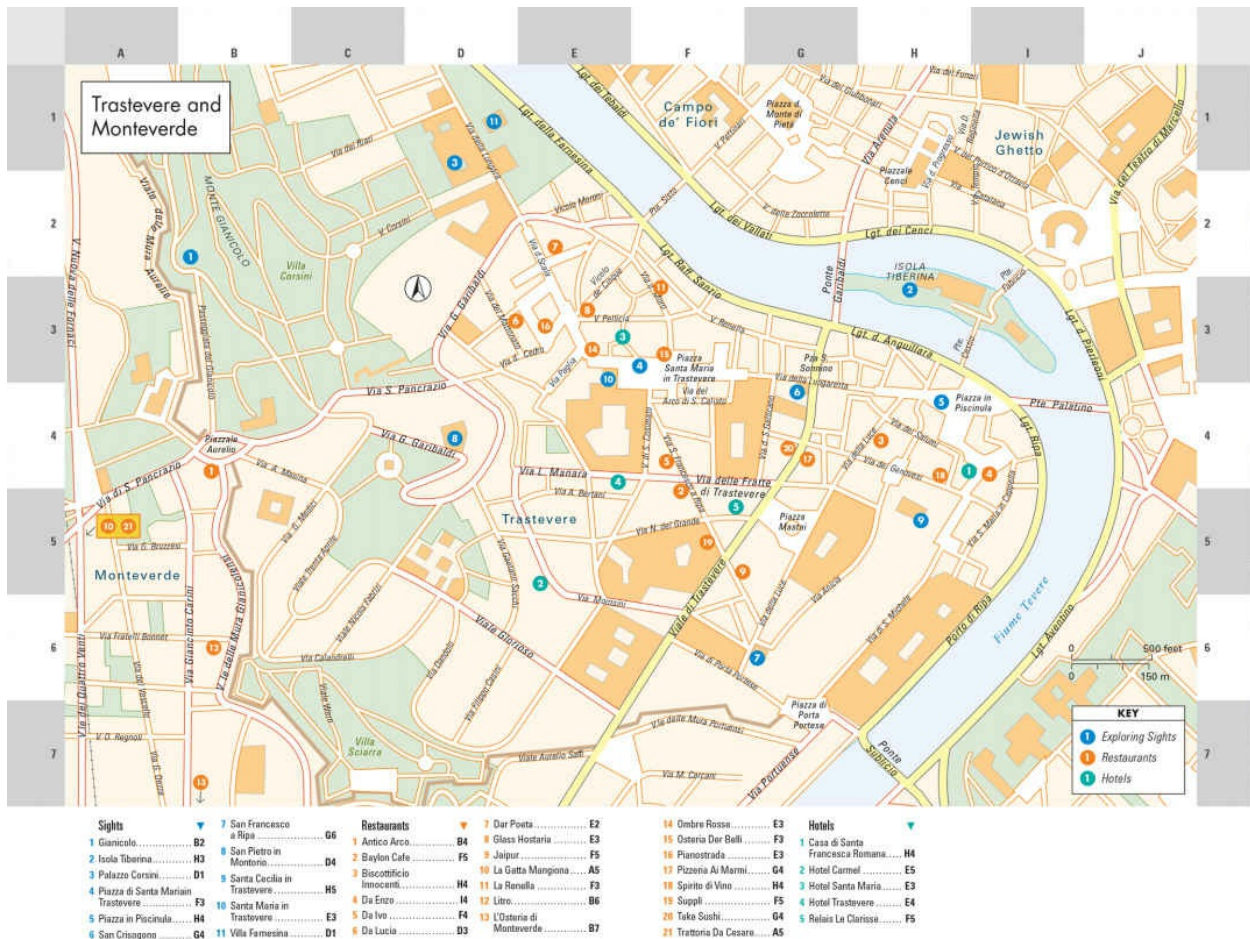
### **Gianicolo** (*Janiculum Hill*)

**NATIONAL/STATE PARK | FAMILY** | The Gianicolo is famous for its peaceful and pastel panoramic views of the city, a noontime cannon shot, and a monument dedicated to Giuseppe and Anita Garibaldi (the guiding spirit behind the unification of Italy in the 19th century, and his long-suffering wife). The view from the terrace, with the foothills of the Appennini in the background, is especially breathtaking at dusk. It's also a great view for dome-spotting, from the Pantheon to the myriad city churches. *EVia Servilia 43, Trastevere.*

### **Isola Tiberina** (*Tiber Island*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | It's easy to overlook this tiny island in the Tiber, but you shouldn't. In terms of history and sheer loveliness, the charming Isola Tiberina—shaped like a boat about to set sail—gets high marks. Cross onto the island via Ponte Fabricio, Rome's oldest remaining bridge, constructed in 62 BC; on the north side of the island crumbles the romantic ruin of the Ponte Rotto (Broken Bridge), which dates back to 179 BC. Descend the steps to the lovely river embankment to see a Roman relief of the intertwined-snakes symbol of Aesculapius, the great god of healing. In imperial times, Romans sheathed the entire island with marble to make it look like Aesculapius's ship, replete with a towering obelisk as a mast. Amazingly, a fragment of the ancient sculpted ship's prow still exists. You can marvel at it on the downstream end of the embankment. Today, medicine still reigns here. The island is home to the hospital of Fatebenefratelli (literally, "Do good, brothers"). Nearby is San Bartolomeo, built at the end of the 10th century by the Holy Roman Emperor Otto III and restored in the 18th century. *ETrastevere jIsola Tiberina can be accessed by Ponte Fabricio or Ponte Cestio.*





## Palazzo Corsini

**GARDEN** | A brooding example of Baroque style, the palace (once home to Queen Christina of Sweden) is across the road from the Villa Farnesina and houses part of the 16th- and 17th-century sections of the collection of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica. Among the star paintings in this manageably sized collection are Rubens's *St. Sebastian Healed by Angels* and Caravaggio's *St. John the Baptist*. Stop in if only to climb the 17th-century stone staircase, itself a drama of architectural shadows and sculptural voids. Behind, but separate from, the palazzo is the University of Rome's **Orto Botanico**, home to 3,500 species of plants, with various greenhouses around a stairway/fountain with 11 jets. EVia della Lungara 10, Trastevere P06/68802323 Galleria Corsini, 06/32810 Galleria Corsini tickets, 06/49917107 Orto Botanico wgalleriacorsini.beniculturali.it AGalleria Corsini €12, including entrance to Palazzo Barberini; Orto Botanico €8 CClosed Tues.



## Piazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere

**PLAZA | FAMILY** | At the very heart of the Trastevere *rione* (district) lies this beautiful piazza, with its elegant raised fountain and sidewalk caffè. The centerpiece is the 12th-century church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, first consecrated in the 4th century. Across countless generations, this piazza has seen the comings and goings of tourists and travelers, intellectuals and artists, who lounge on the steps of the fountain or eat lunch at an outdoor table at Sabatini's. At night, it's the center of Trastevere's action, with street festivals, musicians, and gamboling dogs vying for attention from the throngs of people taking the evening air. *EPiazza di Santa Maria in Trastevere, Trastevere.*

## Piazza in Piscinula

**PLAZA** | One of Trastevere's most historic and time-burnished squares, this piazza takes its name from ancient Roman baths on the site (*piscina* means "pool"). It's said that the tiny church of **San Benedetto** on the piazza was built on the home of Roman nobles in which St. Benedict lived in the 5th century. Opposite is the medieval **Casa dei Mattei** (House of the Mattei), where the rich and powerful Mattei family lived until the 16th century, when, after a series of murders on the premises, colorful legend has it that they were forced to move out of the district, crossing the river to build their magnificent palace close to the Jewish Ghetto. *EPiazza in Piscinula, Trastevere.*

## San Crisogono

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | This pretty church, which dates back to the 4th or 5th century, might be Rome's first parish church. The soaring medieval bell tower can best be seen from the little piazza flanking the church or from the other side of Viale di Trastevere. Inside, ring the bell of the room to the left of the apse to gain access to the underground area, where you can explore the ruins of the ancient basilica, discovered in 1907 beneath the "new" 12th-century structure. The eerie space is dotted with gems like 8th-century frescoes, ancient marble sarcophagi, and even a 6th-century marble altar. *EPiazza Sidney Sonnino 44, Trastevere P06/5810076 A€3 for underground area.*

## San Francesco a Ripa

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | In a quiet part of Trastevere, south of Viale di Trastevere, this church's dedication refers to the fact that St. Francis of Assisi stayed nearby during a visit to Rome. The medieval church was rebuilt in the 17th century and houses one of Bernini's last works, a statue of the *Blessed Ludovica Albertoni*. This is perhaps Bernini's most hallucinatory sculpture, a dramatically lighted figure ecstatic at the prospect of entering heaven as she expires on her deathbed. The cell in which Saint Francis is said to have stayed (Il Santuario di San Francesco) is often visitable. Fans of Giorgio de Chirico can ask to visit his tomb in a chapel that contains three paintings by the 20th-century metaphysical painter. *EPiazza di San Francesco d'Assisi 88, Trastevere P06/5819020 [www.sanfrancescoaripa.com](http://www.sanfrancescoaripa.com).*

### **San Pietro in Montorio**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Built by order of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain in 1481 near the spot where medieval tradition believed St. Peter was crucified (the crucifixion site at the Vatican is much more probable), this church is a handsome and dignified edifice. It contains a number of well-known works, including, in the first chapel on the right, the *Flagellation* painted by the Venetian Sebastiano del Piombo from a design by Michelangelo, and *St. Francis in Ecstasy*, in the next-to-last chapel on the left, in which Bernini made one of his earliest experiments with concealed lighting effects. The most famous work here, though, is the circular **Tempietto** (Little Temple) in the monastery cloister next door. This small sober building (it holds only 10 people and is a church in its own right) marks the spot where Peter was thought to have been crucified. Designed by Bramante (the first architect of the "new" St. Peter's Basilica) in 1502, it represents one of the earliest and most successful attempts to create an entirely classical building. The Tempietto is reachable via the Royal Spanish Academy next door. *EPiazza di San Pietro in Montorio 2 (Via Garibaldi), Trastevere P06/5813940 San Pietro in Montorio, 06/5812806 Tempietto (Accademia di Spagna) [www.sanpietroinmontorio.it](http://www.sanpietroinmontorio.it) CTempietto closed Sun. and Mon.*

### **★ Santa Cecilia in Trastevere**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | This basilica commemorates the aristocratic St. Cecilia, patron saint of musicians. One of ancient Rome's most celebrated Early Christian martyrs, she was most likely put to a supernaturally long death by

the Emperor Diocletian just before the year AD 300. After an abortive attempt to suffocate her in the baths of her own house (a favorite means of quietly disposing of aristocrats in Roman days), she was brought before the executioner. But not even three blows of the executioner's sword could dispatch the young girl. She lingered for several days, converting others to the Christian cause, before finally dying. In 1595, her body was exhumed—it was said to look as fresh as if she still breathed—and the heart-wrenching sculpture by eyewitness Stefano Maderno that lies below the main altar was, the sculptor insisted, exactly how she looked. Time your visit to enter the cloistered convent to see what remains of Pietro Cavallini's *Last Judgment*, dating to 1293. It's the only major fresco in existence known to have been painted by Cavallini, a contemporary of Giotto. To visit the frescoes, ring the bell of the convent to the left of the church entrance. *EPiazza di Santa Cecilia 22, Trastevere P06/5899289 AFrescoes €2.50, underground €2.50 CAccess to frescoes closed in the afternoon.*

### ★ **Santa Maria in Trastevere**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Originally built during the 4th century and rebuilt in the 12th century, this is one of Rome's oldest and grandest churches. It is also the earliest foundation of any Roman church to be dedicated to the Virgin Mary. With a nave framed by a processional of two rows of gigantic columns (22 in total) taken from the ancient Baths of Caracalla, and an apse studded with gilded mosaics, the interior conjures the splendor of ancient Rome better than any other in the city. Overhead is Domenichino's gilded ceiling (1617). The 18th-century portico draws attention to the facade's 800-year-old mosaics, which represent the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins. They enhance the whole piazza, especially at night, when the church front and bell tower are illuminated. The church's most important mosaics, Pietro Cavallini's six panels of the *Life of the Virgin*, cover the semicircular apse. Note the building labeled "Taberna Meritoria" just under the figure of the Virgin in the Nativity scene, with a stream of oil flowing from it; it recalls the legend that a fountain of oil appeared on this spot, prophesying the birth of Christ. Off the piazza's northern side is a street called Via delle Fonti dell'Olio in honor of this miracle. *EPiazza Santa Maria in Trastevere, Trastevere P06/5814802.*

### ★ **Villa Farnesina**

**CASTLE/PALACE** | Money was no object to the extravagant Agostino Chigi, a banker from Siena who financed many papal projects. His munificence is evident in this elegant villa, built for him about 1511. He was especially proud of the decorative frescoes in the airy loggias, some painted by Raphael himself, notably a luminous *Triumph of Galatea*. Agostino entertained the popes and princes of 16th-century Rome, impressing his guests at riverside suppers by having his servants clear the table by casting the precious silver and gold dinnerware into the Tiber (indeed, nets were unfurled a foot or two beneath the water's surface to retrieve the valuable ware). In the magnificent **Loggia of Psyche** on the ground floor, Giulio Romano and others worked from Raphael's designs. Raphael's lovely *Galatea* is in the adjacent room. On the floor above you can see the trompe-l'oeil effects in the aptly named **Hall of Perspectives** by Peruzzi. Agostino Chigi's bedroom, next door, was frescoed by Il Sodoma with the *Wedding of Alexander and Roxanne*, which is considered to be the artist's best work. The palace also houses the **Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe**, a treasure trove of old prints and drawings. E *Via della Lungara 230, Trastevere P06/68027268 info, 06/68027397 tour reservations [www.villafarnesina.it](http://www.villafarnesina.it) A€6 CClosed Sun.*

## r Restaurants

Trastevere has always been known for its Left Bank bohemian appeal. A hip expat enclave with working-class Roman roots, the neighborhood is lined with an abundance of trattorias and wine bars. The Gianicolo area, at the top of the hill, is more subdued, with breathtaking views.

### ★ Antico Arco

\$\$\$ | **MODERN ITALIAN** | Founded by three friends with a passion for wine and fine food, Antico Arco attracts foodies from Rome and beyond with its refined culinary inventiveness. The location on top of the Janiculum Hill makes for a charming setting, and inside, the dining rooms are plush, modern spaces, with whitewashed brick walls, dark floors, and black velvet chairs. **Known for:** changing seasonal menu; molten chocolate soufflé cake; open noon until midnight daily. D *Average main: €28 E [Piazzale Aurelio 7, Trastevere P06/5815274](http://Piazzale Aurelio 7, Trastevere P06/5815274) [www.anticoarco.it](http://www.anticoarco.it).*

## Baylon Cafe

\$ | CAFÉ | With eclectic vintage decor, colorful mismatched tables and chairs, and free Wi-Fi, this low-key neighborhood hot spot lures lots of expats and American travelers. The caffè menu features American-style sandwiches and salads, and weekend brunch is popular for the French toast, pancakes, and eggs Benedict. **Known for:** lots of vegetarian and vegan options; lively dining terrace; evening aperitivos and small plates. *DAverage main: €13* *E*[Via di San Francesco a Ripa 151, Trastevere P06/5814275](#).

## Biscottificio Innocenti

\$ | BAKERY | FAMILY | People from all over Rome come to this family-run bakery that's been turning out delicious desserts since 1920. Try the *brutti ma buoni* (“ugly but good”) almond cookies or anything with chocolate or jam. **Known for:** Torta Sacher; savory snacks for an on-the-go bite; light-as-air profiteroles. *DAverage main: €5* *E*[Via della Luce 21, Trastevere P06/5803926](#) *CClosed mid-July–Aug., and Sun. in early July and Sept. cNo credit cards.*

## ★ Da Enzo

\$\$ | ROMAN | In the quieter part of Trastevere, the family-run Da Enzo is everything you would imagine a classic Roman trattoria to be. There are just a few tables, but locals line up to eat here—a testament to the quality of the food. **Known for:** coda alla vaccinara (oxtail stew); fresh burrata that arrives daily from Andria in Puglia; small space with long waits. *DAverage main: €14* *E*[Via dei Vascellari 29, Trastevere P06/5812260](#) [www.daenzoal29.com](http://www.daenzoal29.com) *CClosed Sun., and 2 wks in Aug.*

## Da Ivo

\$\$ | PIZZA | This always crowded pizzeria opens early and closes late, and in between it's packed with locals, tourists, and sports fans who know they can watch the Roma soccer team play on big, flat-screen TVs. The selection of pizzas is large, with delicious mains available as well. **Known for:** mixed-vegetables pizza; sports-friendly atmosphere; long, leisurely meals. *DAverage main: €16* *E*[Via di San Francesco a Ripa 158, Trastevere P06/5817082](#) [www.ivoatrastevere.it/en](http://www.ivoatrastevere.it/en) *CClosed Tues., and 2 wks in Jan.*

## Da Lucia

\$\$ | ROMAN | There's no shortage of old-school trattorias in Trastevere, but Da Lucia has a strong following among them. Both locals and expats enjoy the brusque but "authentic" service and the hearty Roman fare; snag a table outside in warm weather for the true Roman experience of cobblestone-terrace dining. **Known for:** bombolotti (a tubular pasta) all'amatriciana; spaghetti cacio e pepe; beef rolls (involtini). *DAverage main: €14* *EVicolo del Mattonato 2, Trastevere P06/5803601* *CClosed Mon., and Aug.*

## Dar Poeta

\$ | PIZZA | Romans drive across town for great pizza from this neighborhood institution on a small street in Trastevere. They offer both thin-crust pizza and a thick-crust (*alta*) Neapolitan-style pizza with any of the given toppings. **Known for:** cheese lover's superformaggio pizza; dessert calzone with Nutella and ricotta cheese; no reservations, so expect to wait in line. *DAverage main: €12* *EVicolo del Bologna 45, Trastevere P06/5880516* [www.darpoeta.com](http://www.darpoeta.com).

## ★ Glass Hostaria

\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | After 14 years in Austin, Texas, chef Cristina Bowerman returned to Rome to reconnect with her Italian roots, and her cooking is as innovative as the building she works in (the latter has received numerous recognitions for its design). The menu changes frequently, featuring dishes like a standout steak tartare and pork neck. **Known for:** vegetarian tasting menu; 60-month aged Parmesan cheese; more than 600 types of wine. *DAverage main: €35* *EVicolo del 'Cinque 58, Trastevere P06/58335903* [www.glasshostaria.it](http://www.glasshostaria.it) *CClosed Mon., and 2 wks in July. No lunch.*

## Jaipur

\$\$ | INDIAN | Named after the Pink City in India, this restaurant serves the highest-quality curries in a large space just off the main Viale di Trastevere. It's a festive and fun destination if you're craving something quite different from Italian food. **Known for:** 10 varieties of chicken curry; tasting menus for two people; outside seating. *DAverage main: €16* *EVia di San Francesco a Ripa 56, Trastevere P06/5803992* [www.ristorantejaipur.com](http://www.ristorantejaipur.com) *CNo lunch*



Mon.

### La Renella

\$ | **FAST FOOD** | This no-frills pizzeria *al taglio* (by the slice) and bakery is hidden just off Piazza Trilussa. As in many traditional bakeries, pizza is sold by weight, so get yours sliced to the size you want. **Known for:** classic Roman pizza from a wood-fired oven; no additives or animal fats; homemade breads and sweets. *DAverage main: €6 E**Via del Moro 15, Trastevere P06/5817265* *w*[www.larenella.com/en](http://www.larenella.com/en) *c**No credit cards.*

### Ombre Rosse

\$ | **WINE BAR** | Set on lovely Piazza Sant'Egidio in the heart of Trastevere, this open-day-and-night spot is a great place to pass the time. You can have a morning cappuccino and read one of their international newspapers; have a light lunch; enjoy an aperitivo and nibbles at an outdoor table; or finish off an evening with friends at the bar. **Known for:** free Wi-Fi; well-made cocktails; live-music nights. *DAverage main: €12 E**Piazza di Sant'Egidio 12–13, Trastevere P06/5884155* *w*[www.ombrerosseintrastevere.it](http://www.ombrerosseintrastevere.it).

### Osteria der Belli

\$\$ | **ROMAN** | **FAMILY** | One might overlook Osteria der Belli because of its proximity to the central square of Trastevere, Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere—and that would be a crying shame. Leo, the owner, is Sardinian and has been running this place daily for over 35 years; while Roman dishes are on the menu, it excels at seafood and Sardinian cuisine. **Known for:** sea bass carpaccio; ravioli or fettuccine alla sarda (in a creamy mushroom sauce); daily fresh fish offerings. *DAverage main: €18 E**Piazza di Sant'Apollonia 11, Trastevere P06/5803782* *C**Closed Mon., and 3 wks in Jan.*

### ★ Pianostrada

\$\$ | **MODERN ITALIAN** | This gourmet restaurant has an open kitchen, where you can watch the talented women owners cook up a storm of inventive delights—this is a “kitchen *lab*,” after all, where top local ingredients are whipped into delicious plates. The baccalà patty, with tomato confit, zucchini flowers, and homemade mayonnaise on a homemade squid-ink bun, is one of the signature dishes, and the unusual combination is a delicious indication of

how interesting the food can get. **Known for:** freshly baked focaccia with various toppings; local-style fish ‘n’ chips; tiny space, so coming early is ideal. *DAverage main: €20 EVia delle Zoccolette 22, Trastevere P06/89572296 CClosed Mon., and 3 wks in Aug.*

### **Pizzeria Ai Marmi**

\$ | PIZZA | FAMILY | This place is about as lively as it gets—indeed, it’s packed pretty much every night, with diners munching on crisp pizzas that come out of the wood-burning ovens at top speed. It’s best not to go during peak dining hours, so go early or late if you don’t want to wait. **Known for:** excellent wood-oven pizzas; fried starters such as supplì (breaded fried rice balls); open until midnight for a late-night bite. *DAverage main: €12 EViale Trastevere 53, Trastevere P06/5800919 CClosed Wed., and 3 wks in Aug. No lunch.*

### **Spirito Di Vino**

\$\$ | ITALIAN | At this restaurant, diners get to enjoy an evening of historical interest alongside an excellent meal. The building was constructed on the site of an 11th-century synagogue, and the spot is rich with history—several ancient sculptures, now in the Vatican and Capitoline museums, were unearthed in the basement in the 19th century. **Known for:** ancient Roman recipe for braised pork shoulder with apples and leeks; mostly organic ingredients; cool history. *DAverage main: €18 EVia dei Genovesi 31 a/b, Trastevere P06/5896689 [www.ristorantespiritodivino.com](http://www.ristorantespiritodivino.com) CClosed Sun., and Aug. No lunch.*

### **Suppli**

\$ | ROMAN | Trastevere’s best supplì have been served at this hole-in-the-wall takeout spot since 1979. At lunchtime, the line spills out on to the street with locals who’ve come for the namesake treats, as well as fried baccalà fillets and stuffed zucchini flowers. **Known for:** old-fashioned baked pizza with zucchini and straciatella cheese; gnocchi on Thursday (the traditional day for it in Rome); pistachio and salmon pasta. *DAverage main: €5 EVia di San Francesco a Ripa 137, Trastevere P06/5897110 [www.suppliroma.it](http://www.suppliroma.it) CClosed Sun., and 2 wks in Aug. cNo credit cards.*

## Take Sushi

\$\$ | JAPANESE | An increasingly familiar sight on the streets of Rome are all-you-can-eat Japanese restaurants, popular for their inexpensive prices—but Take Sushi couldn't be further from this concept. It's all about top-quality, authentic food here. **Known for:** uni nigiri (sea urchin roe); tasty algae salad; imported Japanese beer and sake. *DAverage main: €20 EViale di Trastevere 4, Trastevere P06/65810075 [www.takesushi.it](http://www.takesushi.it) CClosed Mon.*

## h Hotels

This former working-class neighborhood, once the stomping ground of artists and artisans, is now home to many of Rome's expats and exchange students. Its villagelike charm makes it an appealing place to stay, and you'll find plenty of moderately priced accommodations here, including converted convents and small family-run hotels.

### Casa di Santa Francesca Romana

\$\$ | HOTEL | In the heart of Trastevere but tucked away from the hustle and bustle of the medieval quarter, this cheap, clean, comfortable hotel in a former monastery is centered on a lovely green courtyard. **Pros:** rates can't be beat; excellent restaurants nearby; away from rowdy tourist side of Trastevere. **Cons:** a bit far from Metro, but there are tram and bus stops nearby; few amenities besides TV room and reading room; spotty Wi-Fi. *DRooms from: €130 EVia dei Vascellari 61, Trastevere P06/5812125 [www.sfromana.it](http://www.sfromana.it) a37 rooms XFree breakfast.*

### Hotel Carmel

\$ | HOTEL | In the heart of Trastevere and across the Tiber from the main synagogue is Rome's only kosher hotel, a friendly and budget-friendly place to stay. **Pros:** lovely dining terrace outside; kosher breakfast can be arranged for €5 extra per person per day; nice location. **Cons:** no frills; air-conditioning is noisy; some rooms share a bath. *DRooms from: €100 EVia Goffredo Mameli 11, Trastevere P06/5809921 [www.hotelcarmel.it](http://www.hotelcarmel.it) a11 rooms XFree breakfast.*

### Hotel Santa Maria

\$\$\$ | HOTEL | A Trastevere treasure with a pedigree going back four centuries, this ivy-covered, mansard-roof, rosy-brick-red, erstwhile Renaissance-era convent—just steps away from the glorious Santa Maria in Trastevere church and a few blocks from the Tiber—has sweet and simple guest rooms: a mix of brick walls, “cotto” tile floors, modern oak furniture, and matching bedspreads and curtains. **Pros:** a quaint and pretty oasis in a central location; free bicycles to use during your stay; lovely rooftop terrace. **Cons:** tricky to find; not the best value for money; some rooms can be noisy. *DRooms from: €230* EVicolo del Piede 2, Trastevere P06/5894626 [www.hotelsantamariatrastevere.it](http://www.hotelsantamariatrastevere.it) a19 rooms XFree breakfast.

### Hotel Trastevere

\$\$ | HOTEL | This hotel captures the villagelike charm of the Trastevere district and offers basic, clean, comfortable rooms. **Pros:** good rates for location; convenient to tram and bus; friendly staff. **Cons:** rooms are a little worn on the edges; few amenities; standard rooms are quite small. *DRooms from: €130* EVia Luciano Manara 24/a, Trastevere P06/5814713 [www.hoteltrastevere.net](http://www.hoteltrastevere.net) a18 rooms XFree breakfast.

### ★ Relais Le Clarisse

\$\$ | B&B/INN | Set within the former cloister grounds of the Santa Chiara order, with beautiful gardens, Le Clarisse makes you feel like a personal guest at a friend’s villa, thanks to the comfortable size of the guest rooms and personalized service. **Pros:** spacious rooms with comfy beds; high-tech showers/tubs with good water pressure; complimentary high-speed Wi-Fi. **Cons:** this part of Trastevere can be noisy at night; check when booking as you may be put in neighboring building; no restaurant or bar. *DRooms from: €180* EVia Cardinale Merry del Val 20, Trastevere P06/58334437 [www.leclarissetrastevere.com](http://www.leclarissetrastevere.com) a18 rooms XFree breakfast.

## n Nightlife

Trastevere is no longer the rough-around-the-edges neighborhood where visitors used to come to get a glimpse of “real” Rome. Years of gentrification have made this medieval “country within a town” a mecca for tourists and for

Americans studying abroad. Its nightlife is a fun mix of overflowing piazzas filled with creative buskers, busy pubs, and great hole-in-the-wall restaurants.

## BARS

### ★ Freni e Frizioni

CAFES—NIGHTLIFE | This hipster hangout has a cute artist vibe, and is great for an afternoon coffee, tea, or aperitivo, or for late-night socializing. In warmer weather, the crowd overflows into the large terrazzo overlooking the Tiber and the side streets of Trastevere. E*Via del Politeama 4, Trastevere* P06/45497499 [www.freniefrizioni.com](http://www.freniefrizioni.com).

### Grazia e Graziella

WINE BARS—NIGHTLIFE | A charming beer and wine bar and restaurant, “G e G” has an at-home atmosphere, from the relaxed vibe to the shabby chic decor. It tends to fill up quickly, but there’s also a charming outdoor terrace. E*Largo M.D. Fumasoni Biondi 5, Trastevere* P06/5880398 [www.graziaegraziella.it](http://www.graziaegraziella.it).

## LIVE MUSIC

### Big Mama

MUSIC CLUBS | Open since 1984, Big Mama is Trastevere’s homegrown institution for live music, including jazz, blues, rhythm and blues, international, and rock. Tables can be booked online for their nightly shows. E*Vicolo di San Francesco a Ripa 18, Trastevere* P06/5812551 [www.bigmama.it](http://www.bigmama.it).

## p Performing Arts

### CINEMA

#### L’isola del Cinema

FILM | Every summer from June until September, the gorgeous open-air Cinema d’Isola di Tiberina hosts its own film festival on Tiber Island. The 450-seat Arena Groupama unfolds its silver screen against the backdrop of the ancient Ponte Fabricio, while the 50-seat CineLab is set against Ponte Garibaldi facing Trastevere. There’s a mix of international films in their

original languages, documentaries, and new Italian films as well as talks with cinematic greats. Screenings usually start at 9:30 pm; admission is €6 for the Arena Groupama, €5 for CineLab. *EIsola Tiberina, Piazza San Bartolomeo all'Isola, Trastevere* P06/58333113 [www.isoladelcinema.com](http://www.isoladelcinema.com).

## THEATER

### Teatro India

THEATER | Teatro India occupies a former soap factory, showcasing the best in contemporary theater from local and visiting artists. Most shows are in Italian, but they have occasional English-language performances. *ELungotevere Vittorio Gassman 1, Trastevere* P06/87752210 [www.teatrodiroma.net](http://www.teatrodiroma.net) ATickets €20.

## b Shopping

Across the Tiber from the city center, Trastevere, one of Rome's most charming neighborhoods, is filled with authentic trattorias, ivy-draped buildings, funky boutiques, lively wine bars and pubs, and the biggest open-air flea market in Rome. The neighborhood attracts a lot of tourist traffic and an American college-student crowd thanks to the bustling nightlife, but it's also a local favorite.

## BOOKSTORES

### Almost Corner Bookshop

BOOKS/STATIONERY | Bursting at the seams, with not an ounce of space left on its shelves, this tiny little bookshop is a favorite meeting point for English speakers in Trastevere. Irish owner Dermot O'Connell goes out of his way to find what you're looking for, and if he doesn't have it in stock he'll make a special order for you. The shop carries everything from popular best sellers to translated Italian classics, as well as lots of good books about Rome. *EVia del Moro 45, Trastevere* P06/5836942.

## CERAMICS AND DECORATIVE ARTS

### Polvere di Tempo

CERAMICS/GLASSWARE | Collectors with a passion for rare and decorative



timepieces should consider taking a stroll over to Polvere di Tempo. The owner and craftsman, Adrian Rodriguez, has a deep adoration for decorative sundials, watches, and even hourglasses—all entirely made by hand. Stop in at his store, and he'll tell you a story about how monks used candles to tell time and other interesting anecdotes related to timepieces. *EVia del Moro 59, Trastevere P06/05880704 [www.polvereditempo.com](http://www.polvereditempo.com).*

## FOOD AND WINE

### **Antica Caciara Trasteverina**

**FOOD/CANDY** | All of Trastevere comes to this deli to get their hands on some of the freshest ricotta in town. Step inside and you'll encounter giant helpings of ham, salami, Sicilian anchovies, and burrata cheese from Puglia, as well as Parmigiano-Reggiano and local wines all served with polite joviality. *EVia San Francesco a Ripa 140 a/b, Trastevere P06/5812815 [www.anticacaciara.it](http://www.anticacaciara.it).*

## MARKETS

### **Porta Portese**

**OUTDOOR/FLEA/GREEN MARKETS** | One of the biggest flea markets in Italy, Porta Portese welcomes visitors in droves every Sunday from 7 am to 2 pm. Treasure seekers and bargain hunters love scrounging around tents for new and used clothing, antique furniture, used books, accessories, and other odds 'n' ends. Bring your haggling skills, and cash (preferably small bills—it'll work in your favor when driving a bargain); stallholders don't accept credit cards, and the nearest ATM is a hike. *EVia Portuense and adjacent streets between Porta Portese and Via Ettore Rolli, Trastevere.*

## SHOES AND ACCESSORIES

### **Joseph Debach**

**SHOES/LUGGAGE/LEATHER GOODS** | With his shoe boutique in Rome that is open only in the evenings (or by appointment), Joseph Debach has made eccentric creations that are more art than footwear. Entirely handmade from wood, metal, and leather in his small and chaotic studio, his abacus wedge is worthy of a museum. The sometimes outrageous styles earn a “wow” and are occasionally finished with hand-painted strings, odd bits of comic books,

newspapers, and other unexpected baubles. E*Piazza de' Renzi 21, Trastevere*  
P3460255265 [www.josephdebach.it](http://www.josephdebach.it).

## Monteverde

Southwest of Trastevere, adjacent to Villa Pamphili Park, Monteverde is a residential area that's been getting more and more foot traffic from travelers in recent years. It has some destination-worthy dining spots.

### r Restaurants

#### La Gatta Mangiona

\$\$ | PIZZA | FAMILY | The pizza at this neighborhood spot is Roman-style— with a thin crust, charred on the edges. All the standard toppings are available, from margherita to buffalo mozzarella and prosciutto, but try one of the newfangled combinations like ricotta and pancetta and edible wildflowers. **Known for:** Thai pizza with tomato sauce, cheese, and spices; pizza-and-wine pairings; great craft beer selection. *DAverage main: €15 E**Via Federico Ozanam 30–32, Rome P06/65346702 [www.lagattamangiona.com](http://www.lagattamangiona.com)*  
*C**No lunch.*

#### Litro

\$\$ | CAFÉ | The idea for Litro started with a commitment to natural and organic wines served by the liter. The restaurant is open late, so there is ample time to explore the vast menu that includes everything from tasty salads to focaccia sandwiches. **Known for:** incredible meat and cheese boards; excellent wine selection and cocktails; outside garden seating. *DAverage main: €15 E**Via Fratelli Bonnet 5, Rome P06/45447639 C**Closed Sun., and 2 wks in Aug.*

#### L'Osteria di Monteverde

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | FAMILY | Romans are starting to recognize Monteverde as a foodie hub, and this trattoria is one of the neighborhood's outstanding spots. The food ranges from the classics to carefully thought-out modern dishes, but whatever you order, the quality of the produce shines. **Known for:** tagliolino (ribbon pasta) stuffed with duck; good selection of dessert wines; classic Roman tripe. *DAverage main: €18 E**Via Pietro Cartoni 163,*

Rome P06/53273887 [www.losteriadimonteverde.it](http://www.losteriadimonteverde.it) CClosed 3 wks in Aug.  
No lunch Mon.

### **Trattoria da Cesare**

\$\$ | ROMAN | FAMILY | This beloved neighborhood trattoria does many things well, from the fried starters to the pastas to the meaty secondi, so it's no surprise that it's won the hearts—and stomachs—of Romans all over town. The wine list is extensive, but the friendly waitstaff are happy to offer advice. **Known for:** stewed meatballs; hearty gnocchi with sugo alla coda alla vaccinara (oxtail sauce); outdoor seating. DAverage main: €15 EVia del Casaletto 45, Rome P06/536015 [www.trattoriadacesare.it](http://www.trattoriadacesare.it) CClosed Wed.

## Chapter 10

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# AVENTINO AND TESTACCIO

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Updated by Natalie  
Kennedy



 Sights  
★★★★☆

 Restaurants  
★★★★☆

 Hotels  
★★★★☆

 Shopping  
★★★★☆

 Nightlife  
★★★★☆

# AVENTINO AND TESTACCIO SNAPSHOT

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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Travelers with limited time often see just one sight here: the Bocca della Verità, or “Mouth of Truth.” There are other gems, though, especially on a nice day. The Giardino degli Aranci (Garden of the Orange Trees) has spectacular views over Rome and the Tiber. Next to the giardino is Santa Sabina, one of Rome’s finest ancient churches, and the Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta, whose keyhole has a special surprise.

Visit Testaccio in the evening, when locals take their *passeggiata* (stroll) and restaurants fill with diners. Admire the Piramide di Caio Cestio and duck into the Cimitero Acattolico, or “Protestant Cemetery,” one of the most atmospheric spots in Rome. In addition to the allure of its mix of ancient ruins and 19th-century architecture, Romans know that this is where to come for a good meal. The area is famed for its restaurants and has a unique culinary history that dates back to a time when the city’s slaughterhouse sat at the edge of the neighborhood.

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Santa Maria in Cosmedin:** Test your truthfulness at the mouth of the Bocca della Verità and swoon over St. Valentine’s relics.

**Cimitero Acattolico “Protestant Cemetery”:** Full of flowering trees and friendly cats, this romantic graveyard even has an ancient Roman pyramid.

**Piazza Cavalieri di Malta:** Peek through the keyhole of the Priorato di Malta for a perfectly framed view of one of Rome’s most famous landmarks.



**Roseto Comunale:** Overlooking the Circo Massimo, this seasonal rose garden offers a fitting and fragrant vestibule to Rome's most poetic hill.

**Baths of Caracalla:** South of the lovely Villa Celimontana Park are the imposing ruins of the Terme di Caracalla, once the second-largest bathing complex of the Roman world.

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## GETTING HERE

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■ It's a spectacular 20-minute walk through ancient ruins like the Circo Massimo to reach the Aventine Hill from either the Roman Forum or the Campidoglio. There's a Metro stop by the same name at the foot of Aventino, too. If you're coming from the Colosseum or Trastevere, take Tram No. 3; from the Spanish Steps, take Bus No. 160; from Termini, Bus No. 175. For Testaccio, use the Piramide (Ostiense) Metro stop.

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## QUICK BITES

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■ **Mordi e Vai.** Sergio Esposito's stand at what will forever be called the "New" Testaccio Market (it moved in 2012) sells the best sandwiches in town. Meatballs, tongue, tripe, and other Roman classics are generously smothered on fresh bread, and there is always a vegetarian option, too. *ETestaccio Market Box 15, Via Beniamino Franklin, Testaccio P339/1343344 [www.mordievai.it](http://www.mordievai.it) CClosed Sun. No dinner.*

**While Romans consider these neighborhoods central, they are just far enough off the beaten path to be little known to tourists—and to have retained their unique character, from the well-heeled, garden-filled residential quarter of Aventino to the traditional-yet-trendy riverside neighborhood of Testaccio. For travelers who have a little extra time (or who simply want to see a Rome beyond the Trevi Fountain and Spanish Steps), making a visit to these areas allows a glimpse of what the Eternal City really means to its residents.**

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## **Aventino**

One of the seven hills on which the city was founded, the Aventine Hill enjoys a serenity hard to find elsewhere in Rome. Trills of birdsong win out over the din of traffic—appropriate, since the hill’s name derives from the Latin *avis*, or bird. Indeed, legend says that the sighting of eagles was used by Romulus and Remus to determine the prime spot for the city’s foundation. In the end, though, Romulus’s site on the Palatine Hill won, and Remus’s Aventino was abandoned. It would remain for centuries thereafter the hill of the plebei, who looked across the valley to the grandeur of Palatine Hill.

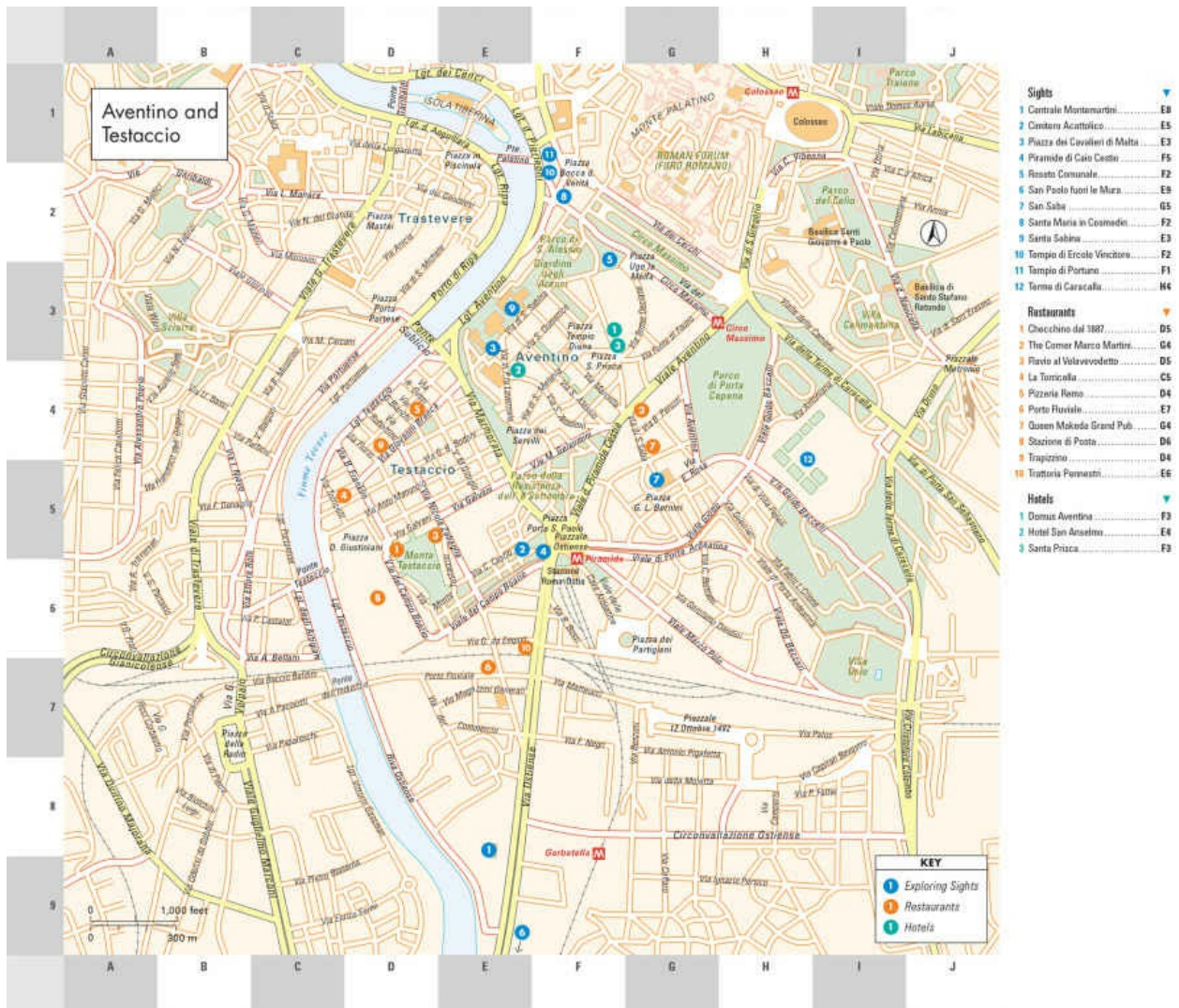
Things have long since changed, however, and today this is a rarefied district, in which some houses still have their own bell towers, and private gardens are called “parks” without exaggeration. Like the emperors of old on Palatino, the fortunate residents here look out over the Circus Maximus and the Tiber, winding its way far below. Today’s travelers still enjoy great views, famously including that from the peculiar keyhole at the gates to the headquarters of the Cavalieri di Malta (Knights of Malta), which may be the

most peered-through in the world.

## S Sights

### ★ **Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta**

**PLAZA** | Peek through the keyhole of the **Priorato di Malta**, the walled compound of the Knights of Malta, and you'll get a surprising eyeful: a picture-perfect view of the dome of St. Peter's Basilica, far across the city. The top of the church is flawlessly framed by trimmed hedges that lie beyond a nondescript, locked green door. The square and the piory within the walls are the work of Giovanni Battista Piranesi, an 18th-century engraver who is more famous for etching Roman views than for orchestrating them, but he fancied himself a bit of an architect and did not disappoint. As for the Order of the Knights of Malta, it is the world's oldest and most exclusive order of chivalry, founded in the Holy Land during the Crusades. Though nominally ministering to the sick in those early days—a role that has since become the order's *raison d'être*—the knights amassed huge tracts of land in the Middle East. From 1530 they were based on the Mediterranean island of Malta, but in 1798 Napoléon expelled them and, in 1834, they established themselves in Rome. Tours are sometimes available if you would like to go inside; call for more information. E*Via Santa Sabina and Via Porta Lavernale, Aventino P06/5779193* tour reservations m*Circo Massimo; Bus Nos. 60, 81, 118, 175, 271, and 715; Tram No. 3.*



## Roseto Comunale

**GARDEN** | As suggested by the paths shaped like a menorah, what is now the city's springtime rose garden was once a Jewish cemetery. The cemetery, save one tombstone, was moved and the space is now a municipal garden that is open during the brief weeks when the roses are in bloom. The garden is laid out to reflect the history of roses from antiquity to the present day and has sweeping views across the old chariot track of the Circus Maximus. *E Viale di Valle Murcia, Aventino P06/5746810* *C* Closed July–late Apr. *m* Circo Massimo. *Bus Nos. 60, 81, 118, 160, 271, 628, and 715; Tram No. 3.*

## San Saba

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | A former monastery, founded in the 7th century by monks

fleeing Jerusalem following the Arab invasion, this is a major monument of Rome. The serene but rustic interior harbors 10th-century frescoes, a famed Cosmatesque mosaic floor, and a hodgepodge of ancient marble pieces. *EPiazza Gian Lorenzo Bernini 20, Aventino P06/64580140 wsansaba.gesuiti.it mCirco Massimo.*

### ★ **Santa Maria in Cosmedin**

**RELIGIOUS SITE | FAMILY |** Although this is one of Rome's oldest churches, with a haunting interior, it plays second fiddle to the renowned artifact installed out in the portico. The **Bocca della Verità** (Mouth of Truth) is in reality nothing more than an ancient drain cover, unearthed during the Middle Ages. Legend has it, however, that the teeth will clamp down on a liar's hand if they dare to tell a fib while holding their fingers up to the fearsome mouth. Hordes of tourists line up to take the test every day (kids especially get a kick out of it), but there is never a wait to enter the church itself, which was built in the 6th century. Head inside to stand before the flower-crowned skull of St. Valentine, who is celebrated every February 14th, but go ahead and pass on the trip down to the tiny, empty crypt. Heavily restored at the end of the 19th century, the church stands across from the **Piazza della Bocca della Verità**, originally the location of the Forum Boarium, ancient Rome's cattle market, and later the site of public executions. *EPiazza Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Aventino P06/6787759 mCirco Massimo. Bus Nos. 3, 60, 75, 81, 118, 160, 175, 271, and 628.*

### **Santa Sabina**

**RELIGIOUS SITE |** This Early Christian basilica is stark and tranquil, showing off the lovely simplicity common to churches of its era. Although some of the side chapels were added in the 16th and 17th centuries, the essential form is as Rome's Christians knew it in the 5th century. Most striking are the 24 fluted Corinthian columns which line the Classical interior. Once bright with mosaics, today the church has only one above the entrance door (its gold letters announce how the church was founded by Peter of Illyria, "rich for the poor," under Pope Celestine I). The beautifully carved, 5th-century cedar doors to the left of the outside entrance are the oldest of their kind in existence. *EPiazza Pietro d'Illyria 1, Aventino P06/579401 mCirco Massimo; Bus Nos. 60, 75, 81, 118, 160, 175, and 715; Tram No. 3.*



## Tempio di Ercole Vincitore

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | The round layout of the Temple of Hercules Victor led it to be mistakenly identified for centuries as the Temple of Vesta, which has a similar shape but really sits in the Roman Forum. Now called by its correct name, it was built in the 2nd century BC around the same time as its neighbor, the Tempio di Portuno. The little park around the temples was once ancient Rome's cattle market, but now has benches to rest weary feet. *EPiazza Bocca della Verità, Aventino mCirco Massimo; Bus Nos. 60, 75, 81, 118, 160, 175, and 271; Tram No. 3.*

## Tempio di Portuno

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | A picture-perfect, if dollhouse-size, Roman temple, this rectangular edifice from the 2nd century BC is built in the Greek style. Positioned in a bend in the Tiber River and long known as the Temple of Fortuna Virilis ("Manly Fortune"), it was appropriately dedicated to Portunus, the protector of ports. It now sits on a slip of greenery between two well-trafficked roads and owes its fine state of preservation to the fact that it was consecrated as a church in the 9th century. *EPiazza Bocca della Verità, Aventino mCirco Massimo; Bus Nos. 60, 75, 81, 118, 160, 175, and 271; Tram No. 3.*

## Terme di Caracalla (*Baths of Caracalla*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | **FAMILY** | The Terme di Caracalla are some of Rome's most massive—yet least visited—ruins. Begun in AD 206 by the emperor Septimius Severus and completed by his son, Caracalla, the 28-acre complex could accommodate 1,600 bathers at a time. Along with an Olympic-size swimming pool and baths, the complex also had two gyms, a library, and gardens. The impressive baths depended on slave labor, particularly the unseen stokers who toiled in subterranean rooms to keep the fires roaring in order to heat the water. Rather than a simple dip in a tub, Romans turned "bathing" into one of the most lavish leisure activities imaginable. A bath began in the sudatoria, a series of small rooms resembling saunas, which then led to the caldarium, a circular room that was humid rather than simply hot. Here a strigil, or scraper, was used to get the dirt off the skin. Next stop: the warm(-ish) tepidarium, which helped start the cool-down process. Finally, it ended with a splash around the frigidarium, a chilly



swimming pool.

Today, the complex is a shell of its former self. Some black-and-white mosaic fragments remain, but most of the opulent mosaics, frescoes, and sculptures have found their way into Rome's museums. However, the towering walls and sheer size of the ruins give one of the best glimpses into ancient Rome's ambitions. If you're here in summer, don't miss the chance to catch an open-air opera or ballet in the baths, put on by the **Teatro dell'Opera di Roma**. E*Via delle Terme di Caracalla 52, Aventino P06/39967700* [www.coopculture.it](http://www.coopculture.it) A€8 (includes Villa dei Quintili and Tomba di Cecilia Metella) m*Circo Massimo*.

## r Restaurants

While there are no eateries to be found on the tree-lined streets of the Aventine Hill itself, you can take a short stroll down to Viale Aventino to find a range of restaurants and caffè that cater to the international staff at the nearby United Nations office. From French to Brazilian to Greek, the area has quick lunch stops and a few fine dining choices which tend to feel a world away from traditional Roman cooking.

### **The Corner Marco Martini**

\$\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | With innovative Italian-inspired cuisine and one Michelin star, this intimate restaurant has a lovely terrace bar as well as a romantic plant-draped dining room. Twirl your fork into a bowl of spaghetti with a delightful oyster, sausage, and turnip-top sauce, or save room for the lamb with butter anchovies and pistachios. **Known for:** whimsical garden setting; creative presentation; value-for-money tasting menu. D*Average main: €35* E*Viale Aventino 121, Aventino P06/45597350* [www.marcomartinichef.com](http://www.marcomartinichef.com) CC*losed Sun. No lunch Sat.* m*Circo Massimo*.

### **Queen Makeda Grand Pub**

\$\$\$ | INTERNATIONAL | This gastropub has an international menu that ranges from Asian fusion appetizers to open-faced sandwiches on dark rye bread. With a rotating selection of 40 craft beers on tap, there is also a suggested drink pairing for every food item. **Known for:** yakitori (Japanese-inspired

grilled meat); craft beer menu; cool urban design. *DAverage main: €25 E*[Via di San Saba 11, Aventino P06/5759608](#) [www.queenmakeda.it](#) mCirco Massimo.

## h Hotels

This affluent neighborhood full of trees, set on the Aventine Hill, attracts travelers looking for a green oasis removed from the centro storico. Hotels take advantage of the extra space, with gardens and courtyards where you can enjoy a little R&R alfresco, and where the only noise you'll hear in the morning is birdsong.

### Domus Aventina

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | The best part of this quaint, friendly hotel is that it's between two of Rome's loveliest gardens—the municipal rose garden and the Orange Garden by Santa Sabina—in the heart of historic Aventino. **Pros:** quiet location; within walking distance of tourist attractions; free Wi-Fi throughout hotel. **Cons:** walls can be thin; small showers; some rooms are very dark. *DRooms from: €170 E*[Via di Santa Prisca 11/b, Aventino P06/5746135](#) [www.hoteldomusaventina.com](#) a26 rooms XFree breakfast mCirco Massimo.

### Hotel San Anselmo

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | This refurbished 19th-century villa is a romantic retreat from the city, set in a *molto* charming garden atop the Aventine Hill. **Pros:** free Wi-Fi; historic building with artful interior; garden where you can enjoy breakfast. **Cons:** some rooms are quite small; limited public transportation; no full restaurant. *DRooms from: €160 E*[Piazza San Anselmo 2, Aventino P06/570057](#) [www.aventinohotels.com](#) a34 rooms XFree breakfast mCirco Massimo.

## p Performing Arts

### OPERA

#### Terme di Caracalla Ballet and Opera

**OPERA** | In the summer months, the 3rd-century-AD Baths of Caracalla are the spectacular backdrop for the Teatro dell'Opera's ballet and opera series. *Aida* is the most sought-after performance, thanks to its melodramatic flair and amazing props. The impressive productions keep the traditional sonatas and musical numbers untouched while incorporating contemporary elements into each show, including stage design that sometimes uses projections atop the ancient ruins. *E Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 52, Aventino P06/481601*  
[www.operaroma.it](http://www.operaroma.it).

## Testaccio

Once considered to be on the periphery of the city, Testaccio is fast becoming a Roman destination in its own right. Testaccini locals claim that their neighborhood bleeds red and yellow, a reference to the colors of the A.S. Roma soccer team that has a passionate fan club located here. Formerly a bit tatty, Testaccio has undergone a trendy revival and is sometimes hailed as Rome's new "Left Bank" district. Most of the buildings date back to the late 19th-century, but nearly all were built on literal broken pots: the area takes its name from an eponymous hill made up of 53 million discarded ancient Roman amphorae that used to store oil, wine, and other goods loaded from the nearby Ripa, when Rome had a port and the Tiber was once a mighty river to an empire. Testaccio is a must for those seeking authentic and comparatively cheap Roman cuisine.

## S Sights

### ★ Centrale Montemartini

**MUSEUM** | A decommissioned power plant (Rome's first electricity plant) was reopened as a permanent exhibition space in 2005 and today houses the overflow of ancient art from the Musei Capitolini collection. After strolling Rome's medieval lanes, the Centrale Montemartini's early-20th-century style can feel positively modern. A 15-minute walk from the heart of Testaccio in one direction will lead you past street-art covered walls to the urban district of Ostiense. Head southwest and saunter under the train tracks to admire buildings bedecked with four-story-high murals until you reach the Centrale Montemartini. With Roman sculptures and mosaics set against industrial machinery and pipes, nowhere else in Rome is the contrast between old and new more apparent or enjoyable. A pleasure, too, is the fact that you're likely to be one of the few visitors here, making it the perfect stop for those feeling claustrophobic from Rome's crowds. Unusually, the collection is organized by the area in which the ancient pieces were found. Highlights include the former boiler room filled with ancient marble statues that once decorated Rome's private villas, such as the beautiful Esquiline Venus, as well as a

large mosaic of a hunting scene. E*Via Ostiense 106, Testaccio P06/0608* [www.centralemontemartini.org](http://www.centralemontemartini.org) A€11 CClosed Mon. mGarbatella; Bus Nos. 23, 271, 769, and 770.

### ★ **Cimitero Acattolico** (Non-Catholic or Protestant Cemetery)

**CEMETERY** | Built up against the ancient Aurelian Walls, this famed cemetery was intended for the interment of non-Catholics. Poetic souls seek out the tomb of John Keats, who tragically died in Rome after succumbing to consumption at age 25 in 1821. The headstone is famously inscribed, “Here lies one whose name was writ in water” (the poet requested that no name or dates should appear). Nearby is the place where Shelley’s heart was buried, as well as the tombs of Goethe’s son, the founder of the Italian Communist Party and vehement anti-Fascist Antonio Gramsci, and America’s famed beat poet Gregory Corso. What’s more, the quiet paths of the cemetery are lined with fruit trees and prowled by shy cats from a nearby animal sanctuary. The tranquil spot is far from morbid and quite easy to find: simply catch the Metro Linea B from Termini station to the Piramide stop, which is just around the corner from the entrance to the cemetery. E*Via Caio Cestio 6, Testaccio P06/5741900* [www.cemeteryrome.it](http://www.cemeteryrome.it) A€3 suggested donation xIf door is closed, ring bell for cemetery custodian mPiramide; Buses Nos. 23, 30, 60, 75, 95, 118, and 715; Tram No. 3.

### **Piramide di Caio Cestio**

**MEMORIAL** | **FAMILY** | Once a part of the Aurelian Walls and now a part of the Cimitero Acattolico, this monumental tomb was designed in 12 BC for the immensely wealthy praetor Gaius Cestius in the form of a 120-foot-tall pyramid. According to an inscription, it was completed in a little less than a year. Though little else is known about the Roman official, he clearly had a taste for grandeur and liked to show off his travels to far parts of the nascent empire. The pyramid was recently restored in a project funded by a €1 million donation from Japanese fashion tycoon Yuzo Yagi. Guided visits are available on the second and fourth Saturday of each month with a reservation. E*Piazzale Ostiense, Testaccio* [www.060608.it](http://www.060608.it) CClosed Aug. mPiramide; Bus Nos. 3, 30, 60, 75, 95, 118, 130, 175, and 719.

### **San Paolo fuori le Mura** (St. Paul’s Outside the Walls)

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | A couple of Metro stops farther down Via Ostiense from Testaccio, in a rather dreary location near the river, St. Paul's is one of Rome's most historic and important churches. Its massive size, second only to St. Peter's Basilica, allows ample space for the 272 roundels depicting every pope from St. Peter to the current Pope Francis (found below the ceiling, with spaces left blank for pontiffs to come). Built in the 4th century AD by Constantine over the site where St. Paul had been buried, the church was later enlarged, but in 1823 a fire burned it almost to the ground. Although the outside lacks any real charm, the rebuilt St. Paul's has a sort of monumental grandeur that follows the plans of the earlier basilica. However, it's only in the cloisters (€4) that you get a real sense of the magnificence of the original building. In the middle of the nave is the famous baldacchino created by sculptor Arnolfo di Cambio. *EPiazzale San Paolo, Via Ostiense 190, Testaccio P06/69880800 [www.basilicasanpaolo.org](http://www.basilicasanpaolo.org) ACloister €4 mBasilica San Paolo.*

## r Restaurants

This working-class neighborhood is where the old slaughterhouses once stood and where the butchers invented the (in)famous meat and offal dishes you can still find in authentic old-school restaurants. Relatively low rents have meant an influx of young people, which has made this one of the up-and-coming areas of the city.

### **Checchino dal 1887**

**\$\$** | **ROMAN** | Literally carved into the side of a hill made up of ancient shards of amphorae, Checchino is an example of a classic, upscale, family-run Roman restaurant, with one of the best wine cellars in the region. One of the first restaurants to open near Testaccio's (now long closed) slaughterhouse, the restaurant still serves classic offal dishes (though the white-jacketed waiters can also suggest other options). **Known for:** old-school Roman cooking; old-school Roman waiters; coda alla vaccinara (Roman-style oxtail). *DAverage main: €23 EVia di Monte Testaccio 30, Testaccio P06/5746318 [www.checchino-dal-1887.com](http://www.checchino-dal-1887.com) CClosed Mon., Aug., and 1 wk at Christmas. No dinner Sun. mPiramide.*



### ★ Flavio al Velavevodetto

\$\$ | ROMAN | It's everything you're looking for in a true Roman eating experience: authentic, in a historic setting, and filled with Italians eating good food at good prices. In this very *romani di Roma* (Rome of the Romans) neighborhood, surrounded by discos and bars sharing Monte Testaccio, you can enjoy a meal of classic local dishes from vegetable antipasto to cacio e pepe (said to be the best version in the city) and lamb chops. **Known for:** authentic Roman atmosphere and food; outdoor covered terrace in summer; polpette di bollito (fried breaded meatballs). *DAverage main: €16 E* Via di Monte Testaccio 97, Testaccio P06/5744194 [www.ristorantevelavevodetto.it](http://www.ristorantevelavevodetto.it) mPiramide.

### La Torricella

\$\$ | SEAFOOD | FAMILY | This family-run institution has been serving seafood in the working-class Testaccio neighborhood for more than 40 years, and if you visit the local market early enough you may spot the owner on his daily rounds to select the freshest fish, which mainly arrives from Gaeta, south of Rome. The seafood menu changes every day, but look for house specialties like *paccheri* with *totani* (baby calamari), pasta with *telline* (small clams), and the wondrously simple spaghetti with lobster. **Known for:** fresh, local seafood; relaxed but refined setting with outdoor seating; polpette di pesce al sugo (fish balls in tomato sauce). *DAverage main: €18 E* Via Evangelista Torricelli 2/12, Testaccio P06/5746311 [www.la-torricella.com](http://www.la-torricella.com) mPiramide.

### Pizzeria Remo

\$ | PIZZA | Arrive promptly at 7 pm or expect a line at this perennial-favorite pizzeria in Testaccio frequented by students and locals. There are no tablecloths or other nonessentials, just excellent classic Roman pizza and boisterous conversation. **Known for:** local crowds; fried appetizers; perfectly charred pizza crusts. *DAverage main: €10 E* Piazza Santa Maria Liberatrice 44, Testaccio P06/5746270 cNo credit cards CClosed Sun., and 3 wks in Aug. No lunch mPiramide.

### Porto Fluviale

\$ | ITALIAN | This massive structure takes up the better part of a block on a street that's gone from gritty clubland to popular nightspot, thanks largely to

Porto Fluviale. The place pulls double duty as a bar, café, pizzeria, lunch buffet, and lively evening restaurant. **Known for:** good cocktails; pizza from wood-burning oven; cicchetti (Venetian-style tapas). *DAverage main: €13* *E*[Via del Porto Fluviale 22, Testaccio P06/5743199](#) [www.portofluviale.com](http://www.portofluviale.com) *mPiramide.*

### ★ **Stazione di Posta**

**\$\$** | **MODERN ITALIAN** | On the site of what was Rome's largest slaughterhouse in the 1800s, Stazione di Posta manages to be über-modern (pushing tradition with twists on classics like amatriciana pasta with shrimp) while retaining some of the feel of the historic cobblestones of the old building. Today, it offers bistro-style plates, unique tasting menus, and a cocktail menu to please mixology buffs. **Known for:** atmospheric setting; vegetarian-friendly menu, including vegetarian tripe; fresh cocktails. *DAverage main: €15* *E*[Largo Dino Frisullo, Testaccio P06/65743548](#) [www.stazionediposta.eu](http://www.stazionediposta.eu) *CClosed Tues.* *mPiramide.*

### **Trapizzino**

**\$** | **ROMAN** | **FAMILY** | Stefano Calegari is one of Rome's most famous pizza makers, but at Trapizzino he's doing something a bit different. The name of the restaurant is derived from the Italian words for sandwich (*tramezzino*) and pizza, and the result is something like an upscale pizza pocket, stuffed on the spot with local specialties like chicken alla cacciatore, or trippa, or roast pumpkin, pecorino, and almonds. **Known for:** casual setting, with seating available next door; eggplant parmigiana and meatball sandwiches; Italian craft beer. *DAverage main: €5* *E*[Via Giovanni Branca 88, Testaccio P06/43419624](#) [www.trapizzino.it](http://www.trapizzino.it) *CClosed Mon., and 1 wk in Aug.* *cNo credit cards* *mPiramide.*

### **Trattoria Pennestri**

**\$\$** | **ITALIAN** | Sitting between Testaccio and Ostiense, Trattoria Pennestri manages to strike a careful balance between tradition and innovation. The thoughtful takes on Roman classics brighten up heavy dishes and add a more appetizing spin to some of the city's beloved entrails recipes. **Known for:** modern Roman cooking; excellent pasta; uncommon wines. *DAverage main: €17* *E*[Via Giovanni da Empoli 5, Testaccio P06/5742418](#)

[www.trattoriapennestri.it](http://www.trattoriapennestri.it) CClosed Mon. No lunch Tues.–Thurs.  
mPiramide.

## h Hotels

### Santa Prisca

\$ | HOTEL | Off the beaten path, this clean and comfortable hotel has been welcoming guests for more than 50 years. **Pros:** near public transportation (trams and Metro); free Wi-Fi; terrace with chairs and tables for relaxing. **Cons:** some say the breakfast is mediocre; the school next door can be a little noisy on weekdays; bit of a trek from the main sights. DRooms from: €100 ELargo M. Gelsomini 25, Testaccio P06/5741917 [www.hotelsantaprisca.it](http://www.hotelsantaprisca.it) a51 rooms XFree breakfast mPiramide.

## n Nightlife

Even if it is a bit outside of the meandering medieval alleyways of the historic center, Testaccio is a hotbed for the Eternal City's nightlife scene. The rowdy clubs that dug into the side of Monte Testaccio have lost some of their appeal in recent years as the trendier dance clubs moved to old warehouses even farther out to the edge of Rome, but this has left space for new wine bars and hip street food stops.

### BARS

#### Ketumbar

CAFES—NIGHTLIFE | One of Rome's few "organic" happy hours, the price of a drink will buy you a spread of healthy and organic vegetarian appetizers. Aperitivo starts daily at 6:30 pm, but the modern minimalist restaurant also serves up a great weekend brunch with a kids' area that includes a free babysitter. E Via Galvani 24, Testaccio P06/57305338 [www.ketumbar.it](http://www.ketumbar.it).

#### L'Oasi della Birra

BARS/PUBS | A long menu of imported brews make this a true beer oasis, although there are also good wines available by the bottle or the glass. Locals love the generous happy hour buffet that makes an appearance from about 6

pm to 8 pm every day, but come early to snag one of the outdoor picnic tables that overlook the piazza. Best known as a low-key drinking spot, the bar also doubles as a specialty food store that stocks Italian jams, chocolates, and pastas. *EPiazza Testaccio 38/41, Testaccio P06/5746122 mPiramide.*

### **Taverna Volpetti**

**WINE BARS—NIGHTLIFE** | Most aperitivos tend to be more all-you-can-eat than refined predinner stop, but that is not the case at Taverna Volpetti. The chic bistro-style wine bar and restaurant sources all of its ingredients from the gourmet food store by the same name that sits just around the corner. The warm atmosphere, stellar wine list, and excellent cheese and salami make it the ideal place for a drink and a snack, or to stay put with a bottle and sip the night away. *EVia Alessandro Volta 8, Testaccio P06/5744306 mPiramide.*

### **★ Tram Depot**

**CAFES—NIGHTLIFE** | A coffee stand by day and cocktail bar by night, this outdoor establishment began life as a city tram car back in 1903. Now the historic carriage has been converted to a kiosk permanently stationed on a park corner with retro tables and garden seating. A trendy crowd descends at sunset and seats are at a premium until the wee hours of the morning. However, since it is entirely outside, Tram Depot is only open in the warmer half of the year (April through October). *EVia Marmorata 13, Testaccio P06/5754406 mPiramide.*

## **b Shopping**

Testaccio is Rome's original foodie neighborhood, with plenty of specialty food and wineshops, as well as an abundance of great Roman eateries. But look between the traditional working-class storefronts and you can also stumble upon cool boutiques and artisan shops.

### **Assemblea**

**CRAFTS** | This modest shop is brimming with fantastic small gifts ranging from ceramics to vintage fabrics remade into tote bags. Assemblea finds small artisans throughout the country and makes these items available in Rome, so every item featured is guaranteed to be made in Italy. *EVia*

*Alessandro Volta 22, Testaccio P06/5747696 mPiramide.*

### **Emporio delle Spezie**

**FOOD/CANDY** | Hardly larger than a walk-in closet, this tiny specialty shop is bursting with ingredients from every corner of the world. Specializing in high-quality spices, you can also find dried goods like legumes, nuts, and rice, along with ingredients to whip up almost any international cuisine. All are carefully scooped from the colorful glass jars that line the walls and measured out to your liking. *EVia Luca della Robbia 20, Testaccio P327/8612655 [www.emporiodellespezie.it](http://www.emporiodellespezie.it) mPiramide.*

### **★ Volpetti**

**FOOD/CANDY** | A Roman institution for more than 40 years, Volpetti sells excellent cured meats and salami from its buzzing deli counter. The rich aromas and flavors are captivating from the moment you enter the store. The food selection also includes genuine buffalo-milk mozzarella, bronze die pasta, Roman pecorino, olive oils, balsamic vinegars, and fresh bread. It's also a great place for assembling gift baskets, and they offer worldwide shipping. *EVia Marmorata 47, Testaccio P06/5742352 [www.volpetti.com](http://www.volpetti.com) mPiramide.*

## Chapter 11

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# ESQUILINO AND AROUND

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Updated by  
Ariston Anderson



 Sights  
★★★★☆

 Restaurants  
★★★☆☆

 Hotels  
★★★★☆

 Shopping  
★★★☆☆

 Nightlife  
★★★☆☆



# ESQUILINO SNAPSHOT

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## MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR TIME

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Some of central Rome's least touristy and best-loved neighborhoods, these areas also have a great deal to explore. With its bustling food market and multicultural shops, Esquilino represents a more modern Rome. Its rich street life has attracted numerous artists, actors, and filmmakers who often gather at some of the popular caffè in the neighborhood. With Termini at its center, this is also your bus and Metro hub for reaching other parts of Rome or hopping on a train for a day trip out of the city. Nearby Pigneto with its hipster bars and galleries is also an example of the ever-evolving city.

San Giovanni is well worth the Metro trip to discover the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, a cathedral that holds centuries of church history in its walls. This residential area also has great flea market shopping if you have the patience to browse. For a bustling night out, head to San Lorenzo, home to the Sapienza University of Rome and the crowds of young students that go with it. And no visit to Rome is complete without a tour of the catacombs on the Appian Way, one of the ancient republic's earliest and most strategically placed roads, built in 312–264 BC.

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## TOP REASONS TO GO

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**Arcibasilica di San Giovanni in Laterano:** Before the Holy See made the Vatican its permanent home, leaders of the Catholic Church made the Lateran buildings their primary residence for nearly 1,000 years.

**Catacomb Country:** Be careful exploring the underground graves of the earliest Christians—one wrong turn and it may be days before you surface.

**Porta Maggiore:** This white travertine “great gate” is an essential stop

for understanding Rome's ancient aqueduct culture.

**Teatro dell'Opera di Roma:** If you've ever wanted to experience the Italian opera greats in their native land, from Verdi to Rossini to Puccini, this historic building with its charming rows of stacked theater boxes is the place to be.

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## QUICK BITES

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■ **Gelato San Lorenzo.** While San Lorenzo is filled with cheap fast food popular among students, this gelateria (open until 1 am) places quality above all else, and can easily rival some of Rome's most storied ice cream shops. All flavors are properly labeled for special dietary restrictions. *E Via Tiburtina 6, San Lorenzo P06/4469440 [www.gelatosanlorenzo.com](http://www.gelatosanlorenzo.com).*

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## GETTING HERE

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■ The Esquilino Hill can be reached via the Vittorio Emanuele subway station, one stop from Termini station. Bus No. 150F runs from Piazza del Popolo to Esquilino.

Several neighborhoods come together here, just north of the Roman Forum and the Colosseum. They range from the bustling, multicultural Esquilino neighborhood to the hipster enclaves of Pigneto and San Giovanni. Most travelers will find themselves passing through at least part of the area, either when they come into the Termini train station or when they pay a visit to the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, which offers everything from ancient monuments to Baroque masterpieces. Head farther south for the evocative Via Appia Antica, dotted with ruins and ancient catacombs.

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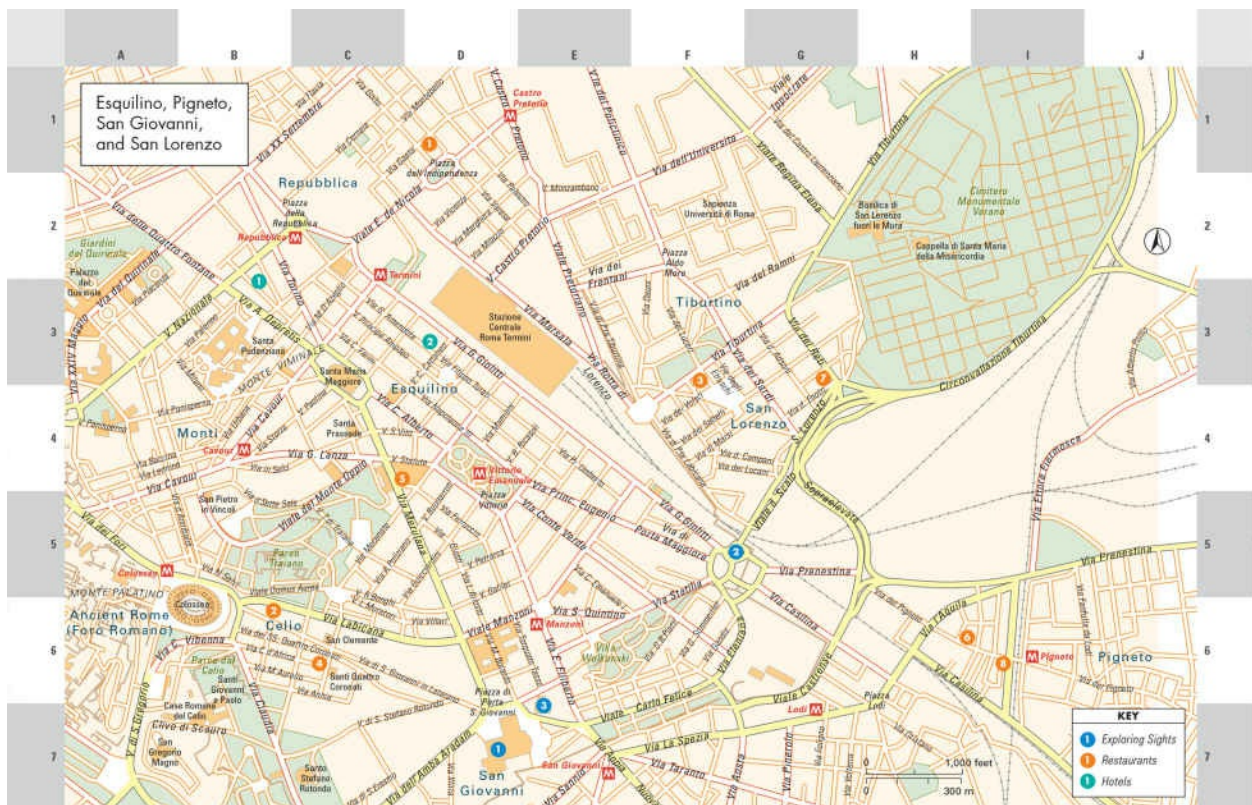
## Esquilino

Rome's most sprawling hill—the Esquilino—lies at the very edge of most tourist maps. Even imperial Rome could not have matched this minicosmopolis for sheer internationalism. Right around Termini, sons of the soil—the so-called “romani romani”—mingle with Chinese, Sri Lankans, Sikhs, and a hundred nationalities in between. One highlight is the Nuovo Mercato Esquilino, a covered market hall where goods from the four corners of the earth are bought and sold in a multitude of languages. This is also where you can find some of the city's largest variety of restaurants and cheapest bed-and-breakfasts—just not the cobblestone atmosphere that most think of when they think of Rome.

## S Sights

**Porta Maggiore** (*Great Gate*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | The massive 1st-century-AD arch was built as part of the original Aqua Claudia and then incorporated into the walls hurriedly erected in the late 3rd century as Rome’s fortunes began to decline; the great arch of the aqueduct subsequently became a *porta* (city gate). It gives an idea of the grand scale of ancient Roman public works. On the Piazzale Labicano side, to the east, is the curious **Baker’s Tomb**, erected in the 1st century BC by a prosperous baker (predating both the aqueduct and the city walls); it’s shaped like an oven to signal the deceased’s trade. The site is now in the middle of a public transport node, and is close to Rome’s first tram depot (going back to 1889). EPiazza di Porta Maggiore, Esquilino mTram No. 3, 5, 14, or 19.



<b>Sights</b>	<b>Restaurants</b>	<b>Tram Tram</b>	<b>Hotels</b>
1 Arcabasica di San Giovanni	1 Africa	7 Tram Tram	1 Betanmie Hotel
2 Laterano	2 Arona	16 Trattoria Pigneto	2 Hotel Morgana
3 Porta Maggiore	3 I Fratelli		
4 Scala Sancta	4 Li Rioni		
	5 Penella		
	6 Pigneto		
	7 Guarantano		

## r Restaurants

Esquilino is Rome’s main multicultural artery, with Mercato Esquilino, a

great covered market for Italian, Asian, and African specialties. Tourist traps abound, but you can find some authentic Roman food.

## Africa

\$\$ | ETHIOPIAN | For something very different from pizza and pasta, try this excellent Ethiopian restaurant where traditional food is served in a casual environment. Seating is at low tables, as is typical, and the spicy stews and salads are served with spongy *injera* bread, which is also used as a utensil—be prepared to eat with your hands. **Known for:** vegetarian couscous; big portions; eclectic decor. *DAverage main: €20 E**Via Gaeta 26, Esquilino P06/4941077 c**No credit cards C**Closed Mon. m**Castro Pretorio.*

## Aroma

\$\$\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | The panoramas from this Michelin-starred restaurant atop the Palazzo Manfredi Hotel are undeniably stunning; it's the best unobstructed view of the Colosseum in Rome, so ask for a table on the terrace. You can order off-menu or opt for chef Giuseppe Di Iorio's seven-course tasting menu: each dish an innovative twist on Italy's top cuisine. **Known for:** intimate 28-seat restaurant; sustainable fish and local produce; gluten-free tasting menu. *DAverage main: €42 E**Via Labicana 125, Esquilino P06/77591380 w*[www.aromarestaurant.it](http://www.aromarestaurant.it) *m**Colosseo.*

## Li Rioni

\$ | PIZZA | FAMILY | This busy pizzeria conveniently close to the Colosseum has been serving real-deal Roman-style pizza—super thin and cooked to a crisp—since the mid-1980s. The magic might be due to the fact that they let their pizza dough rise 24–48 hours before baking to guarantee an extra-light pizza, said to be more easily digested than others. **Known for:** olive ascolane (fried, breaded olives stuffed with sausage); pizza margherita; homemade tiramisu. *DAverage main: €12 E**Via dei Santissimi Quattro 24, Esquilino P06/70450605 C**Closed 2 wks in Aug. No lunch m**Colosseo.*

## Panella

\$ | CAFÉ | FAMILY | It's on the pricey side, but the baked goods here are top-quality and the coffee drinks are excellent. Come in the morning for a *cornetto* (Italian croissant), or in the afternoon for a slice of pizza or one of

the delicious mini tarts. **Known for:** hot spot for local artists and directors; curated wine/grocery shop in back; more than 70 different types of freshly baked bread. *DAverage main: €10 EVia Merulana 54, Esquilino P06/4872435* [www.panellaroma.com](http://www.panellaroma.com) *mVittorio Emanuele.*

## h Hotels

Budget-conscious travelers who want to be near Rome's major transport hub, Termini station, often stay here. There are a number of cheap, clean, no-frills hotels and pensioni, as well as a few more-stylish options.

### ★ **Britannia Hotel**

\$\$\$ | **HOTEL** | Situated in an elegant Art Nouveau palazzo dating back to 1876, this charming hotel feels like a luxurious private home. **Pros:** spacious, comfortable rooms; great breakfast options; spacious marble bathrooms, many with Jacuzzi baths. **Cons:** rooms can be noisy for light sleepers; not very close to the city's main attractions; some furnishings are out of date. *DRooms from: €250 EVia Napoli 64, Esquilino P06/4883153* [www.hotelbritannia.it](http://www.hotelbritannia.it) *a34 rooms XFree breakfast mRepubblica.*

### **Hotel Morgana**

\$\$ | **HOTEL** | A nice, cozy hotel just a stone's throw from Termini station sounds like some sort of a miracle, and yet the Morgana welcomes guests with elegant classically designed rooms and top amenities. **Pros:** practical base for public transportation; great breakfast; pet-friendly. **Cons:** run-down neighborhood; removed from most sightseeing; some bathrooms are on the small side. *DRooms from: €180 EVia Filippo Turati 33/37, Esquilino P06/4467230* [www.hotelmorgana.com](http://www.hotelmorgana.com) *a123 rooms XFree breakfast mTermini.*

## n Nightlife

Esquilino's nightlife has a local artsy vibe, which makes sense as Rome's top film directors and other artists have made the neighborhood their home.



## BARS

### Fiddler's Elbow

**BARS/PUBS** | The oldest Irish pub in Rome, the proud Fiddler's Elbow is a rustic, traditional pub that probably hasn't changed since it first installed its wood panels in 1976. Expect raucous nights of beer and singing. E*Via dell'Olmata 43, Esquilino P06/4872110* [www.thefiddlerselbow.com](http://www.thefiddlerselbow.com).

## p Performing Arts

### OPERA

#### ★ Teatro dell'Opera di Roma

**DANCE** | Designed by Milanese architect Achille Sfondrini, Rome's opera house dates back to 1880 and is still world famous for its extraordinary acoustics. Not even these famed halls could have saved Maria Callas's 1958 performance of *Norma*, where she infamously walked out on the President of Italy due to health reasons. Today, the theater seats 1,600 in glamorous tiered boxes under a frescoed ceiling. It's an excellent venue to see opera in its original language or a contemporary ballet performance. E*Teatro dell'Opera, Piazza Beniamino Gigli 7, Esquilino P06/48160255* [www.operaroma.it](http://www.operaroma.it).

## b Shopping

Home to a variety of ethnic communities, the shops in Esquilino feel very authentic. The market here is a fabulous place to explore.

### MALLS AND SHOPPING CENTERS

#### Roma Termini

**DEPARTMENT STORES** | Rome's handiest central shopping mall is this cluster of shops that stays open until 10 pm (even on Sunday), conveniently located directly inside Rome's biggest train station, Stazione Termini. In a city not exactly known for its convenient shopping hours, this "shop before you hop" hub is a good spot for last-minute goodies. Shops include ever-popular chains like Mango, Moleskine, and Sephora, and bookshops with a hearty selection of English-language best sellers, as well as a grocery store and well-stocked

food court. EPiazza dei Cinquecento 1, Esquilino [www.romatermini.com](http://www.romatermini.com)  
mTermini.

## MARKETS

### Nuovo Mercato Esquilino

OUTDOOR/FLEA/GREEN MARKETS | This fabulous covered market is an excellent place to wander thanks to its sights and smells. There are plenty of Italian, Asian, and African specialties to be found, since the neighborhood is a mix of ethnicities. Many of Rome's top restaurants get their main ingredients here. EVia Filippo Turati 160, Esquilino CClosed Sun. mVittorio Emanuele.

## Pigneto

A hip neighborhood, famed for its street art and full of young people, Pigneto comes to life at night and is a good spot for cool restaurants and caffè. A short ride from Termini station (Bus No. 105, Tram No. 19 or 14), the majority of bars and restaurants are clustered around the section of Via del Pigneto between Via l'Aquila and Circonvallazione Casilina, and around the junction of Via Braccio da Montone and Via Fanfulla da Lodi.

### r Restaurants

Pigneto is Rome's up-and-coming *zona*: gritty caffè, artsy bars, and youth-driven, modern Italian restaurants are what you'll find.

#### ★ Pigneto Quarantuno

\$\$ | MODERN ITALIAN | Reservations are always a good idea at this popular spot for top-quality Roman food (especially if you'd like to sit outside). The constantly changing menu reflects seasonal produce; start off with one of their many foccacie, such as thyme, goat cheese, and grilled zucchini. **Known for:** impressive local and international wine list; homemade pasta; legendary meatballs. *DAverage main: €15 E* Via del Pigneto 41, Pigneto P06/70399483 [www.pignetoquarantuno.it](http://www.pignetoquarantuno.it) CNo lunch weekdays.

#### Trattoria Pigneto

\$ | ROMAN | This casual home-style trattoria follows the style of a frascetta—a type of countryside restaurant where the menu focuses on porchetta in a relaxed and casual atmosphere. Ordering the porchetta here is an obvious must—the waiter will serve it on butcher's paper according to how many people are in your party—but your meal needn't start, or end, there. **Known for:** affordable prices; old-school classics; rustic picnic table decor. *DAverage main: €14 E* Via del Pigneto 68, Pigneto P06/45650417.

### n Nightlife

## **Co.So. Cocktails & Social**

**CAFES—NIGHTLIFE** | This sleek and modern spot is owned by Massimo d'Addezio, who used to be the barman at Stravinskij Bar in Rome's luxury Hotel De Russie, so he knows a thing or two about making cocktails. Today, this hip hangout serves bar snacks as well as larger plates such as nachos and mouthwatering pulled-pork and deconstructed-porchetta burgers. Try something playful on the cocktail list like the Carbonara Sour, made with guanciale-infused vodka. *E**Via Braccio da Montone 80, Pigneto*  
*P06/45435428* *CClosed Sun. and 3 wks in Aug.*

# San Giovanni

The crown jewel of San Giovanni, just west of Celio, is the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, Rome's cathedral. Today, it is largely a residential neighborhood with 19th- and 20th-century apartment buildings and modern shops. Reach San Giovanni by walking south along Via Merulana from the Colosseum.

## S Sights

### ★ **Arcibasilica di San Giovanni in Laterano** (*Basilica of St. John Lateran*)

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | The cathedral of Rome is San Giovanni in Laterano, not St. Peter's. The church was built here by Emperor Constantine 10 years before he built the church dedicated to Peter, making it the ecclesiastical seat of the Bishop of Rome (the Pope). But thanks to vandals, earthquakes, and fires, today's building owes most of its form to 16th- and 17th-century restorations, including an interior designed by Baroque genius Borromini. Colossal statues stand watch over the towering facade: the 12 apostles plus Christ, John the Baptist, and the Virgin Mary.

Some earlier fragments do remain: under the portico on the left stands an ancient statue of Constantine, while the central portal's ancient bronze doors were brought here from the Forum's Curia. The altar's rich Gothic tabernacle, holding what the faithful believe are the heads of Sts. Peter and Paul, dates to 1367. The last chapel on the left aisle houses the cloister, which is encrusted with 12th-century Cosmatesque mosaics. Around the corner stands one of the oldest Christian structures in Rome: Emperor Constantine's octagonal Baptistery. Despite several restorations, a 17th-century interior redecoration, and even a 1993 Mafia-related car bombing, the Baptistery from AD 315 remains true to its ancient form. *EPiazza di San Giovanni in Laterano* 4, *San Giovanni* P06/69886433 [www.vatican.va/various/basiliche/san\\_giovanni/index\\_it.htm](http://www.vatican.va/various/basiliche/san_giovanni/index_it.htm) ABasilica, free, museum €3, cloister €2 mSan Giovanni.

## Scala Santa (*Holy Stairs*)

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | According to tradition, the Scala Santa was the staircase from Pilate's palace in Jerusalem—and, therefore, the one trod by Christ himself. St. Helena, Emperor Constantine's mother, brought the 28 marble steps to Rome in 326. As they have for centuries, pilgrims still come to climb the steps on their knees. At the top, they can get a glimpse of the **Sancta Sanctorum** (Holy of Holies), the richly decorated private papal chapel containing an image of Christ “not made by human hands.” You can sneak a peek, too, by taking one of the (nonsanctified) staircases on either side. The splendid Sancta Sanctorum—the Pope's private chapel long before the Sistine Chapel—is itself visitable, and well worth the price of admission. *EPiazza di San Giovanni in Laterano 14, San Giovanni P06/7726641 [www.scala-santa.com](http://www.scala-santa.com) AScala Santa free, Sancta Sanctorum €3.50 CSancta Sanctorum closed Sun. mSan Giovanni.*

## **b Shopping**

San Giovanni has a wide selection of department stores and chains, as well as a great street market.

### **Mercato di Via Sannio**

**OUTDOOR/FLEA/GREEN MARKETS** | The *mercato* (market) on Via Sannio is a great place for flea-market junkies looking for something borrowed or something new. Rummage through piles of military surplus, leather jackets, cosmetics, and other bargains, and feel free to barter. You can find great deals on shoes, handbags, and accessories, although many booths have been overrun by hawkers selling new, cheaply made clothes. It's open Monday through Saturday 8 am–2 pm. *EVia Sannio 65, near San Giovanni in Laterano, San Giovanni mSan Giovanni.*

### **Pifebo**

**CLOTHING** | Vintage aficionados, university students, musicians, and the occasional costume designer looking for something a little offbeat all love browsing through the racks of the hip vintage clothing emporium Pifebo. The clothes fly off the racks quite quickly thanks to its eclectic selection of '70s,



'80s, and '90s apparel and shoes at hard-to-beat prices. The shop has two other locations farther up via dei Serpenti in Monti. E Via dei Valeri 10, San Giovanni P06/98185845 [www.pifebo.com](http://www.pifebo.com) mSan Giovanni.

## San Lorenzo

This traditionally working-class neighborhood north of Termini station is close to the University. The area is inundated with students and faculty, which makes for quite a lively scene in the evening.

### r Restaurants

San Lorenzo is a university quarter, where student budgets dictate low prices and good value. There are also a few hidden gems here.

#### I Fratelli

\$\$ | SOUTHERN ITALIAN | The four owners of this proudly southern Italian pizzeria and restaurant come from the deep south (Sicily, Calabria, Campania, and Puglia), and the influence can clearly be seen in the menu, especially in the pizza, which is of the thicker Neapolitan variety. There are classic pizzas and interesting combinations like pear and Gorgonzola or Brie and speck. **Known for:** casual atmosphere popular with locals; cacio e pepe dressed up with black truffle; filetto di baccalà served with guanciale and honey. *DAverage main: €15 E* Via degli Umbri 14, San Lorenzo P06/4469856 [www.ristoranteifratelli.it](http://www.ristoranteifratelli.it) *CClosed 10 days in Aug. No lunch Sun.*

#### Tram Tram

\$\$ | SOUTHERN ITALIAN | The name refers to its proximity to the tram tracks, but could also describe the small, narrow interior of the restaurant, which is often packed with diners (in warmer weather there's a "side car" of tables along the sidewalk). Founded by Rosanna Di Vittorio and her two daughters, the restaurant adapts its cuisine from Puglia with a slight Roman influence, emphasizing seafood and vegetables—prawns with saffron-kissed sautéed vegetables, for example—as well as a variety of homemade pastas. **Known for:** homemade orecchiette pasta made with clams and broccoli; rigatoni con la pajata (intestines of an unweaned calf); organic wine list. *DAverage main: €20 E* Via dei Reti 46, San Lorenzo P06/490416 [www.tramtram.it](http://www.tramtram.it) *CClosed 1 wk in Aug. No lunch Sun. and Mon.*

## n Nightlife

Literally the other side of the tracks, just beyond Termini train station, San Lorenzo is a traditional university area with lots of inexpensive bars and restaurants, as well as art spaces. Evenings are always brimming with people and activity.

### BARS

#### **Black Market San Lorenzo**

**WINE BARS—NIGHTLIFE** | This bare-bones speakeasy-style bar offers top-notch cocktails expertly mixed with bitters or fruit, artisanal beer, organic wine, and a full spread of delicious appetizers. In the afternoon, it's a tea lounge with free Wi-Fi, and at night there are often live music performances. *E Via dei Sardi 50A, San Lorenzo P3285626789.*

## b Shopping

This university district is a good place to hunt for unique boho-chic or secondhand clothing.

### CLOTHING

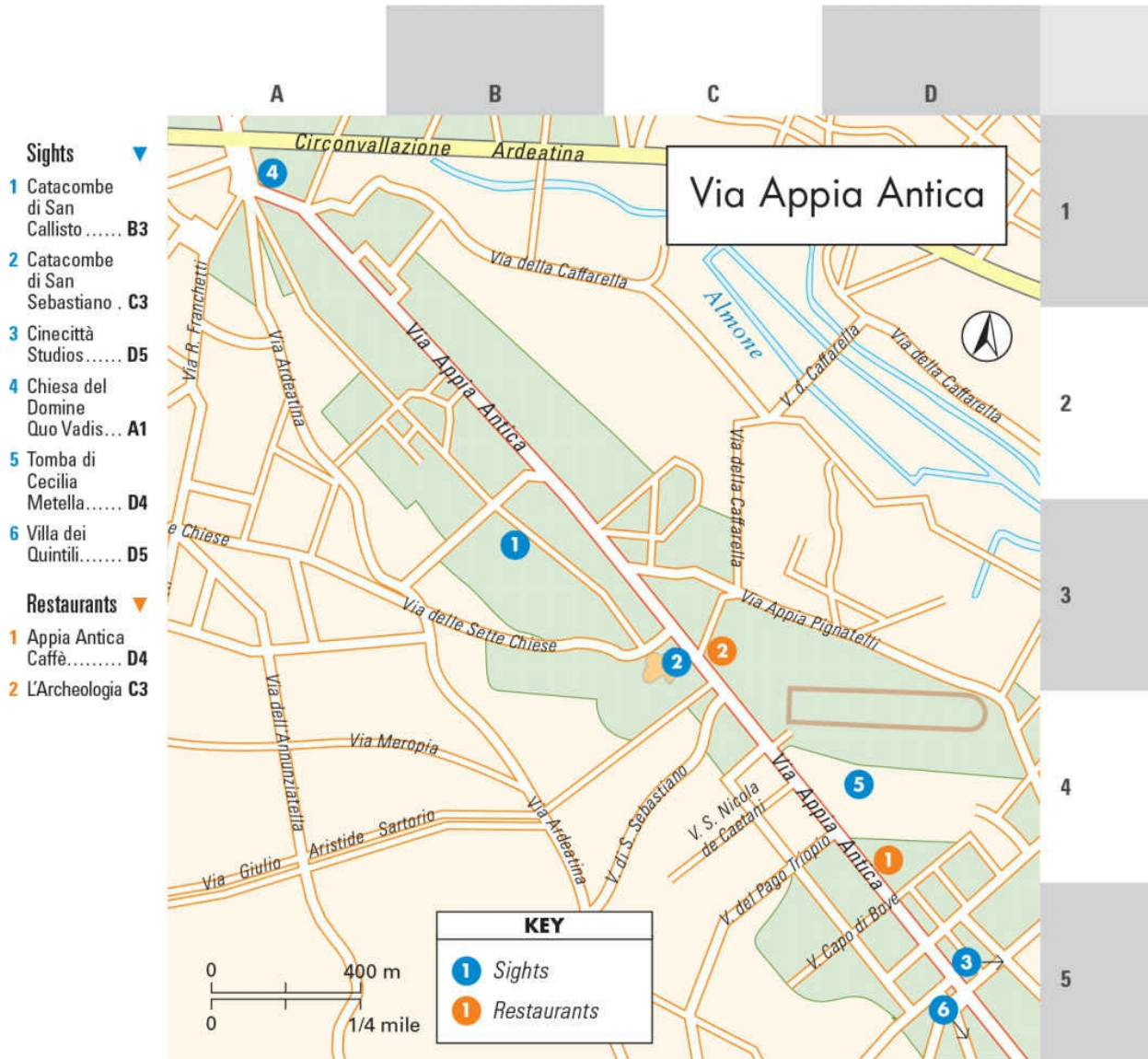
#### **L'Anatra all'Arancia**

**CLOTHING** | Repetto ballerinas, chunky handbags, and funky dresses make L'Anatra all'Arancia one of the best local secrets of boho San Lorenzo. The shop showcases innovative designer clothes from Marina Spadafora, Antik Batik, See by Chloé, and Donatella Baroni (the store's owner). Leaning toward the alternative with an eclectic selection of handpicked Italian and French labels, Donatella also carries luxurious perfumes and boutique jewelry. *E Via Tiburtina 105, San Lorenzo P06/4456293 mTermini, Castro Pretorio.*

#### **Red Frame Shop**

**CLOTHING** | A small and somewhat hard-to-find boutique that is identified only by its redbrick-framed door, Red Frame Shop keeps odd hours, so don't be afraid to knock if the door seems locked. A favorite of TV personality

Giada De Laurentiis, the shop is filled with luxurious sweaters, bespoke suits, and coats made from couture fabrics. Everything is tailor-made, so if your size is out of stock, you can custom order any piece. E Via degli Equi 70, San Lorenzo.



## Via Appia Antica

Far south of Esquilino lies catacomb country—the haunts of the fabled underground graves of Rome’s earliest Christians, arrayed to either side of the Queen of Roads, the Via Appia Antica (Appian Way). Strewn with classical ruins and dotted with grazing sheep, the road stirs images of chariots and legionnaires returning from imperial conquests. It was completed in 312 BC by Appius Claudius, who laid it out to connect Rome with settlements in the south, in the direction of Naples. Though time and vandals have taken their toll on the ancient relics along the road, the catacombs remain to cast their spirit-warm spell. Although Jews and pagans also used the catacombs, the Christians expanded the idea of underground burials to a massive scale. Persecution of Christians under pagan emperors made martyrs of many, whose bones, once interred underground, became objects of veneration. Today, the dark, gloomy catacombs contrast strongly with the Appia Antica’s fresh air, verdant meadows, and evocative classical ruins.

The initial stretch of the Via Appia Antica is not pedestrian-friendly—there is fast, heavy traffic and no sidewalk all the way from Porta San Sebastiano to the Catacombe di San Callisto. To reach the catacombs, take Bus No. 218 from San Giovanni in Laterano. Alternatively, take Metro Line A to Colli Albani and then Bus No. 660 to the Tomba di Cecilia Metella. Another attractive alternative is to rent a bike—for example, at the Appia Antica Caffè near the Cecilia Metella bus stop.

## S Sights

### **Catacombe di San Callisto** (*Catacombs of St. Calixtus*)

**CEMETERY** | Burial place of several very early popes, this is Rome’s oldest and best-preserved underground cemetery. One of the (English-speaking) friars who act as custodians of the catacomb will guide you through its crypts and galleries, some adorned with Early Christian frescoes. Watch out for wrong turns: this catacomb is five stories deep! **■ TIP → The large parking area means this is favored by large groups; it can get busy.** E Via Appia

*Antica 110, Via Appia Antica P06/5130151 [www.catacombe.roma.it](http://www.catacombe.roma.it) A€8  
CClosed Wed., and mid-Jan.–Feb. mBus No. 118 or 218.*

### ★ **Catacombe di San Sebastiano** (*Catacombs of St. Sebastian*)

**CEMETERY** | The 4th-century church was named after the saint who was buried in the catacomb, which burrows underground on four different levels. This was the only Early Christian cemetery to remain accessible during the Middle Ages, and it was from here that the term *catacomb* is derived—it's in a spot where the road dips into a hollow, known to the Romans as *catacumba* (Greek for “near the hollow”). The Romans used the name to refer to the cemetery that had existed here since the 2nd century BC, and it came to be applied to all the underground cemeteries discovered in Rome in later centuries. As well as Christian burial areas, some very well preserved pagan mausolea were found here in the early 20th century, making this one of the more varied catacomb complexes in the area. E*Via Appia Antica 136, Via Appia Antica P06/7850350 [www.catacombe.org](http://www.catacombe.org) A€8 CClosed Sun. mBus No. 118, 218, or 660.*

### **Chiesa del Domine Quo Vadis** (*Church of Quo Vadis*)

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | This church was built on the spot where tradition says Christ appeared to St. Peter as the apostle was fleeing Rome and persuaded him to return and face martyrdom. A paving stone in the church bears an imprint said to have been made by the feet of Christ. E*Via Appia Antica 51, Via Appia Antica P06/5120441.*

### **Cinecittà Studios**

**FILM STUDIO** | Film buffs may want to make the trip out to Cinecittà Studios—stomping ground of Fellini, Audrey Hepburn, and Elizabeth Taylor and birthplace of such classics as *Roman Holiday*, *Cleopatra*, and *La Dolce Vita*. You can take a guided tour of the sets and see the exhibition *Cinecittà Shows Off*, with memorabilia like Elizabeth Taylor's *Cleopatra* gown and the dolphin-shape statue that marked the chariot laps in *Ben-Hur*. Cinecittà is located about 25 minutes southeast of the city center on Metro Line A. E*Via Tuscolana 1055, Rome P06/722931 [wcinecitta.com](http://wcinecitta.com) A€10 exhibition, €20 exhibition and tour mCinecittà.*



## **Tomba di Cecilia Metella**

**CEMETERY** | For centuries, sightseers have flocked to this famous landmark, one of the most complete surviving tombs of ancient Rome. One of the many round mausoleums that once lined the Appian Way, this tomb is a smaller version of the Mausoleum of Augustus, but impressive nonetheless. It was the burial place of a Roman noblewoman: the wife of the son of Crassus, who was one of Julius Caesar's rivals and known as the richest man in the Roman Empire (infamously entering the English language as "crass"). The original decoration includes a frieze of bulls' skulls near the top. The travertine stone walls were made higher and the medieval-style crenellations were added when the tomb was transformed into a fortress by the Caetani family in the 14th century. An adjacent chamber houses a small museum of the area's geological phases. Entrance to this site also includes access to the splendid Villa dei Quintili, but you can get a super view without going in. E *Via Appia Antica* 161, *Via Appia Antica* P06/7844271 [www.parcoarcheologicoappiaantica.it](http://www.parcoarcheologicoappiaantica.it) A€5, includes Villa dei Quintili (valid for 2 days) C Closed Mon. mBus No. 118 or 660.

## **Villa dei Quintili**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | Even in ruins, this once splendid villa gives a real sense of ancient Rome's opulence, and the small on-site museum includes archaeological finds that add to the vision. Even today, two millennia later, it remains clear why Emperor Commodus—the villain in the 2000 film epic *Gladiator*—coveted this sumptuous property. To get the villa from its owners, the Quintili, he accused the family of plotting against him and had them executed, before moving in himself. He may have used the exedra for training for his fights with ostriches back in the Colosseum. Note that the villa is best included in a separate itinerary from the catacombs, being 5 km (3 miles) away. It is accessible from both the modern Appia Nuova and from the Appia Antica, the ancient road (by bicycle or on foot only). E *Via Appia Nuova* 1092, *Via Appia Antica* P06/7129121 [www.parcoarcheologicoappiaantica.it](http://www.parcoarcheologicoappiaantica.it) A€5, includes Cecilia Metella (valid for 2 days) C Closed Mon. mColli Albani, then Bus No. 664.

## r Restaurants

### Appia Antica Caffè

\$ | ROMAN | Strategically situated at the No. 660 bus stop on the corner of Via di Cecilia Metella, the Appia Antica Caffè, with its birdsong-filled ambience, is a rarity among Roman coffee bars. The food isn't particularly exciting (the usual array of sandwiches and pastries), but it's in a convenient location with lots of outside seating in the back. **Known for:** classic Roman espresso; good people-watching; charming outdoor seating. DAverage main: €8 E Via Appia Antica 175, Via Appia Antica P06/89879575 [www.appiaanticacaffe.it](http://www.appiaanticacaffe.it) mCavour.

### L'Archeologia

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | In this farmhouse just beyond the catacombs, founded around 1890, you can dine indoors beside the fireplace in cool weather or in the garden under age-old vines in summer. Specialties include fettuccine *al finocchio salvatico* (with wild fennel), *abbacchio alla scottadito* (grilled lamb cutlets), and fresh seafood. **Known for:** ancient wine cellar La Cantina; hand-painted frescoes; romantic setting. DAverage main: €26 E Via Appia Antica 139, Via Appia Antica P06/7880494 [www.larcheologia.it](http://www.larcheologia.it).

## Chapter 12

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# SIDE TRIPS FROM ROME

Updated by Natalie  
Kennedy



 Sights  
★★★★☆

 Restaurants  
★★★★☆

 Hotels  
★★★★☆

 Shopping  
★★★★☆

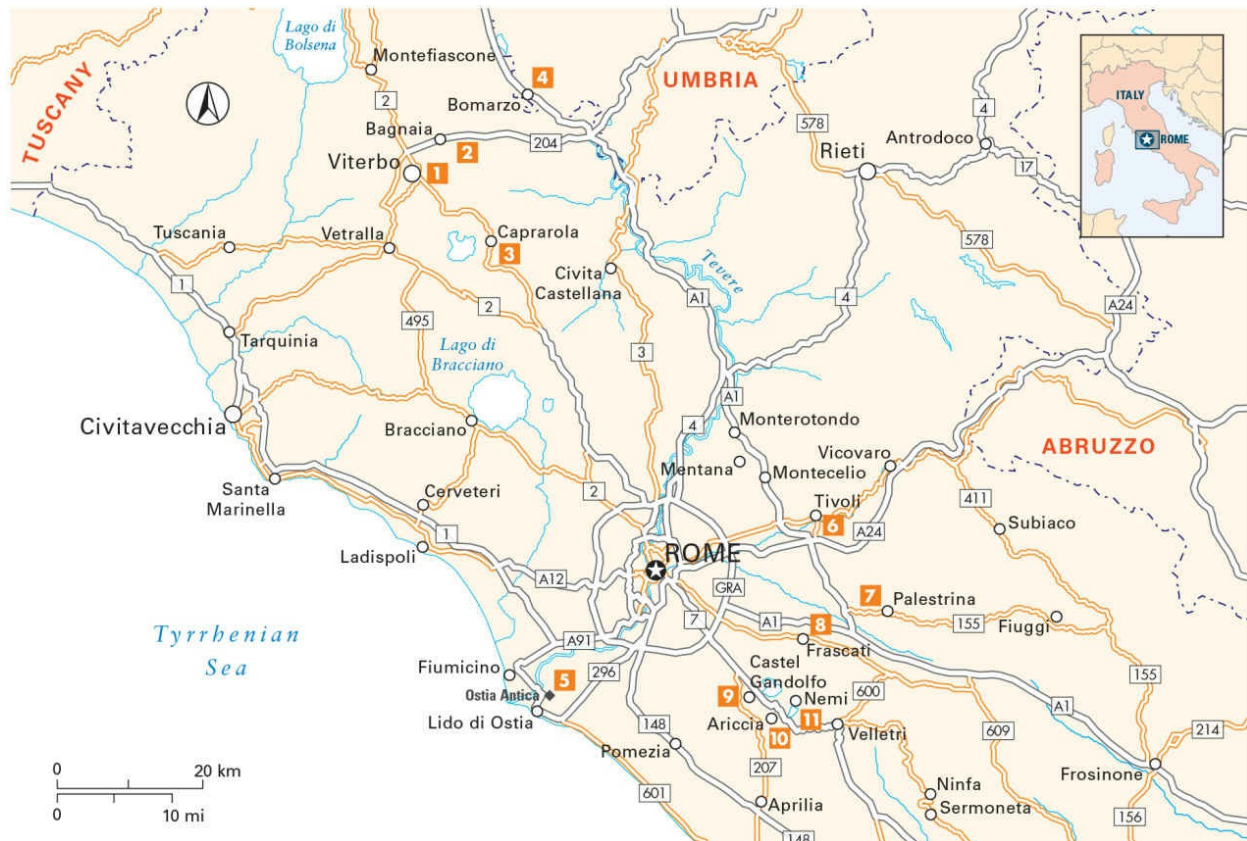
 Nightlife  
★★★★☆

# WELCOME TO SIDE TRIPS FROM ROME

## TOP REASONS TO GO

- ★ **Ostia Antica:** This excavated port city of ancient Rome is brimming with ruins, mosaics, and structures, which convey a picture of every day life in the empire.
- ★ **Tivoli's Villa d'Este:** Hundreds of fountains cascading and shooting skyward (one even plays music on organ pipes) will delight you at this spectacular garden.
- ★ **Castelli Romani:** Be a Roman for a day and enjoy an escape to the ancient hilltop wine towns on the city's doorstep.
- ★ **Viterbo:** This town may be modern, but it has a Gothic papal palace, a Romanesque cathedral, and the magical medieval quarter of San Pellegrino. It's also the gateway to the terme (hot springs) closest to Rome.
- ★ **Bizarre and beautiful gardens:** The 16th-century proto-Disneyland Parco dei Mostri (Monster Park) is famed for its fantastic sculptures; the stately Villa Lante, a few miles away, is a postcard-perfect Renaissance garden of swirling, manicured hedges.





- 1 Viterbo.** The capital of Tuscia and a 13th-century time capsule with papal connections.
- 2 Bagnaia.** The home of a 16th-century cardinal's summer home.
- 3 Caprarola.** A quiet village that is also home to the huge Palazzo Farnese.
- 4 Bomarzo.** A town that's home to eccentric Monster Park garden.
- 5 Ostia Antica.** An ancient Roman port, now a parklike archaeological site.
- 6 Tivoli.** A fitting setting for the regal Villa Adriana and the unforgettable Villa d'Este, a park filled with gorgeous fountains.
- 7 Palestrina.** Originally an ancient pagan sanctuary and home to the father of musical counterpoint.
- 8 Frascati.** A town clustered amid the Alban Hills and famed for its local wine.

**9 Castel Gandolfo.** A little town otherwise known as the pope's garden-filled summer retreat.

**10 Ariccia.** Home to the grand Palazzo Chigi.

**11 Nemi.** A small and pretty town, with an eagle's-nest perch above a volcanic lake.



**Less well known than neighboring Tuscany, Lazio, the region that encompasses Rome, is often bypassed by foreign visitors. This is a pity, since the area, which stretches from the Apennine mountain range to the Mediterranean coast, holds dozens of fascinating towns and villages, as well as scenic lakes, enchanting gardens, national parks, and forests. A trip outside Rome introduces you to a more intimate aspect of Italy, where local customs and feast days are still enthusiastically observed, and local gastronomic specialties take precedence on restaurant menus.**

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Despite these small towns' proximity to the capital and the increased commuter traffic congestion of today, they still each manage to preserve their individual character. Ostia Antica, ancient Rome's seaport, is one of the region's top attractions—it rivals Pompeii in the quality of its preservation, and it easily outshines the Roman Forum thanks to its beautiful setting and expansive, inspiring glimpse at the past. Emperors, cardinals, and popes have long escaped to green and verdant retreats in nearby Tivoli, Viterbo, and the Alban Hills, and their amazing villas, palaces, and gardens add to nature's allure. So if the nonstop Vespa traffic and long lines at the Colosseum start to wear on you, do as the Romans do: get out of town. There's plenty to see and do.

## **MAJOR REGIONS**

**Tuscia.** Tuscia (the modern name for the Etruscan domain of Etruria) is a region of dramatic beauty punctuated by deep, rocky gorges and thickly forested hills, with dappled light falling on wooded paths. This has long been a preferred locale for the retreats of wealthy Romans, a place where they

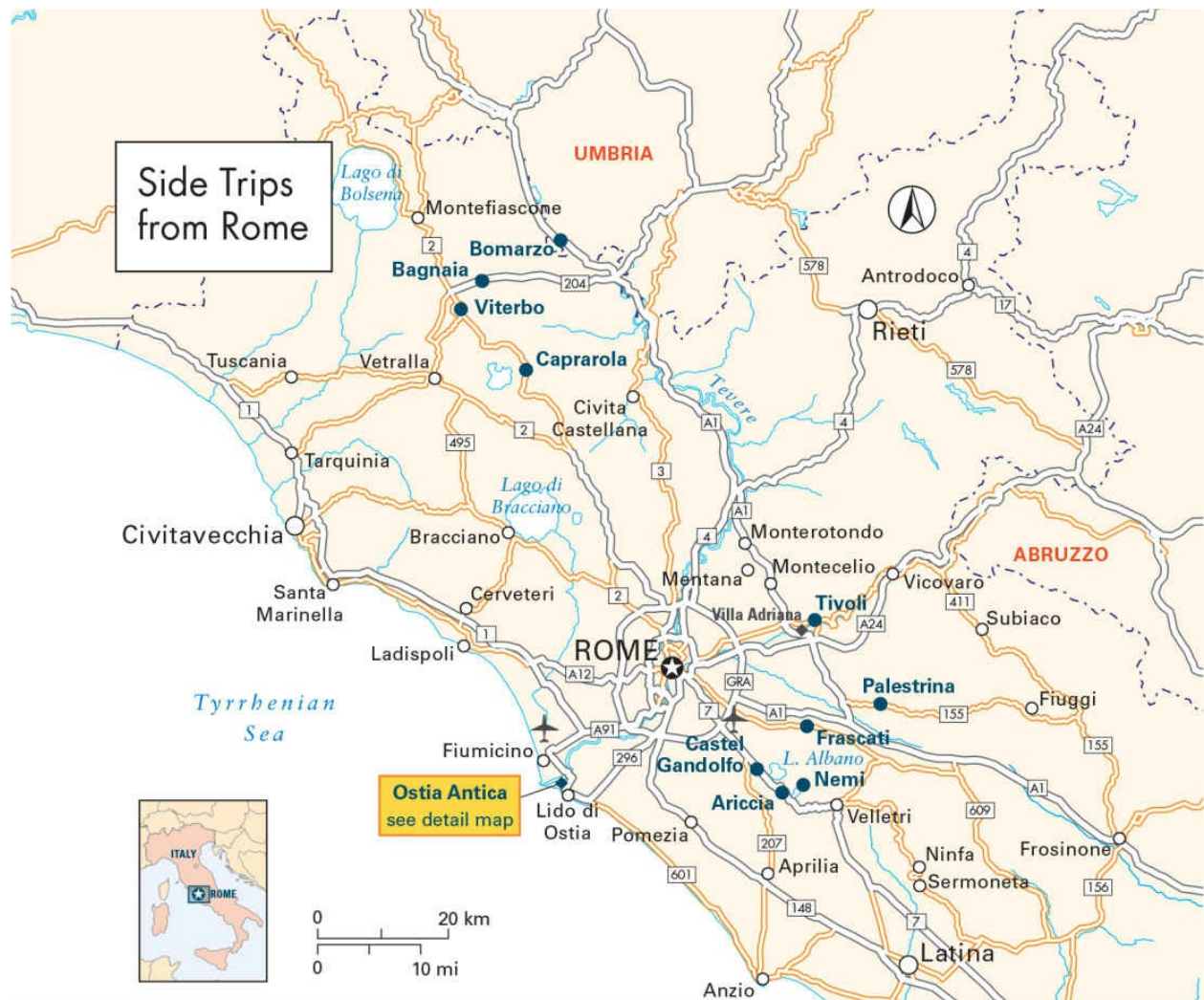
could build grand villas and indulge their sometimes-eccentric gardening tastes. The provincial capital, Viterbo, which overshadowed Rome as a center of papal power for a time during the Middle Ages, lies in the heart of Tuscia. The farmland east of Viterbo conceals small quarries of the dark, volcanic *peperino* stone, which shows up in the walls of many buildings here. Lake Bolsena lies in an extinct volcano, and the sulfur springs still bubbling up in the modern spas were once used by the ancient Romans. Bagnaia and Caprarola are home to palaces and gardens; the garden statuary at Bomarzo is in a league of its own—somewhere between the beautiful and the bizarre. The ideal way to explore this region is by car. From Rome you can reach Viterbo by train and then get to Bagnaia by local bus. If you're traveling by train or bus, check schedules carefully; you may have to allow for an overnight if you want to do a round of the region's sights.

**Tivoli and Palestrina.** Tivoli is a five-star draw, its main attractions being its two villas. There's an ancient one in which Hadrian reproduced the most beautiful monuments in the then-known world, and a Renaissance one, in which Cardinal Ippolito d'Este created a water-filled wonderland. Unfortunately, the Via Tiburtina from Rome to Tivoli passes through miles of industrial areas with chaotic traffic, so whether you are driving or taking the bus, take the A24 motorway to avoid it. Or take the train, which offers a slightly more scenic journey. Whichever way you decide to go, persevere and it'll be worth it for the small but charming city center, expansive park, and Tivoli's two gems that are rightly world famous. You'll know you're close to Tivoli when you see vast quarries of travertine marble and smell the sulfurous vapors of the little spa, Bagni di Tivoli. Both sites in Tivoli are outdoors and entail walking. With a car, you can continue your loop through the mountains east of Rome, taking in the ancient pagan sanctuary at Palestrina, spectacularly set on the slopes of Mt. Ginestro.

**The Castelli Romani.** These *castelli* aren't really castles, as their name would seem to imply. Rather, they're little towns that are scattered on the slopes of the Alban Hills just to the southeast of Rome. And the Alban Hills aren't really hills, but extinct volcanoes. There were castles here in the Middle Ages, however, when each of these towns, fiefs of rival Roman lords, had its own fortress to defend it. Some centuries later, the area was given over to villas and retreats, notably the pope's summer residence at Castel

Gandolfo, and the 17th- and 18th-century villas that transformed Frascati into the Beverly Hills of Rome. Arrayed around the rim of an extinct volcano that encloses two crater lakes, the string of picturesque towns of the Castelli Romani are today surrounded by vineyards, olive groves, and chestnut woods—no wonder overheated Romans have always loved to escape here.

In addition to their lovely natural settings, the Castelli have also been renowned for their wine since the ancient Roman times. In the narrow, medieval alleyways of the oldest parts of the various villages you can still find old-fashioned taverns where the locals sit on wooden benches, quaffing the golden nectar straight from the barrel. Traveling around the countryside, you can also pop into some of the local vineyards, where they will be happy to give you a tasting of their wines. Exclusive local gastronomic specialties include the bread of Genzano, baked in traditional wood-fire ovens, the *porchetta* (roast suckling pig) of Ariccia, and the *pupazza* biscuits of Frascati, shaped like women or mermaids with three or more breasts (an allusion to ancient fertility goddesses). Each town has its own feasts and saints' days, celebrated with costumed processions and colorful events. Some are quite spectacular, like Marino's annual Wine Festival in October, where the town's fountains flow with wine; or the Flower Festival of Genzano in June, when an entire street is carpeted with millions of flower petals, arranged in elaborate patterns.



# Planning

## Making the Most of Your Time

Ostia Antica is in many ways an ideal day trip from Rome: it's fascinating, it's not far from the city, it's reachable by public transit, and it takes about half a day to do. Villa d'Este and Villa Adriana in Tivoli also make for a manageable, though fuller, day trip. There's so much to see at these two sights alone, but also be sure to visit Tivoli's picturesque gorge, which is strikingly crowned by an ancient Roman temple to Vesta (which is now a part of the incomparable outdoor terrace at the famed Sibilla restaurant). Other destinations can be visited in a day, but you'll get more out of them if you stay the night.

One classic five-day itinerary that takes in the area's grand villas, ancient ruins, and pretty villages begins with Ostia Antica, the excavated port town of ancient Rome. You can then head north to explore Viterbo's medieval streets on Day 2. On Day 3, take in the hot springs or the gardens of Bomarzo, Bagnaia, and Caprarola. For Day 4, head to Tivoli's delights. Then on Day 5 take a relaxing trip to the Castelli Romani, where Frascati wine is produced. Admire the sparkling volcanic lakes, find a spot at a family-style local restaurant, and explore the narrow streets of these small hill towns.

## Getting Here and Around

There's reliable public transit from Rome to Ostia Antica, Frascati, Tivoli, and Viterbo. COTRAL is the regional bus company. For other destinations, having a car is a big advantage—going by bus or Trenitalia can add hours to your trip, and the routes and schedules are often puzzling.

**CONTACTS COTRAL.** E Via Bernardino Alimena 105 P800/174471  
[www.cotralspa.it](http://www.cotralspa.it) **Trenitalia** (Italian National Railway System).  
P199/892021, 06/68475475 [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com).

## Restaurants

You certainly won't go hungry when you're exploring the Roman countryside. Whether you choose a five-star establishment or a simple eatery, you can be sure of a fresh, clean tablecloth and friendly, attentive service. Odds are that the ingredients will come from down the road and the owner will be in the kitchen, personally preparing the time-honored dishes that have made Italian cuisine so famous.

## Hotels

Former aristocratic houses with frescoed ceilings, *agriturismi* farmhouses, luxury spas, and cozy bed-and-breakfasts in the village center are just a few of the lodging options here. You won't find much in the way of big chain hotels, though.

*Restaurant and hotel reviews have been shortened. For full information, visit [Fodors.com](http://Fodors.com).*

### What It Costs in Euros

\$	\$\$	\$\$\$	\$\$\$\$
<b>RESTAURANTS</b>			
under €15	€15–€24	€25– €35	over €35
<b>HOTELS</b>			
under €125	€125– €200	€201– €300	over €300

## Visitor Information

Tourist information kiosks, which are scattered around Rome's main squares and tourist sights, can give you information about the Castelli Romani, Ostia Antica, and Tivoli. The Tuscia area is served by the central tourist office in Viterbo.

**CONTACT** **Visit Lazio.** [www.visitlazio.com](http://www.visitlazio.com).



# Viterbo

*104 km (64 miles) northwest of Rome.*

Viterbo's moment of glory was in the 13th century, when it became the seat of the papal court. The medieval core of the city still sits within 12th-century walls. Its old buildings, with windows bright with geraniums, are made of dark peperino, the local stone that colors the medieval part of Viterbo a dark gray, contrasted here and there with the golden tufa rock of walls and towers. Peperino is also used in the characteristic and typically medieval exterior staircases that you see throughout the old town.

Viterbo has blossomed into a regional commercial center, and much of the modern city is loud and industrial. However, in Viterbo's San Pellegrino district you'll get the feel of the Middle Ages—artisan shops and bottegas still operate in a setting that has remained practically unchanged over the centuries. The Palazzo Papale and the cathedral, which sit at the heart of the oldest part of the city, enhance the effect. The city has remained a renowned spa center for its natural hot springs just outside town, which have been frequented by popes and mere mortals alike since medieval times.

## **GETTING HERE AND AROUND**

Viterbo is well served by public transport from Rome. Direct train service from Stazione Trastevere takes 1 hour and 40 minutes, making frequent stops in the capital's more rural suburbs. Try to avoid peak hours, as many commuters live in towns along the line. By road, take either the old Roman consular road, the Via Cassia, which passes near Caprarola, or, if you are in a hurry, the A1 toll highway to the Orte exit and then the 204 highway, with a detour to Bomarzo. The trip can take a couple of hours or even more, depending on traffic.

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

**CONTACT Viterbo Tourism Office.** E *Piazza Martiri D'Ungheria*  
P0761/226427 [www.promotuscia.it](http://www.promotuscia.it).

## S Sights

### Cattedrale di San Lorenzo

**MUSEUM** | Viterbo's Romanesque cathedral was built over the ruins of the ancient Roman Temple of Hercules. During World War II, the roof and the vault of the central nave were destroyed and you can still see the mark the shrapnel left on the columns closest to the pulpit. Subsequently, the church was rebuilt to its original medieval design, but still has many original details including a beautiful Cosmati floor that dates back to the 13th century. Three popes are buried here, including Pope Alexander IV (1254–61), whose body was hidden so well by the canons, out of fear that it would be desecrated, that it has never been found. The small adjoining **Museo del Colle del Duomo** has a collection of 18th-century reliquaries, Etruscan sarcophagi, and a painting of the Crucifixion that has been attributed to Michelangelo. The ticket to the museum also grants you entrance to the Palazzo Papale, located on the same square. *EPiazza San Lorenzo P320/7911328 [www.archeoares.it](http://www.archeoares.it) AMuseum €9.*

### Palazzo Papale (*Papal Palace*)

**CASTLE/PALACE** | This Gothic palace was built in the 13th century as a residence for popes looking to get away from the city. At the time, Rome was notoriously ridden with malaria and the plague, not to mention rampaging factions of rival barons. In 1271 the palace was the scene of a novel type of rebellion. A conclave held that year to elect a new pope dragged on for months. The people of Viterbo were exasperated by the delay, especially as custom decreed that they had to provide for the cardinals' board and lodging for the duration of the conclave. To speed up the deliberations, the townspeople tore the roof off the great hall where the cardinals were meeting, and put them on bread and water. A new pope—Gregory X—was elected in short order. Today, you can visit the great hall, step out on the pretty loggia, and admire the original frescoes in the small adjoining room. ■ **TIP → An audio guided tour is free with the purchase of a ticket and lasts 45 minutes, starting from Museo del Colle del Duomo.** *EPiazza San Lorenzo P320/7911328 [www.archeoares.it](http://www.archeoares.it) A€9, includes tour of Cattedrale di San Lorenzo, Palazzo Papale, and Museo del Colle del Duomo.*

## San Pellegrino

**HISTORIC SITE** | One of the best preserved medieval districts in Italy, San Pellegrino has charming vistas of arches, vaults, towers, exterior staircases, worn wooden doors on great iron hinges, and tiny hanging gardens. You pass many antiques shops and craft workshops, as well as numerous restaurants, as you explore the little squares and byways. The **Fontana Grande** in the piazza of the same name is the largest and most extravagant of Viterbo's Gothic fountains. E*Via San Pellegrino, near Palazzo Papale and Cattedrale di San Lorenzo* [www.promotuscia.it](http://www.promotuscia.it).

## ★ Terme dei Papi

**HOT SPRINGS** | Viterbo has been a spa town for centuries, and this excellent spa not far from town continues the tradition, providing the usual health and beauty treatments with an Etruscan twist: try a facial with local volcanic mud, or a steam bath in an ancient cave, where scalding hot mineral water direct from the spring splashes down a waterfall to a pool beneath your feet. The Terme dei Papi's main draw, however, comes from the *terme* (baths) themselves: a 21,000-square-foot outdoor limestone pool, into the shallow end of which Viterbo's famous hot water pours at 59°C (138°F)—and gives a jolt with its sulfurous odor. Floats and deck chairs are for rent, but bring your own bathrobe and towel unless you're staying at the hotel. There are moonlight swims on Saturday nights, when the pool is open (9 pm–1 am). ■

**TIP** → **Shuttle buses operate between Rome's Piazza del Popolo and the Terme. Round-trip tickets cost €8; call or check website for travel times.** E*Strada Bagni 12, 5 km (3 miles) west of town center* P0761/3501 [www.termedeipapi.it](http://www.termedeipapi.it) A*Pool €12 weekdays, €18 weekends* C*Closed Tues.*

## † Restaurants

### ★ Osteria del Vecchio Orologio

§ | **ITALIAN** | Tucked away in a side street off the medieval Piazza delle Erbe, the Osteria del Vecchio Orologio offers top-quality Tuscia specialties in a warm and informal atmosphere. They're a member of the Slow Food movement with a menu that changes according to the season. **Known for:** cute, cupboard-lined walls; local ingredients; extensive wine list. D*Average*

main: €14 E Via Orologio Vecchio 25 P335/337754  
[www.alvecchioorologio.it](http://www.alvecchioorologio.it) C No lunch Mon. and Tues.

### Taverna Etrusca

\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | Located between the heart of San Pellegrino and Porta Romana, this friendly trattoria is known for its excellent home cooking and pizza. Be sure to admire the Etruscan-inspired decorations and check out the dessert—all of the excellent gelato is made on-site. **Known for:** homemade pasta alla viterbese (spicy red sauce with fennel); fettuccine with lemon; excellent gelato. D Average main: €14 E Via Annio 8 P0761/226694  
[www.tavernaetrusca.it](http://www.tavernaetrusca.it) C Closed Sun.

### Tre Re

\$ | ITALIAN | Viterbo's oldest restaurant—and one of the most ancient in Italy—has been operating in the *centro storico* (historic center) since 1622. The small, wood-paneled dining room, chummily packed with tables, was a favorite haunt of movie director Federico Fellini and, before that, of British and American soldiers during World War II. **Known for:** traditional local dishes; roasted suckling pig; locals touch the Tre Re (Three Kings) sign outside for luck. D Average main: €14 E Via Macel Gattesco 3 P0761/304619  
[www.ristorantetrere.com](http://www.ristorantetrere.com) C Closed Thurs.

## h Hotels

### Hotel Niccolò V

\$\$ | HOTEL | The relaxed country-house elegance and comfortable rooms at this spa hotel are a sharp contrast to the brisk and clinical atmosphere of the Terme dei Papi spa itself, which bustles with doctors, bathers in bathrobes, and uniformed staff. **Pros:** friendly staff; comfortable rooms; relaxing atmosphere. **Cons:** guests lounging in the lobby in bathrobes; several miles out of town; pervading sulfur smell from pool outside. D Rooms from: €200 E Strada Bagni 12, 5 km (3 miles) west of town center P0761/350555  
[www.termedeipapi.it](http://www.termedeipapi.it) a23 rooms X Free breakfast.

### La Terrazza Medioevale

\$ | **B&B/INN** | The historic Palazzo Perotti in the center of old Viterbo's San Pellegrino district is the setting for three stylish double rooms. **Pros:** comfortable rooms in the heart of the historic quarter; great value; pretty terrace overlooking city. **Cons:** no credit cards accepted; accessible only by flight of stairs; no nearby parking. DRooms from: €80 E Via S. Pellegrino 1, near Cattedrale di San Lorenzo P0761/307034 [www.laterrazzamedioevale.it](http://www.laterrazzamedioevale.it) cNo credit cards CClosed Aug. a3 rooms XFree breakfast.

# Bagnaia

*5 km (3 miles) east of Viterbo.*

The quiet village of Bagnaia is the site of the 16th-century cardinal Alessandro Montalto's summer retreat, which is quite an extravaganza.

## GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Local buses from Viterbo are one way to get here. By local train, it's 10 minutes beyond the Viterbo stop—few local trains actually do stop, though, so be sure to check beforehand. If you prefer to drive, take the A1 to the exit for Orte and follow signs for Bagnaia. There is free parking across the bridge from the main square.

## S Sights

### Villa Lante

**CASTLE/PALACE** | The main draw in this otherwise sweet but underwhelming village is the hillside garden and park that surround the two small, identical residences built by different owners in the 16th century, more than 30 years apart. The first belonged to Cardinal Gianfrancesco Gambara, but it was Cardinal Alessandro Montalto who built the second and soon commissioned the creation of a stunning garden filled with grottoes, fountains, and immaculately manicured hedges. The garden and the park were designed by the virtuoso architect Giacomo Barozzi (circa 1507–73), known as Vignola, who later worked with Michelangelo on St. Peter's. On the lowest terrace a delightful Italian garden has a centerpiece fountain fed by water channeled down the hillside. On another terrace, a stream of water runs through a groove carved in a long stone table where the cardinal entertained his friends alfresco, chilling wine in the running water. That's only one of the most evident of the whimsical water games that were devised for the cardinal. The symmetry of the formal gardens contrasts with the wild, untamed park adjacent to it, reflecting the paradoxes of nature and artifice that are the theme of this pleasure garden. *E Via G. Baroni 71 P06/69994251*  
[www.polomusealelazio.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/243/villa-lante](http://www.polomusealelazio.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/243/villa-lante)     A€5



*CClosed Mon.*

# Caprarola

*21 km (13 miles) southeast of Bagnaia, 19 km (12 miles) southeast of Viterbo.*

The wealthy and powerful Farnese family took over this sleepy village in the 1500s and had the architect Vignola design a huge palace and gardens to rival the great residences of Rome. He also rearranged the little town of Caprarola to enhance the palazzo's setting.

## GETTING HERE AND AROUND

Caprarola is served by COTRAL bus, leaving from Rome's Saxa Rubra station on the Roma Nord suburban railway line.

## S Sights

### ★ Palazzo Farnese

**CASTLE/PALACE** | When Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Pope Paul III's grandson, retired to Caprarola, he intended to build a residence that would reflect the family's grandeur. In 1559, he entrusted the task to the leading architect Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, who came up with some innovative ideas. A magnificent spiral staircase, lavishly decorated with allegorical figures, mythical landscapes, and grotesques by Antonio Tempesta, connected the main entrance with the cardinal's apartments on the main floor. The staircase was gently inclined, with very deep but low steps, so that the cardinal could ride his horse right up to his bedchamber. A tour of the five-sided palatial villa includes the Hall of Farnese Triumphs, the Hercules Room, and the Antechamber of the Council of Trent, all painted by the Zuccari brothers. Of special interest is the Hall of the Maps, with the ceiling depicting the zodiac and the walls frescoed with maps of the world as known to 16th-century cartographers. The palace is surrounded by a formal Renaissance garden. *E*Piazza Farnese 1 P0761/646052 [www.caprarola.com](http://www.caprarola.com) A€5, includes garden *C*Closed Mon.

## r Restaurants

### **Antica Trattoria del Borgo**

\$\$ | ROMAN | FAMILY | Visitors to Caprarola's landmark Palazzo Farnese often round out the experience with a hearty meal at this celebrated trattoria. There's a cozy, familial atmosphere inside, and when the weather permits, a pleasant seating area outside. **Known for:** local salumi and grilled meat; expansive wine cellar; homemade desserts. *DAverage main: €20 E* Via Borgo Vecchio 107 P0761/645252 [www.anticatrattoriadelborgo.it](http://www.anticatrattoriadelborgo.it) *CClosed Mon. No dinner Tues. and Wed.*

## **Bomarzo**

*15 km (9 miles) northeast of Viterbo.*

Once a fief of the powerful Orsini family, Bomarzo is home to the Parco dei Mostri, the town's main attraction, which was created to amuse and astound the Orsini's guests. The 16th-century Palazzo Orsini is now the seat of the town council. Inside, there is a princely hall, frescoed by Pietro da Cortona, the famous Italian Baroque fresco painter and architect.

### **GETTING HERE AND AROUND**

Bomarzo is easily reached by car from the A1 autostrada. If you want to go there directly, carry on to the Attigliano exit. Parco dei Mostri is some 6 km (4 miles) from that point. Alternatively, come out at Orte and branch off at Casalone on the Viterbo road. A COTRAL bus also goes here, from Viterbo.

## **S Sights**

### **Parco dei Mostri** (*Monster Park*)

**BUILDING | FAMILY |** This eerie fantasy, originally known as the Village of Marvels, or the Sacred Wood, was created in 1552 by Prince Vicino Orsini, with the aid of the famous artist Pirro Ligorio. The surreal park is populated with weird and fantastic sculptures of mythical creatures intended to astonish illustrious guests. The sculptures, carved in outcroppings of mossy stone in shady groves and woodland, include giant tortoises and griffins and an ogre's head with an enormous gaping mouth and a table with chairs set inside. Children love it, and there are photo ops galore. The park has a self-service café (open Sunday only, in winter) and a gift shop. *ELocalita Giardino*, 1½ km (1 mile) west of Bomarzo P0761/924029 [www.parcodemostri.com](http://www.parcodemostri.com) A €10.

# Ostia Antica

*30 km (19 miles) southwest of Rome.*

Founded around the 4th century BC, Ostia served as Rome's port city for several centuries until the Tiber changed course, leaving the town high and dry. What has been excavated here is a remarkably intact Roman town. To get the most out of a visit, fair weather and good walking shoes are essential. To avoid the worst extremes of hot days, be here when the gates open or go late in the afternoon. A visit to the excavations takes two to three hours, including 20 minutes for the museum. Inside the site, there's a snack bar and a bookshop, but the best idea is to plan to have lunch in the nearby medieval quarter of town.

## GETTING HERE AND AROUND

The best way to get to Ostia Antica is by train. The Ostia Lido train leaves every 15 minutes from the Porta San Paolo station adjacent to Rome's Piramide Line B Metro station, stopping off at Ostia Antica en route; the trip takes 35 minutes. By car, take the Via del Mare that leads off from Rome's EUR district. Be prepared for heavy traffic, especially at peak hours, on weekends, and in summer.

## S Sights

### Castello di Giulio II

**CASTLE/PALACE** | The distinctive castle, easily spotted as you come off the footbridge from the train station and part of the medieval *borgo* (town), was built in 1483 by the future Pope Julius II when he was the cardinal bishop of Ostia. The structure's triangular form is unusual for military architecture. The castle is occasionally (and unpredictably) open to visitors, but only if you have booked ahead (updated days and times for available visits are listed on the official website). Even if you can't get inside, its towers and walls add to the atmosphere of the charming old town. *EPiazza della Rocca P*  
[www.polomusealelazio.beniculturali.it](http://www.polomusealelazio.beniculturali.it) AFree.

## ★ Scavi di Ostia Antica (*Ostia Antica Excavations*)

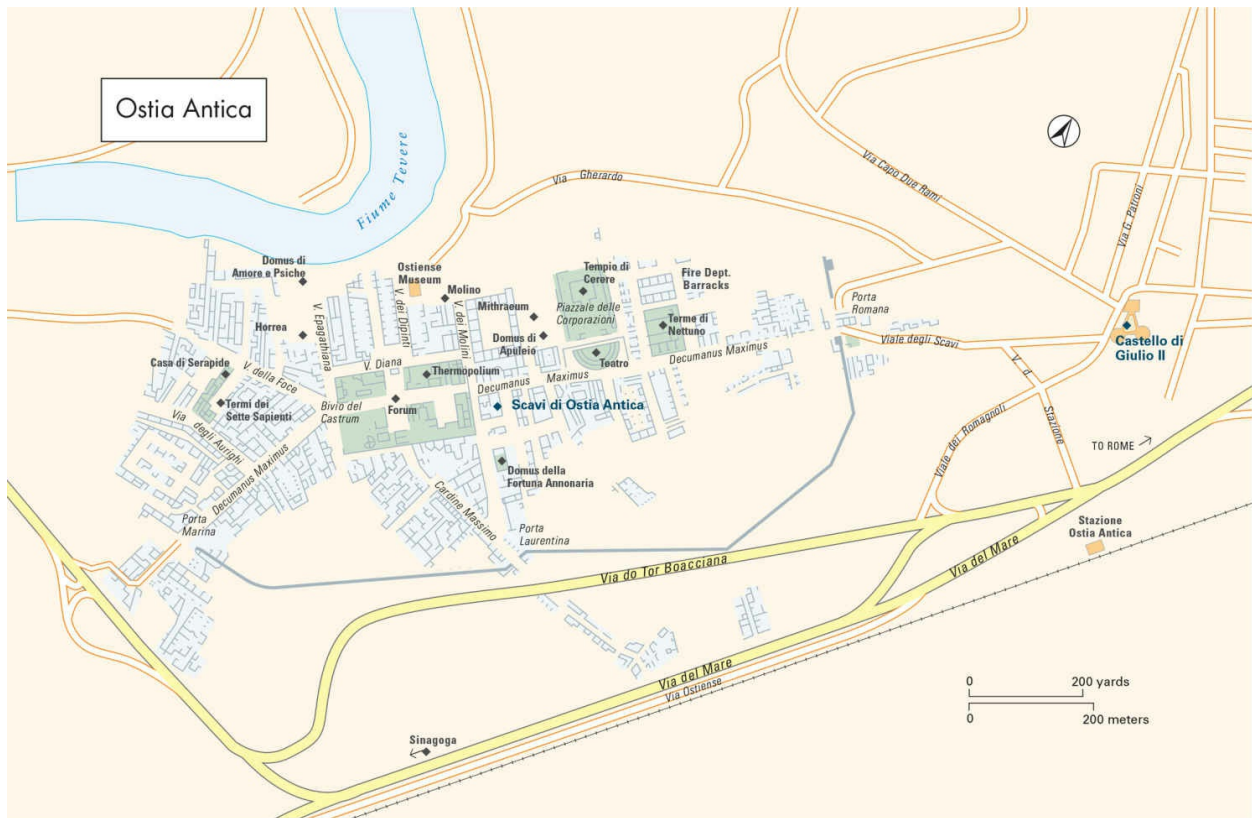
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | Today some of Rome's most impressive ruins, the ancient port town was covered by tidal mud and windblown sand and lay buried until the 19th century, when it was extensively excavated. The massive archaeological site can be explored on foot and is brimming with curious corners, mosaic floors, fallen columns, and a huge Roman amphitheater. At its peak, it was home to a cosmopolitan population of rich businessmen, wily merchants, sailors, slaves, and their respective families. Great warehouses were built here in the 2nd century AD to handle goods which passed through the town, notably huge shipments of grain from Africa; the port did so much business that it necessitated the construction of *insulae* (apartment buildings) to provide housing for the city's growing population. The increasing importance of nearby Portus, and the inexorable decline of the Roman Empire eventually led to the port's abandonment. Over the last two millennia the coastline has retreated, and a 16th-century flood diverted the course of the Tiber so only a glimpse of the river (near the café) can be seen today. The on-site **Museo Ostiense** displays sculptures, mosaics, and objects of daily use found here. There's a cafeteria on-site. ■ **TIP** → **The recently excavated ports of Tiberius and Claudius are nearby and also well worth visiting.** EViale dei Romagnoli 717 P06/56350215 [www.ostiaantica.beniculturali.it](http://www.ostiaantica.beniculturali.it) A€10, includes Museo Ostiense (small increase if there is an exhibition); free 1st Sun. of month CClosed Mon.

## r Restaurants

### **Arianna al Borghetto**

\$\$ | ROMAN | FAMILY | This cozy trattoria is tucked away in the charming walled medieval *borgo* (old town) of Ostia Antica next to the Castello di Giulio II. A short walk from the excavations, it's an ideal spot to restore your energy with some seasonal dishes and Roman specialties. **Known for:** traditional Roman food; homemade pastas; charming outdoor seating. DAverage main: €15 EVia del Forno 11 P06/56352956 [www.alborghetto.it](http://www.alborghetto.it) CClosed Mon. No dinner Sun.





# Tivoli

*36 km (22 miles) northeast of Rome.*

In ancient times, just about anybody who was anybody had a villa in Tivoli, including Crassus, Trajan, Hadrian, Horace, and Catullus. Tivoli fell into obscurity in the medieval era until the Renaissance, when popes and cardinals came back to the town and built villas showy enough to rival those of their extravagant predecessors.

Nowadays Tivoli is small but vibrant, with winding streets and views over the surrounding countryside. The deep Aniene River gorge runs through the center of town and comes replete with a romantically sited bridge, cascading waterfalls, and two jewels of ancient Roman architecture that crown its cliffs—the round Temple of Vesta (or the Sybil, the prophetess credited with predicting the birth of Christ) and the ruins of the rectangular Temple of the hero-god Tibur, the mythical founder of the city. These can be picturesquely viewed across the gorge from the Villa Gregoriana Park, named for Pope Gregory XVI, who saved Tivoli from chronic river damage by diverting the river through a tunnel, weakening its flow. An unexpected side effect was the creation of the Grande Cascata (Grand Cascade), a waterfall formed by the huge jet of water that shoots into the valley below. You may also want to set your sights on the Antico Ristorante Sibilla, set up against the Temple of Vesta. From its dining terrace you can take in one of the most memorably romantic landscape views in Italy.

## **GETTING HERE AND AROUND**

Unless you have nerves of steel, it's best to skip the drive to Tivoli. Hundreds of businesses line the Via Tiburtina from Rome and bottleneck traffic is nearly constant. You can avoid some, but not all, of the congestion by taking the Roma–L'Aquila toll road. Luckily, there's abundant public transport (although leaving your own car behind does make it slightly more inconvenient to visit Hadrian's Villa). Buses leave every 15 minutes from the Ponte Mammolo stop on Metro Line B; the ride takes an hour. Regional Trenitalia trains connect from both Termini and Tiburtina stations and will have you in Tivoli in under an hour, or 30 minutes if you plan to take one of

the few express trains each day. Villa d'Este is in the town center, and there is bus service from Tivoli's main square to Hadrian's Villa.

## VISITOR INFORMATION

**CONTACT PIT (Punto Informativo Turistico)** (*Tivoli Tourist Office*).

EPiazzale Nazioni Unite P0774/313536 [www.comune.tivoli.rm.it/pit](http://www.comune.tivoli.rm.it/pit).

## S Sights

### ★ **Villa Adriana** (*Hadrian's Villa*)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | An emperor's theme park, this astonishingly grand 2nd-century villa was an exclusive retreat below the ancient settlement of Tibur where the marvels of the classical world were reproduced for a ruler's pleasure. Hadrian, who succeeded Trajan as emperor in AD 117, was a man of genius and intellectual curiosity, fascinated by the accomplishments of the Hellenistic world. From AD 125 to 134, architects, laborers, and artists worked on his dreamy villa, re-creating some of the monuments and sights that the emperor had seen on his travels in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece. During the Middle Ages, the site was sacked by barbarians and Romans alike, and many of the statues and architectural features ended up in the Vatican Museums. Nonetheless, the colossal remains are impressive: the ruins rise in a garden setting of green lawns framed with oleanders, pines, and cypresses. Not surprisingly, Villa Adriana is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and it's one that has not yielded up all of its secrets. Archaeologists recently discovered the site of the Temple of Isis, complete with several sculptures, including one of the falcon-headed god Horus. ■ **TIP** → **A visit to the villa, which sits outside of town, takes at least two hours (carry water on hot days); maps dispensed at the ticket office will help you get your bearings.** ELargo Margherite Yourcenar 1, 6 km (4 miles) southwest of Tivoli P0774/530203 [www.villaadriana.beniculturali.it](http://www.villaadriana.beniculturali.it) A€10; free 1st Sun. of month.

### ★ **Villa d'Este**

CASTLE/PALACE | One of Italy's UNESCO World Heritage sites, Villa d'Este was created by Cardinal Ippolito d'Este in the 16th century. This villa in the

center of Tivoli was the most amazing pleasure garden of its day, and it still stuns modern visitors with its beauty. Cardinal d'Este (1509–72), a devotee of the Renaissance celebration of human ingenuity over nature, was inspired by the excavation of nearby Villa Adriana. He paid architect Pirro Ligorio an astronomical sum to create an extraordinary garden filled with nymphs and grottoes. However, water is the true artistic centerpiece here and the Aniene River had to be diverted to water the garden and feed the several hundred fountains that cascade, shoot skyward, imitate birdsong, and simulate rain. The musical **Fontana dell'Organo** has been restored to working order: the water dances to an organ tune every two hours starting at 10:30 am. Romantics will love the night tour of the gardens and floodlit fountains that takes place on Friday and Saturday in summer. ■ **TIP** → **Allow at least an hour for a visit, which involves steep inclines and many stairs. There are vending machines for refreshments by the bookshop.** EPiazza Trento 1 P04/12719036 [www.villadestetivoli.info](http://www.villadestetivoli.info) A€10; free 1st Sun. of month.

## r Restaurants

### ★ Antico Ristorante Sibilla

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | Founded as a hotel and restaurant in 1730 beside the striking Roman Temple of Vesta and the Sanctuary of the Sybil, the idyllic wisteria-draped terrace has a spectacular view over the deep gorge of the Aniene River, with the thundering waters of the waterfall in the background. Standards are high, and the trip to Tivoli is worth it even if you do nothing more than order a lunch of upscale versions of local dishes in this unforgettable setting. **Known for:** beautiful terrace with a super view; special take on fried zucchini blossoms; homemade pasta with seasonal ingredients. DAverage main: €25 EVia della Sibilla 50 P0774/335281 [www.ristorantesibilla.com](http://www.ristorantesibilla.com) CClosed Mon.

## h Hotels

### Hotel Torre Sant'Angelo

\$ | HOTEL | A former monastery and residence of the Massimo princes now

contains comfortable guest rooms equipped with modern amenities; best of all, it overlooks the old town, the Aniene Falls, and the Temple of the Sybil. **Pros:** 21st-century comfort in a historic mansion; nice pool; competitive rates. **Cons:** a mile out of town; decor could use an update; tiny TVs with limited channels. *DRooms from: €120* *E*[Via Quintilio Varo P0774/332533](#) [www.hoteltorresangelo.it](http://www.hoteltorresangelo.it) *a35 rooms XFree breakfast.*

### **Torre Sant'Antonio**

\$ | **B&B/INN** | Set inside a tower that dates back to the 1300s, this small but cozy hotel offers three private rooms on the edge of the historic center. **Pros:** historic setting; modern interior design; easy walk to most major sites. **Cons:** limited parking nearby; old window panes let in some street noise; no 24-hour front desk. *DRooms from: €90* *E*[Vicolo Sant'Antonio 35 P347/8037983](#) [www.torresantantoniotivoli.it](http://www.torresantantoniotivoli.it) *a3 rooms XFree breakfast.*

# Palestrina

*27 km (17 miles) southeast of Tivoli, 37 km (23 miles) east of Rome.*

Except to students of ancient history and music lovers, Palestrina is little known outside Italy. Set on a steep hillside, Romans flock to the small town of sherbet-colored houses in summer, when its cool country breezes offer a refreshing break from the hot city. In addition to the relatively cooler weather, the town is best known for its most famous native son, Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, born here in 1525, and considered the master of counterpoint and polyphony. He composed 105 Masses, as well as madrigals, Magnificats, and motets. There is a small museum dedicated to his life and work in the town center.

Ancient Praeneste (modern Palestrina) flourished much earlier than Rome. It was the site of the Temple of Fortuna Primigenia, which dates from the 2nd century BC. This was one of the largest, richest, most frequented temple complexes in all antiquity—people came from far and wide to consult its famous oracle. In modern times no one had any idea of the extent of the complex until World War II bombings exposed ancient foundations occupying huge artificial terraces, which stretch from the upper part of the town as far downhill as its central Duomo.

## **GETTING HERE AND AROUND**

COTRAL buses leave from the Anagnina terminal on Rome's Metro Line A and from the Tiburtina railway station. Alternatively, you can take a train to Zagarolo, where a COTRAL bus takes you on to Palestrina. The total trip takes 40 minutes. By car, take the A1 (Autostrada del Sole) to the San Cesareo exit and follow the signs to Palestrina. Expect it to take about an hour.

## **S Sights**

### **Palazzo Barberini**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE | A bomb blast during World War II exposed the



remains of the immense Temple of Fortune that covered the entire hillside under the present town. Large arches and terraces are now visible and you can walk or take a local bus up to the imposing Palazzo Barberini, which crowns the highest point. The palace was built in the 17th century along the semicircular lines of the original Roman temple. It now contains the **Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Palestrina**, with material found on the site that dates from throughout the classical period. There is a well-labeled collection of Etruscan bronzes, pottery, and terra-cotta statuary as well as Roman artifacts, but all of these take a distant second place to the main event, a massive 1st-century BC mosaic depicting a buzzing scene on the Nile River, complete with ancient Egyptian boats, waving palm trees, and intricately crafted African animals. This highly colorful and detailed work is worth the trip to Palestrina by itself. But there's more: a model of the temple as it was in ancient times helps you appreciate the immensity of the original construction. *EPiazza della Cortina 1 P06/9538100 A€5.*

## **r Restaurants**

### **Il Piscarello**

\$\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | Tucked away at the bottom of a steep side road, this elegant dining room immersed in a garden comes as a bit of a surprise. Specialties of the house include meat carpaccio and fish, seafood, and meat dishes with white and black truffles, and the pasta can even be made gluten-free if you call at least one day ahead of time. **Known for:** truffle-topped dishes; fresh seafood; outdoor seating in summer. *DAverage main: €20 EVia del Piscarello 2 P06/9574326 [www.ristoranteilpiscarello.it](http://www.ristoranteilpiscarello.it) CClosed Mon. No lunch Tues.–Thurs. No dinner Sun.*

# Frascati

*20 km (12 miles) south of Rome.*

Frascati is one of the easiest villages of the Castelli Romani to get to from Rome, as well as one of the most enjoyable to navigate. After climbing the stairs from the train station or driving up hill to the entrance of the town, it's worth taking a stroll through Frascati's lively old center. Via Battisti, leading away from the looming presence of Villa Aldobrandini, takes you into Piazza San Pietro with its imposing gray-and-white cathedral. Inside is the cenotaph of Prince Charles Edward, last of the Scottish Stuart dynasty, who tried unsuccessfully to regain the British Crown, and died an exile in Rome in 1788. A little arcade beside the monumental fountain at the back of the piazza leads into Market Square, where the smell of fresh baking will entice you into the Purificato family bakery to see the traditional honey-flavored pupazza biscuits, modeled on old pagan fertility symbols.

Take your pick from the cafés and trattorias fronting the central Piazzale Marconi, or do as the locals do: buy fruit from the market gallery at Piazza del Mercato, then get a huge slice of porchetta from one of the stalls, a hunk of *casareccio* bread, and a few *ciambelline frascatane* (ring-shape cookies made with wine), and take your picnic to any one of the nearby *cantine* (homey wine bars), and settle in for some sips of tasty, inexpensive vino. Or continue on to nearby Grottaferrata to take in its one-of-a-kind abbey.

## **GETTING HERE AND AROUND**

An hourly train service along a single-track line through vineyards and olive groves takes you to Frascati from Termini station. The trip takes 45 minutes. By car, take the Via Tuscolano, which branches off the Appia Nuova road just after St. John Lateran in Rome, and drive straight up.

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

**CONTACT Frascati Point (Tourism Office).** EPiazza G. Marconi 5  
P06/94184406 [www.comune.frascati.rm.it](http://www.comune.frascati.rm.it).

## S Sights

### Abbey of San Nilo Grottaferrata

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | In Grottaferrata, a busy village a couple of miles from Frascati, the main attraction is a walled citadel founded by St. Nilo, who brought his group of Basilian monks here in 1004, when he was 90. The order is unique in that it's Roman Catholic but observes Greek Orthodox rites. It is the last surviving Byzantine-Greek monastery in Italy, and has a distinctive blend of art and architecture. The fortified abbey with its soaring bell tower, considered a masterpiece of martial architecture, was restructured in the 15th century by Antonio da Sangallo for the future Pope Julius II. The abbey church, inside the second courtyard, is a jewel of Oriental opulence, with glittering Byzantine mosaics and a revered icon of Mary with child set into a marble tabernacle designed by Bernini. The Farnese chapel, leading from the right nave, contains a series of frescoes by Domenichino. If you make arrangements in advance you can visit the library, which is one of the oldest in Italy. The abbey also has a famous laboratory for the restoration of antique books and manuscripts, where Leonardo's *Codex Atlanticus* was restored in 1962 and more than a thousand precious volumes were saved after the disastrous Florence flood in 1966. ECorso del Popolo 128, Grottaferrata P06/9459309 [www.abbaziagreca.it](http://www.abbaziagreca.it) AFree.

### Villa Aldobrandini

**CASTLE/PALACE** | Frascati was a retreat of prelates and princes who built magnificent villas, the most spectacular being the 16th-century Villa Aldobrandini, which dominates the town's main square from atop its steeply sloped park. The villa is still home to members of the family for which it is named, meaning the gorgeous residence isn't open for touring, but luckily the garden is a public park. Stroll along sweeping pathways lined with stone balustrades, box hedges, and the Baroque Teatro d'Acqua—the sort of showy sculpture group with water features that was a must-have garden adornment for every 16th-century millionaire, in this case Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Pope Clement VIII's favorite nephew. The half circle of sculptures of mythical figures that adorn the “theater” reflect the grandeur and wealth of a prince of the church who thought nothing of diverting the entire water supply of the surrounding area to make his fountains perform. These days the

fountains only play on special occasions. The villa is often rented out for private receptions; the gardens may be closed at these times. *E*Via Cardinale Massaia 18, off Via del Tuscolo P06/94184406 [www.aldobrandini.it](http://www.aldobrandini.it) *A*Free *C*Closed weekends.

## **r** Restaurants

### **Antica Fontana Grottaferrata**

**\$\$** | **ROMAN** | Across the road from the Abbey of San Nilo, this is one of Grottaferrata's most esteemed restaurants, and tends to be slightly higher priced than other nearby eateries. Run by the Consoli family since 1989, the decor is rustic but stylish, with plants hanging from the ceiling and rows of polished antique copper pans and molds decorating the walls. **Known for:** homemade pizza with excellent dough; fettuccine with porcini; pleasant outdoor terrace. *D*Average main: €24 *E*Via Domenichino 24–26, Grottaferrata P06/9413687 *C*Closed Mon.

### ★ **Cacciani**

**\$\$** | **ITALIAN** | The Cacciani family has been running this stylish restaurant in the heart of Frascati old town since 1922 when it was a popular hangout for the likes of Clark Gable and Gina Lollobrigida. Perched high on a rise overlooking the town and the Roman plain, there are spectacular views from the Cacciani terrace, but you can also keep an eye on the gorgeous food being prepared in the open kitchen. **Known for:** tonnarelli cacio e pepe prepared at the table; great views; welcoming, family-run vibe. *D*Average main: €17 *E*Via Armando Diaz 13/15 P06/9420378 [www.cacciani.it](http://www.cacciani.it) *C*Closed Mon. *N*o dinner Sun.

### **Il Grottino Frascati**

**\$\$** | **ITALIAN** | This former wine cellar just beyond Frascati's market square is now an old-fashioned and cheerful trattoria serving traditional Roman dishes and pizza. In summer you can sit under an awning outside and can enjoy the sweeping view over the plain towards Rome. **Known for:** pasta alla gricia; casual atmosphere; extensive wine list. *D*Average main: €15 *E*Viale Regina Margherita 41–43 P06/94289772 [www.trattoriailgrottino.it](http://www.trattoriailgrottino.it).

### ★ Osteria Del Fico Vecchio

\$\$ | ITALIAN | Only a couple of miles outside Frascati, this 16-century coaching inn has a tastefully renovated dining room and an old fig tree (its namesake) that shades the restaurant's charming garden filled with outdoor tables. Long known for its excellent cooking, the classic restaurant still prepares typical Roman dishes, among them *pollo al diavolo* (spicy braised chicken) and *abbacchio allo scottadito* (sizzling grilled lamb). **Known for:** pretty garden for outdoor dining; classic cacio e pepe; typical Roman dishes. **DAverage main:** €20 **E***Via Anagnini 257, Grottaferrata* **P**06/9459261 [www.alfico.it](http://www.alfico.it).

## h Hotels

### ★ Park Hotel Villa Grazioli

\$ | HOTEL | One of the region's most famous residences, this patrician villa halfway between Frascati and Grottaferrata is now a first-class hotel, though the standard-issue guest rooms are a bit of a letdown amid the impressive frescoed salons of the main building. **Pros:** incredible frescoes in the main building; elegant atmosphere; wonderful views of the countryside. **Cons:** situated at the end of a long, narrow lane; not all rooms are in the main building; Wi-Fi connection can be poor. **DRooms from:** €120 **E***Via Umberto Pavoni 19, Grottaferrata* **j***Narrow turnoff from the SP216 road going from Grottaferrata roundabout to Frascati* **P**06/945400 [www.villagrazioli.com](http://www.villagrazioli.com)  
a62 rooms XAll meals.

# Castel Gandolfo

*8 km (5 miles) southwest of Frascati, 25 km (15 miles) south of Rome.*

This scenic little town has been the preferred summer retreat of popes for centuries. It was the Barberini Pope Urban VIII who first headed here, eager to escape the malarial miasmas that afflicted summertime Rome; before long, the city's princely families also set up country estates around here.

The 17th-century **Villa Pontificia** has a superb position overlooking Lake Albano and is set in one of the most gorgeous gardens in Italy. Fortunately, these treasures are now open to the public as papal audiences are no longer held at Castel Gandolfo. On the little square in front of the palace there's a fountain by Bernini, who also designed the nearby Church of San Tommaso da Villanova, which has works by Pietro da Cortona.

The village has a number of interesting craft workshops and food purveyors, in addition to the souvenir shops on the square. On the horizon, the silver astronomical dome belonging to the Specola Vaticana observatory—one of the first in Europe—where the scientific Pope Gregory XIII indulged his interest in stargazing, is visible for miles around.

## **GETTING HERE AND AROUND**

There's an hourly train service for Castel Gandolfo from Termini station (Rome–Albano line). Otherwise, buses leave frequently from the Anagnina terminal of Metro Line A. The trip takes about 40 minutes, and the village is reachable by a 10-minute walk from the station. By car, take the Appian Way from San Giovanni in Rome and follow it straight to Albano, where you branch off for Castel Gandolfo (about an hour, depending on traffic).

## **VISITOR INFORMATION**

**CONTACT PIT Tourist Office Castel Gandolfo.** *E Via Massimo D'Azeglio, Castel Gandolfo* *JA green kiosk on your right as you walk up the road, just outside the town walls* [www.comune.castelgandolfo.rm.it](http://www.comune.castelgandolfo.rm.it).



# S Sights

## Lakeside Lido

**BEACH—SIGHT | FAMILY** | This waterside promenade below the pretty town is lined with restaurants, ice-cream parlors, and cafés, and is a favorite spot for Roman families to relax on summer days. No motorized craft are allowed on the lake, but you can rent paddleboats and kayaks. In summer, you can also take a short guided boat trip to learn about the geology and history of the lake, which lies at the bottom of an extinct volcanic crater. The deep sapphire waters are full of swans, herons, and other birds, and there is a nature trail along the wooded end of the shore for those who want to get away from the crowds. Deck chairs are available for rent; you might also want to stop for a plate of freshly prepared pasta or a gigantic Roman sandwich at one of the little snack bars under the oak and alder trees. There's also a small permanent fairground for children and local vendors often set up temporary shops selling crafts, toys, and snacks on the warmer weekends. *ELake Albano, Castel Gandolfo* *A*Free.

## Palazzo Apostolico di Castel Gandolfo

**CASTLE/PALACE** | For centuries the Apostolic Palace of Castel Gandolfo was the summer retreat of popes, who kept the papal villa and extensive grounds completely private. Luckily for tourists, Pope Francis decided that he was too busy to use it and had it opened to the public. Inside you can view the Gallery of Pontifical Portraits, ceremonial garments, and the imposing papal throne in the Sala degli Svizzeri. The private area of the palace with the pope's bedchamber, his library, study, and offices—all strictly off-limits before 2016—are also open to visitors. *EPiazza della Libertà, Castel Gandolfo* [www.museivaticani.va](http://www.museivaticani.va) *A*€11 *C*Closed Sun. and on Catholic holidays.

## ★ Pontifical Gardens Villa Barberini

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | In 2016, Pope Francis opened the 136-acre Pontifical estate and its glorious gardens to the public. Once rarely accessible, the Pontifical gardens of Villa Barberini can now be visited in a 60-minute tour by an ecologically friendly electric vehicle. The tour takes in the landscaped gardens as well as the archaeological remains of the palace of the Roman Emperor Domitian (dating back to the 1st century AD) and the

home farm, which supplies the Vatican with fresh dairy products and eggs. Multilingual audio guides are included in the price. ■ **TIP** → **The tour can be combined with a visit to the Apostolic Palace as part of a Saturday day trip by train from the Vatican City in Rome at a cost of €38.** EVia Massimo D'Azeglio (entrance gate), Castel Gandolfo [www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en.html](http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en.html) AVilla Barberini gardens €19 (combined ticket includes palace); train from Vatican, with Apostolic Palace and gardens €38 CClosed Sun. and on Catholic holidays.

## r Restaurants

### Antico Ristorante Pagnanelli

\$\$\$ | ITALIAN | One of most refined restaurants in the Castelli Romani has been in the same family since 1882. Its dining-room windows open onto a breathtaking view across Lake Albano to the conical peak of Monte Cavo. **Known for:** homemade gnocchetti with clams and black truffles; elegant and cozy interior with an open fire in winter; famous wine cellar and wine museum in basement. DAverage main: €30 EVia Gramsci 4, Castel Gandolfo P06/9360004 [www.pagnanelli.it](http://www.pagnanelli.it).

### Bucci

\$\$ | ITALIAN | Situated in the heart of the village of Castel Gandolfo, Bucci occupies a splendid position overlooking Lake Albano far below with an outdoor terrace shaded by a grape pergola. Food is traditional and prepared with care. **Known for:** traditional menu; vine-covered terrace; chilled local wine. DAverage main: €17 EVia De' Zecchini 31, Castel Gandolfo P06/9323334 [ristorantebucci.it](http://ristorantebucci.it) CClosed Wed. No lunch Fri. No dinner Sun.

## h Hotels

### Hotel Castelgandolfo

\$ | HOTEL | Overlooking the volcanic crater of Lake Albano and a minute's walk from the Apostolic Palace, this intimate hotel in the heart of Castel Gandolfo makes an ideal retreat for romantics. **Pros:** convenient location; intimate; ideal for romantics. **Cons:** some rooms have street views; balconies

are small and narrow; stunning terrace sometimes closed for private events.  
DRooms from: €120 E Via de Zecchini 27, Castel Gandolfo P06/9360521  
[www.hotelcastelgandolfo.com](http://www.hotelcastelgandolfo.com) a18 rooms XFree breakfast.

## Ariccia

*8 km (5 miles) southwest of Castel Gandolfo, 26 km (17 miles) south of Rome.*

Ariccia is a gem of Baroque town planning. When Fabio Chigi, scion of the superwealthy banking family, became Pope Alexander VII, he commissioned Gian Lorenzo Bernini to redesign his country estate to make it worthy of his new station. Bernini restructured not only the existing 16th-century palace, but also the town gates, the main square, with its loggias and graceful twin fountains, and the round church of Santa Maria dell'Assunzione (the dome is said to be modeled on the Pantheon). The rest of the village was coiled around the apse of the church down into the valley below.

Ariccia's splendid heritage was largely forgotten in the 20th century, and yet it was once one of the highlights of every artist's and writer's Grand Tour. Corot, Ibsen, Turner, Longfellow, and Hans Christian Andersen all came to stay here.

### GETTING HERE AND AROUND

For Ariccia, take the COTRAL bus from the Anagnina terminal of Metro Line A. Buses on the Albano–Genzano–Velletri line stop under the monumental bridge that spans the Ariccia Valley, where an elevator whisks you up to the main town square. If you take a train to Albano Laziale, you can proceed by bus to Ariccia or go on foot (it's just under 1½ km [1 mile]). If you're driving, follow the Via Appia Nuova to Albano and carry on to Ariccia.

## S Sights

### ★ Palazzo Chigi

**CASTLE/PALACE** | This is a true rarity: a Baroque residence whose original furniture, paintings, drapes, and decorations are largely intact. The Italian film director Luchino Visconti used the villa, which sits just at the end of Ariccia's famous bridge, for most of the interior scenes in his 1963 film *The Leopard*. The rooms of the **piano nobile** (main floor)—which, unlike Rome's

Palazzo Chigi, does open to the public and can only be viewed on guided tours—contain intricately carved pieces of 17th-century furniture, as well as textiles and costumes from the 16th to the 20th century. The Room of Beauties is lined with paintings of the loveliest ladies of the day, and the Nuns' Room showcases portraits of 10 Chigi sisters, all of whom took the veil. You can get a close look at **Le Stanze del Cardinale** (Cardinal's Rooms), the suites occupied by the pleasure-loving Cardinal Flavio Chigi, with a guide on most days. The upper floors contain the **Museo del Barocco** (Baroque Museum), with an important collection of 17th-century paintings with largely religious themes. The expansive park stretching behind the palace is the last remnant of the ancient Latium forest, where herds of deer still graze under the trees. Be sure to check the website for the hours when various rooms are open to the public and plan to book ahead to secure a tour in English. *EPiazza di Corte 14 P06/9330053 [www.palazzo-chigi-ariccia.it](http://www.palazzo-chigi-ariccia.it) A €14 full villa tour (when possible), €8 piano nobile, €6 Cardinal's Rooms, €6 Baroque Museum, €4 park CPalazzo closed Mon. Park closed weekdays (except for prebooked groups), and Oct.–Mar.*

### **Santa Maria Assunta in Cielo (Church of the Assumption)**

**RELIGIOUS SITE** | Directly across from Palazzo Chigi is the Church of the Assumption, with its distinctive blue dome and round shape designed by none other than Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The artistic architect had his best students execute most of the work of building and decorating the Pantheon-inspired church, creating porticoes outside and an intricately plastered cupola inside, which steals the show in the otherwise simple interior. *EPiazza di Corte.*

## **r Restaurants**

A visit to Ariccia isn't complete without tasting the local gastronomic specialty: porchetta, a delicious roast whole pig stuffed with herbs, that is best with a side of local Romanella wine. The shops on the Piazza di Corte will make up a sandwich for you, or you can do what the Romans do: head for one of the *fraschette* wine cellars, which also serve cheese, cold cuts, pickles, olives, and sometimes a plate of pasta. Pass Palazzo Chigi and turn

left under the arch to find several in a long row on the other side of the street. Take your pick and ask for a seat on a wooden bench at a trestle table covered with simple white paper; be ready to make friends and maybe join in a sing-along.

### **L'Arcciarola**

\$ | ITALIAN | FAMILY | This fraschetta around the corner from Palazzo Chigi is great for people-watching, which you can do while enjoying a platter of cold cuts and mixed cheeses, washed down with a carafe of local Castelli wine. Order your own appetizers and slices of porchetta at the counter near the door, snag a table on the patio, flag down a waiter if you want to order pasta, and then settle into the rustic setting surrounded by Roman families who've come to enjoy the local food. **Known for:** classic porchetta; local cold cuts; very casual and friendly atmosphere. *DAverage main: €10 E**Via Borgo S. Rocco 9 P06/9334103 CClosed Mon., and 2 wks in Jan.*



## Nemi

*8 km (5 miles) west of Ariccia, 34 km (21 miles) south of Rome.*

A bronze statue of Diana the Huntress greets you at the entrance to Nemi, the smallest and prettiest village of the Castelli Romani. It's perched on a spur of rock 600 feet above the little oval-shape lake of the same name, which is formed from a volcanic crater. Nemi has an eagle's-nest view over the rolling Roman countryside as far as the coast, some 18 km (11 miles) away. The one main street, Corso Vittorio Emanuele, takes you to the baronial Castello Ruspoli (not open to the public), where there's an 11th-century watchtower, and the quaint Piazza Umberto I, lined with outdoor cafés serving the town's famous tiny wild strawberries harvested from the woodlands that line the crater bowl.

If you continue on through the arch that joins the castle to the former stables, you come to the entrance of the dramatically landscaped public gardens, which curve steeply down to the panoramic Belvedere terrace, with a café that's open in summer. A pedestrian-only road runs down the crater side to the Roman Ship Museum. Otherwise, car access is from the town of Genzano on the opposite side of the lake.

### **GETTING HERE AND AROUND**

Nemi is difficult to get to unless you come by car. Buses from the Anagnina station on Metro Line A go to the town of Genzano, where a local bus travels to Nemi every two hours. If the times aren't convenient, you can take a taxi or walk the 5 km (3 miles) around Lake Nemi. By car, take the panoramic route known as the Via dei Laghi (Road of the Lakes). Follow the Appia Nuova from St. John Lateran and branch off on the well-signposted route after Ciampino airport. Follow the Via dei Laghi toward Velletri until you see signs for Nemi.

## **S Sights**

**Museo delle Navi Romane** (*Roman Ship Museum*)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE** | In the 1930s, the Italian government drained Nemi's lake to recover two magnificent ceremonial ships, loaded with sculptures, bronzes, and art treasures, that were submerged for 2,000 years. The Museo delle Navi Romane, on the lakeshore, was built to house the ships, but they were burned during World War II. Inside are scale models and finds from the sanctuary and the area nearby. There's also a colossal statue of the infamous and extravagant Roman emperor Caligula, who had the massive barges built on the pretty lake. Italian police once snatched the marble sculpture back from tomb robbers just as they were about to smuggle it out of the country. *E*Via del Tempio di Diana 13 P06/9398040 [www.museonavirromane.it](http://www.museonavirromane.it) A€3.

## r Restaurants

### ★ La Fiocina

\$\$ | **ITALIAN** | With its privileged position on the tranquil shores of Lake Nemi next to the Roman Ship Museum, La Fiocina has been serving local specialties, including lake fish and homemade gnocchi with wild boar sauce, for more than 50 years. The dining room is elegant and welcoming, and there's a terrace on which you can dine alfresco, overlooking the small lakeside garden. **Known for:** coregone lake fish; garden terrace with lake views; tiny wild Nemi strawberries. *D*Average main: €15 *E*Via delle Navi Di Tiberio 9 P06/9391120 *C*Closed Tues.

### Locanda Specchio di Diana

\$ | **ITALIAN** | Halfway down the main street on the left is the town's most historic inn, where Byron stayed when visiting the area. Today it is a wine bar and café on street level, and a full restaurant on the second floor with marvelous views over the lake. **Known for:** fettucine al sugo di lepre (hare sauce); spectacular lake views; local Nemi strawberries when in season. *D*Average main: €14 *E*Corso Vittorio Emanuele 13 P06/9368805 [wspechiodidiana.it](http://wspechiodidiana.it).

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**Editorial:** Douglas Stallings, *Editorial Director*; Margaret Kelly, Jacinta O'Halloran, Amanda Sadlowski, *Senior Editors*; Kayla Becker, Alexis Kelly, Teddy Minford, Rachael Roth, *Editors*; Jeremy Tarr, *Fodors.com Editorial Director*; Rachael Levitt, *Fodors.com Managing Editor*

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---

**Writers:** Ariston Anderson, Agnes Crawford, Laura Itzkowitz, Natalie Kennedy, Maria Pasquale

**Editor:** Amanda Sadlowski

**Production Editor:** Elyse Rozelle

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## **About Our Writers**

For this edition, freelance writer **Ariston Anderson** updated the Travel Smart, The Vatican, Repubblica and the Quirinale, Villa Borghese and Around, Trastevere and Monteverde, and Esquilino and Around chapters.

Writer **Agnes Crawford** updated the Ancient Rome and Piazza Navona, Campo de' Fiori, and the Jewish Ghetto chapters for this edition.

Originally from California, **Natalie Kennedy** moved to Rome planning to stay for only a year, but has now called the Eternal City home for nearly a decade. In between copious amounts of caffè and gelato, she writes about Italy for international travel publications and runs a popular blog about Roman life ([www.anamericaninrome.com](http://www.anamericaninrome.com)). She updated the Piazza di Spagna and Aventino and Testaccio chapters for this book.

Writers **Laura Itzkowitz** and **Maria Pasquale** contributed to the Experience chapter.





# Rome Metro and Suburban Railway



## Tickets

A ticket (BIT) valid for 100 minutes on any combination of buses and trams and one entrance to the metro costs €1.50. Tickets are sold at newsstands, some coffee bars, ticket machines in metro stations, and ATAC and COTRAL ticket booths. Time-stamp your ticket when boarding the first vehicle, and stamp it again when boarding for the last time within 75 minutes. You stamp the ticket at Metro sliding electronic doors, and in the little yellow machines on buses and trams.

## Fare fees

- Single fare
- Biglietto integrato giornaliero (Integrated Daily Ticket) BIG
- Biglietto turistico integrato (Three-Day Pass) BTI
- Weekly pass
- Monthly unlimited pass

## Price

- €1.50
- €6
- €16.50
- €24
- €35

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