



Rome Trip Notes **November 10-19, 2015**

Highlights:

- My fifth trip to Rome. My fourth into the Vatican. Maybe I need still another trip.
- My more difficult set of itineraries: first for coordinating flights with Steve and Nola out of Denver and then due to continued Lufthansa strikes. One must think twice before booking on Lufthansa who used to be the best and now strike continually.
- This was Steve and Nola's second trip to Europe and I suspect only a start as they are planning more European adventures.
- Weather in November is said to be the very worst but it turned out to be the very best.
- The Paris Problem happened early in our visit. Security was good before and tighter after. We felt safe.
- We luckily had a series of wonderfully helpful and educated guides.
- There are still more things I want to see in Rome.
- I didn't gain any extra weight. Surprise.

Travel Frustration - Before we even started the trip: Headlines: Lufthansa Strike strands 113,000 passengers on Monday --

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/flights/todayinthesky/2015/11/09/lufthansa-strike-strands-113000-passengers-monday/75444964/?csp=travel>

After hours spent on the phone, here is Steve's report to Tom: *After today—Diana probably filled you in a bit—I feel like I need to get on an airplane just to relax! Here's part of today's journey. . . Couldn't get through to Lufthansa using US or Canada phone lines so tried Germany (message said to call back later), Korea/Australia/New Zealand (offices closed, too early there), Japan (couldn't connect), then United Kingdom—45 minutes on hold then got through and got ticket fixed! Thank goodness for my \$0.04/minute phone card I bought for use if needed in Florence in January. Anyway, thanks for sentiment. Should be quite the adventure yet again—when Diana and Nola get going, watch out! Cheers, Steve*

Past Photo Shows - Tom to Steve: Hope you guys have a wonderful trip!

<http://www.photoshow.com/watch/kZ2Mi7am>

Past Trip Notes - Diana could add Rome trip notes from Nov '09, Mar '11 x2, and Jun '13 but I think this became too long anyway. They are available at www.LibertyLadies.weebly.com. Or I'll send on request.

Full (professional) descriptions of tours – within the itinerary at the end.

Missed! Gotta Go Again!

Villa d'Este – it's not easy to get to without a guided tour bus and they don't operate in the winter. It had been one of two main reasons for going. Read on for the second reason for going. Also missed.

Vatican Stairway – I got home and there was a picture from Sister Beverly, presuming I'd seen this, to which I answer: "I'm not sure if this is greeted as funny ... but surely coincidental. Definitely irksome to myself. Read on



and you will either laugh or feel sorry. One of the things on my list to see in Rome was the Vatican stairway because it was closed for renovation my last two times. Would you believe that we missed it? I suspect Nola is correct that we saw the underneath and backside with our guide telling us it was based on the Guggenheim design. So maybe this just means that I must make another trip? Thanks for the picture. Or I think I think thanks. It wasn't until a couple days after our tour that Steve reminded me that we missed MY stairway."

Here is what we DID see, probably the stairway from the backside, then a great plaza with the best view of St Peter's Dome (which we failed to make time to climb but meant to – another missed sight), our tour guide Florinda, and one of our stairways in.



Florinda – Our guide is a friend of Elizabeth and Angelica from Florence and a great find. Here's her story: *"I have very good memories of you and Steve and Nola. Of course I hope to see you again, one day. Attached you can find a famous picture representing the oath of the Orazi (this is my name, remember?) The Oath of the Horatii (Orazi) by Jacques-Louis David, 1784-Louvre."*

It's so special to hear people having history in their life, in their family, in their stories. We also had a quite educated taxi driver who didn't mind telling us that he came from a well-known historical family.



More we missed, from Mario:

Museo Palazzo Massimo alle terme, a collection with the one and only mummy of Rome, bronzes of the fifth century Bce, ancient mosaics, a coin collection from antiquity to our days, and in my opinion: the most beautiful frescoed room that survived the Middle Ages, the 1st century wallpaper of the lunchroom of emperor Augustus' wife. This we could see in 3 to 4 hours, if we combine this with the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli (designed by Michelangelo in the 16th century, within the perimeter of the 4th baths of Diocletian and one of the museums of the Museo Nazionale Romano) <http://archeoroma.beniculturali.it/en/museums/national-roman-museum-palazzo-massimo-alle-terme>

The Museo Nazionale Romano takes care of four big museums under one name, one ticket for four sites

- Palazzo Massimo alle terme
- Palazzo Altemps

- Crypta Balbi
- Baths of Diocletian

<http://archeoroma.beniculturali.it/en/museums/national-roman-museum-baths-diocletian>

Villa Farnesina - a splendid villa considered to be the prototype of suburban villa's in Rome. It was commissioned by the Sieneese banker Agostino Chigi to the architect Baldassarre Peruzzi, and it has magnificent rooms decorated by Raphael, Sebastiano del Piombo (I've only quickly pointed out his work at St. Clements') Baldassare Peruzzi and others. At the end of the sixteenth century the Villa was purchased by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese from whom it takes its name "Farnesina" to distinguish it from Palazzo Farnese on the other side of the Tiber (today the French Embassy).
http://www.villafarnesina.it/?page_id=47&lang=en

Mario gave us this link that everybody should know about: www.wga.hu. Everything about art.

Daily missives home and family:

Day 1 and 2 - on way to and in Rome

Where oh where did the time go? It is day 3 and the last two were a blur. We are off to an introductory tour by private guide Florinda recommended to us by our Florence guide. It's all in the family, right?

Just getting here might have been the bigger trial than I have ever endeavored. The prior day to travel, Lufthansa went on strike and Steve and Nola, my fellow travelers, spent the full day on the phone trying to get them to answer a phone. A calling card and many different countries phone numbers and 45 minutes on hold to a UK number got results for Steve. United had already come through and matched Nola's tickets to mine so she would come through Newark. Steve eventually got on the same flight.

But alas it was not to be. As they started their travels in Denver Lufthansa continued and expanded their strike meaning we would be stuck in Frankfurt. So as they got on the plane, I started the effort to find us a rerouting since there was no way to get from Frankfurt to Rome.

Again, united came through with much more than they needed to. I met Steve and Nola in Newark with their new boarding cards going through Brussels and then into Rome. I didn't spend as many hours on the phone as Steve did but I spent enough to have a stressful and hurried first day. See the first picture? That is how United tried to make amends. I got the first-class cabin.

I had set up a car to retrieve us from the Rome airport and that poor chauffeur had three pick up time changes. Even in Brussels our patience continued to be tested because we were to have a seven hour layover. Brussels air came through and got us on an earlier and what seem to be a sold-out plane.

Life seemed more than fair when we checked into our lovely Westin Excelsior Hotel in the heart of the city. Bonus yet is that it is at employee rate.





Despite desperately wanting a nap, I set out on foot to renew acquaintances with this lovely city. I walked from 1:30 until a bit after 4 PM and saw the Bernini plaza, Barberini villa, on into Place Republica and near to one of our past hotels, the Saint Regis grand Hotel, down 20 September to Quirinale where I was sure I would be able to get into the church to see Bernini's favorite sculpture. It was not open for another half an hour. I wandered around the government buildings and got lost enough to find myself in the packed place of the newly restored Trevi fountain. After a few streets more of being lost in the Spanish steps area I found my way back through some of the same areas and finally to a grocery store. I always like to remember friend Ellen's statement "I've had some of my best adventures while lost." By this time my feet were toast and my head was muddled.

Tom says "didn't you sleep on the plane?" It is just near impossible even with a lie flat bed. The flight into Brussels was short enough that by the time we had dinner, there was about four hours remaining to the flight. But they wake you an hour before landing. So there you have it, a night's sleep lost.

A story about first-class cabin: they offer to make your bed and give turndown service and I am pleased to report that no one asked for that service. We already had two pillows and a down comforter.

Back to first day in Rome:

I met up with Steve and Nola around 5 PM and we wandered off toward the Borghese Park (where they'd already walked) and an area full of small restaurants. (It was in the neighborhood of our last accommodations about two years ago.). Here we had dreams of finding grandma and her meatballs from Florence but instead we met a lovely character who lured us into his colorful restaurant and announced that meatballs were not part of their Italian cuisine. He sang to us, kissed us, and made jokes through the evening. He was Italian fresh! It took all of that to keep us awake.



The food was not all that great but the entertainment and company certainly was.

So we are all set for a 10 AM introductory walking tour and I am sure that I will see new sights or at least things that I forgot about. I was here as a teenager, on a solo trip in 2009, for the marathon in 2011, and again with Tom after the Amalfi trip. It is good to be here again. It is lucky to be here again. Life is good.

Day 3 - first full day in Rome

Weather is more than cooperative: Evenings in the 50s and daytimes in the upper 60s. We come in the off-season as much for the better pricing and also for the lack of tourist. Yet November is noted to be the worst month due to heavy rains. It looks like we might have lucked out.

I will tell you about a nice warm fuzzy feeling of safety I got which quite surprised me. There are many soldiers sporting Oozies on street corners or any political building, museum or large public space. (They are worried about ISIS threats.) I remembered how in China, Taiwan, and Israel that I felt safe seeing many soldiers with Oozies everywhere there too. If we in the U.S. have the reputed 300 million guns, however can we control those that are already out there? So maybe we need this more of this safe-feeling of soldiers who know how to use guns. Get them more in our presence? I am sure that many readers are for gun control but I ask them how they're going to register the bad-guns that are already out there?

Off to other just-as-disagreeable subjects: The strike by Lufthansa continues and is making headlines for stranding 100,000 passengers. The hotels are having difficulty because people are unable to check out, whereas newcomers have already booked. Thus this hotel has a 100% occupancy rate where normally they prefer in the low 90s.

But do I care? I sure will when it comes time to go home on Thursday. Word is that the crews think one week is enough.

But for now I have a private guide that was recommended by two private guides I've used in Florence. Florinda came to our hotel at 10 AM and we left her after a lunch in the Spanish steps area somewhere after 3:30pm when we continued our day getting pleasantly lost up in the gardens of the Medici and into the Borghese Park. We could be convinced that there are a lot more than seven hills in Rome.

Three hours covers a lot and included a couple churches I'd tried to enter. Two very different with one plain and one baroque. Is it any wonder the two designers were in competition?

The newly renovated Trevi fountain might be called the Fendi Fountain for paid for it. Tods Shoes paid for the ongoing coliseum clean up. The Spanish Steps are covered in scaffolding too.



I saw some new sights and many old ones and all remain exciting. As we were getting lost we ended up on one of the seven (or is it ten) hills in time for sunset.

I'll close with a different picture collection and tell you about them in my next report.



Day 4 - coliseum, forum and more

Sometime before this trip we booked a series of day-long small-group guided tours. Today was called "underground Colosseum plus the third tier, the Roman forum and Palatine hill." Though I toured part of the same before, and at least once if not twice, every tour guide is different and this one was excellent. Plus it took us to a lower level of the coliseum and also up to the higher level, both of which are not on usual tours. In the bowels of the coliseum was spooky and on the top level gave a dramatic view.



Our guide was a history major, full of enthusiasm, and thought every one of these junky looking ruins were beautiful. That helped us see some beauty also. On her iPad she had videos showing what the Ruins likely looked like, and in a book she had before-and-after pictures. Without her instruction it all looked like a pile of rocks to me.

I've shown you a picture of what the tunnels underground looked like where we learned about the elevators that would take the animals up to the main floor. Also note how amazing it is that a 2000 year old building could last and note how the arches were formed without concrete. There is also a picture from up on the top called the third tier.

I didn't take a picture of the "luxurious villas" as they were just too hard to imagine. But it sounds like they were pretty much over the top. We could look down from the Imperial Palace viewing area to see the Circus Maximus.

Despite our little tootsies feeling very tired, we went onto Saint Pietro in chains church in order to see Michelangelo's famous Moses statue. I have seen it numerous times and still find it quite dramatic.

Moses is larger than life and was to be the top centerpiece of a memorial to a pope. The memorial was to include 42 statues and be placed in the center of the Vatican's church. Fortunately for us Michelangelo got busy on the Sistine Chapel and never got it done before the egotistical pope died.



Now I told you I would tell you the story of the manhole cover? Some of you know that sister Beverly collects pictures of them. Most of us never knew there were so many beautiful examples in the world. I have added to her collection. Now that you've seen one you might look for them too.

On that I say goodnight. We have a rather early morning walking tour tomorrow called "underground Rome: the hidden city."

Day 5 - a sad day in Paris

I heard the news just as I was going to bed last night so of course it disturbed my sleep. Did it disturb me because I'm on my way to Paris December 1? NOT!

I was flattered by many emails this morning asking if I was OK. So sweet. Thank you.

And would I still go to Paris. Think of it this way: after 9-11 we all still went to New York City. Plus, I relate this to when we lived in Vietnam during the war and I was continually concerned about my

family back in the U.S. Where there were demonstrations, the mothers against drunk driving were reminding us of lack of safety on the roads, and I felt too far removed and worried about those in the U.S.

Tom just made response to someone that I like and relate to: ". . . this event and even similar future events is probably not going to change my life much and I can't take much time to worry about it. I've got too many wonderful things to think about."

Traveler Rick Steves just wrote: *I believe we owe it to the victims of this act not to let the terrorist win by being terrorized. That's exactly the response they are hoping for. Sure, it's natural for our emotions to get the best of us. But, especially given the impact of sensational media coverage, we need to respond intelligently and rationally.*

In 2004, Madrid suffered a terrorist bombing in its Metro, which killed 191 and injured 1,800. In 2005, London suffered a similar terrorist bombing in its Tube system, killing 52 and injuring 700. These societies tightened their security, got the bad guys, and carried on. Paris will, too. I'm sure that many Americans will cancel their trips to Paris (a city of 2 million people) or the rest of Europe (a continent of 500 million people), because of an event that killed about 150. As a result, ironically, they'll be staying home in a country of 320 million people that loses over 30,000 people a year (close to 100 people a day) to gun violence." (Thanks to Nola for Rick's blog.)

Rick Steves doesn't even mention our country's 9-11, demonstrations, alleged police brutality, drunk driver deaths, school shootings, the self-imposed diseases, etc.

So there you have it and now I am back to travel. Our pre-booked tour today was called underground Rome, the hidden city ancient and medieval period and we lucked out with another super guide and it was private for the three of us.

We went under churches to see the layers of "lasagna" Rome is built of. However can a breast go from the fourth century still exist? By having been buried. Due to their floods and silt and Ups and Downs in the economy, dig under most any major building and even roads and you might find a first century church or dwelling. We descended into first and fourth century buildings.



I'm not sure why I didn't take pictures and I suppose it is because though they were interesting they were not picturesque. At least I should have taken a picture of the Circus Maximus but it was pretty big.

We had our very knowledgeable guide from 8:45 AM until about 2 PM when he left us at his restaurant recommendation in Campo de Forio. We ate well, Diana drank well, and then we were off for a short walk until Steve and Nola decided they could use a little nap. Smart. It's a talent to be able to. I walked until about 8 PM and had dinner on the plaza Navona.

Here are two sunset shots of two bridges going across to the Vatican area where I walked some back streets. I remembered the USO nearby from 2011.



I managed to get into and tour the Basilica St Agostino where there are Caravaggio and Rafael paintings and the usual golds everywhere.

If you remember how stunned we were at all the families taking their evening stroll in Madrid, I would say it is quite similar here with multiple generations strolling together the streets on Saturday evening. Sweet. I found a gorgeous galleria that reminded me of Milan's.

Last but not least is a reminder of what Plaza Navona contains. It has artist's stalls like Montmartre in Paris. It also has the famous Bernini fountain. My dinner plus drink was on the very full and busy plaza.



Sunday takes us to the famous gallery Borghese where I had been unable to get tickets two times in the past. We ordered early.

We do have another item of success. Not only Borghese tickets but also we found pocket coffee that is only available in Italy and only during the winter! Beverly and Marie – coming your way. Caffeine coming up.

Now I should be off to bed. On my trip here I might've had an hour or two of sleep, then it's always hard to sleep the first



night maybe because you're overtired, maybe because of the time difference, then last night I had the interruption of the Paris news. By the time I got to sleep I had 4-5 hours left, so it's no surprise I slept through my alarm. I'll sleep well tonight!

Day 6 - headlined by the Borghese Villa

You might recall that I have tried at least twice to get into this museum and today was my first success.

Scipione Borghese might've been a very bad man but he sure knew how to build a spectacular Villa and collect some of the best art in the world. We can also thank the Catholics because this was money from his relationship with the pope and the fact he was a cardinal.

Bernini, Rafael, Caravaggio, all the biggies that you might never see otherwise are here but you're only allowed two hours of viewing. That is, if you can obtain tickets.

Yes that handprint that you see on the second picture is marble carved by Bernini. Like the folds in the bedded woman's clothing, the marble comes to life.



The Cupid undressing his desired love, was a picture that Borghese tried for years to acquire. Money no object.

In amongst all these world-class pieces was a special exhibit of sculpture-designer clothing. It blended in really nicely. My interest as much was the building decor and the ceilings with the Trompe l'oeil.

It doesn't seem right to get such short shrift to any of these pieces I think we all went back to see again these two last sculptures.





I ran out of space and time so later I will add a picture of the old man himself plus tell you about my afternoon and that of Steve and Nola.

Day 6 - the afternoon of the Borghese day

I would walk the park a bit with Nola then head off on my own while she stayed to enjoy the woods, lake, landscape and lunch at the zoo.

Steve decided to go see the pope. Honest. And he was successful, after a short metro ride, for the experience, over to the Vatican area where we walked yesterday. But yesterday if there were 500 people, today they were probably 50,000 people. Smile.

I tried to book one of two different tours and they were either sold out or I was just too late to do so. My choices were secrets and scandals of Rome or a food tasting extravaganza. I had to make do on my own which I also enjoy very much. I call it just following my nose. No map. No stress. Just finding what falls my way and usually plenty does.



Near to the Plaza Republica, which is in the first picture, are some of the largest baths known in the world. They now house a museum. Michelangelo made the fridgearium into a gigantic church. While it is huge, tomorrow at Saint Peters will certainly look larger.

My walking was a pretty far distance even for me and took me down some streets that I had remembered and wanted to see again and I ended up near the Coliseum at a favorite restaurant of Tom's. It was particularly busy because Rick Steves has now recommended it. Fortunately it is still family run and even more fortunate is the food is all as good as I remembered.



I had a pasta dish and then a veal dish, of course all washed down with some red wine, with all having been recommended by the son of the owner. At the next table was a most interesting young Colorado couple who took off from their teaching positions to travel one year. By the time we were both done eating I had learned that they were off to do an archaeological tour of the old Nero quarters. I went, I tried, and I didn't get very far but I walked some of the park anyway. I left them with their hardhats on and walked to the other side of the coliseum and took the hop on – hop off tour bus.

Here is Plaza Republica and the fountain at night as well as the fountains from the baths, encountered on my walk home.

Oops. I'm out of room and forgot the old Cardinal picture. Off to a private guide tour of the Vatican tomorrow.



Day 7 - we went to church

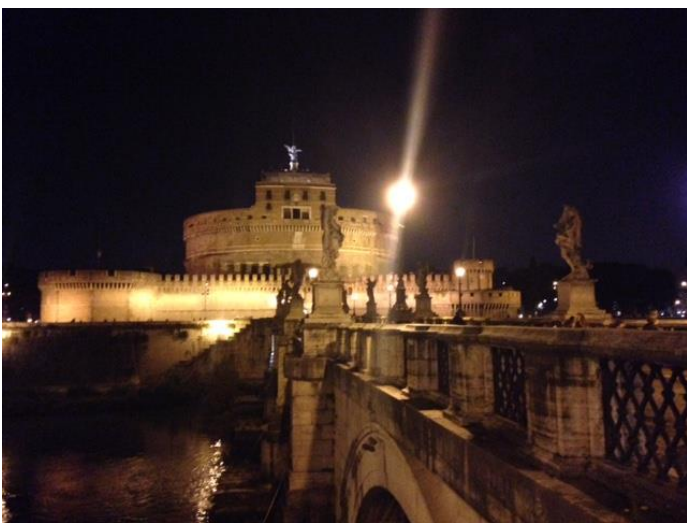
This was our Vatican tour day but first a long walk, a stop at a gourmet shop for stand up coffee and croissant just like the locals. A lunch at Vino and Dino where Loudean, her MIL and two SILs ate dinner before the marathon in 2011.

You might remember that we had an overview guided tour by Florinda our first full day and it was Florinda, a certified Vatican guide, who gave us 4 hours in the Vatican museum and St. Peter's church.

No one needs reminded what St. Peter's looks like but I will put a couple of my favorite pictures here. Nola, over our big lunch, a famous often copied sculpture, and a surprise: Steve saw the pope on Sunday. We saw a past pope today. He wears red shoes just like the last one.



Aren't those Swiss guards cute? They all look much too tiny to be hot shot Marines. I remember reading that in the 1500s when the pope was a warring faction that the Swiss mercenaries ran out on him. So why does a pope trust them now? Because they're cute? (Really, no disrespect due as I think the new pope is doing wonderful things.)



We entered in the daylight and we left in the evening. Then we continued on down the main drag where I remember all the poverty in the 50s. We checked out the shops. From there we must've

wandered a long ways out of our way because the pedometer showed we put on 10 miles. By the time we hit San Marco restaurant not far from our hotel we were ready to eat roadkill.

No I didn't buy any of that holy water. But I thought the offer was rather inventive.

I do like the story of this rather prison looking building. It is a museum now but it first was a Mausoleum. At times it housed the pope, and just as often it was where the Popes took refuge when they were warring.

Beverly, how about this for a special manhole cover? It was in St Peters near to the altar.

To be continued if I can rally and have any energy left and morning doesn't come first.

Did you hear who ISIS threatens to hit next? Ugh. Know that my comments about not letting ISIS keep me from traveling were not meant to lessen my sorrow over the Paris attacks. If we are frightened - they won.

Nite.

Day 8 - if it's Tuesday it must be food tour day

We took off to a new area for me called Testaccio. (Siri hears that word as testosterone and I suppose it was food on testosterone.) We took food tour while in Florence and it might've been one of the highlights of the trip. So here we are signing up for \$85 worth of 4 1/2 hours of straight eating.

Rick Steves claims that this area has the best food market in Rome and that the area is a little bit of original Rome neighborhood and less touristy than Trastevere. The company called "eating Italy food tours" claims this is where Roman cuisine was born and besides it was a good way to escape the crowds.

We were at Rome's top gourmet food store, at a famous and noted restaurant for pastas and wine, we sampled street food, and slices of pizza from the restaurant that ranked number three in all of Rome. In the market we made our own bruschetta and at another stall had real buffalo mozzarella. We had Tiramisu in a chocolate cup and pastries too. Of course we ended with gelato and everyone knows there's no place for gelato other than Italy. (I say that tongue-in-cheek because I don't believe they could keep a recipe secret.) It is a known fact that everything taste better in Italy (if only through our emotions?).

We met the chefs, the store owners, the market vendors, and we heard all their histories, kissed some and were taught how to say hello and goodbye and I want cream on my gelato. Our guide was an American from New Jersey which gave me a lot of laughter until he clarified that he was married to an Italian, had family in Sicily, plus more in Naples, and had lived in Italy for many years. His other career is singing and primarily on a street car where he and his family give tours. You could look up Rome tram tracks.com.

Since I've learned that some of the pictures only come as attachment or at the end anyway (and not within the text as I intended) so I'll just put them all at the end.

But first here is a word from our sponsors. Smile. I'd like to give credit to the very creative and amusing author/sponsor, but the person in question is shy – and you'll see also very smart: *"I think I'll*



print out those two food photos that Diana sent, and then I'll eat them. This gives me an idea for an invention (does it exist already?)...you cram some ingredients plus these food photos into one of those new 3-D make-it-machines and out will come meals like Diana's photos!"

To be continued. These pics are all our food tastings.



Day 9 - the last full day in Rome.

Despite some of the comments that came back to me, I am probably not so callous and I do have concern and sympathy about Paris. But like Rick Steves, I try to put it in perspective and realize that there is risk even in living and we don't want to stop living. The risk is (currently) within my comfort level and yet I will confess that it is hard to turn off the TV. I did have to turn my iPhone off due to the news blasts popping up during the night. Flights diverted, bomb scares, more gunfire in Paris.

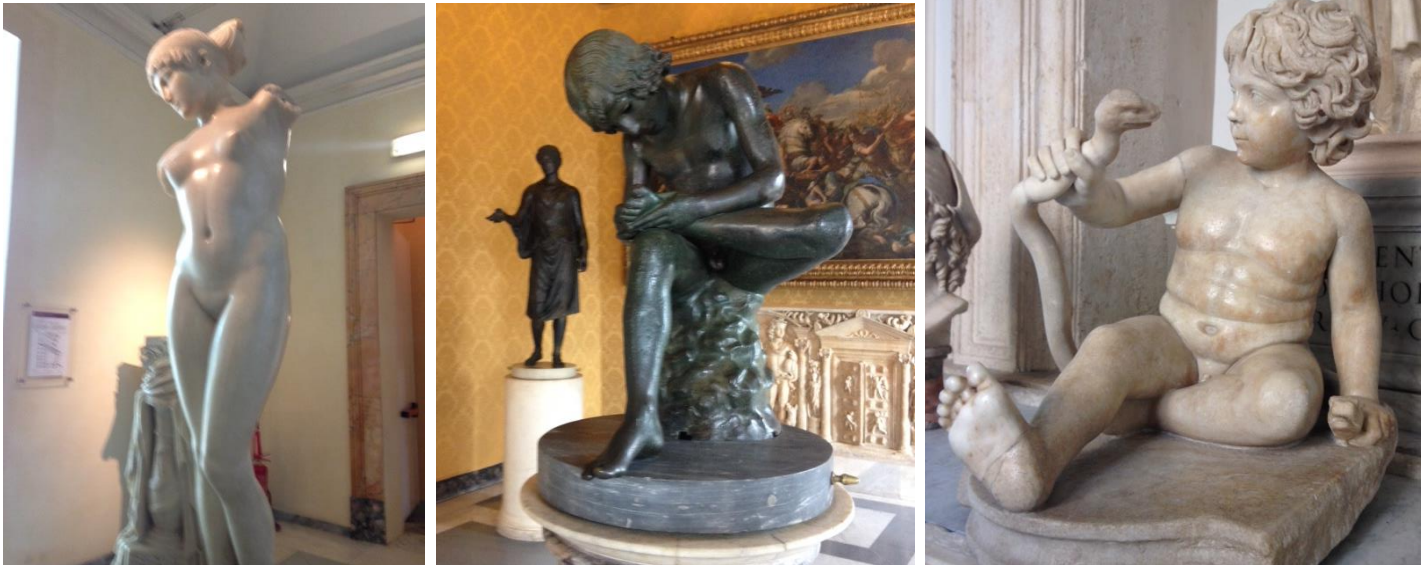
It is interesting that my friends from the New York City area who lived through 9–11 even reminded me that we had to get on with life after 9-11 and that we should do so now too. This has nothing to do with making light of the situation; it had to do with not giving into the fear that the terrorists want to instill.

I stepped out of the hotel this morning and wow but there were a number of police and soldiers and a police van. Later I was told that it had nothing to do with any particular threat to the hotel but that a dignitary was arriving shortly. They were still there at the end of the day.

Isn't it nice we're having weather? A nice change of topic! And especially so since we have had nothing but near perfect weather despite November being known as the worst month for tourists as it is the rainiest month of the year.

We had hired a private tour guide to take us to the Capitoline Museum. Per Mario: *The oldest and first museum of Rome, open since 1471, with mainly ancient statuary, the famous Lupa (she-wolf, symbol of Rome), bronzes of the 1st century, a painting gallery with works from middle-ages until our time and mosaics, temples, etc.* <http://en.museicapitolini.org>

I had only breezed through it on another trip and thought I needed an hour or so but he entertained us for five hours. This is one of the Roman hills and had been designed by Michelangelo when the pope decided he needed to impress Charles V. It contains some pretty impressive pieces of art and I'll try to add a few pictures here and probably continue tomorrow.



After Mario dropped us at a friend's restaurant we went our separate ways. Me to this unique 1st to 4th century archaeological find of a huge home a few levels under an old government building. Most of these digs are pretty hard for me to figure out but this one used high-tech and added video overlays. We walked along glass walkways in the near dark with spotlights and video lighting our way. We ended at the foot of Trajan's Column but not before we saw some pieces of semi buried columns hugely larger. This tour deserves more description so I've added a link to their website. <http://www.palazzovalentini.it/domus-romane/index-en.html>

Nearby was a church focused wax museum with popes, rock stars, dignitaries, and even George Clooney. I got some super pictures.

It was getting dark so I took the opportunity to go by Trevi fountain and fortunately the fountain had begun operating and the adjoining church was open.



Michelangelo's stairway which change the direction of Capitoline Hill. Romulus and Remus. A Bernini favorite. THE church.

More tomorrow.

Day 10 - on the way home.

Steve and Nola had a last-goodbye to Rome this morning by walking the Borghese Park and checking out the overlook again. That's a good sign that they enjoyed their second trip to Europe. Me? I never do any more in the morning than required. I was grateful just to have no news-blasts during the night.

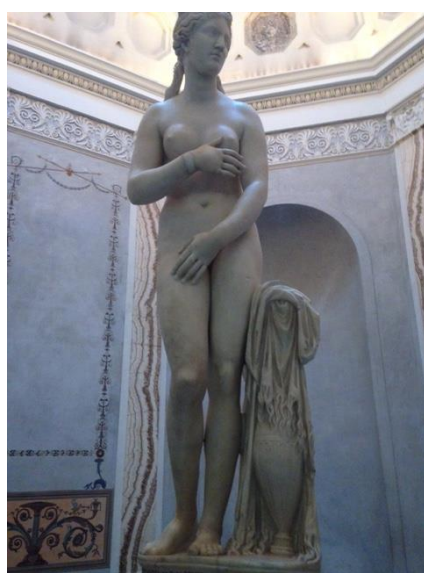


Ten days is plenty and though I have many things on my list that I would still like to see, I feel it was a successful trip. It is better to leave a place with a list of unseen places than to get bored the last day or two. Besides I have two weeks in Paris coming up soon.

We got a taxi at 9:20am and fortunately had an early head-start because there was unanticipated heavy traffic. It all worked fine, I got fast track through security, and into the Alitalia lounge. I felt badly that I couldn't get Steve and Nola into the lounge but, unusually, I have no United lounge nor am I flying first class. I am economy through Toronto via Air Canada so no perks. (There was nothing by United that matched up to Nola's ticket.)

Outside our hotel remained what looked like a small army. Yet the Italians remain cool despite being on the "hit" list. Cool like the Parisians who made a point of going out on strolls and to cafes. (Am I thus redeemed for my seemingly cavalier attitude to keep traveling?)

Back to yesterday part 2 pictures of the Capitoline Museum. You see the front and back of their prime Venus statue. Like Michelangelo's David, she was difficult to leave. Then a massive outdoor sculpture followed by the interior of the forum's church.



To be continued. (You always have a delete button.)

Day 10 - continued

There are vendors of everything but mostly selfie-sticks (who uses those darned things?) and those who want to have their picture taken for a mere 5-10 Euros. We learned that they must be licensed and clearly they are patrolled. This picture is amusing showing the cabinieri (police) arresting or ticketing the Roman Soldiers.



Later – after home I read that Rome had just banished centurions, rickshaws, etc. over tourist scams. With the Jubilee coming up early December, the timing is good. (Let the Catholics scam instead? Oops, that's not PC but after a visit to the treasury you can't help but think how unequal it all is.)

<http://www.france24.com/en/20151126-rome-banishes-centurions-rickshaws-over-tourist-scams>

My guided tour of 1st and 4th century ruins ended with a description of Trajan's Column which is known for telling a detailed story in carvings on the way up. There is a stairway in the interior. It's centered in the first marketplace-mall known and maybe has been saved due to the addition of St Peter on the top. My tour ended at the base of it. In this area we saw toppled columns even larger in diameter and larger than those of the Pantheon. How they were brought all in one piece from Egypt remains part mystery and part the possible.



The Trevi Fountain, which I called the Fendi Fountain, was lit and the fountain finally running. I modify my appreciation of Fendi for the renovation they allegedly made to the fountain. It was a loan and with rights to the image.

Steve and Nola got to the Pantheon again and were able to see it with night lighting.

The airport was hugely easier than I recall. A train vs bus to the outer terminal. Easy security and not the double security we had before. Perhaps it helps being on a Canadian airline. I'd trade the extra security for my United perks.

Mr. Burton - here I come! I missed you despite the long FaceTime conversations each evening.

PS - there is going to be a sub footnote to this because I got stuck with a canceled flight and an overnight in Toronto so thus there will be a Day 11 to the trip notes.

Day 11 - I'm not where I am supposed to be

While I am not where I am supposed to be, I am in a pretty good place sitting in the Toronto lounge. It is the day after I was supposed to be home.

Yesterday upon landing in Toronto I went through quite a bit of first a Canadian security, then our global entry through US, then the US customs and agriculture, and then finally into the Air Canada lounge. My tootsies got tired. It was in the lounge where I was able to pick up email and found that my United flight into Newark was canceled. Later I would learn that most all other flights were canceled thereafter too causing a sell-out of local hotels.

The United customer service counter was a zoo but they took care of me on a first basis and went out of their way to accommodate despite apologizing that there were no other flights available until the next day. It's being weather related, they were not obliged to do anything yet they gave me \$30 in food coupons and covered the Sheraton Hotel located within the terminal. (When I read that there are not enough benefits for consolidating frequent travel on just one airline, I know that is incorrect.)

Because I had already gone through the U.S. security, they had to personally guide those of us who needed baggage retrieval and a return into Canada per se. This meant that I had to fill out Canadian customs forms and go through their lines.

Damn but I never checked luggage but due to heavy security and a suitcase full of pocket coffee I had checked my bag. And my bag having been on the carousel for two hours had to be located through the service desk.

All turned out well and I took my food voucher to the Sheraton restaurant and had a big meal of which I practically fell asleep over and never came near to finishing. 22 hours up was near my limit of endurance.

Tom would ask "didn't you sleep on the plane?" He can sleep anywhere. I was in a rare economy seat with a continually crying baby two rows ahead which I found annoying and emotionally draining. (A juvenile delinquent in the making. Parents who need professional help. A family that should be banned from flying.) But I did read most all one book and half of another. (Cute: Siri thought I said porn book.)

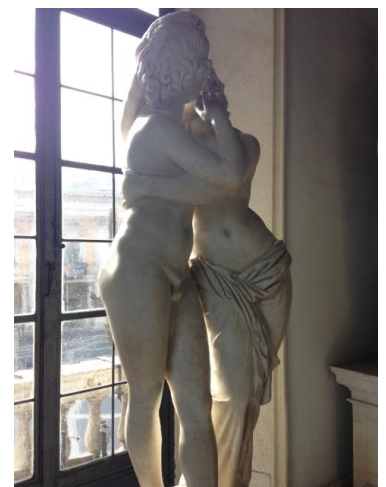
The dinner picture is provided because I knew I would forget what I ate. (Oh my goodness, after Siri heard the word "porn" she was in an X-rated mode so instead of the word "forget" she heard a four letter f-word! Who would have thought she had that vocabulary? I don't.). I didn't eat but about half of it and then carried my wine to my room.



So life goes on. Life is good, and we will presume that I will be seeing Mr. Burton by early afternoon. And that there will be no "Day 12" to this set of missives.

XOXO - see Cupids statuary from the Capitoline. Sweet.

PS. Steve and Nola, without any diversions, had a much longer trip because they went through Frankfurt then Washington DC and then on to Denver and then a 3-hour drive perhaps in the snow to their home. They had a touch of panic when their luggage was not where it was expected and in Washington DC but all turned out OK and they made their connection. To put it in perspective, even with my overnight in Toronto I might make it home before they do.



Day 11 - additional and final thoughts on the trip

Yes I am home. It was interesting that Steve and Nola had an intended overnight stop in Denver. Whereas I had an unintended over-night stop in Toronto. Yet we all got home mid-afternoon on Friday.

Random comments:

- Toronto has a wonderfully clean, modern and organized airport. Yet each time I have come through, things didn't go right. I can't in anyway blame the airport or staff but it would be hard to come through here again.
- Equally, I will do everything I can to stick with United and not even their partners. Not that United is necessarily the best, but my 1K status means I have priority and elite treatment.
- Steve and Nola made their second trip to Europe with their first having been in January to Florence. I was very impressed with how a couple of hiking guides could immediately get into acting like a couple of locals in Rome. They certainly adapted to European culture quicker than I adapted to park hiking culture. I suspect they have more European trips in their future.
- Flying economy? I think I am too old, spoiled, and set in my ways to not consider paying up from now on. Or stay home.
- Rome has now given me two not-so-pleasant epiphanies. In 2009, I looked down at a magnifier mirror in my hotel room and suddenly could not ignore that I had wrinkles. (Magnifiers should be located UP not DOWN!). This year I daily realized that my hair was showing the effects of gray and thinning. Was I the one that said I wanted to grow old gracefully? There is nothing graceful feeling about these observations nor any potential efforts to thwart aging. Was it really me who forever-ago declared I'd let myself grow old gracefully and not partake of anti-aging hype?

Where new will I go now? I like a bit of adventure yet I'm lazy about making trips to the Far East or to Australia. I have no desire to go somewhere and look at poverty, old cows in the street, or a feeling of danger. I want to be within connectivity. Damn but all that sure limits my potentials.

I am now home until December 1st when I set off to Paris on my solo trip for 2 weeks. It was Tom who suggested I go alone so I could wander as I wished and as fast as I wished.

Marie arrives on December 18 and we leave to Lisbon on December 20. We return to New Jersey on December 30 and she returns to her Kansas City home on New Year's Day.

Here is a picture of another I return home to. Mr. Burton comes first but I miss this one too.



Pandora will visit a very friendly babysitter while we are gone to Lisbon.

Itinerary

Tue Nov 10 - Nola and Steve

5:25pm Depart Denver DEN via Lufthansa#447 - Nola ticket#DYVP0Z

-Diana

4:30pm Depart home

7:25pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#960

Wed Nov 11 - Diana

9:15am Arrive Frankfurt FRA for plane change

- Nola and Steve

11:00am Arrive Frankfurt FRA for plane change

-Nola, Diana and Steve

12:10pm Depart Frankfurt FRA via Lufthansa#234 and UA#8746

2:00pm Arrive Rome FCO

Transport Rome Chauffeur reservation #TS1000012113

Hotel Westin Excelsior, Rome – 8 nights with 2 rooms
Via Vittorio Veneto 125, Rome 00187 Italy Tele (39) (06) 47081
Conf#741394503 for 2 rooms – requires form (in file) Yes WiFi and mini bar; No coffee

Thu Nov 12 – All

10:00am Private guide (friend of Elizabeth and Anjelica) with overview tour of about 3 hours with emphasis on Bernini. Florinda will meet at hotel and has been invited to lunch.

Contact: Florinda Orazi, florindaorazi@hotmail.com, Tele: 0039-347-4704890

Not booked – maybe for Friday Nov 13 instead?

5:30pm Rome at Twilight among the Piazzas and Fountains - Maximum group size: 13 – Link: [Rome at Twilight](#) - 39 Euros for 2 ½ hours

Renaissance and Baroque Rome: the most beautiful fountains and piazzas of Rome - An evening stroll to enjoy the city, through its imposing palaces and grand piazzas, where water dances in extraordinary fountains; a tour to discover enchanted little streets where time has stopped; a stroll to dream, exploring history and art in a new way. Join us on this Rome group tour to encounter popes and emperors, artists and ordinary people in the places where their lives took shape, where the ancient and the modern mingled to create the political and religious institutions on which Italian society still rests today.

Spanish Steps Tour - We will begin in Piazza di Spagna, at the foot of the iconic Spanish Steps. With our expert guides we will learn the history of the church of the Trinita' dei Monti that towers above, as well as why the young Gian Lorenzo Bernini and his sculptor father adopted the unusual subject of a boat for the fountain of the Barcaccia. We will also uncover the social significance of the majestic stairway that came to unite these two areas separated for centuries by a high cliff. After short stops at the Colonna dell'Immacolata (Column of the Immaculate Conception) and the house of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, we will reach another of the city's most indelible landmarks, the Trevi fountain.

Trevi Fountain Tour - Here we will let ourselves be lulled by the magical song of the waters, immersing ourselves in this wonderful piece of theatrical architecture that both recalls the great buildings of the past and allows us to imagine the impossible architecture of the mind. With the help of your guide you will read the many legends written in the relief sculpture of the triumphal arch, where the god Ocean advances with his Tritons and winged horses to celebrate with us an ancient festival of water. Please note that the Trevi Fountain is currently undergoing some much-needed restoration and is partially covered. We will still see parts of it from a scaffolding bridge that has been constructed to allow visitors to witness the work in progress.

The Pantheon - The Pantheon transports us to another era, and this portion of our walking group tour is all about the full grandeur of Imperial Rome. Innovative ideas, technologies and various cultures blend to make an artwork of extreme power and poetry, a design so perfect that Michelangelo considered it to be the work of angels. The history of the area is no less fascinating: it was originally a marshland subject to the floods of the Tiber, then a military training ground devoted to Mars, the god of war. The temple that dominates

the piazza was first built by Agrippa for his son-in-law Augustus, before a restoration by Hadrian in 126 AD created the magnificent building we know today. According to medieval legend the central oculus in the huge dome was created by the explosive crash of pagan demons fleeing the building at the moment of its conversion into a church in 609 AD. The Pantheon also houses the tombs of Raphael who died prematurely in 1520, and the first King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele, who died in 1878.

Piazza Navona Tour - The next stop is Piazza Navona, which puts us in the midst of a totally different mystery - its form has been preserved for nearly 2,000 years, and the shape of the Stadium of Domitian (1st century AD) is still obvious today. And yet at the same time we are in the heart of the Roman Baroque: all around are spectacular optical illusions and theatrical buildings, signs of a revolutionary new approach to architectural space. Here we confront the twin genius of Bernini and Borromini, the two greatest rivals of their age and opposites in every respect. Bernini's marvelous Fountain of the Four Rivers is the piazza's centrepiece, a pyramidal structure that incorporates an obelisk and culminates in the flight of a dove. Dominating the skyline above is Borromini's curving facade and bell tower of the church of Santa Agnese, where stone takes on the malleability of softest clay.

Campo dei Fiori and Piazza Farnese - We will finish our tour of Rome in two extremely different piazzas of the city center. First in bustling Campo dei Fiori with its taverns and market stalls, a stop along the route pilgrims took on their way to St. Peter's, and once a site of public execution and torture. By contrast, Piazza Farnese is an aristocratic place of cardinals and popes. Home of the beautiful Giulia Farnese, lover of the rapacious and insatiable Borgia Pope Alexander VI, and site of countless court intrigues, the piazza is dominated by two enormous basins found in the Baths of Caracalla which were re-adapted as fountains for the popes, symbolic of their legitimate succession from the ancient emperors. All this is overlooked by the Palazzo Farnese itself, sombre testament to Michelangelo's architectural talent.

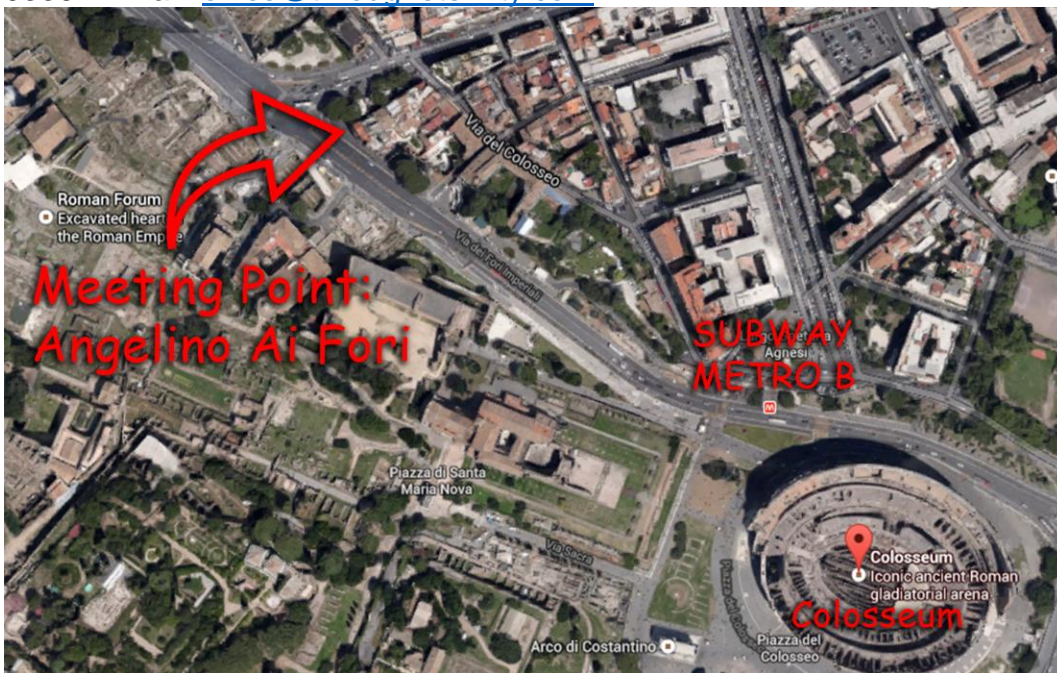
Join us on this Rome group tour on a journey to truly understand the city, and see how its picturesque streets, timeless piazzas and infinite history are all just waiting to be discovered.

Fri Nov 13

10:30am **Underground Colosseum (plus Third Tier), Roman Forum and Palatine Hill**

Maximum group size: 8 – 5 hours for 109 Euros - Link: [Underground Colosseum](#) –

See tickets for directions. <http://www.througheternity.com/> Through Eternity Tours: Tele +39 06 700 9336 - Email: office@througheternity.com



Enter the tunnels of the arena, discover the secrets of the games - Join us on this exclusive Rome group tour in the fascinating underground tunnels of the Colosseum. Marvel at ancient stage machinery capable of amazing special effects, mechanical elevators centuries ahead of their time, and an incredibly complex system of underground links between various supporting buildings that made the Colosseum's spectacles possible. These were amongst the ingenious inventions that we will see on our walking tour which helped ensure the incredible popularity of the games. Along with our expert guides learn how the games, these rituals of violence, were conceived as an Imperial propaganda to unify the incredibly diverse population, languages, and cultures that made up the Roman Empire.

Re-live an entire day's entertainment on our Colosseum tour - Follow the various stages of entertainment: the processions and the salutes; the battles between ferocious beasts and gladiators made spectacular by the surprise entrance of animals into the arena through secret trap-doors; the fight to the death between gladiators amidst the cheers of a delirious crowd; the capricious decisions of the audience or of the emperor to save or condemn a defeated gladiator according to their whim.

Discover who the gladiators were - Our guides are experts in their fields (most of them are archaeologists), and on this ancient Rome group tour they will take you into the world of the gladiators, showing the manner of combat, the weapons, and the origins of these men coming from the remote provinces of the empire. The success of the games was ensured by the multi-ethnic society of the time. On our Colosseum tour you will also learn about their daily training, which took place in the barracks where the gladiators lived, which were equipped with a small arena such as the Ludus Magnus near the Colosseum.

Admire the perfection of the Colosseum from its Third Tier - It is only from this height that we can fully appreciate the imposing magnitude of this remarkable edifice. From here, all its arcades and marbles are laid out before us, its dramatic spaces reveal a colossal feat of engineering that saw the Colosseum built over ten years on a site which was previously part of Nero's Golden House. From the Third Tier you get the most spectacular and unexpected vistas of Rome, making this a group tour not to miss.

Uncover the daily life, the political struggles and the gods of the ancient city on our Roman Forum tour - This great valley was the political heart of ancient Rome. Here we will retrace the daily life and politics of the Romans, beginning at the **Senate**, where the most memorable debates of the Roman republic took place. Then our group tour will enter into the rooms and the stunningly beautiful garden of the **House of the Vestal Virgins**; discover who they were, gaze upon their marble portraits that still survive today, and learn of the cruel destiny that sometimes awaited them. In the **basilicas of Julia and Maxentius**, seats of the courthouses, will bring you into the spaces of the great public trials during the time of Cicero and Caesar. At the **temples of Saturn, Castor and Pollux**, and **Antoninus and Faustina**, we will meet the Roman gods and explore the enigma of a Christian church built into the structure of a pagan temple. The innovations of Roman engineers will amaze you on the **Via Sacra**, still marked today with the wheel-ruts of carriages that passed over it for centuries. Meanwhile, the film-strips of antiquity carved into the marble of the **Arch of Titus** and **Arch of Septimius Severus**, tell of the great conquests of Imperial Rome. At the site where it happened, we will re-live timeless events such as the funeral of Julius Caesar near the Temple of Caesar and the decapitation of Cicero in the central square. Finally, we will explain the political rise of Augustus, who with his youthful face (or at least so he appears in countless statues) closed out the Roman Republic and founded an empire.

Explore the luxurious villas of the emperors on the Palatine Hill - The **Palatine Hill**, is still for the most part, excluded from the itineraries of other tour companies. Wonderfully preserved even today, it's a shame to neglect this beautiful part of the ancient city, a place that for centuries hosted the exclusive residences of the Roman aristocracy, until the emperors appropriated it to construct their colossal villas. **Why was it such a desirable spot?** Simple. **The views from here down into the Forum, the Colosseum, the Circus Maximus, and indeed the entire city are unmatched.** Our group tour will start with the origins of Rome, near the Huts of Romulus from the 8th century BC, which were later moved to the **House of Augustus** for obvious political reasons. We will explore the additions and excesses of the Imperial residences, with their gigantic colonnades. Amongst them the **House of Augustus, the Flavian palace, the Severian baths** and the **great Stadium**. You will uncover original furnishings fashioned from precious marbles and statues in the **Palatine Museum**, and retrace the lives of the most famous and extravagant emperors who ruled here, men such as **Nero and Domitian**.

The Colosseum Underground and Third Tier are reserved exclusively for us - During your hour-long visit to the Colosseum Underground you may be joined by some of our other small or private groups, up to a maximum of 23 visitors. The experience of this ancient Rome group tour is guaranteed to be absolutely exclusive and unique!

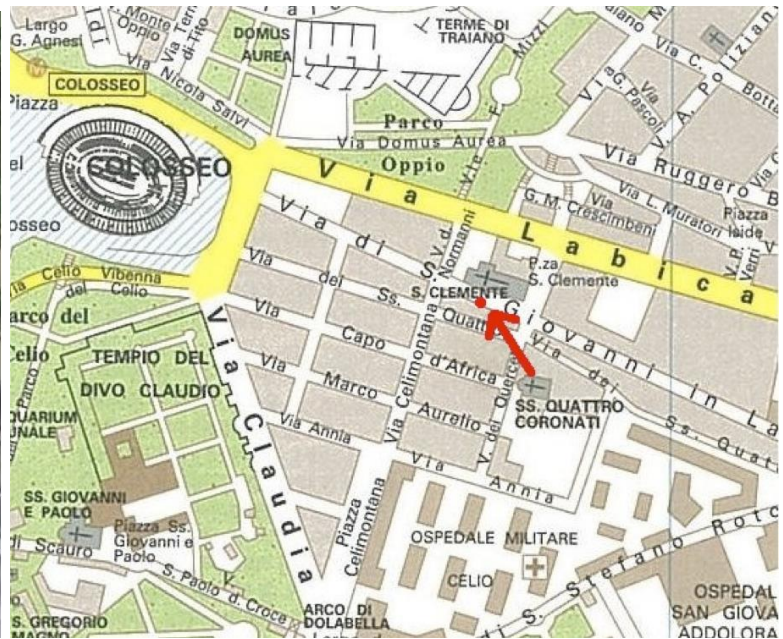
Add on: [In-depth Itineraries and Tour Details](#)

Sat Nov 14

9:00am Underground Rome Tour: the hidden city - Maximum group size: 13 - 3 ½ hours for 57

Euros - Link: [Underground Rome: Ancient and Medieval](#)

Directions on tickets. Here is meeting location:



Descend into the subterranean layers of Rome's fascinating and forgotten past - There is another Rome underneath the city we know and love, another silent and humble city under its grandiose Renaissance and Baroque architecture. There are centuries of history buried in the subterranean layers beneath the three churches that we invite you to visit with us on this Rome group tour, a fascinating voyage into the bowels of the earth.

There were difficult centuries for Rome, from its passage as capital of an immense empire to a small province living under constant threat of wars and economic and political crises. Even after Constantine moved the capital of the empire to Constantinople in 330 AD, Rome still numbered around 450,000 inhabitants in the 5th century AD. And yet, there were no more than 25,000 inhabitants by the 8th century AD. This drastic decline in population coincided with old political institutions falling into disuse and the rise of new power structures tied to the papacy. Meanwhile vast areas of the city within the ancient walls were abandoned or turned into vegetable gardens, and entire structures were re-adapted, often as Christian churches.

Journey back in time from the Renaissance to pagan Rome at San Clemente - San Clemente is a very beautiful 12th century AD basilica with wonderful and unique mosaics in which, among other things, the Crucified Christ is represented in a festival of trees and doves. No less impressive is the **Cappella di Santa Caterina** (Chapel of St. Catherine), with some of the earliest surviving Renaissance frescoes from the early 15th century AD by **Masaccio** and **Masolino**. But that is only the beginning of the surprising discoveries we will make on this group tour: a small stairway takes us to the lower basilica from the 4th century AD, which is perfectly preserved with medieval frescoes that recount some fascinating Christian legends, including the life of St. Clement himself. From here another little staircase takes us to the third underground level where we are catapulted into the first century AD: some of the rooms of this layer were part of an apartment block of several floors, separated from another large building that was perhaps a state mint by a narrow street still visible today.

From the many decorations and relief sculptures that refer to the ritual killing of a bull and to the constellations, we know that one of these spaces was used by the followers of the cult of Mithras at the beginning of the 3rd century AD, whilst a Christian sect met only a few meters away. This is not such a surprise, as from the beginning of the 1st century AD both these religions were widely diffused in Rome and the empire. Their similarities are also noteworthy: both celebrated ritual banquets with water and wine, and both encouraged the faithful to engage in morally correct behaviour in order to reach salvation in a world beyond. Nearby are remains from 6th century AD burials complete with sarcophagi, early Christian symbols, and much more.

Explore ancient life in the Roman houses beneath Santi Giovanni e Paolo - Not far from the Colosseum, the **Basilica of Santi Giovanni e Paolo** (Saints John and Paul) preserves intact a little corner of the middle ages in the form of a monastery and bell tower built upon the imposing ruins of a temple dedicated to the emperor Claudius. Its history begins in the 2nd century AD with a little uphill street and two houses, one of which had elegant pagan frescoes and a small garden with a pool. The story continues in the 4th century AD with a grand domus (the house of a rich Roman) which incorporates the pre-existing buildings and is decorated with frescoes of Christian subjects. The owners of this domus were in all likelihood the titular martyrs —Giovanni and Paolo. In the 5th century AD a small church was built over their tombs, where the faithful venerated their relics. With time the underlying past of the basilica was completely covered and forgotten: first excavations began in 1887 and the buried areas have only recently become accessible once again.

After a lovely walk past gardens still cultivated today by the nuns and the **Circus Maximus**, an immense area where the horse races of republican Rome were held, we will reach the third site of our subterranean Rome group tour.

Witness the meeting of pagan and Christian Rome at San Nicola in Carcere - The church of **San Nicola in Carcere** (St. Nicholas in Prison) is in fact absolutely unique in the world. Even at a distance we realize that there are six imposing columns of an ancient Roman temple built into the side walls of the church. Indeed, the church is entirely constructed on three temples of the 3rd and 2nd

centuries BC, one of which is fully incorporated into the church. Descending to the underground level we find ourselves catapulted into a remote and magical time. We are actually in the spaces—at the time open to the sky—between the three temples. We are on the beaten path of the Romans who for centuries passed this way on their daily comings and goings to the vegetable and cattle market a few steps away. The foundations and the massive load-bearing structures of the temples amazingly survived the devastation of the centuries. During the reconstruction, around the 9th century AD, it seemed a good idea to reuse the strong arms of the temples in order to anchor a church. Amongst the many interesting historical details in the resulting church, we will note an 8th century engraving in one of the columns, whilst the bell in the medieval tower is still the original one from the end of the 13th century AD.

Add on - [In-depth Itineraries and Tour Details](#)

Sunday Nov 15

Pick up tickets at 'will call' door up to one hour ahead. Pick up code: L6CIPAR

Confirmation with Diana

9:00am Borghese Museum tour for 2 hours – tickets paid plus special exhibit
Buy audio guide at door – map of location and map of facilities on line
<http://www.galleriaborghese.it/borghese/en/einfo.htm>

Write up from Through Eternity - Borghese Gallery Tour: The Changing Idea of Art through the Ages

Explore 2,000 years of art through the lens of its greatest masterpieces - Join us on a journey through two millennia of art as we explore the lives and works of some of the greatest artists to have ever lived in the surroundings of one of the Eternal City's most unique and extraordinary museums. From fascinating ancient sculptures like the 1st century BC Hermaphrodite to the great masterpieces of the Renaissance and the Baroque, the Borghese gallery is a history of artistic taste and form in fast-forward, and this is one of our Rome group tours not to miss!

Rediscover the opulent lifestyle of a wealthy baroque prince - The fabulous palace and the peerless collection of painting and sculpture contained within was the brainchild of cardinal Scipione Borghese, one of 17th century Rome's most irrepressible and famous characters. Learn how this man of the cloth was more interested in luxury than piety, as your expert guide recreates a personality whose ruthlessly predatory nature combined with an unerring eye for artistic virtuosity allowed him to amass a private collection of art that has possibly never been matched before or since. Scipione's rapacious desire for artistic masterpieces was so great that he was known to have had artists imprisoned to allow him to confiscate their works, and he even had Raphael's famous Deposition forcibly removed from its altar in Perugia in order that it might grace his villa. As you gaze at the portly face and penetrating stare immortalised by the Baroque genius Gianlorenzo Bernini in a pair of uncanny sculptural portraits, on this Rome group tour we will together unravel the complex and many layered web of power, piety, ambition and intrigue that defined the art world of Baroque Rome.

Take a walk on the wild side with one of art's most controversial geniuses - Despite his controversial methods and flagrant disrespect for authority, Caravaggio was feted by the most powerful men in Rome during the first decade of the 17th century. Collectors like Scipione Borghese recognised the revolutionary potential of his art, and spared no expense in securing his works. The paintings that we will discover here on our tour of the Borghese gallery chart the artist's dramatic rise and fall in fortunes, from early successes like the disarmingly guileless Boy with a Basket of Fruit to mature masterpieces such as his brilliantly moody portrait of St. Jerome. Caravaggio's sudden fall from grace and subsequent humiliating exile is expressed with startling power in the gruesome David with the head of Goliath, where the blank, staring features of the stricken giant are revealed as those of the artist himself, literally cut off from the life of fame and fortune that tragically eluded him. The intense drama and disturbing realism of paintings such as this would change the face of art forever. To learn more about Caravaggio, we recommend our group tour of Rome dedicated entirely to him - Caravaggio Tour: The Art and Blood of a Genius in Turbulent Baroque Rome.

Marvel at the incredible virtuosity of the Baroque master Gianlorenzo Bernini - Caravaggio was not the only artistic pioneer whose career owed much to the cardinal's foresight. Gianlorenzo Bernini would become the most famous sculptor of his generation and one of the most influential artists in history, but it was at Scipione's palatial suburban villa that he first found fame. Bernini's unique interpretation of ancient mythology and his revolutionary conception of three-dimensional space ushered in a completely new language of art, where the boundary between fiction and reality became fundamentally blurred. Bernini's theatrical sculptural fictions launched the golden age of the Baroque, nowhere more clearly in evidence than in the Apollo and Daphne he created for the Borghese palace. Daphne, pursued by the ancient god of music, is caught in a moment of perpetually arrested transformation - no longer the beautiful woman she was but not yet the inert tree she would become, Bernini has managed to capture this fleeting moment of metamorphosis for all eternity, redefining the limits of what art could do in the process.

3:00pm www.ThroughEternity.com offers a Secrets/Scandals tour. Not booked yet.

Mon Nov 16

2:30pm Private tour with guide Florinda (official Vatican guide). Following is description from Through Eternity. Entry tickets purchased by Nola who has voucher.
Consider inviting Florinda to an early dinner. Or Diana has restaurant recommendation from local USO in area.

Tour the Sistine Chapel before it opens: enjoy as did popes and princes - On this unique tour you will find yourself in the perfect environment to admire the Sistine Chapel and other works of incomparable beauty and to fully comprehend their meaning. Our small group tour will help you visualize the cultural context in which such works arose, immersing you in the climate of the Renaissance, in the passions that accompanied artists and princes, merchants and bankers in the creation of a new world of palaces, domes, and cities. On our exclusive Vatican tour you will discover this happy season of human history when the flowering of the arts was accompanied by the evolution of science, together laying the foundations for much of our modern world.

Sistine Chapel Tour: meet a genius - Whoever sees the Sistine Chapel through the eyes of Michelangelo, whoever reads in it his thoughts and sentiments, encounters a genius. Who he was, how he lived and what he thought - these are the main themes of our guided tour. Our guides will accompany you on this Vatican group tour into the great building projects of the Italian Renaissance and together we will relive the environment of the Florentine Renaissance and the Papal court in Rome in which Michelangelo created his masterpieces. The figures of Jonah, Adam, Eve, Noah and thousands of others on the ceiling of the **Sistine Chapel** and in the **Last Judgement** speak of Michelangelo and of the Renaissance: our guided visit will reveal clearly what they say, and how and why these frescoes have redefined not only art, but the way in which we look at the world.

The Raphael Rooms: enter into the courts of the Italian Renaissance - This was a period of overwhelming enthusiasm and of amazing innovation. The men of the Renaissance didn't merely dream of changing the world - they really revolutionised it. The printing press, the geographic maps with which Columbus reached the Americas, modern science, architecture, art and the sense of beauty (a concept demonized in the Middle Ages), all these were their creations. The frescoes of the **Raphael rooms** perfectly depict the world of the contemporary courts that governed the course of this new world and where the great geniuses of the age called home. The cultured conversations fueled by the wine of sumptuous banquets, the statues brought to light by a frenzied passion for excavations, new fashions, and above all new ways of thinking and living, are marvellously recreated by Raphael with the perfect touch of his graceful brush. This is an experience that we will have the opportunity to relive in the flesh on our Vatican group tours. Indeed, there is an entire world to discover here, a world of which we ourselves are the children.

Vatican Museums Tour: stories of art and history - Some of the most important works that we will discover, such as timeless Greek masterpieces like the **Laocoon**, the **Belvedere Torso** and the **Apollo Belvedere**, were excavated at the time of Michelangelo and Raphael, who studied and admired them in the same architectural context in which they are preserved today. The artworks that they created are the fruit of their careful study. And so we too will pass through the **Pinecone courtyard**, the **Belvedere courtyard** and the tapestry galleries on our Vatican group tour, discovering a selection of masterpieces with a guide capable of recreating the climate of the epoch, helping you to appreciate the Raphael Rooms and the Sistine Chapel in their historical context.

The Pinacoteca: Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio and the last painting of Raphael - Some of the finest paintings of the Vatican Museums are collected in the Pinacoteca, still ignored by most tours. In this tranquil part of the Vatican museums it is possible to appreciate the explosive force of **Leonardo's Saint Jerome** and the spectacular realism of **Caravaggio's Deposition**, an artist of absolute and ungovernable genius. We will also encounter **Raphael's Transfiguration**, a work that would be his last when, struck by a terrible fever, he died at the height of his fame at the tender age of 37.

From the Sistine Chapel we will directly enter St. Peter's Basilica without waiting in line

St. Peter's Basilica: The Story of Fatih - This part of our guided Vatican group tour will bring us to the heart of the Christian faith, and along the way we will discover an incredible collection of relics and religious tokens that have accumulated here over the course of nearly 2,000 years at the site of St. Peter's tomb. At the same time you will have the chance to admire and understand enchanting works of art such as **Michelangelo's Pietà**, a work whose intimate embrace overflows with such tenderness that it can move even the hardest viewer to tears. The masterpieces of **Bernini**, the great genius of the Italian Baroque, also dominate St. Peter's, and the spectacular eponymous piazza dazzles with astounding optical effects. It is here that the faithful have gathered for centuries to celebrate the great events of Christianity, from the election of new popes to solemn masses. We will bring you here to read a history that will also become our own, a history lived by the protagonists of our fascinating Vatican group tours.

Tue Nov 17

10:30am Taste of Testaccio Food Tour – 4 hours - tickets purchased at \$84.75 (75 Euros) each; vouchers with Diana <http://www.eatingitalyfoodtours.com/taste-of-testaccio-food-tour/>

Meeting location: more on voucher – a 10 minute walk from the Piramide Metro Station. Includes 12 food tastings and an always entertaining and personable English speaking guide. You'll receive our Food Lovers' Guide to Rome: a printed guide full of insider's tips about where to eat in the Italian capital, as well as details about each of our tour stops.

Directions to meeting location:

The address of the Meeting Location is Piazza Testaccio #41, outside a wine & gourmet food shop called L'Oasi Della Birra a that has umbrellas and wooden picnic tables on the sidewalk. It is just down from the corner of the streets Via Aldo Manuzio and Via Luca della Robbia (the street name changes to Piazza Testaccio). A good landmark to determine if you are in the right place is the Barclays Bank located at the corner of Via Aldo Manuzio and Via Luca della Robbia. There is also a beautiful fountain in the main square of Piazza Testaccio. We will be waiting for you outside the shop L'Oasi della Birra at the picnic tables (not in the middle of the square!) Please check in with your guide who will be holding a blue notebook. Bring water bottle or buy at start.

Description from website: REAL FOOD. REAL PLACES. REAL PEOPLE.

Testaccio is the original foodie neighborhood of Rome and where cucina romana (roman cuisine) was born. It is no coincidence that it's known to Romans as the 'heart of Rome'. Our guided 4-hour Walking Food Tour lets you experience Rome like a local, in an actual neighborhood where people live, eat and shop. Featuring nine authentic food stops with 12 delicious tastings, you get to escape the crowds and taste the best of what the city has to offer. Along the way, your guide will entertain and educate you with stories and insights into Rome's culture and history, while exploring the city's most fascinating offbeat landmarks. Take a break from being a tourist and discover the real Rome with us!

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- Taste why Volpetti has been Rome's top gourmet food store for 40 years
- Savor Rome's 3 most famous pasta dishes with wine at Flavio al Velavevodetto
- Experience real Rome street food – the suppli' (fried risotto ball) from the NY Times acclaimed Trapizzino
- Sample the #3 ranked slice of pizza in all of Rome at Volpetti Piu
- Make your own bruschetta & try real buffalo mozzarella at the famous Testaccio Market
- Become a gelato-tasting expert by learning how to spot the fake stuff from the real thing
- Cannoli at Dess'Art from famous Sicilian pastry chef, Costanza Fortuna
- Enjoy Tiramisu in a chocolate cup from Barberini, the neighbourhood's best pastry shop
- Plus: See Rome's only Pyramid, John Keats' mysterious tomb, the birthplace of Rome's mob gang and much much more...

FOOD HEROES YOU'LL MEET ALONG THE WAY – see pictures and learn more on website

- Giolitti Armando - "When I was 14 years old, I didn't go to school. I just didn't like it.... So, my father told me I better get a job. I've been here ever since, my whole life. That's something you can hang your hat on."
- Trapizzino Stefano - "My trapizzini are what I call a "scarpetta d'asporto", something you can mop up sauce with, but a take-away version"
- Flavio al Velavevodetto - "I've had a passion for cooking since I was fifteen years old, watching my mother and my grandmother cook for the family. This passion grew a little every day, even though I did everything but cook to earn a living. Finally, when I was 45 years old, that passion exploded, strong enough to convince me to quit my old job and start working immediately as a professional cook."
- Dess'Art Costanza - "When I put dough in the oven and see it transform, it gives me so much joy. For us Sicilians, cooking runs through our veins. At home everyone cooked - my grandmothers, my mum and my aunts."
- Lina & Enzo - "My husband and I are just like the caprese salad! We're the perfect couple!"
- Massimo - "I was born and raised with the characteristic things from my country and the bruschetta is one of these."
- Paola & Francesca - "We believe in showing off our produce, so we create a new display every single day. You'll never find something in the same spot. We still hand pick every single peach, every single apricot."
- Volpetti Più Donato - "Taking care of a pizza is like taking care of a woman, you need to wait for her, and treat her gently."

Wed Nov 18

Not booked yet. Offered through www.Througheternity.com

2:30pm Caravaggio Tour: The Art and Blood of a Genius in Baroque Rome –Maximum group size: 13 – 3 hours for 48 Euros

A Life Less Ordinary - The long history of Rome has been chequered by characters full of controversy and brilliance, and no-one has encapsulated this confounding mix of the high and the low more than Caravaggio, one of the most famous painters in the story of Italian art. Extraordinarily prolific, despite his tragically early death at 39 and his long flight from the law, Caravaggio's startlingly original work changed the landscape of art forever. Join us on this Rome group tour, as we uncover his dramatic life of violence and intrigue through the prism of the artistic legacy that he left to the Eternal City. We will retrace his steps through taverns and brothels, palaces and churches, and discover how the troubled life and art of this great genius have remained inextricably linked in the popular imagination of the city.

A Dark and Dangerous world of Conversions and Crucifixions - The ancient church of Santa Maria del Popolo hides two of Caravaggio's greatest masterpieces, The Conversion of Saul and The Crucifixion of St. Peter. In these stark expressions of Caravaggio's unique brilliance, guileless figures loom out of the darkness at us, disconcertingly close and unexpectedly large. These are no idealised paragons of classical beauty, but men with dirty feet and faces marked by their wearisome work. In The Conversion of Paul, Caravaggio undoes a stroke centuries of conventional wisdom concerning composition and symmetry, his canvas dominated not by the moment of divine revelation but instead by the huge and inelegant flank of a draft horse. The contrast with the classical serenity of Annibale Caracci's altarpiece could hardly be more obvious, as two visions of representation vie for the ascendancy in the space of this tiny chapel. It was the vision of Caravaggio that would win the day. These rough and unadorned canvasses of real people thrust into the world of biblical narrative constituted nothing less than a revolution in religious art, and painting would never be the same again.

Blood and Lust in Baroque Rome - The magnificent Palazzo Barberini houses some of Caravaggio's finest works, from his Narcissus eternally lost in the reflection of his own unmatched beauty to the sensational Judith Beheading Holofernes, a heady cocktail of sex and violence that shocked contemporary viewers and then you will admire on our walking tour of Rome. Its graphic violence remains nothing short of hypnotic, and it seems almost impossible not to be transfixed by the livid streams of blood that spurt from the Assyrian general's neck and across the canvas. Caravaggio also courted controversy in his representation of Judith. In her features, contemporaries recognised not an ancient Israeli widow but a local prostitute, and in the withered crone accompanying her not a faithful maidservant but rather a deadly procuress.

Between the Sacred and the Profane - Caravaggio's disturbing tendency to mix the sacred and the profane surfaced once again in the church of Sant'Agostino, not far from Piazza Navona. The Madonna of Loreto that he painted for the Cavaletti Chapel is a wonderful work of introspection and quiet devotion, but the pilgrims' dirty feet, the Virgin Mary's barefooted apparition and the general urban decay in which the scene is set worryingly brought the impoverished and lowly streets of Rome into the rarefied air of the church. Was this the apt reflection of a new religious inclusionism, or wildly inappropriate irreverence? Caravaggio's idiosyncratic approach to sacred imagery divided the art scene of the 17th century city.

The Watcher in the Shadows - In the church of San Luigi dei Francesi, we will be confronted with one of the painter's most famous evocations of violence, the electrically tense Martyrdom of Saint Matthew. A scantily clad youth apparently awaiting baptism has risen up from the crowd of the faithful, sword in hand, and is poised to dispatch the unsuspecting saint. An altar-boy flees in panic as a motley crowd looks grimly on, powerless to intervene. Amongst the whirling vortex of confused figures, a bearded man in the shadows catches our eye. It is none other than Caravaggio himself, at once repulsed and yet beguiled by the terrible power of violence, violence of his own creation.

Life imitates art - In 1606, when Caravaggio was at the height of his fame after so many transcendent successes, the artist's volcanic temper finally brought about his downfall. During a duel on one of the city's many tennis courts, Caravaggio fatally stabbed his rival, the otherwise obscure Ranuccio Tomassoni. The details remain shrouded in mystery – perhaps the argument arose over unpaid gambling debts, or competing affections for a young woman, but whatever the cause, at a stroke Caravaggio became an exiled fugitive. The moody violence that seemed to grow more forceful in every passing work that he painted had erupted from the world of pictorial fantasy and into reality. In that instant of transformation from observer to perpetrator, Caravaggio lost everything. From the most famous painter in Rome, a man feted by cardinals and aristocrats, Caravaggio was reduced to an exiled fugitive, fleeing justice and pursued by unknown assassins out for revenge.

The Spectre of Death - Caravaggio would never again return to Rome. The sins of his past never left him in peace, and the great artist was destined to die feverish and alone on the beach of Porto Ercole in the blinding light of an Italian morning. Fashioning works of sublime beauty from the inky blackness of his imagination, Caravaggio had invented a new language of pictorial drama that was all his own, a chilling world of executions, assassinations and martyrdoms. Those dark fantasies overtook him, and with a tragic inevitability became his own reality. Obsessed with his own work, he had become a part of it. To find Caravaggio, we must seek him in his images.

Thu Nov 19 - Diana

12:35pm Depart Rome FCO via UA#8589 by Air Canada

4:40pm Arrive Toronto YYZ for plane change

6:23pm Depart Toronto YYZ via UA#4216 by Express Jet

8:02pm Arrive Newark EWR

-Nola and Steve

1:30pm Depart Rome FCO via Lufthansa#233

3:30pm Arrive Frankfurt FRA for plane change

5:00pm Depart Frankfurt FRA via UA#933

8:10pm Arrive Washington DC IAD-Dulles for plane change

10:35pm Depart Washington DC IAD-Dulles via UA554

12:33am+1 Arrive Denver DEN on Friday morning Nov 20

Additional Ideas

Hop on and Hop off bus for overview – from \$22

Day trip to Naples and Pompeii

USO near to the Vatican with tours offered

Moses in Chains Church

Sant Andrea al Quirinale, the Jesuit church that Bernini was most proud and thought perfect work

<http://www.grayline.com/things-to-do/italy/rome/>

Other food tours: <https://www.foodtoursofrome.com/>

<http://www.gourmetaly.com/tour/food-tour-of-rome/>

Free walks for 90 minutes: <http://rome-walks.com/>

Rick Steves recommended: <http://www.romewalks.com/> with numerous awards and offerings

Cats and now chocolate. Add mountains and my life is complete...! Lol... 🐱

<http://www.cross-pollinate.com/blog/611/s-a-i-d-artisan-chocolate-in-rome-since-1923/>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/locals-reveal-the-best-things-to-do-in-rome-2014-4>

Blog: <http://www.revealedrome.com/beyond-rome/> - includes book recommendations by Ross King

Bernini:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/monarchy-enlightenment/baroque-art1/baroque-italy/v/bernini-david-1623-24>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/early-renaissance1>

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/high-ren-florence-rome/michelangelo/v/michelangelo-ceiling-of-the-sistine-chapel-1508-12>

Check out Teatro del' Opera

Take a (very short) stroll on the Via Margutta #rome #travel

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/rome-very-short-street-180954580/#tgXMeTpF7KE2FEmZ.03>

<http://www.viator.com/tours/Rome/Tivoli-Day-Trip-from-Rome-Villa-dEste-and-Hadrians-Villa/d511-3058TIVOLI>

Trajan's Amazing Column | National Geographic

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column/article.html?utm_source=NatGeocom&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=inside_20150416&utm_campaign=Content

Gian Lorenzo Bernini - There is a list of his work and each piece has a picture and link.

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gian_Lorenzo_Bernini

Slow Travel Italy - Robert's recommended books to read for Rome, guidebooks, art, history, architecture

http://www.slowtrav.com/italy/rome/rb_books.htm

10 of the best books set in Rome | Travel | The Guardian

<http://www.theguardian.com/travel/2011/jul/13/top-10-books-rome>

The church of Santa Maria with St Teresa in Ecstasy – one of Bernini’s best sculpture

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Maria_della_Vittoria

(Is this the church on Quirinale? – a must see)

Rome basilica - separate from the Vatican :

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbasilica_of_St._John_Lateran

The pope's Vatican from natl geo traveler August/sep 2015 issue:

<http://intelligenttravel.nationalgeographic.com/2015/07/21/inside-the-popes-vatican/>

Vatican and the pope: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2015/08/vatican/draper-text>

Five myths about Italy with good pictures.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2015/06/23/italy/29114213/?csp=travel>

Vatican Arrests 2 in Connection With Leaked Documents - The New York Times

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/03/world/europe/vatican-arrests-leaked-documents.html?emc=edit_au_20151102&nl=afternoonupdate&nid=22982744&r=0

Rome’s Trevi Fountain reopens after makeover

<http://www.france24.com/en/20151104-rome-trevi-fountain-reopens-after-makeover>

10 Innovations That Built Ancient Rome - History Lists

<http://www.history.com/news/history-lists/10-innovations-that-built-ancient-rome>

Landmark mafia trial opens in Rome – Some things are just human nature and never change. In the case of Italy it seems to be so inbred that they are actually bragging that they haven't had a major corruption case since the 1990s. At that time at least half of the politicians were indicted under corruption charges. Surely the news out of Italy is more interesting than anything television can make up.

http://www.france24.com/en/20151105-landmark-mafia-trial-opens-rome/?ns_campaign=nl_quot_en&ns_source=NLQ_20151105&ns_mchannel=email_marketing&ns_fee=0&ns_linkname=20151105_landmark_mafia_trial_opens_rome&f24_member_id=1005248692347

