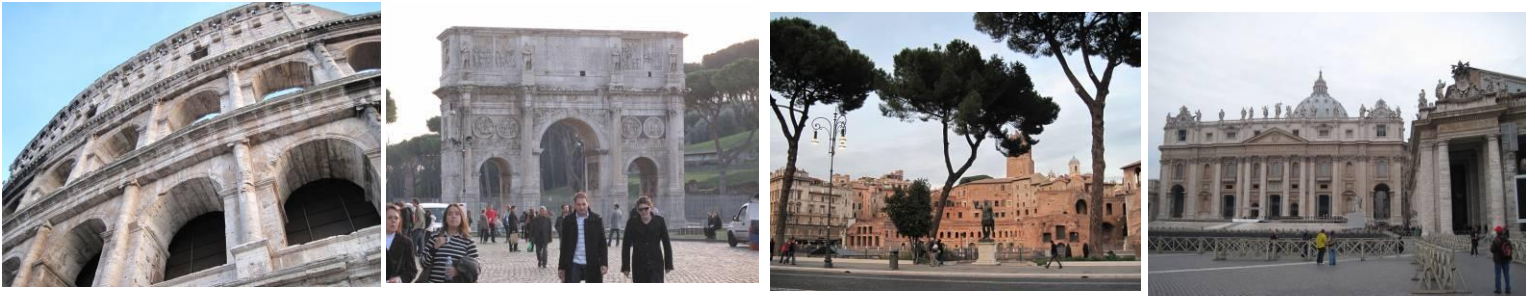


Rome Trip Notes November 12-17, 2009

If it's Rome it must be Tuesday



This was what Tom calls a quickie. Six days is what a travel agent would sell it as, but four nights meant there was at most about four days to tour. I did my best. And well, I needed another trip like a hole in my head anyway, having only been home two days from Indianapolis, and having a trip to Philadelphia trip booked for a couple days after Rome, but what else is a gal to do with her time? If you have a better idea, please help save me from myself.

Airports

I should be grateful that the flight left at all but I had doubts for about three hours at Newark when we first had a delayed aircraft, then a flat tire (after boarding), and finally a passenger who insisted on getting off and then their luggage had to be retrieved per federal regulations. Thus time sitting on my behind was greatly increased.

I'm here Rome!

The last time I was in Rome it was in 1961 and some things never change. They're still digging ruins, the men are still fresh, and to cross a street you still have to close your eyes and just go. Upon my arrival at the Central Terminal it became clear that Rome has 5 million people and many of them were in the train station. Rome probably has about 3 ½ million too many people plus 3 million cars and 2 million motor scooters. If I wondered what Woodstock was like, it must have approximated the train station or the Coliseum grounds.



Miniskirts and bare breasts are not a new thing, nor are sphinx just an old thing

Hotel accommodations

I'd had some concern about my choice but it turned out to be excellent despite being in the Central Terminal area. It's really as close to the center of town as I'd want to be, with easy access to everything and hugely better than I expected. Modernized, gorgeous wood built-ins and parquet

floor, marble bath with the best of fixtures and generous amenities, heated bath towel racks, bidet, slippers and robe, great modern lighting plus many mirrors, very quiet in part due to the motorized window shutters, a built in safe and even a 2nd TV in the bathroom. Lovely lobby and bar plus a huge breakfast buffet included. I'd try another Star Hotel again any day. I learned about Hotel Metropole from Marathon Tours who has used them at least the last 3 years.

One thing wrong with this hotel (and probably with many European hotels) is that my "double twin room for two" (booked in case Kathy decided to come along) came with two beds scooted exactly together like a king bed. Not sure what we would have done with this scenario but one of us might have slept on the hide-a-bed sofa. Another thing wrong with it is that it's managed by Italians. Electricity was off one morning, hot water was off another morning, and labor unrest was in evidence outside one afternoon.

A big surprise and amazing coincidence was looking across the street and seeing Hotel Diana. Not for the namesake but because that is the hotel I stayed while here in 1961. Honest; you can't make this up. I visited and verified that they've been there for 70 years. Drats, they didn't remember me! I remember the neighborhood. You might have guessed correctly that this trip to Rome was a big event in my life, a story I'd share over a drink. However, I immediately wondered if I should have stayed there for old memories sake until I met a woman on a tour who said she'd stayed in better 3-star hotels than Hotel Diana with 4-stars. So I enjoy the memories from across the street.

What did I see?

Out of about 800 pictures, Tom has kindly reduced the numbers down to about a 100 and here's his rendition of my tour. It's a benny for me and for you that he's willing to cull out and reduce them to a manageable number.

<http://www.photoshow.com/watch/RN4bZ5zM> or also available at www.photoshow.com/members/tomskoi with all the other trips.

I try to do it all but I'm sure that would never be possible in Rome. I was even tempted to go on a day's tour to Pompeii and Naples but reminded myself that I came to Rome and there was so much as to now water it down and make it what I refer to as "wave as you go by" tours. After arriving at the airport at 10am, I got into my hotel by 11:15am and was out the door by 1am on a guided tour. Over the four days –



Coliseum inside and out by guided tour and fortunately such tour saved me from the otherwise mile long lines. The place was crawling with tourists. Even with the tour guide, the crowds inside were stifling and I've got to tell you that such didn't let up for most of the trip. Some tours were totally sold out. I don't want to make light of the economy but really What are all those little holes? When the church pulled off the statuary and marble the iron connectors caused the holes you see today.



Roman Forum fifty years ago let you walk through but now there's fencing and the guide walked us around and then up the ancient road to Capitoline Hill for a few downward views. I did return on a subsequent day and walked through the part they allow (and charge 12 Euros for the right.)

Palatine Hill for overview and a reminder that one needs an imagination to figure out what the buildings might have been in the hay-day. Fortunately there are some billboard pictures along the way.



The first shopping center -- Michelangelo designed a 5-story forum that was probably the first shopping center.



Vatican City, a country within Rome and the smallest country in the world is the residence of the popes since 1300s. I wonder if it's the richest country too. Interestingly there is a smaller sovereignty in the Knights of Malta who have a holding and ambassador there too so I wonder what's the difference between country and sovereignty.



At the **Vatican Museums** where I kept seeing treasures I thought I'd seen before in the Paris's Louvre or NYC's Museum of Art it was explained that only originals are in Rome. Wow but this little nation has a lot of money! As a teenager it upset me terribly to see poverty outside and jewels of mind-numbing proportions inside. We entered through a new 52 million Euros entrance (and didn't get to see the old winding staircase that's undergoing a renovation) whereas in 1961 my entry was through the slums. Those slums were bulldozed in the 60s and a wide avenue as a result. There's a huge wall surrounding the Vatican. I wonder why. I saw the Swiss Guards and learned they'd guarded the Pope since the French wars when the Swiss were hired by Italy as mercenaries.



Sistine Chapel -- We had about 20 minutes to sit inside and enjoy the Sistine Chapel. Tour guide commentary is possible due to 'whisper' ear phones. I'd seen the Chapel before but not with the understanding that Michelangelo took 8 years to paint it and not with some understanding of how deeply moving are the paintings. A surprise: what looks like draperies all around the wall are trompe d'oil paintings.



St. Peter's Basilica is by Catholic law the largest church in the Catholic world, though we did also go to the first and earlier Christian church. St. Peter's has a smaller feel than some churches but we were reminded how St Patrick's Cathedral in NYC would fit into one small area of St. Peter's, a trick made possible by separate smaller naves. Did you know the paintings are really mosaics? Hard to imagine. They still have the school of arts and sell tiny mosaics for thousands of dollars, and here we are in St. Peter's with miles of them. Statues inside number about 400 and those outside are at least 120. The marble floor and walls amaze



me with the unique types of marble and how they were often made in mosaic patterns. There's always a service going on, and always these cute little monks (or are they priests?) wandering around. My favorite statue here was Michelangelo's Pieta -- and yet the Bernini statuary (and there were a lot) were what I came for



Appian Way was their first road and parts of it remain both downtown and out of town where I took yet another tour. I'd originally gone in order to see the catacombs, but the road and the 17 kilometers of wall just added to the trip. Later I found that there are 4 major catacomb areas, some holding zillions of bodies. Where I wandered five stories underground at the Catacombs of Domitilla had only contained 150,000 bodies, all of which had been moved. Date this road and tombs back to 300 BC!

then an 'antique' 1959 Mercedes 190 SL. The bridge was important to me in that it was again full of sculptures by Bernini.

St. Angelo Bridge guarding the mausoleum and fortress might have been about as old and here I found an antique car show, but the term antique gets rather muddled in my brain when I'm looking at a 134 A.D. bridge and



Monument to Vittorio Emmanuelle is high on one of Rome's seven hills. This one is called Capitoline Hill and overlooks the Imperial Fora as well as the Roman Forum and Coliseum. It contains a gorgeous plaza, part of the ancient road leading up to it, and two museums. I walked up and through a number of times as the overview to the forum and much of the two was spectacular.



A noted church exists there but I got churched out so missed that particular

one – but not many others. My first day's tour was kept out of the area due to some political cars needing access. So Italian. I had to return to see the Michelangelo statuary and monumental steps.

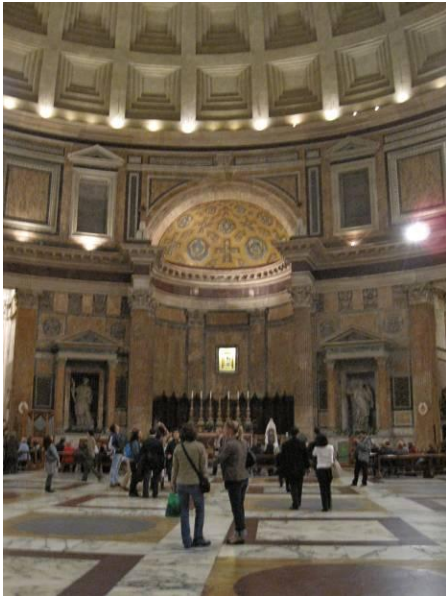
Basilica of St. John Lateran amazed me as much for the huge expanse of marble flooring but also for the giant statuary of the 12 disciples. We'd seen how Michelangelo had represented St Bartholomew in the Sistine Chapel. St Bartholomew had been skinned alive and then burned and the major painting showed his skin being held up, and instead of his face, it was the face of Michelangelo. In St John Lateran the huge statue of St Bartholomew was holding a skin with the face of Michelangelo.



Scala Santa are the Holy Stairs because Jesus once touched them and they were brought to Rome and now people climb the stairs on their knees and say a prayer on each step. Maybe praying that they can reach the top without becoming crippled? We once saw pilgrims on their knees going a very long block in search for a miracle at Portugal's Fatima. It always strikes me as amazing the faith people have and I can totally subscribe to the fact that if they believe it has a very good chance of working.

Piazza Navona is one of the largest squares in Rome as it used to be the oval Stadium of Domitian. It's the Montmartre of Rome with artists and restaurants and lovely sights all day and especially at night. I treated myself to a 7 Euro Prosecco. Egregious prices but how else to enjoy the Bernini fountains and Borromini buildings? It was here I saw a shop selling Pope-style robes.





The Pantheon is an old 2000 year old building that I sort of do 'get' since it's still basically standing and comprehensible. Said to be the glory of Rome and I can agree. The 16 monolithic granite columns outside are huge and were stolen from Egypt. It's amazing how they were transported that long ago having to be all in one piece.



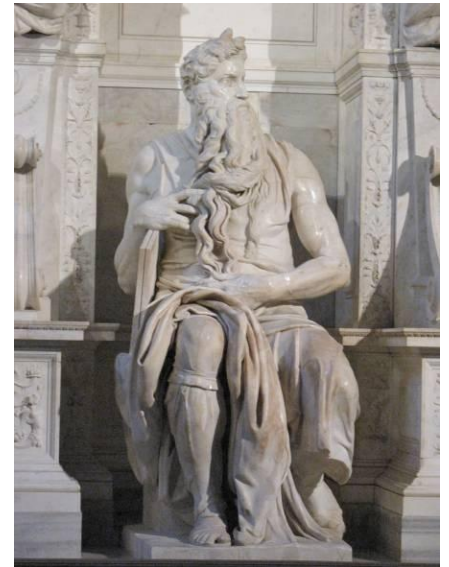
The center dome is an open roof and yes water comes in but the sloping floor and underground piping remain and work efficiently. The old doors were bronze and said to be 450,000 pounds but taken down by a pope so Bernini could fashion the huge canopy in St Peter's. A religious service was ongoing on my first tour of

the outside. Another time I went for a tour in the night time. Some of Italy's most famous kings and artists are buried here, and I think Raphael is one of them.



St. Peter in Chains is home to Michelangelo's masterpiece, Moses. This was my strongest memory of my teenage trip and it took me two tries to see it this time since many churches close up for a three hour lunch hour. It is said that one set of chains held St Peter in captivity, and another set of chains held him another time, and when the two were put together in this church that they melded together by miracle. The Moses statue was built for a pope's tomb but never used. It's part of a large wall of statuary. Not unusual for Michelangelo, he managed to get his

portrait carved within the beard of Moses.



More? As I search for pictures to add to the commentary I realize that Rome's small and compact size had a major advantage – I was able to see a lot in my four days and there's so much more and just too much to describe.

Extravagant spending? The religious extravagance of Rome troubled me greatly as a 16 year old to the point of distancing myself from the church for a few years. This time it only mildly disturbed me. In order to try to keep out of major trouble with my Catholic readers, here are quotes from a couple good friends that explain my dismay in better words than I'm able:

1. *I'm amazed at how many churches in Rome were built as monuments to a particular Cardinal or "Prince of the Church". I got so fed up with the hypocrisy of the churches in Rome, I just gave up and stopped going in them. But then, I happen to think that the Catholic Church*

is one of the greatest catastrophes to befall the human race! (I know. I can hear you say, "Now tell us how you really feel!")

2. I agree. This catholic thing seems to be a monumental hoax and geared to sublimation of the masses (believers) and glorification of the robe (costume) wearers and their greed and need for power. (Wow! that was a mouthful wasn't it).

The little island called Tiberina Isola crossing the Tiber River is gotten to by the Fabricius Bridge which is the oldest bridge in Rome built in 62 B.C. I felt fortunate to make time to walk across to the Island and the town called Trastevere which took me by the Teatro di Marcello.

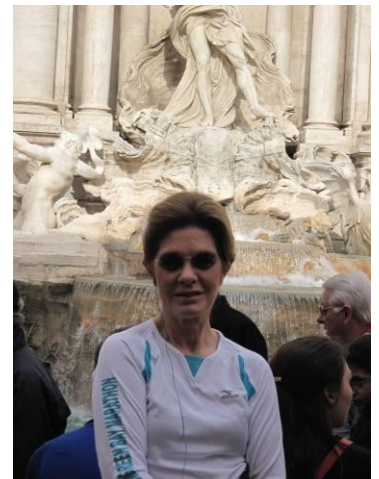


The **Quirinal Palace** was within the walk I often took and used to be the Pope's residence before the Vatican was fully created. I also walked by the **Palace Barberini** and the huge park system surrounding it. Both missed a tour inside which was unfortunate but not possible. I did manage walks down the famous streets from the Via Veneto, Via Cavour, Via Nazionale, Via Quirinale, Via Fori Imperiali, and Via Corso. Gee, I thought Worth Avenue or Rodeo Drive were the most important streets in the world, but Via Veneto is said to be for its elegance.

Campo de' Fiori is said to be Rome's most famous square for not only its architecture but for the markets.



Trevi Fountain or Three Coins in the Fountain was made famous by Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita* and now all tourists must come there and toss a coin in with the wish to return. It was a mob scene! It was frequented by all kinds and a place to watch one's purse. It is near to the **Spanish Steps** which of course I climbed and got a good view from another of Rome's seven hills. The Spanish Steps



were unfortunately crowded with not only tourists but with some demonstration materials, a common occurrence in Italy. The church at the top was worth the climb – sort of like Sacre Cour in Paris. The Plaza di Spagna is said to be a tourist 'must' but I'm not so sure why.



The Italians. I guess three trips to Italy this year was enough as I had no patience for the multitude of demonstrations, the aloofness, the horrible crowded conditions, the high prices (weak dollar), the circus type hawkers, etc. And yet Rome is well attended and very much so by Americans who obviously appreciate the relics or at least the bragging rights for being there.

I really made an effort to stand within the 2000 year old fallen marble statuary and pieces of walls and better understand and appreciate the ancient importance and history. I worked on admiring the idea that everything that fell would remain fallen and in the place it was found. I tried to see in my mind's eye what the stones and pieces of wall might have looked like forever ago. So here's my confession: I prefer the countries that clean up their messes.

Itinerary

Thu 11/12/09

5:30pm Depart Newark

Fri 11/13/09

7:50am Arrive Rome's Fiumicino (Leonardo da Vinci) Airport

Take express train between Fiumicino Airport and Stazione Termini (Rome's main train station) takes about 30 minutes for € 9.50. The train departs from and arrives at Termini station at track n.27 and runs from 6.30am till 11.30pm. Then walk about 300 meters towards Teatro dell Opera.

Hotel: Hotel Metropole, a Star Hotel
3, Via Principe Amedeo, 00185 Rome
Tele: +39 06 4774 Fax: +39 06 4741712
Reservations.metropole.rm@starhotels.it and www.starhotels.com

In Quirinale district, 1 block from Teatro dell Opera, 1 mile from Coliseum, Forum, Trevi Fountain, Spanish Steps and Pantheon. 4-star with recent renovation.

Tue 11/17/09

9:45am Depart Rome

1:50pm Arrive Newark

Musts:

For centuries the most powerful city of the ancient world and cradle of Christianity, Rome boasts a millenary history and the vitality of an adolescent. The golden Tiber is becoming navigable once again and the visitor can rediscover the Eternal City from a totally new point of view. Rome can shed its historical appearance and turn into a modern city with countless shopping streets and business and government centers.

Basilica of Saint Peter

At about 2 minutes from the Starhotels Michelangelo, it is considered as the symbol par excellence of Christianity. Inside, visitors can admire among many others, various works of art such as: "La piet " by Michelangelo, "Il trionfo della croce" (the triumph of the cross) by Giovanni Lanfranco, sepulchro Innocenzo XIII's sepulchre, Saint Peter's Chair by Gian Lorenzo Bernini and the dome designed by Michelangelo. Open from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. every day from October to March, till 7.00 p.m. from April to September.

Dome: entrance every day from 8.00 a.m. to 04.45 p.m. from October to March, till 05.45 p.m..

Ticket only entrance. Underground line A – Ottaviano station.

Basilica of Saint John Lateran

It is the cathedral of Rome. It was founded by Costantino in the IV century, it was demolished and rebuilt several times. The current basilica dates back to the XII century. At the end of the large central nave, under the great triumphal arch, rises the papal altar with the striking and elegant tabernacle dating back to the second half of the XIV century with the frescoes attributed to Barna da Siena. Here the remains of Saint Peter's and Saint Paul's heads are kept in precious silver cases. Opening/Closing Time: from 07.00 a.m. to 07.00 p.m.

Where: Piazza san Giovanni in Laterano, 4; underground line A, San Giovanni station, at 10 minutes from the Starhotels Metropole. Information: telephone 06.69886452.

Basilica of SanPaolo

It is the second basilica by dimension after Saint Peter's. It is situated outside the walls on via ostiense, built by Constantin on apostle Paul's tomb. It is famous for its vast quadruple portico with Saint Paul's statue in the center. Opening/Closing Time: from 07.00 a.m. to 06.00 p.m. Where: via Ostiense, 190; underground line B, San Paolo station.

Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore

The third church in order of importance, but the first wanted by a pope and not by an emperor: Sisto III. Santa Maria del Popolo has also been witness to numerous historical events among which the arrest of Pope Gregory VII during the Christmas mass of 1075 and Charles the Great's Baptism. Below the altar, there is the "Crucifixion" covered with precious materials, where relics of the Bethlem cave are kept, among which a piece of the manger. In addition to Sisto V's tomb, the chapel of Santa Maria del Popolo hosts Bernini's very plain funerary monument. Opening/Closing Time: from 07.00 a.m. to 08.00 p.m. Where: Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore, underground line A, Termini station, Bus 16, 70, 71. 360, 649, 714. At about 5 minutes from the Starhotels Metropole.

Pantheon

This great monument is considered a masterpiece of Roman architecture. Its name refers to the fact that it is a temple dedicated to more than one divinity. Inside, in addition to the royal families' tombs, it houses Raffaello's sepulchre. Opening/Closing Time: weekdays – from 08.30 a.m. to 06.30 p.m.; Sunday 09.00 a.m. – 06.00 p.m.; holidays 09.00 a.m. – 01.30 p.m. Where: Piazza Rotonda, bus 044. Information: Telephone 06.68300230.

Free entrance.

The Colosseum

It is the largest Roman amphitheatre where fierce battles between the gladiators and the wild animals, were staged and where the first Christians were put to death. Opening/Closing Time: from 09.00 a.m. up to one hour

before sunset. Where: Piazza del Colosseo; underground line B, Colosseo station, at 10 minutes from the Starhotels Metropole. Information: Telephone 06.39967700. Ticket only entrance.

Imperial Forums

Symbol of the ancient times and core of the Roman civilization, it was the political, juridical and social center in ancient Rome. Visitors can walk through and admire the ancient ruins and the apses from which the orators spoke to the public and the Massenzio Basilica. Opening/Closing Time: from 09.00 a.m. up to one hour before sunset. Where: Via dei Fori Imperiali, underground line B, Colosseo station. Information: Telephone 06.39967700. Free entrance.

Traianus Markets

A complex made of 150 units used as shops and wanted by Traianus. In fact, it can be considered the first covered shopping center in history. Worth seeing the Torre delle Milizie (Militia Tower) and the large red brick building. Opening/Closing Time: Winter from 09.00 a.m. to 04.30 p.m., Summer from 09.00 to 06.30 p.m. Where: via IV novembre, 94; underground line B, Colosseo station. Information: Telephone 06.69780532. Free entrance.

Altare della Pace (“Ara Pacis”)

It is a squared barrier with an altar in the center decorated with bas-reliefs sculpted by Greek artists. The Ara Pacis was built to commemorate Augustus' prodigious victories in Spain and Gallia. Opening/Closing Time: from 09.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m., holidays from 09.00 a.m. to 01.30 p.m. Where: Lungotevere in Augusta; underground line A, Barberini station. Information: Telephone 06.68806848.

The Constantinian Arch

It is the most important among the triumphal arches in the world. Built to celebrate Constantine's victory over Massenzio it marks the border between the Roman Forum and the Colosseum. This monument is particularly interesting, as it was built in a period not very prosperous for the Roman Empire and that's why the materials used were taken from other buildings and readapted to construct the arch. Among the various decorations, special attention should be given to Marcus Aurelius' statue representing him in one of his greatest battles. Where: Via di s. Gregorio, underground line B, Colosseo station.

Castel S. Angelo

Conceived as emperor Adrianus' mausoleum, it has housed the remains of the imperial dynasties up to Caracalla and it was subsequently transformed into emperor Aurelianus' castle. For a long time it has been used as a refuge for the Popes and that is why a fortified passage was built connecting the castle to the Vatican. It is currently the seat to the National Museum of Castel S. Angelo, where visitors can admire weapon collections and documents related to the history of the castle. All areas are opened to visitors, from the dungeons to the papal apartments. Opening/Closing Time: from 09.00 a.m. to 07.00 p.m., closed on Monday. Where: Lungotevere Castello, 50, metro A fermata Lepanto a 5 minuti dallo Starhotels Michelangelo. Information: Telephone 06.6819111. Ticket only entrance.

Ancient Via Appia

It is the most famous consular road. It is a real open air museum where the passers-by can admire numerous pagan funerary constructions, the first Christian cemeteries and various mausoleums. Cecilia Metella's tomb stands out for importance. Where: ancient via Appia area – Ardeatina, can be reached with bus 118.

Campidoglio (The Capitol)

The project of the square is by Michelangelo Buonarroti. In the center, the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. Opposite the square, the Senate building, today seat of the city council of Rome. On the left, Palazzo Nuovo which houses the Capitoline Museum. Where: Piazza del Campidoglio, underground line B, Colosseo station, or Bus 40 and 64.

Capitoline Museums

The museum houses the most ancient public collection of works of art in the world, founded in 1471 by Sisto IV and enriched in time by the pontiffs who reigned after him. It is divided into the two buildings of Piazza del Campidoglio (Capitol Square), Palazzo dei Conservatori and the opposite Palazzo Nuovo. Here, among the many works of art, are kept the Galata Morente (Dying Galata, a naked warrior wounded to death) and Amendola's sarcophagus with the battle between Greeks and Galatians. Theme exhibitions are staged during specific periods of the year. Opening/Closing Time: from 09.00 a.m. to 08.00 p.m., closed on Monday. Where: Piazza del Campidoglio, underground line B, Colosseo station, or Bus 40 and 64. Information: website www.museicapitolini.org; – email info.museicapitolini@comune.rome.it; Telephone 06.39967800. Ticket only entrance.

Trevi Fountain

It is the most famous fountain in Rome, designed by architect Nicola Salvi in 1735, with the sea as the central theme. The Duchi di Poli building is set on the background. Situated in the homonymous square, it is certainly the most visited site in Rome. In fact, thousands of people visit this fountain to throw a coin in it: the legend says that by doing so the tourist will come back to Rome again. Federico Fellini's movie, "La dolce vita", has contributed to increasing the world fame of this fountain. Where: Piazza Fontana di Trevi, underground line A, Barberini station, at a short distance from the Starhotels Metropole.

Vittor Emmanuel II's Monument

An impressive monument built to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Kingdom of Italy. It has been the symbol of Italian unity since 1921 and it is also the homeland altar. Two sentinels of honor stand guard constantly to the "Tomba del Milite Ignoto" (Tomb of the Unknown Soldier), containing the mortal remains of a soldier fallen during World War One. Where: Piazza Venezia, underground line B, Colosseo station.

Palazzo del Quirinale

It was the papal seat, later to become the residence of the Italian royal family; it is currently the residence of the President of the Republic. It is quite imposing, but does not have a great architectural value, though many important artists, among whom Bernini, collaborated to its construction. Opening/Closing Time: Inly on Sunday from 08.30 a.m. to 12.30. Where: Piazza del Quirinale, Bus 40. Information: Telephone 06.46991. Ticket only entrance.

Piazza del Popolo

An elegant pedestrian area, where political events and end of season concerts are staged. The classic stroll along Via del Corso, Via del Babuino and Via Ripetta starts on this square lined by famous boutiques framed by historical-cultural beauties from the Renaissance period. The Flaminian obelisk, brought here from Egypt by emperor Augustus rises in the center of the square. The church of S. Maria del Popolo (Saint Mary of the People) is situated at the bottom right corner of the square.

Church of S. Maria del Popolo

Piazza del Popolo, 12 Opening/Closing Time: every day 07.00 a.m. – 12.00, 04.00 p.m. – 07.00 p.m. Underground line A, Flaminio station.

Piazza di Spagna

Characterized by the majestic stairs connecting the Square to the church of Trinità dei Monti, Piazza di Spagna has become the scenario of important and spectacular events. Climbing the steps and turning left, visitors can reach the Terrazza del Pincio, from which they can enjoy a breathtaking view of Rome. Trinità dei Monti. Piazza Trinità dei Monti Opening/Closing Time: 9 – 13; Sunday from 11.30 a.m. French mass. Underground line A, Piazza di Spagna or Barberini stations.

Piazza Navona

This square is the symbol of the Baroque style and here it is possible to admire various masterpieces by famous

sculptors such as Bernini, Borromini and G. Della Porta. It is one of the most patronized places in Rome, as in addition to representing a touristic destination, it is also a meeting point for the Roman night life. Nearby are clubs and restaurants for all tastes. Its peculiar elliptic shape recalls that of a stadium, in fact it rises right on the ancient Domitian stadium. The square features three fountains: the central fountain (Fontana dei Fiumi – the Fountain of the rivers) is Bernini's work and represents the four most important rivers in the world; the side fountains are Fontana del Moro (Moor Fountain), designed by Bernini, and the Fontana di Nettuno (Neptune's Fountain) designed by Giacomo Della Porta. The church of Saint Agnese in Agone is a typical example of Baroque style by Borromini, peculiar for its concave façade. Where: Piazza Navona, Bus 64, at 2 Km from Strahotels Michelangelo.

Villa Borghese

Famous city park where it is possible to visit the Gallery of the well known Borghese family. Here one can admire many important artworks among which the paintings by Caravaggio and the sculptures by Antonio Canova. Borghese Gallery: Opening/Closing Time: from Tuesday to Friday 09.00 a.m. – 07.30 p.m., Saturday 09.00 a.m. – 11.00 p.m. Where: Piazzale Scipione Borghese, 5, underground line A, Barberini station; electric bus #116 Information: Website: www.galleriaborghese.it Telephone: 06.32810. Ticket only entrance, free of charge for visitors under 18 and over 60.

Via del Corso

This pedestrian area is characterized by about a km of shop windows, mostly woman fashion apparel stores, made even more fascinating by the Renaissance and XVIII century buildings and a few important churches, such as the Chiesa di Gesù e Maria (Church of Jesus and Mary), where some of Lanfranco's paintings are exposed. Where: Piazza del Popolo area, underground line A, Flaminio station.

Trastevere

It is a true "Roman" area of the capital, where one can still feel the quiet atmosphere of the 19th Century life, a feeling conveyed by the presence of the artisan shops and the historical context surrounding it. At night, the neighborhood is crowded and is completely transformed thanks to the numerous clubs hidden in the most secluded corners. Can be easily reached from Termini railway station with Line H.

Campo de' Fiori

On this square you can breathe an unusual air mixed with history and Roman spirit; in fact, in the morning it becomes the seat of the typical noisy Roman market, while at night it is filled with the people patronising the various clubs lining the square. In the center of it the statue of the philosopher Giordano Bruno, burnt alive right on that spot after being sentenced to death by the Inquisition. Can be easily reached from Termini railway station, bus 64.

Colonna Gallery

It is one of the most important private collections of the capital, housed in some of the rooms of Palazzo Colonna. The fabulous ornaments of the "Sala Grande" frame the works belonging to the homonymous family. Among the other masterpieces, visitors can admire the works by Bronzino, Jacopo and Domenico Tintoretto, Francesco Albani and Pietro da Cortona. Tours to Princess Isabel's apartments are available by reservation. Opening/Closing Time: Saturday from 09.00 to 01.00 p.m. Where: Piazza S. Apostoli, 66, bus 64 or 40 from Termini Railway Station. Information: Telephone 06.6784350. Ticket only entrance.

Doria Pamphilj Gallery

The Pamphilj family collection includes over 400 paintings dating from the XV to the XVIII century and it is exposed on the first floor of the homonymous marvellous building. The gallery houses over 400 works, among which the famous portrait of Pope Innocenzo X by Velazquez and "il riposo nella fuga in Egitto" (the rest during the flight into Egypt) by Caravaggio. Opening/Closing Time: from 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m., closed on Thursday. Where: Piazza del Collegio Romano, 2, bus 64 or 40 from Termini Railway Station. Information: website: www.doriapamphilj.it; Telephone 06.6797323. Ticket only entrance.

National Gallery of Ancient Arts

The National Gallery of Ancient Arts is housed inside one of the most important buildings belonging to the Roman nobility built by Bernini and Borromini. Most of the collection comes from the Barberini family. The indoor environments exhibit XVIII century decorations. The large hall on the first floor deserves special attention for the dazzling fresco by Pietro da Cortona of 1633. Other works of specific interest are: the Portrait of Stefano Colonna by Bronzino, the Fornarina by Raffaello, in which the famous artist portrays his beloved, La Venere e Adone (Venus and Adonis) by Tiziano and Canaletto's views of Venice. Opening/Closing Time: from 09.00 to 07.00 p.m., closed on Monday. Where: Via Barberini, 18, underground line A, Barberini station. Information: website: www.ticketeria.it Telephone 06.4824184. Ticket only entrance.

Vatican Museums

Here are exhibited is the largest collection of ancient works in the world. Here visitors can admire artistic beauties extending over 7 km. In fact, the Vatican museums occupy more than four floors. The first group dates back to the Renaissance period and from then on the popes have continued and completed the collection of the most precious treasures of art. The museums are divided into two sections: the first is the Egyptian one, followed by the Chiaramonti museum, the Pio Clemente museum, where copies of the most famous Greek works and the Perseus by Antonio Canova are kept. There is also the Etruscan museum and the rooms dedicated to Raffaello. Worth mentioning is the Sistine Chapel, its vault and background decorated by Michelangelo with the famous representation of the Universal Judgement. On the right side of the chapel is depicted Christ's life, while the life of Moses is painted on the left. Opening/Closing Time: From Monday to Friday from 08.45 a.m. to 03.45 p.m.; Saturday from 8.45 a.m. to 01.45 p.m. Closed on Sunday. Where: Viale Vaticano, bus #46 at a short distance from the Starhotels Michelangelo. Information: website: www.vatican.va; Telephone: 06.69883333. Free entrance on the last Sunday of the month.

City of Rome Marathon 2009/2010

If you're looking for the ideal combination of athletic challenges and a nice weekend of sight-seeing, Rome Marathon is the place to go. Held annually in March, when nice days exceed hot days and the herds of tourists haven't arrived yet, Rome Marathon attracts more and more runners each year. On March 22 2009, when the last version of Rome Marathon – or to be exact Maratona della città di Roma – was taking place, more than 11,000 runners showed up. Your next chance for a long run through this romantic and historic city is March 21, 2010.

As a participant in the City of Rome Marathon, you get to drink in the city's historic atmosphere right from the beginning. The start line is placed in front of the 2,000 year old Coliseum, and from here the course is a veritable festival of magnificent sights. Among other things, you will run past the Saint Peter's, the Trevi Fountain, Piazza Navona,, the Spanish Steps and through a lot of picturesque, narrow streets in the old part of the city. So, remember your camera but leave your PB aspirations at home – you need time to appreciate all the breathtaking landmarks and to conquer the cobblestones that cover about half the route. The course is surprisingly flat for a city built on seven hills, but the sometimes uneven cobblestone streets, which in the narrowest places can feel quite crowded, may add a few extra minutes to your finish time.

Throughout the years, Rome Marathon has been making good use of its unique status as the capital of the catholic church. For example, the milepost-year 2000 was celebrated by moving the start area to Saint Peter's Square and having the pope himself wish all the runners good luck before the run. And even though the start line is now back in the gladiatorial ambience of the Coliseum, the word has it that priests and cardinals are among the cheering crowds when the runners pass Saint Peter's Church. And if you need more than spiritual nourishment for finishing a marathon, just arrive a day or two early and feast on the many temptations in a city where it is almost impossible not to carb load.

And the best news is that you – or maybe your less marathon-passionate travel partner – don't have to cover 42 km of narrow, Roman streets to experience the special atmosphere on marathon day. According to tradition, 15 minutes after the bold marathoners are sent on their way, 80,000 children, adults and seniors head out for the non-competitive Stracittadina Fun Run. The 4 km course shares its start line at the Coliseum with the marathon and cruises around the ancient city's streets before finishing outside of Domus Aurea – the ruins of emperor Nero's Golden House.

Rome - Suggested itineraries

Whether you have one, two, three days or more, Rome has plenty to offer and more than enough to keep you entertained. Below are our recommended itineraries to give you the best possible overview of the city. We recommend that you pace yourself and drink plenty of water, especially in the summer, as the heat and bustle of Rome can quickly take its toll on any visitor.



One Day in Rome

If you have only one day in Rome, the first thing you should do is change your schedule and book at least three more. Rome wasn't built in a day and shouldn't be visited in a day either. Barring that, lace up your walking shoes and spend your time focusing on the main sites between **Palatine Hill** and the [Spanish Steps](#). Start off with a bang by visiting the [Roman Colosseum](#) and marvel at Rome's greatest architectural wonder. Save time waiting in line by buying your ticket at the ticket office at the entrance to nearby Palatine Hill. After the Colosseum, wander up Palatine Hill, the birthplace of Rome, for a panoramic view of the [Roman Forum](#) and central Rome. Next, explore the Roman Forum yourself and make your way on to nearby **Capitoline Hill**. Here you will find the glorious [Piazza del Campidoglio](#) designed by Michelangelo and the **Capitoline Museums**. But save those for later. For now just enjoy the view and wait for your stomach to rumble. You can find quick eats in the neighborhoods behind Capitoline Hill around the **Piazza Venezia**. After lunch, ogle at the immense, wedding cake-like **Monument to Victor Emmanuel II** as you make your way up the Via del Corso. Along the Corso, detour down the well-trod side streets to the [Pantheon](#) at Piazza de la Rotonda, and then double back to reach the world famous [Trevi Fountain](#). After you've tossed a coin in the fountain and had an ice cream, the streets beyond the Fountain contain Rome's most chic [shopping](#) spots leading all the way up to the **Spanish Steps**. Hang out with the wanna-be's and the jet set, or climb the steps and make your way to [Borghese Park](#) for sunset views over the city. As the night dawns, make your way down to [Trastevere](#) by bus or the help of the metro. The former ghetto is chalk full of [various restaurants](#) and [bars](#) sure to please every budget and taste, with plenty of [entertainment](#) afterwards.

Two Days in Rome

Wake up early on the second day and head the [Vatican city](#) to beat the crowds. Get in line for the **Vatican Museum** and **Sistine Chapel**. When your neck is sore from craning at Michelangelo's famous ceiling, get in line for the immense [St. Peter's Basilica](#). Spend time before and after in **St. Peter's Square** admiring the different statues all around the square. If you plan ahead, you can even get an audience with the Pope here on Sundays and Wednesdays if he's in town. After you've been to church, grab lunch and then head over to the old Post Office to mail a letter from the world's smallest country. Once you've had lunch and your spirit is revitalized, take a nice shady stroll down the Tiber River. Along the river you can visit the [Castel 'Sant'Angelo](#) or the frescoed Villa Farnesina near the Botanical Gardens for a taste of Roman Renaissance. Cross the river then and explore the local neighborhoods and backstreets in and around **Piazza Navona** and the **Campo de Fiori** (flower market). There are lots of [restaurants](#) in this area for when you get hungry and the bars and nightclubs stay crowded until long after midnight. If you want to really get dressed up and go clubbing with the locals, make your way out to Testaccio south of town. Alternatively, if it's high culture you crave, stop by Hello Ticket in the Termini Train Station to book for music, dance and [theater events](#) located all over town.

Three Days in Rome

If you have three days, spend the morning of the third day exploring the [Capitoline Museums](#) – three of the oldest in the world containing artifacts and artworks from the ancient Roman world. The three museums are connected by an underground gallery and run the gambit from a giant bronzed head of Constantine to the serpent-headed locks of

Bernini's *Medusa*. Have lunch along the river near the **Isola Tiberina** and spend the afternoon finishing up whatever you didn't see on *Day One* and *Day Two*. Alternatively, check out some of Rome's other hidden gems: **The Baths of Diocletian** at Piazza Repubblica was the largest bathhouse of its dating back to 300 A.D. and contains **Octagonal Hall**, a former Roman gymnasium. Three kilometers south of the [Colosseum](#), is the **Ancient Appian Way**, the primary road that led into [Ancient Rome](#). All along the road are ruins, cafes, nature trails, and various [catacombs](#) of crucified Christians who were not allowed to be buried inside the city walls. Art aficionados will want to head back up to Borghese Park to visit the **Borghese Gallery**. A visit to the private gallery requires a reservation but is well worth the effort to see masterpieces by Caravaggio, Raphael, Titian and Rubens. In the evening, stroll along the [Imperial Roman Forum](#) and revisit the Colosseum at night for a final awe inspiring view.

If You Have Longer...

If you have more time, you may want to get out and explore some of the other [sights of Rome](#). [Ostia Antica](#) is an ancient seaport within an hour of the city and is Rome's excavated answer to Pompeii. The **Tivoli Gardens** and the **Villa d'Este** was the summer residence of Emperor Hadrian and is a living Eden, filled with fountains, statues and breathtaking Baroque gardens. It's best reached by an organized tour. North of the city, Lago Bracciano is a relaxing lake area with plenty of nature and three interesting Medieval villages along the shore, complete with castles, churches and villas – a great getaway from the hustle and bustle of Rome. The beaches in and around **Civitavecchia** on the Mediterranean town is another option. Of course you may not wish to leave Rome at all. We don't blame you.

Ancient Rome



One of the most ancient cities in Europe, ancient Rome has lived through 2,700 years.

Since then it has been continuously inhabited, and, as headquarters first of the [Roman Empire](#) and then of the [Roman Catholic Church](#), it has had a gigantic impact on the world.

Many European languages are based on *Latin*, many political and legal systems follow the ancient Roman model; and buildings all round the world utilize styles and techniques perfected in ancient Rome.

Today's Rome has become the world's most famous open-air museum. The city itself retains layers of buildings spanning over two millennia.

The Ancient Centre

The Capitol, the southern summit of the Capitoline Hill, was the symbolic centre of the Roman world and home to the city's three most important temples.

Below the Capitol lies the [Roman Forum](#), once the focus of political, social, legal and commercial life; the Imperial Fora, built when Rome's population grew; The Roman Forum is known as the central area around which ancient Rome developed; and the [Colosseum](#), the centre of entertainment.

Overlooking the Forum is the [Palatine Hill](#), where Romulus is said to have founded Rome in the 8th century BC, and emperors lived for over 400 years.

The Vatican City

Vatican city (Citta del Vaticano), the papal residence, was built over the tomb of Saint Peter. The Vatican's position as a sovereign state within a state was guaranteed by the Lateran Treaty of 1929, marked by the building of a new road, the Via della Conciliazione. This leads from huge [St Peter's basilica](#) to [Castel Sant' Angelo](#), a monument to a far grimmer past.

Vatican is the **smallest state in the world**, based in Rome in Italy.

Inside the Vatican city we can find 11 [Vatican Museums](#) with the restored [Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel](#), and **Vatican Gardens**, an enchanted place, a system of large and small gardens, fountain, fish pool and enclosure for rabbits. They date back to medieval times when vineyards and orchards extended to the north of the Apostolic Palace.

Vatican radio station broadcasts all over the world in 29 languages, it has its television station, the daily newspaper, post office with Vatican stamps, shops, offices and publishing house. All signposted, in highly-sophisticated system of organisation.

More than a thousand residents are responsible for the smooth, day-to-day running of this nerve centre of official Christianity, with of course the Pope at its head, all guarded by the [Swiss guard](#).