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# INTRODUCING ROME

THIS IMAGE  
NOT AVAILABLE  
IN PICK & MIX

No other city comes close. It may no longer be *caput mundi* (capital of the world), but Rome is an epic, bubbling-over metropolis harbouring lost empires. One visit and you'll be hooked.

Rome has a glorious monumentality that it wears without reverence. Its architectural heirlooms are buzzed around by car and Vespa as if they were no more than traffic islands.

The city bombards you with images: Valentino, Bulgari, Dolce & Gabbana; elderly ladies with dyed hair the colour of autumn leaves; priests with cigars; traffic jams beneath Roman aqueducts; plateloads of pasta in shining cafés; sinuous trees beside rust-golden buildings; barrages of pastel-coloured scooters revving up at traffic lights as if preparing for a race.

People in Rome encapsulate the spirit of the city. Pass a central café and the tables outside are animated with people, downing fast shots of espresso and sporting big black sunglasses. They are neither posing nor hung over. Nuns flutter through the streets, on the trip of a lifetime or secondment from the Philippines, bustling across the road before treating themselves to an ice cream. Churches fill during Mass, and the priests, dressed in purple, cream or red silk (right down to their socks), read the rites to a hushed congregation (mostly from out of town).

Here the national preoccupation with the aesthetic fuses with incredible urban scenery to make Rome a city where you feel cool just strolling through the streets, catching the sunlight on your face outside a café, or eating a long lunch. It's a place that almost encourages you to take things easy. Don't feel like going to a museum? What's the need when it's all outside on the streets?

## ROME LIFE

Hype or hyperbole? Much has been made of Rome's recent renaissance – newspapers have reported on a boom in tourism, on megaconcerts and a thriving economy. But behind the headlines, what's the reality on the ground? Has Rome really changed so much?

At the centre of the debate is Rome's mayor, Walter Veltroni. Building on the foundations laid by his predecessor, Veltroni has gone on to spearhead a cultural revival, investing in the arts and promoting a long list of events, including Rome's first-ever film festival. Tourism, a traditional barometer of city health, is flourishing, in marked contrast to the rest of the country. From a traveller's point of view, there's never been a better time to visit the Eternal City.

Yet the critics are waiting in the wings. Veltroni is accused of glossing over locals' needs in an all-out bid to pack in the visitors. Residents in the Campo de' Fiori area lament that nothing is done to quieten the drunk students who cavort round their square every night. In Trastevere, locals are finding it increasingly hard to keep up with the rents paid by rich foreigners.

Rome is not Europe's, nor indeed Italy's, most cosmopolitan city and while globalisation has made inroads, it hasn't yet 'Los Angelised' Rome, as one critic so memorably put it. Stores in the city centre might stay open all day, but head out to the suburbs at lunchtime and you'll find most shops shut and the streets subdued. The onset of contemporary design in the form of Renzo Piano's avant-garde Auditorium Parco della Musica and any number of fashionable eateries has not eclipsed the tradition of family-run trattorias and neighbourhood pizzerias.

Transport, an old Roman bugbear, is still an issue. The metro struggles to cope with a demand that is well over operating limits, while buses battle their way through streets blocked by double-parked cars. Improvements are on the cards, though. Work has started on a third metro line that will eventually connect the city's heavily populated southeastern suburbs with the centre.

The depressed state of Rome's *periferie* (outskirts) is not a new problem but it looks as though city hall is finally tackling it. In 2006 the *comune* (town council) approved a huge urban-renewal programme, covering everything from the creation of new residential hubs to the preservation of parkland. Construction has started on various projects, and although it will be years before they come to fruition, the fact that they've gone beyond the drawing board is news in itself.



The iconic Pantheon (p72) makes a great backdrop to alfresco dining on the Piazza della Rotonda

# GETTING STARTED

Ever since Grand Tourists invaded in the 18th century, Rome has been a major tourist attraction. Every year millions of visitors pour into town, lured by a reputation that modern advertisers would be pushed to improve.

The city's main gateway is Leonardo da Vinci Airport (aka Fiumicino), although if you're flying with a low-cost European airline you'll probably land at Ciampino. Both are well connected with the city centre. Once in town, you'll find the centre is best explored on foot – it's not big and the streets are wonderfully vibrant.

## WHEN TO GO

Rome is a busy year-round destination, although some months are busier than others. The city is at its most enticing in spring, between late March and June – the weather is good, flowers are blooming and the light is gorgeous. Early autumn (September and October) is another good time. It follows, however, that these months are the busiest of the year and prices are at their highest. Peak rates also apply at Christmas, New Year and Easter.

Visitors are traditionally warned to avoid July and August, when high temperatures make sightseeing a physical challenge. But if you can handle the heat or are prepared to adapt your daily routine, the summer can be a good time to visit. The city is less chaotic than usual, the festival season is in full swing, and prices are more manageable. Note, however, that many small businesses, including some restaurants and hotels, close for two weeks or so in August.

## FESTIVALS

Summer and autumn are the best times to catch the top festivals. The Estate Romana festival, which runs from June to September, sponsors hundreds of events, many of which are staged in spectacular outdoor settings. The fun continues into autumn as the Roma-Europa festival takes over.

For more information see the Festivals & Events colour spread, [p141](#); for a list of public holidays see the Directory, [p290](#).

## January

### FESTA DI SANT'ANTONIO

Chiesa di Sant'Eusebio, Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II; [M](#) Vittorio Emanuele

On 17 January animal lovers take their pets to be blessed at the Chiesa di Sant'Eusebio in honour of the patron saint of animals.

## February

### CARNEVALE

In the week before Ash Wednesday, children take to the streets in fancy dress and throw *coriandoli* (coloured confetti) over each other.

## March/April

### MOSTRA DELLE AZALEE

Piazza di Spagna; [M](#) Spagna

The Spanish Steps are lined with thousands of azaleas – a perfect photo occasion.

### EASTER

[M](#) Colosseo & Ottaviano-San Pietro

On Good Friday the pope leads a candle-lit procession around the Colosseum. At noon on Easter Sunday he blesses the crowds in Piazza San Pietro.

### SETTIMANA DEI BENI CULTURALI

[www.beniculturali.it/settimanacultura](#) in Italian

A bonanza of free culture. Public museums and galleries open free of charge and guided tours aim to get Italians (and foreigners) back into their heritage.

### NATALE DI ROMA

Piazza del Campidoglio; [G](#) Piazza Venezia

Rome celebrates its birthday on 21 April with bands on Piazza del Campidoglio and fireworks all around.

## May

### PRIMO MAGGIO

[www.primomagGIO.com](#) in Italian; Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano; [M](#) San Giovanni

A free event, Rome's biggest open-air rock concert attracts huge crowds and Italian performers.

## June

### FESTA DI SAN GIOVANNI

[M](#) San Giovanni

The birth of St John the Baptist is commemorated on 24 June, particularly around the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano.

### ESTATE ROMANA

[www.estateromana.comune.roma.it](#)

Between June and September, Rome's big summer festival turns the city into a giant stage. Events range from book fairs to raves and gay parties.

### FESTA DEI SANTI PIETRO E PAOLO

St Peter's Basilica & Basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura; [M](#) Ottaviano-San Pietro & San Paolo  
Romans celebrate patron saints Peter and Paul on 29 June, a public holiday. Festivities are centred on St Peter's Basilica and Via Ostiense.

### ¡FIESTA!

[www.fiesta.it](#) in Italian; Via Appia Nuova; [G](#) Via Appia Nuova

A festival of Latin American food, music and dance on the racecourse on Via Appia Nuova. The fun lasts from mid-June to September.

## July

### ROMA ALTA MODA

[www.altaroma.it](#) in Italian

Catwalk models parade designer gear at locations throughout the city during Rome's biannual fashion week.

### FESTA DI NOANTRI

[% 06 516 07 969](#); [www.biosterra.com/noantri.htm](#) in Italian; Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere;

[G](#) Viale di Trastevere

Trastevere's annual party takes over the neighbourhood for the last two weeks of July.

### ROME PRIDE

[www.romapride.it](#) in Italian

An annual festival celebrating gay rights and culture.

## August

### FESTA DELLA MADONNA DELLA NEVE

Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore; [G](#) Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore

A 4th-century snowfall is celebrated at the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore on 5 August.

### FERRAGOSTO

The Festival of the Assumption, 15 August, is celebrated with almost total shutdown as the entire population heads out of town.

## September

### LA NOTTE BIANCA

[www.lanottebianca.it](#)

An all-night bonanza of cultural events and shopping.

### ROMAEUROPA

[www.romaeuropa.net](#)

Rome's premier music and dance festival runs from late September to November.

## ADVANCE PLANNING

The most obvious thing you'll need to think about before booking your ticket is whether or not you need a visa. You probably won't, but if you do – see [p300](#) to find out – make sure you get onto it early. Italian bureaucracy is notoriously complex and the wheels turn very slowly.

Accommodation is something else you'd do well to sort out in advance. If you're visiting in high season (spring, early autumn, Christmas, New Year and Easter), a reservation is essential and you should try to book as early as possible. At other times, it's not absolutely necessary but is still a good idea, especially if you want your first choice of hotel.

Not many sights require you to book in advance although there is one that you'd be sorry to miss. The [Museo e Galleria Borghese](#) ([p149](#)) is one of Rome's highlights, an absolute gem that more than merits its booking.

You can reserve tickets for a number of sights on [www.pierreci.it](#) (there is a €1.50 booking fee) but unless you're worried about queues – which you'd be wise to for the [Colosseum](#) ([p58](#)) – there's usually not much point.

Similarly, unless you have your heart set on a Valentine's Day tête-à-tête or New Year's Eve dinner you shouldn't have many problems booking a restaurant once you're in town. A phone call a day or two beforehand will usually suffice.

**ENZIMI**

www.enzimi.com

A festival dedicated to young musicians and performance artists.

**VIA DELL'ORSO CRAFT FAIR**Piazza Navona; ☞ Corso Rinascimento  
Artisans on and around Via dell'Orso open their studios and workshops to browsers and buyers.**October/November****CINEMA – FESTA INTERNAZIONALE DI ROMA**www.romacinemafest.org; Auditorium Parco della Musica; ☞ Viale Tiziano  
Rome's film festival, aka RomeFilmFest, rolls out the red carpet for Hollywood big guns.**VIA DEI CORONARI MOSTRA-MERCATO**Piazza Navona; ☞ Corso del Rinascimento  
This famous antiques street opens its doors and displays its wares.**December/January****PIAZZA NAVONA CHRISTMAS FAIR**Piazza Navona; ☞ Corso del Rinascimento  
Piazza Navona is taken over by market stalls selling all manner of seasonal goodies (and rubbish).**CAPODANNO**

New Year's Eve is celebrated with open-air concerts and fireworks.

**COSTS & MONEY**Rome is not Italy's most expensive city – that dubious honour usually goes to Venice – but neither is it particularly cheap. As a visitor, accommodation is going to be your biggest outlay, costing anywhere between €80 and €300 for a double room in a three-star hotel. For a high-season bed in a hostel reckon on at least €25. If you're travelling with kids, note that some hotels don't charge for toddlers who bunk up with mum and dad. Obviously, location affects hotel prices with those in the *centro storico* (historic centre) more expensive than those around Stazione Termini. Food costs also vary tremendously. A sit-down pizza with a beer might cost around €18, while a full meal at a city centre restaurant will set**HOW MUCH?**0.5L mineral water €0.50-2  
Slice of pizza €2-3.50  
Bottle of Peroni beer €1-6  
A coffee €0.70-1  
A gelato €1.50  
Taxi to/from the airport €40 (Fiumicino), €30 (Ciampino)  
1L unleaded petrol €1.30  
Ticket to the Colosseum €11  
Souvenir T-shirt from €8  
Armani jeans €200you back at least €25 to €30. However, it's perfectly acceptable to mix and match and order, say, a starter and pasta dish, and forego the main course (*secondo*).

Museum admission varies from about €8 to €13, but many places are free to EU citizens under 18 years and over 60, with discounts generally available to students. There are various discount cards available which might or might not save you money – see p288 for more on this. Public transport is fairly cheap with a day pass costing €4. See p281 for further transport details.

**INTERNET RESOURCES****Auditorium** (www.auditorium.com) Get the lowdown on what's going on at the Auditorium Parco della Musica, Rome's vibrant cultural centre. Buy tickets online.**Comune di Roma** (www.comune.roma.it in Italian) The official website of Rome City Council.**Enjoy Rome** (www.enjoyrome.com) Useful advice from an independent tourist agency.**lonelyplanet.com** (www.lonelyplanet.com) Check out the Rome destination guide and swap thoughts on the Thorn Tree forum.**Musei in Comune** (www.museiincomuneroma.it) Provides information on 15 important museums, including the Capitoline Museums and the Museo dell'Ara Pacis.**Pierreci** (www.pierreci.it) A bang-up-to-date site with the latest news on exhibitions, monuments and museums. This is the place to book online tickets to the Colosseum and other major sights.**Roma C'è** (www.romace.it) Online version of Rome's best weekly listings guide. It's in Italian but you can download the small English section.**Rome Buddy** (www.romebuddy.com) Aimed at young visitors, providing down-to-earth advice and dry humour.**Rome Tourist Board** (www.romaturismo.it) Rome Tourist Board's website is not the easiest to navigate but once you get the hang of it, it's comprehensive with info on sights, accommodation, city tours, transport and much more.**Vatican** (www.vatican.va) The Holy See's official site covers everything from the Vatican Museums' opening hours to Pope Benedict's latest broadside.**SUSTAINABLE ROME**

A tourist destination for centuries, Rome is bearing up remarkably well. Some of the big monuments are showing signs of wear and tear but after so long in the spotlight this is to be expected. The question now is, will they last another 2000 years?

As a visitor there's not a huge amount you can do to affect the outcome but by following

a few common-sense guidelines you can minimise your trace. Without wishing to patronize these might include:

**Respect barriers** Most of Rome's archaeological sites are open to the public but there are areas that are off-limits. The reason is usually far from clear but if there's a barrier, bite the bullet and turn around.**Keep the camera under wraps** You'd never guess from the amount of flashes going off around you but many churches and museums ban (flash) photography.**Re-use plastic bottles** Fill up with water at the fountains dotted around the centre – there are two in Piazza Navona. The water is drinkable.**Get to grips with the one-way system** Don't drive your car down the Spanish Steps at 4am as one drunk Colombian did in June 2007.

For more information on environmental issues, see p43.

# THE AUTHORS

## Duncan Garwood



Duncan has been living in Italy since 1997; in Rome since 1999. After two years in the city centre he moved out to the Alban Hills just before the 2002 introduction of the euro sent house prices through the roof. When not travelling up and down Italy for Lonely Planet, he enjoys following the madcap soap opera that is Italian politics and the equally gripping world of Serie A football. Duncan has worked on the past two editions of this book and various other Italian guides, including *Italy*, *Piedmont* and *Naples & the Amalfi Coast*.

For this guide Duncan wrote the following chapters: Highlights, Getting Started, Background, Architecture, Neighbourhoods, Festivals & Events, Sleeping, Excursions, Transport and Directory.

### DUNCAN'S TOP ROME DAY

My favourite part of the city is the Jewish Ghetto and, beyond that, the green Aventino hill, so, after a leisurely cappuccino and *cornetto* (croissant), that's where I head. I enjoy wandering the dark alleyways, looking into the secondhand clothes shops and artisans' studios. Eventually I emerge onto Via del Portico d'Ottavia and, a little further south, the River Tiber. I follow the Tiber round, ignoring the tour parties waiting to put their hands in the Bocca della Verità (p69), until I see a neglected-looking path heading up the hill. I take it and after a short, steep climb I'm on top of the Aventino. There's not much to do up here but it's never crowded and I enjoy the tranquil atmosphere. Before leaving I can't resist the famous view of St Peter's dome through the keyhole of the Priorato dei Cavalieri di Malta (p115). I was once told this was the only place in Rome from where you could see three separate countries (Italy, the Vatican and the territory of the Knights of Malta), but sadly, it's not true – the UN doesn't recognise the Sovereign Order of the Knights of Malta as a sovereign state.

Back in the Ghetto I treat myself to a slap-up lunch at Da Giggetto (p193) before making my way up to the Museo dell'Ara Pacis (p85), architect Richard Meier's controversial modern museum. I enjoy Roman art and I enjoy people-watching, so afterwards I spend a lazy hour watching the city go by on Piazza del Popolo (p154). Next stop is Trastevere for an *aperitivo* (apéritif) at Freni e Frizioni (p225) and a beer or two in the teeming streets.

## Abigail Hole



Several years ago, Abigail visited Rome for a month and liked it so much she stayed for three years, working on Lonely Planet's *Best of Rome, Italy* and *Puglia & Basilicata* guides. A freelance travel journalist, she nowadays divides her

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Abigail wrote the Shopping, Eating, Drinking & Nightlife, The Arts and Sports & Activities chapters.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

### Will Salter

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# BACKGROUND

## HISTORY

Rome's history spans three millennia, from the classical myths of vengeful gods to the follies of the Roman emperors, from Renaissance excess to swaggering 20th-century Fascism. Emperors, popes and dictators have come and gone, playing out their ambitions against foreign powers and domestic rivals, stamping out heresies and conspiring for their place in history.

Everywhere you go in this remarkable city, you're surrounded by the past. The martial ruins, huge Renaissance *palazzi* (mansions) and flamboyant baroque churches all have a tale to tell – of family feuding, artistic rivalry or personal grief, of political infighting or dark intrigue.

## THE STUFF OF LEGEND

Rome's ancient history is mired in legend. The most famous of all is the story of Romulus and Remus, the mythical twins who are said to have founded Rome on 21 April 753 BC. Few historians accept the myth as historical fact, but most accept that the city was founded as an amalgamation of Etruscan, Latin and Sabine settlements on the Palatino (Palatine), Esquilino (Esquiline) and Quirinale (Quirinal) hills. Archaeological discoveries have confirmed the existence of a settlement on the Palatino dating to the 8th century BC.

## Romulus & Remus

Romulus and Remus were born to the vestal virgin Rhea Silvia after she'd been seduced, some say raped, by Mars. At their birth they were immediately sentenced to death by their great-uncle Amulius, who had previously stolen the throne of Alba Longa from his brother, and Rhea Silvia's father, Numitor. Fortunately, though, the sentence was never carried out. A royal servant took pity on the twins and instead of killing them abandoned them in a basket on the banks of the River Tiber. In the floods that followed, the basket ended up under a fig tree on the northwestern summit of the Palatino (p59). Here the babies were found and suckled by a she-wolf (in some versions of the story the wolf was sent by Mars to save them) until discovered by a shepherd, Faustulus. Faustulus took the brothers in and, with his wife Acca Larentia, brought them up.

The twins grew up to be a high-spirited, if somewhat unruly, pair and it wasn't long before they were in trouble. Remus was arrested for attacking some shepherds on the Aventino and carted off to face the king. Hearing the news, Faustulus told Romulus about the circumstances surrounding his birth and asked him to save Remus. Romulus immediately set off for the Alban palace, where he not only freed his brother but also killed Amulius and reinstated his grandfather Numitor to the throne.

To celebrate, the twins decided to found a city on the site where they'd originally been saved. But as they didn't know where this was they consulted the omens. Remus, on the Aventino, saw six vultures; his brother over on the Palatino saw 12. The meaning was clear and Romulus began building his new city walls. In a fit of anger Remus is said to have jumped over the unfinished walls, shouting that if they couldn't keep him out how were they going to keep invaders out.

## TIMELINE

753 BC	509 BC	146 BC	73–71 BC	49 BC	AD 14
If you believe the legend, this is the year in which Romulus kills his twin brother Remus, founds Rome and rapes the Sabine women. Archaeological evidence exists of an 8th-century settlement on the Palatino.	On the death of Tarquinius Superbus, the last of Rome's seven kings, Lucius Junius Brutus founds the Roman Republic, giving birth to the acronym SPQR (Senatus Populusque Romanus; the Senate and People of Rome).	Carthage is razed to the ground at the end of the Third Punic War and mainland Greece is conquered by rampant legions. Rome becomes undisputed master of the Mediterranean.	Spartacus leads a slave revolt against the Roman dictator Cornelius Sulla. Defeat comes at the hands of Marcus Licinius Crassus and punishment is brutal. Spartacus and 6000 of his followers are crucified along Via Appia Antica.	<i>'Alea iacta est'</i> ('The die is cast'). Julius Caesar leads his army across the River Rubicon and marches on Rome. Victory over Pompey is short-lived as Caesar is murdered five years later.	Augustus dies after 41 years as Rome's first emperor. His reign is peaceful and culture thrives. Not so under his mad successors Tiberius and Caligula, who go down in history for their cruelty.

Romulus, by now in a rage himself, killed his brother.

Romulus continued building and soon had a city, albeit one with no citizens. To populate it he created a refuge on the Campidoglio, Aventino, Celio and Quirinale hills, to which a ragtag population of criminals, ex-slaves and outlaws soon decamped. However, Romulus still needed women.

His solution was as audacious as it was devious. In one of history's first recorded sting operations, he invited everyone in the surrounding country to celebrate the Festival of Consus (21 August). As the spectators watched the games he'd organised, he and his men pounced and abducted all the women. Known as the Rape of the Sabine Women, the attack understandably angered the Sabine king Titus Tatius, who promptly marched on Rome. Fate, however, was against him, and after warnings from Juno and Jupiter Romulus repulsed the attack.

But Sabine feelings soon calmed – thanks, it's said, to their women begging for an end to the fighting. Peace was made, and Romulus and Titus ruled jointly until Titus died shortly afterwards. Romulus himself lived to the age of 54. His death, in 717 BC, was as mysterious as his birth. While inspecting troops on the Campus Martius (the area that's now the *centro storico*, or historic centre) he simply disappeared during a terrible storm. Poetic accounts claim he was taken up by the gods; more prosaic versions say that he was murdered by senators.

## The Capitoline Geese

By the 4th century BC Rome had established itself as the dominant force in central Italy. However, it was still far from invincible and in 390 BC a tribe of Gauls swept down from the north and besieged the city. The population retreated to the Campidoglio (Capitoline hill; p66), site of a temple to Juno Moneta (known as the goddess who alerts people), and prepared to sit out the siege. At this point myth takes over from history and relates how a sleeping soldier was woken by the squawking of Juno's sacred geese, just in time to catch a Gallic night attack and raise the alarm. The Gallic siege was finally lifted when the city authorities bribed the invaders to go home.

## Rome Burns, Nero Fiddles

In AD 64 up to 70% of Rome was destroyed by fire. The vast conflagration broke out in shops near the Circo Massimo (p63) and spread rapidly through the wooden housing that covered much of the city. According to the historian Suetonius, the fire raged for six days and seven nights.

## top picks

### HISTORICAL READS

- **Ancient Rome: the Rise and Fall of an Empire**, Simon Baker (2007) – a pacy, sweeping and easy-to-read history
- **Caesar: the Life of a Colossus**, Adrian Godsworthy (2007) – learn what drove Julius Caesar in this gripping biography
- **The Oxford History of the Roman World**, John Boardman, Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray (eds: 2001) – fascinating essays on literature, arts and politics by leading Oxford historians
- **Rome: the Biography of a City**, Christopher Hibbert (1998) – an overview of the city's history
- **The Popes: Histories and Secrets**, Claudio Rendina (2002) – potted biographies of the 264 pontiffs from St Peter to John Paul II

What Emperor Nero did during the fire is the subject of debate. Suetonius has him singing on the Palatine, while historian Tacitus claims that he rushed back from his residence in Anzio to lead relief efforts. In the city's gutted lanes, rumours spread that Nero had used the burning city as a backdrop for a play on the fall of Troy, or even that he had started the fire in order to build a vast new city called Neropolis. The pleasure with which he used a large amount of the ruined city for his new palace, the Domus Aurea (p95), did little to assuage popular anger.

In an attempt to deflect criticism, Nero blamed Rome's Christians for the fire. A savage persecution ensued and thousands were killed. Among the victims were St Peter and St Paul: the former was crucified upside down; the latter, a Roman citizen, decapitated.

## THE RISE & FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Rising out of the blood-stained remnants of the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire grew to become the Western world's first great superpower. At its zenith under Emperor Trajan (r AD 98–117), it extended from Britannia in the north to North Africa in the south, from Hispania (Spain) in the west to Palestina (Palestine) and Syria in the east. Rome itself had more than 1.5 million inhabitants and the city sparkled with the trappings of imperial splendour: marble temples, public baths, theatres, circuses and libraries. It truly was the undisputed *caput mundi* (capital of the world).

### Republican Roots

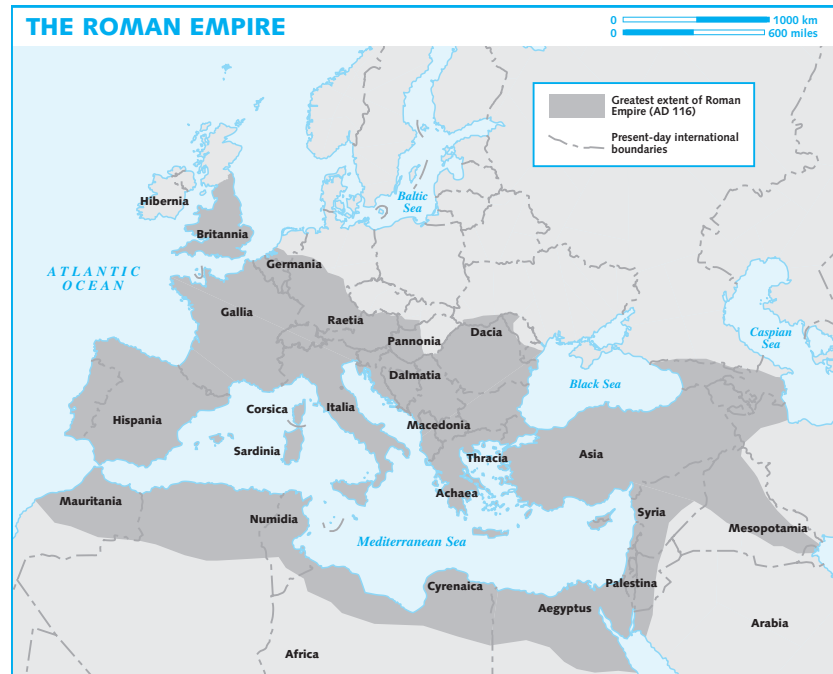
Roman power had been steadily growing since the 3rd century BC, when the battling republic rid itself of its two most dangerous rivals, Greece and Carthage (present-day Tunisia). The Greeks were dealt with first and by 272 BC had fled their Magna Graecia colonies in southern Italy. The North African kingdom proved a harder nut to crack and it took the Romans almost 120 years to tame the Carthaginian forces. By the mid-2nd century BC the Mediterranean was in Roman hands.

But peace was never long-lived, and as the 2nd century BC drew to a close, Rome entered a period of factional strife exacerbated by problems abroad. Germanic tribes began to make a nuisance of themselves in northern Europe and eventually attacked Gaul, while at home divisions were becoming increasingly serious.

In 87 BC civil war broke out between Gaius Marius and his fellow consul Cornelius Sulla. Marius proved no match for the ruthless Sulla, who, in 82 BC, forced the Senate to appoint him dictator for 10 years.

By now power in Rome had become a matter of might – the general who controlled the bigger army prevailed. And no-one was more popular with the troops than the rising military star Julius Caesar. Initially he was happy to share power with Crassus and Pompey, a protégé of Sulla, but when Crassus died in 53 BC Caesar and Pompey fell out in spectacular style. The following civil war led to Pompey's defeat in 48 BC and Caesar's accession to supreme power – in 44 BC he was proclaimed dictator for life. However, his accumulation of power had alienated even those who'd originally supported him, and he was assassinated on the Ides of March (15 March) 44 BC.

Once again the top job was up for grabs. Caesar's lieutenant, Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony), took command of the city, but when Octavian, Caesar's 18-year-old great-nephew and nominated heir, returned to town things began to heat up. At first, Octavian sided with Caesar's assassins against Antonius, but he then switched sides and fought with Antonius



against Brutus and Cassius, who were defeated at Philippi. Finally, in 40 BC, Octavian and Antonius agreed to share control. But it was an uneasy truce, and when Antonius started handing over Roman territory to his Egyptian lover, Queen Cleopatra VII, Octavian attacked. The end came at the naval battle of Actium in 31 BC.

### On the Rise

Octavian was left the sole ruler of the Roman world, but, remembering Caesar's fate, trod very carefully. In 27 BC he officially surrendered his powers to the Senate, which promptly gave most of them back, making him the first emperor of Rome with the title of Augustus.

One of the more stable emperors, he ruled well and Rome enjoyed a rare period of calm and artistic achievement. Virgil, Ovid, Horace and Tibullus contributed to what later generations of Romans would wistfully regard as a golden age. Buildings were restored and monuments erected, including the Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Peace; see p85).

But if Augustus set new standards of artistic achievement, his successors plumbed new depths of depravity. Tiberius (r AD 14–37) and Caligula (r AD 37–41) ensured notoriety through

AD 64–67

St Peter and St Paul become martyrs as Nero massacres Rome's Christians. The persecution is a thinly disguised play to win back popularity after the emperor is blamed for the fire that ravaged Rome in AD 64.

AD 80

The 50,000-seat Flavian Amphitheatre, better known as the Colosseum, is inaugurated by Emperor Titus. Five thousand animals are slaughtered in the 100-day games held to celebrate.

285

In an attempt to control anarchy within the Roman Empire, Diocletian splits it into eastern and western halves. The eastern half is later incorporated into the Byzantine Empire; the western half falls to the barbarians.

476

The fall of Romulus Augustulus marks the end of the Western Empire. The end had been on the cards for years: in 410 the Goths sacked Rome; in 455 the Vandals followed suit.

754

Thanks to a deal between Pope Stephen II and Pepin, king of the Franks, the Lombards are driven out of Italy and the Papal States are created. The papacy is to rule Rome until Italian unification.

1084

Rome is sacked by a Norman army after falling to the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV. Pope Gregory VII had asked the Normans for protection but they arrived too late to prevent him surrendering.



## GLADIATORS

Few images better encapsulate the cruelty and splendour of Ancient Rome than crowds baying for blood at the Colosseum. Gladiatorial combat originated as part of Etruscan funerary rites and was later adopted in Campania and Lucania (modern-day Basilicata). The first recorded bout in Rome was in 264 BC. By the 1st century BC gladiatorial games had outstripped this funerary context and were being staged by wealthy citizens as a form of politics by display – the greater the spectacle, the greater the sponsor's prestige. Later, these private games (*munera*) gave way to public games (*ludi*) controlled by the state.

Gladiator fights were usually staged in the afternoon as part of an all-day spectacle – the morning was given over to animal displays and the lunch break to the execution of condemned criminals. A typical afternoon would involve about 12 pairs of gladiators fighting in bouts of 10 to 15 minutes. Exceptions were rare although often spectacular: Caesar exhibited 320 pairs in 65 BC; Augustus and Trajan each displayed 5000 pairs on different occasions during their reigns. Bouts, accompanied by music, were not usually to the death (*sine missione*), as the games' sponsor was required to pay the owner of a killed gladiator one hundred times the gladiator's value. Clearly, however, accidents happened and gladiators died.

The fate of a defeated gladiator lay in the hands of the presiding sponsor, who would decide on the basis of the crowd's reaction. Traditionally, thumbs up was said to signal life and thumbs down meant death. However, it's not at all clear that this was the case, and many historians believe that thumbs down was the signal to lower weapons and thumbs up was the go-ahead to stab the defeated gladiator in the chest.

Gladiators were prisoners of war, slaves, condemned criminals or volunteers, many of whom were ex-soldiers signing up for a make-or-break period in the arena. It was a tough life, and although only about 10% of gladiators died in the ring, very few lived beyond the age of 30. Only a tiny majority made it big – gladiators were allowed to keep any prize money they won – and became celebrities.

Once condemned to a gladiatorial life, recruits were sent to gladiator school where they were assigned roles: *secutores* were armed with a large shield and sword; *retarii* carried a trident and net; *thraeces* fought with a scimitar and small shield. To ensure the greatest spectacle, heavily armed gladiators were usually paired with lighter, more nimble opponents.

Part entertainment and part business (vast sums were wagered on the games), gladiatorial games played a key propagandist function. The state-run spectacles were a demonstration of public might, and the use of exotic animals a tactic to advertise the extent of Rome's reach. Crowd participation in the sentencing of defeated gladiators allowed the people to share in the state's authority over life and death.

The popularity of the games waned in the 3rd century AD and in 399 Emperor Honorius finally banned gladiatorial combat.

their insane cruelty, the latter famously making his horse a senator and ordering his soldiers to collect seashells.

Following Caligula's assassination, Rome enjoyed a brief interlude of sanity in the person of his bumbling uncle Claudius (r AD 41–54). A conscientious if reluctant ruler, he extended the port facilities at Ostia (p266) and constructed a new aqueduct, the Acqua Claudia, to serve Rome's growing population. He also strengthened Rome's hold on Britannia (Britain), first invaded by Caesar. But in AD 54 he was murdered, probably by his beautiful and ambitious wife Agrippina, and madness returned to the city.

Claudius' successor was Agrippina's 17-year-old son from a previous marriage, a man best known for his musical pretensions and extravagant sadism. Nero (r AD 54–68) considered

himself a great artist and loved to play the lyre when not indulging in serial rape or the massacre of Christians. But when a violent week-long fire ravaged Rome in AD 64 his already scant popularity took a nose dive. Four years later the Senate declared him a public enemy and he committed suicide.

But if the Romans had been hoping that Nero's death would herald a return to calm, they were sorely disappointed. In the year after his death, the imperial crown changed heads four times before the hard-nosed general Vespasian (r AD 69–79) took charge. A practical man of dry wit and generous nature, he constructed the Colosseum (p58) in the grounds of Nero's demolished Domus Aurea and did much to restore the severely tarnished image of the emperorship.

A golden age followed in the 2nd century under Trajan and his successor Hadrian (r 117–138), who remodelled the Pantheon (p72) and built an extensive villa at Tivoli (p277).

By the 3rd century, however, economic decline was fuelling a new wave of anarchy and civil war. Diocletian (r 284–305) addressed the situation by splitting the empire into eastern and western halves, with himself controlling the rich east and Maximian, based in Milan, in charge of the shaky west.

## Decline & Fall

In 305 Maximian and Diocletian abdicated simultaneously, leaving the empire to Constantius in the west and Galerius in the east. However, the move did little to calm the waters and war eventually broke out between Constantine (Constantius' son) and Maxentius (Maximian's son). In 312 Constantine defeated his rival at the Battle of Ponte Milvio. The first Christian emperor, Constantine later claimed that before the battle he'd seen a vision of the cross and the message 'with this sign you will conquer'. It was a message he clearly took to heart, as in 313 he issued the Edict of Milan and officially legalised Christianity.

Christianity suddenly became all the rage and a number of high-profile churches were built in this period, including St Peter's Basilica (p128) and the Basilica di San Lorenzo fuori le Mura (p103). But it was a short-lived bloom, and when Constantine transferred to the new city of Constantinople in 330, the centre of world power shifted irreversibly eastwards.

Rome was increasingly left to its own devices and in the 5th century the Germanic tribes started to eye the once-great metropolis. The sack of Rome by the Goths in 410 marked the beginning of the end. In 440 only the intervention of Pope Leo I persuaded Attila the Hun not to attack, while 15 years later the city was thoroughly plundered by the Vandals.

In 476, the year traditionally recognised as the end of the Western Empire, the last emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed.

## MEDIEVAL FEUDING

The history of medieval Rome is dominated by the feud between the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire, a feud that set the city's noble families against each other in bitter, and often bloody, rivalry.

The emergence of the two poles dates to the dark period after the fall of the Roman Empire. Rome, leaderless and with a rapidly decreasing population, was a shadow of its former self; there was no fresh water – the aqueducts had all been cut during barbarian attacks – and disease was rife. It was a city crying out for a leader.

1188

Pope Clement III bows to pressure from newly formed artisans' guilds and recognises Rome as a commune with rights to appoint senators and a prefect.

1309

Fighting between French-backed pretenders to the papacy and the Roman nobility, led by the Orsini family, culminates in Pope Clement V transferring his court to Avignon. Only in 1377 does Pope Gregory XI return to Rome.

1471

The Capitoline Museums are established. The first exhibits are a series of bronzes gifted to the Roman people by Pope Sixtus IV. In 1538 Michelangelo starts work on Piazza del Campidoglio outside the museums.

1506

Pope Julius II employs 150 Swiss mercenaries to protect him. The 100-strong Swiss Guard, all practising Catholics from Switzerland, are still responsible for the pope's personal safety.

1508

Michelangelo starts painting the Sistine Chapel while down the hall Raphael begins to decorate Pope Julius II's private apartments, better known as the Stanze di Raffaello (Raphael Rooms).

1527

Pope Clement VII takes refuge in Castel Sant'Angelo as Rome is overrun by troops loyal to Charles V, king of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor. The city is sacked in an orgy of looting and violence.

In the event, it wasn't a person who took power, but an institution – the papacy. And although no one person can take credit for this, Pope Gregory the Great (r 590–604) did more than most to lay the groundwork. A leader of considerable foresight, he won many friends by supplying free bread to Rome's starving citizens and repairing the city's broken aqueducts. He also stood up to the menacing Lombards when they threatened the city.

Ironically, it was the threat posed by the Lombards that consolidated papal power and paved the way for the creation of the Holy Roman Empire. In the 8th century Pope Stephen II (r 752–57) allied with the Frankish king, Pepin the Short, to drive the Lombards out of Italy and incorporate their holdings into the newly created Papal States. The relationship between the Church and the Frankish kings was further cemented when Leo III crowned Pepin's son, Charlemagne, Holy Roman Emperor during Christmas Mass at St Peter's Basilica in 800.

But it was no marriage made in heaven and from the mid-11th century onwards the Papal States battled the Holy Roman Empire for spiritual and temporal control of Europe. In Rome the rivalry between the Guelphs (pro-papacy) and Ghibellines (pro-empire) was embodied in the bitter enmity between the Orsini and Colonna families. The Orsini, who supplied three popes over the years, were avid Guelphs and one of central Italy's strongest feudal families, with holdings in Lazio and Campania. The Colonna were traditionally pro-empire, even if one of their number later put an end to the Great Schism as Pope Martin V.

Adding to the dark and dangerous atmosphere were the French, who had long had their eyes set on the papal throne. Fighting between the French-backed pretenders to the papacy and the Roman nobility in the early 14th century culminated in the 1303 kidnap of Pope Boniface VIII. Led by the excommunicated Sciarra Colonna, a French-backed group of soldiers grabbed the pontiff from his residence in Anagni in an action known as the *schiaffo di Anagni* (slap of Anagni). Boniface was released almost immediately but not before he had seen his prestige reduced to tatters. Six years later, in 1309, the French-born Pope Clement V transferred his court to Avignon.

It was a bleak time for Rome: goats and cows grazed on the Roman Forum (p63), and the population fell dramatically. The feuding Orsini and Colonna families turned the city into a battleground, and Cola di Rienzo tried and failed to wrest control from the nobility (see the boxed text, opposite).

Only in 1377 did the situation in Rome calm down enough for the papacy (by now in the hands of Pope Gregory XI) to return to the city. On arriving, Gregory found a deserted city close to ruins, and decided to decamp to the fortified Vatican, rather than the traditional papal residence, the Palazzo Laterano (p106).

But Gregory didn't enjoy his new home for long; he died in 1378 and the Church feuding continued. The Roman cardinals tried to consolidate their power by electing the controversial Urban VI as pope, but their French rivals elected an antipope, Clement VII, who set up an alternative papacy in Avignon. Thus the Catholic world was headed by two popes – a period known as the Great Schism (1378–1417).

## ROME IS REBORN

Largely destroyed in the Middle Ages, Rome was rebuilt in the Renaissance. Under a succession of ambitious 15th- and 16th-century popes, the city was transformed from a series of smouldering ruins into a showcase capital.

1555	1626	1798	1848	1870	1883
As fear pervades Counter-Reformation Rome, Pope Paul IV confines the city's Jews to the area now known as the Jewish Ghetto. Official intolerance of Rome's Jewry continues on and off until the 20th century.	After more than 150 years of construction St Peter's Basilica is consecrated. The hulking basilica remains the largest church in the world until well into the 20th century.	Napoleon marches into Rome, forcing the elderly Pope Pius VI to flee. A republic is announced, but it doesn't last long and in 1801 Pius VI's successor Pius VII returns to Rome.	As rebellion sweeps Europe, a popular assembly declares a republic in Rome. Led by Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi, it is eventually defeated by French forces fighting on behalf of Pope Pius IX.	Nine years after Italian unification, Rome falls to Italian troops. The city walls are breached at Porta Pia and Pope Pius IX is forced to cede the city to Italy. Rome becomes the Italian capital.	In the small town of Forlì in Emilia-Romagna, Italy's future dictator Benito Mussolini is born. An ardent socialist, Mussolini rises through the ranks of the Italian Socialist Party.

## COLA DI RIENZO

A man of epic vision, Cola di Rienzo (1313–54) is one of the great characters of Roman history. The son of a Roman tavern-keeper and a successful notary, he burst onto the public scene on 20 May 1347, when, in full body armour, he stood before a huge crowd on the Campidoglio and declared himself dictator of Rome.

Surprisingly, he wasn't laughed out of town. The long-suffering Romans were ready to accept anyone who might put an end to the baronial fighting ravaging their city and they welcomed Rienzo. But what they didn't know was that Rome was just the first step in Rienzo's master plan to unite Italy. As part of a package of reforms, he conferred Roman citizenship on all the Italian city-states and prepared to elect a new Italian emperor.

This was Rienzo's first big mistake. Up until this point Pope Clement VI, at the time in Avignon, had been prepared to let events unfold. However, the prospect of a new rival spurred him into action and he condemned Rienzo as a heretic. The Roman nobility was similarly outraged and in a brief display of aristocratic solidarity they joined forces to drive Rienzo from the city in November 1347.

For a little over two years Rienzo lived in the Majella Mountains in Abruzzo. In 1350 he went to Prague, hoping to persuade Emperor Charles IV to invade Rome and rid it of its papal rulers. Charles, however, was having none of it and, at the behest of the pope, handed Rienzo over to the Inquisition. Condemned as a heretic, he was sentenced to death. Fortunately for him, though, Clement died before the sentence was carried out and his successor Innocent VI had other ideas. Innocent saw in Rienzo the chance to regain control of Rome, and it was with this in mind that he packed him off to take charge of the city with Cardinal Gil Albornoz.

Rienzo made his triumphal return to Rome on 1 August 1354. Initially things went well and he resumed his governance of the city. But over the years he'd lost his common touch and become high-handed and arrogant. His popularity plummeted and he was killed in a riot on 8 October 1354.

Pope Nicholas V (r 1447–55) is considered the harbinger of the Roman Renaissance, and it was under his successors that Michelangelo, Raphael, Bramante, Donatello, Botticelli and Fra Angelico all lived and worked in Rome.

Pope Sixtus IV (r 1471–84) had the Sistine Chapel (p137) frescoed and, in 1471, gifted the people of Rome a selection of bronzes that became the first exhibits of the Capitoline Museums (p67). Julius II (r 1503–13) opened Via del Corso (p85) and Via Giulia (p82) and ordered Bramante to rebuild St Peter's Basilica (p128).

The Renaissance, however, was also a period of terrible blood-letting as the European powers fought for supremacy. In 1527 Pope Clement VII (r 1523–34) was forced to take refuge in Castel Sant'Angelo as Charles V's Spanish troops ransacked Rome – an event that is said to have deeply influenced Michelangelo's vision of the *Giudizio Universale* (Last Judgment).

But out of the ruins rose Rome's great Renaissance *palazzi*, roads and piazzas. In 1538 Pope Paul III (r 1534–49) asked Michelangelo to design Piazza del Campidoglio (p66); later under Sixtus V (r 1585–90), the dome of St Peter's was completed.

By the mid-16th century the broad-minded curiosity of the Renaissance had begun to give way to the intolerance of the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church's bloody response to Martin Luther's Reformation. With the full blessing of Paul III, Ignatius Loyola founded the Jesuits in 1540, and two years later the Holy Office was set up as the Church's final appeals court for trials prosecuted by the Inquisition.

Paul III's opposition to Protestantism resulted in a widespread campaign of torture and fear. In 1559 the Church published the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (Index of Prohibited Books) and

## LONGEST-SERVING POPES

- St Peter (AD 30–67)
- Pius VI (1775–99)
- Pius IX (1846–78)
- Leo XIII (1878–1903)
- John Paul II (1978–2005)

he was burned at the stake eight years later in Campo de' Fiori (p81) – the spot is today marked by a sinister statue.

Ironically, though, the harder the authorities tried to suppress freedom of thought, the more creative Rome's architects and artists became. This explosion of artistic imagination reached its climax in the baroque 17th century, led by Bernini and his hated rival Borromini (see p49).

## POWER & CORRUPTION

The exercise of power has long gone hand in hand with corruption. As the British historian Lord Acton famously put it in 1887, 'Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely'. And no-one enjoyed greater power than Rome's ancient emperors.

Of all Rome's cruel and insane leaders, few are as notorious as Caligula. A byword for depravity, Caligula was hailed as a saviour when he inherited the empire from his great-uncle Tiberius in AD 37. Tiberius, a virtual recluse by the end of his reign, had been widely hated, and it was with a great sense of relief that Rome's cheering population welcomed the 25-year-old Caligula to the capital.

Their optimism was to prove ill-founded. After a bout of serious illness, Caligula began showing disturbing signs of mental instability and by AD 40 had taken to appearing in public dressed as a god. He made his senators worship him as a deity and infamously tried to make his horse, Incitator, a senator. He was accused of all sorts of perversions and progressively alienated himself from all those around him. By AD 41 his Praetorian Guard had had enough and on 24 January its leader, Cassius Chaerea, stabbed him to death.

Debauchery on such a scale was rare in the medieval papacy, but corruption was no stranger to the corridors of ecclesiastical power. It was not uncommon for popes to father illegitimate children and nepotism was rife. The Borgia pope Alexander VI (r 1492–1503) fathered two illegitimate children with the first of his two high-profile mistresses. The second, Giulia Farnese, was the sister of the priest who was to become Pope Paul III (r 1534–59), himself no stranger to earthly pleasures. When not persecuting heretics during the Counter-Reformation, the Farnese pontiff managed to sire four children.

Corruption has also featured in modern Italian politics, most famously in the 1990s Tangentopoli (Kickback City) scandal. Against a backdrop of steady economic growth, the controversy broke in Milan in 1992 when a routine corruption case – accepting bribes in exchange for public works – blew up into a nationwide crusade against corruption.

Led by the 'reluctant hero', magistrate Antonio di Pietro, the Mani Pulite (Clean Hands) investigations exposed a political and business system riddled with corruption. Politicians,

began to persecute intellectuals and freethinkers. Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) was forced by the Church to renounce his assertion of the Copernican astronomical system, which held that the earth moved around the sun. He was summoned by the Inquisition to Rome in 1632 and exiled to Florence for the rest of his life. Giordano Bruno (1548–1600), a freethinking Dominican monk, fared worse. Arrested by the Inquisition in Venice in 1592,

public officials and businesspeople were investigated and for once no-one was spared, not even the powerful Bettino Craxi (prime minister between 1983 and 1989), who, rather than face a trial in Italy, fled to Tunisia in 1993. He was subsequently convicted *in absentia* on corruption charges and died in self-imposed exile in January 2000.

Tangentopoli left Italy's entire establishment in shock, and as the economy faltered – high unemployment and inflation combined with a huge national debt and an extremely unstable lira – the stage was set for the next act in Italy's turbulent political history.

Chief among the actors were Francesco Rutelli, a suave media-savvy operator who oversaw a successful citywide cleanup as mayor of Rome (1993–2001), and the charismatic media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, whose two terms as prime minister (1994 and 2001–06) were plagued by judicial problems. In 2000 Berlusconi and his former lawyer and defence minister, Cesare Previti, were brought to trial accused of bribing judges in two corporate takeover bids. Berlusconi escaped conviction on both counts; his erstwhile colleague was not so lucky, receiving sentences of 11 and five years. On appeal, the first sentence was reduced to six years and the latter was quashed.

## THE FIRST TOURISTS

As a religious centre Rome has long attracted millions of pilgrims. In 1300 Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed the first Jubilee Year, with the promise of a full pardon for anyone who made the pilgrimage to St Peter's Basilica and the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano. Hundreds of thousands came and the Church basked in popular glory. In 2000 some 24 million visitors poured into the city for Pope John Paul II's Jubilee. However, it was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that Rome's reputation as a tourist destination was born.

The Grand Tour, the 18th-century version of the gap year, was considered an educational rite of passage for wealthy young men from northern Europe and Britain in particular. In the 19th century it became fashionable for young ladies to travel, chaperoned by spinster aunts, but in the late 1700s the tour was largely a male preserve.

The overland journey through France and into Italy followed the medieval pilgrim route, entering Italy via the St Bernard pass and descending the west coast before cutting in to Florence and then down to Rome. After a sojourn in the capital, tourists would venture down to Naples, where the newly discovered ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum were causing much excitement, before heading up to Venice.

Rome, enjoying a rare period of peace, was perfectly set up for this English invasion. The city was basking in the aftermath of the 17th-century baroque building boom and a craze for all things classical was sweeping Europe. Rome's papal authorities were also crying out for money after their excesses had left the city coffers bare, reducing much of the population to abject poverty.

Thousands came, including Goethe, who stopped off to write his 1817 travelogue *Italian Journey*, and Byron, Shelley and Keats, who all fuelled their romantic sensibilities in the city's vibrant streets. So many English people stayed around Piazza di Spagna (p99) that locals christened the area *er ghetto de l'inglesi* (the English ghetto). Trade in antiques flourished and local artists did a roaring business producing etchings for souvenir-hungry visitors.

Artistically, rococo was the rage of the moment. The Spanish Steps (p99), built between 1723 and 1726, proved a major hit with tourists, as did the exuberant Trevi Fountain (p98).

1922

Some 40,000 Fascists march on Rome. King Vittorio Emanuele III, worried about the possibility of civil war, invites Mussolini to form a government. At 39 Mussolini becomes the youngest-ever Italian prime minister.

1929

Keen to appease the Catholic Church, Mussolini signs the Lateran Treaty, thus creating the state of the Vatican City. To celebrate, Via della Conciliazione is bulldozed through the medieval Borgo to Piazza San Pietro.

1944

On 24 March 1944, Nazis shoot 335 Romans at the Fosse Ardeatine cave complex in retaliation for a partisan attack. On 4 June US forces liberate Rome.

1957

Leaders of Italy, France, West Germany, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg sign the Treaty of Rome in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Campidoglio. The treaty officially establishes the European Economic Community.

1960

Rome stages the Olympic Games while Federico Fellini makes his masterpiece *La Dolce Vita* in Cinecittà film studios. At the same time Stanley Kubrick is using Cinecittà to film his Roman epic *Spartacus*.

1990

Football fans tune into Italia 90, the Italian-staged World Cup. The final, won by Germany, is held in Rome's revamped Stadio Olimpico. Sixteen years later, Italy is to win the 2006 World Cup in Berlin's Olympiastadion.

## THE RISE OF FASCISM

Rome did not suffer unduly during WWI but Italy did, losing 600,000 men. A new class of super-rich industrial barons emerged, but the bulk of the population struggled in penury as the economy floundered. Unemployment was widespread and inflation out of control; strikes and riots were the order of the day. It was an explosive cocktail.

Benito Mussolini was born in 1883 in Forlì, a small town in Emilia-Romagna. As a young man he was an active member of the Italian Socialist Party, rising through the ranks to become editor of the party's official newspaper, *Avanti!* However, service in WWI and Italy's subsequent descent into chaos led to a change of heart and in 1919 he founded the Italian Fascist Party. Calling for rights for war veterans, law and order, and a strong nation, the party won support from disillusioned soldiers, many of whom joined the squads of Blackshirts that Mussolini used to intimidate his political enemies.

In 1921 Mussolini was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. His parliamentary support was limited but on 28 October 1922 he marched on Rome with 40,000 black-shirted followers. The march was largely symbolic but it had the desired effect. Fearful of civil war between the Fascists and Socialists, King Vittorio Emanuele III invited Mussolini to form a government.

His first government was a coalition of Fascists, nationalists and liberals, but victory in the 1924 elections left him much better placed to consolidate his personal power and by the end of 1925 he had seized complete control of Italy. In order to silence the Church he signed the Lateran Treaty in 1929, which declared Catholicism the state religion of Italy and recognised the sovereignty of the Vatican State.

On the home front Mussolini embarked on a huge building programme: Via dei Fori Imperiali and Via della Conciliazione were laid out; parks were opened on the Oppio hill and at Villa Celimontana (p110); the Imperial Forums (p65) and the temples at Largo di Torre Argentina (p73) were excavated; and the monumental Foro Italico sports complex (p155) and EUR (p117) were built.

Abroad, Mussolini invaded Abyssinia (present-day Ethiopia) in 1935 and sided with Hitler in 1936. In 1940, from the balcony of Palazzo Venezia (p68), he announced Italy's entry into WWII to a vast, cheering crowd. The good humour didn't last long, though, as Rome suffered, first at the hands of its own Fascist regime, then, after Mussolini was ousted in 1943, at the hands of the Nazis. Rome was liberated from German occupation on 4 June 1944.

## POLITICS, A MATTER OF FAITH

For more than a thousand years religion and politics have been natural bedfellows in Rome. As capital of the Papal States, the city was under the pope's direct control and still today the Vatican keeps a close eye on events in the Italian parliament, a mere kilometre or two down the road. In recent years this close cohabitation has been put to the test.

Church attendance had been falling for a long time when Pope John Paul II died on 2 April 2005, provoking a mass outpouring of popular grief. His funeral was attended by religious and political leaders and by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. Millions followed it on TV. If appearances were anything to go by, faith was once again back in fashion.

Certainly, religion played a starring role in a referendum held in June 2005. The referendum called for amendments to a law on assisted procreation and medical research, two subjects on

2001

Charismatic media tycoon Silvio Berlusconi becomes prime minister for the second time. His first term in 1994 was a short-lived affair; his second lasts the full five-year course, an almost unheard-of event in Italian politics.

2005

Seriously ill for a long time, Pope John Paul II dies after 27 years on the papal throne. He is replaced by his long-standing ally Josef Ratzinger, who takes the name Pope Benedict XVI.

2006

In the spring general election, Romano Prodi defeats his long-standing political rival Berlusconi by a whisker. A year on and controversy still surrounds the counting of votes.

which the Church has very clear views. Broadly speaking, the country was divided between those who wanted to loosen the law's restrictions, which included a ban on stem-cell research, and those who didn't. The Church called on supporters not to vote (for a referendum to be valid in Italy, 50% plus one of the electorate must vote), which is pretty much what happened. A 29.5% turnout ensured the law remained untouched.

It was a result hailed as a victory not only by the Church, but also by Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing government, which had loudly followed the Vatican's line.

The defeated opposition was again to feel the weight of Vatican intervention when it moved into government in April 2006. During a long and closely fought election campaign, Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition had promised to introduce rights for unmarried couples (homosexual and heterosexual). And, in February 2007, that's exactly what they did, approving a draft bill according rights to de facto couples regarding inheritance laws and health benefits. It was a bill too far for the Vatican, though. Pope Benedict XVI announced the Church's opposition to be 'non-negotiable' and the Italian Bishops Conference advised Catholic MPs that they had a moral duty to vote against the bill. Right-wing MPs, keen to curry favour with the Church, enthusiastically joined in the chorus of opposition.

Prodi, himself a practising Catholic, could do little in the face of such powerful opposition, and in spring 2007 the bill was quietly dropped. Relations between the Vatican and the Italian government had rarely been worse.

## ARTS

As a cultural centre Rome is back in the spotlight. Its jazz-loving cinephile mayor, Walter Veltroni, has spearheaded a cultural revival, placing the arts back on the political agenda and injecting much-needed cash into the city's arts scene. At the same time, the Auditorium Parco della Musica has provided Rome with a vibrant cultural focus.

Unfortunately, though, young Roman artists still struggle to break through. Funding has largely been channelled towards high-profile international events and locals have been left to feed off the leftovers.

## VISUAL ARTS

Home to some of the Western world's most recognisable art, Rome is a visual feast. Its churches alone contain more masterpieces than many midsize countries, and the city's galleries are thick with works by the world's most famous artists.

## Etruscan Art

Deriving from Greek styles and techniques, Etruscan art was to have a profound influence on later Roman art.

The Etruscans placed great importance on their funerary rites and they developed sepulchral decoration into a highly sophisticated art form. Elaborate stone sarcophagi were often embellished with a reclining figure or couple, typically depicted with a haunting, enigmatic smile. A stunning example is the *Sarcofago degli Sposi* (Sarcophagus of the Betrothed) in the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia (p153). Underground funerary vaults were enlivened with bright, exuberant frescoes. These frequently represented festivals or scenes from everyday life, with stylised figures shown dancing or playing musical instruments, often with little birds or animals in the background.

The Etruscans were also noted for their bronze work and jewellery. Bronze ore was abundant and was used to craft everything from chariots to candelabras, bowls and polished mirrors. The 5th-century-BC bronze *Lupa Capitolina* (Capitoline Wolf) in the Capitoline Museums (p67) is considered the Etruscans' greatest masterpiece. Etruscan jewellery was unrivalled throughout the Mediterranean. Goldsmiths produced elaborate pieces using sophisticated filigree and granulation techniques that were only rediscovered in the 20th century.

For Italy's best collection of Etruscan art, make a point of visiting the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia (p153); to see Etruscan treasures *in situ* head out of town to Cerveteri (p267) and Tarquinia (p268).

# Sculpture Through the Ages

## THE ANCIENTS

In art, as in architecture, the Romans borrowed heavily from the Greeks and Etruscans. In fact, the first 'Roman' sculptures were actually made by Greek artists or were, at best, copies of imported Greek works. Largely concerned with the male physique, they generally depicted visions of male beauty in mythical settings; check out, for example, the *Apollo Belvedere* and the *Laocoön* in the Vatican Museums' Museo Pio-Clementino (p135).

Subsequent Roman sculpture was dedicated to glorifying the state and its senior citizens. You need only look at the statues in the Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (p101) to get the gist.

One of the most important works of Roman art was the monumental altar that Augustus (27 BC–AD 14) built to himself in 9 BC. The Ara Pacis Augustae (p85) boasts some stunning reliefs that are widely held to mark the point at which Roman art gained its own identity.

By the 3rd and 4th centuries, public sculpture was beginning to lose its appeal as Christian churches began springing up across town. A notable exception was the 4th-century statue of Constantine, a 12m-high colossus, which stood in the Roman Forum. Pieces of it (namely the head, a hand and a foot) are now in the Capitoline Museums (p67).

## BAROQUE

A golden age for Roman sculpture, the baroque period (at its height between 1625 and 1675) raised the art to new heights. Combining a dramatic sense of dynamism with highly charged emotion, works were typically set in churches, usually in elaborately decorated niches.

Baroque sculpture was dominated by Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), whose depiction of *Santa Teresa trafitta dall'amore di Dio* (Ecstasy of St Teresa) in the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Vittoria (p102) is a brilliant blend of realism, eroticism and theatrical spirituality. At the Museo e Galleria Borghese (p149), marvel at his ability to make stone-cold marble seem soft as flesh in the *Ratto di Proserpina* (Rape of Persephone), or his magnificent depiction of Daphne transforming into a laurel tree to escape the clutches of Apollo in *Apollo e Dafne* (Apollo and Daphne).

Bologna-born Alessandro Algardi (1595–1654) was one of the few sculptors in Rome not totally overshadowed by Bernini. His white-marble monument to Pope Leo XI (1652) is in St Peter's Basilica (p128).

## NEOCLASSICISM

The neoclassicism of the late 18th and early 19th centuries signalled a departure from the emotional abandon of the baroque and a return to the clean, sober lines of classical statuary.

The major exponent of neoclassical sculpture was Antonio Canova (1757–1822). His study of Paolina Bonaparte Borghese as *Venere Vincitrice* in the Museo e Galleria Borghese (p149) is typical of the mildly erotic sculpture for which he became known. Similarly erotic is the *Fontana delle Naiadi* (Fountain of the Naiads; 1901) in Piazza della Repubblica (p101), which caused something of a scandal when it was unveiled. Its creator, the Sicilian-born sculptor Mario Rutelli (1859–1941), was the great-grandfather of Rome's former mayor Francesco Rutelli.

## KNOW YOUR BAROQUE

Baroque is a word you hear bandied around a lot in Rome, particularly in relation to church interiors.

The baroque burst onto the scene in the early 17th century in a swirl of emotional energy. Combining the naturalism that Caravaggio (1571–1610) had so daringly introduced with intense emotion, it was enthusiastically appropriated by the Catholic Church, at the time viciously persecuting Counter-Reformation heresy. The powerful popes of the day saw baroque art as an ideal propaganda tool and eagerly championed the likes of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Francesco Borromini, Pietro da Cortona and Alessandro Algardi.

Not surprisingly, much baroque art has a religious theme and you'll often find depictions of martyrdoms, ecstasies and miracles. The use of coloured marble, gold leaf and ornamental settings are further trademarks.

See p34 for more on baroque painting, and above for baroque sculpture.

## Mosaic Art

As far back as the 1st century BC, floor mosaics were a popular form of home decoration. They could be bought ready-made in a number of designs or ordered to suit the individual tastes of the purchaser. Typical themes included landscapes, still lifes, geometric patterns and depictions of the gods. Wall mosaics, however, were rare, being unaffordable to all but the wealthiest of citizens. To see some striking examples, head for the Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (p101), where there is a series taken from a *nymphaeum* (shrine to the water nymphs) at Nero's villa in Anzio.

In early Christian Rome, mosaic art moved into the public arena and surpassed sculpture as the principal artistic endeavour. Religious themes took over and mosaics were used to decorate early Christian churches, including the Chiesa di Santa Costanza (p156), the Chiesa di Santa Pudenziana (p94), the Basilica di SS Cosma e Damiano (p65) and the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore (p89).

Later, between the 7th and 9th centuries, Byzantine influences swept in from the east, leading to a brighter golden look. Rome's best examples are in the Chiesa di Santa Prassede (p94) and the Basilica di Santa Cecilia in Trastevere (p120).

In the 13th century the Cosmati family revolutionised the art of mosaic-making by slicing up ancient columns of coloured marble into circular slabs, which they then used to create intricate patterns. You'll find memorable Cosmati work in the Sancta Sanctorum (p107) and the Basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura (p116).

## Frescoes

Fresco painting is not a uniquely religious art form, but ever since Etruscan times it has been used in a religious context. The Etruscans used frescoes to adorn their underground tombs (witness the necropolis at Tarquinia, p268), while the early Christians daubed religious imagery on the walls of their catacombs. Later, the great Renaissance popes employed the finest artists of the day to fresco their chapels and churches.

In pre-Christian Rome, wealthy citizens would often decorate their houses with large wall frescoes. A series of superb 1st-century-BC frescoes taken from Villa Livia, one of the homes of Augustus' wife Livia Drusilla, is on display at the Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (p101).

The great artist Giotto led the way for the re-emergence of the fresco as a religious art form in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. His masterpiece is the Cappella degli Scrovegni in Padua. In Rome Pietro Cavallini's *Giudizio Universale* (Last Judgment) is an impressive example of the genre. You'll find it, not in great nick, at the Basilica di Santa Cecilia in Trastevere (p120).

## RENAISSANCE

More than any other period, it's the 15th-century Renaissance that marks the high point in ecclesiastical design. Between 1481 and 1483 some of the country's greatest painters were employed by Sixtus IV to decorate the Sistine Chapel (p137). The wall frescoes were created by Pietro Vannucci (Perugino; 1446–1523), Sandro Botticelli (1445–1510), Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–94), Cosimo Rosselli (1439–1507) and Luca Signorelli (c 1445–1523). These artists were assisted by members of their workshops, including Bernadino di Betto (Pinturicchio; 1454–1513), who subsequently frescoed the Appartamento Borgia (p137) between 1492 and 1495. However, it's for Michelangelo's *Genesis* (1508–12), widely considered the high point of

## top picks

### MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

- Museo e Galleria Borghese (p149)
- Capitoline Museums (p67)
- Vatican Museums (p133)
- Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (p101)
- Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Altemps (p78)
- Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia (p153)
- Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna (p153)
- Galleria Doria Pamphilj (p86)
- Capitoline Museums at Centrale Montemartini (p117)
- Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica (p100)

## MICHELANGELO IN ROME

The embodiment of the Renaissance spirit, Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) was born in Caprese, near Arezzo in Tuscany. The son of a Tuscan magistrate, he was a moody, solitary figure, easily offended and difficult to work with.

As a young man he quickly established a reputation as a brilliant sculptor, and it wasn't long before he was summoned to Rome to create a grand tomb for Pope Julius II. The tomb, now in the [Basilica di San Pietro in Vincoli](#) (p95), preoccupied Michelangelo for most of his life but was never completed; Julius II lies in an unadorned grave in St Peter's.

Michelangelo considered himself above all a sculptor and was reluctant to take on the job for which he is now most famous – the painting of the [Sistine Chapel](#) (p137). But when he finally accepted Julius II's commission, he set to work with an obsession verging on mania. For four years, between 1508 and 1512, he worked lying down on scaffolding lodged high under the chapel's ceiling, pushing himself to artistic and physical limits and bickering constantly with the impatient pope. The results, however, were spectacular.

But Michelangelo wasn't finished with the chapel, and in 1534 he reluctantly returned to paint the *Giudizio Universale* (Last Judgment) on the altar wall. The job was commissioned by Clement VII (r 1523–34) but it was his successor Paul III who chose the subject matter and, in 1535, appointed Michelangelo chief architect, sculptor and painter to the Vatican.

Determined to get his money's worth from Michelangelo, Paul III commissioned him to create a new piazza on the Campidoglio – [Piazza del Campidoglio](#) (p66) – and to design a grand approach to it. The work was not finished until the mid-17th century but successive architects closely followed the original plans.

Other posthumous jobs included the upper storey of [Palazzo Farnese](#) (p81), completed by Giacomo della Porta, and the city gateway at [Porta Pia](#) (p155), finished a year after his death in 1564.

The artist spent his last years working – unhappily (he felt that it was a penance from God) – on St Peter's Basilica. He disapproved of the plans that had been drawn up by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, claiming that they deprived the basilica of light. To rectify this, Michelangelo created his magnificent light-filled dome, based on Brunelleschi's Duomo in Florence, and a stately façade.

In his old age he was said to work with the same strength and concentration as he had as a younger man. He continued to work until his death on 18 February 1564. He was buried in the Basilica dei Santi Apostoli, although his remains were later moved to Florence.

Western artistic achievement, and his *Giudizio Universale* (Last Judgment; 1536–41) that the Sistine Chapel is best known.

It was at the insistence of Julius II that Michelangelo, a reluctant painter, decorated the Sistine Chapel. And while he was doing so, not more than 50m away, Raffaello Sanzio (Raphael; 1483–1520) was busy painting the pope's official apartments, now known as the Stanze di Raffaello (Raphael Rooms; p136). The commission marked the beginning of the brilliant Roman career of the Urbino-born artist, who arrived in Rome from Florence in 1508 and went on to become the most influential painter of his generation. His masterpiece is usually considered to be *La Scuola d'Atene* (The School of Athens; 1510–11) in the Stanza della Segnatura (p136).

## COUNTER-REFORMATION & BAROQUE

Of the painters working in the late 16th and 17th centuries, two stand out: Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), whose frescoes in Palazzo Farnese (p81) are said by some to equal those of the Sistine Chapel; and Pietro da Cortona (1596–1669), one of the most sought-after decorators of baroque Rome. His *Trionfo della Divina Provvidenza* (Triumph of Divine Providence) fresco on the ceiling of the Salone Grande in Palazzo Barberini (p100) paved the way for numerous other commissions, including the ceiling frescoes in Chiesa Nuova (p80).

## Modern Trends

In the presence of so much Renaissance and baroque art, Italy's modern artists have had a tough act to follow. However, they have risen to the challenge and have produced a substantial body of work.

Italy's answer to the French postimpressionists, the *macchiaioli*, emerged in late-19th-century Tuscany. Turning to nature for their inspiration, they believed that a picture's effect should derive from the painted surface rather than any moral message and thus developed a technique

based on the use of *macchia* (patches or stains) of colour. The best place to catch their work is the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna (p153).

Often associated with Fascism, Italian futurism was an ambitious movement, embracing not only visual art but also architecture, music, fashion and theatre. Although it was founded in 1909 by the poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, the painting movement dates to the *Manifesto of the Futurist Painters*, written by Umberto Boccioni (1882–1916) in 1910. A rallying cry for modernism and a vitriolic rejection of artistic traditions, it was hugely influential.

Among the most important painters of the period were Giacomo Balla (1871–1958), whose depictions of the dynamic nature of motion encapsulated the futurist ideals; Giorgio De Chirico (1888–1978), who painted visionary empty streetscapes; and Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964), best known for his trademark still lifes. To see a comprehensive collection of De Chirico's works, head to the Museo Carlo Bilotti (p153) in Villa Borghese.

A sculptor and painter, Giacomo Manzù (1908–91) bucked the futurist trend and revived the Italian religious tradition. His most famous work is the bronze door (the last on the left) in St Peter's Basilica, for which he was commissioned after a competition in 1949.

## LITERATURE

A history of authoritarian rule has given rise to a rich literary tradition, encompassing everything from ancient satires to dialect poetry and anti-Fascist prose. As a backdrop, Rome has provided inspiration to scribes as diverse as Goethe and Robert Harris.

## The Classics

Famous for his blistering oratory, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) was the republic's pre-eminent author. A brilliant barrister, he became consul in 63 BC and subsequently published many philosophical works and speeches. Fancying himself as the senior statesman, Cicero took the young Octavian under his wing and attacked Mark Antony in a series of 14 speeches, the *Philippics*. These proved fatal, though, for when Octavian changed sides and joined Mark Antony, he demanded – and got – Cicero's head.

A contemporary of Cicero, Catullus (c 84–54 BC) cut a very different figure. A passionate man, he is best known for his epigrams and erotic, sometimes obscene, poetry.

On becoming Emperor Augustus, Octavian encouraged the arts, and Virgil (70–19 BC), Ovid, Horace and Tibullus all enjoyed freedom to write. Of the works produced in this period, it's Virgil's rollicking *Aeneid* that stands out. A glorified mix of legend, history and moral instruction, it tells how Aeneas escapes from Troy and after years of mythical mishaps ends up founding Rome.

Little is known of Decimus Iunius Juvenalis, better known as Juvenal, but his 16 satires have survived as classics of the genre. Writing in the 1st century AD, he combined an acute mind with a cutting pen, famously scorning the masses as being interested in nothing but 'bread and circuses'. He also issued the classic warning '*quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*' or 'who will guard the guards?'

As Roman society began to change in the 1st century, so too did the Latin language and the people who used it. While Livy (59 BC–AD 17) had glorified Rome's past, the later Tacitus (c 56–116) viewed history with a decidedly colder eye.

## Street Writing & Popular Poetry

Rome's tradition of street writing goes back to the dark days of the 17th century. With the Church systematically suppressing every whiff of criticism, Counter-Reformation Rome was not a great place for budding authors. As a way round censorship, disgruntled Romans began

# top picks

## BOOKS SET IN ROME

- *La Storia* (History), Elsa Morante (1974)
- *La Romana* (The Woman of Rome), Alberto Moravia (1947)
- *The Borgias*, Jeanne Kalogridis (2006)
- *Imperium*, Robert Harris (2006)
- *Tre metri sopra il cielo*, Federico Moccia (in Italian only; 1992)

posting *pasquinades* (anonymous messages; named after the first person to have written one) on the city's so-called speaking statues. These messages, often archly critical of the authorities, were sensibly posted in the dead of night and then gleefully circulated around town the following day. The most famous speaking statue, which still today is covered with messages, stands in Piazza Pasquino (p79) near Piazza Navona.

Poking savage fun at the rich and powerful was one of the favourite themes of Gioacchino Belli (1791–1863), one of a trio of poets who made their names writing poetry in Roman dialect. Born poor, Belli started his career with conventional and undistinguished verse, but found the crude and colourful dialect of the Roman streets better suited to his outspoken attacks on the chattering classes.

Carlo Alberto Salustri (1871–1950), aka Trilussa, is the best known of the trio. He, too, wrote social and political satire, although not exclusively so, and many of his poems are melancholy reflections on life, love and solitude. One of his most famous works, the anti-Fascist poem *All'Ombra* (In the Shadow), is etched onto a plaque in Piazza Trilussa, the Trastevere square named in his honour.

The poems of Cesare Pascarella (1858–1940) present a vivid portrait of turn-of-the-century Rome. Gritty and realistic, they pull no punches in describing everyday life as lived by Rome's forgotten poor.

## Rome as Inspiration

With its magical cityscape and sense of lived-in history, Rome has provided inspiration for legends of foreign authors. In the 18th century the city was a hotbed of literary activity as historians and Grand Tourists poured in from northern Europe. The German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe captures the elation of discovering Ancient Rome and the colours of the modern city in his celebrated travelogue *Italian Journey* (1817).

Rome was also a magnet for the English Romantic poets. John Keats, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley and other writers all spent time in the city. Byron, in a typically over-the-top outburst, described Rome as the city of his soul even though he visited only fleetingly. Keats came to Rome in 1821 in the hope that it would cure his ill health, but it didn't and he died of tuberculosis in his lodgings at the foot of the Spanish Steps (p99).

Later, in the 19th century, the American author Nathaniel Hawthorne penned his lumbering classic *The Marble Faun* (1860) after two years in Italy. Taking his inspiration from a sculpture in the Capitoline Museums (p67), Hawthorne uses a murder story as an excuse to explore his thoughts on art and culture.

### ROMAN READING LIST

'There's no single literary key to enter Rome. The city's too old; there are too many ways of approaching it, too many realities. You can only tackle one reality at a time.'

Paulo Mauri, author, critic and, since 1977, culture editor of *La Repubblica*, is ideally placed to compile a Roman reading list.

'Before coming to Rome, there are various books that you could read. You could try Alberto Moravia's *Racconti Romani* (Roman Tales; 1954) or there's Gadda's *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de Via Merulana* (That Awful Mess on Via Merulana; 1957), a wonderful, linguistically inventive book that might, however, be difficult for foreigners. Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Ragazzi di Vita* (A Violent Life; 1955) tells of a Rome that no longer exists, the Rome of the suburbs in the 1950s.

'If you want to relive the *dolce vita* years, I'd recommend *Diario Notturno* (1956) by Ennio Flaiano. It's written so well and with such intelligent irony that even after several decades it gives a good idea of a life that no longer exists.

'Of the authors writing in Rome today, perhaps the best known is Niccolò Ammaniti, although he doesn't really speak of Rome. One of the most popular contemporary writers is Federico Moccia, whose love stories are adored by adolescents. His book *Tre metri sopra il cielo* (1992) even started a craze by inviting young couples to attach padlocks to Ponte Milvio as a symbol of their love.

'From the editorial point of view there are interesting things happening in Rome today. For example, there's a small editing house called Minimum Fax, which publishes anthologies dedicated to young writers. There's also Einaudi Stile Libero, part of Einaudi, a historic Italian publishing house, which publishes experimental work. Rome's literary scene is in pretty good shape.'

In recent years it's once again become fashionable for novelists to use Rome as a backdrop. Dan Brown's thriller *Angels and Demons* (2001) is set in Rome, as is Kathleen A Quinn's warm-hearted love story *Leaving Winter* (2003). Jeanne Kalogridis transports readers back to the 15th century in her sumptuous historical novel *The Borgias Bride* (2006), a sensual account of Vatican scheming and dangerous passions. Robert Harris re-creates 1st-century-BC Rome with customary aplomb in his fictional biography of Cicero, *Imperium* (2006).

On a lighter note, Lindsey Davis has enjoyed great success with her Roman detective stories. One of the best is *Two for the Lions* (1999), in which her hero Marcus Didius Falco has to investigate the curious murder of a man-eating lion.

## Politics Fuels the Imagination

A controversial figure, Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938) was the most flamboyant Italian writer of the early 20th century. A WWI fighter pilot and ardent nationalist, he was born in Pescara and settled in Rome in 1881. Forever associated with Fascism, he wrote prolifically, both poetry and novels. Of his books, perhaps the most revealing is *Il Fuoco* (The Flame of Life; 1900), a passionate romance in which he portrays himself as a Nietzschean superman born to command.

On the opposite side of the political spectrum, Roman-born Alberto Moravia (1907–90) was banned from writing by Mussolini and, together with his wife, Elsa Morante (1912–85), was forced into hiding for a year. The alienated individual and the emptiness of Fascist and bourgeois society are common themes in his writing. In *La Romana* (The Woman of Rome; 1947) he explores the broken dreams of a country girl, Adriana, as she slips into prostitution and theft.

The novels of Elsa Morante are characterised by a subtle psychological appraisal of her characters and can be seen as a personal cry of pity for the sufferings of individuals and society. Her 1974 masterpiece, *La Storia* (History), is a tough tale of a half-Jewish woman's desperate struggle for dignity in the poverty of occupied Rome.

Taking a similarly anti-Fascist line, Carlo Emilio Gadda (1893–1973) combines murder and black humour in his classic whodunnit, *Quer pasticciaccio brutto de Via Merulana* (That Awful Mess on Via Merulana; 1957). Although the mystery is never solved, the book's a brilliant portrayal of the pomposity and corruption that thrived in Mussolini's Rome.

## The Current Crop

Born in Rome in 1966, Niccolò Ammaniti scored a big hit with his 2001 book *Io Non Ho Paura* (I'm Not Scared). Set in an unnamed village in the deep south, it explores a young boy's reaction to the discovery that his father is involved in a child's kidnapping. In 2003 Gabriele Salvatores made a film based on the book.

Striking an altogether different chord, Federico Moccia's brand of romance-lite was given a cinematic boost when the 2004 film *Tre metri sopra il cielo* (Three Steps Over Heaven) raised his 1992 book to cult status. Starring the young heart-throb Riccardo Scamarcio, it's a classic tale of romance between ill-suited lovers.

## CINEMA & TELEVISION

### Cinema

Never afraid to stick his head over the parapet, Quentin Tarantino ruffled more than a few feathers when he recently decried the state of Italian cinema. Speaking at the 2007 Cannes film festival, he said: 'I really loved the Italian movies of the 1960s and 1970s. But what happened? Recent Italian films I've seen all seem the same. All they talk about is boys growing up, or girls growing up, or couples in crisis, or holidays for the mentally disabled.'

Harsh words maybe, but the fact remains that Italian cinema is not in the rudest of health. Rome's new film festival might have been a success when it premiered in October 2006 (see p142), but behind the gloss the story is one of ever-decreasing funding and stagnation. In recent years the government, one of the major financiers of Italian cinema, has been systematically slashing investment – in 2002 by 43%, then in 2005 by a further 35%. Against such a backdrop it's not surprising that recent film output has been limited.

# top picks

## ROMAN FILMS

- **Roma Città Aperta** (Rome Open City; 1945; Roberto Rossellini) – filmed on Rome's recently liberated streets, this neorealist masterpiece stars Anna Magnani as a woman desperate to save her lover from the Nazis
- **Ladri di Biciclette** (Bicycle Thieves; 1948; Vittorio de Sica) – a genuinely moving drama that follows the protagonist's desperate search for his stolen bicycle
- **La Dolce Vita** (1960; Federico Fellini) – Anita Ekberg frolics in the Trevi Fountain while Marcello Mastroianni looks on in Fellini's slow-moving classic
- **Accattone** (1961; Pier Paolo Pasolini) – this relentlessly grim depiction of Rome's poverty-stricken suburbs centres on the story of a lowlife pimp who fails to escape the life into which he's born
- **Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo** (The Good, the Bad and the Ugly; 1966; Sergio Leone) – the most famous of Leone's testosterone-laden spaghetti westerns, featuring a classic Ennio Morricone soundtrack
- **Profondo Rosso** (Deep Red; 1975; Dario Argento) – a masterclass in terror from the king of Italian horror, this tale of bloody murder paved the way for hundreds of imitations
- **La Stanza del Figlio** (The Son's Room; 2001; Nanni Moretti) – this raw portrayal of anguish makes uncomfortable viewing as Moretti explores the emotions that threaten to destroy a family after the death of a teenage boy
- **L'Ultimo Bacio** (The Last Kiss; 2001; Gabriele Muccino) – Muccino explores the lack of ideals and fears affecting Italy's well-to-do 30-something generation, in a glossy and well-observed film that never entirely convinces
- **Tre metri sopra il cielo** (Three Steps Over Heaven; 2004; Luca Lucini) – the big-screen adaptation of Federico Moccia's 1994 novel has a smouldering Riccardo Scamarcio wooing a schoolgirl in northern Rome
- **Rome** (2005; BBC/HBO) – Ancient Rome is brought to vivid life in this big-budget BBC drama that follows the fortunes of rivals Octavian and Mark Antony
- **Nuovomondo** (Golden Door; 2006; Emanuele Crialese) – Charlotte Gainsbourg stars in the touching story of Salvatore, an illiterate Sicilian farmer who gives up everything to realise his American Dream

The problem is augmented by the screening policies of the big cinema chains. As Elvira Caria, a marketing coordinator with Warner Village Cinemas, points out: 'Hundreds of films get made in Italy but very few actually make it on to the big screen.' The problem, she explains, is that cinemas are under enormous pressure from the big distribution companies and simply can't afford to screen small-scale Italian films. (In 2006 revenue from US-made films was €338 million in Italy, compared with €135 million from homemade films.)

Ironically, though, as Italian cinema fades from the screens there's been a renewal of interest in Rome's film-making facilities. Private investment in the legendary Cinecittà studios lured a number of big-name directors to the city in the early 2000s. Martin Scorsese re-created 19th-century New York for his 2002 epic *Gangs of New York*, and Mel Gibson had ancient Jerusalem rebuilt in 2004 for *The Passion of the Christ*. Much of the 2005 BBC drama *Rome* was filmed at Cinecittà.

## LOCAL TALENT

It's not all bad news and there are a number of young Roman directors emerging onto the scene. Emanuele Crialese (b 1965) earned considerable acclaim for his 2006 film *Nuovomondo* (English title: *Golden Door*), while Matteo Garrone (b 1968), author of the bizarre *L'Imbalsamatore* (The Embalmer; 2002), and Saverio Costanzo (b 1975) both promise good things. Gabriele Muccino (b 1967) has already cashed in on the success of his 2001 smash *L'Ultimo Bacio* (The Last Kiss) by directing Will Smith in *The Pursuit of Happiness* (2006).

Before Muccino, Rome was generally represented by Carlo Verdone (b 1950) and Nanni Moretti (b 1953). A comedian in the Roman tradition, Verdone has made a name for himself satirising his fellow citizens in a number of bitersweet comedies, which at best are very funny, and at worst are repetitive and predictable. His 1995 film *Viaggi di Nozze* (Honeymoons) is one of his best.

Moretti, on the other hand, falls into no mainstream tradition. A socially and politically active writer, actor and director, his films are often whimsical and self-indulgent. Arguably his best work, *Caro Diario* (Dear Diary; 1994) earned him the best director prize at Cannes in 1994 – an award that he topped in 2001 when he won the Palme d'Or for *La Stanza del Figlio* (The Son's Room).

However, for the real golden age of Roman film-making you have to turn the clocks back

## SERGIO LEONE REWRITES THE WEST

Best known for virtually single-handedly creating the spaghetti western, Sergio Leone (1929–89) is a hero to many. Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez are among the directors who count him as a major influence, while Clint Eastwood owes him his cinematic breakthrough. Astonishingly, though, he only ever directed seven films.

The son of the silent-movie director Vincenzo Leone, Leone cut his teeth as a screenwriter on a series of sword-and-sandal epics, before working as assistant director on *Quo Vadis?* (1951) and *Ben-Hur* (1959). He made his directorial debut three years later on *Il Colosso di Rodi* (The Colossus of Rhodes; 1961).

However, it was with his famous dollar trilogy – *Per un pugno di dollari* (A Fistful of Dollars; 1964), *Per qualche dollaro in più* (For a Few Dollars More; 1965) and *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo* (The Good, the Bad and the Ugly; 1966) – that he really hit the big time. The first, filmed in Spain and based on the 1961 samurai flick *Yojimbo*, set the style for the genre. No longer were clean-cut, morally upright heroes pitted against cartoon-style villains; instead characters were more complex, often morally ambiguous and driven by self-interest. As *il buono* in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, Clint Eastwood is just as determined to get his hands on the loot as his two rivals.

Stylistically, Leone introduced a series of innovations that were later to become his trademarks. Characters were associated with musical themes (brilliantly scored by his longtime collaborator Ennio Morricone – see the boxed text, p41); long silences were accompanied by extreme close-ups and followed by bursts of explosive action; and the Mexican standoff was used, most famously in the three-way shootout at the end of *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*.

Leone's spaghetti westerns were hugely successful in Europe, as was his 1968 homage to the American west, *C'era una volta il West* (Once Upon a Time in the West), written by Bernardo Bertolucci and Dario Argento. In his four-hour epic *C'era una volta in America* (Once Upon a Time in America; 1984), Leone took on another of cinema's classic genres – the gangster movie. He had previously turned down the chance to direct *The Godfather*, preferring to continue work on what, over the course of 20 years, had become something of an obsession. The film, set in pre-WWII New York and starring Robert De Niro, flopped at the box office but is now considered a modern masterpiece.

to the 1940s, when Roberto Rossellini (1906–77) produced a trio of neorealist masterpieces. The first and most famous was *Roma Città Aperta* (Rome Open City; 1945), filmed with brutal honesty in the working-class Prenestina district east of the city centre. Vittorio de Sica (1914–74) kept the neorealist ball rolling in 1948 with *Ladri di Biciclette* (Bicycle Thieves), again filmed in Rome's ugly suburbs.

Federico Fellini (1920–94) took the creative baton from the neorealists and carried it into the following decades. His disquieting style demands more of audiences, abandoning realistic shots for pointed images at once laden with humour, pathos and double meaning. Fellini's greatest international hit was *La Dolce Vita* (1960), starring Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.

The films of Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–75) are similarly demanding. A Marxist Catholic homosexual, he made films that not only reflect his ideological and sexual tendencies but also offer a unique portrayal of Rome's urban wasteland. But while Pasolini played to the intellectuals, Sergio Leone revitalised a dying genre – see the boxed text, [above](#).

Rome's contribution to the cinema, however, goes beyond its cast of directors. Its streets have also provided a memorable backdrop to numerous films. Who can forget Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck causing havoc around Rome in the 1953 romantic comedy *Roman Holiday*? Other films shot on Rome's streets include *Three Coins in the Fountain* (1955); *Ieri, Oggi, Domani* (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow; 1963); *The Belly of an Architect* (1987); *The Godfather Part III* (1990); *The Portrait of a Lady* (1996); and *The Talented Mr Ripley* (1999).

## Television

Italian television has never enjoyed a stellar reputation, and after five years of Berlusconi government (2001–06), its prestige is at a low point. Berlusconi, boss of Italy's biggest media conglomerate, dominated the country's broadcasting scene to an extent unparalleled in Western Europe and ruthlessly exploited his TV channels for political gain while simultaneously raking in profits from advertising.

However, at the time of writing it was more than a year since Berlusconi lost the 2006 general election and Italian TV continued to depress with its ratings-driven refusal to supply quality programming. As sport is increasingly taken over by the satellite channels, broadcasters continue to embrace the reality show with an enthusiasm that reflects its winning low-cost, high-audience



ratio. Soap operas and quizzes are staples and homemade drama rarely goes beyond the tried and tested, with an incessant stream of made-for-TV films on the lives of popes, saints, priests and martyrs. For more on TV, see Media (p44).

## MUSIC

Until a few years ago Rome was a musical wasteland. Its reputation among serious musicians was dire, funding had long since dried up and the city lacked a concert hall worthy of the name. Not so now. The 2002 opening of the Auditorium Parco della Musica (p231) has revitalised the city's music scene, leading to an increase in orchestral standards and the birth of a thriving concert calendar. At the same time, mayor Walter Veltroni has promoted a number of high-profile musical initiatives. In recent years Sir Paul McCartney has played at the Colosseum (May 2003), Rome has hosted MTV's European Music Awards (November 2004) and Genesis has played at the Circo Massimo (July 2007). On the downside, home-grown musical talent remains thin on the ground.

## Choral Music

In a city of more than 900 churches, it's little wonder that choral music has deep roots. In the 16th and 17th centuries, just as the great Renaissance artists were summoned to work on the pope's latest building project, so top musicians were summoned to tutor the papal choir. Two of the most famous were Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c 1525–94), one of Italy's foremost Renaissance composers, and the Naples-born composer Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757).

## INSIDE GUIDE

A well-known journalist and author, Leonetta Bentivoglio has been writing on music, dance and theatre since the early 1980s.

The most important event in recent years has been the opening of the Auditorium. Before that it was a real problem finding a good concert venue in Rome. The Auditorium, with its three halls and open-air arena, has really inspired the music scene, not just in classical music but also rock, pop and ethnic music. Run by the Associazione Santa Cecilia and the Fondazione Musica di Roma, an association created by the Comune di Roma, it has staged many musical events. It's also hosted the Festival of Cinema, a festival of philosophy, and many other events.

It's really inspired a revival of classical music. The Accademia di Santa Cecilia is now excellent and has a very well-known musical director, Antonio Pappano. Pappano, who was brought up in London (he's also musical director of London's Royal Opera House), is adored in Rome. He's taken the Santa Cecilia to the Proms in London and to Vienna, and he is often invited to big European festivals. Every September he organises a concert series dedicated to a single composer; say, Mozart one year, Beethoven the next. Anyone who loves music should really keep their eye on Santa Cecilia's programme.

Of the other music associations, one of the most interesting is the Accademia Filarmonica Romana, which puts on high-level performances at the Teatro Olimpico. Another active institution is the Istituto Universitaria Concerti, which does a lot of work with the university and puts on concerts at the university's Aula Magna.

The Teatro dell'Opera, which performs at three venues – the Teatro dell'Opera, the Teatro Nazionale and, in summer, the Terme di Caracalla – has done interesting things under its current director Gianluigi Gelmetti. However, he's never been able to forge an international identity for the theatre, which is one of the most unionised in Italy and has traditionally had serious management problems.

An interesting initiative is the RomaEuropa Festival in autumn. Inspired by the Festival D'Autumne in Paris, it brings exciting new theatre and dance to Rome.

In terms of composers, Giorgio Batistelli does a lot of musical theatre and is well known abroad. He's innovative and fun. More cerebral is the German-trained Luca Lombardi. Of course, there's Ennio Morricone, who doesn't just do film work but also writes symphonic music, and the great German composer Hans Werner Henze, who lives just outside Rome in Marino Laziale.

As a postscript, Bentivoglio's colleague Ernesto Assante drops a few names to look out for in the world of jazz, rock and rap.

There's Niccolò Fabi, a young singer-songwriter who plays clubs a lot and is becoming well known. Achtung Babies, a U2 cover band, is very popular and arguably better than the real thing. Doctor Three is one of the most interesting jazz names to look out for. There are also many rap outfits in the city. One worth catching is Cor Veleno.

## MORRICONE'S MUSIC MAKES CINEMA MAGIC

The success of Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns (see p39) owes a huge debt to the music of Ennio Morricone, Rome's best-known modern composer. Although Leone had initially been reluctant to hire his old schoolmate for *Per un pugno di dollari* (A Fistful of Dollars), he relented, opening the door to what would become one of the finest creative partnerships in cinematic history.

Arguably his finest work was the haunting score for *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo* (The Good, the Bad and the Ugly) in 1966. A unique orchestration of trumpets, whistles, gunshots, church bells, harmonicas and electric guitars, it has lost none of its power to thrill.

Born in Rome on 10 November 1928, Morricone studied trumpet, composition and choral music at the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia before graduating to become a successful studio arranger for the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). He worked with Chet Baker and the Beatles before he began his collaboration with Leone in 1964. Since then he's scored up to 500 films and TV series. He's worked with a who's who of directors, including John Carpenter, Brian De Palma and, most recently, Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez on *Grindhouse* (2007).

Morricone has never won an Oscar despite being nominated five times, most notably for *The Mission* in 1986 and a year later for *The Untouchables*.

Girolamo Frescobaldi (1583–1643), admired by the young JS Bach, was twice an organist at St Peter's Basilica.

The papal choirs, originally composed of priests, were closed to women and the high parts were taken by *castrati*, boys who had been surgically castrated before puberty to preserve their high voices. Although castration was punishable by excommunication, the Sistine Chapel and other papal choirs contained *castrati* as early as 1588 and as late as the early 20th century. The last known *castrato*, Alessandro Moreschi (1858–1922), known as *il angelo di Roma* (the angel of Rome), was castrated in 1865, just five years before the practice was officially outlawed. He entered the Sistine Chapel choir in 1883 and 15 years later became conductor. He retired in 1913, 10 years after Pius X had banned *castrati* from the papal choirs. Boy sopranos were introduced in the 1950s.

In 1585 Sixtus V formally established the Accademia di Santa Cecilia (p231) as a support organisation for papal musicians. Originally it was involved in the publication of sacred music, although it later developed a teaching function (Arcangelo Corelli was an early maestro in 1700), and in 1839 it completely reinvented itself as an academy with wider cultural and academic goals. Today it is one of the most highly respected conservatories in the world, with its own orchestra and chorus.

## Opera

To a serious opera buff, Rome lags behind Milan, Venice and Naples. But that's not to say that it's to be altogether discounted. Under musical director Gianluigi Gelmetti, the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (p233) has enjoyed a revival in fortunes and performances are enthusiastically followed. The Romans have long been keen opera-goers – it's said that Barberini used to stage spectacular performances in Palazzo Barberini in the 17th century – and the city offers a number of extraordinary venues, including the majestic Terme di Caracalla (p110).

In the 19th century a number of important operas were premiered in Rome, including Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (The Barber of Seville; 1816), Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (The Troubadour; 1853) and Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* (1900).

*Tosca* not only premiered in Rome but is also set in the Italian capital. The first act takes place in the Chiesa di Sant'Andrea della Valle (p83), the second in Palazzo Farnese (p81), and the final act in Castel Sant'Angelo (p138), the castle from which *Tosca* jumps to her death.

## Hip-Hop & Rap

Rome might lack the street kudos of New York or Detroit, but that hasn't stopped it developing a vibrant hip-hop scene. Hip-hop arrived in Italy in the late 1980s and spread via the alternative *centro sociale* (organised squat; see p227) network. Spearheading the movement in Rome were three rappers who, in 1994, formed the gangster-rap outfit Flaminio Maphia. Although they've never enjoyed great success outside of Italy, or indeed much mainstream success in

Italy, they've opened concerts for Ice T, Coolio and De La Soul and still command considerable respect among Roman rappers. Contemporaries Colle der Fomento enjoy similar status.

Crossing over into the mainstream, Tommaso Zanella, aka Piotta, burst onto the national airwaves in 1999 with his diabolically catchy 'Supercafone'. A celebration of the Roman *coatto* (a working-class tough guy with attitude and bling), the song was played relentlessly on radio and TV, even attracting the attention of the *International Herald Tribune*. The album of the same name eventually went on to sell more than 100,000 copies. Since then Piotta's kept a relatively low profile despite four new albums.

## THEATRE & DANCE

Surprisingly for a city in which art has always been appreciated, Rome has no great theatrical tradition. It has never had a Broadway or West End, and while highbrow imports are greeted enthusiastically, fringe theatre is something done better in Bologna and Milan.

Ancient Rome was more famous for its gladiators than for its actors. Even borrowing heavily from Greek theatrical traditions – the 2nd-century-BC Roman playwright Terence set his comedies in Athens – the play as an art form could never compete with chariot races or bouts of combat in the Colosseum.

Although not strictly speaking a Roman, Dacia Maraini (b 1936) has produced her best work while living in Rome. Considered one of Italy's most important feminist writers, she continues to work as a journalist while her all-women theatre company Teatro della Maddalena stages her 30-plus plays. Some of these, including the 1978 *Dialogo di una Prostituta con un suo Cliente* (Dialogue of a Prostitute with Client), have also played abroad.

Gigi Proietti (b 1940), on the other hand, is pure Roman. A hugely popular writer, performer and director, he combines TV acting with dubbing (he's dubbed Robert De Niro, Richard Burton, Marlon Brando and Dustin Hoffman) and theatre work. He's artistic director of the Teatro Brancaccio and regularly plays to full houses. His one-man show *Io, Totò e gli Altri* (Me, Totò and the Others) was a runaway success in 2001.

Rome's dance scene has benefited from the citywide resurgence of the arts but home-grown talent remains rare. Despite being led by the internationally renowned Carla Fracci (b 1936), the city's principal ballet company, the Balletto del Teatro dell'Opera, is still regarded as second-rate.

Modern dance is popular in Rome. But despite an increase in the number of contemporary-dance companies, most of the best performances are still by foreign troupes. One local company whose performances regularly attract press attention is ARSmovendi ([www.arsmovendi.it](http://www.arsmovendi.it) in Italian), founded by Andrea Cagnetti and Tiziana Guarna in 1999.

See the Festivals & Events chapter (p141) for details of Rome's arts festivals, and the Arts chapter (p230) for listings of theatre and dance venues.

## ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING

### THE LAND

Rome's best-known geographical feature is its seven hills: the Palatino (Palatine), Campidoglio (Capitoline), Aventino (Aventine), Celio (Caelian), Esquilino (Esquiline), Viminale (Viminal) and Quirinale (Quirinal). Two others – the Gianicolo (Janiculum), which rises above Trastevere, and the Pincio, above Piazza del Popolo – were never part of the ancient city. The city's highest spot (139m) is at the top of Monte Mario, to the northwest of the centre.

Hills make for tough walking and some spectacular views. One of the best vantage points is the top of the Gianicolo (p125), from where it's possible to identify each of the seven hills, although the Viminale and Quirinale are swallowed up by the city sprawl and seem little more than gentle slopes.

The River Tiber, which has its source in the Apennines north of Arezzo (in Tuscany) and runs into the sea at Ostia, is subject to flooding. Until the late 19th century this was a major problem, but it was solved in 1900 by raising the level of the river's embankments. It is still possible to see markers around Trastevere denoting the water level reached by various floods.

In ancient times the city was enclosed by defensive walls: the first, the Servian Wall, was built in 378 BC; the second, the Aurelian Wall, between AD 271 and 275.

## GREEN ROME

In May 2007 researchers revealed that traces of cocaine, cannabis, caffeine and nicotine had been found in Rome's air. The story, which caused predictable glee in the world's press, not only revealed the capital's alarming coke habit but also highlighted Rome's serious pollution problem.

Traffic restrictions have been introduced – much of the city centre is delineated a ZTL (limited traffic zone) – but smog levels remain high and inevitably many monuments are suffering.

Graffiti is another issue that refuses to go away. Despite the efforts of the Ufficio Decoro Urbano (Office of Urban Decorum), the sight of buildings daubed with unsightly spray-paint is still common.

But it's not all bad news. Efforts to promote recycling continue, and even if Rome lags behind Paris and Vienna, figures show that Romans recycle more paper than their London counterparts. An experiment, ongoing at the time of research, to replace communal street bins with recycling bins in individual apartment blocks was showing positive results.

With the exception of a flourishing cat population, Rome's flora and fauna is largely limited to the city's 14 natural parks, many of which used to belong to Rome's noble families. As they were designed and planted according to the fashion of the day, they generally contain a wide variety of exotic species.

Archaeological sites provide an ideal environment for the *cappero* (caper). In spring it forms cascading, puffy bushes, which in June become masses of pink flowers. You'll see them growing in areas including the Palatino and Terme di Caracalla, and on the Ponte Rotto near the Isola Tiberina.

## URBAN PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Mayor Veltroni has made a big deal about being committed to urban renewal, and in March 2006, after years of deliberation, city hall approved a sweeping plan. The highly ambitious *piano regolatore di Roma* (PDR) calls for the construction of 100,000 new houses/flats, 14 new transport corridors (including four metro lines), the creation of 19 parks and a substantial redevelopment of the capital's run-down suburbs. High-profile projects, such as Massimiliano Fuksas' Centro Congressi in EUR and the revamping of Stazione Tiburtina, are also covered.

Not surprisingly, the plan is not without its critics, many of whom ask why a city whose population is decreasing needs 100,000 new homes. They also inquire as to where all the money is going to come from.

## GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Italian life is political to degrees that foreigners find difficult to comprehend. Cynicism is deeply ingrained and nothing happens without speculation as to the dark political motives behind it. On an everyday level, the fact that most Romans live in self-managed *condominios* (blocks of individually owned flats) gives rise to all sorts of politicking as rival residents seek to outsmart one another at *condominio* meetings.

The top man in Rome is the *sindaco* (mayor), currently Walter Veltroni, who heads the city's municipal government up on the Campidoglio, the seat of city government since the late 11th century. The mayor leads

## top picks

### READING UP ON POLITICS & SOCIETY

- **The Dark Heart of Italy**, Tobias Jones (2003) – a scathing study of the Berlusconi phenomenon, this fierce critique caused a scandal in Italy
- **The Moro Affair**, Leonardo Sciascia (2002) – Sciascia, author of the Mafia classic *The Day of the Owl*, relives the 1978 kidnapping and murder of Aldo Moro by Red Brigades terrorists
- **Italy – The Unfinished Revolution**, Matt Frei (2001) – the BBC's former Rome correspondent catalogues the changes Italian society has undergone in the past decade
- **Modern Italy: A Political History**, Denis Mack Smith (1997) – Mack Smith is widely regarded as the leading authority on Italian politics writing in English; the title tells all
- **The New Italians**, Charles Richards (1995) – British journalist Richards takes you through the murky backstage of modern Italian life; packed with surprising revelations, it's a fascinating eye-opener

## CONTROVERSY PLAGUES BERLUSCONI

In 2006 *Forbes* magazine listed Silvio Berlusconi as the world's 37th-richest person, with an estimated fortune of US\$11 billion. Five years earlier his net worth had been US\$10.3 billion. In five years of government, Italy's richest man had earned US\$700 million.

Nicknamed Il Cavaliere (the Knight), Berlusconi was already a controversial figure when he became prime minister in 2001. A self-made media magnate, owner of the Milan-based Mediaset company (producer of Italy's top three commercial channels) and Mondadori, Italy's biggest publishing house, he was loved and hated in equal measure.

Inevitably his government attracted controversy. At the forefront of political debate was the so-called 'conflict of interest' issue. Naturally Berlusconi claimed that his control over Italian TV was irrelevant to his role as prime minister. His critics tried to get a word in edgewise but found access to the media strangely limited.

To be fair, though, Berlusconi's government did introduce legislation to deal with the conflict, even if few opponents were appeased. The law, which established that there was no conflict of interest if a company owner had no official company responsibilities, didn't change a thing, they said. Berlusconi was still free to own as many companies as he liked as long as he didn't officially work for them. Which, of course, he never did.

his appointed *giunta*, a group of councillors called *assessori* who hold ministerial positions as heads of municipal departments. The *assessori* are appointed from the *consiglio comunale*, a body of elected officials much like a parliament.

A former member of the Democratici di Sinistra (Left Democrats) party, Veltroni has enjoyed a successful period at city hall. Dubbed 'Action Man' by *Time* magazine, he has stewarded Rome through something of a mini-Renaissance. Since he took the helm in 2001, tourism has thrived and the city has become a major cultural player. However, he's not been without his critics, many of whom accuse him of a superficial *buonismo* (good-ism), of cultivating a positive image while neglecting the grit beneath the surface.

Yet Veltroni's recipe would seem to be working, and in October 2007 he was elected leader of the new Partito Democratico (Democrat Party), the party that supporters hope will unite Italy's notoriously fractious left wing. Following his election there was debate as to whether he could continue as mayor of Rome, but with no obvious successor he saw little reason to step down and he remains in the hot seat.

Since 2005 Veltroni has enjoyed the support of Lazio's regional government under governor Piero Marrazzo. A former TV journalist and political novice, Marrazzo surprised many when he beat the far-right-winger Francesco Storace in the 2005 regional elections. In government Marrazzo has kept a fairly low profile, happy to leave the limelight to Veltroni.

A parliamentary republic, Italy is headed by a president (Presidente della Repubblica Italiana), who appoints the prime minister, known as the Presidente del Consiglio. The parliament consists of two houses – a Senate and a Chamber of Deputies – both with equal legislative power.

The president resides in Palazzo del Quirinale (p96), on Rome's Quirinale hill; the Chamber of Deputies sits in Palazzo di Montecitorio (p86), just off Via del Corso; and the Senate sits in Palazzo Madama (p80), near Piazza Navona.

At the time of writing the Italian prime minister was Romano Prodi, former president of the European Commission. He's had a tough time of it since scraping to victory in the hotly disputed 2006 general election – not so much from the Berlusconi-led opposition but from elements of his own left-wing coalition that have contested many of his financial reforms.

## MEDIA

To discuss the media in Italy is to discuss Silvio Berlusconi (see the boxed text, above), Italy's undisputed TV king. He may no longer be prime minister, but as founder and controlling shareholder of Mediaset, one half of Italy's TV duopoly, he still wields enormous power. Furthermore, as former prime minister and leader of the opposition he enjoys considerable influence over RAI, Italy's Rome-based state broadcaster. In his prime-ministerial heyday between 2001 and 2006, he was said to control up to 90% of Italy's TV output. For information on Rome's cinema scene and more on Italian television see p37.

Political interference in RAI has deep roots. Ever since it started broadcasting in 1954, it has been a highly politicised company, and still today senior appointments are based on political

considerations. In the early 2000s there was talk of a partial privatisation but efforts were half-hearted and the issue was quietly dropped in 2005.

Fortunately, there is life in the media after TV. Rome's publishing houses are often small, family-run affairs that tend to rely on government contracts or serve specialised markets, such as the academic university sector.

*La Repubblica* and *Il Messaggero* are the two major newspapers produced in Rome, along with the popular sports daily, *Corriere dello Sport*. For more information, see p293.

Rome's alternative media scene is centred on the *centri sociali* (organised squats; see p227), of which there are about 30 in and around town. For an overview of Rome's counterculture go online at [www.tmcrew.org](http://www.tmcrew.org).

## FASHION

After New York, Rome is the most fashionable city in the world. According to a list published by the Californian company Global Language Monitor (GLM), in 2007 Rome was cooler than London, Paris and Milan. However, by any criteria other than GLM's linguistic analysis, Rome falls far short of fashion superstardom.

Fashion might be a way of life here, but only in the sense that trends are followed without a second thought. Whatever the look, be it preppy smart or hip-hop street, Romans wear what their peers are wearing.

This slavish adherence to fashion isn't, of course, limited to clothes. The Smart car (see the boxed text, below) has become something of a city icon, while mobile phones continue to multiply. The sight of teenagers dexterously texting messages has become so common that some cultural commentators have claimed it's affecting their ability to write proper Italian.

Among recent US imports, one of the most unusual has been the flashmob (a gathering called together on the internet to carry out some predetermined action). In July 2003, just a month after the phenomenon premiered in New York, Rome became the first European city to organise its own flashmob. Four years on the trend is still going – in March 2007, 200 combatants met in Villa Doria Pamphilj for a mass pillow fight.

The flashmob phenomenon might not be Rome's finest hour, but it does at least show a desire to set a trend, rather than follow those set elsewhere. On the whole Rome's trendsetters look abroad and copy the foreign modes of the moment; the rest follow them first, each other second. However, unoriginal as styles may be, clothes are invariably of a high quality and worn well. Conservatism and elegance are the order of the day, even when that involves the figure-hugging styles so beloved of Italian women. Skin-tight hipsters and miniskirts may be sexy but they no longer shock; they've become mainstream.

The two big names in the world of Roman fashion are Valentino Garavani and Laura Biagiotti. Of the two, it's Valentino who's been hogging the headlines recently. In July 2007 he celebrated 45 years of *alta moda* (high fashion) with a glamorous 36-hour fashion extravaganza in Rome (see p173). Laura Biagiotti is known for her luxurious knitwear and sumptuous silk separates, often in cream and white.

Rome's major fashion event is the Alta Moda spectacle, staged in January and July in various suggestive settings.

## RETURN OF AN ICON

Twenty-two years after it went out of production, the Fiat 500 is back in fashion. But we're not talking about the old *cinquecento* (500), the classic microcar beloved of *dolce vita* Italy; this is the souped-up 21st-century version, the 'iPod of cars' as Fiat CEO Sergio Marchionne would have us believe. Launched to huge fanfare in July 2007, the car has proved an immediate hit, with 57,000 being ordered within three weeks of its launch.

This news can hardly have delighted bosses at DaimlerChrysler, producers of the Smart, the modern pretender to the *cinquecento* crown. Since 1998 the tiny two-seater Smart has sold better in Rome than anywhere else. The brainchild of Nicholas Mayek (CEO of the Swatch watch company), it suits the Roman motorist perfectly: it's fast, highly visible and, best of all, short enough to park perpendicular to the kerb. But with the exception of Italy, and Rome in particular, it hasn't really caught on. Of the 750,000 Smart cars sold worldwide until 2006, 210,000 were sold in Italy, and a staggering 50,000 of those in Rome.

## top picks

NOTABLE BUILDINGS  
& MONUMENTS

- Pantheon (p72)
- Auditorium Parco della Musica (p155)
- St Peter's Basilica (p128)
- Tempietto di Bramante (p126)
- Colosseum (p58)

labour through buried ruins. The balance between respecting the past and running the present is one that Rome's authorities struggle to maintain.

Throughout history, architecture has been set at the service of the state. Rome's ancient emperors understood only too well the power of architecture to shape reputation and built on a scale that was designed to awe. Similarly, the great Renaissance and baroque popes used marble as much as might to transform Rome into their avant-garde capital. Even today, city authorities are attempting to restore Rome to the spotlight through architecture – since the mid-1990s a number of high-profile building projects have drawn the world's top architects to Rome.

THE EARLY DAYS  
ANCIENT ROME

To a large extent early Roman architecture was inherited from the Etruscans in northern Lazio and southern Tuscany, and from the Greeks in southern Italy.

The early Romans looked to the Greeks for inspiration in designing their temples. But whereas Greek temples had steps and colonnades on all sides, the Roman versions had a high podium with steps and columns only at the front, forming a deep porch. Roman examples of this include the Tempio di Ercole Vincitore and Tempio di Portunus (p69) near Piazza della Bocca della Verità and, though not so well preserved, the temples in the Area Sacra di Largo di Torre Argentina (p73).

The Roman use of columns was also Greek in origin, even if they favoured the more slender Ionic and Corinthian columns over the plain Doric versions. To see examples of all three study the outside of the Colosseum (p58), where the columns are Doric at ground level, Ionic in the middle and Corinthian on the top.

But the early Romans' greatest architectural achievement was in perfecting existing construction techniques and using them on a hitherto unseen scale. They learnt how to build roads and bridges from the Etruscans, and used these skills to create aqueducts and arches that still impress today.

However, they weren't completely without ideas of their own, and when they invented concrete in the 1st century BC, there was no stopping Roman ingenuity. Concrete was used to roof vast areas such as the Pantheon, which boasts the largest unreinforced concrete dome in existence (see the boxed text, opposite), and the huge vaults that covered the baths in the Terme di Caracalla (p110), built in AD 217.

Concrete, however, wasn't particularly attractive, and while it was used for heavy-duty structural work it was usually lined with coloured marble and travertine, imported from Greece and North Africa. Brick was also an important material, used both as a veneer and for construction.

As Rome's power grew, so its builders became increasingly audacious. The forums developed into richly decorated public spaces dedicated to civic, religious and commercial activity. You

Spanning three thousand years of unfettered urban development, Rome's architectural legacy is unparalleled. A remarkable patchwork of styles, it combines martial ruins, medieval churches, Renaissance *palazzi* (mansions), baroque fountains and neoclassical porticoes, all interwoven with Roman roads, cobbled lanes and Fascist thoroughfares.

But while this cluttered cityscape thrills visitors, it doesn't always make life easy for locals. Commuters struggle on roads designed for medieval traffic, while residents face murderous maintenance costs to stop their *palazzi* crumbling around them. Beneath the surface, engineers working on Rome's new metro lines

need only look at the Mercati di Traiano (Trajan's Markets; p65) to realise that shopping was an important pursuit in 2nd-century Rome. To the northeast, the 13-hectare Terme di Diocleziano (p101), built in 298, became the largest baths complex in Ancient Rome.

In the 4th century, as the empire slipped into terminal decline, Constantine financed an ambitious building programme. The most notable of the many churches that the Christian-friendly emperor commissioned is the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano (p106). Built between 315 and 324 and reformed into its present octagonal shape in the 5th century, it was the model on which many subsequent basilicas were based. Other show stoppers of the period include the Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere (p121) and the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore (p89).

## MEDIÉVAL CHURCHES

By the 8th century Rome was firmly in the hands of the papacy, even if the papacy was far from firm itself. A pope's life was a risky one, so many took to building to leave some sort of historical imprint. The result was a flurry of church-building between the 9th and 12th centuries.

By this time churches were almost universally based on the layout of the Roman basilicas (originally a basilica was a hall for public functions). Typically these were rectangular with a flat roof and wide nave, flanked on both sides by narrow aisles. A good example is the Basilica di Santa Sabina (p115), which owes much of its current look to the 9th and 13th centuries.

Other churches dating to this period include the Chiesa di Santa Prassede (p94), built in the 9th century and famous for its spectacular mosaics, and the 8th-century Chiesa di Santa Maria in Cosmedin (p69), better known as home to the Bocca della Verità (Mouth of Truth).

The 13th and 14th centuries were dark days for Rome as internecine fighting raged between the city's noble families. While much of northern Europe and even parts of Italy were revelling in Gothic arches and towering vaults, little of lasting value was being built in Rome. The one great exception is the city's only Gothic church, the Chiesa di Santa Maria Sopra Minerva (p73).

REVAMPS  
RENAISSANCE REBUILD

Florence, rather than Rome, is generally regarded as Italy's great Renaissance city. Yet it was in the heady days of the 15th century that Rome embarked on its great makeover, a process that was to recast the city as a centre of avant-garde art and design.

It's impossible to pinpoint the exact year that the Renaissance arrived in Rome, but many claim that it was the election of Pope Nicholas V in 1447 that sparked off the artistic furore

## THE DOME THAT DEFIES THE EXPERTS

One of the city's must-see sights, the Pantheon is widely regarded as the pinnacle of Ancient Rome's architectural achievement. A solid, thick-set temple (now church), it's topped by the largest masonry vault ever built, a structure so sophisticated that no-one is quite sure why it is still standing. Had it been made with modern concrete it would have collapsed under its own weight long ago.

Supported by giant piers hidden in the main hall's 6m-thick walls, the dome was built over a temporary wooden frame onto which increasingly thin layers of concrete were poured: the concrete is 5.9m thick at the base of the dome and 1.5m at the top. This was one of the key tricks used to keep its weight to an absolute minimum.

Weight reduction was the main problem facing the Pantheon's architects. They employed various solutions, of which two were particularly ingenious. One was to circle the dome with five bands of decorative coffers (the rectangular recesses you see on the inside of the dome); the other was to modify the grade of the concrete to ensure that it was lighter at the top than at the base. The Romans invented concrete in the 1st century BC by mixing lime with pozzolana (volcanic ash from the Campi Flegrei area near Naples) and an aggregate, usually tufa rock. No-one is exactly sure of the composition used for the Pantheon, but the most credible theory is that heavy basalt was used as the aggregate at the bottom, brick or tufa in the midsection and light pumice at the top.

At the centre of the dome, the 8.7m-diameter oculus serves a dual purpose. Most obviously, it allows light into the building, but it also acts as a compression ring, absorbing and redistributing the huge structural forces centred on the dome's apex.

# top picks

## ARCHITECTURE BOOKS

- **Not Built in a Day: Exploring the Architecture of Rome**, George H Sullivan (2006) – personable and accessible guide to 12 themed walking tours
- **Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide**, Amanda Claridge (1998) – comprehensive, comprehensible guide to Rome's earliest monuments
- **The Genius in the Design: Bernini, Borromini and the Rivalry that Transformed Rome**, Jake Morrissey (2005) – the intriguing tale of Rome's two baroque superstars
- **Roman Art & Architecture**, Mortimer Wheeler (1985) – easy-to-carry, easy-to-read look at the city's treasures
- **Principles of Roman Architecture**, Mark Wilson Jones (2003) – considered analysis by a practising US architect

di San Pietro in Montorio, is a masterpiece of elegance. Surrounded by 16 Doric columns, it was the first building in Rome to depend entirely on the proportions of the classical orders and was the most sophisticated attempt thus far to incorporate the ideals of faith and art in a perfect temple.

Similarly harmonious is Bramante's beautifully proportioned 1504 cloister at the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Pace (p79) near Piazza Navona.

In 1506 Julius commissioned Bramante to start work on the job that would finally finish him off – the rebuilding of St Peter's Basilica (p128). The fall of Constantinople's Aya Sofya (Church of the Hagia Sofia) to Islam in the mid-14th century had pricked Nicholas V into ordering an earlier revamp, but the work had never been completed and it wasn't until Julius took the bull by the horns that progress was made. Bramante never got to see how his original Greek-cross design was developed, as he died in 1514.

St Peter's Basilica occupied most of the other notable architects of the High Renaissance, including Giuliano da Sangallo (1445–1516), Baldassarre Peruzzi (1481–1536) and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484–1546). Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564) eventually took over the task in 1547 and created the magnificent dome, based on Brunelleschi's design for the Duomo in Florence.

## COUNTER-REFORMATION CHURCHES

The Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church's vicious response to the Protestant Reformation, was a turbulent time in Rome. Books were banned, freethinkers were branded heretics and tortured by the Inquisition, and the Jesuits were founded. Ironically, though, art and architecture thrived. As part of a sweeping propaganda campaign, the Church launched a costly building programme, employing architects to create huge churches to attract and overawe worshippers.

The prime example of Counter-Reformation architecture is the magnificent Chiesa del Gesù (p76), designed by the leading architect of the day, Giacomo della Porta (1533–1602). In a move away from the style of earlier Renaissance churches, the mannerist façade has pronounced architectural elements that create a contrast between surfaces and a play of light and shade. Della Porta also worked on the construction of St Peter's Basilica and designed the Palazzo della Sapienza (p80), seat of Rome's university until 1935.

that swept the city in the 15th and 16th centuries. Nicholas believed that as head of the Christian world Rome had a duty to impress, a theory that was eagerly taken up by his successors, and it was at the behest of the great papal dynasties – the Barberini, Farnese and Pamphilj – that the leading artists of the day were summoned to Rome.

The Venetian Pope Paul II (r 1464–71) commissioned many works, including the Palazzo Venezia (p68), Rome's first great Renaissance *palazzo*. Built in 1455 when Paul was still a cardinal, it was enlarged in 1464 when he became pope. Sixtus IV (r 1471–84) had the Sistine Chapel (p137) built, and enlarged the Chiesa di Santa Maria del Popolo (p154). But it was under Julius II (1503–13) that the Roman Renaissance reached its peak, thanks largely to a classically minded architect from Milan, Donato Bramante (1444–1514).

Considered the high priest of Renaissance architecture, Bramante arrived in Rome in 1499. Here, inspired by the ancient ruins, he developed a refined classical style. His 1502 Tempietto (p126), in the courtyard of the Chiesa

The end of the 16th century and the papacy of Sixtus V (1585–90) marked the beginning of major urban-planning schemes. Domenico Fontana (1543–1607) and other architects created a network of major thoroughfares to connect previously disparate parts of the sprawling medieval city, and decorative obelisks were erected at vantage points throughout Rome. Fontana also designed the main façade of Palazzo del Quirinale (p96), the immense palace that served as the pope's summer residence for almost three centuries. His nephew, Carlo Maderno (1556–1629), also worked on the *palazzo*, when not amending Bramante's designs for St Peter's Basilica.

## ARCHITECTURE AS THEATRE BAROQUE RIVALRY

No two architects did more to fashion the face of central Rome than the two undisputed maestros of Roman baroque: Francesco Borromini (1599–1667) and his chief adversary Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1680). Two starkly different characters – Naples-born Bernini was smooth and charismatic, while Borromini, from Lombardy, was difficult and depressive – they led the transition from Counter-Reformation rigour to baroque exuberance.

Bernini is perhaps best known for his work in the Vatican. He designed Piazza San Pietro (p133), famously styling the colonnade as 'the motherly arms of the Church', and was chief architect at St Peter's Basilica from 1629. While working on the basilica, he designed towers for Carlo Maderno's façade (which were structurally problematic and later demolished) and created the baldachin (altar canopy) above the main altar, using bronze stripped from the Pantheon.

Under the patronage of the Barberini pope Urban VIII, Bernini was given free rein to transform the face of the city, and his churches, *palazzi*, piazzas and fountains remain landmarks to this day. However, his fortunes nose-dived when the pope died in 1644. Urban's successor, Innocent X, wanted as little contact as possible with the favourites of his hated predecessor and instead turned to Borromini, Alessandro Algardi (1595–1654), and Girolamo and Carlo Rainaldi (1570–1655 and 1611–91, respectively).

The son of an architect and well versed in stone masonry and construction techniques, Borromini created buildings involving complex shapes and exotic geometry. A recurring feature of his designs is the skilful manipulation of light, often obtained by the clever placement of small oval-shaped windows. His most memorable works are the Chiesa di San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (1638–41; p96), which has an oval-shaped interior, and the Chiesa di Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza (p80), which combines a complex arrangement of convex and concave surfaces with an innovative spiral tower.

Bernini came back into favour with his magnificent design for the 1651 Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi in the centre of Piazza Navona (p78), opposite Borromini's Chiesa di Sant'Agnese in Agone.

Like Michelangelo, Bernini thought of himself first and foremost as a sculptor, and his best-known works fall somewhere between sculpture and architecture. He was responsible for the tombs of Urban VIII and Alexander VII in St Peter's Basilica and the angels on Ponte Sant'Angelo (p139), as well as the 1658 Chiesa di Sant'Andrea al Quirinale (p96).

Carlo Fontana (1634–1714), the most popular architect at the tail end of the baroque era, also designed various palaces and churches, including the portico of the Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere (p121).

## ROCCO FRILLS

In the early days of the 18th century, as baroque fashions began to fade and neoclassicism waited to make its 19th-century entrance, the rococo burst into theatrical life. Drawing on the excesses of the baroque, it was a short-lived fad but one that left a memorable mark.

The Spanish Steps (p99), built between 1723 and 1726 by Francesco de Sanctis, provided a focal point for the many Grand Tourists who were busy discovering Rome's classical past. A short walk to the southwest, Piazza Sant'Ignazio was designed by Filippo Raguzzini (1680–1771) in 1728, to provide the Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola (p86), Rome's second Jesuit church, with a suitably melodramatic setting.

Most spectacular of all, however, was the Trevi Fountain (p98), one of the city's most exuberant and enduringly popular monuments. It was designed in 1732 by Nicola Salvi (1697–1751) and completed three decades later.

## ROME, CAPITAL OF ITALY

### POSTUNIFICATION MODERNISATION

After more than a thousand years of direct papal control, in 1870 Rome found itself capital of the new Kingdom of Italy. To meet the challenges of its new role widespread changes were required: houses were needed for the new army of bureaucrats and the city's infrastructure was in dire need of an upgrade. New piazzas were built – Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II (p95), at the centre of a new upmarket residential district, and neoclassical Piazza della Repubblica (p101), over Diocletian's bath complex – and roads were laid. Via Nazionale and Via Cavour were constructed to link the city centre with the new railway station, Stazione Termini, and Corso Vittorio Emanuele II to connect Piazza Venezia with the Vatican. To celebrate unification and pander to the ego of the ruling Savoy family, the Vittoriano monument (p68) was built between 1885 and 1911, much to the disgust of the Roman population.

Fortunately there was still time for flights of fancy, such as the wonderfully frivolous Art Nouveau *palazzi* of the Coppede district (see p149), before Mussolini and the Fascists bulldozed their way into power.

### MUSSOLINI, EUR & POSTWAR BLUES

A shrewd manipulator of imagery, Mussolini was keen that Fascist Rome should become a modern city worthy of its imperial past. To this end he embarked on a series of grandiose building projects, including the 1928–31 Foro Italico sports centre (p155) and his most famous architectural legacy, the EUR district (p117).

For years EUR has been overlooked by serious architects, who have been reluctant to take on the area's political ghosts. However, in recent years, sensibilities have changed and EUR is now being revalued as an architectural phenomenon. At the centre of the debate is superstar architect Massimiliano Fuksas, who has gone on record as saying that EUR is modern Rome's most important landmark.

Built for the Esposizione Universale di Roma in 1942, this strange quarter of wide boulevards and huge linear buildings owes much of its look to the 1920s *razionalisti* (rationalists). Their architectural vision – a mix of functionalism and classical elegance – appealed to Mussolini, who commissioned them to design his new quarter. However, by this stage most of the group had fallen out with the ruling junta and only one of their number, Adalberto Libera, actually worked on the project. His Palazzo dei Congressi remains a masterpiece of rationalist architecture.

For much of the postwar period architects in Rome were limited to planning cheap housing for the city's ever-growing population. Swathes of hideous apartment blocks were built along the city's main arteries and grim suburbs sprang up on land claimed off local farmers.

The 1960 Olympics heralded a spate of sporting construction, and both Stadio Flaminio (p240) and Stadio Olimpico (p240) date to this period. Pier Luigi Nervi, Italy's master of concrete, added his contribution in the form of the Palazzetto dello Sport.

### CONTEMPORARY ROME

You'd never know it by walking the city's history-filled streets, but contemporary architecture is thriving in the capital. In the past decade a clutch of superstar architects have completed projects in Rome or won commissions for daring new buildings. These include Italy's top architect, Renzo Piano; renowned American Richard Meier; Zaha Hadid, the first woman to win the Pritzker Prize (architecture's equivalent of the Nobel); and Dutch legend Rem Koolhaas. Out in EUR, work is under way on Massimiliano Fuksas' cutting-edge Centro Congressi Italia.

The foundations of this building boom date to the early 1990s. When Francesco Rutelli became mayor in 1993, Italy was in the midst of the Tangentopoli corruption scandal (see p28). A period of collective slate-wiping and conscience-cleansing, it was exactly the right time, reasoned Rutelli, to revamp Rome. Inspired by Barcelona's successful makeover for the 1992 Olympic Games, he began to clean up the *centro storico* (historic centre) and, in 1995, commissioned the city centre's first new building in 60 years.

Predictably, Richard Meier's plans for a state-of-the-art museum for the Ara Pacis Augustae (p85) caused controversy. Among the most vociferous opponents was Vittorio Sgarbi, an outspoken art critic and politician, who claimed that the American's design was the first step to globalising Rome's unique classical heritage. In fact, Meier's glass-and-steel design represented little more than the natural progression of architect Vittorio Morpurgo's 1930s shell that already encased the altar. The museum was finally inaugurated in 2006 in a blaze of publicity and muted reactions. While most Romans appreciated the idea of introducing modern architecture to the city centre, few were entirely convinced by Meier's design.

Ironically, Meier won far more acclaim for a second project, his Chiesa Dio Padre Misericordioso (p104) in Tor Tre Teste, an unexceptional suburb east of the city centre. Another religious project that won widespread applause was Paolo Portoghesi's postmodern mosque (p156), opened in 1995 in the upmarket Parioli district.

Back nearer the centre, Renzo Piano's Auditorium Parco della Musica (p155) has had a huge impact on Rome's music and cultural scene. Piano, the man behind the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Kansai terminal at Osaka airport and the wind tunnel at Ferrari's Maranello headquarters, is one of two Italian architects who can genuinely claim international celebrity status. The other is Massimiliano Fuksas.

Born in Rome in 1944, Fuksas is known for his futuristic vision, and while he has no signature building as such, his design for EUR's Centro Congressi Italia comes as close as any to embodying his style. A rectangular 30m-high glass shell containing a 3500-sq-metre steel-and-Teflon cloud supported by steel ribs and suspended over a vast conference hall, its look is fearlessly modern. Yet it's not without its references to the past: in both scale and form it owes its inspiration to the 1930s rationalist architecture that surrounds it in Mussolini's futuristic quarter. Construction work started on the project in March 2006 and is expected to take at least three years.

Work also continues, albeit slowly, on two modern art galleries. Within a few blocks of Piano's auditorium, the new Museo Nazionale delle Arti del XXI Secolo (MAXXI; p155) has been beset by money problems and progresses slowly. Conceived by Zaha Hadid, its glass-and-concrete

### THE REALITY BEHIND THE GLOSS

Eager to drag Rome into the 21st century, the city authorities have been enthusiastically commissioning top international architects to spice up the cityscape. But with the exception of Massimiliano Fuksas not one of them is Roman, and of the others only Genoan Renzo Piano is Italian. So what is the reality behind the gloss? What is life really like for Rome's young architects? Architects Raniero and Stephanie Santini explain:

'The situation is tragic. Everybody wants to leave, to go to Germany, Spain or the US. With 17,000 registered architects in Rome it's obvious that there's a limited amount of work to go round. Also other countries offer much more chance to experiment. Architecturally, Rome is very static; they just want to keep everything as it is. There's little modern work done and that which there is always done by the same companies. Young architects in Rome [both Raniero and Stephanie are in their early 30s] are not very happy. The fact is that if you're not over 60 they simply don't trust you.'

'Another problem is the bureaucracy. One of the reasons why foreigners don't invest here is that there's never any guarantee as to how long a project will take. Or how much it will cost. What happens, for example, if you find Roman ruins while you're building?'

On a more positive note, they comment on some of the capital's better-known buildings.

'My favourite building is the Pantheon,' says Stephanie. 'From a construction point of view it's fascinating. The techniques they used were so cutting-edge and the oculus in the dome is quite unique. When you enter it's quite breathtaking.'

Raniero continues: 'I really like the Auditorium, one of Rome's few modern buildings. It's got a really original shape and the surface is unusual. It's lined with a mix of zinc and lead, which over time whitens. Some people think this is a mistake, but actually Renzo Piano wanted it that way.'

'A *palazzo* that I think is really underrated is Palazzo del Quirinale. The piazza outside is specially beautiful at sunset when the light is wonderful.'

But while Rome's cityscape is unique, many of its problems are not. Ageism is not a uniquely Roman issue, or indeed one limited to architecture. Italy's population is an elderly one and, with unemployment high in many parts of the country, young people often struggle to break into the professions.

design has won many plaudits for the way it incorporates galleries in and around a former army barracks.

Similarly ambitious is Odile Decq's Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma (MACRO; p157). The fundamental idea behind the French architect's design is the breaking down of barriers between the museum and the area that surrounds it. This finds its most dramatic expression in the multilevel rooftop garden.

On the other side of the centre, on Via Ostiense, Rome's former wholesale markets are being overhauled to a design by Dutch architect and Harvard professor Rem Koolhaas. When work is finished, Rome will have a spanking-new arts and retail centre.

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to recommend a travel experience.

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## NEIGHBOURHOODS

### top picks

- **Museo e Galleria Borghese (p149)**  
The 'queen of all private art collections'
- **St Peter's Basilica (p128)**  
A testament to artistic genius and Catholic power
- **Pantheon (p72)**  
The capital's best-preserved ancient monument
- **Colosseum (p58)**  
Rome's great gladiatorial arena sets the heart racing
- **Piazza Navona (p78)**  
Beautiful baroque square in the heart of the *centro storico*
- **Capitoline Museums (p67)**  
Magnificent classical sculpture on Michelangelo's Piazza del Campidoglio
- **Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere (p121)**  
Gold mosaics glitter inside this 12th-century church
- **Terme di Caracalla (p110)**  
Towering ruins set the scene for summer opera
- **Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Altemps (p78)**  
Baroque frescoes provide a colourful backdrop to the Ludovisi sculpture collection
- **Trevi Fountain (p98)**  
Rome's flamboyant fountain is a sure-fire crowd-pleaser



# NEIGHBOURHOODS

The result of 3000 years of ad hoc urban development, Rome can seem an overwhelming prospect. Its street layout owes more to ancient road builders than to any norms of urban planning, and there's little apparent order to the patchwork of ruins, *palazzi* (mansions) and *piazze* that constitute much of the centre. To help you plot a course, we've divided the city into seven manageable chunks.

Centred on the Colosseum, **Ancient Rome** is where you'll find the thrilling remnants of Rome's imperial past: the Palatino (Palatine hill), the forums, the Campidoglio (Capitoline hill) and the Circo Massimo. Easy to get to by public transport, it sits at the southern end of the city centre, at the bottom of Via Cavour, the busy road that connects with Stazione Termini, Rome's main train station.

Many visitors, however, prefer to start in the **centro storico** (historic centre), curious to see if the Pantheon and Piazza Navona live up to their legendary billing. Here, among the tangled lanes and romantic corners, you'll almost certainly lose your bearings, but don't let that worry you. It's not a big area and you can never really get that lost – if you do find yourself going round in circles head west for the River Tiber or east for Via del Corso, Rome's principal shopping street.

To the east, **Esquilino, Quirinale and Piazza di Spagna** is a large area rising east from Via del Corso up to Stazione Termini. Encompassing three of Rome's seven hills (the Esquilino, Quirinale and Viminale), the city's smartest shopping district and a host of iconic sights (including the Trevi Fountain and the Spanish Steps), it's a rich and varied district.

**Southern Rome** is a fascinating area largely overlooked by the crowds that flock to the Colosseum and Roman forums. Among its better-known attractions are the Basilica di San Giovanni, the Terme di Caracalla, Via Appia Antica and the catacombs. But there are also a number of delightful surprises: there's the leafy Villa Celimontana and the tranquil Aventino (Aventine hill); there's EUR, with its strange, world-apart atmosphere; and there's Testaccio, with its pumped-up clubs.

Over the river from Testaccio, **Trastevere** is one of Rome's most photogenic neighbourhoods. Formerly a bastion of working-class independence, it's now a trendy hang-out for foreigners and fun-seekers, its pretty alleyways thronged with restaurants, cafés, pubs and pizzerias.

Continue north from Trastevere and you come to the **Vatican City and Borgo**. Independent since 1929, the Vatican is the world's smallest sovereign state and home to St Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel, two of Rome's top attractions, as well as hundreds of overpriced restaurants and souvenir shops.

On the other side of the River Tiber, the highlight of **Villa Borghese and Northern Rome** is Villa Borghese itself, Rome's most famous park. Here you'll find several art galleries (including the must-see Museo e Galleria Borghese), the city zoo and plenty of benches to rest your weary legs.

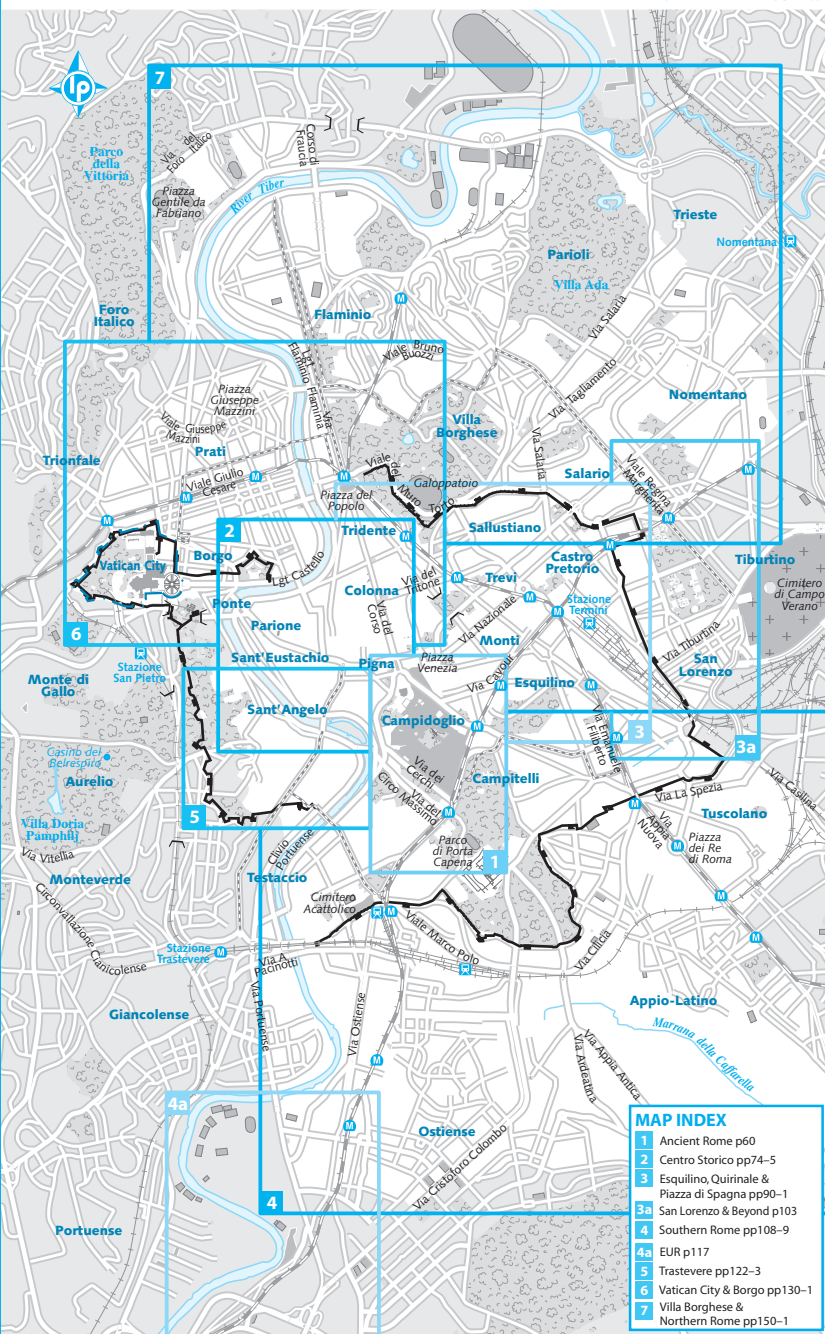
Everywhere you go in Rome, everywhere you look, there's something to see. Too much, maybe; certainly too much for a single visit. The trick is not to worry about it. Stroll the streets, have an ice cream, stop for a coffee – do as the Romans do. For that's the beauty of Rome: you don't need to march round museums and churches to appreciate its unparalleled cultural legacy, you just need to walk its streets. Even without trying you'll see more than you bargained for.

Public transport makes getting around pretty straightforward, and throughout this chapter we have included the best transport options. (For more on transport, see [p281](#).)

**'That's the beauty of Rome: you don't need to march round museums and churches to appreciate its unparalleled cultural legacy, you just need to walk its streets.'**



**GREATER ROME**



**ITINERARY BUILDER**

The table below allows you to plan a day's worth of activities in any area of the city. Simply select which area you wish to explore, and then mix and match from the corresponding listings to build your day. The first item in each cell represents a well-known highlight of the area, while the other items are more off-the-beaten-track gems.

AREA	ACTIVITIES	SIGHTS	EATING	DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE
Ancient Rome	Colosseum (p58) Palatino (p59) Piazza del Campidoglio (p66)		San Teodoro (p186) Ara Coeli (p198) La Piazzetta (p186)	Oppio Caffè (p212) Caffè Capitolino (p212) Cavour 313 (p213)
Centro Storico		Pantheon (p72) Piazza Navona (p78) Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Altemps (p78)	La Rosetta (p186) Enoteca Corsi (p187) Pizzeria da Baffetto (p189)	Salotto 42 (p213) Stardust (p215) Etabri (p216)
Esquilino, Quirinale & Piazza di Spagna		Trevi Fountain (p98) Piazza di Spagna (p99) Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica (p100)	Colline Emiliane (p199) Palatium (p197) Uno e Bino (p200)	La Bottega del Caffè (p218) Antica Enoteca (p220) Trimani (p221)
Southern Rome		Terme di Caracalla (p110) Basilica di Santa Sabina (p115) Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano (p106)	La Tana dei Golosi (p201) Hostaria Zampagna (p203) Trattoria da Bucatino (p202)	L'Oasi della Birra (p224) Circolo degli Artisti (p222) Gladiatori Hotel Terrace Bar (p222)
Trastevere		Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere (p121) Villa Farnesina (p124) Tempietto di Bramante & Chiesa di San Pietro in Montorio (p126)	La Gensola (p203) Da Augusto (p206) Da Poeta (p206)	Lettere Caffè (p225) Ombre Rosse (p225) Freni e Frizioni (p225)
Vatican City & Borgo		St Peter's Basilica (p128) Sistine Chapel (p137) Castel Sant'Angelo (p138)	Del Frate (p207) Osteria dell'Angelo (p208) Taverna Angelica (p207)	Alexanderplatz (p226) Castroni (p226)
Villa Borghese & Northern Rome		Museo e Galleria Borghese (p149) Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia (p153) Chiesa di Santa Maria del Popolo (p154)	Dal Bolognese (p209) La Buca di Ripetta (p209) Red (p209)	Brancaleone (p227)

# ANCIENT ROME

Drinking & Nightlife p212; Eating p185; Sleeping p246

In a city of extraordinary beauty, Rome's ancient heart exerts a compelling hold. It's here that you'll find the great icons of Rome's past set imperiously against the realities of modern urban life. Buses crammed with commuters thunder past 2000-year-old ruins, while sharks dressed as centurions pose with grinning tourists.

Yet just as modern hustlers get by on their wits, so the ancients did what they had to do to get ahead. It was on the Palatine that Romulus killed his brother Remus and founded the city in 753 BC; it was in the Roman Forum that senators conspired against each other; and in the Colosseum that gladiators fought to the death. Away to the southwest, the 250,000-seat Circo Massimo was the scene of vicious chariot races.

Nowadays, you don't have to sweat blood to visit the area – it's easy to get to and easily navigated on foot. There are two focal points: the Colosseum to the east and the Campidoglio to the west. In between lie the forums, on either side of Via dei Fori Imperiali. Now Rome's most famous ruins, the forums were once showpiece examples of cutting-edge urban design, incorporating shops, markets, courts, temples and government buildings.

They were dramatic public spaces, richly decorated and grandly scaled. Fascinating as the ruins are, they're not always well labelled and it's often difficult to know what you're looking at. To help, get a copy of the Electa *Ancient Rome* map (€3.50) from the Roman Forum ticket office at Largo Romolo e Remo.

To the southwest, the Forum Boarium was once Rome's cattle market and river port. Not a lot remains of what must once have been a noisy, smelly part of the capital, and the area is today crisscrossed with busy roads. The one big crowd puller is the Bocca della Verità, Rome's mythical lie detector.

By public transport the best way to get to Ancient Rome is to take metro line B to Colosseo or one of the frequent buses to Piazza Venezia (H, 40, 60, 63, 64, 170 or 716). There's also a metro station (line B) at Circo Massimo.

## COLOSSEUM & PALATINO

### COLOSSEUM Map p60

☎ 06 399 67 700; www.pierreci.it; Piazza del Colosseo; admission incl Palatino adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €11/free/6.50; 11 8.30am-7.15pm Apr-Aug, 8.30am-7pm Sep, 8.30am-6.30pm Oct, 8.30am-5.30pm mid-end Mar, 8.30am-5pm mid-Feb-mid-Mar, 8.30am-4.30pm Nov-mid-Feb, ticket office closes 1hr before closing time; 11 Colosseo; 111  
Opposite the metro station of the same name, the Colosseum (Colosseo) is the most thrilling of Rome's ancient sights. A monument to raw, merciless power, it was here that gladiators met in mortal combat and condemned prisoners faced wild beasts in front of baying, bloodthirsty crowds. Two thousand years on and the Colosseum is one of Italy's top tourist attractions, pulling in about four million

visitors a year. This inevitably means lengthy queues and long waits. But don't be put off – there are ways round the queues (see the boxed text, p62).

If you want information but don't want to join a tour group, grab an audioguide (€4.50) or video guide (€5.50).

Built by Emperor Vespasian (r AD 69-79) in Nero's palatial *Domus Aurea* (p95) complex, the Colosseum was inaugurated in AD 80. To mark the occasion, Vespasian's son and successor Titus (r AD 79-81) staged games that lasted 100 days and nights, during which some 5000 animals were slaughtered. Trajan (r 98-117) later topped this, holding a marathon 117-day killing spree involving 9000 gladiators and 10,000 animals.

The combatants – prisoners of war, slaves or volunteers – were paired off to ensure the greatest spectacle. Thus, one would have a heavy sword and shield and

the other, almost naked, would carry a net and trident. Bouts were not necessarily to the death, as a defeated gladiator could appeal to the presiding VIP, who would judge on the basis of the crowd's reaction. For more on gladiators, see p24.

Originally known as the Flavian Amphitheatre, the 50,000-capacity stadium might have been Rome's most fearful arena but it wasn't the biggest – the Circo Massimo could hold up to 250,000 people. In fact, the name Colosseum, when introduced in medieval times, was not a reference to its size but to the *Colosso di Nerone*, a giant statue of Nero that stood nearby.

The outer walls have three levels of arches, articulated by Ionic, Doric and Corinthian columns. They were originally covered in travertine, and marble statues once filled the niches on the 2nd and 3rd storeys. The upper level had supports for 240 masts that held up a canvas awning over the arena, shielding the spectators from sun and rain. The 80 entrance arches, known as *vomitaria*, allowed the spectators to enter and be seated in a matter of minutes.

The interior of the Colosseum was divided into three parts: the arena, *cavea* and podium. The arena had a wooden floor covered in sand to prevent the combatants from slipping and to soak up the blood. It could also be flooded for mock sea battles. Trap doors led down to underground chambers beneath the arena floor. Animals in cages and sets for the various battles were hoisted onto the arena by a complex system of pulleys.

The *cavea*, for spectator seating, was divided into three tiers: magistrates and senior officials sat in the lowest tier, wealthy citizens in the middle and the plebs in the highest tier. Women (except for vestal virgins) were relegated to the cheapest sections at the top. The podium, a broad terrace in front of the tiers of seats, was reserved for emperors, senators and VIPs.

With the fall of the empire in the 6th century, the Colosseum was abandoned and gradually became overgrown. In the Middle Ages it became a fortress, occupied by two of the city's warrior families, the Frangipani and the Annibaldi.

Damaged several times by earthquakes, it was later used as a quarry for travertine and marble for Palazzo Venezia, Palazzo Barberini and Palazzo Cancellaria among

other buildings. Pollution and vibrations caused by traffic, the metro and the occasional concert have also taken their toll.

### ARCO DI COSTANTINO Map p60

Via di San Gregorio; 111 Colosseo  
To the east of the Colosseum, the Arco di Costantino (Arch of Constantine) was built in 312 to commemorate Emperor Constantine's victory over his rival Maxentius at the Battle of Ponte Milvio (see p155). One of the last great Roman monuments, it is, in fact, a patchwork of panels from other sculptures – the lower stonework dates from Domitian's reign (AD 81-96) while the eight large medallions depicting hunting scenes are Hadrianic (117-138).

Between the Colosseum and the arch you can see the brick foundations of an ancient fountain known as the *Meta Sudans* (Sweating Meta).

### PALATINO Map p60

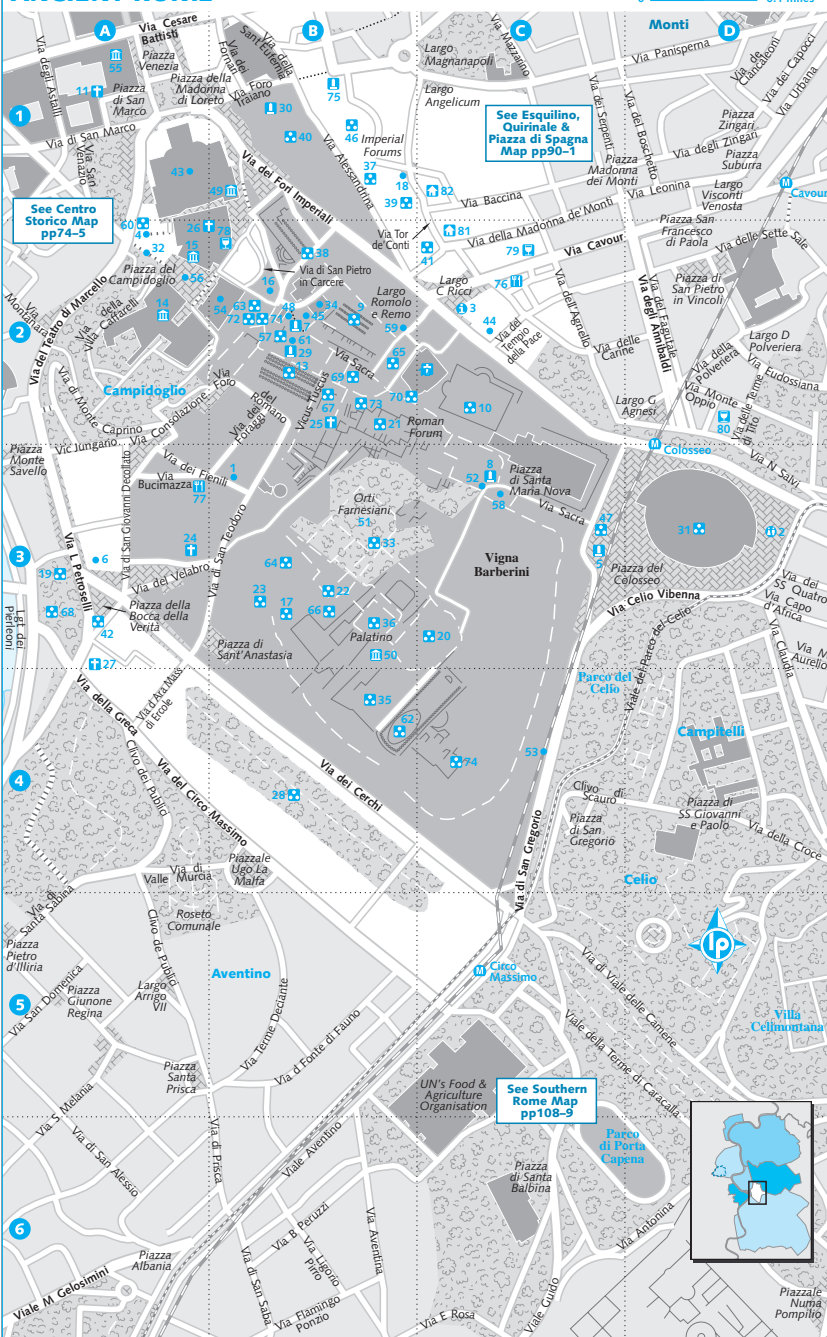
☎ 06 399 67 700; www.pierreci.it; entrances at Via di San Gregorio 30 & Piazza di Santa Maria Nova 53; admission incl Colosseo adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €11/free/6.50; 11 8.30am-7.15pm Apr-Aug, 8.30am-7pm Sep, 8.30am-6.30pm Oct, 8.30am-5.30pm mid-end Mar, 8.30am-5pm mid-Feb-mid-Mar, 8.30am-4.30pm Nov-mid-Feb, ticket office closes 1hr before closing time; 111 Colosseo  
A suggestive area of majestic ruins and memorable views, the Palatino (Palatine) hill is where Romulus is said to have killed his brother Remus and founded Rome in 753 BC. And while it's impossible to prove a myth, archaeologists have unearthed evidence of human habitation in the area dating to the 8th century BC.

If you want further explanation there's a one-hour guided tour in English every day at 11am (€3.50). Note also that if tickets are issued after 1.30pm, they are valid until 1.30pm the following day.

Sandwiched between the Roman Forum and Circo Massimo, the Palatino was Ancient Rome's poshest neighbourhood. Augustus lived here all his life and successive emperors built increasingly opulent palaces. But after Rome's fall, it fell into disrepair and in the Middle Ages churches and castles were built over the ruins. During the Renaissance, members of wealthy families established gardens on the hill.

Most of the Palatino as it appears today is covered by the ruins of Emperor Domitian's

## ANCIENT ROME



## ANCIENT ROME

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Tempio di Portunus.....	(see 68)	
Tempio di Romolo.....	70	B2
Tempio di Saturno.....	71	B2
Tempio di Vespasiano.....	72	B2
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vast complex, which served as the main imperial palace for 300 years. Divided into the Domus Flavia (imperial palace), Domus Augustana (the emperor's private residence) and a *stadio* (stadium), it was built by the architect Rabirius in the 1st century AD.

On entering the complex from Via di San Gregorio, head uphill until you come to the first recognisable construction, the *stadio*. This sunken arena was probably used by the imperial family for private games and events: an oval recess in the eastern wall is thought to have served as the emperor's private viewing area. Adjoining the stadium, to the southeast, are the scant remains of the complex built by Septimius Severus, comprising baths (the *Terme di Settimio Severo*) and a palace (the *Domus Severiana*).

On the other side of the *stadio* are the ruins of the huge *Domus Augustana*, the emperor's private residence. It was built on two levels, with rooms leading off a *peristilio* (peristyle or garden courtyard) on each floor. You can't get down to the lower level, but from above you can see the basin of a fountain and beyond it rooms which were paved with coloured marble. The palace

had an elaborate two-storey colonnaded façade to the south, overlooking the Circo Massimo.

The grey building near the Domus Augustana houses the *Museo Palatino* and its valuable collection of artefacts found on the Palatino. For much of the 20th century, the most important pieces were kept in the Museo Nazionale Romano, and although many still are, a considerable number were returned to the revamped museum in 1998. Admission is included in your Palatino ticket, although the museum closes one hour earlier than the Palatino itself.

The downstairs section of the museum tells the history of the hill from its origins to the republican age. There are pots and eating and cooking utensils from the Palaeolithic Age to the Bronze Age, as well as models of how the Iron Age huts and tombs might have appeared. Sala (Room) IV contains artefacts from the archaic and republican ages (6th to 1st centuries BC), including an altar to a pagan god, and ceramic masks.

Upstairs, you'll find artefacts from the Augustan period (27 BC–AD 14), including

## QUEUE JUMPING – OR NOT

The Colosseum, St Peter's Basilica, the Sistine Chapel – chances are these will be pretty high on your must-see list. If they are, you'll be in good company: in 2006 more than 4.2 million people visited the Vatican Museums (through which you access the Sistine Chapel) and some four million tourists flocked to the Colosseum. Rome's big sights are the most popular in Italy and queues are inevitable. But is there any way round them?

At the Colosseum there are a number of options:

- Buy your ticket from the Palatino entrance (the nearest ticket office is by the Arco di Tito entrance to the Roman Forum). Tickets are valid for both the Palatino and the Colosseum and there are rarely queues outside the Palatino.
- Buy your ticket online at [www.pierreci.it](http://www.pierreci.it), although you'll have to pay a €1.50 booking fee.
- Get the Roma Pass (see p289), which is valid for three days and a whole host of sites.
- If all else fails, join an English-language tour (you'll almost certainly be approached by a tout as you near the ticket offices). These cost €3.50 on top of the regular Colosseum ticket price and, in theory, allow you to skip the queues. In practice, however, you still have to queue to get a ticket, just in a separate, usually shorter line.

The Vatican is more difficult. Security checks outside St Peter's Basilica mean long queues but they usually move quite quickly. Much worse is the situation at the Vatican Museums. In January 2007 the museums reduced their opening times to give greater access to tour parties, and huge queues (sometimes up to 2.5km) have become the norm. About all you can do, if you don't want to join a tour, is to time your visit, and even that's far from foolproof. Avoid Mondays (when many other museums are shut) and Wednesday mornings (when the Pope addresses the faithful in Piazza San Pietro), and try to arrive around lunchtime, when queues tend to be at their shortest (relatively speaking, of course). You can't prebook tickets for the Vatican Museums.

a beautiful 1st-century bronze, the *Erma di Canefora*, and black marble statues from the [Tempio di Apollo](#), as well as objects from the 1st to the 4th centuries AD. Highlights include a rare bust of Emperor Nero and the beautiful sculpted head of Giovane Principessa, the daughter of Nero's successor Marcus Aurelius.

North of the museum is the [Domus Flavia](#), the public part of Domitian's huge palace complex. The Domus comprised three halls: one to the north; one in the centre, which was the emperor's throne room; and, to the south, a large banqueting hall, or *triclinium*, decorated in coloured marble. The *triclinium* looked out onto an oval fountain, the remains of which are still clearly visible. Domitian was terrified of being assassinated and had the peristyle lined with shiny black marble so that he could always see who was approaching. It didn't do him much good, though, as he was murdered in his bedroom.

The Domus Flavia was constructed over earlier edifices. One of these is the [Casa dei Griffi](#) (House of the Griffins; closed for restoration at the time of research), the oldest building on the Palatino. Dating to the late 2nd or 1st century BC, it takes its name from a stucco relief of two griffins in one of the rooms.

Among the best-preserved buildings on the Palatino is the [Casa di Livia](#), northwest of

the Domus Flavia. Home to Augustus' wife Livia, it was built around an atrium leading onto what were once reception rooms, decorated with frescoes of mythological scenes, landscapes, fruits and flowers. In front is the [Casa d'Augusto](#), Augustus' separate residence. Both these houses are being restored and can sometimes be visited depending on what the archaeologists and restorers are up to.

Next to the Casa d'Augusto is the [Casa di Romolo](#), where, it is thought, Romulus and Remus were brought up after their discovery by the shepherd Faustulus. Excavations in the 1940s revealed evidence of supports for wattle-and-daub huts dating to the 8th-century-BC Iron Age. Nearby, the [Tempio della Magna Mater](#), also known as the Tempio di Cibele, was built in 204 BC to house a black stone connected with the Asiatic goddess of fertility, Cybele.

To the northeast of the Casa di Livia is the [criptoportico](#), a 128m tunnel built by Nero to connect his Domus Aurea with the Palatino. Lit by a series of windows, it boasted elaborate stucco decorations, the originals of which are now in the [Museo Nazionale Romano: Crypta Balbi](#) (p78).

The area west of this was once Tiberius' palace, the Domus Tiberiana, but is now the site of the [Orti Farnesiani](#) (currently off-limits for restoration), Cardinal Alessandro Farnese's mid-16th-century gardens.

Considered some of Europe's earliest botanical gardens, they were designed by the fashionable architect Vignola and planted with species new to Italy. Twin pavilions stand at the northern point of the garden, commanding breathtaking views over the Forum below.

## CIRCO MASSIMO [Map p60](#)

Via del Circo Massimo; 𐌆 Circo Massimo  
To the south of the Palatino and surrounded by car-choked roads, the Circo Massimo (Circus Maximus) is now little more than a basin of rather forlorn grass. In the 1st century, however, this was Rome's biggest stadium, a 250,000-seater capable of holding a quarter of the city's entire population. The 600m racetrack circled a wooden dividing island with ornate lap indicators and Egyptian obelisks.

Chariot races were held here as far back as the 4th century BC, but it wasn't until Trajan rebuilt it after the AD 64 fire that it reached its maximum grandeur.

## THE FORUMS & AROUND

The administrative and commercial centre of Republican Rome, the original Roman Forum got too small around 46 BC, forcing successive emperors to build new ones (the Imperial Forums) as demand and expedience required. To the west, there was little glamorous about the Forum Boarium, the ancient city's cattle market.

## ROMAN FORUM [Map p60](#)

☎ 06 399 67 700; entrances at Largo Romolo e Remo 5-6, Piazza di Santa Maria Nova 53 & Via di Monte Tarpeo; admission free; 𐌆 8.30am-7.15pm Apr-Aug, 8.30am-7pm Sep, 8.30am-6.30pm Oct, 8.30am-5.30pm mid-end Mar, 8.30am-5pm mid-Feb-mid-Mar, 8.30am-4.30pm Nov-mid-Feb; 𐌆 Colosseo

To picture the Roman Forum (Foro Romano) as the gleaming centre of the ancient world requires an active imagination. Centuries of neglect and pillaging have left the area in tatters, and what were once majestic temples and proud basilicas are now badly labelled ruins. You can give your mind's eye a helping hand by forking out €4 for an audioguide or joining the daily 12.30pm tour in English (€3.50, departure from the Piazza di Santa Maria Nova entrance).

The oldest and most famous of the forums, the Roman Forum grew over the

course of 900 years. Originally an Etruscan burial ground, it was first developed in the 7th century BC and expanded to become the centre of the Roman Republic. Its importance declined after the 4th century AD until eventually the site was used as pasture land.

In the Middle Ages it was known as the Campo Vaccino (literally 'Cow Field') and was extensively plundered for its stone and marble. During the Renaissance, with the renewed appreciation of all things classical, the forum provided inspiration for artists and architects. The area was systematically excavated in the 18th and 19th centuries and excavations continue.

As you enter from Largo Romolo e Remo, to your left you'll see the [Tempio di Antonino e Faustina](#), erected in 141 by the Senate and dedicated to the Empress Faustina and later to Emperor Antoninus Pius. It was transformed into a church in the 8th century, and the soaring columns now frame the [Chiesa di San Lorenzo in Miranda](#). To your right, the [Basilica Aemilia](#), built in 179 BC, was a vast 100m-long public hall with a two-storey porticoed façade lined with shops.

At the end of this short path you come to [Via Sacra](#) (Sacred Way), which traverses the Forum from northwest to southeast. Opposite the Basilica Aemilia stands the [Tempio di Giulio Cesare](#) (Temple of Julius Caesar), erected by Augustus in 29 BC on the site where Caesar's body had been cremated 15 years before. Head right up Via Sacra and you reach the [Curia](#), the big brick building on the right just after the Basilica Aemilia. Once the meeting place of the Roman Senate, it was rebuilt successively by Julius Caesar, Augustus, Domitian and Diocletian and was converted into a Christian church in the Middle Ages. What you see today is a 1937 reconstruction of Diocletian's Curia. The bronze doors are copies – the originals were used by Borromini for the [Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano](#) (p106).

In front of the Curia is the famous [Lapis Niger](#), a large piece of black marble that covered a sacred area said to be the tomb of Romulus. Down a short flight of stairs (closed to the public) under the Lapis Niger is the oldest-known Latin inscription, dating from the 6th century BC.

At the end of Via Sacra stands the [Arco di Settimio Severo](#) (Arch of Septimius Severus), one of the forum's most intact structures. Dedicated to the eponymous emperor and

## A PASSION FOR MARBLE

'If we want our grandchildren and great-grandchildren to see Rome's ancient monuments we need to close them. They simply can't take the wear or tear any more. But to do so would require a lot of courage as it would be a highly controversial move.'

The suggestion comes from Simone Colalucci, an expert art restorer of more than 20 years' experience.

'The problem with the monuments is that the marble they're made of becomes very fragile if it loses its equilibrium. Inside, in the right conditions, marble can last almost indefinitely, but outside it needs to be protected against the cold, against heat and humidity, and against pollution, something which I might add is not an entirely modern phenomenon. In the past, carbon-fired heating systems caused a lot of pollution, as did the small fires people would light to keep warm on the streets.

'I always find it amazing that the Romans imported so much marble that they never found time to use it all. Right through the Renaissance and up until the 20th century, the city was being built with marble that the ancients had imported from North Africa, Greece and other Mediterranean countries. Even today there are artists, particularly on Via Margutta, who are still using ancient marble.'

A chip off the old block, Simone learned his craft at the hands of a master – his father, Gianluigi Colalucci, who masterminded the restoration of the Sistine Chapel.

'I started off working with my father, although I never worked on the Sistine Chapel; I only ever went there as a visitor. But we worked together on some beautiful frescoes at Palazzo Spada and Castel Sant'Angelo, a building which I think deserves to be much better known.

'My most satisfying job, though, was the year I spent working at the Roman Forum. I worked on the Tempio di Castore e Polluce and it was quite unique. Let's face it, you don't get too many opportunities to work on such a subject.'

his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, it was built in 203 to celebrate the Roman victory over the Parthians (from modern-day Iran). The centre panel depicts defeated Parthians being led away in chains.

Nearby, at the foot of the Tempio di Saturno, is the **Millarium Aureum**, which marked the very centre of Ancient Rome, from where distances to the city were measured. Built by Augustus in 20 BC, it was originally covered in gold.

On your left are the remains of the **Rostrum**, an elaborate podium from which Rome's movers and shakers would harangue the masses. It was here that Shakespeare's Mark Antony made his famous 'Friends, Romans, countrymen...' speech.

The eight granite columns that you see from here are all that remain of the **Tempio di Saturno** (Temple of Saturn), one of Rome's most important temples. Inaugurated in 497 BC, it was used as the state treasury and during Caesar's rule contained 13 tonnes of gold, 114 tonnes of silver and 30 million silver coins. Behind it, and backing onto the Campidoglio, are (from north to south): the ruins of the **Tempio della Concordia** (Temple of Concord); the three remaining columns of the **Tempio di Vespasiano** (Temple of Vespasian); and the **Portico degli Dei Consenti**, of which 12 columns remain.

Turning round, you'll see the Piazza del Foro, the forum's main market and

meeting place during the republican era, marked by the **Colonna di Foca** (Column of Phocus). The last monument erected in the Roman Forum, it was built in 608 to honour the Eastern Roman Emperor Phocus, who donated the Pantheon to the Church. To your right are the foundations of the **Basilica Giulia**, a law court built by Julius Caesar in 55 BC.

To the southeast of the basilica is the **Tempio di Castore e Polluce** (Temple of Castor and Pollux), also known as the Tempio dei Castori. Built in 489 BC to mark the defeat of the Etruscan Tarquins, it was dedicated to the Dioscuri (or Heavenly Twins) who, it is said, miraculously appeared to the Roman troops during an important battle. Three Corinthian columns mark the spot.

Behind the temple, at the end of the **Vicus Tuscus** (Etruscan Street), is the **Chiesa di Santa Maria Antiqua**, the oldest Christian church in the Forum. Inside are some early Christian frescoes and nearby is a welcome loo.

Back towards Via Sacra is the **Casa delle Vestali** (House of the Vestal Virgins), home of the vestal virgins (see p66), whose job it was to keep the sacred flame alight in the adjoining **Tempio di Vesta**.

Once back on Via Sacra turn right and after the **Tempio di Romolo** (Temple of Romulus), part of which is now in the **Basilica di SS Cosma e Damiano** (opposite), you'll see the vast **Basilica di Massenzio** on your left. Emperor

Maxentius initiated work on the basilica, and Constantine finished it in 315 (it's also known as the Basilica di Costantino). The largest building in the forum, it originally covered an area of approximately 100m by 65m, and was used for business and the administration of justice. Its design provided inspiration for Renaissance architects, including Michelangelo, who is said to have studied its massive barrel vaults when planning the dome for St Peter's.

Continuing, you come to the **Arco di Tito** (Arch of Titus), built in AD 81 to celebrate Vespasian's and Titus' victories against Jerusalem. In the past, Roman Jews would avoid passing under this arch, the historical symbol of the beginning of the Diaspora.

You then exit to the Colosseum.

## IMPERIAL FORUMS Map p60

**Via dei Fori Imperiali:** ☺ **Via dei Fori Imperiali**  
The expanse of ruins to the northeast of Via dei Fori Imperiali (on the right as you walk up from the Colosseum) are known collectively as the Imperial Forums (Fori Imperiali). Constructed by Caesar, Augustus, Vespasian, Nerva and Trajan between 42 BC and AD 112, they were largely buried in 1933 when Mussolini built Via dei Fori Imperiali between the Colosseum and Piazza Venezia. Excavations have since unearthed much of them, but work continues and visits are limited to the Foro di Traiano.

To see what the area would have looked like in ancient times, check out the plastic model at the **Imperial Forums visitor centre** (☎ 06 679 77 86; Via dei Fori Imperiali; 11 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat), where there's also a small café and free toilet.

The youngest and most extensively excavated of the forums is the **Foro di Traiano** (Trajan's Forum; ☎ 06 679 00 48; entrance Piazza della Madonna di Loreto by Colonna di Traiano; admission €3.10; 11 9am-2pm Tue-Sun). In its heyday the vast 2nd-century-AD precinct measured 300m by 185m and comprised two libraries, a temple, a triumphal arch, Rome's largest basilica and a huge column. Unfortunately little recognisable remains except for some pillars from the **Basilica Ulpia** and the **Colonna di Traiano** (Trajan's Column). The column was erected to mark Trajan's victories over the Dacians (from modern-day Romania) and is decorated with a spiral of reliefs depicting his glorious battles. Minutely detailed, the reliefs are regarded as among the finest

examples of ancient Roman sculpture. A golden statue of Trajan once topped the column but it was lost during the Middle Ages and replaced with a statue of St Peter.

Dominating the **foro** is the vast semi-circular construction that once housed the **Mercati di Traiano** (Trajan's Markets). The ancient equivalent of a shopping mall, the markets were spread over three floors and sold everything from oil and vegetables to flowers, silks and spices. At the time of research, the upper levels were closed as work continued on a museum dedicated to the Imperial Forums (due for completion in October 2007).

Above the markets, the tall red-brick tower is the **Torre delle Milizie** (Militia Tower), a 13th-century addition. Nearby, the 12th-century **Casa dei Cavalieri di Rodi** (Piazza del Grillo 1) was the medieval home of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, better known as the Knights of Malta.

To the southeast, the **Foro di Augusto** (Augustus' Forum) was completed in 2 BC. Three columns of a temple dedicated to Mars are still standing and others have been reconstructed from fragments, but more than half the original forum is now under Via dei Fori Imperiali. The 30m-high wall behind the forum was built to protect it from the fires that frequently swept the area.

The **Foro di Nerva** (Nerva's Forum) was also buried by Mussolini's road-building, although part of a temple dedicated to Minerva still stands. Originally, it would have connected the Foro di Augusto to the 1st-century **Foro di Vespasiano** (Vespasian's Forum), also known as the Forum of Peace.

On the other side of Via dei Fori Imperiali, three columns on a raised platform are all that remain of the **Foro di Cesare** (Caesar's Forum), built by Julius Caesar at the foot of the Campidoglio. Caesar claimed the goddess Venus in his family tree and his forum included a temple to her as Venus Genetrix – Venus the Ancestor.

## BASILICA DI SS COSMA E DAMIANO

Map p60

☎ 06 699 15 40; Via dei Fori Imperiali; 11 8am-1pm & 3-7pm; 117 Colosseo

Connected to the Roman Forum by the Basilica di Massenzio, this 6th-century basilica incorporates a library from the **Foro di Vespasiano** (above) and part of the **Tempio di**

## LIKE A VESTAL VIRGIN

Not known as great advocates of sexual abstinence, the ancient Romans actually held virginity in high regard. Or, rather, they held the vestal virgins in high regard.

Every year six physically perfect patrician girls between the ages of six and 10 were chosen by lottery to serve Vesta, daughter of Saturn, goddess of hearth and household. And while to be picked was a great privilege, it was hardly the ticket to a fun-filled life. Girls spent their first 10 years in training, learning, among other things, the rudiments of fire preservation – as a fully fledged vestal their most important task was to keep the sacred fire of Vesta burning in the inner chamber of the Tempio di Vesta. To let what was considered the hearth fire of Rome go out was a sin punishable by flogging.

Once fully qualified, the girls faced 10 years of service, during which they were treated as deified beauty queens, appearing at public ceremonies, participating in harvest festivals and taking the seats of honour at dinner parties and spectacles at the Colosseum.

To round off their 30-year period of service was a decade spent teaching the next generation of vestals. Only after this were they free to marry. Most retired virgins, however, chose to stay on in the Casa delle Vestali (House of the Virgins).

The wellbeing of the state was thought to depend on the cult of Vesta, and in particular on the vestals' virginity. While they were held in the highest esteem and received all privileges, punishment for dereliction of duty was severe. If a priestess lost her virginity she was buried alive, since her blood could not be spilled, and the offending man was flogged to death.

The vestals left the Roman Forum when non-Christian cults were outlawed in the late 4th century.

**Romolo (p64)**, visible through the glass wall at the end of the nave.

But it's to the magnificent apse mosaics that most eyes are drawn. Against a blue background, the central figure of Christ is flanked by St Peter and St Paul (in white robes), who are presenting St Cosmas and St Damian to him. On the far left is St Felix, holding up a model of the church, and on the right is St Theodore. Below this scene is a frieze of the Lamb of God (representing Christ) and his flock of 12 lambs (representing the 12 apostles).

In a room off the tranquil 17th-century cloisters is a vast **presepio** (nativity scene; admission €1 donation; h 10am-1pm & 3-6.30pm daily Apr-Oct, 10am-1pm Tue-Thu, 10am-1pm & 3-5.30pm Fri-Sun Nov-Mar). A fine example of 18th-century Neapolitan workmanship, it features a varied cast of wooden and terracotta figures, including the baby Jesus and various animals.

## CAMPIDOGGIO

Rising above the Roman Forum, the Campidoglio (Capitoline hill) was one of the seven hills on which Rome was founded. An important political and spiritual site, it was considered the true heart of the Roman Republic. At its summit were Rome's two most important temples: one dedicated to Jupiter Capitolinus (a descendant of Jupiter, the Roman equivalent of Zeus) and another

(which housed Rome's mint) to Juno Moneta. More than 2000 years on, the hill still wields considerable clout as seat of Rome's municipal government.

The hill's modern highlight is the Piazza del Campidoglio, designed by Michelangelo and home to the fabulous Capitoline Museums.

### PIAZZA DEL CAMPIDOGGIO Map p60

#### ☒ Piazza Venezia

The magnificent centrepiece of the Campidoglio, Michelangelo's 16th-century piazza is considered by many to be Rome's most beautiful square. Commissioned by Pope Paul III and designed by Michelangelo in 1538, it took more than a hundred years to build and was completed in the late 17th century.

There are various ways to reach it but the most dramatic is via the **Cordonata**, the graceful staircase that leads up from Piazza d'Aracoele. At the top of the stairs, the piazza is bordered by three **palazzi**: **Palazzo Nuovo** to the left, **Palazzo Senatorio** straight ahead and **Palazzo dei Conservatori** on the right. Together, Palazzo Nuovo and Palazzo dei Conservatori house the **Capitoline Museums (opposite)**, while Palazzo Senatorio is home to Rome's city council.

In the centre of the square, the bronze equestrian **statue of Marcus Aurelius** is a copy. The original, which dates from the 2nd century AD, was in the piazza from 1538 until

1981, when it was moved to Palazzo Nuovo to protect it from erosion. The fountain at the base of Palazzo Senatorio's double staircase features a 1st-century **statue of Minerva** in a central niche. On either side of her are statues of two laid-back men representing the Tiber (on the right) and the Nile (on the left).

To the left of Palazzo Senatorio is Via di San Pietro in Carcere and, down the stairs, the **Carcere Mamertino** (Mamertine Prison; ☎ 06 679 29 02; donation requested: h 9am-7pm Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Mar), where prisoners were thrown through a hole in the floor to starve to death in the basement dungeon. St Peter was believed to have been imprisoned here and to have created a miraculous stream of water to baptise his jailers. It's now a church, San Pietro in Carcere.

### CAPITOLINE MUSEUMS Map p60

☎ 06 820 59 127; www.museicapitolini.org; Piazza del Campidoglio 1; adult/child/student without exhibition €6.50/free/4.50, incl exhibition €8/free/6, combined Capitoline Museums, Centrale Montemartini & exhibition €10/free/8; h 9am-8pm (last tickets 7pm) Tue-Sun; ☒ Piazza Venezia; √ Boasting some of Ancient Rome's most spectacular sculpture, the Capitoline Museums (Musei Capitolini) are quite magnificent. The world's oldest national museums, they date to 1471, when Pope Sixtus IV donated a number of bronze statues to the city, forming the nucleus of what is now one of Italy's finest collections of classical art. The collection is today beautifully housed in Palazzo Nuovo and Palazzo dei Conservatori on Piazza del Campidoglio. Audioguides (€5) are a worthwhile investment.

The main entrance is in **Palazzo dei Conservatori**, where you'll find the original core of the sculptural collection and, on the 2nd floor, an art gallery with a number of important works.

Before you head upstairs, though, take a moment to admire the ancient masonry littered around the ground-floor courtyard, most notably a mammoth head, hand and foot. These all come from a 12m-high statue of Constantine that originally stood in the Basilica di Massenzio in the **Roman Forum (p64)**.

The 1st floor is dominated by the **Sala degli Orazi e Curiazi**, a vast hall decorated with 16th-century frescoes and a statue by Bernini of Pope Urban VIII, his artistic

sponsor. It was here that the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957, establishing the European Economic Community. Of the sculpture, the Etruscan **Lupa Capitolina** (Capitoline Wolf) is the most famous. Standing in her own room, the Sala Della Lupa, the 5th-century-BC bronze wolf stands over her suckling wards Romulus and Remus. The statue was given to the Roman people in 1471 by Sixtus IV and, surprisingly, the twins were only added at this time. Other crowd-pleasers are the **Spinario**, a delicate 1st-century-BC bronze of a boy removing a thorn from his foot, in the Sala dei Trionfi, and Gian Lorenzo Bernini's head of Medusa in the Sala delle Oche.

Also on the 1st floor, in the Area del Tempio di Giove Capitolino, you can see the foundations of the Tempio di Giove (Temple of Jupiter), one of the two temples that stood on the Campidoglio in republican days.

On the 2nd floor the **Pinacoteca** (art gallery) contains paintings by such heavyweights as Titian, Pintoretto, Reni, van Dyck and Rubens. Look out for Giovanni Bellini's **Ritratto di Giovane** (Portrait of a Young Man; 1500), Garofalo's **Annunciazione** (Annunciation; 1528) and Titian's **Battesimo di Cristo** (Baptism of Christ; 1512). The Sala di Santa Petronilla has a number of important canvases, including two by Caravaggio: **La Buona Ventura** (The Fortune Teller; 1595), which shows a gypsy pretending to read a young man's hand but actually stealing his ring, and **San Giovanni Battista** (John the Baptist; 1602), a sensual and unusual depiction of the New Testament saint.

At this point, a coffee in the museum's panoramic café does wonders for flagging spirits.

To get to Palazzo Nuovo on the other side of the square, take the tunnel via the **Tabularium**, Ancient Rome's central archive, beneath Palazzo Senatorio.

**Palazzo Nuovo** is crammed to its elegant rafters with classical Roman sculpture. Highlights include the graceful **Venere Capitolina** (Capitoline Venus), in the Gabinetto della Venere, and the Sala dei Filosofi with its busts of various philosophers, poets and politicians. The real show stoppers, however, are in the Sala del Gladiatore. These include the **Galata Morente** (Dying Gaul), a Roman copy of a 3rd-century-BC Greek original that movingly depicts the

anguish of a dying Frenchman; the 5th-century-BC *Amazzone Ferita* (Wounded Amazon), created for the Sanctuary of Ephesus; and a marble *Satiro in Riposo* (Resting Satyr), said to be the inspiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Marble Faun*.

For more sculpture head out to the museum's southern outpost, the **Capitoline Museums at Centrale Montemartini** (p117).

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA IN ARACOELI Map p60

☎ 06 679 81 55; Piazza del Campidoglio 4; 11 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm; 12 Piazza Venezia

Marking the high point of the Campidoglio is this dramatic 6th-century church. Accessible from Piazza del Campidoglio or more theatrically by way of the steep 14th-century Aracoeli staircase, it sits on the site of the Roman temple to Juno Moneta. According to legend it was here that the Tiburtine Sybil told Augustus of the coming birth of Christ, and even today the church has a strong association with the nativity. It's home to a venerated statue of Jesus and is a popular place of worship at Christmas. The so-called *santo bambino* (holy baby) is, however, a copy. The original, said to have healing powers and to have been carved of wood from the garden of Gethsemane, was stolen in 1994 and never recovered.

The church has a rich interior, with a Cosmatesque floor, an impressive 16th-century ceiling and, in the first chapel of the southern aisle, an important 15th-century fresco by Pinturicchio.

### ROMAN INSULA Map p60

Piazza d'Aracoeli; 13 Piazza Venezia  
At the bottom of the Campidoglio, next to the Aracoeli staircase, are the ruins of a Roman apartment block or *insula*, typically used to house the poor. The unexcavated ground-floor shops of this building are now 9m below the current road level.

### PIAZZA VENEZIA

Spread out below the Campidoglio, Piazza Venezia is dominated by Rome's most visible landmark, Il Vittoriano, aka the Altare della Patria. It's an undeniably impressive structure whose rooftop terrace commands the best views in town.

### IL VITTORIANO Map p60

☎ 06 699 17 18; Piazza Venezia; admission free; 11 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sun; 12 Piazza Venezia  
Love it or loathe it, as most locals do, you can't ignore Il Vittoriano, the massive mountain of white marble towering over Piazza Venezia. Known as the Altare della Patria (Altar of the Fatherland), it was begun in 1885 to commemorate Italian unification and honour Vittorio Emanuele II, Italy's first king and the subject of the gargantuan equestrian statue. It also hosts the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which means that you can't sit anywhere on the monument, a rule that the hawk-eyed guardians strictly enforce.

Whatever you make of 'the typewriter' (as Romans have dubbed it), there's no denying that the 360-degree views from the top are quite stunning, especially at night when the entire city is lit up beneath you. To get to the top, take the glass **panoramic lift** (adult/up to 10yr/10-18yr & over 65yr €7/free/3.50; 11 9.30am-7.30pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-11.30pm Fri & Sat, 9.30am-8.30pm Sun) from the back of the building.

Less appealing is the **Museo Centrale del Risorgimento** (☎ 06 679 35 98; Via di San Pietro in Carcere; admission free; 11 9am-6.30pm) in the building's hollow interior. Exhibits, including the blanket used to cover Garibaldi at the Battle of Aspromonte and assorted military knick-knacks, document the history of Italian unification. The museum, often referred to as the Complesso del Vittoriano, is often used for temporary art exhibitions.

### PALAZZO VENEZIA Map p60

13 Piazza Venezia  
On the western side of Piazza Venezia, Palazzo Venezia was the first of Rome's great Renaissance palaces. It was built between 1455 and 1464 for the Venetian cardinal Pietro Barbo, who later became Pope Paul II (r 1464-71), and was used for centuries as the embassy of the Venetian Republic. Its most famous resident, however, was Mussolini, who used the vast Sala del Mappamondo as his centre of operations. He famously made speeches from the balcony overlooking the square, and kept the lights on throughout the night to give the impression that he was working.

Nowadays, the *palazzo* houses the **Museo del Palazzo Venezia** (☎ 06 699 94 318; Via del Plebiscito 118; admission €4; 11 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sat; 12), with its superb Byzantine and early

Renaissance paintings and eclectic collection of jewellery, tapestries, ceramics, bronze figurines, arms and armour. Highlights to look out for include the early-15th-century *Madonna con Bambino Angeli e Santi* (Madonna with Child, Angels and Saints) by Mariotto di Cristofano and the charming *Ritratto dei Figli di Virginio Orsini*, a 16th-century portrait (artist unknown) of the five sons of the Orsini family.

You can also admire the *palazzo's* secret gardens from the top floor of a loggia decorated with sculptural fragments, sarcophagi and assorted archaeological finds.

The eastern wing of the museum – where you'll find Mussolini's old office – is often given over to temporary art exhibitions.

### BASILICA DI SAN MARCO Map p60

☎ 06 679 52 05; Piazza di San Marco; 11 8am-noon & 4-7pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm & 4-8pm Sun; 12 Piazza Venezia

Actually part of **Palazzo Venezia** (opposite), but facing onto Piazza di San Marco, the Basilica di San Marco dates to the early 4th century. Built over the house where St Mark the Evangelist is said to have stayed while in Rome, it has undergone several face-lifts over the centuries. In its current form it has a Renaissance façade, an 11th-century Romanesque bell tower and a largely baroque mid-18th-century interior. The main attraction is the golden 9th-century mosaic in the apse, which depicts Christ with saints and Pope Gregory IV.

### FORUM BOARIUM & AROUND

#### BOCCA DELLA VERITÀ Map p60

☎ 06 678 14 19; Piazza della Bocca della Verità 18; 11 9am-1pm & 2.30-6pm; 12 Via dei Cerchi  
A round piece of marble once used as an ancient manhole cover, the *Bocca della Verità* (Mouth of Truth) is one of Rome's great curiosities. According to legend, if you put your right hand in the carved mouth and tell a lie, the mouth will snap shut and bite your hand off. Apparently, priests used to put scorpions in the mouth to perpetuate the myth and Roman husbands used it to test their wives' fidelity. Fans of the film *Roman Holiday* will know it from the scene where Gregory Peck pretends to lose his hand and draws shrieks of unscripted terror from Audrey Hepburn.

The mouth lives in the portico of the beautiful **Chiesa di Santa Maria in Cosmedin**. In

## top picks

### IT'S FREE

Many of Rome's museums are free to EU citizens under 18 and over 65. If that's you, make sure you have a passport or ID card to prove your age, otherwise you'll be paying the full admission price. Free sights for all include the following:

- Roman Forum (p63)
- Trevi Fountain (p98)
- Spanish Steps (p99)
- Pantheon (p72)
- Bocca della Verità (left)
- all churches, including **St Peter's Basilica** (p128)
- **Vatican Museums** (p133) on the last Sunday of the month

Note that while all churches are free, many have small museums and/or excavation sites that require payment.

its current form the church dates to the 12th century, when the seven-storey bell tower and portico were added and the floor, high altar and *schola cantorum* (choir) were decorated with Cosmati inlaid marble. However, in its original form it goes back to the 8th century, when Pope Hadrian built it by merging an arcaded colonnade from a Roman market with walls from a 7th-century Christian welfare centre. There's not much left of the original structure but you can still see a fragment of 8th-century mosaic in the souvenir shop.

#### FORUM BOARIUM Map p60

Piazza della Bocca della Verità; 13 Via dei Cerchi  
Piazza della Bocca della Verità stands on what was once Ancient Rome's cattle market (Forum Boarium). The forum later became an important commercial centre and had its own port on the River Tiber.

Opposite Chiesa Santa Maria in Cosmedin are two tiny Roman temples dating to the 2nd century BC: the round **Tempio di Ercole Vincitore** and the **Tempio di Portunus**, dedicated to the god of rivers and ports, Portunus. To the north are the ruins of the **Casa dei Crescenzi**, a former tower fortress transformed into a mansion in the 11th century by the powerful Crescenzi family.

Just off the piazza, the **Arco di Giano** (Arch of Janus) is a four-sided Roman arch that



once covered a crossroads. Beyond it, on the northern side of the street, is the medieval **Chiesa di San Giorgio in Velabro** (☎ 06 692 04 534; Via del Velabro 19; 10am-12.30pm & 4-6.30pm), a beautiful, atmospheric church whose original 7th-century portico was completely destroyed by a Mafia bomb attack in 1993. The version you see today is a faithful copy.

## ANCIENT ROME

### Walking Tour

**1 Il Vittoriano** More than the Colosseum, more than the forums or Palatino, it's this vast hulk of white marble (p68) that dominates Ancient Rome's cityscape. Dedicated to Vittorio Emanuele II, unified Italy's first

king, it's uniformly disliked but boasts spectacular views.

**2 Piazza del Campidoglio** Considered by many to be Rome's most beautiful square, Michelangelo's stunning piazza (p66) sits atop the Campidoglio. In ancient times this was the spiritual heart of Rome, home to two of the capital's most important temples; nowadays, it

hosts the Capitoline Museums and the headquarters of the Rome city council.

**3 Capitoline Museums** Dating to 1471, these are the world's oldest public museums (p67). Their collection of classical sculpture, one of Rome's finest, is housed in the two *palazzi* that face each other over the square: Palazzo dei Conservatori and Palazzo Nuovo. Inside, the tasty Caffè Capitolino supplies good coffee and views over the forums.

**4 Roman Forum** Rome's most famous ruins (p63) once constituted the epicentre of world power. If you can imagine it, this is where senators, consuls and emperors met to plot the course of the Roman empire and virgins coyly fuelled the flames of the vestal fire.

**5 Colosseum** One of Italy's top tourist attractions, the Colosseum (p58) is an electrifying sight, its tiered stands towering over armies of queuing visitors. A spectacular feat of Roman engineering, the 50,000-seat

stadium was inaugurated by Emperor Titus in AD 80.

**6 Palatino** According to legend the Palatino (p59) is where Romulus killed his twin and founded Rome in 753 BC. An evocative and atmospheric area of giant ruins, this was Ancient Rome's most exclusive neighbourhood, home to the cream of imperial society.

**7 Circo Massimo** This sorry-looking expanse of browning grass was once Ancient Rome's showpiece stadium (p63), an enormous arena capable of holding a quarter of the city's population. Chariots would hurtle round the 600m racetrack in front of crowds of up to 250,000 people.

**8 Bocca della Verità** Lodged in the porch of a beautiful medieval church, the Bocca della Verità (p69) is said to snap shut on anyone who tells a lie. In fact, it's little more than an ancient manhole cover with a man's face etched onto it.

### WALK FACTS

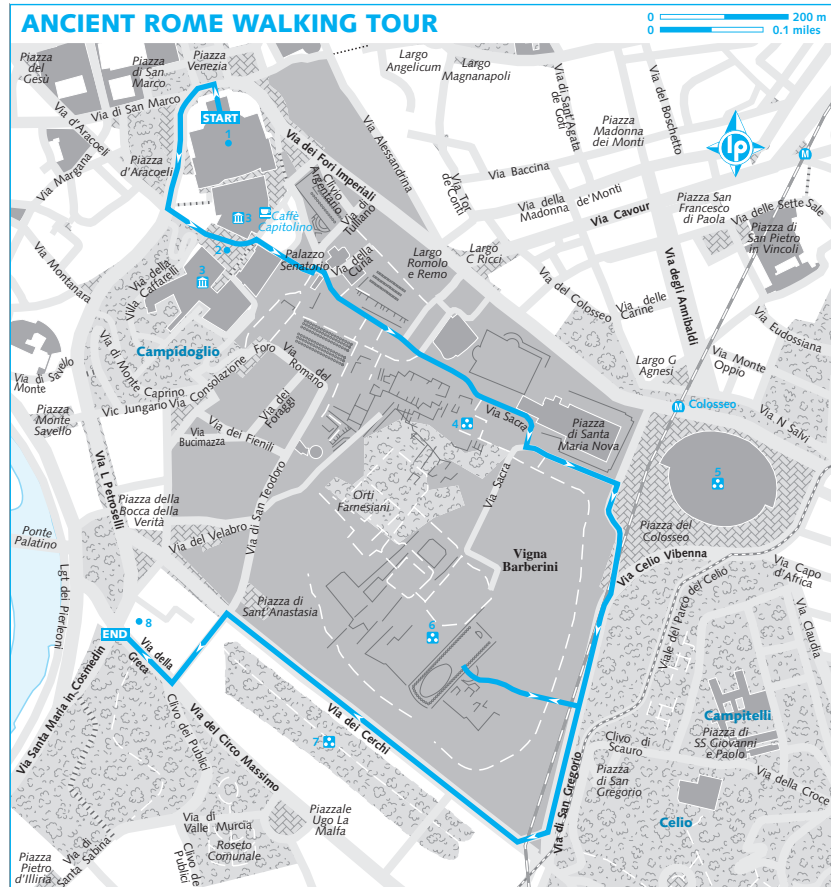
**Start** Il Vittoriano (G Piazza Venezia)

**End** Bocca della Verità (G Via dei Cerchi)

**Distance** 2.2km

**Duration** Four hours

**Fuel stop** Caffè Capitolino (p212)



# CENTRO STORICO

Drinking & Nightlife [p213](#); Eating [p186](#); Shopping [p161](#); Sleeping [p247](#)

Bound by the River Tiber on one side and Via del Corso on the other, Rome's tightly packed *centro storico* (historic centre) is the Rome that many visitors come to see. A suggestive area of cobbled alleyways and animated piazzas, of baroque churches, chic cafés and Renaissance *palazzi*, it's a neighbourhood made for aimless wandering. This is the place to put your guidebook away and discover the streets for yourself, to give yourself up to the whim of the moment. Even without trying you'll come across some of Rome's great sights: the Pantheon, Piazza Navona and Campo de' Fiori, as well as a host of monuments, museums and churches, many of which boast works by Michelangelo, Raphael, Caravaggio and Bernini.

But the *centro storico* is not all about history and art – it's also the political heart of modern Italy. Politicians hatch their plots in the hundreds of restaurants, trattorias and cafés that pepper the area, while the two chambers of the Italian parliament sit here and the Presidente del Consiglio (the Italian prime minister) has his official residence in a gracious 17th-century *palazzo*.

The history of the centre goes back to Roman times, when the area around Piazza Navona and the Pantheon was known as the Campo Marzio (Field of Mars). A peripheral district full of sports arenas, barracks and temples, it was incorporated into the city proper in the Middle Ages and grew to become the core of Renaissance Rome. Many of the grand *palazzi* that you see today were built in the Renaissance building boom of the 15th and 16th centuries.

But it's to the baroque 17th century that the area owes most. No two people did more to fashion the face of central Rome than Gian Lorenzo Bernini and his bitter rival Francesco Borromini, whose flamboyant churches, fountains and *palazzi* astound today as they must surely have done 350 years ago.

The *centro storico* is not a big area and is best explored on foot. Starting from Largo di Torre Argentina, Corso Vittorio Emanuele II heads west towards the River Tiber and the Vatican. To the north are the Pantheon and Piazza Navona; to the south the Jewish Ghetto, Piazza Farnese and Campo de' Fiori.

From Termini, buses 40 and 64 stop at Largo di Torre Argentina and continue down Corso Vittorio Emanuele II. From Barberini metro station (line A), bus 116 stops off at Corso Rinascimento (for Piazza Navona), Piazza Farnese and Via Giulia. Tram 8 connects Largo di Torre Argentina with Trastevere.

## PANTHEON & AROUND

**PANTHEON** [Map pp74–5](#)

☎ 06 683 00 230; Piazza della Rotonda; admission free; ⌚ 8.30am–7.30pm Mon–Sat, 9am–6pm Sun; Ⓧ or Ⓨ Largo di Torre Argentina; Ⓣ Along with the Colosseum, the Pantheon is one of Rome's major icons. A striking 2000-year-old temple, now church, it is a truly remarkable building, a magnificent monument to the skill of Ancient Rome's visionary architects.

In its current form it dates to around 120, when Emperor Hadrian built over

Marcus Agrippa's original temple (27 BC). For centuries, historians read the name Agrippa in the inscription on the pediment and thought that Hadrian's version was the 1st-century-BC original. When excavations in the 19th century revealed traces of the earlier temple, they realised their mistake.

Hadrian's temple was dedicated to the classical gods – hence the name Pantheon, a derivation of the Greek words *pan* (all) and *theos* (god) – but in 608 it was consecrated as a Christian church. During the Renaissance it was much studied – Brunelleschi used it as inspiration for the Duomo

in Florence – and became an important burial chamber. Today you'll find the tomb of the artist Raphael, alongside those of kings Vittorio Emanuele II and Umberto I.

From the outside you get no idea of the dimensions of the extraordinary dome that tops the building. Considered the Romans' most important architectural achievement, the dome – the largest masonry vault ever built – is beautifully symmetrical (the diameter is equal to the interior height of 43.3m). Light enters through the oculus, an 8.7m opening in the dome that also served as a symbolic connection between the temple and the gods. Rainwater also enters but drains away through 22 almost-invisible holes in the marble floor. For more on the dome see the boxed text, [p47](#).

Somewhat the worse for wear, the exterior is still imposing, with 16 Corinthian columns (each a single block of stone) supporting a triangular pediment. Rivets and holes in the brickwork indicate where the original marble-veneered panels were removed.

Thanks to its consecration as a church in the 7th century, the building was spared the Christian neglect that left other structures to crumble, although it wasn't entirely safe from plundering hands. The gilded-bronze roof tiles were removed and, in the 17th century, Pope Urban VIII allowed Bernini to melt down the bronze ceiling of the portico for the baldachin over the main altar of St Peter's (plus 80 cannons for Castel Sant'Angelo). Thankfully, they left the original Roman bronze doors.

**ELEFANTINO** [Map pp74–5](#)

Piazza della Minerva; Ⓧ or Ⓨ Largo di Torre Argentina

A short skip south of the Pantheon brings you to the Elefantino, a curious and much-loved sculpture of a puzzled elephant carrying a 6th-century-BC Egyptian obelisk. Unveiled in 1667 and designed to glorify Pope Alexander VII, the elephant, symbolising strength and wisdom, was sculpted by Ercole Ferrata to a design by Bernini. The obelisk was taken from the nearby Chiesa di Santa Maria Sopra Minerva.

**CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA SOPRA MINERVA** [Map pp74–5](#)

☎ 06 679 39 26; Piazza della Minerva; ⌚ 8am–7pm; Ⓧ or Ⓨ Largo di Torre Argentina

Built on the site of an ancient temple to Minerva, the Dominican Chiesa di Santa Maria Sopra Minerva is the only Gothic church in Rome. Initially, it was modelled on the Basilica di Santa Maria in Florence, but it later underwent various transformations and little remains of the original 13th-century design. The surprisingly restrained façade is baroque and the rose windows are a 19th-century addition. Look closely, however, and you can still see some Latin inscriptions on the façade. These are flood markers, the oldest of which dates to 1422.

Inside, the church harbours a treasure-trove of Renaissance jewels. In the Cappella Carafa, the last chapel in the southern transept, you'll find two superb 15th-century frescoes by Filippino Lippi, depicting episodes from the life of St Thomas Aquinas. On the right wall St Thomas triumphs over heresy, while in the central *Annunciazione* (Annunciation) he's pictured presenting Cardinal Olivieri Carafa, the patron of the work, to the Virgin Mary. Carafa, who later became Pope Paul IV, is also buried in the chapel.

Left of the high altar is one of Michelangelo's lesser-known sculptures, *Cristo Risorto* (Christ Bearing the Cross; 1520), to which blush-saving bronze drapery was later added. An altarpiece of the *Madonna and Child* in the second chapel in the northern transept is attributed to Fra Angelico, the Dominican friar and painter, who is also buried in the church.

The body of St Catherine of Siena, minus her head (which is in Siena), lies under the high altar, and the tombs of two Medici popes, Leo X and Clement VII, are in the apse.

**LARGO DI TORRE ARGENTINA** [Map pp74–5](#)

Ⓧ or Ⓨ Largo di Torre Argentina  
A busy transport hub, Largo di Torre Argentina is set around a sunken area, the *Area Sacra*, in which stand the remains of four republican-era temples. These ruins were unearthed during construction work in 1926 and although off-limits to humans are home to a thriving population of stray cats and a *cat sanctuary* (☎ 06 687 21 33; [www.romancats.de](#); ⌚ noon–6pm Mon–Sat). To learn more, and to visit the ruins, the sanctuary runs a free guided tour daily at 5pm.

On the piazza's western flank is Rome's premier theatre, the *Teatro Argentina* ([p234](#)),



## CENTRO STORICO

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built close to the spot where Julius Caesar was murdered on 15 March (the Ides of March) 44 BC.

### CHIESA DEL GESÙ Map pp74-5

% 06 69 70 01; Piazza del Gesù; h 6.45am-12.45pm & 4-7.45pm; G or j Largo di Torre Argentina

A formidable and much-copied example of Counter-Reformation architecture, the Chiesa del Gesù is Rome's most important Jesuit church. It was built between 1551 and 1584 with money donated by Cardinal

Alessandro Farnese, who was subsequently said to own the three most beautiful things in Rome: his family palazzo, his daughter and the church of Gesù.

Although the façade by Giacomo della Porta is impressive, it's the towering, glitzy interior that's the real attraction. Designed by his contemporary Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, a pupil of Michelangelo, it's an amazing ensemble of gold and marble built to draw worshippers to the Jesuit fold. The huge open-plan nave later became the standard for churches throughout Italy.

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Works to look out for include the *Trionfo del Nome di Gesù* (Triumph of the Name of Jesus), the astounding vault fresco by Giovanni Battista Gaulli (aka Il Baciccia). His masterful use of perspective is evident as figures appear to tumble from the vault onto the coffered ceiling. Baciccia also painted the cupola frescoes and designed the stucco decoration.

The Cappella di San Francesco Saverio, to the right of the main altar, was designed by the Tuscan master Pietro da Cortona. A silver gilt reliquary above the gold altar

holds the saint's right forearm (with which he is said to have blessed, baptised and healed many).

On the other side of the main altar, in the northern transept, is the Cappella di Sant'Ignazio. Here you'll find the tomb of Ignatius Loyola, the Spanish soldier who came to Rome in 1537 and founded the Jesuits in 1540. Crafted by Andrea del Pozzo, the tomb, which doubles as an altar, is an opulent marble-and-bronze affair with columns encrusted with lapis lazuli. On top, the terrestrial globe, representing the

Trinity, is the largest solid piece of lapis lazuli in the world. On either side are a couple of sculptures whose titles vividly portray the Jesuit ethos: to the left, *Fede che vince l'Idolatria* (Faith defeats Idolatry); on the right, *Religione che flagella l'Eresia* (Religion Lashing Heresy).

The Spanish saint lived in the church from 1544 until his death in 1556. To the east of the main church, you can visit **Loyola's rooms** (h 4-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun), which contain a masterful trompe l'oeil perspective by Andrea del Pozzo.

### MUSEO NAZIONALE ROMANO: CRYPTA BALBI

Map pp74-5  
% 06 399 67 700; Via delle Botteghe Oscure 31; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €7/free/3.50, plus €3 supplement if there's an exhibition; h 9am-7.45pm Tue-Sun; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina

The least known of the Museo Nazionale Romano's four museums, the Crypta Balbi provides a fascinating insight into Rome's multilayered past. More than the exhibits, it's the structure of the building itself that's the main point of interest. It's built around the ruins of medieval and Renaissance structures, themselves set on top of a grand Roman portico and theatre, the Teatro di Balbus (13 BC). You can duck down into the underground excavations before perusing artefacts taken from the Crypta, as well as items found in the forums and on the Oppio and Celio hills.

## PIAZZA NAVONA & AROUND

### PIAZZA NAVONA

Map pp74-5  
g Corso del Rinascimento  
With its ornate fountains, baroque *palazzi* and pavement cafés, Piazza Navona is central Rome's showcase square. A busy, buzzing place, it has long been a hive of Roman activity – for 300 years it was the city's main market area and still today it attracts a colourful crowd of street artists, pickpockets, tourists and pigeons.

Like many of Rome's great landmarks, it sits on the site of an ancient monument, in this case, the 1st-century-AD **Stadio di Domiziano** (% 06 671 03 819; h by appointment only). This 30,000-seat stadium, remains of which can be seen from Piazza Tor Sanguigna, just to the north of Piazza Navona, used to host games – the name Navona

is a corruption of the Greek word *'agon'*, meaning public games. Inevitably, though, it fell into disrepair and it wasn't until the 15th century that life returned to the area. The crumbling arena was paved over and Rome's central market transferred here from the Campidoglio.

Today interest centres on Bernini's extravagant **Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi** (Fountain of the Four Rivers). Commissioned by Pope Innocent X and completed in 1651, it depicts the Rivers Nile, Ganges, Danube and Plata, representing the then-known four continents of the world. Legend has it that the figure of the Nile is shielding his eyes from the **Chiesa di Sant' Agnese in Agone** (h 9am-noon & 4-7pm Tue-Sat, 10am-1.30pm & 4-8pm Sun), designed by Bernini's hated rival, Borromini. It's not true, however. Bernini completed his fountain two years before Borromini started work on the church and the veiled gesture indicates that the source of the Nile was unknown at the time.

Borromini's church is a wonderful example of his trademark style, with it's calculated yet vibrantly theatrical concave façade. Dedicated to the virgin martyr Agnes, it is said to be built on the spot where she was killed in the 4th century.

The **Fontana del Moro** at the southern end of the square was designed by Giacomo della Porta in 1576. Bernini added the Moor holding a dolphin in the mid-17th century, but the surrounding Tritons are 19th-century copies. The 19th-century **Fontana del Nettuno** at the northern end of the piazza depicts Neptune fighting with a sea monster, surrounded by sea nymphs.

The largest building in the square is the elegant **Palazzo Pamphilj**, built between 1644 and 1650 by Girolamo Rainaldi and Borromini to celebrate Giovanni Battista Pamphilj's election as Pope Innocent X. It was later occupied by his domineering sister-in-law, Olimpia Maidalchini, and is now the Brazilian Embassy.

### MUSEO NAZIONALE ROMANO: PALAZZO ALTEMPS

Map pp74-5  
% 06 683 35 66; Piazza Sant' Apollinare 46; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €7/free/3.50, plus €3 supplement if there's an exhibition; h 9am-7.45pm Tue-Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento; v  
Just north of Piazza Navona, Palazzo Altemps is a gem. A beautiful, late-15th-century

*palazzo*, it today houses the best of the Museo Nazionale Romano's formidable collection of classical sculpture.

Many of the pieces come from the famous Ludovisi collection. Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi, a nephew of Pope Gregory XV, ruthlessly exploited his connections to acquire ancient sculpture unearthed during the building boom of Counter-Reformation Rome. He eventually amassed one of the most extensive and celebrated private collections of all time.

As was the custom among collectors, Ludovisi employed leading sculptors – including Bernini and Alessandro Algardi – to repair and 'enhance' the works by replacing missing limbs and sticking new heads on headless torsos.

The museum's prize exhibits (untouched by baroque hands) include the 5th-century **Trono Ludovisi** (Ludovisi Throne) in room 21. Discovered at the end of the 19th century in the grounds of Ludovisi's private villa, the carved marble throne depicts Aphrodite being plucked from the sea as a newborn babe. Most scholars think that it originally came from Magna Graecia, the Greek colony in southern Italy, but there are some who claim it's a 19th-century fake. It shares a room with two colossal heads, one of which is the goddess Juno and dates from around 600 BC. The wall frieze (about half of which remains) depicts the 10 plagues of Egypt and the Exodus.

Equally impressive is the sculptural group **Galata Suicida** (Gaul's Suicide), a melodramatic depiction of a Gaul knifing himself to death over a dead woman. It's a marble copy of a 230 BC bronze, probably commissioned by Julius Caesar. Here, in room 26, you'll also discover the **Grande Ludovisi**, a sarcophagus featuring detailed battle scenes.

Baroque frescoes throughout the building not only provide a decorative backdrop to the sculpture but are also fascinating in themselves. The walls of the Sala delle Prospettive Dipinte (on the 1st floor) are decorated with landscapes and hunting scenes seen through trompe l'oeil windows. These frescoes were painted for Cardinal Altemps, the rich nephew of Pope Pius IV (r 1560-65) who bought the *palazzo* in the late 16th century. The Sala della Piattaia, once the palace's main reception room, has a superb 15th-century fresco by Melozzo da Forlì, of a cupboard full of the wedding gifts received by Girolamo Riario and Caterina Sforza.

The Egyptian collection from the Museo Nazionale Romano is also housed here, along with the Mattei collection, formerly at Villa Celimontana (the 16th-century estate of the powerful Mattei family).

### VIA DEI CORONARI

Map pp74-5  
g Corso del Rinascimento  
Named after the *coronari* (rosary-bead sellers) who used to work here, this elegant pedestrian street is famous for its antique shops. A lovely, quiet place for a stroll, it follows the course of the ancient Roman road that connected Piazza Colonna with the River Tiber and was once a popular thoroughfare for pilgrims.

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA PACE

Map pp74-5  
% 06 686 11 56; Vicolo dell'Arco della Pace 5; h church 10am-noon & 4-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun, cloisters depends on exhibition; g Corso del Rinascimento

Tucked away in the backstreets west of Piazza Navona, this small 15th-century church warrants a quick look. Inside, the main draw is Raphael's *Sibille* (Sibyls) in the first chapel on the southern side. Outside, it's the adjacent Chiostrò del Bramante that steals the limelight. One of Bramante's finest works, the cloisters are a masterpiece of Renaissance styling, their classic lines a marked counterpoint to the church's undulating baroque façade. The cloisters are often used to house art exhibitions, but you'll usually be allowed to take a free peek at the ground-floor courtyard.

### PASQUINO

Map pp74-5  
Piazza Pasquino; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
A grubby statue covered with tatty bits of paper, the Pasquino is Rome's most famous 'talking statue'. During the 16th century – when there were no safe outlets for dissent – a Vatican tailor named Pasquino began sticking notes to the statue with satirical verses lampooning the church and aristocracy. Others joined in and soon there were talking statues all over town. Even today Romans still leave messages, known as *pasquinade*.

### VIA DEL GOVERNO VECCHIO

Map pp74-5  
g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Striking off west from Piazza Pasquino, Via del Governo Vecchio is a lively, atmospheric

street full of bohemian boutiques, old-school pizzerias and secondhand clothes shops. The road, once part of the papal thoroughfare from Palazzo Laterano in San Giovanni to St Peter's Basilica, acquired its name in 1755 when the papal government relocated from **Palazzo Nardini** at No 39 to Palazzo Madama on the other side of Piazza Navona. Bramante is thought to have lived at No 123.

### CHIESA NUOVA Map pp74-5

☎ 06 687 52 89; Piazza della Chiesa Nuova; ʘ 7.45am-noon & 4.30-7.45pm Mon-Sat, 8am-1pm & 4.30-7.45pm Sun; ㊦ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Something of a misnomer, Chiesa Nuova is far from new. It was built in 1575 as part of a larger complex to house members of Filippo Neri's Oratorian order. A popular and charismatic figure, Neri founded his order in the mid-16th century to help Rome's poor and needy. Originally he'd wanted a large, plain church, but after his death in 1595 the artists moved in. Rubens contributed the paintings over the high altar, and Pietro da Cortona decorated the dome, tribune and nave. Neri was canonised in 1622 and is buried in a chapel to the left of the apse.

Next to the church is Borromini's **Oratorio dei Filippini** and behind it is the **Torre dell'Orologio**, a clock tower built to decorate the adjacent convent.

### MUSEO DI ROMA Map pp74-5

☎ 06 820 77 304; www.museodiroma.comune.roma.it; Piazza di San Pantaleo 10; adult/child €6.50/free; ʘ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, last exit 7pm; ㊦ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Housed in the 18th-century Palazzo Braschi, the Museo di Roma's eclectic collection of paintings, photographs, etchings, clothes and furniture charts the history of Rome from the Middle Ages to the first half of the 20th century. Of more interest than the collection, however, is the *palazzo* itself. Built by Cosimo Morelli for the nephew of the Braschi Pope Pius VI, it's best known for its beautiful frescoed halls: particularly outstanding is the extravagant Sala Cinese and the Egyptian-themed Sala Egiziana. Among the paintings, most of which are portraits of popes and cardinals, look out for Raphael's 1511 portrait of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, the future Pope Paul III.

### CHIESA DI SANT'IVO ALLA SAPIENZA

Map pp74-5

☎ 06 686 49 87; Corso del Rinascimento 40; ʘ 10am-noon Sun; ㊦ Corso del Rinascimento  
Hidden in the porticoed courtyard of Palazzo della Sapienza, the Italian state archive, this tiny church is unique testament to the genius of Borromini. Based on an incredibly complex geometric plan, it combines alternating convex and concave walls with a circular interior topped by a twisted spire. Inside, there's not a lot to see but it's interesting to note how Borromini uses light to create a sense of spaciousness in such a small area.

### PALAZZO MADAMA Map pp74-5

☎ 06 670 62 430; www.senato.it; Piazza Madama 11; admission free; ʘ guided tours 10am-6pm, 1st Sat of month; ㊦ Corso del Rinascimento  
The seat of the Italian Senate since 1871, Palazzo Madama was originally the 16th-century town house of Giovanni de' Medici. It was enlarged in the 17th century, when the baroque façade was added together with the decorative frieze. The name 'Madama' is a reference to Margaret of Parma, the illegitimate daughter of Charles V, who lived here from 1559 to 1567.

### CHIESA DI SAN LUIGI DEI FRANCESI

Map pp74-5

☎ 06 68 82 71; Piazza di San Luigi dei Francesi; ʘ 7.30am-noon & 3.30-7.30pm Fri-Wed; ㊦ Corso del Rinascimento

The church of Rome's French community since 1589, the Chiesa di San Luigi dei Francesi is one of the capital's art heavyweights. Built by Domenico Fontana and designed by Giacomo della Porta, its interior is a masterclass in baroque bombast, with no less than three paintings by Caravaggio – the so-called St Matthew cycle. The first of his religious commissions, *La Vocazione di San Matteo* (The Calling of Saint Matthew), *Il Martiro di San Matteo* (The Martyrdom of Saint Matthew) and *San Matteo e l'Angelo* (Saint Matthew and the Angel), painted between 1600 and 1602, all stress the utter humanity of the saint and highlight Caravaggio's dramatic use of colour, light and narrative. You'll find them in the front chapel to the left of the altar.

Before you leave the church take a moment to enjoy Domenichino's somewhat faded 17th-century frescoes of St Cecilia in

the second chapel on the right. St Cecilia is also depicted in the altarpiece by Guido Reni, a copy of an earlier work by Raphael.

### CHIESA DI SANT'AGOSTINO Map pp74-5

☎ 06 688 01 962; Piazza di Sant'Agostino; ʘ 7.45am-noon & 4-7.30pm; ㊦ Corso del Rinascimento  
Despite boasting one of the earliest Renaissance façades in Rome, this 15th-century church is more interesting inside than out. Inside the main door, on the right, you'll find Jacopo Sansovino's much-loved *Madonna del Parto* (1521), a sculpture of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus, revered by soon-to-be mums and doting parents. On the third column in the nave, Raphael's fresco of *Isaiah* shows the influence of Michelangelo (both artists were working in the Vatican at the time). But once again it's the Caravaggio that draws the biggest crowds. A classic example of the 16th's brutal realism, the *Madonna dei Pellegrini* (Madonna of the Pilgrims) caused uproar when it was unveiled in 1604 – its portrayal of the Virgin Mary as barefoot and the pilgrims as filthy beggars was too much for the conservative tastes of the time.

## CAMPO DE' FIORI & AROUND

### CAMPO DE' FIORI Map pp74-5

㊦ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Noisy and colourful, 'Il Campo' is a major focus of Roman life: by day it hosts a flower

and vegetable market, while at night it becomes an open-air pub, beloved of hard-drinking students and young Romans.

The square's commercial character dates to the late 15th century, when the transferral of the city market to Piazza Navona revitalised much of what is now the *centro storico*. Traders moved into the area and artisans began to set up shops in the neighbourhood. Many of the streets near Campo de' Fiori are named after the artisans who traditionally occupied them, so there's Via dei Cappellari (hatters), Via dei Baullari (trunk makers) and Via dei Chiavari (key makers). Via dei Giubbbonari (jacket makers) is still full of clothing shops.

Il Campo was also the site of public executions. Most famously, the philosophising monk Giordano Bruno, immortalised in Ettore Ferrari's sinister statue, was burned here for heresy in 1600.

### PALAZZO FARNESE Map pp74-5

☎ 06 688 92 818; visitefarnese@france-italia.it; Piazza Farnese; admission free; ʘ 1hr tours depart 4pm & 5pm Mon & Thu, by appointment only; ㊦ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Forming one side of Piazza Farnese, Palazzo Farnese is one of Rome's most impressive Renaissance *palazzi*. It was started in 1514 by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, continued by Michelangelo, who added the cornice and balcony, and finished by Giacomo della Porta. Nowadays, it's the French Embassy and is open only to visitors

## A FAMILY AFFAIR

Built in the early 16th century, Palazzo Farnese was the main residence of the all-powerful Farnese dynasty, one of Renaissance Rome's most celebrated families.

Originally landed gentry in northern Lazio, the family hit the big time in 1493 when Giulia became the mistress of Pope Alexander VI. Hardly an official post, it nevertheless gave Alessandro, Giulia's brother, enough influence to secure his election to the top job in 1534. As Pope Paul III (r 1534-49), Alessandro led Rome through the stormy waters of the Counter-Reformation, enthusiastically sponsoring the Jesuits and appointing Michelangelo chief architect, sculptor and painter to the Vatican. He also created the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza for his son, Pier Luigi.

Nepotism was rife in Renaissance Rome and a pope in the family was a perfectly acceptable route to untold wealth. Camillo Borghese (Pope Paul V, r 1605-21) made his nephew, Scipione, a cardinal and gave him the land that is now *Villa Borghese* (p153); the Siense banking family, the Chigi, amassed huge fortunes under Pope Alexander VII (r 1655-67), aka Fabio Chigi; and the Pamphilj family enjoyed a 17th-century windfall under their generous kinsman Giovanni Battista Pamphilj, better known as Pope Innocent X (r 1644-55).

Yet of all Rome's great families, only one has a metro station named after it. The Barberini arrived in Rome in the early 16th century, escaping their native Tuscany and a dangerous rivalry with the Florentine Medici. They settled well in the capital and in 1623 Maffeo Barberini was elected Pope Urban VIII, opening the floodgates to the usual round of family appointments and extravagant building projects, including the lavish **Palazzo Barberini** (p100). Some four centuries later the Barberini family still exists, its titular head officially known as the Prince of Palestrina.

who've booked a place on the biweekly guided tour. The visits (with commentary in Italian or French) take in the garden, courtyard and Galleria dei Carracci, home to a series of superb frescoes by Annibale Carracci, said by some to rival the Sistine Chapel. Even if you've reserved a visit you'll need a valid ID document to get inside.

The twin fountains in the square, currently under scaffolding, are enormous granite baths taken from the **Terme di Caracalla** (p110).

### **PALAZZO SPADA** Map pp74–5

☎ 06 683 24 09; www.galleriaborghese.it; Via Capo di Ferro 13; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18–25yr €5/free/2.50; h 8.30am–7.30pm Tue–Sun; ☪ or j Largo di Torre Argentina South of Piazza Farnese, the mannerist Palazzo Spada was built in 1540 and restored by Borromini a century later. The central attraction, and what makes the rather steep ticket price worth paying, is Borromini's famous perspective. What appears to be a 25m-long corridor lined with columns and leading to a hedge and life-sized statue is, in fact, only 10m long. The sculpture, which was a later addition, is actually hip-height and the columns diminish in size not because of distance but because they actually get shorter. On close inspection, the hedge is also a deception – Borromini didn't trust the gardeners to clip a real hedge precisely enough so he made one of stone.

Upstairs, the four-room **Galleria Spada** houses the Spada family art collection, with works by Andrea del Sarto, Guido Reni, Guercino and Titian. Highlights include *Schiavo di Ripa Grande* (Slave of Ripa Grande) by Reni and a daring, seductive *Santa Lucia* (St Lucy) by Francesco Furini.

### **VIA GIULIA** Map pp74–5

☪ Via Giulia Designed by Bramante as an approach road to St Peter's, Via Giulia is a picturesque street lined with Renaissance *palazzi* and potted orange trees.

At its southern end, near Ponte Sisto, is the **Fontana del Mascherone**, a baroque fountain depicting a 17th-century hippy surprised by water spewing from his mouth. Just beyond it and spanning the road is the **Arco Farnese**, covered with cascading ivy creepers. Built to a design by Michelangelo, it was constructed as part of an unfinished project

to connect Palazzo Farnese with Villa Farnesina on the opposite side of the Tiber.

Continuing north, on the left, in Via di Sant'Eligio, is **Chiesa di Sant'Eligio degli Orefici** (h 10–11am Mon–Fri), the 16th-century goldsmiths' church designed by Raphael. Buzz at Via di Sant'Eligio 7 for admission.

Further down, the **Museo Criminologico** (☎ 06 683 00 234; www.museocriminologico.it; Via del Gonfalone 29; admission €2; h 9am–1pm & 2.30–6.30pm Tue & Thu, 9am–1pm Wed, Fri & Sat) provides a break from the Renaissance eye-candy with macabre displays of torture devices and guillotines.

The area at the northern end of Via Giulia is known as the Quartiere Fiorentino because of the Florentine colony that once lived here.

### **CHIESA DI SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA DEI FIORENTINI** Map pp74–5

☎ 06 688 92 059; Via Acciaiolli 2; h 7am–12.30pm & 4–7pm; ☪ Via Giulia

At the head of Via Giulia, this 16th-century church was commissioned by Pope Leo X (a member of the Florentine Medici clan), as a showcase for Florentine artistic and architectural talent. Jacopo Sansovino won a competition for its design, which was executed by Antonio Sangallo the Younger and Giacomo della Porta, while Carlo Maderno completed the elongated cupola in 1614. Inside, the altar is by Borromini, who arranged, on his deathbed, to be entombed here.

A favourite venue for concerts, the church has a 17th-century organ that's played at noon Mass every Sunday.

### **PALAZZO DELLA CANCELLERIA**

Map pp74–5

☎ 06 698 93 491; Piazza della Cancelleria; ☪ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Looming over busy Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, this huge Renaissance *palazzo* was built for Cardinal Raffaele Riario between 1483 and 1513. Something of a rogue, the cardinal is said to have financed up to a third of the palace with gambling winnings. However, he later fell foul of the Medici and when Giovanni de' Medici became Pope Leo X, the Vatican promptly confiscated the *palazzo* and transformed it into the Papal Chancellery. It is still Vatican property.

Closed to the public unless there's an exhibition on, it incorporates the 4th-century Basilica di San Lorenzo in Damaso, one of Rome's oldest Christian churches. Even if you

can't get inside you can usually nip through to the courtyard to admire Bramante's double loggia.

### **MUSEO BARRACCO DI SCULTURA ANTICA** Map pp74–5

☎ 06 688 06 848; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 166; admission €3; h 9am–7pm Tue–Sun; ☪ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

One for the specialists, this charming museum boasts a fascinating collection of early Mediterranean sculpture. You'll find Greek, Etruscan, Roman, Assyrian, Cypriot and Egyptian works, all of which were donated to the state by Baron Giovanni Barracco in 1902.

The *palazzo* housing the museum, known as the Piccolo Farnesina, was built for a French clergyman, Thomas Le Roy, in 1523.

### **CHIESA DI SANT'ANDREA DELLA VALLE** Map pp74–5

☎ 06 686 13 39; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 6; h 7.30am–12.30pm & 4.30–7.30pm; ☪ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

The setting for the first act of Giacomo Puccini's opera *Tosca*, this towering 16th-century church is topped by Carlo Maderno's dome, the second-highest in Rome after St Peter's. The baroque interior features frescoes by Mattia Preti, Domenichino and, in the dome, Lanfranco. Competition between the artists was fierce and legend has it that Domenichino once took a saw to Lanfranco's scaffolding, almost killing him in the process.

## **JEWISH GHETTO**

Forming the southern part of the *centro storico*, the Jewish Ghetto is one of central Rome's most enticing areas. It's a wonderfully authentic district peppered with artisans' studios and secondhand clothes shops. What makes it so appealing, though, is that even in the height of the tourist season you can walk the backstreets and find yourself alone. At night, however, the central strip – Via del Portico d'Ottavia – hums with activity as diners mill around the popular eateries.

There have been Jews in Rome since the 2nd century BC, making Rome's Jewish community the longest surviving in Europe. At one point there were as many as 13 synagogues in the city, but Titus' victory in Jerusalem in AD 70 changed the status of Jews from citizen to slave (Jewish slaves were the labour force that built the Colosseum). In the

2nd century, Romans tended to confuse Jews with the despised monotheistic Christians, making them targets for persecution. In subsequent centuries everything depended on who was in charge, with rights limited under some governments, and nonexistent under others. Things took a turn for the worse in 1555, when Pope Paul IV confined Jews to the Ghetto, marking the beginning of a period of official intolerance that lasted, off and on, into the 20th century. Ironically, confinement in the Ghetto meant that Jewish cultural and religious identity survived intact in Rome.

Via del Portico d'Ottavia is the centre of the Ghetto. To the north, buildings incorporate the remains of old Roman and medieval buildings. The house at No 1 (on the corner of Piazza Costaguti) dates from 1468 and the façade is decorated with pieces of ancient Roman sculpture, including a fragment from a sarcophagus.

### **MUSEO EBRAICO DI ROMA** Map pp74–5

☎ 06 684 00 661; www.museoebraico.roma.it; Via Catalana; adult/under 10yr/student €7.50/free/3; h 10am–7pm Sun–Thu, 9am–4pm Fri Jun–Sep, 10am–5pm Sun–Thu, 9am–2pm Fri Oct–May; ☪ Lungotevere de' Cenci

The historical, cultural and artistic heritage of Rome's Jewish community is chronicled in this small but engrossing museum. Housed in the city's early-20th-century synagogue, which, since a terrorist attack in 1982, has a permanent *carabinieri* (police) guard stationed outside, it presents harrowing reminders of the hardships experienced by Europe's oldest Jewish community. Exhibits include copies of Pope Paul IV's papal bull confining the Jews to the Ghetto and relics from the Nazi concentration camps.

You can take a one-hour guided walking tour of the Ghetto from here; these usually leave the museum at 1pm and 5pm from Monday to Thursday and on Sunday, and at 1.15pm on Friday, though the schedule can be inconsistent. The cost is €7 for adults and €5 for children and you must book at least 30 minutes in advance.

### **PALAZZO CENCI** Map pp74–5

Vicolo dei Cenci; j Via Arenula A 16th-century house of horrors, Palazzo Cenci was home to ill-fated Beatrice Cenci (see the boxed text, p125), who was beheaded on Ponte Sant'Angelo in 1599 for murdering her sadistic father. Shelley based his tragedy *The Cenci* on the family, and a

famous portrait of Beatrice by Guido Reni hangs in the [Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica \(p100\)](#). It shows a sweet-faced young girl with soft eyes and fair hair.

### FONTANA DELLE TARTARUGHE [Map pp74–5](#) Piazza Mattei; j Via Arenula

This playful 16th-century fountain depicts four boys gently hoisting tortoises up into a bowl of water. Apparently, Taddeo Landini created it in a single night in 1585 on behalf of the Duke of Mattei, who had gambled his fortune away and was on the verge of losing his fiancée. On seeing the fountain, Mattei's father-in-law was so impressed that he relented and let Mattei marry his daughter, who one assumes went along with the arrangement. The tortoises were added by Bernini in 1658.

### AREA ARCHEOLOGICA DEL TEATRO DI MARCELLO E DEL PORTICO D'OTTAVIA [Map pp74–5](#)

Via del Teatro di Marcello 44; admission free;  
h 9am–7pm winter, 9am–6pm summer; g Via del Teatro di Marcello

Rising Colosseum-like from the ruins to the east of Via del Teatro di Marcello, the [Teatro di Marcello](#) is the star of this recently opened archaeological area.

The theatre was originally planned by Julius Caesar but remained unfinished at the time of his death in 44 BC. Augustus then inherited the project and named it after his favourite nephew Marcellus, who had died earlier in 23 BC. By 17 BC the theatre was in use, although it wasn't formally inaugurated until 11 BC.

The 20,000-seat theatre was frequently restored after fires and earthquakes until it eventually fell into disuse and became a quarry for building material. In 365 it was partially demolished and the stone used to restore nearby Ponte Cestio.

The Perleone family converted it into a fortress during the 11th and 12th centuries, and in the 16th century Baldassarre Peruzzi converted the fortress into a *palazzo* for the Savelli family, preserving the original form of the theatre. In 1712 it was inherited by the Orsini family and the theatre was partly restored. Remarkably, the *palazzo* still houses apartments occupied by a few lucky Romans.

Beyond the theatre, the [Portico d'Ottavia](#) is the oldest *quadriporto* (four-sided porch) in Rome. It's not in great nick, so you'll need to

use your imagination to turn the columns and fragmented pediment you see today into the enormous square colonnade that it once was. Originally erected by a builder called Octavius in 146 BC, it was rebuilt in 23 BC by Augustus, who, surprisingly, kept the name in honour of his sister Octavia.

The vast rectangular portico, supported by 300 columns, measured 132m by 119m and included temples dedicated to Juno and Jupiter, Latin and Greek libraries, and numerous statues.

From the Middle Ages until the end of the 19th century, the portico formed part of the city's fish market. On one of the brick pillars a stone plaque states that the fish sellers had to give city officials the head *usque ad primas pinnas inclusive* (up to and including the first fin) of any fish longer than the plaque itself.

### CHIESA DI SAN NICOLA IN CARCERE [Map pp74–5](#)

% 06 683 07 198; Via del Teatro di Marcello 46;  
h 7.30am–noon & 4–7pm; g Via del Teatro di Marcello

This church was built in the 11th century on the site of three republican-era temples. Marble columns from the temples were incorporated into the church's façade and interior and are still visible today. If you're not claustrophobic, check out the excavations beneath the church, where you'll find the foundations of the temples and remnants of an Etruscan vegetable market that also stood here.

### ISOLA TIBERINA

The world's smallest inhabited island, the Isola Tiberina (Tiber Island) has been associated with healing since the 3rd century BC, when the Romans adopted the Greek god of healing Asclepius (aka Aesculapius) as their own and erected a temple to him on the island. Today it's the site of the Ospedale Fatebenefratelli.

According to some ancient writers, the island was formed by grain thrown into the river after the Roman expulsion of the Tarquins from the city. Another version holds that a Greek ship ran aground at this spot and was later surrounded by a travertine wall. In its shape the island still resembles a ship but it is in fact made of volcanic rock.

To reach the Isola Tiberina from the Ghetto, cross Rome's oldest standing bridge, the 62 BC Ponte Fabricio. Continuing over the

river, Ponte Cestio, built in 46 BC and renovated in the late 19th century, connects the island to Trastevere. Also to the south of the island, next to the modern Ponte Palatino, are the remains of Ponte Rotto (Broken Bridge), Ancient Rome's first stone bridge, which was all but swept away in a 1598 flood.

### CHIESA DI SAN BARTOLOMEO [Map pp74–5](#) h 9am–12.30pm & 3.30–6pm; g Lungotevere dei Pierleoni

Built on the ruins of the Roman temple to Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing, the island's 10th-century church has been much altered over the centuries. As you see it today, it has a baroque ceiling, a Romanesque bell tower and a marble wellhead, believed to have been placed over the spring that provided healing waters for the temple.

### VIA DEL CORSO & AROUND

Rome's principal shopping street, Via del Corso runs from Piazza Venezia in the south to Piazza del Popolo in the north. Lined with flagship department stores, banks and imposing *palazzi*, it swells with tourists, shoppers and schoolkids during the day and quietens considerably at night.

From the late 15th century, Via del Corso was transformed, once a year, into a racetrack for festive pre-Lenten games. The climax was a contest between riderless horses wired on stimulants and worked into a panic with a barrage of fireworks at the starting line. It was a popular tradition that continued until the late 19th century and gave the street its name.

### MUSEO DELL'ARA PACIS [Map pp74–5](#)

% 06 820 59 127; [www.arapacis.it](#); Lungotevere in Augusta; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18–25yr €6.50/free/4.50 h 9am–7pm Tue–Sun;  
g Lungotevere in Augusta

After years of controversy and on-off construction, architect Richard Meier's luminous glass-and-travertine pavilion was finally unveiled in 2006. The first modern construction in Rome's *centro storico* since WWII, it now threatens to upstage what it's meant to highlight – the Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Peace), Augustus' great monument to the peace he established at home and abroad.

One of the most important works of ancient Roman sculpture, the altar was completed in 13 BC and positioned near Piazza San Lorenzo in Lucina, slightly to

the southeast of its current site. The location was calculated so that on Augustus' birthday the shadow of a huge sundial on Campo Marzio would fall directly on it.

Over the centuries it fell victim to Rome's avid art collectors, and panels ended up in the Medici collection, the Vatican and the Louvre. However, in 1936 Mussolini unearthed the remaining parts and decided to reassemble them in the present location.

Of the reliefs, the most important depicts Augustus at the head of a procession, followed by priests, the general Marcus Agrippa and the entire imperial family.

### MAUSOLEO DI AUGUSTO [Map pp74–5](#) Piazza Augusto Imperatore; g Piazza Augusto Imperatore

What was once one of the most imposing monuments in Ancient Rome is now an unkempt mound of earth, overgrown with weeds and covered with litter. Built by Augustus in 28 BC, the mausoleum originally measured 87m in diameter and had two obelisks either side of the entrance. Although it was designed for Augustus, it was the emperor's favourite nephew and heir Marcellus who was the first to be interred here in 23 BC. Augustus joined him 37 years later in AD 14.

During the Middle Ages the mausoleum served as a fortress and was later used as a graveyard, a private garden and a travertine quarry. Mussolini had it restored in 1936 with an eye to being buried here himself.

When you read this, though, things might have changed. Mayor Veltroni has given the go-ahead to a major renovation project, which, if it goes to plan, will re-create the original level of the street (5m below the current level) and close the area to traffic between the Tiber and the mausoleum. The scheduled completion date is 2011.

### CHIESA DI SAN LORENZO IN LUCINA [Map pp74–5](#)

% 06 687 14 94; Piazza San Lorenzo in Lucina 16;  
h 8am–noon & 4–7.30pm; g Via del Corso Little remains of the original 5th-century church that was built here atop an ancient well sacred to Juno. The exterior, with its Romanesque bell tower and long columned portico, dates to the 12th century, while the elaborate interior is 17th-century baroque. Look out for Guido Reni's *Crocefisso* (Crucifixion) above the main altar,





for the equally impressive seat of the Chamber of Deputies, the 17th-century Palazzo di Montecitorio (p86).

**2 Pantheon** Ancient Rome's best-preserved monument, the Pantheon (p72) was built in 27 BC, modified by Hadrian in the 2nd century AD and consecrated as a Christian church in 608. Make sure to look up and admire the largest masonry vault ever built.

**3 Chiesa di Santa Maria Sopra Minerva** A short walk from the Pantheon, this 13th-century church (p73) is one of the few examples of Gothic architecture in Rome. Inside there's a minor Michelangelo; outside there's Bernini's much-loved Elefantino (p73).

**4 Caffè Sant'Eustachio** En route to Piazza Navona, stop here for a coffee (p215). Reckoned by many to be the best in the capital, the espresso is short and creamy with a rich, deep aftertaste.

**5 Piazza Navona** Baroque central, Piazza Navona (p78) is central Rome's showpiece square. Here, among the street artists, tourists and pigeons, you can compare the two giants of Roman baroque – Bernini, creator of the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi, and Borromini, responsible for the Chiesa di Sant'Agnese in Agone.

**6 Campo de' Fiori** On the other side of Corso Vittorio Emanuel II, the busy road that bisects the *centro storico*, life centres on Campo de' Fiori (p81). By day this noisy square stages a colourful fruit 'n' veg market; by night it transforms into a raucous open-air pub, beloved of foreign students and lusty Romans.

**7 Palazzo Farnese** The focal point of refined Piazza Farnese is this magnificent Renaissance *palazzo* (p81), home to the French Embassy and some of the city's finest frescoes, said by some to rival those of the Sistine Chapel. To see them, though, you'll need to book well in advance.

## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

Drinking & Nightlife p218; Eating p195; Shopping p170; Sleeping p250

Cutting a swathe through the eastern half of central Rome, this busy slice of the city stretches from Via del Corso in the west up to Stazione Termini and San Lorenzo in the east. A large and cosmopolitan area, it's a neighbourhood of many faces: there's the cheap Termini district with its Chinese shops and budget *pensioni* (guesthouses); there's Via Vittorio Veneto, still trading on its *dolce vita* reputation; and there's Via dei Condotti, Rome's most exclusive shopping strip. You'll find cheap drinking dens and critically acclaimed restaurants, monumental basilicas and fabulous museums, as well as the ever-popular Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain.

It's a hilly district too, covering two of Rome's original seven hills – the Esquilino (Esquiline) and the Quirinale (Quirinal). The higher of the two, the Esquilino extends from the Colosseum to Stazione Termini, encompassing Via Cavour (a busy and unlovely thoroughfare), the charming Monti district and the impossible-to-miss Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

The Quirinale rises above Via Nazionale, the shop-filled road that descends from Piazza della Repubblica towards Piazza Venezia. On its summit stands the Palazzo del Quirinale, the official residence of the Presidente della Repubblica (Italy's president). Over on the other side, in the warren of streets southeast of Via del Tritone, you'll find the Trevi Fountain, a spectacular work of sculpture that attracts huge crowds.

For navigation purposes the easiest point of reference is Stazione Termini. To the east lies San Lorenzo; to the west lies just about everything else. From Piazza dei Cinquecento, in front of the station, Viale L Einaudi takes you to Piazza della Repubblica. From here Via Nazionale heads down towards Piazza Venezia, while Via VE Orlando becomes Via Barberini as it winds down to Piazza Barberini. Carry straight on down Via del Tritone for the Trevi Fountain on the left and the Piazza di Spagna to the right.

This area is well served by public transport with metro stations on line A at Stazione Termini (Termini), Piazza della Repubblica (Repubblica), Piazza Barberini (Barberini) and Piazza di Spagna (Spagna); and on line B at Via Cavour (Cavour). Buses depart from the main bus station on Piazza dei Cinquecento to Piazza Venezia (40 and 64), Via del Tritone (52, 53, 116 and 119) and Via Nazionale (H, 40, 60, 64, 116, 170).

### ESQUILINO & MONTI

Although the Esquilino hill covers a large chunk of east-central Rome, the term Esquilino is popularly used to describe the scruffy area around Stazione Termini and Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. The district has long had a reputation as the capital's most multicultural (you'll get the best curries in town here) and is today the nearest thing Rome has to a Chinatown.

In ancient times the Suburra, the lower slope of the Esquilino's western summit (originally there were four), was occupied by crowded slums prone to fires. The area between Via Cavour and the Oppio hill, on the other hand, was a fashionable residential district. Much

## top picks

### ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

- Trevi Fountain (p98)
- Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (p101)
- Piazza di Spagna (p99)
- Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica (p100)
- Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore (below)

of the hill was covered with vineyards and gardens, many of which remained until the late 19th century, when they were dug up to make way for grandiose apartment blocks.

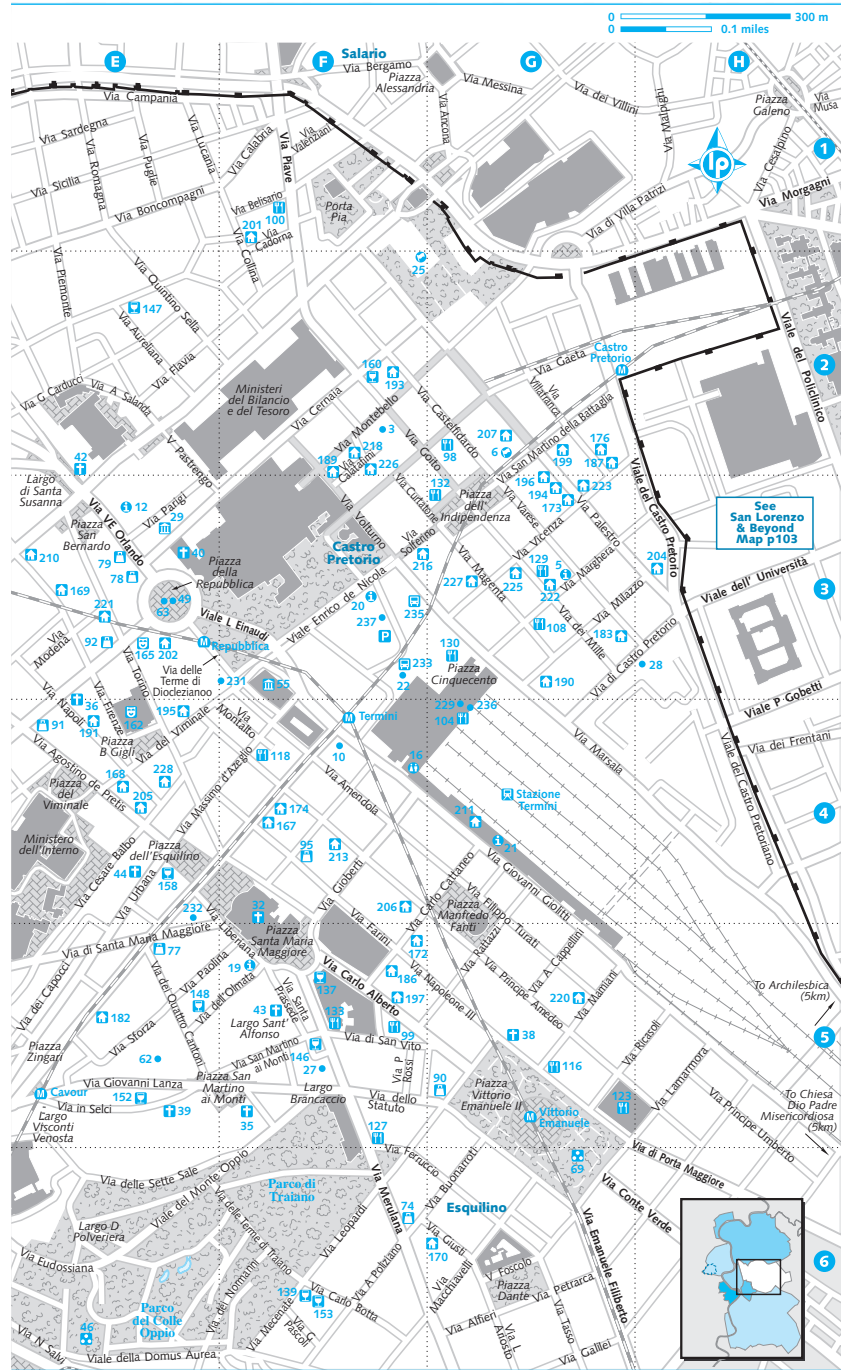
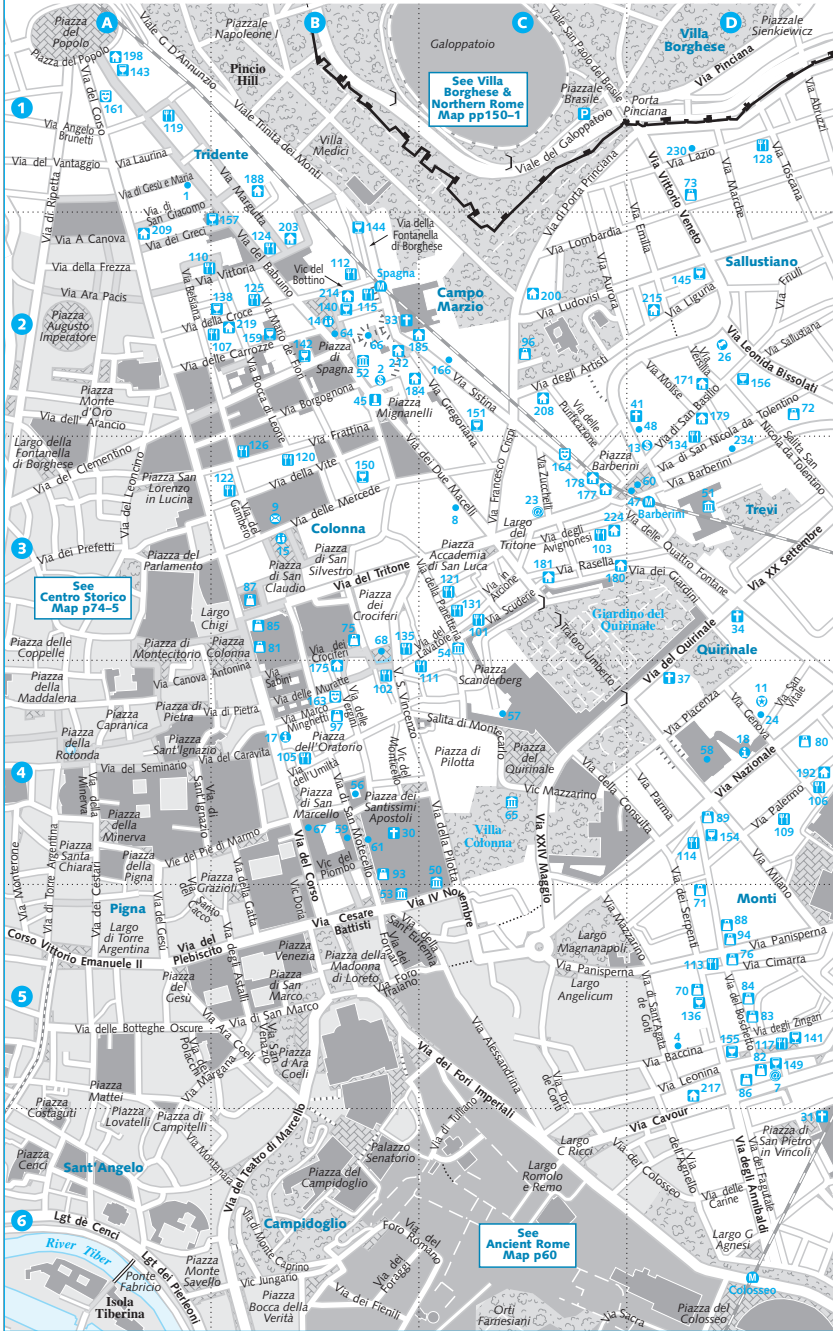
In between Via Nazionale and Via Cavour, the Monti district is a charming neighbourhood of narrow medieval streets full of hidden eateries, bohemian boutiques and cool bars.

### BASILICA DI SANTA MARIA

#### MAGGIORE Map pp90–1

☎ 06 48 31 95; Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore; h 7am–7pm; ☞ Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore One of Rome's four patriarchal basilicas (the others being St Peter's, San Giovanni in Laterano and San Paolo fuori le Mura),

# ESQUILINO, QUIRIALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA



## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

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this monumental church was built on the summit of the Esquilino in the 5th century. Legend has it that in 352 Pope Liberius had a dream in which he was instructed by the Virgin Mary to build a church on the exact spot that he found snow. When, the following morning (5 August – the middle of a hot Roman summer), snow fell on the Esquilino, he obeyed and began building. Whether or not it's true, the miracle is commemorated every 5 August, when thousands of white petals are released from the basilica's coffered gilt ceiling.

In its present form, the basilica is a mix of artistic and architectural styles: the 75m

belfry, the highest in Rome, is 14th-century Romanesque; Ferdinand Fuga's 1741 façade is baroque, as is much of the sumptuous interior; and the floor in the nave is a fine example of 12th-century Cosmati paving. The vast interior, however, retains its original 5th-century form.

Of the artistic splendours on show, it's the cycle of 5th-century mosaics in the triumphal arch and nave that stand out. You'll need a pair of binoculars to do them justice, but if you can see that high, they depict biblical scenes featuring Abraham, Jacob and Isaac to the left, and Moses and Joshua to the right. The central image in

## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

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the apse, signed by Jacopo Torriti, dates from the 13th century and represents the coronation of the Virgin.

The baldachin (canopy) over the high altar is elaborately decorated with gilt cherubs; the altar itself is a porphyry sarcophagus, which is said to contain the relics of St Matthew and other martyrs. Note the nearby plaque marking the spot where Gian Lorenzo Bernini and his father Pietro are buried. Steps lead down to the *confessio* (a crypt in which relics are placed), where a reliquary preserves a fragment of the baby Jesus' crib.

The sumptuously decorated Cappella Sistina, last on the right, was built by

Domenico Fontana in the 16th century and contains the tombs of Popes Sixtus V and Pius V. Opposite is the flamboyant Cappella Paolina Borghesiana, erected in the 17th century by Pope Paul V. The *Madonna col Bambino* (Madonna and Child) panel above the altar, surrounded by lapis lazuli and agate, is believed to date from the 12th to 13th centuries.

Through the bookshop on the right-hand side of the church is a **museum** (adult/child €4/2, 11am-6.30pm) that includes a somewhat motley collection of exhibits, including a few reliquaries, some huge gilt candlesticks and a painting of Mary Magdalene showing

an indecorous amount of cleavage. You can also visit the upper **loggia** (admission €3; h guided tours 9am & 1pm), where you'll find some wonderful 13th-century mosaics (visits are by guided tour only).

### CHIESA DI SANTA PUDENZIANA

Map pp90-1

☎ 06 481 46 22; Via Urbana 160; h 8am-noon, 4-6pm; m Cavour

The church of Rome's Filipino community, the Chiesa di Santa Pudenziana boasts a sparkling gold, 4th-century apse mosaic, the oldest of its kind in Rome. An enthroned Christ is flanked by two female figures who are crowning St Peter and St Paul; on either side of them are the apostles dressed as Roman senators in togas. Unfortunately, you can only see 10 of the original 12 apostles, as a 16th-century face-lift lopped off two of them and amputated the legs of the others.

Most of the church's façade was added in the 19th century, although elements from earlier buildings, such as the delicately carved 11th-century frieze and medallions, were retained. The Romanesque arched windows and the bell tower date from the 12th century.

### CHIESA DI SANTA PRASSEDE Map pp90-1

☎ 06 488 24 56; Via Santa Prassede 9a; h 7am-noon & 4-6.30pm; ☪ Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore Famous for its brilliant mosaics, this 9th-century church is dedicated to St Praxedes, an early Christian heroine. According to legend, Praxedes provided sanctuary for Christians fleeing Roman persecution and buried those that she couldn't save in a well on her father's land. The position of the well is now marked by a marble disc on the floor of the nave.

However, it's the glittering mosaics that you come here to see. Pope Paschal I, the church's founding father, had artists brought in specially from Byzantium to work on them, and still today they blaze with vivid colour.

Stylistically, they bear the hallmarks of their Byzantine creators, with bold gold backgrounds and a marked Christian symbolism. On the first triumphal arch, for example, angels guard the door to the New Jerusalem. The apse mosaics are slightly blocked from view by the baroque baldachin but if you climb the red marble steps

you'll get a better view. Christ is flanked by St Peter, St Pudenziana and St Zeno on the right, and by St Paul, St Praxedes and Paschal on the left. All the figures have golden halos except for Paschal, whose head is shadowed by a green square or nimbus, indicating that he was still alive at the time.

The glittering **Cappella di San Zenone** in the southern aisle was built by Paschal as a mausoleum for his mother. The mosaics on the outside show distinctive Roman faces representing the Virgin and Child, sisters Praxedes and Pudenziana, Christ and the apostles. A small mosaic in the altar niche depicts the Virgin and Child with St Praxedes and St Pudenziana; in the vault is Christ with four angels; on the inside of the doorway are St Peter and St Paul supporting the throne; and on the left, facing the altar, are St Praxedes, St Pudenziana and St Agnes. The fragment of marble in the glass case on the right is thought to be a piece of the column to which Christ was tied when he was flogged.

### CHIESA DI SAN MARTINO AI MONTI

Map pp90-1

☎ 06 487 31 26; Viale del Monte Oppio 28; h 7.30am-noon & 4.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 8am-12.30pm & 4.30-7.30pm Sun; m Cavour

In the 3rd century this was already a place of worship – Christians would meet here, in what was then the home of a Roman named Equitius. In the 4th century, after Christianity was legalised, a church was constructed and subsequently rebuilt in the 6th and 9th centuries. It was then completely transformed by Filippo Gagliardi in the 1650s. The sacristan can show you the remains of Equitius' house beneath the church. Up above, the 24 Corinthian columns in the nave are all that remain of the 6th-century building. Of note are Gagliardi's frescoes of the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano before it was rebuilt in the mid-17th century and St Peter's Basilica before it assumed its present 16th-century look.

### CHIESA DI SANTA LUCIA IN SELCI

Map pp90-1

☎ 06 482 76 23; Via in Selci 82; h 9.30-10.30am Sun; m Cavour

A small church best known for its 17th-century Borromini interior, Chiesa di Santa Lucia in Selci dates to some time before the 8th century. It's not open to the public,

except for Mass on Sunday morning, but if you ring the bell and ask the resident nuns nicely they'll probably let you in.

### BASILICA DI SAN PIETRO IN VINCOLI

Map pp90-1

☎ 06 488 28 65; Piazza di San Pietro in Vincoli 4a; h 8am-12.30pm & 3-6pm; m Cavour Pilgrims and art lovers flock to this 5th-century church for two reasons: to see St Peter's chains and to photograph Michelangelo's tomb for Pope Julius II. The church was built in the 5th century specially to house the chains that bound St Peter when he was imprisoned in the **Carcere Mamertino** (p67). Some time after St Peter's death, the chains were sent to Constantinople before returning to Rome as relics. They arrived in two pieces and legend has it that when they were reunited they miraculously joined together. They are now displayed under the altar.

To the right of the altar is Julius' monumental tomb. At the centre of the work is Michelangelo's colossal Moses (with two small horns sticking out of his head and an impressive waist-length beard), flanked by statues of Leah and Rachel that were probably completed by Michelangelo's students. Michelangelo got the idea for the horns from the mistranslation of a biblical passage: where the original said that rays of light issued from Moses' face, the translator wrote 'horns'. Michelangelo was aware of the mistake, but he gave Moses horns anyway. Despite its imposing scale the tomb was never actually finished – Michelangelo had originally envisaged 40 other statues but got sidetracked with the Sistine Chapel. In the end, Pope Julius was buried in St Peter's Basilica and the unfinished sculptures that were to have adorned this tomb are in the Louvre (Paris) and the Galleria dell'Accademia (Florence).

### DOMUS AUREA Map pp90-1

☎ 06 399 67 700; www.pierreci.it; Viale della Domus Aurea; admission €4.50; h 10am-4pm Tue-Fri; m Colosseo

A monumental exercise in vanity, the Domus Aurea (Golden House) was Nero's great gift to himself. Built after the fire of AD 64 and named after the gold that covered its façade, it was a huge palace complex covering much of the Palatino (Palatine), Oppio (Oppian) and Celio (Caelian) hills. Its

grounds, which included an artificial lake, covered up to a third of the 1st-century city.

Unfortunately, little remains of the original complex – experts reckon only about 20%. Much of it was destroyed by Nero's immediate successors, who were keen to remove all trace of his hated excesses: Vespasian drained the lake and built the Colosseum in its place, Domitian built his palace on the Palatino, and Trajan constructed a baths complex on the Oppio using the Domus Aurea as a foundation. This is the area that is currently being excavated.

Many of the original loggias and halls were walled in when Trajan's baths were built, effectively removing all the light and making it difficult to distinguish between the original complex and the later baths. Highlights include traces of frescoes depicting scenes from Homer's *Iliad* and the octagonal room where Nero is said to have played the lyre on a revolving stage.

The baths and underlying ruins were abandoned by the 6th century. During the Renaissance, artists (including Ghirlandaio, Perugino and Raphael) lowered themselves into the ruins in order to study the frescoed grottoes and to doodle on the walls. All of them later used motifs from the Domus Aurea frescoes in their work.

The excavations suffered serious flood damage in 2005 and have only recently reopened. Visits are by guided tour only and bookings are essential.

### PIAZZA VITTORIO EMANUELE II

Map pp90-1

m Vittorio Emanuele

Rome's biggest square (Piazza San Pietro is in the Vatican and so doesn't count as Rome), Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II was laid out in the late 19th century, shortly after Italian unification. Originally an upmarket residential district, it's now the noisy centre of Rome's most multiethnic district.


To most Romans the piazza is synonymous with the boisterous food market that used to stand here. The market has since moved indoors to nearby Via Lamarmora, but the surrounding streets are still the best place to find exotic spices and take-away curry. Within the fenced-off central section of the square are the ruins of the **Trofei di Mario**, once a fountain at the end of an aqueduct.

In the northern corner of the square is the locked-up **Chiesa di Sant'Eusebio**, which

was founded in the 4th century and rebuilt twice in the 18th. Each year, animals are blessed here on St Anthony's feast day (17 January).

The square itself hosts cultural festivals throughout the year and an outdoor film festival in the summer.

### PORTA MAGGIORE Map p103

**Piazza di Porta Maggiore;**  **Porta Maggiore** Porta Maggiore, also known as Porta Prenestina, was built by Claudius in AD 52. Then, as now, it was a major road junction under which passed the two main south-bound roads, Via Prenestina and Via Labicana (modern-day Via Casilina).

The arch supported two aqueducts – the Acqua Claudia and the Acqua Aniene Nuova – and was later incorporated into the Aurelian Wall.

In the middle of Piazza di Porta Maggiore is the *Sepolcro di M Virgilio Eurisace*. Commonly known as the Baker's Tomb, this pretentious monument was built in 30 BC by the widow of the baker Vergilius Eurisaces in memory of her husband.

## QUIRINALE TO THE TREVI FOUNTAIN

### PALAZZO DEL QUIRINALE Map pp90–1

☎ 06 4 69 91; [www.quirinale.it](http://www.quirinale.it); Piazza del Quirinale; admission €5;  8.30am–noon Sun Sep–Jun;  **Via Nazionale**

Flanking Piazza del Quirinale, this immense *palazzo* served as the papal summer residence for almost three centuries until the keys were handed over, begrudgingly and staring down the barrel of a gun, to Italy's new king in 1870. It was passed on to the president of the republic in 1948.

Pope Gregory XIII (r 1572–85) originally chose the site for his holiday home and over the course of the next 150 years the top architects of the day worked on it: Domenico Fontana designed the main façade; Carlo Maderno designed the chapel; and Bernini was responsible for the *manica lunga* (long sleeve), the long, surprisingly austere wing that runs the length of Via del Quirinale. The *palazzo* is open to the public on Sunday mornings, when there is sometimes a free concert in the Cappella Paolina.

On the other side of the piazza, the palace's former stables, the *Scuderie Papali al Quirinale* (☎ 06 69 62 70; [www.scuderiequirinale.it](http://www.scuderiequirinale.it); Via

XXIV Maggio 16;  depends on exhibition), is now a magnificent exhibition space.


### PIAZZA DEL QUIRINALE Map pp90–1

#### **Via Nazionale**

A wonderful spot to enjoy a glowing Roman sunset, this bare and uneven piazza sits on the summit of the Quirinale hill. The *obelisk* in the centre was moved here from the *Mausoleo di Augusto* (p85) in 1786 and is flanked by 5.5m statues of *Castor* and *Pollux* (whose modesty is ensured by a convenient leaf) reining in a couple of huge rearing horses. These Roman copies of 5th-century-BC Greek originals were originally in the Baths of Constantine but were moved here in the 16th century by Pope Sixtus V. The granite basin, from the Roman Forum, was a later addition.

It's not much of a show, but every day, at some point between 3pm and 4pm, the two sentries outside Palazzo del Quirinale are replaced by the next pair, accompanied by minor pomp and military shouting. More dramatic by far is the classical music concert staged here on New Year's Eve.

### CHIESA DI SANT'ANDREA AL QUIRINALE Map pp90–1

☎ 06 489 03 187; **Via del Quirinale 29;**  9am–noon & 4–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat;  **Via Nazionale**

It's said that in his old age Bernini liked to come and enjoy the peace of this late-17th-century church, regarded by many as one of his greatest. Faced with severe space limitations, the great man managed to produce a sense of grandeur by designing an elliptical floor plan with a series of chapels opening onto the central area. The opulent interior, decorated with polychrome marble, stucco and gilding, was much appreciated by Pope Alexander VII, who used it while in residence at the Palazzo del Quirinale.

### CHIESA DI SAN CARLO ALLE QUATTRO FONTANE Map pp90–1

☎ 06 488 32 61; **Via del Quirinale 23;**  10am–1pm & 3–6pm Mon–Fri & Sun, 10am–1pm Sat;  **Via Nazionale**

It might not look it, with its filthy façade and unappealing location, but this tiny church is a masterpiece of Roman baroque. It was the first church designed by Borromini and bears all the hallmarks of his tortured genius. The elegant curves of the façade, the play of convex and concave surfaces and

the dome illuminated by hidden windows ingeniously transform a minuscule space into a light, airy interior.

The church, completed in 1641, stands at the road intersection known as the *Quattro Fontane*, after the late-16th-century fountains on its four corners, representing Fidelity, Strength and the Rivers Arno and Tiber.

### PALAZZO DELLE ESPOSIZIONI Map pp90–1

☎ 06 48 94 11; [www.palazzoesposizione.it](http://www.palazzoesposizione.it) in Italian; **Via Nazionale 194;**  depends on exhibition;

#### **Via Nazionale**

Recently opened after years of renovation work, this grand 19th-century building is one of Rome's most prominent cultural centres, used for multimedia events, art exhibitions, performances and film screenings. In the past it has served as the headquarters of the Italian Communist Party, a mess for allied servicemen, a polling station and even a public loo.

### MUSEO DELLE CERE Map pp90–1

☎ 06 679 64 82; [www.museodellecereroma.com](http://www.museodellecereroma.com); **Piazza dei Santissimi Apostoli 67;** admission €6;  9am–8pm;  **Via IV Novembre**

Madame Tussaud's it ain't, but Rome's waxworks museum does at least provide some light-hearted relief from the high-brow culture all around you. Ranging from Francesco Totti to Snow White, the 250 wax figures include poets, politicians, murderers and priests.

### GALLERIA COLONNA Map pp90–1

☎ 06 678 43 50; [www.galleriacolonna.it](http://www.galleriacolonna.it); **Via della Pilotta 17;** adult/under 10yr & over 65yr €7/5.50;  9am–1pm Sat, closed Aug;  **Via IV Novembre** An extravagant work of art in its own right, this opulent six-room gallery houses the Colonna family's private art collection. It's not the capital's largest collection but it's highly regarded and well worth the ticket price. Entry is on Via della Pilotta, a picturesque street spanned by four arches connecting *Palazzo Colonna* to its private gardens. Originally built in the 15th century for Pope Martin V, the *palazzo* was given a major makeover in the 18th century for the Colonna family, members of which still live here.



The gallery, the only part of the *palazzo* open to the public, was completed in 1703. The outstanding ceiling frescoes are all dedicated to Marcantonio Colonna, the family's greatest ancestor, who defeated

the Turks at the naval Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Works by Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi in the Great Hall, Sebastiano Ricci in the Landscapes Room and Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari in the Throne Room commemorate his efforts.

Among the artists competing for your attention are Salvatore Rosa, Guido Reni and Guercino, but it's Annibale Carracci's charming *Mangiafagioli* (The Bean Eater) that is considered the collection's masterpiece. Oddities to look out for include a cannonball lodged into the wall during the 1849 siege of Rome and, in the Throne Room, a chair kept ready (turned to the wall) in case of a papal visit.

### BASILICA DEI SANTI APOSTOLI

Map pp90–1

☎ 06 679 40 85; **Piazza dei Santissimi Apostoli;**  7am–noon & 4–7pm;  **Via IV Novembre** Built in the 6th century and dedicated to the apostles James and Philip (whose relics are in the crypt), this church was enlarged in the 15th and 16th centuries and then rebuilt in the early 1700s. The unusual façade with Renaissance arches and portico dates to the early 16th century, while Carlo and Francesco Fontana's baroque interior was completed in 1714. Inside, the main attraction is Antonio Canova's tomb of Pope Clement XIV.



### PIAZZA DEI SANTISSIMI APOSTOLI

Map pp90–1

 **Via IV Novembre**

A popular place for political demonstrations, this long thin piazza is home to L'Ulivo, Italy's main centre-left political party, and is flanked by impressive baroque *palazzi*. At the end of the square stands *Palazzo Balestra*, formerly known as Palazzo Muti Papazzurri, which was given to James Stuart, the Old Pretender, in 1719 by Pope Clement XI. Opposite the *Basilica dei Santi Apostoli* (above) is *Palazzo Odelscalchi*, with its impressive 1664 façade by Bernini. Apart from the church none of these buildings is open to the public.

### TIME ELEVATOR Map pp90–1

☎ 06 977 46 243; [www.time-elevator.it](http://www.time-elevator.it); **Via dei Santissimi Apostoli 20;** adult/child €11/9;  10.30am–7.30pm;  **Piazza Venezia** Down a small side street off Via del Corso, the Time Elevator is ideal for armchair

sightseers. There are three programs, but the one to see is *Time Elevator Rome*, a 45-minute virtual journey through 3000 years of Roman history. Shows kick off every hour, and children and adults alike love the panoramic screens, flight-simulator technology and surround-sound system. Note that children under five aren't admitted and anyone who suffers motion sickness should probably give it a miss.

### TREVI FOUNTAIN Map pp90–1

**Piazza di Trevi:** ☉ **Via del Tritone**  
Immortalised by Anita Ekberg's sensual dip in *La Dolce Vita*, the Trevi Fountain (Fontana di Trevi) is Rome's largest and most famous fountain. An extravagant baroque work designed by Nicola Salvi in 1732 and completed in 1762, it depicts Neptune's chariot being led by Tritons with sea horses – one wild, one docile – representing the moods of the sea. The water comes from the *aqua virgo*, a 1st-century-BC underground aqueduct, and the name Trevi refers to the *tre vie* (three roads) that converge at the fountain.

There has been a fountain here since 19 BC, when the 22km *aqua virgo* was completed. In 1453 Pope Nicholas V had the original updated and then, in 1629, Pope Urban VIII asked Bernini to design a new one. However, Urban died and the project was dropped. It was resurrected in 1730 by Pope Clement XII, who organised a competition to elicit designs for a fabulous new fountain. Salvi won and started work two years later.

Legend has it that during construction a busybody barber criticised the project from

the balcony of his shop on the right side of the square. Architect Salvi got the last laugh, however, by blocking the barber's view with a giant ornament on the balustrade, the so-called *asso di coppe*.

The famous custom is to throw a coin over your shoulder into the fountain; see the boxed text, [below](#).

### MUSEO NAZIONALE DELLE PASTE ALIMENTARI Map pp90–1

☎ 06 699 11 19; [www.pastainmuseum.com](http://www.pastainmuseum.com); Piazza Scanderbeg 117; admission €10; h 9.30am–5.30pm; ☽ **Via del Tritone**

Raised to national-treasure status, pasta is celebrated in all its fascinating glory at this wonderfully straight-faced museum. The National Museum of Pasta is the only museum in the world dedicated to more than two millennia of pasta and it takes its responsibilities seriously – there are exhibitions explaining the production process, the differences between various pastas and how best to cook them. A highlight is the Neapolitan Room, with its photos of film stars tucking into plateloads of the stuff.

### PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & AROUND

The popularity of Piazza di Spagna dates to the 18th century, when it was discovered by travellers on the Grand Tour. Today it's conveniently served by its own metro station, and attracts locals and visitors in equal measure: Roman teenagers come here on the pull; out-of-towners come to sit on the famous Spanish Steps. Built to connect Piazza di Spagna with

the Chiesa della Trinità dei Monti, the steps are always very busy and rarely as colourful as the postcards make out. It's only in early spring that you'll find the famous azaleas lining the steps; for the rest of the year you'll have to make do with exhausted tourists.

Piazza di Spagna is also where well-heeled shoppers come to give their credit cards a workout. Via dei Condotti, home to Bulgari, Prada and Armani among others, is the most famous of the area's moneyed shopping strips.

### PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & THE SPANISH STEPS Map pp90–1

☞ **Spagna**

The favourite flirting ground of Roman teenagers, Piazza di Spagna and the famous Spanish Steps (Scalinata della Trinità dei Monti) have been a magnet for foreigners since the 18th century. In the late 1700s the area was much loved by English on the Grand Tour and was known to locals as *er ghetto de l'inglesi* (the English ghetto). It's still a hugely popular hang-out and is busy from early morning until the small hours. Officially you're not supposed to eat (or defecate, according to a sign) on the steps and if caught by the police you could be fined.

Built between 1723 and 1726 with French money – but designed by an Italian (Francesco De Sanctis) and named after the nearby Spanish Embassy – the Spanish Steps were constructed to connect the piazza with the eminent folk who lived above it. They soon became a meeting point for the city's most beautiful men and women, who gathered here hoping to be chosen as artists' models. These days you're more likely to see spotty schoolkids than any Latin Adonis. Unless, of course, you come in April, when models strut the catwalk at the annual fashion show and the tourists are replaced with a blaze of pink azaleas.

At the foot of the steps, the fountain of a sinking boat, the *Barcaccia* (1627), is believed to be by Pietro Bernini, father of the famous Gian Lorenzo. Opposite, Via dei Condotti is Rome's top shopping strip.

To the right of the piazza, adjacent Piazza Mignanelli is dominated by the *Colonna dell'Immacolata*, built in 1857 to celebrate Pope Pius IX's declaration of the Immaculate Conception. On 8 December each year, local firefighters place a wreath on the arm of the statue of the Virgin Mary.

### CHIESA DELLA TRINITÀ DEI MONTI

Map pp90–1

☎ 06 679 41 79; Piazza Trinità dei Monti; h 10am–noon & 4–6pm; ☞ **Spagna**  
Looming over the Spanish Steps, this landmark church was commissioned by King Louis XII of France and consecrated in 1585. Apart from the great views from outside, it boasts some wonderful frescoes by Daniele da Volterra. His *Deposizione* (Deposition; Christ being taken down from the cross), in the second chapel on the left, is regarded as a masterpiece of mannerist painting. If you don't fancy climbing the steep steps, there's a lift from Spagna metro station up to Viale Trinità dei Monti.

### KEATS-SHELLEY HOUSE Map pp90–1

☎ 06 678 42 35; [www.keats-shelley-house.org](http://www.keats-shelley-house.org); Piazza di Spagna 26; admission €3.50; h 9am–1pm & 3–6pm Mon–Fri, 11am–2pm & 3–6pm Sat; ☞ **Spagna**

Next to the Spanish Steps, the Keats-Shelley House is where John Keats died in February 1821. He'd come to Rome a year earlier, hoping that the Italian climate would improve his failing health. Unfortunately it didn't, and he died at the age of 25. A year later, Percy Bysshe Shelley drowned off the coast of Tuscany. The house is now a small museum crammed with memorabilia relating to the two poets and their colleagues Mary Shelley and Lord Byron.

### VIA DEI CONDOTTI Map pp90–1

☞ **Spagna**

A mecca for high-rolling shoppers, Via dei Condotti is Rome's poshest shopping strip. Two centuries ago it was fashionable in a very different way: the street belonged to the writers and musicians who used to meet at *Caffe Greco* (p220).

Other top shopping streets in the area include *Via Frattina*, *Via della Croce*, *Via delle Carrozze* and *Via del Babuino*. Pretty *Via Margutta*, parallel to Via del Babuino, is lined with art galleries and antique shops and was home to film director Federico Fellini for many years. See the Shopping chapter, p160, for more details.

### CASA DI GOETHE Map pp90–1

☎ 06 326 50 412; [www.casadigoethe.it](http://www.casadigoethe.it); Via del Corso 18; admission €3; h 10am–6pm Tue–Sun; ☞ **Flaminio**

A gathering place for German artists and intellectuals, the Via del Corso apartment

### TREVI FOUNTAIN CLEANED OUT

According to tradition, to toss a coin over your shoulder into the Trevi Fountain is to ensure that one day you'll return to Rome. Throw in a second and you'll fall in love with an Italian, and a third will have you marrying him or her. It's all very romantic, but what happens to the €3000 that is chucked away on an average day?

It goes to charity, is the answer. Once a week a team from Rome's water company ACEA hoovers up the coins and sends them to Caritas, an Italian charity, where volunteers weigh, clean and sort the coins into currencies – coins have been found from up to 58 different countries.

At least, that's the theory. In practice it doesn't always work out that way. In November 2005, police arrested four members of the official Hoover team, claiming that they'd pocketed an estimated €110,000 of Trevi coins.

Before that, in 2002, it emerged that a homeless man known as D'Artagnan had been making up to €1000 a day for 34 years from the Trevi coins. The public was outraged but it wasn't at all clear if he'd been breaking the law. According to a 1994 High Court ruling, taking coins from the fountain was as legal as throwing them in. Moreover, D'Artagnan claimed he had given his loot away to other homeless people. Magistrates, however, fined D'Artagnan €500 under a 1999 law that banned entering the city's fountains. Unabated, he continued until the introduction of the euro put a damper on his scheme – the magnet he used to collect the coins didn't work on the new euro coins.

where Johann Wolfgang von Goethe lived between 1786 and 1788 is now a lovingly maintained museum. Exhibits include documents relating to his Italian sojourn and interesting drawings and etchings – including a 1982 Andy Warhol portrait of the great man. With advance permission, ardent Goethe fans can use the library full of first editions.

## PIAZZA BARBERINI & AROUND

**PIAZZA BARBERINI** Map pp90–1

▣ Barberini

More a traffic thoroughfare than a place to linger, this noisy square owes its name to the Barberini family, one of Rome's great dynastic clans (see the boxed text, p81). In the centre, the eye-catching **Fontana del Tritone** (Fountain of the Triton) was created by Bernini in 1643 for Pope Urban VIII, patriarch of the Barberini family. It depicts the sea-god Triton blowing a stream of water from a conch while seated in a large scallop shell supported by four dolphins. Bernini also crafted the **Fontana delle Api** (Fountain of the Bees) in the northeastern corner, again for the Barberini family, whose crest featured three bees in flight.

## GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE ANTICA

Map pp90–1

▣ 06 3 28 10; [www.galleriaborghese.it](http://www.galleriaborghese.it); Via delle Quattro Fontane 13, entrance at Via Barberini 18; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-25yr €5/free/2.50; h 9am-7pm Tue-Sun; ▣ Barberini; √ A must for anyone into Renaissance and baroque art, this glorious gallery is housed in one of Rome's most spectacular *palazzi*. Commissioned by Pope Urban VIII to celebrate the Barberini family's rise to papal power in 1623, **Palazzo Barberini** was worked on by a who's who of 17th-century architects. Carlo Maderno was the original architect but when he died in 1629 his nephew Borromini took over, adding the windows on the upper storey, which seem from a distance to be the same size as those on the floor below, but are in fact significantly smaller. Borromini's rival Bernini also got in on the act, designing the square staircase on the left of the ground-floor hall, in contrast to Borromini's delicious oval staircase on the other side. Pietro da Cortona painted the breathtaking fresco *Trionfo della Divina*

*Provvidenza* (Triumph of Divine Providence), in the main salon on the 1st floor, between 1633 and 1639.

Today the palace houses part of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica's collection of 13th- to 17th-century works, including paintings by Raphael, Caravaggio, Guido Reni, Bernini, Filippo Lippi and Holbein.

Highlights on the 1st floor include Raphael's lovely *La Fornarina* (The Baker's Girl), a portrait of his mistress Margherita Luti, who worked in a bakery on Via Santa Dorotea in Trastevere (now a restaurant called Romolo); the luminous *Annunziata* (Annunciation) by Filippo Lippi; Guido Reni's *Ritratto di Beatrice Cenci* (Portrait of Beatrice Cenci; see the boxed text, p125); and Hans Holbein's famous *Ritratto di Enrico VIII* (Portrait of Henry VIII), painted on the day Henry married Anne of Cleves. Caravaggio fans will delight in his *Giuditta taglia la testa a Oloferne* (Judith Beheading Holophernes, c 1597–1600), a gruesome masterpiece of theatrical lighting, and *Narcisso* (Narcissus, c 1571–1610).

On the 2nd floor are the 18th-century apartments of Princess Cornelia Costanza Barberini.

## CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA CONCEZIONE

Map pp90–1

▣ 06 487 11 85; Via Vittorio Veneto 27; admission by donation; h 9am-noon & 3-6pm Fri-Wed; ▣ Barberini

There's nothing special about the 17th-century Chiesa di Santa Maria della Concezione, just off Piazza Barberini, but dip into the **Capuchin cemetery** beneath (access is to the right of the church steps) and you'll be gobsmacked. Everything from the picture frames to the light fittings is made of human bones. Between 1528 and 1870 the Capuchin monks used the bones of 4000 of their departed brothers to create the mesmerising and macabre display. There's an arch crafted from hundreds of skulls, vertebrae used as fleurs-de-lis, and light fixtures made of femurs.

## VIA VITTORIO VENETO

Map pp90–1

▣ Barberini

Curving up from Piazza Barberini to Villa Borghese, Via Vittorio Veneto is the spiritual home of *la dolce vita*. Unfortunately, the atmosphere of Fellini's Rome has long gone, and the street today, while still impressive, is largely given over to tourism. Many of the

towering streetside *palazzi* are luxury hotels, and glass-cased restaurants serve over-priced food to tourists with more money than imagination. The huge building on the right as you walk up is the US Embassy.

## PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA & AROUND

**PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA** Map pp90–1

▣ Repubblica

Flanked by grand neoclassical colonnades, Piazza della Repubblica was laid out as part of Rome's postunification makeover. The piazza follows the lines of the semicircular *exedra* (benched portico) of Diocletian's baths complex (see *right*) and was, in fact, originally known as Piazza Esedra. The fountain in its centre, the **Fontana delle Naiadi**, was designed by Mario Rutelli and features a central figure of Glaucus wrestling a fish, surrounded by four naiads or water nymphs.

Spearing off the piazza, **Via Nazionale** heads downhill towards Piazza Venezia. A busy shopping street, its crowded pavements are lined with imposing late-19th-century *palazzi*.

## MUSEO NAZIONALE ROMANO: PALAZZO MASSIMO ALLE TERME

Map pp90–1

▣ 06 399 67 700; Largo di Villa Peretti 1; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €7/free/3.50, plus €3 supplement if there's an exhibition; h 9am-7.45pm Tue-Sun; ▣ Termini; √ A stunning, light-filled museum, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme is home to some spectacular classical art. To help your navigation, audioguides are available for €4.

The ground and 1st floors are given over to sculpture from the 2nd century BC to the 5th century AD. Much early Roman art was designed to pamper imperial egos and on the ground floor you'll find plenty of macho posturing. The depiction of Augustus as Pontifex Maximus in Sala V is a perfect example. In the same room, don't miss the marble frieze from the Basilica Aemilia in the **Roman Forum** (p63), which depicts scenes from the origin of Rome. In Sala VI next door, there is a moving sculpture known as the *Niobide degli Horti Sallustiani* (Niobide from the Gardens of Sallust), which dates from the 5th century BC and depicts one of the 14 children of Niobe. Niobe insulted Lato, the mother of Apollo and Artemis, leading

to Apollo and Artemis killing all of Niobe's children with arrows.

On the 1st floor you'll find sculptures from the late 1st to 4th centuries AD. Among the highlights is a ravaged but naturalistic image of a voluptuous *Afrodite* (Sala V), from **Villa Adriana** (p277) at Tivoli. The badly damaged *Apollo del Tevere* in Sala VI shows what too long in polluted water can do to marble: this piece was discovered in the banks of the Tiber in the late 19th century. In the same room are the *Discobolus Lancellotti* and the *Discobolus di Castelporziano*, two marble statues of a discus-thrower copied from a Greek original by Myron of Athens.

The highlights of the museum, however, are the sensational mosaics and wall paintings on the 2nd floor. These include wall paintings from an Augustan-period villa found in the grounds of **Villa Farnesina** (p124) in the 19th century. The richly coloured frescoes from its *cubicula* (bedrooms) have religious, erotic and theatre subjects and are quite amazing, as are the paintings from the *triclinium* (dining room) featuring landscape scenes.

Stealing the limelight, though, are the garden paintings (dating from 20 to 10 BC) from Villa Livia, one of the homes of Augustus' wife Livia Drusilla. Excavated in the 19th century and displayed here in 1951, these stunning frescoes, which totally surround you, depict an illusionary garden with all the plants in full bloom. The room in which they were originally painted was probably a summer *triclinium*, a large living and dining area built half underground to provide protection from the heat.

The museum also boasts a stunning collection of inlaid marble and mosaics, including (in Sala VII) the surviving wall mosaics from a *nymphaeum* (shrine to the water nymph) at Nero's villa in Anzio.

In the basement there is an extensive display of ancient and medieval coins, including a collection donated to the state by King Vittorio Emanuele II.

## MUSEO NAZIONALE ROMANO: TERME DI DIOCLEZIANO

Map pp90–1

▣ 06 399 67 700; Viale Enrico de Nicola 78; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €7/free/3.50, plus €3 supplement if there's an exhibition; h 9am-7.45pm Tue-Sun; ▣ Termini; √ The ruins that you see over the road from Piazza dei Cinquecento, outside Termini,





## CHIESA DIO PADRE MISERICORDIOSO

off Map pp90–1

☎ 06 231 58 33; Via Francesco Tovaglieri;  
h 7.30am–12.30pm & 3.30–7.30pm; g Via  
Tovaglieri

Set in the midst of the 1970s Tor Tre Teste housing estate, US architect Richard Meier's startling white church is a classic of contemporary design. Built out of concrete, stucco, travertine and 976 sq metres of glass, it is flanked on one side by three graduated concrete shells (respectively 16.8m, 22.1m and 26.7m high), while on the other side a four-storey atrium connects the church with a community centre.

The church was inaugurated on 26 October 2003, seven years after the Vatican commissioned it for the 2000 Jubilee.

## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

### Walking Tour

**1 Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme** Not far from Stazione Termini, this outpost of the Museo Nazionale Romano (p101) houses some stunning sculpture

#### WALK FACTS

**Start** Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (m Termini)

**End** Spanish Steps (m Spagna)

**Distance** 3.3km

**Duration** Four hours

**Fuel stop** Il Posto Accanto (p195)



and mosaics. Highlights include a wonderfully fleshy *Afrodite* and some sensational frescoes taken from a villa belonging to Livia, wife of Rome's first emperor, Augustus.

**2 Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore** The only one of Rome's four patriarchal basilicas to have kept its original form, this bulky church (p89) boasts some wonderful 5th-century mosaics. Train your eyes (or even better your binoculars) on the ceilings above the nave and follow the Old Testament stories.

**3 Chiesa di Santa Prassede** Tucked away at the bottom of a quiet backstreet, this church (p94) is celebrated for its 9th-century mosaics that still blaze with vibrant colour. Pope Paschal I had artists brought in specially from Byzantium to create them.

**4 Basilica di San Pietro in Vincoli** The two drawcards in this basilica (p95) are Michelangelo's unfinished tomb for Pope Julius II and the chains with which St Peter was bound in the Carcere Mamertino. The former features

a famously horned statue of Moses; the latter are displayed under the main altar.

**5 Il Posto Accanto** This homely restaurant (p195) in the Monti area is a good spot for lunch. Mama serves the homemade food while her husband gets very excited about the wines and liqueurs, many of which he's distilled himself.

**6 Trevi Fountain** One of the city's most famous sights, this ornate baroque fountain (p98) is always crowded. Try to visit after dark, when you'll see it beautifully lit and have more space to throw your coin in, thus ensuring your return to Rome.

**7 Spanish Steps** Another definite on most people's must-see lists, the 18th-century Spanish Steps (p99) have long been a hang-out for guys and girls on the make. In the 18th century aspiring youngsters flocked here hoping to be chosen as artists' models; nowadays local teenagers mingle with foot-weary tourists and tat-hawking street sellers.

## SOUTHERN ROME

Drinking & Nightlife p222; Eating p201; Shopping p176; Sleeping p258

Although not exactly off the beaten track, the southern quadrant of the city boasts some quiet and wonderfully atmospheric corners as well as a number of Rome's greatest hits. Stretching south from the Colosseum and Circo Massimo, it can be divided into several distinct districts: San Giovanni, centred on its celebrated basilica; the Celio, a green and peaceful area to the south-east of the Colosseum; upmarket Aventino and beneath it earthy Testaccio; Via Appia Antica, famous for its catacombs; Ostiense and San Paolo, the increasingly trendy district along Via Ostiense; and EUR, Mussolini's futuristic quarter at the end of metro line B.

The area is very spread out and difficult to explore on foot. Fortunately, there are good public-transport connections. There are metro stations at San Giovanni on line A, and at Circo Massimo, Piramide, EUR Palasport and San Paolo on line B; there are bus connections to Via del Circo Massimo (81 and 160), Porta San Sebastiano (118, 218 and 714), San Giovanni (81, 85 and 87), Viale Aventino (60 and 673), Via Ostiense (23 and 716) and Via Appia Antica (118, 218 and 660).

### SAN GIOVANNI

Just inside the city walls, the monumental Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano is the focal point of this largely residential district. Apart from the basilica and the Scala Santa, a staircase said by believers to be the one that Jesus walked up in Pontius Pilate's palace in Jerusalem, there's not a great deal to see. There is, however, a lively clothes market on Via Sannio (p176) that can be fun to browse.

### BASILICA DI SAN GIOVANNI IN LATERANO

Map pp108–9  
% 06 698 86 433; Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano 4; h 7am–6.30pm; m San Giovanni; √ A huge white landmark, this monumental cathedral was founded by Constantine in 313 and consecrated 11 years later. It was the first Christian basilica to be built in Rome and, until the late 14th century, was the pope's principal residence. The Vatican still has extraterritorial authority over it, despite it being Rome's official cathedral and the pope's seat as Bishop of Rome.

The most immediately eye-catching feature is Alessandro Galilei's huge façade. A mid-18th-century example of late baroque classicism, it was designed big to convey the authority and infinite power of the Church. The original 4th-century façade, in contrast, was a much simpler affair. The

## top picks

### SOUTHERN ROME

- Terme di Caracalla (p110)
- Basilica di Santa Sabina (p115)
- Capitoline Museums at Centrale Montemartini (p117)
- Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano (left)
- Basilica & Catacombs di San Sebastiano (p112)

bronze doors were moved here from the Curia (p63) in the Roman Forum, while to their right is the Holy Door that is only opened in Jubilee years. Above the portico (built in 1736) are 15 colossal statues representing Christ with St John the Baptist, John the Evangelist and the 12 apostles.

The interior has been done up on numerous occasions. In 1425 Pope Martin V had the mosaic floor inlaid with marble salvaged from derelict Roman churches, while in 1646 Borromini turned his baroque talents to the job. His fingerprints are on the pillars in the nave and the sculptural frames around the funerary monuments in the aisles. Above these Borromini placed his trademark oval windows.

A Gothic baldachin towers above the papal altar. At the top is a reliquary that supposedly contains the heads of St Peter and St Paul. Below, a double staircase leads to the confesso, which houses pieces of what's thought to be St Peter's wooden altar table, used by 1st- to 4th-century popes. The apse was rebuilt in the 19th century and its mosaics are copies of the originals.

The fresco behind the first pillar of the right-hand aisle is an original, if rather incomplete, Giotto. While admiring it, cock your ear towards the next pillar, where a monument to Pope Sylvester II (r 999–1003) is said to sweat and emit the sound of

creaking bones when the death of a pope is imminent.

To the left of the altar, the beautiful cloister (admission €2; h 9am–6pm) was built by the Vassalletto family in the 13th century. The twisted columns were once completely covered with inlaid marble mosaics, remains of which can still be seen. On the western side there's a marble slab supported by four columns, which Christians in the Middle Ages thought represented the height of Christ.

There's a second entrance into the basilica on Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano. To the left of the door in Domenico Fontana's 16th-century two-tiered portico is the Palazzo Laterano, which was the papal residence until the popes moved to the Vatican in 1377. It was largely destroyed by fire in 1308 and most of what remained was demolished in the 16th century. The present building houses offices of the diocese of Rome.

More interesting is the domed baptistry (admission free; h 7.30am–12.30pm & 4–7.30pm) around the corner. Like the basilica it was built by Constantine and served as the prototype for later Christian churches and bell towers. Pope Sixtus III gave it its current octagonal shape. A basalt font rests in the centre, beneath a dome decorated with modern copies of frescoes by Andrea Sacchi. The Cappella di Santa Rufina is decorated with a faded 5th-century mosaic of vines and foliage against a deep-blue background, while the vault of Cappella di San Giovanni Evangelista has a mosaic of the Lamb of God surrounded by birds and flowers. The Cappella di San Venanzio and its mosaics were added by Pope John IV in the 7th century.

### SCALA SANTA & SANCTA SANCTORUM

Map pp108–9  
% 06 704 94 619; Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano 14; admission Scala Santa/Sancta Sanctorum free/€3.50; h Scala Santa 6.15am–noon & 3.30–6.45pm Apr–Sep, 6.15am–noon & 3–6.15pm Oct–Mar, Sancta Sanctorum 6.15am–noon & 3.30–6.45pm Apr–Sep, 3–6.15pm Oct–Mar; m San Giovanni  
Over the road from the Basilica di San Giovanni, the Scala Santa (Holy Staircase) is one of the few religious sites in the city with a genuinely spiritual atmosphere. The staircase is said to be the one that Jesus walked up in Pontius Pilate's palace in Jerusalem. Brought to Rome by St Helena in the 4th century, it is considered so

sacred that you can only climb it on your knees, saying a prayer on each of the 28 steps. Indulgence is granted to pilgrims who climb on Fridays in Lent. There was no indulgence, however, for Martin Luther who, in 1510, decided halfway up the stairs that he didn't believe in the divinity of relics and promptly turned round and walked out. On his return to Germany he further irritated the Catholic Church by starting the Reformation.

To protect the stairs, wooden boards have been used to cover them, but they are still said to occasionally bleed through the slats.

At the top of the stairs is the Sancta Sanctorum (Holy of Holies), once the pope's private chapel. A spectacular sight, it's richly decorated: the vaulted ceiling is covered with 13th-century mosaics; the marble floor is by Cosmati; and there are 13th-century frescoes depicting the apostles and saints. In June 2007, after a 13-month restoration project, a series of 16th-century frescoes by the Flemish artist Paul Bril were also revealed.

### CHIESA DI SANTA CROCE IN GERUSALEMME

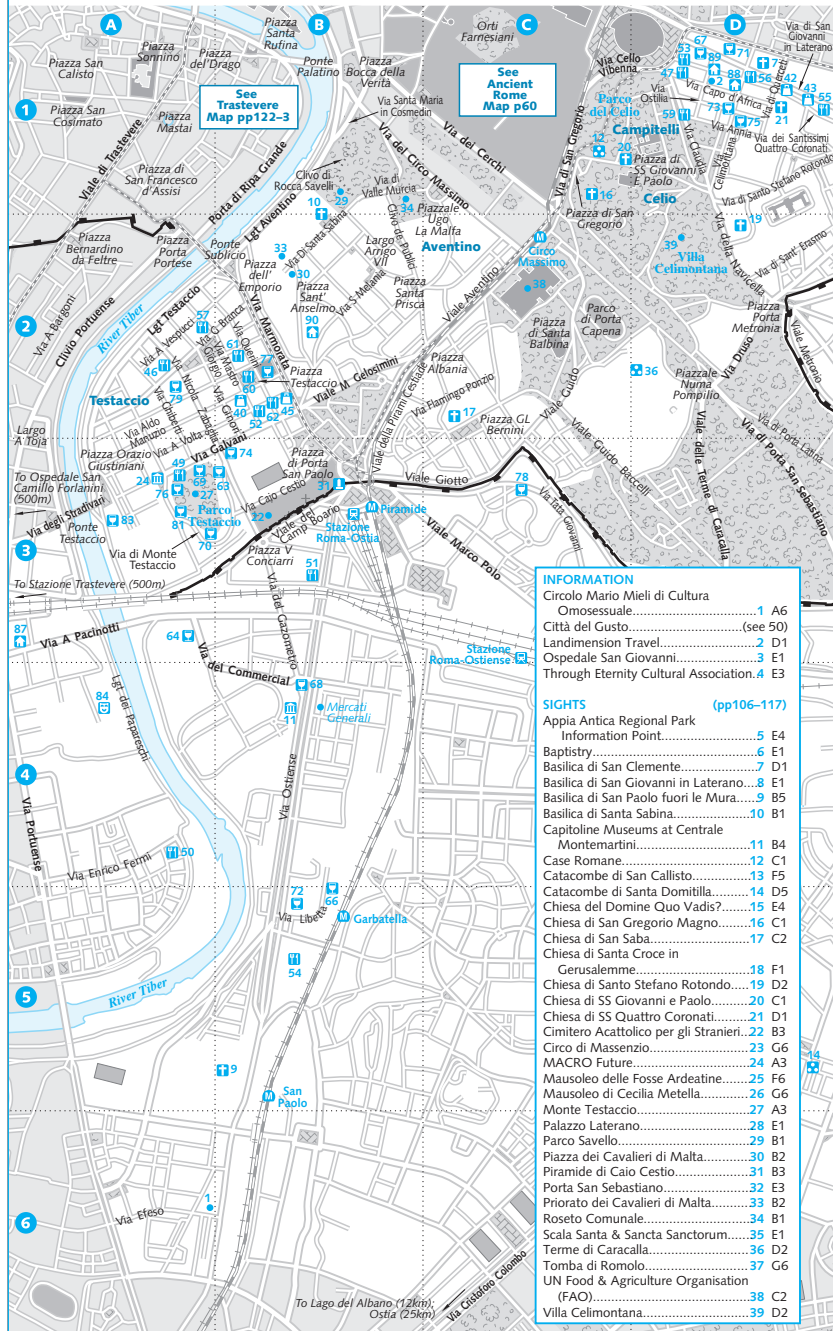
Map pp108–9  
% 06 701 47 69; Piazza di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme 12; h 7am–12.45pm & 2–7pm; g Piazza di Porta Maggiore  
One of Rome's seven pilgrimage churches, the Chiesa di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme was founded in 320 by St Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine. It takes its name from the Christian relics, including a piece of Christ's cross and St Thomas' doubting finger, that St Helena brought to Rome from Jerusalem. The relics are housed in a chapel at the end of the left-hand aisle.

The bell tower was added in 1144; the façade and oval vestibule in 1744. The frescoes in the apse date from the 15th century and represent the legends of the Cross.

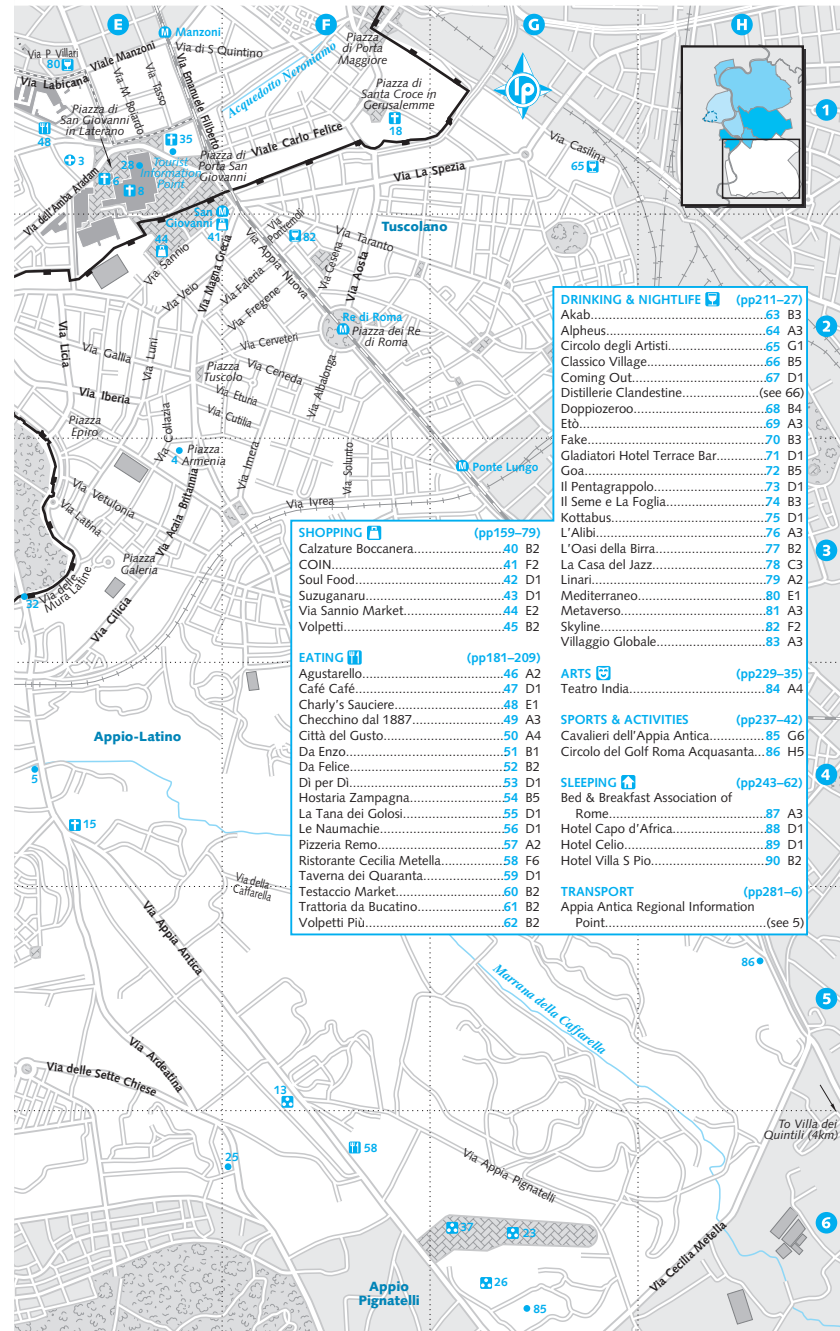
### CELIO

In imperial times the Celio (Caelian hill) was a smart residential district. Dominating the area were the Terme di Caracalla, the ruins of which are today one of Rome's most dramatic ancient sights. Nearby, and no less imposing (if considerably less appealing), is a huge white building on the corner of Viale delle Terme di Caracalla and Piazza di Porta Capena. This once housed Mussolini's Ministry

# SOUTHERN ROME



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of Italian Africa and is now the UN's Food & Agriculture Organisation (known locally as the FAO).

At the top of the hill, and away from the thundering roads, is the beautiful Villa Celimontana, a delightful park to get away from it all. In and around the park there are also a number of fascinating early Christian churches.

### TERME DI CARACALLA Map pp108–9

☎ 06 575 86 26; Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 52; admission incl Mausoleo di Cecilia Metella & Villa Quintili adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18–24yr €6/free/3; h 9am–7.15pm Tue–Sun Apr–Aug, 9am–7pm Sep, 9am–6.30pm Oct, 9am–5.30pm mid–end Mar, 9am–5pm mid–Feb–mid–Mar, 9am–4.30pm Nov–mid-Feb, 9am–2pm Mon year-round; m Circo Massimo; √  
Some of Rome's most awe-inspiring ruins, the Terme di Caracalla are a striking reminder of the massive scale on which the Roman emperors liked to build. Spread over 10 hectares, the ancient leisure centre could hold up to 1600 people and included richly decorated *caldaria* (hot rooms), a lukewarm *tepidarium*, a swimming pool, gymnasiums, libraries, shops and gardens. Between 6000 and 8000 people were thought to have used them every day. And while the free citizens splashed around in the pools, hundreds of slaves sweated in the 9.5km of underground tunnels, tending to the complex plumbing systems.

Begun by Antonius Caracalla and inaugurated in 217, the baths were used until 537, when the Visigoths smashed their way into Rome. Excavations in the 16th and 17th centuries unearthed important sculptures, many of which found their way into the Farnese family collection. Two enormous basins, for example, now serve as twin fountains in *Piazza Farnese* (p81).

Opera fans should note that spectacular outdoor performances are staged here in summer (see p233).

### CHIESA DI SAN GREGORIO MAGNO

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 700 82 27; Piazza di San Gregorio 1; h 8.30am–1pm & 3.30–7pm; m Circo Massimo  
Towering over Via di San Gregorio, this church stands on the site where Pope Gregory the Great is said to have dispatched St Augustine to convert the British to Christianity. Originally it was the pope's family

home but in 575 he converted it into a monastery. It was rebuilt in the 17th century and the interior was given a baroque face-lift a century later.

Inside, the stately 1st-century-BC marble throne in the *Cappella di San Gregorio*, at the end of the right aisle, is believed to have been St Gregory's personal perch.

However, it's the three chapels in the cypress trees to the left of the main church (where Gregory's original convent stood) that are the main attraction. On the right, the *Cappella di Santa Silvia*, dedicated to Gregory's mother, contains a fresco of angels by Guido Reni; the central chapel, the *Cappella di Sant'Andrea*, features various depictions of St Andrew, including frescoes by Domenichino and Guido Reni; and the third, the *Capella di Santa Barbara*, boasts a statue of St Gregory and frescoes illustrating St Augustine's mission.

### CHIESA DI SS GIOVANNI E PAOLO

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 700 57 45; Piazza di SS Giovanni e Paolo; h 8.30am–noon & 3.30–6pm Mon–Thu; m Colosseo or Circo Massimo  
Dedicated to St John and St Paul, this 4th-century church retains little of its original edifice – the façade is 12th-century and the brassy interior is 18th-century. The arches in the square are the remains of 3rd-century Roman shops.

More impressive than the church are the excavations of various *Case Romane* (Roman Houses; ☎ 06 704 54 544; www.caseromane.it; adult/under 12yr/12–18yr & over 65yr €6/free/4; h 10am–1pm & 3–6pm Thu–Mon) underneath. According to tradition this is where John and Paul lived before they were beheaded by Constantine II's anti-Christian successor, Julian, for refusing to serve in his court. There's no direct evidence for this, although research has revealed that the houses were used for Christian worship. There are more than 20 rooms, many of them richly decorated. To get to the excavations continue down Clivo di Scauro to the left of the church, and enter the door before the last arch on the right. Guided tours are available in English on request.

### VILLA CELIMONTANA Map pp108–9

h dawn–dusk; g Via della Navicella  
With its lawns and shady corners, this leafy walled park is a wonderful place to escape the crowds and enjoy a quiet picnic. Parents

with toddlers can let their loved ones loose at the popular playground. Famous for its annual jazz festival (see p143), the park is centred on a 16th-century villa that was once owned by the Mattei family but is now home to the Italian Geographical Society.

### CHIESA DI SANTO STEFANO

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 704 93 717; Via di Santo Stefano Rotondo 7; h 9am–noon & 4–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Sep, 9.30am–12.30pm & 3.30–5.30pm Tue–Sun Oct–Mar; g Via della Navicella

If, like films, religious art were ever to be certified, the startling 16th-century frescoes in this round church would carry an adults-only warning. Circling the outer of two rings of antique granite and marble columns, they graphically depict the various ways in which martyrs were killed in early Christendom. About them, Charles Dickens wrote: 'Such a panorama of horror and butchery no man could imagine in his sleep, though he were to eat a whole pig, raw, for supper.'

The church, not long reopened after years of restoration, dates to the late 5th century. Subsequent alterations were made in the 12th and 15th centuries.

### CHIESA DI SS QUATTRO CORONATI

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 704 75 427; Via dei Santissimi Quattro Coronati 20; h church & cloister 6.15am–8pm Mon–Sat, 6.45am–12.30pm & 3–7.30pm Sun, Cappella di san Silvestro 9.30am–noon & 4.30–6pm Mon–Sat, 9–10.40am & 4–5.45pm Sun; g or j Via Labicana  
This fortified convent is dedicated to four Christian sculptors who were killed by Diocletian for refusing to make a statue of a pagan god. The squat bell tower dates to the 9th century, although the main complex was built in the early 12th century. The most famous feature is the Cappella di San Silvestro and its well-preserved 13th-century frescoes of St Sylvester and Constantine. There is also a pretty early-13th-century cloister and garden off the northern aisle (ring the bell for admission).

### BASILICA DI SAN CLEMENTE Map pp108–9

☎ 06 774 00 21; www.basilicasanclemente.com; Via di San Giovanni in Laterano; admission church/excavations free/€5; h 9am–12.30pm & 3–6pm Mon–Sat, noon–6pm; m Colosseo  
A short walk up from the Colosseum, this fascinating basilica provides a vivid glimpse

into Rome's multilayered past. Through the courtyard, the 12th-century church at street level was built over a 4th-century church, which, in turn, was constructed over a 2nd-century pagan temple and 1st-century Roman house. Beneath all that are foundations dating to the Roman Republic.

In the medieval church, it's the stunning 12th-century apse mosaic that steals the limelight. It depicts the *Trionfo della Croce* (Triumph of the Cross), with 12 doves symbolising the apostles and a crowd of bystanders including the Madonna, St John, St John the Baptist and other saints. Renaissance frescoes in the chapel of St Catherine, by Masolino and his student Masaccio, recount scenes from the life of the saint, who was strapped to a wheel and tortured to death (hence the circular firework named after her). The high marble pulpit on the left was added when the new church was built.

The 4th-century church below, the *basilica inferiore*, was mostly destroyed by Norman invaders in 1084, but some faded 11th-century frescoes remain, illustrating the life of St Clement. According to legend, the 1st-century Pope Clement (who, it is believed, was born Jewish) was banished to the Crimea and forced to work in the mines. His preaching among the other prisoners caused the Romans to bind him to an anchor and throw him into the Black Sea. The water receded some time later, revealing a tomb containing Clement's body. Thereafter, the tomb would be revealed once a year, when the waters miraculously receded.

Descend further and you'll find yourself walking an ancient lane leading to the Roman house and dark temple of Mithras, which contains an altar depicting the god slaying a bull. Don't be alarmed by the sound of running water: it's an underground river flowing through a republican-era drain.

## VIA APPIA ANTICA & THE CATACOMBS

Heading southeast from Porta San Sebastiano, Via Appia Antica (the Appian Way), one of the world's oldest roads, was known to the Romans as the *regina viarum* (queen of roads). Named after Appius Claudius Caecus, who laid the first 90km section in 312 BC, it was extended in 190 BC to reach Brindisi, some 540km away on the southern Adriatic coast.

Flanked by some of the city's most exclusive private villas, as well as assorted Roman ruins, this is where Spartacus and 6000 of his slave rebels were crucified in 71 BC. But the road is best known for its catacombs – some 300km of underground tunnels used as burial chambers by the early Christians. You can't visit all 300km but three major catacombs (San Callisto, San Sebastiano and Santa Domitilla) are open for guided exploration.

A Roman law banned burials within the city walls and persecution left the early Christians little choice but to dig. They wrapped their dead in white sheets and placed them in rectangular niches carved into the tunnel walls, and then entombed them with simple marble slabs. Later the underground chambers doubled as clandestine meeting places.

In 313, when Constantine legalised Christianity, the Christians began to abandon the catacombs. Increasingly, they opted to bury their dead near the basilicas being built in the city. This became common practice under Theodosius, who made Christianity the state religion in 394. Further decline set in when marauding barbarians began ransacking the catacombs in the 5th century, forcing the popes to take the remaining relics, including the heads of St Peter and St Paul, inside the city walls. The catacombs were abandoned and largely forgotten until a 16th-century farmer stuck his hoe into a 'world of the dead'.

From the mid-19th century onwards, scholars of Christian archaeology began a programme of scientific research, uncovering more than 30 catacombs in the Rome area.

If you're planning on blitzing the area think about buying the Appia Antica Card, a combination ticket for several of the roadside sights – see p288 for details. Further information is available at the [Appia Antica Regional Park Information Point](#) (☎ 06 513 53 16; www.parcoappiaantica.org; Via Appia Antica 58-60; 19.30am-5.30pm summer, 9.30am-4.30pm winter), where you can also buy a map of the park (€1) and hire bikes (per hour/day €3/10). Every first Sunday of the month from March till June and September to November there is a free guided tour by bike (bike hire not included) into the Valle della Caffarella with a nature guide. This leaves from the office at 10.30am and takes between two and three hours.

On Sundays a long section of the road is closed to traffic, but be warned that this is when locals and tourists arrive by the coachload. On weekdays there are fewer tourists, but walking or cycling along the road can be

dangerous due to the number of cars zooming past.

To get to Via Appia Antica catch bus 218 from Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano, bus 660 from the Colli Albani stop on metro line A, or bus 118 from the Piramide stop on metro line B. Alternatively, the Archeobus (p294) departs from Termini every 40 minutes.

### BASILICA & CATACOMBE DI SAN SEBASTIANO Map pp108-9

☎ 06 785 03 50; Via Appia Antica 136; basilica free, catacombs adult/under 7yr/7-15yr €5/free/3; 19.30am-7pm daily, catacombs 8.30am-noon & 2.30-5.30pm Mon-Sat, closed mid-Nov-mid-Dec; ☒ Via Appia Antica

Before you duck into the catacombs beneath the church, take a moment to explore the interesting 4th-century basilica on top. Much altered over the years, it was built over the catacombs that were used to safeguard the remains of St Peter and St Paul during the persecutory reign of Vespasian. Its name, however, is a dedication to St Sebastian, who was martyred and buried here in the late 3rd century. In the [Capella delle Reliquie](#), in the right-hand nave, is one of the arrows used to kill the saint and the column to which he was tied. On the other side of the church you'll find a marble slab with the imprints of Jesus' footprints. (For the whole story see Chiesa del Domine Quo Vadis?, p114).

The [Catacombe di San Sebastiano](#) were the first catacombs to be so called, the name deriving from the Greek *kata* (near) and *kymbas* (cavity), because they were located near a cave. Over the centuries this catacomb was one of only three to remain open and receive pilgrims. The first level is now almost completely destroyed, but frescoes, stucco work and epigraphs can be seen on the 2nd level. There are also three perfectly preserved mausoleums and a plastered wall with hundreds of invocations to Peter and Paul, engraved by worshippers in the 3rd and 4th centuries.

### CIRCO DI MASSENZIO Map pp108-9

☎ 06 780 13 24; Via Appia Antica 153; adult/child €2.60/1.60; 19.30am-5pm Tue-Sun; ☒ Via Appia Antica

The Circo di Massenzio is Rome's best-preserved ancient racetrack – you can still make out the starting stalls used for chariot races. The 10,000-seat arena was built

by Maxentius around 309, but it wasn't completed before he died (in the battle of Ponte Milvio in 312) and he never got to see a race here.

Above the arena are the unexcavated ruins of Maxentius' imperial residence, most of which are covered by weeds. Near the racetrack is the [Tomba di Romolo](#) (Tomb of Romulus), built by Maxentius for his young son Romulus. The huge mausoleum was originally crowned with a large dome and had a portico similar to the Pantheon's. It was surrounded on all sides by an imposing colonnade measuring 107m by 121m, in part still visible. The tomb is indefinitely closed for restoration.

### MAUSOLEO DI CECILIA METELLA

Map pp108-9

☎ 06 780 24 65; Via Appia Antica 161; admission €2, incl Terme di Caracalla & Villa Quintili adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €6/free/3; 19.30am-7.15pm Apr-Aug, 9am-7pm Sep, 9am-6.30pm Oct, 9am-5.30pm mid-end Mar, 9am-5pm mid-Feb-mid-Mar, 9am-4.30pm Nov-mid-Feb, closed Mon year-round; ☒ Via Appia Antica Difficult to miss, this massive drum of a mausoleum, measuring 11m in height and 30m in diameter, encloses a burial chamber (built for the daughter of Quintus Metellus Creticus) that is now roofless. The walls are made of travertine and the rather sorry-looking interior is decorated with a sculpted frieze featuring Gaelic shields, ox skulls and festoons. In the 14th century it was converted into a fort by the Caetani family, who used to threaten passing traffic into paying a toll.

Beyond the tomb is a picturesque section of the actual ancient road, excavated in the mid-19th century.

### VILLA DEI QUINTILI Map pp108-9

☎ 06 718 24 85; access from Via Appia Nuova 1092; admission €4, incl Terme di Caracalla & Mausoleo di Cecilia Metella adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €6/free/3; 19.30am-7.15pm Apr-Aug, 9am-7pm Sep, 9am-6.30pm Oct, 9am-5.30pm mid-end Mar, 9am-5pm mid-Feb-mid-Mar, 9am-4.30pm Nov-mid-Feb, closed Mon year-round; ☒ Via Appia Nuova

The splendid Villa dei Quintili is a wonderfully sited 2nd-century-AD villa built by two brothers who were consuls under Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Alas, the splendour of the villa was to be the brothers' downfall – in

a fit of jealousy, Emperor Commodus had them both killed, taking over the villa for himself. The highlight is the well-preserved baths complex with a pool, *caldarium* (hot room) and *frigidarium* (cold room). There's also a small display of archaeological bits and bobs found in the vicinity.

### CATACOMBE DI SAN CALLISTO

Map pp108-9

☎ 06 513 01 580; Via Appia Antica 110; www.catacombe.roma.it; adult/under 6yr/6-15yr €5/free/3; 19.30am-noon & 2-5pm Thu-Tue, closed Feb; ☒ Via Appia Antica

These are the largest, most famous and busiest of Rome's catacombs. Founded at the end of the 2nd century and named after Pope Calixtus I, who was killed in Trastevere in 222, they became the official cemetery of the newly established Roman Church. In the 20km of tunnels explored to date, archaeologists have found the sepulchres of some 500,000 people and the tombs of seven popes who were martyred in the 3rd century. The martyred patron saint of music, St Cecilia, was also buried here, although her body was later removed to the Basilica di Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.

### MAUSOLEO DELLE FOSSE ARDEATINE

Map pp108-9

☎ 06 513 67 42; Via Ardeatina 174; admission free; 19.30am-3.30pm Mon-Fri, 8.15am-4.45pm Sat & Sun; ☒ Via Appia Antica

A sobering reminder of the horrors of war, this moving mausoleum is dedicated to the victims of Rome's worst WWII atrocity.

## top picks

### FOR CHILDREN

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- Villa Borghese (p153)
- Bioparco (p153)
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- Museo della Civiltà Romana (p118)
- Catacombe di San Callisto (above)
- Capuchin Cemetery (p100)
- Museo Nazionale delle Paste Alimentari (p98)
- Museo delle Cere (p97)
- Explora – Museo dei Bambini di Roma (p155)

Buried here, outside the Ardeatine Caves, are 335 Italians shot by the Nazis on 24 March 1944. The prisoners, chosen at random, were killed in reprisal for a partisan attack. Following the massacre, the Germans used mines to explode sections of the caves and bury the bodies. After the war, the bodies were exhumed, identified and reburied in a mass grave at the site, now marked by a huge concrete slab and sculptures.

The German SS commander, Erich Priebke, who has admitted to killing at least two of the victims himself, was tried and convicted to life imprisonment in 1996. He is currently serving the sentence under house arrest in Rome.

At the site there is also a tiny museum dedicated to the Italian resistance to the German occupation.

### CATACOMBE DI SANTA DOMITILLA

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 511 03 42; [www.catacombe.domitilla.it](http://www.catacombe.domitilla.it); Via delle Sette Chiese 283; adult/under 6yr/6–15yr €5/free/3; ⌚ 9am–noon & 2–5pm Wed–Mon, closed Jan; ☒ Via Appia Antica

Among Rome's largest and oldest, these catacombs stretch for about 17km. They were established on the private burial ground of Flavia Domitilla, niece of Emperor Domitian and a member of the wealthy Flavian family. They contain Christian wall paintings and the underground Chiesa di SS Nereus e Achilleus, a 4th-century church dedicated to two Roman soldiers who were martyred by Diocletian.

### CHIESA DEL DOMINE QUO VADIS?

Map pp108–9

Via Appia Antica 51; ⌚ 7.30am–12.30pm & 2.30–6.30pm Thu–Tue; ☒ Via Appia Antica

Near the Appia Antica information office, this pint-sized church marks the place where St Peter, while fleeing Rome, met a vision of Jesus going the other way. Peter asked: 'Domine, quo vadis?' ('Lord, where are you going?'). When Jesus replied that he was going to Rome to be crucified for a second time, Peter decided to join him and returned to the city, where he was promptly arrested and executed. In the centre of the aisle there are copies of two holy footprints supposed to belong to Christ. The originals are up the road in the [Basilica di San Sebastiano](#) (p112).

### PORTA SAN SEBASTIANO

Map pp108–9  
☎ 06 704 75 284; Via di Porta San Sebastiano; admission €2.60; ⌚ 9am–2pm Tue–Sun; ☒ Porta San Sebastiano

Marking the start of Via Appia Antica, the 5th-century Porta San Sebastiano is the largest of the city gates in the Aurelian Wall. Originally it was known as Porta Appia but took on its current name in honour of the thousands of pilgrims who passed under it on their way to the [Catacombe di San Sebastiano](#) (p112). Inside is a little museum illustrating the history of the wall.

## AVENTINO & TESTACCIO

Southwest of the Circo Massimo, the peaceful Aventino is one of Rome's most sought-after residential areas. It offers sweeping panoramas over the River Tiber to St Peter's, and a quiet contemplative air. The most atmospheric street is Via di Santa Sabina, where you'll find a number of medieval churches, including the magnificent Basilica di Santa Sabina, and a beautiful walled orange garden, the Parco Savello.

The nicest way to reach the Aventino is to take the pedestrian-only Clivo di Rocca Savelli from Via Santa Maria in Cosmedin by the river. At the top turn right for Via di Santa Sabina or left for Via di Valle Murcia, which takes you past the [Roseto Comunale](#) (⌚ 8am–7.30pm), a beautiful public rose garden, down to Piazzale Ugo La Malfa and the Circo Massimo.

At the foot of the Aventino hill, between Via Marmorata and the River Tiber, Testaccio is considered one of the city's most authentic areas, its inhabitants a kind of Roman cockney. Traditionally working-class, it's kept much of its earthy character – the city's best offal (a Roman speciality) restaurants are here as is one of the city's liveliest markets – despite the onslaught of clubs and pubs that have transformed it into a nightlife mecca (see p222).

The district is built around [Monte Testaccio](#) (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 671 03 819; Via Galvani; ⌚ by appointment), a mound made of smashed amphorae. Testaccio was Rome's river port from the 2nd century BC to the 3rd century AD – supplies of wine, oil and grain were transported from Roman colonies to the city via Ostia and the Tiber. Goods were transported in huge terracotta amphorae which, once emptied, were dumped in the river. When the Tiber became almost unnavigable as a consequence, the pots were smashed and the

pieces stacked methodically in a pile which over time grew into a large hill. Highlights include a strange pyramid in the middle of a chaotic traffic junction, and a serene cemetery.

### BASILICA DI SANTA SABINA

Map pp108–9  
☎ 06 5 79 41; Piazza Pietro d'Iliria 1; ⌚ 6.30am–12.45pm & 3–7pm; ☒ Lungotevere Aventino

One of Rome's most appealing churches, this atmospheric basilica is the jewel in the Aventino.

Returned to its original look in an early-20th-century restoration, the basilica dates to 422, when it was founded by Peter of Illyria. It was subsequently added to in the 9th century and again in 1216, just before it was given to the newly founded Dominican order. In the floor of the nave you'll see the mosaic tombstone of Muñoz de Zamora, one of the order's founding fathers.

Despite these alterations the original cypress-wood doors remain intact; they're to the far left as you stand under the 15th-century portico. They feature 18 carved panels depicting biblical events, including one of the oldest Crucifixion scenes in existence. It depicts Jesus and the two thieves but, interestingly, not their crosses. It's a bit difficult to make out the subjects in the dusky portico, but clear photographs are posted near the entrance.

The three naves in the solemn interior are separated by 24 Corinthian columns, which support an arcade decorated with a red-and-green frieze in *opus sectile* (that is, made of marble cut to shape, as opposed to mosaic, which is composed of pieces of marble of the same size and shape). The columns themselves are also of interest. They were made specifically for the church, rather than plundered from the city's ruins as was the accepted custom in the 5th century, and are Rome's first example of columns designed to support arches. Before that, horizontal beams called architraves were used.

Light streams into the echoing interior from high nave windows added in the 9th century. Also dating to the 9th century are the carved choir, pulpit and bishop's throne. The fresco in the apse was painted in the 19th century.

Behind the church is a garden, where St Dominic is said to have planted some orange trees, and a meditative 13th-century cloister.

### PARCO SAVELLO

Map pp108–9

Via di Santa Sabina; ⌚ dawn–dusk; ☒ Lungotevere Aventino

Known to Romans as the Giardino degli Aranci (Orange Garden), this pocket-sized perfumed park is a romantic haven. If you can, grab a perch at the small panoramic terrace and watch the sun set over the Tiber and, beyond, Trastevere and the Vatican. In summer, a stage is sometimes set up among the orange trees and outdoor performances are held.

### PIAZZA DEI CAVALIERI DI MALTA

Map pp108–9

Via di Santa Sabina; ☒ Lungotevere Aventino  
At the southern end of Via di Santa Sabina, this peaceful little square takes its name from the Cavalieri di Malta (Knights of Malta), who have their Roman headquarters here, in the [Priorato dei Cavalieri di Malta](#). Although it's closed to the public, the priory offers one of Rome's most charming views: look through the keyhole and you'll see the dome of St Peter's perfectly aligned at the end of a hedge-lined avenue.

An 18th-century masterpiece, the priory is the only architectural work of Venetian Giovanni Battista Piranesi, an artist better known for his etchings and engravings of Roman ruins.

The Knights of Malta were founded in the 12th century in Rhodes and later spread to Malta to protect pilgrims en route to the Holy Land. The villa is the residence of the grand master of the Knights of Malta and has, in the past, served as the order's embassy to Italy and the Holy See.

### CHIESA DI SAN SABA

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 574 33 52; Via di San Saba; ⌚ 8am–noon & 4–7pm; ☒ j Viale Aventino

On the other side of the Aventino, this picturesque church dates from the 10th century, although it has been substantially rebuilt. Cosmati marble work from the 13th century decorates the main door and floor, and on the left-hand nave there's a fresco of three naked girls in bed. Legend has it that these girls were saved from a life of prostitution by St Nicholas, who threw three stockings filled with gold up to their bedroom. St Nicholas is better known as Santa Claus and this story is the origin of the Christmas stocking tradition.





and designed by Studio BBPR; Arnaldo Foschini's monumental **Chiesa Santi Pietro e Paolo** (Church of St Peter & Paul; [Map p117](#); Piazzale Santi Pietro e Paolo), built in 1938–55; and Nervi and Vitellozzi's futuristic **Palazzetto dello Sport** ([Map p117](#); Piazza dello Sport), built in 1958 and now functioning as the Palalottomatica, a venue for concerts and sport. Widely acknowledged as the second-most important building after the Palazzo della Civiltà del Lavoro is the wonderful **Palazzo dei Congressi** (Congress Centre; [Map p117](#); Piazza JF Kennedy), built in 1938–54 and designed by Adalberto Libera.

For online information, Italian speakers can log onto [www.romaeur.it](http://www.romaeur.it). EUR is at the end of metro line B.

## MUSEO DELLA CIVILTÀ ROMANA

[Map p117](#)

☎ 06 592 60 41; Piazza G Agnelli 10; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-24yr €6.50/free/4.50, incl Museo Astronomico & planetarium €8.50/free/6.50; ⌚ 9am-2pm Tue-Sat, 9am-1.30pm Sun; ₪ EUR Fermi; √

A proven kid-pleaser, EUR's most impressive museum was founded by Mussolini in 1937 to glorify imperial Rome. A hulking place with huge echoing halls, it contains a number of intriguing displays. The best is a giant-scale re-creation of 4th-century Rome, but there are also detailed models of the city's main buildings, an absorbing cross section of the Colosseum and casts of the reliefs on the **Colonna di Traiano** ([p65](#)). For something completely different, learn about the night sky at the on-site **Museo Astronomico** (Astronomy Museum; ⌚ 06 820 59 127; adult/child €6.50/4.40; ⌚ 9am-2pm Tue-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat & Sun), complete with its own planetarium. You'll need to book for the planetarium shows.

## MUSEO DELLE ARTI E TRADIZIONI POPOLARI

[Map p117](#)

☎ 06 592 61 48; Piazza Marconi 8; admission €4; ⌚ 9am-4pm Tue-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat & Sun; ₪ EUR Palasport

You might well have to wake up the ticket seller at this sleepy museum dedicated to folk art and rural tradition. Not one of Rome's great museums, it's nevertheless more interesting than it sounds, with an eclectic collection of agricultural and artisan tools, clothing, musical instruments and a room full of carnival costumes and artefacts.

## SOUTHERN ROME

### Walking Tour

**1 Mausoleo di Cecilia Metella** A short walk from the bus stop at the intersection of Via Cecilia Metella and Via Appia Antica brings you to this imposing 1st-century-BC mausoleum ([p113](#)). Built for the daughter of Quintus Metellus Creticus, it was incorporated into the castle of the Caetani family in the early 14th century.

**2 Circo di Massenzio** In the 4th century AD this open area of rolling grass and towering pine trees was a spectacular 10,000-seat arena ([p112](#)) with a chariot racetrack. In the same complex are the ruins of the Tomba di Romolo,

built by Maxentius for his son, and the remains of Maxentius' imperial palace.

**3 Basilica & Catacombe di San Sebastiano** The 4th-century basilica ([p112](#)) was built over the catacombs where the apostles Peter and Paul were originally buried, and on the spot where St Sebastian was martyred. The catacombs are the main attraction but the basilica's worth a quick look, if for nothing else than to see a marble imprint of Jesus' foot.

**4 Mausoleo delle Fosse Ardeatine** This is a moving monument ([p113](#)) to the victims of Italy's worst WWII atrocity – on 24 March 1944, 335 people were shot here by the Nazis in reprisal for a partisan attack. To get here, go left down Via delle Sette Chiese, then left into Via Ardeatina and after about 100m you'll see the mausoleum on your right.

**5 Cecilia Metella** Grab a table under the vine canopy ([p201](#)) and settle down to a delicious lunch of creative Italian food before the second leg of the tour.

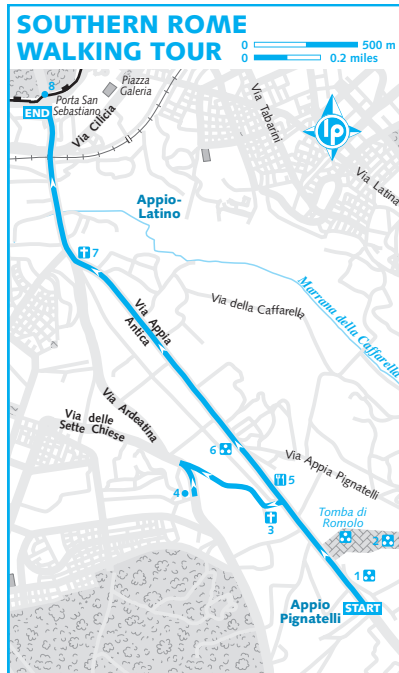
**6 Catacombe di San Callisto** If you're doing this walk on a Sunday you'll find the Catacombe di San Sebastiano closed. Don't worry, though, as these, Rome's largest, most famous, and busiest catacombs ([p113](#)), are a fine alternative. To date archaeologists have unearthed some 500,000 bodies, including seven popes, in 20km of tunnels.

**7 Chiesa del Domine Quo Vadis?** It was here that St Peter is supposed to have met a vision of Jesus and asked '*Domine, quo vadis?*' ('Lord, where are you going?'). Note that to get to this tiny church ([p114](#)) you have to walk against the traffic along a section of road that has no pavement.

**8 Porta San Sebastiano** About 700m beyond the Chiesa del Domine Quo Vadis?, this 5th-century city gate ([p114](#)) marks the start (or end – all roads lead *to* Rome, not *from* it) of Via Appia Antica. The largest and most impressive of the gates in the Aurelian Wall, it houses a small museum illustrating the history of the wall.

### WALK FACTS

**Start** Corner of Via Appia Antica and Via Cecilia Metella (M Colli Albani, then G 660 to its final stop)  
**End** Porta San Sebastiano (G 118, 218 or 714 to M Piramide)  
**Distance** 4.2km  
**Duration** Three hours  
**Fuel stop** Cecilia Metella ([p201](#))



# TRASTEVERE

Drinking & Nightlife p225; Eating p203; Shopping p176; Sleeping p259

Trastevere is one of central Rome's most vivacious neighbourhoods, an outdoor circus of ochre *palazzi*, ivy-clad façades and photogenic lanes, peopled by a bohemian cast of tourists, travellers, students and street sellers. In the midst of the daily mayhem, locals make themselves heard by shouting jokes at each other in thick *romanesco*, the Roman dialect.

## top picks

### TRASTEVERE

- Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere (opposite)
- Villa Farnesina (p124)
- Tempietto di Bramante & Chiesa di San Pietro in Montorio (p126)
- Orto Botanico (p125)
- Basilica di Santa Cecilia in Trastevere (below)

ing. Accommodation in the area is increasingly being targeted by wealthy foreigners and prices are rising. Many old-timers are struggling to keep up with sky-high rents and some have been forced to call it a day and move to the cheaper suburbs.

To a visitor, however, the area is a delight. There aren't a huge number of must-see sights, at least not compared with other parts of the city, but the Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere, on the lively piazza of the same name, is one of Rome's most charming churches and Villa Farnesina boasts some superb frescoes by Raphael. To the east, on the other, quieter, side of Viale di Trastevere, the Basilica di Santa Cecilia is the last resting place of Santa Cecilia, the patron saint of music.

But it's after dark that Trastevere really comes into its own. Its narrow alleyways heave late into the night as Romans and tourists flock to the huge number of pizzerias, trattorias, bars and cafés that pepper its atmospheric lanes.

You can reach Trastevere on foot by crossing the Ponte Sisto footbridge from the *centro storico*, or by taking tram 8 from Largo di Torre Argentina. From Termini, bus H runs to Viale di Trastevere.

## EAST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

### BASILICA DI SANTA CECILIA IN TRASTEVERE

Map pp122–3  
% 06 589 92 89; Piazza di Santa Cecilia;  
h 9.30am–12.30pm & 4–7pm; G or j Viale di Trastevere

The last resting place of St Cecilia, the patron saint of music, this much-altered basilica stands on the site of an earlier 5th-century church, itself built over the house where St Cecilia lived and died in 230.

Like many Christian saints, Cecilia came to a sticky end. Her executioners first tried to scald her to death by locking her in the *caldarium* of the baths in her own house. She emerged unscathed and was then beheaded, but the executioner did such a bad job that she took three days to die. Legend

The area was originally a working-class district separated from the city proper by the River Tiber – hence its name, a derivation of the Latin *trans Tiberium*, meaning over the Tiber. However, as the city grew Trastevere was slowly enveloped by urban development and it is today very much a part of Rome's cityscape. Despite this, Trastevere-born Romans (known as *trasteverini*) like to think of themselves as being different, as being *noantri* (we others), and even have their own festival (p147) to prove it.

But times change and Trastevere is changing. Accommodation in the area is increasingly being targeted by wealthy foreigners and prices are rising. Many old-timers are struggling to keep up with sky-high rents and some have been forced to call it a day and move to the cheaper suburbs.

To a visitor, however, the area is a delight. There aren't a huge number of must-see sights, at least not compared with other parts of the city, but the Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere, on the lively piazza of the same name, is one of Rome's most charming churches and Villa Farnesina boasts some superb frescoes by Raphael. To the east, on the other, quieter, side of Viale di Trastevere, the Basilica di Santa Cecilia is the last resting place of Santa Cecilia, the patron saint of music.

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has it that she sang as she was dying; for this reason she became the patron saint of music and musicians. When her tomb was opened in 1599, the body was miraculously intact, enabling Stefano Maderno to use it as a model for his delicate statue beneath the altar.

In the right-hand nave the *Cappella del Caldarium* marks the spot where the saint was allegedly tortured. There are two works by Guido Reni here. But more than these, it's the spectacular 13th-century *fresco* (admission €2; h 10–11.30am Tue & Thu, 11.30am–noon Sun) in the nun's choir that's the church's artistic glory. Although there are only fragments remaining, you can see enough of Pietro Cavallini's *Giudizio Universale* (Last Judgment) to realise what an outstanding work it must once have been.

Beneath the church, via the elaborately decorated *crypt* (admission €2.50; h 9.30am–noon & 4–7pm), you can visit the excavations of several Roman houses, one of which might have belonged to St Cecilia.

### CHIESA DI SAN FRANCESCO D'ASSISI A RIPA

Map pp122–3  
% 06 581 90 20; Piazza San Francesco d'Assisi 88;  
h 7am–1pm & 4–7.30pm Mon–Fri, 7am–noon & 4–7pm Sat & Sun; G or j Viale di Trastevere  
The overriding reason to visit this otherwise unexceptional church is to gasp at one of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's most daring works. In the fourth chapel on the left, the *Beata Ludovica Albertoni* (Blessed Ludovica Albertoni; 1674) is a work of highly charged sexual ambiguity showing Ludovica, a Franciscan nun, in a state of rapture as she reclines, eyes shut, mouth open, one hand touching her breast. The innuendo is, if anything, more obvious than in *Santa Teresa trafitta dall'amore di Dio* (Ecstasy of St Teresa) in the Chiesa di Santa Maria della Vittoria (p102).

St Francis of Assisi is said to have stayed in the church for a period in the 13th century and you can still see the rock that he used as a pillow.

## WEST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

### BASILICA DI SANTA MARIA IN TRASTEVERE

Map pp122–3  
% 06 581 48 02; Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere;  
h 7.30am–12.30pm & 3.30–7.30pm; G or j Viale di Trastevere

Discreet is not an adjective you can apply to many Roman churches, but this ravishing basilica is just that. At least it is from the outside, where its portico, embedded with fragments of ancient and medieval sculpture, inscriptions and sarcophagi, blends in with the other buildings on Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere.

Said to be the oldest church dedicated to the Virgin Mary in Rome, it was probably established by Pope Calixtus in the early 3rd century and subsequently rebuilt by Julius I in 337. Legend has it that it was built over the site where, in 38 BC, a miraculous fountain of pure oil sprang from the ground.

The church's present structure was built in 1138 by Innocent II and features a Romanesque façade, with a stunning 12th-century mosaic, and a Romanesque bell tower (whose bells ring every 15 minutes).

The portico came later, added by Carlo Fontana in 1702.

Inside it's the glittering 12th-century gold mosaics in the apse and on the triumphal arch that are the main drawcard. At the top of the arch are the symbols and names of the four evangelists; on either side are Isaiah and Jeremiah, each with an image of a caged bird representing Christ imprisoned by the sins of humankind. In the centre of the apse are the signs of the zodiac, beneath which is a dazzling depiction of Christ and his mother flanked by various saints and, on the far left, Pope Innocent II holding a model of the church. Below this is a series of six mosaics by Pietro Cavallini (c 1291) illustrating the life of the Virgin.

Other features to note include the 21 difficult-to-miss Roman columns, some of which came from the *Terme di Caracalla* (p110); the wooden ceiling designed in 1617 by Domenichino, who also painted the central panel depicting the Assumption of the Virgin; and, on the right of the altar, a beautiful Cosmati paschal candlestick, placed on the exact spot where the oil fountain is said to have sprung.

The last chapel on the left-hand side, the *Cappella Avila*, is also worth a quick look for its stunning dome. Antonio Gherardi's clever 1680 design depicts four angels holding the circular base of a large lantern whose columns rise to give the effect of a second cupola within a larger outer dome.

### PIAZZA SANTA MARIA IN TRASTEVERE

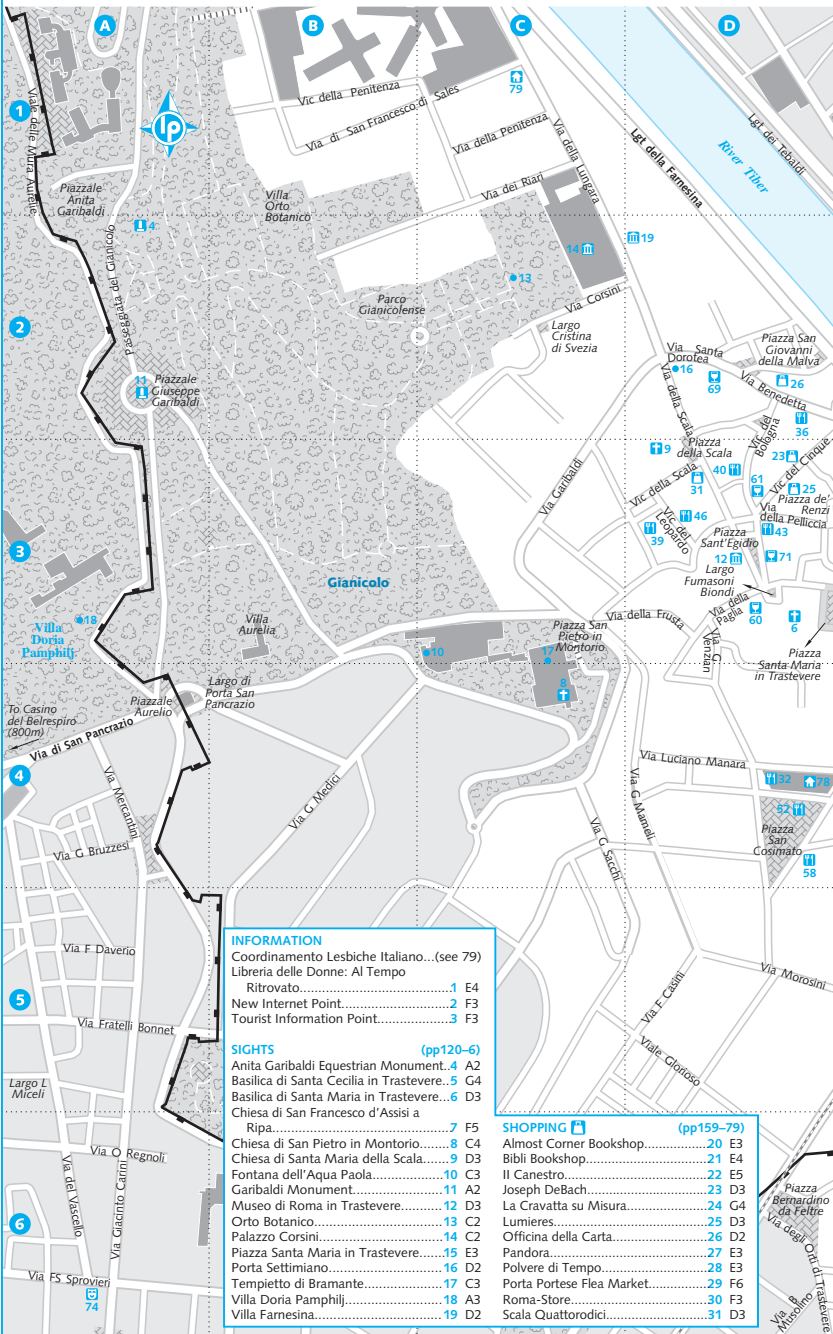
Map pp122–3  
G or j Viale di Trastevere  
Trastevere's focal square is a prime people-watching spot. By day it's full of mums with strollers, chatting locals and guidebook-toting tourists; by night it's the domain of foreign students getting their first taste of *la dolce vita* and young Romans out for a good time.

The fountain in the centre of the square is of Roman origin and was restored by Carlo Fontana in 1692.

### MUSEO DI ROMA IN TRASTEVERE

Map pp122–3  
% 06 820 59 127; Piazza Sant'Egidio 1b; adult/child €3/1.50; h 10am–8pm Tue–Sun; G or j Viale di Trastevere  
Trastevere's traditions and folklore are celebrated at this small museum. The 1st-floor

# TRASTEVERE



### INFORMATION

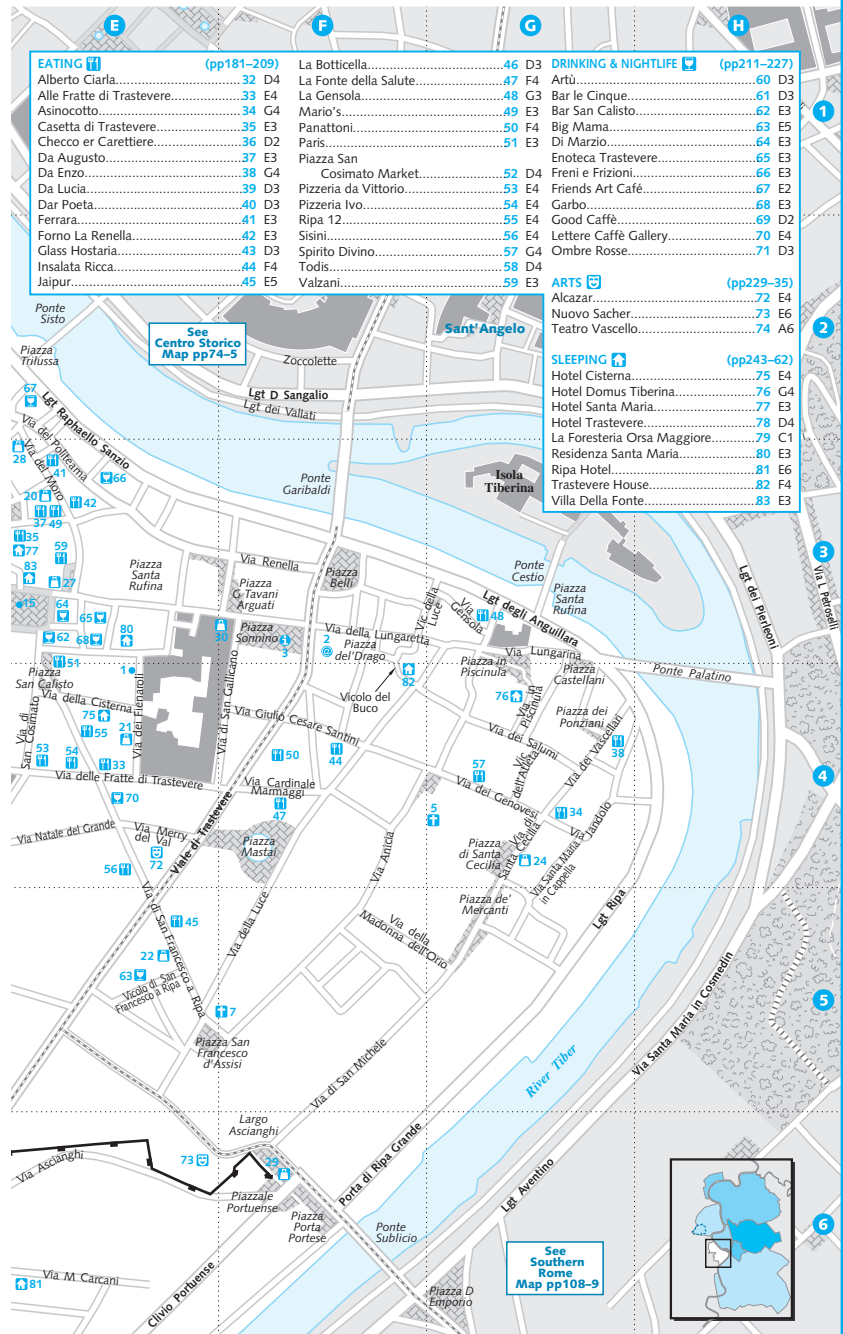
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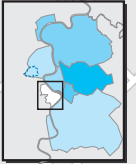
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See Southern Rome Map pp108-9



permanent collection comprises several re-creations of everyday scenes from 19th-century Trastevere and a small selection of watercolours depicting communal life. It's all very kitsch but the kids might enjoy it and it's been done well. The downstairs rooms are often used to stage temporary exhibitions.

### CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA SCALA [Map pp122-3](#)

☎ 06 580 62 33; Piazza della Scala 23; h 7am-12.30pm & 3.30-7pm; ☪ Lungotevere della Farnesina (Piazza Trilussa)

The Chiesa di Santa Maria della Scala dates from the building boom at the turn of the 17th century. The big white façade hides a gloriously baroque interior with a particularly flamboyant marble altar. Next door, the [Farmacia di Santa Maria della Scala](#), which supplied medicine to the popes in the 18th century, is still run by monks from the adjacent Carmelite monastery. The monks are renowned for having commissioned, and then rejected, Caravaggio's *Il Transito della Vergine* (Transition of the Virgin), now in the Louvre (Paris).

### PORTA SETTIMIANA [Map pp122-3](#)

☪ Lungotevere della Farnesina (Piazza Trilussa) Marking the start of Via della Lungara, the 16th-century road that connects Trastevere with the Borgo, Porta Settimiana was built in 1498 by Pope Alexander VI over a small passageway in the Aurelian Wall. It was later rebuilt by Pope Pius VI in 1798.

From Porta Settimiana, Via Santa Dorotea leads to Piazza Trilussa, a popular evening hang-out, and Ponte Sisto, a pretty foot-bridge that connects with the *centro storico*.

### VILLA FARNESINA [Map pp122-3](#)

☎ 06 680 27 268; Via della Lungara 230; adult/under 14yr & over 65yr/14-18yr €5/free/4; h 9am-1pm Mon-Sat; ☪ Lungotevere della Farnesina (Piazza Trilussa)

Anyone with the remotest interest in Renaissance art should find a couple of hours to visit this extraordinary 16th-century villa. Commissioned by wealthy banker Agostino Chigi and built by the Siennese architect Baldassare Peruzzi between 1508 and 1511, it boasts some awe-inspiring decoration, with frescoes by Sebastiano del Piombo, Raphael and Peruzzi. In 1577 the Farnese family bought the villa from the bankrupt

Chigi and modestly renamed it in honour of themselves.

The most famous frescoes are in the Loggia of Cupid and Psyche on the ground floor. Although they are generally attributed to Raphael, the great man did little more than design the frescoes for his assistants to paint. Apparently, he was so besotted with his mistress, who worked in a nearby bakery, that he couldn't concentrate on his work. He did, however, find time to paint the famous *Trionfo di Galatea* (Triumph of Galatea) in the room of the same name.

On the 1st floor it is Peruzzi's dazzling frescoes in the Salone delle Prospettive that stand out. They are a superb illusionary perspective of a colonnade and panorama of 16th-century Rome.

The building also houses the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe (National Print Collection), part of the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica (National Institute of Graphics), which can be consulted by scholars with permission.

### GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE ANTICA DI PALAZZO CORSINI [Map pp122-3](#)

☎ 06 688 02 323; www.galleriaborghese.it; Via della Lungara 10; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-25yr €4/free/2; h 8.30am-1.30pm Tue-Sun; ☪ Lungotevere della Farnesina (Piazza Trilussa) Originally known as Palazzo Riario after Cardinal Domenico Riario, who commissioned it in 1510, Palazzo Corsini owes its current look to a 1736 makeover by Ferdinando Fuga. Over the years a number of esteemed guests have stayed here – Michelangelo, Erasmus and Bramante among them – but the *palazzo* is most readily associated with Queen Christina of Sweden, who took up residency in 1662. A great patron of the arts, Christina was a legendary party-goer and is said to have entertained a steady stream of male and female lovers in her private apartments.

Today the *palazzo* houses part of Italy's national art collection (the rest is in [Palazzo Barberini](#), p100). Many of the 16th- and 17th-century paintings belonged to the Corsini family collection, which, if not Rome's greatest, was still a substantial body of work. Highlights are Van Dyck's superb *Madonna della Paglia* (Madonna of the Straw) in Room 1, Murillo's *Madonna col bambino* (Madonna and Child) next door in Room 2, and a typically haunting canvas by

Caravaggio, *San Giovanni Battista* (St John the Baptist), in Room 3. The paintings of the Bologna school in Room 7 also stand out, with works by Guido Reni, Agostino and Annibale Carracci, Giovanni Lanfranco and Guercino.

You can also visit Queen Christina's richly frescoed bedroom, scene of so much royal revelry.

## GIANICOLO

Rising above Trastevere, the Gianicolo (Janiculum hill) is not one of Rome's original seven hills and was never part of the ancient city. A lovely, leafy area of gardens and spectacular views, it's an ideal spot for recharging your batteries after the energy-sapping streets below.

In 1849 it was the scene of one of the fiercest battles in the struggle for Italian unification. A makeshift army commanded by Giuseppe Garibaldi defended Rome against French troops sent to restore papal rule. Garibaldi is commemorated with a massive [monument](#) ([Map pp122-3](#)) in the centre of the hill's focal space, Piazzale Giuseppe Garibaldi. Here you'll also

find some of the best views in and of Rome, a merry-go-round and, on Sunday afternoons, a puppet show. Garibaldi's Brazilian-born wife, Anita, is also commemorated on the Gianicolo with an [equestrian monument](#) ([Map pp122-3](#); about 200m north in Piazzale Anita Garibaldi) by Mario Rutelli, completed in 1932.

The easiest way to get to Piazzale Giuseppe Garibaldi is to follow Via Garibaldi from near Porta Settimiana; it's a steep 15-minute walk. Alternatively, walk up the steps from Via G Mameli or take bus 870 from Piazza delle Rovere.

### ORTO BOTANICO [Map pp122-3](#)

☎ 06 499 17 107; Largo Cristina di Svezia 24; admission €3; h 9.30am-6.30pm Tue-Sat Apr-Sep, 9.30am-5.30pm Tue-Sat Oct-Mar, closed Aug; ☪ Lungotevere della Farnesina (Piazza Trilussa) Formerly the private grounds of [Palazzo Corsini](#) (opposite), Rome's 12-hectare botanical gardens are a great place to unwind. Plants have been cultivated on this site since the late 13th century but, in their present form, the gardens were established in 1883. Nowadays, they are managed by La Sapienza

## THE TRAGEDY OF THE CENCI

In the Chiesa di San Pietro in Montorio on the Gianicolo, there's a stone slab at the base of the altar marked with a cross and the single word *Orate* (Pray). This is where the body of Beatrice Cenci is said to lie. No-one knows for sure, as after her execution she was buried in an unknown tomb according to 16th-century custom. Her story is tragic.

The youngest of seven children, Beatrice was the daughter of the enormously rich and sadistic Francesco Cenci. Of her six siblings, two were killed, and the remaining four escaped: the boys by winning legal access to some of their father's money, and a daughter through marriage. This left Beatrice, the most beautiful, on whom Francesco focused all his ire. He locked her in a room when she was about 13, abused and raped her, and forced her to sleep with her equally ill-treated stepmother, Lucrecia.

Some years later, when Francesco was away on business, Beatrice fell in love with a priest, Olimpio Calvetti, to whom she'd been introduced by her brother. When Francesco returned, the priest asked for Beatrice's hand in marriage, and was denied.

In despair and with nothing to lose, Beatrice and Lucrecia began to plot Francesco's murder. With the help of Beatrice's brother and Calvetti, they planned a fake kidnapping that would end in Francesco's death. It failed. So they turned to plan B and hired two hit men to kill Francesco in his sleep. When they chickened out, Beatrice threatened to kill him herself. The two shamed assassins, accompanied by Beatrice and Lucrecia, returned to Francesco's bedroom and killed him by driving nails into his eyes and throat.

It didn't take long before one of the hired hit men was arrested and admitted everything. The whole Cenci family was arrested. Lucrecia gave in immediately and confessed, but Beatrice wouldn't admit anything. The judge ordered her to be stripped and tortured but still she wouldn't confess. Finally the rest of the family, traumatised by her suffering, begged her to confess. When she did, the pope sentenced the family to be dragged by horses through the streets of Rome. The public, on to the story by this time, was outraged, and two skilled lawyers were sent to argue for clemency. For a while it looked like they would all be pardoned, but when a young Roman nobleman murdered his rich father, the pope decided that tough measures were needed to eradicate this rash of aristocratic patricide. Lucrecia and Beatrice, along with Beatrice's brother, were once again sentenced to death, this time by decapitation.

By now Beatrice and Lucrecia had become something of a cause célèbre and their execution on 11 September 1599 on Ponte Sant'Angelo drew a huge crowd.



# VATICAN CITY & BORGO

Drinking & Nightlife [p226](#); Eating [p207](#); Shopping [p178](#); Sleeping [p260](#)

The world's smallest sovereign state (a mere 0.44 sq km), the Vatican sits atop the low-lying Vatican hill just a few hundred metres west of the River Tiber. Centred on the domed bulk of St Peter's Basilica and Piazza San Pietro, it is the capital of the Catholic world, a spiritual superpower whose law is gospel to the world's one billion Catholics. On a more temporal level, it's one of Rome's most visited areas and you'll almost certainly have to queue to get into St Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums.

Established under the terms of the 1929 Lateran Treaty, the State of the Vatican City is the modern vestige of the Papal States. For more than a thousand years, the Papal States encompassed Rome and much of central Italy, but when Italy was unified in 1861 and Rome fell to Italian troops in 1870, Pope Pius IX was forced to give up the last of his territorial possessions.

Relations between Italy and the landless papacy remained strained until Mussolini and Pope Pius XI agreed to form the Vatican State in 1929.

Under the terms of the Lateran Treaty, the Holy See was also given extraterritorial authority over a further 28 sites in and around Rome, including the basilicas of San Giovanni in Laterano ([p106](#)), Santa Maria Maggiore ([p89](#)) and San Paolo fuori le Mura ([p116](#)); the catacombs ([p111](#)), and the pope's summer residence at Castel Gandolfo ([p278](#)).

As an independent state, the Vatican has its own postal service, currency, newspaper, radio station and army. The flamboyantly dressed Swiss Guards were founded in 1506 by Julius II to defend the Papal States against invading armies and are still today responsible for the pope's personal security.

The Vatican's current look is the culmination of more than 1000 years of chipping and chopping. The Leonine walls date to 846, when Pope Leo IV had them put up after a series of Saracen raids, while the Vatican palace, now home to the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel, was originally constructed by Pope Eugenius III in the 12th century. Subsequent popes extended, fortified and decorated it according to their political and artistic whims. The original 4th-century St Peter's Basilica was almost entirely rebuilt in the 16th century by a phalanx of Renaissance greats – Bramante, Raphael, Antonio da Sangallo and Michelangelo. Later Giacomo della Porta and Carlo Maderno added further contributions. Outside, Piazza San Pietro was designed by the baroque genius Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

The easiest way to get to the Vatican is to take metro line A to Ottaviano-San Pietro. Otherwise buses 40 and 64 run to the Vatican from Stazione Termini.

## VATICAN CITY

### St Peter's Basilica

In a city of more than 900 churches, none can hold a candle to [St Peter's Basilica](#) (Basilica di San Pietro; [Map pp130–1](#); ☎ 06 698 81 662; www.stpetersbasilica.org; Piazza San Pietro; admission free; ⌚ 7am–7pm Apr–Sep, 7am–6pm Oct–Mar; 🚶 Ottaviano-San Pietro). Put simply, it's the biggest, richest, most spectacular church in Italy, a monument to centuries of artistic genius and a mecca for millions of tourists – on peak days it can attract more than 20,000 visitors. If you want to get in remember to dress appropriately – that means

no shorts, miniskirts or bare shoulders. Audioguides (€5) are available at a desk in the cloakroom to the right of the entrance.

The first basilica was built here in the 4th century by Constantine, Rome's first Christian emperor. Standing on the site of Nero's stadium, the Ager Vaticanus, where St Peter is said to have been buried between AD 64 and 67, it was consecrated in 326.

More than 1000 years later the church had fallen into disrepair. In the mid-15th century Pope Nicholas V took a stab at reconstruction, but it wasn't until 1506, when Julius II employed Bramante, that serious work

## PAPAL AUDIENCES

At 11am on Wednesdays, the pope addresses his flock at the Vatican (in July and August he does so in [Castel Gandolfo](#), [p278](#)). For free tickets, go to the [Prefettura della Casa Pontificia](#) (☎ 06 698 84 631; fax 06 698 85 863; ⌚ 9am–1pm), through the bronze doors under the colonnade to the right of St Peter's. You can apply on the Tuesday before the audience (or, at a push, on the morning of the audience). Alternatively, write to the Prefettura della Casa Pontificia, 00120 Città del Vaticano or send a fax. Specify the date you'd like to attend and the number of tickets required. If you have a hotel in Rome, the office will forward the tickets there.

When he is in Rome, the pope also blesses the crowd in Piazza San Pietro on Sundays at noon. No tickets are required.

began. Bramante designed a new basilica on a Greek-cross plan, with a central dome and four smaller domes. He oversaw the demolition of much of the old basilica and attracted great criticism for the unnecessary destruction of many of its precious works of art, including Byzantine mosaics and frescoes.

It took more than 150 years to complete the new basilica, now the second-largest in the world (the largest is in Yamoussoukro on the Ivory Coast; bronze plates in the marble floor of the central aisle indicate the respective sizes of the 14 next-biggest churches). Bramante, Raphael, Antonio da Sangallo, Michelangelo, Giacomo della Porta and Carlo Maderno all contributed, but it is generally held that St Peter's owes most to Michelangelo, who took over the project in 1547 at the age of 72 and was responsible for the great dome.

The façade and portico were designed by Carlo Maderno, who inherited the project after Michelangelo's death. He was also instructed to lengthen the nave towards the piazza, effectively altering Bramante's original Greek-cross plan to a Latin cross.

## INTERIOR

The cavernous 187m-long interior covers more than 15,000 sq metres and contains spectacular works of art, including three of Italy's most celebrated masterpieces: Michelangelo's [Pietà](#), the breathtaking dome and Bernini's famous baldachin (canopy).

You'll find Michelangelo's hauntingly beautiful [Pietà](#) at the beginning of the right aisle just inside the [Porta Santa](#) (Holy Door). Sculpted when he was only 25, this is the only work to carry his signature (on the sash across the breast of the Madonna). It is now protected by bullet-proof glass after a hammer-wielding vandal attacked it in 1972.

Nearby, the [red porphyry disk](#) on the floor inside the main door marks the spot where

Charlemagne and later Holy Roman Emperors were crowned by the pope.

Dominating the centre of the church is Bernini's 29m-high baroque [baldachin](#). Supported by four spiral columns and made with bronze taken from the Pantheon, it stands over the high altar, which itself sits on the site of St Peter's grave. The pope is the only priest permitted to serve at the high altar. In front, the [Confessione](#), built by Carlo Maderno, is where St Peter was originally buried.

Look up and you'll see Michelangelo's [dome](#) 119m above your head. Based on Brunelleschi's design for the Duomo in Florence, it is supported by four solid stone [piers](#), named after the saints whose statues adorn their Bernini-designed niches: Longinus, Helena, Veronica and Andrew.

The balconies above are decorated with reliefs depicting the Reliquie Maggiori (Major Relics): the lance of St Longinus, which he used to pierce Christ's side; the cloth of St Veronica, which bears a miraculous image of Christ; and a piece of the True Cross, collected by St Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine.

At the base of the Pier of St Longinus, to the right as you face the high altar, is a famous bronze [statue of St Peter](#), believed to be a 13th-century work by Arnolfo di Cambio. Much loved by pilgrims, its right foot has been worn down by centuries of kisses and caresses. On the Feast Day of St Peter and St Paul (29 June), the statue is dressed in papal robes.

Back near the [Pietà](#), Carlo Fontana's [monument to Queen Christina of Sweden](#) is dedicated to the Swedish monarch who converted to Catholicism in 1655.

Next door, the [Cappella del Santissimo Sacramento](#) is a masterclass in baroque style. The iron grille separating the chapel from the rest of the basilica was designed by Borromini; the gilt bronze ciborium above the

# VATICAN CITY & BORGO

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- Centro Servizi Pellegrini e Turisti.....3 B5
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- To Airport Connection Services (5.5km)
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0 0.1 miles 300 m

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- See Esquilino, Quirinale & Piazza di Spagna Map pp90-1
- See Centro Storico Map pp74-5

## THE FACE IN THE BALDACHIN

The frieze on Bernini's baldachin contains a hidden narrative that begins at the pillar to the left, if your back is facing the entrance. As you walk clockwise around the baldachin note the woman's face carved into the frieze of each pillar, at about eye level. On the first three pillars her face seems to express the increasing agony of childbirth; on the last one, it's replaced by that of a smiling baby. The woman was a niece of Pope Urban VIII who gave birth as Bernini worked on the baldachin.

altar is by Bernini; and the altarpiece, *The Trinity*, is by Pietro da Cortona. The chapel's not usually open to passing visitors but you can go in to pray.

Continuing down the aisle you'll see what looks like a huge canvas but is in fact a large mosaic on the Pier of St Longinus. Created by Domenichino, it depicts the *Comunione di San Girolamo* (Communion of St Jerome). To your right as you face the mosaic, the *Cappella Gregoriana* was built by Gregory XIII from designs by Michelangelo. Part of a marble column from the old basilica was placed here in 1578; the painting on it, the *Madonna del Soccorso* (Madonna of Succour), can still be made out.

Two notable works in the closed-off right transept are the *monument of Clement XIII*, one of Canova's most famous works, and the garish *Altare della Navicella* mosaic, based on a painting by Lanfranco.

In the tribune at the end of the basilica, the *Throne of St Peter* (1665) cannot fail to catch your eye. In the middle of Bernini's elaborate gilded-bronze throne, supported by statues of saints Augustine, Ambrose, Athanasius and John Chrysostom, is a wooden seat, inlaid with ivory. This was once thought to have been St Peter's chair but in fact dates to around the 9th century. Above, rays of yellow light shine through Bernini's extraordinarily gaudy window, framed by a gilded mass of golden angels and in whose central pane flies a dove (representing the Holy Spirit).

To the right of the throne, Bernini's *monument to Urban VIII* depicts the pope flanked by the figures of Charity and Justice.

In the left transept, the *Cappella della Colonna* is decorated with figures of angels with garlands of flowers. Above the tomb of St Leo the Great is a particularly fine

relief (1650) by the baroque sculptor Alessandro Algardi. Opposite it, under the next arch, is Bernini's last work in the basilica, the *monument to Alexander VII*.

About halfway down the left aisle, the cupola of the *Cappella Clementina* is named after Clement VIII (d 1605), who had Giacomo della Porta decorate it for the Jubilee of 1600. Beneath the altar is the *tomb of St Gregory the Great* (d 604), and above it a mosaic representing the *Miracolo di San Giorgio* (Miracle of St George) by Andrea Sacchi. To the left is a classical *monument to Pope Pius VII* by Thorvaldsen, whose work at the time was strongly influenced by Canova.

Particularly charming is the *monument to Leo XI* by Alessandro Algardi in the next aisle arch. Beyond it, the richly decorated *Cappella del Coro* is an exercise in gilt. Giovanni Battista Ricci carried out the work in the chapel following designs by Giacomo della Porta; Bernini designed the elegant choir stalls. The chapel is usually locked but it's worth sticking your nose through the gate to get a good look. The *monument to Innocent VIII* by Antonio Pollaiuolo (in the next aisle arch) is a re-creation of a monument from the old basilica.

The *Cappella della Presentazione* contains two of the most modern works in the basilica. On the right of the altar is a *monument to John XXIII* by Emilio Greco and on the left is a *monument to Benedict XV* by Pietro Canonica. Under the next arch are the so-called *Stuart monuments*. On the right is the monument to Clementina Sobieska, wife of James Stuart, by Filippo Barigioni, and on the left is Canova's superb monument to the last three members of the Stuart clan, the pretenders to the English throne who died in exile in Rome.

## DOMES

**St Peter's Basilica; admission with/without lift €7/4;**  
H 8am-5.45pm Apr-Sep, 8am-4.45pm Oct-Mar  
Entry to the dome is to the far right of the basilica. A small lift takes you halfway up but it's still a long climb to the top. Press on though and you'll be rewarded with some stunning views over Rome. It's well worth the effort, but bear in mind that it's a long and tiring climb and not recommended for those who suffer from claustrophobia or vertigo. Note also that the best time to photograph the view is in the afternoon when the light is much softer.

## MUSEO STORICO ARTISTICO (TREASURY)

**St Peter's Basilica; adult/child & student €6/4;**  
H 9am-6.15pm Apr-Sep, 9am-5.15pm Oct-Mar  
The sacristy entrance (halfway down the left aisle) leads to the Museo Storico Artistico (Treasury), which has sacred relics and priceless artefacts. Highlights include a tabernacle by Donatello; the Colonna Santa, a 4th-century Byzantine column from the earlier church; the 6th-century *Crux Vaticana* (Vatican Cross), made of bronze and beset with jewels – a gift of Emperor Justinian II; and the massive 15th-century bronze tomb of Sixtus IV by Pollaiuolo.

## TOMB OF ST PETER

**entrance inside St Peter's Basilica; admission €10;**  
H 7am-6pm Apr-Sep, 7am-5pm Oct-Mar  
Excavations beneath the basilica, which began in 1940, have uncovered part of the original church and what archaeologists believe is the tomb of St Peter.

In 1942 the bones of an elderly, strongly built man were found in a box hidden behind a wall covered by pilgrims' graffiti. After more than 30 years of forensic examination, in 1976 Pope Paul VI declared the bones to be those of St Peter. John Paul II had some of the relics transferred to his hospital room when he was recovering from the 1981 assassination attempt. The bones were then returned to the tomb and are kept in hermetically sealed Perspex cases designed by NASA.

The excavations can only be visited on a 90-minute guided tour. To book a spot contact the *Ufficio Scavi* (Excavations Office; ☎ 06 698 85 318; scavi@fsp.va; Fabbrica di San Pietro, 00120, Città del Vaticano; H 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) and stipulate the date you'd like to visit. You need to book at least one week ahead. If you haven't been able to reserve a place, it is often worth queuing by the Arch of the Bells. If the tours aren't already full, the guides will usually allow a few extra people to tag along. Note that kids under 15 are not allowed on the tour.

## VATICAN GROTTOS

**entrance inside St Peter's Basilica; admission free;**  
H 7am-6pm Apr-Sep, 7am-5pm Oct-Mar  
Extending beneath the basilica, the Vatican Grottoes contain the tombs of numerous popes, including John Paul II, as well as

several huge columns from the original 4th-century basilica. The entrance is a door in the base of the Pier of St Andrew, to the left of the main altar.

## Piazza San Pietro

One of the world's great public spaces, Bernini's massive *piazza* (Map pp130-1; ☐ Ottaviano-San Pietro) is a breathtaking work of baroque town planning. Laid out between 1656 and 1667 for Pope Alexander VII, it was originally designed to open up before visitors as they emerged from the jumble of narrow streets that surrounded the area. Mussolini, however, spoiled the effect when he built *Via della Conciliazione*.

Seen from above, the *piazza* resembles a giant keyhole: two semicircular colonnades, each consisting of four rows of Doric columns, bound a giant ellipse that straightens out to funnel believers into the basilica. The effect was deliberate – Bernini described the colonnades as representing 'the motherly arms of the church'. On the square there are two points from where you can see all the columns perfectly aligned; look for the iron paving disks between the central obelisk and the two fountains. The 25m obelisk was brought to Rome by Caligula from Heliopolis in Egypt and later used by Nero as a turning post for the chariot races in his circus. It was placed in its current position in 1586 by Domenico Fontana.

The scale of the *piazza* is dazzling: at its largest it measures 340m by 240m; there are 284 columns and, on top of the colonnades, 140 saints. In the midst of all this the pope seems very small as he delivers his weekly address at noon on Sunday. To get a good view of him train your binoculars on the top floor of the Vatican palace, itself part of the massive *Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano*, to the right of the square.

## Vatican Museums

Visiting the *Vatican Museums* (Musei Vaticani; Map pp130-1; ☎ 06 698 83 333; www.vatican.va; Viale Vaticano; adult/under 6yr/under 14yr & student €13/free/8, last Sun of the month free; H 10am-4.45pm (last admission 3.30pm) Mon-Fri, 10am-2.45pm (last admission 1.30pm) Sat Mar-Oct, 10am-1.45pm (last admission 12.30pm) Mon-Sat Nov-Feb, 9am-1.45pm (last admission 12.30pm) last Sun of month; ☐ Ottaviano-San Pietro; √) is an unforgettable experience that requires strength and stamina. You'll need to be at the top of your game to endure the long queues (see p62) and enjoy



# top picks

## BEST OF THE VATICAN MUSEUMS

- *Genesis* by Michelangelo (p137)
- *Giudizio Universale* by Michelangelo (p137)
- *La Scuola d'Atene* by Raphael (p136)
- *Laocoön* by unknown (opposite)
- *Marte di Todi* by unknown (opposite)

what is undoubtedly one of the world's great museum complexes.

The entrance is a 15-minute walk from Piazza San Pietro. From the piazza head to Piazza del Risorgimento and turn left, following the Vatican walls north until you come to an area with heaps of people milling around.

The museums are enormous and rest assures you'll never manage to see everything in one go – you'd need several hours just for the highlights. To make navigation easier there are four colour-coded itineraries, which take anything from 45 minutes to five hours. Each starts at the domed Quattro Cancelli area, near the entrance, and finishes at the Sistine Chapel, so if you want you can walk straight there. Bear in mind, though, that you can't backtrack once you're there, so if you want to see, say, the Stanze di Raffaello, make sure you do so first. Also be prepared to jostle for position in the chapel – it's almost always packed and there's not a lot you can do to avoid the crowds.

Each gallery contains priceless treasures, but for a whistle-stop tour get to the Stanza di Raffaello, the Pinacoteca, the Gallerie delle Carte Geografiche and, of course, the Sistine Chapel.

A useful publication is the *Guide to the Vatican Museums and City* (€10), although you can also hire MP3 audioguides (€6). There are also Vatican-run **guided tours** (fax 06 698 85 100; [visitguidate.musei@scv.va](mailto:visitguidate.musei@scv.va); adult/concession €23.50/18). To book a place fax or email at least a week before your visit.

The museums are housed in what is known collectively as the Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano. This massive 5.5-hectare complex consists of two palaces – the Vatican palace nearest St Peter's and the Belvedere Palace – joined by two long galleries. On the inside are three courtyards: the Cortile della Pigna to the north, the Cortile della Biblioteca in the middle and the Cortile del Belvedere to the south.

The museums are well equipped for visitors with disabilities: there are four suggested itineraries, lifts and specially fitted toilets. Wheelchairs can also be reserved in advance – call % 06 698 85 433. Parents with young children can take prams into the museums.

## MUSEO GREGORIANO PROFANO, MUSEO PIO-CRISTIANO & MUSEO MISSIONARIO-ETNOLOGICO

These three museums are housed in the modern block to the right of the entrance hall. The Museo Gregoriano Profano contains classical statuary, including sculpture found in the **Terme di Caracalla** (p110). Greek pieces date from the 5th and 4th centuries BC, and Roman sculpture from the 1st to the 3rd centuries AD.

The Museo Pio-Cristiano is dedicated to early-Christian antiquities. The collection of relics salvaged from the catacombs and carved sarcophagi was founded by Pius IX in 1854 and moved here from the Palazzo Laterano in 1970.

The Museo Missionario-Etnologico exhibits ethnological and anthropological artefacts brought back by missionaries from Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East.

## PINACOTECA

Inaugurated in 1932, the papal picture gallery houses some 460 paintings in 18 rooms. The magnificent collection was founded by Pius XI in the late 18th century and ranges from works of the 11th-century Byzantine and Umbrian schools to 17th- and 18th-century grand masters, a number of which Napoleon carted off to Paris in 1797. They are hung in chronological order and include works by Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli, Federico Barocci, Guido Reni, Guercino, Nicholas Poussin, Van Dyck and Pietro da Cortona.

There are several works by Raphael, who has a room to himself, including the *Madonna di Foligno* (Madonna of Folignano), originally kept in the **Chiesa di Santa Maria in Aracoeli** (p68); and his last painting, the magnificent *La Trasfigurazione* (Transfiguration), which was completed by his students after he died in 1520. Other highlights include Giotto's *Polittico Stefaneschi* (Stefaneschi Triptych), which was originally an altarpiece in the sacristy of St Peter's; Giovanni Bellini's *Pietà*; Leonardo da Vinci's unfinished

*San Gerolamo* (St Jerome); and Caravaggio's *Deposizione* (Deposition from the Cross).

## MUSEO GREGORIANO EGIZIO

Pope Gregory XVI founded the Egyptian Museum in 1839 to hold pieces taken from Egypt during Roman times. The collection is small but there are some fascinating exhibits, including the *Trono di Rameses II*, part of a statue of the seated king, and hieroglyphic inscriptions dating to around 2600 BC.

Room II contains some vividly painted wooden sarcophagi from around 1000 BC and a couple of mummies that will titillate the macabre-minded. On one you can see the henna-treated hair and a hole where the left eye should be; it was probably removed so that the brain could be extracted before mummification. There are also two carved-marble sarcophagi from the 6th century BC.

Room III boasts several Egyptian-style Roman sculptures, which were used as decoration at **Villa Adriana** (p277) in Tivoli, as well as a reconstruction of the villa's Serapeum (Temple of Serapis).

## MUSEO PIO-CLEMENTINO

Home to some spectacular classical statuary, the Museo Pio-Clementino is in the Belvedere Palace, to the left of the entrance complex. It's accessible through the Museo Gregoriano Egiziano or from the Cortile Ottagono (Octagonal Courtyard), itself part of the museum.

Of the mass of sculpture, two statues stand out: the *Apollo Belvedere* and the 1st-century *Laocoön*, both in the **Cortile Ottagono**. To the left as you enter the courtyard, the *Apollo Belvedere* is a 2nd-century-AD Roman copy of a 4th-century-BC Greek bronze. A beautifully proportioned representation of the sun god Apollo, it's considered one of the great masterpieces of classical sculpture. Nearby, the *Laocoön* depicts a muscular Trojan priest and his two sons in mortal struggle with two sea serpents. According to myth the snakes had been sent to slay the priest as punishment for his warning Troy about the dangers of the Trojan Horse. This statue was discovered in 1506 by men working on the Esquillino. On hearing the news, Pope Julius II sent Michelangelo and Giuliano da Sangallo to evaluate the find. They confirmed that it was the same statue that had been cited by Pliny the Elder some 1500 years earlier.

Back inside the Belvedere is the **Sala degli Animali**, filled with sculptures of all sorts of creatures. The floors of both sides of the gallery contain magnificent mosaics dating from the 4th century AD. Don't miss the delightful crab (made from rare green porphyry stone) at the far end of the room on the right and, facing it, the charming mosaic of a cat with ducks and fruit.

Beyond the Sala degli Animali are the **Galleria delle Statue**, with several important classical pieces; the **Sala delle Buste**, which contains hundreds of busts of Roman emperors and political figures; and the **Gabinetto delle Maschere**, named after the floor mosaics of theatrical masks.

In the **Sala delle Muse** (Room of the Muses), the *Torso Belvedere* is another must-see. A Greek sculpture from the 1st century BC, it was found in the Campo de' Fiori around the same time the *Laocoön* was unearthed and was much admired by Michelangelo and other Renaissance artists.

The next room, the **Sala Rotonda** (Round Room), built by Michelangelo Simonetti in 1780, was inspired by the Pantheon. It contains a number of colossal statues, including the gilded-bronze figure of *Ercole* (Hercules), and an exquisite floor mosaic featuring sea monsters and battles between Greeks and centaurs. The enormous basin in the centre of the room was found at the site of Nero's **Domus Aurea** (p95) and is made out of a single piece of red porphyry stone.

In the **Sala a Croce Greca** (Greek Cross Room) are the porphyry-stone sarcophagi of Constantine's daughter, Constantia, and his mother, St Helena.

## MUSEO CHIARAMONTI

A rogues' gallery in marble, this museum is effectively the long corridor that runs down the lower east side of the Belvedere Palace. Its walls are lined with thousands of statues representing everything from immortal gods to playful cherubs and ugly Roman patricians. Near the end of the hall, off to the right, is the **Braccio Nuovo** (New Wing), which contains a famous sculpture of Augustus and a statue depicting the Nile as a reclining god covered by 16 babies (supposedly representing the number of cubits the Nile rose when it flooded).

Visible through a gate at the end of the Museo Chiaramonti is the **Galleria Lapidaria**, which only opens to scholars on request. It contains more than 3000 Christian and

Roman inscriptions mounted into the walls of the gallery.

## MUSEO GREGORIANO ETRUSCO

On the upper level of the Belvedere (off the 18th-century Simonetti staircase), the Etruscan Museum contains artefacts unearthed in the Etruscan tombs of southern Etruria (now northern Lazio), as well as a collection of Greek vases and Roman antiquities. Of particular interest is Room II, with findings from the 7th-century-BC Regolini-Galassi tomb, discovered in 1836 south of [Cerveteri \(p267\)](#). Among the finds on display are gold jewellery and a funeral carriage with a bronze bed and funeral couch.

The [Sala dei Bronzi](#) houses the famous *Marte di Todi* (Mars of Todi), a full-length bronze statue of a warrior dating from the 4th century BC, as well as bronze figurines, statuettes of young boys, armour, hand mirrors and candelabra. Beyond it, the [Sala delle Pietre](#) (Room IV) displays sarcophagi and statues sculpted out of volcanic stone such as tufa and *peperino*. The [Sala degli Ori](#) (Rooms VII and VIII) is devoted to Etruscan jewellery, while the [Sala delle Terracotte](#) displays terracotta pieces, including some wonderfully expressive portrait heads.

Among the Greek goodies on show, look out for a 530 BC vase, signed by the Greek artist Exekias and decorated with an image of Achilles and Ajax playing draughts.

Magnificent views of Rome can be had from the last room at the end of this wing (through the Sala delle Terracotte). From here you can also get a glimpse down the full drop of Bramante's 16th-century spiral staircase, which was designed so that horses could be ridden up it.

## GALLERIA DEI CANDELABRI & GALLERIA DEGLI ARAZZI

By the time you reach these two galleries you're in the home straight, well on the way to the Stanze di Raffaello and, beyond that, the Sistine Chapel.

Originally an open loggia, the Galleria dei Candelabri is packed with classical sculpture, including several elegantly carved marble candelabras that give the gallery its name.

The corridor continues through to the Galleria degli Arazzi (Tapestry Gallery) and its 10 huge tapestries. The tapestries opposite the windows were designed by students of Raphael and woven in Brussels

in the 16th century. On the other side, the 17th-century tapestries were woven at the Barberini workshop.

## GALLERIA DELLE CARTE GEOGRAFICHE

One of the unsung heroes of the Vatican Museums, the 175m-long Map Gallery is hung with 40 huge topographical maps. They were all created between 1580 and 1583 for Pope Gregory XIII, and were based on drafts by Ignazio Danti, one of the leading cartographers of his day. The ceiling frescoes, representing the lives of saints and the history of the Church, are related geographically to the maps below them.

Next to the Map Gallery is the [Appartamento di San Pio V](#), containing some interesting Flemish tapestries, and the [Sala Sobieski](#), named after the enormous 19th-century canvas on its northern wall (depicting the victory of the Polish King John III Sobieski over the Turks in 1683). These rooms lead into the magnificent Stanze di Raffaello.

## STANZE DI RAFFAELLO

Even in the shadow of the Sistine Chapel, the Stanze di Raffaello (Raphael Rooms) stand out, their brilliance testament to the artistic genius of Raphael and the foresight of Pope Julius II, his first Roman patron. The four rooms were part of Julius' private apartment and in 1508 he commissioned the 25-year-old Raphael to decorate them.

But while they carry his name, not all the rooms were completed by Raphael: he painted the Stanza della Segnatura (Study) and the Stanza d'Eliodoro (Waiting Room), while both the Stanza dell'Incendio (Dining Room) and the Sala di Costantino (Reception Room) were decorated by students following his designs.

The [Sala di Costantino](#) is the first room you come to. Finished by Giulio Romano in 1525, five years after Raphael's death, it was used for official functions and decorated to highlight the triumph of Christianity over paganism. This theme is evident in the huge *Battaglia di Costantino contro Maxentius* (Battle of the Milvian Bridge), in which Constantine, Rome's first Christian emperor, defeats his rival Maxentius.

Leading off this sala are two rooms that are not traditionally counted as Raphael rooms. The [Sala dei Chiaroscuri](#) was decorated in the 16th century and used for ceremonial

purposes. Pope Gregory XIII had much of Raphael's original frescoes removed, but the ceiling, designed by Raphael and executed by his students, remains. A small door leads to the tiny [Cappella di Niccolò V](#), which was Pope Nicholas V's private chapel. The superb frescoes were painted by Fra Angelico around 1450 and depict the lives of St Stephen (upper level) and St Lawrence (lower level).

The [Stanza d'Eliodoro](#), which was used for private audiences, was painted between 1512 and 1514. It takes its name from the painting on the main wall to the right of the entrance, the *Cacciata d'Eliodoro* (Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple). An allegorical work, it tells the story of Heliodorus being killed as he tries to make off with booty stolen from the Temple in Jerusalem; the allusion, however, is to Julius II's military victory over foreign powers.

To the left of this is the *Messa di Bolsena* (Mass of Bolsena), showing Julius II paying homage to the relic of a 13th-century miracle at the lake town of Bolsena (see [p270](#)). Next is *Incontro di Leone Magno con Attila* (Encounter of Leo the Great with Attila) by Raphael and his school, and on the fourth wall the *Liberazione di San Pietro* (Liberation of St Peter). This depicts St Peter being freed from prison but is actually an allusion to Pope Leo's imprisonment after the Battle of Ravenna (also the real subject of the Attila fresco).

The [Stanza della Segnatura](#) is named after the Segnatura Gratiae et Iustitiae, the Vatican court that sat here in the 16th century. Here you'll find Raphael's earliest frescoes and his masterpiece, *La Scuola d'Atene* (The School of Athens), featuring philosophers and scholars gathered around Plato and Aristotle. The lone figure in front of the steps is believed to be Michelangelo, while the figure of Plato is said to be a portrait of Leonardo da Vinci, and Euclide (in the lower right) is Bramante. Raphael also included a self-portrait in the lower right corner (he's the second figure from the right). Opposite is *La Disputa del Sacramento* (Disputation on the Sacrament), also by Raphael.

The last of Raphael's four rooms, the [Stanza dell'Incendio](#), was completed after the death of Julius II (1513) during Leo X's papacy and is largely dedicated to the glory of his namesakes Leo III and Leo IV. The most famous work, *Incendio di Borgo* (Fire in the Borgo), depicts Leo IV extinguishing a fire by making the sign of the cross. The ceiling was painted by Raphael's master, Perugino.

From Raphael's rooms, stairs lead to the [Appartamento Borgia](#), decorated with frescoes by Bernardino Pinturicchio and the Vatican's collection of modern religious art.

## SISTINE CHAPEL

The one place in the Vatican Museums that not one of the four million annual visitors wants to miss is the Sistine Chapel (Cappella Sistina). Home to two of the world's most famous works of art – Michelangelo's *Genesis* (Creation; painted 1508–12) on the barrel-vaulted ceiling and the *Giudizio Universale* (Last Judgment; 1534–41) on the end wall – this 15th-century chapel is where the papal conclave is locked to elect the pope.

The chapel was originally built in 1484 for Pope Sixtus IV, after whom it is named, but it was Julius II who commissioned Michelangelo to decorate it in 1508. The complex and grand composition that Michelangelo devised to cover the 800 sq metres of ceiling took him four difficult and solitary years.

The frescoes down the middle represent nine scenes from the book of Genesis: *God Separating Light from Darkness*; *Creation of the Sun, Moon and Planets*; *Separation of Land from Sea*; *Creation of Adam*; *Creation of Eve*; *Temptation and Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden*; *Noah's Sacrifice*; *The Flood*; and the *Drunkenness of Noah*.

Michelangelo painted these in reverse order, providing critics with a remarkable illustration of the artist's development: the first, the *Drunkenness of Noah* (nearest the *Giudizio Universale*) is much more formal than his later works at the other end of the ceiling.

Probably the most famous scene is the image of the *Creation of Adam*, where God points his index finger at Adam, bringing him to life. God's swirling red cape surrounds a group of people, said to represent the generations to come. In the *Temptation and Expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden*, Adam and Eve are shown (on the left) taking the forbidden fruit from Satan, represented by a snake with the body of a woman coiled around a tree. On the right, Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden by the red-robed, sword-wielding Angel of the Lord.

The main scenes are framed by *ignudi*, athletic male nudes, with which Michelangelo celebrates the male figure. Next to them, on the lower curved part of the vault, separated by trompe l'oeil cornices, are large figures of Hebrew prophets

and pagan sibyls. These muscular, powerful figures – especially the Delphic and Libyan sibyls – are among the most striking and dramatic images on the ceiling. Their butch physiques have led scholars to believe that Michelangelo modelled all his female figures on men. In the lunettes over the windows are the ancestors of Christ.

Michelangelo was commissioned by Clement VII to paint the *Giudizio Universale* 22 years after he finished the ceiling, although it was Clement's successor Paul III who actually chose the subject matter. From the outset it was a controversial project. Uproar broke out when two frescoes by Perugino (*Finding of Moses* and *Birth of Christ*) were destroyed to prepare the wall – it had to be replastered so that it tilted inwards to protect it from dust. Then, when it was unveiled seven years later in 1541, its dramatic, swirling mass of predominantly naked bodies caused controversy. Some years later Pope Pius IV had Daniele da Volterra, one of Michelangelo's students, add fig leaves and loincloths to the many nudes. Supporters, however, considered it one of Michelangelo's best works, surpassing all the other paintings in the chapel, including his own ceiling frescoes.

But whatever the technical judgment, there's no denying its ambition. Paul III wanted a powerful image to act as a warning to Catholics to toe the line during the Reformation (then sweeping Europe) – and that's exactly what he got. Depicting the souls of the dead being torn from their graves to face the wrath of God, it's a work of highly charged emotion that was said by some to reflect Michelangelo's tormented faith. Judge for yourself by examining his self-portrait on the shroud held by St Bartholomew, to the right of Christ.

The walls of the chapel were also painted by important Renaissance artists, including Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Pinturicchio and Luca Signorelli. Anywhere else, these frescoes would be the star of the show, but here they're often passed over with little more than a glance. They are, however, magnificent late-15th-century works, depicting events in the lives of Moses (to the left, looking at the *Last Judgment*) and Christ (to the right).

Particularly beautiful is Botticelli's *Temptation of Christ* and the *Cleansing of the Leper* (the second fresco on the right). On the other side, his *Punishment of the*

*Rebels* (the fifth fresco on the left) includes a self-portrait – the figure in black behind Moses on the far right. Ghirlandaio's *Calling of Peter and Andrew* (the third fresco on the right) includes among the crowd of onlookers portraits of prominent contemporary figures, while Perugino's superbly composed *Christ Giving the Keys to St Peter* (the fifth fresco on the right) also includes a self-portrait – the fifth figure from the right.

## VATICAN LIBRARY

Returning to the Quattro Cancelli area from the Sistine Chapel, you pass through the frescoed halls of the Vatican Library (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana), which was founded by Nicholas V in 1450. The library contains more than 1.5 million volumes, including illuminated manuscripts, early printed books, prints and drawings, and coins. Selected items from the collection are displayed in the *Salone Sistino*.

## Vatican Gardens

To visit the *Vatican Gardens* (Giardini del Vaticano; Map pp130–1; fax 06 698 85 100; adult/child €12/8; h guided tours 11am Tue, Thu & Sat Mar–Oct, 11am Sat Nov–Feb; m Ottaviano-San Pietro) you need to book at least a week ahead by faxing the Ufficio Visite Guidate dei Musei Vaticani at the above number. Visits are in two-hour guided tours. The gardens contain fortifications, grottoes, monuments and fountains dating from the 9th century to the present day. There's also a formal Italian garden, a flower-filled French parterre and a kitchen garden that provides produce for the pontifical household.

## BORGO

The area between the Vatican and the River Tiber is known as the Borgo. Not much is left of the medieval (and earlier) quarter, as Mussolini had the area virtually razed to the ground to make way for Via della Conciliazione. However, Castel Sant'Angelo remains intact and many of the streets flanking the Vatican walls retain a medieval charm despite batteries of restaurants, hotels and pizzerias.

## CASTEL SANT'ANGELO Map pp130–1

% 06 681 91 11; Lungotevere Castello 50; adult/EU 18-24yr €5/2.50, plus €2 if there's an exhibition on; h 9am-7.30pm Tue-Sun; G Piazza Pia; W With its chunky round keep, this castle is an instantly recognisable landmark. Begun

by Emperor Hadrian in 128 as a mausoleum for himself and his family, it was converted into a fortress for the popes in the 6th century. It was named by Pope Gregory the Great in 590, after he saw a vision of an angel above the structure heralding the end of a plague in Rome. Later, in 1277, it was linked to the Vatican palaces by a wall and passageway, often used by popes to escape in times of threat. During the 16th-century sack of Rome by Emperor Charles V, hundreds of people lived in the fortress for months.

On the upper floors, check out the lavishly decorated Sala Paolina and the Camera del Perseo and Camera di Amore e Psiche, both with friezes by Perino del Vaga. The terrace, immortalised by Puccini in his opera *Tosca*, offers great views over Rome.

## PONTE SANT'ANGELO Map pp130–1

G Piazza Pia  
Hadrian built the Ponte Sant'Angelo across the River Tiber in 136 to provide an approach to his mausoleum, but it was Bernini who managed to bring it to life. In the 17th century he and his pupils sculpted the figures of angels that now

line this pedestrian-only bridge. The three central arches of the bridge are part of the original structure; the end arches were restored and enlarged in 1892–94 during the construction of the Lungotevere embankments.

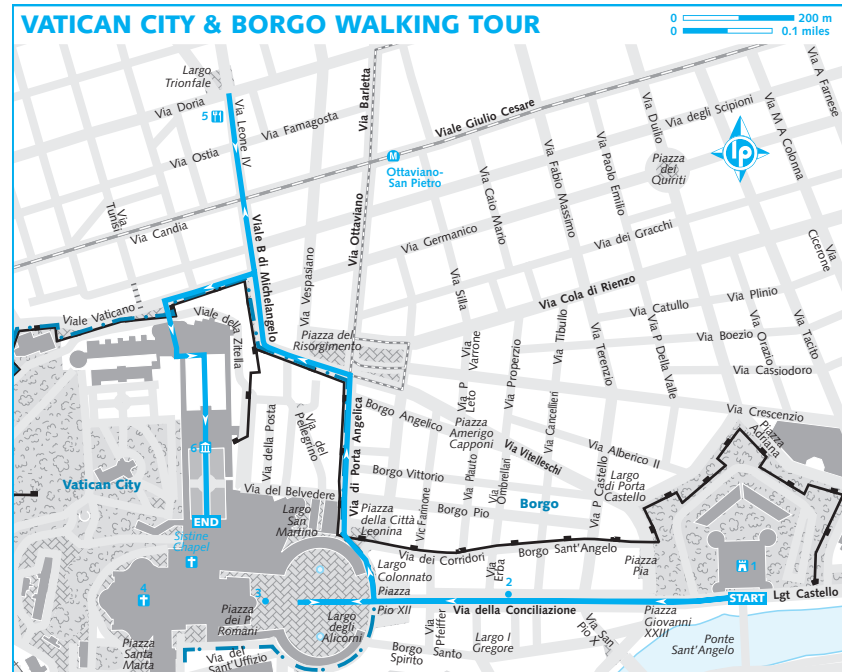
## VATICAN CITY & BORGO

### Walking Tour

**1 Castel Sant'Angelo** A squat drum of a castle, this landmark monument (opposite) was built as a mausoleum for Hadrian in the 1st century AD. Later converted into a fort, it famously served as a refuge for Pope Clement VII during the 1527 sack of Rome. Admire great views over a coffee at the upstairs bar.

### WALK FACTS

Start Castel Sant'Angelo (G 40 to Piazza Pia)  
End Vatican Museums (m Ottaviano-San Pietro)  
Distance 2km  
Duration All day  
Fuel stop Dino & Tony (p208)



**2 Via della Conciliazione** Lined with imperious Fascist buildings, Via della Conciliazione is the dramatic approach road to Piazza San Pietro and St Peter's Basilica. Mussolini had it bulldozed through the area's tightly packed medieval streets to celebrate the signing of the Lateran Treaty in 1929.

**3 Piazza San Pietro** One of the world's great urban spaces, Piazza San Pietro (p133) was designed by baroque maestro Gian Lorenzo Bernini in the mid-17th century. Flanked by two semicircular colonnades, it measures 340m by 240m at its largest, and is surrounded by 284 columns and 140 saints.

**4 St Peter's Basilica** From the instantly recognisable façade to the unbelievably lavish interior, everything about St Peter's Basilica (p128)

is designed to awe. Highlights include the *Pietà*, carved by Michelangelo when he was only 25, and Bernini's towering baldachin over the main altar. Overhead, Michelangelo's dome is one of the great feats of Renaissance engineering.

**5 Dino & Tony** One of the few genuine trattorias in this touristy area, Dino & Tony (p208) serves authentic Roman food at honest prices. The antipasti are memorable and the service is gruff and friendly.

**6 Vatican Museums** Worth a walking tour in their own right, the Vatican Museums (p133) are vast. Once you're in, and you'll need to be patient as the queues are notoriously long, you'll find yourself face to face with one of the world's great art collections. Save energy for the last stop, the Sistine Chapel (p137).

## VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME

Drinking & Nightlife p227; Eating p209; Shopping p178; Sleeping p262

Extending north from Piazza del Popolo and Villa Borghese, Northern Rome is largely given over to business and housing. Many Italian companies have their Roman headquarters here and an address in Parioli (the district to the north of Villa Borghese) is a much sought-after status symbol. Yet the area is not without interest – Villa Borghese is a great place to relax in, and there are some fascinating museums sprinkled across the area.

The obvious starting point is Piazza del Popolo, the inspiring 16th-century square at the head of Via del Corso. From here Villa Borghese, home to one of Rome's top galleries, balloons eastwards and Via Flaminia shoots northwards, following the path of an ancient Roman road. The main attraction on this otherwise uninspiring street is Renzo Piano's extraordinary Auditorium Parco della Musica, Rome's premier concert complex. Carry on up the road and you come to Ponte Milvio, a bridge popular with star-struck young lovers and scene of a decisive Roman battle in 312. Over the river, and to the west, the Stadio Olimpico is Rome's impressive football stadium.

On the eastern side of Villa Borghese, Via Salaria, the old Roman *sala* (salt) road, is now the heart of a smart residential and business district. Among the embassies and town houses near Piazza Mincio, you'll come across a pocket of exuberant post-WWII Art Nouveau buildings in an area known as Coppede. Beloved as they are today, these *palazzi* were much maligned in their day, and Coppede, the architect who designed many of them, killed himself in despair.

To the north of Via Salaria, the vast Villa Ada park expands northwards; to the south, Via Nomentana traverses acres of housing as it heads northeastwards out of the city. Along Via Nomentana, Villa Torlonia is a captivating park, and the Basilica di Sant'Agnes fuori le Mura claims Rome's oldest Christian mosaic.

Getting to Piazza del Popolo is easy – take metro line A to Flaminio. From here tram 3 trundles along Via Flaminia. Buses 60, 84 and 90 cover Via Nomentana, while for Via Salaria you can catch bus 63, 86, 92, 217 or 360.

### VILLA BORGHESE & AROUND

Villa Borghese dates to the 17th century when, in an outburst of papal nepotism, Pope Paul V made his nephew Scipione a cardinal and gave him a sizable chunk of the city, just outside the Aurelian Wall. There, between 1605 and 1614, Scipione built his *casino* (villa) to hold his enormous collection of paintings and sculpture (now displayed in the stunning Museo e Galleria Borghese), and had the grounds laid out by leading landscape designers such as Jacob More from Edinburgh.

Peppered around the park are, among other things, a zoo, the city's largest modern art gallery and a stunning Etruscan museum.

To get to Villa Borghese you can walk from Piazza del Popolo or Piazza di Spagna, or get bus 116, 52 or 53 from Via Vittorio Veneto near Barberini metro station.

## top picks

### VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME

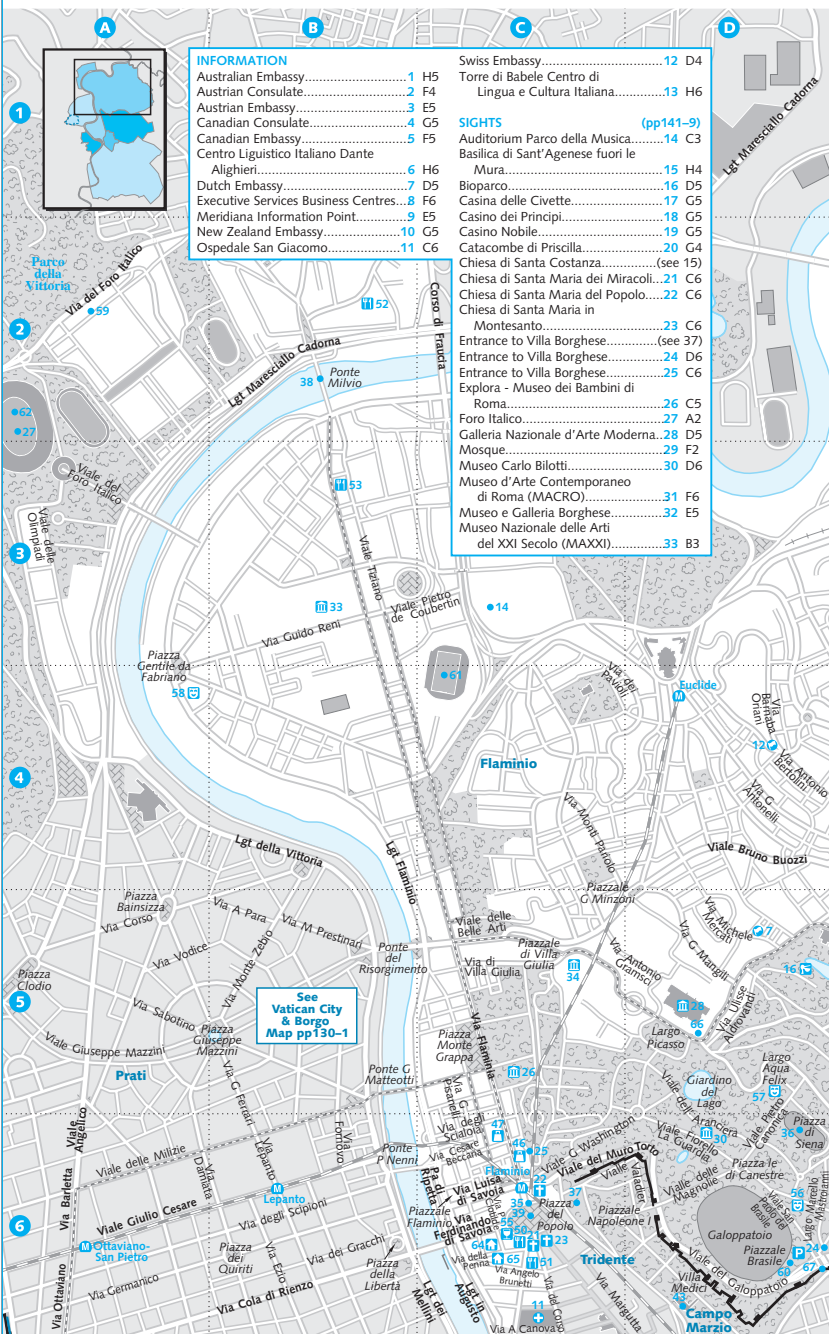
- Museo e Galleria Borghese (below)
- Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia (p153)
- Chiesa di Santa Maria del Popolo (p154)
- Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna (p153)
- Auditorium Parco della Musica (p155)

### MUSEO E GALLERIA BORGHESE

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 3 28 10; www.galleriaborghese.it; Piazzale Scipione Borghese 5; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-25yr €8.50/2/5.25; ⏰ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun, prebooking necessary; 📍 Via Pinciana; ♿ If you only have time (or inclination) for one art gallery in Rome, make it this one. Housing the 'queen of all private art collections', it provides the perfect introduction to Renaissance and baroque art without ever overwhelming as some of the capital's larger and more famous museums do. It's an absolute must-see, well worth the two-minute phone call you'll need to make to book a ticket. In order to limit numbers, visitors are admitted at two-hourly intervals, so after you've picked up your prebooked ticket you'll have to wait for your allocated entry time.

# VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME



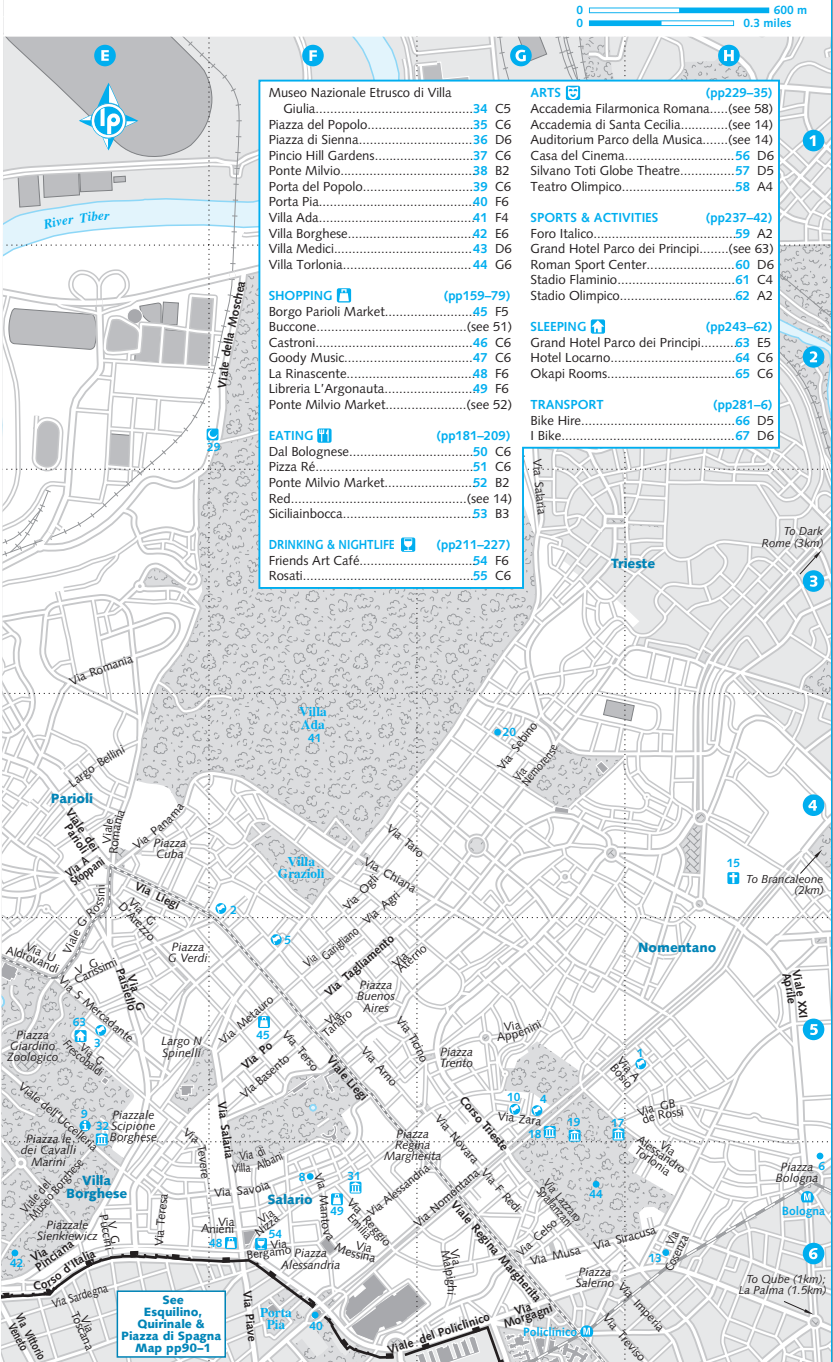
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# top picks

## MUSEO E GALLERIA BORGHESE

- **Ratto di Proserpina** by Gian Lorenzo Bernini
- **Apollo e Dafne** by Gian Lorenzo Bernini
- **Venere Vincitrice** by Antonio Canova
- **Ragazzo col Canestro di Frutta** by Caravaggio
- **Amor Sacro e Amor Profano** by Titian

The collection, including works by Caravaggio, Bernini, Botticelli and Raphael, was formed by Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1579–1633), the most knowledgeable and ruthless art collector of his day. A patron of Caravaggio and Gian Lorenzo Bernini, he stopped at nothing to get what he wanted: he had the fashionable painter Cavaliere d'Arpino flung into jail in order to confiscate his canvases, and Domenichino arrested to force him to surrender *The Hunt of Diana*.

Housing his spectacular cache is the Casino Borghese, whose neoclassical look is the result of a 17th-century revamp of Scipione's original villa. But while the house remained intact, the collection did not. Much of the antique statuary was carted off to the Louvre by Napoleon, whose sister Paolina was married to the son of Prince Marcantonio Borghese. Other pieces were sold off over time.

The entire collection and the mansion were acquired by the Italian State in 1902 but it was only in 1997 that it reopened to the public after a 13-year restoration.

The collection is divided into two parts: the ground-floor museum, with its superb sculptures, intricate Roman floor mosaics and over-the-top frescoes; and the upstairs picture gallery. On the ground floor, in the entrance hall, are floor mosaics of fighting gladiators dating from the 4th century and a *Satiro Combattente* (Fighting Satyr) from the 2nd century (restored by Bernini). High on the wall is a gravity-defying bas-relief, *Marco Curzio a Cavallo*, of a horse and rider falling into the void of the room. It was created by Pietro Bernini (Gian Lorenzo Bernini's father) by combining ancient fragments and modern pieces.

Moving into Sala I, and you find Antonio Canova's daring depiction of Napoleon's sister, Paolina Bonaparte Borghese, reclining topless as *Venere Vincitrice* (Victorious Venus; 1805–08). Apparently she had quite

a reputation, and when asked how she could have posed almost naked she's said to have replied that it wasn't cold.

But it's Gian Lorenzo Bernini's spectacular sculptures – flamboyant depictions of pagan myths – that really take the breath away. Just look at Pluto's hand pressing into the seemingly soft flesh of Persephone's thigh in the *Ratto di Proserpina* (Rape of Persephone; 1621–22) in Sala IV, or at Daphne's hands morphing into leaves in the swirling *Apollo e Dafne* (1622–25) in Sala III.

Other works by the master include a grim-faced and muscular  *Davide* (1624), thought to be a self-portrait, in Sala II and two lesser works in Sala VI: *Enea e Anchise* (Aeneas and Anchises; 1690–20) and *La Verità* (Truth; 1645–52), a rather strange later work.

The 2nd-century *Satiro Danzante* (Dancing Satyr) in Sala VIII is a Roman copy of an earlier Greek work. But it's the six Caravaggios in this room that are the star turn. These include a dissipated-looking *Bacchus* (1592–95); the strangely beautiful *La Madonna dei Palafrenieri* (Madonna with Serpent; 1605–06); *San Giovanni Battista* (St John the Baptist; 1609–10), probably Caravaggio's last work; the much-loved *Ragazzo col Canestro di Frutta* (Boy with a Basket of Fruit; 1593–95); and  *Davide con la Testa di Golia* (David with the Head of Goliath; 1609–10), a dramatic image where Goliath's severed head is said to be a self-portrait.

Upstairs, the picture collection represents the best of the Tuscan, Venetian, Umbrian and northern European schools. In Sala IX you'll find Raphael's *La Deposizione di Cristo* (Christ Being Taken Down from the Cross; 1507), and his earlier portraits *Ritratto d'uomo* (Portrait of a Man; 1502) and the charming *Dama con Liocorno* (Young Woman with Unicorn; 1506). In the same room are the superb *Adorazione del Bambino* (Adoration of the Christ Child; 1495) by Fra Bartolomeo and Perugino's *Madonna con Bambino* (Madonna and Child; first quarter of the 16th century). Correggio's rather erotic *Danae* (1530–31) is in Sala X, as is Cranach's *Venere e Amore che Reca Il Favo do Miele* (Venus and Cupid with Honeycomb; 1531), with its angel surrounded by bees.

Moving on, Sala XIV boasts two self-portraits of Bernini – one as a young man in 1623 and one painted in 1635 – and Sala XVIII contains two significant works by Reubens: *Pianto sul Cristo Morto* (Lamentation over the Dead Christ; 1602) and

*Susanna e I Vecchioni* (Susanna and the Elders; 1605–07). However, these almost pale into insignificance when seen next to Titian's early masterpiece, *Amor Sacro e Amor Profano* (Sacred and Profane Love; 1514) in Sala XX.

## VILLA BORGHESE Map pp150–1

entrances at Porta Pinciana, Piazzale Flaminio & Pincio (above Piazza del Popolo); h dawn-dusk; g Porta Pinciana

Formerly Cardinal Scipione Borghese's private playground, Villa Borghese is Rome's most famous park. A popular spot for joggers, cyclists, strollers and smoochers, it has kilometres of shaded avenues, hedged walks, planted flowerbeds, gravel paths and roads. The reserved, English-style *Giardino del Lago* in the centre was laid out in the late 18th century, as was *Piazza di Siena*, an amphitheatre used for Rome's top equestrian event in May.

Bike hire is available on Via delle Belle Arti, near the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, and at various other points in the park. Typically, you'll pay €3 per hour for a bike.

## BIOPARCO Map pp150–1

% 06 360 82 11; www.bioparco.it in Italian; Viale del Giardino Zoologico 1; adult/3-12yr €8.50/6.50, incl reptile house €11/9; h 9.30am-6pm Apr-Oct, 9.30am-5pm Nov-Mar; g Bioparco

Amazing but true – in 2006, Rome's zoo was Italy's 10th most-visited museum. Some 747,000 people traipsed round the far-from-inspiring 18-hectare site, gawping at the predictable collection of monkeys, elephants, lions and snakes. Quite frankly there are better ways to spend your money, but if your kids are driving you bonkers or you're crying out for a break from classical art, it's a thought.

## MUSEO CARLO BILOTTI Map pp150–1

% 06 820 59 127; www.museocarlobilotti.it; Viale Fiorello La Guardia; adult/child €4.50/2.50; h 9am-7pm Tue-Sun; g Porta Pinciana

The art collection of billionaire business magnate Carlo Bilotti is housed here, in the Orangery of Villa Borghese. It's a small collection (only 22 pieces), but it's interesting and well presented with explanatory panels in English and Italian. Paintings range from a Warhol portrait of Bilotti's wife and daughter to 18 works by Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978), one of Italy's most important 20th-century artists. There's also a fine

selection of landscapes by Alessandro Poma (1874–1960).

## GALLERIA NAZIONALE D'ARTE MODERNA Map pp150–1

% 06 322 98 221; www.gnam.arti.beniculturali.it; Viale delle Belle Arti 131, entrance for visitors with disabilities at Via Antonio Gramsci 73; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-25yr €6.50/free/3.25; h 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun; g Viale delle Belle Arti; vvv

Not on most people's hit list, the GNAM is well worth a visit. Here, in a vast *belle époque* palace, you'll find works by some of the most important exponents of modern Italian art. There are canvases by the *macchiaioli* (the Italian Impressionists) and the futurists (including Boccioni and Balla), as well as major works by Modigliani and De Chirico. International artists are also represented, with works by Degas, Cezanne, Kandinsky, Klimt, Mondrian and Henry Moore.

The wing to the left of the entrance has been transformed into a sculpture gallery. Pieces in dynamic white marble, such as Canova's majestic *Ercole* (Hercules), contrast dramatically against walls painted in rich, solid colours.

Make sure you take the opportunity to have a drink in the gallery's charming courtyard café.

## MUSEO NAZIONALE ETRUSCO DI VILLA GIULIA Map pp150–1

% 06 322 65 71; www.ticketeria.it; Piazzale di Villa Giulia 9; adult/EU under 18yr & over 65yr/EU 18-25yr €4/free/2; h 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun; g Viale delle Belle Arti

If you're planning on visiting Lazio's Etruscan sites (see p264), or even if you're not, this is the ideal place to bone up on Etruscan history. Italy's finest collection of pre-Roman treasures is bilingually labelled and considerately presented in Pope Julius III's 16th-century pleasure palace. The impressive villa and gardens were designed by a number of architects but owe most to Vignola, Vasari and the artist Ammannat. Michelangelo also chipped in before getting on the wrong side of the irascible pope. It has pretty frescoed loggias and a much-imitated *nymphaeum*.

There are thousands of exhibits here: from extraordinary bronze figurines and black *bucchero* tableware to temple decorations, terracotta vases and even the remains

of a horse-drawn chariot. Most of the items come from Etruscan burial tombs, many of which are in the surrounding Lazio region.

Highlights include the recently restored polychrome terracotta statue of *Apollo* found at Veio and the *Sarcophago degli Sposi* (Sarcophagus of the Betrothed; Sala XI in the second building) taken from a tomb at *Cerveteri* (p267). Both date to the 6th century BC. The finely sculpted sarcophagus was made not for royals, but for a regular husband and wife, and is adorned with a sculpture of the happy couple reclining on its lid.

There is also a dazzling display of sophisticated Etruscan (and later) jewellery.

## PIAZZA DEL POPOLO & AROUND

**PIAZZA DEL POPOLO** Map pp150–1

Flaminio

Perch yourself on a bench in this vast, vibrant square and you'll see all of Rome pass by: commuters rushing to the metro, excitable adolescents, dressed-to-kill shoppers, flagging tourists, buskers and black-clad *carabinieri*.

The piazza was laid out in 1538 at the point of convergence of three roads (Via di Ripetta, Via del Corso and Via del Babuino) which form a trident at what was Rome's northern entrance. In fact, this part of central Rome is today known as Il Tridente.

Characterised by Carlo Rainaldi's twin 17th-century baroque churches, *Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Miracoli* and *Chiesa di Santa Maria in Montesanto*, the square was redesigned in neoclassical style by Giuseppe Valadier in 1823.

On the northern flank, the inner face of the *Porta del Popolo* was decorated by Bernini to celebrate Queen Christina of Sweden's defection to Catholicism. In the centre is an *obelisk* brought by Augustus from Heliopolis, in ancient Egypt, and moved here from the Circo Massimo in the mid-16th century. To the east a ramp leads up to the *Pincio Hill Gardens* (right).

## CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DEL POPOLO

Map pp150–1

06 361 08 36; Piazza del Popolo; 7am–noon & 4–7pm Mon–Sat, 8am–1.30pm & 4.30–7.30pm Sun;

Flaminio

A magnificent repository of art, this is one of Rome's earliest and richest Renaissance churches. The first chapel was built here in

1099 to exorcise the ghost of Nero, who was secretly buried on this spot and whose malicious spirit was supposed to haunt the area. Some 400 years later, in 1472, it was given a major overhaul by Pope Sixtus IV. Pinturicchio was called in to decorate the pope's family chapel, the Cappella Delle Rovere (the first on the right) and, in 1508, to paint a series of frescoes on the ceiling of the apse, itself designed by Bramante. Before you leave the apse take a second to look at the stained-glass windows: crafted by Frenchman Guillaume de Marcillat, they were Rome's first.

Raphael designed the *Cappella Chigi* (the second on the left), dedicated to his patron Agostino Chigi, but never lived to see it completed. Bernini finished the job for him more than 100 years later, contributing statues of Daniel and Habakkuk. The most famous feature, however, is the 17th-century mosaic of a kneeling skeleton, placed there to remind the living of the inevitable end.

But the church's principal calling card is the *Cappella Cerasi* (to the left of the main altar), with its two Caravaggios: the *Conversione di San Paolo* (Conversion of St Paul) and the *Crocifissione di San Pietro* (Crucifixion of St Peter). Of the two, it's the latter that strikes the most, if for nothing else than the brilliant way in which the artist shows the banal awkwardness of the situation. St Peter seems more embarrassed by his position than in pain as three executioners struggle to raise the upturned cross.

## PINCIO HILL GARDENS

Map pp150–1

Flaminio

Overlooking Piazza del Popolo, the 19th-century Pincio Hill Gardens are named after the Pinci family, who owned this part of Rome in the 4th century. There's not much to do up here other than enjoy the lovely views and loaf around the shaded paths. From here you can either strike off to explore Villa Borghese or head up to the *Chiesa della Trinità dei Monti* (p99) at the top of the Spanish Steps.

## VILLA MEDICI

Map pp150–1

06 6 76 11; www.villamedici.it in French & Italian; Viale Trinità dei Monti 1; open for events;

Spagna

Enjoying one of the best addresses in Rome, Villa Medici has been home to the French Academy since 1801. It was originally built

for Cardinal Ricci da Montepulciano in 1540, but Ferdinando dei Medici bought it in 1576 and it remained in Medici hands until Napoleon acquired it and gave it to the French Academy.

The only way to get inside is to visit one of the regular art exhibitions held here. You can, however, visit the *gardens* (admission €7; guided tours in Italian/French 10.30am & 11.40am Sat & Sun) at the weekend.

## FLAMINIO

### AUDITORIUM PARCO DELLA MUSICA

Map pp150–1

06 802 41 281; www.auditorium.com; Viale Pietro de Coubertin 10; guided tours adult/under 26yr/over 65yr €9/5/7; 11am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–8pm Sun, tours depart hourly 11.30am–4.30pm; Viale Tiziano

Inaugurated in December 2002, Rome's €140 million concert complex has proved a musical and architectural success. Architect Renzo Piano's ground-breaking design features three grey, buglike concert halls set round an outdoor 3000-seat amphitheatre and the remains of a 300 BC Roman villa, discovered shortly after construction work began. The complex also boasts one of the capital's best-stocked CD and music bookshops. Guided tours cover the concert halls, amphitheatre (known as the *cavea*) and enormous foyer area, itself home to a small archaeology museum. For more on the Auditorium see p231.

## EXPLORA – MUSEO DEI BAMBINI DI ROMA

Map pp150–1

06 361 37 76; www.mdbr.it; Via Flaminia 82; adult/child €6/7; visits depart at 10am, noon, 3pm & 5pm Tue–Sun Jul & Sep, noon, 3pm & 5pm Tue–Sun Aug, 9.30am, 11.30am, 3pm & 5pm Tue–Fri, 10am, noon, 3pm & 5pm Sat & Sun Oct–Jun;

Flaminio

Rome's only dedicated kids' museum, Explora is aimed at the under-12s. It's set up as a miniature town where children can play at being grown-ups. With everything from a hospital outpatients' department to a TV studio, it's a hands-on, feet-on, full-on experience that your nippers will love. And it runs on solar power.

In order to control the number of visitors, all visits are limited to 1½ hours, with entry times as detailed above. Booking is advisable on weekdays, essential on weekends.

## MUSEO NAZIONALE DELLE ARTI DEL XXI SECOLO (MAXXI)

Map pp150–1

06 321 01 81; Via Guido Reni 10; admission free; exhibitions 11am–7pm Tue–Sun; Via Flaminia

Housed in a former army barracks, and built to an avant-garde design by Anglo-Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid, MAXXI is one of two modern art galleries that the city authorities hoped would electrify Rome's contemporary art scene (the other being *MACRO*, p157). Unfortunately, it's not running at full tilt yet, opening only for temporary exhibitions by contemporary Italian and international artists.

## PONTE MILVIO

Map pp150–1

Ponte Milvio  
A pretty footbridge with a market on its northern side, Ponte Milvio was the scene of one of the great events in Roman history: Constantine's defeat of Maxentius in 312. These days, it's a favourite with love-struck teenagers who come here to leave padlocks chained to the lampposts as a sign of their undying *amore*. It was first built in 109 BC to carry Via Flaminia over the Tiber and survived intact until 1849, when Garibaldi's troops blew it up to stop advancing French soldiers. Pope Pius IX had it rebuilt a year later.

## FORO ITALICO

Map pp130–1

Viale del Foro Italico; Lungotevere Maresciallo Cadorna

At the foot of Monte Mario, the Foro Italico is an impressive Fascist-era sports complex. Designed by the architect Enrico Del Debbio, it remains much as it was originally conceived. A 17m-high marble *obelisk*, inscribed with the words 'Mussolini Dux', stands at the beginning of a broad avenue leading down to the *Stadio dei Marmi*, a running track surrounded by 60 marble nudes, and the *Stadio Olimpico* (p240), Rome's 80,000-seat football stadium. The latter was a later addition, built in 1960 for the Olympic Games and revamped for the 1990 World Cup. It's now home to Rome's two football teams.

## NOMENTANO

Map pp150–1

Piazzale Porta Pia; Via XX Settembre

Porta Pia was Michelangelo's last architectural work, commissioned in 1561. Three centuries later, in 1870, it was the scene of fighting as Italian troops breached the





## 2 Chiesa di Santa Maria del Popolo

Standing on the site where Nero was said to be secretly buried, this sumptuous Renaissance church (p154) is one of Rome's richest. Inside, you'll find frescoes, mosaics and paintings by a who's who of big-name artists including Pinturicchio, Raphael, Bernini and Caravaggio.

## 3 Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia

Italy's finest collection of Etruscan treasures is housed in this beautiful Renaissance villa (p153) on the edge of Villa Borghese. Highlights to look out for include a terracotta statue of *Apollo* and the 6th-century-BC *Sarcophago degli Sposi*, taken from a tomb in Cerveteri.

## 4 Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna

For a change of period, Rome's premier modern art gallery (p153) is the obvious choice. Get past the neoclassical bombast of the exterior and you'll discover an excellent collection, with works by the Italian *macchiaioli* painters, early-20th-century futurists and a host of international artists.

**5 Bioparco** Right in the heart of Villa Borghese, the city zoo (p153) won't appeal to everyone but it's a sure-fire kid-pleaser. There's the usual assembly of monkeys, giraffes, lions and elephants and a number of snack bars where you can buy overpriced *panini* (bread rolls) to feed the ducks.

## 6 Museo e Galleria Borghese

Home to what's hailed as the 'queen of all private art collections', this gallery (p149) is one of Rome's must-see sights. The Bernini sculpture on display here is quite staggering and the rich painting collection includes works by Caravaggio, Botticelli and Raphael. Remember to book your tickets in advance.

## 7 Piazza di Siena

This 18th-century arena (p153) is used to stage Rome's top showjumping event in May. For the rest of the year, it's a good place to flop and regain your strength. Bring your own picnic and watch the impromptu footy games and lunchtime joggers.

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to recommend a travel experience.

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## SHOPPING

### top picks

- Ai Monasteri (p164)
- Confetteria Moriondo & Gariglio (p161)
- Enoteca al Parlamento (p170)
- Fausto Santini (p175)
- Francesco Biasia (p172)
- Ghezzi (p162)
- Sermoneta (p172)
- Retro (p164)
- TAD (p167)
- Volpetti (p176)

What is special about shopping in Rome is the sense of tradition and individuality. Fiercely unique, Rome's shops, studios and boutiques make retail therapy supremely diverting. Wander the backstreets and you'll find yourself glancing into dusty workshops where framers, ironmongers, furniture restorers and basket weavers ply their trade as their parents did before them.

Rome's shopping districts are packed with jewel-like boutiques, elegant designer stores, *enoteche* (wine shops) lined with thousands of glinting bottles, and places specialising in a particular item, such as ties, tights, gloves or hats. While in some places the décor has not had a rethink since they opened in the 19th century, others could have stepped directly from the pages of a style magazine. There's a seeming absence of chain stores, at least in comparison to other European capitals. This isn't strictly the real picture: some shops can be found on every major shopping street, such as clothes shop Benetton and lingerie sellers Yanamay and Intimissimi. But, being Italian chains, they don't spoil the illusion too much. There's also an attractive lack of malls – because of the difficulties in constructing new buildings in the city centre, malls tend to be on the edge of town. It all seems bewitchingly bygone to those used to chain stores and malls dominating city centres.

The *bella figura* (loosely translated as 'looking good') is paramount to most Romans, and they'll spend a lot of their free time shopping to maintain this. Men's and women's fashions tend to be either elegant and conservative or flashy and trashy – there's something of the Madonna-whore complex about the Italian fashion industry. Whatever the style, Italy's reputation for quality is deserved and Rome is a splendid place to shop for designer clothes, shoes and leather goods.

Rome has long been viewed as secondary to Milan as a fashion city, but it's significant that Valentino chose to show his 45th-anniversary *haute couture* collection here, and Fendi opened its seven-storey, neoclassical flagship store here in the glorious Palazzo Fendi in 2005. The grid of streets around Via dei Condotti and Piazza di Spagna is definitely high-fashion central: all fashion's biggest names are here, and even if you can't afford to buy, it's fun to wander. Designer homewares are also an Italian speciality and many shops focus on covetable stainless-steel kitchenware, glass baubles and cutting-edge interior design.

While prices here are not as exorbitant as they are in, say, London or Paris, they're still not cheap. To grab a bargain you should try to time your visit to coincide with the *saldi* (sales). Winter sales run from early January to mid-February and summer sales from July to early September.

Most shops accept credit cards and many accept travellers cheques. Note that you're required by Italian law to have a *ricevuta* (receipt) for your purchases (see p297).

Finally, a warning: be prepared for that strange breed of Roman shop assistant for whom customers are little more than an unwanted intrusion. Remember that they have an important call to a friend to complete before they can spare the time to be grumpy with you.

## SHOPPING AREAS

All the big-gun designers strut their stuff in the area between Piazza di Spagna and Via del Corso (Map p168). The great Italian and international names are represented, as well as many more off-centre designers, selling clothes, shoes and accessories, glitter and va va voom. We're willing to lay bets that there are more immaculate shop assistants per square metre here than in any other place. The centre of it all is Via dei Condotti, but there's also lots of high fashion in Via Borgognona, Via Frattina and Via della Vite. Heading up to Piazza del Popolo, Via del Babuino is also full of glamorous boutiques.

Moving down a euro or two, Via Nazionale (Map pp90–1), Via del Corso (Map p168), Via dei Giubbonari (Map pp74–5) and Via Cola di Rienzo (Map pp130–1) are good for midrange clothing stores.

For small fashion boutiques and vintage clothes, head for Via del Governo Vecchio (Map pp74–5), a central yet bohemian street that runs from a small square just off Piazza Navona towards the river. Other great places to discover one-off, froufrou boutiques are Via del Pellegrino and around Campo de' Fiori (Map pp74–5), and in the Monti area: Via del Boschetto and Via dei Soldati (Map pp90–1). Trastevere (Map pp122–3) also harbours some interesting, offbeat shops in its narrow lanes.

For antiques shopping, Via dei Coronari (Map pp74–5), Via Margutta (Map p168), Via Giulia (Map pp74–5) and Via dei Banchi Vecchi (Map pp74–5) are the best places to look. The quality is good but prices are high.

## OPENING HOURS

Many larger shops now open 9am to 7.30pm (or 9.30am to 8pm) Monday to Saturday; some also open on Sundays, typically 11am to 1pm and 4pm to 7pm. However, traditional opening hours – 9am to 1pm and 3.30pm to 7.30pm (or 4pm to 8pm) Monday to Saturday – are still adhered to by many family-run places. Small boutiques might not open until 10am and afternoon hours might also be shortened. Many shops are closed on Monday mornings and for at least two weeks in August. Hours often change in summer, with more places closing at lunchtime and opening later in the evening.

If opening hours are given with a review it's because they differ from these norms.

## CENTRO STORICO PANTHEON & AROUND

**ALBERTA GLOVES** Map pp74–5 Accessories

☎ 06 678 57 53; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 18;

☪ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

As snug as, well, a glove, this tiny, crammed shop meets every occasion: elbow-length silk gloves for that special evening; crochet for your first communion; tan-coloured driving gloves for touring the Alps in your roadster; black kid-leather gloves for icy morning commutes; black fingerless numbers for kinky nights out. Gentlemen will also find a good range of braces.

**FELTRINELLI** Map pp74–5 Books

☎ 06 688 03 248; Largo di Torre Argentina 5;

☪ or j Largo di Torre Argentina

Italy's most famous book-seller (and publisher) has numerous outlets across the capital. This one has a wide range of books (in Italian) on art, photography, cinema and history, as well as an extensive selection of Italian literature and travel guides in various languages, including English. There's also a small English books section and a café (where you can take books for a read before you purchase). Other Feltrinelli bookshops are at Galleria Alberto Sordi (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 677 55 001; Piazza Colonna 31), Viale Giulio Cesare 88

# top picks

## SHOPPING STRIPS

- Via del Governo Vecchio (Map pp74–5) – for vintage and independent fashion
- Via del Pellegrino (Map pp74–5) – lots of small boutiques, jewellers and antique shops
- Via dei Condotti (Map p168) – all the big-name designers; window displays are works of art, and shoppers are entertaining too
- Via del Boschetto (Map pp90–1) – small independent boutiques specialising in fashion, jewellery and ephemera
- Via del Corso (Map p168 & Map pp90–1) – Rome's answer to London's Oxford St; head here for big-name Italian and other chains

(Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 37 72 411) and Via VE Orlando 81 (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 487 01 71), where you'll also find the international branch (see p175).

## HERDER BUCHHANDLUNG

Map pp74–5 Books

☎ 06 679 46 28; Piazza di Montecitorio 117;

☪ Via del Corso

Herder Buchhandlung is a historic German bookshop that specialises in theological and philosophical works. But even students of Kant like a break, and you'll now find Harry Potter, a small selection of Penguin books in English and some children's books.

**DAVIDE CENCI** Map pp74–5 Clothing

☎ 06 699 06 81; Via di Campo Marzio 1-7; ☪ Via del Corso

If your look is immaculate conservative elegance (blazers, slacks and brogues in summer; tweed and flannels in winter) and you never get creased, you'll love Davide Cenci. This store carries a selection of top Italian and international labels – such as Tod's and Ralph Lauren – for men, women and children.

**CONFETTERIA MORIONDO & GARIGLIO** Map pp74–5 Food

☎ 06 699 08 56; Via del Piè di Marmo 21-22; h Oct-Apr; ☪ or j Largo di Torre Argentina Breathe in deeply as you enter the rich-red interior of this historic confectioner's, which resembles something from a story-book. Rows of handmade chocolates and bonbons (more than 80 varieties) lie in

## HOLY SOCKS!

The streets south of the Pantheon are busy with window-shopping nuns. A string of ecclesiastical shops has clerics from all over the world trying out ceremonial capes for their swish factor, eyeing up lecterns and stocking up on suitably stern undies. If you want an icon or a pair of (glorious!) cardinal's socks (available in poppy red or ecclesiastical purple), Via dei Cestari is where to head, though bear in mind that idle browsing is not the done thing. **Ghezzi** (Map pp74–5; % 06 686 97 44; Via dei Cestari 32–33) is the least daunting of the shops, but if nothing but the pope's tailors will do, try **Anniabile Gamarelli** (Map pp74–5; % 06 680 13 14; Via di Santa Chiara 34). For a life-sized statue of the Virgin Mary or a host of smaller icons, try **Statuaria – Arte Sacra** (Map pp74–5; % 06 679 37 53; Via dei Cestari 2).

ceremonial splendour in old-fashioned glass cabinets. Moriondo and Gariglio were Torinese cousins who moved to Rome after the unification of Italy, and many of the recipes used today have been handed down from the 19th century.

### STILO FETTI Map pp74–5 Gifts

% 06 678 96 62; Via degli Orfani 82; **G** or **j** Largo di Torre Argentina  
An old-fashioned shop where assistants wear ties and know the exact location of every item, Stilo Fetti is a throwback to the days when people wrote with pen and ink. Here you'll find racks of fountain pens and sleek leather briefcases.

### LA CHIAVE Map pp74–5 Gifts, Homewares

% 06 683 08 848; Largo delle Stimate 28; **G** or **j** Largo di Torre Argentina  
La Chiave is one of Rome's best shops for ethnic bits and pieces (ceramics, furniture, hammocks, paper lanterns and so on). Just off Largo di Torre Argentina, it's reasonably priced and ideal if you're on a gift hunt.

### DE SANCTIS Map pp74–5 Homewares

% 06 688 06 810; Piazza di Pietra 24; **H** closed Tue morning; **G** Via del Corso  
De Sanctis – in business since 1890 – has moved from its Piazza Navona spot to this smaller shop near the Pantheon. It has some impressive southern Italian ceramics, with sunbursts of colour decorating candleholders, vases, tiles, urns and plates.

### SPAZIO SETTE Map pp74–5 Homewares

% 06 688 04 261; Via dei Barbieri 7; **G** or **j** Largo di Torre Argentina  
Even if you don't buy any of the designer homewares at Spazio Sette, it's worth popping in to see the funky modern furniture set against 17th-century frescoes. Formerly home to a cardinal, the *palazzo* (mansion)

now houses a three-floor shop full of quality furniture, kitchenware, tableware and gifts.

### RINASCITA Map pp74–5 Music

% 06 699 22 436; Via delle Botteghe Oscure 5; **G** Piazza Venezia  
Adjoining the bookshop of the same name, long-running Rinascita is best known for its contemporary and world music. However, you'll also find jazz, blues, classical and electronic CDs, as well as videos, DVDs and an in-store ticket agency.

### SCIÙ SCIÀ Map pp74–5 Shoes

% 06 688 06 777; Via di Torre Argentina 8; **G** or **j** Largo di Torre Argentina  
Not much bigger than the shoe boxes that clutter the interior, Sciù Scià sells its own range of handmade ladies' shoes and multi-coloured suede bags. The vibe is sensible yet chic, ranging from classic pumps to comfortable sandals.

### AS ROMA STORE Map pp74–5 Sportswear

% 06 692 00 642; Piazza Colonna 360; **G** Via del Corso  
The fortunes of AS Roma, one of Rome's two football teams, have made sorry reading in recent years. Boost the team's coffers by buying a replica shirt or a Roma key ring at this, one of their official club shops, which also sells game tickets.

### BARTOLUCCI Map pp74–5 Toys

% 06 691 90 894; Via dei Pastini 98; **G** Via del Corso del Rinascimento  
You can't miss this wonderful toy shop, where everything's crafted in pine by the Bartolucci family. It's guarded by a cycling Pinocchio and a full-sized wooden motorbike, and within are thousands of ticking clocks, beautiful cars, planes and more Pinoccchios than you're ever likely to see in one place. You can have wooden signs

(hang your hat on Pinocchio's nose) personalised with your name.

### TARTARUGHE Map pp74–5 Women's Clothing

% 06 679 22 40; Via del Piè di Marmo 17; **G** or **j** Largo di Torre Argentina  
Ask a stylish Roman woman where she got her classic-yet-individual outfit and she may well point you in Tartarughe's direction. This small boutique sells grown-up clothes that are just frivolous enough to make them interesting. Designer Susanna Liso's outfits are ideal for a special occasion, with tops that are whispers of chiffon, multicoloured dresses and strikingly cut jackets.

## PIAZZA NAVONA & AROUND

### TRONCARELLI Map pp74–5 Accessories

% 06 687 93 20; Via della Cuccagna 15; **G** Corso del Rinascimento  
Romans really cut a dash in a hat, but don't fret: you too can learn. There might not be the demand that there was when Signore Troncarelli opened his shop here in 1857, but it's still a thriving trade. Become an Englishman abroad in a panama or channel French-Resistance chic in a beret.

### CASALI Map pp74–5 Antiques

% 06 678 35 15; Via dei Coronari 115; **G** Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Via dei Coronari's shops mostly specialise in antique furniture or marble, but Casali deals in antique prints, many delicately hand-coloured. The shop is small but the choice is not, ranging from 16th-century botanical manuscripts to €3 postcard prints of Rome.

### COMICS BAZAR Map pp74–5 Antiques

% 06 688 02 923; Via dei Banchi Vecchi 127–128; **G** Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Not a comic in sight – rather, this attic-like treasure-trove is crammed to its rafters with expensive antiques. Wade through the lamps that hang everywhere like jungle creepers and you'll find furniture dating from the 19th century to the 1940s, including a large selection of Viennese furniture by Thonet. It's difficult to spot the shop assistant among it all.

### NARDECCHIA Map pp74–5 Antiques

% 06 686 93 18; Piazza Navona 25; **G** Corso del Rinascimento  
The enchanting antique prints sold at Nardecchia, a venerable institution on Piazza

Navona, range from expensive 18th-century etchings of Rome by Giovanni Battista Piranesi to more affordable 19th-century panoramas.

### LA PROCURE Map pp74–5 Books

% 06 683 07 598; Piazza di San Luigi dei Francesi 23; **G** Corso del Rinascimento  
This French bookshop nestles next to France's church in Rome, the **Chiesa di San Luigi dei Francesi** (p80). Browse the literature, fiction, nonfiction, general interest and children's books before popping into the church to see the paintings by Caravaggio.

### LIBRERIA BABELE Map pp74–5 Books

% 06 687 66 28; Via dei Banchi Vecchi 116; **G** Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Rome's only gay-and-lesbian bookshop, Libreria Babele has helpful staff and a well-stocked selection of books, magazines and videos, some of which are in English, as well as other essentials such as butch

## CLOTHING SIZES

### Women's clothing

Aus/UK	8	10	12	14	16	18
Europe	36	38	40	42	44	46
Japan	5	7	9	11	13	15
USA	6	8	10	12	14	16

### Women's shoes

Aus/USA	5	6	7	8	9	10
Europe	35	36	37	38	39	40
France only	35	36	38	39	40	42
Japan	22	23	24	25	26	27
UK	3½	4½	5½	6½	7½	8½

### Men's clothing

Aus	92	96	100	104	108	112
Europe	46	48	50	52	54	56
Japan	S	M	M	L		
UK/USA	35	36	37	38	39	40

### Men's shirts (collar sizes)

Aus/Japan	38	39	40	41	42	43
Europe	38	39	40	41	42	43
UK/USA	15	15½	16	16½	17	17½

### Men's shoes

Aus/UK	7	8	9	10	11	12
Europe	41	42	43	44½	46	47
Japan	26	27	27½	28	29	30
USA	7½	8½	9½	10½	11½	12½

Measurements approximate only, try before you buy

## TAXES & REFUNDS

Non-EU residents who spend more than €155 at shops with a 'Tax Free for Tourists' sticker are entitled to a tax rebate. You'll need to fill in a form in the shop and get it stamped by customs as you leave Italy. For more details, see p297.

Barbie dolls. To discover Rome's pinker side, head here.

**LIBRERIA SORGENTE** Map pp74-5 **Books**  
% 06 688 06 950; Piazza Navona 90; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

If you're in need of literature and nonfiction books in Spanish or Portuguese, check out Libreria Sorgente, next door to the Spanish Istituto Cervantes.

**AI MONASTERI** Map pp74-5 **Cosmetics**  
% 06 688 02 783; Corso del Rinascimento 72; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

So this is how monks pay the rent. This apothecary-like, wonderfully scented shop sells herbal essences, spirits, soaps, balms, deodorants, antiwrinkle creams, bubble bath and liqueurs, all created by monks and beautifully packaged with the sense of another era. Even the propolis is made from holy bees. To boost your love life try the Elixir d'Amore (Elixir of Love), though quite why monks are expert at this is anyone's guess.

**CASAMARIA** Map pp74-5 **Cosmetics**  
% 06 683 30 74; Via della Scrofa 71; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

It looks like any old *profumerie* (perfume shop), but it's been plying its trade for almost a century and stocks all the leading cosmetic brands and hundreds of lesser-known names. Straining shelves line the shop like an old-fashioned pharmacy, while the knowledgeable staff show admirable athleticism in scaling the towering ladders.

**OFFICINA PROFUMO FARMACEUTICA DI SANTA MARIA NOVELLA**

Map pp74-5 **Cosmetics**  
% 06 687 96 08; Corso del Rinascimento 47; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

Step in for the scent of the place, if nothing else. This bewitching shop – the catchily named Roman branch of one of Italy's oldest pharmacies – sells exquisite lotions

and potions under a Murano-glass chandelier. Founded in Florence in 1612 by the Dominican monks of Santa Maria Novella, many of its cosmetics are based on original 17th-century herbal recipes.

**ALDO FEFÈ** Map pp74-5 **Gifts**  
% 06 688 035 85; Via della Stelletta 20b; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

Started by the owner's father in 1932, this tiny arched workshop produces beautifully hand-painted paper. Products include wrapping paper, little chests of drawers, writing paper, picture frames and photo albums, among other things.

**RETRO** Map pp74-5 **Homewares**  
% 06 681 92 746; www.retrodesign.it; Piazza del Fico 20; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

Rainbow rows of 1950s and '60s glass vases line the back of this shop, while elsewhere Bakelite jewellery and classic design pieces glint invitingly alongside one-offs such as 1940s hats decorated with roses. A shop to make design lovers swoon.

**SISTERS** Map pp74-5 **Homewares**  
% 06 687 84 97; Via dei Banchi Vecchi 143; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Interior-design emporium Sisters is as much a gallery as a shop, with marble busts juxtaposed against black-and-white chess-patterned sofas. Think Andy Warhol meets Gian Lorenzo Bernini and you'll get the picture. And the price.

**TEMPI MODERNI** Map pp74-5 **Jewellery**  
% 06 687 70 07; Via del Governo Vecchio 108; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Tempi Moderni opened in 1976, and the kaftans and look-at-me ties appear to date from then. But the reason to shop here is the superb vintage costume jewellery: wonderful '20s and '30s Bakelite pieces, Art Nouveau and Art Deco trinkets, Pop Art gems, 19th-century resin brooches, and pieces by couturiers such as Chanel, Dior and Balenciaga.

**ONLY HEARTS** Map pp74-5 **Lingerie**  
% 06 686 46 47; Piazza della Chiesa Nuova 21; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Only Hearts sells sexy whispers of underwear in delicate shades, with some retro styling, and some clothes and shoes to complement the fluttery smalls. There are branches at

Via Vittoria 76 (Map p168; % 06 679 34 46) and Via del Boschetto 78a (Map pp90-1; % 06 454 30 993).

**AL SOGNO** Map pp74-5 **Toys**  
% 06 686 41 98; Piazza Navona 53; h 10am-10pm; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

Even from outside you know that Al Sogno is more than your average toy shop, with elaborate window displays featuring elegant Edwardian dolls. Inside is an expensive wonderland, the mezzanine floor straining under the weight of dolls and stuffed animals. The museum-like don't-touch atmosphere is best suited to well-behaved kids.

**BERTÈ** Map pp74-5 **Toys**  
% 06 687 50 11; Piazza Navona 107-111; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

On Piazza Navona, this famous toy shop specialises in beautifully sculpted wooden dolls and puppets, but has a great mish-mash of other stuff, from tractors to push-chairs and doll houses to tea sets. Good for a pre-/post-sightseeing bribe/reward.

**CITTÀ DEL SOLE** Map pp74-5 **Toys**  
% 06 688 03 805; Via della Scrofa 65; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento

Every parent's dream – Città del Sole is a treasure-trove of imaginative, well-made toys that are educational and creative. With few electronic gadgets in sight, this is the

## GLAMOUR ON GOVERNO VECCHIO

*Luciana Iannace started out designing costumes for the theatre before opening her boutique, Maga Morgana (p166), on Via del Governo Vecchio 35 years ago, and her designs are still popular with actors. She opened another branch in 2000.*

### What do you specialise in?

Here it is mainly party and wedding dresses, and some day dresses. I sell shoes and accessories to go with the dresses. I both make and buy the clothes and other things that I sell – I create a cocktail of fashion! Many people come here to buy wedding dresses. They want something different and unconventional. Visitors from London come here to buy hats for Ascot. The clothes are not expensive, but not cheap either. On Monday afternoons, at 5pm, I give tea to people who come to the shop. If it's raining, I don't open, because no-one goes shopping in the rain in Rome.

### Why is Via del Governo Vecchio in particular so full of boutiques?

Originally this street was a place to keep horses, but then the stallholders of the great Porta Portese flea market used it as a *deposito* – they kept the things for the market here. So then the vintage shops developed. At first there were only vintage shops, but slowly there are more and more individual designers.

### You must have seen a lot of changes here. How do you think Rome is changing?

I think it's more touristic now. I feel afraid because I think Rome is losing some of her personality. It's becoming like other capitals. You can get good-quality things, but less and less. There are still lots of workshops, but not as many as there used to be. The Porta Portese market – once it was a real old-fashioned junk market, now most things to buy there are new. Times have changed.

place to remember the toys you played with as a kid and stock up for Christmas. There's another branch at Via Buonarroti 6 (Map pp90-1; % 06 489 30 292), near Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II.

**DISTANES** Map pp74-5 **Vintage Clothing**  
% 06 683 33 63; Via della Chiesa Nuova 17; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A laid-back shop that specialises in women's vintage clothes and accessories from the 1960s and '70s, Distanes exudes a retro charm reminiscent of the great tie-dye years.

**OMERO & CECILIA** Map pp74-5 **Vintage Clothing**  
% 06 683 35 06; Via del Governo Vecchio 110; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Another splendid example in this street of vintage shops. A tunnel of a place, stashed full of a great array of leather bags, shoes, cool scarves, coats and dresses, this is a browser's heaven.

**VESTITI USATI CINZIA** Map pp74-5 **Vintage Clothing**  
% 06 686 17 91; Via del Governo Vecchio 45; h 10am-8pm Mon-Sat, 2-8pm Sun; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Cinzia remains one of the best vintage shops on this street. Jackets (in leather, denim, corduroy and linen), slouchy boots, screen-printed T-shirts, vintage skirts and suede coats crowd the walls.

## JOSEPHINE DE HUERTAS & CO

Map pp74-5 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 687 65 86; Via del Governo Vecchio 68;

📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

For strappy heels and floaty dresses, try this elegant boutique. It stocks Italian designers, including Missoni and Alberta Ferretti, and international designers from Paul & Joe to Anya Hindmarch. There's another store around the corner at Via di Parione 19.

## MAGA MORGANA

Map pp74-5 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 687 99 95; Via del Governo Vecchio 27;

📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Maga Morgana, an independent boutique, stocks a mix of brightly coloured knitwear, woollen wraps, Minnie Mouse shoes and flimsy frocks. Some are Luciana Iannace's own designs (see p165 for an interview with the designer); other items are sourced from Paris, Florence and elsewhere. Head down the road to [Via del Governo Vecchio 98](#) (Map pp74-5; ☎ 06 687 80 95) for silk and wedding dresses.

## CAMPO DE' FIORI & AROUND IBIZ - ARTIGIANATO IN CUOIO

Map pp74-5 Accessories

☎ 06 683 07 297; Via dei Chiavari 39; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Elisa Nepi and her father make exquisite, good-quality leather goods, including bags, belts and sandals, in simple but classy designs and myriad colours. You can sometimes see Elisa working in the shop. If you take a sketch along, they can create something to your own design.

## MONDELLO OTTICA

Map pp74-5 Accessories

☎ 06 686 19 55; Via del Pellegrino 97-98; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

If you're in Rome, you need shades. To fit in with the in-crowd, head here for the hippest brands. A sparkling white temple of sunglasses, Mondello Ottica has frames by leading designers, including Anne et Valentin, I.a.Eyeworks, Cutler and Gross, and the Belgian designer Theo. Prescription glasses can be ready the same day.

## RAINBOW BELTS

Map pp74-5 Accessories

☎ 06 686 40 62; Via dei Giubbonari 61; j Via Arenula

Whether your style is rhinestone-studded, python-skinned, large and black or chain-

linked, this small shop – a forest of leather straps, all made in Florence – will have a *cintura* (belt) to suit you.

## LIBRERIA DEL VIAGGIATORE

Map pp74-5 Books

☎ 06 688 01 048; Via del Pellegrino 78; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

If Rome is only a stop on your Grand Tour, this beguiling bookshop is a must. Small but world-encompassing, it's crammed with guides and travel literature in various languages and has a huge range of maps, including hiking maps.

## MARCOAURELIO

Map pp74-5 Jewellery

☎ 06 686 55 70; Via del Pellegrino 48; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

The extraordinary handmade pieces at this small jeweller's often take organic, nature-inspired forms: lizards, seashells, even dogs inspire the shapes and styles. Beaten gold, silver and copper bracelets look like ancient treasures that you might find in a nearby museum.

## BORINI

Map pp74-5 Shoes

☎ 06 687 56 70; Via dei Pettinari 86-87; j Via Arenula

City girls in the know pile into this reassuringly unglitzy shop to try on the cool, candy-coloured shoes. Whatever is fashionable this season, be it wedge heels or winklepickers, Borini will have it, at reasonable prices and in a cover-every-eventuality rainbow palette.

## LOCO

Map pp74-5 Shoes

☎ 06 688 08 216; Via dei Baullari 22; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Shoe fetishists should hotfoot it to Loco. More a trendsetter than fashion follower, it's small, but big in attitude, with an interesting mix of original shoes by international and Italian designers.

## POSTO ITALIANO

Map pp74-5 Shoes

☎ 06 686 93 73; Via dei Giubbonari 37a; j Via Arenula

Posto Italiano provides a showcase for a number of emerging Italian designers while also stocking more established brands. Sexy, feline sandals share shelf space with coloured clogs and Clarks desert boots.

## BAULLÀ

Map pp74-5 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 686 76 70; Via dei Baullari 37; 📍 Corso

Vittorio Emanuele II

Baullà sells classic women's clothes and some accessories – all understated, informal chic of exceptional quality. Expect beautiful knitwear, linen jackets, jewel-bright chenille scarves and a selection of original bags and shoes.

## ETHIC

Map pp74-5 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 683 01 063; Piazza B Cairoli 11-12; h 10am-8pm Tue-Sat, noon-8pm Sun & Mon; j Via Arenula

With clothes that fall just the right side of boho, this is one of Italy's most individual women's clothing chains, with retro-influenced, original, bold designs. Despite the tinge of hippy-dippy chic, clothes are eminently wearable, in interesting colours, fabrics and designs.

## LEI

Map pp74-5 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 687 54 32; Via dei Giubbonari 103; j Via Arenula

Lei is the place for girls who like a bit of high-class frivolity at not-too-outrageous prices. The racks are filled with pretty party frocks, unusual tops and T-shirts, and there are delicious-looking shoes from brands as diverse as Camper and Katherine Hamnett. There's another branch at [Via Nazionale 88](#) (Map pp90-1; ☎ 06 482 17 00).

## NUYORICA

Map pp74-5 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 688 91 243; Piazza Pallarola 36; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Worship at this shrine to contemporary chic, with its Balenciaga, Marc Jacobs and Chloé clothes, shoes and handbags. It namechecks all the hippest mainstream designers and is worth a browse to sigh over, if not to buy. [Nuyorica Roots](#) (☎ 06 997 00 829; Via del Pellegrino 15) is around the corner, with a fine array of 'it' bags and too-hip-to-smile sales assistants.

## JEWISH GHETTO

MORESCO OTTICA

Map pp74-5 Accessories

☎ 06 688 05 079; Via dei Falegnami 23; j Via Arenula

Flaminio and you'll miss Moresco, a tiny optician's stocking frames by many major labels – Gucci, Chanel, Persol, Web and Luxottica to name a few. You can have your

eyes tested and the friendly proprietor will organise prescriptions in a couple of hours.

## LEONE LIMENTANI

Map pp74-5 Homewares

☎ 06 688 06 686; basement, Via del Portico

d'Ottavia 47; j Via Arenula

Family-run for seven generations, Leone Limentani has a huge, rambling choice of kitchenware and tableware, expensive porcelain and knick-knacks, crockery, cutlery and crystal, all at bargain prices.

## VIA DEL CORSO & AROUND INTERNATIONAL MARE BOOKSHOP

Map p168 Books

☎ 06 361 20 91; Via del Vantaggio 19; m Flaminio

Ahoy there. Specialising in everything *mare* (sea) related, this friendly bookshop has maritime books in Italian, English and French, nautical charts, binoculars, pirate flags, model yachts, posters, Lonely Planet guidebooks, videos and CD-ROMs. The corner bar is an added bonus.

## DIESEL

Map p168 Clothing

☎ 06 678 39 33; Via del Corso 186; 📍 Via del Corso

Diesel, purveyor of low-slung jeans and inventive, clubby clothes, is an Italian brand, and its Roman flagship store has a good selection of what makes the self-consciously hip hordes keep coming back. There are branches at [Via del Babuino 94](#) (Map p168; ☎ 06 693 80 053) and [Via Cola di Rienzo 245](#) (Map pp130-1).

## MATEROZZOLI

Map p168 Cosmetics

☎ 06 688 92 686; Piazza San Lorenzo in Lucina 5;

h 10am-1.30pm Mon, 10am-1.30pm & 3-7.30pm

Tue-Sat; 📍 Via del Corso

Materozzoli, with a beautiful Art Deco front, is the sort of shop where Bertie Wooster would send Jeeves to stock up on toiletries before a weekend in the country. With a wide range of perfumes, shaving tackle, make-up and hairbrushes, it has everything one might need for one's toilet.

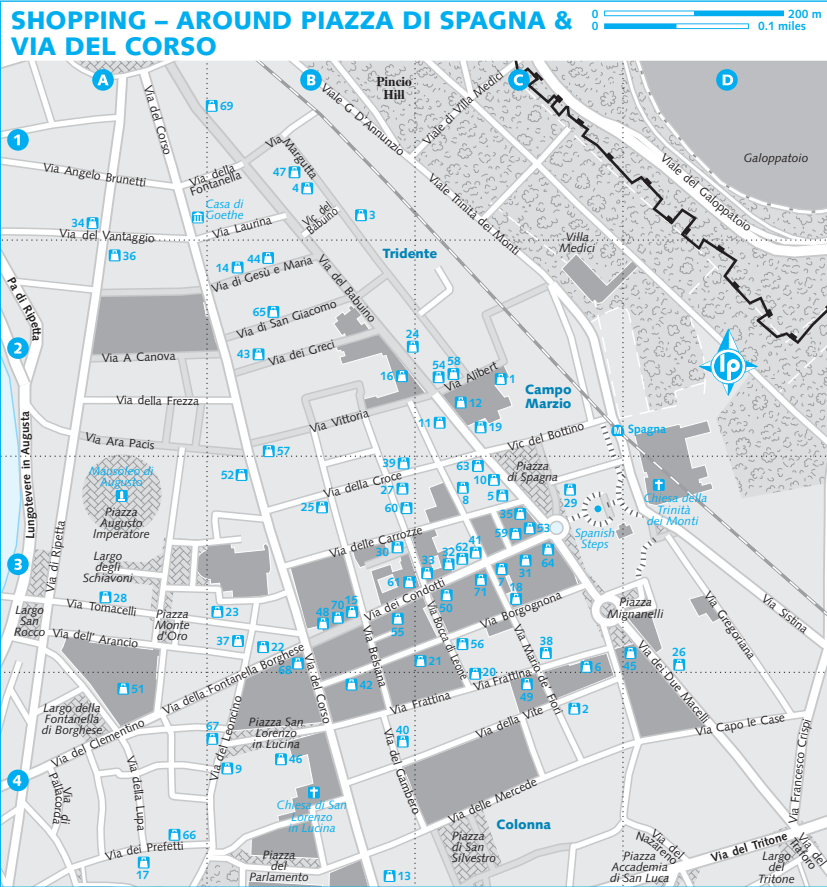
## TAD

Map p168 Department Store

☎ 06 360 01 679; Via di San Giacomo 5;

m Flaminio/Spagna

TAD is a conceptual department store that sells an entire lifestyle. Here you can buy designer clothes by Chloé, Marc



Jacobs and Balenciaga, have a haircut, buy scent and flowers, and then furnish your apartment with designer furniture – from wooden daybeds to silk cushions and Perspex dining chairs. Don't forget to pick up hip soundtracks to your perfect life from the CD rack. The serene courtyard café offers appropriately stylish Italian-Asian morsels of food, and you can round off your immersion in all things TAD with a piece of cake.

**TEBRO** Map p168 Department Store  
 % 06 687 34 41; Via dei Prefetti 46-54; Via del Corso

Since 1867 this upmarket department store has been keeping wealthy locals in linen, underwear and nightwear. It's from a gentler

era: styles are staid, quality is tiptop, service is courteous.

**TEICHER** Map p168 Food

% 06 687 14 49; Piazza San Lorenzo in Lucina; Via del Corso  
 This is one of Rome's many temples to food, so wander in, breathe deeply and select from cheese, hams, pickles, pestos and so on. There are also a select few ready dishes, such as aubergine (eggplant) *parmigiana*.

**CAMPO MARZIO DESIGN** Map p168 Gifts  
 % 06 688 07 877; Via di Campo Marzio 41; Via del Corso

This is a shop that's hard to pass by: step in to revitalise your accessories or to pick up a present. You'll find leather-bound

## SHOPPING – AROUND PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & VIA DEL CORSO

SHOPPING			
Alinari.....	1 C2	Flos Arteluce.....	24 B2
Anglo-American Bookshop.....	2 C4	Focacci.....	25 B3
Animalier e Oltre.....	3 B1	Francesco Biasia.....	26 D3
Artemide.....	4 B1	Fratelli Fabbi.....	27 B3
AVC by Adriana V Campanile.....	5 C3	Furla.....	29 C3
Brighenti.....	6 C3	Gianni Versace.....	30 B3
Bulgari.....	7 C3	Gucci.....	31 C3
C.U.C.I.N.A.....	8 C3	Gucci Jewellery.....	32 C3
Campo Marzio Design.....	9 B4	Hermes.....	33 C3
D&G.....	10 C3	International Mare Bookshop.....	34 A1
De Bach.....	11 C2	Just Cavalli.....	35 C3
Diesel.....	12 C2	L'Offattorio.....	36 A2
Diesel.....	13 B4	L.A.R.....	37 B3
Discount dell'Alta Moda.....	14 B2	La Cicogna.....	38 C3
Dolce & Gabbana.....	15 B3	La Coppella Storta.....	39 B3
Emporio Armani.....	16 B2	La Corona.....	40 B4
Emoteca al Parlamento.....	17 A4	La Perla.....	41 C3
Ermenegildo Zegna.....	18 C3	Laura Biagiotti.....	42 B4
Etro.....	19 C2	Lion Bookshop.....	43 B2
Fausto Santini.....	20 C4	Luisella Mariotti.....	44 B2
Fendi.....	21 C3	Mandarina Duck.....	45 D3
Fendi.....	22 B3	Materozzoli.....	46 B4
Ferrari Store.....	23 B3	Maurizio Grossi.....	47 B1
		Max & Co.....	48 B3
		MaxMara.....	49 C4
		MaxMara.....	50 C3
		Mercato delle Stampe.....	51 A4
		Messaggerie Musicali.....	52 B3
		Missoni.....	53 C3
		Miu Miu.....	54 C2
		Modigliani.....	55 B3
		Moschino.....	56 C3
		Only Hearts.....	57 B2
		Pollicina.....	58 C2
		Prada.....	59 C3
		Rocobarocco.....	60 B3
		Salvatore Ferragamo (Men).....	61 B3
		Salvatore Ferragamo (Women).....	62 C3
		Sergio Rossi.....	63 C3
		Sermoneta.....	64 C3
		TAD.....	65 B2
		Tebro.....	66 A4
		Teichner.....	67 B4
		Tod's.....	68 B3
		Touring Club Italiano.....	69 B1
		Trussardi.....	70 B3
		Valentino.....	71 C3

notebooks, handbags and folders in Pop Art colours, and gift-worthy pens in myriad colours and designs.

**LA COPPOLA STORTA** Map p168 Hats  
 % 06 678 58 24; Via della Croce; 2-8pm Mon, 11am-8pm Tue-Sat, 1.30-7.30pm Sun; Spagna  
 No-one actually wears these flat caps (think Robert de Niro in the flashback bits of *The Godfather*) in Sicily anymore, but damn are they cool, and here you can get them in every imaginable colour and variety (and even for your dog). There's another branch at Via del Piè di Marmo 4 (Map pp74-5; % 06 679 58 01).

**L.A.R.** Map p168 Homewares  
 % 06 687 81 75; Via del Leoncino 29; Via del Corso

Lamps have been created here by artisans since 1938, in materials such as wood, brass and parchment. Their creations look like vintage finds – from great white cylinders to huge tartan centrepieces. If you want to design a lamp, these are the people to talk to.

**LUISELLA MARIOTTI** Map p168 Jewellery  
 % 06 32 01 320; Via di Gesù e Maria 20a; 3.30-7.30pm Mon, 10.30am-7.30pm Tue-Fri, 10.30am-2.30pm Sat; Flaminio

With semiprecious stones, crystals, glass and nickel-free metals, Luisella Mariotti creates spidery, out-of-this-world jewellery. Original pieces at reasonable prices abound in her backstreet shop.

**MERCATO DELLE STAMPE** Map p168 Market

Largo della Fontanella di Borghese; 7am-1pm Mon-Sat; Piazza Augusto Imperatore  
 The Mercato delle Stampe (Print Market) is well worth a look if you're a fan of vintage books and old prints. Browse the permanent stalls and among the tired posters and dusty back editions you might turn up some interesting music scores, architectural engravings or chromolithographs of Rome.

**MESSAGGERIE MUSICALI** Map p168 Music  
 % 06 679 81 97; Via del Corso 123; Via del Corso

Rome's music megastore has CDs spread over three floors, and like most such places it has everything from easy-listening to opera, jazz and pop. It also boasts a well-stocked magazine section (everything from *Q to Hello!*) and a ticket agency.

**L'OLFATTORIO** Map p168 Perfume  
 % 06 361 23 25; Via di Ripetta 34; 3.30-7.30pm Tue-Sat; Flaminio

Those with a nose will adore this place. It's like a bar, but with perfume instead of drinks. The bartender will guide you through smelling different combinations of scents to work out your ideal fragrance. Exclusive handmade French perfumes are available to buy. Smellings are free but bookings are appreciated.

## DESIGNER CENTRAL

Many of the big-name designers have more than one outlet in the Piazza di Spagna/Via dei Condotti area. The following is not a complete list but a selection; all are on the Shopping – Around Piazza di Spagna & Via del Corso map (p168).

- **Cavalli** (Just Cavalli; ☎ 06 679 22 94; Piazza di Spagna 82-83)
- **D&G** (☎ 06 679 22 94; Piazza di Spagna 94-95)
- **Dolce & Gabbana** (☎ 06 699 24 999; Via dei Condotti 51)
- **Emporio Armani** (☎ 06 360 02 197; Via del Babuino 140)
- **Ermenegildo Zegna** (☎ 06 678 91 43; Via Borgognona 7)
- **Etro** (☎ 06 678 82 57; Via del Babuino 102)
- **Fendi** (☎ 06 334 501; Palazzo Fendi, Largo Goldoni)
- **Fendi** (☎ 06 696 661; Via Borgognona 36)
- **Gianni Versace** (☎ 06 678 05 21; Via Bocca di Leone 23 & 26-27)
- **Gucci** (☎ 06 679 04 05; Via dei Condotti 8)
- **Gucci Jewellery** (☎ 06 697 88 266; Via dei Condotti 68a)
- **Hermes** (☎ 06 679 18 82; Via dei Condotti 67)
- **Laura Biagiotti** (☎ 06 679 12 05; Via Borgognona 43-44)
- **Missoni** (☎ 06 679 25 55; Piazza di Spagna 78)
- **Miu Miu** (☎ 06 360 04 884; Via del Babuino 91)
- **Moschino** (☎ 06 678 04 91; Via Borgognona 32)
- **Prada** (☎ 06 679 08 97; Via dei Condotti 92-95)
- **Pucci** (☎ 06 678 40 58; Via Borgognona 25)
- **Roccobarocco** (☎ 06 679 79 14; Via Bocca di Leone 65)
- **Salvatore Ferragamo** (Men; ☎ 06 678 11 30; Via dei Condotti 65)
- **Salvatore Ferragamo** (Women; ☎ 06 679 15 65; Via dei Condotti 73-74)
- **Sergio Rossi** (☎ 06 678 32 45; Piazza di Spagna 97-100)
- **Trussardi** (☎ 06 679 21 51; Via dei Condotti 49-50)
- **Valentino** (☎ 06 679 58 62; Via dei Condotti 13)

### TOD'S Map p168

Shoes

☎ 06 682 10 066; Via della Fontanella di Borghese 56; ☞ Via del Corso

Tod's trademark is its rubber-studded loafers (the idea was to reduce those pesky driving scuffs), perfect weekend footwear for chilling at your country estate. This flagship store is a temple of top-of-the-range casual shoes and expensive leather accessories.

### FERRARI STORE Map p168

Sportswear

☎ 06 689 29 79; Via Tomacelli 147; ☞ Piazza Augusto Imperatore

If you can't afford a Ferrari, at least you can stretch to a key ring. At this Ferrari Store you'll find everything from flaming-red coats to scale models; there's even a real F1 car.

### ENOTECA AL PARLAMENTO

Map p168

Wine

☎ 06 687 34 46; Via dei Prefetti 15; ☞ Via del Corso  
A delectable mingling of scents – wine, chocolate, fine meats and cheeses – greets you as you enter this stately, old-fashioned shop, an

empire of taste, walled with wine. Try some caviar tartines while sampling the wines, and consult the helpful staff for advice.

## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

### ESQUILINO & MONTI

#### MANDARINA DUCK Map p168

Accessories

☎ 06 678 64 14; Via dei Due Macelli 59; m Spagna  
Chic, ergonomic, witty and made from high-tech materials in colours ranging from dove-grey to mustard, Bolognese company Mandarin Duck's bags strike a mean balance between usability and style. Whether you're after some sleek shoulder candy or a futuristic briefcase, this is the place.

#### LION BOOKSHOP Map p168

Books

☎ 06 326 54 007; Via dei Greci 33-36; m Spagna  
This fabulous, long-running, peaceful English bookshop has English-speaking

staff and is well stocked with classics, travel guides and the latest hot reads. There's a particularly good children's section.

#### MAS Map pp90-1

Department Store

☎ 06 446 80 78; Via dello Statuto 11; m Vittorio Emanuele

Trashy MAS (Magazzino allo Statuto) is a bargain-hunter's dream, with lots of cheap and sometimes-cheerful clothes. If you have the patience, you can rifle through cages of knickers and vests; racks of leather jackets, suits and satin dresses; and shelves of kitchen utensils, bags and umbrellas.

#### GUSTO ITALIA Map pp90-1

Food

☎ 06 478 237 00; Via Leonina 76; m Cavour  
Angelo Biagi is the enthusiastic force behind this small, well-stocked deli. He sells homemade pasta and many other delicious items – try the fantastic Sicilian pesto – and offers tastings and some ready-made food.

#### LA BOTTEGA DEL CIOCCOLATO

Map pp90-1

Food

☎ 06 482 14 73; Via Leonina 82; h closed Sep; m Cavour

Walking in here is like entering a chocolate box. It's a magical world of scarlet walls and old-fashioned glass cabinets set into black wood, with irresistible smells wafting in from the kitchen and rows of lovingly homemade chocolates. Chocoholics beware: you could be lost.

#### I VETRI DI PASSAGRILLI

Map pp90-1

Glassware

☎ 06 474 70 22; www.ivetridipassagrilli.it; Via del Boschetto 94; m Cavour

Domenico Passagrilli has had his workshop for more than 25 years, specialising in fusion glassware – creating beautiful artworks through heating glass and moulds in a kiln. Each of the organic-seeming pieces – plates, lamps, tiles and window panes – is unique, and he also restores stained glass.

#### ARCHIVIA Map pp90-1

Homewares

☎ 06 474 15 03; Via del Boschetto 15a; m Cavour  
Muted is not in Archivia's vocabulary, with its bright mix of modern homewares. The Italian and French designs are made to stand out: minimalists should give it a wide berth; others should expect plenty of plastic tableware in primary colours,

modern lamps, garish mirrors and loud picture frames.

#### IO SONO UN AUTARCHICO

Map pp90-1

Homewares

☎ 06 228 66 48; Via del Boschetto 92; m Cavour  
If you could move in this tiny shop you'd probably enjoy browsing through the bric-a-brac. As it is you have to make way practically every time someone new enters. Still, the shelves are heaving with weird and wonderful household items and it's a friendly place. The shop's name is a reference to a film by Roman director Nanni Moretti.

#### AGAU Map pp90-1

Jewellery

☎ 06 488 20 67; Via dei Serpenti 25; m Cavour  
Brightly coloured precious and semi-precious stones from India are used by Italian designers to form the dazzling modern jewellery at this reasonably priced shop. There's another branch at [Via della Vite 57](#) (Map p168; ☎ 06 693 80 699).

#### FABIO PICCIONI Map pp90-1

Jewellery

☎ 06 474 16 97; Via del Boschetto 148; m Cavour  
This ivy-shaded treasure-trove is the domain of artisan Fabio Piccioni. A walking exhibition of his own designs, he recycles old trinkets to create attractive Art Deco-inspired jewellery that, if he doesn't sell, he wears himself.

#### LE GALLINELLE Map pp90-1

Vintage Clothing

☎ 06 488 10 17; Via del Boschetto 76; m Cavour  
With a tiled floor and marble counter, this well-known boutique used to be a butcher's shop. The only reminders are the hooks onto which the new and vintage women's clothes are hung, all cool, retro and stylish.

## QUIRINALE TO THE TREVI FOUNTAIN

#### MEL GIANNINO STOPPANI LIBRERIE PER RAGAZZI Map pp90-1

Books

☎ 06 699 41 045; Piazza dei Santissimi Apostoli 59-65; ☞ Piazza Venezia  
Rome's best children's bookshop is an ideal place for parents to distract their kids. Large, colourful and well stocked, it has about 20,000 titles in Italian and a selection of books in French, Spanish, German and English. If the kids don't want to read, they can always tumble around in the play area while Mum and Dad flick through



the Asterix books. There's also a bathroom equipped for nappy changing.

**JAM STORE** Map pp90–1 Department Store  
% 06 678 42 09; Galleria Alberto Sordi, Via del Corso; ☒ Via del Corso

This is like a Roman version of US clothing and homewares store Urban Outfitters, with a range of funky clothing and other stuff – the kind of thing that might appeal to Paris Hilton, skate kids and Japanese dudes. Labels include Paul Smith and Hello Kitty.

**LA RINASCENTE** Map pp90–1 Department Store  
% 06 679 76 91; Largo Chigi 20; ☒ Via del Corso  
La Rinascente isn't going to rock your world, but it's a stately, upmarket department store, selling fashionable if not cutting-edge clothing, accessories and big-name cosmetics, all amid Art Nouveau interiors. There's a second store at **Piazza Fiume** (Map pp150–1; % 06 841 60 81).

**VIGNANO** Map pp90–1 Hats  
% 06 679 51 47; Via Marco Minghetti; ☒ Via del Corso

This frozen-in-time shop, piled high with head candy, opened in 1873 and sells top hats, bowler hats and deerstalkers, as well as other types that haven't fallen quite so out of fashion. It's worth a look even if you haven't got Ascot on the horizon.

**D CUBE** Map pp90–1 Homewares  
% 06 692 00 911; Via dei Crociferi 42; ☒ Via del Tritone

D Cube sells cool designer gadgets and modern furniture that you never realised you needed. For quirky colanders, modernist coffee cups and rechargeable radios in chrome and steel, look no further. There's another branch at **Via della Pace 38** (% 06 686 12 18).

**GALLERIA ALBERTO SORDI**  
Map pp90–1 Shopping Centre

Piazza Colonna; h 10am–10pm; ☒ Via del Corso  
Opposite Piazza Colonna, where the Galleria Alberto Sordi shopping centre. Named after Rome's favourite actor, who died in 2003, the small but elegant arcade houses some interesting shops, such as Jam Store, Zara, AVC, Feltrinelli, Coccinelle, Gusella and The Bridge, as well as a café – ideal for a quick and cool coffee break.

## PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & AROUND

**FRANCESCO BIASIA** Map p168 Accessories  
% 06 679 27 27; Via dei Due Macelli 62; m Spagna  
If you want an 'it' bag without the 'it' price tag, try slipping a Francesco Biasia over your shoulder. His designs are superb quality, in bright colours, blacks and browns, with original detailing that sets them apart.

**FURLA** Map p168 Accessories  
% 06 692 00 363; Piazza di Spagna 22; m Spagna  
Furla makes all sorts of accessories, from sunglasses to shoes, but is best known for its handbags. Practical, chic, classic and affordable, they use a brilliant array of colours and finishes to add sparkle to their simple designs. If you can't afford Fendi, head here. The many other branches include **Via Tomacelli 136** (Map p168; % 06 687 82 30), **Via Nazionale 54–55** (Map pp90–1; % 06 487 01 27), and **Via Cola di Rienzo 226** (Map pp130–1; % 06 687 45 05).

**LA CORONA** Map p168 Accessories  
% 06 679 01 64; Via del Gambero; ☒ Via del Corso  
A tie-filled, cupboard-sized emporium, La Corona can be relied on for classic sober designs, the latest fads, and colourful numbers ranging from garish to great.

**SERMONETA** Map p168 Accessories  
% 06 679 19 60; Piazza di Spagna 61; m Spagna  
Put your hands in a pair of Giorgio Sermoneta's gloves and you might find you don't want to take them out again. At Rome's most famous glove-seller's there's a kaleidoscopic range of top-quality coloured and textured leather and suede gloves with linings in silk and cashmere.

**ALINARI** Map p168 Antiques, Books  
% 06 679 29 23; Via Alibert 16; m Spagna  
This the oldest photographic business in the world. The Florentine Alinari brothers founded their enterprise in 1852, and produced more than one million plate-glass negatives in their lifetime. Here you can buy beautiful prints of their work depicting Rome in the 19th century, as well as some meaty coffee books on photography.

**ANIMALIER E OLTRE** Map p168 Antiques  
% 06 320 82 82; Via Margutta 47; m Spagna  
Like the attic of an eccentric, aristocratic family, this shop is full of bric-a-brac, curios,

## V IS FOR VALENTINO

Valentino Garavani is a northerner from Lombardy, yet Rome has adopted him as one of her favourite sons. The permatanned designer lives a luxurious existence that makes Rome, with its decadent history, seem an appropriate foster city. His staff's duties include protecting his lap with a pale-blue linen cloth before his favourite pug, Maude, makes a jump for it.

As a young designer, fresh from study in Paris, Valentino opened his first atelier in Via dei Condotti in the 1960s and quickly hit gold, surfing the wave of *la dolce vita*.

The Valentino look is epic glamour. He designed Jackie Kennedy's lace minidress for her wedding to Greek shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis, and has dressed decades of stars, including Elizabeth Taylor, Halle Berry, Julia Roberts, Uma Thurman and Gwyneth Paltrow. His enduring trademarks are red, black or white red-carpet gowns, often adorned with lace or bows, and sublimely cut skirt suits. He believes that women should always look feminine and has ticked stars off for dressing down away from the red carpet.

In 2007 Valentino chose Rome as the venue for his 45th-anniversary *haute couture* fashion show. Mayor Veltroni was keen for Rome to bask in some of the attendant glamour, and so the designer was able to use extraordinary venues, such as the Forum (with acrobats in Valentino costumes dancing above the ruins), the Museo dell'Ara Pacis (with an exhibition of his *haute couture*) and a medieval convent, with an afterparty, attended by a Milky Way of stars, at the Museo e Galleria Borghese.

It was yet another well-tied ribbon in a glittering career. Among many awards, Valentino has won the Neiman Marcus Prize (a fashion 'Oscar') in Dallas in 1967, and received Italy's highest honour, the Cavaliere di Gran Croce, in 1986. Shortly after the Rome extravaganza, he announced his retirement as head of Valentino the company, in order to concentrate on other fashion projects, but doubtless his signature black, red and white takes on glamour will continue to dominate the catwalk and the red carpet.

antiques and furniture. Wrought-iron furniture and leather sofas sit alongside a mammoth selection of animal-shaped antiques – obviously one family member had an obsessive streak – that includes reproductions of 19th-century French *animalier* sculptures.

**ANGLO-AMERICAN BOOKSHOP**  
Map p168 Books

% 06 679 52 22; Via della Vite 102; m Spagna  
Particularly good for university reference books, the Anglo-American is well stocked and well known. It has an excellent range of literature, travel guides, children's books and maps, and if they haven't got a book you want, they'll order it.

**TOURING CLUB ITALIANO** Map p168 Books  
% 06 360 05 281; Via del Babuino 20; m Flaminio  
This is the travel branch of Italy's motoring organisation, the Automobile Club Italiano. It produces Italy's finest maps and travel books, all of which are sold at this, its flagship store. You'll find one of Rome's best collections of guides to Rome in English, an excellent stock of art books and a travel agency.

**LA CICOGNA** Map p168 Children's Clothing  
% 06 678 69 77; Via Frattina 138; m Spagna  
Dress your little darlings in designer togs – DKNY, D&G, Missoni and so on – and hang the expense. Let's just hope that

they don't like puddles and mud. There's a second branch at **Via Cola di Rienzo 268** (Map pp130–1; % 06 689 65 57).

**FOCACCI** Map p168 Food  
% 06 679 12 28; Via della Croce 43; h 8am–8pm  
Mon–Fri, 8am–3pm Sat; m Spagna  
One of several smashing delis along this pretty street, this is where to buy cheese, cold cuts, smoked fish, caviar, pasta and olive oil as well as wines.

**FRATELLI FABBI** Map p168 Food  
% 06 679 06 12; Via della Croce 27; m Spagna  
A small but rich delicatessen, this is a good place to pick up all sorts of Italian delicacies – fine cured meats, buffalo mozzarella from Campania, *parmigiano reggiano*, olive oil, porchetta from Ariccia – as well as Iranian caviar.

**ARTEMIDE** Map p168 Homewares  
% 06 360 01 802; Via Margutta 107; m Flaminio  
For lamps that light up the world of interior design, head to Artemide. Whether moon-like white globes or so minimalist you hardly notice them till you clock the price tag, this is light as art.

**C.U.C.I.N.A.** Map p168 Homewares  
% 06 679 12 75; Via Mario de' Fiori 65; m Spagna  
If you need a gadget for the foodie in your life, C.U.C.I.N.A. is the place. Make your

own *ucina* (kitchen) look the part with the designer-ware from this famous shop, from jelly moulds to garlic crushers.

**FLOS ARTELUCE** Map p168 **Homewares**  
% 06 320 76 31; Via del Babuino 84-85; m Spagna  
Since its founding in 1962, light design house Flos has been responsible for a firmament of design classics: Marc Newson's Helice aluminium floor lamp and many Philippe Starck designs. The look varies from primary-coloured plastic to steely and sleek.

**MAURIZIO GROSSI** Map p168 **Homewares**  
% 06 360 01 935; Via Margutta 109; m Flaminio  
Do you have an obelisk gap? Stop right here. Maurizio Grossi is part gallery, part shop, with an eccentric collection of classy repro marble sculptures and busts, including copies of various famous statues. But you'd need some house to get away with a sculpture of Julius Caesar in the hall. For humbler dwellings the cleverly deceptive bowls of sculpted figs and apricots might be a better fit.

**MODIGLIONI** Map p168 **Homewares**  
% 06 678 56 53; Via dei Condotti 24; m Spagna  
Upper-class Romans flock to Modigliani for its high-class homewares, including unusual pieces such as oversized ceramic chickens. Besides chickens, it stocks the best in Italian design, from classic Murano glassware to sleek Alessi steel, as well as Wedgewood plates and Danish porcelain.

**BULGARI** Map p168 **Jewellery**  
% 06 679 38 76; Via dei Condotti 10; m Spagna  
If you have to ask the price, you can't afford it. Luckily, the sumptuous window displays

mean you can admire the world's finest jewellery without spending a *centesimo*. See the boxed text, [below](#).

**POLLICINA** Map p168 **Jewellery**  
% 06 322 41 32; Via Margutta 61c; m Spagna  
If you like to announce your arrival from a distance, the jewellery at Pollicina is for you. The big, brash costume jewellery is beautifully handcrafted using coloured crystals, resin and coral. To get into the small shop-cum-showroom, ring the buzzer by the side of the door.

**BRIGHENTI** Map p168 **Lingerie**  
% 06 679 14 84; Via Frattina 7-10; m Spagna  
You can imagine Sophia Loren popping into this elegant old-fashioned boutique for a well-structured something. Brighenti specialises in star-style luxurious lingerie – think frothy ruffled playsuits and lace-adorned slippers – and sensational too-good-to-get-wet swimming costumes.

**LA PERLA** Map p168 **Lingerie**  
% 06 699 41 933; Via dei Condotti 78; m Spagna  
Give your life an injection of va va voom with lingerie from La Perla, Italy's most famous lingerie brand. Luxurious lace-trimmed silk bras, negligees that you'll want to dive into and stiletto-heeled fluffy slippers – it's time to indulge your inner movie star.

**AVC BY ADRIANA V CAMPANILE** **Shoes**  
Map p168  
% 06 699 22 355; Piazza di Spagna 88; m Spagna  
Roman designer Campanile's shoes and boots are wearable, stunningly chic and practical – and not insanelly priced. There

are several other branches, including one in [Galleria Alberto Sordi](#) (Map pp90–1; % 06 678 34 84).

**DE BACH** Map p168 **Shoes**  
% 06 678 33 84; Via del Babuino 123; m Spagna  
Squeezed between the big-name outlets, De Bach sells glittering shoes for girls with attitude. Six-inch stiletto-heeled sandals in gold and silver are not for the faint-hearted but, hell, lady, you're the boss.

**FAUSTO SANTINI** Map p168 **Shoes**  
% 06 678 41 14; Via Frattina 120; m Spagna  
High on kudos, Fausto Santini – a former lawyer who gave up the bar for the boot – is famous for his quixotic, colourful shoe designs, and no hipster's wardrobe is complete without a pair of his sleek boots or colourful mules. For bargains and previous seasons' designs, check out the outlet store at [Via Cavour 106](#) (Map pp90–1; % 06 488 09 34), near the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

**MAX & CO** Map p168 **Women's Clothing**  
% 06 678 79 46; Via dei Condotti 46; g Via del Corso  
Rome's young dandies, for whom clothes shopping is a serious business, come to Max & Co for MaxMara's funkier youth range. That means top-quality threads at not-quite-designer prices.

**MAXMARA** Map p168 **Women's Clothing**  
% 06 679 36 38; Via Frattina 28; m Spagna  
Italians adore MaxMara – one of the country's most ubiquitous labels – for its classic, elegant style, ideal for creating the *bella figura*. There's nothing brash or brassy here: colours are neutral and simple, cuts superb and elegant, and fabrics luxurious. Branches include [Via dei Condotti 17](#) (Map p168; % 06 692 21 04) and [Via Nazionale 28](#) (Map pp90–1; % 06 488 58 70).

**PIAZZA BARBERINI & AROUND**  
**CARRY-ON** Map pp90–1 **Accessories**  
% 06 489 04 194; Via Vittorio Veneto 165; g Via Boncompagni  
This is the place to upgrade your luggage, with a good selection of designer bags. Classics include leather satchels by The Bridge and map-printed Alviero Martini handbags; for more rugged needs there are tough Samsonite suitcases. To fill them, you can also buy leather slippers, boxes and hip flasks.

# top picks

## SHOES

- Borini (p166)
- Fausto Santini (p172)
- Loco (p166)
- AVC by Adriana V Campanile (p172)
- Joseph DeBach (p177)

**BRIONI** Map pp90–1 **Clothing**  
% 06 48 58 55; Via Barberini 79-81; m Barberini  
Venerable Brioni, all polished wood and gold leaf, has been dressing the world's finest bodies since *la dolce vita*. Cary Grant was a customer and Pierce Brosnan had himself fitted here for his role as James Bond. Unsurprisingly, the bespoke clothes are expensive: reckon on more than €2000 for a suit, or around €1300 for a silk skirt.

**UNDERGROUND** Map pp90–1 **Market**  
% 06 360 05 345; Ludovisi underground car park, Via Francesco Crispi 96; h 3-8pm Sat & 10.30am-7.30pm Sun 2nd weekend of the month, Sep-Jun; m Barberini  
This monthly market indeed takes place underground, in a subterranean car park near Villa Borghese. There are more than 150 stalls selling everything from antiques and collectables to clothes and toys.

## PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA & AROUND

**FELTRINELLI INTERNATIONAL** **Books**  
Map pp90–1  
% 06 482 78 78; Via VE Orlando 84; m Repubblica  
The international branch of Italy's ubiquitous book-seller has a splendid collection of books in English. You'll find everything from recent-release bestsellers to dictionaries, travel guides, DVDs and an excellent assortment of maps. There are also books in Spanish, French, German and Portuguese.

**MEL BOOKSTORE** Map pp90–1 **Books**  
% 06 488 54 05; Via Nazionale 254-255; m Repubblica  
Mel's, on three floors, has a good range of Italian literature, reference books and travel guides, as well as CDs, half-price

## A JEWELLER'S TALE

In 2005 Bulgari celebrated 100 years of business at Via dei Condotti 10. Now the flagship store of an international multimillion-euro luxury-goods empire, the shop was founded in 1905 by the scion of the dynasty, Sotirio Bulgari.

Born to a family of silversmiths in the Greek village of Epirus, Sotirio emigrated to Italy in the mid-19th century and opened his first Roman venture in 1884. A small jeweller's on Via Sistina, off Piazza Barberini, it was a success, and 21 years later, with the help of his sons Costantino and Giorgio, he upped his silver sticks and moved to Via dei Condotti.

Since then the company has gone from strength to strength, creating big, bold jewellery that rarely goes unnoticed. There's no understated glamour in a lobe-sized diamond earring or a gem-studded gold watch, and nor would Bulgari's clients want any. You don't spend tens of thousands of euros on a bauble that no-one's going to see. And spend Bulgari's clients clearly do. In the first quarter of 2007 the company made €23.9 million net profit, up around 30% from 2006.

Nowadays, however, there's more to the Bulgari bow than just jewellery. Like most luxury-goods companies, it branched out in the 1990s, launching a range of accessories, homewares and perfumes. So even if you can't afford to look like a Bulgari minx, you can at least smell like one.

books (general-fiction paperbacks) and a comprehensive comics section. There are a few in English and French, and a welcome upstairs bar.

## ORIGINAL FANS LAZIO

Map pp90-1 Sportswear  
% 06 648 26 688; Via Farini 34; ☒ Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore

Ever since Lazio won Serie A in 2000, Rome's first (or second, depending on your allegiances) football team has done little except negotiate with banks to stave off financial disaster, at the expense of on-pitch success. Fans can show their support by buying shirts, scarves, hats and tickets here.

## SAN LORENZO & BEYOND

DISFUNZIONI MUSICALI Map p103 Music  
% 06 446 19 84; Via degli Etruschi 4-14; ☒ Via Tiburtina

Covered in graffiti, Disfunzioni is vinyl anorak heaven. It has a good selection of alternative, indie, rare, bootlegged and underground sounds, as well as vintage records and CDs. It also has a lively message board, so if you need a bass player in a hurry, drop by.

## SOUTHERN ROME SAN GIOVANNI

SUZUGANARU Map pp108-9 Clothing  
% 06 704 91 719; Via di San Giovanni in Laterano 206; h 10am-1pm Tue-Sat, 4-8pm Mon-Fri, closed Aug; m Colosseo

Suzuganaru's men's and women's boutiques sit side by side, selling quirky, individual clothes that you won't find anywhere else. Some of the women's clothes are made in the shop, and there are little dresses in unusual prints, light-as-air chiffon pieces, and accessories such as bright lacquer bangles. Next door the men's clothes are lower key but equally hip.

COIN Map pp108-9 Department Store  
% 06 708 00 91; Piazzale Appia 7; m San Giovanni Like a small-scale cousin of the UK's John Lewis, COIN is a dependable choice. It's a large department store stocking good-quality, sensible clothing and accessories, cosmetics and an appealing range of homewares. Another branch exists at Via Cola di Rienzo 173 (Map pp130-1; % 06 360 04 298).

VIA SANNIO Map pp108-9 Market

h 8am-1pm Mon-Sat; m San Giovanni This morning market in the shadow of Porta San Giovanni, near the basilica, is worth checking out if you want to update your wardrobe staples. There's a good assortment of new and vintage clothes, shoes at bargain prices, and a particularly good range of jeans and leather jackets.

SOUL FOOD Map pp108-9 Music

Via di San Giovanni in Laterano; m Colosseo A trainspotter's delight, this cool, retro shop is filled with rare vinyl records - Italian and imports - as well as band T-shirts to suit every taste.

## AVENTINO & TESTACCIO

VOLPETTI Map pp108-9 Food

% 06 574 23 52; www.volpetti.com; Via Marmorata 47; ☒ or j Via Marmorata Volpetti strides like a colossus among Rome's delis. You'll find everything from smelly cheese to fresh homemade pasta, olive oils, vinegar, salami, veggie pies, wine and grappa. Helpful staff will guide you through your choice and you can also order online.

## CALZATURE BOCCANERA

Map pp108-9 Shoes

% 06 575 68 04; Via Luca della Robbia 36; ☒ or j Via Marmorata This old-fashioned Testaccio shoe store stocks big designer names at big designer prices. With a great range of men's and women's footwear, here you'll find Tod's, Gucci, Prada and D&G, among others. It's particularly worth a look at sale time.

## TRASTEVERE EAST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

LA CRAVATTA SU MISURA Accessories

Map pp122-3  
% 06 581 66 76; Via Santa Cecilia 12; ☒ or j Viale di Trastevere

With ties draped over the wooden furniture, this inviting shop resembles the study of an absent-minded professor. But don't be fooled: these guys know their ties. Only the finest Italian silks and English wools are used in the neckwear they make to their customers' specifications. At a push they'll have a tie ready in a few hours.

IL CANESTRO Map pp122-3 Food

% 06 581 26 21; Via di San Francesco a Ripa 105; h 9am-8pm, closed 1.30-4.30pm Jul-Aug; ☒ or j Viale di Trastevere Il Canestro is a trailblazer for all things organic in Rome, and has a large selection of organic food including bread, fruit and veg, fresh and cured meat, pasta, cheese, cereals, olive oil and wine.

PORTA PORTESE Map pp122-3 Market

h 7am-1pm Sun; ☒ or j Viale di Trastevere Rome's biggest and busiest weekly flea market is held in the area extending south from Porta Portese, an ancient Roman gate on the River Tiber. There are fewer antiques these days, and much more mass-produced tat, but it's still great fun, with thousands of stalls pushing everything from bags to bikes and clothes to furniture. You have to bargain, or else it's boring. It gets incredibly crowded so watch out for pickpockets.

## WEST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

LUMIERES Map pp122-3 Antiques

% 06 580 36 14; Vicolo del Cinque 48; ☒ Piazza Trilussa Cut a swathe through the metallic stalks that have all but taken over this delightfully unpretentious shop and you'll discover a large collection of antique lamps. Styles range from Art Nouveau and Art Deco to 1950s.

## ALMOST CORNER BOOKSHOP

Map pp122-3 Books

% 06 583 69 42; Via del Moro 45; ☒ Piazza Trilussa This is how a bookshop should look: a crammed haven full of rip-roaring reads, with every inch of wall space containing English-language books and travel guides. There's an excellent selection of contemporary novels and bestsellers as well as more obscure titles. If you can't find what you want, the English-speaking staff will order it in.

BIBLI BOOKSHOP Map pp122-3 Books

% 06 588 40 97; Via dei Fienaroli 28; h 5.30pm-midnight Mon, 11am-midnight Tue-Sun; ☒ or j Viale di Trastevere On an artsy Trastevere street, Bibli is a buzzing warren that manages to be a bookshop, cultural centre and café, with a little courtyard and delectable cakes. A great place to pass a pleasant hour or two browsing, it regularly hosts poetry readings and book

presentations. There's a limited selection of books in English. There's *aperitivo* (€8, 6.30pm to 8pm) and brunch (12.30pm Saturday and Sunday) for peckish intelligentsia.

OFFICINA DELLA CARTA Map pp122-3 Gifts

% 06 589 55 57; Via Benedetta 26b; ☒ Piazza Trilussa A tiny workshop that produces attractive hand-painted paper-bound boxes, photo albums, recipe books, notepads, photo frames and diaries - all of which make terrific gifts. It also has a selection of better-than-average postcards.

PANDORA Map pp122-3 Gifts

% 06 581 71 45; Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere; ☒ or j Viale di Trastevere Truly a box of a shop, this has a twisted-glass-framed doorway on Trastevere's main piazza and sells a mix of ceramics, Murano glassware, African masks and handcrafted jewellery.

POLVERE DI TEMPO Map pp122-3 Gifts

% 06 588 07 04; Via del Moro 59; ☒ Piazza Trilussa This intriguing shop is ideal for fun adult toys (no, not those sort) that look good but don't have much purpose. In theory, you could use the lovingly crafted hourglasses, globes and pill boxes, all based on 16th- to 18th-century designs, but as often as not they'll end up as attractive shelf-fodder. The leather-bound books are more practical and equally as appealing.

ROMA-STORE Map pp122-3 Perfume

% 06 581 87 89; Via della Lungaretta 63; ☒ or j Viale di Trastevere With no sign, Roma-Store is an enchanting perfume shop crammed full of deliciously enticing bottles of scent, including lots of unusual brands as well as English Floris, Italian Aqua di Parma and French Etat Libre d'Orange.

JOSEPH DEBACH Map pp122-3 Shoes

% 06 556 27 56; Vicolo del Cinque 19; h from 7.30pm; ☒ Piazza Trilussa Here you'll find shoes with teeth and tongues, covered in cartoon collage, or with abacus and wheel heels. Created by Libyan designer Joseph DeBach, they're not necessarily that wearable, but they are works of

## DISCOUNT SHOPPING

Many Romans skip the centre and head for out-of-town outlets that sell designer togs at knockdown prices. A discount mall that's accessible from the centre is **Castel Romano Designer Outlet** (☎ 06 505 00 50; Via Pontina SS148), with more than 100 shops selling branded clothes at discounts from 30% to 70%. You can reach it via a shuttle bus from Piazza della Repubblica at 3pm on Tuesday and Friday, at 9.30am and 3pm on Saturday, and at 10am on Sunday, returning three to four hours later.

In town, try **Discount dell'Alta Moda** (Map p168; ☎ 06 361 37 96; Via Gesù e Maria 14), with end-of-line and last-season pieces by designers such as Dolce & Gabbana, Prada and Armani; or **Outlet Gente** (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 689 26 72; Via Cola di Rienzo 246; ☒ Piazza del Risorgimento), with big-name labels including D&G, Jil Sander and John Richmond. Some pieces are fashion-crime sale-rail junk, but you're bound to find some gems if you trawl through the racks.

art. They would look great on the mantel-piece: file under weird and wonderful.

## SCALA QUATTORODICI

Map pp122–3 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 588 35 80; Via della Scala 13-14;  
 10.30am-1.30pm & 4-8pm Mon-Sat, 4-8pm Sun;  
 ☒ Piazza Trilussa

You could easily walk past this low-key façade. But pause and peer and you will see some exquisite, hand-stitched off-the-peg and tailor-made outfits. It's ideal for the woman who wants timeless elegance (think Jean Seberg and Audrey Hepburn) that's still a little unusual.

## VATICAN CITY & BORGO

**CASTRONI** Map pp130–1 Food

☎ 06 687 43 83; Via Cola di Rienzo 196;  
 8am-8pm; 11 Ottaviano-San Pietro; a  
 Castroni is a glorious food shop with an array of Italian sweets: *marron glacés*, *torroncini* and the like. It's famous for its selection of otherwise impossible-to-find reminders of home. Aussies will find Vegemite, Brits Marmite etc. There's also a café here (see p226). There are smaller branches at **Via Ottaviano** (Map pp130–1) and **Via Flaminio 28** (Map pp150–1).

## ANGELO DI NEPI

Map pp130–1 Women's Clothing

☎ 06 322 48 00; Via Cola di Rienzo 267; ☒ Piazza del Risorgimento

This Roman designer combines Italian cut and style with rich Indian fabrics and colours: sumptuous reds, burnished gold, intricate embroidery and heavy silk create wonderfully eye-catching clobber. You'll find a second branch at **Via dei Giubbonari 28** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 689 30 06).

## VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME

### LIBRERIA L'ARGONAUTA

Map pp150–1 Books

☎ 06 854 34 43; Via Reggio Emilia 89, Nomentano;  
 ☒ Via Nizza

Off the main tourist trail, this travel bookshop is a lovely place to browse. The serene atmosphere and shelves of travel literature can easily spark off daydreams of far-off places: palm-lined beaches or neon cityscapes. Staff are friendly and happy to let you drift around the world in peace.

### BORGO PARIOLI MARKET

Map pp150–1 Market

☎ 06 855 27 73; Via Tirso 14-Via Metauro 21, Parioli; 9am-8pm Sat & Sun 1st 3 weekends of the month; j Viale Regina Margherita  
 Parioli is Rome's most expensive residential area, and its weekend market is a hot date on the capital's monthly shopping calendar. Among the often-expensive bric-a-brac you'll find original jewellery and accessories from the 1950s onwards, silverware, paintings, antique lamps and old gramophones.

### PONTE MILVIO

Map pp150–1 Market

Ponte Milvio, Flaminio; 9am-sunset 1st Sun of the month, closed Aug; ☒ Ponte Milvio  
 The scene of a famous battle in AD 312, the 2nd-century-BC Ponte Milvio is now the scene of a colourful monthly market. On the first Sunday of every month stalls spring up along the Lungotevere Capoprati (between the Ponte Milvio and Ponte Duca d'Aosta) laden with antiques and collectable clobber. As at all markets, the fun's as much in the looking as in the buying.

### GOODY MUSIC

Map pp150–1 Music

☎ 06 361 09 59; Via Cesare Beccaria 2; 11 Flaminio  
 This is where DJs go to stock up on vinyl. Staff are knowledgeable, and there's an excellent collection of club music (on record and CD) with a strong section of 1970s and '80s disco. You can also buy turntables, sound-station equipment and T-shirts to make you look the part.

### BUCCONI

Map pp150–1 Wine

☎ 06 36 12 154; Via di Ripetta 19; 11 Flaminio  
 Step inside, under the faded gilt and mirrored sign, and feel like you've gone back in time. Once a coach house, then a tavern, in the 1960s this building became Buccone, furnished with 19th-century antiques and lined with around 1000 Italian wines as well as a good selection of international tipples. You can eat here too.

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to recommend a travel experience.

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## EATING

### top picks

- La Gensola (p203)
- L'Altro Mastai (p188)
- La Rosetta (p186)
- Trattoria (p186)
- San Teodoro (p186)
- Pizzeria da Baffetto (p189)
- Osteria Sostegno (p187)
- Il Convivio di Troiano (p187)
- Spirito Divino (p203)
- Sergio alla Grotta (p191)

Dining out is a delicious way to enter into the Roman spirit. It's one of the finest things to do in Rome, despite all the other things jostling for your attention.

Romans love to eat, and eat well. Any Roman you ask will have an opinion on the best restaurants in town, the best ice cream and the best pizza. Eating is a sociable experience: long and lingering (a lazy lunch at a neighbourhood restaurant) or short and sizzling (a boisterous pizza with 49 friends). Romans also have high expectations of the kitchen, and fresh, local, seasonal ingredients are the norm, rather than the exception. It's a Mediterranean cuisine, with the addition of a penchant for deep-fried things and a special spot for innards. And of course there's pizza. Here pizzas are served thinner than you've ever seen them, wood-charred, with burnt edges and bubbling-hot toppings.

It used to be that Rome's eateries paid more attention to food than to décor or anything else, but the city has changed over the last few decades and there are ever-increasing opportunities to eat in gorgeous interiors, peruse fantastic wine lists and be wooed by sensitive service. There are also new-style trattorias, which update the simple neighbourhood formula with innovative menus and increased efforts to wine and dine their customers. That said, most Romans will always return to their favourite, well-worn trattoria, and there's no need to write a requiem for the gingham tablecloths and spindly tables on a cobbled street yet. Or for the waiter who slaps down your plate and scribbles your bill on the paper tablecloth. Often the best meal you have will be at the cheapest place, with the shortest menu – if you only serve deep-fried fish, you're going to do it well.

If your interest in Roman food goes further than just eating, consider signing up for a cooking course (see p288).

## HISTORY

Petronius wrote a satirical account of the banquet of the newly wealthy Trimalchio in the 1st century AD, which fixed in the collective consciousness that the ancient Romans ate dormice seasoned with poppies and honey. But the fundamentals of Roman cuisine have remained the same throughout history, resting on the availability of local ingredients: olives, olive oil, pulses, cured pork, lamb, offal, vegetables, wild greens, *pecorino* cheese, ricotta, wood-baked bread, pasta and fish. Innards yes, mice no.

In the past, butchers who worked in the city abattoir were often paid in meat as well as money. But they got the cuts that the moneyed classes didn't want, the offal, and so developed ways to cook them – usually extremely slowly to develop the flavour and disguise their beginnings. The Roman staple *coda alla vaccinara* translates as 'oxtail cooked butcher's style'.

The growing numbers of pilgrims from the 14th century onwards meant a proliferation of taverns and *osterie* (neighbourhood inns), which usually specialised in one dish and *vino della casa* (house wine). The arrival of the potato and tomato from the New World in the 16th century didn't have an immediate impact, though obviously the Romans eventually started to use these novel vegetables.

Deep-frying is a staple of *cucina ebraico-romanesca* (Roman-Jewish cooking), and dates to the period between the 16th and 19th centuries when the Jews were confined to the city's ghetto. To add flavour to their limited ingredients – those spurned by the rich, such as courgette (zucchini) flowers – they began to fry everything from mozzarella to salted cod. *Bresaola* – wind-dried beef, often served as an antipasto – is another feature of Roman-Jewish cuisine, as a replacement for prosciutto.

Grand Tourists (rich pilgrims, in search of Art rather than God) arrived in the 18th century, and *osterie* began to get more sophisticated. Pizza only arrived post-WWII, introduced by southern migrants. The 1980s saw the development of *cucina creativa* – more experimental ways of cooking. Sometimes this was a simple twist, such as adding a different ingredient to a written-in-stone recipe or using an unlikely kind of pasta with a traditional sauce.

## CELEBRATING WITH FOOD

In Rome, to have a good time you need food. Rites-of-passage celebrations all involve sumptuous spreads that are often laid on as much to impress as to enjoy, as anyone who has eaten their way through a nine-course wedding banquet can testify.

Festivals in Italy usually have ancient roots – when Christianity came along, many were just adapted to the new figurehead. The biggest festivals are Natale (Christmas), Pasqua (Easter) and Carnevale (the period leading up to Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent). The classic way to celebrate any feast day is to precede it with a day of eating *magro* (lean) to prepare for the overindulgence to come. On Vigilia (Christmas Eve), for example, tradition dictates that you eat little during the day and have a fish-based dinner as a prelude to the excesses of the 25th. Many special days have dishes associated with them: at Carnevale, the sweets to eat are *bigné* (fried cream-filled pastries); on Ferragosto (Feast of the Assumption; 15 August) Romans eat *pollo e peperoni* (chicken with peppers).

Most festivals have some kind of food involved, but many of them have no other excuse than food. These are called *sagre* (feasting festivals) and are usually celebrations of local specialities such as *porchetta* (a hog spit-roasted with herbs and served cold), hazelnuts, wine and sausages.

## ON THE MENU

### Home Comforts

Roman favourites are all comfort foods, deceptively simple and notably iconic. In the classic Roman comedy *I Soliti Ignoti* (Big Deal on Madonna Street; 1958), some inept thieves break through a wall to burgle a safe, but find themselves in a kitchen by mistake, and console themselves by cooking *pasta e ceci* (pasta with chickpeas). Try *pasta e ceci* in winter or if you're in need of the nutritional equivalent of a cuddle.

### DOS & DON'TS

- Italians dress relatively smartly at most meals, so brush up when eating out.
- Bite through hanging spaghetti rather than slurp it up.
- Pasta is eaten with a fork only.
- Don't ask for salt unless you want to offend the cook. (It's hardly likely you'll need it: Rome was once a stop on Via Salaria, the Salt Road, and still loves its salt.)
- It's OK to eat pizza with your hands.
- In an Italian home you can, and should, *fare la scarpetta* (make a shoe) with your bread and wipe plates clean of sauces. If you want to be refined about it, use your fork. If you're in relaxed company, use your hands. At a restaurant it's not good manners to eat bread with your pasta, but most people do.
- If invited to someone's home, traditional gifts are a tray of *dolci* (sweets) from a *pasticcERIA* (pastry shop), a bottle of wine or a bunch of flowers.
- At restaurants, leave a tip: anything from 5% in a pizzeria to 10% in a more upmarket place. At the very least round up the bill.
- Don't be surprised to see *pane e coperto* (bread and cover charge; €1 to €5 per person) added to your bill.

In *Un Americano a Roma* (An American in Rome; 1954), Roman actor Alberto Sordi decides he wants to be an American. He comes home to a bowl of pasta and glass of wine prepared by his mama, but rejects it, saying Italian food is for peasants. He tries instead to eat bread with milk, mustard, yoghurt and marmalade, as he says the Americans do, before spitting it out with the immortal line: 'Maccarone, why are you looking at me? You provoke me and I shall destroy you!' A black-and-white photo of him forking the spaghetti into his mouth is probably more commonly reproduced than the Sistine Chapel.

But which sauce swayed Sordi? It could have been *spaghetti alla carbonara*, a gorgeous, barely-there sauce of egg, cheese and *guanciale* (cured pig's cheek). It was born out of poverty as this was, obviously, a less-sought-after cut of meat, used sparingly to give flavour. In these richer days, pancetta (cured bacon) is usually used instead. The egg is added raw, and stirred into the hot pasta to cook it. It's debatable why it's called *carbonara* – some say it's because it was the coal workers' favourite, and some that it's after the specks of black pepper that finish off the dish.

Another great belly-filling favourite is *buccatini all'amatriciana* (with tomato sauce, onions, fried pancetta, cheese and chilli), which originated in Amatrice, a town east of Rome. The dish is an adaptation of *spaghetti alla gricia* (pasta with *pecorino* cheese, black pepper and pancetta), which comes from the town of Griciano in northern Lazio. A daring Amatrice cook added tomatoes, creating *amatriciana*.

Likewise, sparing amounts of prosciutto and sage are used to spark up the veal dish *saltimbocca* (the deliciously named 'leap in

the mouth'), while the humble chicken broth is given a lift by the addition of Parmesan and whisked egg to make the soup *stracciatella*.

Rome's often spectacularly scrumptious *spaghetti cacio e pepe* is piping-hot pasta topped with freshly grated *pecorino romano* (a sharp, salty, sheep's milk cheese), ground black pepper and a dash of olive oil. Deceptively simple, it's famously difficult to get right.

There are vast numbers of pasta shapes, such as *ravioli* (fresh pasta envelopes, often filled with spinach and ricotta), and sturdy *rigatoni* (tubes with ridges) traditionally served with *pagliata* (veal or lamb intestines). Spaghetti – *spago* means 'twine' – is best served with thin or oily sauces, such as *alle vongole* (with clams). *Bucatini* (little holes), classically Roman, holds a hearty sauce well. It's thicker than spaghetti and with a hole through its centre, so that the pasta cooks evenly. If you're eating *bucatini* in a restaurant, even if you're dining with the pope, it's permissible to tuck your napkin into your collar, such is the splash factor. The proximity of the Vatican might have inspired another popular, thick, ropelike shape – *strozzapreti* (priest-strangler).

## When in Rome...

One of the great must-eats of the Lazio region is *porchetta*, not a suckling pig, but a hog roasted by a *porchettaio* (*porchetta* chef) on a spit with herbs and an abundance of *finocchio selvatico* (wild fennel). The best comes from Ariccia, in the hills around Rome, but many small shops in Frascati (p278) sell *porchetta* and young fresh white wine, and you can sit outside at trestle tables for a ravishing picnic. Other great meat dishes include *abbacchio al forno* (lamb roasted with rosemary and garlic), usually accompanied by potatoes, also roasted with rosemary.

If you eat offal, head to Testaccio district, the area around the old slaughterhouse and the heart of the *cucina Romana*. Here you can

try pasta with *pajata*, made with the entrails of young veal calves, considered a delicacy since they contain the mother's congealed milk. If you see the word *coratella* in a dish, it means that you'll be eating lights (lungs), kidneys and hearts. Offal is cooked with *carciofi* (artichokes), which cuts its richness and leaves the palate refreshed. At other times tomato is used, and the expression *in umido*, while normally meaning cooked in a broth, in Lazio tends to mean cooked in a tomato-scented broth. A typical Saturday-in-Rome dish is *trippa alla romana* (tripe cooked with potatoes, tomato and mint and sprinkled with *pecorino* cheese).

Seafood can be excellent in Rome, fished locally in Lazio. There are lots of dedicated seafood restaurants, usually upper-range places with delicate takes on fish such as sea bass, skate and tuna. According to the culinary calendar, decided by the Catholic Church to vary the nutrition of its flock, fish is eaten on Friday, and *baccalà* (salted cod), often eaten with *ceci* (chickpeas), usually on Wednesday.

Thursday is the day for *gnocchi* (dumplings). The traditional Roman recipe uses semolina flour and makes heavy *gnocchi*, but you can also find the typical *gnocchi* with potatoes, usually served with a *ragù* (sauce), which in Rome (unlike, say, Bologna) contains more tomatoes than meat.

Of the deep-fried delicacies, you can choose between fillets of *baccalà*, *fiori di zucca* (courgette flowers) stuffed with mozzarella and anchovies, and *carciofi alla giudia* (artichokes) – if *alla romana* these are cooked with oil, garlic and mint. *Suppli* are rice balls, shaped like large croquettes. If they contain mozzarella, they're called *suppli a telefono* because when you break one open, the cheese forms a string like a telephone wire between the two halves. Fried things are usually eaten at either Roman-Jewish restaurants or pizzerias.

If popping into a bakery, a Roman speciality that can become addictive is *pizza bianca*, a

plain pizza brushed with salt, olive oil and often rosemary. In many bakeries and cafés you can buy this split and filled with something to make a sandwich. A classic construction-worker's lunch is *pizza bianca* stuffed with mortadella, glazed down with white wine.

Desserts (*dolci*) tend to be the same at every trattoria: tiramisu, *pannacotta* (literally 'cooked cream', with added sugar and cooled to set) and so on, but for a traditional Roman *dolce* you should look out for ricotta cakes – with chocolate chips or cherries or both – at a local bakery. Many Romans eat at a restaurant and then go elsewhere for a gelato and a coffee to finish off the meal.

## Market Fresh

What's on sale at the market that morning decides what's on the menu, and Romans get excited as broad beans arrive in May, figs in June, peaches in July, courgettes and aubergines in summer, and so on around the year. Vegetables to look out for include *puntarelle* (Catalonian chicory) tossed in a garlic, olive oil and anchovy dressing; *broccoli romanesco* (like broccoli), mainly found in winter; bitter wild chicory; and *lattuga romana*, which resembles cos lettuce. In spring, *fave* (broad beans) are eaten after meals (leaving mountains of green pods) with a slice of *pecorino romano* cheese; the 1st of May is a big day for doing this. Then, of course, there's Rome's rotund, fleshy, delicious artichoke. Herbs are so important that at the market the trader will usually stuff some in free at the end of your purchase, according to what's in season: some parsley, basil, and a stick of celery for your mama's *ragù*.

## WHERE TO EAT

Eateries are divided into several categories. A *tavola calda* (hot table) offers cheap, prepared pasta, meat and vegetable dishes. Quality is usually reasonable while atmosphere takes a back seat. In Ostia Antica (p266) you can see a *thermopile* complete with frescoed menu, the *tavola calda's* ancient ancestor.

A *rosticceria* sells cooked meats but often has a larger selection of takeaway food. There are also takeaway pizza joints serving ready pizza *al taglio* (by the slice). When it's good, it's very good. A pizzeria will, of course, serve pizza, but generally also a full menu including antipasto, pasta, meat and vegetable dishes. Pizzerias are often only open in the evening.

## CLOSED IN AUGUST?

Most eateries close for at least a week in August, but the timings vary from year to year. We have listed here where restaurants close for the whole month. With others it's advisable to ring first in August to check that everyone hasn't gone to the beach.

You can eat well at many *enoteche*, wine bars that usually serve snacks (such as cheeses or cold meats) and some hot dishes.

For a full meal you'll want a trattoria, an *osteria* (neighbourhood inn) or a *ristorante* (restaurant). The difference between them is now fairly blurred. Traditionally, trattorias were family-run places that offered a basic, affordable menu of local dishes. Thankfully, a few still are. *Ristoranti*, however, offer more choice and smarter service, and are more expensive.

## VEGETARIANS & VEGANS

Vegetarians can eat well in Rome, with the choice of profuse antipasti, pasta dishes, *insalati*, *contorni* and pizzas. There are a couple of extremely good vegetarian restaurants, and some of the more creative restaurants have increased numbers of vegetarian dishes.

Be mindful of hidden ingredients not mentioned on the menu – for example, steer clear of anything that's been stuffed (like courgette flowers, often spiced up with anchovies) or check that it's *senza carne o pesce* (without meat or fish). Note that to many Italians vegetarian means you don't eat red meat.

Vegans – as always – are in for a much tougher time. Cheese is used universally, so you must say '*senza formaggio*' (without cheese). Also remember that *pasta fresca*, which may also turn up in soups, is made with eggs. The safest bet is to self-cater or try a dedicated vegetarian restaurant, which will always have some vegan options.

## ANCIENT ROME

Ancient Rome has lots of restaurants, some fantastic, but it pays to be wary of poor food at inflated prices around the main tourist haunts. If you're near the Colosseum or the Forum, you can also look in nearby Celio (p201), to the southwest, or Monti (p195), just north of Via Cavour. The restaurants of San Giovanni (p201) are also close by. From the Campidoglio you can wander down to the Centro Storico (p186).

## EAT AS THE ROMANS DO

For *colazione* (breakfast), most Romans head to a bar for a cappuccino and *cornetto* – a croissant filled with *cioccolata* (chocolate), *marmellata* (marmalade) or *crema* (custard cream).

The main meal of the day is *pranzo* (lunch), eaten at about 1.30pm. Many shops and businesses close for three to four hours every afternoon to accommodate the meal and siesta that follows. On Sundays *pranzo* is sacred.

*Cena* (dinner), eaten anytime from about 8.30pm, is usually a simple affair, although this is changing as fewer people make it home for the big lunchtime feast.

A full Italian meal consists of an *antipasto* (starter), a *primo piatto* (first course), a *secondo piatto* (second course) with an *insalata* (salad) or *contorno* (vegetable side dish), *dolci* (sweet), fruit, coffee and *digestivo* (liqueur). When eating out, however, you can do as most Romans do, and mix and match: order, say, a *primo* followed by an *insalata* or *contorno*.

## PRICE GUIDE

The pricing in this chapter refers to the average cost of a meal that includes *antipasto* (starter), *primo* (first course), *secondo* (second course) and *dolce* (dessert), with a glass of wine.

€	under €25
€€	€25 to €50
€€€	over €50

### SAN TEODORO Map p60 Ristorante €€€

% 06 678 09 33; Via dei Fienili 49-50; meals €80; h Mon-Sat; g Via del Teatro di Marcello

Both ancient and cutting-edge (it's set on a medieval piazza, with vaulted ceilings and paintings by contemporary Roman artists), San Teodoro's sophisticated takes on traditional dishes keep this restaurant at the top of Rome's dining charts. Although it offers a hit list of Roman classics, it's best known for its delicious seafood creations, including baked sea bass served coated in artichokes. Chocolate, ricotta and ice cream appear in various guises for dessert, while the wine list will please most amateur connoisseurs.

### LA PIAZZETTA Map p60 Ristorante €€

% 06 699 16 40; Vicolo del Buon Consiglio 23a; meals €35; h Mon-Sat; m Colosseo *Molto simpatico*, on a tiny medieval lane, this gay-friendly restaurant has a fabulous antipasti buffet and equally impressive *primi* and *secondi* – try the yolk *carbonara*. A dessert-sampler buffet means you don't have to face a difficult decision between puddings.

## CENTRO STORICO

Around Piazza Navona, Campo de' Fiori and the Pantheon you'll find a plethora of eateries, including some of the capital's best restaurants (both contemporary and traditional Roman). Again, look out for overpriced tourist traps. The picturesque Jewish Ghetto is famous for its unique Roman-Jewish cooking.

## PANTHEON & AROUND

### LA ROSETTA Map pp74-5 Seafood €€€

% 06 686 10 02; Via della Rosetta 8-9; meals €80; h lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a

La Rosetta is so excellent that it doesn't have to be overly formal. Some say this is

Rome's best fish restaurant; others say it's the best in Italy. Chef Massimo Riccioli's dishes are often startlingly simple – there's nothing complex about cuttlefish with lemon and olive oil or *linguine ai frutti di mare* (flat spaghetti with seafood) – but they're prepared with genius. He can also innovate, as his spaghetti with scampi and courgette flowers or *moscardini* (baby octopus) with mint show. Outside you glimpse the Pantheon but it's better inside amid yellow hues and white tablecloths. Bookings are essential.

### TRATTORIA Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€€

% 06 68301 427; Campo Marzio Via del Pozzo delle Cornacchie 25; meals €55; h dinner Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a Walk through the discreet entrance and up the stairs to find yourself in the city's most innovative Sicilian restaurant. It has an excellent reputation for its interpretations of classics such as *frittata* and *pasta alla Norma* (with fried aubergine, tomato, basil and ricotta), as well as delicious fried *gnocchi* with *culatello* (a kind of prosciutto), all served amid modernist minimalism that's as well-thought-out as the food.

### BOCCONDIVINO Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€

% 06 683 08 626; Piazza di Campo Marzio 6; meals €50; h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso; a This 'Divine Mouthful' is surprisingly good value. A modernist marriage of steel, Roman columns, fake zebra skin and contemporary art, the design fits the largely successful fusion fare. Typical dishes include *coda di rospo con caponata di melanzane e cipolla di Tropea stufate* (angler fish with aubergines and Tropea onions), and there's a bargain lunchtime set menu.

### IL BACARO Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€

% 06 687 25 54; Via degli Spagnoli 27; meals €50; h lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento; a

You'll have to book, as Il Bacaro is the size of a postage stamp and always busy. It might be small but it's perfectly formed: the *primi* (first courses) are imaginative – try *spaghetti con gamberi, porcini, pecorino e tartufo* (spaghetti with prawns, porcini mushrooms, cheese and truffles) – the meat dishes are beefy and the wine list is well chosen. Summer seating spills out under a vine-covered pergola.

### OSTERIA SOSTEGNO Map pp74-5 Osteria €€

% 06 679 38 42; Via della Colonnelle 5; meals €45-50; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a Here you have stumbled on a well-kept secret. It's intimate, a favourite of journalists and politicians, with simple yet excellent dishes such as *caprese* (tomato and mozzarella salad) or *lasagnetto al forno con punte di asparagi* (little lasagne with asparagus heads). There's a charming small terrace between the steep walls of a narrow alley. Nearby is the similarly splendid *Ristorante Settimio* (Map pp74-5; % 06 678 96 51; Via della Colonnelle 14; meals €45-50), run by the same family.

### ARMANDO AL PANTEON

Map pp74-5 Trattoria €€

% 06 688 03 034; Salita dei Crescenzi 31; meals €45; h Mon-Fri, lunch only Sat, closed Aug; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a For over 45 years (since 1961) this warm, family-run trattoria, almost opposite the Pantheon, has been dishing out hearty staples such as herring with red onion and beans or *gnocchi* with tomato sauce. It's down-to-earth, classic and authentic, despite its history – philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and footballer Pelé have both eaten here. To finish try the homemade cakes. Booking is advisable.

### OBIKÀ Map pp74-5 Mozzarella Bar €€

% 06 683 26 30; Piazza di Firenze; meals €35; h noon-11.30pm; g Via del Corso; a Part of Rome's new guard, this is a mozzarella bar that resembles a sushi joint, but with the white stuff rather than the fishy stuff. The name isn't Japanese: it means 'here it is' in Neapolitan dialect, and the mozzarella arrives fresh daily at 8am. Try the *burrata* (mozzarella-like cheese filled with cream). Brunch is famously good too. Décor is ancient meets modern with columns and an underlit floor.

### GREEN T Map pp74-5 Chinese €€

% 06 679 86 28; Via del Piè di Marmo 28; dishes €7-20; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina It's unusual to find good Chinese food in Rome, and this elegant place, both modern and classical oriental in look, is something entirely different: a tearoom and boutique, serving street food, meat and fish dishes, as well as a selection of raw seafood.

### RICCIOLI CAFÉ Map pp74-5 Seafood €€

% 06 682 10 313; Via delle Coppelle 13; sushi from €2.50; h 10am-12.30am Mon-Thu, 10am-1.30am Fri & Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento The brainchild of Rome's sultan of seafood, La Rosetta's Massimo Riccioli (see [opposite](#)), this perennially chic oyster bar and restaurant specialises in seafood, mostly raw. There's superfresh sushi and sashimi, oysters (from Brittany) and a range of Mediterranean shellfish. You eat on blue-velvet banquettes under twisted modernist chandeliers, and there's *aperitivo* (see the boxed text, [p192](#)) and occasional DJs, but if none of this takes your fancy, you can take away between 10am and 9pm.

### ENOTECA CORSI Map pp74-5 Wine Bar €€

% 06 679 08 21; Via del Gesù 87; meals €25; h Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina Merryly worse for wear, family-run Corsi is a genuine old-style Roman eatery. The look is rustic – bare wooden tables, paper tablecloths, lined with wine bottles – and the atmosphere one of controlled mayhem. The menu, chalked up on a blackboard, contains homely dishes using good, fresh ingredients, such as *cacio e pepe* (pasta with *pecorino* cheese and ground black pepper) or *pasta e ceci* (pasta with chickpeas). It follows the culinary calendar, so if it's *gnocchi*, it's Thursday.

### PIZZA FLORIDA Map pp74-5 Pizza al taglio €

% 06 688 03 236; Via Florida 25; pizza slice around €3; h 10am-10pm Mon-Sat; j Via Arenula You'll spot this takeaway place by the surrounding busy buzz. Run by the friendly Fiori family, it offers delicious slices of pizza with a fantastic range of fresh toppings, such as fontina cheese, bacon and chilli.

## PIAZZA NAVONA & AROUND

### IL CONVIVIO DI TROIANO

Map pp74-5 Ristorante €€€

% 06 686 94 32; Via dei Soldati 31; meals €100; h 8-11pm Mon-Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento Michelin-starred Il Convivio, tucked away in a 16th-century *palazzo* (mansion) north of Piazza Navona, is run by the talented Troiano brothers. It's elegant, intimate and impeccable. Menus are seasonal but you could be eating *maltagliati di farina kamut con ragù di quaglia, funghi porcini*



## THE FABULOUS FABIO BALDASSARE

Fabio Baldassare is chef at one of the city's best restaurants, **L'Altro Mastai** (below). From a Roman family of cooks, he has worked with some big names, including the legendary Heinz Beck at the Hilton's La Pergola, Heinz Winkler in Germany and Raymond Blanc in England. In 2000 he took over at L'Altro Mastai. He also teaches at **Citta del Gusto** (p206).

### What are your specialities?

I change the menu according to the season. In summer, I cook dishes such as foie gras with prickly pears, gazpacho and red onions, risotto with cantaloupe and capers, and pig-head ravioli with buffalo mascarpone and caviar. In winter, from November to December I have a white-truffle menu – people are always asking for white truffles.

### What is your inspiration?

My cooking is Italian, but creative. Of paramount importance to me are the ingredients. The ingredients are all Italian, often from Lazio, but the essential thing is that they are the best quality. I try to put things together in a way that is very elegant, so that when you eat you taste the flavour, taste originality, and sometimes the combination creates a surprise.

### Most Italians love their mama's cooking: has your biggest influence been your mama, Heinz Beck or Raymond Blanc?

All my family cook, but to learn to cook the way that I do, I went outside the family. I studied with Heinz Beck and Raymond Blanc to learn other things. My family kitchen I know by heart, but it is a different mentality to the type of cuisine I create now.

### How do you think things are changing in Rome?

It's no longer a city full of trattorias and *osterie*. More restaurants are placing more importance on style, on waiters, on wines, as you find in London and New York. There are more tastes available – such as Japanese and vegetarian – and Michelin-starred restaurants.

### Apart from L'Altro Mastai, where would you recommend visitors to Rome go to eat?

**Agata e Romeo** (p195) is an excellent restaurant, or **Sora Lella** (p193) on Tiberina island is good for traditional Roman cooking.

*e mirtili* (homemade kamut-wheat egg pasta with quail ragout, porcini mushrooms and blueberries) or *vermicelli di Gragnano all'amatriciana* (Gragnano vermicelli with bacon and tomato sauce). There's an accompanying wine list of more than 2000 labels. Booking is essential and an attitude of reverence recommended.

### L'ALTRO MASTAI Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 683 01 296; Via G Giraud; meals €100, 7-course tasting menu €85; h dinner Tue-Sat, closed Aug; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

L'Altro Mastai is a graceful, special-occasion place, with an interior that manages to be both grand and intimate. Service is fabulous and Fabio Baldassare's cooking expert and innovative (for an interview with Baldassare, see p187). His creations include cod dressed with caviar and John Dory fillet with artichokes and liquorice, but he never lets creativity get in the way of balance and flavour.

### CASA BLEVE Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€

☎ 06 686 59 70; Via del Teatro Valle 48-49; meals €45; h lunch Tue-Sat, dinner Wed-Fri, closed Aug; ☍ or j Largo di Torre Argentina

While away an afternoon in this stately, column-lined courtyard roofed with stained glass. It's ideal for a romantic or epicurean assignation accompanied by sublime wine and cheeses (mature or fresh, such as mozzarella and *burrata*), cold cuts, *carpaccio* (thin slices of raw beef) and amazing roulades.

### CUL DE SAC Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€

☎ 06 688 01 094; Piazza Pasquino 73; meals €35; h Mon-Sat; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A handy address just off Piazza Navona, Cul de Sac is a deservedly popular wine bar with food. The wine list features 1500 international labels, while the menu reveals a French bias: moreish meat pâté, *carpaccio*, delicious cheese and cured hams. The outdoor tables fill quickly, so you might have to duck into the narrow interior.

### DA FRANCESCO

Map pp74–5 Trattoria, Pizzeria €€

☎ 06 686 40 09; Piazza del Fico 29; meals €25; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Paper tablecloths, frazzled yet jovial waiters, tables sprawling along the cobbled street, and a menu of pizza, pasta and meat – this is the classic eat-up-and-ship-out joint. Long on character and short on frills, it's popular and fills up quickly, so unless you rock up early you'll have to queue. Pizzas are tasty and typical, beer is on tap and music comes by way of folksy guitar-strumming buskers.

### ALFREDO E ADA Map pp74–5 Trattoria €

☎ 06 687 88 42; Via dei Banchi Nuovi 14; meals €20; h dinner Mon-Fri; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Find a seat at this tiny, brick-arched and wood-panelled place, with its spindly marble-topped tables, and then eat what Ada puts in front of you (there's no menu). It'll be simple tasty staples like pasta with tomato sauce and *salsiccia con fagioli* (sausage with beans). Dessert comes from Ada's legendary biscuit tin.

### DA TONINO Map pp74–5 Trattoria €

☎ 06 687 70 02; Via del Governo Vecchio 18; meals €15-20; h Mon-Sat; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
You'll be hard-pressed to find a cheaper place for a sit-down meal in central Rome. Unsigned Tonino's is a wonderfully low-key place with yellowing pictures hanging on white walls, and is always packed. There's no menu – the waiter will reel off the choices. You can't really go wrong – everything's pretty good – but if you want a recommendation, go for the *pasta alla gricia* (pasta with *pecorino* cheese, black pepper and pancetta). It's not a place to linger – more hungry bargain-hunters will need your table.

### INSALATA RICCA Map pp74–5 Ristorante €

☎ 06 856 88 036; Largo dei Chiavari 85; salads €6.50-9; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
Tapping into a taste for salad among all that pizza and pasta, Insalata Ricca is reliable and popular, with numerous branches. It offers a huge choice of meal-sized salads ranging from traditional tomato and mozzarella to out-there apple and walnut. You'll find branches at **Piazza Pasquino 72** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 683 07 881), **Via Giulio Cesare Santini 12** (Map pp122–3) and **Via FP Calboli 50** (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 375 13

941), and handily near the Vatican at **Piazza del Risorgimento 4** (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 397 30 387).

### LA FOCACCIA Map pp74–5 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 688 03 312; Via del Pace 11; pizzas €5.50-8.80; h 12.30pm-12.30am Tue-Sun; ☍ Corso del Rinascimento; a  
Hotfoot it to an outside table at this unsigned, gay-friendly pizzeria. It faces the beautiful Chiostro del Bramante, and inside the downstairs dining room is surprisingly big. As well as great bruschetta, you can eat wood-fired pizzas and breads, and delicate fresh pastas.

### LO ZOZZONE Map pp74–5 Panini €

☎ 06 688 085 75; Via del Teatro Pace 32; pizza bianca €2.50-5; h 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-11pm Sat, 11.30am-5.30pm Sun; ☍ Corso del Rinascimento  
The 'Dirty One' (a nickname that unfortunately stuck) is a brilliant *panino* (bread roll) joint, and is leaving its dirty roots further and further behind. These days there are chairs and tables, inside and out! Pay at the register for a regular or large *pizza bianca*, then ask for it to be stuffed with your belly's desire at the bar.

### PIZZERIA DA BAFFETTO

Map pp74–5 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 686 16 17; Via del Governo Vecchio 114; pizzas €7; h 6.30pm-1am; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

Once a meeting point for '60s radicals and now a raucous pizzeria beloved of loud locals and less-loud tourists, Da Baffetto offers the full-on wham-bam Roman pizza experience. To partake, join the queue and wait for the bustling waiters to squeeze you into whatever table space is available. The pizzas are the thin-crust Roman variety, served bubbling hot from the wood-fired oven. Expect to be hurried on your way once you've finished.

### PIZZERIA LA MONTECARLO

Map pp74–5 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 686 18 77; Vicolo Savelli 11-13; pizzas €4.50-9; h noon-3pm & 6.30pm-1am; ☍ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
La Montecarlo, another true-Roman pizzeria full of raucous charm, is ideal for sightseers exploring the *centro storico* (historic centre), but is also crammed with pizza-hungry locals. Expect thin, wood-charred pizzas, paper

## SELF-CATERING

There are various supermarkets dotted around the city centre. All are open from around 8am to 8pm daily.

**Conad** (Map pp90–1; basement level, Stazione Termini)

**DeSpar** (Map pp74–5; Via Giustiniani 18b–21) Near the Pantheon.

**DeSpar** (Map pp74–5; Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 40)

**Di per Di** (Map pp90–1; Via Vittoria)

**Di per Di** (Map pp108–9; Via dei Santi Quattro)

**Sir** (Map pp90–1; Piazza dell'Indipendenza 28)

**Todis** (Map pp122–3; Via Natale del Grande 24)

tablecloths, celebrity photos on the walls, milling queues and supercharged waiters.

## VOLPETTI ALLA SCROFA

Map pp74–5 Pizza al taglio €

☎ 06 688 06 335; Via della Scrofa 31; dishes €2–7.50; h 7am–8.45pm Mon–Sat, 9am–8.45pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento

Volpetti offers scrumptious pizza, *pizza rustica* and pastries to take out, as well as a selection of top-notch daily *tavola calda* delights (set menu €10), which you can eat in or out. This is also a glorious deli with delicacies including truffles, salami and cheese.

## CAMPO DE' FIORI & AROUND

**CAMPONESCHI** Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 687 49 27; Piazza Farnese 50; meals €100; h dinner Mon–Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II To catch up on Rome's high-level gossip, elegant, elitist Camponeschi is the place to eavesdrop. In a romantic setting on Piazza Farnese, it's a favourite of politicians, diplomats and rich industrialists. Inside it feels like a refined wedding reception, complete with floral decorations. The cuisine is a mix of French and Mediterranean, with game in the hunting season, lobster, black truffles and fish, and a lengthy wine list to satisfy its quaffing clientele.

## HOSTERIA DEL PESCE

Map pp74–5 Seafood €€€

☎ 06 686 56 17; Via di Monserrato 32; meals €100; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II One of the capital's hottest seafood restaurants, this place has filled the bellies of

Francis Ford Coppola and Giorgio Armani among other megastars. It sports a studiously low-key look of hardwood floors and deep-blue walls, gets packed, and serves unforgettable, ultrafresh food. Squid is fried and served with creamy mash, risotto is dyed jet-black with octopus ink, while sea bream, snapper and turbot are grilled to crispy perfection, all accompanied by white wines only. Booking is advised.

**AL BRIC** Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 687 95 33; Via dei Pellegrino 51; meals €60; h Thu–Tue; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II Intimate and renowned, especially for its wine list, this place has several rooms in a 16th-century building, all lined with wine bottles and the lids of wooden wine boxes. Cuisine is creative and designed to complement the wines, with dishes such as grilled tomato with *pecorino di fossa* (sheep's cheese aged in caves) and spaghetti with figs, white prawns and Roquefort cheese.

## VINERIA ROSCIOLI SALUMERIA

Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€€

☎ 06 687 52 87; Via dei Giubbbonari 21; meals €55; h Mon–Sat; j Via Arenula Walk in here and swoon over the mingled aromas. Once a traditional deli, this is now a temple to food, with lots of fantastic olive oil, cheeses (around 450 varieties), Italian and Spanish hams and so on to buy. You can eat in the *molto chic* interior under the exposed brick arches with their modernist paintings, and the wine list has some 1100 labels (900 Italian, 200 French). The affiliated *bakery* (p192) is nearby.

**DITIRAMBO** Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 687 16 26; Piazza della Cancelleria 72; meals €40; h lunch Tue–Sun, dinner daily; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II Ditirambo is a recommended, convivial, new-wave trattoria. The interior looks like a regular, if upmarket, neighbourhood place, but the innovative cooking takes risks (mainly hits, with the occasional miss). Ingredients are organic and seasonal and there are an unusual number of vegetarian options. Try the delicate antipasti, such as ricotta with marinated artichokes. It's a favourite of theatrical and media types, as well as tourists, and is unpretentious and popular, so be sure to book.

**RENATO E LUISA** Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 686 96 60; Via dei Barbieri 25; meals €40; h dinner Tue–Sun; g Via Arenula A favourite among vivacious young Romans, this backstreet new-style trattoria is always busy. The cooking is more complex than the norm, with a buttery French twist. Try dishes such as the delicious goat's cheese and honey starter. Service can be haphazard.

**GRAPPOLO D'ORO** Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 687 16 26; Piazza della Cancelleria 72; meals €40; h Mon–Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II More up to date (in design terms) than nearby Ditirambo, this is a similarly buzzing, informal, stylish eatery among the sometimes lacklustre options in this neighbourhood. The food is creative without being over-designed, but with old favourites such as *spaghetti alla carbonara* and meatballs.

**HOSTARIA COSTANZA** Map pp74–5 Osteria €€

☎ 06 686 17 17; Piazza del Paradiso 63–65; meals €40; h Mon–Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II This is old-school Roman dining at its best. In the basement of Pompey's Theatre, Costanza serves up simple and wonderfully cooked food such as a creamy *riso con fiori di zucca* (risotto with courgette flowers), perfect *ravioli di carcioffi* (ravioli with artichokes) and a simply delicious *filetto di manzo al barolo* (fillet of beef with *barolo* wine sauce). The waiters are friendly, the house wine is quaffable and the prices are remarkably reasonable. Bookings essential.

**LA CARBONARA** Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€

☎ 06 686 47 83; Campo de' Fiori 23; meals €35; h Wed–Mon; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II La Carbonara offers superb ringside seating on the never-dull Campo de' Fiori. The food is good, earthy Roman fare that comes at surprisingly honest prices. As its name suggests, it's known for its *spaghetti alla carbonara*, although the restaurant is actually named after a coal shop that the owner's father once ran.

## OSTERIA AR GALLETTO

Map pp74–5 Osteria €€

☎ 06 686 17 14; Piazza Farnese 102; meals €35; h Mon–Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II You wouldn't expect there to be anywhere reasonably priced on Piazza Farnese, one of Rome's loveliest outdoor rooms, but this

long-running *osteria* is the real thing, with good, honest Roman food, a warm local atmosphere and dazzlingly set exterior tables. Roasted chicken is the house speciality (*galletto* means little rooster), but the roasted lamb in season is just as fine.

## SERGIO ALLA GROTTA

Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 686 42 93; Vicolo delle Grotte 27; meals €30; h 12.30–3.30pm & 7.30pm–1am Mon–Sat; g Via Arenula

A flower's throw from the Campo, Sergio's is what a proper Roman trattoria should look like: chequered tablecloths, bustling waiters, steaming plates of pasta, and not a frill in sight. A loyal following enjoys classic hearty Roman pastas – *cacio e pepe*, *carbonara*, *amatriciana* – and large steaks grilled over hot coals. In the summer there are tables outside on the cobbled, ivy-hung lane.

## ANTICA HOSTARIA ROMANESCA

Map pp74–5 Osteria €€

☎ 06 686 40 24; Campo de' Fiori 40; meals €30; h Tue–Sun, closed Aug; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

If you want to sit and eat on the happening Campo, watching the flower market by day and the bar hoppers by night, this is a good choice. It's a simple, straightforward Roman eatery, with a cramped, TV-dominated interior and lots more seating outside on the square. Food is fine and good value, including *bucatini all'amatriciana* and meatballs.

**SCIAM** Map pp74–5 Middle Eastern €€

☎ 06 683 08 957; Via dei Pellegrino 55; meze €3.50–4, 6 dishes €18; h 3pm–2am Mon–Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II For something entirely different, head to this sultry eatery, its ceiling thick with coloured-glass lanterns and walls hung with kilims. Nestle around the little wooden tables and recline on cushions and low seats. You can eat meze and sip mint tea (no alcohol is served) and pretend you're on another continent. There's a glass-bead, lamp and tile shop next door.

**THIEN KIM** Map pp74–5 Vietnamese €€

☎ 06 683 07 832; Via Giulia 201; meals €25; h dinner Mon–Sat; j Via Arenula Rome's lone Vietnamese restaurant is fortunately a winner. The dimly lit interior reveals few oriental trappings but the food

# top picks

## APERITIVO

Young Romans have embraced the Milanese import of the *aperitivo*. Not just a drink, this is the array of hot and cold snacks – mini pizzas, rice salads, *suppli* (rice balls), pasta and so on – that many bars, restaurants and even shops offer from around 6pm to 9pm. Snacks are sometimes free with your drink, or there's a dedicated charge for a drink and a snack. If you have enough helpings, you can skip dinner and turn straight to the Drinking & Nightlife chapter.

Some of the best spots for an *aperitivo*:

- Freni e Frizioni (p225)
- Doppiozero (p224)
- La Mescita (at Ferrara; p204)
- Obikà (p187)
- Red (p209)
- Société Lutece (p214)
- Friends Art Café (p226)

is pure Vietnamese, if adapted for Italian tastes. To start there's an excellent Green Paradise Island soup (a broth of vegetables, prawns and pork scented with ginger, lemon grass and celery); mains include spicy fried fish in *nuoc nam* (fish sauce).

### FILETTI DI BACCALÀ Map pp74–5 Trattoria €

€ 06 686 40 18; Largo dei Librai 88; meals €15; h 5-10.30pm Mon-Sat; j Via Arenula

On a pretty, scooter-strewn piazza, this tiny old institution serves classic cod and chips, without the chips (the name means 'fillet of cod'). You can have the crispy battered veggies instead.

### BRUSCHETTERIA DEGLI ANGELI

Map pp74–5 Pub, Ristorante €

€ 06 688 05 789; Piazza B Cairoli 2a; bruschettas/pastas €8/7; h noon-3pm & 7.30pm-1.30am Mon-Sat; j Via Arenula

A vibrant pub-style place, this unpretentious joint specialises in bruschetta. Thick slabs of toasted bread come with a range of toppings: from the classic tomato, basil and olive oil to courgette flowers and mozzarella, and, in season, truffles. There are also decent pasta dishes and steaks, and a good range of seldom-seen Italian beers. In summer you can sit outside, though the views are nothing special.

### FORNO DI CAMPO DE' FIORI

Map pp74–5 Pizza al taglio €

€ 06 688 06 662; Campo de' Fiori 22; pizza slices from €2; h 7am-1.30pm & 5.30-8pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sat, 7am-1.30pm Thu; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A brilliant pit stop when there's too much to see to pause for a meal, the Forno is most renowned for its thin, crispy, direct-from-the-oven pizza. Afficionados swear by the *pizza bianca* although the *pizza rossa* (with tomato) is just as good. You can snack by Palazzo Farnese in the square next door.

### ANTICO FORNO ROSCIOLI

Map pp74–5 Bakery €

€ 06 686 40 45; Via dei Chiavari 34; h 6am-8pm Mon-Fri, 6am-2.30pm Sat, closed Sat in Aug; j Via Arenula

Not the renowned delicatessen and *wine bar* (p190), but the bakery around the corner, this fabulous place lives up to the culinary standards of its brother enterprise and has delicious pizza by the slice (the *pizza bianca* is legendary) as well as irresistible cakes. Perfect for putting together a picnic.

### BERNASCONI Map pp74–5 Café €

€ 06 688 06 264; Piazza B Cairoli 16; h 7am-8.45pm Tue-Sun; j Piazza B Cairoli

Cheery and tiny, this blink-and-you'll-miss-it kosher patisserie is well worth swinging into. The *cornetti* (croissants filled with chocolate, marmalade or custard cream) are fabulous. It's a stand-up coffee shop: listen out for banter behind the bar and keep an eye out for the best cakes.

### JEWISH GHETTO

Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

€ 06 688 06 629; Via Monte de' Cenci 9; meals €55; h Tue-Sat, noon-3pm Sun; j Via Arenula Veritable Roman-Jewish Piperno, tucked away on a cobbled corner, is a wood-panelled restaurant of the old school, where white-clad waiters serve some of Rome's best deep-fried food, such as *filetti di baccalà*, *carciofi alla giudia* (Jewish-style artichokes) or *fiore di zucca ripieni e fritti* (cheese-and-anchovy-stuffed courgette flowers). It might feel odd to ask the waiter for *palle del Nonno* ('grandpa's balls') but cast aside your qualms and try the delicious ricotta and chocolate puffs. It's formal without being stuffy and is

perfect for family occasions. Booking is essential on Sundays.

### VECCHIA ROMA Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

€ 06 686 46 04; Piazza Campitelli 18; meals €55; h Thu-Tue; g Via del Teatro di Marcello

At venerable Vecchia Roma (Old Rome) polite waiters wear white jackets, oil paintings hang in the dining rooms, candles light the outdoor terrace, celebrities sparkle and politicians scheme. The menu changes with the season, offering fabulous salads in summer, 101 things to do with polenta in winter and lots of decent pastas and risottos year-round. Also worth a mention is the abundant antipasto selection of buffalo mozzarella, stuffed squid, prawns, fried bits and bobs, and assorted vegetables.

### DA GIGGETTO Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

€ 06 686 11 05; Via del Portico d'Ottavia 21-22; meals €45; h Tue-Sun; j Piazza B Cairoli

One of the best-known restaurants in the atmospheric Ghetto area, Da Giggetto is a marvellous labyrinth famous for its Roman-Jewish cooking. Particularly good are the fried starters like *carciofi alla giudia* and *fiore di zucca*; *baccalà* is another tried-and-tested favourite. Bag an outside table next to the ancient ruins of the Portico d'Ottavia.

### LA TAVERNA DEGLI AMICI

Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€€

€ 06 699 20 637; Piazza Margana 37; meals €45; h Tue-Sun; g Piazza Venezia

Roman politicians like to eat well, and La Taverna degli Amici is where many from the nearby Democratici di Sinistra headquarters come to lunch. On a quintessential ivy-draped piazza on the edge of the Jewish Ghetto, it serves consistently good Italian food: pasta and risotto, meat classics like *saltimbocca alla romana* (veal with ham), fish and homemade desserts. There's also an excellent wine list. It gets busy at lunchtime so service can be slow.

### SORA MARGHERITA Map pp74–5 Trattoria €€

€ 06 687 42 16; Piazza delle Cinque Scole 30; meals €28; h 12.30-3pm Tue-Fri & Sun, 12.30-3pm & 8-10.30pm Sat; g Via Arenula

Rough-and-ready Sora Margherita started as a cheap kitchen for hungry locals, but word has spread. Expect dog-eat-dog queues; cheap, hearty pasta; Roman and Jewish dishes slapped down on Formica

table tops; and a rowdy Roman atmosphere. Service is prompt and you're expected to be likewise. It's closed weekends in summer as, according to the sign, '*tutti al mare*' (everyone's at the beach).

### PANE, VINO E SAN DANIELE

Map pp74–5 Wine Bar €€

€ 06 687 71 47; Piazza Mattei 16; dishes €4.50-8.50; h 12.40pm-2am Mon-Sat; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina

This wine bar explains itself in its name: 'bread, wine and San Daniele' – San Daniele being a sought-after ham from the north of Italy. It's a friendly place in the Ghetto, all dark wood and mirror-lined. Try all sorts of northern hams and salamis, alongside samples from a strong wine list. A great place for a drink and a light meal.

### BOCCIONE Map pp74–5 Pasticceria €

€ 06 687 86 37; Via del Portico d'Ottavia 1; h 8am-7.30pm Sun-Thu, 8am-3.30pm Fri; j Piazza B Cairoli

You'll spot this small, ancient, Jewish bakery by the queue. Specialities include ricotta cake with chocolate flakes and cherries, marzipan amaretto biscuits, and *mostacciolo romano* (a kind of sweet biscuit) – all served by a particularly grumpy elderly ladies.

### LA DOLCEROMA Map pp74–5 Bakery €

€ 06 689 21 96; Via del Portico d'Ottavia 20; pastries €2.50-5; h 8am-1.30pm & 3.30-8pm Tue-Sun; j Piazza B Cairoli

'Sweet Rome' specialises in sticky Austrian strudels, Sacher torte, pastries, muffins and cookies. It also has splendid ice cream, and everything's made on the premises. Perfect when the legs are beginning to go and the spirit's waning.

### ISOLA TIBERINA

Map pp74–5 Ristorante €€€

€ 06 686 16 01; Via Ponte Quattro Capi 16; meals €60; h Mon-Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a

You can't beat the romance of Sora Lella's setting, on the River Tiber's tiny island. Ring the doorbell to gain entrance to this timeless institution, named after the owner's mother, who was a Roman TV star. The classic Roman menu has some twists, like aubergine *parmigiana* with added nuts, ricotta and honey, as well as crowd-pleasers such as *amatriciana* with gnocchi (ideal for a winter's night).

## VIA DEL CORSO & AROUND

### OSTERIA DELL'INGEGNO

Map pp74-5 **Ristorante, Vegetarian** €€€  
% 06 678 06 62; Piazza di Pietra 45; meals €60;  
h lunch & dinner Mon-Thu & Sat, lunch Fri, dinner Sun; g Via del Corso; a

A casual yet chic restaurant, this is a favourite of Italian politicians and their glamorous entourages. Eat inside at brightly painted tables, surrounded by cubist-style paintings, or outside overlooking the charming square and temple of Apollo. Food has an adventurous twist, and dishes include a delicious salad of fresh buffalo mozzarella, baby chicory and anchovies, and *farfalle* (butterfly-shaped pasta) with leeks and saffron. It's open all afternoon and there's *aperitivo* available up to 7.30pm.

### GINO

Map pp74-5 **Trattoria** €€  
% 06 687 34 34; Vicolo Rosini 4; meals €40;  
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso  
Conviviality should be this place's middle name. Hidden down a narrow lane, it's friendly and always busy, a favourite of local politicians and journalists. Here you can eat fabulously executed staples such as *gnocchi* and *tonnarelli* (square-shaped spaghetti) under painted vines, overlooked by some of the loudest murals in town.

### MATRICIANELLA

Map pp74-5 **Trattoria** €€  
% 06 692 02 132; Via Frattina 94; meals €40;  
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso  
Romans love this quintessential yet upmarket trattoria, with its typically Roman cuisine, gingham tablecloths and chintzy murals. It's on a quiet cobbled street with some charming outside seating. The fried snacks are great (try fried potato peel and ricotta), meat dishes fabulous and the chocolate and ricotta dessert a grand finale. Book ahead.

### OSTERIA DELLA FREZZA

Map pp74-5 **Osteria** €€  
% 06 322 62 73; Via della Frezza; meals €40;  
g Piazza Augusto Imperatore  
Part of the 'Gusto (below) complex, della Frezza is trendy yet simple, with white-tiled, photo-covered walls and a monochrome look. It's part *osteria*, part *enoteca* and part tapas bar. As well as selections of meat or cheese, you can order *cicchetti* (mini-helpings) of pasta, meat and fish dishes on the menu, such as *tortelli di baccalà* (cod in pasta wraps) and fried ricotta.

### 'GUSTO

Map pp74-5 **Pizzeria, Ristorante** €€  
% 06 322 62 73; Piazza Augusto Imperatore 9; pizza €7-11; g Piazza Augusto Imperatore  
If Terence Conran was Italian, he might have dreamed up 'Gusto, once a mould-breaking warehouse-style gastronomic complex. Now it's all a bit '90s, but it still has a buzz and is a great place to sit and eye up the new Richard Meier-designed *Ara Pacis* museum (p85). Go for the Neapolitan-style pizzas rather than the fusion food in the restaurant. Around the corner, *No28* (dishes €14-26; h 9am-2am Tue-Sun Jul & Aug, 9am-2am daily Sep-Jun) is a café-cocktail bar bearing the same hallmarks of industrial chic and interesting cuisine, while *Osteria della Frezza* (above) is around the back.

### RÉCAFE

Map pp74-5 **Pizzeria** €€  
% 06 681 34 730; Piazza Augusto Imperatore 36; pizzas €6.50-10; h pizzeria noon-3pm & 7.30pm-12.30am, bar 8.30am-midnight; g Piazza Augusto Imperatore  
On perhaps the chicest square in Rome (it's overlooked by the new *Ara Pacis* museum), this is Rome's chicest pizzeria. Take your food outside, or dine inside under twisted globe-like chandeliers in an airy space. Roman thin-crust pizzas are the name of the game, but it's also a good place for a drink.

### PIZZERIA AL LEONCINO

Map pp74-5 **Pizzeria** €  
% 06 686 77 57; Via del Leoncino 28; pizza €5-8.50;  
h Thu-Tue; g Via del Corso  
It can be difficult to source a cheap meal in upmarket Tridente, which is why Leoncino should be celebrated. A boisterous neighbourhood pizzeria with a wood-fired oven, it has two small rooms, cheerful décor and gruff but efficient waiters who will serve you an excellent Roman-style pizza and ice-cold beer faster than you can say *delizioso*.

## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

This area stretches southeast from Piazza del Popolo, across the area called Tridente and the chic streets close to Piazza di Spagna, where restaurants cater to wealthy Romans and hungry tourists. Politicians like to eat well, so there are some splendid restaurants around the presidential palace and parliament.

Monti, north of the Colosseum, has some wonderful choices. An ancient slum, it's one of Rome's most interesting up-and-coming districts, with intimate bars, *enoteche*, restaurants and boutiques.

Around Stazione Termini it's hard to find a good restaurant as most cater only to tourists, but there are a few, and this area contains Rome's best ethnic eats. In San Lorenzo, the vibrant boho student area east of Termini, you'll find some extraordinarily good restaurants and dirt-cheap pizzerias.

## ESQUILINO & MONTI

**AGATA E ROMEO** Map pp90-1 **Ristorante** €€€  
% 06 446 61 15; Via Carlo Alberto 45; meals €100;  
h Mon-Fri, closed 2 weeks in Jan & Aug;  
m Vittorio Emanuele

A match made in heaven: Agata's food and Romeo's wine cellar. This pioneering restaurant nowadays has more rivals, but still wields culinary clout. Agata specialises in finding new takes on traditional dishes. Frequent crowd-pleasers include *coda alla vaccinara* (oxtail) and *filetto di tonno con semi di sesamo* (tuna fillet with sesame seeds). Her *millefoglie* (*millefeuilles*; literally 'thousand leaves', small iced cakes made of puff pastry, filled with jam and cream) are legendary.

### HASEKURA

Map pp90-1 **Japanese** €€  
% 06 483 648; Via dei Serpenti 27; meals €50;  
h Mon-Sat; m Cavour  
Favoured by actors and celebrities, tourists and Japanese expats, Hasekura has a simple interior and extremely good food. As well as sushi and sashimi, there is excellent tempura and traditional meat dishes.

### IL POSTO ACCANTO

Map pp90-1 **Ristorante** €€  
% 06 474 30 02; Via del Boschetto 36a; meals €50;  
h closed Sat lunch & Sun; g Via Nazionale  
On pretty Via del Boschetto, this homely, family-run restaurant is small – there are

only 25 places – and instantly memorable, lined by harvest-festival displays of fruit and veg. The food is splendid, with home-made ravioli and fish among the house specialities.

### TRATTORIA MONTI

Map pp90-1 **Trattoria** €€  
% 06 446 65 73; Via di San Vito 13a; meals €50;  
h lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; m Vittorio Emanuele; a  
The Camerucci family runs this inviting, brick-arched place, offering top-notch traditional cooking from the Marches region. Expect homemade soups, gamey stews, elaborate pastas and ingredients such as *pecorino di fossa* (sheep's cheese aged in caves), goose, sultanas, mushrooms and truffles. Try the speciality egg-yolk *tortelli* pasta. Desserts are also delectable, including apple pie with zabaglione. You'll need to book ahead.

### LA CICALA E LA FORMICA

Map pp90-1 **Ristorante** €€  
% 06 481 74 90; Via Leonina 17; meals €35-40;  
h Mon-Sat; m Cavour  
A charming, hip restaurant, the 'Cicada and the Ant' serves up simple Italian food with a smile. There's a good selection of pasta, meat and seafood dishes, including a delicious *carpaccio di pescespada* (delicate slices of raw swordfish). It has a barrel-vaulted, arty interior decorated with Schiller-style paintings, and a few outside tables.

### IL GURU

Map pp90-1 **Indian** €  
% 06 489 04 656; Via Cimarra 4-6; set menus €15-20; h 7.30pm-midnight; m Cavour  
In the atmospheric Monti district, Il Guru is filled with embroidered drapes and elaborate statuettes, and is a popular place for Indian food. The tandooris are prepared in a proper tandoori oven, the curries and vegetables are tasty and the setting is suggestive, albeit of Rome rather than Rajasthan.

### DOOZO

Map pp90-1 **Japanese** €€  
% 06 481 56 55; Via Palermo 51; sushi €6-10;  
g Via Nazionale; a  
Catering to Rome's fashion for multipurpose venues, Doozo (meaning 'welcome') is also a bookshop and a gallery. It offers tofu, sushi, *soba* (buckwheat noodle) soup and other Japanese delicacies, plus beer and green tea. On the street parallel to noisy Via Nazionale, it's a little oasis, particularly the small garden.

## top picks

### VIEWS

- Ar Galletto (p191)
- Dal Bolognese (p209)
- Da Giggetto (p193)
- Il Palazzetto (p197)
- 'Gusto (right)

**DA RICCI** Map pp90-1 Pizzeria €  
% 06 488 11 07; Via Genova 32; pizzas €8;  
h 9pm-midnight Tue-Sun; g Via Nazionale; a  
In a tranquil, cobbled cul-de-sac a step  
away from smoggy Via Nazionale, Rome's  
oldest pizzeria started life as an *enoteca*  
in 1905. The sign says Est! Est!! Est!!! – Da  
Ricci's other name – after the white wine  
from the north of Lazio (see the boxed  
text, p271). Pizzas are thick-based Nea-  
politan (though you can get thin-based if  
you're a Roman aficionado).

**INDIAN FAST FOOD** Map pp90-1 Indian €  
% 06 446 07 92; Via Mamiani 11; curries €5.50-7.50;  
m Vittorio Emanuele  
A genuine Indian takeaway just off Piazza  
Vittorio Emanuele II, this basic place might  
not look like much, but it has great curries  
and spicy samosas. The fare is displayed  
for easy picking – just point to what you  
want – and you can either take it away or  
eat under neon lighting to a soundtrack of  
Hindi hits.

**PANELLA L'ARTE DEL PANE**  
Map pp90-1 Pizzeria al taglio €  
% 06 487 24 35; Via Merulana 54; pizza slices  
€2.50-5; h 8am-2pm & 5-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm  
Sat; m Vittorio Emanuele  
A devilishly tempting bakery near the  
Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, offering  
a magnificent array of pizza, focaccia, rice  
balls, fried croquettes, pastries and choco-  
late that is every bit as tasty as it looks.  
You can eat in, standing at one of the tiny  
circular tables, or take away.

## QUIRINALE TO THE TREVI FOUNTAIN

**PAPÀ BACCUS** Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€€  
% 06 427 42 808; Via Toscana 36; meals €60;  
h Mon-Fri, dinner Sat; g Via Boncompagni  
To breed your own hogs to ensure a ready  
supply of quality meat requires a passion  
that verges on obsession. But it's exactly  
what the owner of this refined Tuscan  
restaurant does. Meat rules here, with pride  
of place going to the succulent Chianina  
beef, but there's plenty else besides, includ-  
ing *panzanella* (a summery starter of bread  
with salad, herbs and oil). Reservations are  
preferred, and you can sit outside on the  
quiet cobbled street.

**AL PRESIDENTE** Map pp90-1 Seafood €€€  
% 06 679 73 42; Via Arcione 95; meals €55;  
g Via del Tritone  
Al Presidente is a discreet, greenery-  
shrouded place, under the walls of the  
residential palace. Its classy air is matched  
by the sophisticated seafood-centred menu.  
Innovative dishes include *baccalà* whisked  
into polenta and grilled, and *trippa di coda di  
rosapo* (a tripe of angler fish).

**NANÀ VINI E CUCINA** Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€  
% 06 691 90 750; Via della Panetteria 37; meals  
€45; h Lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun;  
g Via del Tritone  
It's tricky to find somewhere reasonable  
near the Trevi Fountain, but this is an ap-  
pealing and simple trattoria. Eat in the large  
inviting interior, under huge brass pipes, or  
outside on the *piazzetta*. Try starters such  
as courgette flower stuffed with buffalo  
mozzarella or seafood salad, then move on  
to something like *orecchiette* (ear-shaped  
pasta) with a sauce of courgette and clams.

**VINERIA CHIANTI**  
Map pp90-1 Wine Bar, Ristorante €€  
% 06 678 75 50; Via del Lavatore 81-82; meals €40;  
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Tritone  
Many restaurants around the Trevi are to be  
avoided, but this ivy-clad wine bar is an ex-  
ception. Specialising in Tuscan dishes, it also  
serves imaginative salads (such as pine nuts,  
cinnamon, pear and blue cheese), pastas  
and meat dishes, and pizza in the evenings.  
It's a great place to eat in summer, when  
tables spill out onto the tiny piazza outside.

**ANTICO FORNO** Map pp90-1 Panini €  
% 06 679 28 66; Via delle Muratte 8; panini €2.50;  
h 7am-9pm; g Via del Tritone  
A minisupermarket opposite the Trevi Foun-  
tain, this busy place has a well-stocked deli  
counter where you can choose a filling for  
your freshly baked *panino* or *pizza bianca*.  
There's also a good selection of focaccia  
and pizza, and it's great value for its loca-  
tion. If you fancy another sandwich, follow  
tradition and throw a coin into the fountain.

**DA MICHELE** Map pp90-1 Pizzeria al taglio €  
% 349 252 53 47; Via dell'Umiltà 31; pizza slices  
from €2; g Via del Corso  
The kosher pizza of Zi'Fenizia was a Ghetto  
institution, but has now moved to this

more central spot, capably catered by pizza  
chefs Michel and Cinzia. It's without cheese:  
try the delicious anchovy and endive or  
marinated courgettes.

## PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & AROUND

**IL PALAZZETTO** Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€€  
% 06 699 341 006; Via del Bottino 8; meals €55;  
h lunch Tue-Sun, closed Aug; m Spagna  
A sun-trap shaded terrace hidden at the  
top of the Spanish Steps, the location here  
can't be beat – it's perfect for a glass of  
*prosecco* (sparkling wine) and a light meal  
such as salad or pasta on a sunny day.  
There's a pricier but recommended res-  
taurant for dinner in the evenings (tasting  
menu €85), and the *palazzo* also houses the  
*wine academy* (p288).

**OSTERIA MARGUTTA**  
Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€€  
% 06 323 10 25; Via Margutta 82; meals €55;  
h Mon-Sat; m Spagna; a  
The epitome of a picturesque trattoria,  
theatrical Osteria Margutta is colourful both  
inside and out: blue flowers and ivy cover  
the quaint entrance, while inside is all blue  
glass, rich reds and fringed lampshades.  
Plaques on the chairs testify to the famous  
thespian bums they have supported. The  
menu combines classic and regional dishes,  
with fish served fresh on Tuesday, Friday and  
Saturday. Desserts are homemade, there's a  
top wine list and the service is friendly.

**DIFRONTA A** Map pp90-1 Ristorante €€  
% 06 678 03 55; Via della Croce 38; meals €35;  
h noon-midnight Tue-Sun; m Spagna; a  
Difronta a is colourful, funky and fun. A  
bright jumble of bare brick, yellow-and-  
red walls, wrought iron and protruding  
lights, it's good-looking and surprisingly  
good value. It caters to most tastes: there's  
bruschetta, pasta (including a lip-smacking  
*orecchiette* with prawns, pesto and cream),  
grilled meat, pizza and salad. An excellent  
option for a light lunch or a lively night out.

**FIASCHETTERIA BELTRAMME**  
Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€  
Via della Croce 39; meals €45; m Spagna  
With a tiny dark interior and high ceilings,  
Fiaschetteria (meaning 'wine-sellers') is a  
discreet, intimate, stuck-in-time place with  
a short menu and no telephone. Expect

traditional Roman dishes (*pasta e ceci* and  
so on) and fashionistas.

**MARGUTTA RISTORANTE**  
Map pp90-1 Vegetarian €€  
% 06 678 60 33; Via Margutta 118; meals €45;  
m Spagna or Flaminio; a  
Vegetarian restaurants in Rome are rarer  
than parking spaces, and this black-, red-  
and grey-toned place is an unusually chic  
way to eat your greens. Most dishes are  
excellent, with offerings such as artichoke  
hearts with potato cubes and smoked pro-  
volone cheese. There's an impressive wine  
list and staff are friendly and bilingual. Best  
value is the Saturday/Sunday buffet brunch  
(€15/25), with up to 50 dishes; on Sundays  
it's accompanied by live music. Around 70%  
of ingredients used are organic, all pasta  
and desserts are homemade, and – vegans  
rejoice! – it also offers a four-course vegan  
menu (€30).

**OTELLO ALLA CONCORDIA**  
Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€  
% 06 679 11 78; Via della Croce 81; meals €40;  
h Mon-Sat; m Spagna; a  
A perennial favourite, Otello is a haven near  
the Spanish Steps. Outside dining is in the  
vine-covered courtyard of an 18th-century  
*palazzo*, where, if you're lucky, you can  
dine in the shadow of the wisteria-covered  
pergola; indoors is cramped yet attractive,  
cluttered with pictures. The fairly priced  
food's pretty good, with an ample selection  
of antipasti, pastas and *secondi*, ranging  
from *sautè di cozze* (sautéed mussels) to fried  
brains and roast turbot.

**MARIO** Map pp90-1 Trattoria €€  
% 06 678 38 18; Via delle Vite 55; meals €35;  
h Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso; a  
Under a wood-beamed ceiling, Mario has  
been serving up earthy Tuscan cooking to  
tourists and locals since 1960 – and the  
interior doesn't seem to have changed  
much. Try classics such as *ribollita* (bread  
soup) and *pappardelle alle lepre* (pasta with  
hare sauce), or fuel your shopping with a  
*bistecca alla fiorentina* (Florentine steak).

**PALATIUM** Map pp90-1 Wine Bar €€  
% 06 692 021 32; Via Frattina 94; meals €35;  
h 11am-midnight Mon-Sat; g Via del Corso; a  
An unusual, sleek, chic wine bar, usefully  
placed in the upmarket Tridente shopping

## CREAMY OR FRUITY, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Ice cream is big business in Italy. The average Italian family spends €80 on ice cream a year, and has shown no sign of cutting back on the sweet stuff despite economic woes.

It's all come a long way since Nero snacked on snow mixed with fruit pulp and honey. No-one's quite sure where ice cream originated, but credit is usually given to the Arabs, who are said to have developed techniques for freezing fruit juices and to have made the first sorbets. The word sorbet probably derives from the Arab word *scherbet*, meaning 'sweet snow', or from *sharber*, meaning 'to sip'. When the Arabs invaded Sicily they brought their food with them and the fame of their frozen drink began to spread.

Fast forward to the Renaissance and 16th-century Florence, where two cooks made ice-cream history. The first, Ruggeri, was a chicken farmer who made it to the culinary big time thanks to a sorbet he made for Catherine Medici. The second, Bernardo Buontalenti, was a well-known architect who stunned the gastronomic establishment by producing a frozen dessert based on zabaglione and fruit.

Both are considered founding fathers of Italy's *gelato* culture, which, while one of the country's most successful exports, is best experienced first-hand. In summer the seasonal fruit flavours are the ones to go for, while cream-based flavours are preferable in winter – but really, it's whatever takes your fancy. You'll usually be asked if you want *panna* (cream) with your ice cream. A good call is *si*.

In the lion days of summer, another Roman treat is *grattachecca* – a crushed-ice sensation, drowned in a fruity syrup of your choice. It'll cool you down on a sultry night, and is the perfect accompaniment to a riverside stroll. There are several stands around the central bridges over the River Tiber.

The following are the *crème de la crème*, but if you're in any gelateria, a tip is to check the colour of the pistachio: ochre-green = good, bright-green = bad. Most places open from around 8am to 1am, though hours are shorter in winter. Prices range from around €1.50 to €3.50 for a *cono* (cone) or *coppetta* (tub).

**Al Settimo Gelo** (Map pp130–1; % 06 372 55 67; Via Vodice 21a; ☪ Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini) The name's a play on 'seventh heaven' and it's not a far-fetched title for one of Rome's finest, with a devotion to natural flavours and the best possible ingredients – pistachios from Bronte, almonds from Avola, and so on. Try the Greek ice cream or cardamom made to an Afghan recipe.

**Ara Coeli** (Map pp74–5; % 06 679 50 85; Piazza d'Aracoeli 9; ☪ Piazza Venezia) Close to the base of the Campidoglio steps and offering more than 40 flavours of excellent organic ice cream, semicold varieties, Sicilian granita and yoghurt.

**Fiocco di Neve** (Map pp74–5; % 06 678 60 25; Via del Pantheon 51; ☪ or j Largo di Torre Argentina) Tiny place, grumpy staff, natural colours – this has all the hallmarks of a good Roman gelateria. Romans come to the 'Snowflake', near the Pantheon, when they're in the mood for something creamy. Zabaglione is the speciality.

district, Palatium is run by the Lazio Regional Authority, but is a lot more glamorous than that sounds. There's an impressive wine list, with a fantastic choice of traditional local products – such as *pecorino* cheese, artichokes, broad beans and ricotta – to accompany it. All this and kosher too.

## NATURIST CLUB – L'ISOLA

Map pp90–1 Vegetarian, Seafood €  
% 06 679 25 09; 4th fl, Via delle Vite 14; set menu €14, meals €25; h Mon-Sat; ☪ Via del Corso In attic-like, wood-lined rooms, this self-service vegetarian restaurant has a rustic feel and serves a variety of tasty salads and pasta dishes, including vegan options and some fresh fish. The food is good and the setting intimate – a world away from the street below. Reservations are requested for the evening. Nudity not necessary.

## GINA Map pp90–1

Café €€  
% 06 678 02 51; Via San Sebastiano 7a; snacks €8-12; h 11am-8pm; m Spagna; a Tucked around the corner from the Spanish Steps, this is an ideal place to drop into once you've shopped. Comfy white seats are strewn with powder-blue cushions, and the walls are hung with modern paintings. You can eat light snacks such as bruschetta with buffalo mozzarella and anchovies, pasta with beans, or smoked-salmon sandwiches. Villa Borghese picnics for two (€40) are also provided.

## PIAZZA BARBERINI & AROUND

TULLIO Map pp90–1 Ristorante €€€  
% 06 475 85 64; Via di San Nicola da Tolentino 26; meals €60; h Mon-Fri; m Barberini; a A formal wood-panelled restaurant whose simple, classic, mainly Tuscan formula has

**Gelateria dei Gracchi** (Map pp130–1; % 06 321 66 68; Via dei Gracchi 272; m Lepanto) Gluten-free cones are available, as well as varieties made with/without milk. It's famous for its seasonal fruity flavours: wild strawberry, peach and mint.

**Gelateria della Palma** (Map pp74–5; % 06 688 06 752; Via della Maddalena 20; ☪ Via del Corso) Not as classy as some, but kids will love this ice-cream version of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory, offering up to 100 different flavours. There's a smaller branch in **Via del Lavatore** (Map pp90–1), near the Trevi Fountain.

**Gelateria Giolitti** (Map pp74–5; % 06 699 12 43; Via degli Uffici del Vicario 40; ☪ Corso del Rinascimento) A historic gelateria that started as a dairy in 1900 and still pushes Roman buttons. Gregory Peck and Audrey Hepburn swung by in *Roman Holiday* and it used to deliver to Pope John Paul II.

**Gelateria Pasqualetti** (Map pp74–5; % 06 687 89 40; Piazza della Maddalena 3a; ☪ or j Largo di Torre Argentina) Graziella and Patrizia Pasqualetti have introduced their father's amazing ice cream to Rome from Orvieto. The secret is the ingredients: pistachios from Bronte, almonds from Avola, pine nuts from Pisa and hazelnuts from the Langhe in Piedmont. Try the strawberries and cream, *stracciatella*, chocolate, fig, or blackberry – though everything is scrumptious.

**Iberto Pica** (Map pp74–5; % 06 688 06 153; Via della Seggiola; j Via Arenula) A long-standing, old-fashioned bar, with shrub-shaded seating where you can savour the many flavours – all the classics as well as some wild cards such as macadamia. Try the rice flavours (like frozen rice pudding) – yum.

**La Fonte della Salute** (Map pp122–3; % 06 589 74 71; Via Cardinale Marmaggi 2-6; ☪ or j Viale di Trastevere) It might not be quite the 'fountain of health', but the fruit flavours are so delicious they're bound to lift your spirits, and it has soy- and yoghurt-based gelato too.

**Old Bridge** (Map pp130–1; % 06 397 23 026; Via dei Bastioni di Michelangelo 5; m Ottaviano-San Pietro) Conveniently set near the wall of the Vatican, this tiny parlour cheerfully dishes up big portions of delicious ice cream. Try the chocolate or pistachio, with a dollop of cream on top.

**Pellacchia** (Map pp130–1; % 06 321 08 07; Via Cola di Rienzo 103; m Lepanto) A landmark on the ice-cream map, this is convenient for the Vatican and splendid for classics such as coffee, zabaglione, chocolate and seasonal fruits.

**San Crispino** (Map pp90–1; % 06 679 39 24; Via della Panetteria 42; m Barberini) Most concur this is the best gelato in Rome, but it's a fine-food experience rather than a wholly indulgent one. Service is grouchy, and the delicate, strictly natural and seasonal flavours are served only in tubs (cones would detract from the taste).

**Tre Scalini** (Map pp74–5; % 06 688 01 996; Piazza Navona 30; ☪ Corso del Rinascimento) Turn your Piazza Navona stroll into a revelation by sampling a *tartufo nero*: a rich ball of chocolate gelato, filled with huge chunks of chocolate and served with cream. As a satisfied punter put it: 'this must be what darkness tastes like.'

attracted a faithful clientele of politicians, journalists and artists since the days of *la dolce vita*. Pasta dishes range from the simple *tortellini in brodo* (pasta in broth) to the decadent *tagliolini con tartufo bianco* (pasta with white truffle). Meat, including the famous *bistecca alla fiorentina*, is grilled over a charcoal fire, while *biscotti* (almond biscuits) are dipped in sweet *vin santo* (holy wine) for a traditional dessert.

## COLLINE EMILIANE Map pp90–1 Trattoria €€

% 06 481 75 38; Via degli Avignonesi 22; meals €45; h lunch & dinner Tue-Sat, lunch Sun; m Barberini; a Splendid food is the name of the game at this warm, elegant trattoria. It flies the flag for Emilia-Romagna, the Italian province that has gifted the world Parmesan cheese, balsamic vinegar, bolognese sauce and Parma ham. It's all about cream,

veal, homemade pasta and scrumptious pasta fillings such as mashed pumpkin. Magnificent.

## PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA & AROUND

### DONATI Map pp90–1 Ristorante €€

% 06 49 18 68; Via Magenta 20; meals €30; h Mon-Sat, closed mid-Jul–mid-Aug; m Termini; a Termini district is full of second-rate tourist traps, but this is a straightforward traditional restaurant serving up competent takes on dishes such as fried seafood or spaghetti with mussels and clams. You can eat inside, in the high-ceilinged hasn't-changed-for-years interior, or outside on the cobbled street. Around the corner is the similar **Regina** (% 06 445 38 34; Via dei Mille 46).

**LA GALLINA BIANCA** Map pp90–1 Pizzeria €  
% 06 474 37 77; Via A Rosmini 9; pizzas €6–11;  
h noon–3pm & 6pm–midnight, to 1am Sat & Sun;  
m Termini; a  
The ‘White Hen’ is a friendly, handy pizzeria among the minefield of tourist trash around Termini, serving great thick-crust Neapolitan pizzas made from slow-risen dough. It’s large and airy, decorated in cool pale blue and old wood, with shaded outside seating on a not-too-busy street.

**AFRICA** Map pp90–1 Ethiopian & Eritrean €  
% 06 494 10 77; Via Gaeta 26–28; mains €10;  
h Tue–Sun; m Castro Pretorio; a  
Dimly lit Africa, serving Ethiopian and Eritrean food to expats and curious Romans since 1978, really feels like it could be somewhere else. The food is spicy and served without cutlery. Use your fingers to dig into falafel and *sambusas* (a cross between a spring roll and a samosa), and scoop up meat and vegetables with soft, spongy *injera* bread before finishing off with sweet halva and spicy tea. It makes a change.

**AL FORNO DELLA SOFFITTA**  
Map pp90–1 Pizzeria €  
% 06 420 11 164; Via Piave 62; pizzas €8; h lunch & dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat & Sun; m Repubblica; a  
None of those namby-pamby thin crusts – this is pure Neapolitan pizza, keeping workers from nearby offices happy with its cheery décor, substantial dough and fine array of toppings. Try the *amatriciana*, topped with pancetta and tomato.

**RISTOFER** Map pp90–1 Tavola Calda €  
Via Marsala 13; meals €7; m Termini  
Technically Ristofer is a railway-workers’ canteen, but it’s open to the public and is cheerily welcoming and completely institutional. Just go through the massive wooden doors, grab a tray and choose whatever looks good on the day. It’s not gourmet food, but if you want a cheap, belly-filling meal, at €7 for a *primo*, *secondo* and *dolce* it’s just the ticket.

**SAN LORENZO & BEYOND**  
**UNO E BINO** Map p103 Ristorante €€€  
% 06 446 07 02; Via degli Equi 58; meals €55–60;  
g Via Tiburtina; a  
San Lorenzo harbours some culinary diamonds and this is the biggest sparkler of

them all, though it’s a very minimalist sparkler. Classy yet relaxed, it’s bottle-lined, with paper tablecloths. It’s won lots of awards, and Giovanni Passerini cooks fine, adventurous food with a Sicilian slant, such as *fagottelli* envelopes stuffed with *pecorino* cheese, garlic, tomato, date and almond milk. It’s always full, so you’ll need to book ahead.

**TRAM TRAM** Map p103 Ristorante, Seafood €€  
% 06 49 04 16; Via dei Reti 44; meals €50;  
h Tue–Sun; g Via Tiburtina; a  
This trendy yet old-fashioned, lace-curtained trattoria is usually filled with San Lorenzo hipsters. It takes its name from the trams that rattle past outside and offers traditional dishes, such as *baccalà* on Friday, as well as southern specialities such as *orecchiette alla Norma* (ear-shaped pasta with fried aubergine, tomato, basil and ricotta) and *riso cozze patate* (rice, mussels and potatoes).

**ARANCIA BLU** Map p103 Vegetarian €€  
% 06 445 41 05; Via dei Latini 55–65; meals €35;  
h dinner; g Via Tiburtina; a  
The ‘Blue Orange’, a laid-back, softly lit, contemporary-chic bistro, is the place to head for creative vegetarian food. It offers dishes such as ravioli stuffed with ricotta, black olives, pistachio and orange, and has a great wine list of more than 400 choices. The chocolate-tasting menu is a nice touch.

**POMMIDORO** Map p103 Trattoria €€  
% 06 445 26 92; Piazza dei Sanniti 44; meals €35;  
h Mon–Sat; g Via Tiburtina; a  
Throughout San Lorenzo’s metamorphosis from down-at-heel working-class area to down-at-heel bohemian enclave, Pommidoro has remained the same. A much-loved local institution, it’s a great century-old trattoria, with high star-vaulted ceilings, a huge fireplace and outdoor conservatory seating. It’s a focus for local intellectuals, including controversial film director Pier Paolo Pasolini. Celebs still stop by – from Nicole Kidman to Fabio Cappello – but it’s an unpretentious place with superb-quality traditional food, specialising in magnificent grilled meat.

**FORMULA UNO** Map p103 Pizzeria €  
% 06 445 38 66; Via degli Equi 13; pizzas €4.15–6.50; h 6.30pm–1.30am Mon–Sat; g Via Tiburtina  
As far removed from a relaxed eating experience as most visitors would want to handle, this historic San Lorenzo pizzeria,

with wooden tables, whirring fans and whizzing waiters, is always packed with local students and slumming uptowners. Consequently, you’ll need to join the waiting throng and learn the underhand art of Roman queuing. Place-mats double as menus and you can order tasty snacks like bruschetta and *suppli al telefono* as well as cheap-as-chips thin-crust pizzas.

## SOUTHERN ROME

Although these are touristy districts, there are some splendid restaurants in the areas around San Giovanni and down towards the Colosseum. Further south, if you are walking the Via Appia Antica, you can stop to eat in the almost-countryside.

To the southwest is Testaccio, a traditionally working-class enclave once famous for its abattoir. Consequently this is one of the best areas to eat real Roman cuisine. Many of the older trattorias and restaurants specialise in the so-called *quinto quarto* (fifth quarter, or the insides of the animal), though they are also good for other dishes if you think offal is awful. Today Testaccio is famous for its nightclubs and bars – for more on these see p223.

## SAN GIOVANNI

**CHARLY’S SAUCIERE**  
Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€  
% 06 704 95 666; Via di San Giovanni in Laterano 270; meals €45; h lunch Tue–Thu, dinner Mon–Sat; m San Giovanni; a  
To recharge between San Giovanni and the Colosseum, try this small Italian-Swiss restaurant, with twee lace curtains, crisp white tablecloths and theatrical deep-red curtains. Choose from a menu that features delectable onion soup, Roquefort salad, different takes on steak and even fondue for two. Wines are mainly French.

**LA TANA DEI GOLOSI**  
Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€  
% 06 772 03 202; Via di San Giovanni in Laterano 220; meals €45; h 7.30–11.30pm Mon–Sat; m Colosseo  
This simple-looking restaurant, created as a culinary adventure, has a changing menu that travels all around Italy twice monthly, featuring different regional cuisines. A southern period, for example, may feature *tiella barese* (rice, mussels and potatoes) and

*polpette di melanzane* (aubergine balls). All ingredients are exceptional: it’s the holy grail of regional excellence pursued with dedication.

**CELIO**  
**TAVERNA DEI QUARANTA**  
Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€  
% 06 700 05 50; Via Claudia 24; meals €30;  
h Mon–Sat; m Colosseo  
Off the main tourist track but near the Colosseum, this airy trattoria is run by gentle staff and offers super, simple Roman cooking, with delicious daily pasta specials, great bruschetta and *arostocini* (beef kebabs). There’s some outside seating on the leafy yet busy street.

**CAFÉ CAFÉ** Map pp108–9 Café €€  
% 06 700 87 43; Via dei Santi Quattro 44; dishes €8–15; h 11am–1.30am, lunch noon–3.45pm, dinner 7.30pm–midnight; m Colosseo; a  
This is a hugely popular gem, the kind of pint-sized wine bar, restaurant and café that everyone needs in their neighbourhood. The changing menu features light stuff such as *caprese* as well as tastes from elsewhere like hummus and tzatziki. The few outside tables overlook the Colosseum at the end of the street.

**LE NAUMACHIE** Map pp108–9 Pizzeria €  
% 06 700 27 64; Via Celimontana 7; pizzas €5–8.50;  
m Colosseo; a  
This modern, popular pizzeria caters to locals and tourists, has a brick-arched, spacious interior, and offers classic Roman pizzas at both lunch and dinner, with tried-and-tested toppings such as *capricciosa* (a variety of toppings, usually mushroom, ham, artichoke and olives) and *marinara* (seafood).

## VIA APPIA ANTICA & THE CATACOMBS

**CECILIA METELLA** Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€  
% 06 511 02 13; Via Appia Antica 125; meals €35;  
h Tue–Sun; g Via Appia Antica; a  
Near the catacombs of San Callisto, the outside seating here is great, set on a low hill under a vine canopy and with glimpses of the jewel-green countryside. Inside resembles a wedding-reception room, but it’s attractive, if formal, and the food is good

too, including *polenta ai porcini* (polenta with porcini mushrooms).

## AVENTINO & TESTACCIO CHECCHINO DAL 1887

Map pp108–9 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 574 63 18; Via di Monte Testaccio 30; meals €60; h Tue–Sat, closed Aug; g or j Via Marmorata; a

A pig's whisker from the city's former slaughterhouse, Checchino is a Roman institution, one of the grander restaurants specialising in offal, from calf heads to pig trotters. Run by the fifth generation of the Mariani family, it has risen from humble

# top picks

## MARKETS

Rome's fresh-produce markets are a fabulous feature of the city's foodscape. Go to see what's in season and enter the fray with all the neighbourhood matriarchs. There's always an explosion of colour: fresh fruit and veg, meat and fish stalls, breads, cheeses and so on. Food markets operate from around 7am to 1.30pm, Monday to Saturday.

Rome's most famous markets include the following:

- **Campo de' Fiori** (Map pp74–5; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II) The most picturesque, but also the most expensive. Prices are graded corresponding to the shopper's accent, so the Roman pays one sum, the Italian another and the non-Italian yet another.
- **Nuovo Mercato Esquilino** (Map pp90–1; Via Lamarmora; m Vittorio Emanuele) One of Rome's cheapest markets and the best place to find exotic herbs and spices.
- **Piazza dell' Unità** (Map pp130–1; g Piazza del Risorgimento) Near the Vatican, this is a good place to stock up for a picnic.
- **Piazza San Cosimato** (Map pp122–3; g or j Viale di Trastevere) Some tourist tat has crept in to Trastevere's neighbourhood market, but it's still the business with foodstuffs.
- **Ponte Milvio** (Map pp150–1; g Ponte Milvio) North of the city centre, Ponte Milvio caters to the well-heeled shoppers of Flaminio.
- **Testaccio** (Map pp108–9; Piazza Testaccio; g or j Via Marmorata) The most Roman of all the city's markets. Sharpen your elbows and admire the queuing techniques of the elderly ladies. It's noted for its excellent quality and good prices.

roots to become one of the city's most vaunted eateries, attracting a well-to-do clientele of local regulars and curious foreigners. For those who can't stomach the Roman soul food there's more standard seasonal fare and a comprehensive wine list.

**AGUSTARELLO** Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 65 85; Via Giovanni Branca 98; meals €35; h Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata; a Old-timer Agustarello hides its in-the-know hubbub behind frosted glass. Inside, plain and simple, is thoroughly Roman, from the clientele to the food. It serves mostly offal, specialising in sweetbreads and oxtail, but if innards aren't your thing, you'll still eat splendidly here (though vegetarians may want to give it a miss).

**DA FELICE** Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 68 00; Via Mastro Giorgio 29; meals €35; h Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata; a Film director Roberto Benigni has written a poem to this place. As well as for its food, it's renowned for the way cantankerous old Felice used to vet his clients. He's retired now but still keeps an occasional beady eye on proceedings. The trattoria has smartened up a lot, and is hidden behind frosted glass. If you make it inside you'll enjoy true Roman fare, great pasta and lots of meat and offal. You might get in trouble if you don't finish your food though.

## TRATTORIA DA BUCATINO

Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 68 86; Via Luca della Robbia 84; meals €35; h Tue–Sun; g or j Via Marmorata Popularity has seen this long-standing neighbourhood place expand down into the basement. Ask for a table upstairs (with wood panels, empty chianti bottles and a mounted boar's head) or outside, as downstairs has less atmosphere. Of the antipasti, try the terrific *insalata di mare* (seafood salad), while afterwards a bowl of steaming pasta is where it's at: the signature dish is *bucatini all'amatriciana*.

**PIZZERIA REMO** Map pp108–9 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 574 62 70; Piazza Santa Maria Liberatrice 44; pizzas €6; h 7pm–1am Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata Not a place for a romantic tête-à-tête, Pizzeria Remo is one of the city's most popular pizzerias, busy with noisy hordes of young

Romans. Expect to queue if you arrive after 8.30pm. The pizzas are among the biggest and thinnest in Rome, sizzling with toppings on the crisp, charred base. Place your order by ticking your choices on a sheet of paper slapped down by an overstretched waiter.

**VOLPETTI PIÙ** Map pp108–9 Tavola Calda €

☎ 06 574 43 06; Via A Volta 8; pasta/meat dishes €4/5; h Mon–Sat; g or j Via Marmorata One of the few places around town where you can sit down and eat well for less than €10, Volpetti Più is a sumptuous *tavola calda* with pizzas, pastas, soups, meats, vegetables and fried nibbles. The quality is as impressive as the quantity, and the booming cooks who dish out the food are always willing to explain what everything is (in Italian).

## OSTIENSE & SAN PAOLO

**DA ENZO** Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 13 64; Via Ostiense 36; meals €25; h Mon–Sat; m Piramide With just a few tables, this is a classic Roman family-run trattoria that's been here for around 50 years. The chef used to cook at the parliament, and now feeds the workers from the nearby market. The fresh pasta is divine, the sausage super and the tiramisù feathery light.

## HOSTARIA ZAMPAGNA

Map pp108–9 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 574 23 06; Via Ostiense 179; meals €25; h closed dinner Sun; g Via Ostiense The trendification of Via Ostiense – with ever-growing numbers of bars and clubs in its side streets – has thankfully bypassed this humble trattoria near the Basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura. As for the past 80 years, you sit down to good hearty food prepared according to the city's weekly calendar. It's all splendid: try *spaghetti alla carbonara*, *alla gricia* or *all'amatriciana*, then tuck into tripe, beef or *involtini* (stuffed rolls of meat).

## TRASTEVERE

Once working-class and poor, now pricey and picturesque, Trastevere has a huge number of restaurants, trattorias, cafés and pizzerias. The better places are generally tucked away in the maze of side streets, while many of the higher-profile places have long since foregone quality, reckoning (rightly) that people will come all the

same. Still, it's not just tourists here – Romans like to eat in Trastevere too. Find the right spot and you'll have a memorable experience.

## EAST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

**ASINOCOTTO** Map pp122–3 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 589 89 85; Via dei Vascellari 48; meals €55; h dinner Tue–Sun; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Asinocotto means 'cooked donkey' but don't let that put you off. The cooking here is creative, with imaginative, balanced, harmonious dishes such as loin of lamb stuffed with foie gras and caramelised figs, or swordfish with capers. The interior is invitingly hung with grapevine lighting, and it's one of Rome's few self-proclaimed gay-friendly restaurants.

**LA GENSOLA** Map pp122–3 Ristorante €€

☎ 06 581 63 12; Piazza della Gensola 15; meals €50; h closed Sun Jul–Aug; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a This discreet Sicilian smasher fills small, brightly lit, graceful adjoining rooms, and offers superb cooking. It specialises in seafood – try the delicious tuna tartare or pasta with fresh anchovies. This is the kind of restaurant you want to have in your neighbourhood: it's unpretentious but classy, waiters are knowledgeable and quirky, and foodies will love it. There's a five-course *menu di pesce* (fish degustation menu, €39), complete with water and decent house wine.

**SPIRITO DIVINO** Map pp122–3 Ristorante €€

☎ 06 589 66 89; Via dei Genovesi 31; meals €45; h 7.30pm–midnight Mon–Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a Spirito Divino is in a medieval building that once housed the oldest synagogue in Rome – the walls date to 980, while the wine cellar is even older. The menu is not just traditional; some of the recipes are ancient, such as pork Mazio-style, which dates back around 2000 years. More modern dishes, all delicious, include linguine with seafood, lamb with pepper and peach chutney, and a sublime *crème brûlée*.

**DA ENZO** Map pp122–3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 581 83 55; Via dei Vascellari 29; meals €25; h Mon–Sat; g Piazza Sonnino A warm-yellow, welcoming, pocket-sized trattoria, open to the street and decorated with pictures of cats. There are a few



outside shaded tables. You can start with bruschetta with *burrata*, and go on to *rigatoni cacio e pepe* followed by *abbacchio al forno* (roasted lamb) and other such Roman classics.

### JAIPUR Map pp122-3 Indian €€

☎ 06 580 39 92; Via di San Francesco a Ripa 56; curries €5-12; h Tue-Sun & dinner Mon; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
Jaipur is a cut above most other Indian restaurants in Rome and has an airy interior covered in Indian paintings to get you in the mood. Popular with young Romans and the city's foreign student population, it specialises in northern Indian cooking, with a large selection of tandoori dishes as well as those old friends – *tikka masala* and *rogan josh*. Vegetarians are well catered for.

### PANATTONI Map pp122-3 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 580 09 19; Viale di Trastevere 53; pizzas €7; h 7pm-2am Thu-Tue; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
Locals know it as *I obitorio* (the morgue) because of its marble tabletops, but thankfully the similarity stops there. This is one of Trastevere's liveliest pizzerias, with paper-thin pizzas, a clattering buzz, grumpy waiters, street-side seating and excellent fried starters (specialties are *suppli* and *baccalà*).

### SISINI Map pp122-3 Pizza al taglio €

Via di San Francesco a Ripa 137; pizza slices from €2; h Mon-Sat, closed Aug; g or j Viale di Trastevere  
Spot it by the crowd. Locals know where to come for the best *pizza rustica* in Trastevere, and you'll need to jostle with them to make it to the counter. Here, simple styles reign supreme – try the *margherita* or *marinara* and you'll see what we mean. It's also worth sampling the *suppli* and roast chicken.

## top picks

### PIZZA

- Pizzeria da Baffetto (p189)
- Dar Poeta (p206)
- Panattoni (above)
- Pizzeria Remo (p202)
- Forno di Campo de' Fiori (p192)

## WEST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

### ALBERTO CIARLA Map pp122-3 Seafood €€€

☎ 06 581 86 68; Piazza San Cosimato 40; meals €90; h dinner Mon-Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
Alberto Ciarla's Trastevere fish restaurant is a historic landmark on the city's gastronomic map. It's on the corner of the piazza that houses the area's food market, and the décor is a time warp of 1970s glamour. Food is spectacular in a more tasteful sense. There are three seafood tasting menus: *grande cucina* for lobsters, oysters and refined delicacies; *cucina tirrenica* for Mediterranean prawn salads and pasta with seafood; and *crudo* for marinated raw fish and marine molluscs.

### CHECCO ER CARETTIERE

Map pp122-3 Ristorante, Osteria €€€€/€€

☎ 06 581 70 18; Via Benedetta 10; meals restaurant/osteria €80/35; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
Something of a food complex, this is a restaurant, bakery, gelateria and *osteria*. With a swinging 1950s feel, the restaurant is wood-panelled throughout and terracotta-floored. Walls are smothered in black-and-white photos of celebrities savouring Roman dishes such as *saltimbocca alla romana* or *bombolotti* (ridged tube pasta) *all'amatriciana*. Some tables are tucked into alcoves for intimate parties, or there's a large convivial room with wooden columns and an outside patio. There's a special smoking room between this and the *osteria*, which is a small, appealing place with a few daily specials. The cakes at the *café* (h 7am-1am) are delicious, and the ice cream good too.

### FERRARA Map pp122-3 Wine Bar, Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 583 33 920; Via del Moro 1a; meals €60; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
In whitewashed, elegant cellars that offset a glamorous crowd, this restaurant/*enoteca* cellar/shop is a temple to wine, and even well-informed amateurs might need the waiters' friendly help navigating the two-volume (one for red, one for white) 1000-label wine list. The food is modern and on the whole manages to keep up. Try *orecchiette* with courgette and ginger-scented prawns, or *tagliioni* (thin, delicate strands of pasta) with white truffles. Alternatively, stop by for a drink at the snug bar, La Mescita, with *bunissimo aperitivo*.

### PARIS Map pp122-3 Ristorante €€

☎ 06 581 53 78; Piazza San Calisto 7; meals €50; h Tue-Sat & lunch Sun; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
Nothing to do with Paris (it's the name of the founder), this is thoroughly Roman – the best place for Roman-Jewish cuisine outside the Ghetto. Inside are wooden beams and a big chandelier; outside are tables on the cobbled square. Dishes include the outstanding *carciofi alle giudia*, the tempura-crisp *fritto misto con baccalà* (deep-fried vegetables with salted cod) and, on Tuesday and Friday, the rare dish of *minestra di arzilla ai broccoli* (skate soup with broccoli).

### RIPA 12 Map pp122-3 Seafood €€

☎ 06 580 90 93; Via di San Francesco a Ripa 12; meals €45; h Mon-Sat; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
Whether or not it's true that *carpaccio di spigola* (very fine slices of marinated raw sea bass) was first served at this graceful, wood-beamed Calabrian restaurant, the seafood here is top-notch. On the menu you'll find a mix of dishes playing on traditional themes – *gnocchetti con fagioli e cozze* (small gnocchetti with beans and mussels), for example – as well as Calabrian specialties such as fiery-hot salami. There are some street-side tables but unless you want your fish smoked by traffic fumes you're better off inside.

### GLASS HOSTARIA

Map pp122-3 Wine Bar, Ristorante €€

☎ 06 583 35 903; Vicolo del Cinque 58; meals €45; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
For verging-on-quiet Trastevere, the self-conscious modishness of this place stands out. It sits on a corner near Piazza di Santa Maria and is a nice place for a drink as well as a meal – you can sit outside and have a glass of *prosecco*. It's less expensive than you might expect from the modernist décor. The wine list and creative Italian cuisine are impressive – with imaginative dishes such as rosemary tagliatelle with *ragù* of goose, cherries and mushrooms, or pork medallions with crispy savoy cabbage.

### CASSETTA DI TRASTEVERE

Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 580 01 58; Piazza de' Renzi 31a; meals €35; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
With outside seating on a cobbled Trastevere corner, this characterful trattoria is

held in high regard by Italians, who will cheerfully queue for a table, either inside or out. What they're waiting for is their share of the no-nonsense hearty fare served in pleasantly large portions. Particularly good is the *crema di fave con crostini* (broad-bean puree with croutons) and *pasta e fagioli* (thick borlotti-bean soup). Service can be slow when it's busy.

### ALLE FRATTE DI TRASTEVERE

Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 583 57 75; Via delle Fratte di Trastevere 50; meals €30; h Thu-Tue; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
A warm, welcoming trattoria with chirpy paintings, frothy curtains, delicious food and outside seating, Alle Fratte is a big hit with savvy priests, busy businesspeople and grateful tourists, all eager to tuck into big plates of classics like *orecchiette a cacio e pepe* (OK, the real Roman recipe uses spaghetti) and main courses of roasted fish and escalope. The friendly English-speaking staff work hard and are happy for you to linger over post-dinner coffee and liqueurs.

### LA BOTTICELLA Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 581 47 38; Vicolo del Leopardo 39a; meals €30; h 4pm-midnight Mon-Tue & Thu-Sat, noon-3pm Sun; g Piazza Trilussa  
On a quiet Trastevere backstreet, La Botticella offers pure Roman cooking, outside under the lines of flapping washing, or inside in the twee dining area. Menu stalwarts include tripe and *rigatoni alla paiata* (pasta with calf's intestines), but there are less demanding dishes if you're not feeling brave, such as an excellent *spaghetti all'amatriciana* and *fritto alla botticella*, a tempura-like dish of deep-fried vegetables and delicious apple slices.

### MARIO'S Map pp122-3 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 580 38 09; Via del Moro 53-55; meals €25-30; h Mon-Sat; g Piazza Trilussa  
A bit smarter in recent years, Mario's nevertheless remains what it has always been – a modest trattoria plastered with postcards and photos, serving homely food to whoever's hungry. Mamma shuffles from kitchen to table in her slippers, bringing out bowls of steaming pasta, plates of grilled meat and generous carafes of house wine. It's all good but the ricotta and

spinach ravioli served in butter and sage is wonderful.

**DA LUCIA** Map pp122–3 Trattoria €  
% 06 580 36 01; Vicolo del Mattonato 2; meals €20–25; h Tue–Sun; g Piazza Trilussa  
Eat beneath the fluttering knickers of the neighbourhood at this terrific trattoria, frequented by hungry locals and tourists. On a cobbled backstreet that is classic Trastevere, it serves up a cavalcade of Roman specialities including *trippa all romana* (tripe with tomato sauce) and *pollo con peperoni* (chicken with peppers), as well as bountiful antipasti.

**DA AUGUSTO** Map pp122–3 Trattoria €  
% 06 580 37 98; Piazza de' Renzi 15; meals €20; h closed Aug; g Piazza Trilussa  
As a concession to the modern age, Augusto has printed a menu on laminated plastic. But don't look for other frills at this long-standing, much-loved trattoria. For a truly Roman meal plonk yourself at one of his rickety Formica tables and choose from the selection of traditional starters, pastas and meat dishes. Everything's good – the *rigatoni all'amatriciana* and *straciatella* (clear broth with egg and Parmesan) are smashing. Tables spill out into the square in summer.

**DAR POETA** Map pp122–3 Pizzeria €  
% 06 588 05 16; Vicolo del Bologna 46; pizzas €8; h dinner; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
Dar Poeta, a breezy, cheery pizzeria hidden away in an atmospheric side street, is a

contender for Rome's best pizza. The base is somewhere between wafer-thin Roman and Neapolitan comfort food, and the slow-risen dough apparently makes it easier to digest. There are also great bruschettas and salads, and it's famous for its unique ricotta and Nutella calzone. It's great for kids: they can run up and down the alley when they get bored. Expect to queue, elbows at the ready.

**PIZZERIA DA VITTORIO** Map pp122–3 Pizzeria €  
% 06 580 03 53; Via di San Cosimato 14; pizzas €3–7; h noon–11.30pm; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
One of the few pizzerias in this neck of the woods to serve thick-crust Neapolitan-style pizzas, backstreet Vittorio is a consistent crowd-pleaser. The tiny interior is decorated with murals depicting appropriately Neapolitan scenes such as an erupting Vesuvius, and heavens with happy eaters. There are also a few outside tables. You'll find all the regular pizzas plus a few house specialities such as the Vittorio (fresh tomato, basil, mozzarella and Parmesan) and the Imperiale (fresh tomatoes, lettuce, cured ham and olives); football fans might like the Maradona, made in honour of Naples' favourite football superstar.

**PIZZERIA IVO** Map pp122–3 Pizzeria €  
% 06 581 70 82; Via di San Francesco a Ripa 158; pizzas €6; h closed Tue; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
One of Trastevere's – if not Rome's – most famous pizzerias, Ivo's is perennially popular.

It has been slinging pizzas for some 40 years, and still the hungry come. With the TV on in the corner and the tables full, Ivo's a noisy and vibrant place where the crispy, though not huge, pizzas are made with conventional toppings (exceptions include an unorthodox Gorgonzola and apple combo) and the waiters fit the gruff-and-fast stereotype.

**VALZANI** Map pp122–3 Pasticceria €  
% 06 580 37 92; Via del Moro 37; cakes €3; h 10am–8.30pm Wed–Sun, 3–8.30pm Mon & Tue, closed Jul & Aug; g or j Piazza Sonnino  
The speciality of this humble cake shop, opened in 1925 and not redecorated since, is the legendary *torta sacher*, the favourite cake of Roman film director Nanni Moretti. But there are also chocolate-covered *mostaccioli* (biscuits), Roman *pangiallo* (honey, nuts and dried fruit – typical of Christmas) and Roman *torrone* (nougat). If help is needed, the owners speak English and will happily discuss your requirements.

**FORNO LA RENELLA** Map pp122–3 Pizzeria al taglio €  
% 06 581 72 65; Via del Moro 15–16; pizza slices from €2; h 9am–1am; g Piazza Trilussa  
The wood-fired ovens at this historic Trastevere bakery have been firing for decades, producing a delicious daily batch of pizza, bread and biscuits. The bread's made first but when the embers die down the white-tops turn their hands to pizza. Toppings (and fillings) vary seasonally. Popular with everyone from skinheads with big dogs to elderly ladies with little dogs.

## VATICAN CITY & BORGO

Beware, hungry tourists, as there are tons of overpriced, mediocre eateries around the Vatican and St Peter's, aimed at the thousands who pass through here each day and need somewhere to flop and refuel. It's worth making the extra effort to find somewhere listed in this guide, as there are fabulous places amid the follies.

North of the Vatican is Prati, an upmarket, largely residential district and location of the RAI TV headquarters. It has some excellent, interesting restaurants feeding the hungry media.

Note that there's a branch of the reliable In-salata Ricca (p189) on Piazza del Risorgimento, and several great ice-cream places (see p198).

**SICILIANBOCCA** Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€  
% 06 373 58 400; Via Emilio Faà di Bruno 26; meals €45; h Mon–Sat; m Ottaviano–San Pietro; a  
Lemon-yellow and lined in dazzling southern ceramics, this trattoria is sunny in demeanour and colour. It's a great place to sample sumptuous seafood, Sicilian specialities like *caponata* (browned vegetables, anchovies and capers), and the island's legendary desserts, such as *cannoli* (fried pastry tubes filled with ricotta) accompanied by *panetteria*, the great muscatel. There's another branch in Flaminio (Map pp150–1; % 06 324 01 87; Via Flaminia 390; h Tue–Sun).

**SETTEMBRINI VINO E CUCINA** Map pp130–1 Wine Bar €€  
% 06 323 26 17; Via Luigi Settembrini 25; meals €40; h Mon–Sat; g Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini; a  
A pared-down, new-style wine bar, Settembrini offers an excellent wine list and a limited but imaginative menu that includes vegetarian options. Inside is ash-wood and slate décor with dramatic blown-up black-and-white photos on the walls; there are also outside tables. Join the media lovelies taking time out from the nearby RAI headquarters who come to enjoy its degustation menu (€45) or its new-wave rustic dishes. There's a lunchtime buffet (€12).

**DEL FRATE** Map pp130–1 Wine Bar, Osteria €€  
% 06 323 64 37; Via degli Scipioni 118; meals €35–40; h lunch & dinner Mon–Fri, dinner Sat & Sun; m Ottaviano–San Pietro; a  
Locals love this upmarket wine bar, and it's a great escape from the Vatican. The tall yet small brick-arched rooms have wooden tables and large barrels, while bottles of wine line the walls. Interesting cuisine includes some delicious *crudo* (raw) dishes, such as beef tartare, as well as great *primi*. *Aperitivo* is available from 6.30pm every evening.

**TAVERNA ANGELICA** Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€  
% 06 687 45 14; Piazza Amerigo Capponi 6; meals €35–40; h dinner Mon–Sat, lunch & dinner Sun, closed 2 weeks Aug; m Ottaviano–San Pietro; a  
A gorgeous, creative trattoria tucked away at the edge of the Borgo, this has an elegant, gracious interior with huge wicker lampshades and copper-framed pictures. Food is imaginative, with delicate and delicious flavours: take, for example, *tonnarelli* with garlic and oil, *pachino* (a type of cherry

## CITTÀ DEL GUSTO

In the industrial hinterland to the south of Trastevere, Italy's premier food organisation Gambero Rosso runs a gleaming, six-storey shrine to food. Housed in a former warehouse, the *Città del Gusto* (City of Taste; Map pp108–9; % 06 551 12 21; www.gamberorosso.it/portale/cdg/scuole; Via Enrico Fermi 161) is an impressive futuristic glass-and-steel construction where you can study food, read about it, cook it and even eat it.

The foodie fun starts on the 2nd floor (the 1st is given over to temporary exhibitions), where you'll find the cookbook shop, a pizza workshop and the centre's excellent restaurant, the *Osteria del Gambero Rosso* (% 06 551 12 277; pizzas €14, meals €30; h 9am–4pm Mon, 9am–11.30pm Tue–Fri, 7.30–11.30pm Sat).

Having eaten your fill, try a trip to the theatre – there are two in the building. On the 3rd floor, next to the cookery school (for information on courses see p288), there's the amphitheatre-shaped Teatro della Cucina, where you can watch top Italian and international chefs perform. Two floors up, the Teatro del Vino stages various wine-related events, including lessons and tastings. To put your newly acquired *wino* expertise to the test, adjourn to the *wine bar* (% 06 551 12 264; h 7.30pm–midnight Tue–Sat) on the same floor.

In between the two theatres, on the 4th floor, are the TV studios of the 24-hour satellite channel Raisat Gambero Rosso.

To get to the Città del Gusto by public transport take bus 780 from Viale di Trastevere.

tomato) and ricotta. Sunday lunch is a bargain at €20 or €25 (two different set menus).

### HOSTARIA-PIZZERIA GIACOMELLI

Map pp130–1 Pizzeria €€

☎ 06 372 59 10; Via Emilio Faà di Bruno 25; meals €35; h closed Aug; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a This neighbourhood restaurant has them queuing around the block for thin and crispy Roman pizzas. The décor is nothing fancy (high ceilings, lots of photos), but the reliably good food has locals voting with their feet. There's also some in-demand outside seating under striped awning on the pleasant street.

### IL BAR SOTTO IL MARE

Map pp130–1 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 397 28 413; Via Tunisi 27; meals €35; h lunch & dinner Tue-Sun, dinner Mon, closed lunch Aug; m Cipro Musei Vaticani Only a few minutes' walk straight down the road from the Vatican entrance, this easy-going restaurant is nonetheless tucked away and feels like a find. It's a laid-back place with a funky vibe: blue arched rooms set the submarine theme and the menu is full of delicious, simply cooked seafood. Service can be a bit laid-back too.

### DINO & TONY

Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 397 33 284; Via Leone IV 60; meals €25; h Mon-Sat; m Ottaviano-San Pietro A rarity in the Vatican area, Dino & Tony is a genuine and simple little trattoria with gingham tablecloths, some streetside seating, reasonable food and reliably gruff Roman service. Famous for its *amatriciana*, it also has fabulous antipasti and a beautiful *granita di caffè* (crushed-ice coffee), served in a glass and topped by an inch of whipped cream. Helpings are so generous that it's best to order one course at a time. If, for example, you ask for a little antipasti, expect ham, salami, croquettes, vegetables au gratin, stuffed olives and half a pizza with four different toppings.

### CACIO E PEPE

Map pp130–1 Trattoria €

☎ 06 321 72 68; Via Avezzana 11; meals €20; h Mon-Sat; g Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini Romans flock for the home cooking at this humble trattoria, with gingham-clad tables spreading across the pavement in all directions. They'll even put up with freezing winter temperatures to sit outside and

dig into great steaming bowls of classics as *spaghetti alla carbonara* and meatballs, rather than wait to eat in the tiny interior. Dessert is fruit and the coffee's good.

### ENOTECA CARSO

Map pp130–1 Wine Bar €

☎ 06 372 58 66; Via Carso; meals €20; h Mon-Sat; g Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini Locals love this unassuming place with streetside seating. It has a great range of fresh wines on tap or from the bottle, and can't-go-wrong tasty dishes of the day such as mozzarella-and-tomato salad or pasta with basil and tomato – point and choose from the glass cabinet. The waiter with the headband will see you right for wine.

### OSTERIA DELL'ANGELO

Map pp130–1 Trattoria €€

☎ 06 372 94 70; Via Giovanni Bettolo 24; meals €20; h lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat; m Ottaviano-San Pietro Having hung up his boots, former rugby player Angelo runs a neighbourhood trattoria that's hugely popular (making a reservation a must), with paper cloths on solid wooden tables, burly fresh-from-the-scrum waiters, photos of Angelo's sporting heroes and a sociable atmosphere. On the menu are robust versions of Roman favourites like *tonnarelli cacio e pepe*, skate soup with broccoli, and an enormous set menu (€25) that includes wine and water. If you have roast meat, don't miss the roast potatoes.

### SHANTI

Map pp130–1 Indian, Pakistani €

☎ 06 324 49 22; Via Fabio Massimo 68; meals €20; h daily; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a Deservedly popular, this small Indian and Pakistani restaurant has delicately spiced dishes (tandooris, dhals and the like) served in an appealing setting – an intimate room, dimly lit, with lots of intricately carved wood and eastern decoration.

### FRANCHI

Map pp130–1 Delicatessen €

☎ 06 687 46 51; Via Cola di Rienzo 198; panini €2.50-4; m Ottaviano-San Pietro Franchi is a fine-food landmark. Assistants in white jackets work with a dexterity that only comes with years of practice, slicing hams, cutting cheese, weighing olives and preparing *panini*. There's also wine, vegetables conserved in oil, and truffles. You can buy ready-made dishes, such as poached salmon, baked aubergine *parmigiana* or

*zucchini a la Barese* (Bari-style courgette), to take away or eat at stand-up tables. Its fried dishes are renowned.

### PIZZERIA AMALFI

Map pp130–1 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 397 33 165; Via dei Gracchi 12; pizzas €5-8.50; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a This neighbourhood pizzeria is so popular that it recently expanded into the next shop. Murals of the Bay of Naples and other Neapolitan vistas set the scene for punters tucking into splendid thick-crust pizzas.

### DOLCE MANIERA

Map pp130–1 Pasticceria €

☎ 06 375 17 518; Via Barletta 27; cornetti from €0.30; h 24hr; m Ottaviano-San Pietro Down some stairs, this cake-filled corner is crammed full of every possible type of *cornetto* (croissant). It supplies most of the cafés in the area with their fresh *colazione* staples. You can also buy big slabs of *pizza rosso* and other savouries – at any time of day or night!

## VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME

This area encompasses Piazza del Popolo and Villa Borghese. The areas west and further north are either upmarket residential or given over to office space, so they're busy by day and subdued at night.

## PIAZZA DEL POPOLO & AROUND

DAL BOLOGNESE

Map pp150–1 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 361 14 26; Piazza del Popolo 1; meals €65; h Tue-Sun; m Flaminio; a See and be seen and mingle with the beautiful at this chic restaurant. Dine inside surrounded by wood panelling and exotic flowers, or outside watching people saunter across the piazza. As the name suggests, Emilia-Romagna dishes are what you get. Everything is good, but try the tagliatelle

with truffles, tuna tartare or the damn fine fillet steak.

### LA BUCA DI RIPETTA

Map pp150–1 Ristorante €€€

☎ 06 321 93 91; Via di Ripetta 36; meals €65; h Tue-Sun; m Flaminio; a Popular with actors and directors from the district, who know a bargain when they see it, this is cheery and dependable, and you may have to queue. Cooking is robust. Try the country-style soup with rosemary-scented bread or the roasted suckling pork with potatoes and you'll be fuelled either for more sightseeing or for a lie down.

### PIZZA RÉ

Map pp150–1 Pizzeria €

☎ 06 32 11 468; Via di Ripetta 14; pizzas €6-9.50; m Flaminio a Part of a chain, but a good one, this popular pizzeria – handy for Piazza del Popolo – offers Neapolitan-style pizzas, with thick doughy bases and delicious, diverse toppings. The salads are fresh and the antipasti is great – try the fried things or the *mozzarella fresca di bufala e prosciutto San Daniele* (buffalo mozzarella with San Daniele dry-cured ham). There's a narrow strip of outdoor tables. It's busy so you might have to book or wait.

## FLAMINIO

RED

Map pp150–1 Fusion €€

☎ 06 806 91 630; Viale Pietro de Coubertin 30; meals €45; g or j Viale Tiziano, or shuttle bus M from Stazione Termini; a Hobnob with artistic Romans in this snazzy bar-restaurant at Renzo Piano's grey, podlike Auditorium Parco della Musica. It's a glamorous place with curvaceous wicker furnishings and red interior, and live jazz every Thursday night. The food is duly modern and sees old ingredients given a contemporary make-over in dishes such as giant prawns with balsamic vinegar, or pork fillets with cranberries. There's also *aperitivo* (€10).

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## DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE

### top picks

- Caffè Capitolino (p212)
- Salotto 42 (p213)
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- Stardust (p215)
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- La Bottega del Caffè (p218)
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- Ombre Rosse (p225)

# DRINKING & NIGHTLIFE

In a city as extraordinary as Rome, you have an inordinate number of incredible settings in which to sip a Campari or sup a pint. Being drunk though, is uncool, and you're as likely to see Romans out on the lash on a Friday night as you are to see them eating pasta and salad on the same plate. It's just not the done thing. Dressing well for a wander and a gelato is much more up the Roman street. But the city retains an eternal glimmer of the *dolce vita* – beautiful people, beautifully dressed, having a beautiful time. The flip side is a surprising underground, alternative underbelly, centred on *centri sociali* (organised squats; see p227), which are grungy squatter arts centres that often have live music, and where dressed-down is the look of choice.

Up-for-it Romans tend to eat late, then drink at bars before heading off to a club at around 1am. It can be difficult to get around as some places are far-flung – despite drink-and-drive rules, all the locals drive, hence the alarming road-accident statistics.

Choose from myriad charming bars, *enoteche* (wine bars) and pubs. Bars range from spit-and-sawdust (no décor but the beer is cheap and the ice cream better) to designer places for the exquisitely turned out. The *enoteca* was where the old boys from the neighbourhood used to drink rough local wine poured straight from the barrel. Times have changed: nowadays they tend to be sophisticated, yet still atmospheric places, offering Italian and international vintages, delicious cheeses and cold cuts. Pubs are based on the Irish or British model and look almost like the real thing, but are populated by better-groomed people. They haul in the usual suspects: expats, Italians on a novelty trip and pint-hungry tourists.

When choosing your evening out, bear in mind that Romans prefer to go out on Thursday or Friday night. Saturday night sees many clubs full of teen suburbanites. Some of the more popular nightclubs have an infuriatingly whimsical door policy, and men will often find themselves turned away. At many clubs you will have to dress up to get or fit in – man or woman. Often admission is free, but drinks are expensive. Cocktails can cost from €10 to €15. Exceptions are the student clubs in San Lorenzo and the *centri sociali*.

For listings check *Trovaroma* (an insert in daily newspaper *La Repubblica*) on Thursday and *Roma C'è* on Wednesday, which both have a short English section, or the English-language *Wanted in Rome* magazine, published every second Wednesday. Also look out for the free nightlife listings monthly *Zerò* in bars and cafés. For alternative and techno events try <http://romastyle.info/>, while [www.musicaroma.it](http://www.musicaroma.it) lists concerts in Rome. To book live music tickets see the local listings publications or contact the ticketing agency *Orbis* (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 482 74 03; Piazza dell'Esquilino 37).

Major concerts are held indoors or outdoors at the Parco della Musica (p231), with gigs as diverse as Lou Reed and the Scissor Sisters as well as plenty of world and jazz music stars. Large concerts also take place at Rome's sports stadiums, Stadio Flaminio (p240) and Stadio Olimpico (p240), which recently hosted the Rolling Stones and George Michael. For smaller venues, see the listings in this chapter.

## ANCIENT ROME

In Ancient Rome there are several places in which to drink in the fabulous views. You can't beat a cocktail as the sun goes down on the Colosseum, or a coffee overlooking Rome's rooftops.

### CAFFÈ CAPITOLINO Map p60 Café

☎ 06 691 90 564; Capitoline Museums, Piazza del Campidoglio 19; h 9am–7.30pm Tue–Sun; ☒ Piazza Venezia; a  
This amazing terrace overlooking the domes of Rome is a well-kept secret. It's hidden away behind the museum, and

accessible from the piazza (via a separate entrance behind Palazzo dei Conservatori) even if you haven't done the cultural bit inside the museums themselves.

### OPPIO CAFFÈ Map p60 Café

☎ 06 474 52 62; Via delle Terme di Tito 72; h 7.30am–2.30am; m Colosseo; a  
A glass-and-metal café-bar with bare-brick walls. Oppio has fabulous views of the Colosseum from the outside tables. It's a great place for a beer (€6 to €7 for a large one), cocktail (€7) or *aperitivo* (€10; 5pm to 10pm), and has regular live music and DJs playing lounge, jazz and house.

## DANCING IN THE STREET

From around mid-June to mid-September, most nightclubs and live-music joints close, while many move to Fregene or Ostia for a summer's dancing on the sand. *Eto* (p223) often holds its summer season on the terrace of Mussolini's Palazzo dei Congressi in EUR, which is worth experiencing. Summer is prime time for outdoor concerts, including the wonderful *Roma Incontra il Mondo* ([www.villaada.org](http://www.villaada.org)), featuring world and local music concerts in lakeside gardens, with a festival feel and alternative crowd. *Fiesta* ([www.fiesta.it](http://www.fiesta.it)) is a chaotic Latin American dance festival on the Via Appia. The area around the Isola Tiberina bursts into life every evening for the *Lungo er Tevere... Roma*, which sprouts bars (with gimmicks such as beach areas and deck chairs), stalls and an open-air cinema. The *Estate Romana* festival (see the boxed text, p235) takes place over the entire summer – it's a huge, all-encompassing collection of festivals with myriad club nights, concerts and performances.

### CAVOUR 313 Map p60 Wine Bar

☎ 06 678 54 96; Via Cavour 313; h 10am–2.30pm & 7.30pm–12.30am Mon–Sat, 7.30pm–12.30am Sun; m Cavour; a

This is one of Rome's oldest wine bars. Sink into its publike cosiness and choose from a list of about 1200 labels, including Italian wines and notable Californian and Australian vintages. There's also a food menu featuring a superb cheeseboard.

## CENTRO STORICO

The *centro storico* (historic centre) is home to a couple of nightlife centres: the area around Piazza Navona, with a number of elegant bars and clubs catering to the beautiful, rich and stylish (and sometimes all three); and the rowdier area around Campo de' Fiori, where the drinking is heavier – this is where people tend to congregate after football games. The *centro storico* also harbours Rome's best cafés.

## PANTHEON & AROUND

### DIVINUM Map pp74–5 Bar

☎ 3391636955; Piazza di Pietra 64; h 11am–1am Wed–Mon; ☒ Via del Corso

In the corner of this enchanting square, you can sit outside and overlook the worn columns of the Tempio di Adriano. During the day try the *caffè completo* (€3/1 seated/ at the bar) – it's served with cream in a cup lined with chocolate. At night the tables are white draped and candlelit, and it's more of an eatery (pasta, salads etc) but still good for a drink.

### LE COPPELLE Map pp74–5 Bar

☎ 06 683 24 10; Piazza del Coppelle 53; h 6pm–2am Mon–Sat; ☒ or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a  
Strike a pose at Le Coppelle and partake in some 21st-century *dolce vita*. The recently

refurbished bar has partially taken over the pretty piazza as its salon, with leopard-skin chairs and lipstick-red sofas on which to recline, watch the beautiful and the damned, and indulge in a cocktail (€10) or two.

### SALOTTO 42 Map pp74–5 Bar

☎ 06 678 58 04; Piazza di Pietra 42; h 4pm–2am Tue–Sat, 4pm–midnight Sun; ☒ Via del Corso; a

Slinky and quietly fashionable on this extraordinary piazza, this bar is as close as you'll get to a sitting-room experience in the city centre. It's run by a glamorous Italian-Swedish couple and features over-size flock wallpaper, armchairs and soft sofas, coffee-table books lining the walls and an aquarium on TV. *Aperitivo* (from 7pm to 9pm) is mainly Swedish.

### LA TAZZA D'ORO Map pp74–5 Café

☎ 06 679 27 68; Via degli Orfani 84–86; h 8am–8pm Mon–Sat; ☒ Via del Corso

A busy, stand-up bar with burnished fittings dating from the 1940s and some of the best coffee in the capital, which means it's spectacularly good. A speciality is the *granita di caffè*, a crushed-ice, sugared coffee served with a generous dollop of cream top and bottom. If you just want cream on either the top/bottom, ask for *solo sopra/sotto*.

### MISCELLANEA Map pp74–5 Pub

Via delle Paste 110a; h 11am–3am; ☒ Via del Corso

Subtitled the 'international students' pub' this is a spartan place. An American-student magnet, it's tucked down a cobbled alley near the Pantheon, and has spindly tables and chairs outside a pub-bar interior. A *birra media* (large beer) costs €3.50/1.50 before/ after 4pm.

**TRINITY COLLEGE** *Map pp74–5* **Pub**  
 % 06 678 64 72; Via del Collegio Romano 6;  
 h noon–3am; g Via del Corso; a  
 A historic city-centre pub, Trinity College is a big booming place just off Via del Corso. Spread over two floors, it attracts a cosmopolitan crowd up for a good time. It gets packed to overflowing at weekends, when men might find it difficult to get past the heavies on the door.

## PIAZZA NAVONA & AROUND

**ANIMA** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**  
 % 06 688 92 806; Via Santa Maria dell'Anima 57; h 7pm–4am Tue–Sun; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a  
 The interior is overdone Gothic-Hawaiian, the music high-energy house and hip-hop. It gets busy at this fashionable, fussily dressed-up bar, and there are burly bouncers on the door, but no admission charge. The cocktails are great (€10) and the drinkers are young, good-looking and loving it. Come early for drinks or drop by late for a dance.

**BAR DEL FICO** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**  
 % 06 686 52 05; Piazza del Fico 26; h 8am–2am Mon–Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
 At the time of writing Bar del Fico was undergoing some works to shore up its façade. By the time you read this, fingers crossed, this long-standing favourite of the capital's bohemians will have reopened and you can return to while away days and nights at its fig-tree-shaded tables. The elderly chess players never left: they carried on their games in the cobbled street beside the building site.

**BAR DELLA PACE** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**  
 % 06 686 12 16; Via della Pace 5;  
 h 9am–2am Tue–Sun, 4pm–2am Mon;  
 g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a  
 Ivy cascades down the façade of this perennially fashionable Art Nouveau café, whose outside tables are an ideal setting for posing and watching the world wander past in summer, and gilt and wood interior perfect for a leisurely winter nightcap.

**BARONATO QUATTRO BELLEZZE** **Bar**  
*Map pp74–5*  
 % 06 687 28 65; Via di Panico 23; h 8pm–2am Tue–Sun; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
 Ageing Tunisian owner Antonio Loiacono, aka Dominot, dresses in drag and sings Piaf

every Thursday night at this, his eccentric bar. A glittering, theatrical shoebox of a place, where you're bound to meet some characters. Book for the Piaf show.

**BLOOM** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**  
 % 06 688 02 029; Via del Teatro Pace 29–30;  
 h varies but usually 8.30pm–2am Mon, Tue & Thu–Sat Sep–Jun; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a  
 In a converted 14th-century chapel, Bloom is closely related in style to nearby club La Maison, hosting a crowd that's younger but just as gorgeous. The steel bar, 21st-century Art Deco, Philippe Starck lighting and a menu of Italian–Asian fusion food all add to the ambience of city-centre swank. It turns into a disco at weekends. Dress the part unless you want to stick out like a bad haircut.

**CRUDO** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**  
 % 06 683 89 89; Via degli Specchi 6; h Tue–Sun;  
 g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a  
 Crudo is an easy-going yet uberchic bar and restaurant. It's a great place for a designer drink, whether it's a mojito or a vegetable shake. The interior is arty and contemporary, with streaky walls and flickering projections, and it's almost too cool for school. That goes for the easy-on-the-eye patrons and the food because everything served here is raw, from sushi to sashimi to salami.

**FLUID** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**  
 % 06 683 23 61; Via del Governo Vecchio 46;  
 h 6pm–2am; g Corso del Rinascimento; a  
 A bit too try-hard, this is nonetheless popular and worth a try if you like a designer setting as a backdrop for a drink. Punters sit on illuminated ice-cube-style seating and the interior design is best described as cosmic-cave chic. Most clientele think they're too cool to look even vaguely interested in what they are doing.

**SOCIÉTÉ LUTÈCE** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**  
 % 06 683 01472; Piazza di Montevicchio 17;  
 h 6.30pm–2am Tue–Sat; g Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a  
 A group of Turin trendsters opened Société Lutèce and it's listed among Rome's hippest bars – boho, cool and art-school rather than dressed-up and glitzy – like their other venture in Trastevere, *Freni e Frizioni* (p225). The music's genuinely funky, *aperitivo* tasty, and the effortlessly good-looking crowds spill out onto the piazza outside.

## TOUR DE ROME

*Fabrizio Pompeo was born in Rome and has lived here for 34 years – spending another nine years abroad. His company, Tour de Force, promotes music concerts in Rome.*

### What is the music scene like in Rome?

As Rome is Italy's biggest city, most of the main acts play here during their tours. The summer is liveliest as there are lots of open-air venues. In the last decade Rome has established her position in the music market, mostly for big summer events. The council has invested a lot, allowing some very special places to be used for free concerts (such as outside the Colosseo and in Circo Massimo). Unfortunately the investment has provided huge media exposure, but hasn't addressed the historic lack of venues. Rome deserves a wider range of venues. Often we can't satisfy the requests of our clients or the audience.

### Which is Rome's best venue?

The Circolo degli Artisti is a real rock club. I love it as they started at the same time I started promoting shows here. Customers like it as a window to the alternative scene. And the garden is a really good place to talk to people after a great concert.

I like working at the Parco della Musica because it is so easy to sell out shows. People go there because they know it's comfortable, easy to reach, easy to park and so on. All the concerts they host seem to be huge events. It's affected the music scene a lot. But nowadays the Musica per Roma Foundation buys shows directly and so has become a direct competitor, with a lot of public funds and supported by the town council!

### What would you recommend a visitor do on a night out?

I love to wander around the streets of Rome. Trastevere, Campo de' Fiori, Monti, the Ghetto are just unique. They're all so different. It's one thing is to walk around in the morning, and another at night. Different worlds. Go to a central district and enjoy an aperitif on a bar terrace; afterwards walk into a trattoria for a great dinner; and finish walking from one bar to another.

**STARDUST** *Map pp74–5* **Bar**

% 06 686 89 86; Via Santa Maria dell'Anima 52;  
 h 8pm–2am Mon–Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento  
 Stardust was a Trastevere institution, a tiny low-lit bar with a sultry atmosphere, boho crowd, and occasional live music. Atmosphere and all, it's been packed up and shifted to just off Piazza Navona. The new Stardust is larger but remains intimate, with a series of red-and-black rooms decorated by blown-up works of Iranian photographer Arash. Punters hang out on the cobbled street, while music veers from Velvet Underground to Vivaldi. Charismatic owner Anna hopes that live jazz gigs will restart once soundproofing has been completed.

**CAFFÈ SANT'EUSTACHIO** *Map pp74–5* **Café**

% 06 686 13 09; Piazza Sant'Eustachio 82;  
 h 8.30am–1am; g Corso del Rinascimento  
 A small stand-up place with some of Rome's best coffee, this is always three deep at the bar. The coffee is created through a special process – note how the *barristi* (coffee-makers) turn away to complete the secret recipe. Served sugared

with a layer of froth, it's superbly smooth and guaranteed to put some zing into your sightseeing. Specify if you want it *amaro* (bitter) or *poco zucchero* (with a little sugar).

**CHIOSTRO DEL BRAMANTE CAFFÈ** **Café**  
*Map pp74–5*

% 06 688 09 035, ext 26; Via della Pace;  
 h 10am–7.30pm; g Corso del Rinascimento  
 A well-kept secret: you can have a drink or creamy cappuccino, and snack (or brunch on weekends between 10am and 3pm) on salads and so on (€8 to €12) in the Renaissance splendour of Bramante's cloister, which often hosts dramatically contemporary art installations. There's also wi-fi access.

**DA VEZIO** *Map pp74–5* **Café**

% 06 683 29 51; Via Tor di Nona 37;  
 h 7am–7pm Mon–Sat; g Corso del Rinascimento  
 You might find conversation falters as you enter this flag-festooned, tiny coffee bar, but it's worth a look out of curiosity. Vezio Bagazzini has turned it into a crammed-full shrine to Communism – inside all things red line the walls and ceiling. Don't wear your Forza Italia T-shirt.

## GRAN CAFFÈ LA CAFFETTIERA

Map pp74-5

Café

☎ 06 679 81 47; Piazza di Pietra 65; h 7.30am-9pm Mon-Sat; ☒ Via del Corso; a This stately café is a throwback to smarter days and is famous for its Neapolitan cakes – try the *babà* (sponge cake soaked in rum) for something special, and the *rustici* (cheese-and-tomato-filled pastry puff) for something savoury. Sit in the elegant Art Deco interior or outside and watch life on the enchanting square, overlooked by the ancient Tempio di Adriano.

## ETABLÌ

Map pp74-5

Café-Bar

☎ 06 687 14 99; Vicolo delle Vacche; h 10am-2am; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento; a Chilean-Italian brothers Massimo and Alessandro Aureli are the smiling hosts of this informal *enoteca*-lounge-bar-café restaurant in a 16th-century building. A new address on the itinerary of Rome's beautiful people, it's named after the antique workbenches that the brothers brought back from Provence alongside the many other antique furnishings. Roman lovelies float in and out to have a drink or coffee, read the paper, and indulge in *aperitivo* or the restaurant's *cucina creativa* (creative cuisine).

## LA MAISON

Map pp74-5

Club

☎ 06 683 33 12; Vicolo dei Granari 4; h 11.30pm-4am Tue-Sun Sep-May, Fri & Sat Jun-Aug; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a Velvet banquettes, crystal chandeliers and a sleek resin-and-steel bar provide the

sexy backdrop for a good-looking, flirty, 30-something crowd. Showy it might be, but it's also genuinely fun, with good music. Entrance is free if you can get past the door police, but drinks are from €10 to €15 a throw. There's no-one there before 2am, but, as if by magic, it's chock-a-block at 2.05.

## SUPPERCLUB

Map pp74-5

Club

☎ 06 688 07 207; Via de' Nari 14; h 8pm-2am Mon-Sat; ☒ or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a Is it a bar? Is it a restaurant? Is it a cabaret joint? No, it's the Supperclub! Resembling its cousin in Amsterdam, but with less reefer, here you recline on white divans, eat a violin-serenaded dinner, and then strut your designer-clad stuff in the disco.

## MODÒ

Map pp74-5

Live Music

☎ 06 687 90 75; Vicolo del Fico 3; h 7.30pm-2am Tue-Sun Oct-May; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a A black-and-white confection: consider wearing black to fit in. This long narrow bar is a sophisticated, intimate venue, with live music (mainly jazz) followed by DJ sets. It's gay-friendly for a Sunday *aperitivo*.

## BEVITORIA NAVONA

Map pp74-5

Wine Bar

☎ 06 688 01 022; Piazza Navona 72; h 10am-midnight, 10am-1am Jun-Sep; ☒ Corso del Rinascimento No wine bar on Piazza Navona is ever going to be cheap and off the beaten track, but this is one of the better places. Drink at the bar (€4 for a glass of Frascati Superiore) or sit outside and pay for waiter service. If you

get the chance check out the remains of Domitian's stadium in the cellar.

## ENOTECA PICCOLA

Map pp74-5

Wine Bar

☎ 06 688 01 746; Via del Governo Vecchio 75; h noon-3.30pm & 7pm-1am Tue-Sun; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II Despite being in one of Rome's most touristy areas, this wine bar retains an old-fashioned, unaffected feel. A local said dismissively, 'the fridge is small', but the selection of Italian wines is good if limited, and well accompanied by cold cuts and cheeses.

## CAMPO DE' FIORI & AROUND

FEMME

Map pp74-5

Bar

☎ 06 686 48 62; Via del Pellegrino 14; h 6pm-2am mid-Sep-Jun; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a A hang-out just off Campo de' Fiori, Femme has all-women DJs, and a hip bar interior: you sit on silver cubes, leaning against wavy modernist banquettes.

## GLOSS

Map pp74-5

Bar

☎ 3358179090; Via del Monte della Farina 43; h 7pm-2am Tue-Sat, 6.30-10.30pm Mon Sep-Jun; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a With rough red walls, modern art and regular DJ and live music sets – mostly house and electrofunk – Gloss is appealingly laid-back, attracting a lively, but not too intimidatingly dressed-up crowd.

## CAFFÈ FARNESE

Map pp74-5

Café

☎ 06 688 02 125; Via dei Baullari 106; h 7am-2am; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II We're with Goethe, who thought Piazza Farnese one of the world's most beautiful squares. Judge for yourself from the vantage of this unassuming café. On a street between Campo de' Fiori and Piazza Farnese, it's ideally placed for whiling away the early afternoon hours. Try the *caffè alla casa* (house coffee) – made to a secret recipe, it resonates with lemon and other delicious flavours.

## IL GOCCETTO

Map pp74-5

Wine Bar

☎ 06 686 42 68; Via dei Banchi Vecchi 14; h 11am-2pm & 4-10pm Mon-Sat; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II An old-school *enoteca* with a dark interior, few tables, and bottles lining the wooden walls, Il Gocetto is a genuine Roman wine

bar. Join the regulars at the bar for a glass or order a bottle from the selection of international and Italian vintages.

## IL NOLANO

Map pp74-5

Wine Bar

☎ 06 687 93 44; Campo de' Fiori 11; h 6pm-2am Tue-Sat, noon-2am Sun; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II Taking its name from Giordano Bruno da Nola, the hooded monk-Obiwan lookalike in the centre of the *campo* (field), Il Nolano is a refined little arty wine bar with peeling paint, rickety tables and old wooden cinema seats. It's often used for art exhibitions and book presentations.

## L'ANGOLO DIVINO

Map pp74-5

Wine Bar

☎ 06 686 44 13; Via dei Balestrari 12; h 10am-2.30pm & 5pm-2am Mon-Sat; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a A hop and a skip from the busy *campo*, this corner *vini e olio* shop (wine and oil cellar) is an oasis of genteel calm, with an ample wine list and a select menu (dishes €7.50 to €13.50). A charming place with wooden beams and terracotta floors, and on the go since 1946, it's great for a quiet glass of wine, a nibble of cheese or a light meal.

## TAVERNA DEL CAMPO

Map pp74-5

Wine Bar

☎ 06 687 44 02; Campo de' Fiori 16; h 8am-3am Tue-Sun; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II A breakfast bar for the *campo's* market traders, the Taverna metamorphoses into a hip drinking haunt during the day, almost merging with Vineria next door. Grab an outside table to watch the human traffic.

## VINERIA REGGIO

Map pp74-5

Wine Bar

☎ 06 688 03 268; Campo de' Fiori 15; h 8.30am-2am; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a The coolest bar on the *campo*, this has a small, bottle-lined, cosy interior and outside tables as well, and attracts *fighi* (cool) Romans like bees to a honey pot. A *birra media* costs €4.50.

## JEWISH GHETTO

BARTARUGA

Map pp74-5

Bar

☎ 06 689 22 99; Piazza Mattei 9; h 3pm-2am; ☒ Via Arenula; a VIPs, theatre darlings and the charming come to sip cocktails amid this exuberant and eccentric baroque ensemble of oriental

## HOW TO DO COFFEE

To do as the Romans do, you have to be precise about your coffee needs. For an espresso (a small amount of very strong black coffee), ask for *un caffè*; if you want it with a drop of hot/cold milk, order *un caffè macchiato* ('stained' coffee) *caldo/freddo*. Long black coffee (as in a weaker, watered-down version) is known as *caffè lungo* (an espresso with more water) or *caffè all'americana* (a filter coffee). If you fancy a coffee but one more shot will catapult you through the ceiling, you can drink *orzo*, made from roasted barley but served like coffee.

Then, of course, there's the cappuccino (coffee with frothy milk, served warm rather than hot as otherwise it impairs the flavour). If you want it without froth, ask for a *cappuccino senza schiuma*; if you want it hot, ask for it *ben caldo*. Italians generally drink cappuccino only during the morning and never after meals; to order it after 11am would be, well, foreign. In summer *cappuccino freddo* (iced coffee with milk, usually already sugared), a *caffè freddo* (iced espresso), or *granita di caffè* (frozen coffee, usually with cream) top the charts. A *caffè latte* is a milkier version of the cappuccino with less froth and *latte macchiato* is even milkier (warmed milk stained with a spot of coffee). A *caffè corretto* is an espresso 'corrected' with a dash of grappa or something similarly strong.

There are two ways to drink coffee in a Roman bar-café: you can either take it standing up at the bar, in which case pay first at the till and then, with your receipt, order at the counter; or you can sit down at a table and enjoy waiter service. In the latter case you'll pay up to double what you'd pay at the bar.

furniture, velvet fabrics and Venetian chandeliers; the soundtrack is loungey and jazzy and the mood relaxing and chatty.

## RIALTOSANTAMBROGIO

Map pp74–5

Live Music

% 06 68133 640; www.rialtosantambrogio.org; Via Sant'Ambrogio 4; h various Sep–mid-Jun;

g Via Arenala

You might feel that you've stumbled into an art school, but this ancient courtyard-centred building is the most central *centro sociale*. It's open to all and is a radical melting pot, with gigs, club nights (a monthly funk night among others), exhibitions and art-house cinema.

## VIA DEL CORSO & AROUND

CIAMPINI Map pp74–5

Cafe

Piazza di San Lorenzo in Lucina; h 7.30am–9pm; g Via del Corso

The graceful, traffic-free square of San Lorenzo is an ideal stop for an alfresco coffee, which you'll drink among the well-heeled folk of the neighbourhood. Bring your big sunglasses and little dog. Sitting outside is pricey (cappuccinos €5), so remember it's an investment and settle.

## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

The Monti area, north of the Colosseum, is also splendid for after-dark drinks, with lots of charming candlelit dives that are good if

you want a proper chat. If you're wanting to keep it real, head down to San Lorenzo district, which is close to Termini, the student quarter and home of grungy pubs, bars, clubs and some surprising gems.

## ESQUILINO & MONTI

BOHEMIEN Map pp90–1

Bar

% 328 173 01 58; Via degli Zingari 36; h 10am–2pm & 5pm–2am Tue–Sun; m Cavour This elegant little bar feels like something you might stumble on in Left-Bank Paris: small, with mismatched chairs and tables and an eclectic, fittingly boho crowd drinking wine by the glass or cups of tea. It's gay but attracts all types.

## ANTICO CAFFÈ SANTAMARIA

Map pp90–1

Cafe

% 06 446 58 63; Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore 7a; h 8am–midnight; m Vittorio Emanuele Despite the name, this is notably new: a smart chrome-and-glass café, with a fantastic position opposite Santa Maria Maggiore. You can sit face to face with the magnificent church façade at sun-shaded outside tables, which is pleasant despite the busy junction.

## LA BOTTEGA DEL CAFFÈ

Map pp90–1

Cafe

% 06 481 58 71; Piazza Madonna dei Monti 5; h 8am–2am; m Cavour Ideal for whiling away a morning, lunch, afternoon or evening, this appealing café-bar has greenery-screened tables out on the captivatingly pretty Piazza Madonna dei

Monti with its fountain. Exchange glances with interesting, artsy types, foreign and local. A *birra media* costs €5.

## IL POSTO DELLE FRAGOLE

Map pp90–1

Live Music

% 06 478 80 959; Via Carlootta 51; h 8pm–2am Wed–Sun; m Vittorio Emanuele; a

For an alternative night out you can't get more offbeat than this homely Swedish *as-sociazione culturale* (cultural association). It offers an ample selection of beer and wine, a menu of Scandinavian food (including reindeer meat) and an eclectic events calendar, ranging from world music concerts to chess tournaments.

## DRUID'S DEN Map pp90–1

Pub

% 06 488 02 58; Via San Martino ai Monti 28; h 6pm–1.30am; m Cavour; a

An Irish nook of a pub, the Druid's Den attracts a crowd of young expats and Roman Anglophiles. It meets all your Irish pub needs: the atmosphere is convivial; the walls are wood lined; Celtic paraphernalia is everywhere; and Guinness is on tap.

## FIDDLER'S ELBOW Map pp90–1

Pub

% 06 487 21 10; Via dell'Olmata 43; h 5pm–1.15am; g Via Cavour; a

The granddaddy of Rome's Irish pubs, the Fiddler's Elbow sticks to the formula that has served it so well over the last 25 years or so – Guinness, darts and crisps. Providing the beer chasers are more than 180 labels of whisky and rum.

## FINNEGANS Map pp90–1

Pub

% 06 474 70 26; Via Leonina 66; m Cavour At first glance this seems like an Irish pub anywhere in the world, but look closer and it has some Italian twists. Many of the clientele are good-looking and there's table service. You can also order bellinis and snacks alongside the pints of Guinness. Popular with expats and young Romans, it's Irish-run and shows all the big football and rugby games.

## AL VINO AL VINO Map pp90–1

Wine Bar

% 06 48 58 03; Via dei Serpenti 19; h 5.30pm–12.30am Sun–Thu, 5.30pm–1.30am Fri & Sat; m Cavour; a

A studiously rustic vine-decorated place, with ceramic table tops and terracotta and ceramic floors set against large contem-

# top picks

## WINE BARS

Here's a list of some of Rome's most divine wine bars. You'll notice some of them are listed in the Eating chapter, because they're particularly good for food.

- Antica Enoteca (p220)
- Casa Bleve (p188)
- Cul de Sac (p188)
- Ferrara (at the tiny Le Mescita bar; p204)
- Il Nolano (p217)
- La Barrique (below)
- Palatium (p197)
- Trimani (p221)
- Vineria Chianti (p196)
- Vineria Reggia (p217)

porary paintings, this is an attractive spot to linger over a fine collection of wines, particularly *passiti* (sweet wines). You can accompany them with snacks, including some Sicilian dishes.

## LA BARRIQUE Map pp90–1

Wine Bar

% 06 478 259 53; Via del Boschetto 41b; h closed Sat lunch & Sun; m Cavour; a A dark and cool, bottle-lined *enoteca* that on a summer's day is like balm after the heat-pounding street. La Barrique offers excellent wines – including a good list by the glass – accompanied by delicious snacks such as *bruschettine* (little bruschettas).

## PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & AROUND

LE JARDIN DU RUSSIE Map pp90–1

Bar

% 06 328 88 70; Via del Babuino 9; m Flaminio Perhaps you can't afford to stay here but you should splash out for a drink in what is surely one of the most enchanting bars in the city. It's set in the courtyard of the *Hotel de Russie* (a favourite of visiting celebrities; p255), with terraced gardens and sun-shaded tables, and is impossibly romantic in a kind of 19th-century-traveller way.

## BABINGTON'S TEA ROOMS

Map pp90–1

Cafe

% 06 678 60 27; Piazza di Spagna 23; h 9am–8.15pm Wed–Sun; m Spagna; a More English than the English, and right by the Spanish Steps, Babington's has been

## TIME FOR WINE

There's nothing like a chilled, light white wine, washing down the pasta on a summer's day. It might be forgettable but it's sublimely refreshing. Most of the house white you'll guzzle in Rome will be from the Castelli Romani area to the southeast of Rome, centred on Frascati and Marino. It arrives by truck: robust and honest, usually mixed from Trebbiano and Malvasia grapes.

However, as Italian wine producers have raised their game to face international competition, so Lazio's wine-makers have joined the fray. New production techniques have led to a lighter, drier wine that is beginning to be taken seriously. Frascati Superiore is now an excellent tippie, Castel de Paolis' Vigna Adriana wins plaudits, while the emphatically named Est! Est!!! Est!!!!, produced north of Rome in *Montefiascone* (p271), is becoming increasingly drinkable.

Although whites dominate Lazio's production – 95% of the region's Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC; the second of Italy's four quality classifications) wines are white – there are a few notable reds worth dipping into. Falesco produces the excellent Montiano, blended from Merlot grapes, while Torre Ercolana from Anagni is another opulent red. To try any wines from Lazio, *Palatium* (p197) is the place.

You're not confined to local wine though, of course. Rome is packed with *enoteche* (wine bars) with knowledgeable staff, proffering wines from all over the beautiful country, as well as international labels. Some of these are also listed in the Eating and Shopping chapters.



serving Earl Grey to homesick tourists since the 19th century. You'll need the kind of budget worthy of a Grand Tour: a full high tea costs €29, but what else can you do when you have a crumpet craving?

### CAFFÈ GRECO Map pp90-1 Café

☎ 06 679 17 00; Via dei Condotti 86; h 10.30am-7pm Mon & Sun, 9am-7pm Tue-Sat; m Spagna; a Caffè Greco opened in 1760 and retains the look of a forgotten era: penguin waiters, red flock and gilt mirrors. Casanova, Goethe, Wagner, Keats, Byron, Shelley and Baudelaire were all regulars. Now it's fewer artists and lovers and more shoppers and tourists. Prices reflect this, unless you do as the locals do and have a drink standing at the bar.

### CIAMPINI 2 Map pp90-1 Café

☎ 06 78 56 78; Via della Fontanella di Borghese; h 7am-1am; m Spagna  
Hidden away a short distance from the top of the Spanish Steps, this graceful café has a garden-party vibe: it's the green wooden latticework surrounding the outside tables that does it. There are lovely views over the backstreets behind Spagna, and the ice cream is renowned (particularly the truffle).

### MUSEO ATELIER CANOVA TADOLINI Map pp90-1 Café

☎ 06 321 10 702; Via del Babuino 150a/b; h 8am-8.30pm Mon-Sat; m Spagna; a In 1818 sculptor Canova signed a contract for this studio, which agreed it would be forever preserved for sculpture. The place is still stuffed with statues, and it's a curious but unique experience to sit among the great maquettes and sup an upmarket tea or drink an *aperitivo*.

### GILDA Map pp90-1 Club

☎ 06 678 48 38; Via Mario de' Fiori 97; h 11pm-4am Tue-Sun; m Spagna; a Cue impressive displays of cleavage and silver foxes on the dance floor: Rome's partying politicians, actors and glamorous wannabes have been coming to Gilda to let their expensive hair down for decades. Named after the Rita Heyworth film, it's a dressy place where jackets are required and the music is pure pop. The glamour pusses transfer to Ostia in summer for Gilda on the Beach.

### GREGORY'S Map pp90-1 Live Music

☎ 06 679 63 86; Via Gregoriana 54d; h 8pm-3am Tue-Sun; m Barberini; a If it were a tone of voice, it'd be husky: unwind in the downstairs bar then unwind some more on squashy sofas upstairs to some slinky live jazz, with quality local performers. Gregory's is a popular hang-out for local musicians.

### ANTICA ENOTECA Map pp90-1 Wine Bar

☎ 06 679 08 96; Via della Croce 76b; h 11am-1am; m Spagna; a Local shoppers and shopkeepers pack this much-loved wine bar, full of frescoes and 19th-century fittings. Plonk yourself at the long wood-and-brass counter and take your pick from the wine list and snacks, or plunge into the back room for decent pasta or pizza.

### SHAKI Map pp90-1 Wine Bar

☎ 06 679 16 94; Via Mario de Fiori 29a; h 9am-1am; m Spagna; a Shaki is a sleek wine bar with outside tables along a cobbled street, plum in the centre of the designer shopping district. Hence it's pricey (dishes €8 to €16) for what it is, but is ideal for a flop to watch the fashion hits and misses wander past. Of the light meals, salads are the best bet, with fresh ingredients. There's another branch at *Via del Governo Vecchio 123* (*Map pp74-5*), near Piazza Navona.

## PIAZZA BARBERINI & AROUND

### L'HOTEL ALEPH Map pp90-1 Bar

☎ 06 42 29 01; Via di San Basilio 15; h 12.30-4pm & 5pm-2am; m Barberini; a The Aleph hotel, designed by Adam D Tihany, is themed heaven and hell throughout. Downstairs is the Angelo bar: if this is heaven, it has borrowed hell's clothes, suffused in sexy black and lipstick-red *agent provocateur* boudoir chic. Else try the rooftop terrace and the 7 Heaven bar with views and more conventionally sublime white sunshades. It's a place to pose and feel like you're in a photo shoot. Unless you are here on expenses, you might want to spin out your €18 cocktail.

### DONEY H CLUB Map pp90-1 Bar

☎ 06 470 82 805; Via Vittorio Veneto 141; h 8am-2am; m Barberini; a A former *dolce vita* hang-out on once-swinging Via Vittorio Veneto, the Doney is

the best place to go in search of the contemporary equivalent in this no-longer-it zone. Housed in the plush Westin Excelsior Hotel, its outdoor section is like a sitting room on the street, ideal for smoking your fat cigar, sipping a cocktail (€11) and eyeing up the other wealthy Romans, out-of-towners and tourists. Indoors features candelabras, modernist chandeliers and artistic baubles. It heats up around *apéritif* time. There's a DJ Friday and Saturday nights.

### MOMA Map pp90-1 Café

☎ 06 420 11 798; Via di San Basilio; h 7am-11pm; m Barberini  
*Molto* trendy: this café-restaurant, popular with workers from nearby offices, is a real find. There's a small stand-up café downstairs, with a nice little deck outside where you can linger longer over coffee and delicious *dolcetti*. Upstairs is a *cucina creativa* restaurant (meals €60).

## PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA & AROUND

### TRIMANI Map pp90-1 Wine Bar

☎ 06 446 96 30; Via Cernaia 37b; h 11.30am-3pm & 6pm-12.30am Mon-Sat, closed Aug; m Termini; a Part of the Trimani family's wine empire (their shop just round the corner stocks about 4000 international labels) this is a great, unpretentious place. Always bustling, it's Rome's biggest wine bar and has a vast selection of Italian regional wines as well as a small food menu. Book ahead to take one of the regular wine-tasting courses.

## SAN LORENZO & BEYOND

### CLANDESTINA Map p103 Bar

☎ 06 444 04 67; Via dei Volsci 33; h 8pm-3am; g Via dei Reti; a Opposite one of Rome's historic *centri sociali*, the intimidatingly muralled No 32, this is a chic little, spartan yet stylish wine bar where San Lorenzo hipsters come to while away the night until it's club o'clock.

### ARCO DEGLI AURUNCI Map p103 Café

☎ 06 445 44 25; Via degli Aurunci 42; h 7am-2am; g Via dei Reti; a A charming café-bar on one of San Lorenzo's rare idyllic corners, here the outside

tables overlook a small piazza and a modern church. The interior is airy, with warm orange walls, brick arches and blown-up photos. It's a fabulous place for a drink (cocktail €5), *aperitivo* (7pm to 9pm; €7 to €9), or even a light meal (€5), with occasional live music.

### MAX'S BAR Map p103 Club

☎ 06 702 01 599; Via Achille Grandi 3a; admission varies; h 10.30pm-3.30am Thu-Sun; m Vittorio Emanuele  
Max's unthreatening, welcoming vibe, backed by a hip-wiggling soundtrack of commercial house, is what has endeared it to so many men for so long. An institution in gay Rome, it's favoured by the young, the old and everything in between.

### LOCANDA ATLANTIDE Map p103 Live Music

☎ 06 447 04 540; www.locandatlantide.it; Via dei Lucani 22b; h 10pm-4am Sep-mid-Jun; m Vittorio Emanuele; a You wouldn't find this unmarked, backstreet, graffiti-covered door among a string of workshops and warehouses unless you were in the know. Descend into a cavernous place with décor best described as recycled. Its lively alternative gigs are always fun and full; it's good to know that punk is not dead. Come here to tickle Rome's grungy underbelly.

### MICCA CLUB Map p103 Live Music

☎ 06 874 40 079; www.miccaclub.com; Via Pietra Micca 7a; h 10pm-2am Wed, 10pm-4am Thu-Sat, 6pm-2am Sun, closed Jun-Aug; m Vittorio Emanuele; a Pop art fills ancient cellars and brick arches change colour every few seconds at this curious underground venue. It's dedicated to the '60s but isn't a nostalgia trip, though Austin Powers types are in evidence. Expect live jazz followed by rare '60s grooves. Book online, or, if you can't make it, listen to it: Radio Città Futura broadcasts shows live.

### RIVE GAUCHE 2 Map p103 Pub

☎ 06 445 67 22; Via dei Sabelli 43; h 7pm-2am; g Via Tiburtina; a We don't know where Rive Gauche 1 is, but this weirdly named place is one of San Lorenzo's most popular pubs. Vibrant, big and noisy, it's always full of students, foreigners and assorted friends.

## SOUTHERN ROME

Get down to Testaccio at midnight, and saunter down to the end of Via Galvani, in the square mile of the mount of Testaccio, and you'll find more clubs than at a Captain Caveman fancy dress ball. They offer something for every taste, including no taste. More clubs spread out into the neighbouring gritty but trendy district of Ostiense. Celio (near Colosseo) has some charming drinking options, and there are some more clubs flung out in the suburbs.

## SAN GIOVANNI

### CIRCOLO DEGLI ARTISTI

Map pp108-9

Live Music

☎ 06 703 05 684; Via Casilina Vecchia 42; h 10pm-3.30am Tue-Thu, 9pm-4.30am Fri & Sat; g Via Casilina; a

For a memorable evening, head to this laid-back club in Rome's eastern suburbs. It's the venue for alternative music concerts, with recent highlights Black Rebel Motor-cycle Club and the White Stripes, but also hosts club nights, reaching a crescendo every Saturday night with Screamedelica, featuring Italy's alternative music oracle Fabio Luzietti. Friday night is Omogenic, gay night. A large garden area is ideal for a chat and a beer from the open-air bar.

## GAY & LESBIAN ROME

Rome's gay scene is out of the closet but hasn't ventured much further. Despite the efforts of the Catholic Church, homosexuality is well tolerated, but the gay scene is not a patch on that of many other international capitals. There's no openly gay part of town and only a few gay and lesbian clubs and bars, though many clubs host regular gay and lesbian nights. We've listed these throughout this chapter.

There's a Gay Pride march annually in mid-June, and the 10-week **Gay Village** ([www.gayvillage.it](http://www.gayvillage.it); h end June-mid-Sep), a temporary complex of bars, clubs, cinema, and even fitness areas, has run in different locations for more than five years.

For information on the local scene talk to the friendly folk at **Libreria Babele** (p163), and pick up the monthly magazine *AUT*, which has up-to-date listings, including the city's increasing number of cruising clubs, and is published by **Circolo Mario Mieli** (p289). Lesbians can also find out more at **Coordinamento Lesbiche Italiano** (p290), which has a recommended women-only restaurant, Luna e L'Altra (men are allowed at lunch).

Most gay venues (bars and clubs) require you to have an **Arcigay** ([www.arcigayroma.it](http://www.arcigayroma.it)) membership card. These cost €15/8 per year/month and are available from any venue where you have to have one.

Most gay saunas open from 2pm or 3pm until very late and admission is around €15 with a compulsory Arcigay card (which you can buy at the saunas).

**Apollion** (Map pp90-1; ☎ 06 482 53 89; Via Mecenate 59a)

**Europa Multiclub** (Map pp90-1; ☎ 06 482 36 50; Via Aureliana 40)

**Mediterraneo** (Map pp108-9; ☎ 06 772 05 934; Via P Villari 3)

Men and women carouse at Rome's gay beach, Il Buco, in the dunes 9km south of Lido di Ostia. Outdoor cruising delights are still to be found after dark on the Monte Caprino side of the Capitoline hill.

## SKYLINE

Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 06 700 94 31; [www.skylineclub.it](http://www.skylineclub.it); Via Pontremoli 36; admission with Arcigay membership; h 10.30pm-4am Mon-Sat, 5pm-4am Sun; m San Giovanni

With new larger premises, gay bar-club Skyline has gone from strength to strength, and we're not just talking about the muscular types who like to mingle here. There are bar areas, a video room, dark areas and cubicles. Mondays are naked.

## CELIO

### COMING OUT

Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 06 700 98 71; Via di San Giovanni in Laterano 8; h 11am-2am; m Colosseo

Spot this easy-going gay bar in the shadow of the Colosseum by the rainbow sign and the mixed, convivial crowds spilling out into the street.

### GLADIATORI HOTEL TERRACE BAR

Map pp108-9

Bar

☎ 06 775 91 380; Via Labicana 125; h 4pm-midnight; m Colosseo

A small flower-ringed terrace on the rooftop of the swish little Hotel Gladiatori, this bar is open to all. It has a fantastic view of the Colosseum and is ideal for a

sundowner or an after-dark cocktail (€12 to €16). Well worth it for the view.

## HANGAR

Map pp90-1 Club

☎ 06 488 13 971; Via in Selci 69; h 10.30pm-2am Wed-Mon; m Cavour

A landmark on Rome's gay map for more than 20 years. The Italian and foreign clientele includes a number of cruising gym bunnies keen to try out the new dark room. It gets crowded at weekends and on Monday nights for the weekly porn screenings.

## IL PENTAGRAPPOLO

Map pp108-9 Wine Bar

☎ 06 709 63 01; Via Celimontana 21b; h noon-3pm & 6pm-1am; m Colosseo; a A few blocks from the Colosseo, this star-vaulted place has 250 labels to choose from and about 15 wines by the glass. There's live jazz or soul from about 10pm and *aperitivo* (6pm to 8.30pm). Readers have had fun here, as well as at the *enoteca* opposite, **Kot-tabus** (☎ 06 772 01 145; Via Celimontana; h 7pm-1am).

## AVENTINO & TESTACCIO

IL SEME E LA FOGLIA Map pp108-9 Bar

☎ 06 574 30 08; Via Galvani 18; h 8am-2am Mon-Sat, closed 1 wk Aug; m Piramide

Once upon a time an ordinary bar, the position of this place at the edge of Testaccio's nightlife strip has seen it become a hip pre-club stop. It's tangerine-coloured and tiny inside, with street-side seating where you can eargwag conversations on topics as diverse as nihilism and where to go next.

## LINARI

Map pp108-9 Café

☎ 06 578 23 58; Via Nicola Zabaglia 9; h 6am-10pm Wed-Mon; g or j Via Marmorata

Spot this by the crowds of old-time locals. It has the busy clatter of a good bar, with excellent pastries, splendid coffee and bar-side banter. There are some outside tables but you'll have to fight the elderly ladies of the neighbourhood to get one.

## AKAB

Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 06 574 78 26; [www.akabcave.com](http://www.akabcave.com); Via di Monte Testaccio 68/69; h midnight-5am Tue-Sat; m Piramide; a

This eclectic former workshop has an underground cellar, an upper floor, a garden and a classically whimsical door policy. On Saturday the two levels pulsate to R & B

and the latest house music, while Friday nights Akab zips up its boots and goes back to its roots with live music.

## ETÒ

Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 06 574 82 68; Via Galvani 46; m Piramide; a A shiny, hi-tech club, hosting shiny, dressed-up people, Etò plays commercial house and dance to a lively crowd, and serves knock-your-socks-off cocktails. Most summers it moves to the terrace of the **Palazzo dei Congressi** (p118) in EUR: go-go dancers on the walls of Mussolini's stern architecture have to be seen to be believed.

## FAKE

Map pp108-9 Club

Via di Monte Testaccio 64; h 8am-5pm Wed-Sun; m Piramide; a Fake has gone through a few changes of hands over recent years but this venue has maintained its popularity for its laid-back atmosphere. The pop-art décor is looking a bit tired but it's having a refit, and the floaty harem-styled seating area makes you feel like you're on holiday. Although it's a club it's laid-back enough to go for a drink; there's no admission charge and cocktails are €10.

## L'ALIBI

Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 06 574 34 48; Via di Monte Testaccio 40; h 11.45pm-5am Wed-Sun; m Piramide L'Alibi attracts a mixed gay and straight crowd. Spread over three floors, including a huge summer roof terrace, it has sofas to relax on and commercial music to shake your ass to.

## METAVERSO

Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 06 574 47 12; [www.metaverso.com](http://www.metaverso.com); Via di Monte Testaccio 38a; h 10.30pm-5am, closed Jul & Aug; m Piramide; a The smallest, friendliest place on the Monte Testaccio strip, cellar-club Metaverso packs in a cool, alternative crowd, and plays mostly hip-hop and electronica, with the occasional foray into out-there stuff like acid house. Projections of old movies in the arched interior make it doubly hip. Admission is around €5 and drinks are cheap.

## VILLAGGIO GLOBALE

Map pp108-9 Club

☎ 06 573 00 329; Lungotevere Testaccio; m Piramide Rome's former slaughterhouse houses the extraordinary Villaggio Globale *centro*

*sociale*. Resembling a grungy, down-at-heel student union, with lots of skinning up, dreadlocks, cheap beer and hip-hop styling, the centre stages some great gigs – recent stars have included the Beastie Boys. Winter events take place in a huge circus tent, Spazio Boario (so called as it's in the former 'cattle yard').

**L'OASI DELLA BIRRA** *Map pp108–9* **Pub**  
% 06 574 61 22; Piazza Testaccio 41;  
h 8am–2.30pm & 4.30pm–midnight Mon–Sat,  
7.30pm–12.30am Sun; m Piramide; a  
The Oasis of Beer is just that, with over 500 different types. But this isn't just a beer-lover's dream, it's charming, with intimate seating in the cellars beneath a well-stocked *enoteca* and lots of good food to soak up the alcohol, such as hearty stews (goulash €14) or cheeses and cold cuts (six/eight varieties €15.50/18.50). Next door is an excellent *formaggeria* (cheese shop), if you're here during the day.

**OSTIENSE & SAN PAOLO**  
**DOPPIOZERO** *Map pp108–9* **Bar**  
% 06 573 01 961; Via Ostiense 68; h 7am–2am, closed 1 wk Aug; m Piramide; a  
Fashionable Romans flock to this easy-going, trendy bar that is all things to all people. Sleek and modern, it serves coffee and pastries for breakfast; pizza by the slice or snacks for lunch; tea in the afternoon; and *aperitivo* between 6.30pm and 9pm.

**ALPHEUS** *Map pp108–9* **Club**  
% 06 574 78 26; www.alpheus.it; Via del Commercio 36; h 10pm–4am Thu–Sun; m Piramide; a  
At Alpheus sounds vary from room to room, and with four halls that makes for a mixed crowd, or, at least, one that likes variety. It hosts everything from Argentine

tango to house, hip-hop, rock and soul, while Saturday is Gorgeous, gay night.

**DISTILLERIE CLANDESTINE** *Map pp108–9* **Club**  
% 06 573 05 102; www.distillerieclandestine.com; Via Libetta 13; h 10pm–4am Thu–Sun; m Piramide; a  
One of Rome's umbrella venues, this funky place hauls in the hipsters. As well as a bass-thumping club, there's a swing room: an American bar with what look like light sabres suspended above the bar. Then there's the dark, neon-lit R & B room with a house and dance soundtrack, and – gasp – a smoking room.

**GOA** *Map pp108–9* **Club**  
% 06 574 82 77; Via Libetta 13; h 11pm–3am Wed–Sun Oct–May; m Garbatella; a  
For a night of hands-in-the-air, flickering plasma screens, dancers on podiums and moments of house-induced euphoria, Goa is the place. It's Rome's best big club, with international names, a dressed-to-the-nines crowd and heavies on the door. Recent guest DJs include Sven Väth and Louie Vega, while every Thursday Claudio Cocoluto spins house, electronic and experimental sounds. It hosts Rome's only lesbian night, Venus Rising, on the last Sunday of the month.

**CLASSICO VILLAGE** *Map pp108–9* **Live Music**  
% 06 574 33 64; www.classico.it; Via Libetta 3; h 9pm–1.30am Mon–Thu, 11pm–4am Fri & Sat; m Garbatella; a  
Well worth a look is this eclectic converted factory with a bar, restaurant and live-music venue, hosting music of all genres, and centred on a lovely courtyard.

**LA CASA DEL JAZZ** *Map pp108–9* **Live Music**  
% 06 70 47 31; www.casajazz.it; Viale di Porta Ardeatina 55; h 7.30pm–midnight Tue–Sat, noon–midnight Sun; m Piramide  
In the middle of a 2500-sq-metre park in the southern suburbs, the Casa del Jazz (House of Jazz) is housed in a charming three-storey 1920s villa that belonged to a Mafia boss. When he was caught the Comune di Roma (Rome Council) converted it into a beautiful jazz-tastic complex. There's a 150-seat auditorium, rehearsal rooms, a café and a restaurant.

## TRASTEVERE

Enchantingly pretty, Trastevere is one of the city's most popular areas to wander, drink and decide what to do afterwards, and the streets in summer are packed, with stalls, bars spilling into the street, and a carnival atmosphere.

## EAST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

**BIG MAMA** *Map pp122–3* **Live Music**  
% 06 581 25 51; www.bigmama.it in Italian; Vicolo di San Francesco a Ripa 18; annual membership €13; h 9.30pm–1.30am Tue–Sun Oct–mid-Jun; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a  
To wallow in the Eternal City blues, there's only one place to go – this cramped Trastevere basement. It's also good for jazz, funk, soul and R & B. There are weekly residencies from well-known Italian musicians and songwriters and frequent concerts by international artists. You can reserve a table via phone or online.

## WEST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

**BAR LE CINQUE** *Map pp122–3* **Bar**  
Vicolo del Cinque 5; h 6am–2am Mon–Sat; g or j Piazza Sonnino  
There's no sign outside, and it looks like a run-down ordinary bar, but this is a Trastevere favourite, and always has a small crowd clustered around outside, here for the nice location, easy-going vibe and cheap drinks.

**BAR SAN CALISTO** *Map pp122–3* **Bar**  
% 06 583 58 69; Piazza San Calisto; h 6am–1.30am Mon–Sat; g or j Piazza Sonnino  
Those in the know head to this down-at-heel bar for its basic, stuck-in-time atmosphere and cheap prices (a large beer costs €2.50). It's the most bohemian bar in the area and attracts everyone from dodgy drug dealers and long-term soaks to elderly matrons and American students. It's famous for its chocolate – drunk hot with cream in winter, eaten as soft, creamy ice cream in summer.

**FRENI E FRIZIONI** *Map pp122–3* **Bar**  
% 06 583 34 210; Via del Politeanna 4; h 10am–2am; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
One of Rome's coolest bars, Freni e Frizioni (meaning 'brakes and clutches' – the venue

was once a garage) is close to the Tiber. It's run by the same people as equally hip *Société Lucète* (p214). Inside mixes vintage furniture and modern art, outside happening crowds fill the entire little piazza at night. Drinks are reasonable and *aperitivo* a bargain (beers/cocktails cost €5/7 from 7.30pm to 10.30pm).

**FRIENDS ART CAFÉ** *Map pp122–3* **Bar**  
% 06 581 61 11; Piazza Trilussa 34; h 8am–2am; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
This hi-tech steel-and-chrome favourite is a glitzy, cheerful, noisy spot and offers a bountiful *aperitivo* (€6 to €7). There are two other branches at *Via Piave 69–73* (*Map pp150–1*); % 06 420 14 285; Piazza Fiume; h 7.30am–2am daily except Sun (afternoon) and *Via della Scrofa 59* (*Map pp74–5*); % 06 686 14 16; h 8am–2am). All have wi-fi access.

**GARBO** *Map pp122–3* **Bar**  
% 06 583 20 782; Vicolo di Santa Margherita 1a; h 10pm–2am Tue–Sun; g or j Piazza Sonnino  
Camp and cosy, and all red velvet, red fairy lights and gilt mirrors, this snug gay venue is more about couples than cruising.

**OMBRE ROSSE** *Map pp122–3* **Bar**  
% 06 588 41 55; Piazza Sant'Egidio 12; h 7.30am–2am Mon–Sat, 7.30am–7pm Sun; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
One of the cornerstones of the Trastevere drinking scene, this bar sits on a pretty piazza under a shady tree, the sought-after outside tables surrounded by hanging flower baskets. A great place to watch the world wander past.

**DI MARZIO** *Map pp122–3* **Café**  
% 06 581 60 95; Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere 15; h 7am–2am Wed–Mon; g or j Piazza Sonnino  
For ringside seats on Trastevere's most entertaining piazza – one of the loveliest in Rome – take a table at this ordinary but sublimely set café. Prices are high (cocktails €9) but the view is great.

**LETTERE CAFFÈ GALLERY** *Map pp122–3* **Live Music**  
% 06 583 43 79; Via San Francesco a Ripa 100/101; h 6.30pm–2am; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
This literary café is one of the best examples of Rome's trend for bars crossed with

# top picks

## CLUBS

- La Maison (p216)
- Metaverso (p223)
- Villaggio Globale (p223)
- Goa (right)
- Circolo degli Artisti (p222)

bookshops. You like books? You like blues and jazz? Then you'll love Lettere Caffè. Performances usually start at 10pm, followed by DJs playing indie and new wave.

**ARTÙ** *Map pp122-3* **Pub**  
% 06 588 03 98; Largo Fumasoni Biondi 5;  
h 6pm-2am Tue-Sun; g or j Piazza Sonnino;  
a

This diminutive, dark-panelled *birreria* (beer shop) with stained-glass windows and an open fireplace feels half-pub, half-bar. Perhaps that's why it's such a favourite of thirsty expats. Ideal for a lingering beer.

**GOOD CAFFÈ** *Map pp122-3* **Wine Bar**

% 06 972 77 979; Via Santa Dorotea 9;  
h 7pm-2am Mon-Sat; g Piazza Trilussa; a  
In a charming ivy-hung location on a cobbled street, albeit a bit busy with passing cars, this is indeed good with a cosy wood-lined interior. It's a popular place to hang out, have a quick meal, a long drink or make use of the free wi-fi (particularly popular with American students from nearby John Cabot Uni). There are weekend DJs, *aperitivi* (6.30pm to 9.30pm) and a cocktail costs only €6 (€9 after 6pm).

## ENOTECA TRASTEVERE

*Map pp122-3* **Wine Bar**

% 06 588 56 59; Via della Lungaretta 86; h 6pm-midnight Thu-Tue; g or j Piazza Sonnino; a  
A popular, unusually spacious *enoteca* in Trastevere, with little painted tables and chairs inside and out. Glasses of wine start at €4 and there are over 500 from which to choose, with a long menu of good if over-priced snacks to accompany them.

## VATICAN CITY & BORGO

Around the Vatican nestle some charming wine bars and splendid cafés and pastry stops. For nightlife there are a couple of live music venues, including Italy's best jazz club.

**ART STUDIO CAFÉ** *Map pp130-1* **Café**

% 06 972 77 286; www.artstudiocafe.com; Via dei Gracchi 187a; h 9am-11pm Mon-Sat; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a

An unusual modern café that's spacious and airy, with white seating and lots of *objets d'art* for decoration and for sale. It also houses an interesting, accessible mosaic

school, where you can take classes in the ancient art.

**CASTRONI** *Map pp130-1* **Café**

% 06 687 43 83; Via Cola di Rienzo 196;  
h 8am-8pm; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a  
This *food shop* (p178) harbours a great café with splendid coffee and snacks. You can stand at the busy bar or sit at outside tables.

**FAGGIANI** *Map pp130-1* **Café**

% 06 397 39 742; Via G Ferrari 23-29;  
h 6.30am-9.30pm; m Lepanto  
Some of the best coffee and *cornetti* (croissants) in Rome are served up here in old-fashioned style by waistcoat-wearing *barristi*. There are a few streetside tables, but most customers get their daily fix at the polished bar.

**GRAN CAFFÈ ESPERIA** *Map pp130-1* **Café**

% 06 320 39 71; Lungotevere dei Mellini 1;  
h Mon-Sat; g Piazza Cavour; a  
This revamped Art Nouveau café is separated from the river by a busy road. Large and glittery, it's full of polished wood, brass and crystal chandeliers, and filled by a conservative crowd of well-dressed professionals enjoying the coffee and cakes.

**ALEXANDERPLATZ** *Map pp130-1* **Live Music**

% 06 397 42 171; www.alexanderplatz.it;  
Via Ostia 9; admission with membership €10;  
h 9pm-1.30am; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; a  
The big daddy of jazz clubs in a city that loves jazz, Alexanderplatz attracts a passionate crowd and some huge names; George Coleman and Lionel Hampton are two regular performers. You'll need to book a table if you want dinner, and the music starts around 10.30pm. From July to September, the club moves outside to the grounds of *Villa Cellimontana* (p110) for an enchanting outdoor festival.

**FONCLEA** *Map pp130-1* **Live Music**

% 06 689 63 02; Via Crescenzo 82a; h 8.30pm-1.30am Sep-Jun; g Piazza del Risorgimento; a  
The best place for a night out in the Borgo, this is a great little pub-venue for live music, usually featuring cover bands playing anything from jazz to soul, funk to rock. In July and August Fonclea moves outside – phone for the location.

## CENTRI SOCIALI

Rome's *centri sociali* (social centres) are an unusual feature of Italy's music scene. They are organised squats – centres of anti-establishment counter-culture set up in the 1970s in disused public buildings, such as factories, garages or industrial estates. Then squatters regularly battled with police, while nowadays most have been around long enough to be part of the establishment. However, they still offer Rome's most unusual and alternative entertainment, including gigs, club nights and exhibitions. They're also a bargain, in accordance with their ethic of accessible culture.

Most important are **Forte Prenestino** (% 06 218 07 855; Via F Delpino Centocelle), housed in a fort east of the city centre, **Rialtosantambrogio** (p218), **Brancaleone** (below) and **Villaggio Globale** (p223) in Testaccio.

**TASTEVIN** *Map pp130-1* **Wine Bar**

% 06 320 80 56; Via Ciro Menotti 16; h 1-3.30pm & 8pm-midnight Tue-Fri, 8pm-midnight Sat; g Piazza Giuseppe Mazzini; a  
Tastevin's tiny, cool interior is a great escape on a summer's day and it has an exceptional collection of 1005 Italian and French wines, including an excellent choice of Barolo and Brunelli. While you drink you can nibble on cheeses and salamis, tuck into a daily hot dish or chomp on a choice of salads.

## VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME

Not the most happening of areas, the genteel northern suburbs nevertheless have a few great places to drink or head out to for a big night out.

**ROSATI** *Map pp150-1* **Café**

% 06 322 58 59; Piazza del Popolo 5;  
h 7.30am-11.30pm; m Flaminio; a  
Historically Rosati, overlooking the vast disc of the piazza, was the hang-out of the left-wing chattering classes. Authors Italo Calvino and Alberto Moravia used to drink here while their right-wing counterparts went to the *Canova* (*Map pp90-1*; % 06 361 22 31; Piazza del Popolo 16; h 8am-midnight a ) over the square. Today tourists are the main clientele at both.

**BRANCALEONE** *off Map pp150-1* **Club**

% 06 820 00 959; Via Levanna 11; g Via Nomentana; a  
It's a bit of a schlep, but this *centro sociale* is one of the big guns of Rome's music

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scene, and worth the journey if there's a good line-up. It attracts superstar DJs serving up an eclectic range of music – usually house, hip-hop, drum 'n' bass, reggae and electronica – and playing to a young, boisterous, alternative crowd. Skate kids will like it.

**QUBE** *off Map pp150-1* **Club**

% 06 438 54 450; Via di Portonaccio 212; m Tiburtina; a  
With three floors, Qube is Rome's largest disco. Thursday is Radio Rock night; Saturday is UnderG.R.A.und, with hip-hop and R & B on the ground floor, disco revival on the first floor and minimal, electro and techno upstairs (with guest DJs such as Trentemøller and Oliver Huntemann). Prices vary. Rome's biggest gay and lesbian one-nighter, *Muccassassina* (Cow Assassina; www.muccassassina.com), takes place on Fridays. It's run by Circolo Mario Mieli, who also organises Gay Pride. In July and August it moves outdoors (with live show and cruising garden) – check the website for the current location.

**LA PALMA** *off Map pp150-1* **Live Music**

% 06 435 99 029; www.lapalmaclub.it in Italian; Via Giuseppe Mirri 35; h 8.30pm-2am Mon-Thu, 8.30pm-3am Fri & Sat, closed Aug; g Via Tiburtina; a  
Jazz-heads rate this place on a par with Alexanderplatz. It's housed in two large 18th-century houses on a former farm, and a bit of a hike out from the centre, but worth it if you're on the hunt for quality jazz, classical music or diverse DJs. In summer there's a balmy jazz festival in the courtyard.

**BLUelist**<sup>1</sup> (blu,list) v.  
to recommend a travel experience.

What's your recommendation? [www.lonelyplanet.com/bluelist](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/bluelist)

## THE ARTS

### top picks

- Auditorium Parco della Musica (p231)
- Isola del Cinema (p233)
- Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (p233)
- La Notte Bianca (p232)
- Estate Romana (p235)
- Teatro Ghione (p232)
- Teatro Valle (p235)

Rome's busy cultural calendar includes a host of unforgettable events, particularly in summer when most of the theatre, cinema, opera and music moves outdoors. Marking the end of summer is the extraordinary *Notte Bianca* (White Night; see p232), but the fun doesn't stop there: autumn also has many specialised festivals dedicated to dance, drama and jazz.

Looking beyond the excitement of Rome's alfresco summer, you could sum up the capital's arts scene as somewhat provincial. Often good venues host lacklustre productions, or talented performers are let down by other factors. However, there has been a sea change in recent years. The culture-vulture mayor, Walter Veltroni, has overseen something of a renaissance, with the establishment of new venues and promotion of hugely populist and high-profile events, including the establishment of a film festival in 2006. The other major development is Rome's Auditorium Parco della Musica. This amazing venue now hosts the majority of the city's important cultural events and attracts big international stars in all musical genres, who previously would have given Rome a miss, to play here. The auditorium's all-encompassing, diverse and exciting programme has revolutionised the performing arts in Rome, albeit in one corner of the city.

Rome's major arts venues and festivals (see also p141) are detailed in this chapter, but it's always worth checking current listings as programmes are often only confirmed fairly late in the day. The most comprehensive listings guide in Rome is *Roma C'è* (€1.20), published every Wednesday, complete with a small, but perfectly informed, English-language section. Two other useful guides are *Metro*, a Thursday supplement to *Il Messaggero*, and *Trovaroma*, which comes with *La Repubblica* (also on Thursday). Both papers also carry daily cinema, theatre and concert listings.

Useful websites for events information include [www.romace.it](http://www.romace.it) (in Italian, but with an English section), [www.romaturismo.it](http://www.romaturismo.it), [www.comune.roma.it](http://www.comune.roma.it) (in Italian) and [www.inrome.now.com](http://www.inrome.now.com).

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

Classical music in Rome is thriving. Concerts are of a high standard and the Renzo Piano-designed Auditorium Parco della Musica is a world-class venue featuring superb classical, popular and world music concerts. For more on pop, jazz, rock and world live music gigs see the Drinking & Nightlife chapter (p212).

Free classical concerts are regularly held in many of Rome's churches, especially at Easter and around Christmas and New Year,

with seats available on a first-come-first-served basis. The programmes are usually excellent even if the acoustics are not. The Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola (p86) is a popular venue for choral masses, as are the Pantheon (p72) and Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano (p106). The Basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura (p116) hosts an important choral mass on 25 January and the hymn *Te Deum* is sung at the Chiesa del Gesù (p76) on 31 December.

Details are published in the daily newspapers, *Roma C'è* and *Trovaroma*.

## TICKETS & RESERVATIONS

Tickets for concerts and theatrical performances are widely available across the city. Prices range enormously depending on the venue and artist. Hotels can often reserve tickets for guests, or you can contact the venue or organisation directly. Otherwise there are a number of agencies you can try, including the following:

**Hello Ticket** (☎ 800 90 70 80, 06 480 78 400; [www.helloticket.it](http://www.helloticket.it) in Italian).

**Orbis** (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 474 47 76; Piazza dell'Esquilino 37; ⌚ 9.30am–1pm & 4–7.30pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–1pm Sat) Near the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

You can also get tickets to concerts at major record outlets, including **Messaggerie Musicali** (p169) and **Rinascita** (p162).

## ACCADEMIA DI SANTA CECILIA

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 802 42 501; [www.santacecilia.it](http://www.santacecilia.it); Auditorium Parco della Musica, Viale Pietro de Coubertin 10; Ⓙ or j Viale Tiziano, or shuttle bus M from Stazione Termini

Rome's major classical-music organisation, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia dates back to the 16th century when it was founded by, among others, the Renaissance composer Palestrina. The academy's programme includes a world-class symphonic season – featuring superstar guest conductors – and short festivals dedicated to single composers. The in-house orchestra is directed by London-born Italian Antonio Pappano.

## ACCADEMIA FILARMONICA ROMANA

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 320 17 52; [www.filarmonicaromana.org](http://www.filarmonicaromana.org) in Italian; Via Flaminia 118; Ⓙ or j Piazza Mancini The academy was founded in 1821 and its members have included Rossini, Donizetti and Verdi. Its programme concentrates on classical and chamber music, but also includes opera, ballet and multimedia events. Concerts are held at the **Teatro Olimpico** (p232).

## ASSOCIAZIONE MUSICALE ROMANA

Map pp130–1

☎ 06 393 66 322; [www.assmusrom.it](http://www.assmusrom.it) in Italian; Via Gregorio VII; Ⓙ Via Gregorio VII Founded to promote baroque and Renaissance music, the *associazione* organises recitals and concerts in various locations throughout the year. Its two most prestigious annual events are an international organ festival in September (in the **Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista dei Fiorentini**, p82) and a harpsichord festival in spring, but both have been hit by funding crises in recent years and so are in jeopardy – check the current press for details.

## AUDITORIUM CONCILIAZIONE

Map pp130–1

☎ 899 50 00 55; [www.auditoriumconciliazione.it](http://www.auditoriumconciliazione.it); Via della Conciliazione 4; Ⓙ Piazza Pia Formerly Rome's premier classical music venue, this auditorium was renovated after the Accademia di Santa Cecilia and hosts concerts (both contemporary and classical, from David Sylvian to Uto Ughi), dance performances and film screenings. There's also a specialist music bookshop on site.

# top picks

## ARTS FESTIVALS

The major festivals are outlined in the Festivals & Events chapter (p141), but for those who can't get enough culture, here are a few more:

- **Concerti del Tempio** ([www.tempietto.it](http://www.tempietto.it)) The ancient **Teatro di Marcello** (p84) is the dramatic venue for a summer concert series in August and September, when piano and chamber music bounces off the rugged stone nightly from 8.30pm.
- **Cosmophonies** (☎ 06 635 01 55; [www.cosmophonies.com](http://www.cosmophonies.com) in Italian) A short season (June to July) of theatre, music and dance held in the Roman theatre at **Ostia Antica** (p266).
- **Festival Internazionale di Villa Adriana** (☎ 06 802 41 281; [www.auditorium.com](http://www.auditorium.com)) Takes place in **Tivoli** (p277) with concerts, international theatre and dance in archaeological settings (June to July).
- **Invito alla Danza** (☎ 06 583 35 275; [www.invitoalladanza.it](http://www.invitoalladanza.it)) This mammothly popular modern-dance festival, which started in 1980, draws international performers (anything from tango to jazz) and passionate crowds to the beautiful parklands of **Villa Doria Pamphili** (Map pp122–3; Via di San Pancrazio 10) south of the Vatican in July. Tickets cost around €20.
- **New Opera Festival** (☎ 07 613 31 164; [www.newoperafestivaldiroma.com](http://www.newoperafestivaldiroma.com); Piazza San Clemente 1) Established and emerging Italian and international singers perform in the courtyard of the **Basilica di San Clemente** (p111) during July and August.

## AUDITORIUM PARCO DELLA MUSICA

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 802 41 281; [www.auditorium.com](http://www.auditorium.com); Viale Pietro de Coubertin 10; ⌚ 11am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–8pm Sun; Ⓙ or j Viale Tiziano, or shuttle bus M from Stazione Termini

Three great grey pods, resembling landed spaceships, have remodelled Rome's musical landscape, both classical and contemporary. Combining architectural innovation with perfect acoustics, Rome's €140 million auditorium has proved a popular and critical success since it opened in 2002. Designed by Italy's top architect, Renzo Piano (who also designed the Pompidou Centre in Paris), it comprises three concert halls set around a 3000-capacity open-air arena. Of the three halls, the 2756-seat Sala Santa Cecilia

is the largest. Home to the Santa Cecilia Orchestra, it's spectacular, with a billowing wooden ceiling and lipstick-red seating. Every month the Parco della Musica hosts huge international names in classical, pop, rock and world music, and puts on themed festivals celebrating anything from flamenco to circuses.

The shuttle bus M service departs from Stazione Termini every 15 minutes between 5pm and the end of the last performance.

### ISTITUZIONE UNIVERSITARIA DEI CONCERTI Map p103

IUC; % 06 361 00 51; www.concertiuc.it in Italian; Piazzale Aldo Moro 5; m Castro Pretorio The IUC organises a season of concerts in the Aula Magna of La Sapienza university, including many visiting international artists and orchestras. Held from October to May, performances cover a wide range of musical genres, including baroque, classical, contemporary and jazz. It could be the works of Mozart one week, Miles Davis the next.

### TEATRO GHIONE Map pp130-1

% 06 637 22 94; www.ghione.it in Italian; Via delle Fornaci 37; G Piazzale del Risorgimento, m Ottaviano-San Pietro A former cinema, the Teatro Ghione is a small, beautifully restored theatre near St Peter's that offers a varied programme featuring major international performers. You can catch anything from Pirandello to opera arias, from fado to Sarah Kane.

### TEATRO OLIMPICO Map pp150-1

% 06 326 59 91; www.teatroolimpico.it in Italian; Piazza Gentile da Fabriano 17; G or j Piazza Mancini Home to the Accademia Filarmonica Romana, the Olimpico has excellent acoustics

## A WHITE DAY'S NIGHT

The idea of a sleepless night for an entire city, the 'white night', was first instigated in Paris. Rome soon followed suit, and the capital's *Notte Bianca* (www.janottebianca.it) is a wild, welcome addition to the entertainment diary, taking place in early September. For just one night museums and cultural venues stay open overnight, as do many galleries and bars, with free concerts all night long. Many important buildings that are usually closed to the public also open to all for the night. The principle is to encourage creativity, and all events are free.

and an eclectic rag-bag programme that, besides many venerable classical performances, includes farces, musicals, comedians, plays and dance (see below).

## DANCE

Dance is not an art form that receives much patronage in Italy, and the best dancers tend to go abroad to work. But the occasional visiting dance company allows opportunities to see some class acts, which are enthusiastically supported. See the daily papers and listings press for details.

### TEATRO DELL'OPERA DI ROMA

Map pp90-1  
% 06 481 60 287; www.operaroma.it; Piazza Beniamino Gigli; m Repubblica Home to Rome's official corps de ballet, the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma stages a number of ballet performances in its season (December to June). The repertoire is safe, and the standard is mixed. It's recommended when there is an important guest star.

### TEATRO OLIMPICO Map pp150-1

% 06 326 59 91; www.teatroolimpico.it in Italian; Piazza Gentile da Fabriano 17; G or j Piazza Mancini The Teatro Olimpico keeps the Rome dance scene on its toes, with frequent world-class productions ranging from jazz to classical, ethnic to contemporary. Regular performances by big international stars – dancers, choreographers and companies – add to the glamour.

## FILM

With such a backdrop, it's unsurprising that Rome has a close relationship with the cinema. Rome's cinematic heyday was in the 1960s, with Fellini producing films like *La Dolce Vita* and *Roma*, and in the 1970s when Cinecittà (Film City) studios churned out enough spaghetti westerns to keep you entertained for life. But Rome's cinema scene has recently seen something of its former glory (if not home-grown). Major international films recently produced at Cinecittà include *Ocean's Twelve*, *Mission Impossible 3* and the TV series *Rome*, and in 2006 Rome held its first international film festival (see p142). Film-going has always remained popular, and there are some 80-odd cinemas dotted around the city. Many of these

are small, single-screen affairs, although the number of multiscreen complexes is increasing. Most foreign films are dubbed into Italian; those shown in the original language are indicated in listings by *versione originale* or VO after the title – there are several cinemas that regularly show English versions.

Tickets cost between €5 and €8. Afternoon and early-evening screenings are generally cheaper, while all tickets are discounted on Wednesday. Check the listings press or daily papers for schedules and ticket prices.

A fantastic feature of Rome's cinema scene is the summer festival period, when films are shown outdoors at various glorious locations.

### ALCAZAR Map pp122-3

% 06 588 00 99; Via Merry del Val 14; G or j Viale di Trastevere An old-style cinema with plush-red seats. On Monday you can see films in their original language with Italian subtitles.

### CASA DEL CINEMA Map pp150-1

% 06 42 36 01; www.casadelcinema.it; Largo Marcello Mastroianni 1; G Via Boncompagni In Villa Borghese, the Casa del Cinema comprises an exhibition space, two projection halls, a DVD room, a café and a bookshop. It regularly screens films in their original language and has 24 computers on which you can watch a DVD from the 150-disc catalogue.

### METROPOLITAN Map pp90-1

% 06 320 09 33; Via del Corso 7; m Flaminio This modern multiplex not 2m from Piazza del Popolo has four screens and the latest surround-sound audio technology. New releases, blockbusters and the more off-beat Hollywood films are regularly shown in the original language. For popular films it's best to book ahead.

### NUOVO SACHER Map pp122-3

% 06 581 81 16; www.sacherfilm.eu; Largo Ascianghi 1; G or j Viale di Trastevere Owned by cult Roman film director Nanni Moretti, this is the place to catch the latest European art-house flick. Originally designed to support home-grown film talent, it shows films in their original language (English, French, Swedish etc) on Monday. Summer screenings take place in the courtyard next to the cinema.

## CINEMA UNDER THE STARS

There are various outdoor summer film festivals; check current listings, but these take place annually.

**Isola del Cinema** (% 06 689 66 39; www.isoladelcinema.com) Independent arty films in the fantastically romantic setting of the **Isola Tiberina** (Map pp74-5) in July and August.

**Notti di Cinema a Piazza Vittorio** (% 06 445 12 08; www.agsanec.lazio.it in Italian) Italian and international releases at two open-air screens in **Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II** (Map pp90-1) in July and August.

## WARNER VILLAGE MODERNO

Map pp90-1  
% 06 477 79 202; Piazza della Repubblica; m Repubblica

This is where big-budget Hollywood blockbusters are premiered in Italy. Hidden behind the columns that circle Piazza della Repubblica, this multiplex has five screens showing major-release commercial films (both in English and dubbed into Italian).

## OPERA

Historically, opera in Rome was long opposed by the papacy. An opera house opened here in the 17th century, but it was only after independence that Rome's opera scene began to develop. Mascagnai's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Puccini's *Tosca* and Rossini's operas *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Cenerentola* all premiered here.

Today, the opera house, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, is a great grandiose venue, but productions tend to be a bit hit-and-miss. Best of all is when the company moves outdoors for the summer season at the ancient Roman **Terme di Caracalla** (p110). You can also see opera in various other outdoor locations including the **Basilica di San Clemente** at the annual New Opera Festival (see the boxed text, p231). Check listings for details of other outdoor performances.

### TEATRO DELL'OPERA DI ROMA

Map pp90-1  
% 06 481 60 287; www.operaroma.it; Piazza Beniamino Gigli; m Repubblica The functional Fascist-era exterior of Rome's premier opera house makes the plush red-and-gilt interior a stunning surprise. This theatre has an impressive

## NO CHICKEN: WALTER VELTRONI

It's a rare politician who can include dubbing for Disney (the voice of Mayor Turkey Turkey in the Italian version of *Chicken Little*) on his curriculum vitae. But Rome's mayor loves the arts and feel-good publicity, and the two combined? All the better. Mayor of Rome since 2001, he has been a dynamic powerhouse in raising the city's cultural profile. He inaugurated Rome's star-studded international film festival in 2006, instigated the annual Notte Bianca (White Night) in 2003, pushed the money through for **La Casa del Jazz** (p224), and commissioned free annual concerts starring icons such as Paul McCartney and Simon and Garfunkel outside the Colosseum and in Circo Massimo.

His personal artistic dabblings are not limited to voicing a cartoon turkey. He has also written a novel, *La Scoperta dell'Alba* (Discovery of Sunrise; 2006), and a music biography of Italian jazz pianist Luca Flores (2003), as well as many political tomes. Veltroni even makes a cameo appearance in Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday* ('a quiet civilized man, with a passion for jazz').

Veltroni has definitely had an impact on tourism – numbers were up nearly 9% on the previous year in 2007. But the mayor has his critics (see p3) and it's true that many of the vaunted arts events involve international stars, rather than promoting local artists. However, Veltroni is renowned for his winning diplomacy, fabulous networking and nice-guy politics, and at the time of writing had just been elected leader of the new Partito Democratico (Democratic Party). Rome today, Italy tomorrow.

history: it premiered Puccini's *Tosca*, and Maria Callas sang here. Built in 1880 and given a Fascist makeover in the 1920s, it has great acoustics, but contemporary productions don't always match the splendour of the setting. From July to mid-August, performances shift outdoors to the rugged Roman Terme di Caracalla, an unparalleled location.

## THEATRE

Rome has a thriving local theatre scene. Though nothing compared with Broadway or London's West End, there are more than 80 theatres dotted across town, including an increasing number of smaller experimental places. There's even a re-created Globe Theatre in Villa Borghese Park, exactly like Shakespeare's Globe in London, but with better weather. In the larger city-centre venues the programmes tend to be conservative and performances are usually in Italian.

Particular to the city are the summer festivals that make use of Rome's archaeological scenery – no city could be better suited to classic drama. Performances take place in settings such as Villa Adriana in Tivoli, Ostia Antica's Roman theatre and the Teatro di Marcello. In summer the **Miracle Players** (☎ 06 703 93 427; [www.miracleplayers.org](http://www.miracleplayers.org)) perform classic English drama or historical comedy in English next to the Roman Forum and other open-air locations. Performances are usually free.

Further theatre information can be found online at [www.tuttot teatro.com](http://www.tuttot teatro.com) (in Italian).

### ENGLISH THEATRE OF ROME Map pp74–5

☎ 06 444 13 75; [www.rometheatre.com](http://www.rometheatre.com); Piazza Montevincchio; 1 Oct-Jun; 11 Cavour

The English Theatre of Rome stages a mix of contemporary and classic plays, stand-up comedians, and bilingual productions, mainly at the Teatro L'Arciliuto, near Piazza Navona, and occasionally other venues.

### SILVANO TOTI GLOBE THEATRE

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 205 91 27; [www.globetheatreroma.com](http://www.globetheatreroma.com); Largo Aqua Felix, Villa Borghese; 9 Piazzale Brasile

In the form of an Elizabethan theatre, this is an open-air, inspiring space in the middle of Villa Borghese park. The season – mainly Shakespeare – includes occasional productions in English.

### TEATRO AMBRA JOVINELLI Map p103

☎ 06 443 40 262; [www.ambrajovinelli.com](http://www.ambrajovinelli.com) in Italian; Via G Pepe 43-47; 11 Vittorio Emanuele

A home from home for many famous Italian comics, the Ambra Jovinelli is a historic venue for alternative comedians and satirists. Besides government-bashing, the theatre also hosts productions of classics, musicals and opera, and the odd concert.

### TEATRO ARGENTINA Map pp74–5

☎ 06 684 000 311; [www.teatrodiroma.net](http://www.teatrodiroma.net) in Italian; Largo di Torre Argentina 52; 9 or j Largo di Torre Argentina

Rome's foremost theatre is one of the two official homes of the Teatro di Roma; the other is the Teatro India. Founded in 1732,

it retains its original frescoed ceiling and a grand gilt-and-velvet auditorium. Rossini's *Barber of Seville* premiered here. Today it hosts major theatre and dance productions, with occasional performances in English. Book early for the dance productions, which often sell out.

### TEATRO DELL'OROLOGIO Map pp74–5

☎ 06 683 08 330; [www.teatroorologio.it](http://www.teatroorologio.it); Via dei Filippini 17a; 9 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A well-known experimental theatre in the *centro storico*, the Orologio offers a varied programme, with works by contemporary authors (including theatrical dance pieces) and classic names, such as George Bernard Shaw. There are occasional performances in English.

### TEATRO INDIA Map pp108–9

☎ 06 553 00 894; [www.teatrodiroma.net](http://www.teatrodiroma.net) in Italian; Lungotevere dei Papeschi; 9 Via Enrico Fermi

Inaugurated in 1999 in the postindustrial landscape of Rome's southern suburbs, the India is the younger sister of the Teatro Argentina. It's a starkly modern space in a converted industrial building, a fitting setting for its cutting-edge programme, with a calendar of international and Italian works.

### TEATRO QUIRINO Map pp90–1

☎ 06 679 45 85; [www.teatroquirino.it](http://www.teatroquirino.it) in Italian; Via delle Vergini 7; 9 Via del Tritone  
Within splashing distance of the Trevi Fountain, this grand 19th-century theatre

produces well-known works by well-known playwrights. Expect to see works (in Italian) by Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Shakespeare, Seneca and Luigi Pirandello. For some productions there's a free babysitting service for children aged six to 11 (reservation necessary).

### TEATRO SISTINA Map pp90–1

☎ 06 420 07 11; [www.ilsistina.com](http://www.ilsistina.com) in Italian; Via Sistina 129; 11 Barberini

'Life is a cabaret old chum', and this is the place to tap your toes to show tunes. Big-budget theatre spectaculars and musicals are the staples of the Sistina's ever-conservative, ever-popular repertoire.

### TEATRO VALLE Map pp74–5

☎ 06 688 03 794; [www.teatrovalle.it](http://www.teatrovalle.it); Via del Teatro Valle 23a; 9 or j Largo di Torre Argentina

This perfectly proportioned 18th-century theatre is like a pocket opera house, with three levels of red-and-gold private boxes. There are occasional English-language works performed in English with Italian subtitles, as well as concerts from rock opera to recitals.

### TEATRO VASCELLO Map pp122–3

☎ 06 588 10 21; Via Giacinto Carini 72, Monteverde; 9 Via Giacinto Carini

Left field in terms of vibe and location, this is an independent theatre that stages interesting fringe work, including avant-garde dance performances, multimedia events and new works by emerging playwrights.

## ROMAN SUMMER

Every August Romans pour out of the city, headed for the sea or the cool of the mountains. But if you can face the heat, Rome in summer is a buzzing place to be. Between June and September, the annual **Estate Romana** ([www.estateromana.comune.roma.it](http://www.estateromana.comune.roma.it)) festival transforms much of the city centre into an open-air stage. Events include concerts, theatre performances, recitals, opera under the stars, exhibitions, DJ sets, contemporary dance, jazz festivals, book fairs, skateboard events and markets. Settings make full use of the city, ranging from chamber music in front of Teatro Marcello to Shakespeare in the Roman Forum, from concerts in parks to artificial beaches along the banks of the Tiber. Check the Estate Romana website for details of what's on this year (the programme is usually posted in late spring).



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## SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

### top picks

- An AS Roma or Lazio game at Stadio Olimpico (p241)
- Swimming in Lago di Albano (p241)
- Acanto Benessere Day Spa (p241)
- Cycling in the Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica (p241)
- A Six Nations rugby game at Stadio Flaminio (p241)

In Rome, allegiance to your football team comes second only to allegiance to your family. *Il calcio* (football) inspires more passion than politics, dressing up and mamma's cooking all rolled into one. Italian players are modern-day gladiators, adored by and roared at by passionate crowds. No other sport comes close in terms of TV coverage, column inches, fanatical passion, and highs and lows. For more on the subject, and to work out who wears which colour scarf, see [below](#). Basketball (p240) remains the second most popular spectator sport, but still trails football by a long way. Of late, rugby (p240) has inspired more interest than it has done previously, the surge in support correlating with the Italian team doing slightly better in the Six Nations tournament.

Romans do, as a rule, prefer watching to doing sport, but cycling is popular, and there are some attractive places around town to go running, horse riding or play golf. During the long, hot summer, you cannot beat plunging into a pool, lake or the sea, so Rome's swimming options are well worth seeking out. Also look out for opportunities to preen, indulge and pamper yourself – beauty therapies, spas and plain-old barbers will make sure you can maintain the *bella figura* (beautiful figure) despite all this activity.

## SPECTATOR SPORT FOOTBALL

In 2006, the manager of Turin team Juventus, Luciano Moggi, was discovered to be at the centre of a match-fixing ring. Italy, disillusioned, seemed almost to fall out of love with the beautiful game. Not for long though, as the national team, shaky in the early stages, suddenly found its feet and form and went on to win the 2006 World Cup. The celebrations in Rome went on for weeks as delighted fans danced for joy, jumping in and out of fountains and hooting car horns until the entire city suffered from insomnia. Half a million people filled Circo Massimo to see the captain, Fabio Cannavaro, parade the trophy.

The glory lingered, but it wasn't long before football was again tainted, this time by the recurring ugly spectre of violence in the stadium. In February 2007, a policeman died during a riot on the terraces in Catania in Sicily, and all national and international games were cancelled in the wake of his death. Only a few months later, violence erupted during an AS Roma–Manchester United game, after which police were criticised for their heavy-handed response. The national response to these and other events, apart from soul-searching and grief, has been increased CCTV at stadiums, and the issuing of named tickets.

In Rome you're either for Roma or Lazio. Rome's two teams, AS Roma (*giallorossi* – yellow and reds) and Lazio (*biancazzuri* – white and blues), play in Serie A (Italy's premier league), at the Stadio Olimpico in the Foro

### A CITY OF TWO HALVES

The Rome derby is one of the football season's most high-profile games. The rivalry between Roma and Lazio is fierce and little love is lost between the fans: according to tradition, Lazio attracts right-wing support, Roma left-wing, but in reality they both draw a mixture of political shades.

Lazio's fans traditionally come from the provincial towns outside Rome, although recent success has seen this boosted by *tifosi* (fans) from the city's wealthy middle class. Enjoying a less than brilliant press, they have an unfortunate (but deserved) reputation for racism and extreme right-wing sympathies. When Lazio player Paolo Di Canio extended his right arm in what he described as a 'Roman salute' after scoring in the 2005 derby, he immediately attained cult status.

On the other hand, Roma's supporters, known as *romanisti*, are historically working class, from Rome's Jewish community and from Trastevere and Testaccio.

So, if you go to the Stadio Olimpico, make sure you get it right – Roma fans (in deep red with a natty orange trim) flock to the Curva Sud (southern stand), while Lazio supporters (in light blue) stand in the Curva Nord (northern stand). If you want to sit on the fence, head to the Tribuna Tevere or Tribuna Monte Mario.

For more details on the clubs, check out [www.asroma.it](http://www.asroma.it) and [www.sslazio.it](http://www.sslazio.it) (both in Italian).

### FRANCESCO TOTTI

The rip-roaring, goal-scoring AS Roma captain Francesco Totti is a Roman god. He has played for AS Roma throughout his career, never being tempted away from his home town. It'd be hard to entice him: as well as a Roma patriot, Totti is Italy's top-paid footballer, earning €6 million per season, a sum that AS Roma president, Francesco Sensi, can ill afford. It's not about money though – like any good Italian boy, Totti, with his strong Roman accent, has remained close to his mamma and family in Rome.

Born in 1976, he joined AS Roma in 1989, first playing for the side aged only 16. His role is as a striker or attacking midfielder and he has scored over a hundred goals for the club – the most of any player in Serie A. Totti is famous for his chipping technique, called *er cucchiaino* (spoon) in the Roman dialect. Like David Beckham he is at once derided for stupidity and hero-worshipped for his good looks and skill on the pitch.

A career low point came when he was expelled from Euro 2004 for spitting, but he is not always so unimaginative in his pitch behaviour. In 2005, after scoring at the Rome Derby, as a tribute to his pregnant wife in the stands, he put the football up his shirt and pretended to give birth to it with the help of some other players. A surreal moment.

Totti has played for the Italy national team since 2000, and was part of the victorious 2006 World Cup squad, but afterwards he announced his intention to retire from the national team so he could concentrate solely on playing for his beloved Roma. In June 2007, he was awarded the European Golden Boot, as the highest goal scorer across all European divisions.

As Rome's Beckham, he of course has his own clothing line ('Never without you'), fulfilling the needs of fans everywhere for Totti pencil cases and rucksacks.

His summer 2005 wedding to TV starlet Ilary Blassi in the Chiesa di Santa Maria in Araceli stopped traffic in Piazza Venezia as crowds formed to hail their king. The couple has two children, Cristian and Chanel (this isn't a *Footballers' Wives* script, but real life).

Italico, north of the city centre. Both sides are considered solid, top-level performers, but Lazio has run into problems in recent years, while Roma has seen patchy success. Financial problems have beset both clubs, forcing them to sell top players and rely on one or two star performers.

Lazio's championship in 2000 broke a 26-year drought and was met with manic celebrations throughout the city, at least by the light-blue half. Representing the climax of Lazio's brief tour de force – it had previously won the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1999 – it was the club's finest moment. Basking in the glory were team coach Sven Goran Eriksson (who later became England's manager) and club president Sergio Cragnotti. However, it wasn't to last and as Cragnotti's business empire crashed around him, the club's fortunes went from bad to worse and it had to sell many star players. In the 2004–5 season the side struggled to survive and finished in an ignominious 13th place. The one highlight for fans was the presence of Paolo Di Canio, who had taken a 75% pay cut to join the club. A lifelong Lazio supporter, Di Canio provided some of the season's most controversial moments including his infamous Fascist salute during a derby game (see the boxed text, [opposite](#)). In 2007 Lazio was shamed as a result of its involvement in the match-fixing scandal, and it was announced that, after point

deductions, it would be relegated to Serie B. After an appeal, the punishment was reduced, but the team still lost its place in the following season's [Union of European Football Association](#) (UEFA; [www.uefa.com](http://www.uefa.com)) cup. However, it eventually recovered from the deduction to finish 3rd in Serie A in 2006–07.

Roma's fortunes have been similarly mixed. The club won the championship in 2001 and came second the following year. Manager Fabio Capello outraged the *giallorossi* fans and players by joining Juventus in 2004, and since then the club has struggled to find a suitable successor, with five changes of manager (the current being Luciano Spalletti). The public spat between Capello, subsequent managers, captain Francesco Totti and talented but impossible Antonio Cassano (who left for Real Madrid in 2006) were worthy of a soap opera. The 2004–05 season was disastrous, but in 2005–06 Roma fared better. It reached fifth place, but was bumped up to second when Juventus, Milan and Fiorentina lost points as a result of the match-fixing scandal. In the final of the Coppa Italia, AS Roma was beaten by Inter Milan – for the second year in a row.

In 2007 Roma won 2–1 against Manchester United, but on-pitch success was overshadowed by the accompanying violence on the terraces. When Roma re-met Manchester United away, it lost a shameful 7–1, going on to lose 8–3 on aggregate and was thus knocked out of

the Champions League. It had better success at home, finally winning against Inter Milan in the final of the Coppa Italia (2006–07), giving Rome – or rather, the yellow and red half of it – the chance to erupt with joy once again.

From September to June there's a game at home for Roma or Lazio almost every weekend and a trip to Rome's football stadium, the **Stadio Olimpico** (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 3 68 51; Viale del Foro Italico) is an unforgettable experience. Note that ticket purchase regulations are far stricter than they used to be. Tickets cost from €15 to €65. You can buy them from [www.listicket.it](http://www.listicket.it), from ticket agencies or at one of the AS Roma or Lazio stores around the city (see p162 and p176). Tickets have to bear the holder's name, and you must present a photo ID at the turnstiles when entering the stadium. If you want to buy tickets for other people, you can buy up to 10, and supply their names and dates of birth.

To get to the stadium take metro line A to Ottaviano-San Pietro and then bus 32.

## BASKETBALL

Basketball is a popular spectator sport in Rome, though inspiring nothing like the fervour of football. Rome's team, Virtus Roma, plays throughout the winter months at the **Palalottomatica** (Map p117; ☎ 199 12 88 00; Viale dell'Umanesimo; m EUR Palasport) in EUR.

## RUGBY UNION

Every time a Six Nations game gets played in Rome, the city fills with a swell of foreign spectators, easily discernable by their penchant for silly hats and beer.

Italy's rugby team, the Azzurri (the blues), entered the Six Nations tournament in 2000, and has remained the underdog in the group. Good results for the team include finishing fifth in 2003 and 2004. Such minor achievements have been reflected by a distinct lack of media interest in the game. Big matches might get a paragraph or two in national newspapers, while TV coverage is limited to the nation's smallest channel, La7. Public interest is further hampered by the complexity of the rules that no-one quite understands, not having played the game at school. However, in 2007 Italy won against both Scotland and Wales and finished in 4th place, which sparked an unprecedented wave of pride and coverage.

The team plays home international games at Rome's **Stadio Flaminio** (Map pp150–1; [www.federugby.it](http://www.federugby.it); ☎ 06 368 57 309; Viale Tiziano).

## TENNIS

Italy's premier tennis tournament, the Italian International Tennis Championships, is one of the most important events on the European tennis circuit. Every May the world's top players meet on the clay courts at the **Foro Italico** (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 368 58 218; Viale del Foro Italico). Tickets can be bought at the Foro Italico each day of the tournament, except for the final days, which are sold out weeks in advance.

## EQUESTRIAN EVENTS

Rome's top equestrian event is the **Piazza di Siena showjumping competition** (☎ 06 638 38 18; [www.piazzadisiena.com](http://www.piazzadisiena.com)), an annual event held in May in Villa Borghese (Map pp150–1). An important fixture on the high-society calendar, it attracts a moneyed Anglophile crowd.

## ACTIVITIES GOLF

To play golf you will usually have to show a membership card from your home club and proof of handicap. Rome's best golf course, in beautiful, cypress tree-dotted countryside close to the Appia Antica, is **Circolo del Golf Roma Acquasanta** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 780 34 07; [www.golffroma.it](http://www.golffroma.it); Via Appia Nuova 716; per day €80–100; h 8am–sunset Tue–Sun; g Via Appia Nuova).

## HORSE RIDING

You can go on horse-riding excursions along and around Via Appia Antica. Call to book at **Cavalieri dell'Appia Antica** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 780 12 14; Via dei Cerceni 15; h Tue–Sun, closed Aug; g Via Appia Antica); excursions cost around €25 per hour.

## RUNNING

Good places to run include Circo Massimo, Villa Borghese, Villa Ada, Villa Doria Pamphilj, and along the banks of the Tiber. But for those aspiring to more than a gentle jog, the Rome Marathon, which starts and finishes at the Colosseum, takes place in late March. No longer the long and colourful fun run it once was, it's now taken seriously and attracts some of the world's top marathon runners. If you think you're up to 42km on cobblestones, register your intentions well in advance with **Italia Marathon Club** (☎ 06 406 50 64; [www.maratonadiroma.it](http://www.maratonadiroma.it)).

## CYCLING

Romans adore cycling, though they mostly head out of town in look-at-me lycra, to pedal around the countryside. You'd have to be mad to cycle in the city centre most days, but at certain times (check local press for details) it is closed to traffic, which means you can glide around with relative ease. There are also cycle lanes along the banks of the Tiber. One starts at Ponte Risorgimento and goes north, via Ponte Milvio, ending at the Castel Giubileo dam. The other starts at Ponte Sublicio and heads south, to Ponte Marconi, ending at Ponte della Magliana. Each runs through urban, suburban and rural landscapes. In time a new cycle path will link these two, but it hasn't been completed yet.

On Sundays the **Via Appia Antica** (p111) is closed to traffic, and bikes are available for hire (€3 per hour for first three hours, €9 to €10 per day) from the park information office. Two wheels is a great way to see the ancient road. On the Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica website, [www.parcopappiaantica.org](http://www.parcopappiaantica.org), you can download five biking itineraries of 6km to 17km, taking beautiful routes through the regional park, past Roman ruins and through green countryside.

## HEALTH & FITNESS DAY SPAS

### ACANTO BENESSERE DAY SPA

Map pp74–5

☎ 06 683 136 602; [www.acantobenessere.it](http://www.acantobenessere.it); Piazza Rondinini 30; h 10am–10pm Tue–Sat, 2–10pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento

This exquisite designer day spa near the Pantheon is mosaic-mirrored, with stained

glass, soft lighting and curvaceous white seating. It's a good place to go when you deserve a treat. It offers a wide range of facials and massages – an hour-long massage costs around €90.

### HOTEL DE RUSSIE SPA Map pp90–1

☎ 06 328 881; [www.hotelderussie.it](http://www.hotelderussie.it); Via del Babuino 9; h 9am–9pm Tue–Sat; m Flaminio  
The admission charge of €35 is a bargain when you consider that this glamorous and gorgeous day spa is in one of Rome's best hotels, and factor in the remote possibility of bumping into Brad Pitt in the Turkish bath, sauna or gym. Treatments are also available, including shiatsu and deep tissue massage; facials start at around €90.

## SWIMMING

On a smouldering summer's day, a dip in a swimming pool is just the ticket. Unfortunately, there are few public pools in Rome, and they are well outside the city centre, so if you want to swim without a trek you'll have to take the plunge and pay for a hotel pool.

Most public and private pools require a doctor's certificate before you are allowed to swim, so call first and ask '*serve un certificato medico?*' (do you need a medical certificate?). The pools reviewed in this chapter do not require a certificate.

For serious swimming, head to the two Olympic-sized pools at the Roman Sport Center (p242).

As soon as the weather warms up, most Romans head straight for the coast to the seaside around Ostia (25km south of Rome), though few of them go in the water – it's unappealingly

## HAIR & NAILS

You might have noticed that Italians look more groomed than other nationalities. In Rome there are beauty parlours and barbers on almost every street helping to keep them that way. It's easy to take a break, pamper yourself and gain a little Italian style in the process. Most barbers look like they haven't changed their décor since they opened sometime in the mid-19th century; a standard cut will cost around €10.

A venerable ladies beauty salon that exudes old-fashioned class is **Femme Sistina** (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 679 84 81; Via Sistina 75; h 11am–7pm). It's more expensive than most – a pedicure with leg massage costs €45, but a leg massage for tired feet (an inviting thought after days of sightseeing) costs only €20.

A swish nail bar near the Campidoglio, **Gamax** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 693 80 479; Via d'Aracoli 35), with English-speaking staff, offers all sorts of nail treatments as well as a straightforward manicure (€20) or pedicure (€30 to €45). At less-swish places around town these treatments will usually cost around €10 and €20 respectively.

There's even an old-fashioned hairdresser especially for children, **Il Parucchiere dei Bambini e Giovannette** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 686 54 09; Via Metastasio 17; h 9.30am–1pm & 3–7pm Tue–Sat), with fairground-like horses and cars for the children to sit on while having their hair cut (€18).

murky. You can reach Ostia Lido (off Map pp108–9) via a 30-minute train ride from Termini. If you have your own transport, you can also head out of town to the volcanic lakes dotted around the city – the water is much cleaner and the scenery enchanting. Lago di Albano (around 12km south of Rome; off Map pp108–9), close to Castel Gandolfo, has lots of sunbeds set up around it in summer and is a good place for swimming, basking and taking out a pedalo.

### GRAND HOTEL PARCO DEI PRINCIPI

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 85 44 21; www.parcodprincipi.com; Via G Frescobaldi 5; admission per day €60; ⌚ 10am–6.30pm May–Sep; 📍 Via Paisiello

On the edge of Villa Borghese, this [hotel](#) (p262) has a lovely pool shaded by tall trees and surrounded by flowers and rows of sun loungers. The daily rate means it's usually deserted, though weekends can be busier.

### PISCINA DELLE ROSE

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 592 97 17; www.piscinadellerose.it; Viale America 20; per half-/full day €13/15; ⌚ 10am–10pm Mon–Fri, 9am–7pm Sat & Sun Jun–Sep; 📍 EUR Palasport

Out in the southern district of EUR, this open-air place is Rome's largest public

swimming pool. It gets crowded, so get in early to grab a poolside deck chair, lie back and be entertained by the aqua aerobics as you take it easy.

## GYMS

### FARNESE FITNESS

Map pp74–5

☎ 06 687 69 31; www.farnesefitness.com in Italian; Vicolo delle Grotte 35; ⌚ 9am–10pm Mon & Wed, 8am–10pm Tue & Thu, 9am–9pm Fri, 11am–7pm Sat, 10.30am–1.30pm Sun; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A handy city-centre gym in a historic building, with classes including fitness, dance, martial arts and pilates. There's a weights room and separate saunas for men and women. Day membership costs only €12.

### ROMAN SPORT CENTER

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 320 16 67; www.romansportcenter.com; Viale del Galoppatoio 33; ⌚ 8am–10pm Mon–Sat; 📍 Spagna

This is Rome's largest gym, where you'll find squash courts, two Olympic-sized swimming pools, saunas and all the latest hi-tech gym equipment you could possibly need. It costs €26/220 per day/month to use the facilities.

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# SLEEPING

## top picks

- Daphne Inn (p257)
- The Beehive (p254)
- Relais Palazzo Taverna (p248)
- Hotel Campo de' Fiori (p249)
- Gregoriana (p255)

# SLEEPING

Accommodation in Rome is plentiful, ranging from opulent five-star palaces to chic boutique hotels, family-run *pensioni* (small hotels or guesthouses) and tranquil convents. In recent years, the number of B&Bs has risen exponentially and there are now hundreds dotted around the city. There are also a growing number of hybrid hostel-cum-hotels offering hotel-quality private rooms alongside communal dorms.

Rome is not cheap, though, and rates are uniformly high. Price hikes since the 2002 conversion to the euro have affected everything in the city and accommodation has been no exception.

Most of the hostels and budget *pensioni* are located in the not-so-beautiful area around Stazione Termini. The district has been spruced up in recent years but is still not especially inviting and can be unwelcoming after dark; in particular, women travelling alone may feel uncomfortable at night. However, competition between hotels has forced many places to up their standards and you can find some surprisingly good places to stay.

Nicer by far is the *centro storico* (historic centre) and the warren of streets around Campo de' Fiori and Piazza Navona. Prices are obviously higher, but you'll be right in the heart of the action with many major sights and hundreds of restaurants, trattorias and bars on your doorstep. Be warned, though, that it's not the quietest of areas and light sleepers may have problems.

Over the river, Trastevere is another picturesque and central spot. Its tightly packed streets boast a number of attractive options, many in historic *palazzi* (mansions), although note that space is tight and rooms tend to be small (something that is common in much of the city centre). Again, noise can also be a problem, especially in summer when the area is swamped with partying visitors. The Prati district around the Vatican is a good compromise if you want somewhere beautiful but less hectic.

All these areas are a bus ride or metro journey from Stazione Termini. If you come by car, be warned that there is a terrible lack of on-site parking facilities in the city centre, although your hotel should be able to direct you to a private garage. Street parking is not recommended.

Wherever you decide to stay and whenever you come it's always a good idea to book ahead. For further details on reservations see p246.

Although Rome doesn't have a low season as such, many hotels offer significant discounts from mid-July through August and from mid-November to mid-March (excluding the Christmas–New Year period). Expect to pay top whack in spring (mid-March to mid-July) and autumn (September to mid-November) and over the main holiday periods (Christmas, New Year and Easter).

Most mid- and top-range hotels accept credit cards. Budget places might but it's always best to check in advance. Note that many smaller places offer discounts of up to 10% for payment in cash.

In this book, reviews are in order of price, with the most expensive places listed first. Low-season and high-season rates have been provided unless there's a single year-round price. Icons indicate extras such as air-conditioning, internet availability and wheelchair access. See the Quick Reference on the front inside cover for a list of icons used.

**Rome Tourist Board** ([www.romaturismo.it](http://www.romaturismo.it)) publishes a full list of all officially recognised accommodation in Rome, with prices.

## ACCOMMODATION STYLES

### B&Bs

Alongside the hundreds of traditional B&Bs (private homes offering a room or two to paying guests) there's a growing number of smart, boutique-style B&Bs that offer stylish accommodation at mid- to top-end prices. Many of these are effectively small guesthouses, meaning that you get your own keys

and can come and go as you like. Note also that you're unlikely to be served a cooked breakfast; much more likely is a continental offering of cereal, bread rolls, croissants, ham and cheese.

The tourist office publishes a full list of B&Bs, with prices, at [www.romaturismo.it](http://www.romaturismo.it).

The following agencies specialise in B&B accommodation and offer online booking services:

**Bed & Breakfast Association of Rome** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 553 02 248; [www.b-b.rm.it](http://www.b-b.rm.it); Via Antonio Pacinotti 73; ⌚ 9am–1pm & 3–7pm Mon–Fri) Has more than a hundred properties on its books. As well as rooms in B&Bs it organises short-term rentals of fully furnished flats, usually for a minimum of three nights. Single rooms cost from €50, doubles from €70.

**Bed & Breakfast Italia** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 688 01 513; [www.bbitalia.it](http://www.bbitalia.it); Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 282; ⌚ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri) A long-established agency with more than 200 B&Bs divided into three categories. Prices start at €35 per person.

**Cross Pollinate** ([www.cross-pollinate.com](http://www.cross-pollinate.com)) An online agency for *affittacamere* (B&B without the breakfast). Per-person rates start at €55 for a single room and €35 in a double.

## Hostels

Rome's hostels are smartening up their act. The number of private hostels is increasing and many now offer smart hotel-style rooms alongside traditional dorms. These are often an excellent alternative to a room in a cheap *pensione*. Hostel facilities vary but typically include internet access, a communal TV area and kitchen; some also have laundry facilities. Curfews are rare and some even offer 24-hour receptions.

The central office of the Italian youth hostels association, the **Associazione Italiana Alberghi per la Gioventù** (AIG; Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 487 11 52; [www.ostellionline.org](http://www.ostellionline.org); Via Cavour 44), has information about all the youth hostels in Italy. You can also join Hostelling International (HI) here.

## Pensioni & Hotels

The bulk of accommodation in Rome is made up of *pensioni* and hotels (*alberghi*).

A *pensione* is basically a small, family-run hotel. In Rome, they are usually housed in converted flats occupying one or two floors in a large apartment block. Rooms tend to be simple, and although most now come with a private bathroom, those that don't will usually have a basin and bidet.

Hotels are generally bigger and more expensive than *pensioni*, although at the cheaper end of the market, there's often little difference between the two. All hotels are rated from one to five stars, although this rating relates to facilities only and gives no indication of value, comfort, atmosphere or friendliness. Most hotels in Rome's city centre tend to be three-star and up. As a general rule a room in

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a three-star hotel will come with a hairdryer, minibar (or fridge), safe and air-conditioning. Many will also have satellite TV and internet connections.

A common complaint in Rome is that hotel rooms are small. This is particularly true in the *centro storico* and Trastevere, where many accommodation options are housed in converted *palazzi*. Similarly, a spacious lift is a rare find, particularly in older *palazzi*, and you'll seldom find one that can accommodate more than one average-sized person with luggage.

Breakfast in cheaper hotels is rarely worth a bleary eye so, if you have the option, save a few bob and pop into a bar for a coffee and *cornetto* (croissant).

## Religious Institutions

Not surprisingly Rome is well furnished with religious institutions, many of which offer cheap(-ish) rooms for the night. Bear in mind, though, that all religious institutions have strict curfews and the accommodation, while clean, is mostly of the basic, no-frills variety. It's always wise to book well in advance. For a list of institutions, check out [www.santasusanna.org/comingToRome/convents.html](http://www.santasusanna.org/comingToRome/convents.html).

## CHECK-IN & CHECK-OUT TIMES

Hotels usually require you to check out on the day of departure between 10am and noon. Later than this and you run the risk of being charged for a further night; check with individual hotels for specific regulations. As to check-in times, there are no hard and fast rules, but if you're going to arrive late in the day, it's probably best to mention this when you book your room.

Many hostels won't accept prior reservations for dorm beds, so arrive after 10am and it's first come, first served. Check-out times are often earlier in hostels, typically around 9am.

## LONGER-TERM RENTALS

Apartments in central Rome are not cheap. Bank on spending about €1000 per month (with bills on top) for a studio apartment or a small one-bedroom place. You'll also have to fork out anywhere between €35 and €180 for the monthly *condominio* (building) maintenance charge. However, for a longer stay they can often work out cheaper than an extended hotel sojourn. For a mini-apartment in a hotel block go online at [www.romaturismo.it](http://www.romaturismo.it) and check the section marked 'residences'. It's also worth checking the following websites:

Flat in Rome ([www.flatinrome.it](http://www.flatinrome.it))

Flats in Italy.com ([www.flatsinitaly.com](http://www.flatsinitaly.com))

Italy Accom ([www.italy-accom.com](http://www.italy-accom.com))

Leisure in Rome ([www.leisureinrome.com](http://www.leisureinrome.com))

Rental in Rome ([www.rentalinrome.com](http://www.rentalinrome.com))

A room in a shared apartment will cost from €600 per month, plus bills. You'll usually be asked to pay a deposit equal to one or two months' rent and the first month in advance.

Several English-language bookshops have notice boards where people looking for accommodation or offering a room on a short- or long-term basis place messages. Try the Almost Corner Bookshop (p177) in Trastevere or Feltrinelli International (p175) near Piazza della Repubblica. Another option is to check the classified ads in *Wanted in Rome* (published fortnightly on Wednesday) or *Porta Portese* (published twice weekly on Tuesday and Friday).

Rental agencies specialising in short-term rentals usually charge hefty commissions for their services – up to two months rent in some cases. They are listed in the telephone directory under *Agenzie immobiliari*.

## RESERVATIONS

It is always a good idea to book ahead, and essential if you're coming in high season or for a major religious festival (in particular Christmas or Easter). The easiest way is generally on the internet; otherwise, you'll probably be asked to fax confirmation of your reservation together with a credit card number as deposit. If you don't have a credit card, you'll have to send a money order to cover the first night's stay. Note that although many budget hotels require a credit card number to secure a booking, not all accept them as payment. To

## PRICE GUIDE

The following is a guide to the pricing system used in this chapter. Unless otherwise stated, prices quoted are for a double room with private bathroom.

€	up to €120
€€	€120 to €250
€€€	€250-plus

avoid embarrassing scenes when checking out, check in advance.

When reserving a room, make sure you ask for a *camera matrimoniale* if you want a room with a double bed. A *camera doppia* (double room) usually means a room with twin beds.

If you arrive without a reservation, all's not lost. There's a hotel reservation service (Map pp90–1; % 06 699 10 00; h 7am–10pm) at Stazione Termini in the hall parallel to platform 24, that will book you a room for a €3 fee. Alternatively, the Enjoy Rome (p295) tourist office can sort you out with a room. Whatever you do, though, don't follow the people hanging around at the train station who claim to be tourism officials and offer to find you a room. Chances are they'll lead you to some dump for which you end up paying way over the official rates.

## ROOM RATES

It's almost impossible to be specific when outlining price ranges, as not only do rates fluctuate madly between periods but also between hotels in the same category. As a very rough guide, expect to pay from €40 to €150 for a double in a one-star hotel; in a two-star €60 to €150; in a three-star €80 to €300; in a four-star €200 to €460; and in a five-star from €300 upwards.

Many hotels offer discounts for low-season visits (up to 50%), long stays or for weekend breaks. Check hotel websites for offers.

Note also that single travellers are not well served, with single rooms often disproportionately expensive.

## ANCIENT ROME

Stretching from the Campidoglio down past the forums to the Colosseum and Palatino, Rome's ancient core is what makes this city so special. A busy area of ruins and roads, it has little accommodation and tends to be expensive. That said, it's easy to reach by public transport and there's something magical about sleeping in the shadow of Italy's best-loved ruins.

## HOTEL FORUM Map p60

Hotel €€€

% 06 679 24 46; [www.hotelforumrome.com](http://www.hotelforumrome.com); Via Tor de'Conti 25; s €145–240, d €220–340; m Cavour; p a

A stately old pile, the Forum offers some of the best views in town. From the rooftop restaurant, you can look down on all of Ancient Rome, from Il Vittoriano on the right down to the forums and the Colosseum on the left. Inside, the appeal is olde-worlde, with antiques and leather armchairs strewn about the wood-panelled lobby, staff in ties and tails, and chandeliers hanging from every ceiling. Rooms are similarly styled, offering charm in place of hi-tech wizardry.

## HOTEL NERVA Map p60

Hotel €€

% 06 678 18 35; [www.hotelnerva.com](http://www.hotelnerva.com); Via Tor de'Conti 3; s €100–160, d €130–220; m Cavour;

p a  
Cheerful and family-run, the Nerva is tucked away on a narrow road behind the Imperial Forums. A small place, it manages to squeeze 22 peach-coloured rooms onto its three floors (the stairs are among the steepest in Rome) as well as plenty of Roman paraphernalia – mosaic flooring in reception, an imperial bust halfway up the stairs, fake frescoes. Rooms are not the biggest but they are quiet, carpeted and simply decorated; two have facilities for the disabled.

## CENTRO STORICO

The *centro storico* is the best place to stay if you want to experience Rome to the full. An enthralling tangle of atmospheric squares, shadowy lanes, cafés and historic *palazzi*, this is the baroque heart of the city, the Rome of the Pantheon, Piazza Navona and Campo de' Fiori. Not surprisingly, it's relatively expensive and most hotels, *pensioni* and B&Bs are in the mid- to upper-price bracket.

## PANTHEON & AROUND

### GRAND HOTEL DE LA MINERVE

Map pp74–5 Hotel €€€

% 06 69 52 01; [www.grandhoteldelaminerve.it](http://www.grandhoteldelaminerve.it); Piazza della Minerva 69; s €360–460, d €460–620;

g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a i w  
The grand old Minerve is one of Rome's historic hotels. Housed in an austere 17th-century *palazzo*, it's been in business since the late 18th century. It owes much of its current look, including the flamboyant Art

Deco lobby, to architect Paolo Portoghesi's 1990 makeover. Rooms vary in size and look – some have original 17th-century wood-beamed ceilings, others have frescoes and four-poster beds.

## HOTEL SANTA CHIARA

Map pp74–5 Hotel €€€

% 06 687 29 79; [www.albergosantachiara.com](http://www.albergosantachiara.com); Via di Santa Chiara 21; s €143–175, d €223–280; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a  
Walk into the grandiose entrance hall of the Santa Chiara and you might think you've landed on your feet. Classical statues, marble columns and Murano crystal chandeliers promise luxury on a grand scale. However, go upstairs and you'll find that the guest rooms are disappointingly down-to-earth. They're not uncomfortable, just rather bland with nondescript décor and little character. Those around the internal courtyard are generally quieter.

## ALBERGO ABRUZZI Map pp74–5 Hotel €€

% 06 679 20 21; [www.hotelabruzzo.it](http://www.hotelabruzzo.it); Piazza della Rotonda 69; s €130–155, d €175–195; g or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a

Few hotels in Rome boast a better location than this popular three-star option, bang opposite the Pantheon. What's more, the rooms are attractive, with parquet, cherry wood furnishings and soft colour schemes, and the owners are a friendly bunch. The one problem is noise – double glazing will keep some of it out but a silent night is unlikely. Breakfast is served in a nearby café.

# top picks

## VIEWES

- **Hotel Forum** (left) – admire the forums, Colosseum and Campidoglio spread out before you
- **Hotel Scalinata di Spagna** (p256) – from the top of the Spanish Steps, enjoy the evocative spread of Roman rooftops
- **Albergo Abruzzi** (above) – wake up to the Pantheon looming over vibrant Piazza della Rotonda
- **Grand Hotel Parco dei Principi** (p262) – delight in the green spread of Villa Borghese over to St Peter's Basilica
- **Hotel Exedra** (p257) – dip your toes in the pool as you look down on Piazza della Repubblica

**HOTEL MIMOSA** Map pp74-5 Pensione €  
% 06 688 01 753; www.hotelmimosa.net; Via di Santa Chiara 61, 2nd fl; s/d/tr/q €88/118/158/178, with shared bathroom €50/70/90/105; G or j Largo di Torre Argentina; a  
One of the few budget choices in the historic centre, the rough-and-ready Mimosa is popular with foreign students. Don't expect any frills, just basic accommodation in spartan rooms, some of which are cramped but all of which are clean. To book a room you'll need to leave a credit card number even if the hotel accepts payment in cash only.

## PIAZZA NAVONA & AROUND

**HOTEL RAPHAËL** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€€  
% 06 68 28 31; www.raphaelhotel.com; Largo Febo 2; s €200-350, d €250-450; G Corso del Rinascimento; p n a i w  
Famous for its ivy-clad façade, the much-loved Raphaël is striking inside and out. Art lovers can admire Picasso ceramics and Miro lithographs in the lobby while diners sit down to alfresco meals at the panoramic rooftop restaurant. The Richard Meier-designed executive rooms on the 3rd floor are sleek and modern whereas those on other floors have an old-fashioned gentlemen's club feel; all have top-end touches such as Bulgari toiletries in the bathrooms. Breakfast costs an extra €22 to €26.

**HOTEL DUE TORRI** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 688 06 956; www.hotelduetorriroma.com; Vicolo del Leonetto 23; s €114-165, d €172-235; G Via di Monte Brianzo; a  
Tucked away at the end of a tiny side street, the Hotel Due Torri has always offered discretion – first as a residence for cardinals, then as a brothel, and now as a lovely, refined hotel. The look is classic, with huge gilt-framed mirrors, marble statuettes and plump pot plants, and the English-speaking staff are cordial and efficient. Rooms are average sized and tastefully appointed.

**TEATROPACE 33** Map pp74-5 Boutique Hotel €€  
% 06 687 90 75; www.hotelteatropace.com; Via del Teatro Pace 33; s €90-135, d €140-235; n a  
Worth inclusion for its location alone – about 50m from Piazza Navona – this crackling three-star is a top choice. Housed in a former cardinal's residence, it has 23 beautifully appointed, soundproofed rooms decorated with parquet flooring, damask curtains

and exposed wooden beams. They're spread over four floors, which means quite a climb if you're on the top floor – there's no lift, just a monumental 17th-century stone staircase.

**RELAIS PALAZZO TAVERNA** Map pp74-5 Boutique Hotel €€  
% 06 203 98 064; www.relaispalazzotaverna.com; Via dei Gabrielli 92; s €80-150, d €100-210, tr €120-240; a j  
A bargain in central Rome is a rare and beautiful beast. And this chic boutique hotel is just that. But its charms go beyond value for money and a prime location – near the antique shops of Via dei Coronari. Considerable effort has been taken to decorate the 11 rooms in a fun, modern way and all bear the hallmarks of a tasteful eye. Satellite TV and kettles mean that you can put your feet up with a cuppa in front of the box.

**HOTEL PORTOGHESI** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 686 42 31; www.hotelportoghesiroma.com; Via dei Portoghesi 1; s €120-150, d €150-190; G Via di Monte Brianzo; n a i  
Located on an atmospheric street north of Piazza Navona, the 150-year-old Portoghesi extends a warm welcome. Its smart, carpeted rooms come with mosaic-tiled bathrooms and amenities such as satellite TV and wi-fi, though some (particularly the singles) are very small. Breakfast is served on the roof terrace. No Amex or Diners Club cards.

**RESIDENZA ZANARELLI** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 688 09 760; www.hotelnavona.com; Via G Zanardelli 7; s/d/tr €120/160/225; G Via G Zanardelli; a  
The smarter sister of [Hotel Navona](#) (below), this quiet, family-run hotel is housed in a late-19th-century *palazzo*. The seven rooms are not huge but they are tastefully decorated with antiques, Persian rugs and brass beds. Flat-screen TVs are a more recent addition.

**HOTEL NAVONA** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 686 42 03; www.hotelnavona.com; Via dei Sediari 8; s €90-110, d €125-145; G Corso del Rinascimento; a  
Spread over several floors of a 15th-century *palazzo*, rooms at this convivial hotel vary in quality: some are big and bright, others are very small, and the décor is largely ad hoc, with an antique desk here and a plastic lamp there. But what you're really paying for

here is the location, a skip and a jump from Piazza Navona. The hotel also offers nearby apartments sleeping two for between €155 and €250 per night including breakfast.

**HOTEL PRIMAVERA** Map pp74-5 Hotel €  
% 06 688 03 109; fax 06 686 92 65; Piazza di San Pantaleo 3; s €70-95, d €100-125; G Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a  
Right in the heart of it, on busy Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, the Primavera is an old-fashioned hotel with an old-fashioned look – think chichi bedspreads and chintzy curtains. Rooms get plenty of natural light, though, and are sparkling clean. Double glazing ensures most of the traffic noise stays outside. Credit cards are not accepted.

## CAMPO DE' FIORI & AROUND

**RESIDENZA IN FARNESE** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€€  
% 06 682 10 980; www.residenzafarneseroma.it; Via del Mascherone 59; s €190-350, d €210-520; G Via Giulia; a i  
With its billiard table, pot plants and chessboard floor, this relaxed four-star resembles a colonial club in the tropics. Rooms are spread over two floors and decked out in classical style – antique furniture, parquet and wall-length curtains. Pick of the bunch is room 309, which retains its original 15th-century fresco.

**HOTEL CAMPO DE' FIORI** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 688 06 865; www.hotelcampodefiori.com; Via del Biscione 6; s €130-160, d €140-250; G Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
What was a reliable, if uninspiring, option has transformed itself into a wicked modern hotel. Rich red and lime-green walls have been hung with gilt mirrors and restored bric-a-brac, and everywhere there's an air of provocative playfulness. There's a stylish rooftop terrace with 360-degree views and the basement breakfast room boasts an original vaulted ceiling.

**HOTEL TEATRO DI POMPEO** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 683 00 170; www.hotelteatrodipompeo.it; Largo del Pallaro 8; s €135-160, d €180-205; G Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a  
Built on top of a theatre that Pompey the Great built in 55 BC (now the basement

breakfast room), this family-run hotel is small and atmospheric. Particularly attractive are the rooms on the 3rd floor with sloping wood-beamed ceilings, terracotta floor tiles and tasteful, dark-wood furniture. Last-minute prices are available if you arrive in person and there's a room available.

**CASA BANZO** Map pp74-5 B&B €€  
% 06 683 39 09; elptomas@tin.it; Piazza del Monte di Pietà 30; r €120-180, apt €260-280; j Via Arenula; a  
Not an easy place to find (there's no street sign), Casa Banzo is on the 2nd floor of a Renaissance *palazzo* near Campo de' Fiori. The two rooms and two apartments (for up to four people) are quiet, clean and unfussy, and not nearly as grand as the aristocratic reception hall with its stained-glass windows and vaulted frescoed ceiling. There's a minimum stay of three nights in high season.

**SUORE DI SANTA BRIGIDA** Map pp74-5 Religious Institution €€€  
% 06 688 92 596; www.brigidine.org; Piazza Farnese 96, entrance Via di Monserrato 54; s/d €105/190; G Via di Monserrato  
This isn't the cheapest convent in Rome, but it's certainly one of the best. Overlooking beautiful Piazza Farnese, it offers pleasant, no-frills room in a picturesque *palazzo* (where the Swedish St Brigid died in 1373) on one of Rome's great squares. The only snag is an 11pm curfew.

**HOTEL SMERALDO** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 687 59 29; www.smeraldoroma.com; Vicolo dei Chiodaroli 9; s €60-120, d €90-180; j Via Arenula; a i w  
Value for money and a prime central location are what you get at the Smeraldo. Just down the road from Campo de' Fiori, its white-tiled rooms are unexciting but comfy, with air-con, satellite TV and a direct phone line for internet access. Up on the 5th floor, the rooftop garden is an added bonus.

**ALBERGO DEL SOLE** Map pp74-5 Hotel €€  
% 06 687 94 46; www.solealbiscione.it; Via del Biscione 76; s €90-120, d €120-160, s/d with shared bathroom €65/95; G Corso Vittorio Emanuele II  
The oldest hotel in Rome, the charmingly ramshackle del Sole dates to 1462. It's been done up since then, although the complex warren of low wood-beamed ceilings owes more to medieval design than 20th-century



architecture. There's nothing fancy about the rooms, which are functional and fairly priced, but the 2nd-floor roof terrace, open to 11pm every night, is a definite plus. No credit cards.

**HOTEL POMEZIA** Map pp74–5 Hotel €€  
% /fax 06 686 13 71; [hotelpomezia.it](http://hotelpomezia.it); Via dei Chiavari 13; s €60-130, d €80-150; ☒ Corso Vittorio Emanuele II; a w

A reliable lower midrange choice, the Pomezia offers plain, good-sized rooms, hospitable staff and an excellent location. Of particular note is the ground-floor room equipped for disabled travellers, with a huge bathroom and lovely parquet floor.

## VIA DEL CORSO & AROUND

**HOTEL MARCUS** Map pp74–5 Hotel €€  
% 06 687 36 79; [www.hotel-marcus.com](http://www.hotel-marcus.com); Via del Clementino 94; s €70-125, d €80-165; ☒ Via di Monte Brianzo; a

If you're after somewhere to leave your bags and grab a quick night's sleep, the Marcus will do fine. It's well positioned – close to the shopping of Via del Corso – and welcoming, but the rooms are small and can be stuffy. The heady décor (plush scarlet fabrics and thick red carpets) doesn't help much either.

## ESQUILINO, QUIRINALE & PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

Ranging from luxury five-star hotels near upmarket Piazza di Spagna to budget  *pensioni*  around Stazione Termini, this large area provides the full gamut of accommodation options. The bulk of Rome's budget accommodation is concentrated in the Termini area, which, although not the capital's most desirable, is not as bad as it's sometimes made out to be. It has been cleaned up in recent years and there are now some pretty good places to stay. Lone travellers, particularly women, should still take all the usual safety precautions, particularly around Via Giovanni Giolitti.

## ESQUILINO & MONTI

**RADISSON SAS** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€€  
% 06 44 48 41; [www.radissonsas.com](http://www.radissonsas.com); Via Filippo Turati 171; r €200-356; m Vittorio Emanuele; a i s w  
It's now a few years since what was then the Hotel Es burst onto Rome's conservative

hotel scene. And while it's changed name and is now the Radisson SAS, it remains a popular choice with business travellers and design-conscious customers who appreciate the minimalist sci-fi décor and hi-tech gadgetry. The poolside rooftop bar serves swell cocktails and views over Termini's busy rail tracks.

**HOTEL BRITANNIA** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€€  
% 06 488 31 53; [www.hotelbritannia.it](http://www.hotelbritannia.it); Via Napoli 64; s €110-295, d €130-352; ☒ Via Nazionale; n a

Part gentlemen's club and part Roman palace, the Britannia is a fun four-star just off Via Nazionale. Dodgy frescoes and 19th-century horse-and-hound paintings hang on walls; floors are parquet one minute, inlaid marble or carpet the next; leather armchairs are tastefully arranged in the wood-panelled bar. The room décor is similarly ad hoc, with antique furniture, floral chintz and sparkling marble-clad bathrooms. Wi-fi is available. Check the website for last-minute offers.

**HOTEL COLUMBIA** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€  
% 06 488 35 09; [www.hotelcolumbia.com](http://www.hotelcolumbia.com); Via del Viminale 15; s €113-218, d €150-235; m Termini or Repubblica; a i

In a noisy, workaday area, the friendly Columbia sports a polished look with wood-beamed ceilings, wrought-iron furniture, and dark-wood cabinets. The tasteful white-walled rooms are bright and reasonably big, all have data plugs for laptop-toters and some have beautiful Murano crystal chandeliers. The pretty roof terrace is a further bonus.

**HOTEL GIULIANA** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€  
% 06 488 07 95; [www.hotelgiuliana.com](http://www.hotelgiuliana.com); Via Agostino de Pretis 70; s €60-130, d €80-180; m Termini; n a

A cosy little hotel run by a jolly Londoner and her daughter, the Giuliana ticks all the right boxes. Its rooms, divided into standard and superior, are elegant without being excessive; the location, near Via Nazionale, is convenient; and the service is affable and efficient. Travellers for whom a holiday without tea is no holiday should ask for one of the three rooms with a tea service, while smokers can sneak a quick puff on the small internal balcony. There's a 5% discount for payments in cash.

**NICOLAS INN** Map pp90–1 B&B €€  
% 06 976 18 483; [www.nicolasinno.com](http://www.nicolasinno.com); Via Cavour 295, 1st fl; d €120-180; m Cavour; n a  
This lovely, bright B&B is at the bottom of Via Cavour, a stone's throw from the Imperial Forums (p65). Run by a welcoming young couple, it has four big guest rooms, each of which boasts homely furnishings, colourful pictures and a large bathroom. For such a central place it's also remarkably quiet, a definite plus in this generally noisy city.

**HOTEL CARAVAGGIO** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€  
% 06 48 59 15; [www.caravaggiohotel.net](http://www.caravaggiohotel.net); Via Palermo 73-75; s €70-160, d €80-220; ☒ Via Nazionale; a  
This quiet three-star is only a short aria away from Rome's opera house. The 13 rooms are decked out in old country-style wallpaper and adorned with antique furniture and glass chandeliers; those facing onto Via Palermo also have mosaic floors. Upstairs there's a popular terrace garden.

**ROMAE** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€  
% 06 446 35 54; [www.hotelromae.com](http://www.hotelromae.com); Via Palestro 49; s €45-165, d €50-175; m Castro Pretorio; a i  
Smiling English-speaking staff greet guests at this welcoming hotel. Rooms vary in size and style but many have chequered tiled floors and large wooden bedsteads, and all have dataports and air-con. There are also larger rooms for families and a small internal courtyard where you can relax with a drink. New Zealanders might recognise some of the paintings by renowned New Zealand artist Alison Ryde. Wi-fi is available.

**58 LE REAL B&B** Map pp90–1 B&B €€  
% 06 482 35 66; [www.58viacavour.it](http://www.58viacavour.it); Via Cavour 58; r €80-150, ste €110-180; m Termini; a  
This swish 12-room B&B is on the 4th floor of a towering 19th-century town house. The suave owner has gone to great lengths to produce a stylish environment, with

### GAY STAYS

Rome's accommodation scene is fairly conservative but the following are all gay-friendly:

58 Le Real B&B (above)

Hotel Florida (p261)

La Foresteria Orsa Maggiore (p260)

For more on gay and lesbian life in Rome see p289.

modern trappings set alongside classical furnishings. Think leather armchairs and plasma TVs, crystal chandeliers, polished bedsteads and parquet floors. The sexy walk-in showers also merit a mention, as does the panoramic sun terrace.

**66 IMPERIAL INN** Map pp90–1 B&B €€  
% 06 482 56 48; [www.66imperialinn.com](http://www.66imperialinn.com); Via del Viminale 66; r €80-150; ☒ Via Nazionale; a  
Sister of 58 Le Real B&B, this smart B&B has seven cool cream rooms, five on the 4th floor and two on the 2nd. With their high ceilings, lush green carpets and double glazing, they are airy, comfortable and quiet. The bathrooms are spotless and the Jacuzzi showers are a treat. As you check in, check out the wall frescoes – they're not the best in town but they add colour.

**HOTEL GABRIELLA** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€  
% 06 445 01 20; [www.gabriellahotel.it](http://www.gabriellahotel.it); Via Palestro 88, 1st fl; r incl breakfast €75-160; m Termini; a  
A laid-back, family-run hotel, the Gabriella offers small-ish rooms that while honestly priced and well appointed – harmless pastel walls, satin bedspreads and mosaic-tiled bathrooms – can be a tad noisy. Still, it's good value and breakfast is included.

**FORUS INN** Map pp90–1 Inn €€  
% 06 478 24 745; [www.forusinn.com](http://www.forusinn.com); Via Cavour 194; s €100-130, d €130-160, tr €150-190, q €160-200; m Cavour; a  
An elegant bolthole on busy Via Cavour, the Forus offers discreet comfort and classical style. The rooms are small but tastefully decorated with parquet floors, rich fabrics and framed prints; some even have their original wood ceilings. Mod cons include plasma-screen TVs and broadband internet connections.

**HOTEL & HOSTEL DES ARTISTES** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€, Hotel €€€  
% 06 445 43 65; [www.hostelrome.com](http://www.hostelrome.com); [www.hoteldesartistes.com](http://www.hoteldesartistes.com); Via Villafranca 20; hostel per person dm €17-26, s €39-65, d €55-95, tr €75-115, hotel per room d €94-159, tr €114-179; m Castro Pretorio; a i  
One of the best sleeping options in the Termini district, Des Artistes has a room for everyone. Hostel-goers can choose between plush, carpeted rooms near the 5th-floor reception or more basic four- to

six-person dorms on the 2nd floor. On the intervening floors, the three-star hotel rooms feature polished mahogany wood, gilt-framed canvases and modern trappings such as satellite TV and modem points. Topping everything is a lovely, leafy rooftop terrace.

### CARLITO'S WAY Map pp90-1 Hostel €, Hotel €€

☎ 06 444 03 84; [www.rome-hotel-carlitosway.com](http://www.rome-hotel-carlitosway.com); Via Villafranca 10; hostel per person s €39-65, d €55-95, tr €65-101, hotel per room d €94-159; m Castro Pretorio; a

A dependable choice, Carlito's Way is part of the growing accommodation empire run by the folk at *Hotel des Artistes* (p251). Spread over three buildings but with a centralised reception, it's got clean, functional hostel rooms for budget travellers and smart hotel rooms with air-con and plasma TVs.

### YES Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 443 63 836; [www.yeshotelrome.com](http://www.yeshotelrome.com); Via Magenta 15; s €74-139, d €94-159; m Termini; a A new outfit, this slick, modern hotel is friendly and good-looking. The modestly sized white rooms are simple but sharply decorated with linear black furniture, hard leather beds, and plasma TVs. White roses and spangly chandeliers add elegance to the halls and reception area. Service is excellent and the staff are very helpful.

### HOTEL DOLOMITI Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 495 72 56; [www.hotel-dolomiti.it](http://www.hotel-dolomiti.it); Via San Martino della Battaglia 11; s €60-100, d €80-150, tr €110-180, q €135-225; m Castro Pretorio; a i A warm, family-run hotel, the Dolomiti is in a converted flat, meaning that the reception is little more than a small counter and the public spaces are built into any available corner. Rooms, on the 4th floor, are colour coordinated with cream walls, cherry-wood furniture, orange fabrics and prints of chubby-cheeked cherubs. The same family also manages the Hotel Lachea two floors below. The combined reception is on the 1st floor.

### VILLA DELLE ROSE Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 445 17 95; [www.villadellerose.it](http://www.villadellerose.it); Via Vicenza 5; s €70-100, d €100-150; m Termini; p a Housed in a lovely villa, this is an excellent option in the Termini district. Grand marble columns and stucco decoration lend grandeur to the downstairs public rooms, while

upstairs the guest rooms are sunny and agreeable. But more than the décor, it's the fragrant courtyard garden and personable atmosphere that set this place apart. Free off-road parking is available for one or two cars in front of the entrance.

### HOTEL D'ESTE Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 446 56 07; [www.hotel-deste.com](http://www.hotel-deste.com); Via Carlo Alberto 4b; s €80-90, d €100-140; m Vittorio Emanuele

A charming hotel near the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore, Hotel d'Este is full of character. Chandeliers, wood-paneling and brass banisters abound and the guest rooms are big and high-ceilinged. The quiet, old-fashioned atmosphere is a wonderful antidote to the frenzied noise outside. The 1st-floor roof garden is an added bonus.

### HOTEL IGEA Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 446 69 11; [www.igearoma.com](http://www.igearoma.com); Via Principe Amedeo 97; s €70-80, d €100-130, tr €100-150; m Termini

A reliable if unspectacular choice, the Igea provides spacious, unfussy rooms and efficient, courteous service. The rather grand reception belies the simplicity of the rooms, which are functional, clean and far from memorable. That said, they're quiet – a quality not to be underestimated in central Rome – and good value.

### HOTEL ASCOT Map pp90-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 474 16 75; [www.hotelascotroma.com](http://www.hotelascotroma.com); Via Montebello 22, 2nd fl; s €50-75, d €65-130; m Termini

If all you're after is a simple, no-frills room that's clean and quiet, you'll do OK here. Admittedly, there's a somewhat forlorn atmosphere about the place but that shouldn't put you off, as the rooms are large and, by local standards, reasonably priced.

### HOTEL CONTINENTALE Map pp90-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 445 03 82; [www.hotel-continendale.com](http://www.hotel-continendale.com); Via Palestro 49; s €40-75, d €75-125; m Castro Pretorio; a

One of several budget *pensioni* in the same building, the Continentale has rooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors and its reception on the ground floor. If you've got a lot of luggage you might have trouble squeezing into the rattling old lift, but once up on your floor you'll find the pastel-coloured

rooms are bright and modestly furnished. The staff are friendly and speak several languages, including English and French.

### BED & BREAKFAST ANDY & LU

Map pp90-1 B&B €

☎ 06 444 10 13; [www.andyelu.com](http://www.andyelu.com); Via Castelfidardo 31; s €50-90, d €80-120; a

Better for its beds than its uninspiring breakfasts, this budget B&B is north of Termini. There's nothing remarkable about the bright rooms, some of which are very small, but they are smartly furnished, clean and inexpensive. Air-con is an extra €12. The B&B closes from January to March.

### HOTEL CASTELFIDARDO

Map pp90-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 446 46 38; [www.hotelcastelfidardo.com](http://www.hotelcastelfidardo.com); Via Castelfidardo 31; s €50-90, d €80-120, s with shared bathroom €40-60, d with shared bathroom €60-100; m Castro Pretorio; a i

One of Rome's best one-star hotels, the Castelfidardo is a welcoming family-run affair. Bright yellow halls lead to spacious rooms furnished with simple taste and a minimum of fuss. However, all have TVs and direct telephone lines for internet access. In the same building and run by the same family, the *Hotel Lazzari* (☎ 06 494 13 78; [www.hotellazzari.com](http://www.hotellazzari.com); s €50-90, d €80-120, s with shared bathroom €40-60, d with shared bathroom €60-100) offers more of the same.

### HOTEL SWEET HOME Map pp90-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 488 09 54; [www.hotelsweethome.it](http://www.hotelsweethome.it) in Italian; Via Principe Amedeo 47; s €60-80, d €80-120, s with shared bathroom €55-65, d with shared bathroom €75-85; m Termini

A throwback to *nonna's* day, this modest hotel is classic old-school. Yellowing pictures, dark corridors and an air of fading gentility give it a charm that many newer places lack, while the chintzy rooms vary in size and comfort. Those facing away from the street are larger and quieter.

### M&J HOSTEL Map pp90-1 Hostel €

☎ 06 446 28 02; [www.mejhostel.com](http://www.mejhostel.com); Via Solferino 9; dm €16-25, s €50-70, d €60-120, d with shared bathroom €50-80; m Termini; n a i Fresh from a major overhaul, the M&J is one of Rome's new breed of hostel-cum-hotels. There are a number of colourful dorms, two of which are women-only and some of which have their own bathrooms.

Private rooms are decked out in a modern Zen style with low beds and black bathrooms. They also have air-con, which dorms don't. There's a communal kitchen with satellite TV, free internet, and breakfast, which is served in the Living Room bar under the hostel. Evening meals (€12) are available in the Living Room between 6pm and 9pm.

### WELROME HOTEL Map pp90-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 478 24 343; [www.welrome.it](http://www.welrome.it); Via Calatafimi 15-19; s €50-100, d €50-110; m Termini

The main selling point of this small, spotless hotel is the chatty owner. She enthusiastically points out where's good to eat and what's good to do, even advising that it's cheaper to breakfast at one of the local bars than in her own hotel. The seven large rooms feature unfussy décor and, importantly for such a noisy area, double glazing. Families are well catered for – wooden cots are provided on request and the Spagna room is perfect for four.

### FUNNY PALACE Map pp90-1 Hostel €

☎ 06 447 03 523; [www.funnyhostel.com](http://www.funnyhostel.com); Via Varese 33; dm €15-29, s €30-70, d €55-100; n i Run by a friendly international crew, this great little hostel has doubles, triples and quads, all with a comfortable, homey feel. Thoughtful touches such as clean towels, a bottle of wine on arrival and vouchers for breakfast in a nearby café make it a truly excellent choice. Wi-fi is available, as is Skype. No credit cards.

### PAPA GERMANO Map pp90-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 48 69 19; [www.hotelpapagermano.it](http://www.hotelpapagermano.it); Via Calatafimi 14a; dm €20-30, d €100, s/d with shared bathroom €45/75; m Termini; a i Easy-going and popular, Papa Germano is a budget stalwart. There are various sleeping options, ranging from four-person dorms to private rooms with or without private bathrooms. Rooms are fairly anonymous but the décor is harmless and all are clean. Breakfast is included, internet costs €2 per hour, and air-con is €5.

### HOTEL BEAUTIFUL Map pp90-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 447 03 927; [www.solomonhotels.com](http://www.solomonhotels.com); Via Milazzo 8; dm €15-29, s €30-70, d €55-100; m Termini; n a A cross between a hostel and a hotel, this two-star place has 14 clean, basic rooms.

There are doubles, triples and dorms, all with plenty of light, air-con and their own bathrooms. Breakfast is served in the rooms. The same management also runs the popular **Hostel Beautiful** (Map pp90–1; % 06 446 58 90; Via Napoleone III 35; dm €15–29; i ) on the other side of Stazione Termini.

### ALESSANDRO PALACE HOSTEL

Map pp90–1 **Hostel €**  
% 06 446 19 58; [www.hostelsalessandro.com](http://www.hostelsalessandro.com); Via Vicenza 42; dm €18–35, d €66–90; m Termini or Castro Pretorio; n a i

The popularity of this long-standing favourite shows no signs of waning. It offers spick-and-span hotel-style doubles, triples and quads, as well as dorms sleeping from four to eight. Every room has its own bathroom and all have air-con. Popular features include the downstairs bar, which serves free pizza from 8pm and has satellite TV. Internet costs €2 per hour. The same owners also run the more basic **Alessandro Downtown Hostel** (Map pp90–1; % 06 443 40 147; Via Carlo Cattaneo 23).

### HOTEL CERVIA Map pp90–1 **Pensione €**

% 06 49 10 57; [www.hotelcerviaroma.com](http://www.hotelcerviaroma.com); Via Palestro 55; s €40–70, d €50–90, s with shared bathroom €30–40, d €40–70; m Castro Pretorio  
Run by two chatty, multilingual ladies, the Cervia offers plain, high-ceilinged rooms and a pleasingly warm welcome. There's nothing glamorous about the small rooms (the bathrooms are positively miniscule), but it's a friendly enough place and the rooms offer reasonable value. Children are welcome, with free cots available on request. On the 2nd floor the **Hotel Restivo** (% 06 446 21 72; [www.hotelrestivo.com](http://www.hotelrestivo.com)) is run by the same people.

### ALBERGO GIUSTI

Map pp90–1 **Religious Institution €**  
% 06 704 53 462; [s.annagiusti@tiscali.it](mailto:s.annagiusti@tiscali.it); Via Giusti 5; s/d/tr €50/85/110; m Vittorio Emanuele; a  
This excellent budget option is in a convent near the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore. Guest rooms are salmon pink and simple, with a minimum of furniture, and gleaming bathrooms. You can dine on-site for €15 and the hospitable nuns will even set you up with a picnic lunch bag for €6. Families, groups and lone travellers are welcome, night owls less so – there's a midnight curfew.

### THE BEEHIVE Map pp90–1 **Hostel €**

% 06 447 04 553; [www.the-beehive.com](http://www.the-beehive.com); Via Marghera 8; dm €22, d with shared bathroom €70–80; m Termini; i  
More boutique chic than backpacker crash pad, the Beehive is one of the best hostels in town. Run by a southern Californian couple, it's an oasis of style with original artworks on the walls, funky modular furniture, a vegetarian café and a yoga studio. Beds are in a spotless, eight-person mixed dorm or in one of six private double rooms. Needless to say, it's very popular, so make sure you book ahead. The owners also have three self-contained apartments (per person €30 to €35) for up to 10 people, although these lack the verve of the main hive.

### HOTEL KATTY Map pp90–1 **Pensione €**

% /fax 06 444 12 16; Via Palestro 35; s €35–60, d €45–75; m Castro Pretorio; a  
Rooms at this homely 4th-floor *pensione* are clean, bright and unfussy. Some are bigger than others but all are uniformly old-fashioned, with gadgetry limited to air-con between April and November, and a telephone. However, you're not paying much and the owner is a friendly host.

### YWCA Map pp90–1 **Hostel €**

% 06 488 04 60; [foyer.roma@ywca-ucdg.it](mailto:foyer.roma@ywca-ucdg.it); Via Cesare Balbo 4; s/d €40/50, s/d/tr/q with shared bathroom per person €40/33/28/28; g Via Cavour  
A cheap, no-frills place with a midnight curfew, the YWCA is better suited to early birds than night owls out to party. It's a quiet place with simple, spick-and-span rooms, an old-fashioned contemplative air and modest facilities. On the 2nd floor there's a breakfast room and kitchen, while on the ground floor the welcoming TV room opens onto a small patio. Breakfast is included and payment is cash only.

### THE YELLOW Map pp90–1 **Hostel €**

% 06 493 82 682; [www.the-yellow.com](http://www.the-yellow.com); Via Palestro 44; dm €22–36; m Castro Pretorio; n a i  
Don't let the eye-catching neon reception or cavernous common room fool you, this is a hard-core hostel for a young, fit crowd (there's even an age limit – 18 to 40). Regular pub crawls and the outgoing international staff ensure an upbeat vibe, while accommodation is in dorms of up to 12 people. Some dorms have bathrooms

but the bigger ones don't. Internet is free, there's wi-fi, and the downstairs bar has outdoor tables where you can while away hours into your beer.

## QUIRINALE TO THE TREVI FOUNTAIN

### B&B 3 COINS Map pp90–1 **B&B €€**

% 06 446 06 34; [www.3coinsbb.com](http://www.3coinsbb.com); Via dei Crociferi 26; d €80–130; g Via del Tritone; a  
You don't have to pay a king's ransom to stay near the Trevi Fountain, as this modest B&B proves. Make it past the fraying carpet up to the 3rd floor and you'll find a warm, characterful apartment full of family knick-knacks and old clocks. No two of the seven rooms are exactly alike – some are bigger, some are carpeted and two have external bathrooms – but all are clean and all come with TV and air-con.

## PIAZZA DI SPAGNA & AROUND HASSLER VILLA MEDICI

### Map pp90–1 **Hotel €€€**

% 06 69 93 40; [www.hotelhassler.com](http://www.hotelhassler.com); Piazza della Trinità dei Monti 6; s €430–460, d €550–810; m Spagna; a i  
When Tom Cruise moved in before marrying Katie Holmes in November 2006, he became the latest in a long line of VIPs to have stayed at the Hassler. A byword for luxury, it sits on top of the Spanish Steps, seducing its guests with ravishing views and sumptuous hospitality. Rooms, no two of which are the same, are mod-conned and opulent, and the service is slick and professional. Special weekend and 'romance' packages are often available, so check online.

### HOTEL DE RUSSIE Map pp90–1 **Hotel €€€**

% 06 32 88 81; [www.hotelderussie.it](http://www.hotelderussie.it); Via del Babuino 9; s/d/ste from €440/650/1320; m Flaminio; p a i w  
Favoured by Hollywood celebs, the de Russie is the embodiment of modern luxury. Standard rooms, which overlook either Piazza del Popolo or the hotel's exquisite terraced gardens, boast state-of-the-art entertainment systems, massive mosaic-tiled bathrooms and beds with linen sheets. To wash away the stress of the city, the hotel's health spa is one of Rome's best, and organic toiletries are provided in the rooms.

### HOTEL ART BY THE SPANISH STEPS

### Map pp90–1 **Hotel €€€**

% 06 32 87 11; [www.hotelart.it](http://www.hotelart.it); Via Margutta 56; s €297–396, d €429–561; m Spagna; a  
A striking marriage of old and new, this glam hotel is on arty Via Margutta. The vaulted lobby is quite a sight, with the reception set into two white Plexiglas pods and a bar incorporated into an old chapel. Rooms are smaller and more low key, with parquet and modern furniture. In the basement there's a small gym and a sauna.

### IL PALAZZETTO Map pp90–1 **Boutique Hotel €€€**

% 06 699 34 10 00; [www.ilpalazzettoroma.com](http://www.ilpalazzettoroma.com); Vicolo del Bottino 8; r €275–396; m Spagna; a  
For that very special occasion, pull out all the stops and book one of the four luxurious rooms at this delightful boutique hotel. Three of the four rooms overlook the adjacent Spanish Steps and all combine impeccable classical décor with discreetly fitted mod cons. Upstairs, on the 5th floor, there's a terrace cocktail bar and superb restaurant serving high-class Roman cuisine. Breakfast is served in the nearby **Hassler Villa Medici** (left), where guests have full access to services such as a business centre and gym.

### GREGORIANA Map pp90–1 **Hotel €€€**

% 06 679 42 69; [www.hotelgregoriana.it](http://www.hotelgregoriana.it); Via Gregoriana 18; s €148–168, d €248–288; m Spagna; a  
Eschewing the limelight, this charming hotel offers stylish Art Deco rooms and friendly, unpretentious service. Polished wood predominates in the guest rooms with circular bedsteads made of maple and

## top picks

### LOVE NESTS

- **Il Palazzetto** (above) – sheer unadulterated luxury in the shadow of the Spanish Steps
- **Domus Julia** (p257) – slip into a suite here and you won't want to leave
- **Residenza Cellini** (p257) – a honeymoon favourite with large beds and personal service
- **Casa Howard** (p256) – get steamy in the Turkish bath at this kooky boutique hotel
- **Hotel Villa S Pio** (p259) – escape the hordes at this refined hideaway on the leafy Aventino

evocative rosewood furniture. Unusually, none of the rooms are numbered but are instead adorned with letters by the 1930s French fashion illustrator Erté.

### HOTEL SCALINATA DI SPAGNA

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€€

☎ 06 679 30 06; www.hotelscalinata.com; Piazza della Trinità dei Monti 17; s €130-190, d €170-270; m Spagna; a i  
It's not cheapest hotel in Rome but given its prestigious location – at the top of the Spanish Steps – the Scalinata could cost a whole lot more. An informal and friendly place, it's something of a warren, with low corridors leading off to smallish, old-fashioned rooms, some of which boast magnificent views over the city. Public spaces are tiny but the fantastic roof garden more than compensates. Surprisingly for such an old-school hotel, wi-fi access is available. Book early for a room with a view.

### HOTEL MOZART

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 360 01 915; www.hotelm Mozart.com; Via dei Greci 23b; s €144-180, d €204-255; m Spagna; a i  
Right in the heart of Rome's shopping district, the Mozart is a stone's throw from Piazza del Popolo. Inside the modest entrance, large and classically attired public spaces lead through to light, spacious rooms decorated with elegant taste. Upstairs, the roof garden is a memorable place for a sun-downer. A short walk from the main hotel, a separate wing houses more stylish rooms.

### HOTEL FORTE

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 320 76 25; www.hotelforte.com; Via Margutta 61; s €125-176, d €156-255; m Spagna; a  
Hotel Forte is a friendly little hotel in a lovely 17th-century *palazzo* around the corner from Piazza di Spagna. It's a bright place decorated in faux-classical style with fake columns in the corridors and antiques in every corner. The rooms are reasonably sized and comfortable although the heavy fabrics and cloying wallpaper might not appeal to everyone. Wi-fi is available.

### CASA HOWARD

Map pp90-1 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 06 699 24 555; www.casahoward.com; Via Sistina 149 & Via Capo le Case 18; s €150-210, d €160-240; m Spagna; a i  
Once seen, Casa Howard is not forgotten. Its 10 rooms, split between two houses, reveal a

wealth of playful styles, ranging from full-on floral chintz to kitsch retro and oriental chic. They are all eye-catching but some are small (the Chinese Room, in particular), and at Via Capo le Case three have their private bathrooms separate from the guest room (a kimono and slippers are provided for the walk). There are Turkish baths at both locations and breakfast costs €10 extra.

### PENSIONE PANDA

Map pp90-1 Pensione €

☎ 06 678 01 79; www.hotelpanda.it; Via della Croce 35; s €75-80, d €98-108, tr €130-140, q €170-180; m Spagna; a  
In an area of Rome where a bargain is a Bulgari watch bought in the sales, this lone *pensione* boldly flies the flag for the budget traveller. There really is nowhere else you can get a room this close to the Spanish Steps for so little. And an attractive room to boot, with high ceilings, warm wooden furniture and the odd statue or two. Air-con costs an extra €6 and wi-fi is available.

## PIAZZA BARBERINI & AROUND

### HOTEL EDEN

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€€

☎ 06 47 81 21; www.hotelleden.it; Via Ludovico 49; s/d €480/750, ste from €2100; m Barberini; p a i w  
Impeccable service, refined rooms and superb views are what you get at the Eden, one of Rome's most glamorous hotels. Rooms vary but most feature traditional antique furniture, thick carpets and gleaming marble-clad bathrooms. The welcome basket of Mars bars, sweets and crisps will win over the most presidential of guests. For a more sophisticated fill-up, book a table at the highly rated rooftop restaurant.

### ALEPH

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€€

☎ 06 42 29 01; www.boscolohotels.com; Via di San Basilio 15; r €300-700; m Barberini; a i  
More style than substance? Possibly, but for fashionistas on the move this is *the* place to be seen. Based on designer Adam D Tihany's vision of heaven and hell, the eclectic décor features acres of black marble, life-size models of samurai warriors and plenty of red leather. Rooms – the heaven part of the theme – boast contemporary furniture set against magnified photos of Roman sights. Service can at times be snooty.

### LA RESIDENZA

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 488 07 89; www.hotel-la-residenza.com; Via Emilia 22/24; s incl breakfast €100-110, d incl breakfast €200-220; m Barberini; a  
La Residenza is pleasantly old-fashioned. The ground-floor public rooms, reminiscent of a 19th-century gentlemen's club, make a fine impression, while the carpeted guest rooms are comfortable, clean and spacious, if slightly bland. Some even have their own balcony, although the hotel won't guarantee a balcony when you book. However, what sets this unpretentious four-star apart is its magnificent buffet breakfast (included in the price), which features bacon, eggs, sausages, fruit, cereal, bread rolls and coffee.

### DAPHNE INN

Map pp90-1 Boutique Hotel €€

☎ 06 478 23 529; www.daphne-rome.com; Via di San Basilio 55; s €110-150, d €130-200, s with shared bathroom €80-100, d with shared bathroom €90-130; m Barberini; n a i  
A top contender for the title of best small hotel in Rome, the Daphne is a star. Rooms come in various shapes and sizes but the overall look is minimalist modern with cooling earth tones and linear, unfussy furniture. The superhelpful English-speaking staff go out of their way to help, even lending you a mobile phone for your stay. Other extras include free wi-fi, an iron and board in each room, and a delicious breakfast. There's a second outfit, the *Trevi Daphne* (Map pp90-1; ☎ 06 478 23 529; Via degli Avignonesi 20; s €100-130, d €130-200, ste €280-500), which opened two new suites in April 2007.

### HOTEL MODIGLIANI

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 428 15 226; www.hotelmmodigliani.com; Via della Purificazione 42; s €110-163, d €120-197; m Barberini; a  
A quick glance in the guest book at the Modigliani reveals recurring phrases such as 'loved this place' and 'charming staff'. Run by an artist and his musician partner, it is indeed an excellent choice. Staff are young and helpful, rooms are pearl-grey in colour, spacious and light, and the location (just off Piazza Barberini) is great. There's also a quiet courtyard for drinks and a number of apartments sleeping from four to six people (€270 to €450). For a room with a view, book a 'superior double' (€210 to €266).

### FELLINI B&B

Map pp90-1 B&B €€

☎ 06 427 42 732; www.fellinibnb.com; Via Rasella 55; s €70-170, d €90-180, apt €100-255; m Barberini; n a  
More a small hotel than traditional B&B, the Fellini pays homage to Italy's great director, whose film *La Dolce Vita* made a star of the nearby Trevi Fountain. The 13 rooms are quiet and comfortable with firm beds, well-equipped bathrooms and satellite TV. Of the three mini-apartments, go for the one on the top floor. It's got parquet, a low sloping roof and a huge private terrace with views over the surrounding rooftops.

### DOMUS JULIA

Map pp90-1 B&B €€

☎ 06 474 57 65; www.domusjulia.it; Via Rasella 32; d €88-170, ste €99-220; m Barberini; n a  
Refined, discreet and romantic, the two large suites in this 18th-century *palazzo* are ideal for a stolen weekend with a loved one. With their parquet floors, exposed wood-beamed ceilings and imposing antique furniture they're guaranteed to bring out the Casanova in anyone. The other four rooms are smaller and more modern but smart and spacious all the same.

## PIAZZA DELLA REPUBBLICA & AROUND

### HOTEL EXEDRA

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€€

☎ 06 48 93 81; www.boscolohotels.com; Piazza della Repubblica 47; r €600-800; m Repubblica; a i s w  
Overlooking Piazza della Repubblica, the Exedra manages to be as grand inside as out. The vast marble lobby is no less striking than the neoclassical colonnaded exterior, and the rooms are all impressive. Some are classical, with striped wallpaper and gilt-framed mirrors; others have low, wood-beamed ceilings and a cosy feel; others still are modern with neutral colours and contemporary furniture. Topping everything is a tiny dipping pool with freezing water and sensational views.

### RESIDENZA CELLINI

Map pp90-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 478 25 204; www.residenzacellini.it; Via Modena 5; r €145-240, ste €165-260; m Repubblica; a i  
A romantic bolthole in a nondescript *palazzo* near Piazza della Repubblica, the Cellini is small and intimate. Fresh flowers adorn a

bright hall, which leads to six vast rooms boasting parquet floors, choice antiques and fine fabrics. The mosaic-tiled bathrooms are equally appealing. Mod cons, including dataports, are incorporated and the service is impeccable. Two floors above on the 5th floor, there are a further five rooms.

### **ABERDEEN HOTEL** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 482 39 20; [www.travel.it/roma/aberdeen](http://www.travel.it/roma/aberdeen); Via Firenze 48; s/d/tr €120/170/190; m Repubblica; a i

For a decent, easy-going hotel in a well-connected central location, you could do a lot worse than this sparkling three-star. The spacious mustard-yellow rooms feature chequered chessboard floors, comfy beds (orthopaedic mattresses are standard) and spotless mint-green bathrooms. Buffet breakfast is served under a charming coffered wood ceiling and everywhere you go the staff are cheerful and cordial.

### **HOTEL OCEANIA** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 482 46 96; [www.hoteloceania.it](http://www.hoteloceania.it); Via Firenze 38; s/d/tr/q €125/158/190/212; m Repubblica; i With its red carpet and homely demeanour the Oceania is a welcome break from the bustle of the streets five floors below. An intimate, personable hotel, it has 15 tastefully attired rooms spread over two adjacent apartments. Extras include satellite TV, modem plugs and free internet, excellent coffee and English newspapers. Book early to bag a room.

### **TARGET INN** Map pp90–1 Inn €€

☎ 06 474 53 99; [www.targetinn.com](http://www.targetinn.com); Via Modena 5, 3rd fl; s €80-125, d €95-150, ste €140-250; m Repubblica; n a Forget any ideas of an olde-worlde timber-beamed inn – the Target is up-to-the-minute modern. Sexy red leather furniture, abstract art and black wardrobes are stylishly set against neutral walls and traditional parquet floors in the seven guest rooms. Families should go for the suite, which sleeps four and has the biggest TV screen this reviewer has ever seen.

### **HOTEL SEILER** Map pp90–1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 488 02 04; [www.hotelseiler.com](http://www.hotelseiler.com); Via Firenze 48; s €45-99, d €75-145; m Repubblica Pronounced 'sailor', the Seiler is a safe if uninspiring choice. Spread over four floors of a huge 19th-century *palazzo*, guest rooms

leave little lasting impression with their indifferent décor and tiny bathrooms. The one exception is room 405, known as *la camera degli angeletti* (room of the angels) for its ceiling fresco of angels dating from 1885. Staff are laid-back, sometimes frustratingly so.

### **HOTEL ERCOLI** Map pp90–1 Pensione €

☎ 06 474 54 54; [www.hotelercoli.com](http://www.hotelercoli.com); Via Collina 48; s €75-95, d €110-130; g Via Piave; a Old-fashioned and friendly, the 3rd-floor Ercoli is a straight-up, no-frills *pensione*, popular with foreign students. It's not a big place and the 14 rooms are functional rather than memorable, but they're all sparkling clean, breakfast is included and the air-con works.

## SOUTHERN ROME

Southern Rome is best suited to those who want to be near, but not on top of, the action. Stay on the Celio, the hill to the immediate south of the Colosseum, and you're within walking distance of the ancient sites and San Giovanni, famous for its monumental basilica; stay on the Aventino, a quiet residential district overlooking the Tiber, and you've got Testaccio, Rome's nightlife mecca, a short hop away. Hotels, however, are fairly expensive.

## CELIO

### **HOTEL CAPO D'AFRICA**

Map pp108–9 Hotel €€€

☎ 06 77 28 01; [www.hotelcapodafrica.com](http://www.hotelcapodafrica.com); Via Capo d'Africa 54; s €300, d €320-400, ste €540; m Colosseo; n a w

A short walk up from the Colosseum, this is a chic but refreshingly unpretentious designer hotel. The look is contemporary, an eye-catching ensemble of neutral backgrounds, colourful furniture and bold artwork, and rooms are spacious and sunny. There's a charming terrace overlooking the medieval *Chiesa di SS Quattro Coronati* (p111), a small gym and attentive staff. Rooms on the 2nd-floor are nonsmoking.

### **HOTEL CELIO** Map pp108–9 Hotel €€€

☎ 06 704 95 333; [www.hotelcelio.com](http://www.hotelcelio.com); Via dei Santissimi Quattro Coronati 35c; s €100-280, d €170-340; m Colosseo; a i w Over the top, kitsch and fun, the extraordinary décor at this small hotel marries mosaic floors with heavy baroque furnishings, frescoes and *trompe l'oeil*. The mid-sized

rooms, equipped with flat-screen TVs and wi-fi internet access, are themed on the Renaissance artists after whom they're named. Upstairs on the roof there's a mini-gym with jogging machines and inspirational photos of Sophia Loren.

## AVENTINO & TESTACCIO

### **HOTEL VILLA S PIO** Map pp108–9 Hotel €€

☎ 06 574 52 31; [www.avinot-hotels.com](http://www.avinot-hotels.com); Via Melania 19; s €105-160, d €150-240; g Via Marmorata; p a w

An excellent place to escape the crowds, the Villa S Pio is a refined hotel in a quiet residential area. It's some way from the tourist hot spots but more than makes up for this with huge, classically decorated rooms and swish bathrooms decked out in sexy black marble. Breakfast is served in the leafy garden that connects the hotel's three separate blocks. Some rooms have disabled facilities.

## TRASTEVERE

Light sleepers should give Trastevere a wide berth. This beautiful and animated area is thick with restaurants, pubs and cafés and gets incredibly busy, especially on hot summer nights when crowds swell its picturesque streets until the small hours. That said, it really is pretty and there are a number of good-value hotels, many of which are housed in centuries-old *palazzi*.

## EAST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

### **RIPA HOTEL** Map pp122–3 Hotel €€€

☎ 06 5 86 11; [www.ripahotel.com](http://www.ripahotel.com); Via degli Orti di Trastevere 3; s €230-250, d €270-290, ste from €360; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a i Minimalism might no longer be cutting edge but the Ripa still looks good, at least on the inside. Behind an ugly concrete façade, rooms sport a linear look with modular furniture, natural white light and discreet mod cons. Suites are more colourful with vivid carpets and the odd decorative bauble.

### **HOTEL DOMUS TIBERINA**

Map pp122–3 Hotel €€

☎ 06 581 36 48; [www.hoteldomustiberina.it](http://www.hoteldomustiberina.it); Via in Piscinula 37; s €75-110, d €95-150; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a On the quieter side of Trastevere, near the Ponte Cestio, this is a friendly, popular hotel. It's a tight fit and rooms are not the biggest but they're attractive in an old-fashioned

way, with bright majolica tiles, floral designs and the occasional exposed wood beam.

### **HOTEL ANTICO BORGO DI TRASTEVERE** Map pp122–3 Hotel €€

☎ 06 588 39 24; [www.hotelantiborgo.it](http://www.hotelantiborgo.it); Vicolo del Buco 7; s €75-110, d €95-150; g or j Viale di Trastevere; a

Not for claustrophobics, this quaint hotel occupies a small 19th-century *palazzo*. It's an atmospheric place whose rooms tastefully incorporate bare brick walls, exposed wood beams and heavy wooden shutters, but it's tiny and some of the rooms are not much bigger than the double beds they contain. Breakfast is served in your room.

## WEST OF VIALE DI TRASTEVERE

### **HOTEL SANTA MARIA** Map pp122–3 Hotel €€

☎ 06 589 46 26; [www.htlsantamaria.com](http://www.htlsantamaria.com); Vicolo del Piede 2; s €150-180, d €165-220; g or j Piazza Sonnino; p n a i w

Arguably Trastevere's best hotel, this inviting three-star is a haven of calm. Housed in a spacious 17th-century cloister, it has 19 rooms set, hacienda-style, around a romantic courtyard garden with orange trees and plenty of seating. The rooms are all cool and relaxing, their décor a combination of terracotta tiles, cream walls and showy bedsteads. The English-speaking staff are very professional and service levels are unusually high.

### **RESIDENZA SANTA MARIA**

Map pp122–3 Hotel €€

☎ 06 589 46 26; [www.htlsantamaria.com](http://www.htlsantamaria.com); Via dell'Arco di San Callisto; s €150-180, d €165-220; g or j Piazza Sonnino; a Opened in August 2007, this promises to be a great place to stay. It boasts a good pedigree – the owners are the people behind the excellent *Hotel Santa Maria* (above); the location is excellent – on a picturesque side street in the heart of Trastevere; and the décor is an appealing mix of brick, exposed wood beams and terracotta floor tiles. Wi-fi access is a further plus.

### **VILLA DELLA FONTE** Map pp122–3 Hotel €€

☎ 06 580 37 97; [www.villafonte.com](http://www.villafonte.com); Via della Fonte d'Olio 8; s €90-110, d €130-160; g or j Piazza Sonnino; a A hidden jewel near Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere, this charming little hotel extends a warm welcome. There are only five rooms,

all simply decorated with tasteful furniture, firm beds and fine linen. The tight corridors are lined with black-and-white photos of cheeky street urchins and the garden terrace is a wonderful spot for a siesta in the sun.

### HOTEL CISTERNA Map pp122-3 Hotel €€

☎ 06 581 72 12; [www.cisternahotel.it](http://www.cisternahotel.it); Via della Cisterna 7-9; s/d/tr/q €80/130/155/180; ☒ or j Piazza Sonnino; a

Offering excellent value for money and a prime location near Trastevere's focal Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere, the Cisterna has bright modest rooms with creamy yellow walls and unobtrusive furniture. Service is courteous and there's a small internal courtyard for early evening drinks.

### HOTEL TRASTEVERE Map pp122-3 Hotel €€

☎ 06 581 47 13; [www.hoteltrastevere.net](http://www.hoteltrastevere.net); Via Luciano Manara 24a-25; s/d/tr/q €80/103/130/155; ☒ or j Viale di Trastevere

Overlooking the market square of San Cosimato (think noise), this modest, unpretentious hotel is one of Trastevere's few budget options. There's a bit of a run-down feel about the place but the rooms are large, clean, and fine for the money. The owner's a friendly guy, too.

### LA FORESTERIA ORSA MAGGIORE

Map pp122-3 Guesthouse €

☎ 06 689 37 53; [www.casainternazionalelledonne.org/foresteria](http://www.casainternazionalelledonne.org/foresteria); Via di San Francesco di Sales 1a; dm €24-26, s/d €75/110, s/d with shared bathroom €52/72; ☒ Piazza Trilussa; n i w

This women-only guesthouse (boys aged 12 or younger can accompany their mums) is in a beautifully restored, 16th-century convent. It is run by the Casa Internazionale delle Donne (International Women's House) and offers safe and well-priced accommodation in a quiet corner of Trastevere. Rooms sleep two, four, five or eight. Most look onto the attractive internal garden and share institutional-style bathrooms. There's also a communal room and restaurant where breakfast is served. There's a 3am curfew.

## VATICAN CITY & BORGO

A year-round mecca for pilgrims, the Vatican is well set up with accommodation. In the streets north and northeast of St Peter's Basilica you'll find everything from cheerful old-school  *pensioni*  to smart three-stars, B&Bs and tranquil

convents. It's a popular area, though, and you'll need to book ahead, particularly if you want to stay during the big religious holidays (Christmas and Easter). Busy during the day, the Vatican is well connected and quiet at night.

### HOTEL BRAMANTE Map pp130-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 688 06 426; [www.hotelbramante.com](http://www.hotelbramante.com); Vicolo delle Palline 24; s €100-160, d €150-220; ☒ Piazza del Risorgimento; a

The pick of the Vatican hotels, the Bramante is a model of effortless elegance. Tucked away in a side street behind St Peter's, it's housed in the 16th-century building that was home to architect Domenico Fontana before Pope Sixtus V banished him from Rome. Wood-beamed ceilings top graceful rooms equipped with satellite TV, tea- and coffee-making facilities and gleaming bathrooms.

### HOTEL AMALIA Map pp130-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 397 23 356; [www.hotelamalia.com](http://www.hotelamalia.com); Via Germanico 66; s €79-130, d €99-210; ☒ Ottaviano-San Pietro; a i

Comfort and convenience are what you're paying for at this large, characterless hotel. With Piazza San Pietro an easy 10-minute walk away, it has smart, good-sized rooms on five floors of a towering 19th-century  *palazzo* . Service is efficient although staff are not always the friendliest. High-speed internet connections are available.

### HOTEL LADY Map pp130-1 Pensione €€

☎ 06 324 21 12; [www.hotelladyroma.it](http://www.hotelladyroma.it); Via Germanico 198, 4th fl; d €145, s with shared bathroom €60-80, d with shared bathroom €90-100; ☒ Lepanto; n

This authentic old-fashioned  *pensione*  is cosy and warm. All the rooms are slightly different and even if they're small they're pleasantly decorated with rustic furniture. Particularly attractive are rooms 4 and 6, which still have their original wood-beamed ceilings. The shared bathrooms are modern and clean. The owner and his wife don't speak English, but will merrily chat to you in Italian and serve you breakfast (€10) in their smart salon.

### HOTEL ADRIATIC Map pp130-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 688 08 080; [www.adriatichotel.com](http://www.adriatichotel.com); Via Vitelleschi 25; s/d €100/130, with shared bathroom €60/90; ☒ Piazza del Risorgimento; a

About five minutes' walk from St Peter's Basilica, the Adriatic offers decent, mid-range rooms. The décor is fairly insipid,

with faux-antique furniture, but rooms are a reasonable size and right for the price. Upstairs, the small terrace is a good spot for a quiet breather. Air-con costs €10 per day.

### HOTEL DEI QUIRITI Map pp130-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 360 05 389; [quiriti@tiscalinet.it](mailto:quiriti@tiscalinet.it); Via Germanico 198; s €89-99, d €99-129; ☒ Ottaviano-San Pietro; a

In the quiet Prati area, this welcoming little hotel is one of several options in the same building. There are 10 traditional and warmly decorated rooms on the 4th floor and a small breakfast room adjacent to the 1st-floor reception. The staff, some of whom speak English, are helpful and friendly.

### HOTEL GIUGGIOLI Map pp130-1 Hotel €€

☎ 06 360 05 389; [quiriti@tiscalinet.it](mailto:quiriti@tiscalinet.it); Via Germanico 198; s €89-99, d €99-129; ☒ Ottaviano-San Pietro; a

In the same block as its sister hotel,  *Hotel dei Quiriti*  (above), the Giuggioli is smaller and more modern than its sibling. Its 1st-floor rooms sport a dapper, pearl-grey look with a minimum of furniture and large, comfortable beds. There's nothing large about the bathrooms, though, which are tiny. The helpful staff will arrange babysitting on request.

### COLORS HOTEL & HOSTEL

Map pp130-1 Hotel, Hostel €€

☎ 06 687 40 30; [www.colorsshotel.com](http://www.colorsshotel.com); Via Boezio 31; hostel dm €18-27, d with shower & shared toilet €70-110, d with shared bathroom €60-100, hotel r €80-130; ☒ Piazza del Risorgimento; n a i

One of Rome's best hostels, Colors has expanded and is now a dishy hostel-cum-hotel. The core of the operation is still the 4th-floor hostel – seven brightly coloured dorms, spotless bathrooms and well-stocked kitchen – but there are now hotel rooms on the 1st and 3rd floors. Those on the 1st floor are a kaleidoscope of electric oranges and greens; those upstairs feature cool greys and modern bathrooms. Internet costs €1 for 20 minutes and air-con is included between mid-June and mid-September.

### HOTEL FLORIDA Map pp130-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 324 18 72; [www.hotelfloridaroma.it](http://www.hotelfloridaroma.it); Via Cola di Rienzo 243; s €60-85, d €75-120, s with shared bathroom €30-40, d with shared bathroom €60-80; ☒ Piazza del Risorgimento; a

The late 20th century seems to have bypassed this defiantly old-school establish-

ment. Homely, high-ceilinged rooms are decorated with solid wooden furniture and an almost complete lack of mod cons, unless, of course, you count a TV and phone as mod cons. Air-con is available in all rooms with bathrooms and discounts are available for cash payment.

### HOTEL SAN PIETRINO Map pp130-1 Hotel €

☎ 06 370 01 32; [www.sanpietrino.it](http://www.sanpietrino.it); Via Giovanni Bettolo 43; d €80-115, s with shared bathroom €35-65, d with shared bathroom €50-90; ☒ Ottaviano-San Pietro; a i

A winner on all counts, this hotel gets everything right. It's good value for money; it's conveniently located near a metro station and within walking distance of the Vatican; and its owners are welcoming and helpful. Rooms are small but tasteful with cream walls, terracotta floors and dark-wood wardrobes. Extras such as a TV and DVD player and wi-fi access are rare in this price bracket.

### MATTEO B&B Map pp130-1 B&B €

☎ 06 976 00 788; [www.matteobb.it](http://www.matteobb.it); Viale Angelico 36/B; d €80-100; ☒ Viale Giuseppe Mazzini A 15-minute walk north of the Vatican, this basic B&B offers a quiet, homely atmosphere. There's little in the way of luxury, with two small, Ikea-inspired guest rooms and not a lot else, but for somewhere inexpensive to lay your head down, it'll do fine. Note that it's closed in August and from mid-January to the end of February.

### HOTEL JOLI Map pp130-1 Pensione €€

☎ 06 324 18 93; [www.hoteljoliroma.com](http://www.hoteljoliroma.com); Via Cola di Rienzo 243; s €50-75, d €80-110; ☒ Piazza del Risorgimento; a

Family-run, unpretentious and a little tatty around the edges, the Joli is a popular  *pensione*  six floors above busy Via Cola di Rienzo. There are few frills but rooms are luminous and the décor is harmless. Bathrooms, while clean enough, could do with a little attention – the addition of shower curtains would be a good start. Air-con costs an additional €10.

### PENSIONE PARADISE Map pp130-1 Pensione €€

☎ 06 360 04 331; [www.pensioneparadise.com](http://www.pensioneparadise.com); Viale Giulio Cesare 47; s €50-60, d €85-95, s with shared bathroom €50-60; ☒ Lepanto

You won't find any miracles, or mod cons, here, just simple, bright rooms with terracotta-tiled floors and basic furniture.

The location is good, near Lepanto metro station, and the owner amiably greets all his guests in English or Italian.

### CASA DI ACCOGLIENZA PAOLO VI

Map pp130–1 Religious Institution €  
% 06 390 91 41; casapaolosesto@pssf.it; Viale Vaticano 92; s/d/tr/q €32/55/73/85; m Ottaviano-San Pietro; n a

Opposite the entrance to the Vatican Museums, this convent is a bargain. It's also popular, so you'll need to book early if you want to snaffle one of the spotless rooms, all of which come with modern bathrooms and air-con. The sisters who run the place are welcoming and you're free to come and go as you please as long as you're back by midnight.

## VILLA BORGHESE & NORTHERN ROME

Stretching outwards from Piazza del Popolo and Villa Borghese, northern Rome is affluent and smart. It's here you'll find some of the city's most expensive real estate as well as a number of fascinating museums. However, it's not somewhere you'll spend much time exploring and parts can be ghostly at night. The best accommodation is near Piazza del Popolo.

## VILLA BORGHESE & AROUND

### GRAND HOTEL PARCO DEI PRINCIPI

Map pp150–1 Hotel €€€  
% 06 85 44 21; www.parcodeiprincipi.com; Via Frescobaldi 5; s/d €480/550; g Via Giovanni Paisiello; p a s

Boasting the best outdoor swimming pool in central Rome, this luxury hotels sits on the edge of Villa Borghese. Decidedly

traditional in look, it features wood-panelled walls, marble columns, chandeliers, heavy drapes and gilt-framed paintings. Upstairs, the terrace restaurant commands some wonderful tree-top views over to St Peter's Basilica. The swimming pool is open to nonguests for €60 per day.

## PIAZZA DEL POPOLO & AROUND

### HOTEL LOCARNO Map pp150–1 Hotel €€€

% 06 361 08 41; www.hotelloccarno.com; Via della Penna 22; s €150-200, d €230-320; m Flaminio; a i w

With its ivy-clad exterior, stained-glass doors, and rattling cage-lift, the Locarno is an Art Deco classic. Rooms, spread over two sites – the main building and, over the road, the Anahi annex – vary in size and décor. Some have red silk wallpaper and period furniture, others light cream walls and wrought-iron beds; all have spotless bathrooms. Rooms in the Anahi wing are nonsmoking and cheaper as there's no room service. There's a lovely roof garden, a restaurant and guests have free use of bicycles.

### OKAPI ROOMS Map pp150–1 Hotel €€

% 06 326 09 815; www.okapiroma.it; Via della Penna 57; r €120-180; m Flaminio; a

When we passed by, the finishing touches were being put to what promises to be an excellent low midrange option. Run by the owners of *Pensione Panda* (p256), it has rooms spread over six floors (there is a lift). Most are simple, airy affairs with cream walls, terracotta tiles and double glazing, but some are more elaborate. A room on the 4th floor has four statues and a small terrace; those on the top floor have sloping electronic windows and miniscule bathrooms.

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# EXCURSIONS



# EXCURSIONS

It's easy to be blinded by Rome. Its legends, history and narcotic beauty make for a heady cocktail that can leave you breathless and hungover. The cure, if you have the time, is to give yourself a break, to get out for a day or two. The surrounding region of Lazio is well worth exploring, while further north the delights of Umbria are well chronicled. To the east, the brooding mountains of Abruzzo are a world apart.

Overshadowed by its capital, Lazio is a region that's not only beautiful – green and hilly in the north, parched and rugged in the south – but also rich in history and culture. In ancient times the wealthy built villas in the countryside and towns developed as fiefdoms of noble Roman families. Today Lazio's landscape is pockmarked with reminders of its ancient past. The most obvious place to start is Ostia Antica, imperial Rome's port. On the other side of Rome, to the east, the ruins of Emperor Hadrian's Villa Adriana complex in Tivoli are quite amazing.

To see something *really* old, however, head northwest to Etruria, the ancient land of the Etruscans. Cerveteri and Tarquinia were important centres between the 8th and 4th centuries BC and are today famous for their Etruscan treasures. Nearby, Viterbo retains enough of its medieval core to show what it must have been like in its 13th-century golden age.

In summer overheated Romans cool down by heading to the Castelli Romani, the green hills south of Rome, or by driving north to Bolsena, a charming medieval lake town. For the sea, the beaches at Sabaudia and Sperlonga are among the region's best.

Further afield, Umbria's hill-top towns are famously picturesque. The beautifully preserved Orvieto and Perugia are well connected with Rome and make for a great weekend break. In Abruzzo, L'Aquila sits in the shade of the Gran Sasso d'Italia, a massif of stark peaks capped by the Apennine's highest mountain, the Corno Grande (2914m).

All the places mentioned in this chapter are accessible by public transport, although to get to some of the smaller towns you'll need plenty of patience. Your own wheels will make life a lot easier (see p285 for details on car hire in Rome).

## HILLS, MOUNTAINS, LAKES & THE SEA

When Rome's urban attractions begin to fade and you feel the call of nature, you're ideally placed to enjoy a breather in the countryside. Just 20km south of the city, the **Castelli Romani** (p278) is a picturesque area of lush vine-covered hills and pretty towns. The best-known are Frascati, a smart wine town with a lively *centro storico* (historic centre), and Castel Gandolfo, perched on a hill overlooking Lago di Albano, one of the area's two volcanic lakes (the other being Lago di Nemi).

For Lazio's largest lake, however, you'll have to travel to the very north of the region, to **Lago di Bolsena** (p270). It's too far for a day trip from Rome, but the lakeside town of Bolsena has a pretty medieval centre and plenty of accommodation.

If the idea of splashing around in fresh water doesn't appeal, head for the beach. The best of Lazio's beaches are about two hours south of Rome, near the border with Campania. Here whitewashed **Sperlonga** (p279) is ideal for an evening stroll after a soothing

day on the sand. Nearby, the Parco Nazionale del Circeo at **Sabaudia** (p279) is perfect for those who prefer watching birds to people.

For an absolute change of scene you can't beat the dark mountains and vast, silent valleys of Abruzzo. If you're up for it you can climb the Corno Grande, the rocky mountain that looms over Abruzzo's regional capital **L'Aquila** (p276), just over an hour away from Rome.

## ANCIENT WONDERS

Given the wealth of Rome's ancient wonders, you might be surprised at just how many classical monuments lay strewn around the Lazio countryside. Chief among these are the ruins of Ancient Rome's port **Ostia Antica** (p266) and Villa Adriana in **Tivoli** (p277). The ruins at Ostia have been remarkably well preserved and are among the most impressive in the country. They are easily explored in a day and, unlike many of Rome's more famous ruins, are easy to interpret – as you walk down the skeletal streets you really can imagine how the town must once have looked. Villa Adriana, on the other hand, is not actually a town, although



its scale gives the impression of one. Emperor Hadrian's enormous palace complex provides a staggering example of the scale on which the Roman emperors operated.

Preceding the Romans, the Etruscans were a highly civilised people who provided many of the artistic and architectural techniques that the Romans subsequently adopted as their own. According to the Greek historian Herodotus, they originated in Asia Minor, moving to Italy in about 1000 BC. They were at their strongest between the 8th and 4th centuries BC, before being incorporated into the expanding Roman Republic in the 3rd century BC. Two of Etruria's major centres were **Cerveteri** (opposite) and **Tarquiniā** (p268). Both towns boast fascinating Unesco-listed tomb complexes that count among Lazio's most haunting sights.

## MEDIEVAL MARVELS

The Middle Ages was an ugly period for Rome. Fighting among the city's aristocrats reduced much of the city to rubble, while Church feuding culminated in Pope Clement V transferring to Avignon in 1309. However, while Rome flourished, many of the hill-top towns in the surrounding areas flourished. In the north of Lazio, **Viterbo** (p269) became an important medieval centre and in the 13th century the popes established a residence there. Before that, though, it had already established a reputation as a thermal town and today its therapeutic hot springs still have an invigorating effect.

Over the regional border, in neighbouring Umbria, **Orvieto** (p271) owes its stunning Gothic cathedral, one of Italy's finest, to the munificence of a 13th-century pope who wanted to celebrate a miracle in Bolsena. At the same time, artists and architects in **Perugia** (p273) were taking inspiration from the violent atmosphere that surrounded them to create the beautiful hill-top centre that remains to this day.

## OSTIA ANTICA

Founded by the Romans in the 4th century BC, Ostia (referring to the mouth or *ostium* of the River Tiber) became a great port town and later a strategic centre for defence and trade. Decline arrived in the 5th century AD when barbarian invasions and the outbreak of malaria led to the abandonment of the city and its slow burial – up to 2nd-floor level – in river silt, thanks to which it's survived so well. Pope Gregory IV re-established the town in the 9th century AD.

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 25km

**Direction** Southwest

**Travel time** 30 minutes (by train) to two hours (by boat)

**Boat** Batelli di Roma (p294) offers a return cruise from Rome to Ostia on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. It costs €13 and leaves Ponte Marconi in Rome at 10am, returning from Ostia at 2pm. Cruising time is just over two hours each way.

**Car** Take Via del Mare, parallel to Via Ostiense, and follow the signs for the *scavi* (ruins).

**Train** Take metro line B to Piramide, then the Ostia Lido train from Stazione Porta San Paolo (next to the metro station). Trains leave half-hourly and the 30-minute journey is covered by Rome's standard BIT tickets (see p284).

The beautifully preserved ruins (Scavi Archeologici di Ostia Antica; ☎ 06 563 52 830; www.ostiantica.info in Italian; Viale dei Romagnoli 717; adult/child €4/free, parking €2.50; 𠂇 8.30am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 8.30am-5pm Tue-Sun Mar, 8.30am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb) are quite spread out and you'll need a few hours to do them justice. You can buy a handy map of the site from the ticket office for €2 or take on one of the multilingual guides who roam the site; they usually charge €5 per person for a one-hour tour.

Ostia was a busy working port until AD 42, and the clearly discernible ruins of restaurants, laundries, shops, houses and public meeting places give a good impression of what life must have been like. The main thoroughfare, the Decumanus Maximus, runs over 1km from the city's entrance (the Porta Romana) to the Porta Marina, which originally led to the sea.

At one stage, Ostia had 20 baths complexes, including the **Terme di Foro**, which were equipped with a roomful of stone toilets (the *forica*) that still remain pretty much intact. The most-impressive mosaics on site are at the huge **Terme di Nettuno**, which occupied a whole block and dates to Hadrian's renovation of the port. Make sure you climb the elevated platform and look at the three enormous mosaics, including the stunning one of Neptune driving his sea-horse chariot and surrounded by sea monsters, mermaids and mermen. In the centre of the baths complex you'll find the remains of a large arcaded

courtyard called the Palaestra, in which athletes used to train. Here there's an impressive mosaic of four athletes engaged in boxing and wrestling.

Next to the Nettuno baths is a good-sized **amphitheatre**, built by Agrippa and later enlarged to hold 3000 people. By climbing to its top and looking over the site, you'll get a good idea of the original layout of the port.

Behind the amphitheatre is the **Piazza delle Corporazioni** (Forum of the Corporations), the offices of Ostia's merchants guilds, which sport well-preserved mosaics depicting the different interests of each business.

Further towards Porta Marina is the **thermopile**, a shop that sold hot food and drink and which bears a striking resemblance to a modern bar. Check out the central bar counter, the kitchen to the right and the small courtyard at the rear. Here customers would have sat next to the fountain and relaxed over a drink. Inside, it's still possible to discern remnants of a fresco advertising the bill of fare.

To the north, there's a complex comprising a cafeteria/bar, toilets, a gift shop and a **museum** (𠂇 9am-1.30pm & 2.15-6.30pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-5.30pm Tue-Sun Mar, 9am-4.30pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), which houses statues and sarcophagi excavated on site.

Near the entrance to the excavations is the **Castello di Giulio II** (☎ 06 563 58 024; Piazza della Rocca; 𠂇 free guided tours at 10am & noon Tue-Sun), an impressive example of 15th-century military architecture.

## INFORMATION

Ostia Antica (www.ostiantica.net)

## EATING

**Ristorante Monumento** (☎ 06 565 00 21; Piazza Umberto I 8; meals €26) A historic restaurant near the ruins, this place specialises in homemade pasta and fish.

## CERVETERI

Within easy day-trip distance of Rome, Cerveteri's Unesco-listed Etruscan tombs make for one of the strangest and most memorable sights in Lazio. Cerveteri, or Kysry to the Etruscans and Caere to Latin-speakers, was one of the most important commercial centres in the Mediterranean from the 7th to the 5th centuries BC. However, as Roman power

grew, so Cerveteri's fortunes faded, and in 358 BC the Etruscan city was annexed by Rome.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, the spread of malaria and repeated Saracen invasions caused further decline. In the 13th century there was a mass exodus from the city to the nearby town of Ceri, and Caere became Caere Vetus (Old Caere), from which its current name derives. The first half of the 19th century saw the first tentative archaeological explorations in the area, and in 1911 systematic excavations began in earnest.

The tomb complex, the **Necropoli di Banditaccia** (☎ 06 994 00 01; Via del Necropoli; admission €4, incl museum €6.50; 𠂇 8.30am-6.30pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 8.30am-3.30pm Tue-Sun Oct-Apr) is 2km out of town. To get there take the hourly shuttle bus (€0.80) from the tourist information point in the town centre. Alternatively, you can follow the well-signposted road – it's a pleasant 20-minute walk.

The tombs are built into *tumoli* (mounds of grass-covered earth with carved stone bases), laid out in the form of a town, with streets, squares and terraces of 'houses'. The result is a strange and haunting landscape. Signs indicate the path to follow and some of the major tombs, including the 4th-century-BC **Tomba dei Rilievi**, are decorated with painted reliefs of figures from the underworld, cooking implements and other household items.

If you can't make the tombs the next best thing is a visit to the **Museo Nazionale di Cerveteri** (☎ 06 994 13 54; Piazza Santa Maria; admission €4, incl necropolis €6.50; 𠂇 8.30am-6.30pm Tue-Sun) in the medieval town centre.

## INFORMATION

**Tourist information point** (☎ 06 995 52 637; Piazza Aldo Moro; 𠂇 10am-12.30pm & 4.30-6.30pm May-Sep, 10am-12.30pm Oct-Apr)

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 35km

**Direction** Northwest

**Travel time** 40 to 90 minutes

**Bus** Catch a Cotral bus (€2.50, 65 to 90 minutes, half-hourly from 7.30am to 9pm) from outside the Cornelia metro stop on metro line A.

**Car** Take either Via Aurelia (SS1) or the Civitavecchia autostrada (A12) and exit at Cerveteri-Ladispoli.

## EATING

**Antica Locanda le Ginestre** (% 06 994 06 72; Piazza Santa Maria 5; meals €45; 1 Tue-Sun) Considered one of the best restaurants in Lazio, this family-run eatery attracts diners from all over the region. The delicious food is prepared with organically grown local produce and is served in the elegant dining room or flower-filled courtyard garden. Book if you want a table on a weekend or holiday.

## TARQUINIA

It's a long day trip from Rome to Tarquinia, the most famous of Lazio's Etruscan centres, but your efforts are amply rewarded. The town is home to a beautiful tomb complex, the best Etruscan museum outside of Rome and an atmospheric medieval quarter. According to legend Tarquinia was founded towards the end of the Bronze Age in the 12th century BC. It later became the seat of the Tarquin kings of Rome before the creation of the Roman Republic, reaching its prime in the 4th century BC. After a century of struggle the town surrendered to Rome in 204 BC.

On the edge of the *centro storico*, the 15th-century Palazzo Vitelleschi houses the impressive **Museo Nazionale Tarquiniese** (% 0766 85 60 36; Piazza Cavour; adult/child €4/2, incl necropolis €6.50/3.25; 1 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun). Here you'll find frescoes removed from nearby excavations, including a beautiful terracotta frieze of winged horses (the *Cavalli Alati*), sarcophagi, jewellery and, in Sala VI, a collection of erotic tableware. Also on the ground floor, in Sala IX, the *Sarcofago con Cerbiatto* is a model of 4th-century-BC workmanship, showing a half-naked reclining woman holding a plate from which a long-necked dog (the *cerbiatto*) is drinking.

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 90km

**Direction** Northwest

**Travel time** 1½ hours

**Bus** Cotral buses (€3.80) leave approximately every hour from the Saxa Rubra station on the Ferrovía Roma-Nord train line, arriving at the Barriera San Giusto (medieval gate). The last bus leaves Tarquinia for Rome at 8.35pm.

**Car** Take the Civitavecchia autostrada (A12) then Via Aurelia (SS1).

**Train** Departures daily from Stazione Termini (€5.60, 1¼ hours, every one to two hours from 10.08am). Buy a return ticket as the ticket office in Tarquinia opens only in the morning. At Tarquinia station, you'll need to catch the Line BC shuttle bus to the centre of town. The last train leaves Tarquinia for Rome at 8.28pm.

To see Tarquinia's famous painted tombs *in situ*, head for the **necropolis** (% 0766 85 63 08; adult/child €4/2, incl Museo Nazionale Tarquiniese €6.50; 1 8.30am-7.30pm May-Sep, 8.30am-2pm Oct-Apr), 2km out of town. Almost 6000 tombs, of which 60 are painted, have been excavated since the first digs in 1489. Now protected by Unesco, the tombs have suffered centuries of exposure and are consequently visible only through glass partitions. On any given day only a selection are open to the public. There are some beautiful hunting and fishing scenes in the Tomba della Caccia e della Pesca; scenes featuring dancers, lionesses and dolphins in the Tomba delle Leonesse; and a smutty Dionysian-influenced scene of a man whipping a woman in the Tomba della Fustigazione.

To get to the necropolis from Piazza Cavour, walk up Corso Vittorio Emanuele and turn right at Piazza Nazionale into Via di Porta Tarquinia. Continue past the Chiesa di San Francesco and then down Via Ripagretta until you see the necropolis on your left. Alternatively, a shuttle bus leaves from outside the tourist office every 30 to 45 minutes from 9am to 10.50am and from 2pm to 4.40pm, returning to town five minutes after it arrives at the necropolis.

## INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (% 0766 85 63 84; Piazza Cavour 1;

1 8am-2pm Mon-Sat) On your left as you walk through the town's medieval gate (Barriera San Giusto).

## EATING & SLEEPING

**Il Cavatappi** (% 0766 84 23 03; Via dei Granari 2; meals €25; 1 Thu-Tue) One of a number of decent lunch spots in the *centro storico*, this family-run trattoria specialises in dishes made with local products.

**Hotel San Marco** (% 0766 84 22 34; www.san-marco.com; Piazza Cavour 18; d €65-75) If you need to stay over, this friendly little hotel has bright, unfussy rooms opposite the Museo Nazionale Tarquiniese. Noise from the downstairs American-style bar can be a nuisance, though.

## VITERBO

Despite sustaining heavy bomb damage in WWII, Viterbo is Lazio's best-preserved medieval town. Founded by the Etruscans and eventually taken over by Rome, it developed into an important medieval centre, and in the 13th century became the residence of the popes.

Viterbo's main sights are squeezed into the walled *centro storico*, a small area easily covered on foot.

The focal square, the Renaissance **Piazza del Plebiscito**, is flanked by elegant *palazzi* (mansions), of which the most impressive is the 15th-century **Palazzo dei Priori** (admission free; 1 10am-1pm & 3.30-6.30pm). Now home to the town council, the *palazzo* is worth a quick look for the 16th-century frescoes that colourfully depict Viterbo's ancient origins. You'll find the best in the Sala Regia on the 1st floor. Outside, the elegant courtyard and fountain were added two centuries after the *palazzo* was built in 1460.

To the southwest, **Piazza San Lorenzo** is the religious heart of the medieval city. It was here that the cardinals came to vote for their popes and pray in the 12th-century **cathedral** (Cattedrale di San Lorenzo; % 0761 32 54 62). Next door, the **Museo del Colle del Duomo** (admission incl Sala del Conclave in Palazzo dei Papi €3; 1 9.30am-1pm & 3-8pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sat, 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6pm Sun Oct-Mar) displays a small collection of religious artefacts.

On the northern side of the square, the 13th-century **Palazzo dei Papi** (% 0761 34 17 16; 1 visits by appointment only) was built to entice the papacy away from Rome. Go up the stairs to the graceful Gothic loggia to peer into the **Sala del Conclave**, the hall where five popes were elected. In 1271 the entire college of cardinals was briefly imprisoned here. The story goes that after three years of deliberation the cardinals still hadn't elected a new pope. Mad with frustration, the townspeople locked the dithering priests in a turreted hall and starved them into electing Pope Gregory X.

Nearby, the Romanesque **Chiesa di Santa Maria Nuova** (Piazza Santa Maria Nuova; 1 10am-1pm & 3-5pm)

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 105km

**Direction** Northwest

**Travel time** 1½ to two hours

**Bus** Cotral buses (€3.30, 1½ to two hours, half-hourly) depart from the Saxa Rubra station on the Ferrovía Roma-Nord train line. In Viterbo, get off at Porta Romana.

**Car** Take Via Cassia (SS2). Once in Viterbo, the best bet for parking is either Piazza Martiri d'Ungheria or Piazza della Rocca.

**Train** Direct trains depart hourly (€4.10, 1¼ hours) from Rome's Ostiense station for Stazione Porta Romana. There are also trains from Valle Aurelia station (next to the metro station on Line A), often changing at Cesano (€3.70, 1½ hours).

is the oldest church in Viterbo. It boasts some lovely cloisters, believed to date from an earlier period, and was restored after bomb damage in WWII.

To the south of the church lies the remarkably well-preserved medieval quarter. Wander down Via San Pellegrino with its low-slung arches and claustrophobic grey houses to pint-sized **Piazza San Pellegrino**. While in the area, pop into the **Museo del Sodalizio dei Facchini di Santa Rosa** (% 0761 34 51 57; Via San Pellegrino 60; admission free; 1 10am-1pm & 4-7pm Wed-Sun Apr-Sep, 3-5.30pm Fri, 10am-1pm & 3-5.30pm Sat & Sun Oct-Mar) to learn the history of the Machine of St Rose, the 30m-high construction that is carted around town during Viterbo's annual 3 September festival.

For a shot of Etruscan culture, head to the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (% 0761 32 59 29; Piazza della Rocca; admission €4; 1 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun), housed in an attractive *palazzo* by the northern entrance to the town. Not a big place, it has an interesting collection of Etruscan artefacts taken from local digs and, on the 1st floor, an impressive series of statues dedicated to the Muses.

A short walk away is the **Chiesa di San Francesco** (% 0761 34 16 96; Piazza San Francesco; 1 8am-noon & 3.30-7pm), a Gothic church containing the tombs of two popes: Clement IV (died 1268) and Adrian V (died 1276). Both are attractively decorated, notably that of Adrian, which features Cosmati work (see p33).

On the other side of town, the **Museo Civico** (% 0761 34 82 75; Piazza Crispi; admission €3.10) features

## DETOUR: THERMAL SPRINGS

Originally used by both the Etruscans and the Romans, Viterbo's famous thermal springs are concentrated in an area 3km west of town.

The easiest to get to are the **Terme dei Papi** (‰ 0761 35 01; Strata Bagno 12; h pool 9am-7pm Wed-Sun), where you can take a dip in the sulphurous pool (€12 Wednesday to Saturday, €15 Sunday), have an invigorating massage (€25 to €100) or treat yourself to a goopy mud bath (about €60). Take city bus 2 (2F on Sundays) from Piazza Martiri d'Ungheria in Viterbo. Specialist and therapeutic mud and water treatments cost much more and need to be booked in advance.

yet more Etruscan goodies and a small art gallery, the highlight of which is Sebastiano del Piombo's *Pietà*. At the time of research the museum was closed for restoration.

## INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (‰ 0761 32 59 92; www.provincia.vt.it in Italian; Via F. Ascenzi; h 10am-1pm & 4-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm & 3.30-6.30pm Sat) Ask for the useful (and free) booklet *Ospitalità Toscana*.

## EATING & SLEEPING

**Ristorante Tre Re** (‰ 0761 30 46 19; Via Macel Gattesco 3; meals €22; h Fri-Wed) A great bet for steaming plates of tasty local food. House specialities include *acquapazza Viterbese*, a scalding soup of chicory, potatoes and tomatoes, and *pollo alla Viterbese*, roast chicken stuffed with spiced potato and green olives.

**Tuscia Hotel** (‰ 0761 34 44 00; www.tusciahotel.com; Via Cairoli 41; s €49-56, d €74-82; a ) A serviceable town-centre three-star with large, light rooms. Parking is available on request and costs an extra €7.

## LAGO DI BOLSENA

Set in lush rolling countryside a few kilometres short of the regional border with Umbria, Lago di Bolsena is the largest and northernmost of Lazio's lakes. The lake's main town is Bolsena, a charming, low-key place that, despite a heavy hotel presence, retains its medieval character.

Like many Italian towns, Bolsena has its own miracle story. In 1263 a priest saying mass noticed blood dripping from the bread he was

blessing. Science was unable to prove that it wasn't a miracle and Pope Urban IV promptly founded the festival of Corpus Domini to celebrate – each June the townspeople hold a 3km procession and decorate the town with flowers. The miracle is famously depicted in Raphael's *Messa di Bolsena* (Mass of Bolsena) in the Vatican Museums' Stanze di Raffaello (p136).

There's not a huge amount to see in Bolsena but what there is in the medieval centre. To find evidence of the town's miracle head to the 11th-century **Basilica di Santa Cristina** (‰ 0761 79 90 67; Piazza Santa Cristina; h 7.15am-12.45pm & 3.30-7.45pm Easter-Sep, 7.15am-12.30pm & 3-5.30pm Oct-Easter), where you'll find four stones stained with the miraculous blood. Beneath the basilica are a series of **catacombs** (admission €4; h 9.30am-noon & 3.30-6.30pm Easter-Sep, 9.30-11.30am & 3-4.30pm Oct-Easter), noteworthy for a number of tombs that are still sealed.

For superb views over the lake climb up to the **Castello Monaldeschi** (‰ 0761 79 86 30; admission castle €3.50, panoramic walkway €2; h 10am-1pm Tue-Fri, 10am-1pm & 4-8pm Sat & Sun) at the top of the hill. Originally built between the 13th and 16th centuries, the castle was pulled down by locals in 1815 to prevent it from being taken by the French invader Luciano Bonaparte. It now houses the Museo Territoriale del Lago di Bolsena, covering the area's volcanic geology.

## INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (‰ 0761 79 99 23; Piazza Matteotti; h 9.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm daily May-Sep, 9.30am-12.30pm Mon-Sat Oct-Apr)

## EATING & SLEEPING

**Trattoria Pizzeria del Moro** (‰ 0761 79 88 10; Piazza Dante Alighieri 5; meals €25) On a pier jutting into the lake, this trattoria specialises in fresh fish and local eel.

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 150km

**Direction** Northwest

**Travel time** 1½ to 2½ hours

**Bus** From Viterbo (see p269) take one of the infrequent Cotral buses (€2.50, 50 minutes).

**Car** Take Via Cassia (SS2) to Viterbo and follow the signs to Bolsena.

## DETOUR: MONTEFIASCONE

If you have your own wheels, Montefiascone is a good place to stock up on wine. Near the southern shores of Lago di Bolsena, the town is home to the famous white wine Est! Est!! Est!!! According to local lore a travelling monk wrote *est!* (Latin for 'it is') on cellar doors to indicate the places where the wine was good. On arriving at Montefiascone he was so overcome by the quality of the local tipple that he exclaimed '*Est! Est! Est!*'. Modern critics have been less kind, deriding it as little more than trattoria plonk. However, in recent years it has improved considerably and it's now being taken seriously by buffs. Load up at the **Cantina di Montefiascone** (‰ 0761 25 11 30; Via Grilli 2; h 8am-1pm & 3-7pm), just off Via Cassia (SS2) south of town.

**Hotel Columbus** (‰ 0761 79 90 09; www.atihotels.it; Viale Colesanti 27; s €45-79, d €60-96) Value for money and a central lakeside location are what you get at this modern three-star. Rooms are comfortable if bland.

## ORVIETO

Home to one of Italy's most magnificent Gothic cathedrals, medieval Orvieto is a favourite of tour operators and gets very crowded, particularly in summer when busloads of tourists pour in for the day. But try not to let that put you off, as it really is a striking town, well worth a visit. Perched precariously on a cliff made of the area's tufa stone, it counts among its many attractions an important collection of Etruscan artefacts and a series of ancient underground caves.

To get to the main sights catch bus 1 from the train station or take the funicular up to Piazza Cahen at the eastern end of the old town. For those with cars, there's plenty of parking space in Piazza Cahen and in several designated areas outside the old city walls.

A good investment is the **Carta Unica** (adult/concession €18/15), which includes five hours' free parking, a return trip on the cable car as well as free bus transport, and admission (only once) to the Cappella di San Brizio in the cathedral, Museo Claudio Faina e Civico, Orvieto Underground, Torre del Moro, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo and the Crocifisso del Tufo necropolis (the last is just outside of town, at the foot of the rock massif on which Orvieto stands). It's available at participating sites, the Campo della Fiera car park, the tourist office and the funicular car park.

Little can prepare you for the visual feast that is the **cathedral** (‰ 0763 34 11 67; Piazza Duomo; h 7.30am-12.45pm & 2.30-7.15pm Apr-Sep, 7.30am-12.45pm & 2.30-6.15pm Mar & Oct, 7.30am-12.45pm & 2.30-5.15pm Nov-Feb). Started in 1290, it was originally planned in the Romanesque style but, as work proceeded and architects changed, Gothic

features were incorporated. The black-and-white marble banding of the main body of the church is overshadowed by the rich rainbow colours of the façade.

Pope Urban IV commissioned the cathedral to celebrate the Miracle of Bolsena (see opposite) in 1263, but it took 30 years to plan and three centuries to complete. It was probably started by Fra Bevignate and later additions were made by Lorenzo Maitani, Andrea Pisano and his son Nino Pisano, Andrea Orcagna and Michele Saniceli. The great bronze doors, the work of Emilio Greco, were added in the 1960s.

Inside, Luca Signorelli's fresco cycle, *Il Giudizio Universale* (The Last Judgment), shimmers with life in the **Cappella di San Brizio** (admission €5; h closed during Mass), to the right of the altar. Signorelli began work on the series in 1499, and Michelangelo is said to have taken inspiration from it for his Sistine Chapel masterpiece. Indeed, to some, Michelangelo's version runs a close second to Signorelli's work. The **Cappella del Corporale** (admission free; h 7.30am-12.45pm & 2.30-7.15pm May-Sep, varies Oct-Apr, closed during Mass) houses the blood-stained altar linen of the Bolsena miracle and features frescoes by Ugolino di Prete Ilario that depict the miracle.

Next to the cathedral is the **Museo dell'Opera del Duomo** (‰ 0763 34 24 77; Palazzo Soliano, Piazza Duomo; adult/concession €5/4; h 10am-1pm & 3-7pm daily Jul & Aug, 10am-6pm daily Apr-Jun & Sep-Oct, 10am-5pm Wed-Mon Nov-Mar), which houses a clutter of religious relics from the cathedral, as well as Etruscan antiquities and works by artists such as Simone Martini and the three Pisanos: Andrea, Nino and Giovanni.

Around the corner in the **Palazzo Papale**, you can see Etruscan antiquities in the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale** (‰ /fax 0763 34 10 39; Piazza Duomo; adult/concession €3/1.50; h 8.30am-7.30pm) and the much more interesting **Museo Claudio Faina e Civico** (‰ 0763 34 15 11; www.museofaina.it; Piazza Duomo 29; adult/concession €4.50/3; h 9.30am-6pm daily Apr-Sep,

## TRANSPORT

Distance from Rome 120km

Direction Northwest

Travel time 1¼ to 1½ hours

**Bus** Bargagli (☎ 057 778 62 23) runs a daily bus service to Rome (€8, one hour 20 minutes, 8.10am and 7.10pm). From Rome, buses depart from Stazi-one Tiburtina twice daily, at 3.15pm and 9pm.

**Car** The city is on the A1 north-south autostrada.

**Train** Hourly trains depart from Rome's Stazione Termini (€7.10, 1¼ hours).

10am-5pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar). Here you'll find one of Italy's most important collections of Etruscan archaeological artefacts, as well as some significant Greek ceramic works, mostly found near Piazza Cahen in tombs dating back to the 6th century BC.

Head northwest along Via del Duomo to Corso Cavour and the **Torre del Moro** (Moor's Tower; ☎ 0763 34 45 67; Corso Cavour 87; adult/concession €2.80/2; 10am-8pm May-Aug, 10am-7pm Mar, Apr, Sep & Oct, 10.30am-1pm & 2.30-5pm Nov-Feb). Climb all 250 steps and you're rewarded with sweeping views of the city. Nearby, in Piazza della Repubblica, stands the 12th-century **Chiesa di Sant'Andrea** (11 8.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-7.30pm) with its curious decagonal bell tower. Continue west and you come to the 11th-century **Chiesa di San Giovenale** (Piazza Giovenale; 11 8am-12.30pm & 3.30-6pm), its interior brightened by 13th- and 14th-century frescoes.

Standing watch at the town's easternmost tip is the 14th-century rock fortress, **La Rocca**, part of which is now a public garden. To the north of the fortress, the **Pozzo di San Patrizio** (St Patrick's Well; ☎ 0763 34 37 68; Viale Sangallo; adult/concession €4.50/3.50; 11 9am-8pm May-Aug, 9am-7pm Mar, Apr, Sep & Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Feb) is a 60m-deep well, lined by two spiral staircases for water-bearing mules.

The coolest place in Orvieto – literally – is **Orvieto Underground** (☎ 0763 34 06 88; Parco delle Grotte; adult/concession €5.50/3.30; 11 tours 11am, 12.15pm, 4pm & 5.15pm daily Mar-Jan, Sat & Sun only Feb), a series of 440 caves that have been used for millennia for various purposes. Tours (with English-speaking guides) take you through several that were used as WWII bomb shelters, refrigerators, wells and, during many a siege, dovecotes to trap pigeons for dinner (still seen on local restaurant menus as *palombo*).

## INFORMATION

**Information office** (☎ 0763 30 23 78; Piazza della Pace; 11 9am-4pm) At the bottom of the funicular.

**Tourist office** (☎ 0763 34 17 72; info@iat.orvieto.tr.it; Piazza Duomo 24; 11 8.15am-1.50pm & 4-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm & 3-6pm Sat, Sun & holidays)

## EATING

**Ristorante Zeppelin** (☎ 0763 34 14 47; Via Garibaldi 28; meals €32; 11 Mon-Sat, lunch Sun) **Jazz-cool** restaurant serving creative Umbrian food; enjoy menus for vegetarians (€25), children (€20), truffle lovers (€40) and traditionalists (€25).

**L'Asino d'Oro** (☎ 0763 34 44 06; Vicolo del Popolo 9; meals €28; 11 Tue-Sun) Innovative food at affordable trattoria prices is the speciality of the house. Dishes such as a smoked streaky bacon with radicchio appetiser and *cinghiale in agri-dolce* (sweet-and-sour boar) are typical.

**Ristorante La Pergola** (☎ 0763 34 30 65; Via dei Magoni 9b; meals €26; 11 Thu-Tue) Sit down to hearty Umbrian fare served in a delightful, flower-filled garden.

**Cantina Foresi** (☎ 0763 34 16 11; Piazza del Duomo 2; snacks from €4.50) A family-run *enoteca* (wine bar) serving *panini* (bread rolls) and sausages, washed down with local wine from the ancient cellar.

## SLEEPING

**Hotel Maitani** (☎ 0763 34 20 11; www.hotelmaitani.com; Via Lorenzo Maitani 5; s/d/ste €71/126/170; P ) Pillow chocolates and cathedral views (in some rooms) are a winning combination at this thoughtful hotel.

**Hotel Corso** (☎ 0763 34 20 20; www.hotelcorso.net; Corso Cavour 343; s €50-64, d €80-87; a i ) **For snug**

## DETOUR: CIVITA DI BAGNOREGIO

An abandoned village perched atop a huge crumbling rock in the middle of a barren ravine, Civita di Bagnoregio is a unique sight. There's not much to do other than enjoy the views, but if you're in the area it's definitely worth a look.

Just 25km south of Orvieto, the village is accessible by a footbridge from Bagnoregio. There's a car park at the base of the walkway or you can get a shuttle bus from Piazza Battaglini in Bagnoregio to the bridge. To reach Bagnoregio from Orvieto take the SS71 south and turn off left onto the SP130.

rooms with wooden-beamed ceilings, terracotta bricks and antique cherry furniture.

**B&B Valentina** (☎ 393 970 58 68; valentina.z@tiscalinet.it; Via Vivaria 7; s/d/tr €50/70/90) A homely B&B offering casually elegant, spacious rooms. Valentina lives downstairs with two friendly dogs.

## PERUGIA

Too far from Rome to cover in a day, Perugia merits a night's stopover. One of Italy's best-preserved medieval hill towns, it's a lively student centre famous for its chocolate and annual jazz festival (Umbria Jazz, p275).

The city has a lively and bloody past. Founded by the Etruscans, it reached its zenith in the 6th century BC and fell to the Romans in 310 BC. During the Middle Ages it was racked by bloody internal feuding and violent wars against its neighbours, wars that continued long after the city was incorporated into the Papal States by Pope Paul III in 1538. For three centuries Perugia remained under papal control.

The city also has a strong artistic and cultural tradition. In the 15th century it was home to fresco painters Bernardino Pinturicchio and his master Pietro Vannucci (known as Perugino), who would later teach Raphael. The city also attracted the great Tuscan masters Fra Angelico and Piero della Francesca.

Perugia's most noteworthy sights are crammed into the hill-top *centro storico*, 1.5km above the train station.

The city's focal point is **Piazza IV Novembre**, a popular hang-out for guitar-strumming students and gelato-eating tourists. Looming over the square is Perugia's austere **Duomo** (Cathedral of San Lorenzo; ☎ 075 572 38 32; Piazza IV Novembre; 11 10am-1pm & 2.30-5.30pm Tue-Sun). Built between 1345 and 1587, it's home to the city's most prized relic – the Virgin Mary's wedding ring. On 30 July you can witness the annual unveiling of the ring, usually locked inside 15 boxes.

In the centre of the square stands the **Fontana Maggiore** (Great Fountain), designed by Fra Bevignate but sculpted by father-and-son duo Nicola and Giovanni Pisano between 1275 and 1278. Along the edge are bas-relief statues representing scenes from the Old Testament, the founding of Rome, and a griffin and lion. Look for the griffin all over Perugia – it's the city's symbol.

On the southern side of the piazza, the block-long **Palazzo dei Priori** houses Perugia's

## TRANSPORT

Distance from Rome 170km

Direction North

Travel time 2½ to three hours

**Bus** Sulga (☎ 800 09 96 61; www.sulga.it) buses depart from Piazza dei Partigiani to Rome (€15, three hours, five daily). From Rome, there are six departures daily from Stazione Tiburtina.

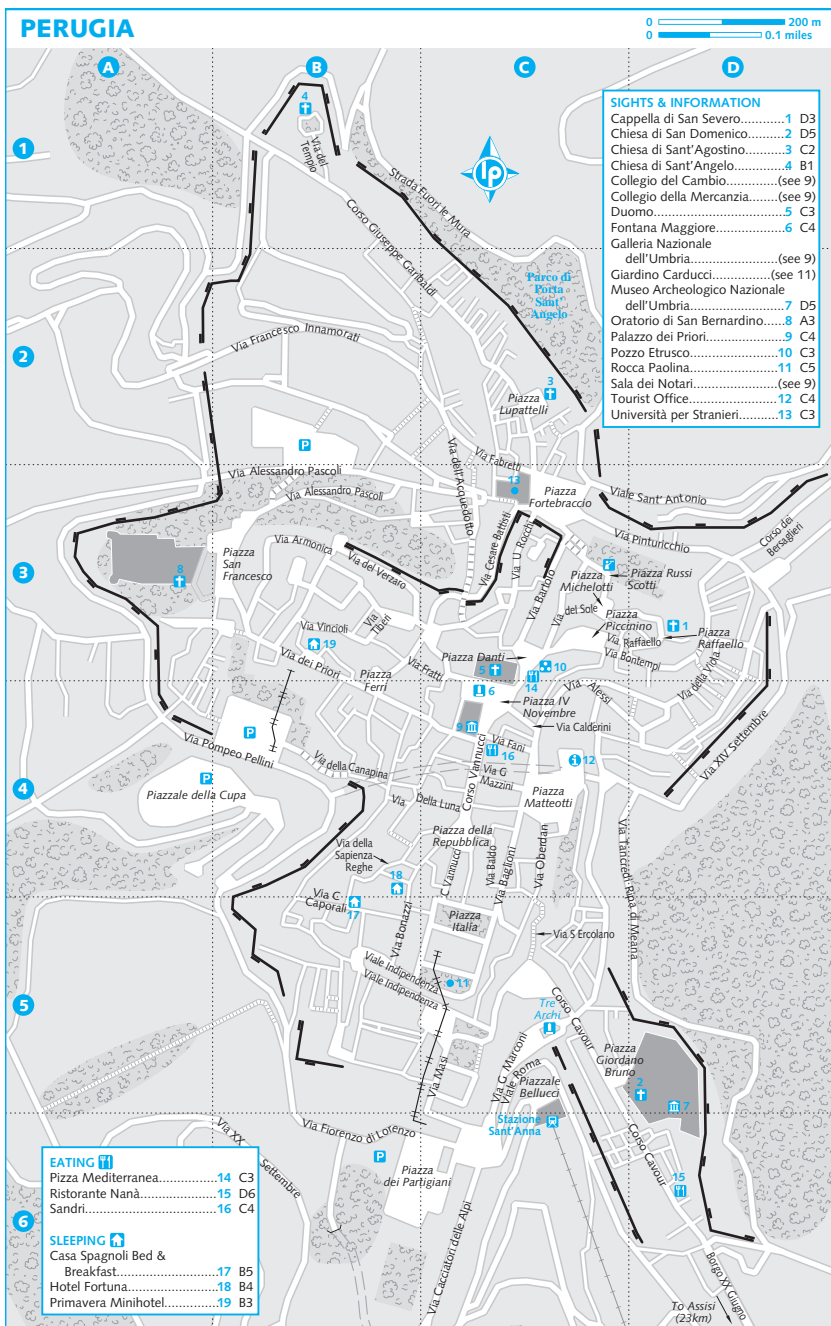
**Car** Take the A1 autostrada north from Rome, exit at Orte and follow the signs for Perugia.

**Train** Regular trains connect Perugia with Rome (€10 to €18.45, 2½ hours). Perugia's train station, Stazione Fontivegge, is 1.5km west of the city centre but regular buses (6, 7, 9, 11 and 15) run to Piazza Italia.

municipal offices as well as four of Umbria's best-known museums. Start in the stunning **Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria** (National Gallery of Umbria; ☎ 800 69 76 16; Corso Vannucci 19; adult/concession €6.50/3.25; 11 8.30am-7.30pm), whose comprehensive collection features numerous Byzantine-inspired paintings from the 13th century, as well as works by local heroes Pinturicchio and Perugino.

The three other museums are the gilded **Collegio del Cambio** (Exchange Hall; ☎ 075 572 85 99; Corso Vannucci 25; admission incl Collegio della Mercanzia €3.10; 11 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm daily Mar-Oct, 9am-2pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), which has some superb frescoes by Perugino; the **Collegio della Mercanzia** (Merchant's Hall; ☎ 075 573 03 66; admission incl Collegio del Cambio €3.10; 11 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-5.30pm daily Mar-Oct, 9am-2pm Tue-Sun Nov-Feb), the former seat of the city's powerful Renaissance-era merchants; and the 13th-century **Sala dei Notari** (Notaries' Hall; ☎ 075 574 12 74; Piazza IV Novembre 3; admission free; 11 9am-1pm & 3-7pm Tue-Sun), where the nobility used to meet. Here, the arches supporting the vaults are Romanesque, covered with frescoes depicting biblical scenes and Aesop's fables. To reach the hall, walk up the steps from Piazza IV Novembre.

Just off the southern end of Corso Vannucci is the tiny **Giardini Carducci**, which has lovely views of the countryside. The gardens stand atop a 16th-century fortress, known as the **Rocca Paolina** (main entrance Piazza Italia, entrances on Via Marzia, Via Masi & Viale Indipendenza; admission free; 11 8am-7pm), which was built by Pope Paul III in the 1540s over a medieval quarter formerly inhabited



by some of the city's most powerful families. Destroyed by the townspeople after Italian unification, it is now used as the thoroughway for Perugia's *scale mobili* (public escalators) and to host temporary art exhibitions.

Continuing further south, along Corso Cavour, the early-14th-century **Chiesa di San Domenico** (% 075 573 15 68; Piazza Giordano Bruno; h 8am-noon & 4pm-sunset) is the city's largest church. Its Romanesque interior was replaced by austere Gothic fittings in the 16th century. Pope Benedict XI, who died after eating poisoned figs in 1325, lies buried here. The adjoining convent is home to the **Museo Archeologico Nazionale dell'Umbria** (% 075 572 71 41; Piazza Giordano Bruno 10; adult/concession €4/2; h 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun, 10am-7.30pm Mon), which has a choice collection of Etruscan and prehistoric artefacts dating back to the 16th century BC.

A short walk away, the **Medieval Gardens** (% 075 585 64 32; Borgo XX Giugno 74; admission free; h 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri) are a great place to picnic.

At the other end of town, northeast of Piazza IV Novembre, you can venture down the 3rd-century-BC **Pozzo Etrusco** (Etruscan Well; % 075 573 36 69; Piazza Danti 18; adult/child €2.50/1; h 10.30am-1.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm Wed-Mon Apr-Oct, 10.30am-1.30pm & 2.30-4.30pm Wed-Mon Nov-Mar). The 36m-deep well was the main water reservoir of the Etruscan town, and, more recently, the source of water during WWII bombing raids. Nearby, the **Cappella di San Severo** (% 075 573 38 64; Piazza Raffaello; adult/child €2.50/1; h 10.30am-1.30pm & 2.30-6.30pm Mar-Oct, 10.30am-1.30pm & 2.30-4.30pm Nov-Feb) is decorated with Raphael's *Trinity with Saints* (thought by many to be his first fresco) and frescoes by Perugino.

Heading north from the **Università per Stranieri** (University for Foreigners; % 075 5 74 61; www.unistrapg.it; Piazza Fortebraccio 4), Italy's foremost academic institution for foreigners, Corso Giuseppe Garibaldi

leads to the **Chiesa di Sant'Agostino** (Piazza Lupatelli; h 8am-noon & 4pm-sunset), noteworthy for a beautiful 16th-century choir by Baccio d'Agnolo. Further north, Via del Tempio branches off to the 5th-century **Chiesa di Sant'Angelo** (% 075 57 22 64; Via Sant'Angelo; h 10am-noon & 4-6pm), one of Italy's oldest churches, which is said to stand on the site of a pagan temple.

Near the city's western walls, Piazza San Francesco is home to the 15th-century **Oratorio di San Bernardino** (% 075 573 39 57; h 8am-12.30pm & 3-6pm), the impressive façade of which is decorated with bas-reliefs by the early Renaissance sculptor Agostino di Duccio.

## INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (% 075 573 64 58; info@iat.perugia.it; Piazza Matteotti 18; h 8.30am-1.30pm & 3.30-6.30pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

**Umbria Jazz** (% 800 46 23 11, 075 500 11 07; www.umbriajazz.com in Italian) attracts top-notch international performers for 10 days each July, usually around the middle of the month. Single tickets cost €10 to €100, and week-long or weekend passes are also available.

## EATING

**Ristorante Nana** (% 075 573 35 71; Corso Cavour 206; meals €25; h Mon-Sat) A family-run trattoria with a small creative menu – think pâté with Sardinian flatbread or *gnocchetti* in pepper and radicchio cream sauce.

**Pizzeria Mediterranea** (% 075 572 13 22; Piazza Piccinino 11/12; meals €11; h Wed-Mon) Too-cool-to-smile

## DETOUR: ASSISI

If you've made it as far as Perugia, try to build in a quick stopover in Assisi, 25km down the road. Thanks to St Francis, who was born here in 1182, this quaint medieval town is one of Italy's top religious destinations.

The star of the show is the **Basilica di San Francesco** (% 075 81 90 01; Piazza di San Francesco), the imposing complex that gives Assisi its distinct townscape. The basilica is divided into two churches. The **upper church** (h 8.30am-6.50pm Easter-Nov, 8.30am-6pm Nov-Easter, 8.30am-7.15pm holidays) was built between 1230 and 1253 in the Italian Gothic style and features superb frescoes by Giotto and works by Cimabue and Pietro Cavallini.

Downstairs, the dimly lit **lower church** (h 6.30am-6.50pm Easter-Nov, 6.30am-6pm Nov-Easter, 6.30am-7.15pm holidays) is slightly older, dating to 1230. Here you'll find a series of colourful frescoes by Simone Martini, Cimabue and Pietro Lorenzetti, and, beneath the floor, the crypt where St Francis is buried.

To get to Assisi from Perugia, take the SS75, exit at Ospedalicchio and follow the signs. Alternatively, **APM Perugia** (% 800 51 21 41; www.apmperugia.it) runs regular buses (€3, 50 minutes, nine daily).

waitresses dish out Perugia's best pizza to appreciative locals.

**Sandri** (☎ 075 572 41 12; Corso Vannucci 32) Tasty café for delectable chocolate cakes, candied fruit, espresso and pastries.

## SLEEPING

**Hotel Fortuna** (☎ 075 572 28 45; www.umbriahotels.com; Via Bonazzi 9; s €69-98, d €99-128; a i ) Ancient stone, frescoes and Venetian plaster walls sit alongside new furnishings and modern bathrooms at this spotless hotel.

**Primavera Minihotel** (☎ 075 572 1657; www.primavera.minihotel.it; Via Vincioili 8; s €42-48, d €60-70; a i ) Central yet quiet, this place has magnificent views and bright, airy rooms. Great value for money.

**Casa Spagnoli Bed & Breakfast** (☎ 075 573 51 27; www.perugiaonline.com/bbspagnoli; Via C Caporali 17; with shared bathroom s €30-38, d €50-58) A homely B&B perfectly located near Piazza Italia.

## L'AQUILA

Although there's not a whole lot to see in L'Aquila (Abruzzo's regional capital), its proximity to the magnificent Parco Nazionale del Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga makes it an attractive escape from Rome. Overshadowed by the Gran Sasso d'Italia, it's not entirely bereft of charm, with a foreboding fort, a stunning 13th-century basilica and a fountain with 93 spewing gargoyles.

Known locally as the **Forte Spagnolo** (Spanish Fort), L'Aquila's austere 16th-century castle was built after an unsuccessful rebellion against the city's Spanish rulers in 1528. At the northeastern corner of the *centro storico*, it houses the **Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo** (☎ 0862 63 34 00; Castello Cinquecentesco; admission €4; h 8.30am-7.30pm Tue-Sun) and its collection of local archaeological finds and religious art. The surprise highlight is the skeleton of a million-year-old mammoth, unearthed near the city in 1954.

At the other end of the walled centre, the strikingly geometric **Basilica di Santa Maria di Collemaggio** (☎ 0862 2 63 92; Piazzale di Collemaggio; h 8.30am-1pm & 3-8pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-8pm Sat & Sun) is Abruzzo's most famous church. Its square pink-and-white quilt-pattern façade is a beautiful marriage of architectural styles: the intricate rose windows are typically Gothic while the imposing central portal is pure Romanesque.

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 110km

**Direction** Northeast

**Travel time** About two hours

**Bus** ARPA (☎ 0862 41 28 08; www.arpaonline.it) runs buses to and from Stazione Tiburtina (€9.10, 1½ hours, 19 daily).

**Car** Take the A24 autostrada east from Rome.

Consecrated in 1288, the basilica became an important religious centre in 1294 when Pietro del Morrone was crowned Pope Celestine V here. As founder of the Celestine order, he was canonised in 1303, seven years after his death, and his tomb lies inside the basilica.

A monument to L'Aquila's magic number, the 13th-century **Fontana delle 99 Cannelle** (Fountain of the 99 Spouts) is misnamed – there are, in fact, only 93 spewing gargoyles. Surrounded by a wall of pink-and-white stone, the 13th-century fountain is one of the few supplies of fresh water that has proved reliable throughout the city's earthquake-prone past.

About 20km northeast of L'Aquila, Fonte Cerreto is the main access point for the Gran Sasso and **Campo Imperatore** (2117m), a desolate highland plain where Mussolini was briefly imprisoned in 1943. A **funivia** (cable car; ☎ 0862 40 00 07; return trip €9 Tue & Thu, €11 Mon, Wed & Fri, €13 Sat & Sun; h 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm Sat & Sun) runs up to the Campo every 30 minutes from Fonte Cerreto. Up top, there's hiking in summer and skiing in winter.

One of the most popular trekking routes is the surprisingly straightforward climb to the top of **Corno Grande** (the Apennines' highest peak). The 9km *via normale* (normal route) starts in the main parking area at Campo Imperatore and heads to the summit at 2914m. The trail should be clear of snow from early June to late September/early October.

To get to Fonte Cerreto by public transport take bus 76 (€0.80, 20 minutes, hourly) from L'Aquila to Paganica and then a Linea M bus to Assergi and Fonte Cerreto (€0.80, 20 minutes, 13 daily). By car follow the A24 east and exit at Assergi or Fonte Cerreto.

## INFORMATION

**Park office** (☎ 0862 6 05 21; www.gransassolagapark.it in Italian; Via del Convento 1; h 10.30am-1pm & 4-6pm Mon-Fri) In Assergi, 16km northeast of L'Aquila.

**Tourist office** (☎ 0862 41 08 08; Piazza Santa Maria Paganica 5; h 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm Sun mid-May–mid-Sep, 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat mid-Sep–mid-May)

## EATING & SLEEPING

**La Matriciana** (☎ 0862 2 60 65; Via Arcivescovado 5a; meals €20; h Mon-Sat) A bustling no-frills trattoria good for steaming bowls of pasta, filling meat dishes and robust red wine.

**Trattoria da Rino** (☎ 0862 2 52 80; Via San Marciano 2; meals €18; h Tue-Sun) Sit down to warming Abruzzo classics prepared by *nonna* in the kitchen.

**Hotel Duomo** (☎ 0862 41 08 93; www.hotel-duomo.it; Via Dragonetti 6; s €55-80, d €80-90; p ) Rooms at this quietly elegant hotel sport a rustic-chic look with burnt-sienna floor tiles, wrought-iron bedsteads and dark-wood furniture.

## TIVOLI

Pass through Rome's scruffy eastern suburbs and you soon come to the busy hill-top town of Tivoli. A Roman resort and summer playground for the Renaissance rich, it's best known for its two Unesco World Heritage Sites: the monumental Villa Adriana and the 16th-century Villa d'Este. The latter is prettier and easier to get to, but the former is what makes a day trip here really worthwhile.

Emperor Hadrian's summer residence **Villa Adriana** (☎ 06 399 67 900; adult/child €6.50/3.25, parking €2; h 9am-1hr before sunset), 5km outside Tivoli, is more a small town than a big villa. It was built between 118 and 134 and even by Roman standards it stood out for its opulence. A model near the entrance gives you some idea of the scale of the original complex, and you'll need several hours to explore. Audioguides (€4) give a good overview.

A great traveller and enthusiastic architect, Hadrian personally designed much of the complex, taking inspiration from buildings he'd seen around the world. The **Pecile**, a large porticoed pool area where the emperor used to stroll after lunch, was a reproduction of a building in Athens. Similarly, the **Canopo** was a copy of the sanctuary of Serapis near Alexandria, with a long canal of water, originally surrounded by Egyptian statues, representing the Nile.

To the east, one of the highlights of the complex is Hadrian's private retreat, the Teatro Marittimo. Built on an island in an artificial pool, it was originally a minivilla

accessible only by swing bridges, which the emperor would have raised when he felt like a dip. Nearby, the fishpond is encircled by an underground gallery where Hadrian liked to wander. There are also *nymphphaeums* (shrines to the water nymphs), temples and barracks, and a museum displaying the latest discoveries from ongoing excavations.

Up in Tivoli's hill-top centre, **Villa d'Este** (☎ 199 76 61 66; www.villadestetivoli.info; Piazza Trento; adult/child €6.50/free; h from 8.30am Tue-Sun) is more impressive outside than inside. A former Benedictine convent, it was transformed into a sumptuous pleasure palace by Lucrezia Borgia's son, Ippolito d'Este, in 1550. From 1865 to 1886 it was home to Franz Liszt and inspired his composition *Fountains of the Villa d'Este*.

The mannerist frescoes in the villa are worth a look, but it's the elaborate garden you come for: terraces with water-spouting gargoyles, shady pathways and spectacular fountains powered solely by gravitational force. One fountain (designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini) once played the organ; another imitated the call of birds. Don't miss the Rometta fountain, which has reproductions of the landmarks of Rome.

The villa's closing hour varies according to the month; the earliest (November to January) is 4pm and the latest (May to August) is 6.45pm.

A short walk from Villa d'Este is **Villa Gregoriana** (☎ 06 399 67 701; Piazza Tempio di Vesta; adult/child €4/2.50; h 10am-6.30pm Tue-Sun Apr–mid-Oct, 10am-2.30pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun Mar & mid-Oct–Nov), a 19th-century park laid out by Pope Gregory XVI in 1834. The park descends down a steep gorge, over which water crashes to the

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 30km

**Direction** East

**Travel time** 30 minutes to one hour

**Bus** Cotral buses (€1.60, one hour) depart from Ponte Mammolo station on metro line B at least every 20 minutes. For Villa Adriana take the CAT shuttle bus 4 or 4X (€1, every 30 minutes Monday to Saturday, every 70 minutes Sunday) from Largo Garibaldi in Tivoli town centre.

**Car** Take either Via Tiburtina (SS5) or the Rome–L'Aquila autostrada (A24).

**Train** From Stazione Tiburtina (€2.50, 50 minutes, hourly).

bottom of the canyon more than 100m below. Of the various grottoes and waterfalls, the highlight is the 120m-high Cascata Grande (Great Waterfall).

## INFORMATION

**Tourist information point** (☎ 0774 31 35 36; Piazza Garibaldi; ↻ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar)

## EATING & SLEEPING

**Villa d'Este** (☎ 0774 31 17 65; Villa d'Este, Piazza Trento; set menus €14) In Villa d'Este, this is a stylish café-cum-restaurant for a drink or lunch.

**Hotel Adriano** (☎ 0774 38 22 35; www.hoteladriano.it; Largo Yourcenar; s €90-100, d €100-120) A smart three-star opposite the entrance to Villa Adriana. Its excellent restaurant (meals €45) has served Federico Fellini and Queen Elizabeth II.

## CASTELLI ROMANI

About 20km south of Rome, the Colli Albani (Alban hills) and their 13 towns are collectively known as the Castelli Romani. Since early Roman days they've provided a green refuge from the city and today Romans still flock to the area on hot summer weekends. The most famous towns are Castel Gandolfo, where the pope has his summer residence, and Frascati, famous for its crisp white wine. The other towns are Monte Porzio Catone, Montecompatri, Rocca Priora, Colonna, Rocca di Papa, Grottaferrata, Marino, Albano Laziale, Ariccia, Genzano and Nemi.

Frascati is an easy bus or train ride from Rome and makes a rewarding day trip. From central Piazza Guglielmo Marconi, the large villa you

see rising above the square is the 16th-century **Villa Aldobrandini**, designed by Giacomo della Porta and built by Carlo Maderno. It's closed to the public but you can visit the landscaped **gardens** (↻ 9am-1pm Mon-Fri) once you've picked up a permit from the tourist office.

If you have a car head up to the ruins of ancient Tusculum. All that remains of this once-imposing 4th-century-BC town is a small amphitheatre, a crumbling villa and a small stretch of road leading up to the city. However, the grassy hill top is a popular spot for a walk and commands fine views.

But more than villas and views, Frascati is all about food and fine wine. To get into the swing of things, head for one of the authentic **cantine** (wine cellars) in the **centro storico**. Many don't sell food, but won't mind if you bring your own snack – pick up a delicious **porchetta** (roast hog) **panini** from one of the stands on Piazza del Mercato.

A short drive away at **Grottaferrata** there's a 15th-century **abbey** (abbazia; ☎ 06 945 93 09; Viale San Nilo; admission free; ↻ 8.30am-12.30pm & 4-7.30pm summer, 8.30am-12.30pm & 3.30-1hr before sunset winter), founded in the 11th century and now home to a congregation of Greek monks and a small museum.

Continuing southwest brings you to **Castel Gandolfo**, a smart hill-top **borgo** (small village) overlooking Lago di Albano. Dominating the town is the pope's summer residence, which although closed to the public still attracts coachloads of tourists. The small **centro storico** is a lovely place for an evening stroll, and although it can get very busy it's still ideal for the romantically inclined.

The smaller of the two lakes in the Castelli, **Lago di Nemi**, has spawned numerous legends. In ancient times it was the centre of a cult to the

## ST BENEDICT, THE CAVE MAN

Founder of the Benedictine order, St Benedict is generally regarded as the father of Western monasticism. He is also the patron saint of engineers and speleologists, an accolade that he owes to three years he spent holed up in a cave.

Born to a rich Roman noble in the Umbrian town of Nursia in 480, Benedict studied in Rome until, at the age of 20, he decided to flee the city's vice and seek somewhere quiet to pray. He ended up in a cave gouged into the side of a steep ravine just outside the small town of **Subiaco**, 63km east of Rome. Over the next three years he attracted a large local following that was eventually to provoke the ire of his fellow friars and force him to escape.

There are two monasteries that make the hike to Subiaco worthwhile. The first and most important is the spectacular **Monastero di San Benedetto** (Monastery of St Benedict; ☎ 0774 8 50 39; ↻ 9am-12.30pm & 3-6.30pm), carved into the rock over the famous cave. As well as its stunning setting, described by Petrarch as 'the edge of Paradise', the monastery boasts some wonderfully vibrant 13th- to 15th-century frescoes.

Halfway down the hill from St Benedict's is the **Monastero di Santa Scolastica** (Monastery of St Scholastica; ☎ 0774 8 55 25; ↻ 9am-12.30pm & 3.30-7pm), where Italy's first book was printed in 1465. The monastery complex has a restaurant offering set menus at lunch (€15) and dinner (€21), and a **foresteria** (guest quarters; ☎ 0774 8 55 69; foresteria@benedettini-subiaco.it; per person €35, half/full board €43/48) where you can spend a comfortable and contemplative night. It's best to book ahead, as Benedictine clergy from around the world often make the pilgrimage here to work in the monastery's famous **library and archive** (↻ Mon-Fri & Sat morning).

From Subiaco, Benedict headed south until, it's said, three ravens led him to the top of **Monte Cassino**. Here, in 529, he founded the abbey that was to be his home until he died in 547. One of the medieval world's most important Christian centres, the monumental **abbey** (☎ 0776 31 15 29; admission free, parking €2; ↻ 9am-12.30pm & 3.30-5pm) has been destroyed and rebuilt several times throughout its history, most recently in 1953. During WWII the abbey was central to German efforts to stop the Allied push north. After almost six months of bitter fighting, the Allies finally bombed the abbey in May 1944 in a desperate attempt to break through.

Subiaco is easy to get to: by car simply take the A24 autostrada and follow the signs; by public transport take a Cotral bus (€3.10, 1½ hours, 29 daily) from Ponte Mammolo on metro line B. For Monte Cassino take the A1 autostrada south 135km or a train from Stazione Termini (€7.40, two hours, 23 daily).

goddess Diana and it was a favourite vacation spot of Emperor Caligula. On the shores of the lake, the **Museo delle Navi Romane** (☎ 06 939 80 40; Via Diana; admission €2; ↻ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) was built by Mussolini to house two ancient Roman boats (one 73m long, the other 71m), salvaged from the lake when it was partly drained between 1927 and 1932. These dated from Caligula's time but were tragically destroyed by fire in 1944 – what you see now are scale models of the originals.

**Trattoria la Sirena del Lago** (☎ 06 936 80 20; Via del Plebiscito 26, Nemi; meals €22; ↻ closed Mon) Sit down to local game and trout at this bustling trattoria.

**Pane e Tuttipani** (☎ 06 941 66 37; Via Mentana 1, Frascati; meals €20; ↻ Tue-Sun) A charming **enoteca** that serves excellent and well-priced food. After sampling the local tipples, buy a few bottles to take away with you.

**Hotel Pagnanelli Lucia** (☎ 06 936 14 22; Via A Gramsci 2, Castel Gandolfo; d €100) A modest two-star hotel with decent rooms at reasonable rates.

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 20km

**Direction** Southeast

**Travel time** 20 to 50 minutes

**Bus** From Rome's Anagnina station on metro line A, take the Cotral bus to Frascati (€1, 20 minutes, 35 per day on weekdays, fewer on weekends). From Frascati catch the Albano Laziale bus to get to Castel Gandolfo (€1.70, 40 minutes, hourly).

**Car** For Frascati and Grottaferrata take Via Tuscolana (SS215); for Castel Gandolfo and Albano Laziale follow Via Appia Nuova (SS7) south, following signs for Ciampino Airport.

**Train** Trains leave from Stazione Termini for Frascati (€1.90, 30 minutes, hourly), Castel Gandolfo (€1.90, 40 minutes, hourly) and Albano Laziale (€1.90, 50 minutes, hourly), from where you can catch a bus to Nemi.

## INFORMATION

**Tourist office** (☎ 06 942 54 88; iatfrascati@libero.it; Piazza Guglielmo Marconi 1, Frascati; ↻ 8.30am-1pm Mon & Tue, 9am-1pm Thu, 9am-1pm & 3.30-7pm Wed, Fri & Sat summer, 9am-1pm Mon, Wed, Thu & Sat, 9am-1pm & 3-6pm Tue & Fri winter)

## EATING & SLEEPING

**Antico Ristorante Pagnanelli** (☎ 06 936 00 04; Via A Gramsci 4, Castel Gandolfo; meals €55; ↻ Wed-Mon) With high-class cuisine, a 3000-label wine list and spectacular views over Lago di Albano, this restaurant is the business.

## SPERLONGA & SABAUDIA

The best of Lazio's beaches are south of Rome, near the regional border with Campania.

The small coastal town of **Sperlonga** is one of the area's most fashionable beach resorts. It's almost entirely given over to tourism, but the whitewashed **centro storico** is a cool hang-out (in summer, at least) and there are two inviting sandy beaches either side of a rocky promontory. The town is divided into two parts: medieval Sperlonga Alta is on top of the promontory; modern Sperlonga Bassa is at sea level.



There's a small **tourist office** (☎ 0771 52 10 82; info@litoralepontino.it; Corso San Leone 22; ⌚ 8am-2pm Mon-Fri, 2.30-5.30pm Tue & Thu) **behind the church at the top of the hill.**

Other than the beach, the town's main attraction is the **Museo Archeologico di Sperlonga** (☎ 0771 54 80 28; Via Flacca, km1.6; admission €2; ⌚ 8.30am-7.30pm), home to sculptures dating from the 2nd century BC and a cave with a circular pool used by the emperor Tiberius. The remains of his villa are in front of the cave.

Back 43km towards Rome, **Sabaudia** is not a particularly attractive place, with its Fascist architecture and modern holiday homes, but it is the centre of the **Parco Nazionale del Circeo**, an 800-hectare area of sand dunes, rocky coastline, forest and wetlands. The **visitor centre** (☎ 0773 51 13 85; www.parcocirceo.it; Via Carlo Alberto 107; ⌚ 9.30am-1pm & 5-7pm) can provide details on activities in the area, including fishing, bird-watching, walking and cycling.

## EATING & SLEEPING

**Gli Archi** (☎ 0771 5 43 00; Via Ottaviano 17, Sperlonga; meals €35) Signature dishes at this hill-top fish restaurant include *linguine agli scampi* (flat

## TRANSPORT

**Distance from Rome** 120km

**Direction** Southeast

**Travel time** 1½ to two hours

**Car** Take Via Pontina (SS148) south to Terracina and then the SS213.

**Bus** Cotral buses for Sabaudia (€3.80, two hours) leave from outside the Laurentina station on metro line B.

**Train** Take a regional train (not the Intercity) from Stazione Termini to Fondi (€5.60, 1¼ hours, about 20 daily); from here get the connecting Piazzoli Giorgio bus to Sperlonga (€1, 15 minutes, six daily).

spaghetti with scampi) and *zuppe di cozze* (mussel soup).

**Albergo Major** (☎ 0771 54 92 44; Via Romita I 4, Sperlonga; s €60-170, d €70-180; Ⓟ a ) Just off the main seafront road into town, the Major has decent rooms and excellent facilities for beach bunnies: tone up on your tan in the solarium before heading to the hotel's private beach area.

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# TRANSPORT

Rome is an easy place to get to. It's served by direct flights from across the world and hundreds of European connections. Once you're in the city, there's a comprehensive public transport system which makes getting around pretty simple.

Flights, tours, tickets and the like can be booked online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

## AIR Airlines

Rome is served by most of the world's major international airlines and by a growing number of low-cost operators. Most airlines have counters in the departure hall at Fiumicino airport (Leonardo da Vinci Airport; p282) and some have ticket offices in the city centre, usually on or around central Via Barberini.

Most domestic flights are operated by Italy's national carrier, **Alitalia** (% 06 22 22; [www.alitalia.it](http://www.alitalia.it)), although **Air One** (Map pp90–1; % 199 20 70 80; [www.flyairone.it](http://www.flyairone.it); Via Sardegna 14) and **Meridiana** (Map pp90–1; % 89 29 28; [www.meridiana.it](http://www.meridiana.it); Via Barberini 67) fly a number of routes.

International airlines with direct connections to Rome:

**Air Berlin** (AB; % 848 39 00 54; [www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com))

**Air Canada** (AC; % 800 871 27 786; [www.aircanada.com](http://www.aircanada.com))

**Air France** (AF; % 848 88 44 66; [www.airfrance.com](http://www.airfrance.com))

**Alitalia** (AZ; % 06 22 22; [www.alitalia.it](http://www.alitalia.it))

**American Airlines** (AA; % 06 660 53 169; [www.aa.com](http://www.aa.com))

**British Airways** (BA; % 199 71 22 66; [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com))

**Brussels Airlines** (SN; % 899 80 09 03; [www.brusselsairlines.com](http://www.brusselsairlines.com))

**Delta Air Lines** (DL; % 848 78 03 76; [www.delta.com](http://www.delta.com))

**EasyJet** (U2; % 899 67 67 89; [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com))

**Emirates** (EK; % 06 452 06 060; [www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com))

**Lufthansa** (LH; % 199 40 00 44; [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com))

**Malaysia Airlines** (MH; % 06 421 54 371; [www.malaysiaairlines.com](http://www.malaysiaairlines.com))

**Qantas** (QF; % 848 35 00 10; [www.qantas.com](http://www.qantas.com))

**Ryanair** (FR; % 899 67 89 10; [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com))

**Singapore Airlines** (SQ; % 06 478 55 360; [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com))

**Thai Air** (TG; % 06 47 81 31; [www.thaiair.com](http://www.thaiair.com))

## CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

### Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

### Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, supports the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

Travel websites worth checking for tickets:

**Cheap Tickets** ([www.cheaptickets.co.uk](http://www.cheaptickets.co.uk))

**Ebookers** ([www.ebookers.com](http://www.ebookers.com))

**Expedia** ([www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com))

**Opodo** ([www.opodo.com](http://www.opodo.com))

## Airports

Rome is served by two airports: the main international airport **Leonardo da Vinci** (FCO; % 06 659 51; [www.adr.it](http://www.adr.it)), better known as Fiumicino, and **Ciampino airport** (CIA; % 06 659 51; [www.adr.it](http://www.adr.it)).

Thirty kilometres from the centre of town, Leonardo da Vinci is divided into three terminals: Terminal A (for domestic flights), Terminal B (for domestic and international flights to Schengen countries) and Terminal C (for all other international flights). The terminals are within easy walking distance of each other in the main airport building.

Facilities at the airport include a post office, internet access (in Terminal A's Atahotel Executive Centre), some 140 shops, and a **left-luggage office** (h 7am-11pm) on the ground floor of Terminal C. To leave a bag costs €2 for up to seven hours and €3.50 for seven to 24 hours; luggage over 110cm long, or weighing more than 55kg, costs €6 per day. Make sure you

have your passport handy, as a photocopy will be made when you leave your luggage.

Ciampino, 15km southeast of the city centre, is used by low-cost airlines and charter operators. It's not a big airport but there's a steady flow of traffic and at peak times it can get extremely busy. Facilities are limited but you will find a post office and Banca di Roma.

## BICYCLE

The centre of Rome doesn't lend itself to cycling: there are steep hills, treacherous cobbled roads, and the traffic is terrible. Things improve on Sundays when much of the city centre (and Via Appia Antica) is usually closed to traffic.

If you want to pedal around town, pick up *andiamo in Bici a Roma* (€7.50), a useful map published by Lozzi & Rossi Editore, which details Rome's main cycle paths.

On Sunday, and weekdays after 9pm, you can take your bike on metro line B and the Lido di Ostia train (front carriage only), although you'll have to buy a separate ticket for it.

You can also carry bikes on some regional trains, paying a €3.50 supplement. On Inter-city and Eurocity/Euronight services the supplement is €5 on national routes and €10 on international journeys.

## GETTING INTO TOWN

### Fiumicino

The easiest way to get to and from Fiumicino is to take the train. The efficient *Leonardo Express* leaves from platform 24 at Stazione Termini and travels direct to the airport every 30 minutes from 5.52am until 10.52pm. It costs €11 (children under 12 free) and takes about 30 minutes. From Fiumicino, trains start at 6.35am and run half-hourly until 11.35pm.

If you want to get to Termini, don't take the train marked Orte or Fara Sabina. These slower trains stop at Trastevere, Ostiense and Tiburtina stations but not Termini. They cost €5.50 and run every 15 minutes (hourly on Sundays and public holidays) from 5.57am to 11.27pm, and from Tiburtina from 5.06am until 10.36pm. Journey time is 30 minutes to Ostiense and 45 minutes to Tiburtina.

Train tickets can be bought from vending machines in the arrivals hall and train station, from ticket offices, and from *tabacchi* (newsagents').

From outside the airport arrivals hall, **Terravision** (Map pp90-1; % 06 454 41 345; [www.terravision.eu](http://www.terravision.eu)) buses depart every two hours between 8.30am and 8.30pm, arriving at Via Marsala outside Stazione Termini. Going the other way buses run between 6.30am and 6.30pm. Tickets (single/return €7/12) are available online, on board, or from **Agenzia 365** (h 8am-8pm) at Stazione Termini.

During the night, **Cotral** (% 800 15 00 08; [www.cotralspa.it](http://www.cotralspa.it) in Italian) runs a bus from Stazione Tiburtina via Stazione Termini to Fiumicino. It departs Tiburtina at 12.30am, 1.15am, 2.30am and 3.45am, returning at 1.15am, 2.15am, 3.30am and 5am. Tickets, available on the bus, cost €7. Note that Tiburtina is not a safe place to hang around at night.

By car, follow signs for Roma out of the airport complex and onto the autostrada. Exit at EUR, following signs for the *centro*, to link up with Via Cristoforo Colombo, which will take you directly into the centre.

Official white or yellow taxis leave from outside the arrivals hall. The set fare to the city centre is €40, which is valid for up to four passengers and includes luggage.

## Hire

To rent a bike you'll have to leave a photo ID in lieu of a cash deposit or, in some cases, a credit card number. Reliable operators:

**Appia Antica Regional Park Information Point** (Map pp108-9; % 06 513 53 16; Via Appia Antica 58-60; per hr/day €3/10)

**Bici e Baci** (Map pp90-1; % 06 482 84 43; [www.bicibaci.com](http://www.bicibaci.com); Via del Viminale 5; per hr/day €3/9)

**Cyclo** (Map pp90-1; % 06 481 56 69; [www.scooterhire.it](http://www.scooterhire.it); Via Cavour 80; per day €10)

**Treno e Scooter** (Map pp90-1; % 06 489 05 823; [www.trenoescooter.191.it](http://www.trenoescooter.191.it); Piazza dei Cinquecento; per hr/day €5/10) Show a train ticket and you get a 20% discount on the first day's rental.

**Villa Borghese** (Map pp150-1; Largo Picasso; per hr €3)

## BUS & TRAM

Rome's buses and trams are run by **ATAC** (% 800 43 17 84; [www.atac.roma.it](http://www.atac.roma.it)). The **main bus station** (Map pp90-1) is in front of Stazione Termini on Piazza dei Cinquecento, where there's an **information booth** (h 7.30am-8pm). Other important hubs are at Largo di Torre Argentina, Piazza Venezia and Piazza San Silvestro. Buses generally run from about 5.30am until midnight,

with limited services throughout the night on some routes.

Useful routes:

**H** Stazione Termini, Via Nazionale, Piazza Venezia, Largo di Torre Argentina, Ponte Garibaldi, Viale Trastevere and into the western suburbs.

**8 Tram** Largo di Torre Argentina, Trastevere, Stazione Trastevere and Monteverde Nuovo.

**23** Piazzale Clodio, Piazza Risorgimento, Ponte Vittorio Emanuele II, Lungotevere, Ponte Garibaldi, Via Marmorata (Testaccio), Piazzale Ostiense and Basilica di San Paolo.

**40 Express** Stazione Termini, Via Nazionale, Piazza Venezia, Largo di Torre Argentina, Chiesa Nuova, Piazza Pia (for Castel Sant'Angelo) and St Peter's.

**64** Stazione Termini to St Peter's. It takes the same route as the 40 Express but is slower and usually more crowded.

**170** Stazione Termini, Via Nazionale, Piazza Venezia, Via del Teatro Marcello and Piazza Bocca della Verità (then south to Testaccio and EUR).

**175** Stazione Termini, Piazza Barberini, Via del Corso, Piazza Venezia, Via dei Fori Imperiali, Via di San Gregorio, Circo Massimo and Stazione Ostiense.

**492** Stazione Tiburtina, San Lorenzo, Stazione Termini, Piazza Barberini, Piazza Venezia, Corso Rinascimento, Piazza Cavour, Piazza Risorgimento and Cipro-Vatican Museums (metro line A).

Several private companies run shuttle services. **Airport Connection Services** (off Map pp130-1; % 06 338 32 21; [www.airportconnection.it](http://www.airportconnection.it); Via Angelo Fava 28) charges €39 for one or two people, €59 for four. **Airport Shuttle** (off Map pp130-1; % 06 420 14 507; [www.airportshuttle.it](http://www.airportshuttle.it); Piazza Imerio 67) operates minibus transfers to/from Fiumicino for €28/35 one way for one person then €6 for each additional passenger up to a maximum of eight.

All major car-hire companies are present at Fiumicino.

### Ciampino

For Ciampino your best bet is to take a shuttle bus. **Terravision** (Map pp90-1; % 06 454 41 345; [www.terravision.eu](http://www.terravision.eu)) buses depart from Via Marsala outside Stazione Termini two hours before each scheduled flight and from Ciampino soon after the arrival of flights. Buy your tickets (single/return €8/14) from **Agenzia 365** (h 8am-8pm) at Stazione Termini or at Ciampino airport. Alternatively, **SIT** (% 06 591 78 44; [www.sitbusshuttle.com](http://www.sitbusshuttle.com)) covers the same route, with regular departures from Termini between 4.30am and 11.30pm, and from Ciampino between 8.30am and 12.30am. Buy tickets (single/return €6/10) on board.

**Schiaffini** ([www.schiaffini.com](http://www.schiaffini.com)) runs two night services: from Termini at 4.30am and 4.50am, and from Ciampino at midnight and 12.30am. Get tickets (€5) on the bus.

Otherwise you can take one of the regular Cotral buses to the Anagnina metro station (about 15 minutes, €1), and then jump on the metro to Stazione Termini. Local orange buses run to Ciampino train station from where regular trains connect with Termini. **Airport Connection Services** (off Map pp130-1; % 06 338 32 21; [www.airportconnection.it](http://www.airportconnection.it); Via Angelo Fava 28) and **Airport Shuttle** (off Map pp130-1; % 06 420 14 507; [www.airportshuttle.it](http://www.airportshuttle.it); Piazza Imerio 67) also operate transfers. With the former you'll pay €39 for up to two people and €59 for four; with the latter €42 for two people, then €6 for each extra passenger.

By taxi the set rate to or from Ciampino is €30.

To hire a car you'll find all the major rental companies in the arrivals hall.

## TICKETS, PLEASE

Public transport tickets are valid on all Rome's bus, tram, metro lines, except for routes to Fiumicino airport. They come in various forms:

**BIT** (*biglietto integrato a tempo*, a single ticket valid for 75 minutes and one metro ride) €1

**BIG** (*biglietto integrato giornaliero*, a daily ticket) €4

**BTI** (*biglietto turistico integrato*, a three-day ticket) €11

**CIS** (*carta integrata settimanale*, a weekly ticket) €16

**Abbonamento mensile** (a monthly pass) €30

Children under 10 travel free.

To travel in Lazio your best bet is a daily BIRG (*biglietto integrato regionale giornaliero*) ticket. This allows unlimited travel on all city and regional transport, including buses, trains, trams and, in Rome, the metro. It's priced according to zones: the most expensive, zone 7, costs €10.50; the cheapest, zone 1, €2.50.

You can buy tickets at *tabacchi*, at newsstands and from vending machines at metro, bus and train stations. They must be purchased before you get on the bus or train and then validated in the yellow machine once on board, or at the entrance gates for the metro. You risk a €52 fine if you're caught without a validated ticket.

Note that the **Roma Pass** (p288) comes with a three-day travel pass valid on all transport (except for Cotral buses and national trains) within the city boundaries.

**590** Follows the route of metro line A and has special facilities for disabled passengers.

**660** Largo Colli Albani, Via Appia Nuova and Via Appia Antica (near Tomba di Cecilia Metella).

**714** Stazione Termini, Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore, Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano and Viale delle Terme di Caracalla (then south to EUR).

**910** Stazione Termini, Piazza della Repubblica, Via Piemonte, Via Pinciana (Villa Borghese), Piazza Euclide, Palazzetto dello Sport and Piazza Mancini.

Rome's night bus service comprises more than 20 lines, most of which pass Termini and/or Piazza Venezia. Departures are usually every 30 minutes with buses marked with an N after the number. Night bus stops have a blue owl symbol.

The most useful routes:

**29N** Piramide (Piazzale Ostiense), Ponte Vittorio Emanuele II, Piazza Risorgimento, Viale Belle Arti, Piazza Ungheria, Viale Regina Margherita, Piazza Porta Maggiore, Piazza Porta San Giovanni, Via Labicana and Piramide.

**40N** Follows the route of metro line B.

**55N** Follows the route of metro line A.

**78N** Piazzale Clodio, Piazzale Flaminio, Piazza Cavour, Corso Rinascimento, Largo di Torre Argentina, Piazza Venezia, Via Nazionale and Stazione Termini.

Long-distance national and international buses arrive at and depart from Stazione Tiburtina.

## National companies serving Rome:

**ARPA** (% 0862 41 28 08; www.arpaonline.it in Italian) For L'Aquila and Abruzzo.

**Bargagli** (% 057 778 62 23; www.bargagliautolinee.it in Italian) To/from Orvieto.

**Cotral** (% 800 15 00 08; www.cotralspa.it in Italian) For destinations in Lazio.

**Sulga** (% 0862 41 28 08; www.sulga.it in Italian) Runs to/from Perugia and Assisi.

## CAR & MOTORCYCLE

### Driving

Driving in Rome is a special experience: it's exhilarating, terrifying, fun and often pointless (gridlock is the norm in central Rome). Riding a scooter is hairier but gives you greater freedom and makes parking easier.

Most of the *centro storico* (historic centre) is closed to normal traffic. You're not allowed to drive in the centre from 6.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 2pm to 6pm Saturday unless you're a resident or have special permission. All 22 streets accessing the 'Limited Traffic Zones' (ZTL) are equipped with electronic-access detection devices. If you're staying in this zone, contact your hotel, which will fax your numberplate to the authorities, thus saving you a €68.25 fine. For further information, check www.sta.roma.it (in Italian) or call % 06 571 18 333.

Driving out of town can be costly. Tolls apply on autostradas and the price of petrol is high.

All EU driving licences are valid in Italy, except for the old-style green UK licences. If you have one of these, or a licence from a non-EU country, you'll need an International Driving Permit (IDP). Valid for a year, they're available from national motoring associations.

To ride a moped, motorcycle or scooter up to 125cc, the minimum age is 16 and a licence (a car licence will do) is required. For anything over 125cc you need a motorcycle licence. Helmets are compulsory.

Remember to drive on the right and overtake on the left, to wear seat belts and turn your headlights on outside of built-up areas. It's also compulsory to carry a warning triangle and fluorescent waistcoat in case of breakdown. The blood alcohol limit is 0.05%.

A good source of information is the **Auto-mobile Club d'Italia** (ACI; www.aci.it in Italian), Italy's national motoring organisation.

## Hire

### CAR

There's no point renting a car unless you're planning to get out of Rome, but if you want wheels you'll find all the major car-rental companies:

**Avis** (www.avisautonoleggio.it in Italian) central bookings (% 800 86 30 63); Ciampino airport (% 06 793 40 195); Fiumicino airport (% 06 650 11 531); Stazione Termini (% 06 481 43 73)

**Europcar** (www.europcar.com) central bookings (% 800 01 44 10); Ciampino airport (% 06 793 40 387); Fiumicino airport (% 06 650 10 287); Stazione Termini (% 06 488 28 54)

**Hertz** (www.hertz.it) Ciampino airport (% 06 793 40 616); Fiumicino airport (% 06 793 40 616); Stazione Termini (% 06 793 40 095)

**Maggiore National** (www.maggiore.it in Italian) central bookings (% 848 86 70 67); Ciampino airport (% 06 793 40 368); Fiumicino airport (% 06 650 10 678); Stazione Termini (% 06 488 00 49)

### MOTORCYCLE & MOPED

Average prices range from €50 per day for 125cc scooters to €95 for a 500cc motorcycle. Agencies include:

**Bici e Baci** (Map pp90–1; % 06 482 84 43; www.bicibaci.com; Via del Viminale 5)

**Cycto** (Map pp90–1; % 06 481 56 69; www.scooterhire.it; Via Cavour 80)

**I Bike** (Map pp150–1; % 06 322 52 40; Villa Borghese underground car park, 3rd sector, Via Vittorio Veneto 156)

**Treno e Scooter** (Map pp90–1; % 06 489 05 823; www.trenoescooter.191.it; Piazza dei Cinquecento) Show a train ticket and you get a 20% discount on the first day's rental.

## Parking

Parking in the city is no fun. Blue lines denote pay-and-display spaces with tickets available from meters (coins only) and *tabacchi*. Costs vary but in the centre expect to pay at least €1 per hour between 8am and 8pm (11pm in some parts). Traffic wardens are vigilant and fines of up to €68.25 are common. If you're really unlucky, you could find your car's been clamped or towed away. If so, call the **traffic police** (% 06 6 76 91) who can tell you where to collect it. You'll have to pay about €100 to get it back, plus a hefty fine.

The most convenient car park is at Villa Borghese (Map pp150–1); entry is from Piazzale Brasile at the top of Via Vittorio Veneto. There are also supervised car parks at Stazione Termini (Map pp90–1); at Piazzale dei Partigiani, just outside Stazione Roma-Ostiense (Map pp108–9); and at Stazione Tiburtina.

Expect to pay between €1.30 and €2.50 for the first three to four hours and roughly €16 per day.

## METRO

Rome's metro system is of limited value to visitors, with the two lines, A and B, bypassing much of the *centro storico*. The two lines traverse the city in an X-shape, crossing at Stazione Termini, the only point at which you can change from one line to the other. Trains run approximately every five to 10 minutes between 5.30am and 11.30pm (one hour later on Saturday). However, until 2008 or 2009, Line A is closing for engineering works at 9pm every night. To replace it there are two temporary bus lines: MA1 from Battistini to Arco di Travertino and MA2 from Viale G Washington to Anagnina.

For ticket details see the boxed text, Tickets Please, *opposite*.

For information on facilities for disabled travellers see p299.

## TAXI

Rome's taxi drivers are no better or worse than those in any other city. Some will try to fleece you, others won't. To minimise the

risk, make sure your taxi is licensed (it'll be white or yellow with the letters SPQR on the front door), and always go with the metered fare, never an arranged price (the set fares to and from the airports are an exception to this rule). Official rates are posted in the taxi and on [www.romaturismo.it](http://www.romaturismo.it) (click on Rome Welcomes You, Transportation, When in Town, Taxi).

Hailing a passing taxi doesn't work in Rome. You must either wait at a taxi rank or telephone for one. In the centre you'll find ranks at Stazione Termini, Largo di Torre Argentina, the Pantheon, Corso Rinascimento, Piazza Navona, Piazza di Spagna, Largo Goldoni, Piazza del Popolo, Piazza Venezia, the Colosseum, Piazza GG Belli in Trastevere and near the Vatican at Piazza Pio XII and Piazza Risorgimento. To book a taxi by phone, try the following:

**Cosmos** (☎ 06 8 81 77)

**La Capitale** (☎ 06 49 94)

**Pronto Taxi** (☎ 06 66 45)

**Radio Taxi** (☎ 06 35 70)

**Samarcanda** (☎ 06 55 51)

**Tevere** (☎ 06 41 57)

Note that if you phone for a taxi, the meter is switched on immediately and you pay from wherever the driver receives the call.

## TRAIN

Rome's main train station and transport hub is **Stazione Termini** (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 473 06 599; Piazza dei Cinquecento), from where there are regular trains to other European countries, all major Italian cities and many smaller towns.

On the main concourse, the **train information office** (Map pp90–1; h 7am–9.45pm) is helpful (English is spoken) but often very busy. To avoid the queues, you can get information online at [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com) (accessible through the Link option on the home page of [www.ferrovia dellostato.it](http://www.ferrovia dellostato.it)) or, if you speak Italian, by calling ☎ 89 20 21.

The station has the usual assortment of shops, snack bars and ATMs. In the hall parallel to platform 24 you'll find the tourist office and a hotel reservation service (see p246). The **left-luggage office** (h 6am–midnight) is on the lower ground floor under platform 24. To leave an item costs €3.80 for the first five hours, then €0.60 per hour for each additional hour.

Rome's second train station is Stazione Tiburtina, a short ride away on metro line B. Of the capital's eight other train stations, the most important are **Stazione Roma-Ostiense** (Map pp108–9) and **Stazione Trastevere** (Map pp108–9).

Apart from connections to Fiumicino airport, you'll probably only need Rome's overground rail network if you head out of town to the Castelli Romani (p278) or to Ostia (p266).

# DIRECTORY

## BUSINESS HOURS

Most shops in central Rome open between 9am and 7.30pm (or 9.30am and 8pm) Monday to Saturday. Some larger stores and supermarkets also open on Sundays, typically from 11am to 1pm and 4pm to 7pm. Many smaller, family-run shops stick to the traditional opening hours of 9am to 1pm and 3.30pm to 7.30pm (or 4pm to 8pm) Monday to Friday. Many food shops close on Thursday afternoons (winter) and Saturday afternoons (summer), while other shops tend to remain closed on Monday mornings. Many shops also close for two weeks in August.

Banks generally open from 8.30am to 1.30pm and from 2.45pm to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. In the centre some also open from 8.30am to 12.30pm on Saturday mornings. However, it's always possible to find an exchange office open (see [p293](#)).

Bars and cafés usually open from about 7.30am to 8pm. Some then stay open until 1am or 2am, catering to a nocturnal crowd. Many pubs open around noon for lunch and close at about 2am. Clubs (known as *discoteche* in Italian) open at about 10pm but the action rarely starts before midnight. Restaurants open noon to 3pm and 7.30pm to 11pm (later in summer). By law, restaurants are required to close for one day each week, although not all do.

Opening hours of the major sites vary enormously. Many of the big archaeological sites open from 9am until an hour before sunset. The big museums tend to open from around 9.30am to 7pm, although some might stay open later in summer or close earlier in winter (generally October to March). Note also that last admission to museums is generally an hour before the stated closing time and that many museums are closed on Mondays.

## CHILDREN

Rome is not especially child-friendly, with few specific attractions and a dearth of amenities. That said, Romans love children and they'll be welcome everywhere. Restaurants, for example, are very laid-back when it comes to accommodating children and, even if few offer a kids' menu, most will happily serve a

*mezza porzione* (child's portion) and provide *seggioloni* (highchairs). Some hotels can supply a *culla* (cot) on request.

Rome's museums and galleries are not ideal for rampaging toddlers as most are hands-off, cultural heavyweights with little light-hearted distraction. There are some exceptions, though, and we've listed these in the Top Picks for Children boxed text ([p113](#)).

Museums, galleries and archaeological sites are generally free for EU citizens under 18, and children under 10 years old travel free on all public transport. Major car-rental firms can provide children's safety seats subject to prior reservation.

For information about children's events check out *Roma C'è* or *Trovaroma*, the Thursday supplement to *La Repubblica* newspaper.

You can buy baby formula and sterilising solutions at all pharmacies. Disposable nappies (*pannolini* in Italian) are available from supermarkets and pharmacies.

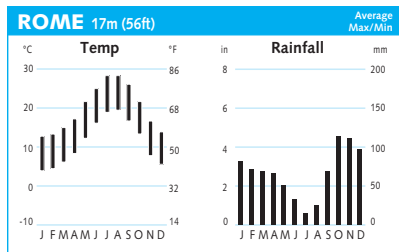
For more general information on how to keep the kids amused, see Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* by Cathy Lanigan, or log on to [www.travelwithyourkids.com](http://www.travelwithyourkids.com).

## Babysitting

Many top-end hotels provide child-minding facilities and most others can arrange babysitters. If you want an English-speaking sitter, contact *Angels* (Map [p60](#); ☎ 06 678 28 77; [staffinitaly@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:staffinitaly@yahoo.co.uk); Via dei Fienili 98). It charges about €15 per hour plus an agency fee of €20. For longer-term residents, the English *All Saints Church* (Map [pp90-1](#); ☎ 06 360 01 881; [www.allsaintsrome.org](http://www.allsaintsrome.org); Via del Babuino 153) runs a parent-toddler group called *Lady-birds*. It meets on Wednesday mornings between 10am and noon.

## CLIMATE

Rome enjoys a typically Mediterranean climate. Summers (from June to September) are hot and dry with temperatures often soaring to 37°C. High humidity is also common, particularly in July and August. Winter tends to be moderate, at least by northern European standards, with temperatures averaging around 10°C to 15°C between December and February. Snow, although not unheard of, is



extremely rare. Spring (March to June) and early autumn (September and October) are the best times to visit Rome, with lovely blue skies and mild temperatures. November and December are the two wettest months. For more on when to visit, see [p16](#).

## COURSES

Rome is a popular destination for foreign students. But even if you're not reading for a degree in art or architecture, there are loads of courses available for enthusiastic amateurs.

## Cooking

Cookery writer Diane Seed (*The Top One Hundred Pasta Sauces*) runs her [Roman Kitchen](#) (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 679 71 03; www.italiangourmet.com) cooking courses four or five times a year from her kitchen in Palazzo Doria Pamphilj (p86). There are one-day, two-day, three-day and week-long courses costing €200 per day or €1000 per week.

The Italian gastronomic organisation Gambero Rosso organises a range of cooking courses at its Rome complex [Citta del Gusto](#) (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 551 12 21; www.gamberorosso.it/portale/cdg/scuole; Via Enrico Fermi 161). Three- or six-hour courses (in Italian) focus on a particular dish or ingredient such as pasta, pizza or seafood. Lessons cost €75 for three hours.

## Language

There are hundreds of schools offering language courses in Rome. Costs vary from around €350 for a 40-hour, two-week course to around €3840 for a one-year course. Some schools also offer accommodation packages. Reputable schools include the following:

[Arco di Druso](#) (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 397 50 984; www.arcodidruso.com; Via Tunisi 4)

[Berlitz](#) (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 683 40 00; www.berlitz.it; Via di Torre Argentina 21)

[Centro Linguistico Italiano Dante Alighieri](#) (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 442 31 400; www.cclidante.it; Piazza Bologna 1)

[Italiaidea](#) (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 699 41 314; www.italiaidea.com; Via dei Due Macelli 47)

[Torre di Babele Centro di Lingua e Cultura Italiana](#) (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 442 52 578; www.torredibabele.com; Via Cosenza 7)

## Mosaic-Making

Turn your hand to mosaic-making at [Art Studio Café](#) (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 972 77 286; www.artstudiocafe.com in Italian; Via dei Gracchi 187a), an exhibition space, mosaics school and art 'laboratory'. One-day classes cost €120, two-day classes €240 and an intensive six-day course €800.

## Wine Tasting

Refine your palate a course run by the [International Wine Academy of Roma](#) (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 699 08 78; www.wineacademyroma.com; Vicolo del Bottino 8). Learn about Italy's wine regions and tone up your tasting skills on the €180 half-day (two-hour) course, which includes lunch or dinner. There are also one-day tours (€360) to local vineyards and tastings (€30 to €50) on Thursdays and Saturdays. Bookings essential.

## CUSTOMS REGULATIONS

If entering Italy from another EU country you can bring, duty-free, 10L of spirits, 90L of wine and 800 cigarettes. If you're arriving from a non-EU country the limits are 1L of spirits, 2L of wine, 50mL of perfume, 250mL of *eau de toilette*, 200 cigarettes and other goods up to a total of €175.50; anything over this limit must be declared on arrival and duty paid. On leaving the EU, non-EU citizens can reclaim any value-added tax on expensive purchases (see p297). You can bring up to €10,000 into Italy.

## DISCOUNT CARDS

There's a range of combination tickets available for serious sightseeing.

[Appia Antica Card](#) (adult/EU 18–24yr €6/3, valid 7 days) Entrance to the Terme di Caracalla, Mausoleo di Cecilia Metella and Villa dei Quintili.

[Museo Nazionale Romano Card](#) (adult/EU 18–24yr €7/3.50, valid 3 days) Entrance to all venues of the Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Altemps, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Terme di Diocleziano and Crypta Balbi. If there's an exhibition on at any of the museums there's an additional €3 supplement.

[Roma Archaeologia Card](#) (€20, valid 7 days) Entrance to the Colosseum, the Palatino, Terme di Caracalla, Museo Nazionale Romano (Palazzo Altemps, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, Terme di Diocleziano, Crypta Balbi), Mausoleo di Cecilia Metella and Villa dei Quintili.

[Roma Pass](#) (www.romapass.it; €20, valid 3 days) Includes free admission to two museums or sites (you choose from a list of 38) as well as reduced entry to extra sites, unlimited public transport (although it's not valid on trains to the airport), and reduced entry to other exhibitions and events. If you use this for more-expensive sights such as the Capitoline Museums and the Colosseum you'll save a considerable amount of money.

The cards can be purchased at any of the monuments or museums listed. The Roma Pass is also available at tourist information points.

Note that EU citizens aged between 18 and 24 or 25 generally qualify for a discount (usually half the normal fee) at most galleries and museums, while those under 18 and over 65 often get in free. In both cases you'll need proof of your age, ideally a passport or ID card.

## ELECTRICITY

The standard voltage in Italy is 220V, 50Hz, although some older buildings still use 125V. Power points have two or three holes and do not have their own switches; plugs have two or three round pins. Adaptors are available from electrical shops. For further electrical information log onto [www.kropla.com](#), where you'll find loads of useful tips on plugs, adaptors, transformers and other gizmos.

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

[Australia](#) (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 85 27 21, toll-free emergency number 800 87 77 90; www.italy.embassy.gov.au; Via Antonio Bosio 5; h 9am–5pm Mon–Fri)

[Austria](#) Embassy (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 844 01 41; www.austria.it; Via Pergolesi 3); Consulate (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 855 28 80; Viale Liegi 32; h 9am–noon Mon–Fri)

[Canada](#) Embassy (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 85 44 41; www.canada.it; Via Salaria 243); Consulate (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 85 44 41; Via Zara 30; h 8.30am–noon & 2–4pm Mon–Fri)

[France](#) Embassy (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 68 60 11; www.france-italia.it; Palazzo Farnese, Piazza Farnese); Consulate (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 68 60 11; Via Giulia 251; h 9am–12.30pm Mon–Fri)

[Germany](#) (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 49 21 31; www.rom.diplo.de; Via San Martino della Battaglia 4; h consular section 9am–noon Mon–Fri)

[Ireland](#) (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 697 91 21; www.ambasciata-irlanda.it; Piazza Campitelli 3; h consular section 10am–12.30pm & 3–4.30pm Mon–Fri)

[Netherlands](#) (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 322 86 001; www.olandait.it; Via Michele Mercati 8; h consular section 9am–noon Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri)

[New Zealand](#) (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 441 71 71; www.nzembassy.com; Via Zara 28; h 8.30am–12.45pm & 1.45–5pm Mon–Fri)

[Switzerland](#) (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 80 95 71; www.eda.admin.ch/roma; Via Barnaba Oriani 61; h consular section 9am–noon Mon–Fri)

[UK](#) (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 422 00 001; www.britishembassy.gov.uk; Via XX Settembre 80a; h consular section 9.15am–1.30pm Mon–Fri)

[USA](#) (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 4 67 41; www.usis.it; Via Vittorio Veneto 119–121; h consular section 8.30am–12.30pm Mon–Fri)

## EMERGENCY

Ambulance (☎ 118)

Fire (☎ 115)

Police (☎ 113)

## GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

At the start of 2007 it looked like it was going to be pink champagne all round. Italy had its first transsexual MP, Vladimir Luxuria, and gay rights were very much on the government's political agenda. Alas, little came of it. The Vatican thundered outrage at the prospect of legal rights for common-law couples (including same-sex couples) and the right-wing opposition loudly decried the death of family life. In the end the government wilted and the issue was dropped.

Fortunately, not all of Rome thinks like its politicians and priests. Homosexuality (legal over the age of 16) is well tolerated if rarely overt – public displays of affection are frowned upon and there's no openly gay part of town – and gay life thrives in Rome.

The main cultural and political organisation is the [Circolo Mario Mieli di Cultura Omosessuale](#) (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 541 39 85; www.mariomieli.it in Italian; Via Efeso 2a), which organises debates, cultural events and social functions. It also runs free AIDS/HIV testing and a care centre. Its website has information and listings of forthcoming events, both social and political, including Rome Pride, which takes place every

year in June. Mario Mieli also publishes a free monthly magazine, *AUT*, available from gay bookshops and organisations.

The national organisation for lesbians is the **Coordinamento Lesbiche Italiano** (CLI; [Map pp122–3](#); ☎ 06 686 42 01; [www.clrpb.it](#) in Italian; Buon Pastore Centre, cnr Via di San Francesco di Sales & Via della Lungara). Weekly political meetings of the **Centro Femminista Separatista** are held here, as well as conferences and literary evenings. There is also a women-only hostel, **La Foresteria Orsa Maggiore** (p260).

The lesbian bookshop **Libreria delle Donne: Al Tempo Ritrovato** ([Map pp122–3](#); ☎ 06 581 77 24; Via dei Fienaroli 31d) carries details of forthcoming events, as does the friendly **Libreria Babele** (p163), an excellent point of reference for gay and lesbian visitors.

Useful listings guides include *Pride* (€3.10), a national monthly magazine; the international gay guide *Spartacus*; and [GuidaGay.it](#) ([www.gay.it/guida/Lazio](#) in Italian) or [GayFriendlyItaly.com](#) ([www.gayfriendlyitaly.com/guide](#) in English), which carry listings for Rome and the Lazio region.

The following might also be of help:

**Arcigay Roma** ([Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 645 01 102; [www.arcigayroma.it](#); Via Goito 35b) The Roman branch of the national Arcigay organisation. Offers counselling, phone lines and general information.

**Arcilesbica** ([off Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 418 02 11; [www.arcilesbica.it](#); Viale Stefanini 15) Runs a help line (7pm to 9pm Monday evenings) and organises social get-togethers.

**Zipper Travel Association** ([Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 443 62 244; [www.zippertravel.it](#); Via del Castro Pretorio 30) A specialist gay and lesbian travel agency.

## HOLIDAYS

Most Romans take their annual holiday in August. This means that many businesses and shops close for at least part of the month, particularly around Ferragosto (Feast of the Assumption) on 15 August. Surprisingly, though, August is not considered high season by Rome's hoteliers, many of whom offer discounts to avoid empty rooms.

Italian schools close for three months in summer (from mid-June to mid-September), for three weeks over Christmas (generally the last two weeks of December and the first week of January) and for a week at Easter.

Public holidays:

**Capodanno** (New Year's Day) 1 January

**Epifania** (Epiphany) 6 January

**Pasquetta** (Easter Monday) March/April

**Giorno della Liberazione** (Liberation Day) 25 April

**Festa del Lavoro** (Labour Day) 1 May

**Festa della Repubblica** (Republic Day) 2 June

**Festa dei Santi Pietro e Paolo** (Feast of St Peter & St Paul) 29 June

**Ferragosto** (Feast of the Assumption) 15 August

**Festa di Ognisanti** (All Saints' Day) 1 November

**Festa dell'Immacolata Concezione** (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) 8 December

**Natale** (Christmas Day) 25 December

**Festa di Santo Stefano** (Boxing Day) 26 December

For further details of Rome's holiday calendar see [p141](#) and [p16](#).

## INTERNET ACCESS

The easiest way to access the internet is at an internet café. There are plenty to choose from, including the following:

**Internet Café** ([Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 478 23 051; Via Cavour 213; per hr €2-3; ⌚ 11am-1am Mon-Fri, 3pm-1am Sat & Sun) Rates vary according to the time of day; they're cheapest before 4pm.

**Internet Café** ([Map p103](#); ☎ 06 445 49 53; Via dei Marzucini 12; per hr €3; ⌚ 9.30am-1am Mon-Fri, 5pm-1am Sat & Sun) In San Lorenzo, east of Termini.

**New Internet Point** ([Map pp122–3](#); ☎ 06 583 33 316; Piazza Sonnino 27; per hr €4; ⌚ 8.30am-midnight) Over the road from the tourist information point in Trastevere.

**Splashnet** ([Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 493 82 073; Via Varese 33; per hr €1.50; ⌚ 8.30am-midnight) One of several laundrette-cum-internet points in the Termini area.

**Tritone Internet Point** ([Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 478 26 180; Via Zucchelli 1d; per hr €2.50; ⌚ 8am-2am) An international phone centre just off Via del Tritone.

**Yex Internet Point** ([Map pp74–5](#); Piazza Sant'Andrea della Valle 1; per hr €4.40; ⌚ 10am-midnight) Near Piazza Navona. All terminals have webcams.

Many hostels and budget hotels provide a computer for internet access.

Most travellers use free web-based email such as **Yahoo** ([www.yahoo.com](#)), **Hotmail** ([www.hotmail.com](#)) or **Google** ([www.google.com](#)), which can be accessed from any internet-connected computer in the world.

If you're bringing your own laptop or PDA, you shouldn't have many problems hooking up in your hotel room. Most midrange and top-end hotels now have dataports for

## WI-FI ACCESS

Free wi-fi access is available in much of central Rome. Hot spots cover all the major parks as well as Piazza Navona, Campo de' Fiori, Piazza di Spagna, the Pantheon, Campidoglio, the Trevi Fountain and Largo di Torre Argentina. To log on is easy: open your browser and fill in the registration form that automatically appears. You'll have to provide a mobile telephone number and make a quick call so that the server can verify your number, but once that's done you're entitled to one hour's free internet use per day. For further details see [www.romawireless.com](#).

Many hotels also offer wi-fi access, although it's rarely free.

**Telecom Italia** ([www.187.it](#) in Italian) sells prepaid wi-fi cards for €3 (one hour), €5 (five hours), €15 (15 hours) and €40 (seven days). Once you have the card, activate it by going online at [www.wifiarea.it](#) and filling in the form. It's in Italian but basically asks for your name, address, nationality (select *estera* unless you're Italian), user ID and password (both on the back of your card).

customer use and those that don't will usually let you plug your modem into the phone line. You might need a power transformer (to convert from 110V to 220V if your laptop isn't set up for dual voltage), an RJ-11 telephone jack that works with your modem, and a plug adaptor. Most electrical shops in Rome sell adaptors that convert from RJ-11 to the local three-pinned plug variety; more modern phone lines take the RJ-11 jack directly.

If you need an Internet Service Provider (ISP) with local dial-up numbers, try **AOL** ([www.aol.com](#)), **AT&T** ([www.att.com](#)) or **CompuServe** ([www.compuserve.com](#)).

## LEGAL MATTERS

The most likely reason for a brush with the law is to report a theft. If you do have something stolen and you want to claim it on insurance, you must make a statement to the police as insurance companies won't pay up without official proof of a crime.

The Italian **police** (☎ 113) is divided into three main bodies: the *polizia*, who wear navy-blue jackets; the *carabinieri*, in a black uniform with a red stripe; and the grey-clad *guardia di finanza* (fiscal police), responsible for fighting tax evasion and drug smuggling. If you run into trouble you're most likely to end up dealing with the *polizia* or *carabinieri*.

If you are detained for any alleged offence, you should be given verbal and written notice of the charges laid against you within 24 hours. You have no right to a phone call upon arrest but you can choose not to respond to questions without the presence of a lawyer. For serious crimes it is possible to be held without trial for up to two years.

Rome's **Questura** (police headquarters; [Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 4 68 61; Via San Vitale 15) is just off Via Nazionale. Around the corner, the **Ufficio Stranieri**

(Foreigners Bureau; [Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 468 63 216; Via Genova 2; ⌚ 24hr) is where you should go to report a theft or if you want to apply for a *permesso di soggiorno* (p300).

The voting age in Italy is 18, the age of consent is 16 (homosexual and heterosexual) and you can drive at 18. Minors under 16 can buy wine and beer but not *superalcolici* (spirits).

## Drink & Drugs

In February 2006 the Italian parliament approved tough antidrugs laws that abolished the distinction between hard and soft drugs, effectively putting cannabis on the same legal footing as cocaine, heroin and ecstasy. If caught with what the police deem to be a dealable quantity (5g of cannabis or more), you risk fines of up to €260,000 or prison sentences of between six and 20 years. At the time of writing, elements within the government were pushing to liberalise these laws but nothing had been settled.

The legal limit for a driver's blood-alcohol reading is 0.05%. Following a spate of road fatalities in summer 2007, authorities are beginning to stamp down hard on drink driving.

## MAPS

The Rome Tourist Board publishes an excellent pocket-sized city map, *Roma*, which is free at its **office** ([Map pp90–1](#); ☎ 06 48 89 91; Via Parigi 5; ⌚ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat). Tourist information kiosks around town also hand out *Charta Roma*, an A3-sized stylised map with the major sights and their opening hours. Otherwise there are plenty of maps available at newsstands and bookshops.

Lonely Planet's *Rome City Map* indicates all principal landmarks, as well as museums, shops and information points, and has a street index.



Editrice Lozzi publishes various city maps: the basic *Roma* (€5) lists all major streets and bus/tram routes; *Rome Today* (€5.50) comprises a city map, a map of the province of Rome and an enlarged plan of the city centre; and *Roma Metro-Bus* (€6) details the city's main transport routes.

For maps of Ancient Rome try the *Lozzi Archaeo Map* (€4), with a plan of the Roman Forum, Palatino and Colosseum, or *Ancient Rome* (€3.50), published by Electa.

The best road map is the 1:12,500 *Pianta Roma* (€7), published by the Touring Club Italiano.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

Italy has a public health system that is legally bound to provide emergency care to everyone. EU nationals are entitled to reduced-cost, sometimes free, medical care with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), available from your home health authority; non-EU citizens should take out medical insurance.

For emergency treatment, go straight to the *pronto soccorso* (casualty) section of an *ospedale* (public hospital), where it's also possible to receive emergency dental treatment. For less serious ailments call the local Guardia Medica (ask at your hotel or nearest tourist office for the number). Pharmacists will serve prescriptions and can provide basic medical advice.

If you need an ambulance call % 118.

## Emergency Rooms

The following hospitals offer emergency services.

**Ospedale Bambino Gesù** (Map pp130–1; % 06 6 85 91; Piazza di Sant'Onofrio 4) Rome's premier children's hospital; on the Gianicolo.

**Ospedale Fatebenefratelli** (Map pp74–5; % 06 6 83 71; Piazza Fatebenefratelli, Isola Tiberina)

**Ospedale San Camillo Forlanini** (off Map pp108–9; % 06 5 87 01; Circonvallazione Gianicolense 87)

**Ospedale San Giacomo** (Map pp150–1; % 06 3 62 61; Via A Canova 29) Off Via del Corso near Piazza del Popolo.

**Ospedale San Giovanni** (Map pp108–9; % 06 770 53 44; Via Amba Aradam 8) Near Piazza di San Giovanni in Laterano.

**Ospedale Santo Spirito** (Map pp130–1; % 06 6 83 51; Lungotevere in Sassa 1) Hospital near the Vatican; several languages spoken.

**Policlinico Umberto I** (Map p103; % 06 4 99 71, first aid 06 499 79 501; Viale del Policlinico 155) Rome's largest hospital, near Stazione Termini.

Specialist dental care is available at **Ospedale di Odontoiatria G Eastman** (Map p103; % 06 84 48 31; Viale Regina Elena 287b).

## Pharmacies

Marked by a green cross, *farmacie* (pharmacies) open from 8.30am to 1pm and 4pm to 7.30pm Monday to Friday and on Saturday mornings. Outside of these hours they open on a rotation basis, and all are legally required to post a list of places open in the vicinity. Night pharmacies are listed in daily newspapers and on [www.romaturismo.it](http://www.romaturismo.it).

If you think you'll need a prescription while in Rome, make sure you know the drug's generic name rather than the brand name.

There's a 24-hour **pharmacy** (Map pp90–1; % 06 488 00 19; Piazza dei Cinquecento 49) on the western flank of Piazza dei Cinquecento near Stazione Termini. In the station, you'll find a **pharmacy** (h 7.30am–10pm) on the lower-ground floor.

In the Vatican, the **Farmacia Vaticana** (Map pp130–1; % 06 698 83 422; h 8.30am–6pm Mon–Fri & 8.30am–1pm Sat), just inside the Porta Sant'Anna entrance, sells certain drugs that are not available in Italian pharmacies, and will fill foreign prescriptions (something local pharmacies can't do).

## MONEY

Italy is a member of the euro zone, along with Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. The seven euro notes come in denominations of €500, €200, €100, €50, €20, €10 and €5. The eight euro coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, five, two and one cents.

Exchange rates are given in the Quick Reference inside the front cover of this book. For the latest rates check out [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). For a guide to costs turn to p18.

## ATMs

ATMs (known in Italy as *bancomat*) are widely available in Rome and most will accept cards tied into the Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus and Maestro systems. As a precaution, though, check that the appropriate logo is displayed on the ATM before inserting your card. The daily limit for cash withdrawal is €250.

Remember that every time you withdraw cash there will be a transaction surcharge. Check with your own bank to see how much this is.

If an ATM rejects your card, don't despair. Try a few more before assuming the problem lies with your card.

## Changing Money

You can change your money in banks, at post offices or at a *cambio* (exchange office). There are exchange booths at Stazione Termini (Map pp90–1) and at Fiumicino and Ciampino airports. In the centre, there are numerous exchange booths, including the following:

**American Express** (Map pp90–1; % 06 6 76 41; Piazza di Spagna 38; h 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, 9am–12.30pm Sat)

**Thomas Cook Travelex** (Map pp90–1; % 06 420 20 150; Piazza Barberini 21a; h 9am–7pm Mon–Sat, 9.30am–5pm Sun)

Post offices and banks tend to offer the best rates. Commission fluctuates and depends on whether you're changing cash or cheques. A few banks also provide automatic exchange machines that accept notes from most major currencies. Exchange booths often advertise 'no commission' but offer worse rates.

Always make sure you have your passport, or some form of photo ID, at hand when exchanging money.

## Credit Cards

Virtually all midrange and top-end hotels accept credit cards, as do most restaurants and large shops. You can also use them to obtain cash advances at some banks. Some of the cheaper *pensioni* (guesthouses), trattorias and pizzerias accept nothing but cash.

Major cards such as Visa, MasterCard, Eurocard, Cirrus and Eurocheques are widely accepted. Amex is also recognised although it's less common than Visa or MasterCard.

The Amex office (above) can issue customers with new cards, usually within 24 hours and sometimes immediately, if they have been lost or stolen.

If your card is lost, stolen or swallowed by an ATM, telephone toll-free to have an immediate stop put on its use:

**Amex** (% 800 91 49 12)

**Diners Club** (% 800 86 40 64)

**MasterCard** (% 800 87 08 66)

**Visa** (% 800 87 72 32)

## Travellers Cheques

Increasingly overlooked by card-wielding travellers, travellers cheques are a dying breed. They are, however, an excellent form of backup, especially as you can claim a refund if they're stolen (provided, of course, that you've kept a separate record of their numbers).

American Express, Visa and Travelex cheques are the easiest to cash, particularly if in US dollars, British pounds or euros. Increasingly, though, banks are charging hefty commissions, even on cheques denominated in euros. Always take your passport as identification when cashing in travellers cheques.

If your cheques are lost or stolen, call the following:

**Amex** (% 800 91 49 12)

**MasterCard** (% 800 87 08 66)

**Travelex** (% 800 87 20 50)

**Visa** (% 800 87 41 55)

## NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES

### English

English-language newspapers and magazines are available from many city-centre newsstands. For magazines try Feltrinelli International (p175) or Messaggerie Musicali (p169), both of which have excellent selections.

British papers are generally available around lunchtime on the day of publication; for the Sunday papers you'll have to wait until Monday. Look for the *Guardian*, *Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Independent* and *Financial Times* as well as various tabloids and the *Economist*.

American publications usually appear a day after printing. You'll find the *International Herald Tribune* (Monday to Friday) with a four-page supplement, *Italy Daily*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal Europe*, *New York Times*, *Time* and *Newsweek*.

The major German, French and Spanish dailies and some Scandinavian papers can also be found.

Published in Rome, *Wanted in Rome* is a fortnightly English-language news and listings magazine aimed at Rome's foreign residents.

### Italian

Italian newspapers are long on domestic politics and tend to assume the reader is well versed in current affairs. At the very least they require a thorough knowledge of Italian

acronyms, a working understanding of Italian law and an almost total command of bureaucratic procedures.

*Il Messaggero*, Rome's local broadsheet, is good for news about the capital and has a weekly listings supplement. *Metro*, Milan-based *Corriere della Sera* is Italy's leading broadsheet, with good foreign and political coverage. Its main competitor is Rome's slightly left-of-centre *La Repubblica*, which publishes an excellent listings guide, *Trovatura*, every Thursday. The voice of the Vatican, *L'Osservatore Romano*, is published daily in Italian with weekly editions in English (on Wednesdays) and other foreign languages.

Italy's biggest-selling weekly magazine is *Famiglia Cristiana*, a predictably conservative periodical published by a Catholic publishing house. The two top current-affairs magazines are *L'Espresso* and *Panorama*, both of which provide in-depth analysis of domestic and international affairs.

The best listings guide in Rome, *Roma C'è* (€1.20), comes out every Wednesday, while *Porta Portese* (€1), a newspaper full of classified ads, is the place to look if you're after a flat or a secondhand car. It comes out on Tuesdays and Fridays. These are available at newsstands across the city.

## ORGANISED TOURS

### Boat

**BATELLI DI ROMA** [Map pp130-1](#)

☎ 899 199 925; [www.battellidiroma.it](#); tickets €12; ⚓ departures 11am, 12.30pm, 4pm & 5.30pm mid-Mar-mid-Nov, 11am & 4pm mid-Nov-mid-Mar This outfit runs daily boat tours along the Tiber. The 70-minute cruise departs from Ponte Sant'Angelo and covers the stretch down to the Isola Tiberina and then up to Ponte Risorgimento. There are also dinner cruises (€54, two hours 15 minutes) at 9pm on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays and, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, a round-trip service to Ostia Antica (€13, two hours 20 minutes) at 10am. Tickets are available online or at tourist information points (p299).

### Bus

**ROMA CRISTIANA** [Map pp130-1](#)

☎ 06 69 89 61; [www.romacristiana.orpn.net](#); 1-2/-3-day tickets adult €15/20/28, 7-12yr €7.50/10/14, under 6yr free; ⚓ every 30min 8.30am-7.30pm

Operated by the Vatican-sponsored Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, this hop-on-and-off open bus service runs two lines, both departing from Via della Conciliazione. Line A (San Pietro) follows a circular route up to Stazione Termini and back by way of the major churches and sites, including Santa Maria del Popolo, Museo e Galleria Borghese, Santa Maria degli Angeli, Santa Maria Maggiore, San Pietro in Vincoli, SS Cosma e Damiano, Santa Sabina, Santa Maria in Cosmedin, San Marco, the Pantheon and Chiesa Nuova. Line B (San Paolo) stops off at 22 sites in Trastevere, the Gianicolo, Via Ostiense, Via Appia Antica and San Giovanni before returning to the Vatican.

There's a multilingual commentary and tickets are available on board the buses.

**TRAMBUS** [Map pp90-1](#)

☎ 800 281 281; [www.trambusopen.com](#); Piazza dei Cinquecento

Trambus operates two tour buses: the 110open and the Archeobus.

The **110open** (adult/under 5yr/6-12yr €16/free/7; ⚓ every 10min 8.40am-7.40pm) is an open-top double-decker bus that departs from the main bus station outside Stazione Termini (platform C) and stops at the Quirinale, Colosseum, Bocca della Verità, Piazza Venezia, Piazza Navona, St Peter's, Piazza Cavour, the Ara Pacis, Trevi Fountain and Via Vittorio Veneto. Tickets, available on board or from the ticket office on platform E of Piazza dei Cinquecento, are valid for the day and allow you to hop on and off as you please. There's a multilingual host on board as well as an audioguide in six languages. Journey time is two hours.

**Archeobus** (adult/under 5yr €10/free; ⚓ every 40min 9am-4pm) is another stop-and-go bus, which takes sightseers down Via Appia Antica, stopping at 16 points of archaeological interest along the way. These include Piazza Venezia, Bocca della Verità, Circo Massimo, Terme di Caracalla, Porta San Sebastiano, Catacombe di San Callisto and San Sebastiano, Mausoleo di Cecilia Metella and Villa dei Quintili. The bus departs from the main bus terminus at Stazione Termini and tickets are available as for the 110open service.

You can purchase a joint ticket for both the 110open and Archeobus for €24 (valid two days). If you have a Roma Pass (p289) you qualify for a €3 discount on the 110open service and €2 on the Archeobus.

## Cycling

**LANDIMENSION TRAVEL** [Map pp108-9](#)

☎ 06 775 91 009; [www.landimensiontravel.it](#); Via Ostilia 10; per person 2/3 people €105/75, 4-5 people €62, 6-8 people €50

Landimension Travel's three-hour electric bike tours cover one of four itineraries: Trastevere and Environs, Ancient Rome, Appia Antica or Classical Rome. All groups are accompanied by experienced guides and equipment is provided.

## Walking & Running

**CONTEXT IN ROME** [Map pp90-1](#)

☎ 06 482 09 11; [www.contexttravel.com](#); Via Baccina 40

Offering a long list of thematic walks, ranging from food and wine jollies to art and architecture tours, Context in Rome has most subjects covered. Walks are in small groups led by expert guides, often American students specialising in art history and archaeology. Prices vary but bank on about €55 per person for a three-hour walk, €65 for four hours. A private visit to the Vatican Museums costs €275 per person. Booking is essential.

**DARK ROME** [off Map pp150-1](#)

☎ 338 500 64 24; [www.darkrome.com](#); Via Seravalle 27; tours €18; ⚓ 9pm daily Mar-Oct, 9pm Sun, Tue, Wed, Fri & Sat Nov-Feb

Trawl through Rome's bloody underbelly on one of these original tours. You'll visit the sites of famous murders, miracles and supernatural mysteries. The 1½-hour night walks depart from Corso Vittorio Emanuele II.

**ENJOY ROME** [Map pp90-1](#)

☎ 06 445 18 43; [www.enjoyrome.com](#); Via Marghera 8

A friendly and efficient private tourist office, Enjoy Rome organises various walks for the budget traveller. Three-hour tours (under/over 26 €18/24) cover Ancient Rome (by day or night), the Vatican, Trastevere and the Jewish Ghetto. Tours to the catacombs and the Appian Way (€35/40) and the Vatican cost extra to cover entrance fees. All guides are native or fluent English speakers.

**SIGHTJOGGING**

☎ 347 335 31 85; [www.sightjogging.it](#) If you're fit and in a hurry, sightjogging is for you. As the name suggests, it consists

of seeing the sights on the run. A trainer collects you from your hotel and runs you round one of 10 routes, each one centred on a specific area (eg St Peter's, Villa Borghese, Piazza Navona, Trastevere, Campidoglio). The routes are graded for difficulty and are all between 5.2 and 6.5 miles. Prices range from €84 per hour for a solo tour to €168 for a group of four. Booking is essential.

**THROUGH ETERNITY CULTURAL ASSOCIATION** [Map pp108-9](#)

☎ 06 700 93 36; [www.througheternity.com](#); Via Sinuessa 8

Another reliable operator, offering various itineraries led by English-speaking experts. Walks include a group twilight tour of Renaissance and baroque Rome (per person €25, 2½ hours), the Vatican Museums and St Peter's Basilica (per person €46, five hours), and a full-day Essence of Rome tour (per group €380, seven hours, groups of up to five people).

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Rome's historic cityscape, bright light and hilly terrain make it a photographer's dream. Film and video equipment are widely available, but most people now use digital cameras. If you're shooting digitally check that you have enough memory to store your snaps – two 128MB cards will probably be enough. If you do run out your best bet is to burn your photos onto a CD, something that many processing labs and internet cafés will do for you.

As a general rule, the soft light in the late afternoon photographs better than the sharp glare in the morning. For more photo tips check out Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography* by Richard I'Anson.

Although you'd never know it from the flashes going off around you, flash photography is banned at most museums, galleries and churches.

## POST

The butt of much criticism, *Poste Italiane* (☎ 803 160; [www.poste.it](#)) is not as reliable as it could be but has improved much in recent years. The Vatican postal system, on the other hand, has long enjoyed a reputation for efficiency. Note that to use the Vatican post you must use a Vatican stamp.

Stamps (*francobolli*) are available at post offices and authorised tobacconists (look for

the official *tabacchi* sign: a big 'T', usually white on black). Tobacconists keep regular shop hours.

Rome's **main post office** (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 697 37 213; Piazza di San Silvestro 19; 8.30am–6.30pm Mon–Fri, 8.30am–1pm Sat) is the place to pick up *poste restante* (*fermo posta*) mail. This should be addressed to John Smith, c/o Ufficio Postale Centrale, Fermo Posta, Piazza di San Silvestro, 00187, Roma. Amex card or travellers cheque holders can also use the free client mail-holding service at the Amex office (p293). In both cases take your passport when you go to pick up mail.

There are local post offices in every district of the city. Opening hours vary but are typically 8.30am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 8.30am to 11.50am on Saturday. All post offices close two hours earlier than normal on the last business day of each month.

There's a **Vatican post office** (Map pp130–1; ☎ 06 698 83 406; Piazza San Pietro; 8.30am–7pm Mon–Fri, 8.30am–6pm Sat) on the southern side of Piazza San Pietro.

## Rates

Standard postal rates depend on the weight and destination of the letter. Letters up to 20g cost €0.65 to Zone 1 (Europe and the Mediterranean Basin), €0.85 to Zone 2 (other countries in Africa, Asia and America) and €1 to Zone 3 (Australia and New Zealand). Delivery is guaranteed to Europe within three days and to the rest of the world within four to eight days.

For more important items, use registered mail (*raccomandata*), which costs €3.45 to Zone 1, €3.65 to Zone 2 and €3.80 to Zone 3.

## RADIO

Italy's national broadcaster, RAI, has three stations: RAI 1 (1332AM or 89.7FM), RAI 2 (846AM or 91.7FM) and RAI 3 (1107AM or 93.7FM). They play a mix of chat shows, sport, news and music, particularly classical and jazz.

For a faster beat tune into one of the many commercial stations that jam the capital's airwaves. Popular outfits include Radio Centro Suono (101.3FM); Radio Kiss Kiss (97.2FM); Radio Città Futura (97.7FM), which broadcasts the BBC World Service for an hour at 10pm daily and then from 3am to 6am; and Radio Capital (95.8FM).

Vatican Radio (1530AM or 105FM; www.vaticanradio.org) is the official mouthpiece

of the Church, broadcasting online and in various languages, including English.

For an insight into current affairs, Italian speakers can log onto <http://repubblicaradio.repubblica.it> and listen to the online radio station of newspaper *La Repubblica*.

## RELOCATING

When you relocate to Rome there's a certain amount of paperwork you'll need to deal with. Exactly what depends on whether you're an EU citizen or not – it's best to check at an Italian consulate before travelling.

For information regarding visas and the *permesso di soggiorno* (permit to stay) see p300.

On arrival in Rome you'll need to get a tax number (*codice fiscale*). Surprisingly, these are very easy to get – simply go to your nearest tax office (*ufficio delle entrate*) with your passport and *permesso di soggiorno* and fill in a form. The number will then be issued within a few days.

To get residency (*certificato di residenza*), for which you'll need an address, take your passport and *permesso di soggiorno* to the registry office (*ufficio anagrafe*) at your local council office (*circoscrizione*) and complete a residency request form. A few days later you'll be visited by a traffic warden (*vigile urbano*) to check that you're living at your stated address.

If you're planning to drive you'll need to sort out your driver's licence. EU licence holders can use their home licence for a year, after which they'll need to convert it to an Italian licence. Holders of non-EU licences will need to get theirs converted straightaway and might have to sit a driving test. It's quite a process converting your licence, involving long queues at the traffic-control authority (*motorizzazione*) and plenty of head-scratching. Rather than go it alone, you'd be well advised to do it through an *ACI* (Automobile Club d'Italia; www.aci.it in Italian) branch office, although this does cost more.

Finding somewhere to live can be hard work. Rental accommodation is much in demand and competition for flats is fierce. The best way is through a friend or contact. If you don't have anyone who can help, look out for *affittasi* (to rent) signs or check out the local press. For more information see the Longer-Term Rentals section in the Sleeping chapter (p246).

For further tips check out [www.justlanded.com](http://www.justlanded.com), which has loads of concise and clear information.

## STOP, THIEF

The greatest risk visitors face in Rome, and it is a very real risk, is from pickpockets and thieves. There's no reason for paranoia but you need to be aware that the problem exists.

Pickpockets follow the tourists, so watch out around the Colosseum, Piazza di Spagna, Piazza San Pietro and Stazione Termini, particularly the bus stops on Via Marsala, where thieves prey on disorientated travellers fresh in from Ciampino airport. Crowded public transport is another hot spot – the 64 Vatican bus is notorious. If travelling on the metro, try to use the end carriages, which are usually less crowded.

A money belt with your essentials (passport, cash, credit cards) is a good idea. However, to avoid delving into it in public, carry a wallet with a day's cash. Don't flaunt watches, cameras and other expensive goods. If you're carrying a bag or camera, wear the strap across your body and away from the road – moped thieves can swipe a bag and be gone in seconds. Be careful when you sit down at a street-side table – never drape your bag over an empty chair by the road or put it where you can't see it.

Beware of gangs of dishevelled-looking kids waving newspapers and demanding attention. In the blink of an eye, a wallet or camera can go missing. If you notice that you've been targeted, either take evasive action or shout '*va via!*' (go away!) in a loud, angry voice. Remember also that some of the best pickpockets are well dressed.

Cars, particularly those with foreign numberplates or rental-company stickers, also provide rich pickings for thieves. Try removing or covering the stickers or leaving a local newspaper on the seat. Never leave valuables in your car – in fact, try not to leave anything on display if you can help it and certainly not overnight. It's a good idea to pay extra to leave your car in supervised car parks.

A more insidious form of theft to watch out for is short-changing. One popular dodge goes as follows: you pay for a €4 *panino* (bread roll) with a €20 note. The cashier then distractedly gives you a €1 coin and a €5 note before turning away to carry on their conversation. If you just wait chances are that the €10 note you're owed will appear without a word being said.

In case of theft or loss, always report the incident to the police within 24 hours and ask for a statement, otherwise your travel-insurance company won't pay out.

## SAFETY

Rome is not a dangerous city but petty crime is rife (see the boxed text, above).

Road safety is also an issue. The highway code is obeyed with discretion so don't take it for granted that cars and scooters will stop at pedestrian crossings, or even at red lights. The only way to cross the road is to step confidently into the traffic and walk across, ideally in a group, best of all with a nun.

For issues facing lone women travellers, see p300.

## TAXES & REFUNDS

A value-added tax of around 20%, known as IVA (Imposta di Valore Aggiunto), is slapped on just about everything in Italy. If you are a non-EU resident and you spend more than €155 on a purchase, you can claim a refund when you leave the EU. The refund only applies to purchases from affiliated retail outlets that display a 'Tax Free for Tourists' sign. You have to complete a form at the point of sale, then get it stamped by Italian customs as you leave. At major airports you can then get an immediate cash refund; otherwise it will be refunded to your credit card. For more information pick

up a pamphlet on the scheme from participating stores.

Note also that under Italian tax law you are legally required to get a receipt for any purchase you make. Although it's highly unlikely, you could, in theory, be asked by an officer of the *guardia di finanza* (fiscal police) to produce a receipt immediately after you leave a shop. Without one, you face a fine of up to €155.

## TELEPHONE

### Domestic Calls

Rates, particularly for long-distance calls, are high. A local call from a public phone costs €0.10 every minute and 10 seconds. For a long-distance call within Italy you pay €0.10 when the call is answered and then €0.10 every 57 seconds. These peak rates apply from 8am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturday.

Rome's area code is 06. Area codes are an integral part of all Italian phone numbers, meaning that you must always use them even when calling locally. Mobile-phone numbers begin with a three-digit prefix such as ☎ 330; toll-free numbers are known as *numeri verdi*

and usually start with % 800; national-rate numbers start with % 848, % 899, % 199 or % 166. Some six-digit national-rate numbers are also in use (such as those for Alitalia, rail and postal information).

For directory inquiries, dial % 892 412.

## International Calls

Direct international calls can easily be made from public telephones by using a phone card. Dial % 00 to get out of Italy, then the relevant country and area codes, followed by the telephone number.

A three-minute call to a landline in most European countries and North America costs about €0.85, to Australasia €2.85. From a public payphone it costs more. You are better off using your country's direct-dialling services (such as AT&T in the USA and Telstra in Australia) paid for at home-country rates. Get the access numbers before you leave home. Alternatively, try making calls from cheap-rate call centres or using international calling cards, often on sale at newspaper stands.

To make a reverse-charges (collect) international call from a public telephone, dial % 170. All phone operators speak English. In Italy, the number for international directory inquiries is % 4176.

To call Rome from abroad dial the international access number (usually 00), Italy's country code (39) and then Rome's area code (06), including the leading 0.

## Mobile Phones

Italy is one of the most mobile-saturated countries in the world. Phones operate on the GSM 900/1800 network, which is compatible with the rest of Europe and Australia but not with the North American GSM 1900 or Japanese systems (although some GSM 1900/900 phones do work here).

If you have a GSM dual- or tri-band phone that you can unlock (check with your service provider), it can cost as little as €10 to activate a prepaid (*prepagato*) SIM card in Italy. **TIM** (Telecom Italia Mobile; www.tim.it), **Wind** (www.wind.it) and **Vodafone** (www.vodafone.it) all offer SIM cards and have retail outlets across town. To recharge a card, simply pop into the nearest outlet or buy a charge card (*ricarica*) from a tobacconist. Per-minute call rates are typically about €0.35 to Italian fixed phones and €0.50 to Europe and the US. When you buy a card make sure you have your passport with you.

## Public Phones

Telecom Italia is the largest telecom company in Italy and its silver public payphones are liberally scattered about town. Most work and most take telephone cards (*schede telefoniche*), although you'll still find some that accept coins or credit cards. You can buy phonecards (€5, €10 or €20) at post offices, tobacconists and newsstands. Before you use them you need to break off the top left-hand corner of the card.

There are cut-price call centres all over Rome. These are run by various companies and the rates are lower than Telecom payphones for international calls. Alternatively, ask about international calling cards at newsstands and tobacconists. They can be hit-and-miss but are sometimes good value.

## Fax

Major post offices offer fax services; otherwise, there are numerous private services, usually in tobacconists and stationery stores.

## TIME

Italy is in a single time zone, one hour ahead of GMT. Daylight-saving time, when clocks move forward one hour, starts on the last Sunday in March. Clocks are put back an hour on the last Sunday in October.

Italy operates on a 24-hour clock, so 6pm is written as 18:00.

## TOILETS

Rome is not a good place to get caught short. Public toilets are not widespread; some estimates claim that there are fewer than 40 in the whole city. The best thing to do is to nip into a café or bar, all of which are required by law to have a loo. Very few, however, seem to supply loo paper. There are toilets at the following places:

**Colosseum** (Map p60; h 8.30am-4.30pm)

**Piazza di San Silvestro** (Map pp90-1; h 10am-7.40pm)

**Piazza di Spagna** (Map pp90-1; h 10am-7.40pm)

**Stazione Termini** (Map pp90-1; admission €0.70; h 24hr)

## TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist information is easy to come by in Rome and in most places you'll find someone who speaks English. The following are all helpful.

**Centro Servizi Pellegrini e Turisti** (Map pp130-1; % 06 698 81 662; Piazza San Pietro; h 8.30am-6.30pm Mon-Sat) The Vatican's official tourist office.

**Enjoy Rome** (Map pp90-1; % 06 445 18 43; www.enjoyrome.com; Via Marghera 8a; h 8.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-2pm Sat) An excellent private tourist office that arranges guided tours, books accommodation and publishes the useful *Enjoy Rome* guide.

**Meridiana Information Point** (Map pp150-1; % 06 853 04 242; www.villaborghese.it; Viale dell'Uccelliera 35; h 9am-5pm daily year-round, until 7pm Fri-Sun Apr-Sep) For information on Villa Borghese.

**Rome Tourist Board** (APT) City (Map pp90-1; % 06 48 89 91; www.romaturismo.it; Via Parigi 5; h 9am-7pm Mon-Sat); Fiumicino Airport (Terminal B, International Arrivals; h 8.15am-7pm) Has loads of literature on accommodation, itineraries and activities.

The Comune di Roma runs a **multilingual tourist infoline** (% 06 820 59 127; h 9.30am-7.30pm) and publishes two useful monthly listings pamphlets: *Live in Roma* and *L'Evento*. These and other information (including maps) can be picked up at the *comune's* tourist information points:

**Castel Sant'Angelo** (Map pp130-1; % 06 688 09 707; Piazza Pia; h 9.30am-7.30pm)

**Fiumicino Airport** (% 06 659 54 471; Terminal C, International Arrivals; h 9am-7pm)

**Piazza dei Cinquecento** (Map pp90-1; % 06 478 25 194; h 11am-6pm) In a glass pavilion in front of Stazione Termini.

**Piazza Navona** (Map pp74-5; % 06 688 09 240; h 9.30am-7.30pm) Near Piazza delle Cinque Lune.

**Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore** (Map pp90-1; % 06 474 09 55; Via dell'Olmata; h 9.30am-7.30pm)

**Stazione Termini** (Map pp90-1; % 06 489 06 300; h 8am-9pm) In the hall that runs parallel to platform 24.

**Trastevere** (Map pp122-3; % 06 583 33 457; Piazza Sonnino; h 9.30am-7.30pm)

**Trevi Fountain** (Map pp90-1; % 06 678 29 88; Via Marco Minghetti; h 9.30am-7.30pm) Nearer Via del Corso than the fountain.

**Via dei Fori Imperiali** (Map p60; % 06 699 24 307; Piazza del Tempio della Pace; h 9.30am-7.30pm)

**Via Nazionale** (Map pp90-1; % 06 478 24 525; h 9.30am-7.30pm) In front of Palazzo delle Esposizioni.

If you need practical information, the **free call centre** (% 06 06 06) operated by the *comune* is

incredibly useful. The centre is staffed for 24 hours every day of the year and there are English, French, Arab, German, Spanish, Italian and Chinese speakers available between the hours of 4pm and 7pm. They can answer any question along the lines of 'where's the nearest hospital?', 'where am I allowed to park?' or 'when are the underground trains running?'.

## TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Rome is not an easy city for travellers with disabilities. Cobble streets, blocked pavements and tiny lifts make life difficult for the wheelchair-bound, while the relentless traffic can be disorientating for partially sighted travellers or those with hearing difficulties.

Getting around on public transport remains difficult, although efforts are being made to improve accessibility. On metro Line B all stations have disabled facilities except for Termini, Circo Massimo, Colosseo and Cavour. Metro Line A is pretty much off-limits, although bus 590 covers the same route and is wheelchair-accessible. Rome's newer buses and trams can generally accommodate wheelchairs.

If travelling by train, the **Centro di Assistenza Disabili** (Assistance Centre for the Disabled; Map pp90-1; % 06 488 17 26; h 7.30am-8.30pm) on the main concourse at Stazione Termini can provide information on wheelchair-accessible trains and help with transport in the station. Contact the office 24 hours ahead if you know you're going to need assistance. There's a similar office at **Stazione Tiburtina** (% 06 473 07 184).

Airline companies should be able to arrange assistance at airports if you notify them of your needs in advance.

Some taxis are equipped to carry passengers in wheelchairs; ask for a taxi for a *sedia a rotelle* (wheelchair). For contact numbers, see p285.

For information on public transport contact **ATAC** (% 800 154 451; www.atac.roma.it; h 9am-5pm Mon-Fri).

Museums, galleries and churches equipped for wheelchair-bound travellers are marked with a wheelchair icon (♿) in the Neighbourhoods chapter.

## Organisations

The best point of reference is **Consorzio Cooperative Integrate** (COIN; % 06 712 90 11; www.coinsociale.it),

which can provide information about services for travellers with disabilities, including transport and museum access. It operates a toll-free telephone **help line** (% 800 27 10 27; h 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat).

Other useful organisations:

**Museum** (% 06 541 02 88; www.assmuseum.it) A voluntary group that organises visits to galleries and museums. On some of these visits you're allowed to touch the exhibits and Braille notes are provided.

**Roma per Tutti** (% 06 571 77 094; www.romaper tutti.it in Italian) A council-backed venture to provide assistance and free guided museum visits.

## VISAS

EU citizens do not need a visa to enter Italy. Nationals of some other countries, including Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and the USA, do not need visas for stays of up to 90 days in Italy, or in any Schengen country.

Italy is one of the 15 signatories of the Schengen Convention, an agreement whereby participating countries abolished customs checks at common borders. The Schengen countries are Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

The standard tourist visa for a Schengen country is valid for up to 90 days. As a rule, a Schengen visa issued by one Schengen country is valid for travel in other Schengen countries, although it's always worth checking as individual countries may impose additional restrictions on certain nationalities. You must apply for a Schengen visa in your country of residence and you can apply for no more than two in any 12-month period. They are not renewable inside Italy.

Technically all foreign visitors to Italy are supposed to register with the local police within eight days of arrival. However, if you're staying in a hotel you don't need to bother as the hotel does this for you – this is why they always take your passport details.

Up-to-date visa information is available on [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) – follow links through to the Italy destination guide.

## Permesso di Soggiorno

A *permesso di soggiorno* (permit to stay) is needed if you plan to study, work (legally) or live in Italy. It's required by all non-EU

nationals who stay in Italy longer than three months. In theory non-EU citizens should apply for one within eight days of arriving in Italy, but in practice few people do. EU citizens do not require a *permesso di soggiorno*.

To get one you'll need a valid passport, containing a stamp with your date of entry into Italy (ask for this as it's not automatic); a photocopy of your passport; a study visa if necessary; four passport-style photographs; proof of your ability to support yourself financially (ideally a letter from an employer or school/university); and a €14.92 official stamp (formerly known as a *marca da bollo*, now called a *contrassegno telematico*), available from authorised tobacconists.

Although correct at the time of writing, the documentary requirements change periodically so always check before you join the inevitable queue.

You can apply at the **Ufficio Stranieri** (Foreigners Bureau; [Map pp90-1](#); % 06 468 63 216; Via Genova 2; h 24hr; at your nearest *commissariato* (police station); or at major post offices.

## Study Visas

Non-EU citizens who want to study at a university or language school in Italy must have a study visa. These can be obtained at your nearest Italian embassy or consulate. You will normally require confirmation of your enrolment, proof of payment of fees and proof that you can support yourself financially. The visa covers only the period of the enrolment. This type of visa is renewable within Italy but, again, only with confirmation of ongoing enrolment and that you are still financially self-supporting (bank statements are preferred).

## Work Visas

To work in Italy all non-EU citizens require a work visa. Apply to your nearest Italian embassy or consulate. You'll need a valid passport, proof of health insurance and a work permit. The work permit is obtained in Italy by your employer and then forwarded to you prior to your visa application. For more on work permits, see [opposite](#).

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Rome is not a dangerous city for women, but those travelling alone should use their common sense. There are no particular no-go areas in the centre; even the notorious area around Termini is much improved in recent

years, although lone women might want to avoid it late at night.

The most common source of discomfort is harassment, which is sadly a real issue in Rome. Lone women may find it difficult to remain alone as local lotharios try it on with exasperating insistence. This might be flattering at the beginning but can soon become a real pain. The best response is to ignore unwanted approaches, but if that doesn't work politely tell your stalker that you are waiting for your husband (*marito*) or boyfriend (*fidanzato*) and, if necessary, walk away. Avoid becoming aggressive as this may result in an unpleasant confrontation.

Wandering hands can also be a problem, particularly on crowded public transport. If you feel someone touching you up, make a fuss; molesters are no more admired in Rome than anywhere else. A loud '*che schifo!*' (how disgusting!) should work. If a more serious incident occurs, make a report to the police, who are then required to press charges.

The *Handbook for Women Travellers* by Maggie and Gemma Goss (1995) is useful for women who travel solo.

## WORK

Most EU citizens can legally work in Italy with nothing more than a tax number (*codice fiscale*; see [p296](#)). However, citizens of the new EU states and non-EU nationals need a work permit (*permesso di lavoro*).

If you're going to work for an Italian firm, the company will organise a permit and forward it to the Italian consulate in your country, enabling you to apply for the relevant work visa. If, however, you intend to work for a non-Italian company or plan to go freelance, you must organise the permit in your country of residence through an Italian consulate. This process is extremely complicated and can take many months.

In practice many foreigners don't bother with such formalities, preferring to work undeclared. Casual work is not always easy to find but you might strike it lucky in bars, in hostels, au pairing or tour-guiding. Teaching English is another option, although to secure a place at a reputable school you'll need a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate. It's best to apply for

teaching work in September, in time for the beginning of courses in October.

Teaching and other jobs are advertised in *Porta Portese* (weekly) and *Wanted in Rome* (fortnightly). You could also look in *Il Messaggero* and the *Herald Tribune* for job ads, and on the bulletin boards of English-language bookshops. A useful guide is *Living, Studying and Working in Italy* by Travis Neighbour Ward and Monica Larner (2003).

Online, you could try the following:

**British School** ([www.britishschool.it](http://www.britishschool.it)) A private English-language organisation with various schools across Rome.

**International House** ([www.ihromamz.it](http://www.ihromamz.it)) One of Rome's best-known English language schools.

**Recruit Italy** ([www.recruitaly.it](http://www.recruitaly.it)) Provides links for graduates looking for longer-term employment.

**Roma Au Pair** ([www.romaaupair.it](http://www.romaaupair.it)) An organisation that arranges short-term positions for au pairs with Italian families.

**Volunteer Abroad** ([www.volunteerabroad.com](http://www.volunteerabroad.com)) Lists volunteer opportunities in Rome and Italy.

## Doing Business

There are no special issues in doing business in Rome. However, an awareness of Italian business etiquette always helps. Some basic tips:

**Contacts** If you know someone who can help you, have no qualms about using them.

**Formalities** Courtesy counts and formalities are observed. Italian speakers should use the formal third person *lei* rather than the informal *tu*.

**Punctuality** It might not always be reciprocated, but punctuality is noticed and it is appreciated.

**Socialising** Expect to be invited to lunch or dinner; the host pays.

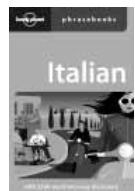
Many of the smarter hotels have business centres or secretarial assistance for guests. Otherwise try the following:

**Executive Services Business Centres** ([Map pp150-1](#); % 06 852 37 250; [www.executivenetwork.it](http://www.executivenetwork.it); Via Savoia 78) Secretarial services, video conferencing facilities, interpreters and other services.

**World Translation Centre** ([Map pp90-1](#); % 06 488 10 39; [www.wtcsrl.com](http://www.wtcsrl.com); Via Merulana 259) Can provide sworn translations for legal and corporate needs.

# LANGUAGE

It's true – anyone can speak another language. Don't worry if you haven't studied languages before or that you studied a language at school for years and can't remember any of it. It doesn't even matter if you failed English grammar. After all, that's never affected your ability to speak English! And this is the key to picking up a language in another country. You just need to start speaking.



Learn a few key phrases before you go. Write them on pieces of paper and stick them on the fridge, by the bed or even on the computer – anywhere that you'll see them often.

You'll find that locals appreciate travellers trying their language, no matter how muddled you may think you sound. So don't just stand there, say something! If you want to learn more Italian than we've included here, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's comprehensive but user-friendly *Italian Phrasebook* or *Fast Talk Italian*.

## SOCIAL

### Meeting People

Hello.  
**Buongiorno.**  
 Goodbye.  
**Arrivederci.**  
 Please.  
**Per favore.**  
 Thank you (very much).  
**(Mille) Grazie.**  
 Yes/No.  
**Sì/No.**  
 Do you speak English?  
**Parla inglese?**  
 Do you understand (me)?  
**(Mi) Capisce?**  
 Yes, I understand.  
**Sì, capisco.**  
 No, I don't understand.  
**No, non capisco.**

Could you please ...?  
**Potrebbe ...?**  
 repeat that **ripeterlo**  
 speak more **parlare più lentamente**  
 slowly  
 write it down **scriverlo**

### Going Out

What's on ...?  
**Che c'è in programma ...?**  
 locally **in zona**  
 this weekend **questo fine settimana**  
 today **oggi**  
 tonight **stasera**

Where are the ...?  
**Dove sono ...?**  
 clubs **dei club**  
 gay venues **dei locali gay**  
 places to eat **posti dove mangiare**  
 pubs **dei pub**

Is there a local entertainment guide?  
**C'è una guida agli spettacoli in questa città?**

## PRACTICAL

### Question Words

Who? **Chi?**  
 What? **Che?**  
 When? **Quando?**  
 Where? **Dove?**  
 How? **Come?**

### Numbers & Amounts

1 **uno**  
 2 **due**  
 3 **tre**  
 4 **quattro**  
 5 **cinque**  
 6 **sei**  
 7 **sette**  
 8 **otto**  
 9 **nove**  
 10 **dieci**  
 11 **undici**  
 12 **dodici**  
 13 **tredici**  
 14 **quattordici**  
 15 **quindici**  
 16 **sedici**

17 **diciassette**  
 18 **diciotto**  
 19 **diciannove**  
 20 **venti**  
 21 **ventuno**  
 22 **ventidue**  
 30 **trenta**  
 40 **quaranta**  
 50 **cinquanta**  
 60 **sessanta**  
 70 **settanta**  
 80 **ottanta**  
 90 **novanta**  
 100 **cento**  
 1000 **mille**  
 2000 **duemila**

### Days

Monday **lunedì**  
 Tuesday **martedì**  
 Wednesday **mercoledì**  
 Thursday **giovedì**  
 Friday **venerdì**  
 Saturday **sabato**  
 Sunday **domenica**

### Banking

I'd like to ...  
**Vorrei ...**  
 cash a cheque **riscuotere un assegno**  
 change money **cambiare denaro**  
 change some **cambiare degli assegni**  
 travellers cheques **di viaggio**

Where's the nearest ...?  
**Dov'è il ... più vicino?**  
 automatic teller **bancomat**  
 machine  
 foreign exchange **cambio**  
 office

### Post

Where is the post office?  
**Dov'è la posta?**

I want to send a ...  
**Voglio spedire ...**  
 fax **un fax**  
 parcel **un pacchetto**  
 postcard **una cartolina**

I want to buy ...  
**Voglio comprare ...**  
 an aerogram **un aerogramma**  
 an envelope **una busta**  
 a postage stamp **un francobollo**

## Phone & Mobile Phones

I want to buy a phonecard.  
**Voglio comprare una scheda telefonica.**

I want to make ...  
**Voglio fare ...**  
 a call (to ...) **una chiamata (a ...)**  
 reverse-charge/  
 collect call **una chiamata a carico  
 del destinatario**

Where can I find a/an ...?  
**Dove si trova ...**  
 I'd like a/an ...  
**Vorrei ...**  
 adaptor plug **un adattatore**  
 charger for my **un caricabatterie**  
 phone  
 mobile/cell **un cellulare da**  
 phone for hire **noleggiare**  
 prepaid mobile/  
 cell phone **un cellulare prepagato**  
 SIM card for **un SIM card per vostra**  
 your network **rete telefonica**

## Internet

Where's the local internet café?  
**Dove si trova l'internet point?**

I'd like to ...  
**Vorrei ...**  
 check my email **controllare le mie  
 email**  
 get online **collegarmi a internet**

## Transport

What time does the ... leave?  
**A che ora parte ...?**  
 bus **l'autobus**  
 plane **l'aereo**  
 train **il treno**

What time's the ... bus/vaporetto?  
**A che ora passa ... autobus/batello?**  
 first **il primo**  
 last **l'ultimo**  
 next **il prossimo**

Are you free? (taxi)  
**È libero questo taxi?**  
 Please put the meter on.  
**Usa il tassametro, per favore.**  
 How much is it to ...?  
**Quant'è per ...?**  
 Please take me to (this address).  
**Mi porti a (questo indirizzo), per favore.**

## GLOSSARY

ACI – Automobile Club Italiano (Italian Automobile Association)  
 alimentari – grocery shop  
 alta moda – high fashion  
 ATAC – Agenzia per i Trasporti Autoferrotranviari del Comune di Roma (Rome's public transport company)  
 autostrada – motorway, highway  
 baccalà – salted cod  
 bancomat – ATM  
 benzina senza piombo – unleaded petrol  
 biancazzurri – 'white and blues'; Lazio fans and players  
 biglietteria – box or ticket office  
 biglietto – ticket  
 birreria – pub  
 calcio – football (soccer)  
 cambio – exchange office  
 cappella – chapel  
 carabinieri – police with military and civil duties  
 casa – house, home  
 castello – castle  
 catacomba – catacomb, underground tomb complex  
 chiesa – church  
 centro sociale – social club; organised squat  
 centro storico – historic city centre  
 cimitero – cemetery  
 commissariato (di polizia) – police station  
 comune – equivalent to a municipality; town or city council  
 coperto – cover charge in most restaurants  
 cornetto – a croissant filled with chocolate, marmalade or custard cream  
 enoteca, enoteche (pl) – wine bar  
 fornaio, forni (pl) – bakery  
 gelato – ice cream  
 gelateria – ice-cream parlour  
 giallorossi – 'yellow and reds'; AS Roma fans and players  
 IVA – Imposta di Valore Aggiunto (value-added tax)  
 libreria – bookshop  
 macchiaioli – 'dabbers'; the late-19th-century Italian version of the Impressionists  
 mezza porzione – half or child's portion  
 motorino – moped  
 numero verde – toll-free number  
 ospedale – public hospital  
 osteria – neighbourhood inn  
 palazzo – mansion  
 panino – bread roll  
 pasquinades – anonymous messages posted around 17th-century Rome  
 pasticceria – cake/pastry shop

pensione – small hotel or guesthouse  
 permesso di lavoro – work permit  
 permesso di soggiorno – permit to stay in Italy for a nominated period  
 piazza – square  
 pinacoteca – art gallery  
 piscina – pool  
 pizza al taglio – pizza by the slice  
 polizia – police  
 ponte – bridge  
 porta – city gate  
 posta – post office  
 primo – first course  
 profumeria – perfume shop  
 pronto soccorso – first aid; (*riparto di*) pronto soccorso is a casualty/emergency ward  
 questura – police headquarters  
 Risorgimento – late-19th-century movement led by Garibaldi and others to create a united, independent Italian state  
 ristorante – restaurant  
 romanesco – Roman dialect  
 Romani – Romans  
 sala – room in a museum or a gallery  
 saldi – sales (ie with price reductions)  
 secondo – second course  
 sedia a rotelle – wheelchair  
 seggiolone – child's highchair  
 servizio – service charge in restaurants  
 sindaco – mayor  
 SPQR – Senatus Populusque Romanus (the Senate and People of Rome; symbol of the Roman Republic)  
 stazione – station  
 tabaccheria – tobacconist's shop  
 tavola calda – literally 'hot table'; a cheap, self-service-style eatery  
 teatro – theatre  
 terme – baths, hot springs  
 torre – tower  
 trattoria – cheap restaurant  
 ufficio postale – post office  
 ufficio stranieri – foreigners bureau (in police station)  
 via – street, road  
 vicolo – alley, alleyway  
 ZTL – Zone a Traffico Limitato (limited traffic zones)

## FOOD

breakfast  
 lunch  
 dinner  
 snack  
 eat  
 drink

prima colazione  
 pranzo  
 cena  
 spuntino/merenda  
 mangiare  
 bere

Can you recommend a ...  
 Potrebbe consigliare un ...?  
 bar/pub  
 café  
 restaurant

bar/pub  
 bar  
 ristorante

Is service/cover charge included in the bill?  
 Il servizio/coperto è compreso nel conto?

For more detailed information on food and dining out, see p181.

## EMERGENCIES

It's an emergency!  
 È un'emergenza!  
 Could you please help me/us?  
 Mi/Ci può aiutare, per favore?  
 Call the police/a doctor/an ambulance!  
 Chiami la polizia/un medico/  
 un'ambulanza!

Where's the police station?

Dov'è la questura?

## HEALTH

Where's the nearest ...?

Dov'è ...più vicino?

chemist (night)	la farmacia (di turno)
dentist	il dentista
doctor	il medico
hospital	l'ospedale

I need a doctor (who speaks English).

Ho bisogno di un medico (che parli inglese).

## Symptoms

I have (a) ...

Ho ...

diarrhoea	la diarrea
fever	la febbre
headache	mal di testa
pain	un dolore

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