

TO / FROM THE AIRPORT

Aeroporto Leonardo da Vinci di Fiumicino (FCO)

011-39/06-65-951, adr.it

Express rail: The *Leonardo Express* is a nonstop train that runs between the airport and Termini station, the city's main train station. Departs from the airport to Termini every 30 minutes 6:35 A.M.—11:35 P.M.; to the airport every 30 minutes 6 A.M.—11 P.M. Trip time is 30 min., \$12 each way. **Local rail:** FR1 metropolitan trains leave the airport every 15–30 minutes, with service to Roma-Trastevere (24 min.), Roma-Ostiense (29 min.), Roma-Tuscolana (34 min.), and Roma-Tiburtina (44 min.). This train does not stop at Termini station. Trains run from the airport 6 A.M.—11:30 P.M.; to the airport from Tiburtina 5 A.M.—10:30 P.M. \$6.25 each way.

Look for FERROVIA (rail station) signs for Local and Express trains in the airport terminal, then follow a series of escalators and covered passageways to the three-track platform of the airport train station. Buy tickets from window agents or automatic vending machines (cash or credit), or at the newsstand (cash only) on the platform. Validate your ticket at the orange time-stamping machines before boarding the train. Luggage carts are not allowed on trains.

Aeroporto G.B. Pastine di Ciampino (CIA)

011-39/06-794-941, adr.it

Public transportation: From the airport, take a blue COTRAL bus (011-39/06-57-031, cotralspa.it) to Roma-Anagnina, then metro line A to the city center. Most are modern coaches, but some are like school buses, with vinyl seats and no A/C. Purchase bus tickets from the ticket machine or pay extra on board. Buy metro tickets from the *tabaccherie* (tobacco stores) or newsstands. Total trip time to the city is about an hour, \$2.50 each way. **Private coach:** Modern, air-conditioned, and upholstered Schiaffini buses (011-39/06-474-4534, schiaffini.com) run between Ciampino and Termini station seven times a day. Buy tickets from the Schiaffini desk or onboard. Trip time is 44 min., \$6.25 each way. Cash only.

Traveling Around Italy: Discount train cards & passes

- **Trenitalia Pass** Unlimited travel on consecutive or non-consecutive days over a two-month period for foreigners. Purchase tickets online, at select U.S. travel agencies, or at train-ticket windows in major Italian cities. From \$176 for three-day minimum. More info: trenitalia.com.
- **Trenitalia Pass Youth** 17 percent discount on the prices of adult Trenitalia passes for travelers between 12 and 25 years of age. Can only be used for second-class travel.
- Note: Travelers under 12 ride for half the adult ticket price; kids under four ride free. Passes do not include the additional fee for tickets that require reserved seating.

GETTING AROUND

City Buses, Trams, and Metro

ATAC Agenzia per la Mobilità: 800-431-784 (within Italy), atac.roma.it

Regular buses and trams run 5:30 A.M.—midnight; metro lines 5:30 A.M.—11:30 P.M. (until 12:30 A.M. on Saturdays). Night buses, marked by an “N” after the bus number, operate between midnight and 5:30 A.M. The 29N does a loop that includes stops at the Colosseum, the Vatican, and Villa Borghese. The 78N runs between Termini and Piazzale Clodio by way of the *centro storico* (historic city center) and the Prati area near the Vatican. Download a map of the bus and tram system from atac.roma.it, or purchase a city map with bus routes at newsstands throughout the city. Buy tickets at *tabaccherie* (tobacco stores) and some newsstands. The green ticket-vending machines outside major bus stops are usually out of order.

“In Rome, all the dreams of my youth are realized.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Standard tickets (BIT) for buses, trams, and metro are valid for 75 minutes from time of stamping. The BIT ticket allows unlimited transfers on buses and trams, but only one transfer on the metro (e.g., between lines A and B). Single-ride tickets are \$1.25. Daily tickets (BIG) cost \$5 and are valid for 24 hours of unlimited travel from time of stamping. Three-day tourist tickets (BTI) cost \$14 and are valid until midnight on the third day of use. Weekly tickets (CIS) cost \$20 and are valid for unlimited travel until midnight on the seventh day of use.

COTRAL Regional Buses

011-39/06-57-031, cotralspa.it

Most day-trip destinations are served by this regional bus line. Buses to the Etruscan necropolis at Cerveteri and the beaches north of Rome depart from Cornelia metro station; buses to Villa d'Este and Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli and Palestrina (a quiet medieval town with an ancient hillside sanctuary) depart from Ponte Mammolo metro station; buses to local beach resorts Sabaudia and San Felice Circeo depart from Laurentina metro station. Depending on season and destination, 5–10 buses a day. Tickets \$2–\$4.50. Cash only.

Ostia-Lido Trains

Good for visiting Ostia Antica and the beaches at Lido di Ostia. Trains depart every 20–30 minutes from Stazione Porta San Paolo (Piramide metro station); use same ticket as for ATAC city buses, trams, and metro. \$1.25 each way.

Budget Travel

Rome / Essentials

SNAP GUIDE

GETTING AROUND

Taxis

It can be difficult to hail a taxi on the street in the center of Rome. Instead, go to a taxi stand; there's one at most major sights, including Piazza di Spagna, Piazza San Pietro, near the Pantheon in Piazza delle Cinque Lune, and near the Colosseum at Piazza Venezia by Via dei Fori Imperiali. To have a cab pick you up at a specific address, call one of Rome's radio-taxi cooperatives (Radiotaxi 3570, 011-39/06-3570; Radiotaxi 4994, 011-39/06-4994; or Radiotaxi Tevere 011-39/06-4157). Give them your exact street address (they understand some English, but speak slowly), and an automated system will tell you the medallion number (e.g., Parma 31) and when it will arrive. Taxis usually take up to four passengers, although the smaller cars only seat three comfortably. Fares are expensive (\$8.75–\$19 for a ride within the city center), and there's a higher rate 10 P.M.–7 A.M. and on Sun.; about \$1.25 extra for each large bag.

TIP “Prearranged” fares are a classic Roman cabdriver scam and are usually exorbitant. Always insist that the cabdriver use the meter, or *tassametro*.

Trains in Italy

National call center, 89-20-21 (within Italy), trenitalia.com
All major trains to and from other Italian and European cities go through Termini station, on the east side of the city center. Purchase tickets online, through travel agents, or at the gray-and-yellow self-service machines inside the train station, which take cash and major credit cards. Eurostar trains offer the quickest—and priciest—train trips between Italy's major cities. For the *Leonardo Express* train to the Fiumicino airport, note that the train departs from Tracks 28 and 29, which are a 5- to 10-minute walk beyond tracks 1–22. If you enter on Via Giolitti, you'll have a somewhat shorter walk. All train tickets except the Eurostar must be validated at the yellow time-stamping machines in front of each track.

WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND TOWN

Roma C'è For concerts of all kinds, cinemas, clubs, exhibitions, lectures, and walking tours. Weekly at newsstands, English-language section in back pages, romace.it, \$1.50

TrovaRoma For less comprehensive concert listings, cinemas, museums, monuments. To get it, you must buy the Thursday supplement to the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. \$1.25

Cinemas that often show films in English

(Ask for English-language films in “versione originale”)

- **Metropolitan** Via del Corso 7, 011-39/06-320-0933
- **Warner Village Cinemas Moderno** Piazza della Repubblica 44-45, 011-39/06-4777-9202
- **Alcazar** Via Cardinale Merry del Val 99, 011-39/06-588-0099

TOURS

Bus 110 Open

Piazza dei Cinquecento, 8002-81281 (within Italy), trambusopen.com

Double-decker bus with an open-air deck that departs every 20 minutes from Piazza dei Cinquecento (Termini station) and operates a hop-on, hop-off service for most major sights, including the Colosseum, St. Peter's Square, and the Trevi Fountain. Minimal onboard commentary in multiple languages, including English. Tickets are valid all day. \$16.

Enjoy Rome

Via Marghera 8A, 011-39/06-445-1843, enjoyrome.com

Three-hour general orientation tours that are educational and entertaining. For example, a tour might mix smart tips for making sense of ancient ruins and sites such as the Sistine Chapel with colorful anecdotes about gladiators and mischievous popes. Guides are young English-speakers. Walking tours \$23–\$30. The Catacombs and Roman Countryside bus tour (\$44–\$50, including Catacombs admission) takes you to a remote park with spectacular ruins of an ancient aqueduct. Note: Lower prices are for people age 25 or under.

\$ SPLURGE Context: Rome

011-39/06-482-0911, from the U.S. 888/467-1986, contextrome.com

Not cheap, but you get your money's worth. Learn a ton about Roman history, art, and culture on private and small group walks led by experienced English-speaking docents who live and work in Rome as archaeologists, architects, art historians, or food critics. One hour to full-day excursions, from \$32 (for an orientation walk around the Spanish steps or Pantheon) to \$296 (for a full-day tour to Pompeii and the archaeological museum in Naples). Admission prices are extra.

NUMBERS TO KNOW

Police 113 Carabinieri (army police) 112

Ambulance 118 Fire department 115

U.S. Embassy and Consulate 011-39/06-46-741

Monument and museum tickets Colosseum/Palatine, 011-39/06-3996-7700, pierreci.it; Galleria Borghese, 011-39/06-32810, ticketeria.it

Concert and event tickets Orbis Agency (Piazza dell'Esquilino 37, 011-39/06-474-4776); TicketOne (ticketone.it)

International access code

From US: 011+country code+city code+local number
Country code 39 City code 06

Note: Always dial the full city code (06), whether calling from abroad or making local calls within Rome.

Budget Travel Rome / Sleep

SNAP GUIDE

Those who procrastinate on booking Rome hotels are punished with horrendous locations and/or price tags. E-mail prospective hotels and make reservations before you go—you can almost always cancel later.

CENTRO STORICO Albergo del Sole al Biscione

Via del Biscione 76, 011-39/06-6880-6873, solealbiscione.it
Roman character, basic rooms, and an unbeatable location in the throbbing heart of the old city. In business since the 15th century, it's the oldest hotel in Rome (as confirmed by an official city heritage plaque on the outside of the pink-stucco building). Roll out of bed into the bustling market of Campo de' Fiori, look out over rooftops and church domes from the multilevel interior garden, and take your pick of the hundreds of cheap and lively restaurants and bars within a five-minute walk. From \$139 (\$120 with shared bath). Cash only.

CENTRO STORICO Hotel Mimosa

Via di Santa Chiara 61, 011-39/06-6880-1753, hotelmimosa.net

Prices are ridiculously low for the location—on a quiet street a few yards from the Pantheon. Some rooms feel institutional, but others are classed up with Oriental rugs and baroque lamps. A/C. From \$101 in low season (\$88 with shared bath), \$136 in high season (\$117 with shared bath), includes breakfast. Cash only.

CENTRO STORICO Hotel Navona

Via dei Sediari 8, 011-39/06-686-4203, hotelnavona.com
Run by an Australian couple, this 14th-century palace sits on an quiet street between Piazza Navona and the Pantheon. Rooms are big enough to do a cartwheel in, and the decor is soothing. Some rooms have 15th-century frescoes. From \$158, includes breakfast.

PARIOLI Hotel Coppedè

Via Chiana 88, 011-39/06-854-9535, hotelcoppede.net
This art nouveau palazzo may be a bus ride away from the *centro storico's* sights and street life, but it's also an affordable way to experience one of the most elegant neighborhoods in Rome—one that tourists rarely see. Clubby rooms have minibars, A/C, TV, green carpeting, rich wood paneling, and striped upholstery in saturated colors. Visit nearby Piazza Mincio to see the whimsical, fairy-tale-inspired 1920s architecture of the hotel's namesake, Gino Coppedè. From \$126 in low season, \$164 high season.

TRASTEVERE Hotel Cisterna

Viale della Cisterna 7–9, 011-39/06-581-7212, cisternahotel.it
Rooms have all the basics but it's the location—in one of the more-Roman-than-expat parts of Trastevere—that's appealing. Beware: Your neighbors on this charming but sometimes rowdy street might include salty locals who sing Roman drinking songs late into the night. From \$139, includes breakfast.

TIP Easter week and the weekends around May 1 (Italian Labor Day) and Dec. 8 (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) are booked solid several months to a year in advance. Also, some hoteliers are loathe year-round to accept reservations for only one night.

TRASTEVERE Villa della Fonte

Via della Fonte d'Olio 8, 011-39/06-580-3797, villafonte.com
On an ocher-washed, ivy-covered alley just north of Santa Maria in Trastevere. The five-year-old, unfussy boutique property has such typically earthy Roman touches as exposed dark-wood ceilings, terra-cotta tile floors, and arched doorways. Modern pluses include minibars, broadband cable for in-room Internet access, and A/C. The garden patio, one floor above street level, is ideal for sipping wine. From \$139.

TRIDENTE Hotel Panda

Via della Croce 35, 011-39/06-678-0179, hotelpanda.it
Great value in a neighborhood where everything else is prohibitively expensive. Near the Spanish Steps and the culture strip of Via dei Condotti. Rustic rooms are bright and polished, with wooden-beam ceilings and terra-cotta floors; a few even have original 19th-century frescoes. From \$117 (\$82 with shared bath).

THE VATICAN & PRATI Hotel Adriatic

Via G. Vitelleschi 25, 011-39/06-6880-8080, adriatichotel.com
On a street with modern buildings and a stone's throw from Castel Sant'Angelo and St. Peter's. Spacious, comfortable, carpeted rooms are done up in an old-fashioned hodgepodge of green, blue, and mustard yellow. Some have private terraces. From \$101 in low season (\$95 with shared bath), \$151 high season (\$113 with shared bath); \$13 supplement for A/C.

THE VATICAN & PRATI Hotel Colors

Via Boezio 31, 011-39/06-687-4030, colorshotel.com
Owners Pierluigi and Fulvia keep upgrading and expanding their friendly hotel/hostel, but the price stays low. Doubles and dorm-style rooms on multiple floors are painted in tasteful bright colors or cool neutrals; most have private baths. Guests who want to cook can use the full kitchen and dine on the quiet terrace. Perfect for budget travelers who've outgrown noisy backpackers and bedbugs. English-speaking staff. Rooms with bath include breakfast; coffee, tea, cornflakes, and jam provided for other guests. A/C June–Sept. only. From \$107 (\$76 with shared bath). Cash only.

\$ SPLURGE Casa Howard

Via di Capo Le Case 18 and Via Sistina 149, 011-39/06-6992-4555, casahoward.com
Gorgeously appointed rooms in two separate boutique guesthouses near the Spanish Steps. Each is done in a radically different style, from the masculine "American Cousin" room to the sultry, concubine-ish "Chinese" room. In the Via Sistina property, the "Zebra" room has a private balcony overlooking the street. Both locations have a Turkish bath (\$32–\$63 supplement) and free Wi-Fi throughout. From \$202.

Budget Travel Rome / Centro Storico

SNAP GUIDE

The historic center has the city's densest concentration of tourist sights, but it's also surprisingly lived-in, with monumental and intimate squares, grand and humble palaces, and restaurants galore.

SEE Piazza della Minerva

In the often-ignored blind spot behind the Pantheon, an uppity elephant, believed to have been sculpted by Bernini, carries an Egyptian obelisk on its back. On the facade of Santa Maria sopra Minerva church, marble plaques record the water levels of Tiber floods from the 15th to 19th centuries.

SEE Via dei Cestari and Via di Santa Chiara

The liturgical outfitters on these narrow streets just south of the Pantheon are what keep Vatican VIPs looking red-carpet ready. Ogle the elaborate window displays as long as you like; store owners say that even non-priests are welcome to browse or shop inside. John Paul II had his custom threads crafted at Gammarelli, while it's rumored that Benedict XVI entrusts the making of his vestments to Euroclero, on the other side of town, where he became a loyal customer as a cardinal. His flashy red shoes, however, are limited-edition Prada.

“In Rome, the emperor sat in a special part of the Colosseum called the Caesarian section.”

—Comedian George Carlin

EAT Obikà

Piazza di Firenze 28 (at Via dei Prefetti), 011-39/06-683-2630, obika.it

The name means “here it is!” in the Neapolitan dialect—“it” being buffalo mozzarella. In this slick café, mozzarella (don't call it cheese) in many forms—braids, blobs, balls—is paired with salami, prosciutto, and *bottarga* (dried fish roe).

EAT Pizzeria La Montecarlo

Vicolo Savelli 13, 011-39/06-686-1877, sevoinapizzadillo.net
The liveliest, cheapest, and friendliest of the triumvirate of favorite local pizzerias west of Piazza Navona. The crowds out front look daunting, but stride confidently to the front of the line, and you'll be greeted and seated right away. (Cutting with confidence is an art form in Italy.) Angle for a table in one of the back rooms or outside. Closed Mon. Cash only.

EAT Renato e Luisa

Via dei Barbieri 25, 011-39/06-686-9660, renatoeluisa.it
You could live around the corner for years and never think to eat here, but this is a real standout amid the casual trattorias just north of Largo Argentina. Consistently delicious Roman dishes, such as *bucatini all'amatriciana* (zesty tomato and pancetta pasta) and *fiori di zucca* (stuffed zucchini blossoms) are served in a rustic and homey atmosphere. Closed Mon.

DRINK Bar del Fico

Piazza del Fico 26–28, 011-39/06-686-5205

Down-to-earth and busy all day long, from the morning espresso shooters to the 2 A.M. vodka-and-Red Bull crowd. The indoor/outdoor “bar of the fig” (also translatable as “bar of cool”) is a Roman social institution and highly recommended, especially if you happen to be at one of the tables under the gnarled fig tree when Lenny Kravitz stops by and buys a round. Cash only.

DRINK Le Coppelle 52

Piazza delle Coppelle 52, 011-39/349-740-4620

In one of Rome's most refined and secluded little piazzas, this chic and comfy bar is perfect for an *aperitivo* (light cocktail or glass of wine, especially *prosecco*) before—or a *digestivo* (nightcap) after—a meal at one of the stylish restaurants on the square. Weather permitting, lounge furniture is set up on the car-free cobblestones outside. Closed Mon. from Nov. to March.

DRINK Salotto 42

Piazza di Pietra 42, 011-39/06-678-5804, salotto42.it

Co-owned by Swedish model and longtime resident of Rome Malin Persson this new “book bar” offering Swedish fare has been an *aperitivo*-hour hit with Nordic expats and cultured Romans since its 2004 opening. A few tables spill out onto the quiet, pedestrian piazza to face the ruins of the Temple of Hadrian. Closed Mon.

\$ SPLURGE Posto Italiano

Via dei Giubbonari 37a, 011-39/06-686-9373

Shopping bags from flashier shoe boutiques in the Campo de' Fiori area carry more cachet, but if you want a well-priced and well-made pair of this-minute Italian shoes or boots (meaning they'll be in style in the U.S. in a year), make this your first stop. Expect to spend about \$125 a pair.

PLAY Supperclub

Via de' Nari 14, 011-39/06-6880-7207, supperclub.com

At this Euro-fabulous dining experience, which includes four courses of fusion fare, you recline on a white divan and are served by half-naked waiters. The cocktail lounge and dance club are less expensive ways to partake in the excess. Reserve well in advance for dinner. Location changes in summer. \$69 prix fixe.

TIP If you're ever in Rome when it's pouring rain—or better yet, during one of the city's rare hailstorms—head straight to the Pantheon. The 30-foot-wide oculus (the round window at the top of the dome) is open to the sky, which means that the ancient temple becomes a gigantic indoor shower in rainy weather. This feature of the building gets especially dramatic on Pentecost Sunday in May or June, when firemen dump barrel after barrel of red rose petals through the oculus to flutter down over the Mass, celebrated 142 feet below.

Budget Travel Rome / Ancient Rome to Stazione Termini

SNAP GUIDE

Dramatic ruins stud the green belt of world-famous archaeological sites south of the Capitoline hill. To the east, the Esquiline hill climbs past medieval Monti, ending at the seedy Termini area.

SEE Case Romane del Celio

Clivo di Scauro (Piazza S. Giovanni e Paolo), 011-39/06-7045-4544, caseromane.it

Just south of the Colosseum and removed from the tourist chaos, the Celio hill is home to sunbaked brick walls, unkempt greenery, and several rustic churches. Lying beneath the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo are the Case Romane, a group of third-century A.D. Roman homes with well-preserved wall frescoes. Fortunately, this site is open to the public. It's a rare opportunity to visit one of the few surviving examples of ancient domestic architecture. Closed Tues. and Wed. \$7.50.

“It is no accident that one small village on the Tiber was chosen to rule the world.”

—Messala, a character from *Ben-Hur*

SEE Tabularium

Capitoline Museums, Piazza del Campidoglio 1, 011-39/06-8205-9127, museicapitolini.org

Presiding over the northern end of the Roman Forum valley like a custom-built viewing gallery, the vaulted arcades of the Tabularium, or Roman records hall, date back to 78 B.C. but have only been open to the public since 2000. The building is a potent demonstration of the structural strength of arches and vaults, and its ponderous red tufa blocks, made from soft volcanic stone, have served as the foundation of the Palazzo Senatorio (city hall) since the 11th century. Closed Mon. \$7.75.

EAT Hostaria Isidoro

Via S. Giovanni in Laterano 59A, 011-39/06-700-8266

Revel in the glory of pasta at this cozy *hostaria*, where the specialty is the *assaggini misti* (pasta tasting menu). Partitioned cafeteria-style plates are heaped with steaming gnocchi with Gorgonzola sauce, *tagliolini* with artichokes, or penne with walnut-cream sauce—to name a few dishes. Prices are based on how many rounds you last. Closed for lunch Sat.

\$ SPLURGE Crostaceria Ipanema

Via dei Capocci 26, 011-39/06-482-4758

A candlelit bamboo-walled dining room that's a memorable setting for a seafood feast. Whether raw or cooked, the lobster, mussels, clams, crabs, crayfish, shrimp, and scallops dazzle the taste buds with their freshness and subtle seasonings. The house *torre dei frutti di mare* (tower of raw and steamed shellfish and crustaceans, from \$38) is a showstopper, presented with theatrical flair by skilled and friendly staff. Closed Sun. Dinner only.

DRINK Al Vino Al Vino

Via dei Serpenti 19, 011-39/06-485-803

A small, convivial *enoteca* (wine bar) with a quiet back room and a louder, more sociable front room. Wines by the bottle or glass, from all price ranges, include old favorites like Brunello di Montalcino, an exquisite full-bodied red from Tuscany, and harder-to-find regional varietals such as Colli Lanuvini, an inexpensive white made on the volcanic hills of south Rome. You can also order plates heaped with olives, bread, and cured meats and cheeses.

DRINK Zest

Via F. Turati 171, 011-39/06-444-841, rome.radissonsas.com

With cocktail tables set up on the swimming-pool deck of the four-year-old Radisson SAS hotel, this rooftop bar is a minimalist oasis in the seedy district south of Termini station. It's especially popular in summer, when organized nighttime poolside parties are the norm. The hypnotic view from the pool deck, over the 1930s travertine arches of the train station, could have inspired a de Chirico painting.

SHOP Capitoline Museums bookshop

Piazza del Campidoglio 1, 011-39/06-678-2913, museicapitolini.org

Great for souvenirs. The functional or frivolous curios are inspired by classical antiquity. Wonderful children's books about ancient life and all manner of prints of local landmarks are also for sale. Closed Mon.

SHOP LOL

Piazza degli Zingari 11, 011-39/06-481-4160

A clever mix of retail and gallery space, this boutique in newly trendy Monti sells edgy apparel and accessories by up-and-coming designers, while simultaneously exhibiting artwork by young European painters and photographers. A pleasant surprise after the mass-market threads on nearby Via Nazionale. Closed Sun.

ESCAPE

Circolo Cavalieri dell'Appia Antica

Via dei Cencenii 15, 011-39/06-780-1214

Take a horseback tour of the Appian Way, and commune with the spirits of Roman legionnaires. A mile south of the Catacombs, this no-frills stable offers one-hour rides along the 2,300-year-old basalt flagstones of the “Queen of Roads” and through the countryside, which is strewn with ruins of tombs and imperial retreats. You'll also see to-die-for residences of modern-day rich-and-famous Romans, as well as working farms. Moonlight rides offered June–Sept. Have your hotel call and reserve; the stable owners are friendly but don't speak much English. Closed Mon. \$32 per hour with wine and snack. Cash only.

Budget Travel Rome / Tridente, Via Veneto, Villa Borghese

SNAP GUIDE

The elegant, crowded area from Piazza del Popolo to the Spanish Steps is retail heaven. To the east, Villa Borghese is a green escape. Below, Via Vittorio Veneto's hotels and cafés draw seekers of *la dolce vita*.

SEE Ara Pacis Museum

Lungotevere in Augusta near Ponte Cavour, 011-39/06-8205-9127

In 1996, American architect Richard Meier was commissioned to design a new exhibition space for a celebratory altar from 9 B.C., one of the finest surviving examples of Roman sculpture. Meier's contemporary-looking pavilion, which has been criticized for its resemblance to a "Texas gas station," is the first new building erected in the historic center of Rome since Mussolini's reign. Closed Mon. \$8.25.

SEE Crypt of the Capuchin Monks

Under Santa Maria Immacolata Concezione, Via Veneto 27, 011-39/06-487-1185, cappucciniviaveneto.it

From the 17th to the 19th centuries, the skeletons of thousands of Capuchin monks were dismantled and meticulously arranged, according to bone type, in six chapels. Ribs and finger bones form delicate floral motifs, and femurs are stacked like firewood under dioramas of still-clothed skeletons said to be waiting for the Second Coming. Some visitors are freaked out by the "corrupt" use of human remains, but most are too fascinated to care. Closed Thurs. A small donation of a euro or two is expected.

TIP To skip the frequently long lines for entry to the Colosseum, buy your tickets at the Palatine box office (200 yards away, on Via di S. Gregorio 30). Palatine tickets are good at the Colosseum, and vice versa, and once you have your ticket, you can proceed past the line and straight to the entry turnstiles. You can also prebook your tickets through Pierreci (011-39/06-3996-7700, pierreci.it) and pick them up directly at the Colosseum will-call window, but there's a \$2 surcharge. Colosseum/Palatine tickets from \$11. Cash only.

EAT Osteria della Frezza

Via della Frezza 16, 011-39/06-3211-1482, gusto.it

A '30s-style *osteria*, where small plates (*cicchetti*) are paired with great wines. Choose from cheeses, olives, and charcuterie, as well as tapas-sized helpings of dishes like roasted lamb. In a back room, you can enjoy traditional meals. But the front salon, with its black-and-white tiles and dark wood and leather, is where the action is.

EAT San Marco

Via Sardegna 38G, 011-39/06-4201-2620

Take your pick from the countless pastas, meats, and pizzas served in differently styled dining rooms, including a modern New York-style bar area in front and a cozy, library-ish back room. Professionals from the offices around Via Veneto have made this their go-to happy hour and casual dinner joint. It's big and efficient enough, though, that you'll never wait for a table.

DRINK Caffè delle Arti

Via A. Gramsci 73 (next to the Villa Borghese park), 011-39/06-3265-1236

On a terrace attached to the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna and shaded by the trees of the Villa Borghese, this is a great spot for a midday glass of wine or beer. From May to September, the bar stays open well into the evening, with balmy weather drawing an attractive crowd into the depths of the park. Closes at 6 P.M. Mon.

SHOP C.U.C.I.N.A.

Via Mario de' Fiori 65, 011-39/06-679-1275, cucinastore.com
Outfit your kitchen at the emporium of wooden, earthenware, and stainless-steel cooking tools, in basic shapes that have served Italian housewives for centuries. Primitive, inexpensive machines (food mills for homemade tomato sauce, Bialetti stove-top espresso makers) may look unfamiliar, but they're the staples of the Italian kitchen. Closed Mon. morning and Sun.

SHOP Fabriano

Via del Babuino 173, 011-39/06-3260-0361, fabrianoboutique.com

One of Italy's most renowned stationers, home to upscale art and writing papers, as well as beautiful blank journals and address books, some bound with reproductions of old maps of Rome and Venice. Closed Sun.

PLAY Villa Borghese rowboats

Laghetto di Villa Borghese

A man-made lake, complete with fake Roman temple, in the heart of the city's most famous public park. The *barche a remi* (boats) aren't the swiftest vessels, but they're a giddy way to break out of the sightseeing grind. 10 A.M.–7 P.M. daily, weather permitting. \$6.25 per hour, cash only.

God's green earth: visiting the gardens at the Vatican

Once you've paid homage to Bernini's talents at St. Peter's Square, ogled Michelangelo's handiwork at the Sistine Chapel, and wandered through the numerous smaller museums at the Vatican, consider taking in the gardens to the north and west. Once filled with vineyards and orchards, the space is now laced with winding paths, flowers, groves, and fountains—a true oasis in the middle of Rome. There are also medieval structures built by popes past, including the prominent Villa Pia. Two-hour garden tours usually depart Tues., Thurs., and Sat. at 10 A.M. Reserve at least four days in advance by calling 011-39/06-6988-4676, or e-mailing visiteguidate.musei@scv.va. \$15, cash only. For more info, contact the Vatican Tourism Office (011-39/06-698-81662, vatican.va).

Budget Travel Rome / Trastevere and the Gianicolo

SNAP GUIDE

Rome's village-like left bank is the *centro storico's* funky little sister. Its northern streets, around Regina Coeli prison, have become a cool bohemian enclave. Take it all in from the tree-lined Gianicolo hill.

SEE Il Gianicolo (Janiculum hill)

Passeggiata del Gianicolo (stairs from Via Garibaldi)

Dominating the northwestern boundary of Trastevere, Rome's lookout par excellence is a long ridge lined with stately trees and busts of famous Italians. At the southern end of the panoramic walk is the Fontanone, an oversized 17th-century fountain basin. At the northern end, the Janiculum cannon fires a blank shot every day at noon, scaring the bejesus out of unprepared bystanders.

SEE Villa Farnesina

Via della Lungara 230, 011-39/06-6802-7268

Just past the ancient city gate of Porta Settimiana, the former residence of the Chigi, a family of hard-partying Renaissance bankers, has lush, marine-themed frescoes by Raphael. The eye-popping *Triumph of Galatea*, with its undersea background of teal blue, is a visual treat when you've seen one too many earth-toned renditions of the Madonna and Child. Closed Sun. \$6.25. Cash only.

EAT Hostaria da Corrado

Via della Pelliccia 39, 011-39/06-580-6004

Massimo Conti's humble kitchen functions mostly as a canteen for the motorcycle mechanics and furniture craftsmen whose shops are nearby, but anyone is welcome to have a sit-down meal here. The menu is small and changes daily, but count on hearty pastas, side dishes of spinach and *cicoria* (chicory), and roasted meats, accompanied by killer rosemary potatoes. Closed Sun.

EAT Sisini Venanzo

Via di S. Francesco a Ripa 137, 011-39/06-589-7110

It looks like just another Roman pizza-to-go joint from the outside, but discerning locals will walk several blocks (which is saying a lot in this Vespa-dependent town) to get a slice of the mushroom-and-potato pizza. Closed Sun. Cash only.

\$ SPLURGE Rivadestra

Via della Penitenza 7, 011-39/06-6830-7053, rivadestra.com

The "Right Bank" (a puzzling name, since it's in Trastevere) takes a stand against the minimalist aesthetic that has swept through Rome's culinary scene in recent years. The restaurant flouts fusion in favor of gourmet Italian cooking. The menu, which has included such items as creamed asparagus with oysters and turbot with espresso sauce and snap peas, changes every month. The intimate dining room looks like it came from an 18th-century papal palace, with iron candelabras and an ornate green front door. A trendy, buzzy spot for artists and jet-setters in the up-and-coming neighborhood around Regina Coeli prison. Dinner only. Closed Sun. \$57 per person, excluding wine.

DRINK Ombre Rosse

Piazza Sant'Egidio 12, 011-39-06/588-4155

Little more than a glorified coffee bar, but as long as you've got good company and you can snag a table on the front porch, you've got one of the best watering holes in Trastevere. Every night, from sundown to the wee hours, characters from all walks of Roman life walk through the tiny piazza. Settle into a bright blue chair, order a vodka lemon, and watch the parade go by. Closed Sun. morning.

SHOP Fuori Orario

Via del Moro 29, 011-39/06-581-7181

Display tables in the tiny boutique are filled with colorful trousers, embellished tees, and funky skirts by smaller French and Italian labels, but the real deals here are the leather jackets for men and women. Most are under \$200, and the wide range of styles and colors demonstrates Italian design sense: Jewel tones like teal and yellow are muted, not garish, and cuts are sexy and flattering.

ESCAPE

Ostia Antica

Viale dei Romagnoli 717, Ostia Antica, 011-39/06-5635-8099

The easiest and perhaps most worthwhile day trip from the city is to ancient Rome's port town. The shady, sprawling archaeological site includes ruins of tombs, theaters, baths, apartment buildings, public latrines, laundries, bakeries, and the Roman equivalent of the neighborhood café, called *thermopolium* (hot place). As comprehensive an overview of ancient daily life as Pompeii, and far less crowded. From Porta San Paolo (Piramide metro station) take an Ostia-Lido train to Ostia Antica. Closed Mon. \$5.

PLAY Big Mama

Vicolo di S. Francesco a Ripa 18, 011-39/06-581-2551, bigmama.it

Who knew Rome could sing the blues? Blocky wooden tables in the surprisingly sophisticated, often raucous, basement joint are coated with black paint, spilled beer, and the memory of cigarettes past. International blues, jazz, and soul acts regularly take to the faux-brick-backed stage. Also appearing here are talented local bands, like Più Bestial Che Blues, who will have you dancing to soulful, energetic covers of Prince, Ray Charles, and the Rolling Stones. It's a small place; for tables with the best view of the stage, you'll need to book in advance. Tables are held (without charge) until 10 P.M.; shows start at 10:30 P.M. Closed summer months.

TIP Restaurants are often closed in August; call in advance to confirm.

Budget Travel Rome / Testaccio and Ostiense

SNAP GUIDE

A chance to experience real daily life. Two of the last bastions of salt-of-the-earth *romanità* in the city center, these middle-class communities are quirky, with rustic sights and booming nightlife.

SEE Macro al Mattatoio

Piazza O. Giustiniani 4, 011-39/06-6710-70400, macro.roma.museum

A rather melodramatic statue of a naked hero slaughtering an ox crowns the entrance to Rome's defunct abattoir. The main quartering pavilions have been converted into a contemporary art gallery, open 4 P.M.–midnight. Plans are underway for a cultural center with a library and theaters.

“Rome was a poem
pressed into
service as a city.”

—Literary critic Anatole Broyard

SEE Monte Testaccio

Via Galvani, Via di Monte Testaccio, Via Zabaglia

A 150-foot-high mountain made entirely of millions of amphorae (Roman earthenware jugs for oil, wine, and grain) that were broken and dumped in antiquity. You can see the tightly packed potsherds especially well at the corner of Via Galvani and Via Zabaglia; the rest of the hill is covered with grass, trees, and pens with live poultry and goats—in the middle of the city! At night, legions of Roman youths descend on rustic Via di Monte Testaccio, which skirts two sides of the hill and is packed with dance clubs.

EAT Acqua e Farina

Piazza O. Giustiniani 2, 011-39/06-574-1382

A popular pizzeria alternative, where the basic ingredients of water and flour are shaped into mini pies and topped with everything from radicchio and goat cheese to walnuts and Gorgonzola. Eat inside the cozy dining room or outside under the trees.

\$ SPLURGE Checchino dal 1887

Via di Monte Testaccio 30, 011-39/06-574-3816, checchino-dal-1887.com

What began as a humble wine shop and kitchen, serving the workers from the *mattatoio* (slaughterhouse) across the square, is now considered one of the finest spots in the city for traditional *cucina romana*, much of which makes use of the *quinto quarto*, or organ meats, heads, tails, and feet. Set menus (\$50–\$88, excluding wine) include such delicious—and initially scary—dishes as *rigatoni alla pajata* (with lamb intestines) and oxtail stew. The reward for your adventurousness is an all-around wonderful meal, with warm service and a souvenir plate. The dining room is built into the side of Monte Testaccio, and the wine cellar is an excavated grotto—the amphora shards reduce humidity and provide temperature control. Reservations essential. Closed Sun. and Mon. as well as August and Christmas week.

DRINK Ketumbar

Via Galvani 24, 011-39/06-5730-5338, ketumbar.it

The hippest and longest-lived of the hot spots on the Via Galvani strip, this stylish Asian-themed lounge is built into the side of Monte Testaccio, whose ancient potsherds are visible through a Plexiglas wall panel. You can eat (sushi and creative Italian), but the real scene is after dinner, especially in the colder months. From 11 P.M. to 2 A.M., the candlelit, Buddha-bedecked bar and black banquettes swarm with 20- and 30-somethings.

DRINK L'Oasi della Birra

Piazza Testaccio 38–41, 011-39/06-574-6122

Even Romans like to trade *vino* for beer once in a while. Find all your favorite brews at this inviting cellar, from Belgium's Chimay to Cuba's Mayabe. There's a menu of comforting soups and sausages and other, lighter snacks.

SHOP Mercato di Testaccio

Piazza Testaccio

Rome's most authentic covered food market is a priceless cultural spectacle, totally in line with your stereotypical notions about Italian community life. In the cacophonous main pavilion, tittering housewives haggle with the fishmonger for fresh prawns and clams. Fresh herbs are sold with the roots still attached. Out on the sidewalks of Piazza Testaccio, away from the food stalls, vendors sell inexpensive shoes, skirts, and trinkets. Sat. is the busiest day. Closed Sun.

PLAY Casa del Jazz

Viale di Porta Ardeatina 55, 011-39/06-704-731, casajazz.it

The brand-new “House of Jazz” is a handsome 1930s villa, reclaimed from a Mafia boss and refurbished with a concert hall and recording studio dedicated to the American music genre most loved by Italians. Performances are held almost every night at 9 P.M. inside the 150-seat auditorium or out under the stars and umbrella pines in the garden, which is open daily to the public. Café, bookshop, and restaurant on-site. Ticket prices vary; from free to \$25. Cash only.

ESCAPE

Etruscan Necropolis at Cerveteri

Via della Necropoli, Cerveteri, 011-39/06-994-0001

The vast “city of the dead” is a dense and thrillingly ancient-feeling jungle of vines and trees that envelop thousands of mound-shaped tombs cut from reddish tufa rock. The carved burial chambers inside the tumuli (which date from the 7th to the 3rd centuries B.C.) are open to anyone willing and able to walk or climb in. Take a COTRAL bus (see p. 1) from Cornelia metro station to the Cerveteri city center. From there, walk 25 minutes or catch the shuttle bus (011-39/06-9955-1971), which runs four times a day. 8:30 A.M.–sunset. Closed Mon. Bus fare and admission from \$13. Cash only.

Budget Travel Rome / Prati, Parioli, and Foro Italice

SNAP GUIDE

Above the touristy meridian between the Vatican and Villa Borghese, the neighborhoods of Prati and leafy Parioli have trendy fusion restaurants and fascinating 20th- and 21st-century architecture.

SEE Auditorium Parco della Musica

Viale Pietro de Coubertin 30, 011-39/06-8024-1281, auditorium.com

After initial noise about the concert halls' resemblance to giant beetles (which is fair), Romans have heartily embraced the exciting new music and fine arts complex designed by Renzo Piano. Come during the day to tour the site, which includes an ancient Roman villa excavated during construction, and have a snack at the cafeteria. At night, attend a performance by the Accademia di Santa Cecilia symphony or Bob Dylan. Admission to the site is free. Prices for shows vary, from free to \$126.

EAT Ai Villini

Via Marcantonio Colonna 48, 011-39/06-321-6766

The kind of perfectly Roman pasta that can inspire a transatlantic trip. Crowd in with the locals on their lunch break and order the rigatoni alla carbonara off the handwritten menu. The dish features salty, crisped *guanciale*, or pork cheeks, Rome's divine answer to thick-sliced bacon. The grilled radicchio and the espresso-soaked tiramisu are not to be missed. Unless you're lucky enough to score a personal invitation from a local, this may be the closest you can get to mamma's home cooking. Closed Sun. dinner and Wed. In July closed Sun. lunch.

EAT Duke's

Viale Parioli 200, 011-39/06-8066-2455, dukes.it

Perhaps you didn't come to Rome to eat at a California-inspired restaurant, but Duke's is so well executed, from its breezy, beachy architecture to its strictly locals crowd of young professionals (and a few celebs) to its healthy, delicious food, that it's worth trekking up to posh Parioli for dinner. It's one of the few Roman restaurants with a decent bar scene.

DRINK Chioschetto di Ponte Milvio

East of the northern gate of Ponte Milvio

Just north of the ancient Milvian bridge, where Constantine vanquished Maxentius in A.D. 312, the casual drink shack with a neon Coca-Cola sign and plastic tables on the gravelly roadside is a powerful magnet for 20- to 40-somethings. No frills, no attitude. Open only in summer.

Dining in Rome

Birreria pub

Enoteca wine bar

Gelateria ice cream/gelato parlor

Osteria simple tavern serving local wine and food

Paninoteca sandwich shop

Pasticceria bakery

Rosticceria deli selling roasted meats and prepared foods

Ristorante restaurant

Trattoria casual restaurant, usually family-run

DRINK ReD

Auditorium, Viale Pietro de Coubertin 12-16, 011-39/06-8069-1630, redrestaurant.roma.it

If you're lucky, you'll mix with international musicians at this sleek cocktail bar and restaurant in Rome's new center for fine arts. Even if the Brazilian jazz singers and Korean violinists are absent, it's still a hot place for an *aperitivo* with accompanying free snack buffet from 6:30 P.M.—9 P.M.

SHOP COIN

Via Cola di Rienzo 173, 011-39/06-3600-4298

Often ignored by tourists in search of flashier storefronts, the midrange department store has a fantastic assortment of affordable handbags, belts, socks, scarves, hats, and jewelry on the ground floor. Upstairs, there's fashionably sporty outerwear and upscale lingerie.

SHOP Del Frate

Via degli Scipioni 118, 011-39/06-323-6437

A classy, fully stocked *enoteca* near the Vatican for people who take their wine seriously. Let the expert staff pour you an under-the-radar vintage. The shop also functions as a wine store, and the genteel folk of Prati wouldn't dream of buying their cases of Barolo elsewhere.

Via del Quirinale churches

For a quick and satisfying survey of the florid and frenzied Roman baroque, visit three 17th-century treasures. At Via del Quirinale 29, Gian Lorenzo Bernini's Sant'Andrea al Quirinale looks like a Neapolitan-ice-cream sundae, with swirly pink and white marble and a statue of St. Andrew rising heavenward toward the dome. At Via del Quirinale 23, Francesco Borromini's San Carlino alle Quattro Fontane is a tiny, dizzying space with oppressive, fractured white surfaces that mirror the tortured soul of the architect. A few blocks east, at Via XX Settembre 17, Santa Maria della Vittoria is home to Bernini's famously sexual sculpture *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*.

PLAY A.S. Roma and S.S. Lazio soccer games

Stadio Olimpico, Piazzale del Foro Italice, 011-39/06-3685-7762, lega-calcio.it

From September through May, Rome's two Serie A soccer teams (A.S. Roma and S.S. Lazio) play at home against rivals such as Juventus (Turin) and Inter Milan. The atmosphere is loud and passionate. There are plenty of pyrotechnics, but rarely violence; no alcohol or glass allowed. For Roma games, buy tickets at any *tabaccheria* (tobacco store) that advertises centrally linked "Lottomatica" machines. For Lazio games, buy tickets at Orbis ticket agency (see listing in Essentials, p. 2). Or try your luck at the stadium box office a few hours before kickoff. From \$32.