

## Rome – The Eternal City

Any holiday in Rome must include a visit to the ancient monuments of the Roman Empire, which are still dotted around the city centre. The Colosseum is a great place to start. This spectacular example of Roman architecture and engineering was constructed during 72AD and is today one of Rome's most famous landmarks. It was 160ft high, had 80 entrances and could hold up to 50,000 spectators, who regularly flocked to the amphitheatre to watch animal hunts and gladiator fights. A short walk away is the Forum. This was the main market and centre for business and religion and its ruins still evoke a sense of its former greatness. The Pantheon, in its present form, was constructed in the early part of the 2nd century. Its most remarkable feature is the dome, which is exactly as high as it is wide. There is a circular opening at the apex that lets in sunshine and rain, which can create some dramatic effects. The cafes in the surrounding square make a good spot for an ice-cream and a breather.

Turning to the classical architecture of Rome, the Spanish Steps and the Trevi fountain are amongst the highlights. The Spanish steps, so called because of their location close to the Spanish embassy, are Rome's best known Rococo monument. They appear particularly outstanding in May when they are covered in azaleas, and are a popular meeting point all year round. The Trevi fountain, which features in many films, is the most impressive of all of Rome's fountains, its impact being all the greater because of the tiny square in which it is located. The water comes from the ancient aqueduct built by Agrippa in 19BC and tradition holds that if you want to return to Rome you must throw a coin over your shoulder into the basin.

The Vatican, covering only 120 acres, contains some of the world's most spectacular works of art including paintings by Raphael, Caravaggio, Giotto, Poussin and, of course, Michelangelo. Displayed throughout its ten museums are antiquities from Egypt, Greece and Rome. An essential stop is the Sistine Chapel, although it is often brimming with visitors. It took Michelangelo four years to complete the stunning ceiling and the final results were revealed in 1512. St Peter's Basilica boasts the largest dome in the world. The present structure was built between 1506 and 1626, initially following plans by the architect Bramante. Inside, the building is decorated with coloured marble, magnificent sculptures and frescos.

Following a busy sight seeing schedule in the city, it is well worth adding a few days onto the end of your holiday to relax in the tranquil country setting of the Castelli Romani – the 'Roman Castles'. The area is well known as the most beautiful part of the county of Lazio. The Castelli Romani are the ring of pretty towns that encircle the volcanic lakes to the south of Rome: sample the famous wine of the town of Frascati or the wild strawberries on the banks of Lake Nemi, or enjoy watersports on the lakes – the perfect antidote to busy days in the city.

### Getting There

Fly direct from the UK to either Rome airport with, amongst others, BA, Alitalia, Easyjet, Ryanair, BMI

### Combine With

The countryside of Tuscany, Umbria, Le Marche or Abruzzo to the north, and the Lakes beyond, or the stunning Amalfi Coast to the south.

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For thousands of years writers, artists and travellers have been drawn to Rome, and with very good reason. Holidays in Rome reveal fascinating discoveries around every corner, from ancient monuments to classical architecture to an abundance of churches and piazzas. In addition, Rome is home to the world's smallest nation: the Vatican City. But Rome is not just about history: a bustling metropolis thrives alongside the relics of the past, so leave time during holidays or honeymoons in Rome to take in the designer shops and people-watch from the many alfresco bars and restaurants.

### Our Recommended Hotels Rome and Lazio

The Frascati Villa  
The Club

