



# ROME

## THE ETERNAL CITY

### OVERVIEW

The city of Rome is one of the most enduring achievements of western civilisation. The vast range of historic sites creates a destination of unique character with an unrivalled sense of historical continuity between ancient and modern society, well worth an extended visit.

This 15-day residential-style tour provides a unique opportunity to gain detailed knowledge of Rome's history, art and architecture, while enjoying the city during the quiet months. Led by classicist Dr Eireann Marshall, the itinerary has been designed to peel away the layers of history, from the ancient Roman city, source of the city's pride and traditions, to the magnificent art and architecture of the Renaissance and baroque eras.

The tour takes you beyond the usual tourist experience of Rome, with visits to less well-known but fascinating sites, excursions outside of the city and special visits to private palaces of the Roman aristocracy. As well as the programmed sightseeing, there is sufficient free time built into the itinerary for individual exploration of the city and relaxation.



### TOUR LEADER

**Dr Eireann Marshall** is an Honorary Research Associate and Associate Lecturer with the Open University. Eireann has in depth knowledge of Italy and its history and archaeology.

### TOUR DATES

**January 9-23, 2025** | 15 Days

### TOUR PRICE

**\$11,980** per person, twin share  
**\$2,580** single supplement

### TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

### GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

### ITINERARY

Rome (14 nights)

### INCLUSIONS

**14** nights' accommodation in a centrally located 4-star hotel. Airport-hotel transfers in Rome. All breakfasts, 5 lunches and 3 dinners. Best available tickets to **2** performances. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Start & Finish

The tour starts at 3.00pm on Thursday 9 January, at the Ponte Sisto Hotel, Rome.

The tour ends after breakfast on Thursday 23 January, at the Ponte Sisto Hotel, Rome.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

### Rome's Extraordinary History

Rome's influence on western culture is unsurpassed. Unravel the layers of history, from great emperors to the geniuses that shaped the Renaissance, and the art that defined the Baroque across Europe.

### Rome without the Crowds

Enjoy Rome's vibrant atmosphere without the high season crowds and get the most out of your experience, including entry to hard-to-access sites such as the Insula Ara Coeli, the Aula Gotica and the Niccoline Chapel.

### Rome's distinctive Neighbourhoods

Rome has both the grandeur of a European capital and a sense of intimacy in its neighbourhoods. Along with walking tours through its districts, this tour allows you to enjoy 'living like a local' in a centrally located palazzo.

### Genius of Caravaggio & Bernini

Rome is home to arguably the greatest painter of the baroque period, along with its greatest sculptor. From daily life in the paintings of Caravaggio to the dramas captured in marble by Bernini, explore Rome's most famous artists.

### Music in the Eternal City

Music was an important part of ancient Roman culture and the city's musical life thrives. We plan to attend a concert at Renzo Piano's Parco della Musica Auditorium, along with a performance at the historic Teatro dell'Opera.

### Thursday 9 January

#### Arrival

The tour begins this afternoon at 3.00pm when we meet in the Hotel Ponte Sisto. After a talk introducing us to Rome, our walking tour takes us through the neighbourhood surrounding the hotel, including the Republican-era temples at Largo Argentina. Tonight we enjoy a welcome dinner of typical Roman dishes in a nearby restaurant. Overnight Rome (D)

### Friday 10 January

#### The Heart of Ancient Rome

The Republican-era Forum and the Palatine Hill resonate with legend and history and our walking tour this morning takes us through the many highlights. We start with the Palatine Hill, viewing the lavish frescoes of the House of Augustus and the opulent palaces of Tiberius and Domitian. We then descend Tiberius' Ramp, constructed to connect these palaces with the temples, markets and courts of the Forum below, hoping to stop at the unique 6th century church on the way (subject to openings). We tour the Oratory of the 40 martyrs and more of the Forum, including Caesar's Temple, the Temple of Vesta and the Temple of Romulus. Returning to our hotel, the afternoon and evening are at leisure. Overnight Rome (B)

### Saturday 11 January

#### Imperial Imagery | Performance I

As the Roman political system changed from a republic to the sole rule of an emperor, the layout and appearance of the city changed along with it. Our exploration of this phase of the city's life begins at the Ara Pacis, the Emperor Augustus' Altar of Peace, an invaluable source of text and images relating to the reign of the first 'princeps' of the Empire. After a well-timed coffee, we then take a private tour of Ludus Magnus – the preserved ruins of Ancient Rome's largest and most prestigious gladiator training school, located just east of the Colosseum. Following lunch at the charming Gran Caffè Martini & Rossi overlooking the Colosseum, we make our way first to the Arch of Constantine,





Roman Forum



Livia's villa at Prima Porta

built to celebrate the victory of Constantine over his rival Maxentius, then to the mighty Colosseum itself. Our day ends at the Domus Aurea, the site of the massive and extravagant pleasure palace built by the Emperor Nero. Returning to the hotel, there is time to relax and freshen up before we make our way to the Renzo Piano designed Parco della Musica for a concert by Rome's resident symphony orchestra, the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (schedule permitting). Overnight Rome (B, L)

#### Performance details

Venue: Auditorium Parco della Musica

Program: To be advised

Performers: To be advised

### Sunday 12 January Imperial Magnificence

We celebrate the magnificence of Imperial Rome today beginning with a talk in our hotel before we make our way to the Palazzo Massimo, an excellent museum of Roman sculpture, mosaics and paintings. Highlights of the collection include superb frescoes which once adorned the walls of the Villa Livia, the lavish country retreat of the wife of the Emperor Augustus at Prima Porta, and the extraordinary 2nd-century *Portonaccio Sarcophagus*, covered in elaborate carved scenes depicting the bloody reality of Roman warfare. After a break for lunch, we walk the short distance to the well-preserved Baths of Diocletian, once the largest and most impressive of the imperial bathing complexes in Rome, and Santa Maria degli Angeli, the beautiful 16th-century basilica masterminded by Michelangelo and constructed within the remains of the Bath walls. Returning to the hotel, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Rome (B)

### Monday 13 January Everyday life in Ancient Rome

Shifting our focus to the more prosaic but no less fascinating remnants of everyday life in Rome, we start our day with a private visit to the Insula of the Ara Coeli. Discovered during excavations for an urban renewal project around the Capitoline Hill initiated by Mussolini, this 2nd-century structure is a rare surviving example of the apartment dwellings, or *insula*, where many Romans once lived. Our walking tour continues through the district between the forum and the Tiber River, including the Forum Boarium, the ancient cattle market; the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin and the republican-era Theatre of Marcellus, transformed into a family fortress in the 11th century. Transferring to Testaccio, the former slaughterhouse district which has become one of Rome's most dynamic neighbourhoods, we enjoy lunch in a local trattoria before a private visit to Monte Testaccio, an artificial hill and archaeological treasure trove made up of discarded ancient amphorae and other pottery fragments. Returning to the hotel, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Rome (B, L)





Via Appia Antica

## Tuesday 14 January Walking the Appian Way

Following in the footsteps of the ancient Romans our adventure takes us along the first and most famous of the great Roman roads, the Appian Way. We begin at the Porta San Sebastiano, the largest and best-preserved of the city gates built by the Emperor Aurelian, before making our way to the Pomponius Hylas hypogeum, where we take a private tour of this fascinating underground tomb decorated with frescoes and mosaics, and the hypogeum Scipionum, the tomb of the patrician Scipio family, founded in the 3rd century CE. After lunch at a local restaurant offering excellent regional cuisine, we continue to the Circus of Maxentius, a well-preserved arena and track dating from the 4th century CE, and the nearby tomb of Caecilia Metella, a monumental structure built for the patrician wife of a consul who served under Julius Caesar. Our final destination today is to the Columbarium of the Freedmen of Augustus, an extraordinary site which is rarely open to the public, believed to be the resting place of thousands of freedman who worked for the imperial family. Returning to the hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Rome (B, L)

## Wednesday 15 January Ostia

An early start today as we join our coach for the drive to Ostia Antica, the harbour city and seaport of ancient Rome, located at the mouth of the Tiber. Silted up and abandoned in ancient times, the site is now an extensive archaeological park. Our tour takes us through the exceptional range of excavations including the theatre of Marcus Agrippa, temples, bathhouses and domestic dwellings followed by time to explore at leisure. Our return journey takes us past a very different development. The EUR was originally planned by Mussolini as the site of the 1942 World Fair but historical events took Mussolini in a quite different direction, and the EUR is now a residential and business district, albeit renowned for its monumental fascist era architecture. After time to relax and refresh back at our hotel, we meet for dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Rome (B, D)



Santa Prassede

## Thursday 16 January The Advent of Christianity

The conversion of the Emperor Constantine to Christianity resulted in basilica building on a truly imperial scale. After a talk on paleochristian Rome this morning we travel to the summit of the Esquiline Hill to visit Santa Maria Maggiore, built in 432 on a site indicated, so tradition suggests, by a vision of the Virgin Mary. Despite its neoclassical façade, the basilica is the only one of the four papal basilicas in Rome to have preserved many of its paleochristian elements, including significant mosaics. After a break for coffee we continue to Santa Prassede, an early medieval basilica built over ancient roman thermae and dedicated to Saint Praxedes, said to have provided care and comfort to persecuted Christians.





Tempietto at San Pietro



Villa d'Este Tivoli

The basilica's mosaic decorations are amongst the oldest and most beautiful in Rome. After lunch at a nearby restaurant we walk to San Clemente, an attractive 11th-century church built over three levels of earlier structures, the oldest dating back to the 1st century CE. Our day concludes at the Basilica of Santi Quattro Coronati where we have a private viewing of the extraordinary series of medieval frescoes in the Aula Gotica rediscovered in 1996 after having been covered under a thick layer of plaster. Returning to the hotel, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Rome (B, L)

### **Friday 17 January** **Renaissance Rome**

Our journey through history brings us to the Renaissance, brought to Rome by artists and architects from across Italy, seeking glory through the restoration of Europe's most famous city following the return of the Papacy from Avignon. Our day begins on the Janiculum Hill, visiting Bramante's delightful 'Tempietto' of 1502, sponsored by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain and marking the place where, according to legend, St Peter was martyred. Our next destination is the magnificent riverside Villa Farnesina, where Renaissance notables such as Raphael and Pope Leo X enjoyed life out of public view. After time for lunch, we continue to one of Rome's oldest churches, Santa Maria in Trastevere, whose unassuming exterior belies an interior adorned with beautiful mosaics from the 12th and 13th centuries. Returning to the hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Rome (B)

### **Saturday 18 January** **Tivoli | Performance II**

Settlement in ancient Tibur can be dated back to the 13th century BCE but it was its reinvention as Tivoli, an elegant spa town frequented by wealthy Romans, that put it on the map thanks to the waters from the nearby Aniene River. A short drive from Rome, our visit takes us through the extensive ruins of Hadrian's Villa, once a luxurious landscaped complex complete with pools, baths and fountains, which served the emperor as both retreat and second home. Lunch is enjoyed at the gorgeous 18th-century Ristorante Sibilla, poised on top of the Acropolis of Tibur and overlooking the Temple of Vesta, before we continue to the beautiful 16th-century Villa D'Este. Here Cardinal Ippolito D'Este, son of Lucrezia Borgia, generous patron of the arts and thwarted papal candidate, retired in style, commissioning a sumptuous villa surrounded by a pagan fantasy world of grottoes, gardens, pools and fountains. Returning to Rome we have an evening performance at the Teatro dell'Opera by Rome's resident opera company (schedule permitting). Overnight Rome (B, L)

#### **Performance details**

Venue: Teatro dell'Opera di Roma

Program: To be advised

Performers: To be advised





Doria Pamphilj



Apollo and Daphne

### **Sunday 19 January** **Treasures of Rome**

Today we visit the Capitoline Museums, a collection which began in the 15th century when Pope Sixtus IV donated a number of bronzes to the people of Rome. Augmented by further papal gifts and acquisitions over time, this fine collection of art and ancient sculpture was opened to the public by Pope Clement XII in 1734. Housed in a complex of fine medieval/renaissance buildings on the Capitoline Hill, the many treasures of the collection include the famous *Capitoline Wolf*, the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, and the *Capitoline Venus*. Adding to the experience are the visible foundations of the ancient temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on which the museums are built, revealed by recent renovations. Afternoon and evening at leisure Overnight Rome (B)

### **Monday 20 January** **Baroque Rome**

The baroque architecture of the 17th and 18th centuries left an indelible mark on the city of Rome as papal patronage sought to transform and reinvigorate the city. Beginning on the Quirinal Hill our walking tour takes us to sites where the versatile talents of Bernini and his rival Borromini were engaged, including the churches of Santa Maria della Vittoria and San Carlino alle Quattro Fontane, the Trevi fountain, and Bernini's fountains at the foot of the Spanish Steps. In the afternoon, we continue to the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, a 16th-century palace in the heart of Rome which houses a fine art collection, displayed as it was intended to be seen in the baroque period, with works by Caravaggio, Titian, Jan Breughel and Velasquez's *Portrait of Innocent X*. Making our way back to the hotel, our last stop is the beautiful Chiesa del Gesù, mother church of the Jesuit order and resting place of founder Ignatius Loyola, whose frescoed ceiling is a masterpiece of trompe l'oeil. Evening at leisure. Overnight Rome (B)

### **Tuesday 21 January** **Caravaggio**

We begin this morning with a talk on Caravaggio, a painter whose superb technique and radical, theatrical style combined Renaissance ideals with a closely observed humanity. We then make our way to the Galleria Borghese, where Cardinal Scipione Borghese and later generations of his family amassed a fine collection of art and sculpture, including five exceptional works by Caravaggio and some of Bernini's earliest sculptural masterpieces, such as his *Apollo and Daphne*. Travelling on to the Campus Martius, there is free time for lunch before we visit the Pantheon, built by the Emperor Hadrian and one of the most impressive feats of Roman engineering of all time. A short walk brings us to the church of San Luigi dei Francesi, dedicated to the patron saints of France, whose Contarelli Chapel contains a dynamic

## HOTEL

### Rome, Hotel Ponte Sisto

(14 nights)

Accommodation has been carefully selected. Your base is the four-star Hotel Ponte Sisto, located in a renovated historical palazzo in a quiet part of central Rome.

Within a few hundred metres are a range of attractions, and Campo dei Fiori, around which many boutiques and fine restaurants can be found. It is in easy, gentle walking distance to the Trastevere district, with its many restaurants and shops, and the Ghetto, a quiet inner city neighbourhood with a relaxed feel and good local restaurants.

The rooms of the Hotel Ponte Sisto are well-equipped and relatively spacious. The hotel has an internal courtyard garden, a rooftop terrace and good public areas.

[www.hotelpontesisto.it](http://www.hotelpontesisto.it)

## WEATHER

Rome in January is usually a pleasant time to travel, with cool weather (average 8°C), blue skies and occasional light snow. It is a good idea to bring layers, a pair of waterproof shoes and a warm, water and windproof coat.

## FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

### Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, including walking at an easy to regular pace, sometimes on uneven terrain at challenging historic and archaeological sites. For details of all requirements, please visit our website.

cycle of paintings by Caravaggio on the life of St Matthew. In nearby Sant'Agostino we find Caravaggio's lovely *Madonna of Loreto*, as well as frescoes by Raphael. Evening at leisure. Overnight Rome (B)

### Wednesday 22 January

#### St Peters & the Vatican Museums

The Vatican Palace and St Peter's Basilica were by far the largest building projects of Renaissance Rome, using classical models to create a triumphant message of the pre-eminence of the Roman church. Building these vast structures employed the greatest architects and artists of the day, including Bramante, Raphael, Michelangelo and Bernini. It represents a culmination of the Renaissance and baroque styles in painting, architecture and sculpture. Our visit today takes us through the extraordinary collections of ancient and Renaissance works in the Vatican Museums, including the Sistine Chapel, the Raphael Rooms and a private visit to the Niccoline Chapel with its beautiful frescoes attributed to Fra Angelico. After a break for lunch, we visit the spectacular basilica itself, with free time to appreciate its sheer scale and magnificence. Tonight, we meet for our farewell dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Rome (B, D)

### Thursday 23 January

#### Galleria di Arte Moderna - Departure

This morning departing group members transfer to Rome airport for outgoing flights. For those leaving on evening flights, or staying longer, there is the option of a morning visit to the Galleria di Arte Moderna, Rome's museum of modern and contemporary art, housed in a former Barefoot Carmelite monastery dating from the 17th century. (B)



## ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Sharon Williams** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

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