

Destination Details – Visiting Rome



Things to do, places to eat, trips to make when visiting Rome

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Rome for Pre- & Post-Cruise Guests

The Eternal City

Whether you're sailing from Port of Civitavecchia or extending your trip in Rome, this is one of Europe's most immersive destinations. Ancient ruins, Renaissance art, and vibrant street life sit side by side. Plan **2–4 nights minimum**—and longer if you want to explore beyond the highlights.

Personal Insight! During my visits to Rome in 2024 and 2025 I found myself wanting to wander the city on foot at a casual pace. History is on every block, at every turn and it's easy to find yourself stopping often to learn about the ruins, buildings, obelisks, churches and statues you'll come across seemingly everywhere. While the main attractions are amazing, the heart of the city is found around those locations in places you don't get to while touring on a bus or following a tour guide. Do yourself a favor and savor this magical city on foot as much as you can!

Where to Stay

Choosing the right hotel can shape your entire Rome experience—location matters more than brand.

Luxury (5★)

Hotel de Russie

Tucked between Piazza del Popolo and the Spanish Steps, this property is known for its **lush terraced garden**, a rarity in Rome. Ideal for clients wanting a quiet retreat in a central location, with top-tier concierge service.

The St. Regis Rome

A grand, historic palace hotel with **ornate interiors and high ceilings**. Best for guests who prefer classic European luxury and proximity to Termini for transport connections.

Upscale (4–4.5★)

Hotel Artemide

Consistently one of Rome’s best-value upscale hotels. Highlights include a **rooftop restaurant and spa**, plus excellent service—great for pre-cruise stays.

Palazzo Manfredi

Boutique luxury directly overlooking the Colosseum. Rooms and dining offer **once-in-a-lifetime views**, making it a strong choice for milestone trips.

Boutique & Value / Airbnb-Friendly

Hotel Campo de' Fiori

Steps from one of Rome’s liveliest squares, with a **rooftop terrace perfect for evening wine**. Ideal for guests who want atmosphere right outside their door.

Tree Charme Hotel

Located in Trastevere, offering a **cozy, local feel** with modern touches—excellent for travelers wanting charm over formality.

Best Areas to Stay

Historic Center (Centro Storico)

Near Pantheon and Trevi Fountain

Best for: First-time visitors, short stays

Why: Walk to nearly every major landmark in minutes

Vibe: Bustling, historic, postcard-perfect

Consider: Higher prices, busy day crowds

Trastevere

Best for: Food lovers, nightlife, repeat visitors

Why: Cobblestone streets, authentic Roman dining, lively evenings

Vibe: Energetic, local, slightly bohemian

Consider: Noise at night, especially on weekends

Monti (Near Colosseum)

Best for: Boutique stays, trendy atmosphere

Why: Close to ancient sites but less crowded than the core

Vibe: Hip, artistic, relaxed

Consider: Smaller hotels, some hills

Prati (Near Vatican City)

Best for: Families, quieter stays

Why: Wide streets, residential feel, better value hotels

Vibe: Calm, polished, less tourist-heavy at night

Consider: 15–25 min walk to historic center

Termini Area

Best for: Budget travelers, short stays, logistics

Why: Immediate access to trains, метро, airport links

Vibe: Functional, busy

Consider: Less charm; choose hotel carefully

Dining Highlights

Classic Roman (Must-Do)

Roscioli Salumeria con Cucina

A hybrid deli, wine bar, and restaurant known for perfectly executed Roman pastas and one of the best wine lists in the city.

Trattoria da Enzo al 29

Small, no-frills trattoria in Trastevere serving authentic, traditional dishes. Expect a wait—but it's part of the experience.

Rooftop Dining & Views

Aroma Restaurant

Michelin-starred dining with front-row Colosseum views, especially stunning at sunset.

Terrazza Borromini

Elegant rooftop overlooking Piazza Navona—ideal for a romantic evening or celebratory dinner.

Les Etoiles

One of the best panoramic terraces in Rome, offering sweeping views toward St. Peter's Basilica.

Dining with Atmosphere

Elegance Café

A refined jazz venue where guests can enjoy live performances paired with fine dining.

Alexanderplatz Jazz Club

One of Rome's top jazz clubs, offering an intimate, classic music experience.

Tramjazz

A unique experience: dine aboard a vintage tram moving through Rome at night, with live music onboard.

Hidden Gems & Local Favorites

Armando al Pantheon

A family-run institution offering refined traditional Roman cuisine just steps from the Pantheon.

Da Cesare al Casaletto

Worth the short taxi ride—known for some of the best Roman dishes in the city.

Flavio al Velavevodetto

Built into Monte Testaccio, famous for exceptional carbonara and amatriciana.

Casual & Street Food

Pizzarium Bonci

Creative, high-quality pizza by the slice—perfect quick stop.

Supplizio

Specializes in supplì, Rome's beloved fried rice balls.

Giolitti

Historic gelato shop—ideal midday break.

Top Things to Do (The Classics)

Colosseum & Roman Forum – Ancient Rome's core

Pantheon – Architectural masterpiece

Vatican Museums & St. Peter's Basilica – World-class art & religion

Trevi Fountain – Iconic photo spot

Spanish Steps – Classic gathering place

Beyond the Highlights

Galleria Borghese – Intimate museum with Bernini masterpieces

Appian Way – Walk or bike ancient Roman roads

Baths of Caracalla – Massive ancient spa ruins

Catacombs of San Callisto – Underground history

Orange Garden (Giardino degli Aranci) – Peaceful views

Day Trips from Rome

Florence – Renaissance art, Duomo, museums (~1.5 hrs by train)

Naples – Pizza capital and gateway to Pompeii

Tivoli – Villa d’Este fountains & Hadrian’s Villa

Orvieto – Dramatic hilltop town with stunning cathedral


Transportation


From Port


Train from Port of Civitavecchia (~1 hr, most efficient)

Private transfer (~1–1.5 hrs, most comfortable)

Getting Around Rome


 Walking – best for central exploration

 Rome Metro – useful and easiest way to traverse within the city limits and Vatican City

 Taxi – convenient for evenings or longer distances

Tip! The Metro provides a great way to travel the city without spending a ton of money on taxis or Ubers. Use the wallet on your phone to easily tap and pay at the turnstiles or get a multiday pass for more streamlined travel. It took me a half day to get comfortable with the system but once I did, moving between places like Vatican City, the Spanish Steps, and my AirBnb became second nature.

Travel Across Italy

 Trenitalia Frecciarossa – fastest option

 Italo – competitive alternative

Tip! Download the **Trainline** app and use it to book train tickets as it searches all train lines for best times and routes.

Why Rome is Ideal for Cruise Guests

Easy access from Port of Civitavecchia

Highly walkable historic core

Incredible variety of dining experiences

Ideal base for exploring Italy

Skip-the-Line Tickets in Rome: Why They're Worth It

Rome is one of the world's great bucket-list destinations—but it is also one of Europe's busiest tourist cities. Attractions like the Colosseum, Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel, and Galleria Borghese regularly sell out or develop lines that can stretch for hours, especially between April and October.

For most travelers, skip-the-line tickets are one of the best values in Rome because they save valuable sightseeing time, reduce stress, and help you avoid the frustration of sold-out attractions.

What “Skip-the-Line” Really Means

Skip-the-line tickets generally allow you to bypass the long ticket-purchase queue by reserving a timed entry in advance. They do **not** eliminate mandatory security screening lines.

In practical terms:

Without advance tickets, waits at the Vatican can exceed 2–3 hours in peak season.

With skip-the-line tickets, entry is often reduced to a brief security wait plus timed admission.

The biggest benefit is guaranteed access and dramatically less wasted vacation time.

For cruise guests or travelers with limited days in Rome, this can mean seeing two major sites in a day instead of spending half the day standing in line.

Best Attractions for Skip-the-Line Tickets

Colosseum & Roman Forum

The Colosseum is Rome’s most visited attraction, and same-day tickets often sell out early.

Why Skip-the-Line Helps

Timed entry avoids long ticket queues

Helps secure premium access areas such as:

Arena Floor

Underground levels

Upper tiers

Makes it easier to combine with the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill in one visit

Online reservations are strongly recommended, especially from spring through fall.

Vatican Museums & Sistine Chapel

The Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel can have some of the longest attraction lines in Europe.

Why Skip-the-Line Is Almost Essential

Peak waits can exceed three hours

Timed-entry tickets dramatically shorten entry time

Better crowd management during busy periods

Reduces stress when visiting one of the world's largest museum complexes

Official Vatican tickets include a reservation fee for skip-the-line access.

Borghese Gallery

Galleria Borghese works differently from many Roman attractions because entry is capped and timed.

Why Advance Tickets Matter

Daily admission limits

Frequent sellouts

Small-group atmosphere preserved inside the museum

For this museum, advance booking is less about skipping lines and more about guaranteeing entry.

Independent Visit vs Guided Tour

Visiting on Your Own

Advantages

Lower cost

More flexibility

Explore at your own pace

Easier for experienced travelers

Great if using audio guides or guidebooks

Best For

Repeat visitors to Rome

Travelers who enjoy independent exploration

Budget-conscious travelers

Those who dislike structured group schedules

Potential Downsides

Less historical context

Can feel overwhelming at huge sites like the Vatican Museums

Easier to miss important highlights

More planning required

Many travelers successfully use official timed-entry tickets plus audio guides for an excellent self-guided experience.

Guided Tours

Advantages

Expert storytelling and historical context

Faster navigation through complex sites

Guides highlight key masterpieces and hidden details

Some tours include special-access areas

Less logistical stress

Best For

First-time visitors

Travelers short on time

Ancient history or art lovers

Families or multigenerational groups

Visitors wanting deeper understanding

The Roman Forum and Palatine Hill are especially enhanced by guided tours because much of the area consists of ruins that are difficult to interpret independently.

At the Vatican, guides often streamline the experience by navigating the enormous museum efficiently and explaining the significance behind the artwork and architecture.

Quick Comparison

Feature	Independent Visit	Guided Tour
Cost	Lower	Higher
Flexibility	Excellent	Limited to tour schedule
Historical Context	Moderate	Excellent
Pace	Self-paced	Structured
Navigation Ease	Moderate	Easy
Access to Special Areas	Sometimes	Often included

Feature	Independent Visit	Guided Tour
Best For	Experienced travelers	First-time visitors

Best Strategy for Most Travelers

For many visitors, the ideal balance is:

✓ Self-Guided + Skip-the-Line

Best for:

Colosseum

Pantheon

Borghese Gallery

✓ Guided Tour + Skip-the-Line

Best for:

Vatican Museums & Sistine Chapel

Roman Forum & Palatine Hill

This approach combines flexibility with expert insight where it matters most.

How to Get Skip-the-Line Tickets

Official Websites (Best Value).

[Vatican Museums](#)

Book directly through the official Vatican Museums website.

[Colosseum](#)

Use the official Colosseum ticketing site for timed entry and special-access tickets.

[Borghese Gallery](#)

Advance reservations are highly recommended through the official booking system.

Third-Party Tour Companies

Useful when:

Official tickets are sold out

You want bundled experiences

You prefer guided tours

You want hotel pickup or transportation included

Look for:

“Priority Access”

“Timed Entry”

“Small Group Tours”

Strong recent reviews

Bonus! Cooking Class and Wine Tasting at Minardi Winery in Frascati, Italy



My family took this short-day trip and cooking class during our visit to Italy in 2024. The Minardi family provided a wonderful experience and one I highly recommend if you want to get outside the city for a day and enjoy the countryside!

Just 30 minutes from Rome, the charming hill town of Frascati offers a peaceful escape into the heart of the Castelli Romani wine region. Known for its historic villas, relaxed piazzas, family-run wineries, and crisp white Frascati DOC wines, it provides a completely different atmosphere from the busy streets of Rome. Visitors can stroll cobblestone lanes, enjoy panoramic views over the Roman countryside, and experience authentic Roman culinary traditions in a more intimate setting. Frascati is especially popular for half-day or full-day excursions that combine wine tasting, local food, and hands-on cooking experiences.

One of the most popular winery experiences is offered by Minardi Historic Winery Tours, a family-run vineyard dating back generations in the Frascati countryside. Their experiences include vineyard tours, wine tastings, and hands-on pasta or pizza-making classes where guests learn traditional Roman recipes using local ingredients. The pasta masterclass teaches guests to prepare handmade ravioli, fettuccine, and other regional specialties before enjoying the meal paired with estate wines. The winery's rustic setting among vineyards and olive groves makes it one of the most memorable culinary experiences near Rome.