Welcome to Rome

A heady mix of haunting ruins, breathtaking art, vibrant street life and incredible food, Italy’s hot-blooded capital is one of the world’s most romantic and inspiring cities.

The result of 3000 years of ad hoc urban development, Rome’s cityscape is an exhilarating spectacle. Ancient icons such as the Colosseum, Roman Forum and Pantheon recall the city’s golden age as caput mundi (capital of the world), while monumental basilicas testify to the role that great popes have played in its history.

Rome’s astonishing artistic heritage is almost unrivalled. Throughout history, the city has starred in the great upheavals of Western art, drawing the top artists of the day and inspiring them to push the boundaries of creative achievement. The result is a city awash with priceless treasures. A walk around the centre will have you encountering masterpieces by the giants of Western art: sculptures by Michelangelo, canvases by Caravaggio, frescoes by Raphael and fountains by Bernini.

A trip to Rome is as much about lapping up the dolce vita lifestyle as gorging on art and culture. Idling around picturesque streets, whiling away hours at street-side cafes and people-watching on pretty piazzas are all an integral part of the Roman experience. Eating out is one of the great pleasures here, and a combination of romantic al fresco settings and superlative food guarantees good times. For a truly Roman meal head to a boisterous pizzeria or a convivial neighbourhood trattoria.

Ancient icons recall the city’s golden age as caput mundi (capital of the world)
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Plan Your Trip
This Year in Rome

Rome
From saints’ days and neighbourhood shindigs to shopping bonanzas and major cultural festivals, Rome’s calendar bursts with events. History, architecture and art might have called you here, but food, wine, music, theatre and parades will etch Rome into your memory.

Above: Festa della Madonna delle Neve (p13)
Top Festivals & Events

Carnevale Romano  Feb (p7)
Natale di Roma  Apr (p9)
Lungo il Tevere  Jun–Aug (p13)
Estate Romana  Jun–Oct (p11)
RomaEuropa  Late Sep–Nov (p14)
Plan Your Trip
This Year in Rome

March

The onset of spring brings blooming flowers, rising temperatures and unpredictable rainfall. With Good Friday falling on 30 March 2018, prices increase as the end of the month approaches.

📍 Festa di Santa Francesca Romana 9 Mar
Traffic jams galore! Every year on the feast day of Francesca Romana, patron saint of drivers, devout motorists drive their cars to the Monastero della Oblate di Santa Francesca Romana for a vehicular blessing.

📍 Festa di San Giuseppe 19 Mar
Previously an official public holiday, the Feast of St Joseph is still a cherished event, particularly in the Trionfale district near the Vatican City, where local pasticcerie (pastry shops) prepare delicious cream puffs known as bignè di san Giuseppe (pictured above).

😀 Giornate FAI di Primavera Late Mar
Palazzi (mansions), churches and archaeological sites that are generally closed to the public unbolt their doors for a weekend of special openings, courtesy of Italy’s main conservation body, the Fondo Ambiente Italiano (www.fondoambiente.it).

📍 Easter 30 Mar–2 Apr
In the capital of the Catholic world, Easter is a big deal. On Good Friday, the pope leads a candlelit procession around the Colosseum. At noon on Easter Sunday he blesses the crowds in St Peter’s Square.
Plan Your Trip
This Year in Rome

September

In the dying days of summer, the weather is still pleasantly warm, but cooler nights mean the city starts to shrug off its heat-induced torpor. The kids go back to school and locals return to work.

🌐 Evening Openings  Jun–Sep
A number of Rome’s headline sights offer night visits over the summer and through September. In past years, these have included the Colosseum (pictured above) and Vatican Museums.

嗉 City Clubbing  Late Sep
The end of the month is a good time for party-goers as the city’s main clubs return to town after their summer exodus. Curtain-raiser events are a guarantee of big nights and sweaty dance floors.

★ RomaEuropa  Late Sep–Nov
Established international performers join emerging stars at Rome’s premier dance and drama festival (http://romaeuropa.net).

腥 Taste of Roma  Mid-Sep
Foodies flock to the Auditorium Parco della Musica to revel in world food. Join Rome’s top chefs for tastings, performances and three days of food-related events (www.tasteofroma.it).

Events range from avant-garde dance performances to installations, multimedia shows, recitals and readings.
Plan Your Trip

Need to Know

Currency
Euro (€)

Language
Italian

Visas
Not required by EU citizens. Not required by nationals of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA for stays of up to 90 days.

Money
ATMs are widespread. Major credit cards are widely accepted but some smaller shops, trattorias and pensioni may not take them.

Mobile Phones
Local SIM cards can be used in unlocked European, Australian and US phones. Other phones must be set to roaming.

Time
Western European Time (GMT/UTC plus one hour)

Tourist Information
Information points around town are open from 9.30am to 7pm for maps, brochures and the Roma Pass.

Daily Costs

Budget
Less than €100
- Dorm bed: €20–35
- Double room in a budget hotel: €60–110
- Pizza plus beer: €15

Midrange
€100–250
- Double room in a hotel: €110–200
- Lunch and dinner in local restaurants: €25–45
- Museum admission: €5–15
- Three-day Roma Pass covering museum entry and public transport: €38.50

Top end
More than €250
- Double room in a four- or five-star hotel: €200–450
- Top restaurant dinner: €45–150
- Opera ticket: €17–150
- City-centre taxi ride: €10–15
- Auditorium concert ticket: €25–90

Advance Planning

Two months before
Book high-season accommodation.

Three to four weeks before
Check for concerts at www.auditorium.com and www.operaroma.it.

One to two weeks before
Reserve tables at A-list restaurants. Sort tickets to the pope’s weekly audience at St Peter’s.

A few days before
Book for the Museo e Galleria Borghese (compulsory) and for the Vatican Museums (advisable to avoid queues).

Useful Websites
- Lonely Planet (lonelyplanet.com/rome) Destination low-down, hotel bookings and traveller forum.
- 060608 (www.060608.it) Rome’s official tourist website.
- Coopculture (www.coopculture.it) Information and ticket booking for Rome’s monuments.
- Vatican Museums (www.vatican.va) Book tickets and avoid the queues.
- Auditorium (www.auditorium.com) Check concert listings.

For more, see the Survival Guide (p229)