



Day Trips from Rome

Ostia Antica p200

Wander through complete streets, gaze at ancient toilets and clamber over an amphitheatre at the ancient port of Ostia Antica, Rome's very own Pompeii.

Tivoli p201

A hilltop town home to two Unesco World Heritage sites: Villa Adriana, the emperor Hadrian's colossal country estate, and Villa d'Este, famous for its landscaped gardens and lavish fountains.

Castelli Romani p202

Located south of Rome, the pretty Colli Albani (Alban Hills) and their 13 towns have long provided a green escape for overheated Romans.

Cerveteri p204

The evocative tombs and archaeological treasures of this once important Etruscan city provide a window into a mysterious ancient world.

Orvieto p206

Home to one of Italy's most awe-inspiring Gothic cathedrals, this hilltop Umbrian town makes for a rewarding day trip.

Ostia Antica

Explore

An easy train ride from Rome, Ostia Antica is one of Italy's finest and most under-appreciated archaeological sites.

Founded in the 4th century BC, the city started life as a fortified military camp guarding the mouth of the Tiber – hence the name: Ostia is a derivation of the Latin word *ostium* (mouth). It quickly grew, and by the 2nd century AD was a thriving port with a population of around 50,000.

Decline set in after the fall of the Roman Empire, and by the 9th century the city had largely been abandoned, its citizens driven off by barbarian raids and outbreaks of malaria. Over subsequent centuries, it was plundered of marble and building materials and its ruins were gradually buried in river silt, hence their survival.

The Best...

➤ **Sight** Terme di Nettuno

Top Tip

Bring a picnic or time your visit so that you can eat at a restaurant as the on-site canteen gets extremely busy.

Getting There & Away

➤ **Train** From Rome, take the Ostia Lido train from Stazione Porta San Paolo (next to Piramide metro station), getting off at Ostia Antica (25 minutes, every 15 minutes). The trip is covered by a standard Rome public transport ticket (€1.50).

➤ **Car** Take Via del Mare, which runs parallel to Via Ostiense, and follow signs for the *scavi* (ruins).

Need to Know

➤ **Location** 25km southwest of Rome



SIGHTS

★ **SCAVI ARCHEOLOGICI
DI OSTIA ANTICA**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

(06 5635 0215; www.ostiantica.beniculturali.it; Viale dei Romagnoli 717; adult/reduced €8/4, free 1st Sun of month, exhibitions €3; 8.30am–6.15pm Tue–Sun summer, shorter hours winter) One of Lazio's prize sights, the ruins of

ancient Rome's seaport are wonderfully complete, like a smaller version of Pompeii. Highlights include the Terme di Nettuno (Baths of Neptune), a steeply stacked amphitheatre, and an ancient cafe, complete with a bar and traces of the original menu frescoed on the wall.

Note that the site is pretty large and you'll need a few hours to do it justice. Also, it gets busy at weekends, but is much quieter on weekdays.

Near the entrance, **Porta Romana** gives onto the **Decumanus Maximus**, the site's central strip, which runs over 1km to **Porta Marina**, the city's original sea-facing gate.

On the Decumanus, the **Terme di Nettuno** is a must-see. This baths complex, one of 20 that originally stood in town, dates to the 2nd century and boasts some superb mosaics, including one of Neptune driving his sea-horse chariot. In the centre of the complex are the remains of an arcaded **Palestra** (gym).

Next to the *terme* is the **Teatro**, an amphitheatre originally built at the end of the 1st century BC by Agrippa and later enlarged to hold 4000 people.

The grassy area behind the amphitheatre is the **Piazzale delle Corporazioni** (Forum of the Corporations), home to the offices of Ostia's merchant guilds. The mosaics that line the perimeter – ships, dolphins, a lighthouse, an elephant – are thought to represent the businesses housed on the square: ships and dolphins indicated shipping agencies, while the elephant probably referred to a business involved in the ivory trade.

The **Forum**, Ostia's main square, is overlooked by what remains of the **Capitolium**, a temple built by Hadrian and dedicated to Jupiter, Juno and Minerva.

Nearby is another highlight: the **Thermopolium**, an ancient cafe, complete with a bar, frescoed menu, kitchen and small courtyard where customers would have relaxed by a fountain. Just to the north of the Thermopolium are two of the site's so-called **case decorate**. These frescoed houses are off-limits to unaccompanied visitors but can be visited on a guided tour at 10.30am each Sunday – book a place via email (ss-col.domusostia@beniculturali.it).

Over on the other side of the Decumanus are the remains of the 2nd-century **Terme del Foro**, originally the city's largest baths complex. Here, in the *forica* (public toilet), you can see 20 well-preserved latrines set sociably in a long stone bench.