Monti, Esquilino & San Lorenzo

Neighbourhood Top Five

1. Visiting the Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (p161), with its incredible frescoes from imperial Rome.
2. Lingering at wine bars and pottering around the bohemian-chic neighbourhood of Monti (p165).
3. Hobnobbing with the bohos in Pigneto (p171), the iconic working-class district immortalised by Pasolini.
4. Taking in the splendours of Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore (p162).

For more detail of this area, see Map p375 and p376.
Lonely Planet’s Top Tip
Don’t neglect to visit the oft-overlooked patriarchal Basilica di San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura (p169) – it’s starkly beautiful.

Best Places to Eat
- L’Asino d’Oro (p172)
- Open Colonna (p173)
- Panella l’Arte del Pane (p172)
- Trattoria Monti (p173)
  For reviews, see p170

Best Places to Drink
- Ai Tre Scalini (p175)
- Micca Club (p176)
- 2 Periodico Caffè (p175)
- La Bottega del Caffè (p175)
- Il Tiaso (p171)
  For reviews, see p175

Best Works of Art
- Frescoes at Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (p161)
- Michelangelo’s colossal Moses (p163)
- Fuga’s 13th-century facade mosaics (p162)
- Richard Meier’s modernist Chiesa Dio Padre Misericordioso (p169)
  For reviews, see p161

Explore: Monti, Esquilino & San Lorenzo
Esquilino is one of Rome’s seven hills, and the area encompasses the sometimes scruffy area around Stazione Termini and Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. It is also home to some fantastic sights, including some of Rome’s finest medieval churches, and the Museo Nazionale Romano: Palazzo Massimo alle Terme, which displays stunning classical art.

Heading downhill, Monti was the ancient city’s notorious Suburra slum – a red-light district and the childhood home of Julius Caesar – but is now a charming neighbourhood of inviting eateries, shops and enoteche (wine bars). You could say Monti is Rome’s Greenwich Village, and, as if to put the seal on its accelerating gentrification, Woody Allen filmed parts of To Rome with Love here in 2011.

San Lorenzo is a lively student quarter east of Termini, home to a beautiful, little-visited patriarchal basilica. It was the area most damaged by Allied bombing during WWII, ironic given the area’s vehemently anti-Fascist politics. By day the area feels hungover, a grid of graffitied streets that nonetheless harbour some gemlike boutiques, but after dark it shows its true colours as a student night-life haunt; it’s also home to some excellent restaurants.

A quick tram ride southeast, Pigneto is even more bohemian, the Roman equivalent of London’s Shoreditch. House prices are rising and its bars and funky offbeat shops attract a regular crowd of artists and fashion-conscious urbanites.

Local Life
- Hang-outs While away an hour or so at Monti’s La Bottega del Caffè (p175), watching the world go by.
- Shopping Find exotic foodstuffs at the Nuovo Mercato Esquilino (p180), Rome’s most eclectic food market, next to Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II.
- Drinking Have a drink amid artists and wannabes on the buzzing street of Via del Pigneto, (p171).

Getting There & Away
- Metro The Cavour metro stop (line B) is most convenient for Monti, while the Termini (lines A and B), Castro Pretorio (line B) and Vittorio Emanuele (line A) stations are useful for Esquilino.
- Bus Termini is the city’s main bus hub, connected to places all over the city. Access Monti from buses stopping on Via Nazionale or Via Cavour. San Lorenzo is served by buses 71, 140 and 492; Pigneto is served by buses 81, 810 and 105, and night bus n12.
- Tram This is an easy way to access San Lorenzo (tram 3) or Pigneto (trams 5, 14 or 19).