

San Giovanni to Testaccio

SAN GIOVANNI | CELIO | AVENTINO | TESTACCIO

Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Facing up to the overpowering splendour of the monumental **Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano** (p197). You'll feel very small as you explore the echoing baroque interior of Rome's oldest Christian basilica.
- 2 Going underground through layers of history at the **Basilica di San Clemente** (p199).
- 3 Being over-awed by the towering ruins of the **Terme di Caracalla** (p202).
- 4 Enjoying a quiet moment in the tranquil **Basilica di Santa Sabina** (p203).
- 5 Looking through the keyhole of the **Priorato dei Cavalieri di Malta** (p204).



For more detail of this area, see Map p370 →

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

If you like opera, check www.operaroma.it for details of summer performances at the Terme di Caracalla. Also, if you visit the Terme di Caracalla, note that the admission ticket includes access to two other sites: the Mausoleo di Cecilia Metella and the Villa dei Quintili. Both these are some distance from the Terme – the Mausoleo on Via Appia Antica and Villa dei Quintili on Via Appia Nuova – and require a bus journey to reach.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Flavio al Velavevodetto (p205)
- ➔ Li Rioni (p204)
- ➔ Aroma (p205)
- ➔ Checchino dal 1887 (p206)

For reviews, see p204 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Il Pentagrappolo (p206)
- ➔ L'Oasi della Birra (p206)
- ➔ Linari (p206)

For reviews, see p206 ➔

Best Buried Treasures

- ➔ Basilica di San Clemente (p199)
- ➔ Case Romane (p202)
- ➔ Mithraeum, Terme di Caracalla (p202)

For reviews, see p199 ➔

Explore: San Giovanni to Testaccio

Encompassing two of Rome's seven hills, this oft-overlooked part of town offers everything from barn-storming basilicas and medieval churches to ancient ruins, busy markets and hip clubs. The area can easily be divided into two separate patches: San Giovanni and the Celio; and Aventino and Testaccio. A day in each is sufficient to cover the main sights.

Start off at the landmark Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano, the focal point of the largely residential San Giovanni neighbourhood. It's easily accessible by metro and quite magnificent, both inside and out. Once you've explored the cathedral and surrounding piazza, head down Via di San Giovanni in Laterano towards the Colosseum. Near the bottom, the Basilica di San Clemente is a fascinating church with some thrilling underground ruins. From there, you can walk across to the Celio, the green hill that rises south of the Colosseum. There's not a lot to see but the graceful Villa Celimontana park is a great place to escape the crowds. Further south, the ruins of the Terme di Caracalla are one of the neighbourhood's highlights, easily on a par with anything in the city.

Further west, on the banks of the Tiber, the once working-class area of Testaccio is a bastion of old-school Roman cuisine with a number of excellent trattorias and a popular nightlife district. Rising above it, the Aventino boasts a number of wonderful medieval churches and one of Rome's great curiosities – the famous keyhole view of St Peter's dome.

Local Life

➔ **Romance** Local Lotharios out to impress their loved ones take them to enjoy the views from the Parco Savello (p203) on the Aventino.

➔ **Offal** Testaccio is the spiritual home of 'blood-and-guts' Roman cooking, and its popular trattorias and restaurants are the place to try it.

➔ **Parks** You'll often see locals relaxing with a book or going for a leisurely lunchtime stroll in Villa Celimontana (p203).

Getting There & Away

➔ **Bus** Useful bus routes include 85 and 87, both of which stop near the Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano; 714, which serves San Giovanni and the Terme di Caracalla; and 175, which runs to the Aventino.

➔ **Metro** San Giovanni is accessible by metro line A. For Testaccio take line B to Piramide. The Aventino is walkable from Testaccio and Circo Massimo (line B), although from Circo Massimo it's a bit of a hike.