

# Centro Storico

PANTHEON | PIAZZA NAVONA | CAMPO DE' FIORI | JEWISH GHETTO | ISOLA TIBERINA | PIAZZA COLONNA



## Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1** Stepping into the **Pantheon** (p72) and feeling the same sense of awe that the ancients must have felt 2000 years ago. The sight of the dome soaring up above you is a genuinely jaw-dropping spectacle.
- 2** Exploring **Piazza Navona** (p74) and the warren of medieval lanes that surrounds it.
- 3** Browsing the fabulous art collection at the **Palazzo e Galleria Doria Pamphilj** (p82).
- 4** Viewing three Caravaggio masterpieces at the **Chiesa di San Luigi dei Francesi** (p77).
- 5** Escaping the crowds in the shadowy back streets of the **Jewish Ghetto** (p80).

For more detail of this area see Map p304 and p306 ➔

## Explore: Centro Storico

Rome's *centro storico* (historic centre) is made for leisurely strolling and although you could spend weeks exploring its every corner, you can cover most of the main sights in two or three days. Many people enter the area by bus, getting off at Largo di Torre Argentina, from where it's a short walk up to the Pantheon and beyond that to Rome's political nerve-centre Piazza Colonna. Nearby, on Via del Corso, the Palazzo e Galleria Doria Pamphilj houses one of the capital's finest private art collections. Art is thick on the ground in these parts and many of the centre's piazzas and churches harbour extraordinary works by big-name Renaissance and baroque artists. To the west of the Pantheon, the narrow lanes around Piazza Navona, itself one of Rome's great must-see sights, are a magnet for tourists and hip Romans with their bohemian boutiques, cool bars and popular pizzerias.

Over on the other side of Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, the main thoroughfare through the area, all roads lead to Campo de' Fiori, home to a colourful daily market and hectic late-night drinking scene. From 'il Campo' you can shop your way down to the medieval Jewish Ghetto, a wonderfully atmospheric pocket of romantic corners, hidden piazzas and authentic eateries.

## Local Life

➔ **Backstreet eating** The restaurants on Piazza Navona and Piazza Rotonda attract a touristy crowd, while Campo de' Fiori (p78) pulls in boozing students. Locals head to places in the quieter backstreets.

➔ **Shopping** Browse retro fashions and indie styles on Via del Governo Vecchio (p76); Via dei Giubbonari is good for frocks and heels.

➔ **Aperitif** Fashion-conscious Romans love to socialise over an evening *aperitivo* in the bars around Piazza Navona (p74).

## Getting There & Away

➔ **Bus** The best way to access the *centro storico*. A whole fleet serves the area from Termini, including bus 40 and 64, which both stop at Largo di Torre Argentina and continue down Corso Vittorio Emanuele II. From Via del Tritone near Barberini metro station, bus 492 runs to Corso del Rinascimento for Piazza Navona.

➔ **Metro** There are no metro stations in the neighbourhood but it's within walking distance of Barberini, Spagna and Flaminio stations, all on line A.

➔ **Tram** Catch tram 8 from Piazza Venezia to Trastevere by way of Via Arenula.

## Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The *centro storico* is an expensive part of town but there are ways of making your money go further. You can see masterpieces by the likes of Michelangelo, Raphael, Caravaggio and Bernini for nothing by visiting the area's churches, which are all free to enter. Fuel your wanderings with coffee, sliced pizza and ice cream, and fill up with water from the drinking fountains known as *nasoni* (big noses) dotted around the streets.

## Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Casa Coppelle (p84)
- ➔ La Ciambella (p84)
- ➔ Supplizio (p88)
- ➔ Forno Roscioli (p88)
- ➔ Armando al Pantheon (p84)

For reviews, see p83. ➔

## Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Caffè Sant'Eustachio (p90)
- ➔ Barnum Cafe (p91)
- ➔ Open Baladin (p91)
- ➔ Il Goccetto (p91)

For reviews, see p90. ➔

## Best Art Churches

- ➔ Chiesa di San Luigi dei Francesi (p77)
- ➔ Chiesa del Gesù (p81)
- ➔ Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola (p83)
- ➔ Basilica di Santa Maria Sopra Minerva (p75)

For reviews, see p75. ➔