



Day Trips from Rome

Ostia Antica p206

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 p207

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 p208

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

Cerveteri p210

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

Orvieto p211

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

Ostia Antica

Explore

Half a day or more would be ideal to explore the impressive remains of Ostia Antica. This ancient Roman city was a busy working port, and its extensive ruins are substantial and well preserved. Most of the headline sights are situated on or near the main drag, the Decumanus Maximus, which runs for more than a kilometre from the main entrance (Porta Romana) to Porta Marina, the city gate that originally led to the sea. The site gets busy at weekends.

The Best...

- **Sight** Terme di Nettuno
- **Place to Eat** Ristorante Monumento

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

- **Car** Take Via del Mare and follow signs for the *scavi* (ruins).
- **Train** Take the Ostia Lido train from Stazione Porta San Paolo (next to Piramide metro station) and get off at Ostia Antica. Trains leave every 15 minutes or so and the trip, which is covered by a standard Rome public-transport ticket, takes 25 minutes. On arrival, walk over the pedestrian bridge and continue until you see the castle to your right and the ruins straight ahead.

Need to Know

- **Location** 25km southwest of Rome

SIGHTS

First settled in the 4th century BC, Ostia (the name means the mouth or *ostium* of the Tiber) grew to become a great port and an important commercial centre 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.

★ SCAVI ARCHEOLOGICI

DI OSTIA ANTICA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

(☎06 5635 0215; www.ostiaantica.beniculturali.it; Viale dei Romagnoli 717; adult/reduced €10/6; ☀8.30am-6.15pm Tue-Sun summer, earlier closing winter) An easy train ride from Rome, Ostia Antica is one of Italy's most under-appreciated archaeological sites. The ruins of ancient Rome's main seaport are spread out and you'll need a few hours to do them justice. Highlights include the **Terme di Nettuno** (Baths of Neptune), a steeply stacked amphitheatre, and an ancient cafe, complete with bar and traces of the original menu frescoed on the wall.

Note that the site 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 built 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 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. Check out the bar, the frescoed menu, the kitchen and the small courtyard where customers would have relaxed next to a fountain.

Across the road 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.