



HOTEL PANAMA GARDEN

Sightseeing First Day

Since time is wasting, arise early and begin your day with some "live theater" by walking the streets of the Eternal City around your hotel, as Rome awakens to another day. Deliveries are being made; Romans with early calls are reporting to work, and the famous cats of the city are out looking for a fish head. This walk can acclimatize you faster than anything else to the sights, sounds, and smells of this ancient capital, once the seat of one of the world's most powerful kingdoms, with many reminders of its heyday. This walk will get you centered before you catch a taxi, hop a bus, or board the Metro for a ride to the first attraction on our tour.

But first, we suggest that you duck into a Roman cafe for breakfast. It doesn't matter which one. On virtually every street of Rome, you'll find one. If it's your desire, begin your day with a cup of coffee, espresso, cappuccino and cornetto, a glass of blood-red orange juice, and one of those delicious Italian pastries.

Sit back and people-watch as patrons go through the same ritual as you, fortifying themselves for another day.

A lot of the museums, piazzas, and other attractions will have to wait for another day, if you have one. The "Rome in 1 Day" crowd will want to concentrate on the "greatest hits" itinerary by taking in the monuments that made Imperial Rome revered throughout the known world.

If you have just 1 day, many visitors reject Imperial Rome (as hard as this is to do) and opt instead to explore St. Peter's and the Vatican. The choice is yours. We'll lead off with Day 1 with Imperial Rome, saving Day 2 for the Vatican and St. Peter's. But, if it's your wish, you can reverse these itineraries, of course.

One day is far too brief -- after all, Rome wasn't built in a day, and you can't see it in one -- but you can make the most of your limited time.

If you're in Rome for at least 3 days, stop by or call the ticket office of Galleria Borghese and secure a reservation for a visit on Day 2 (phone: 06 854 8577).

Start: From Hotel Panama, walk 450 meters to via Tagliamento (second on your left and third on your right), take the #63 line directly to the Campidoglio Square.

1. Piazza del Campidoglio

The Campidoglio stands on the summit of Capitoline Hill, the most sacred of ancient Rome, where the Temples of Jupiter and Juno once stood. This was the spiritual heart



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of ancient Rome, where triumphant generals made sacrifices to the gods for giving them victories.

At the top of the graceful steps leading to the Campidoglio is the fabled equestrian statue of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Actually, it's a copy; the original is in the Capitoline Museum on your left. Across the piazza is the Palace of the Conservatori based on an architectural plan of Michelangelo. Save these museums for a future visit.

Walk around the corner (as you face it) of the Senatorium (Town Council) for a panoramic view of the Roman Forum, which we'll visit later. In the distance you can see the Colosseum, also coming up later in our itinerary. The decaying columns and crumbling temples of Imperial Rome rank as one of the grandest man-made views you'll see in Europe. Allow at least 30 minutes or more to walk up and down the steps leading to Capitoline Hill taking in the view.

After Capitoline Hill, head east following our map for a walk along Via dei Fori Imperiali, taking in:

2. Fori Imperiali (Imperial Forums)

From the railing that skirts Via dei Fori Imperiali, you can take in the view of the famous forums of Imperial Rome in about 30 minutes. Arm yourself with a trusty map so you'll know which ruins you're viewing. Right off Piazza Venezia stands **Trajan's Column**, with its intricate bas-relief sculpture depicting Trajan's victorious campaign against Dacia at the dawn of the 2nd century. Immediately east of the column is **Basilica Ulpia**, whose gray marble columns rise roofless into the sky. Moving east you come to the **Forum of Julius Caesar**, the site of the ancient Roman stock exchange and the Temple of Venus. Next you'll pass on your left the **Forum of Augustus**, built before the birth of Christ and once home to a mammoth statue of Augustus. On your right is the **Forum of Nerva**, honoring an emperor with a 2-year reign (A.D. 96-98). Directly east of Nerva is the **Forum of Vespasian** begun by the emperor after the capture of Jerusalem in A.D. 71. Immediately following that is the **Temple of Venus and Roma**, or what little is left of it.

At this point you'll be at the doorway to the Colosseum.

3. Colosseum

Construction on this amphitheater began in A.D. 72, and it was a marvel of engineering since its enormous weight rested in a swamp (Nero's former lake) on artificial supports. The completed stadium was dedicated by Titus in A.D. 80. Covered with marble, it could hold 80,000 spectators who watched games that nearly rendered extinct many species of animals from the Roman Empire. Allow at least 1 1/2 hours to explore it.



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Next to the Colosseum is the:

4. Arch of Constantine

This spectacular arch was erected in honor of Constantine's defeat of the pagan Maxentius in A.D. 312. You can gaze in awe at this remarkable arch with its intricate carving for at least 15 minutes before pressing on. Before tackling the Roman Forum and the Palatine Hill, we suggest a luncheon break in the area of the Colosseum. If you don't want to waste precious time, you can avail yourself of food on the run at a street vendor, or else patronize one of the trattorie in the vicinity, if you're seeking a sit-down meal.

Within a short walk of the Colosseum you can take in the glories of:

5. Forum Romano (Roman Forum), Palatino (Palatine Hill), and Museo Palatino (Palatine Museum)

The Roman Forum was the literal heart of ancient Rome, a center for trade, religion, and politics. The entrance is off Via dei Fori Imperiali, right at the intersection with Via Cavour. There is also a walking tour of the area if you need more guidance.

After you view the Roman Forum, you can explore Palatine Hill, which was once covered with the palaces of patrician families and early emperors. Today it's a tree-shaded hilltop of gardens and fragments of ancient villas. Allow at least 3 hours to take in these attractions and the Palatine Museum.

To reach our next attraction, pick up bus 46, 62, 64, 170, or 492 at Arco di Costantino to Largo di Torre Argentina, or Metro to Barberini.

6. The Pantheon

This fabulous ancient monument was built and rebuilt several times, first by Agrippa who began it in 27 B.C. The present structure is the result of an early 2nd century A.D. reconstruction by the Emperor Hadrian. The Pantheon stands on Piazza della Rotonda, which is complete with obelisk and baroque fountain. It is in an astonishing state of preservation, considering nearly 2 millennia of vandalism. Allow 45 minutes for a visit.

Caffe Sant'Eustachio -- For a break, head nearby to this café, which Romans claim serves the most superior coffee in Rome. What's the secret? The pure water used in the brew is funneled into the city by an aqueduct built in 19 B.C. Piazza Sant'Eustachio 82 (tel. **06-97618552**).



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Take the Metro to Spagna for our next stop.

7. Scala di Spagna (Spanish Steps)

Rising over the Piazza di Spagna in the very heart of Rome is a monumental baroque staircase -- best viewed in spring when the flowers are in full bloom. It was the work of Francesco de Sanctis in the 18th century. The stairs lead to the Trinitá dei Monti Church. At no. 26 on the piazza is the Keats-Shelley House where Keats died of tuberculosis at the age of 25.

It's a rare visitor who hasn't sat for a while on one of the landings -- there's one every 12 steps -- perhaps to download an e-mail from home on a laptop or observe the other sitters, most often young. The fountain at the foot of the steps was designed by Bernini's father at the end of the 16th century, and it's reputed to have the sweetest water in Rome. Allow at least 30 minutes for a visit.

After perhaps a shower and rest at your hotel, take bus 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 87, 116, or 492 to reach the:

Evening

8. Piazza Navona

The most beautiful square in all of Rome -- and best seen at night -- is like an ochre-colored gem, unspoiled by new buildings, or even by traffic. The shape stems from the Stadium of Domitian, whose ruins lie underneath. Great chariot races were once held here. In the center is Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers, floodlit at night. During summer evenings there are outdoor art shows. Some of the oldest streets in Rome surround Piazza Navona. There is no more romantic place to dine in all the city. During winter the square is filled with Christmas stands and you can meet there a St. Klaus as well...

For your *arrivederci* to Roma, take bus 62, 95, 175, or 492.

9. Fontana dei Trevi (Trevi Fountain)

This is an 18th-century extravaganza of baroque stonework ruled over by a large statue of Neptune. Visitors come here at night for 20 minutes or so to toss a coin into the fountain, which is said to ensure that you will some day return to Rome.