

The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Home in Greece or Rome

Legendary frescoes, mosaics and sculptures from the apartments of Empress Livia in *Palazzo Massimo alle Terme* → p. 36

INSIDER TIP Gourmet palace

Spread across four floors *Eataly* presents not only the finest products such as olive oil, wines and organic bread, but also celebrates the Italian kitchen in its 23 restaurants → p. 76

INSIDER TIP Authentic Roman cooking

Do you love Italian food? The website *www.ceneromane.it* has over 50 hosts in Rome inviting you to dinner parties in their own homes → p. 19

INSIDER TIP Sarcophagus dining

Did all that walking along the Via Appia Antica make you hungry? Then stop at the *Antica Hostaria L'Archeologia* garden restaurant, where fountains splash, roses bloom and the pasta is wonderful → p. 76

INSIDER TIP Dead poets

Two English Romantic poets lie in the *Protestant cemetery*. John Keats arrived in Rome with an advanced case of tuberculosis and died there in 1821. Shelley was drowned in the Gulf of La Spezia the following year → p. 62

INSIDER TIP View from a key position – the National Monument

Residents of Rome refer to the bulky white *monument to King Vittorio Emanuele II* as “the typewriter”. But from the top row of keys, the roof terrace at a height of 213 ft, you have a fantastic panoramic view of all periods of history → p. 35

INSIDER TIP Stone gossips

They may be carved in stone, but that doesn't stop the strange *statue parlanti* from talking. Once satirical verses criticising papal rulers were hung round their necks, and in the case of Pasquino the Romans still do this → p. 126

INSIDER TIP Nightlife on a hill of shards

In ancient times *Testaccio* was a rubbish tip where the Romans piled up the pottery shards of amphorae – they had no plastic or textile shopping bags. Today the *ragazzi* come here to give their all on the dance floor → p. 92

INSIDER TIP Organic bistro

Ginger is the popular meeting spot in the exclusive Via Borgognona where a hip and health-conscious clientele meet up for organic juices and teas, smoothies, soya milkshakes, salads and light pasta dishes → p. 73

INSIDER TIP Glass-covered antiquity

The 2,000-year-old altar of peace, the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, is now protected by Richard Meier's ultra-modern glass roof (photo left) → p. 47

INSIDER TIP Fairy houses

The *Coppedè quarter* is like a fairy tale. The architect Gino Coppedè built wonderful villas and palazzi here in the early 20th century → p. 65

INSIDER TIP Original or copy?

If you think the glossy sheen of the equestrian statue on the Campidoglio looks too new, you are right (photo below). Corrosive exhaust gases were too much for the original Emperor Marcus Aurelius, and he rode off to the Musei Capitolini → p. 35

INSIDER TIP Picnic in the park

Gina, a high-class snack bar on Piazza di Spagna, will make you a gourmet picnic, and all you have to do is find a nice spot in the park of Villa Borghese → p. 77

INSIDER TIP Organic ice cream

Where the ice cream tastes homemade and the fruit is delivered by organic farmers from the Piedmont or rather from the tropics: *Grom* → p. 73

INSIDER TIP The ultimate restaurant

Housed in a former warehouse in Ostiense, the *Porto Fluviale* restaurant is the Italian equivalent of “Soul Kitchen”. Their lunchtime menu is particularly delicious! → p. 77



BEST OF...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Sistine chapel for free*

If you want to see the world's largest art collection, Raphael's Stanze and the Sistine Chapel without paying a penny: on the last Sunday of the month there is free admission to the *Musei Vaticani* → p. 36

● *Classical music in churches*

The view of the Baroque dome of *Sant'Ignazio* is confusing. It's a painted illusion, and nothing is real. By contrast the sound of the international choirs that you can enjoy there is authentic – and the seats at the back cost nothing (photo) → p. 46, 98

● *View of the Forum*

In Caesar's time Romans and travellers paid nothing to stroll across the *Foro Romano*. Today you have to pay for admission, but if you just want to get a glimpse, there is a view from the steps to the left of the *Campidoglio* – at its best in the evening → p. 29

● *A train to the Mediterranean*

Rome's beach fans and clubbers know the way. The 20-mile trip on a local train to the beach resort of *Lido di Ostia* costs only 1.50 euros, next to nothing. Lovers of archaeology take the same train and get off one stop earlier at *Ostia Antica* → p. 97

● *Arts week in spring*

Around Easter all of Italy celebrates the *Settimana della Cultura*. If you are lucky enough to be in Rome at this time you can visit all the sights, museums and galleries free of charge until late at night → p. 36

● *San Pietro through the keyhole*

The Order of the Knights of St John, whose domicile is on the *Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta*, boast an unusual attraction, and so far they are not charging a fee to see the surprising view of St Peter's Basilica that you get through the keyhole of the main entrance, the *Buco di Roma* → p. 64

● ● ● Dots in guidebook refer to "Best of..." tips

ONLY IN ROME

Unique experiences

● *Drink from the fountain*

Eleven aqueducts kept ancient Rome well supplied with water, and free drinking water still bubbles from numerous *fontanelle*, the little fountains in the *Centro Storico*. Do like the Romans do: close your hand over the spring and let the water spurt into your mouth from the upper hole → p. 126

● *Where politicians get their ice cream*

Rome has a dozen good ice-cream parlours, but *Gelateria Giolitti* is a must go. No matter that the prices are eye-watering and the service often rude: after heated debates nearby in parliament, Italian politicians of every party sneak off and cast their vote for one of their 40 kinds of cooling ice cream (photo) → p. 73

● *Step up, sit down*

Even if you've already seen a thousand photos of these gaily curving steps, the *Scalinata di Trinità dei Monti* remains one of the nicest and classiest places to sit and relax. People come here to flirt, laugh, take photos, meditate and dream the time away → p. 52

● *The mouth of truth*

All Romans who are newly in love make a trip to the ancient lie detector known as the *Bocca della Verità*. So far the man-sized marble face in the atrium of Santa Maria in Cosmedin has never really bitten off the hand of a beautiful woman who lied or a cynical macho – but you never know! → p. 29

● *Eat on the piazza*

In Trastevere there are still good ol' trattorias like *Da Augusto* on *Piazza de' Renzi*. There is no printed menu here, but the dishes of the day are chalked up on a blackboard by the door and everyone knows Augusto, who will come straight away with bread, water and the house wine, and take your order → p. 79

● *Campo de' Fiori: flower market and vanity fair*

Fewer and fewer of Rome's old market women now come to *Campo de' Fiori*, the city's most popular vegetable market, in the mornings. But this square attracts a fashionable crowd round the clock. It's a place to see and be seen → p. 39



ONLY IN



DISCOVERY TOURS

1

ROME AT A GLANCE



START: ① Piazza Venezia

END: ① Piazza Venezia

Distance:

14 km/8.7 miles

1 day

Walking/driving time
(without stops)

3 hours

COSTS: 1-day bus/metro ticket: 6 euros

Lift at ② **Monumento Vittorio Emanuele II** 7 euros

Combined ticket for the ④ **Foro Romano** and ⑤ **Colosseo** 12 euros

WHAT TO PACK: water, sun protection

IMPORTANT TIPS: To avoid the queues for the ⑤ **Colosseo** remember to buy the combined admission ticket for the **Foro Romano/Colosseo** at the forum entrance, Via Salaria Vecchia (Via Fori Imperiali), or ideally online beforehand.

⑦ **San Pietro** is closed on Wednesday mornings due to the audience with the Pope.



Cities have many faces. If you want to get behind the scenes to explore their unique charm and head off the beaten track or find your way to green oases, handpicked restaurants or the best local activities, then these tailored Discovery Tours are just the right thing. Choose the best route for the day and follow in the footsteps of the MARCO POLO authors – well-prepared to navigate your way to all the many highlights that await you along the tour.

Rom is unique, magnificent and has been a cult destination for almost 3,000 years. Take a personal tour of this amazing city with a cappuccino over the Capitol, a stroll through its ancient history, a visit to St. Peter's, *aperitivo* on the piazza and evening meal in the ghetto.

09:00am Slept well? Camera at the ready? Then start the day at the ① **Piazza Venezia** by climbing the snow-white ② **Monumento Vittorio Emanuele II** → p. 35. Instead of going through the building, **take a right up the steep steps to the church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, then go left through a gate** to the monument's terrace where it's

① Piazza Venezia



② Monumento Vittorio Emanuele II

