



Visiting Rome: must-sees for a first visit

By Floriane

As you know, we have a real soft spot for [Italy](#). We go back whenever we can, and of course we've already visited Rome several times.

So we decided to launch a **series of articles dedicated to Rome**, and what could be more logical than to start with a first article dedicated to the essentials.

In this first guide, we share **our must-sees in Rome**, those that help us understand the soul of the city, its thousand-year-old history and the unique atmosphere that makes us fall a little more in love with the Italian capital every time.

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The Colosseum, the first Roman shock

It's impossible to imagine a first visit without stopping off at the **Colosseum**. Built in the 1st century AD, under the emperors Vespasian and Titus, it has spanned almost two thousand years of history. Even after several visits to Rome, the effect remains the same. In photos, it's already impressive, but in person, it's a different

story. You often arrive almost by chance, at the bend in the road, and suddenly it appears, huge and massive.

You soon realize that a visit to Rome [visit to Rome](#) anticipation makes all the difference, especially for a site as busy as the Colosseum.

□ **Our tip:** buy a **combined online ticket** for the **Colosseum, Roman Forum** and **Palatine Hill**.

This full-price adult ticket (€18) is valid for **24 hours** and lets you explore all three sites at your own pace. It's clearly the best option if you want to avoid queues and visit one site after another without wasting time.

□ As far as opening times are concerned, we recommend **avoiding the middle hours of the day**, especially between May and September. Early in the morning or late in the afternoon, the light is softer, the heat more bearable and the crowds a little less dense.

And above all, don't just admire it from the outside. A visit inside really helps you to get a feel for the place, to understand how it worked and to imagine what the gladiators and spectators were going through.

For smooth organization, the best place to **start is the Colosseum**, followed by the Roman Forum and Mount Palatine on foot. Everything is grouped together in the same place, avoiding unnecessary transport and allowing you to remain immersed in ancient Rome for several hours.

The Roman Forum and Mount Palatine, understanding ancient Rome

Right next to the Colosseum lies the **Roman Forum**, the political, religious and social heart of ancient Rome. On a first visit, the site may seem difficult to read, but if you take your time, or with the help of an audioguide, the ruins gradually come to life.

The **Palatine Hill**, overlooking the Forum, provides a bird's-eye **view of the city's layout**.

□ We advise you to allow at least half a day for the Colosseum, the Forum and Mount Palatine, with good shoes.

The Pantheon, an architectural slap in the face

The **Pantheon** is one of **the best-preserved monuments of Ancient Rome**, dating from the early II^e century AD. From the outside, it impresses with its monumental portico. But it's inside that the magic really happens.

The dome and its oculus, open to the sky, create a unique, almost timeless atmosphere. Depending on the time of day and the light, the atmosphere changes completely.

□ Admission is now charged (full price €5), and again, go early in the morning to avoid the crowds.

The Trevi Fountain, to see at the right time

The **Trevi Fountain**, in the heart of Rome, is one of the symbols of Rome, and inevitably one of the **most visited places**. It's a monumental Baroque fountain from the XVIII^e century, set against a palace, where spectacular sculptures and turquoise water create one of Rome's most iconic settings. In the middle of the day, the crowds can be impressive.

□ After several tries, we recommend going **late at night**, after your dinner and just before returning to the hotel.

In the evening, the illuminated fountain offers a magnificent spectacle. You can, of course, throw a coin over your right shoulder if you wish, because the ritual is part of the journey.

The Vatican, a visit in its own right

On a first visit to Rome, it's hard to overlook the Vatican. The **Vatican Museums** and the **Sistine Chapel** are among Rome's most memorable and sought-after sights.

□ Here, anticipation clearly changes the experience. **The Vatican Museums are not free**, and neither is access to the Sistine Chapel, which is included in the tour. Once again, booking your tickets in advance saves precious time and avoids the often interminable queues, especially in high season.

St. Peter's Basilica, on the other hand, is free of charge, making it one of the world's largest freely accessible churches. The only exception: you **have to pay to climb to the top of the dome**, but the effort is amply rewarded by one of the finest panoramic views of Rome.

To organize your visit without rushing, the ideal is to devote **an entire day to the Vatican**. We advise you to start in the morning with the Vatican Museums, preferably as soon as they open, with a guided tour or an all-inclusive ticket, taking your time to explore the collections and the Sistine Chapel.

Follow this with a quick lunch break around the Vatican or a picnic. Then devote the afternoon to St. Peter's Square and Basilica, with a climb to the top of the dome for those who wish to enjoy the view over Rome.

Trastevere, for a glimpse of everyday Rome

After the great monuments, we always like to escape to **Trastevere**. This lively, popular district shows a different side of the city, more authentic, more local.

You can wander around aimlessly, stopping in a little square to observe Roman life. In the evening, Trastevere is the ideal place to dine and feel the special atmosphere that makes Rome so charming. The best thing to do is get lost on your own.

Ostia Antica, the mini Pompeii for further afield

For those wishing to delve deeper into Roman history after the must-sees, **Ostia Antica** is an excellent idea. Often compared to a mini [Pompeii](#) next to [Naples](#), this ancient port city is much less visited.

Here, you'll discover the everyday life of the Romans: apartment buildings, thermal

baths, stores, taverns and theaters. Everything is still clearly legible, and the visit is particularly immersive. Ostia Antica is the perfect complement to the Colosseum and Forum. Where the latter recount the grandeur of the Empire, Ostia Antica tells the story of everyday life.

If Roman ruins fascinate you, Rome is clearly not the only Italian city to offer superb examples. In [Verona](#), the city's ancient heritage is still very much in evidence, with its remarkably well-preserved Roman arenas still used for shows today. Further south, [Herculaneum](#) offers a striking insight into Roman daily life. Less well known than Pompeii, this city, buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D., is better preserved and offers a detailed insight into how the inhabitants of the Roman Empire lived.

For a first visit to Rome, this mix of emblematic monuments and quieter spots works particularly well. It offers a more complete vision of the city, and above all leaves you with one certainty: Rome deserves to be visited again and again, to continue discovering it.

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