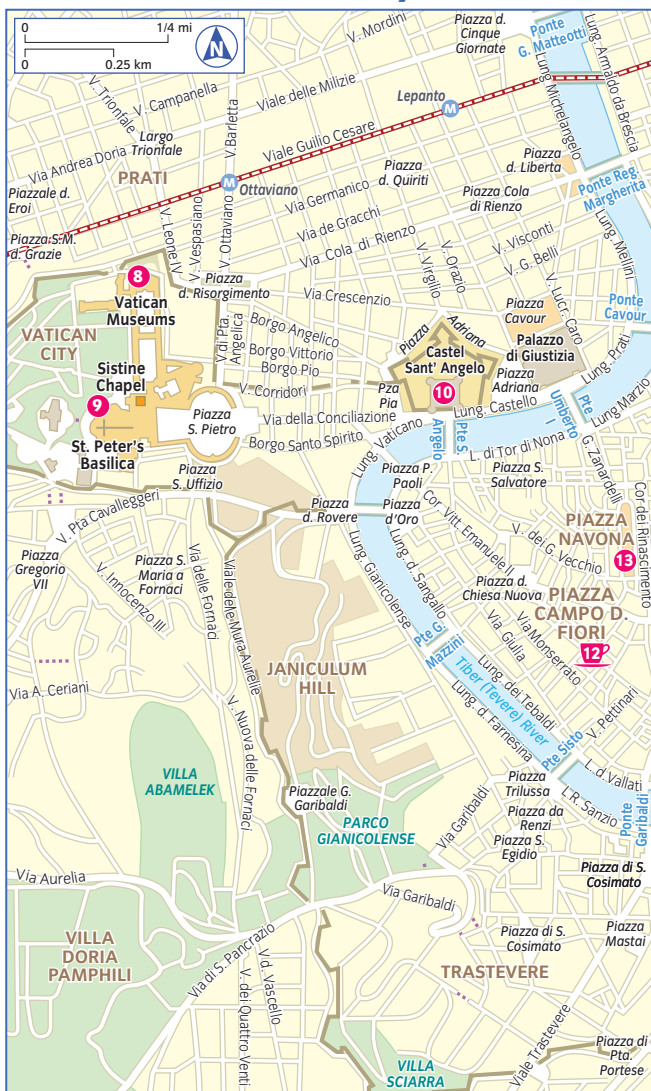


1

# The Best **Full-Day Tours**



# The Best in One Day



- |                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Campidoglio (Capitoline Hill) | 5 Vittoriano      |
| 2 Roman Forum                   | 6 Caffè Italia    |
| 3 Colosseum                     | 7 Pantheon        |
| 4 Imperial Fora                 | 8 Vatican Museums |

Previous page: Columns at the Pantheon.





**Seeing the top sights of Rome in 1 day** requires an early start, discipline, and a bit of stamina, but it's actually quite doable. This "greatest hits" itinerary begins with an overview of the highlights of ancient Rome; after lunch, cross town and spend a few hours at the Vatican. Conclude your day with a leisurely evening walking tour of the gorgeously floodlit fountains and piazzas of the **centro storico**.

**START:** Take bus 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 87, 95, 170, 492, or 628 to Piazza dell'Ara Coeli and climb the stairs to Piazza del Campidoglio.

### Travel Tip

Seasonal opening hours of some attractions may require modification of the itinerary below: For example, because of the Vatican Museums' shorter winter hours, from November to February, you'll need to do the Vatican in the morning and ancient Rome in the afternoon.

**1 ★★★ Campidoglio (Capitoline Hill).** The most sacred of Rome's hills was given its present look in the 1500s, when Michelangelo designed the star-patterned square and surrounding buildings of the Capitoline Museums (see p 31, bullet **6**). The bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius in the center of the piazza is a copy; the 2nd-century-A.D. original is inside the museum. The western slopes of the hill, with

their steep red *tufa* walls and tangled vegetation, still look much the same as they would have in the primordial days before the rise of Rome. Don't miss the majestic view of the Roman Forum from the south-facing terraces on either side of the bell-towered Palazzo Senatorio (city hall). 🕒 15–30 min. Also gorgeous—and deserted—at night. Bus: 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 87, 170, 492, or 571.

**2 ★★★ Roman Forum.** While the Forum is not one of the better-preserved archaeological sites of ancient Rome, it is the most historically significant. The Forum was the nerve center of the most powerful Western civilization in history for the better part of a thousand years, where political decisions were made, public speeches were heard, and market activities took place. The remains here—of 2,000-year-old

*The ruins of the Roman forum were excavated in the 19th century.*







in a spectral glow at dusk.

and victory  
oppressive but  
difficult to deci-  
see p 24, bullet

m. The Flavian  
(80) never fails  
elegant, enduring  
g former func-  
laughter. At the  
Empire, games  
ry other day; in  
ration, games  
or months on

**4 ★★ Imperial Fora.** Mussolini  
blazed the broad thoroughfare of  
Via dell'Impero—now Via dei Fori  
Imperiali—to trumpet the glories of  
his ancient forebears and propagate  
his own ambitions of empire. Along  
the east side of the boulevard, the  
ruins of the forums built by emper-  
ors Nerva, Augustus, and Trajan can  
be seen protruding from the ancient  
street level, 7.6m (25 ft.) below. On  
the west side, near the Colosseum,  
don't miss the fascinating marble  
maps (also from the Fascist period)

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The Best in One Day

**6★ Caffè Italia.** Take a breather at this alfresco cafe halfway up the summit of the Vittoriano, to the left of the gigantic bronze statue of the king on horseback. *Il Vittoriano*.

**☎ 06-6780905. \$-\$\$.**

**7★★★ Pantheon.** As the best-preserved and most elegant ancient building in the city—if not the world—the Pantheon (“temple to all gods”) merits multiple visits. It was designed and possibly built by Hadrian from A.D. 118 to 125, in a form governed by circles and squares—shapes which, as Vitruvius wrote (and Leonardo later immortalized in his drawing the *Vitruvian Man*), the human body most naturally occupies. The Pantheon’s perfectly hemispherical, poured-concrete dome is 43m (141 ft.) tall and wide—1m (3 ft.) wider than the dome of St. Peter’s. ⌚ **15–30 min.** See p 54, bullet **11**. Take a taxi from the Pantheon to the Vatican Museums.

**8★★★ Vatican Museums.** After lunch, the crowds have left the Vatican, making it much more

*Michelangelo’s Pietà.*



pleasant to explore. Stay focused, however, and make sure you see the starring ancient sculptures—the gut-wrenching emotion and dynamism of *Laocoon*, the transcendent composure of *Apollo Belvedere*—in the Pio-Clementine section of the museums, and then hightail it for the Vatican’s biggest guns, Raphael’s *stanze* and Michelangelo’s frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. The art here, by two of the greatest painters in history, is a triumph of Renaissance achievement, bold in color, lofty in concept, and monumental in scale. ⌚ **1½ hr.** See p 49, bullet **6** for a more comprehensive review.

**9★★★ St. Peter’s Basilica.** The incomprehensibly voluminous Vatican basilica is packed with incalculable riches, from the marble and gold that cover its every surface to masterpieces like Michelangelo’s *Pietà* and Bernini’s *Baldacchino*. ⌚ **30 min.** Dome visit not absolutely necessary. See p 48, bullet **2**.

**10★★ Castel Sant’Angelo.** You probably won’t have the time or energy to go inside, but the view of this mausoleum-turned-fortress, from Ponte Sant’Angelo—where angels by Bernini wince and moan—is not to be missed. ⌚ **15 min.** See p 53, bullet **1** for full details.

**11★ Your hotel room.** By now, it’s 4 or 5pm—a good time to return to your hotel, rest your feet, and freshen up before heading back out for dinner and your evening walking tour. Just don’t crash completely. If it’s after 5pm, and you’re feeling energetic, skip the hotel and proceed directly to **12★**, below.

**12★ Campo de’ Fiori.** By early evening (6–6:30pm), this square in the very heart of the



*The Trevi Fountain lit up at night.*

*centro storico* is abuzz with all kinds of people taking an *aperitivo* at the many outdoor bars. (I recommend **Vineria Reggio** and **Taverna del Campo**, p 114.) Later in the evening, it's a younger scene. Campo de' Fiori and nearby Piazza Navona, the starting points of your evening tour, are also prime zones for dinner. ⌚ 1 hr. See p 101. Bus: 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 87, 116, or 492. \$-\$\$.

**13** ★★★ **Piazza Navona.** The most famous baroque square in Rome, built on the site of the

ancient athletic stadium of Domitian, boasts Bernini's fantastic Fountain of the Four Rivers and Borromini's church of Sant'Agnese in Agone, as well as the smaller Fontana del Moro and Fontana di Nettuno. There are also a number of cafes to tempt you with after-dinner treats—it's unabashedly touristy, but the setting sure is pretty. ⌚ 20–30 min. See p 38, bullet **1**, and p 53, bullet **6**. Bus: 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 87, 116, or 492.

**14** ★★ **Giolitti.** At the city's best-loved gelato shop, the setting is elegant and the ritual is fun. Pay the cashier up front, then negotiate your way through the crowds in back, where gracious servers scoop up enormous helpings of almost 100 flavors. *Via degli Uffici del Vicario* 40. ☎ 06-6991243. \$.

**15** ★★★ **Trevi Fountain.** Rome's most celebrated fountain, designed by Nicola Salvi and built from 1732–62, is impressive enough during the day, but at night, the floodlights make it look cleaner and doubly spectacular—so gorgeous that you won't even mind the crowds. ⌚ 20 min. *Piazza di Trevi*. Bus: 62, 85, 95, 175, or 492.

*St. Peter's Basilica fronting St. Peter's Square.*





# The Best in Two Days



- 1 Santa Cecilia
- 2 Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere
- 3 Ombre Rosse
- 4 Via Giulia
- 5 Piazza Farnese
- 6 Campo de' Fiori
- 7 Taverna del Campo

- 8 Galleria Borghese
- 9 Villa Borghese
- 10 Pincio Terrace
- 11 Piazza del Popolo
- 12 Bar Stravinskij
- 13 Enoteca Antica di Via della Croce
- 14 Spanish Steps

**O**n your second day, spend the morning wandering the picturesque squares and alleys of Trastevere and Campo de' Fiori, Rome's oldest and most authentic quarters. Have lunch, and then cross town to feast your eyes on the crown jewels of baroque art in the Galleria Borghese. Go for a stroll through the Villa Borghese, making your way to the Pincio terraces and their enchanting view over the city and the Vatican. Finish the day by visiting the elegant Tridente district below, where such *dolce vita* activities as shopping, drinking, and eating abound. Allow 2½ hours for the morning tour of Trastevere and Campo de' Fiori. **START:** Take bus 23, 271, or 280 to Lungotevere degli Anguillara, and then walk to Piazza di Santa Cecilia; or take bus H, 780, or tram 8 to Piazza G. G. Belli, and walk.

**1 ★ Santa Cecilia.** This incredibly peaceful basilica—an 18th-century reworking of a medieval church—is dedicated to the patron saint of music, who was martyred here in the 3rd century A.D. Inside, altar mosaics dazzle, and fragments of Pietro Cavallini's wonderful 13th-century fresco of the *Last Judgment* can be seen at limited times. Cecilia was exhumed from her tomb in the crypt here in 1599, long enough for Stefano Maderno to sculpt the lovely (but disturbing—her throat is slashed) statue of the saint's still-uncorrupted body below the altar. The church is one of the most popular in Rome for weddings, evidenced by omnipresent grains of rice on the ground near the front door. 🕒 20 min. **Piazza di Santa Cecilia.** ☎ 06-5899289. Daily 9:30am–12:30pm, 4–6:30pm. *Cavallini frescoes:* Tues,

Thurs 10am–noon, Sun 11:30am–12:30pm. Bus: 23, 271, 280, or H. Tram: 3 or 8.

**2 ★★ Piazza and Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere.** The first church in Rome dedicated to the Virgin Mary is spectacular inside and out, with a landmark Romanesque brick bell tower, colorful frescoes, mosaics, and loads of recycled ancient marbles. The eponymous square in front of the church acts as a kind of common living room for the neighborhood—it seems that every resident of Trastevere crosses the wide expanse of cobblestones here at some point during the day. See also p 39, bullet 8, and p 43, bullet 8. 🕒 20 min. **Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere.** ☎ 06-5814802. Daily 7:30am–9pm. Bus: 23, 271, 280, or H. Tram: 8.

*A cafe in Trastevere.*



**3 ★ Ombre Rosse.** This cafe with a porchlike view over a charming piazza is more stylish than the average neighborhood bar, but still frequented by born-and-bred, local *trasteverini*, and perfect for cappuccino-sipping and people-watching. **Piazza Sant' Egidio 12.** ☎ 06-5884155. \$-\$\$.

**4 ★★ Via Giulia.** Bearing straight toward the Vatican from Ponte Sisto, this former pilgrim route is home to many art galleries and high-end, original boutiques. Via Giulia's most fetching feature is an arch—with overgrown ivy draped luxuriously toward the pitch-black cobblestones—that spans the road behind Palazzo Farnese. ⌚ 15 min. **Bus:** 23, 271, or 280.

**5 ★★ Piazza Farnese.** Sophisticated and regal Piazza Farnese is where locals come to read the newspaper or to push a stroller in peace, against the stately, yellow-brick backdrop of 16th-century Palazzo Farnese. The sleepy square seems a world away—in reality, it's only a block—from the hubbub of Campo de' Fiori. See also p 39, bullet 10, and p 57, bullet 3. ⌚ 15 min. **Bus:** 23, 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 87, 116, 271, 492, or 571. **Tram:** 8.

**6 ★★★ Campo de' Fiori.** Rome's market square par excellence, the Campo is the perfect embodiment of the myth of Italy. Every morning from Monday to Saturday, the square hosts a lively fruit, vegetable, and trinket bazaar. By early evening, where grocery shoppers eyed *pachino* tomatoes a few hours before, Rome's bright young things are scoping out each other over sparkling wine and effervescent conversation, indulging in the carefree atmosphere of this always busy outdoor salon. See also p 39, bullet 11, and p 56, bullet 1. ⌚ 20–30 min. **Bus:** 23, 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 87, 116, or 492. **Tram:** 8.

**7 Taverna del Campo.** Break for lunch on or around Campo de' Fiori before beginning the second part of the day's tour. For savory pizza-bread sandwiches and piazza views, Taverna del Campo can't be beat (p 114). \$\$.

**8 ★★★ Galleria Borghese.** Reel in amazement at sculptures by Bernini (and other masterpieces) at one of the world's most outstanding small museums. Visits must be booked at least 1 day in advance: Go for the 1 or 3pm time slot. See also p 30, bullet 3. ⌚ 1 hr.

*Tomatoes and zucchini for sale at the market in Campo de' Fiori.*







*The Spanish Steps are one of the city's favorite gathering places.*

**Piazzale Museo Borghese.** ☎ 06-32810. Admission 8.50€ plus 2€ booking fee. Tues–Sun 9am–7pm (last visit 5pm). Bus: 116 or 910.

**9 ★★ Villa Borghese.** Go for a relaxing stroll among the refreshing greenery of Rome's most central public park. Boats can be rented at the picturesque *laghetto*. See also p 92. ⌚ 30 min. Daily 6am–sunset. Metro: Spagna. Bus: 52, 53, 63, 116, or 910. Tram: 3 or 19.

**10 ★★★ Pincio Terrace.** Hearts flutter at the impressive perspective on the Vatican from this panoramic spot above Piazza del Popolo. It's gloriously sun-filled by day, ultraromantic by night. See also p 45, bullet **3**. ⌚ 15 min. Metro: Flaminio.

**11 ★★ Piazza del Popolo.** Romans and tourists alike bask in the late-afternoon sun that floods this vast, traffic-free oval space just below the Pincio. Graced in the center by a massive, hieroglyphed pink granite obelisk, the "Square of the People" is wonderfully elegant and uncluttered—perfect for idling and gelato-licking, and a fitting introduction to the good-life in Tridente district, which spreads out pronglike to the south. See also p 38, bullet **4**, and p 61, bullet **1**. ⌚ 15 min. Metro: Flaminio.

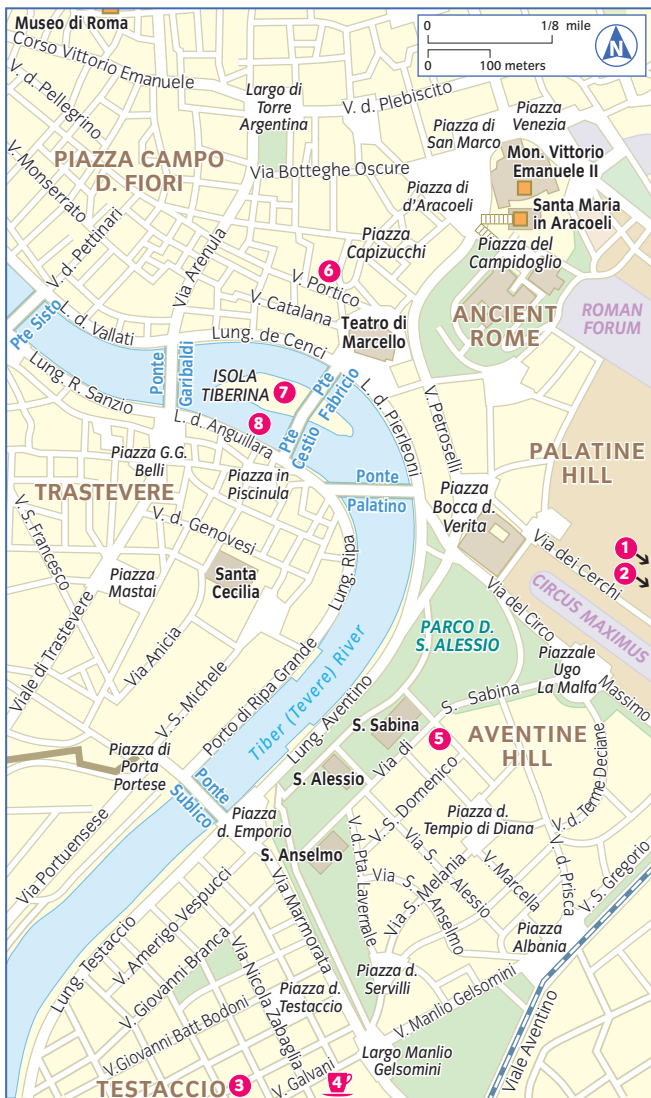
**12 ★★ Bar Stravinskij.** Forget the cheesy sidewalk cafes of Via

Veneto—these days, celebs hounded by the paparazzi duck into this (pricey) bar inside the glamorous Hotel de Russie. In warm weather, sit outside in the gorgeous interior garden, sloping up toward the Pincio; in winter, get cozy at the piano bar's indoor tables. *Via del Babuino 9*. ☎ 06-328881. \$\$\$–\$\$\$\$.

**13 ★★ Enoteca Antica di Via della Croce.** For a more budget-friendly snack, grab a barstool or sidewalk seat and enjoy some wine and tantalizing plates of meats, cheeses, and olives at this friendly spot. A favorite of expats living in Rome. *Via della Croce 76B*. ☎ 06-6790896. \$\$.

**14 ★★★ Spanish Steps.** Fortunately, the sweeping beauty of the Scalinata di Piazza di Spagna transcends the sometimes-ugly crowds of tourists that populate the square day and night. The climb to the high terrace covers 12 curving flights of steps of varying width—you'll trip if you don't watch where your feet are—but the view from the top is exhilarating. Come between 2 and 6am, and you'll enjoy that rarest of Roman treats—having the fabulous stage of the Spanish Steps to yourself. See also p 63, bullet **11**. ⌚ 30 min. Metro: Spagna.

# The Best in Three Days



- |                             |                 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Catacombs of San Callisto | 5 Aventine Hill |
| 2 Appian Way (Appia Antica) | 6 Jewish Ghetto |
| 3 Testaccio                 | 7 Tiber Island  |
| 4 Il Seme e la Foglia       | 8 Tiber Cruise  |

**O**ne of the best and most surprising things about Rome is how quickly you can escape the urban chaos and enjoy the rustic tranquillity of the city's greener areas, just a few miles away from the tourist hordes. On your third day, visit the catacombs and breathe the spicy, rural air along the history-saturated Appian Way. Then, go for a stroll in the contrasting, adjacent neighborhoods of Testaccio and the Aventine. Finish the day back in the *centro storico* with a walk through the Jewish Ghetto and Tiber Island. (Alternatively, get out of town entirely, and go for a day trip to Ostia Antica or Tivoli. See p 150 and 148.) **START: Take bus 118 or a taxi to the Catacombe di San Callisto on the Appian Way (the entrance is 3.2km/2 miles south of Porta San Sebastiano gate).**

**1 ★★★ Catacombs of San Callisto.** Nineteen kilometers (12 miles) and four levels of hand-dug tunnels make up the underground network of Rome's largest catacombs, home to the tombs of half a million Christians, buried here from the 1st to the 4th centuries A.D. Deep within the complex, a labyrinth of 9m-high (30-ft.) tunnels, whose walls are perforated up to the ceiling with *loculi* (tomb niches), is especially impressive (and uncannily reminiscent of college library stacks). See also p 46. 🕒 **45 min.** **Via Appia Antica 110.** 📞 **06-5130151.** **Admission 6€.** **Open Thurs–Tues 8:30am–noon, 2:30–5pm. Bus: 118.**

*A corridor in the Catacombs of San Callisto.*



**2 ★★★ Appian Way.** Few places in Rome transport you to ancient times as well as the Via Appia Antica, whose black basalt cobblestones, still bearing the wheel ruts of ancient cart traffic, stretch south of the city from Porta San Sebastiano. A few miles from the city walls, a rustic, agrarian landscape opens up on either side of the 4th-century-B.C. highway; the scenery is scattered with imposing or modest remains of ancient tombs and villas, and shepherds drive flocks of sheep from pasture to pasture, right across the “Queen of Roads.” Even the scent of the Appian Way is ripe with antiquity: Once you smell it, the combination of bright notes of umbrella pine needles, musty sunbaked brick and marble, and the acrid pungency of leaves burning in farmyards becomes indelible in your memory. See also p 94. 🕒 **1 hr. Bus: 118.**

**3 ★★ Testaccio.** Anchored by an artificial hill made of ancient pottery cast-offs and populated by salt-of-the-earth *romani de' Roma* (and the odd sheep or goat), the authentic neighborhood of Testaccio oozes character. See also p 72. 🕒 **1 hr.** **Metro: Piramide. Bus: 30, 60, 75, 95, 118, or 170. Tram: 3.**





A wall-fountain at Santa Sabina.

**4 ★ Il Seme e la Foglia.** With views of the old slaughterhouse and the potsherds of Monte Testaccio, this hip corner joint is a great place for a casual, quick lunch of enormous and tasty salads and sandwiches. *Via Galvani 18.* ☎ 06-5743008. \$–\$\$.

**5 ★★★ Aventine.** Oblivious to the noise of the *centro* below, Aventine Hill is mostly residential, and home to several churches, whose dignified and simple red-brick exteriors and grassy grounds are a welcome contrast from the fussy facades and cramped quarters of many Roman churches. The 5th-century-A.D. church of Santa Sabina is cavernous and calming—a sublime example of the basilican form. ⌚ 1 hr. *Metro: Circo Massimo. Bus: 30, 60, 75, 81, 95, 118, 175, or 628. Tram: 3.*

**6 ★★ Jewish Ghetto.** As the area where Roman Jews were confined from the 16th to the 19th centuries, the medieval quarter between the Capitoline and the

Tiber has seen its share of dark days. Today, however, the Ghetto is an upbeat, characteristic part of the *centro storico* that many tourists miss. From towering ancient ruins like the Theater of Marcellus, to sculptural gems like the Fountain of the Tortoises in Piazza Mattei, to the triumphant synagogue, this small area has a lot to see. See also p 66.

⌚ 45 min. *Bus: 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 81, 87, 170, 271, 492, or 628. Tram: 8.*

**7 ★★ Tiber Island.** This boat-shaped protuberance in the middle of the river, between the Ghetto and Trastevere, is an oasis of calm; ever since the Greek god of medicine, Aesculapius, washed up here disguised as a snake, the island has been the city's sanctuary of medicine. Check out the lower promenade (water level permitting), with its great views of the ancient bridges nearby. See also p 66. ⌚ 30 min. *Bus: 23, 30, 40, 62, 64, 70, 81, 87, 170, 271, 280, 492, or 628. Tram: 8.*

**8 ★★ Tiber Cruise.** If you have time, going for a ride on the Battelli di Roma riverboat service (also known as “Bateaux Rome”) is a great way to relax while seeing Rome from the interesting perspective of this historic waterway, now largely overlooked by the modern city. You can cruise all the way up to the Foro Italico (p 131) for a sunset stroll among the Fascist-inspired athletic cult mosaics and statues. ⌚ 1½ hr. ☎ 06-97745496. [www.rexervation.com/crociere.asp](http://www.rexervation.com/crociere.asp). From 12€. *Bus: 23, 271, 280, or H. Tram: 8.* ●

*Tiber Island is an oasis of calm.*

