

FREE DESTINATION GUIDE

ROME

Italy



Twenty eight centuries of history, one perfect plate of pasta at a time.

SAFETY: US State Dept: Level 2

Travelling with ActorTonyB & Nala The Shih Tzu

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Top Sights

- **Colosseum.** Book the earliest timed entry and pair it with the Forum before the heat and crowds build.
- **Roman Forum and Palatine Hill.** Walk the main street of ancient Rome; the combined ticket with the Colosseum makes this simple.
- **Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel.** First entry of the day is the only calm one; book direct online weeks ahead.
- **St Peter's Basilica.** Free entry, enormous scale. Dress code is enforced: covered shoulders and knees.
- **Pantheon.** The best preserved Roman temple anywhere; now ticketed, so reserve a slot online.
- **Trevi Fountain.** Go before 8 am for a photo without a crowd, then come back lit up at night.
- **Trastevere.** Rome's village quarter: ivy covered lanes, aperitivo bars, and family trattorias.
- **Borghese Gallery and Gardens.** Bernini sculptures in a villa, then rent a rowboat on the little lake in the park.

Local Tips

- Timed tickets for the Colosseum and Vatican sell out weeks ahead in season; booking early is the whole game.
- Carry a refillable bottle: Rome's little street fountains (nasoni) pour cold, free drinking water all over the city.
- The coperto on your restaurant bill is a standard cover charge, not a scam; tipping beyond it is modest, round up or leave a few euro.
- Churches enforce dress codes. A light scarf in your bag solves shoulders and knees on the spot.
- August is hot and many family restaurants close for holidays; spring and fall are the sweet spot.
- Use official white taxis or apps; ignore anyone offering a ride inside the station.

Customs & Etiquette

Do

- Greet with buongiorno before noon and buonasera in the evening.
- Order cappuccino in the morning like a local; after lunch it is espresso territory.
- Wait to be seated and ask for the bill (il conto) when you are ready; nobody rushes you.
- Validate regional train tickets at the platform machines before boarding.

Please Don't

- Do not sit, eat, or dangle your feet on the Spanish Steps or in fountains; fines are real.
- Do not order a big breakfast expecting eggs and bacon; Italian breakfast is coffee and a cornetto at the bar.
- Do not touch produce at markets with bare hands; point and the vendor will bag it.
- Do not expect dinner before 7:30 pm; kitchens open late and the city eats at 8 or 9.

Things to Know Before You Go

Currency. Euro (EUR). Cards widely accepted; small cash helps at markets and tiny bars.

Language. Italian. English is common in central Rome's hotels and sights, thinner in the suburbs.

Best time to visit. April to June and September to October for warm days without peak heat or peak crowds.

Getting around. The historic center is walkable. Metro lines A and B hit the big sights; buses fill the gaps.

Five phrases that open doors

Buongiorno	Good morning
Grazie	Thank you
Per favore	Please
Scusi	Excuse me
Dov'e il bagno?	Where is the restroom?

What to Bring

- Broken in walking shoes; Rome's cobblestones (sampietrini) are beautiful and ankle hostile.
- A light scarf or shawl for church dress codes, whatever the season.
- A refillable water bottle for the city's free drinking fountains.
- A European plug adapter (Type C, F, or L) and a power bank.
- Sun protection and a hat from May to September; shade is scarce in the Forum.
- A small daypack you can wear in front of you in crowds.

What to Expect

Weather: hot and dry in summer (often 90 F plus), mild in spring and fall, cool and rainy spells in winter.

Pace: gloriously slow at the table, chaotic at the curb. Dinner starts at 8, and nobody apologizes for it.

Costs in practice: stay one neighborhood out from the big sights and prices drop fast. Standing at the bar for coffee is the local price; sitting is the tourist price.

How tourists are received: Romans are warm and direct. A few Italian words and patience with the pace turn service friendly fast.

What NOT to Bring

- Heels or smooth soled dress shoes for sightseeing days; the stones win every time.
- Drones without permits; flying over central Rome and the Vatican is prohibited and drones are seized.
- Big bills for small shops; carry small euro notes and coins for bars, buses, and markets.
- A tight schedule in August; heat, closures, and crowds will rewrite it for you.

Safety Rating

US State Dept advisory level: Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution

Italy is rated Level 2 by the US State Department, citing terrorism risk at crowded venues. For visitors the everyday issue is petty theft: pickpockets work the Colosseum area, Termini station, and packed buses like the famous route 64.

Three practical safety moves

- Keep your wallet in a front pocket and your bag in your lap at outdoor cafes near major sights.
- Be extra alert in Termini station and on crowded Metro cars; that is where most tourist theft happens.
- Enroll in the free STEP program at step.state.gov before you go.

Advisory levels change. Check the current rating for your destination at travel.state.gov before you book and again before you fly. Summary reflects the advisory in effect in October 2026.

Budget Snapshot

Rough per person daily ranges in US dollars, including lodging, food, local transport, and activities. Airfare not included. Treat these as planning estimates, not quotes.

Tier	Per day (USD)	What it looks like
Budget traveler	\$100 to \$150 per day	Guesthouse near Termini or Trastevere, pizza al taglio, free church art, one paid site a day.
Mid range	\$200 to \$280 per day	Hotel in the centro storico, trattoria dinners, timed tickets everywhere, a food tour.
Comfort	\$380 plus per day	Boutique hotel, private guides, rooftop aperitivo, and a day trip to Tivoli or Ostia.

Ready to Go?

You have the sights, the tips, the customs, and the budget. Now put dates on it. Compare flights, stays, cars, and activities for Rome in one place, with live prices and traveler reviews.

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