

# CASA MANNI ROMA

## The Ultimate Roman Lifestyle

### Archaeology Experiences

#### **The Archaeology of Rome**

In no other city in the world are the physical remains of the remote past so much a part of the everyday life of the modern city as in Rome. And for that reason the past is nowhere so hard to read as it is in Rome. These archaeological tours of Rome and its surrounding areas are designed to help you make sense of all those layers of history and to understand how modern Romans live among them. Tailored to your particular interests, the tours are coordinated by Paolo Lenzi, an English-speaking Italian archaeologist who has been excavating ancient Rome for the past twelve years.

#### **Rome icons**

Even if you've been to Rome a hundred times, if you've never been to these, you don't yet know Rome. Each can be visited on its own or as part of a wider-ranging tour, custom designed for your interests and time constraints.

*Colosseum.* Perhaps the most influential structure ever built, this is the sports arena from which every modern stadium originates. We'll stand now where crowds of 55,000 ancient Roman spectators once watched deadly gladiatorial contests. Today there's a new elevator and exhibition space for important temporary shows.

*Pantheon.* Or maybe *this* is the most imitated building of all time. Think of the dome of Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. Today, this splendidly preserved Roman temple is a working church, and it remains the best place anywhere to experience how Roman architects enclosed space. Built by the emperor Hadrian in the early 2nd century, its simple layout and breathtaking interior, dominated by a dome whose height and width are equal (140 ft/43.3 m), form a perfectly balanced unit.

*Roman Forum and Palatine.* The Forum was the center of Rome's political, commercial, and judicial life, made splendid with temples and basilicas, triumphal arches, and statues. The Palatine Hill, overlooking the Forum, evolved from a hut village to a wealthy neighborhood to the imperial palace (where we get the word).

*Baths of Caracalla.* Famous throughout the world for the summer opera performances here, this enormous 3<sup>rd</sup> century bath complex was a sort of leisure center, where the citizens exercised, read, and socialized. Its beyond-monumental scale gives a thrilling impression today of the power of ruins.

*Appian Way (Via Appia Antica) and the Catacombs.* The Queen of Roads was once a major highway in Rome, and considerable stretches of its ancient paving are still preserved. It is lined with both elaborate, above-ground tombs of wealthy Romans as well as underground catacombs, where the early Christians buried their dead.

### **Walking tour of the Campus Martius (Campo Marzio; about three hours)**

Casa MANNI is located in the Campus Martius, today called Campo Marzio (see satellite photograph), the part of Rome that was once the ancient Field of Mars—a low-lying, densely populated area in the bend of the Tiber that was the center of the Medieval and Renaissance city. As you walk around this picturesque part of town, you'll see ancient columns embedded in modern buildings, excavated temples beneath the streets, and the footprints of ancient buildings traced by streets. Nowhere else are you so aware that you are moving on top of another, parallel city. Just outside Casa MANNI's front door are the impressive columns of the Temple of Hadrian, erected to honor an emperor whom the Romans never loved. A block away is Piazza Colonna, with the Column of Marcus Aurelius, one hundred Roman feet high and decorated with a continuous scroll of reliefs recording that emperor's victories in Germany. (You can see this column from all the windows of Casa MANNI.) We'll go inside the Pantheon to experience Roman space, and we'll trace the semicircular remains of the ancient theater of Pompey in the street plan and beneath the neighborhood's hotels and restaurants.

The Campus Martius is so rich in remains that you might prefer to take several more-focused tours of the area, including one or both of the two relatively new museum-sites: the Crypta Balbi and the Ara Pacis. Inside the building of the Crypta Balbi are fascinating archaeological layers comprising both an ancient theater and workshops dating back to the so-called Dark Ages. The Ara Pacis, or Altar of Peace, is one of the most magnificent examples of ancient marble relief sculpture anywhere, though many people visit it to see the new building enclosing it by the architect Richard Meier.

### **Outside the walls of Rome (with car and driver; about four hours)**

Today Romans speak of "inside" and "outside" the walls as a sort of geographic shorthand, but until 130 years ago, "inside" offered the protections and comforts of civilization, while "outside" meant danger, disease, and vulnerability. The surviving stretches of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century, brick-faced Aurelian Walls are spectacular, with their massive gates and towers, and could be a destination in themselves. Outside the walls, we'll visit the Appian Way, in a setting that still evokes the countryside, with its mausoleums, temples, villas, Christian and Jewish catacombs, and churches that have witnessed the events of Italy's history for more than 2300 years. You can also see the

remains of the great arches of the aqueducts, and discuss the sophisticated Roman engineering that produced such roads and water supply.

On the way back to the city you will stop for a proper walking tour of the Baths of Caracalla and drive along the Circus Maximus, once the largest stadium the Empire ever built, with a capacity of 250,000 (you may remember it from the movie *Ben Hur*). Finally, we'll stop at two picturesque little temples on the Tiber and, across the street, the famous "Mouth of Truth," a stone face embedded in a church wall said to bite the hand of liars (including Gregory Peck in *Roman Holiday*).

### **Ostia Antica (with car and driver; about four hours plus optional lunch)**

Just half an hour's drive from Rome is the ancient port of Ostia. With its remains of apartment buildings, restaurants, warehouses, temples, theater, and civic center, it gives an excellent idea of what ancient urban life was like. Shaded with pines and cooled by a sea breeze, this abandoned ancient city is a pleasant spot to visit at any time of year. A morning trip to the site can be followed by a seafood lunch on the coast.

### **Thematic tours of Rome**

Feel free to challenge the archaeologists and art historians to devise a truly unique experience for you as, for the guests of Casa MANNI, they can custom-design tours around any theme. These may include: Roman Wall Painting and Mosaics, Roman Hydraulics, Roman Mausolea, Religions of the Roman Empire, or Life Along the Tiber. The only limit to your tour of Rome is your curiosity (and, even then, the experts can always help you find new interests).