



Aventino

Circus Massimo

This was Rome's largest stadium where 200,000 could watch chariots race around a 600m track. Augustus erected the obelisk of Ramses II in 10 BC - and it was subsequently moved to Piazza del Popolo. Constantine erected a second obelisk that now stands in front of San Giovanni in Laterano.

The circus remained in use until 549.

Chiesa di Santa Maria Cosmedin

One of the finest medieval churches in Rome. An imperial-era arcaded colonnade and a 7th century building were incorporated into the church, which was further altered in the 12th century with the addition of the seven story bell tower. The beautiful floor, altar and choir are decorated with Cosmati marble.

The famous 'Bocca della Verita' is in the portico of the church. The Boca della Verita (the mouth of truth) is a great stone mask with a gaping mouth and is located in the church of Santa Maria Cosmedin. Legend has it that anyone who lies while their hand is in the mouth will have it bitten off. Santa Maria Cosmedin was first built in the 6th century and later enlarged in the 8th century.

There are two well preserved Roman temples to Ercole and Portuno.

Parco Savello

This small park is lined with orange trees and offers a magnificent panoramic view of Rome.

Chiesa di San Saba

The church dates from the 10th century. Commati marble work from the 13th century decorates the main floor. In the portico are some interesting examples of how imperial-era marble was recycled.

Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta

The keyhole into the priory of the Knights of Malta offers a charming surprise.

Pyramid

Caius Cestius, a magistrate from the 1st century, built this as a tomb for himself. It was incorporated into the Aurelian walls when these were erected in the 3rd century. The city-wall gate next to the Pyramid is interesting and houses a small museum.

Protestant Cemetery

Shelly wrote of this cemetery "it might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place". John Keats, Percy & Mary Shelly and Goethe are buried here, and the shady cemetery offers timeless views of the Pyramid and Aurelian wall.

Aurelian Wall

Construction of these walls was started by Emperor Aurelian in 270 and completed by his successor Probus between 276 and 282. It stretches 18 km around the city with 18 gates and 381 towers. In the 4th century Emperor Maxentius raised the wall to almost double its height. Most of the wall survives to this day.

Terme di Caracalla

The baths were inaugurated in 217 and were used for 300 years until the Goth invaders cut the aquaduct and thus water supplies. The huge complex covered 10 hectares and could accommodate up to 1600 people, who could enjoy richly decorated steam rooms, swimming pools, gymnasiums, libraries, shops and gardens.

San Gregorio Magno

The old church built in 575 was thoroughly restored by Cardinal Scipione Borghese in 1633. Giambattista Soria built the steps and a new theatrical (false) façade which leads to an atrium and then to the church.

From the broad stairway you can enjoy a wonderful view of the Palatine.

San Giovanni e Paolo

The square has hardly changed since medieval times.

The portico dates from the 12th century and is embellished by columns of Roman origin. The chapel with the dome is a 14th century addition. Excavations beneath this church have revealed Roman houses of the first and second centuries used as places of Christian worship.

The bell tower is typical of many medieval churches in Rome. The tower was built on the foundations of a Roman temple dedicated to the emperor Claudius. The tower is decorated with ceramic dishes from Spain (at the time under the Moors) and is decorated with inscriptions dedicated to Allah.

Acqua Claudia

The aquaduct was built by Emperor Claudius in 52 AD and supplied water to the Palatine hill. The aquaduct entered the city at Porta Maggiore, and its arches can be seen at many points, woven into the city's fabric, as it passes San Giovanni and over Via Clivo Scauro and Via San Gregorio onto the Palatine.