

Rome

Day 1

7.10pm From Fiumicino airport (0844 493 0787, ba.com; £78 return from Gatwick) take a taxi (£42) into town – it's more than twice the public transport price for two, but 10 times more comfortable, and takes half the time.

8.30pm Check into Hotel Campo de' Fiori (00 39 06 6880 6865, hotelcampodefiori.com; doubles from £97, B&B) – it's well-connected, near transport hub Largo del Torre Argentina, and its roof terrace has spectacular 360° rooftop views. Or try nearby Albergo Santa Chiara (00 39 06 687 2979, albergosantachiara.com; doubles from £221, B&B). Ask the hotel to reserve tomorrow's tables: for lunch at Settimio al Pellegrino (00 39 06 6880 1978; mains around £7), and dinner at Armando al Pantheon (00 39 06 6880 3034, armandoalpantheon.it; mains around £11). And use the Fiori's iPad to book and print Day 3's online tickets to the Vatican museums (mv.vatican.va; £17), the Colosseum and Forum (ticketclit.it; £11.50).

9.15pm Head straight out for cured meats and *spaghetti alla carbonara* at Roscioli (00 39 06 687 5287, salumeriaroscioli.com; mains around £18), a few minutes' walk away.

11pm Out of Roscioli, follow the narrow alley on the right to Via degli Specchi, where Open Baladin (openbaladinroma.it) specialises in Italian craft beers – there are dozens on tap, and waiters will create a three-beer flight for £8.75.

Day 2

9am Swap hotel breakfast for a peek inside the Pantheon (Piazza della Rotonda), en route to espresso and *sfogliatella frolla* (ricotta-filled shortbread), overlooking the austere 2nd-century remains of Hadrian's Temple, at La Caffetteria (grancaffelacaffetteria.com; breakfast around £6) in Piazza di Pietra.

10am Bypass the queues and crowds rubbernecking the Trevi Fountain and Spanish Steps, and instead check out Renaissance and Baroque artworks in churches in peace. On Piazza della Minerva (five minutes from La Caffetteria), illuminate Lippi's frescoes in Santa Maria Sopra Minerva (www.basilicaminerva.it; free) by putting 50c in the slot. Then it's round the corner to the Church of San Luigi dei Francesi's (saintlouis-rome.net; free) three Caravaggio canvases. Sant'Agostino (Piazza Sant'Agostino; free), 150m away, has Caravaggio and Raphael masterpieces.

1pm Cut through Piazza Navona towards Via del Pellegrino for Roman trattoria classics at Settimio al Pellegrino (booked on Day 1; ring bell on arrival). Try the homemade fettucine.

2.30pm Walk off lunch a block away in Via di Monserrato's fantastic galleries and boutiques.

3.30pm En route through the historic Jewish Ghetto, stop for Rome's best *gelato* at Vice (Corso Vittorio Emanuele II 96; £1.75), then shortcut through ruined Teatro di Marcello to the Capitoline Hill. >



4.30pm Besides the antiquities of the Musei Capitolini (museicapitolini.org; £10.50 – look out for the *Colossus of Constantine* statue and the dramatic *Dying Gaul* sculpture), don't miss the Forum views from the tunnel connecting the two museum buildings – take the staircase midway down the right-hand corridor. Rest your feet at the museum cafe, with its views across the city to St Peter's dome; you're 10 minutes from more feet-up time back at the hotel.

8.30pm A five-minute stroll away at Armando al Pantheon (pre-booked on Day 1), the Gargioli family has five decades' experience of serving traditional pork-rich pasta dishes. It has an excellent veggie menu, too.

Day 3

10am Post-hotel breakfast, taxi 10 minutes (€8) to the Vatican Museums, complete with

queue-dodging voucher (booked on Day 1) and plenty of cash (cards currently not accepted). Once you've seen the Sistine Chapel, exit through the south door of the chapel for St Peter's Basilica (Piazza San Pietro; free), without backtracking to the Museums' exit or standing in the security line in St Peter's Square.

12.30pm Just five minutes from the Vatican walls, Sorpasso (00 39 06 890 24554, sorpasso.info; mains around €9) serves excellent *locavore* pastas, salads and snacks, including house-cured meats.

2pm Take the nearby Metro eight stops from Ottaviano (€1.30) to Colosseo and waltz past the queues for the Colosseum and Roman Forum (with your tickets purchased on Day 1).

4pm End the afternoon with a spot of shopping in neighbouring Monti district. Find hand-crafted accessories at Mikiway (Via del Boschetto 40), and ceramics and hand-loomed scarves at Spazio Artigiano (Vicolo dei Serpenti 13).

6pm En route back to the Fiori, sip local bubbly with unbeatable views of Trajan's Column at

Enoteca Provincia Romana (enoteca.provinciaromana.it; €4 a glass).

7.30pm Walk 10 minutes from the hotel, through Piazza Navona, to No.au (00 39 06 4565 2770, noauroma.wordpress.com; mains around €8), for exceptional natural wines paired with cheese plates, salads or steak tartare.

Day 4

9.30am Two minutes from the hotel, at bakery Antico Forno Roscioli (Via dei Chiavari 34; snacks around €1), order signature *pizza bianca* to breakfast on, and pocket some almond meringues and *crostate* (ricotta pies) for later.

10.30am Pick up last-minute gifts within a few hundred-metre radius – designer homeware at Spazio Sette (Via dei Barbieri), posh togs at Loulou (Via dei Banchi Vecchi), and jewellery and woven silk at Nicotra San Giacomo (ndsg.it).

12pm Grab a coffee in Piazza Farnese, by the magnificent 16th-century Palazzo Farnese.

1pm Eat your Roscioli bakery snacks in the taxi back to the airport.

Inspired? See turismoroma.it.

Katie Parla ■



Inside scoop: clockwise from above, eat the best *gelato* in Rome; vintage cars like this Fiat spin through narrow streets; the tempting Roscioli bakery and restaurant; a dusky view from Palatine Hill, one of the most ancient parts of the city; see the *Colossus of Constantine* in the Capitoline Museum. Opposite, the mighty Colosseum

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