

## Rome - The Eternal City

### **Day 1 Departure From London, Arrive Rome (5 Nights)**

This morning you will catch your flight from London to Rome.

Rome is so rich in treasures that many consider it to be the most magnificent city in the world. Our introduction to the city will be a **Walking Tour** from Castel Sant'Angelo over the River Tiber to **Piazza Navona**, an elegant square built on the site of Emperor Domitian's ancient stadium. In addition to admiring Bernini's fountains and the local artists' works, you may also wish to sample the world famous 'tartufo' ice cream that originated here for your first 'taste' of Rome!

### **Day 2 Rome (City Of The Caesars)**

We will begin this morning's sightseeing with a visit to the great **Colosseum**, the symbol of Rome's eternity, where over 50,000 spectators watched gladiators fight. Nearby stands the Roman **Mamertine Prison**, known as 'the hole' for the small opening in the floor through which prisoners were thrown into the cramped cells below. Past inmates include Saints Peter and Paul. We will then enter the ruins of the **Roman Forum**, with its many temples, basilicas and triumphal arches. Above is the Palatine Hill, where impressive ruins of the emperors' villas remain. After lunch we will view Trajan's Column and markets, and the dazzling white marble Vittorio Emmanuele Monument, built in the late 19th century, before we walk into the quiet recesses of the oldest known Jewish Ghetto. We will pass some of the oldest ruins in Rome in Piazza Largo Argentina on our way to the best-preserved monument of ancient Rome, the **Pantheon**. Once dedicated to all the gods and now to St. Mary and all Martyrs, the temple was originally built in 27 BC. Rebuilt by Hadrian over a century later and converted into a church in the 7th century, the Pantheon is a masterpiece of architecture with its huge hemispherical dome. It also contains the tombs of the kings of Italy and that of the artist, Raphael.

### **Day 3 Rome (The Legends)**

Today we will ascend Michelangelo's graceful Cordonata stairway, leading to Piazza Campidoglio atop the Capitoline Hill. This site has been the heart of Rome and center of its city government since ancient times. We will visit the **Capitoline Museums**, which contain the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, a copy of which has now been returned to its original position in the square, as well as the Etruscan bronze She-Wolf and many important sculptures and paintings from the Empire and the Renaissance. We will then take a **Walking Tour** past the Temples of Apollo, Fortuna and Virilis and the Theater of Marcellus to the Church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, most famous today for the **Mouth of Truth** in the porch. Behind this church is the ancient chariot-racing stadium, the **Circus Maximus**. Nearby we will find a most unique **keyhole** through which appears an extraordinary view of St. Peter's Dome.

### **Day 4 Rome (City Of The Popes)**

Our day at the Vatican City will begin with a visit to the **Vatican Museums**, which house one of the most impressive collections of art in the world, including the magnificent **Raphael Rooms** and Michelangelo's extraordinary ceiling in the **Sistine Chapel**. After a break for lunch just outside the Vatican walls, we will continue to St. Peter's Square. The majesty and size of **St. Peter's Basilica** upon entry is unforgettable. It contains many treasures and masterpieces, including the famous Pieta by Michelangelo, the tomb of St. Peter and Bernini's magnificent Baldacchino.

**Day 5 Papal Audience**

A **Papal Audience** will be arranged today (subject to scheduling).

There will be free time for individual sightseeing this afternoon. This evening we will take a walk to the Spanish Steps before winding through the narrow streets that lead to the Trevi Fountain, where it is traditional to toss a coin into the fountain to ensure a return to the Eternal City.

**Day 6 Outside Rome's Walls: The Catacombs & St Paul's - Departure**

We will head south outside Rome's ancient walls, through the Porta San Sebastiano and onto the Appian Way, the first and most important of the great roads, which the Romans built. Our first stop is the **Catacombs of San Sebastiano**, one of the underground Christian cemeteries that were in use from the 2nd century AD. We then visit **St Paul's Basilica**, whose body is supposedly buried in the tomb.

Your enjoyable and rewarding tour will come to an end as your tour manager/guide accompanies you to the airport for the return flight.