

Vatican Museum / Rome

Description



We stumbled upon Altare della Patria yesterday while looking for the Trevi fountain and it was glorious!



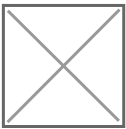
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I loved this photo of the seagull surveying its surroundings from atop.

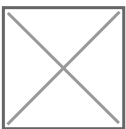


One of the security guards explained to us that this was a monument built in honor of the first king of Italy, to celebrate the unification of the cities in Italy.

How meaningful!



The equestrian status of King Vittorio Emanuele was so huge and splendid.



Just across the road from the monument, we also chanced upon this HUGE archaeological site. No idea about its name, but it was amazing seeing and absorbing all of this in person. We kept wondering how all the huge statues and columns fell and got broken. Any history buffs here know?

#dayretravels



San Marcello al Corso. Another church we stumbled upon while searching for the Trevi fountain (which we didn't find in the end cos it rained and we had to hurry back to our hotel).



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We didn't quite know how to appreciate all the art in this free to visit church, but were blown away by this 15th century wooden crucifix statue that miraculously survived the fire.

Wood surviving fire?!?!? It must have been divine intervention for sure.



The famed wooden crucifix with Jesus portrayed. Many people were paying their respects when we were here.

Today we'll be headed to the Vatica City, and also planning a day trip to Pompeii the day after tomorrow!

Also, the pizzas here seem a lot more expensive than when we were eating in Venice and Florence? Back there pizza slices were about \$2.50 to \$3.50 each for a super big portion. Over here in Rome, each slice costs us between \$4 to \$5! ڄ??°

Anyone has any tips on getting to Pompeii From Rome?

Rome's bus system is confusing

We've figured out the train system, but the buses here are so complex (our hotelier also advised us against taking it cos the main route is known as the PickPocket Express LOL) so we're mainly walking everywhere.

Train tickets:

\$1.50 per trip

\$7 for a 24 hour unlimited pass

\$13 for 48 hours pass

\$18 for a 72 hour pass

We've been in the queue for the Vatican museums for over an hour ð??°ð??° tip for future visitors: pre-book the tickets directly online in advance for 4 euros extra to skip the queue!

Queuing up for the tickets : \$16

Pre book online : \$20

Roma Pass doesn't work here, but their skip the queue ticket counter sells it for \$30 at the train station

Guided tours here : \$55 ð??±

Such a big difference seriously!

The Vatican Museum

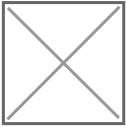


Michelangelo's famous ceiling within the Sistine Chapel: The Creation of Adam.

Having seen this so many times in books and on TV, I spotted this right away! Hubby, on the other hand, was lost and didnt know where to look ð???



The snaking long queues of the Vatican Museum. We waited for about an hour to get in, but it was fine as the weather was pretty cooling! At first we were worried as we had left the hotel late due to some urgent matters that cropped up on my work email, but it turned out that the Vatican Museum only opens at 11am today anyway lol.

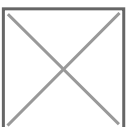


Michelangelo's The Last Judgment. Such a huge and impressive piece of artwork! Done when he was in his sixties, wow.



The Laocoön sculpture depicts a moment from Virgil's Aeneid, which recounts the Trojan War. You may remember a scene in which the Greeks leave a giant wooden horse outside the gates of Troy. The Trojans naïvely bring in the horse, and subsequently the Greeks who'd been hiding in the horse jump out and destroy Troy. Laocoön, a Trojan priest, had warned the Trojans not to bring in the horse. The gods Athena and Poseidon, who sided of course with the Greeks, sent two sea serpents to kill the priest

Aeneas heeded the priest's warning and fled Troy, bound for Italian shores. And for Romans, this is a big deal, since Aeneas was one of the forefathers of Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome.



The Expulsion of Heliodorous by Raphael.

This was my FAVE painting out of all! Let me show you why:



Raphael painted himself in!!!!

Such a sneaky genius, this guy!



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See that mischievous look on the guy's face?!? I was telling hubby it looks a lot like Raphael is saying, heh bet you just realised what I did here, wahahah ð???



Raphael's School of Athens.

The painting is a fantasy gathering of the greatest philosophers, mathematicians and thinkers from classical antiquity. They are all together in this one painting even though they came from different places and different moments in time. That's already whimsical in itself.

But what Raphael did was even more fun.

He put the faces of his buddies in there: Plato, in the center talking to Aristotle, has Leonardo Da Vinci's face. Another Renaissance master, Donato Bramante (who designed the Belvedere Courtyard and was the first one to design the dome for St. Peter's Basilica), appears on Euclid's body (he's the one drawing on a chalkboard.) Raphael himself is also in there, on the bottom right corner, looking out at us.

And, while Raphael was painting this extraordinary masterpiece, he popped into the Sistine Chapel and saw what Michelangelo was doing â?| and put Michelangelo front and center of The School of Athens, in the form of the Greek philosopher Heracleitus (he is the one resting his head on his arm, and with boots on, sitting on the steps.)

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Andddddddâ?|.here is Raphael again!! Took me a while to spot this.

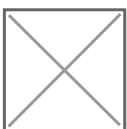
I love Raphael! Such a mischievous but talented artist!!!



This giant porphyry basin was part of Nero's Golden House, and was made from a single piece of stone, one made from cooled lava. The rock is extremely hard and thus difficult to cut, not to mention super heavy.

So imagine about 2000 years ago, the emperor Nero ordering a bath for his Domus Aurea (Golden House), and having someone get this giant rock out of Egypt (there is one quarry in Ancient Egypt where all the porphyry rock came from) â?| and then carve it into a single piece like this and get it to Rome?

Wow!



The Resurrection of Christ in the Tapestries Gallery.

Each tapestry took years to make. They were finely woven by the best weavers of the day (who were in Flanders, or Belgium), out of wool but also silk, and gold and silver thread.

All the details and emotionsâcreated by thread! ð??±ð??±

But the most amazing part of this particular tapestry? As you approach it from the left, keep your eyes on Jesus's eyes â keep walking and watch his eyes. By the time you pass the tapestry, the eyes are still with you!

Much of the narration here behind the artwork is credited to <http://www.romewise.com/vatican-museum-must-sees.html>

If you're heading there, check out this website beforehand!



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This double helix staircase, which brought us out of the Vatican Museum, was also another sight in itself. Took me a while to figure out how the helices could allow one group to go up and another to go down without crossing each other. Once you figure out, you'll be amazed as well!

Tips for visiting the Vatican Museum :

(stuff I wished we did beforehand if we had planned properly. We basically winged this whole Italy trip as you can tell.)

1. Book your tickets in advance from the Vatican Museum website. It will cost you an extra 4 euros (total \$20) but save you tons of time queuing up otherwise, and you'll have more time to see the artwork inside. We honestly planned to just zoom through the whole museum and be done in an hour, but there was so much to see that we realised afterwards why people say even a full day isn't enough!

2. Ignore all the tour guides trying to hawk you fast track tickets. They're superbly marked up (50 â 80 euros when we checked today) and not worth it in my opinion.

Some people say it is worth hiring a tour guide to explain to you all the significance and highlights of the artwork inside lest you get overwhelmed, but our budget tip was to just eavesdrop on the group tours inside ð???

Also, when huge groups stop in front of an artwork, stop with them, admire it for a while and take a photo.

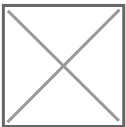
You'll either find a panel explaining the artwork at the side, or you can google it yourself online after.

Hope that helps anyone going to the Vatican Museum in the future to avoid the mistakes we made!

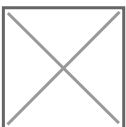
After spending about 4+ hours in the museum, we headed to St Peter's Square and the Basilica. The scene of where the Pope stands to greet his people, and the scenes we saw in Dan Brown's Angels and Demons movie adaptation, was finally before our eyes.

St Peter Basilica

We avoided the infamous queues by going at about 6.30pm on a Friday and it took us only 10 minutes of waiting at the security line to enter.



Tomb of St. Peter (behind the painting). Hubby was really awed by this especially given his biblical studies history and going on mission trips.



Michelangelo's Pieta. Most of you would probably recognise this!



Bernini's Baldachin which guards atop St Peter's tomb.

We were watchkng Angels and Demons yesterday and I asked hubby, guess where the bomb is placed in Vatican City?

He instantly guessed it right!



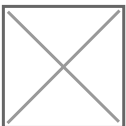
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The ceiling was also so pretty??!?



Chanced by a really value-for-moneh trattoria near the Termini station where their set was only 12 euros for a first course of pasta, second course of meat (nothing fantastic but still filling) and chips, a bread bowl, tiramisu ice cream and a bottle of water!

We shared one set and went back to our hostel for the \$1.95 strawberries we bought haha
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Took a leisurely walk back to our hotel after dinner and chanced by this! No idea about its name yet, does anyone here know?

Category

1. Family