

Whispers from the Past

Description

Stories and whispers of the past intrigue me.

When those stories happen to be those buried under metres of volcanic ash and rock, forgotten for centuries until recently unearthed, that gets me even more excited.

All the what could have happened, what this could have possibly been, what do you think took place here? All the mysteries and wonders that have since been unlocked.

Visiting Pompeii and Herculean

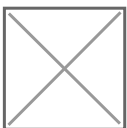
The people and buildings of Pompeii were covered in up to twelve different layers of tephra, in total 25 meters deep, which rained down for about six hours when Mount Vesuvius blew its top off. Imagine all that scurrying and frenzy, trying to escape impending doom.

Did they know that none of them would make it out alive?

Touching the same walls where the ancient Romans once walked. Gazing up at the same frescos that they used to look at regularly as they went about their daily lives.

Seeing buildings, pottery and human casts all suspended in time. Captured in a moment as the world went dark.

That's surreal.



We're finally here at the ghost town I've watched videos of and read so much about.



Some casts of the humans and animals were on exhibit, displayed in the exact moment they tried to escape.

Here's one of a dog entangled in its chains. Take a closer look and imagine it alive in that very moment, centuries ago. Poor doggy didn't make it ð???

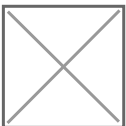


Here's one of the many cookhouses in the ancient city.

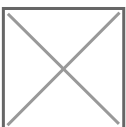
You know what amazes me the most about the film Pompeii? While the movie was a flop, I just found that some of the citizens and their lives portrayed were real.

Real stories unearthed from the archaeological remains, and pieced together over many decades as they tried to figure out the stories of these people who lived and died here.

Isn't that amazing?



A mother rocking her baby, forever frozen in that moment.



In the arena where the gladiators fought, for the entertainment of the crowd. Some hoped to fight their way to freedom, but at the end, both the free people and the slaved all died the same. Everyone is equal in the face of death.



The frescos that the ancient folk of Pompeii looked up at. Imagine someone else in that very same spot, centuries ago. Did they wonder about the future, as we stand there today thinking about their past?

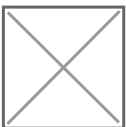


The brothel was the highlight for many tour groups, and was the only ghost house that had a line outside to get in.

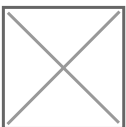
What did those folks feel about sex? Were they liberals? Or were these brothel visits kept a secret?



We saw the same beds portrayed in these frescos in that house. Isn't it peculiar how well preserved these sexual frescos are, whereas most of the other frescos have faded into oblivion?



The house of someone rich who lived in this ghost town. You can easily imagine the grandeur of this place back in the ages.



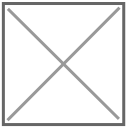
Their floors must have had many colourful tiles. What a sight.



A bakery and its oven.

Doesn't it remind you of the same ovens we use to make wood roasted pizzas today?

We're all the same, yet different in so many ways.



The full view of the bakery, coupled with the mills for the grains.



All these tourists, walking on the streets of this ghost town. What was it like in this same square, only centuries ago?

Herculaneum

Herculaneum's fate runs parallel to that of Pompeii. Destroyed by an earthquake in AD 62, the AD 79 eruption of Mt Vesuvius saw it submerged in a 16m-thick sea of mud that essentially fossilised the city. This meant that even delicate items, such as furniture and clothing, were discovered remarkably well preserved.

This ghost town had more vivid whispers from the past when we visited.

Thousands of its people tried to escape by boat then, but were suffocated by the volcano's poisonous gases. Indeed, what appears to be a moat around the town is in fact the ancient shoreline. It was here in 1980 that archaeologists discovered some 300 skeletons, the remains of a crowd that had fled to the

beach only to be overcome by the terrible heat of clouds surging down from Vesuvius.



You can see Mount Vesuvius looming in the far distance (and see active), the current modern town that sprung up above the buried ghost town, and the original Herculaneum all the way under.

Archaeologists couldn't dig too much in as the rest of the site sits under the modern city, evident in this photo.

See the trees on the right side? That's where new life grew, and showed the immense height of the boiling mud that was dumped on this town.



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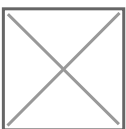
16 metres. There was no way of escaping.

What would you do in your last moments at a time like this?

St Paul's Tomb

For those of you familiar with the Bible, you might know the Apostle Paul, or previously known as Saul before his conversion.

He wrote the books of Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and 1 Thessalonians in the Bible. Hubby is a huge fan of his work, cos he was the main Apostle who gave us the message of Grace that guides many of today's modern churches.



They discovered and confirmed his tomb here just a few years ago, and I chanced upon an article recommending this site! Little is known of this place to most tourists, and it didn't have the crowds at St Peter's Basilica.

The courtyard is gorgeous, befitting of such a great man.



And unlike St Peter's Basilica, visitors here can go down the steps to see Paul's actual tomb.

Entrance is free, and we spent some time here giving thanks and paying our respects.

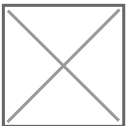


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These were the chains that held Paul in captivity. So surreal to see them in person.



They actually dug out part of the red brick wall so future visitors can see the actual tomb (a side of it) and pay their respects, without moving Paul's original tomb where his bones were laid to rest.



Isn't the courtyard truly magnificent? I thought this place was more impressive than St Peter's, and preferred the peace and quiet here more.

The crowds at St Peter's, on the other hand, were really disrespectful and made so much noise.

Spanish Steps



Headed to the Spanish steps to take some photos before leaving Rome for home (hey that rhymes!)

The weather was so bright and warm that all my photos were either perfectly coloured, or over exposed!

Goodbye Rome and Italy, I hope to be back someday!

Total Travelling Budget

Tabulated all our expenses, inclusive of airfares, hotels, transport, food and shopping :

\$2.9k per person!

For two weeks in Italy, I actually think that's not too bad? In all, we covered :

• Venice

• Florence

• Tuscany (Pisa, Sienna, San Gimignano, Chianti)

• Cinque Terre

• Rome & Vatican City

• Pompeii and Herculaneum

Is our budget on the high or low side? How much did you guys spend?

(Anyway today's entry covers places we visited yesterday and today before we headed back to the airport at 4pm. Due to the time difference it reflects as one day's entry bit we not so zai haha)

Category

1. Family