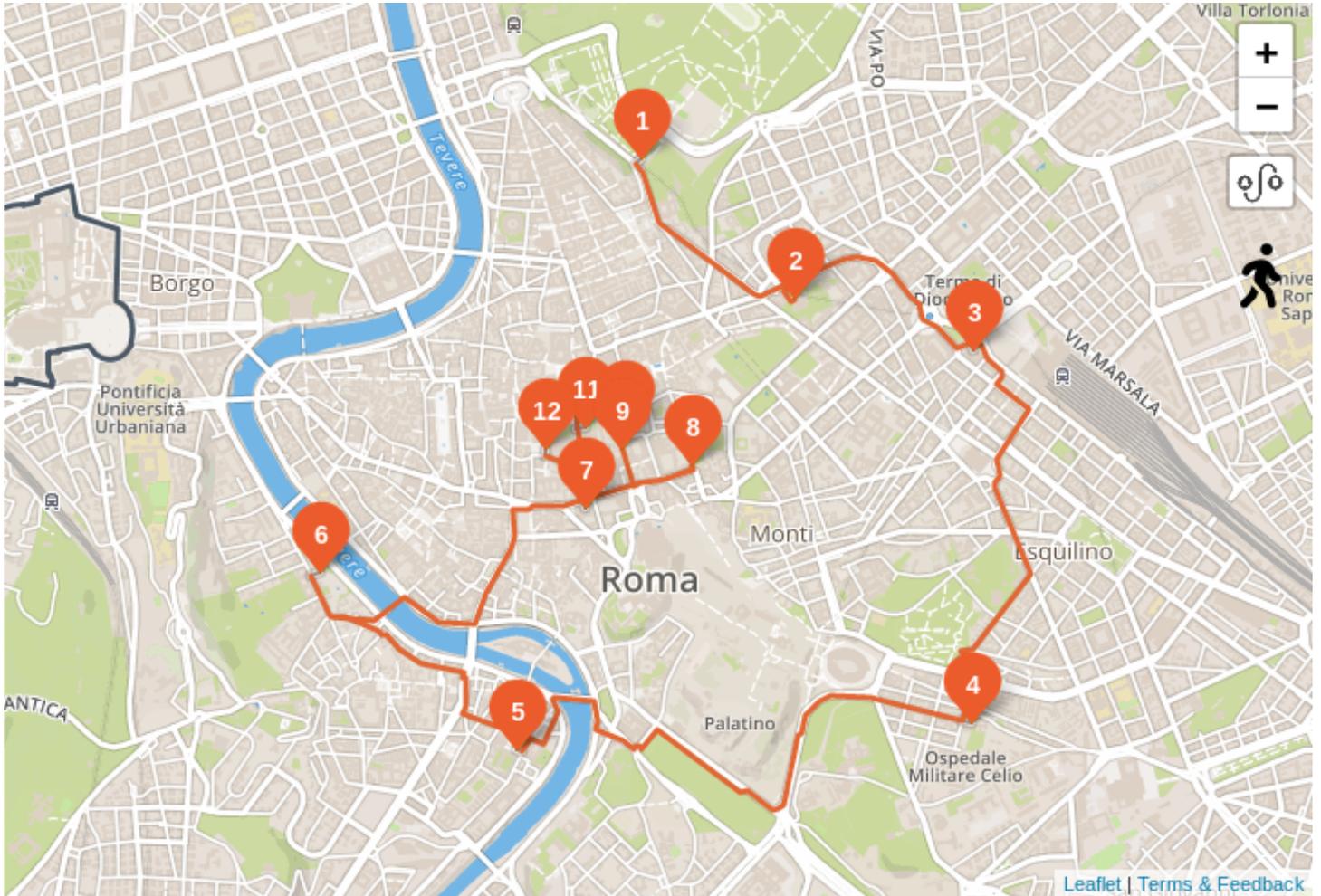




The impressive story of Rome frescoes

The impressive story of Rome frescoes self-guided itinerary



Itinerary description:

Rome is a living art history book whose pages are its walls painted with immortal colors. Thanks to this self-guided artistic walking tour in Rome, you'll browse through the most astonishing and mostly lesser known examples of frescoes retracing the glorious history of art in the Eternal City.

Immerse yourself in the paradisiac dimension of one among the most beautiful and refined painting remains from Ancient Rome, the luxuriant painted garden from the Villa of Livia Drusilla, wife of the Roman emperor Augustus.

Time travel through the Middle Ages to admire the vivid remains of Pietro Cavallini's painting cycle, concealed behind a Benedicting choir, and the brilliant colors of the Oratorio di San Silvestro.

Listen to the painted music of Filippino Lippi's angels in the Carafa Chapel, observe Raffaello's pupils' ingenious invention of the faux tapestries spread out against the airy sky celebrating the connection with the prosperous viridarium pergolas of Villa Farnesina, and appreciate a rare artistic testimony by Giorgio Vasari saved from the demolitions of the late 19th century.

Moreover, this walk through Rome frescoes will allow you to enjoy the most impressive examples of perspectival virtuosity in the early Baroque period and afterwards, from the sumptuous astonishment of the Triumph of the Divine Providence by Pietro da Cortona to the exceptional aerial architecture by Padre Andrea Pozzo, passing by the amazing effect of aerial perspective by Giovan Battista Gaulli called "il Baciccia".

Therefore, don't stop at the most celebrated Michelangelo's frescoes at the Sistine Chapel in Rome and let yourself be amazed by unexpected masterpieces enshrined in hidden treasure chest just behind your corner, waiting for you to be

admired!

Tour settings:

Travel time : 4 h

Total waypoints : 14

Tickets cost : 109.5 €

Dress style : casual for museums indoor and proper dresscode for sites of worship

For family : yes

Leadders : yes

Low visibility: no

Steep: no

Highlights:

Triumph of the Divine Providence at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Barberini, The painted garden from the Villa of Livia at Museo Nazionale

Hidden gems:

Oratorio di San Silvestro, Stanza degli Uccelli at Villa Medici, Las Judgment at the basilica di Santa Cecilia in Trastevere

1) Romulus received by Jove on the Olympus at Galleria



Address : Piazzale Scipione Borghese, 5, 00197 Roma

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 09:00 : 19:00

Tue : 09:00 : 19:00

Wed : 09:00 : 19:00

Thu : 09:00 : 19:00

Fri : 09:00 : 19:00

Sat : 09:00 : 19:00

Overview:

Among the few Roman villas that has preserved most of its land surface (around 80 hectares) and retained its architectural and scenic appearance, Villa Borghese was the development of a family property extended at the beginning of the seventeenth century by Cardinal Scipione Caffarelli Borghese, nephew of Paolo V (Camilio Borghese, 1605-1621), who assigned the design of the Villa di delizie, literally 'Villa of delights', to Flaminio Ponzio and Giovanni Vasanzio. Work began in 1606 and was completed in 1664. The villa developed around the Casino Nobile or Great Lodge (which today houses the Galleria Borghese) with an entry portico in the central building between two extensions, following the model of Villa della Farnesina. The Lodge had originally been used to house the family's rich collection of art. In accordance with the typical layout of Renaissance villas, the large space around the main building was used for a walled garden with fruit trees and rare flowers as well as a formal garden with flower beds and avenues, embellished with sculptures and fountains. The first perimeter included the Aviaries, the work of Girolamo Rainaldi (1617-1619), which formed the perspective backdrop of a second, secret garden. A second perimeter, now the Parco dei Daini, enclosed the Prince's private garden. The third and largest perimeter included a natural park with a sector devoted to cultivation. The conversion of the Renaissance and Baroque garden to a Romantic style garden, inspired by English examples, was undertaken by Marcantonio IV Borghese between 1766 and 1793 to a design by the architects Antonio and Mario Asprucci which profoundly changed the area of the third perimeter. The focal point of the new structure was the Giardino del Lago, adorned with the temple of Esculapius. Architectural features included the temple of Diana, that of Antoninus and Faustina and the large space that was used as a racetrack, inspired by Roman models, called the Piazza di Siena. The Casino dei Giuochi d'Acqua, or the Lodge of Water Features, (converted to an Orangery), was immortalised in one of the first Roman paintings by Ippolito Caffi (1834), preserved in the Museum of Rome. The eclectic arrangement in neoclassical style that characterised the nineteenth century was the work of the archeologist and architect, Luigi Canina. On festival days, the villa was opened to the public with amusements for payment: the menagerie at the Giardino del Lago, the velodrome Piazza di Siena, the pigeon shoot at the Parco dei Daini, the sale of milk and waffles with cream at the Dairy (Casina delle Rose). From 1903, the villa was sold to the Municipality of Rome and opened to the public. Recent improvement works of the great Roman park included the installation of the Silvano Toti Globe Theatre inspired by the Elizabethan model and the Casa del Cinema, near the Casina delle Rose.

Description:

The magnificent salon located at the beginning of the Galleria Borghese visit path is dominated by the gorgeous vault painted by Mariano Rossi in the 1770s, on the occasion of the renovation works directed by the architect Antonio Asprucci and fostered by prince Marcantonio IV Borghese. Also linked to

the birth of Marcantonio IV's first child Camillo in 1775, the fresco celebrates the Roman civilization and the heroic virtue, representing "Romolo accolto da Giove nell'Olimpo" (Romulus received by Jove on the Olympus) to propitiate the victory of Marcus Furius Camillus against Brennus and his Gauls. Every day between 3 and 4 pm (except on Monday) upon previous reservation you can also visit the Galleria Borghese painting storage on the third floor of the building.

2) Stanza degli Uccelli at Villa Medici



Address : Viale della Trinit  dei Monti, 1, 00187 Roma RM

Duration : 10 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 09:30 : 17:30

Tue : 09:30 : 17:30

Wed : 09:30 : 17:30

Thu : 09:30 : 17:30

Fri : 09:30 : 17:30

Sat : 09:30 : 17:30

Overview:

At his panoramic villa on the Pincian hill, the cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici commissioned the decoration of his Studiolo to the workshop of painter Jacopo Zucchi and assistants in the 1570s.

Description:

The Florentine cardinal Ferdinando de' Medici commissioned a Studiolo, a secluded annex located on one of the guard towers belonging to the Aurelian Walls and overlooking the Roman campagna, at his panoramic villa on the Pincian Hill. The decoration was magnificently executed by the workshop of painter Jacopo Zucchi and assistants in the 1570s (1576-1577). The elegant fresco on the main room ceiling, called "Stanza degli Uccelli", represents an extraordinary pergola inhabited by a multitude of birds and animals, accurately illustrated in a variety of species, including exotic ones. This depiction probably contributed to the bucolic atmosphere of this haven, which adjoined another richly adorned vestibule equipped with a balcony.

Observe also Jacopo Zucchi's enchanting decoration at the noble apartment of Ferdinando de' Medici, whose arcane iconographic program was conceived with the collaboration of the learned Pietro Angeli. Poet, historian, philosopher and astrologer, Pietro Angeli conceived a complex system of cosmologic and astrologic images for the lavish ceilings adorned with paintings and coffers, contributing to create one of the most arcane invention in Italian Mannerism.



3) Triumph of the Divine Providence at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica in Palazzo Barberini



Address : Via delle Quattro Fontane, 13, 00184 Roma RM

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 08:30 : 19:00

Tue : 08:30 : 19:00

Wed : 08:30 : 19:00

Thu : 08:30 : 19:00

Fri : 08:30 : 19:00

Sat : 08:30 : 19:00

Overview:

Following the acquisition by the Barberini of a vast area of land on which stood the villas of the Grimani and the Sforza, during the papacy of Urbano VIII (Maffeo Barberini, 1623-1644), work began in 1625 to construct the complex designed by Carlo Maderno, with the collaboration of Domenico Castelli and the young Francesco Borromini. The project, a masterpiece of Roman Baroque, went beyond the traditional layout of Renaissance palaces arranged around a central courtyard and created a combination of a palace and a villa. Open wings were added to the central building with nymphaeum-style atrium between the entrance arcade and garden, merging the mansion and the suburban villa and emphasising the relationship between the building and nature, in part inspired by the Villa Farnesina. A private theatre was annexed to the palace in the Baroque style. In constructing the majestic complex, Pietro da Cortona and Gian Lorenzo Bernini contributed by creating the palace façade on the garden with three orders of columns and a square stairwell in the right wing. Francesco Borromini designed the spiral staircase and the first floor windows of the central building. Pietro da Cortona painted the cycle of frescos in the room of representation which celebrated the Barberini, depicting the triumph of Divine Providence over Time and immortalising the family coat-of-arms. In 1875, to create Via Barberini, the entrance to the garden was demolished and transferred to Via Quattro Fontane. Today the palace houses the important National Gallery of Ancient Art, with masterpieces of Renaissance and Baroque art including those of Filippo Lippi, Lorenzo Lotto, Holbein, Perugino, Poussin and Caravaggio.

Description:

The monumental fresco on the vault of the grand salon was executed by Pietro da Cortona in the 1630s (1632-1639). Depicting the "Triumph of the Divine Providence", the stunning painting celebrates the exalting of the Barberini family, at the time of the pontificate of one of his members, Urbano VIII, born Maffeo Vincenzo Barberini. The whirlwind of the figures, the majestic false architecture and a particular painting technique allowed the artist to give the vault a striking relief, suitable to be admired from the bottom in the sumptuous astonishment of Baroque art.

On the opposite side to the main museum entrance, get also a glimpse of the fascinating helicoidal staircase by Francesco Borromini.



4) The painted garden from the Villa of Livia



Address : Largo di Villa Peretti, 2, 00185 Roma RM

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 09:00 : 19:45

Tue : 09:00 : 19:45

Wed : 09:00 : 19:45

Thu : 09:00 : 19:45

Fri : 09:00 : 19:45

Sat : 09:00 : 19:45

Overview:

The magnificent frescoes from the Villa of Livia at Palazzo Massimo were discovered on the occasion of the excavations carried out around 1863 in the Roman suburb of Prima Porta, along the via Flaminia. The frescoes, dated around the second half of the 1st century BC, decorated the walls of the underground triclinium, or dining room, belonging to the house of Livia Drusilla, wife of the Roman emperor Augustus, known as "Villa di Livia" or "Villa di Primaporta".

Description:

You can escape the hustle of the Termini station entering this luxuriant paradise survived from Ancient Rome: a unique painted garden coming from the Villa of Livia Drusilla, located along via Flaminia, will surround you and let completely immerse yourself in a new, serene dimension. Various exotic birds play in the varied and wild vegetation prospering beyond an illusionistic fence or fly over the blue sky, whose color variation renders an atmospheric effect. The different species of flora and fauna are depicted in accurate detail: among the variety of flowers, plants and trees, for example, scholars have been able to recognize strawberry trees, oleander, cypresses, date palms and oaks.

The frescoes have been dated around the second half of the 1st century BC. In the 1950s the four panels of the painted walls were detached from the Roman villa and are now safely on view in the Museo Nazionale Romano di Palazzo Massimo. Recently, a faithful reproduction of the painted panels has been set up at the Villa of Livia.

The Museo Nazionale Romano di Palazzo Massimo houses one of the most important collections of classical antiquity.

The author of the murals in Livia's villa has not been specifically identified but we can rely on the illustrious scholar Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli who supposed the painter was a superb master, able to execute an artwork greater than most of the painting remains in Rome and he could be the same author of the paintings in the so-called Auditorium Maecenatis (Auditorium di Mecenate).

If you'd enjoy a visual comparison with Livia's painted garden, you can also dive into the vivid colors of the ancient wall decorations displayed in other rooms on the same museum floor, coming from a vanished house at Trastevere, the so-called Villa della Farnesina.



5) Oratorio di San Silvestro dei Marmorari ai Santi Quattro

Address : Via dei Santi Quattro, 19, 00184 Roma RM

Duration : 60 minutes

Openings:

Overview:

A little distance from the church of San Clemente, the church of the Quattro Coronati sul Celio was built, perhaps dedicated to four marble workers (Castorius, Claudius Sinfronian and Nicostratus) who were martyred because they refused to sculpt a statue of Esculapius during the Diocletian empire or, according to another version, to four soldiers who refused to worship Esculapius. The building of worship was probably erected by the IV century on the structures of an ancient domus. Mentioned for the first time in 595 and completely rebuilt in the Carolingian era under the papacy of Leone IV (847-855), it was badly damaged in the sack of Rome by the Normans in 1084. Together with the convent annex, the complex of the Quattro Coronati still displays the salient features of the architecture of the High Middle Ages, preserved in the reconstruction ordered by Pasquale II (Raniero di Bieda, 1099-1118). The interior of the church, with three naves and furnished with a women's gallery, has two chapels at the sides with cruciform and apsidal plan. Alongside the church is the thirteenth century cloister with the fountain for purification rites, originally located in the pronaos of the medieval church. The room in front of the nearby Oratory preserves a liturgical calendar with the months of the year (XIII century). The monastery annex preserves the remains of the Carolingian tower belonging to the fortified complex located along the Via Papale, heading to San Giovanni in Laterano, which stood there until the Middle Ages. Martino V (Oddone Colonna 1417-1431) declared it the seat of the papacy.



Description:

Hidden inside this monastic complex, a rare medieval painting cycle decorates the whole space of the Oratorio di San Silvestro with its brilliant colors. Dating to the mid-13th century, the frescoes feature scenes from the "Story of pope Sylvester I and Constantine" and they have been attributed to masters maybe coming from Veneto area and influenced by Byzantine tradition. This is an unexpected place to be entirely admired from top to bottom: from the clear vault, which shows a unique decoration displaying a central cross made of majolica tiles and being all over studded with star and cross motifs, to the cosmatesque floor. Don't miss also to explore the entire complex: the beautiful cloister, dating to the beginning of the 13th century and characterized by arches on paired columns is a peaceful spot giving also access to the Cappella di Santa Barbara.



6) The Last Judgement at the basilica di Santa Cecilia in



Address : Piazza di Santa Cecilia, 22, 00153 Roma RM

Duration : 10 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 10:00 : 12:30

Tue : 10:00 : 12:30

Wed : 10:00 : 12:30

Thu : 10:00 : 12:30

Fri : 10:00 : 12:30

Sat : 10:00 : 12:30

Sun : 11:30 : 12:30

Overview:

According to tradition, the Saint may have belonged to the noble family of the Caecilii. Having converted to Christianity, she became a follower, with her husband Valerianus, of Pope Urbano I (222-230 A.D.). She was martyred by decapitation after a series of tortures culminating in her exposure, for three days, to the steam of the caldarium of the baths of her own house. She was buried in the Catacombs of San Callisto alongside the so-called "Crypt of the Popes". The body was later transferred to the house, earlier converted to a church by Pope Urbano I, at the wishes of Pope Pasquale I (817-824) who also ordered the reconstruction of the basilica. Between the XII and the XIII centuries, the portico, cloister and bell tower were added. In 1599, the body of Santa Cecilia was exhumed. The statue by Stefano Maderno is thought to stand in the exact position in which the body of the Saint was found. Between the XVI and XVIII century, the building underwent various additions including the monumental entrance of Ferdinando Fuga, which gives access to the atrium of the basilica. Beneath the church are the remains of an archeological complex attributed to a domus of the II century B.C., a multistory insula from the end of the II century A.D. and a number of thermal rooms. Recent excavations have also brought to light a baptismal font dating from the most ancient phase of the church.

Description:

Accessible from the entrance space belonging to the convent of the Benedictine nuns, some astonishing remains of medieval frescoes are still visible on the church counter-façade, where the later building of the choir space, called "Coro delle monache", obtained on the occasion of some restoration works performed around 1540, caused the partial ruin and concealing of these paintings.

Executed in the late 13th century, most of the left fragments on the upper part of the counter façade represent the "Last Judgement" scene, but they were part of an originally much wider painting cycle probably completed before 1293, which also covered the sidewalls of the central nave. Some scenes from the Old Testament were represented on the right wall, whereas scenes from the New Testament were painted on the left one. Apart from the "Last Judgement", there are only fresco fragments, made by assistants, from these other following scenes: "Isaac blessing Jacob" and "Jacob's ladder" (on the right sidewall), the colossal figure of "Saint Michael (?)" and the "Annunciation" (on the left sidewall), still visible on the initial section (near the counter façade) of the sidewalls, now included in the space of the nuns' choir.

There are also decorative portions of painting still visible on the attic, which allow to reconstruct the whole scheme. It was constituted by two registers, characterized by the painted rendering of a false architectural structure: at a lower level the scenes were framed with false tortile cosmatesque columns, in the upper level the windows were alternated with painted sculptures in niches, surmounted by tympanums.

The painter revealed the richness of his cultural sources of inspiration, conserving a Late Antique descent and obtaining a solemn sculptural solidity of the figures, reminiscent of the gothic sense of space, painted with the chiaroscuro rendering of his thorough artistic technique and enriched with the details preciousness gushing from the oriental Mediterranean.

The variety of inspirations, the accurate technique and the chiaroscuro solidity of the figures allow this frescoes to be considered as a masterpiece by one of the most innovative and significant artists of the 12th and 13th centuries Rome, Pietro Cavallini, probably with the participation of his assistants.



7) Loggia di Psiche at Villa Farnesina



Address : Via della Lungara, 230, 00165 Roma RM

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 09:00 : 14:00

Tue : 09:00 : 14:00

Wed : 09:00 : 14:00

Thu : 09:00 : 14:00

Fri : 09:00 : 14:00

Sat : 09:00 : 14:00

Overview:

The prototype for suburban Renaissance villas in Rome, it was designed for the rich and powerful banker Agostino Chigi by Baldassarre Peruzzi around 1508. Violently plundered by the Lanzichenecchi during the sack of Rome in 1527, it was acquired at the end of the century by the Farnese, adopting the name of Farnesina in order to distinguish it from the grand city palace on the opposite bank, to which it was intended to be connected by a bridge according to a design by Michelangelo, never carried out. A little slipway allowed communication between the two properties. The building, integrated into the surrounding countryside, had an innovative plan with a central block opening towards the formal garden, with a five arched loggia bordered by two protruding sections, recalling Tuscan architectural models. The rear façade, facing the Tiber, has two orders of windows with architraves accompanied by pilasters. The building is surmounted by a large cornice with corbels and a frieze of cherubs and candelabras between festoons of fruit and flowers. The façade was originally decorated according to the fashion of the early years of the sixteenth century. The design of the separate pavilion, perhaps used as stables, is attributed to Raphael. Between the palace and the Tiber stood the Viridarium, bathed by the river, perhaps designed by Raphael, which was destroyed with part of the gardens in 1884 in order to build the Lungotevere. The gardens of the Renaissance villa sloped downwards with steep banks, pavilions, a grotto with fish pond and culminated with a loggia on the river, used as an exedra (a dining room). At the end of one of the sumptuous banquets in 1518, it is said the gold dishes were thrown into the river (presumably recovered later from hidden nets). The greatest artists of the Renaissance collaborated on the splendid decoration of the interiors, such as Raphael, Giulio Romano, Sebastiano del Piombo, Baldassarre Peruzzi and Sodoma. A complex iconographic scheme inspired by the classics is combined with scenographic effects of illusionistic views of landscapes and Roman architecture. The villa passed to the Bourbons in 1704 and housed the Academy of Naples founded by Carlo III. Today it is the home of the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. In the nineteenth century works on the Lungotevere, a Roman villa of a person of high rank was brought to light with sophisticated decoration in frescos dating from around 20 A.D., preserved at the Museum of Palazzo Massimo alle Terme.

Description:

Nestled between the Tiber river and Porta Settimiana, Villa Farnesina is one of the finest architectural and painting ensemble in Rome at the heights of Renaissance art.

It was patronized as a "suburban residence", meaning located on those which were once the borders of the city, by Agostino Chigi (Siena, 1466 – Rome 1520). The wealthy and cultured banker from Siena, named "il Magnifico" due to the splendor of his lifestyle, commissioned the building to his fellow Baldassarre Peruzzi, Siennese artists, between 1506 and 1510. Various interventions lasted until 1520, when the death of Agostino Chigi caused the decay of the villa, with the loss of precious furnishings and copious artworks. Around 1590, the powerful Farnese family took possession of the villa, hence its name "Farnesina".

In the late 19th century, the building of the Tiber embankments entailed the demolition of part of the garden which constituted a wide "viridarium", including the stable and the loggia (or pavilion) overlooking the river, probably designed by Raffaello.

At present, after many property passages and interventions, Villa Farnesina is the official seat of the illustrious Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei and houses the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, which is deemed as one of the richest Italian collections of prints and drawings.

The closing of the loggia arcades with glass walls in order to safeguard the marvelous frescoes has unfortunately interrupted the intimate connection between the villa and its surrounding luxuriant garden planted with conifers and laurels hedges, together with the original perception of the perfect balance between full and empty spaces.

The Loggia di Psiche inside the villa is fully embellished by the celebrated cycle of frescoes representing mythological figures and episodes of the tale of Psyche from the "Metamorphoses" by Apuleius, which Augustine of Hippo referred to as "The Golden Ass" (Asinus aureus). The frescoes were painted within 1517 by Raffaello Sanzio's pupils as Giulio Romano, Giovanni Francesco Penni, Raffaellin del Colle and Giovanni da Udine after the great Renaissance master's designs, and later retouched by Carlo Maratta in 1693-1694. At the center of the figurative system, the "Council of the Gods" and the "Marriage of Cupid and Psyche" are painted on faux tapestries spread out against the airy sky among opulent illusionistic garlands, rich of fecundity symbols, which originally merged with the "viridarium" pergolas.





8) Triumph of the name of Jesus at chiesa del Santissimo

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Address : Via degli Astalli, 16, 00186 Roma RM

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

Overview:

An architectural symbol of the Counter Reformation, the Chiesa del Gesù (or, more properly, the Chiesa del Santissimo Nome di Gesù all'Argentina) would become a reference point for the construction of Jesuit religious buildings throughout Europe. Commissioned in 1550 by Saint Ignazio di Loyola, it was only constructed ten years later, thanks to the financing of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, to a design by Jacopo Barozzi, known as Vignola. On his death, the works were completed (1584) by Giacomo della Porta, who also created the façade and the cupola. The structure blends a central plan layout with longitudinal development. The church has a single nave covered with barrel vaults and flanked by three chapels on each side. The façade, in travertine, anticipates a number of formal approaches of Baroque art, with a wide prospect and protruding elements, and reflects the desire to create a scenic urban environment. The prospect develops on two levels. In the lower order, the pairs of parastades mark the nave and the lateral chapels. In the upper order, the parastades are repeated only in the nave area while the position of the chapels is masked by two large spirals that also form the connection with the roof. This architectural approach would be commonly adopted by churches with longitudinal plans constructed in Rome. Inside, there are noteworthy frescos on the vault by Giovan Battista Gaulli, known as Baciccia.



Description:

This church is connected to the figure of Saint Ignatius of Loyola who wanted to found the church since 1550 for the constituted Compagnia di Gesù (Society of Jesus). The building of the church begun at a later time only in 1568 thanks to the contribute of the cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

The interior of the church, important example of a Counter-Reformation architecture, is embellished with the grandiose fresco on the central vault painted around 1679 by Giovan Battista Gaulli, called "il Baciccia". The perfect point of view to fully enjoy the new and extraordinary effect of aerial perspective is marked on the central nave floor with the monogram "IHS", the first letters of the Jesus name in Greek language.

Groups of figures spectacularly soar on the vault, which appears as it was opened beyond the golden stucco frame executed by Ercole Antonio Raggi after the Baciccia's design.



9) Sala Altoviti at Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia

Address : Piazza di S. Marco, 49, 00186 Roma RM

Duration : 10 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 08:30 : 19:30

Tue : 08:30 : 19:30

Wed : 08:30 : 19:30

Thu : 08:30 : 19:30

Fri : 08:30 : 19:30

Sat : 08:30 : 19:30

Overview:

In front of Castel Sant'Angelo, between Piazza di Ponte and the Tiber, a Renaissance palace was erected for Bindo Altoviti, a Florentine banker in the service of Giulio III (Giovanni Maria Ciocchi del Monte 1550-1555), as well as patron and friend of Michelangelo, Raphael, Benvenuto Cellini and Giorgio Vasari. Bindo Altoviti converted and amplified his father Antonio's palace to which a number of adjacent dwellings had been annexed. The palace had two entrances. One was on Piazza di Ponte, an austere city prospect on three floors with ashlar at the ground floor. The other faced the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, giving access to an inner courtyard by a large staircase to the Saletta di scrittura, where Vasari painted the cycle of frescos known as the Trionfo di Cerere (today in the National Museum of Palazzo Venezia), an allusion to Bindo's position as manager of the Ufficio Abbondanza. The façade on the Tiber, lacked uniformity with traces of the superimposition on the old buildings. A double loggia opened on the river, attributed to Raphael and supported by a base with alternating large arches and pilasters, a favourite spot to watch the spectacle of the Girandola fireworks display at Castel Sant'Angelo. The side on the river was lined with wooden workshops, rented to artisans until the seventeenth century. In 1888, with the construction of the walled embankments of the Tiber, the palace was demolished, following the removal in 1887 of the frescos created in 1553 by Giorgio Vasari.

Description:

The Altoviti frescoes are some precious remains which testify to the valuable heritage of Rome buildings along the Tiber destroyed to build the river embankments in the late 19th century. The overall decoration originally belonged to the studiolo of the banker Bindo Altoviti's palace. The Palazzo Altoviti was unfortunately demolished, yet this decoration was preserved and here recomposed around 1929. The mid-16th century paintings by Giorgio Vasari framed by stucco decorations depict a central homage to Ceres and other allegorical figures.

Take also a walk in the recently restored and opened courtyard of this palace, where Renaissance arcades overlook the fine garden centered by the 18th century fountain sculpted by Carlo Monaldi.



10) Grande Galleria at Galleria Colonna



Address : Via della Pilotta, 16, 00187 Roma RM

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 09:00 : 13:15

Overview:

The complex affair of the construction of the Galleria Colonna is connected to that of Piazza Colonna. After 1870, the square had assumed a leading role in the political and social life of the city due to the presence of Palazzo di Montecitorio, chosen as the seat of the Chamber of Deputies and the new Palazzo delle Poste (Palazzo Wedekind). However, it was necessary to complete the side of the square that was left empty by the demolition in 1888 of Palazzo Piombino, owned by the Boncompagni Ludovisi. The designs and proposals for the development of the area were wide-ranging and provoked lively debate. Only in 1911 was the plan of the architect Dario Carbone approved. The building, in an eclectic style that sought to recall the architecture of both the fifteen and eighteenth centuries, was inaugurated in 1922. Constructed in reinforced concrete masked by cladding in travertine, it has a large portico on the façade of Via del Corso. The internal gallery, to a “Y” plan, is covered by glass decorated with figures, in art nouveau style, featuring the use of coloured marble in the elevations and the floors. From 2003, after long restoration, the gallery was reopened and dedicated to the great Roman actor, Alberto Sordi.

Description:

Inside Palazzo Colonna, the Grande Galleria or Sala Grande is the most breathtaking space, commissioned to the architect Antonio del Grande by Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna in the mid-17th century (1661-1665), probably following a project by his uncle, the cardinal Girolamo Colonna. The commemorative frescoes by Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi are extended to the whole vault of the grand hall and they celebrate the valor of the Colonna family, being dedicated to Marcantonio II Colonna, protagonist of the Christian victory at the Battle of Lepanto.

Take a complete tour of the Galleria Colonna, also visiting the apartments of princess Isabelle, which are an opulent chest of art treasures, including surprising frescoes decorating walls and ceilings by notable artists.



11) Galleria degli Specchi at Palazzo Doria Pamphilj



Address : Via del Corso, 305, 00186 Roma RM

Duration : 10 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 09:00 : 19:00

Tue : 09:00 : 19:00

Wed : 09:00 : 19:00

Thu : 09:00 : 19:00

Fri : 09:00 : 19:00

Sat : 09:00 : 19:00

Sun : 09:00 : 19:00

Overview:

The present Palazzo Doria Pamphilj is the outcome of various construction phases which took place over the course of several centuries and which left the building with the appearance of an architectural block of the eighteenth century. The original nucleus, on Via del Corso, is arranged around a central courtyard, inspired by Bramante, with colonnaded quadrangle in two superimposed orders, commissioned by Cardinal Fazio Santorio in the early sixteenth century and built on the fifteenth century palace of Cardinal Nicola Acciapacci. The building later passed to the Della Rovere and was bought in 1601 by Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini. With the wedding of Olimpia Aldobrandini to Camillo Pamphilj, nephew of Innocenzo X (Giovambattista Pamphilj, 1644-1655), the palace became the residence of the Pamphilj. They commissioned Antonio del Grande to design a new wing on Piazza del Collegio Romano between 1659 and 1675. The complex stands on Via del Corso with an elegant façade, the work of Gabriele Valvassori, composed of five vertical ashlar bands and a portal with columns surmounted by a chequered balcony. The other facades are on Via del Plebiscito, the work of Paolo Ameli (1743), and Via della Gatta, by Andrea Busiri Vici (1877). Inside, Gabriele Valvassori converted the sixteenth century arcade between 1731 and 1734 into a Gallery, used to display works of art, and the Braccio degli Specchi adorned with lavish decoration in rococo style. The residence of the Pamphilj family, since 1671 joined with the Doria, it now houses one of the most important historical galleries of Rome with works by Velasquez, Raphael, Titian, Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci.

Description:

The marvelous Galleria degli Specchi ceiling was frescoed by the painter Aureliano Milani from Bologna and are dated to the 1730s, the period of Gabriele Valvassori's renovation of the palace, patronized by Camillo Pamphilj Aldobrandini. Harmoniously integrated with the peculiar design and decoration of the gallery, the frescoes represent the "Labours of Hercules", taking inspiration from the legendary genealogy of the Pamphilj family whose mythological origins were said to be rooted to the progeny of the divine hero, according to one of the various story versions.

Don't forget to have also a look at the refined "Sala da Bagno" next to the courtyard, before going up to the noble floor. Decorated by the painter Annibale Angelini, this little and colorful hall was commissioned by the prince Filippo Andrea V on the occasion of his marriage to Mary Talbot in 1838.



12) Oratorio del Crocifisso di San Marcello

Address : Piazza di San Marcello, 5, 00187 Roma RM

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 07:00 : 12:00 16:30 : 19:00

Tue : 07:00 : 12:00 16:30 : 19:00

Wed : 07:00 : 12:00 16:30 : 19:00

Thu : 07:00 : 12:00 16:30 : 19:00

Fri : 07:00 : 12:00 16:30 : 19:00

Sat : 07:00 : 12:00 16:30 : 19:00

Sun : 07:00 : 12:00 16:30 : 19:00

Overview:

According to tradition, the church was founded between the IV and V centuries in honour of Pope Marcello on the site of the Catabulum (that is, the stables of the postal service of Imperial Rome) along the Via Lata, where the Pope had died after being condemned to forced labour by the emperor



Maximianus (286-310 A.D.). The church originally had a layout of three naves with apse positioned on Via del Corso. In an adjacent room, a baptismal font was present. The church and the baptistry, restored in the XII century, were again destroyed by a fire in 1519. On that occasion, a wooden Crucifixion from the XV century was miraculously saved, becoming an object of great devotion. The reconstruction was assigned to Jacopo Sansovino (1519), who changed the orientation of the building so that it faced onto Via del Corso. The concave Baroque façade was constructed by Carlo Fontana between 1682 and 1686. The interior is formed of a single nave with five lateral chapels and houses works by Perin del Vaga (the Four Evangelists in the chapel of the Madonna), Alessandro Algardi (busts of the Frangipane), Taddeo and Federico Zuccari (Stories of Saint Paul in the chapel of the Frangipane). Inside, the ancient immersion baptistry from the IV-V century can be seen resting on Roman masonry perhaps belonging to the Statio of the Prima Corte dei Vigili.

Description:

It's a strong emotion entering the Oratorio del Crocifisso because its walls are entirely and densely covered by worthy frescoes. Painted by various artists and fostered by the cardinal Alessandro Farnese, the decoration dates to the late 16th century. Nicolò Circignani called il Pomarancio was one of the most requested painters in Rome in those years and he succeeded Giovanni de' Vecchi to complete the work at the oratory, executing the "Stories of the True Cross" with assistants. In particular, the episode of the "Duel between Heraclius and Cosroe" shows the inclination to an epic tone and, also through the set-up of the landscape, the story reaches a theatrical drama.

Next to piazza dell'Oratorio, discover also the hidden passageway known as Galleria Sciarra and look up to the liberty decorations of the building.



13) The Glorification of Saint Ignatius at chiesa di Sant' Ignazio di Loyola in Campitelli

Address : Via del Caravita, 8a, 00186 Roma RM

Duration : 15 minutes

Openings:

- Mon : 07:30 : 19:00
- Tue : 07:30 : 19:00
- Wed : 07:30 : 19:00
- Thu : 07:30 : 19:00
- Fri : 07:30 : 19:00
- Sat : 07:30 : 19:00
- Sun : 09:00 : 19:00

Overview:

The church of Sant' Ignazio di Loyola is architecturally and ideologically linked to the complex of the palace of the Collegio Romano, with which it forms a sort of Insula dei Gesuiti, commissioned by Sant' Ignazio on the model of the University of Paris, where he had studied theology in 1528. The complex included the library, the Kircherian museum, the Spicery and the Astronomical Observatory. Pope Gregorio XV (Alessandro Ludovisi, 1621-1623), who was linked to the Jesuits and was buried inside the church, asked his nephew Ludovico Ludovisi to construct the new building, the design for which, the work of the Jesuit Orazio Grassi (adversary in a dispute with Galileo), was approved in 1629 and completed in 1685, but without the cupola. The Jesuit Andrea Pozzo, to compensate for the architectural incompleteness, depicted, on a canvass 17 metres in diameter, a cupola open to a luminous sky with an extreme perspective that reached the apex of Baroque illusionism. The compact façade copied the monumental approach of the Chiesa del Gesù with two orders of columns and Corinthian pilasters with cornices and reverse lateral scrolls, demonstrating adaptability in the empty niches flanking the main portal in the lower order and, in the upper, the large central window, through which light illuminated the nave. The magnificent interior is a Latin cross with a single nave, with three chapels each side and exuberant pictorial decoration that amplifies and multiples the spaces. The church represents the fullest evolution of the new model demanded by the liturgy of the Counter Reformation.



Description:

In front of the wonderful dynamic convex-concave theatrical architecture of piazza di Sant'Ignazio by Filippo Raguzzini, dating to the 18th century, you can enter the spectacular chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola, one of the most sumptuous examples of sacred architecture in Baroque Rome.

The spectacular interior of the church is magnified by the fresco masterly executed by Padre Andrea Pozzo after 1685 on the central nave ceiling. If you stand on the ancient yellow marble disk located on the floor at the center of the nave, you can perfectly admire the illusionistic "da sott'in su" (from the bottom to up) perspective, which break the actual space and expand the sacred temple into an overlapping aerial one, made only of colors and lights. The faux open-air architecture is articulated in two orders and is characterized by a sinuous movement of columns, arches and trabeation, standing out against a golden light and functioning as a splendid frame for representing the life and glorification of Saint Ignatius, pointed towards Christ who shows the cross standard and irradiate the saint surrounded by four allegorical figures symbolizing the four known continents at that time.

Standing on the further mark on the floor nearer the altar you can be amazed by the faux dome painted on the cross vault by the same artist, who ingeniously executed also the fresco representing the Siege of Pamplona on the presbytery vault and the fresco in the apse basin, depicting Saint Ignatius healing the pestilents, where Andrea Pozzo succeeded in painting an architecture with straight columns over a concave surface, thanks to his perspectival virtuosity.



14) Carafa chapel at the basilica di Santa Maria sopra Minerva

Address : Piazza della Minerva, 42, 00186 Roma RM

Duration : 10 minutes

Openings:

Mon : 10:30 : 12:30 15:00 : 19:00

Tue : 10:30 : 12:30 15:00 : 19:00

Wed : 10:30 : 12:30 15:00 : 19:00

Thu : 10:30 : 12:30 15:00 : 19:00

Fri : 10:30 : 12:30 15:00 : 19:00

Sat : 10:30 : 12:30 15:00 : 19:00

Sun : 10:30 : 12:30 15:00 : 19:00

Overview:

The ancient oratory of Santa Maria de Minerva was built in the VIII century on the site of the temple of Minerva Chalcidica, from which it took its name, along with the monastery annex of the Basilian monks, replaced from 1266 by the Dominicans who made Santa Maria sopra Minerva the mother church of their order. A focal point for Tuscans before the construction of the sixteenth century San Giovanni de' Fiorentini, the church housed important tombs of Florentine nobles and prelates. The model of Santa Maria Novella of Florence, albeit simplified, inspired the construction of the new building from 1280, the only example of Italian Gothic in Rome that has been preserved. After the resumption of works at the wishes of Cardinal Juan de Torquemada, uncle of the famous Inquisitor, the façade was completely redone in 1453 thanks to the intervention of Count Francesco Orsini. In 1600, Carlo Maderno reworked the façade in Renaissance style, in three sections with pilasters, inspired by that of Santa Maria in Aracoeli. In the reorganisation of 1667 of the square in front, the little elephant with the obelisk was erected to the design of Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Until 1725, the façade preserved the exposed brickwork, plastered during the eighteenth century restoration by Filippo Raguzzini. Between 1848 and 1855, radical work sought to restore the Gothic lines by demolishing the Baroque additions and decorating the interiors with early Gothic frescos. The interior houses masterpieces of Renaissance artists, including Filippino Lippi (Cappella Carafa), Beato Angelico and Michelangelo (statue of the Risen Christ). The solemn Papal cavalcade of March 25 for the festival of the Annunciation ended here, starting under the papacy of Eugenio IV (Gabriele Condulmer 1431-1447) until Pio VI (Giovannagelo Braschi 1775-1799). In 1431 and 1447, the conclaves that elected Eugenio IV and Niccolo V respectively were held in the sacristy. The convent annex, with painting of the school of Antoniazio Romano, hosted the infamous tribunal of the Inquisition of the Dominican order. The congregation of the Holy



Office held the trial of Galileo here in 1633.

Description:

Many travelers and visitors pass by this church near the Pantheon but fewer people enter and pay attention to the works of art that fill its peculiar interiors. Patronized by the cardinal Oliviero Carafa, the Carafa chapel is magnificently adorned with a late 15th century fresco cycle by the Tuscan painter Filippino Lippi. The heavenly blue of the sky painted on the back wall is the scenery to the "Assumption". Several angels participate in a concert, playing various instruments accurately depicted so that you can admire them in silence, almost listening to their painted music. Have also a look at the rich frescoes decorating the Capranica chapel next to the presbytery: you'll perceive the intense effort shown by the Dominicans as other religious orders at communicating with the worshippers in Counter-Reformation period.

