



ARE YOU PLANNING TO VISIT ROME?

If so, here are a few ideas which may be helpful.

At €30 per person, the ‘Roma Pass’ represents exceptional value: it provides free public transport for three days, free entry to the first two museums and sights you visit, including the Colosseum and Forum, and a discount on subsequent museum visits. Not only that, but it allows you to skip the queues at the major attractions.

You can buy the pass at the tourist office in the arrivals hall of the airport, or at the attractions, or at ticket offices at major Metro stations throughout Rome. Note that, sadly, the Roma Pass doesn’t cover transport to or from the airport.

In my experience the Colosseum queues are not that bad: about half an hour if you just turn up, though I suppose that on public holidays they would probably be longer; but there’s a separate entrance with only a negligible queue for Roma Pass holders. I highly recommend paying a little extra for the interpretive audio tour.

Even with the Pass, it’s advisable to book ahead for the Galleria Borghese (note that ‘villa’ in Rome means ‘park’; the first time I went to Villa Borghese, I wasted a lot of time looking for the non-existent villa)! You can call +39 06 32810 or go there. The park is absolutely gorgeous, so if you arrive early, it’s very little hardship, and there’s an incomparable view over the city from the park’s western terrace, which itself leads to the top of the Spanish Steps.

Despite the concern about crowds, I would still say the Vatican is unmissable. The volume and quality of the art and antiquities, and of course that famous ceiling, are beyond compare. Here, booking ahead is essential, as without this—or unless you buy a guided tour from a tout in the street (at €40 quite pricey, but not as bad value as you’d think)—the queues are hours long. Since the Vatican is a separate country, though, the Roma Pass does not give any preferential treatment.

That said, if you’d like a taste of the Vatican, but not the entire museum, St Peter’s



Basilica is entirely separate and is also free. There’s a long but swift queue from St Peter’s Square. It would be worth shuffling along for a few minutes just to see Michelangelo’s Pietà, but the Basilica itself is utterly magnificent: the photo I took should give you a taste.

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