

ROME

Legend says that Rome was founded by Remus and Romulus, brothers who were nursed by a wolf. More reliable sources date the inception of the city from the 8th century B.C., when a village was founded on the banks of the Tiber River as a meeting place and market for shepherds and farmers. This village became the greatest empire the world had known until then, and the grandeur of Rome is still evident in its surviving monuments and structures.



TRANSPORTATION

Rome is a huge city, but sightseeing is easy with its subway, bus and tram systems. You can buy single, daily or weekly tickets at any tobacco shop. There are only two subway lines, crisscrossing at the Termini station, so it's almost impossible to get lost. Every day at 3:30 PM, and also Saturdays and Sundays at 10:00 AM, bus 110 leaves Piazza dei Cinquecento for a three hour tour of the most important sights.



BANKS AND CURRENCY

Banks are open Monday to Friday 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM and 2:45-3:45 PM, except Wednesday when they're open nonstop. Italy's currency is the Euro. Coins in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 cents and 1 & 2 Euros. Bank notes of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 Euros are legal tender.



POSTAGE

You might arrive back home sooner than the letter or postcard you sent from Rome-- the Italian mail system is notoriously slow, so allow about 3 weeks for a letter to reach the U.S. and even longer for postcards. Postcards with a short greeting and signature cost approximately one Euro to send, but a letter rate is charged if the message is lengthy.



TELEPHONES

Public phones are located throughout the city. You can use them with coins, as well as phone tokens (gettone) and telephone cards. Transatlantic calls are cheapest from the Central Post Office in Piazza San Silvestro (open 24 hours). Try not to use the phone in your hotel room since hotels add exorbitant service charges for long-distance calls. To call the U.S. dial 00 + 1 + area code + number.



SHOPPING

Shops are open weekdays from 9:00 AM until 1:00 PM, and 4:00-8:00 PM, and on Saturdays 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Some shops are closed Monday mornings.

Rome is a great place to go shopping. There are tempting windows all along Via Condotti, Via Frattina, Piazza de Spagna and Via Sistina. Italian shoes are world famous for their high quality (and high prices), and you can find them at Albanese (Via Lazio 19). For gifts such as key chains, handbags, wallets and anything in leather, go to Fendi (Via Borgognona 36). RINAS-CENTE, on the corner of Via del Corso and Via Tritone, is a large department store that you shouldn't miss.

There is a flea market every Sunday morning at Porta Portese, and the food market at Campo dei Fiori is one of the most colorful in Rome.



EATING

Excellent food is as inherent to Rome as its ancient monuments. You are never far from an eating establishment, whether it's very elegant or most informal. Traditionally, Italian cuisine consists of pasta and meat (veal, lamb, chicken or fish), accompanied by red or white wine at dinner. Dinner is relatively late, around 9:00 PM.



PLACES TO VISIT

The best known structure from ancient Rome is the **Colosseum**, where crowds once came to view gladiatorial contests, hunts and naval battles; the most complete building left is the **Pantheon**, constructed by Hadrian as a temple dedicated to the seven planetary gods; the oldest and most evocative ruins which recall most clearly the half-legendary, half-historical origins of Rome are those of the **Roman Forum**, which has numerous monuments, basilicas and temples; the **Villa Borghese** is the largest public park in Rome; the **Catacombs**, subterranean cemeteries, were used by Christians in the 2nd century for meetings and worship; the **Vatican City**, a separate entity from the city of Rome governed by the Pope, is surrounded by a wall built to protect the tomb of St. Peter-- St. Peter's Basilica is the largest and greatest of all churches. And for a nice excursion a little out of Rome, see **Ostia Antica**, a former Roman port and the best preserved Roman town after Pompeii.