

# The Wayfarer

By Dawn M. Wayand

## Rome - A City of Invaluable Ruins



I remember the first time that while walking down one of many small web-like roads lined with shops and little pizzerias in Rome, I turned the corner and there was the Pantheon. Built in 120AD, I was stunned that it looked like a movie prop dropped into the middle of a public square no more than a century old. It looked misplaced. One has to have respect for a place that has a landmark that old, that is not sectioned off from the general public with entrance fees, gates or rules and that

is still in the amazing condition that it is in. Native Romans and tourists socialize and eat lunch at the fountain and on the steps of the Pantheon much like a picnic at a public park.



Not far down the road, the Colosseum is another

structure with a long historical run. Built in 72AD, it was built to seat 50,000 people and used to amuse the Romans by bloody gladiator battles between animals and people. Today the seats are gone, as is the wooden floor but the structure is still there, having even survived an earthquake.



Across the street from the Colosseum is the Foro Romano, which consists of magnificent buildings, temples, palaces and shops - and it was crowded with people from all over the world. These ruins, marble fragments and crumbling columns are still impressive, but it's not easy to envision that of which it once was. However, keep in mind that what's there today are ruins from about 500 BC to 400 AD.

Back into the busy city, the Fontana di Trevi was built in 1762 and is not just an ordinary fountain. Behind it is a beautiful white wall of sculptures with the centermost

object being Neptune. It is considered to be the most beautiful fountain in Rome and one of the world's largest wishing wells. It's been said that if you toss a coin over your shoulder into this well, it ensures your return to Rome.



In Rome, just before Vatican City, is the Castel Sant' Angelo, which was built in the second century AD. This overpowering castle on the Tiber River is Rome's chief citadel and dungeon and has seen more blood, treachery and turmoil than any other that remains standing in Rome.



I cannot remotely begin to touch on all that Rome has to offer. I've been there twice and have barely scratched the surface (although it would probably help if I didn't go for the New Year's holiday every time...LOL) It's not the cleanest city, but there is so much history and very old sites to see that it's definitely highly recommended and, as what has happened in my case, may require more than one visit.

## When in Rome...



Both times that I've been to Rome it was over New Year's Eve, and typically on a holiday, I like to stay in a dorm so that I can meet people with which to celebrate. Whether or not on a holiday, if you're willing to consider a dorm, the Hotel Alessandro gets my "thumbs up". It has a very friendly staff, is very clean and offers Internet, phone access and even a washer/dryer setup for laundry! It's extremely inexpensive (I paid 22€/night over a holiday). It includes a free continental breakfast such as: drinks, breads, jams and cereals. They also have free pizza parties and coordinate pub crawls. There are three locations, all five minutes from the Termini train station - which is always a plus.

### Hotel Alessandro Downtown

Via C. Cattaneo, 23 00185 Rome, Italy  
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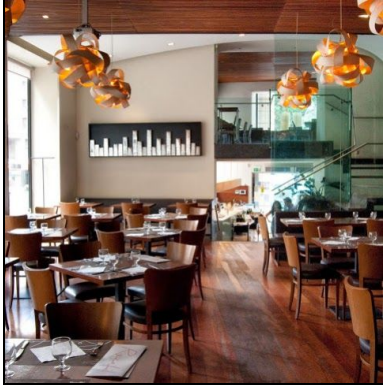
## Travel Tip

Many people in European countries can be standoffish toward travelers who come to their countries without trying to speak a little bit of their language. Before your blood pressure raises, do we not expect tourists to know SOME English when they visit the U.S. or must we speak every language of the world?

It's really important (and polite) to AT LEAST learn "please", "thank you" and "excuse me" in the language of the country you are visiting. For anything else, you can use your language books, dictionaries and common sense along the way.

Remember, you are a guest in THEIR country! They are not required to know English and some people don't know it!

## Recafé: A Repeat



Recafé is a Neapolitan restaurant located across the street from Augustus' Mausoleum. It's almost impossible to go for the traditional several-course meal as the portions are pretty large. This fancy - but

inexpensive - restaurant serves up delicious traditional Italian dishes and cocktails. I went for lunch and tried a calzone which looked like a large half-pizza, but it was stuffed with ricotta, ham and spices. With a bottle of water and an espresso, my total was about 12€. If you happen to be in the area on a Sunday, as I was, they have a great little flea market on the road outside with people selling antiques, gifts and books.

### **Recafé**

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