Tour: Roman Science & History

Destination: Rome & Pompeii, Italy

Specialization: Archaeology, Anthropology, Earth Science, Geography, History, Language & Culture

Availability: Year-round

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If your school is based in the USA or Canada, please contact us for our extended Rome tour.

Specialists in STEM Student Travel

As with all sample itineraries, please be aware that this is an “example” of a schedule and that the activities included may be variable dependent upon dates, weather, special requests and other factors. Itineraries will be confirmed prior to travel.
Rome.... Modern and old, past and present go side by side; all the time. You can decide to follow the typical paths, or you can be lucky enough to go off the usual tracks. The ‘Eternal city’ of Rome is not only represented by its masterpieces of art, breath-taking architecture and its monuments and museums, but by it’s typical streets and alleyways where one can discover traits of Italian lifestyle, tradition and culture. Don’t forget to throw a coin in the Trevi Fountain before you leave – it is said that this will ensure your return to the Eternal City.

Rome is one of world's most photogenic cities - not surprising when you remember what's here – The Vatican, the Trevi Fountain, St. Peter’s Square, the Spanish Steps, the Coliseum.... A visit to Rome will allow you to discover the many different historical layers which have built this beautiful city through the centuries, from the remains of the Roman Empire, through the Medieval and Renaissance periods, up to the modern day architecture that dots the city throughout; Rome is one of those cities you could spend a year in and still feel like you've barely scratched its surface. Amazing historical sites, mind-blowing art—and then there's the food.

It may no longer be caput mundi (capital of the world), but Rome is an epic, bubbling-over metropolis harboring lost empires. One visit and you’ll be hooked. Rome has a glorious monumentality that it wears without reverence. Its architectural heirlooms are buzzed around by car and Vespa as if they were no more than traffic islands.

People in Rome encapsulate the spirit of the city. Pass a central café and the tables outside are animated with people, downing fast shots of espresso and sporting big black sunglasses. Nuns flutter through the streets, on the trip of a lifetime or secondment, bustling across the road before treating themselves to an ice cream. Churches fill during Mass, and the priests, dressed in purple, cream or red silk (right down to their socks), read the rites to a hushed congregation (mostly from out of town).

Here the national preoccupation with the aesthetic fuses with incredible urban scenery to make Rome a city where you feel cool just strolling through the streets, catching the sunlight on your face outside a café, or eating a long lunch. It’s a place that almost encourages you to take things easy. Ready to go?

Did you know?

✓ Rome’s Coliseum, a huge Amphitheatre located in the center of the Ancient City, at one time could seat as many as 50,000 spectators of gladiator games and other public battles. The Coliseum which was constructed between 70 and 72 AD is among the Seven Wonders of the World. This historic monument can also be found on the Italian five-cent euro coin.
✓ Did you know that 60% of the world’s art treasures can be found in Italy?

✓ Shakira isn’t the only one who knows something about she-wolves. Did you know that Rome’s mascot is a she-wolf that cares for the brothers Romulus and Remus (the founders of Rome)? Legend has it that the brothers were abandoned by their uncle in the wild. The twins were later discovered by a she-wolf who rescued and nursed them. Romulus and Remus eventually returned back to their birth-right and decided to found a new city. Hence, Rome was born.

✓ Just about every tourist heads over to the Trevi Fountain to throw a coin in and make a wish that they too will return to the Eternal City. But have you ever wondered just how much money gets tossed into the Fontana di Trevi each year? According to the City of Rome, nearly €700,000 worth of coins get tossed in each year. The proceeds are donated to help the needy.

✓ Everyone knows that pasta is Italy’s staple dish. Italians eat it for lunch; they eat it for dinner. They simply can’t live without their pasta. Just how much of it do they consume each year? It is estimated that Italians eat about 60 pounds of pasta per person, per year.

✓ The Pantheon which was built in 27 B.C by Marcus Agrippa is the only monument belonging to ancient Rome that still remains intact. What is even lesser known, is that it entombs Italy’s king Vittorio Emanuele II, and his successor, Umberto I.

✓ The Baths of Caracalla were once spread across 27 acres and could handle 1,600 bathers at any given time. Built in the 3rd century, they are the largest survivors of Rome’s imperial era.

✓ Rome has a museum which is entirely dedicated to pasta. The Pasta Museum is a one-of-its-kind around the world and showcases different pasta-making machines, as well as paintings related to pasta by contemporary artists.

✓ St Peter's Basilica inside Vatican City is the largest church ever constructed.

✓ The Monumental Cemetery of the Capuchin Brothers has used the bones of over 4,000 Capuchin monks, some skeletons fully intact, to create symbolic works of art in its series of chapels.

✓ The Vatican Museum is a huge museum complex with over 1,000 museums and galleries like the Gallery of Tapestries and Etruscan and Egyptian Museums that are full of masterpieces collected by the successive Popes. It is the world's largest museum complex.

✓ St. Peter’s Basilica was a structure that stood for almost 1,000 years until it neared collapse and was rebuilt in the 1500s and 1600s. It is an overwhelming structure which displays the work of some of Italy’s greatest artists like Raphael, Michelangelo, and Maderno.

**Day 1**

Dinner

**NOTE FOR SCHOOLS COMING FROM USA/CANADA/MEXICO** – Schools will fly overnight and arrive on Day 1 in this itinerary, have a city tour of Rome in the afternoon, and then start formal activities on Day 2. This allows for one extra night in Rome to get adjusted to the time difference. In the afternoon of Day 2, groups will have free time to get caught up on rest or explore Rome on their own.
Upon your arrival at Fiumicino Airport in Rome, Vision groups will clear Customs & Immigrations and then be met by our English-speaking Ambassador; transferring quickly to our Rome hotel. After check-in, we’ll have our Visions Welcome & Safety Meeting, and then get started on our action-packed itinerary straight away.

**Sample Hotel: The Church Village Hotel** (3-star)

The Church Village Hotel in Rome is located in the immediate vicinity of the Villa Doria Pamphili Park and is 3km from Vatican City. This 3-star hotel offers 235 comfortable rooms divided between four buildings set in a magnificent park, whilst the main body of the hotel is home to the hall and internet point, the conference areas, the restaurant and the bar with its pretty outdoor seating area. Here, guests can avail from a wide choice of drinks, aperitifs and a selection of pizzas and light dishes for either lunch or dinner. All students will sleep in individual beds in rooms for 2 to 3 students per room.

At the Church Village Hotel, visitors can relax and enjoy the peace of this calm and tranquil area, away from the noise and bustle of the busy city center, yet still within striking distance of the action. Attention to detail and care for guests are the fundamental characteristics of the Church Village Hotel, whose multilingual staff are on hand to satisfy guests’ needs, ensuring that relaxation and comfort are the elements that distinguish your visit to the Eternal City.

After leaving luggage in your rooms, Vision groups will board the bus for a half day tour of Ancient Rome. This tour will take you on a journey of the splendor and magnificence of the Roman Empire. You will visit the inside of the Coliseum, skipping the line, and the Roma Forum.

**The Coliseum** - The Flavius Amphitheatre is the biggest and most imposing in the Roman world. It is also the most famous monument in Rome and is known as the Coliseum. Started by Emperor Vespasian of the Flavia family, it was opened by his son Titus in 80 A.D. The highly ostentatious opening ceremony lasted one hundred days during which people saw great fights, shows and hunts involving the killing of thousands of animals (5000 according to the historian Suetonius). For the opening, the arena space was filled with water for one of the most fantastic events held in Roman times, *naumachias* – real sea battles reproducing great battles of the past.

The Coliseum is one of the most imposing ancient structures. Imagine it all white, completely covered in splendid travertine stone slabs. It is elliptic in shape in order to hold more spectators. It had four floors; the first three had eighty arches each; the arches on the second and third floors were decorated with
huge statues. What we see nowadays is just the skeleton of what was the greatest arena in the ancient world. In the Middle Ages, when no longer in use, the Coliseum was transformed into an enormous marble, lead and iron quarry used by Popes to build Barberini Palace, Piazza Venezia and even St. Peter’s.

The Amphitheatre could hold up to seventy thousand spectators. The tiers of seats were inclined in such a way as to enable people to get a perfect view from wherever they sat. Entry was free for all Roman citizens, but places were divided according to social status; similar to seating divisions in today’s theatres. The seats at the top were for the common people but with distinct sections for men and women. The nearer you got to the arena the higher your social status. In the front row were senators, vestals, priests, and naturally - the emperor.

Like modern sports stadiums, the Coliseum gave spectators efficient protection from the sun thanks to its ingenious roof covering, the “Velarium”. The Velarium was an enormous linen tarpaulin hung by a system of ropes, winches and wooden poles that girded the top of the outer wall. It took one hundred sailors from the Imperial fleet to move it. They moved in perfect synchrony to the beating of a drum.

On entering, we see the arena straight ahead of us. The stage for shows, whose floor was once made from a mixture of brick and wood, has now disappeared altogether. In its place you can see the cellars which housed equipment used to prepare and carry out the games. The two underground floors housed the lifts and hoists with their counter weights, of which we can still see the rails today. They were the special effects of the time, used to hoist up animals and gladiators who burst into the arena through trapdoors, suddenly appearing in a burst of white dust giving the audience great surprise effects.

The shows taking place in the Coliseum were both of a symbolic and solid nature and created a link between citizens and their leader through common participation at important public events with the not unimportant function of giving the people some fun to distract them from political problems. So, what exactly happened inside the Coliseum? Lots of different shows were put on in the Amphitheatre, at different times, following a specific time schedule: in the morning the "Venationes" - fights between exotic animals, or between men and animals. At times, as a form of public execution, people were left to the mercy of ferocious beasts.

The event the audience enjoyed most was definitely the gladiators. Towards midday there was a break during which they removed the bodies and spread more sand on the arena floor. A deafening noise arose from the audience; to the blaring of trumpets and the beating of drums, the gladiators triumphantly paraded into the packed arena. They came from an underground passageway linked directly to the Gladiators’ barracks, the Ludus Magnus, and were welcomed by fans like real heroes; a bit like today’s sports champions. After a brief walk around the arena, the gladiators paid homage to
the Emperor’s stage saluting with the famous words "Ave Cesare morituri te salutant" (Hail Caesar, those who are about to die salute you). The winners received golden palm leaves and large amounts of money. After each battle, servants dressed like Charon, the Ferryman of the Underworld, made sure that the wounded were really dead and when necessary, finished them off. The gladiator’s blood was much in demand; people thought it had healing powers and could heal you from epilepsy and give you greater sexual vigor.

After the VI century, with the Empire's decline, the Coliseum fell into disuse and its walls housed confraternities, hospitals, hermits and even a cemetery. From the Middle Ages onwards, the Coliseum has been one of Rome's greatest marvels, attracting hordes of visitors. Threatened with demolition by Sixtus V for town-planning reasons, it was declared a sacred monument dedicated to the Passion of Christ by Benedict XIV, placing a cross on a pedestal, as a symbol of the sufferings of all Christian martyrs. This cross is still the starting point for the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. Since then, it has become an object of worship for Christians and was protected from further destruction and ruin.

**The Roman Forum** - Situated in the area between Piazza Venezia and the Coliseum, the Roman Forum is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world. Three thousand years ago, this valley between Campidoglio and the Quirinal, which was to become the future social and political center of one of the greatest empires of ancient times, was submerged in marshland. By an incredible invention of engineering, a canal that is still in function today, allowed for the drainage of the land. The area soon began to develop and already at the end of the 7th century BC, it was home to many markets and a hive of social activity.

Foro was the name that the Romans gave to the central square of the urban settlement and we must imagine this busy, crowded place as the pulsing center of a modern city. Here the masses would flock to see the meetings of the orators, attend criminal trials and discuss internal politics or the latest military campaigns, or quite simply to comment on the games or running races (an activity that the Romans particularly enjoyed). In the area around the Forum, the city was also home to markets, shops and taverns. You could also find the typical Termopolia, which were the ancient’s equivalent of today's fast food restaurants. In short, the Forum was the heart and soul of city life. It was in Caesar's time when Rome had become the capital of a vast empire, that the Forum became a place for celebrations and in the Imperial era, it was the symbol of the Empire.

During the Middle Ages, the Forum fell into a state of ruin and was abandoned. Its monuments were often used to build medieval fortifications, and at times, were even completely dismantled and their materials used elsewhere. In those times, the area was used for cultivation and grazing, and it took on the name of 'Campo Vaccino', or 'cattle field'. It was only in the eighteenth century that the Forum was rediscovered and finally the definitive process of the recovery of the ancient ruins began, bringing this long-forgotten and barbarically plundered historic patrimony back to life.
**Fori Imperiali** - The first of Rome’s Imperial forums was built by Julius Caesar. He spent a fortune; most of it booty from his conquest of Gaul, buying up and demolishing houses on the site. Pride of place went to a temple dedicated in 46 BC to the goddess Venus Genetrix, from whom Caesar claimed descent. The temple contained statues of Caesar and Cleopatra as well as of Venus. The forum was enclosed by a double colonnade which sheltered a row of shops, but this burnt down in AD 80 and was rebuilt by Domitian and Trajan. Trajan also added the Basilica Argentaria and a heated public lavatory. The forum is only open to the public by appointment, but parts are visible from above in Via dei fori Imperiali.

Walking through the Fori Imperiali you will reach ‘The Time Elevator’ where you will learn about the history of Rome in 5D thanks to 3 panoramic screens, flight simulators and state-of-the-art surround system. [www.capitolium.org/english.htm](http://www.capitolium.org/english.htm)

After our exciting day learning about ancient Rome, we’ll travel back to the hotel in time for dinner.

**Day 2**
Breakfast, Packed Lunch & Dinner

Rise and shine Rome! After breakfast, get prepared to become an archaeologist for a day! We’ll transfer by private bus to an archaeological site and will be taught how archaeologists work. The day will begin with a quick visit to the site of the villa and then we’ll begin a real archaeological excavation (accompanied by scientific evidence based on the completion of the ministerial check paper, literature, graphics and archaeological photography). We will then do an active archaeological survey exploring the possibilities offered by a raised Roman villa, along with documentation and cataloguing of archaeological materials. This is a full-day activity; a packed lunch is provided.

After our day of digging and cataloguing, we’ll transfer back to the hotel for dinner.

This evening, we’ll have a meeting room reserved for your group to provide a quiz or other activity of your choice.

**Day 3**
Breakfast & Dinner

Good morning Italy! After Breakfast in our hotel, we’ll board our bus to Pompeii, one of the most magnificent archaeological sites in the world. With a 2-hour guided tour we’ll see and learn how the ancient Romans used to live in this amazing town, which was buried by an eruption of the Vesuvius almost 2000 years ago.
**Pompeii** - Mount Vesuvius, a volcano near the Bay of Naples, is hundreds of thousands of years old and has erupted more than 50 times. It’s most famous eruption took place in the year 79 A.D., when the volcano buried the ancient Roman city of Pompeii under a thick carpet of volcanic ash. The dust “poured across the land like a flood’, one witness wrote, and shrouded the city in “a darkness...like the black of closed and unlighted rooms.” Two thousand people died and the city was abandoned for almost as many years.

When a group of explorers rediscovered the site in 1748, they were surprised to find that underneath a thick layer of dust and debris, Pompeii was mostly intact. The buildings, artefacts and skeletons left behind in the buried city have taught us a great deal about everyday life in the ancient world.

![Image of Pompeii](image)

**Life in Pompeii** - Ever since the ancient Greeks settled in the area in the 8th century B.C., the region around Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples attracted wealthy vacationers who wanted to soak up the sun and the scenery. By the turn of the first century A.D., the town of Pompeii, located about five miles from the mountain, was a flourishing resort for Rome’s most distinguished citizens. Elegant houses and elaborate villas lined the paved streets. Tourists, townspeople and slaves bustled in and out of small factories and artisans’ shops, taverns and cafes, and brothels and bathhouses. People gathered in the 20,000-seat arena and lounged in the open-air squares and marketplaces. On the eve of that fateful eruption in 79 A.D., scholars estimate that there were about 20,000 people living in Pompeii and the surrounding region.

**Mount Vesuvius** - The Vesuvius volcano did not form overnight. In fact, scholars say that the mountain is hundreds of thousands of years old and had been erupting for generations. In about 1780 B.C. for example, an unusually violent eruption (known today as the “Avellino eruption”) shot millions of tons of superheated lava, ash and rocks about 22 miles into the sky. That prehistoric catastrophe destroyed almost every village, house and farm within 15 miles of the mountain. But it was easy to overlook the mountain’s bad temper in such a pleasant, sunny spot. Even after a massive earthquake struck the Campania region in 63 A.D. - a quake that, scientists now understand, offered a warning rumble of the disaster to come - people still flocked to the shores of the Bay of Naples. Pompeii grew more crowded every year.

![Image of Vesuvius](image)

**79 A.D.** - Sixteen years after that tell-tale earthquake, in August 79 A.D., Mount Vesuvius erupted again. The blast sent a plume of ashes, pumice and other rocks, and scorching-hot volcanic gases so high into the sky that people could see it for hundreds of miles around. (The writer Pliny the Younger, who watched the eruption from across the bay, compared this “cloud of unusual size and appearance” to a pine tree that “rose to a great height on a sort of trunk and then split off into branches”. Today, geologists refer to this type of volcano as a “Plinean eruption.”)
As it cooled, this tower of debris drifted to earth: first the fine-grained ash, then the lightweight chunks of pumice and other rocks. It was terrifying - “I believed I was perishing with the world,” Pliny wrote, “and the world with me” - but not yet lethal; most Pompeian’s had plenty of time to flee. For those who stayed behind, however, conditions soon grew worse. As more and more ash fell, it clogged the air making it difficult to breathe. Buildings collapsed. Then, a “pyroclastic surge” - a 100-mile-per-hour surge of superheated poison gas and pulverized rock - poured down the side of the mountain and swallowed everything and everyone in its path.

By the time the Vesuvius eruption sputtered to an end the next day, Pompeii was buried under millions of tons of volcanic ash. About 2,000 people were dead. Some people drifted back to town in search of lost relatives or belongings, but there was not much left to find. Pompeii, along with the smaller neighboring towns of Stabiae and Herculaneum, was abandoned for centuries.

Rediscovering Pompeii - Pompeii remained mostly untouched until 1748, when a group of explorers looking for ancient artefacts arrived in Campania and began to dig. They found that the ashes had acted as a marvelous preservative. Underneath all that dust, Pompeii was almost exactly as it had been 2,000 years before. Its buildings were intact; skeletons were frozen right where they’d fallen; everyday objects and household goods littered the streets. Later archaeologists even uncovered jars of preserved fruit and loaves of bread!

Many scholars say that the excavation of Pompeii played a major role in the neo-Classical revival of the 18th century. Europe’s wealthiest and most fashionable families displayed art and reproductions of objects from the ruins, and drawings of Pompeii’s buildings helped shape the architectural trends of the era. For example, wealthy British families often built “Etruscan rooms” that mimicked those in Pompeian villas.

Today, the excavation of Pompeii has been going on for almost three centuries, and scholars and tourists remain just as fascinated by the city’s eerie ruins as they were in the 18th century.

Afterwards, we’ll head back to the hotel in time for dinner. This evening we’ll have an option to opt-in, at additional cost, for AstroLab. AstroLab is an interactive laboratory designed to introduce Astronomy.

Day 4
Breakfast, Packed Lunch & Dinner

Rise and shine Rome! After breakfast at our hotel, we’ll transfer to the Vulci Archaeological Park. After visiting the reconstruction of the François Tomb we will walk on a path that stretches for 7km inside the Park with a specialist guide. The first part of the route crosses the plateau on which the ancient
Etruscan city developed. Walking along the Roman decumanus, students will observe the remains of the fortifications and the Etruscan temple, crossing the Roman residential district to reach the recent finds of Etruscan river port. After crossing the River Fiora and visiting the tomb of François, the route continues along the river, discovering unspoiled corners of extraordinary beauty. At the Pond Pellicone we will stop for lunch. After lunch the journey continues by entering the gorges of volcanic rocks carved by Fiora until we reach the majestic Ponte della Badia, an ancient Etruscan and Roman aqueduct near the castle of the Abbey.

Welcome to Vulci Archaeological Naturalistic Park - a fascinating integration between the unspoiled landscape of the Maremma and the imposing archaeological remains of what was one of the most important centers of Ancient Etruria. Enter a world that astounded the great travelers of the nineteenth century and revisit intact natural environments. The park is unique in that it presents a complete panorama - Etruscan and Roman city, necropolis, virtually unpolluted countryside, and the Museum of Vulci finds in Badia Castle, one of the monuments which continually draws guests.

Not to miss is the François Tomb, one of the most famous monuments of Etruscan civilization, and the Cuccumella: a tumulus of impressive dimensions. Follow the paths which penetrate the country-side crossed by the Fiora River, which cuts its way between volcanic rocks before plunging into clear Pellicone Lake in an exceptionally beautiful landscape. You can experience first-hand an environment that is unique for its cultural and naturalistic features. Not to be forgotten are the special products offered by this region; sampling these at the panoramic Casaletto del Parco di Vulci.

After our day of discovery, we’ll transfer back to the hotel for dinner and free time to further explore Rome!

**Day 5**

Breakfast & Dinner

Good morning Italy! After our breakfast, we’ll board our bus for a visit of the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel; one of the largest museum complexes in the world. Located in the grand and magnificent Vatican Palaces, there are over 7 kilometers of galleries to be seen; displaying works from the immense collection built up by the Roman Catholic Church throughout the centuries, including some
of the most renowned classical sculptures and most important masterpieces of Renaissance art in the world. The Museums celebrated their 500th anniversary in October 2006.

www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm & www.vatican.com

In the Vatican Galleries you will admire the modern entrance built for the Jubilee 2000, the Galleries of the Chandeliers, of the Tapestries and of the Geographical Maps, the Sobiesky Hall and the Immaculate Conception Hall.

The galleries will lead visitors to the breath-taking Sistine Chapel. It is without doubt one of the greatest art treasures of all time, one of the most celebrated masterpieces in the world. It was Pope Paul III who asked Michelangelo to decorate the wall behind the altar with a fresco showing the Last Judgment; the moment when God judges man. It became one of the most celebrated and admired frescoes in the world.

**Vatican City** - The world’s smallest sovereign state (a mere 0.44 sq. km), the Vatican sits atop the low-lying Vatican hill just a few hundred meters west of the River Tiber. Centered on the domed bulk of St Peter’s Basilica and Piazza San Pietro, it is the capital of the Catholic world; a spiritual superpower whose law is gospel to the world’s one billion Catholics. On a more temporal level, it’s one of Rome’s most visited areas.

**Vatican Museums** – The Vatican Museums and Galleries include art collections of the Popes since the beginning of the 15th century, housed in the papal palaces and other buildings in the Vatican. The Pio-Clementino Museum was founded in the 18th century by Pope Clement XIV and enlarged by Pope Pius VI. This museum exhibits the pontifical collection of ancient sculpture that originated with the collection of Pope Julius II. The Chiaramonti Sculpture Gallery, established by Pope Pius VII in the 19th century and designed by the sculptor Antonio Canova, is also devoted to ancient sculpture. The Gregorian Etruscan Museum, founded in 1836 by Pope Gregory XVI, houses a collection of objects from Etruscan excavations and objects from the Regolini-Galassi tomb with its collection of Etruscan jewelry. The Egyptian Museum, also founded by Gregory XVI, was opened to the public in 1839. The Pinacoteca, founded by Pope Pius VI in 1797, has been housed in its present gallery (commissioned by Pope Pius XI) since 1932. It has an outstanding collection of Italian religious paintings and also includes Russian and Byzantine painting.
In 1956 a modern art collection was initiated, which exhibits secular works by such 19th and 20th-century artists as Renoir, Seurat, Van Gogh, Rouault, Matisse, and Picasso. In 1973 the Vatican opened its first museum of contemporary art, including the work of both European and U.S. artists, housed in 65 galleries in the Vatican Palace. [http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html](http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html)

**St Peter’s Basilica** - It is thanks to Peter, the first Apostle and the first Pope and leader of the Church that the most important basilica in the Christian world, the St. Peter's Basilica, was built in Rome. Peter was given his name by Jesus because he was destined to be the foundation "stone" (in Italian "Pietra") on which the church would be built. He was certainly one of the most enterprising of the Apostles to say the least. He was imprisoned, and then miraculously released, following which he left Jerusalem and headed for Rome, the "Capital of the World", which was the center of the immense Roman Empire at that time. Here, he became bishop and then reigned as the first Pope for 25 years.

During the fierce persecution of Nero, he was imprisoned with millions of other condemned Christians and died by crucifixion sometime between 64 and 67 AD on the Vatican Hills in the Neronian circle. Rumor has it that he wanted to be put on the cross head-down as he did not feel he was worthy of being crucified in the same manner as Jesus. Among the other tales about Peter is the one that says while he was on the road to his place of execution, or possibly when he ran away from Rome to flee his death, he met Jesus and he posed the fateful question "Domine, quo vadis?" to his Lord and decided to return. It was here in the gigantic complex of the Neronian circle with its palaces, temples and gardens that the execution and burial of one of the most important Apostles of Christ took place.

A long veneration of this sacred place soon began, so much so that while the grandiose Roman buildings fell to ruin, a Christian necropolis was built and successively, in the 4th century, Emperor Constantine decided to erect the first basilica in honor of the Saint. This is how the Church, the physical and spiritual center of Christianity was born. The first basilica was an immense and magnificent building, which guarded treasures of art and gold.

Thousands of years later, Constantine's Basilica began to show the first signs of collapse. At the dawn of the 15th century, Pope Nicholas V and the architect, Bernardo Rossellino set to work on what would be one of the most famous and demanding building sites of the Renaissance; the so-called "Brickworks of St. Peter".
The Sistine Chapel – The Sistine Chapel is without doubt one of the greatest art treasures of all time, one of the most celebrated masterpieces in the world. It’s the last stop on the Vatican Museum tour and is the most ardently awaited moment for the millions of tourists from around the world that come here every year to admire it. Step into the Sistine Chapel and the magic completely envelops you because literally everything in this place is priceless and rich in history, from the pavement to the amazing frescoed ceiling by Michelangelo.

From the outside, the Chapel gives an entirely different impression. It’s imposing defensive structure is almost fearsome with its powerful walls and menacing ramparts. It’s like an ancient strongbox guarding a treasure: powerful and massive outside, rich in extraordinary and unimaginably precious masterpieces inside. The creative force behind all this fame and beauty is the unsurpassed genius of Michelangelo and the most amazing thing is that he managed to complete this artistic miracle all by himself!

The Sistine Chapel takes its name from the Pope that commissioned it, Pope Sixtus IV of the Della Rovere family. The Vatican Palaces needed a new building to house religious celebrations and to host the conclave, the gathering of cardinals that elects the Pope. Thus, in around 1473, the pontiff gave the job to architect Giovannino De’ Dolci of building the Sistine Chapel, exactly on the spot where at one time had stood the so-called Great Chapel. The architect designed a grandiose building that had the same dimensions as Solomon’s Temple as it’s described in the Bible: more than forty meters long and as high as a seven-story building.

Pope Sixtus IV wanted the walls of the Chapel to be decorated with stories of Moses, guiding light of the Hebrew people, and of Jesus, comparing the latter to the former as a guiding figure of the Church. For the occasion, he called upon the most famous artists of the time - Botticelli, Rosselli, Ghirlandaio and Perugino - to tell the stories of the Bible through pictures so that everyone could know them.

The Sistine Chapel’s first years were not exactly happy ones; however, it was the most unfortunate of events that led to the creation of a masterpiece. During the first years of the 1500s, all sorts of building sites had grown up around the edifice. The excavations for the foundations caused very serious problems for the Chapel, so much so that an enormous crack appeared in the vaulted ceiling. The frescoes, unfortunately, had suffered such damage that the new Pope, Julius II, had the idea of asking Michelangelo to re-do the ceiling.

Michelangelo lived alone and in total poverty, notwithstanding all the wealth he had accumulated. He was presumptuous with others, always unhappy with himself, obsessed with anxiety about death and salvation. He was described as a "genius, inspired, almost removed and hostile to the world". Even the Pope, despite his admiration for Michelangelo, agreed that there was simply no getting through to him. But why exactly did the pontiff choose Michelangelo of all people? According to gossip of the time, it was Bramante who suggested to the Pope the idea of giving Michelangelo the job; the rivalry between Michelangelo and Bramante was certainly no secret, the latter being also friend and relative to Raphael, another avowed enemy of the artist. The innocent proposal to the Pope in reality was a way to put the
hated sculptor in a bad light since he had never done a fresco in his life and wasn't familiar with the technique.

After much arguing back and forth, the Pope succeeded in his intentions by employing a subtle psychological trick: he challenged Michelangelo to transform the "barn" into the jewel of the Vatican; the artist accepted the challenge against his better judgment but considered this commission an attempt to pull him away from the tomb of Julius II and from sculpture; so, as a protest, during that whole period, he signed his letters as "Michelangelo sculptor".

On May 8th, 1508, the artist finally signed the contract that stipulated the decoration of the ceiling with giant figures of the 12 apostles and painted architectural elements. Michelangelo closed himself in the Chapel and began to work in complete solitude, he would let no one enter to see how the work was proceeding and even chased out the Pope. Michelangelo's tormented and lonely work went on for four interminable years.

In October of 1512, the work that would be remembered for centuries to come as one of the greatest treasures of humanity was finally finished and, on All Saints Day, November first, the Sistine Chapel was triumphantly inaugurated in full ceremony with a solemn mass celebrated by Pope Julius II himself. Michelangelo, in those years of unbelievably hard, lonely work, had transformed the walls into masterpieces that spoke. A thousand square meters of frescoes told of the marvels of Creation and the story of Man. www.artbible.info/art/sistine-chapel.html

In the afternoon, we will tour Baroque Rome!

**Baroque Rome Tour** - The tour will start with one of Bernini masterpieces, the Trevi Fountain, then followed by The Pantheon and finally, the Piazza Navona.

**The Trevi Fountain** - Inspired by Roman triumphal arches, standing 26-metres high and 20-metres wide, the Trevi Fountain is the largest Baroque fountain in the city and one of the most famous fountains in the world. The Trevi Fountain is found at the end of the Aqua Virgo, an aqueduct constructed in 19 BC that nowadays still brings water to the fountain from a natural spring located 20km from Rome. Every day, visitors from all over the world throw a coin over their shoulder with their back at the fountain to make sure they'll return to the eternal city.

**The Pantheon** - Entering the Pantheon, one’s attention is caught straightaway by a ray of slanting sunlight shooting down from the “oculus”, a 9-metre round aperture at the very top of the dome that illuminates the entire building. The Pantheon was built between 118 and 125 A.D, over the ruins of another temple as a place of worship for all the pagan gods. Since the 7th century it has been used as a Roman Catholic Church dedicated to "St. Mary and the Martyrs".
**Piazza Navona** - Piazza Navona is one of the most famous and elegant squares in Rome, built over the Stadium of Domitian. Ancient Romans came to the square to watch sport events and shows and today, it still has that vibrant atmosphere with painters and entertainers performing for the joy of the people passing by. This piazza, which displays the genius of Bernini and Borromini, is one of the finest Baroque Masterpiece in papal Rome.

**Legionary Training** (extra cost) – This evening, Visions groups will have an opportunity to Opt-in for Legionary Training. Under special tutoring, students will train and learn what it was like to live as a Roman soldier, training to march as well as weaponry. This activity is available upon request with extra fees required for the training and also transport and is only offered during the summer months. If you would like us to include a Legionary Evening, simply let us know. We will verify costs and confirm this for you.

**Day 6**
Breakfast

Rise & shine Rome! After breakfast in our hotel we will formally check-out and dependent upon flight times, take one last look around this magnificent city! Afterwards, we’ll say goodbye and wave to our new friends as we leave for the airport and hopefully, take away memories that will last a lifetime!
**ROMAN SCIENCE & HISTORY**

**Minimum Booking Numbers:**
20 students

**What’s Included:**
- Return flights with a scheduled carrier
- 5 OR 6-nights’ accommodation, based on origination
- Breakfasts & dinners daily
- Packed lunches on Days 2 & 4
- Airport transfers and transportation to activities
- Rome City Tax
- Archaeologist for a Day program
- Full-day tour with private guide in Pompeii
- Vulci Archaeological Park & Archaeotrekking Excursion
- Half-day tour of the Vatican
- Half-day tour - Ancient Rome
- Half-day tour - Baroque Rome
- Entrance fees - Coliseum
- Entrance fees - Roman Forum
- Entrance fees - Pompeii
- Entrance fees - Vatican & Sistine Chapel + headphones
- Entrance fees - Time Elevator, Fori Imperiali
- Entrance fees - Vulci Archaeological Park
- Conference Room Rental in Evening of Day 2
- Visions Tour Ambassador
- 24-hour emergency cover

**What’s Not Included:**
- Fully comprehensive insurance (mandatory)
- Transfers to/from home airport
- Transportation for activities not shown in the itinerary
- Lunches in resort with the exception of Days 2 & 4
- Legionary Training (at extra cost)
- AstroLab (at extra cost)
- Cost of visas, full or collective passports
- Cost of inoculations or medication required for travel
- Sightseeing / Entertainment Options not shown
- Hotel incidental deposits & bills – meals, mini-bar items, recreation charges, purchases billed, etc
- Any gratuities – coach drivers, maid / bellman services, area guides, tour ambassador

As always, our staff are always available to you to answer any questions you may have regarding programming. If we may serve you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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