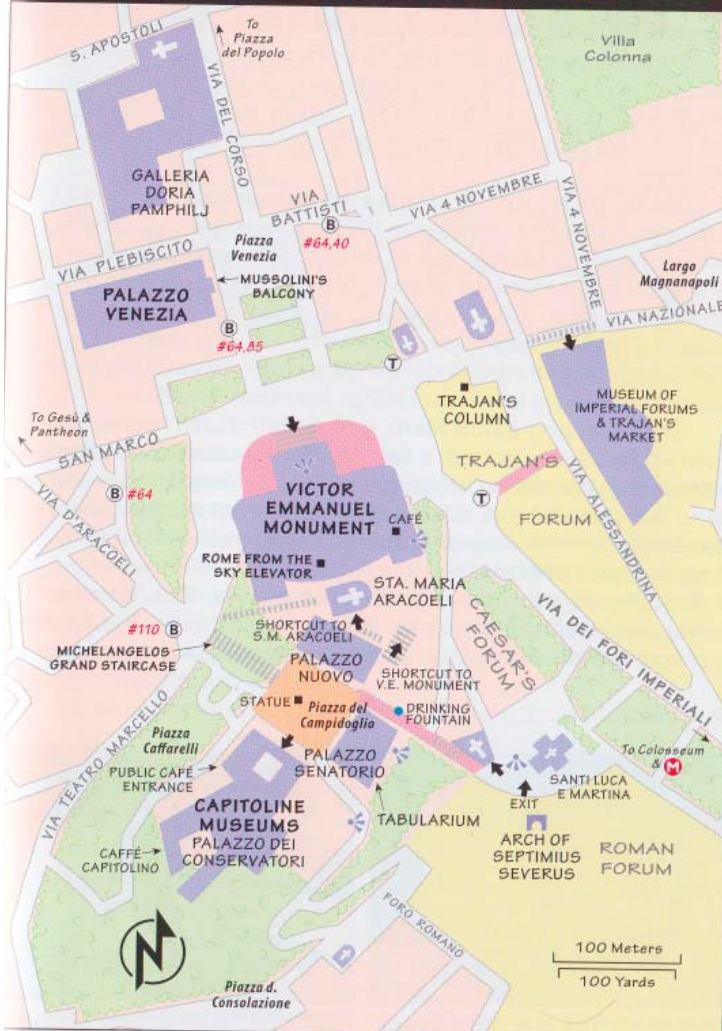


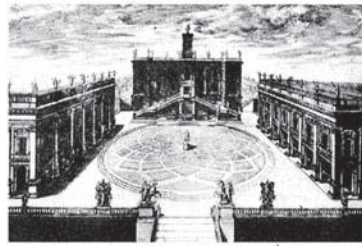
Capitoline Hill & Piazza Venezia

Capitoline Hill & Piazza Venezia



CAPITOLINE HILL

Of Rome's famous seven hills, this is the smallest, tallest, and most famous—home of the ancient Temple of Jupiter and the center of city government for 2,500 years. There are several ways to get to the top of Capitoline Hill.



If you're coming from the north (from Piazza Venezia), take Michelangelo's impressive stairway to the right of the big, white Victor Emmanuel Monument. Coming from the southeast (the Forum), take the steep staircase

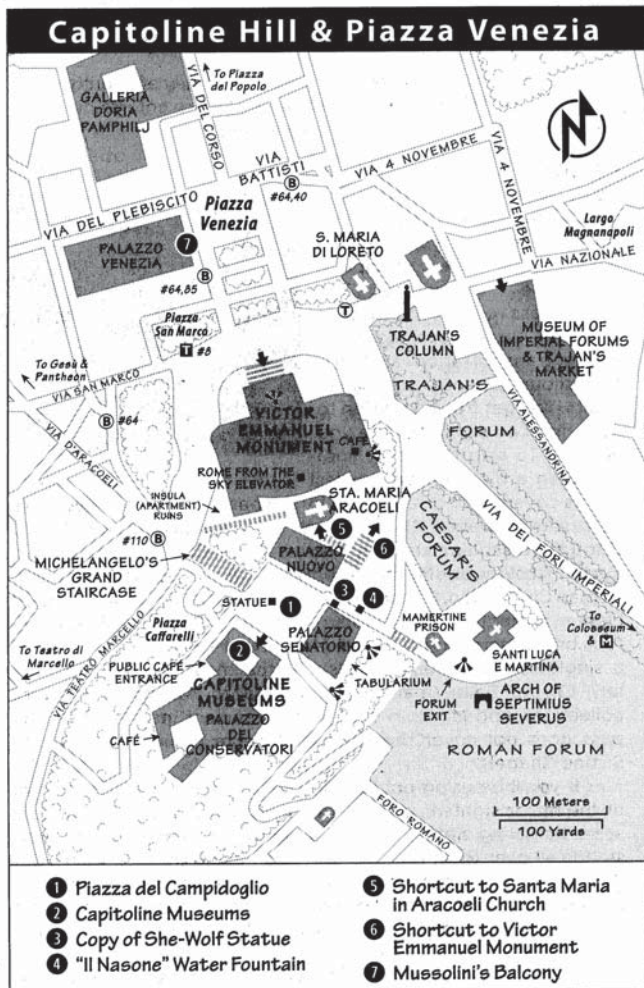
near the Arch of Septimius Severus. From near Trajan's Forum along Via dei Fori Imperiali, take the winding road. All three converge at the top, in the square called Campidoglio (kahn-pee-DOHL-yoh).

▲Piazza del Campidoglio

This square atop the hill, once the religious and political center of ancient Rome, is still the home of the city's government. In the 1530s, the pope called on Michelangelo to re-establish this square as a grand center. Michelangelo placed the ancient equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius as its focal point. Effective. (The original statue is now in the adjacent museum.) The twin buildings on either side are the Capitoline Museums. Behind the replica of the statue is the mayoral palace (Palazzo Senatorio).

Michelangelo intended that people approach the square from his grand stairway off Piazza Venezia. From the top of





the stairway, you see the new Renaissance face of Rome, with its back to the Forum. Michelangelo gave the buildings the "giant order"—huge pilasters make the existing two-story buildings feel one-storied and more harmonious with the new square. Notice how the statues atop these buildings welcome you and then draw you in.

The terraces just downhill (past either side of the mayor's palace) offer grand views of the Forum. To the left of the mayor's palace is a copy of the famous she-wolf statue on a column. Farther down

is *il nasone* (“the big nose”), a refreshing water fountain (see photo). Block the spout with your fingers, and water spurts up for drinking. Romans joke that a cheap Roman boy takes his date out for a drink at *il nasone*. Near the she-wolf statue is the staircase leading to a shortcut to the Victor Emmanuel Monument (see sidebar).

▲▲▲Capitoline Museums (Musei Capitolini)

Some of ancient Rome’s most famous statues and art are housed in the two palaces that flank the equestrian statue in the Campidoglio. You’ll see the Dying Gaul, the original she-wolf, and the original version of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. Admission includes access to the underground vacant Tabularium, with its panoramic overlook of the Forum.

Cost and Hours: €13, Tue-Sun 9:00-20:00, closed Mon, last entry one hour before closing, audioguide-€5, tel. 06-0608, www.museicapitolini.org.

✦ See the Capitoline Museums Tour chapter.

Santa Maria in Aracoeli Church

The church atop Capitoline Hill is old and dear to the hearts of Romans. It stands on the site where Emperor Augustus (supposedly) had a premonition of the coming of Mary and Christ standing on an “altar in the sky” (*ara coeli*).

Cost and Hours: Free, daily April-Oct 9:00-12:30 & 15:00-18:30, Nov-March 9:00-12:30 & 14:30-17:30, tel. 06-6976-3839.

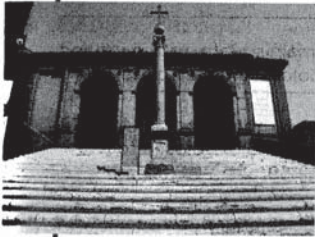
Visiting the Church: While dedicated pilgrims climb up the long, steep staircase from street level (the right side of Victor Emmanuel Monument as you face it), savvy sightseers prefer to enter through the shortcut atop Capitoline Hill (see sidebar).

The church is Rome in a nutshell, where you can time-travel across 2,000 years by standing in one spot. The building dates from Byzantine times (sixth century) and was expanded in the 1200s. Inside, the mismatched columns (red, yellow, striped, fluted) and marble floor are ancient, plundered from many different monuments. The medieval world is evident in the gravestones beneath your feet. The early Renaissance is featured in beautiful frescoes by Pinturicchio (first chapel on the right from the main entrance), with their 3-D perspective and natural landscapes. The coffered ceiling celebrates the Christian victory over the Ottoman Turks (Battle of Lepanto, 1571), with thanks to Mary (in the center of the ceiling). The chandeliers in the nave hint at the elegance of



Shortcut to the Victor Emmanuel Monument and Aracoeli Church

A clever shortcut lets you go directly from Piazza del Campidoglio, the square atop Capitoline Hill, to Santa Maria in Aracoeli Church and an upper level of the Victor Emmanuel Monument, avoiding long flights of stairs. Facing the square's equestrian statue, head to the left, climbing the wide set of stairs near the she-wolf statue. Midway up the stairs (at the column), turn left to reach the back entrance to the Aracoeli Church. To reach the Victor Emmanuel Monument, pass the column and continue to the top of the steps, pass through the iron gate, and enter the small unmarked door at #13 on the right. You'll soon emerge on a café terrace that leads to the monument and the Rome from the Sky elevator.



ue to the top of the steps, pass through the iron gate, and enter the small unmarked door at #13 on the right. You'll soon emerge on a café terrace that leads to the monument and the Rome from the Sky elevator.

SIGHTS

Baroque. Napoleon's occupying troops used the building as a horse stable. But like Rome itself, it survived and retained its splendor.

The church comes alive at Christmastime. Romans hike up to enjoy a manger scene (*presepio*) assembled every year in the second chapel on the left. They stop at the many images of the Virgin (e.g., the statue in the marble gazebo to the left of the altar), who made an appearance to the pagan Augustus so long ago. And, most famously, they venerate a wooden statue of the Baby Jesus (Santo Bambino), displayed in a chapel to the left of the altar (go through the low-profile door and down the hall). Though the original statue was stolen in 1994, the copy continues this longtime Roman tradition. A clear box filled with handwritten prayers sits nearby.



The daunting 125-step staircase up Capitoline Hill to the entrance was once climbed—on their knees—by Roman women who wished for a child. Today, they don't...and Italy has Europe's lowest birthrate.

urban, with lots of little hole-in-the-wall eateries. The big garage on the right opens its doors on weekends to host the lively MercatoMonti (see “Department Stores, Souvenirs, and Markets” near the end of this chapter).

After passing the entrance to Cavour Metro station, the street swings left, becomes **Via Urbana**, and gets a bit more charming, as it runs through the bottom of a narrow valley between Via Cavour and Santa Maria Maggiore. At the gap with the parking lot, look high on the left to spot the recommended Fatamorgana *gelateria* (see page 400). Farther along, watch on the left for the Studio Cassio mosaics workshop (#98), then a fascinating *orologiaio* (clock shop, #103a). Continuing along Via Urbana, window-shop local designers’ boutiques. Aromaticus, at #134, sells nothing but fresh herbs, as if to emphasize the Italian obsession with seasonal cooking. As the street climbs uphill, you can either go back the way you came, or turn left at Via Panisperna to return to Via del Boschetto, Via dei Serpenti, and the heart of Monti.

Via Baccina and Via della Madonna dei Monti

Via Baccina and Via della Madonna dei Monti have a lower concentration of shops, but they’re even more atmospheric than the main drags. From the main square, head down **Via Baccina**, noticing Sotto Bosco at #40, selling colorful, minimalist jewelry and hats. Farther along, this street has a range of art galleries, boutiques, and jewelry shops. Better yet, turn left down vine-strewn Via dei Neofiti (across from Sotto Bosco), then right on **Via della Madonna dei Monti**. While there are more bars and restaurants than shops along here, it’s worth a browse.

PIAZZA VENEZIA

This vast square, dominated by the big, white Victor Emmanuel Monument, is a major transportation hub and the focal point of modern Rome. With your back to the monument (you’ll get the best views from the terrace by the guards and eternal flame), look down Via del Corso, the city’s axis, surrounded by Rome’s classiest shopping district. In the 1930s, Benito Mussolini whipped up Italy’s nationalistic fervor from a balcony above the square (it’s the less-grand building on the left). He gave 64 speeches from this balcony, including the declaration of war in 1940. This Early Renaissance building (with hints of medieval showing with its crenellated roof line) was the seat of Mussolini’s fascist government. Fascist masses filled the square screaming, “Four more years!”—or something like that. Mussolini created the boulevard Via dei Fori Imperiali (to your right, capped by Trajan’s Column) to open up views of the Colosseum in the distance. Mussolini lied to his people, mixing fear and patriotism to push his country to the right and embroil the Italians in expensive and regrettable wars. In 1945, they shot Mussolini and hung him from a meat hook in Milan. (Former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s headquarters are still located—thought-provokingly—just behind Mussolini’s. That explains all the security on Via del Plebiscito.)

With your back still to the monument, circle around the left side. At the back end of the monument, look down into the ditch on your left to see the ruins of an ancient apartment building from the first century A.D.; part of it was transformed into a tiny church (faded frescoes and bell tower). Rome was built in layers—almost everywhere you go, there’s an earlier version beneath your feet. (The hop-on, hop-off 110open Bus stops just downhill from here.)

Continuing on, you reach two staircases leading up Capitoline Hill. One is Michelangelo’s grand staircase up to the Campidoglio. The steeper of the two leads to Santa Maria in Aracoeli, a good example of the earliest style of Christian church (described earlier). The contrast between this climb-on-your-knees ramp to God’s house and Michelangelo’s elegant stairs illustrates the changes Renaissance humanism brought civilization.

From the bottom of Michelangelo’s stairs, look right several blocks down the street to see a condominium actually built upon the surviving ancient pillars and arches of Teatro di Marcello.

▲Victor Emmanuel Monument

This oversize monument to Italy’s first king, built to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the country’s unification in 1861, was part of Italy’s push to overcome the new country’s strong regionalism and create a national identity. The scale of the monument is over-the-top: 200 feet high, 500 feet wide. The 43-foot-long statue of the

king on his high horse is one of the biggest equestrian statues in the world. The king's moustache forms an arc five feet long, and a person could sit within the horse's hoof. At the base of this statue, Italy's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (flanked by Italian flags and armed guards) is watched over by the goddess Roma (with the gold mosaic background).



Cost and Hours: Monument—free, daily 9:30-18:30, a few WCs scattered throughout, tel. 06-6920-2049. Elevator—€7, Mon-Thu 9:30-18:30, Fri-Sun 9:30-19:30, ticket office closes 45 minutes earlier, WC at entrance, tel. 06-679-3598; follow *ascensori panoramici* signs inside the Victor Emmanuel Monument or take the shortcut from Capitoline Hill (no elevator access from street level).

Background: With its gleaming white sheen (from a recent scrubbing) and enormous scale, the monument provides a vivid sense of what Ancient Rome looked like at its peak—imagine the Forum filled with shiny, grandiose buildings like this one. It's also lathered in symbolism meant to connect the modern city and nation with its grand past: The eternal flames are reminiscent of the Vestal Virgins and the ancient flame of Rome. And it's crowned by glorious chariots like those that topped the ancient Arch of Constantine.

Locals have a love/hate relationship with this “Altar of the Nation.” Many Romans say it's a “punch in the eye” and regret its unfortunate, clumsy location atop precious antiquities. Others consider it a reminder of the challenge that followed the creation of the modern nation of Italy: actually creating “Italians.”

Visiting the Monument: The “Vittoriano” (as locals call it) is open and free to the public. You can simply climb the front stairs, or go inside from one of several entrances: midway up the monument through doorways flanking the central statue, on either side at street level, and at the base of the colonnade (two-thirds of the way up, near the shortcut from Capitoline Hill). The little-visited **Museum of the Risorgimento** fills several floors with displays (well-described in English) on the movement and war that led to the unification of Italy in 1870. A section on the lower east side hosts temporary exhibits of minor works by major artists (€5 to enter museum, temporary exhibits around €10, tel. 06-322-5380, www.comunicareorganizzando.it). A café is at the base of the top colonnade, on the monument's east side.

Best of all, the monument offers a grand view of the Eternal City. You can climb the stairs to the midway point for a decent view,

Via del Boschetto and Via dei Serpenti

This little loop takes you up and down the parallel main drags of Monti. First, from the top of the square, head left down **Via del Boschetto**. You'll pass several little boutiques and jewelry shops. Along the way, watch for the recommended Gaudeo sandwich shop (#112); the fragrant Il Giardino di Tè tea house (#107); King Size vintage shop (#94); a cute kids' clothing store (#96); Gallina Smilza, selling colorful plastic dishes and housewares (#129); and Pulp, featuring women's casual fashion (#140).

Soon you'll reach the intersection with **Via Panisperna**; several pioneers in the early study of radiation, including Enrico Fermi, lived or worked along here, earning them the nickname “the Panisperna boys.” From this intersection, you can turn right up Panisperna for more shopping (boutiques, antiques, and the Monti Bio organic shop at #225), or continue straight ahead for a few more shops (and the highly recommended L'Asino d'Oro restaurant, with a great lunch special—see page 400). Otherwise, loop left (downhill on Panisperna), noticing—on the corner—Macelleria Stecchiotti, a classic Roman butcher (where, reportedly, VIPs from the prime minister to the pope get their meat). Continuing downhill on Panisperna, you'll spot the neighborhood's favorite hangout—the recommended Ai Tre Scalini bar—and (at the corner) the recommended Antico Forno ai Serpenti bakery.

Turning left on **Via dei Serpenti**, on the left just past the bakery entrance, peek in the window to see the bakers at work. Continuing down Serpenti, watch for a funky collection of shops, including Podere Vecciano (at #33)—“a farm in the city” selling enticing Tuscan (not Roman) goods, including wines, olive oils, other gifty edibles, and wood-carved items. Then you'll reach Oic-FiFna Gioielli jewelry store (#25); a tempting *alimentari* (grocery); Faces, a boutique selling T-shirts with...faces (#138); the Pifebo vintage shop next door (#141); and on the right, at #4, a neighborhood fixture dating to the days when vintage wasn't yet vintage: the aptly named Di Tutto di Più (“Everything and More”), a general store stuffed to the gills with everything you could possibly need. Near the end of the street is American Apparel—which incited minor outrage in this extremely provincial and proud corner of Rome when it opened a few years back. And just beyond that, you've circled back to the main square.

Via Leonina/Via Urbana

To explore another set of streets with similar shops, leave the top of the main square and jog right (on Via dell'Angeletto, passing some fun little galleries), then left at the T-intersection (where you'll find a local chocolatier, La Bottega del Cioccolato). This puts you on **Via Leonina**, the first few blocks of which are a bit more crowded and

the chance to really immerse yourself in village Rome...all within a few hundred yards of the city's greatest landmarks. In front of Via della Madonna dei Monti 82, look for the bronze cobbles embedded in the street, marking the place where several of the victims of the Fosse Ardeatine massacre lived (see page 521).

Monti is an ideal place for a quick lunch or early dinner, or for a memorable meal; for recommendations, see page 400. It's also a fine place to shop (see page 420) or hang out after dark (see page 429).

▲St. Peter-in-Chains Church (San Pietro in Vincoli)

Built in the fifth century to house the chains that held St. Peter, this church is most famous for its Michelangelo statue of Moses, intended for the tomb of Pope Julius II (which was never built). Check out the much-venerated chains under the high altar, then focus on mighty Moses. (Note that this isn't the famous St. Peter's Basilica, which is at Vatican City.)

Cost and Hours: Free, daily April-Sept 8:00-12:30 & 15:00-19:00, until 18:00 in winter, modest dress required; the church is a 10-minute uphill walk from the Colosseum, or a shorter, simpler walk from the Cavour Metro stop; tel. 06-9784-4950.

✦ See the St. Peter-in-Chains Tour chapter.

Shopping Near Monti

MONTI, NEAR THE ROMAN FORUM

Located between Via Cavour and Via Nazionale, across the street from the Roman Forum, the Monti neighborhood is a delight for exploring, dining, and shopping. Rather than designer fashions, Monti has Rome's closest thing to a hipster aesthetic: gourmet foodie shops and funky boutiques alongside very traditional neighborhood stores. Get oriented from the main square, Piazza della Madonna dei Monti (see page 58 for an orientation to this neighborhood). Then take off, strolling each of these areas.

keep climbing to the base of the colonnade for a better view, or, for the best view, ride the **Rome from the Sky** (Roma dal Cielo) elevator, which zips you from the top of the stair climb (at the back of the monument) to the rooftop for the grandest, 360-degree view of the center of Rome—even better than from the top of St. Peter's dome. Once on top, you stand on a terrace between the monument's two chariots. You can look north up Via del Corso to Piazza del Popolo, west to the dome of St. Peter's Basilica, and south to the Roman Forum and Colosseum. Helpful panoramic diagrams describe the skyline, with powerful binoculars available for zooming in on particular sights. It's best in late afternoon, when it's beginning to cool off and Rome glows.

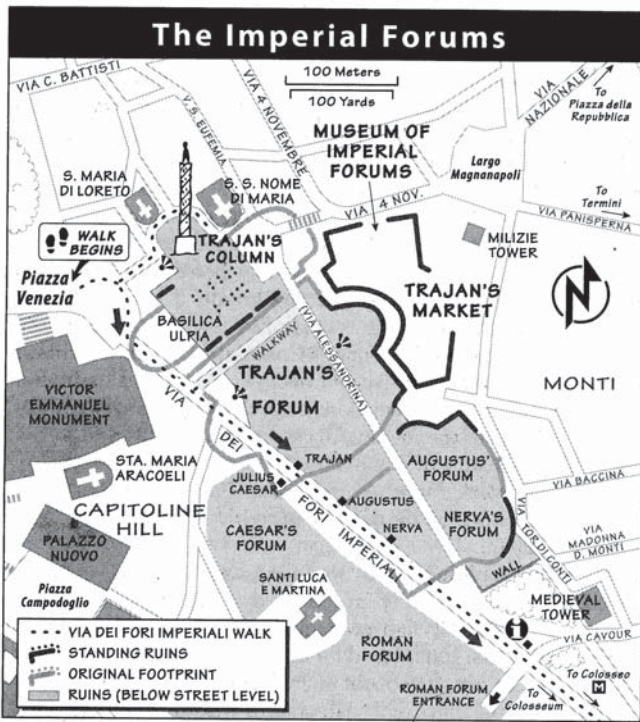


THE IMPERIAL FORUMS AND VIA DEI FORI IMPERIALI

The original Roman Forum is the main attraction for today's tourists, but several more forums and ruins—the legacy of later emperors (especially Trajan)—line the broad, Mussolini-built Via dei Fori Imperiali, which runs from Piazza Venezia to the Colosseum. Today the imperial forums are out in the open, free to view 24/7, and linked by this self-guided walk. Visiting here is especially nice now that the once-busy street has been closed to private car traffic—and, on Sundays and holidays, to all vehicles.

Background: As Rome grew from a village to an empire, it outgrew the Roman Forum. Several energetic emperors built their own forums—which stood in a line from the Colosseum to Trajan's Column—complete with temples, shopping malls, government buildings, statues, monuments, and piazzas. While the Roman Forum was built with no grand plan over 1,200 years, these new imperial forums were distinct modules, with a cohesive plan stamped with the emperor's unique personality. Julius Caesar built the first one (46 B.C.), and over the next 150 years, it was added onto by Augustus (2 B.C.), Vespasian (A.D. 75), Nerva (A.D. 97), and Trajan (A.D. 112). What you see today are mostly the remains of Trajan's great building campaign.

✦ **Self-Guided Walk:** For an overview of the entire archaeological area, take this walk from Piazza Venezia to the Colosseum. After a busy day of sightseeing, this stroll offers a relaxing way to wind down (while seeing a few more ancient wonders, but without crowds or turnstiles) on your way to the Colosseum and its handy Metro stop.



• *Start in Piazza Venezia.*

Piazza Venezia: Mussolini's office was here, and the Fascist dictator longed to see the Colosseum from his window. So this self-styled modern emperor leveled an entire neighborhood, dug up the forum ruins, and ran a strip of pavement right down the middle, creating this wide, straight boulevard directly to the Colosseum. (For more on Piazza Venezia, see the listing earlier.)

• *Head in the direction of the Colosseum, walking along the left side of Via dei Fori Imperiali. At the start of the boulevard, the big park with umbrella pines stands in front of...*

Trajan's Forum: Rome peaked under Emperor Trajan (ruled A.D. 98-117), when the empire stretched from England to the Sahara, from Spain to the Fertile Crescent. A triumphant Trajan returned to Rome with his booty and shook it all over the city. He extended the Forum by building his own commercial, political, and religious center nearby, complete with temples, law courts, a semicircular shopping mall, and a monumental column covered with detailed carvings that tell the story of one of his most famous conquests.

▲ **Monti Neighborhood: Village Rome**

Tucked behind the imperial forums is a quintessentially Roman district called Monti. Squeezed between Via Nazionale and Via Cavour, this hilly tangle of lanes helps visitors understand why the Romans see their hometown not as a sprawling metropolis, but as a collection of villages. Neighbors hang out on the square and chat, funky boutiques and fashionable shops share narrow streets with hole-in-the-wall hardware shops and *alimentari*, and wisteria-strewn cobbled lanes beckon photographers. How this charming little bit of village Rome survived, largely undisturbed, just a few steps from some of Italy's most trafficked sights, is a miracle worthy of canonization. While not quite "undiscovered" (savvy travelers have been reading about Monti in "hidden Rome" magazine and newspaper articles for years), it's certainly untrampled relative to its ample charms.

From a practical point of view, Monti (with the best assortment of colorful, characteristic, and inexpensive Roman eateries I've found) is a delightful complement to your ancient Roman sightseeing. For a lunch break or cool and relaxing evening wander and dinner, it's made-to-order.

From the Roman Forum's main entrance, cross Via dei Fori Imperiali and angle up Via Cavour two blocks to Via dei Serpenti. Turn left, and in one block, you hit Monti's main square, **Piazza della Madonna dei Monti**. (The Cavour Metro stop also gets you steps away.) To get oriented, face uphill, with the big fountain to your right. That fountain is the neighborhood's meeting point—and after hours, every square inch is thronged with young Romans socializing and drinking. They either buy bottles of wine or beer to go at the little grocery at the top of the square or at a convenience store on nearby Via Cavour. Often they order something more interesting from the adjacent Full Monti bar, which specializes in freshly squeezed fruit-juice drinks (served in plastic cups).

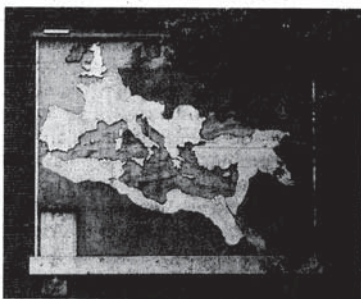
From this hub, interesting streets branch off in every direction. Via dei Serpenti (to your left) and Via del Boschetto (at the top of the square, then left) are both lined with an eclectic array of boutiques, gourmet bakeries and sandwich shops, lively *enoteche* and pubs, and fine restaurants. If you go to the top of the square, jog right, then left, you'll be on Via Leonina, which becomes Via Urbana, with more shops and eateries. And, over your right shoulder is one of Monti's most charming streets, Via Baccina—though the parallel Via della Madonna dei Monti is even cuter (head down Baccina and take the first left, then jog right). Although a bit less developed—with only a few shops and eateries—these streets offer

You'll pass by the main entry to the Roman Forum (on the right side of Via dei Fori Imperiali) and the information center (on the left), with a handy café, info desk, and WC. Also on the right side of the street is the back side of the vast Basilica of Constantine (see page 157), with its apse from a time before there were churches.

• *Cross the street (using the handy crosswalk directly in front of the information center), and turn your attention to the wall just below the arches of the basilica. (Note: This area may be torn up due to construction of a new Metro line.)*

Four Black-and-White Maps: These chart the growth of the Roman Empire. As if to validate his greatness, Mussolini made sure to celebrate the greatness of Rome. He posted this handy history lesson, showing the rise (but not the fall) of the greatest civilization in Western history: 509 B.C.—Roman Republic established;

200 B.C.—Rome after the Punic War; A.D. 1—Rome under Augustus, during the time of Christ when St. Peter was here; and A.D. 100—during Trajan's rule, with the empire at its peak. A fifth plaque is missing. It showed Italy in 1936, after Mussolini had made his own mark on history by conquering



Ethiopia. Mussolini may have pointed it out to his fellow Fascist, Adolf Hitler, when the two paraded down the street together in 1938. A few years later, Italy had lost World War II, Mussolini was arrested and executed, and the plaque was torn down.

• *Our walk is over. From here, you have several options. The Colosseum (and a handy Metro stop) are straight ahead. To visit St. Peter-in-Chains Church, head up the hill above the Metro stop (see St. Peter-in-Chains Tour chapter). If you haven't yet toured the Roman Forum, you can enter either along Via dei Fori Imperiali (just right of the maps), or use the entrance facing the Colosseum.*

Trajan's Forum was a crucial expansion of the old Roman Forum, which was too small and ceremonial to fill the commercial needs of a booming city of more than a million people. To build his forum, Trajan literally moved mountains. He cut away a ridge that once connected the Quirinal and Capitoline hills, creating this valley. This was the largest forum ever, and its opulence astounded even jaded Romans.

In Roman times, you would have entered at the Colosseum end through a triumphal arch and been greeted in the main square by a large statue of the soldier-king on a horse. Continuing on, you'd enter the Basilica Ulpia (the gray granite columns near Trajan's Column), the largest law court of its day. Finally, at the far end, you would have found Trajan's Column, flanked by two libraries that contained the world's knowledge in Greek and Latin. Balconies on the libraries gave close-up looks at the upper reliefs of the column, in case anyone doubted the outcome of Trajan's war.

• *Speaking of which: Rising 140 feet above Trajan's Forum (circle it on the sidewalk above for a complete view) is...*

Trajan's Column: The world's grandest column from antiquity is decorated with a spiral relief of 2,500 figures trumpeting the emperor's exploits. It has stood for centuries as a symbol of a truly cosmopolitan civilization. At one point, the ashes of Trajan and his wife were held in the base, and the sun glinted off a polished bronze statue of Trajan at the top. (Today, St. Peter is on top.) Built as a stack of 17 marble doughnuts, the column is hollow (note the small window slots) with a spiral staircase inside, leading up to the balcony.

The relief unfolds like a scroll, telling the story of Rome's last and greatest foreign conquest, Trajan's defeat of Dacia (modern-day Romania). The staggering haul of gold plundered from the Dacians paid for this forum. The narrative starts at the bottom with a trickle of water that becomes a river and soon picks up boats full of supplies. Then come the soldiers themselves, who spill out from the gates of the city. A river god (bottom band, south side) surfaces to bless the journey. Along the



way (second band), they build roads and forts to sustain the vast enterprise, including (third band, south side) Trajan's half-mile-long bridge over the Danube, the longest for a thousand years. (Find the three tiny crisscross rectangles representing the wooden span.) Trajan himself (fourth band, in military skirt with toga over his arm) mounts a podium to fire up the troops. They hop into a Roman galley ship (fifth band) and head off to fight the valiant Dacians in the middle of a forest (eighth band). Finally, at the very top, the Romans hold a sacrifice to give thanks for the victory, while the captured armor is displayed on the pedestal.

Originally, the entire story was painted in bright colors. If you were to unwind the scroll, it would stretch over two football fields—it's far longer than the frieze around the Greek Parthenon. (An unscrolled copy is in E.U.R.'s Museum of Roman Civilization; see page 106.)

• *Continue through the park about 150 yards down Via dei Fori Imperiali. Detour left onto a pedestrian walkway, with good views of Trajan's entire ensemble. Below the bridge are the foundations of the medieval-era neighborhood that was cleared out to build the boulevard. Under these medieval ruins lie ancient ones.*

The big, semicircular structure nestled into the cutaway curve of Quirinal Hill is...

Trajan's Market: This was likely part shopping mall, part warehouse, and part administration building and/or government offices. For now the conventional wisdom holds that at ground level, the 13 tall (shallow) arches housed shops selling fresh fruit,



vegetables, and flowers to people who passed by on the street. The 26 arched windows (above) lit a covered walkway lined with shops that sold wine and olive oil. On the roof (now lined with a metal railing) ran a street that likely held still more shops, making about 150 in all. Shoppers could browse through goods from every corner of Rome's vast

empire—exotic fruits from Africa, spices from Asia, and fish-and-chips from Londinium.

Above the semicircle, the upper floors of the complex housed bureaucrats in charge of a crucial element of city life: doling out free grain to unemployed citizens, who lived off the wealth plundered from distant lands. Better to pacify them than risk a riot. Above the offices, at the very top, rises a tower added in the Middle Ages.

The market was beautiful and functional, filling the space of the curved hill perfectly and echoing the curved side of the Forum's

main courtyard. (The wall of rough volcanic stones on the ground once extended into a semicircle.) Unlike most Roman buildings, the brick facade wasn't covered with plaster or marble. The architect liked the simple contrast between the warm brick and the white stone lining the arches and windows.

If you'd like to walk around the market complex and see some excavated statues, visit the **Museum of the Imperial Forums** (described later; enter just uphill from Trajan's Column).

• *Returning to the main street, continue toward the Colosseum for about 100 more yards.*

Emperor Statues and More Forums: A bronze statue of **Emperor Trajan** stands beside Trajan's Forum. Notice the date on the pedestal—Anno XI. The statue was erected by Mussolini in "the 11th year of the Fascist Renovation of Italy." Mussolini came to power in 1922, so this would be from 1933. Across the street is a similar statue of **Julius Caesar**. Caesar built the first of the imperial forums in 46 B.C., as an extension of the Roman Forum. Behind him stand the three remaining columns of his forum's Temple of Venus—the patron goddess of the Julian family.

• *Continue along (down the left side).*

You soon come to **Emperor Augustus** in his famous hailing-a-cab pose (a copy of the original, which you can see at the Vatican Museum). This is actually his "commander talking to his people" pose. Behind him was the Forum of Augustus, marked by the four remaining columns of the Temple of Mars. The main thing that survives of the forum is the towering, ugly wall built to protect Augustus' temple from city fires.

Farther along is a statue of **Emperor Nerva**, trying but failing to have the commanding presence of Augustus. Gazing across the boulevard from here to the Roman Forum, you have good views of the back side of the Curia, where the senate met. Beyond that is Palatine Hill, with the foundation of one of its palaces. Behind Nerva, you can look down at an original marble inlaid floor that was once under a grand roof, surrounded by offices and shops within a semicircular mall. Nerva's Forum is also marked by its surviving fire wall.

A few steps beyond the remains of a **medieval tower** are some fine surviving marble reliefs from Nerva's Forum showing religious rituals. The tower was a medieval noble family's fortified residence—a reminder that the fall of Rome left a power vacuum, and with no central authority, it was every big shot for himself.

• *Cross the busy Via Cavour. If you were to head up this street two blocks, then turn left (near the Cavour Metro stop), you'd be immersed in the Monti district, one of Rome's most characteristic neighborhoods (described later). But for now, continue along the main drag.*