

# Roman Holiday

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Rome at Christmas is a magical time when the city outdoes itself in decorative splendor, as befits the home of the Roman Catholic Church. The temperate weather allows visitors and locals alike to spend time outside in the city's characteristic squares, eating roasted chestnuts as well as gelato. Many churches display artistic and detailed 'preseppi', or nativity scenes, some dating to the seventeenth century. Christmas Eve Mass at St Peter's can be a moving experience for faithful and non-believers alike. The Christmas market in Piazza Navona brings a typically Italian twist to a northern European tradition. In short, Christmastime in Rome adds another layer of wonder to what is already an intoxicating blend of sights, sounds, smells and tastes, of art, culture and life.

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## Tour Highlights

- Historic Center of Rome, and Properties of the Holy See \*
- Trevi Fountain
- Pantheon
- Spanish Steps
  
- Christmas Market
- Colosseum
- Forum
- Palatine Hill
  
- Borghese Gallery
- The Vatican
- St. Peter's Basilica

\* UNESCO World Heritage Site

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Thursday, December 21, 2017

Depart home bound for Rome, Italy

This is a travel day, with tour services beginning tomorrow in Rome, Italy. Book a flight from your home city to the Rome's Fiumicino – Leonardo da Vinci International Airport. Use the airport code FCO when searching for flights online. Please time your arrival no later than 4:00 pm on December 22nd so that you may participate in our Welcome Dinner. If you are not able to arrive by that time, we suggest you plan to depart a day early, on Wednesday, December 20th, and arrive on December 21st. For those who wish to arrive a day early, please indicate this on your reservation form so that we can hold a room for you at our Rome hotel. (*Meals Aloft*)

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Friday, December 22, 2017

## Arrive in Rome / Welcome Dinner

After arriving in Rome, make your way to our centrally located hotel. There is a non-stop train that operates from the main airport terminal to the Termini Station, Rome's major rail hub. This train leaves the airport every 15 minutes and takes roughly 30 minutes to arrive in the city center. From the Termini Station, it will then be a low-cost taxi fare to get to our hotel. Hotel check-in is typically at 3:00pm. You will have the afternoon free to relax or do some exploring on your own. This evening Toto Tours hosts a reception in our hotel's bar/lounge for introductions before we head to our Welcome Dinner. Overnight in Rome. *(Dinner included)*

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Saturday, December 23, 2017

Trevi Fountain / Pantheon / Spanish Steps / Christmas Market

Our guided walking tour includes the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon (best preserved Roman structure anywhere in the world), Piazza di Spagna with the Spanish Steps, and Piazza Navona considered Rome's most beautiful public space whose plan follows that of the Roman athletic stadium upon which it was built. Rome's Christmas market is situated here. Also enjoy an included gelato at Gelateria La Palma, which boasts of having 150 flavors. During today's tour see several locations used for the filming of Dan Brown's book *Angels & Demons*, including Piazza Navona and the Pantheon, along with the churches of Santa Maria della Vittoria with Bernini's "Ecstasy of Santa Theresa" and Santa Maria del Popolo with two Caravaggio masterpieces. We finish the day by crossing the original Roman bridge leading to Castel Sant'Angelo, originally the tomb of the bisexual emperor Hadrian, which was later converted into a fortress for the Pope's protection. *(Breakfast)*

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Sunday, December 24, 2017

Colosseum / Forum / Palatine Hill

Today's guided tour includes the Colosseum, Roman Forum and Palatine Hill. The Colosseum was the Roman Empire's greatest amphitheater, where gladiators and wild animals fought for 400 years. The Forum was the political, religious, commercial and judicial center of the city and its territories. On Palatine Hill, legend, fable and tradition claim that Romulus killed his brother Remus and established the city. Later the Emperors would build their residences on the same site. *(Breakfast)*

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Monday, December 25, 2017

Free Day / Christmas

Because of the Christmas holiday, most of the city is quiet today. As we have done on previous Christmastime tours, we will fill the day with some leisurely activities. We will gather to have a late breakfast together at our hotel and do a little gift presentation. Then we might take a stroll through the quiet city streets near our hotel to enjoy the sights, along with perhaps another visit to the Christmas Market. [Click here](#) to read some of the things that were possible to do in Rome on Christmas Day in 2016. We will inform participants in advance about today's options. In the evening, we will have a special Christmas feast. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*

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Tuesday, December 26, 2017

Borghese Gallery

Today we have a guided tour of the Borghese Gallery. Often considered the best museum in Rome, the Borghese was built by Cardinal Scipione Borghese (nephew of Pope Paul V) to house his private art collection. It contains sculptural masterpieces by Gianlorenzo Bernini and Antonio Canova, and paintings by Caravaggio, Raphael and Titian amongst others. The evening is free. *(Breakfast)*

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Wednesday, December 27, 2017

## The Vatican / Farewell Dinner

Today is reserved for a full exploration of the Vatican Museums and St Peter's Basilica. The Vatican Museums contain an immense collection of art, including Michelangelo's frescos in the Sistine Chapel and many celebrated statues from antiquity. St Peter's Basilica is the largest Christian church in the world and was built (according to tradition) above the tomb of the apostle Peter. Much of the interior decoration was designed by Gianlorenzo Bernini, while among its treasures are the Pietà by Michelangelo (who also designed the dome). This evening Toto Tours hosts a festive Farewell Dinner to toast the conclusion of our Roman Holiday. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*

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Thursday, December 28, 2017

### Departure

Tour services conclude this morning. Breakfast is provided at the hotel and you may book your return flights home for any convenient time today. The hotel concierge will help arrange for taxi cabs taking you either to the Termini Station to catch the train back to the airport or back to the airport itself. Let us know if you would like to extend your stay in Rome. *(Breakfast)*

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