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## THE ARTS

### top picks

- Auditorium Parco della Musica (p231)
- Isola del Cinema (p233)
- Teatro dell'Opera di Roma (p233)
- La Notte Bianca (p232)
- Estate Romana (p235)
- Teatro Ghione (p232)
- Teatro Valle (p235)

Rome's busy cultural calendar includes a host of unforgettable events, particularly in summer when most of the theatre, cinema, opera and music moves outdoors. Marking the end of summer is the extraordinary *Notte Bianca* (White Night; see p232), but the fun doesn't stop there: autumn also has many specialised festivals dedicated to dance, drama and jazz.

Looking beyond the excitement of Rome's alfresco summer, you could sum up the capital's arts scene as somewhat provincial. Often good venues host lacklustre productions, or talented performers are let down by other factors. However, there has been a sea change in recent years. The culture-vulture mayor, Walter Veltroni, has overseen something of a renaissance, with the establishment of new venues and promotion of hugely populist and high-profile events, including the establishment of a film festival in 2006. The other major development is Rome's Auditorium Parco della Musica. This amazing venue now hosts the majority of the city's important cultural events and attracts big international stars in all musical genres, who previously would have given Rome a miss, to play here. The auditorium's all-encompassing, diverse and exciting programme has revolutionised the performing arts in Rome, albeit in one corner of the city.

Rome's major arts venues and festivals (see also p141) are detailed in this chapter, but it's always worth checking current listings as programmes are often only confirmed fairly late in the day. The most comprehensive listings guide in Rome is *Roma C'è* (€1.20), published every Wednesday, complete with a small, but perfectly informed, English-language section. Two other useful guides are *Metro*, a Thursday supplement to *Il Messaggero*, and *Trovaroma*, which comes with *La Repubblica* (also on Thursday). Both papers also carry daily cinema, theatre and concert listings.

Useful websites for events information include [www.romace.it](http://www.romace.it) (in Italian, but with an English section), [www.romaturismo.it](http://www.romaturismo.it), [www.comune.roma.it](http://www.comune.roma.it) (in Italian) and [www.inrome.now.com](http://www.inrome.now.com).

## CLASSICAL MUSIC

Classical music in Rome is thriving. Concerts are of a high standard and the Renzo Piano-designed Auditorium Parco della Musica is a world-class venue featuring superb classical, popular and world music concerts. For more on pop, jazz, rock and world live music gigs see the Drinking & Nightlife chapter (p212).

Free classical concerts are regularly held in many of Rome's churches, especially at Easter and around Christmas and New Year,

with seats available on a first-come-first-served basis. The programmes are usually excellent even if the acoustics are not. The Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola (p86) is a popular venue for choral masses, as are the Pantheon (p72) and Basilica di San Giovanni in Laterano (p106). The Basilica di San Paolo fuori le Mura (p116) hosts an important choral mass on 25 January and the hymn *Te Deum* is sung at the Chiesa del Gesù (p76) on 31 December.

Details are published in the daily newspapers, *Roma C'è* and *Trovaroma*.

## TICKETS & RESERVATIONS

Tickets for concerts and theatrical performances are widely available across the city. Prices range enormously depending on the venue and artist. Hotels can often reserve tickets for guests, or you can contact the venue or organisation directly. Otherwise there are a number of agencies you can try, including the following:

**Hello Ticket** (☎ 800 90 70 80, 06 480 78 400; [www.helloticket.it](http://www.helloticket.it) in Italian).

**Orbis** (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 474 47 76; Piazza dell'Esquilino 37; 11am–8pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–1pm Sat) Near the Basilica di Santa Maria Maggiore.

You can also get tickets to concerts at major record outlets, including **Messaggerie Musicali** (p169) and **Rinascita** (p162).

## ACCADEMIA DI SANTA CECILIA

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 802 42 501; [www.santacecilia.it](http://www.santacecilia.it); Auditorium Parco della Musica, Viale Pietro de Coubertin 10; ☿ or j Viale Tiziano, or shuttle bus M from Stazione Termini

Rome's major classical-music organisation, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia dates back to the 16th century when it was founded by, among others, the Renaissance composer Palestrina. The academy's programme includes a world-class symphonic season – featuring superstar guest conductors – and short festivals dedicated to single composers. The in-house orchestra is directed by London-born Italian Antonio Pappano.

## ACCADEMIA FILARMONICA ROMANA

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 320 17 52; [www.filarmonicaromana.org](http://www.filarmonicaromana.org) in Italian; Via Flaminia 118; ☿ or j Piazza Mancini The academy was founded in 1821 and its members have included Rossini, Donizetti and Verdi. Its programme concentrates on classical and chamber music, but also includes opera, ballet and multimedia events. Concerts are held at the **Teatro Olimpico** (p232).

## ASSOCIAZIONE MUSICALE ROMANA

Map pp130–1

☎ 06 393 66 322; [www.assmusrom.it](http://www.assmusrom.it) in Italian; Via Gregorio VII; ☿ Via Gregorio VII Founded to promote baroque and Renaissance music, the *associazione* organises recitals and concerts in various locations throughout the year. Its two most prestigious annual events are an international organ festival in September (in the **Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista dei Fiorentini**, p82) and a harpsichord festival in spring, but both have been hit by funding crises in recent years and so are in jeopardy – check the current press for details.

## AUDITORIUM CONCILIAZIONE

Map pp130–1

☎ 899 50 00 55; [www.auditoriumconciliazione.it](http://www.auditoriumconciliazione.it); Via della Conciliazione 4; ☿ Piazza Pia Formerly Rome's premier classical music venue, this auditorium was renovated after the Accademia di Santa Cecilia and hosts concerts (both contemporary and classical, from David Sylvian to Uto Ughi), dance performances and film screenings. There's also a specialist music bookshop on site.

# top picks

## ARTS FESTIVALS

The major festivals are outlined in the Festivals & Events chapter (p141), but for those who can't get enough culture, here are a few more:

- **Concerti del Tempio** ([www.tempietto.it](http://www.tempietto.it)) The ancient **Teatro di Marcello** (p84) is the dramatic venue for a summer concert series in August and September, when piano and chamber music bounces off the rugged stone nightly from 8.30pm.
- **Cosmophonies** (☎ 06 635 01 55; [www.cosmophonies.com](http://www.cosmophonies.com) in Italian) A short season (June to July) of theatre, music and dance held in the Roman theatre at **Ostia Antica** (p266).
- **Festival Internazionale di Villa Adriana** (☎ 06 802 41 281; [www.auditorium.com](http://www.auditorium.com)) Takes place in **Tivoli** (p277) with concerts, international theatre and dance in archaeological settings (June to July).
- **Invito alla Danza** (☎ 06 583 35 275; [www.invitoalladanza.it](http://www.invitoalladanza.it)) This mammothly popular modern-dance festival, which started in 1980, draws international performers (anything from tango to jazz) and passionate crowds to the beautiful parklands of **Villa Doria Pamphili** (Map pp122–3; Via di San Pancrazio 10) south of the Vatican in July. Tickets cost around €20.
- **New Opera Festival** (☎ 07 613 31 164; [www.newoperafestivaldiroma.com](http://www.newoperafestivaldiroma.com); Piazza San Clemente 1) Established and emerging Italian and international singers perform in the courtyard of the **Basilica di San Clemente** (p111) during July and August.

## AUDITORIUM PARCO DELLA MUSICA

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 802 41 281; [www.auditorium.com](http://www.auditorium.com); Viale Pietro de Coubertin 10; 11am–8pm Mon–Sat, 10am–8pm Sun; ☿ or j Viale Tiziano, or shuttle bus M from Stazione Termini

Three great grey pods, resembling landed spaceships, have remodelled Rome's musical landscape, both classical and contemporary. Combining architectural innovation with perfect acoustics, Rome's €140 million auditorium has proved a popular and critical success since it opened in 2002. Designed by Italy's top architect, Renzo Piano (who also designed the Pompidou Centre in Paris), it comprises three concert halls set around a 3000-capacity open-air arena. Of the three halls, the 2756-seat Sala Santa Cecilia

is the largest. Home to the Santa Cecilia Orchestra, it's spectacular, with a billowing wooden ceiling and lipstick-red seating. Every month the Parco della Musica hosts huge international names in classical, pop, rock and world music, and puts on themed festivals celebrating anything from flamenco to circuses.

The shuttle bus M service departs from Stazione Termini every 15 minutes between 5pm and the end of the last performance.

### ISTITUZIONE UNIVERSITARIA DEI CONCERTI Map p103

IUC; % 06 361 00 51; [www.concertiuc.it](http://www.concertiuc.it) in Italian; Piazzale Aldo Moro 5; Castro Pretorio The IUC organises a season of concerts in the Aula Magna of La Sapienza university, including many visiting international artists and orchestras. Held from October to May, performances cover a wide range of musical genres, including baroque, classical, contemporary and jazz. It could be the works of Mozart one week, Miles Davis the next.

### TEATRO GHIONE Map pp130-1

% 06 637 22 94; [www.ghione.it](http://www.ghione.it) in Italian; Via delle Fornaci 37; Piazza del Risorgimento, Ottaviano-San Pietro A former cinema, the Teatro Ghione is a small, beautifully restored theatre near St Peter's that offers a varied programme featuring major international performers. You can catch anything from Pirandello to opera arias, from fado to Sarah Kane.

### TEATRO OLIMPICO Map pp150-1

% 06 326 59 91; [www.teatroolimpico.it](http://www.teatroolimpico.it) in Italian; Piazza Gentile da Fabriano 17; or Piazza Mancini Home to the Accademia Filarmonica Romana, the Olimpico has excellent acoustics

## A WHITE DAY'S NIGHT

The idea of a sleepless night for an entire city, the 'white night', was first instigated in Paris. Rome soon followed suit, and the capital's *Notte Bianca* ([www.janottebianca.it](http://www.janottebianca.it)) is a wild, welcome addition to the entertainment diary, taking place in early September. For just one night museums and cultural venues stay open overnight, as do many galleries and bars, with free concerts all night long. Many important buildings that are usually closed to the public also open to all for the night. The principle is to encourage creativity, and all events are free.

and an eclectic rag-bag programme that, besides many venerable classical performances, includes farces, musicals, comedians, plays and dance (see below).

## DANCE

Dance is not an art form that receives much patronage in Italy, and the best dancers tend to go abroad to work. But the occasional visiting dance company allows opportunities to see some class acts, which are enthusiastically supported. See the daily papers and listings press for details.

### TEATRO DELL'OPERA DI ROMA

Map pp90-1  
% 06 481 60 287; [www.operaroma.it](http://www.operaroma.it); Piazza Beniamino Gigli; Repubblica Home to Rome's official corps de ballet, the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma stages a number of ballet performances in its season (December to June). The repertoire is safe, and the standard is mixed. It's recommended when there is an important guest star.

### TEATRO OLIMPICO Map pp150-1

% 06 326 59 91; [www.teatroolimpico.it](http://www.teatroolimpico.it) in Italian; Piazza Gentile da Fabriano 17; or Piazza Mancini The Teatro Olimpico keeps the Rome dance scene on its toes, with frequent world-class productions ranging from jazz to classical, ethnic to contemporary. Regular performances by big international stars – dancers, choreographers and companies – add to the glamour.

## FILM

With such a backdrop, it's unsurprising that Rome has a close relationship with the cinema. Rome's cinematic heyday was in the 1960s, with Fellini producing films like *La Dolce Vita* and *Roma*, and in the 1970s when Cinecittà (Film City) studios churned out enough spaghetti westerns to keep you entertained for life. But Rome's cinema scene has recently seen something of its former glory (if not home-grown). Major international films recently produced at Cinecittà include *Ocean's Twelve*, *Mission Impossible 3* and the TV series *Rome*, and in 2006 Rome held its first international film festival (see p142). Film-going has always remained popular, and there are some 80-odd cinemas dotted around the city. Many of these

are small, single-screen affairs, although the number of multiscreen complexes is increasing. Most foreign films are dubbed into Italian; those shown in the original language are indicated in listings by *versione originale* or VO after the title – there are several cinemas that regularly show English versions.

Tickets cost between €5 and €8. Afternoon and early-evening screenings are generally cheaper, while all tickets are discounted on Wednesday. Check the listings press or daily papers for schedules and ticket prices.

A fantastic feature of Rome's cinema scene is the summer festival period, when films are shown outdoors at various glorious locations.

### ALCAZAR Map pp122-3

% 06 588 00 99; Via Merry del Val 14; or Viale di Trastevere An old-style cinema with plush-red seats. On Monday you can see films in their original language with Italian subtitles.

### CASA DEL CINEMA Map pp150-1

% 06 42 36 01; [www.casadelcinema.it](http://www.casadelcinema.it); Largo Marcello Mastroianni 1; Via Boncompagni In Villa Borghese, the Casa del Cinema comprises an exhibition space, two projection halls, a DVD room, a café and a bookshop. It regularly screens films in their original language and has 24 computers on which you can watch a DVD from the 150-disc catalogue.

### METROPOLITAN Map pp90-1

% 06 320 09 33; Via del Corso 7; Flaminio This modern multiplex not 2m from Piazza del Popolo has four screens and the latest surround-sound audio technology. New releases, blockbusters and the more off-beat Hollywood films are regularly shown in the original language. For popular films it's best to book ahead.

### NUOVO SACHER Map pp122-3

% 06 581 81 16; [www.sacherfilm.eu](http://www.sacherfilm.eu); Largo Ascianghi 1; or Viale di Trastevere Owned by cult Roman film director Nanni Moretti, this is the place to catch the latest European art-house flick. Originally designed to support home-grown film talent, it shows films in their original language (English, French, Swedish etc) on Monday. Summer screenings take place in the courtyard next to the cinema.

## CINEMA UNDER THE STARS

There are various outdoor summer film festivals; check current listings, but these take place annually.

**Isola del Cinema** (% 06 689 66 39; [www.isoladelcinema.com](http://www.isoladelcinema.com)) Independent arty films in the fantastically romantic setting of the **Isola Tiberina** (Map pp74-5) in July and August.

**Notti di Cinema a Piazza Vittorio** (% 06 445 12 08; [www.agsanec.lazio.it](http://www.agsanec.lazio.it) in Italian) Italian and international releases at two open-air screens in **Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II** (Map pp90-1) in July and August.

## WARNER VILLAGE MODERNO

Map pp90-1  
% 06 477 79 202; Piazza della Repubblica; Repubblica

This is where big-budget Hollywood blockbusters are premiered in Italy. Hidden behind the columns that circle Piazza della Repubblica, this multiplex has five screens showing major-release commercial films (both in English and dubbed into Italian).

## OPERA

Historically, opera in Rome was long opposed by the papacy. An opera house opened here in the 17th century, but it was only after independence that Rome's opera scene began to develop. Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Puccini's *Tosca* and Rossini's operas *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *La Cenerentola* all premiered here.

Today, the opera house, Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, is a great grandiose venue, but productions tend to be a bit hit-and-miss. Best of all is when the company moves outdoors for the summer season at the ancient Roman **Terme di Caracalla** (p110). You can also see opera in various other outdoor locations including the **Basilica di San Clemente** at the annual New Opera Festival (see the boxed text, p231). Check listings for details of other outdoor performances.

### TEATRO DELL'OPERA DI ROMA

Map pp90-1  
% 06 481 60 287; [www.operaroma.it](http://www.operaroma.it); Piazza Beniamino Gigli; Repubblica The functional Fascist-era exterior of Rome's premier opera house makes the plush red-and-gilt interior a stunning surprise. This theatre has an impressive

## NO CHICKEN: WALTER VELTRONI

It's a rare politician who can include dubbing for Disney (the voice of Mayor Turkey Turkey in the Italian version of *Chicken Little*) on his curriculum vitae. But Rome's mayor loves the arts and feel-good publicity, and the two combined? All the better. Mayor of Rome since 2001, he has been a dynamic powerhouse in raising the city's cultural profile. He inaugurated Rome's star-studded international film festival in 2006, instigated the annual Notte Bianca (White Night) in 2003, pushed the money through for **La Casa del Jazz** (p224), and commissioned free annual concerts starring icons such as Paul McCartney and Simon and Garfunkel outside the Colosseum and in Circo Massimo.

His personal artistic dabblings are not limited to voicing a cartoon turkey. He has also written a novel, *La Scoperta dell'Alba* (Discovery of Sunrise; 2006), and a music biography of Italian jazz pianist Luca Flores (2003), as well as many political tomes. Veltroni even makes a cameo appearance in Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday* (a quiet civilized man, with a passion for jazz).

Veltroni has definitely had an impact on tourism – numbers were up nearly 9% on the previous year in 2007. But the mayor has his critics (see p3) and it's true that many of the vaunted arts events involve international stars, rather than promoting local artists. However, Veltroni is renowned for his winning diplomacy, fabulous networking and nice-guy politics, and at the time of writing had just been elected leader of the new Partito Democratico (Democratic Party). Rome today, Italy tomorrow.

history: it premiered Puccini's *Tosca*, and Maria Callas sang here. Built in 1880 and given a Fascist makeover in the 1920s, it has great acoustics, but contemporary productions don't always match the splendour of the setting. From July to mid-August, performances shift outdoors to the rugged Roman Terme di Caracalla, an unparalleled location.

## THEATRE

Rome has a thriving local theatre scene. Though nothing compared with Broadway or London's West End, there are more than 80 theatres dotted across town, including an increasing number of smaller experimental places. There's even a re-created Globe Theatre in Villa Borghese Park, exactly like Shakespeare's Globe in London, but with better weather. In the larger city-centre venues the programmes tend to be conservative and performances are usually in Italian.

Particular to the city are the summer festivals that make use of Rome's archaeological scenery – no city could be better suited to classic drama. Performances take place in settings such as Villa Adriana in Tivoli, Ostia Antica's Roman theatre and the Teatro di Marcello. In summer the **Miracle Players** (☎ 06 703 93 427; www.miracleplayers.org) perform classic English drama or historical comedy in English next to the Roman Forum and other open-air locations. Performances are usually free.

Further theatre information can be found online at [www.tuttot teatro.com](http://www.tuttot teatro.com) (in Italian).

### ENGLISH THEATRE OF ROME Map pp74–5

☎ 06 444 13 75; [www.rometheatre.com](http://www.rometheatre.com); Piazza Monteverde; 1 Oct-Jun; 11 Cavour

The English Theatre of Rome stages a mix of contemporary and classic plays, stand-up comedians, and bilingual productions, mainly at the Teatro L'Arciliuto, near Piazza Navona, and occasionally other venues.

### SILVANO TOTI GLOBE THEATRE

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 205 91 27; [www.globetheatreroma.com](http://www.globetheatreroma.com); Largo Aqua Felix, Villa Borghese; 9 Piazzale Brasile

In the form of an Elizabethan theatre, this is an open-air, inspiring space in the middle of Villa Borghese park. The season – mainly Shakespeare – includes occasional productions in English.

### TEATRO AMBRA JOVINELLI Map p103

☎ 06 443 40 262; [www.ambrajovinelli.com](http://www.ambrajovinelli.com) in Italian; Via G Pepe 43-47; 11 Vittorio Emanuele

A home from home for many famous Italian comics, the Ambra Jovinelli is a historic venue for alternative comedians and satirists. Besides government-bashing, the theatre also hosts productions of classics, musicals and opera, and the odd concert.

### TEATRO ARGENTINA Map pp74–5

☎ 06 684 000 311; [www.teatrodiroma.net](http://www.teatrodiroma.net) in Italian; Largo di Torre Argentina 52; 9 or j Largo di Torre Argentina

Rome's foremost theatre is one of the two official homes of the Teatro di Roma; the other is the Teatro India. Founded in 1732,

it retains its original frescoed ceiling and a grand gilt-and-velvet auditorium. Rossini's *Barber of Seville* premiered here. Today it hosts major theatre and dance productions, with occasional performances in English. Book early for the dance productions, which often sell out.

### TEATRO DELL'OROLOGIO Map pp74–5

☎ 06 683 08 330; [www.teatroorologio.it](http://www.teatroorologio.it); Via dei Filippini 17a; 9 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A well-known experimental theatre in the *centro storico*, the Orologio offers a varied programme, with works by contemporary authors (including theatrical dance pieces) and classic names, such as George Bernard Shaw. There are occasional performances in English.

### TEATRO INDIA Map pp108–9

☎ 06 553 00 894; [www.teatrodiroma.net](http://www.teatrodiroma.net) in Italian; Lungotevere dei Papareschi; 9 Via Enrico Fermi

Inaugurated in 1999 in the postindustrial landscape of Rome's southern suburbs, the India is the younger sister of the Teatro Argentina. It's a starkly modern space in a converted industrial building, a fitting setting for its cutting-edge programme, with a calendar of international and Italian works.

### TEATRO QUIRINO Map pp90–1

☎ 06 679 45 85; [www.teatroquirino.it](http://www.teatroquirino.it) in Italian; Via delle Vergini 7; 9 Via del Tritone  
Within splashing distance of the Trevi Fountain, this grand 19th-century theatre

produces well-known works by well-known playwrights. Expect to see works (in Italian) by Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, Shakespeare, Seneca and Luigi Pirandello. For some productions there's a free babysitting service for children aged six to 11 (reservation necessary).

### TEATRO SISTINA Map pp90–1

☎ 06 420 07 11; [www.ilsistina.com](http://www.ilsistina.com) in Italian; Via Sistina 129; 11 Barberini

'Life is a cabaret old chum', and this is the place to tap your toes to show tunes. Big-budget theatre spectaculars and musicals are the staples of the Sistina's ever-conservative, ever-popular repertoire.

### TEATRO VALLE Map pp74–5

☎ 06 688 03 794; [www.teatrovalle.it](http://www.teatrovalle.it); Via del Teatro Valle 23a; 9 or j Largo di Torre Argentina

This perfectly proportioned 18th-century theatre is like a pocket opera house, with three levels of red-and-gold private boxes. There are occasional English-language works performed in English with Italian subtitles, as well as concerts from rock opera to recitals.

### TEATRO VASCHELLO Map pp122–3

☎ 06 588 10 21; Via Giacinto Carini 72, Monteverde; 9 Via Giacinto Carini

Left field in terms of vibe and location, this is an independent theatre that stages interesting fringe work, including avant-garde dance performances, multimedia events and new works by emerging playwrights.

## ROMAN SUMMER

Every August Romans pour out of the city, headed for the sea or the cool of the mountains. But if you can face the heat, Rome in summer is a buzzing place to be. Between June and September, the annual **Estate Romana** ([www.estateromana.comune.roma.it](http://www.estateromana.comune.roma.it)) festival transforms much of the city centre into an open-air stage. Events include concerts, theatre performances, recitals, opera under the stars, exhibitions, DJ sets, contemporary dance, jazz festivals, book fairs, skateboard events and markets. Settings make full use of the city, ranging from chamber music in front of Teatro Marcello to Shakespeare in the Roman Forum, from concerts in parks to artificial beaches along the banks of the Tiber. Check the Estate Romana website for details of what's on this year (the programme is usually posted in late spring).

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What's your recommendation? [www.lonelyplanet.com/bluelist](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/bluelist)

## SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

### top picks

- An AS Roma or Lazio game at Stadio Olimpico (p241)
- Swimming in Lago di Albano (p241)
- Acanto Benessere Day Spa (p241)
- Cycling in the Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica (p241)
- A Six Nations rugby game at Stadio Flaminio (p241)



In Rome, allegiance to your football team comes second only to allegiance to your family. *Il calcio* (football) inspires more passion than politics, dressing up and mamma's cooking all rolled into one. Italian players are modern-day gladiators, adored by and roared at by passionate crowds. No other sport comes close in terms of TV coverage, column inches, fanatical passion, and highs and lows. For more on the subject, and to work out who wears which colour scarf, see [below](#). Basketball (p240) remains the second most popular spectator sport, but still trails football by a long way. Of late, rugby (p240) has inspired more interest than it has done previously, the surge in support correlating with the Italian team doing slightly better in the Six Nations tournament.

Romans do, as a rule, prefer watching to doing sport, but cycling is popular, and there are some attractive places around town to go running, horse riding or play golf. During the long, hot summer, you cannot beat plunging into a pool, lake or the sea, so Rome's swimming options are well worth seeking out. Also look out for opportunities to preen, indulge and pamper yourself – beauty therapies, spas and plain-old barbers will make sure you can maintain the *bella figura* (beautiful figure) despite all this activity.

## SPECTATOR SPORT FOOTBALL

In 2006, the manager of Turin team Juventus, Luciano Moggi, was discovered to be at the centre of a match-fixing ring. Italy, disillusioned, seemed almost to fall out of love with the beautiful game. Not for long though, as the national team, shaky in the early stages, suddenly found its feet and form and went on to win the 2006 World Cup. The celebrations in Rome went on for weeks as delighted fans danced for joy, jumping in and out of fountains and hooting car horns until the entire city suffered from insomnia. Half a million people filled Circo Massimo to see the captain, Fabio Cannavaro, parade the trophy.

The glory lingered, but it wasn't long before football was again tainted, this time by the recurring ugly spectre of violence in the stadium. In February 2007, a policeman died during a riot on the terraces in Catania in Sicily, and all national and international games were cancelled in the wake of his death. Only a few months later, violence erupted during an AS Roma–Manchester United game, after which police were criticised for their heavy-handed response. The national response to these and other events, apart from soul-searching and grief, has been increased CCTV at stadiums, and the issuing of named tickets.

In Rome you're either for Roma or Lazio. Rome's two teams, AS Roma (*giallorossi* – yellow and reds) and Lazio (*biancazzurri* – white and blues), play in Serie A (Italy's premier league), at the Stadio Olimpico in the Foro

### A CITY OF TWO HALVES

The Rome derby is one of the football season's most high-profile games. The rivalry between Roma and Lazio is fierce and little love is lost between the fans: according to tradition, Lazio attracts right-wing support, Roma left-wing, but in reality they both draw a mixture of political shades.

Lazio's fans traditionally come from the provincial towns outside Rome, although recent success has seen this boosted by *tifosi* (fans) from the city's wealthy middle class. Enjoying a less than brilliant press, they have an unfortunate (but deserved) reputation for racism and extreme right-wing sympathies. When Lazio player Paolo Di Canio extended his right arm in what he described as a 'Roman salute' after scoring in the 2005 derby, he immediately attained cult status.

On the other hand, Roma's supporters, known as *romanisti*, are historically working class, from Rome's Jewish community and from Trastevere and Testaccio.

So, if you go to the Stadio Olimpico, make sure you get it right – Roma fans (in deep red with a natty orange trim) flock to the Curva Sud (southern stand), while Lazio supporters (in light blue) stand in the Curva Nord (northern stand). If you want to sit on the fence, head to the Tribuna Tevere or Tribuna Monte Mario.

For more details on the clubs, check out [www.asroma.it](http://www.asroma.it) and [www.sslazio.it](http://www.sslazio.it) (both in Italian).

### FRANCESCO TOTTI

The rip-roaring, goal-scoring AS Roma captain Francesco Totti is a Roman god. He has played for AS Roma throughout his career, never being tempted away from his home town. It'd be hard to entice him: as well as a Roma patriot, Totti is Italy's top-paid footballer, earning €6 million per season, a sum that AS Roma president, Francesco Sensi, can ill afford. It's not about money though – like any good Italian boy, Totti, with his strong Roman accent, has remained close to his mamma and family in Rome.

Born in 1976, he joined AS Roma in 1989, first playing for the side aged only 16. His role is as a striker or attacking midfielder and he has scored over a hundred goals for the club – the most of any player in Serie A. Totti is famous for his chipping technique, called *er cucchiaino* (spoon) in the Roman dialect. Like David Beckham he is at once derided for stupidity and hero-worshipped for his good looks and skill on the pitch.

A career low point came when he was expelled from Euro 2004 for spitting, but he is not always so unimaginative in his pitch behaviour. In 2005, after scoring at the Rome Derby, as a tribute to his pregnant wife in the stands, he put the football up his shirt and pretended to give birth to it with the help of some other players. A surreal moment.

Totti has played for the Italy national team since 2000, and was part of the victorious 2006 World Cup squad, but afterwards he announced his intention to retire from the national team so he could concentrate solely on playing for his beloved Roma. In June 2007, he was awarded the European Golden Boot, as the highest goal scorer across all European divisions.

As Rome's Beckham, he of course has his own clothing line ('Never without you'), fulfilling the needs of fans everywhere for Totti pencil cases and rucksacks.

His summer 2005 wedding to TV starlet Ilary Blassi in the Chiesa di Santa Maria in Araceli stopped traffic in Piazza Venezia as crowds formed to hail their king. The couple has two children, Cristian and Chanel (this isn't a *Footballers' Wives* script, but real life).

Italico, north of the city centre. Both sides are considered solid, top-level performers, but Lazio has run into problems in recent years, while Roma has seen patchy success. Financial problems have beset both clubs, forcing them to sell top players and rely on one or two star performers.

Lazio's championship in 2000 broke a 26-year drought and was met with manic celebrations throughout the city, at least by the light-blue half. Representing the climax of Lazio's brief tour de force – it had previously won the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1999 – it was the club's finest moment. Basking in the glory were team coach Sven Goran Eriksson (who later became England's manager) and club president Sergio Cragnotti. However, it wasn't to last and as Cragnotti's business empire crashed around him, the club's fortunes went from bad to worse and it had to sell many star players. In the 2004–5 season the side struggled to survive and finished in an ignominious 13th place. The one highlight for fans was the presence of Paolo Di Canio, who had taken a 75% pay cut to join the club. A lifelong Lazio supporter, Di Canio provided some of the season's most controversial moments including his infamous Fascist salute during a derby game (see the boxed text, [opposite](#)). In 2007 Lazio was shamed as a result of its involvement in the match-fixing scandal, and it was announced that, after point

deductions, it would be relegated to Serie B. After an appeal, the punishment was reduced, but the team still lost its place in the following season's [Union of European Football Association](#) (UEFA; [www.uefa.com](http://www.uefa.com)) cup. However, it eventually recovered from the deduction to finish 3rd in Serie A in 2006–07.

Roma's fortunes have been similarly mixed. The club won the championship in 2001 and came second the following year. Manager Fabio Capello outraged the *giallorossi* fans and players by joining Juventus in 2004, and since then the club has struggled to find a suitable successor, with five changes of manager (the current being Luciano Spalletti). The public spat between Capello, subsequent managers, captain Francesco Totti and talented but impossible Antonio Cassano (who left for Real Madrid in 2006) were worthy of a soap opera. The 2004–05 season was disastrous, but in 2005–06 Roma fared better. It reached fifth place, but was bumped up to second when Juventus, Milan and Fiorentina lost points as a result of the match-fixing scandal. In the final of the Coppa Italia, AS Roma was beaten by Inter Milan – for the second year in a row.

In 2007 Roma won 2–1 against Manchester United, but on-pitch success was overshadowed by the accompanying violence on the terraces. When Roma re-met Manchester United away, it lost a shameful 7–1, going on to lose 8–3 on aggregate and was thus knocked out of

the Champions League. It had better success at home, finally winning against Inter Milan in the final of the Coppa Italia (2006–07), giving Rome – or rather, the yellow and red half of it – the chance to erupt with joy once again.

From September to June there's a game at home for Roma or Lazio almost every weekend and a trip to Rome's football stadium, the **Stadio Olimpico** (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 3 68 51; Viale del Foro Italico) is an unforgettable experience. Note that ticket purchase regulations are far stricter than they used to be. Tickets cost from €15 to €65. You can buy them from [www.listicket.it](http://www.listicket.it), from ticket agencies or at one of the AS Roma or Lazio stores around the city (see p162 and p176). Tickets have to bear the holder's name, and you must present a photo ID at the turnstiles when entering the stadium. If you want to buy tickets for other people, you can buy up to 10, and supply their names and dates of birth.

To get to the stadium take metro line A to Ottaviano-San Pietro and then bus 32.

## BASKETBALL

Basketball is a popular spectator sport in Rome, though inspiring nothing like the fervour of football. Rome's team, Virtus Roma, plays throughout the winter months at the **Palalottomatica** (Map p117; ☎ 199 12 88 00; Viale dell'Umanesimo; m EUR Palasport) in EUR.

## RUGBY UNION

Every time a Six Nations game gets played in Rome, the city fills with a swell of foreign spectators, easily discernable by their penchant for silly hats and beer.

Italy's rugby team, the Azzurri (the blues), entered the Six Nations tournament in 2000, and has remained the underdog in the group. Good results for the team include finishing fifth in 2003 and 2004. Such minor achievements have been reflected by a distinct lack of media interest in the game. Big matches might get a paragraph or two in national newspapers, while TV coverage is limited to the nation's smallest channel, La7. Public interest is further hampered by the complexity of the rules that no-one quite understands, not having played the game at school. However, in 2007 Italy won against both Scotland and Wales and finished in 4th place, which sparked an unprecedented wave of pride and coverage.

The team plays home international games at Rome's **Stadio Flaminio** (Map pp150–1; [www.federugby.it](http://www.federugby.it); ☎ 06 368 57 309; Viale Tiziano).

## TENNIS

Italy's premier tennis tournament, the Italian International Tennis Championships, is one of the most important events on the European tennis circuit. Every May the world's top players meet on the clay courts at the **Foro Italico** (Map pp150–1; ☎ 06 368 58 218; Viale del Foro Italico). Tickets can be bought at the Foro Italico each day of the tournament, except for the final days, which are sold out weeks in advance.

## EQUESTRIAN EVENTS

Rome's top equestrian event is the **Piazza di Siena showjumping competition** (☎ 06 638 38 18; [www.piazzadisiena.com](http://www.piazzadisiena.com)), an annual event held in May in Villa Borghese (Map pp150–1). An important fixture on the high-society calendar, it attracts a moneyed Anglophile crowd.

## ACTIVITIES GOLF

To play golf you will usually have to show a membership card from your home club and proof of handicap. Rome's best golf course, in beautiful, cypress tree-dotted countryside close to the Appia Antica, is **Circolo del Golf Roma Acquasanta** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 780 34 07; [www.golffroma.it](http://www.golffroma.it); Via Appia Nuova 716; per day €80–100; h 8am–sunset Tue–Sun; g Via Appia Nuova).

## HORSE RIDING

You can go on horse-riding excursions along and around Via Appia Antica. Call to book at **Cavalieri dell'Appia Antica** (Map pp108–9; ☎ 06 780 12 14; Via dei Cerceni 15; h Tue–Sun, closed Aug; g Via Appia Antica); excursions cost around €25 per hour.

## RUNNING

Good places to run include Circo Massimo, Villa Borghese, Villa Ada, Villa Doria Pamphilj, and along the banks of the Tiber. But for those aspiring to more than a gentle jog, the Rome Marathon, which starts and finishes at the Colosseum, takes place in late March. No longer the long and colourful fun run it once was, it's now taken seriously and attracts some of the world's top marathon runners. If you think you're up to 42km on cobblestones, register your intentions well in advance with **Italia Marathon Club** (☎ 06 406 50 64; [www.maratonadiroma.it](http://www.maratonadiroma.it)).

## CYCLING

Romans adore cycling, though they mostly head out of town in look-at-me lycra, to pedal around the countryside. You'd have to be mad to cycle in the city centre most days, but at certain times (check local press for details) it is closed to traffic, which means you can glide around with relative ease. There are also cycle lanes along the banks of the Tiber. One starts at Ponte Risorgimento and goes north, via Ponte Milvio, ending at the Castel Giubileo dam. The other starts at Ponte Sublicio and heads south, to Ponte Marconi, ending at Ponte della Magliana. Each runs through urban, suburban and rural landscapes. In time a new cycle path will link these two, but it hasn't been completed yet.

On Sundays the **Via Appia Antica** (p111) is closed to traffic, and bikes are available for hire (€3 per hour for first three hours, €9 to €10 per day) from the park information office. Two wheels is a great way to see the ancient road. On the Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica website, [www.parcopappiaantica.org](http://www.parcopappiaantica.org), you can download five biking itineraries of 6km to 17km, taking beautiful routes through the regional park, past Roman ruins and through green countryside.

## HEALTH & FITNESS DAY SPAS

### ACANTO BENESSERE DAY SPA

Map pp74–5

☎ 06 683 136 602; [www.acantobenessere.it](http://www.acantobenessere.it); Piazza Rondinini 30; h 10am–10pm Tue–Sat, 2–10pm Sun; g Corso del Rinascimento

This exquisite designer day spa near the Pantheon is mosaic-mirrored, with stained

glass, soft lighting and curvaceous white seating. It's a good place to go when you deserve a treat. It offers a wide range of facials and massages – an hour-long massage costs around €90.

### HOTEL DE RUSSIE SPA

Map pp90–1  
☎ 06 328 881; [www.hotelderussie.it](http://www.hotelderussie.it); Via del Babuino 9; h 9am–9pm Tue–Sat; m Flaminio  
The admission charge of €35 is a bargain when you consider that this glamorous and gorgeous day spa is in one of Rome's best hotels, and factor in the remote possibility of bumping into Brad Pitt in the Turkish bath, sauna or gym. Treatments are also available, including shiatsu and deep tissue massage; facials start at around €90.

## SWIMMING

On a smouldering summer's day, a dip in a swimming pool is just the ticket. Unfortunately, there are few public pools in Rome, and they are well outside the city centre, so if you want to swim without a trek you'll have to take the plunge and pay for a hotel pool.

Most public and private pools require a doctor's certificate before you are allowed to swim, so call first and ask '*serve un certificato medico?*' (do you need a medical certificate?). The pools reviewed in this chapter do not require a certificate.

For serious swimming, head to the two Olympic-sized pools at the Roman Sport Center (p242).

As soon as the weather warms up, most Romans head straight for the coast to the seaside around Ostia (25km south of Rome), though few of them go in the water – it's unappealingly

## HAIR & NAILS

You might have noticed that Italians look more groomed than other nationalities. In Rome there are beauty parlours and barbers on almost every street helping to keep them that way. It's easy to take a break, pamper yourself and gain a little Italian style in the process. Most barbers look like they haven't changed their décor since they opened sometime in the mid-19th century; a standard cut will cost around €10.

A venerable ladies beauty salon that exudes old-fashioned class is **Femme Sistina** (Map pp90–1; ☎ 06 679 84 81; Via Sistina 75; h 11am–7pm). It's more expensive than most – a pedicure with leg massage costs €45, but a leg massage for tired feet (an inviting thought after days of sightseeing) costs only €20.

A swish nail bar near the Campidoglio, **Gamax** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 693 80 479; Via d'Aracoli 35), with English-speaking staff, offers all sorts of nail treatments as well as a straightforward manicure (€20) or pedicure (€30 to €45). At less-swish places around town these treatments will usually cost around €10 and €20 respectively.

There's even an old-fashioned hairdresser especially for children, **Il Parucchiere dei Bambini e Giovanette** (Map pp74–5; ☎ 06 686 54 09; Via Metastasio 17; h 9.30am–1pm & 3–7pm Tue–Sat), with fairground-like horses and cars for the children to sit on while having their hair cut (€18).

murky. You can reach Ostia Lido (off Map pp108–9) via a 30-minute train ride from Termini. If you have your own transport, you can also head out of town to the volcanic lakes dotted around the city – the water is much cleaner and the scenery enchanting. Lago di Albano (around 12km south of Rome; off Map pp108–9), close to Castel Gandolfo, has lots of sunbeds set up around it in summer and is a good place for swimming, basking and taking out a pedalo.

### GRAND HOTEL PARCO DEI PRINCIPI

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 85 44 21; www.parcodprincipi.com; Via G Frescobaldi 5; admission per day €60; ⌚ 10am–6.30pm May–Sep; 📍 Via Paisiello

On the edge of Villa Borghese, this [hotel](#) (p262) has a lovely pool shaded by tall trees and surrounded by flowers and rows of sun loungers. The daily rate means it's usually deserted, though weekends can be busier.

### PISCINA DELLE ROSE

Map pp108–9

☎ 06 592 97 17; www.piscinadellerose.it; Viale America 20; per half-/full day €13/15; ⌚ 10am–10pm Mon–Fri, 9am–7pm Sat & Sun Jun–Sep; 📍 EUR Palasport

Out in the southern district of EUR, this open-air place is Rome's largest public

swimming pool. It gets crowded, so get in early to grab a poolside deck chair, lie back and be entertained by the aqua aerobics as you take it easy.

## GYMS

### FARNESE FITNESS

Map pp74–5

☎ 06 687 69 31; www.farnesefitness.com in Italian; Vicolo delle Grotte 35; ⌚ 9am–10pm Mon & Wed, 8am–10pm Tue & Thu, 9am–9pm Fri, 11am–7pm Sat, 10.30am–1.30pm Sun; 📍 Corso Vittorio Emanuele II

A handy city-centre gym in a historic building, with classes including fitness, dance, martial arts and pilates. There's a weights room and separate saunas for men and women. Day membership costs only €12.

### ROMAN SPORT CENTER

Map pp150–1

☎ 06 320 16 67; www.romansportcenter.com; Viale del Galoppatoio 33; ⌚ 8am–10pm Mon–Sat; 📍 Spagna

This is Rome's largest gym, where you'll find squash courts, two Olympic-sized swimming pools, saunas and all the latest hi-tech gym equipment you could possibly need. It costs €26/220 per day/month to use the facilities.

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