Map of Popular Tourist Sites in the Lazio Region Accessible from Civitavecchia Port

- Bolsena
- Civita di Bagnoregio
- Tarquinia
- Civitavecchia Port
- Vatican City
- Rome
- Fiumicino Airport
- Ciampino Airport

www.TomsPortGuides.com
INFO YOU NEED TO PLAN TOURS from Civitavecchia to Rome, Tarquinia, Tuscania, Lake Bolsena, Civita di Bagnoregio, and Orvieto in the picturesque Lazio region of Italy. This 61-page guide has 27 walking tour maps and 78 photos. Transportation options are train, bus, car. Comparison of the ship’s bus tours vs private tours in a van.

Civitavecchia is the “ideal port for shore excursions” in the beautiful Lazio Region of Italy. North of Civitavecchia are many scenic towns, lake resorts, historic sites, castles, churches, vineyards, etc. Rome and Vatican City are fifty miles southeast of Civitavecchia. Rome is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world! Visitors can see priceless art, visit historic buildings, museums, palaces, churches, ruins, plazas with fountains, and relax in Rome’s beautiful public parks.

There are trains from Civitavecchia to Rome where you can use public transit to tour the city. It’s an 18-minute walk from the Civitavecchia port shuttle bus stop to the train station. The train to Rome takes 60-90 minutes.

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CAVEAT
Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify the information you use for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

Tom Sheridan
NOTE: I would like to thank Keith Henderson, Jim Kurovsky, Mike Harper, Colin Kathryn Gregg, Jianming Miao, and Nathasha Swaminathan for their help on this port guide.
Civitavecchia (chE-vE-ta-vek-ya) is the cruise port for Rome and the major ferry port for sea connection from central Italy to Sardinia, Sicily, Malta, Tunis and Barcelona. This map shows where cruise ships dock and some of the nearby important tourist sites. You can walk through the port, but it’s safer to use the free port shuttle bus to ride from your ship through this industrial port to the Port Shuttle Bus Stop outside the port.
A Walking Tour of Civitavecchia

A walking tour is a great way to explore Civitavecchia. There are many historic sites, scenic areas, churches, postcard photo opportunities, and places to explore. This area is “lived in” - there are outdoor cafes, shops, restaurants, etc. along the route. The streets are flat and easy to walk. Proceed at your own pace and take time to enjoy Civitavecchia. You can spend several hours or most of the day on your walking tour.

The walking tour begins at the Port Shuttle Bus stop and ends at the Church of the Holy Japanese Martyrs which is 1300 feet (400 meters) past the Civitavecchia Train Station.

• It’s a 35 minute walk and 1.7 miles (2.7 km) from the Port Shuttle Bus Stop to the Church of the Holy Japanese Martyrs.
• The return from the Church of the Holy Japanese Martyrs to the Port Shuttle Bus Stop is a more direct route of 1.1 miles (1.8 km) and 22 minutes along SS1 Via Aurelia. You can avoid the walk back by taking a cab or bus (for a few euros) from the Train Station to the Port Shuttle Bus Stop.

There are 15 sites along this route. These are the most important historic sites, scenic areas, monuments, squares, museums, and churches to visit, photograph, and explore:

1) Port Shuttle Bus Stop (near Largo Della Pace)  
2) Ancient Fortress of Civitavecchia  
3) Porta Livorno  
4) Fontana del Vanvitelli  
5) The Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi  
6) Church of the Star in Piazza Leandra square  
7) Archetto Passage in Piazza Aurelio Saffi square  
8) Santa Maria dell’ Oratione e Morte (Church of Death)  
9) The Market – a farmers market open in the morning  
10) National Archaeological Museum  
11) Scenic View of port - climb stairs above McDonald’s  
12) Fortress Michelangelo  
13) The Church of the Immaculate Conception  
14) Civitavecchia Train Station  
15) Church of the Holy Japanese Martyrs

Why GPS Coordinates Are Important

GPS coordinates are a powerful tool to help you plan your shore excursion:

• GPS coordinates show the EXACT location on a digital map such as Google or Bing.
  The format I use is Degrees, Minutes, and Seconds ddd° mm' ss.ss” N ddd° mm' ss.ss” E.
  For example:
  The Port Shuttle Bus stop GPS = 42°05'50.3”N 11°47’18.7”E
  To find the Port Shuttle bus stop on Google or Microsoft Bing maps
  Copy and paste GPS coordinates from this guide into the map search box and press the enter key
  Or type GPS coordinate numbers and periods into the map search box replacing the symbols for degrees, minutes, and seconds with spaces. Type 42 05 50.3 n 11 47 18.7 e into the map search box and press the enter key.

• You can use Google Maps on a home computer, to “preview your walk of the streets of Civitavecchia”. Google maps have “street-level photos” which are incredibly helpful to spot landmarks and “see” the intersections and turns along the walking route. For information on how to use Google and Bing maps, see my map user guide at http://www.tomsportguides.com/map-user-guide.html

• Program your hand held GPS, tablet, or phone with these GPS coordinates. If you carry a GPS enabled device that has Italy maps and these GPS coordinates, you will always know where you are and the walking route to your destination. See my guide on GPS devices at http://www.tomsportguides.com/world-gps-maps.html
1) Port Shuttle Bus Stop (near Largo Della Pace)  GPS = 42°05'50.3"N 11°47'18.7"E

Civitavecchia is a large industrial port. See the map on page 2 of this guide.

If your ship is docked close to Fort Michelangelo, you might walk into the city. However, many docks are a long walk to the city. Also, there is industrial traffic in some areas of the port and there is a lot of bus traffic throughout the port. Hence, the port shuttle bus is safer than walking through the port.

If you are dragging suitcases or if you have mobility issues, the port shuttle bus is a good choice. The buses run from 8 am. When many people are using port buses, you may have to wait at the bus stop for a connection to the public bus or to get a taxi to the train station. This walking tour of Civitavecchia begins at the Port Shuttle bus stop as shown by the red dashed line on the map below.
The Roman Dock is the oldest part of the port. It has been used for 2000 years. Today, the dock is lined with fishing boats. It’s an interesting area to stop for photos. Note that the street along the dock is very narrow and does not have a pedestrian sidewalk. Take care.

2) Ancient Fortress of Civitavecchia  GPS = 42°05'39.0"N 11°47'21.9"E
The ruins of the fortress are also referred to as “Antica Rocca di Civitavecchia.” The fortress dates back to 1455. The area is fenced in, but you can view the ruins and will have excellent views of the port for photos.

3) Porta Livorno  GPS = 42°05'37.9"N 11°47'22.6"E
There is a 615 foot long defensive wall along the harbor that was built to protect the city from enemy attacks. Porta Livorno is a gate in the wall that was built in 1761 in honor of Pope Clemens XIII. Further south along this massive wall is the historic fountain Fontana del Vanvitelli.

It’s important to note that you can only see the wall from the harbor near the water. The view of the wall from the city is blocked by high rise buildings. Note that these buildings have patios along the top of the wall where there are restaurants, cafes, and shops. There are also many nice restaurants and shops nearby in the city.

You might want to stop in this area on your return walk to the Port Shuttle bus stop to have lunch or a drink and enjoy the scenic views from the patio before you return to your ship.

4) Fontana del Vanvitelli
GPS = 42°05'35.0"N 11°47'25.4"E
Be sure to stop for a photo of this historic fountain. It’s an impressive monument of travertine built by Luigi Vanvitelli in 1743.

The head is an old faun.
The Map Below Shows the Walking Route as a dashed red line from 2) Ancient Fortress to 13) Church of the Immaculate Conception.
5) The Cathedral of Saint Francis of Assisi
GPS = 42°05'32.8"N 11°47'30.8"E
The Cathedral (photo at right) is the most important church in Civitavecchia. Stop by the statue outside the church and be sure to visit the interior to see the beauty of this impressive church.

From the cathedral, follow the dashed red line on the map on page 7. Walk north 140 feet on road SS1 and turn right on Via Giuseppi Gusti. Immediately bear left thru the parking lot on Via Piave and turn left into Piazza Leandra. The Church of the Star will be in front of you.

6) Church of the Star
GPS = 42°05'36.4"N 11°47'31.4"E
Visit the beautiful, old Church of the Star (Google street level photo at left). On Good Friday, the statue of Christ is taken from the church for a procession.

The square in front of the church is Piazza Leandra. It’s the oldest square in the city. There’s a medieval fountain in the square. Take time to observe the old buildings and take lots of photos.

This area of the city has many restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, etc.

From Church of the Star walk north, past the medieval fountain. Turn right, walk up the ramp through Archetto Passage, a 9th C gate in the ancient Roman wall. (Photo at right)

7) Archetto Passage  GPS = 42°05'37.8"N 11°47'32.3"E
You exit the gate in the wall into Piazza Aurelio Saffi one of the oldest squares in the city. Stop to take a (photo at left) of this impressive, ancient tower.

There are many shops, cafes, and restaurants along this street.

Walk north. It’s 235 feet to Santa Maria dell’ Oratone e Morte“Church of Death”, on your right.

8) Santa Maria dell’ Oratone e Morte
GPS = 42°05'39.9"N 11°47'31.1"E
Since the 16th C, some associations within the Catholic church have focused on spiritual welfare of the dying and dead to give them a christian burial. The Church of St. Mary of prayer and death was built in 1685. It has many symbols of death in it’s statues, paintings, frescoes, and the crypt.
When you are done visiting the church, follow the dashed red line on the map on page 7. The second street on the right of the church is Via Monte Grappa. Walk south 500 feet to Piazza Regina Margherita, the square around the Market.

9) **The Market**  

GPS = 42°05′35.9″N 11°47′38.5″E

The market has several names including “Civitavecchia Market”, “San Lorenzo Market”, and “Mercato Di Civitavecchia”. **It’s only open in the morning and closes around noon. Plan accordingly.**

The market is under tents where vendors offer fruit, vegetables, cheese, bread, pastry, nuts, flowers, etc. There are also vendors who offer clothes, shoes, and a number of other products. Some stalls offer prepared foods and there are pizzerias, bars, and other shops in the area. There are refrigerated buildings nearby where you can buy fresh fish, meat, etc. **I highly recommend visiting the market.** It’s fun and a pleasant experience. It’s a great place to visit and an opportunity to take photos. We bought fresh flowers and took them back to our ship.
From the market, walk southeast on Via Risorgimento, turn right onto Corso Centocelle and walk southwest. See the map on page 7. Most of this street is closed to vehicles. There are stores, restaurants, and bars with sidewalk umbrellas where you can enjoy a cappuccino, cocktail, or lunch.

10) National Archaeological Museum GPS = 42°05'27.3"N 11°47'33.5"E
The museum is in an 18th-century building that had been used as the papal garrison. Three floors exhibit Roman artifacts unearthed during excavations of the area. The most important exhibits are a Roman copy of the portrait of Socrates and a statue of Apollo.
Admission is free. Hours are 8:30 to 19:30 Tuesday thru Sunday. Closed on Monday.

11) Scenic View from the stairs above Mc Donald’s GPS = 42°05'26.0"N 11°47'32.1"E
When you are facing McDonald's look to the left. There’s a stairway to walk to a higher level for great views and photos of the port and Fortress Michelangelo.

12) Fortress Michelangelo GPS = 42°05'26.1"N 11°47'29.3"E
Fort Michelangelo was built in 1535 as a strategically important defensive structure. It’s an impressive, prominent structure in the port and is located on the site of an ancient Roman fortress. Michelangelo designed the tower.
Admission is free. Hours are 10:00-13:00 and 16:00-19:00 hrs. It’s only open on Saturday and Sunday.

13) The Church of the Immaculate Conception GPS = 42°05'25.7"N 11°47'35.6"E
Built in 1740, the church is known as the “Church of St. Anthony Abbot” and the "Church of the Ghetto". It was subsequently re-dedicated to those who died in the first and second world wars. The square in front of the church is known as “Heroes Square”.
A miracle occurred in 1854 in the church that was witnessed and verified by the bishops and accepted by Pope Pius IX.
The miracle involved the statue of Our Lady who moved her eyes several times, over several months, when children were preparing for first communion. The name of the church was changed from “Saint Antonio Abate” to “Immaculate Conception.”

14) Civitavecchia Train Station  
GPS = 42°05′17.4″N 11°47′52.5″E
Walk on the north side of the street near the hotels as you approach the station or cross the street as shown by the dashed red line on the map on page 10. There are public buses and taxis at the train station.

15) Church of the Holy Japanese Martyrs  
(Chiesa Dei Santi Martiri Giapponesi)  
GPS = 42°05′09.4″N 11°48′04.9″E
Walk 1300 feet (400 meters) past the Civitavecchia Train Station. The Church of the Holy Japanese Martyrs is on the right just past the IP Gas Station. There’s a statue of St Francis in front of the church.

Many missionaries left Italy from Civitavecchia to travel the world and convert others to Christianity. This church was built in 1864 and is dedicated to 26 martyrs crucified in Nagasaki, Japan during their missionary work. The interior is impressive, see the Google photo above right.

Civitavecchia is an Ideal Cruise Port

It’s a clean, comfortable port city where you can enjoy a walking tour of the old town historic and restaurant areas close to your ship. Civitavecchia is along the coast near the north-south center of the beautiful Lazio Region of Italy that has many scenic towns, historic sites, castles, churches, vineyards, lake resorts, etc. Popular tourist sites north of Civitavecchia include Tarquinia, Tuscania, Ville Lante, Lake Bolsena, Civita di Bagnoregio, and Orvieto. Tourist sites 50 miles southeast of Civitavecchia include Vatican City, Rome, the surrounding area and the Fiumicino Airport, and Ciampino Airport.

Rome and the Vatican City area are one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. You can see priceless art, visit historic buildings, museums, palaces, churches, ruins, plazzas with monuments and fountains, and relax in beautiful public parks. The restaurants are excellent and shopping is fantastic.
Shore Excursion Travel Options = 1) Public Transit, 2) The Ship’s Bus Tour, and 3) A Private Van Tour

I have a web-page that discusses and compares travel options for shore excursions
See  http://www.tomsportguides.com/choices.html

1) Public Transit
You can take a train from Civitavecchia south to Rome and use the excellent public transit system of trains, metro, buses, and trams plus walking to tour the city. The Civitavecchia Train Station is an 18-minute walk from the port shuttle bus stop. There’s a train to Rome about every 30 minutes and the train ride is 60-90 minutes depending on which station you exit the train.

Train travel is a good option between Civitavecchia and Rome. But trains are not practical for most tourist sites north of Civitavecchia due to limited schedules. Use the ship’s bus tour or a private van tour to sites north of Civitavecchia.

2) The Ship’s Bus Tour
The ship’s bus tour is impersonal, follows a rigid schedule, the bus parks a long way from the tourist sites (I have to walk to the sites), I can’t take good pictures from the bus, and, if lunch is included, it’s at a large, crowded, noisy restaurant that seats a lot of people on bus tours. The ship’s bus tour is not my favorite.

3) A Private Tour in a Van
A private tour is designed for our specific interests. We can modify the tour as we travel. The van parks next to the tourist sites to minimize walking. The driver will stop for photos. If lunch is included, it’s at a small, quiet restaurant with an excellent view and outstanding food. My wife and I, and our friends, strongly prefer a private tour in a van vs. the ship’s bus tour.

The most important issue is to find an outstanding tour company. Private tour companies range from poor to outstanding. It can be difficult to find the best tour companies. Hence, I plan to create a new web-page: “Toms Picks – The Best Private Tour Companies”. This is the type of information I will publish.

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**All Around Italy by Fabrizio ★★★★★**

My first choice shore excursion is a Private Tour. It's the best, easiest, and most flexible method to travel. An outstanding tour company makes it an enjoyable experience that “memories are made of.”

We’ve cruised Italy many times and found private tour companies that range from poor to outstanding. Our favorite is http://www.allarounditaly.net  The owner is Fabrizio Melaragno. We have toured with his company for 8 years. All of the tours have been outstanding!

Fabrizio is the best tour guide we have ever met. He lives in Rome, provides private tours from Rome to every other city in Italy, and shore excursion tours from ships that dock or tender ashore at Civitavecchia, Livorno, La Spezia, Naples, Sorrento, and Amalfi.

His company also offers private land tours from Rome hotels such as:

To Cerveteri with a tour inside LaBanditaccia Etruscan Necropolis. Continue to the little town of Bracciano to Castello Odescalchi, the most beautiful medieval castle in Italy. It's in perfect condition. Drive to the nearby lake to see the little villages around it. The day tour can stop in Ceri at the ancient Farnese's patrician family mansion perched on tufa rocks, where your group can have a delicious light lunch at the Restaurant "LaRocca ".

A day tour to the Roman countryside with stop in Tivoli and his villa d'Este typical Italian Renaissance style Palace and gardens. The tour continues with a drive to Frascati famous "Frascati Superiore" in the wine country area of the Castelli Romani, Castel Gandolfo (the pope’s summer residence), and the nearby lake. You can have a light, delicious lunch in the medieval burgus of the Castle.

From Rome, but not from Civitavecchia, a very successful day excursion to Tuscany countryside with stops by Montalciano, Montepulciano, Pienza along the countryside with wine tasting and lunch at a local wine, cheese & oil producer.

For more information on these and other tours, visit the website at http://www.allarounditaly.net
Contact email:  info@allarounditaly.net  Phone +39 3343346131

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Tom Sheridan

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Checklist for Planning a Shore Excursion

Some of the sites may be closed the day your ship is in port. Throughout this guide, I provide information to help you create your travel plan by providing sources of information, web-links, maps, and advice. Please consider the following issues when planning your shore excursion.

- **Check the days museums and tourist sites are open.** The Vatican Museum is closed on Sunday and the Pope usually says Mass outside on Wednesday morning. The Basilica is closed during mass. Check the open days and hours for the sites you wish to visit.

- **Buy admission tickets to museums on the internet BEFORE your cruise to avoid long lines.** There are several websites that sell tickets. You’ll receive an email with a voucher and the time you are expected to enter the museum quickly with almost no waiting. Tickets purchased on-line are more expensive than those purchased at the site, but it’s the only way to avoid waiting in line.

- **Prepare for pickpockets - they’re everywhere, at all public places, and in crowded areas including the churches in Rome.** “Rome, Naples, Barcelona, and Madrid are the Pickpocket Capitals of the World.” See [https://www.bella-toscana.com/pickpocketsinitaly.htm#W1Xu_9JKhPY](https://www.bella-toscana.com/pickpocketsinitaly.htm#W1Xu_9JKhPY)

- **Anti-theft devices are inexpensive and provide a high level of protection.** Search Google for anti-pickpocket or theft-proof wallets, handbags, purses, etc. One of my favorites is Pacsafe at [https://www.pacsafe.com/](https://www.pacsafe.com/) I use Pacsafe wallets and a steel wire lined strap on my Nikon camera. Many of my friends use Scottevest multi-concealed pocket clothing [https://www.scottevest.com/](https://www.scottevest.com/) Purchase your anti-theft, anti-pickpocket devices before your cruise.

- **Be aware of potential problems when taking a train between Civitavecchia and Rome.** On Italian holidays, the trains can be overcrowded. A train that has no room for additional passengers will not stop at Civitavecchia. We’ve experienced this problem and could not get on a train to Rome. Another complication is when there are thousands of people on cruise ships in Civitavecchia trying to get on a train to Rome. I discuss these issues in detail in my Transfer Guide.

**Traveling from Civitavecchia to Rome by Train**

Written by Keith Henderson

For those that like to explore ports on their own, traveling from Civitavecchia to Rome is easy to navigate on your own. The most important thing is to have a plan on what you want to see and do in advance so that you do not waste precious time once you get there.

From the Port Shuttle Bus Stop, it’s a short 18 minute walk to the Civitavecchia train station (stazione). As you enter the main lobby of the train station, it will be filled with fellow cruisers all looking to buy train tickets to go to Rome. The lobby has agents at windows that sell tickets along with automated machines on the side of the room. But if you go to your right, through an archway, you will come across a variety of shops that have signs saying they sell train tickets. So don’t worry, you do not need to wait in line for the official ticket agents. Just keep on walking to find a shop with little or no line.

From Civitavecchia you will see that there a few options regarding trains that go to Rome. Almost every 30 minutes, there will be a regional train stopping at the station in addition to slightly faster inter-city trains that run only a few times a day.

If you want to go to the main station (Roma Termini) in Rome, the regional train takes about 80 minutes and the inter-city (IC) train takes about 60 minutes. From Civitavecchia to Roma S. Pietro (first stop in Rome) it is about 20 minutes sooner for the regional train with several stops after it on the way to Roma Termini. The intercity train only stops at Roma Ostiense and Roma Termini.
Note: If a train is full prior to arriving to Civitavecchia, they will announce that the train will not stop there. But hey, it is Italy. You need to be prepared for delays or inconveniences.

**The best option for those that want to DIY is a special ticket offered at the various locations in the station called BIRG. (Biglietto Intergrato Regionale Giornaliero)**

A BIRG ticket costs ~12€ and entitles you to take any regional train from Civitavecchia to any station between Civitavecchia and the main station in Rome (Roma Termini) and then return to Civitavecchia. But, the best part is that you can also use the same ticket with any of the public transportation (ATAC) in Rome for the day. This includes buses, trams, and the subways (Metro). So, once you get to Rome you can use any option to easily get around Rome depending on your plans. The BIRG tickets are not valid on the inter-city trains or trains going to the Fiumicino Airport, only on the regional trains to Rome.

Inside the station, there are large displays of train schedules for the upcoming hours where they will note the train number, arrival time, the track where it is to arrive, and whether it is a regional train or inter-city. Prior to coming to Italy, you can go online with the Trenitalia website to print out a schedule of trains going to Roma Termini from Civitavecchia and vice-versa. This will help you understand your options.

Once you buy a ticket, you will head to the platforms behind the station. To get there, you will need to go down stairs to the tunnel that runs underneath all of the platforms and tracks.

The MOST important thing to remember is that you need to have each ticket validated with a time stamp before getting onto a train. Look around the station in the tunnel and near the platforms and you will spot yellow boxes to time stamp your ticket. If you do not have the ticket validated, your ticket is not considered valid.

In Italy, they do not usually have conductors or bus drivers check your tickets. It’s an honor system where it is assumed that you have purchased a valid ticket. But, occasionally they will have ticket agents come through the train, buses, and subways to check for tickets and there is a hefty fine of 50€ if they catch you. They will not accept any excuse for being on board without having a time-stamped ticket.

Once you do get on a regional train, you can sit anywhere as they do not have reserved seating like the inter-city trains that have first and second class seats. You need to be aware of the train stations that will be just before the one where you want to get off. They do not always make announcements on the train of approaching stations and they only stop for a few minutes before continuing to the next station. It is helpful to have a printed schedule of the train route with its stations from the Trentalia website. [http://www.trenitalia.com/](http://www.trenitalia.com/)

**Rome has several train stations as shown on the map on the next page.**

As you enter Rome from Civitavecchia, you will pass Roma S. Pietro, Roma Trastavere, and Roma Ostiense prior to Roma Termini (the main station in Rome). Depending on your plans, you will want to get off at the station that will get you to your first destination quickly. The map on the next page shows the stations and several popular tourist sites.

Each location on this map is indicated by a green arrow. The arrows show the precise location of the site. Enter the GPS coordinates into the Google Map search box and press the enter key to see location.

**Train Stations in Rome**

- San Pietro Rome Train Station
  - GPS = 41°53′46.4″N 12°27′16.9″E
- Trastavere Rome Train Station
  - GPS = 41°52′21.9″N 12°27′57.6″E
- Ostiense Rome Train Station
  - GPS = 41°52′23.4″N 12°29′03.2″E
- Termini Rome train Station
  - GPS = 41°54′03.9″N 12°30′06.7″E

**List of popular tourist sites on the map with GPS coordinates and a brief description**

**Vatican, Saint Peters Square**

GPS = 41°54′08.1″N 12°27′26.2″E

**Vatican City:** Saint Peter's Basilica, 8 museums, 5 galleries and the Sistine Chapel. Flash photography is not permitted in the Vatican Museum, and no photography in the Sistine Chapel. Visitors wearing; shorts, sleeveless T-Shirts or blouses or are not permitted to enter St. Peter’s Basilica or the Vatican Museums. Piazza San Pietro can hold 400,000 people and the area is surrounded by 284 Doric columns, designed by Bernini
Castel Sant Angelo  GPS = 41°54'09.4"N 12°27'59.0"E
A fortress built by Emperor Hadrian as his mausoleum in 139 A.D.

Pantheon  GPS = 41°53'55.0"N 12°28'36.6"E
In Piazza della Rotonda in the center of the City, it's the most perfect of the ancient monuments. First erected in 27 B.C.

Piazza Navona  GPS = 41°53'56.3"N 12°28'22.9"E
One of the most beautiful squares, dominated by Bernini’s impressive ‘Fountain of the Four Rivers’. Many outdoor cafes.

Colosseum  GPS = 41°53'24.8"N 12°29'32.1"E
(72 A.D.) at Piazzale del Colosseo, is Ancient Rome’s best known monument and was the arena of games and gladiators. Arch of Constantine, next to the Colosseum, was erected in 315 A.D. The Forum, adjoining the Palantine Hill, is now a mass of ruins.

Piazza Venezia  GPS = 41°53'44.0"N 12°28'57.5"E
The huge monument to Victor Emmanuel II, built in 1911 of white marble, the largest outdoor altar in Europe, Italy’s ‘Tomb of the Unknown Soldier’. This site is called “the wedding cake” by Italians.
Fontana di Trevi (Trevi Fountain)  GPS = 41°54'03.6"N 12°28'59.8"E  
Trevi is the most famous fountain in Rome, located on Via Della Muratte. There is a romantic legend that “whoever tosses in a coin will one day return to Rome”.

Piazza di Spagna (Spanish Steps)  GPS = 41°54'21.2"N 12°28'56.5"E  
Named after a palace that housed the Spanish Embassy. The oldest feature of the area is the Barcaccia Fountain, depicting a sinking barge. The 137 steps were built by the French to connect the French Quarter at the top, to the Spanish Quarter below.

Villa Borghese  GPS = 41°54'46.6"N 12°29'06.4"E  
The most famous of Rome’s parks, includes the Galleria Borghese, a pleasure palace created by Cardinal Borghese in 1613.

Walking Route (map at right)  
from San Pietro Train Station to Piazza San Pietro to the Vatican Museum

San Pietro Train Station  GPS = 41°53'46.4"N 12°27'16.9"E  
St Peter’s Square (Piazza San Pietro)  GPS = 41°54'08.3"N 12°27'30.1"E  
It’s a 1 Km, 13 minute walk from San Pietro Train Station to St Peters Square as shown by the dashed red line on the map at right.

Vatican Museum Entrance GPS = 41°54'25.2"N 12°27'12.4"E  
It’s an additional 0.9 Km and an 11 minute walk from St Peters Square to the entrance to the Vatican Museum as shown by the dashed blue line on the map.

I’ve shown the #6 HopOn Big Bus stop. Unfortunately, the city of Rome has changed and restricted stops for HopOn buses. The buses used to stop next to St Peter’s Square. Today, the bus stop is across the river from Castel Sant’ Angelo. Some tourist sites are a fairly long walk from the HopOn bus stops. The map above is a section of the Central Rome public transit map. You can download the full size map for Central Rome Train, Tram, Bus and Metro routes and stops from http://www.atac.romait/files/doc.asp?r=383  

One of the best, most useful websites for information/advice on visiting Rome is https://www.rome.info/  
For information on transportation, see See https://www.rome.info/transportation/  
For information on the metro, see https://www.rome.info/metro/  

Rome metro (subway), simply called Metropolitana by Italians. The metro runs approximately every 7-10 minutes, from 5:30am until 11.30pm every day (until 0:30am on Saturdays). Ordinary tickets can be bought throughout the metro stations from vending machines or booths. Tickets can be purchased also in newsstands and tabacchis. The drivers do not sell any tickets. For daily or weekly tickets see https://www.rome.info/transportation/tickets/  (see the Metro map on the next page)
Just north of the Vatican are two Metro Stations of the Red A line (Cipro-Musei Vaticani and Ottoviano-S. Pietro). From those stations you can head towards the Termini station with stops for Villa Borghese (Flaminio station) and the Spanish Steps (Spagna station).

Buses allow you to cover a lot of ground in a short time. All buses are clearly marked with a number and each bus stop will have signs showing the bus schedules of each bus that makes stops there by their number. For each bus, there is a display showing the stops on its route that are before and after the stop where you are. In a lot of cases more than one bus will be stopping at a location you may want to go to. Just be aware of the name of the bus stops you want to go to and scan the signs to be sure of all of the bus numbers that can take you there. At the larger bus stops, there are electronic signs showing the approaching buses by numbers and the approximate time they will arrive at your location. There are also a few trams in the public transportation system.

**Roma Trastavere train station**  
GPS = 41°52'21.9"N 12°27'57.6"E

This is the station where you can get off to catch a bus or tram to take you to the area around Piazza Navona and the Pantheon. The Trevi Fountain is about a 10 minute walk from the Pantheon. For those who want to take the train to the Fiumicino airport, the Trastavere station is where you can catch the FR1 train to take you there. *(The BIRG ticket cannot be used for the FR1 train to the airport)*
**Roma Ostiense Station**  
GPS = 41°52'23.4"N 12°29'03.2"E  
This is where you can get off to visit the Colosseum and Forum Areas. Next to the train station is a Metro station of the Blue B line called Piramide. You go inside and find the track that heads to towards Rebibbia. You can get off at either the Circo Massimo station or the Colosseo station before the Roma Termini station.

**Roma Termini Station**  
GPS = 41°54'03.9"N 12°30'06.7"E  
This is where you can find the hop-on hop-off (HOHO) buses. The main entrance of the station is about a 15 minute walk from where you get off the train.

A great resource with a ton of information on Rome and exploring it on your own is “Ron in Rome”. Ron Philips is an American that has spent quite a bit of time in Rome and his website offers plenty of advice on navigating the public transportation systems, tips about visiting sites, and useful information about Rome itself. See [http://www.roninrome.com/](http://www.roninrome.com/)

One thing that you should have with you is a map of Rome. They are several companies that offer tourist maps of Rome and other major cities. My personal favorite maps are Popout Maps ([www.popoutproducts.com](http://www.popoutproducts.com)). They are small (approx. 3 ½” x 5”) and open out to show several areas of interest with different maps. They also include a map of the subway systems (if they exist in a city). I have used them for Rome, London, Berlin, and Frankfurt and they saved me a lot of time negotiating my way around those cities.

Another useful item is to have a small Italian/English phrase book. While you can usually get by speaking English in Rome, I always found it helpful to have a book handy if wanted to ask a specific question and or just to be polite. My favorites are Rick Steves’ books and ones published by Fodor. I keep them handy along with a map in my coat pocket or small backpack that I use as a camera case.

Some sites in Rome require tickets for access while others are free. Most of the churches, including St. Peter’s at the Vatican are free. This is true for other popular spots like the Pantheon, Trevi Fountain, Piazza Navona, and the Spanish Steps. Museums, including the one at the Vatican, have tickets requirements along with the Colosseum and Forum Areas. If you have definite plans for the Vatican Museum (includes the Sistine Chapel) or the Colosseum/Forum, go to their online websites and order your tickets in advance. This will allow you to skip the long lines for those waiting to buy a ticket.

Here is one for the Vatican: [http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html](http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html)

This is a good one for the Colosseum and other sites: [http://www.rome-museum.com/?gclid=CICe-9zdqLECFSSgbQgodUgoAmQ](http://www.rome-museum.com/?gclid=CICe-9zdqLECFSSgbQgodUgoAmQ)

**General tips:**

**Vatican** – If you go to the Vatican and want to visit St. Peter’s Cathedral, you can expect lines of people waiting to go through the security checkpoints. At these same stations, they have “Fashion Police” that will not allow entrance into the cathedral if your shoulders and knees are not covered (men and woman). They are very serious about this. Local vendors around the Cathedral do a brisk business selling shawls for women to cover their shoulders or to wrap around their hips as a long skirt. You can bring cameras inside to take pictures. For the Vatican Museum including the Sistine Chapel, a ticket is required. Cameras are allowed everywhere except you cannot take photos inside the Sistine Chapel. They have plenty of guards that will approach you if they see you trying to take a photo inside there. To get to the Sistine Chapel, you will have to go through a large part of the museum complex first. Also, if you want to visit St. Peter’s after seeing the Sistine Chapel, you are supposed to go back to the entrance/exit area of the museum and then walk all the way around the walls of the Vatican and get into the line for St. Peter’s. If you are lucky and spot a tour group in the Sistine Chapel, you can try to sneak into line with them as they are taken to a back door that leads into St. Peter’s without having to get into the security line. 

*We spent an entire afternoon one time at the Vatican and did not see everything it has to offer.*
Colosseum/Forum – If you want to go inside the Colosseum and/or Forum areas, you will need to buy a ticket. One good thing is that a ticket entitles you to visit both sites (with or without a guided tour). There are restrooms to be found inside both. If you do not want to order a ticket on-line in advance you will find much shorter lines for tickets at the entrance of the Palatine Hill that you can use at the Colosseum.

At the other end of the Roman Forum area is the Monte Capitolino hill that overlooks the Roman Forum and Imperial Forum. It includes 2 museums of ancient Roman artifacts called the Musei Capitolino (tickets are required). On the other side of the museums is Vittoriano that includes the Italian Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Again, you can spend several hours here and still not see everything.

On our first visit to Rome, we had a walking guided tour where we quickly visited all of the major sites in Rome (not the Vatican Museums or the inside of the Colosseum/Forum) at a very brisk pace prior to returning to our cruise ship (It was exhausting, but doable if you can walk at a fast pace and take advantage of buses and the Metro). The next time, we had ended our cruise in Rome and spent two days there. One day was devoted to the Vatican Museums and St. Peter’s. The second day was spent mainly at the Colosseum/Forum area before heading over to Piazza Navona for dinner.

Returning to Civitavecchia:
You will need to follow the reverse of the instructions for getting to Rome. You can catch a regional train back to Rome from any of the stations listed previously.

Here are some tips:

Getting on the train at Roma Termini will probably allow you to get a seat. By the time the train arrives at Roma S. Pietro, it will be filled by returning cruisers as well as commuters (if it is a weekday) returning to their homes in the suburbs. On our trip from Roma S. Pietro, we had to stand for 45 minutes shoulder to shoulder crammed in the vestibule of train car.

Be aware that there will many cruisers trying to catch the same late afternoon trains to Civitavecchia and there could be a possibility of not having enough room for you to get on, especially at Roma S. Pietro. If the train is full, it will not stop at S. Pietro. Plan on getting a train earlier than the last one with a scheduled time that works for you and gives you a cushion.

Be aware of the train schedules and be sure you allow plenty of time to return to Civitavecchia and the port shuttle back to the ship. There can be train delays, cancellations, and strikes (although those are announced in advance), so you do not want to think that the schedule is 100% reliable.

Plan in advance and you can have an enjoyable day in Rome.

Keith Henderson

Maps for Central Rome train, bus, metro, and trams are helpful to explore the city.

Excellent public transit maps are available for FREE download as PDF files.

Download the main map from
r=383
This lists ALL the maps available for download
http://www.atac.roma.it/index.asp?p=18
Central Rome pdf map for bus and metro
http://www.atac.roma.it/files/doc.asp?r=3
Entire city of Rome, a HUGE Map of bus and metro.
http://www.atac.roma.it/files/doc.asp?r=2
Map of metro and underground railways
http://www.atac.roma.it/files/doc.asp?r=4
Map - Lines host
http://www.atac.roma.it/files/doc.asp?r=7
Tramways map
http://www.atac.roma.it/files/doc.asp?r=5
Popular Tourist Sites in Rome
1= San Pietro Train Station  2 = St Peters Square   3= Castel Sant Angelo   4= Spanish Steps   5= Villa Borghese  6= Piazza Navona
7= Pantheon  8= Trevi Fountain  9 = Termini Train Station   10 = Palazzo Venezia  11 = Colosseum
Touring Vatican City

Vatican City is the smallest independent State in the world with an area of 0.2 square miles and a population of 800, none of whom are permanent residents. Trivia – Most countries have two embassies in Rome. One embassy is for diplomatic relations with Italy, the other is for relations with the Vatican.

Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel - Open Hours -
Note - the Sistine Chapel is the last part of the museum tour.
Check this website http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/z-Info/MV_Info_Orari.html

Open
Monday to Saturday: the Ticket Office is open from 9 am to 4 pm. The Museums close at 6 pm.

Closed
Sunday (except the last Sunday of every month, free entrance from 9 am to 12.30 am; the Museums close at 2 pm unless it coincides with Easter Sunday, the 29th of June (St. Peter and Paul), 25th and 26th of December (Christmas and St. Stephen). Free entrance also the 27th of September January 1, 6 February 11 March 19 April 24 (Easter), 25 (Easter Monday) May 1 June 29 (St. Peter and Paul) August 14, 15 November 1 December 8 (Immaculate Conception), 25, 26

Dress Code
Entry to the Vatican Museums, the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Gardens is permitted only to appropriately dressed visitors. Low cut or sleeveless clothing, shorts, miniskirts and hats are not allowed.

Order tickets for the museum on the Internet to avoid standing in very long lines! Use this website to order tickets: http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/MV_Home.html Tickets are 17 euro per person plus 4 euro online booking. Tickets are sold for a specific date and time (by the half hour). There are a limited number of tickets available.

Order tickets a month or more before your visit; otherwise tickets may not be available for the day of your visit. You get a voucher which you redeem for tickets. It only takes a few minutes. Then you pass through security and enter the museum which leads you to the Sistine Chapel.

You can take photos in the museum, but flash is prohibited in some areas. You cannot take any photos and must remain silent in the Sistine Chapel.

TIP: The museum tour ends at the exit from the Sistine Chapel. Signs direct guided tour groups to the Basilica which is next to the Sistine Chapel. But visitors who are not with a guided tour are directed to walk back to the Museum entrance, exit the building, walk 900 meters around the building back to St Peters Square, and stand in line (up to an hour) to get into the Basilica. Hogwash! I suggest you stand near, and walk with, a guided tour group pretending to be part of that group. This allowed us to walk directly into the Basilica and avoid walking a half mile around the building and waiting in line for an hour to get into the Basilica.

STUNNING 360° VIRTUAL TOUR of the Sistine Chapel
This is a must see web-link http://www.vatican.va/various/cappelle/sistina_vr/index.html Click your mouse and drag it left/right to pan or up/down to view the ceiling/floor.

STUNNING 360° VIRTUAL TOUR of Saint Peter's Basilica
See http://www.vatican.va/various/basiliche/san_pietro/vr_tour/index-en.html Saint Peter's Basilica is the largest church in the world. Admission is free. The Pope usually says mass outside on Wednesday morning. When the Pope is saying Mass outside, you can't get into the Basilica.
Before the Pope says mass, he rides around in the “Pope mobile”. Everyone stands up to cheer and applaud.

If you plan to take a photo, be prepared to stand on your chair and hold the camera high above the crowd who are all standing on their chairs in front of you. It would help if your camera had an articulated viewer with a long handle so you could hold it high over your head.

There is no restriction on photos in the Basilica, but attendants will stop you from carrying a camera to the side altars when a priest is saying mass. If you have a telephoto lens, you can photograph the altar from a distance. There is generally low light. Flash does not work at long distances and tripods are not permitted. A camera with low light capability is important.

See this website for beautiful photos of the Basilica

There are many beautiful treasures to photograph. My favorite is the Pieta' by Michelangelo (Photo at left).
Swiss Guards Protect the Vatican (photo below)

National Museum of Castel Sant Angelo  GPS  =  41°54'09.4"N 12°27'59.0"E
It's a 9-minute, 700 meter walk from Saint Peter's Square. See the map on page 15 of this guide.
This is a 6-story fortress built by Emperor Hadrian as his mausoleum in 139 A.D. It was used as a papal residence and served as protection, and an escape route for the Pope via a covered passageway from the Vatican. It has exhibits of Renaissance paintings, sculpture, antique military weapons and pottery. It has a huge spiral ramp to ascend to the top and offers beautiful views from the terrace. See this website for details  https://www.rome.net/castel-sant-angelo

Opening hours:
April-September 9am-7pm
October-March 9am-2pm

Admission fee:
Adults €10.50

How to get there:
Castel Sant'Angelo is located on the banks of the Tiber close to the Vatican

Bus service 40 (express) from the main railway station.

Metro- Lepanto (Line A)
Villa Borghese  see https://www.villaborghesetours.com/info/points-of-interest/

Villa Borgese is a 200 acre public park. It dates back to 1605 when Cardinal Borghese began to change a former vineyard into one of the most extensive gardens in Rome. Today, it is very popular offering something for everyone. It's a great site for walking, jogging, or picknicking. The gardens are picturesque with tree lined paths, fountains, many statues, artificial lakes, terraced gardens, a theater, and impressive villas, some of which have been converted to museums. Children enjoy the zoo, an old merry-go-round, and the puppet theater.

The park is divided into several sections. Art and history enthusiasts are attracted to the museums:
- Galleria Borghese is regarded as one of the most important art galleries in Rome.
- Villa Giulia, which has served as the summer residence of Pope Julius III, is now the Etruscan Museum (Museo Etrusco).
- There are two modern art museums. One is next to the Etruscan Museum at Villa Giulia, the other is 700 meters away as shown on the map below.

Villa Borghese Park Map

Piazza del Popolo is the “people's plaza”. There is a large obelisk in the center of the square and several churches. Just above the square are the Terraced Gardens “Terrazza del Pinco” with great views of Rome, an old fashioned merry-go-round, and San Carlino Puppet Theater “Teatro del Burattino”.
Bioparco (Zoo) is one of the oldest zoos in Europe. See [www.bioparco.it](http://www.bioparco.it) Directions to the San Carlino Puppet Theater (map below).
Metro, Bus and Tram Lines (2, 3 &19) Around Villa Borghese

GPS Coordinates and websites for more information about Villa Borghese Park:

- **Piazza del Popolo**  GPS = 41°54'38.6"N 12°28'34.9"E
- **Terraced Pincio gardens**  GPS = 41°54'40.8"N 12°28'41.9"E
- **Teatro del Burattino Puppet theater**  GPS = 41°54'44.4"N 12°28'49.3"E
- **Villa Giulia Etruscan Museum (Museo Etrusco) and modern art museum**  GPS = 41°55'05.8"N 12°28'29.3"E
- **Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna**  GPS = 41°55'00.4"N 12°28'54.7"E
- **Galleria Borghese - Museum**  GPS = 41°54'50.5"N 12°29'31.4"E
- **Cinema de Picco**  GPS = 41°54'39.1"N 12°29'15.2"E
  [http://www.cinemadeipiccoli.it/home.htm](http://www.cinemadeipiccoli.it/home.htm)
- **Globe theater**  GPS = 41°54'54.3"N 12°29'11.4"E  [http://www.globetheatreroma.com/](http://www.globetheatreroma.com/)
- **Bioparco (Zoo)**  GPS = 41°55'04.0"N 12°29'16.3"E  [http://www.bioparco.it/](http://www.bioparco.it/)

Note the location of Spanish Steps south of Villa Borghese near Metro Spagna on the map above.
Piazza di Spagna (Spanish Steps)  GPS = 41°54′21.2″N 12°28′56.5″E

The steps are named after a palace that housed the Spanish Embassy. The oldest feature of the area is the Barcaccia Fountain at the bottom of the steps, depicting a sinking barge. The 137 steps were built by the French to connect the French Quarter at the top, to the Spanish Quarter, Piazza di Spagna, at the lower level.

The photo-left is looking up to Trinità dei Monti Church at the top. In the spring, the steps are covered with flowers.

The streets around the Spanish Steps- Via del Corso, Via del Babuino, Via Ripetta, Via Condotti, Via Frattina, and Via Borgognona offer the most luxury boutiques shopping for designer fashion, jewelry, furs, etc. Every high end designer is represented.

For a review and list of the major stores, see http://www.inromenow.com/site%20templates/ShopFashSpanish.html and http://www.relaispierret.com/shopping-in-rome-from-spanish-steps.html

Fontana di Trevi (Trevi Fountain)  GPS = 41°54′03.6″N 12°28′59.8″E

Trevi Fountain is Italy’s largest and most famous Baroque fountain. It is a beautiful, highly ornate, massive structure measuring 85 feet high and 65 feet wide. According to legend, tossing a coin into Trevi Fountain will guarantee a return trip to Rome. TRIVIA - About 3,000 euros are collected each night and donated to charity.

A good place to take a photo is from the church steps at the southeast corner of the fountain. The church steps allow you to look “over” the crowd and photograph the entire building and fountain. See “photo spot” on the map below.
This street map shows a good spot for photos and nearby restaurants with very good food.

**Pickpockets:** Space is confined and crowds are elbow-to-elbow near the fountain. It's ideal for pickpockets. Don't get a false sense of security when you see Carabinieri policemen. Pickpockets are petty thieves, a low-priority for police. Due to open borders, pickpockets are everywhere. Europe could never hire enough police to catch pickpockets. And many tourists fail to take SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS to prevent being pickpocketed.

The map below shows public transport near Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, Palazzo Venezia, the Pantheon and Piazza Navona.
The dome (left) was an architectural masterpiece. It is supported by walls 20 feet thick at the base which taper to 7.5 feet thick at the top. The dome has been imitated in other places of worship and was the largest dome in the world until construction of the Florence Cathedral in 1436.

Design of the Pantheon was changed over the centuries with heavy restructuring. One iteration added two bell towers by Bernini (photo at right above). The Romans referred to the towers as “asses ears”; The towers were removed in 1883.

**Walking route map.**
It's 3.1 Km and 38 minutes to walk the entire route. Create a map for your walking route using the GPS coordinates I have provided. The sidewalks are generally flat so there are not many steps to climb. You can also take buses or the metro, but if you are only going to a few sites, walking might be faster.
**Piazza Navona**  GPS = 41°53'56.3"N 12°28'22.9"E
This is one of the most beautiful squares with many outdoor cafes. The square is dominated by Bernini’s impressive ‘Fountain of the Four Rivers’.

**Piazza Venezia**  GPS = 41°53'44.0"N 12°28'57.5"E
The huge monument to Victor Emmanuel II was built in 1911 of white marble. It's the largest outdoor altar in Europe and Italy’s ‘Tomb of the Unknown Soldier’. Italians call this site “the wedding cake”.

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*Image of Piazza Navona*

*Image of Piazza Venezia*
**Colosseum**  GPS = 41°53'24.8"N 12°29'32.1"E  points to center of the Colosseum at the green arrow

To avoid waiting in long lines, purchase tickets for the Colosseum BEFORE your vacation. Admission is 16.50 euro per person. See [http://www.rome-museum.com/?gclid=CICe-9zdqLECFSgbQgodUgoAmQ](http://www.rome-museum.com/?gclid=CICe-9zdqLECFSgbQgodUgoAmQ)

The aerial photo above and map below-left show bus, Metro, and Tram #3. NOTE: Stairs to the upper levels of the Colosseum are very steep = not safe for the mobility challenged (photo of sign below-right).
The famous keyhole is in a massive door at the Priory of the Knights of Malta. When you look through the keyhole, you'll see St Peter's Basilica framed by a row of hedges along a gravel lined path.

It's a postcard picture, but not easy to photograph. The only one in our tour group who took a good photo was Jim Kurovsky.

Jim's photo (at left) is amazing. It is taken 1.76 miles from the Vatican and yet it captures such detail that you can see a bird in flight above the Basilica.

Jim set his camera for spot metering on the dome of the basilica.

I had my camera set for matrix metering which averages the light in the scene resulting in blown out highlights.

The Bing.com “Birdseye” map (below) shows the Priory. The red arrow points to the door. The blue dot is the location of map coordinates. Note the hedges that frame the view through the keyhole.
The street map below shows the Keyhole, T3 tram stops, and Ostiense Train Station. I have highlighted public transit stops near the Keyhole.

Popular Tourist sites NORTH of Civitavecchia Cruise Port

Rome and Vatican City area are very popular tourist destinations. They have the characteristics of large cities; namely, they are usually very crowded.

Tourist sites North of Civitavecchia are more rural, and in many respects, more relaxing places to visit.

From a practical standpoint, public transit to the sites North of Civitavecchia is not feasible due to very limited train and bus schedules. Unless you rent a car in Civitavecchia, your travel options are the ship’s tour bus or a private tour in a van. I’ve used both.

My first choice is a private tour in a van.
Map of Popular Tourist Sites in the Lazio Region Accessible from Civitavecchia Port

- Bolsena
- Orvieto
- Civita di Bagnoregio
- Tuscania
- Villa Lante
- Tarquinia
- Civitavecchia Port
- Vatican City
- Fiumicino Airport
- Ciampino Airport

10 Miles

www.TomsPortGuides.com
Tarquinia
It’s a 22 minute, 22 Km drive along highway E80, or a 13 minute train ride from Civitavecchia to Tarquinia. Tarquinia (tarˈkwɪːnjais) is a Unesco World Heritage ancient Etruscan city that dates back to the 9th Century BC. It’s the site of one of the oldest and most important of the twelve Etruscan settlements near Rome that had been ruled by Etruscan kings. The Necropolis (ancient cemetary) of Monterozzi in Tarquinia has hundreds of tombs that date back 3000 years.

Things to See and Do in Tarquinia
1. A walking tour of the city: I’ve provided detailed maps, GPS coordinates, and descriptions of the top 8 sites in the Historic District. It’s takes 25 minutes (without stopping) to walk 1.9 Km through the historic district from the Ancient Gate Entrance to the famous Church of Santa Maria di Castello. Plan on an hour or longer for your walking tour.
2. National Archaeological Museum: This is a world famous museum. Plan on a minimum of 45 minutes to tour the museum.
3. Visit the Tombs south of the city: Most people spend 45 minutes to an hour visiting the tombs.

Travel Options from Civitavecchia to Tarquinia
1. The lowest cost travel option is a train or bus from Civitavecchia to Tarquinia. Trains depart Civitavecchia for Tarquinia around 7:27 am and 11:28 am. It’s a 13 minute ride for 1.50 Euro. In the afternoon, trains depart Tarquinia around 14:27, 16:29 and 17:29 to Civitavecchia. Check http://www.trenitalia.com/ for exact train schedules.

The train station in Tarquinia is at GPS = 42°14'22.4"N 11°43'37.5"E It’s a 7 minute, 3.4 Km taxi or bus ride from the Train Station to entrance gate to Tarquinia. If you arrive at Tarquinia by cab, have the driver drop you off at the Church of Santa Maria di Castello, stop 8 on my walking tour map. Begin your walking tour at the church and end at National Archaeological Museum. This way you only walk through the historic district once. This will save you a half hour walking time.

Some blogs and websites discuss public buses between Civitavecchia and Tarquinia. However, unlike trains where there is an easy to use, Trenitalia train website, I cannot find a website that posts public bus schedules with exact travel times between Civitavecchia and Tarquinia.
2. Rent a car in Civitavecchia with a GPS device, you can use the GPS coordinates in this guide for a 22 minute drive to Tarquinia. With a rental car, you can drive through the historic district of Tarquinia to see all the sites and minimize walking. Find a parking spot and explore the most important areas on foot. You can also drive to the Tombs that are south of the city.
3. Take the ship’s bus tour. Our guide gave us a choice of a one hour walk of the historic district or an hour at the museum. My wife and I opted for the walking tour. Our guide would not stop at churches to allow time to go inside to take photos. Hence, I was unable to visit the interiors of the beautiful cathedral and the Church of Santa Maria di Castello, the most famous church in Tarquinia. I did not like our bus tour because I could not explore and photograph sites along our walking tour.
4. Schedule a private tour in a van that picks you up at your cruise ship. This is the most flexible, most time efficient, and most personal way to tour. The driver will drop you off anywhere in the historic district. You can adjust the schedule for your preference and visit the Tombs.

How Much Time to Spend at Tarquinia?
I recommend spending ~ 2 hours in Tarquinia. This allows time to visit the Museum and explore the town walking to the major sites, visiting the interior of the churches, with time to relax at an outside cafe or have a light lunch. You definitely need to try some gelato.

The tombs are outside and south of the town. There are buses that leave from next to the ancient gate entrance near the museum to the Tombs. You’ll probably need 45 minutes to an hour to visit the Tombs.
Historic District Walking Tour of Tarquinia

When I visited Tarquinia, I walked with the guide from the ship’s tour bus. I did not know anything about the historic district and wished that I had a map with photos and a description of the most important historic sites. After my cruise, I decided to create the maps and descriptions of the historic district that I wish I had when I visited Tarquinia.

My walking tour highlights eight of the most important sites in the historic district. I’ve included GPS coordinates you can use with Google maps on your home computer to preview your walking tour. Also, if you carry a GPS device, you’ll always know where you are and the distance, time, and route to your destination.

1) Barriera di San Giusto is the ancient entrance to the town  
GPS = 42°15'12.2"N 11°45'18.5"E

Tour buses park outside the entrance gate (photo below) because they are not permitted to drive through the historic district. Vehicle traffic in Tarquinia is restricted to cars, vans, and local delivery vehicles.

2) National Archaeological Museum  
GPS = 42°15'12.9"N 11°45'20.5"E

The museum is just inside the gate as shown on the map above.

The museum has three floors of exhibits with the largest collection of Etruscan art, sarcophagi, vases, bucchero ware, dishes, pottery, statues, ancient coins, etc. The most significant treasure is the Winged horses, recovered in the ruins of the temple of the Altar of the Queen.


Open Hours: 8.30 am to 7.30 pm Closed on Mondays, Christmas day and New Year’s Day

Tickets  Full € 6,00 — Reduced € 3,00

Combined ticket Museum + Necropolis Full € 8,00 — Reduced € 4,00

Time for tours

Tarquinia Necropolis: 2 hours;

Tarquinia Museum: 2 hours;

Tarquinia Necropolis + Museum: 3 hours;

Necropolis, Museum and old town of Tarquinia: 4/5 hours;

The Necropolis, Museum and old town of Tarquinia, including lunch in the café located inside the precincts of the Necropolis of Tarquinia, with a menu or a selection of typical local products to be chosen by agreement. This tour lasts six hours and the price depends on the visitors’ specific requirements.
This map shows the most important historic sites in Tarquinia. Note that the Tombs are south of the city.

Options to Tour Tarquinia

When you are planning a shore excursion from your ship to Tarquinia, consider what you want to see and do, and how much time that will take in Tarquinia. Touring the Necropolis (cemetery) tombs, visiting the Archaeological Museum, and walking the old town of Tarquinia takes 4 to 5 hours. If you want to “see it all”, you could: A) Plan a private tour in a van, B) Rent a car in Civitavecchia and drive to Tarquinia, or C) Join an organized walking tour of Tarquinia via a special tour company or organized by the Museum.
3) Tarquinia Duomo (Cathedral of Santa Margherita)  
GPS = 42°15'16.4"N 11°45'18.7"E (Photo at Left)

The Church was built in 1260 and designated as a Cathedral in 1435. It suffered extensive damage from a fire in 1643 and was rebuilt. The cathedral has nine altars, three naves, and many frescoes of the Virgin.

The guide on our ship’s bus tour did not allow us time to go into the Cathedral and other churches to see and photograph the beautiful interiors. The Cathedral has a beautiful interior. All that I got to see was a view of the exterior from the parking lot. Ugh!

4) Palazzo Comunale  GPS = 42°15'15.0"N 11°45'30.7"E

Palazzo Comunale is the main square of the historical center of Tarquinia. It’s a must visit medieval site with a huge 18th Century Fountain, Town Hall, and two Churches; namely, San Leonardo, and Church of the Suffragio.

5) Chiesa e Convento di San Francesco  GPS = 42°15'13.6"N 11°45'37.4"E
Porta Nova is a park and scenic outlook where you can view and photograph the countryside in the valley below. There are outside cafes in this area so you can relax with a drink or gelato while you enjoy the views. You’ll see the Church of Santa Maria di Castello (photo above right). I didn’t know how to walk to it because there was a massive tower in front of it. Our tour guide did not provide any guidance, so I did not walk to the most important church in Tarquinia!!!

7) Chiesa di San Martino is the oldest church in the city GPS = 42°15'20.3"N 11°45'24.8"E

Our guide did not take us to this square. I’m not sure I would want to visit it on my own because I might get lost because the walking route has many twists and turns on narrow streets and intersections.

8) Church of Santa Maria di Castello GPS = 42°15'19.6"N 11°45'05.9"E

This is the most Church in Tarquinia. Construction began in 1121 and the church was consecrated in 1207. The church is next to Via di Porta Castello.

It’s a bit tricky to walk to the church because it is behind a tower. The map on the next page shows the walking route. Walk on Via della Rippa or Via Porta Castello to the tower. There is a gate through the tower. Walk through the gate as shown on the blue dashed line on the map on the next page.
It’s only a one minute 130 meter walk from the tower to the entrance to the church as shown on the map below.

Visiting the Tombs near Tarquinia  http://www.necropoliditarquinia.it/informazioni/prezzi

About 6000 tombs were dug into the soft volcanic tufa and some were painted inside with colorful frescoes. Paintings date from the 6th to 2nd centuries BC. About 15 tombs are open each day for visitors. Entrances to tombs are covered with small buildings. Our tour did not stop at the tombs. I’m told the stairs can be very steep entering the tombs. There are tombs in an area of 750 acres.

Buy tickets to tour tombs at Necropolis of Tarquinia building. Tickets are 6 euro/person. On the first Sunday of the month, admission is free for everyone. As you enter the tomb, press a button on the wall to turn on the light. There is free parking next to the tombs. Open Hours:

Winter: Tuesday- Sunday: from 8.30 until one hour before sunset - Monday: Closed
Summer: Tuesday - Sunday: 8.30/19.30 - Monday: Closed
Closing the 1st January and the 25th December. Ticket offices always closes one hour before.

The Tomb of the Leopards has one of the most colorful and best preserved murals (photo below).
Walking Route from Tarquinia Historic District to the Tombs

It’s a 10-minute, 750 meter walk from **5) Chiesa e Convento di San Francesco** GPS = 42°15'13.6"N 11°45'37.4"E to the ticket office for the tombs at **Necropolis of Monterozzi** GPS = 42°14'59.4"N 11°46'03.3"E
Valle del Marta – Olive trees, a vineyard, and a hotel/resort  

Valle del Marta is a 3-minute, 1.9 Km drive from the Tarquinia ancient entrance gate. This site has olive trees, a vineyard, produces olive oil, wine, liquors, preserves, and has a hotel/resort with gorgeous views.

It overlooks Tarquinia's old city walls and fields of many vineyards which lead down to the sea. It would be a great, relaxing place to stay overnight. It's a fantastic site for a wedding party.

**Trivia question:** Where does virgin olive oil come from?  
**Answer:** Ugly olives.

Valle del Marta is a relaxing, scenic area to visit. It's a short walk from the parking lot through a tunnel to the resort. Many wines and liquors are available for tasting and sale. We were treated to a good spread of snacks, cheeses, jams, liquors, wines, bread, olive oil, etc. Music was provided for our entertainment.
If you are in the area, you must stop at Tuscania!!

**Tuscania is an ancient walled town with breathtaking views**

GPS = 42°25'10.7"N 11°52'17.9"E

Tuscania is 28 miles (45 km) = a 55 minute ride north from Civitavecchia and 23 minutes north of Tarquinia.

Situated in the romantic countryside of Tuscany, you'll find the small town of Tuscania. It's a quiet, peaceful, ancient town encircled by massive walls with high towers. The area has several churches and ancient buildings with breathtaking scenic views. This is a place to take in the beauty of the Lazio countryside in Italy, relax with a cup of coffee, and take postcard pictures.

In the 8th century B.C., Tuscania was a powerful, wealthy Etruscan town. Over the centuries, control of the area changed. It flourished in the 4th century and became a Roman town in the 3rd century B.C. It was an important medieval center in the 6th to the 12th century. Tuscania declined to a modest, but illustrious center of the Pontifical State in the 16th century.

The map below shows the walking route.

From 1) Porta di San Marco Entrance Gate GPS = 42°25'10.7"N 11°52'17.9"E it's only a 9-minute, 650 meter walk to the 4) Scenic Viewpoint at Parco Torri Lavello GPS = 42°24'58.1"N 11°52'21.1"E

It’s important to stop at the square to visit the beautiful 2) Chiesa di San Giuseppe Catholic Church GPS = 42°25'07.6"N 11°52'24.9"E

On your walk, you need to 3) Bear right onto Via della Salute at GPS = 42°25'04.4"N 11°52'28.1"E
1) Porta di San Marco Town Entrance Gate

Entrance gate to the town as seen from inside the town looking back out to the main highway.

2) Chiesa di San Giuseppe Catholic Church

Interior of the church. There’s a small square outside the church with an outdoor cafe where you can enjoy a cup of cappuccino, or a light lunch.

Photos from 4) Scenic Viewpoint at Parco Torri Lavello

Monastery

A Gate to the Park
Another view from Parco Torri Lavello

The 11th century building in the left of the photo above is a fortified citadel with two towers and a Bishop's palace. The building at right in the photo is San Pietro Basilica built in the 8th century and reconstructed in the 11th century in Romanesque Lombard style.

Villa Lante – a Gorgeous Renaissance Garden  GPS = 42°25'35.6"N 12°09'17.3"E

Villa Lante is 39 miles (62 km) and a one-hour ride from Civitavecchia.
Villa Lante Garden is in the town of Bagnaia, Lazio. This area was initially a medieval hunting park. In the 15th century, ownership changed to cardinals who constructed buildings and improved the garden to become one of the best Renaissance gardens in Italy. Lante's formal terraces rise up from the town that was redesigned during the same period and still has a very medieval feel to it.
Gardens were more important than houses and dominate the landscape because gardens were designed as statements of power and wealth.
It's considered one of the most beautiful gardens in the world. It's a peaceful and beautiful area to walk around. There are many fountains. The symbol of Cardinal Gambara was jaws of a crayfish.

The photo at left is called the Fountain of the Chain. At the top, it is shaped like the head and front claws of a crayfish. At the bottom, it has the shape of the crayfish's back claws.

Open from Tuesday to Sunday
Closed on Monday, January 1st, May 1st, and December 25
Open hours
  January - February: 8:30am - 4:30pm
  March: 8:30am - 5:30pm
  1 - 15 April: 8:30am - 6:30pm
  16 - 30 April: 8:30am - 7:30pm
  May - June - July - August: 8:30am - 7:30pm
  1 - 15 September: 8:30am - 7:30pm
  16 - 30 September: 8:30am - 6:30pm
  October: 8:30am - 6:30pm
  November - December: 8:30am – 4:30pm

Admission 5 euro
Free admission on the first Sunday of the month

Civita di Bagnoregio  GPS = 42°37'39.1"N 12°06'44.1"E
The town of Civita di Bagnoregio commands majestic views from it’s position high on a hill surrounded by steep valleys. It’s in an area of unstable volcanic turf subject to collapse due to erosion and earthquakes. In the 17th century, most inhabitants left the town after an earthquake due to concern of rapid soil erosion around the town.

Today, it’s a tourist attraction with only 7 residents in winter and 100 residents in the summer. It’s a unique and beautiful place that’s rich in history. The town is 2500 years old. It was founded by the Etruscans. Saint Bonaventure was born in the town in the 13th Century.

It’s a beautiful place to explore and photograph. Your first impression will be the walk across the bridge high above the valley to the town entrance. There are several small squares and winding streets with restaurants, shops and a few bed & breakfasts.

The 5th Century “former cathedral” is Chiesa di Donato Civita located in Palazzo Vescovile GPS = 42°37'40"N 12°6'50"E It has a beautiful interior and a crucifix that is believed to be miraculous.

Walk across the bridge to Civita di Bagnoregio perched on a hill (photo below).

There’s a parking lot outside the town where you get onto the bridge  GPS = 42°37'35"N 12°6'36"E
It’s a 5-minute, 260 meter walk across the bridge. There is a slight grade uphill at the town entrance. We were comfortable walking across the bridge.

It covers 41 points of interest with photos, maps and descriptions. It’s an OUTSTANDING, MUST READ GUIDE to plan your visit to Civita di Bagnoregio.
Photos of the Chiesa di Donato Civita

One of the restaurants
A Donkey Pulled Wheel for an Old Olive Press

As you walk through the medieval town, you’ll find narrow stone streets with arches through the walls.
Lake Bolsena (Lago di Bolsena)  GPS =  42°38'39.0"N 11°59'12.7"E

Bolsena is the largest lake of volcanic origin in Europe. The water is clean thanks to a sophisticated purification system in the area and absence of pollution-generating industries. Restaurants, trattorias, pubs and pizza parlors galore offer the gastronomic delicacies of the area. Fish is outstanding, but meat also has a place. Pork is processed and cooked in countless ways: sausages, chops, ribs, liver, prosciutto and the typical porchetta, seasoned with wild fennel. Lamb is also popular roasted, scottadito (grilled chops) and in stews. Local wine is Est! Est! Est! of Montefiascone. Many types of grapes grown on slopes of the Volsini hills.

On our tour to Bolsena, we had an unbelievable lunch at a hotel with huge windows overlooking the lake. The food and wine were fantastic!

The Official Website is [http://www.visitbolsena.it/#](http://www.visitbolsena.it/#)

**Lake Bolsena is a Major Vacation Destination and Tourist Area. USA Today Travel Tips:**

The area offers almost limitless opportunities for sightseeing, with dozens of picturesque villages, and archaeological sites dating back to Etruscan and Roman civilizations.

Lake Bolsena region boasts numerous historic churches, romantic castles and ancient necropolises (tombs). Some of the most notable sites include the neolithic village of Bagnoregio -- birthplace of St. Bonaventure -- the impressive 16th-century Farnesi Palace at Caprarola and the Etruscan remains at Acquapedente. The city of Bolsena is a good spot for sightseeing, with Roman walls, an amphitheatre, necropolises and a medieval castle; and the Basilica Santa Cristina ([basilicasantacristina.it](http://basilicasantacristina.it); Italian language only) offers beautiful frescoes and a priceless 8th-century altar. Monster's Park, at Bomarzo, is an unusual attraction, with a series of grotesque sculptures displayed in its gardens.

The shoreline of Lake Bolsena offers a number of dark sand beaches that are free to use. The main tourist beaches are at Bolsena and Capodimonte, a beautiful beach that is cleaned every day.

Land-based sporting activities include hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding along the lakeside trails or in the surrounding hillsides. In summertime you can also go paragliding at Montefiascone, or take a jeep safari into the mountains to visit caves and archaeological sites. If you are in the mood for relaxation, enjoy a soak in the thermal pools at the Botanical Garden of Viterbo or take a boat tour of the lake. You can also take a ferry across to Bisentina Island, which is a large natural park just offshore from the city of Capodimonte.

**NOTE:** There are many festivals and events scheduled throughout the year. It can be extremely crowded during these events. Check the calendar on the official website.

From Civitavecchia it is 87 Km, 1 hr and 20 minutes to Bolsena and another 25 Km and 30 minutes to Orvieto. It’s not practical to take a train or public bus to Bolsena from Civitavecchia considering location of train stations and infrequency of the scheduled trains and limited public bus service.
Travel Options to Orvieto

From Civitavecchia, the only options to Orvieto are the ship's bus tour, a private van tour, or a rental car. Orvieto is a 1-hour and 40-minute, 100 Km (62 mile) bus or car ride from Civitavecchia Port. There is no direct train from Civitavecchia to Orvieto. However, if you are staying in Rome before or after your cruise, there’s a one-hour direct train from Roma Termini Station to Orvieto.

If you arrive by train, take the Funicolare up the hill

It’s a 100 foot-walk from the Orvieto Train Station to the Funicolare to ascend the mountain.

Funicular Running Times  
see [http://www.orvietoonline.com/funicolare_orvieto.html](http://www.orvietoonline.com/funicolare_orvieto.html)

- Weekdays: from 7.20 am to 8.30 pm every 10 minutes
- Holidays: from 8 am to 8.30 pm every 15 minutes
- Cost is ~ 1 euro  There is a Minibus at the top of the Funicolare to take you to center city.

1) Funicular Top Station  
GPS = 42°43'16.9"N 12°07'11.9"E
I've shown the route of the Funicolare as a yellow line on the map above. The top station of the Funicolare is next to a large car park area.

NOTE:
There aren’t many tourist sites near the Funicolare Top Station. There are parking areas for the ship’s tour buses, parking areas for cars, a small park with good views of the valley below, and remains of Fortezza Albormoz.

2) Fortezza Albornoz  
GPS = 42°43'15.1"N 12°07'14.3"E
Sometimes a 5 Euro entrance fee is charged. The primary reason visitors walk to the fort and gardens in the park is to see the spectacular views of the valley below Orvieto and the walls around Orvieto. (Photo at Right)
3) St. Patrick's Well (Pozzo Di San Patrizio)  GPS  =  42°43'21.3"N  12°07'13.2"E
This is the most unique and important tourist attraction in this part of Orvieto.  (photos below)
The well was built in 1537 to protect the city's water supply in the event of a siege.  It’s 43 feet in diameter and 175 feet deep.  It has two, separate spirals and 248 steps to allow mules to descend to the bottom with empty containers which are then filled with water.  Then the mules climb up the other spiral carrying the water to the surface.  There are 70 window openings to provide natural light.  (Photo of interior at left below)

Open Hours:  November to February 10,00 – 16.45  March, April, September, October 9,00 - 18.45  
May to August 9,00 – 19,45  Admission is 5 Euros.
See  http://www.inorvieto.it/en/visit/orvieto_below_the_surface/saint_patrik_s_well.html

Orvieto = A Top Tourist Destination

Orvieto is one of the most dramatic hill top towns in Italy perched on a plateau above huge cliffs.

Note the height and size of the beautiful Duomo (cathedral) in the photo below.  The clock tower in center city is to the left of the cathedral.

Reasons to visit or, better yet, stay overnight for more time to explore and enjoy Orvieto:
The city is clean, comfortable, and enjoyable to visit.  Streets are flat and easy to walk.  Shopping is incredible with a wide variety products by skilled artisans.  There are museums, churches, cafes, restaurants, monuments, etc.  You can also tour the 2500 yr old caves under the city.  Visit the Tourism Office across the street from the Duomo for details and the schedule for tours of the underground caves.
Orvieto Center City Map for Your Walking Tour

The center of the city is 7) Torre del Morro, the clock tower. There are tourist sites west of center city, but they are not included in this guide.
There’s not much to see or do as you walk from the bus parking lot west along Corso Cavour to center city. Since you will walk past

5) Santa Mari dei Servi  
GPS = 42°43'14.1"N 12°07'04.9"E
Stop to visit this church. (photo at left)

The main shopping and restaurant area on Corso Cavour begins at

6) Teatro Mancinelli  
GPS = 42°43'07.3"N 12°06'46.7"E
This theater hosts a wide variety of entertainment. If you are staying in Orvieto overnight, consider attending a performance. For details see http://www.teatromancinelli.com/it/stagione_teatrale_2017_2018.html

Continue walking west on Corso Cavour to the clock tower at center city.

7) Torre del Morro (Clock Tower)  
GPS = 42°43'06.2"N 12°06'38.9"E
The tower rises high above the buildings and is easy to use as a reference point as you explore center city.

The main shopping and restaurant area on Corso Cavour ends at

8) The Flower Market  
GPS = 42°43'06.2"N 12°06'32.3"E
Between the theater and flower market, you’ll find a wide variety of shops, restaurants, outdoor cafes, a few banks, pharmacies, and stores that sell meat, pastry, etc. It’s a 4 minute 350 meter walk along Corso Cavour from the theater to the flower market (photo below).

Turn around at the flower market; walk back to the Clock Tower, and turn right onto Via Duomo. Walk south and stop to explore shops selling pottery and crafts products. There are many restaurants and cafes.
Via Duomo takes you to a huge square where you will find, the Duomo, the tourist office, and a few museums. Orvieto is the main center for majolica pottery. Also, there is bronze and alabaster. Other handicrafts include lace, wrought iron, and wood products. White wine is produced in the vineyards in nearby hills. We purchased a large and heavy urn (photo below right) and had it shipped to our home. It measures about 26 inches high.
Leather handbags

Olive wood carvings

Fabric
Duomo di Orvieto (Cathedral)

GPS = 42°43'00.7"N 12°06'45.3"E

The Duomo is one of the most impressive examples of medieval architecture in Italy. Started in 1290, it took almost four centuries to complete. The facade is decorated with mosaic that is stunning after a rain if the sun shines while the facade is wet. Orvieto is one of the few places outside Rome with a Papal Palace. Several Popes spent time here before moving to Avignon, bestowing Orvieto with a wealthier than normal set of religious monuments.

Orvieto is one of our favorite places to visit. We’ve toured Orvieto five times from cruise ships docked at Civitavecchia.

The policy for visiting the cathedral is inconsistent and has changed back and forth over the years. Sometimes admission is free and we can photograph everything inside. Other times, there’s a 4 euro entrance fee and we can’t take photos. These photos of the interior were taken when we were permitted to take photos.
The Duomo is Spectacular – the paintings, the altars, the statutes, etc.

Tourist Information Center  GPS = 42°42'59.3"N 12°06'47.1"E
Go to the Tourism Office EARLY during your visit to Orvieto.
It’s across from the street from the front of the Duomo, next to a museum.
People at the Tourist Office are very helpful in providing information to help you plan your limited time in Orvieto. There are many things to see and do that I have not covered in this guide. You can get advice and free maps at the tourist office. You can also book a 1-hour guided tour of the Underground City ~ 5 Euros. The tours are in Italian, German, English. Since I would have to wait an hour to get the English tour, I took the Italian tour. Didn’t understand a word that was said, but I got the general idea and took lots of photos.

THE UNDERGROUND CITY – see http://www.orvietounderground.it/index.php/en/services/the-tour
A pleasant guided tour along a very easy route makes it possible to get to know Orvieto’s underground world, created by its ancient inhabitants over about 2500 years of uninterrupted digging. An hour-long tour on a discovery of a millenary, surprising and unexpected “Underground City”.
Orvieto, a millenary city suspended almost by magic between heaven and earth, has revealed another of those aspects that make it unique and extraordinary: a labyrinth of grottoes is hidden in the silent darkness of the rupe (rock). The distinctive geological nature of the mass of stone on which it stands allowed its inhabitants to dig, in the course of about 2500 years, an incredible number of cavities extending, overlapping and intersecting beneath the modern structure of the city.
The “Essentials” for Living Underground

1) Water
There’s an opening to the sky in the roof of the caves allowing rainwater to enter. Inside the caves, there’s a deep well (photo at right) to catch and contain the rain water.

2) Wine
There are presses to make wine inside the caves.

3) Bread
Donkeys turn stone wheels to grind the grain.

The caves have many different stairways, chambers and a few entrance doors from the outside. It’s an interesting place to visit.
Thinking About The Ship’s Bus Tour Vs. A Private Tour in a Van

How much time should you plan to spend at each tourist site? Some sites might take less time than you expect. Tuscania can be a 30-minute stop. Orvieto has so much to see and do, you’ll need several hours! If lunch is included at a site, it can take a long time if you’re on a bus tour due to the number of people and size of the restaurant catering to tour buses.

Our first visit to Orvieto was on the ship’s bus tour. Our guide took us through the Cathedral for an excellent tour. Then we went to a pre-arranged lunch at a restaurant that catered to tour buses. There were a gazillion people. The restaurant ran out of food. Service was slow. We wasted so much time at lunch, that we had NO time to explore Orvieto. We hurriedly bought a ceramic urn, “ran” to our bus, and waited for people who were late getting on the bus. Ugh!

Orvieto is a wonderful city to explore. It’s our favorite tourist destination from Civitavecchia Port. We have been three times on ship’s bus tours and twice on a private tour with our favorite guide, Fabrizio Melaragno see http://www.allarounditaly.net

Here’s my comparison of our Ship’s Bus Tours Vs. our Private Van Tours with Fabrizio Melaragno

To begin, let me emphasize that Orvieto is a very special place. It has an incredible number of things to see and do and it’s a long way from Civitavecchia Port. My criteria are 1) travel efficiency and how time is spent, 2) opportunity to take photos, 3) ability to personalize the day’s schedule for my priorities = a tour that “memories are made of.”

1) Travel Efficiency & How Time Is Spent:
Tour buses cannot drive to center city. In Orvieto, it’s a 21 minute, 1.4 Km (.87 mile) walk from the bus parking lot to center city. I waste 42 minutes walking to/from the bus. The bus tour usually includes lunch at a large restaurant which takes a long time because of the number of people from many buses.

In my private van tour, I am dropped off next to the Duomo in center city = no wasted walking from a parking lot. My wife and I have a relaxing lunch at a small, quiet restaurant with our friends. We choose how much time to spend at lunch; we’re not trapped in a huge, crowded restaurant with slow service.

2) Opportunity to take photos:
It’s not practical to take good photos from a moving bus and the bus does not stop for photos. Fabrizio knew that we wanted to take photos. He stopped the van at the side of the road so we could take “postcard photos” of Orvieto as the famous “hilltop town”. See my photo on page 52 of this guide.

3) Ability to personalize the day’s schedule for my priorities = a tour that “memories are made of”
The ship’s bus tour follows a pre-defined rigid schedule.

When you book a private tour in a van, the schedule is designed for your personal interests and priorities. And you can modify the tour to make an additional stop and spend time as you choose. Our tours with Fabrizio were designed for our specific interests. We stopped for private wine tasting at a gorgeous vineyard near Orvieto. Also, Fabrizio surprised us with an unplanned stop at the church of Basilica of San Flaviano so he could tell us about the legend of the wine Est! Est! Est!

In the 12th Century, Bishop Johann Fugger was traveling to Rome for the coronation of Henry V as the Holy Roman Emperor. The Bishop sent his servant ahead to visit villages, taste local wines, and report on the best wines by writing with chalk on the door of the establishment “Est” (which means “there is”). In Montefiscone, the servant left the message on a door “Est! Est! Est!” When Bishop Fugger arrived, he was so impressed with the wine that he canceled his trip to Rome and stayed in Montefiscone until his death. The Bishop is buried in a tomb in the Basilica of San Flaviano.

Bottom Line
The ship’s bus tour is convenient – just pay the money and get on the bus. If I just need transportation e.g. from Livorno Port to Florence, the ship’s bus is my preferred travel method. But when I want to personalize touring through the beautiful countryside of Lazio, visit Orvieto, or Rome, my first choice is a private tour in a van and Fabrizio is my first choice tour guide in Italy.
User Feedback Is Welcome

Goal
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation. Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend www.CruiseCritic.com; it's free to join.

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Tom Sheridan