

In the Footsteps of an Emperor

Wondering what to do when you arrive in Rome after a long travel day and just want to get out and relax with a short walk and an espresso..??? How about discovering the ruins of the great Emperor Trajan? If you are staying at a hotel on or near Via Quattro Novembre, you can explore 3 great sites that are all a few steps from your hotel.



The Hotel Traiano is situated just seconds away from Trajan's Column (or 'Colonna Traiano') and the remains of Trajan's Forum, literally a stone's throw from the Imperial Roman Forum. First, have a relaxing Cappuccino at the Theatre Cafe and watch the Romans racing home on their Vespas and Fiats. If it's later in the day ...there is a great selection of imported beers here too.



Right across the street is Trajan's market.... you can visit the museum but the best part of this attraction can be viewed from outside - you can see the ancient roman shopping street over the railings to the right of the entrance, and you get a better sense of the semicircular terraces from street level next to Trajan's Column at the back. Here also you will get a great view of the ruins of Trajan's Forum and you can explore these on both sides of the walkway...there is great lighting at sunset. If you get hungry and want some dining locations... there are 2 restaurants right on the other side of the ruins on Salita del Grillo. Osteria Corte del Grillo and further down the lane Ristorante Mario's. Check the reviews on Trip Advisor to see which one suits your taste and pocketbook.



Trajan's Column, Market and Augustus Forum



Trajan's Forum



Trajan's Column

Trajan's column commemorates Roman Emperor Trajan's victory in the Dacian Wars. Located in Trajan's Forum, built near the Quirinal Hill completed in AD 113 most famous for its spiral bas relief, which artistically describes the epic wars between the Romans and the Dacians The structure is about 30 metres (98 ft) in height, 35 metres (125 ft) including its large pedestal. The shaft is made from marble. Inside the shaft, a spiral staircase of 185 stairs provides access to a viewing platform at the top. This staircase has not been open to the public since Roman times.



The Pedestal

After Trajan's death in 117, the Roman Senate voted to have Trajan's ashes buried in the Column's square base which is decorated with captured Dacian arms and armor. His ashes and those of his wife, Plotina, were set inside the base in golden urns. The ashes are no longer there.



Top of Trajan's Column

Plans to top the column with a statue of a bird, probably an eagle were changed after construction. A statue of Trajan was put in place. This statue disappeared in the Middle Ages. The top was later crowned by Pope Sixtus V with a bronze figure of St. Peter.



The Frieze

The relief portrays Trajan's two victorious military campaigns against the Dacians; the lower half illustrating the first and the top half illustrating the second. The scenes depict mostly the Roman army in military operations. The carvings are crowded with about 2,500 figures in all and provide a valuable source of historical information. Also shown are methods of warfare (forts, ships, weapons, etc.). The relief shows such details as a ballista or catapult. The emperor Trajan makes 59 appearances among his troops.



Spiral staircase

The interior of Trajan's Column is hollow: entered by a small doorway at one side of the base, a spiral stair of 185 steps gives access to the platform above, offering the forum visitor a view over the surrounding Trajan's forum; 43 window slits illuminate the ascent.

Despite numerous earthquakes in the past, the column today leans at an angle of less than half a degree.

Also present are a series of windows (merely holes in the column), strategically placed on the outside of the column to give light to someone walking up the stairs.

The spiral staircase winds upwards within its otherwise solid marble shaft to a viewing platform at its top

Trajan himself appears in each scene, typically in the center of the scene and appearing taller than the rest of the figures. Each scene runs into the next.



Trajan's Market



Built between the years 100 and 110 A.D. Trajan's Market was the first covered shopping center in history. The complex was built in brick on six floors which held more than 150 businesses. Presumably, vendors sold cash and carry type products like olives, wheat,

cheese, etc. Thought to be the world's oldest shopping mall. The shops and apartments were built in a multi-level structure, and it is still possible to visit several of the levels. Highlights include delicate marble floors and the remains of a library. During the Middle Ages the complex was transformed by adding floor levels, still visible today, and defensive elements such as the Tower of Milizie, the "militia tower" built in 1200.



Large parts of the Roman forum district were revealed to modern eyes in the 1920s and 1930s, when the dictator Benito Mussolini drove his own imperial road (now the Via dei Fori Imperiali) through a lower class neighborhood from the Coliseum to the Piazza Venezia. Until recently, however, the areas fronting on this road, beneath which were the imperial forums, were occupied by streets, parks and parking lots. Since 1996, archaeologists have excavated below these green areas and parking lots .

The imperial forums dig is one of the largest and most complicated urban archeological excavations ever undertaken. In contrast to Mussolini's bulldozer approach, which simply destroyed anything from later antiquity or the post-Roman period, the new excavations have tried to rescue everything that could possibly be saved. Now the work is nearly completed: tourist walkways above and through the Imperial Forums are opening.



Trajan's Forum

Trajan's Forum is an ancient structure in Rome, Italy, chronologically the last of the Imperial fora. Casa dei Cavalieri di Rodi in the background.