SPECIALIST
JOURNEYS



Pantheon

Essential Rome
Caesars, citizens, senators and slaves

Rome was once the most powerful city in the Mediterranean, sending out soldiers, administrators and traders to order the affairs of provinces as far apart as Britain and Mesopotamia. On this tour, archaeologist and Italiophile, Oliver Gilkes, is on hand to help us unravel this complex web of history. Exploring with Oliver, we meet the Romans at every level of society, from the senatorial grandeur of the forum to sailors and merchants at the once-bustling harbour at Ostia.

Key highlights

- Admire the unique Pantheon, so influential to Renaissance architects in later millennia
- Explore the Colosseum, the largest amphitheatre ever built
- Discover two sites extraordinary sites outside the city — Tivoli and Ostia Antica

SPECIALIST JOURNEYS

Day One: UK - Rome
Arrive into Rome and meet your expert Guide Lecturer and fellow travellers at your hotel.

Meals: Dinner

Day Two: Rome
During the morning, we walk through the ancient centre of Rome to see the **Theatre of Marcellus**, preserved by its conversion into medieval tenements, the Forum and **Senate House**, the political heart of the capital, the **Palace of Domitian**, located on the Palatine Hill, and the Column of Trajan, built to commemorate his wars in Dacia. We also visit the Flavian Ampitheatre, better known as the **Colosseum**, the largest in Italy. In the afternoon, there is free time to spend as you wish.

Meals: Breakfast

Day Three: Tivoli
We travel outside the city today to **Tivoli**. We spend the morning at Hadrian's opulent, sprawling villa built in the 2nd century AD to provide a retreat from Rome. This vast estate was a complex of over 30 buildings, including libraries, bathhouses, a theatre, temples, imperial staterooms and landscaped gardens inspired by his travels. This afternoon, we continue to the celebrated Renaissance gardens and World Heritage Site of the **Villa d'Este**.

Meals: Breakfast

Day Four: Rome
Today is a free day in Rome. There is much to choose from! This might be the time to explore along the banks of the Tiber, to see the temples in the Forum Boarium, to walk the length of the Circus Maximus or visit St Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums.

Meals: Breakfast

Day Five: Rome
A morning's walk takes us through the **Field of Mars** today. A low-lying plain in the bend of the River Tiber north of the city centre, it was drained by order of Julius Caesar and developed by Augustus. The modern street system is still largely that of the Roman period. We also see the **Pantheon**, built by Hadrian with the largest unsupported dome in the world, the **column of Marcus Aurelius** with its reliefs of the emperor's victories over the Germans and Sarmatians and the **Stadium of Domitian**, now better known as the Piazza Navona. Our walk ends at the Trevi Fountain. This afternoon is left free for private exploration.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day Six: Rome - Ostia Antica - UK
We leave Rome this morning and travel to **Ostia Antica**, the ancient harbour city of Rome, close to the mouth of the Tiber. Originally Rome's first colony, it became a thriving port where goods flowed into the city from every corner of the empire. The site rivals Pompeii with some of the best-preserved Roman buildings anywhere in the world. Later, depart for the airport or continue your trip at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast

Activity level - **Moderate** ●●○

Your Expert Guide Lecturer

Oliver Gilkes



Oliver is an archaeologist of eclectic experience.
Currently he works as a freelance consulting archaeologist, and provides advice for Andante Travels on designing as well as leading a number of tour groups. Oliver began as a commercial archaeologist and museum curator in the UK. Preferring warmer weather, he worked for over 10 years as a field archaeologist in Italy for the British School at Rome at classical and medieval sites. These included a rescue excavation in the grounds of the British Embassy at Porta Pia in Rome, and the great Carolingian abbey of San Vincenzo al Volturno in the central Italian mountains — two very contrasting sites. Further afield, he drove through North Africa to participate in excavations in Cyrenaica, mainly because it revisited a journey his mother had made with the eighth army in 1943, but also because of the wonderful classical sites to be seen. He then followed a childhood destiny, specifically the callsign of Radio Tirana, and moved across the Adriatic to Albania, where he directed excavations and trained students at the World Heritage Sites of Butrint and the evocative medieval city of Gjirokastra. Oliver is still involved in a number of projects in Albania, notably the survey and excavation of an intriguing Hellenistic sanctuary, and is one of only a handful of experts on Albanian archaeology in the United Kingdom. Oliver's publications include: Gilkes, O. et al. 2013. Gjirokastra: the essential guide. Norwich: Gjirokastra Conservation and Development Organization. Gilkes, O. 2012. Albania: an archaeological guide. London: I.B. Tauris. And numerous papers and articles in journals and magazines.

Your tour includes

- *Expert Guide Lecturer & professional Tour Manager*
- *Entries to all sites as per the itinerary*
- *Andante Field Notes*
- *All taxes & gratuities to local staff (drivers, waiters, site custodians)*
- *All local transport aboard a private air-conditioned coach*
- 5 nights at the Albergo Santa Chiara, Rome
- 5 breakfasts & 2 dinners
- Water with all meals, wine & tea or coffee with dinner