



The Via Appia from the mausoleum of Caecilia Metella to the Capo di Bove

Via Appia Antica

This rather short itinerary will guide you in the discovery of a southern stretch of the ancient Appian Way, from the impressive structure of the Tomb of Caecilia Metella and across the landscape between the 3rd and 4th milestones of this ancient road. The remains of this mausoleum and of the Palazzo Caetani are an example of the Roman tradition of building magnificent tombs outside their cities, along the consular roads, and of how these buildings were reused, in the Middle Ages, for defence or residential purposes, as in this case.

Opposite the tomb is the beautiful Gothic church of San Nicola, once enclosed, like the tomb itself and other buildings, within the walls of the castrum Caetani, the stronghold built there by the noble Roman Caetani family. After a very well-preserved stretch of the road you come to the Capo di Bove complex, a fascinating archaeological site with a permanent exhibition on the long history of the restoration and preservation of the Via Appia.

The complex also houses the Archive of Antonio Cederna, with documents, texts and other materials belonging to one of the most important Italian intellectuals of the second half of the 20th century, who passed away in 1996, and who is remembered as a key figure in the environmental movement and as a forceful campaigner for the preservation of the great cultural heritage of this country.



POI



Distance

4

0.51 Km

Poi

- 1 Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella and Castrum Caetani
- 2 Church of San Nicola
- 3 Tower Tomb
- 4 Capo di Bove Site - Cederna Archive



Scan the QrCode to
access the navigable
mobile version of the
itinerary



🕒 Opening Hours

09:00 - 18:30	On weekends mandatory reservation at least one day in advance by calling 067886254 during opening hours.
---------------	--

📅 Closing Days

Monday

📄 Info

Admission fee

Opening hours:
from Tuesday to Sunday from 9.00 to 18.30 pm with last entrance half an hour before closing.

Visits on weekends must be booked by phone at least one day in advance.
Reservations for the weekend by calling 067886254 during opening hours.

Closing days:
Monday, 25 December, 1 January.

📍 Address

Via Appia Antica 161 - Roma (RM)

🚶 How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to BASILICA S. SEBASTIANO stop, alternatively from METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to CECILIA METELLA stop.

Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella and Castrum Caetani

Roma / Place to visit - Archaeological areas

The Mausoleum of Caecilia Metella is one of the most well-known monuments flanking the Via Appia. Built between 30 and 20 BC, at the 3 mile marker of the road, about 300 m south of the complex built by the emperor Maxentius, it still has the power to impress visitors today, because of its size and elegance, and also because of the added attraction of having been converted, in the Middle Ages, into a stronghold, a sort of fortified palace, which is still in good condition.

Externally the tomb has the shape of a cylindrical drum entirely clad with slabs of travertine, resting on a square podium of which only the concrete core of flint has survived. Inside, the conical burial chamber, open to the sky at the top (*oculus*), contained the body of a wealthy Roman noblewoman belonging to one of the city's aristocratic families and probably the daughter-in-law of the famous Marcus Licinius Crassus, a member, with Caesar and Pompey of the 1st triumvirate in 59 BC.

This twofold archaeological site features not just the tomb of Caecilia Metella, but also the remains of a fortified palace built at the beginning of the 14th century by the Caetani family, after it bought the land on which the monument rises (called Capo di Bove, or "ox head", due to the ox skulls adorning the frieze at the top of the tomb) and decided to fortify the tomb by encircling it with a wall and building a palace, church and tower inside, the tower being raised on top of the Roman tomb.

Today, the residential part of the stronghold, with its typical battlemented wall and mullioned windows, hosts the Appian Museum and its collection of statues, sarcophagi, inscriptions and reliefs from the funerary monuments along the Via Appia.



📍 Address

Via Appia Antica, 161 - Roma (RM)

🚶 How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to BASILICA DI SAN SEBASTIANO stop, alternatively from METRO LINE

Church of San Nicola

Roma / Place to visit - Churches

The church of San Nicola is situated inside the *Castrum Caetani*, the stronghold built at the beginning of the 14th century by Pope Boniface VIII, who was a member of this noble Roman family. This stronghold had a square layout and was surrounded by a wall. Inside, according to an inventory preserved in the Torlonia archive, it contained about 50 houses, gardens, farmland and two churches, one of which was dedicated to St. Nicholas.

Of the original church, only the outer walls survive today, together with a bell gable that dominates the facade; the gable roof has also been lost. The walls feature eight buttresses per side and pointed arch windows with marble cornices, restored in the early 20th century. The building is a rare example of Gothic church in Rome; its main features, such as the effect of the light, which deceptively dilates the interior space, the pointed arch windows and the presence of buttresses all refer to the French Gothic style.

A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to CECILIA METELLA stop.



Address

Via Appia Antica, 222 - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to CECILIA METELLA stop.

Poi 3

Tower Tomb

Roma / Place to visit - Tombs

This tower-shaped tomb, not far from the Capo di Bove complex, was probably a multi-storey tomb consisting of a concrete core incorporating fragments of precious Luni marble (which today is known as Carrara marble), the use of which material in Rome is attested from the mid-1st century BC, which is the period in which this structure was built. The monument features a modern inscription referring to the trigonometric measurements carried out along the Via Appia in 1855, by the Jesuit scientist Angelo Secchi, an astronomer and the director of the Observatory of the Roman College. The measurements served as the basis for the nationwide geodetic survey completed in 1871.



Opening Hours

	On weekends mandatory reservation at least one day in advance by calling 067886254 during opening hours.
09:00 - 19:00	

Closing Days

Monday

Info

Opening hours:
From Tuesday to Sunday, from 9.00 to 19.00 pm with last admission 30 minutes before closing.

Visits on weekends must be booked by phone at least one day in advance.
Reservations for the weekend by calling 067886254 during opening hours.

Closing days:
25 December, 1 January, 15 August

Address

Via Appia Antica, 222 - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to CECILIA METELLA stop, alternatively, from METRO LINE B station

Poi 4

Capo di Bove Site - Cederna Archive

Roma / Place to visit - Archaeological areas

The “Capo di Bove” site is situated at the 4th mile of the Via Appia Antica, at a distance of about 500 m from the Tomb of Caecilia Metella. It consists of a green area of approx. 8600 m2 with a main building on three levels and a smaller building. When the property was put up for sale, in 2002, the Archaeological Superintendence of Rome and the Ministry of Culture decided to purchase it, by exercising the right of pre-emption, given the archaeological interest of the area (subject to specific restrictions). Excavations carried out in the gardens, after it was purchased, unearthed a Roman bath complex dated to the mid-2nd century AD, with additions until the 4th century and traces of its conversion for agricultural purposes in the late antique period, when the area belonged to a vast church-owned estate called the *Patrimonium Appiae*. A large number of rooms of the baths remain, with mosaic and coloured marble flooring, pools, terracotta piping, the drainage system and parts of the marble cladding and painted wall-plaster.

The garden was redesigned and planted with new trees, with a walking route and an effective lighting system. The main building, originally a private house, has been adapted by the Superintendence to its new public function and now houses offices, a conference room, exhibition rooms, for photography and art, cultural events and teaching activities, and also hosts the Archive and Library of Antonio Cederna, the father of the environmentalist movement in Italy, who actively championed the protection of the Via Appia Antica. The building, built over the Roman water cistern feeding the baths, features typical wall decorations made in the 1950s with fragments and materials recovered from the ancient ruins.

The smaller outbuilding has been converted into a visitor information centre, complete with restrooms and beverage vending machines. Near the entrance, on side opposite to the street, are the remains of a tower tomb, dating back to the mid-1st century BC, with a marble plaque commemorating the trigonometric measurements carried out along the Via Appia in 1855 by the Jesuit priest Angelo Secchi.

COLOSSEO take the BUS 118
to BASILICA S. SEBASTIANO
stop and then walk for 10
minutes.