



From the Via Appia Antica to the Park of the Via Latina

Caffarella Valley / Park of the Via Latina / Via Appia Antica

This itinerary crosses the Caffarella Valley, the backdrop of many of the myths and legends of Ancient Rome. Tradition had it that this was the home of the water nymph Egeria, a divine consort and counsellor of one of the kings of Rome, Numa Pompilius, to whom the Egeria spring is dedicated. From here you can visit the Valley, dotted with ancient, medieval and modern buildings, surrounded by an immensely evocative natural environment. The highlights of the Valley are the Valca Tower, a medieval watchtower built to defend a bridge across the river Almone, a small affluent of the Tiber that crosses the Valley, and the so-called Columbarium of Constantine. From Via dell'Almone, just north of the junction with Via Appia Nuova, you can reach the Park of the Via Latina, which preserves a long stretch of the Roman road lined with tombs, some of which feature marvellous interior decorations.

The itinerary enters the Caffarella Valley via the underpass of the Fonte Egeria mineral water plant, which is subject to opening times, as follows: Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm; Sunday and Holidays, 9 am to 1.30 pm. These hours, however, may change at the discretion of the plant.

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Info



POI

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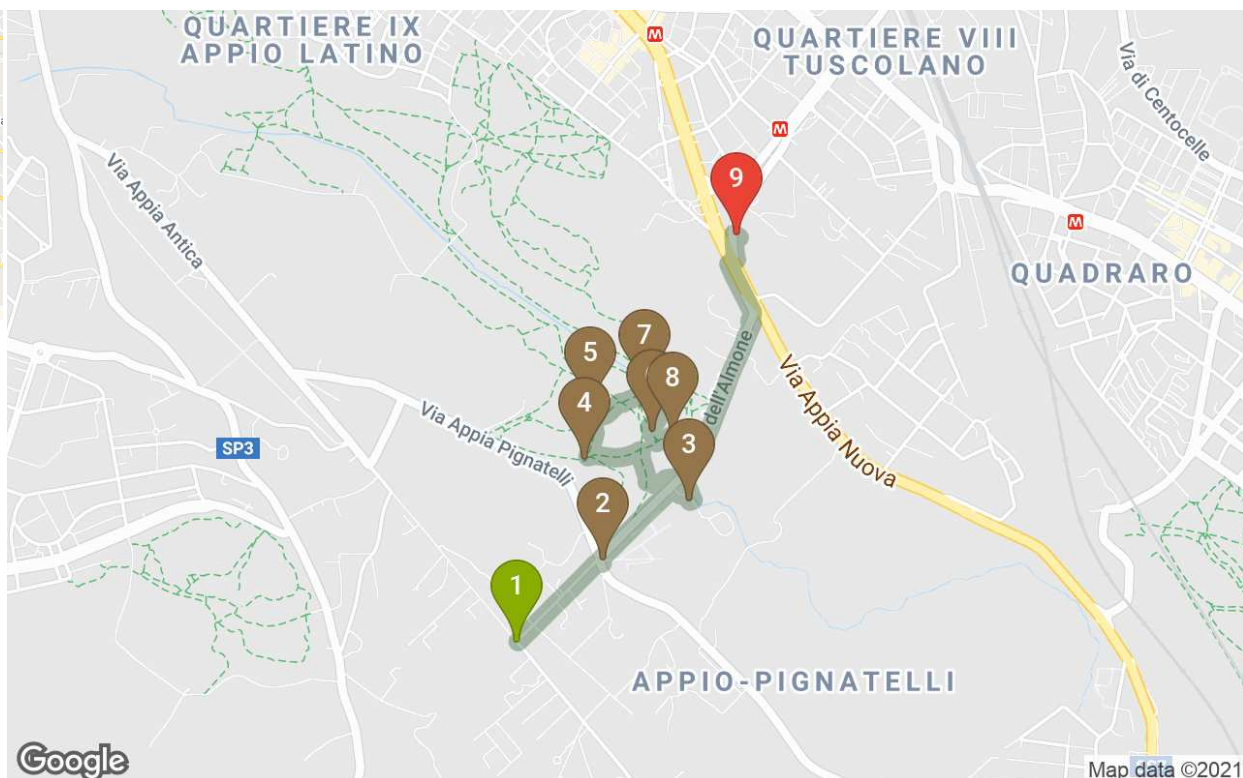


Distance

3.28 Km



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





The Via Appia Antica

Roma / Place to visit - Ancient streets

The long story of the Via Appia unfolds in space and time. With its 2300 years of history, the Appian Way bears all the signs of a remarkable and fascinating past, which are still clearly visible among the ruins that flank the road today. Great historic events and minor episodes of everyday life have played out here, in these picturesque surroundings, since the time of ancient Rome, through the Dark Ages, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, until the decision, by Pope Pius IX, in the mid-19th century, to transform it into an open air museum.

The Via Appia began at Porta Capena, one of the gates in the Servian Wall, near the Circus Maximus, and continued southward, with a straight smooth stretch, first until Capua and, later on, to Brindisi and the Adriatic Sea. The initial part of the road is no longer visible and the main monuments can be reached through the modern Viale delle Terme di Caracalla and Via di Porta San Sebastiano. However, at the junction with the Via Ardeatina, and the church of Domine, quo vadis?, there begins a long straight extraordinarily well-preserved stretch of the old Roman road, lined with hundreds of ancient monuments.

These are just a small part of the many relics of the past that adorn this evocative expanse of Roman countryside, where the absence of buildings or natural barriers ensure an uninterrupted view of the nearby Alban Hills.

The state-owned stretch of the Appian Way runs for a length of about 12 km, from house number 195 to Frattocchie, in the commune of Marino.

Visit Duration

60 min. cc.

Address

Via Appia Antica - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to BASILICA DI SAN SEBASTIANO stop and then walk for 7 minutes, alternatively from METRO LINE A station ARDO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to CECILIA METELLA stop

Audioguide



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The Appia Pignatelli Artillery Fort

Roma / Other places - Other Places

Beginning in 1877, Rome was surrounded by a defence system consisting of a string of artillery forts and fortresses, located at a distance of 4-5 km, on average, from the Roman Aurelian Walls and forming a 37 km long ring with 15 fortresses and 3 artillery forts, such as this one. The Appia Pignatelli Artillery Fort, built between 1883 and 1888, together with the Porta Furba Artillery Fort, was tasked with the purpose of preventing the enemy from accessing the city along the Via Appia and Via Tuscolana, and controlling the area between the Via Appia Antica and the modern-day Park of the Aqueducts.

The fort has an irregular pentagonal ground plan, with a salient-type outer front. It housed a gunpowder magazine entered from the moat, near the drawbridge, and featured two freshwater wells, useful in the event of a siege. The fort is generally in good condition, although it was slightly damaged in 1944 during an Allied bombing. It was used, since the 1910s, as the headquarters of the Italian Air Force's Artillery Division, and today houses the headquarters of the Automated Information System Unit.

The system of 19th century fortresses and artillery forts surrounding the city have been decommissioned, over the last few decades, because they are now located too close to built up areas, following the expansion of Rome well beyond the Aurelian Walls during the 20th century, and are now used as military storehouses or barracks.

Visit Duration

5 min.

Address

Via Appia Pignatelli 123 - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/ALMONE stop.



Egeria Spring





Roma / Tourist Services - Info Point

The spring is associated with the very ancient cult of the nymph Egeria, which originated at the time of the foundation of Rome. The water is a medium mineral water rich in calcium, magnesium, potassium and fluoride, and the spring is fed by an aquifer that collects water from the Castelli Romani basin, rich in mineral salts from the volcanic soil it crosses, which also confer its characteristic light effervescence.

The aquifer is protected from surface pollution by various layers of clay. The spring was already known to the Romans for its therapeutic qualities. It was rediscovered in the 11th century, after a long period of neglect, and became popular once again in the 16th century thanks to the physician of Gregory VII and Abbot Tommaso della Valle, who enthusiastically mentions it in his "Guide to Holy Waters". In the 18th century the waters were analysed for the first time and the spring was linked to the city by means of two roads, transforming it an attraction and mineral water resort, as well as facilitating the supply of the water for a thriving door-to-door water selling trade.

In 1948 a bottling plant was opened, set in a large area of parkland, which still bears the name of the spring and where the water can still be appreciated today, all its properties intact.

Services

-  Café / Restaurant
-  Drinking water
-  Info point
-  Parking

Info

Opening hours:

Summer

From the start of daylight saving time

Monday – Saturday: 8.00 – 18.30

Sunday – Holidays: 8.00 – 13.30

Winter

From the return to standard time

Monday – Saturday: 8.00 – 17.30

Sunday – Holidays: 8.00 – 13.30

Closing days:

1 January, Easter Sunday, 15 August, 25-26 December

Visit Duration

20 min.

Address

Via dell'Almone 111 - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/ALMONE stop, alternatively from METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take BUS 660 to ALMONE stop.



Roman cistern

Roma / Place to visit - Cistern

The Caffarella Valley, thanks to the lay of the land and abundance of water, being crossed by the river Almone, was much exploited in Roman times for farming, while at a later date it also became much appreciated as a setting for a number of wealthy villas, with large rooms, baths, gardens and fountains. This explains the presence of the many large cisterns here, such as this one, located between the church of S. Urbano and Via dell'Almone. The structure, about 21 metres long and almost 7 metres tall, was originally dug into the earth, to better support the enormous pressure of the water stored inside, and was brought to the light only after the large-scale excavation works in this area in the Late Imperial period (4th-5th centuries AD). Today, all that remains of the original structure is its concrete core containing flint gravel aggregates. The lower part of the outer walls feature traces of brickwork added much later, probably to strengthen the structure after the excavation. Inside, there is a cocciopesto (broken pottery beaten to powder) floor, while the walls were plastered. The short walls are semi-circular in shape, while the vault has an acute angle. Its date is uncertain, but it was probably built in the 1st century AD. Over the centuries, after being abandoned, the cistern was used as a warehouse or even a house, as well as a watchtower, as suggested by the crenellations at the top.

👁 Visit Duration

10 min.

📍 Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

🚶 How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/S.URBANO stop.



The Sacred Grove

Roma / Place to visit - Natural area

Not far from the nymphaeum of Egeria is a wood which, according to a Renaissance tradition, was used by the water nymph Egeria and the second king of Rome Numa Pompilius as a meeting place for their trysts, although historians have recently moved this spot to closer to the ancient Porta Capena gate. This is probably all that remains of an ancient lucus, the sacred groves often planted near suburban villas, in ancient times, and in this case the sacred grove on the estate of the villa built by Herodes Atticus in the 2nd century AD, where he lived with his wife Annia Regilla. This was also a favourite spot for landscape painters in the 18th century. The wood, located on the top of a hill overlooking the entire valley, has been preserved, in part, from Roman times. From 1999, another 50 holm oak trees (*Quercus ilex*) have been planted around the only 3 remaining oak trees of the original grove, in an attempt to recreate its appearance.

Visit Duration

3 min.

Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/SANT'URBANO stop, alternatively from METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINIOI take the BUS 660 to ALMONE stop.



Costantine's Colombarium

Roma / Place to visit - Tombs

This is the name given to the remains of a temple tomb, dated to the 2nd century AD. The red and yellow brick rectangular building, elevated on a podium, featured a portico with two columns, which have since disappeared. The monument was two storeys tall, with a burial chamber below, accessed via a door on the longer side, and an upper chamber used for the funeral rituals.

Inside there are traces of frescoes and the marks left by the marble slabs that covered the walls. In the middle of the far wall was an arched recess – called an arcosolium – with a barrel vault, where the deceased was laid to rest. The building has been heavily altered over the centuries. For example, several windows have been bricked in, with tuff blocks or bricks, and a niche cut into the wall to house a sink. In the Middle Ages the building became a mill, used until the Renaissance, when it was partially buried; then, in the 17th century, it was converted into a house.

The monument has recently been accurately restored. The Columbarium is a short distance from the Egeria Source, which can be reached via an underpass or by crossing Via dell'Almone.

Visit Duration

3 min.

Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

Da METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/S.URBANO stop, alternatively METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to ALMONE stop



The Valca Tower

Roma / Place to visit - Towers

This tower was built between the 12th and 13th centuries over a previous Roman building, to control a bridge across the river Almona and a road. It was probably used by the Counts of Tusculum, and then the Caetani, to control the surrounding area and the access to Rome, after having acquired the Tomb of Caecilia Metella and the neighbouring land.

The tower has a square ground plan and is two storeys tall, originally divided by a wooden floor, which no longer exists although the holes in the walls for the beams can still be seen. The entrance to the tower is on the side opposite to the river and is framed by a short porch with Roman brickwork decoration. There are several rectangular windows for sighting and the entire building is made of blocks of peperino and yellow tufa blocks.

The name “*valca*” refers to a type of mill used, in the Middle Ages, to wash wool for making cloth, and is probably of Longobard origin, a theory regarding the purpose of this tower which seems to be supported by the presence, nearby, of several tanks. Based on the results of archaeological excavations, it has been surmised that the mill stopped operating in the 16th century. After the excavation work, carried out in 1999, the heavily damaged tower was restored to prevent its collapse.

👁 Visit Duration

2 min.

📍 Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

🚶 How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/S.URBANO stop, alternatively from METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVEVERNO take the BUS 660 to ALMONA stop.



River Almone (South)

Roma / Naturalistic Area - Rivers

In Roman times, the stream crossing the entire length of the Caffarella Valley was called *Almo flumen* (river Almo) and was the third most important waterway of the ancient city. Its headsprings being located in the Alban Hills, near the modern-day town of Marino, and it crossed the Roman countryside before reaching the city.

In this area, near the Tenuta della Caffarella estate, the river was fed by the Fonte Egeria springs, after which it crossed the Aventino Valley and then flowed into the Tiber. Ovid mentions a solemn festival linked to the river and held every year on 27 March, since 205 BC, called the *lavatio Matris deum*, during which the black stone symbolising the goddess Cybele (Magna Mater) and the sacred ritual objects used in her temple on the Palatine hill were washed at the point of confluence of the Almone and the Tiber. Almo, Virgil recounts in Book VII of his Aeneid, was also the name of a young woman at the court of the Latin king, associated with the legend of the arrival, on the coast of Latium, of the Trojan Aeneas, fleeing from the destruction of Troy, the first to die in the clash between the Latins and the Trojans.

Since the 16th century the river has also been called Acquataccio (Bad Water), from which marrana dell'Acquataccio or marrana della Caffarella, marrana meaning ditch in the Roman dialect. In 1939, the river, after the point where it is crossed by the Via Appia, was covered over and channelled into an underground pipe to the wastewater treatment facility of Roma Sud. At the Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse the river is crossed by a small brick and tufa bridge.

Visit Duration

2 min.

Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118, alternatively from METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to ALMONE stop.



The Archeological park of the Tombs of the Via Latina

Roma / Place to visit - Archaeological areas

A section of the 3rd mile of the ancient Roman road called the Via Latina has been preserved, practically intact, on the outskirts of Rome, between the modern-day Via Appia and Via Tuscolana. The road has very remote origins, being the natural prehistoric route used by the Etruscans to colonise Campania in the 8th to 6th century BC.

The paved road was built by the Romans in the 4th-3rd century BC linking Rome to Capua and crossing the Lepini, Ausoni and Aurunci mountains and the valleys of the Sacco and Liri rivers, playing an important role throughout antiquity. Even in the Middle Ages, in fact, it was the preferred road for Naples, because it was in a better condition than the Via Appia and due to the presence of many Christian monuments along the way.

A section with the original paving of the road can still be seen in the Archaeological Park of the Tombs of the Via Latina, which makes for a pleasant stroll to admire the tombs, dated to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, which flank the road and still feature perfectly preserved multicoloured decorations, both inside and outside: vaulted ceilings that are plastered, stuccoed and painted, walls covered with frescoes with funerary subjects and mosaic floors have all been perfectly preserved and look today as they must have looked centuries ago. The road also leads to the Basilica of S. Stefano, a rare example of Early Christian building erected under Pope Leo the Great in the 5th century.

The Archaeological Park of the Tombs of the Via Latina was created in 1879, following the purchase, by the State, of a vast area where a number of Roman remains had been unearthed. Today, it can be visited free of charge and, thanks to the recent restoration work by the Archaeological Park authorities, it is also possible to admire several of the most spectacular Roman tombs:

The so-called **Barberini or Corneli tomb**. This funerary monument, dated to the 2nd century AD, consists of two floors above and an underground burial chamber in excellent condition. The uppermost chamber is cross-vaulted and entirely covered with frescoes with a red background, as well as stucco decorations. The frescoes depict groups of people, winged victories riding on chariots, cupids, birds, marine animals, mythological subjects and architectural elements.

The **Tomb of the Valerii**. The richly decorated underground burial chambers have been preserved, dated to the 2nd century AD, while the part above ground is a hypothetical reconstruction made in the 19th century. The underground chambers feature elaborate white stucco work decorations, with 35 medallions and squares, lunettes and a vaulted ceiling. The medallions depict Dionysian themes, female figures and marine animals, while the central roundel features a delicate veiled figure riding on the back of a griffin, which represents the deceased being taken to the underworld.

The Tomb of the Pancratii. Most of the visible structure is a modern building that protects the underground part of the monument, built on top of the original walls dating to the 1st-2nd century AD, which have been preserved up to a height of about 1.5 metres. Inside, the tomb has several underground chambers marvellously decorated with mosaics on the floor and frescoed walls and vaulted ceilings, painted with brilliant colours and featuring excellently preserved stucco work, all of which depict mythological scenes, natural and architectural landscapes, female figures and animals. In the middle of one of the underground chambers is a large sarcophagus of Greek marble large enough for two bodies.

Given the beauty and exceptional nature of the decorations inside the tombs, the Archaeological Park limits access to the tombs to guided groups, to enable the public to enjoy these wonderful, albeit delicate, monuments, without causing any damage.

Services

- Info point
- Parking
- Restroom

Opening Hours

09:00 - 19:00

On weekends mandatory reservation at least one day in advance by calling 067886254 during opening hours.

Audioguide



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Closing Days

Monday

Info

Opening hours:

From Tuesday to Sunday from 9.00 to 19.00 with last admission 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 day:

Monday.

Visit Duration

30 min.

Address

Via dell'Arco di Travertino, 151 - Roma (RM)

How to get

METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO, then
walk 7 minutes.