



The Via Appia, from Vicolo di Tor Carbone to the Tomb of Caecilia Metella

Via Appia Antica

This short stretch of the Appian Way between the junction with Vicolo di Tor Carbone and the Tomb of Caecilia Metella impressively reveals, to travellers, the role of this road as a privileged graveyard for the good and the great of ancient Rome.

Centuries-old cypress and pine trees frame the succession of tombs of various shapes and sizes, some of which are associated with recent historical events, such as the geodetic surveying of the Via Appia, in the 19th century, by a priest, Angelo Secchi, remembered by a plaque on the so-called Capo di Bove Tower, in a timeless atmosphere that still enthrals visitors today, as it did in the past. Further on is the complex of Capo di Bove, which features an interesting archaeological area and houses the archives of Antonio Cederna, the father of Italy's modern day environmentalist movement, who tirelessly campaigned for the protection of the Via Appia.

The itinerary ends at the grandiose Tomb of Caecilia Metalla, one of the iconic symbols of the Appian Way. The Caetani Castle next to the tomb, the Gothic church of San Nicola and the remains of the walls of the *castrum Caetani*, the stronghold enclosing all three monuments, are marvellous examples of how the ancient Roman buildings lining the road were transformed and converted to a new life in the subsequent centuries, a rather common feature of the Appian Way.



POI



Distance

5

0.75 Km

Poi

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



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

Poi 1



⚠ Not open to visitors

📍 Address

Via Appia Antica, 187 - Roma (RM)

🚶 How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to BASILICA S.SEBASTIANO stop and then walk for 15 minutes, alternatively from METRO LINE A station ARCO DI TRAVERTINO take the BUS 660 to CECILIA METELLA stop and then walk for 5 minutes.

Tomb of the Equinoxes

Roma / Place to visit - Tombs

The tomb, dated to the 2nd century BC, is situated inside a private property. The tomb is round with a square subterranean burial chamber, which preserves its travertine cladding, with niches for the cinerary urns.

In 1748, the architect and engraver Giovan Battista Piranesi drew and described several stucco fragments he observed on the walls, and based on which it can be assumed that the chamber was decorated with frescoes. We do not know to which family the tomb belonged and its name comes from the fact that it appears to be astronomically oriented towards the Equinox. In fact, on the exact day of each Equinox a ray of sunlight enters the burial chamber through a window and hits a spot in the exact centre of the floor. In ancient times rites celebrating death and rebirth were held on the Equinoxes.

Poi 2



📍 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.

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.

Poi 3



🕒 Opening Hours

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

opening hours.

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

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.

Poi 4

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.

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

Poi 5

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,

ⓘ Opening Hours

On weekends mandatory reservation

09:00 - 18:30	at least one day in advance by calling 067886254 during opening hours.
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Closing Days

Monday

Info

Admission fee

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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

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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.