



From Largo Tacchi Venturi to Domine Quo Vadis

Caffarella Valley

This itinerary explores the Caffarella Valley and ends on Via Appia Antica. The valley is an area of great natural beauty, with rolling hills, crossed by waterways and dotted with buildings and remains from Roman times, such as the Tomb of Annia Regilla and the water cistern converted into a barn by the aristocratic Torlonia family, who owned a large estate here, and the more recent Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse built in the 16th century.

The itinerary ends at the junction with the Appian Way, near the interesting church of *Domine Quo Vadis*, associated with the legendary appearance of Christ to the apostle Peter, and the Tomb of Priscilla, one of the most monumental tombs along the Appia Antica. From here, follow the map to other itineraries across the Park.



POI

13



Distance

3.57 Km

Poi

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

Poi 1



Info

Free admission.

Address

Largo Tacchi Venturi - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI and then walk for 8 minutes along Via Mario Menghini.

The Caffarella Valley – Largo Tacchi Venturi

Roma / Place to visit - Natural area

Next to the ancient Via Latina, in a densely populated modern neighbourhood, is one of the most popular entrances to the Caffarella Valley, a huge expanse of public land, covering an area of 190 hectares, bounded by the Aurelian Walls, Via Latina and Via dell'Almone. Its name comes from an estate owned by the noble Caffarelli family, who built a farmhouse here, in the 16th century, known as "Vaccareccia", and which can still be seen in the Park.

The area was listed as public parkland in the 1965 Zoning Plan, and today visitors may enter and appreciate its natural beauty and archaeological remains via a number of gates in the surrounding neighbourhoods. This green valley, crossed by the river Almone, features many archaeological remains, tombs, villas, towers and waterworks, having been inhabited since the 6th century BC. Initially consisting entirely of farmland, in the Imperial age it became a highly prized residential area. In particular, we know from the ancient sources that, at the time, Herodes Atticus, a prominent Athenian orator and politician, who lived in Rome in the 2nd century AD, owned a vast estate and built a huge villa here (known as the *Pagus Triopius*), the core of which, having passed into the hands of the emperor, later became the Villa of Maxentius.

Evocative buildings here are the so-called "*nymphaeum* of Egeria", the church of Sant'Urbano, originally dedicated to Ceres and Faustina, the tomb of Annia Regilla, the deceased wife of Herodes Atticus. Also of interest is the "Valca Tower", built as a mill in around the 11th century, on the shores of the river, as part of a fulling mill for manufacturing cloth.

Poi 2



Address

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI walk for 10 minutes along Via Marco Menghini towards Largo Tacchi Venturi

Cistern – Nymphaeum

Roma / Place to visit - Cistern

The Caffarella Valley, due to lay of the land and abundance of water, being crossed by the river Almone, was used since ancient Roman times as prized farmland, as well as the preferred setting for a number of wealthy suburban villas with large rooms, baths, gardens and fountains. This also explains the many water cisterns found here, for storing and supplying water to both the farms and the villas. One of these, the so-called Cistern - Nymphaeum, is the closest to the Via Latina: a building with a rectangular floor plan, almost 10 metres long, built of brick, which features the peculiar characteristic of five buttresses against the south wall, framing three arched recesses. This unusual feature has led archaeologists to believe that it also doubled as a monumental fountain called a nymphaeum. It was probably part of a villa the remains of which have been unearthed near the Via Latina. No information has yet come to light regarding how and from where water was supplied to the cistern, although its proximity to the aqueduct and dating have led archaeologists to assume that it was fed by the *Aqua Antoniniana*.

The structure was abandoned in Late Antiquity (4th-5th century AD) and was later reused first as a burial site, then, after a stair was opened in the floor leading to an underground chamber, for wine production, based on the presence of a tank where the grapes could be pressed.

Poi 3



Via Latina – Caffarella Valley

Roma / Place to visit - Ancient streets

Near the junction between the Via Latina and Via di Vigna Fabbri lies a stretch of the ancient Via Latina, the road which, in Roman times, linked Rome and Capua. The route, used since proto-historic times by the Etruscans, for their conquest of Campania, was paved beginning in the 4th century BC, and became the second most important road, after the Appian Way,

Open every day

Address

Via Latina - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI and then walk for 8 minutes along Via Marco Menghini.

connecting Rome with the south of Italy. In Roman times the Via Latina was flanked, like all the important roads leading out of Rome, by tombs, residential buildings, shops and inns serving travellers.

The stretch visible here was paved with slabs of volcanic rock. The road was about 4 metres wide, not including the pedestrian walkways at the sides; this is the typical width of Roman roads and had been calculated to allow to carts travelling in different directions to pass each other without having to give way. Some of the paving stones feature deep ruts carved by cart wheels. In this area of the Appio-Latino neighbourhood, after World War II, a shanty town was built, called the Borghetto Latino, to provide a shelter for the many people who had lost their homes. The huts were built against the ancient Roman ruins, even using stones and other materials removed from the monuments. In the 1970s, the local authorities decided it was high time to find a more permanent solution for the people still living in the shanty town, decades after the War, so plans were drawn up to demolish the Borghetto Latino and regenerate the entire area, also including the Roman ruins.

Today, the remains of only a few ancient buildings can still be seen here, including, near the preserved stretch of the Via Latina, a small pillar tomb, so-called because it is taller than it is wide, resembling a pillar, with a small square base erected, as a marker, over an underground burial place. As is often the case in pillar tombs, only the core of the base has been preserved, made of concrete and tufa aggregate, while the external stone or marble cladding has long since been plundered.

Poi 4

Round cistern

Roma / Place to visit - Cistern

Very little remains of this circular Roman cistern, only a few centimetres of its structure jutting out of the soil. With a diameter of 30 metres, it was made of concrete containing flint gravel aggregates. The limited thickness of the wall has led archaeologists to think that it probably lacked a roof and was, therefore, open to the skies, to collect rainwater for crop irrigation. The Caffarella Valley, thanks to the lay of the land and abundance of water, being crossed by the river Almone, was much exploited for farming, since Roman times, a fact testified by the numerous cisterns found there.



Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station FURIO CAMILLO exit to Via Baronio and walk for 14 minutes

Poi 5

Torlonia Cistern – Barn

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 exploited since Roman times, for farming purposes, as well as being appreciated as a setting for several wealthy suburban villas, with large rooms, baths, gardens and fountains. This is the reason for the presence, in the Valley, of a large number of cisterns – storage tanks for collecting water – an example of which is the so-called “Torlonia Cistern – Barn”.

Built originally in the period between the end of the Republic and the Early Imperial age (between the end of the 1st century BC and the beginning of the 1st century AD), it probably belonged to a large villa the remains of which have been unearthed between via Carlo de Bildt and the Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse. The walls of the cistern are built of concrete containing leucitite aggregates and it has a rectangular ground plan measuring 14 x 5.50 metres. Its unusual name is down to the fact that, between the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, it was converted into a barn by the owners of the estate, the wealthy and powerful Torlonia family, as part of the refurbishment of the Tarani cistern. On that occasion, an upper floor was added, to be used as a warehouse.

The building partially collapsed, in 2011, after which restoration and strengthening works were carried out.



Address

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI walk for 11 minutes along Via Marco Menghini towards Largo Tacchi Venturi.

Poi 6



Address

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI walk for 11 minutes along Via Marco Menghini towards Largo Tacchi Venturi.

Casale della Vaccareccia

Roma / Place to visit - Casali

The Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse is one of the many farmhouses built in the Caffarella Valley and incorporates a Medieval watchtower built to defend the Roman countryside. It was erected in 1547 by the Caffarelli family, and important family of the Roman nobility, who had started purchasing land in the area since 1529 and eventually built up an estate covering almost the entire valley. The Caffarelli sold the estate in 1695 to the Pallavicini, who, about a century later, in 1816, sold it to the Torlonia.

Poi 7



Address

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO A station COLLI ALBANI walk for 11 minutes along Via Marco Menghini towards Largo Tacchi Venturi.

River Almone (North)

Roma / Place to visit - Natural area

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.

Poi 8



Address

Via della Caffarella 23 - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station

Tomb of Annia Regilla

Roma / Place to visit - Tombs

In the Caffarella Valley, on a path branching off northwards, after the Casale della Vaccareccia farmhouse, there is a building which, according to a 17th and 18th century legend, was the Temple of Rediculus, the Roman divinity who protected travellers leaving and returning to the city.

Instead, it is a temple-shaped bicoloured brick tomb, which is now generally thought to be the tomb of Annia Regilla, wife of Herodes Atticus, who died prematurely in AD 160. A nearby former farmhouse with a mill has been refurbished as an info point.

COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA
ANTICA/CAFFARELLA stop and then walk for 15 minutes along Via della Caffarella.



Address

Via della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take the BUS 118 to APPIA
ANTICA/CAFFARELLA stop.

Poi 9

Chapel of Reginald Pole

Roma / Place to visit - Churches

At the junction of Via Appia Antica and Via della Caffarella there is a small round chapel built, in 1539, by the English cardinal Reginald Pole, in thanksgiving for the failure of an attempted ambush by assassins at the orders of King Henry VIII.

The cardinal, in fact, had opposed the king's decision to separate the English Church from Rome and the Pope. After Mary I was crowned Queen of England, he became one of her most trusted advisers and was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury.

The cylindrical building is modelled on an ancient Roman tomb. The outside wall features eight pilasters in yellow brick, with granite plinths and capitals, which divide the wall into eight equally sized areas and support an entablature above topped by a domed roof, which fits onto the projecting cornice. The building shares some architectural features with the little church of San Giovanni in Oleo, on Via di Porta Latina, especially in having two doorways, probably associated with pilgrimage rites. The interior, which is currently closed, preserves some 16th century frescoes.



Address

Via Appia Antica 47 - Roma (RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take BUS 118 to APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE QUO VADIS stop.

Poi 10

Church of Domine Quo Vadis

Roma / Place to visit - Churches

Located where the modern Via Ardeatina branches off the Via Appia, the small church of *Domine Quo Vadis* has been a pilgrimage attraction for centuries. Tradition has it that this is the site where Jesus appeared to Peter, who was fleeing Nero's persecution in Rome; when Peter asked him “Lord, where are you going?” (*Domine quo vadis?*), he replied “I am going to Rome to be crucified again”.

A shrine was built on this spot in the ninth century, although the current church dates to the 16th and 17th centuries. The church is also known as St. Mary “of the footprints”, because of a marble slab with two footprints kept there, said to be those of Jesus Christ (actually, a pagan Roman “*ex voto*”, the original of which is preserved in the Basilica of San Sebastiano).



Address

Via Appia Antica 76 - Roma (RM)

How to get

Poi 11

The tomb of Priscilla

Roma / Place to visit - Tombs

Almost opposite the church of *Domine Quo Vadis*, on the other side of the Via Appia, is a cylindrical 11th century tower, built on top of a monumental Roman tomb. The tomb itself was built by Titus Flavius Abascantus, a freedman of the emperor Domitian, for his wife Priscilla, who died prematurely in the middle of the 1st century AD. The huge square podium is hidden behind the surrounding Medieval buildings.

From METRO LINE B station
COLOSSEO take the BUS 118
to DOMINE QUO VADIS stop.



Info

Open every day:

November - February: Monday-
Friday 9.30-13 / 14-17.30
Saturday and Sunday 9.30-
17.30
March - October: Monday-
Friday 9.30-13 / 14-18.30
Saturday and Sunday 9.30-
19.30

Address

Via Appia Antica 58/60 - Roma
(RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station
COLOSSEO take BUS 118 to
APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE QUO
VADIS stop, alternatively
from METRO LINE A station
SAN GIOVANNI take the BUS
218 to APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE
QUO VADIS stop.

Poi 12

Appia Antica Visitor Information Centre

Roma / Tourist Services - Info Point

The Info point, the management of which has been awarded by the Regional Park of the Appia Antica to EcoBike Srl, supplies information materials, welcomes tourists, provides a bike hiring service and a guided reservations for nature and archaeological tours (walking, bike and electric minicar tours), also in foreign languages. For further info visit <https://www.infopointappia.it/>



Address

Via Appia Antica 46 - Roma
(RM)

How to get

From METRO LINE B station
COLOSSEO take the BUS 118
to DOMINE QUO VADIS stop.

Poi 13

Via Appia Antica - Domine Quo Vadis

Roma / Other places - Other Places

This point, at the 2nd mile of the Via Appia Antica, is of strategic importance for reaching any of the areas in the Park. Slightly to the south, in fact, at the church of *Domine Quo Vadis*, is the important junction between the Via Appia and the Via Ardeatina. This is the place where, according to Christian tradition, Christ appeared to Peter as he was fleeing Rome to escape persecution. From here you may continue along the Appian Way either northwards or southwards, otherwise you may decide to proceed westwards along the Via Ardeatina to the Tenuta di Tor Marancia estate, or explore the evocative Caffarella Valley, from where you may then reach the Tombs on the Via Latina, Tor Fiscale and the Aqueducts.