

# From Tor Marancia to Domine Quo Vadis

## Estate of Tor Marancia

This itinerary explores several very interesting areas in the Archaeological Park of the Appia Antica. The starting point is the Tenuta di Tor Marancia estate, a natural island surrounded by a sea of densely populated neighbourhoods. From here, Via Ardeatina leads to the memorial dedicated to the victims of the Fosse Ardeatine massacre, one of the most dramatic events that occurred in the Nazi occupation of Rome during World War II.

Further on are the extensive catacombs of Domitilla and San Callisto, offering a glimpse into the burial practices of the early Christian community. Eventually, you come to the Appia Antica and two of the most representative monuments lining this ancient road, the Tomb of Priscilla and the church *Domine Quo Vadis*, associated with the legendary appearance of Jesus to the apostle Peter. From here, follow the map to other itineraries across the Park.

*Plan this itinerary around the opening times of the Catacombs of San Callisto (closed on Wednesdays, 25 December, 1 January, Easter Sunday and between the end of January and the end of February).*



POI



Distance

7

3.40  
Km

### Poi

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

# Poi 1

## Estate of Tor Marancia- Nord

### Roma / Place to visit - Natural area

Tor Marancia is a 200 hectare expanse of miraculously unspoilt countryside in the heart of one of Rome's most populous districts, still surprisingly intact and with a wealth of fauna and flora and also a number of archaeological remains, which have revealed that the area has been inhabited since the Stone Age (between 70,000 and 35,000 BC) and used as farmland since Roman times.

The area is bounded to the west by a stream called Marrana dell'Annunziatella, and to the north and east by Via delle Sette Chiese, Via Ardeatina and Vicolo dell'Annunziatella. Remains of a large number of Roman residential buildings have been found here, from simple farmhouses to large aristocratic villas. The most monumental of these was the Villa of the Numisii, dating back to the mid-2nd century AD and belonging to Numisia Procula, according to the inscription on a lead pipe found at the site.

The name Tor Marancia probably comes from Amaranthus, a Roman libertus (freed slave) who took over the management of the villa, which, unfortunately, has since disappeared, replaced by a quarry opened on the right hand side of Via Ardeatina. The Marancia Tower, known to have been part of a complex defence system erected in the Middle Ages, was located on Via delle Sette Chiese inside the Horti Flaviani, near the Catacombs of Domitilla. It is thought to have been demolished between the end of the 16th and the mid-17th century since it no longer appears in the 1660 Alessandrino Map. The area also features traces of paved Roman roads flanked by funerary monuments, and necropolises, along Via Ardeatina and Via Laurentina (one of the largest was along Via di Grotta Perfetta, near the church of Annunziatella). In the 1990s there was a plan to develop this until then incredibly unspoilt area inside Rome's Ring Road.

Luckily, and thanks to the activism of environmental organisations, political parties and local resident groups, the plan was scrapped and in 2002 the City Council of Rome and the local government decided to establish the Park of Tor Marancia, which has since become an integral part of the Appia Antica Regional Park.



#### Address

Via dei Numisii - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

From METRO LINE B station PIRAMIDE take BUS 716 to SARTORIO stop.

# Poi 2

## Fosse Ardeatine Memorial

### Roma / Place to visit - Monuments

On 23 March 1944, a column of the German SS Police Regiment "Bozen" was ambushed by Partisans with an improvised explosive device in a central Roman street, Via Rasella, resulting in the death of 33 policemen. The Germans retaliated by rounding up 335 men (ten for each German soldier killed, plus another five), who were taken to some disused quarries along the Via Ardeatina, between the catacombs of San Sebastiano and San Callisto, and summarily shot under the orders of Herbert Kappler, commander of the SS and Gestapo in Rome, during the night of 24 March, in 67 gruesome shifts. The massacre, the place where it was perpetrated and the names of the victims, were supposed to remain secret.

The bodies of the victims were piled up and buried under tons of rock debris caused by the explosive charges detonated to seal the caves and conceal the massacre. After the end of the war, in 1945, the Allied Command provided 2 million lire to recover the bodies of the victims and hold a national competition for designing a memorial of the massacre, with the recommendation not to alter the appearance of the caves. In 1948, the task of building the memorial was assigned to the Ministry of Public Works, because, in the meantime, the massacre and related memorial had become a matter of national importance, as a symbol of the entire country's sacrifice to regain the national unity shattered by the war and the Nazi-fascist occupation.

The Government wanted the memorial to become a monument to the Resistance movement, to the collective revolt of the people against the invaders, and so it built with materials and workers from across the entire country.



#### Info

##### Opening hours:

Monday - Friday  
Memorial: 8:15 - 15:30 -  
Museum: 8:15 - 15:15  
Saturday and Sunday  
Memorial: 8:15 - 16:30 -  
Museum: 8:15 - 16:15

##### Closing days:

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

#### Address

Via Ardeatina 174 - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

METRO LINE A station SAN GIOVANNI then BUS 218 to FOSSE ARDEATINE stop. Alternatively, METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO then BUS 118 to BASILICA DI SAN SEBASTIANO stop and walk



#### Info

**Opening hours:**  
Wednesday to Monday,  
from 9.00 to 12.00 and  
14.00 to 17.00

**Closing day:**  
Tuesday

#### Address

Via delle Sette Chiese 282 -  
Roma (RM)

#### How to get

METRO LINE B station  
PIRAMIDE exit to Via delle  
Cave Ardeatine, take BUS  
30 to NAVIGATORI stop and  
then walk for 4 minutes.

## Catacombs of Domitilla

### Roma / Place to visit - Catacumb

The Catacombs of Domitilla on the Via Ardeatina, referred to in an ancient source as the cymiterium Domitillae Nerei et Achillei ad sanctam Petronillam via Ardeatina, are one of the largest subterranean funerary complexes in Rome. Discovered at the end of the 16th century, when they were thought to be part of the Catacombs of San Callisto, they were examined and investigated in the mid-19th century by the archaeologist Giovanni Battista de Rossi. Originally formed as separate burial grounds, they were united already in ancient times and reached their maximum extension between the 4th and 5th centuries AD.

The passio, or account, of the martyrdom of saints Nereus and Achilleus, written in the 6th century AD, mentions that after being martyred, during the persecution by the emperor Diocletian, they were buried on land belonging to a certain Flavia Domitilla, who is generally identified as the niece of the emperor Domitian and wife of Titus Flavius Clemens, consul in AD 95, and was banished to the island of Ponza for having converted to Christianity. Following their transformation into a shrine by pope Damasus at the end of the 4th century, or between the 6th and 7th centuries according to other sources, the catacombs became a place of pilgrimage and devotion until pope Leo III, in the 9th century, decided to move the relics of the two martyrs into the city, to the church of Saints Nereus and Achilleus, near the Baths of Caracalla.



#### Info

**Opening hours:**  
10.30 - 12.00 then 14.00 to  
17.00

**Closing day:**  
Wednesday; entire month  
of February.

#### Address

Via Appia Antica 126 -  
Roma (RM)

#### How to get

METRO LINE B station  
COLOSSEO, then walk 150  
metres and take BUS 118 to  
DOMINE QUO VADIS or  
BASILICA DI SAN  
SEBASTIANO stops

## Catacombs of San Callisto

### Roma / Place to visit - Catacumb

Half way between the church of Domine Quo Vadis and the Basilica of San Sebastiano, are the Catacombs of San Callisto, the first collective burial ground in Rome to be mentioned in the ancient sources. The catacombs are named for the deacon and future pope Callixtus, who was appointed guardian of the cemetery by pope Zephyrinus, between 198 and 217, as a place in which the faithful could "rest" together (from the Greek "koimao", to sleep) while awaiting the day of Resurrection. They are the biggest catacombs in Rome and also contain many martyrs, 16 popes and hundreds of ordinary Christians. The warren of tunnels and caves, covering an overall area of approx. 72,000 square metres, was laid out according to a grid plan, with parallel corridors and connecting corridors at right angles, as a mass burial ground featuring purposely-designed standard tombs. There are various areas, dating back to different periods, and indicating that the catacombs were progressively extended over the decades. The oldest core is the part closest to the Via Appia, known as the "crypts of Lucina", the Roman matron who, according to the historical sources, buried pope Cornelius there in AD 253. Of great importance is the so-called "crypt of the Popes", which contains the burials of a number of high-ranking churchmen, the most important of which is pope Sixtus II, who died a martyr in AD 258. In the 4th century AD, pope Damasus (366-384) ordered the refurbishment of the catacombs, with the creation of a devotional route and the decoration of the most venerated tombs, with the addition of inscriptions and dedications celebrating the popes and martyrs.

# Poi 3

# Poi 4

# Poi 5



## Church of Domine Quo Vadis

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### 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

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Via Appia Antica 47 - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

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METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO, then walk 150 metres and take BUS 118 to APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE QUO VADIS stop



## The tomb of Priscilla

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### 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.

#### Address

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Via Appia Antica 76 - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

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



## Appia Antica Visitor Information Centre

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### 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/>

#### Info

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**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

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Via Appia Antica 58/60 - Roma (RM)

#### How to get

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METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO, then walk 110 metres and take BUS 118 to APPIA ANTICA/DOMINE QUO

Poi 6

Poi 7

VADIS stop METRO LINE A  
station SAN GIOVANNI then  
take BUS 218 to APPIA  
ANTICA/DOMINE QUO VADIS  
stop