

# From Vicolo di Tor Carbone to Valle della Caffarella

## Caffarella Valley / Via Appia Antica

This itinerary crosses one of the most beautiful green areas of the entire Park, the Caffarella Valley. The grey basalt paving stones of the Appian Way leading into the city lead you to the complex of Capo di Bove, which today houses the archive and library of Antonio Cederna, a key figure of the Italian environmentalist movement. After leaving the ancient paved road, take first Via di Cecilia Metella, then Via dell'Almone to the Fonte Egeria mineral water bottling plant, from where, via an underpass, you enter the Caffarella Valley, a vast green area of about 190 hectares bounded by the Aurelian Walls, Via Latina and Via dell'Almone.

This is an excellent observation point overlooking the entire Valley, with its historical and natural heritage: the still visible traces of red *pozzolana* and *tufa* stone, produced by the eruptions of the prehistoric volcano of the Alban Hills, the monumental water cistern built in the 1st century AD, the so-called Sacred Grove, which, according to a Renaissance legend, was the site of the trysts between the Nymph Egeria and the second of the seven king of Rome, Numa Pompilius. Nearby is the church of Sant'Urbano, originally built as a pagan temple in the 2nd century AD, dedicated to Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, and converted into a church in the 9th century.

*The itinerary enters the Caffarella Valley via the underpass of the Fonte Egeria mineral water bottling plant, which is open on Monday to Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm; Sunday and Holidays, 9 am to 1.30 pm. The opening times, however, may change.*



POI



Distance

9

2.57  
Km

### Poi

- 1 Via Appia Antica - Vicolo di Tor Carbone
- 2 Tower Tomb
- 3 Capo di Bove Site - Cederna Archive
- 4 The Appia Pignatelli Artillery Fort
- 5 Egeria Spring
- 6 Roman cistern
- 7 The Sacred Grove
- 8 Temple of Ceres and Faustine - Church of Sant'Urbano
- 9 Caffarella Valley



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

# Poi 1

## Via Appia Antica - Vicolo di Tor Carbone

Roma / Place to visit - Ancient streets



### Address

Vicolo di Tor Carbone - Via Appia Antica - Roma (RM)

# Poi 2

## Tower Tomb

Roma / Place to visit - Tombs



### Address

Via Appia Antica, 222 - Roma (RM)

This was probably a multi-storey tomb built after the mid-1st century BC, consisting of a concrete core incorporating fragments of precious Luni marble, the use of which in Rome is attested from this period. 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

## Capo di Bove Site - Cederna Archive

Roma / Place to visit - Archaeological areas



### Info

#### Opening hours:

Every day, 9.00-17.00  
(winter time) / 9.00-18.30  
(summer time)

#### Closing days:

25 December, 1 January, 15 August

### Address

Via Appia Antica, 222 - Roma (RM)

### How to get

From METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI take BUS 660 to CECILIA METELLA stop. Alternatively, from METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take BUS 118 to BASILICA DI SAN SEBASTIANO stop and then walk for 10 minutes.

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 m<sup>2</sup> 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.

## Poi 4

### The Appia Pignatelli Artillery Fort

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#### 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.



#### **A** Address

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Via Appia Pignatelli 123 - Roma (RM)

#### **M** How to get

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METRO LINE B station  
COLOSSEO then BUS 118 to  
APPIA PIGNATELLI/ALMONE  
stop

## Poi 5

### Egeria Spring

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#### 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.



#### **A** Address

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Via dell'Almone 111 - Roma (RM)

## Poi 6



## 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 cocchiopesto (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.

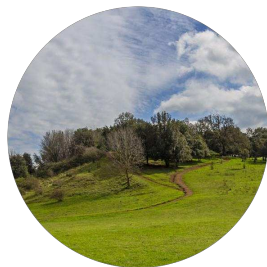
#### 📍 Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

#### 🚶 How to get

METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO, then walk for 150 metres and take BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/S.URBANO stop

## Poi 7



## 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.

#### 📍 Address

Valle della Caffarella - Roma (RM)

#### 🚶 How to get

From METRO LINE B station COLOSSEO take BUS 118 to APPIA PIGNATELLI/SANT'URBANO stop, or METRO LINE A station COLLI ALBANI take BUS 660 to ALMONE stop

## Poi 8



## Temple of Ceres and Faustine - Church of Sant'Urbano

### Roma / Place to visit - Churches

Easily accessible from Vicolo Sant'Urbano, which branches off Via Appia Pignatelli on the left, at about 800 metres from the Catacombs of Pretestato, there is a Roman temple which, in the 9th century, was modified and consecrated as a church dedicated to St. Urban.

The original temple, erected in the 2nd century AD by Herodes Atticus as a "prostyle" temple with a colonnaded porch, on a low podium and with the cell in the centre, is believed to have been dedicated to Ceres and Faustina, as a memorial to his deceased wife Annia Regilla.

Its appearance was radically altered in 1634, during the restoration work commissioned by Pope Urban VIII, who had the spaces between the columns bricked in and a bell tower added on the roof.

#### 📍 Address

Vicolo S. Urbano, Roma - Roma (RM)

## Caffarella Valley

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### Roma / Place to visit - Natural area

The Caffarella Valley is an 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. Roman sources tell us that, at the time, the land belonged to Herodes Atticus, a prominent Athenian orator and politician, who lived in Rome in the 2nd century AD and who built a huge villa here (known as the Pagus Triopius).

Associated with this complex is a suggestive nymphaeum dedicated to Egeria, the "Temple of Rediculus" and the church of Sant'Urbano, originally a temple believed to have been dedicated to Ceres and Faustina, a memorial to Annia Regilla, the deceased wife of Herodes Atticus. Also of interest is the "Valca Tower", built in around the 11th century, on the shores of the river, as part of a fulling mill for manufacturing cloth.



#### **A** Address

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Vicolo di S. Urbano - Roma  
(RM)