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*‘The Eternal City’
‘The Capital of Two States’ or
‘Caput Mundi’ (Latin for ‘capital of the world’)*

Rome is the capital of and largest city in Italy. Founded in 753 B.C., its two and a half thousand year history and the resulting immensity of its *archaeological and artistic treasures* make it one of the oldest, most renewed and most visited cities in the world.

In the ancient world it was successively the *capital of the Roman Kingdom*, the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire, and is regarded as one of the birthplaces of Western Civilization. Its historic center is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Its museums (such as the Vatican Museums), monuments and the Colosseum are among the *most visited tourist destinations* on the planet.

There is so much to do and see in Rome that people sometimes get lost while trying to get *the most out of their limited time* there. You, on the other hand, can relax - your Edelweiss tour guide will show you a great time.

The first stop will be in *Piazza Venezia*, the central hub of Rome, at the foot of the Capitoline Hill and dominated by the *imposing monument to Vittorio Emanuele II*, first king of Italy. A walk around this monument will let us see the Via die Fori Imperiali and part of the Roman Forum, the *political and religious center of ancient Rome*, and reach the Capitoline Hill with its beautiful square, a masterpiece of Renaissance design by

Michelangelo Buonarroti. We will then take public transport for a short ride to the *Bocca della Verità* (the Mouth of Truth). Since the Middle Ages it has been believed that if one tells a lie with one's hand in the mouth of the sculpture, the hand would be bitten off. From there we will walk up the Aventine Hill to enjoy a *beautiful view over the city* and St. Peter's dome. Impossible not to take a few pictures!

Going down again we will pass along the *Circus Maximus*, an ancient Roman chariot racing stadium that could accommodate around 150,000 spectators! The stadium, unfortunately, did not survive the centuries and the area is now a public park. Not far away there is another stadium that did survive: the *world-famous Colosseum*! This was the largest amphitheatre of the Roman Empire, and is considered one of the greatest works of Roman architecture and engineering. There is always a crowd of tourists outside the Colosseum, but if you want to visit this monument, and don't mind standing in line, just tell your Edelweiss tour guide.

From the Colosseum we will take the underground. Just a few stops away and the environment changes totally. We will be in the Rome of the 'Dolce Vita' and, after walking on the famous *Spanish Steps*, we will go see one of the most famous fountains in the world, the *Fontana di Trevi*, a masterpiece of the baroque style. Don't forget to bring some coins with you - it's a 'must' to throw one in the fountain!

After a coffee stop, another pleasant walk through the center of this millenary city takes





us to the *Pantheon*, one of the best-preserved of all Roman buildings. Built in the year 126 A.D., it has been in regular use throughout its history, and is currently a church. This magnificent building still holds the record for the *world's largest unreinforced concrete dome*! Not far from the Pantheon there is another main sight of Rome, the *Piazza Navona*, a significant example of baroque Roman architecture, with the beautiful and famous *Fountain of the Four Rivers* at its center.

At this point you will probably start to feel hungry, so our next stop will be for lunch in a nice, typical, Roman 'trattoria' where you can enjoy a *delicious pasta dish*. Have you seen enough for today? Not at all! We still get to cross the borders of the smallest state in the world: *Vatican City*! We will reach the magnificent St. Peter's Square and admire the impressive Basilica and its Dome, the center of the Catholic world. When you are in the square, don't forget to take a look at the obelisk at its center. Built in Egypt 4,400 years ago, the obelisk was moved to Rome by Emperor Caligula around 2000 years ago!

FACTS AND FIGURES

- Rome, Italian 'Roma', is the capital of Italy and, with 2.8 million residents, is also the country's largest and most populated city.
- Rome hosts all the principal institutions of the nation, like the Presidency of the Republic, the government (and its single Ministeri), the Parliament, the main judicial courts, and the diplomatic representatives of all the countries for the states of Italy

and Vatican City.

- Rome has a large number of universities and colleges. Its first university, La Sapienza (founded in 1303), is the largest in Europe and the second-largest in the world, with more than 140,000 students attending.
- Rome is home to the Cinecittà Studios, the largest film and television production facility in continental Europe and the center of Italian cinema. The studio complex is part of one of the biggest production communities in the world, second only to Hollywood.
- Rome has been the setting for some of the world's most memorable films. With stunning landmarks like the Trevi Fountain and the Spanish Steps, it's easy for directors to choose Rome as a colorful backdrop.
- Football (soccer) is the most popular sport in Rome, as in the rest of the country. The Olympic Stadium is also the home stadium for local Serie A clubs S.S. Lazio and A.S. Roma, whose rivalry has become a staple of Roman sports culture.
- One curiosity: You will often see the initialism 'SPQR'. This comes from the Latin phrase Senatus Populusque Romanus (The Senate and People of Rome), referring to the government of the ancient Roman Republic. It is used as an official emblem of the modern day municipality of Rome.

USEFUL INFORMATION

For more information about *availability and pricing* please do not hesitate to contact our Edelweiss Bike Travel team. We are looking forward hearing from you:

EDELWEISS BIKE TRAVEL - Sportplatzweg 14 - 6414 Mieming - Österreich
Telefon: +43.5264.5690 - Gebührenfrei aus Europa: 00800.333.593.477
E-Mail: worldtours@edelweissbike.com - Web: www.edelweissbike.com

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