

# Family Guide to the Vatican and Rome (3 Days)

Joyful Discoveries for Families with Children Aged 4-14

Designed by Monika, Founder

Aureate Travel



# A Warm Welcome from Monika



Dear Adventurous Families,

Welcome to Rome, the Eternal City, where ancient wonders and modern delights await your family's discovery! As a parent who has traversed every cobblestone street and hidden piazza of this magnificent city, I have created this guide especially for families like yours. At Aureate Travel, we believe that travelling with children should not just be feasible - it should be magical!

Rome's incredible history, delicious cuisine, and warm culture make it the perfect place to create lasting family memories. Whether your little ones want to learn more about the mighty gladiators or your teenagers are seeking Instagram-worthy photo ops, this guide will help you navigate the treasures of Rome with ease and joy.

Before we embark on our three-day adventure, a few quick tips: consider bringing a lightweight stroller for younger children (though be prepared to carry it up stairs), wear reusable water bottles (Rome's public fountains provide clean, refreshing water), and don't forget sun hats and sunscreen, especially in the summer months. I also recommend comfortable walking shoes for everyone - the Roman cobblestones can be demanding!

Adventure awaits in the city of wonders! Let's make the most of every moment.

Warmly,  
Monika

# Day 1: Ancient Wonders and Gladiator Fun

The first day combines breathtaking ancient ruins with family exploration. Perfect for curious minds and future gladiators! From the sun-drenched arches of the Colosseum to the panoramic views from the Capitoline Hill - this is Rome in its most dramatic and exciting form.

## Morning: Colosseum

Walk where real gladiators once fought. Children love discovering the mysterious arches and hearing dramatic stories.

- Use the new lift to bypass the stairs if you have strollers
- Visit early to avoid crowds and the afternoon heat

### Monica's Tip:

Play a "gladiator debut" game with the kids! Ask them to come up with a gladiator name and special move - then point out where the emperor would have sat and let them try the classic "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" gesture.  
*It's a great way to turn the ruins into a memory they'll never forget.*

## Afternoon: Capitoline Hill Viewpoint

Capture breathtaking views of the Forum in this peaceful, easily accessible photo spot.

1



## Midday: Palatine Hill

Wander the shaded paths where emperors once lived. Perfect for children with vivid imaginations who love ancient tales.

- Focus on 1-2 ruins instead of seeing everything
- Use the shaded spots for rest breaks



## Lunch Options

- Pizza Forum - Quick slices of pizza with shaded seating
- Taverna dei Fori Imperiali - Family-friendly restaurant with pastas
- Zia Rosetta - Creative takeaway sandwiches

## Monika's Note

Remember: Be flexible with morning plans. It's okay to skip some ruins if little legs need a rest! Be sure to check the weather forecast and dress appropriately. Bring hats, sunscreen, and water to stay comfortable.

# Day 2: Fountains, Squares and Secrets of the Pantheon



## Early Morning: Trevi Fountain

Arrive early to avoid the crowds at this magnificent Baroque gem. Each family member should prepare a coin to toss over their left shoulder into the fountain, which will ensure a return to Rome. Take photos of the impressive Neptune statue and the crystal-clear, azure water before the tour groups arrive.

- Kid-friendly activity: Count how many different animals you can find in the fountain sculptures
- Photo opportunity: From the right side for the best morning lighting



## Mid-Morning: Spanish Steps

Head to the iconic Spanish Steps, one of Rome's most famous staircases. Challenge the children to count the steps (there are 135!) as you climb. At the top, enjoy a well-deserved snack while taking in the city view. The Barcaccia Fountain at the bottom provides another opportunity for the children to toss a coin.



## Late Morning: Pantheon

This perfectly preserved ancient temple boasts the world's largest unreinforced concrete dome. The oculus (opening) at the top creates a stunning beam of light effect inside. With the children, keep the visit brief (30-45 minutes), focusing on the engineering marvel and the tombs of famous Italians, including Raphael and King Victor Emmanuel II.

## Lunch Options Around Piazza Navona

There are many relaxed, family-friendly spots near Piazza Navona – a great area to rest in the middle of the day.



- 🍕 **Slice pizza** or classic margherita for quick bites with the kids
- 🍝 **Simple trattorias** offering pasta, shaded terraces and open space nearby
- 🥗 **Lighter options and cafes** with cocktails, salads or allergy-friendly meals

*Choose a place with a good view, a calm atmosphere and food suitable for your group – the square is perfect for watching street performances during your meal.*



## Late Afternoon: Sweet Treats Near Piazza Navona

Reward everyone with well-deserved gelato. The streets around Piazza Navona and Via dei Coronari are dotted with small, family-run gelaterie.



- 🍫 **Classic flavours** like hazelnut, stracciatella or lemon
- 🍓 **Seasonal or creative options** – try fruit, herb or dairy-free varieties
- 🧘 **Peaceful spots nearby** with benches, fountains and space to enjoy the treat

*Let the children choose their own flavour adventure – it's one of the simplest joys of visiting Rome!*

### Monika's Note:

Make the stop at the Trevi Fountain unforgettable by starting with a *family wishing circle*. Stand in a quiet spot nearby, share your hopes, and then toss your coins into the fountain together.

For younger children, I suggest having them close their eyes and make three small wishes before throwing their coin.

*This is a beautiful way to turn sightseeing into something personal – and those photos will mean even more later.*

# Day 3: The Vatican and Castle Adventure

## Early Morning: St. Peter's Square

Arrive early to experience the grandeur of Bernini's colonnades surrounding the vast square. Allow children to run and explore this expansive, open space, while adults appreciate the architectural harmony. Have children search for the spot where all the columns align perfectly (marked by stone discs in the pavement). Notice the Swiss Guard in their colourful Renaissance uniforms—children are often fascinated by their elaborate attire.



## Late Morning: St. Peter's Basilica

Enter the largest church in the world and marvel at its opulence. With children, focus the visit on a few key attractions: Michelangelo's Pietà (behind protective glass), the enormous baldachin (bronze canopy over the altar) and the awe-inspiring dome. For older children interested in adventure, climbing the dome is an unforgettable experience, though not recommended for those with claustrophobia or families with very young children.

## Lunch Break Near the Vatican

Take a break for a family-friendly lunch after a busy morning. You'll find a few places in a peaceful atmosphere within walking distance of St. Peter's Square.



- 🍕 **Pizzerie al taglio** offer quick slices, perfect even for the fussiest little foodies
- 🥗 **Casual cafés** with shaded seating for sandwiches or simple pasta
- 🧺 **Picnic on the Vatican Lawns** (if open and weather permits) for a tranquil break in the shade

*Opt for light, simple fare—especially if the afternoon involves more walking!*



## Afternoon: Castel Sant'Angelo

A short walk from the Vatican, this fortress-turned-museum offers the perfect balance of history and adventure for families. Children love exploring the circular ramps, secret passages and former papal apartments. The rooftop provides spectacular views of the River Tiber and St. Peter's Basilica. The diverse history of the building as a mausoleum, fortress, prison and papal residence provides fascinating stories suitable for all age groups.



## Evening: Stroll Along the River and Playground at Piazza Cavour

Take a peaceful stroll along the River Tiber, crossing the picturesque Ponte Sant'Angelo with its beautiful angel statues. End the day relaxing at the playground in Piazza Cavour, where children can play while parents unwind after three days of sightseeing.

**Monika's Note:** During your visit to St. Peter's Basilica with children, pause for a moment in the quiet corner to the right of the entrance. Here, away from the main crowds, notice what Bernini called the "embrace of the colonnade"—how the massive columns on the exterior seem to wrap around visitors like a welcoming hug. Ask the children to stretch their arms wide, then bring them together in a gesture of embrace, mimicking how the architecture makes everyone feel included and welcomed. This moment of connection helps children appreciate the intentional design behind the overwhelming grandeur.



# Eating with Children in Rome

## Best Family-Friendly Spots

Rome's culinary scene can be surprisingly family-friendly –if you know where to go. These spots combine *authentic Italian cuisine* with a relaxed atmosphere where even young guests can unwind.

- **Pizzarium (Via della Meloria, 43)** - Renowned Gabriele Bonci's pizza al taglio shop offers focaccia-style slices with creative toppings. Perfect for picky little foodies who like to pick their own pieces.
- **Trattoria Luzzi (Via di San Giovanni in Laterano, 88)** - Near the Colosseum. Outdoor seating and quick service make this an ideal spot for families craving classic Roman pasta.
- **Old Bridge Gelateria (Viale dei Bastioni di Michelangelo, 5)** - Near the Vatican. Great for a sweet treat with popular flavours that kids love.

## Best Gelato in Rome

Reward everyone after a long day with a scoop of something sweet. These spots are consistently top-rated by both locals and tourists:

- **Gelateria del Teatro (Via dei Coronari, 65)** - Fresh ingredients, hidden location
- **Giolitti (Via degli Uffici del Vicario, 40)** - Elegant and iconic
- **Frigidarium** - Multiple locations, generous portions and intense flavours



## Tips for Picky Little Foodies

Even in a pasta paradise like Rome, not every child is ready for carbonara. Here are simple substitutes and dishes that almost always work:

-  **Pasta al pomodoro** - Tomato sauce, no surprises
-  **Plain cheese pizza** or white pizza (no sauce)
-  **Cotoletta** - Breaded chicken cutlet (like a Roman schnitzel)
-  **Pasta with butter** - Ask for *pasta al burro*
-  **Meatballs or grilled chicken** - Available at most trattorias
-  **Bread basket + olive oil** - Fills the gap while cooking

## Best Picnic Spots

- **Villa Borghese** - Large shaded areas + playground
- **Piazza Cavour** - Ideal after visiting Castel Sant'Angelo
- **Vatican Lawn (if open)** - Good spot between sightseeing

## Italian Food Words Worth Knowing

Help your children feel engaged with a few Italian basics:

- *"Gelato"* = ice cream
- *"Pane"* = bread
- *"Contorno"* = side dish
- *"Senza"* = without (e.g. senza formaggio - without cheese)

## Meal Timing Tips

- Many restaurants don't open for dinner before **7pm**.
- Lunch between **12:30-2:30pm** works best.
- For early evening meals, look for pizzerias or cafes open all day.

# Practical Tips for Families



## Transport

The historic centre of Rome is best explored on foot, but little legs tire quickly. The metro (lines A and B) is clean, efficient and connects the main attractions. Children under 10 travel for free with a paying adult. For longer distances, it's worth using the MyTaxi app (Rome's equivalent of Uber) to order official taxis with child seats on request. Avoid bus travel during rush hour as the buses are very crowded then.



## Toilets and Baby Care

Public toilets are scarce in Rome and often require a fee (1-2€). Instead, use the facilities in the museums you visit or order a quick coffee at a cafe to use their toilets. For nappy changing, large museums like the Vatican have dedicated spaces, but smaller venues may not. Many upscale department stores offer clean nappy changing areas. The "Cambio" app shows nearby nappy changing options.



## Stroller Strategy

A lightweight, sturdy stroller with good suspension works best on Rome's cobbled streets. Consider a baby carrier backpack for small children when visiting sites with many stairs. Many major attractions offer stroller storage services, though this may add to waiting times. For the Vatican and Colosseum, wearing very young children in carriers is often more practical than manoeuvring strollers.



## Finding Drinking Fountains (Nasoni)

Rome is full of thousands of public drinking fountains called "nasoni" (big noses) that provide cold, clean mountain water. Download the "I Nasoni di Roma" app to locate these fountains across the city. Bring reusable bottles for each family member to stay hydrated and reduce plastic waste.



## Safety Considerations

Watch out for scooters and motorcycles that sometimes use pedestrian areas. Hold children's hands in crowded places and establish meeting points in case you get separated. Be alert for pickpockets in tourist areas and transport hubs - front-facing bags work well for parents. Keep a paper copy of your hotel address and phone number in each child's pocket.



## Finding Essential Items

Pharmacies (look for green cross signs) stock essential baby products like nappies, wipes and formula. For a wider selection and better prices, look for "Acqua & Sapone" or "Tigotà" stores. Supermarkets like Conad or Carrefour Express offer child-friendly snacks and basic supplies. Most shops close for a few hours in the afternoon (usually 13:30 to 16:00), so plan your shopping accordingly.



## Preparing for Weather

Roman summers are intensely hot (32-38°C), so plan indoor activities during the midday hours (12:00-15:00). Spring and autumn offer pleasant temperatures, but can bring sudden rain showers. Winters are generally mild, but buildings may feel cold as heating systems are not as efficient as in northern countries. Always pack layered clothing, regardless of the season.

Emergency Number	112 (works across Europe)
Tourist Police	+39 06 4686
24-Hour Pharmacy	Farmacia Piram (near Termini Station)
Children's Hospital	Bambino Gesù Children's Hospital
Tourist Information	+39 060608

# Farewell! The History of Your Family in Rome

As your three-day adventure in the Eternal City comes to an end, take a moment to reflect on the memories you have created together. From standing where gladiators once fought, to tossing coins in the Trevi Fountain, from marvelling at Michelangelo's masterpieces to savouring authentic Italian gelato, your family has experienced the heart and soul of Rome.

The beauty of family travel lies not only in seeing famous landmarks, but in the shared moments of wonder, the challenges overcome together, and the laughter shared over pizza and pasta. Perhaps your children were captivated by the oculus of the Pantheon, or maybe they most enjoyed chasing pigeons in Piazza Navona. Whatever captured their hearts will become stories they will tell for years to come.

At Aureate Travel, we believe these experiences form the foundation of your family's unique travel narrative. The Roman adventures you have shared have sown the seeds of curiosity, resilience, and cultural appreciation that will continue to grow long after you return home.

We would love to hear about your family's special moments in Rome! Share your photos and stories using the hashtag **#AureateFamilyRome** on social media or write to us directly at **[concierge@aureatetravel.co](mailto:concierge@aureatetravel.co)**.

As the Romans would say: "Non è importante la destinazione, ma il viaggio" - It is not the destination that matters, but the journey. May the memories of your Roman journey remain with your family for years to come and inspire many more adventures together.

Until next time,

Monika and the Aureate Travel Team



## Favourite Spots for Family Photos

- The outer Colosseum with the Arch of Constantine
- The view of the Roman Forum from the Palatine Hill
- The interior of the Pantheon, with light streaming through the oculus
- The Spanish Steps with the church of Trinità dei Monti above
- St. Peter's Square with the basilica dome in the background
- The bridge at Castel Sant'Angelo with the angel statues at sunset

## Souvenirs Worth Bringing Home

- Handcrafted marionettes from Bartolucci (Via dei Pastini)
- Mosaic-making kits from Vatican souvenir shops
- Gladiator costume accessories (shields, helmets)
- Italian wooden toys and games
- Artisanal chocolates from Said (ancient chocolate factory)
- Family photo albums created from your travel snapshots



# Essential Packing List for a Family Adventure in Rome

- ☐ **Comfortable walking shoes:** Rome requires walking many kilometres along cobblestone streets and ancient sites.
- ☐ **Water bottles:** You can refill them at the numerous public fountains in Rome providing fresh mountain water.
- ☐ **Sun protection:** Pack hats, sunscreen and lightweight scarves for visits to the Vatican.
- ☐ **Essentials for children:** Bring sketchbooks for museum visits and small backpacks for treasures.
- ☐ **Documentation:** Have passports, booking confirmations and emergency contacts on hand.

# Thank You for Exploring the Vatican with Us

We hope this guide has made your family's journey easier, richer, and more joyful. Our mission is to help you create memories that matter.

## Personalised Family Adventures

Let us create a journey tailored to the unique interests and needs of your family.

## Expert Local Insights

Transform standard sightseeing into valuable experiences with our insider tips.

To receive a fully customised itinerary with maps, hotel selection, and personal WhatsApp support, visit [aureatetravel.co/concierge-services](https://aureatetravel.co/concierge-services)

Prepared by Monika Pawlik, Founder of **Aureate Travel**



# Legal Information

This family guide to the Vatican is the intellectual property of Aureate Travel.

All content, recommendations and custom illustrations are copyright protected.

Please respect our work by not publishing, copying or distributing without written consent.

For licensing or permissions, please contact

**Monika Pawlik**

Founder & Travel Concierge

**Aureate Travel**

 [concierge@aureatetravel.co](mailto:concierge@aureatetravel.co)

 [www.aureatetravel.co](http://www.aureatetravel.co)