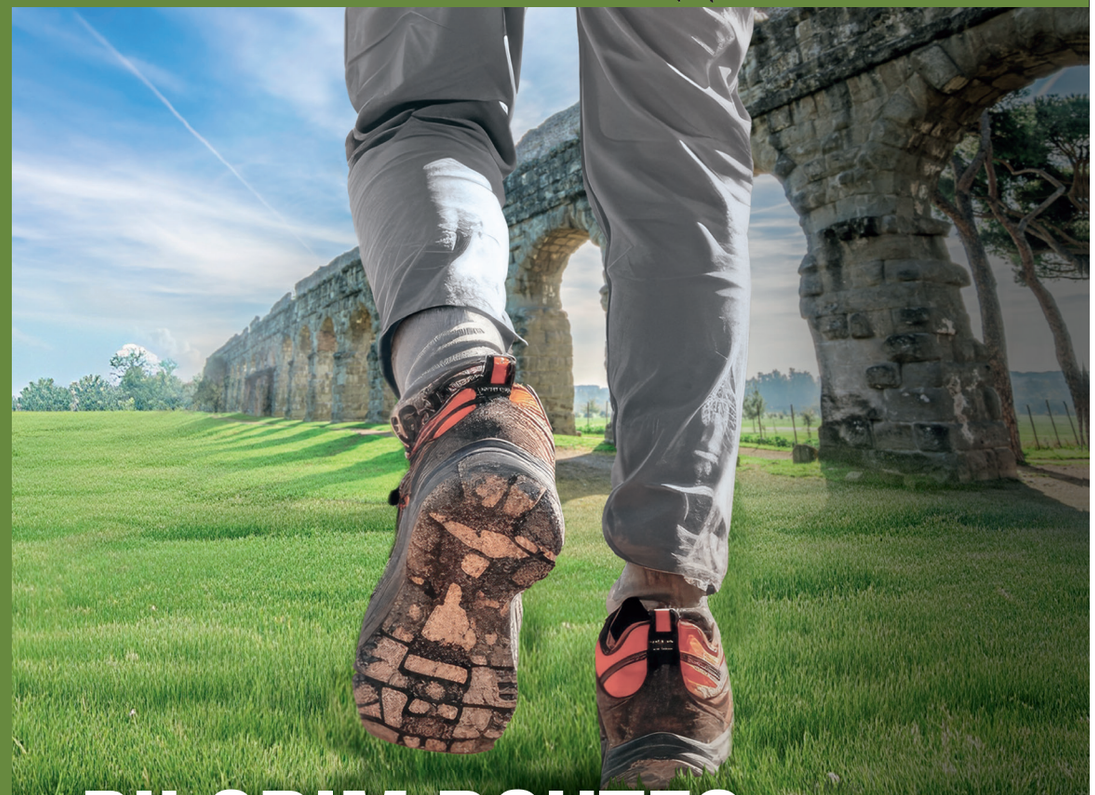
ROMA

Città metropolitana
di Roma Capitale



PILGRIM ROUTES TO ROME: A GUIDE

Via Francigena
Via Francigena nel Sud
Cammino – Via di San Francesco

Touring Club Italiano

WALKING TOWARDS ROME LEAVES A MARK ON YOUR SOUL

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ROMA SI TRASFORMA Giubileo 2025

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ROMA

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Touring Club Italiano

Walking as a form of travel is a response to the ever growing need to take life a little slower, reconnect with nature and rediscover the richness of history and its imprint on the landscape. In recent years, walking routes have grown in popularity as one of the most common forms of "experiential tourism." This tourism sector has become a significant sector, driven by the passion of many people who, on foot or by bicycle, explore landscapes, stop off in rural villages, engage with local communities and bring economic benefits to areas often overlooked by traditional tourism.

The development of walking routes across the Rome area finds its place against this backdrop, as showcased in this beautiful publication. Our city, as a historic religious capital, has long been a crossroads for major pilgrimage routes. The Jubilee of Hope is a wonderful opportunity to enhance this heritage, bring some new life to the regions these routes pass through and improve both accessibility and the available hospitality.

As part of the projects for the Jubilee, Roma Capitale has made a significant commitment to upgrading the network of walking routes, allocating resources for its restoration and enhancement, as well as for improving the associated hospitality infrastructure. Much remains to be done, but I am confident that this form of slow and sustainable tourism will help us enhance our city, making it even more appealing.

I find it deeply moving to imagine so many travellers arriving at the newly redeveloped Piazza Pia and walking along Via della Conciliazione after covering hundreds of kilometres from England, France, Switzerland or northern Italy. Others will reach Rome by following the Via Francigena nel Sud or starting their journey from a Franciscan site like the Sanctuary of La Verna. Each of them will bring to our city the thrill of discovery and a piece of their own culture. And I have no doubt that Rome will greet them with its enduring spirit of hospitality and its beauty.

Roberto Gualtieri
Mayor of Rome

Rome has always been a city with hospitality as a core vocation. Exploring it at a slower pace and taking the time to savour its beauty offers a fresh perspective and a different rhythm. For centuries, ancient routes brought people to Rome, especially along key paths now known as the Via Francigena, Cammino di San Francesco and Via Francigena nel Sud. These self-same routes have now become a major draw for immersive tourism, attracting an ever-growing number of enthusiastic walkers. Following these routes equates to embarking on a journey through history, nature and spirituality, visiting charming villages, connecting with local communities, traditions and cultures, and discovering unexpected landscapes and places off the beaten tourist tracks.

This fascinating guide to the walking routes is also an invitation to readers to experience and explore Rome and its surrounds in a different way, a slower and more sustainable way. Those who embark on a walking route undertake both a physical and spiritual journey, where the journey itself becomes part of the destination. Indeed, the word pilgrim actually derives from the Latin per agros—"through the fields"—a reminder of how the Roman countryside offers some memorable walking experiences.

Roma Capitale has deliberately embraced the opportunity provided by the Jubilee to improve the city's existing walking routes, seeing them as a chance for a collective rediscovery of Rome and its surrounds with minimal impact on the natural environment. Efforts have been directed towards making the paths safer and more accessible, improving and expanding signage and information panels, upgrading rest areas and facilities, restoring scenic viewpoints and strengthening the hospitality network.

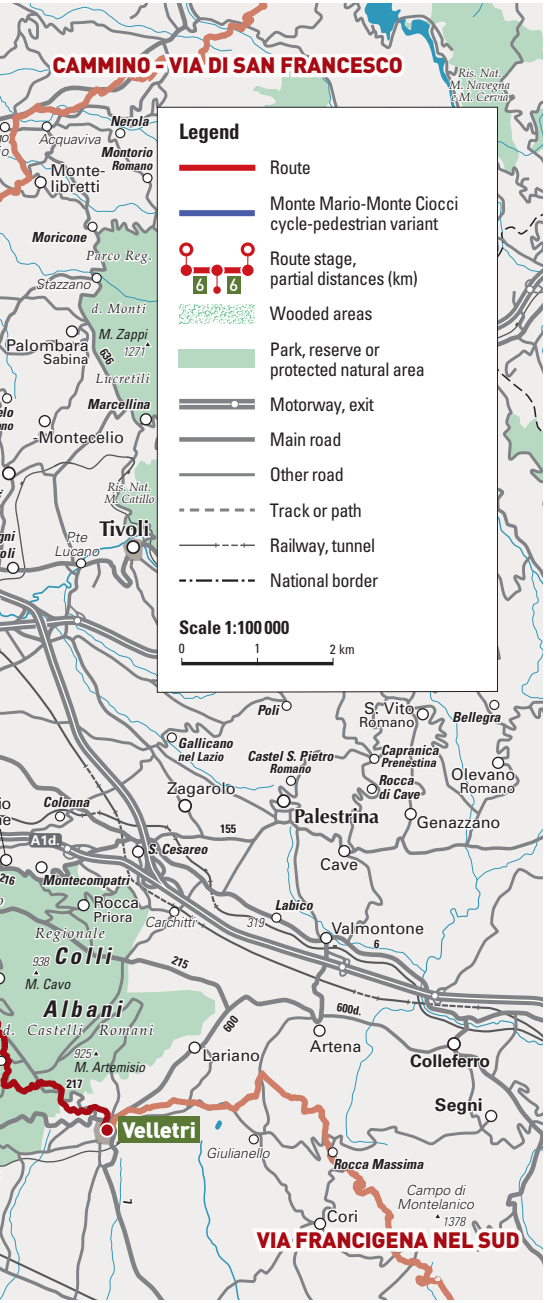
Rome is a welcoming, inclusive and pluralist city. And it has always been such a city because being open to the world is one of its many vocations, as is dialogue, both secular and religious. Thus, upgrading and redeveloping the pilgrim routes helps make our city ever more attractive to sustainable forms of tourism. This connects perfectly with the message of the Jubilee, which brings with it the great themes of the environment, sustainability and caring for the planet.

Sabrina Alfonsi

Councillor for Agriculture, Environment and Waste Management at Roma Capitale



VIA FRANCIGENA
Campagnano di Roma
la Storta
Monterotondo
Piazza Sempione
VATICAN CITY
ROME
Castel Gandolfo
Parco Regionale Bagni di Vicarello
Monti Sabatini
Oriolo Romano
Vicarello
Trevignano Romano
Ris. Nat. Monterano
Canale Monterano
Manziana
Lago di Bracciano
di Bracciano-
L. di Martignano
Bracciano
Baccano
Anguillara Sabazia
Parco Reg. di Bracciano-Martignano
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-Martignano
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Foreword

The modern European network of historic trails, inspired by the rediscovery of pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, continues to grow as interest increases among people of all ages and nationalities. Italy, home to one of Christianity's key destinations–Rome–has seen a steadily expanding network of walking routes develop over the past three decades. The appeal of setting out on foot is more widespread than ever, perhaps because it is a sustainable and deeply immersive way to experience landscapes and local communities. Each year, estimates suggest that over 100,000 people, from Italy and abroad, choose the slow pace of a pilgrim's journey to explore Italy's various regions.

Days spent slowly crossing the landscape at no more than four kilometres per hour offer a chance to find inner peace, meet fellow travellers from around the world and explore the spirituality of places steeped in faith and history.

At the heart of Rome, within the grand embrace of the colonnade that defines Piazza San Pietro, three of Italy's longest, most important and most travelled routes converge: the Via Francigena, the pioneer of Italy's great itineraries; the Cammino-Via di San Francesco; and the Via Francigena nel Sud, which links the Seven Hills of Rome to the far south-eastern tip of the Italian peninsula–Santa Maria di Leuca. Following the medieval route traced by Archbishop Sigeric, the Via Francigena begins in Canterbury, England, crosses France and Switzerland, and enters Italy via the Great Saint Bernard Pass, leaving roughly 1,000 km to be walked before reaching Rome.

The network of routes dedicated to St Francis spans much

of central Italy, linking the capital with Rieti, Assisi, La Verna, Florence and Rimini and offering a wide range of charming itineraries tied to the life and legacy of the saint from Assisi.

Travelled by crusaders and merchants, pilgrims and royalty, the Via Francigena nel Sud stretches for around 930 km, leading to the Sanctuary of Finibus Terrae in Puglia. Along the way, it passes great cathedrals and sanctuaries, historic cities and untamed landscapes.

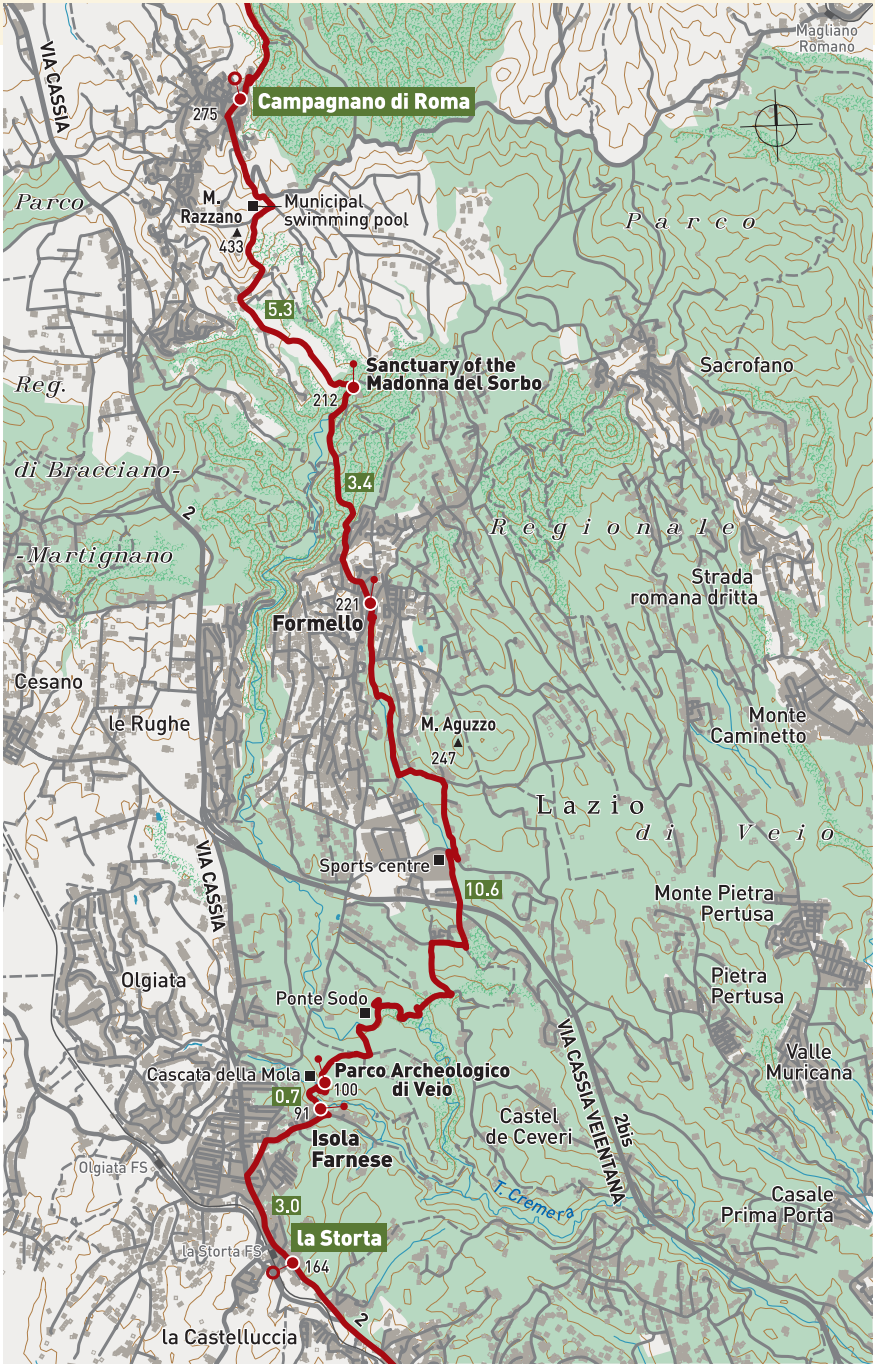
Whatever route a pilgrim chooses, Rome remains one of the key destinations in the world of walking routes. The final stages of the three great trails leading to the city offer even those taking their first steps into slow travel the chance to experience a new way of journeying–slow, profound and silent.

Enjoy the walk!



Testimonium

Pilgrims arriving at Basilica di San Pietro after walking at least 100 km or cycling 200 km are awarded a *Testimonium*. This document can be obtained at the basilica's welcome desk by presenting the credentials with the stamps collected during the journey. The document must be reserved through the *Ufficio Accoglienza* at Basilica di San Pietro (accoglienza@fsp.va, Tel. 0039 066982).

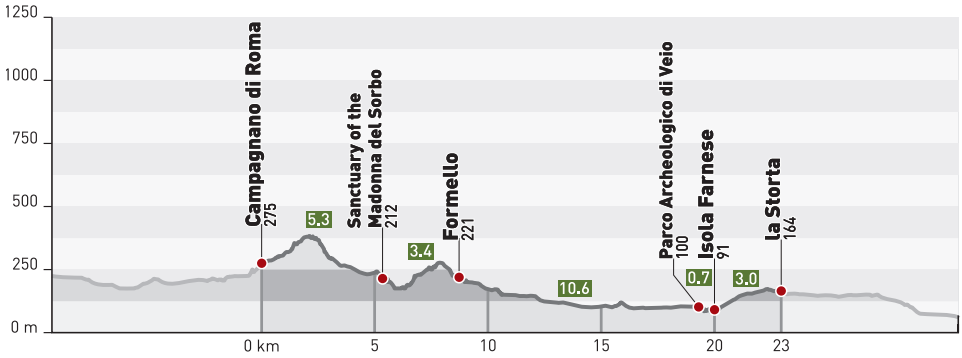

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Cascata della Mola
Parco Archeologico di Veio
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la Castelluccia
Olgiata FS
la Storta FS
Cesano
le Rughe
Olgiata
Sacrofano
Strada romana dritta
Monte Caminetto
Monte Pietra Pertusa
Pietra Pertusa
Valle Muricana
Castel de Ceveri
Casale Prima Porta
Magliano Romano
Parco
Reg. di Bracciano-Martignano
Regionale
Lazio di Veio
VIA CASSIA
VIA CASSIA VEIENTANA 2bis
2
T. Cremera

From Campagnano di Roma to La Storta

Distance: 23 km
Walking time: 6h30
Elevation gain: 580 m
Elevation loss: 690 m

With the tuff lands behind, the Via Francigena moves closer to Rome, through the countryside and hills that lead to the Agro Veientano. Along the route, it traverses small historic towns, expansive, secluded natural areas and rich vestiges of history and archaeology.

From the centre of **Campagnano di Roma** (275 m), you walk along Corso Vittorio Emanuele, pass through the arch of Porta Romana and follow the uphill paved road (SP10a, also known as Via di Maria Bona). After going by a sports field, you turn left at the top of the climb, skirt the





Etruscan ruins in the Parco Naturale Regionale di Veio

municipal swimming pool and take a minor road to the left, signposted for the 'Santuario del Sorbo'. The path heads down through fields, offering occasional views of Rome in the distance. You take a right, then a left onto Strada del Sorbo, which leads to the **Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sorbo** (212 m), built after 1427 on the site of earlier structures, then follow the course of the Sorbo stream on a flat clearing.

You climb through a wood and then walk downhill to a paved road, where you turn right towards **Formello**. Once in Formello, you turn right onto Via Umberto I, which takes you basically to the old centre. Here you'll find the church of San Lorenzo, featuring a remarkable 19th-century sundial, and Palazzo Chigi, partly converted into a hostel and crowned by a modern tower with excellent views. The Mu-

seo dell'Agro Veientano preserves artefacts that illustrate the area's long history, from the Etruscans to the Roman conquest. After crossing the town, you descend on an unpaved road and a (sometimes) uneven path that runs alongside a small stream and leads to a paved road. Following Via Pietrarella di Monte Aguzzo, you continue on Via del Prataccio and then proceed along Via della Pietrara, passing a large sports complex on your right.

After crossing the Cassia Veientana (SR2bis) on a bridge, a dirt road goes off to the right and reaches a crossroads where you go left through a beautiful nature area and continue to the arch of the ancient Ponte Sodo (actually the ruins of the arch of an Etruscan tunnel). Shortly after, you go back up through fields to reach the ruins of **Veio** scattered among pastures.



The Porta Romana gate in Campagnano di Roma

Now downhill, the path crosses the Valchetta stream and passes the Cascata della Mola waterfall before arriving at the tiny, isolated hamlet of **Isola Farnese** (91 m). The route then continues along the busy Via Cassia, which you follow to the left to La Storta (164 m), where the stage concludes at the chapel dedicated to the vision of Saint Ignatius of Loyola.

☞ To see



Relief depicting the god Mithras (Museo Agro Veientiano, Formello)

Campagnano di Roma can trace its origins to the Middle Ages and, in the 15th century, became a fief of the Orsini family. In the village, you'll find the church of San Giovanni, built in 1515 on an older structure, and the Fontana dei Delfini fountain (attributed to Vignola). The Via Francigena leaves the village passing under the arch of the Porta Romana gate (or Porta Maggiore). In the valley of the same name stands the church of the **Madonna del Sorbo**, built by the Carmelites at the site of a miraculous apparition of the Virgin Mary to a young man leading pigs to pasture. In the medieval centre of **Formello** stands Palazzo Chigi, renovated in the 17th century and now housing the Museo dell'Agro Veientano. The latter has a splendid relief of the god Mithras that was found in a field and a welcome point for pilgrims on this journey. Nearby is the parish church of San Lorenzo, topped by a Romanesque bell tower and home to a precious camera obscura sundial from the late 18th century.
Perched between two gorges, the medieval hamlet of **Isola Farnese** was sold by the Orsini family to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese in 1616. The Ferraioli Castle overlooks the town, preserving a circular tower from its medieval origins, later transformed by the Farnese family. Nearby lie the ruins of **Veio**, situated within the **Parco Naturale Regionale di Veio**. This ancient Etruscan city, founded in the 10th century BC, was conquered

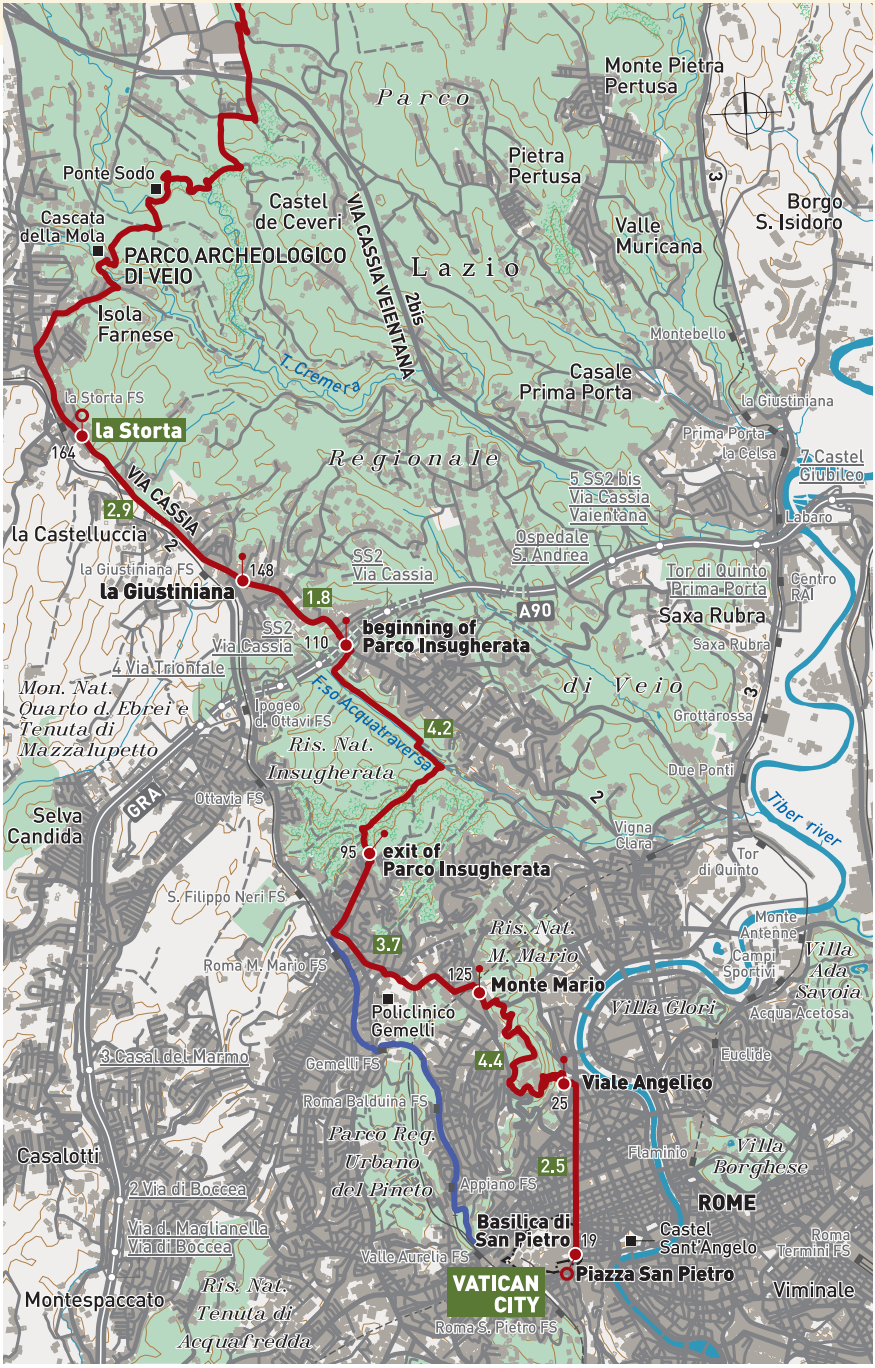
by the Romans in 396 BC and re-established in the 1st century AD. On the outskirts of the ancient city, you can see the remains of the so-called Temple of Apollo (actually dedicated to Minerva) and Villa Campetti, excavated in the 1960s. This villa once featured a nymphaeum whose mosaic is now preserved in the Museo Nazionale Etrusco in Villa Giulia in Rome.

Cyril and Methodius Route

South of the Arno, the Via Francigena overlaps with the European Cultural Route dedicated to Saints **Cyril** and **Methodius**, a network of pilgrimage routes spanning more than 7,500 km, inspired by the legacy of these co-patrons of Europe. The two apostles of the Slavs have become symbols of cultural dialogue between Eastern and Western Christianity, especially because of the role they played in developing more accessible sacred and public language—a development that ultimately led to the codification of Cyrillic. The **Cyril and Methodius Route** runs through Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and North Macedonia, reaching the Basilica di San Pietro via the Via Francigena before continuing toward Bari, largely following the Via Francigena nel Sud. Only a few relics of Saint Cyril have been recovered since the French Revolution and they are preserved in the Roman Basilica of San Clemente, just a stone's throw from the Colosseum.

INFO

Museo dell'Agro Veientano: comune.formello.rm.it/per-i-visitatori/museo-agro-veientano
Parco Naturale Regionale di Veio: parcodiveio.it
Cyril and Methodius Route: cyril-methodius.eu

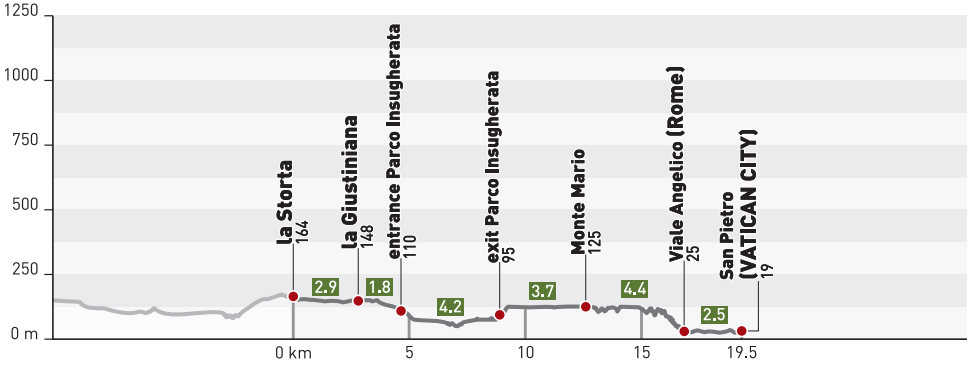

Parco
Monte Pietra Pertusa
Pietra Pertusa
Ponte Sodo
Castel de Ceveri
VIA CASSIA VEIENTANA 2bis
Cascata della Mola
PARCO ARCHEOLOGICO DI VEIO
Lazio
Valle Muricana
Borgo S. Isidoro
Isola Farnese
T. Cremera
Montebello
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SS2 Via Cassia
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di Veio
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F.so Acquatraversa
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Ris. Nat. Insugherata
Due Ponti
GRA
Ottavia FS
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Ris. Nat. M. Mario
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Roma Termini FS
Valle Aurelia FS
Piazza San Pietro
VATICAN CITY
Montespaccato
Ris. Nat. Tenuta di Acquafredda
Viminale
Roma S. Pietro FS

From La Storta to Basilica di San Pietro

Distance: 19.5 km
Walking time: 5h30
Elevation gain: 310 m
Elevation loss: 450 m

In recent years, for the final stage of the Via Francigena, pilgrims have been granted access to the Riserva Naturale dell'Insugherata, a vast green area that bypasses a busy stretch along Via Cassia and allows them to enjoy a few more hours of countryside tranquillity right on the doorstep of Rome.

After leaving **La Storta** (164 m), you proceed for about 5 km along the edges of the state road and, just before reaching the major motorway ring-road around Rome (*Grande Raccordo Anulare–GRA*), you need to cross to the right side of the road. After crossing the ring road, the Via





A section in the Riserva Naturale dell'Insugherata

Francigena diverges from Via Cassia at the intersection with Via Trionfale, turning right through the gate at number 1081. You first walk on a paved section, then keep to the right to reach the valley floor and begin following the Fosso dell'Acquatraversa, a small stream that accompanies you on the initial section of the crossing through the **Riserva Naturale dell'Insugherata**, which stretches for nearly 4 km.
After crossing the Fosso dell'Acqua Traversa on a pedestrian bridge, you continue to the right through pastures before exiting the park via a steep climb up Via Conti (which later becomes Via Fratelli Gualandi) towards Via Trionfale. At the intersection with Via Trionfale, you can choose to head straight on and then go left onto the Monte Mario – Monte Ciocci cycle and pedestrian path variant (see below). Alternatively, if you

follow the main route, you turn left, pass alongside the large Policlinico Gemelli hospital complex, cross Largo Cervinia and continue along Via Igea and Via della Camilluccia (to the right). After passing the Don Orione centre, you turn left onto Via De Amicis to enter the Monte Mario park (follow the CAI 215 trail markers) until you reach a viewpoint with a splendid panorama. At this high point, following a long tradition, pilgrims would give thanks to God for allowing them to complete the journey. After a second viewpoint, you go back on to Via Trionfale for a short stretch before re-entering the park through a gate on the left that leads to a third viewpoint. From here, you finally see the dome of St Peter's (but Sigeric—the 10th-century archbishop whose journey later defined the route of the Via Francigena—never enjoyed this view, as the great dome did not yet exist) and begin descending towards the centre of Rome: follow Via Gomenizza and then the long Viale Angelico, which (changing name to Via Ottaviano) reaches Piazza del Risorgimento after about 4 km. From the piazza, you follow the Leonine Walls for a short distance until you pass Bernini's colonnade and arrive in Piazza San Pietro (19 m).

Monte Mario-Monte Ciocci Variant

From Via Trionfale, the route of the cycle and pedestrian path is a viable alternative to the traffic on the roads of the main route. It is particularly recommended for groups or individuals with mobility issues.

The path skirts the Policlinico Gemelli hospital and the Balduina district, running between buildings and green areas until it reaches the Monte Ciocci viewpoint, where there is a pleasant bar/restaurant (71 m). The path will be completed in the coming months to follow an old Vatican railway bridge

that takes you directly to the Vatican City. For now, from the viewpoint overlooking the Vatican walls and St Peter's dome, you descend to Via Angelo Emo and follow it to the left, continuing on Via Candia. At the intersection with Via Leone IV, you turn right and, after skirting the Leonine Walls for a short distance, you come to Piazza San Pietro.



A view of Rome from Parco di Monte Mario

☞ To see

The curious name **La Storta** originates from the bend in Via Cassia, where it diverges from the route of Via Clodia. In Piazza della Visione, you'll find a chapel built to commemorate Christ with the Cross appearing to Ignatius of Loyola, who was travelling to Rome in 1537.

The **Riserva Naturale dell'Insugherata**, spanning 740 ha, is one of Rome's key green areas, covering the valley of the Fosso dell'Acqua Traversa, which flows parallel to Via Cassia. The reserve contains the ruins of numerous Roman villas and other structures, including the so-called Tomb of Nero, which is actually a 2nd-century grave.

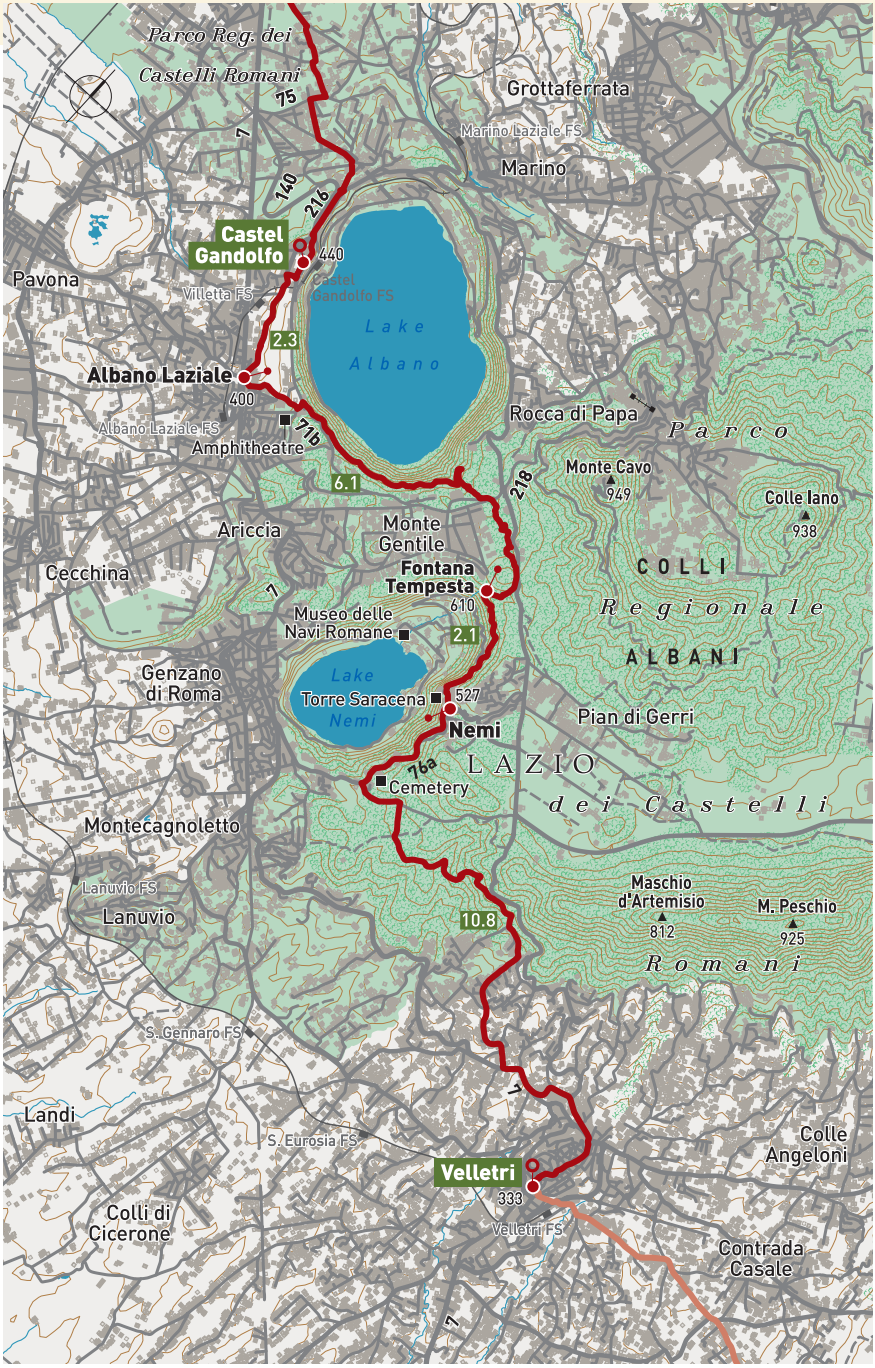
Monte Mario (139 m, protected by a nature reserve), the highest peak in the Farnesina hills, was a crucial stop for pil-



grims approaching Rome, where they would celebrate the *Te Deum* thanksgiving. In Roman times, the location was equally significant, as victorious military leaders would come here before continuing to the city centre along Via Trionfale. Notable landmarks nearby include the 19th-century **Villa Mazzanti** (headquarters of the Riserva Naturale di Monte Mario) and **Villa Mellini**, with 15th-century origins. Villa Mellini houses the National Institute for Astrophysics and the Museo Astronomico Copernicano. The Rome Astronomical Observatory was also once in the villa but is now in Monte Porzio Catone.

INFO

La Storta: sacricuorilastorta.org/la-parrocchia/luoghi-di-culto/cappella-della-visione
Riserva Naturale dell'Insugherata: insugherata.com
Riserva Naturale di Monte Mario: parchilazio.it/montemario
National Institute for Astrophysics: inaf.it
Rome Astronomical Observatory: www.oa-roma.inaf.it/oar/monte-mario

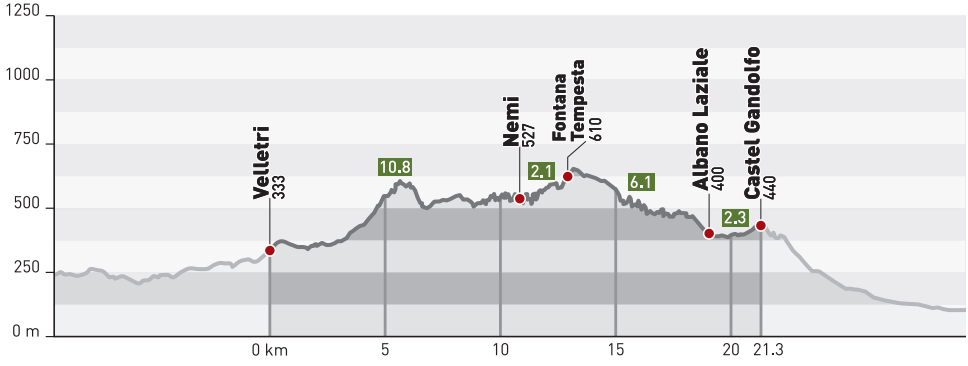

Parco Reg. dei
Castelli Romani
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7
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Castel
Gandolfo
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Villetta FS
Castel
Gandolfo FS
Lake
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Albano Laziale
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Albano Laziale FS
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6.1
Grottaferrata
Marino Laziale FS
Marino
Rocca di Papa
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Colle Iano
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Ariccia
Monte
Gentile
Cecchina
Fontana
Tempesta
610
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Museo delle
Navi Romane
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ALBANI
Genzano
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Nemi
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LAZIO
dei Castelli
76a
Cemetery
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Lanuvio FS
Lanuvio
Maschio
d'Artemisio
812
M. Peschio
925
10.8
Romani
S. Gennaro FS
Landi
S. Eurosia FS
Velletri
333
Velletri FS
Colle
Angeloni
Colli di
Cicerone
Contrada
Casale
7

From Velletri to Castel Gandolfo

Distance: 21.3 km
Walking time: 6 h
Elevation gain: 648 m
Elevation loss: 542 m

The Francigena nel Sud route crosses the volcanic landscape of the Colli Albani hills, part of the Parco Regionale dei Castelli Romani. It winds through dense woods and overlooks two lakes, passing through the village of Nemi and the town of Albano Laziale before reaching Castel Gandolfo. A challenging stage with plenty of unpaved paths.

From the cathedral of San Clemente in the centre of **Velletri** (333 m), you go uphill along Via Fabio Filzi towards the upper part of the town, passing below the town hall located on Piazza Cesare Ottaviano Augusto. Next, you continue along Corso della Repubblica and Viale Roma until you reach





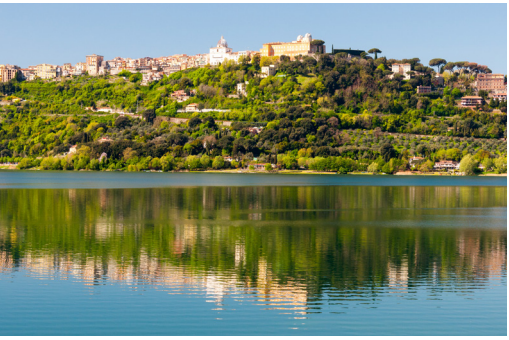
On the route near Velletri

the roundabout at the town's entrance. From here, you take the SS7 road, passing the next roundabout as well, before turning right and heading uphill on Via Colle Caldara for a couple of kilometres. At the top, after turning left onto the paved road, you continue until you reach a left-hand bend where you take the path on the right. Following the path, you climb gently upwards, until you reach another well-marked path descending steeply to the left, leading to a clearing on the valley floor. Following the signs, you proceed along a dirt track, initially through the woods and then skirting them, until you arrive at the Nemi cemetery. From there, it is a short descent to the SP76a, which you follow to the right until you reach **Nemi** (527 m). From Piazza Roma you continue left on Corso Vittorio Emanuele to Palazzo Ruspoli, including the medieval Torre Maggiore tower (sometimes called Torre Saracena), and a belvedere overlooking the lake. You leave the village (drinking fountain) and continue along the cobblestone road, first descending steeply and then climbing through the woods, leaving behind Lake Nemi, where the Museo delle Navi Romane is located on the eastern shore.

At the junction, you keep to the right and begin ascending through the woods until you reach Fontana Tempesta (610 m). After passing the spring, the trail continues in the shade of a chestnut grove, passing a well-marked three-way junction. From here, you go straight until you reach an underpass that allows you to safely cross the SR218, before heading towards **Lake Albano**, which soon comes into view.

After a steep descent and a bend, you continue along the path and, beyond the dense holm oak vegetation, you can catch glimpses of the lake on the right for a good stretch, until you reach the SP71b. Continue to the nearby junction (a little fountain is located here). From this point, you can either turn right onto a higher variant that skirts the western edge of the lake, along Via Galleria di Sopra, Via Pio XI and Via Carlo Rosselli, thus avoiding the centre of **Albano Laziale**, or turn left downhill.

If you choose the latter (to the left, downhill), you pass the Severian amphitheatre and follow Via dell'Anfiteatro Romano to reach the cathedral of San Pancrazio in the centre of Albano (400 m). From here, you go right onto Via Cairoli until you reach the roundabout at Piazza Mazzini, where you go right onto Viale Giovanni Paolo II. At the end of the cycle and pedestrian path, you reach the SP71b again, where you turn left and head on until Piazza Don Morosini. Climb the staircase leading to a small square where the trail reconnects with the higher variant. You continue along Corso della Repubblica, passing through Piazza della Libertà until you reach Palazzo Pontificio in Castel Gandolfo (440 m).



Castel Gandolfo reflected in Lake Albano



Palazzo Pontificio in Castel Gandolfo

☞ To see

With ancient origins, **Velletri** was the site of long wars between the Romans and the Volsci and was the birthplace of the ancient Roman Octavia family, from which Emperor Octavian Augustus descended. In 1088, the Bishop of Velletri, Eudes of Lagery, became Pope Urban II. The crypt of the cathedral of San Clemente houses the relics of the martyrs Ponziano and Eleuterio. The Torre del Trivio tower dates back to 1343. The city's current layout reflects Renaissance renovations, during which the Porta Napoletana gate, built between 1511 and 1519 along Via Appia, served as a customs post. It is worth stopping in at the Museo Diocesano and, in the 16th-century town hall, the Musei Civici, which include the Museo Archeologico Oreste Nardini and the Museo di Geopaleontologia.

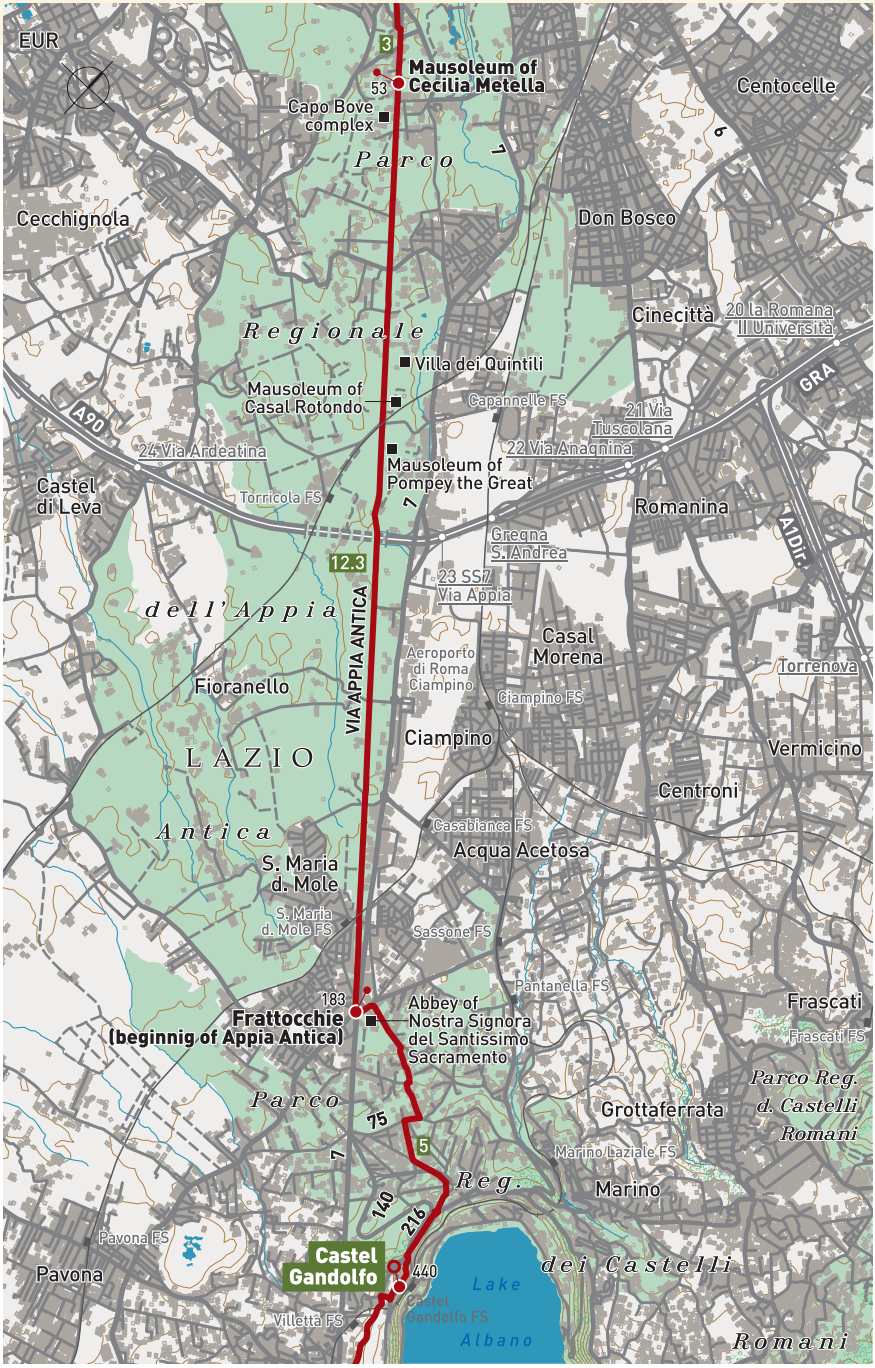
Nemi, overlooking its namesake lake, is one of the most picturesque towns in the Castelli Romani zone. Located in a wooded area, it is renowned for its strawberries, celebrat-

ed with a festival each June. The old centre retains its medieval layout linked to the Cistercian monks, who also long controlled the current Palazzo Ruspoli. The area has been sacred since antiquity, as evidenced by the temple of Diana Nemorense. In 1929, two large ceremonial Roman ships, commissioned by Caligula, were discovered in the lake. Though destroyed by a fire in 1944, fragments of them are still visible in the local Museo delle Navi Romane.

Albano Laziale is rich in historical landmarks, particularly from the Roman era. The amphitheatre is directly visible from the Via Francigena. Other notable sites include the Sepulchre of the Horatii and Curiatii, the Baths of Caracalla, the Cisternoni, the Porta Pretoria gate and the villa of Pompey the Great, the ruins of which are conserved in Villa Doria-Pamphili. From later periods, highlights include the catacombs of San Senatore, adorned with frescoes beneath the church of Santa Maria della Stella and the sanctuary of Santa Maria della Rotonda, built around the year 1000 over earlier Roman structures. The present-day form of the cathedral of San Pancrazio dates to work in 1913, though the church itself dates back to the 9th century, as evidenced by the beautiful early-Christian sarcophagus preserved inside. The Museo Civico in Villa Ferrajoli houses many artefacts from the area.

INFO

Parco Regionale dei Castelli Romani: parcocastelliromani.it
Cathedral of San Clemente, Velletri: diocesivelletrisegni.it
Musei Civici, Velletri: velletrimusei.it
Museo delle Navi Romane, Nemi: direzioneregionalemuseilazio.cultura.gov.it
Villa Doria-Pamphili, Albano Laziale: comune.albanolaziale.rm.it/vivere-il-comune/luoghi/villa-doria-pamphili
Museo Civico in Villa Ferrajoli, Albano Laziale: comune.albanolaziale.rm.it/vivere-il-comune/luoghi/museo-civico

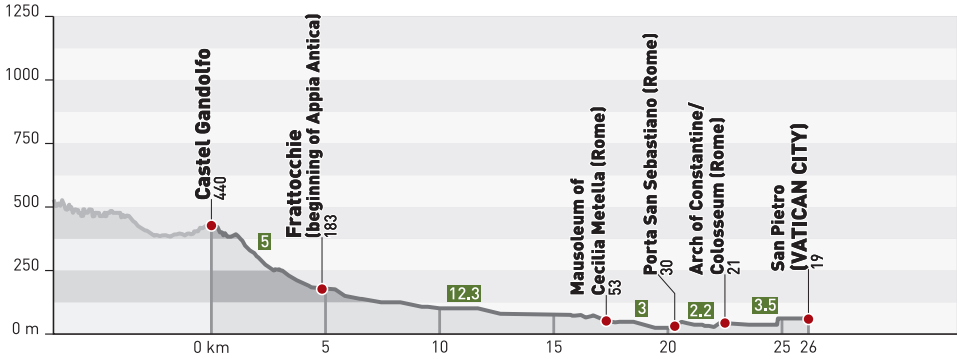

EUR
3
Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella
53
Capo Bove complex
Parco
Centocelle
Cecchignola
Don Bosco
Regionale
Cinecittà
20 la Romana Il Università
Villa dei Quintili
GRA
A90
Mausoleum of Casal Rotondo
Capannelle FS
21 Via Tuscolana
24 Via Ardeatina
22 Via Anagnina
Mausoleum of Pompey the Great
Castel di Leva
Torricola FS
Romanina
A1Dir.
Gregna S. Andrea
12.3
23 SS7 Via Appia
dell'Appia
Casal Morena
Aeroporto di Roma Ciampino
Torrenova
Fioranello
VIA APPIA ANTICA
Ciampino FS
Ciampino
Vermicino
LAZIO
Centroni
Antica
Casabianca FS
Acqua Acetosa
S. Maria d. Mole
S. Maria d. Mole FS
Sassone FS
Pantanella FS
183
Frattocchie (beginnig of Appia Antica)
Abbey of Nostra Signora del Santissimo Sacramento
Frascati
Frascati FS
Parco Reg. d. Castelli Romani
Parco
75
Grottaferrata
5
Marino Laziale FS
7
Reg.
Marino
140
216
Pavona FS
Castel Gandolfo
440
Pavona
Lake Albano
dei Castelli
Castel Gandolfo FS
Villetta FS
Romani

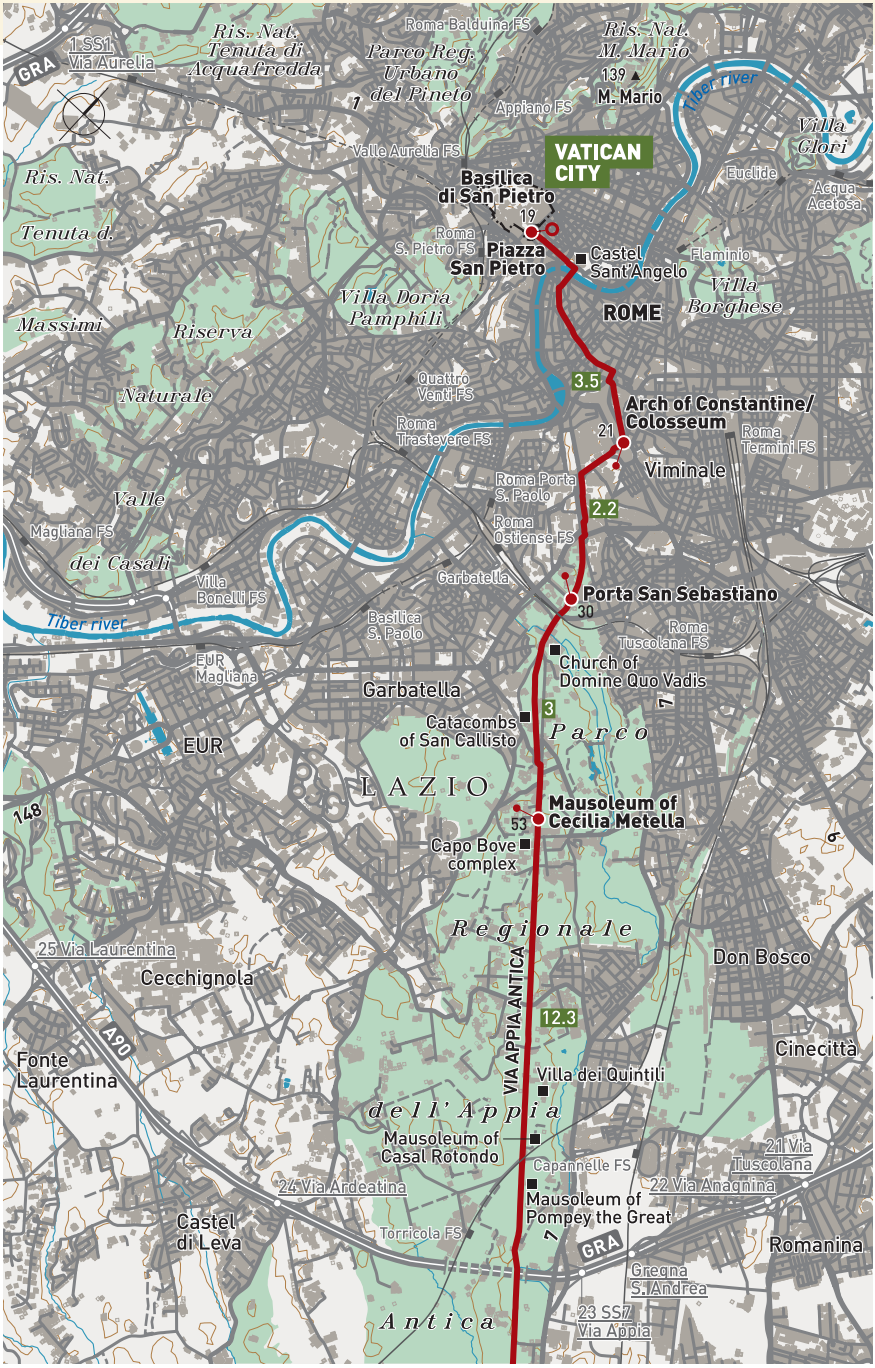
From Castel Gandolfo to Basilica di San Pietro

Distance: 26 km
Walking time: 7 h
Elevation gain: 184 m
Elevation loss: 596 m

Leaving behind the volcanic hills and lakes, pilgrims find themselves in sight of the Eternal City. This is an exciting stage, rich in archaeological landmarks, especially in the latter part along the Appia Antica and within the city itself. The route is easy, mostly downhill, and largely follows paved roads or traditional Roman stone paths.

From Palazzo Pontificio in **Castel Gandolfo** (440 m), you head downhill to the left towards the belvedere overlooking the lake, then go left again, following the road as it quickly leaves the town and proceeds along a straight stretch of the SP216. Shortly after a gentle bend to the right, you head left downhill and follow Via Montecrescenzio. Continuing steadily downhill, you take secondary roads past houses, gardens and vegetable patches until




GRA
1 SS1 Via Aurelia
Ris. Nat. Tenuta di Acquafredda
Parco Reg. Urbano del Pineto
Roma Balduina FS
Ris. Nat. M. Mario
139
M. Mario
Tiber river
Villa Glori
Appiano FS
7
Valle Aurelia FS
VATICAN CITY
Basilica di San Pietro
19
Euclide
Acqua Acetosa
Ris. Nat.
Tenuta d.
Roma S. Pietro FS
Piazza San Pietro
Castel Sant'Angelo
Flaminio
Villa Borghese
Villa Doria Pamphili
ROME
Massimi
Riserva
Naturale
Quattro Venti FS
3.5
Arch of Constantine/ Colosseum
21
Roma Termini FS
Roma Trastevere FS
Viminale
Roma Porta S. Paolo
2.2
Valle
Magliana FS
dei Casali
Roma Ostiense FS
Garbatella
Villa Bonelli FS
Porta San Sebastiano
30
Tiber river
Basilica S. Paolo
Roma Tuscolana FS
EUR Magliana
Church of Domine Quo Vadis
Garbatella
3
Catacombs of San Callisto
Parco
EUR
LAZIO
148
Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella
53
Capo Bove complex
Regionale
25 Via Laurentina
Cecchignola
Don Bosco
12.3
A90
VIA APPIA ANTICA
Fonte Laurentina
Cinecittà
Villa dei Quintili
dell'Appia
Mausoleum of Casal Rotondo
Capannelle FS
21 Via Tuscolana
24 Via Ardeatina
22 Via Anagnina
Mausoleum of Pompey the Great
Castel di Leva
Torricola FS
GRA
Romanina
Gregna S. Andrea
Antica
23 SS7 Via Appia



The streets of Castel Gandolfo

you have to carefully cross the SP140 and proceed along Via Due Santi Pascolari, descending to a crossroads where you turn right onto Via dei Glicini. Follow this road until you reach the SP75, which you take to the right for a short distance, before turning left onto Via Castagnole di Sotto, continuing between gardens and small villas. From here, head left onto Via Costa Rotonda and follow it along a straight stretch. After passing the abbey of Nostra Signora del Santissimo Sacramento on your left, you come to traffic lights on the SS7 Via Appia Nuova at Frattocchie (183 m, drinking fountain) after a left-hand bend. Here, following a short, paved stretch, you get to the long, well-preserved route of the Via Appia Antica within the park of the same name, which you follow for the next 15 km or so. The route descends very gently, tracing the ancient path with truly spectacular places. Passing Ciampino Airport on your right, you also cross the Rome motorway ring road (GRA), although is not visible as it runs below the Appia Antica through a long tunnel. Along the way, you pass the Mausoleum of Pompey the Great, the Mausoleum of Casal Rotondo and the massive Villa dei Quintili. More historical finds accompany you to the Capo Bove complex and the Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella (53 m, drinking fountain).

You continue through the area of the Catacombs of San Callisto (closed on Wednesdays) and then along a beautiful cypress-lined avenue. When access is closed, you take a right along the Appia Antica, where the ancient paving is hidden beneath cobblestones. After passing the church of Domine Quo Vadis, you leave the offices of the **Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica** on your left and continue to the Porta San Sebastiano gate (30 m), which

opens in a beautifully preserved section of the Aurelian Walls. From here, you follow Via di Porta San Sebastiano to Piazzale Numa Pompilio, then to the Terme di Caracalla. At this point, you turn right onto Via di San Gregorio, which leads to the Arco di Costantino and the Colosseum (21 m). Next, you proceed along the Fori Imperiali to Piazza Venezia, then turn left onto Via del Plebiscito, passing the church of Gesù and continuing onto Corso Vittorio Emanuele II. At Largo Tassoni, you turn right onto Via del Banco di Santo Spirito and cross the Tiber via Ponte Sant'Angelo, arriving at Castel Sant'Angelo. The journey concludes on Via della Conciliazione, leading to Piazza San Pietro (19 m).

☞ To see

Castel Gandolfo, overlooking Lake Albano, stands in an area inhabited since Neolithic times. Legend holds the city was founded around the 13th century BC with the name Alba Longa and is said to be the birthplace of Romulus and Remus. The capital of the Latin League, it was destroyed by Rome in the 7th century BC and many patrician villas were later built on the ruins, including the villa of Publius Clodius Pulcher, now part of Villa Santa Caterina, and the villa of Domitian, now part of Villa Barberini. In the 13th century, the Gandolfi family built a castle here, around which the present settlement began to develop. In 1604, Pope Clement VII annexed the castle to the possessions of the Church and it later became the papal summer residence. This led to the construction of the Papal Palace and the collegiate church of San Tommaso da Villanova, designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, as well as Villa Cybo and Villa Torlonia. On Piazza della Libertà, you can find the world's first letterbox, 1820. The **Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica**, established in 1988, spans 4,580 ha and is the largest urban park in



A section of the Via Appia Antica

Europe. Among its iconic sites, the colossal Villa dei Quintili, located at the fifth mile of the Appia Antica, is the largest residential complex in the Roman suburbs. Notable landmarks include the Capo Bove site, featuring the Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella, the Castrum Caetani and the nearby church of San Nicola a Capo Bove. Close by, there is also the Villa di Massenzio (whith a Circus) and the Mausoleum of Romulus. The Catacombs of San Sebastiano and San Callisto are also well worth a visit. This vast protected area includes the Parco degli Acquedotti, Parco di Torre del Fiscale, the Tormarancia estate and the Parco della Caffarella.

INFO

Papal Palace and Secret Garden, Castel Gandolfo: www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/it/organizza-visita/tariffe-e-biglietti/biglietto-ridotto-ville-pontificie-di-castel-gandolfo.html

Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica: parcoappiaantica.it

Mausoleum of Cecilia Metella: parcoarcheologicoappiaantica.it/luoghi/mausoleo-di-cecilia-metella-e-castrum-caetani

Villa dei Quintili: parcoarcheologicoappiaantica.it/luoghi/villa-dei-quintili-e-santa-maria-nova

Catacombs of San Sebastiano: catacombe.org

Catacombs of San Callisto: catacombesancallisto.it

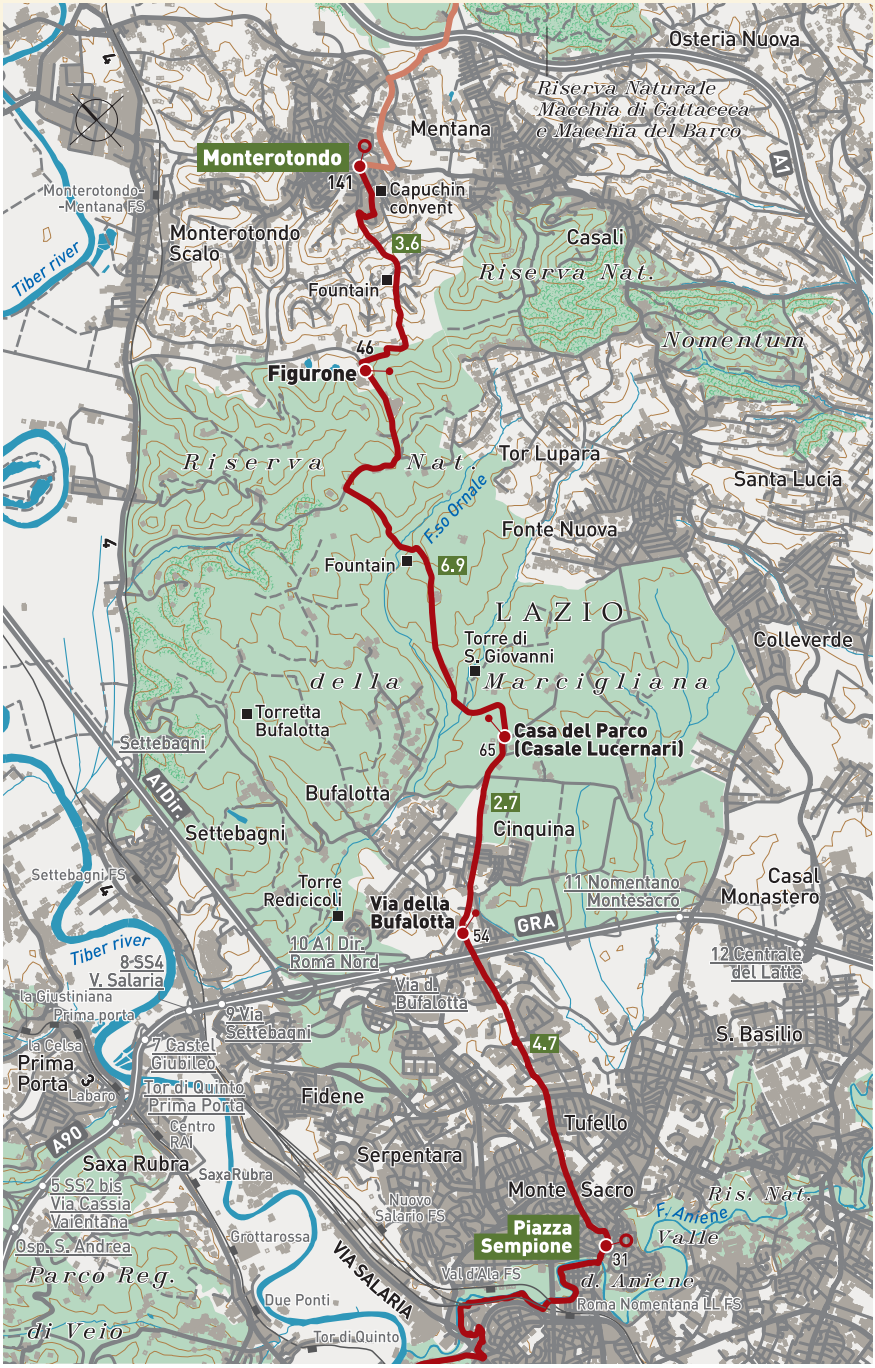
Church of Domine Quo Vadis: dominequovadis.com

Parco di Torre del Fiscale: torredelfiscale.it

Villa di Massenzio: villadimassenzio.it

Parco degli Acquedotti: parcodegliacquedotti.it

Parco della Caffarella: caffarella.it

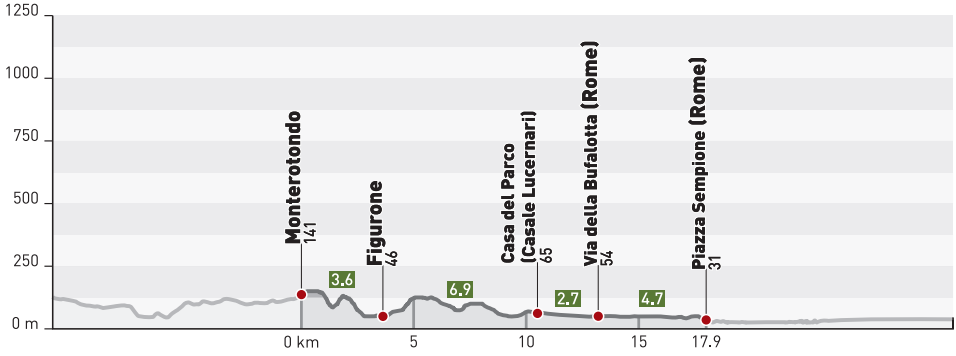

Osteria Nuova
Riserva Naturale
Macchia di Gattaceca
e Macchia del Barco
Mentana
Monterotondo
141
Capuchin
convent
Monterotondo-
-Mentana FS
Monterotondo
Scalo
3.6
Casali
Riserva Nat.
Tiber river
Fountain
Nomentum
46
Figurone
Riserva Nat.
Tor Lupara
Santa Lucia
F.so Ornale
Fonte Nuova
Fountain
6.9
LAZIO
Torre di
S. Giovanni
Colleverde
della Marcigliana
Torretta
Bufalotta
Casa del Parco
(Casale Lucernari)
65
Settebagni
A1 Dir.
Bufalotta
2.7
Cinquina
Settebagni
Settebagni FS
Torre
Redicicoli
Via della
Bufalotta
54
GRA
11 Nomentano
Montesacro
Casal
Monastero
Tiber river
8 SS4
V. Salaria
10 A1 Dir.
Roma Nord
12 Centrale
del Latte
la Giustiniana
Prima porta
9 Via
Settebagni
Via di
Bufalotta
la Celsa
7 Castel
Giubileo
4.7
S. Basilio
Prima
Porta
Labaro
Tor di Quinto
Prima Porta
Fidene
Tufello
A90
Centro
RAI
Serpentara
Saxa Rubra
SaxaRubra
5 SS2 bis
Via Cassia
Valentana
Monte Sacro
Ris. Nat.
F. Aniene
Valle
Nuovo
Salario FS
Piazza
Sempione
31
Osp. S. Andrea
Grottarossa
VIA SALARIA
Val d'Ala FS
d. Aniene
Parco Reg.
di Veio
Due Ponti
Roma Nomentana LL FS
Tor di Quinto

From Monterotondo to Piazza Sempione

Distance: 17.9 km
Walking time: 5 h
Elevation gain: 371 m
Elevation loss: 484 m

After the Sabine Hills, this stage winds through farmland and pastures, much of it within the Riserva Naturale della Marcigliana. Beyond the reserve, you continue for a good stretch along Via della Bufalotta to reach the Monte Sacro district.

From **Monterotondo's** cathedral, dedicated to Santa Maria Maddalena (141 m), you head left onto Via San Pio da Pietrelcina, continuing along Via Matteotti and then Viale Bruno Buozzi until you reach the monument dedicated to aviator Fausto Cecconi. From here, you turn right onto Viale Cecconi, where you'll find the church of San Francesco,



part of a Capuchin convent, on your left. Keep to the right to follow Via dei Crociferi, then soon turn right onto Via dei Frati Minori, which cuts out a bend in the main road. Turning right again back onto Via dei Frati Crociferi and heading downhill, you reach a roundabout. Here, you turn left onto Via Sant'Angelo, which continues descending, crosses an intersection and then climbs through greenery to a crossroads with a fountain on the right (122 m). As you continue straight (now called Via delle Begonie), you descend sharply to a right-hand bend, where you leave the road on the left—just before it becomes private—and briefly follow it to the right. The trail winds through fields with a leftward curve, then veers right and reaches a small junction at Figurone (46 m). You turn left onto Via di Valle Ricca and



The hills outside Monterotondo



Signs in the Riserva della Marcigliana

follow it uphill for about 1.4 km until the next junction, where the route continues to the right on Via di Santa Colomba.

In this area, you enter privately owned land within the **Riserva Naturale della Marcigliana**, as indicated by an information sign (it is important to carefully follow the posted guidelines). At a hay barn, you turn left and head downhill, crossing the Fosso dell'Ornale (62 m) before reaching a fountain after a stretch through cultivated fields. Here, you leave the private area by following Via di Tor San Giovanni, passing the Agriturismo Antiqua on the left. A little further on, also to the left, you'll see the silhouette of the ancient Torre di San Giovanni tower rising above a farm. On the right, you come to the Casa del Parco at Casale Lucernari, featuring a display of wooden arrows showing the distances to major pilgrimage sites, including Santiago, Assisi and Jerusalem.

Continuing along the same road, you pass between two columns marking the boundary of the reserve. At the intersection, you proceed straight along the same road, which leads to a bus stop (for bus 86 towards Piazza Conca d'Oro, where you'll find a station for the B1 metro line). The road widens and you can walk on the pavement, soon reaching the first houses, where there is a bar and some shops. Continuing straight, you pass through the residential area of the Cesarina complex. At a large double intersection, you proceed straight onto Via della Bufalotta (54 m) and pass beneath the viaduct of the Rome ring road (GRA). After just over

3 km along this road—walking carefully on the pavements—you pass Piazza Monte Gennaro and join Viale Adriatico, continuing straight until you reach the busy piazza of the same name. A few dozen metres ahead, you leave the avenue on the left and climb a short set of steps to the narrow Via Monte Argentario, which you follow to the left until Piazza Monte Tufone. From here, a short stretch along Via delle Alpi Apuane brings you to Piazza Sempione, home to the church of Santi Angeli Custodi and the headquarters of Municipio III of Rome - Monte Sacro (31 m).

☞ To see

The entry into the centre of **Monterotondo**, which became a fief of the Roman Basilica of San Paolo in the year 1000, is through the gate dedicated to Garibaldi (who captured the town with his men in 1867). Following the old Borgo (now Via Cavour), you come to a 17th-century cathedral. Continuing from Piazza della Repubblica along Via Giovagnoli, you arrive at the steps leading to a building, originally built by the Orsini on the foundations of an older fortification, later passing into the possession of the Boncompagni and then the Barberini families. Behind the municipal library are the exhibition spaces of the Museo Civico Archeologico, which houses artefacts from various eras discovered locally.



Fontana dei Leoni in Monterotondo



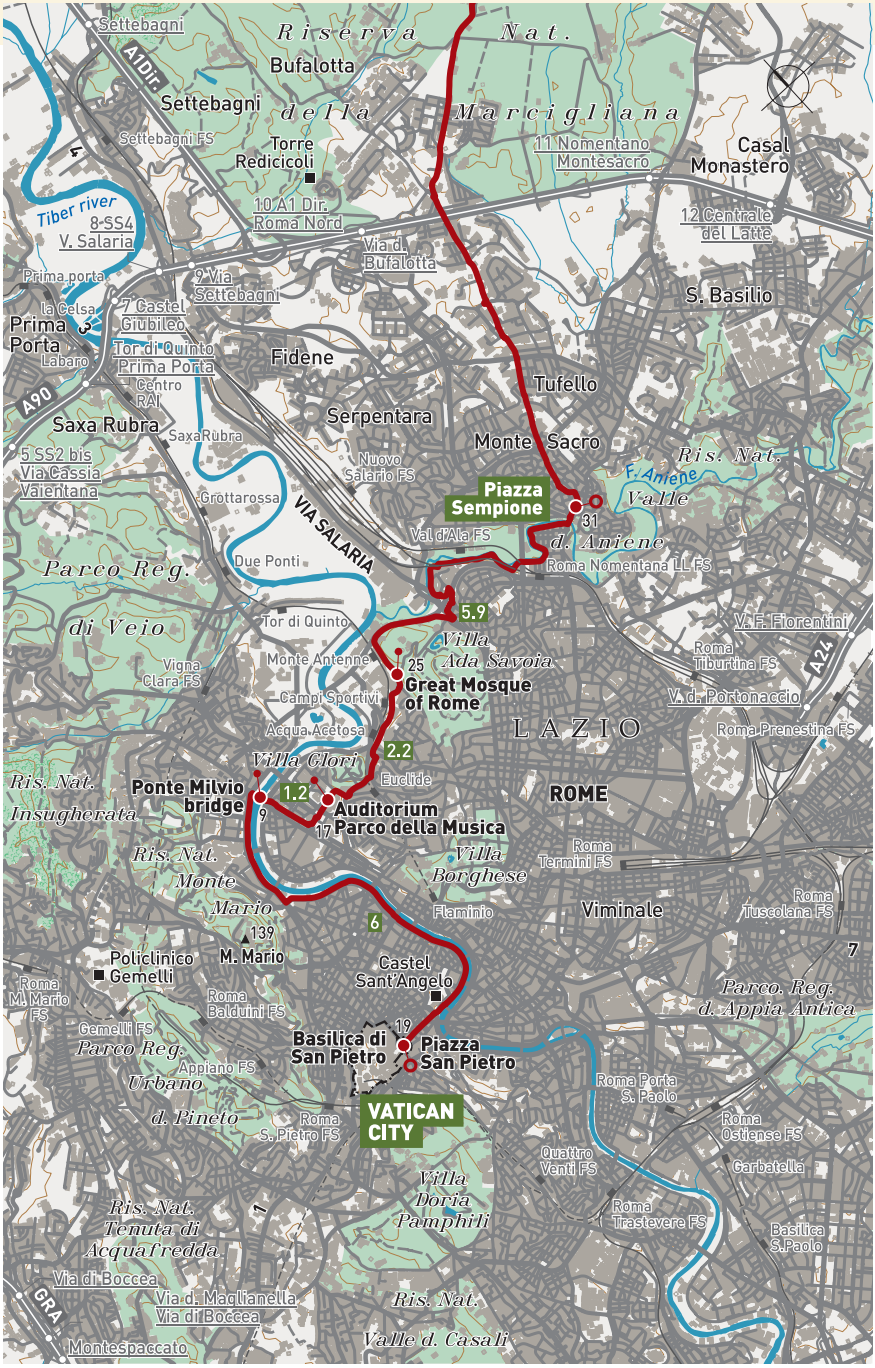
Walking in the Riserva Naturale della Marcigliana

The **Riserva Naturale della Marcigliana** protects a vast green area with numerous historical remnants from Roman and medieval times. Particularly notable are the medieval fortifications, such as the towers of San Giovanni and Marcigliana, which over the centuries lost their military purpose and became part of farms or large agricultural estates. Covering over 4,600 ha, the reserve safeguards a significant portion of the Agro Romano rural district, characterised by gently rolling hills used for farming or grazing, while the valleys are covered with dense scrub vegetation, remnants of the once-extensive forest of various types of oak.

INFO

Musei Civici Monterotondo: mucim.it

Riserva Naturale della Marcigliana: romanatura.roma.it/riserva-naturale-della-marcigliana

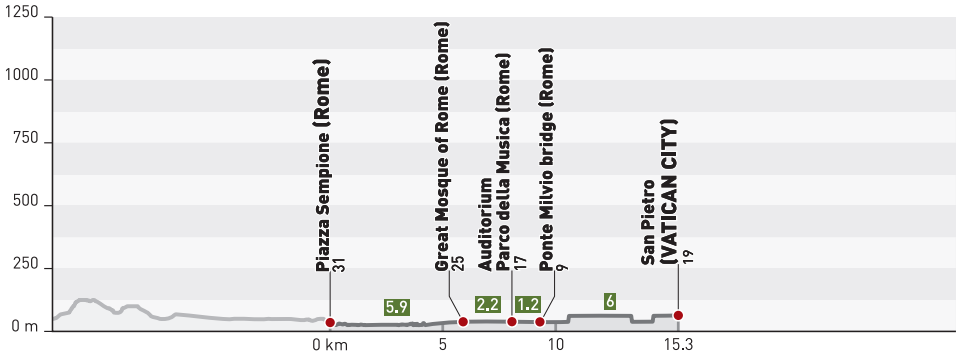

Settebagni
Riserva Nat.
Bufalotta
A1Dir.
Settebagni
della Marcigliana
Settebagni FS
Torre Redicicoli
11 Nomentano Montesacro
Casal Monastero
Tiber river
8-SS4 V. Salaria
10 A1 Dir. Roma Nord
12 Centrale del Latte
Via d. Bufalotta
Prima porta
9 Via Settebagni
S. Basilio
la Celsa
7 Castel Giubileo
Prima Porta
Labaro
Tor di Quinto Prima Porta
Fidene
Centro RAI
A90
Tufello
Saxa Rubra
Serpentara
SaxaRubra
Monte Sacro
5 SS2 bis Via Cassia Veientana
Nuovo Salario FS
Ris. Nat. F. Aniene Valle d. Aniene
Piazza Sempione
31
Grottarossa
VIA SALARIA
Val d'Ala FS
Roma Nomentana LL FS
Parco Reg. di Veio
Due Ponti
5.9
V. F. Fiorentini
Tor di Quinto
Villa Ada Savoia
Roma Tiburtina FS
A24
Vigna Clara FS
Monte Antenne
25
Great Mosque of Rome
V. d. Portonaccio
Campi Sportivi
LAZIO
Acqua Acetosa
Roma Prenestina FS
Villa Glori
2.2
Ris. Nat. Insugherata
Ponte Milvio bridge
1.2
Euclide
ROME
9
17
Auditorium Parco della Musica
Roma Termini FS
Ris. Nat. Monte Mario
Villa Borghese
Roma Tuscolana FS
Flaminio
Viminale
6
7
139
M. Mario
Policlinico Gemelli
Castel Sant'Angelo
Parco. Reg. d. Appia Antica
Roma M. Mario FS
Roma Balduina FS
19
Basilica di San Pietro
Piazza San Pietro
Gemelli FS
Parco Reg. Urbano
Appiano FS
Roma Porta S. Paolo
VATICAN CITY
d. Pineto
Roma S. Pietro FS
Roma Ostiense FS
Quattro Venti FS
Garbatella
Villa Doria Pamphili
Ris. Nat. Tenuta di Acquafredda
Roma Trastevere FS
Basilica S.Paolo
Via di Boccea
Via d. Maglianella
Via di Boccea
Ris. Nat.
GRA
Montespaccato
Valle d. Casali

From Piazza Sempione to Basilica di San Pietro

Distance: 15.3 km
Walking time: 4h30
Elevation gain: 198 m
Elevation loss: 209 m

The final day of the journey dedicated to the memory of Saint Francis is an urban route that winds through parks and striking modern architecture. For much of the way, it follows the banks of the Aniene and Tiber rivers, the two waterways that have shaped the history of Rome.

The final stage of the Cammino – Via di San Francesco begins at Piazza Sempione (31 m) and follows the busy Viale Sempione, crossing the Aniene River via the Tazio bridge. At the end of the bridge, you leave the main road (which from here becomes Via Nomentana Nuova) and head right



onto Via Valsolda, where after a few metres, you can move onto the cycle and pedestrian path on the right-hand side. After following a straight stretch, the path briefly veers away from the paved road (left) to curve along the riverbank before returning to follow the paved road closely. The cycle path continues alongside the Aniene, passing near the Rome Nomentana railway station and then beneath the viaduct of Ponte delle Valli—a recently regenerated area that is now popular with sports enthusiasts after years of neglect.

Within the Riserva Naturale della Valle dell'Aniene, after following the railway for a good stretch with the river on your right, the path passes under the railway overpass and begins to ascend. You'll find a plaque commemorating 12-year-old Ugo Forno, the last Roman partisan killed by the Nazis during a skirmish with German demolition teams attempting to destroy the railway bridge over the Aniene. The cycle path passes through the Prato della Signora complex and emerges onto Via Fioravanti, which you follow to the right, passing beneath the Tangenziale Est bridge. Further along, you leave Via Catalani on the right and continue on the cycle path, which reaches Via Salaria and follows it to the right until the intersection with Viale Somalia. You cross both Viale Somalia and Via Salaria



The Great Mosque of Rome



The Ponte della Musica Armando Trovajoli

via the cycle path, after which the route skirts the outer perimeter of **Villa Ada Savoia**, passing the base of Monte Antenne. For about 1 km, the path runs between the park and the Circonvallazione Salaria (Tangenziale Est) road. This section—while not particularly pleasant but safe for pedestrians—ends at the intersection with Viale della Moschea. You turn left here to reach the complex of the Islamic Cultural Centre and the **Great Mosque of Rome** (25 m).

From there, the route continues along the cycle path on the left side of the avenue, and upon reaching Viale Parioli, you go right to follow it to the entrance gate for the Villa Glori park. Leaving Viale Maresciallo Pilsudski, you turn right onto Via Gaudini, which descends and leads to the **Auditorium Parco della Musica Ennio Morricone** in Rome (17 m). You continue straight along Via de Coubertin, then turn right onto Viale Tiziano, which takes you to the Ponte Milvio bridge (9 m). After crossing the Tiber, you turn left onto the cycle path running along the riverbank and follow it for roughly 5 km. Along this stretch, you pass the Ponte Duca d'Aosta and the modern Ponte della Musica Armando Trovajoli bridges. After going beneath the arches of six more bridges over the Tiber, you ascend at Lungotevere Castello just before Ponte Sant'Angelo. Finally, you head across the newly refurbished Piazza Pia and take Via della Conciliazione, which leads to Basilica di San Pietro (19 m).

☞ To see

After crossing the Aniene River, the route skirts the expansive green area of **Villa Ada Savoia**, which, after being owned by several noble families, became the private residence of Vittorio Emanuele II until the fall of the monarchy. On the slopes of the Monte Antenne hill stands the **Grand Mosque of Rome**, an integral part of the Islamic Cultural Centre. The design of the mosque, which was the largest in Europe at the time it was built, was by Paolo Portoghesi in collaboration with Vittorio Gigliotti, Sami Mousawi and Nino Tozzo. It is based on a direct relationship between local materials—such as Roman travertine and terracotta—and architectural styles from mosques across the Muslim world, from Córdoba to the Maghreb, Persia and Istanbul.

Built between the viaduct of Corso di Francia and the hill of Villa Glori park, the **Auditorium Parco della Musica Ennio Morricone** is one of Rome's most significant architectural and cultural achievements of recent decades. Designed by Renzo Piano and inaugurated in 2002, the complex is the largest of its kind in Europe. The structure has three independent halls with a distinctive oval shape, arranged around an open-air amphitheatre (cavea) that can accommodate up to 3,000 spectators.



The Auditorium Parco della Musica Ennio Morricone

The route reaches the Ti-



The Ponte Milvio bridge in Rome

ber at the **Ponte Milvio bridge**, the site of the famous battle on 28 October 312, between Maxentius and Constantine. Little remains today of the original tuff bridge with four arches built in 109 BC by the censor Marcus Aemilius Scaurus to span the Tiber. This is due to centuries of reinforcement work, the restoration carried out by Giuseppe Valadier in 1805 in preparation for Pope Pius VII's return to Rome and the damage caused when Garibaldi partially destroyed the bridge during the defence of the Roman Republic to slow the French advance.

INFO

Villa Ada Savoia: turismoroma.it/it/luoghi/villa-ada-savoia
Grand Mosque of Rome: turismoroma.it/it/node/56
Auditorium Parco della Musica Ennio Morricone: auditorium.com

Basilica di San Pietro

The Basilica di San Pietro, the heart of Catholicism, has been one of the most important and sought-after pilgrimage destinations since ancient times. The **symbolic site of Christian spirituality**, it is also an amazing treasure trove of art, with many works tied to the long history of pilgrimages. Built in 324 on the site of St Peter's burial, the present-day monumental church is the result of a complete reconstruction begun in 1506 and completed in 1626, the year of its consecration. It houses numerous masterpieces, including the dome designed by Michelangelo Buonarroti and the baldachin (canopy) by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The basilica is the ultimate destination for all pilgrims arriving in Rome. Even its external architecture guides pilgrims toward the basilica, with the **colonnade** symbolising the universal embrace of the Church. **Piazza San Pietro**, created between 1656 and 1667 by Bernini, is enclosed by two semicircular wings formed by four rows of columns—284 in total—supporting two semicircular entablatures topped by 140 statues of saints and popes. The church's enormous Renaissance **façade** has five doors. To the right of the main entrance, pilgrims can enter through the **Holy Door**, which is opened only in Jubilee Years, occurring every twenty-five years. At all other times, it remains sealed shut. The current bronze door was crafted





The Holy Door

by sculptor Vico Consorti (1902–1979) for the Jubilee of 1950.

The **interior** of the basilica is an incredible 190 m long and spans a total area of over 22,000 sq.m. It is thought it can hold around 20,000 people—or the entire Colosseum. Inside, it houses some of the most revered treasures for pilgrims arriving in Rome. The most significant of these is **St Peter's tomb**, believed to hold the remains of the apostle. It is located in the so-called Vatican Grottoes, a vast crypt with the burial sites of nearly all the popes across two millennia. The tomb is flanked by gilded bronze statues of the apostles Peter and Paul, created in 1617 by Ambrogio Buonvicino. The funerary shrine itself dates back to the 2nd century and, apart from its mosaic decorations, remains virtually intact. It is known as the **Nicchia dei Palli** (Niche of the Pallia) because, on the eve of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (29 June), pallia—two white wool stoles with black crosses—are placed here. These are later presented by the pope to metropolitan archbishops.



Basilica di San Pietro



The bronze sculpture of St Peter Enthroned

Directly above the tomb of San Pietro, in the upper part, is the **Confessio**, a sacred space in front of the high altar, which allows a view of the apostle's burial site. The **altar** is crowned by the monumental bronze baldachin designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini between 1624 and 1633. Modelled on the form of processional catafalques, it is extraordinary in scale, rising to 28.5 m with four solomonic columns, each 11 m tall. A landmark in the history of art, this masterpiece was the result of collaboration among several prominent artists, including Francesco Borromini, Stefano Maderno, François Duquesnoy, Andrea Bolgi, Giuliano Finelli and Luigi Bernini, the brother of Gian Lorenzo. The **bronze sculpture of St Peter Enthroned**, attributed to Arnolfo di Cambio (13th century), is another significant devotional site. The statue's right foot is visibly worn from centuries of pilgrims touching and kissing it as an act of respect and faith. The 11 side chapels and 44 altars, in addition to the main altar, are also remarkable.

The first chapel on the right houses Michelangelo's **Pietà**, created between 1497 and 1499 when the artist was just over 20 years old. The second chapel houses the tomb of John Paul II.

The **dome**, affectionately called the Cupolone and visible from nearly every part of Rome, was designed by Michelangelo with contributions from Giacomo della Porta and Carlo Maderno. Towering approximately 136 m from the base to the top of the cross crowning the lantern, it is one of the tallest domes in the world. Its internal diameter measures 41.5 m, slightly less than that of the Pantheon. The enormous structure is supported by



The dome from the inside

four colossal piers, each with a perimeter of around 71 m—large enough to contain the entire church of San Carlino alle Quattro Fontane. The **interior of the dome** is decorated with mosaics depicting sacred scenes and saints, while its base features an inscription in bold blue letters on a gold background: TV ES PETRVS ET SVPER HANC PETRAM AEDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM – TIBI DABO CLAVES REGNI CAELORVM (You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven). The dome itself was constructed with a double shell, with a staircase built into the space between the layers to allow pilgrims to climb to the **lantern**. The effort of this final ascent is richly rewarded with a stunning, panoramic view of the Vatican and the entire city. Many pilgrims also aspire to attend **papal audiences**, which are held either in Piazza San Pietro or the nearby Paul VI Audience Hall, commonly known as the Nervi Hall. This grand auditorium, designed by architect Pier Luigi Nervi, was inaugurated in 1971.

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