

## In the City of Night

August is a special time of year in the Eternal City: a good chunk of its residents decamp and head to the seaside or the mountains to escape the heat, and tourism slows down as well. The result is the transformation of a frenetic capital into a tranquil town that you have almost all to yourself. The usually busy streets are eerily quiet and ripe for nocturnal exploration. When Rome cools down, discover a different side of this romantic and mysterious city.



PHOTO BY LASSE CHRISTIANSEN

### > Culture after-hours

For a bit of culture-by-night, take advantage of the many museums around the city that are open well into the night. On Friday nights, the Vatican Museums reopens its doors from 7pm until 11pm. Reservations are required! [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va). Saturday nights, all Roman city museums, including the Capitoline Museums, Trajan's Market, MACRO and the Museo di Roma in Trastevere, remain open until 1am! Every last Tuesday night during summer, take advantage of free entry to all state museums (Palazzo Barberini, Palazzo Corsini, Galleria Borghese, Palazzo Massimo, and many more) until 11pm, so you can keep your culture mojo going well into the night, and save money at the same time!

### > Music under the stars

If live music is your thing, you'll be spoiled for choice. In many cases, the special Saturday night museum openings will feature live concerts on site. In addition, bands specializing in all kinds of music, from rock to classical to traditional Italian folksongs perform in piazzas, parks, courtyards and archeological sites across the city. It's called quite simply *Estate Romana* (Roman Summer) and most of the events are free of charge. Check out [www.estateromana.it](http://www.estateromana.it) for a full list of events. To experience Rome's most dramatic outdoor venue, book tickets to see a performance of Rome's national opera company and soak up your favorite arias and duets under the stars in the unforgettable setting of the ancient Baths of Caracalla. [www.operaroma.com](http://www.operaroma.com).

### > Secret passageway

Castel Sant'Angelo, the daunting and unmistakable fortress that graces Rome's skyline, where popes fled from invaders and prisoners were tortured and left to rot, is open until late into the night all summer, with its terraces open for cocktails and offerings of live music and entertainment. But more rewarding is the chance to visit its frescoed rooms and eerie dungeons by the light of the moon, and greater still is the rare opportunity to walk down the *Passetto*, the medieval passageway that connects the fortress to the Vatican, the escape route for many a threatened pontiff. **Tues-Sun, 8:30pm-12:30am. €5. Passetto and dungeons open Tues and Sun with obligatory guided tour, €9.**



PHOTO BY RICKY DAVID

### > Go east

For a lovely nighttime "day-trip," head east of Rome to Tivoli to take in the festivities at the sumptuous Renaissance palace, Villa d'Este. Every Friday and Saturday night until 10 September, the exquisitely frescoed rooms and stunningly manicured gardens complete with elaborate fountains and sculptures galore can be visited by night, from 8:30 to midnight.

[www.villadestetivoli.info](http://www.villadestetivoli.info)

-T.P.