

My Rome



Cecilia Alessi

[[tour guide and restorer]

Born and raised in Rome, Cecilia Alessi grew up immersed in the marvels of the Eternal City, where her parents fueled her love of the city with countless walks, stories, and visits. She turned her passion into a profession, first as a restorer of ancient armory, and later as a licensed tour guide, sharing her knowledge and love of Rome with thousands of people every year. www.ceciliarometours.com

Which three adjectives best describe Rome?

Multi-faceted, unique, eternal.

Describe your relationship with the city.

Infinite love. All you have to do is look around to fall in love with the colors, the ruins, the monuments, and the breathtaking views all around you. What I love most about Rome is that to explore it thoroughly is a never-ending task. To quote Silvio Negro: "In Rome, a lifetime isn't enough." You could spend each day in the



same place, and you'd always find something you didn't notice before. It's impossible to get bored here!

Is there a place in Rome that is particularly close to your heart?

Castel Sant'Angelo. My father used to take me there when I was little and I always dreamed about what it would be like to work there. A few years ago, that dream came true when I worked there as a restorer, and it continues each time I bring a client there. It's a unique experience to get to share a place you love so much; a place that was transformed along with the city, originally an imperial mausoleum in the 2nd century, then a medieval fortress, and finally a Renaissance castle. Add to that a breathtaking panoramic view of the city, and you have a combination that makes for an absolutely unforgettable place.

Is there a "secret" place in the city that you suggest your clients seek out?

The hidden alleys of the historic center. Wandering aimlessly is the best way to discover these secret and authentic corners of the city. A tip: every time you see an open doorway, always take a peek inside. You might find an enchanting courtyard, decorated with statues or fountains, or simply a delightful unexpected corner. Rome always knows how to dazzle anyone who looks at it with love.

What is the most satisfying part of being a tour guide?

Sharing the grandiosity and the uniqueness of the city, always choosing off-the-beaten-path itineraries in order to let my clients discover the true Rome, even those who visit for only one day. The best way to get to know a city is to pass from history to art, from customs to cuisine, a 360° experience: this is what my clients appreciate the most.

Is there a Roman dish that you can't resist?

There are two: *saltimbocca*, which are thin veal slices rolled with prosciutto and sage, breaded, and sautéed with butter and wine—they literally jump into your mouth (hence the name)! And *amatriciana*, a classic pasta dish created in Amatrice, one of the towns destroyed in the recent earthquake. Many Italian restaurants have decided to donate €2 for every amatriciana dish they sell in order to help fund the relief efforts.



MY PERFECT DAY

9 a.m.

The City Awakens

I'd take a walk in the historic center and find a charming bar in one of the many piazzas to have breakfast and watch the city wake up.

12 p.m.

Pre-museum Fuel-up

I'd head to Trastevere or the Jewish Ghetto for lunch, letting my nose choose the best restaurant—it's vital to have a good meal before visiting an exhibit or museum.



5 p.m.

Rome with a View

After spending the better part of the day trudging all over the city, it's time for a relaxing break. I'd climb the Pincian or Janiculum Hill for a well-deserved *aperitivo* with a panoramic view of the city.

9 p.m.

Dining in the Ruins

The best way to conclude a perfect day in Rome is with a special dinner. I'd opt for somewhere in the neighborhood around the Pantheon or Campo de' Fiori. Many restaurants in that area offer outdoor seating in a characteristic piazza. Better yet, several boast underground dining rooms where you can gaze at Imperial Roman ruins while you eat. This is something that you can only find in Rome!