

VISIT GUIDE 2026

the Pantheon

Rome · From 11.80€

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History & experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

From Temple to Eternal Church

GOOGLE 4.8 ★★★★★ 287 154 reviews

TIQETS 3.6 ★★★★☆ 4 739 reviews

The story of the Pantheon begins in the late first century BC, when Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa commissioned a grand temple on his own property in the Campus Martius. This original structure was part of an impressive building program following the Battle of Actium, designed to celebrate Roman power and religious devotion. Although the first temple burned down during the reign of Nero, its legacy endured through the inscription that would later define the site's identity for centuries.

In the second century AD, Emperor Hadrian oversaw the complete reconstruction of the temple, finishing it around 126 AD. He made a deliberate choice to retain Agrippa's original date inscription, allowing him to appropriate the glory of his predecessor while showcasing his own architectural genius. This act of historical continuity explains why the building is often associated with Agrippa, even though the current structure is entirely Hadrianic.

The transformation from a pagan temple to a Christian church occurred in 609 AD, when Pope Boniface IV dedicated the site to Saint Mary and the Martyrs. This early conversion protected the monument from the destruction that befell many other ancient Roman buildings. The continuous use as an active place of worship ensured its preservation, making it one of the best-preserved structures from antiquity still standing today.

Today, the Pantheon stands as a testament to Roman engineering, with its massive concrete dome remaining the largest unreinforced dome in the world. The perfect geometry of its interior, where the height matches the diameter, creates a harmonious space that has inspired architects for nearly two millennia. It remains a state property managed by Italy's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, attracting millions of visitors who come to witness this unique blend of history and faith.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping into the Pantheon, you are immediately struck by the sheer scale of the rotunda and the dramatic play of light through the oculus. The massive granite columns of the portico frame your entry, leading you into a circular space where the coffered dome rises above you like a celestial canopy. The air feels charged with history, and the silence is broken only by the soft murmur of visitors and the occasional echo of footsteps on the ancient marble floor.

As you stand beneath the central opening, the natural light forms a moving spotlight that sweeps across the interior, illuminating the intricate details of the architecture. The atmosphere is both mystical and serene, offering a moment of contemplation amidst the bustle of Rome. This unique experience of light and space promises a visit that is not just educational, but deeply emotional and unforgettable.



PREPARE YOUR VISIT

Practical information

ADDRESS

Historic center · Metro: Bologna (L B) or Flaminio (L A), 10-15 min walk.

OPENING HOURS

Hours vary depending on religious services and holidays. Check time slots before your visit.

FEES

Paid entry required since 2023. Indicative fee: €11.80. {promo}.

VISIT DURATION

Plan for 45 to 60 minutes inside if you use the audioguide, plus 15 minutes to admire the façade and exterior portico.

PHOTOS

Photography is allowed without flash. Tripods and flashes are prohibited to preserve the tranquility of worshippers and the conservation of ancient frescoes.

AUDIENCE

Ideal for all profiles: families, couples and history enthusiasts. The site is accessible but requires proper attire as it is an active church.

HOW TO GET THERE

Access & transport

Metro

: Rome Termini Station — 26 min à pied

Rome Termini Station (11 min) · Roma Trastevere Station (13 min)

Bus

: Rinascimento — 3 min à pied

Rome Termini Station (16 min) · Roma Trastevere Station (20 min)

Car

Rome Termini Station (10 min) · Roma Trastevere Station (13 min)

Bike

Rome Termini Station (12 min) · Roma Trastevere Station (16 min)

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the Pantheon ?



📍 Piazza della Rotonda — 00186 Rome

🌐 41°53.917′ N, 12°28.612′ E



ORGANIZATION

Navigating the Rotunda Space

Portico & Vestibule

The entrance features eight massive pink granite Corinthian columns, each carved from a single block. Behind them, a rectangular vestibule links the porch to the main rotunda. The pediment above the columns displays the original inscription of Agrippa. This area sets the tone for the monumental scale of the interior.

Main Rotunda (Ground Floor)

The circular hall is dominated by the coffered concrete dome rising above. The floor is made of large marble slabs arranged in a geometric pattern. Side chapels contain the tombs of Italian kings, including Victor Emmanuel II. The acoustics here are remarkable, creating a majestic resonance for any sound.

Oculus Viewpoint

While not a separate physical level, the space directly under the oculus offers a unique perspective. Here, the light from the sky creates a dynamic focal point. Visitors often gather here to observe the movement of the sunbeam. It is the heart of the architectural experience.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Disabled Access**

Limited wheelchair access due to ancient architecture and security checks at the entrance.

👨‍👩‍👧 **Families**

Family-friendly, but beware of crowds and limited space for strollers.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Spanish, Italian, German



Must-sees

SELECTION

Architectural Wonders to Admire

01 Rotunda

The Great Dome

This 43-meter diameter structure is the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world. Its coffered design reduces weight while maintaining structural integrity. The perfect equality between height and diameter creates a harmonious sphere. Standing beneath it evokes a sense of awe at Roman engineering.

> 💡 The dome has stood for nearly 2,000 years without reinforcement, a feat unmatched in modern construction.

02 Dome Center

The Oculus

This 9-meter opening is the only source of natural light in the building. It has never been closed by glazing or a roof. The sunlight creates a moving beam that sweeps across the interior throughout the day. It symbolizes the connection between earth and heaven.

> 💡 Rain falls directly through the oculus, draining through small holes in the floor designed by the ancients.

03 Portico Pediment

Agrippa Inscription

The Latin text reads 'M·AGRIPPA·L·F·COS·TERTIVM·FECIT', meaning 'Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, consul for the third time, built this.' Hadrian chose to keep this inscription despite rebuilding the temple. It serves as a historical marker of the original construction. This choice allowed Hadrian to claim Agrippa's legacy.

> 💡 The inscription misled historians for centuries about the true date of the current building's construction.

04 Portico

Granite Columns

Eight massive columns support the front portico, each carved from a single block of pink granite. They were transported from Egypt to Rome using advanced ancient logistics. Each shaft measures approximately 10 meters in height. Their Corinthian capitals are intricately detailed with acanthus leaves.

> 💡 The columns were likely moved on wooden sledges over greased tracks, a logistical marvel of the time.

05

Rotunda

Marble Floor

The floor is composed of large slabs of various marbles arranged in a geometric pattern. The colors range from white to red and black, creating a striking visual effect. The surface is polished to a high sheen, reflecting the light from the oculus. Small drainage holes are integrated into the design to handle rainwater.

> 💡 The floor's design helps direct water towards the drains, preventing flooding during heavy rains.

06

Side Chapels

Royal Tombs

The side chapels house the tombs of several Italian kings, including Victor Emmanuel II. These monuments reflect the historical importance of the site in modern Italian history. The tombs are ornate and serve as reminders of the nation's unification. Visiting these areas adds a layer of contemporary history to the ancient setting.

> 💡 Victor Emmanuel II was the first king of unified Italy, buried here to symbolize national unity.

07

Dome Interior

Coffered Ceiling

The dome features 28 coffers in five concentric rings, reducing the weight of the concrete. Each coffer contains a recessed panel, creating a textured appearance. The design is both functional and aesthetic, enhancing the visual depth of the dome. The central oculus is surrounded by the innermost ring of coffers.

> 💡 The coffering technique was a key innovation in Roman concrete construction, allowing for larger spans.

08

Rotunda

Acoustic Resonance

The architecture of the Pantheon creates exceptional acoustic properties. Sounds produced in the center are amplified and resonate throughout the space. This feature was likely intentional, aiding in religious ceremonies and public speeches. The smooth surfaces of the marble and concrete contribute to the clarity of the sound.

> 💡 Whispering near the center can be heard clearly at the edges of the rotunda due to the curved walls.

TIPS

Mastering Your Pantheon Visit

TIMING

Arrive early in the morning, around 7 am, to avoid crowds and enjoy the light streaming through the oculus without interference.

BILLET

Book online in advance to secure a specific time slot and skip the long queues, especially during peak season.

PARCOURS

Start with the exterior portico, then move into the rotunda, and spend time under the oculus before exploring the side chapels.

PHOTO

Position yourself under the oculus to capture the natural light, using manual mode to balance the strong contrasts between shadows and light.

PAUSE

Take a break at a cafe in Piazza Navona, right next door, to rest your feet and enjoy a coffee while observing the street life.

ENFANTS

Keep children close in the crowded rotunda and explain the significance of the oculus to engage their curiosity about the architecture.

AUDIOGUIDE

Choose an audioguide that covers architectural history and anecdotes about Hadrian, ensuring it includes explanations of the oculus and royal tombs.

CONFORT

Wear comfortable shoes for walking on the marble floors and ensure your shoulders and knees are covered to meet the dress code.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Do I need to book my ticket for the Pantheon?

Yes, it is strongly recommended to book in advance, especially during peak season. Access conditions change regularly, so check available time slots on the official website. This guarantees smooth access without long wai

Can I buy the ticket on site?

It is possible to buy the ticket at the counter, but queues can be very long, often exceeding one hour. To avoid this, prefer online booking which often offers a precise time slot. This is the most reliable solution to o

What is the difference between an audioguide and a guided tour?

The audioguide allows an independent visit at your own pace with audio explanations in French. The guided tour includes a physical guide, skip-the-line and direct interactions. Choose based on your preference for indepen

Are tickets refundable?

The refund policy depends on the type of ticket and the time of cancellation. Generally, free cancellation is possible up to 24 hours before the visit. Always check the specific terms when purchasing online.

How long does it take to visit the Pantheon?

Allow about 45 minutes for a complete visit of the interior with an audioguide. Add 15 minutes to admire the exterior and the square. Plan this time to fully appreciate the architecture and history of the place.

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

The Misleading Date

Hadrian kept Agrippa's inscription to claim his predecessor's glory. This decision confused historians for centuries about the building's age. It highlights the political savvy of Roman emperors. The true construction date is now known to be around 126 AD.

Rain Drainage System

The floor has small holes to drain rainwater from the oculus. This system was designed to prevent flooding inside the building. The water flows out through hidden channels. It is a clever solution to a practical problem.

Continuous Use

The Pantheon has been used continuously since its construction. This uninterrupted use helped preserve the structure. Many other Roman buildings were abandoned or destroyed. Its role as a church ensured its survival.

Geometric Perfection

The interior diameter and height are exactly the same, 43.3 meters. This creates a perfect sphere if the dome were completed. The precision of this geometry is remarkable. It reflects the advanced mathematical knowledge of the Romans.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

The area surrounding the Pantheon is rich with historic charm and cultural attractions. Just steps away, Piazza Navona offers a vibrant square with the famous Fountain of the Four Rivers and lively street artists. To the north-east, the Trevi Fountain awaits, providing another iconic Baroque masterpiece to admire. For those seeking a break, the nearby cafes offer a perfect spot to relax and soak in the atmosphere. If you have time, exploring the narrow alleys of Trastevere provides an authentic taste of Roman nightlife and traditional cuisine. These nearby landmarks make the Pantheon a central hub for discovering the best of Rome's historic center.



Leaving the Pantheon, you carry with you the memory of a place where time seems to stand still. The **perfect geometry** of its dome and the **ancient light** streaming through the oculus create an emotion that words can barely capture. This is more than a tourist stop; it is a profound encounter with history that will stay with you long after you return home.