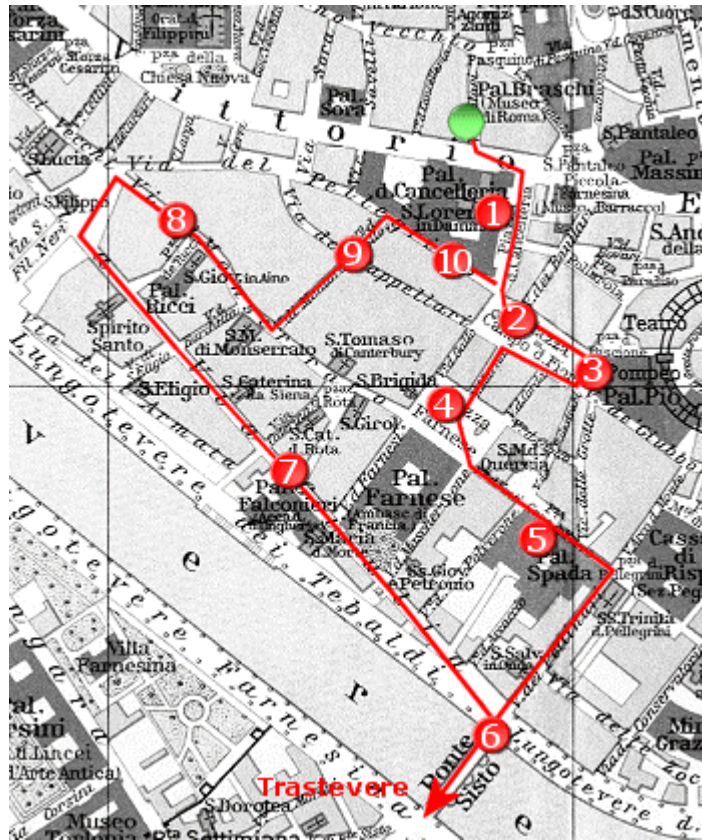


## TO THE RIVER AND TRASTEVERE



When you leave Palazzo Olivia turn right and cross Corso Vittorio Emanuele. You are now in Piazza della Cancelleria. The papal administration ran the affairs of the church from the Palazzo della Cancelleria, one of the masterpieces of the Early Renaissance's architecture.

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### **PALAZZO DELLA CANCELLERIA (1)**

The palazzo, a supreme example of the confident architecture of the Early Renaissance, was begun in 1485. It was financed partly with the gambling winnings of Cardinal Raffaele Riario. Roses, the emblem of the Riario family, adorn the vaults and capitals of the beautiful Doric courtyard.

The palazzo's interior was decorated after the Sack of Rome in 1527. Giorgio Vasari boasted that he had completed work on one enormous room in just 100 days; Michelangelo allegedly retorted: "It looks like it". Other Mannerist artists, Perin del Vaga and Francesco Salviati, frescoed the rooms of the cardinal in charge of the Papal Chancellery, the office that gave the palazzo its name when it was installed here by Pope Leo X.

On the right of the main entrance is the unobtrusive and rather quaint church of San Lorenzo in Damaso, founded by Pope Damasus who reigned 366-384. It was reconstructed in 1495 and although Bernini made alterations to the transept and apse in 1638, it was later restored to its 15th-century lines. Its surrounding porticoes housed libraries which held the first Papal Archives.

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On the other side, the square ends in Campo de' Fiori, one of the city's most entertaining places, with its colourful market.

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### **CAMPO DE' FIORI (2)**

The Campo de' Fiori (field of flowers), once a meadow, occupies the site of the open space facing the Theatre of Pompey. Cardinals and noblemen used to rub shoulders with fishmongers and foreigners in the piazza's market, making it one of the liveliest areas of medieval and Renaissance Rome. Today's market retains much of the traditional lively atmosphere. In the centre of the square is a statue of the philosopher Giordano Bruno, who was burnt at the stake for heresy on this spot in 1600. The hooded figure is a grim reminder of the executions that were held here.

The piazza was surrounded by inns for pilgrims and other travellers. Many of these were once owned by the successful 15th-century courtesan, Vannozza Cattanei, mistress of Pope Alexander VI Borgia. On the corner between the piazza and Via del Pellegrino you can see the Cattanei's shield, which she had decorated with her own coat of arms and those of her husband and her lover, the Borgia pope.

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In the adjacent Piazza del Biscione, you can see the Palazzo Pio Righetti, built over the ruined Theater of Pompey.

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### **PALAZZO PIO RIGHETTI (3)**

The vast 17th-century Palazzo Pio Righetti was built over the ruined Theatre of Pompey. The windows of the palazzo are decorated with lions and pine cones from the coat of arms of the Pio da Carpi family who lived here.

The curve of the Theatre of Pompey, completed in 55 BC, is followed by Via di Grotta Pinta. This was Rome's first permanent theatre built of stone and concrete. In places, for example the basement of the Pancrazio restaurant, you can see early examples of "opus reticulatum" - small square blocks of tufa (porous rock) set diagonally as a facing for a concrete wall.

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Continue on Campo de' Fiori and take Via dei Baullari to reach the wonderful Piazza Farnese, a quiet square almost untouched by the city's traffic, with its monumental Renaissance palazzo created by Michelangelo and other great artists.

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### **PALAZZO FARNESE (4)**

The prototype for many princely palaces, the imposing Palazzo Farnese was originally built for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (who became Pope Paul III in 1534). He commissioned the greatest artists to work on it, starting with Antonio da Sangallo the Younger as architect in 1517. Michelangelo, who took over after him, contributed the great cornice and central window of the main facade, and the third level of the courtyard.

Michelangelo had a plan for the Farnese gardens to be connected by a bridge to the Farnese home in Trastevere, Villa Farnesina. The elegant arch spanning Via Giulia belongs to this sadly unrealized scheme. The palazzo was completed in 1589, on a less ambitious scale, by Giacomo della Porta. It is now the home of the French Embassy, which moved in already in 1635.

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Then proceed to Piazza della Quercia, a small square of the old Rome, with Palazzo Spada and its picture gallery.

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### **PALAZZO CAPODIFERRO SPADA (5)**

This majestic palazzo, built around 1550 for Cardinal Capo di Ferro, has an elegant stuccoed courtyard and facade decorated with reliefs evoking Rome's glorious past.

Cardinal Bernardino Spada, who lived here in the 17th century with his brother Virginio (also a cardinal), hired Bernini and Borromini to work on the building. The brothers' whimsical delight in false perspectives resulted in a colonnaded gallery by Borromini that appears four times longer than it really is.

The cardinals also amassed a superb private collection of paintings. These are now displayed in the Galleria Spada together with some Classical statues and 18th-century furniture. The wide range of artists represented includes Rubens, Durer and Guido Reni. Works to look out for by lesser artists include "The visitation" by Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530), "Cain and Abel" by Giovanni Lanfranco (1582-1647) and "The Death of Dido" by Guercino (1591-1666).

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Turn right and reach the Lungotevere. You are now in front of the recently restored Ponte Sisto.

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### **PONTE SISTO (6)**

Named after Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere (reigned 1471-84), who commissioned it, this bridge was built by Baccio Pontelli to replace an ancient Roman bridge. The enterprising pope also built the Sistine Chapel, the Hospital of Santo Spirito and restored many churches and monuments.

The four-arch travertine bridge is characterized by an "occhialone" (circular opening) for flood outflow and by breakwaters on the northern side. Until the flood defense walls were built, Ponte Sisto's "occhialone" represented the alarm checkpoint. When the water started lapping it, it was the sign that the river was bursting its banks, penetrating the urban area through countless openings and filtering through the sewers in the lower dwellings.

Two plaques on the left side glorify Pope Sixtus and claim that the project was accomplished for 1475 Holy Year. The real objective was to avoid the dangerous crowding of pilgrims on Ponte S. Angelo, where in the 1450 Holy Year there had been many deaths.

The recently restored bridge is now reserved to pedestrians.

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Crossing the Tiber you can reach Trastevere. In our itinerary, however, we stay on this side of the river, walking by Via Giulia, one of the most beautiful streets in Rome. Take the pleasure of looking into the several courtyards hidden inside its noble buildings.

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### **VIA GIULIA (7)**

Laid out by Bramante for Pope Julius II in the early 16th century, Via Giulia was one of the first Renaissance streets to slice through Rome's jumble of medieval alleys. The original plan included new law courts in a central piazza, but this project was abandoned for lack of cash. The street now is dominated by antiques shops and furniture restorers. On summer evenings, hundreds of oil lamps light the street while cloisters and courtyards provide romantic settings for a special season of concerts.

Starting from Lungotevere dei Tebaldi, you will see ahead of you an archway spanning the road. This was the start of Michelangelo's unrealized project linking Palazzo Farnese and its gardens with the Villa Farnesina on the other side of the river.

Just before you reach the archway, you will see to your left the curious Fontana del Mascherone, in which an ancient grotesque mask and granite basin were combined to create a Baroque fountain.

Beyond the Farnese archway on the left is the lively Baroque facade of the church of Santa Maria dell'Orazione e Morte. A bit further along on the same side of the road stands Palazzo Falconieri, enlarged by Borromini in 1650. Note its two stone falcons glowering at each other across the width of the facade.

On the other side of the road you pass the yellowish facade of Santa Caterina da Siena, church of the Sienese colony in Rome, which has pretty 18th-century reliefs. The figures of Romulus and Remus symbolize Rome and Siena - there is a legend that the city of Siena was founded by the less fortunate of the twins.

Pass the short street that leads down to Sant'Eligio degli Orefici: the original design of this church was by Raphael, the cupola is attributed to Baldassarre Peruzzi. Then look at the frescoed facade of Palazzo Ricci, painted in the 16th century by Polidoro da Caravaggio, a follower of Raphael. Now you come to an area of half-demolished buildings around the ruined church of San Filippo Neri, called Vicolo della Moretta. If you look to the left down to the river, you can see Ponte Mazzini and the huge prison of Regina Coeli on the other side of the Tiber. Further on, facing the narrow Vicolo del Malpasso are the imposing prisons, the Carceri Nuove, built by Pope Innocent X Pamphilj in 1655. When first opened, they were a model of humane treatment of prisoners, but were replaced by Regina Coeli prison across the river at the end of the 19th century. The buildings now house offices of the Ministry of Justice and a small Museum of Crime.

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When you reach the small church of S. Filippo Neri, turn right in the small square. The buildings here once housed the papal prisons. Turn right once more and take Via di Monserrato, to start your way back home.

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### **VIA MONSERRATO (8)**

The street follows an ancient Roman track. In the past it was named Via Arenula, Via Regula, Via Recta: generic names used also for other straight streets. Then the name changed to Corte Savella, from the houses and the prisons managed by the Savelli family. It got its current name after the building of the church of S. Maria in Monserrato.

Via Monserrato is lined with churches and aristocratic buildings. To get its full flavour you have to get into the courtyards, full of atmosphere and quietness, where you can make nice discoveries...

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Turning left, you can walk by Via dei Cappellari.

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### **VIA DEI CAPPELLARI (9)**

This narrow, medieval street is a great place for watching furniture restorers and other artisans plying their crafts in the open air.

The street is spanned by the picturesque Arco di S. Margherita and keeps signs of the importance it had in the past, when it was the seat of the Tebaldeschi family: columns, coats of arms, sacred aedicules, fanciful stairs and courtyards...

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Proceed to Via del Pellegrino.

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### **VIA DEL PELLEGRINO (10)**

The street is part of the medieval path leading from the Tiber Island to Ponte S. Angelo. It got its name (Pilgrim Street) from the mass of pilgrims heading to St. Peter's and stopping at the many pubs and small shops opened here for them.

Via del Pellegrino was restructured by Pope Alexander VI in 1497, in the context of a general reorganization of the accesses to Castel S. Angelo.

At Nos. 64-67 you will see two painted facades. One of these buildings was the "Locanda dei tre re" (Three Kings Inn). The name of the adjacent Via del Bollo (Stamp Street) reminds the fiscal punching imposed to goldsmiths and silversmiths (who often evaded it...). On the corner with the Arco di S. Margherita you can admire a gorgeous stucco sacred aedicule, a real "procession machine" (1716).

Book and art shops abound here next to working artisans in the historic centre. Don't miss the mirror-lined alley near Campo de' Fiori.

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Then come back to Campo dei Fiori, where you can have a well-deserved rest and taste a good "aperitivo" in one of the coffee shops of the square.