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**Rome, the eternal city**

*Adapted from http://www.travelchannel.com*

The Eternal City celebrates its long history with monuments, churches and restored ruins that *offer a glimpse* into life during the days of the great Roman Empire. Here are a few essential attractions in Rome.

**Colosseum**

The Roman Colosseum is a testament to the architectural skills of the ancient Roman people and *offers insight* into the culture that celebrated the gladiator games at this huge entertainment arena. The first bloody fight ensued in A.D. 82, starting a tradition of battles between men and beasts in a public forum with crowds reaching 50,000. Outside of the Colosseum. To avoid lengthy lines, [order tickets online](http://www.ticketclic.it/gb/HTML/musei/colosseo.cfm) ahead of time -- they're good for 2 consecutive days and include admission to the nearby Forum and Palatine Hill.

**Vatican City**

Even though it's located in Rome, Vatican City has been an independent state since 1929 with its own flag, coins and stamps. It even has its own militia, the Swiss Guard, which protects this state, the Pope and the 800 full-time citizens and visiting residents. The first impressive site is St. Peter's Square itself designed by Bernini in the late 17th century. As long as you're dressed appropriately (no bare shoulders or shorts or skirts above the knee), you may enter St. Peter's Basilica and see Michelangelo's Pietá, a stunningly beautiful and sad sculpture. Continue up to the roof where you can take in the view of the large square and city beyond. Also contained in the Vatican's walls, the Vatican Museums hold Italian masterpieces, including Michelangelo's painted ceiling at the Sistine Chapel.

**Trevi Fountain**

There are various reasons for throwing 3 coins in the fountain at the marvelous Trevi, with benefits ranging from finding love to returning to the city. Once you've mastered your art of coin-throwing and wished for the appropriate outcome, take some time to explore this Baroque masterpiece showing the god Neptune riding in a shell-shaped chariot led by seahorses. And you can feel good about your charitable donation as the money (nearly $3,500 each day) collected from the fountain is used to support food programs for the city's poor.

**Spanish Steps**

The Spanish Steps may be the longest and widest staircase in all of Europe, but that's not what draws visitors to this popular tourist spot. A Barcaccia fountain bubbles at the foot of the steps while the Trinità dei Monti church rises above the crowds at the top of the steps. But the best spot is somewhere in between the 2: take a seat in the middle of the wide staircase and watch the city go by as beautiful people hurry into the nearby high-end shops, designer boutiques and restaurants.

Apapted from http://www.theguardian.com

