

36 Hours Rome



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FROM LEFT Maxxi is an ambitious contemporary art museum; gardens by the Barberini Palace, home of a gallery of ancient art; aperitivo time at ReD, a restaurant by a concert and event site.

By RACHEL DONADIO

ROME is the city that over-sleeps. Unlike other European cultural capitals, this glorious jumble of history and art changes slowly. But lately, Rome has welcomed some new sparkle. A futuristic museum in the historic center has added color to the city's architectural scene. Around town young chefs are experimenting with local ingredients to create new tastes. Even old palazzos have been given makeovers. After years of hitting snooze, this ancient city might just be waking up.

Friday

4 p.m.

1 Modern Curves

The Maxxi (Via Guido Reni, 4; 39-06-3996-7350; fondazionemaxxi.it), opened in April, is still the talk of Rome. Designed by Zaha Hadid, it is the city's most ambitious contemporary art museum, and offers playful views with its odd-angled ramps, hidden corners and oblique windows. And although still young, its permanent collection features works by a respectable range of contemporary artists, including Francesco Clemente, William Kentridge and Gerhard Richter.

7 p.m.

2 Architectural Aperitivo

For a modern aperitivo, glide over to

ReD (Via Pietro de Coubertin, 12, 16; 39-06-8069-1630; www.redrestaurant.roma.it), a trendy restaurant with a lively lounge bar that draws concertgoers and musicians alike. The lounge is situated on the sidewalk outside the Auditorium (auditorium.com), a multi-function complex, designed by Renzo Piano, which has become a cultural hub since opening in 2002. If it's fall, check out the Roma Europa Festival (romaeuropa.net), which brings music, dance and theater from around the world.

8:30 p.m.

3 Pasta Nouvelle

For a change from the usual spaghetti all'amatriciana that dominate Roman menus, head to the residential neighborhood of Prati where Settembrini (Via Settembrini, 27; 39-06-323-2617; ristorantesettembrini.it), a chic new restaurant, uses classic ingredients in novel ways. Mullet on a bed of vegetables (16 euros, about \$22 at \$1.33 to the euro), tender rabbit (12 euros) and a risotto with the deconstructed ingredients of eggplant Parmesan (14 euros) are standouts. Décor is minimal but warm and the outside tables on a broad boulevard are roomy.

11 p.m.

4 Fruit Scoops

Skip dessert and grab a cone at the Gelateria dei Gracchi (Via dei Gracchi, 272; 39-06-3216668) or Al Settimo Gelo (Via Vodice, 21a; 39-06-372-5567; alsettimogelo.it), two of the city's best gelaterias, in a city full of them. At Gracchi, the fruit and nut flavors taste fresh off the tree, and might just be worth the price of the plane ticket.

Saturday

10 a.m.

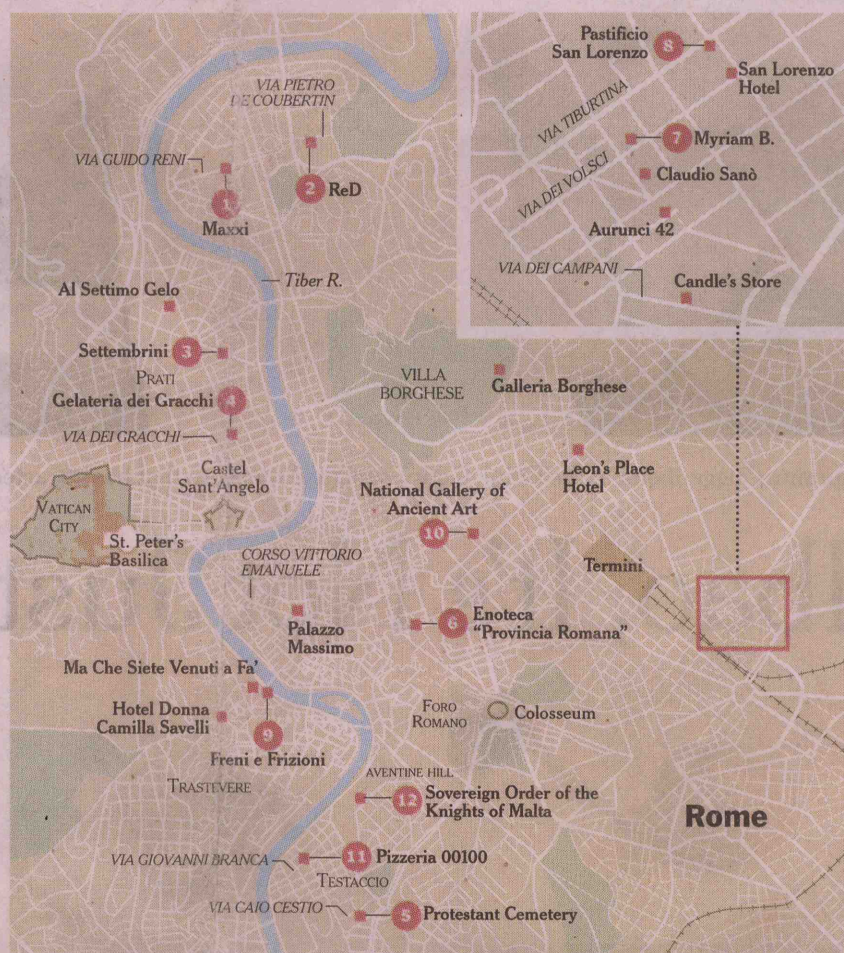
5 Resting Places

Like Père Lachaise in Paris, the Protestant Cemetery (Via Caio Cestio, 6; 39-06-574-1900; cemeteryrome.it) is one of Rome's most meditative and overlooked spots. The final resting spot of non-Catholics for centuries, the cemetery counts John Keats among its permanent residents — his tomb reads "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Besides romantics, there's often a steady stream of graying lefties, who pay tribute to Antonio Gramsci, the founder of the Italian Communist Party.

2 p.m.

6 Provincial Market

For great food, friendly service and low



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prices — and priceless views of Trajan's Column — head to the Enoteca "Provincia Romana" (Largo del Foro Traiano, 82-84; 39-06-6766-2424). The sleek new wine bar was started by Rome's province of Lazio to promote local products and wines. The meats and cheeses are excellent, as are its salads. Sit and enjoy the scene, or take a delicious pressed sandwich of spicy grilled eggplant with fresh mozzarella and basil (about 3.50 euros) for a picnic in the nearby Roman Forum.

4 p.m.

7 Made in Rome

Not all of Rome is set in stone. For a dose of neo-realism, stroll around San Lorenzo (madeinsanlorenzo.it), a former working-class district near the Termini station that's come alive with chic boutiques and workshops. Find handmade women's clothing and jewelry at Myriam B. (Via dei Volsci, 75; 39-06-4436-1305; myriamb.it). Claudio Sanò (Largo degli Osci 67/A; 39-06-4469-284; claudiosano.it) makes custom bags and other leather goods, and Candle's Store (Via dei Campani, 49; 39-06-446-4849;

candlestore.it) has artisanal candles.

8:30 p.m.

8 Creative Kitchen

A handful of restaurants specialize in what Italians call "creative cuisine," new takes on old standards. One of the newest is Pastificio San Lorenzo (Via Tiburtina, 196; 39-06-9727-3519; pastificiocerere.com), an upscale yet informal restaurant and wine bar that opened last year in a former pasta factory. Favorites include a breaded poached egg in a delicate Mornay sauce (10 euros), grilled tuna with a yogurt sauce (20 euros) and a roasted suckling pig with sugar-coated figs and blanched French beans (18 euros).

11 p.m.

9 Street Life

No night on the town would be complete without a stop in the once gritty, now hopping neighborhood of Trastevere. Cool bars include Freni e Frizioni (Via del Politeama, 4-6; 39-06-4549-7499; freniefrizioni.com), where you can drink while looking out on the Ti-

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ber. Or you can grab an artisanal beer at the pub around the corner, Ma Che Siete Venuti a Fa' (Via di Benedetta, 25; 39-380-507-4938; football-pub.com). If you prefer to stay in San Lorenzo instead, follow the party to Aurunci 42 (Via degli Aurunci, 46; 39-06-445-4425; arcoaurunci.it), a friendly bar in the Piazza dell'Immacolata, which becomes an open-air lounge on weekend nights.

Sunday

11 a.m.

10 Charm of the Bourgeoisie

From the Galleria Borghese to the Palazzo Massimo, Rome has a daunting array of boutique museums in varying degrees of repair. Just reopened after an extensive renovation is the National Gallery of Ancient Art of Barberini Palace (Via delle Quattro Fontane, 13; 39-06-482-4184; galleriaborghese.it). Its formidable collection, now reorganized on freshly painted walls, includes Caravaggio's "Judith and Holofernes," in which the biblical heroine winces slightly as she draws her blade.

1 p.m.

11 Pizza by the Slice

Last year, two ambitious young chefs, Stefano Callegari and Gabriele Gatti, took over a hole-in-the-wall in the Testaccio neighborhood and opened Pizzeria 00100 (Via Giovanni Branca, 88; 39-06-4341-9624; 00100pizza.com), named for the grade of semolina flour. The popular pizzeria specializes in "trappizzini" — triangular pieces of thick pizza bianca, which they fill with pillowy meatballs, tripe and other savory stuffings (from 3 euros).

2 p.m.

12 Key to the City

Amid the general chaos, the city has wonderful pockets of calm. Stroll up the quiet Aventine Hill to find the city's best Baroque joke: a keyhole at the headquarters of the Sovereign Order of the Knights of Malta (Piazza Cavalieri di Malta) that perfectly frames a view of St. Peter's Basilica. In the orange garden down the street, the view of the city stretching out beneath you is breathtaking. That is, after all, why you came.