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Rome (Italian: Roma), the 'Eternal City', is the capital and largest city of Italy and of the Lazio (Latium) region. It's the famed city of the Roman Empire, the Seven Hills, La Dolce Vita (sweet life), the Vatican City and Three Coins in the Fountain. Rome, as a millennium-long centre of power, culture and religion, having been the centre of one of the globe's greatest civilizations ever, has exerted a huge influence over the world in its circa 2500 years of existence. The Historic Center of the city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. With wonderful palaces, millennium-old churches and basilicas, grand romantic ruins, opulent monuments, ornate statues and graceful fountains, Rome has an immensely rich historical heritage and cosmopolitan atmosphere, making it one of Europe's and the world's most visited, famous, influential and beautiful capitals. Today, Rome has a growing nightlife scene and is also seen as a shopping heaven, being regarded as one of the fashion capitals of the world (some of Italy's oldest jewellery and clothing establishments were founded in the city). With so many sights and things to do, Rome can truly be classified a "global city". Situated on the River Tiber, between the Apennine Mountains and the Tyrrhenian Sea, the "Eternal City" was once the administrative center of the mighty Roman Empire, governing a vast region that stretched all the way from Britain to Mesopotamia. Today it remains the seat of the Italian government and home to numerous ministerial offices. Rome has 2.7 million inhabitants while the metropolitan area is home to around 4.5 million. Architecturally and culturally, Rome has some contrasts - you have areas with pompously huge majestic palaces, avenues and basilicas, which are then surrounded by tiny alleyways, little churches and old houses. The centre of Rome is mainly ancient, and modern buildings are usually concentrated in the suburbs, unlike Milan (where new and old architecture is combined both in the centre and the outskirts). You may also find yourself walking from a grand palace and tree-lined elegant boulevard, into a small and cramped Medieval-like street. Rome has a Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. In the winter months, daytime temperatures are usually pleasant and range from 10-15 °C, while nighttime temperatures tend to stay slightly above freezing. That being said, the occasional cold snap can cause temperatures to fall below freezing, and it is not unheard of for light flurries of snow to fall on occasion, though accumulation is rare, and major snowstorms are known to occur once every 20-25 years. Italians are very fond of their landmarks; in order to make them accessible to everyone one week a year there is no charge for admittance to all publicly owned landmarks and historical sites. This week, known as "La settimana dei beni culturali", typically occurs in mid-May and for those 7 to 10 days every landmark, archaeological site and museum belonging to government agencies (including the Quirinale presidential palace and gardens, the Colosseum and all of the ancient Forum) is accessible and free of charge. Also, government-owned museums and historical sites have free admission on the first Sunday of every month. rome travel guide travel guide rome 2016 rome guidebook 2016

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