ODYSSEY TRAVELLER

Discover Rome | Cultural and History Small Group Tour for Seniors

Recommended reading for your journey

01

Rome: The Biography of a City

Christopher Hibbert

This beautifully written, informative study is a portrait, a history and a superb guide book, capturing fully the seductive beauty and the many layered past of the Eternal City. It covers 3,000 years of history from the city's quasi-mythical origins, through the Etruscan kings, the opulent glory of classical Rome, the decadence and decay of the Middle Ages and the beauty and corruption of the Renaissance, to its time at the heart of Mussolini's fascist Italy. Exploring the city's streets and buildings, peopled with popes, gladiators, emperors, noblemen and peasants, this volume details the turbulent and dramatic history of Rome in all its depravity and grandeur.

02

SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome

Mary Beard

Ancient Rome matters. Its history of empire, conquest, cruelty and excess is something against which we still judge ourselves. Its myths and stories - from Romulus and Remus to the Rape of Lucretia - still strike a chord with us. And its debates about citizenship, security and the rights of the individual still influence our own debates on civil liberty today. SPQR is a new look at Roman history from one of the world's foremost classicists. It explores not only how Rome grew from an insignificant village in central Italy to a power that controlled territory from Spain to Syria, but also how the Romans thought about themselves and their achievements, and why they are still important to us. Covering 1,000 years of history, and casting fresh light on the basics of Roman culture from slavery to running water, as well as exploring democracy, migration, religious controversy, social mobility and exploitation in the larger context of the empire, this is a definitive history of ancient Rome. SPQR is the Romans' own abbreviation for their state: Senatus Populusque Romanus, 'the Senate and People of Rome'.

03

Veni, Vidi, Vici: Everything you ever wanted to know about the Romans but were afraid to ask

Peter Jones

The Romans left a long-lasting legacy and their influence can still be seen all around us - from our calendar and coins, to our language and laws - but how much do we really know about them? Help is at hand in the form of Veni, Vidi, Vici, which tells the remarkable, and often surprising, story of the Romans and the most enduring empire in history. Fusing a lively and entertaining narrative with rigorous research, Veni, Vidi, Vici breaks down each major period into a series of concise nuggets that provide a fascinating commentary on every aspect of the Roman world - from plebs to personalities, sauces to sexuality, games to gladiators, poets to punishments, mosaics to medicine and Catullus to Christianity. Through the twists and turns of his 1250-year itinerary, Peter Jones is a friendly and clear-thinking guide. In this book he has produced a beguiling and entertaining introduction to the Romans, one that vividly brings to life the people who helped create the world we live in today.

04

The Colosseum

Keith Hopkins

The Colosseum was Imperial Rome’s monument to warfare. Like a cathedral of death it towered over the city and invited its citizens, 50,000 at a time, to watch murderous gladiatorial games. It is now visited by two million visitors a year (Hitler was among them). Award winning classicist, Mary Beard with Keith Hopkins, tell the story of Rome’s greatest arena: how it was built; the gladiatorial and other games that were held there; the training of the gladiators; the audiences who revelled in the games, the emperors who staged them and the critics. And the strange after story - the Colosseum has been fort, store, church, and glue factory.

05

Invisible Romans: Prostitutes, outlaws, slaves, gladiators, ordinary men and women the Romans that history forgot

Robert C. Knapp

Robert Knapp seeks out the ordinary people who formed the fabric of everyday life in ancient Rome and the outlaws and pirates who lay beyond it. They are the housewives, prostitutes, freedmen, slaves, soldiers, and gladiators who lived commonplace lives and left almost no trace in history - until now. But their words are preserved in literature, letters, inscriptions and graffiti and their traces can be found in the histories, treatises, plays and poetry created by the elite. A world lost from view for two millennia is recreated through these, and other, tell-tale bits of evidence cast off by the visible mass of Roman history and culture. Invisible Romans reveals how everyday Romans sought to survive and thrive under the afflictions of disease, war, and violence, and to control their fates under powers that both oppressed and ignored them. Their lives - both familiar and foreign to ours today - are shown against the tumult of a great empire that shaped their worlds as it forged the wider world around them.

06

The First Ladies of Rome: The Women Behind the Caesars

Annelise Freisenbruch

Like their modern counterparts, the ’first ladies’ of Rome were moulded to meet the political requirements of their emperors, be they fathers, husbands, brothers or lovers. But the women proved to be liabilities as well as assets - Augustus’ daughter Julia was accused of affairs with at least five men, Claudius’ wife Messalina was a murderous tease who cuckolded and humiliated her elderly husband, while Fausta tried to seduce her own stepson and engineered his execution before boiled to death as a punishment. In The First Ladies of Rome Annelise Freisenbruch unveils the characters whose identities were to reverberate through the ages, from the virtuous consort, the sexually voracious schemer and the savvy political operator, to the flighty bluestocking, the religious icon and the romantic heroine. Using a rich spectrum of literary, artistic, archaeological and epigraphic evidence, this book uncovers for the first time the kaleidoscopic story of some of the most intriguing women in history, and the vivid and complex role of the empresses as political players on Rome’s great stage.

07

The Roman Forum

David Watkin

There are few more historic and evocative places in the world. Caesar was cremated there. Charles V and Mussolini rode by it in triumph. There Napoleon celebrated his festival of liberty. In this radical reappraisal David Watkin teaches us to see the Forum with new eyes and helps us to rediscover its rich history. This is as stimulating to the armchair traveller as it is useful as a guide to the Forum itself. ’With verve, authority and no little humour, Watkin tells the detailed and complex story of this great but mutilated landmark ... it is an almost impossible task, superbly done’ Peter Jones, BBC History Magazine ’In this sprightly volume ... the distinguished architectural historian David Watkin charts the shifting fortunes of the site ... he has an engagingly romantic feeling for the place... deploying a good deal of sharp wit, he reveals how the relatively recent obsession with recovering the Forum’s classical past has led to much unhappy destruction and much less scarcely happy invention’ Matthew Sturgis, Country Life

08

Ancient Rome: The Rise and Fall of an Empire

Simon Baker

This is the story of the greatest empire the world has ever known. Simon Baker charts the rise and fall of the world’s first superpower, focusing on six momentous turning points that shaped Roman history. Welcome to Rome as you’ve never seen it before - awesome and splendid, gritty and squalid. From the conquest of the Mediterranean beginning in the third century BC to the destruction of the Roman Empire at the hands of barbarian invaders

some seven centuries later, we discover the most critical episodes in Roman history: the spectacular collapse of the ’free’ republic, the birth of the age of the ’Caesars’, the violent suppression of the strongest rebellion against Roman power, and the bloody civil war that launched Christianity as a world religion. At the heart of this account are the dynamic, complex but flawed characters of some of the most powerful rulers in history: men such as Pompey the Great, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Nero and Constantine. Putting flesh on the bones of these distant, legendary figures, Simon Baker looks beyond the dusty, toga-clad caricatures and explores their real motivations and ambitions, intrigues and rivalries. The superb narrative, full of energy and imagination, is a brilliant distillation of the latest scholarship and a wonderfully evocative account of Ancient Rome.

09

The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy

Jacob Buckhards and Peter Murray

For nineteenth-century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt, the Italian Renaissance was nothing less than the beginning of the modern world - a world in which flourishing individualism and the competition for fame radically transformed science, the arts, and politics. In this landmark work he depicts the Italian city-states of Florence, Venice and Rome as providing the seeds of a new form of society, and traces the rise of the creative individual, from Dante to Michelangelo. A fascinating description of an era of cultural transition, this nineteenth-century masterpiece was to become the most influential interpretation of the Italian Renaissance, and anticipated ideas such as Nietzsche’s concept of the ’Ubermensch’ in its portrayal of an age of genius.

10

Art in Renaissance Italy

John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke

With a freshness and breadth of approach that sets the art in its context, this book explores why works were created and who commissioned the palaces, cathedrals, paintings, and sculptures. It covers Rome and Florence, Venice and the Veneto, Assisi, Siena, Milan, Pavia, Genoa, Padua, Mantua, Verona, Ferrara, Urbino, and Naples. Chapters are grouped into four chronological parts, allowing for a sustained examination of individual cities in different periods. "Contemporary Scene" boxes provide fascinating glimpses of daily life and "Contemporary Voice" boxes quote from painters and writers of the time. Innovative and scholarly, yet accessible and beautifully presented, this book is a definitive work on the Italian Renaissance. This revised edition contains around 200 new pictures and nearly all colour images.

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