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There's No Place Like Rome



Naughty or nice, there's something for everyone in Italy's cool capital

By Nick Boulos, 06/05/2009

Sensational shopping, classy culture and fantastico food. It's no wonder Hollywood A-listers like Jessica and Justin are heading to Rome. And it's set to become even more popular after becoming the backdrop to this year's blockbuster, *Angels & Demons*. Tom Hanks takes the lead in next month's follow up to *The Da Vinci Code*, but Rome is the real star. So whether you want to make like an angel or get all devilish, we've got it cracked.

Your culture fix

For angels: Visit the famous Trevi fountain after dark and you'll share it with the masses. Instead, visit at dawn. Yes, we know it's early - but you'll have it blissfully to yourself, and it's the perfect place to go with that special someone.



For demons: Stifle a giggle as you bypass the hapless fools waiting in the line for the Colosseum by getting your tickets at the nearby, queue-free ruins of the Roman Forum. And on the last Sunday of the month, the Vatican Museums waive their 14 euros (£12.50) entrance fee so you can gaze at Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel for nothing - naughty behaviour without the bad karma.

Your food fix

For angels: It's hard to be heavenly when it comes to eating in Rome. The pizzas may be thin, but they're still high in calories - but as Italy's main passion is food, see it as good manners to indulge. Be an angel where your wallet is concerned at Da Baffetto (Via del Governo Vecchio 114), an authentic pizzeria in the Centro Storico district. The mouthwatering Baffetto (topped with mozzarella, artichoke, spicy sausage and a fried egg) is a recession-friendly 8 euros (£7).

For demons: Give your purse an evil thrashing at Open Colonna (Scalinata di via Milano 9A), one of the city's slickest restaurants, and the latest project from chef Antonello Colonna, Italy's answer to Gordon Ramsay. Will

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Editor's Picks

Tough times call for hard-wearing fashion



Mix silk and leather for serious attitude

Beauty: Old make-up can ruin your looks



Your make-up could be giving you spots and wrinkles

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'We've got the MILF factor'



Five hot mums reveal their stay-young secrets

Travel: There's no place like Rome



There's something for everyone in Italy's cool capital

Smith and Angels & Demons director Ron Howard dined under its glass ceiling on melanzane alla Parmigiana - an aubergine and Parmesan dish.

Your retail fix

For angels: Milan may be the fashion capital of the world, but Rome also packs a Prada punch. But why go for labels when you can seek out more unique threads in the stylish boutiques along Via del Boschetto in the Monti district? This bohemian street also boasts galleries and quirky homeware stores, such as Archivia.



For demons: If you're feeling exceptionally sinful, splash your cash in the designer stores around Piazza di Spagna in Tridente, where you'll find Gucci and friends. The nearby Spanish Steps, Europe's most famous staircase dating back to 1723, is an ideal spot to show off your new purchases (and repent your spending sins)!

Your people fix

For angels: Sip espresso by day and Merlot by night at the art nouveau Bar Della Pace (Via Della Pace 3/7). Locals and their pet pooches spend hours at the alfresco tables set around its ivy-covered exterior.



For demons: Bar and restaurant Salotto 42 on Piazza di Pietra attracts a sexy young crowd. Spicy basil cocktails, Swedish-style tapas (it's owned by a Swedish model) and dishy Italian stallions keep it a hot, hot, hot place to hang out.

Your spa fix

Both angels and demons deserve pampering - and the idea of wallowing in a spa isn't new to Rome. The Baths Of Diocletian (Viale Enrico de Nicola 78), built in the third century and now a museum, once welcomed thousands to soak in its thermal waters. Now the exquisite spa in the nearby five-star Hotel Exedra (Exedra.boscolohotels.com)



fuses old and new. Soak in the baths inspired by ancient Rome before enjoying a treatment - perhaps a flat abdomen massage, 80 euros (£70) - and finish with a dip in the rooftop pool. Well, when in Rome...

Getting there: A three-night city break in a four-star hotel with breakfast and return flights from London Gatwick costs from around £483 at Lastminute.com.

Tell us about your favourite holiday hot spots in the UK and Ireland at hiddengems@fabulousmag.co.uk

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