

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CHA Ecclesiology and Spiritual Renewal Program

GENERAL

Do I need to know Italian to visit Rome?

No, many people speak English in tourist areas, but learning basic Italian phrases (e.g., "Grazie" for thank you) is helpful.

What's the currency in Rome?

The Euro (€). Credit cards are widely accepted, but carrying some cash is useful. There are several ATMs near the hotel.

Can I drink tap water in Rome?

Yes! Rome's tap water is safe, and you can refill bottles at public fountains. The public fountains called "nasoni" are the city's distinctive drinking fountains offering free, fresh water to visitors and are known for their cylindrical cast iron design with a curved spout resembling a nose.

What is the tipping culture in Rome?

Tipping is not mandatory but rounding up the bill or leaving 5–10% for excellent service is appreciated.

What should I wear in Rome?

See your participant and guest book for the attire guide to assist you in making decisions. In general, wear comfortable shoes for walking and modest clothing when visiting churches (cover shoulders and knees). Rome enjoys a mild Mediterranean climate, but it's best to pack layers, as temperatures can drop throughout the day especially in the evenings.

Is Rome safe for tourists?

Yes, but watch out for pickpockets, especially in crowded areas like Termini Station, the Colosseum, and public transport. Be mindful of your surroundings and avoid distractions like digital devices as much as possible. Keep your belongings secure and be cautious of scams. Keep an eye on your surroundings and avoid displaying expensive items.

What are common tourist scams to avoid?

- Fake petitions & friendship bracelets or flowers.
- Overpriced taxis without meters.
- Fake "helpful" ATM assistants.
- Skip the line tickets offered by street vendors.

Do I need an adapter for my electronics?

Yes, Italy uses Type F/L plugs (230V, 50Hz). Get a universal adapter.

If I have an emergency, how do I contact CHA staff?

Diarmuid can be reached at 503-467-8443 and Lori can be reached at 217-415-9921. The hotel front desk can be reached at +39 06-47081.

TRAVEL

Do I need a visa to visit Rome from the U.S.?

No, U.S. citizens do not need a visa for stays up to 90 days for tourism, business, or family visits. Starting in 2025, the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) will require U.S. travelers to apply for travel authorization before visiting. The ETIAS has not yet been launched. If it happens prior to the program, CHA will inform you immediately.

What documents do I need to enter Italy?

- A passport valid for at least three months beyond your planned departure from the Schengen Area.
- An ETIAS authorization which is set to start in 2025 but has not yet been launched.
- It is recommended that you register with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>.

What will be the transportation from the airport to the hotel?

CHA will coordinate with Fourth Dimension Italy to provide a car and driver to meet you at the luggage claim. If your system is coordinating this travel, please tell Lori at lashmore-rupppel@chasua.org.

If my travel plans change, who do I contact?

If you travel plans change prior to May 5, contact Paula Bommarito at pbommarito@chausa.org. If you travel plans change after May 5, contact Fourth Dimension Italy at +39 335 6413283.

If I arrive at the airport and cannot find my driver, who should I contact?

If you are unable to find your driver, contact Fourth Dimension Italy at +39 335 6413283.

What's the best way to get around Rome?

- All transportation related to the program will be planned unless otherwise noted (after the tentative Papal Audience on Wednesday morning you will need to coordinate your own travel back to the Westin).
- Walking: Many attractions are close to each other.
- Metro & Buses: Cheap (€1.50 per ticket), but can be crowded.
- Taxis: Use official taxis to avoid scams.
- Scooters & Bikes: Available but recommended for experienced riders due to traffic.

PROGRAM

When does the program start and conclude?

The program begins at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 11 and concludes with lunch at noon on Friday, May 16.

When will participants and guests have free time during the program?

- On Monday afternoon, participants and guests will have time prior to leaving for dinner at Al Ceppo.
- Tuesday is a good day for a dinner reservation after our return from Assisi. We will likely arrive back to Rome by 8 p.m.
- Following the Papal Audience on Wednesday afternoon, participants and guests will have a few hours for lunch and exploration of Vatican City. We will visit St. Peter's Basilica on Thursday morning, so we suggest exploring other areas on Wednesday.
- Following the dicastery meetings on Thursday, there will be some time prior to our dinner at Casina Valadier.
- After we conclude on Friday afternoon, Fourth Dimension Italy will offer optional group tours. For more information, contact Lori at lashmore-ruppel@chausa.org.

When will participants be engaged in programming, and registered guests be on their own?

- On Monday morning
- On Wednesday afternoon
- On Thursday following liturgy at St. Peter's Basilica

Who can I contact regarding additional tours or pre/post-vacation plans?

CHA works with a travel company to plan the program: Fourth Dimension Italy. Representatives will be present throughout the program to assist with optional tours, making dinner reservations, and schedule local travel. Their website can be found here—<https://www.fditaly.com/>—and our direct contact is Rossana Ripicini, Travel and Event Coordinator. Her email is rossana@fditaly.com. If you contact Rossana directly, tell her you are with the CHA Ecclesiology and Spiritual Renewal Program.

HOTEL

What is the contact information for the hotel?

The Westin Excelsior, Rome, is at Via Vittorio Veneto 125, Rome, Italy, 00187, and can be reached at +39 06-47081. For more information regarding the hotel, visit its website at <https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/romwi-the-westin-excelsior-rome/overview/>.

What time is the check-in and check-out time?

Check-in starts from 3 p.m. and check-out is at 12 p.m.

Do you accommodate early check-in/late check-out?

We can only guarantee early check-ins for rooms reserved the prior night at full rate. We will do our best to accommodate late checkout requests, subject to availability and not guaranteed.

What is the hotel voltage?

The hotel voltage is 220 V. Please make sure to check the voltage of your equipment before usage.

Does the hotel provide adaptors or converters?

Our concierge may provide guests with adapters (subject to availability), but no converters are available. Please contact the concierge desk should need any.

Does the hotel have safe deposit boxes?

For your convenience, there is an electronic safe box in all rooms with a personal-digit code. A safe deposit box is also available at the front desk.

Does the hotel have a business center?

Our business center is at your complete disposal 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

What does the hotel Internet cost?

The entire hotel is equipped with complimentary low-band Wi-Fi access for all our guests. Premium Wi-Fi is available at a daily charge of Euro 12 per 24 hours.

What are the laundry service hours at the hotel?

The laundry is available to all guests from Monday to Saturday: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Sunday: 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Does the hotel have a fitness center/Spa/pool?

The hotel is equipped with a Westin WORKOUT® Fitness Studio with Technogym facilities, which are accessible 24/7 with a room key and complimentary to all guests. It also has a small indoor pool, sauna, and massage center.

Does the hotel have hairdryer?

All rooms are equipped with hairdryers.

Do all hotel rooms have air conditioning?

All rooms are equipped with air conditioning.

Does the hotel provide guests with boiler, coffee makers or iron boards?

- Iron/Iron board (can be requested via service express and delivered, upon availability, for the time to iron your garments).
- Water Boilers/Coffee makers: need to be requested in advance and will be delivered upon availability.

What attractions are near the hotel?

- Pantheon: Marvel at the architectural wonder of the Pantheon.
- Fontana di Trevi: Toss a coin into the iconic Trevi Fountain.
- Galleria Borghese: Visit the art museum and gardens of Galleria Borghese.
- Spanish Steps: Climb the iconic landmark to take in stunning views.

What are some local restaurants within walking distance?

There are some restaurants in the area but there are others nearby.

- Mirabelle – 14 Via di Porta Pinciana (5-minute walk)
- Carpaccio Beef – 9 Via Marche (2-minute walk)
- San Marco Pizzeria – 38/D Via Sardegna (6-minute walk)
- Vladimiro – 37 Via Aurora (2-minute walk)
- Girarrosto Fiorentino – 46 Via Sicilia (2-minute walk)
- Girarrosto Toscano – 29 Via Campania (4-minute walk)
- Piccolo Mondo – 39 Via Aurora (3-minute walk)
- Cesarina – 109 Via Piemonte (6-minute walk)
- Saponi Sardi – 79 Via Piemonte (6-minute walk)
- Il Boncompagni – 83 Via Boncompagni (4-minute walk)



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