In the heart of Italy, just below Tuscany is Lazio, the center of Italian political life, Catholic world center, and a top tourist destination for its innumerable monuments of the Roman and Etruscan civilizations. Apart from the area of Rome, the rest of the territory is mostly flat plains and rolling hills, with mountains in the area of Rieti. Being a coastal region, the waterfront cities of Lazio enjoy a typical Mediterranean climate consisting of mild winters, and hot summers. Further inland, winters are rigid and summers warm, with rain throughout the mountains and hill areas in the spring.

From being the birthplace of the Roman Empire, Lazio is an epicenter of fine art, food, wine, and most importantly, ancient history. Lazio, with its many wonders is one of the top tourism destinations of Europe. Whether you’re interested in the awe-inspiring countryside or distinguished cities like Rome, Lazio is the ideal vacation destination for those looking to travel through some of the world's greatest history.
TOURS AND ACTIVITIES

Bicycle Tours: Bike the Roman countryside, and take in the ancient sites, or stay in town and explore Villa Borghese, the most famous city park for walking or cycling. It represents an unparalleled experience between art, containing the Borghese Gallery, and the nature surrounding it, including lakes and ancient trees.

Sailing, Windsurfing, and Fishing: Lago di Bolsena (Lake Bolsena) is where you’ll find a plethora of nautical things to do, including:
- Scuba diving: A must, both for experts and beginners—you can not only admire the landscape, but you can also swim through submerged antique ruins of these fascinating waters. Please note, though diving is permitted, you’ll need to bring your own equipment.
- Boating: Looking to leisurely sail the fine waters of Lake Bolsena? This vast crater made lake offers plenty of boat tours leaving around the clock.
- Fishing: The local towns take great care to preserve the lake and control all other activities so that fish stocks flourish. You will need a permit to fish on the lake and from the shore.
- Windsurfing: If you’re looking for a rush, windsurfing is ideal on Lake Bolsena.

Walking Paths: Discover the Regional Natural Park of Bracciano-Martignano, where the natural surroundings are the perfect breeding grounds for bird watching, with many species of bird visible year-round.

Thermal springs: Lazio is also full of spas, whose history is bound to the several thermal water springs with histories dating back to the Roman Empire. Built by Romans, these sumptuous thermal baths can still be admired for their vestiges around the territory. Visit Terme di Caracalla in the heart of Rome, Tivoli just north-east of Rome, or the natural hot springs of Bullicame, known as Terme dei Papi (Spa of the Popes). If you’re looking for a more rural and scenic spa experience, visit the hot sulfurous pools at Bagnaccio that sit in the heart of the countryside.

Food Specialities

**Bucatini all'amatriciana:** A pasta dish made with bucatini spaghetti, and a meat sauce made with bacon, this hearty Italian favorite is enjoyable for the whole family.

**Spaghetti alla carbonara:** A lighter pasta dish from Rome, spaghetti alla carbonara is made with eggs, cheese, bacon, and black pepper.

**Rigatoni alla Pagliata:** This is a pasta dish for true Italian cuisine gastronomes. Made from the intestines of a calf, this dish is usually served in the traditional Roman style in which pajate (intestines) are stewed in a typical tomato sauce and served with rigatoni.

**Abbacchio al forno:** As with many Italian dishes, this dish thrives on simplicity, and very few ingredients. Few dishes are quite as Roman as this pan-roasted lamb. Cooked with white wine, rosemary, olive oil, and garlic, this dish can sometimes be cooked with cubed roasting potatoes, or alla cacciatora (lamb with an anchovy and rosemary sauce).

**Saltimbocca:** A dishes name that literally translates to, jumps in the mouth, Saltimbocca Roman-style consists of veal, prosciutto or ham, and sage, rolled-up and cooked in Marsala and butter.

**Carciofi alla Giudia:** It’s name translated to, Jewish-style artichokes, is among the best-known dishes of Roman-Jewish cuisine. The recipe is essentially a deep-fried artichoke, originating in the Jewish community of Rome.
PLACES TO VISIT

Rome: Roma is the capital city of Italy, and is Italy’s largest and most populous city. A culmination of over two and a half thousand years of history, and once the largest city in the world, Rome is a treasure trove of must sees while on vacation. From Vatican City, to coliseums, ancient theaters, baths, and ruins, Rome is the third most-visited tourist destination in the European Union. For more information, see our guide to Rome.

Castelli Romani: Escape the city and head to wine country. The Castelli Romani (Castles of Rome), are just southeast of Rome, and are a collection of wine-producing hill-towns. These small towns and villages are scattered throughout the wooded slopes of the Colli Albani (Alban Hills), an area of volcanic-made landscape perfect for the product of great reds, rosés, and white wines. The towns of Castelli Romani include:

Frascati: Frascati It’s the most well known of the Castelli Romani, and the most visited. The town is famous for its white wine, and is a popular destination for Romans looking for fresh air, good food and drink, and a pleasant day out. The most imposing building in Frascati is the grand Villa Aldobrandini, with gardens that are open to the public.

Castel Gandolfo: It is the summer residence of the Pope— an attractive hill-town, above Lake Albano, dominated by the Papal Palace and by the extensive gardens. Though, there isn’t much to see in this relaxing quaint town, it’s a pleasant spot to spend a few relaxing hours.

Genzano: It is above the crater of Lake Nemi and has a great main shopping street. Behind the church of S. Maria della Cima, uphill from the centre, is a belvedere with views over the lake. Genzano’s grandest building is a ducal palace, Palazzo Sforza Cesarini.

Albano Laziale: On a steep slope leading up to the Lake Albano crater, Albano’s Roman ruins include a grass-covered arena, bits of fortified wall and town gates, and the ruined Baths of Caracalla that have been converted into a church.

Ariccia: Once a town associated with Greek Gods, Diana and Virbius, Ariccia in modern times is famous throughout the region for its porchetta (roast pork)— a pork that is slow roasted in herbs and wild fennel; and its wines. The small town’s greatest sight is the seventeenth-century Palazzo Chigi, designed by Bernini for Pope Alexander VII. A grand Baroque palace, it dominates its attractive piazza. The extravagant period interior is open to the public.

Velletri: Velletri, twenty-five miles from Rome, has a Camellia Festival every spring in March, with displays, sales, and guided tours of local gardens. The town also has an archaeological museum with exhibits dating back as far as the Iron Age.
Cerveteri: The Etruscan Necropolis at Cerveteri is a uniquely haunting archaeological site. Built between the seventh and the third centuries BC, the city is still not fully excavated, though there are a remarkable number of stone tombs lining little streets. This is easily a place to spend several hours exploring.

Tivoli: It is world-famous for its villas and sulfur baths. Villa d’Este is known for its water system and the architecture of its gardens, including the fountains. The garden is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in recognition of its significance in the history of garden design. Villa Adriana is an enormous complex with underground service passages big enough for vehicles, and it incorporates lakes, fountains, libraries, baths, temples and gardens. The area covered is staggering, and highly confusing even when armed with a map.

MUST SEES

The Pontine Islands: A hidden gem for international tourists, the Isole Pontine (Pontine Islands) are an archipelago (group of islands) off the Italian coast south of Rome. With its historical roots dating back to Roman and pre-Roman times, the islands boast a number of ruins not to be missed. Ponza is the main tourist destination, and is hugely popular with water-lovers; the island offers superb swimming opportunities, especially for those who hire boats.

Sperlonga: A beautiful seaside town south of Rome, Sperlonga is not to be missed. With unbelievably clean beaches, ruins in the Grotto of Tiberius, whitewashed houses clustered together on a steep headland, and a labyrinth of streets and stairways that bring you to unexpected terraces above the sea, this small and charming town is sure to deliver a gratifying experience.
Terracina: Heading south of the Lazio region, between Rome and Naples, you will find Terracina, a seaside resort town, home to the site of a major temple to Jupiter, and sandy beaches.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Marino Wine Festival: Sagra dell’Uva (The Marino Wine Festival) is typically held on the first Sunday of October. This often boisterous grape event is held annually on the first Sunday of October. The event includes a procession, music, and period costumes. The climax of this event occurs when the ‘Fountain of the Four Moors,’ in the center of town gushes sweet white wine which is distributed freely amongst the crowd. Additionally, this is a time when the local cellars open their doors and offer treats paired with wine.

La Corsa degli Ussari: In the town of Ronciglione you’ll find a beautiful blend of Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque architecture in a compact space. If you’re visiting during Carnival in February, this is the place to be, especially for their main event. Initiated in 1465 by Pope Paul III Farnese, come and cheer on the horses as they gallop through the streets, rider-less.

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