

Ciao, Roma! How We Survived a Week of Ancient Ruins and Endless Pasta

The anticipation had been building for months, and it finally became real the moment we gathered at Dar Es Salaam Airport, ready to swap our usual routines for a week of pure Italian culture. Boarding our flight to Rome Fiumicino, the energy was electric, fueled by a collective lack of sleep and the shared excitement of an international adventure. After a quick stopover in Ethiopia and a long flight, we finally touched down in the Eternal City, retrieved our mountains of checked luggage, and headed straight to our hotel. While checking into our rooms and sorting out who got which bed caused the usual chaotic arguments, we managed to head out for a quick first look at the city before crashing after our first official dinner in Italy.

Sunday: Straight Off the Flight to Wishes and Walks

Our flight landed first thing in the morning, and instead of letting us sleep, we were thrown straight into a massive walking tour of Rome's most iconic streets. Running on pure adrenaline and airport snacks, we made it to the Trevi Fountain, where we all crowded around to toss our coins over our shoulders and make our wishes. By the time we checked into our hotel and finally got our room allocations later that afternoon, most of us were completely dead on our feet, but we still managed to inhale a massive Italian dinner before passing out.

Monday: Papal Vibes and Masterpieces

Monday was all about exploring the breathtaking world of the Vatican Museums. Walking through the endless galleries was stunning, but nothing quite prepared us for the moment we stepped into the Sistine Chapel and looked up at Michelangelo's masterpieces, leaving the entire group temporarily speechless. Afterward, we explored the massive scale of St. Peter's Basilica and took about a million group photos out in the spectacular square.

Tuesday: Futuristic Architecture and Freedom

We took a break from ancient history to visit the ultra-modern MAXXI Museum, designed by Zaha Hadid. The building looked like a futuristic labyrinth with its twisting,

fluid walls, making it the absolute perfect backdrop for our aesthetic photos. The best part of the day, however, was the afternoon free time, where we split into groups to explore local cafes, hunt down snacks, and inevitably get slightly lost in the winding side streets.

Wednesday: The Florence Sprint

Bright and early, we boarded a train for an unforgettable day trip to Florence. We did a whirlwind tour of the world-renowned Uffizi Gallery to see legendary Renaissance art up close, followed by a beautiful walk through the sprawling Boboli Gardens. By the time we caught the evening train back to Rome, our legs were completely dead, but our camera rolls were entirely full of stunning panoramic city views.





Thursday: Gladiator Mode and Perfect Pizza

Thursday brought us face-to-face with the ultimate icon of the trip: heading inside the actual Colosseum with an amazing tour guide who was super fun to converse with. Standing where gladiators used to fight thousands of years ago was completely surreal and easily a favorite moment for everyone. A bonus was also getting to see the coliseum at night with it's beautiful lights on-such a beautiful view! We celebrated surviving the ancient arena by tracking down some of the best authentic Italian pizza we've ever tasted, followed by a heavy dose of gelato.





Friday: UN Missions and Retail Therapy

We started the morning feeling incredibly professional with a visit to the FAO United Nations Headquarters, giving us a fascinating inside look at global diplomacy. But the real excitement came immediately afterward: a massive trip to the mall. We were given tons of free time to shop, hunt down Italian chocolates, and spend way too much money, spent the evening laughing over our purchases.



Saturday to Sunday: Open-Tops and Heading Home

For our final day in Rome, we kept things relaxed by jumping on a Hop-On Hop-Off bus tour, cruising past all our favorite landmarks one last time from the top deck. Afterward, it was a mad dash back to the hotel grab our bags and head to the airport for the long journey back. By Sunday at 11:30 a.m., we finally touched down in Tanzania—exhausted, carrying way too many souvenirs, and missing the pizza already.

Honestly, spending a week navigating a foreign country, surviving massive walking tours, and sharing hotel rooms meant we had no choice but to become incredibly close, and we came back as one tight-knit family. A huge thank you to everyone for making it the trip of a lifetime, for the endless laughs, and for ensuring that the memories (and the inside jokes) will last much longer than our leg fatigue!

