

## Classics Visit to Rome 2017

Being able to experience Rome on this trip was incredible. It allowed us to not only see all the most popular tourist attractions in Rome - the Colosseum, the Sistine Chapel, (and even just the quaint Italian alleyways that make up the city), but also some sights we had not previously heard of, which we will now never forget.



The Trevi Fountain is one of the most famous fountains in the world and for good reason - upon entering the square where it was located, we were exposed to the majestic structure of stone sculptures rising up above clear blue water. Dramatically lit up at night as it was the first time we visited, there was an almost ethereal air. Crowds of tourists teemed around the huge fountain, desperate to get closer to the water, us amongst them, and we did manage to get right up to the fountain and even throw coins over our right shoulders into the water, as is tradition. All in all, it was quite magical, especially for our first evening in Rome, and it set a very high bar for the rest of our trip.

We however, were at no point disappointed. St. Peter's Basilica was, without a shadow of a doubt one of the most impressive sights I have ever seen. The church has cavernous domed ceilings, with almost impossibly intricate carvings and paintings covering it, and what at first appear to be vast wall-to-ceiling paintings, are actually mosaics, somehow making it even more beautiful.

We then went on to climb to the top of the Castel Sant'Angelo, giving us the very romantic view out over the River Tiber and much of Rome; it allowed us to actually appreciate where we were, and the beauty of this city.

Another highlight of the trip was visiting the underground catacombs in San Callisto, just outside Rome. Here we followed our hilariously entertaining tour-guide down into the dark labyrinth that was the catacombs, and were told tales of persecution, martyrdom and the strength of human will - it was quite sobering and surprisingly emotional for some of us.

Visiting the Piazza Navona however, was probably the best evening of the trip. Being able to wander around the large cobbled square, lined with small cafés, gelato in hand, and watching the array of street performers (from singers to flamethrowers), really just soaking in the Italian atmosphere was quite honestly, lovely.

There is no doubt that school visits like this have great educational benefit: you are able to visualise the places you have spent months learning about, seeing the sights in real life greatly aids memory and comprehension, and you can genuinely appreciate the history and heritage the culture you study is steeped in. But more than this, it brings the subject to life in a way not replicable in any classroom and also happens to be great fun in the process!



**Ananya, Year 13**