BABYCCINO KIDS blog
daily inspiration for the modern family

WEEKEND GETAWAY: ROME

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Rome is one of my favorite European capitals. When I visited I was so impressed that so much history, from the Romans to the Renaissance and turbulent 19th century, can be found on a relatively small scale. But how easy is it to explore all this history with the whole family? Sarah Petrucci, a true Roman and the owner of the newly opened toy boutique Il Pesciolino Rosso, was kind enough to write down her recommendations for a trip to Rome with familia!

Rome must be one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Maybe because of the warm light so unique to this city which makes its palazzi in hues of gold and terracotta glow at sunset. Perhaps it has to do with the beauty of its flowering balconies and rooftops or the regal stance of the pine and sycamore trees that line the river and fill the parks. Of course it could be the abundance of wealth in monuments and churches, important ruins and treasures. And to top it off, that balmy climate, so mellow in each season giving a romantic feeling you can?t get enough of as you walk the cobblestone streets

and listen to the sweet sounds of Roma. Here are some ideas for a weekend in Rome...

SEE:
CASTEL S. ANGELO - Castel Sant?Angelo has ramps and secret passages, weapons and artillery, frescoes and even papal bedchambers. Be sure to visit the terrace with amazing views of Rome at the top. The covered passage (passetto) is a battlement wall which connects it to St. Peter?s and served as an escape route for the Pope when he was under siege.

THE COLISEUM - Symbol of Rome with its gladiator games and wild animal hunts, the arena featured seating for 50,000 spectators. At times it was filled with water so that naval battles could be held. It is, of course, the best attraction in Rome.

ST. PETER?S DOME - Climbing the Cupola? There are 320 steps to the top of the dome, if you?re up for a strenuous walk. By taking the elevator, you can see the view into the basilica from inside the dome while standing amidst the beautiful mosaics that line the walls. The narrow steps that wind around the elevator reach the roof and offer outstanding views of the square and all of Rome.

PANTHEON - The Pantheon's huge dome has a large opening which is the temple?s only source of natural light. It is 27 feet in diameter and open to the sky (the floor is gently sloped to allow for runoff of rainwater). Its extremely thick walls, 16 huge columns and gigantic bronze doors strike an impression on visitors as a reminder of the great Roman empire.

PLAY:
VILLA BORGHESE - The second largest public park in Rome, it was once residence to the Borghese family. With its fountains, gardens, forests, historical buildings and museums, it has an almost fairy tale feel to it. There are many attractions for children, such as pony rides, bicycle rental and four-seat cycling with assisted pedalling near the CASINA DI RAFFAELLO. This is a magical daycare ? a workshop where children can play and are free to use their imagination. At the GIARDINO DEL LAGO, a pond with classic temple in the middle and exotic vegetation all around, you can rent a small row boat. There is a movie theatre for children, the CINEMA DEI PICCOLI and BIOPARCO, a zoo where children can see many animals and learn about habitats and animal conservation. (there?s also a self-service restaurant ideal for children). Be sure to ride or walk to the Pincio above Piazza del Popolo where there is a magnificent view of Rome.

EXPLORA MUSEUM - Explora is a customized town for children, based on the principle of learning by doing. The Museum gives children the opportunity to have fun in a stimulating environment while touching, testing and playing. Workshops and temporary exhibitions are all ?hands-on? experiences. Children enter pint-sized scenes of everyday life where they can shop at a supermarket, purchase stamps at a post office, play in a television studio or climb aboard a fire engine. They can even enter a multimedia room where energy is produced by air, waves or light.

TECHNOTOWN VILLA TORLONIA - A medieval villa has been restored to entertain children from 8-17 in an area dedicated to nature and technology. It?s located on the grounds of the beautiful Villa Torlonia park, where there is a neo-classic villa, now museum, which was once the summer home for Mussolini. There are interactive games with special effects and interactive floors such as a time machine to discover ancient parts of Rome in which two teams compete, scenes are shown on 3 screens, and a virtual glove and glasses are worn. In all, there are 8 rooms containing sophisticated technology and educational games to enjoy in a fun, creative way. Also worth a visit while in the park is the Casina delle Civette, for its Swiss lodge look and stained glass windows. Enjoy a bite to eat at the adjacent restaurant, la Limonaia.

GIANICOLO HILL - Every day on Gianicolo hill, a cannon blast marks the noon hour. The cannon is located just below one of the largest and most panoramic terraces of the city, the piazza dedicated to Giuseppe Garibaldi. Also worth seeing for children is the special outdoor puppet theatre which puts on shows daily. (free of charge, but an tip is appreciated)

EAT:
GUSTO - At Gusto, the gastronomic experience equals quality in its dishes and service but also a moment to savour in slow life. Taste is shown in its interior design, music, art and emporium. Gusto is a model for concept food, located in Piazza Augusto Imperatore, an important historical area of Rome, facing ancient ruins. It includes a restaurant, pizzeria, wine bar and shop, cheese bar, seafood and vegetable restaurant as well as a bookshop and emporium. You can eat indoors in the international setting or outdoors under the arcade by Piacentini with views of the piazza and the Ara Pacis Museum.

GELATERIA VENCHI - With a motto that declares, ?Once you taste it, you?ll understand,? you?ve just got to try it. Superb ice cream that will make you want more. Use of simple genuine elements: milk, fresh cream, sugar and fibers along with prime ingredients such as chocolate, nuts, pistachios and fresh fruits. The result is ice cream which is genuine, rich in taste and all Italian, with particular care for nutritional values, manufacturing procedures and respect for the land. Flavors range from traditional Venchi classics for chocolate and cream lovers to fresh seasonal fruits, granite and fruit popsicles in summertime.

Antica Enoteca della Croce - Ever popular with locals, artists and shoppers for a drink or a meal, the Antica Enoteca has been around since 1842. You can sample wines, eat tasty dishes from the buffet served on the polished wood and brass bar or choose something from the restaurant menu. In warmer months there are tables set up outside.

LA BUVETTE -This elegant tea room/snack bar/restaurant has the look and feel of an old cafè with its tasteful surroundings and professional service. The chef suggests a traditional Italian and French menu. Hand-made pasta and prime ingredients make up first and second courses while the desserts are all homemade with the perfect mix of chocolate, fruits and cream. In the morning you can find an excellent breakfast buffet and at 5p.m. tea and cakes.

SHOP:
Il PESCIOLINO ROSSO - The shop marks the return of toys which are hand-crafted traditional treasures. Carefully made with natural colours and non-toxic materials, and chosen to stimulate the curiosity and creativity of children, these toys

also help parents discover the pleasure of playtime in which the toy becomes an ideal companion for travel and life.

There are books by many Italian editors which include texts by important children?s authors while the toys come from many different countries including Japan, United States (Manhattan Toy) and Scandinavian countries. They are made out of natural materials, in fabric, crochet work and wood with a special care for design. Close attention has been dedicated to promoting the child?s educational and recreational development by respecting the area where the toys have been made. Many of these companies produce their line in the Far East where they have chosen to follow local traditions.
Upon request, children?s bedrooms are designed with custom-made furnishings.

***BONPOINT** - Bonpoint, an exclusive French line of clothing from age zero to sixteen is haute couture for the young. Fabrics are highest quality cottons and linens. The designs are not trendy, but give a bit of a modern edge to otherwise classic designs. Piazza S. Lorenzo in Lucina*

***PINCO PALLINO** - Pinco Pallino?s fashionable address is next to Tiffany?s on Via del Babuino. Designers and owners, Imelda and Stefano Cavalleri export their unique line of children?s fashion worldwide. With stores in Asia, the Middle East and Europe, they feature whimsical designs as well as classic and contemporary cuts and cater to the young globe trotter with a princely wallet.*

***METTIMI GIU** - Near the Spanish steps, this shop has casual and sporty clothes for newborns to 15-year olds and their mothers. It sells nice sweatshirts, jackets, jerseys and jeans in a variety of fun brands including Oilily. Via Dei Due Macelli 59*

***CARTONNAGE LEGATORIA DELL?ORSO** - Handcrafted creations in which the client is free to choose the type of paper, ribbons and canvas which come from different parts of the world, often handmade with natural colors or recycled. They can be used to create objects, invitations, albums, books, boxes or place cards for special events. Federica, with her sweet smile and gentle hands creates precious handicrafts of extreme precision. Julia Roberts shopped here as she filmed Eat, Pray and Love next door. Via dell?Orso, 39*

STAY:

***VILLA LAETITIA** - This historic residence owned by the Fendi family, consists of a series of small apartments, with creatively designed interiors.*

***HOTEL DE RUSSIE** - An oasis in the midst of the bustling city centre, this luxury 5 star hotel features terraced gardens and an exclusive health club.*

***CASA HOWARD** - The charm and elegance of a private home in a fantastic location.*

***RESIDENCE VITTORIA** - Apartments in the center of Rome that are modern and functional.*

***PORTRAIT SUITES** - Luxurious Italian style with custom-made hospitality.*

***H&H HOME** - Located in an 18th century building, the apartment has modern facilities and a small balcony. Bicycles, tours around Rome and even babysitting are some of the services offered.*

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