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## starting from Venezia square... going to Trastevere

From Piazza Venezia, true beating heart of the town, go towards the nearby Piazza del Gesù, historical head-quarter of the Jesuits, you can see the church "Il Gesù", prototype of the main Jesuit churches in the world. The majesty of its interior is meant to smother any heretical instinct and to state firmly the supremacy of Christian religion. You reach Via delle Botteghe Oscure, that takes its name from the shops which were inside the ruins of Balbo's theatre in the Middle Ages. Cross Via Caetani, sadly noted because here in 1978 it was found the corpse of the statesman Aldo Moro abducted by the Brigate Rosse.

In the following stop, at Piazza Mattei you have the chance to have a sip of limpid water from the Turtles Fountain, one of the most beautiful fountains of Rome, designed by Giacomo della Porta, great fountain-maker of the papal Rome; the turtles were added by Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

Crossing the narrow streets leading to the ancient Jewish Ghetto we will appreciate the charm of a town quite foreign to the bustle of a capital city. Pope Paul IV had the area enclosed within a wall, considering inconvenient for the Christian to live in such a close contact with the Jews, thus creating the Roman Ghetto. Via della Reginella is the only spot of the Ghetto perfectly preserved. Noteworthy is the house of Lorenzo Manili facing on Piazza Giudia, whose façade was splendidly decorated in the Renaissance.

The visit of the Ghetto continues towards the Portico of Octavia, site of the fish market. Of great interest is the Theatre of Marcellus, one of the biggest and best preserved theatres of Ancient Rome, the church of St Angelo in Pescheria and the Synagogue, built in 1907.

Crossing the river you are in Trastevere, the old residential area of Rome, until recently the habitation of working class families who had lived there for centuries. Since the war however, Trastevere has come further and further up-market until it is now almost exclusively the neighbourhood of successful artists, intellectuals and professional trendies. In a move comparable to the development of the London Docklands in the eighties, the last few old locals whose leases had expired were forcibly evicted from these million dollar properties in Trastevere five years ago, though just a handful of retired shoe-menders and washer-women still survive in their old damp basements underneath the dentists and record company executives. That's enough politics for now - Let's switch to the aesthetic review of Trastevere - It's absolutely charming!

Trastevere is the real thing! Endless winding cobbled streets, tiny little bars of exquisite intimacy, and washing hanging out between the shuttered windows high overhead. Red ochre and burnt sienna wash paint peeling from ivy infested stone walls, trickling drinking fountains set back into dark carved crevices, while the smells of rich espresso coffee, freshly baked ciabatta and sun-ripened dog turds waft through the air. There is also an enticing collection of little antique shops and jewellers sprinkled throughout these magical streets, together with the occasional artist or sculptor's studio. If you're gonna get lost anywhere in Rome, then get lost in Trastevere. You'll never want to find your way home again&hellip;