

Get to Know GARBATELLA

Opt out of Rome's tourist scene for the day and head to Garbatella, one of the city's most authentic neighborhoods. Alexandra Bruzzese has your itinerary ready.

Located just south of Rome's seven hills, the Garbatella neighborhood is one of those rare spots in the Eternal City that has remained relatively undiscovered by guidebooks and tourists. In a city where once-little-known districts like Trastevere and Testaccio have seen a recent surge in visitors, Garbatella is surprisingly quiet, good news for tourists and locals alike who are looking to escape the busy pace and crowded streets of the historic center. Garbatella was developed in 1918 with the humble goal of providing high-quality housing to the working classes, and later, to host Romans forced to relocate from their downtown homes due to Mussolini's remodeling of the city center. While unfamiliar to tourists, Garbatella is well known by Romans who remember it as the stomping grounds of comedic actor Alberto Sordi as well as the location of director Nanni Moretti's 1993 film "Caro Diario". Today, the neighborhood is a quirky blend of unusual architecture, street art, a few hidden historical gems, and a thriving culinary scene. Intrigued? Look no further than our step-by-step guide for a delightful day in Garbatella.

9AM

Grab a cappuccino and a *cornetto* and start your morning at **Bar Foschi** (Piazza Bartolomeo Romano, 3). Feeling extra-indulgent? Go for one of their signature *bombette fritte con crema*, fried cakes of pastry dough filled with vanilla cream and rolled in sugar, or a decadent *cannolo*, a Sicilian pastry filled with sweetened ricotta cheese. Another neighborhood favorite for breakfast and socializing is **Bar dei Cesaroni** (Piazza Giovanni da Triora), where the Italian comedy series *I Cesaroni* has been filmed. Adorned with AS Roma soccer memorabilia, this is where locals meet to heatedly discuss the outcome of last night's game. If you're visiting Garbatella during the weekend, make sure to stop by the neighborhood's charming **Il Farmer's Market di Garbatella**; stock up on cheeses, breads, produce, olive oils, honeys, jams, pastas, and cold cuts, all provided by Lazio's local businesses and farmers. Their *porchetta* (baked pork rolled in spices) is divine (Via Francesco Passino, Sat 8:30am–6pm, Sun 8:30am–2:30pm).



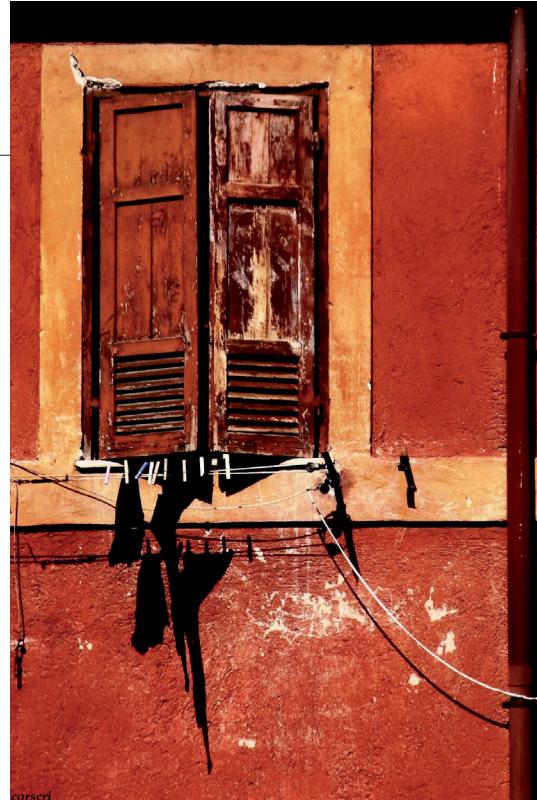
11AM

Once you're fueled up with coffee and sugar, take a stroll around the quirky neighborhood. Garbatella's most distinctive element is its eccentric architecture, a curious mix of baroque detail and Mussolini modernism. Inspired by the utopian concept of Garden Cities, the homes in *vecchia Garbatella* (the original neighborhood) are known as *lotti*, or building units grouped together around common gardens and green spaces. The Garden Cities were an attempt to recreate the lifestyle of a familiar rural village and encourage families to socialize and develop a sense of community. Look for the decorative animal and botanical motifs that are characteristic of the *lotti*, which begin at Via Fausto Vettor and Via Domenico Chiodo. Next, head towards the imposing Albergo Rosso and Albergo Bianco (viewed from

Piazza Michele da Carbonara), suburban "hotels" built during the fascist period and designed to accommodate those displaced by renovations in the city center. For a taste of the modern direction of the city, check out the neighborhood's newest addition, a 27-meter-high mural by street artists Sten&Lex (Via Caffaro) and the avant-garde Cavalcaferrovia Bridge, just beside the metro's exit.

1PM

Tuck into an authentic Roman lunch with a plate of *cacio e pepe* pasta or *coda alla vaccinara* (hearty oxtail stew) at **Tanto per Magnà** (Via Giustino de Jacobis, 9), the go-to spot for locals. If you're craving a pizza, grab a table at **Tre Fratelli** (Piazza Giovanni da Triora, 2). The restaurant offers a fixed lunch menu with antipasti and a pie of your choice, all for €10. Best of all, the pizzeria boasts an impressive wine list.



» What's in a name?

3PM

Continue your tour of the neighborhood with a visit to its namesake: **La Fontana Carlotta** (Piazza Ricoldo da Monte Croce), one of the neighborhood's many fountains, holds a special place in the hearts of the locals as an homage to the gracious hostess the district is named after (see right). The stairs adjacent to the fountain, known as *le scale degli innamorati*, are believed to have been the meeting place for lovers during WWII. If you're in the mood to shop, stop by **Il Mercato dell'Usato Garbatella** (Via Manfredio Camperio, 25). Romans browse here for gently used Tiffany, Prada, and other luxe items at half price. More of a history buff? Head to the **Catacombs of Commodilla** (Via delle Sette Chiese, 42). Housed in the Commodilla Park, the catacombs are believed to date back to the beginning of the 4th century, and were dedicated to the martyrs Felix and Adauctus. Tours are by appointment only (Tel 060608).

According to popular legend, the borough's moniker was inspired by Carlotta, a *garbata ostella* or "charming innkeeper" who would offer refreshments to passersby, and who was adored by the locals. During the fascist period, there was an attempt to change the name to Remuria (a nod to Rome's foundation myth of Romulus and Remus), but the neighborhood resisted.

5PM

Unwind from all that shopping and sightseeing with a spritz or Prosecco at **Acino Brillo** (Piazza Sant'Eurosia), a hip wine bar in the heart of the district. Outdoor seating overlooking historic Piazza Sant'Eurosia is an option for those wanting to take advantage of Rome's magical late-afternoon light.

8PM and beyond

End your Garbatella evening at **La Bottigliaccia** (Via delle Sette Chiese, 114) (pictured above left), known for its hearty meat dishes, such as meatballs and roast tenderloin, as well as its super-fresh fish. In addition, enjoy handmade classic Roman and Italian pasta dishes such as *carbonara* and *amatriciana*. The charming atmosphere recalls a Parisian bistro, and the walls are decorated with vintage photos from the '60s. Or, for a twist on tradition, book a table at **Ristoro degli Angeli** (Via Luigi Orlando, 2) and sample their salt cod ravioli or fettuccine with butter, parmesan, and toasted sesame seeds.



How to get there: Take the Metro B line from Termini and hop off at the Garbatella stop.