

Porta San Sebastiano

Originally known as Porta Appia, it was renamed during Christian age, rebuilt by Onorio and restored by Belisarius in 400 AD. It is flanked by two medieval Towers and it leans against the Aurelian Walls, the imposing town walls built by Emperor Aureliano (270-275 AD) and finished by his successor Probo (276-282 a.C.).

The walls incorporated the Seven Hills, thus protecting Rome from the Marcomanni, the Quadi, the Iatungi and the Germani, defeated by Aurelian himself. The walls were 19 kilometres long, 6 meters high and 3 meters thick and they had 18 doors and 381 towers.

The present aspect of the Gate is the result of several transformations throughout centuries; the last triumphal cortege entering the city from Via Appia was the one led by Marcantonio Colonna after the victory of Lepanto over the Turks in 1571.

Casina del Cardinal Bessarione

This very rare example of suburban Renaissance villa was used as a small hospital in early 14th century, then as a monastery and, towards the half of 1800, it became a country tavern. The restoration brought the internal decorations and the nice Italian garden back to their ancient splendour. The bond with Cardinal Bessarione, humanist and bishop in the Tuscolo, might be ascribed to the fact that the nearby Church of St. Cesareo was a fixture of the Tuscolo Episcopate.

The Church was built upon Roman ruins dating back to 2nd century BC and has a Renaissance façade by Giacomo della Porta; on the inside you can admire mosaics and decorations from the period of Pope Clemente VIII (XVI th century), whose coat of arms is still adorning the ceiling.

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Arch of Drusus

Close to Porta St. Sebastiano rises the Arch of Druso, actually a fornix with monumental forms, with which the Aqüeduct Antoniniano stepped over Via Appia, in order to reach and supply the Thermae of Caracalla.

Museum of the Walls

Since 1990 the inside of Porta St. Sebastiano is the seat of the Museum of the Walls, with display panels, plastic models of the different steps of the building of the walls, as well as plaster casts of some decorative elements.

The didactic course (divided into ancient, medieval and modern sections) runs through the story and the architectonic transformations of the town walls which have defended Rome from 200 AD up to the Breach of Porta Pia in 1870. Some of the panels are dedicated to the fortifications during Royal Time and the Republic and to the history of the ancient Via Appia.

From the Museum you have access to the rounds way all along the top of the walls as far as the fornices in Via Cristoforo Colombo and you will surely enjoy the breathtaking view from the two Towers.

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Bus: 218

Open: Tuesday- Sunday 9.00 - 14.00 (Last entrance 13.30)

Closed: 1 May, 25 December