

Musei Capitolini

Piazza del Campidoglio 1 (00186)

Near Piazza Venezia

Metro: Colosseo

9:30 AM - 7:30 PM (Every Day)



The creation of the Capitoline Museums has been traced back to **1471**, when Pope Sixtus IV donated a group of bronze statues of great symbolic value to the People of Rome. The collections are closely linked to the city of Rome.

Piazza del Campidoglio's current appearance dates back to the middle of the XV century when it was designed by **Michelangelo Buonarroti**. The piazza's component parts (buildings, sculptures and decorated paving) were intended by Michelangelo to form one single organic unity, although over the centuries there have been a number of alterations & additions.

The Capitoline Hill is the smallest hill in Rome and was originally made up of two parts (the **Capitolium** and the **Arx**) separated by a deep valley which corresponds to where Piazza del Campidoglio now stands about 8 metres above the original site. The sides of this hill were very steep and on account of the difficulty of reaching the top and the dominating position it enjoyed over the River Tiber, it was chosen as the city's main stronghold.

The main buildings faced the Ancient Roman Forum, from which a carriageable road known as the **Clivus Capitolinus** led up the hill to the **Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus**, the most important and imposing temple in Rome. In addition to this temple and those dedicated to **Juno Moneta, Veiovis and in the Area Capitolina**, the Capitoline Hill was the headquarters of the Public Roman Archive (**Tabularium**) and, in Republican Age, of the Mint.

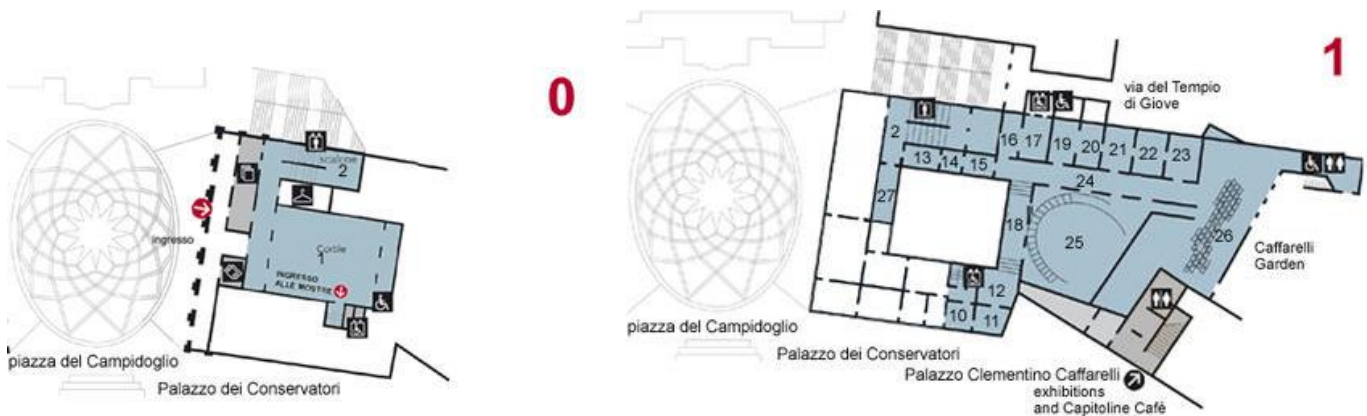
Conservators' Apartment



The rooms making up the apartment on the first floor of the Palazzo, were used by the **Conservators, or magistrates**, for activities connected to their office; they therefore form a single entity, both as regards their function and their ornamental features. The rooms were also used for Public and Private **Council meetings**. The rich decoration of these reception rooms (frescoes, stuccoes, carved ceilings and doors, tapestries) has as its main theme the history of Ancient Rome, from its foundation to the Republican Age. The earliest cycle of frescoes goes back to the beginning of the XVI century.

The main floor of the Palace houses the **Ceremonial Rooms of the Conservators**, also known as the Apartment. They are the **oldest part of the Palace**: some rooms preserve parts of the series of frescoes painted at the beginning of the XVI century, whereas the decorations of the other rooms were renewed after Michelangelo's renovation.

Palazzo dei Conservatori Museum



The **Palazzo dei Conservatori**, headquarters of the **magistrature** of the same name for hundreds of years, has, since the end of the 15th century, been home to the Capitoline collection of sculptures.

The palazzo's interior design and the layout of the works of art has been modified over the years. The sculptures were originally situated in the external portico on the ground floor, on the façade and in the courtyard, but gradually were used also to decorate rooms on the first floor.

Palazzo Nuovo



Despite a number of changes that have taken place over the centuries, this section of the museum has more or less maintained its original **XVIII century aspect**. The decorative features of this area have remained unchanged, and this has influenced the layout of sculptures and inscriptions. The fine pieces of ancient sculpture come mainly from private collections belonging to **high-ranking churchmen and noble Roman families**. Unlike the Palazzo dei Conservatori opposite, the interior space of this building and the arrangement of its architectural features are of symmetrical design.

Palazzo Nuovo is so called because it was built ex novo, using **Michelangelo's blueprint** when he redesigned the Palazzo dei Conservatori a century earlier to complete the renovation of the Capitoline Square.

The museum was opened to the public in **1734, under Pope Clement XII, who had already purchased the Albani collection of 418 sculptures** the previous year, as an addition to the works already on display at the Vatican Belvedere and donated to the Capitoline museum by Pope Pius V in 1566, and the sculptures that could not find a place in Palazzo dei Conservatori. The collections are still arranged according to the exhibition concept of the eighteenth century.

Galleria Lapidaria



The **underground gallery (Galleria di Congiunzione)** linking the Capitoline palazzos was built at the end of the 1930s underneath Piazza del Campidoglio; inside the gallery we can see the remains of **two-storey ancient Roman dwellings dating back to the 2 century AD**. During excavations for its construction workers came across the remains of an **ancient road** that went from the Capitoline hill to the Campus Martius. Some **buildings of the Imperial period** ran along the road, one of these is incorporated into the museum and is characterized by columns with corbels that support balconies.

Capitoline Picture Gallery



The **second floor of the Palazzo dei Conservatori** houses an important collection of **paintings**, which also includes many works of decorative and applied art.

The Capitoline Picture Gallery is the oldest public collection of paintings. It was built on the Capitoline hill **between 1748 and 1750**, with the purchase of paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries - including masterpieces by **Titian, Caravaggio and Rubens**

Tabularium



From the museum, **passing through the Gallery Junction**, we come to the **Tabularium**. After walking down a long corridor, created in modern times within the building's original foundation space, and from where we can see the **Temple of Veiovis**, we come to the gallery which opens out on to the Roman Forum. On this gallery is the entrance to another area containing the remains of buildings pre-existent to the Tabularium.

The Roman Forum's main square is closed, on the side of the Capitoline Hill, by the imposing square structure of the **Tabularium**; the building contained the **Roman Public Record Office**, which was used as a place to store the state archives, such as deeds, laws, treaties, and decrees of the Senate. We know from an inscription in the building that it was erected by Quintus Lutatius Catulus in 78 B.C., the year of his consulate.

The Tabularium, roughly trapezoidal in shape, presents a significant recess at the corner of the Capitolium, due to the presence of an older temple, the **Temple of Veiovis**.