

SAMPLE CHAPTER

ARTHUR REVIVES THE PAST

ARTHUR'S GRAND TOUR

Fourteen stops, three thousand years, one route



BEFORE YOU START

How to use this book

Every site entry is built the same way, so that once you have read one you can read them all at a glance.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| STOP 6 OF 14 | The number of the stop on the route. The maps carry the same numbers. |
| UNDER €25 | A price band, never a figure. Prices change by season; the official website is named under every entry. Check it before you book. |
| STAND HERE | Coordinates and a compass bearing for the exact spot the reconstruction was built from. Raise the page there and the picture lines up. |
| THE QR CODE | Opens the video at the minute that place is described. |
| ARTHUR'S NOTE | The thing worth knowing that no ticket tells you. |
| ARTHUR'S CAVEAT | Where the good story and the evidence part ways. |
| THE FIELD BOOK | A separate file to print and fold: the booking list, day plans, a budget sheet and phrase cards. Nothing in it needs colour ink. |

WATCH FIRST, OR WATCH AS YOU GO

The videos, in route order

Every stop in this book began as one of these reconstructions. Point your phone at a code and the video opens; the site entries carry the exact minute each place is described.



STOP 1
Edinburgh
1544
32 min



STOP 2
Birmingham
1900
28 min



STOP 3
London
1300
23 min



STOP 4
Paris 1400
27 min



STOP 5
Venice 1700
20 min



STOP 6
The
Colosseum
19 min



STOP 6
Rome at its
height
21 min



STOP 7
Pompeii
18 min



STOP 8
Athens
26 min



STOP 9 · 11
The 7
Wonders
15 min



STOP 10
Knossos
1700 BC
20 min



STOP 13
Ephesus
17 min



STOP 14
Constantinople
26 min

youtube.com/@ArthurRevivesthePast · The 7 Wonders covers Olympia, Rhodes and Bodrum in one film.

PART ONE — 01 / 07

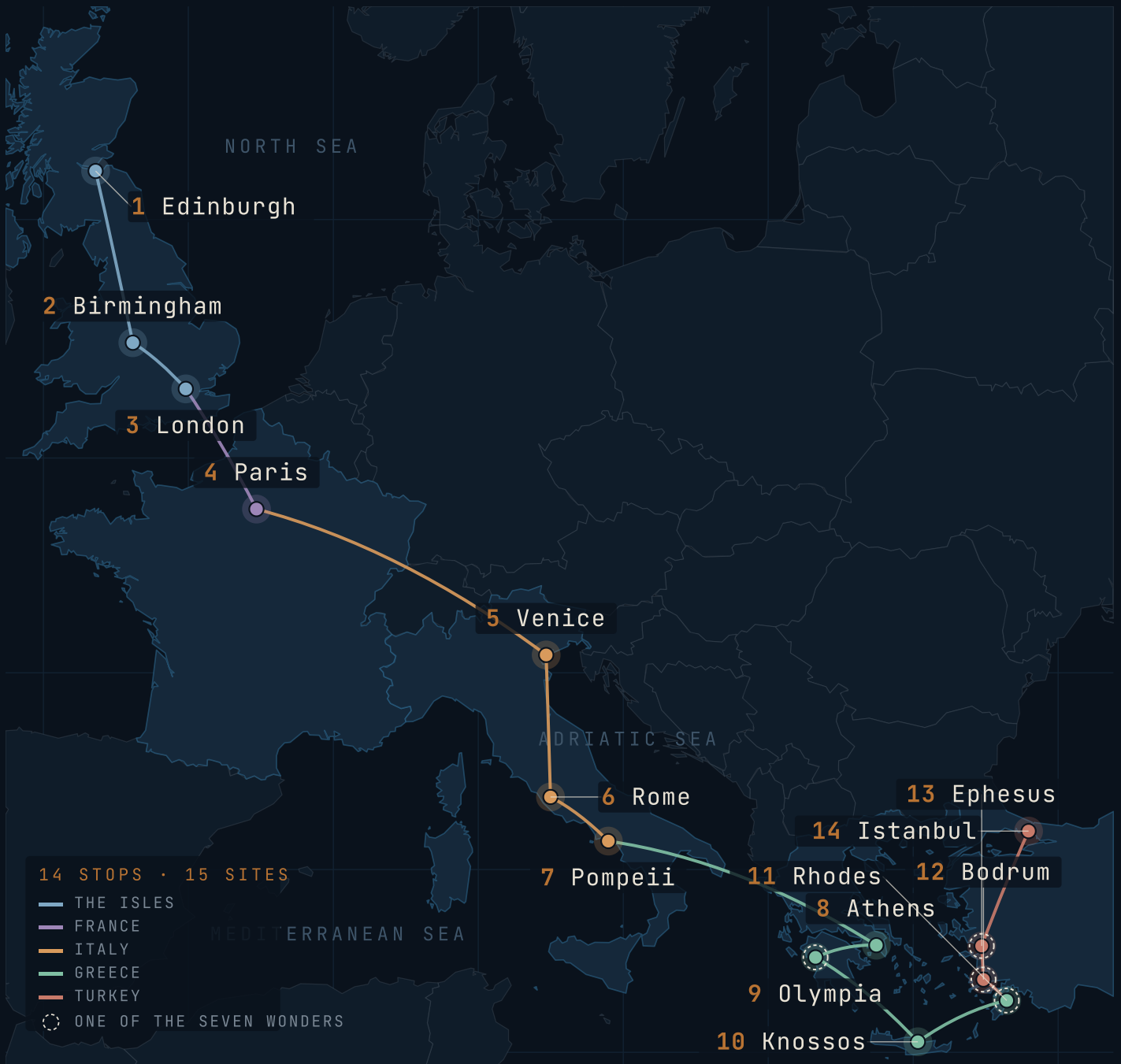
THE ROUTE

Fourteen stops, three thousand years, one road

“We're still living in the world they created.”

LONDON 1300 — 00:23:11

Fourteen Stops



The route runs south and east, and as it does it runs backwards through time.

From the coal smoke of Birmingham in 1900 to the Bronze Age palace at Knossos. Roughly, not strictly — but close enough that you feel it happening. The numbers are the stops; the site entries carry the same numbers.

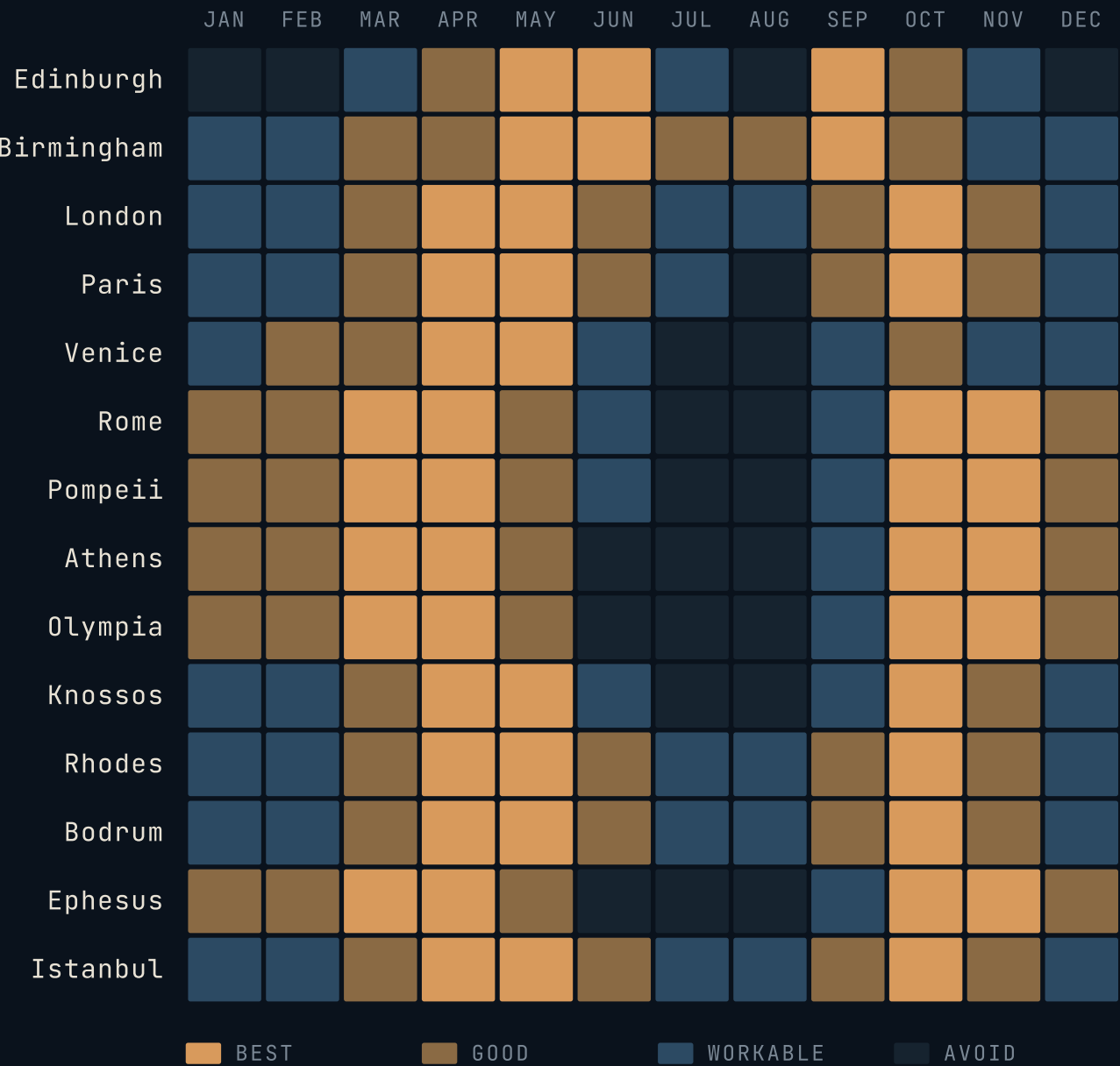
In Route Order



Every stop in this book is a single moment, not a whole history. Knossos is 1700 BC and nothing else. Rome is the opening week of the Colosseum. Birmingham is one court, one yard, one tap. The scale is compressed: the deeper the past, the tighter the spacing.

Month by Month

Heat, crowds, price and daylight, combined into one reading per month.



July and August are not merely uncomfortable. They make the trip worse.

Pompeii, Ephesus and the Athenian Agora have almost no shade. The Acropolis has closed at midday during recent heatwaves. Cruise coaches fill Ephesus and Venice by mid-morning. Two windows work: April to early June, and September to late October. Travel south as the year turns: leave Britain in early September and reach the Aegean in October.

BOOK THESE BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

What Sells Out

Six things on this route will be gone by the time you get around to them. Book them first, then build the rest of the trip around the dates you were given.

The advance list

COLOSSEUM • UNDERGROUND	Booking opens ~30 days out and goes the same hour
DOMUS AUREA	Guided only, very small groups, weekends go weeks ahead
DOGE'S PALACE • PIOMBI	Secret Itineraries tour, small groups, book before your flight
PARIS CATACOMBS	Hard cap underground; walk-up queues run for hours
ACROPOLIS	Timed entry with a daily cap in summer
BIRMINGHAM BACK TO BACKS	Guided only, and closed some weekdays

EVERY SITE ENTRY IN THIS BOOK NAMES ITS OFFICIAL WEBSITE • CHECK BEFORE BOOKING

ARTHUR'S NOTE

Set a calendar alarm for the day Colosseum booking opens for your date. There is no other reliable way in.

How far ahead

The same six, sorted by how early the window closes.

MONTHS AHEAD



Doge's Palace • Piombi

WEEKS AHEAD



Domus Aurea • Paris Catacombs • Colosseum • underground

DAYS AHEAD



Acropolis • Back to Backs

PART ONE – THE ROAD BETWEEN

Between the Stops

Thirteen legs, how each one is done, and roughly how long it takes. These are typical times, not timetables: check the operator before you book.

LEG	HOW	ABOUT	WORTH KNOWING
1 Edinburgh 2 Birmingham	Train	about 4 h 30	Advance singles cost a fraction of the walk-up fare. This is the leg that fills.
2 Birmingham 3 London	Train	about 1 h 25	Frequent; still cheaper booked ahead.
3 London 4 Paris	Eurostar	about 2 h 20	Passport control before boarding; arrive an hour early. Book early for the price.
4 Paris 5 Venice	Train via Milan, or a flight	a long day by rail; about 1 h 30 in the air	The train wins on views and on arriving by water. The plane wins on time.
5 Venice 6 Rome	Frecciarossa	about 3 h 45	Book ahead; the fare rises as the seats go.
6 Rome 7 Pompeii	Train to Naples, then the Circumvesuviana	about 1 h 10, then about 40 min	Base yourself in Naples. The local line is slow and crowded but constant.
7 Pompeii 8 Athens	Flight from Naples	about 2 h	The overnight ferry from Bari to Patras is the slow, romantic alternative.
8 Athens 9 Olympia	Car or bus	about 3 h 30	No rail link. Rent the car for this leg alone and hand it back in Athens.
9 Olympia 10 Knossos	Back through Athens: flight, or the night ferry from Piraeus	about 50 min in the air; overnight by sea	The ferry lands you in Heraklion at dawn, ten minutes from the museum.
10 Knossos 11 Rhodes	Flight	about 50 min	Ferries exist but take most of a day.
11 Rhodes 12 Bodrum	Ferry, summer only	a few hours	Outside the season the practical route is back through Athens by air. Plan this crossing first.
12 Bodrum 13 Ephesus	Bus or car up the coast to Selçuk	about 3 h	Selçuk, not Kuşadası: you want to be at the gate before the cruise coaches.
13 Ephesus 14 Istanbul	Train or bus to Izmir, then a flight	about 1 h 15, then about 1 h 15	An afternoon. Domestic flights here are cheap enough to be the obvious answer.

PART ONE – 21 NIGHTS

Three weeks: the whole line, no islands

Every mainland stop in route order, from the smoke of 1900 to the marble of 537. The Aegean chapter is the one you leave for another year: it needs boats, and boats need time.



STOP	NIGHTS	BASE	DO NOT MISS
1 Edinburgh	2	Old Town	The castle at first entry; the Flodden Wall in Greyfriars
2 Birmingham	1	Jewellery Quarter	The workshop left as it was in 1981
3 London	3	Southwark	St Bartholomew the Great; the south bank at low tide
4 Paris	3	The 5th	The Catacombs, booked weeks ahead; the painted west front
5 Venice	2	Cannaregio or Dorsoduro	The Secret Itineraries tour into the Piombi
6 Rome	3	Monti	The Colosseum at opening; the Forum from above
7 Pompeii	2	Naples	The Temple of Jupiter steps with Vesuvius behind you
8 Athens	3	Koukaki	The rock at first slot; the Agora in the afternoon
14 Istanbul	2	Sultanahmet or Karaköy	Hagia Sophia early; the ferry to Kadıköy

YOU SKIP Olympia, Crete, Rhodes, Bodrum and Ephesus.

GETTING ABOUT Trains through Britain and to Paris; a long train day or a short flight to Venice; trains down Italy; flights Naples to Athens and Athens to Istanbul.

OR Swap Birmingham's night for a fourth in London if industrial history is not your thing. Arthur would disagree.

PART ONE — THE HONEST TABLE

Steps, Stone and Shade

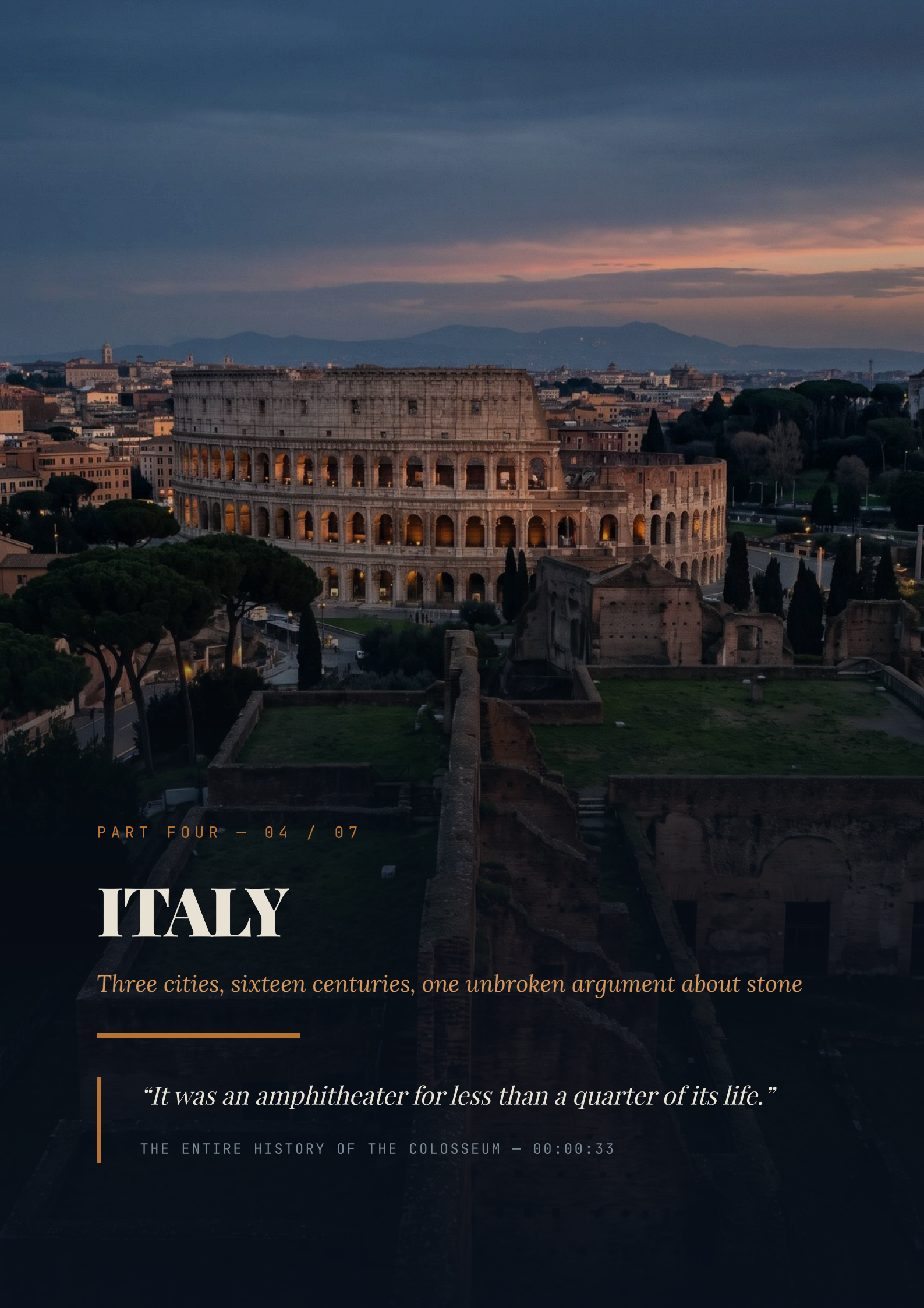
How hard each site is on the legs, taken from the Access line of every entry. One dot is easy, three is hard. "On your feet" is the time the entry allows.

SITE	STEPS	GROUND	SHADE	ON YOUR FEET	NOTE
1 Edinburgh Castle and the closes	●●●	●●○	●●○	3-4 h	Steep cobbled approach; the closes are stepped.
2 Jewellery Quarter · Back to Backs	●●●	●○○	●○○	Half a day	The Back to Backs have steep narrow stairs and cannot be adapted.
3 Medieval London on foot	●○○	●○○	●●○	A morning	Level pavement; worn stone thresholds in the churches.
4 Notre-Dame · the Catacombs	●●●	●○○	●○○	2-3 h	Catacombs: 131 steps down, 112 up, no lift, 14°C.
5 Doge's Palace · the Piombi	●●●	●○○	●○○	3 h	The Secret Itineraries route is stairs throughout, some narrow and steep.
6 The Colosseum	●●○	●●○	●●●	90 min	Lift to arena level; the hypogeum is stairs and uneven ground only.
6 The Forum and the Palatine	●●●	●●●	●●○	2 h	Ancient paving throughout; the Palatine is a genuine hill.
7 Pompeii	●●○	●●●	●●●	Half a day	Roman paving with deep ruts and stepping stones. Hard going on wheels.
8 The Acropolis and the Agora	●●○	●●●	●●●	5 h with the museum	A lift serves reduced mobility; the rock is polished and slippery.
9 Olympia	●○○	●○○	●●○	2 h	Level gravel paths; very little shade.
10 Knossos	●●○	●●○	●●●	90 min	Uneven ground, steps and narrow raised walkways.
11 Mandraki Harbour · Old Town	●○○	●●○	●●○	Half a day	Flat paved waterfront; cobbles and some steps inside the walls.
12 Bodrum Castle · the Mausoleum	●●●	●●○	●●○	2 h	A fortress on a rock: ramps, steps and steep cobbles.
13 Ephesus and the Artemision	●●○	●●●	●●●	3 h	Long marble street, downhill from the upper gate; slippery when wet.
14 Hagia Sophia · the Cistern	●●○	●●○	●○○	2 h	Shoes off in the prayer area; the Cistern is steps down and damp underfoot.

STEPS: FEW · SOME · MANY
SHADED · LITTLE · NONE

GROUND: FLAT · UNEVEN · ROUGH

SHADE:



PART FOUR — 04 / 07

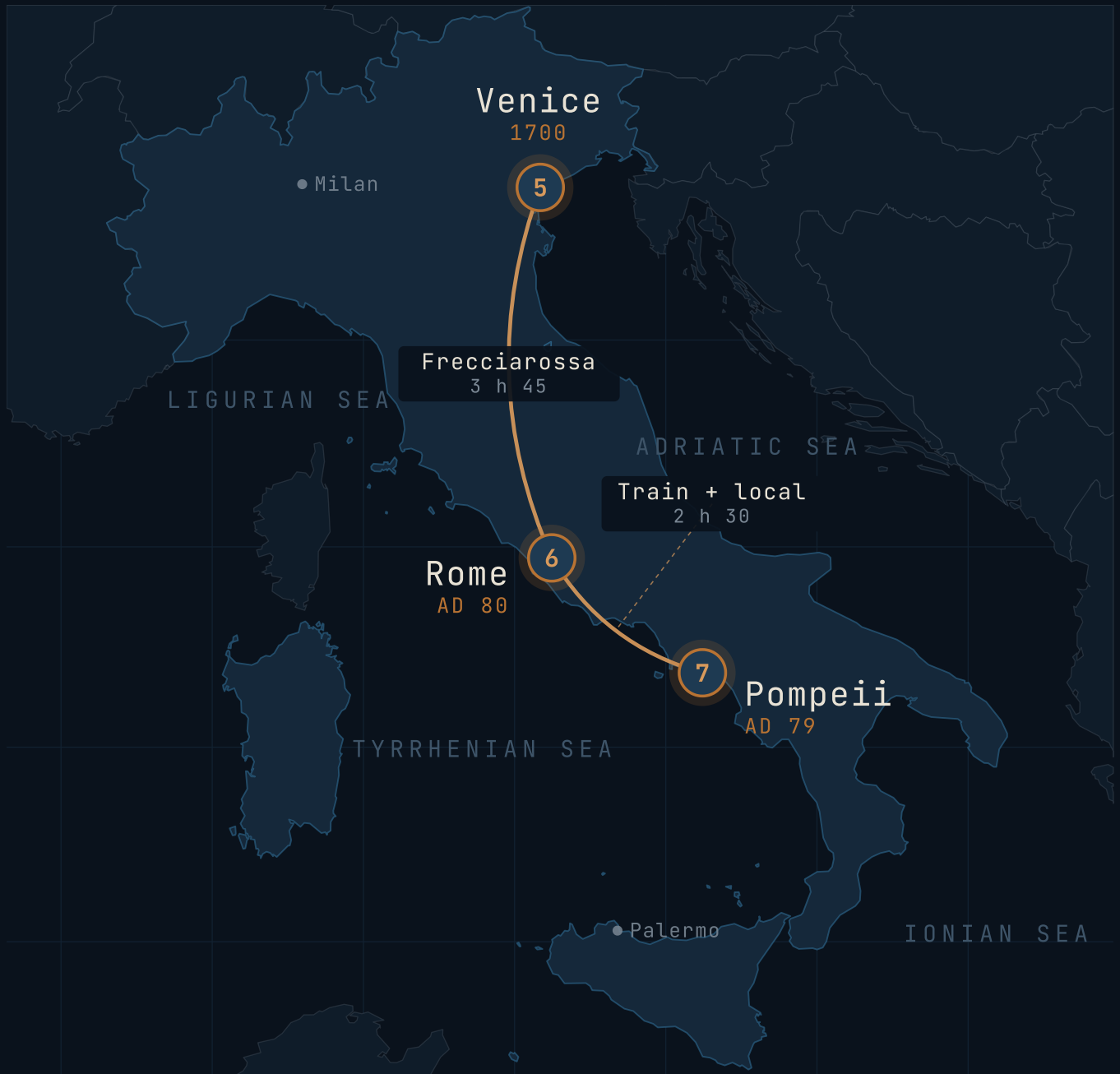
ITALY

Three cities, sixteen centuries, one unbroken argument about stone

“It was an amphitheater for less than a quarter of its life.”

THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE COLOSSEUM — 00:00:33

Italy



North to south on one high-speed line, then a local train to the ash.

Naples is a better base for Pompeii than Pompeii town, and the Circumvesuviana runs constantly.

Italy in one page

Venice at the end, Rome twice, Pompeii once: the Italian pages run from the first emperor to the last doge.

27 BC

Augustus takes the city in hand

Rome had a million people and no fire brigade. Augustus created the Vigiles, rebuilt the temples and left a city of marble where he had found one of brick; nine Romans in ten still lived in wooden insulae.

ROME AT ITS HEIGHT • 01:52

AD 79–80

Vesuvius, then the Colosseum

In 79 the volcano buried Pompeii and Herculaneum in a day; Pliny the Younger watched from across the bay. A year later Titus opened the Colosseum on the drained lake of Nero's palace, paid for with the plunder of Jerusalem.

POMPEII • THE COLOSSEUM • 10:20 • 00:45

126–180

The peak, and the turn

Hadrian's Pantheon of 126 still carries the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world. Marcus Aurelius, who never wanted the job, spent his reign on the Danube frontier and died in 180.

ROME AT ITS HEIGHT • 13:40

1200–1797

The long afterlife

The Colosseum became a neighbourhood, a fortress and a quarry before a story about martyrs saved it in 1749. Venice, masked for half the year, danced through its last century until Napoleon dissolved the Republic in May 1797.

THE COLOSSEUM • VENICE 1700 • 12:50 • 17:29



ROME — AD 80, OPENING WEEK

Every arch was numbered. You were told which one was yours before you left home.

Sailors of the imperial fleet worked the awning from the top gallery, twenty men to a rope. Nobody else in the city handled that much line.

The Colosseum

Rome does not hand you the Colosseum. It withholds it. Come up Via di San Giovanni in Laterano and the street stays ordinary until the last thirty metres, when the wall simply arrives.

Getting In

What does not change from season to season

UNDER €20 • STANDARD ENTRY

BOOKING OPENS	About 30 days before your date
ENTRY	Timed slot, compulsory
SELLS OUT	Days ahead in season; the underground ticket goes the hour it is released
TIME NEEDED	90 min, or a half morning with the hypogeum
GO AT	Opening, or the last slot. Midday brings the coach groups and, May to September, shadeless heat
ACCESS	Lift to arena level. Hypogeum by stairs and uneven ground only

PRICES AND HOURS CHANGE BY SEASON • CONFIRM AT PARCOCOLOSSEO.IT BEFORE BOOKING

ARTHUR'S NOTE

Set an alarm for the day booking opens for your date. It is the only reliable way to get into the hypogeum.

STAND HERE

41.8896° N, 12.4934° E

Bearing 248° — face west-southwest

Raise the page here: the ruined attic storey lines up with the awning masts.



WATCH • 04:23

THREE LAYERS OF TIME

The Colosseum

AD 80



COMPLETE · FOUR STOREYS · IRON CLAMPS STILL IN THE STONE

Reconstruction, Arthur Revives the Past

1774



QUARRIED, STRIPPED OF ITS IRON, HALF FALLEN

Joseph Wright of Derby, 1774–75 · The Metropolitan Museum of Art, CC0

TODAY



SWEPT, TICKETED, AND HOLDING STILL

Photograph: Wilfredor · Wikimedia Commons, CC0



ROME — THE HEIGHT OF THE EMPIRE

“But 90% of Romans lived in insulae — multi-story apartment buildings that dominated the cityscape.”

One million people in a city where the wealthy owned a house around a courtyard and everyone else climbed narrow stairs to a room without water, kitchen or heat. The higher you lived, the cheaper the rent.

ROME AT ITS HEIGHT — 00:05:57

Reconstruction, Arthur Revives the Past

The Forum and the Palatine

The Forum is where Rome kept its receipts. The Palatine above it is where the people who wrote them lived.

Getting In

What does not change from season to season

INCLUDED WITH THE COLOSSEUM TICKET

Ninety per cent of Romans never lived like this. They lived in brick blocks six storeys high, and none of those survive.

BOOKING	Same 24-hour ticket as the Colosseum. No separate slot.
TIME NEEDED	Two hours for both, longer if you climb the Palatine slowly
GO AT	Enter from the Palatine side in the early morning. The Forum entrance queue forms first.
ACCESS	Uneven ancient paving throughout. The Palatine is a genuine hill.

PRICES AND HOURS CHANGE BY SEASON • CONFIRM AT PARCOCOLOSSEO.IT BEFORE BOOKING

ARTHUR'S NOTE

Stand on the Palatine terrace at dusk. That is the view on the opening page of this chapter.

STAND HERE

41.8986° N, 12.4769° E

Bearing 130° — face south-east

The Palatine terrace above the Forum. This is the frame the chapter opener was built from.



WATCH • 03:50

STOP 6 OF 14 — MORE OF ROME

The Pantheon

Hadrian's dome, 43.3 metres across, still the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world after nineteen centuries. It survived because it became a church.

Getting In

What does not change from season to season

Stand under the oculus and you stand where every emperor and every visitor has stood since AD 126. When it rains, it rains on the floor, and the floor is built to drain.

BOOKING	Ticketed since 2023; buy online to skip the queue. Closes for Mass and on some feast days.
TIME NEEDED	Forty minutes
GO AT	Opening, or late afternoon when the sun comes through the oculus at an angle
ACCESS	Level entry through the portico.

PRICE AND HOURS NOT PRINTED: CHECK PANTHEON.CULTURA.GOV.IT BEFORE YOU GO

ARTHUR'S NOTE

The bronze doors are original. The bronze that once covered the portico ceiling went to Bernini's baldacchino at St Peter's, or so Rome has always said.

STAND HERE

41.8986° N, 12.4768° E
Under the oculus. Look up.

The dome, the hole in it, and the sky.



WATCH · 03:29

STOP 6 OF 14 — MORE OF ROME

The Domus Aurea

Nero's Golden House, the palace so vast that Romans joked about being crowded out of their own city. Vespasian drained its lake and built the Colosseum on the mud.

Getting In

What does not change from season to season

What survives is underground, under the Oppian hill: painted vaults that Renaissance artists lowered themselves into by rope. Visits are guided, in hard hats, with a virtual-reality reconstruction of the rooms.

BOOKING	Guided only, very small groups, mostly at weekends; sells out weeks ahead.
TIME NEEDED	Seventy-five minutes
GO AT	Whatever slot you can get
ACCESS	Uneven, damp and dimly lit; not suitable for wheels.

PRICE AND HOURS NOT PRINTED: CHECK PARCOCOLOSSEO.IT BEFORE YOU GO

ARTHUR'S NOTE

It is on the same hill as the entrance to the Colosseum's park, five minutes away. Book it the day you book the hypogeum.

STAND HERE

41.8913° N, 12.4951° E

From the park above, face the Colosseum

Nero's lake lay where the amphitheatre stands.



WATCH • 01:26

Rome: sleep, eat, one day

Where to sleep

SPLURGE
OVER €300

Monti, between the Forum and Santa Maria Maggiore

The Colosseum is at the end of your street, and it is not a tourist district.

BALANCE
€130-220

Monti or Testaccio

Testaccio is where Romans eat; the Forum is a short bus or a long walk.

SMART
UNDER €100

The Esquiline side of Termini, or Pigneto

Plain and central; every train and metro line starts here.

What to eat

**CACIO E PEPE,
CARBONARA,
AMATRICIANA,
GRICIA**

Roman trattorie

The four Roman pastas. If a menu has none of them, walk out.

SUPPLÌ

Pizza al taglio counters

A fried rice ball with a thread of mozzarella, eaten standing, before dinner.

**COFFEE STANDING
AT THE BAR**

Everywhere

Sitting down can triple the price. The bar is where the locals are anyway.

One day, if that is all you have

MORNING

The Colosseum at opening, with the hypogeum if the alarm went off on the day booking opened.

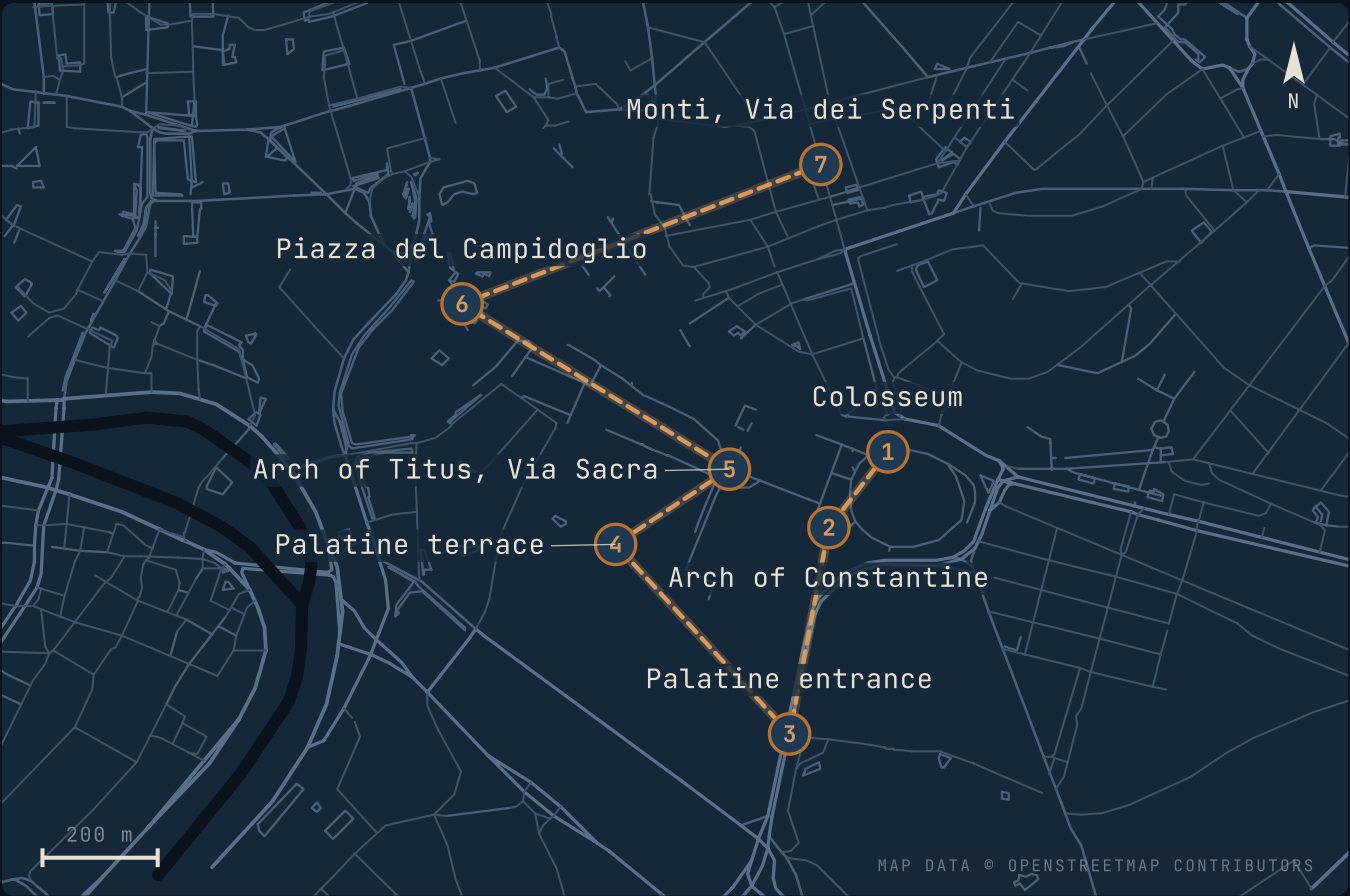
AFTERNOON

Enter the Forum from the Palatine side; the terrace at the top is the view on the chapter opener.

EVENING

Testaccio or Monti for the pastas; the Forum lit from Via dei Fori Imperiali on the walk back.

Colosseum, Palatine, Forum, Capitol



1	Colosseum	start	Opening slot; the hypogeum if you have it
2	Arch of Constantine	200 m · 3 min	Built from older monuments, like the city
3	Palatine entrance	450 m · 7 min	The quieter way in
4	Palatine terrace	550 m · 8 min	The chapter opener was built from here
5	Arch of Titus, Via Sacra	300 m · 4 min	Down into the Forum along its main street
6	Piazza del Campidoglio	700 m · 10 min	Look back over the Forum from the Capitol
7	Monti, Via dei Serpenti	850 m · 13 min	Dinner among Romans

The Palatine is a genuine hill and the Forum is ancient paving throughout. Enter the archaeological park from the Palatine side; the Forum entrance queue forms first.

ABOUT 3050 M IN ALL · DISTANCES ARE STRAIGHT LINES BETWEEN STOPS, ROUNDED UP FOR STREETS
· MAP DATA © OPENSTREETMAP CONTRIBUTORS



FIELD NOTES — ITALY

The holes in the stone

“Go close to the outer wall today and look at the surface. It is pitted all over with holes, thousands of them, running in ordered lines across the travertine.”

THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF THE COLOSSEUM — 00:16:19

“The Florian did something almost scandalous for its time: it was the only one that allowed women inside.”

VENICE 1700 — 00:06:15

“The deep grooves worn into the stone by cart wheels are still visible, a quiet testament to the thousands of journeys that ended here in October 79 AD.”

POMPEII — 00:16:22

PART FOUR — ON THE GROUND

Italy, on the ground

Venice · Rome · Pompeii

GETTING ABOUT	Frecciarossa between Venice, Rome and Naples. Book ahead. Circumvesuviana from Naples to Pompeii is slow and crowded but frequent.
MONEY	Card widely accepted; small bars and bacari sometimes prefer cash.
TIPPING	Not expected. Coperto is a cover charge, not a tip.
WEATHER	July and August at Pompeii are genuinely dangerous without shade and water.
WATCH FOR	The skip-the-line reseller outside the Colosseum charging several times the official price for the same ticket.
EMERGENCIES	112 from any phone. Farmacie take turns staying open at night; the rota is posted on every door.



DETAIL — A BAUTA MASK AND TRICORN, VENICE · IMAGE: ARTHUR REVIVES THE PAST

The full book has fourteen stops

You have just read one of them the way every one of them is written: the reconstruction, the site entry with its price band and its Stand Here, the three layers of time, where to sleep and eat, and a walk with a real street plan.

What the full book adds

1	EDINBURGH	1544
2	BIRMINGHAM	1900
3	LONDON	1300
4	PARIS	1400
5	VENICE	1700
6	ROME	AD 80
7	POMPEII	AD 79
8	ATHENS	430 BC
9	OLYMPIA	430 BC
10	KNOSSOS	1700 BC
11	RHODES	280 BC
12	BODRUM	350 BC
13	EPHESUS	AD 60
14	ISTANBUL	AD 537

Every image in the book was made for the channel *Arthur Revives the Past*. Every quotation carries the minute of the video it came from.

youtube.com/@ArthurRevivesthePast

*Fifteen sites that no longer look like themselves —
and the exact spot to stand at each one.*



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