

# Vatican Vistas

**As the Christian world celebrates Easter this month, we take you on a tour of Vatican City, home of the Roman Catholic Church.**

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**T**ake a step over the white line that distinguishes the border between Rome and the world's smallest city into Vatican City, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church. Within its 100 acres are some of Europe's most popular tourist destinations and unsurprisingly, tourism contributes heavily to Vatican City's economy. With remarkable arts embraced within its ancient Roman architecture,

Vatican City is known for its magnificent St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel, with its famous ceiling painted by Michelangelo. What one may not know is that through a half-mile long corridor called the Passetto di Borgo, the Vatican is connected to Castel Sant'Angelo. This secret passageway allowed Pope Clement VII to escape during the Sack of Rome in 1527 where he sought shelter in the castle for six months.



View of Rome and the Tiber River





Inside the Basilica

The Castel Sant'Angelo was originally designed to be the mausoleum of the Roman emperor Hadrian and his family and was named after the Archangel Michael at its top. The Castel Sant'Angelo stands on the right bank of the Tiber River and facing the north end of the Ponte Sant'Angelo, one of the prominent ancient Roman bridges. The circular fort contains halls, chapels, apartments, courtyard, and prison cells, and is surrounded by a square that was designed for

defense purposes. Once the tallest building in Rome, it was converted in the fifth century into a fortress for the popes. Today, it is a museum with five floors. As you move toward the upper part of the castle you will see rooms decorated with preserved paintings from the Renaissance period, along with an extensive collection of weapons. From the top of the castle, you can see the beauty of Rome from Vatican City to the main shopping streets.



In St. Peter's Square



Spiral staircase in the Vatican Museum