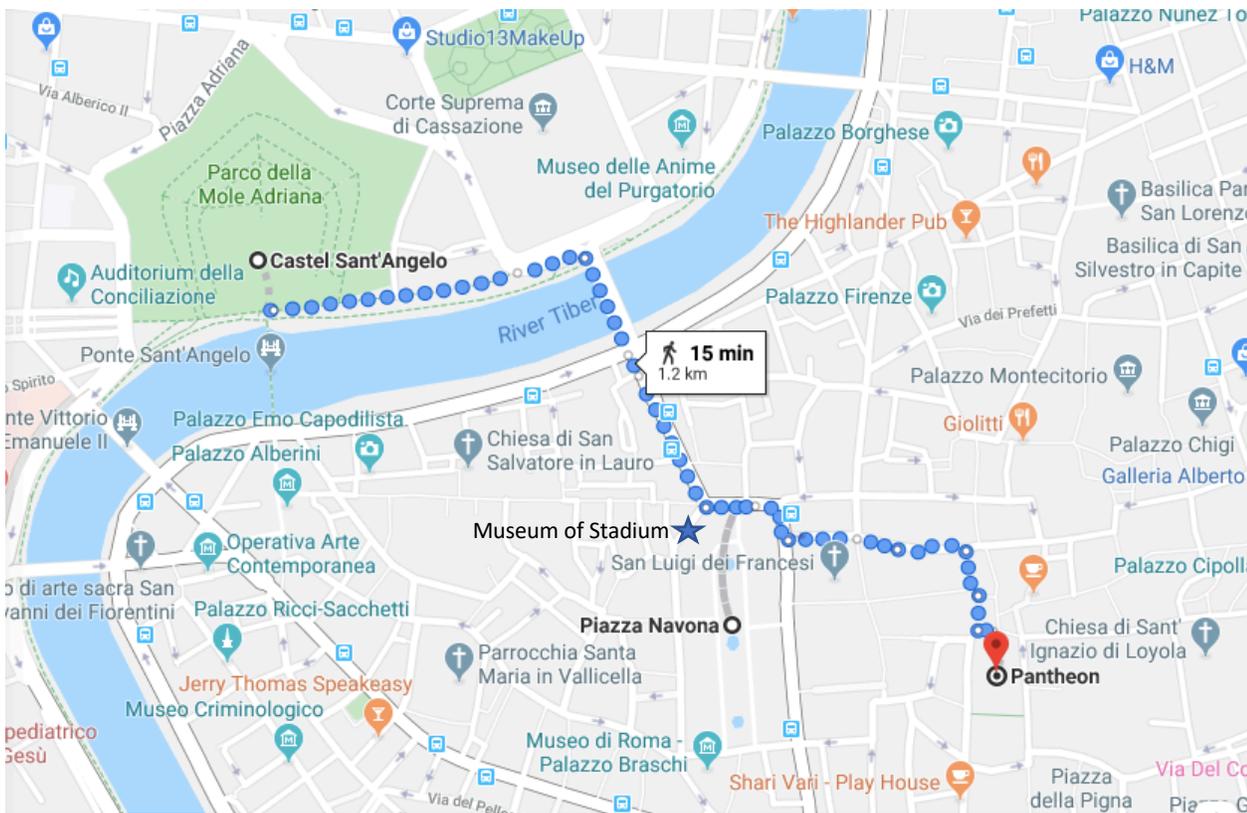


# Finding the I CAN spirit in Rome: Innovation Walk



This is walk of about 45 minutes through Rome to highlight some of the innovations that the Romans used to establish their role in history as great infrastructure developers and society builders. Start at the Bridge Sant Angelo, walk to the Piazza Navona and end at the Pantheon.

This is purposefully not a collection of facts. The purpose here is to get the young leaders to interact with the past, and to connect what they are seeing to the concerns they have today. You as the tour leader may know much more than we captured here: please improvise! bring your passion to this walk and help them see evidence of human inspiration over time.



## 1. Bridge Sant' Angelo

**Theme: Amazing arches, taming water and constant reinvention**

**What it is:** a bridge over the Tiber River built in 134 AD when Hadrian was emperor to connect his mausoleum (today called Castel Sant'Angelo) to a nearby collection of important public buildings.

**Compelling Question/Theme of Discovery:** How do bridges shape a community? Have them talk for a second about bridges in their communities. Do they have a bridge where they come from? When was it built? What does it connect?

**Appreciative Inquiry:**

*What do you see?* Get kids to describe in detail what they see. Leave time. Try to get half of kids to say something. Notice the width of the bridge—huge numbers of people and vehicles could cross this bridge.

*What do you think it means?* Let them try to interpret what they see. Let them analyze the connection of the statues to religion (no, they are not Roman)—they must be added later.

*What does it make you wonder?*

**Fun facts/Innovation Aspects you can see here:**

- Engineering/materials: The bridge and the Castello are some of the few Roman structures that have been hardly plundered or recycled—their original stonework is largely still all there, with some decorations removed and others added on.
- Engineering/Arches: Romans were the first people to use the arch in creating bridges, designing their bridges so the arches effectively distributed the weight of the bridge. We are still using this technique today.
- Innovation/Reinvention: The bridge changed names several times in the first few centuries of its existence. Its current name has stuck, though, for the past 1400 years. According to legend, an angel appeared over the bridge in 590 to announce the end of the plague—so the name became “Saint Angel”
- Innovation/Marketing: The angels and statues were an early form of brand building for the church. Anyone who wanted to walk over to the Vatican came through this bridge, so the church wanted to make sure that everyone who walked over the bridge got a healthy dose of understanding who the most important people were for the Church
- Controlling water was one of the biggest hurdles that the Romans had to overcome as they built their city and their empire. They are also famous for their aqueducts, which they used to transport fresh water, but we can't see those in the city itself.
- Rome used to get flooded all the time, so building strong bridges was very important; the Tiber would overflow its banks in a major disastrous flood about every 20 years. A new book just came out a few years ago studying these floods and wondering why the Romans didn't come up better systems to prevent them. His answer is bizarrely modern (and you can let the kids guess these): The rich people lived on hills, the

most important buildings were stone and not affected, and they built structures with aqueducts and grain stores that allowed the grain and drinking water not to be affected. (G. Aldrete: Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome, 2007)

**Activity:** How do bridges create possibility? If you were to build a bridge, what would it look like? Where would it go? Draw your bridge of connection on an index card.

## 2. The Piazza Navona:

### **Theme: Bread, Circus and Community**

**What it is:** This is a square that was built over the ruins of the first Roman stadium—the Stadium of Domitian, dedicated in AD 86, a few years after the big colosseum in Rome was built (near the Forum). Enter from the North and stop at the first fountain, the fountain of Neptune (also very interesting! If you have more time, talk about the use of fountains in cities, and these three in particular).

**Compelling Question/Theme of discovery:** What kinds of spaces inspire us as humans to build a community? Let them brainstorm a bit on the question first, then turn to the piazza and let them dig into what they see as described below).

### **Appreciative Inquiry:**

*What do you see?* Get kids to describe in detail what they see. Leave time. Try to get half of kids to say something about the shape of the place, the kind of building

*What do you think it means?* Let them try to interpret what they see and what the place was used for—let them guess and think about what this huge long oval might have been for in a city like Rome. Collect everything and confirm: sports, chariot races, human races, executions, gladiators (less), market place, gathering area

*What does it make you wonder?* Have them think about: What role do sports facilities play in your cities? How do people feel during sports events? Why do you think the romans invented the idea of a big stadium?

### **Fun facts**

- This was built as a stadium, one of the first stone sports facilities, about the same time as the Colosseum. It was a more ‘intimate’ venue than the Colosseum, for 20,000-30,000 viewers. (vs. 60,000 in Colosseum and 70,000 in most big soccer stadiums)
- It was used for the kinds of sports that needed more of a long run to gather speed (chariot races, running races), for naked wrestling and for public executions. (You can see the underground stadium at a museum at the Northeast Corner of the Piazza (you

may want to go over and just look at it briefly after you have talked about it so they can actually see what it looks like. It's marked with a star on the map above)

- When the empire went into decline and the state no longer had the funding to support an athletic entertainment system, the stadium decayed, and the stones and columns were stolen and reused elsewhere. It was like a big dump of stone arches and pillars that people could pull out of as needed.
- These buildings we see today were all built at the height of Rome's Renaissance wealth, so when Rome had risen again as a pilgrimage and trading city and wanted a big marketplace in the center of town. It was used as a marketplace for many centuries, until the market moved to the Campo dei Fiori (a few blocks south)

**Activity:** What is a cheer you would develop for our whole group if we were all in this stadium?

### 3. Pantheon

**Theme: Displaying Heroes**

**What it is:** "Pantheon" means "of all gods". This building probably was used as a temple and sanctuary both for the traditional Roman gods and the Imperial Cult. The building has a huge dome with a hole in the middle. The sun shines through this hole tracing a path around the building.

**Compelling question/Theme of discovery:** What does a collection of heroes say about the society that worships them?

**Appreciative Inquiry:**

- What do you see?* Get everyone to describe in detail what they see. Leave time. Try to get half of kids to say something. There is a big inscription in Latin on the front, the circle in the dome shines a sunbeam on the floor/wall, the walls are very colorful - mostly red, the front has straight lines but the back is circular almost like a silo, the marble has lots of different colors
- What do you think it means?*
- What does it make you wonder?* What about the colors of the marble? Why are they so different? How did they get here? What was this used for? What does the inscription mean? what is the sunspot for? Why is it so weirdly shaped? How did they select who was displayed in here?

**Fun facts**

- The building is the third pantheon to be built on the same spot—both previous ones burned down. This one was built in the early second-century CE. This is in large part due to Roman concrete, a mix of limestone and volcanic ash that is the reason we can still see many ancient Roman buildings today.
- Another reason this building is in such good shape is that it has been in continuous use. It has been a church and in continuous use since the 600s.
- There are several innovations here: for one, its dome is still, to this day, the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world. Domes were another of the Romans' innovations that is still impacting the world today - they were used to make small indoor spaces feel bigger.
- The second innovation is that this is the first kind of “all-heros-temple”, a place that was used to display the “people who matter” (a bit like the statue collection of the church on the bridge!) The Pantheon held statues of many gods, in the niches that later became the burial chapels of famous Italians. Among them, in the early years, were statues of Julius Caesar and Augustus. This shows the "Imperial Cult," or worshipping of the emperors as gods. Augustus especially took branding very seriously—he put his face all over the empire on coins showing him as all powerful and wise.
- *Reflect: How do leaders today market themselves and ensure that people understand their importance, or what they expect as behavior?*
- Famous people buried here include 2 kings of Italy, the composer Arcangelo Corelli, and the painter Raphael.
- The marble in the Pantheon came from all over the Roman Empire, which stretched across Europe and Asia when this was built. Take a look at the columns around the niches where the god statues used to be: the yellow marble is from Turkey, some of the red marble on the floor is from northern Africa. Imagine how hard it was to extract this marble in 150 AD—and how hard it was to transport this across the ocean or across roads. No wonder they recycled all the stone they could find in their own city! They didn't only recycle marble: they also recycled metal. There was a huge bronze construction on the porch that was melted down in the 1700s to make cannons and decorations for the Castel Sant Angelo (which we just saw!)

**Activity:** Who are the leaders you would put into a pantheon today? Let's collect nominees for the top 7 people we put in here to symbolize the values we stand for.

**Take a short clip with your phone of yourself in the pantheon: I am ... and I stand for ....**

*This tour was created for the 2019 I CAN summit in Rome by **got history?**, an organization dedicated to ensuring that everyone has the history they need to be an engaged member of democracy.*

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