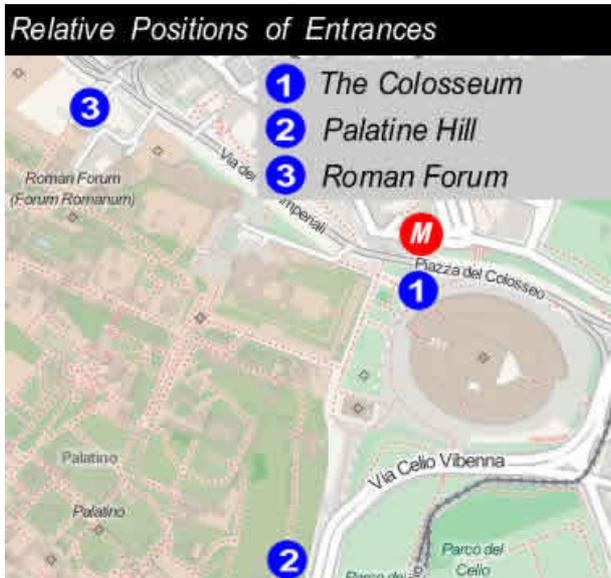


Roman Forum, Palatine Hill, Colosseum and Arch of Constantine

The first two areas are next to each other and you can move freely between them.

The Colosseum or Flavian Amphitheatre and the Arch of Constantine are very close.

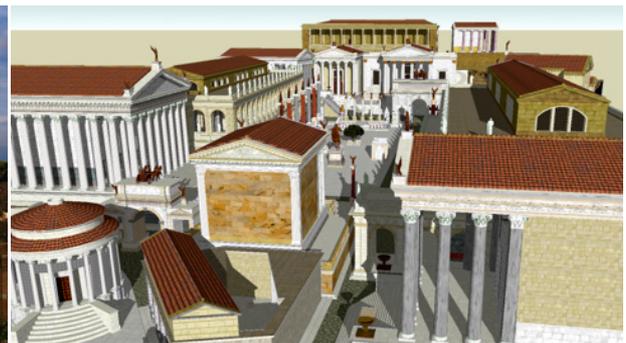


The Arch of Constantine was erected in 312 to celebrate Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge. The arch spans the route which triumphant emperors would use to enter Rome.

The Colosseum was begun by the Emperor Vespasian in AD72 and completed by his son Titus in 80 as a venue for gladiatorial contests. It sits on the site of a colossal statue which the Emperor Nero had placed in the grounds of his massive 'Golden House'. On taking over from the unpopular Nero, Vespasian thought that the people of Rome would appreciate having the tyrant's statue replaced by something they could all enjoy.

(At least those people who weren't part of the entertainment might enjoy it!)

There is a Christian shrine on the site, but no evidence that Christians were martyred there. It was used for gladiatorial fights, beast hunts and even flooded for mock sea battles.



As you can see from a comparison of the ruins today and a reconstruction model, the site of the **Forum** is very complicated, since it was used continuously throughout the Roman period. Not all the ruins you can see would have been complete buildings at the same time, so it is a good idea to focus on individual sites as you reach them.

The **Palatine Hill** was the first part of Rome to be occupied and there are reconstructions of Bronze Age huts in the small museum. It is where the legend of Romulus and Remus is based and a shrine thought to be the *Lupercal* has been discovered underground.

The hill stands 40 feet high, overlooking the Forum on one side and the Circus Maximus (where chariot races were held) on the other side. From Republican times wealthy Romans chose to live there and you can see the ruined palaces of several Emperors. *Palatine* is in fact the root of the word *palace*.