

FROM THE CAFFARELLA TO THE APPIAN WAY BY BICYCLE

The *Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica* is the biggest Park in Rome. It stretches along the beginning of this important consular road, including the valley of Almone, a holy river for the Ancient Romans. The Caffarella corresponds to the area of the Park that reaches the centre of the town.

Whether you are an amateur or an expert cyclist, the visit by bike represents an unique and unforgettable experience. Its exceptionality is given by the double soul of the Park: natural area, where the authentic Roman countryside hosts a great vegetal and animal variety (especially birds, that you can spot from the birdwatching hut), and archaeological zone, boasting lots of monuments and historical remains of various ages that are scattered along the Appian Way and in the Almone River valley.

Starting from the *Casa del Parco, Casale Vigna Cardinali*, our advice is to cross the river up to the so-called *Vaccareccia*, a Renaissance farm complex annexed to a medieval tower. After the bridge, within 100 metres you will get to a crossroad: on the left you will go toward the so-called *Ninfeo di Egeria*, while on the right you will arrive to the cenotaph erroneously called *Sepolcro di Annia Regilla* (aka *Tempio del dio Redicolo*, open on Saturdays and Sundays).

Turning to the right and going past the cenotaph, about a kilometre later you will arrive to the gate that marks the exit from the Caffarella. After a short and tarred tract you will finally reach the Appian Way; on your right you will have the church of *S. Maria in Palmis*, also called of *Domine Quo Vadis*.

Continuing on the Appia Antica toward the centre of Rome you will find on your left first an information point of the Park, then the *Cartiera Latina* (an ex paper factory, with annexed offices of the Park authority); going on, after the flyover, you will arrive to *Porta San Sebastiano*, where is the *Museo delle Mura* (free entry from 9 to 2 p.m., closed on Mondays).

If you wish to go to the other side, moving away from the centre of Rome but remaining on the consular road, you can't miss, in front of the church *Domine Quo Vadis*, an entrance to the *Catacombe di San Callisto* (8 euros for the guided tour, closed on Wednesdays and all February): even if you do not want to visit the catacombs, it's in any case preferable to go up along the inside path, which is smooth although uphill, then to face the first stretch of the Appian Way, narrow and still busy with cars. At the end of the pathway you will get back to the Appian Way, and immediately on the right you will find the *Catacombe di San Sebastiano* (8 euros for the guided tour, closed on Mondays and all December). Further up you can admire some of the most ancient and impressive monuments of the area: the *Circo di Massenzio*, with the ruins of the Villa and the *Mausoleo di Romolo* (free entry, closed on Mondays), and the *Tomba di Cecilia Metella* (entry fee 6 euros, closed on Mondays).

If you wish to visit the archaeological sites please don't forget to ask for bike chains to lock your bikes.

You are kindly requested to bring bicycles back to the *Casa del Parco* before sunset.

Have a good time and enjoy yourself!



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