

Like most tourists, I enjoy taking photographs on holiday and can't wait to show them to friends and family when I get back. But whilst for me they represent treasured memories, to others they are more often than not simply a collection of boring, badly composed, out of focus pictures. So this year I decided to do something about this by booking myself on a trip to Rome which included photography lessons.

The first time I went to Rome, I remember thinking that it was a photographer's paradise with a fantastic photo opportunity lying around every corner. (1)___ Added to this was the fact that there were crowds of tourists everywhere, blocking all the best views. But this second time things were different. Antonio, my photography tutor, was on hand to give expert advice every step of the way.

The first thing Antonio told our group was that the secret to creating a good photographic image rather than just a snapshot is to first take a long look at what you want to photograph. For example, he said, you should consider the background just as much as you do the subject. (2)___ You can get unwanted figures out of your image simply by getting down on your knees to take a picture, for instance, or changing the angle of the shot.

Our first port of call was Piazza Navona, where Antonio gave us advice about how to photograph the Fountain of Neptune. (3)___ Then, he added that we should take the photo with the fountain slightly off centre.

Next, we headed off to the Pantheon, which was originally an ancient Roman temple. Along the way, I took the opportunity to photograph anything that caught my eye. The Pantheon itself is so huge that it is impossible to take a good photograph of the whole thing. (4)___ I tried out this technique by lying down on the floor and taking a picture of just one section of the great domed ceiling. I was pretty pleased with the results.

For the next couple of hours, we wandered around the historic centre visiting many of Rome's architectural highlights. (5)___ And I felt that I was really able to appreciate the sights as I had to look at each one so carefully in order to get good pictures.

We finished off our first morning tour with a stop at a traditional Roman street café. After all the hard work and walking I'd done, a large Italian ice cream seemed like the perfect reward! (6)___ It felt like a whole new world had opened up to me. I learnt an incredible amount over the next two days, as well as having a thoroughly enjoyable time in one of the world's most beautiful cities.

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1 — I didn't get at all tired, even though I was on my feet for such a long time.

2 — According to Antonio, however, it's much better to try to find one interesting detail.

3 — Afterwards, feeling refreshed, I spent the rest of the afternoon alone practising my new skills.

4 — It just goes to show that it is not the equipment that counts but how you use it.

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