

Home > Travel

## Splurging at Vatican worth it

By Shawna Vanness  
Tribune Newspapers  
September 14, 2008

[E-mail](#) [Print](#) [Share](#) [Text Size](#)

VATICAN CITY — Pass by the entrance to the Sistine Chapel and Vatican Museums during open hours and you'll see patrons waiting in an agonizingly long line that snakes along the city's stone wall.

Though a relative bargain in price (admission is about \$21), the sacrifice is dealing with the massive crowds that come with can't-miss sights such as the Vatican.

Worth a splurge is booking a private evening tour of the Vatican that gives you a glimpse of some of the world's most important works of art when the museum is closed to the public. The two-hour guided tours, organized a few times a month by Rome-based Italy With Us ( [www.italywithus.biz](http://www.italywithus.biz)), take groups of 10 or fewer patrons through the museum's highlights with ample time built in for lingering in the chapel. But exclusivity doesn't come without a sacrifice—the experience costs 250 euros (about \$350) a person.

Is it worth it?

On an Italy With Us tour in May, our little group was given an eerie welcome at the Vatican's massive entrance doors promptly at 7 p.m. by a crew of serious-looking Vatican security officers.

We journeyed through empty corridors lined with beautiful tapestries and had a gloriously unobstructed view of hidden gems pointed out by our guide in the frescoed walls of Raphael's Rooms. The only other sound was the faint hum of an electronic floor cleaner from elsewhere in the wing.

Stepping into the Sistine Chapel in the rear corner of the museum, any remaining twinges of doubt evaporated into sheer wonder. The colors, 500 years old, were shockingly vivid. The silence was palpable. And best of all, the floor to stroll around and admire it was wide open.

Lesson learned: Sometimes, a splurge is a smarter choice than a bargain.

Newsday

Copyright © 2010, Chicago Tribune

## Top travel stories

Saguaro Nat. Park: A cactus haven

'Miracle on the Hudson' pilot retiring

Updated 34 minutes ago

US Airways says storms cost it \$30M

Updated 27 minutes ago



## Today's Hot Deals

3/3/10

**\$268 & up** -- Last-Minute Europe Fare Sale from Chicago\*  
 Lufthansa  
A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

**\$59 & up** -- Fly to 35+ Cities from Chicago; Book by Thursday\*  
 AirTran Airways

**\$420 & up** -- Fly to Tokyo & More from Chicago, Each Way\*  
 Air Canada

[Click Here for More Deals >](#)

Listed by **TRAVELZOO**. \*Some taxes, fees additional

**half price chicago**  
Gift Certificates sold at **HALF** Their Face Value!  
Come back at noon for today's deal!  
 **Cafe Bernard**  
Get a \$50 gift card for \$15 for Cafe Bernard & Red Rooster  
Feature your business here

Chicago Tribune Festival of Homes  
Map your personal tour of Chicago's new developments.

Ads by Google

### Vatican & Sistine Chapel

Skip the long lines! Buy 5-star rated Vatican tours and tickets.  
[www.viator.com/vatican](http://www.viator.com/vatican)

### Purchase Vatican Museums

tickets from your desk. Skip lines. Instant confirmation. Any date 2010  
[www.italy-museums.com](http://www.italy-museums.com)