

Rome's Hidden Colosseum Tunnel Opens

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. amphitheater (noun) /'æm.fɪ.θi:.ə.tər/ – A large open building with seats around a central area for performances or sports.
Example: The Colosseum is the most famous amphitheater in the world.
2. gladiator (noun) /'glæd.i.ɛɪ.tər/ – A fighter in ancient Rome who battled in front of large crowds.
Example: Many gladiators became famous for their bravery and skill.
3. emperor (noun) /'em.pər.ər/ – The ruler of an empire or group of countries.
Example: The emperor often watched gladiator games from a special seat.
4. tunnel (noun) /'tʌn.əl/ – A long underground passage that connects one place to another.
Example: The Colosseum has secret tunnels where animals and people once passed through.
5. restoration (noun) /,res.tə'reɪ.jən/ – The act of repairing something to make it look new again.
Example: The restoration of the tunnel allows tourists to see ancient Rome more clearly.
6. assassination (noun) /ə,sæs.ɪ'nei.jən/ – The planned killing of an important person.
Example: Emperor Commodus once survived an assassination attempt in the Colosseum.
7. symbol (noun) /'sɪm.bəl/ – Something that stands for or represents an idea or belief.
Example: The Colosseum is a symbol of Rome's power and long history.



If you visit Rome, it is hard to miss the Colosseum.

This large amphitheater is in the city center and attracts millions of tourists. It was famous for gladiatorial competitions in ancient times. Today, it stands as a symbol of the western Roman Empire, which fell in 476. The Colosseum still reminds people of Rome's historical power.

Much of the Colosseum remains hidden beneath its surface.

There are underground tunnels and secret rooms that most visitors cannot see. These areas were used to organize gladiator fights and move animals quietly. Soon, tourists will have the chance to explore one of these hidden tunnels. This new experience will reveal parts of history that were long forgotten.

The Commodus Passage is a tunnel beneath the Colosseum.

It is about 55 meters long and was first discovered in the 19th century. Historians believe emperors used it to enter and exit the arena quickly. Its design shows how much Romans valued safety and privacy. This passage gives a unique view of how the Colosseum functioned.

The tunnel is named after Emperor Commodus, who ruled Rome from 177 to 192.

He was one of Rome's youngest and most controversial emperors. Many people recognize him from the movie *Gladiator*, where Joaquin Phoenix played his role. Commodus was both powerful and feared by many citizens. The connection to the movie helps visitors imagine historical events.

Commodus once survived an assassination attempt in the tunnel below the Colosseum.

Because of this event, the tunnel carries his name. His guards are believed to have saved him from enemies. This story shows the dangers faced by Roman leaders. Legends like this add mystery to the Colosseum's history.

The tunnel has now been restored and will open to small groups from October 27.

Visitors can access it through the Colosseum's "Full Experience" ticket. The tour will allow people to walk in the paths where emperors once moved. This restoration makes history tangible for modern audiences. It also ensures the tunnel is protected for the future.

Restoration work on another part of the tunnel will start early next year.

Experts will study its design and materials to learn more about Roman construction. Their goal is to preserve the tunnel and prevent damage. This effort highlights the importance of protecting cultural heritage. The Colosseum remains a living classroom for students and tourists alike.

DISCUSSION

1. If you could walk through the secret tunnel, what would you want to see first?
2. How would it feel to walk where Roman emperors once went?
3. Why did Romans build underground tunnels under the Colosseum?
4. How do restoration projects help people learn history today?
5. If you could be a gladiator or emperor for a day, which would you choose?
6. What can movies like *Gladiator* teach us about ancient Rome?
7. If you found a secret tunnel in your city, what would you do?