**The history of Rome’s Trevi fountain.**

One of the most famous fountains in the world, the Trevi Fountain in Rome is an unmissable sight when visiting the romantic city. Sandwiched between a number of small streets in the heart of Rome, the Baroque-style fountain depicts Oceanus, God of water surrounded by the statues of Abundance, Salubrity, tritons and hippocamps. Built using local Travertine stone in 1762, Trevi Fountain stands 26 feet tall and 49 feet wide, so has naturally required some renovation over the years, most recently in 2015. After the Fendi-sponsored restoration three years ago, now is the best time to visit [Trevi Fountain in Italy](https://www.blacktomato.com/destinations/italy/) and admire the iconic masterpiece in all its glory.

## Who designed the Trevi Fountain?

Prior to the construction of the Trevi Fountain, another fountain dating back to Roman times existed in its place. In 1629 Pope Urban VIII concluded the fountain was insufficient so he commissioned Italian architect, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, to sketch some renovation ideas. However, following the Pope’s death in 1744, the plans were never bought to life, though some of Bernini’s touches can be seen on the fountain today.

It wasn’t until 1730 that work began on the fountain after Italian architect Nicola Salvi won the re-design contest held by Pope Clement XII. Using local Travertine stone, the same material used in the construction of the Colosseum, Trevi Fountain slowly began to take shape, with intricate detail carved into every section and sculpture. Unfortunately, Salvi didn’t live to see the finished piece, but with the help of four sculptors and architect, Giuseppe Pannini, Trevi Fountain was completed 30 years later in 1762.

Located in the Trevi district of Rome, the Italian fountain is easily accessible while staying at a luxury hotel in Rome, whether it’s [Hotel de Russie](https://www.blacktomato.com/destinations/italy/hotel-de-russie-rome/), [Portrait Roma](https://www.blacktomato.com/destinations/italy/portrait-roma/) or [Villa Spalleti Trivelli](https://www.blacktomato.com/destinations/italy/villa-spalletti-trivelli-rome/). A short walk from many of Rome’s main attractions including the Spanish Steps, Pantheon and mighty Colosseum, Trevi Fountain’s position in the heart of Rome is an excellent place to explore from. Up for discovering more Roman history? Trevi Fountain serves as the perfect place to set off from on a day trip to the old port town of Ostia on the west coast. Less than an hour drive away, we’ll arrange a private tour of the vast archaeological site at Ostia Antica, home to beautiful mosaics, ancient ruins, floor frescoes and wall paintingsSitting atop an ancient aqueduct that dates back to 19 BC, the Trevi Fountain is fed by the clear water of Acqua Vergine. Found at the junction of three streets, translating to ‘tre vie’, this is simply how the Trevi Fountain got its famous name.

Busy for most of the day, our Travel Experts believe the best time to visit Trevi Fountain is at the break of dawn or in the evening, both offering a completely different but beautiful standpoint. Just eight minutes from Trevi Fountain and sitting atop one of the city’s seven original hills lies Villa Spalleti Trivelli, a gorgeous hotel over 100 years old. Laced with antique furniture and a glamorous marble bathroom, once you’ve checked in to your room for the evening, you’ll be in the perfect position to head out on a [night tour of Trevi Fountain](https://www.blacktomato.com/destinations/italy/family-adventure-italy/). Beautifully lit, the baroque architecture comes to life when darkness falls and the crowds have disappeared, creating a heavenly atmosphere. Don’t forget to toss a coin into the glistening pool for good fortune.

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# facts about the Trevi Fountain

### 1. ‘Trevi’ means ‘three-ways’

The name ‘Trevi’ means ‘three-ways’ and is said to refer to the junction of three roads on Piazza dei Cruciferi. There was also a famous Goddess named Trivia. She protected the streets of Rome and had three heads so she could see everything going on around her.  She would always stand on the corners where three streets met.

### 2. The first Trevi Fountain was purely functional

In the Middle Ages public water fountains were purely functional. They supplied fresh drinking water from natural springs to the people in [Rome](https://italiannotes.com/rome-quotes-famous-words-eternal-city/), who would bring buckets to the fountains, and collect water to take home. The first Trevi Fountain was designed by Leon Battista Alberti in 1453 at the terminal of the old Aqua Virgo aqueduct. For more than a century this Trevi fountain offered the only supply of pure water in Rome.

### 3. The Trevi Fountain was not designed by Bernini

The celebrated architect [Bernini](https://italiannotes.com/tracking-bernini-through-rome/), who designed 5 spectacular fountains in Rome like the central fountain on [Piazza Navona](https://italiannotes.com/stories-piazza-navona-rome/), did not design the present Trevi Fountain. But he did contribute to the process. In 1629 Bernini was commissioned to build a new Trevi Fountain. He pulled down the old fountain and moved the outlet of the aqueduct to its present position. Bernini was allowed to use stone from the tomb of Cecilia Metella on the Appian Way for the fountain, but this caused a public outcry and delayed the project. Bernini left the fountain as a semicircular basin without decorations.

### 4. Designer with flair for theatrics

The Trevi Fountain was designed by a poet and philosopher called Nicola Salvi. He had no architectural experience, apart from having previously designed a set-piece for a firework display in Piazza di Spagna. Salvi set to work in 1732 and he wanted to create a great waterfall that should spring from the façade of a palazzo. Both Salvi and the sculptor who carved the figures died before the fountain was completed and inaugurated in May 1762.

### 5. The sea god is not Neptune

The centre piece in the Trevi Fountain is the Greek sea God Oceanus. Unlike Neptune who would have a trifork and a dolphin, Oceanus is accompanied by sea-horses and Tritons who are half men and half mermen. Salvi used the symbolism to visualize an essay on water. The triton on the left who is having trouble with a restless horse represents rough seas. The triton leading a calm steed is the ocean in tranquility. Agrippa to the left is abundance with a toppled vase as the source of water, while Virgo to the right symbolizes health and water as nourishment.

### 6. There is magic in the water

At some point in the late 19th century, people started to believe that a sip of water from the Trevi Fountain would ensure a return to Rome. No one should attempt drinking the water in the fountain today, but there is a supply of [aqua potabile](https://italiannotes.com/drinking-the-water-in-italy/) in the right hand corner of the fountain, where you can fill you water bottle.

### 7. A coin to appease the Gods (and the builders)

The sip of water is accompanied by a coin thrown into the fountain to ensure not just a speedy but a safe return to Rome. This rite has been traced back to the Ancient Romans, who sacrificed a coin in lakes and rivers to placate the Gods into helping them back home safely. Others claim the tradition sprung from an early attempt at using crowd funding to cover maintenance costs.

### 8. The Trevi Fountain generates 3 000 Euros a day

According to [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trevi_Fountain)an estimated 3 000 Euros are thrown into the Trevi Fountain each day. The coins are collected every night and given to charity, an Italian organization known as Caritas. They use it on a supermarket programme giving rechargeable cards to Rome’s needy to help them get groceries.

### 9. The Trevi Fountain in poetry and film

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote The Marble Faun about the Trevi Fountain. And the fountain plays a prominent role in films like ‘Thee Coins in the Fountain’, and ‘Roman Holiday’, starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck. The best know Trevi Fountain scene is probably from ‘La Dolce Vita’ with Anita Ekberg and Marcello Mastroianni. In fact, the fountain was turned off and draped in black crepe to honor actor Marcello Mastroianni after his death in 1996.

### 10. The Trevi Fountain has reopened after a €2m restoration

From June 2014 to November 2015 visitors found the Trevi Fountain drained and sealed off with fencing. Now it has reopened after a €2m restoration and the attraction is greater than ever.

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| **Trevi Fountain**  **Fontana di Trevi** | |
| **Fountain** | |
| Trevi Fountain | |
| **Design** | [Nicola Salvi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nicola_Salvi) |
| **Construction** | 1732–1762 |
| **Height** | 26.3 metres (86 ft) |
| **Length** | 49 metres (161 ft) |
| **Surface** | Travertine stone |
| **Location** | [Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome), [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy) |
| [Wikimedia](https://foundation.wikimedia.org/wiki/Maps_Terms_of_Use) | © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright)  Click on the map to see marker | |
| Coordinates: [41°54′3″N 12°28′59″E](https://geohack.toolforge.org/geohack.php?pagename=Trevi_Fountain&params=41_54_3_N_12_28_59_E_type:landmark_region:IT) | |