

ROME

An Illustrated Guide to Its Monuments & Art

Piazza di Trevi

From Rome with Love

Robert and Karla

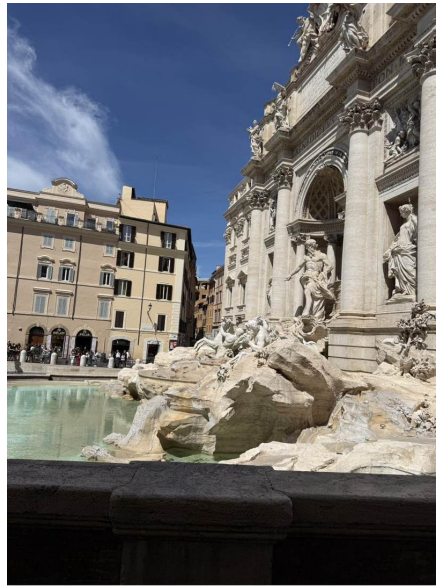
Photographed on site · Notes compiled for viewing

Fontana di Trevi (Trevi Fountain)

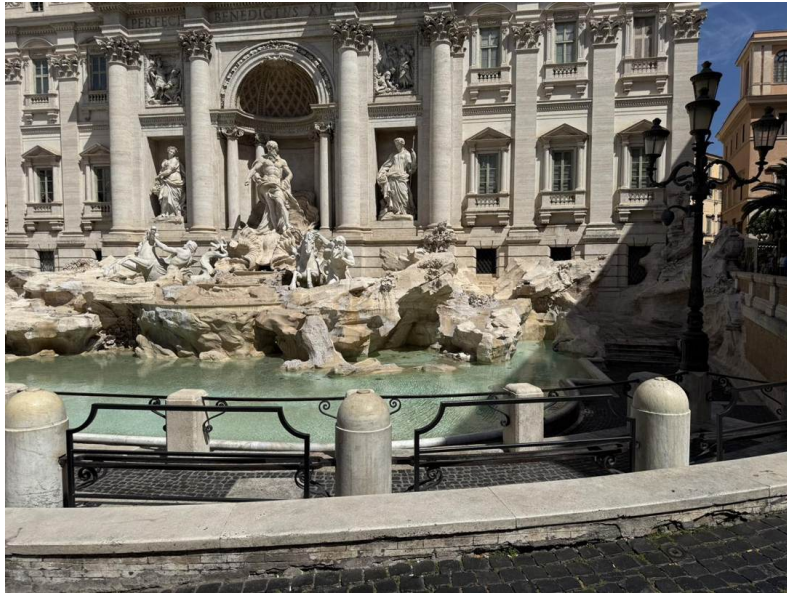
Location: Piazza di Trevi, Rome



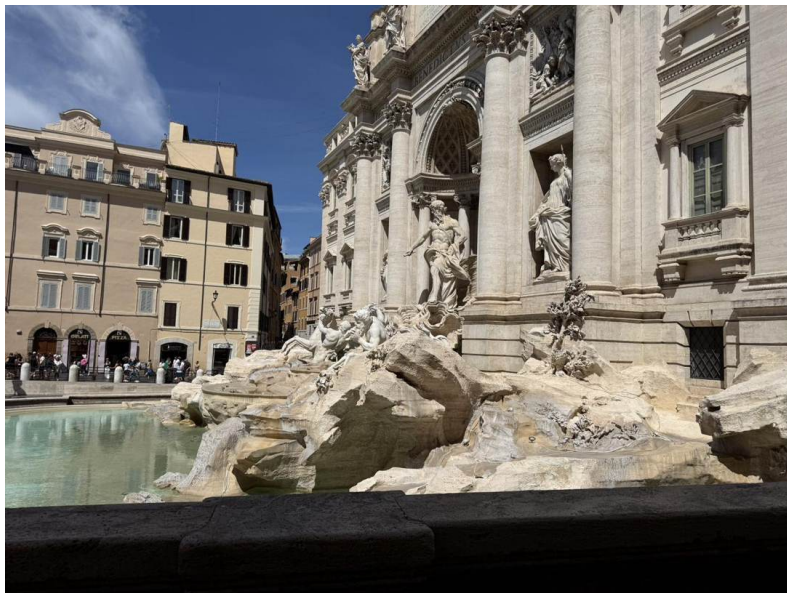
The full fountain — Oceanus on his shell-chariot against the Palazzo Poli, flanked by Abundance (left) and Health (right).



From the left — Oceanus, the Triton with the unruly sea-horse, and the niche of Abundance.



From the right — the Triton with the calm sea-horse; the attic inscription names the popes who built it.



The travertine reef — the carved rockwork spilling toward the street, beneath the niche of Health.

Description

The largest and most famous Baroque fountain in Rome, built against the rear facade of the Palazzo Poli like a great triumphal arch. At the centre the sea god Oceanus rides a shell-shaped chariot drawn by two sea horses, each led by a Triton — one horse rearing and wild, the other calm, for the changing moods of the sea. In niches to either side stand the allegories of Abundance and Health, and carved travertine rocks spill forward into a wide basin. These views move around the fountain to show the central group, the two side niches, and the rockwork meeting the square.

Inscription & Translation

**Attic, central inscription: “CLEMENS XII PONT·MAX· AQVAM VIRGINEM
COPIA ET SALVBTRITATE COMMENDATAM CVLTV MAGNIFICO
ORNAVIT ANNO DOMINI MDCCXXXV PONT·VI·” (a further line of the attic
records Benedict XIV).**

“Pope Clement XII adorned with magnificent decoration the Aqua Virgo — commended for its abundance and healthfulness — in the year of the Lord 1735, the sixth year of his pontificate.” The Aqua Virgo is the ancient Roman aqueduct (19 BC) that still feeds the fountain; a second inscription on the attic names Pope Benedict XIV, under whom the work continued.

Date & Age

Designed by Nicola Salvi, who won Pope Clement XII’s competition and began building in 1732. After Salvi’s death in 1751 it was completed by Giuseppe Pannini and inaugurated by Pope Clement XIII on 22 May 1762 — about 260 years ago, after some 30 years of work. It stands roughly 26 m high and 49 m wide, and was restored in 1998–2000 and again in 2015.

Artist / Creators

Designed by the architect Nicola Salvi (1697–1751) and finished by Giuseppe Pannini. The central Oceanus, with the Tritons and sea horses, was carved by Pietro Bracci (1700–1773). The two allegorical statues, Abundance and Health, are by Filippo della Valle (1698–1768); other sculptors, among them Andrea Bergondi and Giovanni Grossi, carved the upper reliefs and decoration.

Significance

The supreme example of the Roman late-Baroque fountain and one of the most famous fountains in the world. It is the monumental display (the ‘mostra’) marking the end of the Aqua Virgo, an aqueduct in use since 19 BC. Its theme is the taming of water, and its great innovation is the fusion of palace facade, sculpture and ‘natural’ rock dissolving into the basin. Made world-famous by film and by the coin-tossing tradition — a coin tossed over the shoulder is said to ensure a return to Rome.