



Cyclists usually have no option but to walk their bikes en route to the Trevi Fountain in Rome, one of the world's most famous landmarks. PHOTOS BY NEVILLE JUDD — SPECIAL TO PNG

What little shade cast by the Obelisk had been taken so we admired the Gods, all sinew and marble menace, while cooling our wrists in the water. Moments later we were back on our bikes slaloming between pedestrians ambling through Piazza Navona. The more we cycled the more comfortable we became navigating traffic. Perhaps it's the raised saddle of a cruiser bike, but we couldn't help feeling somehow superior to the other tourists trudging along baked cobblestones.

We had no choice but to join them at the Trevi Fountain where, unable to carve out a cycle path, we parked our bikes with Roberto and proceeded on foot. It's probably fitting that seemingly half the world's tourists would besiege one of the world's most famous fountains. An estimated 3,000 euros are thrown in the fountain each day and anyone thinking of diving in to steal ready cash had better be prepared for a slow getaway. It's easy to see why so many people come: Almost 26 metres high and 20 metres wide, the Trevi Fountain is hard to ignore, especially with Neptune, God of the sea, taking centre stage on a chariot pulled by rampant horses. But it's also hard to linger surrounded by so many people, who prob-



Bike guide Roberto at one of Rome's ubiquitous municipal water fountains in Campo de Fiori, scene of World Cup celebrations in 2006.

ably all feel the same way.

Stopping for another drink might have been sensible thing to do. Roberto had other ideas. Not far from the chaos of the Trevi Fountain is Giolitti. In a city full of gelateries, Giolitti stands out for one simple reason. It has more than 100 flavours to choose from, and some of the recipes are

almost a century old. The Coppa Giolitti, which combines chocolate ice cream, custard, chilled zabaione, and is topped with cream and hazelnut shavings, has been responsible for ice cream headaches since 1920.

For cyclists young and old, the restorative powers of ice cream cannot be underestimated, especially when it comes in flavours like Nutella, English Trifle, kiwi and Kit Kat. Being North American we naturally chose to cram three flavours on top, since customers pay by the cone, not by the scoop. The gluttony delayed our progress by a full 15 minutes, but, according to Emma: "This is the best part of the tour."

Second best might have been us cycling along the Tiber River, past the imposing cylindrical fortress Castel Sant' Angelo and up Via della Conciliazione to St. Peter's Square. So many confining streets, narrow alleyways and busy piazzas only serve to emphasize the vastness of St. Peter's Square and the basilica. Amid the chaos of the tour buses, the taxis and countless buzzing scooters, we drank from a water fountain and watched the world go by. It may have been chaos, but it was beautiful chaos.

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