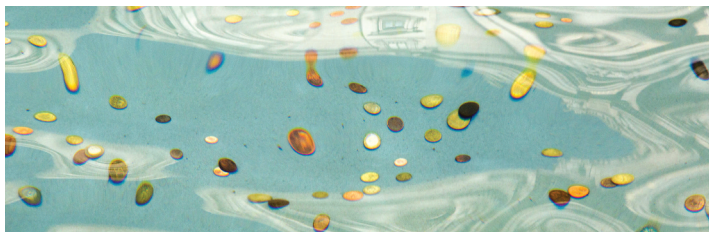


MAKE A WISH

Old Tradition Yields Welcome Benefits

Popularized by a 1950s Hollywood film, the act of throwing coins into Rome's Trevi Fountain began much earlier, and recovered specimens provide for those in need.



PHOTOS: ISTOCKPHOTO/PHOTOGRAPHER-GARY EDWARDS (FOUNTAIN) & MARISAPEREZ

IN 1732 WORK BEGAN on the Baroque-style Trevi Fountain in Rome. Completed in 1762 and inaugurated by Pope Clemens XIII in May of that year, the popular tourist attraction receives thousands of visitors annually.

For many, a visit to Rome is not complete without throwing a coin into the fountain. (This act was popularized by the 1954 film *Three Coins in the Fountain*.) The reasons for doing so are many, including to encourage good luck or find love, but the tradition's origins are quite different. It was believed that drinking a glass of water from the baroque masterpiece would ensure one's fortune, and the legend slowly evolved into tossing coins into the water to guarantee a return trip to Rome. Many visitors might be back for another visit, because more than \$3,000 worth of coins are collected each day!

After city employees sweep the bottom of the fountain, the recovered money is given to Caritas Roma, a Catholic charity that uses the funds to run a low-cost supermarket for needy families in Rome. Visitors who cast coins into the famous fountain can rest assured their money is providing help to those who really need it.