

Rome By Bicycle

Written by Jim and Patti Kerr

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We wouldn't dream of riding bikes around a bustling metropolis like New York City or Los Angeles.



So what on earth were we doing on bicycles on the Via del Corso in Rome? Our troubles started innocently enough when we typed “Bicycle tour of Rome” as a Yahoo! search. A bicycle livery company, [Top Bike Rentals and Tours](#), had the best website, and after a quick phone call, we were headed to Via Dei Quattro Cantoni to a quaint, perfectly tucked away Rome bicycle rental business. The company advertises itself as “professionally run by Rome bike enthusiasts who want to show off their city.”

We spent most of our Saturday touring the [Vatican Museum](#) and [Saint Peter's](#) and thus missed out on the organized tours that the shop offers. Instead, the shopkeepers, Florian and Corine, made us a deal. We rented two 21-gear trekking bicycles and locks for 20€, which was 10€ less than the listed price. Armed with a city map and a healthy fear of dying, we started down the Via Cavour to the Colosseum.

It took a few minutes to get used to riding side by side with Fiats, scooters, tour busses and other traffic. We even saw a wedding processional and the bride waved to us from the backseat of a Lancia limo. Soon, the [Colosseum](#) appeared on the left near the Imperial Forum.

We quickly found out that pedestrians were our true nemesis, not the traffic, because at least the traffic is organized and obeys certain rules. The walkers bolt, turn, veer, jump, stop dead, and do everything but do-si-do. Patti said we were like magnets for them: if they could sense us, they would step in front of us.

We should say that we bike often at home and have rented bicycles in other vacation areas, including a very crowded Niagara Falls, so we adjusted quickly to the confusion and our boldness increased. Soon, we were zipping through Rome at a pretty good pace and were eating gelato in front of the [Pantheon](#) in no time.

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As to the bikes, they were perfect once the seats were adjusted. They made even the Seven Hills of Rome seem easy. All too soon, we were headed back to Florien and Corine and returned to being pedestrians ourselves. The experience did make us respectful for the other bikers, at least for the rest of the evening.

If you are so inclined, we recommend biking in Rome. We covered much of the city very quickly and cheaply without waiting on a tour bus or walking to the Metro station. We also recommend [Top Bike Rental and Tours](#)

. The staff was helpful, knowledgeable, courteous, and spoke perfect English. Their equipment is also first class and well-maintained. Despite the crazy traffic, we really enjoyed the experience of touring Rome via bicycle.

