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All one will need travelling across Italy this year is a bit of money, a good map and definitely a great sense of humor.

The peninsula separating the Mediterranean from the Adriatic is a haven of good food, laughter and physical splendor but it can also become an imbroglio for those not well versed in the land of the unpredictable.

A good rule of thumb for the unsuspecting traveller is to stay clear of the three Fs: fast men, fast food and—especially—fast cars.

Italian drivers are mad and in a rush. Traffic lights are just street ornaments. Drivers don't stop at a red light, they slow down, honk and, if the intersection is clear, proceed.

If you're brave enough to sit in an Italian car—or, better still, behind the wheel you'll find it's surprisingly easy to get around.

Noon is rush hour in Italy because most people go home for lunch, their largest meal of the day. But unlike Canadian cities, there's little traffic congestion because Italian drivers have mastered the road.

In Rome, three lanes automatically become four or five when Fiats and Alfa Romeos try to squeeze ahead. If there's no room left on the road, don't be taken aback if you see some impatient drivers use sidewalks, (not always empty) for a quick getaway.

Honking is another annoying habit Italian drivers just can't seem to shake. They toot their horn to draw girls' attention, to scare crossing dogs and speed up slow pedestrians. It's also a common practice in cities and on highways to honk if you plan to pass.

Italian streets may be pretty to look at but not necessarily to drive on. Narrow streets that barely allow one car through have been made into two-lane roads. In order to avoid a head-on collision, drivers honk before entering these roads to warn oncoming cars. He who honks first pro-

ceeds down the lane while the other pulls over or backs out.

The best way to get around Italy's major cities is by bus. They're usually punctual and fares are reasonable, at under \$1. The problem is boarding.

You enter from the back and exit from the front. Tickets are purchased in advance and cancelled at a time machine at the rear of the bus. Better be quick boarding or you might get a piece of yourself stuck between the doors. If you yell loud enough the driver will eventually open the doors, while the bus is in motion, to let the rest of you in.

That's getting in. Getting out means crawling your way



Abruzzo and the celebration of St. Anthony's Feast

# ITALY

All about the three Fs  
and other things the brochures  
never tell you

to the front. Watch your belongings and the men—if your wallet doesn't get pinched, something else might. If you exit from the entrance door, you'll either get crushed or slapped with a \$10 fine if an inspector catches you.

Italian cab drivers rival New York cabbies when it comes to driving, but in all fairness they are polite, understand English fairly well and charge fares equal to any major world centre. A word of caution, though, stick to marked taxis and don't pay the fare until your luggage is out of the trunk.

Another harrowing experience one can't avoid is going to the banks. Pack a lunch, because it can take hours to get service. Hope the teller doesn't run out of small bills, or there's another 15-minute wait.

Banking hours are uniform across Italy. They open at 8:30 a.m. and close at 1:30 p.m., then re-open for an hour at 3:00.

Have plenty of money on hand because you never know what you will get charged for in Italy. If you decide to order a drink in any bar or restaurant there's a sitting charge, usually 10% of the total bill. But the tax is waived if you drink standing at the bar. Most restaurants include the tip on the bill.

Italians are impressed with foreigners who attempt to speak the language. For in-

stance, there's more than just espresso in Italy. There's cappuccino, cafe al latte (with milk), cafe lungo (weak), cafe ristretto, (strong) and cafe corretto (with a dash of liquor). For those who want more milk than coffee, there's latte con caffe. You'll be a native in no time.

Pizza, Italians' favorite food, has also become popular with hungry tourists. It's sold by weight, not slice, and comes with a variety of toppings. It's slowly replacing bread as the perfect sandwich maker. The dough gets cooking as early as 8:30 a.m.

Play it safe and stay away from hot buffets and tourist menus. The food is usually yesterday's leftovers, deep fried in olive oil and not recommended for sensitive stomachs. Treat yourself to a good restaurant or stick to pizza and burgers.

Remember to always have shoulders and legs covered when entering churches and monasteries or you'll be made to cover with a towel. Hagglng is the magic word at flea markets and boutiques. Italians expect you to bargain with them and usually cut one-third from the original cost.

If you're up after 10 p.m., and I'm sure you will be, notice the traffic lights flashing amber. There's no traffic control in most Italian cities at night. So again, honk, look both ways, and advance with caution.