

Untold Italy Episode 42 - Come away to Capri!

[00:00:59.990] - Katy

Buongiorno, Benvenuti, welcome, friends, it's Katy here, and I hope your week is going really well. Today I am going to cut straight to the chase because I am so excited about the guest we have on the show. If you've been listening or following us for a while, you know that visiting Capri was not only a highlight of one of our trips to Italy, but also of my life so far. Yes, it was pretty amazing. And I know many of you would love to visit or attend there one day, too.

[00:01:28.760] - Katy

Joining us today is Holly Star, a fellow Australian who I have to say in one of the most romantic stories ever, visited Capri as a tourist and ended up falling in love and staying there with her husband. She now runs an amazing food experience business on the island and raises her little Caprese family and enjoys life in one of the most beautiful places on Earth. I just know you're going to love this episode as Holly shares so many amazing things about Capri and her story. Honestly, it's the stuff dreams are made of.

[00:02:00.000] - Katy

If you enjoy our show, please leave us a rating, review or send us a message. We truly appreciate it. And it helps bring these stories of Italy to more people. Grazie! Now, as promised, I'm not going to preamble any longer. I'll let Holly tell you all about Capri and how you can make the most of your time there. Ciao Benvenuti and welcome to the Untold Italy podcast,

[00:02:32.870] - Holly Star

Ciao Katy, thank you for having me. And thank you for inviting me to join the podcast.

[00:02:37.620] - Katy

Oh, thanks, Holly I am so excited to talk to you today about beautiful Capri and delve into all its wonderful mysteries that I'm very intrigued about myself. But before we start, can you tell our listeners how you, an Australian woman, ends up living the dream and staying there?

[00:02:57.510] - Holly Star

I can honestly say it's it's something I still pinch myself today when I think about how much my life has changed in the last seven years. I actually left Australia on a solo trip to Italy in 2013, and at that time I couldn't speak any Italian. But I found myself with my Google Translate and some language apps and actually I had no itinerary. So I arrived in Milan and I was traveling around. At each destination I went to I would I would look up where I wanted to go next, wherever I felt like on that that morning.

[00:03:32.880] - Holly Star

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And one day I looked up Google, my Google search engine and I put in Ischia that I'd heard a lot about. And I actually hadn't heard too much about Capri, surprisingly. But as I put in Ischia, the first thing that, one of the first, things that came up was a hotel called Hotel Luna, which was actually located in Capri. Anyway, I clicked on it and I looked at the website and I have never seen more breathtaking images.

[00:03:58.740] - Holly Star

The scenery looked like it was from a film set and it was this hotel perched on these big limestone cliffs that were like epic and fell down into the sea. And and for me, like the first thing I saw, the first images I saw, I thought, you know, I just want to stay there. I didn't know where this place is, but I'm going to call them. I called up the hotel and I said, you know, have you got a room available?

[00:04:22.200] - Holly Star

And the next minute they did. And within a day I was on the train, I jumped on a train and I was in Naples and hopped across on the boat to Capri and knowing very little about Capri. And I guess I say this often, I was definitely a Capri 101. And I would say that I've learned many things obviously now living here, but things I would have done differently if I traveled to Capri now knowing all those things.

[00:04:48.090] - Holly Star

So actually when I arrived, I was a little unprepared and I was in my travel tracksuit and I was lugging two big bags. And I was down at the port and I got asked by the concierge of the port, "can I take your bags?" But I was traveling as a single woman at the time and I was very possessive of my bags. So I was like, no, and big error 101.

[00:05:17.700] - Holly Star

I will say that if you're staying in pedestrian Capri one thing, you definitely one is a porter to pick up your bags and transport them to your hotel. So little did I know, I jumped on the funicular and ended up at Capri town, which, like I said, is pedestrian. And at that time I had a big map and I had no idea that my hotel was all the way down over many cobblestones walking through the piazza with... If you've been to Capri, the piazza can sometimes be a little overwhelming. It's it's often frequented by the rich and famous and obviously lots of designer clothes wear and and, you know, people donning the latest Dolce and Gabbana glasses and bags, et cetera, sipping on Aperol spritzers.

[00:06:05.040] - Holly Star

So I don't think I was, I think I might have been.. Obviously I stood out. That's what I'd say. But probably for the wrong reasons. It was one of those things. And I lugged my bag and with my big map and my travel track suit down to Hotel Luna. But when I got there, I was in paradise. So I was, I knew that the hotel I had chosen was exactly what it appeared to be on the website. And I couldn't believe how beautiful it was.

[00:06:35.610] - Holly Star

And anyway, the first evening I sat at the hotel restaurant and ate my meal, and the next day I had my best the bar manager I had become acquainted with very quickly after I had my first Aperol spritz, and he was giving me tips on things to do on the island. And and on the first full day, I did the most amazing walk along the Pizzolungo. I'll talk about that later, because it's one of the most amazing things I love to do in Capri. I fell in love with the nature. That's the first thing I fell in love with. I did this walk and traveling alone, I know that there's many times I've wanted to turn to someone and say, are you looking at this? Is this for real? I was literally breathless, like I was breathless, like at what I was seeing.

[00:07:22.890] - Holly Star

Anyway, long story short, I hit the decks. That was my second night and the bar manager asked where I was eating dinner and I didn't know at that stage. And I asked for a recommendation and he recommended Michel'angelo. So off I went. He made a reservation for me and off I went for my table for one at Michel'angelo. And as I walked in, I saw this this handsome man giving a beautiful big smile. And I was doing the same. And I can't even explain it. Like, we just we were just smiling at each other. And anyway, long story short, he sat me down and, you know, I had my book on the table and I was just observing the scene and, you know, I had ordered my meal. And, you know, towards the end of the meal, I thought, I know, I'll get the check now. And the first time I asked for the bill was like trying to speak my best Italian "il conto per favore".

[00:08:23.880] - Holly Star

I next minute I saw a Gianluca nod. So I thought, you know, yes, he understands me. OK, I'll just wait for the bill. And then the first thing that comes out is a dessert. It was actually the Torta Caprese Limone, which is absolutely delicious. And I don't normally eat dessert, but I can tell you it took my breath away. That one too, the dessert, as well as the nature of Capri.

[00:08:46.520] - Holly Star

Everything was taking my breath away by this stage and I'd only been in Capri for two days. But but yeah. And then I said I didn't order this and he said, I know. And I went OK. And, and then the next thing is he came past and he said that this is the torta of my mamma. And I thought to myself, oh well, you know, I better eat it. So then after I finished the Torta Caprese, I thought I'd ask for the bill again. And by this stage I'm looking at all the tables, getting their bill, and slowly leaving and and here I am again. Il conto per favore! And then a glass of red wine appears. And I'm like "I didn't order this." Like I know. And I'm like, OK. And by this stage I'm like, this is getting weird. I don't know if he doesn't understand me or what's going on. And then, yeah, by the third time I asked for the il conto a limonello came out and I thought, OK, this is getting crazy. And so at this time actually there was literally only one table left. And by the time the other table left, I thought to myself, I'm just going to ask one more time.

[00:09:55.580] - Holly Star

"Il conto per favore!".

[00:09:58.670] - Holly Star

Gianluca came over with his order pad and he put it on the table and he said in broken English, Italian and I could understand enough. Was that, "you've eaten. I, I haven't. Now how about you serve me?" And I thought, wow, this is hilarious. He's been playing a trick on me and I thought, you know, I'm in Capri. Why not? Let's just run with the experience. And I got up and I pretended to be a waitress and I led him to a table and I took his order. I went into the kitchen, I gave the order and he was just laughing. And, you know, the staff are laughing and they couldn't believe that I'd like played along with the joke. And after that, he was like, you must sit with me then.

[00:10:45.260] - Holly Star

And literally we had Google Translate and these language apps. And that's how we were communicating. And I don't know what we were saying or what problems we solved that night. But I know we had great fun and we finished up with him walking me home to my hotel at like 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. Well, might have been even later. And that was that. And I put it down to a beautiful evening. It was very you know, everything was unexpected. And the next day I didn't know if I'd hear from him again, but I only had another night in Capri. So I did actually get a message from him on messenger and he asked me to go for a walk. And I just thought realistically, the next day my head came out of the clouds and I went, you know, I've got one more night here. I'm probably never going to see him again. So I said, thank you and thank you for last night. It was lovely to meet you. But no.

[00:11:42.310] - Holly Star

And then he wrote again and said, how about an aperitivo? And I then thought, I don't know, maybe no, I still think no. And then, now I know this. Now I know him. And since moving here, this is a big thing. He said, OK, well, I'm going to leave my restaurant and pick you up and take you to another one. I thought to myself, OK, that's that's nice. I'm here one more night. Let's go out for dinner and see what happens. Anyway, long story short, it was beautiful night. And the next day I was supposed to be leaving and I dropped off at his restaurant Michel'angelo during lunch service, and I wanted to say goodbye. It was busy, so I just put my bags down and went and came back when it was a little quieter. And he just looked at me and he said, you can't leave. And I said, OK. And he said, now please stay with me. And I did. And I don't know why everything just kept happening.

[00:12:40.740] - Holly Star

And it just felt like even though we couldn't speak the same language, even though it just felt so different, it felt like we'd known each other for a long time without being able to speak the same language. I can't explain it other than that. I then checked out of my hotel. I stayed with him for a couple of days and then I did have to go away then.. I was meeting some friends in Pisa and I came back and before I left and went back to Australia and we went to Positano for a couple of nights together. And then I went back to Australia and the long and the short of it is five months later, I returned in the winter to Capri to see Gianluca.

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[00:13:20.040] - Holly Star

So in those five months when I was in Australia and he was in Capri, we were writing on Skype every morning and at night. It was a lot of work, actually, because of the language problem. I would get the messages come through on Skype in Italian, then I'd put them into Google Translate. Then I would then write back in English, get Google Translate and translate into Italian and then back through to Skype. And it was like that.

[00:13:45.300] - Holly Star

Yeah, like I said, I felt and so did he that we had a connection like straight away and it was something different than anything else we'd both felt before. So I came back in November and December and that led to him coming to Australia in January. And by February before he left, we were engaged and then we were married in Capri in May, which was not even a year before our first meeting.

[00:14:12.270] - Holly Star

So it was... and I know, it is very, to other people, might think that was very quick and and also maybe maybe rushed, I don't know. But like, I don't know. For us, it just felt right. It was like there's nothing I can't say anything more than that. And to this day, like, you know, we're still so in love. We've now got two children. We've been married now for five and a half years. And despite all the barriers in terms of, you know, cultures and language, et cetera, we make it work. So obviously, after we got married, we then fell pregnant with our first child, Valentino, and he was born in Australia. But then after his birth, we then packed up or I packed up my life in Australia and moved to Capri. And obviously by that stage I inherited a restaurant that Gianluca had opened in 2009.

[00:15:10.140] - Holly Star

So I had to learn things very quickly. Learn about the food, the culture, what it's like running a business on a remote island. And yeah, I learnt a lot of things very quickly. So that's how that's I guess that's how Capri kind of fell into my lap. I call it destino. All I would say is that ten years ago, I never imagined in my wildest dreams I would be married to a Caprese, an Italian, living in Italy on an island in Capri and raising my children here and running a restaurant. It's the furthest thing from my imagination.

[00:15:55.500] - Katy

Well, it's an amazing story and I absolutely love it. And you know what? I think it's the perfect antidote for these crazy times. It's just one of those ... it sounds like all the stars aligned and the magic happened. And, you know, if anyone hasn't been to Capri, you can, when you go there, you'll understand how some of this magic was all coming together because it is such a magical place, isn't it? Holly.

[00:16:19.010] - Holly Star

It really is. It really is. And for so many reasons. Like not only like the first thing, like I said that took my breath away is just the natural landscape. It's it's breathtaking. Everywhere you look is a magical corner. And it just takes my breath away. And I still to this day, every day I go walking and for us, like on the island, raising the children here every day, I must sound so funny.

[00:16:48.210] - Holly Star

I always I tell everybody that I always be a tourist, you know. I'm always... I think every day I think I take at least I don't know, one hundred photos. I always do that, like, you know, and I tell my kids "look at the Faraglioni today!", you know.. And, you know, whether it is raining or it's sunny or it's this day or that day, you know, it's beautiful. The island's beautiful all year round

[00:17:10.250] - Katy

Isn't it? It's just one of those spectacular landscapes that if you haven't, until you've seen it, you can't really explain it, can you? Because it's so dramatic and it's so blue and it's so green and you've got the waves crashing and the flowers springing up everywhere in the springtime. I honestly I fell in love with that place. I was heartbroken to leave and every day I wear my Fiori di Capri perfume from Carthusia. But so so we can talk about this for ages, just how much amazing stuff there is. But what specifically what can people expect when they get to Capri?

[00:17:52.550] - Holly Star

Well, and a response to that can definitely depend on what time of year you come. So I think the best thing.. I'd probably have to say about the island is it is what could be typically known as a resort island. So officially, officially the season, the summer season starts around Easter and runs to January, to around the end of October.

[00:18:19.580] - Holly Star

And when I say the official summer season, that's when, for example, the Quisisana, the Grand Hotel Quisisana will put their flags up and open and then all the shops and restaurants will open. And so, for example, in the summer season, there's around one hundred and forty to fifty restaurants. However, in the low season for example, so from October through March, there could be at one point only up to five restaurants open.

[00:18:47.750] - Holly Star

So most people travel to Capri in the summer season. So if you're going to come in the summer season, then there's a lot of things that you need to expect. One is lots of people in July. So I know Capri welcomes up to two and a half million people per year, which is actually in July and August. We can see up to twenty thousand people arrive per day on the island. And putting that into perspective of the size of the island and the amount of people who are residents of the island; the island is actually only 11 kilometres, takes the space of 11 kilometers square kilometres, and there's fourteen thousand residents. So obviously there are more people coming than there are residents here. So in saying that, so what would you expect or what you would need to plan around that is visiting the island wisely.

[00:19:45.380] - Holly Star

So knowing where to go, what you want to do, you know, how to get around the island, et cetera, can I can make or break your experience depending if you're coming for a day or a week or two weeks or more. We all prefer more

[00:20:02.660] - Katy

Or if you stay forever like you!

[00:20:07.760] - Holly Star

Why not? I say

[00:20:10.220] - Katy

Exactly. Yeah, I think that's really true. I think this is a time, especially if you've got a limited amount of time, you really need to plan your day out, because otherwise I think there is the potential to be hugely disappointed unfortunately.. And you don't want to be disappointed when you're in Capri like, that's just it's not the right answer, is it really?

[00:20:30.530] - Holly Star

Exactly. No exactly. And so I think the first thing is you need to know is how to get around the island. And also, obviously your trip would be organized as to how long you got to dedicate yourself on the island.

[00:20:44.870] - Katy

Yeah, exactly. So, you know, I think maybe we should talk about like, what are some of the things to see? And then we can sort of unravel it back and say, well, if you only had this amount of time, how could we manage that? So, you know, I think the main thing that people want to do and I didn't even see it... Oh, my goodness. Is to go and see the Blue Grotto because it was actually closed the day that we were there due to the tides and the weather. So, Holly, is it worth it?

[00:21:16.970] - Holly Star

Look, I always say, people often ask me this, and I I am very cautious about recommending things to people on the island, because if it's something that you might regret later, I don't want to in any way influence anyone's decision. And everyone's got a different opinion as to whether something is worth it or not. I guess for me, I believe it's, I mean it's historically fantastic. I mean, the idea that this was possibly the, you know, swimming pool of the Roman emperor, Emperor Tiberius, who ruled the Roman Empire from Capri in twenty seven to thirty seven AD.

[00:21:52.580] - Holly Star

And so, you know, they've found the sea gods statues down on the sea bed of the Blue Grotto, and.. Which you can now actually see in the museum, Casa Rosa, which is in Anacapri, they're on display there. And so I think the history of it is one thing and the energy, and the feel, let alone

obviously the amazing, indescribable blue that you experience. And along with, of course, the theater of the the guys that row you in on the rowboats who sing Sole Mio and in there, as you go around. And look, you know, I think like I said, it's.. Some people, of course, everyone has their different experience when it comes to visiting the Blue Grotto. Again, it can be influenced by the time you go. So, for example, in peak periods, yes, it can be long waits and that can be difficult for people, especially if they're waiting on a boat. And you know, in the heat of the summer, in the hot sun, et cetera. But I will say that in visiting the Blue Grotto, one thing that some people aren't aware of is that you can actually access it by land also. So, if you weren't to come by boat, which is which is obviously something I also highly recommend is a boat ride around the island. Seeing the island by sea is very obviously different than seeing it by land. But you get a very different perspective of not just... So of course, as the Blue Grotto, but there is so many different grottos around Capri. And I'm talking a Gozzo, which is the traditional wooden boat in Capri and going with a captain who will take you into these grottoes. It's really spectacular. You know, you'll see the white grotto there, the Emerald Grotto, the Coral Grotto, and, of course, the Blue Grotto if you go in. I will say obviously, just for those who don't know. But if you're going into the Blue Grotto, it's actually a separate fee for entry to go in. So it's not included as part of, generally not included as part of your boat ride around the island. So if you want to go on a boat ride around the island, like I said, you could access it by land and you could catch a taxi or a bus down to the Blue Grotto and there's some stairs. You can go down and access it that way and hop into a rowboat from the bottom.

[00:24:07.830] - Katy

So that's a good tip. I like that one. But I have to agree with you. The boat trip around the island is what we did. And I'm a real boaty person and so is my husband. So we did enjoy that. But you have to.. I think you have to get the smaller boats, like you said, because there is this huge boat that goes round and sort of chugs its way around really fast, doesn't it? Yeah, I was kind of shocked when I saw it just kept going, like it sort of bulldozed its way in as close as it could get to the grottoes. And then people were hanging off the side doing their selfies and then it kept going around. And then I felt really special because we got to go through the middle of the Fariglioni rocks and and I did get a kiss. Not from my husband, but from my little son.

[00:24:54.280] - Holly Star

I was going to say, so it's called the Lovers' Arch. And it's, you know, the theory is that, you know, the legend has it that, if you kiss underneath the lovers' arch you will have eternal love.

[00:25:07.360] - Katy

I'm glad of that! But I mean, I did feel kinda sorry for the people that were on the big boat because I'm sure everyone's got a certain budget and they can do different things. But I think if you could afford it, you would want the smaller boat, as small as you could get. That would be my feeling.

[00:25:26.060] - Holly Star

No, I definitely say to people, especially if, you know, you're not a frequent head to Italy or to Capri. So this might be the one time that you visit in a moment in your life or, you know, or in at least five, ten years. If you think of it like that, make it special and spend the extra money to have the experience that will blow your mind. You know, I would say that a gozzo boat obviously they're very traditional and there's a whole different range of gozzo boats that either leave from Marina Grande, or you can get one that leaves from Marina Piccola, which is a small port on the other side of the island. And your captain is generally, you know, if not Caprese, obviously somebody that has frequented the island or lives here in the summer season. And they will tell you everything about the island, you know, like I say, all the nooks and crannies. And I think the good thing is, is that you can do your boat trip the way you want.

[00:26:20.860] - Holly Star

So especially if you have a private captain, if you want to know the history, they can tell you the history. If you want to lounge with the music on, they put the music on. If you want to jump into the sea, you ask them to stop somewhere where you can jump into the sea. I mean, like I say or, you know, different people like to hire a boat and then get them to take them to one of the beach club restaurants and have an afternoon at a beach club and then continue that boat ride. So you have more flexibility when you hire a private gozzo with a captain, you have more flexibility about what experience you're after in Capri.

[00:26:52.930] - Holly Star

So obviously there is a different range. There is the boat you were talking about. There are a range of different boats that can take you around with a lot more people. And I will say that, you know, obviously you don't get the same experience. It's over a microphone. You hear the history of the island. So, you know, there's very little, if any, chance to ask questions or to, you know, to really delve deeper.

[00:27:14.890] - Katy

Yeah, yeah. And look, everyone's, like I said, everyone's style of travel and experience and budget is very different. So, yeah, you have to make choices along the way, and you just need to do what's right for you, I think in the end.

[00:27:30.830] - Holly Star

Exactly. No, I 100 percent agree with that.

[00:27:33.970] - Katy

OK, so once we've been around the water, because it is just honestly so spectacular, just like Holly was saying, you just pinch yourself every time. You go, "is this for real?" Like it looks like heaven or something. And then you arrive back. Usually they arrive into Marina Grande if you're coming from Sorrento or the mainland, and then you go up the funicular and then what do you find at the top there?

[00:27:57.770] - Holly Star

OK, so I might explain it like this. Capri is actually broken up into I would say five suburbs, five neighborhoods. So Marina Grande where you arrive and this is the port. And like you said, the boats come from Sorrento and Amalfi Coast in the summer season, Naples and can come from Ischia in the summer season. In the winter season, just from Naples and Sorrento. So Marina Grande is there. Then there is Capri town, which is the historical center of Capri, and you can access that by the funicular, which you said, which is like a cable car, and that takes you straight up the mountain. And you'll arrive in Capri, which is pedestrian only as I was explaining when I first met Gianluca.

[00:28:43.640] - Holly Star

Capri town is beautiful and historic. But like I said, you've got to have your walking shoes on and ready to walk over the cobblestones all around that part of the island. From Capri town.. so you first come when you get to the top of the funicular, you will come to the piazza, into the piazzetta. The piazza is what some people call the living room to the world. It's where the rich and famous, the VIPs, all sit and enjoy, you know, Aperol Spritzes, like I said. And it's a different experience. It's something very special. And I do believe it's so characteristic of Capri. And, you know, there's four bars that all face each other with their cane chairs. And it's all about, you know, getting dressed up and and Italian style. Like, I think it's beautiful.

[00:29:37.190] - Holly Star

You know, like at first when I (obviously have changed my opinion now). first I found it a little overwhelming and pretentious. But, you know, after living here, I see that it's ... You know, there's one thing local sitting down and enjoying their Aperol Spritzes, but also seeing people from around the world, you know, sitting in the piazza and enjoying the atmosphere, soaking it all in. So, I mean, that's beautiful. Obviously a place that I would say you have to walk through, or visit, or experience and sit down and enjoy either a coffee or an Aperol spritz. Look, I know it's expensive, but you can, again, experience it in two ways. You could also have your coffee at the bar. But, you know, the best thing to do is really sit down and enjoy it. And, you know, if it's only one time, then again, choose as to whether to spend your money in the square and the Aperol Spritz. Yes, it might be expensive, but it's something beautiful that you'll take away.

[00:30:30.390] - Katy

Yeah, sure. And you're not just paying for the drink. You're paying for the whole experience,

[00:30:35.610] - Holly Star

Exactly I know. Before going on to the different parts of Capri, I do often get the question about Capri being expensive. And I will say that of course it's an island and a lot of the things have to come from the mainland everyday.. Just the transportation costs alone, but let alone running a business in terms of utilities, there's a whole range of factors that come into place as to why, of course, there's an additional price tag when you come to Capri. I mean, being only a resort that's

open primarily for eight months is another factor. So yes, it might be a little bit more expensive, but definitely a part of your experience.

[00:31:16.070] - Holly Star

So I guess from there, if you're walking around Capri town, there's a number of beautiful things to do in pedestrian Capri. There's lots of shopping. If you enjoy shopping, there's the famous luxury designer stores all along down from the Via Vittorio Emmanuele, all the way to Via Camarelli. And this is where you find your Dolce and Gabbana, your Gucci, Valentino, etc. And then if you obviously go up a little bit off the laneways, you can find equally, (if you're not into the luxury designer brands), you can find a whole lot of Caprese artisans making handmade sandals to vintage wear - different clothes wear, jewelry. And like you said, the island's perfume, which is renowned now in Capri, and it's called Carthusia, and they have a beautiful range of different perfumes, which they say originated from the Carthusian monks that that that resided in the monastery, the Certosa, another beautiful place to visit.

[00:32:18.030] - Holly Star

And so in Capri things that you could do in the pedestrian area is go down to the Augustus Gardens. Some beautiful, perfectly placed gardens, which has terraces. It's usually a euro to get in and you walk through the terraces. It is, for example, and we'll get back to I'm sure, if you only have a short time on the island somewhere, I always recommend to go because you can get picture perfect postcard like pictures of the Faraglioni of Marina Piccola and also Via Krupp one of the country's most famous attractions.

[00:32:54.220] - Holly Star

Unfortunately, even since when I first came to Capri in 2013, it's been closed. So it's actually, it's a winding street that when you look down, it goes it goes down to Marina Piccola - from the Augustus Gardens down to Marina Piccola. But it's actually closed due to the risk of falling rocks. So landslides. And so in that regard, it's the only place you can really get a beautiful aerial view of this magnificent street - a zigzagging street that cascades down into the, like you said, these crystal blue water - is from the Augustus Gardens, from the last terrace. So I always recommend people to go to the gardens, not only because it's just a beautiful little natural sanctuary in the heart of Capri, but also, like I said, you get your beautiful postcard pic of the Faraglioni, you get to see Marina Piccola and and you get an aerial view of the Via Krupp, which is the only place you can really get that viewpoint now that it's closed. Pedestrian Capri lots to do. You can go the Augustus Gardens, like I said, the Certosa, go shopping...

[00:33:56.950] - Holly Star

You can walk up to some of my favorite architectural wonders, which I say, for example, there are many eclectic styles in Capri. Capri has very much been influenced not only from thousands of years back from the Roman Empire being here until It's actually had a very eclectic history... To different people from all over the world coming and influencing its style. So you can see all

different types of architecture. Villa Lysis is spectacular. It was built by a Frenchman in the early nineteen hundreds and it's up on the hill -perfectly placed again.

[00:34:33.310] - Holly Star

These places all have spectacular views. Villa Lysis is stunning and it has views right down to the port and Marina Grande all the way across the Sorrentine peninsula. And not only is it historically interesting, the owner also had in there (and you can look up this later), but he put in an opium den and it was very much a center of the foreign community, eclectic writers, poets, authors of the time of the early nineteen hundreds. It was a center, a place to go. I mean, there was there was lots of parties, et cetera. And yeah, you can read a lot of that if you really into the more interesting international community that that populated the island anywhere from between like around the eighteen fifties, right up until, you know, obviously today. So this is another place, a beautiful place to look.

[00:35:30.310] - Holly Star

And like I said before, if you keep following up the mountain of Tiberio, which is the more local area of Capri, you can find the ruins of Emperor Tiberio, Emperor Tiberius, main residence on the island. He built, is said to have built 12 villas on the island. The one up the very top of Tiberio is called Villa Jovis, and it's open to the public. Like I said, with Villa Lysis, also open to the public as a museum so you can walk through the ruins and imagine what it must have been like to over two and a half, almost two and a half thousand years ago when he was there.

[00:36:05.170] - Holly Star

So pedestrian Capri of itself has so many things to look and see and do. Obviously, like I know I mentioned at the very start - nature. There's a million and one beautiful walks that can you can walk through Capri. In July and August, in the peak season when, like I said, that can be up to twenty thousand people a day, you can find places where there's no one and you might not pass anybody. So, you know, you would you would not imagine that you're actually there in peak season. All you need to do is just get off the main tracks and find those places and then experience your Capri. I you'll feel like it's a slice of paradise just for you. So for me, like I said, the famous Pizzalungo walk. That was my very first walk I did on the island. It blew me away. And and I love doing that walk to this day. And it takes you around the whole coast of the island and you can go up around and back to the piazza. But before you do see, you've got to see that natural arch the Arco Naturale - beautiful. And then you can also walk through and go back through a place called Piazzetta delle Noie, which is a beautiful lookout point. There are so many look at points in Capri where you can just literally just soak it in, soak in the natural wonder around you.

[00:37:24.730] - Holly Star

So. So, yeah, putting that aside, that's Capri, that's my little summary of what's in Capri.

[00:37:33.040] - Katy

Who knew that 11 kilometers of island could pack such a punch? You know, like, seriously, you've got something for everyone. We haven't even mentioned the food yet Holly

[00:37:44.370] - Holly Star

I know. So I'll quickly ran back to the different neighborhoods of Capri because you have Marina Grande and then you come to Capri town, you've gone up to Tiberio, and then you have Marina Piccola still and Anacapri. Anacapri means above Capri - ana means above.

[00:38:02.470] - Holly Star

So Anacapri is almost like there is two different local governments, Capri and Anacapri. And they are very different. They're very different vibes, different feels. I would say, for example, Capri town being pedestrian and everything is more energy focused, more in one area. There's a lot more activity. And I guess buzz in terms of restaurants and bars, et cetera, nightlife. And Anacapri has a completely different feel. And I would say more like a village. We feel it's beautiful. We actually we moved up here just six months ago now and we're loving it. So I guess another thing is it covers a lot more space. So Capri is quite concentrated, like I said, and a lot of energy and space, whereas Anacapri is very spaced out.

[00:38:54.430] - Holly Star

And and for us, it's beautiful to have that space. And there's a lot of amazing things up here to see. Again, shopping has a more local artisan kind of vibe. You know, a lot of festivals are held up here. So, for example, in October, we would normally have the Chestnut Festival up on the almost the top of the mountain. So you can take the chairlift up to the top of the mountain, Monte Solaro, the highest peak of the island, and then walk down through the valley, where we would normally have the Chestnut Festival and then walk back down to Capri. Like it's very community focused and beautiful. Same, you know, obviously in Anacapri they held different festivals.

[00:39:37.390] - Holly Star

Normally they would have at this time actually, Settembrata - it's a celebration of the grape harvest. And everyone gets together and you'll see the different folklore traditions and lots of dancing, colorful folk group singing and dancing the tarantella. And it's really beautiful.

[00:39:58.000] - Holly Star

So and then just to cap off the island, the last neighborhood or suburb that I'd like to touch on is Marina Piccola. It's where Gianluca grew up. So it's spectacular. It's where the Fariglioni is located. It's very much.. It was a small, little quaint fishing town and is now obviously got more famous over the years and has beach clubs, et cetera. But it also has two sort of small free beaches you can go to where the locals frequent and where you'll find my family, my two kids and and nonna and zia. And they're relaxing in the summer afternoons while Gianluca and I are working.. So that's the low down on the island.

[00:40:45.760] - Katy

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Oh, gosh, I just I really need to get there again. Okay, so I'm coming. Can we talk about the food? We need to talk about the food. So own a restaurant.

[00:41:03.040] - Holly Star

Definitely we have to talk about the food. OK, maybe I'll start by saying a little bit of history about Michel'angelo and the restaurant that my husband opened in 2009. My husband is from a family of foodies and his father was actually a chef on the island. So is his cousin and his brother, etc.. So they have been involved in the local food for a long time, actually, before his father was a chef. His grandfather was raised pigs on the island. Now, I think it's so interesting because I can't imagine if there is even one pig on the island.

[00:41:40.510] - Holly Star

But clearly, as you can see, or as you would have a feeling, is that the island has changed a lot in the last 60, 70 years, especially with the growth of tourism. And so we've seen less of focus on agriculture, which I'll get back to later on that. But in any event, Gianluca's father unfortunately passed away in 2002 and in memory of his father, he opened a Michel'angelo and it's actually translates to ...So his father's name was Michele and the name of the restaurant translates to Michele with the Angels. It's very.. For him, it's a very passionate, emotional connection he has to the restaurant. And his idea and the concept was, is that he would bring his family's cuisine to the restaurant to share with the world. But also, you know, his passion. Obviously I never got to meet Gianluca's father, but I've seen photos and he had an amazing smile like Gianluca.

[00:42:35.010] - Holly Star

And I feel like, you know, Gianluca really wants to.. He wants to share a part of his father's life and their life on the island with the world. And he's done that now for 12 years. So like I said, I feel like I inherited a restaurant by marriage. And, you know, he had his concept of the restaurant, of course, before I came along. I mean, I couldn't really add anything. And I don't know, I didn't mention before. But, you know, as my career before, as a lawyer, I couldn't really bring much to the culinary table... Although other than other than absolutely enjoying all the food that was coming my way. But I would say that since I've come here, I've learned a lot about the cuisine, obviously. Also something we started after we married Gianluca actually opened a cooking class and it was the perfect way for both Gianluca and I to work together and put our skills and talents together.

[00:43:39.750] - Holly Star

So he is actually the chef in the cooking class. And I come along and talk and he's taught me everything. So I've learnt about, you know, obviously the history of the food, the dishes, et cetera. And and, you know, I get an opportunity mostly to speak in English during the class. So I get excited because the rest of my life and in Capri is sort of, you know, trying to navigate through broken Italian or dialect.

[00:44:05.760] - Holly Star

So for us, it worked out perfectly because he gets to share his passion for cooking and his cuisine while I get to, you know, communicate with people. So it worked well. And what we did was we actually started our cooking class with the three most renowned dishes in Capri. So if someone wants to ask me what what would you eat on the island if you were there for one meal, what would I eat?

[00:44:29.310] - Holly Star

I would say this. I would say the three dishes, the three most famous dishes all have Capri in the name. So, I mean, how could you try it? So you have, of course, the famous Insalate Caprese. That's the Caprese salad. It came from Capri. And then we have the ravioli Caprese, which is a delicious ravioli filled with a goat cheese called caciotta, which is very local. In fact, back in the day... And it's something actually I can share a little bit of history on now.. Is that there was a lot of goats and you can still see them. If you're walking around, especially if you on Monte Solaro or Tiberio, you might often see some of the resident goats clinging to the the limestone cliffs and getting their way around. And in fact there used to be quite a big production of this goat cheese caciotta. And, and that leading to another interesting fact is that in Italian goats means or goats is capri. Capra is one goat, capri is goats. And often people believe that that's how Capri got its name. But but I will tell you, this is a diversion.

[00:45:41.400] - Holly Star

But I always think that it's a way to remember that the goats cheese the ravioli caprese is Capri. So then you can think goat's cheese and goats. But I always say it's not actually the way Capri got its name. Capri was actually named, they say, most likely by the Greeks after a wild boar that's no longer on the island. It's extinct. And they called this boar wild boar capri. So an interesting little diversion, but the ravioli Caprese bringing it back is a beautiful ravioli, cheese filled goodness. It also has a local herb in there called marjoram. And it's obviously topped with the most amazing fresh, you know, rich and sweet tomatoes and basil. And it's honestly delicious. One of my most favorite pasta dishes on the island. It's also a very traditional Sunday dish. So, for example, if you having a family lunch at c's mamma's house it is generally ravioli Caprese on Sundays.

[00:46:43.150] - Holly Star

And obviously then I would also recommend you'd have to have a taste of the island's dessert. I mean, the island's dessert is beyond. It's gluten free. It's called the chocolate torta Caprese. I would also recommend, you know, as I mentioned when I first met Gianluca, the lemon variety. The lemon variety is just as good as the chocolate variety. It's basically ...The chocolate variety is chocolate and almond almond cake. And it has an interesting history as well, which we always divulge in the in the cooking class and along with the lemon. Anything lemon in Capri is amazing. And I'll go into that..

[00:47:21.070] - Holly Star

So they're the three main dishes. So I say if you're going to come to Capri, why not try the dishes that have Capri in its name?

[00:47:30.980] - Katy

Yeah, it makes sense. It makes sense.

[00:47:33.080] - Holly Star

But obviously there are a whole range of other dishes that I suggest. I mean, firstly, you're on an island. So that obviously means amazing seafood. So there's a couple of things I would recommend in terms of seafood, if you want to try. For example, the local fish special fish, I guess, that's caught is caught by hand in between mainly in the waters between Capri and Ischia. But you can still see this fish quite a long way down the Amalfi Coast. It's called Pezzogna. And they cook that in a way. It's called pezzogna all'aqua pazza, which means fish in crazy water.

[00:48:09.100] - Holly Star

But it's actually a beautiful dish and it's really light and it's cooked with tomatoes and garlic and you feel very island like when you're eating it. You know, it's very, very local and almost like a little luxury in Capri. The other thing I'd probably say is, you know, Totani, it's a local squid. It's something, again, that's very Caprese. They either stuff it with, like cheese fillings or vegetable fillings or they fry it and put it with potato.

[00:48:40.670] - Holly Star

And it's amazing. Naughty but amazing. Yeah. And like I said, there's also anything lemon that means, you know, try ravioli Caprese with a lemon source or fettuccini or a lemon pasta with seafood. You know, the lemons. Capri is renowned for its lemons and and they put it and they mix it in the cuisine a lot, whether it be from desserts to biscuits to pastas to drinks. You know, you name it. You can get anything with lemon in it. And yeah other than that, you know, you can get different varieties of parmigiano Melanzane. But on the island especially, I think the local produce here is amazing and you can really taste that. Like I said, that tomato is like so tasty, the eggplants, the basil, you know, when it's home grown and freshly torn, it's just, you know, a different a different fragrance, a different aroma and a different taste. So I know that's a beautiful dish I also like.

[00:49:44.030] - Katy

The melanzane parmigiana is my favorite. It's my favorite. But I'm living for this fried squid. I'm going to try that out. I'm a bit of a seafood lover now. But what about the wine, Holly? Are there local the wines on Capri.

[00:50:02.260] - Holly Star

Well, I will say one thing. They're to put in perspective again, taking it back to how big the island is. There isn't actually wine, I think, cantina that uses all Capri grapes. Because of the size of the island it couldn't have produced enough grapes to actually produce a wine that would be in enough volume to sell to the world at large, for example. However, we do have lots of local wines here. So there's lots of grapes that might be mixed with some grapes from the mainland and they

are very Campania based grapes. And for example, white wine, delicious Falanghina, Greco di Tufo, Fiano di Avellino, which go perfectly with seafood. And mozzarella, of course, which I didn't mention before. But something else that.... We're in Campania in the heart of mozzarella!

[00:50:53.940] - Holly Star

So you know, you can have your your chilled white wine with your Insalate Caprese with your buffalo mozzarella that was freshly made that day. Another level! Or you know, also Aglianico. It's a very light red wine, a local grape and and this is also perfect for the summer, even if you can have it a little bit chilled, you know. Right through to the more heavy, a full bodied Taurasi, that in Capri is a specialty in winter. You know, when you're enjoying your melanzane parmigiana in winter, it's one of those comfort food wines, but of a very high quality. It's a DOCG wine. So, yeah, there's a lot of local wines and and there are a few very small cantinas on the island that you can experience. Or, definitely, more family production wines that you can experience in different restaurants from carafes, for example, straight from carafes.

[00:51:50.680] - Holly Star

So of course, you know, being in Campania, we have this access to all the most richest produce. So all the foods and produce that come from rich volcanic soil, you know, being so closely located to Vesuvius, obviously just across the wayside. It's one of the big, I guess, epic things that take up the landscape when you're in Capri. You're looking across right at the Vesuvius. And it's it's pretty, like I said, like everything here - breathtaking.

[00:52:25.640] - Katy

I think it's really hard to over exaggerate how tasty the food is, really. Like you have a tomato and it tastes like a tomato of the gods or something. It's just ... It's got the ultimate tomato taste, doesn't it? And I was just talking to another friend of mine, Daniel Oteri. She's an expert in the Paestum area. And so she knows a lot about the mozzarella. And I said to Danielle, actually I had life changing mozzarella cheese there.

[00:52:57.220] - Holly Star

Yes, I know. I 100 percent agree with you on that. The flavors here, it's like, you know, when you put a tomato in your mouth, it bursts in your mouth like it's bursting with flavor. And, you know, I know it's hard to explain until you until, you know, obviously taste it. Like, I'm Australian and we have great produce in Australia, but it's just a different flavor. And I think, you know, it really comes with the soil and how fertile it is and also, you know, obviously years and years of traditional farming in ways that they've done things here in Italy. And I think. Yeah, and I guess that brings me to.. I didn't finish about the restaurant and such. Our restaurant actually has now closed.

[00:53:45.460] - Holly Star

So we have opened the cooking class. We've been open for six years with the cooking class and and we're happy to say that we've had the most amazing experience meeting so many people from

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all over the world. And people from, you know, professional chefs to people who just want to come and have a laugh and learn about local life on the island and enjoy food while they're doing it.

[00:54:04.960] - Holly Star

And we've also taken our cooking class on the road. So earlier this year, we were actually in collaboration with Eataly. We went round each of the US locations that were in New York and Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and ended up in Canada at the new store in Toronto. And we we just love the cooking class. We love just sharing, you know. Gianluca is the chef sharing his passion for food. And me, like I said, sharing the island. And I guess this leads to our next venture in our next life. And so the restaurant actually finishes its lease at the end of this year. So after 12 years of being in business, we're sad to say that Michel'angelo is closing, but we're also in the same way, extremely excited because we're going to launch our new venture next year and it's very much involved with food experiences as opposed to a restaurant.

[00:54:58.660] - Holly Star

So actually we've invested in a very big, beautiful seaview garden property, which is located just near the Blue Grotto and it's a very special piece of land on the island. And we've been clearing it and now cultivating it. And so this year is our first year, our first harvest. It was once a cultivated olive grove over 100 years ago. An olive grove and Vineyard. And so we're actually now reviving the plants that we're finding. We're working on the olive trees. We're planting like a big vegetable garden. And the concept being is we want people to come and experience a different, more traditional part of the island in that and bringing agriculture back to Capri, some of which had been lost, obviously, to the rise in tourism on the island.

[00:55:53.110] - Holly Star

And so in that regard where, like I said, planting all our vegetables, we're hoping to host a whole range of really unique experiences. So combining food with the culture. So we want to hold our cooking classes, you know, different tasting sessions, aperitivo evenings. There is a spectacular sunset from our property. So we're right on on the cliff side. So, you know, in some way you're looking at the sun setting behind Ischia. You can see the whole landscape of Procida to the Bay of Naples right across to Vesuvius.

[00:56:22.920] - Holly Star

So it's really a spectacular location. But we want to obviously bring more than the location itself. We want to bring the culture back. So we're looking forward to, like, launching art workshops, different cultural workshops or meditation, relaxation, yoga, et cetera. But all combined with a food experience where, you know, hopefully you can come and pick your own food and and we'll cook it up for you. We have a barbecue, and so we'll grill your eggplants, grill your food and make a whole range of different exciting creations with food that you literally picked from the garden. We did our very first olive harvest on the property last year. We're hoping to get people involved and come along and do an experience with us harvesting the olives and then bottling and pressing, pressing and bottling your own olive oil, those sorts of experiences.

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[00:57:17.800] - Holly Star

Like I said, it's very sad to be saying goodbye to Michel'angelo after 12 years, unfortunately, also in the circumstances that the world is facing at the moment.. However, in the same instance, we're really excited about the challenge ahead. And you know, we think that we can hopefully offer to the world at large, very different side to Capri. So in that regard, we're keeping positive and looking so much forward to when people can travel again and come and visit us and and see, you know, like I said, come and experience our little sanctuary on the island.

[00:57:54.140] - Katy

I can tell you right now that I'll be there .I'll swim across from Naples if I have to. But that sounds so exciting. I think, you know, one thing and this is a bit of a theme running through what's happened on the podcast. We get some really interesting people coming along. But just getting back to nature and really understanding the provenance of the food, where has come from the love and the care and attention that's going into the produce. And then further to that, the respect that it's given when you're cooking, that it's just a real part of Italian culture that unfortunately we don't see so much of in other parts of the Western world. And I think it's something if you can, if you do have the time to experience, I think people definitely should make the time to do. Because it could be life changing. You could get that mozzarella. But at the same time, you could get stars. You might meet a husband who knows? But at the very least, you'll be one of the most idyllic parts of the world and you'll be eating amazing food. And I don't know if there's anything better than that, to be quite honest.

[00:59:03.050] - Holly Star

You got it right in that food has played a central part in Gianluca and I's relationship to this day. From the moment I ate in his restaurant, you know, obviously then opening a cooking class, meeting people through food and and now obviously growing it ourselves. And I know when we were talking about wine before he also has grapes on the mainland. We make our wine production from there. And we've now since then also have our own range of different products that we can ship around the world. So we we bottle up our tomatoes and and we bottle up our olive oils, et cetera. And we have these available that we can ship around the world, which especially at this time we found has been great for many reasons. If you're missing Capri, you're really missing Capri you can taste the flavors of Capri at home. We send you six of Gianluca's family recipes that you can cook up and and try with our tomatoes that are bottled up here in Campania and the olive oil.

[01:00:06.140] - Holly Star

So I guess it's a bit of fun. It brings Capri to your home and and obviously keeps us like dreaming of when we're going to travel again and enjoy, you know, a million places, but also obviously Capri.

[01:00:22.390] - Katy

So don't worry, folks, I'll give you all the details because you'll be wanting to get some of these. I'm telling you, you never tasted tomatoes like this before. I'm not joking. Unbelievable. All right. So

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when we can come back, because I know it's actually true, everyone just is desperate to come back. Holly, just don't worry. We're coming. We're coming for you as soon as it's possible. We're on our way. I might even swim from Australia. Who knows? I'm not that good at swimming. So, you know, I think ideally you'd want to spend two or three days, maybe more in Capri. But if you only have one day, what would you suggest?

[01:01:06.160] - Holly Star

OK, what I would suggest is really planning your trip wisely. Think before about what you really want to get out of the island. As I said before, people come to the island for so many reasons, whether it's the nature, the history, the art, whether it's the beach club environment, whether it's the fashion, you know, fashion, nightlife, et cetera, you know. Think about what's the reason why you want to come. Hone in on just one or two of the things that you would like to see and do those leisurely and explore them deeply as opposed to running around and seeing the whole island.

[01:01:41.210] - Holly Star

So I do hear often that people say that ticked off Capri. They've done Capri because they've come for a day. And I honestly, you know, I've been living here for over six years. I can't say that I've done Capri. I still am learning things every day. You know, I still get amazed by another walk that I hadn't been on yet, you know.. So there's so many things to do on the island.

[01:02:06.350] - Holly Star

I think, you know, if you're coming for the day, see, these one or two things that you choose, whatever might be your priority items and and really explore them and save the rest for when you can come back and stay a while. Because really part of the thing or part of the fascination and joy of the island is living or getting to experience the island pace, the way of life, and it's a lot slower. I mean, something you often hear in Capri is people saying to piano, piano, piano, piano. That means, slowly, slowly.

[01:02:43.570] - Holly Star

So if you're rushing somewhere... everyone's like piano, piano, like, you know, you are on an island like, hey, relax. You're in Capri and I assure you know, if you're trying to see Capri in a day, you're going to be rushing around.

[01:02:59.910] - Holly Star

And I will say that, you know, in the summer season in particular, there can be big queues for the buses or public transport. And whilst the island's small - only 11 square kilometres - getting around it in the time frame, you know, to give it any justice, to be able to see different sites in Capri, I really just don't think it's worthwhile without being without being stressed. I think you would feel rushed and stressed if you were wanting to go to Anacapri, Capri, Marina Piccola and go up to see the ruins. You know, it's just too much to see.

[01:03:31.440] - Holly Star

So like I said, pick a couple of things, see them, experience them, you know, leisurely, and then come back and stay on the island and really experience the island the way of life. You know, it's very much a part of the experience as as is ticking off your must sees.

[01:03:53.520] - Katy

Wow. So I think three days would kind of do it.. .Although if you stayed three days, you probably would never want to leave.

[01:04:04.470] - Holly Star

Yeah, I, I definitely say this -nthe longer the better thing. But I understand that, you know, depending on your trip to Italy, Capri sometimes can just be a quick visit as part of, you know, the Amalfi Coast or doing the whole of southern Italy. And in that regard, I have a couple of different suggestions, maybe one little left of center. A lot of people come to Capri for the day trip. And that means a lot of, up to twenty thousand people can come per day. In fact, I think it's only ten to 15 percent of those daytrippers that come that actually stay the night. So obviously in the evenings, it's a lot quieter. Quite a different environment. It's just a different feel. So in the daytime, you have this big amount of traffic coming and going all at the same time. So, you know, early morning you have everyone arriving and then in the evening, afternoon, or evening, people leaving. If you, for example, were spending a bit of time along the Amalfi Coast, one thing I do suggest to people is how about basing yourself in Capri and doing the day trips across to the mainland?

[01:05:15.330] - Holly Star

And the reason I say that is you're going against the traffic. Number one - so you're leaving the island when people are arriving. So, you know, generally when I do, I mean, this is the way that we we sort of work around it in the summer if we need to go to the mainland is when you're going against the traffic. So, you know, your boat will be less full and then you have a different experience on the mainland because a lot of people are coming up to Capri.

[01:05:35.460] - Holly Star

You're going across to the mainland so you can visit either from Capri, Naples, Pompeii at Pompeii, do day trips to any of the beach clubs along the Amalfi Coast or, you know, there's ferry lines direct in the summer period. You know, the Amalfi Coast, Atrani, Positano, Sorrento. And also there's other boats going direct to go island hopping and go across to Ischia and different islands that you access then again from Ischia. So there's a lot you can do by basing yourself in Capri.

[01:06:05.040] - Holly Star

And I know that in the past people have been, I guess, wary of doing that because of the perceived, I guess, expense of accommodation on the island. And as I said to you before, yes, some things are more expensive, but again, it's what your preference is. So there is you know, a large range of accommodation options from five star hotels, the luxury exclusive five star hotels to one star hotels, to B and Bs, to Airbnb, to pensiones, to villas and apartments.

[01:06:33.600] - Holly Star

You know, there's a lot of different options. And it's about finding what's right for you and what budget you want. And that all depends on what you're after, what you want to take out of your holiday. I mean, are you someone that spends time in the hotel or do you prefer to be, you know, hiking the island? I mean, do you want a pool and a view or are you going to be down at the beach looking at the view all day anyway?

[01:06:56.880] - Holly Star

You know, so it really depends. Do you want a local experience or do you want to be amongst the action and in the centre in the heart of the piazza? Or would you prefer to be staying with a local family in Anacapri learning different ways of the island? It really just depends on what you're after. You know, are you traveling as a family or on a honeymoon or a romantic visit, or are you coming with friends to celebrate at our wedding or a birthday or whatever it be really influences what type of accommodation and which part of the island you should stay in.

[01:07:32.200] - Katy

Well, I actually think that's a genius move. Actually, I think you should sort of patent that maybe.. Stay Capri instead of Positano and go there on a day trip. It's genius. So good on you. I love that.

[01:07:47.170] - Holly Star

Well, of course we all want to hear it, but it's also great to experience the island like, say, the pace of the island. So I would say the pace of the island isn't reflected when you come on a day trip because you see so many people running around on a day trip.. And you miss, for example, this pace of life. People ask me, especially in the cooking class, like, you know what? How do the locals get by? And I go, oh, if you want to see locals, like in the summer, get up early, get up around seven, or eight, and you will see all the nonna's doing their supermarket shopping.

[01:08:18.310] - Holly Star

You will see the food getting distributed around the island on the characteristic little cars and you will see a different life because everything locals need to do gets done before the first boat comes that fills up the island and we can't then hop on a bus. So we know that we've got to do things either in the morning, early or in the evening. And so, like I said, if you're staying on the island for a longer period of time, you get to feel the way of life and how things work and you get to see the locals. Like a lot of people say, you know, isn't it just a tourist island.No, there actually is fourteen thousand of us that live here all the time. In winter too. Yes. There are schools here. There's a hospital. This is it. You know, we have doctors and dentists and there are a lot of people ask me those sorts of questions about life here. And yes, there is a life, there's a daily life here. Of course, we live here. But, you know, if you're visiting for a day, you might not see that and get lost amongst the sea tourists. And it can happen.

[01:09:24.310] - Katy

It can. And it certainly deserves to linger a little longer, I think. Definitely. So have we missed anything Holly? I think we've covered everything. It sounds like, I think everyone is going to be ready for Capri. Ready and waiting. But I did have one thing, actually. What if you're going on one of these long walks that sound amazing and definitely need to be done when I don't have a couple of four year olds in tow. What if we get hungry along the way? What would you do then? Because this is actually a leading question, because I found Holly through this idea and she needs to tell everyone about it because it's very important. I think it's a brilliant idea. Another one!.

[01:10:05.350] - Holly Star

Yeah. I would say, again, when we open the cooking class, one of the things that I got to bring to people when they were visiting Capri was a different experience because, again, like I'd heard, many people would come to Capri and they would think that it was overcrowded, etc. And I would just say I couldn't believe it because I would go on these walks and I don't see people. And, you know, like I said in July and August, and I thought to myself, why aren't people enjoying, like, you know, beautiful food while looking at, you know, the Tyrrhenian Sea in awe of the boats below on these amazing look out points.

[01:10:39.940] - Holly Star

So we started up Capri picnics. And what you do is you order online and we freshly prepare your picnic for your pick up time and you literally come pick it up. We give you a map. We have personalized maps to all secret locations on the island and off you go. So you walk to your destination on the back of the map. It has the history of the location, etc. So you can read and learn as well as sitting, devouring, beautiful, freshly made Caprese food. And and then, of course, you're experiencing nature. So you get to experience, I guess, threefold. You get the history, the nature and the food. So we love doing the picnics as well. It's something we're going to offer at our new venture. But actually not so much doing the walks anymore because we the property is two hectares and there's so many beautiful places we can set up picnics on the property itself.

[01:11:34.960] - Holly Star

So we're obviously still going to continue that offering - our gourmet picnics and obviously a new venture, which I didn't know if I mentioned before, is called the Giardino di Capri. So in English it translates to Capri's Garden.

[01:11:53.650] - Katy

Beautiful!

[01:11:54.240] - Holly Star

Well I wanted a way to continue like doing it. Like I said, all the things we're passionate about sharing - sharing of food and, and family and traditions. Bringing it back to what you said about food and it really is a crucial part of Italian culture. It really is. Like for us food really brings families, family together. It's like how you celebrate love in all shapes and forms.

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[01:12:20.860] - Katy

Ah you're so romantic. I do love it. So, Holly, I've got a sneaky last question for you. Now, seeing as you live in one of the most beautiful places on Earth and almost Paradise. Where do you go on holiday in Italy? On vacation, do you?

[01:12:38.340] - Holly Star

Oh, it's funny. You know, look, we don't leave the island often. And as weird as this is, especially I mean, for example, Gianluca's family find that Capri has everything that they need to live comfortably. And they don't often, you know, even go to Naples to pick up things or anything. And I guess a little bit of an offshoot story. When I was Gianluca's birthday, for his fortieth birthday, I organized a lunch in Positano at one of our favorite restaurants over there called Da Vincenzo.

[01:13:12.390] - Holly Star

And his mom was obviously coming and his nieces and nephews and I had some of my family from Australia who were here. And anyway, we got off the boat and I could see his mum walking around and I was asked, "oh, when was the last time you were in Positano?" And she said it was her first time. And she's lived in Capri her whole life, born and raised in Capri and had never been to Positano.

[01:13:35.310] - Holly Star

And, you know, it's again, it's a product of how the seasons work here. In the summer season in Capri the residents are working because it's a short season and you have to earn enough money to sustain your family for 12 months. As with Positano, it's very seasonal. And the interesting thing is, while you're working, it's summer. And, you know, most people travel to these destinations in the summer for the love of the beach and beach culture and, you know, being by the water, enjoying seafood. But, you know, if you're working really hard at that time, you don't often get a day off to go. And if you do, you generally are not going traveling on that day.

[01:14:15.120] - Holly Star

You're normally resting before the next busy week, you know, especially in hospitality and tourism industry during peak period. So the point is, is that, you know, if you do go somewhere from here and and this is not me personally, but I said Capri people and generally after they've worked a long season, they will often head to somewhere where they can get some sun because, again, they work the whole summer. And then when it comes to it, say they might go to Thailand or go to the Canary Islands or to the Maldives or, more recently, a lot of people have been going to Australia and Dubai, etc. in the off season. Obviously, with the restrictions on travel this season, I won't be going back to see my family in Australia.

[01:15:00.540] - Holly Star

But sometimes we do that. But to be honest with the kids in school, it's more difficult to travel when you've got a growing family in Capri. And obviously school season in full force in the winter

so we don't get off the island much is what I'm trying to answer. That was a long way round about telling you I don't get on the island much. And if we do in the low season, it's very local.

[01:15:23.610] - Katy

We often travel to visit all of our amazing suppliers and providers on the mainland. So we spend a lot of time in Taurasi and in, you know, in different places in Campanina. And and that's probably the extent at the moment. Obviously, you know, when you've got young children, as they get older, it's easier to travel to different places. And like I said earlier, we went to America earlier this year. I can't believe it was this year. It feels like a long time ago. But in January and February, before covid here we were in America. And but that's again, that was that was a first for us, you know, like that was I hadn't been to America for twenty five years more. It was great, you know. But yeah, like I said, traveling.. We are happy here. We love everything here. We have family, you know, and for us going on a hike is just as fun as, you know, experiencing some other destination around the world.

[01:16:26.110] - Katy

So it's pretty much paradise, I've got to say. It really is. So thank you, Holly. I feel like I've just stepped into the piazzettawater and the sea breezes are wafting over me. And I know everyone needs a bit of Capri in their lives at the moment. So how can our listeners get in touch with you and keep up to date with the goings on on your beautiful island?

[01:16:49.830] - Holly Star

Oh, yes, please do keep in touch. I do. We have our Instagram page, which I'm probably the most active on it, by the way. It's all me because it's all in English. As I said before, as I said before, my Italian is pretty, pretty bad still. I don't know. I've lived here a long time, but I am also on piano, piano, time-frame as it comes to learning the language. But it's all in English. And I have the Instagram account of the restaurant which is at Ristorante_Michelangelo and we also have an Instagram account that I'm just setting up for the new venture called Giardino di Capri so @GiardinodiCapri. And on Instagram, I'm very active. So like, you know, once a day, I do try to upload an Insta story every day of our life on the island, sharing a bit of everything. So a bit of food, a bit of what we're doing that day, bit of the kids, bit of family, bit of these beautiful views or, you know, hikes or whatever it might be a bit of history. So we like sharing the island. And yes, you can find this on Instagram - follow us there. We're on Facebook, although I must admit, not as active as we are on Instagram. And you can check out and follow along our websites. Obviously, our Michel'angelo website - www.caprimichelangelo.com is up there already. But unfortunately, as I said, we're closing at the end of the year, although you can purchase all of our food products through our website directly. And we have a range of different packages that include shipping. So you just need to click on the products tab and then go through. And we have different packs there for our tomatoes, wine, olive oils, pasta, marinated vegetables, everything. You can get a real taste of what we're going to be offering in the new venture next year at the Giardino di Capri. I will say, for those that say how can you keep in touch? How can you keep Capri alive and be in Capri without being in Capri at the moment? Like I said, you know, we have our recipe book. Cook up at home, you know, follow along on Instagram.

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[01:18:55.490] - Holly Star

I'm not sure if you have read yet that the best selling author, Kevin Kwan, who is the author of The Crazy Rich Asian trilogy, he just released this summer, a book that's partly set in Capri. And he's very descriptive of his story that's set in Capri. I mean, I've read the book, obviously, and I can see that it's a great read if you are really imagining and wanting to be here right now.

[01:19:17.660] - Holly Star

So people have been asking me, what can I do Capri related? I want to plan my trip. I want to do all these things now for next year - hoping that all is well. And so I say get in the mood, you know, cook up, research recipes, you know, read Kevin's novel that'll get you in the mood, you know. Do all the things Capri. But from a distance.

[01:19:43.280] - Katy

Oh, yes, I know the distance.

[01:19:47.090] - Holly Star

Yes. We're all too familiar with that right now.

[01:19:51.050] - Katy

We really are. Now everyone Holly's Instagram is the stuff of dreams. So do check it out and it'll brighten up any day no end. I absolutely promise. Grazie Holly. Thank you for joining us and taking us on this amazing virtual journey to gorgeous Capri. Thanks again.

[01:20:07.460] - Holly Star

Thank you for inviting me to join. I'm very grateful. And and like I said, thank you to everyone for listening in.

[01:20:17.560] - Katy

OK, I'm just going to take a moment to sigh here. Oh, wasn't that amazing? Holly was so generous with her stories and advice and there is absolutely no doubting her love of the island, its food and its people. I actually took her advice and read Kevin Kwan's novel called Sex and Vanity, which, as Holly mentioned, is partially set on Capri.

[01:20:42.610] - Katy

It's such a fun book that is actually loosely based on one of my favorite novels of all time, A Room with a View by EM Forster. Except that instead of Florence, Capri plus the location protagonist of the stor. The description of the places and sights of Capri are wonderful and it's a brilliant escape. Now don't go expecting a serious literary read. This is fun and light. And if you ask me exactly the right tone for these somewhat crazy times.

[01:21:13.320] - Katy

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Of course, I put a link to the book and information on all the places and food dishes Holly mentioned into the show notes at untolditaly.com/42 for Episode 42. You should be able to click through from your podcast app, too.

[01:21:28.250] - Katy

And I've also provided details of the food experiences and parcels Holly and Gianluca are excited to share with you. They are both so clever and creative that I know there is going to be a long wait list to join them in Capri as soon as things open up. So make sure you stay in touch with them if you plan to visit.

[01:21:46.640] - Katy

If you enjoyed this episode as much as I did recording it, we'd be so grateful if you could leave a rating or review in your podcast app. That will bring Holly's incredible story and all the stories of people that we have featured in the show to more people and boost their profile in these very challenging times. Grazie mille. Thank you so much. We appreciate you. So now I am off to scheme my next trip and to make sure I build in island time on beautiful Capri

[01:22:14.510] - Katy

Grazie. Thank you for listening. Enjoy your weekend. Ciao for now