

[00:00:50.480]

[00:00:59.430] - Katy

Ciao, everyone. Hope you're eating all the pasta and enjoying the tiramisu in your part of the world. You're listening to Katy bringing you your weekly virtual trip to Italy. Did you enjoy last week's episode on some of the smaller cities in Italy? I loved recording it, actually, and it really reminded me of how much I love those smaller places and why I usually include several into our itineraries for Italy. While Rome, Florence and Venice are nothing short of magnificent, if you want a different flavor of Italian life, the smaller cities offer something really special.

[00:01:32.820] - Katy

They are often steeped in history and so proud of their unique past and stories. And this is where you find and see people living and working and just going about their daily business. Today, we're going to visit another one of those cities and explore the surrounding area. I haven't been to Bergamo, but it was the last stop planned for, yes, you guessed it, the trip we had to cancel in March. And sadly, like nearby Brescia that I talked about in Episode 32, Bergamo was very badly impacted in the first wave of covid, but it's well on the way to recovery.

[00:02:06.750] - Katy

And I really wanted to hear more about it because I had some insights and it really did sound like a very interesting and lovely place to visit. So it was serendipitous that my new friend, Di Bortoletto, reached out and mentioned that she had spent quite some time there and would love to share her experience. Di stayed in Bergamo as part of an intensive Italian language program that she's just about completed at a university here in Australia. She became very familiar with the area and uncovered some treasures, including one secret that had me scrambling to Google and bookmarking and saving across every single device that I have for my next trip.

[00:02:47.280] - Katy

How lucky we are to get such wonderful tips every week. We appreciate all our amazing guests and the generosity in sharing that quite wonderful secrets. Make sure you subscribe to the show on your favourite podcast app so you don't miss out on any of these tips going forward. But for now, on with the show and let's find out what got me so excited.

[00:03:10.080] - Katy

Ciao Di Benvenuti. And welcome to the Untold Italy podcast.

[00:03:14.430] - Di Bortoletto

Oh, thanks, Katy. Thanks for having me. I'm excited to be on. I love your podcast.

[00:03:19.700] - Katy

Well, thank you so much, Di. I've given you a short introduction in our episode intro. But before we get started, perhaps you could let our listeners know something about yourself, your background and your interest in Italy.

[00:03:32.190] - Di Bortoletto

Well, I've got Italian heritage, so I've always had an interest, I suppose, in Italy. But it wasn't until I went there for the first time when I was 24 that I felt like I'd arrived home. And it was such a weird feeling. And my sister, who's a couple of years younger than me, didn't quite have that same pool as what I have to Italy. I mean, she loves it, but not like me. I kind of a yearn for it.

[00:04:01.140] - Di Bortoletto

And right now it's so hard not being able to go. It's yeah. That's kind of like a little achey feeling in my heart. But background wise, yeah. I've spent a lot of time in Italy over the years, so I've been traveling overseas since I was twenty four. So that's twenty four years actually. Gosh, I'll give it away my age.

[00:04:25.230] - Di Bortoletto

But I spent six months living in Rome at one point back in 2007. I've done several trips that have been

like eight weeks, couple of months long through Italy and I've lost count the number of times I've been, which is kind of like a nice thing to be able to say. So and I try to go some where, like I always try to go to Rome, but I also try to go somewhere different each time.

[00:04:52.060] - Katy

That sounds like the best thing to do. I try and do that myself. So you have spent so much time in Italy and you're so passionate about your family's homeland. But today we thought we would chat about the lovely city of Bergamo close to Milan. What took you there?

[00:05:06.090] - Di Bortoletto

Well, I'm studying Italian at the University of Western Australia at the moment, and I'm doing a diploma of Italian studies, which is just the major subjects. So if I did all the other subjects, I could get a Bachelor of Arts. But I've already got a Bachelor of Arts, so I didn't need another one. So my sister in law and I enrolled to do just the diploma. And there was a study exchange in Bergamo that we decided to do.

[00:05:35.370] - Di Bortoletto

Yeah. Which was one of the really big motivating factors for me to enroll in university was. Yes. A month started studying Italian in Italy. Yeah. In Bergamo. So that's what took me there.

[00:05:48.150] - Katy

Wow, how wonderful. And what was that experience like studying in Italy?

[00:05:52.710] - Di Bortoletto

It was.. Look it was amazing. It was hard. Like the whole class, we had a test on our very first day to get us into which class level we would be in.. And, but it was like every lesson was in full Italian, which, you know, at the time I was you know, I'd been studying for 18 months, done three units at UWA. So it was really tough going after five hours of class every day. It doesn't sound like a lot, five hours, but I would be exhausted by the end of that.

[00:06:26.620] - Di Bortoletto

And then we had most afternoons free from about 2:00, 3:00 onwards. So, yeah, we would just be able to do some other pretty fun things around Bergamo in the time. But yeah, we had in the class that was a real mix of students from all over the world, all ages, some girlfriends and boyfriends of, foreign girlfriends and boyfriends of, people living in Italy that were going out with Italians and they wanted to improve their language skills. Others like us that were doing university exchanges and others just kind of on a bit of a holiday that just wanted to learn Italian.

[00:07:04.010] - Katy

Oh, yeah, well, it sounds like such a great way to learn Italian and see some of Italy at the same time. What was it that you particularly loved about Bergamo?

[00:07:13.740] - Di Bortoletto

It's a really beautiful medieval city. It's also quite like the fairly small, so it feels really manageable. It's not big and overwhelming like Rome can be, especially on your first visit. My first visit to Rome, I hated it. It was like, oh, so in my face, but now I can't get enough. But Bergamo is, you know, the old.. There's two towns really in Bergamo. There's Citta Alta, the old town on top of the hill, that's the medieval town and Citta Bassa, which is the lower town. And the Alta is medieval. Most of the streets, a lot of the streets are pedestrianized. There is not much traffic through there. So it just feels manageable and it's just really pretty. And because it's on a hill like you do get beautiful views all around.

[00:08:06.100] - Di Bortoletto

It's actually got some UNESCO heritage walls surrounding the Citta Alta. And you can actually walk along those walls. It's a five kilometer walk. Yeah. And you get really pretty views.

[00:08:21.170] - Katy

Oh, I love those those walled towns. It's one of those things that we just don't get here in Australia. And I guess outside of Europe, it's.. Those are very special things. And I always go to the walls myself or are there any other view points of the city?

[00:08:35.200] - Di Bortoletto

Well we had awesome views from the university where we went, which was just outside of the one of the entrances and the wall of the Citta Alta. So, yeah, every morning I would walk in and not just go, oh, wow, look at that. The view is quite distracting from the learning because when it got too hot and my brain would switch off, I'd just gaze out the window and think, oh, look at that.

[00:08:58.090] - Di Bortoletto

So but yeah, there's also you can climb a tower and there's a pretty nice view from that. And there's a funicular as well that connects the lower town and the upper town. Obviously there's views from that as well.

[00:09:16.920] - Katy

Oh, beautiful. What's the countryside like around there? Is it very hilly? I suspect it would be.

[00:09:22.640] - Di Bortoletto

Yeah, it's a killer. It is. The hills are a killer. So, you know, if you plan to go to Bergamo, sensible walking shoes one hundred per cent every day. Yeah. The cobblestones and the hills make it for pretty challenging walking conditions, but around there... The city's surrounded by four and a half thousand hectares or so of park. It's called Parco dei Colli. And yeah, it's ....There's lots of hiking. Hiking is one of the activities that people go to Bergamo for. Yeah. And again, really, really pretty.

[00:10:01.390] - Di Bortoletto

Unfortunately, while I was there, I had a torn meniscus in my knee, so I didn't participate in the hiking. But yeah, I saw photos of all the other students who went and it does look really beautiful.

[00:10:12.160] - Katy

Amazing. I always find it fascinating how the Italian women still manage to wear heels in these places without fail.

[00:10:19.780] - Di Bortoletto

I know my first trip to Rome, I packed heels. I walked out of the accommodation I was staying at and within two steps my heel got caught in the middle of a cobblestone. And I just, you know, I just turned around, went back, put my trainers on and. Yeah. So if you want heels, wedges are the way to go in Italy, but you're better in flats.

[00:10:44.080] - Katy

And I understand, back to Bergamo, because it sounds like a very beautiful place. It's also a bit of a city of churches, isn't it? Not that, you know, most Italian cities aren't, but I understand it's got some lovely churches.

[00:10:57.880] - Di Bortoletto

Yeah, it does. There's Santa Maria Maggiore, which is a 12th century church. There's San Bartholemew and also Santo Stefano Church, they're 15th century churches. The Bergamo Cathedral is a 17th century church and there's a few others. And they're really beautiful. Like just, you feel like you're in a postcard when you're in Piazza Vecchia, which is in the upper town Citta Alta. It's just it's hard to describe and it's medieval, you know, it's all cobblestones, that old brickwork.

[00:11:33.040] - Katy

Lovely, beautiful, beautiful. I've seen pictures of Bergamo actually. And I've always really wanted to go because when they show the pictures with it covered in mist and it always looks really atmospheric and very beautiful. So it was on my list of places to go this year, but that didn't happen.

[00:11:51.820] - Di Bortoletto

You'll get there. You'll get there when you go. You'll be able to eat polenta and make sure you do eat the polenta because it's so good, in Bergamo. It's actually different to the rest of the polenta they serve in the north in that they have their own type, which is, they ate buckwheat to it. Oh, it's so good.

[00:12:10.750] - Di Bortoletto

There's actually a little hole in the wall restaurant in Citta Alta that serves just polenta. That's all it serves and and it's really cheap. It's like a student place, like it caters for students. So you just , I think it was like I don't know, like four euro or something like that for a plate of polenta. Yeah.

[00:12:31.090] - Katy

Mm. Delicious. What did they serve it with?

[00:12:33.080] - Di Bortoletto

But you can get it chicken. You can just get it on its own. They have another one that's mixed with cheese as well. So yeah there's a few different types.

[00:12:44.140] - Katy

Oh goodness. Polenta. Mm. Yummy yummy. Now I think I mentioned to you when we were chatting earlier that I spent some time in Brescia and I know that casconcelli is a type of stuffed pasta from that general region. Do they have, did you ever taste that?

[00:13:00.340] - Di Bortoletto

Yeah, we did. And we only had it once. Didn't really rate it, to be honest. It was, I think it might have been the restaurant we were in. Yeah. I think we kind of got sucked into a tourist trap, which I should have known better, but should have known better. You know the tricks usually.. But you know, you see a cute little place. And you see it's got lovely views and it's very easy to forget that it's a tourist trap. So, yeah,

[00:13:28.700] - Katy

you've got to do your research, don't you?

[00:13:30.650] - Di Bortoletto

You do. You do. And never eat in a place. It's got pictures of the food at the front. That's my general rule.

[00:13:38.000] - Katy

I mean, the thing is, in Italy, they have to provide a menu at the front and it will be written down and eaten in Italian. But if you do a little bit of pre preparation, you can always find out what, you know, what certain words are. So you can avoid offal if you want to.

[00:13:53.590] - Di Bortoletto

Yes. Yes. They also have a a specialty cake in Bergamo as well, which... That is disgusting. Actually, I would not recommend it. It's just I know I know. It's a it's just like a round sort of yellow mould and it's a bit grainy, but it's really, really sweet, like just sickly sweet, like not enjoyably sweet. And the local Bergamaschi, the people say it's just the tourists. Now locals don't eat that cake any more. So yeah, there you go

[00:14:31.450] - Katy

This is news me.... Italian food that's not very nice.

[00:14:36.490] - Di Bortoletto

yeah look I know but the gelato, the gelato was out of this world. I had, I've never had gelato with herbs in it before. We found this place, it served almond and rosemary gelato which sounds a bit strange, but the taste, I still think about it. It blew my mind, it was so good and I'm sure that that's not a typical Bergamo flavor. But, yeah, very interesting. I haven't seen it anywhere else.

[00:15:08.410] - Katy

So, no, I haven't heard of that I've had with Basilico. And, you know, it's that's quite refreshing. But I can imagine that's a bit more rich and more like more of a wintery type gelato or something

[00:15:24.790] - Di Bortoletto

It's surprising. I had it in the heart of summer. And I was really refreshed. So yeah, I had it more than once. It was really good. Yeah.

[00:15:32.530] - Katy

And was there a particular place that you go to for that delicious gelato?

[00:15:37.480] - Di Bortoletto

There was a place and I can't remember the name, but it was on our way to university, so we had to walk past it. So it was a frequent stop. Yeah, it was on one of the main roads. I think it was on Via Settembre 20, 20th of September Street. But I can't remember the name of the Gelateria.

[00:15:59.770] - Katy

Oh, well, I mean, did you get one on the way there and on the way back?

[00:16:03.640] - Di Bortoletto

No, because otherwise the way there, it was too early in the morning. We had to be at university by eight a.m. and we used to catch the bus there because that was uphill. And then we would walk home, which is downhill, you know,

[00:16:15.000] - Katy

So it just sound like the type of place that you would probably get a good workout going up and down hills.

[00:16:23.530] - Di Bortoletto

Definitely. Definitely.

[00:16:25.540] - Katy

And what about the wine? What's that like?

[00:16:28.950] - Di Bortoletto

Oh, look, we just drank whatever was on offer. I didn't to be honest, I didn't really research the local wine while I was there.. Although we did take a day trip out to our Franciacorta, that little town that makes the specialty Franciacorta wine and did a tour out there, which is a very accessible trip from Bergamo. And that's Franciacorta. It's a sparkling wine. And they make it in a really traditional way. But interestingly, it's much less known than champagne, obviously, which is famous worldwide, but it has more bubbles per measurement of fluid than what champagne does. It's very refined. It's quite expensive.

[00:17:18.190] - Di Bortoletto

But but the wine country it was just stunningly beautiful. Like rolling green hills lined with vines and then the old, you know, 15th, 16th century stone building bombs that have been converted into cellar doors. And it was a really lovely day out.

[00:17:38.290] - Katy

Oh, it is so beautiful. It's those pinch yourself moments when you're sort of walking around, and you go "am I really here? What's going on?"

[00:17:45.340] - Di Bortoletto

Yeah. Yeah. My favorite pinch myself moment of course was at San Pellegrino, which is where the water comes from, the famous sparkling waters. And in San Pellegrino there is a river there that's crystal clear and there's a day spa called the QC Terme and it is the most opulent, gorgeous, luxurious, grandiose day spa I have ever seen. It's in a beautiful old palazzo and it is surrounded by mountains and greenery and pine trees. But inside there's all these different kinds of, I lost count of

how many different chambers and experiences there were, you know, from it, it was a salt tray.

[00:18:34.080] - Di Bortoletto

We just sat there and got all the positive ions from the salt. There was various different steam rooms. One of them was colored. You had colored steam, another one had music playing. Another one was an aromatherapy steam room with different scents.

[00:18:52.930] - Di Bortoletto

There were saunas, spas, spas for your feet. Little caves with pools in them that you could lie in and you put your head underwater and music is playing. Outdoor pools as well and lounges so you could just lounge around and just enjoy the view of the mountains and the trees. And so it was just bliss.

[00:19:12.940] - Di Bortoletto

And it was so nice, in fact, that the last bus leaving from San Pellegrino to go back to Bergamo was leaving at five thirty in the evening, but at 5:30 in the evening. That's when the spa put on aperitivo, which was all included in the entry price. And it was like, oh, we're going to miss aperitivo! We're not going back to Bergamo. So we rushed to the change rooms where our phone was and I frantically searching and just booked a couple of hotel rooms for my sister in law and I to stay. And we just decided we were going to stay in San Pellegrino for the night. And because the day spa, the spa didn't close until midnight, so. Let's just stay here. I just never want to leave.

[00:19:56.510] - Katy

I wouldn't want to leave either. That sounds amazing. And I think the moral of this story is never miss aperitivo!

[00:20:02.510] - Di Bortoletto

No, you know, and and if you see a QC spa anywhere, I think they're like beautiful, like several of them around the place. But the one, it's in San Pellegrino is absolutely stunning. And it's just next door to what actually is an old casino. It's a replica of the Monte Carlo Casino. It's really beautiful. You have to pay to go in. Oh, no, you don't pay go and you have to join a tour to go in.

[00:20:32.270] - Di Bortoletto

So we kind of snuck on the end of a tour and then got caught and had to because we just plan it. So we were just kind of a bit too late for for it all. This group rocked up and we thought I just follow them. But yeah, it's a really, really beautiful old building. San Pellegrino is a really lovely day trip, a really lovely little town... It's only kind of one street. And then the day spa. and the casino.

[00:21:00.220] - Katy

Wow. How far is that from Bergamo?

[00:21:03.530] - Di Bortoletto

I was about a forty five minute bus ride. One bus. Really easy to get to

[00:21:10.450] - Katy

Listen to that - wine country, day spas point. Sounds like a really lovely base. Were there any other day trips that you did from there?

[00:21:19.870] - Di Bortoletto

Oh yes. Yeah. We went to skipped class actually one Friday and had a long weekend in Lake Como. Lago di Como. So we stayed in Varenna, which I visited previously, but I've never stayed there before. So that was yeah, that was really beautiful to have a few nights in Varenna and just spend the weekend on the the ferry on Lake Como going from place to place. And we talked our way into a beach club. Yeah. You have to pay to get into these beach clubs and have access to the little beaches. This was in a town called Lecco on Lake Como.

[00:21:59.480] - Di Bortoletto

And there it was fully booked. You have to book like, you know, weeks and weeks in advance. And we

just turned up and the guy said, "we're full well," We said "We're from Australia. We've come all this way" and using our best Italian as well. And as it turned out, there was an Australian wedding taking place, I think, in the hotel that was attached to this beach club.

[00:22:28.550] - Di Bortoletto

So they said, as they heard, we were Australians. And anyway, they took pity on us and he said, yes, you can come in, but, you know, you're not allowed to sit on any of the lattinos, any of the beds. We can sit on the grass. That's fine. You know, so he let us in. Yeah. And I think he thought that we must have been part of this big group of Australians that would there for a wedding. And we were but we were so grateful to be, you know, so nice sitting here and just having spritz after spritz and a little swim in the lake and it was divine.

[00:22:59.880] - Katy

Yeah. It's quite unusual, isn't it, to have those paid beach clubs. I've talked about it before, but just if you're coming from a place like Australia or even the United States or the UK where the beaches to go to a beach or to a lake or whatever is pretty much free. And there's not really there's not often an option even to go to a beach club. It's quite an unusual experience that you do have to get a little bit used to when you're in Italy.

[00:23:23.360] - Di Bortoletto

Yeah, it is. I mean, there's pros and cons to it. I mean, the pros of it's service. So you can call the waiter in and get drinks and food and whatnot and, you know, there's someone there to put your umbrella up, take it down, move it if you need it, if you pay for those things and get access to those things, which we didn't get that day. But the yeah the cons are they do tend to pack people in. It's a little bit confronting when you come from Australia. The first time you go, oh there's someone lying kind of right next to me and yeah. Unless you're in Bondi or somebody like that it doesn't really happen in Australia.

[00:24:03.900] - Katy

Yeah you're right. And well you know what I'm all for those advantages. There's nothing quite like relaxing on the beach and someone bringing you a cappuccino then a spritz, then a cup of..

[00:24:14.380] - Di Bortoletto

Lemon granita . Oh yeah.

[00:24:16.850] - Katy

All of the above! And Como is a pretty popular lake, but there's some other it lakes closer to Bergamo are there? That are quite lovely too

[00:24:28.970] - Di Bortoletto

Lago D'Iseo or Lake Iseo is quite close to Bergamo. It's about from memory. It's about an hour and a half. I think we just caught a bus. No we actually paid for private transfers. I think it costs 60 euro and split between two of us. Thirty euro to get there. We thought it was just worth it with luggage. So. Yeah. And what I loved about like is have. Is that, again, it's kind of a smaller town, it's a living, breathing alive Italian town with Italian tourists, but very few other foreign tourists were there when we were there. We were there July, like in peak season.

[00:25:09.470] - Di Bortoletto

But, yeah, the lake is much smaller than Lake Como or any of those other big lakes. It's much smaller, but you're surrounded by mountains. It's fairly flat. It's it's just a really pretty looked after town and the food that we ate was amazing. We ate really well and stayed at a really beautiful apartment hotel. So it's just a really lovely experience.

[00:25:33.920] - Katy

Does it have a castle in the middle or is it like a villa or something like that?

[00:25:39.180] - Di Bortoletto

Oh, we just kind of swarmed around. We didn't see this, so we didn't really do it. Yeah, I can't remember.

[00:25:48.830] - Katy

I love it. I love a bit of swanning around. I call it wandering. You call it swanning. I love it.

[00:25:55.120] - Di Bortoletto

Mean, that's a West Australian thing because the Black Swan is that is the state emblem.

[00:26:01.970] - Katy

But I mean that like Italy is just made for wandering and swanning really isn't it? So..

[00:26:06.870] - Di Bortoletto

And that's it. I think I put a comment on your Facebook page, actually, to somebody asking for advice on an itinerary that they were thinking of doing. And I was like, make sure you just leave time to sit in a piazza and watch the world go by, because that is one of the great joys of travelling in Italy. Well, for me, anyway, it's just the people watching is like nothing else.

[00:26:30.350] - Katy

It totally is. And you can watch the ladies with their heels not being you uncoordinated or ungainly at all, just managing to look incredibly stylish going over these cobblestones. And you can see kids playing and yeah, it's so much fun. I love it and I miss that so much actually, as I sit inside my house the last 10 weeks.

[00:26:55.430] - Di Bortoletto

I know. We'll get there. We'll get there.

[00:26:58.840] - Katy

So were there any other places around the city that you explored? It sounds like you got out and about quite a bit. Yes. Another day trip, really easy to get to from Bergamo is Milan. Milano's only 40 minutes by train from Bergamo. Also very easy to do in a day.

[00:27:16.300] - Di Bortoletto

A lot of the students we that were in our class would actually go to Milan to some big factory outlet shopping malls around Milan, and they would go there shopping on the weekend, which for us was like we we just we didn't go there, but we went to Milan after we went to Lake Iseo. So we did spend a day in Milan and did some shopping from there, but not in the big factory outlet malls. I've done those before in Italy and you just end up spending way too much on stuff you don't need.

[00:27:47.660] - Katy

So I also find it a bit overwhelming because it was just like so much to choose from. And you have to really go there with a plan in mind, I think. But I think you can get some good deals if, you know, if you have a plan.

[00:28:00.520] - Di Bortoletto

But in July, all the sales were on anyway. So, you know, just in the gallery in Milano, you know, everything was on sale. So we got some some bargains there and, it's you know, really close to the Duomo. And yes, a Milan is also, another really very accessible day trip from Bergamo. And Bergamo is quite a good option to stay to situate yourself as a base because it's well serviced with bus and train transport. It's close to lots of interesting places like Milan. If you don't want to stay in a big city, it's really pretty, there is enough to see and do there if you want to spend three, four days easy in Bergamo. If you wanted to do some hiking a bit longer. And also if you want to do an Italian language course, you could do that as well.

[00:28:52.910] - Katy

So it's, you know, it sounds like a great idea. So if you're staying there, if you're staying in the town, do you need a car while you're there or do you just walk around and just walk around?



[00:29:03.260] - Di Bortoletto

Yeah, just walk around and use taxis or buses. Yeah. The bus system is like, look, it was a little tricky to figure out to start with, but we just asked people at the bus stop and they were really nice. Yeah. Know you have to cross the road if you want to go there or you know, a lot of people speak English there as well. It's a very accessible place for visitors to go to.

[00:29:28.970] - Katy

OK, so, yeah, you don't need to you don't need to be learning Italian to be there, unlike some of the other places further south. You probably do need to try a little bit harder. But I always think it's nice to say Ciao and Buongiorno, it's just lovely to get out of the place.

[00:29:45.410] - Di Bortoletto

That's right. And you know, the locals just love it when you make an effort, you know. So that's no matter what country you're in. Just learning a few words, hello, goodbye, thank you, is so worthwhile a

[00:29:59.290] - Katy

And I think later, when you start to learn, if you want to go and continue learning the language, then that opens up a whole another area of culture. I think that you don't necessarily get if you're not if you're not fluent or somewhat sort of conversant in the language.

[00:30:17.320] - Di Bortoletto

Exactly right. Yeah. Look, even though you in my final semester at UWA of Italian, having studied for four years. And I'm not I wouldn't call myself fluent, not by a long shot, but even still watching TV movies, I'm like, that's not what they say, especially the swearing. It's hilarious because I swear the translation that comes up in English, in the subtitles. Like, no, that's not what they said.

[00:30:44.980] - Katy

It's so cheeky. So Di, Bergamo and the surrounding area sound so wonderful. But I do have one last question for you as we wait for our travel restrictions to lift, is there a place in Italy that you just can't wait to return to?

[00:31:02.260] - Di Bortoletto

Rome like it's always Rome. It's yeah, it's I don't know what my family are not from Rome, but I just love that city. I don't know, maybe I'm superstitious and always try throwing the coin, you know, over my shoulder at the Trevi Fountain, making sure I return to Rome one day. But look, this time, the next trip to Italy. I really want to go to Ischia the island off the coast of Naples. And I really want to go to Calabria to Tropea. Have you been there?

[00:31:36.340] - Katy

No, I have not been to those two places. They are two places that I was wanting to go to, but we weren't allowed to. Well, we were allowed, but we had some family commitments in Calabria, sort of extended family visits that we couldn't get out. But I would love to go to both those places. But did you know, as you know, actually Di, Rome is eternal and it's been there for a very long time and it's waiting for you.

[00:32:04.940] - Di Bortoletto

Yes. And you and I know this is what I think we should do is arrange to be initially at the same time. And then you can say, no, I've got to go meet Di in Ischia. See you later and then we leave. You can't leave a family and then we'll just go to holiday.

[00:32:21.830] - Katy

That sounds pretty perfect. So grazie Di, thanks for joining us and sharing your insight into the beautiful Bergamo and the region around it. I think I mentioned to you that the city was going to be the last stop on the trip that we had to abandon in March, and I'm very resolved to get back there. I think I could check myself into that spa for about a week. I think after this year

[00:32:45.250] - Di Bortoletto

just I didn't realize at the time or I don't know if it's new since we were there, but you can actually stay at the day spa. But they've got accommodation. They've got rooms there now. So do yourself a favor, Katy. You won't regret it.

[00:32:57.800] - Katy

Oh, my goodness. Well, I might never leave now before we rush off. Di, how can our listeners stay in touch with you and keep track of your travels in Italy and around the world.

[00:33:07.450] - Di Bortoletto

I've got a little blog called Traveletto, which I've named after my surname, which is Bortoletto.. So Traveletto.com. And I post mostly about Italy, Margaret River in Western Australia and anywhere else I tend to travel. So and it's usually usually food focus because that's just the way I operate when I travel. And I'm on Instagram and Facebook as well. But I'm also part of your Facebook group and really happy to connect with any of your listeners there. And and I'll continue to chime in on various chats that go on in there and give people advice as they ask for it.

[00:33:49.300] - Katy

Oh, that's so appreciated. Thanks, Di. And we can't wait to hear more of your Italian adventures together out here. Thanks again.

[00:33:56.470] - Di Bortoletto

Oh, thank you so much for having me. It's been a real pleasure. Thank you, Katy. And keep up the great work with the podcast.

[00:34:03.700] - Katy

Oh, what a fun chat. And how about that day spa? I think we all deserve a week at the San Pellegrino Spa after all the trouble we've had in 2020. As we mentioned, Bergamo is in a great position to use as a base to explore the Lombardy region, including the Lakes - Garda Iseo and Como, Franciacorta wine region and Milan. You can even fly in there as it has quite a big airport close by.

[00:34:28.570] - Katy

Bergamo is actually the third biggest international airport in Italy, with flights to and from mostly European destinations by low cost airlines. As always, I'll put all the details of that phenomenal spa and the other places Di mentioned in the show notes for this episode. They'll be available at [Untolditaly.com/41](https://untolditaly.com/41) for episode forty one or in your podcast app. You'll also find a full transcript of the show if you'd like to read through or check any of the place names.

[00:34:57.580] - Katy

Coming up next week, we're heading south to the famed island of Capri. I am so excited to chat with local Holly Star about the place so many people are excited to visit and the place she calls home. She's so lucky. So make sure you subscribe to Untold Italy so you're notified as soon as this episode drops. But for now, I'll leave you with dreams of luxury day spas and fun times on the lakes near Bergamo. Ciao for now.