

Untold Italy Episode 55 - Piedmont with Olivia Windsor

[00:00:00.060] - Katy

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 55.

[00:00:13.070] - Josie

Ciao and Benvenuti to Untold Italy, I'm Josie

[00:00:16.160] - Katy

And I'm Katy, and we're here to help you plan your trip to Italy.

[00:00:20.000] - Josie

Between us, we have many years of travel experience and we want to help you uncover your own as yet untold stories and adventures in Italy.

[00:00:28.040] - Katy

Each episode, you'll hear practical advice, tips and ideas to help you plan your own trips to the magical land of history, stunning landscapes and a whole lot of pasta.

[00:00:36.890] - Josie

We'll have interviews from experts and focus on local destinations and frequently asked questions about travel in Italy.

[00:00:43.970] - Katy

Thanks for listening and make sure to subscribe to our show.

[00:00:47.090] - Josie

Now let's get started on your regular dose of Bella Italia.

[00:01:01.920] - Katy

Ciao Amici, hello friends! Hope you are all well and looking forward to another adventure in Italy. It's Katy here and I can't wait to share this new episode with you all about a region we haven't spoken about too much before. But before we head there, I hope you enjoyed participating in our itinerary challenge last week. I absolutely loved all your questions and itineraries and hope it was a lovely escape and activity to do while we wait for travel to become safe again.

[00:01:31.620] - Katy

We had such great feedback on the challenge that we'll let it run all year round. And so if you didn't manage to take part, you can sign up at untolditaly.com/itinerarychallenge. And what

Untold Italy travel podcast transcript. [Visit our website](#) for show notes and all episodes

will happen is you'll be led through a series of emails that will help you plan an incredible draft itinerary for your trip to Italy. I'll pop the link to this in the show notes so you can sign up to join quickly. But now we're off to another wonderful part of Italy.

[00:01:59.910] - Katy

After spending many, many episodes exploring the south of the country this week, we are heading to the north to a region best known for its wine, truffles and royal connections. It's the somewhat under the radar region of Piedmont, and it borders France and Switzerland. Our guest, Olivia Windsor, currently lives in the Piedmont region, having embarked on a solo adventure in 2019 to learn Italian and immerse herself into Italian culture, especially the food and wine. Of course, covid has disrupted that somewhat, but it hasn't dampened Olivia's spirit and passion for all things Italian and her new home in Piedmont. So let's welcome her onto the show. Ciao! Benvenuto Olivia, and welcome to the Untold Italy podcast.

[00:02:47.550] - Olivia

Thanks so much for having me, Katy.

[00:02:49.950] - Katy

Oh, it's great to have you here. I am thrilled to have you on the show today, Olivia, to talk about the region of Piedmont or Piemonte as it's known in Italian. I've only been there for a short visit myself and I know it's absolutely beautiful. How was it that you ended up living there?

[00:03:07.350] - Olivia

Interesting question, Katy. I've been in Italy for about a year and a half now and I didn't initially move to Piemonte. When I came last May, so May 2019, I moved to Bologna actually for the first six weeks. I came to Italy for a year. I gave myself and I kind of had it all planned out. The first six months would be learning Italian. So I went to an Italian school in Bologna, which is an excellent school if anyone's looking for an Italian school, Academia Lingue. And then from there, I was, you know, I had this big passion for food and wine and cooking, and I had organized a few agriturismi, and wineries to work in around Italy, kind of in the center. So that was one in Tuscany, one in Umbria. And so, you know, I kind of moved around a little bit, working in wineries, working in agriturismo, a bit of travel, too. Over the summer, I went down south, went to Puglia, Calabria - all the different places and then it was getting to September and the wine harvest in Italy is in September. And I hadn't done a lot of the northern region of Italy.

[00:04:16.320] - Olivia

But I'd heard about Piemonte for the wine, Barolo, of course people would know, I guess and I use the program, Wwoof, so I found like an organic winery in Piemonte called Cascina Luli that needed workers over the summer period to come and pick grapes. And I kind of thought, OK, let's give it a go. I'd heard of Turin, which is the capital of the capital of Piemonte before, and I was curious to see it. So I kind of packed up, went down from the very south all the way up north. And I stayed at this winery for six weeks and then at the end of the harvest,

Untold Italy travel podcast transcript. [Visit our website](#) for show notes and all episodes

I had been traveling by this point for like six months, so I was ready to lay roots for the for the next six months. And so I went to Turin, where the winery owners had some connections, so there was a place I could stay. And within the first week, everything fell into place. I found two jobs in the first week teaching English, and I met my now boyfriend. And he's the reason that I'm still in Italy a year, more than a year that I thought I would be here. So.

[00:05:22.500] - Katy

Oh, that's amazing. But what drove this passion for Italy? Why did you end up there in the first place?

[00:05:28.830] - Olivia

I've always been really passionate about Italy, I guess, because I grew up in quite an Italian community. I'm not Italian myself. My family is not Italian, but I grew up in Melbourne, Australia, and there's a big Italian community there. When I went to school, all of my friends were Italian. I remember like being little things. You wish I was Italian, like a secret club that I wasn't part of. And I'd been to Italy a few times, I think three times before I finally moved. And each time that I left Italy, it was getting harder and harder to draw myself away from it. You know, I have this big passion for cooking and food and Italian food and I guess by saying Italian food is like totally wrong - it's so regional, there's no such thing as just Italian food. But yeah, I was just becoming really fascinated, more and more fascinated by the country and I was kind of getting to a point where I was in Melbourne, settled in my job. But I had this kind of burning desire to to see more of Italy. And I thought, if I don't do it now, I'm not going to do it. So, yeah, I quit my job, moved over and and yeah, I kind of - at times it was difficult, but I really haven't looked back, I would say.

[00:06:43.530] - Katy

Oh, Olivia, what an amazing story of adventure and following your dreams. I just love so many of our guests have actually done that. And you know, in 2020 more than ever, I think these stories are really important as like -yeah don't wait, just go and let's just seize the day, seize the moment and just do it. Oh, wow. So I asked you today to come and talk about Piedmont or Piemonte. And so I think the best thing to do to start off with is maybe to tell our listeners where the region actually is because they may not know.

[00:07:17.970] - Olivia

Yeah So Piemonte is in the very top of Italy, so in the north, on the west coast. So it's really on the border of France and next to Liguria as well. But it is landlocked. So there's no beaches or anything in the region. But you've got beautiful mountains and mountain vistas to admire and lakes as well.

[00:07:38.880] - Katy

Oh, yeah, it's lovely. I've been there very fleetingly. And so what makes it so special, apart from these mountains, like what is it like there's hilltop towns? And I know a few little secrets, but what do you think makes it special?

Untold Italy travel podcast transcript. [Visit our website](#) for show notes and all episodes

[00:07:52.550] - Olivia

So much! Like I think it's really/ it's lesser known to, I guess, Australian tourists and perhaps to other English speaking tourists, which makes it also a bit magical because it's not as, I guess, stereotypical or kind of touristy in the first instance. I think the landscape is beautiful. It's very green, very mountainous. In the summertime and you can go hiking in the mountains, but also in the wintertime it snows, like it was snowing here a couple of weeks ago. So that's quite nice as well. You've got the really warm summers and then the cold winters. This variation in landscape and temperature, I think, as well- something that's beautiful about Piemonte - obviously, it's home to some of the world's best wines, but Barolo for example, so it's got beautiful vineyard scenery - so for people who like good wine - this is definitely for you. As well as food. So, you know, it's home to like the famous white truffle, which you can find in other places in Italy as well, but it's particularly special in Alba, which is one of the towns of Piemonte. So, yeah, I think that's great. I think if you're a foodie, too, like Piemonte is great because that's where slow food was born. It was where Italy was born. So I think if you like food, you like wine, you like nature - this is a great region to explore.

[00:09:16.280] - Katy

And it's really actually easy to get to. As you mentioned, it's bordering on France. So if people are doing like a southern France Italy road trip, but for some reason, people kind of tend to skip through. I don't know why I think it's.. Guilty again! But it's quite easy to reach from Milan, too. So if you're flying to Milan and you picked up a car, you could easily just take a little detour to Piemonte on your way down, maybe to Liguria. I'm thinking of a great itinerary here.

[00:09:49.940] - Olivia

Yeah, definitely. Definitely Katy.

[00:09:53.270] - Katy

Now the capital is Turin and in Italian it's Torino. It's a beautiful city. But can you tell us a little bit more about it?

[00:10:04.250] - Olivia

Torino is super elegant. It gives me very Parisian vibes, I guess, like the architecture's very French, it's very sophisticated, has an air of grandeur, like it was home, as Italy's first capital. It was home to the royal family of Savoy. So they still ... the palace in the main city square. It's very stunning. It's very elegant. Sophisticated. Yeah.

[00:10:29.900] - Katy

Beautiful. And it's there's the famous shroud of Turin there for people that are religious.

[00:10:36.230] - Olivia

Exactly. That's released like once every - I can't remember exactly how many years - it doesn't come out all the time. This was the year actually that they were meant to be unveiling the shroud. But I don't/ I need to see if they're still going to do it. I think probably

with the corona virus restrictions, it might not be possible. But, yeah, this was intended to be the year they were unveiling the shroud for everyone to see, which doesn't happen every year. So maybe it will next year.

[00:11:02.570] - Katy

And there's lots of cafes and restaurants in Torino as well out there, and there's some pretty special foods that you can eat when you're there. I know that.

[00:11:13.110] - Olivia

Exactly. Yeah. Turin as well is known for its markets, too. So if you like to do your own cooking and like fresh food, literally every neighborhood in Turin has a market. The biggest and most famous market is Porta Palazzo, which is actually the biggest open air market in Europe. And so that is great. You know, it's a great place to go and it's vibrant and it's bustling. And, you know, if you go all the way through the market to the back, you go out to the contadini or the farmers are and you can do fresh food shopping out there as well. But food, like restaurants, obviously, there is some excellent restaurants that I can tell you a few names as well.

[00:11:57.320] - Katy

Oh, please do.

[00:11:59.420] - Olivia

My favorite restaurant in Turin. That was a kind of new discovery. It's not in the city center, so you'd have to get either a taxi or bus out there. And it's in this tiny, little, unassuming, street in a very unassuming neighborhood, I guess, it's called Trattoria Antiche Sere. And it looks like an old house from the outside. And you kind of like, you walk through and it's very nice when you go in summer or spring because the courtyard is magical. You go through and the courtyard has got all the grapevines hanging over the top and it's just like delicious, local Piemonte food very traditional, you know, nothing too fancy about it, but it's just, it's an excellent touristy restaurant and you won't really hear a word of English spoken there, but the staff are very happy to help and anything you order will be delicious. So, you know, you kind of don't even need Italian or English there really to that is great.

[00:12:59.140] - Katy

OK, and so what sort of dishes do they have in Piemonte? Because I'm all about the food.

[00:13:04.360] - Olivia

Yeah, exactly. So Piemonte and Turin is really known for its antipasti. So you could have a whole meal full of the different antipasti. There's many some of the most famous ones, the most delicious ones would be Vitello Tonnato. So that's like a sliced veal with a creamy tuna sauce, which maybe sounds a bit of a weird combination, but it's super delicious. And they put a caper berry on top - that's really lovely. Then there is Battuta, which is like a carne cruda - that's the raw meat with the egg yolk and they have that bread or the grissini. So the grissini is like the bread stick that was actually born in Piedmont. There they have the greens

sause or so the salsa verde there, which is a sauce of the anchovies, garlic, parsley. They have that on like many different things. You can have that on a cheese called Tomino or you could have that on tongue, so lingua, or literally just with the anchovies, with the salsa verde, that's super delicious. They also have a salad that you can find now in lots of different areas of Italy, insalata russa - russian salad. That's a really classic Piemontese appetizer. If we going to the Primi, which is my favorite course I guess because I love pasta, they have the Tajarin. And this is a really thin, really thin pasta. Kind of like imagine a fettucine but like a quarter of the size - it's very thin and it's a very made from a really rich pasta dough with extra egg. It's called royal pasta dough. So it's yeah, it's delicious. Tajarin is really especially great at this time of year or in autumn because they have fresh truffles shaved over the top. And that is heaven. Exactly. It's super delicious.

[00:15:09.460] - Olivia

Or the other pasta, if you like, a filled pasta is the Agnolotti or plin, which is just a variation on the actual shape and that is typically served with like a roast beef sauce and butter, so it's quite creamy, I guess in the food in Piemonte is quite rich and decadent and it's more about kind of creaminess in some ways. So those three pasta dishes, in Piemonte you won't really find like the tortellini or anything like that here. It's more about the Agnolotti.

[00:15:42.550] - Katy

Oh, it's so interesting, isn't it, how these different regions of Italy have these different influences and food from the local areas? And you can't really say that these Italian food, can you, because it's very different from region to region. Well, agnolotti, yum!

[00:16:04.720] - Olivia

It's so good. But I mean and then if you like, you know, if you like meat, there's lots of different meat dishes as well. And Piemonte I think they don't have a lot of fish because they're not on the coast, but they have great meat so like for Secundi, you can have bollito which is basically just different cuts of boiled meat in a super delicious roast beef sauce and something that I have to mention that is super Piemontese is Bagna càuda. I don't know if you've heard of it, but they serve it in like a fondue kind of dish and it's basically a dipping sauce and really it's a meal in itself. It's made of tons of garlic, parsley, anchovies and they say, you know, like if you have this, like don't kiss anyone for the next week because it's so full of garlic but it's delicious. And, you know, you can dip in anything into the sauce, vegetables, bread, meat. It's served warm as well. So it's a complete dish in itself. It's quite filling. But yeah, that one is super, super Piedmontese as well as another complete dish is Fritto misto - and that is like the different/you can have vegetables fried, you could have meats fried, they tend to have a lot of like brains or tongue or like the kind of weirder cuts of meat, I guess we're not perhaps as used to eating in our diets, but of course anything fried is delicious - generally speaking. Even the dessert course when you do the fritto misto, they have the fruit fried, so fried apple, fried peaches. It's obviously a very filling, a very filling meal. The fritto misto.

[00:17:42.870] - Katy

Oh wow, I've never heard of the fruit being fried in the fitto misto.

[00:17:46.730] - Olivia

Yeah!

[00:17:47.110] - Katy

Interesting. Would you get that at a restaurant? Or, like, I've seen these vans around at the markets, especially where you can pick up a cone of fried goodness.

[00:17:58.250] - Olivia

Yeah well that's interesting, I think more in Piemonte I've seen at restaurants I haven't seen as street food as such. I don't think Piemonte has as big a street food as places like Sicily or even Florence. Yeah, but Super Delicious - is very filling.

[00:18:15.220] - Katy

But we need to go for a few hikes in the mountains to walk that off.

[00:18:18.440] - Olivia

Exactly. Exactly. Yeah.

[00:18:20.840] - Katy

Now while we're talking about sweet things I heard they've got the special chocolate drink too.

[00:18:25.490] - Olivia

They sure do. Yeah. So I should say as well, like chocolate is famous in Torino home to Italy's chocolate and they have the drink that you're mentioning the Bicerin - so it's like a coffee hot chocolate drink. And the best place to get it in Turin is a cafe called Cafe al Bicerin. It is a very decadent, sophisticated, romantic cafe to go to go in and it's quite dark inside. It's lit by candlelight and it's just beautiful. It's like a real Turinese experience that you need to have. It's great.

[00:19:04.070] - Katy

Oh wow. Can you just walk in off the street or do you need to book that one that

[00:19:08.240] - Olivia

You can walk in off the street when I've been before, sometimes there's a queue at the front and you might need to wait a little bit to get a table, but you don't need to make a booking, generally speaking.

[00:19:18.270] - Katy

OK, sounds like something- I don't normally queue or line up for anything, but I think I would for that chocolate and that experience. Oh, wow, are you spending a day in Torino apart from eating your way around it - what else is there to do in Torino?

[00:19:35.450] - Olivia

OK, so as I said, Turin is the capital of Piemonte it was the first capital of Italy, so if you're a history buff, there is some really great sites to see. So there's the Palazzo Reale, so that's the palace - the Royal Palace, which is beautiful, definitely recommend going inside. Also to the gardens - the gardens are really beautiful to walk around and you don't need to pay to go into the gardens. So if you're kind of limited on time, you could just go and see the gardens. But it is worth going inside to the palace to. There's the Egyptian museum as well. So that's interestingly a huge museum that houses the most Egyptian artifacts in the world, so that's a great one. There's also the Pietro Micca museum. So he was he was a hero of Piemonte for fighting against the French when they invaded - one of the invasions - there were many. So definitely.

[00:20:30.350] - Olivia

If you're a history lover, there's lots to to kind of see in that department. Otherwise, in terms of like monuments, there's quite a few as well. There's Monte dei Cappuccini. So this is for a beautiful view as far as - you can walk up across the river from the main part of town, walk up this big hill and you can see a beautiful view across the whole city from above. It's quite romantic. You can see the Alps, kind of a bird's eye view of Torino. And if you want an even better view, you can keep walking even more (there's actually a mini train that will take you there) the walk might take you all day, and you can go to Superga. And that is actually a church. And it's like the icon or the symbol of Turin. It watches over the city. Wherever you kind of are in the city, you look up and you can see this beautiful church watching over. And that has - you should go on a day where it's not foggy. And I should say as well, that Turin is often very foggy, so you need to find a non overcast day so you can get a beautiful view. And you can see the Alps as well. You can actually see, like all the way towards France, too. And that is stunning. Continuing with, like, the view kind of theme within the city center, another great place to go is the The Mole - Mole Antonelliana, in my bad Italian and that is definitely like another monumental icon of Turin, it's a big tower that watches over. Well, when you go all the way up the top, you can get another beautiful view of Turin. But actually, it's really interesting, the building, because the base of it was originally a synagogue and then the town bought it and that was an icon of Turin and the houses inside another museum that is really fun and worth going to. It's a cinema museum. That is something that I think if you've got a few days in Turin, you should definitely go and do. That's great. I've been there a couple of times. Then, you know, you can see go through the cinema museum, then you can go up to see the view at the very end and it's just a beautiful thing to do. So, yeah. So there's the history. There's the different icons.

[00:22:41.750] - Olivia

What else? There is the markets. So, as I was mentioning, every neighborhood has a different market, which is something that I really love being a foodie and loving to cook. I love going to the market. So that's awesome. There's an antique market as well, which runs in close to the Porta Palazzo in the neighborhood of Balon. The market of Balon. And that is. That's great. They have the bigger antique markets that generally runs let's all weekend. And they have every second Sunday of the month, they'll have like the bigger antique market. That's awesome. And you can find some real hidden Italian gems there and furniture and other little bits and pieces. So that's really great. And then I think it's just like walking through Turin, the different neighborhoods as the Quadrilatero, which is the most ancient part of the city built by the Romans. And that's really beautiful. So we kind of wander through all those tiny, narrow little streets. And there's different cafes that you can go to. I think Turin has a real tea culture, too, especially in the wintertime. So there's little places you can go in for a slice of cake and a cup of tea. And that's really beautiful. Other areas that would be great for an aperitivo - if you're kind of getting to the end of the day and you're looking for a drink, say Santa Giulia. That is a really nice area with different Enoteca that you go to that recently kind. Yeah. More recently, I guess, was rebranded for nightlights. And then the other area for a drink or actually even restaurant is San Salvario. And that is a really bustling, vibrant part of the city where you can find also kind of like Japanese or Ethiopian food, as well as just your classic Italian Piedmontese restaurants. Kind of a little bit more hip.

[00:24:42.530] - Katy

Oh, wow. It's a little bit cosmopolitan there. That's unusual because like, sometimes if you're in Italy for a long time, like, I can tell you this, even as much as I love Italian food, sometimes you need a little break, you know, and it's good to refresh the palate.

[00:25:01.290] - Olivia

I 100% agree. Yeah, definitely.

[00:25:06.560] - Katy

But I think we need to talk about wine because it is a very important part of the culture in this area. That will probably take us outside of Turin, though wouldn't it, to the countryside?

[00:25:18.320] - Olivia

Exactly. Yeah, you're 100% right. So, yeah. So the famous wine region of Piemonte is Le Langhe, as well as Monferrato - so famous for wine and everyone, I'm sure if you've kind of - if you have heard of Piemonte, as I mentioned before, if famous for Barolo is produced in Piemonte. So in the Le Langhe and it's a tiny village, it's super tiny when you actually drive through Barolo and beautiful. But I think it's important to remember as well that there's also other little towns and villages in the Le Langhe that are just as beautiful. And the wine, OK, maybe if it's not produced in Barolo you can't technically say it's Barolo on the label. But it can be made literally super close with the same grapes just grown in a different area. So different terroir. So, yes, so some of the other wines I guess of Piemonte. So there's the Nebbiolo, obviously, but other ones that maybe are less - so Piemonte is really famous for red

wine and the grapes - barbera, barbaresco, dolcetto there's also some I mean, there's so many grapes - I think that's another thing with Italy, there's so many different varieties. But some of the ones that I got to know when I was working at Cascina luli that are, I guess, indigenous to Piemonte, there's the Slarina and Grignolino and these are grapes that, you know, in some cases like Slarina, where even lost to the Piemontese, generally speaking and Cascina luli, you know, had this big university partnered with University of Turin to reignite the grapes Slarina as an experiment. And they're bringing that back into its once former glory, I guess. And it's delicious. It's super, super lovely.

[00:27:12.620] - Olivia

For white wine. It's not a region as well known for white wine. The red wine really is the star of the show here. But again, there's some great white wines speaking from my experience, because Uli, they have, again, another white grape that they grow, which is the only white wine that they produce from the Baratuciat grape and their wine that they produce from that, it's called Baratz, which is in Piemontese dialect that means like, cats-balls, but I can tell you, it tastes a lot better than cats balls. It was super like, well it's my favorite white wine now. It's super delicious and crisp. It's really, really yummy, even drinking in winter time to have something kind of more refreshing. That's lovely. But the more famous grapes that for Piemonte that are white would be the Arneis and the Timorasso. They're also lovely. But yeah, it is more well known for the red wine, of course.

[00:28:12.220] - Katy

OK, so if we were wanting to visit the wineries, are there any particular villages or towns that you would be a good base to base yourself?

[00:28:20.360] - Olivia

Yes. So in Le Langhe I would say there's a few La Mora is one of them that I really love. That's where my boyfriend's part of the family were from originally. So we've stayed there before and that's it's beautiful and it's a little bit bigger. There's like some restaurants there. So you could actually make that your base for a couple of days and not feel kind of too cramped either. And that's really in the middle. So you can do the little day trips out to the different wineries quite comfortably. And the last time we went to Le Langhe we stayed in a hidden gem, I would say that was - it's quite small. It's called Monforte d'Alba. And that was beautiful. There's like, I think one or two restaurants in town. And in the summertime, I've heard it really comes alive because there's a jazz festival - that wasn't on this year, obviously. But hopefully next year, over the summertime, they've got this beautiful, small, private arena that's all outdoors. And it looks like it would be beautiful. But that's that's a lovely place to stay too

[00:29:25.620] - Katy

ooh, lovely. There's so many like these cute places in Piemonte, and in fact, the only time that I have been there, I was telling Olivia earlier, is when my cousin told me, you need to go to this, lake. You know, Italy has amazing lakes and Australians, we don't really have big lakes really do we Oliva - so for us a lake with a mountain is kind of like - oooh! So my cousin told

me, go to this lake, you'll love it. And it was Lake Orta. And I'd love, Olivia, for you to tell your perspective of this because I would just gush. So, you know!

[00:30:03.780] - Olivia

For sure - it's beautiful. And I think it was a surprise to me because I had never heard of it before. And we went there just I was telling Katy before, just after the first lockdown in Italy. So it was even kind of more special because they were not really any tourists. We kind of had Lago d'Orta to ourselves. And it was in June and it was beautiful and warm. It doesn't feel very touristy either. It's this beautiful. Yeah. Lakeside town where there is an island in the middle - Isola San Giulio. I think it's called. And yeah, you can catch the ferry over to it. And there's a church at the islands in the middle. And I think you're meant to actually be silent or not speaking for parts of that when you're walking around, there's like all these little signs in Italian to say, actually it's a silent island and it's really magical. And yeah, when we were there, that was hardly anyone there. So we just went over to like a secluded little area and put our feet in the water. And it was just like a super heavenly. And, you know, there's some great restaurants there as well that you can have a lovely meal and a glass of wine and it's just super - I find it super relaxing and unexpectedly delightful, it really felt like a hidden gem, like Lago D'Orta.

[00:31:29.670] - Katy

It really is. And if you're into this sort of situation with the vines coming down and I'm a bit of a Wisteria freak, there's lots of wisteria draping and, you know, little cute little piazzas. And like - we should tell everyone because it is worth going. It's only a little bit - it's only about an hour and a half out of Milan, actually, so it's not too far. We actually didn't go to the island in the middle. And so I have to go back. And the reason was because our kids I think there were three at the time, and I didn't think that I could cope with the no speaking rule. Might not have worked. But I mean, then there is like a UNESCO site. I don't know if you got up to the UNESCO site with all the statues, but it's a beautiful site dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi up there. And there's I think there's twenty something statues dedicated to his life. And it's very beautiful up there. But yeah, I love that area.

[00:32:26.310] - Olivia

Oh, I need to go, I need to go back so I can do the hike up there. Definitely on my list to return.

[00:32:33.330] - Katy

Yeah. It's so pretty. Are there any other hidden gems that we should know about in Piemonte?

[00:32:39.210] - Olivia

Definitely. There's so many places and like I've been here for over a year and I still haven't visited them all. But yeah, OK. I could say some smaller towns that are great to explore kind of that medieval town vibe would be Asti and I actually have a Palio, so it's not just Sienna that has a palio. It was nice when I very first arrived last year, in September time they still

had all the the flags of the different neighborhoods up for the palio. So that that would be great, you know, you don't have to go to Sienna to see the palio, you could go to Asti.

[00:33:13.290] - Katy

So it's a horse race. Is it through the town like it is in Siena?

[00:33:17.250] - Olivia

Yes, exactly. Of course, they didn't run it this year, but hopefully with that next year. So, yeah, that would be a great one. And the city itself, well it's not really a city, it's a town is is beautiful. There's great food there as well. It's not super touristy either. So that is lovely. And just to kind of get lost and wander the streets, that is beautiful. And then there's another town called Cuneo and that also it's like a mini Turin, I guess it's a little bit smaller and it's just lovely to wander in to. Where else? OK, if you like hiking and there's a beautiful hike, a bit of an intense hike, perhaps, it is called Sacra di San Michele. So you hike up a mountain and literally on the top of the mountain, there is an abbey built into the top of the mountain. So when you're inside the abbey, you can see the top of the mountain.

[00:34:16.350] - Katy

That's crazy.

[00:34:17.260] - Olivia

It is! Google some photos afterwards. Incredible. And again, like, go on a day where it's not overcast. So then, you want to be able to see the beautiful view when you get up there as well, but it's just super lovely. So definitely recommend Sacra di San Michele and Lago d'Orta which we were speaking about as well. And then winery's, I definitely would say so many so so, so many wineries. That special on that I've been speaking about a little bit Cascina Luli where I worked for six weeks for the wine harvest. And that is beautiful. It's run by an American woman, Summer and Fabrizio, her husband, it has been in the family for generations. And it's in a little town that literally there's like a supermarket and that's about it - a petrol station and their property is just idyllic and beautiful. So I would definitely recommend making an appointment there to go and visit their winery. It's an organic winery. It's just heavenly. Views are amazing.

[00:35:26.260] - Katy

Yeah. It's those type of moments. They're the special ones, aren't they? And I think I mentioned this quite a bit on the podcast. But if you do like wine and you want to go try some wineries, it's really important to make the appointments because it's a different culture than we have in Australia or the United States, where you can just turn up and they're ready to pour your wine. You know, a lot of these people are actually - especially in the harvest time - they're working. So you need to make the appointment and so that they can be there and you'll get a lot of special treatment when you go and they're really happy to help and share the story. But you need to make the appointment.

[00:36:06.850] - Olivia
Definitely. Yeah, definitely.

[00:36:09.490] - Katy
Yeah. It's really good. And I love this - the palio. I think it's just amazing. I really encourage people to seek out festivals or special occasions when they're in Italy. I mean, at the moment when we're recording this, there's a lot of Christmas activities going along, but throughout the year, there's so many amazing festivals. And in actual fact, Piedmonte is very famous for one festival in particular, isn't it? Which is the...

[00:36:37.240] - Olivia
White Truffle Festival?

[00:36:41.070] - Katy
Yeah!

[00:36:41.070] - Olivia
That is probably the most famous, as you say. So that is in Alba, which is in Le Langhe so that is another great town, actually, if you want a bigger place to base yourself in when you're exploring the wine region. Alba is great, it's beautiful and of course, there's the truffle festival, so you can go in there and do the tastings, you can buy the truffle to take home. Truffle salt or the real truffle or truffle butter, truffle oil, anything truffle related you'll find it there. And there's lots of little shops as well, like truffle - special truffle shops in the town that aren't necessarily in the festival, but you can go and buy all your truffle products there too.

[00:37:24.310] - Katy
Such a unique and delicious flavour. I love it. Yummy! So it sounds like you probably need a car to get around though Olivia, is that right?

[00:37:34.240] - Olivia
Yeah, I would say it's easier like in Turin public transport is quite good. There's the buses, trams, the metro. So yeah, I wouldn't say that you need a car within Turin, but definitely if you're going out to the countryside and you just want to make it easier on yourself, you don't want to be sticking to these little bus timetables for the bus might never show up or it's a Sunday and it's a weird timetable, especially at the moment, like the public transport schedules all over the place. So definitely make it easy on yourself and hire a car for sure.

[00:38:09.520] - Katy
And is the driving... I think a lot of people get a bit worried about driving in Italy, but what's the driving like around there? Is it fairly straightforward or is it.

[00:38:18.640] - Olivia

Yeah, like Turin is a city, so that is going to be a bit more difficult to drive in. Of course, a lot of people actually a Piemontese people who aren't from Turin will complain about the drivers in Turin, which is quite funny. Yeah, I find it in Turin, it's a city, so it's a bit chaotic, of course. But when you're out in the countryside, like as soon as you get outside the main city, it's fine. It's very easy, I think. And if you're more comfortable being Australian - with an automatic car, do it like pay the extra money to get the automatic car. It's well worth it for your kind of comfort and level/ level of comfort, definitely an the automatic. But yeah, once you're out of the main city, the driving is pretty fine. Yeah.

[00:39:04.430] - Katy

OK, that's good to know. Right, now Olivia, we have, we've been talk about beautiful Piemonte and you know what? I think I mentioned to you, maybe I don't know if I have actually - my husband's aunty is from Torino and she's very disappointed that we haven't been there. So we'll be making it a priority. But as you've travelled. So many places around Italy, I was wondering if you had a favorite place apart from Piemonte that you can share with our listeners.

[00:39:33.010] - Olivia

Yeah, it's really difficult because I love so many places in Italy, but maybe I would say Bologna, and because that was the first place that I moved to when I first - it wasn't the first place in Italy I visited. But when I started this adventure of living in Italy, that was my home base for a while. I lived with an Italian family there. And, you know, I kind of feel like I have some roots in Bologna. And, of course, for the food being being so passionate about food, it's a great city that all food lovers should visit. Yeah, it's beautiful Bologna for sure.

[00:40:09.580] - Katy

Yeah. I love those. The redness of it - it's got a unique look and feel to it. It's beautiful. And I still thinking about those ladies rolling their tortellini that I saw. I don't know how they do it. It's so fast - they can do like hundreds and now it's crazy.

[00:40:25.090] - Olivia

Yeah. I did a pasta making class when I was there with them because I just used like the rolling pin to roll them out, they don't use the the pasta machine and it is so difficult. But yeah, you get great muscles if you're doing that every day.

[00:40:42.340] - Katy

Love it! Thank you Olivia. Piemonte sounds beautiful. Everything sounds delicious. You've got the wine, you've got the cute villages, you've got the mountains of views and the hot chocolate and the other chocolate. So Olivia, if our listeners want to learn more about Piedmont and follow your adventures, how can they stay in touch with you?

[00:41:03.670] - Olivia

On Instagram - I have an Instagram account called Livguine, so that's my nickname, Liv and then combined with the pasta linguini. So I G, U, I, N E and then I also have just started a website that is also called Livguine. So they can find me there and if they're interested in recipes cooking anything about Piedmonte - they can follow along.

[00:41:28.960] - Katy

Oh, wonderful. Thank you so much for letting us into your secrets of the region. It's just beautiful. I know. I can't stop thinking about that - is it Bicerin?

[00:41:42.380] - Olivia

Bicerin yeah

[00:41:42.380] - Katy

And the Truffles and of course, beautiful Lake Orta that's really stole my heart. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with us on Untold Italy today.

[00:41:52.810] - Olivia

Thanks so much, Katy. It was a pleasure.

[00:41:56.590] - Katy

Honestly, I am always hungry after listening to and recording these episodes. I cannot believe I've skipped through Piedmont so quickly in the past. There's definitely a case to be built for a northern Italy plus southern France road trip that takes in this beautiful region with its truffles, traditions and of course, the incredible wine. Big thanks to Olivia for sharing her thoughts on beautiful Piedmont. I love your Instagram handle, Livguine - so clever. And you find it in all the details on our website at untolditaly.com/55 for episode 55. So it's time to say thank you Grazie for all your ongoing support. Can I ask a favor? If you enjoy the show, it would be so wonderful. If you could leave a rating or review on your favorite podcast app that tells the Apple, Spotify, Stitcher people that this is content that is worth listening to and the more Italy lovers in this community, the better.

[00:42:55.330] - Katy

Grazie, thank you for listening. Have a wonderful week and ciao for now.