

Untold Italy Episode 80 - Towns in Puglia with Nikki Taylor

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 80.

Ciao a tutti and Benvenuti to Untold Italy, the travel podcast, where you go to the towns and villages, mountains and lakes, hills and coastlines of Bella Italia. Each week your host Katy Clarke takes you on a journey in search of magical landscapes of history, culture, wine, gelato, and, of course, a whole lot of pasta. If you're dreaming of Italy and planning future adventures there, you've come to the right place.

Katy

Ciao a tutti! Hi everyone! Are you ready to go on an adventure to Puglia? I hope so. This region has been having its moment in the sun and I've got a wonderful guest joining me today who lives in one of the beautiful towns there and is excited to share her love of the region.

Before we get started though, I wanted to say a huge thank you GRAZIE to all our listeners. I was looking at the stats from the podcast and was quite blown away by how fast we've grown over the past year. And of course that is all thanks to you!

Thank you to our listeners in the United States where Untold Italy is in top 50 on Apple podcasts for places and travel. In Australia we are in the top 30 but in beautiful Canada Untold Italy is in the top 20. Wow. It's so exciting. Grazie mille! Thank you everyone for all your support wherever you are in the world - from New York City to Norway I just love dreaming about Italy with you each and every week.

So as I mentioned, this week we are off to Puglia! It's the south eastern region and heel of Italy's boot with an Adriatic coastline and ancient past. Today we're talking to my friend, fellow Aussie Nikki Taylor, who you may remember from our episode on buying property in Italy - episode 56! Nikki lives in beautiful Martina Franca right in the middle of the top of the heel of the boot with her beautiful family and is very excited to share with you the towns and experiences you can't miss when you visit Puglia. So here she is!

Katy

Benvenuto and welcome back to the Untold Italy podcast, Nikki, thank you so much, Katy. So great to be back here again.

Katy

Oh, I'm so happy to have you back on the show to tell our listeners about the beautiful region where you live - Puglia. We have so many people interested in this beautiful southern region

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of Italy. So I thought it would be great to hear from someone who actually lives there, about which towns they like and why you think they are special. But before we get started on that, can you remind our listeners how a girl from Sydney came to be living in beautiful Puglia.

Nikki

OK, so I've been living in Italy for now nearly seven years. I was working corporate, had the traditional corporate burnout and just thought, enough's enough. This is not how I want my life to be. And I had always had this huge fascination with Italy and I had a British passport so I've got double nationality. So it was very easy for me to come to Italy without having any visa issues or anything like that. And I moved to a town called Bolzano, which is in the far North East of Italy on the Austrian border. And I immediately started working in the real estate industry, helping foreigners purchase property in Italy. But, you know, being an Aussie girl at heart - missing the beach and the mountain life was not for me. And it didn't really feel like Italy living in Bolzano. So my Italian teacher that I had been living in Sydney was from Puglia. And it's so funny because when we started doing the lessons in 2014, she said that she was from Puglia and everyone in the room looked confused because they had no idea where Puglia was. I mean, that was, what, seven years ago. Now, Puglia is pretty much on the frickin map. It is the most researched and sought after place, not just to buy real estate, but also to come on holiday. And when I came down to Puglia, I moved to a beautiful town called Monopoli, and I've got goosebumps thinking about it. So every time I talk about this part of my story, I get goosebumpy because when I went to Monopoli, I felt like I was home. Like I was walking through the historical center. I got goosebumps and started to cry. I'm like the beauty of this place. And if anyone that's listening has never been to Monopoli never heard of it, look it up. It's Monopoli with an I, not the Y. And you know immediately why I fell in love with the place. It is just phenomenal. And I realized that Puglia was pretty much my happy place in Italy. And so I'm really excited to share some of my favorite little hot spots and some hidden treasures that not many people know about. So when you come here, you can discover them for your own self.

Katy

Oh, my goodness, it's so exciting. OK, now I think we need to know a little bit more about Monopoli. Just paint a picture for us. What does it look like?

Nikki

So Puglia has a very Grecian style look about it. You've got your whitewashed buildings. It kind of reminds me like walking through Ostuni, which is called the La Città Bianca which is The White City. Monopoli/all the little towns, all like whitewashed buildings, so it's got like a very Grecian style look to it in that aspect. The architecture is really different because we have the Trulli houses. And if you haven't heard about the trulli houses, look them up. It's T R U L L I. And it's these beautiful little cone shaped houses made out of limestone and they are only found in Puglia. And they're very traditional, there's a very special way in which they're constructed. So they keep you warmer in winter and cooler in summer and they are iconic.

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Foreigners have gone mad for this. This is perhaps the most requested property I ever get asked for when I'm helping people buy houses here, but also for my holiday rental. People want to come to Puglia and stay in a Trullo because it is really a unique experience. So not only do we have to trulli we have something called Masseria. And the Masseria, these beautiful giant farmhouses. And a lot of these Masserias have been turned into something which I call an agriturismo, which is pretty much where you have all the animals, all the farm area, there's a restaurant and everything is like made on the premises - it's like from farm to fork pretty much. And we do eat and drink really well down here. So anyone that's coming down to Puglia, I will give a name of a fantastic Masseria, which we go to, which we discovered recently. It's in the area called Fasano. So F A S A N O and it's called Masseria Conte. So C O N T E What I love about this Masseria is as you drive up, there's like a stable of cows, there's horses, there's dogs running around, there's cats, there's chickens, there's pretty much everything. And you go in and the way they've design this Masseria is absolutely beautiful - very rustic, traditional and the food is phenomenal. It's not super expensive. And they really cater for children, so if you're going on holiday with your kids, there's a whole play area. Actually, the owner's kids take my kids and go playing with them. The owners are pretty hands on. They sit down with you whilst you're having lunch. They chat with you. They're really invested in making sure you have a great time. And it's that level of service, which I absolutely love. So, yeah, a little bit of a digression there. But yeah, I just wanted to give you a little plug because they really are so deserving of a bit of publicity because they've only been open a short time and not many people know about them.

Katy

And whereabouts are they exactly?

Nikki

In Fasano. So F A S A N O. So Fasano is located next to Monopoli.

Katy

Ah ok and Monopoli is a fishing village right? And it's like when I picture Monopoli, because - if you've been listening to this podcast for a while, you may know that I had an ill-fated trip in 2020. That part of it was staying in Monopoli, which I was very much looking forward to it. And what attracted me about it was the fishing village feeling. You had the colorful boats bobbing in the water, is that the right sort of vibe?

Nikki

Totally the right sort of vibe. And what I love about Monopoli is you are right on the beach. So I was living there and my apartment was a five minute walk to the beach. And you've got this - I mean, growing up in Australia, the beaches, the water's freezing, huge big waves. There's always that fear of being eaten by a shark. That's not for me, a relaxing beach swimming experience, even though the beaches of Australia are beautiful. But there's this little, tiny

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little beach like in the historical center called Cala Porta Vecchia. And the water is crystal clear, turquoise blue. It's so clean. It's warm water. It's very shallow. It's like being in a bath. And they do call Puglia the Italian Maldives, because all around the coast, not just the Adriatic, but also the Ionian coast, it is literally shallow, shallow, shallow water and very warm. So - and no sharks!! Which is beautiful!

Katy

But I bet there's lots of fish in there to eat though.

Nikki

I don't eat fish, so when I do go to a restaurant in Puglia. I sometimes struggle, especially if it's in a restaurant that's not in the inland where I live in Martina Franca (and I'll go more into that in a minute) - it's more meat. But if you go to restaurant on the coast, it's very fish based. And that's where I struggle because I don't eat fish. And they do look at me weirdly, when I ask for a non fish dish.

Katy

Oh, well, I mean, it happens. I know lots of people who are actually allergic to shellfish, as an example, and so it can mean problems. So what else about Monopoli? You've got the beautiful beach? You put the fishing boats in the water. Is it an old town?

Nikki

It's an old town, it's a beautiful historical center. And there's little alleyways and it's full of gorgeous little cafes, little restaurants with trattorias and cute little piazzas, gorgeous little boutiques. And it's just beautiful. It's absolutely beautiful. And you got a little bit - away from the historical center and you're still in the center and the houses are all different colors. So imagine like you, Portobello Road in London. So you have like my house that I lived in was a pink house with green shutters. Next to that was a gray house with pink shutters. Then there'll be a yellow house with blue shutters and it was all different colors and beautiful different colored shutters. And I just thought, this place is just phenomenal. It reminded me of an Italian version of Portobello Road. And I love, I just love walking around the streets of Monopoli. So we we lived there for eight months and then we moved away for family reasons. And we've come back and we're living in an area called Martina Franca. So the reason we moved to Martina Franca is we literally couldn't find a place Monopoli because Monopoli is so popular with tourists, it's hard to buy a place, it's hard to rent a place. So if you find something, grab it because it's literally like going completely crazy. And we want it to be in a big city. And I'm using the inverted commas right now in big cities. Martina Franca has fifty thousand inhabitants. It's like your bustling metropolis in Puglia.

Nikki

But it is beautiful because it's a very it's the second biggest baroque style town, architecture town after Lecce. So Lecce is called the Florence of the South, beautiful baroque style architecture. And we have that in Martina Franca as well. And Martina Franca is also very beautiful. But for us, it's too far from the beach. For me too far. I want to be ten minutes max to the beach. Yeah, Martina Franca is positioned in the Valle de Itria, which is probably the most sought after area in Puglia and the Valle de Itria is - imagine rolling green hills, beautiful, rustic, that red earth with olive trees, you trulli houses beautiful big old masserias and just gorgeous, just beautiful vegetation, Mediterranean plants. It's just stunning. Like if you look at like on a beautiful, sunny day, you've got these gorgeous bright blue sky, you've got the olive trees and you've got this red earth and the contrast of the red earth against the blue sky. It's like living in a postcard. It's absolutely phenomenal. And what I love about a lot of the Martina Franca, because, as I've said, I don't eat fish and Martina Franca that they are all about the meat. So you will see a butcher on pretty much on every second corner in Martina Franca and they have something called Bombette. So if you tried it when you came here last time, so it's pretty much like something called Capocollos. It's like pork meat and they put cheese inside it and you cook it on the pan, you fry it basically. It's literally like your cholesterol just goes through the friggin roof. But it is absolutely amazing and they love their bombette here and you can get all different types and flavors. And if you go down the road to Cisternino, which is also - Cisternino has been called one of the borghi più belli d'Italia, which is one of the most beautiful spots in Italy. Again, with the whitewashed buildings, these little tiny little alleyways with little bars and trattorias and cafes and stuff like that. And they also have a lot of meat dishes. Yeah, it is - the food is just it's just phenomenal. What I do, I mean, I love my wine and it's funny, like, I used to love Australian wine and I couldn't drink Australian wine anymore and apologies to any Australian listeners but the wine we have here in Puglia is phenomenal. It's like - one of the most popular is the Primitivo Amabile or the Primitivo, which is from an area called Manduria. And we have a cantina, which means like a wine, a wine shop that you can go to. And it's kind of like - he has the big barrels of wine and he pulls it from the 'spina', which is like the what you call a lever or something. 2 Euros a litre. It's organic. No headaches. And it tastes amazing. When you take that with a few Bombette and it is absolutely phenomenal. And, you know, it's so funny because in Australia I used to love my red wine and I could never imagine drinking red wine that's come out of the fridge, because I think in Australia, if you drank cold red wine and then expel you out of the country, even in the wintertime, I have my wine in the fridge, the red wine in the fridge. I'm pretty sure I'm going to have my Australian citizenship snatched off me for saying that. But it is. Yeah, it is a really, really lovely.

Katy

What do they keep it in the fridge?

Nikki

Why would they keep it in the fridge? Because if you think about - well we're going through a massive heat wave right now. It was forty six degrees when I got in my car the other day.

Katy

That's celsius right?

Nikki

Celsius, yes. And so a glass of room temperature wine with forty six degree heat is not enjoyable. So yeah, we have it in the fridge to keep it fresh. And even in restaurants you will find that all red wine is served chilled.

Katy

Is it normal? Forty six degrees?

Nikki

No - oh it's been ridiculous. And it's June. It's June. So I'm thinking oh my God, what's it going to be like in the middle of summer. And we don't have air con either. So that's a whole other podcast about Italians and hating air conditioning and they're afraid of the air. So I could talk for hours about that. That's another topic.

Katy

Goodness. But so this is a really good point, though. People are traveling down there in summer. Can you expect the hotels - or if you are staying in Airbnb, you probably can't expect them to have air conditioning.

Nikki

Oh yeah. I mean - in a tourist structure definitely because the Italians are staying in there themselves. Like if you went to the owner's house, you would never see any sort of air conditioning unit whatsoever. They sit there with their handheld fan. And I said to my husband the other day, I said, I really don't feel like I'm a fully fledged Italian woman until I have a hand held fan.

Katy

Guess what you're getting for Christmas? Oh, Martina Franco sounds just enchanting. And are there lots of little wine bars you can go to?

Nikki

Yeah. Is a beautiful little little town. It's this gorgeous arch as you go into the historic center. Again with the whitewashed buildings and the main piazza has this stunning kind of baroque kind of curved building that goes round the entire piazza. So it is really, really beautiful. Down the road from us, maybe about a half an hour drive is Ostuni and Ostuni is the Città Bianca, which is perched up high on the hill overlooking the Adriatic Coast. And the drive between Martina Franca and Ostuni is beautiful. So it's just very, very green. You see the beautiful trulli houses. You're like right in the countryside. There's loads of different masserias with the agriturismo all down that road. And it's really a nice drive. And I would say if you're coming to Puglia on holiday, hire a car, because when you're staying in the town - if you're going to stay in one town the whole time, OK, however, the towns are fairly small and you want to get out and do a bit of exploring. You want to get in the car and drive around. But as soon as you go a little bit out of town, you're in the sticks, you're in the countryside. It's so funny, the amount of American clients that say to me, so can we get an Uber. Uber does not exist down here at all. Also, like, there's no Uber Eats, there's no Uber. It's very, very rustic. If you want to get around and you want to do some exploring and I highly recommend that you do, you hire a car. Then you kind of you can really get off the beaten track and you can go and discover some of these amazing agriturismo and eat really, really well. And also, you can discover - there's some beautiful beaches all along the coast, not only on the Adriatic side, but on the Ionian side as well. And there's a lot of little inlets of hidden kind of bays. And again, with this really flat, shallow water perfect for kids. And a lot of these places are very much off the beaten track. And without a car, it's hard to really explore and see everything that Puglia has to offer. And there is a lot. It's a very big region.

Katy

Yeah, it sounds like it. Now, one of the places that I know is very popular is Polignano a Mare. And I know there's a very famous restaurant there that's built into a cliff, but I've heard it's not that good on food. Is that right?OK.

Nikki

OK. Can be brutally honest? It's called the Grotta Palazzese and it's look, if you want to go there to be seen and ticket it off the bucket list "I've eaten at Grotta Palazzese " - go right ahead. If you want to eat good food, you don't go there. So I think it was the last year or the year before last year, it got shut down for food poisoning. So the fish was off. OK? And they do have a tasting menu, which is not cheap. But if you ask an Italian person to rate that food, that was terrible. If you ask a tourist, so a non Italian person - they would probably say it's amazing, but you're paying for the view. Polignano a Mare is very, very nice. It has the beautiful cliff, very dramatic kind of clifftop going over the sea. If you go through the historic center, there's a lot of poetry written on the walls, on the stairs, and you kind of follow it round and it's really, really beautiful. It's not actually my favorite place I've been a few times and I think it's great to go in the summertime. I would never want to live there because if you're thinking about an all year round kind of living environment, it's dead off season. It's

really, really, really quiet. So anything like Monopoli or Ostuni or Martina Franca, you can pretty much live all year round and not feel like you're kind of isolated in a ghost town. But Polignano is beautiful to visit in the summer time.

Katy

Yeah, it's really interesting, isn't it? Because I think it depends on the type of holiday that you want. And if you were going there to sort of really soak up the local culture and understand and, you know, just like be part of life in Italy, then maybe some of these towns are not the place and also the time of year that you go. Because I know we were coming in March at the end of March, and it was still going to be pretty quiet around there because I think things don't really open up there until after Easter.

Nikki

Yeah, that's when things start to open up. At Christmas time, some things sort of open up. I mean, it is a really nice place to come in the off season because if you like, you see people in the beach in Monopoli in November. In the sea, on the rocks, sunbathing because it's still really, really sunny, you know, if you don't like the extreme heat - so coming in August, you know, it is like being in an oven. You are there on the Ferragosto holiday. And Ferragosto is like, I don't really know the meaning of Ferragosto so much. I call it like it's that the Italian Christmas - it's like Christmas without the presents. You pretty much have a day on the 15th of August, you eat and eat and eat and then you kind of pass out in a food coma and that's Ferragosto but around that whole time is when all the Italians take their holidays and the beaches are packed. So if you want to go to Puglia and really enjoy it and not feel like you're like a sardine in a can - go in your June, going in your September, even in July, it's not so busy.

Katy

Good tips there. Excellent. Now, how about let's just talk about the trulli, because I know so many people would love to stay in a trulli or even maybe buy one. Where do you find the trulli like way with the best place to see the country as they are they should be and how they evolved.

Nikki

So Alberobello is called the Città de Trulli - the city of trulli and it is beautiful. It is, you know, just streets and streets and streets of trulli houses. It's absolutely - I'm going to say it's 'truly' beautiful. And how is daggy is that? That kind of joke has been used a million times over, but it is really, really beautiful. However, Alberobello for me, I find it a bit too touristy, like it's a bit too much because there's so many of them. Don't get me wrong, they are beautiful. It's definitely a place to visit. But if you really want to see gorgeous and stay in a Trullo and be there on holiday, you want to pick the Valle de Itria area so that's Martina Franca, your Cisternino, your Ceglie Messapica, your Locorotondo. All of that pocket, Ostuni,

all of that pocket is the beautiful, you know, the green hilly lands, your red earth, your olive trees, and there's loads of holiday homes around there. And, you know, people are so into the holiday homes, especially our post covid. We're still in this pandemic and people don't want to be going on holiday in a hotel. They want to be in their own structure. They want to be cooking local produce. And, you know, and sometimes you can find, you know, holiday homes like these trulli houses with fully fitted kitchen. You might be able to have some cooking classes teaching you how to make the focaccia, the orecchiette, which is, you know, the famous dishes here in Puglia. And you really get that local experience.

Katy

Oh, that sounds amazing. I know my friend Jose stayed in one in Alberobello, and I think she found it a bit rustic. She's more used to a little - a bit more fancy place. But I think you can definitely get some simple trulli and then you can get some really luxe ones, too. I know I've seen some amazingly decorated trulli in my travels around the interwebs.

Nikki

Yeah I know there are some absolutely beautiful, beautiful, beautiful structures. I've worked in the holiday rentals industry for a very long time and I've just been so blown away at what you can actually do with these properties. So I did mention focaccia beforehand. So the best place I mean, I love a thin crunchy focaccia and orecchiette beforehand. I don't like that really like two inch thick where it's kind of gluggy. And I found the most amazing focaccia in Bari. In the old town. So what I love about Bari is - I love all of my shops, right? I still love my shops. I like my brands. I do love/I do support local boutiques as well, but I do love the fact that I can go to a massive H&M or a massive Zara and get my fix. Bari for shopping is fantastic. But to go to the old town is when you go down the little side streets and you see the Nonna outside making the orecchiette by hand. And it is such a beautiful experience to see. They've got literally - there'll be like a few of them all sitting down with these huge big tables in front of them and then making orecchiette by hand. And they've become so iconic in Bari and they're again with getting that the focaccia Barise is absolutely phenomenal as well. So it's really just give the simple one that's just with your tomatoes, your oregano and a bit of sea salt. And obviously it's nice and thin and crunchy and it's really great street food as well. We have something called the panzerotti, which is like a fried - and and it's definitely not one - anyone that follows anything in Italy will know that it's not something that's light on the calories of the food here. Unless you're really sticking to the Mediterranean fruit and veg. But the panzerotti are so amazing because it's that deep fried and they stuff them with, like, the mozzarella and the tomatoes and stuff like that. And that's also really good to check out.

Katy

The panzerotti - I've only had them because I haven't been down to visit you in Puglia yet, but I've had them Milan - there's a really famous shop in Milan called Panzerotti Luini who make them and you can check that out. I made the mistake of getting just one. And my friend Rachel and I, we stood there and just went, what was that all about? Why did we just get

one? That was after a particularly late night. Yeah, they definitely worth - just put caution to the wind. Do you not think about the calories, just get one because you you'll just be biting into it going "Oh, my goodness, this is amazing, amazing, amazing." So how about aperitivo. Out of all your favorite places? Where was your favorite place to go for aperitivo.

Nikki

Right? Well, these days, my aperitivo days are pretty much done and dusted having an eight month old and a three year old. So, you know, they're not really the best company for an aperitivo bar. But I really love a place called Vini and Panini in Monopoli. It's in in Piazza Garibaldi and they have wine degustation. They have the most amazing platters of, like what we call them stuzzichini - picking/little bites of food. That's really great for an aperitivo.

Nikki

There's also a really good place called Carlo Quinto, which is in Monopoli as well, which is near the castle, it's on the sea. Absolutely beautiful. Pretty much anywhere. I love an aperitivo anywhere where there is a piazza. I love to people watch. So you put me with a large spritz, with extra Aperol in it. So I can just watch the world go by and I am happy. It doesn't have to be anywhere in particular, just as long as I can sit and watch people - just doing life.

Katy

Well you really kind of sold me the piazza in Martina Franca, with the baroque buildings around. Do they have a nice few bars there? Where you can chill out and relax?

Nikki

They've got some really lovely restaurants. So in the summertime all the tables are outside and everything is sort of alfresco dining and it's absolutely wonderful.

Katy

Puglia sounds like the perfect place to just relax and enjoy the southern Italian life.

Nikki

It is amazing. If I think about my lifestyle when I lived in London, I've lived in Sao Paulo in Brazil, and I lived in Sydney - I've lived in some pretty busy cities and to - everything's always in a rush. And even now when I walk around the town, I still walk very quickly like I'm walking to some big meeting or running late for the office or something. And I'm not. I still need take it back and slow it down. But the pace of life is really relaxed. People really enjoy life. People enjoy time with friends, socializing, being outside. Food is such an important thing. And now that we are all out of lockdown, we can go to restaurants again. Everyone's really savoring the fact that we can just be in each other's company and just enjoy a meal

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together, enjoy some beautiful surroundings. And it really is - now I don't want to be so cheesy, but it really is La Dolce Vita! I mean, I found that when I was living in Bolzano. Amazing city, very, very beautiful. But the lifestyle in the south is second to none. It really is.

Katy

Sounds amazing. I mean, what about if people like a bit of culture? You can go and looking in these beautiful churches and museums and there's a lot of ancient architecture and really old, old Roman finds in Puglia as well, aren't they?

Nikki

Yes, there's loads of museums. Bari has some great museums, it has as a theater. There's some - the churches are absolutely stunning. They've got the baroque style churches and the cathedrals. And you go inside and the detail is absolutely phenomenal. It really is breathtaking. If you're going to go inside a church in Italy, you must have your shoulders covered just a bit of a tip. So even if it is a forty six degree day, just put a pashmina around your shoulders and check out the churches as it is really, really beautiful.

Katy

It's amazing. It's no wonder that so many people want to go on holiday to Puglia Nikki. But they also want to leave there. Is that even possible?

Nikki

Yes it is possible. You know, Puglia is turning into a real melting pot of digital nomads. Of expats. It's turning into a really multicultural environment. There's many, many Brits, loads of Americans, not so many Aussies - we need to ramp up the Aussies here. But no, there is. I mean, there's an influx, especially of Americans right now. I mean, I've helped so many Americans purchase property here in Puglia. It is where everyone wants to buy right now. Yeah, I mean, people just want especially post pandemic. They don't want to be stuck in an office. I think the pandemic has taught people that life is so short and why wait? Why wait and put these dreams on hold. We've had a whole year and a half sitting inside feeling scared about the world and everyone's like, stuff this. I'm going to enjoy the rest of my life. It's going to take life by both hands and I'm going to make my life happen for me, you know, instead of to me.

Katy

Absolutely. There's no time like the present. And I think that's what was kind of really heartbreaking about what happened in Italy, you know, a year ago is because that is part of the lifestyle. It's a huge part - that's socializing and spending time/slow time with each other. It was the bit that got taken away, and I'm so, so happy that it's coming back for you all and you're out and about enjoying a beautiful city.

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Katy

Now Nikki, I know our listeners will have absolutely loved this trip through these charming towns as much as I have. How can they stay in touch with you and your adventures and how you're helping people buy their dream property there?

Nikki

Well, I have a community called How to Confidently Buy Property in Italy and live La Dolce Vita. I'm also going to be running a special training with you on buying property. It's a free three day training. It's always loads of fun. It's always very insightful. I always find that you don't know what you don't know and there's a lot of information, a lot of things to know, a lot of things to look out for. So, yeah, jump on the training and it'd be great to connect. And yeah, I mean, I'm just so passionate about what I do. I know that it can be hard, you know, when you're trying to to buy property here. I mean I'm going through the same scenario myself, trying to buy property and it can be really tricky. So it would be just awesome to be able to help anyone that's looking to to make the switch to come over here to integrate into life here. I think a lot of people are afraid of moving to a country because they don't know the language. Right. And when I first arrived here, I hardly knew any Italian at all. I did a course in Sydney. And what we learned was how to pretty much say no if someone wanted to chat you up and take you home! Life skills and how to get around in the day to day and just throw yourself into it, you know, Italians are so warm and friendly. They love foreigners, they love tourism. They really make an effort. If you make an effort with them, they'll make an effort with you. And don't be afraid. I mean, there's there's so many groups on Facebook these days that are designed to help and help people integrate and create a life here. And it's the best thing I ever did. So I highly encourage anyone not just to come here on holiday, but to to think about living here as well.

Katy

Well, it sounds like a great idea. I mean. Well, I mean, you have to go maybe just go for a few trips and then you probably just fall in love and you just go "Nikki - I need some help."

Nikki

And it's like chemistry, you know, when you when you see a place and it pulls at your heart, it's like, oh, my God, this is the place that's what I found with Monopoli - that was my place because it just grabbed me. And so many people say when they come to Italy, they feel like they've come home.

Katy

I've certainly felt that way myself. And, you know, even before I met you, I was going to stay Monopoli. So hopefully we can go to that little bar and have that aperitivo sooner rather than

later. So Grazie mille Nikki. Thank you so much for being a guest on Untold Italy today. And everyone we'll give you all the details of that special training that we talked about at the end of the show. But for now, it's Grazie Nikki.

Nikki

Thank you so much. Thanks for having me Katy. So great to be here. And thank you everyone, for listening to me again.

Katy

I cannot wait to finally get to Puglia. I have a feeling that it might give Sicily a run for its money in my affections! Now in the past if you wanted to get to Puglia quickly you probably flew from Rome or Milan into Bari but I recently found out that one of the train companies Italo now has a fast train service that runs from Turin to Bari via Roma Termini. The journey from Rome to Bari takes around 5 hours which sounds long but you can sit back and relax with the free wifi and not have to worry about airports, security and testing and you'll be delivered right into Bari where you can start your adventures in Puglia. You can even have a cheeky wine on board. Perfetto! There's 3 services a day that go through Rome into Puglia. So it's never been easier to explore that part of Italy

As Nikki mentioned, she's going to do a special presentation for our listeners interested in buying property in Italy in the coming weeks. We know there are lots of you out there dreaming of your little piece of la dolce vita so we thought we'd set up a place where you can learn all about making those dreams come true! You can join us in our private facebook group for more details >> just go to untolditaly.com/purchasethedream where you'll get all the information on the upcoming sessions. Of course we'll put this information into the show notes with all the places Nikki shared in Puglia including that fabulous sounding bar in Monopoli I absolutely must get to one day!

That's all for this week, keep those gelato dreams alive, and we'll be back next week with another fun episode of Untold Italy but until then it's "ciao for now"