

# Untold Italy Episode 108 - Day Trips from Sorrento

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 108.

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

Buongiorno! Ciao friends. It's Katy here, dreaming of the southern Italian coast as I am sure you are too. Many, if not most of our listeners are in the northern hemisphere - a big shout out to you! - I hope you're staying warm and cosy and planning your trips to Italy for when the weather warms up a little.

So as you can never have too much sunshine in your life, today I thought we'd take a trip to beautiful Sorrento in Campania, a popular place to stay for many visitors thanks to its lovely atmosphere, delicious food and proximity to so many fabulous places to visit. I actually can't think of a town anywhere else in the world that is better suited to day trips than Sorrento! So that's what we're talking about today - some of the beautiful day trips you can take from the city if you decide to use it as a base to explore the region.

Joining me on the podcast is our friend and regular podcast contributor Pierpaolo, also known as Paulo, from Joe Banana Limos. Paulo is such a fun guy and he is a local of the area that lives near Sorrento. He's also a licensed tour guide for Napoli, Sorrento, Pompeii, and the Amalfi Coast and so is absolutely the expert on how to make the most of your time if you're staying in Sorrento.

## Katy

Benvenuto Pierpaolo. Welcome back to the Untold Italy podcast.

## Pierpaolo

Thank you so much, Katy. Welcome back, everybody. Welcome back to our listeners. And I hope you started very well this 2022 hopefully better than the last two years.

## Katy

Absolutely. Buon Anno to you. I'm looking forward to a fun-filled year - are you?

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**Pierpaolo**

Yes, we are looking for that kind of year. You know, lots of travels, lots of experiences and the memories that we will carry with us forever.

**Katy**

That's exactly right now. Pierpaolo, you are getting a bit famous on this podcast, so a lot of people will know who you are.

**Pierpaolo**

I'm so flattered.

**Katy**

But let's remind everyone where you're from and how you help travelers visiting your country have an amazing time.

**Pierpaolo**

Okay, so I'm from the Sorrento area. I'm actually living on the first town of Sorrento. So I hang around all the areas of the Amalfi Coast - Positano, Amalfi, Ravello, Sorrento, of course, Naples area. So let's say that there are many things that I try to show to my guests as I'm a tour guide and a driver as well. And that's what we do with our company. So we try to give memories to the people.

**Katy**

You really do and everyone, Paolo is so generous with his knowledge and a very popular guide on the Amalfi Coast, on Naples, on Pompeii, and that's with Joe Banana Tours and Limos. And so we're very lucky to have him here today.

**Pierpaolo**

Thank you.

**Katy**

Now, Paolo, many of our guests like to stay in Sorrento and use it as a base to do day trips, so I thought we'd have a chat today about how they can make the most of their time staying in the area and making use of all your best ever tips on what they can do. What do you think?

## **Pierpaolo**

Alora! For me, it's one of the greatest locations because consider that we have so many places to see and we cannot spend time in every location, like three or four days. So, like, for day trips, it's one of the best places you can ever pick. Consider that Sorrento with its shape. It's basically on the Northern part of the Amalfi Coast. So it's an hour drive from Naples, an hour train from Naples, half an hour train to Pompeii, so you can get to the ferry to Capri very easily, to Positano, to Amalfi. So even for those that don't necessarily want to take services like car drivers or whatever, because they're actually more on a budget - definitely, you can move from Sorrento in a very easy way, more on my opinion than anywhere else.

## **Katy**

I agree. So I think I would say when people say, should I go to Sorrento or Cinque Terre, I think if someone's looking to do a lot of different types of activities and I would say to choose between the two, then Sorrento is probably a better choice because you've got a lot more options right on your doorstep.

## **Pierpaolo**

Definitely. In my opinion, even the Cinque Terre is a place that is worth it to be visited. But people ignore the fact that there is a place where you have to walk a lot. It's really for hikers, and you don't have the variety that you have here. I mean, you can tell it even about the food that we have. Our variety of food shows, even the variety of the territory that we have. So, in fact, if you see Sorrento - first, Sorrento has got the confirmation of the cliff, which is so weird somehow it's more or less like a plateau on top, but it's very sheer on the side. So that means that when you face from those views gosh, you got this view underneath, straight, deep down. And you got all of these beautiful views because it's located on a cape. You can see Naples, the Vesuvius. It's very scenic, in my opinion. And of course, the history of Sorrento goes back in time to the Greek times and in fact, still, now, if you walk through it through this town, you definitely have the original pattern of the streets. So it means that it's like East, West, North, South, and all of these allies are so beautiful because you walk in it. And even if now for sure, it's a touristy area. But still, you have a wonderful time.

## **Katy**

It's beautiful for sure. And even just down on the waterfront there, it's very beautiful with the little boats bobbing up and down in the seafood restaurants. I love it.

## **Pierpaolo**

Oh, yeah. That is actually one of my favorite day off because you actually get to swim, you get the food, you're relaxed. One of my ideal day-off is actually like that. But I got to tell you, even the offer that Sorrento has in terms of hotel, bed and breakfast, all these structures, there are so many. We have over 110 hotels in Sorrento plus even accommodations that really don't have the name 'hotel' on the paper, but they're definitely as good as them.

Then the other thing, which is quite impressive is the fact that some of the activities because of the tourism, we still kept it - like, for example, they got the inlet woodwork. So the famous music boxes were from here. We got a good production of mozzarella - the cow one not at the Buffalo mozzarella. Still very good. And of course, we have talked about it in our recent podcast, The Limoncello, as well. I guess our guests remember that if they listen to it. Otherwise, I would invite them to go look for the episode of The Limoncello because it's quite interesting if you want to know about it. And even if you want to make it at all.

**Katy**

It's a very popular episode. So if you did miss that one, we'll put that into the show notes, too. So you can reflect back on that one.

**Pierpaolo**

Alora! Now let's think about the places we can see from. Sorrento the point is, every place I'm mentioning you could definitely spend three days in every single site. So what I'm saying to our listeners is the fact don't get me wrong, think, oh, you go there one day and you come back, you go there one day. That's of course, something you do when you want to see everything. But if you can't do that and that's the majority of us because we don't have vacations that last three months, unfortunately. So we can definitely point with the Sorrento location in order that we can visit, for example, the islands. Now we start with that. Have you ever heard about the island of Ischia?

**Katy**

I have it's beautiful.

**Pierpaolo**

See, many people misspell it calling it 'Ishia', but it's definitely one of the most thermal Islands in Italy, so we have activities, secondary activities of the volcanoes still going on. And that's a place where whichever hotel you pick there, they got a spot in every single hotel. So really relaxing. They got some mud, they got even beaches where you can go there and you have this hot spring that goes straight into the water. In fact, it's one of the few places where Italians pick it, even for the wintertime, where normally in Italy, especially the summer areas, they don't really get that popular in the wintertime. They're almost deserted, not in the case of Ischia and not even in the case of Sorrento. So, of course, for our listeners, my aim is to give them both the views. So the way to do it on their own, in order that they can actually feel independent about it and they can still see it and enjoy it. And of course, I'm giving them even some ideas if they're going to do it with services that can serve them better. Let's say, even if they want to be spoiled, they can definitely be helped about it, because the Ischia Island we have from Sorrento a departure, there are not so many, but in the summer they run. So they got one or two departures in the morning and then there is one ferry on the way back, more or less or five after in the afternoon. That's the timing. And it's very

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comfortable, because once you reach the Marina Piccola in Sorrento, Marina Piccola paradoxically has got the biggest port for the ferry. Piccolo means it's all. But that's actually newer. And consider that this Marina Piccolo has got the departure that in an hour with the hydrofoil it takes you to Ischia directly. Now when you go on the island, what's to see there? If you do it on your own, you got two options, you enjoy the spa and the thermal bath, or you just go and explore it because the attraction are so many and the island is way bigger than Capri, for example. In fact, when you reach the island of Ischia, the first thing that you will see coming from the woodland. It's a beautiful (Aragonese- the Spanish family that was here) the Aragonese Castle, which is simply fantastic. Imagine this castle that it's located on this volcanic cliff, huge cliff and all over the castle is actually built on it. And you got a view from there, which is simply fantastic. But even the attraction inside the castle is beautiful for the simple reason that you can see different rooms, different churches, different ambience. You'll definitely love it when you'll be there. But Ischia has got like six different towns in the same island. And it's one of the biggest Islands in Italy after, of course, the main one of Sicily and Sardinia. So consider that they got two thermal parks. I mean, now it's kind of like you go to a park, not like the amusement park. And rather than having all the games and things like that, so you got actually all the different kinds of waters. So you got the massage, you got the hot waters, the hot pools, the hot sauna. There is imagine a grotto in one of these two where you go in it and the steam comes out literally at a temperature of 90/100 Celsius, which is more or less like 220 F. So of course, you got to be careful to not go too close. They got these two thermal parks. One is called Negombo. And of course, the other one is called Poseidon, like the King of the God of the water. So the other thing is actually the beach of Sorgeto. It's beautiful and small. But if you actually got something to cook and you got like aluminum foil, you can put the food in there to leave it right down, few spots in the sand. And after a little bit of time, you got the food cooked literally. That is so funny because you actually go there and you when you go into the water, even if it's cold, so you actually have the hot spring where the water comes out at 90 Celsius. So it's really like boiling water. But you definitely know how close you can get because you can feel it. And there is also another beautiful setting, which is called the Lacco Ameno. Already the word makes you understand how beautiful that was. And this is still now, even if the Island, I have to say that it has got many structures, many houses. The point is that at Lacco Ameno, they got a beautiful historical museum where they keep the pieces of the Greek time, because you have to know that before anywhere else in the area in Ischia, they arrived and they settled the Greeks. So let's say that where the civilizations are, in our case, that in this museum they got even one of the first witnesses of Greek alphabet.

**Katy**

Amazing.

**Pierpaolo**

Yes. And of course, there is even Sant'Angelo is fantastic. It's like a little cute district that it seems like it's climbing on the rocks and very colorful. Imagine that even Angela Merkel, the

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ex President of Germany. She comes every year to Ischia. And she loves to go there in Sant'Angelo for her vacation and in Sant'Angelo. So you can see all these colorful houses and you can definitely have a relaxing walk there.

**Katy**

Sounds amazing, Pierpaolo.

**Pierpaolo**

Oh, yeah. The things to see there are so many. But the thing is that you can do it on your own. You can rent a guide for the full day. So with the guide, you literally know where to go and you can use the public transportation on the island, if you want to save some money, or you can get one of our services, which includes the ferry, the car on the island and the guide for the full day. Or if you really want to exaggerate that, you say, I want to relax - you also can have your private boat directly to the island, so they will come to pick you up by car at your hotel. So they will take you to this private boat. You will have an hour ride to Ischia, an hour and 20 minutes more or less. And you can definitely tour the islands by the water. And you can see some attraction depending, even from what you want to see. And the guide will help you with that. Sounds good, doesn't it?

**Katy**

It really does sign me up

**Pierpaolo**

Whenever you want Katy of course.

**Katy**

I think what would be nice about that is that you could organize a trip that really suits you. So you might want to go to a special spa and then go to a beach and then a nice restaurant. And I know that you know, all the great restaurants, Paolo.

**Pierpaolo**

I try! Let's say that I was on the island with some guests from America, from California. Very beautiful family. We're still friends and we hear each other and we did this - so we went around the island by boat. Then we went to the Negombo Spa to make all this water thing. And then we ended up in a beautiful restaurant on the water eating the fishes, the fresh fish, which is beautiful.

**Katy**

Sounds perfect to me.

**Pierpaolo**

They love dit. They still remember it. Let me tell you, they cannot forget it.

**Katy**

That sounds beautiful. Okay, we've ticked off Ischia where can we go next?

**Pierpaolo**

The other place that is very popular that you can reach so easily is Capri that everybody probably knows as Capri. But the right pronunciation is Capri. So to our listeners when they are saying to other guests, to other friends. So I was in Capri or in Capri when you are there and you've been in Italy, you call it the right way.

**Katy**

Thank you for the correction.

**Pierpaolo**

Leaving apart this little joke, I'm doing, you know - the incredible thing is that when you are in Sorrento located, you go again to the Marina Piccolo and see the departure to the island of Capri - there are so many, I guess the first one is around seven and you can end it up till 6.30/7 at night. Of course, there are always two kinds of boats. You can take the hydrofoil or the ferry. It's a difference of a few minutes. So the hydrofoil is so fast. I mean, probably in less than 20 minutes - you're there. Instead with the ferry take a little bit more, but you know what? You go there, you buy the ticket, the first one that you get, you go. And it's the easiest way without booking things more or less. It's around the \$20 so for 20 each way to go on the island. And once you are on the Island, I want to give to all our listeners all, of a list of what you can do on the island.

**Katy**

Yeah. I mean, we've had recently Holly who lives on Capri. Oh, I just don't want to get it wrong. She's been telling us a lot about the things, but it's really interesting to hear from your perspective because she lives on the island, and she's got a very unique point of view.

**Pierpaolo**

That is the point when you live on the island, it's different, maybe even the most touristy attraction - you don't like it because there are too many tourists. But if there are the tourists, it means that it's beautiful. There is nothing to do. In fact, once people land on the island on their own, what I normally suggest to do, take a cab, spend this 20 Euros 25 and reach the top

of Capri. Anna Capri. So, Anna Capri, if you started from there, you got the chance to see many different things.

## Pierpaolo

First, you can take the chairlift and reach the Mount Solato. So with €12 to ride back and forth, you actually get a ticket that takes you directly on the Mount and you have a 360-degree view, which is fantastic. Plus, once you are on Ana Capri, there is the Axel Munthe Museum, which is beautiful. And even if you like the tiles, the decorated tiles, there is a Church that you cannot miss, which is called the Church of San Michele, which has got the scene of the paradise. It is so beautiful that when people take it, if you don't like it, it means you don't like beauty and 99.9% of the guests that you take there. I mean, they're all in love with it. The other thing is that you can go down from there or you can take a bus or whatever, and you reach the center of Capri. So there is the Piazzetta, where you can have this nice walk. It's very fancy and normally at night time, if you sleep on the island, one of the most fancy things to do is actually to sit in the square looking at people walking. Let's say that the standards of Capri are very high and you see all these entrepreneurs, classy women just walking through this while you're drinking this famous drink, which is made with vodka and lemon called Sgroppino. That's a very nice drink that they have on the island. So from the center of Capri when you are exploring it, not when you are sleeping there. So you can definitely - from the Piazzetta you can definitely go and see the fancy shops in Via Camerelle. So they have all of these beautiful stores. It's like really being one of the most fancy streets in Paris or Rome or Milan. So they definitely have the nice shop. The same walk, if you want to explore it without really paying attention to the shop, you can reach Punta Tragara. You can see this beautiful Faraglioni rocks, which is one of the most popular attractions. It's three big rocks right in the middle of the water that they are shaped like this because of the erosion of the sea. And the other thing is actually, if you really are into archaeology to go all the way to Villa Jovis, which is this beautiful Villa of Tiberius, the Emperor that led the Roman Empire for several years, directly from that little spot on the island. So imagine a place that is bigger than Europe. It was led directly from that little spot on the island. And of course, even the Augustus Gardens are simply fantastic, because from the Augustus Gardens, you go there, it's like €1 ticket. You can book online. So it's not a big expense. You go there and you can see this Krupp street. Krupp was actually the stainless steel producer, which he loved to come with his yacht to Capri and he said, I want to make my street to reach my villa. And it's a beautiful serpentine street, which is just beautiful to look at. Now it's closed. You can't walk in it because of the falling rocks, but already to look at it, it's fantastic. So if you do it on your own, you pass from Ana Capri to Capri. There's one thing that I didn't mention that everybody goes for it. Some Spanish people love it that much that when I had some guests coming. They said, La grotta della morte or the grotto of the death. They want to see the Blue Grotto, right? Everybody wants to see that. But the blue grotto, it's not impossible to see. Get prepared that you got to make a line for sure. There are people waiting for it. They want to see it. And it's beautiful because it's a very particular situation and confirmation of the rock underneath that gives this turquoise color, which is pretty unique in this grotto. But of course, when it's rough the water, you can go in there. Otherwise, you'd hit your head on

the rock and from a vacation and then you need to go to the hospital. So that's why these people are very strict. They definitely don't let you there. But on the island of Capri, so this is actually a list of all the things that you can do it on your own. The very important thing that you need to do, in my opinion, when you land there, take the cab directly to Anna Capri. And from there you will enjoy your visit.

### **Katy**

I think that's a great tip, because most people will get the funicular up to Capri town and kind of get stuck there exactly.

### **Pierpaolo**

Now, if you spend 40 minutes for the funicular, then 40 minutes for the bus line. So tell me how many times it happens to you to be on the island of Capri? Not really every day, so that's why you take that. And you are set with the visit of the island. But we got also an alternative always to spoil our guests. One of the prettiest things about the island is actually it's water. When you see the coastline from Sorrento to Capri, it's to die for. It's so beautiful. You have so many shades of colors. And definitely, when you take the ride with a private boat like we do, you can definitely see this beautiful waterfall and get close to the waterfall. So you can see all the town of Massa Lubrense, which is the next town after Sorrento and all these little spots, these little caves. Then before you reach the island itself, you can see other grotto. Of course you can pick also the Blue Grotto, because if you ask it to your skipper and your assistant, you can definitely say, oh, you know what, like the Spanish said - the grotto of the death. I want to see the grotto, so they know if it's open or not, because we know it ahead of time before when they open it in the morning. And the very first thing, we take the people directly there, then they take you with a smaller boat in there. And you can also see the Blue Grotto. But do you think it's over? So do we just show the blue growth? Of course not, because we got a beautiful Green Grotto with beautiful rock formation. We got the White Grotto that you go in there and it's simply fantastic with all the shades of the white color. And then the other thing is like by boat with a small boat, you can go even through smaller places. And there is one - I did it recently. So I got a very fresh memory of it. There is one which is called like the Little Beach of the Lovers, which is definitely like embracing people. Shaped like a human being. When it's ready to hug somebody, it's simply fantastic. And of course, we give it the chance to the people to stay on the island or to pick like you said, one of the restaurants on the water with this beautiful seafood. And you can enjoy this at 101%. Of course, we also have the option that if you want a guide that takes you on the island for 3/4 hours, you can do it. Of course, I feel to say that if you're taking a private boat, you definitely will love staying near by the water. So imagine that we give the snorkeling set, we give the towels, we give the shots of limoncello, we give it a drink, the light lunch, or of course, if you want to stop on a restaurant, you can do it on your own. And in this way, when you give all of these services, now Katy - not everybody really has the willing to go on the island because they are just relaxing it and enjoying it. But of course, we always give an option in order that if people want to see it and wants to enjoy it, why not? I mean, we give it a service and the tour guide

can take you on the island to have a quick look at it. So we will take our driver on the island like we did it - we can do it. Also in Ischia. In Ischia when you go with the private boat, we have the option also to have a private driver there also because it's not that you can go with your own cars, especially in Capri. I know you have to forget about it. That's why we got our links - we got our people that we can definitely help to enjoy the island. And at the same time, the waters around. The last thing is, when you pass through the Faraglioni rock, there is this beautiful arch that you pass through it by boat. I mean, it's so beautiful. They call it the arch of the lovers, of course, because it's a romantic spot. So we will not miss that as well.

**Katy**

Absolutely not. And, you know, I didn't come with you, but I will come next time with you.

**Pierpaolo**

I can't wait for it.

**Katy**

I know it's going to be so exciting! But we did a similar boat tour, and honestly, I've said this a few times. It is actually one of the best days of my life. It was incredible. If you're going to splurge on one thing, I would say, do these day trip to Carpi with the boat. That's all I would say.

**Pierpaolo**

if you do this experience, I mean, it's because you will love it. And we say it's really for your happiness, because it's so beautiful. Of course, it has its cost. But it's one of the days like you just said, you will never forget it for the best of your life.

**Katy**

Absolutely beautiful.

**Pierpaolo**

And these are the two main Islands that you can see. Of course, there is even a third island, which is very pretty. But from Sorrento it's not easy at all to see it. That's why I didn't mention it. So that's when you are staying in the city of Napoli, you can take an easier ferry from there. It's called the Procida. It's very pretty. Now it's the capital of the culture, capital of the culture, 2022 which is this year.

## Katy

Yeah, it looks so stunning. It's one of those colorful towns that people just swoon over immediately. And I would love to go to Procida next time I'm there too. My list is so long, it's crazy. I'm having to cut, cut, cut - crying every two minutes every time I cut something out.

## Pierpaolo

Yeah, let's say that from Sorrento you also, for those that love the archaeological site, but let's say the truth, not only for those that love archaeological sites, because when you hear like a thousand times in your life, Pompeii, Pompeii Vesuvius and the explosion, it means something. It means that when you are going to the Pompeii, you will have the chance to see a city that was frozen in time. And there you can literally understand that those that are actually advanced, it's them, not us. You say Paolo, but you're talking about 2000 years ago. Yes, I'm talking about 2000 years ago and more because the city was even older than that. It was buried on the 79 AD. And definitely it's a place that's when they started to dig it out so little by little it became wider and wider. Now, what happens if you go to see Pompeii from Sorrento you can do it with the first option. If you do it on your own by train, there is a train. A local train takes you exactly to the entrance of Porta Marina. Now, from there, the biggest mistake is okay, I buy the ticket and I explore it. You go to see a place which is 165 acres. Those that are dug out there are exactly 110 because 55 are still buried. But, Katy, how can you visit 110 acres of land without knowing where to go? So when you go there, get a guide. I normally suggest to take your private guide because if you have questions, you can do it. You got the bigger group. It's true that you save some money, but at the same time, it's like a storytelling and you have no option to ask. The thing is that we normally suggest to go to Pompeii, taking a driver, of course, don't even think about taking your own car because it's so comfortable the train, that at that point you take the train from Sorrento. If you're taking your car, it's a little bit stressful, even if you have - the good thing is that you have parking close to the - which is the most important thing. And the other thing about getting there by car is when you get with a private driver, when you get with a private driver, the thing is you go there, you got the private driver, then you got the private guide in there. Of course, the day will be more pricey. But you are having like, two, three people working for you the whole day. And the thing is when you go there, you book the full day and you can see even the visit and you can see also Herculaneum. If you don't have the option to see so many historical sites or you're not a climber because many people go to the Vesuvius, they say it's beautiful to go to the Vesuvius, and they never hiked in their life. You got to have a bit of experience. It's not impossible. It's easy. But if your activity is actually is to go from the sitting room to the sofa and the television, and then you want to make a steep way up for 35, 40 minutes all in a row, it's normal that it becomes very successful. So the Vesuvius needs actually its time. And when we take people there, of course, we do it. Otherwise, if you don't want to see the Vesuvius and you want to see the two. We can add a visit to a nice local winery because the soil of the Vesuvius is incredibly rich. So all these vineyards are simply fantastic. You will not drink the Grenache like you have it in Australia or those beautiful, nice Merlot that they have in California, in Napa Valley. But for sure you will drink some local wine that will give you some joy. And of course, all of it, including a beautiful view from the volcano onto the water. That's

what I feel to say to the guests. So if you really want to make your day and you want to get the best out of it, this is a good way to do it. Otherwise simply Pompeii and you can definitely do it without being stressed out that much.

**Katy**

Yeah, I think it's really important to know (and I'll tell you how we did it last time we were there) is because if you don't get a guide, what you have to understand is you'll get a map. But it's kind of pointless. There's not a lot of markings around the site about telling you about what you're seeing. So you would just be wandering around looking around, going, what's this place and you miss out on so much like I can't stress that enough.

**Pierpaolo**

I laugh about it because you cannot even imagine as I'm a tour guide there, too, so all the times, it's actually like spending time to give information to other guests, other people, because then they see you talking in English. "Excuse me. Where is the way out?" "Excuse me. Where can I see the dead bodies", which they mean the plaster casts. So you help them because I'm a helpful person with everybody. Even if you didn't pay me, it doesn't mean anything. So I help them, but I see all of these people that they literally don't know where to go. And plus, if you get to the audio guide there because people think it's a museum. No, it's not a museum, because when you go into a museum, you got the numbers, you got the important paintings you got to listen with, and you're fine. Instead, when you go with the audio guide, there is somebody that uses the Rick Steve's audio guide. There's somebody that uses the one that they have there, and they cost too. But the point is that they don't match with the numbers. So you're listening to the explanation, but it's not the thing that you're looking at.

**Katy**

Oh dear.

**Pierpaolo**

Literally, because every single day I see people asking, getting lost, going somewhere else.

**Katy**

Yeah. And if you only have a limited amount of time and you're really interested in the history or even seeing what I like to see the Kentucky Fried Chicken or Pompeii Fried Chicken. I mean, you're not going to find it on your own. So look, it's a really beautiful, amazing, interesting place, and I really feel like that again, is a special place where you need to really think about how you're going to approach it to make the most of your time.

## Pierpaolo

Also, because the site is so big that you can go to Pompeii three times for the 2 to 3 hours and always see different things. That's the incredible thing. And of course, it's a place that on my opinion, you can't miss like you cannot even miss the Amalfi Coast. Probably one of the most beautiful drive in the world. There was a ranking done a few not long time ago and is considered it one of the most beautiful drives on earth. And I can definitely agree because I've seen several places, but the beauty of this, it's incomparable - the Amalfi Coast from Sorrento it's not that bad. I mean, you can actually see the Amalfi Coast and do the digital tour. Of course, I want to take advantage of the moment to say to our listeners that we have done an episode entirely on the Amalfi Coast, so if they really need more detail for that, they can definitely see it there. But on the Amalfi Coast, when you want to do it on your own, you got to be careful because if you get motion sick and you take one of the buses from Sorrento, which more or less deliver from the transition area, it takes a bit of time. It goes first up on the hills, and then it goes the hills of Sorrento, and then it goes because the route is like that, and then it takes you straight to deposit down. Now the point is when you get deposit down, then you got to make a walk to reach it, which on the way down seems very easy. But on the way up, it's not really that easy because the place is so vertical and steep that is actually another spot where you will feel like you have never walked that much in your life. Imagine that the top is part of Positano. To the bottom, if you really want to explore it, having a time, it's 1700 steps. Not a joke. You can also take the hydrofoil, but the hydrofoil takes you to Positano or to Amalfi - all the views in between, especially when you have the hydrofoil. The hydrofoil doesn't have many open seats that you can actually see. So once they finish those ten seats on the outside, then you got to be inside. And it's not really the greatest, but to move around it's not that bad. So that's why at that point I would never say if I love and I care about somebody. I would never say to that person, rent your own car and drive the Amalfi Coast. Never. It really must hate you to say, okay, don't worry, take a big car and drive the Amalfi Coast on your own. It's too stressful or you drive or you look at the views. If you do both things at the same time, you realize that's a tragic combination. So the other thing is you can do it with the private driver. And the incredible thing is that differently from Pompeii, where you necessarily need a guide which has an extra cost, of course, on the Amalfi Coast - the drivers there, they are English-speaking drivers. They give you a commentary. I don't want to say that they are guides that they can take you in every single site or church, but you don't need it when you're on the Amalfi Coast, because when you're there, you want to know what you're looking at, or sometimes you just want to enjoy the views.

## Pierpaolo

And the incredible thing is that we do the private drive and the commentary and all the suggestions that it gives you. You will definitely make the best day out of it. Now the point is, everybody sticks with Positano, Amalfi and Ravello, because these are the three islet spots. Imagine we have in Positano, this beautiful walk down to the beach and you have all these houses to see which are simply fantastic, like a pyramid of houses. You go to Amalfi with its incredible decorated church and its square and the street that takes you to all the different

spots of the city. And of course, magnificent views. And we have a Ravello which is located on the top of a cliff with a beautiful private historical villa - when you go there and you got this 220 deg view with a cliff which is 1500ft, about 500 meters steep down straight. So you got these views that are simply breathtaking. Now the point is - is that the only Amalfi Coast? No way, because when somebody has been here already, they want to come back for sure. But sometimes we give them an alternative. So we pick one of the spots that you like most. And then we started to show other little towns like Minori, Maiori. So we got Vietri sul Mare, the little town of Cetara. Of course not all of them, you can go out and explore because some of the places you literally don't have where to put your car. Not even paying. That's another thing in Positano and the Amalfi Coast, the prices of the parking, you only have a few places. So if you rent your car, it really costs you an amount of money, because in Italy, it's not that then of course, you want to make a full insurance because when you don't make it, the scratches will come out because the street is too narrow. The other thing is that you got to pay for the parking and you got to know where to park. So that's the other thing. So some of the places we're going, most of the places we're going to have at the parking and we pay for it. It's included, of course. But what is incredible is that we can do other alternative spots like this Vietri sul Mare, little district called the Raito, where you actually go to take this picture, which is simply fantastic. So we got different alternatives, or just for example, to show Praia after Positano up and down. So the incredible thing is that we give different alternatives in order to make you enjoy it's best. And, of course, with your private driver, which is a sort of a guide that tells you the information you can definitely understand about the place as well.

**Katy**

I think it's fantastic. Honestly, we did go in April and we did drive last time we were there. But my husband is quite good at driving.

**Pierpaolo**

Would you do it again?

**Katy**

Not in summer.

**Pierpaolo**

In summer? No.

**Katy**

We had two little kids. I probably wouldn't do. In summer, no!

### **Pierpaolo**

In April, it's easier. And plus, the car wasn't too big, because when you got the small car, it's perfect. You take a Fiat 500. I mean, for two people, it's perfect. But when you start to have a bigger vehicle, it becomes a little bit harder.

### **Katy**

You know what? I had a great time. But I think if you ask my husband, I don't think he had a great time because he was spending a lot of time concentrating on driving. And I feel a little bit bad about that now.

### **Pierpaolo**

You know what? The man wants to show his driving skills and which better place than the Amalfi Coast wants to show.

### **Katy**

What about by boat Paolo?

### **Pierpaolo**

By boat. That's another time, the same thing I told you before when we were exploring the part from Sorrento to Capri. Of course, we miss out on the other part because there are two different ways. So if you want to do it like some of our guests have done the Amalfi Coast, they made a drive, and they made a boat tour. The time of your life, because going all the way to the Amalfi Coast, you necessarily pass by some of these nice little restaurants that are on the water. You say "Paolo, why do you insist on the restaurant?" It's not only the restaurant because they are in sorts of natural ports. There is one place that I really love. We know it, there is mostly a restaurant there. It's called Conca del Sogno. Cove of the Dream. Oh, my word, Katy, it's like a corner of paradise. And so when you are taking a private boat, we will explore these areas because we drive nearby the coast. So you will never miss that out. That's the incredible thing.

### **Katy**

Yeah.

### **Pierpaolo**

And then you can go to Positano, and you can have your time there. Plus, without having the stress of going and making the steep steps on the way up, which is the other thing, because when you land by boat, you actually arrive already on the beach and you can get the boat back without really feeling too stressed out about the walk. And the other incredible thing is actually going all the way to Amalfi, because in between Positano and Amalfi, there are so many beautiful spots. And I repeat it when you are in the water. It's a different perspective

because the perspective of the water is definitely like something you say, wow, you see this from the top, you see all the steepness down no? But from the bottom from the water, you see these massive cliffs right above your head, so it's almost dominating. It makes you understand that the most powerful is always Mother Nature, because when you see such a creation like that and of course, from the water, you can also see all these beautiful terracement, because on the Amalfi Coast, the only chance they added to have the lemon yard, it was to make the terrace. So you will see all these terraces with these patches I say patches because they are covered with nets and you see it, it's almost like a hero agriculture. I mean, imagine all these people that have to pick the lemons and have to climb all the stairs. But of course, you can see it in a comfortable way directly from the water. And of course, wait all the time that you need to swim, because when you take it in the summertime, of course, we suggest to take it in a sunny day and we plan it on in order that you will not get a rainy day, the Amalfi Coast, so of course, you can't go to Ravello by boat for the simple reason that Ravello is set on a cliff unless you don't have a James Bond boat. But it's still beautiful to see from the Amalfi area. That's very pretty too.

**Katy**

Yeah. Honestly, I think you're right. One of my dreams is just to cruise up and down the coastline for a few days. And just soak it all up. It's so beautiful. I miss it so much.

**Pierpaolo**

And the other thing is, on the Amalfi Coast so you can definitely have an idea of a leisure and relaxing spot. But if you want to see a cultural place, an old city, which better place than Napoli. I always say Napoli, because Naples is in Florida while Napoli is here in Italy. Unfortunately, during the years, it had like a bad reputation because they thought, oh, I'm going to be stolen in Napoli. No. If you go to see the service and all the data we have, you actually have Naples that it's as safe as Milan. I've heard more about people that have been pickpocketing in Rome than in the city of Naples. So I mean, that is not happy. But at least let's not put it in the way that it's a city that you can see. It's a city where you actually have so many extreme things. I mean, in a certain point, you see two people, they are talking to each other so loud that you think, gosh, these people are arguing, and now they're going to beat each other. It's better that I escape. Then when you're ready to escape, you see them hugging each other. It's just like that because we are very colorful, our gesturing. I mean, we have, of course, a week and the show is a podcast, but the gesturing we have it's like a second language. And we definitely have this happening in the city. You know, what is the worst impact when you do the city of Napoli - when you get to the train station?

**Katy**

Yes.

## Pierpaolo

I mean, the train station in Napoli, like many others, even if you go to the Termini station in Rome, it's not like the place that I would like to be, honestly. All these people, I mean, people that try to sell you stuff, even in Naples, Naples, imagine that we have a character that this might be fun for - one of the most insistent venders on Earth, the sock vender. He wants to sell you socks, even if you don't need it. It's so funny because he starts to tell you all his desperate life that at the end you buy the socks, even if you don't need it. That is so funny, because even if you are extremely ugly, they will call you Brad Pitt. Or everybody can easily turn into Angelina Jolie as long as you buy the stuff. But of course, keeping apart these stereotypes of people that we also have. The city is beautiful. It's so beautiful. I mean, it's like an open museum. The thing is, if you do it on your own, do it. Of course, take the train from Sorrento there is actually not the last, but the station before the last, you reach the Garibaldi Square. You go out and then you take the subway. The subway is one of the last subway they have done in Europe. You know what it means that all the contemporary artists were almost fighting to put one of their artworks in there. And there are some subway stations, even if you are not a lover of contemporary art. Oh, my word. It's so beautiful. And you go there, you actually got the chance to see different stations. It's one that will take you to the Archeological Museum, another one that will take you to the center where there is the castle, the Maschio Angioino and from there you see the historical center. Now, what about the historical center of Napoli? The historical centres of Napoli is a World Heritage site. It's in the UNESCO list, of course, but it's one of the most extended center in Europe. Historical here is something that can be 500 or 400 years old and something that can be 2000/2500 years old. The city itself, when you walk through it as parts that you look better in the wall. And you see the red bricks of the old theater that there was underneath, only that now they built the new structure. I mean, you can do things like that. And the incredible thing is that there is a part of Naples, which is the monumental part. So you definitely reach it with the subway there. The subway is actually the Castell Nuovo. New Castle. From there you can see this beautiful castle if you want it, but already to look at it from outside. It's magnificent. It is a Royal Palace right in front of the Royal Palace. There is like the Galleria that there is in Milan. One in Milan is very popular, so that people think that it exists only in Milan. Now we have it also in Napoli. They made it at the beginning of the 1900 to create one of the first mall ever. So it's a shopping center because they actually had all the different streets together and created this beautiful structure with architecture over the 1900, the Liberty style it's called. With these decorations and this beautiful Dome on top in the center with glass and iron, which 150 years ago, it was like one of the most revolutionary thing. And the thing is not only that the Plebiscito Square, I mean, this beautiful square that looks a little bit like the St. Peter square. I mean, he wants to pretend to be like that. Of course, it's not Saint Peter, Saint Peter Square, but it's still very beautiful. And from there you make actually the main street. So the main street, little by little, taking actually and asking information or if you have a map, you can definitely go to the other part, which is the real historical center, which is called the Spacca Napoli. It means exactly Split Naples. Because if you see this from the top and from the hill of the town, the alley splits the city exactly into those streets, like in Sorrento they follow exactly the same shape of the Greek and Roman streets. So you're

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talking about a place that because of the World War II, that it was bombed damage, it shook even stuff that was underneath the old churches. Then they went downstairs and they found the Roman market, the Roman streets. They found the Roman Theatre. I mean, it's so beautiful because Naples is literally like a lasagna of history. So you got layers. It gives you the idea the lasagna. When you actually open it, you see the different layers. The deeper you are, the older it is. And the older medieval part is actually right on top because it's the newest (talking about medieval and it's the newest) so in the city, so you actually can see this. You can see, of course, so many things. We have the National Archeological Museum from many experts. It's considered one of the most beautiful archeological museums in the world. Then from there, you can see some churches. I don't know if you ever heard about the Veiled Christ. Of course, you got to book that ticket online before, because the crowds are so big. It's a small chapel that little by little, people started to know it. And on TripAdvisor it was one of the most rated sites in the world. They got like, thousands and thousands of reviews, like more than 10,000 for sure. Why? Because you go in there and you see a Christ made of marble, laying on a mattress covered completely from a veil. This veil, it actually is so thin and it's done that well, it's still marble that it seems like there is a veil for real in there. I mean, you go there and it's something crazy to see and realize how a human being was able to do that. Imagine that Canova one of the best sculptures of the 1800s, when he saw that artwork made from a local but very good artist. He said that would give up to ten years of my life to have done something like that. And imagine that Canova made the statues even for Napoleon, for the most important Kings in Europe. So that's just to tell you about this little site. Like, for example, if you like paintings, you have Capodimonte, which is like a sort of Naples of Uffizzi, then you got churches. I mean, you have more than 400 churches. You can pick one. And it's beautiful. There is a cloister with the beautiful tiles. We were talking about the tiles you can see in a little church in Capri. Well, same artists have done an entire cloister, the Cloister of Santa Chiara. So just to tell you that after this part, there is even the area where they have the Nativity scene. If you go now, they made it one way because there are so many people during Christmas time in Naples Center that it's crazy. So they actually decided to make the street only one way. And it's beautiful to look at that as well. But Napoli, it's surrounded by five different hills. So if you actually have the chance to take one of those buses, of course, the day turns to be very, very long when you do it on your own. But if you have the chance, you can see these panoramic hills, which shows views that are simply fantastic.

## **Katy**

I love the one we could see out to Vesuvius and you can see the sea and Spacca Napoli down there. It's actually a really great way to get a perspective on the city. I thought to actually start up on the hill.

## **Pierpaolo**

This is something that you can do it even with public means of transportation. But it becomes a bit harder if you want to do that and see the hill, you got to actually go out at Vomero

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V-O-M-E-R-O. But if you really don't want to stress out, you take another time a driver. Because if you're leaving from Sorrento by car, it's true, the day is at least 9/10 hours. But take the car. The early bird catches the worm. So you leave soon and you definitely reach the city from the panoramic spot. Then you got the chance to be dropped off in the areas where normal cars cannot go. So it leaves you there and picks you up exactly there. It gives you all the way how to explore the central part of the town. You can see the monumental area you can see again, other views that you have not seen before. Even if you have a driver, it will give you the commentary, like on the Amalfi Coast. Of course, in order to enjoy it even better, you can also take a driver and a guide, because when you go through the Historical Center, I mean, all the nice information and curiosities. And a place like Napoli, together with Palermo in Sicily, it's one of the places where you can find street food everywhere. And it was a necessity in the past and need to have the street food because people needed to survive which baring that in the past to take a big, huge pot with boiling oil and to make something like the fried pizza. Imagine you go there. You see, even in some hidden spots that they are selling the broth of the octopus, it is something that in the wintertime warms you up that much. And then, of course, they got even people selling tripe and all the interior of the animals. So yes, you got some restaurants. Now there are more restaurants in the historical center, I have to say, but you can still see the fish vendor. You can still see the shop. When you talk with an expert about Napoli, it will tell you that the only city that you can compare to the old Rome in terms of shapes and shopping. It's exactly Napoli, because you have people living like in the basement, people living like at the ground floor. It's so incredible. People that are not used to it. They kind of like, oh, gosh, where did I happen to be today? Because you walk through the streets and you see people watching at the television or the cartoons. You can smell the eggplant parmigiana. Or you actually have to be careful that the lady has washed the floor and they throw the bucket with the water directly on the street. It's like that. It's a city that has got even some traditions. I mean, in Napoli. So it was known for the gloves. We had a production of gloves in the past that was covering the 95% of the Italian market. So imagine that. Still now we have an umbrella producer, handmade tailored umbrella imagine Charles from England. I mean, he definitely takes his umbrella in Napoli. Just to tell you one of the little things let's say that it's a city that it's not easy to understand at first, but you definitely will love it when you have somebody that explains that to you. And of course, you will love the variety that you can see the two extreme. Like I told you at the beginning of the introduction of the city.

**Katy**

Yeah. I think it's definitely a place where you're either going to really love it. And I think it's worth making the effort to do that. I actually went to Napoli. I just went for a food tour.

**Pierpaolo**

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## **Katy**

It was sensational. It was amazing. But the really amazing thing was we had a great guy called Gianpaolo, and he wove all the history and the stories of the town. And he said something to me that stayed with me for a very long time now. And he said to me, you know, the people of Naples or Napoli, they're all living in the shadow of this volcano because it could blow at any time. And so you've got to understand that that's driving the passion and the thing - they're living for the moment. They're knowing that they've lived with this volcano for 2000 years and they know it can blow and destroy everything. So it's kind of influenced the personality of the people. And I just think it's amazing and vibrant and fun. And I can't wait to go and explore that with you. And you're going to take me out for pizza.

## **Pierpaolo**

Definitely. That will be up on me. I will make you have I'm telling you, and I promise it in front of our listeners. I will make you have the tasting of many different pizzas, you only have to be ready to eat, like seven or eight different kinds of pizzas.

## **Katy**

Oh, Paolo, this has been amazing. We've gone everywhere we've gone to Ischia we go to Capri, Amalfi, Pompeii, and Napoli. And there's so many, many amazing things that you can do if you base yourself in Sorrento. But I'm sure everyone would like to know how they can keep in touch with you and perhaps book you for an amazing tour from Sorrento. And how can they do that?

## **Pierpaolo**

You can definitely find all the tours that I mentioned on [joebananalimos.com](http://joebananalimos.com) And you can definitely see the different links. If you have any doubt that you might want to do something different, we can tailor it because we give the personal touch to all our guests. And of course, if they want to request me, they definitely can do it if I'm available. I'm, of course, very happy to take the guests around. They got to ask for Paolo. It's the only one in the company, so no doubt it's me. So [joebananlimos.com](http://joebananlimos.com), J-O-E. Banana Limos, we have a US and Canada toll-free number, which is 1888-727-4707. So in this way, if our listeners want just to give a phone call, even to say, how is the weather there? We will answer it, don't worry!

## **Katy**

I think everyone better get their bookings in soon because I have a feeling you're going to be booked out in 2022 Paolo.

## **Pierpaolo**

Crossing the finger. Crossing the finger. So we definitely ... you know what? I don't see it anymore as a job, but almost as a mission, because when you show people not only the

knowledge but the feeling of the area, I mean, it's one of the sensations that you like most, because people will have that memory forever. And that definitely once I had that sensation, I said, but why shouldn't I do this with my guests?

**Katy**

It definitely shines through. We can tell that you love where you live and you love sharing all your ideas and helping people have an amazing time. So, Grazie Paolo for sharing all your tips.

**Pierpaolo**

You're very welcome. Thank you. And I can't wait to see you again and to keep in touch with our listeners so we can give them other suggestions on how to get the best out of their vacation in Italy.

**Katy**

Grazie Mille Paolo!

**Pierpaolo**

Have a great again have a great 2022 to all our guests.

**Katy**

Hopefully, you have more than just a few days to explore this beautiful region but even if you don't, at least now Paulo's given you an actionable plan to visit some of the popular and lesser-known sights. I've actually never been to Ischia so it's on the top of my list of places to visit when we are there later this year. And I can't wait.

Paulo was our guest this month in our Untold Italy Amici group where we connect with fellow Italy travelers and learn the secrets of people who have deep knowledge of Italian regions, places, food and wine. He shared some amazing off-the-beaten-path tips and ideas for Napoli, and the Sorrentine and Amalfi Coast area that our members have rushed to add to their itineraries.

The replay of our live chat with Paulo, along with all other previous private podcast episodes created for our Untold Italy Amici members, is available to watch or listen to immediately when you sign up. There are lots of other goodies including our fun itinerary challenge, discounts, and downloads plus I think the main attraction is connecting with like-minded Italy-loving travelers from around the world. We'd love to have you join us and you can do that at [untolditaly.com/amici](https://untolditaly.com/amici)

But if you want the details of the information Paulo shared on this episode, head over to the episode show notes and [untolditaly.com/108](https://untolditaly.com/108)

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That's all for this episode, next time we meet I am thrilled to introduce you to some new tour experiences that are shining a light on the hidden history of women in Ancient Rome. Honestly, these women were quite formidable and their stories need to be told! But, you'll have to wait for the next episode of Untold Italy for that. So until then it's... Ciao for now!