

Untold Italy Episode 128 - South Tyrol itinerary

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 128.

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! Today we're heading to the mountains in the north of Italy to the region of South Tyrol and the magnificent Dolomites and I can't wait. This is the area that borders Austria and Switzerland so you can picture the stunning snow-capped mountain ranges that hide more than a few surprises.

Often people try to squeeze the Dolomites and South Tyrol region into a day trip from Venice but let me tell you, I learned the hard way that this is going to give you just a little taste of this incredible region. But in recognition that Most of us have limited time when it comes to travel, I asked our guest Franziska to help us plan 5 incredible days in her region so you could see how you could add it into a northern Italian itinerary or bigger Italian trip.

Franziska Dona comes from a family of winemakers who live just outside of Bolzano. I meet a lot of people through our show who love their region but I have to say Franziska's passion for her homeland is second to none. She rose to my 5-day itinerary challenge and I can't wait for you to hear what she has planned for you!

Katy

Benvenuta Franziska, welcome to the Untold Italy Podcast.

Franziska

Hello, Katy thank you. It's just great to be here.

Katy

I'm so thrilled to be heading to the mountains of beautiful South Tyrol with you today. Franziska, wondering can you paint a picture for our listeners of what it looks like there outside your window?

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Franziska

Okay. I'm from South Tyrol. It's a very small region in Italy with an open spot of Italy on the border to Swiss and Austria. I'm living in the mountains and it's a very green region. And now in the moment, it's blooming. So it's like apples are blooming. Cherries are blooming, almonds, tulips. It's very colorful outside. We do have the Dolomites and also the Alps. We are very various regions. We do have bath lakes and mountain lakes and very different pictures, in South Tyrol. We have a million of places and it's like living in a small paradise. South Tyrol, we have also a very nice history.

Katy

I can imagine it's springtime and it's absolutely beautiful. There's flowers and blossoms everywhere. It must be absolutely beautiful. Is it?

Franziska

Yes, it is. It's magic. If you go outside, it's like a small paradise.

Katy

I can't wait to hear more about it. It's so exciting. But first, let's hear more about you. Have you lived in South Tyrol all your life, Franziska?

Franziska

Yes, I have lived all the time here. When I was young, I was traveling around. I love to explore the world, so I knew I live in a paradise, but I was just excited how it is outside. I was traveling around in so many places, too. And always when I came back, it was like, oh, wow. I love it more and more just to stay here.

Katy

And your family has a big tradition of welcoming visitors to your region too don't they?

Franziska

Oh, yes. My mm is from hotelier's family, and my father is a winemaker. And so also they knew them. So I'm out of winemaker's family and my parents live on the winery. And there are four apartments, and we are small wine producers. We do have 30,000 bottles a year. And we just concentrate on four grapes.

Katy

Four different types of grapes. Wow. And are they native to the area?

Franziska

Yes, they are. One of them is the Vernatsch. That's very important for South Tyrol. And it's a very light red wine. And we do have a very great terroir for the Chardonnay. So we do have also many Chardonnay and Sauvignon there.

Katy

So you have red and white wines, but the lighter reds. Wow. That sounds amazing. And the winery is in a beautiful valley, isn't it?

Franziska

The winery is in Appiano and that's close to Bolzano, and we are looking to the south. We see Bolzano, and in the backyard, we see the Dolomites. That's a beautiful place. And on the other side, there is a mountain with a beautiful castle on because in Appiano, there are many castles. I will talk to you later, also of an excursion to the three castles there's Castle Hocheppan, Boymont and Korb. That's a very beautiful place. And from there you can see it's medieval. It's great. There are many history on and you can see the whole land. It's beautiful to be there.

Katy

It's like a fairy tale, isn't it, because you've got the castles and you've got the vines all around, and you can see how these fairytales came about, I think.

Franziska

Yeah. Many people are coming and enjoying just the nature and the places and the castles. The history.

Katy

Stunning. So let's just take a step back and tell everyone exactly where you are in the geography. We need a little geography lesson here because a lot of people go to Rome and Florence and Venice. So whereabouts are you in the north of Italy?

Franziska

Okay. We are very small region, and we do have many mountains, and we do just have 470,000 people living in South Tyrol. So it's very small. We are the north-est region of province of South Tyrol, and we cross the border to Switzerland and Austria.

Katy

Was South Tyrol was always part of Italy.

Franziska

No, you can hear that my English maybe is not so Italianized like other Italians. That's because my mother tongue is German and that's because of the history. And that's very interesting. Before the First World War, we were part of Austria. And after the First World War, we became to Italy. My grandfather, for example, his name was Franz, and after becoming to Italy, his name was Francesco. So for him, it was like changing everything. But since 70 years, more than 70 years, we can speak our mother tongue. So we are an autonomous province. We can speak our mother tongue German and also can speak Italian. I like the South Tyroles, because we are a great mixture. We are a mixture of the German straightness, but also the Italian Dolce Vita.

Katy

I love it. It's so great. These two mixtures of cultures, which on the surface are very different, aren't they? Like you've got that? As you say, the German can be very straight and direct and organized. And then Italians have a reputation for being a little bit chaotic.

Franziska

Yes. So we do mix both the cultures. For example, if you go to Bolzano to the capital of South Tyrol, you will see that very good. So it's very nice to see both cultures living together.

Katy

That's beautiful. Yeah. So you've got Bolzano. How far is Bolzano from some of the other major cities? Just roughly. So you could get there from, say, Milan, couldn't you? Or Venice maybe. Is that the easiest way?

Franziska

It's 3 hours to Venice and also 3 or 4 hours to Milan by car.

Katy

And is it easy to get there by train to Bolzano?

Franziska

You can also reach it by train. And we do have very nice public transport. So it's like the buses are very good, organized. Also the trains. And in Italy, for example, we do have also the Fretcha. And the Fretcha is very quick to go to Milano for example, you just take 4 hours. Also, if by car, normally you get 5 or 6 hours. So it's quite quick. But coming to South Tyrol, I always say it's good to have a car with because there are so many places also up to the mountains where it's just you can be there alone. And if you have a car, it's easier.

Katy

Yeah, for sure. I can imagine that it is. So we know where you're up in the north, on the border of Switzerland and Austria. And so when you picture that, you obviously picture these beautiful mountain ranges and green pastures. But I think the landscape is actually a little bit different to Switzerland and Austria, even because you've got these spectacular Dolomites, which are different, aren't they?

Franziska

Oh, yes the Dolomites are so great. I love them. It's like a stone. The Dolomites is just a stone. It's different and it's so powerful and it's so magical. It's so huge. Also, if you go, for example, to the Seiser Alm/Alpe di Siusi. If you go there, that's a plateau in 2000 meters, and it's green and it's just pure nature. There's just nothing, just some mountains and some cows. And it's great because it's so huge, it's so free and so powerful just to see. I always say to see the Dolomites once, it's stunning. It's gorgeous. You will never get it. There are many places. There is Corvara. There are the three peaks in the Dolomites, Tre Cime. Yeah, the Marmolada. And you can go there in summer, but also in winter, you can go the whole year there.

Katy

So we were talking a little bit before we started is that a lot of people want to go on a day trip from Venice to the Dolomites, which is great. But what's going to happen is you're going to go. "Oh - I think I need to go back".

Franziska

It's great to take many times when you come here. Yes, it's great to take more time because there are really a million of places to see. The other Dolomites. The Dolomites are great. They are gorgeous, they are beautiful to see, but there are so many others.

Katy

There really is. And so what I thought we'd do is help people out because I think sometimes people don't know how to fit your region maybe into their itinerary. So what we're going to do today is something a little bit different. I haven't actually done this with another guest before, but what we're going to do is we're going to take everyone through how they can spend five days in your beautiful region. And I chose five days because sometimes people have maybe two weeks to travel through Italy. So they might want to go and see Venice and they might want to go and see Milan and they can stay in the north of Italy and maybe see some lakes. But then they can also come up to beautiful South Tyrol and just spend some amazing time up there in your beautiful homeland. So how about you tell us how we can spend five unforgettable days in South Tyrol?

Franziska

Okay, one day you have to see the south of South Tyrol. The south of South Tyrol is the Kalterer Lake, for example. Kalterer Lake is a beautiful bathing lake and it's surrounded by wines. So it's a very important wine region also. And you also have to see Appiano. I told first of all behind our winery that you can make a tour of three castles. It's just the hiking of one or 2 hours and you go up being the Castle of Hocheppan and you will have such a beautiful view. You will see the land from upside and you can see Bolzano, the Dolomites. You can see the mountains surrounded there. And you will also see the history there. You can see paintings on the church. You will see a garden full of herbs. You can also go there with the children. Very good, because they are animals and you can see how the farmers live there. So that's very great. And then you can go to Boymont and Korb. So you see three castles and not just the castles, you also have always the nature around the view and the history and the farmers.

Katy

Now this castle - so from the winery, is it an easy walk up to the castle?

Franziska

The first step is a little bit high, but then when you came up after just 20 minutes, it's easy to walk.

Katy

Most people can do it easily?

Franziska

Yeah, most people can do it. If you like to do easy hikings, then go to the Kalterer Lake. That's a bathing lake. And there, for example, you can also just do the surrounding of the lake. That's so easy. And everybody can do that. That's beautiful. And you will also see a beautiful view and see South Tyrol from the wine side. Okay, let's say like this.

Katy

But people think, oh, hang on, I'm up in the mountains. Do I want to go swimming in this lake? It might be really cold.

Franziska

Yeah, but you can swim there. They are also surfers. They do the surf, wind surf there.

Katy

Oh, yes. But it's also the climate is not probably what people would expect though, is it?

Franziska

No, the south of South Tyrol is very Mediterranean. It's also very hot. It's like you can pass the summertime there. You can have a swim.

Katy

When I think of a mountain lake, I think it might be freezing cold, but it's not. It's hot, isn't it?

Franziska

It's very interesting. Also that Appiano, for example, it's just 270 meters. It's not so high. So that's also very interesting in South Tyrol because the valleys and the foods they are not so high. They are 200 meters or 300 meters. So that's because it's so hot. Also Merano, for example, it's also in the valley and it's very hot because it's like the mountains surround it. They are going to be high, but down it's very hot. And that's because it's low and that's because it's so hot there.

Katy

There you go. So if you come in summer, then it's good to stay near the lake so you can cool off after you've done your hike up to the castle. Yes.

Franziska

And when it's too hot, you can go up to the mountains just to cool down.

Katy

So I did take a peek at this. I'm going to say this incorrectly, I'm sure. Castel Hocheppan, you better say it for me.

Franziska

Hocheppan. Yes.

Katy

And it is like out of a fairytale, isn't it? It's got the turrets and it's got the square and it's looking over the valley and it's just beautiful. And I actually saw that you can actually go to a Tavern up there too. So you can go for a walk and you can have your wine or your beer or something like that and a lunch.

Franziska

Oh, yes. You can also go a little bit nearer by car and then just have a small walk to reach the castle and just have lunch there. Just enjoy it.

Katy

Yeah. Amazing. So I think I'm going to mention to everyone as well, we're going to probably be dipping in and out of German and Italian because each of the places has two different names, doesn't it?

Franziska

Yeah, that's true.

Katy

The lake that we mentioned, that's the natural bathing lake is called Kalterer Lake, right,

Franziska

Kalterer Lake yes.

Katy

And in Italian it's called Caldaro.

Franziska

Caldaro, yes, that's true. Yeah. That's important to say because really when you go to South Tyrol, you will always see two names, always the German and always the Italian name.

Katy

It can be a little bit confusing if you're looking it up on like Google Maps or something, because I don't think Google's quite figured out the geopolitical situation in South Tyrol.

Franziska

That's true.

Katy

Well, that sounds like the perfect first day, spending time looking at castles, swimming in lakes and walking through wineries. Oh, my goodness, that sounds fantastic. And I'm sure you can definitely try the wines at your parents' winery, too?

Franziska

Oh, yes, you can. You're always welcome. We'll be very happy to welcome you.

Katy

So on the second day, what would you suggest for our second day in your region?

Franziska

For the second day, I would say just go up to the size that's the Seiser Alm/Alpe di Siusi - and it's the highest plateau of Europe and it's on more than 2000 meters high level. And it's UNESCO heritage. So you cannot go by car there. You can just go up by cabin and you can just walk around and it's just beautiful to be there. It's so silent. It's such a huge nature and you will never forget it. It's unforgettable. You can walk up to the mountains or you can just walk around. You don't have to go up to the highest peak. You can just walk around. So everybody can do that.

Katy

Yeah. So you don't need to be some sort of hardcore hiker?

Franziska

Oh, no.

Katy

It's nice for wandering. Where do you get the cable car from? Where do you get the cabin from to get there?

Franziska

You will get the cabin from Seis, that's five minutes from Seiser Alm and from Alpe de Suisse

Katy

And how far is that from Bolzano?

Franziska

From Bolzano, it's 20 minutes by car. And the road is very good.

Katy

Yeah.

Franziska

That's important. In the mountains, if you go by car, the roads are very good. You can go with a car there.

Katy

In Australia, we don't have a lot of mountains and we don't have many cable cars at all. So it's kind of treat to go up in a cable car and then just step out onto this beautiful scene that's with mountains and fields and it's kind of breathtaking.

Franziska

Yeah, it is. And it's so beautiful. And there are also many flowers growing and also many flowers which you can eat. I don't know. Do you know edible flowers - have the culture to eat of herbs and many eatable herbs. And that's very interesting. There is one restaurant and it's an easy restaurant. It's the Gostner Schwaige and Hans is the man who is like cooking and his mother is like caring the garden. And she's like, there is growing more than 41 flowers - eat-able flowers. First time that I was there, it was so great. I came and I said I would just like to have a mixed salad. And she was like, no, we do not have mixed salads. So I'm like "oh what do you have?" "We just have edible flowers". And I was like, "oh, wow. I would like to have it."

Katy

Was it really tasty?

Franziska

Yes, it is. It's adventurous.

Katy

Oh, do they have really nice honey up there, too?

Franziska

Yes. Also cheese. And they make knödel - it's dumplings. That's a culture of food in South Tyrol here. Yes.

Katy

And do they put the flowers in the dumplings as well up there.

Franziska

Also sometimes, yeah. It depends.

Katy

Wow.

Franziska

Because of the dumplings, you can make many different flavors. You can choose your flavor. You can make it with cheese. You can make it with ham. You can make it with everything. Also with spinach.

Katy

That sounds healthy. Sounds good. The dumplings a bit like gnocchi or are they a little bit different?

Franziska

No, they are bigger. They're made of bread, white bread and eggs. It's like a tennis ball.

Katy

Okay.

Franziska

They are big like tennis balls.

Katy

Wow. So how many would you get in a serve?

Franziska

You can eat two or three.

Katy

Is there a special sauce that goes on them or is it mainly butter? How does it work?

Franziska

You can eat it. It's different. You can eat it how you like it. You can use with salad. You can eat with butter. You can eat with cheese sauce. You can eat it with gorgonzola.

Katy

Oh, my gosh. That's my favorite. Yeah.

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Franziska

It's amazing. You can eat it how you like it. You can also eat it in the soup.

Katy

Oh, sounds great. So the restaurant you mentioned, is it when you go up to the cable car and you're walking around, is it a Refugio?

Franziska

Yeah, it is a Refugio. And it's like when you come up with a cable car, you just walk 20 minutes. It's 20 minutes walk and easy walk. And then you come on, it's like in a silent place and it's staying alone there and you just have the view to the Dolomites. And it's the name of this dolomite. It's the Schlern. That's my favorite mountain. It's so beautiful and it's just silent. It's just nature and just relax. And the refugio is so small. I think outside you do have ten tables, but inside in the kitchen, you can just turn around once. So just one people can work there. That's very nice to see.

Katy

Would you need to book there or can you just turn up?

Franziska

It depends a little bit on the season. If you go there and the high season and the high season is August, book first of all, first to come there. If you go outside the season, it's for example, on June, you can just go there. You will find a place. Otherwise, you will just wait five minutes.

Katy

It's not going to be hard to wait five minutes when you've got that view. I'm sure.

Franziska

Turn around and make to picture.

Katy

And so it sounds like you can easily spend a whole day up there just wandering around and having some lunch and exploring.

Franziska

Yes, it's such a beautiful place. So I also suggest to spend the whole day there and go up at 09:00 and come down when the sun is going down. So it's beautiful. It's just magic there.

Katy

I think everyone better take their battery charges when they go up there, because I'm pretty sure there'll be a lot of photos that gets taken.

Franziska

It is very beautiful. You will love it Katy. You have to go there.

Katy

I'm desperate to go. You have no idea. Okay. That's day two, I don't know how we can get any better than that. But anyway, so on day three, we're going to our base, aren't we? We're going to stay in our base in Bolzano. And that's the capital, isn't it?

Franziska

That's the capital. Yeah. When you're in South Tyrol, you have to go to Bolzano, to the capital. The capital - that's where you can see how German and Italians are like living together and the cultures are like the mixtures of the culture. And there is a beautiful architecture. I love the architecture in Bolzano. And there's also a very important man being there in the museum. I imagine, you know, Oetzi,, the man of the ice.

Katy

Yeah, I've heard of him, but our listeners might not know.

Franziska

Okay. It was the man who was found in the ice. Oetzi, was found on the glassier of the Schnalskamm. And it was a phenomenon to find him because it's one of the most important moments of the world. And in the 991 he was found from just normal walkers.

Katy

Yeah. He was preserved in ice, is that right?

Franziska

Yes, that's right. And now he's like in the museum in the Archaeology Museum in Bolzano.

Katy

It's an incredible discovery because it tells us a lot about human development and what happened to people in Europe, I think. How long ago did he live? Do we know?

Franziska

He lived around 3300 before Christ.

Katy

Wow. So that's like 5000 years old.

Franziska

Yeah.

Katy

And preserved in ice. That's crazy. I was going to say he wasn't very tall. He's almost as tall as me. And I'm looking at this now and I'm thinking maybe I'm the same as Oetze because he's around the same age as me as well, when he died. Me too. They think he was in his mid 40s when he died.

Franziska

Yeah, something like that.

Katy

So it's a really interesting discovery. And it's way before the Romans became popular in Italy.

Franziska

Oh, yes, it is. And you can also see what he wore - his clothes and the shoes. And I think they also know what he eats. He has good teeth.

Katy

Incredible. The architecture you mentioned, I think it's really interesting because it's very different to other architecture in Italy, isn't it, because your churches are different, aren't they? Maybe you describe

Franziska

The churches are different. They are very colorful. They're also very rich. So we have many golds in the churches because the religion was also very important for the South Tyroleans, also for the time for the history when, for example, the church, it's like the church was very important in the World War or after the World War because there was like them who said, we

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will stay here and we will take our culture here and the religion will help us. God will help us to stay here and just to live our culture and also our language.

Katy

Yes, really interesting because I can imagine it would be quite traumatic for the people to be pulled from one country to another.

Franziska

It's a very interesting story, for who's like interested in it - yes.

Katy

And the churches have the Dome on top, don't they? Which is unusual. They're not straight.

Franziska

They're not a straight. Many of them have the steeples. You can see many, many churches. Also in Lana, for example, where I'm based, it's like we are very important church town because we have more than 24 churches here.

Katy

How many people in your town?

Franziska

10,000.

Katy

Wow. That's a lot of churches.

Franziska

Yeah. But it's very nice because you see also many farms. Okay. The farmers are very important for South Tyrol and many farms, they have their own church.

Katy

Oh, wow. Okay.

Franziska

It's like some of them are like a small town.

Katy

Yeah. Okay. So back to Bolzano. Do you have a very nice market there? Like is there a farmers market in Bolzano?

Franziska

We do have in the towns we do have once a week, we do have farmer markets. Where we can go and just have the seasonal products. We have fresh fruit, vegetables, salads, eggs, also ham (speck) also flowers. They bring everything that they have. That's beautiful. I love the market and they make it in capital, they make it in Bolzano, but also in every small town in South Tyrol.

Katy

Because there's a beautiful piazza in Bolzano, isn't there?

Franziska

Yes, at Bolzano there is a fruit market that every day they bring flowers, fruits, vegetables. That's beautiful to see.

Katy

I think it's really interesting for people like that live in our cultures where everything is at the supermarket, really. So for something to have a market there every day with fresh fruit and vegetables, that's amazing.

Franziska

Yeah, that's amazing. You see, fresh fruit is like how it is. You can see the difference. You can see the difference in this. Also the supermarkets, they do have good fruits and vegetables here in South Tyrol. But I mean, you see the difference when you go to the market of a farmer, it's like fresh. It's like full love life.

Katy

I love a market. You can really see the character of the town when you go to a market because the local people are coming to do their shopping and you see what they're eating and I love it.

Franziska

And when you go to Bolzano, I also suggest to see. Okay. I like we do have a very important alpinist here in South Tyrol and his name is Reinhold Messner. And I think that many people know him. He was the man who see the Yeti. And for me it's an important man and he has many museums in a whole South Tyrol and close to Bolzano. There's one of the museums, my

favorite one is Firmain and that's also in the castle. And from where you see Bolzano and the whole surroundings and you see in the whole valleys. So it's a very central point. And he's like showing what he saw in his expeditions when he was in the Himalayas or something like that. And it's also mixing it or recovering it with the mountains in South Tyrol.

Katy

So he's from the area and the mountains inspired his travels around the world, but now he's brought them back to the area to share them with everyone.

Franziska

Yes. And also saying that the Dolomites, how we do have the Dolomites in our South Tyrol, you will never see mountains like this.

Katy

No, you can't. Even if you go to Switzerland or Austria. So different, like the terrain, I think people think that it's going to be similar, but it's actually not. It's actually very different. So we spend a day in Bolzano. This is fantastic. I don't know how we're going to fit all this into five days. So my mind is being blown here. Now, what do we do on day four?

Franziska

On day four, I would just tell you some favorite places and then you can chase where you like to go. For example, I love Corvara. Corvara is also a town in the Dolomites. And you can do hikings, like not so - hiking is for everybody. But you're in the middle of the Dolomites. It's such a beautiful view for me always. Or you can go to Renon. Renon is a town above Bolzano. And there is a phenomenon, a natural phenomenon. There are Earth pyramids. It's a famous place. And the pyramids, they do have a stone up. And it's like just the nature is making it. No, hands are like making them. It's just the nature.

Katy

I'm looking at a picture of it now. And they're kind of rock formations, aren't they?

Franziska

Yeah, me too. It's like they are going high and on the top is a stone.

Katy

They kind of look like shards of stone, like if you can imagine a shard of glass. But they're a shard of stone going up high. Yes, spectacular. Amazing.

Franziska

Yeah, it is. And if you like, I would really like to talk a little bit also about food and what we do have in South Tyrol here.

Katy

Yes, please. We always love a big chat about food on this podcast.

Franziska

Yeah. When you are in Italy, always, food is always very important, I think. And in South Tyrol, we do have many local restaurants and small local restaurants. And they are very good. And what you find here is very good cheese. We do have cows. We do have many milk. And they make good cheeses. Also refiners who are making special cheese. And we have Speck - Speck is like bacon here. So the South Tyrol Speck is very famous for the area. And then we have the knödel, the dumplings. We talked first about it - it's the dumplings that are made of bread and you can make it in which favor you like, you can make it with spinach, so they wear green. You can make it with cheese. You can make it with speck, but you can also make them sweet. You can make them with apricots, for example, and fresh cheese like ricotta. So that's very nice and interesting. When you come to South Tyrol, you have to eat it.

Katy

Can you go it sounds like you could go on a dumpling tour. You could just try all your little knödel.

Franziska

Oh, yes, you can do that.

Katy

The thing that I really think is really important about the cheese as well as you can really taste the difference from a cow that's been up in the mountains eating the fresh, fresh grass, organic by nature. Like not even trying to be organic. And it tastes amazing.

Franziska

Yes, it is. And how I told first of all, we do have many vineyards. Why - well we do have many agriculture. And it's like mainly apples and wine-growing here in the region. So we have many apples. The South Tyrolian apple is very important for the region and for the agriculture, for people, for the farmers. When you're here, I also suggest to eat apple strudel.

Katy

Okay.

Franziska

You will know what I mean when you had it. It's gorgeous. It's like, wow. It's like with cinnamon and raisins.

Katy

I've had apple strudel - but I feel like this is going to be the next level of Apple Strudel, the best one I've ever tasted. I've had Apple Strudel in Austria, but I bet this is better.

Franziska

Okay. Come on. You have to have to try it - you have to try the South Tyrolean one.

Katy

I will. Don't worry about that. It's going to be great. And the wine - so you mentioned in your family's wine you've even got Chardonnay. And is it those wines that you make in your family's vineyard, are they just pretty much everyone make the same type of wine, or is there different varieties that people would try?

Franziska

No, there are different varieties. We do have three autochthone vines, it's the Gewürztraminer, Vernatsch and Lagrein. These are our three autochthone sorts. But we do have many wine growing here. We do have a special terroir for the Pinot Noir, for example, because they like cold nights and hot days. And we do have Merlots, Cabernet Sauvignon. We do have 50% red wine and 50% white wine and Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, they are like growing here.

Katy

Would you say you have more white wines there than most areas of Italy?

Franziska

Okay. We have 50/50. 50 white 50 red, so from the whole of Italy that normally are more red wines than white wines and we are 50 50. I think that we have more red light wines in Italy. Maybe there are more red not heavy wines, but we have strong ones.

Katy

It's interesting, isn't it? I love this, that there's so many different wine regions of Italy. I think it's really interesting when people - we get a lot of people who say, I want to go on a wine tour, and I sort of say to them, what sort of wine do you like? Because we can find somewhere for you.

Franziska

Yes, that's great.

Katy

So do people eat a lot of meat in South Tyrol, or is it mainly the speck and the bacon?

Franziska

Mostly? We prefer to eat South Tyrol meat. So we eat meat, but maybe not every day. And when we eat it, we eat a good one.

Katy

Yeah. So would it be beef or would it be other types of ..

Franziska

Beef, veal, pork, lamb.

Katy

I love lamb.

Franziska

Yeah me too.

Katy

Yeah. Once again, if they're eating the grass from the pastures, you can taste it. It's really tasty, amazing. And I'm sorry for any vegetarians out there, but it is absolutely delightful. That type of lamb is delicious.

Franziska

Sometimes once a week or twice a week. We eat meat.

Katy

We don't eat too much meat, but when I do, I like to enjoy the best. So we've had the three peaks of Corvara and the earth pyramids. And the food, I think you mentioned, you can find these little places everywhere, all over your region.

Franziska

Everywhere in the region.

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Katy

Is there a way to find out which ones we should go to? Because it's just that you can't go wrong.

Franziska

Yeah. And South Tyrol is also nice because you can just by car, you can just drive around and you will see beautiful places everywhere. And you will also see the small towns, how they are made. It's like they have towns with just a thousand or 2000 people living there. So they are very small. Some they are just living on the mountain. And it's beautiful also. Merano is beautiful. Yes. Merano is a very important city also for South Tyrol, with a very mild climate and many botanical, many flowers and everything growing. It's like from the kiwis to the lemons and orange. It's like bananas. Everything is growing here.

Katy

Do you make cider there?

Franziska

Yes, we do have cider. Apple drinks. Apple cider. And also grape cider.

Katy

Oh, my goodness. All right. So I don't know how we're going to do this, but this is the last day of our trip to South Tyrol. Day five, what can we do on day five?

Franziska

We can go to the border to the border to Austria and Switzerland. And there's a Lake. And that's a mountain lake now. And it's quite famous. It's the Resia Lake and it's on Curon since some years. We do have also a Netflix film from Curon. And it's the Resia Lake. And the Resia Lake is quite interesting because there is the tower of a church inside. And that's becoming from the history. It's a surface area of 10 kilometers.

Katy

Wow.

Franziska

It's a lake where the church is inside. So the town was like down the water in the history. It was like filled up with water.

Katy

Okay.

Franziska

And now they use it to make energy.

Katy

It's a hydroelectric power source. So they flooded the town.

Franziska

Yes.

Katy

Wow.

Franziska

And it's so interesting because the church is inside and it's becoming of the history. It's beautiful. And it's in a very mountain town. I'm feeling always like 50 years before when I go to Resia.

Katy

Yeah.

Franziska

It's a very nice town. You see many nature around. Yes.

Katy

And the water the color of the water. I've seen your photos of these. The color of the water is like turquoise almost.

Franziska

It's the case, yeah. In September. I always love it when the wood is like red, orange, yellow, and the sea is the turquoise. It's the beauty of the nature.

Katy

I think that's the whole story of it. You've got this incredible nature all around you, and then you're just living in harmony with the nature and enjoying it. And I know that you want to

share it so much with everyone. Don't you like it not all at once. I think everyone needs to go there at the same time. But if you want to come and visit and enjoy the nature, I think it's a beautiful thing to do.

Franziska

We like to share our home.

Katy

Yeah. And it's just beautiful. And I think what you said there to enjoy nothing like just being at peace with the nature and just enjoying everything around you. I find myself, especially after these two years, more drawn to nature and more drawn to the simpler things that you can enjoy - like a beautiful glass of wine and a few dumplings with this crazy mountain backdrop. It sounds so exciting. Oh, my goodness. So that was an incredible five days. I think that unfortunately, we won't be going to your area this trip. But in 2020 I had planned a trip to your area.

Franziska

Yeah, you told me.

Katy

Me what happened was for our listeners that I kind of got a bit overwhelmed with the planning to work out what we should do because there's so many things to do and see. So I really appreciate you building this itinerary for everyone, because it's a really amazing piece of work, actually. Because to try and figure it all out for yourself is really quite difficult. So thank you very much, Franziska. It's really quite amazing.

Franziska

Thank you, Katy.

Katy

So what we have here castles, apple strudel, alpine wine, stunning lakes and mountains. So there's so much to do in South Tyrol. But I know people are going to want to know more. How can our listeners reach out to you and find out more about beautiful South Tyrol?

Franziska

We are Weingut Dona and you can find us on Instagram, on Facebook or just on the internet. My name is Franziska Dona, and I'm happy welcoming you when you come to South Tyrol.

Katy

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Maybe we can spell it out for people because W-E-I-N-G-U-T and then

Franziska

D-O-N-A.

Katy

Yes, Wiengut Dona. I think I did it. Okay. So I think if you want to go on this beautiful trek through the vines and stay in a beautiful accommodation, you can do that with Franziska's family. They have a beautiful accommodation there just outside of Bolzano. Get in touch with them if you would like to learn some more about this beautiful region. So, Franziska, this has been amazing. Thank you so much for telling us all about your beautiful, beautiful region and giving us a little peek into what we can expect when we visit there. And I know a lot of people will be doing that. Thank you so much for joining us on Untold Italy.

Franziska

Thank you, Katy and I'm happy to see you when you come to South Tyrol. Thank you.

Katy

Well, I hope you are now all inspired to visit the beautiful region of South Tyrol and the Dolomites. Sometimes I think we can get a bit carried away giving lists of ideas of things to see and do - and let's face it there are so many. So I hope you enjoyed this format where we share how to plan out your days so you can make the most of your time in these untold regions of Italy. Let me know what you think. As always I'd love to hear from you on email at ciao@untolditaly.com

All the details of places that Franziska mentioned are in the show notes at untolditaly.com/128 for episode 128 as well as how to contact Franziska if you'd like to stay in one of their gorgeous alpine properties and soak up the beauty of this stunning region.

Thanks to all our wonderful listeners for your ongoing support of Untold Italy. I hope you enjoyed today's show. If you did then it would be amazing if you gave us a rating or review in your favorite podcast app. If you're using apple podcasts then you need to go to the show page for Untold Italy - not the episode page - and scroll down until you see "ratings and reviews" You can leave your 5-star review and message there.

On next week's episode, we're revisiting our episode about the magical island Capri. If you haven't heard my friend Holly's story and her passion for her adopted island home, prepare to swoon. It's a beauty and definitely one to listen to again and again.

But until then it's "ciao for now".

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