

Untold Italy Episode 147 - 7 Secrets of Rome

[Untold Italy Amici preview]

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 147.

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 everyone! Today I'm letting you into a little secret.. well a few in fact but let's get started with the main one.

Did you know that we have an Untold Italy members group where we share travel stories and experiences, you can join in live private podcast episodes, access exclusive travel info and ask me questions about your trip? Well, it's called Untold Italy Amici or friends of the Untold Italy podcast and it's one of my favorite places to be on the internet!

Today I wanted to give you a taste of what happens in our Amici group, so I'm sharing one of our private podcast episodes from earlier in the year that I recorded with our Untold Italy language expert favorite Michele Frolla also known as the Intrepid Guide.

Michele is a former resident of Rome so I asked her to share with the group her 7 favorite secrets of the Eternal City that visitors may not know about. It's a fun episode that covers everything from ordering pizza to some incredible views of the city plus where to find the best tiramisu!

If you'd like to find out more about Untold Italy Amici head on over to casa.untolditaly.com where you can sign up to be a supporter of the podcast, access the private podcast episodes, exclusive Untold Italy tour announcements and more!

But for now, let's hear from Michele about her favorite Roman secrets.

Katy

Ciao Buongiorno everyone. Buona sera actually here for me and as you can see, I'm in my woolly jumper because it's a little bit cold here in Australia. Welcome to our private podcast episode for May and am so thrilled and excited to be here with Michele Frola. And she is also

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known as the Intrepid Guide. And Michele was on last week's episode of our podcast, of course, telling us some quick tips on how to learn Italian. But I wanted to invite Michele on to talk to have a special chat with you, all our Amici, our friends of the podcast, because Michele lived in Rome for some time and she's got a lot of secrets to tell about Rome, which is exciting. And you know what? In two weeks, I'm going to be on the plane. I'm so excited. Oh, my God, it's just been a little bit too long. Anyway, Michele, why don't you jump in and give us everyone a reminder of who you are big intro and we'll start building into your secrets. .

Michele

Sure. Okay. So I'm Michele from the Intrepid Guide. Some of you may know me from Intrepid Italian, which is a separate channel that I have dedicated solely to learning Italian, learning that Italian culture, and also a bit of travel inspiration there, too. So you can find me on Instagram @intrepiditalian. If you want to get, like, daily doses of Italian lessons that you can learn, you've got a bit of Italian each day in 1 minute. I also have courses, too, Intrepid Italian for Travel. So if you're planning a trip, you can take that course and it gets up to speed in about two weeks. But I also have more in-depth courses that would take you from absolute beginner all the way up to intermediate. But yeah, I am from Melbourne, Australia. I grew up with Italian heritage on my dad's side. I'm named after my grandfather, which is quite strange. So my name is actually Michele, which is Michael in Italian. And I learned Italian as an adult. So I didn't grow up speaking the language. And I realized there are a lot of people like me out there that have Italian heritage but didn't necessarily grow up speaking the language. They may know a few words. So, yeah, I share my journey and I help others like you, like me to learn Italian as an adult. So it's never too late to get started, no matter how old you are, even into your 60s, it's never too late. Yeah, that's me.

Katy

I know, like one of my mum's neighbors and also someone that she went to school with - they live in the same street, that's fantastic (even in a totally different town, even after 40 plus years). But anyway, she's taught herself Italian in her 60s. And she's amazing. She's really good and she's so dedicated and she takes so much time to do it. And I'm thrilled about that. So, Michele, you spent a little bit of time in Rome, didn't you? What were you doing there?

Michele

So, yeah, in my 20s, when I started to learn Italian as an adult, I learned to a point where I just loved it. The more that I learned, the more I wanted to learn. And then I made the decision to move to Rome. So I quit my job in Melbourne. I moved to Rome. And, yeah, I had three wonderful years there. I would have loved to have stayed longer - that was the plan. But I don't have a European passport, so I moved here to London. But my heart is still and always will be in Rome. I thought I'd just share a few of my favorite places in Rome that I've discovered during my time living there, and also things that have opened up since I've been away. So I've got a mix of, like, ancient historical sites and also food and, yeah, a little bit of fun. Anything that has to do with Rome, I get really excited about.

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Katy

So I have to tell everyone a secret, actually, because when I first went to Rome, I didn't love it. It was because I was - mainly due to the company I was keeping, a little relationship tidbit and also I was a student at the time and I didn't have much money and it was at the end of a very long trip in Europe and I think I was just about ready to come home I think. That was I'd been living in the UK for that long. But anyway, Rome did not grab me, but it took just one more visit to get back and I was like, "Whoa, what was I thinking?" And, yeah, I just love it so much. So I can't wait to hear what you've got to tell us about. So why don't you get started and tell us your first secret of Rome?

Michele

Okay. So when I first moved to Rome, actually, I was in a taxi and I asked the driver, what is your favorite place here in Rome? And he said, Janiculum Hill, right. Which is a viewpoint over the city. Now, lots of people already know about Janiculum, that terrace that overlooks the whole of Rome. But after I had been there for a few months, I discovered that there's another terrace even more central, that when you look all the way around, you sort of even closer to the historical monuments. So the one that I'm referring to has a few different names depending on how you refer to it. But it's in Piazza Venezia, which is like pretty much the heart of the historical center of Rome. And in Piazza Venezia, there's the monument - people call it the wedding cake or the typewriter. It's that big white monument that is quite iconic. But on top of that, there is a rooftop terrace. You take an elevator to the top, and from there you get an incredible perspective over the Piazza itself, also, the Roman Forum. You can see the Colosseum. You can even see the top of San Giovanni in Laterano, which is it should be just as famous as the Vatican. But this is where all the Popes are what do call it - inducted?

Katy

Interred? where they're buried?

Michele

No, not interred, but where they're enthroned - up until 1870. So it's quite important. So that's where the Bishop of Rome celebrates the Holy Thursday Mass. So it's quite important. So you can see in the distance the top of this really important church. You can see down the main thoroughfare of the shopping strip in Rome, which is called Via del Corso. And you can see all the way down to Piazza del Popolo with this obelisk in the center. And it's just an incredible perspective. So it's called Terraza de las Cuadrigas and that refers to the chariot on top of the monument with the four horses. You can just call it it's above the Il Vittoriano, which is refers to the King of Italy. So Victor Emmanuel II so that's his full name. So the monument has all these different names. But basically, if you say like Terraza Vittoriano, then people will know what you're looking for or if you type it into Google, because it's not easy to remember Terraza de las Cuadrigas because it's not really a word that we use a lot in English.

Katy

But yeah, you know what, Michele, I love that and I had heard about that. I'm glad you mentioned that because I'd forgotten. And so I'm just doing the final things on our itinerary now and I've definitely going there because I believe I was talking to Maria Pasquale and she loves that place too. And I think it's not very well known actually. And so I would have to say I'm one of those people that are kind of wandering around the bottom of that monument going, "oh yeah, that's nice". Who knew that you had to go up to the top?

Michele

Yeah, because it's not actually obvious because when you're in Piazza Venezia you can go up the stairs and sort of explore the exterior. But to actually go to the rooftop terrace, you have to go to the side of the building and there's entrance there. And every time I've gone there they always said you have to have cash. So before you go there have cash just in case they still don't have credit card for payments. So I think it's €12 to go up to the top. But it's so worth it. I think it's a nice way to start off your trip. I like to sort of go to the top of things to orientate myself with a place, even though I know Rome, but it's still nice to stand up there and have a look around and just to soak it all in because you can see as far as the Vatican. It's an incredible perspective to be surrounded by and be in the real thick of everything. It's a really nice spot to start your trip, I think.

Katy

I agree. Now, I've got a question for you. Is there a cafe at the top there?

Michele

No, it's not, because you're literally on the roof. Yeah. So it's just the elevator that takes you up there.

Katy

Yeah.

Michele

I don't think there'd be enough space. Yeah, it would have to be pretty modest. Yeah.

Katy

I mean, there's so many amazing viewpoints. I mean, I love Janiculum Hill as well. It's amazing. And I also love the view over Piazza del Popolo.

Michele

Yeah. There's a few different at least two different perspectives from - yeah Villa Bourgaise looking down onto the city, and one of them overlooks Piazza del Popolo, and the other one is closer towards the Spanish Steps that overlooks the area, too. And you get more of a view of this building here, il Vittoriano.

Katy

So it'd be good to see it from both those sides because you could see Piazza del Popolo and then back again. I also love the Giardino degli Aranci. I think that's a different one as well.

Michele

That's really more Roman, I would say. You get lots of Romans that go up there and sit there. Couples. Yeah, it's a nice spot, lovely spot.

Katy

Wonderful. Well, I love that first tip. I do. I love getting those viewpoints because you feel like you're there. I think you're not just wandering the streets, and sometimes the streets can look fairly similar, almost in Rome, not really, but you know what I mean. But once you take yourself up and look out, I think it's amazing. Now, what was your second tip, Michele? I can't wait to hear this one.

Michele

This one is actually one that had been closed to the whole time that I was living there. Lots of things were closed while I was there, and they're only just starting to open up now. So this is a long time ago. They have a lot of work to do that they work cut it out for them when they're digging up old ruins and restoring things and making sure that everything is protected and safe. This one is Domus Aurea, which is Latin for the golden house. So this is just opposite the Colosseum, where I am now. And it's basically hidden underground because it had been lost for centuries. So this is what Emperor Nero had built. It was super elaborate. Unfortunately, he didn't get to really - he actually committed suicide, so he didn't get to experience or live in the Domus Aurea and spend much time there for very long. But he was quite full of himself, maybe and he wanted to create a golden house, so it would be reflected by the sun, and it would basically be a reflection of him as, like a Sun God. So he was identifying himself as a Sun God, so he wanted this house to reflect his grandeur as an Emperor.

Michele

So it's quite impressive. But since it was buried as lots of things are in Rome underground, and it was lost for centuries lots of it was destroyed, but there are still parts that you can visit now. So where the Colosseum was, that whole arena that used to be a lake, that was part of

Nero's house. Then they drained the area because that was like all swampland where they put the Colosseum, which I'm glad I chose this picture, actually as my background.

Katy

It's really good.

Michele

It was massive - like the whole area was this massive, impressive villa. And it was actually how the Colosseum got its name, Colosseo, because there was a massive or colossus statue of Nero, Nerone depicting himself as a Sun God. When the statue was taken away, the area was still kind of known as the Colosseo. That's basically how the Colosseum got its name, but its real name is Anfiteatro Flavio, named after the Flavian dynasty. So the name sort of remains and a bit of Nero's history remains in that area too. But yes, for such a long time it was closed because it was unsafe. There's a really impressive I think it's called the octagonal room, which the ceiling wasn't secure, so they had to make sure that that was reinforced and it was safe enough to be open to the public. So now you can go and visit. And now there is an exhibition that you can go and see about Raphael who actually came through the ceiling. So it was actually rediscovered accidentally. And a lot of artists during I think it was like in the 16 or 1700, they rediscovered it accidentally and they came through the top of the octagonal room and discovered this, rediscovered this palace and the frescoes and took inspiration from it. So this exhibition that is now there sort of pays homage to those artists at that time. So it's quite nice. I haven't seen this particular exhibition. It's quite new. For a long time, Domus Aurea was only open on maybe like a weekend for a very few hours. You have to be in small groups of 15. You could go in every 15 minutes or something like it was quite staggered and you can only go in with a guided tour. You can't go in a loan because it is quite big as a complex, but you get a lot more value out of it with a guide anyway. So, yeah, it's pretty amazing. Some parts can be maybe a little underwhelming, but it's because they're still restoring it. Like they show you an example on the wall of just how much, I don't know muck, mold is still there that needs to be taken away. And you can see underneath the beautiful frescoes that still remain. So be patient. They are still working on it, but it's still amazing to see anyway, especially the octagonal room for sure.

Katy

Wow. I just get an absolute thrill out of these archeological sites that are still underway. We went to see The Baths of Caracalla. I don't know if you know, that's an amazing place too. And the archeologists were working at the time and I'm a bit of a nerd about that sort of thing. And I've actually been on an archaeological dig in Melbourne, but I would love to do one in Rome.

Michele

In Rome, in Melbourne. What are they taking us in Melbourne?

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Katy

Well,

Michele

Dinosaur bones maybe?

Katy

It wasn't that old. It wasn't too old. Was sort of like from the gold rush. But in Rome, I'd really love to see this Domus Aurea, I mean, amazing. And I've just got this vision now that you've described of Raphael, like doing this abseil down into the room like Indiana Jones or something. And they wouldn't have had any torches. They would have had those fire torches.

Michele

Yeah. Candles or something. Yeah. Because actually if you're in the Colosseum and you look out there is Colle Oppio, which is the name of Oppian Hill. There is a park. That is the park. So the palace is actually right below that. So someone, a man they said had actually stumbled upon like this opening in the ground and that is the top of the dome, the octagonal room. So that was their only way to get in. They didn't know what they had discovered and where the entrance was. So the entrance now that created in this park. But yeah, if you didn't know any better, it's not like an elaborate palace that you just see. Like you have to go inside and you go down. It's quite humid in there, but cold. So it's like you have to dress in layers because it's cold and humid, which isn't a fun mix, but it's super fun and it's totally worth it to go for sure. It's €14 and that might include the exhibition as well. So they show you around the exhibition. They explained to you about how it was discovered about Raphael and the other artists that have come and wanted to be inspired during the Renaissance.

Michele

So, yeah, really cool.

Katy

What's really great is the way you've just described it is and Michele, I know you're not a licensed tour guide, but boy, did you bring that to life, you know what I mean? Like you really did. And the thing is when people think that they're just going to wander around some of these places by themselves, my heart sinks a little bit because there's no way you can possibly get across the stories and just the context and all of that with like a plaque or a series of plaques can get across is some dry facts and stuff like that. So this is why I really encourage people to do a tour if they can or if they're even remotely interested. Because you will just find out all these amazing stories and just give me the shoes. Like just thinking about how cool that was amazing.

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Michele

I'm totally one of those people too. There's only so much that you can really sort of- it's fatiguing to read - you know when you go to a museum or a gallery or whatever, and you have to read these boards. It's so much better to listen to someone that brings it to life. And then you can ask questions. And there's that dialogue, and it's just a lot more enjoyable, a lot more out of it. And it's more likely to sink into because you remember the stories that go along with their history, because there's just so much in Rome, so much history

Katy

So many thousands of years. It doesn't ever stop. It's amazing. That's the best thing about it. I can't wait to go back. All right. We have a few people watching us on Facebook, so I just want to say Hi to them. Hello. Don't forget, if you put a comment in the thing, I can see that if you want to ask any questions, so do go ahead with that. I'm trying to multi-screen here. It's quite challenging. All right, so that was awesome. I love those two ones so far. I don't know what you've got for us next. Michele, what's happening? What's the next tip you've got for us?

Michele

Let's go into some food. So when I lived in Rome, I lived in near San Giovanni in Laterano, which is the Basilicata I was telling you about. So I was in the area called Rei di Roma, which is basically a massive roundabout. And on one of those roads that lead off to the roundabout is basically the institution that all Romans know about and where they went or still go to to get some of the best tiramisus. Personally, I think it's the best. I was introduced to it by a Roman, and it's called Pompei so il regno di tiramisu- the reign of the tiramisu, the best tiramisu is basically what they're implying by the name. It was established in 1960, so they've been in this massive cafe-style shop right near where I used to live. And I didn't know about it for the longest time until a Roman actually took me there one night. Now, this place is an institution. It's open until all hours of the night. It's a cafe, but they specialize in cakes and pastries, but their main product is their tiramisu. Now, their tiramisu isn't just the classic, which is the tiramisu we normally get. They also have different flavors, which is amazing.

Michele

Obviously, they have the classic, but they also have different flavors. So the ones that they had at the time that I was there was hazelnuts, pistachio or pistaccio, chocolate and fragola. They've since added other ones, like caramel. They've got peach and mango, pineapple and coconut. So they're only like this size. And it's not too much. It's not too little. It's just enough that it leaves you wanting just a little bit more, but you don't make yourself sick. The flavors might sound a bit strange, but it's just magic. And you can also get an option where they'll add a few extra toppings on top. So with the fragola, the strawberry one, I used to get a drizzling of fruits of the forest on top, and it was. Oh, my God, Katy. It was so good. They have the main shop is Piazza Rei di Roma. Otherwise, there is a smaller shop near the Spanish

Steps. So if you don't want to go, you can still get a sampling of these. But I used to also get my birthday cake from Pompei because they specialize in cakes. For my birthday when I was there, my 25th birthday, I got a tiramisu birthday cake from Pompei.

Katy

Oh, my goodness. That sounds amazing. Well, my daughter actually made tiramisu at Easter, so I reckon she'll be right into that. You can see us tramping the streets to get to the Pompei for the tiramisu and try all the different flavors. Oh, wow.

Michele

Yeah. And just imagine that. I don't know. Sorry. No, finish.

Katy

No you go.

Michele

I was just going to say that for those of you that don't know, it might add a bit more interest to my favorite dessert for sure. Tiramisu literally means pick me up. Tira means pull or pick. Mi is me, and su means up. So it's called tiramisu because it gives you a boost of energy because it's got caffeine in it. So I need a bit of tiramisu and I need a little bit of a Pick Me Up, so you can think about it that way, which is why it's a dessert at the end of, like a heavy meal, you need a bite.

Katy

Because my mother-in-law was saying something and she was saying tiramisu... something like going to go down, pick me up and then go down. It was a little rhyme that she had going, but I have to try and remember it. I'd love to remember. Imagine how many Savoirdi biscuits they will be dipping in the coffee.

Michele

Yeah, I know, right.

Katy

But don't get it too soggy.

Michele

There's always a queue. They're always busy. They're really good. Like turning, getting people through because you can take it away. It comes in like a little box or you can eat in. Yeah, it's really good. But yeah, there's a little shop, Via della Croce,, which is near the Spanish Steps,

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so you can go there. And they also have ice cream there. They do have a small selection of cakes, but for the really big one, where you can actually dine in and have, like a proper afternoon of just indulgence, that's the one in Rei di Roma That's the original shop. Check it out.

Katy

That sounds amazing. It really does. Well, I think that's definitely going on the list. Well, all of it is. All right. So tiramisu, I don't know where we can go from here. Michele, you better tell us the next one. I think it's good.

Michele

Okay, so we're going from sweet, and we'll do a bit of salty. Well, I just made that up. I used to work in the ghetto ebraico, the Jewish quarter in Rome, and it's only like a smaller area, but they've got a lovely selection of restaurants. Kosher restaurants and a couple of bakeries. Now, through my bosses, who were Jewish, they had introduced me to their bakery there. It is called Forno. Forno - the bakery - doesn't have like a special name, but it's a kosher bakery, but they are very well known and they're open like people would go there after a long night. You would go there at five in the morning and get the first round of Pizza Bianca or Pizza Rosa. So Pizza Bianca is white pizza, literally translated, which means it doesn't have any tomato-based sauce on it. And Pizza Rosa - red pizza does have the source. It's very simple ingredients. But of course, Italians know how to do it best. So at lunchtime is like the peak time where everyone goes to the Forno del ghetto, the ghetto bakery, to get a slice of this white pizza or this red pizza. And it would be packed with people out the door at by 12:00. So they would come out with, like these long. They would have to hold it with arms outstretched, these long pizzas that have come out of the oven, and you would tell them how much you would want. Then they would weigh it and that's it. So this is sort of part of in Rome, you can get Pizza al taglio, which is like pizza on all these different boards, and you can choose how much that you want. So it's like pizza by the slice or pizza by the quantity. So you can choose that. So, yeah, you would go there. And most days I couldn't decide which one I wanted, so I just get a little bit of both. But they're a normal bakery. They have breads, too. There's a deli there, so you can get the bread in the bakery, take it across to the deli in the next section, and he'll make up a sandwich for you. But they're more famous for their Pizza Bianca and Pizza Rosa. And it's an institution. It's a tiny little bakery. You take a little number when you walk in and it's chaos, but it's brilliant.

Katy

Michele, We're staying round the corner from there?

Michele

Yes, it's a great area.

Katy

I love the area so much. But, you know, maybe you can help everyone out because I think sometimes people get a little bit overwhelmed and a little bit intimidated by the pizza, by the slice, because if you're ordering just one pizza, then you can go like this. You can go like this.

Michele

Normally they'll sort of it's more like they'll have a knife or they use scissors. It's more scissors that they have. And if the pizza is this long and this is the end of it, they'll sort of move their scissors along and sort of, do you want it here? Do you want this much? Do you want that much? And then you just sort of nod and say yes. You don't really give them a measurement. You just sort of let them point it out, and then you just say yes, stop or whatever. So that's basically how that works.

Katy

What's stop in Italian?

Michele

Oh, you can just say 'basta' or 'perfecto'. 'Basta' is enough. But I think you can say just say 'Si', yes, because he'll just like, "Si, No" we can say 'più', which is more. Basta is enough. Più, if you want more or meno if you want less. Più and Meno so più - think of più = plus meno = minus. Think about it that way.

Katy

I love your little tricks. Now, while you're here, that word Basta, is that a rude word? I've heard people say it when they've been sort of when they're in a crowd. Sometimes you've got people offering new things like bracelets and stuff like that. And I've heard people use the word Busta to those vendors.

Michele

Yeah. Depending on your tone. So you can soften it. If you say basta, you know that I'm not happy. Right. Basta means stop, like enough. Sort of like in English, enough. But if you can soften it and you can say, like, say if you're in a bakery and they're like più/meno and you say basta, you can say basta cosi. That basically means that's enough that way or like that. So it doesn't really translate that well in English. But that's how you would say it and use basta in that context. So you'd say Basta cosi. So it's enough that way. Yeah. Because they might say Altro. They might ask you like once you've decided what size you want and you can say più or meno, then you say Basta cosi, Grazie. They'll say Altro? Do you want something else? Volete altro? And you say no. Grazi Basta cosi. That's enough like that. And you can use it in any context.

Katy

Okay. I like it. That sounds like a nice - because when I did hear the word Busta, it was quite harsh in the other context.

Michele

Yeah. You can just stop it and just add the cosi at the end. Cosi. Basta cosi.

Katy

Beautiful. Well, we've had the views, we've had the pizza, we've had the tiramisu, and we've had the ancient ruins. What else have you got for us, Michele?

Michele

Okay, I want to mix it up. I'm going to give you an optical illusion. There are a couple of Rome in Rome, but this one is even less known. And a couple of different Romans at different times wanted to surprise me with taking into this place. But this is a place that I saw my very first day that I had moved to Rome. I had just came from the airport, a friend had come to pick me up and wanted to give me, like, this whirlwind tour while I was jet-lagged. Of all their favorite places, they wanted to impress me with, - I'm like I'm already sold, like, I'm moving here. Anyway, they took me to this road, which is high up overlooking the area of the Vatican. So the St. Peter's Basilica, St. Peter's dome in particular. So you go to this road. It's called Via Niccolò Piccolomini, which is the name of a guy, and this long road that's quite wide and is lined with trees and houses. Now, starting at the end of the road, heading towards the Basilica, the Cúpula - it's perfectly framed in the middle of the road. So if you're at the back of the road and you're driving towards the Cúpula, it gets smaller in size because of the layout of the road and the perspective. So an optical illusion is created as you approach. As you approach the end of the street, and then as you go back, obviously it gets bigger. So there's this incredible optical illusion. The best way to experience it is in a moving vehicle. So you can be in a taxi or in someone's car looking at the back window. You can be on a scooter. But yeah, the idea is that you'll spend at least 10 minutes driving up and down, up and down being like "oh, how does this work?" It is huge when you're at the end of the street and as you approach it, it gets smaller. It's magic. I don't know how it works, but it's an incredible perspective because you're seeing an incredible monument. Peter's Basilica, the Dome itself, you can see the top of it, and yeah, it gets massive and then it gets tiny at the end. It's quite cool. Not many people know about it.

Katy

Well, I want to go check it out now. What's the name of the street?

Michele

Via. So via means road. V-I-A ia Niccolò with an accent on the end. So N-I-C-O-L-O with an accent on the final o. Piccolomini, which is Piccollomini. Small and Mini means mini. But yeah, Piccolo Mini is the last word there.

Katy

Mini Mini.

Michele

Yes, Piccolo PI Double C O Mini - it is a bit of a mouthful.

Katy

But I think I would remember that because I think that's the name of the Pope that made the town Pienza, which is one of my favorite towns in Tuscany.

Michele

Really?

Katy

Yeah, because he was a Pope.

Michele

I'm not familiar with that.

Katy

Yeah. So I do know that. Yeah, they are some really cool optical illusions. I didn't know that one, but I do know the one which is actually just quite an amazing people-watching experiment. Which is the Aventine keyhole.

Michele

Yeah. Yeah also the dome of St Peters. That's another one. There's one at Palazzo Farnese

Katy

The Aventine keyhole is so cool. You actually just see this, like really big door and there's all these people lined up and I knew what they were lined up for. But if you were walking along...

Michele

What are they doing here?

Michele

What's going on?

Michele

Why is everyone standing at a door that doesn't open?

Katy

When you get to the keyhole, which is actually quite a large keyhole, and you look through and you can see St. Peters, right. It's amazing. But I couldn't take a very good photo of it because you have to be really steady and still because otherwise it won't focus on the St. Peters through the keyhole. But apparently, you're looking through three countries. So you're standing in Italy and you're looking through I think it's the Maltese embassy and then you look through obviously Vatican City. So that one is pretty cool.

Michele

Yeah, it's awesome. The other one I was thinking about, I think it's in Palazzo Farnese and there is an optical illusion of like this archway and at the end there's a little statue but the archway it creates like a depth of field which is fake so it makes it look longer than it actually is. But it's actually quite short. Is it called for shortening? Is that the right term? So they use like a similar thing in theaters to create the perspective so the backdrop will make it look like it's quite deep but it's actually just the painting and perspective and optical illusion of the artwork itself. But yeah, that's a cool spot. That's a guided tour as well. So you can't just go in there. You need to actually book in advance.

Katy

Palazzo Farnese - that's in Trastevere right? I think.

Michele

Palazzo Farnese is just off Campo de' Fiori there that if you're saying in Palazzo Farnese, the building there is Palazzo Farnese. The Farnese Palace that's a great spot. Great spot.

Katy

Yes. I always try and stay around there because it's just - you can walk everywhere that I want to go. Roscioli for my pasta, of course, the Jewish quarter. Yeah. Well, we stayed at the market and this is a good tip for you all. It's good to stay near the market but it's very noisy in that Piazza at Campo de' Fiori because of the market at night time. There's a lot of people

having fun going out to restaurants and bars and singing and what not and especially if there's a football match. There was a lot of people ended up there which is fun too but maybe not if you have a couple of three year olds in tow. But yeah, I thought if we stayed around the corner from there we'd have the best of both worlds because it might not be so busy. And I do love in that Piazza they've got the baths that Giulia Farnese stole. I think Giulia Farnese or she borrowed or stole because she was quite well connected. She took it from the Baths of Caracalla so she decided she wanted to make them into some fountains. She just pumped them in.

Michele

Yes, yes you're right.

Katy

So much recycling

Michele

Well, I mean Colosseum, just to get back to the Colosseum, all these holes that you see this is such a great idea. I'm so glad I did this. All these holes. Is that clear to you, Katy? Like all these holes on the Colosseum that was actually where the marble was fixed onto the Colosseum and they took that away and built the Vatican. So all the marble from the Colosseum was taken and repurposed to build the Vatican. Yeah.

Katy

It's really interesting, isn't it because I think when you see history books or story books and I know my kids have got them, I think they are thinking that it's going to be white because they don't really show that the sort of amended version of where they've taken all the marble off. But it must have been such an incredible site, this white marble theatre.

Michele

Brilliant in the sun. Yeah, absolutely.

Katy

Incredible. I can't wait, I'm getting so excited. Just jumping out of my seat now. All right, so we've had all these optical illusions and I know this next one, but you need to tell everyone because this is a great tip and I want everyone to hear it.

Michele

Okay? So aperitivo is like the thing that you need to do every day at the end of the day, from the afternoon onwards, from about 04:00. Aperitivo, you go and sit somewhere. You have an

alcoholic beverage. Usually, it's an Aperol spritz if that's your fancy. But yeah, there's this wonderful Roman, very Roman cocktail bar. They are known for their cocktails, but they also have an incredible aperitivo spread. So aperitivo, just to summarize, for those who aren't sure what it is exactly, it's between lunch and dinner. And the idea is that because the Italians have dinner so late, usually after 09:00 p.m. onwards and they've had lunch maybe around one or two. There's this middle time where they need something to tide them over, that satiates them until dinner. So this is why the aperitivo was basically invented, to have a little something that doesn't ruin your appetite for dinner. So you'll have usually a drink. It's a time where you catch up for work and you also have something to eat. Now you can get all kinds of aperitivo - apericena is what they call it if it's a big meal, cena, meaning dinner. So they're kind of joining these two words, aperitivo and cena - apericena.

Michele

This particular place is called Freni e Frizioni which means brakes and clutches because historically it used to be a mechanics workshop. So they've just maintained the name and maintained that historical reference. It's in Trastevere which is quite a cool, hip, very beautiful, charming part of Rome. And yeah, the establishment is small itself, but the outside area is on a Piazza. So you'll have people that sit inside, people that are sitting and standing outside. And it's just full of life, full of character. They got wonderful cocktails and really nice food for an aperitivo. So it's not just like finger foods where you get like a little pizza, which is they call pizza, which is a little small pizza, but they have like more hearty meals like you could get lentils or beans or pasta and stuff like that. So it's a really nice mix. So I would go there if you're not planning on having like a big dinner, but you can get an aperitivo/apericena for like €10, that's a drink cocktail of your choice and then you get the buffet that you can go back to as many times as you like. But yeah, it's a really cool spot.

Michele

Yeah, really cool spot.

Katy

And that's right in Trastevere, isn't it? I think it's just when you cross over the bridge, the Ponte Sisto.

Michele

Yes

Katy

I think it's just fairly.

Michele

Yeah. Just to your left. There's Piazza Trilussa, which is dedicated to the Roman poetry. But if you stay on the main road and you walk to your left, then it opens up into a little Piazza. And that's where they've got like two different tools that cross over like that. So you can see - if they're closed. A wrench and a spanner or something.

Katy

I'm not really good with car tools either. Would you need to book it, do you think?

Michele

They don't do bookings, as far as I'm aware, because they're just so popular. It's not like a restaurant where you would book it's more just like a bar. You could try and book, but I don't think they do unless maybe it's like a bigger party, like there are ten of you or something. But if it's just the two people. Yeah, it depends. Sometimes they'll do a booking. If it's a quiet day, I'm not 100% sure on that. I would just check now.

Katy

Yeah. Okay. And what time would it start, apericena, do you think?

Michele

Yes. Some places start a little bit early because this is a bar, they tend to open a little bit later, but by 06:00 you can definitely go there. 07:00 is when it starts to pick up a bit more. 6/7:00 is a good time. 05:00 would be too early.

Katy

Yeah, I know, but I love how they sneak in, Italias sneak in another little snack after lunch and before dinner.

Michele

Yeah. It's very Italian.

Katy

After about 11:00, we just started eating. We don't stop, I think.

Michele

First gelato of the day.

Katy

Oh, yeah. Oh my gosh, I can't wait. I love the fact that you're just walk in and you don't worry about anything, just keep walking, if you get a bit hungry, you just have a little nibble. Stop by the Forno, get some pizza. Michelle, this has been fantastic. And then you have one more tip for us, aren't you?

Michele

Yes. So this one isn't food-related, but this is something that when I was living at Rei di Roma, I lived with a lady, Rosario, who is Roman and we would go and walk together and she would take me to places in our neighborhood that I had never heard of or would never have found out about. And I remember one day it was February. It was a beautiful, like winter's day, but typical Roman style. It was a clear blue sky, but it was cold. And we went for a walk and she took me to this basilica, which is quite old and not very well known by visitors to Rome. And it is the first circular church in Rome, so it's completely circular, hence its name, which is including the word Rotondo, meaning rotund - what's the word we use in English? Round! Basilica di Santo Stefano Rotondo al Celio. The name can be shortened, but it's a beautiful church. It dates back to the fifth century and it's dedicated to St. Stephen hence Santo Stefano Rotondo. So rounded St. Stephen I guess. So there's a beautiful altar in the center I've seen a few photos of people getting married there, and it's just incredible because they've taken like a super wide-angle perspective of this rounded interior with all these beautiful pillars and columns. The only gruesome thing, which is a bit interesting and characteristic of this particular basilica, is that on the walls there are frescoes that depict the grizzly deaths, it's quite graphic, of 34 different martyrs. So you walk around and you see on the walls all these really graphic depictions of how each of these martyrs actually met their death. So it's interesting in that way, but it's really beautiful. Not many people know about it, so it's usually quite quiet inside. And you'll only get other Italians that are in there. They also have strange opening times, too. They're always closed on a Monday, and then they're open in the morning from ten till one and then from two till five. So you have to time it right during your trip. So Tuesday to Sundays when you can go. But yeah, it's just something a little bit different, but, yeah, quite unique. Really cool. It's a 5th Century basilica.

Katy

Yeah. I mean, you just wander around and even if you're not at all religious, I think that to see this history right before your eyes is just one of the most important things in Rome, isn't it just that window on another era? I think for us, when we come from countries which don't have such obvious, deep history, it's quite enchanting, really, isn't it?

Michele

Yeah, sure. It's nice to find these places that aren't so well known. It gives you another perspective on the history. I think it's also because it's circular. I think it adds something to it. Normally you go into a Basilica Church and it's got that cross layout, but when it's circular, it

feels more inviting, like you're not just sort of everyone's leading to the altar, even though the altar is in the center, but it just feels like it's hugging you, like it's embracing you. Like when you go to the Vatican and the Piazza is designed to be circular to welcome in the people. So I kind of get that same feeling when I go to this particular Basilica, regardless of the grisly depictions on the frescoes. But, yeah, go there and see what you think. See how you react to it.

Katy

Yeah. So interesting. I mean, there's hundreds of churches in Rome out there, so you could literally just check out churches on every corner.

Michele

Yeah, I know it can be a little bit overwhelming, but this one's a little bit different because it's the first circular church and it's super old, so I think it deserves a mention for sure.

Katy

And whereabouts is it again?

Michele

It is close to San Giovanni in Laterano. I can give you the address. I quickly Google it. Yeah, it's just south of the Colosseum. Let me get a better description of it here.

Katy

Is it in the Monte district?

Michele

Kind of it's in Celio. Okay, so Colosseum, there is a road that will take you straight down. It's called Via Claudia. So if you're at the Colosseum with your back to Piazza Venezia, there are a few roads that run off it. But you want to go down Via Claudia. Via Claudia will take you straight down to the Basilica. And it's on that road. So it's quite easy to get to. It's not too far. It's probably about ten-minute walk.

Katy

It's nothing. But isn't it interesting because you just don't go the other way to everyone else is going because everyone else is just going down the Foro. If you just go the different way to everyone else, look what you're going to find.

Michele

Yeah. Opposite direction. Yeah.

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Katy

Just go for a wander. Oh, Michele, thank you so much for sharing these amazing tips. You've really given me goosebumps and shivers. I'm so excited to get back to Rome and all of that. Now. I know there's quite a few people watching on Facebook. If you have any questions, just type them into the chat there and we can ask Michele because I think it's a great opportunity, even if it's anything, about learning the language, because obviously, Michele is the expert there. And if you haven't listened to the podcast from last week. Yeah, definitely do that. She use some great tips. And she's also got a bit of a special on a travel course happening at the moment, which is 20% off that you can grab. And we'll give everyone the link there for that, too. But if you have any questions or comments, we'd love to hear them. We just stay on for a little couple more minutes. Definitely. I'm going to Piazza Venezia because I can walk from there from Piazza Farnese and it's a nice little walk from there. So we'll definitely do that on our first day. Maybe I'm going to have massive jet lag when I get there.

Katy

What time do you arrive?

Katy

Two in the afternoon, so I'll be needing a nice walk. I might just do that. Well, actually, hopefully, I'm catching up with Danielle, who is a regular on our podcast, and meeting her for the first time in person. So that will be really nice after I've been for a walk and had a shower.

Michele

Yeah.

Katy

But yeah, we're looking for a rooftop for our aperitivo. I think we might need a book, actually, because everyone I'm going to sound like a broken record, but I don't know if you've seen photos of Rome or any of the major tourist destinations in Italy at the moment, but they are absolutely packed and you need to book everything - it's not much room in these big places for spontaneity, unfortunately. So I've booked every dinner, which is a bit boring really. But even the little places I've booked and yeah, I think it's going to be very busy. So especially the places that I mentioned on the podcast. And there's some popular places as well that people like to go. But if you want to be spontaneous, you're going to have to get out of the main center, I think. Unfortunately.

Michele

Yeah, I think everyone is going to realize they can finally travel again. Everyone's excited and makes total sense. But yeah, you wise to book in advance, especially tours as well. If there's a certain if you're strict on time, it's good to be like they skip the queue to us. Yeah, for sure. Yeah.

Katy

That's a really good tip, I think. I was speaking to the team at Take Walks earlier in the week, and they were saying some of the ones have booked out. So they've got some they do a day trip down to Pompeii, and that's selling so fast, it's not even funny. And always the early sessions at the Colosseum in summer sell out really quickly because it gets really hot there and quite uncomfortable in the summer heat in the later part of the day. So if you want to go to the Colosseum and you're going in the summer, book early because it does get sold out very quickly.

Michele

They also have an app now, too, which is a new development.

Katy

Okay.

Michele

Yeah, the Parco Colosseo. So basically the Roman Forum and the Colosseum, the whole complex is all included when you get a ticket. So you can actually get your tickets through their app instead of actually queuing up and buying your tickets there. And the app is quite good. I think it's got an audio guide on there, too. It's quite a good app, and your ticket will be on there. So you don't need to print it out. You can just show them that. So that could be another way to plan your trip and check all the time. They have a good app for that.

Katy

Excellent. That's such a good tip. I didn't know that. Well, there you go. See, I've learnt so much from you today, Michele. Amazing. So we didn't have any questions, so we're going to say and all of those things. And thank you so much for joining us. How can people stay in touch with you if they would like to do that?

Michele

Yes. So my website is called theintrepidguide.com, or you can find me on Instagram if you want the daily lessons called [intrepidItalian](#). And that also links to my other Instagram account, which is [intrepidguide](#). So, yeah, I'm on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube. I've got two different YouTube channels, one for Italian and learning it. And the other one is more

general travel and Italian tips. So, yeah, reach out, say hello, send me a DM. Lovely for you to be connected with you all.

Katy

She's so prolific. I know. I think you even beat me, which is - posting every day, it's crazy. But Michele's Instagram lessons are fantastic and they're all lots of fun and really quick, too. So everyone should jump on those. Definitely. All right, everyone, thanks for joining us live for those of you who joined us live and of course everyone else can catch the replay in the portal or here on Facebook as well. So thanks for joining us, Michele. Grazie Mille.

Michele

Thank you so much Katy. Bye everyone.

Katy

I hope you enjoyed Michele's private podcast episode which we recorded earlier this year. Since then I've been back to Rome 3 times and I don't mind admitting to you that I've tried every one of these experiences and yes they were amazing. Still thinking about that tiramisu by the way. And as always, all the places mentioned are in the podcast show notes at untolditaly.com/147

So, if you love Italy and building a deeper connection with the country so you can enrich your travels and you enjoyed that more casual approach to podcasting go ahead and visit casa.untolditaly.com where you'll find all the details on how to sign up to be a supporter or Amici, friend of the podcast. We can't wait to have you join us!

This has been a huge year for Untold Italy as we bounce back from the trauma of the pandemic years. We've had so much fun over the last few months exploring untold corners of the country and meeting our guests and listeners in person what a thrill. To celebrate we've created some fun and I hope useful Untold Italy products so you can show your love for Italy and the show. We have specially designed Untold Italy tote bags, aprons and other products that are great for gifting. You can find them on our online store at shop.untolditaly.com

Grazie Mille! Thanks to everyone and especially our Amici for your ongoing support of Untold Italy. I hope you enjoyed today's show. If you did we would love it if you shared it with your Italy-loving friends and family. Grazie to those of you who have already done this. Untold Italy is now in the top 10 travel podcasts in the United States, Canada and Australia which is so exciting. And it's all thanks to you. Grazie Mille! Thank you.

That's all for today, on next week's episode we're heading north to Venice to take a bite of its unique food culture with a favorite guest Valeria Necchio but until then it's "ciao for now".

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