

Untold Italy Episode 174 - Wheels and Wanderlust: Exploring Italy by Campervan

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 174.

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 friends, hope everything is great wherever you are in the world and busy planning wonderful trips to Italy. I started traveling many moons ago and things were certainly a lot different then dealing with visas, the Italian currency lire in its 1000s and negotiating where to stay when we arrived at the train station. There was no airbnb or online bookings back then. Things were quite free and easy and you know what, sometimes I miss those days where you would just take to the road and rock up at your next destination ready to explore without too many details in hand

These days there are a myriad ways to travel and to be honest, I love the organisation - perhaps a bit too much - but I do think fondly of the days when we had a little less expectation of our travels.

So today we're going to explore a fun way to travel in Italy which is really popular with Europeans - especially the dutch and germans - but that you may not have considered for your own trip. And that's campervanning! There's something about taking to the open road and exploring which is so very popular here in Australia where I'm from and I know also in the United States where many of our listeners tune in from.

Our guests today are Tania and Adam, fellow podcasters, filmmakers and photographers, and the dynamic duo behind [jitintothesunset](#). They had a great time exploring Italy in their van for 2.5 months starting in the Dolomites and heading south. They even took the van to the Amalfi Coast... gosh that sounds brave! So let's hear all about it and welcome them onto the show.

Katy

Benvenuti, Tania and Adam. Welcome on to the Untold Italy podcast.

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Adam

Thank you so much for having us. It's great to be here.

Tania

Yeah, we're really excited. Katie, what a pleasure it is to get to sit down and chat with you all about Italy and doing it with a van. We're really excited.

Katy

Oh, my goodness. I love having fellow podcasters on the show, and I am so intrigued to hear about your van life adventures in Italy. But how about you first introduce yourselves and let our listeners know how you came to have this incredible trip exploring Italy in your van?

Adam

Sure. So we've lived in a van for almost four years, up until a couple of months ago, where we've now left it in Europe and gone backpacking, but that's a separate story. So yeah, we lived in a van for three and a half, almost four years. We only originally planned to live in a van for one year. We saved enough money to go traveling in our campervan for one year. And by the end of the year, we were like, "Well, we love it so much". And we were starting to make films on YouTube and develop a community there. And we just decided, why stop now? Why give up? And we just carried on going, carried on going. And that led us to exploring a whole lot of Europe. And Italy was always someone that was right at the top of our bucket list. And we tried to get there. Well, we did very briefly get there in 2020, just before the second lockdowns came in and we got immediately chased out. So it's been somewhere that we really wanted to go back to and do properly, which we managed to do late last year.

Tania

Yeah, for two months. And we managed to travel from all the way to the North when starting off at the Dolomite all the way down south through the Amalfi Coast and made it into Puglia. And yeah, Italy is just amazing.

Adam

It's such an amazing country. We don't need to tell you or your listeners this, I'm sure. But the fact that you've got mountains, we were up in the mountains, we were up in snow, and then we drove and I think it was like we drove slowly. And a couple of days later, we were in the sun in the rolling hills. And then a few weeks later, when we decide to move on, we were down at the Coast on this amazing crystal clear blue water. It's just like you got all of this in the space of just a bit of driving. And that's why it is such an incredible place to do a road trip.

Katy

Yeah, I think so too. The diversity is absolutely incredible. So tell us, what were some of your favorite places? What are your top three? You probably got different ones, so you can both have a go.

Adam

It's so hard. It's so hard. So we were talking about this, and as we were talking about this, we just listed off everywhere we'd been.

Katy

Yeah.

Tania

It's classic.

Katy

I know that happens to me too.

Adam

Yeah. We were like, Oh, yeah. Dolomites, definitely. And then, Oh, no. Yeah, but definitely Tuscany as well. And then, Oh, yeah, but what about the Amalfi Coast? It's very hard. So we're going to try and narrow it down here.

Tania

But I think it's fair to say that the Dolomites are just other-worldly. If you love nature, if you're into hiking, and whether you love going on beautiful walks or you like to hike, there's something for you in the Dolomites and the Northern region where it's just absolutely breathtakingly beautiful. And especially when you're traveling by van, whether you own your own or whether you're renting one, imagine yourself parking up where you're making yourself your cup of tea and you're looking out your window of your tiny little home and there's just epic mountains.

Adam

This mountain scape goes on forever.

Tania

And the Dolomites has always been somewhere that Adam, in particular, has wanted to go. It's a very cinematic place. And for us as filmmakers, it was just an indulgence, an absolute

indulgence. So we've loved the Dolomites. And also to add to that, it's very camper van friendly. And we can get onto how you find places to park, about wild camping, about where you stay. For example, as you know in the Dolomites, one of the most impressive and most visited sites is the three peaks. And there you can stay in your camper van.

Adam

There's a car park right at the top designated for camper vans. And you have to pay the 30 Euro toll to get past. And you get past and you're allowed to stay up the night there as long as you come back before the 7 PM time again the next day. So you got 24 hours up there. We actually ended up staying for two nights because it was so beautiful. And it's just really cool. And there's loads of camper vans there, so it's really nice. And the view is just perfect. It's better than any campsite we've ever been to. It was unbelievable. And also the people are very friendly there. They tell you, actually, as you arrive, they say, if you want to go up after 7, then you get... What was it? Was it free or was it half price?

Tania

No, it's free. It's free? Yeah. So basically, the way that the tolls work is from 7 PM to 7 PM. So there was a line at 6.59 at campers waiting for the man at the kiosk to leave, who was the one that told us about it, to leave so that we could go in for free and not have to pay for that second day

Adam

Yeah, so sound of him to tell us, Oh, if you wait for an extra few hours, you can go up for free. He didn't have to do that.

Tania

And to add to that, that is just a testament to the warmth and the kindness and the generosity of the Italian people. They're just so welcoming. They're so glad to see you enjoy the country. And Katy, I know you've said this many, many times. As long as you have a big smile on your face and you're willing to interact and be curious about other people and the Italians and their culture, you're just going to have the best time. And we got to experience that Italian hospitality as we road trip all down through the country.

Adam

Back to the question, I think our favorite place, I think it has to be the Dolomites. If we had to really pick one, yeah, I think the Dolomites because it was, like we said, so campervan friendly. Some of the places to park are absolutely mind blowingly beautiful. Really some of the best park ups we've ever had.

Tania

Katy, you said that we probably have different ones. Okay, so.

Adam

Dolomites is mine, is it?

Tania

The Dolomites, I'll give you one. Yes, great. I'll have Dolomites. Because I also think it's great to show variety. We've loved doing van life in Tuscany because we have gotten the pleasure of camping literally right next to vineyards. On the last trip that we did, we got to stay in an agriturismo where they have homestays and you can also rent rooms but some of them will also allow you to park up your van for free. And what you do is you then get involved in - what we did, we picked olives and we pressed our own olive oil.

Adam

Yeah, we got to see the process right from the beginning to the end. So literally from the picking the olive off the tree. And then within a few days, we were going to the olive pressing facility and pressing the olive and seeing this incredible bright olive oil coming out.

Katy

Amazing. I've actually just recorded a podcast specifically about the olive harvest, and that's coming out a little bit before yours. So it's going to be interesting to see it. But it is a beautiful tradition, isn't it? It's not something that you would have perhaps anywhere in the world.

Adam

The thing I found really funny about it that I didn't really realize was that they have their olive pressing facilities during the season run 24 hours. So we were there literally at midnight pressing olive oil. It's so funny. It's not like a 9 to 5 thing.

Katy

And were they having a little bit of a party on the side there?

Adam

They weren't actually. Everyone was so busy just trying to make sure their olive oil was weighed and pressed.

Tania

Top tip, make sure that if you're pressing your own olive oil and you find yourself doing this, don't forget to bring your bread so that you can taste it. We didn't have our bread with us.

Adam

We didn't bring bread.

Tania

Yeah. Yeah, top tip.

Katy

Yeah, bring your own bread. Well, in Umbria, actually, which is next door to Tuscany, they do seem to have a little bit of a party when they do their olive oil pressing. And I think they make pizza and all sorts of things. So maybe you should try that one next time. But yeah, I mean, Tuscany is stunning, isn't it? And in any season, it's just beautiful. And I think it's particularly the harvest time. It's just stunning. All right, so you've got Dolomites and Tuscany. And I love that tip about the Agriturismo. I mean, Agriturismos, I have a whole podcast on that. And it's like, if you don't know what it is, go listen back to the podcast and I'll put the number in the show notes. You will not regret staying in Agriturismo, ever.

Adam

Yeah, they're incredible, really unique experiences.

Tania

Yeah. And I think it's a wonderful way to integrate with the locals because..

Adam

And the culture properly.

Tania

And the culture, yeah, because they are there all year round. And usually you have these beautiful views and you can get involved in whether it's the harvest or you could also get involved in helping in the kitchen. There's the community and the people that you meet that are staying there, like minded people. So you can go there as a family, or you could go there as a solo traveler and just meet other people that have that shared values and are looking for something different and appreciate Italian culture.

Katy

Amazing. Okay, now, I think we should go through your whole itinerary and just maybe go through the highlights. But first, can you tell us about your van? What sort of van is it? My parents had a combi van when I was growing up, so I do know a little bit. It was very... I was 1970s old school pop-up roof.

Adam

Your sounds a lot cooler than our van.

Katy

Well, what's your van like? And it has a name, too, doesn't it?

Adam

Yes. It does. So our van is a Peugeot Boxer from 1998. It's very, very functional but not very cool at all. We've named her Jitters or Jits, for short, because when you go over 60 kilometers an hour, she starts jittering around and you can hear the plates clattering around in the back because we don't even have camping gear. We got full crockery and you can just hear it clattering around. Sometimes the fridge door will come flying open. So she's rickety and jittery. So yeah, Jits, that's her name. And yes, she was my mum's van. I inherited her when my mum actually passed away in 2019. And she is the reason that we got into van life because she really inspired me because she had the van, of course. She had Jits. She did two massive trips in Wales and in Scotland after she retired. And that was what made me go, 'Wow, van life'. So, I inherited the van from mum and inherited the idea of van life from mum as well. And that is how we ended up with the van.

Adam

But yeah, it's such a good van. And we've actually got a van tour on our YouTube channel because it's really hard to explain on an audio format. But effectively, you've got everything you need in this pretty small van, especially for anyone listening in America who's used to RVs, which are these massive vehicles. It's a very small van. I can't remember the measurements off the top of my head, but we've got a fridge, we've got an oven, we've got a hob, we've got hot water, we've got a specific wet room that's also like a toilet and a shower.

Tania

We've got a modular setup for our bed. So in the daytime, it is like two couches, let's say. We have the tables, we have a big table, a small table. That you can take out.

Adam

Set up for office or for eating.

Tania

And then that all gets changed every day, every evening into a bed. You pull levers and this comes out and then you move this across and then you've got a really decent, comfortable and roomy double bed. And then in the morning back again, we do everything. So we love the fact that she's modular. Because she's modular, we can fit in everything. And when people walk into Jits, they always say, she's like a tardis. It's like there's so much room. It looks tiny on the outside, but so spacious. You can stand up when you're in there. And we just love it.

Adam

It's so well designed. And it's not a self build. It came from a small company that professionally convert vans like this. And after doing all the research that we've done, because originally I wanted something a lot cooler. Mum was like, honestly, this is the van you want because you can live in this van. And I was looking at combi, like VW, something really retro, really cool. But after all my research, I realized, no, Mum was right. Jits has got everything you need in such a small space. And for us, it was absolutely perfect. And it is still, to this day, the best design internally of a van I think that I've ever seen. But she does break down.

Katy

There's got to be these pros and cons, isn't there? Oh, my goodness. When you're saying when you go over 60 kilometers an hour, I'm just thinking the Italian roads and the Autostrada, and I'm like, How does that work? How do you go on the Italian roads with Jits?

Adam

Well, you can go over the 60 miles an hour and you can go over the 70 miles an hour. No, not over 70. You can get to 70 miles an hour and it's fine, but you are jittering around. But in terms of the small roads and the little country lanes that you have in Italy, again, it's not a massive RV. It's a small medium wheelbase van. So it's not like a really long sprinter van and it's not huge. We have actually managed to get it down some pretty tight spaces and some pretty small lanes. That's the other thing about the van is you can park it in a normal parking space designed for a car. So it is small enough to do these kinds of lanes and get to the places that you might not be able to get to if you're in a bigger car. And that's very important in Europe and particularly in Italy.

Katy

I would say so. Did you see any of these big RV style vans at all on your travels?

Adam

Yes, but only on big roads. You don't see them going into the little towns, which is the best thing about Italy.

Tania

Exactly. The higgledy-piggledy little side streets and things that you can go and explore. And I think that that's one big tip to your listeners. If you're thinking about traveling to Italy and renting your campervan and you want to do this experience, consider a smaller vehicle.

Adam

As small as you feel like you can manage to spend time in.

Tania

Exactly. And then you could also stay in campsites, for example, if you want to have access to bigger showers and all of that. But you will not regret going smaller rather than what you might be used to, which would be a larger RV. And then that could limit you and other places that you can explore, which is...

Adam

Especially if you're just following the Sat Nav, because we found ourselves accidentally down these tiny roads, and I would not feel comfortable driving them in anything bigger. We were on cobble street, so I was like, A car's supposed to be here? And then you just see some Vespas nipping around you're like, Okay, it's a road. You're following Google Maps, then you don't want to be in a big van because you will get stuck somewhere.

Katy

Oh, my goodness. Google Maps, it'll get you every time, especially if you're going off the beaten path for sure. We have a great few great stories. I need to listen to my own advice because this was a time when we were following Google Maps and we did not have the physical map, and we didn't listen to the hotel advice either, by the way, which was really silly. And literally stuck between two stone walls. And the guy, the hotel manager came out and goes, "What are you doing?" I know. He had to get out and we scraped the car. It was all right in the end, though. But yeah, I think your physical map is really important, right? I mean, you can't underestimate it.

Adam

Well, we have to admit that we did not ever have a physical map. We maybe we should have.

Katy

You winged it.

Adam

We winged it. We just used the Sat Navs.

Katy

So you actually drove from London to the Dolomites, right?

Tania

Yeah, we got on the Euro tunnel. And for anyone that's not familiar with the Euro tunnel, it is literally a train track that is built underneath the sea that connects you from the UK to France. And it takes you about what is it, like half an hour, 20 minutes or 40 minutes? You get to relax. And what's brilliant as well when you're traveling in a campervan is that you just drive your van onto the train and you can relax.

Adam

You're just traveling at home. You're just sitting down at home and you're on your way to Europe.

Tania

And it doesn't take that long to get from the UK to Italy. I have to caveat for anybody listening that we love to travel slowly. It's actually one of the great pleasures of living in a van. I think that we know people certainly who in one year can travel to 30 countries in Europe and they nip here, here and here, we would rather do less for longer. So whilst you could travel from the UK to Italy in a much shorter space of time, I think us being quick is still taking seven days because we love to indulge on the journey and see how things unfold. And if we love a place, we love to stay a little bit longer. But for us going quickly, knowing that last year we really wanted to make sure that we got our two months of time indulging in Italy, we got there in six or seven days.

Katy

I've actually done the fast one on the Eurotunnel. Yeah. Have you? Yeah. We had to get down to Switzerland in a hurry. I said, not everyone has like... I mean, you're lucky you've got a lot of time to take it very slowly. But if you ever have the chance to do that, it's super fun just to drive around Europe that way. I mean, we did that trip quite a few times actually when we lived in the UK. And it's so fun to see the different cultures change as you go through the different regions. It's amazing. So when you arrived in the Dolomites, how long did you stay there?

Adam

Well, I think we stayed there for about three weeks in the end. And this is again, the great thing about van life is we had a very rough itinerary of things that we wanted to see. And when you're living in a van, you can take your time, you can react and go to places that you want. You don't have to have a solid plan because you don't have to book your

accommodation, you don't have to book your transportation. So we could just make it up as we go along. And we were just driving around the Dolomites going, Oh, I like this. Should we go check this out? Should we go check that out? And we ended up pottering around the Dolomites for three weeks before moving on.

Tania

And then the other thing to add to that is that quite often, the best thing about travel is when you're meeting local people and the local knowledge that you get from others. And again, you can be reactive to that. If someone recommends a beautiful walk or there's a place that is right next to the main tourist attraction, but have you checked this? I guess this is actually where us Italians, we go. You can do that and you decide to stay one night longer or two nights if you want and explore that.

Adam

It's a very spontaneous way of traveling.

Katy

Yeah. And I think that's somehow been lost in these days of where you can book everything online. I was just reflecting before that when I started traveling in the 90s, it was way more spontaneous. And you didn't have a choice because there was no option to research online. You just show up at the train station and there would be people with signs and you'd be like, Oh, I think I'll stay there tonight. But it's a very different... everything is hyperorganized. But I feel like you do need to be like that in the cities in Italy. Actually, you do need to be very organized. But if you really want to explore the countryside, how cool to be spontaneous and just spend your time wandering around and soaking up the bits that you really love rather than what you've seen maybe online.

Adam

Yeah. And I mean, even there, you mentioned the cities, like van life - we visited both Venice and Florence, and we parked out just outside a short bus ride away from both of those places, and we could stay there for as long as we want, until we finished feeling like we'd explored the city, then we just drive on. So it is still a good way to explore the cities.

Katy

I can definitely see how easy that would be in Florence, because it's such a small city with lots of hills around it. I'm sure you'd get a pretty good vantage point there, actually.

Adam

That's right. We were just up a hill just in the town right next. I can't remember the name of it off the top of my head, but we were like a 15, 20 minute bus ride away from Florence. So

it's like a 15, 20 minute bus ride away from home, effectively. So you just hop on the bus and then go into town and hop on the bus home again. It's really cool.

Tania

And similarly, with Venice, we were a 25 minute bus ride away. And I think if I remember correctly, we were probably paying 16 or 18 euro per night to stay in this campsite. It wasn't like anything fancy, but it did the job. It did the job. It has the showers. If you needed to do your laundry, there was facilities for you to do that. It's just a great way to explore somewhere like Venice, which can be...

Adam

On a budget.

Tania

On a budget, exactly, because it can be expensive. If it's a once in a lifetime experience for you and you want to go luxury, of course, you can do that. But if you want to make your budget stretch and you want to experience a road trip around Italy in that region, then this is definitely not off the cards. You don't just have to stick to the mountains and really go into the vineyards and say, Well, I wouldn't be able to do cities like Florence or Venice. They are there for the taking if that's what you would like to do.

Katy

I just like to mix it up. I think that's what you've done. I think that's a really great way to do it, especially if you're on a budget. Because even if you're renting - really, hotel rooms, the price of hotels have actually gone up astronomically in the last two years. And so it's really, I guess, if you do the maths, even with the road tolls and all of that and then parking fees, I'm sure that it probably works out a lot cheaper to go in the van, actually.

Adam

And something else we always speak about with van life, a way of travel that's very specific to van life is you get to see the in-betweens that you wouldn't see if you were taking public transport, if you were taking a train, you'd just go from train stop to train stop, or of course, a flight, even more so, you just fly over everything. But Italy has got so much to offer. Little towns that you've never heard of, these amazing landscapes that aren't on postcards. When you're traveling in a van, you drive through these and you take pit stops in these little towns you've never heard of when you're on the way to the place that you have heard of. Sometimes we spent a good chunk of time in this place that we had not planned to spend simply because we found a great park up. It was a really beautiful, cute little town. And we were just like, Yeah, why not? This is great. When will we ever come back here? So that's the other thing

about van life is you can go outside of the main touristy destinations and find other parts of Italy that you would probably not discover if you were traveling in another way.

Tania

And because they are not so touristy, it really feels like you're getting into the essence of that Italian culture. Because if people are not speaking English because it's not a tourist place, then you're doing the old-fashioned way and you're communicating with your hand gestures and your smiles and your signals and all of it. And that is a really brilliant point that the getting to experience the in-between places is super special and unique as well.

Katy

I do think that's where the real gold is in Italy, is those in-between places. Unfortunately, Italy is popular for a reason, and it's so absolutely stunningly beautiful. And I feel like then you build up these tourist infrastructure, which is there to help move people around and everything, but slowly, slowly, it erodes the essence of what was there in the first place that drew people. So I'm really hopeful and I really try on these podcasts to try and get people out into these other places. So you can really experience that for yourself because once you have, you'll never go back. You'll be like, I need to have that feeling again. It's almost like some addiction, which is probably why I keep going back. But it's very special.

Adam

Couldn't agree more. And I think van life really is such a good way of exploring Italy in that way.

Tania

Katie, you mentioned accommodation going up, and I don't know if you know at the top of your head how much one would expect to pay because I'm thinking about your listeners and them wanting to replicate a trip like this. And if they wanted to rent a campervan, there's rental car companies. I looked them up before we hopped on here. And people can be paying on... For two people for their campervan, they could be paying on average around €100 to €120 per night that you rent. But that is your accommodation and your transport and you get all the home comfort. I can imagine that, especially if you're going to a place like Venice, you can run up a higher bill as well.

Katy

Oh, easily. I mean, of course, you can find relatively cheap places, but again, you don't have that transport cost, you don't have the access to these smaller places. I think €200 is a pretty... To get a very middle-of-the-road place in the cities, that's probably average €200. I think it definitely sounds cheaper to go in the van. And it's a totally different type of trip as well. So everyone's different. That's what I love about this show is that we can talk one

minute we can be talking about luxury trips, and the next minute we can talk about home swaps, and then we can talk about van life. I love that about how everyone's traveling these days, it's so different. And it's just a great way to share, to expose people to different ideas that they may not have thought about.

Tania

Yeah, absolutely. And you mentioned there that some people are interested in luxury. And I can imagine that there will be some listeners who would say, I like the idea of it, but I don't know that if I'd be able to do it myself because I love my home comforts. We have met a lot of people in the last four years who have gone from doing the classic all inclusive package type of holidays and feeling like that was their ideal way to travel to really relishing in all of the magic that van life brings. Because van life, it gives you the home comfort because you've got your own bed, your mini kitchen. If you've got a little toilet or a shower, you could do that. But also it's that injecting a bit more adventure. So I would say if you're on the fence, don't underestimate what you might find really - like a wonderful way to travel just because you're used to one way. This could be a wonderful new avenue of exploration for you.

Tania

Tania's pitch.

Katy

Yeah. Well, I love it because as well, I think really we need to examine and think to ourselves what is luxury? Because to me, luxury is unique experiences and having those moments that you're not in that not a sausage factory, but it can be a bit like that when you get into some of the big cities and the major tourist areas. But for me, luxury is just like having that experience where it's exclusive. No one's got it. And that sounds really Gucci or something like that, but it's not. You can have that just by, like you said, that beautiful moment parking your van at the top of the hill, overlooking the three peaks in the Dolomites. I mean, that to me is extremely exclusive and luxurious in a lot of ways.

Adam

That's it and the thing we quite often say is we'll park up in these places that we'll have to ourselves, that will have these incredible views, whether it be on a beach, up a mountain.

Tania

Or next to a castle.

Adam

Or next to a castle or wherever it is. And we'll say, we'll often joke like, My God, how much would we be paying to have an Airbnb or a hotel room that was in this location? And it's like,

we're just here either paying like a fiver or camping for free or whatever it might be. Still, like a fraction of the price. And on top of that, we're at home still. It's really an incredible way of traveling. Yeah, super cozy. It's great. All right.

Katy

Now, I've got some questions for you about the Amalfi Coast because having driven along there, and we don't ever recommend anyone to drive, actually. They can help. So you took a van down the Amalfi Coast. Respect to you. How did that go?

Tania

Slowly

Adam

Slowly. But it was shoulder season, so it wasn't peak season, so I think the roads were quieter than maybe they sometimes are. Fewer big busses, fewer tourists driving around, not knowing what they're doing, I guess. We were one of the few. And yeah, we made it. It was fine. It was just slow. And like I said, our van is smaller than perhaps you may be envisaging. It's not a massive van. So we did make it. I didn't have too many problems. I just had to take it slow. And in terms of the actual van life thing, we didn't have... It's not van life friendly there. So we ended up, we actually stayed with a friend because there was no real parking. But in terms of the driving, I think as long as you're careful and confident. .

Katy

I'm thinking specifically of that hairpin bend going up to Ravello. I don't know if you did that one, but the busses have to do a three point turn.

Tania

That one was a little bit further on.

Adam

We turned around before that one.

Tania

But 100 % I think it's very wise to deter people towards who are not very confident or comfortable drivers to just avoid those roads because they're very skinny. And those busses, I mean, they're extremely skilled, but they're massive.

Adam

They are massive.

Katy

Remember, they're all Napoli drivers as well. And they know they've been driving those roads for years. And so for them, it's like, they just do it by nature and they handle it very well. But for us, it's like, oh, goodness. So I know a little bit about van life in Europe, but not so much. But I do understand that some countries are really better than others in terms of the services that they've got set up. How is it in Italy? How does it go?

Tania

I loved it. I think in Europe, in general, van life is quite popular also. And in Italy, Italians, they like to road trip. They've got their own camper vans as well. We often parked up next to locals that were from another part of the region. And so it is very well equipped. One of the top tips that we always share with people is that in Europe, there is this app called Park4Night. That's park and then for the number four and night. And it is a user generated map of places that you can park up. Either it's a paid camps or it's a free camps, or it's a wild camping where the locals don't mind you staying. So people leave reviews and you are able to then find places to stay. Not just to stay, but to hook up your electricity. If you need to empty out your toilet, that's another thing. You're self-sufficient. There are plenty of spots that you can stay. There's also resources where you can sign up. I think you pay £35 to unlock access to 280 different hosts around the country that will host you on their vineyards.

Adam

This is Italy-specific, isn't it?

Tania

Yeah, this is Italy-specific in their vineyards or they'll host you on their farms. You can stay there for 24 hours for free. And sometimes if they're selling something, you can just go and you can check out their shop. You can contribute in that way. But there's not obligation because you've signed. What's that called? That one is called agricamper-italia.com For £35. So there are plenty of places to park up and to stay at however you would like to do it, whether it's wild camping, meeting locals on their farm or on their vineyards or in campsites. So it is very camper van friendly.

Adam

Just a quick one on the wild camping. I think wild camping is technically not legal in Italy, but it's a bit of a gray area. And we only did it a few times when we felt like it was this really nice spot that was miles away from anyone and it wasn't a bother. And people do not mind. It's not like a law as such. It's just like a guideline as to not do wild camping. But if you do it respectfully, and again, you follow this app, park4night, and you look at the reviews and you make sure you're out of the way and you stay for one, maybe two nights maximum, then wild

camping is done and seems to be absolutely fine in Italy. And we've even had police just drive past us and no one minds. It's absolutely fine as long as, like we say, as long as you're respectful. And there are also Tania didn't mention that these things called aires, which are dotted around the country. A lot more of them actually are in North Italy than South Italy. But aires are these places that are specifically designed for campervans that are designated. They're always free and they will have some facility, whether it's fresh water, ways to empty your water tanks or your toilet. And yeah, it's just the perfect place to sleep for free, which is just amazing. And there's a few countries around Europe that do that very well, and Italy is one of them.

Katy

It's actually really hard to get information about campervanning because I was so excited when you emailed me because I couldn't find it. I was googling away and I'm an expert Googler, don't worry about that - but I could not find anything about Italy. And then you would have some random things and they would say, Oh, it's not France, France is better, and you're better off. But yes, I'm really thrilled to know that there's so many great services there.

Adam

Yeah. I mean, if I was to rank it, I would say, yeah, France is better. But that's not to say that Italy isn't also great. Italy, Spain are probably on approximately the same level. And then France is just incredibly high. You can't compare it to France because France is just the most campervan-friendly place I think we've ever been. But Italy, it's still very good. And if you know where to look, again, pretty much it's just the app and the website that we mentioned, that would be enough for you to not need to plan and just do those. You can just... day by day work out where you're going just using those two resources. And that for us is a sign of a great country to be in in a van.

Tania

You don't get the decision fatigue or having to plan in ahead because as Adam mentioned, it could be 3PM and you don't know where you're sleeping that night, you just open up this app and you can see where you are on the map and where there are places that are safe and with good reviews that you can stay in and you can select, do I want a paid campsite? Do I want somewhere for free? Are these the facilities that I need? And it's just so easy. So it's really taking the best of the technology and just making your Italian road trip a breeze.

Katy

That sounds amazing. I think as well, the thing that really attracts me to what you're telling us about is really those local experiences and being able to access... like go to someone's vineyard, honestly, if you haven't seen the sunset over a vineyard in any part of Italy, to be honest, but particularly Tuscany, it's got some special glow that must come from the minerals in the soil or something like that. I don't know how they do it, but it does look magical. And

have your beautiful glass of wine from the local wine shop or the grower. I mean, this can't get better than that, really, can it?

Adam

Yeah, it's magic.

Katy

Is there anything else that you wanted to share with the listeners about Campervaning Italy? It sounds too good to be true.

Adam

Yeah, I mean, it is amazing. I would say that we spent more of our time in the north of Italy than we did in the south. And I think as you go further south, the infrastructure isn't as strong there. It isn't as good. And it wasn't our choice. We would have spent a lot longer in the South and we'd have a lot more to say about it, I'm sure. But by the time we got there, because we spent so long in the North, we had to turn around and drive home. But yeah, one thing I would also say, and this is not specific to Van Life at all, but the people are just so friendly everywhere. And I think I've heard a stereotype that the people in the South are friendly and the people in the North can be a bit grumpy. That's not our experience at all. We've had such good experience with people all across Italy. And yeah, that's nothing to do with Van Life. It's just an observation that we had.

Katy

Well, I think you two are very friendly people anyway, so that really goes down. I think if you go in there with the right attitude, you're going to get a lot of love back anyway.

Tania

The other thing that helped us make friends along the way was that we were traveling with my family dog, a little one-eyed Yorkie that is called Trigger. He's been around. He's somewhere between 12 and 14. He's a rescue. My mom and I, we adopted him back in Dublin in Ireland a decade ago. Because he's getting on and we miss him since I've been doing lots of traveling (he usually lives with my mom in Dublin) we decided to take him on this Italian road trip. And it was the first time that he got to go on these hikes with us and I mention him because the Italians love dogs. Love with a capital **love**. They love dogs.

Katy

Carissima!

Tania

Piccolino.

Adam

Piccolino, that's what he got.

Tania

Piccolino. So he when would be with us, everyone would stop. Italy is an incredibly dog-friendly country. So we were allowed to bring Trigger into museums, even churches.

Adam

Lidls.

Tania

I mean, you can go in your supermarket, no problem. Cafe, restaurants, no question about it.

Adam

Everyone invited him in. There were more happy to have him there than us.

Katy

That's what happens when you have kids as well, just, so you know.

Tania

Yes, exactly. So we had, again, that just amplified the kindness and the warmth of the Italian people and our experience there. So that is another thing to bear in mind.

Katy

I'm sure he got completely spoiled and lots of pats and cuddles and all of those things. And I'm sure it opened up lots of conversations for you as well that you probably wouldn't have had otherwise. That's a really interesting thing. I have actually had people ask me, can they take their dog to Italy? And I just didn't know. So thanks for sharing that.

Tania

When we were in Positano, I went out and I went on a solo walk with Triggy, just the two of us. I did meet a couple from the US that had brought their small little dog with them. So I know that it is absolutely possible for you to fly to Europe with your dog, go to Italy, and they're a family member - so bring them along.

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Katy

I know Danielle, who's a regular on here, she takes her dog Lenu over to that part of the world. And I think Lenu has a very nice time exploring the coastline over there. Maybe it was Lenu that you met, who knows?

Tania

Maybe. Lenu on holiday.

Katy

Are you planning any trips back to Italy in the future, or you're continuing around the world for now?

Adam

There's nothing in the pipeline, but we know that we will be back. It's one of our favorite countries for good reason.

Tania

And in actual fact, we have been seriously considering buying a homestead in Italy, a renovation project, something that we can really learn DIY because we know nothing but we love the idea of it and we love the idea of growing our own vegetables and incorporating our lives into the locals and all of it. When we were in the Abruzzo area, we actually viewed a couple of properties just to start getting our head into it. While there's nothing in the diary exactly when, we know that between Italy and Portugal, we want to really research where we would want to call home. And we love Italy for all the reasons that you do and all the reasons that your listeners do. And once you're there, you just can't get it out of your head and your heart.

Katy

No, you really can't. Oh, goodness. That sounds like such a great adventure that you're going on. Listeners, I'm actually talking to Tania and Adam from Nepal, which is a whole another world away from Italy and from Australia as well. So, Tania and Adam, can you remind our listeners how they can stay in touch with you and learn more about your work on [jitsintothesunset](#)?

Tania

Yeah, absolutely. We have our YouTube channel where we post our travel films there from our time in Italy. We have four or five videos on a playlist there, so you can indulge in everything that we have just described. We'll take you along on that visual journey. And also videos from all over our travels. We're also on Instagram and on Facebook. If you search [jitsintothesunset](#),

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our website, it's jitsintothesunset.com. And we are also podcast hosts of the Adventure Mindset podcast, where we interview people that love to travel, to do road trips, and also take on adventures. So the Adventure Mindset podcast, wherever you get your podcasts.

Adam

If that was all a lot to take in, just go to jitsintothesunset.com and everything will be linked there.

Tania

Adam's always better.

Katy

We'll always put a link into the show notes as well. But what I want to say to everyone, I haven't really voiced this opinion publicly. I have to people privately, but I do think there's not a lot of great information on YouTube online, but go and check out [jitsintothesunset](https://jitsintothesunset.com) - because they're taking a very different approach to the way they do videos. It's more of a deep exploration of culture and the destinations that they visit, which I think - instead of those click baity top five things to do wherever, I think if we're going to be appreciating a place in a more deep way, then that's the kind of video that I look forward to anyway.

Adam

Thank you so much for that. That's very kind words.

Tania

Yeah. Thank you so much for having us. And thank you to your listeners for... They've made it all the way to the end. It's honestly such a pleasure, such a privilege. We're just absolutely... My cheeks are hurting from this conversation.

Adam

Yeah mine are.

Tania

Thank you so, so much. We're so glad to have had this conversation and thank you for welcoming us and introducing us and introducing us to your community.

Katy

Ah, thank you so much. And keep going with all the inspiration and the practical tips. And I just loved hearing about your story, exploring Italy and with your little pup in tow. How lovely. Grazie!

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Tania

Thank you.

Adam

Thank you.

Katy

I've done a bit of research and it is getting much easier to rent a van in Italy - mostly from Rome or Milan airports. I had most success with AutoEurope who have quite a few different types of vehicles you can rent to head off into the sunset and up onto an alpine peak just like Tania and Adam.

I think if you crave some spontaneity and are looking to hit the road in Italy then this would be such a fun way to travel. I really appreciate Tania and Adam sharing all their tips and insights into van life Italian style. If you'd like to check out the places they mentioned head on over to the episode show notes at untolditaly.com/174 for episode 174.

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 delving deep into some of the most frequently asked questions about travel to Italy in a quick-fire round with travel expert Danielle Oteri from Feast Travel.

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