

Untold Italy Episode 185 - Venetian Cicchetti - A food lovers guide

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 185.

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

Katy

Ciao friends, welcome back to Untold Italy - our podcast that aims to help you build your dream trip with inspiration and insight into traveling the country from its mountainous top to the toe of its boot.

On this episode, you're in for a real treat as we have my friend Monica Cesarato who I have just named the Cicchetti Queen - here to tell you all about the famous small bites and food scene in Venice. Monica and I spent a day together earlier this year and I don't think I've laughed so much in my life. We explored Venice together and dipped in and out of classic sights and bars just enjoying the magic that is this incredible unique city built on water

You will not find a stronger or more passionate advocate for Venice and preserving its unique history and culture. And it's Monica who I turn to if I ever need reminding just how special Venice is. Or should I say, I point people in her direction who maybe think Venice is just a tourist trap these days. Spend a day with Monica and you'll put that thought to rest immediately!

So let's welcome Monica - Venetian food expert, podcaster, tour host, author, and general tour de force onto the show.

Katy

Bentornato Monica, welcome back to the Untold Italy podcast.

Monica

Thank you so much. So nice to be back and so nice to see you after a while, after the days we spent together and stuff.

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Katy

Oh, my gosh. It was so much fun. For everyone listening - Monica and I had a really beautiful reunion earlier this year and we just did not stop laughing.

Monica

As they say, it started with a coffee, it ended up with a huge meal in the evening. That was a long day, but probably one of my best days ever. I loved it. It was so perfect. It was a perfect day in Venice, I think. I thought it.

Katy

Was so fun because we had this boat ride and Monica was just waving at everyone and they knew her. I thought I was with a celebrity. With a star.

Monica

I loved it because every time my time was coming up and I was getting, Oh, what are you doing now? Well, I'm not doing nothing. Oh, should we do this then? And as I say, starting with a 10 o'clock morning coffee. I think when I went home it was about midnights or something.

Katy

I know. It was like the best date ever, wasn't it?

Monica

The best unplanned the day because we didn't plan it at all. So it was good. I loved it. I love it. And the weather was perfect as well.

Katy

So good. And it was the end of March. So if you're thinking of going in March, we had a great time. Now, Monica, a lot has happened since you were last on this podcast in the middle of that silly pandemic, including you turning into a superstar on TV.

Monica

I love it.

Katy

Can you please reintroduce yourself to our listeners and let them know all about you, what you do, and what you've been up to? What's the Monica Plan?

Monica

I am Venetian food and travel blogger. I run a class and food tours in Venice, cooking classes and food tours in Venice. I am also a podcaster now. I got my own podcast dedicated just to Venice. I have written a book on Cicchetti as well. Oh, gosh, I do so many things. We talked about this last time. I thought, I ran out of hands of how many things I do. But now, let's say the mainly I eat and I talk about what I eat as well. So that's mainly what I do.

Katy

And she does it in such an amazing way. I don't want you to be shy about this, Monica, but you have been on a few very popular television shows lately. Can you tell everyone what they were?

Monica

Well, the biggest one was the last one that is with Eugene Levy on Apple TV, the Reluctant Traveler. I got to say that was probably one of the best experiences in my life. It's on Apple TV at the moment, so you can all watch it. I'm on the episode obviously dedicated to Venice. And it was a real pleasure because I got to take him around to eat Cicchetti, of course, and to talk about it. But also we went through the Jewish Getto, so we talked about that as well. And yeah, that was the biggest one. I did some others before, but this is the most important, I think, and the most recent as well.

Katy

I was so proud watching that. I just was like, That's our Monica. There she is. We know her. We know her.

Monica

I can't believe I got people. I got people recognize me on the street. That feels very weird because I got short hair and I'm not exactly noticeable. But I don't know why people says, Oh, you were on TV. I was like, Yeah, all right. Okay. Now I feel like, Oh, good. Okay. Now, wish I could get the money of course that goes with the fame. But that will come. That will come.

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Katy

We're working on it. We're working on it, Monica. I mean, really, you did such a great job. It wasn't just that you were there, it was that you did an amazing job. And I was so proud to know you and I was so happy about it. So, honest lady, everyone, Monica is a force to be reckoned with. And there's no better person to teach you all about the magic that is Cicchetti than the woman who literally wrote the book on these tasty snacks. And she's written it in both Italian and it's coming out in English very, very soon. Monica, some people might not know. I mean, I know this is shocking, but they might not know what Cicchetti are. So can you let everyone in onto a little bit of a secret or not? It's not the secret, but... It's not anymore. Used to be a secret, but.

Monica

It used to be a secret. When I started in 2008, practically nobody knew what Cicchetti were. I remember when people used to book my food tour and I used to explain it's not just a food tour, it's about Cicchetti. They will go like, what? People take a shortcut, say they are like the tapas. They're not like tapas. Cicchetti are a way of life in Venice. It's the way you do aperitivo. It's the way you just sample Venetian cooking. The word Cicchetti comes from Latin that means 'little'. And the history goes back to a long, long time ago. Probably the same time as tapas because let's remember that Venice in Spain had a strong link. But they're not the same.

Monica

I need to start from the beginning, really. The first thing that you know when you go around doing Cicchetti is that... Forget about spritz. Everybody has a spritz. Forget about the spritz. What you need to have is an ombra, that is a small glass of wine, okay? Possibly, like the one that I got you to try when you were with me, that is a nice Venetian wine. Possibly, when you go around drinking the ombra, always ask for local wine, the Venetian wines, because Veneto wines are amazing anyway.

Monica

Our ombra is a small glass of wine that is typical of Venice. Now, there are a lot of legends out there. They're fake news on the internet. So the main legend that is not true says that the Venetian called the ombra because they used to be sold underneath the Church tower. The wine was sold underneath the Church tower and to keep the wine cool, they used to move the

stalls with the shade of a church tower. So they used to say, Let's go and drink in the shade. As the years went by, it became, "andiamo a bere all'ombra" - "let's go and drink in the shade". That's not true. That is just a legend.

Monica

But if you want to know the true story, you need to buy the book. No, I'll tell you the true story, but then you can find it in the book as well. So literally not very far away in history, only about 200 years ago... Well, for Venice, 200 years is good. It's very recent, let's say. There used to be a local professor in Venice that used to, let's say, was very well-loved by the Osteria of the city for obvious reasons. He used to like going around quite often. He defined a small glass of wine because it's a very tiny small glass of wine. He used to define it as 'un ombra di niente', a shade of nothing because it is one-eighth of a liter. From then on, in his honor, all of the Osteria of the city start to use it as a unit of measurement.

Monica

When you order an ombra, you should always have a Cicchetto. Now, remember, the Cicchetti of 20 years ago are not the Cicchetti of today. If you came with me 20 years ago, you would have had brain, liver, tongue, spleen, tripe, and you name it. Now you don't. You get cod, you get sardines, you get octopus, you get all of the fish, mainly produce of the city. And they're just, let's say, different. Many recipes are in the book. So you know, major propaganda for the book since it's coming out in August. And that's it.

Monica

So it was very typical for Venetians to go back in the past. Why did they used to go and drink an ombra and a Cicchetto? Simple. Because in Venice, we had a problem that we had, because we don't have a problem anymore, that there wasn't any fresh water in the city because it's a city built on stilts in the middle of a salty lagoon. We didn't have any springs, any rivers, and so on. Venetians had to find ways to gather fresh water into the cities and there are two ways. They had large barges going to the mouth of the rivers every day called Bùrcio, they used to bring back fresh water into the city. And then they had ladies and gentlemen delivering the water door to door until the early 1900s. And then they had these large wells that are massive systems under the and ground in the camp, the main squares of Venice. They were filled with clay and sand and the water filtered through the clay and sand and collected in a cylinder that went down from the base of the beautiful constructions that you usually see outside.

Monica

Now, the problem with those of the system and the barges was then you just needed one dead rat and you got contaminated water. Venetians had to find a way not to drink contaminated water because plague was a very big problem back in the days. What did they do? Simple. They did well. Everything everybody else before them did. Every time they drank water, they mixed it with wine because that killed the bacteria.

Monica

But that would have meant a lot of drunken people around Venice. So what did they do? Simple. They made sure to add a small bite to eat every time they drank, so they wouldn't get too tipsy, let's say. Because remember, this was done by everybody, all social classes, all genders, all ages, including children. Okay, so it would have been a bit hard. We would have had a lot of leaning tower of Pisas in - Venetian tower of Pisa in Venice.

Katy

Few splashes in the canal.

Monica

Yeah.

Katy

Definitely. I mean, it's such a great story. And the thing is that it's so unique to Venice. It does look a little bit like tapas, maybe, but it's totally different flavors and it's a totally immersive experience.

Monica

They're much smaller size. Originally... Now you see a lot of bread with toppings. Originally, it wouldn't be like that. It would have been an egg with an anchovy. It would have been a bit of polenta with some cheese. It would have been a side dish of beans and onions. It would have been totally different now. As I said, I did make sure on the book to put both brand new recipes but also the traditional old ones from 50, 100 years ago. They're both fair because I wanted to preserve things. And it's some of the year, you still find them. You do still find them, so it's nice.

Katy

Are there any particular ones you prefer? Which are your favorites?

Monica

My favorite, well, definitely Bacala Mantecato that I think is everybody's Venetian favorite that is made with dried cod, not salt cod, but it's creamed dried cod. And I would say the octopus in tomato sauce. Those are definitely my favorite. And those are two of those that I usually get everybody to try. Even though people look at it a bit funny. And usually, I would say nine out of 10 people enjoy them. You always get the odd one.

Katy

Can't please everyone.

Monica

Exactly. And you cannot like, I don't like everything. So it's not that... I don't take it personally. I don't get offended when it happens.

Katy

Yeah. I mean, I love the bacala. It's so delicious. It's so creamy. I think it's hard to explain unless you try it because it's really whipped.

Monica

Isn't it? Yeah, it's whipped with oil and garlic. That's it. But it looks like a mousse. It looks like there is cream and stuff, but there isn't. I would say the consistency is like tuna mayonnaise, the consistency. But the flavor, I would say it depends on the quality of the bacala that they use and how good the person who makes it as well. But I would say it's creamier than that and a bit fatter than that maybe in flavor. But it's unique. And it's like Marmite. You either like it or you don't like it. Simple as that. It's very - it is not, I don't think there is halfway. And I recommend it to take it with polenta because the polenta tones down the strong flavor of the fish. So it's perfect. It balances out the dish.

Katy

Just in case people don't know what polenta is, can you let them know?

Monica

It's corn flour. Since when corn arrived in the Veneto, thanks to the Spanish in over in Italy and so on, we actually call polentoni, big eaters of polenta. It's just corn flour and you have in many ways. You go to boil it, of course, and it becomes like a porridge consistency first. Then you can let it cool down and it becomes hard and then you can really fry it or just it is soft when it comes out. Oh, it's delicious.

Katy

Yeah. Sometimes they put cheese in it.

Monica

It's like grits. It's exactly like grits, but without the grits in it, if you know what I'm saying.

Katy

Yeah. I always like it. If it's got some Parmigiano.

Monica

And mix it inside, or with mushrooms inside, like they're making in Valle d'Aosta or Piemonte, Oh, la la. Oh, la la, yeah.

Katy

But I love all these little different riffs. Everyone's got their little take on how to do these bacala and how they can make it tastier and put their own spin on it. It's so good. And each of the Osteria, they all love to have their own specialties, don't they? And show them off.

Monica

I think is the greatest thing about the Cicchetti is that, yes, there are basic recipes, of course, but as you were saying, everybody gets his own twist in a way, and they're never the same. You can literally go to 10 osteria one after another. You will not eat the same stuff. They're all totally different. And I think it's a great way to do Venice without getting too full and reserve your meal for the evening. So just go to get it during the day, hopping, bar hopping in a way, not getting too drunk, not getting too tired. That's like the Venetians used

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to do it. It was one way not to get drowsy, to get the digestion going, but you carry on working. So it was a good way to do it. Good way to do pub crawling.

Katy

How much are they each? Because literally, you can hold them in your hand usually, can't you?

Monica

So the prices have gone up, unfortunately, after COVID, because everything's gone up. I think now is an average of about two euros each. And they're not that small. I see when I go around with friends, not with clients, because with clients, I tend to get them stuffed as much as I can. But when we go around with friends, if we have 3 of them and a drink or a couple of drinks, we usually, as we call it, it's Tappabuchi. Fare fondo. It creates a base for all the alcohol that you're going to put on top in your stomach. That's how we call it. That's how it's called.

Katy

Then how much would if you went out with your friends, it would be for the two drinks and three Cicchetti?

Monica

10 euros. We have a couple of Cicchetti and a drink and maximum 10 euros, we do it. Then obviously, we proceed. Then it depends. If you are with me, it might be even less than 10. It depends on what mood the bartenders are, who I meet. Well, you know me.

Katy

Yeah I do.

Monica

You've been with me, so you know.

Katy

I've been with you. I think it's the thing is people have this misconception about Venice is really expensive. This is the budget way. If you want to, you can have these little picnics everywhere.

Monica

Venice... Well, they don't have picnics because you're not actually sitting down. They're not sitting on the floor. Don't do that. Please, please. We're against picnics in Venice. You know that.

Katy

Sorry, my bad.

Monica

No. Venice can be as expensive or as cheap as you want it to be. I recommend this. Save a proper meal for the evening and there are restaurants of different budgets. You do not need to go exactly every night to a fine dining restaurant. There are normal restaurants. Yes, Venice, it is more expensive than other cities. I don't deny this. But then again, the basic cost of running a business is much higher in Venice because everything must come by water. The cost of rentals of the locations is double than anywhere else in Italy because of the locations of historic buildings and so on. So put that in mind when a restaurant opens, he has to keep this cost into consideration on top of the staff. So top obviously, it will cost you, I would say, 30 % more probably to eat in Venice than other cities or other places, even just outside of Venice. But at the same time, you can eat properly. You can have a good meal for about €40, no problem. Obviously, you start piling up the wine, the price goes up. But let's say you can have a decent meal for about 40 euros a person, but it's not that much.

Monica

Because consider I went to America and with \$40 we didn't even get a drink. Alcohol, it was the end - the food wasn't exactly... I mean, it was good, but if you wanted to eat well, you got to spend a little bit more. So 40 euros for Venice is not so bad. I would say. You can spend even less. But as I say, if you do it while you move from Cicchetti to Cicchetti to Cicchetti, then you don't get so hungry and you can budget as well better.

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Katy

It's true. When you're just spending 10 euros here and 10 euros there, you forget.

Monica

Exactly. And you're happy with the economy and you're spreading the money to the economy because you're spreading.

Katy

Spreading the love.

Monica

You give it to the community. You give it to the community.

Katy

I love it. Now, Monica, I know you have so many places in your book which you recommend, but is there a couple that you can let our audience in on that you would like to tell them?

Monica

Yes. I give those that I don't usually take people because they're out of my itinerary. So if they want those, then my itinerary, they need to come with me. Now, the two very good ones, they are out of my itinerary. So I'm very happy to share them because I found them the very traditional. So first of all, one in Castello, but nobody ever goes to the sestieri Castello, unless they go to the Biennale. Otherwise, it's a very residential part of Venice that I think is beautiful. The Venetians out there are going to hate me because I'm promoting it, but I like for people to spread in the cities rather than concentrated in San Mark. In Castello, there is an Osteria that is called Osteria a la Scuola, that when you walk in, it's like walking into the 60s. The people look like from the 60s, the location looks like from the 60s, the vibe is from the 60s and the food is from the 60s. They have a cicchetti like it used to be. It's full of Venetians. You do see every so often the other tourists, but mainly only locals and the food is amazing.

Monica

Oh, my God. If somebody says to me, Oh, Monica, do you want to go to Castello? Yeah, that's my first stop. I always take people there and they do amazing stuff tomatoes, gratin stuffed tomatoes. They are amazing. Very good. And the wines are good too. And then another one is actually near Rialto. So everybody keeps saying that... I'm the first one to tell you, but near Rialto, you get a lot of tourist traps, above all, along the embankment, the main Fondamenta. But as one of the turnings, there is a place called Osteria Il Diavolo E L'acqua Santa. And that's where you get the best tripe ever. The gondoliers are going to have dinner there and lunch, so you know. And the Cicchetti are fantastic. But they don't do just Cicchetti, they do also proper food. And you can definitely eat cheap there. The best tripe that I have had in my life, nearly as good as my mum's one.

Katy

That's a big statement, Monica

Monica

From me - saying that it's nearly as good as my mum, I consider my mom is one of the best cooks I've ever met in my life. She should write a book. I always say she should write a book. My mum doesn't tell me how to make recipe. My mum shows me. When you ask her, How much do I need to put? Yeah, that much. She shows you and - like that. Every time she does that, i should be there with a scale and measure how much that means.

Katy

They just know.

Monica

I told her the other day, I said, Mum, we really should start writing down your recipe. She says, "I'm never going to give you my recipes!" My grandma did that. My grandma did that - she has an amazing recipe for a liquor that she used to make with walnut leaves, lemon zest, lots of grappa and then raisins. But when she had a secret ingredient and she never took it, told anybody what it was. So the recipe died with her. So we are all very upset about it.

Katy

That's not good.

Monica

Nonna!

Katy

Nonna. Nonna. Now, if our listeners are wanting to go around on their own to do some Cicchetti bar hopping around the Osteria and the Bacaro in Venice, do these places take card or is it cash only?

Monica

So it used to be cash only, but since Covid now everybody takes a card, not American Express. But all the other cards generally they do. Now they do. Because of Covid, this was introduced in Italy after Covid, so everybody they used to take only cash now are forced to take cards as well. So yeah, you'll be okay.

Katy

Okay. And do you ever have to line up to get in or is it something?

Monica

It depends on the place. It depends on the places. Some places and the time you go. Obviously, if you go aperitivo time, that's about 6ish - yeah, you'll definitely queue because... And Saturday and Sundays, Friday, Saturday and Sundays, because it's Saturday and Sunday Saturday, Saturday and Sunday, because obviously, all the locals go to. And lunchtime now as well. But if you go off times and you usually don't, and even if you do, you usually wait 10, 15 minutes. Because people, they usually go have a, many people stand up. So you have an umbrella, you have a couple of talk with your friends or a spritz, whatever, and then you walk away. So I always give about 15, 20 minutes. You do queue.

Monica

There are the busy ones where you queue for an hour. So it depends. And usually, if you're so busy, just walk away, go somewhere else. There's tons. Just in my book, I put 30 Osteria and there's double that, if not three times that. So plenty.

Katy

You'll find something, it'll be good. And it's honestly not just food, it's part of the cultural experience. It's part of being in Venice. And it's something that you should definitely make time to do because it's very special. And you do feel like you're in another world. You're standing in these ancient buildings. You've got your little glass of wine and in your hand delicious from the local countryside. And you've got these beautiful tastes you're munching into. And you can't be at home because they don't make them at home. Even though sometimes they try.

Monica

I don't think it's not only about eating and drinking with Cicchetti. It's about the social experience. I was talking to a client - they said to me, in America, for example, in America, they cannot do that. They cannot just sit there and watch outside with a drink. Now they started because of the pandemic, but before that they didn't. So there wasn't this idea of just sitting with a friend having a drink talking while watching the people go by. Just to give you an idea, the other day I did another day like I did with you with another Italian friend. By the way, she's a local, so she knew what we were doing, but she loved it. So we started by going first to Palazzo Grimani, that is one of the most beautiful museums in Venice that nobody goes to. And literally, it was just me and her. And I can't believe I had a museum for myself. I did so many lives and videos and photos, whatever. Then we went to an art exhibition because at the moment we go the Architecture Biennale. So we went to one of the free exhibitions there.

Monica

And then we decide to go for some Cicchetti. And that's what we did. We just sat there for about an hour and a half talking to my friend the barman, then talking to the customers coming in. But then it was very hot. It's three o'clock in the afternoon. It's 40 degrees in Venice. What do you do? I look at her and I said, "Should we just do some people-watching?" So we just went in Campo Santo Stefano, to Terrazza Aperol sat for three and a half hours, wined and dined by the staff because of course, they all know me. So they keep saying to me, Oh, do you want to try this new drink? Do you want to try this new drink? So by the time seven o'clock came, I was like, totally done. More or less because it was hot as well. But it was beautiful. I was talking to her and she was saying to me as well, She doesn't get to do it. She's working all the time.

Monica

I think that's the great thing about Venice that is different from the other city. But you're sitting down, you don't have cars passing by, so you don't have a pollution and smog. Life is so much slower. So three hours sitting down in a bar sounds a lot, but it literally flew. It just went by. I think that's one way to really enjoy Venice, to do Venice slow. Sometimes it's not about piling up. I need to do this. I need to do that. I need to do that. It's also just sit down and relax. I don't know if you agree or not, but you did it with me.

Katy

I do. I really just love Venice. It upsets me when people say they didn't enjoy it. I wonder what they did. I'm like, What did you do? Because for me, it's just that whole relaxing moment and finding a little secret passageway. I tell you, I've been saying this a lot just on repeat, actually. Turn off the GPS, please, because I was saying to you, Oh, my goodness, everyone's got the same way they're going because of Google Maps. Then Monica came along and she was like, No, we're going this way. And off we were. We were weaving in and out of the little laneways. We were we got there in half the time because they can't get the big Google Maps car down through those places anyway. So it's probably someone wearing a hat or something.

Monica

I don't know. Google Maps dies anyway through those small alleyways because the buildings are so tall. But it is what we call in Venetian, we call them Sconte, the hidden ones. And just the Venetians usually use them or the people that actually move to Venice and start to get to know them. And they are.

Monica

I did the same with a friend of mine during Carnevale. At one stage we got stuck because at Carnevale, of course, the numbers are massive. We were trying to go back to Saint Marks Square. Unfortunately, we had to. We didn't want particularly to do it, but we had to. We got to a certain point, it was like a funnel. Everybody went like there and all of a sudden you couldn't go through. I looked at him, I said, Do you trust me? He looked at me, he says, "Okay. I don't really know where I'm going", but I know where I'm going as in I know where I want to go. And I know that more or less cutting through here, through here, through here, probably it will be quicker. And we did. Even though I didn't know where I was going, but I had in my mind the idea where I wanted to end up.

Monica

So if you get the logistics of Venice and you understand the North, South, East and West, you can avoid going through the main roads. But I do understand that for many people that grew up in cities where everything is like a grid, I get it. It is literally... They go into a panic. I totally understand it because I get told many times by people. Generally, it's Americans. Generally, it's Americans. Europeans, not so much because in Europe, we are used to cities that just were born like mushrooms.

Katy

Higgledy Piggeldy

Monica

Well, you just built as you went along. You just built where there was the space to build. It wasn't planned. People like Napoleon knocked everything down and planned. But before Napoleon, you just built as you went along. So I think the ideas that you have... Australia is a bit like that as well. It's very grid-like, isn't it? Because obviously, you came later. So the country is where cities were built much later, I understand it. I find it very disconcerting when I went to America. I couldn't find my bearings. Everything was too straight and all the same. It all looked the same. I was here before. Oh, no, we weren't. It was like... I couldn't get my bearings right. My point of reference is where I'm at because they all looked the same.

Katy

Well, I do know that you do have some very good points of reference. After you finish your Cicchetti, if you go with Monica, she knows the best chocolate shops in the world. She really does.

Monica

I can tell you where to go. It's called Vizio Virtù. Because I'm more than happy to... It's the best artisan shops in Venice.

Katy

So yeah, definitely. You were like a homing pigeon.

Monica

Yeah, I forgot we did that. I always forget about that little bit. Okay, sorry. It's the best chocolate place in the city. I do my chocolate tasting there with my tours as well. Because I do also cake and chocolate tours and coffee and chocolate tours. It's food and food and food. I mean, if I need to invent something, some other type of food, I will be there. Don't worry about it.

Katy

I'm sure you will be. Okay, everyone, are you ready to munch your way around Venice now? I really hope so. But just to make sure Monica can you please let everyone know how they can stay in touch with you, how they can buy your new book and follow you on social media and listen to your podcast?

Monica

Okay. My website is my name, so it's fairly easy - www.monicacesarato.com. The podcast is very easy too. It's called Venice Talks and is available on all major podcast platforms. It's where I talk about Venice 360 degrees. I get to interview writers, artisans, museums, journalists, you name it, I'm trying to expose Venice at all levels. So all the people that work or live in Venice get to talk in the podcast. I'm going to go out pretty soon with my 40th episode, so I'm very happy because I've been podcasting for one year, so it's one-year celebration.

Katy

Congratulations.

Monica

The book is called *Andar per Bacari*. I'm going to keep the same name in English because it just didn't make any sense to translate it. It will be available on Amazon from August, or you can find it on my website. There will be a link. On my social media is always me, Monica Cesarato, both on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, you name it, you find me.

Katy

I'm going to ask you to say Monica Cesarato. I'm going to ask you to spell it.

Monica

Oh, yes. Okay, I need to spell it. I forget. Okay, so it's C, E, S, A, R, A, T, O. It's like Caesar with 'arato' at the end so Cesarato.

Katy

Yeah, as dominant as Caesar when it comes to the Venetian food scene, that is our Monica, and she's everywhere. Venice Talks is a podcast in English.

Monica

Oh, yes, it is.

Katy

You can get your fill of Venice every week.

Monica

I'm lagging off at the moment because it's summer and it's a bit hard to find people available. But hopefully, with the cold season coming back on, I get back into once a week.

Katy

You got a batch run them. That's what I do. Everyone, a little podcasting secret is sometimes we record a lot of episodes in one week.

Monica

No, I used to do that. My problem is I'm running out of people that want to do the interviews because I keep telling them that people love listening to Italian accents. But Italians have a problem. You probably know this. Italian, there is a word we call Bella Figura. It means that you always want to look at your best. If an Italian thinks that he's not going to look at his best, he's not going to do the thing. At the moment, I run out of people that speak very good English and those that speak good English, but in their opinion is not good enough, they don't want to do it because they think I'm not good enough. And I'm thinking - that's what people love about it is because I'm really interviewing Italians, the locals.

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Katy

Yeah, Monica, I'm so glad you brought that up. I think if anyone wants to help Monica and I out with guests that are native Italian speakers, please reach out to us because if you've been listening to my podcast for a while, it's really a passion of mine for Untold Italy that we do feature Italians talking about Italy because a lot of the time the commentary can be from people from overseas. And that's great to have different perspectives, not just Australian, American, or Canadian. But it's so, so important to have that Italian perspective because after all, it's their country and they know it best and we can only learn from them, really. That's my view anyway. Monica, thank you so much for joining us on Untold Italy. Again, it's such a joy to always speak to you. And I always live with a big smile on my face that stays there for days and days. And I'm so glad we reconnected in Venice. And I'll be back next year for another go.

Monica

I'm back. I'm back. I'm back. I'm back.

Katy

Oh, yes. Absolutely. I can't wait. Oh, my goodness. And listen, you take care and we'll put Monica's details into the show notes, everyone. So you will be able to make contact with her and you can book a tour with her. It's absolutely one of the best things that you'll ever, ever, ever do in Venice, I guarantee it. So, Grazie Mille, Monica. It's just an absolute pleasure to have you on the show.

Monica

Thank you for having me. It's always a pleasure talking to you. And I can't wait to see you when you come back. Ciao

Katy

Ciao

Katy

I so hope you enjoyed hearing about cicchetti that amazing Venetian food tradition from the cicchetti queen herself- Monica Cesarato. I cannot imagine going to Venice without doing a cicchetti crawl and if you want the best in the business, make sure to look up Monica or if she's booked up (which is indeed possible) grab a copy of her book and go exploring on your own. And make sure you look out for her on the Venice episode of the Reluctant Traveler

series starring Eugene Levy. If you ask me, Monica steals the show. I was so thrilled to see her on there.

We've put all Monica's details including info on her podcast, books, tours and all the things into our show notes on our website at untolditaly.com/185.

Thanks for your ongoing support of Untold Italy. We truly appreciate all of you, especially our Amici private podcast subscribers, and of course, all our listeners joining us from around the world. If you have a spare moment we would so appreciate it if you left us a 5-star rating and review on your favorite podcast app. That way we can reach more Italy-loving travelers just like you.

That's all for today, on next week's episode, next week we'll be back with another escape to beautiful Italy but until then it's "ciao for now".