

Untold Italy Episode 283: Vespa Sidecars, Rooftop Bars, and Medieval Towns - Katy's Italian Trip Highlights

What happens when you mix Roman rooftop bars, a fun Vespa sidecart tour, Medieval towns of your dreams and the Umbrian countryside? Join me as I recount my latest trip through Rome, Naples, Orvieto and Urbino, managing the heat wave, dodging traffic and finding peace and perfection in familiar places.

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 Clarke:

If you're dreaming of Italy and planning future adventures there, you've come to the right place, dreaming of arriving in Italy, strolling into a gelateria and ordering your gelato with confidence. If you've been learning Italian with language apps but still can't string a sentence together, it might be time to try another approach. My friend Michelle from Intrepid Italian offers a practical way to learn travel-ready Italian. Thanks to her unique 8020 method, Michelle teaches you exactly what you need to know to connect with locals and have more authentic travel experiences. There's no getting bogged down in awkward phrases and unnecessary grammar. As an adult learner herself with Italian heritage, Michelle really knows how to bridge the gap between English and Italian. As Roma from London said, the learning methodology is great. I progressed much faster in the last four weeks than I ever did on my own or using other language apps. To find out more and claim your free Italian travel phrase guide, visit untolditaly.com/italian or visit the link in the show notes. As a bonus, you'll also get an exclusive \$20 coupon code to use on any of Michelle's online self-paced courses. So visit untolditaly.com/forward/italian and accelerate your Italian language journey today. Ciao. Buongiorno friends.

Katy Clarke:

Welcome back to another episode of Untold Italy, where I deep dive into my latest trip and spill the tea on what I loved and learned on the ground in beautiful, magical Italia. It's important to me that I visit Italy often, even though I live in Australia, which makes it at least a 24-hour journey to get to Italy. And then I've got to come back again. Some might say that's not such a tough life and it's true. I'm so grateful for this charmed existence I am living, exploring Italy whenever I get a chance. And you know, apart from the fact that it is absolutely gorgeous and there's always something new to discover there are a few reasons why I like to go back regularly and of course, one of those is to see for myself what's

Untold Italy travel podcast transcript. [Visit our website](#) for show notes and all episodes

happening on the ground. I like to have the latest information so I can report back to all of you as you plan your trips. And while we do have an amazing team based in Rome and various spots around Italy, it's great to see things through my own eyes.

Katy Clarke:

And you know what? There's nothing more inspiring than being in Italy if you ask me. I get so many ideas, in fact, you often have to stop me with my ideas. Speaking of the team, it's also extremely important to me to stay in touch in person as well as online with our amazing team. So another big part of the trip was catching up with them plus our partners, some clients and podcast guests and gathering them all together to build those all-important bonds and connections that are the glue behind this podcast, our trip planning services, app and the small group tours. We threw a delightful party on a rooftop bar in Rome's Trastevere district and it was just a beautiful warm night and everyone was in such good spirits and laughing and having so much fun. In attendance from Untold Italy were our tour hosts and content team and a handful of our trip consultants. But best of all, and I really love this, we had a multi-generational gang there, babies, kids and parents of our team. It was a beautiful, summery night in Rome that I won't forget for a very long time.

Katy Clarke:

And after the celebrations, it was back to work and exploring. So work as I call it, and exploring some more. So here are some of the highlights and learnings from my recent trip to Italy. First up, you've heard this all over the news. Boy, it's hot over there. And I, you know, can't stress this enough. It's hot and you just need to be prepared. And I always think I am.

Katy Clarke:

And you know what? I wasn't this time. So much so, I did actually get a really great tip from my physiotherapist who was there shortly afterwards and she said really? Next time go grab some electrolytes, get some of like Gatorade or something into you because that'll really help stop, stop any swelling that you get because I have this thing where I do swell up a bit when it's hot. So definitely not just the water, but get some electrolytes into you if it's going to be very hot. So it was around maybe 35 degrees Celsius and that's about 100 Fahrenheit. So when you're walking around and doing, you know, your 20,000 steps a day, it's really important to keep yourself hydrated as best you can. The other thing is, and you know what I'm really terrible at this, is to stop and rest. I mean, I was there for work, so it's a bit different than if you're on holidays. But I think I could have done a better job of resting a little bit more.

Katy Clarke:

But it's kind of not what I'm known for, so it would be a big change in personality for me to stop and rest a lot. Again, shoes, as I've always known, are absolutely critical. I only buy shoes from one brand now, actually, and they're called Beard. They are an Australian brand, and they're all very comfortable and designed by, you know, foot specialists. So I've never actually got a blister from one of those shoes. And they were quite stylish, too. I'm not sure if they ship overseas, but if they do, they're fantastic.

Katy Clarke:

They're called Baird.com and they're really, really great. I'm not advertising anything. I just happen to simply buy all my shoes there now. What I was a bit surprised at, and maybe this does have a little bit to do with the heat, was that the Centro Storico, or this historic center was not as busy as I thought it would be. And since then, I've learned - I've had some stats that the visitor numbers from the United States are down slightly on last year. Maybe it's the heat, maybe I don't know everything else that's going on, but, you know, I didn't feel like it was as busy as I've seen it in more recent times. So it was quite nice, even though it was hot and sunny, to walk around some of the major sites and just soak everything up. We had a really lovely morning doing that, getting some nice footage for our social media - that was fun.

Katy Clarke:

And we also did a lovely wander through Trastevere, where I always stay. And the reason I stay there is because I can walk to the house of some of my team. So they all live kind of not in Trastevere, but they live, you know, close by. So I can go to their place and then I can walk into the center and do all the things I need to do there. So it's a really handy place for me to stay. And I think if you like a more kind of neighborhood feel, then Trastevere is definitely a place that you would probably like, too. It is very vibrant at nighttime.

Katy Clarke:

And so if you're not really into, you know, a busy nightlife, then maybe it's not the area for you. But for me, it's fun and I like to stay there. Popular restaurants like Tonarella were absolutely heaving lines out the door. But you know what? I just don't line for anything, to be honest, these days. I'm way too old for that. But you still find a lot of magic in that area. And little restaurants, local restaurants that make delicious food. I was able to catch up with some people and find some really lovely places that I would go to again.

Katy Clarke:

Unfortunately, I can't. Well, I'm not going to share them because unfortunately, what's happened with my favorite restaurants is I'm no longer able to get a booking there. And, you know, I'm keeping something a little bit special for myself. We share a lot on this podcast, so you'll excuse me that one, I hope. Now, one of the fun things that we did, and this was thanks to our amazing partner, LivTours, who we've been working with for a long time now. And the reason we like working with LivTours is because not only do they give an amazing tour experience, but they are genuinely really lovely people. They're a local business.

Katy Clarke:

The owners that I know personally, Angelo and Kristin, they live in Rome and they are very creative and fun, and they have very similar values to we have here at Untold Italy. So we're always looking for ways to work with each other and support each other. And this time they enabled us to go on one of their new tours, which is a Vespa sidecar tour. Now, before, they used to partner with another organization, but now they've bought their own very, very cute little Vespas with side carts, and it honestly is the best fun ever. So our team did the Vespa

tour. Zipping around Rome and everyone's waving at you, you're having so much fun. And it is a really unique, you know, Roman holiday experience that I can highly recommend. I've done this tour at night time, but this time we did it during the day.

Katy Clarke:

And I have had a few of my Italian team, the people that live and were born in Italy on that tour. And I've never seen so many beautiful smiles from the team. Like, it's an experience that even if you've lived in Rome your whole life, that you can enjoy. So definitely go check that out. It is very safe. And if you're in a group of two, someone will sit on the back of the Vespa behind the driver and then someone will sit in the sidecar. So of course, we put all the young ones with long legs on the back of the vespas. And you know, some of us that are, you know, slightly more advanced in age did sit in the side cart and it was super comfortable and just lots of, of fun.

Katy Clarke:

And I think kids can go in it as long. I think they need to be eight, if I'm not mistaken. So it's something that everyone in the family can do and it really is a huge amount of fun. Now, Live Tours, thank you very much for that experience. That was excellent. And we'll put a link to that in the show notes because you definitely should check it out. The other thing we did with LivTours is they have a new cooking school that's in the district of Prati, which is near the Vatican Museums. Prati is, you know, quite an upscale neighborhood.

Katy Clarke:

It's a really nice place. They're getting some more hotels there and Airbnb apartment-style accommodation too. And it's a really, really nice, charming area to check out. They've also got a nice market there. But LivTours have a new cooking school there and we went there and we learned how to make suppli and pizza together with the host, who was a former MasterChef Italia contestant. So that was really fun. And if you don't know what suppli are, they are little rice balls like arancini. They're the Roman version of arancini and they're stuffed with cheese.

Katy Clarke:

So there's like with the tomato sauce and cheese stuffed inside. So we got out of the heat of the day and it's this beautiful air-conditioned kitchen and we learned from our chef how to make a simply pizza. It was really fun. I think sometimes people get maybe a little bit intimidated by cooking classes, but this one was, you know, really well done. We had instructions to follow and definitely can recreate what we learned again. And I've got some excellent tips because we actually do make a little bit of pizza at home. And for those of you who are interested in that, we have an ooni pizza oven. And I love my ooni.

Katy Clarke:

It's so good. It can cook the pizza, it gets up to a very high temperature and you can cook the pizzas really fast and it tastes really delicious. But if you don't have it in the oven, don't worry, she'll teach you how to make it in the actual oven. But I think it's always good to get different tips on how to make the dough, because the dough is everything in pizza. And I

think you have to refine your technique. You know, the first time, you know, you might be a bit disappointed, but it's try and try and try again. So we made the suppli and that was fun because, you know, you get your hands dirty and you make the soup li and you get this oozy mozzarella that comes out of it. So that was really nice.

Katy Clarke:

And then you make the pizza, and then you make a Nutella pizza. And who doesn't like Nutella? So that was some of the fun things that we did in Rome. One of my favorite things is as well was to go back to Villa Farnese, which is the beautiful villa down by the River Tiber, which is in Trastevere. Gorgeous Raphael frescoes, you know, and there's no one there. And you can just wander around this beautiful garden and villa and really enjoy the artwork. So this is for someone who gets a bit overwhelmed with big galleries. If you just want to go and dip in and see some art, I can highly recommend the Villa Farnese. It's beautiful.

Katy Clarke:

Now, because I'm a little crazy and I want to make sure we get absolute maximum value out of this trip to Italy - I did sort of hassle some of my team into doing a day trip down to Naples, and I wanted to do that was a couple of reasons, you know, first to go make sure that, you know, it really is doable as a day trip, which I think it is. And I have done that before, but I just wanted to do that again and double-check and see what was going on with the trains. And also, you know, people have mixed opinions about Naples. And, you know, I love it. I just love the vibe and the energy and all of that. But I wanted to make sure that, you know, I'm not getting the wrong end of the stick. And I have got the right impression, which every time you step off that train, you are, you're coming from Rome.

Katy Clarke:

And Rome has got its own energy. And you get to Naples and again, it's a different energy. And that's what I love, love, love about Italy. We did a day trip. We just headed over to Termini at about 9 o'clock in the morning. And here's one learning now, because we wanted to do some shooting of videos about how to use the trains. We thought we'd buy the tickets there and then, but I think in peak season, you do need to book those fast-speed trains in advance if you want to go in the morning. Or the late afternoon, either way, because everyone's got the same idea.

Katy Clarke:

And it was a Saturday, so I feel like some people, Italians, would have been traveling. So I'll talk a bit about what happened when we got back a little bit later. But I do suggest booking the trains. Look, it's. It's not fun - for those of you who are free and easy, but the reality is that things have changed in travel and some things just cannot be left to winging it. So make sure trains and things are booked. You know, you don't have to go too crazy, like six months or 12 months in advance, but at least a couple of weeks in advance. I'd highly recommend you booking the train.

Katy Clarke:

So when we got to Naples again, the energy just hits you straight away. And I just love it because it's completely different to Rome. There's just a different vibe. It's more local. And for those of you who are familiar with Asian cities, I would say, you know, it reminds me a little bit of Bangkok or a really busy Asian city with like just sights, sounds, smells, and everything going on all around you. This is maybe not everyone's cup of tea. So I was able to catch up with some of our tour guests later in the trip, and, you know, they found it all a bit overwhelming. So I probably wouldn't start with Naples. I'd probably have that later in the trip - if you're someone that really is going to, you know, find that really massive change in culture, something that's quite hard to deal with. But, I mean, I love it and it's great. And what we did in Naples was we hooked up with a guide from a company called With Locals. And what I really like about WithLocals is that WithLocals are a marketplace, or it's a listing site for local guides. So if you want to have a private tour with a local guide, then this is a really good option. And I've worked with them for a while, and I've had some excellent experiences with them.

Katy Clarke:

So how it works is you go to their website and they've got a, like a series of set itineraries that you can choose from, or you can customize your own and just say you wanted to do like a walking tour of Naples, then you go to Naples, you go to the walking tour that you want. And, you know, sometimes it's good just to have something to work from, because unless you're really familiar with or you really want to know about street art in Naples, then it's a good idea to be guided by them anyway. So you choose your itinerary and then you choose which local speaks to you. So they've got profiles of all, you know, the guides that they have that are available and, you know, it's fantastic. We had a great old time going around with Maria. It was just so lovely. She's got such a different perspective as do everyone. Everyone's got a different perspective of their city and how they live.

Katy Clarke:

And she was super interesting because she lived out by the US base out there and she lived her whole life out there. And her children were half American, half Italian and she had some really interesting insights into the way the world's working and all of those things. But she told us some really cool stories about the hospital there that her mum used to work at. It's not cool, actually, it's a little bit sad, but it was interesting. And basically it was a hospital where babies that were unwanted were cared for. And so she showed us the whole procedure of how they were check in and let's just say it wasn't very nurturing. So look, it was really interesting to go around with her. And we did walk the length of Spaccanapoli, which is the street that splits the city into two.

Katy Clarke:

And I've never done that before, so that was really great to do. And we stopped for bites, including the famous life-changing buffalo mozzarella cheese. And we dipped into the cathedral where, you know, there was this amazing installation going on and stopped at the Galleria and we had delicious pizza frita, which is the fried pizza, just go with it, it's

fantastic. And what was really fun this time in Naples is that they just won the league, the football soccer league. And so all the streets were festooned with decorations and people obviously celebrating the win. Another amazing thing about Naples is there's some really fun street art. So if you're someone that's into really a bit more of an edgy experience when you go abroad, then Naples is really, really fun. It's really raw and it's high energy, so be prepared.

Katy Clarke:

Back in a flash, right after these messages. We got down to the theatre at the end of our walk down Spaccanapoli and we were looking out at the bay across to Capri and you know, it's just such a contrast between Rome, Naples and then Capri. It's just this is why I love Italy. You get everything in one little pocket and it's absolutely gorgeous. So that was our fun day in Naples and it was super fun with, with locals and I'll again, I'll link to that in the show notes because they are a really great site to know about if you're looking for local guides. When we got back on the train, oh, it's busy. And so again, like, I always sound like a broken record, but please don't take big luggage. You just don't need to be dealing with it.

Katy Clarke:

It's just not, it's not fun. You will always manage, but it's about whether you're going to be comfortable managing or not. But anyway, so we got back to Rome at about, I would say about 5:30 pm and the train ride takes about 90 minutes. And then here's where the fun really began. Because there were no taxis, we needed to get over to Trastevere so you can walk it - it would have taken about 45 minutes, but we've been walking all day. It was super hot. I, we were tired, you know, I wanted to go to bed and there were no taxis. And we actually waited an hour in the taxi line until I had some other ideas. And during that time we were waiting, I was also trying to book taxis on FreeNow, which is like their Uber style app that they have in Rome. And then after waiting for so long and just being so tired and so exhausted, I think the jet lag had caught up with me. I decided to, you just go for the UberX and book the UberX. And it wasn't very cost-effective, let's just say. So for those of you who know Rome, it cost €80 to get to Trastevere from Termini. So just bear that in mind. I did do another trip that I came back into Termini later on the week after and it was fine.

Katy Clarke:

But just to know that that's, that's a potential problem if you're coming in on the train and you - if you're coming in maybe on the weekend and there's fewer taxis around, do kind of have a backup option. The thing is, taxis are very few and far between in Italy and especially Rome. There's like, I think there's a third of the number of taxis in Rome as there are in Paris. Similar-sized population. So it can be a little bit difficult to get a taxi at times. So just to be prepared. Anyway, that was those crazy days in Rome. So I was there, you know, we did a few things.

Katy Clarke:

I had to do some more work which, you know, it's, it's actually delightful because I get to work with some amazing people. But it was a pretty busy few days. And then one of the main reasons for the trip was that I wanted to join our Umbria tour. This tour was, you know, it's

been a long time in the making and we're so proud of this one. It's includes a visit to the Infiorata Flower Festival, and you're going to hear a little bit more about that next week, which is. It's a very special community event where locals get together and build floral carpets and they work overnight to do that. I'm not going to do any spoiler alerts here because I think the episode coming up next week might actually be one of my favorites of all time. So I'm pretty excited about that.

Katy Clarke:

But I really wanted to join this tour to say thank you to some of our repeat guests and, you know, to see how the tour was going. And the tour this time was led by our amazing Giulia, who is a very special person to me. She's been on the podcast a few times. And yes, at the party, Giulia's parents were there and I was just. It was just delightful to meet her dad again and meet her mum for the first time. I absolutely loved it. Okay, so the people that I wanted to do a shout out to and who I was meeting for the first time, Rebel, who you'll hear from next week, but also Carolyn and Rich, who have been the most amazing supporters of Untold Italy, really from the very beginning. And they were on their fifth tour with us.

Katy Clarke:

And so I felt like it was only right to go in and say hi and meet them again because I'd met them back in 2022 in Sicily when we did a tour there with my friend Karen LaRosa. It was very special to see them again and to say thank you for all their support and I really loved it. And it was also wonderful to meet Johnna and Mark from Oklahoma and Moira and Peter from New Jersey. And it was funny because Johnna and Mark had been listening to the podcast, but Moira and Peter, they had no idea who I was. So that I think it was quite funny, I was like, hi, I'm Katy, founder of Untold Italy. And they were like, oh, yeah. But Johnna and Mark, obviously, they'd been listening along and they'd heard my voice a lot. So they knew who I was and had a lot of background on me.

Katy Clarke:

But I loved hearing all their different stories and reasons for joining our tour and visiting the Umbria region. And it was really great to find out that is a clear favorite place that people want to visit in Umbria. Obviously we love it, but we love so many places in Umbria. And I guess you know, what I learned later and during the trip as it went along, was that what makes our tour really special is that we do go out of our way to help our guests, who are very interested in this particular town in Assisi, to experience it in the way that they want to. And one of our team actually lives in Umbria, and she has got some extremely detailed and very special insight into the way that Assisi is and all these little special, unique spots that you're not going to find if you do, like, a day trip from Rome, because they're not in the main town. Umbria is a favorite region of ours, and, you know, it did not disappoint. So with the group, I was just there with them for about a day and a half, and I managed to duck into Orvieto with them. And our guide, Maura, showed us all the places that I missed before when I'd come on my own.

Katy Clarke:

And. And honestly, there is nothing, nothing better than seeing a place through the eyes of a local guide. These people are trained and they have so much passion for their town. And it's quite astonishing just how many things have happened, just unique and important local and international events that have happened in a place that you might not know about. We learn a lot from the guide, and I'm hoping to get her onto the show to talk about Orvieto, because it is a really beautiful place. We had a lovely half day there, introducing our guest to the Shakerrato, which is the iced coffee Italians love that comes in a martini glass, because why not? And we had a delicious lunch with some truffle pasta, and we met some locals who are making some really unique historic beverages as well. So it was super fun and just everyone is so relaxed and enjoying themselves. And, you know, you can't. Not in a place like Orvieto, because it is really charming. And, you know, there wasn't very many people. It wasn't busy at all, actually. So if I compare it to, say, a similar time in maybe San Gimignano or Cortona in Tuscany, you can't even compare it because I think the most busy thing was there was a band from a high school in America doing a concert in the piazza, and then they just packed up and went. And it was really. It was really peaceful and charming, and that's what I really love about that place. We did some more exploring after lunch. And, you know, the cathedral there is one of the most beautiful in Italy, and it's got this gorgeous stained glass window and some beautiful frescoes inside. And we did a lot of walking. A lot, a lot, a lot. You just can't, you can't not do a lot of walking in Italy. So that's good because I enjoy walking and you know, as you walk, you see so many more beautiful little sights. And we shared a dinner that night overlooking the olive groves close by to Orvieto. And I've got to say, the food, we had a few different dietary requirements and, and I don't have those dietary requirements, but I was really enjoying the food that was coming out from the rest of the team was like on the table. They were enjoying all sorts of things.

Katy Clarke:

The people that were eating gluten free that I was quite jealous. So that was lovely. And the next day we stopped in Daruta, which is the home of Italian ceramics and it's, you know, got a really strong reputation for really quality wares. And we visited an artisan workshop there where the people they were working were hand painting their beautiful works. And that was really delightful. So that was, that was the first bit. And then I was whisked away into Umbria and we had a few jobs to do. But you know, as I said that my job's not that difficult.

Katy Clarke:

So we checked out our main hotel for the tour, which is magnificent and the views from Assisi were incredible. And we had another stop in Assisi just to wander and have some lunch with some more views. Absolutely delightful. And after that, Sarah, who actually lives in Umbria, she stopped by her friend of hers that is a local artisan who makes beautiful custom ceramics. And goodness, it's, it is a charmed, charmed existence there. It is so beautiful. And as we sort of, you know, get closer towards Sarah's home at La Cuccagna, which is an agriturismo self catering agriturismo close to Gubbio and Perugia, you know, I, I started to feel like I was going to relax and I always do when I go to La Cuccagna, so it does feel a bit like coming home to me and it's very peaceful and I always feel extremely looked after by Sarah and Sal who run

that. And finally we got to La Cuccagna and there I ran into podcast listener Andre who had found La Cuccagna via the podcast. And it was just so delightful to hear about his trip that he was doing with his family and his parents and his kids and everyone. And yeah, I'm just so happy, happy that they found La Cuccagna via this podcast because it is a very, very special place. Okay. Marching on. The next day Sarah and I decided to do a day trip from La Cuccagna in Umbria to Urbino in Marche. And I know a lot of you wanted to hear about my impressions about this beautiful town also. It's a mini city and my goodness, it is gorgeous. And you know what, these ones that are a little bit harder to get to, you are definitely worth the effort.

Katy Clarke:

We did a day trip from Umbria and it took an hour and a half each way to get there. So it was a decent effort. And it is about three hours from Florence by car and about three hours from Rome, three and a half hours from Rome. So just to give you an idea, you got to make an effort and you've got to get in the car to get there. But it would be a lovely place to settle in for a few days. You do need a car, as I mentioned, but it's an easy drive and it's so worth it. It's really up there as an untold favorite because just those medieval streets, lovely piazzas, a gorgeous local feel. Like, you know, I think there was, there were tourists there, but they were mainly Italian school kids running around piazzas having fun, eating gelato.

Katy Clarke:

It had a really friendly vibe and it's because it's probably, I would say it's a university town. So I always get that friendly student vibe when I'm in a university town and I really try and seek those out. You could easily just hang out there in Urbino and enjoy the magnificent architecture. It is a hilltop town, so the views from the side are just magnificent. But you can also check out so many different things. They've got an art gallery there, a big cathedral and some of the churches there. They've got some absolutely incredible frescoes that you can get right up close and look at. And they are, they weren't by Raphael, who was actually born in Urbino, but they were painted by peers of his.

Katy Clarke:

And you know, you can really enjoy them at your own leisure without any pressure. So if you're like me and you like your art kind of in bite-sized pieces, this is the way to do it. But it was really fantastic. It's got a lot of curiosities in Urbino, so a lot of little nooks and crannies. And it's a place where you can just go wandering and exploring. And when you do, and I love doing this, you find some really cool things. Like I found this woman who makes ceramics, but she makes sort of custom sculptures and one of the shapes that she makes is this special star that is the symbol of Urbino, and it's based on a design that was created by Leonardo da Vinci, working with a local mathematician. And it's based on, I think, like an octagon with pyramids on the outside.

Katy Clarke:

So it's really 3D and it's really gorgeous. And she makes it with a local stone and then the stone's brown and when it's fired, it turns white. And anyway, so I had to get one of those home when I. Well, this is my crazy purchases that I like to make, but it's really special and I'll

get a photo of it and we'll put it on the show notes there so you can see what it is, because it's a really special, unique thing that will always remind me of Urbino. So, yeah, it is a hill town. It's pretty steep.

Katy Clarke:

Like, there's up and down and there's cobblestones and, you know, but it's. It's super gorgeous. And I really, really had just the most delightful day exploring there with Sarah. And we also tried out some of the suggestions from our Untold Italy app. And I hadn't written that content myself, one of our team members had written it, so I was keen to check out, you know, what she'd suggested. And, you know what, they're all excellent, especially the gelato. And I was so proud to be part of that and to know that we were supporting local businesses there. So it was really cool.

Katy Clarke:

And then sadly, we had to go back to La Cuccagna and we left Urbino. That was sad. I'd love to go back there. And incidentally, it's actually only an hour and a half from San Marino, so if you wanted to get another stamp on your passport, you could kind of do that. You might not be surprised - we're thinking up an idea for a tour. But anyway, more on that later.

Katy Clarke:

So it was our last night in Umbria, my last night, and Sarah took me to a local - I guess it's the local pub, but goodness me, the food, you know, in England you go to the pub for beers. In Italy, you go to the pub for food. And I had this omelette with truffles. Oh, my goodness. You know, very simple, very tasty, very, very cheap. So, you know, I think it was €7. I didn't pay for it, but I was, like, looking at these prices on the menu. Thanks, Sarah and Sal, for hosting me.

Katy Clarke:

That was absolutely lovely of them. So we had this delicious omelette, you know, in some wine, and then we sauntered off back, back to their place at La Cuccagna. And as if by magic, and this always happens to me at La Cuccagna on the last night, the fireflies came out and I just, I went a bit silly and I got very excited about the fireflies and just love that experience. So seriously, the. The main thing I take away from this is Rome is fun, Naples is fun, but you know, if you want some just pure joy in your heart, get out into the countryside, go and see towns like Orvieto, Urbino, and just have some fireflies action in Umbria. You'll never regret it. So anyway, I had to say goodbye to La Cuccagna and head back to Rome on the local train, which was slow and steady and there was not a lot of room for luggage. I had to have mine in the seat next to me.

Katy Clarke:

And as I was checking out the updates from the tour, I noticed that they all went up in the Gubbio birdcage. If you know, you know, I've talked about this on our podcast and they loved it. So that was good because I found it mildly terrifying. Anyway, the train stops at lots of towns along the way in Umbria, and it was a really nice journey. So if you had some time and

you wanted to travel by train, it's a nice way to do it. This time it was easy to get a taxi at Termini. It was mid-afternoon on a weekday, so it was fine to get back to Trastevere. And then I had a final dinner with my Rome tours team in San Saba, which is a delightful neighborhood near Circus Maximus.

Katy Clarke:

That was 10 days in Italy. And I just realized I covered a lot of ground. And to be honest, this whirlwind is not really what I'd suggest for most travelers, unless of course, you do want to cover a lot of ground. It is your trip. You should travel your way and not listen to anyone else - if you really prefer to pack a lot in, then that's your prerogative. Though I would say when I do ask people what their favorite parts of their trip were, they usually say that they loved it all.

Katy Clarke:

No one says they had a bad trip, do they? Anyway, they loved it all, but they'll always remember that the days they spent in the countryside. And my physiotherapist said exactly the same thing. She just loved the time she spent in Tuscany. And that's why I'm really so glad that I had those peaceful moments at La Cuccagna. It was a moment to take it all in breathe and be connected to that slower pace of life. Now, working out where to stop and stay in the country often gets people stumped though because of course, these lovely spots are not well advertised. So if you would like help with planning that and making sure you optimize your route or route depending on your accent type, check out our Trip Planning services.

Katy Clarke:

Our team is obsessed with this type of travel and will be delighted to help you find the perfect spot for you and whoever you're traveling with. If you would like the details of the places and experiences I mentioned in this week's show, you'll find them in the episode show notes at untolditaly.com/283 for episode number 283. And also in our Untold Italy app, which includes every single podcast episode ad-free organized by topic and place so you can find what you're looking for. And you also get the pre-release version of the podcast every week too.

Katy Clarke:

Grazie Mille. Thanks for listening to Untold Italy and showing your support by purchasing our app, leaving a review or dropping me a note. I just love receiving them. Recently, I was sent a postcard from the Cinque Terre by Debora Hil in Perth in Australia and it gave me such a thrill, such a thoughtful thing to do. Debora - Grazia Mile I really, really loved getting it. That's all for this episode.

Katy Clarke:

Next time, our tour guest Rebel is joining us to share her experiences traveling solo - independently and with our small group tours in Northern Italy and Umbria. It might actually be one of my favorite episodes, so be sure to tune in. So until then, it's ciao for now.

Untold Italy travel podcast transcript. [Visit our website](#) for show notes and all episodes