

# Untold Italy Episode 288: Italy Travel Trends for 2026 and Beyond

If you've been waiting for the perfect time to take that dream trip to Italy, I've got news for you. It doesn't exist. There are so many factors out of our control. Global events, health issues, family challenges. Things change, life throws surprises. And if Italy is calling you, the time to start planning is now. Today we're talking about how to plan your Italy travels for 2026 and beyond. The new trends to watch, the pitfalls to avoid, and the smart moves that will help you make your trip to a reality.

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:

Buongiorno. Hello, friends, and welcome back to Untold Italy. Hope you're doing well as we see off the northern summer and head at fast pace into Fall, or Autumn, as we call it here, where I am in Australia. If you're traveling to Italy soon, well done to you. September and October are glorious months to explore Italy. You're going to have an absolute blast. But today we're diving into a few trends and updates on how travel in Italy is shaping up for the rest of the year and into 2026. If you've been dreaming of days spent wandering the sights and soaking up all things Italian and you're not sure where to go or when, this episode is for you.

Katy Clarke:

If you're heading off soon - so exciting - I've also got some trends to share on things to do and what to avoid, so you don't make any major mistakes. But you know what? Sometimes mistakes are fun. That's what I think, anyway. One thing I want to start this episode with is this. There's never a perfect year or time to travel. I don't know if you were listening in earlier this year, but everyone was bracing for crushing jubilee crowds in Rome. Everything was going to be super busy.

Katy Clarke:

Hotels and airlines were supposedly hiking up their prices, which a lot of them did, it's fair to say. And the media warned of chaos. Not just the media, actually, the Italian Tourist Board. And who knows why they would do that. Just doesn't make sense to me. That was because of the Jubilee that was coming up, and that has been continuing for the whole of this year. But then something happened that nobody really predicted, and the Pope became very seriously ill and he passed away. So things really shifted overnight.

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Katy Clarke:

And what was supposed to be one of the busiest travel years in decades played out somewhat differently. Yes, Rome has been really busy this year. But you know what? It's always busy. And as predicted right here, the types of travelers visiting the Eternal City were very different to most of you. The pilgrim travelers. If you've been listening along to this for a while, this podcast, the pilgrims are very different types of travellers and they flock to the religious sites and stay in dormitories and maybe not in hotels or bed and breakfasts like most of the listeners of this podcast will.

Katy Clarke:

So, Rome this year has essentially been the same as it has for many, many years, apart from the COVID years. And that means it's busy. Rome is always busy. Another thing that has not changed is that, let's just say, summer this year has been another super hot one in Italy, and it's probably been best spent at the beach or in the mountains, if you are able to do that. July and August and even June, when I was there, are really, really very hot. And now some people do love the. I do not. And if you're like me and you're traveling in the hotter months, then you need to be aware and make sure you know your plans accordingly. I think the reality is now these really hot summers are setting in and unfortunately, that means if you need to travel during those times, you're really going to have to dig deep and make sure that you're looking after yourself and your health.

Katy Clarke:

And one of the best tips that I learned this year was from my Pilates coach. Ingrid - thank you. And she mentioned that a really good idea is to get some electrolytes into you during the day. And I did an interview earlier this week talking to someone who spends a lot of time in Italy, and she said, yes, she does that too. And you can get those electrolytes, they come in a little sachet that you can get at the chemist or the pharmacy. So if you're traveling when it's hot, remember that tip. So those things were a constant. You know, Rome's always busy and the summers are hot, so we know that.

Katy Clarke:

But one thing that has happened in 2025 is something that really probably wasn't expected. And it doesn't affect everyone, but it does impact American travelers. And it's not something you can plan for and it's completely out of your control. But the US dollar has taken a big hit against the Euro, which has meant the prices in euro for Americans are now 11 to 12% higher. So for all my Australian listeners and others joining us from places with, let's just say, more volatile currencies. This is 100% business as usual and we're used to it. But it can come as a shock if you're on a tight budget or you're not used to being subject to these very strong currency fluctuations. So what's the lesson here? Well, the lesson is that life is unpredictable and we can't change certain things, like what's happening with a Pope or what's happening with currency exchanges. And if Italy is on your mind and in your heart, please don't wait for some magical better year or better time to go, because the best time to go is when you can.

Katy Clarke:

So if you're thinking about going in 2026 next year, seriously, don't wait. There's always going to be reasons not to go, but I can assure you that your time in Italy will invigorate you with fresh perspectives and keep you positive and upbeat about life in a world that feels quite tumultuous right now. And Italian culture is so very different to most of our English-speaking countries. I really feel very different when I'm there, and that's because there's less of a focus on growth and productivity and more of a focus on enjoying life as it is in the moment. And this is the perfect antidote for a frantic and busy life where everything is a little bit stressful. Italians just have this, you know... they say "piano, piano", which is slow down, let's go a little slower. And I love that, you know, and it's not my usual mode of operating, I have to say. I'm more of a let's go, let's go type of person.

Katy Clarke:

But when I'm there, I really appreciate those moments where you're really forced to slow down and enjoy everything that's going on around you. So thank you to Italy for that. It's really been a big part of my life. Now, in this episode, we're going to explore some of the new trends shaping travel in Italy in 2026, the pitfalls to avoid, and the best practices that can make your trip smoother. I'm also going to share a bit about how social media and AI tools are changing the way people plan trips and why we here at Untold Italy are shifting where we share some of our content and how you can get some help from us if planning feels overwhelming or you'd like a little sanity check on your itinerary. So what's going to be different in 2026? A few big themes are emerging, actually, and some of them I'm really excited about. So the first one is that there's definitely a shift to traveling in the regions outside the major tourist zones. Hooray. Hooray.

Katy Clarke:

I'm so excited, and I like to think that we've played a small part in that travelers are branching out beyond Rome, Florence, Venice, the Amalfi coast, and Tuscany. And we're seeing such a growing interest in Umbria, Piedmont, Emilia Romagna and Puglia in particular. Is it the food, the fresh country air, the local festivals, or the beautiful scenery? It's probably all of the above. But it's so great to see this shift because not only does it reduce pressure on the bigger cities, but, and perhaps I'm preaching to the choir here, you are really going to have quite a different, more intimate and localized experience when you head outside of the traditional tourist zones. It's really very special and I'm really glad that this trend is emerging. And if you'd like to explore these areas, sometimes it's not actually easy to find a lot of information online or outside of this podcast about those areas, those smaller destinations. And that's why we built our app actually, is to share all of the 20 regions of Italy. And we're not quite finished with it just yet.

Katy Clarke:

We've still got a few regions to go, but we've got 11 in there at the moment. And I'm really excited because in the next few weeks, all of the 20 Regions of Italy will be in our Untold Italy app, complete with their food and wine culture, how to get around the favorite towns

that we have, hotels that we love and restaurants that we like to go to. So this is built not from any algorithm; it's built from a love of Italy. So I hope, if you haven't already, that you've downloaded the app. And of course, as a podcast listener, you can get all of our episodes that we've done so far. And that's almost 300 on the app - ad-free. And you'll keep getting those episodes as they're released. So we are not charging a membership for the app, it's a one-off fee and you'll continue to get all the content as we keep adding it.

Katy Clarke:

So I hope everyone's liking it. You know, with everything, there are always a few technical issues and if you're having a problem, just please don't hesitate to reach out. That's what I'm here for. Okay, we're exploring the regions outside the main tourist zones. Excellent. The second one that I wanted to talk about is sustainability and slow travel principles are really now starting to cut through, which I am also very happy about. So more and more people are choosing to travel by train, support local business and stay in agriturismo, that are those family-run farm stays. These are booming as travelers learn how great they are at providing a contrast between the cities and how they enable you to discover local traditions.

Katy Clarke:

I try not to be too bossy on here, but really, if you do one thing that will change the way you see Italy and also any travel that you do going forward in any other country, it's staying a few days at Agriturismo and getting to know a pocket of Italy that perhaps, perhaps you don't see so much showcased in all the glossy brochures and online, but which in fact, is incredibly special and will stay with you for a very long time. The third trend I want to share is technology and AI. So many travelers are turning to tools like ChatGPT to draft itineraries and other online itinerary makers. And look, AI is brilliant at brainstorming. It's like your favorite research buddy who never gets tired. But here's the catch. It's got a few problems with logistics in particular, and so it doesn't know that some of the museums aren't open on a Monday or that, you know, the perfect trattoria that you found on the beach has either shut down or they're not open at certain times of the year.

Katy Clarke:

Or like, you know, a lot of them shut down in August, in fact, and in January, if you were traveling then. So there's some challenges with AI. And look, I am a technological person. I love new innovations. And if you've been following along for a while, you have noticed that. But I don't know about you, but unless you get your prompts really tight, like, AI just keeps spewing information and more and more and more information with very little context. And so, frankly, I've found it pretty useless on logistics because a lot of transport information can't be easily scraped and it changes a lot.

Katy Clarke:

And the reason it can't be scraped is because of the Italian transport people - I mean, they're barely on the Internet, which, you know, again, go back to "piano, piano". I kind of love this sometimes. But they will sometimes publish key routes, their schedules for that on a PDF, and they might publish it halfway through the season, which I think's hilarious, but good on them,

but you can't then if you're an algorithm, you can't scrape that. So therein lies the problem. Now, if you're learning Italian like me, you'll know that it's also quite easy to misinterpret prepositions so things can get lost in translation more often than you think. Be aware when you're using those tools.

Katy Clarke:

I think it's a great place to do research. I do it myself. But when you're trying to pull everything together. It can be really, really tricky. And we've actually had quite a few clients come to us after building an AI generated plan because they started to delve into it and were getting frustrated about how to get it to work logistically, like the train schedules that didn't exist, opening hours and how to like map things together so that you can really do the things that you want to do. And they were really going in circles trying to figure it all out. So that's where human expertise really matters. And if you need help, make sure to engage someone who knows Italy really well. So you might have a really good friend that's well-traveled and spent a lot of time in Italy.

Katy Clarke:

Or, of course, we've got our trip consultants, all of us who are a little bit obsessed with traveling in Italy. We know the quirks and the realities of what's happening on the ground and so do reach out if you're stuck. We love hearing all your dreams for your trip and helping you pull those ideas together and sorting out the logistics and adding little extras that make the trips really special. But, you know, sometimes we've all got a friend that has these skills as well. But make sure you buy them lunch at least. It's a lot of work doing trip planning, so definitely buy someone lunch if they're going to help you with that. Finally, seasonality shifts. Now, we've had long-standing advice to go in the shoulder season and I reckon it's becoming a little bit almost mainstream now.

Katy Clarke:

And more and more travelers are booking for April and October and even into March and November. And I love this, it spreads the crowds out a little, but it also means that you need to plan earlier for those months. Not to say they are not busy, but they're just a little less so. It's really preference about how you want to travel, but also it's like I said, Carpe Diem, seaside, go when you can, because Italy is amazing whatever time you go. And if you really, really want to skip the largest crowds, November, early December, the last three weeks of January and February, except for Carnevale time in Venice, are your best bets. The time around Christmas up to January 6th is actually very busy, which I found out for myself earlier this year. It was fun at that time, like a lot of fun, but perhaps not as relaxed as I was expecting.

Katy Clarke:

Now I'm going to talk about social media because it's always there. And you know it's going to be no surprise to you that platforms like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram are hugely influential. When it comes to travel, a single reel or YouTube video about a hidden beach or a tiny trattoria or a restaurant in Rome can send thousands of people there overnight. In fact,

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earlier this year, there was a mountain village in the Campania region that had to bring in traffic control - earlier this year, when an influencer posted that it was snowing there, they actually quadrupled their population in a few hours. And the locals were quite bewildered. Needless to say, there were not enough services, including bathrooms, to cope with the influx. So we're getting these surge visits due to social media, and it's quite crazy because, you know, we are all expecting to have, you know, this beautiful restaurant with the snow falling down, but it wasn't happening because there were just not enough services to cope with the influx. And you know what? They might never be ready for all those visitors because it just was so unexpected.

Katy Clarke:

Another story that I wanted to tell you was that in June, I was walking through Trastevere in Rome and I saw the long lines outside a restaurant that I constantly see on social media. Personally, I don't do lines at all. I've never done lines, even back in my clubbing days, which were a very, very long time ago. But I was quite happy to walk around the corner to sit in a piazza and get told off for my incorrect hand gestures by a friendly waiter while I enjoyed a lovely glass of Sicilian wine. Now, who doesn't love a bit of banter with their delicious meal? And let's be real, there's no banter when we're turning tables quickly to move a line, and that's really un-Italian anyway. We like to linger in Italy. Social media has been around long enough that we know everything has been made to look amazing and at its absolute best. But somehow we sometimes forget all that when it comes to traveling abroad.

Katy Clarke:

The problem is the style. Posts don't tell the full story. Amalfi at 11 am in July does not look like the dreamy clip you saw. And the road in and out is at a standstill. Ferries are packed and running late, and prices are sky high, which is absolutely fine if that's what you were expecting, but a bit disappointing if you weren't expecting that. And I have to say, every single person that I have spoken to this year that's been intent on going to the Amalfi coast, and I said, "oh, you might want to have a think of, you know, some other places". "No, we're going. I've always wanted to see it."

Katy Clarke:

And they say, "Yep, I went, I saw it. I'm glad I did, but I don't need to go back." And you know what? I know what they mean. Now if we're all being a little bit honest with ourselves. Also, social media is less on the social these days and more of a marketing tool. I can't remember the last time that I shared something personal on any of the major social media platforms. Even on my personal accounts. I'm definitely a lurker, and I know many of you are too, and there's nothing wrong with that. But it does mean that social media is no longer that place where we're seeing snippets of everyday life and experiences.

Katy Clarke:

You know what, I'll also be honest with you and say that we definitely don't share broadly our very, very special favorite restaurants, hotels and towns on those channels because, like I said, I don't like to line up and if I can't get a booking at those places that I really love, it



makes me very sad. So, unfortunately, you know, I do understand the irony of the situation and realize that I have been part of the problem of over touring some areas. But, you know, going forward, I'm a little bit more cautious about what I share because it's taken the fun out of travel a bit, also, you know, like, everyone's going to the same place, everyone's having the same experience. And like, isn't it fun to go home and say, oh, I found this amazing place, I didn't see it on social media, I just went down this laneway and we bumped into this gorgeous little trattoria and then we met the owner. And that's half the fun of travel, if you ask me. So if social media isn't social anymore, that means you're getting fed whoever does marketing the best. And it's really food for thought, isn't it? So when you double down on who does marketing best about Italian places in English, you're getting a very small view of the potential out there, because, in fact, I can only think of about 10 brands or companies outside the luxury fashion and cars space that are able to market in English very effectively.

Katy Clarke:

Now, isn't that sad? I mean, I think it's great that Italians aren't amazing at marketing because it does allow for that exploration, but it does mean what we're seeing is something that is, you know, a marketing exercise. We're seeing a very small handful of what's available. And that's why, wherever possible, on this podcast and via our tours, our services, and our Untold Italy app, we like to focus on Italian voices, Italian people, especially women, who may not be so great at marketing in English, but have absolutely have amazing stories to share and experiences that you might like. And this is also part of why we've made changes in our online community. So after many years. Many, many years, we've closed our Facebook group - with over 160,000 members. And a lot of people are really shocked about that. But, you know, I think it's the right thing to do because we started back in 2019, and we've been through all the highs and lows of travel, from engagements and proposals in Venice to the dark days of COVID. And the group was a great place for a long time. But as we've talked about in this podcast, people are moving to other platforms and using AI these days.

Katy Clarke:

And honestly, running a group at that scale costs considerable resources and energy, literally thousands of dollars a month. And I don't think that really people appreciate how much effort goes into keeping a space feeling the way that we wanted to keep it, which was very kind and very thoughtful and very helpful. So, yeah, we've decided to close the group. And, you know, to be frank, we'd rather focus our resources where they can provide the most value to thoughtful travelers like you, our podcast listeners. And we're going to be doing that, continuing to do that on our podcast, on our app, and on our new sub stack, where I've already started sharing my thoughts on each episode of our podcast and where I'll be sharing mini guides and the really special places that I just really want to share with people that are curious and thoughtful and want to travel in a really slow and considered way. And honestly, I'm having much more fun on Substack than I've done for a long time. So if you haven't checked out this platform, it's definitely worth a look, because, you know, it's like a curated version of the good old days of the Internet and blogging before everything got a little bit too cynical.

Katy Clarke:

Okay, so next up, I promised you some things to avoid in 2026 and your planning for that year and for the years beyond. And even if you're going to Italy in the coming months. So, first up, let's stop copying other people and start curating your own trip. Everyone says you should go to the Colosseum, and I'm going to say you don't have to do that. If you simply want pictures, there are plenty of spots outside for that. No need to run the gauntlet of thousands of people squished into an ancient monument if it's not your jam. Even if it is, I can think of at least 10 sites in Rome to get your ancient history fix. We've got an article on that actually, and I'll pop that into the show notes for you.

Katy Clarke:

Recently, just actually last week, unfortunately, a very sad thing happened and a tour guide passed away inside the Colosseum. I'm not quite sure the exact reason, but heat exhaustion has been mentioned. Listen, it's not for everyone. It's a really big exposed site with lots of rocks and lots of people and steep stairs to walk up and down if you want to go up and down the main areas. So, yeah, think hard about it. It's just, you know, it's not for everyone. That's all I'm saying. I love the Colosseum, but it's not for everyone.

Katy Clarke:

The second thing I want to say is that in terms of avoiding things, is that you should avoid really visiting the tourism hotspots in peak times and seasons. So a great example is Venice during the peak months. And actually, they're putting in a tourist tax there that is to discourage people going on a day trip to Venice. You can find out more on our website there as well. We've got a link to that that's finished for the year, that particular tax, but I'm sure it will continue into 2026. There are some other places that it just gets really, really busy. And you know what, even if you don't mind crowds, let's have a spare thought for the people that live in these places. The Cinque Terre, for example, is a series of very, very small towns with, I think they've got about 5 to 10,000 people living in them.

Katy Clarke:

And when hundreds of thousands of people descend on those villages in peak season, it really has a big impact. And as much as everyone's there to appreciate them, it's maybe, you know, causing structural damage and all sorts of impact. I think we can all have a little bit of a think about how we can approach those a little bit more sensitively. And one idea that I have for you is if you are thinking of going on a day trip to Cinque Terre as an example, really do have a think about staying overnight, because it's when it's most magical, in fact. So, yeah, that's a little tip for you. If any of the places, like the Amalfi coast or any of the main tourist areas, are on your dream list, yes, you should go. Absolutely. But plan carefully and book early and try and stay overnight, try and stay a few nights and keep your expectations open and understand that you know they're popular places for a reason and that they will be busy. And you may not get that intimate experience that you would get if you went a few, maybe a few towns along the railway up in Liguria, which I highly recommend.



Katy Clarke:

Okay. And the third point is try and avoid some hidden costs or to flip it, be aware of costs that you might not see up front. So lately, the Italian cities have raised their city taxes for hotel stays, which is the price, the amount that you pay per person, per night, depending on the status of the hotel. And it's really climbing up now. Some of them are like €8 or €9, 10 a night, so depending on the class of hotel. And that's per person actually. And so it can really add up if you're staying in those major tourist areas. Car rental costs and fuel costs are also very high.

Katy Clarke:

And so, you know, we like to always use a train if we can. And you know, I mentioned this before, but the exchange rate with your currency may impact what's happening through the prices on your trip. So really be aware of what's happening in terms of prices and you can make some pretty strong decisions. One thing that I really would say is, you know, everyone's saying, oh, do this tour, do that tour, have those experiences. But experiences don't actually need to cost anything. And some of my most favorite times that I've ever had in Italy have not cost a single cent. It's just been walking along the Tiber river in Rome or getting up early in Florence and just doing a walk along the Arno there like at about six o'clock in the morning, while people are starting to rise and get ready for work. So, yeah, I think some of those times are the most beautiful times that you're ever going to spend in Italy.

Katy Clarke:

And I think the last thing that I wanted to mention on things to avoid is really try not to rely on those free tools like forums, AI itineraries, or any type of random advice that you get online from people who you don't know, or even people that you don't know their context or their experience because, you know, like, you don't know who you're talking to online. And I firmly believe that, you know, 95% of people are doing things out of the goodness of their heart, but you don't know what their experience is. You know, a lot of people that go to Italy one time and they just so excited about their experience as they should be, that they want to share it with everyone, but they may not have the experience that you need for your trip. I think this might sound a bit overwhelming. And you know, it is. It is. There is simply too much content out there these days with tips, advice, rules, do this, do that, don't do that. And so it can get really overwhelming. So if you're feeling overwhelmed, that's okay.

Katy Clarke:

We all feel that. And, you know, we can really help if you want some help. People also say, why would I pay for planning help when there's so much for free online? And you know, that's true. There is a lot of information, but free often comes with some hidden costs, mistakes, wastes of time and misinformation. And we've got clients that have been stuck in the wrong base or they've spent hundreds of dollars on car rentals that they didn't need. So peace of mind and getting a basic plan set up is always a good idea. So now let's flip it again to the best practices for planning your trip in 2026. So the number one thing I would say, you seize the moment, as I said at the start, don't wait for the perfect timing.

Katy Clarke:

Remember the Jubilee and everything that's happened since. Things change. Exchange rates are completely out of our control. We don't know what's going to happen in a month or a year. So if you are feeling the call of Italy, you should go when you can. And I'll never stop saying that. And you know, the truth is, there's no perfect year or month that you should go. Italy will fill your soul whenever you go.

Katy Clarke:

It's one of those places that people keep going back in, back again. I am guilty as charged. And today I've had some interesting news from my family. And you know, I am firmly in the moment that if you keep waiting, you may never go. So please take heed and start looking at flights right now, if you haven't already. The next point I wanted to make was to plan strongly, but don't over-plan, like have a buffer in there for flexibility, serendipity and exploring where you can. The main things are is to get your flights booked, your train schedule sorted out, and whichever key museums or sites and restaurants that you want to see. But then after that, just let everything go and have plenty of time for wandering and serendipity and finding that special shop that you can't wait to buy a special memento of your trip.

Katy Clarke:

I know my really good friend Penny. She's got some Beautiful jewelry pieces that she found as she was wandering around an area of Rome and when she was in Sardinia. And she wears them all the time and you know, she just found them by wandering around. And that's a beautiful thing. The third point I wanted to make was to choose fewer bases. And the less time you spend unpacking and repacking, the more time you have to enjoy the places that you are and to go and find little jewelry shops and places like that. I know there are a lot of people out there who like to smash out as many places as possible on their trips. And you know what - you do you.

Katy Clarke:

And I used to be like that, so hungry to see and experience everything. So I get it. And you know what, it took me a couple of decades, but I do appreciate a longer stay these days. I think sometimes when people say, "oh, you should travel slowly - slower", you know, they forget that first moment and excitement of being abroad and seeing everything and soaking up all the different sights and sounds and tastes. And I never want to forget that feeling because it's really exciting. And even though I've changed my travel style quite a bit these days, I can still appreciate why people would want to go super fast. But it is a good idea to just slow things down a little bit, and I do wish I'd known that sooner. Another strategy I think is to book those special experiences early.

Katy Clarke:

Whether that's a cooking class in Tuscany, a countryside hotel that's got views over the Tuscan landscapes, or that restaurant you've been hearing about for ages, the best things do get snapped up. So, really do book in advance. And the last one that I wanted to mention is plan your own way and in your style. But, but double-check your sources. There are so many, many

itinerary ideas on AI social media and YouTube and they're created by people who are so full of excitement and the thrill of travel, but they might be experiencing places for the first time and through a particular lens. And I've got to admit that I find it overwhelming when I'm going to a new destination. And these days I'm really not afraid to get help. And this is exactly what I did when we went to Japan a couple of years ago and I got some help from a local trip planning service who explained why buying a rail pass was not ideal.

Katy Clarke:

It actually saved us hundreds of dollars because we could easily do the trip much cheaper if we just bought point-to-point tickets. And so I didn't know that because all the information that I was reading online was -get the rail pass, get the rail pass. And I'm glad I took the local advice. And even if I'm going to a new area of Italy, I ask for help because I don't know the transport systems, the places that are great to go to and that are not great at marketing in English. I did that when we went up to South Tyrol, and I got some specific help from Tyla in our team, who knows a lot about the ski fields up there. So if you are going and you're interested in going to the Winter Olympics this year, yeah. Tyla has a wealth of knowledge and experience of traveling and staying in the ski fields in Northern Italy.

Katy Clarke:

So, yeah, I would definitely get some help from her. So I really can't emphasize this enough, though, because it's really important. And I'm going to use an example from house building, as I'm up to my eyeballs in this right now. But you can do all your research online and build a beautiful home that's, you know, that you love. But I was finding all that very overwhelming because there's just so many choices, like how many tiles can you look at and your eyes are spinning and your eyeballs are crossing and everything. But we ended up then hiring an interior designer, and my eyes have been opened, and I'm so much more relaxed because I've had access to a whole new world of options and insights that have been curated just for us. So, you know, Lauren knows what I like and she knows what I don't like, and she's able to sift through everything and just pinpoint things that will really suit our new home.

Katy Clarke:

And so I am so delighted that my favorite thing that's coming up is a new sofa, which I've got very short legs. So this is. It's a miracle sofa that I can sit comfortably on and have my feet touch the ground. And I never, ever would have found it without our interior designer. Thanks, Lauren. Who has also saved us, us, literally thousands of dollars in mistakes. If you love research, fantastic. Planning can be a big part of the joy.

Katy Clarke:

But even seasoned travelers sometimes want a second set of eyes and an expert opinion. And I would fall into that category. There is a ton of information online and you can plan for free, but in any context in life, an expert can make a huge difference. And that's why we offer trip consultations where we review your plans, spot gaps and costly mistakes, and suggest hidden gems and, you know, things that are just going to make your trip extra special. We don't take over your trip. I hope people don't think that you stay in complete control of it. And what

we're giving you is some added confidence and some extra advice. And you know what? No one needs to know that you used a service unless you want to tell them.

Katy Clarke:

You can say you did it all yourself. I have no problem with that at all. If you're the type of person for whom research feels like a second job, our full itinerary service lays everything out. Transport, activities, timing so you can simply enjoy your trip stress-free. And if you're one of those last-minute or you've just got a nagging question over something that you can't quite figure out, we have some quick fix chats that are perfect for this. It's a 30-minute call to solve your top issues with a follow-up email summary and people are using this to sanity check their itineraries and to focus on a particular area that they are curious about. You know there's lots of ways to get help and do reach out if you would like some help. So to wrap this up for the remainder of this year and in 2026, we're looking forward to more regional exploration, more slow travel choices, and more travelers using AI and social media to do their research and to plan.

Katy Clarke:

Sometimes with great results, sometimes with pitfalls. So avoid the overcrowded hotspots if you can. Whether that's timing during the day or in the year, watch out for those hidden costs and don't over-rely on free tools or copying other people. But at the end of the day, just you do you. So seize the day. There's no perfect year or time to go. If Italy is calling, go now. You won't regret it.

Katy Clarke:

And lastly, just a reminder that we've made shifts in how we share our Untold Italy resources and we have closed our Facebook group hope to focus on places where we can provide the most value. And that is Substack, this podcast and our app and of course, our website remains open and ready for all of those practical trip planning questions you might have. And if you'd like personalized support, we're here for you, too. Thank you. Grazie Mille, as always for tuning in. We love being part of your Italy trip planning journey and we'd love to hear your 2026 travel dreams. Next week we're heading to one of my favorite regions. Who am I kidding, I love them all. Anyway, we're exploring some delicious sweet treats from the tastiest island in the Mediterranean.

Katy Clarke:

But until then, it's ciao for now.