

Untold Italy Episode 301: Italian Travel Stories - How Carol Embraced La Dolce Vita

Italy has so many incredible experiences that keep drawing travelers back. Everyone has a different favorite and our guest today shares hers for your inspiration - from the soaring peaks of the Dolomites to a personal tour of a palazzo in Tuscany.

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 everyone, and welcome to Untold Italy. I'm Katy Clarke, your host. My team and I are obsessed with helping you discover the Italy we love - unhurried, special and full of wonder - from the beautiful landscapes and architecture to each delicious dish and drop of wine. We run boutique small group tours across regional Italy, offer personalised planning services and created an app that helps you with curated choices on the go. This podcast brings all of our passion and knowledge together with real conversations, clear advice, and stories that help you shape a trip that fits your style. Andiamo, let's begin today's episode.

Happy Thanksgiving to all of our American listeners if you're hearing this when it's first released. I hope you all had or are having a lovely time with your family and friends. Thanksgiving is the American holiday I would love to adopt - I love the sentiment behind it and that it's about spending time with loved ones and there's no focus on buying things and gifts. Much as I love presents.. And I really love presents, there's something to be said for those moments when we gather together and reflect on a year gone past and what we're grateful for

So it's fitting that today our guest is someone that I am truly grateful for. Carol is one of our most loyal tour guests who has been on 5 trips with us so far. She's got a wonderful spirit of adventure and fully embraces the concepts of la dolce vita and seizing the day.

Carol's joining us to share her many experiences in Italy - from skiing in the Dolomites to beach hopping in Puglia and many more moments in between. What you'll learn is that she follows her dreams and keeps returning to Italy to dig ever deeper into the culture and explore beyond what you see on the surface. So let's welcome her onto the show.

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

Katy Clarke:

Benvenuta. Carol, welcome to the Untold Italy podcast.

Carol Klinger:

Ciao, Katy. It's such a pleasure to be here and thank you.

Katy Clarke:

Oh, no, thank you, Carol. And it's lovely to finally meet you and see you properly here in person after so many chats over email. And I know that you've spent a lot of time with the Untold team, so I do feel like I'm chatting with a dear friend. And you know what? I'd love to introduce you and have you to introduce yourself to our listeners. Can you tell us a little bit about you and how you came to love traveling in Italy?

Carol Klinger:

I happened upon Untold Italy when I was researching a trip to Bologna, and I'll back up from there. Fifteen years ago, I took my first trip to Italy. It was Rome with my daughters, and they had just finished college, and we went with one of their high school Latin teachers who goes to Rome every year. It was a wonderful trip. So I've only had wonderful travel experiences in Rome, but that was 15 years ago. And then three years ago, one of my girlfriends that I was working with basically was supposed to go to Italy, and it all kind of fell apart. And I looked at her, I said, well, let's go to Italy, the two of us. I mean, she said, I have another friend who might want to go.

Carol Klinger:

So the three of us went to Tuscany and Cinque Terre, and we had a lovely time. And then someone mentioned to me that Bologna is a place to go. And I was searching around the Internet getting some information about Bologna, and that's when I first happened upon Untold Italy and found your podcast. And I read about the Bologna tour, which is now Bologna, Modena, and Parma. And I read that tour description, and I thought, this is my dream tour. It's food, it's balsamic vinegar. It's Parmigiano Reggiano, it's prosciutto.

Carol Klinger:

I'm in. I'm in. But I didn't have anyone to go with. My husband - he does not care to go to Europe. He doesn't adjust to the time change. We love each other a lot. But traveling to Europe, and he doesn't drink alcohol. He doesn't like alcohol.

Carol Klinger:

So I'm like. And he doesn't like food that's a little out of his comfort zone. And I said, well, are you okay if I go by myself? And he said, if you want to go, go. And so I started planning this trip with Untold Italy. And quite honestly, Katy, I was pretty scared to take a trip all by myself. I would talk to my friends and they'd say, "You're going to Italy by yourself?" And I said, "Yes, yes, I'm going to fly to Milan and take a train to Bologna and yep -

Carol Klinger:

But I'm going to meet up with people, so I'm not worried". And I went on that first trip, and the first part of that trip was the Untold Italy. The second part was going back to Milan for a week and meeting a friend of mine - we were in a language class together because I'm trying to learn Italian. I mean, we were just beginner, beginner Italians. And so the second part of the trip was spending a week at a language, like in a little immersive school in Milan. So two weeks. And I had a lot of anxious nights worrying about this trip, but it went off so smoothly.

Carol Klinger:

And as a solo traveler, a female, and being with the small group of people, it was one of the most wonderful experiences I've ever had in Italy. I came home and I was over the moon. And everyone else said, "Oh, did you get rid of your Euros when you left?" I said, "Heck no, I'm going back."

Katy Clarke:

I love that. Oh, I love it. I love your spirit of adventure, Carol. You always. I know we can go and talk about a few more of these adventures that you've had, but what was the initial feeling about Italy? Like, you went to Rome first up and then what was calling you back? Do you know what that feeling was?

Carol Klinger:

It was really special. It was welcoming. I had grown up in the area we live in, there are a lot of long-term immigrants, probably World War II immigrants. So they've, you know, multi-generational immigrants from Italy and, you know, we have our Little Italy here. It was nothing like the Italian culture that we have here in the United States. It was so warm and welcoming and it was a beautiful country. At that point, I didn't know any part of the language and the experiences that I had at that point just felt, I don't want to say superficial, but almost superficial because it was a lot of going, doing, seeing, move, move, move, go, go, go, and not really taking it all in and slowing down and really enjoying where we were, what we were doing.

Carol Klinger:

So now when I travel, it's a completely different pace, it's a completely different lens that I look at the whole country through. And the more I interact with the Italians, whether it's our driver on the tour and asking that driver about his family, which is always lovely to talk to them about their family and their Italy and their country, because they're very proud people, and they're very passionate people. I remember when we went to one of the Balsamic vinegar agroturismos, and this gentleman was really passionate about the way he was making olive oil. But that guy down the road doesn't know what the heck he's doing.

Katy Clarke:

I know exactly who you're talking about.

Carol Klinger:

But I bet you if we go talk to that guy down the road, he'd tell me that that other guy doesn't know what he's talking about, too. In Puglia, when we went to the olive farm with the olive trees, and here's a man who had been a journalist for decades and late in life decided that the olive trees from his family, this farm, were calling him back to the farm. And it was a passion, and you could hear it in his voice and the way he was describing how he's embracing this life, these olive trees, and how much it means to himself now and his family and his mother. And it was just a special moment and a special interaction.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah, it's really moving when people share stories like that with you and how they've changed their life. And I think when you travel, if you can have that experience, it's something you can bring home and just reflect on.

Carol Klinger:

Absolutely, absolutely. Our driver in Puglia, Vincenzo, when he took us to Ostuni, "This is my town! " He was so proud to take us to Ostuni. And then we went to his farm and had dinner, and his mother was up in the window up above, waving at us as we came in. I mean, it was just. It was. It was really special. He was so proud.

Katy Clarke:

Vincenzo. Vincenzo. A very popular part of those tours.

Carol Klinger:

Yeah.

Katy Clarke:

I mean, this is how the world is a better place, I think, when we connect as human beings. And I guess that's what we try and do on the tours. And it is sometimes difficult if you are traveling independently to have these interactions because, you know, people aren't, you know, like, waiting around to invite you to their house, unfortunately. I mean, some of these activities that we do - they are planned, but the people are very genuine.

Carol Klinger:

Very. When we were in the Dolomites and we were in the. I'll call it a cabin, it was a refugio right up on the mountain with Franz, and we were doing our cooking class, making the dumplings, and he was so wonderful. You know, here's this guy who was a Michelin chef making dumplings with us, and he was so sweet. Everything was beautiful. These are the cheeses from my cows, from my farm. These are the plums that I picked from my trees that we're making for our dessert. And then I look out the window and it starts to snow. And it was like a magical moment.

Carol Klinger:

We were all giddy because you're in this warm little cabin, making this wonderful meal with all these great people and you look out the window and it's snowing. It looked like something out of a movie, quite honestly. And I will never forget that.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah, I've been in that cabin and I. I was there with my parents, actually, and we'd had a bit of a struggle cuz my dad's not very mobile to get up the hill, the little hill there. But yeah, just to sit down in that cute. It's like a little Heidi cabin, isn't it?

Carol Klinger:

Exactly, exactly.

Katy Clarke:

Straight out of a book.

Carol Klinger:

It really is. I don't know how you describe it or the time on that same trip where we went to the. The festival where they bring the animals down the mountain.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah.

Carol Klinger:

And that village is so small, Laion. And I felt like we were experiencing something really special with this community. First, we sit down and eat with them and the kids are bringing beers to the tables and we have this great meal at this outdoor festival. And then they just start picking up tables and chairs as the band's playing and pull back some ropes and people step aside and the animals start coming through. They've dressed up the animals and they start coming through. And it just was such a special moment and it was such a cool event to see this happening, but you weren't in this - it's not like the Paleo where you're in this swarm of people and you're dying. It was, it was this, you could almost call it intimate, but yet it was a small village.

Carol Klinger:

This village - there's only 2600 people in this village. It's tiny and it was just really, really, really special.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah. I think for me, what makes it especially moving is that you have all these generations of people together and they're continuing a tradition that they've been doing for, you know, many, many hundreds of years. And especially in that region. And I, well, actually all over Italy they do this, but they're especially. They have their traditional dress on. And it just blew my mind because in our family we have quite a few teenagers and "I will not be dressing up in

those costumes." But these teenagers have a very strong sense of place and community and they are so proud that they, you know, there's not a second thought about getting dressed in those outfits.

Carol Klinger:

You're absolutely right. And I was thinking the same Thing when I was there, I'm like, look at these young adults. They're proud to be part of this. And you could tell they just enjoyed it. They were having fun and it really meant something to them to participate.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah. And that's one thing I think that we maybe don't have in our English-speaking societies, is that people are contributing to their community. And so then they get something back, but it's not seen as something, oh, I have to contribute, so I'll get something back. It's an organic experience and you feel that love and passion when you're spending time there. And I. That's what I find extremely moving, especially in these days where it's all, you know, technology and everything's sort of going a million miles an hour. If you have the chance to slow down and appreciate this community atmosphere, it can stay with you for a very long time.

Carol Klinger:

Absolutely.

Katy Clarke:

I know someone else that you met on that first Bologna tour was Giulia's dad. Right.

Carol Klinger:

Oh, my gosh. She was so sweet. So sweet. Giulia is a wonderful tour host too. She's very passionate about Italy and just wants to share all these wonderful experiences and activities in her region. And I still follow her on Instagram and will send her a little message every now and then. It's such a joy to see her. Her dad was so sweet and we did say, are we gonna see him again?

Katy Clarke:

Daniele is the best. And I actually met Giulia's mum earlier this year, and she's like a little pocket rocket version of Giulia, which can you imagine, because Giulia is like, I am height challenged, everyone, but Giulia's mum is even tinier. And, yeah, they're just a beautiful family and you really feel that warmth and genuine passion coming out from her as well. I think it's really interesting because on that tour, we actually go to pretty much all the places that Massimo Bottura gets his produce from. He's the, you know, Michelin star, you know, one of the top chefs in the world. And it was a lot of those places that he took Stanley Tucci to on his trip.

Carol Klinger:

Yes. Because I watched that episode and I said, I've been there. I've been to that Caseificio. Is that the way you said the cheese?

Katy Clarke:
Caseificio, yeah.

Carol Klinger:
Caseificio. si. And that was where I tasted ricotta for the first time in my life, unlike anything else I've ever tasted. When we did the cheese tasting there, it blew my mind. I'm like, it doesn't taste like this at home at all. And then for us to take the aged Parmigiano, Reggiano, from there to the balsamic vinegar tasting the next day. And so we taste the balsamic vinegar, and then we get to put some of it on the Parmigiano from the day before. It was so good.

Katy Clarke:
You can bring the cheese home, but somehow it tastes different. I don't know what's going on over there in the air or the water or whatever, but it does taste different. I think I've mentioned a few times - my son has a particular affinity for that region. And he's like, "When are we going back, Mum? I want to go back for the balsamic and go to the tastings and have my tortellini with a drizzle of balsamic." It's delicious. Was there any other region that you particularly like the food from, Carol?

Carol Klinger:
Well, that's the interesting part that I never knew before I started traveling to all these different regions of Italy, is how different the food is from region to region to region, to the point where I know if we have a little local tour guide in particular, I will ask them, you know, what is the specialty here? What's the special drink - local drink, or what's the local pastry, or what's. What's the local dish? And most of the time, I know what the local dish is, but maybe not some of the other things. And I can't say, because I think of things like in Puglia, when we went to Altamura and had the focaccia.

Katy Clarke:
Yeah.

Carol Klinger:
First of all, that is the cutest little town, a little village. And it was so unexpected because it was at the end of the trip and we had done a lot of different things. So I'm thinking, oh, this is another cute little town. No, it was so cool. And there was a wedding going on when we walked through the town, through the piazza, main piazza, with the church as we walked by. So it was really fun to see the church all prepped for a wedding and... But then when we went and.

Carol Klinger:
had the focaccia in the oldest oven in that town, I think it's been there since the 1600s operationally.

Katy Clarke:

Maybe longer, I think. Yeah.

Carol Klinger:

It was incredible. Incredible. A favorite food. That's really hard to say because there have been so many great experiences. I happened upon one of my videos when we were in Piedmont. Piedmont, Yep, in La Morra. And we had gone to the winery and tasted lovely Barolos. And then after we come up from the winery, we come up to have lunch in this beautiful, beautiful Agriturismo - Monte Viso is in the background, snow-capped. And we're having this beautiful lunch with truffles on our spaghetti.

Carol Klinger:

You know, they're shaving fresh truffles. And then they bring out the dessert and they bring out this cylinder, a white cylinder, ceramic. On the top, there's a scoop of gelato, and you lift it up and there's a warm roll inside. And so you take this warm roll and you pour the gelato over top. It was so good. As we're looking out over Monte Viso, it was so beautiful.

Katy Clarke:

I think it's a package, isn't it? So you have this food. It's so curated and not in a fancy way, but, you know, in a way that they're very proud of their ingredients and what they're putting on the plate. So it's not essentially about quantity. It's about the quality of the ingredients and the presentation and how everything. The atmosphere comes together. You have the wine and you have your. Your dish and all of that. I thought you were going to say the panna cotta.

Katy Clarke:

That one, you know, the. The wobbly panna cotta. That's always a favorite as well up in Piedmont.

Carol Klinger:

Well, trying the Bicerin.

Katy Clarke:

Oh. So for everyone listening up in Torino and Turin, they have this special chocolate and coffee drink with cream. And it's something you really want to have around 3:30 in the afternoon if you're feeling a bit tired, because it'll. It'll give you wings that way. It's like an instant energy shot. And so delicious, isn't it?

Carol Klinger:

Oh, I love it. Yes. But, you know, it isn't. It isn't necessarily how amazing the food was. Sometimes it's just where we were having it and what was happening at that time. So in this most recent trip to Tuscany, when we went to Lorenza's house and she made us. She had made us an eggplant lasagna, and she had made it herself, and she's serving to us. It was wonderful, and it's lovely.

Carol Klinger:

And we're sitting there in her home, in this beautiful old 16th-century home and hearing all about the history of her family and just having these lovely conversations. Another special moment. The food was wonderful, but so was the conversation. And just being there in that lovely setting as well.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah. It's a unique part of Tuscany that I think when people think of Tuscany, they're thinking a lot of the times, of the Chianti region, the area close to Florence and Siena and San Gimignano. But on that trip, you went further south, right?

Carol Klinger:

We did.

Katy Clarke:

Did you have any surprises around that area?

Carol Klinger:

Oh, my gosh. I was supposed to go on the Genoa trip, and it got sideways. And so you offered, let's go to Tuscany instead. And I was like, okay, I'll go to Tuscany. And I'd been to Tuscany, like I said, a few years ago, with my girlfriend. So I was like, it's good, because after Tuscany, I was meeting friends in Lucca to do school. So I said, "this will be more convenient". The first hour of the trip, I couldn't believe what happened when we drive an hour north out of Rome and go to the castle and meet Claudia and this castle that's been in her home hundreds of years, and there's association with her family in the Catholic Church and the Pope and her telling us the story of her great grandfather being a Black Guard who escort the royalties or dignitaries to the Pope.

Carol Klinger:

And she shows us a picture of, here's my great-grandfather, here's the King and Queen of Italy, back when they had a King and Queen, and here's the Pope and, oh, as we're walking through the house, the castle, she's moving furniture, she's fixing covers, and she lives here. This is her home. It's not like some of the other castles we visited that are empty and they're just there to be seen. This is her home. And then she shows us the gorgeous Renaissance garden that was her, I think her great, great grandmother had created that. And then we walk outside, and thanks to Katy and Untold Italy, there are two women playing the cellos, and they're playing Handel's music because Handel had stayed at this castle for two summers. And while he was there, he wrote 50 pieces of music.

Carol Klinger:

He had to write a piece of music every Sunday for the church. And so these women are playing, and we get to have a Prosecco toast and some Parmigiano Reggiano and some other snacks. And Claudia was so stunned with these women who were playing that she's

videotaping. So here's the host. She's so excited. She's videotaping. And the women get done playing. It was lovely.

Carol Klinger:

It was a beautiful day. We're in the garden, they're playing, and they finish and they thank Claudia. But Claudia's like, thank you. And the women are also dressed in traditional dresses. And one of the musicians, her mother had made the costumes. So they're conversing with Claudia about the costumes, and everyone's giving their appreciation. But I found it amazing that Claudia was videotaping because she was just as excited to have these musicians playing in her garden as we were being part of it. And then we sit down and have lunch, and Claudia joins us for lunch.

Carol Klinger:

She's just an amazing woman who's traveled the world and just had some wonderful life experiences. And she could talk to everyone at the table about their lives because she's been to so many countries and done so many different things, and a beautiful lunch in a Renaissance garden. I mean, come on, Katy!

Katy Clarke:

I know. These are the things I dream about. This was like my. I'm sort of projecting my dreams onto this untold Italy. And what we tried to do is really tap into everyone's senses, you know, so, you know, the taste, the sight, the sounds. And you can't have that experience at home.

Carol Klinger:

No. I have a friend who's a really good traveler, loves to find excursions. You do those kind of things on your own, and you can find trips and events to do, but nothing that's been as specifically curated, I guess, is the best way I can explain it as an experience with Lorenza and Claudia; those were both incredible, incredible experiences. And there was food, too. So it was food and wine. It was always good. But the other funny part is my friends, who I was meeting in Lucca (they were already in Lucca), and I'm sending them pictures of my trip, and they're like, "That's an amazing trip!"

Carol Klinger:

I said, "I know. You guys should have come". And so then by the time I finished the trip, one of my friends said, "Well, I signed up for the next one".

Katy Clarke:

Look, we're so thrilled. You know, you do trust us with your trips, Carol, because, you know, she's been on a few with us, haven't you? So I think you've been on five now.

Carol Klinger:

Yes.

Katy Clarke:

And she's such a wonderful - as you can hear everyone. She's a friendly person. And, yeah, it's. It's an important part, though, the conviviality with the group. I think it's really important that people, you know, are able to share their stories and get to know one another. And it's not transactional.

Katy Clarke:

I don't.... we don't want it to be.

Carol Klinger:

No, for me, it's perfect because we get to interact with other people and we can go to these wine tastings. I don't have to worry about driving. In fact, a lot of times after we've done our wine tasting, there's a little nap as we're driving back to wherever we're going next or if it's back to the hotel. And so it just takes away all the angst over, oh, it's supposed to rain tomorrow. And I had planned to do this. I don't know if we can do it. When we were in the Dolomites, we had some rain that we didn't expect.

Carol Klinger:

And Liv was able to shuffle the schedule around because our group wasn't so huge that it wasn't inflexible. We were able to move some things around and accommodate the weather so we could still do the activities that she had planned.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah, it's really important and we spend a lot of time, you know, contingency planning for things like that as well, because we know it's your special time, you know, to get away from busy life. And it's really an escape and it's an immersion into another way of living in another, another life.

Carol Klinger:

But you also plan it out so that it's not jam-packed every day - there are activities, but there's also time to get a massage at the hotel if you need to, or go for a swim in the pool if you need to. There are those moments where you can just relax and be on your own for a little bit if you want to. Or if you want to meet another member of the group and have an aperitivo, you can do that as well. So there's still flexibility.

Katy Clarke:

As I said, I am projecting my needs and wants. I do love a relaxing interlude in my trips. And I think you know as well that I'm very much into the thermal baths. It's my happy place now. Do you like them, Carol?

Carol Klinger:

Yes, well, listening to your podcasts, last summer, a friend of mine went with me to Puglia. We spent a week just wandering around Puglia and we did some beaches. We went all the way down to Santa Maria de Leuca. Is that right?

Katy Clarke:
Yeah. Leuca.

Carol Klinger:
Yeah, yeah, Leuca. swam in the sea where the two seas come together. Oh, and. But we finished that trip with two days in Ischia and went to the Poseidon Garden there, this thermal bath there, which were incredible.

Katy Clarke:
So good. I love Ischia for that. I'm still dreaming of it. I've got it. I've got another secret I want to tell everyone. I went there on my big birthday a few years ago. And when I was staying at the hotel, we noticed someone that looked quite familiar. We arrived fairly late at lunchtime and we were hungry, my friend and I, and we stopped in this hotel and there was...

Katy Clarke:
For some reason, there was only another party in the restaurant. And so they set us right next to these people and we could hear these accents that were very posh, like English posh. And my friend said, who is that? And because we are Australian and the British Royal family is also our royal family, I was like, hang on a minute. And I was having a little look and everyone I know, there's a lot of people listening, so maybe I should keep this as a secret. But anyway, I said, I think that's Queen Camilla because she's quite recognizable. Then I started going, no, it can't be, and I started Googling. And in fact, she has been going to Ischia since she was a little girl.

Katy Clarke:
And then I saw her several times later at breakfast and things like that, and it was definitely her. So I've, you know, if it's good enough for Queen Camilla, Carol, I think it's good enough for us. But I love that you're combining these experiences. So you're not - you're coming on the tour, then you're going off and doing a little adventure with your friends or going to a language school. You've made this Italian adventure so interactive and fun. I love that.

Carol Klinger:
I think I picked a little bit up from the Australians when they're like, well, we come for six weeks or two months. And I'm like, wow, for us, two weeks is a big trip. So I try to make the most and I try to get two to three weeks, three and a half. Sometimes I get puppy dog eyes from my husband if I go too long.

Katy Clarke:
Yeah, well, he's a good egg. As we say here. We should embrace what our desires are and, like, you know, it's amazing you've got a partner that supports you in that. I think it's fantastic. And I do say to all women, if you want to come on it. And we have had solo men travelers as well, actually, on some of our trips. Everyone's welcome.

Katy Clarke:

We have all age groups, don't we? It's really an interesting mix of people. That's what I love as well, because I think everyone is really just curious and interested in food and wine and culture. And so you have this, you know, lovely mix of people from all ages from around the world. If you're lucky, you get some Australians. I'm just joking, but I think that's a nice part of our trips, too.

Carol Klinger:

Absolutely. It feels like we all have travel, food and wine in common. Everybody is there for those wonderful things, and there's always something to talk about. Every group I've been on has been fabulous. It's sad to leave at the end of the trip because we've become friends.

Katy Clarke:

Yeah, we do have a lot of people that stay in contact, even from, you know, our very first trip back in 2022. It's super nice and we're actually catching up. Olivia and I are catching up with some of our very dear clients next week, actually, when she's here in Melbourne back for a visit with her family. So it does stay quite connected and I love that about it. So I've got one last question for you, Carol. How has Italy changed you? Has it changed you at all? Or is it something that you were going in with open eyes and you were ready for a change, or, you know, maybe it's just, you know, piqued some little interests that maybe weren't there before.

Carol Klinger:

Italy has inspired me to really dig in and learn the culture and understand and I don't want to say, the history. It's more. Italians really do embrace La Dolce Vita. It's family, it's food. And I'm an A-type personality. And I've lived such a go, go, go life. And now that I'm retired, I really enjoy their love of life and to embrace the simple pleasures, to have traditions and festivals that have been going on for hundreds of years is phenomenal. And they put these festivals on with the same passion that they had for the last 100 years.

Carol Klinger:

I think also the first time I went to Tuscany with my other friend, whose name is Carol, we had just arrived and we looked out over the Tuscan countryside and she just sighed and said, "Look at this beautiful Tuscan countryside." And it was just stopping and looking and saying, "You know what? It really is beautiful." And I've gone from the traveler that has to do everything to really enjoying and embracing some of the slow lunches we've had on the tours where we were in, I think it was La Morra for a lunch, and we were sitting outside having wine and. And just sharing pizzas. And literally, there is a church right there and the church bells were ringing and Mass was ending, and people are coming out from Mass and just watching people seeing and living their everyday life. I just have such a great appreciation for that and just slowing down, taking it in, interacting with people one-on-one on these trips and just really enjoying where I am in the moment at that time. And I'm truly grateful because I've had some just amazing experiences.

Katy Clarke:

It does make you feel grateful for having the ability to have that experience, but also that you can reflect on the time that you've had there and, you know, bring a little piece of it home. I know in our family, one of the things we do is we have Italian breakfast, which, as Carol knows, can be quite an extravagant affair with multiple homemade cakes and pastries. This is why we do not have Italian breakfast very often. Otherwise, it could get very dangerous. But we, you know, it's one of those things that we've brought back that we all love. And if I say, I think it's time for Italian breakfast, the kids just think it's fantastic. And we go all out. We have the Parmigiano Reggiano.

Katy Clarke:

We bring out the balsamic vinegar. We get the pastries and the cakes going and the prosciutto. And it's one of those special things. We all sit down for breakfast. We like to sit down at least once a day for a meal just to center ourselves as well. But, yeah, it's one of those traditions that we put back, I guess. But not that Italians eat like that every day.

Katy Clarke:

It's just a special hotel. And it's very hard, isn't it? You go and you've had these beautiful dinners, and you're like, okay, I'm just going to have a light breakfast. Well, then the breakfast is laid out before you, and you're like, I might have a yogurt. You're like, might try that little piece of cake over there.

Carol Klinger:

Right, right. You know, Katy, people keep asking me, my friends, why do you keep going back to Italy? And I keep telling them, if you're from the United States and all you've done is go to New York City or Los Angeles, you haven't seen the United States. Italy is so long and narrow. When you're in the Dolomites, that is a completely different country than when you're in Puglia. I haven't been to Sicily yet. That's still on my to-do list. So to say "Well, I've been to Rome, Venice, Florence and Naples" But there's so much more in the United States. Have you been to Colorado? Have you been to Wyoming? Have you been to Florida? Have you been to Texas? Those are all very different experiences, even here in the United States.

Carol Klinger:

And that's the way I see Italy. There are still so many places I want to go to and experiences that I want to have that my list keeps getting longer.

Katy Clarke:

It's a terrible affliction. I have this problem, too, and I haven't been to. There's two regions I haven't been to yet, which is Molise. Oh, sorry, three. Abruzzo and Sardinia. And, yeah, I need to get on to that situation. But we're gonna probably. We'll probably do a trip with the family, maybe starting in Venice and going all the way down to Puglia.

Carol Klinger:

Ooooh.

Katy Clarke:

That would be a nice road trip, I think. So many places to go. But if there was one place that stayed. Sticks in your heart, can you tell me what that is?

Carol Klinger:

You know, I think I'm going to say the Dolomites, because the Dolomites are just so beautiful on their own. So beautiful. I mean, and I. I love Torino. It's an elegant city. But in the springtime, Puglia, you can't beat the beaches and the beauty. Those whitewashed villages along the coast, the beautiful coastlines. It's like, I can't have a favorite.

Carol Klinger:

It's not possible.

Katy Clarke:

It's like choosing a favorite child, isn't it? Yes. Yeah, I know. I'm the same. Although I can't wait for you to go to Sicily, because I think you're gonna really love it, because it's one of those places that has just got a different energy. It's very special. But, yeah, I do agree about the Dolomites. And, you know, you went skiing there, too, didn't you? So.

Carol Klinger:

Yes, I did.

Katy Clarke:

We're coming up on the Winter Olympics this year. Where did you go skiing?

Carol Klinger:

We skied in Val Gardena. We skied in Alta Badia. We went to Cortina and skied there. So, I mean, you ski to all these different villages? We skied the Tre Cima, the Three Peaks, I think it's called. Yeah, we skied a lot of different places. It was six straight days of skiing, so it was incredible. And I get to go back. I'm going back in December because I'm going to go back to Bolzano for the Christmas market.

Katy Clarke:

Wow. Get your skates on, too, because they've got their skating rink there that my kids had to go on, and it's very pretty, so. Oh, Carol, I'm jealous. I'm jealous.

Carol Klinger:

Yes. So I'm attaching that onto another ski adventure.

Katy Clarke:

Well done to you, Carol. Listen to - I think you might be a bit more. Even more Italy-obsessed than. But you. I think it's easy for you to get there somehow.

Carol Klinger:
The flight's a few hours shorter.

Katy Clarke:
Oh, Carol. Grazie Mille! Thank you. I've just so loved chatting with you about your Italian adventures. And I am so, so humbled and grateful that you entrust us with them even more. And I can't wait for you to spend time in Umbria and Northern Italy next year and hearing about what you think about them also. So thank you.

Katy Clarke:
Carol, thank you for joining us on Untold Italy today.

Carol Klinger:
Thank you, Katy.

Katy Clarke:
Ciao.

Katy Clarke:
Italy really does have a unique way of pulling people in. I loved hearing Carol's stories and her curiosity and openness to new experiences - whether she's sharing wine with friends in the Dolomites, savoring focaccia in Altamura, or marveling at centuries-old traditions—truly inspiring. I especially love how she's woven her Italian journeys into her life and made meaningful connections wherever she goes!

And of course, we love hearing from all of you who write in and let us know your experiences. Whichever way you travel, we hope you find the Italy that you're looking for, as well as a few wonderful surprises on your travels.

If you want to learn more about the places Carol mentioned and about our tours of the hidden pockets of Italy, we've put the details and information about the tour into the show notes at untolditaly.com/301.

Thank you for joining us on this journey, and for supporting Untold Italy. If you enjoyed today's episode, we'd be so grateful if you could leave a rating or review on your favorite podcast app, or consider upgrading to our premium app for ad-free listening and exclusive travel content, now including almost all Italian regions - there's just a few to go!

Next week, we're meeting another traveler who has based their Italian adventures around food and wine experiences - a true bon vivant. But until then, it's "ciao for now."