



DREAM OF ITALY TV SERIES

AS SEEN ON
PUBLIC TELEVISION

TRAVEL GUIDE



DISCOVER ITALY

In the PBS series *Dream of Italy*, Italian travel expert Kathy McCabe, editor of the award-winning travel newsletter *Dream of Italy*, explores six diverse areas of Italy. Viewers meet Italy's colorful locals — chefs, artisans, historians — who are deeply connected to their land, carrying on and preserving the traditions of their ancestors. This travel guide connects you with the places we visit and people we meet in the six episodes of the series. Use it to plan your own Italian travels. *Dream of Italy* is directed by Dakkan Abbe who created the public television series *Inside The Tuscan Hills*.



DREAM OF ITALY

The Six-Episode Public Television Series

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TUSCANY

ALL THINGS ITALIAN

If Tuscany didn't exist, we'd have to invent it. But this place is not frozen in time. The hills are alive. Tuscany is so famous it has become shorthand for all things Italian. But it is much more than good food, good wine and beautiful vistas. It's a real place, where real people live and work. We travel through the region, from the heart of *Chianti* to the coast of *Maremma*. It is impossible to sum up the richness of Tuscany in one episode, but hope you enjoy some highlights of this diverse place.

CASTELLO DI AMA



Castello di Ama produces the most famous wine in Tuscany – *Chianti Classico*, a locally protected vintage made of 100% *Sangiovese* grapes. *Chianti Classico* has undergone a renaissance in recent years, thanks in part to winemakers like *Lorenza Pallanti*. *Pallanti* is not only a winemaker but a patron of art, welcoming modern artists to her vineyard to erect stunning, fanciful and moving works. *Castello di Ama* is open daily for tours and tastings; reserve in advance. For more information, visit www.castellodiama.com

OLIVE OIL

The focus at *Pornanino* in *Radda in Chianti* is on quality. Hand-harvesting olives and gathering them in soft nets helps protect the delicate fruit. The organic olives are picked from 4,000 trees, composed of four types: *Frantoio*, *Pendolino*, *Moraiolo* and *Leccino*. This combination gives the oil its distinctive spicy taste. The olives are taken to a mill just hundreds of feet from where they are grown. From March through October, every Tuesday at 10 a.m., owner *Matteo Robutti* presents a seminar on olive oil (10€ per person). *Pornanino* also offers three vacation villas for rent. For more information, visit www.oliveoil.chiantionline.com and www.pornanino.com



CASHMERE GOATS



American expat Nora Kravis started Italy's first cashmere goat farm in 1995. *Chianti Cashmere Farm* in *Radda in Chianti* is open to the public every afternoon between 4 and 7 p.m. from Easter until the end of October. An organized group tour is 5€. There's a store at the farm where you can buy luxurious scarves and blankets and even soap made from goat milk. Nora runs a Goat Camp each May, where guests can stay for several days and get involved in the goats' care. You can also "Adopt A Kid" and follow its progress. Nora rents out a small house on the farm. For more information, visit www.chianticashmere.com



DARIO CECCHINI



Colorful and opinionated – part showman, part philosopher – *Dario Cecchini* is perhaps the most famous butcher in all of Italy. He has transformed his hometown of *Panzano* into a mecca for meat, with visitors arriving from all over the world. The centerpiece of his meat empire is the butcher shop *Antica Macelleria Cecchini* where if you're so inclined you can become a butcher for a day (three hour workshop with lunch is 280€ per person). Dine at one of Dario's restaurants *Solociccia*, *Dario DOC*, *Officina della Bistecca*. For more information, visit www.dariocecchini.com



BUSATTI TEXTILES

Since 1842, *Busatti* has been producing sumptuous linen, cotton and wool textiles in the basement of a 16th-century *palazzo* in *Anghiari*. Eighth-generation proprietor *Giovanni Sassolini Busatti* takes pride in the fact that his customers prefer fabrics made the old-fashioned way. “*Most of the production requested is the old one: high quality, shuttle looms, very slow production, very slow but well-finished,*” he says. Factory tours are available upon request; email michelangelo@busatti.com The *Busatti* store at *Via Mazzini, 14* is open Monday through Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. For information, visit www.busatti.com



TUSCAN COWBOYS

The wetlands of the *Maremma*, in the southwest corner of Tuscany, are home to a vast preserve of stately umbrella pines and remote, untouched beaches. Here you will find the *butteri*, the last remaining Tuscan cowboys, whose work goes back to the time when the area was malarial swamp with more cattle than people. *Azienda Agricole Alberese* offers special programs in the summer months to meet the *butteri* and ride with them; prices start at 25€ for adults and 10€ for kids, in Italian only. For more information, visit www.alberese.com





WHERE WE STAYED

VILLA GLORIA

Villa Gloria is a stunning property represented by *Doorways, Ltd.* Located in the town of *Barbarino* in the *Chianti* area, *Villa Gloria* is comprised of two beautifully restored buildings – a magnificent tower and the original hay barn. A separate studio apartment is located at pool level. The interior showcases the best of contemporary Italian design, with a very cool, clean look. A total of eight bedrooms sleep 16 people.

There's a large, modern, well-equipped kitchen, huge dining room and several inside and outside living areas. The central focus of *Villa Gloria* is a impressive infinity swimming pool and jacuzzi. The property offers absolutely captivating views of the *Chianti* countryside. The conscientious and kind owners are always available to assist with the house or give local tour advice. The Villa rents for \$13,014 to \$19,020 per week, depending on the season. For more information, visit www.villavacations.com



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ROME

WHEN IN ROME...

In Rome, 2,000 years of history collide into the present. Every era has left its mark...from the emperors who once ruled the world, to the Renaissance popes and princes who built St. Peter's Basilica and countless other monuments. Rome is full of life and energy - it's a city always on display. The cracks and crumbling facades only make it more beautiful. There are so many layers of life in the Eternal City and in this episode, we reveal the city's hidden gems.

VOLPETTI



You've never seen a deli quite like *Volpetti*. The *alimentari* at *Via Marmorata, 47* in *Testaccio* was founded more than 40 years ago. *Alessandro Volpetti* gave Kathy a mouth-watering tour of the meats, cheeses, truffles, olive oils, wines and ready-to-eat foods, all packed into a tight space. (*Volpetti* is also a stop on *The Taste of Testaccio Food Tour* run by *Eating Italy Food Tours*.) This is the perfect place to buy supplies for a picnic lunch and gastronomic gifts for the folks at home. Sit down for a hot meal at *Volpetti Piu* next door. The *pizzeria-tavola calda* is open Monday through Saturday for lunch and dinner. For more information, visit www.volpetti.com



TESTACCIO MARKET

The *Mercato Testaccio* offers everything from vegetables to cured meats, fresh seafood to Sicilian pastries. The market, at of *Via Galvani* and *Via Beniamino Franklin*, is a great excuse to visit the working-class neighborhood of *Testaccio*. (Nearby sights include the MACRO Museum, the Protestant Cemetery and the Pyramid.) The market is open Monday through Saturday, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. A great way to learn more about the market (and taste many of the offerings) is to join *The Taste of Testaccio Food Tour* run by *Eating Italy Food Tours*. For more information, visit www.eatingitalyfoodtours.com

CACIO E PEPE



There's a tiny restaurant in *Trastevere* that is one of the best places in Rome to eat *Cacio e Pepe*, one of the most famous dishes in the Eternal City. Brothers *Francesco* and *Roberto di Felice* taught Kathy how to make the dish with *Pecorino Romano*, *tagliolini*, pepper, water and a secret ingredient (*shhhh* - love). *Da Enzo* is a great place to try other Roman specialties too. *Da Enzo* is located at *Via dei Vascellari, 29* and open daily, 12:30 to 3 p.m. and 7:30 to 11 p.m. It fills up, so make a reservation by calling [39 06 5812260](tel:39065812260). For more information, visit www.daenzoal29.com

ROMAN MOSAICS

Nadia Ridolfini teaches visitors how to make traditional Roman mosaics at her studio *Aegea Mosaici* on *Via Corsini, 8*. You can take a two-hour class (35€ per person) and create your own small mosaic to take home or take longer courses in glass fusion or even making *filati* (micro tiles made with *smalti* glass.) The technique was said to have been born in the Vatican's mosaic studio in the 17th century. The studio is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Lessons are in Italian but aren't hard to follow even if you don't know the language. For more information, visit www.aegeamosaici.com



GELATO



When in Rome, eating *gelato* is a must but not all *gelato* is created equal. Avoid the places that display fluffy flavors in fake colors. Typically this *gelato* is filled with chemicals. *Gelateria del Teatro ai Coronari* at *Via dei Coronari*, 65-66 makes delicious and unusual natural flavors like sage and raspberry (the most popular flavor), pumpkin with chocolate and Amaretto and white chocolate with basil. *Gelato*, of course, is similar to ice cream but traditionally has more milk, no eggs and is churned at a slower rate, making it denser. The *gelateria* is open daily from noon to midnight.



ALICE PASQUINI

Alice Pasquini is quickly become one of the world's foremost street artists. Her work can be found throughout Rome and around the world (a great place to view many of her works in at www.instagram.com/alicepasquini) In our segment, we visit two walls featuring her work: *Circolo degli Artisti* at *Via Casilina Vecchia* and *San Lorenzo* at *Via dei Sabelli* (between *Via Degli Ausoni* and *Via dei Sardi*). Alice also creates stand-alone pieces in her studio in Rome. If you are interested in buying one of Pasquini's pieces, email info@alicepasquini.com for a list of galleries. For more information, visit www.alicepasquini.com



HISTORIC DANCING



Under the direction of *Nino Graziano Luca*, the *Compagnia Nazionale di Danza Storica* is dedicated to preserving European classical dances. Members of the public are invited to attend the grand balls held by the group – such as *Il Gran Ballo di Sissi* and *Il Gran Ballo di Carnevale* – and may join in several waltzes as well as seven or eight dances in the *Carnet de Bal*. Many of the events are held in the exquisite *Palazzo Brancaccio* (www.palazzobrancaccio.com) where we filmed our segment. For more information, visit www.danzastorica.it



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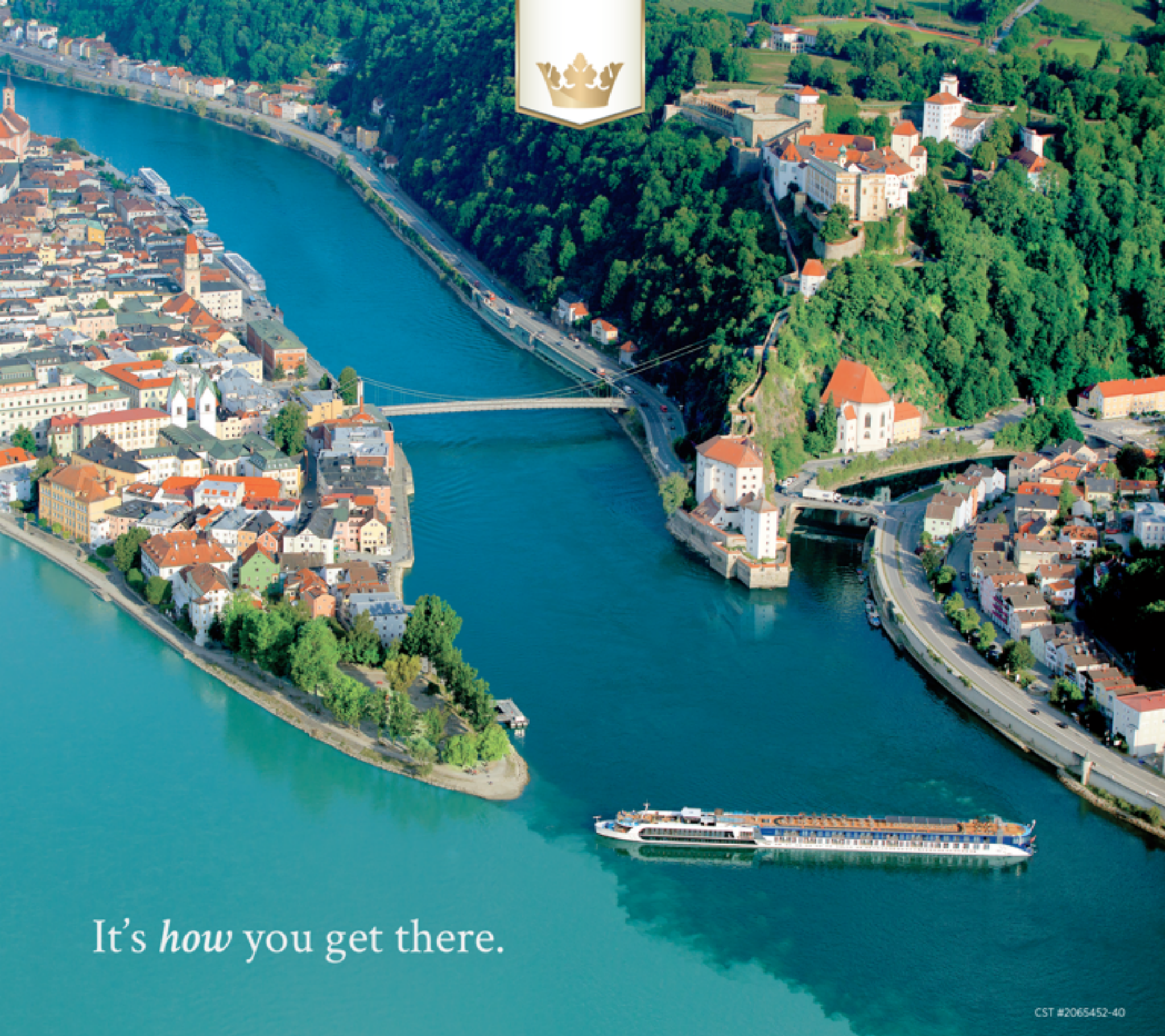


WHERE WE STAYED

HOTEL MAJESTIC ROMA

Location, location, location. Few hotels have a better location than the *Hotel Majestic Roma* which sits regally on Rome's most famous street, the *Via Veneto*, a short walk from the Spanish Steps, the Pantheon and Rome's best shopping. Built in 1889, it was the first hotel on *Via Veneto* and remains the perfect combination of neo-classical style and modern luxury.

Still family owned and operated, the *Hotel Majestic Roma* prides itself on providing impeccable service to guests. That extends to food. The hotel is home to *Massimo Riccioli*, a restaurant that is an artisan's workshop for one of Rome's most famous chefs. *Hotel Majestic Roma* is a member of *The Leading Hotels of the World*. Nightly rates average about 400€ per night for a deluxe room during high season. For more information, visit www.hotelmajestic.com



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UMBRIA

THE GREEN HEART OF ITALY

Italy's only region with neither a coastline nor a border with a foreign country, *Umbria* is more rustic and less-visited than its neighbor Tuscany. *Umbria* has a distinct feeling, a wildness that is hard to find in the famous region to the west. Often called "the green heart of Italy," *Umbria* is a region of grand hills, steep valleys and picturesque, but little-known villages and towns. If people know anything about *Umbria*, it is often its most famous inhabitant - St. Francis of Assisi.

ASSISI



Assisi – the hometown of *St. Francis* and *St. Clare* – is a must-visit for any trip to *Umbria*. Set high on the slopes of *Mt. Subasio*, *Assisi* is beautifully preserved with 2000 years of Roman, Medieval and Renaissance architecture on display. Leave ample time to explore the extraordinary *Basilica di San Francesco* before wandering the lovely streets to the *Basilica di Santa Chiara*. Further up the mountain, the *Eremo delle Carceri* is an ancient retreat for mystics that *St. Francis* visited frequently during his life. Head up here for a peaceful break.

PERUGIA

Across the valley from *Assisi*, the city of *Perugia* has a history that goes back even further than *Assisi's*. Although it was founded by the native *Umbrii* tribe, by the 5th century B.C., it had become one of the primary towns of the powerful Etruscan League. Today, it is a bustling and beautiful city. The *University of Perugia* is one of Italy's largest and student life fills the streets with a youthful energy. The city is also filled with artisans crafting everything from stained glass and textiles to chocolate.



STAINED GLASS



Studio Moretti Caselli in *Perugia* has been producing stained glass windows since *Francesco Moretti* founded the studio in 1860. *Moretti* was known as one of the best glass restorers of his generation, studying the lost art of glassmaking in 12th and 13th century texts. *Maddalena Forenza* now runs the studio and gives tours of the museum and laboratory housed in a stunning 15th-century *palazzo*. The studio is open daily for visits, with an appointment, and every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. without an appointment. For more information, visit www.studiomoretticaselli.it



WEAVING TEXTILES



Inside a converted, 13th-century church in *Perugia*, *Marta Cucchia* runs *Museo Atelier Giuditta Brozzetti*, in honor of her grandmother who ran a weaving school for local women. In addition to weaving her own textiles for sale, *Marta* teaches courses. The workshop is open for visitors Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. A one-hour guided tour is available on weekdays and weekends, by reservation, and costs 4€ per person. *Marta* teaches one-day (150€ per person, one finished piece) and five-day (650€ per person, multiple finished pieces) private courses. For more information, visit www.brozzetti.com

CHOCOLATE SCHOOL



Chocoholics rejoice! Your prayers were answered when *Perugina* built a chocolate school in its factory on the outskirts of *Perugia*. (There's an interesting museum as well.) Kathy took a class on how to make *Perugina's* famous *Baci* kisses candies. A similar four-hour class called *Le 3 Stelle dei Baci Perugina* costs 70€ per person. Classes in English are available by request though the courses in Italian aren't too difficult to follow if you know some Italian language basics. To reserve a class, call [39 02 45467655](tel:390245467655) or fill out the reservation form at www.perugina.it

GOAT-CHEESE

Goat-cheese is becoming increasingly popular in *Umbria*, thanks in part to the cheese production of *Diego Calcabrina* and his 150 goats. Visitors are welcome at *Calcabrina's* goat farm near *Bevagna* but should contact him in advance at diego.calcabrina@hotmail.it A goat cheese tasting with seven or eight selections as well as tastings of Diego's wines can be arranged for 20€ per person. *Diego* produces the wines *Foglio 11* (*Sagrantino*) and *Foglio 61* (*Sangiovese*) which can be purchased in the U.S. at www.chambersst wines.com For more information, visit www.facebook.com/Calcabrina.Fattoria.Biodinamica



CARAPACE



The *Carapace*, meaning “turtle shell,” is the most unusual building in the Umbrian landscape. Part sculpture, part working winery, it is the creation of Italian sculptor *Arnaldo Pomodoro*. Located in the countryside outside the town *Bevagna*, *Carapace* is the home of *Tenuta Castelbuono* which produces excellent *Sagrantino* and *Montefalco Rosso* vintages. Tours and tastings are available daily; it is best to reserve in advance. For more information, visit www.tenutacastelbuono.it



CAPRAI



In the area surrounding *Montefalco*, the indigenous grape *Sagrantino* has experienced a rebirth in the last two decades, thanks mostly to *Marco Caprai* and his family winery *Arnaldo Caprai*. *Caprai* has made this historic grape famous the world over and if there is anywhere to taste it, it is right here. The winery is open daily for tastings between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and 2 and 7 p.m. Tours are available daily but must be reserved in advance. The cost for a tour/tasting is 10€ per person. For more information, visit www.arnaldocaprai.it



COOKING WITH SALVATORE

Chef *Salvatore Denaro* is a character and cooking with him is like a party and lesson rolled up into one. He is the resident chef at *Arnaldo Caprai* and that's where he gave Kathy her cooking lesson. A lesson/lunch with Salvatore is 80€ per person and must be booked at least a few weeks in advance by contacting www.arnaldocaprai.it During the summer, Salvatore also gives lessons at his famous *orto*, his vegetable garden outside *Bevagna*. The cost is 60-80€ per person and the experience is a six-hour extravaganza including picking, grilling, cooking and eating! Contact salvatoredenaro@hotmail.com

WILD GREENS

At her family's *agriturismo* in *Castel San Felice*, *Marta Giampiccolo* leads half-day (starting at 14€ per person) and full-day courses in foraging for greens and herbs. She offers saffron harvesting courses in October and November. (Instruction is available in English on request.) The B&B's small farm shop is always open (as the family lives upstairs) and sells saffron, apples, jams, dried herbs, spelt (*farro*), lentils and honey. There are three rooms/suites available for stays for those who wish to spend more time exploring the area. For more information, visit www.zafferanoedintorni.it





WHERE WE STAYED

FATTORIA DEL GELSO

Fattoria del Gelso offers an excellent location just minutes from *Assisi* and within walking distance of the town of *Cannara*, famous for its onions. With eight bedrooms, the villa sleeps up to 16 people but the layout ensures privacy for even large groups. There's a pool and a pizza oven (arrange for Marco's famous pizza night). The owners Suzy and Bill Menard, who also own the *Via Umbria* store in Washington, DC, are very hands on and their team can arrange for fantastic excursions (wine tasting, truffle hunting, etc.) throughout Umbria. Weekly rentals are 3,000€ during low season and 4,000€ during the most popular months. For more information, visit www.viaumbria.com



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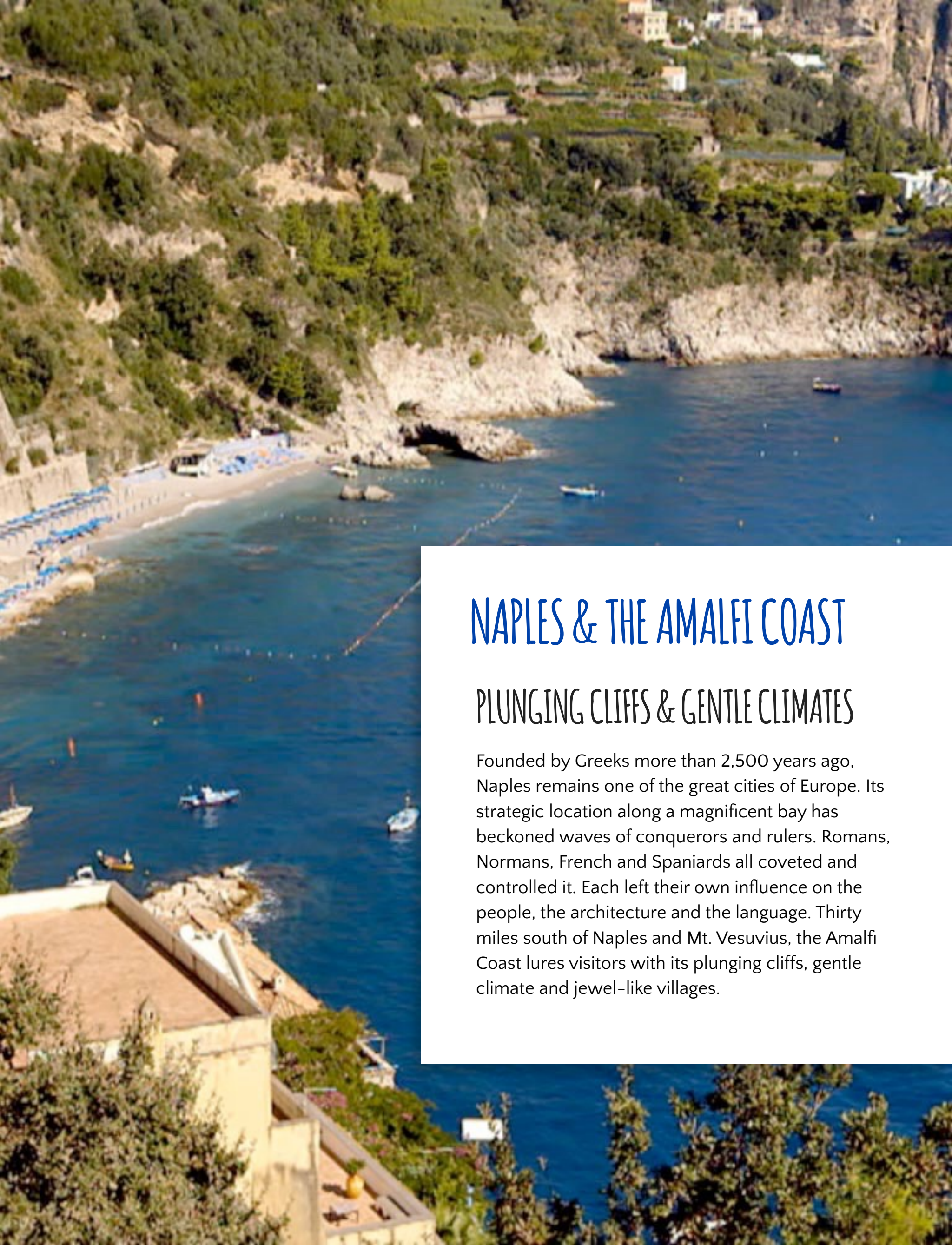
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NAPLES & THE AMALFI COAST

PLUNGING CLIFFS & GENTLE CLIMATES

Founded by Greeks more than 2,500 years ago, Naples remains one of the great cities of Europe. Its strategic location along a magnificent bay has beckoned waves of conquerors and rulers. Romans, Normans, French and Spaniards all coveted and controlled it. Each left their own influence on the people, the architecture and the language. Thirty miles south of Naples and Mt. Vesuvius, the Amalfi Coast lures visitors with its plunging cliffs, gentle climate and jewel-like villages.



CAFE CULTURE

The coffee in Naples is often considered the best in Italy. Some say it because of the water, some say it is the result of the energy of the city. One of the best places to drink true Neapolitan coffee is at *Gran Caffè Gambrinus*, a 150-year café in *Piazza Trieste e Trento*. Not content to wake up Naples with mere espresso, *Caffè Gambrinus* has developed a wickedly strong drink called the *cremina*, a mix of espresso, sugar and milk. For more information, visit www.grancaffegambrinus.com



RUBINACCI TAILORS

Naples has a long history of fine tailoring and *Marianno Rubinacci* is one of the city's great tailors. His store/workshop is located at *Via Chiaia, 149/E*. If you would like a custom *Rubinacci* suit of your own, it is best to make an appointment for a fitting or two while you are in Naples ([39 081 415793](tel:39081415793)). A bespoke suit usually takes about a month for Rubinacci's tailors to make and can be shipped at your home. As the old adage goes, if you have to ask how much one costs, you probably can't afford it. For more information, visit www.marianorubinacci.net



PIZZA SCHOOL

Pizza was born in Naples and it remains synonymous with the city. *Enzo Coccia* is a master *pizzaiolo* and teaches amateurs and professionals how to make true Neapolitan pizza. *Coccia* offers one-day lessons for a minimum of five people (100€ per person); an English interpreter can be arranged. A more professional week-long course is 700€ per person. The lessons take place at *Pizzeria La Notizia* (Via Michelangelo da Caravaggio, 53; www.pizzarialanotizia.com). Even if you don't take a lesson, go there for some of the best pizza of your life. For more information, visit www.pizzaconsulting.com



CHRISTMAS STREET

The street *Via San Gregorio Armeno* is home to a cluster of artisans who make small *terracotta* and wooden figurines. The area is famous for its traditional Christmas nativity scenes, but over the years the subjects have expanded to include earthy peasant scenes and celebrity caricatures. Walk down the street to visit a variety of artisans including *Luigi Cesarini* and his 130-year-old family workshop at *Via San Gregorio Armeno, 11*.



MOUNT VESUVIUS



Naples is framed by the dramatic curve of the bay and the domed volcano that looms over the city. Vesuvius has played a large role in local history, most famously with its explosion in 79 A.D. that killed 16,000 people in nearby *Pompeii*. While it is possible to visit Mt. Vesuvius on your own, it is much more meaningful with a guide to explain the extensive history and science here. We took the private *VIP Vesuvius Tour* with *Walks of Italy*, which offers a guided hike to ascend to the highest point in the crater, a walk around the rim and even the chance to descend a bit into the crater. The 2.5-hour experience is 295€ for two people. For more information, visit www.walksofitaly.com



Just inland from the Amalfi Coast, the town of *Tramonti* is unique in the viticultural world for its pre-*phylloxera* vines. In the 19th century, 90% of European grapevines were destroyed by a small insect called *phylloxera*. But the vines on this patch of land were protected by the volcanic soil and survived. Visit *Tenuta San Francesco* to try the wines made from these vines. San Francesco's *Ginestra* vines are among the rarest of *Tramonti*'s indigenous varieties, and their presence was first recorded in 1825. Reserve ahead for a tasting or lunch. There are also two B&B rooms for rent. For more information, visit www.vinitenutasanfrancesco.it

SOMMA VESUVIANA



The community of *Somma Vesuviana*, in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius, is home to two incredible musical group carrying on local folk music traditions, *Paranza d'Ognundo* and *Gruppo Folk Patrizio dell'Accademia*. The bonfire celebration, *Il Sabato dei Fuochi*, takes place in honor of returning the station of the *Madonna di Castello* to the sanctuary, takes place on the first Saturday after Easter (www.festatammorra.altervista.org). There are similar performances and celebrations throughout the year. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/festadellatammorrasomma



AMALFI PAPER

The town of *Amalfi* has a longstanding tradition of paper making. The last remaining paper mill in *Amalfi* is *Cartiera Amatruda*, where paper is made the same way it was in China 2,000 years ago. A slurry of wood or cotton pulp is spread out onto a mesh screen. The dense mixture is then pressed between two pieces of linen cloth and dried. The mill is not open to the public but their hand-crafted paper can be ordered online. For more information, visit www.cartadiamalfi.it



LIMONCELLO

The lemons along the Amalfi Coast seem to grow bigger than anywhere else in the world, so it is no surprise that the official drink here is the sweet, lemon liqueur, *Limoncello*. There's nothing better than tasting some that has been made in a local home. We visited with *Marianna Carbone* who owns a Bed & Breakfast in the town of *Conca dei Marini*. She instructed us with a simple recipe: peel the oil-rich zest off of five to eight lemons, put them into a liter of pure alcohol and let them sit in a cool, dark place for five days. Make a simple syrup with one liter of water to 700 grams of sugar. Combine all and filter. For more on her B&B, visit www.amalfiresidence.it



COOKING WITH CHEF BOB

Monastero Santa Rosa, a former convent, is one of the newest and most luxurious hotels on the Amalfi Coast. The focus here is on authenticity and quality and that very much extends to the food. The lauded and accomplished *Chef Christoph Bob* heads up the culinary efforts which focus on hyperlocal ingredients and recipes. Guests of the hotel may enjoy a culinary experience including a tour of the vegetable garden and a cooking lesson. Non-guests are welcome to dine at Monastero's stunning restaurant *Il Refettorio* which is open daily for lunch and dinner. For more information, visit www.monasterosantarosa.com



FISHING



Life on the Amalfi Coast revolves around the sea, especially when it comes to food. Enjoying fresh fish and seafood is an essential part of any visit here. On the show, we went out fishing with *Costabile Laudano* who goes out each morning for the fresh ingredients for the evening's diners at his seaside restaurant, *L'ippocampo* in *Conca dei Marini*. Make sure to try their fish *carpaccio*. For more information, visit www.trattoriaippocampo.com





WHERE WE STAYED

GRAND HOTEL VESUVIO (NAPLES)

Grand Hotel Vesuvio sits on the Naples waterfront – facing the harbor of *Santa Lucia* – in an historic Belle Epoque building. This hotel provides a peaceful and elegant retreat from the hustle and bustle of the center of Naples just minutes away. The rooms offer a combination of Old World charm (think antiques, chandeliers, marble bathrooms) and modern elegance. The hotel rooftop is surely one of the most beautiful in all of Naples. *Hotel Vesuvio* is a member of *The Leading Hotels of the World*. Nightly rates start at about 400€ per night during high season. For more information, visit www.vesuvio.it

GRAND HOTEL EXCELSIOR VITTORIA (SORRENTO)

Perched on a cliff in the center of *Sorrento*, the elegant *Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria* has a history full of superlatives. Owned and operated by the *Fiorentino* family since 1834, the property has hosted Richard Wagner and Oscar Wilde, who enjoyed the same breathtaking views of the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius as today's guests. Yet modern amenities, from a world-class spa to a hip swimming pool and bathing area, abound. *Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria* is a member of *The Leading Hotels of the World*. A classic sea view room costs 583€ per night during high season. For more information, visit www.excelsiorvittoria.com



PIEDMONT & LAKE ISEO

ELEGANT YET GROUNDED

The northern regions of Piedmont and Lombardy are home to numerous treasures including rich wines, white truffles, luxury spas and gorgeous speedboats. While these regions are elegant, the locals are down-to-earth and eager to share their traditions of truffle hunting, wine making and local cuisine. Piedmont and Lombardy may not get as much press as other areas of Italy, but they are well worth visiting.

TRUFFLE AUCTION



The *Langhe* area of Piedmont, specifically around the town of *Alba*, is home to one of the rarest and lauded culinary treasures in the world – the white truffle. A white truffle can reach prices of 1,000€ per gram or more. Every November, an exclusive charity auction – *Asta Mondiale delTartufo Bianco d'Alba* – is held at the *Castello Grinzane Cavour* with the year's largest tuber selling for as much as 100,000€. The auction is invitation only but visitors are welcome at the castle year-round. For more information, visit www.castellogrinzane.com



A more accessible event celebrating all things truffle is the annual truffle fair held each fall in the center of the charming town of *Alba*. The fair has been held for more than 80 years and includes a truffle market (where hunters bring their freshest black and white finds), a show including cooking demonstrations and cultural events such as a donkey *palio*. The fair is held on weekends between mid-October and mid-November and certainly draws über-crazy crowds. For more information, visit www.fieradeltartufo.org



TRUFFLE FAIR

TRUFFLE HUNTING



Known as the “*fratelli trifulau*” to their neighbors in *Costigliole d'Asti*, brothers *Giorgio* and *Natale Romagnolo* are fifth-generation truffle hunters and thoroughly enjoy welcoming guests to their home (*La Casa del Trifulau*) for a two-hour truffle hunting and tasting experience. The brothers will take you into the neighboring woods where hunting dogs *Brio*, *Diana* and *Esterina* aptly demonstrate their amazing ability to detect and dig out truffles. The white truffle season is September to November and various types of black truffles are in season the rest of the year. For more information, visit www.lacasadeltrifulau.it



CASCINA BRUCIATA



Piedmont has a strong wine-making tradition. The *Cascina Bruciata* winery in the town of *Barbaresco* is also perhaps unsurprisingly best known for its *Barbaresco* wines, made from the *Nebbiolo* grape, named for the fog that is common in this area. *Cascina Bruciata* also produces *Barolo*, *Barbera* and *Dolcetto* vintages. A tour and tasting is complimentary for individuals and small groups. You must reserve in advance by phone (39 347 9501505) or email (fbaravalle@cascinabruciata.it) For more information, visit www.cascinabruciata.it



ACQUI TERME

The natural hot springs at *Acqui Terme* were discovered by the ancient Romans.... for whom bathing and soaking was a national pastime. We visit *Lago delle Sorgenti* a day spa built around the remains of a 16th-century palace. This spa is unique in its Asian influences and the strict order in which guests must take the waters. The spa limits the amount of guests who can enter at one time, ensuring a semi-private experience. *Lago delle Sorgenti* recommends a sequence of 12 experiences lasting about four hours. Entrance costs 39 to 45€ per person. Reserve in advance. For more information, visit www.lagodellesorgenti.it

RIVA YACHTS

Lake Iseo is famous for the exquisite, world-famous yachts that are made right here on its shores. You can learn about *Riva Yachts* through the two-hour tour, the *Riva Yacht Experience*. It begins with a 30-minute film on Riva's history and starring roles in movies (most recently in the 2014 Oscar winner *La Grande Bellezza*). Then it is on to the factory to see the boats in production and learn even more about the boat building traditions here. The tour ends with a stop at the *Plancia* (the former office of *Carlo Riva*) and an exploration of model boats. The tour is available on Saturday and Sunday and costs 30€ per person (with hat). For more information, visit www.riva-yacht.com





Chef Luigi Falanga offers private cooking lessons at *La Foresta* on *Monte Isola* (the largest island in Lake Iseo) during certain parts of the year: October, November and March through Easter. (During the rest of the year, he is too busy cooking for the restaurant). A private lesson is 50€ per person. Although *Luigi* speaks mostly Italian, he can also teach in some basic English. *La Foresta's* restaurant, featuring fresh fish from the lake, is open daily, except Wednesday, from March to December 20. *La Foresta* also offers rooms for rent at 90€ per night. For more information, visit www.forestamontisola.it





WELCOME TO PUGLIA

LAND OF STONE WALLS & OLIVE TREES

Puglia...a land of stone walls, gargantuan, gnarled olive trees and unusual cone-shaped stone houses. With 500 miles of coastline, the heel of Italy's boot is also intimately linked to the sea. Throughout Puglia's history, its wide open coastline has brought unwanted visitors in the form of invaders who have left their mark on the rich culture here. *Puglia* is also home to one of the most beautiful cities in all of Italy – *Lecce*. Whether your passion lies in art and architecture or you simply yearn for a vacation of beach going and good food, *Puglia* will surprise and delight you.



The Baroque city of Lecce has been called “the Florence of the South.” The historic center is constructed almost entirely from the same material – known as *Lecce stone*, or *pietra leccese*. This local limestone lends itself to use as both a structural and decorative material. And although the city’s history dates back to Roman times, Lecce’s city center was largely constructed in a 100-year burst of activity by its Spanish rulers in the mid-17th century. Lecce is very walkable to explore on your own or join a walking tour, such as those available through www.ilecce.com



CLASSIC CAR RIDE

Tonino Benincasa gives Kathy a tour of Lecce in his 1935 *Morris Model 8*. A classic car ride is a unique way to experience *Puglia*. *Yltour* can arrange for a ride with *Tonino* in one of his collection of historic cars, either in the city of Lecce or in the neighboring *Salento* countryside. The tour lasts for several hours and includes a wine tasting. The cost is 100€ per person. For more information, visit www.yltourcongressi.com

PASSEGGIATA



Every Saturday and Sunday, throughout the year, the *Leccese* flock to the historic center of and engage in a grand *passeggiata*. The *passeggiata* is the nightly stroll most Italians take, usually before and sometimes after dinner. But here in *Lecce*, it is an obsession, with the entire city, and even people from the neighboring countryside, coming out. For at least an hour and a half, crowds walk from *Piazza Mazzini* to *Piazza Sant' Oronzo* and back, on the main streets and side alleys, stopping to enjoy a coffee or *gelato* or to shop.



Paper mâché was introduced to Italy from Spain in the late 17th century. It had a practical purpose – to create lightweight icons for Italy's sometimes days-long religious processions. The artisanal tradition has lived on in *Lecce* where *Claudio Riso* and his brothers *Giuseppe* and *Sandro* handcraft religious figures and peasant scenes. Their work is celebrated the world over and their pieces make for perfect souvenirs to bring home. Visit their workshop and store *Cartapesta Claudio Riso* at *Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 27*. For more information, visit www.cartapestariso.it



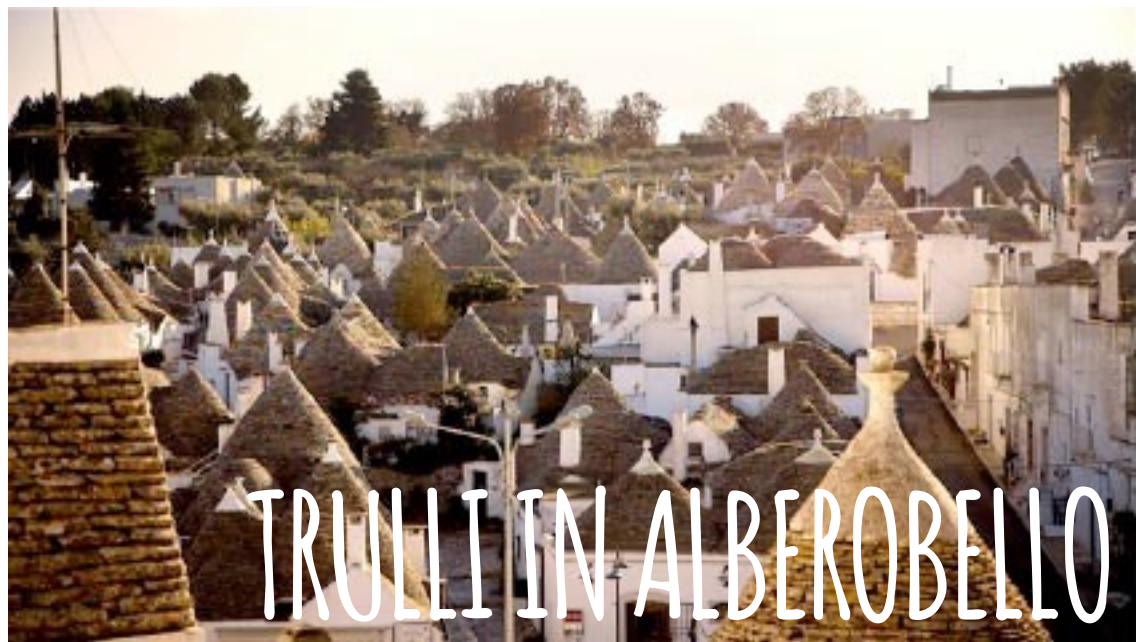


COOK WITH A MAMA

One of the most enjoyable activities in *Puglia* is eating the simple food passed down from the peasants of yesteryear or *cucina povera*. Even better? Learning how to make dishes like *orecchiette* (ear-shaped pasta) or *taralli* (savory round biscuits) and no one can do a better job in passing on culinary traditions than the “mamas” of the region. *Mama Giulia Vitale* gives Kathy a cooking lesson at *Masseria Provenzani*, an historic estate 15 minutes from *Lecce*. *Cook in Puglia* offers lessons with mamas around the *Salento* area. For more information, visit www.cookinpuglia.com



The landscape of *Puglia's Itria Valley* feels otherworldly, most because of the unusual cone-shaped house that dot the landscape. These house are called *trulli* and the town of *Alberobello* is home to the greatest concentration of them, earning the town the designation of a *UNESCO World Heritage Site* and millions of visitors a day. *Trulli* were introduced to the area by Turkish invaders. Our friend *Mimmo Palmisiano* is an expert on the history and architecture of these structures and rents out the *trulli* he has restored. For more information, visit www.trulliepuglia.com



TRULLI IN ALBEROBELLO

BOATS IN MONOPOLI



Monopoli is one of Puglia's stunning, fortified cities along the coast. While the seaside castle and fortified walls are now a peaceful place to stroll and explore, they were once battle grounds for invading Ottomans. *Monopoli* is also a center of fishing and its distinctive blue and red *gozzi* dot the harbor. Former fisherman *Ignazio Amodio* now makes delightful, small models of these boats in his tiny workshop on *Via Argenzio*. He is usually open for business in the morning. (From *Largo Portavecchia* head towards the city walls and then turn left into the old town. Look for Ignazio's workshop on the left.)



When the *Pugliese* want to socialize or celebrate, they turn to an age-old traditional dance, the *pizzica* (similar to the *tarantella*). We experienced the *pizzica* first-hand in the main square of the town of *Squinzano* and then during the olive harvest at nearby *Agricola Taurino*. Watching and learning to dance the *pizzica* with locals is one of the most authentic experiences you can have in *Puglia*. *Yltour* can arrange for a private performances and dance lessons; cost starts at 230€ For more information, visit www.yltourcongressi.com and www.agricolataurino.it





PUGLIA TRAVEL PLANNING

Two excellent Puglia-based travel companies helped us to plan our experiences in the region:

SOUTHERN VISIONS TRAVEL

Antonello Losito (picture) and *Ali Pike* run *Southern Visions*, offering immersive journeys into the cultures of Southern Italy and beyond. They specialize in premiere cycling holidays, intimate culinary tours and cuisine experiences lead by global celebrity chefs and food experts. Southern Visions offers a fleet of 150 high-end bikes including the latest carbon fiber *Bianchi bikes*, in-house bike guides and support vehicles. Their cooking school is located in a beautifully restored *masseria*. For more information, visit www.southernvisionstravel.com

YlTOUR

Ylenia Sambati and her team at *Yltour* custom design tours, excursions and incentive travel for both travelers and travel professionals seeking to experience authentic *Puglia*. Yltour's versatile offerings are perfect for those traveling alone or with a group, seeking luxury or on a budget. Yltour specializes in cooking courses, classic car rides, wine tours, sailing, cycling, yoga, painting and more. For more information, visit www.yltourcongressi.com



WHERE WE STAYED

BORGO EGNAZIA

Borgo Egnazia is a stunning, modern resort set on one of the prettiest parcels of land in all of *Puglia* (40 acres in the seaside village of *Fasano*). The hardest part about a stay here is forcing yourself to leave the ground of the resort; there's little reason to, as the resort offers everything including a golf course, beach, full-service spa, programs for kids and multiple accommodation choices, from large villas to individual guest rooms. *Borgo Egnazia* is a member of *The Leading Hotels of the World*. For more information, visit

www.borgoegnazia.com

RISORGIMENTO RESORT & HOTEL PRESIDENTE

Vestas Hotels & Resorts offer some of the premiere hotels in the city of *Lecce*. *The Risorgimento Resort* is the finest luxury hotel in the city and offers an unparalleled location just a stone's throw from the city's main square, *Piazza Sant'Oronzo*. There's an excellent restaurant as well as a spa. For business travelers or those seeking a more affordable alternative, *Hotel Presidente* fits the bill. For more information, visit

www.vestashotels.it



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