

# Untold Italy Episode 232: Secret Milan - A Local's Guide

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 232.

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

I'm curious, have you been to Milan? And what did you think? I love this city and its clash of old and new Italy, its design focus and flair and vibe and wonderful coffee and cocktail bars. I've said it before but I think Italy is at its most thrilling best when you see the respect for tradition juxtaposed with innovation - and you definitely find that in Milan. Out of all the cities in Italy, I think it feels the most international to me and that makes it an exciting contrast to some of the other Italian cities.

Today I'm thrilled to welcome onto the show a friend - Inge de Boer - who I met way back in 2016 when I was writing my food travel blog. Inge took me on a really fun food tour of Milan and introduced me to a pretty amazing chocolate shop Zaini - that I've been dreaming of and seeking out ever since. Imagine my excitement when my coffee came with a perfectly wrapped square of Zaini chocolate one day in the Dolomites last year!

Inge and I reconnected recently and it was so great to catch up and hear all about what she's been up to including contributing to a fun online city game and writing guidebooks. I'm going to let her introduce herself in her own words though so let's welcome her onto the show.

## Katy

Benvenuti. Welcome on to the Untold Italy podcast.

## Inge

Thank you, Katy. Thanks for having me here on this great podcast.

## Katy

I am so excited to have you here. I can hardly believe that we were having a delicious risotto-style lunch just a few weeks ago, and now we are here on the opposite sides of the world, getting ready to chat about wonderful Milano. But before we get started, I'd love for

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you to share about who you are, your background, and how you came to be living in Milan, and what you do there.

**Inge**

Yeah, thank you very much. Well, apart from meeting two weeks ago, we already met a few years ago, actually, when I just moved to Milan, because I moved there in 2012. I am originally from the Netherlands I studied there, graduated there. But then at some point, my husband and I, we decided it was time for a year abroad, and we ended up in Milan, mainly because of the World Exhibition, which happened here in 2015. After that great experience working in an Italian company which has its upside and downside, I actually decided to start to work as a freelancer, and I started to propose different tours through the city of Milan. When we met, I was mainly proposing an Alt Milano food tour, which was really exciting, but on the other hand, also a little bit hard to organize because of the collaboration with the local entrepreneurs. I changed - I still am organizing tours through the city of Milan, but now I'm focusing more on more general tours related to an introduction to the city of Milan, but also more focused on architecture, because actually I graduated as an architect, so that's my background.

**Inge**

Besides that, I also wrote two travel guides, one for Milan and one for Lake Como in Dutch, unfortunately. Probably not many of your audience can read this, but it was a really excited way to get to know more about my city, Milan, because I now call it my hometown, and also Lake Como, which is so nearby and which I really like to spend some time on during the weekends.

**Katy**

It's really lovely. You've also worked on an app, haven't you?

**Inge**

Well, it's not really an app. It's a self-guided city game. I think this is what you are referring to. It's called Secret City Trails. You play it actually in your web browser, and it's a really nice way for last minute fun activity through the city of Milan, but also Como and the larger beautiful village on Lake Como as well.

**Katy**

She's a very clever lady, this one. You can do your tours in English as well as Dutch, right?

**Inge**

Yeah. Dutch is my main focus, but I'm also capable of doing the tours in English, definitely.

**Katy**

Yeah, absolutely. Your English is perfect.

**Inge**

Thank you, Katy.

**Katy**

I think it would be really amazing to do a tour, an architectural tour of Milan with someone who knows a lot about architecture because it is actually very interesting, thanks to the older style architecture, but also the new architecture that's there. There's some really amazing buildings. One of the things I love about Milan is it's really got a really strong design focus. It's where you see the best of the old and the new coming together in Italy. It's really fun, I think.

**Inge**

Yeah, that's another reason why Milan is such a particular city, but also an interesting city, definitely compared to other Italian cities, because it has some really important contemporary architecture and big developments also. So yeah, definitely.

**Katy**

Yeah, I really like that. Is it Bosco Reale? Is that the one?

**Inge**

It's, of course, a beautiful Bosco Verticale, which is the vertical forest by Stefano Boeri, and it's a whole area around this building as well. But then you also have City Life, which has three contemporary office towers and also some residential buildings, all designed by star architects like Zaha Hadid and Daniel Libeskind who are also world famous architects actually getting some commissions in the city of Milan.

## Katy

I just love how the city has really embraced that design heritage and taking it forward into the future, because sometimes - some travelers say they're a little bit disappointed with Milan after they visit Rome, Florence, and Venice. I don't know if you get that impression, but for me, I think that it's because maybe they're expecting the old world or the older architecture, and they come to Milan, and it's a little bit different. What do you think?

## Inge

That's true, and I completely agree. I also get this feedback from my clients. People come to the city of Milan without any expectations, or maybe they have some expectations because other people told them that there's not much to see apart from the Duomo, the Galleria, and the Castello, and shopping, of course. In a way, maybe it's true, or maybe it's not true, but it's more difficult to understand the city of Milan compared to other Italian cities. And it has different reasons. First of all, because Milan always has been a very wealthy city, they always have been very rich, close to the Alps, so it was easy to get in touch with northern parts of Europe, and they were also trading a lot with them. They never had trouble demolishing old buildings and constructing new ones in order to remain up to date with the rest of the world. And then on the second hand, the city has been bombed a lot during the Second World War, meaning that after the Second World War, there have been lots of reconstructions of buildings, but also densification in the city. So we have less squares, for example, because after the Second World War, the municipality decided to construct buildings high rise on these squares.

## Inge

Of course, don't expect a big high-rise city. It's not like a metropole like New York or Bombay or anything like that. But still, compared to other cities, Milan is different and it's more complicated to understand where you have to go. So you really have to prepare yourself, buy a travel guide or take a tour with a guide to can show you what are the nice places in the city, and also maybe explain you the story about behind it, because often also this helps you to better understand the city. I don't say this because I want to make publicity for myself, but I think it gives you a better idea of the city of Milan.

## Katy

It's difficult to get a real taste of a place unless you're there with a local, whether that's a friend or a guide or someone that can navigate you around and share some of the really amazing spots. I think that's really one of the motivations behind this podcast is to really get locals on board to tell us about what there is to do and see that's really special about their city. When we reconnected, I was so thrilled because there was one particular place, and I told you this the other week, that you took me to. I can't stop thinking about it - this chocolate shop, Zaini. I loved it. I loved the whole design. I loved the taste of the chocolate. I love their big Espresso machine, their vintage one. I just loved everything about it. I think that's one of the really cool things about Milan. There's some more famous places, I guess. Everyone knows the Duomo and the Galleria and the Last Supper and maybe the Castle, maybe.

## Inge

Exactly.

## Katy

But there's so many more things to do in see in Milan. Why don't you share some of your favorites with our listeners?

## Inge

Well, I think first of all, what not many people know is that Milan has lots of museums, and they are really diverse between each other. You have, for example, it's called Casa Museo in Italian, meaning house museum. Often, these are houses which belong to wealthy Milanese people. They are decorated in a very, very beautiful way, very detailed, and they now have been open to the public, so you can visit them and maybe see also their art collection, which is very particular. One of them is Poldi Pezzoli, which is very close to the Scala Opera House, just a few steps away. And also in this same area in the Quadrilatero della Moda, so the fashion neighborhood, it's called Bagatti Valsecchi, two beautiful Casa Museo.

## Inge

Then on the other end, if you prefer contemporary art, there's also lots of options. You can, of course, go to the Triennale Design Museum, where they focus mainly on design. Another similar museum, it's called ADI Design Museum, where they display the winners of the Compasso d'Oro, which is a very famous design prize from Italy. And there you can see

everything from bull pens to Ferraris, from huge boat to, I don't know, door handles, for example. So it's completely everything you might need during the day as industrial design, you can see there. And this is a very new museum.

**Inge**

But also we have the beautiful Fondazione Prada, and I must be a little bit proud on this one because it's designed by a Dutch architect, Rem Koolhaas, and his studio OMA. It's actually the refurbishment of an old distillery, and he also added some buildings. This is housing the contemporary art collection of the Prada family, and it organizes contemporary exhibitions as well on mainly contemporary art.

**Katy**

There's a famous café there, too, isn't there?

**Inge**

That's true. This is already the cafe or the architecture is where to visit, even when you don't visit the museum itself. There's a famous café there, and it's designed by Wes Anderson, which is a famous director. Yeah, definitely have a coffee there, at least. I suggest also a cake.

**Katy**

Is the coffee good?

**Inge**

The coffee is good, and also their cake's very sweet, but you can't get them anywhere else in Milan, so have a break there, definitely.

**Katy**

Yeah. I think it's really one for people that are big fans of Wes Anderson or anyone really that loves design. This is the best thing about Milan. People take for granted what it takes to design something simple that we use in everyday life. But actually, there's been a lot of amazing innovations that come out of Italy. I had a boss who sadly passed away now, but he used to work for Olivetti. This is the best example that I could give, was that they made typewriters for those who don't know. For all of you younger listeners who don't know what a

typewriter is - Oh, my gosh. I don't even know... it's a keyboard where you punched in letters and paper came out. I don't know if I've described it properly.

**Inge**

It's a integration of a keyboard and a printer.

**Katy**

Anyway, he told me that Olivetti had built a hotel or an office that was in the shape of the typewriter, which this is what I love about Italians. Why not? If you're going to do it, go big and go large and do it properly. They go into the details. Yeah. So many exciting museums. I'd love to go and see that design one. What else can you tell us?

**Inge**

Well, if I move away from the museums because I just give you a short impression that there's many, many more to visit. Also, visit definitely the Pinacoteca di Brera or the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, where they have beautiful collections of historical paintings from the 13th century onwards of also the well-known paintings from Italy, like Caravaggio, Tintoretto, Rafael. So if you are an art lover, you have to go there.

**Katy**

And, sorry to interrupt, there's no one there. Exactly. It's not like the Uffizi Gallery where you're squashed into everyone else. You can go and see these amazing pieces of art with very few other people.

**Inge**

Well, actually, now we're talking about the Pinacoteca di Brera, very close by. There's also an Orto Botanico, a botanical garden. It's part of the same complex. You can visit this also six days a week. So not on Sundays, and it's free entrance. It's a very tiny botanical garden, but actually it shows you very well that Milan is also a very green city. Because also in many people's minds, Milan is gray, dirty, lots of traffic, etc. But still we have lots of green. This green used to be part of the convents that used to be in the historical center of the city of Milan. And they used these gardens, amongst others, for growing food for the inhabitants of the convents, but also for people of the city of Milan. They grew medicinal herbs in order to make people more healthy, and they used to grow grapes for winemaking. This is not very

positive. Well, it's a positive story, but the wine wasn't that good. Because wine at some point, or for a long time actually, used to be the only way to trench your thirst. People didn't have any access to drinking water, so they just drunk wine, also the children. But it was disgusting. It was very dry. It was not nice to drink. But anyways, they grew it in those gardens of the convents. The Botanical Garden is really worth a visit also just for a 10 minutes break of the chaos of the Italian city of Milan.

**Inge**

What also not many people know is that besides the Duomo, there's many, many other churches you can visit in Milan which are definitely worth a visit. We have quite a lot of historical churches constructed from the fourth, fifth century, so 1,500 years in age. And one very beautiful church is the San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore, and its nickname is the Sistine Chapel of Milan because of all the decoration in the interior. Have you been there, Katy?

**Katy**

I haven't. I'm really intrigued now.

**Inge**

I'm trying to give you a next reason to come back to the city of Milan, as you can imagine. It's not that well known. It's not far from the Last Supper and also not far from the castle in Milan. In the inside, it has many declarations done by Bernardino Luini and his sons. Bernardino Luini was student of Leonardo da Vinci, so actually quite an important painter who was known mainly locally. Unfortunately, he didn't get any world fame like Leonardo da Vinci did, but locally, he did some very important works.

**Katy**

I was just going to say it's really interesting because I feel like in the past, Milan was a little bit self-contained, unlike the Medici in Florence that like to spread out all over. It seems like the Milanese, they like to keep themselves in Milan and keeping to themselves a little bit.

**Inge**

I think they had other things to worry about because when the Medici were ruling in Florence, we here had the Visconti and the Sforza family, and they tried to compete also with the



Medici, but there were the mountains in between, so it was not an easy job to do. Then the Milanese people more had to worry about the people coming from the northern parts of Europe, Austria, Switzerland, France, etc. Actually, Milan has also been occupied by the Austrians, the French people, and the Spanish people. We had lots of influence from foreigners as well.

**Katy**

It's interesting. I hadn't really thought of that, but it's so true. That side of the Alps and the River Po, there's more opportunities for marauding invaders from the north.

**Inge**

Definitely, yeah. You're completely right about this. The other thing particular about this beautiful church, the San Maurizio al Monastero Maggiore, is that it's separated in two separate parts. The first one, so when you enter as a visitor, you arrive from the street, you have the possibility to pass a small corridor or a passageway, and then you get the area dedicated to the nuns who used to live there. But the nuns were not allowed to get in touch with other people, so there was no visual connection between one part of the church and the other part of the church. It's really exciting to see this.

**Katy**

It might not have been exciting for them to be locked up.

**Inge**

That's true. But it's a few hundred years ago, luckily.

**Katy**

Yeah, exactly. That's so interesting. These are really things that are just not on normal lists about Milan, for sure. What else have you got for us, Inge?

**Inge**

Are you getting hungry or you like a coffee?

**Katy**

Always.

**Inge**

Okay. Well, maybe then it's nice to talk a little bit about this. Because, of course, Italy has lots of traditional food, all the delicious pasta. You were already mentioning the risotto we had a few weeks ago, which is delicious. I think the risotto is one of the things you have to try when you are in Milan, especially the risotto Milanese, in which they add saffron, so it gets the beautiful yellow color.

**Inge**

But besides the traditional dishes in Milan, there's also lots of opportunities to have some more contemporary food. I think also here, Milan is different than other Italian cities because also, food entrepreneurs are trying to innovate in this city. We have some really good specialty coffee bars, for example. One of them is Orso Nero, which you can find near the Porta Venezia area, which is also a nice area to visit, not known by many tourists. So definitely go there for a breakfast or maybe a dinner because it's a nice area with lots of restaurants, bars, etc. And a little bit more famous, it's called Cafeza. And this is a Brazilian guy who moved to Milan already some time ago, and he's decided to open a specialty coffee store, and he's roasting the coffee himself. Actually, he's even selecting the beans right from the farmers in Brazil. So he really knows the origin of his products. They have three bars already in the city of Milan in different areas. Actually, you don't have any excuse not to go there because it's always kind of close by your accommodation. This is definitely also something I like to recognize to you.

**Katy**

With the coffee style, in Australia, we are very particular about our coffee, actually, even sometimes sometimes a little bit more than Italians, not in Milan, but in the north. And Australians do like to drink a milky coffee, so we won't just drink Espresso. We'll probably have a Macchiatto or maybe a cafe latte something more milky. What is the style of the coffee bars there, Cafeza? Is that a particular one where you'd go just for an Espresso?

**Inge**

Or is that- Well, they actually, and that's what happens with many specialty coffee bars, they suggest you, if you are a first-time visitor, to have an Espresso and even to do not add any

sugar in order to taste the coffee in its original state. Then maybe you add one or two sips and you think, okay, it was too strong, then you're allowed of course, to add sugar. But they suggest you to try it without the sugar. I think these coffee-style bars mainly serve the traditional Italian coffee. Espresso, Espresso Macchiato, which is completely different than a Latte Macchato because it only has a spot of milk in it, an Espresso Macchiato, or for example, a Cappuccino. In many cases, you also can order the Cappuccino with vegetable milk.

**Katy**

Like soy milk?

**Inge**

Soy milk, yeah. So in many cases, you can also order your cappuccino with a non-dairy milk. I think this is one of the differences. The other difference is that still a takeaway coffee is not something you really do in Italy. It happens, and especially actually, after the pandemic, it became more normal that you do a takeaway coffee. But spending a few minutes in a bar is also something which is still part of the Italian culture. You have a chat with the barman, maybe you talk about the soccer game of the night before or about your plans for the next holidays, and then you go back to your work or you go back and do grocery shopping or whatever you were heading to. You can get your takeaway coffee, but just enjoy these five minutes in the bar.

**Inge**

Maybe not mention the football this week. I had another question, actually, about saffron. Where does the saffron come from that they use in the Milanese?

**Inge**

Originally, of course, it comes from Iran and the Middle East, but it arrived in Italy, I think in the 14th century already in Sicily, where the climate is more North African, so it was able to grow it. Now there are actually even some young producers in the Milan area, really working in the initial phase because they really have to do the research, understand what type of saffron is growing in this climate because we have a more cold, humid climate compared to where the saffron is coming from. But they can grow it here. There are, of course, people saying that the saffron grown in this area in the in Northern Italy is disgusting. They prefer the saffron coming from warmer areas.

**Katy**

Why are they using the saffron? What made them put in the risotto?

**Inge**

Well, that's a really romantic legend about this story, which is probably not true. But it says that there used to be a Flemish painter working on the stained glass of the Duomo. And he had a student, and this student was adding Saffron to all the paint in order to get it more bright colors. Then the daughter of his master or his teacher was getting married, and they were having risotto as one of the dishes during the dinner. And then the student decided to give a present to the daughter of his teacher and add saffron to risotto. In this way, it got this beautiful yellow or golden color, which, of course, stands for happy life. Probably this is a very beautiful legend, but probably it's not true because they think saffron in risotto was introduced a couple of centuries after they finished the stained glass of the Duomo. But it's a nice legend though.

**Katy**

Let's not get facts in the way of a good story.

**Inge**

Exactly.

**Katy**

Well, okay, we've had our coffee. I'm hungry now. What can we eat? I know you have the best recommendations. She really does.

**Inge**

Well, maybe it's nice to get a little bit out of the city center for some lunch or a dinner. A very nice place, which I hadn't been to, but I went back recently, is Cascina Cuccagna. This is also a really beautiful example of the proximity from the city of Milan and its agricultural hinterland, like they call this here, because Cascina is the northern Italian word for a farm. So this used to be a farm only 20 minutes on foot away from the Piazza del Duomo. And this is now transformed into a cultural center. But they also have a really nice restaurant in which they use local ingredients and they make really nice dishes for fair prices. Besides having

good food, it's also a really nice atmosphere. So in summer, you sit there outside in their garden, etc. So it's a really nice place to enjoy a good meal.

**Katy**

You told me that one, and I went there, and it was excellent. I loved it. It was a while ago, but I do still remember it was excellent.

**Inge**

Yeah, I went back there just a month ago, and they still have the same chef, but he's still doing a good job.

**Katy**

It's really interesting to go somewhere that's been... it's still a part of a cultural hub. I think sometimes in a big city, you don't see that so much, but it's really nice to see that people are gathering in this one space, and there's a delightful restaurant where you can get really delicious food as well.

**Inge**

Yeah, and I think also it's really important in Italy, because what I learned after 12 years of living in Italy, people here are really social, even though they say that the Milanese people are always in a hurry, they are arrogant, etc. But still, there's lots of people who work as a volunteer or who contribute in one way or another to charity projects, etc. That's nice to be part of it or see it from close by what happens in the Italian cities.

**Inge**

There's another really nice restaurant which has the same goals. They are using mainly local ingredients, seasonal ingredients, of course. Most of it is vegetarian, but if they use meat or fish, they use good quality products. And it's called Dispensa Degustazione e Ristoro, and it's very close to Porta Garibaldi. It's a restaurant that opened only a few years ago, just before the pandemic, I think. But then, of course, they had to close down during the lockdowns. It's, again, part of a building which used to be the Casa dei Artisti, so the house of the artists. And they still have artists in residences over there. They have an exhibition space.

**Inge**

They have a small bottega, so you can buy products over there. They organize irregularly markets, farmers markets, and they have a really nice restaurant, also there with a really nice outdoor space surrounded by green.

**Katy**

Milan has got... if you were to do a comparison, it's not really a comparison, but Milan would be like the New York, I would say, of Italy.

**Inge**

Smaller scale, but might be.

**Katy**

It's got more of that international vibe where people are innovating traditional things.

**Inge**

Exactly.

**Katy**

Which, as I said, I find really exciting, actually, in Italy. That's my favorite part about Italians and Italy is a lot of people are entranced by the history, which I am too. But I think that it gets really exciting when they combine their tradition with technology and they come up with something pretty amazing.

**Inge**

Yeah, definitely. I completely agree with this.

**Katy**

Now, did you have some bakeries that you wanted to mention? Because we're all about the pastry here.

## Inge

Exactly. Well, not only pastry, but also very, very nice bread. Because 5 or 10 years ago, there was It's a new bakery. He is called Davide Longoni, and he's the grandfather, even though he's not that old. Sorry, Davide, if you're listening. Of a new generation of bakers, people making bread, sourdough bread, high-quality ingredients again. So really selected the flour at the farm, usually locally, well, locally or at least Italian ingredients, organic, and also wholemeal. Whole grain? Whole grain, yeah. A whole grain flour in order to get also a quality bread. And they're so different in the city of Milan.

## Inge

One of them is really nice because it's run by a lady, and it's called Le Polvéri. They have a small bakery near the Navigli area, which is also where to visit actually if you like to go for a drink or a dinner because it's a big canal. And along the canal, there's lots of restaurants and lots of bars. There's also a lot of tourism, so don't expect to be the only one over there, but you can find some hidden gems there as well. But not far from that area, you have one of the two stores of Le Polveri.

## Inge

And then they have a second bakery, a little bit more on the outside of the center, on the Southwest western part of Milan, where you can also sit down. You can have a delicious breakfast there, of course, with the sweet pastry, the brioche, but also French-style croissant, etc. You can have lunch there. I think they are even open for aperitivo, which, of course, is a very important part of the lifestyle of the Italians.

## Katy

Oh, that sounds good. I think there's some exciting things going on with the younger generation, actually, isn't there? They're really taking their food culture to new heights and trying new different techniques, but taking the tradition with them, too.

## Inge

Yeah. And I also noticed there's another really nice bakery. It's called Forno di Lambrate. It's in the Lambrate neighborhood on the east side of the city center. And this guy, he was actually working as a financial guy in London. He got sick of working 60 hours a week. So he decided to reinvent himself and he wanted to come back to Italy because maybe it's known that many, many young Italians go abroad because they think there's better perspective for

them, better salaries, better work hours, etc. But then at some point, they realized that Italy is also a very nice country to live in, so they have to find a way to reinvent themselves. And then, well, some of them choose to become a baker, for example. So it's really nice to see also the flexibility of the Italians, I think. Maybe they started to study, they follow their dreams of themselves or maybe slightly also the dreams of their parents to have a nice job, to be able to work abroad, etc. And then at some point, they realized that money isn't everything. So maybe it's better to do something with your passion.

**Katy**

You know what? I always think when I go to Italy, and I was thinking a lot about this recently, is there's so many people worried about artificial intelligence and bots and all of those types of things. I just think, well, if you're worried about that, just take a visit to Italy because I just feel like they're not going to be fast adopters of that technology. They're quite happy to live their life and not become as fast-paced as perhaps we do in particularly English-speaking countries. Everyone's on the go all the time. But yeah, I just feel like if they saw a robot coming at them, they'd probably just kick it. They wouldn't like any of this technology too much. I think that's some of the charm. Even in a super modern city like Milan, they've still got those traditions and they still hold close to them the past and the traditions and the culture rather than blindly adopting everything that's new.

**Inge**

Sometimes it's nice that they are inefficient. It's just an advantage.

**Katy**

It's frustrating, but that's why we love it.

**Inge**

It's part of the experience.

**Katy**

It is. It's the frustrating charm of Italy, I think. I have a question for you. Could you tell us, what's your favorite way to spend a day in Milan? If you had one to yourself without your children, just if you had a day all to yourself, imagine the scene, what would you do?



**Inge**

Well, I think, first of all, I would go for a nice breakfast. Actually, I don't go far away from my house. I live on the northeast side of the city center in an area which is called Nolo, north of Loretto. They are trying, of course, to change this area into a more popular area. There is a really nice pastry store as well. It's called Fola. They have great coffee, roasted in the city of Milan. I would go there, first of all, for a nice easy breakfast with an Espresso I usually take for breakfast and a nice croissant. Maybe I read even a book or take a newspaper to relax.

**Katy**

Piano, piano, nice and slow.

**Inge**

Definitely. Then I would hop on my bike because I'm Dutch, so I'm moving around the city on my bike, which is actually fine. I mean, Milan is a flat city. The infrastructure isn't yet completely adapted to bikes, but if you know where to take care, it's a perfect way to go around. And also I think one of the fastest way to go around because you never get stuck in traffic and you can park your bike everywhere you want to park it.

**Katy**

But you're Dutch. You're used to it.

**Inge**

Sorry, I'm Dutch. I would cycle past the Bosco Verticale and the beautiful park which is there. It's called Biblioteca degli Alberi. It's a really contemporary park, but very, very beautiful and very well maintained. Have a walk around the Orto Botanico, and then I either visit or the Pinacoteca di Brera because it's such a big museum that I haven't been able to concentrate myself on all the paintings. So it's really worth to go there more than once. Or I would visit the Museo del Novecento, which is the museum next to the Duomo, and it holds art from the 20th century. And it has a very important collection of art from the futurists who is a movement coming from the city of Milan and who was mainly important in Italy in the last century.

**Inge**

So yeah, this is really what I like to do. Then for lunch, I might have a pasta, even though it's not a very... Well, you can eat it everywhere, of course, in Milan, but traditionally, it's not coming from the city of Milan. But there are some nice places where they make a good fresh pasta at fair prices. And then in the afternoon, I think I would just walk around. I might go to the Cinque Via area, the Five Streets, if you translate it literally, which is similar to Brera. Brera is very well known and it's also in a nice way touristic. Cinque Vie is less discovered, so it's more quiet, but you have art galleries, you have some very nice courtyards in which you can have a look. There are some smaller stores and there are some bars as well. And what I think is really interesting about this neighborhood is that there's both some reminders of the Roman Empire. I like to emphasize reminders because it's really the leftover offers. You can't see any buildings anymore. Also some architecture from the fascist period, which, of course, was a really difficult period in Italy because it was also the start of the Second World War, but as an architect, I appreciate some of their buildings, the rational architecture. I would study them a little bit more close.

**Katy**

That sounds amazing. I love it.

**Inge**

You like to come with me? The children are not there.

**Katy**

Of course! Because you should always choose some great places to eat. So everyone, if you want all the notes on this, we're going to put them in the show notes, so don't worry, because there are some complicated Italian names there. But actually, Inge and I had a really nice lunch somewhere that you might not I think would be good, but it's actually really good, isn't it?

**Inge**

Definitely, yeah. Well, I brought the Katy to the Milano Centrale Mercato Centrale. It's on the central station, ground floor on the west side of the huge station building, which is worth a visit as well if you're into architecture. It's a really nice, let's call it a food court, even though maybe it doesn't really cover the explanation of this building. It has about 20 stalls of different producers. Both local producers like Davide Longoni, the bakery I mentioned before.

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They have a locally brewed beer from the Birrificio Lambrate, but they also have some Asian food stalls, or you can eat fish, etc. You can order wherever you want and then find a place to enjoy it, actually. It's really nice because it's attached to the central station, so it's the perfect place to have a break before taking the train or when you just arrived in the city of Milan.

**Katy**

We had tried these - it was like a risotto cake, wasn't it? That was really delicious. I'm thinking about that now. I'm hungry it is nearly dinner time for me. I love hearing about all these secret places in Milan. In fact, I hadn't heard of so many of them, and I really do need to get back to Milan very soon, I think. I really do enjoy my time that's spent there. You really need to work a little bit harder there to uncover some of these amazing places, but it's so worth it. Some of the bars they have and the design and the design of the coffee shops and just their attention to detail just on how they make their pastries is just amazing. So Inge, if our listeners want to connect with you and learn more about all of the secrets of Milan and access the Secret City Trails game or even booking for a tour with you? How can they do that?

**Inge**

Let's start with the Secret City Trails. We mentioned during this discussion. The Secret City Trails are available on the website, [secretcitytrails.com](https://secretcitytrails.com). You just select the city. We are not only present in Milan, but in 55 other European cities. All trails can be played in English, and they may usually also have another language, the local language, or in the case of the Milan, Como, and Bellagio, one also in Dutch, of course. But I'm not sure if this really helps you out. This is one way, very easy, low-priced. You can buy it and can immediately start it. I promise you, you really get to places which are unknown, even by the Milanese people.

**Inge**

Then if you really want to connect with me, you can connect with me through my own website. Again, this one is mainly focused on the Dutch people, but it's called Milaan met local - just get in touch with me if you're interested in a tour or if you want to have some more information on the city of Milan. I'll try to help you.

**Katy**

Inge is very generous, and she also does an amazing tour. I really appreciate the attention to detail. I remember going past the canals and understanding a little bit more about the canals

of Milan with Inge, as well as trying lots of yummy food. It's a really interesting combination of history and food and culture and the architecture and everything. It's just wonderful. I was so thrilled that you got in touch and that we were able to have lunch so recently. So thanks for joining us on Untold Italy.

**Inge**

Thank you very much, Katy, for giving me this opportunity.

**Katy**

No problem. I hope to see you again in Milan very soon.

**Inge**

Thanks, Katy. Bye.

**Katy**

Ciao, ciao.

**Katy**

Wow, I am so itching to get back to Milan now. I had a flying visit just for lunch with Inge after a few days on Lake Como recently and I realized how much I missed it. For me, Milan is a very grown-up city although as Inge has children of her own no doubt she's got a few ideas of how to spend family time there. Anyway as I was saying, Milan is sophisticated and fun - from the galleries, shops and design focus plus all the great restaurants and bars it's the type of place to spend a few days exploring secrets and hidden nooks.

Of course, we've put all the places Inge mentioned as well as the details of the Secret City Trails games and her website into the show notes at [untolditaly.com/232](https://untolditaly.com/232).

Thanks for your ongoing support of Untold Italy. We truly appreciate all of you, our listeners joining us from around the world including the Netherlands - hallo to you all. We'd love it if you helped spread the word so we can reach more Italy loving travelers just like you. And the best way you can do this is by leaving us a 5-star rating or review on your favorite podcast app or forwarding this episode onto a friend who also loves Italy's magnificent cities like Milano.

Next episode we're headed back to Puglia to talk about its amazing food culture.

But until then it's ... ciao for now.

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