



An Italian Odyssey: One Couple's Culinary and Cultural Pilgrimage

Julie A. Burk, Neville J. Tencer

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An Italian Odyssey is a story about a midlife couple who embarks on a great adventure — walking 1,000 km on the Via Francigena, an ancient, elusive medieval pilgrim trail through the heart of Italy.

Historically, the Via Francigena was a broad network of trails originating in ancient Francia, an ever-changing backbone of Roman and medieval roads leading to Rome. Today, unlike the Camino de Santiago in Spain, only a few hundred people have walked the entire Via Francigena through Italy during the past decade. It is a barely discovered, obscure, and sometimes challenging trail to navigate.

The couple's initial plan was to walk and eat their way through Italy using their own homemade guide and map books. But their adventure takes on a life of its own as they face unexpected challenges. With both themselves and each other, they struggle with the constant physical and emotional demands and outcomes of navigating an arduous route that is not well signed. But with dollops of Roman and medieval history, a dash of contemporary culture, plenty of sensual food and wine, and gracious Italian hospitality, they also share many romantic and magical moments.

Only after they endure sweat, tears, and frustration, when the strange concoction comes to a boil and the flavors and juices ooze out, do they realize and discover the true meaning of their journey. In the end, An Italian Odyssey is a classic bittersweet tale of the couple's expectation of walking and eating through Italy—a unique culinary and walking pilgrimage.

An Italian Odyssey will appeal to readers who love all things Italian, its history, culture, and food, and those who like traveling and walking; or by the armchair traveler who enjoys reading about other people's adventures. Readers will also appreciate the rewards and discoveries that come about from tackling real life challenges and struggles. It is a story that combines a great adventure of personal growth, individually and as a couple, with the backdrop of Italian history, contemporary culture, food, and wine.

This travel memoir is co-written by both authors, so the reader can appreciate the story from the male and female perspective.

Buon viaggio!

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