

SPRING | SUMMER | AUTUMN

Melina Puntaricna
COOK THE MOUNTAIN

SEASONAL CULINARY RETREAT - ITALY

2026 & 2027

From Melina Puntoriero

"After years of running food tours all over Italy, I am finally coming home, the village of Bedonia in the mountains of Parma. My culinary retreats here at home are my special place. These are the tours where I get to really share my love of Italy and culture, its life and its heart. This is where we leave the noise behind and live a true Italian experience "



Introducing:

Cook The Mountain.

Step away from the brochures and into the real Italy. Slow down and reset. Join Chef Melina for a slow-living culinary journey through the gastronomic heart of Parma and the hidden artisan shores of the Ligurian coast. Live like an Italian, laugh like an Italian, learn to be Italian!

Melina Puntoriero



THIS ISN'T JUST A HOLIDAY,

this is ME inviting YOU to my home...

I've shown you the Italy from the postcards, the magical coasts and famous plazas. And it was MAGIC! But now I'm going bigger. It's intimate, it's loud, and it's completely OURS

And we know you don't want to plan, you just want to stop thinking...maybe with wine in your hand, so yes, we do everything for you, you are my guest, and that is the point!

Life's biggest LUXURY is TIME... and Italians just get it! *You can not give your life more time, but you can give your time more life.*

This is slow mornings, slow living and slow food. **Best food comes from relationships**, we meet the artisans behind our cheese, grains, vegetables and even pasta tools. We forage the mountain and cook our local products.

We visit the local wineries and head over to the nearby fishing villages. We eat in the restaurants that are 100% locals, visit the local castles and *stay in an ancient flour mill converted into your beautiful retreat.*

We cook, so much cooking... You me, some wine and **a love so profound for Italian food I am just bursting to share it.**

I'm going to be honest - maybe this isn't for you, and that's ok.

Our groups are small, and we want to make sure everyone's expectations are met, THAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT.

This isn't about the perfect instagram photo, (you will have those too), this is **real italy.** doing real life. It's experiences and relationships, feeling a part of a village in an exceptionally beautiful secret part of Italy.



WE DON'T DO SCHEDULES
WE DO SEASONS

SPRING

April 19-25, 2027

HIGHLIGHTS:

fishing villages
mushroom foraging
mountain berries

SUMMER

June 21-27, 2027

HIGHLIGHTS

local festivals
new season liquors
outdoor dining

AUTUMN

October 13-19, 2027

HIGHLIGHTS

mushrooms and truffles
grape harvest
woodfire dining

PASTA

November 8-14, 2026

February 15-21, 2027

March 1-7, 2027

November 8-14, 2027

October 13-19, 2027

WINTER

during our winter months we
dedicate our program to making fresh
pasta. this week is intensive cooking.
artisan visits are still a big feature



Spring

The awakening of the valley

April 19–25, 2027

Spring in Bedonia is defined by "green" flavors. As the snow melts from the Apennine peaks, the cuisine shifts from heavy winter stews to the fresh, bitter, and aromatic.

- **Seasonal Ingredients:** Wild asparagus, field herbs (tarassaco, nettle, and borage), spring peas, and the first broad beans (fave). This is also the time for Prugnoli mushrooms, which appear in April and May with a distinct, floury aroma.
- **Traditional Plates:** * Tortelli d'erbetta: A classic Parma dish, but in Bedonia, the filling often includes wild mountain herbs mixed with ricotta and Parmigiano Reggiano.
 - Torta di Erbe: A savory pie that shows the Ligurian influence—thin pastry crusts filled with a mix of wild greens.
- **The Essence:** A sense of renewal. The air is crisp, the pastures are lush, and the wine pairings move toward lighter, pét-nat styles like a fresh Malvasia dei Colli di Parma.

Summer

The soul of the Italian table

June 21–27, 2027

When the heat hits the plains, Bedonia becomes a sanctuary. The food becomes simpler, focusing on the incredible quality of raw ingredients and the "barbecue" culture of the mountains.

- Seasonal Ingredients: Heirloom tomatoes, zucchini flowers, mountain berries (blueberries and raspberries), and fresh sheep's milk cheeses from the high pastures.
- Traditional Plates:
 - Torta Fritta & Salumi: Though eaten year-round, summer evenings in Bedonia are synonymous with outdoor tables piled with hot fried dough and cool ribbons of Prosciutto di Parma or Culatello.
 - Testaroli: Here you see the bridge to Liguria and Tuscany. These ancient "pancakes" are cooked on cast-iron discs (testi), cut into diamonds, and tossed with Pesto alla Genovese.
- The Essence: Lively and social. Summer is the season of sagre (food festivals) where the community eats under the stars.

Autumn

The Foragers Dream

October 13–19, 2027

This is Bedonia's "Grand Finale." The forests surrounding the town become the most productive larder in Italy.

- **Seasonal Ingredients:** The legendary IGP Borgotaro Porcini Mushrooms, chestnuts, and the Black Truffle of Bedonia.
- **Traditional Plates:**
 - Porcini Everything: Sliced raw in salads with shavings of Parmigiano, fried, or served over fresh egg tagliatelle.
 - Torta di Patate: A local specialty consisting of a thin savory pie filled with seasoned mashed potatoes—hearty pilgrim food at its best.
 - Castagnaccio: A dense, flourless cake made from chestnut flour, pine nuts, and rosemary.
- **The Essence:** Earthy and cozy. The smell of woodsmoke and roasting chestnuts fills the air, and the wines shift to structured reds like Gutturnio or Barbera.

All Inclusive

INVESTMENT AND INCLUSIONS (THE PRICE)

Welcome to your Italian Village unwind

Your investment for the retreat is €4200 per person double occupancy. Single supplement is an additional €600). This includes absolutely everything from experiences to food and wine during meals, and of course private transfers from Borgo Val di Taro train station and during our excursions.

Private transfers can also be organised either from the airports or your location in Italy at an additional small fee.

Your home for the week is Il Mulino, a magical retreat tucked away in nature.

Depending on where we visit, there is always some one with a wealth of knowledge to teach and show you the local way of life. All our guides are included and Melina will be with you every step of the way.

From arrival in Bedonia to departure, everything is included



the ITINERARY

Every season we may add something new, but here is what doesn't change

A week in the life of... YOU

Arrive and settle into your rooms, dinner at a local restaurant

DAY
01

'The cheesemaker' This morning we visit Michele, a local parmigiano reggiano cheese maker with a tasting of different aged cheeses . Next is Marco, a local goats cheese farmer who makes a cheese only found here in the mountains. We will stop at a very special restaurant for lunch and then you have a free afternoon with time to relax. Join Melina late afternoon cooking class for this evening cooking class

DAY
02

'The food trail to the sea' - visit it the Ligurian coast. We follow the mountain pass towards the ligurian coast where we stop at a local artisan woodworker for traditional pasta making tools. We continue onto our seaside town, the home of Pesto Genovese for a tasting stroll through this unique village. Spend some time for shopping before home to Dinner in a private home with an ancient 'testo oven'

DAY
03

Mountain forage day! Depending on the season. Truffles, porcini mushrooms, wild berries, herbs for making liqueur. We discover the mountains with a local guide, and lunch at a very special local restaurant. This afternoon we spend with a local artisan who makes liquers from the herbs and berries gathered in the mountains. Dinner with chef Melina using todays mountain finds

DAY
04

This morning we visit the beautiful nearby mill, where we can see fresh flour being ground making the polenta that forms a big part of our cusine. We then head towards a local trout farmer for a trout lunch and have a special treat that is only seen in this one particular restaurant. Later this afternoon we head for a local wine tasting with a picnic aperitivo dinner in the vineyard as the sun sets.

DAY
05

'Castles and the King of Ham'. We have seen the king of cheese and now to see the King of ham, Culatello. This morning we first visit the beautiful medieval village of where sits our local castle, one of the castles of the duchy of Parma. We the head onto the padana plains to see caves and production of Culatello and then a Michelin lunch by Chef Massimo Spigaroli. A relaxing dinner by Chef melina this evening before departure as we sit together and celebrate our week

DAY
06

Time to say goodbye. Departure.

DAY
07



Groups are limited to 8 people and most of these are couples from all over the world. Great like minded people, sharing food and wine.

Your flights are not included, and your best arrival airports are either Milan or Bologna. (you may also be able to fly into Parma, but the airport is small and has limited flights). From there you can take a train to the town of Borgo Val di taro, where we will pick you up and transfer you to your accommodation. We can also organise for you private transfers from the airport at an additional expense.

We are located in the mountains, about an hour from the capital of Parma, in the small and beautiful village of Bedonia. This is the town where I live and also have my restaurant, Taverna Il Cortile

This retreat is food based so we concentrate on learning about Italy and its culture through food. We visit local Artisan producers, here close to town, but we also visit the nearby regions near Tuscany and Liguria. Each day we will cook something together based on the local products.

The Itinerary remains the same for each season, what changes is the food depending on local availability. When there are local festivals and local celebrations, we will add those at no additional cost to you

The most important thing is that I will be with you the whole time. Of course you will have time to relax and enjoy on your own too.





HOME FOR THE WEEK.

IL MULINO IS A MAGICAL RETREAT TUCKED AWAY IN NATURE.

YOUR HOME FOR THE WEEK SITS NESTLED ALONG THE TARO-CENO RIVER, IN THE PICTURESQUE COMUNE OF MASANTI—ONLY 10 MINUTES FROM THE CENTER OF BEDONIA. MASANTI IS FAMED FOR ITS BREATHTAKING WATERFALLS AND BELOVED BY LOCALS FOR THE PRIZED TRUFFLES THAT GROW QUIETLY IN THE SURROUNDING FOREST.

SET ON SPRAWLING GROUNDS WITH A PRIVATE TENNIS COURT, SPARKLING SWIMMING POOL, AND A SERENE SPA ROOM, IL MULINO IS THE PERFECT ESCAPE TO UNWIND, RECHARGE, AND SOAK IN THE BEAUTY OF THE ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE—ALL JUST A STONE'S THROW FROM TOWN.



what my clients say...

CHEF MELINA WAS GLOWING. HER JOY, HER WARMTH, THE WAY SHE SHARED THE HISTORY BEHIND EVERY INGREDIENT AND DISH MADE THE ENTIRE ROOM FEEL CONNECTED. IT FELT LIKE LEARNING, LAUGHING, TASTING, AND TRAVELING ALL AT ONCE.

THIS WAS NOT JUST DINNER. IT WAS STORYTELLING. IT WAS CULTURE. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE EXPERIENCES YOU LEAVE FEELING FULLER IN EVERY WAY.

ANNA DAY

"OUR TOUR GUIDE, MELINA, WAS EXCELLENT - SHE WAS GOOD FUN TO BE WITH AND SHE HAD A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EVERYWHERE WE VISITED."

BOB HITCHENS

"WHAT A FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE! EVERYTHING IS ORGANISED AND DONE AMAZINGLY. THERE WASN'T A DAY WHERE WE DIDN'T HAVE FUN, ENOUGH FOOD AND LAUGHS. THIS TOUR HAS BEEN ETCHED IN OUR MEMORY AND HAND ON HEART WAS WORTH EVERY DOLLAR. OUR GUIDE, MELINA WAS JUST THE BEST WITH HER KNOWLEDGE, INTERACTION AND FRIENDLINESS"

DARREN & DONNA MAHER

"OUR HOST, MELINA WAS KNOWLEDGEABLE, FRIENDLY, ENERGETIC WITH A GREAT SENSE OF HUMOUR. SHE MADE EACH OF US FEEL SPECIAL. THE FOOD EXPERIENCES WERE TO DIE FOR! WE TASTED FOOD THAT WE WOULD PROBABLY NEVER HAVE TRIED ON OUR OWN"

TRACEY & GRANT LUHRS

WITH MELINA PUNTORIERO

The Italian *Culinary* Retreat—

SLOW DOWN, UNWIND &
LIVE LIKE AN ITALIAN
IN MY VILLAGE

1

7 DAYS, ALL INCLUSIVE.
FORAGE, COOK, WINE & DINE, BAKE
VISIT LOCAL ARTISANS &
FOOD PRODUCERS.



Say hello to chef Melina