



Italy Out of Hand: A Capricious Tour

Barbara Hodgson

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With its genius for art and culture, there is no country in the world as wonderfully civilized (and civilizing) as Italy. But seething below this surface is a long and shadowy history of corruption, cruelty, and the generally bizarre. For centuries it has been overrun by waves of invaders, all contributing their own questionable bits of culture, and all wantonly adding to the confusion. So, how is a poor visitor supposed to make sense of this anarchic place? Co-creator of the cult favorite *Paris Out of Hand*, Barbara Hodgson has neatly brushed away the chaos and assembled an eclectic treasury of forgotten and overlooked oddities: long-lost popes, bloodthirsty mercenaries, tempestuous artists, and inexplicable follies. *Italy Out of Hand* is not a traditional guidebook, with hotel addresses and hours of operation. Rather, it is an idiosyncratic tour of a country that is too overwhelming and extravagant for most of us to comprehend without a little guidance. Illustrated with an equally eclectic selection of photographs, portraits, and art, *Italy Out of Hand* is the perfect companion for those who like their truths to be stranger than fiction.

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