

ITALIAN EARTHQUAKE NOT EXPECTED TO DAMAGE TOURISM



The recent natural disaster is set to damage just the region of Abruzzo. Further earthquakes could be detrimental to the survival of Italy's thousands of ancient monuments. Religious tourism will always keep Italian tourism alive, along with the food and fashion.

The death toll of the recent earthquake in central Italy has almost reached the **300 mark**. The magnitude of the earthquake, officially measured at 6.3 according to official sources, devastated not only the lives of the unfortunate, yet also around 10.000 structures. Taking into account the fact that Italy, along with places such as Greece and Egypt, relies heavily on **ancient monuments** for its tourism industry, the non-human effects of natural disasters could prove to be absolutely disastrous. The truth is that most of the damage occurred this time in the region of **Abruzzo**, where the capital L'Aquila has around 70.000 inhabitants and not such a dense amount of ancient artifacts and sites. Among the historical monuments that were damaged in L'Aquila is the church of San Bernardino, the church of Sant'Agostino, the church of the Suffragio, the basilica of Santa Maria di Collemaggio, and parts of a castle from 16th century that houses the National Museum of Abruzzo.

It may sound inhuman and irrelevant in perspective of the lost lives, yet the **effect on Italian tourism is expected to be minimal**. After all, tourists tend not to fear repetition of natural disasters, instead panicking about man-made terrorism and political problems. We should not rule out the hard truth that if another earthquake were to strike Italy's 'more ancient' regions, then disaster for tourism could be on the horizon.

Italy has far too much to offer to worry seriously about the effects of the earthquake on its income from tourism. The world-renowned fashion paradise of Milan, the afore-mentioned ancient monuments, infamous cuisine and centre of Roman Catholicism play testament to this, amongst other things. The latter element, Catholicism, is very important to Italian tourism, as the Vatican and around 30.000 churches and sanctuaries bring hoards of Catholics from all around the globe every year.

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