

CITIES OF ART STILL ONE OF ITALY'S FAVORITE DESTINATIONS



Cities of art are still one of the main drivers for Italian tourism. From 2010 to 2013, arrivals in historical cities increased by 11.3% (about 3.9 million people) and stays increased by 9.9% (+9.3 million) against an overall change of 5% in arrivals and -1.2% in stays.

The data come from a Cst report published by Assoturismo Confesercenti. The work will be presented in Bologna on the occasion of the tourist offer for the main 100 cities of art on May 29-31.

The analysis outlines this positive trend bound to grow further: for the long weekends of April 25th and mostly May 1st Italian cities of art recorded an increase in bookings, with Venice reaching 80% of its capacity, 79% in Turin, 76% in Rome. **In 2014 almost one tourist out of three (27.8%) chose a city of art.**

Touristic flows increased in Padua (+27.5%) and Rome (+23.7%). Foreign tourists like these cities, with a 14.4% increase between 2010 and 2014, whilst Italian travelers increased only by 11.6%.

But there is more: foreigners visiting cities of art spend more money. Tourists traveling for cultural reasons in cities of art spend an average 25% more than other tourists: 129 Euros a day compared to 103 in 2013.

Art and fashion still confirm to be a winning combination in Italy. While staying in Italy, 43.2% of people buy clothes, about 42% tickets and cards for museums and 24.4% also buy shoes. "Italian tourism suffered a big crisis with bad economic consequences. The sharp decrease of tourist presences recorded by Istat in 2012 caused a loss of about one billion Euro in sales. **Luckily, cities of art, one of our core business, showed a constantly growing appeal,**" says Filippo Donati, Assohotel president.

An analysis about the approach the "Italy system" has towards this economic sector comes from Andrea Babbi, general manager for Enit. According to Babbi, "tourism must be loved, acknowledged and respected, not only used. What is interesting is the taxation burden we have here and the resources our competitors can count on. Croatia for instance is very close and its cost is a direct competitor to the costs of Friuli, Veneto, Romagna and Marche. Croatia will invest 7 billion Euros in the next seven years. The truth is that our country, the most beautiful and desired one, must face very serious competitors."

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