

# ITALIAN TOURISM ATTRACTIONS NEED BETTER WEBSITES



Italian tourism sector has already made a major contribution to save the country from the recession of 2013-2014. According to statistics from the Bank of Italy, about 81.5 million tourists from abroad arrived in Italy in 2015. This number represents an increase of 4.4% compared to 2014.

The most favored region is the north, which was the destination of choice for 69% of foreigners. The central part was preferred by 22% of tourists and the south by only 9%.

**Overall, Lombardy is the most visited region with 21.7 million tourists last year.** The main reason for such a great achievement was the 2015 Expo in Milan.

Venetia comes second, with 13.5 million visitors, and Lazio is third (11.5 million). In the bottom of the list there are Molise, Basilicata and Calabria.

Considering a sample of 21 countries, BEM Research recently conducted an analysis to predict the future inflow of Italian tourism. They used Google searches related to Italy as a helpful statistic. For the summer of 2016 the researchers expect an increase of inflow from abroad by 3.2%. In absolute terms, this means that there will be approximately 1.1 million new visitors.

The greater influx of tourists from abroad should lead to increased spending of about half a billion euro. Thus it can be said that even in 2016 tourism will continue to support the Italian economic growth, though the room for improvement is still large.

Given the immense historical and cultural heritage and landscape that Italy has available, the economic contribution of Italian tourism is potentially much higher. To take advantage of this potential the authorities should try to show the local attractions to a wider audience of potential tourists. In the age of the Internet and social networks, this goal can be achieved effectively only through the Internet.

How are the Italian museums keeping up with the digital evolution? The analysis from BEM Research indicates that there is still a lot to do.

In this analysis of major state museums and archaeological areas, the Last Supper is rated with the best online performance after combining information from the web, social networks or sites like TripAdvisor. Mobile devices were obviously also taken into consideration. The Forte di Bard is second, while the Miramare Castle museum in Trieste is third. They are followed by the Egyptian Museum in Turin and Valley of Temples in Agrigento.

The Coliseum is seventh, while the Uffizi Gallery does not exceed the 12th position. The ruins of Pompeii are penultimate, with only the National Archaeological Museum achieving even worse rating.

However, the Italian imperfection in terms of digital information of museums is very apparent when compared to some of Europe's major attractions. The Prado Museum in Madrid in fact outclasses the Last Supper, the site with the best rating in Italy. The gap is even wider when compared to the Eiffel

Tower and the Tower of London. Both have a far better online performance.

If it were possible to overcome the digital gap that is seen between the Italian tourism attractions and other destinations, the country may increase the number of visitors from abroad. According to BEM Research estimates, the increase could reach about 2 million people.

The first step to improvement could be to promote real travel routes departing from major Italian tourist attractions and arriving in less known places. A great help would also be websites offering exclusive and personalized content for the visitors. **It is essential to keep up the pace so that major Italian tourist attractions can be of the best European standards.**

The recent initiative of the Agency for a Digital Italy was to introduce guidelines “for a design of public administration services”. The aim of this is to improve the efficiency of online services offered by different administrations. Web sites providing information in major world languages and that use social media to share useful information are missing in Italy. These are also necessary to form conditions to entice potential visitors to come to the country and enjoy its beauty.

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