

# SPORT TOURISM IN ITALY IS A RISING NICHE



887,000 travelers chose Italy as a destination for their sport holidays in 2015, representing 1.8% of the total foreign tourist inflow to the Italian Peninsula. Sport tourism is growing in importance.

This year's Giro d'Italia, the famous bicycle race, passes by the Venetian Villa Mocenigo in Oriago, home to the International Centre of Studies on Tourism of the University Ca' Foscari. This is not the only connection between the travel sector and sports in Italy. In fact, sport tourism is growing in popularity in the country.

## Sports Tourism in Europe

12% of European visitors who stayed for at least 4 consecutive nights in Italian hotels last year

declared that their main motivation to travel were activities related to sport. Sport tourism in Italy is boosted mainly by European tourists from Austria (26% of about 10 million travelers), Czechs, Belgians, Poles and Germans, while only 3% of Italians (of about 31.5 million travelers) declare sport as their main motivation to travel (Eurobarometer 2016).

Moreover, the practicing of some sport activities during a holiday with a different focus (e.g. culture) is soaring, with growth rates at double figures. The most popular activities according to the World Travel Monitor are hiking (38%), cycling (23%), and motor sports.

This is linked to the increasing popularity of sport in our daily lives - 58% of Europeans state they do some sport regularly. However, there is a clear difference between Mediterranean Europe (low sport activity) and central and Northern Europe (high sport activity).

## Sport Tourism in Italy

In 2015, Italy hosted 887,000 visitors who came to the country for their sporting holidays, which is 1.8% of the total foreign inflow. Sports tourism generated over 3 million overnight stays, which is 1.6% of the total overnight stays. The average daily spending of foreign tourists is 115 euro according to Banca d'Italia.

Regarding sport tourism in the broader sense, 1 in 4 Italians choose his or her holiday destination taking into account possible sport activities as well.

As for the various sporting events and championships in the long term, the most successful are those that can attract the sport fans and give them reason to return to Italy in the future. For example, 20% of the Giro d'Italia fans return to the country within two years to spend their holiday here and go sightseeing.

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