

# ITALY: 140,000 FAMILIES HAVE ENJOYED A HOLIDAY VOUCHER



In a summer that has been further from typical due to the coronavirus pandemic, Italy has been able to boost domestic demand in an effort to offset the drop in international arrivals. This was the goal of the 1,448,528 'holiday bonuses' program (a government-approved fund) valued at more than 647 million euros.

To date, one million of these bonuses have been claimed through the specific app and worth 450 million euros, although not all have been used: "About 140,000 families have enjoyed them," said Maria Elena Rossi, Marketing Director of the Italian National Agency for Tourism (ENITI).

**"140,000 families have already spent the holiday voucher in some 10,000 establishments, thus contributing more than 60 million euros to the tourism industry,"** said Rossi, confirming that domestic tourism has been essential this season, which has bet on "rediscovering the country".

As part of the efforts to promote tourism this year, the campaigns have been aimed at boosting domestic tourism "with a view to promote the support measures on demand promoted by the Italian Government" and have played an important role, but without neglecting international tourism.

## Tourist Numbers in the Summer

The summer season has been marked by a strong presence of domestic tourism: a summer of discovery, or rediscovery, of Italy. Even though the season kicked in late, there have been positive numbers throughout August and September, which allowed the industry to experience a short recovery.

Italians that spent the holidays in their country have a very positive opinion. The average score is 8 out of 10, with 75% of all holidays were spent on relaxation and well-being, 32% on the beauty of the holiday destination, 31% on the sea and positive experiences, and 23% on Italian food and fine dining.

Most inbound tourism has been from neighboring countries: German-speaking countries, France, and the Netherlands; although there has also been a good presence from the UK market once Italy began to implement health protocols and complied with the regulations in each destination, from the Alps to the islands.

## Tourism Promotion

The marketing strategy involved both the national public, through digital and television campaigns, including a view to aid measures promoted by the Italian Government, as well as the main European markets using a B2C (business-to-consumer) communication strategy that took into account the dynamics of the last minute/last second changes heavily seen when choosing destinations.

In long-range markets, Italy has used B2C digital positioning campaigns and actions aimed at tour operators to maintain strong relationships with international businesses.

Relations with the media have been constant, both in terms of management of the crisis and the

expectations of the country. From March 18 to October 1, there were a total of 1,420,000 mentions (with 140,100 on the web and 901,700 on social media) that produced 253.3 million interactions. This shows how the country is perceived as a safe and highly appreciated destination internationally.

### **Domestic Tourism**

The government has handed out more than one million holiday bonuses of the 1,448,528 generated for the equivalent of 647,804,550 euros, of which 570,793 were used, and the number of accommodations that adhere to this important initiative to support tourism and spending of lower to middle-income families continues to increase.

The budget bill approved by the Council of Ministers provides for the extension until June 30, 2021, of the holiday voucher, first introduced by the so-called Relaunch Decree to boost Italian tourism.

According to data from the Tax Agency released by the Ministry Cultural Heritage and Tourism (MIBAC), the territorial distribution of the expenses of Italians is occurring between regions with a trend not so different from the usual flows of domestic tourism.

The first three regions where spending has been concentrated are Emilia-Romagna, Puglia and Tuscany where, together, more than a third of the bonuses granted have been used. Specifically, in Emilia-Romagna 16% of the bonuses were spent valued at more than 9.5 million euros, in Puglia 10% valued at about 6 million euros, and in Tuscany, around 7% valued at more than 4 million euros.

### **International Tourism**

It is expected that total overnight stays by tourists will decrease by 186 million and spending by 71 billion euros. **International visitors are down 64% (about 40 million visitors) in 2020.** In contrast, it is estimated that domestic visitors will decrease by 31% (about 16 million) compared to 2019.

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