

TWO FACES OF ITALIAN TOURISM: DESIRE TO TRAVEL AND ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES

Economic difficulties are a bigger issue for Italians than the fear of Covid-19 when it comes to tourism consumption. This was revealed in a study conducted by Demoskopika on Italian tourism during this difficult year. Moreover, some other very insightful and invaluable data were revealed regarding the sector.

According to the study, 54 % of Italians opted to go on vacation compared to 46 % who chose to omit leisure travel this year for various reasons.

The primary reason, **perhaps somewhat surprisingly, is not the fear of Covid-19 infection, but economic troubles**. About ten million Italians are concerned in this regard.

Almost All Vacationers Stay in Italy

When it comes to concrete numbers with regards to the holidaymakers “confirmed” by the study, 87 % of them will spend their vacation in Italy. In contrast, 13 % will travel to foreign countries, with 11.1 % planning a trip within Europe and only 2.1 % opting for an international destination.

Moreover, 31 % of these vacationers have already booked their holiday, while 17 % of those surveyed are “thinking of planning a holiday for the next few months”. To date, only 6 % are already on holiday.

Young People and Seaside Holidays Prevail

Young people are more inclined to go on vacation (62 %) compared to adults (59 %) and people older than 65 (33 %). The most convinced holidaymakers reside in the south of the country.

Furthermore, they have a medium-high educational qualification and have a status of dependent employment (managers, middle managers etc.) rather than self-employment.

Finally, almost 6 out of 10 Italians have opted to spend their holiday by the sea (58 %). The second most popular holiday type is mountain tourism (15 %), followed by city holidays (10 %) and vacation in the countryside (8%).

Covid Fear Not as Significant

As mentioned, the fear of Covid-19 infection is not as high on the list of reasons not to travel for Italians as one would perhaps expect. Only 5 % have given up on their vacation because of this. This amounts to a decrease of 19 % compared to last May.

Economic concerns weigh much more in the decision-making of Italians, as 17 % of them will not go on vacation because they do not have the economic possibility to do so.

It must be noted, moreover, that the situation is worsening. Only 8 % of those surveyed said they cannot travel due to economic troubles in May 2020, compared to today’s frightening 17 %.

With regards to those who have chosen to omit traveling for “economic reasons”, these are mostly people with a low educational qualification or who are unemployed.

Moreover, there are more elderly people in this group than the young, mirroring the share of the group of vacationers. Regionally speaking, more people from central Italy and the northwest have chosen not to go on vacation.

Worrying Trend

Experts note that this year will inevitably be characterized as tourism “of two faces”, one mirroring the other. On the one hand, those who have chosen to go on vacation, mainly in Italy, and, on the other, those who are economically weakened by the pandemic and have chosen a different path.

This is indeed a worrying trend. **And while the Italian tourism sector is in a phase of gradual recovery, it is essential to pay attention to these problems, as well as to the closure of almost 100 thousand companies** or the infiltration of organized crime in the sector.

Experts are calling on the government to implement effective measures for the recovery of the Italian tourism system in cooperation with associations and institutions at various levels.

For now, however, the central government is somewhat quiet on the matter and the appeal of the stakeholders in Italian tourism has not received a response.

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