

ITALIAN TOURISM REVENUES DOWN BY 81%



The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the entire tourism industry, and it will take some time for the sector to recover. Italian tourism was particularly struck, also given the importance of the sector for the economy of the country. Some of the numbers are really devastating, with many stakeholders insisting that “we are facing a massacre”.

In 2020, the first year of the Covid era, domestic tourism consumption in Italy lost over 63 billion compared to 2019 and 31 billion in added value, as reported by the Italian National Institute of Statistics. **This is approximately the levels prior to 2010.**

These are the direct consequences of the drop of both incoming and ongoing tourist flows caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Overnight stays of foreigners decreased by 54.6 %, 207 million visitors from abroad were missing and much more.

The expenditure of foreigners was consequently also heavily affected. Foreign tourists spent 23.7 billion euros during 2020, which is a drop of 59.6 % compared to 2019. Domestic expenditure, in the meantime, fell by 33.8 % to 46.3 billion.

Restaurants thus saw their income decreased by an astonishing 69.8 % to 3.2 billion euros, while tour operators and leisure companies registered a drop of 74.5 % in revenues to 758 million.

GDP Plunges

The state of the Italian tourism industry is quite clear also from the country's GDP. Italy saw its GDP plunged by 8.9 % in 2020, its worst recession since World War II.

Of the 115 billion euros of GDP that Italy lost in 2020 compared to 2019, 27.1 % can be attributed to tourism, i.e. a shortfall estimated at 31.1 billion euros for the sector. All in all, these are quite evidently devastating losses for the sector.

With regards to this year, there have been some minor positive signs. Seaside destinations in Italy have registered an average room occupancy of 70 %, with some regions (Liguria and Tuscany) even reaching an occupancy of over 80 %. Positive numbers are also registered in mountain resorts.

Some inland areas have also experienced improvements. Rome registered an occupancy rate of 40 % during the summer, while Florence and Venice registered a rate of 50 % and 55 % respectively. Better values than in the past but still far from the pre-crisis period.

Outdoor Tourism Booming

However, outdoor tourism did better during the summer of 2021, having exceeded the pre-pandemic levels. As note by Campeggi.com, the leading portal in Italy for campsites and holiday villages, from May to August it recorded an increase in searches of 16 % compared to the same period in 2019.

This has confirmed the positive trend recorded during the spring, when in the third week of April the portal had highlighted a +54 % compared to the beginning of the month and a growth of 656 %

compared to the same period of 2020.

The positive trend for Italian tourism continued even after the start of the season. The month of June recorded a 137 % increase of searches for campsites compared to the previous month and further growth in July, where it reached + 224 % compared to May.

Interest also comes from across the border. From mid-May to August, in fact, there was a growth of 261 % of German users interested in Italy compared to the same period in 2020. Thus, the volumes from 2019 were exceeded by 10 % in total.

Organized Tourism Suffers

But not every subsector of Italian tourism is on this cautiously optimistic wave. In particular, organized tourism is suffering this year.

“We are facing a massacre. 2021 is not going much better than 2020. Indeed, at this rate the organized tourism segment, in particular, will even manage to do worse than the tragic 2020,” said Franco Gattinoni, president of the Federation of Organized Tourism.

In 2019, Italian organized tourism had a turnover of 13.3 billion euros and grew by 4.3 % compared to the previous year. **Now, the sector is preparing to close the balance sheet at 2.5 billion euros, over 80 % less than in 2019.**

The main problem of organized tourism is the fact that there is a general uncertainty with regard to the ever-changing rules. Moreover, there is a lack of perspective which prevents the planning of tourist seasons and makes Italy lose purchasing power compared to foreign competitors.

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