

ANOTHER POOR EASTER SEASON FOR ITALIAN TOURISM?



Italian tourism has been in a very difficult situation since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic two years ago and many were awaiting the recovery in 2022 with great expectations. However, the illusion of recovery did not last long. The war in Ukraine as well as inflation and rising gas prices immediately dampened the spirits. Many people are discouraged to make “non-essential” expenses, such as travel or weekend trips by car.

Another Unimpressive Easter

In 2021, Italy’s tourism sector lacked an incredible 60 million arrivals. Moreover, compared to 2019, 22 million fewer Italians travelled abroad. A picture that only confirms a crisis in which the sector is still immersed and from which there seems to be no exit.

According to data from Confcommercio, **about 8 million Italians want to travel during Easter but of these only 4 million have already organized their trip and booked hotels.** This is a clear sign that uncertainty reigns in society.

Even those who want to travel, however, send few encouraging signals. The travel choices make it clear how critical the situation is: short and short-term journeys within the region of residence, a single overnight stay and spending in the order of 200 euros per person all-inclusive. Moreover, 20% of vacationers say they will spend between 10 and 25 % less than in the pre-pandemic period.

Holidays in second homes or at friends' homes are also on the rise. Half of travelers will use them, while in 2019 40% had done so.

As implicated, everything related to free time is affected. According to data, 68 % of Italians have already changed their spending habits for entertainment and 12 % will be forced to do so soon. A similar thing can be said about restaurants and pizzerias (66 % have already started spending less, 14% will soon).

Milan and Rome in Crisis

Rome and Milan, the two capitals of Italy, are probably suffering the most. The pandemic has emptied the historic centers. The hotel and restaurant sectors, which wanted to relaunch in 2022, have so far had to change their minds.

In Milan, only 20 % of the rooms available have been booked for the Easter period. This is a massive drop from 75 % during the same period three years ago.

In Rome, the situation is similar, with bookings having dropped by 50 % compared to 2019. At the same time, 250 hotels out of a total of 1500 remain closed in the Italian capital, thus further paralyzing the industry.

The overall picture is rather bleak for Italian tourism as well as its two most popular cities. First Covid-19, now the Ukrainian war connected with rising gas prices and inflation. This has paralyzed the sector and at this point, it is difficult to predict any future development.

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