

CYCLING TOURISM IN ITALY BECOMING A 4 BILLION BUSINESS



Cycling tourism in Italy has an estimated economic impact of around 338,000 euros per kilometer. However, there remains a gap between north, central and southern Italy. Here are the cities that take advantage of cycling tourism the most.

Among the many actions to be faced in order to deal with climate change, preferring the bicycle to the car is one of them. **Riding in the saddle is an eco-friendly habit, which can bring to significant environmental changes:** just think that, on a global level, 72% of CO2 emissions are attributable to road transport.

In this respect, the data that emerged from the Global Bicycle Cities Index 2022 are heartening, according to which more and more European cities favor two-wheelers: nine of the top ten 'bicycle-friendly' cities are European. Italy ranks in 65th place, with Milan.

The presence of cycle paths is a clear indicator of sustainability, development, and innovation in the country where such infrastructures are present.

North and South: Distribution Problems

In recent years, more and more Italian municipalities have invested in the construction of cycle paths, but an obvious distribution problem immediately emerges: the 10 Italian cities with more cycle paths than their surface are all in the North. In fact, it is here that the capitals have an average of 56.3 km of cycle paths per 100 sq km of surface, in the center there are 14.8, and in the south only 5.2.

At the first place of the top ten, Padua ranks, with 180 km of cycle paths per 100 sq km, the highest number in Italy. Followed by Brescia (167.9 km), Mantua (164.4 km) and Turin (159.2 km). To counter this disparity between north and south, the Ministry of Infrastructure has recently published the General Plan of Cycling Mobility, a 1.1-billion-euro plan to incentivize the use of bicycles, reduce transport-related emissions and give a boost to the development of infrastructures, especially in the areas that are currently less covered.

How Much Is the Cycling Tourism Market Worth?

Travelling by bicycle moves territorial development with an estimated economic impact of about 338,000 euros per km of cycle path, thanks to new entrepreneurial forms, job opportunities created by the sector and services connected to the same field.

This is confirmed by the third National Report on Cycle Tourism in Italy, which estimated about 31 million cycle tourists for 2022, equal to 4% of those totals recorded in Italy up to now.

The economic impact is also far from negligible: the expenditure for tourism consumption in holiday resorts generated by cycle tourists is estimated for this year to be almost 4 billion and 2022 marked a progress of the so-called "pure" cycle tourists, or rather those for whom the bicycle is one of the main reasons for choosing the destination.

They now amount to approximately 8.5 million and have generated an estimated expenditure of approximately 1 billion euros. On the basis of the available data, **the segment of “pure” cycle tourists appears to have practically doubled its presence compared to the pandemic period** and unites all age groups: the “pure” are mostly included in the age group ranging from 26 to 57 years. Lower percentages are recorded among the very young 10% and among the oldest, only 16%.

Moreover, according to the data, for a journey, a “pure” Italian cyclist spends an average of 95 euros, while a foreign cyclist spends 215 euros. For accommodation, the Italian spends an average of 48 euros per day against 59 euros for those who come from abroad.

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