

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CYCLING TOURISM IN ITALY: 7.4 BILLION EUROS



Italy's bicycle tourism industry is experiencing explosive growth, earning billions of euros. A projected 6.3 million tourists cycled in Italy in 2022, contributing 7.4 billion euros to the economy. While Italy lags behind other European countries in cycling infrastructure, it is investing to catch up. The "Ecosystem of the Bicycle Edition 2023" study shows that cycling tourism has benefited the accommodation industry (1.4 billion euros), the catering sector (800 million), clothing manufacturers (500 million), and leisure activities (300 million).

The study

According to available data, Italy boasts a vast network of cycle paths and cycle tourism spanning approximately 58,000 kilometers. In the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, a budget of 600 million euros has been allocated towards the promotion of cycle tourism. The funds will be utilized to develop 1,235 km of new tourist cycle paths and 565 km of new urban cycle paths by 2026. The study highlights that the average duration of a bicycle vacation is 11 days. Northern Italy is the most preferred destination, especially Trentino-Alto Adige, renowned for its warm hospitality and well-developed bike paths. Interestingly, Southern Italy attracts many cyclists, approximately 18 percent of the total flow.

Italian cycling tourism beneficiaries

According to data on cycle tourism, tour operators are benefiting the most from the industry, which is expected to grow by 15% this year. However, three factors will play a significant role in its future development. Firstly, the increasing production of e-bikes which are gaining popularity among cyclists. Secondly, there is a growing demand for traffic-free cycle paths, with 45% of cycle tourists requesting safer roads. Finally, there is a need to increase the supply of group tours, with 71% of foreign tourists requesting them. The study also highlights the importance of municipalities investing in sustainable mobility and tourism on two wheels.

The winners

The top Italian regions and routes for cycling tourism were recently revealed. Tuscany Region takes the lead with the Puccini Ciclopedonale, followed by the Sicily Region's Sicily Divide in second place and the Veneto Region's Treviso-Ostiglia Ciclabile in third place.

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