

ITALY'S OPEN-AIR TOURISM SURGES DEMONSTRATING A RECORD DEMAND



Among the open-air tourism options, campgrounds and holiday resorts are gaining ground across Italy. Data from Campeggi's 2026 Camping Report shows search activity for these establishments climbed 34 percent since 2025. Families drive much of this growth. Overseas visitors also contribute significantly to rising demand. Growth appears steady despite broader market shifts.

Families Are Still the Main Focus

Most outdoor trips still attract family travelers. 77 percent of booking inquiries come from those traveling with kids or partners - up two points since last year. **Instead of families, couples and friend circles cover eighteen percent.** Just five out of every hundred who look into these getaways go alone.

Among search priorities, entertainment and baby clubs appear most often - chosen in 37% of cases - ahead of pet-friendly amenities at 19%. Swimming areas and splash zones show up in 15% of queries, while closeness to shore draws interest in 13%. On-site dining plus shopping spaces register in 9%, whereas meal-inclusive stays make up 7%. Family needs shape these patterns clearly through each choice listed.

Most who travel - about 65 percent - choose to stay in permanent buildings like bungalows or movable houses on land. Instead of these, a smaller group, roughly three in ten, go for standard spots where they set up tents or park trailers. Though tiny in share, just 3 percent, luxury camping draws interest from people wanting brief getaways that blend nature with comfort. Despite its size, this last option stands out by offering something different: ease within wild settings.

Foreign Demand Narrows the Gap

Surprising numbers show a sharp rise in global attention. Back in 2025, local queries made up 78%, while overseas ones stood at just 22%. Yet by 2026, nearly half - 48% - of all searches came from outside Italy. Meanwhile, national interest dipped to 52%. A clear shift unfolded within a single year.

Top spot goes to Germany, pulling in 21 percent of all search interest in open-air tourism from abroad. Close behind is Switzerland, contributing 8 percent. Austria accounts for 6 percent, while the Netherlands makes up 5. Other contributions come from France, Denmark, Spain, the Czech Republic, Poland, and the UK - each adding a modest slice.

Shifting Destination Preferences

Now topping the list, Liguria grabs 16% of travel queries - an impressive jump of 64% since 2025 - just ahead of Sardinia at 14%, up by a quarter. Shifting preferences among Italian tourists reveal new patterns. In third place comes Tuscany, now holding steady at 10%, its numbers rising 21%. Trailing slightly behind, Puglia records 8%, growing just 4%. Meanwhile, Calabria surges forward with a 48% boost, landing firmly in fifth position despite starting lower. Not far off, Veneto sees searches climb 43%; similarly, Trentino-Alto Adige gains traction with a rise of 39%. These regions reflect quiet momentum beneath the surface.

Though domestic travelers favor different destinations, abroad tourists show a distinct pattern. In 2026, Sardinia tops their list - Tuscany comes next, then Veneto trails closely behind. Following those, Lake Garda holds steady in fourth place; Liguria slips into fifth position unexpectedly. A year earlier, back in 2025, attention focused more on Lake Garda along with the Adriatic coastline instead.

Contrasting Travel Styles

Most Italian travelers choose coastal spots, often picking trips that last just a week or a bit more. Instead of planning months ahead, they tend to decide close to departure time. Family needs guide their choices - from pools to kid-friendly spaces. Longer visits come more naturally to visitors from abroad. While German guests usually remain two weeks, those from the Netherlands or Switzerland settle in for about twelve days. Lately, there has been growing interest among Germans in campgrounds open all year. This shift offers site managers chances to run operations beyond summer.

Rising Costs and the Beach Access Debate

Summer trips outdoors grow busier even as classic seaside breaks climb higher in cost. A report from the consumer group Altroconsumo reveals that rental fees for sunbeds and umbrellas along Italy's coastal spots increased 6% for 2026, rising 24% since five summers ago.

Most dramatic jumps show up across parts of southern Italy. Taormina and Giardini Naxos in Sicily climb by as much as 16 percent. Alghero, tucked in northern Sardinia, rises 14 percent. In contrast, prices in Gallipoli edge upward by 10 percent. Weekly costs peak in Alassio, Liguria, where a top-tier beach setup - with umbrella and pair of recliners - costs about €368. Meanwhile, spots along the Adriatic, like Lignano, stay lower; there, similar access runs near €164 each week.

Nowhere near enough shoreline remains open to everyone, sparking fresh conversation about who gets to enjoy Italy's coasts. Because prices keep climbing, many find themselves with little choice but to pay for access where sunbeds, changing areas, and food services are provided. Instead of leaving it this way, a consumer group urges long-term change: increase publicly managed stretches while reducing leased zones and clarifying how permits get awarded. Already, voices demanding action have grown loud - a call for reform online now backed by more than ninety-one thousand supporters.

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