

BUYING PROPERTY IN ITALY: FOREIGN INVESTORS PREFER THE REAL COUNTRY



There is different Italy, beyond the most photographed villages and clichéd landscapes: a hidden Italy of villages nestled in the Apennines, inland, forgotten lakes and stretches of coastline without any queues. This is increasingly what is sought by those who buy property in Italy.

Based on the first half of 2026 data compiled by Gateaway, it emerges that the search is becoming more eclectic, more curious than ever, focusing less on the most iconic landmarks, and more on the face of everyday Italy, far from the tourist masses.

Overtourism in Italy: The Numbers

According to the Italian Ministry of Tourism, **international tourists flock exclusively to 4% of the territory**, i.e. a few art cities, a handful of famous beaches and the most renowned lakes. Here, the balance shifts.

When the Journey Becomes a Purchase

While the top searched locations on the territory are dominated by iconic properties, it is important to note that 7.4% of inquiries come from foreign users already present in the country: in other words, those who have arrived to discover Italy on foot, on a bike, by motorhome or in a farmhouse kitchen.

A journey changes a person's gaze: what was discovered on foot will often become the location of a second home, where the owner can spend several months a year. Or it can become the center of a new life, built step by step: experience counts. And experience rarely comes from a brochure.

The Most Sought-After Regions and Municipalities

Tuscany leads the way with 14.33% of preferences, followed by Sicily (11.05%), Lombardy (9.28%), Puglia (8.74%) and Liguria (7.70%). Also among the most searched are Piedmont, Calabria, Abruzzo, Umbria and Lazio, which emerge as popular choices.

The list of the 20 most searched municipalities also includes well-known locations such as Ostuni, Noto, Rome, Tropea, Sanremo, Lucca and Syracuse, but also some hidden gems that few tourists visit:

- Tortora in Calabria
- Castiglione del Lago in Umbria
- Fivizzano in Lunigiana
- Bagni di Lucca
- Nizza Monferrato in Piedmont
- Terricciola in Valdera
- Carovigno and Ceglie Messapica in Puglia
- Parghelia in Calabria
- San Siro on Lake Como

- Scalea on the Tyrrhenian coast
- Caltagirone in inland Sicily

What these names have in common is that they represent a certain idea of quality of life, far from the crowded places where tourists flock. There for they are ideal for those looking for a property in Italy.

Close to the Coast, Not on It

While about 54.84% of requests concern properties within ten kilometers of the coast, only 19.06% are interested in a property in Italy with a view of the sea.

It seems that for most foreign buyers, the idea of living in Italy does not necessarily include the beach: distances are acceptable, provided there is a cooler climate, hills or villages, lower prices and a more authentic lifestyle.

Who Is Looking—and What They Spend

Americans lead the ranking, followed by the British and Germans:

- United States: 21.71%
- United Kingdom: 14.24%
- Germany: 9.59%
- France: 5.36%
- Netherlands: 4.33%
- Sweden: 3.74%
- Belgium: 3.10%
- Canada: 2.70%
- Switzerland: 2.47%

The average budget is €396,807, but nearly 70% of those seeking a property in Italy have a budget below €250,000. **In other words, there is strong demand for affordable housing.**

It is no coincidence that in less sought-after areas the supply is greater, as well as more interesting prices, far from the inflated peaks near the most popular cities. Apartments, villas and single-family homes are the most sought-after properties, with over 60% of those searching for a house looking for renovated property or ready to move in.

Demand That Runs Ahead of Tourism

It seems clear that the interest of foreigners in buying real estate in Italy is not limited to sunbeds and sandals. They are looking for something more authentic: a different lifestyle, a daily life that is not dictated by tourism, but this is a trend that is spreading increasingly far from the usual touristic routes.

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