

FOREIGN TOURISTS BOOST THE SHOPPING TOURISM IN ITALY



International tourists are the key to developing the shopping tourism in Italy, says a recent study. The Shopping Tourism Italian Monitor 2026 is the analysis conducted by the research agency Risposte Turismo, which has been following this sector of tourism for over ten years.

Foreign tourists are the market operators should concentrate on, since Italian shoppers have a low propensity to travel for this purpose, although they form a not irrelevant segment: 22% of those surveyed overall.

The Identikit of the Shopping Tourist

Italian shoppers have a different profile from those found in other surveyed countries, such as Spain and the UK: **over 60-year-olds form the largest age group (36%), while the opposite is true for other two countries.**

As for preferences, these largely overlap, with discounts, sales, and promotions most influencing destination choice for 66% of respondents, followed by the availability of traditional products and niche items (55%). In Italy, shopping tourists frequent markets and stalls selling traditional products (30%) and small local artisan shops (29%), followed by stores selling discounted luxury brands (17%) and boutiques selling iconic Italian brands (9%).

Spending power is also changing: the range of €26-50 a day has increased to 41%, compared to 22%. Italian tourists still spend more than those travelling for other purposes, but they are more selective and prefer traditional and artisan products to well-known brands.

Mapping Shopping Tourism Locations

In terms of structures, the Monitor forecasts that in 2026 Italy will confirm itself as Europe's second-largest market for outlet centers. Thus, after France, Italy comes second in the rankings and precedes the UK.

Department stores, a traditional retail format for European cities, have seen some important closures in 2025 in Europe, and Italy had not been spared: however, shopping streets continue to be an attractive destination for foreign tourists, with the presence of around 80 associations of these stores nationwide.

Important legislative changes are coming, with the National Register of Commercial Activities, Artisan Workshops and Historic Public Establishments, issued by the Ministry of Business and Made in Italy, which will enter into force at the end of 2026. Various promotional initiatives and information activities for these businesses are already available on the portal of the Ministry of Tourism: for the first time, historic workshops will also be included in the institutional communication on tourism, which goes beyond the local level.

Italy has various types of shopping venues, which can satisfy different needs. **The number of outlet villages is static, while department stores are in decline, but artisan workshops and**

markets are on the rise: these are the places that attract most shopping tourists, and where some cities have built their image around them.

Venues are numerous, but the challenge now is to increase their capacity to welcome a target that is growing, international, and with high requirements, which the data confirm to be largely made up of foreigners.

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