



FIERA MILANO

MILANO
Bit
YOUR TRAVEL
EXHIBITION.

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Press office

SUSTAINABLE, CONSCIOUS, CUSTOMIZED, TECHNOLOGICAL: A NEW TOURISM AT BIT 2024

- *Italy represented from north to south, new participants, and historic destinations from around the world*
- *Three exhibition areas, Leisure, BeTech and MICE Village, to turn the spotlight on the whole industry, in Italy and abroad, with an offer that meets the needs of travelers*
- *The exhibition proposal will be enhanced by a campaign to select top buyers from all over the world, with the confirmed presence of participants from USA, China, Spain, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands*
- *Bringing Innovation Into Travel, the events format, will offer a rich schedule to discuss current trends from AI to sustainability, up to training workshops for operators and travel agents*
- *Sustainability, awareness and customization combined with new technologies will be the common thread throughout the whole exhibition proposal*

Milan, 14 December 2023 – Despite the climate of geopolitical uncertainty at the international level, **the desire to travel is still alive**, both in Italy and around the world. As reported by the World Tourism Organization (**UNWTO**) **last 30 November**, world tourism has made significant progress, **recovering by 90% over 2019**. Europe did even better, **welcoming 550 million international tourists in the first nine months of 2023, thus accounting for 56% of the global total**, far exceeding 2019. Intra-regional demand, together with the strong demand coming from the United States, is contributing to an industry that is rich on multiple levels. In Italy, in particular - due to the intrinsic cultural value and the economic spin-off it produces - **the industry is worth 255 billion euros**, accounting for 13% of the national GDP.

Italy confirms to be **one of the favorite destinations for foreigners**: if in 2022 the country ranked fourth in terms of number of presences (14.5% of those registered in the entire EU) behind Spain (16.6%), France (16.3%) and Germany (14.7%), after the first half of 2023 it **rose to second place** trailing only Spain.

BIT Milano will take place under these premises: an irreplaceable platform to foster relations and business opportunities for sector operators, as well as an observatory of trends, to be held at **Allianz MiCo** in Milan from **Sunday 4 to Tuesday 6 February 2024**. As it happens every year, the goal will be to turn the spotlight on this valuable sector through the various **exhibitors**, both national and international, the buyers and the rich schedule of conferences, taking stock of the **present and future of the global travel industry** with offers that are increasingly **sustainable, conscious, customized and technological**.

In addition, this year Bit entered into a **strategic partnership** with the most important travel agency network. As a matter of fact, **Welcome Travel Group** (whose partners are Alpitour and Costa Crociere) chose Bit for its corporate convention, which will enliven the exhibition for three days with private and public initiatives to be announced soon. Welcome Travel Group will end the current year with a turnover of about 1,340 billion euros, 20% more compared to 2019 and with a forecast for 2024 of a 30-40% growth, confirming that the sector, despite the state of constant crisis in which we are living, is very energetic and shows how travel is one of the few activities that people are not willing to give up.



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Areas and itineraries shaped around the needs of exhibitors and visitors

The three macro-areas will be confirmed: **Leisure**, based on proposals of destinations and operators with **a renewed focus on foreign destinations and internationalization**; **BeTech**, centered on digital services; the **MICE Village**, dedicated to business travel.

These three sectors respond to the need to highlight the added value of exhibitors. As a matter of fact, the Leisure area will be dedicated to exhibitors proposing travel solutions and destinations for *mainstream* tourism, with the best cities and resorts, sea, mountains, food and wine, and honeymoon destinations, as well as for experiential and customized tourism, a trend that has characterized the last few seasons: from slow, eco tourism, to which Bit devotes special attention, up to active, proximity, long-haul, luxury and tailor-made tourism. The offer proposed by Italian regions and local authorities, which will be present from north to south, will range from the classic tours and top destinations characterized by the uniqueness and beauty of the places, to medieval villages, routes and paths to be enjoyed on foot or by mountain bike, up to trips to lesser-known and even more fascinating places such as **Basilicata** and its incredible forests, the karst landscapes in **Friuli Venezia Giulia**, the hidden and underground Naples in **Campania**, and the Palladian Villas in **Veneto**. Many novelties will also come from abroad, starting with countries such as **China** and **Japan** and the city of **Tokyo**, with the former that after many years will present a fresh approach towards the needs of travelers and operators, aimed at communicating its history of Empires and revolutions, with magical places ranging from endless deserts to vast plains and forests dotted with Temples and imperial cities, from lakes and oases to the skyscrapers and hyperactivity of more contemporary areas. Bit will also showcase a great number of dreamy destinations, from the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean, from **Cuba** to **Sri-Lanka** and **Barbados**, up to Central and South America with the still little-known **Uruguay**, **Nicaragua** and the states of **Ceara** and **Fortaleza** in **Brazil**. Moreover, a brand new participant in this edition will be the **Central America Tourism Agency** (representing **Belize**, **El Salvador**, **Guatemala**, **Honduras**, **Nicaragua**, **Panama**, and **Dominican Republic**).

On the other hand, more popular destinations will include countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea such as **Algeria**, **Tunisia**, **Croatia**, and **Formentera**.

There will be new participants also for what concerns attractions, hotels and carriers: Bit will host, among others, **Gardaland** and its resorts, **ITA Airways**, **Eva Airways**, **MSC Crociere**, **Cruiseline**, **Space Hotels**, **NH Milano Congress Centre** (MINOR Hotels), together with other chains and services in the MICE sector.

Among tour-operators and associations, Bit will host big names such as **Gattinoni**, **FTO-Turismo Organizzato**, **Federcongressi&eventi**, and **ASTOI**.

High-profile top buyers for new international opportunities

The program of **selection and registration** of highly profiled domestic and international **top buyers** continues with a view to enabling exhibitors to activate **business relationships** and enhance export opportunities in target countries from all continents: USA and Canada for **North America**; Argentina and Brazil for **South America**; Spain, France, Germany, UK, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden for **Europe**; China, India and UAE for **Asia**.

Among the most prominent names that already confirmed their presence, there will be companies with international resonance such as **Grupo Viajes El Corte Inglés**, **Travelzoo** (Germany), **Lidl Österreich GmbH**, and **TUI Netherlands**, one of the world's largest tourism groups with more than 60,000 employees and offices throughout Europe.



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From the United States, Bit will host **Backroads**, **HelmsBriscoe** and **Dell Technologies Inc**, while from China, **Fliggy**, an online travel platform that is part of the Alibaba Group, confirmed its presence together with **Beijing GE Hualun Medical Equipment company Limited**, the Chinese branch of GE Healthcare, the world's leading manufacturer of medical devices.

Thanks to such diverse and prestigious participants, Bit Milano continues to play a crucial role in facilitating business connections on a global scale, thus contributing significantly to the growth of the industry.

Bringing Innovation Into Travel: trends and solutions for an evolving marketplace

BIT is not just a marketplace for matching supply and demand, but a space for meeting and discussion geared toward anticipating data and trends while providing strategic and practical tools for professional growth.

Thanks to the exclusive events format **Bringing Innovation Into Travel**, which is curated by **Business International**, **Fiera Milano's** knowledge-unit, all the souls of the supply chain - associations, specialized publishers and companies - will be able to discuss the major trends in the industry, taking into account three main macro-themes: **New Trends**, **Innovation**, **Sustainability** - understood as environmental and personal protection.

Among the events not to be missed, on Sunday 4 February, after the inauguration, there will be an **appointment dedicated to the hot topic of training, "Skills in tourism, a new vision"**, aimed at defining some guidelines to harmonize training strategies in tourism, so as to offer quality services through unified knowledge for future tourism managers. The event **"Wanderlust, the future of tourism is today"** will gather the **industry's top international CEOs** for a discussion on tourism scenarios and trends for the coming years. Through an interactive and integrated analysis, they will discuss **transportation, hospitality, new strategies and technologies** for increasingly **sustainable, conscious and customized** traveling solutions, but at the same time accessible and transgenerational.

Of absolute topical interest will be the conference **"Aviation between peak demand, pricing and supply under stress. How to square the circle"**, which will analyze how artificial intelligence and generative software can help change a particularly hot topic such as that of price.

Carriers will be on center stage also at the meeting **"The future of air and cruise transport according to the vision of conductors and associations"**.

These topics are also related to Bit's particular focus **on the environmental, human and economic impact of travel**, combined with a **renewed sensitivity towards individual needs**, which will be discussed at conferences such as **"Tour operators: beyond revenues comes the social value of companies"**, or **"Overtourism, the comeback: strategies to avoid crowding"**.

Digital transition and artificial intelligence, two fundamental challenges for the industry, will be common topics among the whole schedule of talks, such as those dedicated to MICE: **"Flights, trains and hotels: the travel of SMEs in 2024"** and **"Business travel never again without bleisure"**. **New generative software** applied to travel booking engines will be the focus of **"The role of artificial intelligence in travel: from inspiration to booking"**; **"MICE and AI, matchmaking between intelligences for a new way of communicating events"**; **"Hotels: automation, AI and human advice"**; and **"The role of ChatGpt and generative software in travel"**, for an in-depth look at the impacts that these new technologies will have on the work of operators, with interesting insights on the issue of privacy.



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In addition, there will be no shortage of the so-called **toolboxes: a series of talks and insights dedicated in particular to travel agents**. Using a simple but pragmatic language, these events are aimed at keeping professionals updated with the new **"Competencies, tools and strategic means for the travel manager"**, or with **"Take your resort or village to a level of high performance, increase profitability and efficiency with the model 'Villaggio Sold Out'"**.

Sustainability will be back on center stage with the appointments **"The new mission of cruises needs to rely on environmental protection"** and **"Nature and tourism, culture of the environment for a wellness vacation"**.

All details of the events can be found on the Bit website <https://bit.fieramilano.it/eventi.html>

For updated info: bit.fieramilano.it; @BitMilano.

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