



FIERA MILANO

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Bit
YOUR TRAVEL
EXHIBITION.

Fiera Milano
Press Office

Rosy Mazzanti
Simone Zavettieri
+39 0249977457
+39 335 6992328
press.bit@fieramilano.it

Trade and foreign press office
Flaviana Facchini RP
+ 39 339 6401271
flavianafacchini@gmail.com

Fiera Milano S.p.A.
+39 02 4997 7134
fieramilano@fieramilano.it
fieramilano.it

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The BIT 2025 Observatory presents the travel trends for the upcoming holidays

- *At Christmas 2024, interest in adventure travel in Sub-Saharan Africa, Madagascar, Latin America and Southeast Asia is growing*
- *In the medium-haul sector, the big European capitals confirm their poll position, while in Italy Milan and Naples stand out*
- *On New Year's Eve, all eyes will be on the east, with Berlin and Budapest for the youngest travellers and the 'smaller' capitals, such as Zagreb, Ljubljana or Bratislava, for families. Rome and Turin will do well in Italy*
- *Over 70% of Italians are already booking a trip, 8% will do it last-minute, and only 21% plan to stay put during the holidays*

Milan, 18 November 2024 – The holiday season is approaching and, this year more than ever, travel trends appear diversified and, therefore, full of **opportunities for operators**. Many travellers are looking for **unique and authentic experiences**, with a strong interest in **hotter and more exotic destinations**. However, there is no shortage of those seeking out **adventure**, even in cold climates, and interest in **Italy**, is also strong, with travellers choosing art, wellness and food and wine.

The **BIT 2025 Observatory** – the leading tourism exhibition in Italy, [on at fieramilano – Rho from 9 to 11 February 2025](#) – brought together and analysed some of the most interesting predictions. Calculating an average based on the data of the main Italian TOs, the Observatory predicts that at least **60%** of our compatriots plan to spend Christmas elsewhere, with a significant increase in demand for **trips abroad** compared to previous years.

Long-haul destinations tend to favour warm weather and adventure

In particular, there is a growing interest in **trips that combine adventure and relaxation**, with tours in countries that offer both **wild nature** and **white sandy beaches and crystal clear waters**: **Caribbean** destinations top the popularity stakes, such as the evergreen **Dominican Republic**, where 'sun and sea' holidays are joined by large wild natural parks and striking Hispanic locations with their traditions. According to the **Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association**, arrivals in the region have already **increased by 13%** compared to last year.

The numbers of **Central American destinations** are higher still, such as **El Salvador**, which is increasing in popularity with its mix of natural parks, volcanoes, Mayan ruins and surprising **inland lakes**. According to data from



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the **WTTC**, the country is leading the growth in the region and has seen a **3-digit increase** of no less than **157%** compared to 2023. The increase of **Nicaragua (+142%)** also reached 3 figures and Guatemala (+52%), Honduras (+49%), Costa Rica (+35%), Mexico (+31%) and Colombia (+23%) did well too.

On the other hand, **Iceland** figures among the favourite destinations of those who **defy the cold**. Famous for its breathtaking landscapes with the wonderful Northern Lights, as well as its **volcanoes and spa waters**, it is dotted with quaint Nordic-style fishing villages full of colourful houses. Destinations that not only offer the opportunity to break away from the routine, but also to immerse yourself in different cultures or lifestyles. The **Bank of Iceland** estimates that December 2024 will be the month with the highest growth ever for tourism to the country, with a **21.4% increase** compared to 2023.

Photographic safaris are still in high demand, the Observatory notes, but with many travellers opting for relatively new destinations such as **Madagascar**, with its lush forests rich in native fauna unique to the island. **South America** is one of the countries that ranks among this year's top destinations for adventure holidays: A study by **Research & Markets** estimates that this year the region will finally reach its pre-pandemic levels, welcoming **40.19 million travellers**. In the 'Cono Sur' it is worth mentioning **Uruguay** with its colonial cities, the pampas, the great rivers to explore and the iconic meat-based food and wine. Or again, new Asian destinations such as **Vietnam**, where the charm of a millenary culture blends with an unspoiled and enveloping tropical nature.

Plunge into the Christmas atmosphere not far from home

The analyses of the Observatory on short and medium-haul destinations reveal that, during the holidays, European capitals such as **Paris, Vienna or London**, famous for their particularly ostentatious Christmas scenery, remain a must for shorter stays. As for the British capital, the Tourist Board **Visit Britain** estimates that it will receive a record-breaking **25.1 million visits**, with tourists spending almost **£14 billion**.

For those who want to lose themselves **in the festive atmosphere and spectacular illuminations** while remaining in Italy, the top cities will be **Milan**, for its unrivalled shopping offer and decorations at the same level as the big European metropolises, and **Naples**, with its **nativity scene** tradition and the inevitable visit to the incredible creations of the artisans of **San Gregorio Armeno**. For the capital of Lombardy, 2024 was a record-breaking year, with arrivals now steadily above the quota of **one million per month**, as attested by the data of the **Metropolitan City**, while **Naples** is estimated to reach **14 million visitors** by the end of the year.

For travellers who, on the other hand, want to explore the classic **Northern European-style Christmas markets**, the key destinations remain those of the



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northeast, while for those seeking something new this year the markets of **Calabria, Veneto, Lombardy, Apulia** offer a variety of options.

And for New Year's Eve?

For New Year's Eve, according to the BIT 2025 Observatory, the main trend is the search for destinations that combine a great tradition of **outdoor parties**, with light shows and entertainment, offering a range of clubs where visitors can party after midnight until the early hours of the morning.

In this sense, one of the most sought-after destinations in Europe remains **London**, between its **fireworks over the River Thames** and parties in the neighbourhoods combined with a vast variety of **nightclubs** in iconic neighbourhoods such as **Soho, Camden or the West End** of the theatres. Not to mention the area of the museums on the **Left Bank** and the 'hidden gems' to be discovered in the residential areas, such as **Notting Hill** or **Hampstead Heath**.

Madrid is also experiencing a grand revival, with its ritual that involves eating twelve grapes on the twelve strokes of midnight, in the square in front of the large clock of **Plaza del Sol**, the heart of the Spanish capital and starting point for all the city's streets. Then continue the night in one of the countless clubs of the famous Madrid nightlife around the **Gran Vía, in Chueca**, or in emerging alternative neighbourhoods such as **Lavapiés**.

On the other hand, **Central and Eastern Europe** stand out among the emerging destinations of this year, where outdoor events and grand celebrations take on a **Central European allure** that Italian travellers seem to appreciate very much. **Budapest**, in particular, **is a novelty**, offering lively squares and enchanted atmospheres along **the Danube** while **Berlin** confirms its place at the top of the rankings for younger travellers: not only for the traditional big party at the **Brandenburg Gate**, but also for the wide choice of discos that animate **the techno and house scene**. Berlin also remains one of the most popular **LGBTQ+ destinations** in Europe, a constantly growing market segment. For those who want a quieter and more family atmosphere, the East also offers the Habsburg charm of the 'small' capitals such as **Ljubljana, Zagreb and Bratislava**, as well as the evergreen **Prague**.

In Italy, **Venice** is still a popular romantic destination, ideal for a special evening strolling among the canals and visiting St. Mark's Square, while **Rome or Turin**, among the others, continue to offer concerts and shows for those who prefer a classic New Year's Eve. A classic New Year's Eve is on offer at the sea in **Liguria** while nature and history are the main themes of the celebrations in the villages and cities of **Umbria**.

When it comes to the long haul, on the other hand, the BIT 2025 Observatory notes that many Italian households are choosing **New York**, to admire the famous crystal ball in **Times Square**, or **Dubai**, with its spectacular fireworks displays



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around the **Burj Khalifa**. Those looking for a New Year's Eve in warm locations also consider the beaches of **Rio de Janeiro** for a unique experience combining music and dancing on the sand.

An eye on the budget and the other on timing

It should be said, in any case that travellers are trying to optimise costs. According to the community **Weroad**, approximately **70%** of Italians are planning trips with a **set budget**, taking advantage of **offers & packages**. Flexibility becomes a priority, with many choosing to book trips that can be cancelled or changed without penalty.

The data of a **Jetcost** search engine survey are substantially in line with this estimate. They confirm that **71% of Italians** intend to travel in the upcoming holidays and many have already booked, taking advantage of **prices that are 25% lower** than the offers closer to the date of departure, committing a budget of **about 800 euros per person**. According to the study, only **8%** will wait until the last few days to take advantage of last-minute deals, while **21%** is not planning to travel at all.

All these destinations and trends will be showcased in [**BIT 2025, at fieramilano – Rho from 9 to 11 February 2025**](#), so that visitors can plan ahead for next year's holidays. BIT 2025 will also be open to travellers on **Sunday 9 February** and only to operators on **Monday 10 and Tuesday 11 February**.

For up-to-date information on the exhibition: bit.fieramilano.it, [@bitmilano](https://twitter.com/bitmilano)