

**Fiera Milano
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Background for press

Bit 2025, a success among industry professionals, tourism looks to the future

The success of the 45th edition confirms the exhibition's value as a pioneer of trends, innovation, technology and quality products for operators in the sector. Wide participation of international buyers interested in the Italy offer, personalised trips, proposals for new market niches.

Rho – Milan, 19 February 2025. With an impressive influx of professional operators and travellers, the 45th edition of BIT - International Tourism Exchange closed with an extremely positive result, confirming its strategic role as a reference point in Italy for innovation and development of the tourism product.

An event that continues to be the most effective sounding board for the industry, thanks to the large number of press from all over the world.

A quality and innovation edition

BIT 2025, which took place in its new location at Fiera Milano, saw the participation of over 1,000 exhibitors from 64 countries, with a wide and diversified offer able to provide operators with effective tools and ideas to move confidently in a constantly evolving sector and to meet the needs of increasingly informed travellers in search of authentic and original experiences.

The presence of thousands of international buyers confirmed BIT 2025's role as a global reference event. Buyers' attention was focused on finding new destinations and innovative, high quality travel offerings, with a particular emphasis on unique, hyper-personalised experiences.

Completing the networking between supply and demand, the Bringing Innovation Into Travel programme featured more than 40 presentations, attended by hundreds of delegates, on some of the most topical issues of the day: from artificial intelligence, big data and other challenges of digitalisation, to solutions to overcome overtourism, to new consumer trends driven by emotion, passion, motivation and lifestyle.



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In a sector characterised by strong technological innovation, expertise and valuable relationships, the BIT4Job event area, organised in collaboration with Lavoro Turismo and Welcome Travel Group, was an excellent opportunity to promote the match between labour supply and demand, with a particular focus on the new skills and competences required by the market. One of the strengths of BIT4Job has been its ability to combine tourism and business events, showing young people the attractiveness of the sector and reducing the gap between school and the world of work.

Adriano Apicella, CEO of WTG, said, "The sector is evolving towards a hybrid model. Human expertise in this area is integrating with new technologies, including AI, to deliver tailored experiences, as direct knowledge of destinations remains an added value."

Hyper-personalisation and social sustainability. The trends that emerged at BIT

The tourism sector is evolving with increasingly themed, sustainable and personalised experiences. According to the UNWTO, international tourism will increase by between 3% and 5% in 2025, while in Italy the additional income generated by the Milan-Cortina Olympic Games will be between 2.3 and 3 billion euros.

Among the new trends, tourism linked to natural phenomena stands out, with noctourism and astrotourism on the rise. Some 61% of travellers are willing to travel to see the Northern Lights, while 60% look for areas with low light pollution to view the stars. Wellness tourism is also developing, with a focus on longevity itineraries, innovative therapies and immersive sensory journeys.

Sports tourism is also growing, with a particular focus on winter sports in the run-up to the Olympic Games. Gig tripping, i.e. planned trips around concerts and festivals, is increasingly common among young people, while shopping tourism is changing: Gen Z is looking for unique and authentic products off the beaten track, contributing to the success of Made in Italy and luxury shopping, with Milan as the centre of attention.

Among the cross-cutting megatrends that have emerged are the hyper-personalisation of the travel experience, facilitated by artificial intelligence, and social sustainability alongside environmental sustainability. The focus on ESG policies is central to a tourism that seeks to balance economic growth and resource conservation.

Italian tourism product continues to grow worldwide

The ISNART data presented at BIT 2025 - based on more than 39,000 interviews with operators and travellers, as well as objective measurements - estimate around 880 million visitors for 2024, with an economic impact on the regions of more than 108



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billion euros. Of particular interest is the increase in foreign tourists, up 2.3% compared to 2023 and even +18% compared to the pre-pandemic highs of 2019.

More importantly, employment in the accommodation sector will increase by 17 percentage points to around 68% compared to 51% in 2023. Of particular interest are also the changes in the profile of visitors who choose Italy: the share of those with medium to high or very high status has risen from 34% in 2023 to 43% in 2024. Last year, culture was the main reason for travelling to Italy (seventh in 2023), while value for money rose from sixth to fourth.

A change that is also reflected in the growing interest in experience tourism, among which food and wine tourism continues to stand out. The new report on Italian food and wine tourism, promoted by the Italian Food and Wine Tourism Association, was presented at BIT 2025.

According to the report, food and wine is the second most popular type of experience for European travellers (15.3%), after nature (16.6%). With more than 20.6 million potential travellers involved, the total economic contribution of food and wine tourism to national GDP is estimated at more than 40 billion euros. Small villages and inland areas remain the most visited destinations for this type of tourism, while the most requested experiences are gourmet experiences in restaurants (56%) and visits to production sites (52.5%), but also relaxation (45.3%). In terms of their reasons for travelling, food and wine travellers want to try new experiences (43%), broaden their cultural knowledge (34%) and immerse themselves in nature (31%).

Authenticity and experiences: buyers around the world find what they are looking for at BIT

Bit was visited by thousands of buyers from around the world, including a selection of high-profile hosted buyers from 49 countries. Of these, 45% come from Europe, including Italy; 27% from the Americas; 18% from Asia (including CIS countries) and Oceania; 10% from the Middle East and Africa. The most represented countries include Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, the Eastern European countries, the Gulf countries, Spain, USA.

BIT 2025 is confirmed as a strategic event for international buyers looking for new destinations and innovative travel offers. Eileen Ai Ping Phua, of The Travel Corporation Pte. Ltd. (Singapore), highlights the role of the exhibition in the MICE sector: "It is important for us to find new locations, especially in Europe and Italy, where Tuscany is in high demand. The phenomenon of bleisure is growing, with travellers combining work and holidays.

Italy is also a top destination for the Middle East market. Shady Ali, from Almosafer (Seera Group), explains: "Milan, Rome, Venice and the Amalfi Coast remain the most popular destinations, but



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there is a growing interest in alternative accommodation such as villas and luxury apartments. Shopping remains central, but we see strong growth in boating holidays and the authenticity of local traditions.

In the European market, the focus has shifted to finding unique experiences. Bjoern Johannsohn of TUI Belgium (which covers the whole continent) has noticed a new trend: "A lot of customers are on the lookout for destinations that are 'not from Instagram'. Sustainability is increasingly important: we are asking for higher standards from hotels. Customers are very aware of details such as the use of plastic or food waste."

From Argentina, Patricia Shanahan of Ayello Carbonari, talks about the evolution of local tourism: "In Latin America, the economic crisis has reduced the size of the middle class, so the sector is now focusing on the luxury segment, promoting roots tourism, with trips to discover family origins, often combined with tours of Italy. Puglia is among the emerging destinations."

The luxury segment is also crucial for the United States. Alvaro de la Fuente from Travelive confirms: "We are looking for exclusive experiences for high-profile clients. BIT is the perfect place to find specific offers for the Italian market, with quality exhibitors and effective networking."

Finally, from China, Yingying Laod, of Hiseas International Tourism Group, points out: "The Chinese customer is still tied to classic tours of Europe, but there are more repeaters looking for more in-depth experiences, especially in terms of culture and food and wine. We are also seeing growth in business travel."

With the success of this edition, BIT consolidates its role as one of the most important proprietary exhibitions for Fiera Milano. In fact, this edition was a strategic step towards the 2026 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in Milan-Cortina, for which Fiera Milano will be a partner in hosting some of the most eagerly awaited competitions in its venues.

The 46th edition of BIT will be held at Fiera Milano – Rho from 8 to 10 February 2026.