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Emotions, wellness, experiences: BIT 2025 reveals the most promising niches in Travel

Travel will be even more experiential and thematic, with a greater focus on social sustainability. For 2025, the UNWTO forecasts a +3-5% increase. In Italy, the spotlight is on the economic impact of Milan-Cortina, estimated between 2.3 and 3 billion euros.

Milan, 6 February 2025 – As usual, the upcoming appointment with [BIT 2025, at Fiera Milano – Rho from Sunday 9 to Tuesday 11 February](#), will be an opportunity to take stock of the state of the art of the sector and **preview the emerging trends**, both as **business opportunities** for operators and **unique and original travel ideas** for the public.

In the run-up to the opening ceremony, [the BIT 2025 Observatory](#) has identified the most interesting data and trends starting from the **constant dialogue with all the players in the supply chain**, while analysing studies and research in partnership with **Magda Antonioli, professor at Bocconi University and Vice President of the European Travel Commission**.

A 2025 characterised by growth driven by new forms of tourism

According to the latest **UNWTO World Tourism Barometer**, in 2024 Europe recorded **747 million international arrivals** (**+5%** compared to 2023), supported by a strong intra-regional demand. And the UNWTO, based on **IATA data**, also notes that both the supply and demand for **air travel** in Europe are higher than in 2019: supply increases by **+8%** on domestic routes and **+3%** on international routes, while demand increases by **+19%** on domestic routes and **+1%** on foreign routes. For 2025, the organisation estimates a further growth in international tourism of between **+3% and +5%** compared to 2024, which will affect all regions.

And while in 2024 we witnessed a **change in seasonality** for our Mediterranean destinations – with an increase in flows in the “shoulder” seasons, to avoid the heat, and a greater demand for trips to Northern Europe during the summer period – this year **61% of travellers** say they want to plan more and more **activities during** the evening or in the early hours of the morning because they are cooler, according to recent research by **Booking.com**.

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As regards **Italy**, a particularly interesting figure is the **total tourist expenditure** which, for 2024, **Confindustria** estimates at **110 billion euros**.

From sky, to sea, to wellness: emotions are the key appeal

Within the broader trend of slow travel, outdoor trips and holidays in contact with nature, one of the most interesting innovations is **tourism linked to natural phenomena**. Starting from the observation of the night sky, for which the neologism **noctotourism** has been coined: in particular, in 2024 **eclipses** and the appearance of the **Northern Lights** even at low latitudes have fuelled the desire to travel to witness natural phenomena. A study just released by **Expedia** indicates that **61% of travellers** are willing to travel to see the Northern Lights and **30%** to admire **volcanoes, geysers and hot springs**.

But there is also great interest in the trend known as **astrotourism**, linked to the **observation of the night sky**: from the planets of our solar system (protagonists of a rare and spectacular alignment at the beginning of 2025) to the **secrets of the most distant stars and galaxies**. According to **Booking.com**, **60% of travellers** look for "dark sky" areas (i.e. with low light pollution) to better admire the views.

Wellness tourism is also still evolving, increasingly linked not only to holistic well-being, but also to the quest to **live a long, healthy life**: again according to data from **Booking.com**, it appears that 60% of **travellers** are interested in **longevity-focused residential programmes, red light therapy, cryotherapy and stem cell treatments**, the latter also linked to **medical tourism**.

Immersive sensory journeys are a new feature: travellers are looking for experiences that stimulate all the senses in innovative ways, including with the support of **augmented reality**. Among these, participating in **molecular cooking classes, aromatherapy sessions in rainforests** or **guided tours in the dark** to amplify sensory perception, but also **immersive venues** designed to offer **multisensory experiences at cocktail hour**.

And while 2024 had seen a significant growth in **female adventure travel**, in 2025, especially among **millennials and Gen Z (58% and 65% respectively)**, there will be a search for **solo travel** among men, who are increasingly seeking to unplug and recharge their mental and physical batteries, as **Booking.com** notes. In response to the FOMO (*Fear of Missing Out*) phenomenon of a few years ago, **JOMO (Joy Of Missing Out)** is also becoming increasingly trendy. The demand for relaxing destinations is growing and **62%** of travellers declare that these are also an

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opportunity to **reconnect with their loved ones**, often taking advantage, according to **Expedia**, of all-inclusive and “worry-free” formulas.

Sports, concerts, shopping: motivation drives the traveller

At the same time, **sports tourism** is also finding new forms. Our country will opt in particular for travel related to **winter sports**, as part of the run-up to the **2026 Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics and Paralympics**: three different studies by the universities **La Sapienza, Bocconi and Ca' Foscari** estimate that these events will provide an important contribution to the overall economic impact of the Olympic event, valued at **between 2.3 and 3 billion euros**. According to Deloitte, **more than 2 million visitors** are expected, spending **154 million euros** on accommodation alone.

At an international level, there has been a growth in **cruise packages that include sports** and in hotels and resorts offering **semi-competitive activities**. When it comes to music-related travel, **gig tripping** is an emerging trend: travellers plan their trips around multiple concerts, music festivals or live gigs, combining their passion for music with the exploration of new destinations, to **create unique cultural and social experiences**.

Shopping tourism is also changing: there is a strong desire among travellers to break out of established tourist “bubbles” to **interact with local communities**. According to **Euromonitor**, this is expressed through the purchase of **different cultural experiences** in the destination, while for **Expedia** a new phenomenon is that of travellers who are increasingly looking for **products that they cannot find at home**. **Gen Z** in particular is fuelling this phenomenon, even if all types of travellers love to visit local shops: **39%** do this regularly and **44%** buy products that are “unfindable” in their own country.

This is a trend that puts **Italy** at the forefront, with its **unique food and wine offerings** and the **"beautiful and well-made"** products of Italian lifestyle.. Luxury shopping remains a protagonist in our country, with **Milan** in the spotlight: thanks to this appeal, in 2024 **Via Montenapoleone** became the most expensive luxury street in the world, surpassing New York's Fifth Avenue. In the summer of 2024, according to a study by **the Lombardy Region**, high-spending visitors spent an average of **158 euros per day** on accommodation and **215 euros** on restaurants, shopping, museums and local transport.

The megatrends behind the individual trends



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Cutting across different travel styles, the **trend of hyper-personalisation** continues to grow and strengthen: a need increasingly felt by travellers, even when it comes to planning group trips: in this sense, states a study by **Euromonitor International**, the contribution of **generative artificial intelligence** is fundamental, allowing the needs of individuals to be combined with the overall organisation using sophisticated algorithms.

Alongside **environmental sustainability**, which is now an established fact, **social sustainability** also appears to play an increasingly central role. Both travellers and operators are increasingly attentive to **ESG** (Environmental, Social, Governance) **policies** : the **centrality of people** is fundamental to **finding a balance** between economic valorisation and protection of resources, guaranteeing **sustainable development** for tourism.

In addition to the proposals of [over 1,000 exhibitors from Italy and 64 countries around the world](#), at BIT 2025 innovation will also be the protagonist of the rich schedule of ***Bringing Innovation Into Travel*** talks, which will pay particular attention to the topics of artificial intelligence, the digital sphere and start-ups, ecotourism, and emotional travel.

On Sunday 9 February BIT 2025 will also be open to the travelling public. Both travellers and professional operators can [purchase tickets in advance at the Online Ticket Office](#) on the Bit 2025 website.

BIT 2025 is present on the main social media with the handle @BitMilano.
For updated information: bit.fieramilano.it