

Press Office
Fiera Milano

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

International and trade press
Flaviana Facchini RP
+ 39 339 6401271
flavianafacchini@gmail.com

Fiera Milano S.p.A.
+39 02 49977134
fieramilano@fieramilano.it
fieramilano.it

Press office

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TOURISM, "WANDERLUST" GOES ON: BITMILANO EXPLORES THE NEW TRAVEL TRENDS

Proximity, nature, slow tourism. But also the affordable luxury of experiences usually reserved for a few, the wish to be pampered, the time to spend in unique and extraordinary places, perhaps tasting local specialities. These are the drivers of the return to travel in 2021.

Milan, 4th March 2021 - In almost every language, the German term **Wanderlust** is synonym of the innate desire to **travel, move, learn, explore** that characterises the human being. And in this last year of travel restrictions, we have seen how deep-rooted this instinct really is: in the months when conditions have allowed it, in fact, many have chosen **not to give up on holidays and travel**.

What will happen in 2021? Thanks to **Fiera Milano** 's constant dialogue with all the parties in the supply chain, **the Bit Borsa Internazionale del Turismo Observatory** tried to outline some of the travellers' wishes beyond the operational aspects that are still ongoing.

Proximity holidays between nature and digital experiences

Almost all analysts and operators foresee the continuation of **proximity tourism**, especially in **open-air and nature**. According to a **TripAdvisor** survey, **21%** of Italian travelers plan to stay **close to home**, **16%** plan to travel to destinations **no more than 90 minutes** from their residence and as many as one-third, **33%**, **just over 90 minutes**. In the **UK** the percentage of those who will stay close to home rises to **24%** and in the **US** to **29%**.

A trend that could favour, for example, **mountain destinations** close to the most populated areas, such as those **in the Alps and Apennines**, as well as small villages, widespread hospitality and **slow tourism** in general. **Food and wine** will remain a powerful motivator that will find in the wine and oil routes, and in PDO products, potential attracting destinations.

But the now ubiquitous **technology** will also play a role. Another research, this time by **OPPO Smart Studies**, points out that hygiene precautions will lead travellers to opt for "**precision tourism**": even those who usually love holiday-adventures this year will tend to **plan in advance every detail** using digital and online tools. This is an important indication to help destinations and operators fine tune their strategies in line with their own requirements.



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**Press Office
Fiera Milano**

Rosy Mazzanti
Simone Zavettieri
+39 0249977457
+39 335 69992328
press.bit@fieramilano.it

**Press and Public Relations
Office**

AT Comunicazione
Barbara Robecchi
+39 347 7892234
Alessandra Agostini
+39 349 2544617
press.bit@fieramilano.it

Fiera Milano S.p.A.
+39 02 49977134
fieramilano@fieramilano.it
fieramilano.it

Pampering new travellers

ShopFully's Consumer Observatory confirms that the most popular desire among consumers is to **return to travel**, the first option for **over 40%** of respondents. Since the health emergency has affected the spending budget of the middle class, the challenge for 2020 will be to combine **unique experiences** that motivate potential travellers with budget limitations. Thus, reinforcing a trend that has already been under way for some years, **luxury is increasingly redefined** as the possibility of accessing "**once in a lifetime**" **places and moments** rather than as a premium price. Small charming restaurants with very few seats, monuments with restricted access - think of the **Last Supper in Milan** -, walks on paths where you walk one at a time... the possibilities are endless.

Another major challenge for the industry will be to combine the need for detailed planning with the **wish for spontaneity** that, according to a **Hotels.com** survey, will characterise the return to travel after a year spent respecting many obligations and instructions. The possible answer? **Focus on "pampering"**: offering upgrades, even more care at restaurants, lounges and breakfasts, excursions and new and original experiences beyond the hotel. In addition to the latter, there is a reconfirmed interest in charming extra-hotel accommodation such as **trulli in Apulia, stone homes in Matera, holiday farms and B&Bs in historical buildings**.

The widespread feeling among the operators is that, despite the objective difficulties, the sector is proving to be resilient and is **redefining its offerings** to be ready for the moment when the *wanderlust* of travellers can once again fully express itself.

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