Italy's winter tourism set for steady growth despite rising costs

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Dhaka: Italy's mountain resorts are preparing for a positive but moderate 2025/26 winter season, with visitor numbers expected to grow 3.8 percent. The Italian Mountain Tourism Observatory describes the outlook as "positive, yet not ecstatic," as international demand offsets weaker domestic travel.

International arrivals are projected to rise 8–8.8 percent, led by Poland (+29.6 percent), the UK (+15.9 percent), and the Czech Republic (+8.2 percent). These visitors tend to stay longer—averaging 6.2 nights per trip—helping stabilize mountain economies.

Meanwhile, Italian tourists are set to decline 3.9 percent, and day trips may fall 14.5 percent, reflecting inflation pressures and changing travel habits. More locals are choosing shorter, off-peak getaways or nature-based activities like snowshoeing.

The sector's turnover is forecast to reach EUR 12.1 billion, up 3.6 percent year-on-year. Hotels will generate nearly EUR 5.9 billion, followed by sport and facility services (EUR 4.78 billion) and food, retail, and entertainment (EUR 1.42 billion). The report highlights growing efforts toward eco-friendly innovation, from solar-powered lifts to zero-waste kitchens.

Holiday costs are rising 5.8 percent overall. A weeklong ski trip now averages EUR 1,545 per adult or EUR 4,017 for a family, while weekend stays cost EUR 622 per adult, up almost 9 percent. Hotels lead the price surge as operators recover post-pandemic losses.

Shorter, unpredictable winters are pushing resorts to invest in snowmaking, carbon-neutral transport, and sustainable tourism practices. Travelers are also showing preference for immersive, lower-impact experiences over luxury excess.

Cortina d'Ampezzo takes the crown as "Ski Destination of the Year," followed by Madonna di Campiglio and Livigno, noted for its green initiatives. Moena wins "most accessible," and Courmayeur shines for premium lodging.

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