

Italy's gardens win as outdoor tourism boom post-pandemic

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 11 July, 2021



Milan: Outdoors have become popular for post-vaccination vacation this year. With destinations slowly opening up for tourism again, and travelers tentatively booking flights travel that take in the great outdoors look set to boom post-pandemic.

And in Italy, things are no different. Travelers to Italy are searching for outdoor holidays, sports, and activities, according to the country's national tourism agency ENIT. There have even been strong growth in demand for camping.

"Last year the impact of the pandemic was less strong in mountain areas," said ENIT's Marketing Director Maria Elena Rossi. But for 2021, she said, people are all about nature, outdoor relaxation, and open-air activities.

Pierluigi Selenga, who wrote a report for management consultancy Bain & Company about post-pandemic travel trends for their Travel Digital Summit, said that there is a real search for "more customized and more flexible open-air, individual experiences".

And he said Italy is not only rising to the challenge - but that it might also help counter any return of overtourism.

"It's very positive," he said. "There's a clear willingness to diversify and extend the offer beyond the traditional [city] destinations."

It is in that brave new outdoor world that Italy's gardens are seeing a resurgence.

Alongside the Renaissance art that draws visitors from all around the world, Italy has gardens and green spaces dating back centuries.

The world's first botanical garden was created in Padua in 1545. Still open for visits today, it has preserved its original layout: a circular central plot, symbolizing the world, surrounded by a ring of water.

And that is just the beginning, said Judith Wade, who's spent 40 years promoting Italy's botanic heritage as the founder of Grandi Giardini Italiani (Great Italian Gardens), a private network of nearly 150 of Italy's most beautiful gardens scattered all the way down that famous boot.

Before the pandemic, 08 million people visited the network of gardens – and although numbers were down for obvious reasons last year, she said that once they reopened in July 2020, numbers immediately shot up by 35 percent year on year.

Wade is hoping for a spectacularly successful 2021 – and said that Italy's gardens have the potential to change tourism for the better.

Her network helps owners of private gardens promote their properties – thereby generating income and jobs for the local community in places that otherwise risked remaining undiscovered.

- [Italy spreading museum artworks around all Tuscany to prevent overtourism](#)
- [Emirates strengthens Italy operations in July, re-launches services to Venice](#)