

## Tourism

The current information system on tourism statistics produced by Istat relies on several sources that analyse this phenomenon from the point of view of both demand and supply.

The oldest sources are the survey *Capacità degli esercizi ricettivi* (Capacity of collective accommodation establishments) and the survey *Movimento dei clienti negli esercizi ricettivi* (Occupancy in collective accommodation establishments). These two total surveys have been performed since 1956 to gain a snapshot of the capacity of Italian collective accommodation establishments and of the internal tourist flows (domestic and inbound tourism). The information contained in the two surveys has been gradually extended over time, taking into consideration new types of tourist accommodation establishments (farm- and country houses, bed and breakfasts, etc.), detailing hotel categories, including in the questionnaires the regions of origin for the Italian residents and a deeper breakdown for the country of origin of foreign residents. In the recent years, furthermore, the two surveys have provided variables at municipal level.

Regarding household surveys, since 1959 Istat has carried out a sample survey to record information on the periods of holiday taken by the Italian population. The strong interest in the sector, prompted by the rise in tourism following the economic boom in the 1960s, led Istat to conduct a series of surveys on holidays in the years 1965, 1968, 1972, 1975 and 1978.

In the 1980s this phenomenon took on considerable social importance, as the enjoyment of at least one period of holiday during the year became a significant aspect of Italian lifestyle. The surveys performed in 1982 and 1985 revealed new aspects of this phenomenon, associated with lifestyles and socioeconomic and cultural contexts different from the past. Trips for various purposes (business, visiting relatives and friends) and holidays of less than four nights began to take on greater importance alongside traditional holidays.

The mid-1990s were characterised by a greater attention by Istat towards the use of free time by the population. In 1993, with the launch of the new multipurpose surveys on households, the Institute decided to investigate this phenomenon on an annual basis, introducing a section into the survey *Aspetti della vita quotidiana* (Multipurpose survey on households: aspects of daily life) to collect the main information on long holidays, i.e. on trips for leisure, recreation and holidays lasting at least four nights.

The importance of investigating the complex phenomenon of tourism, already existing at a national level, became more evident when clear signs of growth in the flows of tourism came also at international level, mainly with reference to short holidays and business trips. Therefore, the need rose within the Eu to define a joint Statistics information system based on the harmonisation and integration of the statistics systems already existing in the various Member States. The architecture of this new Information system was set down in Council Directive 95/57/EC on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism, implemented by the European Council on 23 November 1995.

In line with Eu requirements, in 1997 Istat conducted the first quarterly survey *Viaggi, vacanze e vita quotidiana* (Multipurpose survey on households: trips, holidays and daily life), with the aim of providing a complete overview of the tourist demand among residents. The survey collected information not only on long holidays – a phenomenon already observed in the previous surveys – but also on short holidays and business trips, which had started to account for a considerable share of tourism.

The survey was completely redesigned in 2011, in order to integrate it in the new survey *Spese delle famiglie* (Household Budget Survey), which became the official source of estimates on tourist demand in 2014. At Eu level on 1 January 2012 Directive 95/57 was replaced by the new (Eu) Regulation No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism. With it, the statistical units for the observation of tourist demand also extended to the phenomenon of same-day visits (trips).

## Capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments

The surveys on the capacity and occupancy of collective accommodation establishments are total surveys. Both the annual and the monthly surveys were designed at national level in 1956, in collaboration with the *Ministero del Turismo e dello Spettacolo* (Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment).

For data collection in both surveys, Istat relied and still relies on the collaboration of the entire public tourist organisation, which over the years has changed structure, differing from region to region according to the various legislative frameworks. Currently, in compliance with articles 2 and 4 of Legislative Decree no. 322/1989, the Institute relies on the Statistics Offices in the Regions and in the autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano which, as intermediate survey bodies, collect information from local authorities and tourist organisations in charge and submit the data to Istat. In some particular regional cases, the specific Regional Tourist Departments or Offices are involved in the survey activities. Moreover, the involvement of provincial or sub-provincial intermediate bodies in data collection depends on the organisation of the survey at local level, defined in accordance with specific regional regulations.

Since 2012, the data of the two surveys have been collected according to Eu Regulation no. 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism and repealing Council Directive 95/57/Ec of 23 November 1995.

The classification of accommodation establishments complies with Law no. 135 dated 29 March 2001 (Reform of the national legislation on tourism), in addition to various regional legislations.

## Capacity of tourist accommodation establishments

Each year, this survey collects for each municipality the number of hotels and similar accommodation establishments (classified as hotels with stars from 5 to 1 or tourist-hotel residences RTA), their bed-places, bedrooms and bathrooms, and the number and bed-places of other collective accommodation establishments (camping sites, holiday villages, mixed forms – comprising both camping sites and holiday villages, rented holiday dwellings, farm- and country houses, youth hostels, holiday homes, mountain refuges, other accommodation not elsewhere classified, bed & breakfasts and other private accommodations).

Up until 1963, the survey's field of observation covered only hotels. In 1963 it started to collect information also on other types of accommodations.

Regarding territorial detail, up until 2001 the information was collected at municipal level with reference to the entire range of hotels (without distinguishing between categories or star classification) and four types of other accommodation establishments: camping sites and holiday villages, rented holiday dwellings recorded in the REC (Retail Trade and Commercial Register), farm- and country houses (introduced in 1996) and other short-stay accommodation establishments, covering all the remaining types of accommodation. Since 2002, the data collection at municipal level has been extended to the various hotel categories and to different types of lodgings under the category of other short-stay accommodation establishments (youth hostels, holiday homes and mountain refuges), previously collected separately only in provincial summaries. Since the same year, bed and breakfasts have also been recorded at municipal level, as well as the other components under the heading holiday and other short-stay accommodation establishments.<sup>1</sup>

Since 2007, the survey has explicitly referred to gross capacity, i.e. the number of tourist accommodation establishments open during the year, even if only seasonally or for a short period; up until 2006, the survey referred to the accommodation available in each municipality as of 31 December each year.

Since 2008, the capacity regarding hotels has been collected and disseminated also according to the size classes of the accommodation establishments (based on their number of rooms).

Since 1996 the electronic version of the Ctt/4 form, used to submit data to Istat, has gradually replaced the paper version and since 2007 the forms have been acquired through the certified and secure Indata website (<https://indata.istat.it/ctur>).

Since 2012, the data of the survey have been collected according to Eu Regulation no. 692/2011 concerning European statistics on tourism that changed the deadlines of data transmission to Eurostat leading to the production of more timeliness data and also enriched the information and improved the degree of harmonisation among Eu Members.

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<sup>1</sup> *Bed and Breakfasts* were included under *holiday and other short-stay accommodation establishments* starting from 1999; in 2001 they were recorded separately in provincial summaries.

## Occupancy in tourist accommodation establishments (domestic and inbound)

This monthly survey collects data on arrivals and nights spent by residents and non-residents in Italy at tourist accommodation establishments, divided by category of hotels and similar accommodation, and by type other collective accommodation establishments. The variables are collected with reference to the country of residence in the case of non-residents, and by region of residence for Italian residents.

Up until 1957 the survey's field of observation only covered hotels, and it was extended to include other types of accommodation establishments in 1958.

The data on the daily flows of tourists are collected by the owners of accommodation establishments; they are monthly summarised from intermediate bodies (regional, provincial or sub-provincial depending on the survey organisation at the local level, defined in accordance with specific regulations) and are subsequently sent to Istat.

Until 2013, Istat has provided paper forms for data collection (Istat model C / 59 and Istat model A1 and A2) to tourist accommodation establishments through these intermediate bodies. Since 1 July 2013, Istat has no longer provided the paper forms (in accordance with Prime Ministerial Decree of 22 July 2011) and the intermediate bodies have modified their organisation so as to carry out data collection directly from the accommodation establishments belonging to their territory.

Since January 1997 the region of origin for Italian residents began to be indicated and, in compliance with Council Directive 95/57/EC of 23 November 1995 on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism, a new breakdown by geographical area was set out to indicate the origin of the non-residents.

Up until 2004, the monthly data were transmitted to Istat summarised by tourist district – an area coinciding with the territorial area managed by the local public tourist offices– with less detail on other accommodations than in the current form (Istat Ctt/1 form). In 2005, the Mov/C form was introduced (composed of a text file designed according to a pre-established layout), with improved structure of the flow data summarised at municipal level and major breakdown by type of accommodation in line with the Ctt/4 form (capacity's survey).

In the 2005-2006 period the two forms (Istat Ctt/1 form and Mov/C) were both in use, then the Ctt/1 form was finally substituted by Istat Mov/C form in 2007, which is exclusively submitted online through the Indata website (<https://indata.istat.it/ctur/>).

Since January 2012, the data of the survey have been collected according to the Regulation (Eu) No 692/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2011 concerning European statistics on tourism which also enriched the information including the room occupation rate for hotels, new classifications by location of the accommodation establishment with reference to the urbanisation level and distance from the sea of the area. Moreover, the Regulation reduced the data transmission deadlines to Eurostat to produce more timeliness statistics on tourist flows.

### *Warnings for time series comparisons*

- Up until 1983 hotels and similar accommodation establishments were divided into *hotels*, *pensions* and *inns*. In 1984, following Law no. 217/1983 (the framework legislation for tourism), all hotels and similar accommodation establishments took on the definition of hotels and were classified into five categories (by stars), thus substituting the previous categories of *hotels*, *pensions* and *inns*.
- In 1986, hotel tourist residences, previously classed under other accommodation establishments, were reclassified under hotels.
- In 1987, rented holiday dwellings not registered in the REC (Retail Trade and Commercial Register), i.e. not managed as a business activity, were excluded from the other accommodation category of rented dwellings.
- Since 1996 farm- and country houses have also been included under other accommodation establishments.
- Since 1999 bed and breakfasts have also been included under other accommodation establishments.

## **Trips and holidays of resident population**

In the period between 1959-1982 the estimates of tourists and trips based on household sample surveys were drawn by specific surveys combined with the labour force surveys.

The specific *Indagine speciale su alcuni aspetti delle vacanze e degli sport della popolazione* (Survey on some aspects of holidays and sport in the population) was combined with the regular labour force survey performed in the Autumn of 1959. This sample survey was conducted using paper questionnaires, through direct interviews with the head of the family or other qualified person. The survey unit was the household and the sample was composed of nearly 75,000 households, for a total of 1,374 sample municipalities. At the time, holidays were a rare event, and usually only coincided with the Summer holiday. This first survey defined a holiday, understood as a period of rest and relaxation of a certain duration, as a stay of at least 3-4 days with overnight accommodation, spent by the family members out of their usual residence - at the sea, in the mountains, in thermal sites or other locations. The main purpose was rest and recreation, taking advantage of time off work, study and from usual activities in general. The overall periods of holiday taken by the various family members were recorded, together with the description of their main characteristics, without distinguishing between the single holiday periods.

For 1965, data on tourists and trips were taken from the *Indagine speciale sulle vacanze degli italiani* (Specific survey on holidays made by Italians), combined with the labour force survey carried out in the first quarter of 1966. In this case the survey involved 83,376 families for a total of 1,403 sample municipalities. In contrast to the previous survey in 1959, for the first time detailed information on the characteristics of each period of holiday enjoyed by the family members was recorded: the duration, the first day of holiday and the place visited.

More detailed information was also collected on the destination, either in Italy (region) or abroad (State). Furthermore, the type of holiday was recorded (at the sea, lakes, mountains, hills, etc.), along with greater detail on the means of transport used, the type of accommodation used for the longest period and the reasons for not going on holiday (health or family reasons were added to the reasons already recorded in 1959, which were economic/working reasons or residence in a tourist site).

In the 1966 survey, as in the one performed in 1959, holidays of less than four days were not recorded, as the definition of holiday remained substantially the same as that used in the previous survey: a period of at least four consecutive days with overnight stay, spent out of the usual place of residence for the purpose of rest or recreation (also when combined with other purposes: health, visiting relatives, religion, etc.), including stays in summer camps by children and young people.

The subsequent *Indagine speciale sulle vacanze degli italiani* (Specific survey on Italian holidays), combined like the others with one of the regular labour force surveys, was conducted in the first quarter of 1969, with reference to the previous year holidays. The survey questionnaire was extended with a section on holidays of less than four days, for which, however, only the overall number of days was recorded. The survey, performed using the same methods used in the past, was based on a sample of 1,370 municipalities for a total of 81,591 households.

In the 1970s the need to harmonise the information on tourism in the various Member States appeared for the first time within the European Community. Together with the labour force survey of January 1973, the *Indagine speciale sulle vacanze degli italiani* (Specific survey on Italian holidays) was therefore conducted according to the indications provided by Eurostat. Still on the basis of these recommendations, the survey was repeated in 1976 and 1979, with reference to the holidays taken by Italians in 1975 and 1978 respectively. The surveys of 1972 and 1975 covered a sample of approximately 83,000 households and 1,410 municipalities, while the 1978 survey was conducted on a sample of approximately 92,000 households and 1,600 municipalities. The information on the characteristics of the taken holidays was extended with details on the way in which they were organised, including types of trips, such as individual or group holidays. Furthermore, with respect to short holidays, not only the overall number of days spent during the year, but also the number of short holidays taken, was recorded.

The estimates of tourists and trips in 1982 were drawn from the *Survey on holidays, trips and sport in Italy*, once again combined with the quarterly labour force survey (1983). The sample was formed of 975 municipalities and 28,560 households, for a total of more than 85,000 individuals. Tourist demand was recorded in a far more complete manner than in previous editions, with the inclusion of trips for reasons other than holiday; along with holidays and short stays, the survey also covered other trips and stays, defined as a period of any duration of more than 24 hours (including at least one overnight stay) spent outside of the respondent's home and usual environment, for purposes other than holiday (business, missions, temporary work transfer, attendance of conferences, health, study, sport, religion and others). For holidays of at least four days, questions were introduced regarding the reason for choosing the specific period and regarding the distances covered; for short holidays a question was included on the destination (Italy or abroad), in addition to the total number of holiday periods and the number of days taken during the year; the same information requested on short holidays was also recorded for trips made for purposes other than holiday (business, mission, temporary work transfer, etc.).

In 1985, as part of an ever increasing harmonisation of concepts and definitions of tourism at European level, the definition of holiday was modified in relation to the number of days, marking a new limit between holidays (intended as long holidays) and short holidays. For the definition of holiday, the limit was changed to five consecutive days of stay, resulting in at least four overnight stays. This aspect formed the main novelty in the *Indagine sugli sport e sulle vacanze* (Survey of sport and holidays) carried out in 1985. Furthermore, for the questions on short holidays and other types of trips, differently from what happened in previous surveys, this edition referred to the month immediately preceding the survey, due to the difficulties encountered in the past in precisely recording the dates of this type of trips with reference to a whole year. The collection of data on short holidays and other types of trips was, for the first time, structured into individual periods, and among other things the place of destination, the duration in days and the reason for trips were recorded. The information on holidays was also enriched with questions on the detailed expenditures sustained in each period (transport, full board, half board, food and accommodation expenditures, whether the trip was an all-inclusive organised trip, other expenditures). For this survey the sample was composed of 833 municipalities and involved nearly 25,000 resident households.

The figures reported in the tables relating to the share of residents who made at least one holiday of four or more nights in the period between 1993-2009 were based on the annual survey *Aspetti della vita quotidiana* (Aspects of daily life), as part of the multipurpose survey system (see: [Households](#)).

This survey annually records a range of information on social behaviour and lifestyle of the population including, since 1993, long holidays taken in the last 12 months, in a brief dedicated section, and the reasons why respondents choose not to go on holiday.

Since 1998, the estimates on trips have been produced from the results of the sample survey *Viaggi, vacanze e vita quotidiana* (Trips, holidays and daily life), in compliance with Council Directive 95/57/Ec of 23 November 1995 on the collection of statistical information in the field of tourism.

When the Directive came into force, the statistics system for tourist data collection in Italy was reorganised in order to ensure a systematic collection of information and, at the same time, to provide short-term estimates on the trend of this phenomenon.

The survey, carried on a quarterly basis using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) techniques, aims at quantifying the number of trips (with overnight stays) taken by residents to Italian or foreign destinations and provide information on the type of holiday and tourism behaviour. The population surveyed is composed of households resident in Italy and the individuals within them (Italian and foreign citizens resident in the household). Trips for tourism are classified, in line with international standards, distinguishing between business or holidays trips and between short (1-3 nights) or long (4 or more nights) holidays. Trips for relaxation, pleasure, recreation, to visit relatives or friends, for health treatments or religious reasons are all included under holidays. In addition to the number of trips, estimates on tourists and on the number of nights spent are also provided by the survey. The sample covers 14,000 households each year (3,500 each quarter), corresponding to approximately 36,000 individuals.

Note that the figures on people and those on trips recorded in the sample surveys on households are not comparable with those on arrivals recorded by the survey on holiday and other short-stay accommodation establishments, in that the same person may result in several arrivals at different accommodations during a single holiday.

### *Warnings for time series comparisons*

- In all surveys carried out until 1982 (1959, 1965, 1968, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1982) the questionnaire was combined with the labor force survey. Data prior to 1997 are derived from Istat surveys on holidays in Italy by residents and from the survey *Aspetti della vita quotidiana* (Aspects of daily life), both surveys with the calendar year as reference period; data from 1997 to 2013 are quarterly data and data after 2013 are monthly. For this reason, attention should be paid in comparing different sources. It can be assumed that the longer the reference period, the greater the difficulties for respondents in remembering the events that took place in it. Since 2014 the estimates of tourist demand have been drawn from the *Indagine sulle spese delle famiglie* (Household Budget Survey), which detects the spending behavior and tourist movements of households resident in Italy. The transition to the new survey involved a major innovation of the entire production process; in particular it changed the survey technique from Cati to Capi, the reference period from quarterly to monthly and the theoretical sample size, which doubled. In addition, the methodological improvements

concerned the representativeness of the sample extracted from the population (sample households are taken from municipal population registers and not from the lists of fixed-line telephone subscribers, as was the case in the previous survey). The estimates produced since 2014 are therefore not directly comparable with those from previous years. The time series of the main aggregates relating to trips and overnight stays have been reconstructed and are available in Istat data warehouse (<http://dati.istat.it/?lang=en>).

- In 1959 the duration of holidays was expressed in days. The survey unit was a holiday of at least 3-4 days, corresponding to at least 2-3 overnight stays. The regions of residence were aggregated into the following 11 "statistical regions": Piemonte, Valle d'Aosta and Liguria; Trentino-Alto-Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto; Lombardia; Emilia-Romagna and Marche; Toscana, Umbria and Northern Lazio; Rome and the surrounding province; Southern Lazio and Campania; Abruzzo and Molise; Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria; Sicilia; Sardegna.
- From 1965 to 1982 the duration of holidays was expressed in days. The survey unit was a holiday of at least four days, corresponding to at least 3 overnight stays.
- From 1965 to 1982 the heading other referred to transport means for holidays of at least four nights included rental car and other types of transport.
- From 1972 to 1985 private accommodation included the heading other types of accommodation. In 1985 they also included the heading not indicated.
- The survey unit, up until 1985, was the registered household. Since 1993 onwards the focus has shifted to de facto households.
- In 1985 the duration of holidays was expressed in days. The survey unit was a holiday of at least five days, corresponding to at least four overnight stays.
- From 1993 the duration of holidays was expressed in nights and the survey unit was a holiday of at least four overnight stays.
- The average duration of holidays was expressed in days up until 1985. Since 1998 the same value has been expressed in nights.