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## Discover New England – Market Update

# Italy

### **1. Would you consider the geo-political-economic condition of your market to be stable (eg. inflation, gdp, health of mid-upper class, relations with USA, consumer confidence)?**

Please briefly explain:

The Italian economy as well as the global one can be affected by geopolitical events both directly and indirectly through financial, trade and commodity price channels due to the recent war between Israel, the USA and Iran. We might experience higher inflation, lower growth and significant welfare losses. However, in an increasingly uncertain geopolitical environment, initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience, diversifying supply chains and securing alternative corridors have become more urgent than ever. Italy position itself at the heart of this emerging transcontinental architecture in the Mediterranean. Within the European Union, Italy is the fourth largest trading partner of the United States, with annual exports amounting to approximately 65 billion euros. The overall impact of the new USA duties could exceed EUR 3 billion annually, particularly affecting Italian SMEs. Confidence in the United States is collapsing, and the trust Italians place in the European Union is growing. Certainly, especially recently, more and more Italian people are afraid to go to the States even just on vacation due to recently imposed immigration policies.

### **2. What is trending for long-haul travel interests (eg. sports/events, readaways/hospitality, adventure, nostalgia, luxury, budget, astrotourism/nature-based, solo, etc)**

"flexplore": a way of traveling open to improvisation and adaptation, which then translates into concrete behaviors: 63% of Italians, in fact, now tend to change their plans during the trip while 78%, if they could, would choose to travel mainly in the low season. Growing preference for natural places, far from mass tourism. More and more travelers are choosing destinations that allow them to slow down and reconnect with the environment. An increasingly tourism awareness for authentic experiences, less

crowded destinations, and personalized travel solutions. Increasingly eco-lodges and holidays that support local economies and reduce environmental impact. At the same time, technology and innovation are transforming the way travel is designed and experienced. AI will be used more for hyper-personalized planning, suggesting itineraries based on passions, moods, values, and more, to create more meaningful journeys. With more and more travelers eager to discover off-the-beaten-path destinations and escape overtourism, generative AI will also serve to discover second cities, low-season destinations, and less touristy spots.

1. Top interest: Less popular congested places
2. Interest: nature
3. Interest: heritage

### **3. Major industry news/announcements since last Summit (eg major travel company changes and/or flights to Boston/New York gateways):**

Comment: New additional seasonal flight by jetBlue, Milan-Boston- May/October 2026. Delta Air Lines also reconfirmed the seasonal flight Milan-Boston, May-October on top of the already existing Delta Air Lines Rome-Boston, and Ita Airways flight Rome-Boston.

### **4. Rank top three concerns affecting future travel to New England (eg. Sentiment towards USA, sentiment towards New England, fuel prices impacting cost of travel, competition, affordability of destination, airline availability, availability of product, esta/visa process, source market political environment, source market economics/politics stability, trends, etc.):**

1. Top Concern: affordability of destination
2. Concern: sentiment towards USA
3. Concern: fuel prices impacting cost of travel

### **5. What advice to you have for New England's tourism suppliers to succeed in your market over the next two years (hotels, attractions, dmos, transportation, etc)?**

Advice: to be more consistent in promoting NE in the Italian market with a Mission, newsletters and a couple of coop marketing projects