

Tourism

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

The oldest sources are the surveys of the capacity and of the occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments. They are two total surveys performed since 1956 to gain a snapshot of the capacity of the Italian collective accommodation establishments and the “internal” tourism flows (“domestic” and “inbound” tourism). The information contained in the two surveys has been gradually extended over time, taking into consideration new types of tourism accommodation establishments (farm holidays, *bed and breakfasts*, etc.), detailing hotel categories, entering the regions of origin for the Italian residents. In the recent years, furthermore, the two surveys provide a greater number of variables on a municipal level.

Regarding surveys on households, ISTAT carries out – for the first time in 1959 – 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, lead ISTAT to conduct a series of surveys on holidays in the years 1965, 1968, 1972, 1975 and 1978.

In the 1980s the phenomenon takes on considerable social importance, as the enjoyment of at least one period of holiday during the year becomes a significant aspect of Italian lifestyle. The surveys performed in 1982 and 1985 reveal new aspects of the 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 begin to take on greater importance alongside traditional holidays.

The mid-1990s are characterised by a greater attention from ISTAT towards the use of free time by the population. In 1993, with the launch of the new multipurpose surveys on households, the Institute decides to investigate the phenomenon on an annual basis, introducing a section into the “Aspects of daily life” survey 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 on a national level, becomes more evident when clear signs of growth in the flows of tourism come also at international level, mainly with reference to “short” holidays and business trips. Therefore, the need to define a Joint Statistics Information System based on the harmonisation and integration of the statistics systems already existing in the various Member States rises within the EU. The architecture of the new Information System is set down in Directive 95/57/EC on Tourism Statistics, implemented by the European Council on 23rd November 1995.

In line with EU requirements, in 1997 ISTAT conducts the first quarterly survey on “Trips, holidays and daily life”, with the aim of providing a complete overview of the tourism demand among residents. The survey collects information not only on long holidays – a phenomenon already observed in the previous surveys – but also on short holidays and business trips, which are by now accounting for a considerable share of tourism.

Capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments

The surveys on capacity and on occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments are census surveys. Both the annual surveys on capacity and occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments and the monthly one on the occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments were designed on a national level in 1956, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment. For data collection in both surveys, ISTAT relied – then as now – on the collaboration of the entire public tourism 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 autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano which, as intermediate survey bodies, acquire information from local authorities and competent tourism organisations and submit the data to ISTAT. In some particular regional cases, the competent Regional Tourism Departments or Offices are involved in the survey activities.

From 1997, figures from the two surveys are collected according to the standards set out in the EC Directive on tourism statistics 95/57/EC dated 23rd November 1995, implemented in the Italian legislation with a Ministerial Decree dated 25th September 1998, although the directive did not bring any significant modifications to the pre-existing structure.

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

Capacity of tourist accommodation establishments

Each year, this survey collects for each municipality the number of hotels and similar accommodation (classified as hotels with stars from 5 to 1 or tourism residences), their bed places, bedrooms and bathrooms, and the number and bed places of other collective accommodations (tourist camp-sites, holiday villages, farm houses, youth hostels, holiday dwellings, bed and breakfasts, etc.).

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

Regarding territorial detail, up until 2001 the information was collected on a municipal level with reference to the entire range of hotels (without distinguishing between categories or star classification) and four types of other accommodation establishments: campsites and holiday villages, rented holiday dwellings recorded in the REC (Retail Trade and Commercial Register), farm houses (introduced from 1996) and "other short-stay accommodation" establishments, covering all the remaining types of accommodation. From 2002, the data collection on a municipal level was 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 a provincial summaries. From the same year, bed and breakfasts were also recorded on a municipal level, as well as the other components under the "holiday and other short-stay accommodation" category.¹

From 2007, the survey explicitly refers to the gross capacity, i.e. the number of tourist accommodation establishments open during the year, even if seasonally or for a brief period; up until 2006, however, the survey referred to the accommodation available in each municipality as at 31st December each year.

Starting from the figures in 2008, the capacity regarding hotels was collected and disseminated also according to the size classes (based on the number of rooms).

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

Occupancy of tourist accommodation establishments (domestic and inbound)

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

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

The figures on the daily occupancy are based on the daily forms (ISTAT C/59) or the pulling tables (ISTAT A1 and A2) that the establishments' owners fill in with the required information. These forms are transmitted to the public administrations (local tourism bodies or directly the Statistics Offices in Regions or Provinces) that subsequently submit the data to the ISTAT. From January 1997 the region of origin for Italian residents began to be indicated and, in compliance with new statistics guidelines set out by the Directive, a new breakdown by geographical area was set out to indicate the origin of the non-residents.

Up until 2004, the monthly figures were transmitted to ISTAT summarised by tourism district – an area coinciding with the territorial area managed by the public local tourism offices– with less detail on other accommodation 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), which presents an improved structure of the flow data summarised at municipal level and according to a breakdown by type of accommodation aligned with the Ctt/4 form r(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 the ISTAT Mov/C form in 2007, which is exclusively submitted online through the Indata website (<https://indata.istat.it/mtur>).

Warnings for time series comparisons

- Up until 1983 hotels and similar accommodation were divided into “hotels”, “pensions” and “inns”. From 1984, following the Law no. 217/1983 (the framework legislation for tourism), all hotels and similar accommodation took on the definition of hotels and were classified into five categories (by stars), substituting the previous categories of hotels, pensions and inns.
- From 1986, hotel tourist residences, previously classed under “other accommodation”, were reclassified under hotels.
- From 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”.
- From 1996 farm houses are also included under “other accommodation”.
- From 1999 Bed and Breakfasts are also included under “other accommodation”.

Trips and holidays of resident population

In the period between 1959-1982 the estimates of tourism and trips figures based on sample surveys on families were drawn by special surveys combined with the Labour force Surveys.

The special 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 family 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 period. In fact, 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, complete with overnight accommodation, spent by the members of the household out of their usual residence – at the sea, in the mountains, in thermal sites or other locations – mainly for the purpose of rest and recreation, taking advantage of time off work, study and from normal activities in general. The “overall” periods of holiday taken by the various members of the household were recorded, together with the description of their “mainly” characteristics, without distinguishing between the individual holidays.

For 1965, the figures on tourists and trips are taken from the Special survey on holidays made by Italians, combined with the Labour Force Survey 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 members of the family was recorded: the duration, the date of the first day and the place visited.

More detailed information was also collected on the destination, either in Italy (region) or Abroad (Country).

Furthermore, the type of holiday was noted (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/work reasons or residence in a tourism 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 (even when combined with other purposes: health, visiting relatives, religion, etc.), including stays in summer camps by children and young people.

The subsequent Special 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's 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 families.

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. Therefore, together with the Labour Force Survey of January 1973, in 1972 a Special survey was conducted on Italian holidays, 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 families and 1,410 municipalities, while the 1978 survey was conducted on a sample of approximately 92,000 families and 1,600 municipalities. The information on the characteristics of the holidays taken 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 families, for a total of more than 85,000 individuals. Tourism demand was recorded in a far more complete manner than in previous editions, with the inclusion of trips for reasons other than holiday. In fact, along with holidays and short stays, the survey also covered "other trips and stay", 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 period and the distances covered; for "short holidays" a question was included on the destination (Italy or abroad), in addition to the total number of 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 on a 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 forms the main novelty in the 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 the 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 acquisition of figures 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 for each. The information on holidays was also enriched with questions on the expenditures sustained in each period, with details on the various expenditures (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 families.

The figures reported in the tables relating to the quota of residents who made at least one holiday of four plus nights in the period between 1993-2009 are based on the annual "Aspects of daily life" survey, 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.

From 1998, the estimates on trips are produced from the results of the sample survey on "Trips, holidays and daily life", in compliance with European Directive 95/57/EC on tourism statistics.

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

The survey, carried on a quarterly basis using CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) techniques, aims to quantify 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 resident foreign citizens in the household). Trips for tourism is 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 in holiday and other short-stay accommodation, in that the same person may result in several arrivals at different accommodations over the course of a single holiday.

Warnings for time series comparisons

- In all the surveys carried out until 1982 (1959, 1965, 1968, 1972, 1975, 1978, 1982) the questionnaire was combined with that on the Labour Force Survey. The figures before 1997 are taken from ISTAT Surveys on holidays taken by Italian residents and the "Aspects of daily life" survey, and should therefore be considered with the usual precautions when comparing different sources.

Furthermore, the two surveys both use the calendar year as reference, while subsequent surveys were conducted on a quarterly basis. It could be hypothesised that the wider the reference period, the greater the difficulties for the respondent in remembering the events that took place. In fact, some differences may be observed between the figures in the quarterly survey and those in the previous surveys of holidays, based on an annual reference period. By analysing the monthly distribution of trips it emerges that, in the case of estimates obtained with reference to 12 months, there is a greater concentration of holidays in Summer months (July and August) with respect to the information recorded each quarter. When the survey is based on an annual reference period, it appears that the respondent mainly remembers the trips made in the period of the year in which holidays are usually taken, and more easily forgets those made during other periods of the year and in particular those farthest away in time from the survey.

- In 1959 the duration of holidays was expressed in days. The survey unit was holidays of 3-4 days, corresponding to at least 2-3 overnight stays. The regions of residence were aggregated into the following 11 "statistical regions": Piedmont, Aosta Valley and Liguria; Trentino-Alto-Adige, Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto; Lombardy; Emilia-Romagna and Marche; Tuscany, Umbria and Northern Lazio; Rome and the surrounding province; Southern Lazio and Campania; Abruzzo and Molise; Apulia, Basilicata and Calabria; Sicily; Sardinia.
- From 1965 to 1982 the duration of holidays was expressed in days. The survey unit was holidays of at least four days, corresponding to at least 3 overnight stays.

- From 1965 to 1982 “other” means of transport for holidays of at least four nights include “hire car” and “other types of transport”.
- From 1972 to 1985 private accommodation include the item “other types of accommodation”. In 1985 these also include “not indicated”.
- The survey unit, up until 1985, was the family. From 1993 onwards the focus shifted to de facto household.
- In 1985 the duration of holidays was expressed in days. The survey unit was holidays 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 holidays of at least four overnight stays.
- The average duration of holidays was expressed in days up until 1985. From 1998 the same value is expressed in nights.