

NEEDS & NUANCES - ITALIAN MARKET

How do they plan and buy?

Italians are last minute bookers

They tend to book just a few weeks before travelling, so make sure any late availability is open to this market. Italians are keen negotiators, so will generally ask for a discount. That said, they tend to prefer to travel during peak season, primarily August so you may have to be creative on how to offer them a “deal”.

They are experienced travellers, but can underestimate distances

Italians tend to look at a map of Ireland and think it can be seen in a much shorter period than is realistic. Emphasise distances between locations and give recommendations on how long to spend in each place to fully experience it. Recommendations of things to do that make it worth spending the extra time in an area are always appreciated.

They love a recommendation

If the Lonely Planet (or other respected guidebook) recommends it, they tend to want to see it. This is great, if you are listed... but means they may be slower to try new and “off-the-beaten track” options. So include testimonials and awards from recognised sources on your website.

Italians are surrounded by rich heritage and natural beauty at home...

So they tend to want to be surrounded by it when away! Include lots of imagery of stunning landscapes and architecture on your website. Raw beauty tends to have a huge emotional impact on them, so stress the dramatic scenery in your area and how they can experience it.

What do they like to experience when they are here?

Italians love central locations

- ✓ They love city centre and lively larger towns
- ✓ The “passeggiata” or walk after a meal is extremely important. They enjoy pottering in busy areas and popping into pubs, even if they don’t stay for the whole evening. Make sure to highlight what there is to do in the evenings within walking distance
- ✓ They are extremely fastidious about cleanliness. As the largest purchasers of vacuum cleaners in the world, they expect pristine carpets and tiles. That said, they tend to not enjoy minimalist décor... preferring fireplaces and ornaments that match their view of traditional Ireland.
- ✓ They don’t like the cold so good heating and comfort is important to them.

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Everything should be translated

- ✓ Italians expect their language needs to be met, as fluent English is not widely spoken. Consider translating printed, online and audio visual guides into Italian. Make sure you clearly state that you have guides etc. available in Italian on your website.
- ✓ There may be a local tour guide who speaks Italian. Could they record some short video pieces for you for your website?

Italians LOVE to shop!

- ✓ They like to purchase goods of Irish origin and are drawn to items with an historical reference such as Claddagh rings. So make sure you include some opportunities for shopping for your Italian guests and recommend local craft people.

Italians like to eat and explore later than other guests

- ✓ Consider later dining times and later opening times for visitor attractions. This might be a good way to offer out off hours off-peak time slots. Consider staggering dining times in your restaurant.

Food is a big deal for Italians...

- ✓ Italians place huge importance on locally sourced ingredients and regionally inspired dishes. So make sure you explain the provenance of your ingredients. Your servers should know where all the ingredients come from.
- ✓ Reference local ingredients on your menus. Even include pictures of the growers/producers in your literature. They expect a lot of seafood (as we are an island) and beef and lamb (as they see lots of cows and sheep in our fields) so make sure these are included on each menu.
- ✓ Share a “secret recipe” with them... your own brown bread recipe or your seafood chowder’s special ingredient.
- ✓ Ensure you have a good selection of pastries and fresh fruits in your breakfast selections, as these are expected.
- ✓ Lots of bread and water should be left on the table throughout the meal.
- ✓ While Italians will pay well for high quality cuisine... they also appreciate a single plate dish like a fish pie or a traditional Irish stew... so this may be a good way to keep margins down while still hitting the mark.

What should you avoid?

- ✗ Not having tablecloths. Italians expect to see linen in dining rooms and do not like informal bistro style dining.
- ✗ Promotion of self-drive routes only. They do not enjoy driving on the left... so emphasise local transport links and organised day trips.
- ✗ Lack of food variety... especially for tour groups.

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- × Unnecessary expense. They view Ireland as expensive, especially for little things like coffee. So try to include little extras in your pricing free of charge or look at ways to offer them value for money.
- × Excessively wet and windy weather. So have warm and welcoming treats for their arrival on a wet day... and the fires lit!

Where are they most likely to visit?

On their first trip to Ireland, Italians are likely to see Dublin and the west of Ireland. They are drawn to places they have heard of like Connemara, Aran Islands, Cliffs of Moher, Cashel and Ring of Kerry.

NB: This resource forms part of a series of 'Market Insights' focusing on the needs and cultural nuances of key overseas markets for Irish tourism. It is presented on a market-by-market basis, presenting combined insights from interviews held in 2017 with both Tourism Ireland Market Managers and Tour Operators who engage with these markets. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of information, it is recognised that the insights are a general guideline and that many exceptions can also apply.