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Italy takes its 3.1 billion-euro wine tourism campaign to New York

At Vinitaly USA, officials will court U.S. travelers whose food-and-wine visits doubled last year.

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Italy will use Vinitaly USA 2026 later this month in New York to promote wine tourism as a growing part of its visitor economy, with the Tourism Ministry putting the value of the segment at 3.1 billion euros and highlighting stronger demand from U.S. travelers.

The ministry said Italy will take part in the trade event on Oct. 26 and 27 in New York, where it plans to present wine as both an economic asset and a marker of national identity. Its presence will include a press conference scheduled for Oct. 27 at noon with Ivana Jelinic, chief executive of ENIT, Italy's national tourism agency, and Gianluca Caramanna, an adviser to the tourism minister and a member of the lower house committee that covers production, trade and tourism.

Italian officials also said ENIT will launch a new editorial hub in Italian and English on its website, enit.it, focused entirely on wine tourism. The platform is intended to give industry participants and travelers an overview of wine-related offerings across all of Italy's regions.

The announcement reflects a broader push by Italy to link wine more closely to travel, especially in overseas markets where demand for destination-based experiences remains strong. According to an ENIT analysis based on UniCredit-Nomisma Wine Monitor 2025 data, 98% of wine tourists said they plan to repeat at least one wine-related trip in the next two or three years. The same analysis found that 85% identified Italy as their preferred destination for future wine tourism experiences.

The ministry said the U.S. remains central to that strategy. In the first half of 2026, 1.9 million U.S. travelers visited Italy, generating more than 17.7 million overnight stays. Compared with the same period in 2025, spending rose 7.5%, the number of travelers increased 6.2%, and overnight stays were up 7.6%, according to the ministry.

Within that flow, food-and-wine travel is also gaining ground. Citing ENIT research based on Bank of Italy data, the ministry said 30,000 U.S. travelers chose Italy in 2025 for a vacation motivated by food and wine, double the level of the previous year. Their spending reached 42.3 million euros.

Italian officials said this demand is increasingly tied to a wider set of travel interests. Wine tastings and visits to wineries and vineyards are being combined more often with cultural activities, local food, nature-based tourism and sustainability-focused experiences. That trend is especially important for rural areas and smaller towns, where wine tourism can channel visitors beyond the main cities and spread tourism income across more territories.

For the beverage sector, the figures point to a market opportunity that goes beyond bottle sales. If the rise in international wine-focused travel continues, wineries may be able to diversify revenue through tastings, tours, hospitality and direct visitor spending, while also easing some of the seasonal pressure that affects traditional tourism patterns.

In the ministry's statement, Tourism Minister Gianmarco Mazzi said the government considers wine tourism a strategic sector that helps promote local areas and villages and supports travel outside peak periods. He said the United States is a crucial market for Italy and noted that U.S. visitors generated 6.6 billion euros in tourism spending in Italy in 2025, along with 3.6 million overnight visitors.

Mazzi said Vinitaly USA is an important occasion to promote Italy's wine tourism offer, support businesses and strengthen the country's appeal. His remarks place wine tourism within a wider tourism policy that aims to improve Italy's competitiveness abroad while supporting local economies and the sustainable development of rural communities.

The government's emphasis on an institutional presence at Vinitaly USA also shows how closely Italy is tying tourism promotion to one of its best-known export categories. Wine already has a strong commercial profile in the U.S. market, and Italian officials are now trying to turn that familiarity into more travel demand by presenting vineyards, cellars and regional food traditions as part of a broader visitor experience.

That effort comes as destinations across Europe compete for higher-spending travelers who are looking for trips built around local identity rather than only major landmarks. In that context, Italy is presenting wine tourism not just as a niche activity, but as a way to connect agriculture, hospitality, culture and regional branding in one offer.

The ministry's announcement did not provide a breakdown of the 3.1 billion-euro estimate for wine tourism, but it made clear that Rome sees the segment as a priority for international promotion through ENIT. With U.S. arrivals and spending still rising, officials are using this month's New York event to make the case that wine can serve as a gateway to a wider Italian travel experience, especially in regions that want more year-round visitors and additional income sources tied to beverages, hospitality and

local food production.