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Food and beverage becomes Italy’s second-largest influencer marketing segment

DeRev says the category held 18% of the market in 2026, trailing only fashion and beauty in a €425 million industry

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Food and beverage has become the second-largest segment of influencer marketing in Italy, accounting for 18% of the market in 2026, according to the DeRev 2026 report on the industry. The sector ranked behind fashion and beauty at 27% and ahead of both travel and lifestyle and gaming and tech, which each held 13.5%.

The report said the food and beverage share slipped by 0.2 percentage points from 2025, but that decline came as the wider market kept growing. DeRev estimated the Italian influencer marketing market at €425 million in 2026, up 10.4% from €385 million in 2025. Since 2020, when the market was worth €243 million, the increase has reached 74.9%.

The findings point to a market in which food remains one of the most effective categories for creators and brands. DeRev said sectors that rely on visual storytelling and product recommendations are especially suited to social media because they fit the way creators work. Short recipes, taste tests, product comparisons and direct demonstrations make it easier to turn attention into interest and, in some cases, sales.

The report said that pattern can be seen in engagement data across major platforms. Food ranked among the top five subjects by interaction on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Facebook. It placed third on Instagram, fourth on TikTok, second on YouTube and

fourth on Facebook. DeRev said only entertainment and humor showed the same kind of broad presence across all four platforms.

That reach matters for brands because the Italian influencer market is becoming less concentrated and more diverse. DeRev said traditional sectors still hold the biggest shares, but more brands are putting money into areas where trust between creator and audience plays a central role. Food, with nearly one-fifth of the market, has become one of the pillars of that system.

Video is driving most of the activity. DeRev said that among the 20,000 top posts it analyzed, reels, TikTok videos and YouTube Shorts made up 79.2% of content and generated 82.5% of interactions. On Instagram, reels represented 43.9% of content but drew 56.3% of interactions. On TikTok, videos accounted for 97.3% of content. On YouTube, Shorts made up 70.6% of content and 86.7% of interactions.

For food brands, that means short vertical video is now the main format for campaigns. At the same time, DeRev said static images and carousel posts still keep an editorial and commercial role on Instagram, even if they no longer dominate engagement.

The report did not break down prices by sector, but it gave rate ranges by creator tier. On Instagram, a nano influencer with 5,000 to 10,000 followers typically commands €100 to €300 per post. A micro influencer with 10,000 to 50,000 followers earns about €300 to €1,600. A mid-tier creator with 50,000 to 300,000 followers can charge €1,600 to €5,500. Rates rise to €5,500 to €9,500 for macro influencers with 300,000 to 1 million followers, while celebrities can command €12,500 to €35,000 per post.

On TikTok, DeRev said a mid-tier creator generally charges €800 to €3,750 per post. On YouTube, a long-form video by a mid-tier creator costs roughly €3,000 to €7,800, while a Short costs about €900 to €2,700.

The report also highlighted a persistent transparency problem in the market. In the sample DeRev studied, only 4.46% of top Instagram posts and 0.78% of top TikTok posts carried a label showing they were sponsored content. Those figures covered all sectors, not just food. Direct calls to action appeared in 10% of Instagram posts, 4.24% of TikTok posts and 14.2% of Facebook posts.

That issue is important in food marketing, where personal credibility often shapes whether a recommendation is believed. DeRev said brand safety and reputation are becoming part of the value of collaborations, especially as regulators and industry classifications make the professional role of creators more visible in Italy.

The broader context is a creator economy that has expanded well beyond national markets. DeRev said the global creator economy has surpassed $250 billion and is projected to reach $480 billion by 2027. Against that backdrop, Italy is also seeing new business models built around food creators.

In Milan, more than 70 Italian food creators with a combined 10 million followers have joined to launch Foodie CookLab, a business-to-business platform focused on content, challenges and events for food brands. The project is presented as the first vertical B2B platform in Italy dedicated to the food sector.

The creators behind the initiative say the goal is to simplify a market that can be difficult for brands to navigate, especially when companies want integrated campaigns involving several voices, different audience sizes and a mix of regional specialties and global food trends. Foodie CookLab is part of the Tuduu group and says it removes some of the intermediaries that usually stand between brands and creators.

Clarissa Belcastro, a food creator and the project’s coordinator, said the platform responds to a gap in the market by linking content producers directly with food companies. She described the model as a change in the creator economy that streamlines the process and has already drawn early commercial interest.

According to the project’s organizers, the platform is meant to manage the full chain of a campaign, from concept development and recipe testing in cooking labs to multimedia production, sales-impact tracking in e-commerce and large-scale retail, and live activities such as showcooking and in-person experiences.

The launch reflects a broader shift in how food companies are using social media. Rather than treating creators as one-off promotional channels, more brands are building longer campaigns around recognizable personalities, recurring formats and videos designed for direct consumption on major platforms. In that environment, food remains one of the most adaptable categories because it works as entertainment,

instruction and product demonstration at the same time.