

MyHeritage says Italy’s roots tourism now runs both ways

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MILAN — Genealogy platform MyHeritage said roots tourism now runs both ways, with Italians tracing foreign branches of their families and booking trips to find them as Italy is projected to draw more than 7.4 million heritage travellers in 2026, according to Italy’s foreign ministry, the *Farnesina*.

Roots tourism has meant Italian Americans, Italian Argentines, and Italian Canadians returning to the villages their great grandparents left. The *Farnesina* built a national programme around that flow, *Italea* (Italy’s state backed roots tourism scheme), to court the diaspora and channel it toward smaller towns.

“In the Italian culture, family narratives and ties can be deeply meaningful, so finding out about another strand of ancestry may feel like something worth exploring,” Dr Tracy King, clinical psychologist and independent travel advisor, told Italy Now. “It’s therefore plausible that some would want to travel after a DNA result because family history, regional identity, can carry real emotional importance.”

MyHeritage argues the pattern is now inverting, and that Italians are discovering foreign branches of their own families and booking trips to find them.

Source: https://italynow.co.uk/myheritage-says-italys-roots-tourism-now-runs-both-ways/



Ancestors' village (*Credits: Italy Now*)

"According to industry experts, heritage travel is a phenomenon in strong growth. From our point of view we observe ever greater interest in the discovery of one's own origins. Over the past five years, sales of MyHeritage DNA kits in Italy have more than doubled, up 134 percent," said Margaux Stelman, head of public relations at MyHeritage.

Kit sales

That figure is the company's own, drawn from its Italian sales, and MyHeritage sells the kits whose popularity it is reporting. It has not published the underlying numbers.

The platform also released ancestry findings from its Italian customers. Just over three quarters, 76.1 percent, showed an Italian genetic component. Yet 57 percent registered a link to the platform's Greek and southern Italian cluster, 41 percent to the Iberian peninsula, and 33 percent to northern and western Europe. More than one in five showed ties to North Africa, at 20.7 percent, or the Balkans, at 20.2 percent.

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Foreigners of Italian origin going back to ancestors' villages (*Credits: Italy Now*)

The company states plainly that the sample covers only its own Italian users who bought a test, not the Italian population, and that the categories overlap, so one person can appear in several.

Summer bookings

MyHeritage sets those results beside this summer's booking flows toward Greece, Spain, Albania, and Croatia. It stops short of claiming genealogy is driving them, and offers no evidence that it is.

What the data does show is narrower and more interesting than a travel trend. A country that spent a century exporting people has spent rather less time counting who arrived, and the mosaic these tests describe, of Iberian, Balkan, North African, and Greek threads, is the residue of that traffic in both directions. The kits did not create those links. They made them legible, and gave people an address to visit.

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