

West Trumps East in Europe Travel This Year Italy Picked for Top Cities, Best Cuisine and Best Looking Locals

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Sixty-two percent of travelers intend to visit Europe in 2006 and Italy is the top European destination, according to a recent TripAdvisor(TM) survey of more than 1,800 travelers worldwide. While Eastern Europe was the preferred European region last year according to a May 2005 TripAdvisor(TM) survey, it seems the tides have turned. Seventy percent of respondents said they would rather travel to Western Europe this year, if money were not a factor. Forty-four percent cited spring as the best season to go.

When asked if they could choose just one Western European city to visit in 2006, Rome was the most popular destination among travelers, with sister Italian city Venice placing second. Prague was the top choice among Eastern European destinations.

Perhaps the popularity of the Italian cities can be attributed to the local fare. Italy was overwhelmingly the top choice (54 percent) for best cuisine. Rome finished first among European cities for having the most attractive locals.

Dublin is the city with the friendliest and most helpful locals, according to survey respondents. Americans gave London the edge for most affable citizens.

"We are seeing a trend shift with travelers now favoring classic popular destinations such as Rome, Venice, Paris and London, while Eastern Europe was all the rage in 2005," said Michele Perry, director of communications for TripAdvisor(TM). "With all of the incredible variety Europe has to offer, it was surprising that the top two cities according to travelers are both in Italy."

Top 10 Hotels in Italy Based on the TripAdvisor(TM) Popularity Index:

- * Hotel Davanzati, Florence, Tuscany
- * Residenza Il Villino, Florence, Tuscany
- * Hotel Al Ponte Mocenigo, Venice, Veneto
- * Residenza Cellini, Rome, Lazio
- * Hotel Antiche Figure, Venice, Veneto
- * La Villa Hotel, Asti, Piedmont
- * JK Place Hotel, Florence, Tuscany
- * Furore Inn Resort, Salerno, Amalfi Coast, Campania
- * Foscari Palace, Venice, Veneto
- * Palazzo del Selvadego, Venice, Veneto

About TripAdvisor LLC

TripAdvisor.com(TM) is the largest global travel information and advice destination on the web, with more than 4 million unbiased reviews and opinions and covering 200,000+ hotels and attractions. With nearly 19 million unique monthly visitors worldwide (source: comScore Media Metrix, January 2006), TripAdvisor(TM) features real advice from real travelers and easy access to major online travel sites, including Expedia.com(R), Orbitz, Hotels.com(R) and American Airlines, for great deals. TripAdvisor(TM), which operates sites in the U.S. (<http://www.tripadvisor.com/>) and in the U.K. (<http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/>) provides travel suppliers a graphical advertising and cost-per-click marketing platform. Winner of dozens of awards, including PC Magazine's Top 100 Web Sites and Forbes Best of the Web, TripAdvisor(TM) is an operating company of Expedia, Inc. .

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