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# Southern European tourists flock to Denmark to escape the heat

Roselyne Min

With rising temperatures in southern Europe, more and more tourists are flocking to cooler destinations in the north. Denmark, in particular, has become an increasingly popular choice for those looking to escape the scorching summer heat. According to the recently published report from DMI, the official Danish meteorological institute, the national average temperature of July 2024 was 16.2C. For much of southern Europe, high temperatures tell a very different story. Italy has been enduring nearly constant heatwaves since mid-June, with parts of the country experiencing record temperatures exceeding 40C. France has also faced several days of high-temperature alerts, with temperatures soaring over 30C across the country last week.

## Southern Europe flocks to the north

Amid the bustling crowds in Copenhagen's iconic Nyhavn, it's not uncommon to catch snippets of French, Spanish, and Italian, as tourists from across southern Europe flock to the city with its cooler climate. Sagrario, normally a resident of Madrid, stopped by in Denmark on a cruise ship tour in Scandinavia with her daughter. "In Madrid, we've had a heat wave for three straight weeks with temperatures of minimum 30C and maximum temperatures of 40C," Sagrario's daughter Sofia said. Copenhagen's hospitality industry, which traditionally caters to tourists from northern Europe and the United States, has noticed a significant increase in visitors from southern Europe. "We definitely see a big increase in southern European tourism. It's

France, it's Greece, it's Spain, and Italy," Karim Nielsen, the CEO of Kolpin Hotels which owns Hotel Sanders in Copenhagen, told Euronews.

"And that increase we have seen that coming for the last 5 or 6 years but the last two years it has been increasing a lot. And, here at Hotel Sanders, we normally have something like 80 per cent Americans, but that number is actually decreasing a little bit. And we see especially from Spain and Italy, we have approximately 10 per cent of our occupancy from southern Europe now. That's a quite big increase from formal numbers from 3-4 per cent" Nielsen added. Nielsen attributes this increase to southern European guests seeking cooler weather in the north.

## Not limited to the capital

South Zealand, about 80

kilometres outside Copenhagen, is an emerging destination for those looking for a cool summer vacation.

"The trend for southern European guests coming to Denmark started around three years ago. Last year we really saw it. And this year, I'd use the word extremely high. And it has gone from maybe 5 per cent to 30-35 per cent of our guests," Filip Rasmussen, the owner of Jungshoved Præstegaard, a traditional Danish B&B in Præstø, said. Rasmussen noted that while a new agreement with a French travel agency has contributed to this increase, there has also been a notable rise in visitors from southern Switzerland, Italy, and Spain.

"The topic is heatwave which is actually the first thing they say if you ask "why are you visiting Denmark?" he added.

Patricia Levantis and Franck Watinne, residents of Marseille staying at Jungshoved Præstegaard, say they are satisfied with Denmark's cool late August climate, which allowed them to enjoy outdoor activities. "25 degrees during the day. In the evening, you can wear a small sweater or a small jacket. So we can do very pleasant things," Watinne said. The official tourism organisation of South Zealand and Moen, Visit Sydsjælland & Møn, confirms the trend. Bender also noted that while the tragic fires in Greece are a sombre backdrop, Denmark is glad to offer a cool respite for those affected. "When you see all the fires in Greece and so on. It's a tragic background. But of course, then we are happy to say, come and cool down for a couple of weeks up here at North and discover our beautiful

nature and culture," Bender added.

## More than the cooler climate to offer

Stakeholders of the tourism industry in Denmark say that the new influx of tourists are not just coming from southern Europe but other parts of northern Europe such as the Netherlands and Belgium.

"It's also not only people from the southern part of Europe. It's also people who used to travel to the southern part, but now choose the north and find out the quality we have. In the middle of the summer, we have much, much longer nights. We call them the white nights even," Rasmussen.

At the height of summer, during the solstice, the sun doesn't set until around 10 PM in Denmark, giving visitors almost an hour more daylight compared to Italy, for example.

According to data from Visit Denmark, the Official Tourism Organisation of Denmark, the number of Italian and French tourists visiting the capital region this June has surged by 23%, growing from around 49,000 in 2019 to nearly 60,000 in 2024. Copenhagen has recently broken records for overnight stays as the city gains popularity, a trend explained by Wonderful Copenhagen, the official tourism organisation for Denmark's capital region. Wonderful Copenhagen says, however, that the record-breaking trend cannot be attributed to the cool climate but is thanks to the culture and culinary scene in the city.



FILE - Tourists in the harbour in Copenhagen, Denmark, during a hot summer day with temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius, Friday, June 18, 2021.

# Southern Europeans are flocking to Denmark fleeing heat

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People enjoy sunbathing and refreshment at the harbor in Copenhagen, Denmark, during a hot summer day with temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius, Friday, June 18, 2021.

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# Homemade food and stunning views: Swap Italy's overcrowded cities for its most beautiful villages

Rebecca Ann Hughes

Venice has trialled an entry fee, Florence has banned new Airbnbs and Rome's public transport is unbearably crowded.

Overtourism is hitting Italy's cities hard and the result is a stressful experience for those who holiday there.

The good news is, for masterful artworks, excellent food and a dynamic cultural scene, you don't have to stick to the cities.

Italy has a non-profit association called 'I Borghi più belli d'Italia' ('The Most Beautiful Villages in Italy') which safeguards and preserves the heritage of the country's hamlets.

Visitors can use the list of these most beautiful villages to create an itinerary away from the crowds - a type of slow travel which also supports struggling rural communities. Here are some of the top villages to visit in Italy.

#### Dozza for its vibrant street art

Close to the city of Bologna (which a resident recently described as 'tourist hell'), Dozza is a town of around 6,000 inhabitants surrounded by hills.

It is famous for its festival of **murals**, which takes place every two years in September. Renowned national and international artists decorate the walls of the town's houses with permanent artworks,

so the streets are now a kaleidoscopic outdoor gallery. The monumental, red brick Dozza Castle from the 13th century also houses the Enoteca Regionale Emilia Romagna in its cellars. This **wine shop and bar** promotes wines from across the region.

#### Monte Isola for a sanctuary with a view

Lake-Isola lies between Como and Garda, two lakes that have become notoriously overcrowded in recent years. In the middle of the waterbody is Monte Isola, an island that rises up steeply, its slopes thick with vegetation.

Around the island along the water's edge are several small **hamlets** and you can spend a pleasant day riding from one to another on hired bikes.

For more strenuous exercise, hikers can climb some 400 metres to the lofty shrine of Madonna della Carola, a small whitewashed church with mesmerising views.

#### Castelmezzano for staggering scenery

One of the least-touristed regions of Italy is Basilicata, lying between Puglia and Campania. In its forested, mountainous centre, the village of Castelmezzano clings to giant shards of grey rock rising above the treeline.

As you wind through its narrow,



Visitors can use the official list of Italy's most beautiful villages to create an itinerary away from the crowds - a type of slow travel which also supports struggling rural

steep streets (not wide enough for cars), you get sudden glimpses between houses out to the verdant valley.

If you want a more exhilarating view, you can take the Volo dell'Angelo ('Flight of the Angel') high-speed zip line crossing the valley to neighbouring Pietrapertosa, which is also a 'most beautiful village'. Flying at speeds of 120 km/h, you get an adrenaline-pumping view from around 400 metres above the ground.

#### Atrani for a quieter experience of the Amalfi Coast

Squeezed in beside the summer hotspot Amalfi, Atrani is a tiny village often completely overlooked by tourists to the Amalfi Coast. With a surface area of 4.12 km<sup>2</sup>, it can boast the title of the smallest municipality in Italy. The hamlet retains the historic urban architecture of the **Amalfi Coast** with maze-like streets that duck under passageways and emerge out into small, mise-en-scène squares.

As the heavily trafficked coastal road does not pass directly through the centre of the town, which is a little set back, it is a particularly quiet and pleasant place to stay on the busy coastline.

#### Deruta for eye-popping ceramics

Deruta in the region of Umbria is renowned as a centre of maiolica production. These bright ceramics have been hand-produced in the **village** since the early Middle Ages and are now exported around the world.

Particularly recognisable are the 16th-century 'Raffaellesque' designs with portraits of Renaissance nobility, swirling vegetation, floral decorations and mythological motifs in blue, yellow and turquoise.

**Related** [Residents of this Romanian village are restoring century-old houses to lure in tourists; Hot-headed villagers battle over illegal air-conditioner units in Italy's iconic Portofino](#)

If you can drag yourself away from the workshops crammed with flamboyant products, head to the town hall for the Museum of

Ceramics and an art gallery housing a fresco by Umbrian master Perugino.

#### Barga for a slice of Scotland in Italy

Barga might be located in the Italian region of Tuscany but don't be surprised if you hear some Scottish accents or see a resident donning a kilt.

Known as the most Scottish town in Italy, a history of residents' emigration to Scotland and then a reverse migration of descendants back to the town of their ancestors has given Barga its multinational culture.

There are shops selling the fuzzy drink **Im Bru** while in August there is a festival dedicated to fish and chips.

There is also an opera festival and a long-running jazz festival and the town is crowned by the Romanesque church of San Cristoforo with a grand limestone facade.

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