



Jubilee 2025 in Numbers: Markets, Rates and the Quality of Experience

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The year 2025 will remain etched in history for Rome — a year of major events, transformation, and great challenges, marked not only by the Jubilee but also by the passing of Pope Francis and the election of Leo XIV.

Since the opening of the Holy Door on December 24, 2024, Rome has hosted dozens of events marking the Holy Year, drawing millions of pilgrims from across the world. Estimates suggest more than **30 million visitors** by year-end — a flow that has reshaped the rhythm, spaces, and very identity of the capital.

To welcome the event, Rome launched an ambitious **€4.8 billion Jubilee Plan** — over **600 projects** to improve mobility, hospitality, and public spaces. Among them, the new **Piazza Pia** stands out: the city's largest pedestrian area and a symbol of a capital that aims to renew itself not only for tourists, but also for residents.

As the Holy Door nears closure, **The Data Appeal Company** looked at the Jubilee from a different perspective: **through data**.



By analysing thousands of reviews, OTA rates, and digital traces, Data Appeal explored how the Holy Year reshaped tourism, visitor experience, and the global perception of Rome.

In this analysis, we'll answer the following key questions:

- Who visited the city during the Holy Year?
- How did the online sentiment around Rome evolve?
- Which attractions captivated visitors, and which generated the most criticism?
- How did the city's different sectors cope with the peaks in demand?
- And finally, what can other destinations learn from the way Rome managed this historic event?



Executive summary

In 2025, **Rome experienced one of the most intense years in their recent history — both spiritually and in terms of tourism.**

The Jubilee, the Catholic event that every 25 years celebrates reconciliation, spiritual renewal, and plenary indulgence, became a powerful tourism catalyst. It was also a **chance for Rome to rethink public services and urban spaces** to ensure a better quality of life — for visitors and residents alike — while advancing sustainability goals.

Data Appeal's analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data highlights converging trends: attention and visitor flows increasingly focused on the Vatican.

Vatican points of interest (POIs) recorded a **+33% increase in reviews** and a **+60% surge in Popularity Index**, with peaks between March–April and August–September. The Popularity Index measures the balance between review volume and sentiment to reflect the popularity of each location. Meanwhile, **Rome as a whole saw a mild decline (-10% YoY)** in total digital traces — clear evidence that the Holy Year polarised attention around symbolic religious sites.

Pricing remained surprisingly stable. OTA rates fell slightly (-3%) compared with 2024, showing a **redistribution of demand** rather than speculative price spikes. Hotels reduced their maximum rates (-7%), while **hostels and campsites grew sharply (+27%)**, meeting the needs of pilgrims, groups, and solo travellers. This stability indicates that Rome remained **accessible and well-managed** even during demand peaks. Compared to 2024, lower OTA saturation points to an increase in direct bookings and less reliance on intermediaries.

The visitor map changed. Countries with strong Catholic traditions saw growth — **Poland (+7%)**, **Argentina (+29.2%)**, **Canada (+14.4%)**, and **Mexico (+11.6%)** — while **Germany (-41.3%)** and **France (-12.2%)** declined, likely due to tighter economic conditions in Central Europe.

Traveller profiles shifted. Solo travellers reached **15% of all visitors (+3 pp)**, mainly driven by Italians, who generated **41% of total reviews (+8 pp)**. Couples and families remained the largest groups overall.

Cultural and religious attractions maintained their dominance. The Colosseum, Trevi Fountain, and Pantheon remained on the podium, but Vatican landmarks saw unprecedented growth: **St. Peter's Basilica (+93%)** with an outstanding sentiment of **94.5/100**, and **the Vatican Museums (+10%)** with **89.7/100 (+2.4 pp)**.

Attractions remain the most positively perceived sector (Sentiment Score **91.3/100, +1 pp**), while restaurants lost ground due to perceptions of high prices.

Despite major investments in mobility, infrastructure, and hospitality, some issues persisted — mainly **costs, organisation, and safety**. However, **staff professionalism and hospitality** played a key role in maintaining consistently high satisfaction across sectors.

The Jubilee ultimately **redirected visitor flows, spread spending across flexible accommodation types, and enhanced the perception of Christianity's symbolic sites**. Even with surging visitor numbers, Rome's POIs sustained high sentiment scores — proof of effective event management and resilience.

This positive scenario offers valuable lessons for destinations worldwide: the importance of **data-informed planning, balanced flows, sustainability, and strong visitor experience management**.

Methodology in brief

● **Data source:** D/AI Destinations

● **Analysis period:** January – October 2025, year-on-year comparison with 2024

● **Geographical scope:** Rome Capital and Vatican City State, aggregated by point of interest (POI) and sector (e.g. hospitality, food & beverage, attractions, transport)

● **User-generated content (UGC):** Reviews, comments, and interactions gathered from major platforms — Google, Tripadvisor, Booking, Expedia, Facebook, and others.

● **Proprietary KPIs:**

■ **Sentiment Score (0–100):** Analyses and normalises online reputation data for POIs and territories.

■ **Popularity Index:** Measures the popularity of a business or area, serving as a proxy for footfall.

■ **Semantic Analysis:** Powered by large language models and generative AI integration, it interprets user content in real time across 50 languages, detecting emotional engagement and semantic nuance while preserving data granularity and accuracy.



The Vatican City: Digital traces and popularity surge

In 2025, the center of attention clearly shifted toward the Vatican. **Over the first ten months of the year, Vatican POIs recorded a +33% increase in reviews and around +60% growth in Popularity Index**, a proxy for footfall and overall appeal.

Both **volume and sentiment rose together** — evidence that heavier tourist pressure did not erode visitor experience. Even during crowded periods, perceptions remained positive.

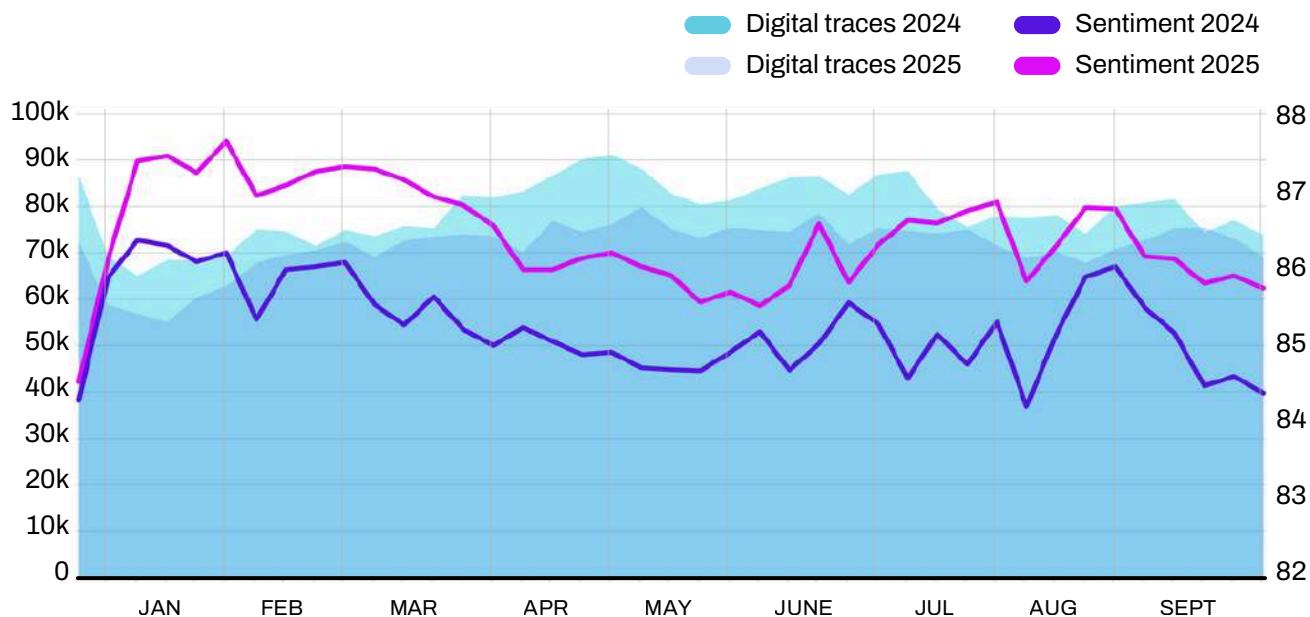
Across the broader city, however, **digital activity declined slightly** (–10%) while sentiment stayed stable — a trend consistent with national patterns. Two factors likely explain it: the shift of attention toward Jubilee sites and a partial move from written reviews to short-form video content (e.g. TikTok).

The temporal curve of Vatican traces **reveals a sharp drop in late April following the death of Pope Francis** (April 21) and the temporary closure of the Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel, and St Peter's Basilica for funeral rites. Activity then rebounded within weeks, returning to the March–April and August–September peaks.



Rome and Vatican City: Trends in digital trace volume and Sentiment Score

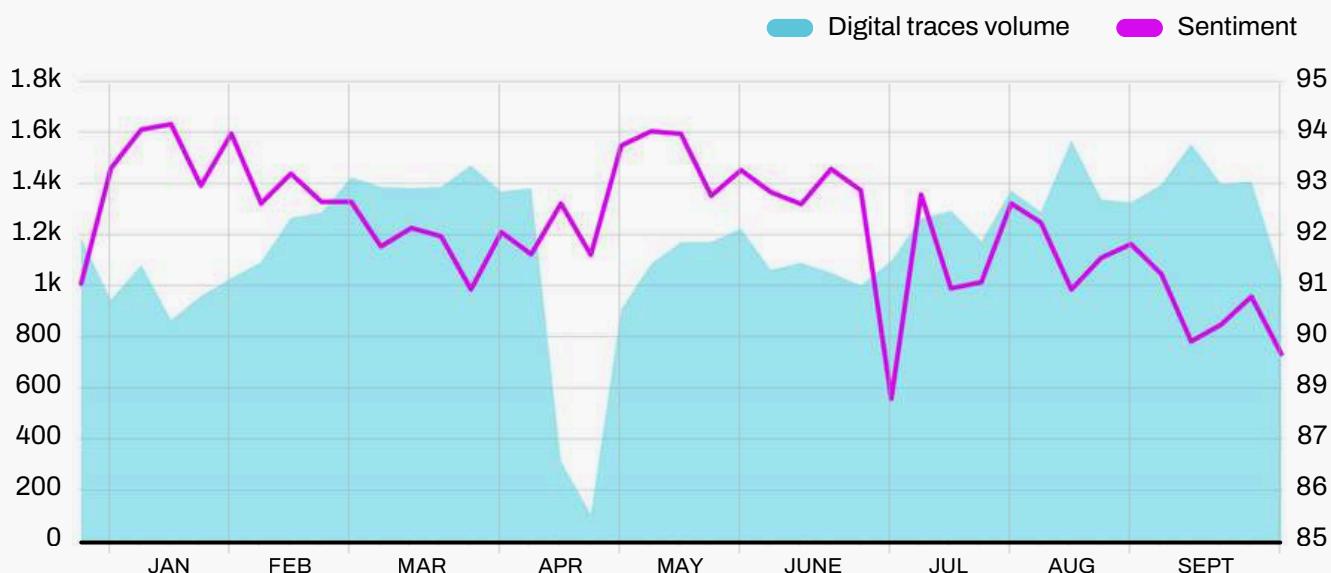
January – October 2025 vs 2024



Sentiment scores range from 0 to 100.

Focus on Vatican City: Digital traces and Sentiment Score

January – October 2025



Sentiment scores range from 0 to 100.

Visitors: Growth from Catholic countries and more solo travellers

The composition of visitors leaving reviews between January and October 2025 offers a clear picture of Jubilee-year pilgrimage to Rome.

Italy remains the largest source market (27% of all traces), followed by Spain, the United States, France, and the United Kingdom.

The most notable increases, however, came from countries with strong Catholic traditions: **Argentina, Mexico, Canada, and Poland**.

Countries with the most marked increase in digital traces

January – October 2025 vs 2024

	Digital traces increase YoY	Sentiment increase YoY
 Argentina	+29.2% 	+4 pp 
 Canada	+14.4% 	+5 pp 
 Mexico	+11.6% 	+4 pp 
 Poland	+7% 	+2 pp 

Sentiment scores also rose — up to five points higher in Canada — with overall ratings ranging between 84 and 87 out of 100. These figures show that even greater visitor volumes did not diminish the perceived quality of experience.

Traveller profiles shifted too: couples and families still dominate, but solo travellers stood out — now representing **15% of the total (+3 pp YoY)**. A large share are domestic visitors, with Italians accounting for **41% of all traces (+8 pp YoY)**.

Hospitality and prices: Controlled rates and a shifting mix in accommodation

Where did Rome's visitors stay during the Jubilee period?

Analysis of OTA (Online Travel Agency) data paints a surprisingly balanced picture: **prices remained stable overall (–3% vs 2024)**.

Even at demand peaks, **rates did not skyrocket** — a sign that Rome managed to remain **accessible and well-organised**, avoiding speculative dynamics.

However, demand clearly **shifted from hotels to more affordable accommodation types**, reflecting the needs of **pilgrims, groups, and solo travellers**.

● **Hotels:** Average rates fell by **–13%**, with maximum rates down **–7%**.

● **Hostels and campsites:** Maximum rates surged **+27%**, showing strong demand for simpler, budget-friendly options.

The charts highlight the trend: tariff peaks followed the same pattern as 2024 — concentrated in **early May and September**.

Occupancy, however, dipped slightly in spring and summer. Two key factors likely contributed:

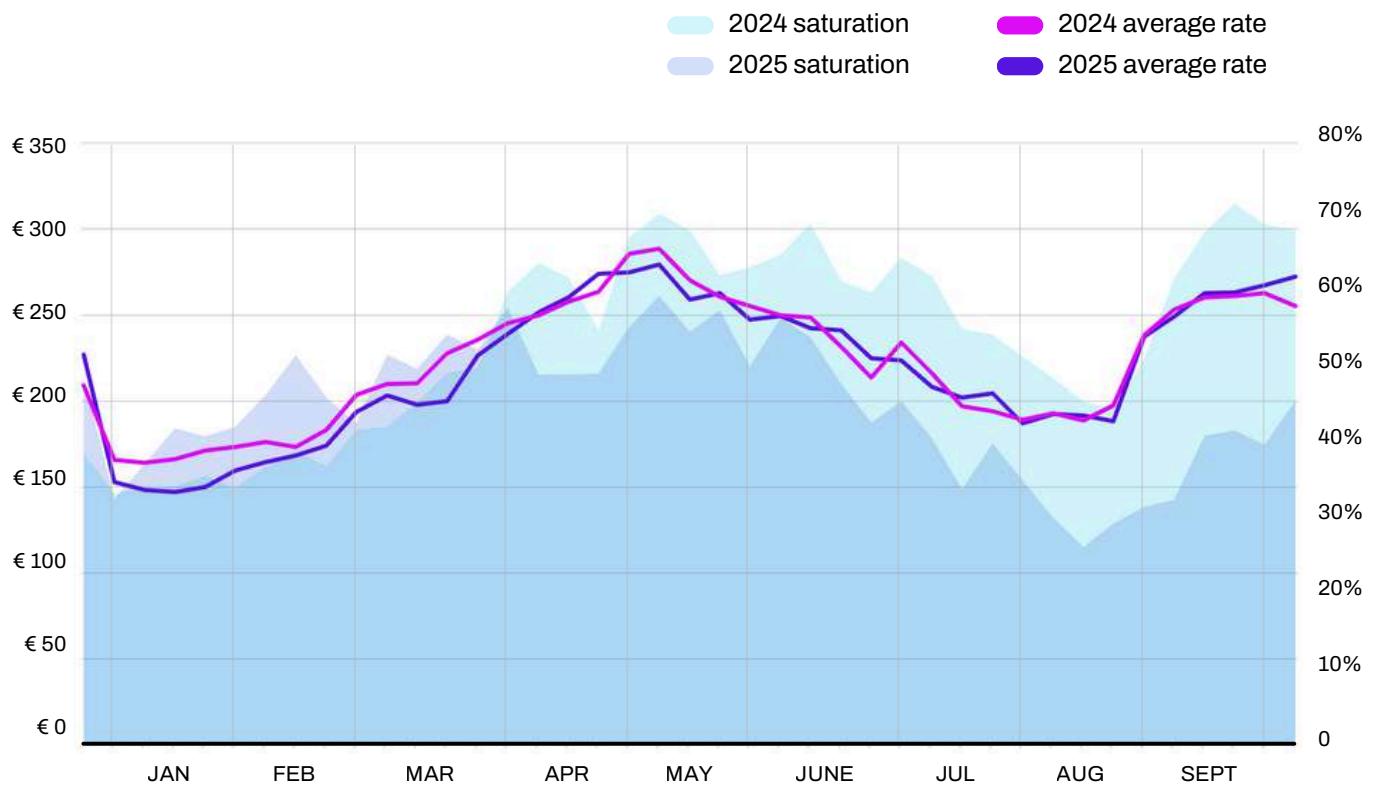
● **More direct booking by hoteliers** during high-demand periods, which reduces OTA inventory;

● **Growing preference for alternative accommodations** (often underrepresented on major OTA platforms).

Additionally, large pilgrimage groups frequently booked through **traditional travel agencies**, further decreasing OTA saturation levels.

Overall OTA rates and saturation trends in Rome

January – October 2025 vs 2024



What visitors appreciated most: Attractions and staff take the lead

The semantic analysis of digital traces makes it possible to clearly understand what worked in visitors' experiences in Rome and Vatican City during the Jubilee year.

The **attractions sector** stands out for its strong growth in volume (+26% YoY) and for an excellent **Sentiment Score (91.3/100, +1 pp vs 2024)**.

Museums and monuments remain the heart of the visitor experience, confirming the Jubilee's role as a **multiplier of cultural attention**.

By contrast, **digital activity declined in dining (-19%) and entertainment (-14%)** — a trend consistent with an audience more inclined to invest in **culture** rather than **leisure and food**.

The **weakest point for restaurants** was **price perception**, with a **Sentiment Score of 54/100** for mentions related to "cost".

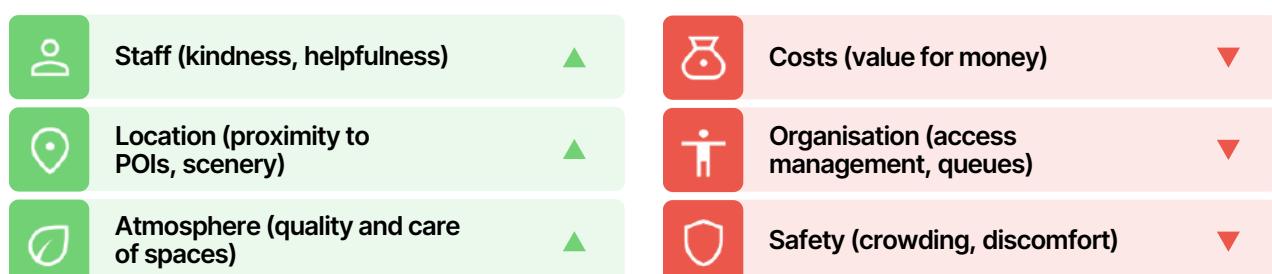


Overall, the **most frequently mentioned issues** in reviews throughout the year were **costs**, followed by **organisation** and **safety**.

Among the aspects most appreciated across all sectors, **staff performance** stands out — earning **Sentiment Scores between 90 and 94/100**, a sign of **warm hospitality and professionalism** that helped maintain positive perceptions even during peak periods.

Italian visitors proved to be the most critical, especially regarding **entertainment, hotels, and dining**, while **Polish and US travellers** were the most satisfied with their overall experience.

Analysis of the most-appreciated and most-criticised topics in digital traces



St Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museum among the top 5 most-visited attractions in Rome

The analysis of Rome's most-visited cultural attractions confirms that **2025 was profoundly shaped by the Jubilee.**

St Peter's Basilica and the **Vatican Museums** ranked **fourth and fifth** respectively among the **top five most-reviewed attractions in the city.**

The **Colosseum**, **Trevi Fountain**, and **Pantheon** maintained their long-standing positions on the podium, but the Vatican sites recorded **unprecedented growth.**

St Peter's Basilica saw a remarkable **+93% increase in digital traces**, while maintaining an exceptionally high **Sentiment Score of 94.5/100.**

What is it about St Peter's that captivates visitors? Its **unmistakable atmosphere**, steeped in **grandeur, beauty, and above all, tangible sacredness.**

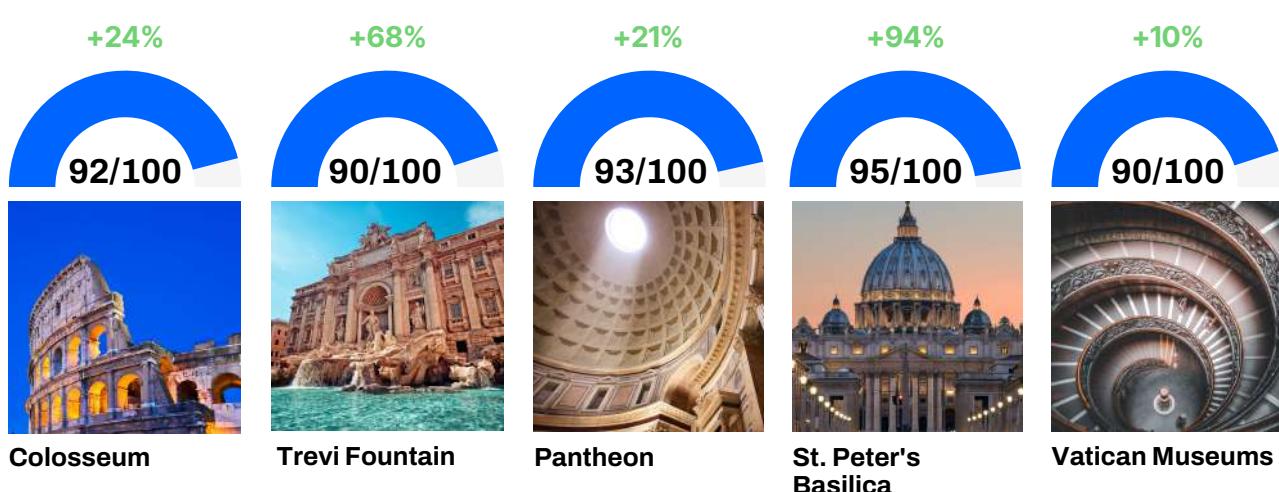
The **Vatican Museums** recorded a more moderate yet significant rise: **+10% in digital traces**, with a **Sentiment Score of 89.7/100, up 2.4 pp from 2024.**

Top 5 most-reviewed attractions in Rome in 2025

January – October 2025

Sentiment

Digital review volume variation (YoY)



Lessons and outlook: What the Jubilee can teach other destinations

Managing an event like the Jubilee is, above all, an exercise in balance.

For Rome, **2025 was both a powerful opportunity and a major test** — a year that boosted visitor flows, visibility, and economic impact throughout the calendar, while also demanding precise coordination in a complex city to minimise friction and negative perceptions.

Overall, the data outlines a **positive scenario**: growing appeal for symbolic landmarks, price stability, and steady perceived quality, with the main challenges concentrated around **costs, organisation, and safety**.



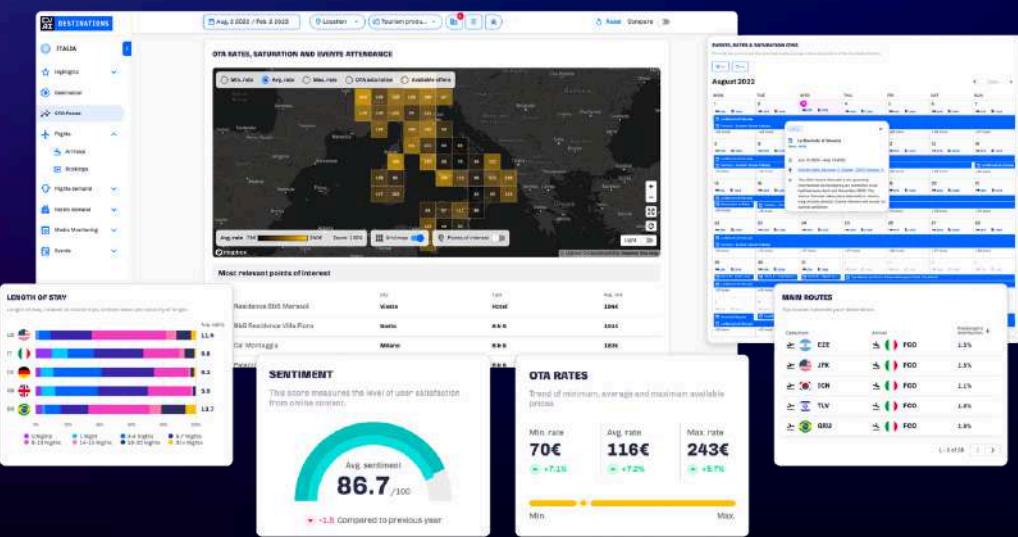
From this picture emerge several **actionable lessons** that any destination can apply when hosting large-scale international events:

- **Polarise without saturating.** Major events are a unique opportunity to **redraw the city map and disperse visitor flows** beyond the historic centre, promoting alternative itineraries outside the most popular routes. Rome did so by launching an **AI-powered app** designed specifically to suggest lesser-known attractions to tourists.
- **Keep prices under control, make value clear.** Hospitality is a team effort. It's vital for the DMO to **involve and train local operators** to prevent price hikes from becoming a **boomerang for the city's reputation**.
- **Manage queues and access points.** As visitor numbers rise, so do entries to museums, churches, and key landmarks. Cities must **rethink ticketing systems, optimise signage, and provide real-time information** on official channels to distribute flows more evenly throughout the day and week.
- **Invest in the human factor.** Hospitality and staff professionalism have a profound impact on the visitor experience. Creating **training, awareness, and feedback moments** for all stakeholders helps the destination maintain a consistently positive reputation.
- **Listen continuously.** Implementing **real-time online listening tools** is essential to keep a pulse on visitor sentiment and to **intervene proactively** before isolated complaints evolve into widespread dissatisfaction.
- **Diversify communication.** Quickly identifying **emerging markets and their characteristics** enables destinations to design **targeted, effective promotional messages** all year round.

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The Data Appeal Company

The Data Appeal Company SpA (formerly Travel Appeal) was founded in 2014 and acquired in 2022 by Almawave SpA, a company listed on the Euronext Growth Milan market of the Italian Stock Exchange and part of the Almaviva group.

Utilising a proprietary algorithm based on artificial intelligence, machine learning, and semantic analysis, Data Appeal collects, measures, and analyses all publicly posted feedback online.

It merges this feedback with geographical and contextual data, helping businesses across industries leverage insights to guide decisions and gain a competitive edge.

The company's goal is to democratise and simplify the use and comprehension of data, assisting businesses and institutions in making effective and informed decisions.

This, in turn, aims to accelerate progress towards a more sustainable and inclusive world.

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