

Milano 2020: Promoting LGBTQ+ Tourism

Roberta Cutillo (April 29, 2019)



In May 2020, Milan will host the 37th annual convention of the International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA) inside the famed Castello Sforzesco. It's the first time the convention takes place in an Italian city and the event will take place within a campaign aimed at promoting LGBTQ+ tourism in the city and beyond.

Milan is already amongst Italy's most LGBTQ+ friendly cities and so, as this year's International [Gay & Lesbian Travel Association \(IGLTA\)](#) [2] Annual Convention (held in New York City) comes to a close, it seems fitting that the Lombard city should host the next edition, which will take place in May 2020.

Home to over 25 LGBTQ+ associations, to one of the country's largest Gay Prides, among other cultural initiatives, Milan was the first Italian city to develop an LGBTQ+ neighborhood ([Porta Venezia](#) [3]) and most importantly to open a registry of Civil Unions, once they became legal in 2016.



The city now launches the Milan Loves You campaign, a project by the [Sonders and Beach](#) [4] tourist agency and endorsed by the Municipality and by Enit (the Italian National Tourism Agency) with the aim of promoting the next IGLTA 2020 Convention.

The IGLTA is the world's leading network of LGBTQ+ welcoming tourism businesses. It was founded in 1983 and provides free travel resources and information while continuously working to promote equality and safety within LGBTQ+ tourism worldwide.

The 2020 convention, which will be held at the iconic Castello Sforzesco, one of the symbols of Milan, will welcome around 500 tour operators, journalists, LGBTQ influencers from all over the world.

According to Tourism Commissioner Roberta Guaineri, this event "is important for business but also from a human rights perspective and a collaboration between privates and institutions is fundamental for the promotion of non-discriminatory hospitality. We are working towards Milan becoming welcoming of everyone and able to answer to the needs of all travelers."

Alessio Virgili, CEO of Sonders & Beach and IGLTA Italian Ambassador explains that the goal of the campaign is to use Milan 2020 as a springboard for the promotion of LGBTQ+ tourism in Milan and beyond. "Based on the results of previous editions," he comments "we expect an influx of 2 million euro during the 3 days of the convention in the city of Milan alone and a 60% increase in the volume of tourists in the following year."

So far, Italy (which, let's face it is not amongst the most LGBTQ-friendly nations) has not catered towards LGBTQ+ tourism, a complete loss considering that, as another Italian Ambassador, the actor and journalist Alessandro Cecchi Paone, notes "members of the LGBTQ+ community travel, spend money, and set trends."

Hopefully, the Milan Loves You initiative along with the 2020 Convention, beyond favoring the Milanese and Italian tourism industry, will help set new standards within the sector, making Italy a place where all visitors, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation can feel safe, welcome and have a great time.

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Links

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/milanolgbtqjpg>

[2] <http://www.iglta.org/>



[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porta_Venezia#The_district

[4] <https://www.iglta.org/sonders-and-beach-italy-srl/>