

Economic Impact, Spending and Digital Payments

Department of Design - Politecnico di Milano

Francesco Leoni, Massimo Bianchini, Carla Sadini, Stefano Maffei, Francesco Zurlo

Our journey continues with an analysis of *tourist spending* in Milan during the week of the event, focusing on the main visitors spending categories: accommodation, food and dining, and shopping. From the perspective of an impact study, understanding the visitors spending in the area is important for a number of reasons: to identify which sectors of the economy benefit most from the event, to adapt and manage service provision to meet the evolving needs of visitors, and to promote more sustainable practices. The first data source considered is the economic impact estimate of Salone del Mobile.Milano, published in 2024 by the Ufficio Studi of Confcommercio Milan, Lodi, Monza and Brianza¹. For the latest edition of the event, this estimate amounted to around €275 million² (Figure 5.9), that is an increase of 13.7% on 2023 (€241.7 million).

Confcommercio also estimated an increase in per capita tourism expenditure, divided by the following categories: €121.4

5.9
Estimated total tourist expenditure for Design Week 2023 and 2024 (in millions of euros)

Source: Estimates by the Ufficio Studi of Confcommercio Milan Lodi Monza and Brianza based on data from Banca d'Italia, Salone del Mobile.Milano, AEFI, Euro Fair Statistics. Note: the original title of this table is *Estimate of total tourist expenditure of Salone del Mobile 2024* (million euros).

	2023	2024	Var. %
Hospitality services	101.3	115.6	14.2%
Restaurants and food services	71.9	81.8	13.7%
Shopping	56.2	63.4	12.7%
Salone del Mobile Tickets purchased	12.3	14.3	16.1%
Total	241.7	275.1	13.7%

for hospitality services (+10.6% compared to 2023), €85.9 for restaurants and food services (+10.1% over 2023), and €66.6 for shopping (+9.2% over 2023) (Figure 5.10). These estimates confirm the event's key role as a generator of spending in the local area.

	2023	2024	Var. %
Hospitality services	109.8	121.4	10.6%
Restaurants and food services	78.0	85.9	10.1%
Shopping	61.0	66.6	9.2%
Total	248.8	273.9	10.1%

5.10
Estimated daily per capita tourist expenditure for Design Week 2023 and 2024 (in euros)

Source: Estimates by the Ufficio Studi of Confcommercio Milan Lodi Monza and Brianza based on data from Banca d'Italia, Salone del Mobile.Milano, AEFI, Euro Fair Statistics. Note: the original title of this table is: "Daily per-capita tourist expenditure (€)"

Hospitality services represent the major spending segment. As previously mentioned (Ch. 5, Section 5.c), this important international event impacts both demand and prices. According to Centro Studi Abitare Co³, the average rate for short-term rentals during the 2024 edition of the event was nearly three times higher than prices for a regular week without events at other times of the year. The same source also reports an average increase in rental rates across various neighbourhoods in 2024 compared to 2023 (+5.3%), with Lambrate standing out with a week's

rent of €2,890 (+186% compared to a standard week, +10.8% compared to the 2023 edition). This increase, according to this source, could be seen in the rate for a week's rent in several municipalities around Milan: €2,310 in Rho (+255% compared to a standard week), €1,750 in Sesto San Giovanni (+213%), €1,890 in San Donato Milanese (+207%), €1,610 in Segrate (+104%) and €1,190 in Corsico (+110%).

To further investigate tourist spending during the 2024 edition of the event, we considered digital payments data from Mastercard, provided by Milano & Partners through the YesMilano Data Hub⁴. This data is represented through a total spending volume index – not exclusively referred to tourist spending – that describes the amount of spending recorded by credit/debit cards transactions in Milan's postal code areas⁵. These figures allow for a granular analysis of spending dynamics, particularly the origin of buyers (inferred from the origin of credit/debit cards), the average spending amount by country of origin and the locations in the city where spending was concentrated. The countries that contributed the most to the total volume of spending made through credit/debit card payments in Milan from the 15th to the 21st of April 2024 were: the United States (9.2%), Switzerland (7.7%) and Germany (7.3%)⁶. During the 2023 edition of the event (17th–23rd of April), the same countries contributed to the spending volume as follows: Switzerland (9.5%), the United States (8.3%) and Germany (7.3%).

The list changes radically if we consider the average amount spent by each single credit/debit card from the 15th to the 21st of April 2024. The countries that are highest in this ranking are: the United Arab Emirates (€1,067.47), Saudi Arabia (€993.83), Kuwait (€985.17), Hong Kong (€831.44), Singapore (€793.53), Israel (€449.23), Turkey (€420.73) and the United States (€377.29). The cards with the highest average spend come from the Middle East, led by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and from the Far East, led by Hong Kong and Singapore.

In the 2024 edition, the main areas of Milan where spending was concentrated were identified through Milan postal codes, to which the YesMilano Data Hub dashboard associates areas of the city. The spending by those area is distributed as follows: postal code 20121 - Brera, Sempione, Castello (20.7% in 2024; 21% in 2023), postal code 20154 - Sarpi-Chinatown, Monumentale, Porta Volta (11.1% in 2024; 11% in 2023), postal code 20122 - Duomo, Guastalla, Crocetta (8.8% in 2024; 8.1% in 2023), postal code 20123 - Cinque Vie, Colonne, Sant'Ambrogio, Magenta (7.4% in 2024; 7.2% in 2023). The main commercial category of spending are: clothing (19.2% in 2024; 20.7% in 2023), supermarkets and other food stores (18.3% in 2024; 17% in 2023) and

restaurants and food services (16.9% in 2024; 16.5% in 2023). Finally, digital payments data provides a snapshot of the seasonal trends of spending in Milan. The time distribution of this spending (analysed through the weekly average variance) shows that the volume of total spending in Milan during the 2024 edition (from the 15th to the 21st of April 2024) increased by +26.1% compared to 2023, which is above the average for the period January 2023 to May 2024 (Figure 5.11). This figure seems correlated with the growth in visitor stays for Salone del Mobile.Milano 2024 (+20.2%).

