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PRESS RELEASE

Genoa, Italy's only finalist for European Capital of Tourism 2027: a greener city where the outdoors starts at the end of the street

Twenty years of UNESCO World Heritage, the longest city walls in Europe, trails, forts and ridges just minutes from the historic centre, and Italy's first urban plan to include depaving

Genoa arrives at WTM London as the only Italian city among the eight finalists of **European Capitals of Tourism 2027**, the European Commission initiative rewarding destinations for sustainable, accessible and innovative tourism. The winner will be announced in Brussels on 18–19 November.

It is the fourth consecutive year that Genoa has made the shortlist. This year the city competes alongside Aalborg, Braga, Konya, Ljubljana, Lviv, Salzburg and Sofia, selected by the Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE).

Four pillars for a European candidacy

Genoa's bid rests on four pillars: accessibility and inclusion, cultural heritage and creativity, technology for sustainable tourism, and urban sustainability.

- **Accessibility:** the Plan for the Elimination of Architectural Barriers (PEBA), the sea lift at Capo Marina Beach, the FUNT Genova4all project and the Accessible City Pass.
- **Culture and digital innovation:** the Genoa City Pass, offering discounted access to more than 150 museums, libraries and archives; the VisitGenoa app; augmented-reality audio tours on the Loquis podcast platform; and the VOX digital tourist card.
- **Environment:** the SurplUSE Reuse Centres, circular economy policies and a 6.5% annual reduction in pollution in tourist areas.

"Seeing Genoa confirmed among Europe's leaders in innovation tells us we are on the right track," said **Tiziana Beghin, Councillor for Tourism of the City of Genoa**. "Remaining on this shortlist is a strategic goal. It shows that our vision is sound, that our work over the past year has been consistent and, above all, that the principles of our bid have become best practices officially promoted by the European Commission for the benefit of other cities. It is recognition of the real impact of our sustainable and accessible tourism policies on the ground."

Genoa Outdoor: from the caruggi to the ridges

In Genoa the outdoors starts where the city ends, often just a flight of steps or a funicular ride away. From the *caruggi*, the narrow medieval lanes of the historic centre, trails, fortresses and ridges are only minutes away, making nature an integral part of the city experience.

The Zecca–Righi funicular climbs from the city centre to the gateway of the **Parco delle Mura**, where **the longest city walls in Europe** and the **Strada dei Forti**, the road of the forts, have been reopened to the public thanks to the restoration of Genoa's fortifications. From here a network of trails crosses every hill from east to west and connects to the **Alta Via dei Monti Liguri**, the long-distance ridge trail that runs the length of Liguria, with routes for every level: panoramic walks, demanding hikes and trail running, always with the sea in view.

Each hill also has its own **mountain bike** network, largely maintained by sports and volunteer associations, with equipped starting points such as the **bike hub at Forte Begato**. Further afield, the **Beigua UNESCO Global Geopark** rises from the sea to the Apennine ridges, while Genoa's waters are part of the **Pelagos Sanctuary** for Mediterranean marine mammals.

Thanks to its mild Mediterranean climate, Genoa Outdoor is a year-round proposition. Autumn and winter, with clear days and fewer crowds, are among the best seasons to hike and ride the hills above the city: a sustainable way to discover Genoa beyond the summer months.

A greener Genoa: Italy's first city to write depaving into its urban plan

Genoa is the first Italian city to officially introduce **depaving** into its new Urban Plan (PUC): removing concrete, asphalt and sealed surfaces to give soil back to nature, let rainwater soak into the ground again and cool urban heat islands. Soil and urban greenery are now formally recognised as ecosystem infrastructure.

The plan also brings the private sector on board. Developers who choose to allocate their urbanisation charges to depaving works benefit from tax relief, in exchange for maintaining the new green areas for at least ten years. Among the flagship projects, depaving at **Villa Bombrini** in Cornigliano will replace concrete with a new urban park of more than 13 hectares.

Depaving is part of a wider strategy that already includes reuse centres, circular economy policies and a steady reduction in pollution in the areas most visited by tourists: a city that is reshaping its public spaces for residents and visitors alike.

A city with two souls

2026 marks twenty years since the **Strade Nuove and the system of the Palazzi dei Rolli** were inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List: the first great urban planning project of Renaissance Genoa, where noble families hosted popes, kings and ambassadors in their palaces. Alongside the city of art, the historic parks and gardens of **Nervi** and **Pegli** open onto the sea.

Binding culture and nature together is **Italian cooking, inscribed on UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list**, kept alive every day by Genoa's **Historic Shops and Traditional Venues**. With 20 new entries in 2026, the municipal register now counts 120 businesses (75 shops and 45 venues), making Genoa the Italian city with the largest number of officially recognised historic establishments.

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What's on: from November to winter

- **Until 8 November – Ottobre Paganini.** The biennial festival dedicated to Niccolò Paganini, with concerts, masterclasses and many free events across the city, including concerts by the winners of the Paganini Competition and itineraries of the European Paganini Route, a Council of Europe Cultural Route.
- **Autumn 2026 – Twenty years of UNESCO World Heritage.** Under the theme "Sharing is protecting", a photography exhibition at Palazzo Bianco and Palazzo Rosso tells the story of the city's museums through archive images, alongside guided tours of Palazzo Nicolosio Lomellino.
- **Until 25 November – ReC 26** at Teatro della Tosse, a multidisciplinary festival of dance, circus, theatre, live music, visual arts and new media.
- **18–19 November – European Capitals of Tourism 2027** final in Brussels.
- **Until 31 December – World Press Photo Exhibition 2026** at the Loggia degli Abati, Palazzo Ducale.
- **Until 31 December – Le pietre parlano** at the Depositi di Sant'Agostino, offering rare access to the hidden collections of the civic museums.
- **8 December – 6 January – Christmas in Genoa.** Light installations in all nine districts of the city, from Voltri to Nervi, and the return of the **Nativity Passport**, a city-wide trail through churches, oratories and museums celebrating the Genoese nativity-making tradition, a pride of Ligurian craftsmanship since the 18th century.
- **19 December – Confeugo** in Piazza De Ferrari. In a ceremony dating back to the 14th century, the city's highest authorities pay homage to a laurel tree as a good omen for Genoa, followed by historical and cultural performances in the Salone del Maggior Consiglio of Palazzo Ducale.
- **6 January – Epiphany.** The firefighters' Befana abseils down from Palazzo Ducale into Piazza Matteotti, handing out sweets to children.

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