

Female investment power: how Italian women invest today

A research conducted by N26 in Italy traces the behaviours of investing and non-investing women: increasing potential, curiosity towards new forms of investment and the fundamental role of financial education

Main findings:

- 72% of women who already invest say that in 2022 they plan to increase their monthly sum;
- 60% of women between 35 and 44 who have never invested have already evaluated the possibility of starting;
- 40% of those who invest do so to maximize their economic availability and to achieve greater solidity;
- 30% of female investors mainly choose new forms of investment, such as cryptocurrencies;
- Real Estate in second place among the sub-funds indicated by non-investing women for their future investments (29%);
- Appropriate training and more open conversations on financial issues as investment incentives for 51% of non-investing women;
- The professions influence the preferred tools for investment: banking products for the PA, healthcare and medical professions; insurance products for trade, crafts and legal; cryptocurrencies for Tech

From Wall Street to mainstream – investing and growing wealth has long started to be a trending and frequently discussed topic among more and more consumers. However, the latest research from The Mobile Bank N26 shows there's more to do when it comes to finding parity in investment opportunities among men and women.

What obstacles are women (still) facing when investing their money? And, what are their motives and preferences? How much of their monthly income do they invest and how do factors like regional differences, occupation and marital status influence their investment behaviour?

The Mobile Bank N26 commissioned a research conducted in February 2022 on a sample of 1,483 women residing in Italy, analysing the habits and propensities of those who invest regularly and of those who, on the other hand, have never dedicated themselves to this activity, and comparing them with the behaviours and propensity to financial investments of a male sample of the same size (1,492).

Investments for women: this is just the beginning

More than half (56%) of Italian women who have not invested before say they have considered it in the past. When asked about what would drive them to start, they follow similar motivations as Italian women who are already investing: growing their money in the long-term (41%), building financial security for their family or children (40%), and growing

their money quickly (29%). Especially open to investing in the future are women aged 35-34, where 60% have thought about starting.

The highest proportion of women who don't invest say they would most likely start with real estate (29%), followed by cryptocurrencies (26%), and bank products (23%).

In fact, the potential of new investors in Italy appears significant: as many as 72% of those who already invest say that in 2022 they plan to increase their monthly sum. Female investors aged between 35 and 44 are planning to double the amount destined to seize new investment opportunities compared to the past (+ 111%).

The obstacles to investments and the fundamental role of financial education

Both groups, women who already invest and those that are considering starting, name lack of disposable income as the number one obstacle to why they don't invest more and why they haven't started yet (42% and 52% respectively). One third of female investors (33%) also cite some uncertainty about their future financial stability (29%).

For women who are not yet investing, poor knowledge (32%) and a lack of confidence in investment products (15%) represent significant barriers. When asked what would encourage them to start investing, over a quarter of the female sample (28%) put adequate training on the subject first, while 23% want more open and simple conversations about the benefits and risks of 'investment. Two out of five women (40%), in fact, declare that they have no opportunity to discuss the subject with anyone. Another useful aspect, according to women who do not invest, would be the support of professional consultants who could help women who intend to invest (22%).

Although the lack of knowledge is not an obstacle for Italian women who already invest and the overwhelming majority (76%) feel confident in making decisions in this area, just over half (55%) say they are adequately informed about financial instruments. The low level of financial information is particularly visible among the youngest (aged between 18 and 24 years), in fact 81% declare themselves safe, but only 48% feel informed.

Paula Mariani, Director of User Experience at N26, says: “This research clearly demonstrates just how much more opportunity there is for women within the investment landscape. It's great to see investing becoming more a topic among women, as more of them explore ways to grow their wealth. Proactively contributing to this development by facilitating the conversation among women and creating money management and investment products that are more inclusive is an absolute priority for us at N26. For instance, our user research shows that the share of women holding Bitcoins has tripled in the past three years. However, it also shows that the share of men holding Bitcoins is six times as big. There is still a lot to do and we are looking forward to building towards an investment industry that is accessible for everybody.”

Banking products are the most popular financial tool for women

Nearly 2 in 5 women (38%) who invest consider banking products, such as savings accounts, as their preferred financial instrument, followed by insurance products (e.g. life insurance and pensions), preferred by 34% of respondents, and trading of cryptocurrencies (30%).

Long-term savings prevail over sustainability: because women invest

When looking into the motives of Italian women to invest, growing their money over the long-term comes first (49%) – a motivation that also ranks first among investing men in Italy (44%). For most investor women, building financial security for their families and children (40%) and saving for retirement (30%) are also primary reasons behind their investment activities.

While diversification is a buzzword often mentioned in financial jargon, it comes only seventh among factors that are important for women when they invest. Also surprisingly: despite the global attention that's been drawn to the climate crisis in the past year in particular, sustainability does not rank highly in importance for Italian investor women in their investment strategy. Just 22% of women that invest in Italy rank it amongst their top 3 criteria. So, what does top the list? Minimising the risk (38%), value for money (34%) and long-term yields (28%).

The study suggests that the field of profession has an influence on how relevant the women find market trends when investing. For women employed in the entertainment industry, for example, market trends are the most important factor to consider, along with value for money (both 35%). A factor that instead slips to third place (17%) for women who work in the technology sector, behind the minimization of risks (40%) and understanding of the product (29%). The same place also for the interviewees who work in the public administration (29%), who take into consideration market trends only after the minimization of risks (46%) and the quality-price ratio (34%).

To find out more and explore the findings, check out [our page](#).