



## Treasure hunt in your neighbour's backyard (TreasureHunt)

# PR2. HANDBOOK FOR AGRITOURISM

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April 2023

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## Table of contents

Introduction.....	5
1. Agritourism in Sweden – a Case Study .....	11
1.1. General information about Sweden .....	11
1.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Sweden .....	16
1.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organization in the field of Agritourism.....	17
1.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism .....	18
1.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Sweden .....	18
1.6. National and international Agritourism events.....	18
1.7. References .....	19
2. Agritourism in Greece – a Case Study .....	21
2.1. General information about Greece .....	21
2.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Greece .....	34
2.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organization in the field of Agritourism.....	34
2.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism .....	36
2.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Greece.....	37
2.6. National and international Agritourism events.....	40
2.7. Conclusions.....	41
2.8. References.....	41
3. Agritourism in Italy – a Case Study .....	43
3.1. General information about Italy.....	43
3.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Italy .....	46
3.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organisation in the field ofAgritourism .....	48
3.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism.....	50
3.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Italy.....	51
3.6. National and international Agritourism events .....	54
3.7. Conclusions .....	55
3.8. References .....	56
4. Agritourism in Bulgaria – a Case Study.....	58
4.1. General information about Bulgaria.....	58
4.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Bulgaria .....	67
4.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organization in the field of Agritourism.....	67
4.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism .....	69



4.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Bulgaria .....	70
4.6. National and international Agritourism events.....	71
4.7. Conclusions.....	72
5. Agritourism in Spain – a Case Study .....	73
5.1. General information about Spain .....	73
5.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Spain.....	80
5.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organisation in the field of Agritourism.....	81
5.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism in Spain.....	84
5.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Spain .....	86
5.6. National and international Agritourism events.....	87
5.7. Conclusions.....	88

## Introduction

Agricultural tourism (agritourism) is defined as the practice of touring agricultural areas to see farms and often to participate in farm activities<sup>1</sup>. According to another popular definition, agritourism represents “a sustainable on-farm connected, complementary and diversified activity for family conducted working farms with predominating agricultural activities, which are producing for the market to generate additional agricultural income”<sup>2</sup>. However, it is still rather challenging to determine a unique and common terminological definition of agritourism<sup>3,4</sup>. This is because there are several factors that drive choices both for tourists and farmers who decide to spend their holidays on farms and in rural areas. Very often, agritourism, farm holidays, and rural tourism are considered interchangeable synonymous terms. The exigence of a shared definition emerges from the success of agritourism, which is in fact a complex and differentiated phenomenon, characterized by multiple forms of relationships between tourists and the underpinned agricultural activity, widespread worldwide and affected by the socioeconomic characteristics of the different areas in which it developed<sup>5</sup>. Agritourism has also been defined as a complementary and integrated on-farm activity aimed at hosting people on farms by the farmer and their family members as long as the activity remains connected to farming<sup>6</sup>. If the main target of agritourism is the development of a multi-active working farm to attract visitors<sup>7</sup>, then in some cases, hosting people and serving typically traditional rural meals along with rural cultural lessons, in farms or the house of the farmer, can be part of the agricultural or complementary activities. Agritourism, in many European countries, has played a key role in generating tourism opportunities on working farms. For farmers, agritourism is fundamental to increasing profits and diversifying farm activities, thus, stabilizing their income over time<sup>8</sup>. Thus, agritourism represents an important marketing tool for rural areas and farms. Agritourism is also a specific form of social innovation in the primary sector, specifically in rural areas, that can guarantee an adequate sustainable development of local agriculture<sup>9</sup>. Agritourism plays a fundamental

<sup>1</sup> “Agritourism.” Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/agritourism>. Accessed 5 Oct. 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Eurac Research. Outcome Statement 1st World Congress on Agritourism. 2018. Available online: <http://agritourism.eurac.edu> (accessed on 5 Oct. 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Phillip, S., Hunter, C., Blackstock, K. A typology for defining agritourism, *Tourism Management* 2010, 31, 6, 754-758, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.08.001>

<sup>4</sup> Åke Nilsson, P. Staying on farms: An Ideological Background, *Annals of Tourism Research* 2002, 29, 1, 7-24, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(00\)00081-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(00)00081-5)

<sup>5</sup> Broccardo, L., Culasso, F., Truant, E. Unlocking Value Creation Using an Agritourism Business Model. *Sustainability* 2017, 9, 1618.

<sup>6</sup> Sonnino, R. For a ‘Piece of Bread’? Interpreting Sustainable Development through Agritourism in Southern Tuscany. *Sociologia ruralis* 2004, 44, 3, 285-300; <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9523.2004.00276.x>

<sup>7</sup> Barbieri, C. Agritourism research: A perspective article. *Tourism Review – Jubilee Special Edition* 2020, 75(1), 149-152.

<sup>8</sup> Tew, C. and Barbieri, C. The perceived benefits of agritourism: The provider’s perspective. *Tourism Management* 2012, 33(1), 215-224.

<sup>9</sup> Chiodo, E.; Fantini, A.; Dickes, L.; Arogundade, T.; Lamie, R.D.; Assing, L.; Stewart, C.; Salvatore, R. Agritourism in Mountainous Regions—Insights from an International Perspective. *Sustainability* 2019, 11, 3715. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11133715>

role in rural development and economic growth in rural areas despite differences among nations in terms of the socioeconomic and environmental sustainability of agritourism. It has a favourable impact not only on the economic and tourist framework of local communities but also on the aspects of their ecological and social framework<sup>10</sup>.

Agritourism has been a fundamental part of development in many European rural areas, characterized by modest population density, increasing migration, and marginalization. In addition, it provides economic stability to rural territories through increased diversification of farm resources<sup>11</sup>, maintaining the viability of active farms and local communities. At the same time, agritourism has also promoted agricultural resources, local traditions, customs, and culture in the framework of sustainable tourism<sup>12</sup>. In particular, small family-owned farms might contribute substantially to the management of the cultural landscapes, which are deemed as highly valuable for the provision of public goods and ecosystem services in rural regions. Agritourism is an adequate response to the characteristic of idyllic rurality, to satisfy new needs and requirements of agricultural production that is not devoted to the production of commodities but rather oriented to producing environmental and socioeconomic services for rural communities. The high quality of natural resources and place-specific cultural heritage of these regions usually is addressed as the specific uniqueness and attractive elements for agritourism initiatives<sup>13</sup>.

Agritourism plays a key role within the growing fields of agro-food studies<sup>14</sup>, culinary heritage and culinary tourism<sup>15</sup>. It brings the rural culture close to the guest and mediates the farm's own products and the traditional culinary art, i.e. it enables access to authentic rural and agricultural lifestyles in the countryside. Therefore, authentic agritourism may contribute to understanding the needs and requirements of agricultural production and farmers, and the demands of the predominantly urban side. This may prevent or revert the currently ongoing alienation between urban and rural populations. In a time of increased urbanity with rural characteristics disappearing at the same time due to demographic change, agritourism could be an important element in counteracting the geographical and cultural marginalisation of rural areas. Through its multifaceted and target group-oriented features this type of rural

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<sup>10</sup> Calina, A., Calina, J., Tiberiu, I. Research regarding the implementation, development and impact of agritourism on Romania's rural areas between 1990 and 2015, *Environmental Engineering and Management Journal* 2017, available at: <http://eemj.eu/index.php/EEMJ/article/view/3167>

<sup>11</sup> Galluzo, N. A quantitative analysis on Romanian rural areas, agritourism and the impacts of European Union's financial subsidies. *Journal of rural studies* 2021, 82, 458-467; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.01.025>

<sup>12</sup> Streifeneder, T., Dax, T. Agritourism in Europe: Enabling Factors and Current Developments of Sustainable On-Farm Tourism in Rural Areas. *Global Opportunities and Challenges for Rural and Mountain Tourism*, 2020; DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-1302-6.ch003.

<sup>13</sup> Lo M.-C. Mohamed A. A. Chin C.-H. Ramayah T. The Impact of Natural Resources, Cultural Heritage, and Special Events on Tourism Destination Competitiveness: The Moderating Role of Community Support. *International Journal of Business and Society* 2017, 18(S4), 763–774.

<sup>14</sup> Ermann U. Langthaler E. Penker M. Schermer M. (2018). *Agro-food studies. Eine Einführung*. Weimar, Germany: Böhlau Verlag.

<sup>15</sup> Slocum S. L. Curtis K. R. (2018). *Food and agricultural tourism – theory and best practice*. London, UK: Routledge.





tourism enhances customized travels to rural and mountain areas and authentic experiences of places, agriculture and farm life, far away from the big traditional tourist destinations. In addition, the global COVID-19 outbreak has also changed the attitude of tourists towards visiting rather small, usually rural area-based and remote places for their vacation, looking for more social isolation<sup>16,17</sup>. Agritourism is a viable option where people can find peace and calmness; furthermore, they can be or become involved in farm activities, which can reduce stress and frustration.

The importance of agritourism and rural area protection has been underlined by the European Union through dedicated subsidies allocated by the Common Agricultural Policy<sup>18</sup>. They have done so to support rural development in less favoured areas, aiming to reduce rural migration and generate new job opportunities<sup>19</sup>. Agritourism also provides rural communities with the potential to increase their local tax bases and new employment opportunities. Additionally, agritourism provides educational opportunities to the public, helps to preserve agricultural lands, and allows the establishment of new business enterprises.

While agritourism may create new potential revenue streams, it also presents new challenges for farmers and landowners. The enormous demand for this type of tourism has led some providers to lure tourists with similar offers that have little or nothing to do with an authentic farm holiday. So, on the one hand, activities aimed at protecting those who want to spend a holiday on a farm that is still farmed and which offers an insight into the world of agriculture and work, are required at local, regional, national, and European levels. On the other hand, such activities would also defend the interests of providers who offer agritourism services. A clear distinction between different tourism types would allow to promote the assets of agritourism more specifically and report the development of agritourism more convincingly through appropriate monitoring schemes. Therefore, agritourism should be distinguished from other tourist offers in rural areas, which do not fulfil these achievements and characteristics.

Sustainable tourism, i.e. ecotourism, consists of making simple choices to reduce its negative impact on a given destination. If the devastating COVID-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that the concept of sustainable 'green' travel needs to be seriously considered. With its increasing popularity, another question occurs - how can one practice 'green' travelling? 'Green' travel, i.e. 'eco-friendly' or 'environmentally conscious' travel is a broad term used to encompass ecotourism and sustainable, responsible travel practices, which generally strive to

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<sup>16</sup> Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. Pandemics, Tourism and Global Change: A Rapid Assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 2021, 29(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>.

<sup>17</sup> Li, Z., Zhang, S., Liu, X., Kozak, M., & Wen, J. Seeing the invisible hand: Underlying effects of COVID-19 on tourists' behavioral patterns. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 2020, 18, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100502>.

<sup>18</sup> Evaluation of Agricultural Policy Reforms in the European Union, available online at: <https://www.oecd.org/eu/evaluationofagriculturalpolicyreformsintheeuropeanunion.htm>

<sup>19</sup> EC (The Council of the European Union). (2006). Council Decision No. 144 on community strategic guidelines for rural development. *Official Journal of the European Communities* (L 55/20).

benefit the environment and the social and economic well being of the local people. ‘Green’ travelling can be considered as an individual's responsibility to travel by giving back to nature and the local community of the target destination, ensuring that present needs are met without compromising on future generations. ‘Green’ travelling is the effective management of resources in such a way that economic needs are fulfilled without disturbing a fine ecological balance. It is to minimize the harmful impacts of tourism to the point that the environment, the travel industry, tourists, and native communities alike can mutually benefit without causing friction. ‘Green’ travel keeps the spirit of adventure alive by promoting authentic experiences that protect natural resources and conserve heritage and culture<sup>20</sup>.

When travelling, the first issue to consider is the right choice of transportation. Although flying is usually the fastest and the cheapest option, it represents an unsustainable way of travelling. To travel green, the first thing you can do is to avoid domestic flights in the first place. If you are travelling within Europe, it is best to use the train to transport. If you do not have such an option or you are travelling overseas, try to use direct flights as the takeoffs and landings create most of an airplane’s carbon emissions. You can also use airlines that offer carbon offset programs for a greener journey. In terms of getting around once you are at your target destination, try to visit places by using an electric car, a bicycle, a scooter, or even better – on foot, as far as applicable.

In addition to the right means of transportation, there are some other useful tips that will help you to become a ‘green’, sustainable traveller. Some of the most important ones are listed below<sup>21</sup>.

- **Travel local** - if a holiday is what you need, try opting for nearby destinations and staying local. Surprise yourself by (re)discovering the close by attractions rather than visiting mass tourist attractions overseas. This way, you save time, money, and avoid air travel, which helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Eat and shop local** - avoid eating at multinational chain restaurants or shopping in large supermarkets and brand stores. Instead, choose small businesses and vendors to help stimulate the local economy. This way, you are helping keep people employed and preventing the transportation of goods across far distances.
- **Try to find a ‘green’ accommodation** - with a little research, you can find accommodations that give back to local people and the planet, i.e. choose sustainable hotels that employ green practices. To ensure this, you may need to find answers to questions like if the hotel is environmentally certified, or if they have a sustainability report, or what their waste management protocol and plastic policy looks like, or if their products and menus are locally sourced, etc. Websites such as EcoBnb<sup>22</sup> and Green Pearls<sup>23</sup> allow individuals to list accommodation variants according to how sustainable they are. Before leaving your accommodation, do not forget to take the

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<sup>20</sup> Erasmus Student Network, <https://esn.org/green-travel-perspective> (accessed on 5 Oct. 2022).

<sup>21</sup> How to become a green traveller, <https://www.headout.com/blog/sustainable-green-responsible-traveler/> (accessed on 5 Oct. 2022).

<sup>22</sup> EcoBnb, <https://ecobnb.com/> (accessed on 5 Oct. 2022).

<sup>23</sup> Green Pearls, <https://www.greenpearls.com/> (accessed on 5 Oct. 2022).



leftover products to use later as they will be thrown away after you leave your accommodation.

- **Travel 'light'** - by packing light, you ensure that the transportation vehicle of your choice is also light, which in turn reduces fuel consumption. Especially when you are paying for extra luggage on flights, you are directly contributing to an increase in fuel consumption and hence a significant increase in your carbon footprint.
- **Indulge in 'slow travel'** - slow travel is a smart and responsible way to travel. Slow travel is a mindset that rejects traditional ideas of tourism and encourages you to soak in your environments and keep yourself open to new experiences<sup>24</sup>. **Slow travel is about the journey, not just the destination**<sup>25</sup>. Simply embrace the local culture and community, immerse yourself entirely in the destination, and experience a deeper connection with your surroundings.
- **Reduce, reuse, and recycle** - reusing your towels instead of what the hotel provides, carrying a refillable water bottle, reducing food, water, and product consumption, and looking out for recyclable symbols are some other ways to minimize the negative impact of your trip.
- **Save electricity & water** - always switch off lights, air-conditioning, ceiling fans, and charging ports before leaving your room. Reduce your energy consumption, conserve water, and abandon baths for quick showers. Many hotels today use advanced punching mechanisms that automatically turn the electricity on or off with a card and a slot.
- **Say no to plastics** - by avoiding single-use plastics, you can prevent yourself from generating excessive waste and causing pollution. Say no to plastic bags, carry your own cloth bags, use natural and plastic-free products, and bring your own toiletries rather than using pre-packaged ones.
- **Go paperless** - a lot of tourist attractions accept mobile tickets. This prevents travellers from printing boarding passes, hotel reservations, and entry tickets. By going paperless, you not only help the environment but also avoid losing tickets and enjoy easy access to them at the same time.
- **Be respectful** – 'green' travel is not only about your impact on the environment, but also your consideration of local communities, customs, and culture. It is good to be mindful of the practices of the places you visit so that you do not offend the locals in any way. Mostly, being a responsible traveller is being respectful of your surroundings and enriching the place that enriches you.

Green travel is all about making eco-conscious choices while travelling in order to ensure you minimize your impact on the environment. It is about understanding, respecting, and supporting cultures and communities while travelling. Nowadays, it is easier to 'green' travel as it is supported by various organizations, agencies, local communities and companies, and as a result, the sustainable travelling market is growing rapidly to face our environmental

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<sup>24</sup> The art of slow travel, <http://www.theartofslowtravel.com/what-is-slow-travel/> (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022).

<sup>25</sup> The Travel Word, <https://www.thetravelword.com/2012/02/07/what-is-slow-travel-heres-what-we-think/> (accessed on Oct. 6 2022).

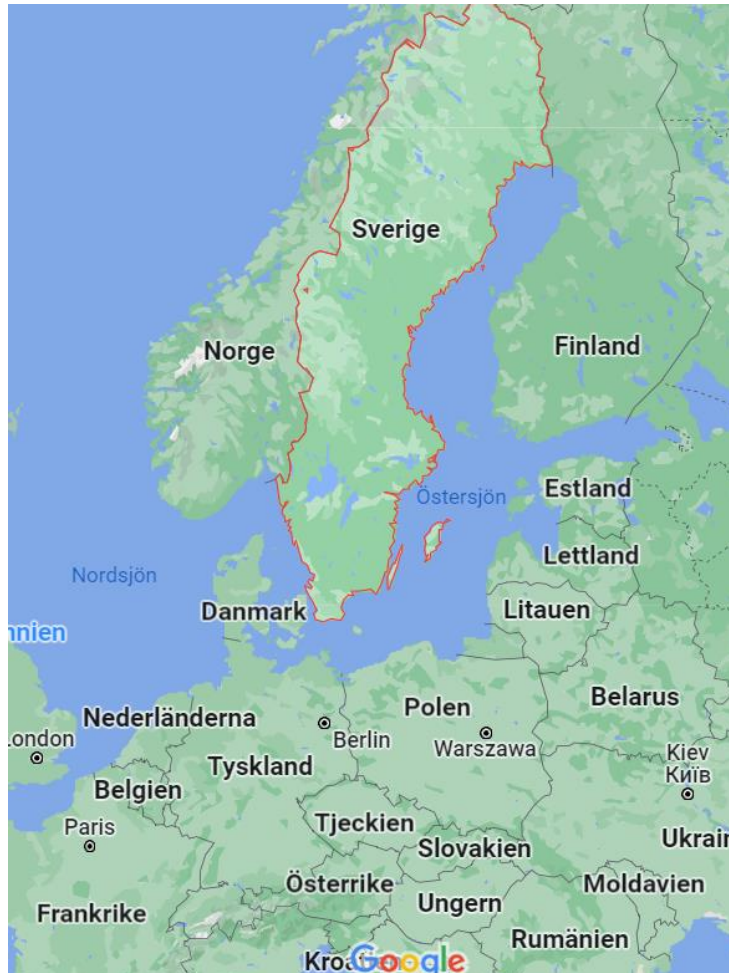


problems. Individuals can practice 'green' travel by changing small habits while enjoying the travelling experience and being mindful of sustainability.

# 1. Agritourism in Sweden – a Case Study

## 1.1. General information about Sweden

26



QR-code for Sweden in Google Maps

**Capital:** Stockholm.

**Time zone:** CET

### Climate

There are often large temperature differences between North and South Sweden. Winter temp north: 0-minus 25C Winter temp south: +10 - minus 5 °C. Summer temp: 10-22 in North, 15-27 °C in South Sweden.<sup>27</sup>

### Travel and transport

Good road and train transport throughout the country, but with varied standard on roads. Trains can be a little trickier to travel in east-west directions, but generally better in north-south directions. To book train tickets, visit [sj.se](http://sj.se), where tickets generally can be booked to other train companies as well. If you plan to visit rural areas, a car is the better option. Car rental is available, including camper rentals or recreational vehicles (RVs).

### Accommodation

<sup>26</sup> Google maps, "Sweden", 2022-07-11

<sup>27</sup> Smhi.se, 2022-07-11



The last couple of years, opportunities for overnight stay have increased in varied ways.<sup>28</sup> Glamping is growing, hostels and hikers' homes (Vandrarhem) are still around, and camping sites are popular, especially in summer. And not to miss, if you are an outdoor person, you can put up your tent in nature for free, for one night in one spot, as long as you are not disturbing anyone.<sup>29</sup>

### Language

Swedish, but you can get by by speaking English in Sweden. German comes next, preferably in south Sweden, which has many German tourists. Sweden also has official minority languages, for example Sami or Finnish.<sup>30</sup> Did you know about the indigenous people in northern Sweden, the Samis?

### Religion

Mostly Lutheran, although Sweden is one of the most secular countries in the world.<sup>31</sup> Christianity can be prominent in some regions, for example Småland<sup>32</sup>.

### Currency

Sweden is not part of the European Monetary Union (EMU). The Swedish kronor (SEK) as the official currency of the country. 1 SEK is equal to approx. 0,1 EUR (autumn 2022).

### Social pattern and culture

This is in the eye of the beholder and one may be careful with generalisations, but Swedes may be considered reserved, but friendly. Weather and sports may be topics for talks!

On public holidays Swedes often eat herring (Christmas, Easter). That is also the case when celebrating midsummer. Midsummer is a bigger event than the National Day (6th of June). Midsummer-eve (late June) is always a Friday and although not a public holiday most people have a day off anyway, to celebrate the light and long summer days, and nights. Midsummer day is a public holiday. In North Sweden there is midnight sun at this time of year. If you have the chance, visit a public celebration of "*Midsommarafton*" that is a cultural marker for Sweden. This kind of celebrations are very common throughout the country, but maybe most traditional in the region of Dalarna.

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<sup>28</sup> [Visitsweden.se](https://visitsweden.se), 2022-07-10

<sup>29</sup> [Naturvardsverket.se](https://naturvardsverket.se), 2022-07-12

<sup>30</sup> [Informationsverige.se](https://informationsverige.se), 2022-07-08

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.so-rummet.se/kategorier/religion/sekularisering-och-religionskritik/sekularisering#>

<sup>32</sup> [sweden.se/life/society/religion-in-sweden](https://sweden.se/life/society/religion-in-sweden)



Celebrating Lucia, the 13th of December is another "odd celebration" of light, when the darkness is most profound. Maybe you have seen it when Lucia, as the tradition states, wakes the Nobel price winner of literature up every year, during the Nobel price celebrations in Stockholm, when scientists are awarded for steps benefitting the human kind.

## Sweden Public Holidays 2022

This page contains a national calendar of all 2022 public holidays. These dates may be modified as official changes are announced, so please check back regularly for updates.

Date	Day	Holiday
1 Jan	Sat	New Year's Day
6 Jan	Thu	Epiphany
15 Apr	Fri	Good Friday
17 Apr	Sun	Easter Sunday
18 Apr	Mon	Easter Monday
1 May	Sun	May Day
26 May	Thu	Ascension Day
5 Jun	Sun	Whit Sunday
6 Jun	Mon	National Day
25 Jun	Sat	Midsummer Day
5 Nov	Sat	All Saints' Day
25 Dec	Sun	Christmas Day
26 Dec	Mon	2nd Day of Christmas

## Gender issues

Sweden is considered to be fairly equal when it comes to gender equality. Evidence for that is the political area, where there are as many women as men in the parliament, and the prime minister is a woman (summer 2022). In business it is not quite as good, with still many boards run by men and executive chiefs are most often men.<sup>34</sup>

## Alcohol and tobacco

No smoking in restaurants and cafes since 2005<sup>35</sup>.

Alcohol can be purchased in shops called "*Systembolaget*", which is the state's monopoly.

"*Snus*", tobacco that is put up behind the lip, are fairly popular. It contains a lot of nicotine, and is therefore highly addictive and not healthy.<sup>36</sup>

## General history and governing

Sweden is a monarchy, although the King has only ceremonial power. Sweden is a representative democracy that has stayed out of wars for more than 200 years. The parliament called "*Riksdagen*" contains currently 8 parties, and the Prime minister runs the government, currently Mrs Andersson from the Social democrats (summer 2022). Further, the regions and municipalities have relatively many tasks to fulfill such as health care (regions), schools and elderly care (municipalities). Notable is that the older version of regions, landscapes, are still used in some fields. Landscapes is commonly used in tourist marketing, for example "*Visitsmåland*", "*Härliga Härjedalen*", etc. Often is it the same as region, but it can sometimes differ.

## Civic laws

There are speed limits on every road.

Littering is a legal offence.

Right to public access in most of Swedish nature, which is very appreciated by domestic people and visitors. You are allowed to pick berries and mushrooms in nature without permission. You are free to hike as long as you avoid private plots. It also holds obligations to behave accordingly. Note that in National parks and reserves there can be regulations. Read more about "*Allemansrätten*" on Swedish Environmental Protection Agency's website: [Naturvardsverket.se](https://naturvardsverket.se)<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Regeringen.se, 2021 (Swedish government)

<sup>35</sup> Folkhalsomyndigheten.se, 2022

<sup>36</sup> Folkhalsomyndigheten.se, 2022

<sup>37</sup> Naturvardsverket.se, 2022





### **Health and security aspects**

Tap water is drinkable everywhere in Sweden.

Healthcare system is well developed, although there can be long distances to healthcare facilities. If you visit mountain areas, make sure to have access to information on how to contact rescuers before hiking, etc. Generally it is the emergency number 112 who connects to the mountain rescue team.<sup>38</sup>

### **Sustainability**

Swedes are often considered to be good in ecological sustainability. Maybe it is true with well developed recycling systems and a lot of energy produced from water, sun and wind. Maybe not so good when it comes to consumption, where people and companies consume a lot more than average, resulting in big carbon dioxide emissions from consumption.

Travelling by train domestically in Sweden is a very good choice, since the power for most trains comes from renewable resources.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Sosalarm.se

<sup>39</sup> Sj.se, 2022. (Swedish State railroad company)

## 1.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Sweden



Agritourism is a concept not as well known in other European countries as, for example, in Italy.

Sweden has the concept *”Bo på Lantgård”* (Stay at Farm). This concept has prerequisites like active, living agriculture at the farm, personal hosting, approved standard of accommodations and a serious business. This organisation is fairly small with approximately 100 farms connected<sup>40</sup>. They are characterized as small businesses.

For example, the regional identity is more deeply rooted in countries with strong tradition in tourism, like Italy or Spain, Germany and France. Sweden’s strength can be described as free from burdensome traditions; this provides greater flexibility and opens up the field for innovation. The diverse Swedish food traditions provide opportunities to establish many *”Food Regions”*<sup>41</sup>. That is the case in the Swedish Region Halland, where many new farm shops and restaurants are located; in the past year, 2 (!) restaurants were each awarded a Michelin Guide star, the first two ever in this region. This achievement, together with the many local farm shops and microbreweries, will increase the reasons for travelling to this region.

To widen the concept, companies with nature-based tourism can be added, which has similarities to agritourism. Nature-based tourism is when nature is the reason for travel. The tourism research institute proposes the broader definition *”Nature tourism includes activities performed when people are in nature and outside their own surroundings”*. A closely related

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.bopalantgard.se/anpassat-koncept-efter-ett-annorlunda-ar/>

<sup>41</sup> Ett land att besöka En samlad politik för hållbar turism och växande besöksnäring, SOU 2017:95

concept is ecotourism that is defined as "responsible travels that contribute to the protection of natural environment and to well-being of the local population".

The Nordic term "*Friluftsliv*", or outdoor recreation/outdoor life is defined as "staying outdoors in the natural and cultural landscape for well-being and nature experiences without competitive elements." Friluftsliv can be organised or not organised.

Fishing, hunting and wildlife-tourism is another growing branch of tourism<sup>42</sup>. Outdoor activities of a more consuming character are also included.

*"Naturturismföretagen"* (Nature-based tourist companies)

This organisation has 350 member businesses and is Sweden's way of organising companies with nature-based tourism or ecotourism as their business-model. However, the connection to active farming is limited. But maybe more important, the connection between small-scale ecotourism, local communities and rural development and people's abilities to make a living and good life, is clear and concise<sup>43</sup>.

Nature-based, small-scale tourism businesses need access to protected nature areas, nature preserves and National Parks since Sweden's Right of public access most often does **not include businesses**. Agreements can be made with private landowners, of course. So, it is slightly different to the concept of agritourism, in which access to farmland is a business prerequisite.

### 1.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organization in the field of Agritourism

Starting agritourism may be a simple process, but can be complicated as well, depending on what type of function you are planning. In many cases, entrepreneurs find that their business is surrounded by many rules. Swedish authorities' regulations for businesses are summarised at [verksamt.se](https://verksamt.se)<sup>44</sup>.

Bed & Breakfast is one common business often combined with agriculture, forestry or nature-based tourism, and it is similar to the agritourism concept.

Examples of permits you may need:

- Building permit (because of changed use);
- Room with food handler's permit;
- If applicable, permit to serve alcohol.

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<sup>42</sup> Ett land att besöka En samlad politik för hållbar turism och växande besöksnäring, SOU 2017:95

<sup>43</sup> <https://naturturismforetagen.se/val-2022-camilla-reflekterar-och-analyserar/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.verksamt.se/alla-e-tjanster/din-checklista>

Selling alcohol products from a farm is not allowed, that should be done through the State monopoly *Systembolaget*. (If you have a restaurant, you can serve it or try it on site).

Organizations: Bo på Lantgård (Farmstay), Naturturismföretagen (Nature-based tourism association), LRF (Farmers association).

## 1.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism

National program for rural development (*Landsbygdsprogrammet*) available through *Tillväxtverket*, Swedish authority for Growth. EU-financed projects for Rural Development (Leader) are available through Leader-method. Both are based on EU strategies and goals.

## 1.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Sweden

Stora Segerstad plans to start an education at upper secondary level called "*Nature-based tourism*". The new training programme is planned to start in 2023 and marketing is now ongoing.

The natural resources schools in Sweden report that students graduating from nature-based tourism programmes are attractive on the labour market and can easily get a job. This is evidence that these programmes are accurate in relation to the professional areas they are aimed at.

Educational programs exist both at the High School and People (Open) University levels. The outcome of these educational programmes is trained individuals, like Guides, Mountain Guides and *Friluftsliv* (life in the outdoors), often with practical orientation focusing on experience of nature and skills.

At the University level, there is a broad spectrum of programmes within hospitality, service management, and tourism science. It seems to be the case that Swedish students are mostly interested in education programmes at a basic academic level. Several of the Swedish Universities are offering programmes at an advanced level, but these are mostly in demand by international students. It is not totally clear why advanced tourism programs attract more international students, but one proposed explanation is that the field of tourism has a higher value in other countries, due to a larger tourism industry in those countries.

## 1.6. National and international Agritourism events

<https://turistmassan.se/turista-hos/18496/bo-pa-lantgard-sverige> - A fair focused on travels in general but has some element of agritourism.

<https://naturturismforetagen.se/forum-for-naturturism/>

*Forum för naturturism* is an annual conference for nature-based and eco-tourism businesses.  
(Hybrid, digital or on-site)

<https://www.landsbygdsnatverket.se/vadarlandsbygdsnatverket.4.2e7051841506a4adf406eb9.html>

Network of organisations, associations and authorities with focus on improving quality in Rural program measures concerning rural development, promoting innovations and so forth. Organises conferences occasionally.

## 1.7. References

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Swedish government gender equality information

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Statens järnvägar (Swedish State railroads)

<https://www.sj.se/>, 2022-07-11

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Visit Sweden (Swedish government marketing company), 2022.

<https://visitsweden.se/upplevelseguide/results>, 2022-07-11

Visit Småland, Regional marketing company, 2022

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## 2. Agritourism in Greece – a Case Study

The purpose of this Case Study is to provide general information about the status of agritourism in Greece, as well as to serve as a treasure chest of information on EU-funding resources and agritourism higher education and vocational training in Greece. Therefore, this is a reference document with a large number of links and short texts that perhaps will not provide direct answers, but will hopefully assist aspiring agritourism entrepreneurs in their business endeavours by providing the starting point(s) for finding the answers.

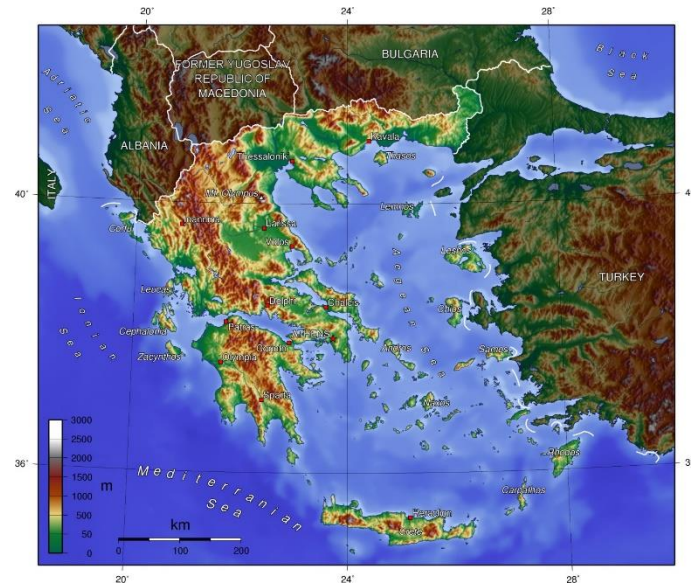


Location of Greece

### 2.1. General information about Greece

#### Geography

Greece is located at the Southeast end of the EU. The only other EU country located farther to the South and East is Cyprus.



*Topographic map of Greece*

Greece together with Spain, Italy, Cyprus and Malta make the group of countries known as the European South or Mediterranean countries.

Mainland Greece is located at the tip of the Balkan Peninsula in a North to South direction, with a Northern region running East-to-West. To the North, Greece shares borders with Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Albania, and to the East with Turkey.

The country also has [2000-6000 islands](#) depending on the definition and the mapping resolution.

Between the West coast of Greece and the East Coast of Italy, there is the Ionian Sea. Between the East coast of the mainland and the West coast of Turkey there is the Aegean Sea.

Greece is the 3rd most mountainous country of Europe after Norway and Albania, with mountains and mountainous regions covering 80% of its surface area<sup>45</sup>. The highest mountain of Greece is Mt. Olympus, the home of the ancient Greek Gods, with its highest peak Pantheon at an elevation of 2918 m.

The mountainous terrain creates the opportunity for wind power generation, but leaves very little land to be used for agriculture. Even the urban landscapes are made of steep hills, and thus leave no margin for using bicycles for transportation, in contrast to some other European countries.

### Surface area

132.000 sq km.

<sup>45</sup> <https://realonomics.net/what-is-the-most-mountainous-country-in-europe/>

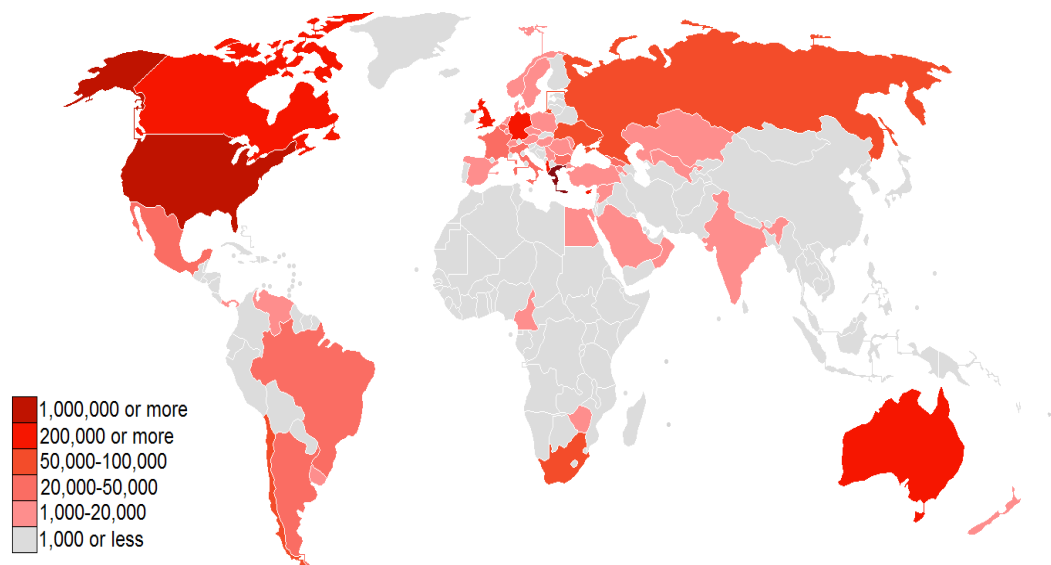
Roughly 29% the area of Sweden, about 20% bigger than Bulgaria, 43% the area of Italy and 25% the area of Spain.

Interestingly, [no part of Greece is more than 150 kilometres away from the ocean](#).

## Population

About 10 million in Greece, and another 10 million Greeks of diaspora.

[Greece receives about 30 million tourists per year](#); this is three times Greece's native population size, but equal to the number of tourists in Venice alone.



*Countries with the highest Greek diaspora communities.*

Greece faces a serious demographic problem. According to recent accounts, over the next 20 years the Greek population is expected to decline by as much as 24% and the GDP to decrease by 30% or more as a result of a declining number of births, the 12-year long financial crisis that started in 2009, and the 500,000 and by more recent accounts, close to 1,000,000 or 10% of the Greek population– working age people that migrated to other places, seeking better economic prospects.

## Capital

Athens, pop. about 5 million.

## Official language(s)

Greek<sup>46</sup>. [One of the oldest languages still in use](#).

The alphabet of the Greek language is Greek; many letters have been transferred directly to the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, and from there to many other Western and Eastern European

<sup>46</sup> [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Portal:Greek\\_language\\_and\\_literature](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Portal:Greek_language_and_literature) – The Wikipedia portal provides good information about the history of the Greek language and classic literature.

languages. The Greek alphabet consists of 24 (the ancient Greek one by 27) letters, perhaps the fewest of any other Western language. But these letters were more than enough to generate about 5.000.000 words making Greek one of the richest languages in the world in terms of number of words.

### Currency

Since 2001, the Euro. For thousands of years before that, the drachma (*δραχμή*), one of the earliest coins in the world<sup>47</sup>.

### Time zone and time culture

GMT +2.

### Climate

The climate of Greece is classified as Mediterranean climate with mild and wet winters and warm and dry summers. The mean average annual temperature ranges between 8 and 20 °C with peak values in July-August and lowest values in February-March. Average annual rainfall varies between 50-120 cm in the North to 40-80 cm in the South<sup>48</sup>, with virtually zero rainfall in June-August in the South. The mild weather conditions in combination with the local microenvironments by both the mainland and the islands are believed to be responsible for the great diversity of Greek flora<sup>49,50</sup>, which comprises about 6000 species of plants, many of which are endemic in Greece.

For detailed information and comprehensive weather data, visit the interactive 1971-2000 Climatic Atlas of the Hellenic Meteorological Service<sup>51</sup>. For comparative data with many other cities around the world, visit the [ClimateCharts.net](https://climatecharts.net) website of the Technische Univesistaet Dresden.

With an average of 250 sunny days or 3000 hours of sunshine per year [Greece is one of the sunniest places in the world](#). Some islands receive full sunshine 300 days per year. Therefore, for those travelling to Greece, sunglasses, a heavy sunscreen cream and a hat are highly recommended all year round.

The high solar energy received results in high photovoltaic power generation potential. Every house in Greece has its own rooftop PV panels, which provide sufficient hot water for shower and household usage throughout 90% of the year. A few houses have come off-grid by installing PV electrical power storage; high installation and maintenance costs have prevented the widespread use of home PV power systems.

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47 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/drachma>

48 <https://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Europe/Greece-CLIMATE.html>

49 <https://www.greeka.com/about/nature/flora/>

50 <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Floristic-Diversity-of-the-Greek-Flora-as-by-of-Panitsa-Tzanoudakis/47e4d4f8832081844f6b1672cc59d6b41bbecfed>

51 <http://climatlas.hnms.gr/sdi/?lang=EN>

The mild and dry climate combined with the clear sky conditions in most places and most of the year, plus the lack of industrial or urban pollution, make Greece an ideal destination for stargazing tourism.

[Greece is also a paradise of wildlife](#). In addition to many species of plants, the country hosts about 240 bird species, making it a prime destination for bird watching. Hundreds of bird species with populations in the hundreds of thousands migrate through Greece in the winter months.

### Travel and transport

Taking into consideration its mountainous terrain and islands spread across the Aegean and Ionian Seas, Greece has an extensive network of paved roads connecting cities, towns and villages. There are three main arteries crossing the country: 1) the East Coast Highway running North to South and connecting Athens to Thessaloniki and the Greek-Bulgarian borders, 2) the West Coast Highway running also North to South and connecting Patras to Ioannina and Igoumenitsa and the Greek-Albanian borders, and 3) the Egnatia Highway running East to West on the North and connecting Ioannina and Alexandroupolis and the Greek-Turkish borders.



Road network of Greece

All highways of the National Highways Network are toll roads. Estimated passenger car tolls: about 1 EUR per 10 km travel. An international driver's license is required for tourists driving in Greece.

Daily boat/ferry trips to all islands throughout the year; multiple departures to and from most of the islands every day in the summer. Multiple daily ferry departures to the most popular (tourist) islands. The close proximity of the East Aegean Sea Greek islands and the Turkish coast has become the East Mediterranean Route<sup>52</sup> used by migrants to illegally cross the borders and enter Greece and the EU.

Greece is accessible by train from other EU countries; due to the remote location of the country, however, train travel takes a long time. Currently, cars and trucks from Greece to Italy cross the Ionian Sea by ferry and travel on the Italian autostradas Northbound to central EU destinations, or Southbound to South Italy. Visitors from other central EU countries travelling to Greece by car take the opposite route.

The [worst train accident in recent Greek history](#) happened on 28 February 2023. A Southbound freight train collided heads on with a Northbound passenger train carrying 350 people, near Tempi, shortly after leaving the town of Larissa in northern Greece, killing at least 57 people and injuring dozens of others, mostly students returning to Thessaloniki, after a short holiday in preparation for the Greek Orthodox Easter.

The railroad workers Union had repeatedly warned the government by public statements about the unsafe conditions of the railroad network, but the government “disregarded” these warnings. One month before the accident, Greece had also been referred to the EU Court of Justice for failure to meet the Single European Railway Area Directive requirements, regarding its obligations for project transparency and the use of Community funds.

Government officials claimed that the austerity measures imposed on Greece by the 2008-2009 bailout programs have led to failure to modernise the country’s railroad network. However, Greece has received enormous amounts of money by the EU to modernise its railway network without success.

Because tourism is one of the two main revenue sources of Greece, the country has an extensive network of about 60 airports. In addition to the airports on the mainland, almost every major tourist destination island, like Crete, Rhodes, Kos, Corfu, Mykonos, Kefalonia, Lesbos, Lemnos, Samos, Zakynthos, Santorini and Skiathos have international airports, i.e. airports capable of serving international regular airline or charter flights with medium size airplanes. Other islands, like Paros, Chios, Kalymnos, Naxos, Astypalaia, etc have national airports, whereas other places, like Thessaloniki, Patras/Araxos, Rhodes, Larissa, etc have combined military and civilian airports.

Fourteen international airports at Greek tourist destinations are [currently owned and operated by Fraport AG](#), the German State airport handling company, on a 40-year concession as collateral for German funds transferred to Greece for its 2010 bailout program.

An interesting recent development is the connection of islands or coastal towns not having access to an airport to Athens by seaplanes.

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<sup>52</sup> <https://frontex.europa.eu/we-know/migratory-routes/eastern-mediterranean-route/>



## Emergency numbers in Greece

### Toll-free numbers

- Hellenic Police Emergency Call Center: 100
- Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP): 112
- Hellenic Fire Brigade: 199
- Medical Emergency Call Center: 166
- Hellenic Coast Guard: 108

## National Highway Network Emergency Call Numbers

(Phone charge applies)

HIGHWAY NAME	Call #
● Attica Highway (East Coast)	1024*
● Aegean Highway (East Coast)	1075*
● Moreas Highway (Korinthos – Tripoli – Kalamata)	1025*
● Nea Odos (East Coast)	1075*
● Olympia Highway (Elefsina – Korinthos – Patras)	1025*
● Egnatia Highway (East-West Highway in the North)	1077*
● Rion-Antirion Bridge	26340-39010 & 39011

\* Toll road.

## Accommodation

Greece has over 10,000 hotel units, with about 450,000 rooms and 880,000 beds, and 300 camping facilities with 1100 auxiliary buildings and about 25,000 places (ITEP 2022, survey for the Hotel Chamber of Greece).

52% of the hotels are on the islands, 79% of the hotels have up to 50 rooms, 61% of the hotels are seasonally operated, 32% are operated as a personal enterprise and only 6% are franchise.

41% are family hotels (1-20 rooms), 38% are small hotels (21-50 rooms, 12.5% are medium-size hotels (51-100 rooms) and 8.5% are big hotels (more than 101 rooms).

## Religion

Greek Orthodox.

Over 93% of Greeks are Christian Orthodox. Other religious minorities include Catholics (1%), Muslims (2%), and other Christians, including Armenians, Coptic, Russian Orthodox, etc. In the 1900s, there was a sizable Greek-speaking Jewish community in Thessaloniki, which was wiped out during the German Occupation of Greece and the Holocaust.

Proselytizing/Conversion/Preaching in open spaces is not allowed in Greece.

Greece officially considers religious tourism as a main type of alternative tourism and a source of considerable national income.

## Greek social pattern and culture

### Greek Society

One of the strongest ties in Greek society is the family.

We can say that the family is an important foundation of Greek society, supporting the individual economically and emotionally. Greek families have been larger in recent decades because people tended to have more children and grandparents also lived in the same household or near the family nucleus.

Although the fertility rate of the Greek family has decreased, the relationships within the family are still very close and strong. The social life of most Greeks is closely linked to their relatives, and the extended family plays an important role in people's lives.<sup>53</sup>

In the 1980s, important changes were introduced in Greek family law, which mainly included civil marriage in line with religious marriage, which is a respected convention in Greek society.<sup>54</sup>

### **Greek Cultural life**

[There are more than 4000 traditional dances in Greece.](#)

Greece has a variety of cultural customs and culture in general. Some of them are mentioned here, related to society and cultural life (festivals, gastronomy) and also the most important things about art.

In Greece there are many festivals connected with religion. During these festivals, many people return to their home villages to celebrate these traditional festivals with their families, go to church, eat homemade food - usually meat - and dance folklore dances. The most important example is the Orthodox Easter, but there are also numerous other festivals and celebrations throughout Greece, on the mainland and on the islands.<sup>55</sup>

### **Gastronomy**

[Greece is the third largest producer of olives in the world.](#) With 120 million olive trees and 2.2 million tonnes of olives produced every year, Greece ranks 3rd largest olive producer in the world behind Spain and Italy.

Another thing connected with cultural life is food. Traditional, healthy Greek cuisine is based on olive oil, olives and olive products, dairy products and especially cheese, bread, vegetables and fruit, and seafood. Meat was usually only served on special occasions, such as Easter, Christmas or special celebrations and festivals.

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53 <https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/greek-culture/greek-culture-family>

54 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Daily-life-and-social-customs>

55 <https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Daily-life-and-social-customs>



*Greek coffee. Offered as a warm-up, welcome icebreaker and enjoyed anytime. A prime tool for socialising with guests or the locals. Can have it medium, sweet or straight (σκέτος)*

In addition, many Greek dishes reflect different historical periods or other influences. For example, the food in Thessaloniki is still strongly influenced by the Ottomans and some sweets, such as baklava, Greek coffee, etc, also reflect the centuries of Turkish rule.

### **Cultural heritage and art**

It is well known that Greece has an extensive cultural heritage and also artistic life with contributions to literature, music, theatre, architecture and Greek ancient art in general.

It is worth noting that two Greek poets have received the Nobel Prize for Literature: Georgios Seferis in 1963 and Odysseus Elytis in 1979. The Cretan Nikos Kazantzakis is the best-known novelist outside Greece, especially after the film adaptation of his novel Zorba the Greek.

There are also many other Greeks, composers, painters and sculptors, actors and film directors, etc., who have an international reputation.

The most significant of all, however, is the influence that ancient Greek art (architecture, painting, pottery, etc.) and Greek mythology have had and continue to have on Western art and literature.<sup>56</sup>

### **Gender issues**

<sup>56</sup>

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Greece/Daily-life-and-social-customs>

Gender issues are the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs<sup>57</sup> and Law 4604/2019 on Substantial Gender Equality<sup>58</sup> (in Greek) and implemented by circular 1/2020<sup>59</sup> (in Greek).

According to the European Institute of Gender Equality<sup>60</sup> (EIGE), in 2021, with 52.5 out of 100 points, Greece ranks a disappointing 27th in the EU on the Gender Equality Index. Its score is 15.5 points below the EU's score. Since 2010, Greece's score has increased by 3.9 points. Since 2018, Greece's score has increased by 0.3 points, mainly driven by improvements in the domain of money. However, Greece's ranking has remained the same since 2010.

The EIGE findings probably reflect how Greece still clings to its traditional, patriarchal roots<sup>61</sup>. However, it is highly likely that the EIGE indices, like so many other educational and social tests and surveys<sup>62</sup>, are culturally biased and thus the findings discriminatory and unacceptable. Presently, many places in Greece, such as Crete, maintain a matriarchal society and, as it is well known, in every Greek family the husband has the first word, and the wife has the final one.

Equal rights should not be investigated between men and women, but for women employees between different employers. There are huge inequalities between public and private employers; for example, women civil employees take full advantage of the law for maternity leave, whereas women employees of the private sector are at an obvious disadvantage and they have to limit their maternity leave to about 1/4 of the full extent provided by the law.

On the other hand, men who have completed their Army service have better chances of being hired over men who have not, everything else being equal.

In any case, the gender issues are now formally addressed in Greece and companies are required to post on their website the measures taken to restore equal rights, e.g. ELGO Dimitra<sup>63</sup> (in Greek), Benaki Phytopathological Institute<sup>64</sup> (in Greek), etc.

In conclusion, there is potential space for improvement in Gender Issues, but the EIGE indices are superficial and should be taken with a grain of salt. In addition, Greece has other existential problems to manage, such as the demographic one, that demand immediate and radical solution.

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57 <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/en/gender-equality/>

58 <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/N.4604-για-την-Ουσιαστική-Ισότητα-των-Φύλων.pdf>

59 <https://ypergasias.gov.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Εγκύκλιος-για-τον-N.-4604-2019.pdf>

60 <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/country/EL>

61 <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/02/18/387091215/even-as-progressives-take-lead-in-greece-women-remain-out-of-power?t=1661366489310>

62 <https://smallpondscience.com/2019/03/08/what-are-the-reasons-we-have-for-dropping-the-gre/>

63 [https://www.elgo.gr/images/GEP\\_ELGO-DIMITRA/Σχέδιο\\_Ισότητας\\_Φυλων\\_ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ.pdf](https://www.elgo.gr/images/GEP_ELGO-DIMITRA/Σχέδιο_Ισότητας_Φυλων_ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ.pdf)

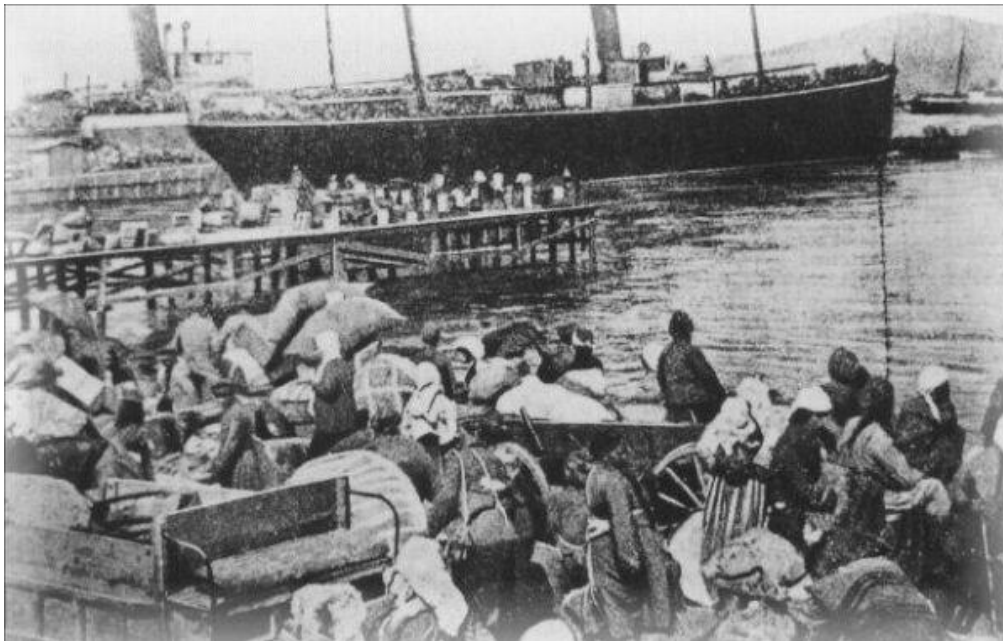
64 <https://www.bpi.gr/files/Σχέδιο%20Δράσης%20Ισότητας%20Φύλων2022.pdf>

## General history and governing

### History

Greece is a small country with a big history. It stands at the crossroads of Eastern and Western worlds and managed to survive many waves and all sorts of attacks and invasions ever since written historical records have been kept.

An incomplete list of ancient Greek cities and colonies<sup>65</sup> and colonies established outside Greece reveals the far-reaching impact of ancient Greece throughout the centuries.



*Smyrna massacre refugees, 1922*

Throughout its 3000-year long history, Greece has fought enemies from within and outside its borders<sup>66</sup>. In the last 200 years, Greece was involved directly or indirectly in about 10 regional, civil and world wars. It has sustained several genocides, suffered ethnic cleansing campaigns and deportations of its citizens<sup>67</sup>, migration waves and brain drains, and lived through two dictatorships. The country continues to struggle and invest heavily in defence from its meagre financial resources to keep its national sovereignty against odd financial interests, socio-political and philosophical beliefs about jump-starting humanity, and a rambunctious and malevolent neighbour to the East<sup>68</sup>.

As a result of its long history, [Greece has more archaeological sites and museums than any other country in the world.](#)

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<sup>65</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ancient\\_Greek\\_cities](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ancient_Greek_cities)

<sup>66</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle\\_of\\_Thermopylae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Thermopylae)

<sup>67</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1914\\_Greek\\_deportations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1914_Greek_deportations)

<sup>68</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece-Turkey\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece-Turkey_relations)

## Governing

The Hellenic Republic, as Greece's official name is, is a presidential parliamentary republic. The President of the Republic, elected by the Parliament, is the head of the State, and the Prime Minister is the head of the government. The Parliament consists of 300 Members elected every 4 years by the people and it is the legislative body of the country. The leader of the election-winning party becomes Prime Minister, and appoints the government, whereas the President of the Republic maintains the executive authority.

Until 2010, Greece was divided into 52 prefectures and 54 prefecture authorities, with 4 prefecture authorities within the Attica (Metropolitan Athens) region. On January 1, 2011, the "Kallikratis" regional reform program merged the 52 prefectures into administrative 13 regions, and these were finally merged into the current 7 regional administrations.



*The 13 color-coded administration regions after "Kallikratis I".*



*The 7 color-coded Regional Administrations of Greece after "Kallikratis II".*

## Greek Civil law

First of all, civil law is generally an area of private law, together with commercial law and labour law.

Civil law comprises a set of rules that regulate the personal and property relations of citizens.

Greek civil law has its roots and sources in Byzantine-Roman law and in customary law.

The term "civil law" comes from the Latin term "*jus civile*" (which was used in ancient Rome to distinguish the law that applied exclusively in the city of Rome from the "*jus gentium*", the law of all nations that applied throughout the empire).

The sources of Greek civil law are the following:

- Legislation
- Custom



- The generally accepted rules of international law
- International treaties
- European Union Law (primary and secondary)

The main and more general provisions of Greek civil law are found in the Civil Code. The idea of creating a civil code in Greece is very old and can be traced back to the 19th century. More precisely, the first attempts to draft a civil code in Greece were made in 1835, mainly modelled on the German Civil Code. The Greek Civil Code came into force on 23 February 1946 and is still in force today, having been revised a few times over the years and occasionally reformed.

The Greek Civil Code is divided into five "books":

1. General Principles
2. Contract Law
3. Property Law
4. Family Law (Articles 1346-1709)
5. Inheritance Law<sup>69</sup>

## Health and security aspects

### Health

Nearly 98.8% of the Greek population has been vaccinated twice against COVID-19.

4.7 million cases and 32,000 deaths from COVID-19 were reported from 3 January 2020 through the end of June 2022.

Like most countries, Greece responded to waves of COVID infections by shutting down schools, workplaces and international borders and imposing stay-at-home isolation.

On 1 June 2022, all COVID-19 restrictions, including wearing masks in public places, were lifted in view of the 2022 tourist season.

Government supplied data collection<sup>70</sup> and statistics updates at the Johns Hopkins COVID-19 monitoring website<sup>71</sup> have stopped on 15 June 2022.

### Security

Despite a property crime rate increase in 2011 due to worsening economic conditions and tough measures imposed by the bailout program, Greece still has one of the lowest crime rates in Western Europe<sup>72</sup>. It is perfectly safe to walk on the streets of all major Greek cities.

### National security

Ever since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, neighbouring Turkey never ceased to challenge Greek National Security and Sovereignty. The two countries have been in a

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<sup>69</sup> [Aspects of Greek Civil Law Introduction - GREEK LAW DIGEST The Official Guide to Greek Law](#)

<sup>70</sup> <https://covid19.gov.gr/covid19-live-analytics/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/greece/>

<sup>72</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime\\_in\\_Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime_in_Greece)

competitive relationship<sup>73</sup> since time immemorial. Turkish fighter planes violate the Greek air space 30-100 times daily and are intercepted by Hellenic Air Force planes.

Illegal migrants that have flooded Greece since 2009 and agents among them may represent a potential threat against National Security.

## Sustainability

Two leading studies, one by the Deutsche Bank Research (2008) and the other by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) & United Nations Environment Programme (2008), forecast a redistribution of tourist arrivals in favour of countries with lower average summer temperatures, such as the Baltic, Scandinavian and Benelux countries if current weather patterns prevail, Mediterranean countries, and especially Greece and Turkey, stand to lose their attractiveness due to increased summer temperatures. High economic dependence on tourism for the local economy, such as in Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Spain and Austria, will worsen things.

The contribution of tourism to the development of any country and especially Greece remains decisive. But it also creates problems, such as unruly housing development, uncontrolled urban spreading, increased demands on natural resources, burden on settlements, traffic, insufficient parking space, noise, land use conflicts, waste management, negative effects on local communities' morals and customs and perhaps violence (Coccosis, Tsartas & Grimpa, 2020). The problem is expected to increase in the future and will become critical when the carrying capacity of each region is reached resulting in saturation or over-tourism.

## 2.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Greece

The roots of agritourism can be traced on the island of Crete in the mid 70s. Vourdoubas (2020) provides a more detailed account of the development and evolution of agritourism on Crete.

A rudimentary network of about 40 [cooperating multifunction farms](#), as the official characterization of agritourism units is, has been established in Greece, although there are estimates of over 1000 businesses directly or indirectly involved in agritourism.

## 2.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organization in the field of Agritourism

### National legislation

- [Minister of Tourism Decree No. 216/OGG<sup>74</sup> B10, 9-1-2015](#) “Establishing the technical and operational specifications and criteria for ranking hotels according to the star system” (in Greek).
- [Joint Ministerial Decree 543/34450/OGG B1145/3-4-2017](#) “Multifunctional Farms Specifications” (in Greek).

<sup>73</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece-Turkey\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece-Turkey_relations)

<sup>74</sup> OGG: Official Government Gazette

- [Ministerial Decree 21185/OGG B2840/22-10-2014](#) “Establishing the technical and operational specifications and criteria for ranking of Rooms To Rent according to the key system” (in Greek).
- [Joint Ministerial Decree \(JMD\) 12528/OGG B3089/30-7-2018](#) on Terms & Requirements for the Special Agritourism Label (in Greek).
- [Law 4399/2016/OGG A117/22-6-2016](#) on Institutional framework for the establishment of Private Investment Support schemes for the regional and economic development of the country - Establishment of a Development Council and other provisions (in Greek).
- [Law 4864/2021/OGG A237/2-12-2021](#) on Strategic investments and improvement of the investment environment through the acceleration of procedures in private and strategic investments, creation of a framework for artificial growth companies and other urgent provisions for development (in Greek).
- [Law 4887/2022/OGG A16/4-2-2022](#) on Development Law - Greece Strong Development (in Greek).
- [Law 4276/2014/OGG A155/30-7-2014](#) on Simplification of operating procedures of tourist businesses and tourist infrastructures, special forms of tourism and other provisions (in Greek).
- [Law 4582/2018/OGG A208/11-12-2018](#) on Thematic tourism – Special forms of tourism – Arrangements for the modernization of the institutional framework in the field of tourism and tourism education – Support for tourism entrepreneurship and other provisions (in Greek).

### Labour organisation

In general, in Greece there is the Hellenic Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED), established in 1969 but now renamed the Public Employment Service (DYPA) under par. 1, article 3, Law 4921/2022. It is a legal entity under public law with its headquarters in Athens and is supervised by the Hellenic Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

The three main objectives of DYPA are:

1. The promotion of employment
2. Unemployment insurance and social protection for maternity and family
3. Vocational education and training<sup>75</sup>

In the context of labour, employment and work, there is also the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), which was founded in 1918. The GSEE is composed of 83 workers' trade unions and 74 departmental secondary trade union confederations. Its main objective is to defend the interests of all private sector workers in Greece. To this end, it negotiates with employers' organisations to sign national union labour agreements and, if necessary, can call all private sector workers to strike.

As far as the organisation of work in agritourism is concerned, we could not find anything specific to agritourism. However, there is the Hellenic Agritourism Federation<sup>76</sup> (SEAGE), an

<sup>75</sup> <https://motiv-action.eu/oaed/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://hellasagrotourism.org/en>

association that aims to create the identity of the Greek agritourism product and reach a wider audience in Greece and abroad. SEAGE supports its members, the regional agritourism associations and their affiliated businesses, in ensuring and improving the quality of local agricultural products and services, in developing local and wider markets for agritourism, and ultimately aims to attract visitors from all over Greece and abroad.<sup>77</sup>

There is also Agro Xenia – Hellas Agrotourism<sup>78</sup>, a non-profit organisation active throughout Greece with the aim of strengthening cooperation and shared learning in the agricultural sector.

## 2.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism

### EU and country-specific funding programmes, schemes, grants, etc.

EU Funding: A good starting point in the search for any EU funding is the Single Electronic Data Interchange Area (SEDIA) website of the European Commission funding & tender opportunities. It provides comprehensive funding information and hence requires meticulous and in depth searching.

The Funding & Tenders<sup>79</sup> web page is a comprehensive information point for EU-funding opportunities.

### Country-specific funding in Agritourism

For the overall announced 2021-2027 NSRF of Greece in general, see Active programs at: <https://www.espa.io/programmata/energa/>.

Green Agritourism investment grants<sup>80</sup> (in Greek). Mainly for investments connecting the primary and secondary sector with the tertiary sector. Budget: 49 million EUR. Minimum: 500,000 to 7,500,000 EUR for medium-small up to 7,500,000 EUR for large investments. EU contribution varies by region and ranges between 15-50%. - Closed.

Another 260 million EUR Recovery Fund package of four programs for small-medium agri-food enterprises<sup>81</sup> in June 2022 including the following

### Private investments & transformation of economy

Some funding sources for agritourism can be found [here](#).

List of 2022-2027 planned subsidies/grants support rates<sup>82</sup> under the Greek National Development Law 4887/2022 by administrative region and size of enterprise.

<sup>77</sup> [Hellenic Agrotourism Federation \(hellasagrotourism.org\)](https://hellasagrotourism.org/)

<sup>78</sup> <https://agro Xenia.org/>

<sup>79</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders_en)

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.espa.io/programmata/energa/prasinos-agrotourismos/>

<sup>81</sup> <https://www.espa.io/tameio-anakampsis-erxontai-tessera-programmata-mesa-ston-iounio/>

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.espa.io/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/xartis-perifereiakon-enisxiseon-anaptyxiakos-nomos-4887-2022-updated.pdf>

## Submitting a proposal for funding

Aspiring agritourism entrepreneurs seeking funding should outsource the application submitting process to one of the many certified consultants specializing in handling EU funding programs. Interested parties are urged to monitor the above sites on a regular basis, as these sites are constantly updated with new programs and information on the application process, venue and deadlines, or for accessing regional funds<sup>83</sup>. However, caution and control is recommended as several venture (vulture) funds have targeted the Greek tourism industry.

## 2.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Greece

Greece. None of them have academic curricula specializing exclusively in agritourism, but all of them are flexible to accommodate student interest in agritourism-related topics.

### Public educational institutions

#### *Ministry of Tourism<sup>84</sup> operated educational institutions*

1. 2 Higher Tourism Educational Schools in Rhodes Island and in Agios Nikolaos, Crete<sup>85</sup>.
2. 8 Public Vocational Training Institutions<sup>86</sup> (ΔΙΕΚ) operating in the respective Greek cities with 914 student admissions in 2022<sup>87</sup>.
3. 3 Public Tour Guide Schools in Athens, Thessaloniki and Rhodes Island<sup>88</sup>.
4. A total of 97 lifelong training courses in tourism were held in the last 4 academic years in 14 Greek cities. More than 1600 workers and unemployed individuals attended<sup>89</sup>.

### Public Employment Service of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs Vocational training schools

7 Tourism and Hospitality Experimental training schools<sup>90</sup> in Athens, Thessaloniki, Corfu Island, Crete Island, Lesbos island, Patras and Rhodes island.

#### *Ministry of Education & Religion operated vocational training institutions*

### General Secretariat of Vocational & Lifelong Training and Youth

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83 [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/accessing-funds/#1](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/accessing-funds/#1)

84 <http://www.mintour.edu.gr/>

85 Outline of the courses offered by semester <http://www.mintour.edu.gr/index.php/aste>

86 <https://www.espa.io/iek-tourismou-xekinoun-oi-aitiseis-dyo-nees-eidikotites/>

87 List of vocational skills & specializations offered, admissions requirements and an outline of courses taught: <http://www.mintour.edu.gr/index.php/iek>

88 Description of requirements, application documents, and selection criteria and an outline of the academic program: <http://www.mintour.edu.gr/index.php/2018-08-29-11-21-07/anakoinoseis-gia-ekpaidevomenous/253-prok-xen-22-23>

89 Outline of admissions requirements, skills offered and the academic program:

<http://www.mintour.edu.gr/index.php/sinexiz-katartisi>

90 <https://www.espa.gr/el/Pages/NewsFS.aspx?item=1498>

1. Agritourism Technician Training Guide<sup>91</sup>. With the same decision of the Minister of Education and Religion, Training Guides have been announced for [another 19 specializations](#), including [Mountain Tour Leader](#), [Apiculture Technician](#), [Dairy Technician](#), [Tour Leader](#), [Organic Farming Technician](#), [Farm Manager](#), [Forest Protection Technician](#), etc.
2. A number of public vocational training schools advertise agritourism technician training opportunities, such as [IEK-Aridaias](#), [IEK Ellinikou](#), [IEK Velventou](#), [IEK Sidirokastrou](#)

### **Tourism/Rural Development & Management Courses offered by Higher education institutions**

1. Agricultural University of Athens<sup>92</sup>
2. Agricultural University of Athens<sup>93</sup>
3. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki<sup>94</sup>
4. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki<sup>95</sup>
5. University of West Attica<sup>96</sup>

### **Departments of educational institutions providing isolated courses/theses and/or interdisciplinary courses in tourism**

1. [Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Department of Forestry and Natural Environment](#)
2. [Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Department of Spatial Planning and Development Engineering](#)
3. [Hellenic Open University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Master's Program in Business Administration](#)
4. [Jean Monnet European Center of Excellence, University of Athens](#)
5. [University of the Aegean, Faculty of Management Sciences, Interdepartmental Master's Program, Tourism Planning, Management and Policy](#)
6. [University of the Aegean, Sustainable Tourism Development: Heritage, Environment, Society](#)
7. [University of the Aegean, School of Management Sciences, Department of Business Administration](#)
8. [University of the Aegean, Department of Geography](#)

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.gsae.edu.gr/attachments/article/1660/18.%20Τεχνικός%20Αγροτουρισμού.pdf>

<sup>92</sup> [http://www.ruraldevelopment.aua.gr/default.aspx?menu\\_id=1](http://www.ruraldevelopment.aua.gr/default.aspx?menu_id=1) – Master's Program in Integrated Rural Development and Management of Rural Areas

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.eduguide.gr/grad/program/geoponiko-epiheirimatikotita-kai-symvouleutiki-stin-agrotiki-anaptyxi,1127/curriculum> – Interdisciplinary Master's Program in Rural Development Entrepreneurship and Consulting

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.agro.auth.gr/τομεις/εργαστηρια/γεωργικων-εφαρμογων-και-αγροτικης-κοινωνιολογιας> – Dept of Rural Development, Laboratory of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology

<sup>95</sup> <https://msc-tourism.econ.auth.gr/> – an interdisciplinary program of Economics (accredited Department), Forestry and Natural Environment, Agriculture, Spatial Planning and Development Engineers, Theology and Law School

<sup>96</sup> <https://www.uniwa.gr/spoydes/scholes-kai-tmimata/sdo/tourism/> – Department of Tourism Administration



9. [University of Thessaly, Department of Spatial Planning, Urban Planning and Regional Development, Interdepartmental Master's Program, Planning and Development of Tourism and Culture](#)
10. [University of Ioannina, School of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Accounting and Finance](#)
11. [University of Patras, Department of Tourism Management](#)
12. [University of Piraeus, School of Management and Economics, Department of Accounting and Finance](#)
13. [University of Piraeus, Department of Economics, Business and Financial Strategy](#)
14. [TEI Kavala](#)
15. [TEI Kalamata, School of Administration and Economics, Department of Administration of Local Government Units](#)
16. [TEI Kalamata, School of Plant Production](#)
17. [TEI Kalamata, Department of Local Government](#)
18. [TEI of Crete, School of Public Administration, Department of Cooperative Organizations and Holdings](#)
19. [TEI of Crete, School of Management and Economics, Department of Business Administration](#)
20. [TEI of Crete, School of Management and Economics, Department of Tourism Business](#)
21. [TEI Piraeus, School of Management and Economics, Department of Tourism Studies](#)
22. [Hellenic Mediterranean University, School of Economic and Management Sciences, Hospitality and Tourism Business Administration](#)

The above higher education institutions do not provide specialized agritourism curricula, but they may offer single agritourism courses. Graduating students may select to develop their own graduation project on the subject of agritourism, in agreement with their academic supervisor. The graduation project is usually a bibliographic search on an agritourism-related topic pertaining to the student's place of birth. On 29 August 2022, a Google Scholar search yielded about 40 published graduation projects, a few Masters' Theses, and one Dissertation.

#### **Private vocational & lifelong training institutions**

1. Captain Vassilis and Carmen Constantakopoulos Foundation<sup>97</sup>
2. American Farm School, Perrotis College, Thessaloniki<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> <https://www.cvf.gr/eng/> A family operated charity, non-profit foundation under the umbrella of the Costa Navarino Luxury Resort – [Looking to cooperate with other organizations.](#)

<sup>98</sup> <https://www.perrotiscollege.edu.gr/eu-funded-projects/> - Offering agritourism Certification program

### 3. Mediterranean College<sup>99</sup>

#### **A short list of Private Vocational Training Institutes offering training for agritourism technicians**

On 10 August 2022, the Decree on the operation of Private Vocational & Lifelong Training Institutions<sup>100</sup> was published (in Greek). On 29/8/2022, i.e. 18 days after the official publication, the following Private Vocational Training Institutes had posted agritourism technician specialization programs on their websites and/or organized educational field trip: [IEK Praxis](#); [IEK Enosi](#); [IEK Agro](#); [IEK Alpha](#); [IEK Delta](#); [IEK Europroodos](#); [IEK Korelko](#)

#### 2.6. National and international Agritourism events

In Greece, there are almost no fairs or conferences specialised in agritourism. Most of them focus on agriculture, agribusiness and tourism in general

However, there are some that may include the topic of agritourism.

##### **Athens International Tourism and Culture Expo<sup>101</sup>**

The 9th version of the Expo was held in Athens from 3 to 5 November 2022. This expo is an avenue for new trade cooperation in tourism and culture. This expo focuses on mice & business, luxury and leisure. This year, online tourism, cultural tourism, gastronomy and alternative tourism will also be in the spotlight. Agritourism can also be considered as part of alternative tourism.

##### **Sustainable Tourism Greece Conference<sup>102</sup>**

The first Sustainable Tourism Conference was held in Greece on 27 September 2022. This event was about the sustainable development of both destinations and businesses. It was divided into three categories: sustainable destinations, sustainable businesses and sustainable gastronomy

Agritourism can also be part of sustainable tourism and/or provide a pathway to sustainable tourism.

##### **International AgriBusiness Forum<sup>103</sup>**

The 5th International AgriBusiness Forum took place in Athens on 15-16 November 2022 and was focused on food safety, security and resilience to uncertainties. It was held with the participation of an accredited audience (300 delegates) representing leading companies,

<sup>99</sup> <https://www.medcollege.edu.gr/en/schools/school-of-tourism-and-hospitality/> – School of Tourism and Hospitality

<sup>100</sup> <https://www.espa.io/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/fek-kanonismos-leitourgias-iek.pdf>

<sup>101</sup> <https://aite.gr/en/>

<sup>102</sup> <https://greendestinations.org/event-list/sustainable-tourism-greece-conference>

<sup>103</sup> <https://agribusinessforum.org/>

financial service providers, innovative farmers, cooperatives, policy makers, research and academia. This forum offers hybrid participation and sessions will be broadcast in real time.

## HORECA

Hotel Industry Trade Show. The leading international exhibition for the provisioning and equipment of hospitality and foodservice companies. As of 2023, 500 Exhibitors, over 60,000 visitors, 300 International Visitors, etc. Organized biannually.

### **Pelion Gastronomy Festival<sup>104</sup>**

This is a gastronomy festival that started in 2019 on a farm in Pelion, Thessaly region. This year, the third edition of it was held on 1 and 2 October 2022 at the Karaikos farm. It includes exhibitions and stalls selling local products, food and wine tasting, lectures, demonstrations, cooking classes and many other activities. It is an attempt to bring local producers, businesses and citizens closer together.

## 2.7. Conclusions

1. Large number of vocational training & higher education institutions associated with tourism, but few specialize in Tourism and none in Agritourism.
2. Sparse and incomplete agritourism curricula in all educational institutions.
3. Numerous agritourism-related graduation project essays by students in last 20 years.
4. Business Administration, Finance and/or Hotel Management curricula by Higher Education Institutions provide theoretical knowledge only about agritourism.
5. Increased student enrolment in agritourism-related curricula following publication of Agritourism Technician Training Guide by the Ministry of Education.
6. The Agritourism Technical Training Guide is currently the only available official training material on agritourism.
7. The future of agriculture in Greece is very uncertain as huge effort and funding is directed to (agri)tourism, but very little towards keeping the young farmers to secure food sustainability.

## 2.8. References



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## 3. Agritourism in Italy – a Case Study

### 3.1. General information about Italy



Italy has an estimated population on 1 January 2022 of approximately 58 million 983 thousand. Its capital is Rome and its currency is the Euro. Italy has only one time zone: Central European Time (CET) is used as standard time, while Central European Summer Time (CEST) is observed when Daylight Saving Time (DST) is in force.

#### Climate

The climate in Italy is generally temperate and more precisely Mediterranean climate and humid temperate climate. The seasons are fairly well defined: winter is generally cold, spring rainy with sunny days, summer hot and dry and autumn clear, more rarely rainy, but never harsh. Only rarely are temperatures higher than 40 degrees Celsius in summer, or 10 degrees below zero in winter. Being very extensive from North to South, Italy can be divided into three distinct climate zones:

- North-Italy has a very harsh climate in winter (with common snowfall) while summer is very hot and with high humidity levels.
- Central Italy does not have major differences between the extreme seasons, although it can go from a rather harsh winter to a very hot summer season.
- The South (which also includes the major islands, Sicily and Sardinia) has a dry and generally warm climate, with little precipitation and periods of real drought. The winter is never too harsh and the autumn and spring have temperatures closer to the summer temperatures of other parts of Italy than

to the winter ones.

### **Travel and transport**

Road and rail connections are good and more developed in northern and central Italy rather than in the south, where routes are longer and it is more difficult to reach rural areas, where it is preferable to go by car, and in general there is a gap between north and south in terms of modernisation of transport, road and rail links.

The country is crossed by a system of highways with tolls to pay, a national railway transportline (Trenitalia) as well as several regional lines and bus companies and most of the main cities have airports.

### **Accommodation**

Tourism is one of Italy's largest economic sectors. The country is the fifth most visited in the world with 65 million foreign arrivals according to ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics, 2019). Thanks to the varied territory from north to south, the country offers numerous hotel, agritourism and camping sites, with locations ranging from the mountains to the beaches that surround three quarters of the country. In recent years, the sector has modernised by combining and enhancing the rural structures inherited from the tradition of past centuries to offer a modern experience.

### **Language**

The only official language is Italian, while for the majority of the population it is still difficult to know English, although with global development more and more workers have to deal with it, at least in a basic form, and the new generations have many more opportunities to learn it effectively from an early age. From region to region, there are numerous dialects that influence colloquial language, which are unfortunately disappearing and testify to the great variety of different cultures and peoples that inhabited Italy.

### **Social pattern and culture**

Italians are generally very sociable and friendly, and each region has its own personality with its own virtues and faults. This is due to the fact that, despite the unification of Italy in 1861, in previous centuries each region contained a different population and there is a lot of regional identity, and even today these aspects still emerge, including some goliardic rivalries between neighbouring towns. As the politician Massimo D'Azeglio said after the unification of the country, 'we have made Italy, now we have to make Italians', a problem that has not yet been fully resolved!

Italy's main national holidays are both civil and religious: among the former are Liberation Day from Nazi-Fascism (25 April), Labour Day (1 May) and the Republic Day (2 June). Religious festivals such as Christmas and Easter are very heartfelt and provide an opportunity for family reunions, while in the summer we must mention Ferragosto (15 August), in honour of the Assumption of Mary, but which actually



originates from a day of rest introduced by the Emperor Augustus under the name *Feriae Augusti* (Festivals [Holidays] of the Emperor Augustus). In addition, each municipality has its own patron saint to whom a feast day is dedicated.

## Religion

Italy is a secular state, but the dominant religion is Catholicism, due to the influence of the Vatican and its geographical presence in Italy, which has radically influenced Italian culture and history since its origins for centuries.

## Gender issues

In some areas, the inequality between men and women is an issue that is still being wrestled with, such as career opportunities or salary values. Often, the most important positions are still held by men, and in politics, for example, although the number of women has increased, the ratio is still unbalanced.

Currently, struggles for gender equality, freedom of expression and sexual orientation are heartfelt and aligned with those in other Western countries.

## Alcohol and tobacco

In Italy, smoking is not allowed inside clubs, bars or restaurants, as well as in all other indoor places. Despite the damage to health, cigarettes are a widespread habit among both young people and adults. Alcohol, which is a state monopoly and in Italy represents many local and traditional varieties (especially liquor and wine), is also widespread and can be purchased in stores, supermarkets, bars, and clubs, often without many controls related to underage or night-time sales for safety issues.

## General history and governing

Italy is a Parliamentary Republic: Parliament is divided into the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate of the Republic. The Prime Minister, officially President of the Council of Ministers (*Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri*), is Italy's head of government, while The President of Italy (*Presidente della Repubblica*), currently Sergio Mattarella since 2015, is Italy's head of state. The territorial authorities, divided into regions, provinces and municipalities, also have various tasks related, for example, to the healthcare system and education system.

Historically, Italy is one of the oldest countries in the world, having been inhabited since prehistoric times and then in ancient times colonised by the Greeks and giving birth to the Roman civilization. The country has been traversed by countless populations and thus featured in historical events such as the founding and the fall of the Roman Empire. The Middle Ages saw the birth of numerous republics and municipalities, and the territory was fragmented into numerous kingdoms until the unification of Italy in 1861, when it became a monarchy, the Kingdom of Italy.

In the 900s, Italy was protagonist in the rise of Nazi-fascism, fought later by the Italian resistance movement with the help of the Allies, and in 1946 a referendum sanctioned the end of the monarchy and the birth of the Republic.

### **Civic laws**

There are speed limits on every road. Littering is a legal offence carrying fines or criminal convictions.

### **Health and security aspects**

In Italy, the government guarantees a National Health Service: each region finances the Local Health Authorities (Aziende Sanitarie Locali - ASL), which provide essential levels of care.

In recent years, there have been positive data on crime in Italy, also positively influenced by the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, some critical issues remain: many assets continue to be seized and confiscated from the mafia annually. Justice in Italy continues to be slow due to the heavy regulatory and bureaucratic burden.

### **Sustainability**

Speaking of sustainability, the Italian government's agenda continues to follow the example of other EU countries and is an increasingly sensitive issue for citizens. The separate waste collection system is being implemented nationwide, although in general there is a need to raise more awareness among citizens and businesses in a simple way, obstructed by slow bureaucracy.

## **3.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Italy**

According to *MIPAAF* (the Ministry of agricultural food and forestry policies), “Italian agritourism is an original form of tourism in the countryside that has developed in Italy over the last thirty years. Its peculiarity is that it can only be carried out on farms and by farmers, who are the real protagonists.”<sup>105</sup> In Italy, the word '*agriturismo*' is used both to define the phenomenon of tourism in the countryside and to refer to the agritourism farm. By now, many foreign tourists also prefer to use the word *agriturismo* instead of its many translations.

According to the latest data from ISTAT, the National Institute of Statistics, in 2020, the number of active agritourism farms in Italy increased by +2% compared to 2019, reaching 25,060, and 63% of Italian municipalities host at least one agritourism, whereas these numbers reach 97% in the regions of Tuscany and Umbria. According

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<sup>105</sup> Agriturismo Italia, What is agritourism?; An original way of experiencing the countryside; <http://www.agriturismoitalia.gov.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/EN/IDPagina/6?uniq=c8d60e519%20d3b7fe744dd171a17296301>

to the latest statistics for the year 2020, the sector has been growing steadily since 2007, with a national average growth rate of +41.4% over 13 years, and an average annual growth rate of 2.5%<sup>106</sup> between 2007 and 2020.

These businesses have contributed in the Italian countryside to save a very important part of the historical and valuable rural buildings, helping traditional agriculture to survive in difficult areas. The majority of agritourism businesses are in fact in the hills and mountains, where agriculture requiring large areas and highly industrialised production systems cannot develop. Instead, agritourism favours small production systems, integration with the environment, in particular with woods, forests and Mediterranean scrub, and proximity to cities of art and ancient medieval or Renaissance towns and villages, giving its guests the opportunity to get to know first hand the places where Italian art was born and developed.

Every agritourism company is different and is influenced by its history and location, local traditions, landscape and climate.

Many farms try to offer a complete set of services and activities such as walking, hiking, horse riding or cycling, fishing, sports or simply sunbathing, while others specialise in only one form of offer. Foreign tourists will therefore not find, as sometimes happens in other countries, different names for different sectors of activity: in Italy, all tourist activities that take place on a real farm are called agritourism.

An increasingly large group of agritourisms tend to turn their offerings towards the world of wellness, while others pay great attention to families and children, often combining tourist activities with educational and didactic ones.

Other agritourisms, on the other hand, base their philosophy on caring for the environment and preserving local history and culture. Some farms also become museums dedicated to agriculture and the countryside; others present themselves as authentic centres for the conservation of plant or animal biodiversity. Today the general trend is to offer guests a full range of services, but each farm is different from the next and builds its own original proposal, different from the others<sup>107</sup>.

The Italian territory offers a variety of experiences and opportunities, from the mountains of the Alps and Apennines to the hills (where the majority of Italian agritourisms are located, consisting mainly of vineyards and olive groves surrounding small historic centres) and mountainous areas of the south and the islands; many other agritourism farms, on the other hand, are located in the surroundings of large cities and offer the opportunity to experience the countryside or even simply to buy food specialties or meals, with a short journey from urban areas and the possibility of staying for even a few hours. Many agritourism businesses are located in a nature

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<sup>106</sup> ISTAT, Le aziende agrituristiche in Italia, <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/265109>

<sup>107</sup> Cfr. Agriturismo Italia, *What is agritourism?; Character and diversity*, <http://www.agriturismoitalia.gov.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/EN/IDPagina/7?unig=7cfe5ed84%20ea69e8b70b3f51518d5d63f>

park, a protected natural area or in its immediate vicinity. It can be said that agritourism is today the most widespread form of hospitality in the service of ecotourism, thanks to its presence even in the most difficult areas<sup>108</sup>.

Each Italian region is characterised by a different rural settlement pattern in which we find both traditional rural architecture with houses made of stone, brick and wood; farmsteads, courtyards, farmhouses, masserie (*farms*), *bagli*, *trulli* (*conical roofs*), courtyards and huts, as well as historic villas, with stately buildings, parks and artistic gardens.



*The trullo is a type of traditional dry-stone construction in Apulia. Today, they are a typical example of the valorisation of old buildings in rural tourism.*

### 3.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organisation in the field of Agritourism

The general regulation of agritourism in Italy is dictated by Law 96/2006, according to which agritourism activities are defined as 'reception and hospitality activities carried out by farmers, also in the form of corporations or partnerships, or associated among themselves, through the use of their own farm in connection with the activities of cultivation of the land, forestry and animal breeding. The agri-tourism activity may be carried out by the farmer and his family members, with the employment of fixed-term, open-ended and part-time employees. Farm workers are considered agricultural workers for the purposes of social security, insurance and tax regulations. The use of external subjects, on the other hand, is only allowed for the

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<sup>108</sup> Cfr. Agriturismo Italia, What is agritourism? Lands and landscapes;  
<http://www.agriturismoitalia.gov.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/EN/IDPagina/10>

performance of complementary activities and services.<sup>109</sup>

The measure states that agro-tourism activities include:

- a) providing accommodation in lodgings or open spaces intended for campers;
- b) providing meals and beverages consisting mainly of its own products and of products from farms in the area, including alcoholic and super-alcoholic products, with preference given to typical products and characterised by the DOP, IGP, IGT, DOC and DOCG marks or included in the national list of traditional agro-food products
- c) organise tasting events of farm products, including wine-tasting;
- d) organise recreational, cultural, educational, sporting, hiking and horse-riding activities, also outside the land at the farm's disposal, also through agreements with local authorities, aimed at enhancing the territory and rural heritage.

For this reason, as set out in Article 2135 of the Civil Code, a person who exercises one of the following activities is considered an agricultural entrepreneur:

- cultivation of the land
- forestry
- animal breeding
- related activities

The purpose of the agritourism regulations is therefore to support agriculture also through the promotion of suitable forms of tourism in the countryside aimed in particular at:

- protecting, qualifying and enhancing the specific resources of each territory
- encourage the maintenance of human activities in rural areas
- encourage multifunctionality in agriculture and the differentiation of farm incomes
- encourage initiatives to protect the soil, land and environment by farmers by increasing farm incomes and improving quality of life
- recovering the rural building heritage, protecting the peculiarities of the landscape
- support and encourage typical, quality production and related food

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<sup>109</sup> Cfr. Altalex, *Disciplina dell'agriturismo*;

<https://www.altalex.com/documents/news/2006/03/20/disciplina-dell-agriturismo>

and winetraditions

- promote rural culture and food education
- encourage agricultural and forestry development

The task of regulating specific aspects is left to regional legislation: the individual regions define the criteria, limits and administrative obligations, the health and hygiene requirements for buildings and equipment and the procedures for licensing agritourism activities.

### 3.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism

The European Union, the Italian State and Regions are proposing various calls for tenders with funding and facilities for agritourism, as well as incentives to support the start-up costs of this form of entrepreneurial activity. The proposed calls for tenders are constantly being updated: some examples are the 'Terre Colte' ("cultivated lands") and 'Resto al Sud' ("staying in the south") calls for tenders, aimed in particular at those who regenerate uncultivated or abandoned land and those who decide to invest in southern Italy.

Each Italian region has a different framework of measures to support agricultural development, with regional funds being disbursed by the relevant agricultural department. This type of facilitation is granted on the basis of the **Rural Development Programme - RDP** (Piano di Sviluppo Rurale - PSR) in which priority axes of intervention are defined and measures to improve the structure of the different agricultural enterprises and the respective agri-food system are established, according to the regional territory.

EU countries implement **EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development**, also called in Italy FEASR - Fondo europeo agricolo per lo sviluppo rurale) funding through these RDP; each RDP must aim to achieve at least four of the six EAFRD priorities:

- promote knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas
- enhancing the profitability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture and promoting innovative agricultural technologies and sustainable forest management
- foster food chain organisation, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture
- encourage resource efficiency and the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy in the agri-food and forestry sector



- preserving, restoring and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry
- promote social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas

The EAFRD budget for 2021-2027 amounts to EUR 95.5 billion, including an EUR 8.1 billion contribution from the **Next Generation EU** instrument, which is intended to foster the recovery of European countries and help them face the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the transition to the new **CAP** (Common Agricultural Policy), according to which rural development actions will be included in national strategic plans, planned for 2023.<sup>110</sup>

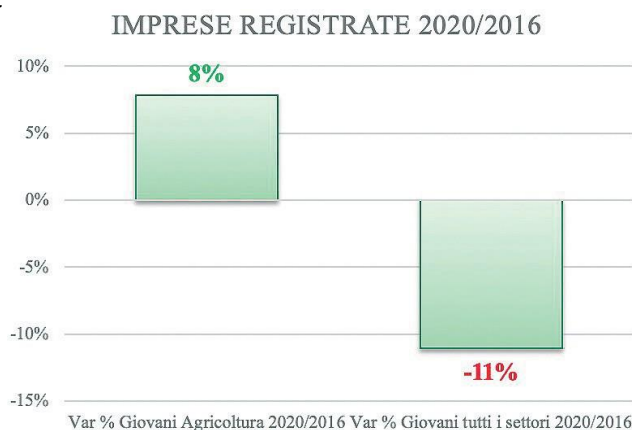
The Italian government has prepared a document, the **National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP)**, to illustrate to the European Commission precisely how the Country intends to invest the funds that will arrive under the Next GenerationEU programme: for Italian agritourism enterprises, is planned an incentive in the form of a tax credit of up to 80% of eligible expenses incurred and a non-repayable contribution of up to 50% of the expenses incurred.

### 3.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Italy

In Italy the **agricultural technical institutes** offer the necessary training and important professional outlets for entering the world of work after school. In addition, the Italian school provides periods of cooperative education, i.e. practical work experiences, and therefore also in the agritourism sector.

At **university** level, on the other hand, in Italy we find **faculties of agricultural sciences**, related to environmental and food issues, as well as several university master's degrees to specialise in different areas of the sector.

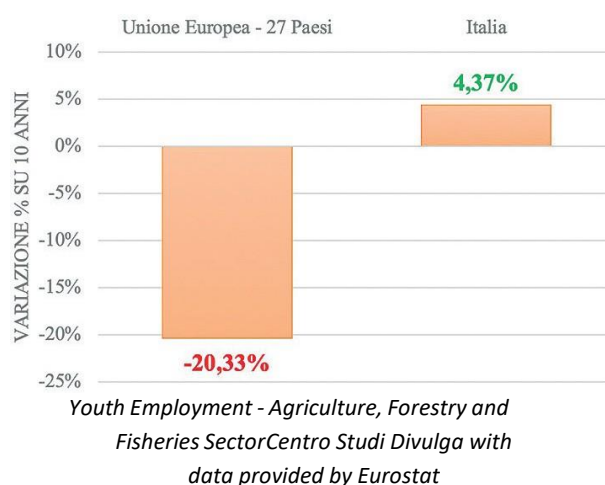
According to the first report on young people in agriculture in Italy published in 2021 (*Primo Rapporto sui Giovani in Agricoltura - Covid, la svolta green delle nuove generazioni*), the number of young people in the agricultural sector shows a positive trend of +8%, despite the difficulties brought by the Covid-19 pandemic.



<sup>110</sup> Cfr. European Commission, Rural Development;  
[https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development\\_en](https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/rural-development_en)

Centro Studi Divulga with data provided by Unioncamere

In Europe, 2.6 million young people under 40 are employed in agriculture: of these, over 10% are in Italy (275,000). The peninsula ranks 3rd for the number of young people employed after Romania and Poland. Over the last decade, the trend of young people in agriculture in Italy has been in contrast with the European trend. While, in fact, the latter has recorded a drop of 20% (- 690 thousand jobs), in Italy there has been a reverse trend with + 4% (11.5 thousand new jobs for young people in agriculture)<sup>111</sup>.



Referring to the year 2019/2020, 8% of the students in Italy enrolled in high schools (2.6 million in total) have chosen courses oriented towards the **agricultural sector**: training courses oriented towards wine and food, tourist reception and hospitality involve 150 thousand students, while just over 48 thousand are enrolled in disciplines involving rural development, the enhancement of territories and services for agriculture. There is therefore a 25% growth in enrolments in disciplines relating to rural development, the enhancement of territories and services for agriculture, while the number of students enrolled in training courses on tourism and hospitality is reduced, with the loss of more than 100 thousand students (- 40%). Nowadays 145 agricultural technical institutes are distributed throughout the country.

On the other hand, and always in reference to the 2019/2020 academic year, 2.64% of young people who decided to continue their education by enrolling in a University (1.7 million in total) chose courses in the field of agriculture, forestry, fishing and veterinary medicine. In the last academic year, the educational offerings of public and private universities in Italy were enriched with new interdisciplinary courses

<sup>111</sup> Cfr. Primo Rapporto sui Giovani in Agricoltura - Covid, la svolta green delle nuove generazioni; Centro Studi Divulga, Coldiretti Giovani Impresa, 2021. Rete Rurale Nazionale 2014-2020 <https://www.reterurale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/23261>

related to the world of agriculture and agribusiness, with the aim of enabling young people to acquire new multidisciplinary skills to meet future challenges, in particular those related to the themes of innovation agriculture, sustainability in the context of the New Green Deal, and climate change mitigation.

Lastly, the Italian education scene has seen the addition of **ITS**, Istituti Tecnici Superiori (Technical High Schools), or 'special schools of technology', which constitute a parallel training channel to academic courses<sup>112</sup>.

The website **Rete Rurale Nazionale**<sup>113</sup> updates news about young people in the agritourism sector and provides a range of useful tools, such as **FarmLab**, a pilot project involving specific training for young farmers to be carried out through direct experience on 'successful' farms with knowledge transfer between agricultural entrepreneurs, and the competition **Nuovi Fattori di Successo**, aimed at disseminating good practices in rural development by rewarding young farmers who have received funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

In addition, the agritourism operator must possess the necessary requirements to be recognised as such and be enrolled in the Register of Agritourism Operators to prove that he/she has received the mandatory training (according to regional regulations) to acquire the necessary knowledge to undertake agritourism activities.

For this reason, specific private or public (e.g. offered by universities) **training courses** are constantly promoted in Italy. Here are some of the key points of the training:

- Regulatory framework for the agro-tourism sector
- Health and hygiene regulations and principles of the HACCP system in the field of food processing; personnel management regulations
- Civil and fiscal regulations for agricultural and agritourism businesses and related obligations
- Planning of agricultural and tourism activities in a complementary and synergic manner; valorisation of farm and territorial specificities
- Planning of product and service supply, definition of quality standards, identification of control and evaluation tools
- Identification of promotional activities
- Elements of communication, territorial and tourism marketing
- Management of communication and reception activities, hospitality and use of services by guests inside and outside the structures

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<sup>112</sup> Cfr. *Ivi* pp. 24-27.

<sup>113</sup> Rete Rurale Nazionale, <https://www.reterurale.it/giovani>

- Management of catering activities using farm produce in compliance with local typicality and the highest quality standards of hygiene and health
- Control of management and economic aspects, identification of critical points and adjustments to be made.

Here you can find a sample of offers for training courses in the tourism sector in general, which are constantly being updated: <https://www.corsiturismo.it/>.

### 3.6. National and international Agritourism events

In Italy, the agritourism offer is so varied that each region is constantly full of new events, fairs, tasting events of local products. Here is one of the main sites where you can find examples of offers: <https://www.agriturismo.com/canali/eventi-e-manifestazioni-italiane.asp>.

At the national level there are some events such as **AGRIeTOUR** - National Exhibition of Agritourism and Multifunctional Agriculture<sup>114</sup>, organised every year and allowing agritourism operators to meet and network, offering master courses, seminars and conferences, promoting technical and educational updates and presenting the Italian agritourism offer to qualified national and international operators. This year the 20th edition will be held on 12 and 13 November in Arezzo, Tuscany.

Here are other examples of national and international agritourism events in some Italian regions:

- **Volterra Gusto**<sup>115</sup> is a historical event in the regional panorama of Tuscany dedicated to the white truffle and typical products of the Alta Val di Cecina. It will be held in Volterra on 22-23 October and from 29 October to 1 November.
- **SANA**<sup>116</sup> is the 34th International Exhibition of Organic and Natural Products held in Bologna, Emilia-Romagna: founded in 1988, it is the first trade show in Europe focused on the world of organic, natural and sustainable; today it fosters new industry innovations and develops new business relationships, connecting together producers, distributors, HoReCa. Channels, national and international buyers, institutions and control bodies.
- **Merano Wine Festival**<sup>117</sup> is the 31st edition of the first European event dedicated since 1992 to a sensorial journey with a selection of food and wine products, strengthening the network of producers, opinion leaders,

<sup>114</sup> <http://www.agrietour.it/>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.volterragusto.com/>

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.sana.it/en/home-page/1229.html>

<sup>117</sup> <https://meranowinefestival.com/>

professionals in the sector and consumers. It will be held from 4 to 8 November in Merano, Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol.

- Dedicated to the region of Lombardy, the website **Terranostra Lombardia**<sup>118</sup> is constantly updated on the region's agritourism offers and events.

These are just a few examples of regional, national and international events organised and dedicated to the world of agritourism, in addition to the countless meetings, experiences, tasting events, local festivals and fairs, and thematic events organised by individual agritourism farms in every region of Italy, which can be discovered via their local websites and social networks.

The website **Agriturismo Italia**<sup>119</sup> of the Mipaaf, provides an overview with descriptions of all Italian territories and their typical agri-food products with an interactive map; moreover, through its social network channels, it enables a network of producers, consumers, agritourism operators and stakeholders in general.

Get to know Italy through agritourism



in association with





Get to know Italy through the historical areas it is made up of; by clicking on the coloured areas of the map you can access a range of information about the territory and its history, art traditions, events, places, landscapes and typical foods. For each area you can choose the farm closest to what you are looking for and that best fits your needs.

### 3.7. Conclusions

In Italy agritourism is a growing sector that has contributed to the recovery of historic and valuable rural buildings and traditional agriculture in difficult areas. Each firm can offer various services and activities, especially related to the enhancement of the local region providing typical meals and beverages and organising tasting events of

<sup>118</sup> <https://terranostralombardia.it/eventi>

<sup>119</sup>

<http://www.agriturismoitalia.gov.it/flex/FixedPages/Common/Territori.php/L/EN?uniq=8ef75b2d4ae0%20ca943fee2fc553630189>

farm products, in conformity with the law 96/2006 regulating agritourism in Italy.

Each Italian region has a different framework of measures to support agricultural development, granted on the basis of the Rural Development Programme funded through the European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD), which in Italy specifically the government applies through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Training opportunities in agritourism in Italy start in high school through technical institutes and continue with various university faculties of agricultural sciences. In addition, there are training courses that are always being updated and can be free or by payment.

Finally, on a regional and national level, Italy offers numerous events related to the world of agritourism with the aim of creating a network of operators, trainers, consumers and aspiring entrepreneurs through fairs, conferences, events and local festivals.

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Merano Wine Festival, <https://meranowinefestival.com/>

National Holidays: <https://www.italofile.com/italy-calendar/>

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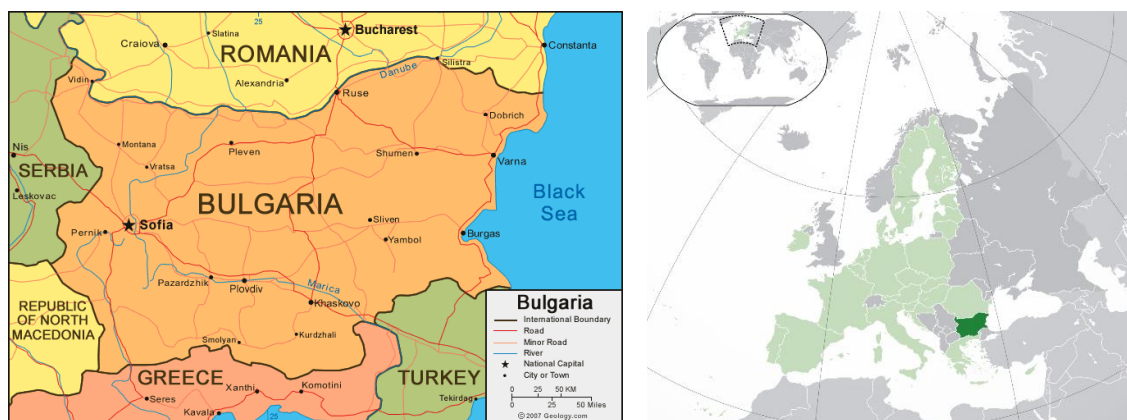
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## 4. Agritourism in Bulgaria – a Case Study

### 4.1. General information about Bulgaria

Bulgaria, officially the Republic of Bulgaria, is located in Southeast Europe, in the northeast part of the Balkan Peninsula. It is a European, Balkan, Black Sea, and Danube country. The country is bordered by Romania to the north, Serbia and North Macedonia to the west, Greece and Turkey to the south, and the Black Sea to the east. Bulgaria covers a territory of 110,994 square kilometres (42,855 sq mi), and is the sixteenth-largest country in Europe.

**Capital:** Sofia (42°41'N 23°19'E) is the nation's capital and largest city; other major cities are Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas.



The national state emblem of the Republic of Bulgaria is an upright golden lion on a dark red, shield-shaped background. The national emblem of Republic of Bulgaria is depicted on its state seal. The flag of the Republic of Bulgaria consists of three colours: white, green, and red, arranged horizontally from top to bottom. The country's national anthem is the song *Mila Rodino* (Dear Motherland).

**Population:** 6,520,314 (Census 2021)<sup>120</sup>.

**Official language:** Bulgarian.

**Ethnic groups:** 84.8% Bulgarians; 8.8% Turks; 4.9% Roma; 0.7% others.

#### Religion

The religion of most Bulgarians is Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The percentage distribution of all religions is as follows: 79% Christianity (77% Eastern Orthodox, 2% other Christian); 10% Islam; 5% no religion; 2% Others; 4% no answer.

<sup>120</sup> National Statistical Institute, <https://census2021.bg/language/en/> (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022).

## Time zone

The official time in Bulgaria is Eastern European Time, which is two hours ahead of Greenwich Time (UTC+2).

## Government

Parliamentary republic. According to the Constitution, the basic institutions of the state include the National Assembly (Parliament); the President; the Council of Ministers; legal bodies such as the courts, the prosecutor's office, and the office of investigation; the Constitutional Court; the Higher Court Council; and other organs of local self-government. The National Assembly is vested with legislative authority and exercises parliamentary supervision. The President is the head of the state, embodying the unity of the nation and representing the Republic of Bulgaria internationally. The Council of Ministers is in charge of and enacts the external and internal policies of the country, in conformity with the Constitution.

## Currency

The monetary unit in the Republic of Bulgaria is the lev (BGN), which is equal to 100 stotinki. Since 1997, the country has been governed by a currency board and the Bulgarian lev has a fixed exchange rate against Euro (1 Euro = 1.95583 leva).

**Driving side:** right.

**Calling code:** +359.

## Climate

Bulgaria is situated closer to the Equator than the pole. It falls within the southern part of the temperate climate zone with a subtropical influence. Its location on the transition line between two climate zones influences the climate, soils, vegetation, and animal species. All of them are characterized by great biodiversity. The country's geographic position also determines the relatively wide angle of sunlight that falls on the country, making the country predominantly sunny. The Black and the Aegean Sea also influence the country's climate. The influence of the Mediterranean is extensive for the climate in the southern parts of the country, while the Black Sea influences the climate over an area extending some 40 km inland, supporting diverse flora and fauna. Actual information about the weather in the country, including forecast, can be obtained from <http://www.meteo.bg/en><sup>121</sup>.

## Transport

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<sup>121</sup> Bulgarian national institute of meteorology and hydrology, <http://www.meteo.bg/en> (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022).



The country has four international airports - Sofia, Varna, Plovdiv, and Burgas. The airports also serve charter flights and helicopters. Rail transport in Bulgaria is readily accessible and generally comfortable, and the rail network serves all the larger populated places in Bulgaria.

The railway lines cross all the land borders of Bulgaria. The European Orient Express service also crosses the country. Narrow-gauge railways have been constructed to reach the less accessible places in the country and to serve destinations with a smaller number of passengers. Tickets can be purchased at railway stations, at transport offices in towns and cities, and at tourist agencies. International tickets are issued at the offices, agencies, and international desks at the stations.

Bulgaria's water borders are along the Danube River and along the Black Sea coast. The primary seaports offering marine transport in Bulgaria are the Varna and Burgas ports. Travellers can enter Romania through the local ports near Durankulak and can enter Turkey through Rezovo. These points are used for small seagoing vessels in transit rather than those embarking from Bulgaria's territorial waters. Along the Danube River, there is a border checkpoint near the village of Vrav, as well as at other cities and towns along the river: Vidin, Lom, Oryahovo, Ruse, Tutrakan, and Silistra. Both passenger and freight water transport are available all along the Danube River and the Black Sea coast. Prices and travel schedules depend on the season, the type of vessel, and its category. There are also many private seagoing carriers, both yachts, and motorboats, travelling to local landmarks and offering river or sea tours to both individuals and groups.

The road network in the country consists of limited access highways, first-class roads, second-class roads, and third-class roads. Bus transport is well developed. There are express buses serving most of the large towns and cities in the country.

There are international bus lines to most of the European capitals and to other European cities. Through Turkey, there is a bus connection to the Middle East and Egypt. Bus tickets can be purchased from designated offices, bus stations, the carriers themselves, and tourist agencies in larger towns and cities.

## History

The territory of Bulgaria has been inhabited since antiquity, as the country's many ancient settlements and burial mounds attest. Bulgaria was a cradle of some of the earliest civilizations in Europe – the oldest gold ornament ever discovered, unearthed in the Chalcolite necropolis near Varna, is evidence of that. From the age of Ancient Thrace we have inherited valuable cultural monuments, including tombs (such as the Kazanlak tomb, the Aleksandrovska tomb, and the Sveshtarska tomb); treasures (the Panagyursko, Rogozensko, and Valchitransko treasures, among others); and sanctuaries and temples (at Perperikon, Starosel, Kozi Gramadi, Begliktash, and elsewhere). The cultural interaction between the Thracians and the Hellenistic civilization were particularly dynamic. Many cities and towns heavily influenced by Greek culture were established between 6th-2nd century BC in

Thrace, Misia, and along the shores of the Black Sea. In the middle of the 1st century AD, all Bulgarian lands became a part of the Roman Empire. Many architectural and archaeological monuments have been preserved from this period, such as the Ancient Theatre and the Roman Stadium in Plovdiv, and remains of the Roman cities Ulpia Escus, Nove, Nikopolis ad Istrum, Nikopolis ad Nestum, Augusta Trayana, and Abritus.

After the dissolution of the Roman Empire, the present Bulgarian lands came under the control of the East Roman Empire, later called Byzantium by historians. In the second half of the 7th century, the proto-Bulgarians settled in what is now Northeast Bulgaria. They united with the Slavs to form the Bulgarian state, recognized by Byzantium in 681. The head of the state was the leader of proto-Bulgarians Han Asparuh, and the city of Pliska was declared the state's capital.

After the Second World War, Bulgaria came under the political and economic influence of the USSR. In 1946 the country was declared a republic and the Bulgarian Communist Party came to power. All political parties except for the so-called Fatherland Front (Otechestven Front) were forbidden, the economy and the banks were nationalized, and the agricultural land was organized as collectives. The democratic changes in Bulgaria started at the end of 1989, when multi-party elections were held and a new constitution was adopted. At this time Bulgaria began its transition to democratic development and a market economy. On January 1, 2007, after fulfilling all membership criteria, Bulgaria became a European Union member state.

### **Social pattern and culture**

Bulgarian culture was greatly influenced by all peoples who resided on these lands – Thracians, Romans, Slavs, and Bulgarians. The traditions, festivals, customs, and rituals preserved by Bulgarians through the ages are evidence of the country's profound spirituality and its dynamic lifestyle and culture. Bulgarian customs are





rooted in antiquity and are closely tied to the country's history and particular expression of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Dancing on live coals is an ancient Bulgarian ritual still practiced in a few villages in the Balkan Mountains. The ritual in its authentic form is performed on the name day of the saints Konstantin and Helena – 21 May. Fire dancers prepare for their dance by spending hours locked in a chapel, venerating the icons of these two saints while listening to the beating of drums and the music of gaidas (Bulgarian bagpipes), which is a special melody associated with fire dancing, after which they often fall into trance. In the evening they perform their special dance on live coals. During their dance they always hold aloft in both hands an icon of Saint Konstantin and Saint Helena. Amazingly, they never get hurt or burn their feet.



*“Kukeri”* is another local tradition that also found in other societies in the world. *Kukeri* games are only performed by men, who wear special masks and costumes that have been made for the occasion by each of the participants. The ritual dances are said to chase away bad spirits and demons at the beginning of every year, so as to greet the New Year cleansed and charged with positive energy.

*“Laduvane”* is another interesting ritual that is performed on the New Year's Eve, George's Day, Midsummer's Eve and St. Lazarus Day. At this ritual young women predict their future in marriage and the men they will marry. They address Lada, the goddess of love and family life, to ask her about their future husbands. *“Lazaruvane”* is a ritual related to coming of spring. It is conducted on St. Lazarus Day, eight days before Easter. The date of the celebration varies, but it is always on the Saturday before the celebration of Palm Sunday. On this day willow branches are picked and used to decorate the doors of houses on the following day. Then the young maidens in the villages pick flowers to shape as garlands on Palm Sunday. On Saturday maidens gather in the home of one of their number and dress in festive clothes



decorated with flowers and sprigs. Then they walk through the village from house to house, offering blessings for good health and rich harvests. They are invited in and given small gifts.



Probably the most important symbol of Bulgaria is the ritual of making and giving '*martenitsas*' for health and happiness at the beginning of March. For Bulgarians, this is a symbol of the year's renewal, again intended to promote health and successful harvests.



Especially well-respected in Bulgaria are traditions related to the circle of life – birth, christening, wedding, and funeral. Saints’ name days are also highly respected in the country, the most famous ones being St. John’s day, St. George’s Day, and St. Dimitar’s Day.

The holidays that are most honoured by Bulgarians are undoubtedly Christmas and Easter – when the generations all celebrate together, united by the feeling of belonging to the harmonious Bulgarian family. Also especially highly honoured are the first Sunday before Lent, the second Sunday before Lent, Mother’s Day, All Soul’s Day, and Lent. While travelling around the country, tourists will become acquainted with various rituals and customs, many of which are typical only for specific regions in Bulgaria.

The rose is the symbol of Bulgaria. Rose picking, one of the oldest and traditional customs of Bulgarians, has become primarily a tourist attraction. Carpets from the time of the Bulgarian Revival are now highly valued works of art. The major centres of carpet weaving are Kotel, Chiprovtsi and Samokov. Along with traditional handicrafts, Bulgaria’s people have also preserved a wide range of traditional popular customs and songs.



There are a number of architectural reserves in the country that preserve the unique Bulgarian architecture from the age of the Revival (18th – 19th centuries) – Koprivshtitsa, Tryavna, Bozhentsi, Zheravna, Bansko, and Melnik, among others. In some of the ethnographic complexes, such as Etara, Zlatograd, and Old Dobrich, tourists can appreciate first-hand Bulgarian customs and handicrafts, since residents



continue to make articles according to old techniques passed down from generation to generation.



During the Bulgarian Revival, the monasteries served as centres of artistic and educational activity. There are still many working monasteries in the country – Rila Monastery, Bachkovo Monastery, Troyan Monastery, Zemen Monastery, Glozhene Monastery, Kilifarevo Monastery, Shipchenski Monastery, and others. Our country is also famous for its well-established national traditions of icon painting and woodcarving. The best-known icons and carvings are from Samokov, Tryavna and Bansko.



The Bulgarian national costume is an intrinsic part of Bulgarian lifestyle and culture. Over the ages, folk costume designs have been influenced by Thracian, Slavonic and ancient Bulgarian motives. The basic article of clothing is a white shirt with long sleeves, worn under vests and coats of various shapes, materials and decorations. Each ethnographic area (Dobrich, Pirin, Rhodope, Northern, Thracian and Sofia) has its own typical workday, holiday and wedding costumes.



An important part Bulgarian culture is folk music and national dances, such as the *horó*. Instruments typically used to perform Bulgarian national music are the fiddle, the mandolin, the *kaval* (flute), the *gaida* (bagpipe), the pipe, the *dvoyanka* (double pipe), the drum and the taranbuka, another percussion instrument. Bulgarian folksongs are handed down orally from one generation to the next. The ensembles “Cosmic Voices”, “The Mystery of Bulgarian Voices” and the folklore ensemble “Pirin” are internationally famous. Bulgarian traditional dances are exceptionally vivid forms of artistic expression. Most often they are performed by a group of people touching palms in a closed or open circle, semicircle, serpentine pattern, or in a straight line. Participants perform similar movements in unison, along with gestures and steps to a specific melody.

Bulgaria’s museums preserve valuable collections of domestic, cultural, and military artifacts; statues, burial steles and monuments; masks, mosaics, and small statuettes of ancient gods; and many other precious exhibits.

Bulgarians have developed their culture and enriched it over the millennia, and they preserve it and continue to develop it to the present day. In more recent times, Bulgarians have also had reason to take pride in their literature, arts, music, and architecture. A proof of ongoing involvement is Bulgaria’s rich cultural calendar of national and international festivals for young and old alike, as well as other gatherings, cultural events, and expositions.

### **Civic laws and gender equality**

All citizens are equal before the law. No limitations on rights or privileges are allowed because of race, citizenship, ethnicity, sex, national origin, religion, education, beliefs, political affiliations, personal or social position, or property status. The state authority is divided into the legislative, executive and legal branches.

Bulgaria holds a leading position in Europe in the number of women working in the IT sector – 27%. 53% of the scientists and engineers in our country are women<sup>122</sup>. However, there is still a lot to be done in terms of reducing the gender pay gap and promoting equality in decision-making processes.

### **Health and security aspects**

Bulgaria has compulsory common healthcare insurance. All insured persons in Bulgaria select their family doctor (general practitioner), whom they visit when necessary. If the general practitioner is not competent to treat the illness, he or she provides written permission for the patient to visit a specialist also working with the National Health Insurance Fund. When visiting the general practitioner or the specialist recommended by the general practitioner, a small fee is paid. Children up to 18-years old, pregnant women, military personnel, and a few other groups are treated free of charge. There is a large number of specialized private offices and

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<sup>122</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/bulgaria>

medical clinics in the country. On receiving consultation and/or treatment at these facilities, patients pay the entire amount for the examination and/or treatment, regardless of whether they have health insurance.

If you need to contact the emergency services in Bulgaria call 112. English-speaking operators are available.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainable development is an important priority for the Government of Bulgaria. The country is committed to doing its part for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals both nationally and internationally. Bulgaria has already achieved a 20.53% share of renewable energy in gross final energy consumption and plans to raise that share to 27% by 2030.

## **4.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Bulgaria**

The advantages of the Bulgarian agritourism are determined by the clean and virgin nature, the varied landscape, the availability of numerous natural, historical and other places of interest, the unique culture, and hospitable population, motivated to offer tourist services. All four seasons are suitable for practicing agritourism. Each season has its own fascination and holds unexpected surprises for today's urbanized man. If you want to immerse yourself in a domestic atmosphere, lifestyle and customs, the country's agritourism places offer everything from educational activities to home-cooked meals. In addition, farm work never ends: the land needs to be tilled, the harvest gathered, the hay mowed and stacked, the cattle grazed and the cows milked. Dairy products such as butter, cheese, and yoghurt are still made at home according to old technologies, fruit and vegetables are grown, herbs and mushrooms picked, etc. There is also plenty to do inside the home: cooking according to traditional recipes, embroidery, and knitting. Depending on interest and possibilities, anyone is able to experience something new. Rural homes combine traditional furnishings with modern comforts and radiate coziness and warmth. The friendly hosts welcome their guests with the famous Bulgarian hospitality. The days are filled with good mood and unforgettable experiences.

The Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism (BAAT) provides supports partnerships for the sustainable development of alternative forms of tourism, including agritourism, at a regional and local level in order to preserve our natural, cultural and historical of the country<sup>123</sup>.

## **4.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organization in the field of Agritourism**

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<sup>123</sup> Bulgarian Association for Alternative Tourism, <http://www.baatbg.org/en/home/1/> (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022)

## National Legislation

The tourism policy in Bulgaria is founded on partnerships between government and local authorities, NGOs, business, and civil society, promoting opportunities for investment, new skills, jobs and stimulating competitiveness within the tourism industry. The Council of Ministers is the national body responsible for formulating national tourism policy in Bulgaria. The Ministry of Tourism implements policy and coordinates the activities of other ministries and institutions. The Ministry of Tourism is also specifically responsible for regulation, product development, marketing, research and information, external project funding, and supporting regional organisations.

The National Tourism Council (NTC) is the consultative body, which operates under the authority of the Ministry of Tourism. Its members include representatives of tourism-related ministries as well as national, regional, and local tourism associations, transport operators, and consumer bodies<sup>124</sup>.

Recent legislative changes have led to the establishment of nine Regional Tourism Management Organisations. The members of these include tourism associations, regional and municipal administrations, institutes, museums, scientific bodies and tourism schools. The Regional Tourism Management Organisations are responsible for regional tourism product development and marketing of the nine identified tourist regions in Bulgaria.

The main national legislative document in the field of tourism, including agritourism, is the Tourism Act, in force from 26 March 2013. The purpose of this Act is: to provide conditions for sustainable development of tourism and competitive national tourist product; create conditions for development of the specialized types of tourism – cultural, healthy, spa and wellness, rural, congress, for children and young people, adventurous, sport, hunting, golf etc.; introduce single criteria for carrying out tourist activities and provision of tourist services; provide protection of consumers of tourist services<sup>125</sup>. In addition, the Tourism Act makes provisions for local authorities to adopt tourism development programmes according to local resources and need, and establishes an Advisory Council on Tourism and a Municipal Commission to oversee the development of tourism related facilities<sup>126</sup>.

## Labour organisation

The country is a member of the International Labour Organisation since 16 December 1920<sup>127</sup>. In general, the labour organisation in the Republic of Bulgaria is

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<sup>124</sup> National Tourist Council, <https://www.tourism.government.bg/en/kategorii/nacionalen-svet-poturizm/national-tourist-council> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>125</sup> Tourism Act, <https://www.mrrb.bg/en/tourism-act/> (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022)

<sup>126</sup> OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/42d5df98-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/42d5df98-en> (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022)

<sup>127</sup> International Labour Organization, [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11110:0::NO:11110:P11110\\_COUNTRY\\_ID:102576](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11110:0::NO:11110:P11110_COUNTRY_ID:102576) (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022)



governed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy<sup>128</sup>. The Labour Code is the most important legislative document regulating all matters related to the general working conditions, individual employment contracts as well as the collective labour relations. The latest amendments to the Labour Code entered into force on 1 August 2022.

According to the administrative statistical data of the National Employment Agency, in January the unemployment rate in the country was 4.9%<sup>129</sup>.

Citizens of the European Union may work in Bulgaria without a work permit. All other foreign employees must hold a valid work permit. As a general rule, work permits are initially issued for a period of 1 year, but can be extended after that. There are numerous exemptions from the requirement to hold a work permit. Those exemptions with practical relevance include: foreigners with permanent residence in Bulgaria (unless a special regulation or international agreement exists for their position); members of the executive and supervisory board, managing directors and permanent representatives of corporations or branch offices of foreign corporations; representatives of foreign corporations which are members of the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry; no work permit is necessary for postings that take no more than three months, but the Bulgarian Employment Agency must be notified of this; and foreign staff from embassies, consulates, media representatives and international organisations. The Employment Agency, as part of the Ministry of Employment and Social Policy, is responsible for the issuance of work permits<sup>130</sup>.

#### 4.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism

Agritourism in Bulgaria is considered an important economic sector for the sustainable development of the rural areas and local communities. Rural Development in Bulgaria is managed nationally through the Bulgarian Rural Development Programme (RDP), funded under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)<sup>131</sup> and national contributions. Rural development funding through the EAFRD is part of a broader framework of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds)<sup>132</sup>, including also Regional Development, Social, Cohesion, and Fisheries Funds.

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<sup>128</sup> Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism, <https://www.mfsp.government.bg/eng> (accessed on 6 Oct. 2022)

<sup>129</sup> Labour Market Information: Bulgaria, [https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-bulgaria\\_en](https://eures.ec.europa.eu/living-and-working/labour-market-information/labour-market-information-bulgaria_en) (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>130</sup> Bulgarian Employment Agency, <https://www.az.government.bg/en/pages/za-nas/> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>131</sup> European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD), [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafrd\\_en#funding-opportunities](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development-eafrd_en#funding-opportunities) (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>132</sup> European structural and investment funds, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/european-structural-and-investment-funds_en) (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

The Bulgarian Rural Network<sup>133</sup> aims to improve the quality of the RDP while increasing the interest of the wider public towards rural areas. It also maintains, supports and structures the conversation between the authorities and the stakeholders.

In 2018, the Council of Ministers approved the updated National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Tourism in the Republic of Bulgaria to 2030<sup>134</sup>. The implementation of the Strategy is the responsibility of the Minister of Tourism. The most important challenges addressed by the Strategy are overcoming the seasonal and geographic concentration of Bulgarian tourism, encouraging the industry to be more sustainable, improving the qualifications and skills of the workforce, and upgrading and investing in new accommodation and other facilities. The Strategy's long-term objectives are to: establish a favourable business environment to develop sustainable tourism by updating the regulatory framework and reducing burdens on business; develop a competitive tourism sector by stimulating improvement in all types of tourism businesses to ensure high-quality products; position and promote Bulgaria in international markets; develop regional tourist areas by stimulating the growth of tourism SMEs and establishing destination management organisations in nine tourist regions across the country to ensure balanced growth.

Recently, America for Bulgaria Foundation announced a call for proposals, called Developing Agritourism in Northern Bulgaria request for proposals (RFP), aimed at selecting and funding 20 projects for the development of rural tourism in the country. The RFP attracted considerable interest, with a total of 356 submitted applications. The approved projects received up to 25,000 BGN in funding for activities attracting tourists and developing local economies, such as farm visits and experiences, food and crafts tours, culinary demonstrations, and farmers' markets with local products, among others.

#### 4.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Bulgaria

There are many public and private educational institutions in the country, both at secondary and tertiary (higher education) level, offering a wide range of courses related to alternative tourism, including also rural tourism. However, at present, there are no vocational and higher education training curricula, specialised in the providing training in Agritourism.

The Faculty of Business Management at the University of Forestry, Sofia, provides training in the specialty of Alternative Tourism<sup>135</sup>. The duration of the Alternative Tourism programme is 8 semesters, full-time studies. After finishing the program

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<sup>133</sup> Bulgarian Rural Network, [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networking/nrn-profiles/bulgarian-rural-network\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networking/nrn-profiles/bulgarian-rural-network_en) (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>134</sup> Strategy for sustainable tourism development in Bulgaria, [https://www.tourism.government.bg/sites/tourism.government.bg/files/uploads/strategy-policy/strategy\\_2014-2030\\_13\\_05\\_2014-sled\\_ms\\_26\\_05\\_2014.pdf](https://www.tourism.government.bg/sites/tourism.government.bg/files/uploads/strategy-policy/strategy_2014-2030_13_05_2014-sled_ms_26_05_2014.pdf) (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>135</sup> Alternative Tourism at the University of Forestry, <https://ltu.bg/en/faculty-of-business-management/education/bachelors/2144-alternative-tourism> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

successfully, students obtain a Diploma for Higher Education with the educational-qualification degree of Bachelor of Alternative Tourism, professional qualification: Economist in Tourism in the professional field: 3.9 Tourism.

Other university training programmes in the field of Alternative Tourism offered in the country:

- New Bulgarian University, Sofia – International Alternative Tourism, Master degree<sup>136</sup>.
- Neofit Rilski South-West University, Blagoevgrad - Management of Alternative Tourism Types, Master degree<sup>137</sup>.
- Technical University, Sofia – Management of Alternative Tourism, Bachelor degree<sup>138</sup>.
- Higher School of Security and Economics, Plovdiv – Tourism Economics, Bachelor degree<sup>139</sup>.
- Trakia University, Stara Zagora – Economics of Alternative Tourism, Bachelor degree<sup>140</sup>.

There are also a number of centres of continuing education in the country, which could offer a specialised agritourism courses on demand by the potential trainees. The activities of these training institutions, mostly private ones, are governed by the Bulgarian National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET)<sup>141</sup>.

#### 4.6. National and international Agritourism events

In Bulgaria, there are no specialised conferences or fairs, dedicated to Agritourism in particular. However, some of the events, organized in the country, may also include the topic of Agritourism.

**International Agricultural Exhibition AGRA** - the biggest economic event for agribusiness in Southeast Europe. This year the fair was held from 9 to 13 March, and attracted more than 40 000 visitors<sup>142</sup>.

**International exhibition Nature, Hunting, Fishing** – the event showcases segments of the green economy and the leisure industry. It is an arena of a wide variety of

<sup>136</sup> NBU, [https://ecatalog.nbu.bg/default.asp?V\\_Year=2021&PageShow=programpresent&P\\_Menu=generalinfo&Fac\\_ID=4&M\\_PHD=0&P\\_ID=3118&TabIndex=1](https://ecatalog.nbu.bg/default.asp?V_Year=2021&PageShow=programpresent&P_Menu=generalinfo&Fac_ID=4&M_PHD=0&P_ID=3118&TabIndex=1) (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>137</sup> SWU, <https://swu.bg/bg/127-mpcat/tourcatm/255-avtmbgart> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>138</sup> TU, <https://tu-sofia.bg/specialties/preview/703> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>139</sup> VUSI, <https://www.vusi.bg/priem-3/priem-kandidatstudentska-kampania/> (accessed in 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>140</sup> Trakia University, <https://trakia-uni.bg/en-US> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>141</sup> Bulgarian National Agency for Vocational Education and Training, <https://www.navet.government.bg/en/> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>142</sup> AGRA fair, <https://www.fair.bg/en/event/2022/agra-2022> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022).

products for hunting, fishing, alternative tourism and extreme sports, demonstrations and parallel events<sup>143</sup>.

**International Tourism Fair HOLIDAY & SPA** – the next edition will be organized from 15-17 February 2023 in Sofia<sup>144</sup>. Among the exhibitors promoting their destinations and tourist products at HOLIDAY & SPA EXPO, you can meet national and regional tourism boards, representative branch organizations, tour operators and travel agencies, hotels and resorts, spa & wellness centres, agencies developing eco and rural, golf, wine & gourmet, children and youth tourism. The fair attracts also manufacturers and suppliers of hotel, spa and fitness equipment, and specialized software; transport companies, attractions sites, art and sporting clubs as well as professional training centres, foreign language schools, publishers and media with travel industry focus.

#### 4.7. Conclusions

Agritourism in Bulgaria, being a type of rural tourism, is considered an important economic sector for the sustainable development of the rural areas in the country. Although alternative tourism education and training is part of different curricular and extracurricular educational activities in all levels of formal and non-formal education in Bulgaria, at present there is no specific training methodology and materials, tailored at providing the necessary theoretical knowledge, practical skills and competences to people working and/or living in rural areas of the country in the field of agritourism. Markedly, the innovative, customized set of training materials, planned by the *TreasureHunt* project partnership, will provide the project target groups with powerful training tools, aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills, competences and mind-set to turn creative ideas into entrepreneurial action in the field of Agritourism.

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<sup>143</sup> Nature, Hunting, Fishing fair, <https://www.fair.bg/en/event/2022/nature-hunting-fishing-2022> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

<sup>144</sup> <https://holidayfair-sofia.com/en/home/> (accessed on 10 Oct. 2022)

## 5. Agritourism in Spain – a Case Study

### 5.1. General information about Spain

#### History of Spain

Due to its geographical position, Spain has been the scene of a varied and rich history. The first modern humans settled in its territory more than 35,000 years ago. The Roman conquest began in 218 BC and initiated a profound process of cultural assimilation whose repercussions are still felt today. After the fall of the Western Empire, the territory of Hispania was conquered by Germanic tribes (Visigoths, Suevi and Vandals) and later by the Arabs. The Muslim presence on the peninsula lasted until 1492 with the fall of the Nasrid kingdom of Granada. The marriage of the Catholic Monarchs led to the dynastic union between the territories of the Crown of Castile and the Crown of Aragon. After the discovery and conquest of America, Spain became the leading European power and formed a great empire that extended over four continents. The Spanish presence in America forged strong ties between the two sides of the Atlantic, making Spanish the common language of more than 500 million people worldwide.

Today, Spain forms part of the group of countries with the most advanced level of development. It actively participates in the main international forums and organisations such as the UN, NATO, the OECD and the G-20. Spain is also a member state of the European Union, the world's leading economic bloc, and remains firmly committed to advancing the continent's integration.

#### About the Spanish territory

Spain is located in the southwest of Europe. It occupies 80% of the Iberian Peninsula as the remaining 20% belongs to Portugal. It is bordered to the north by the Cantabrian Sea, France and Andorra, to the east by the Mediterranean Sea, to the south by the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, and to the west by the Atlantic Ocean and Portugal.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/es/illustrations/mapa-espa%3b1a-provincias-geograf%3%ada-4121575/>

Spain's total surface area is of 505,957 km<sup>2</sup>; area which apart from the Iberian Peninsula includes the Balearic and the Canary Islands as well as the cities of Ceuta and Melilla (situated in Africa).

Spain has a population of more than 47 million, with a density of 92 people/Km<sup>2</sup>. Spain has one of the lowest density indices in the European Union, slightly higher than Greece and Ireland and six times lower than the Netherlands.

Spain is divided into 17 autonomous communities (Andalucía, Aragón, Asturias, Cantabria, Castilla y León, Castilla La Mancha, Cataluña, Comunidad Valenciana, Extremadura, Galicia, Islas Baleares, Islas Canarias, La Rioja, Madrid, Murcia, Navarra, País Vasco) and each of them counts with its own governing bodies and representative institutions. Apart from the 17 autonomous communities, Spain counts with 2 autonomous cities Ceuta and Melilla, situated at the north of Spain.

Madrid is Spain's capital. Its population is of 4 million 726 thousand inhabitants and houses some of the most important Spanish public administrative bodies and institutions such as the Congress of Deputies, the Senate, the House of Majesty or the National Library. Madrid is said to be a cosmopolitan city which combines both modern and old infrastructures and has an immense cultural and artistic heritage coming from the legacy of history.



Source:

<https://www.canva.com/photos/MAD0sCQGv1Y-photo-of-city-during-dawn>

## Language

Castilian (Spanish) is the language spoken throughout the country. However, other languages coexist in some areas of Spain, such as Catalan in Catalonia, Galician in Galicia, Basque in the Basque Country, Valencian in the Valencian Community, and the Balearic Islands' own variety of Catalan.

## Climate

Spain is very well known because of its temperate Mediterranean climate which results in dry summers and winters with balanced temperatures. Due to its location, Spain is one of the warmest countries in Europe although given its geographical diversity, there are many and constant changes in temperatures depending on the area where you are located. For example, if you travel to the north of the country, temperatures are usually lower than the country average and summers rarely exceed 25 °C whilst if you travel to the south of the country you will probably find very dry and warm temperatures reaching 45 °C during summer months.

It is worth mentioning that the peculiar location of the Canary Islands off the African coast, favours the existence of a mild climate with mild temperatures (22 °C annual average on the coasts), without great seasonal differences between day and night.



Not only this but Spain's geographical distribution favours the formation of snow during wintertime at its highest mountain points. Thus, there are several skiing stations in the territory.

### **Currency**

Before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2002, the currency used in the Spanish territory was the 'peseta', which was replaced by the Euro when Spain became an official Member State of the European Union.

### **Religion**

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Spanish Constitution, yet 70% of the population declares itself Catholic.

### **Spanish social pattern and culture**

#### **Political organisation**

Spain has a form of government called a parliamentary monarchy, in which a king is head of state, but the government is run by the legislature and the executive branches.

Spain's legislative power is in the hands of the *Cortes Generales*, made up of the Senate and the Congress of Deputies. The representatives of the Cortes are directly elected by Spaniards over 18 years of age every four years. The President is then elected by these assemblies and the investiture is performed by the King and Queen.

The candidate for president must be approved by at least a simple majority in the Congress of Deputies and will remain in office until one of the following variables occurs:

- Cessation of confidence of the deputies in the candidate;
- Legislative election;
- Dissolution of the chambers;
- Personal decision;
- Death.

#### **Spanish Culture**

Spanish culture is a miscellany that has been gathering and absorbing customs from the different peoples that have passed through the country over the centuries. These peoples have left their mark in many areas, in the customs of everyday life, in gastronomy, in literature, in politics and in art in general.

- **Spanish Art:** It is internationally renowned for its variety and quality. Artists such as Salvador Dalí, Pablo Picasso, Miguel de Cervantes or Federico Garcia Lorca have left us with impressive and worldwide known pieces of magnificent art, which form part of the Spanish culture.

- **Spanish gastronomy:** For billions of tourists around the world, gastronomy has become a central part of the tourist experience, and this makes Spain the destination par excellence. Spanish dishes mix the new and the old, the exotic and the familiar, sitting at the table is much more than simply sharing a meal, it is bonding, bringing people closer together, it is an excuse to get to know each other.

The Spanish gastronomy is a set of "chores" when it comes to preparing dishes, which has generated a very particular subculture marked by the incessant creativity of its participants. Tables are dotted with history and new and ingenious signature cuisine techniques, from chefs who have achieved international prestige through their flavours and imagination, known as contemporary cuisine. However, what really makes Spanish gastronomy special is the plurality and variety of products that exist in the different regions of Spain. Our popular knowledge coexists with the current curiosity of our chefs and gastronomic researchers, and it is in this crossroads where the authentic flavour of Spain is born.



Source: <https://www.canva.com/photos/MAENrtFfWry-fried-croquettes-on-blue-ceramic-plate/>



Source: <https://www.canva.com/photos/MAEiRCRHPCU-seafood-paella-in-pan/>

- **Spanish sports:** Spain is today an undisputed world reference in sport. "La Roja", as the Spanish national football team is known, is a national symbol that has crossed borders and continents, that has united generations and that has given hope back to that old idea of a team. However, despite this, we cannot limit ourselves to talking only about football. Spain's sporting greatness can be seen in a multitude of disciplines, such as badminton, canoeing, athletics, taekwondo, swimming, basketball and artistic gymnastics. The success of this company depends on the application of concepts that, once they are put into practice, have no limits. Values such as perseverance, collective effort, emotional development, responsibility, humility and dignity, among others, bring incalculable benefits to society.

## Spanish special activities and festivities<sup>145</sup>

**Flamenco:** It is a Spanish musical genre that developed in Andalusia, especially in the areas of Cádiz and its ports. It is one of the most popular artistic expressions in Spain and has been recognized by UNESCO as a heritage site.



Source: <https://www.canva.com/photos/MADQ5oz4Rgc/>

**Los San Fermín:** This is one of the most popular and traditional Spanish festivities, celebrated in Pamplona with bulls that run through the streets.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/es/photos/sanfermin%c3%adn-sanfermines-vivasanfermin-3587336/>

**Las Fallas:** Another of the most renowned Spanish festivities. It takes place in Valencia during the month of March. Big wooden sculptures are built and set in the middle of the cities' squares to be burnt on the last day of Fallas, the 19th of March.



Source: <https://pixabay.com/es/photos/pueblo-religión-arte-estatua-calle-3299174/>

**Los Carnavales:** The Carnival of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria is one of the oldest, most historic and distinctive festivals in Spain. In June 2011 it was declared a Festival of Tourist Interest in the Canary Islands and of National Tourist Interest in March 2017.

## Gender issues

In 2020, Spain achieved a score of 69.6 in the European Gender Equality Index (GEI), on a scale ranging from "0" (maximum inequality) to "100" (full equality). This score

<sup>145</sup> Características, 'Información y características España' <https://www.caracteristicas.co/espana/>



shows that Spanish society is still a long way from achieving full equality between men and women, according to the authors of the study, who point out that Spain is only slightly above the European Union index (66.3).

In the year 2020 when a study conducted by professor Mercedes Camarero, from the Department of Sociology of University Pablo de Olavide and Eduardo Bericat, of the Department from Sociology of the University of using the European Gender Equality Index (EGEI) from 2000 to 2020 was made, Spain ranked seventh in the EU gender equality ranking. Sweden and France, with a score of 76.0 and 74.0 respectively, occupied the first two places. The lowest scores in the European Gender Equality Index were for Malta (51.7) and Cyprus (51.8).

### **Health and security aspects**

Spain has the longest life expectancy in Europe and one of the lowest mortality rates, which suggests that public health and health care interventions are effective in preventing premature mortality, despite the lack of investment in the sector.

Notwithstanding, people living in rural areas struggle to have proper healthcare facilities and have to commute long distances in order to receive appropriate attention. Improving rural health care has been one of the Government's unresolved issues for years. A problem that the government intends to tackle through the '*Plan 130 Medidas frente al Reto Demográfico*', which will improve "the connectivity and equipment of essential public centres in rural areas such as hospitals and health centres".

### **Sustainability**

According to 2021's report on Sustainable Development, Spain sustains the 20<sup>th</sup> position out of 193 in the ranking of most sustainable countries<sup>146</sup>.

However, even though Spain has managed to improve its sustainable development systems, there is still a lot of work to do given that emissions from imports or threats to aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity embodied in imports are still a major problem.

### **Travel and transport in Spain**

According to data from the World Tourism Organisation, Spain ranks fourth on the list of countries with the most international tourists in the world. In 2019, almost 84 million residents abroad chose to visit the country, which was an all-time record for

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<sup>146</sup> El Ágora, 2021, 'España escala hasta el puesto 20 en desarrollo sostenible', <https://www.elagoradiario.com/desarrollo-sostenible/ods-agenda-2030/espana-escala-hasta-el-puesto-20-en-desarrollo-sostenible/>

arrivals.

Spain is a very rich and varied country. These are two factors that, together with its low prices comparison to neighbour countries in the European Union, make it a very attractive tourist destination for those who are willing to go on vacation.

Spain is the perfect place for both those who want to unwind in the mountains and those who want to unwind on the beach. Notwithstanding, we mustn't forget about those who want to become more educated in terms of Art, Spanish history or architecture (provided the great number of museums there are) and without forgetting about those who live for food (given the outstanding and varied gastronomy that the country offers).

Transport in Spain is characterised by an extensive network of roads, railways, airports and ports. The country has the longest network of expressways (including motorways and highways) in the European Union and the third longest in the world, behind only China and the United States. The railway network is characterised by a great interconnection between the different modes of transportation -urban, metropolitan and interurban lines-, which has earned it the consideration of being one of the best countries with access to the train in the world.

A benchmark in high-speed rail, it has the second most extensive high-speed network in the world, second only to China's. In terms of air traffic, there are a total of 52 airports (90% publicly managed), which handle more than 200 million people each year. In addition to this, there is an important network of ports on the coast, where the ports of Valencia (31st in the world in terms of container traffic) and Algeciras (31st in terms of container traffic) are located.

### **Transport to rural areas**

In towns of between 25,000 and 50,000 inhabitants it is difficult to design bus lines, because they only make sense when people can walk to the stops, but if this is not the case it is difficult to get people to use the service. However, in rural areas transport is an essential necessity given that people need to move either to access services that are not available in their home towns, for work or family reasons, or simply for leisure. This means that this obliges people to use their own private cars to move.

Tourists who want to visit rural areas can get to the biggest towns by bus; however, in order to get to some of the most remote places or to get to most agritourism, it is necessary for them to go by car.

At the beginning of 2022, a new mobility app called RuralCar, was developed with the main objective of facilitating mobility in sparsely populated areas where public transportation services may suffer. The app is the result of the collaboration between Red Eléctrica, the association El Hueco and Fundación La Caixa. It is basically a collaborative platform through which the inhabitants of remote areas can contact their neighbours who may have similar destinations, and ask them if they

could share the ride (car pooling), i.e., to ask someone to drive them to the medical centre, to carry out a procedure or to visit a relative.

## 5.2. Introduction to Agritourism in Spain

The Real Spanish Academy defines agritourism as *“Rural tourism, especially that which includes agricultural and livestock activities.”*<sup>147</sup> Thus, the meaning of agritourism is clear: that type of tourism focused on discovering and enjoying the rural and natural environments that surround human beings.

The Spanish territory is a perfect spot for practicing agritourism activities due to its impressive rural and ethnographic heritage; each village is distinguished by its agricultural, cultural and linguistic traditions. In addition to the latter, there are marvellous and varied landscapes that can be enjoyed throughout Spain with temperatures that accompany these type of activities. These factors have favoured the creation of a wide range of well-cared accommodation located all over the country, which is easy to book. Many of the activities associated with agritourism take place in stunning protected natural areas such as National Parks.

If you like rural tourism, Spain offers several possibilities such as rural houses, rural flats, rural hotels, hostels, holiday villas, rural campsites, farm-schools for children and even uninhabited villages.

The most characteristic aspect is that each area has a typical accommodation. For example, in the Basque Country and Navarra, it is more common to go to farmhouses; in Galicia to *pazos*, in Catalonia to *masías* (country houses); in Extremadura to guesthouses; in the Balearic Islands to agritourism estates; in Asturias to manor houses, etc. These are all places where rural tourism is usually complemented with other activities such as: artistic routes, stargazing, massages, adventure sports... Spain's good climate means there are activities all year round.

Some of the most typical agritourism activities in Spain include:

- Feeding farm animals, milking the cows, collecting hens' eggs, donkey rides for the little ones, shearing a sheep, being a shepherd for a day, looking after the horses;
- Watering the plants, harvesting vegetables, taking part in tilling the soil, growing organic produce;
- Making wine or cider;
- Learning how to find mushrooms, walking along trails;
- Making food such as jams, curds, yoghurts, cheese or honey.

Here are some examples of the different agritourism activities that can be practiced

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<sup>147</sup> Real Academia Española, agritourism definition, <https://dle.rae.es/agroturismo>



along different Spanish regions<sup>148</sup>:

1. **Navarre:** It is a region located to the north of Spain which offers very interesting hiking itineraries that run between beautiful tourist spots (such as the Pyrenees) and which make it easy to visit sheep farms, traditional farmhouses, interpretation centres, cheese dairies, wineries, olive oil museums or truffle museums.
2. **Euskadi:** It is another region located on the northern coast of Spain, which is very famous for its gastronomic traditions. There are many agritourism places where tourists are invited to make natural cider or Idiazabal Cheese and then taste it.
3. **Asturias:** also in northern Spain, Asturias is famous for the Apple and Cider Routes and the chance to attend craft, jewellery, leather and wood workshops.
4. **Galicia:** in northwest Spain you can embark on a fishing boat and spend a day with the whole crew.
5. **Malaga:** in villages very close to the Costa del Sol you can attend workshops on how to make products, dress olives or take a donkey ride through typical streets.
6. **La Rioja:** it is a very famous region for its wine cellars. The best plan is to get a guided visit through the wine cellar and then have a wine-tasting experience.

### 5.3. Applicable national legislation and labour organisation in the field of Agritourism

In first place, we must mention that agritourism is not regulated by one single general law. In fact, it is regulated by many specific laws that have been created by 11 of the 17 Spanish autonomous communities, which we will see and analyse below.

The following standard requirements apply equally to all communities<sup>149</sup>:

- All the necessary permissions and licenses to run a place where agritourism activities are practiced must be up-to-date;
- In case there is accommodation, the capacity must be of a minimum of 4 people. The minimum area of single rooms shall be 6 square meters and the minimum area of double rooms must be 12 square meters;
- There must be electricity and hot water available;
- First-aid kit and fire extinguisher.

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<sup>148</sup> Spain's official tourism website, 'Agrotourism', <https://www.spain.info/en/discover-spain/agrotourism-spain/>

<sup>149</sup> Idealista/news, 'Practical guide to setting up a rural house and taking advantage of trends in the tourism industry', 12 september 2018.

In addition to the latter it is essential to have a feasibility plan in order to open a rural establishment; a study, which must show all the strengths and weaknesses of the business, as well as the development plan of a commercial strategy. The feasibility plan shall include the following:

- **Location:** it is important to analyse if the area is attractive, if there is easy access and if there is coverage.
- **Facilities:** furniture available in the house, access for the disabled and whether it is necessary to renovate the rural house.
- **Competition:** you should know if there are other rural houses in the area.
- **Consumers:** who is your ideal client in the area.
- **Services included in the rural house:** excursions or the sale of typical local products, for example.
- **Communication:** you have to implement a good advertising strategy so that your rural house reaches everyone, as they are usually located in remote places.
- **Necessary staff:** for the management, cleaning and maintenance of the house.

Below you have a table showing the different decrees applicable to the different territories that have legislated agritourism/rural tourism<sup>150</sup>:

Community	Decree	Date
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<sup>150</sup> ASETUP, 'Normativas vigentes en materia de Turismo Rural en España', <http://asetur.blogspot.com/p/legislacion-y-tipologias.html>

Comunidad Autónoma	Legislación	Promulgación
Andalucía	Decreto 20/2002	29 de enero
Aragón	Decreto 69/97	27 de mayo
	Decreto 247/2008	23 de diciembre
Principado de Asturias	Decreto 143/2002	14 de noviembre
Islas Baleares	Decreto 62/1995	2 de junio
	Orden de 13 de octubre de 1.995	
Islas Canarias	Decreto 18/1998	5 de marzo
	Decreto 39/2000	15 de marzo
Cantabria	Decreto 31/1997	23 de abril
Castilla La Mancha	Decreto 93/2006	11 de junio
Castilla y León	Decreto 84/95	11 de mayo
	Orden de 27 de octubre de 1995	
Cataluña	Decreto 214/95	27 de junio
	Decreto 313/2006	26 de julio
Comunidad de Madrid	DECRETO 117/2005	20 de octubre
Comunidad Valenciana	Decreto 188/2005	2 de diciembre
Extremadura	Decreto 87/2007	8 de mayo
Galicia	Decreto 191/2004	29 de julio
	Decreto 142/2006	17 de julio
	Ley 7/2011	27 de octubre
La Rioja	Decreto 11/94	24 de febrero
	Decreto 6/1995	2 de marzo
	Decreto 26/2000	19 de mayo
	Ley 2/2001	31 de mayo
Murcia	Decreto 111/2003	10 de Octubre
	Decreto 76/2005 Corrección de errores Orden de 20 de julio de 2006	24 de junio
Comunidad Foral de Navarra	Decreto Foral 243/1999	28 de junio
Euskadi	Decreto 128/1996	28 de mayo
	Decreto 191/1997	29 de julio
	Decreto 210/1997	23 de septiembre

As a summary of the main features that characterise Spanish agritourism regulation in different communities, based on a comparative study by Dr. Francisco Javier Melgrosa Arcos<sup>151</sup>, we can say that:

- The 11 aforementioned autonomous communities have regulated rural accommodation as a differentiated product from conventional accommodation. However, in some cases, the rules for the latter are supplementary to those of rural accommodation.
- Most autonomous communities have modified their first enacted legal texts to facilitate the adaptation and promotion of supply, generally by making the requirements for facilities and the requirements to be a developer more flexible. For example, the requirement for the owner to be a resident in the municipality has been eliminated, although in some autonomous regions there is some pressure from developers to avoid what they consider to be a form of intrusiveness that goes against the essence of rural tourism, and they

<sup>151</sup> Melgosa Arcos, F. J. “La regulación del turismo rural en España”, en la obra colectiva “Derecho del turismo iberoamericano”, coordinada por DIEGO BENÍTEZ, Ed. Libros en Red (Amertown Internacional), Buenos Aires (Argentina) 2010 (Págs. 489 a 598).

propose establishing requirements for links with the municipality where the establishments are located.

- The existence of different regional regulations reveals a great diversity of accommodation typologies. Although the Spanish term "casa rural" (rural house) is the most common term used, each Autonomous Region has specific typologies, normally adapted to the peculiarities of its rural architecture. Some of the other of the most common terms used are: rural hotel, tourist lodge, tourist apartment, rural camping etc. This heterogeneity, which, on the positive side, is a demonstration of the richness and variety of the Spanish territory, entails some disadvantages, such as the confusion it creates among consumers, or the difficulty of marketing it abroad as well as the different regulations they are linked to depending upon the denomination received. For example, an agritourism business, labelled as a rural hotel, will refer to the rules for hotel accommodation, but with specific conditions laid down in the laws or regulations on rural tourism.
- There is a disparity in the criteria used in terms of the minimum requirements for facilities and the maximum capacity of rooms or places per accommodation offered.
- The recovery and conservation of cultural heritage is an essential point to which all autonomous legislations have paid attention to whilst drafting it.

**For more information on the regulation of a specific autonomous community please search for its decree.**

## 5.4. Funding opportunities in Agritourism in Spain

### Funding opportunities at an EU level

According to the official webpage of the European Commission, from January 2023 onwards, European countries can include tourism-related investments in their Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) strategic plans. These investments can include interventions linked to rural infrastructure and territorial economic development, to the renewal of villages or actions aimed at the conservation of historical places such as chapels or bridges, to the boosting up of leisure, recreational or agritourism activities and other similar interventions that contribute to improvement.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development has three main long-term rural development objectives for the

EU which include<sup>152</sup>:

- Fostering the competitiveness of agriculture;
- Ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action;
- Achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities, including the creation and maintenance of employment.

The Common Agricultural Policy uses the EAFRD as its main funding instrument. The allocations for the period concerning 2021 to 2027 MFF and 2021-2022 EURI (EAFRD-Next Generation EU) amount to around €387 billion in current prices.

The 2023-2027 CAP allocation will mainly be spent on the implementation of the CAP strategic plans. Its rural development component (EAFRD) can be implemented at the latest by the end of 2029. While the European Commission approves and monitors rural-development programs (RDPs), decisions regarding the selection of projects and the granting of payments are handled at national or regional levels.

### **Funding opportunities in Spain**

Similarly to the Spanish regulation in the field of agritourism, funding opportunities aren't equal in every community. This means that each autonomous community has developed its own funding schemes according to their needs and wants.

Below are some of the main grants and subsidies that can be requested to set-up rural accommodations. However, before reading them it is important to mention that in some cases, the possibility of obtaining funding opportunities for rural houses requires that the accommodation has been operating for at least 2 years or that applicants commit to maintain the activity for a 5-10 year period.

Main grants<sup>153</sup>:

- Grants for the digital transformation of tourism SMEs, i.e. for the creation of the company's website;
- Subsidies to manage or improve the company;
- Aid to promote business investment;
- Subsidised loans.
- Subsidies for the sending of data by tourism companies collaborating

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<sup>152</sup> European Commission, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/funding-guide/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development\\_en](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/funding-guide/european-agricultural-fund-rural-development_en)

<sup>153</sup> Jaime Salvador Vital, 2022, 'Ayudas y subvenciones para casas rurales', <https://ayudas-subvenciones.es/blog/ayudas-y-subvenciones-para-casas-rurales/>

- in statistical operations;
- Annual subsidies from the Ministry of Industry, Energy and Tourism.

For more information on specific grants in given autonomous communities please look up in the official pages.

## 5.5. Training opportunities in Agritourism in Spain

In first place, we must mention that in Spain there isn't a specific Agritourism university degree. However, there is a wide offer of tourism degrees which can be found both in private and public universities as well as master degrees that do specialize in agritourism practices such as for example the master degree in Rural Tourism and Local Development offered by the INESEM Business School<sup>154</sup> or the master degree in Rural Accommodation offered by Euroinnova<sup>155</sup>.

The SEPE (State Public Employment Service), an autonomous body attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Economy which, together the Public Employment Services of Autonomous Communities, form the National Employment System, promotes, designs and develops measures and actions for employment in a decentralized way that tries to adapt policies to different territorial realities. In what concerns agritourism, the SEPE offers a great variety of certified courses in the fields of tourism and hotel industry management and in particular, they offer one called 'rural accommodation' which can be found by clicking on the following [link](#).

This course is mainly aimed at teaching entrepreneurs who own mountain refuges or hostels that provide accommodation, catering or rural activities how to market their facilities and services, using, where appropriate, a foreign language, to take responsibility for the operation and surveillance of the establishment, collaborating with the public services operating in the area, and, depending on the location of the refuge or hostel, to manage safely in the mountain environment.

The main units tackled by this course are:

- Manage and carry out the reception service in accommodation in rural and/or natural environments.
- Assist as first responder in the event of an accident or emergency situation.
- Act according to safety, hygiene and environmental protection standards in the hotel and catering industry;
- Manage and market mountain huts and mountain lodges' own services;
- Maintain the facilities of the mountain refuge or hostel in a good state

<sup>154</sup> [https://www.inesem.es/Master-Turismo-Rural-Desarrollo-Local?gclid=Cj0KCQjw94WZBhDtARIsAKxWG-9QIDD-hi1gAN2GpHd-uK78t4A6gXxCRrXOlwryC6s6aqPqykdQQD0aAh-CEALw\\_wcB](https://www.inesem.es/Master-Turismo-Rural-Desarrollo-Local?gclid=Cj0KCQjw94WZBhDtARIsAKxWG-9QIDD-hi1gAN2GpHd-uK78t4A6gXxCRrXOlwryC6s6aqPqykdQQD0aAh-CEALw_wcB)

<sup>155</sup> [https://www.euroinnova.edu.es/master-comercializacion-de-alojamientos-rurales/amp?gclid=Cj0KCQjw94WZBhDtARIsAKxWG-9H-YMMEs3NaiX-uZMwgFJYRU4rka3-REtEK0pOL7wpnc-tqF1xBQaAhzcEALw\\_wcB](https://www.euroinnova.edu.es/master-comercializacion-de-alojamientos-rurales/amp?gclid=Cj0KCQjw94WZBhDtARIsAKxWG-9H-YMMEs3NaiX-uZMwgFJYRU4rka3-REtEK0pOL7wpnc-tqF1xBQaAhzcEALw_wcB)



- of use and ensure the functioning of its systems and equipment;
- Monitor the mountain refuge or hostel and ensure its communication, in collaboration with the public services operating in the area;
  - Progress safely through mountain terrain, especially in tasks of collaboration with emergency services and provisioning of mountain refuges and shelters, in tourist activities;
  - Communicate in a foreign language, with an independent user level.

To know more about the duration of each module and the requirements to access it please click on the file 'rural accommodation' that you will find on the following [link](#).

Apart from this agritourism course offered by public Spanish institutions, there are other courses that can be freely accessed online by users such as 'Ecoturismo', course offered by femxa – This is an online course that will last 60 hours in total addressed towards workers, self-employed people and those affected by an ERTE, in the hotel and tourism sector.

## 5.6. National and international Agritourism events

Spain hosts quite a lot of events related to rural tourism. Some of the main events that will be taking place during the following months of 2022 and the following year are:

1. INTUR (trade fair in Valladolid)<sup>156</sup>: INTUR is a trade fair celebrated in Valladolid. It was created with the aim of promoting inland tourism among its citizens and visitors from other parts of Spain and abroad. Representatives of tourism institutions, tour operators, travel agencies, hotel chains and rural accommodation, theme parks and spas attend INTUR to present their services and publicise the leisure and cultural possibilities offered.
2. ARATUR (trade fair in Zaragoza)<sup>157</sup>: ARATUR is a fair trade celebrated in Zaragoza. It is the fair used to promote tourism activities (adventure, culture, water, mountain and other activities).
3. Expotural (trade fair in Madrid)<sup>158</sup>: Expotural is the place where visitors are invited to discover an endless number of nature destinations, ecotourism activities and getaways, active tourism and many other new

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<sup>156</sup> <https://www.nferias.com/turismo-rural/espana>

<sup>157</sup> <https://www.nferias.com/turismo-rural/espana>

<sup>158</sup> <https://www.ifema.es/expotural/que-es>

initiatives in the field of sustainable tourism. With more than 50 direct exhibitors presenting their proposals for your next trips and getaways in nature that you can hire with special fair promotions, in addition to learning, discovering and discovering new activities

4. Naturcyl (trade fair in Castilla and León): The Ecotourism Fair of Castilla y León NATURCYL celebrated its first edition in 2018. Without interruptions in these years, in 2022 it will celebrate its V edition from 23 to 25 September 2022 in the hamlet of Ruesga, municipality of Cervera de Pisuerga in the province of Palencia, in the surroundings of the Natural Park Montaña Palentina. NATURCYL is one of the most important national forums for the promotion of ecotourism.

## 5.7. Conclusions

In conclusion, Agritourism is a growing industry in Spain and it is carried out in the different regions of the country. Each region can offer a variety of activities that help with the development of the agricultural sector. In fact, Spain is a very diverse country when it comes to climate, languages, culture, etc. and because of such diversities, not all of the agricultural experiences that can be done in the country are the same. Many things differ in each part of Spain; from the type of accommodation you can find to the activities you can take part in. This characteristic makes Spain an ideal and attractive place to carry out all kinds of agricultural activities.

Moreover, each Spanish region has a different framework of support measures for agricultural development, as there are different decrees applicable to the different territories that have legislated rural tourism.

In addition, when it comes to training, there isn't a specific university degree for Agritourism in Spain. However, there is a wide offer of tourism degrees, which can be found both in private and public universities and where students can learn about rural tourism.

Lately the Spanish territory has become a perfect spot to hold events related to Agritourism. In this way the country intends to create a strong network of consumers and entrepreneurs united through fairs and events. Nowadays, different kinds of events can be found in the country, from fair trades to events where visitors are invited to learn and discover destinations, activities that can be done, etc.