

FUTURE OF TOURISM INDUSTRY IS GREEN



Environmentally friendly holidays are becoming increasingly popular these days and tourism related businesses are aware of that. This is perhaps the reason for the development of rural tourism and also agritourism in the Czech Republic. Tourists most interested in the offer are from the Netherlands.

To be environmentally friendly is more important for tourism industry than ever these days. Hotels as well as tour operators struggle to gain a 'green' certificate proving that they are environmentally friendly. Ecology is therefore no more just a good thing for the environment but also for business. **A natural form of sustainable tourism has always been the rural tourism.** In the Czech Republic such tourism is connected with picking fresh vegetables directly from one's garden with bird singing around or perhaps with horse rides. Most Czechs who want to enjoy such holiday usually spend it at their cottages. Besides these tourists, there are also others who prefer short stays in private rooms, small camps or guest houses.

Another concept of 'green' tourism is agritourism. Tourists can directly participate in the activities that took place on a farm. They help feeding animals or working in the garden. Such holiday is especially interesting for families with children who love the contact with animals. Agritourism has already developed in Italy, France and Ireland. **In the Czech Republic it is starting to appear in Bohemia, especially in the Bohemian Forest (Šumava).** Among other Czech regions where you can find such tourism are the Highlands, Bohemian Paradise or Moravian Wallachia.

As the Czech Tourism agency reports, the Union of the Rural Tourism does not have any statistics about the number of tourists going on such holiday. **According to the members of the Union, the most numerous group of foreign tourists are the Dutch,** even though their numbers have dropped slightly in few recent years. Germans visit mostly the south-west and north-west of the Czech Republic whereas north is popular among Polish tourists. From the neighboring nations, Austrians are the least attracted to the Czech countryside.

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