

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: HOLIDAYS IN RURAL-, AGRO-, ECO- MODE

Sustainable tourism is governed by the principles of sustainability, with the purpose of minimizing the impact on the environment and local culture.

It is said that sustainable tourism is not just another type of tourism, but also rather the objective to which all types of tourism should aspire. **However, in this sense, the current reality of tourism has little to do with the objectives set by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).**

On the other hand, there are several reasons why sustainable tourism is growing in popularity. Some of them are:

Social awareness. More and more people are concerned about environmental issues. Impact of the industry. The tourism market is beginning to realize the negative impact on the environment generated by tourism activity itself. Customer demand. Visitors are no longer satisfied with anything and this makes the demand for quality products and services higher. Consequently, a greater effort is required to remain competitive in the market. External pressure. Environmental groups exert pressure on public opinion regarding the effects of tourism activities. Every year, society, in general, becomes more aware of the need to preserve the planet and companies must respond with exemplary conduct.

There are several types of sustainable travel - responsible tourism, solidarity tourism, agrotourism, ecological- and rural tourism.

Responsible Tourism

Responsible tourism is defined as a social movement that seeks to establish sustainable tourism development models specific to each destination area. Its objective is to demand the responsibility of tourists, guides, hosts and public institutions to promote sustainable tourism models.

It also denounces the negative impacts that tourism may have on the environment and the inhabitants of the area visited.

The European Alliance for Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (EARTH) project defines responsible tourism as: "Any specific tourism product or tourism production system in which tourists, local actors and suppliers assume responsibility for the host destinations from the environmental, cultural, social and economic viability point of view".

Solidarity Tourism

Its main objective is to generate benefits for the local population and allow tourists to learn about the socio-political reality of the place they are visiting. The proposal arose from the NGOs in the destinations where they carry out projects.

Agrotourism

Agrotourism is the type of tourism that offers direct contact with traditional agricultural activities, in which the farmer benefits from his economic activity through agriculture and tourism. Raising animals and planting food are some of the activities carried out in this type of tourism.

Ecological Tourism

According to the environmental organization Greenpeace, ecotourism is a type of tourism that contributes to sustaining the well-being of the local population, conserving their environment and biological diversity, and requires the least possible consumption of resources.

In other words, these are the trips whose main purpose is the interaction, knowledge and contemplation of nature, and participation in its conservation and preservation.

Rural Tourism

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) states that sustainable rural tourism is a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is linked to a wide variety of products generally related to nature, agriculture, rural lifestyles, and cultures.

Sustainable rural tourism offer has occurred for three reasons. First, there has been a decline of conventional tourism. The drive for environmentalism has got stronger. Finally, the misnamed commodification of nature.

In other words, rural tourism is nothing more than the set of all the activities that can be carried out outside the urban perimeter with the greatest possible contact with nature. Its main objective is to contribute to local development, for example, through agricultural work such as raising chickens and fish, thus reducing the impact of seasonal tourism and avoiding mass tourism.

A Movement in Demand

Several studies explain the growing demand for sustainable tourism around the world. For example, TripAdvisor, through a survey conducted in 2012, indicated that 71% of respondents said they would make environmentally friendly choices that year.

On the other hand, another study in 2012 revealed that **almost half of the world's consumers would be willing to pay more for products from companies that demonstrate a commitment to social responsibility.**

This is how caring for the environment is becoming a plan on many travelers' agendas.

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