

# AGRITOURISM BRANCHES OUT



Flexibility of choices is one of the modern-day luxuries available for any holiday planning. Travelers who long for a bit of rural diversity combined with unique culinary experiences and outdoor leisure activities need not look further. Agritourism is what they need.

An ideal holiday means one can get exactly what one wants. For some, the dream is lying on a beach next to a 5\* hotel, many long for a fun city break or a trip around galleries and museums. Adventurers praise high mountain peaks, wild rivers or deep valleys. There is also a compromise between a comfortable city holiday and a challenging, action-packed trip. **Agritourism** is the answer. It **involves ecotourism, rural and ethnic tourism, culinary experiences, country recreation or even geo-tourism**. The choices vary from country to country, but the sector is growing rapidly.

The great advantage is its diversity. **It may mean spending a holiday in a village house on a lake, a lovely villa overlooking a winery, or even a farm where visitors work to stay**. In fact, an initiative called 'Volunteers on the Farms' has been running similar programs across the world for some time now, and is currently supported by 33 countries. Travelers not only see but experience what life on a farm is truly about.

Most agritourists are looking for an escape from the city and long for a new cultural experience. Visiting a striking natural setting and staying in a cozy cottage is a welcome option for many. Often, there are many opportunities for leisure activities. Hiking, fishing, horseback riding, and snowmobiling are welcome choices.

**European countries have been building up a network of establishments which focus on agritourism**. Italy has a very long tradition and especially Tuscany has gained a glamorous agritourist status. Thousands of picturesque villages scattered around the seaside sound lush; visitors come to see the popular pasta farms, olive groves, and wine plantations.

Czech Republic attracts beer lovers who explore the Pilsen region and its brewing traditions; however horse farms or even goat farms are slowly appearing; making goats cheese is not on a daily tourist menu, after all. Bulgaria counts as one of the more frequented destinations. There are 100 agritourist farms there, as well as rural coaching inns, family hotels and cottages. The country's varied landscape is inspiring and all seasons have something special to offer.

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