

# TOP FIVE RURAL TOURISM TRENDS FOR SMART MARKETERS



UNWTO declared 2020 as the Year of Tourism and Rural Development. Tourists that are sustainable and care for the environment, as well as those looking for well-being getaways, will be interested in the main trends in rural tourism this year, compiled by Tourism Review based on the study of Escapada Rural.

## Sustainable Traveler

Ecotourism and the profile of the sustainable traveler are on the rise. Nowadays, and according to data from the Observatory of Rural Tourism, most rural travelers (55%) say that enjoying nature in a responsible way is a priority when choosing holiday destinations.

In fact, the eco-tourist traveler profile is one of the trends in rural tourism that has grown the most in recent years and will continue to do so this year.

The rural travelers will plan their getaways better to discover out-of-season destinations, leaving the rush aside to focus on local life, enjoying products and services from local initiatives, making responsible consumption during the stay, and sharing and spreading these values within the traveler community. The rural tourist will look for sustainable ways of traveling, with low environmental impact and respecting the natural and social environment.

## Well-being: Time for You and the Environment

Embarking on rural tourism means enjoying well-being activities, and the rural traveler of this new decade will choose to escape to nature, thinking about relaxation first, but also allowing time for adventure.

In fact, according to data from the last Observatory of Rural Tourism report, staying in a rural house with accessible and safe facilities is the highest priority of the traveler (51%), followed by the friendliness of the owner (43%) and the possibility of enjoying wellness equipment and services (36%).

The routine, worries, daily work and family problems create stress, which is the greatest pandemic of the 21st century. For this reason, it is not surprising that wellness tourism leads the preferences of travelers.

In this sense, the rural traveler will seek to disconnect technologically during their escapades, trying out trends such as Digital Detox - refraining from using digital devices, like smartphones and other gadgets.

Another trend that supports conscious and transformative tourism, with the goal of having travelers who practice it find a balance between physical well-being, emotional health, and spiritual peace, is Mindfulness Travel. In 2020, the rural traveler will look for physical well-being, but will also take care of his/her mind and soul.

## Senior Tourists in the Spotlight

The priorities and profile of the senior tourist have changed a lot in recent years. Nowadays, this tourist profile is an active, dynamic part of the population eager to make the most of the time, which is completely different from their way of life a few years ago. In this decade, age is no longer an obstacle to seize an opportunity.

Today, people of retirement age are reevaluating this stage of their life to adopt new experiences, activities and discoveries, and 2020 will put them in the spotlight.

This group represents a niche market of interest for rural tourism since 39% of senior travelers, according to the Observatory of Rural Tourism, make a long trip every six months, and 44% have taken part in at least two rural getaways in recent years. Other interesting facts are that 35% of senior tourists travel with their partner, and 73% prefer mountain destinations.

This is a traveler profile without work commitments but with purchasing power, which invests 10 euros more on average in rural accommodations than other travelers. They are more demanding customers because they know what they want, are willing to discover new destinations, and have the economic capacity and time to do it.

## Rural Tourism and Women

The role of women is becoming greater in the rural setting, with the implementation of business ventures led by them. The rise of rural tourism, as well as the activities that encompass it, are an excellent opportunity. This is also true for travelers, who will have the opportunity to learn about this reality. In 2020, rural establishments will be managed mostly by women.

Today, many rural establishments are managed by women who are taking advantage of the business opportunities offered by the rural environment to offer routes, workshops, tastings, and more, that can help them complement their agricultural and livestock work.

## Industry Specialization

In 2020, the industry must look towards specialization in order to stand out from competitors and offer the best service. The rural traveler is increasingly asking for customized options, which require owners to focus on a niche market to gain competitiveness and distance the industry away from seasonality.

In this regard, the strong demand of the traveler in recent years will mark the beginning of a substantial change for rural tourism. Requests such as traveling with pets or interest of rural travelers in taking part in activities related to wine and local food, such as wine and culinary tourism, will contribute to promoting the idea of specialization in this industry.

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