

9 – TOURISM

There were 4,102,000 tourists staying in hotel-type accommodation on the island of Sicily over the course of the year 2009, 2.5% fewer than in the previous year, with the number of overnight stays (a total of 13,765,000) also down on figures for 2008. The previous year had been characterized by a fall of 8.9%, and the figures for the year 2009 also showed a loss for both components (foreign and Italian). In 2009 the average length of stay (3.4 nights) was a little higher than the figures for the three previous years, but lower than the national average (3.9 nights). The above-mentioned dynamics resulted in only slight changes in the percentage totals for these two tourist components, with the number of foreign visitors varying over time from 37.0% to 39.1%.

Sicilian hotels operating in 2009 provided accommodation for 3,542,000 tourists (38% of whom were foreigners), totalling 11,542,000 overnight stays (the average length of stay being 3.3 nights). A comparison with 2008 reveals a fall with regard to both arrivals and the number of overnight stays. With regard to Italian nationals, there was a fall in the number of arrivals (-1.6%) but overnight stays (+0.1%) remained more or less stable, the average length of stay being about 3.1 days. With regard to foreign tourists in the same period there was a fall of 6.3% in arrivals and a 4% drop in overnight stays, with the average length of stay being slightly longer (3.5 days).

With reference to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily (camp-sites, tourist villages, holiday homes, agritourism accommodation, youth hostels, etc), overall arrivals totalled 560,000 (+4.3% over 2008) with a little over 2,200,000 overnight stays, a 0.7% rise over the previous year. The average overnight stay for this category of structure is 4 days, a little longer than that for the hotels (3.3 nights). With reference to collective non-hotel accommodation, the figures for arrivals for Italian tourists (67.5%) and overnight stays (71.1%) as a percentage of the whole, are much higher than those for visitors from abroad.

At the Provincial level, in 2008, with regard to hotels, the provinces of Messina (3,408,000 overnight stays), Palermo (2,624,000) proved the most attractive destinations. Much further behind, but with over 1,000,000 overnight stays, we find Catania (with 1,236,000), Agrigento (1,127,000) and Trapani (1,219,000). At the bottom of the pile we find the Provinces of Enna (91,000) and Caltanissetta (173,000), with the number of stays totaling a mere 2.3% of the overall tourist flux on the island. The highest average length of stay for 2009 is, once again, recorded in the Provinces of Ragusa (4.2 nights), followed by Messina (3.8), Trapani (3.5, equal with Caltanissetta) and Siracusa (3.7,) with the Provinces of Catania and Enna bringing up the tail (2.4 and 2.3 nights respectively).

With regard to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily, the data for

2009 shows that tourists preferred to stay in establishments situated in the Provinces of Messina (614,000 overnight stays), Catania (445,000) and Trapani (395,000), which together accounted for 65.4% of overnight stays in the Region. Data regarding the average length of stay shows the highest figures for the Provinces of Messina (4.8 days), and Catania (4.4 days).

Figures for tourism in 2010 show that there were 1,271 hotels in Sicily, (3.7% of the national total), 11 more than in the previous year. The number of rooms exceeded 54,000 units (an increase of 502 rooms), over 53,000 equipped with bathrooms (579 more than in 2009).

There were 121,799 hotel beds available in Sicily, 5% of the national figure, and an increase of 2,434 units. The availability of sleeping-places offered by camp-sites and tourist villages was down by 1,216 over the previous year, as it was in other non-hotel establishments (-1,066).

The Province of Messina had the most hotels in 2010 (403, accounting for 31.7% of the Regional figure). Other Provinces in Sicily with a significant number of hotels were Palermo, with 218 (17.2% of all hotels in Sicily), followed by Trapani with 188 (14.8%). The provinces of Enna and Caltanissetta bring up the tail, with their total of 38 structures accounting for a mere 2.9% of the total. With regard to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily the Province of Messina (with a 27.9% share) again topped the table, with 29.5% of total sleeping-places; it was followed at some distance by the Provinces of Trapani and Palermo (with 17.3% and 14.4% of collective non-hotel accommodation respectively) and with 17.3% and 14% of the Regional total of available beds. The Province of Siracusa had 12.5% of collective non-hotel accommodation, and provided 9% of all available beds.

Glossary

Arrivals: number of visitors, Italian and foreign, staying in holiday accommodation (hotel or complementary) during the period in question.

Average stay: ratio of number of nights' stay to number of visitors arriving at accommodation (arrivals).

Hotels: singly-run establishments open to the public, which provide lodging, usually meals and other supplementary services, in bedrooms in one or more buildings or a part thereof. They can be hotels categorised with from 1 to 5 stars, or other collective tourist accommodation.

Hotel-type accommodation: hotels (1 to 5 stars), villages, tourist villages, boarding- houses, motels, period residences, historical houses, beauty farms and

all other categories of accommodation, which can be included in this category (on the basis of Regional regulations).

Other collective accommodation (non-hotel): duly registered Commercial Business Registry rented accommodation, camp-sites, tourist villages, agritourism, youth hostels, holiday homes, communal alpine refuges, other accommodation.

Overnight stays: the number of nights spent by guests in accommodation.

Star classification system: categorisation of hotels from 1 to 5 stars:

- 5-star luxury: luxury hotels of international class standard.
- 5-star: luxury hotel
- 4-star: first-class hotel
- 3-star: second-class hotels and first-class boarding houses.
- 2-star: third-class hotels and second-class boarding houses
- 1-star: fourth-class hotels and third-class boarding houses.

The minimum requisites for a hotel to be classified are: accommodation consisting of at least 7 rooms; at least one bathroom for every ten beds; a washbasin with (hot and cold) running water in each room; a common room; technological installations and an adequate number of qualified staff.

Tourist: whoever travels to a place differing from his usual environment and spends at least one night in that place.

Tourist accommodation: all hotels and other collective accommodation

Further reading

Publications

Italian Statistical Yearbook – 2011 - ISTAT

Travelling in Italy and abroad in 2006-2007 - ISTAT

Tourism statistics 2002 - ISTAT

Report on tourism in Sicily– incoming national and international fluxes 2008-2009– Regional Department for Tourism, Communications and Transport

Internet

www.regione.sicilia.it

Tourist flux – 2009

Figures for tourist accommodation in Sicily -2010

con.istat.it

Hotel figures

<http://www.istat.it>

Regional indicators for development policy

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2011 – Chapter 18: “Tourism”

Capacity and flux of tourist accommodation – 2009

Annual data for agritourism accommodation

www.starnet.unioncamere.it

Thematic area– Tourism – Analysis and data

www.uic.it

International tourism analytical data

Statistical bulletin

www.isnart.com

National Institute for Tourist Research – Data-banks

Tourism observatory