

## 9. Tourism

There were just over 4,300,000 tourists staying in hotel-type accommodation on the island of Sicily over the course of the year 2012 (+2.8% over the previous year), with the number of overnight stays (a total of 14,218,000) also up on figures for 2011. In 2012 the average length of stay (3.3 nights), was the same as in the previous year 2011, the national average being 3.7 nights. In 2012 Italians represented 58.8% of arrivals and 55.7% of overnight stays, whilst foreign visitors accounted for 41.2% of arrivals and 44.3% of overnight stays (0.3 was the average length of stay in this case).

Sicilian hotels operating in 2012 provided accommodation for 7,246,000 tourists (70.5% of whom were foreign), totaling 11,793,000 overnight stays (the average length of stay being 1.6 nights). A comparison with 2011 reveals a rise in both arrivals and the number of overnight stays, due solely to the foreign component. With regard to Italian nationals, there was a fall in both the number of arrivals (-1.1%) and overnight stays (-3.2%), with the average length of stay being about 3 days. With regard to foreign tourists in the same period, figures showed increases in both arrivals (+4.2%) and in overnight stays (+5.9%), with the average length of stay being slightly longer (3.5 days) than that of Italians..

With reference to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily (camp-sites, tourist villages, holiday homes, agritourism accommodation, youth hostels, etc.), overall arrivals totaled 677,000 (+13.4% over 2011) with a little over 2,400,000 overnight stays, a 4.4% rise over the previous year. The average overnight stay for this category of structure was 3.6 days, a little higher than the figure for hotels (3.2 nights). With reference to collective non-hotel accommodation, the figures for arrivals of Italian tourists (+60.7%) and their overnight stays (+63%) as a percentage of the whole, are much higher than those for visitors from abroad. At the Provincial level, in 2012, with regard to hotels, the Provinces of Messina (3 million overnight stays) and Palermo (2,730,000) proved the most attractive destinations. Much further behind, but with over 1,000,000 overnight stays, we find Catania (with 1,416,000), Agrigento (1,129,000) and Trapani (1,463,000). At the bottom of the pile we find the Provinces of Enna (92,000) and Caltanissetta (187,000), with the number of stays accounting for a mere 2.4% of the overall tourist flux on the island. The highest average length of stay for 2012 was recorded in the Provinces of Ragusa (4 nights, a little higher than Messina, with 3.9), followed by Caltanissetta (3.8) and Siracusa (3.7), with the Provinces of Catania and Enna bringing up the tail (2.3 nights).

Data for 2010, with regard to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily, shows that tourists preferred the Provinces of Trapani (621,000 overnight stays), Messina (456,000) and Catania (455,000), which together

accounted for 63.1% of overnight stays in the Region. Data regarding the average length of stay shows the highest figures for the Provinces of Caltanissetta (4.8 days) and Messina (4.5 days).

Figures for tourism in 2012 show that there were 1,363 hotels operating in Sicily (4% of the national total), 11 more than in the previous year. Although the number of rooms exceeded 56,000 units this represented a decrease of 190 rooms compared to 2011; over 55,000 were equipped with bathrooms (34 more than in 2011). There were 127,256 hotel beds available in Sicily, 5.7% of the national figure, and representing an increase of 855 units. The number of sleeping-places provided by camp-sites and tourist villages (32,776; +0.7%) increased when compared to the previous year, as it did in other non-hotel establishments (41,740; +2.6%).

The Province of Messina boasted the most hotels in 2012 (425, representing 31.2% of the Regional figure). Other Provinces in Sicily with a significant number of hotels were Palermo, with 225 (16.5% of all hotels in Sicily), followed by Trapani with 190 (13.9%). The provinces of Enna and Caltanissetta bring up the tail, with their total of 43 structures accounting for a mere 3.1% of the total. With regard to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily the Province of Messina (with a 31% share) again topped the table, followed at some distance by the Provinces of Palermo and Trapani, with 13.7% and 16.7% of collective non-hotel accommodation respectively, and with 14% and 17.1% of the Regional total of available beds. The Province of Siracusa provided 11.8% of collective non-hotel accommodation, and provided 7.2% 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. These hotels may be categorized with from 1 to 5 stars, or take the form of 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: categorization 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 – 2013 - ISTAT

Travelling in Italy and abroad in 2006-2007 - ISTAT

Tourism statistics 2002 - ISTAT

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

## **Internet**

[www.regione.sicilia.it](http://www.regione.sicilia.it)

Tourist flux – 2010-2012

Figures for tourist accommodation in Sicily -2012

[con.istat.it](http://con.istat.it)

Hotel data

<http://www.istat.it>

Regional indicators for development policy

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2013 – Chapter 18: “Tourism”

Flux of tourist accommodation – 2010

Capacity of tourist accommodation – 2012

Annual data for agritourism accommodation

[www.starnet.unioncamere.it](http://www.starnet.unioncamere.it)

Thematic area– Tourism – Analysis and data

[www.uic.it](http://www.uic.it)

International tourism analytical data

Statistical bulletin

[www.isnart.com](http://www.isnart.com)

National Institute for Tourist Research – Data-banks

Tourism observatory