

9 – TOURISM

During the year 2007 there were 4,614,000 tourists in hotel-type accommodation on the island of Sicily, 1.3% more than in the previous year, whilst the number of overnight stays remained stable when compared to 2006 (a total of 14,602,000). After a marked rise in 2006, the figures for the year 2007 were generally stable, due in no small measure to the foreign component. In the last five-year period, a general upturn was recorded in both arrivals and overnight stays, though with varying increases. The average for overnight stays in 2007 (3.2 nights) was the same as the figure for 2005 and 2006, but lower than the national average (3.9 nights).

Classifying the visitors by nationality reveals that the number of Italian nationals fell by 2.2%, with 8,677,000 visitors, compared to a 3.9% increase in the number of foreigners (5,925,000 visitors). Between 2002 and 2007 the number of overnight stays registered by Italians rose by 9.2%, whilst there was a greater increase in the number of foreign visitors (13.9%). These statistics generate only slight changes in the percentage totals of these two tourist components, with the number of foreign visitors rising from 37% to 40.6%. Hotels operating in 2007 provided accommodation for a little under 4 million tourists (39.8% of whom were foreigners) totalling about 12,300,000 overnight stays (the average length of stay was 3.1 nights). A comparison with 2006 reveals a stable situation with regard to both arrivals and the number of overnight stays. On the other hand, analysis of the statistics by nationality reveals slight differences in trends. In fact, with regard to Italians, there was a fall in both the number of arrivals (-1.9%) and overnight stays (-3.1%) with an average length of stay of about 2.9 days. On the other hand, there was a different trend in the figures for foreigner tourists (+1.6% for arrivals, +3.9% overnight stays); the average length of stay was also slightly longer (3.3 days).

With regard to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily (camp-sites, tourist villages, holiday homes, agritourism accommodation, youth hostels etc), overall arrivals totalled 618,000 (+12.7% over 2006) with a little under 2,300,000 overnight stays, a 2.5% increase over the previous year. The average overnight stay for this category of structure is 3.7 days, a little longer than that for the hotels (3.1 nights). However, for collective non-hotel accommodation for Italian tourists the percentage figures for arrivals (71.5%) and overnight stays (73.1%) are much higher than those for visitors from abroad.

At the Provincial level, in 2007, with regard to hotels, the provinces of Messina (3,551,000 overnight stays), Palermo (3,156,000) proved the most attractive destinations. Much further behind, but with over 1,000,000 overnight stays, we find Catania (with 1,390,000 days stay), Trapani (1,242,000) and Siracusa (1,044,000). At the bottom of the pile we find the Provinces of Caltanissetta (95,000) and Enna (84,000), with the number of stays barely totalling 1.5% of the overall tourist flux. The average length of stay is highest in the Provinces of Ragusa (4.2 nights), Messina (3.8), Trapani (3.3) and Siracusa (3.1,) with the Province of Enna bringing up the tail (1.8 nights).

With regard to collective non-hotel accommodation, the data for 2007 shows that tourists preferred staying in establishments situated in the Provinces of Messina

(675,000 overnight stays), Trapani (499,000) and Catania (450,000), which together account for 70.8% of overnight stays in the Region. In fact, data regarding the average length of stay shows the highest figures for Messina (5 nights), and Catania (44.2 nights). With regard to figures for tourist facilities, in 2008 there were 1,208 hotels in Sicily, (3.4% of the national total), 37 more than in the previous year. The number of rooms exceeded 53,000 units (an increase of 1,587 rooms), equipped with 51,400 bathrooms (1,492 more than in 2007). There were 116,972 hotel beds available in Sicily, 5.3% of the national figure, and an increase of 3,223 units. The availability of sleeping-places offered by camp-sites and tourist villages (200) was also up on the previous year, and above all in other non-hotel establishments (7,001). This is probably explained by an increasing tendency on the part of the customer to investigate new types of accommodation, such as agritourism and B&B, which are less expensive and more accessible.

The Province of Messina had the most hotels in 2008 (379, accounting for 31.4% of the Regional figure). Other Provinces in Sicily with a significant number of hotels were Palermo, with 208 (17.2% of all hotels in Sicily), followed by Trapani with 174 (14.4%). The provinces of Enna and Caltanissetta bring up the tail, with their total of 40 structures accounting for a mere 3.3% of the total. Almost 41% of collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily was located in the Province of Messina (with 29.9% of beds), followed at some distance by Catania and Palermo (with 14.3% and 11.4% of collective non-hotel accommodation respectively) and with 14.7% and 13.1% of the Regional total of available beds. The Province of Trapani had 10.2% of collective non-hotel accommodation, representing a figure of 14.8% 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 – 2009 - ISTAT

Travelling in Italy and abroad in 2006-2007 - ISTAT

Tourism statistics 2002 - ISTAT

Report on tourism in Sicily– incoming national and international fluxes 2005-2006

– Regional Department for Tourism, Communications and Transport

Internet

www.regione.sicilia.it

Tourist flux – 2007

con.istat.it

Hotel figures

<http://www.istat.it>

Regional indicators for development policy

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2009 – Chapter 18: “Tourism”

Capacity and flux of tourist accommodation – 2005

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