

9 – TOURISM

There were 4,205,000 tourists staying in hotel-type accommodation on the island of Sicily over the course of the year 2008, 8.9% fewer than in the previous year, with the number of overnight stays (a total of 13,938,000) also down on figures for 2007. With regard to arrivals, after a 1.3% rise in 2007, the figures for the year 2008 showed a 9% loss for both components (foreign and Italian). In 2008 the average length of stay (3.3 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 activity brought about only slight changes in the percentage totals for these two tourist components, with the number of foreign visitors rising from 37.9% to 39.9%.

Sicilian hotels operating in 2008 provided accommodation for 3,668,000 tourists (39.2% of whom were foreigners), totalling 11,732,000 overnight stays (the average length of stay being 3.2 nights). A comparison with 2007 reveals a fall with regard to both arrivals and the number of overnight stays. With regard to Italian nationals, there was a marked fall in the number of arrivals (-7.3%) and a lesser drop in overnight stays (-2.7%) with an average length of stay of about 3.1 days. There was a similar picture for foreign tourists (-9.6% for arrivals, -7.2% overnight stays), with the average length of stay being slightly longer (3.4 days).

With regard to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily (camp-sites, tourist villages, holiday homes, agritourism accommodation, youth hostels, etc), overall arrivals totalled 537,000 (-13.1% over 2007) with a little over 2,320,000 overnight stays, a 3.8% drop over the previous year. The average overnight stay for this category of structure is 4.1 days, a little longer than that for the hotels (3.2 nights). For Italian tourists the figures for arrivals (67.6%) and overnight stays (71.3%) as a percentage of the whole, at collective non-hotel accommodation are much higher than those for visitors from abroad. At the Provincial level, in 2006, with regard to hotels, the provinces of Messina

(3,408,000 overnight stays), Palermo (2,939,000) proved the most attractive destinations. Much further behind, but with over 1,000,000 overnight stays, we find Catania (with 1,247,000) and Trapani (1,234,000). At the bottom of the pile we find the Provinces of Enna (103,000) and Caltanissetta (119,000), with the number of stays barely totalling 1.9% of the overall tourist flux on the island. The average length of stay is highest in the Provinces of Ragusa (4.2 nights), Messina (3.8), Trapani (3.4) and Siracusa (3.7,) with the Province of Catania bringing up the tail (2.3 nights).

With regard to collective non-hotel accommodation in Sicily, the data for 2008 shows that tourists preferred staying in establishments situated in the Provinces of Messina (614,000 overnight stays), Trapani (420,000) and Catania (416,000), which together accounted for 65.7% of overnight stays in the Region. Data regarding the average length of stay shows the highest figures for the provinces of Siracusa (5.3 nights), and Catania (4.4 nights).

Figures for tourism in 2009 show that there were 1,260 hotels in Sicily, (3.7% of the national total), 52 more than in the previous year. The number of rooms exceeded 53,000 units (an increase of 836 rooms), 52,500 equipped with bathrooms (1,134 more than in 2008). There were 119,365 hotel beds available in Sicily, 5.4% of the national figure, and an increase of 2,393 units. The availability of sleeping-places offered by camp-sites and tourist villages was down by 3,795 over the previous year, but up in other non-hotel establishments (+248). This is probably due to 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 2009 (387, accounting for 30.7% of the Regional figure). Other Provinces in Sicily with a significant number of hotels were Palermo, with 217 (17.2% of all hotels in Sicily), followed by Trapani with 174 (13.8%). The provinces of Enna and Caltanissetta bring up the tail, with their total of 37 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 27.3% share) again topped the table, with 31% of total sleeping-places; it was followed at some distance by the provinces of Trapani and Palermo (with 18.9% and 14.1% of collective non-hotel accommodation respectively) and with 18.5% and 13.6% of the Regional total of available beds. The Province of Siracusa had 12.3% of collective non-hotel accommodation, and provided 8.7% 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 – 2010 - ISTAT

Travelling in Italy and abroad in 2006-2007 - ISTAT

Tourism statistics 2002 - ISTAT

Report on tourism in Sicily– incoming national and international fluxes 2006-2007– Regional Department for Tourism, Communications and Transport

Internet

www.regione.sicilia.it

Tourist flux – 2009

con.istat.it

Hotel figures

<http://www.istat.it>

Regional indicators for development policy

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2010 – Chapter 18: “Tourism”

Capacity and flux of tourist accommodation – 2008

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