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# COUNTRY SIDE TOURISM



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For most people who live in a town, this is a distant dream: waking up at the sunrise, opening a window and breathing deeply — not an atmosphere precociously corrupted by smoke and odour where the strident sound of horns and the deafened noise of exhausts cross each other, but the healthy fresh air of the mornings in the country in a close contact with nature.







Surrounded by noise and confusion, propelled restlessly under the rhythm of traffic and watch, how many times can we enjoy that simple pleasure of tasting, without hurry, the silence of a morning in the country? The answer, in most cases, is always the same: almost never.

Nevertheless we need that close contact with nature. Our own body demands, from time to time, "a return to origin". And the mind can't rest without the silence, the quiet and peace that nowadays can only be found in the country.

That is the use of holidays and week-ends, of course. But, it is equally true that we hardly succeed in doing without habits and comforts which – so think most people – can only be found in towns or at a place of holiday, built similarly to them.

Therefore, we rarely go to the country during our free times. Attached to the cinemas, the restaurants, the constant presence of crowd, we don't consider without hesitating the possibility of passing some of those precious free days far from our habitual atmosphere.

After all, we have some good reasons for that. Beyond the contact with nature and the country stillness, we are mainly afraid of the monotony, the lack of amusements and motifs of interest, when the question is to choose a place to pass our holidays or just a week-end. Besides this, there are other aspects which relegate the rural areas to an inevitable (and unfair) second place, where the tourism is concerned: the non-existence (or ignorance) of hotel accommodation having the least conditions to be available and the generalised idea that there is nothing to be done (or to be seen) in the country.





## INITIATIVES

However there are lots of things that a tourist coming from the town may see and do in the country. Without pretending to exhaust the roll, he may hunt, fish, ride on horse, attend (or even for the less timid participate) in rural activities, discover in place the real handicraft-industry or the real folk-lore. Or just enjoy the stillness under the shadow of a tree.

Monotony and lack of interesting motives, as you may see, are not necessarily appanage of the country. But, in fact, for the common town-dwellers, even when they are plenty of good will, all these agreeable suggestions are rather difficult to be put into practice.

To hunt and to fish, for instance, we must have convenient places; to discover the traditions of a country, we must know it; and to ride it is absolutely necessary to have a horse. And not considering some rare exceptions the common town-dweller is far beyond any of these conditions. However, many of them would like to run away for some time from the saturated atmosphere of the town where they live and submit to a rest-cure in the quiet atmosphere of the country without rushing or bustling about.





Just to solve this difficulty, some organisations of a similar kind have appeared lately in some foreign countries with the purpose of improving the rural tourism, by welcoming those people who might be interested in it and giving them possibility of enjoying all the motives of interest which the country may offer.

In Italy, for instance, the Agriturismo-Associazione Nazionale Agricoltura e Turismo – has been trying to improve a great many initiatives in this way, with a view basically to increasing the economic and social standard of country-people.

In Spain they have been encouraging some families from the town to visit inhabitants of rural areas.

In Holland, some “touristic farms” have been set up, and there guests take part in agricultural workers’ life and tasks, and organize collective trips and “poneys” or caravans, like those of American Far West.

In France, Belgium and Hungary riding trips in the most picturesque and beautiful regions are specially suggested.



### SEDUCING POSSIBILITIES

Among us, the possibility of taking advantage of the potentiality of some of our rural areas for touristic purposes has recently begun being studied, due to the initiative of the State Department for Information and Tourism. And the results of this study begin coming to light. Some initiatives have already become a reality, others are taking shape and are expected to begin working within a short time.

The first areas comprehended in this new kind of tourism are on the one hand the "montes" of Alentejo because of their excellent situation, landscape and climate.

On the other hand, the area of Rio de Mouro, which on account of being near the capital, is specially suitable for a quick development.

Near Évora, Monte das Flores, the large mansion of a farm was turned into an inn, with capacity for lodging a good many people in a cosy atmosphere, which is not inferior to the traditional hospitality of our country people. Besides the peace, the silence and the pure air of the plain of Alentejo, its guests have the possibility of taking part in several activities of the life on the farm or of taking advantage of a large number of initiatives of different kind.







## ACTIVITIES FOR EVERY TASTE

In fact, activities capable of contenting the most different and opposite tastes have been foreseen; among them, we may point out: trips on horseback or in a cart through the country and several kinds of hunting, including harehunting and partridge-hunting on horse and with a gun. The riding schools already available and still to set up are perfectly furnished and provided with animals specially trained for several purposes, both for experienced riders and beginners.

Those who don't like riding, may play tennis in modern and well-cared courts or refresh themselves in swimming-pools or even to apply themselves to fishing in rivers and brooks, for all these things are included in the "rural tourism".

After all, we shouldn't forget what is perhaps the most important thing: the pleasure of waking up at the sunrise, far from the rushing of towns and the traffic noise, of opening the window and breathing the pure air of the country around us. As the proverb says, it gives health and perhaps it even makes us grow up.



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