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TOURISM



In 2006, almost 58.5 million non-Spanish tourists chose Spain as a holiday destination, a 4.5% increase on the 2005 figure. Total tourist expenditure rose by 4.8 percentage points, despite a drop in average expenditure per tourist. Thus, while tourists spent an average of € 872 during each stay in 2004, the figure fell to € 857 in 2006. Broadly speaking, the figures for 2006 confirm the positive trend in tourism world-wide, which witnessed 842 million visits by international tourists and an increase of 4.5%. This percentage coincides with the figure for Spain and is higher than the European average (3.9%). These data confirm that Spain is the world's second-biggest tourist destination in terms of both tourists received and revenue contributed to the country's balance of payments.

The United Kingdom, Germany and France are well established as Spain's main sources of visitors, making up 61% of entries into the country. Six Autonomous Communities (Catalonia, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Andalusia, Valencia and Madrid) accounted for 90% of all visits. Andalusia recorded an all-time peak in 2006, receiving 14.6% of all visits by international tourists.

Tourists resident in Spain undertook a total of 155.7 million journeys within the country (93.58%) and 10.7 million journeys abroad (6.42%). Whilst the former fell by 3.1%, the latter rose by 1.6%. The most popular



destination with residents in Spain was Andalusia, followed by Catalonia and Valencia. None of the Autonomous Communities had fewer visitors than the previous year. The number of tourists received outside the summer season increased by 5%, which helped to distribute visits throughout the year. In other words, the sector is becoming less seasonal, which is a key factor in achieving sustainability.

INDICATOR	GOAL	TREND
Number of foreign tourists per resident	Monitor the number of tourists and their relationship with the host population	All-time peak reached in 2006
Number of foreign tourists per kilometre of coast	Minimise the impact of the presence of foreign tourists on the coast	Tourist numbers on the coast are increasing
Tourist Population Equivalent (TPE) compared against resident population	Achieve a balance between the TPE and host population (at state, regional, local level)	Despite the increase in tourists in 2006, the TPE fell in relation to 2005 due to a reduction in the number of overnight stays and an increase in the population
Number of visitors to National Parks	Preserve National Parks from excessive tourist pressure	After a drop in 2005, the number of visitors is now rising
Rural tourism: accommodation, capacity, tourists and overnight stays	Monitor rural tourism infrastructure and services according to the principles of sustainable rural development	Very positive increase in the rural tourism offering since 2001

The aforementioned figures also confirm a trend that has been emerging for some time now: more foreign non-residents visit Spain, but stay a shorter time and spend a higher average amount per day (91 in 2006, representing a 2.7% rise), hence the fact that the sector continues to grow despite the lower average overall expenditure. In addition, 46% of total expenditure was concentrated in the summer season (June- September).

As regards modes of transport used to reach Spain, in 2006, 72.6% of international tourists (42.4 million visitors) travelled by air, representing an overall rise of 4.2%. It is important to highlight a new factor that has emerged in recent years: the increasing volume carried by low-cost airlines (LCAs), which were used by 31.6% of all visitors, compared to 68.4% for traditional airlines. Nevertheless, traditional airlines' share grew by 3.8%, thus bringing the decline of recent years to an end, whilst LCAs increased their share by 14.7%.

As far as tourism's social benefits are concerned, and according to official figures provided by the Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (*Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales*), 1,829,224 people are employed in tourism-related activities, i.e. hotels and catering, and travel agencies (wholesale and retail). This represents a 4% increase on the previous year.

On 19 October, the European Commission presented its Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism (COM 2007, 621 final). The Agenda represents a further contribution to implementation of the Lisbon Strategy and the new Sustainable Development Strategy. In view of this sector's importance to Spain's economy, the country's Public Administration has been paying more attention to the development of tourism and to matters such as adapting it to the environment, demand and, more recently, to sustainability. Within this context, mention should be made of the Integral Quality Plan for Spanish Tourism 2000-2006 (PCTE 2000 – *Plan Integral de Calidad del Turismo Español 2000-2006*), which replaced the Competitiveness Framework Plans (*Planes Marco de Competitividad*) that were in place until 1999. These Plans were drawn up at the end of the 1980s as a response to the crisis affecting the sector.

Recently (in November 2007), the Cabinet approved the Spanish Tourism Plan – Horizon 2020 (*Plan del Turismo Español Horizonte 2020*) proposed by the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (*Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio*), which involves a strategic short- and medium-term review of the Spanish tourism sector. Its purpose is to increase the competitiveness and sustainability of the Spanish tourism system by 2020 whilst ensuring maximum social welfare.

The Plan's goals are to: increase the social and financial benefits of tourism; redress the social and territorial balance and boost tourism in new destinations; improve the

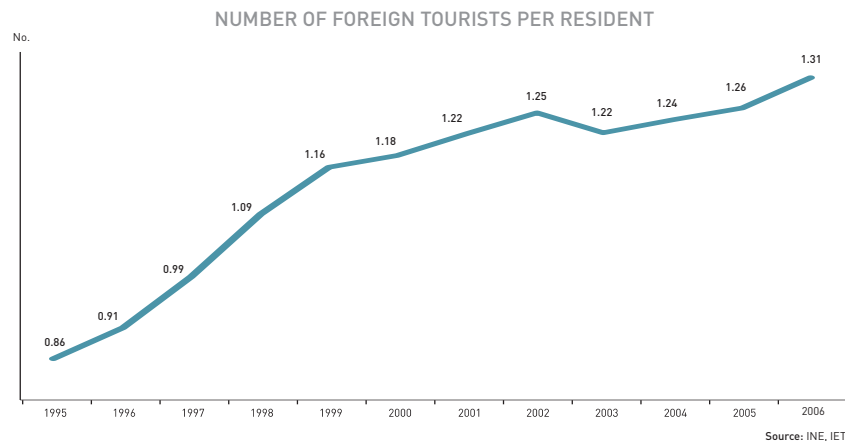
quality of the natural environment and cultural setting and reduce the impact of tourism on the environment and the cultural and social setting in tourist destinations. The Plan has been designed around five broad strategic themes, one of which is sustainability.

Its implementation is due to begin early in 2008 with a 4-year plan — the Spanish Tourism Plan 2008-2012 (*Plan de Turismo Español 2008-2012*). This is a framework plan that provides a context for co-operation and collaboration and enables the Public Administration to work on the various tourism-related issues that lie within its respective areas of authority. Creation of this Plan has been based on widespread consensus and has involved participation by over 35,000 industry professionals. The budget for 2008 amounts to over €322.7 million, 22% more than for 2007.

The following sections present indicators portraying the increase in the number of foreign tourists per resident, modes of transport used to travel to Spain (with a growing predominance of air travel), the number of foreign tourists per kilometre of coast, changes in the Tourist Population Equivalent (i.e. the visiting population as a proportion of the host population), and the number of visitors to National Parks. This edition also includes a new indicator showing changes in rural tourism.

Number of foreign tourists per resident

The overall number of foreign tourists visiting Spain increased by 4.5% in 2006 in relation to the previous year, although seven Autonomous Communities received fewer visitors than in 2005



The indicator shows the number of foreign tourists per resident visiting the country each year, and as can be seen on the graph, the overall trend is a steady rise. Despite the financial benefits of an increase in tourists, their arrival also leads to greater resource and energy consumption, more waste generation, expansion of infrastructure to provide services, greater land cover, more pollutant gas emissions, etc. This rising trend therefore has a very significant impact on the environment.

The above is heightened by the distinctly seasonal nature of tourism in Spain, concentrating environmental pressures during a short period of time and thereby exacerbating the situation and, at times, exceeding the environment's carrying capacity. However, in 2006, the increase in the number of tourists arriving outside the summer season was higher (5%) than that of tourists travelling to Spain during the summer period (4%).

The break-down of non-Spanish tourists by Autonomous Community shows that, in relation to 2005, the number of tourists increased in ten Autonomous Communities and decreased

in the others. Those that saw an increase include Murcia (with a 16.4% rise on the previous year), followed by Madrid (14.7%), the Basque Country (9.1%) and Catalonia (6.9%), whilst Rioja, Navarre and Asturias are among those which experienced a drop in numbers.

As regards modes of transport, air travel continues to be the most popular option chosen by tourists, accounting for 72.6% of all travel in 2006 (showing a slight decrease of 0.8% in relation to the previous year), compared to 23.7% of visitors who chose to travel by road, 3.2% by sea and 0.5% by rail.

Comparing Spain with other nearby countries, the number of tourists per resident is similar to that of France in 2004 (1.26) and somewhat lower than that of Italy (1.54). It must, however, be remembered that the average pressure exerted by tourists nation-wide is much lower than that seen in traditional tourist areas and, in particular, in the islands.

The only mode of transport which approaches sustainability targets is rail, which has seen a clear decline since the end of the 1990s, when it reached its peak, and not even then did it account for more than 1% of tourist arrivals. In 2006, fewer than 300,000 foreign tourists travelled to Spain by rail.

NOTES

- Tourist: any person travelling to a place other than his/her usual place of residence, who stays at least one night for a purpose other than the exercise of paid activity.
- Carrying capacity of an area: concept used with reference to the sustainability of tourism, defined as the maximum number of tourists that can visit a tourist destination at the same time, without this causing economic, socio-cultural or environmental damage and without a decrease in the visitors' satisfaction [UNEP].
- The Agenda for a Sustainable and Competitive European Tourism (COM 2007, 621 final), of 19 October, invites all participants to:
 - Take a holistic and integrated approach.
 - Plan for the long term.
 - Achieve an appropriate development rate.
 - Involve all stakeholders.
 - Use best available knowledge.
 - Minimise and manage risk (applying the precautionary principle).
 - Reflect impacts in costs.
 - Set and respect limits where appropriate (recognising carrying capacity).
 - Undertake continuous monitoring.

SOURCES

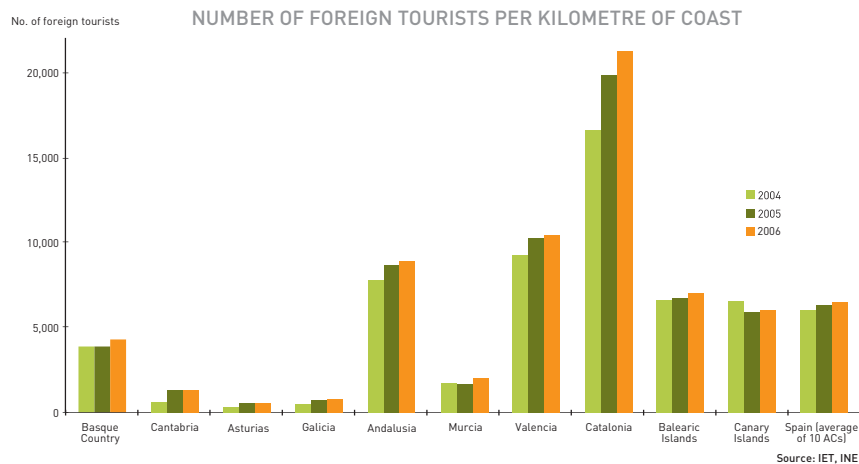
- Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies (IET – *Instituto de Estudios Turísticos*). Balance of Tourism in Spain 2006 (Balance del turismo en España en 2006).
- Spanish Border Survey of Inbound Tourism (FRONTUR – *Movimientos turísticos en fronteras*).
- Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE – *Instituto Nacional de Estadística*). Inbound Tourism. Tourist Arrivals by Autonomous Community 2005-2006 (*Turismo receptor. Entrada de turistas por CCAA 2005-2006*).

FURTHER INFORMATION

- <http://www.iet.tourspain.es>
- <http://www.tourspain.es/es/Home/ListadoMenu>
- <http://www.ine.es>

Number of foreign tourists per kilometre of coast

The number of tourists per kilometre of coast continues to rise, reaching 6,632 tourists in 2006

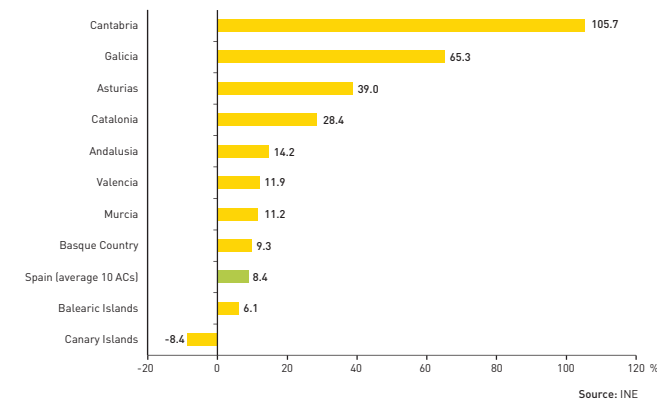


This indicator establishes the ratio between the number of foreign tourists who visit the Spanish coast and the length of coastline. Once again, when broken down by Autonomous Community, it is clear that there is a great imbalance between tourist destinations in Northern Spain and those on the Mediterranean, although it should be remembered that the figures are not calculated on the basis of number of tourists alone, but also in terms of length of coastline, which for three Autonomous Communities (Galicia, the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands) rises to a total of over 4,500 kilometres.

In 2006, 52.2 million foreign tourists visited the Spanish coast, an average of 6,632 tourists per kilometre of coast. By Autonomous Community, Catalonia was the most popular (21,464 tourists per km), followed by Valencia (10,589), Andalusia (9,045), the Balearic Islands (7,078) and the Canary Islands (6,070). On the Bay of Biscay, the Basque Country has the highest figure (4,289), while Asturias, Cantabria and Galicia have lower levels, although pressure is tending to increase. In Galicia, the length of its coastline (1,498 km) partly explains the lower ratio.

Overall, the north and north-west coasts received 1,198 foreign tourists per kilometre of coast, whilst for the Mediterranean coast and Balearic Islands this figure stood at 9,818

RATE OF INCREASE IN NUMBER OF FOREIGN TOURISTS IN COASTAL AUTONOMOUS COMMUNITIES 2004-2006



foreign tourists per kilometre of coast, which is eight times more than for northern Autonomous Communities.

Consideration must also be given to foreign day-trippers spending a day in Spain. Given their proximity to the French border, Catalonia and the Basque Country receive several million day-trippers every year, with Catalonia being visited by 10.9 million in 2005 and 11 million in 2006, and the Basque Country by 7.9 million in 2005, rising to 8.2 million in 2006. Day-trippers arriving in Galicia from Portugal also accounted for a substantial number in 2006 (4.2 million).

SOURCES

- Spanish Border Survey of Inbound Tourism (FRONTUR). Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies (IET).
- Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). Inbound Tourism. 1995-2006 series.

FURTHER INFORMATION

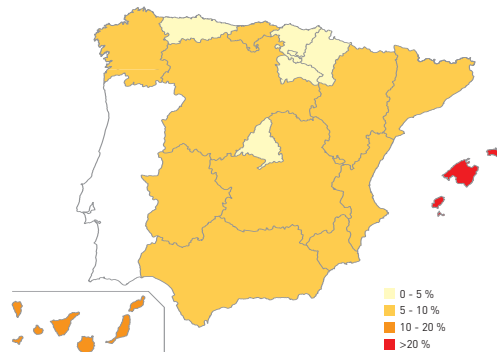
- <http://www.mma.es>
- <http://www.iet.tourspain.es>
- <http://www.tourspain.es/es/Home/ListadoMenu>

Tourist Population Equivalent (TPE) compared against resident population

Despite the rising number of foreign tourists, the number of overnight stays in 2006 actually decreased. As a result, tourist pressure in terms of population also fell

% TPE COMPARED AGAINST RESIDENT POPULATION

AC	2005	2006
Andalusia	7.85	7.42
Aragon	6.53	5.54
Asturias	5.74	4.64
Balearic Islands	31.44	29.89
Canary Islands	18.18	17.19
Cantabria	9.98	9.20
Castile-Leon	8.49	8.09
Castile - La Mancha	6.81	6.50
Catalonia	7.77	7.46
Valencia	9.16	9.13
Extremadura	6.12	6.32
Galicia	5.75	5.45
Madrid	2.97	2.83
Murcia	6.57	5.33
Navarre	4.05	3.15
Basque Country	3.27	2.49
Rioja	5.95	4.76
Ceuta and Melilla	3.14	1.18
SPAIN	7.72	7.29



Source: compiled in-house from IET and INE data

The indicator establishes the ratio, measured as a percentage, between Tourist Population Equivalent and resident population in Spain as a whole and in each of the Autonomous Communities.

The Tourist Population Equivalent (TPE) is the total of all overnight stays at hotel accommodation, camp-sites, tourist apartments and rural accommodation by foreign and Spanish tourists, in addition to overnight stays at second homes by both groups, divided by the 365 days of the year. The Tourist Population Equivalent therefore tells us the population (living in Spain all year round) equivalent to the number of overnight stays TPE allows a more precise analysis to be made of the pressure exerted by tourism. The tourism

indicator most commonly referred to in the media is the growing number of foreign tourists travelling to Spain. Although the average length of stay is decreasing in line with the ever-increasing fragmentation of holiday periods, the number of overnight stays has continued to grow during the period examined (except in 2006, when it fell by 4.3% compared with the previous year) due to the rise in the number of foreign tourists visiting Spain, which reached record levels in 2005 and 2006.

At state level, the percentage of TPE in relation to resident population was 7.29% in 2006 compared to 7.72% in 2005, due to the aforementioned fall in overnight stays and the parallel increase in population in 2006 compared with the previous year (1.4%). Seven Autonomous Communities recorded higher percentages than the national average for both these years: Andalusia, Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castile-Leon, Catalonia and Valencia. The percentage was much higher for the island groups than for any other region, with 29.89% in the Balearic Islands and 17.19% in the Canary Islands (2006). Except in the case of Extremadura, the percentage of PTE/resident population fell in all Spain's Autonomous Communities in 2006.

The Tourist Population Equivalent, taken as a percentage of the resident population (of Spain or, where applicable, of each Autonomous Community), provides a means of assessing tourist pressure on destination areas. High figures, of 10% or above, indicate that the tourist sector produces an average annual increase in population on the same scale. This naturally has an impact on resource consumption and urban and environmental service management, as well as influencing spatial planning and land use.

The absolute figures for the chosen variables are presented in the following chart. By reducing the data to index form it is possible to see the changes over the 2003-2006 period.

SPAIN: CHANGES IN THE MAIN VARIABLES IN THE TOURISM SECTOR (2003-2006)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of overnight stays	1,068,411,997	1,092,106,446	1,243,032,947	1,189,285,167
Tourist Population Equivalent (TPE)	2,927,156	2,992,072	3,405,570	3,258,316
PTE index	100	102	116	111
Resident population (inhab)	42,717,064	43,197,684	44,108,530	44,708,964
Resident population index	100	101	103	105
PTE in relation to resident population [%]	6.85 %	6.93 %	7.72 %	7.29 %
Foreign tourists	50,853,815	52,429,832	55,913,778	58,451,141
Foreign tourist index	100	103	110	115

Source: IET, INE and in-house

NOTES

- The Tourist Population Equivalent (TPE) is the sum total of all overnight stays at all types of accommodation by Spanish and foreign tourists, divided by 365.

$TPE = (Ons + Onf) / 365$, where:

Ons = number of overnight stays by Spanish tourists at all types of accommodation

Onf = number of overnight stays by foreign tourists at all types of accommodation

- The number of overnight stays is taken from the report published by the Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies (IET) "Domestic Tourism" (*Turismo Interior*) for 2003-2006. This survey covers overnight stays at the following types of accommodation: hotels and similar, own property, home of family and friends, rented property, other types of accommodation. The data refer to residents and non-residents (Spanish and foreign citizens). The sources of information used were the FRONTUR and FAMILITUR surveys. The Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE) also publishes these figures (2005 and 2006) under the sections relating to "Domestic Tourism" (*Turismo interior*) and "Inbound Tourism" (*Turismo receptor*).

Resident population: the population data refer to the population recorded in the municipal population register as at 1 January of each year (INE). For calculation purposes, the resident population reduction index used in previous editions has not been taken into consideration.

SOURCES

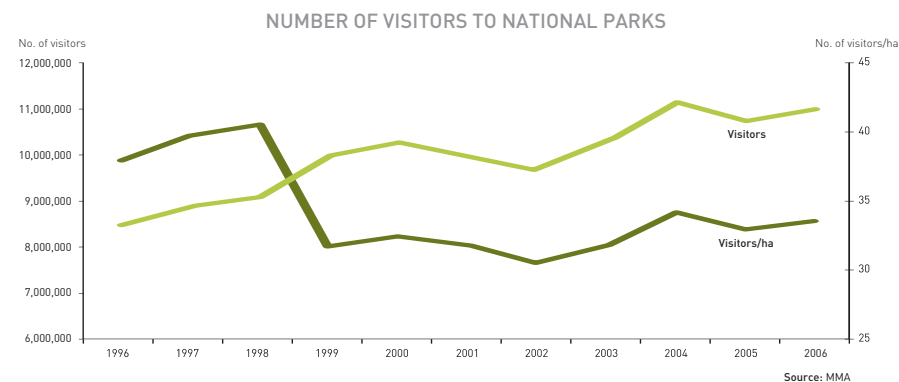
- Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). Inbound Tourism
- Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). Domestic Tourism
- Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). Drawn from the annual municipal register statistics (2003-2006).
- Spanish Institute of Tourism Studies (IET). Domestic Tourism 2003-2006, with data from the FRONTUR and FAMILITUR surveys

FURTHER INFORMATION

- <http://www.ine.es>
- <http://www.iet.tourspain.es>

Number of visitors to National Parks

In 2006, the number of visitors rose by 2.5% on 2005

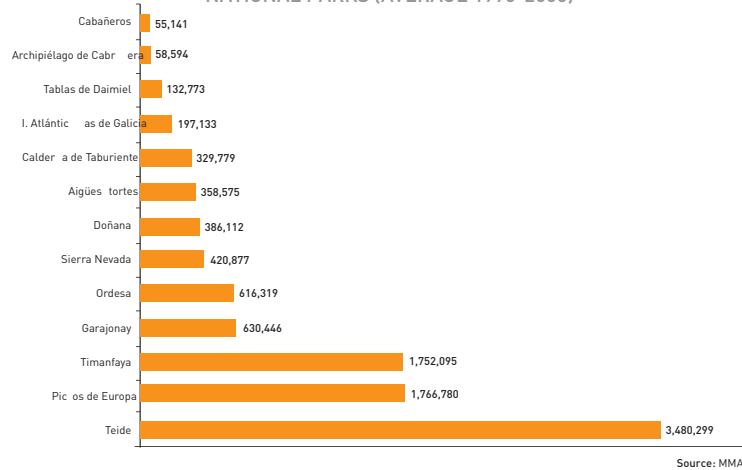


The indicator shows changes in the number of visitors to Spain's National Parks and the number of visitors in relation to the size of the protected area. In 2006, these protected areas covered 327,060 ha and received 10,979,470 visitors, 251,092 more than the year before. It should also be highlighted that, in addition to the protected areas themselves, eight of the Parks are also surrounded by a total of 168,092 ha of land covered by different degrees of protection.

Spain's National Parks have received an average of 10 million visitors per year since 1996, and visitor numbers peaked in 2004 (11,134,880). As was mentioned above, the number of visitors increased in 2006 by 2.34% on 2005, although this was not the case with all Spain's Parks. Except for Doñana, where the number of visitors virtually remained the same, there was a rise in eight of the thirteen Parks, whilst the other four experienced a decline (Taburiente, Garajonay, Picos de Europa and Tablas de Daimiel).

The four National Parks that received most visitors per hectare in 2006 are in the Canary Islands and these Parks received 59.83% of total visits in 2006 (6,569,502). The Canary Islands are also home to the most visited Park, Teide, which received 3,567,701 visitors in 2006. Since 1986, this Park has received more than 3 million visitors every year.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF VISITORS TO SPAIN'S NATIONAL PARKS (AVERAGE 1996-2006)



The Teide National Park was declared a World Heritage Site at the 31st session of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (27 June 2007) in acknowledgement of its position as one of the world's greatest sites of natural value and diversity. It is the third natural area in Spain to be declared a World Heritage Site, together with the Doñana National Park and the Garajonay National Park. It should also be mentioned that it is the first Protected Area in Spain (and the second in Europe) to be awarded the EMAS (EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) Environmental Management Certificate.

KEY FIGURES FOR SPAIN'S NATIONAL PARKS – 2006

NATIONAL PARK	Area (ha)	Protected area (ha)	No. of visitors	No. of visitors/ha
Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici	14,119	26,733	355,633	25
Archipiélago de Cabrera	10,020	None	74,532	7
Cabañeros	39,015	None	73,926	2
Caldera de Taburiente	4,699	5,956	371,558	79
Doñana	54,251	13,540	376,287	7
Garajonay	3,984	4,160	842,467	211
Islas Atlánticas de Galicia	8,480	None	220,240	26
Ordesa y Monte Perdido	15,608	19,679	316,700	40
Picos de Europa	64,660	None	1,863,847	29
Sierra Nevada	86,208	85,750	728,137	8
Tablas de Daimiel	1,928	5,410	100,666	52
Teide	18,990	6,864	3,567,701	188
Timanfaya	5,107	None	1,787,776	350
TOTAL NATIONAL PARKS	327,069	168,092	10,979,470	33

Source: National Parks Annual Report 2004 (*Memoria Parques Nacionales 2004*). MMA. The Environment in Spain 2006 (*Medio Ambiente en España 2006*).

Notes: Size of the Islas Atlánticas de Galicia National Park: 7,282.2 ha of sea and 1,194.8 ha of land. Size of the Archipiélago de Cabrera National Park: 8,703 ha of sea and 1,318 ha of land. The Monfragüe National Park was created in 2007 and is not included in this indicator.

NOTES

- Sentence 194/2004, passed by the Constitutional Court on 4 November 2004 (*Sentencia 194/2004 del Tribunal Constitucional*), established a different organisation and management model for the National Park Network (*Red de Parques Nacionales*), assigning the ordinary everyday management of the Parks to the Regional Governments. The process of transferring the National Parks of Andalusia (Doñana and Sierra Nevada) and Aragon (Ordesa and Monte Perdido) to the corresponding Regional Governments was completed in 2006. The Aigüestortes i Estany de Sant Maurici National Park was already managed entirely by the Regional Government of Catalonia. The Monfragüe National Park, which was created on 2 March 2007, after the sentences passed by the Constitutional Court, has been managed entirely by the Regional Government of Extremadura ever since its creation. The other National Parks continue to be jointly managed by the National Parks Agency (*Organismo Autónomo de Parques Nacionales*) and the Regional Governments, which are equally represented on the Parks' Management Committees.
- On 11 January 2008, the Cabinet approved Royal Decree 12/2008 (*Real Decreto 12/2008*), which regulates the composition and operation of the National Parks Network Board (*Consejo de la Red de Parques Nacionales*), a consultative body attached to the Spanish Ministry of the Environment (MMA – *Ministerio de Medio Ambiente*), through the National Parks Agency. Act 5/2007 (*Ley 5/2007*), of 3 April, regarding the National Parks Network not only upholds the existence of this body (which was created in 1989), but also consolidates its role within the framework of the National Parks Network by adding to the duties that had already been assigned to it.
- 1999 saw a considerable decrease in terms of the number of visitors per hectare, despite the fact that the number of visitors continued to rise. This decrease was due to the inclusion of the Sierra Nevada National Park in the calculation of total surface area.
- The Monfragüe National Park, which covers an area of 18,118 ha, was created in 2007 and was not included in the calculations of the indicator on account of the schedule established for the Strategic Action Plan 2007 (PAE – *Plan de Acción Estratégico 2007*).

SOURCES

- National Parks Network. Spanish Ministry of the Environment (MMA).

FURTHER INFORMATION

- <http://www.mma.es>
- <http://reddeparquesnacionales.mma.es/parques/index.htm>,

Rural tourism: accommodation, capacity, tourists and overnight stays

In 2007, Spain's 11,559 rural tourism establishments had a 103,455-person capacity and provided accommodation for 2.6 million tourists



The indicator includes the number of rural tourism establishments and their capacity, in addition to the number of visitors and overnight stays recorded throughout the year. This indicator has been chosen on the basis of this sector's importance in promoting sustainable rural development and meeting the need to provide alternatives to mass tourism. Initially, rural tourism came about as an alternative means of income in areas traditionally dependent on farming or fishing that were experiencing a decline in their traditional activities. Rural tourism is no longer an emerging sector and is gradually becoming a consolidated industry with a strong environmental side to it. It contributes to maintaining rural population, raising income in agricultural areas, conserving natural landscapes and preserving historical and cultural heritage.

In Spain, rural tourism underwent considerable development during the 2001-2007 period, as can be seen from the data compiled by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) in the Tourist Accommodation Occupancy Survey – Rural Tourism Accommodation (EOTR – *Encuesta de Ocupación en Alojamientos Turísticos, Alojamientos de Turismo Rural*)⁽¹⁾.

(1) The purpose of the EOTR is to provide information about supply and demand of accommodation services provided by rural tourism establishments. The first available figures are for 2001.

During that period, the number of establishments open rose from 5,497 to 11,559 (a 110.28% increase) and the capacity likewise rose from 42,925 to 103,455 (a 141% increase).

As regards occupancy, it can be seen that the number of visitors who chose to stay in rural accommodation rose from 1,210,891 in 2001 to 2,661,357 in 2007, which represents a 119.79% increase. The number of overnight stays also increased, rising by 117.69% from 3,660,815 in 2001 to 7,969,361 in 2007.

It should be highlighted that the vast majority of visitors who stay in rural accommodation are Spanish or live in Spain, and they generally travel on bank holiday weekends or at weekends for short stays not far from their place of residence. In 2001, only 10.25% of visitors were foreign (124,125), but by 2007 this figure had risen to 265,388 (11.08%). The ratio between resident and non-resident visitors is reversed in two regions: the Balearic Islands and Canary Islands.

Nevertheless, not all of the figures are as encouraging as these, since the average length of stay has changed very little and even decreased slightly from 3.02 days to 2.99 in 2007. Furthermore, the occupancy rate fell from 23.08% in 2001 to 20.81% in 2007, although this percentage is quite a lot higher if only weekends are considered. As regards the social benefits of this subsector of the hotel and catering industry, measured in terms of number of jobs in 2001 it employed 7,973 people and this figure rose to 19,142 in 2007.

Analysis of the situation by Autonomous Community (2007), reveals that Castile-Leon, Catalonia, Andalusia and Asturias offer the most number of rural accommodation and have the largest capacity. Castile-Leon also occupies the top position in terms of number of visitors received, followed by Catalonia, Andalusia, Cantabria and Asturias. There has been a very significant increase in this type of accommodation in Asturias, rising from 451 establishments in 2001 to 1,024 in 2007, whilst the number of visitors received rose from 63,067 to 168,237 in the same period.

As regards the average length of stay recorded for the various Autonomous Communities, the Canary Islands and Balearic Islands (traditional holiday destinations) present the highest rates, which vary from around 8 days (Canary Islands) to 4-5 days (Balearic Islands). These two regions also have the highest occupancy rates, which the Balearic Islands lead with 47.7%. Six Autonomous Communities were below the national average (21%) in 2006: Madrid, Murcia, Extremadura, Galicia, Valencia and Castile-La Mancha.

NOTES

- Rural tourism accommodation is classified according to the following types: rural hotel, rural apartment, rural house, rural hostel, active tourism facilities, large-scale complexes and others. Rural houses form the largest of these groups, with more than 9,221 houses open in August 2006. These are followed by rural tourism apartments, with 553 apartments open in August of the same year. The accommodation figures supplied by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE) are an estimate of the number of accommodation establishments open.
- According to the INE, rural tourism accommodation refers to establishments or houses that charge for tourist accommodation, with or without other complementary services, and are listed in each Autonomous Community's Tourist Accommodation Register (*Registro de Alojamientos Turísticos*). These establishments tend to have common features, such as being located in buildings typical of the local architectural style or on working farms (agro-tourism). They also offer a limited number of guest beds and rooms, and they meet certain requirements in terms of infrastructure and basic facilities.
- Promoting rural tourism is one of the keys to furthering sustainable tourism. Sustainability in tourism means that the relevant resources are managed in such a way that it is possible to cover economic, social and aesthetic needs whilst also respecting cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life-sustaining systems. It is also closely related to initiatives for the implementation of Local Agenda 21.
- Act 45/2007 (*Ley 45/2007*), of 13 December, regarding sustainable development in the rural environment, promotes rural tourism by managing supply and improving demand for such tourism. Particular attention is paid to sustainable tourism in priority rural areas, agrotourism and farming-related tourism. This measure relating to sustainable development will be promoted within the context of a future National Plan for Agriculture and Livestock Environmental Quality (*Plan Nacional de Calidad Ambiental Agrícola y Ganadera*), which will enable application of the provisions of Act 45/2007.

SOURCES

- Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). Tourist Accommodation Occupancy Survey.
- Spanish Ministry of the Environment (MMA). Situation Report 2005 (*Informe de coyuntura 2005*). Rural Tourism (*Turismo rural*).

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