

## UNIT 1.1

# RURAL TOURISM AND ITS DIVERSITY

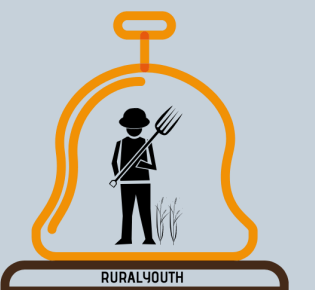
## MODULE 1: RURAL TOURISM AWARENESS

# OBJECTIVES

In Unit 1.1 you will learn about the basics of the rural tourism, its types, forms, and most common activities. You will understand the importance and benefits of the rural tourism for society and economy.

## **Keywords:**

- Rural tourism
- Rural area
- Agritourism
- Farm tourism
- Wilderness and forest tourism
- Green tourism
- Ecotourism



# AT THE END OF THIS UNIT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO...



...distinguish among various forms of tourism in rural areas.



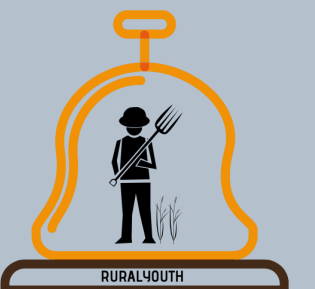
...understand the issues and challenges the rural tourism has to face.

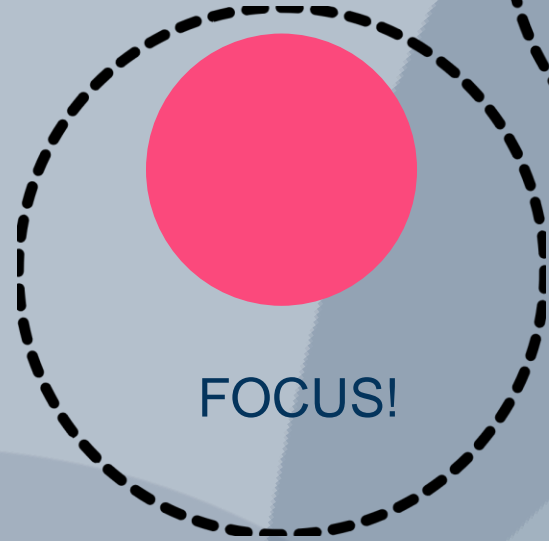


...understand the importance and benefits of rural tourism.



...comprehend the rural tourism development.





# TOPICS

1. Definitions, types and forms of rural tourism
2. Rural tourism activities
3. Importance and benefits of rural tourism
4. Rural tourism issues and challenges
5. Characteristics of rural tourism
6. Rural tourism development

# What is rural area and rural tourism?



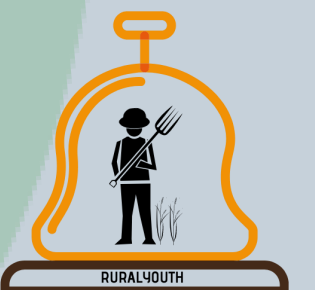
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Rural tourism can be defined as the movement of persons from their usual place of residence to rural areas for a period of at least twenty-four hours and up to six months for the sole purpose of recreation and enjoyment. Rural tourism means all tourism activities in rural areas.

The concept of rural tourism is by no means precisely defined and can be interpreted in many ways. Fleischer and Pizam associate rural tourism with "countryside tourism", where the tourist spends most of his or her vacation engaging in recreational activities in a rural setting on a farm, ranch, ranch house or in the surrounding areas.



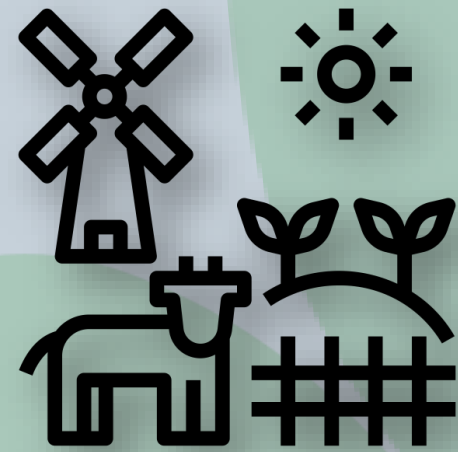
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**OECD defines the rural area as,** " at the local level, a population density of 150 persons per square kilometer is the preferred criterion. At the regional level, geographic units are grouped by the share of their population that is rural into the following three types: predominantly rural (50%), significantly rural (15-50%) and predominantly urbanized regions (15%).



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The Council of Europe employed the term '**rural area**' to denote the following characteristics:

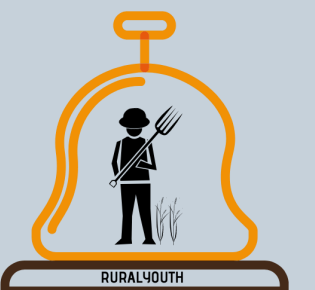
A stretch of inland or coastal countryside, including small towns and villages, where the main part of the area is used for:

Agriculture, forestry, aquaculture, and fisheries.

Economic and cultural activities of country-dwellers.

Non-urban recreation and leisure areas or nature reserves.

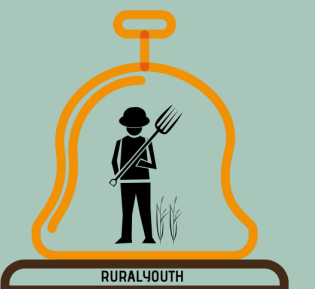
Other purposes such as housing.



RURAL4YOUTH

## The OECD states rural tourism should be:

- Located in rural areas.
- Functionally rural, built upon the rural world's special features; small-scale enterprises, open space, contact with nature and the natural world, heritage, traditional societies, and traditional practices.
- Rural in scale – both in terms of building and settlements – and therefore, small scale.
- Traditional in character, growing slowly and organically, and connected with local families.
- Sustainable – in the sense that its development should help sustain the special rural character of an area, and in the sense that its development should be sustainability in its use of resources.
- Of many different kinds, representing the complex pattern of the rural environment, economy, and history.





To help reverse the decline in biodiversity, the tourism sector and government bodies responsible for tourism face the following challenges:



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- Apply existing guidelines, frameworks and best practices for biodiversity and ecosystem services in tourism;



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- Understand the negative impacts of tourism on biodiversity and how to avoid or minimize these impacts;



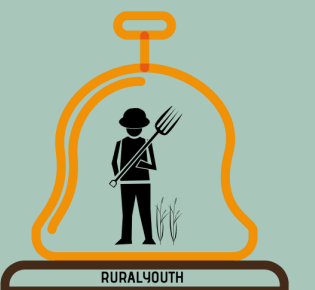
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- Understanding the value of biodiversity to tourism and the potential of tourism to make a positive contribution to biodiversity conservation; and



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- integrating biodiversity considerations into tourism planning and decision-making.



# What are the Types and Forms of Rural Tourism?

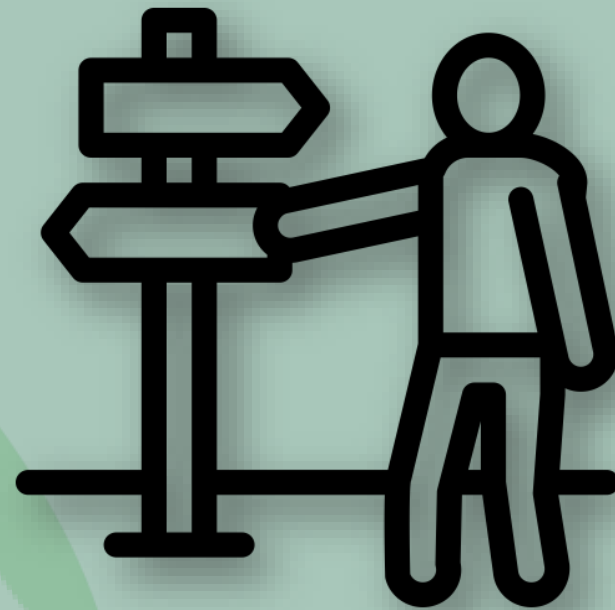


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Rural tourism can be defined as any form of tourism that focuses on rural life, art, culture and heritage in the countryside, that benefits the local community economically and socially, and that allows for interaction between tourists and locals, thus enriching the tourism experience.



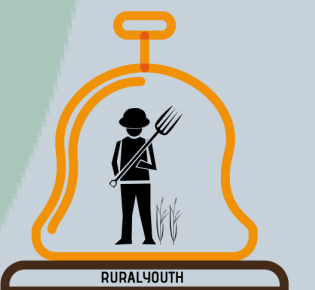
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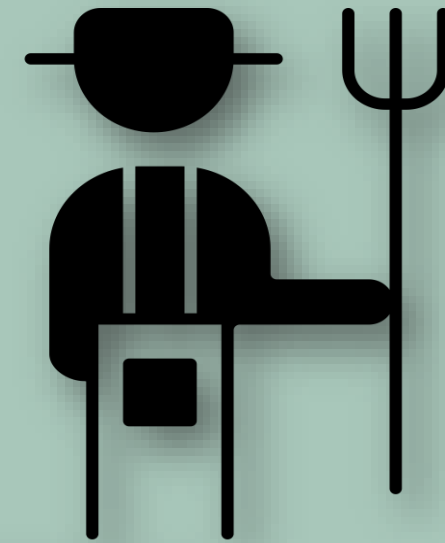
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Various terms are used to describe rural tourism: agritourism, farm tourism, soft tourism, alternative tourism, eco-tourism, and several others, which have different meanings in different countries and even in different states.

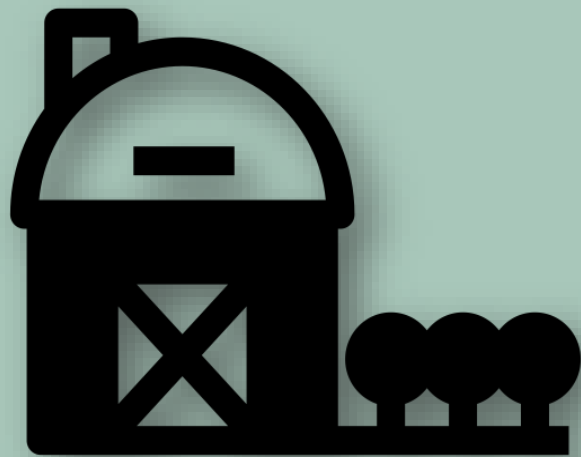
The term 'rural tourism' has been adopted by the European Community (EC) and refers to any tourism activity in rural areas.



**Agritourism:** although this term is often used to refer to all tourism activities in rural areas, it usually refers to tourism products 'directly linked to the rural environment, agricultural products or rural accommodation': farm, room or campsite accommodation, study visits, catering, leisure and the sale of agricultural or craft products.

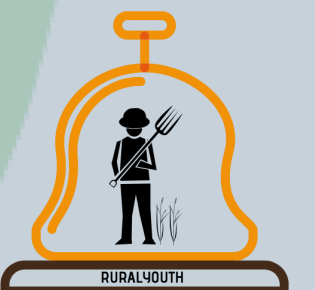


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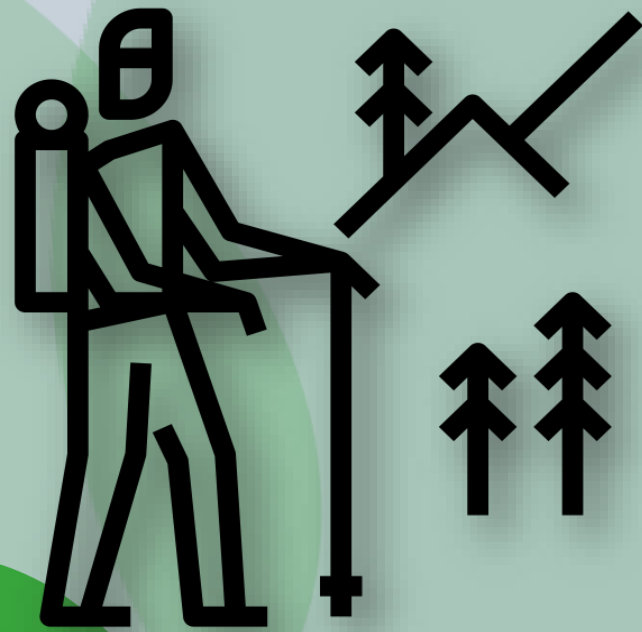
**Farm tourism:** explicitly, farm-based tourism, which is generally related to tourism involving on-farm accommodation and the experience of on-farm activities and attractions.



**Wilderness and forest tourism:** the tourist explores the nature and natural beauty of rural areas. It can be included in the concepts of rural tourism or dealt with separately. Nature and forest tourism involves tourists visiting natural habitats of plants and animals. It mainly involves non-obligatory interaction with animals and nature, such as observing and photographing animals in their natural habitat. Nature and forest tourism includes a wide range of tourism activities such as nature photography, safaris, bird watching, hiking and trekking, etc.

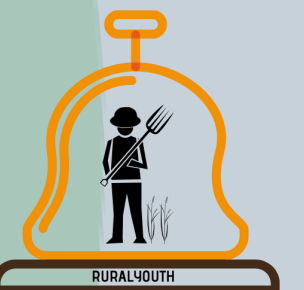


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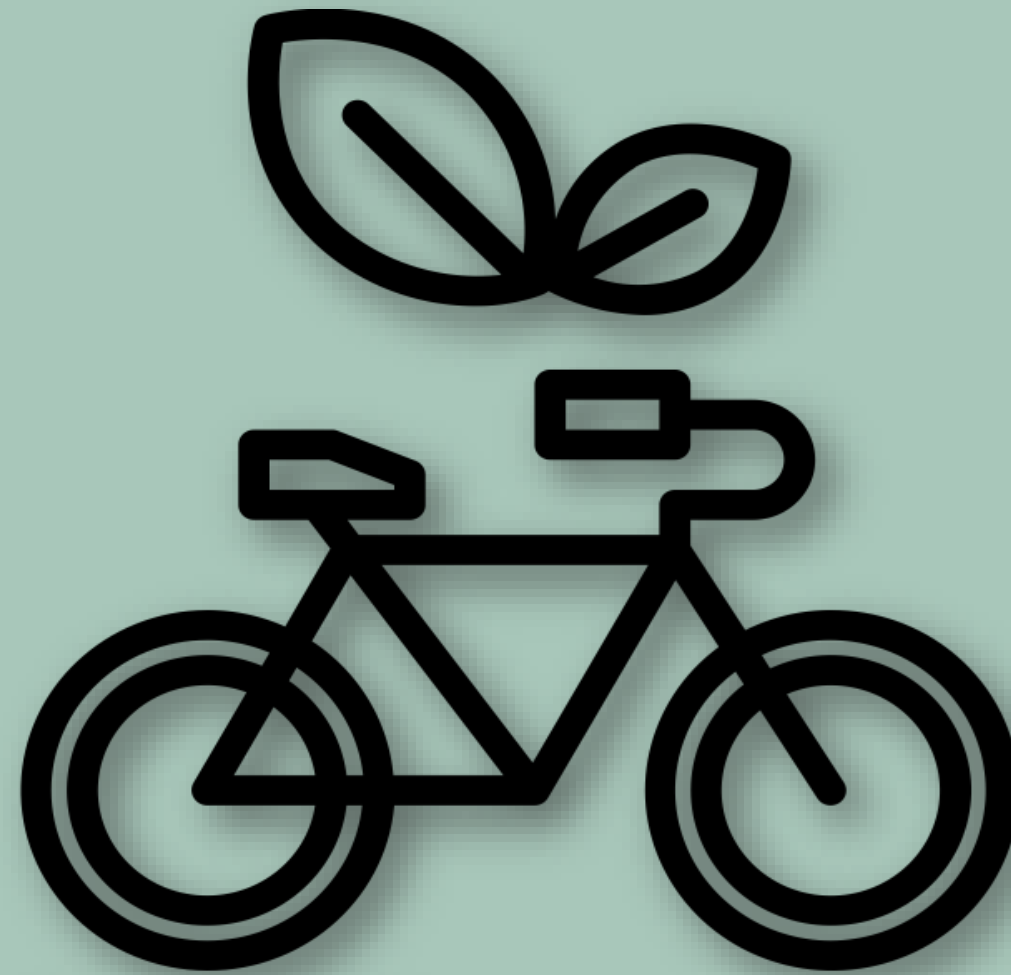


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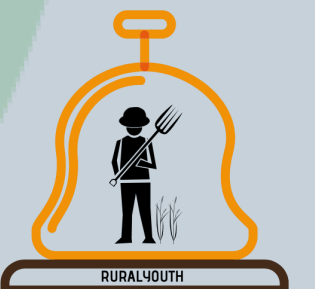
**Green tourism:** green tourism refers to tourism in rural or green areas. It is most often used to describe forms of tourism that are considered more environmentally friendly than traditional mass tourism. In rural areas, green tourism is an important form of rural tourism. Green tourism is described as an approach to tourism development that seeks to develop a symbiotic relationship with the physical and social environment on which tourism depends and indirectly aims to achieve the ideals of sustainable development.



**Ecotourism:** a form of nature tourism (tourism to pristine, unspoiled areas) that actively promotes environmental protection and direct benefits to local society and culture, and provides tourists with positive, educational experiences. Ecotourism is a group of sustainable tourism activities that take place in the natural environment.



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# Which are the Rural Tourism Activities?



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According to various estimates, rural tourism accounts for between 10 and 20% of total tourism activity and, according to a Eurobarometer survey, 23% of European holidaymakers choose rural or countryside destinations each year.

Many cultural and nature-related activities take place in rural areas.

The countryside has traditionally been managed for recreational purposes and this symbiosis has had a significant impact on both the environment and activities.



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The countryside offers a wide range of tourism and leisure activities. We can classify these activities according to their nature. Among rural tourism activities we can mention the following:

- Touring
- Cultural activities
- Water-related activities
- Health-related activities
- Aerial activities
- Passive activities
- Sporting activities
- Business-related activities



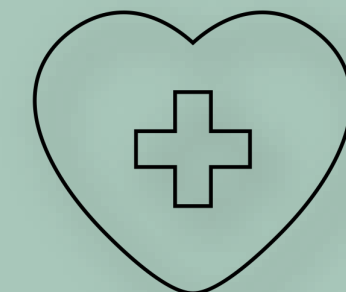
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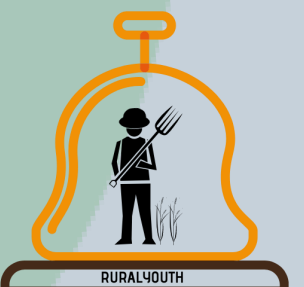
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**Touring** includes a wide range of tourist activities such as hiking, horse riding, caravan tourism, motor tourism, small village/village tourism, cycling, adventure or nature holidays.

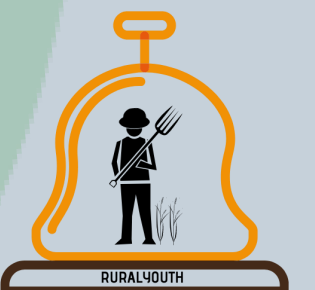


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Rural areas are home to a wide range of **cultural tourism activities**. Archaeology, rural restoration, museums, craft courses and art workshops are some examples of cultural activities in rural tourism.



Fishing, swimming, river tourism, canoeing, kayaking, windsurfing, speedboat racing, sailing are some examples of **water-related activities** of rural tourism.

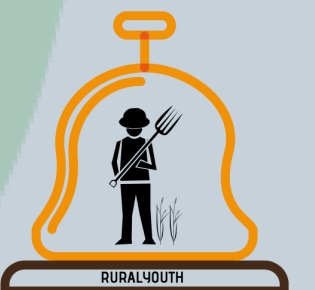


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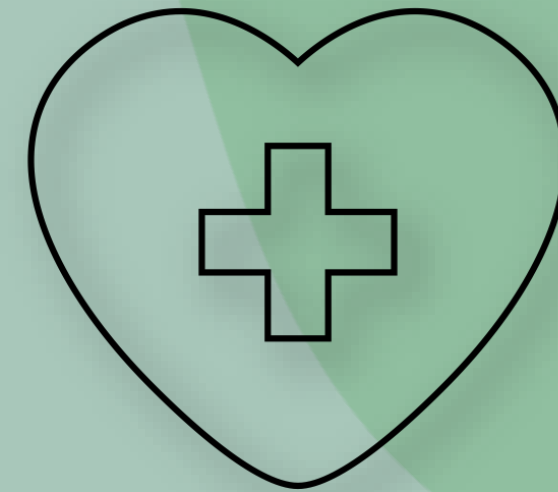
A variety of **sporting activities of rural tourism** are found in rural areas. Some examples are potholing, rock climbing, orienteering, Tennis, Golf, low-intensity downhill skiing, and hunting.



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The most popular activities in rural tourism are **health-related activities**, such as gym classes, boxing classes, spas and fitness centres. A large number of tourists travel to rural areas for the sole purpose of improving their health through health-related tourism activities.

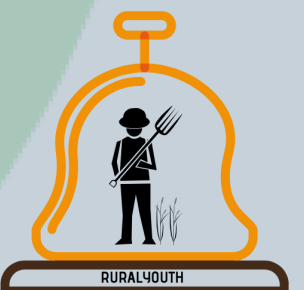


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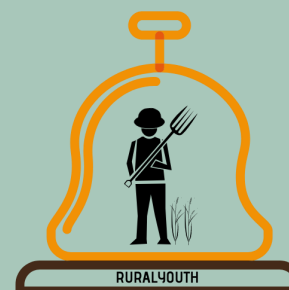
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**Passive activities** such as relaxation holidays in the rural milieu, nature study in outdoor settings including birdwatching and photography, landscape appreciation are also some famous activities of rural tourism.



*If country life is healthful to the body,  
it is no less so to the mind.*

– Giovanni Ruffini



# Importance and Benefits of Rural Tourism



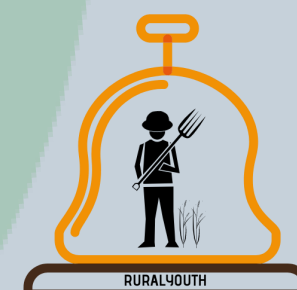
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Rural tourism is an important form of tourism that plays an important role and brings many benefits to rural communities. When tourists visit rural areas, they support the local economy and help in many ways. Rural tourism contributes to the development of rural areas and the standard of living of the host communities.



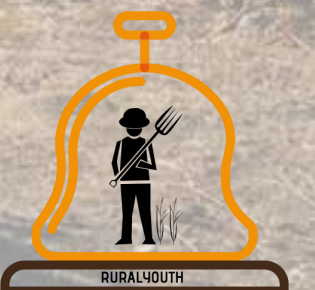
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Rural tourism is a growing form of tourism. It is not just farm stays or visits to rural areas. It is more than that. Rural tourism benefits the host community of rural areas as well as surrounding natural environment through preservation and conservation of natural resources.



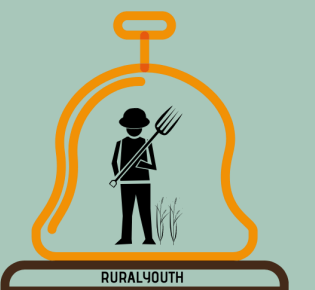
## Some of the benefits of rural tourism are:

- Provides a source of new, alternative or supplementary income and employment in rural areas.
- Rural tourism spurs infrastructure development in rural areas.
- Help to reduce gender and other social power
- Encourage collective community
- Reinvigorate local culture.
- Instill the sense of local pride, self-esteem, and identity
- Contribution to conservation and protection.
- Increase the living standards of the local community.
- Assists refurbishment and re-use of abandoned properties.
- Provide opportunities for retaining population in areas that might otherwise experience depopulation.
- Enable areas to be repopulated.



*Not rural sights alone, but rural sounds exhilarate  
the spirit, and restore the tone of languid nature.*

– William Cowper





# Rural Tourism Issues and Challenges



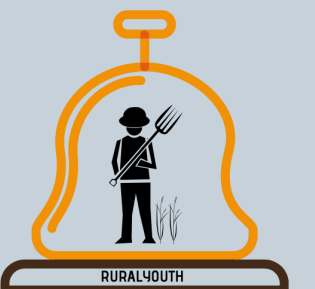
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The main issues and challenges related to rural tourism are the protection of the environment and natural resources, the need for education, understanding between tourists and local people, and the need to create a democratic movement to help people at all levels participate in tourism development.



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The cooperative system in rural tourism can be an effective approach in bringing positive impact in rural areas. Local people can monitor and control the negative impacts of rural tourism on their own society, if they have an equal stake and authority in management and development.



Some important issues and challenges of rural tourism are:

- Economic Leakages
- Local price inflation
- Distort local employment structure
- Seasonal patterns of demands
- Manufacture or distort local 'culture' for commodification and staged authenticity
- Destroy indigenous culture
- Natural habitat destruction of rural wildlife
- Littering, emission and other forms of pollution
- Congestion



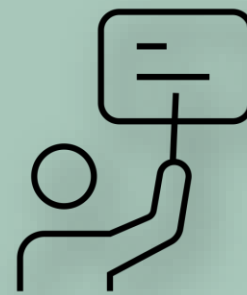
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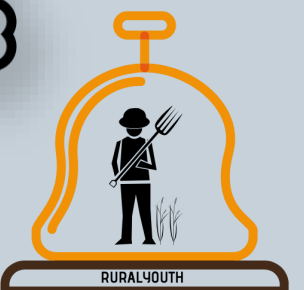
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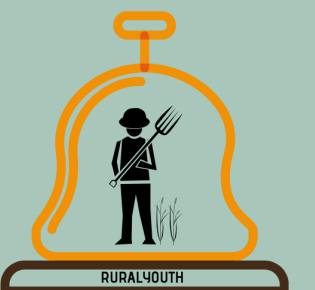


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*I suppose the pleasure of country life lies really  
in the eternally renewed evidences of the  
determination to live.*

– Vita Sackville-West



# Characteristics of Rural Tourism



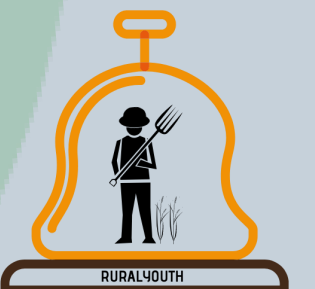
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The concept of rural tourism has a noble purpose. It is another form of sustainable tourism that exploits rural resources, with little or no negative impact, and which brings increasing benefits to rural areas in terms of rural productivity, employment, better distribution of wealth, preservation of the environment and rural culture, involvement of local people and an appropriate way of adapting traditional beliefs and values to modern times.

Rural tourism can promote local performing arts, help preserve local culture, and counteract rural depopulation. Rural tourism can attract tourists by providing a good insight into the village atmosphere and local cuisine.

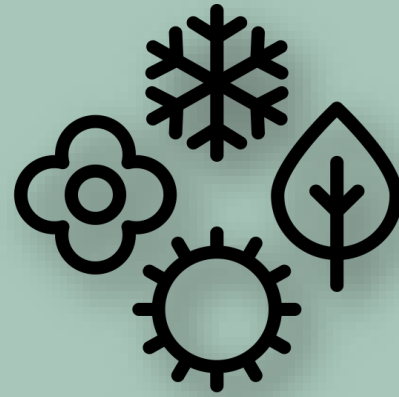


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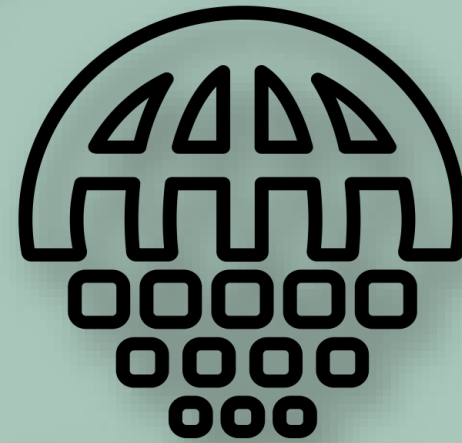
## The characteristics of rural tourism include:

- Seasonality



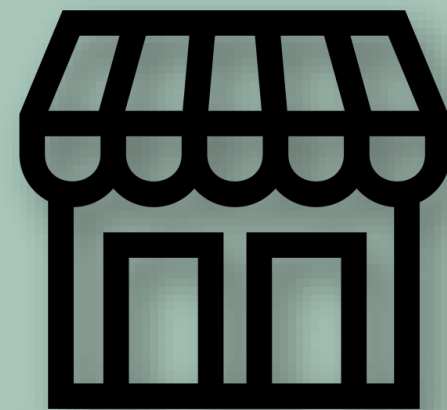
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- Fragmentation



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- External market needed



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- Co-operation needed between internal and external market



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- Role of women

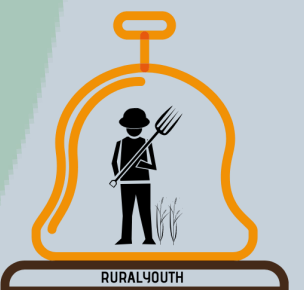


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- Economic role: side income for farmers and other entrepreneurs in the rural area

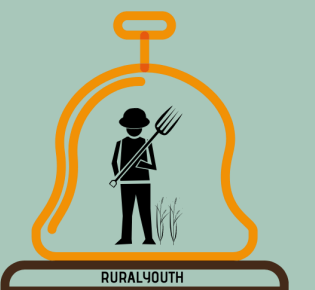


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*Being in the country is like being in a dream – one doesn't quite know who one is. There is an anonymity to it all – that strange human creature that is me, one among all.*

- Meia Geddes



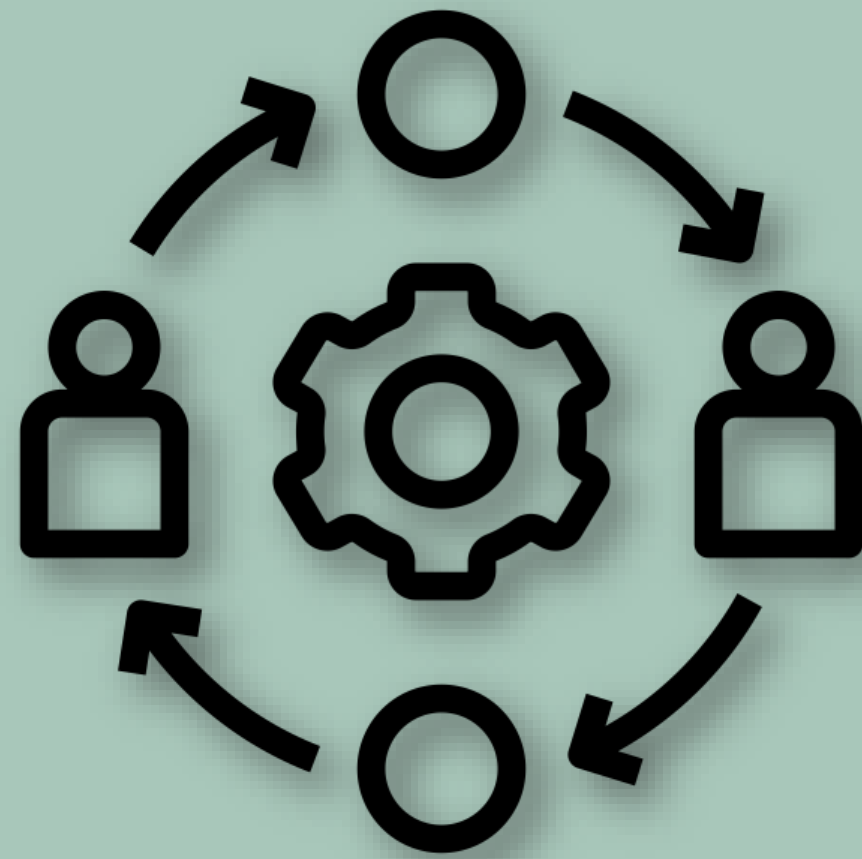


# Rural Tourism Development

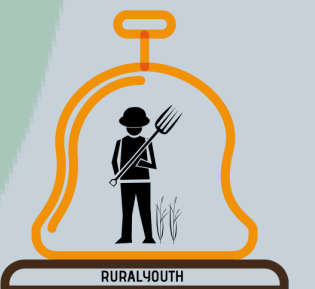


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Rural tourism development is more than a planned process. Using an actor-oriented approach, it can be seen as a dynamic, ongoing, socially constructed and negotiated process involving many social actors who continually reshape it to fit their perceptions, needs, values and goals.

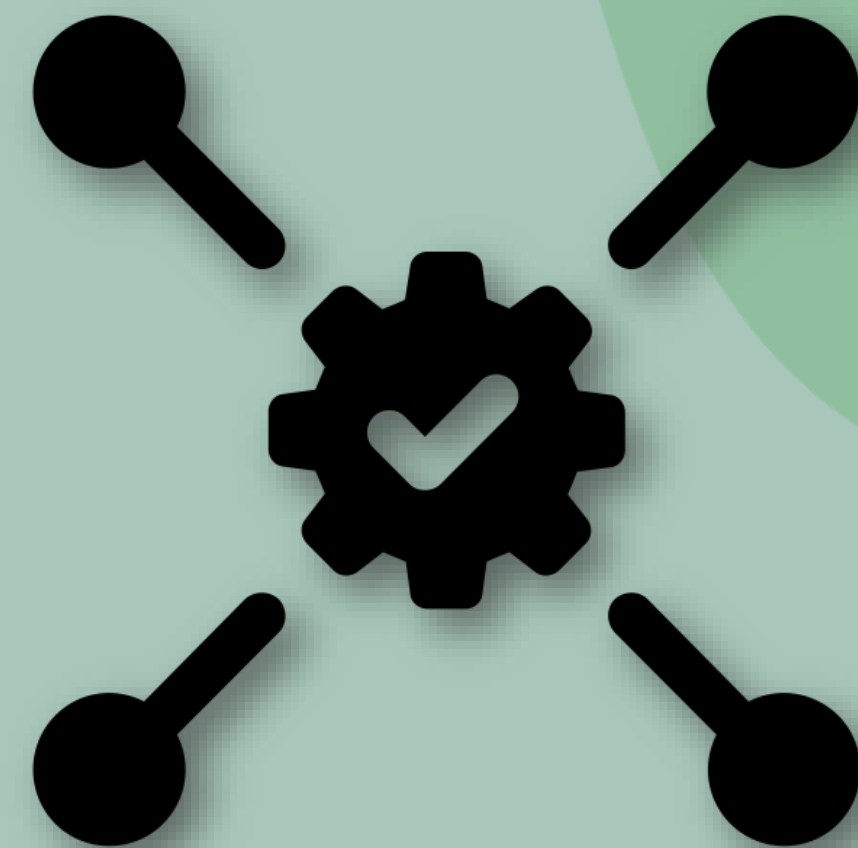


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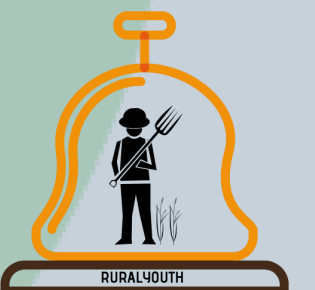


Rural tourism has developed strongly in the 1990s, and a growing literature has helped to understand this evolving phenomenon.

According to Long and Lane, rural tourism has entered its second phase of development, the first characterized by an increase in participation, product and business development and partnerships. In their review of the development of rural tourism, Long and Lane argue that rural tourism - at least in Europe and North America - is entering a more complex phase of expansion, differentiation, consolidation and understanding..



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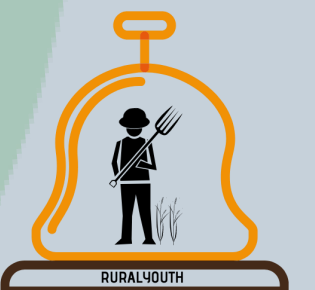


As tourism continues to develop in rural areas to offset the economic decline of primary sectors, the need for sustainable forms of development is recognized. Since the early 1990s, the concept of sustainable tourism development has become almost universally accepted as a desirable and appropriate approach and goal for tourism development.

The development of rural tourism has been driven by the need for economic growth and diversification, and it is therefore important that the potential contribution of tourism to rural economic growth is not diluted by being too specific in the principles of sustainable tourism.

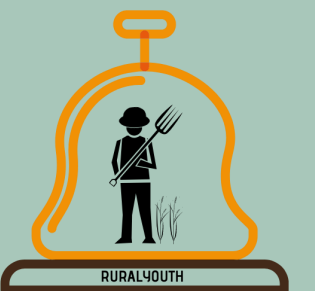


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*I consider it the best part of an education  
to have been born and brought up in the country.*

– Amos Bronson Alcott





## SURF TO FIND OUT MORE



Awarded a Fulbright to eat, drink, and study her way through Italy, Katharine Millonzi discovers new ways for American Agricultural enterprises to enliven and sustain their unique position in the creative and hospitality economies. [Watch her TED talk.](#)



[Economic leakage](#) is a major problem in the tourism industry. Destinations develop and grow their tourism industries with high hopes of making a significant income from the various tourism-associated activities. However, in many destinations, this is simply not the case.



Is There Such a Thing as 'Rural' Gentrification? [Find out in this article.](#)



The tourism industry requires a huge amount of natural resources and creates a huge environmental footprint. Yet the onus is always on the travel consumer to 'make better choices'. What does it look like when the hotels step up and commit to taking responsibility for their environmental footprint? [This talk](#) explains why the myth that becoming an environmentally responsible hotel is not profit friendly is totally wrong.

# MATCH THE PARAGRAPHS!



Rural tourism is tourism which takes place...

... and more independent organisations

Rural areas often have less of the known chains and brands (think Costa Coffee, Hilton Hotel etc)...

... with the people who are coming to visit the area.

Businesses that are owned and managed locally are great because it enables much of the income raised from tourism...

... in non-urbanised areas.

Traveling to rural areas provides opportunities for locals and tourists...

...and prevents economic leakage in tourism.

Rural areas are encouraged to share their traditions and customs...

... to get to know each other and to learn more about each other's cultures.



# MATCH THE PARAGRAPHS!



Rural tourism provides valuable commercial and employment opportunities for communities...

... this is the case, for example, at Stone Henge, where the area is roped-off to prevent tourists from touching the stones.

Roads may be gridlocked on bank holiday weekends...

... because they can no longer afford to live in the area, known as gentrification.

Some people may feel that they need to relocate...

... as city-livers flee to the countryside for some fresh air.

In some cases, restrictions to access are necessary in order to ensure that areas are preserved;...

...that are confronted with the growing challenge of offering viable livelihoods for their local populations.



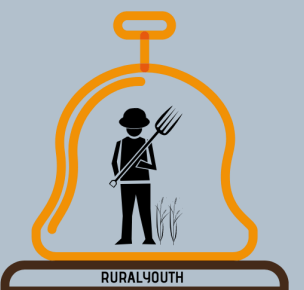


# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE!



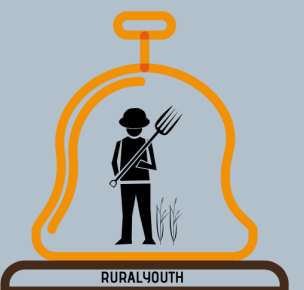
Are these statements true or false?

- Tourism makes up just one (important) part of the rural economy. (T)
- Rural tourism directs tourists away from some of the more well-known, busy areas and provides work opportunities and economic activity in alternative areas. (T)
- Rural tourism also helps to combat the challenge of limited carrying capacities in some destinations and the negative environmental impacts of tourism. (T)
- Rural tourism has many positive economic, social and environmental impacts if it is managed well and adheres to sustainable tourism principles. (T)
- Rural tourism enables local people to set up and operate businesses. (T)
- Rural tourism does not require the development of new infrastructure and facilities. (F)
- Rural tourism often results in the construction of new transport networks and infrastructure, among other public facilities and services. (T)
- Rural tourism discourages cultural tourism and cultural exchange. (F)
- There are no positive social impacts of tourism. (F)
- Rural tourism usually relies on the environment that is being visited. (T)



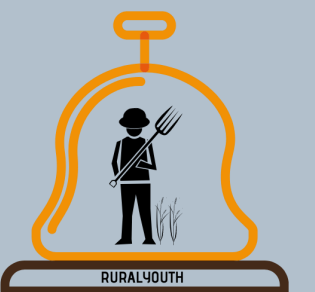


- Tourism is not seasonal and does not come in peaks and troughs. (F)
- In the EU, countryside areas are busier on weekends than on weekdays and there are more tourists during the school holidays than there are during term time. (T)
- The presence of tourism can result in increases in land and housing prices. (T)
- Rural tourism cannot be subject to overcrowding and congestion. (F)
- Lack of transport links to gain access to the destination is a common problem in the rural tourism industry. (T)
- Many areas will ask tourists to stick to designated paths or walkways, to prevent damage to the natural environment. (T)
- Public transport infrastructure is one of the strongest points of rural tourism. (F)
- Sustainable travel is any form of transport that keeps damage to our environment to a minimum and normally has the added advantage of being a healthier alternative for the user. (T)
- Methods of sustainable transport include: walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. (T)
- Rural tourism does not deserve a place in the tourism industry. (F)



# DISCUSSION

1. Talk about your personal views of advantages and disadvantages of rural tourism in your local area and give examples.



# SUMMARY

- In this unit, you have learned about the basics of the rural tourism, its types, forms, and most common activities. You have also learned the importance and benefits of the rural tourism.
- Based on what you have learned in this unit, think of the rural areas that are close to your home. Is it also a tourist area?
- In Unit 1.2 you will understand the importance of culture, history and architecture and their role in any kind of tourism.

