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From Wine Production to Wine Tourism Experience: the Case of Italy

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ABSTRACT

Typical products, mainly local food and wine, are considered suitable features to characterise the tourist supply of a destination and, in many cases, they are a major attraction of a particular territory. The demand of this category of products has a significant influence in formulating different types of tourist packages and excursions to attract a wider variety of people.

Many typical products are simultaneously an expression of the culture of a territory. Then, we can define the typical products as ‘territorial intensive products’ (TIPs). The TIPs contain a strong reference to the territory in which they are produced. They are able to represent on the market a geographic area, its traditions and its cultural heritage; they identify a local community and its identity as well.

Wine tourism represents the most innovative phenomenon of the more general tourism supply created around TIPs and certainly the most evident. It represents a particular type of tourism, which principal feature is given by the wine production and by the territories in which it is exploited. In fact, a market has developed around wine that looks at this product either as an agro-alimentary one in the strict sense or rather as a resource characterising the tourist supply of a destination, able to specialise a segment of the market. The importance of wine production has been growing to such a point to organise a system of relations between local actors, organizations, clubs, institutions and associations of wine experts and lovers, which promote wine and wineries. Through their activities, they compete to strengthen, if not to create, the image of the territories in which wine is produced, contributing, therefore, to the local economic development and the promotion of the tourist offer.

The paper considers the importance of wine in Italy in helping to create the tourist supply of different territories through the creation of the Wine and Food Routes. The Wine and Food Routes model comes out from two important productive sectors: the vine cultivation one, within the main agro-food line, and the tourist one. The Wine and Food Routes occupy an important position into the system of the new alternative tourisms. They represent a particular kind of tourist thematic itineraries and realize a model of district that attributes a remarkable weight to the social and cultural factors in the processes of development.