

# Tourist harvesting: what it is, regulations to know, and opportunities to seize

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**Tourist harvesting** is rapidly gaining popularity as one of the most engaging experiences in the world of **wine tourism**. This phenomenon, which is distinctly different from traditional harvesting, allows visitors to immerse themselves in **wine-making traditions**, offering an authentic taste of **vineyard life**.

## What is Tourist Harvesting?

**Tourist harvesting** refers to the activity of grape picking carried out by **tourists** on a non-paid, short-term basis. This experience, organized in designated areas within wineries, is closely linked to stays in local accommodations and visits to

and tastings at wineries. It is, therefore, a **recreational and cultural activity** that allows participants to discover where it all begins, by picking grapes directly from the vine.

**Tourist harvesting** not only brings visitors closer to the world of wine but also revitalizes the concept of **shared agriculture**. This activity offers a unique experience, allowing enthusiasts to live moments of symbiosis with the production processes and the daily life of wineries. It is a demonstration of the dynamism and capacity for innovation in the agricultural sector, creating **authentic experiences** that enhance the **local area**.

## **Rules and safety: the regulations of tourist harvesting**

In 2023, the **National Labor Inspectorate** (INL) and the **National Association of Wine Cities** signed a memorandum of understanding to regulate **tourist harvesting** at the national level. This agreement establishes that **tourist harvesting** activities must meet specific conditions, including:

- It does not involve any payment in cash or kind (Art. 2) and must be:
  - Limited to a few hours, either in the morning or afternoon;
  - Cannot be carried out more than twice a week at the same winery;
  - The rows designated for tourist harvesting must be recognizable and distinguishable from those where regular harvesting activities take place, excluding any mingling of the two activities;
  - The **land registry** and **cadastral coordinates** where **tourist harvesting** is carried out must be reported in advance to the **one-stop shop for productive activities** (SUAP) or an equivalent office;

- Conducted under the supervision of qualified company supervisors/tutors with appropriate training, adhering to local regulations;
- Ensuring that tourists and supervisors wear identification badges or bracelets labeled “tutor” and “tourist harvester”;
- Ensuring the **health and safety** of tourists, including the equipment and clothing provided;
- Prohibiting the use of agricultural machinery and the loading and unloading of grape crates by tourists;
- Taking out **civil liability insurance** for tourists before starting the activity;
- Reporting the activity to the competent municipality via the SUAP platform or an equivalent office.

## Adoption by wineries and future prospects

The **National Wine Tourism Observatory**, managed by **Nomisma Wine Monitor** on behalf of the **National Association of Wine Cities**, reveals that only **19%** of wineries are well aware of the protocol on **tourist harvesting**. **51%** have heard of it, while **30%** are unaware. Despite the protocol, only **7%** of wineries took action in 2023 to offer this experience, while **34%** plan to do so in 2024. The remaining **57%** of wineries do not intend to implement it or will discontinue this initiative.

**Tourist harvesting** represents an extraordinary opportunity for wineries to enhance their **local area** and involve visitors in an unforgettable experience. Although there are still many wineries that need to adopt this practice, the prospects for the future are promising. With adequate regulation and a particular focus on safety and the authenticity of the

experience, **tourist harvesting** can become a cornerstone of **wine tourism**, further enriching the **cultural and recreational offerings** of Italy's **wine-growing regions**.