

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**.