



The Catalanian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs says that *“rural tourism can grow provided there is a greater external promotion and a highlighting of the resources of the inland regions”*

Minister Huguet met today with Assumpta Fort, the President of the Catalanian Confederation of Rural Tourism, and with other representatives from the rural tourism sector in Catalonia

Wednesday, 23 August 2005.— Josep Huguet, the Catalanian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs, visited the municipality of Cardona today, where he met with Assumpta Fort, the President of the Catalanian Confederation of Rural Tourism (Confederació Catalana de Turisme Rural, *Concatur*), and with other representatives from the rural tourism sector in Catalonia. During the meeting, Minister Huguet and the members from the sector debated on the state of rural tourism in Catalonia and on the various strategies to be followed in order to promote its growth.

The Minister explained that *“rural tourism in Catalonia has a long way to go yet, especially taking into account that its strength is essentially found in the inland regions, where a very important task of highlighting their tourist resources is still needed – something that has not been done to date”*.

For her part, Assumpta Fort, the President of *Concatur*, said that during the meeting the rural tourism representatives exposed to the Minister *“the need for a greater promotion effort, especially involving the northern European market”*. In this sense, Minister Huguet invited Catalonia’s rural tourism *“to be present at the leading tourist fairs of the world through Turisme de Catalunya”*.

A tourist option rapidly developing

Rural tourism is an alternative tourist option to the more traditional tourism that stays in hotels or apartments. It is based on the recovery of the rural space, on the search for a quiet time, and the chance of getting to know new areas, landscapes, historical or architectural heritage, or more home-like gastronomy.

Rural tourism combines stays with complementary activities linked to a closer contact with nature: long-distance walks, bicycle, mountaineering, castle or monastery routes, or the visit to ecomuseums, among others.

One of the characteristics of Catalonian landscape is its diversity. From its long seaside to the Pyrenees, one can find all kinds of landscapes and nearly all the bioclimatic habitats of Europe. For this reason, it is important to point out that Rural Tourism offer can be found throughout the country. Rural Tourism can be practised very near the coast, on the plains, in the forests, in the Pre-Pyrenees and, obviously, in the Pyrenees themselves.

Some figures about rural tourism

Current rural tourism offer in Catalonia:

Tourist Brand	Number of establishments	Room
Central Catalonia	194	1,517
Costa Brava	248	2,075
Costa Daurada	115	914
Costa del Garraf	36	300
Costa del Maresme	14	72
Pyrenees - Pre-Pyrenees	604	4,543
Terres de l'Ebre	78	650
Terres de Lleida	78	186
Val d'Aran	20	186
TOTAL CATALONIA	1,387	10,852

The following is the profile and the behaviour of a standard user of Rural Tourism accommodation in Catalonia:

- 76% of the clients are Catalan or from the rest of the Spanish state.
- 50% are older than 35 years of age.
- 84% live in cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants.
- 54% of trips to rural tourism establishments involve week-end stays.
- Reservations are mainly made over the phone, but the Internet and e-mail are gaining ground.
- Most of the reservations involve couples or families with children.
- 75% are customary clients. The main motives for the trip are to rest and to take contact with nature. Gastronomic tourism and adventure tourism are both on the increase.