

COVID-19 Protocol **Rural Tourism**

**APPENDIX OF
TOURIST SERVICE PROVIDERS**

JULY 2020

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Introduction

The Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Argentina, the Argentine Chamber of Tourism (CAT), the Argentine Department of Quality Tourism (ICTA), the Argentine Association of Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism (AAETAV), the Chambers of Tourism Federation of the Argentine Republic (FEDECATUR) and the provinces, through the Federal Council of Tourism, have prepared this Appendix for rural tourism.

This document is a supplement to the “COVID-19 Protocol for Tourist Service Providers” and is intended to provide further details about the guidelines provided therein, guarantee that such guidelines are properly interpreted and applied to the tourist services and activities rendered in rural areas throughout the national territory. It also seeks to deal with the special aspects, characteristics and management of rural tourism in its various practices and alternatives.

The new scenario the industry is facing requires revising and updating the operative management of each service for the purpose of minimizing the chances of disease spread by adopting preventive measures in light of the world health emergency posed by the COVID-19 virus and establish rules of behavior for the staff and service users in accordance with the global and national recommendations in the context of this pandemic.

It is paramount for those who are part of the tourism value chain to be prepared for the time when the critical stage of the pandemic has been overcome and the epidemiologic situation allows the economic activities to be resumed, in order to provide their services again, and to regain their visitors’ trust in a safe context.

The guidelines shown herein as an appendix for rural tourism have been developed in line with the other protocols in effect regarding activities that may be carried out in a rural environment. If applicable, tourist service individual providers and organizations should refer to the COVID-19 Protocols for Tourist Accommodation, Food Establishments Travel Agencies, Meeting Tourism and any other protocols that may subsequently be approved. Such protocols can be accessed at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/turismoydeportes/protocolos-covid-turismo>

1. Definitions

1.1. RURAL TOURISM

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines rural tourism as a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle and culture, angling and sightseeing.

Rural tourism activities are carried out in non-urban (rural) environments characterized by:

- a) low population density
- b) landscapes and spatial planning where agriculture and forestry prevail.
- c) traditional social structures and lifestyle

1.2. PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

Production activities are those individual or social actions the processes of which are related to sowing and harvesting and those which turn inputs such as raw materials and natural resources into the goods and services required to meet a certain need.

1.3. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Educational activities are those tasks performed by educators and students, either individually or as a group, in or outside the classroom, for the purpose of meeting the objectives of a specific subject.

1.4 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Recreational activities are those individual or social actions intended for fun or entertainment and for the personal experience of any individual enjoying such activity.

2. Characteristics of the Service

2.1. OVERALL CONSIDERATIONS

In light of the special characteristics of rural tourism, below are some guidelines and recommendations applicable to the practices and services offered by this type of tourism.

- a) It is advisable to inform the cancellation or rescheduling policy applicable in the event of COVID-19 compatible symptoms in visitors or service providers.
- b) It is recommended that any person belonging to a risk group be advised to refrain from taking part in the activities or else that the possibility of setting a special timetable or tour for them be considered, and that extreme preventive measures be taken.
- c) Before hiring the service, ask visitors about any disability, or mobility or communication impairment they may have, and bear it in mind when informing the health and safety measures and recommendations. Also, consider the assistance that the person having such disability or impairment will need to perform the activity.
- d) Request that any person visiting the facilities and/or performing the activities submit a sworn statement of COVID-19 related symptoms.
- e) Before starting the activity, make sure that the first-aid kit is equipped with all the elements required by the Ministry of Health of Argentina: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/salud/primerosauxilios/botiquin>
- f) In parking lots, make sure that vehicle spaces allow passengers to keep the minimum distance required when getting on or descending from the vehicle. It is advisable to mark and signal parking spaces.
- g) In the event the service involves transportation of visitors within the facilities for performing

the activities, provide visitors with waste bags for throwing away any disposable items for personal use (included, but not limited to, paper tissues, napkins, disposable water bottles and non-reusable face masks).

h) As far as possible, recommend that visitors refrain from using cloakrooms and leave their coats and bags in their cars or in buses. If cloakrooms are used, the relevant cleaning and disinfection requirements must be met.

i) Avoid handing out badges, identification cards or hang tags to visitors. If used, these items should be made of materials which guarantee easy cleaning and disinfection.

j) Check that visitors use their personal protection equipment properly throughout the activity and make sure that face masks cover nose, mouth and chin while their mandatory use is in effect and that the social distancing requirement is met.

k) Recommend that visitors refrain from using public drinking water fountains or dispensers to refill their bottles. If used, however, provide visitors with disposable biodegradable caps and maximize cleaning and disinfection measures.

l) When receiving suggestions and comments from passengers or visitors after rendering the service, promote the use of digital systems such as QR codes that redirect them to a survey or form in the cloud, Google Maps or social networks, among others.

m) In the event of having a visitors' book, consider the possibility of replacing it with a digital version. Otherwise, promote the use of personal pens, rather than having pens available for shared use.

2.2. PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES AND VISITS IN THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

a) When welcoming visitors and before starting the activity, explain to visitors, or remind visitors of, the preventive measures that must be complied with during the visit and when tasting the products, included but not limited to, contact with facilities, handling of products, mandatory social distancing, use of face masks, hand washing and disinfection, and handling of cutlery and napkins.

b) Plan and organize a visit schedule on days and at times booked in advance, define the maximum number of people in the facilities per visit and/or production or tasting activity,

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among other actions, as provided by the Ministry of Health of Argentina.

c) In connection with the provisions above, define a strict schedule of visitors' entering and leaving the facilities, and of length of each activity and/or production proposal, to avoid meeting with other groups and to have enough time between activities for properly disinfecting areas and items used.

d) Organize the visit to production areas or sectors in a single direction and make sure that the information about the production processes is given in well-ventilated areas, where the minimum social distancing requirement can be met.

e) Avoid crowds of visitors in critical sectors and points such as lobbies, tasting and sale of local product areas, restrooms, parking lots, among others.

f) Visitors should refrain from taking self-guided tours or walking freely around the manufacturing and/or production areas.

g) Visitors should refrain from touching production equipment and from handling lids, blades, hoses, molds, levers, handles, taps or pressing devices, among other elements.

h) Preferably, and as far as permitted by weather conditions, plan and perform product tasting in open areas, and make sure that the required social distancing is kept.

i) Optimize times when performing product tasting, trying to complete the activity in not more than 15 minutes.

j) When tasting products, make sure that visitors have washed their hands thoroughly, and give them sufficient time and the required elements for proper disinfection. If hand sanitizer is provided, administer it upon each visitor entering the tasting room or area, thus avoiding mass contact with dispensers.

k) When tasting products, give visitors small servings and hand them out with a clamp on a paper napkin, thus avoiding direct contact with hands.

l) As far as possible, use disposable biodegradable caps for individual use when tasting liquor, wine, beer or other beverages or infusions.

m) Have wide-mouth waste baskets with no lid placed in tasting rooms or areas to throw away any disposable elements used in the activity.

- n) If products are sold, it is advisable to place them inside cabinets or behind a counter to prevent visitors from touching displayed bottles or souvenirs.
- o) Offer promotions or pre-arranged kits to make the sales process faster.
- p) Encourage the use of electronic methods of payment to pay for products.

2.3. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND VISITS IN THE RURAL TOURISM ENVIRONMENT

- a) Schedule the days and times available for the educational activities with the schools or educational institutions at different times, thus avoiding meetings between students and allowing sufficient time between each activity for properly disinfecting the areas, equipment and items used.
- b) Inform the schools or educational institutions the maximum number of students permitted per visit and/or educational activity in advance, as well as the requirements for students to take part in the activities, such as bringing their personal protection equipment, hygiene kit, and sworn statement about COVID-19 related symptoms, among others.
- c) Organize the visit to farms, production sectors, points of cultural heritage and of educational interest in a single direction and make sure that the explanations of educational contents are given in open and/or well-ventilated areas, where the minimum social distancing requirement can be met.
- d) If the facilities are equipped with seats for educational exhibitions or projections, make sure that they are arranged so that the minimum social distancing and the proper hygiene requirements are met.
- e) If the facilities are equipped with an area for having picnics or snacks, make sure that the size and distribution of spaces are in accordance with the social distancing requirements. Any contact surface in such area should be disinfected before use by another group.
- f) Avoid crowds of students in critical sectors and points such as lobbies, interpretation areas, sale of local product areas, restrooms, parking lots, among others.
- g) Students should refrain from taking self-guided tours or walking freely around the educational sectors or paths.

h) If the activity involves visits to showrooms and/or exhibitions of items which cannot be properly disinfected, acrylic panels, do not touch signs or warning tapes, among other elements, should be installed to prevent students from handling and/or contacting such items.

2.4. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND VISITS IN THE RURAL TOURISM ENVIRONMENT

a) When welcoming visitors and before starting the activity, explain to visitors, or remind visitors of, the preventive measures that must be complied with during the visit, tour and/or recreational activity, included but not limited to, contact with facilities and equipment, handling of protective equipment, mandatory social distancing, use of face masks, and hand washing and disinfection.

b) Visitors should refrain from taking self-guided tours or walking freely around interpretation areas or recreational paths.

c) Plan and organize a tour or recreational activity schedule on days and at times booked in advance, and define the maximum number of people in each tour as provided by the Ministry of Health of Argentina.

d) In connection with the provisions above, define a strict schedule and length of each tour and/or recreational activity to avoid meeting with other visitors and/or groups and to have enough time between activities for properly disinfecting the equipment and items used.

e) Avoid crowds of visitors in critical sectors and points such as lobbies, areas for delivery of equipment, places shops for the sale of local products, dressing rooms, restrooms and parking lots, among others.

f) As far as possible, recommend that visitors carry their own equipment and personal items for performing the activities included, but not limited to, binoculars for bird watching, trekking sticks, and elements for hunting and fishing. Avoid sharing equipment and other items.

g) When performing water activities, define the maximum capacity of the boats based on their size, the required social distancing and the manufacturer's recommendations of use.

h) Disposable cleaning materials such as paper towels and cloths should be made available throughout the activity, as well as a container where these items can be thrown away for final disposal and which can be kept closed until returning from or completing the tour.

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- i) When using extra items to perform the activities (life vests, helmets, reins, among others) disinfect them properly prior to and after each use, preferably before the visitors' arrival.

- j) Whenever saddles, harnesses or straps are used, these should be covered with materials that can be easily disinfected. The use of blankets, lamb skin or wool, among others, should be avoided. However, if any of these is used, synthetic materials are recommended, for proper disinfection.

- k) Give indications as to how the equipment, helmet and safety items should be used and handled, keeping the minimum social distancing required.

- l) Draw maps of areas where free circulation is allowed and include rest stations. Make sure that the social distancing requirement is met and avoid having many visitors in the same rest station at the same time. Signal the way with color stakes or ropes.

- m) In the event the facilities are equipped with seats for exhibitions or shows, make sure that these are arranged so that the minimum social distancing and the proper hygiene requirements are met.

- n) Whenever the service involves staying overnight, the related guidelines in the COVID-19 Protocol for Tourist Accommodation issued by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Argentina should be observed.

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