



FIRST REPORT ON TOURISM AND THE DAIRY WORLD YEAR 2024

In collaborazione con:



BERGAMO CITTÀ CREATIVA
PER LA GASTRONOMIA

FORME

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PREFACE

by Elena Carnevali



I am proud to baptize the **first National Report on Tourism and the Dairy World**, a fundamental work, edited by Professor Roberta Garibaldi, which the Municipality of Bergamo has decided to support and which, not surprisingly, was born right here, as part of the 2024 edition of **FORME**, the event that has been promoting the development of the entire dairy supply chain for 10 years.

Our territory, Bergamo and its province, recognized for its long dairy tradition, today with 9 PDO cheeses out of 53 nationally (of which 14 are Lombard), a rich variety of recognized and certified dairy products, 3 Slow Food presidia, Principi delle Orobie cheeses has a record of excellence, not only nationally, which legitimizes the ambition to make Bergamo and its province a capital of cheese, a point of reference for the entire Italian dairy supply chain.

Bergamo, since 2019 has also been a **UNESCO Creative City for Gastronomy**, thanks to the **Orobic Cheese Valleys**, and has the opportunity and responsibility to collaborate with 350 other cities around the world for the mutual promotion and enhancement of the cultural and gastronomic excellences that make them unique. The city thus becomes an extraordinary showcase to promote the dairy art of our valleys, celebrate the quality and authenticity of our cheeses, also aiming to support the local economy and preserve the landscape and culture that characterizes the Bergamo area.

This gave rise to the **Italian District of UNESCO Creative Cities for Gastronomy** that connects **Bergamo, Alba and Parma** and represents a great opportunity to create synergies between the territories and develop tourist routes that network the typical excellences of these cities. A virtuous example of this collaboration is the **"Typically Unique"** project, which proposes a **synergistic tourist offer** of the three territories, starting from the products that make them famous in the world: cheeses for Bergamo, white truffles for Alba and the many products with designation of origin for Parma, such as Parmigiano Reggiano and Prosciutto di Parma.

The spirit that animates this work therefore goes far beyond the borders of Bergamo and represents a significant starting point for reflecting on a theme that concerns the entire country: the **potential of dairy tourism in Italy**.

Our hope is that dairy tourism can become, as has happened for wine and oil tourism, a **driving force for the growth of the entire national territory**. Food and wine tourism, in fact, is not limited to enhancing products, but tells the link between food, culture and territory, encouraging the creation of collaboration networks that strengthen local identity and



promote authentic experiences.

The example of the circuits of the Roads and the Cities of Wine and Oil, shows us how territorial aggregation can generate virtuous processes of promotion, economic development and social cohesion. Likewise, this report intends to be a tool for reflection and inspiration, offering successful models and data that can support the creation of tourism networks related to the dairy world. From North to South, our country is rich in dairy traditions that deserve to be discovered and enhanced, not only for their quality, but also for the uniqueness of the territories from which they come.

I am sure that this relationship will help consolidate the role of Bergamo and its province and also of our country as a food and wine destination of excellence, promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism, capable of creating opportunities for all the communities involved. I wish everyone a reading full of ideas and I thank those who have contributed to the realization of this project, in the hope that it can be the starting point for a new season of growth and enhancement of our dairy heritage.

Elena Carnevali

Mayor of Bergamo

THE REPORT ON ITALIAN FOOD AND WINE TOURISM



13 volumes from 2018

INTRODUCTION

by Roberta Garibaldi

The "Report on Tourism and the Dairy World" represents the first systematic analysis of supply and demand at national level entirely dedicated to this tourist segment which in recent years has been receiving increasing attention from the public.

The synergies between the dairy world and tourism can, if adequately enhanced and promoted, create benefits for territories, businesses, local communities and travellers. The study highlights a strong interest on the part of tourists, who show particular attention to authentic and innovative experiences that allow them to get in touch with the culture of cheese, discover and experience the places through engaging and engaging ways of use, where human resources play a central role in facilitating this exchange.

The tourist offer currently presents numerous successful practices, including visits and activities in dairies, events and festivals, thematic itineraries, ... which already attract the attention of the public today. There is also ample space, given the richness and variety of the dairy world, to develop and enrich tourist proposals by leveraging innovation, experientiality and sustainability. This process can help increase the attractiveness of lesser-known rural areas and actively protect (thanks to the involvement of travellers) this heritage that is so important for our country, encouraging the spread of slow and responsible tourism practices and creating widespread benefits for the entire supply chain. To this end, collaboration between all public and private actors will be fundamental.

My hope is that the information, case studies, and indications contained in this first report dedicated to tourism and the world of cheese can stimulate and help the sector to explore the potential of the combination of cheese and tourism through initiatives and projects capable of promoting the culture, traditions and values of the territories, of products and people.

A wish for a good reading.

Roberta Garibaldi

President of the Italian Association of Food and Wine Tourism





1 | A GLANCE

About cheese tourism

TOURISM AND THE WORLD OF CHEESE

An opportunity for territories and companies

What is meant by cheese-related tourism?

:Cheese is a product closely linked to the territory in which it is produced, reflecting the local environment and culture. The geographical and climatic conditions of a region directly influence taste and quality. The feeding of the animals, based on local pastures, gives the cheese unique characteristics, making it a symbol of the biodiversity of the place. Dairy production is also a fundamental component of the cultural heritage of communities, a set of practices and knowledge passed down from generation to generation. Cheesemakers, custodians of this tradition, play a crucial role in preserving the vitality of the territory and perpetuating a practice that for centuries has been one of the primary sources of livelihood for rural communities in Italy as well as in other regions of the world.

The opening to tourism in the dairy world is a relatively recent phenomenon, especially when compared to wine tourism. The growing interest of the public in food and wine culture – of which cheeses are an expression – has certainly favored this process which, over time, may expand becoming an important lever for economic diversification and protection of landscapes and dairy production. Especially in our country which, in addition to being characterized by the richness, quality and capillarity of dairy production, has 57 Geographical Indication cheeses.

To better understand tourism in relation to the dairy world, it is appropriate to start with its definition. We can consider it a form of tourism through which to know, live and experience the territories, productions and dairy culture. Among the main proposals that characterize the current context are

- **Guided tours of cheese factories**, during which you can observe and learn about the various stages of cheese production, from milking to aging, meet local producers and listen to their stories.
- **Cheese tastings**, both on the farm and in other places (e.g. restaurants, cheese bars, ..).
- **Cheese-themed festivals and events.**
- **Cheese-making workshops / laboratories**, where you can actively try your hand at production



Cheese production.


- **Thematic itineraries**– Such as, for example, the cheese roads – which cross the territories and production companies and can be traveled on foot, by bicycle or by car.
- **Cheese Museums** dedicated to the history and culture of this product.

Why enhance cheese in a tourist key?

Tourism related to the world of cheese, if adequately supported, planned and managed, can help create lasting value for territories, companies, local communities and tourists. It has the potential to generate:

- *Economic benefits.* The development of tourism related to the world of cheese can contribute to the diversification of rural economies and support the process of multi-functionalization of production realities. Tourist proposals such as, for example, guided tours, tastings and laboratories/workshops are able to generate additional income for producers and create positive externalities for other activities in the area - for example by stimulating the birth of new related businesses and employment. Thematic events and markets can promote the knowledge of rural territories and dairy products, at the same time stimulating tourists' interest in discovering other related attractions.
- *Social and cultural benefits.* As tourism is mainly located in rural areas, its development can help to avoid or slow down the abandonment of marginal territories and the erosion of traditional practices. By enhancing the work of cheesemakers, it is possible to strengthen the sense of identity and belonging to the community.
- *Environmental benefits.* The preservation action supported by tourism can extend to the entire landscape. Continuity of traditional practices reduces the negative impact that abandonment or transformation of activities can have on the environment.

We can also identify factors that characterize tourism in the broadest sense and that can stimulate and encourage the tourist enhancement of dairy products. The growing attention to forms of slow tourism is well suited to the rural character of tourism linked to the world of cheese, whose proposals are fully within the forms of fruition



sweet. The interest in the active 360-degree exploration of the food and wine heritage is a lever to discover the world of cheese in new and engaging ways. Think, for example, of multisensory paths, workshops on production and activities related to food well-being.

Conditions are favorable, and tourism linked to the world of cheese can potentially contribute to the revitalization of Italian rural areas. To this end, synergistic and systemic interventions are needed to transform these opportunities into concrete actions capable of fully enhancing this product and the system of relationships that bind it to the territory and the local community.

TOURISM AND THE WORLD OF CHEESE

An international outlook
by Francesc Fusté Forné




Roberta Garibaldi
WINE • FOOD • TOURISM

Today there are numerous regions around the world that include popular destinations for tourism related to the world of cheese, and many of these combine the geographical indication mark with their identity cheeses, as is also the case in Italy. This reinforces the role of the terroir in the production and consumption of cheese. Tourism linked to the world of cheese embraces a diversity of elements that create a tourist attraction, including both small entrepreneurs and large companies, as is the case in the Manchego region of Spain, where all producers contribute to the local and global recognition of the product. Cheese is also used as an ambassador for nations, in a context where cultural diplomacy has gained more and more attention, and cheese is used as an element of identity.

In particular, the attractiveness of tourism related to the world of cheese is based on several aspects. It develops a strong connection with ancient history (as happens in the Catalan Pyrenees, where cheese production has been documented since the medieval period) and with modern history (as in the Orkney Islands, with the production of cheddar dating back to the second post-war period), but also with migratory dynamics (such as Colonia cheese in Uruguay, whose production is linked to Swiss migrants who arrived in the country at the end of the nineteenth century).

Tourism connected to the world of cheese is also a means of engaging visitors in the local culture, which includes a heritage of agricultural and breeding traditions (e.g. in small valleys, such as the Roncal Valley in northern Spain), but also with the environment surrounding the production spaces (as is the case in many mountainous regions and their bucolic landscapes). The landscapes where the animals live provide the nutrients that are transferred into the milk and, subsequently, into the cheese, giving each product a unique flavor that changes with the seasons. Since milk is not the same in winter and summer, cheese is also not the same at different times of the year. This adds a temporal component to territoriality. Local knowledge about cheese is transferred to the tourism system through themed museums, but also events and tours.

Also, consumption spaces play a crucial role, particularly in cities that concentrate tourist flows, where markets, restaurants and specialty shops offer a wide range of cheeses that attract a varied profile of palates. This offer includes the use of traditional cheesemaking techniques that blend with global tastes, such as cheeses flavoured with beer or wasabi. In this sense, pairing cheese with other food and drink products is another way to advance world-related cheese



tourism. This includes cheese and wine tastings or sushi bars that use local cheeses in their preparations.

The planning and development of cheese tourism experiences must focus on an authentic narrative that connects the steps along the cheese supply chain, from landscape to table, and creates engaging narratives around the people, places and practices related to this product. This can be seen, for example, in a Danish cheese called Havgus, the Danish word for 'sea fog', as this cheese is made from the milk of herds grazing along the Wadden Sea, where sea fog extracts salt from the sea and disperses it over the fields, giving the cheese a distinctive iodized taste.

Future dairy tourism management and marketing strategies will revolve around the experience that goes beyond the product, as travellers seek immersive experiences rather than passive consumption. A successful cheese tourism experience should integrate an engaging narrative (before and after the visit, including digitally) with practical and active learning activities (e.g., about the history of a destination), allowing tourists to connect emotionally and physically with the heritages, landscapes and also with the lifestyles of the territory. For example, 'farm to fork' meals in the context of slow and regenerative tourism create a deeper connection between visitors and cheese, cheese producers and places of production.

In this sense, the relationship between cheese and tourism can also contribute to the preservation of biodiversity, enhancing traditional practices that help protect local breeds, pastures, but also the use of local rennet (such as artichoke flower) or maturing spaces (such as natural caves), in addition to the different culinary uses of cheese in a variety of dishes, from cheese platters to cheesecakes. The actors involved in tourism related to the world of cheese, from farmers to restaurateurs, are also agents of change that promote the ecological transition towards sustainable forms of production and consumption, based on the understanding of cheese as a "living portion" of geography that embodies the cultural and environmental attributes of a place.

THE RELEVANCE OF THE DAIRY WORLD FOR TOURISM



Analyzing and understanding the behavior of tourists is an important step – together with the analysis of the offer – to outline a picture of the current state of tourism connected to the world of cheese. This segment – as we have had the opportunity to underline previously – is one of the expressions of food and wine tourism, whose growing affirmation is shared by numerous sector studies and academic research.

Before going into the details of supply and demand, it seems appropriate to broaden our gaze to food and wine on the go and retrace the key aspects, which are also factors that have a positive influence in stimulating the discovery of dairy production, namely: the strong interest in food and wine and rural areas, the appeal of Italian villages and rural territories, the desire to live authentic experiences and the centrality of visits to producers.

Tourists' wishes: food and wine and rural areas

Today, travelers show a growing interest in rurality and food and wine. Looking at the desires of European citizens for travel in the period June-November, 17.8% (about 24 million) and 16.7% (22.5 million) want to explore rural areas and discover the food and wine of the area visited regardless of the type of holiday⁷ (Graph 1.1). Overseas travelers who will come to the Old Continent also show the same high interest with 37% of first visitors and 41% of repeaters declaring that they want to participate in proposals on food, wine, ...⁸

Looking at Italian tourists, they too show a high appreciation for food and wine-themed proposals: participation in these experiences is now a widespread habit, with about 7 out of 10 having carried out at least five different types during the most recent trips. Over time, the number of tourists who have taken a holiday with food and wine as their primary motivation (i.e. "food and wine tourists") has increased from 21% in 2016 to 58% in 2023⁹.

(7) European Travel Commission – ETC (2024). *Monitoring sentiment for intra-European travel. Summer/Autumn 2024* Wave 19. Available [QUJ](#).

(8) European Travel Commission – ETC (2024). *Long-haul travel barometer 3/2024. Travel horizons: September- December 2024- April* Available [QUJ](#).

(9) Garibaldi, R. (2023). Report on Italian Food and Wine Tourism: Trends and Scenarios. The volume is available [QUJ](#).

GRAF. 1.1 | Types of experiences preferred by European tourists.

Travel in the period June – November 2024. % values on the total. Source: European Travel Commission.



Tabella da
modificare

Rurality and small villages: the strength of the Italian tourist offer

The small villages, the Italian towns in the hinterland – where the food and wine heritage and themed experiences are concentrated – are a distinctive element of Italy and represent a connoting element of our tourist offer.

The data confirm their attractiveness: in 2023, there were 39.3 million presences of Italians (18.5% of the total) and 48.5 million of foreigners (20.7%) in these locations on the Italian territory. The comparison with other competitor countries is interesting: Italy sees a significant concentration of international tourists in rural areas, while Spain has a strong imbalance towards coastal resorts¹⁰.

Despite their appeal, there is room for their further enhancement in terms of tourism. In 2024, 60% of Italian tourists say they have taken a trip to the small villages of Italy and 93% intend to take one in the coming months. What are the aspects that most motivate their discovery? Beauty and uniqueness of places, culture and food and wine (Table 1.1).

TAB. 1.1 | Main reasons why Italian tourists would take a trip to the small villages of the Italian hinterland.

Year 2024. Tourists who declare that they want to take a trip to the small villages. Source: Garibaldi, R. (2024).

	TOTAL Tourists
They are beautiful places	11,2%
To learn about the history and culture of the place	10,3%
It's an interesting/interesting/unique experience	10,3%
They are beautiful to discover/there is always something beautiful to discover/they have a lot to offer	10,2%
For the food and wine heritage/to learn about the culinary culture/I love good food	8,8%

The search for authentic food and wine experiences

In the current context, tourists increasingly want authentic experiences that allow them to discover the cultural value rooted in territories, products, and people. In other words, tasting recipes, specialties and local wines (indicated by 62.3% of Italian tourists), seeing and experiencing landscapes that have maintained their agricultural production vocation (38.4%) and meeting producers and locals (26%). (Graph 1.2).

GRAF. 1.2 | Elements that make the food and wine experience authentic.

Year 2024. TOTAL Italian tourists. Source: Garibaldi, R. (2024).



Visits to producers among the most popular proposals

Over the years, the interest of Italian tourists in the places of production has grown. In 2023, 74% say they have participated in at least one experience in wineries, oil mills, breweries, dairies, ... during the trips made in the last three years. This is a value second only to culinary experiences in restaurants – which have always been the most widespread and popular – and greater than events (indicated by 60% of respondents) and other themed proposals (Table 1.2).

TAB. 1.2 | Participation in food and wine experiences.

Year 2023. TOTAL Italian tourists. Source: Garibaldi, R. (2023).

	TOTAL Tourists
Dining experiences in restaurants	94%
Visits to production sites	74%
Food and wine events	60%
Active food and wine experiences	53%
Tours and thematic itineraries	48%
Altre esperienze enogastronomiche	65%

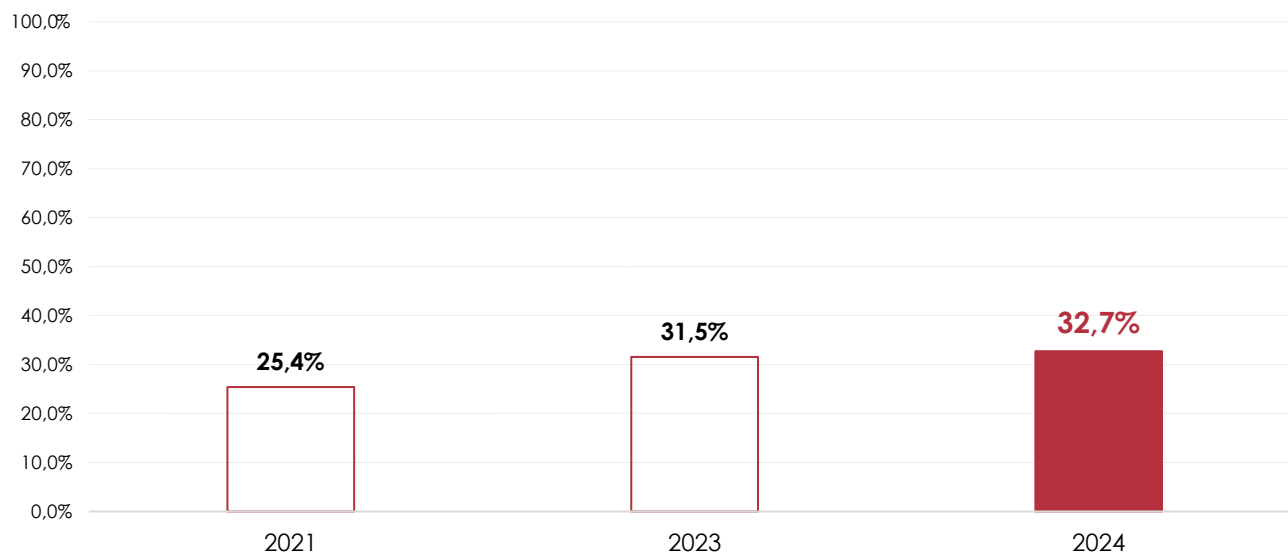
The relevance of tourism in relation to the world of cheese

Tourism linked to the discovery of dairy production is experiencing a moment of growth. Recent interest has stimulated production companies and tourism service providers to offer thematic proposals (such as visits, tastings, events, tours, itineraries, ...), triggering a virtuous circle.

The numbers confirm this. Today, 32.7% of Italian tourists say they have participated in at least one cheese-themed experience during their trips in the last three years – in absolute values, it is estimated that there are about 6.8 million¹¹. Numbers that, in the last three years, have grown significantly: +7.3% on 2021, and +1.2% on 2023 (Graph 1.3).

GRAF. 1.3 | Italian tourists who have participated in at least one cheese-themed experience.

Years 2021-2024. % of total values.



What are the reasons? A first reason lies in the growing interest in food, wine, oil, beer, cheese themed experiences. In 2023, 7 out of 10 Italian tourists have taken at least five of them during their most recent trips. A second reason is the growth in the appeal of production sites, with visits to dairies second to wineries in popularity.

Despite this new visibility and attractiveness, the desire to discover the dairy world is still not a primary reason to travel. Those who have participated in themed experiences are not "niche" travelers – i.e. they have a distinct socio-demographic profile that is different from the general one – and carry out different food and wine activities in addition to those related to cheese.

Participation in other food and wine experiences

Looking at the travel experience, it is useful to learn more about the other types of proposals that those who have carried out tourist activities related to the world of cheese participate in (Table 1.3). The most popular are the culinary experiences in local restaurants: 88.3% say they have taken part in them during their trips in the last three years. Strong appeal also for visits to other places of production, such as wineries, oil mills, breweries, ... indicated by 85% of tourists. This indicates a strong propensity to explore the production world in all its facets among those who participate in cheese-themed activities.

This is followed by relaxation experiences (75.6%), events (72.1%), itineraries and thematic tours (61%) and active proposals (61%). This is further confirmation of the fact that the food and wine journey is no longer exclusively an opportunity to discover local productions and companies, but also an opportunity to rediscover one's psycho-physical well-being and experience the territories at 360 degrees and in more engaging ways. Less attention is paid – also due to their lower diffusion – to museums of taste (indicated by 43.5% of respondents), while there is some interest in other food and wine experiences such as markets, small shops of taste and other attractions.

TAB. 1.3 | Participation in food and wine experiences.

Year 2024. TOTAL tourists who have had at least one cheese-themed experience, * Visits to cheese factories, events and cheese-themed itineraries were not considered

	TOTAL Tourists
Culinary experiences	88,3%
Visits to production sites*	85,0%
Relaxing experiences	75,6%
Events*	72,1%
Tours and itineraries*	61,0%
Active experiences	61,0%
Museums of taste	43,5%
Other experiences	66,9%
Culinary experiences	88,3%





2 | TOURIST OFFER

Linked to the world of
cheese

DAIRY PRODUCTION

The Italian dairy heritage boasts unique traditions and peculiarities, with a wealth of products that testify to the cultural and productive diversity of the territories of the Belpaese. In addition to their relevance to the agri-food economy, cheeses are potentially an added value for tourist destinations. They can increase – if adequately enhanced – the attractiveness of the area as a food and wine destination, enriching the travel experience and contributing to tourist satisfaction.

Italy can boast 58 cheeses and dairy products with Geographical Indication (PDO, PGI and TSG) – listed in Table 2.11 – out of a total of 328 certified products (17.7%). This is the category with the highest number of indications, second only to fruit and vegetables and cereals (126)¹. To these are added the numerous local productions that characterize the entire peninsula, from north to south.

TAB. 2.1 | List of Italian cheeses and dairy products with PDO and PGI Geographical Indication (>>>continued)

Year 2024. Our re-elaboration on MASAF and Qualivita Observatory data, updated on 14 October 2024.

	Category	Region	Province
Asiago	DOP	Prov. Aut. di Trento, Veneto	Trento, Vicenza, Padova, Treviso
Bitto	DOP	Lombardia	Sondrio, Bergamo
Bra	DOP	Piemonte	Cuneo, Torino
Burrata di Andria	IGP	Puglia	Bari, Barletta-Andria-Trani, Brindisi, Foggia, Taranto, Lecce
Caciocavallo Silano	DOP	Calabria, Campania, Molise, Puglia, Basilicata	Catanzaro, Cosenza, Avellino, Benevento, Caserta, Napoli, Salerno, Isernia, Campobasso, Foggia, Bari, Taranto, Brindisi, Matera, Potenza
Caciottone di Norcia	IGP	Umbria	Perugia
Canestrato di Moliterno	IGP	Basilicata	Potenza e Matera
Canestrato Pugliese	DOP	Puglia	Foggia, Bari
Casatella Trevigiana	DOP	Veneto	Treviso
Casciotta d' Urbino	DOP	Marche	Pesaro-Urbino
Castelmagno	DOP	Piemonte	Cuneo
Fiore Sardo	DOP	Sardegna	Cagliari, Nuoro, Oristano, Sassari, Carbonia-Iglesias, Medio Campidano, Ogliastra, Olbia-Tempio

(1) Data source: Qualivita Observatory.

TAB. 2.1 | List of Italian cheeses and dairy products with PDO and PGI Geographical Indication (>>>continued)

Year 2024. Our re-elaboration on MASAF and Qualivita Observatory data, updated on 14 October 2024.

	Category	Region	Province
Fontina	DOP	Valle d'Aosta	Aosta
Formaggella del Luinese	DOP	Lombardia	Varese
Formaggio di Fossa di Sogliano	DOP	Emilia Romagna, Marche	Forlì-Cesena, Rimini, Ravenna, Bologna, Pesaro-Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, Ascoli Piceno
Formai de Mut dell'Alta Valle Brembana	DOP	Lombardia	Bergamo
Gorgonzola	DOP	Piemonte, Lombardia	Alessandria, Bergamo, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Cuneo, Milano, Novara, Pavia, Vercelli
Grana Padano	DOP	Emilia Romagna, Lombardia, Piemonte, Prov. Aut. di Trento, Veneto	Alessandria, Asti, Cuneo, Novara, Torino, Vercelli, Bergamo, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Mantova, Milano, Pavia, Sondrio, Varese, Padova, Trento, Rovigo, Treviso, Venezia, Verona, Vicenza, Bologna, Ferrara, Forlì, Piacenza, Ravenna
Montasio	DOP	Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto	Gorizia, Pordenone, Trieste, Udine, Belluno, Treviso, Padova, Venezia
Monte Veronese	DOP	Veneto	Verona
Mozzarella di Bufala Campana	DOP	Campania, Lazio, Molise, Puglia	Benevento, Caserta, Napoli, Salerno, Frosinone, Latina, Roma, Foggia, Isernia
Mozzarella di Gioia del Colle	DOP	Puglia, Basilicata	Bari, Taranto, Matera
Murazzano	DOP	Piemonte	Cuneo
Nostrano Valtrompia	DOP	Lombardia	Brescia
Ossolano	DOP	Piemonte	Verbania Cusio Ossola
Parmigiano Reggiano	DOP	Emilia-Romagna, Lombardia	Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, Bologna, Mantova
Pecorino Crotonese	DOP	Calabria	Crotone
Pecorino delle Balze Volterrane	DOP	Toscana	Pisa
Pecorino del Monte Poro	DOP	Calabria	Vibo Valentia
Pecorino di Filiano	DOP	Basilicata	Potenza
Pecorino di Picinisco	DOP	Lazio	Frosinone
Pecorino Romano	DOP	Toscana, Lazio, Sardegna	Frosinone, Grosseto, Latina, Roma, Viterbo, Cagliari, Nuoro, Sassari

TAB. 2.1 | List of Italian cheeses and dairy products with PDO and PGI Geographical Indication (>>>continued)

Year 2024. Our re-elaboration on MASAF and Qualivita Observatory data, updated on 14 October 2024.

	Category	Region	Province
Pecorino Sardo	DOP	Sardegna	Cagliari, Nuoro, Oristano, Sassari, Carbonia-Iglesias, Medio Campidano, Ogliastra, Olbia-Tempio
Pecorino Siciliano	DOP	Sicilia	Agrigento, Caltanissetta, Catania, Enna, Messina, Palermo, Ragusa, Siracusa, Trapani
Pecorino Toscano	DOP	Toscana, Umbria, Lazio	Arezzo, Firenze, Grosseto, Siena, Livorno, Lucca, Massa Carrara, Pistoia, Pisa, Viterbo, Terni
Piacentinu Ennese	DOP	Sicilia	Enna
Piave	DOP	Veneto	Belluno
Provola dei Nebrodi	DOP	Sicilia	Catania, Enna e Messina
Provolone del Monaco	DOP	Campania	Napoli
Provolone Valpadana	DOP	Prov. Aut. di Trento, Lombardia, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna	Cremona, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, Rovigo, Padova, Piacenza, Bergamo, Mantova, Milano, Trento
Puzzone di Moena/Spretz Tzaorì	DOP	Prov. Aut. di Trento, Prov. Aut. di Bolzano	Trento, Bolzano
Quartirolo Lombardo	DOP	Lombardia	Brescia, Bergamo, Como, Cremona, Milano, Pavia, Varese
Ragusano	DOP	Sicilia	Ragusa, Siracusa
Raschera	DOP	Piemonte	Cuneo
Ricotta di Bufala Campana	DOP	Campania, Lazio, Molise, Puglia	Benevento, Caserta, Napoli, Salerno, Frosinone, Latina, Roma, Foggia, Isernia
Ricotta Romana	DOP	Lazio	Roma, Frosinone, Viterbo, Latina, Rieti
Robiola di Roccaverano	DOP	Piemonte	Asti, Alessandria
Salva Cremasco	DOP	Lombardia	Bergamo, Brescia, Cremona, Lecco, Lodi, Milano
Silfer	DOP	Lombardia	Brescia
Spressa delle Giudicarie	DOP	Prov. Aut. di Trento	Trento
Squacquerone di Romagna	DOP	Ravenna, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini, Bologna, Ferrara	
Stelvio o Stilsfer	DOP	Prov. Aut. di Bolzano	Bolzano

TAB. 2.1 | List of Italian cheeses and dairy products with PDO and PGI Geographical Indication.

Year 2024. Our re-elaboration on MASAF and Qualivita Observatory data, updated on 14 October 2024.

	Category	Region	Province
Strachitunt	DOP	Lombardia	Bergamo
Taleggio	DOP	Lombardia, Veneto, Piemonte	Bergamo, Brescia, Como, Cremona, Milano, Pavia, Treviso, Novara
Toma Piemontese	DOP	Piemonte	Novara, Vercelli, Biella, Torino, Cuneo, Alessandria, Asti
Valle d' Aosta Fromadzo	DOP	Valle d'Aosta	Aosta
Valtellina Casera	DOP	Lombardia	Sondrio
Vastedda della valle del Belice	DOP	Sicilia	Agrirento, Trapani, Palermo

A fundamental role in enhancing the richness of dairy production is played by the Consortia for the Protection of GIs. In our country there are 54 active – listed in Table 2.2. These have the important role of making cheeses known and promoted to the general public, facilitating their distribution and marketing, guaranteeing their quality and authenticity and defending them from counterfeiting.

Following the approval of Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council no. 2024/1143, the Protection Consortia have expanded their competences to the tourism sector, with tasks related to the promotion and management of related activities².

(2) For more details, please refer to the dedicated page of the Qualivita Foundation portal ([HERE](#)).

TAB. 2.2 | List of consortia for the protection of cheese GIs. (>>>more)

Year 2024. Our reprocessing of MASAF data, updated on 14 October 2024.

	Region	N. Members / operators
Asiago Cheese Protection Consortium	Veneto	1244
Association of Pecorino di Picinisco producers	Lazio	3
Squacquerone di Romagna Association DOP	Emilia Romagna	38
Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese Consortium	Emilia Romagna, Lombardia	2987
Consortium of Provolone dei Nebrodi cheese	Sicilia	7
Consortium of Pecorino del Monte Poro DOP	Calabria	N/A
Consortium for the Protection of Nostrano Valtrompia	Lombardia	6
Consortium for the protection of Pecorino delle Balze Volterrane DOP	Toscana	12
Consortium for the Protection of Sicilian Pecorino DOP	Sicilia	23
Consortium for the Protection of Provolone del Monaco DOP	Campania	38
Consortium for the protection of the Puzzone di Moena – Spretz Tzaori'	Prov. Aut. di Trento	72
Consortium for the protection of Mozzarella di Gioia del Colle Dop	Puglia	N/A
Consortium for the Protection of Roman Ricotta D.O.P	Lazio	167
Consortium for the Protection of the Vastedda of the Belice Valley DOP	Sicilia	12
Consortium for the Protection of Valtellina Casera and Bitto Cheeses	Lombardia	63
Consortium for the Protection of Piacentinu Ennese DOP Cheese	Sicilia	28
Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Crotonese	Calabria	30
Consortium of Fossa di Sogliano DOP Cheese	Emilia Romagna	41
Stelvio Cheese Consortium	Prov. Aut. di Bolzano	424
Consortium for the Protection of Casatella Trevigiana DOP Cheese	Veneto	79

TAB. 2.2 | Elenco dei consorzi di tutela delle IG formaggi. (>>>segue)

Anno 2024. Nostra rielaborazione su dati MASAF, aggiornamento al 14 ottobre 2024.

	Regione	N. Soci / operatori
Consortium for the Protection of Castelmagno Cheese	Piemonte	25
Consortium for the Protection of Gorgonzola Cheese	Piemonte	1685
Consortium for the Protection of Grana Padano Cheese	Lombardia	4178
Consortium for the Protection of Montasio Cheese	Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto	959
Consortium for the Protection of Monte Veronese Cheese D.O.P	Veneto	136
Consortium for the protection of Murazzano cheese	Piemonte	13
Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Romano Cheese	Sardegna	10358
Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Sardo DOP Cheese	Sardegna	8453
Consortium for the Protection of Ragusano DOP Cheese	Sicilia	37
Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino Canestrato di Moliterno	Basilicata	15
Consortium for the Protection of Pecorino di Filiano	Basilicata	5
Consortium for the Protection of Formaggella del Luinese	Lombardia	10
Consortium for the Protection of Mozzarella di Bufala Campana DOP	Campania	1229
Consortium for the protection of Strachitunt Val Taleggio	Lombardia	6
Consortium for the protection and enhancement of Burrata di Andria IGP	Puglia	12
Consortium for the protection, promotion and enhancement of Ossolano DOP cheese	Piemonte	25
Consortium of Producers and Protection of the DOP Fontina	Valle d'Aosta	619
Consortium of Formai de Mut Producers of the Upper Brembana Valley	Lombardia	25
Consortium for the Protection of Casciotta d'Urbino DOP	Marche	45
Consortium for the Protection of Bra DOP Cheese	Piemonte	216

TAB. 2.2 | Elenco dei consorzi di tutela delle IG formaggi.

Anno 2024. Nostra rielaborazione su dati MASAF, aggiornamento al 14 ottobre 2024.

	Regione	N. Soci / operatori
Consortium for the Protection of Caciocavallo Silano Cheese	Calabria	191
Consortium for the Protection of Piedmontese Toma DOP Cheese	Piemonte	397
Consortium for the Protection of Fiore Sardo DOP Cheese	Sardegna	571
Consortium for the Protection of Piave Cheese DOP	Veneto	155
Consortium for the Protection of Raschera Cheese DOP	Piemonte	227
Consortium for the Protection of Roccaverano DOP Cheese	Piemonte	25
Consortium for the Protection of Silter Cheese	Lombardia	34
Consortium for the Protection of Sprezza delle Giudicarie DOP Cheese	Prov. Aut. di Trento	30
Consortium for the Protection of Tuscan Pecorino DOP	Toscana, Umbria, Lazio	790
Consortium for the Protection of Provolone Valpadana	Lombardia	683
Consortium for the Protection of Quartirolo Lombardo	Lombardia	575
Consortium for the Protection of Ricotta di Bufala Campana DOP	Campania	1166
Consortium for the Protection of Salva Cremasco	Lombardia	113
Consortium for the Protection of Taleggio	Lombardia	634



EXPERIENCES IN DAIRIES AND DAIRY FARMS

Dairies and dairy companies, from being productive places with spaces designed and dedicated only to this purpose, have begun to open up to tourism stimulated by the growing interest of the public. Following what has already happened in wine tourism – a mature sector with a constantly evolving offer – the offer of traditional and innovative proposals has been increasing in recent years.

Unfortunately, as for other sectors, there is no precise information on the opening to the public of these production realities. Official statistics do not have data on the volume and structure of the related tourist offer. We know that, among the experiences in the places of production, visits to dairies represented in 2023 the second most popular proposal by Italian travelers after wineries³; a figure that could suggest the presence of a relatively substantial offer.

Rather than looking at the numerical data, it is appropriate to analyze the development trajectories of experience in dairies and dairy farms. We will then present data on the desires of Italian tourists accompanied by good practices, which can provide insights on how to create engaging experiences for visitors.

Guided tours, tastings and purchase of products

The guided tour of the farm, the tasting and the purchase of products are the core tourist services of the dairies, what the traveler looks for most frequently and what he expects to find when he decides to visit a production company.

The data confirm this: the survey clearly shows that the preferences of travellers are primarily oriented towards the possibility of buying local cheeses (indicated by 72.9% of respondents), tasting them in combination with other typical dishes and wines of the area (69%), as well as discovering and seeing the places and production processes (65.6%) (Table 2.3).

One of the relevant issues is the organization of company spaces, which must be able to harmonize the needs related to the HACCP regulations for dairy production and the needs of tourists. Below - in the pits - we present some solutions.



TAB. 2.3 | Interest in cheese factory experiences: purchase, tasting and visit.

Year 2024, TOTAL Italian tourists and differences between generations. Question on Likert scale (1-5). The % refer only to the values 4 (Agree) and 5 (Totally Agree).

	TOTAL Tourists	18-24 Var. %	25-34 Var. %	35-44 Var. %	45-54 Var. %	55-64 Var. %	> 65 Var. %
I would like to be able to buy the company's cheese at attractive prices	72,9%	-0,3%	-8,7%	-7,5%	3,4%	6,9%	4,7%
I would like to taste the cheese in combination with local food and wines	69,0%	-4,5%	-0,7%	-7,9%	1,4%	4,9%	4,6%
I would like to see cheese production	65,6%	3,8%	-1,4%	0,3%	0,8%	-0,2%	-1,2%

LATTERIA TRE CIME MONDOLATTE: PANORAMIC GALLERY

Latteria Tre Cime, Dobbiaco, BOLZANO



With the construction of the new plant in 2004, this historic cooperative dairy in Val Pusteria was redesigned to suit the needs of the guest, with structural measures: a gallery with large windows on the processing rooms, which allows the public to comfortably see all the stages of cheesemaking from above, thus obviating the health problems deriving from the presence of non-experts in the dairy. At the same time, two other spaces have been dedicated to hospitality: a small museum with the identity tools of South Tyrolean cheesemaking and a multimedia area equipped with large curved walls where landscape and dairy technology content is projected, aimed at making people understand, with the help of expert guides, the world of mountain dairy production.

 <https://3zinnen.it/it/chi-siamo/mondolatte/>

4 MADONNE CASEIFICIO DELL'EMILIA: FROM EARTHQUAKE TO TOURISM



4 Madonne Caseificio dell'Emilia, Lesignana, MODENA

After the earthquake of 2012, the main plant of the dairy, severely damaged, was completely renovated with a view to anti-seismic, energy sustainability and also tourist accommodation. The structure is barrier-free and large windows have been installed along the corridors that run along the production premises. Guests can thus follow the production operations of Parmigiano Reggiano PDO in absolute safety, also given the high temperatures of curd processing. Also through the windows it is possible to observe the salting in brine, while the maturing warehouses - containing over 33 thousand wheels - are directly accessible for a sensory, especially olfactory, immersive experience. For over 10 years, the dairy has welcomed an average of about 20 thousand visitors a year.



www.caseificio4madonne.it/

Courses and workshops

As we have already pointed out for more "mature" segments – such as wine tourism⁴ – within the places of production, more and more engaging, engaging and stimulating proposals are spreading alongside traditional visits, tastings and purchases. For example, the tasting of cheese moves outdoors becoming a tasting format with combinations between local productions and other typical products of the area – as in the example described in the box.

Among the numerous proposals there are cheese pairing courses, much appreciated by tourists (54.7%) because they allow you to learn about the characteristics of local dairy productions and learn the possible combinations with food, wines and / or beers. As well as laboratories and workshops through which to discover the art of cheese-making and test themselves with the production of cheese, (51.8%) – perhaps with the possibility of receiving it once the journey is over (44.1%) (Table 2.4). The Burki farmhouse in Macugnaga (VCO), for example, organizes "Cheese labs" through which visitors can try their hand at producing from milk to cheese (detail in the box).

TAB. 2.4 | Interest in experiences in dairies: courses and workshops.

Year 2024, TOTAL Italian tourists and differences between generations. Question on Likert scale (1-5). The % refer only to the values 4 (Agree) and 5 (Totally Agree).

	TOTAL Tourists	18-24 Var. %	25-34 Var. %	35-44 Var. %	45-54 Var. %	55-64 Var. %	> 65 Var. %
I would like to participate in courses to learn how to combine cheeses with wine, beer and other products	54,7%	4,9%	1,3%	0,1%	1,8%	0,1%	-5,3%
I would like to have the opportunity to participate in the production of cheese and learn the art of cheesemakers	51,8%	3,0%	2,2%	4,4%	2,9%	-5,0%	-6,4%

It is appropriate to highlight here a fact that emerges from the analysis, and which can be of great use for companies that decide to develop new tourist proposals related to cheese. This search for experiential proposals is a trait that distinguishes especially the younger generations. It represents, therefore, a possible lever to bring them closer to the dairy world (Table 2.4).

Looking at the data, we see that tasting and purchasing are more appreciated and sought after by the over 55s, while Millennials and Generation Z are more oriented towards activities through which they can learn by getting involved themselves, as in the case of cheese pairing (Δ 18-24 years = +4.9%) and cheese workshops (Δ 35-44 years = +4.4%).

CABIGLIERA & ZIDDA: EVENING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Cabigliera & Zidda Formaggi, Ozieri, SASSARI



A long dining table set with elegant handmade ceramics, vases that house ears of wheat, antique pots, coffee tables and a comfortable sofa, all in the open air countryside, with bales of straw and hay to frame beautiful summer sunsets. The "evening in the countryside" organized by the Sardinian farm sees in the accuracy of the preparation one of its strengths, managing to create that magical atmosphere capable of making the experience memorable not only of taste, linked to the tasting of the company's cheeses and ricotta, but also of beauty. The attention to detail and decorative elements gives a gear in to the various activities planned, such as the walk in the fields to get to know their animals up close, making the time spent on the farm exciting and poetic for the guests.

 www.facebook.com/formaggicabiglierazidda/?locale=it_IT

BURKI FARMHOUSE: SPACE FOR WORKSHOPS

Agriturismo Burki, Macugnaga, VERBANO-CUSIO-OSSOLA



The room of the alpine micro-dairy, designed to process the milk of only 15 cows, would be inadequate to accommodate the public of visitors for the "Cheese labs" organized by the farm. For food safety reasons, it was decided to set up a special space on the panoramic terrace or inside the farmhouse, depending on the weather conditions. Here guests can try their hand at a real production from milk to cheese, each with their own container and tools, guided by the indications of Cristina, the cheesemaker, and her stories. Also for health reasons, given the processing spaces that do not comply with the standards, the fresh cheeses obtained from the laboratories are not suitable for human consumption, but are to be understood as educational material aimed at sensory experimentation of milk processing and understanding its secrets.

 <https://alpeburki.it/services/laboratori/>

The new proposals

This attention to engaging, engaging proposals capable of raising awareness of lesser-known aspects of the dairy world is leading companies to create new experiences dedicated to specific targets.

Think, for example, of courses dedicated to children, which are increasingly popular today and have a strong educational value – as they allow boys and girls to learn while having fun. The satisfaction of tourists is there, and it is high (almost 1 tourist out of 2) (Table 2.5). Company spaces can also open up to the business world with dairies thus becoming spaces where work team building activities can be carried out alongside visits and tastings (a proposal appreciated by 40.8% of respondents). As well as playful proposals (escape rooms, treasure hunts, murder mystery dinners), where the focus shifts to entertainment; 37% of Italian tourists like this option, which differs from traditional tourist experiences in dairies.

TAB. 2.5 | Interest in new ways of using the dairy tourist experience..

Year 2024, TOTAL Italian tourists and differences between generations. Question on Likert scale (1-5). The % refer only to the values 4 (Agree) and 5 (Totally agree),

	TOTAL Tourists	18-24 Var. %	25-34 Var. %	35-44 Var. %	45-54 Var. %	55-64 Var. %	> 65 Var. %
I would like dairies to offer courses and workshop activities to learn how to make cheese dedicated to children	49,7%	0,3%	2,4%	5,6%	-2,6%	-1,8%	-3,7%
I would like dairies to offer structured proposals dedicated to companies (e.g. team building activities)	40,8%	6,0%	3,8%	2,5%	3,6%	-4,6%	-8,0%
I would like to have playful experiences (e.g. escape room, treasure hunt, murder mystery dinners) in the dairy	37,0%	3,3%	5,6%	6,3%	4,7%	-3,5%	-15,7%



DA CAROZZI: BLIND TEST

Carozzi Formaggi, Pasturo, LECCO

Among the different types of experiences, Carozzi Formaggi offers a "blind test", suitable for corporate or private groups. It is a blind tasting that takes place in the company bistro after a visit to the production premises. The participants, blindfolded and divided into teams, are served 2 cheeses per course, for a total of 4 courses, starting from the freshest to the most mature cheeses. It is a strategy game, a challenge that tests touch, taste and smell. A playful way to discover the dairy peculiarities of Valsassina by stimulating the sensory skills of guests.



www.dacarozzi.it/prodotto/blind-test-formaggi-carozzi/

It seems appropriate to deepen what to communicate. Looking at the desires of tourists, a theme that is increasingly focused on today concerns food well-being which, during food and wine trips, translates into the desire to know the nutritional characteristics of the products tasted. More than 1 in 2 tourists shows interest in having this information during the dairy experience (Table 2.6). This is accompanied by the desire to discover the history of the territory, the company and the people through the voice of those who work there.

This is confirmed by the statements of the tourists themselves: 52.5% would like to be able to know the history and anecdotes related to the company and the cheeses produced and 48.9% to meet and talk to the owner of the company (Table 6). Encouraging data, as they underline a desire on the part of travellers to get out of the "hit and run" logic and discover the true link between cheese and its territory

Likewise, it is necessary to understand how to communicate the dairy world in its different facets. Creating engaging and captivating storytelling – which today can also take advantage of new digital technologies such as, for example, augmented and virtual reality, and georeferenced podcasts – can facilitate the engagement of the tourist and the transmission of knowledge during the visit, creating continuous stimuli. For this reason, we wanted to dedicate a specific in-depth study to the process of building narrative formats.

TAB. 2.6 | Interest in the educational aspect of the dairy tourism experience.

Year 2024, TOTAL Italian tourists and differences between generations. Question on Likert scale (1-5). The % refer only to the values 4 (Agree) and 5 (Totally agree),

	TOTAL Tourists	18-24 Var. %	25-34 Var. %	35-44 Var. %	45-54 Var. %	55-64 Var. %	> 65 Var. %
I would like to have information during the experience of nutritional values in order to make correct choices	53,0%	0,2%	1,7%	-1,1%	-0,1%	1,7%	-1,9%
I would like to know the history and anecdotes related to the company and the cheeses produced	52,5%	-4,2%	2,2%	-1,1%	4,0%	-1,5%	-2,5%
I would like to have the opportunity to meet and talk to the cheesemaker	48,9%	1,1%	-1,6%	5,5%	-0,9%	-2,6%	-1,7%

Historic dairies

The Italian dairy tradition boasts a thousand-year history, rooted in the territories and with unique specificities. This is why places of great charm such as historic dairies become increasingly attentive attractions, opportunities for tourists to enrich their cultural background and learn about the production culture of the territories and their evolution over time. This is confirmed by the survey data: 64.2% of Italian travellers, in fact, say they want to visit one (Table 2.7).

TAB. 2.7 | Interest in historic cheese factories.

Year 2024, TOTAL Italian tourists and differences between generations. Question on Likert scale (1-5). The % refer only to the values 4 (Agree) and 5 (Totally agree),

	TOTAL Tourists	18-24 Var. %	25-34 Var. %	35-44 Var. %	45-54 Var. %	55-64 Var. %	> 65 Var. %
I would like to visit a historic cheese factory	64,2%	-4,5%	-2,0%	-2,7%	2,6%	2,3%	0,7%

STORICO RIBELLE

In the mountain pastures of the Bitto valleys, in the Orobic Prealps, 12 shepherds produce a special cheese called Storico Ribelle. It is a cheese produced only in the summer months, when cows of the Alpine brown breed and goats of the Orobica breed graze the high mountain meadows rich in biodiversity, without the integration of feed or silage. Their milk is processed by shepherds directly in the freshly milked mountain pastures, with traditional techniques and tools, unchanged for several hundred years. The combination of these conditions means that this cheese has an extraordinary ability to age and can reach up to ten years, developing remarkable sensory characteristics.

To protect the cultural and environmental heritage represented by the Storico Ribelle, also a Slow Food Presidium, there is a Safeguard Consortium that brings together the producers, a benefit commercial company that enhances their work and a specification that preserves the practices of the historical method of production.

Behind the Storico Ribelle there is in fact a great deal of work in terms of time, manual skills and care of the territory that the Valli del Bitto Company is committed to safeguarding by paying producers an ethical price for their cheese, which is purchased, kept and cared for in the ripening center and marketed.

The various subjects that revolve around the Storico Ribelle are able to convey with their work the values of dairy resistance that characterize this production and over the years they have been able to involve a community of supporters such as to have transformed the enhancement project into a collective project in which to identify. The Bitto Center has thus become a real point of reference, representative of a small cultural movement.

Among the various initiatives, starting from the early 2000s, the center promotes the "Forme in dedica", that is to say the possibility, in each year, to buy an entire wheel, have it personalized with hand-painted inscriptions on the rind and have it mature inside the Casera. The owner of the wheel can then collect it once the desired level of maturation has been reached or on the occasion of an important anniversary. Every year the best 100 wheels are selected and made available; Each one is unique: those who buy know that there is no other like it.



Over time, the "dedicated wheels" have achieved a certain success, for over 5 years now to be able to buy one it is necessary to wait and book it in advance for the following year. The current year's wheels are sold out. The Casera has been transformed into a sort of museum in which the history of cheese blends with people's life stories. There are shapes for all occasions, from the birth of a child to weddings or anniversaries, to coming of age. Great friendships or passions are celebrated, associations and even companies are celebrated. Many restaurants, cheese shops and shops also require them to display them to their customers. The cheese thus becomes a gift and guardian of time, until the wheel is finally opened and consumed, probably in the name of conviviality, and then continued to live in the form of an image and memory. At the same time, the owners of the forms become ambassadors of the Rebel Historian. It is not uncommon for them to return to the Casera periodically with friends and relatives to "find" their shape, as if it were a family person, and to tell the story of this extraordinary cheese. The history of resistance of the Rebel Historian has also crossed national borders and among the buyers of the dedicated wheels there are many Australians, Americans and Northern Europeans who sign them with the hope of being able to return after a few years to collect them. The Storico Ribelle for its history is a free and independent cheese, it has no graphic labeling constraints and its wheels remain bare by choice: producers want to enhance the differences, they want their cheese to be seen, felt and touched. The shapes thus lend themselves to being dressed in the stories of people, who by purchasing it allow it to survive.



Photocredits: storicoribelle.com

STORYTELLING AND CHEESES

By Maria Cristina Crucitti



Roberta Garibaldi
WINE • FOOD • TOURISM

The particular charm enjoyed by the dairy world is due to a combination of factors, starting with the great variety of types of cheeses and milk derivatives that distinguishes the sector, the ancestral link of the productions with the most disparate territories all over the planet, up to the remarkable palatability of dairy products for all tastes. Then there is another aspect that often seems to go unnoticed: the aura of mystery that surrounds this type of production. Common sense makes it easy for us to understand how oil is obtained from the pressing of olives, wine from the crushing of grapes, cured meats from the processing of meats. How milk can become cheese is an unintuitive process. It is not even easy for a non-expert to explain how from just 3 ingredients you can obtain so many different types of cheese. Cheese manages to be mysterious and at the same time commonly spread and consumed.

From all these aspects emerges a double need that leads to the story of cheese: on the one hand, those who produce at an artisanal level need to make people understand the value of their work and the uniqueness of their productions compared to industrial ones, marketed at lower prices. On the other hand, consumers have an increasingly pressing need to orient themselves among the enormous quantity of products to which they potentially have access, with particular interest in the quality and healthiness of cheeses and the sustainability of the supply chains at an ethical and environmental level.

The story of cheese, through the precious tool of storytelling, can be declined at various levels, from the written text, to the use of social media up to the creation of experiential tourism products, the subject of this report.

Tourism and the world of cheese: an opportunity

A dairy producer who wants to enter the tourist offer will have a great opportunity to structure an articulated and highly effective story of his reality. Certainly an appropriate organization and careful planning of the tourist product offered will be fundamental; some investments will probably be necessary in terms of the environments and staff dedicated to reception. But if well constructed, the tourist product can become a real item of turnover for the company, a new way to sell and enhance its cheeses and to communicate effectively, creating lasting relationships with the customer.

The cellar effect

The design phase will be of central importance for the success of the experience and to avoid incurring what I call the "cellar effect".

For over 20 years, wineries have been organized to welcome customers eager to get in touch with wineries, they have done so in a simple and intuitive way, mostly offering a visit to the production premises, a wine tasting and the story of the family history. Initially, this type of proposal was adequate to the expectations of users, but today something has changed: even the most enthusiastic of food and wine enthusiasts feels a certain tiredness in front of the same proposal repeated by producers in any wine-growing area. The offer is flattened and the identity of the producers themselves is approved.

The objectives

The experience in the company should tend to have 4 different objectives:

- **entertainment:** customers dedicate part of their free time to participate;
- **Education:** Allow the audience to learn production-related elements to enrich their experience;
- **Valorisation:** allow the public to understand the added value of the company's productions and secondly obtain a more advantageous selling price;
- **the transmission of the corporate identity:** allow the public to understand the distinctive elements that make the company unique compared to others.

The objectives of the experience do not include the sale of dairy products specifically: the experience is a product in itself, the customer must not feel bound to buy anything else, even if it is not uncommon for him to want to buy after having carried it out.

The storytelling

All 4 goals of an in-company experience can be achieved through the use of storytelling. When we talk about storytelling, we don't mean telling the story of the company, at least not only. It is a tool that allows you to organize content according to a precise structure, capable of creating emotional involvement in the listener. Through storytelling, a producer can share with the public the values that animate his work, those universally understandable feelings that can make even those who are completely unfamiliar with the world of milk farming and processing participate.

How to proceed

To build the storytelling of a dairy company, it is first necessary to carry out an analysis in order to identify identity contents and values:


- **Context:** *Where is the farm / dairy located? In which landscape? What language is spoken? How is the company organized? What is its history? Which animals are raised? What type of farming? Which productions?* The contextual information has the function of giving the right coordinates to the guest, tracing the boundaries of the chessboard on which the game takes place; define the starting situation in which to identify for the duration of the experience.
- **Characters:** *Who is the company made up of? What character does each member have? What knowledge and skills?* Every production reality is above all characterized by the people who compose it. They, with their cultural baggage and character traits, make decisions every day from which their actions ultimately result. There is no product without its producer and the characteristics of each cheese are largely due to the actors operating in the company. Allowing guests to get to know them will put them in a position to better understand the dynamics at work and increase their involvement.
- **Values:** *What does the work revolve around? What are you not compromising on? What is considered of utmost importance?* The explication of the values that animate the company allows

it allows the discourse to be shifted to a universal level, understandable by all and possibly shareable. Allowing you to understand the ultimate reason for the choices and behaviors adopted in the company is the key to establishing a bond of empathy with the public, which probably does not have the tools to decipher what is happening on a technical and operational level, but which in all likelihood will be able to align itself with the basic principles.

- **Criticality:** *What problems are there in carrying out the work? What adverse conditions?* It may perhaps seem counterproductive to highlight the aspects of fragility, but in reality, in addition to showing transparency and authenticity, they constitute the trigger for an action: the fulcrum of storytelling. What distinguishes a story from a simple description is the presence of action. Delicately revealing the difficulties will also highlight the value of the work done, bringing out that even what may seem simple on the surface may not be taken for granted.
- **Reaction:** *What solutions are adopted to deal with critical issues?* The problem-solving process coincides with action; what satisfies the curiosity triggered by the criticality and keeps the attention of the public alive, eager to know the epilogue.
- **Identity:** *What makes the company unique and special compared to others? What has been mentioned in the previous points contributes to the definition of the company's identity in the public's mind. But it can be useful to make explicit the distinctive aspects, the digital footprint that makes the production reality concretely different from neighboring companies or similar types, so as to be clearly remembered by the user, in its uniqueness.*

It is not important the order in which the identified contents are transferred, what matters most is to make the guest participate in each of these aspects, so that he can immerse himself in the company reality, understand its values and empathize with what is happening around him.

Once the peculiarities of the company have been identified, we can then move on to the design of the activities to be proposed within the experience. In order for an activity to be experiential, the user must actively participate in it, carrying out some actions himself. Even the use of the sensoriality is very effective in creating experiences and making a moment memorable.



The ways in which this can be done are countless. With a good dose of creativity, environments and equipment made available by the company, it is possible to create excellent experiences. To give some examples, a company that gives a lot of importance to the grazing of its animals could include within its experience a laboratory on the various forage essences present in its meadows. Or a producer who is particularly attentive to dairy technology could show the use of curd cutting tools. Even the moment of tasting the cheese can be a starting point for narrating the company's characteristics.

Hospitality

Among the most important aspects during the design phase, I also remember the particular attention that must be paid to the needs of the guest. His involvement is essential to the success of the activity, imagining yourself "on his side" can be of great help: how to satisfy his curiosity? How can you make your stay in the company pleasant? What information can be boring in his eyes? How can the dynamics of processing that are so important to us be better understood?

Storytelling as a framework

Finally, in order for the experience to flow organically, it will have to be entirely embraced by storytelling, starting from communication to present it, upon the arrival of guests, to the various activities that will be decided to propose, up to the conclusion. Everything will have to be coherently immersed in the narrative that will have been prepared. Without adequate storytelling, there is a risk of proposing a set of activities that are unrelated to each other and an end in themselves, difficult for the public to understand. Designing one's own tourism product connected to the world of cheese by imagining to include the various activities in the glue of storytelling will allow you to achieve not only an excellent quality level of the offer, but also to give the prominence it deserves to agricultural and artisanal cheese and the great work behind it.



CATERING

The desire to discover and taste cheeses goes beyond production companies, expanding to catering. New formats are emerging, helping to make the dairy world known even in places far from where it is produced – such as, for example, large cities.

Think, for example, of cheese bars, places that offer the opportunity to taste local and non-local products during lunches, aperitifs and/or after dinner, often paired with wines and/or beers. They also serve as cheese purchase points for those interested in consuming them at home.

These proposals can be found in the spaces of the companies and be focused on local dairy products, or be local in the city dedicated to the discovery and tasting of the world of cheese.

LATTERIA PERENZIN: FOR SHOPS AND CHEESE BARS

Perenzin Latteria, San Pietro di Feletto, TREVISO



In addition to visits to the maturing warehouse and the Perenzin Family museum, the dairy has opened a shop with a cheese bar, open from Tuesday to Sunday, where cheeses paired with local wines and beers are sold and tasted, with a menu ranging from breakfast to aperitif with dairy specialties, dedicated to tourists and locals. In this space, he organizes events such as the "raclette aperitif" and the "one-meter table", a selection of 8 cheeses. It also offers corporate team building activities, aging workshops and guided tastings. Interactive experiences such as "Become a Master Refiner for a day" and "Cheese Making Experience" directly involve participants in production and aging techniques. A versatile and convivial space that revolves around the beating heart of the company: cheese.

 <https://perperenzin.it/>

FORMAGGIOTECA TERROIR: FUSIONI

Formaggioteca terroir, Firenze, TOSCANA



This small Florentine cheese bar, open since 2021, was born from the fusion of different concepts, experiences, people. Cheese shop and wine shop together, it offers over 50 types of French and Italian cheeses and wines, always selected from France and Italy, respecting the small virtuous productions, both in the world of wine and cheese. The soul of the shop are Rebecca and Pierre who, with their knowledge of oenology, seasoning and gastronomy, have given life to this place. In the Formaggioteca it is possible to buy the products, consume them on the spot for tasting or even choose a dish from the monthly menu, always linked to cheese and with Italian-French influences, for lunch, aperitif or dinner. Here, the culture of cheese and wine is also transmitted through the regularly organized guided tasting events. La Formaggioteca has received several awards as best cheese shop and cheese bar of the year in 2023.

 www.formaggiotecaterroir.it/

BABY DICECCA: CHEESE BAR NELLA FORESTA

Caseificio Dicecca, Cassano delle Murge, BARI



It all began in 2021 with a small kiosk immersed in the forest of Mercadante, in the Murge, where the young Vito Dicecca, owner of the family dairy of the same name, together with his partner Roberta chose to open a cheese bar. Open in the summer season, it serves on wooden tables in the middle of nature a selection of farm cheeses from fresh to aged blue cheeses and cold dishes with strictly local ingredients and unusual combinations originating from Vito's travel contaminations. The experience does not include the consultation of a menu and the service is informal and friendly. Completely immersed in the vegetation, the Baby Dicecca is a vehicle of local identity also thanks to the setting up with the typical Apulian illuminations. Guests are tourists from all over the world. A few months ago, Baby Dicecca moved to a larger room, still in the forest.

 https://vitodicecca.it/it/to_book/baby-dicecca-tasting-cheese-wine/

Another restaurant proposal, less known and perhaps even less widespread than the previous one, is represented by cheese catering. It is a catering service that takes place in locations of the buyer's choice where the menu is entirely focused on cheeses.

Degust, for example, is a South Tyrolean company that selects "niche" dairy products by creating buffet proposals that also include the preparation of the room and the service staff.

Tableaux Paris is a "cheese atelier" in the heart of the French capital that creates refined combinations of cheeses and charcuterie, embellished with floral arrangements, for its catering proposals (details in the boxes).



DEGUST: CHEESE CATERING

Degust KG, Varna, BOLZANO

For those who want to surprise their guests with an unusual buffet, Degust, a South Tyrolean affineur, offers an elegant assortment of dairy varieties, perfectly harmonized with each other and accompanied by chutneys, jams, bread, breadsticks, dried and fresh fruit. The selection, curated by Hansi Baumgartner, an affineur and former starred chef, is served on wooden cutting boards, slate stones and refrigerated plates. Everything is decorated and accompanied by bilingual labels. The offer includes different buffet proposals based on territoriality: South Tyrolean, Italian or a selection of the affineur. It is also possible to choose the type of service: from the delivery of cheeses only, to the complete set-up with relative service staff or the simple rental of the equipment for the buffet.



www.degust.com/cheese-catering-p28.html

TABLEAUX PARIS: FORMAGGI LUXURY

Parigi, FRANCIA



Very elegant and rich compositions of cheeses selected by maître fromagers, fruit always at the right level of ripeness, finely sliced cold cuts and fresh flowers of all varieties. This is how Tableaux Paris offers its creations in the atelier in the center of Paris. Whether it is a buffet or a tableau, intended as a miniature buffet, Tom Tarsiguel, the creator, offers proposals that are always different and varied according to the seasons. The attention to aesthetics and the selection of ingredients and decorations of the buffets make these compositions ephemeral gourmet works of art, so much so that they arouse the interest of the greatest Parisian fashion houses. While take-away tableaux become precious objects to give as a gift with a surprise effect guaranteed at every opening. A new face of cheese, which from an agricultural and artisanal product becomes a luxury creation.

<https://tableauxparis.com/traiteur-paris>

More traditional is the use of menus dedicated to cheeses in restaurants. This way of enhancing dairy production is also spreading thanks to the commitment of trade associations. It is highly appreciated by Italian tourists: 58.2% would like to have the opportunity to taste different types of cheeses when they go away from home for lunch or dinner and find a dedicated menu with explanations on the characteristics and possible combinations with other dishes, wines and/or beers (Table 2.8). If properly valued and communicated, the cheese list can become an opportunity to create a bond with producers, stimulating visits to the company and developing profitable network connections for both operators.

TAB. 2.8 | Interest in the cheese menu at the restaurant.

Year 2024, TOTAL Italian tourists and differences between generations. Question on Likert scale (1-5). The % refer only to the values 4 (Agree) and 5 (Totally agree),

	TOTAL Tourists	18-24 Var. %	25-34 Var. %	35-44 Var. %	45-54 Var. %	55-64 Var. %	> 65 Var. %
When I go to the restaurant, I would like to be able to taste different types of cheeses and that these are described in a dedicated menu	58,2%	-9,8%	-1,5%	-2,9%	1,4%	7,2%	-1,3%



CHEESE EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

Thematic events and festivals are among the most popular proposals on the Italian territory. There are numerous major events capable of attracting a national and international audience as well as "small" proposals that enhance local dairy production.



CHEESE: SLOW FOOD'S HISTORIC EVENT

Bra, CUNEO

Biennial international event organized by Slow Food in Bra, dedicated to raw milk cheeses, considered one of the main events in this niche of the dairy sector. During the event, the streets of the city are transformed into a cheese market, where national and international producers present and sell their products, attracting visitors, activists and professionals from all over the world. There are also the Slow Food Presidia, rare cheeses at risk of extinction that the movement aims to protect. But the peculiarity of Cheese is the content: with a rich schedule of taste workshops, conferences and round tables, the event manages to have playful, educational, gourmet and political implications. Each edition revolves around a theme that is addressed in the round with the ultimate aim of safeguarding virtuous productions that are good for the planet.


 <https://cheese.slowfood.it/>



MADE IN MALGA: TUTTA MONTAGNA

Asiago, VICENZA

Festival dedicated to mountain dairy production, starting from the cheeses of the mountain huts of the Asiago plateau, the beating heart of local culture, up to hosting producers from all over Italy, as long as they carry out their work above 600 m above sea level. For 12 years, the event has been held in September on two consecutive weekends in the center of Asiago and in addition to the market, it offers masterclasses, tastings, dialogues with mountain hut producers and excursions to the mountain huts to show the public the particularity of mountain cheesemaking. Among the various activities in the last edition there was a ceremony for the cutting of a wheel of Asiago PDO aged 15 years, followed by the charity sale of the aged cheese, an exciting sensory experience for those present who were able to discover the effects of such an extreme maturation.

 www.madeinmalga.it/

These events can also take on a more "spectacular" dimension. Some interesting examples come from abroad: in Gouda (Netherlands) it is possible to attend a historical re-enactment of the purchase and sale negotiations; in Brockworth (United Kingdom), the championship of "rolling cheeses" is held, which takes up a nineteenth-century tradition.



GOUDA CHEESE MARKET: THE SPECTACLE OF NEGOTIATION

Gouda, NETHERLANDS

Every Thursday morning from April to August the historic cheese market takes place in the central square. It is a re-enactment that aims to keep alive the memory of an ancient tradition that gives its name to the most famous cheese in the world. From 10 a.m., the Gouda wheels are transported to the center of the square by wooden horse-drawn carts and unloaded by young boys in traditional clothes who throw them together and place them on special supports on the ground. Right next to the different batches of cheese, producers and traders start a special negotiation by clapping their hands when pronouncing the offers, until they agree on the price and stop clapping and shake hands. In the beautiful building in the center of the square, now a cheese museum, the wheels are then weighed to be sold. Everything takes place in a festive atmosphere, between music and cheese tastings.



<https://welcometogouda.com/cheese/gouda-kaasmarkt>



COOPER'S HILL CHEESE-ROLLING: ROLLING CHEESES

Brockworth, UNITED KINGDOM

It is an annual event, a championship of literally "rolling cheeses" that takes place in a village near Gloucester. Here a wheel of the cheese of the same name is thrown down the steep Cooper Hill and the participants chase it to grab it and carry it to the finish line. The race takes place in several heats. The winner wins the wheel of cheese conquered. This nineteenth-century tradition, once reserved only for the inhabitants of the area, today attracts many people from all over the world. It is a rather risky "sport" because the hill has a gradient of 30-40%, the cheese reaches over 100 km/h of speed and it is practically impossible to stay standing. To make the race even more fun is the clothing of some participants who compete in bizarre disguises.



www.soglos.com/event/outdoors/gloucestershire-cheese-rolling/17943/



CHEESE MUSEUMS

A further tourist attraction is represented by the museums dedicated to cheese. Today there are still few public or private realities dedicated entirely to dairy production and that tell its history, characteristics, production methods.

The database of the Ministry of Culture includes three of them: the Fontina Museum and Visitor Center in Valle d'Aosta, the Museum of Parmigiano Reggiano - Peasant and Artisan Civilization of the Val d'Enza and the Museum of Parmigiano Reggiano in Emilia-Romagna. There are also private companies not listed on the ministerial list, such as the Capriz cheese factory museum in South Tyrol. More often, the dairy culture can be found in ethnographic museums: the Museum of Transhumance in Villetta Barrea (AQ) is an example.


Looking abroad, the diffusion is certainly limited – if compared with other thematic museums such as those related to wine – but there are realities at a national level – such as the National Milk Museum in Kiesen (Switzerland) – or regional – including the museum dedicated to Camembert de Normandie (France).

MUSEUM OF PARMIGIANO REGGIANO DOP

Soragna, PARMA



Located in the structure of the ancient Caseificio di Soragna, it is part of the network of Food Museums of the Province of Parma. The museum has a circular shape functional to the exhibition space, which recalls that of Parmigiano Reggiano. It includes a guided tour that tells the story of cheese from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century and features over 120 historical tools used in production and aging. In the center of the room there is an ancient copper boiler, with a section dedicated to the production of butter. In the underground room of the brine the history of the cheese, its production chain and the history of the grater is told. An exhibition dedicated to imitations of Parmigiano Reggiano abroad is also visible. The itinerary highlights the evolution of the "king of cheeses" and the role of the Consortium. The museum shop allows the tasting and purchase of Parmigiano Reggiano and other local products.

 <https://parmigianoreggiano.museidelcibo.it/>

LA MAISON DU CAMEMBERT

Camembert, FRANCIA



The museum dedicated to Camembert de Normandie AOP is located in an eighteenth-century Norman farm, in the heart of the original production area. The visit offers an all-round experience of the history and production of this cheese starting from the preparation of the nineteenth-century processing rooms. The museum also includes a collection of labels from all over the world. The next step is a visit to the historic Clos de Beaumontel cheese dairy, where visitors can observe the current production process through the large windows and via explanatory videos. The visit ends with a tasting of the different varieties of Camembert de Normandie (pasteurized, thermized and raw milk), allowing visitors to grasp all the original nuances of one of the most imitated cheeses in the world.



www.maisonducamembert.com/en/home/

NATIONAL MILK MUSEUM

Kiesen, SVIZZERA



A small museum that has been set up since the 70s on the premises of the first cheese dairy in the valley dedicated to the production of Emmentaler, which turns 50 this year. It brings together a rich collection of tools related to Swiss cheese production and shows the reconstruction of the production environments of 200 years ago. Particularly interesting are the 2 rooms dedicated to temporary exhibitions that from time to time focus on the various main Swiss dairy productions, telling their history and anecdotes through the exhibition itinerary. In 2024, the thirtieth anniversary of the Swiss Raclette Association will be celebrated in one room, while the second exhibition tells the story of the development of milk transport from the countryside to the cities and the evolution of the delivery system.



www.museumkiesen.ch/

MUSEUM OF TRANSHUMANCE

Villetta Barrea, L'AQUILA



Located in an old sheepfold, the museum houses a permanent exhibition on the landscape, a collection of pastoral tools, photographs and artifacts. It also has spaces for educational workshops and tasting workshops of local products and thematic dinners on the history of transhumance. But the real peculiarity is that the museum goes beyond the exhibition spaces, it is spread throughout the territory: the exhibition also includes visits to pastoral farms in the area, to the palaces of the herdsmen and to the countries of art linked to the history of transhumance, now a UNESCO intangible heritage. In the sheep tracks, the historic roads traveled by the flocks during the transhumance, shows, recreational activities such as treasure hunts and walks on foot on the Regio Tratturo Pescasseroli-Candela are also periodically organized, rediscovering the memory of the shepherds who alternated there in every era.

 www.parcoabruzzo.it/cen_dettaglio.php?id=17

Although the offer is still "limited", the interest in thematic museums is there, and it is high – 44.2% of Italian tourists would like to visit one of a national nature (Table 2.9) – and can be a stimulus to create a great attraction that is a place to entertain and educate visitors, promote rural areas and dairy farms and offer different services – such as, for example, tourist info-points, agri-food markets, catering services, event spaces, training areas, interactive and immersive multimedia and tasting rooms.

TAB. 2.9 | Interest in cheese museums.

Year 2024, TOTAL Italian tourists and differences between generations. Question on Likert scale (1-5). The % refer only to the values 4 (Agree) and 5 (Totally agree),

	TOTAL Tourists	18-24 Var. %	25-34 Var. %	35-44 Var. %	45-54 Var. %	55-64 Var. %	> 65 Var. %
I would like to be able to visit a national cheese museum	44,2%	4,2%	-1,6%	-1,9%	1,6%	2,1%	-2,2%



CHEESE-THEMED SPA

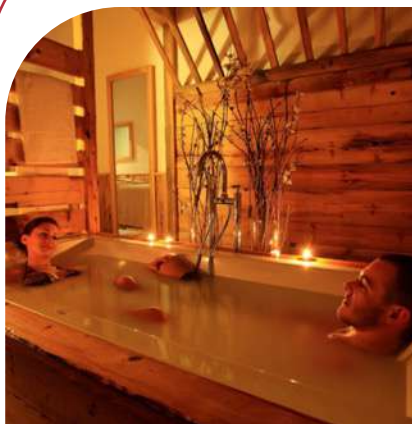
Today the concept of travel is increasingly placed in the sphere of well-being, it becomes an opportunity to regenerate, reprogram one's habits, adopt a healthy lifestyle to be maintained in everyday life. As with wine, beer and oil, cheese – and, more often, the milk from which it is produced – also takes on a dimension more linked to wellness which translates into dedicated centers and thematic spas.

There can be different variations: from the more traditional ones, with baths based on mixtures of water and raw milk, to proposals that combine wellness treatments with tastings of dairy products, such as the Fondue Bath offered by AlpenBad (Switzerland).



AGRITURISMO LA FLORIDA: MILK AND HAY BATHS

Mantello, SONDRIO



The farm with breeding of brown alpine cows and producer of Valtellina Casera DOP cheese, in addition to restaurants and rooms, also has a SPA, in which it uses the farm's raw materials. Guests thus have the opportunity to immerse themselves in unusual baths: based on a mixture of water and freshly milked raw milk, Cleopatra's bath, relaxing and relaxing, or based on hay, very fragrant, from the pastures of Valgerola. The vapours released by the infusion and the essential oils give natural healing effects. Used for centuries by the peasant population as a home remedy, herbs such as arnica, mountain chamomile, yarrow, veronica and plantain, with a hay bath can relieve joint pain and muscle fatigue. During the baths, a tasting of small pastries and apple juice is also offered.



www.laflorida.com/benessere/i-bagni-della-florida/

ALPENBAD: FONDUE BATH

Hinwil, SVIZZERA



The alpine bath consists of a series of wooden tubs, each with space for five people and a central table, outdoors surrounded by nature, on a slope overlooking Lake Zurich as a panorama. Every day the tubs are filled with the purest water from the Bachtel spring, heated to 38° C with wood from the company forest, to welcome guests who, in bathing suits, both in summer and winter, can enjoy a dinner based on fondue and local bread or other local products. The fondue is made with a selection of 5 cheeses from a nearby dairy, according to a particular house recipe. A convivial experience that involves all the senses, in contact with nature and which sees the Swiss dairy tradition as the protagonist. It is aimed at couples, families, private and corporate groups as a team building experience.



www.myswitzerland.com/it-it/scoprire-la-svizzera/una-fondue-alpenland/

THE WEDGEWATER SPA: CHEESE ON THE SKIN

Wisconsin, USA



It is an April Fool's joke, a joke to advertise "The art of cheese festival". A luxury SPA completely dedicated to Wisconsin cheese, with treatments that involve the use of various local dairy types. By opting for the (edible) fondue face mask, you can choose your favorite cheese from the list of award-winning products. For a detoxifying cleansing of the skin there is the brine bath, the same used for salting an iconic Wisconsin cheese, or to relieve stress the relaxing milk bath, immersing yourself directly in the copper tanks once used for cheesemaking. The offer includes an exfoliating scrub based on hard cheese rinds, a steam bath from Limburger ideal for clearing the respiratory tract and a hair removal service based on Gouda wax, the wax that covers the cheese. Entertaining.



www.wedgewaterspa.com/



TOURS, ITINERARIES AND TOURIST PACKAGES

A further attraction is represented by cheese-themed tours and itineraries. Think, for example, of the proposals for discovering territories and production companies along customizable routes. In Italy there are the Roads of Wine, Oil and Flavors which include among the food and wine excellences that it is possible to discover (and taste) also local cheeses. One of these – the Trentino Dolomites Cheese Route – is entirely dedicated to dairy production and the places where it is produced.

It is interesting to point out here the initiative of the Swiss tourist board: to encourage visits to the cheese route, a special "passport" has been created that allows you to accumulate stamps and receive prizes (details in the box).

Alongside these proposals that can be used independently by the tourist there are guided tours, which can also contemplate traditions and practices related to the dairy culture, and tourist packages created by Tour Operators. The theme of cheese is quite attentive, with visits to dairies often among the proposals most included in the proposals of foreign providers.



SWISS CHEESE PASSPORT: EXPERIENCES TO COLLECT

SVIZZERA



As part of the "Grand Tour of Switzerland", a road trip for the entire Swiss territory, the passport is a special cheese route that allows you to explore the cheese regions through visits to the four demonstration dairies in the area. The initiative is able to encourage tourism related to the world of Swiss cheese in a simple but engaging way for guests. The journey can be freely traveled by passport holders without a specific order and can be completed within two years. Participants who have collected the stamps of the four dairies, in addition to the discounts and concessions provided, receive the Grand Tour Snack Box: a red tin box that includes a Victorinox cheese knife and a piece of Swiss cheese. The paper Swiss Cheese Pass required to participate is available from demonstration dairies and regional tourist offices or can be ordered on the website.



<https://www.myswitzerland.com/en-ch/microsites/ch/the-swiss-cheese-passport/>

MASSERIE COLANTUONO: LA TRANSUMANZA

Frosolone, ISERNIA e San Marco in Lamis, FOGGIA



It is not a structured tourism proposal, but rather a movement born naturally to live on one's own skin, see with one's own eyes and support an endangered practice that the Colantuono Family continues to bring to life: transhumance. The Colantuonos raise a herd of hundreds of Podolica cows in the wild, in Molise in summer and in the Gargano in winter, in search of green grass. Twice a year, transhumance takes place in the passage between the two areas, when animals and men and women on horseback travel the 180 km between ancient sheep tracks and crossings of roads and villages. Together with them, people from the most diverse places queue up for the crossing by walking along a part of it or simply stop to watch the imposing parade, a UNESCO intangible heritage.



<https://www.caseificiocolantuono.it/>





3 | THE BEHAVIOR of the tourist

THE BEHAVIOR OF THE TOURIST

To get a detailed picture of the current state of tourism related to the world of cheese, it is also appropriate to pay attention to the behavior of travelers who have carried out cheese-themed experiences – who, as we have previously highlighted, are 32.7% of Italian tourists (about 6.8 million). We are now going to show the decision-making process, i.e. what the travel choices are.

The decision-making process

How are decisions made about the travel destination and food and wine activities? The analysis clearly shows that this process is the result of consulting a plurality of sources of information (Table 3.1).

55.6% of tourists who participated in cheese-themed proposals said they were influenced by the advice of relatives and friends. The role of the web – in its different forms – is equally central to choices. Social media (Instagram and Facebook in the first place, indicated respectively by 39% and 37.8% of respondents) are the most used as well as websites that talk about tourism and food and wine (37.8%). Other sources include television programs and series dedicated to food and wine (32.7%); less attention, however, are travel magazines and specialized guides.

This picture presents, as plausible, some peculiarities. If we look at the generations, the use of social networks is greater especially among the youngest – with Generation Z preferring Instagram, TikTok and YouTube and Millennials Facebook. These media also maintain a certain influence among Generation X and Boomers, but alongside more traditional sources such as magazines and specialized guides.

The centrality of online is also found when looking at the ways of booking experiences themed food, wine, ... together with direct contact. In fact, telephone (indicated by 33.9%), online intermediaries (31.4%), email (30.8%) and tourist portals of destinations (26.5%) are the most used channels to choose and purchase tourist proposals.

They lose some centrality when the tourist is in the destination, as they tend to book on site (39%). The use of travel agencies and tour operators is, on the other hand, less widespread both before and during the holiday (Graph 3.1).

TAB. 3.1 | Sources of information used in the choice of destination and food and wine experiences.

Year 2024. TOTAL tourists who have had at least one cheese-themed experience.

	TOTAL Tourists
Recommendations from family and friends	55,6%
Instagram	39,0%
Websites that talk about food and wine tourism	37,8%
Facebook	37,8%
Tripadvisor	34,7%
Programs, series and/or television channels dedicated to food and wine	32,7%
YouTube	29,0%
Google Maps	29,0%
Travel magazines/newspaper sections dedicated to travel	24,8%
Guide enogastronomiche	21,4%
Tik Tok	19,7%
Whatsapp	18,5%
Food and wine magazines/newspaper sections dedicated to food and wine	17,5%
Catalogues and websites of Tour Operators and/or Specialised Travel Agencies	17,5%
Virtual Tours	9,0%
Digital tastings	6,8%
Other social media	4,7%

FRIDAY OF THE CHEESEMAKER: THE EXPERIENCE BEGINS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Agriturismo Ferdy, Lenna, BERGAMO

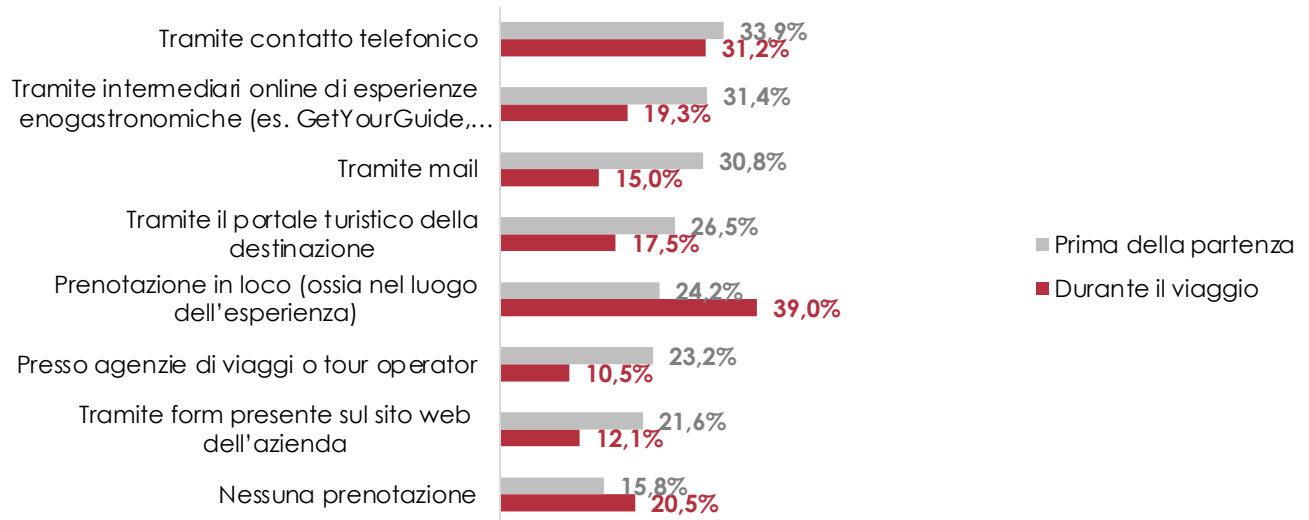


Through the Instagram page "Ferdy Wild" – 317 thousand followers – Agriturismo Ferdy carries out an immersive narrative of life in the Orobie and local culture day by day. With his story, Nicolò has managed to define the character traits of the people who revolve around the farmhouse, the spaces and landscapes that surround it, the everyday gestures. Those who book a Friday tasting or a table at a restaurant are probably already familiar with the reality "Ferdy" knows its characters, the language with dialectal interjections and some glimpses. For these people, the experience begins well before arriving in Val Brembana, it begins with the imagery created through narration, capable of giving rise to the desire to book and live the "Wild" experience firsthand.

www.agriturismoferdy.com/it/ristorante/menu/13/venerdi-del-casaro-cheese-tasting-e-wine-tasting

GRAF. 3.1 | How to book food and wine experiences BEFORE and DURING the trip.

Year 2024. TOTAL tourists who have had at least one cheese-themed experience.



Other travel choices: transport and accommodation

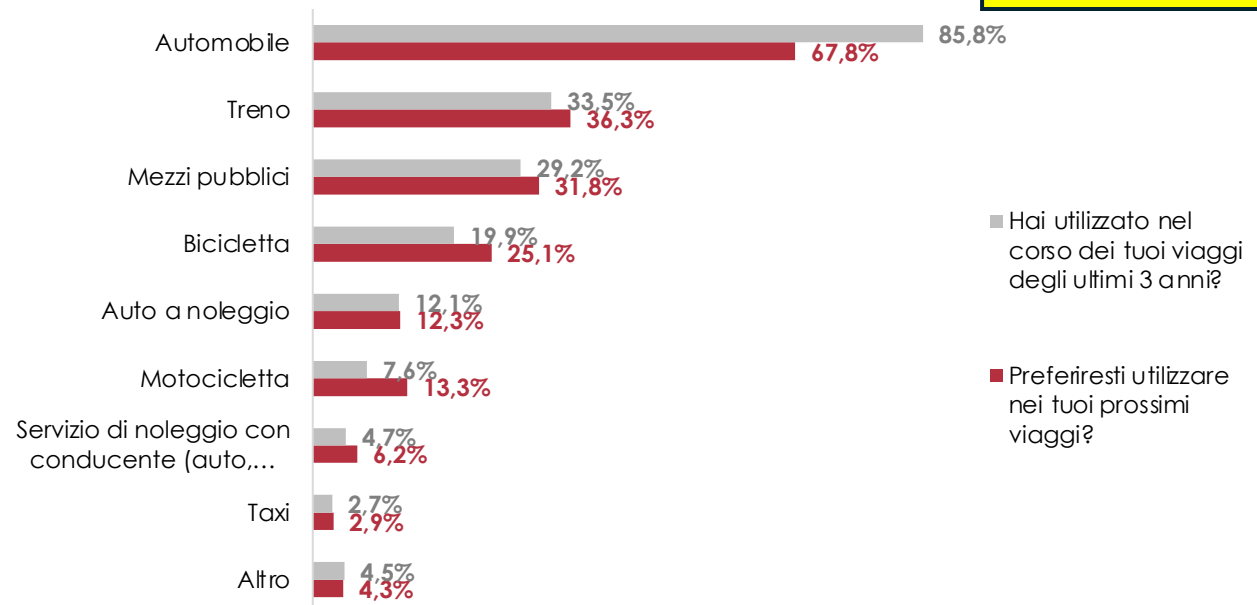
In addition to the tools used to search for information and book food and wine-themed experiences, it is advisable to analyze travel choices regarding transport and accommodation.

We know that the issue of accessibility to production territories is a critical issue. Today, the car is the most used means of transport to visit agri-food and wine companies (indicated by 85.8% of respondents); there is also a strong desire to reduce the use of food and wine on future trips (-17.9%) in favour of other less impactful but still not very common modes, including cycling (+5.3%), trains (+2.7%) and other public transport (+2.5%) (Graph 3.2).

GRAF. 3.2 | USED and PREFERRED means of transport on food and wine trips.

Year 2024. TOTAL tourists who have had at least one cheese-themed experience.

Grafico da tradurre

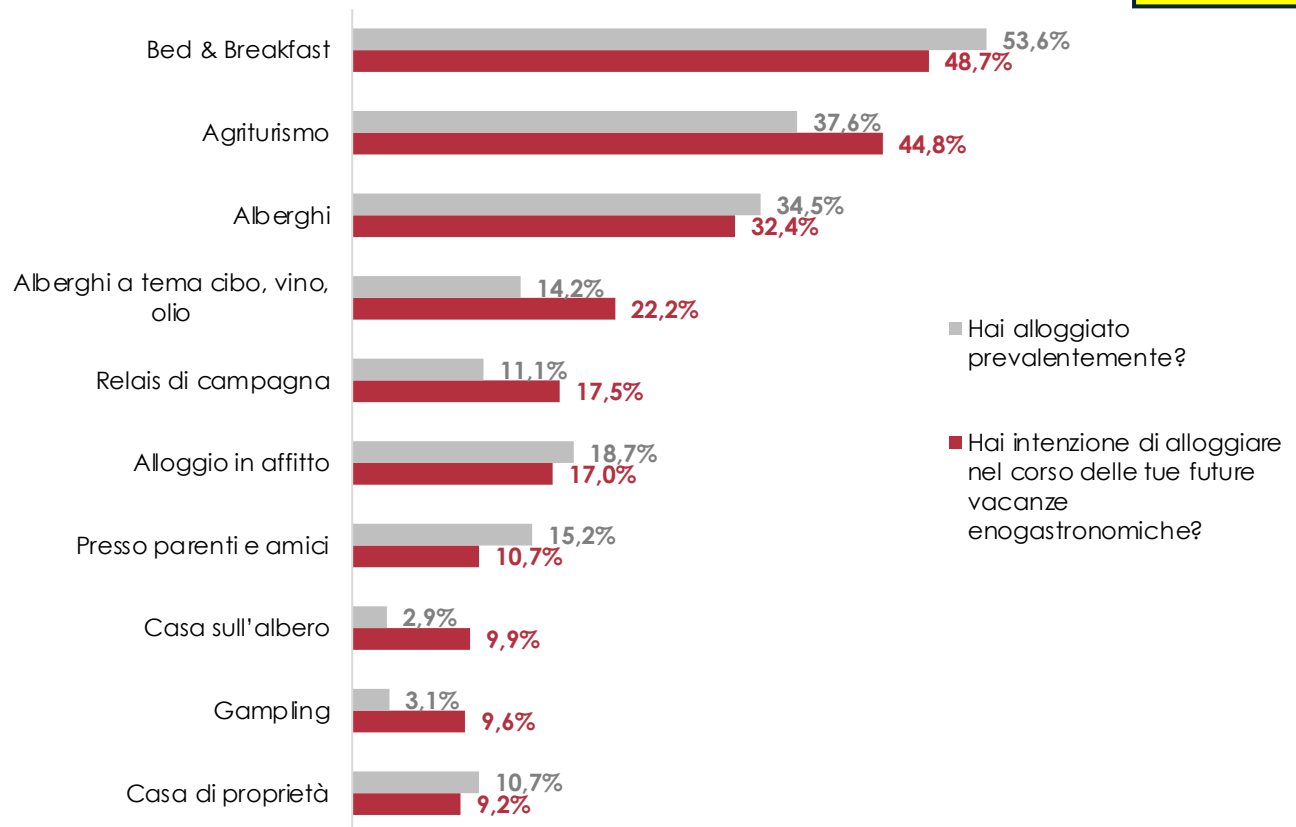


The choice of accommodation tends to fall on the most widespread structures in Italy, i.e. Bed & Breakfasts (indicated by 53.6% of respondents), farmhouses (37.6%) and hotels (34.5%). Food, wine, oil, ... and country relays are forms of hospitality that are still little used, but very welcome: the gap between actual use on past trips and desire for future ones stands at +8% and 6.4% respectively (Graph 3.3). This result suggests the desire, among those who participate in cheese-themed proposals, to live a 360-degree experience in close contact with the production activity.

GRAF. 3.3 | Types of accommodation CHOSEN and PREFERRED in food and wine trips.

Year 2024. TOTAL tourists who have had at least one cheese-themed experience.

Grafico da tradurre



THE CHEESE SUITE: CAMERA POP UP

London, UNITED KINGDOM



To present the winter menu, a few years ago the Café Rouge chain set up a fully furnished cheese-themed suite in the trendy Camden district. The lucky 9 winners of the competition promoted by the restaurant were able to stay one night in the specially set up mini apartment, in which every single detail, from the wallpaper, to the pillows, to the soaps, was declined to the cheese. Guests had an exceptional experience completely immersed in their favorite food: during their stay they were able to access unlimited tastings of different dairy varieties, in addition to the dinner offered, of course with cheese-based courses. The room also offered cheese-themed board games, small cheesy candles, yellow sheets with the classic perforated effect pattern and a series of objects bearing funny phrases and cheese-themed puns.



www.giltmagazine.it/luxury-escape/hotel-resort/cheese-suite-un-omaggio-al-formaggio-firmato-cafe-rouge/





4 | NETWORK PROJECTS

For the tourist
enhancement of cheese

**NETWORK
PROJECTS**
For the tourist
enhancement of
cheese

A central theme for the development and enhancement of synergies between tourism and the dairy world lies in the collaboration between public and private actors in the supply chains. We therefore wanted to dedicate this section to some good practices that have been able to leverage the potential of this combination.

The success stories concern the Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium and the initiatives aimed at tourists undertaken, which in 2023 are estimated to have brought 180 thousand visitors to the area, and the "Feeding Tomorrow" network project, developed since 2015 in the Primiero and Vanoi Valleys (Trentino) to promote local cheeses.

The focus shifts to Bergamo, recognized in 2019 as UNESCO Creative Cities for gastronomy thanks to the Orobie Cheese Valleys and the greater concentration at European level of Geographical Indication dairy production. A virtuous system has been created in the area that has been able to integrate events for citizens and tourists such as FORME, events for operators such as B2Cheese and research projects coordinated by the University of Bergamo, such as the Sportumanza project for the tourist enhancement of this agricultural practice with forms of slow and sustainable tourism and the CRUCUS project, funded by the Horizon Europe program and involving ten university partners from nine European countries to revitalize rural areas.

TOURISM IN PARMIGIANO REGGIANO

By Igino Morini



Roberto Garibaldi
WINE - FOOD - TOURISM

The genesis: school visits

The Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium has been carrying out visits to dairies for years. This activity was born in an almost pioneering and spontaneous way in the 70s thanks to the Parma Section of the Consortium. Renzo Cattabiani, the then secretary of the Parma Section, began to host school groups and initially also to bring tourists and some journalists to watch the processing of Parmigiano Reggiano.

The goal was to increase knowledge of the product, to ensure that especially young people and journalists knew what was the commitment, craftsmanship and naturalness – made with only raw milk, rennet and salt – that are the basis of the production of Parmigiano Reggiano. It was a very concrete way of communicating the product: to make people watch the processing, to make the people who produced it known and to let them taste it. The result was surprising over time; it was evident that witnessing the processing meant giving a new and in-depth light on the product, with an engaging and memorable emotional impact, especially considering all the work and commitment that goes into the work behind a single flake of Parmigiano Reggiano.

In fact, over time this activity has been increasing, especially thanks to word of mouth among schools. In the early days, this activity of visits defined as institutional to schools, but also to some groups of tourists, took place thanks to the availability of expert auctioneers who, between one beating commitment and another, dedicated some time to bring school groups to visit the process. The intuition was also to bring journalists, at a time when press offices did not yet exist, at least to the Consortium.

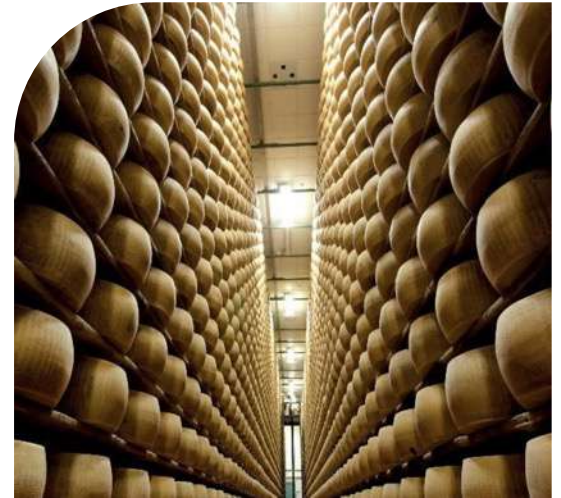
In the 90s this activity slowly began to expand to the Sections of the other provinces of the Consortium: Reggio Emilia, Modena, Bologna and Mantua. Currently, the institutional visits organized and managed directly by the Sections and with the costs borne by the Consortium are no longer carried out for tourists, conveniently left to professional operators who contact the dairies directly, but are aimed exclusively at elementary and middle schools, many agricultural institutes, hotel institutes, cooking schools and many groups of students from agricultural universities, of gastronomic sciences, marketing and economics. In addition, food professionals, cooks, buyers and even tour operators who want to learn about the type of tourist experience offered by dairies are also welcomed. There are about 50 dairies that lend themselves to hosting these visits from the Provincial Sections and there were **6,173 visitors in 2022 and 9,148 in 2023.**

Tourism

Over the years, the Sections have increasingly made use of the contribution of the expertise of some **tourist guides** selected and prepared for these institutional visits. These acted as intermediaries with the world of other tourist guides, who then took inspiration from this activity of hospitality in the dairies to begin to offer visits to tourist groups visiting the cities of Emilia.

From an institutional activity, we have thus moved on to **visits to dairies aimed at tourists**, initially mediated by tour guides, and then later also by tour operators. So over the years many incoming agencies have been born who organize tourist

packages with a strong food and wine imprint, proposing, in addition to the visit to the dairies and the city, also the visit to the winery, to the vinegar factory, to the ham factories.



Photocredits: parmigianoreggiano.com

Tourist dairies

This activity of welcoming tourists in the dairies has led some Parmigiano Reggiano producers to organize themselves to make this activity an important communication and marketing lever for commercial purposes, giving a strong experiential imprint to the visit and focusing heavily on guided tasting at the end of the visit. At the moment there are about **20 "tourist" dairies** that carry out this reception activity continuously throughout the year.

This reality has led the Consortium to ask itself how to offer assistance and support for this tourist activity, which have developed in recent years in two directions. The first is an important training activity that the Consortium addresses to the staff who conduct visits to the tourist dairies; **training activities** that means, above all, training on the product, on the narration, on the tasting and on the values of Parmigiano Reggiano, but also on the way of welcoming and managing the tourist and developing a relationship that can continue over time through the contacts made in the dairy. Since 2020, therefore for five years now, the Consortium has been offering training courses for its tourist dairies. Since 2020, therefore for

five years now, the Consortium has been offering training courses for its tourist dairies. A second action was the creation of a **digital booking platform** for visits to which tourist dairies can voluntarily join since 2020. The platform allows direct contact between the tourist and the dairy that indicates the characteristics of the offer, the days available, the methods and prices of the visits.


The results of using the platform are encouraging and the digital booking mechanisms allow for precise accounting. In 2023, there were 17 tourist dairies registered on the platform, but others carry out this reception activity and it is hoped that we will be able to extend this participation with the new platform model. Some numbers of transit through the booking platform: in **2022** there were **12,500 bookings for 38,000 visitors** (48% from Italy, 52% from other countries); In **2023**, there were **14,500 bookings** reservations for **44,000 visitors** (49% from Italy, 51% from other countries). The platform is one of the channels, but not the only one, that brings tourists to the dairies, and covers a 30% share. Other channels are very important, even if not monitored in the numbers; They are direct requests to the dairies by e-mail and telephone, or through tourist guides or Volto tour operators. These professional tourism operators have also involved other dairies that are not registered on the platform. Therefore, considering all the channels in a **plausible and conservative estimate**, we can consider a **total flow of tourists in 2023 of 180,000 visitors**.



Photocredits: parmigianoreggiano.com

Open dairies

An important initiative of contact with the public to be reported is the initiative of Open Dairies. It consists of two weekends, one in spring and one in October, in which 50 dairies voluntarily open their doors to welcome visitors, show the places of production, offer



tastings and the opening of the wheel. Some also offer games for children, others real moments of catering.

The initiative was born in 2013, the year after the earthquake of May 2012, which hit many dairies in the plains of Reggio Emilia, Modena, Mantua and also Bologna. More than damage to the structures, the earthquake hit the warehouses, with the collapse of the maturing "scalere" and with over 600,000 wheels fallen and damaged. The solidarity was overwhelming, expressed in various ways, especially with the desire to buy the damaged cheese or other product that would guarantee solidarity support to the affected producers.

So in the following year the Consortium decided to launch the Open Dairies initiative as a sign of thanks to the public who expressed, in a spontaneous and sincere motion of solidarity, how much Parmigiano Reggiano was in the hearts of many citizens. Bringing producers together with this audience, making Parmigiano Reggiano and its people known in depth is the goal of this initiative that continues today, which now boasts more than 10 years and which has seen excellent results, obviously variable, with the participation of over 10,000 visitors for each edition.

FEEDING TOMORROW

A territorial alliance to
promote local
cheeses

By Chiara Massacesi



Roberta Garibaldi
WINE • FOOD • TOURISM

The Feeding Tomorrow project has been developed since June 2015 in the Primiero and Vanoi Valleys, involving the Primiero Social Dairy with its breeder members, the Association of Hoteliers and Tourist Enterprises of the Province of Trento (ASAT) - Primiero Section and the Tourist Board and ApT San Martino di Castrozza with its hoteliers and restaurateurs members. The project focused on the local gastronomic heritage, cheese, to develop an authentic dairy tourism offer.

The origins of the name Feeding Tomorrow

To feed, a word that emphasizes taking care and that recalls several actions necessary for the production of cheese: the farmer who feeds the cow, which in turn refers to the haymaking activity and the origin of each cheese: the blade of grass; the transformation, where the skilled hands of the cheesemaker nourish the freshly milked milk with graft and rennet, transforming it into cheese; the dairy that feeds the community; tourism that nourishes the territory; The cheese that nourishes us all.

The Primiero and Vanoi Valleys are located in the eastern part of Trentino, on the border with Veneto; it is a mountain area that since the end of the 19th century has attracted the first explorers eager to open new mountaineering routes in the Pale di San Martino. This mountain range is one of the nine mountain systems that make up the Dolomites and was recognized in 2009 as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The first forms of tourism were flanked by a society with a strong agricultural dedication, mostly subsistence agriculture, which over time has seen the development and affirmation of cattle breeding. In 1981 the farmers came together in a single dairy to which they gave the task of transforming their milk into cheese. More than forty years later, 45 farmers are members of this cooperative-run dairy and therefore participate as the first producers in the transformation of milk into cheese. In 2024, the Primiero Social Dairy produces over twenty products including cheese, ricotta and yogurt and stands out for some flagship products including Trentingrana, Tosèla, Primiero and Botiro di Primiero di Malga, also recognized as a Slow Food presidium.

Who participates in the project

Feeding Tomorrow was born as a doctoral research project⁵. The first months of research highlight the lack of a shared strategy for the enhancement of the cheeses produced by the Caseificio Sociale di Primiero at a tourist level. On the one hand, the difficulties encountered by restaurateurs and hoteliers in buying local cheese emerge, on the other hand, the discomfort and inexperience of producers – breeders and dairies – in telling about themselves and the product emerges. Thanks to the involvement of some key figures in the agricultural and tourist world of the valley, the research becomes a concrete project for the tourist enhancement of the local dairy world: in fact, it receives the support of the Creamery Sociale di di Primiero, the Federation of Primiero Breeders, the Association of Hoteliers and Tourist Enterprises of the Province of Trento (ASAT) - Primiero Section, the Tourist Board (APT) San Martino di Castrozza, Passo Rolle, Primiero and Vanoi, the Dolomite Cheese Route and the Paneveggio Pale di San Martino Natural Park.



Valli del Primiero e Vanoi: Silvia Massacesi

What the project consists of: the two pilot actions

The project brings together 56 subjects including breeders, hoteliers and restaurateurs with the aim of strengthening alliances between them. The first phase allowed each category to reflect on its history, relationship and role with the gastronomic heritage. The second phase allowed each working group to share this new awareness with the other groups through mutual visits and meetings where they could tell each other. The third phase made it possible to tell this path with the entire territorial system. The project was presented through two public events (June 2016, May 2017) which saw the participation of over 200 people from the community and experts in the field. Two significant moments of exchange to become aware at community level of the importance of the cheese-territory-tourism relationship for the valley.

*"The **Feeding Tomorrow project** has allowed us breeders to learn more about the world of tourism and tourism to learn more about our world. And this has opened a dialogue that was missing before," says Cesare Scalet, the president of the Primiero Social Dairy, recalling that initiative "There is still a lot to do," he adds, "to make people understand the role of breeders in marginal territories like ours. Without us maintaining the territory, how much would tourism lose?" (3 October 2024)*

The discussions and contents that emerged from the 20 working tables with breeders, hoteliers and restaurateurs led to the co-design of two collaborative pilot actions that are characterized by an authentic narrative of the place and the actors involved.

The first pilot action, called "**Adopt a stable**", sees the collaboration between 14 breeders and 10 hoteliers where the former become storytellers of the product and the latter the tasting "showcase" for the guests of the hotels involved. Each hotel adopts a stable and therefore its guests can exclusively visit that specific stable accompanied by the farmer's story. The farmer becomes a storyteller: learning to tell his own story, to illustrate the daily activities he carries out to produce milk. Guests can closely observe the farmer's practices such as milking, hay drying, wastewater management and thus experience that world. At the end of the visit, guests are taken to the hotel where they can taste the cheeses (which come from the milk of one of the breeders like the one they have just met). Creamery



Formaggi del Caseificio: Caseificio Sociale di Primiero

This experience fosters an emotional connection with the cheese and illustrates to the tourist the complexity of the dairy culture, which starts from the pasture, passes through the stables and the dairy until it arrives at the table of one's own hotel.

The second, called "**Adopt a cheese – The recipe photos**", promotes the collaboration between the Caseificio Sociale di Primiero and 12 restaurateurs, who have committed to including a new dish with a cheese from the dairy in their menu. Each restaurant adopts a specific cheese and creates a recipe from scratch to be included in its menu. The chef of each restaurant involved is photographed step by step while preparing the recipe and the guest/tourist who buys that specific cheese at the Dairy's point of sale receives a QR code associated with the receipt through which to access the recipe photo and get a discount in the restaurant offering that dish. An alliance that aims to increase the volume of cheese purchased at the dairy by



Foto Ricetta: Alessandro Pianalto e Claudia Funai

restaurateurs and at the same time allows the restaurant to gain visibility through the dairy's website and social media channels. These concrete actions, in addition to representing the sprout of two tourist products, sow two seeds for a broader discourse within the Primiero Social Dairy to enhance its cheeses in a tourist key.

*"The **Feeding Tomorrow Project** - says the director Alberto Bettega - has strengthened the role of the Dairy in the valley also as a promoter of the locality" (6 October 2024)*

The long-term effects of the project

For a certain time, the actions implemented continued: "Adopt a stable" favored dialogue with tourism operators and "The photo recipes", which later also became video recipes, favored the use of cheeses among restaurateurs and, moreover, they grafted well into the e-commerce of the Dairy's website, which started in 2014 to respond to customer requests. To complete these collaborations, the dairy has implemented a structured order collection service for tour operators in the valley and has continued training to them.

Subsequently, the dairy realized that it needed a greater push and so implemented a specific marketing project through which the approach to the tourist (and to the customer in general) changed with a more active communication, which first of all promotes the values of the dairy even before its products. On a practical level, the dairy has hired a figure dedicated to marketing, promotion and relations with tourism; it has implemented a blog that talks about Primiero, its values and the experiences that can be had, not only about cheese; has intensified meetings with tour operators, both in in groups and dedicated; it has activated a series of experiential activities under the name "Stories of milk" with a dynamic

format it has activated a series of experiential activities under the name "Stories of milk" with a dynamic format that change according to the season and has organized cooking classes for visitors and tourists in Palazzo Scopoli, a historic building intended precisely to promote local food through "La Casa del Cibo". A project, not surprisingly, born on the initiative of the Municipality of Primiero San Martino di Castrozza following the first public meeting of the Feeding Tomorrow project. The Feeding Tomorrow project has in fact had the merit of triggering a process of awareness at the territorial level that has involved various actors of the destination, who have opened new paths and synergies in terms of tourism connected to the world of cheese.



Formaggi del Caseificio: Caseificio Sociale di Primiero



THE EXPERIENCE OF BERGAMO UNESCO CREATIVE CITY FOR GASTRONOMY

From local genesis to the international present

By *Claudio Cecchinelli*



The stimulus for Bergamo to apply as Creative City for Gastronomy originates in 2019 from a small group of local dairy producers. A stimulus that is immediately grasped by the institutions: the municipal administration recognizes the creativity and potential of an entire territory, putting them in dialogue with the sustainable development goals of the United Nations and at the same time identifying the opportunities for applying Bergamo's endemic creativity to the various productive and economic sectors of a land that has always been closely linked to manufacturing

This is how Bergamo was included, in October 2019, within the UNESCO program dedicated to Creative Cities, a goal of which it is preparing to celebrate the fifth anniversary.

Bergamo Creative City has highlighted its peculiarities through national and international networks, real mechanisms of creative exchange. The city has progressively conquered a role at an international level, selling a call to share its experience as a manufacturing territory, custodian of food excellence that is apparently easy to tell and taste, such as cheeses.

In October 2023, the Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture and Life Development asked Bergamo to tell the role of small recognized productions in its territory, with specific reference to dairy realities and their importance in directly generating economic value for the communities of reference, not only in terms of product sold, but above all as a driving force for improving the quality of life of the production areas, thanks to the attractiveness linked to the protection of the territory, a fundamental element to allow the maintenance of high quality standards.

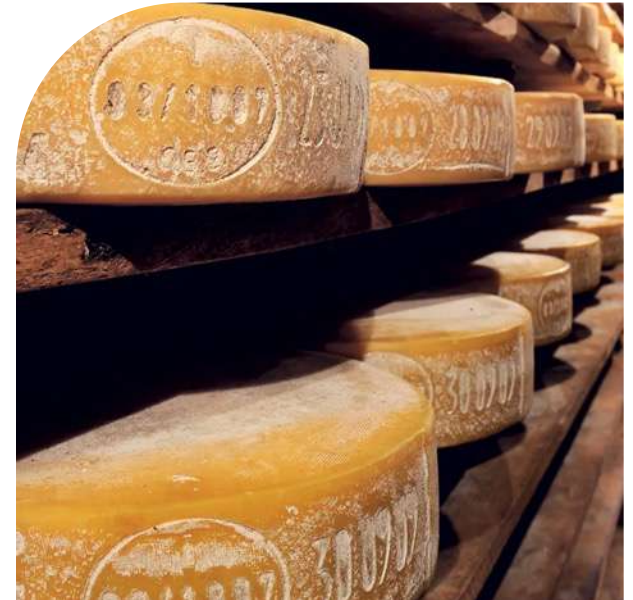
Bergamo Creative City's testimony of the vitality of the agri-food sector, which focuses on cheeses accompanied by other products, arouses interest and concrete attention in the global network of creative cities, with invitations to numerous international events, such as, from June to December 2024 only: the International Cities of Gastronomy Carnival in Macau (China), the Buraydah Dates Festival (Saudi Arabia), the Usuki Gastronomy Festival (Japan). On every occasion, Bergamo's products are a surprise for the world of catering and for the public, a sign of an enormous potential targeted and governed tourist development, to be directed towards the areas of the territory that preserve dairy knowledge.

The quality and specificity of the dairy industry have made it possible to broaden the horizon of proposals for the public. Thanks to cheese and polenta, a historic combination of traditional cuisine, from 2024 Bergamo, in collaboration with Gandino, is part of the Network Pueblos del Maíz International Hospital, the only non-American city. In addition to

with ambassador chefs and Bergamo products in the events in Mérida (Mexico) and San Antonio (United States), Bergamo hosted in October 2024 delegations of restaurateurs from San Antonio, Tucson (United States), Mérida, Iloilo (Philippines) who traveled through the city and province arriving in places outside the usual circuits such as the Imagna Valley to meet local dairy producers. An exchange of good practices, linked to traditional knowledge, reserved for professionals that generates additional models of attractiveness linked to business to encourage targeted tourist flows and to promote high added value.

The ductility of the dairy product makes it possible to navigate through the different clusters of creative cities, reaching 350 cities around the world: The Food Film Fest, with which Bergamo Creative City has been collaborating since 2020, welcomes films from creative cities from all over the world, in 2024 from Ensenada, a Mexican city in Baja California, in a combination of cinema and gastronomy. The documentary Living Matter (2023), which narrates a typical day within the world of dairy production in the Orobic valleys, has been selected for the San Antonio Film Festival and the Matula Film Festival in Belo Horizonte (Brazil): a story of reality that brings potential visitors closer to remote areas in need of central return, to reverse dangerous phenomena such as depopulation. The choice of Bergamo as vice-coordinator of the world cluster of

Gastronomy of the UNESCO Creative Cities network, and as coordinator in the two-year period 2026-2027, attests to the interest in a model for the promotion of tourist attractiveness that combines the enhancement of local agri-food excellence, especially dairy, with the needs of sustainable development of the territory and affirms the importance of cooperation between institutional actors and business realities in the promotion of effective tourism models.



Photocredits: bergamocittacreativa.it

THE "FORM SYSTEM"

By Alberto Gottardi



The origin of the project

FORME was born in 2015, on the **occasion of Expo Milano** and starts from the need to tell and enhance the dairy heritage of the Bergamo area, but in reality with the ambition of developing a format at the service of the entire national supply chain. In fact, Italian cheese lacked a truly unifying initiative, capable of creating an "**Italian value**" for cheese that transcended the specificities of individual products, but on the contrary united them under the aegis of a unifying concept: the very fact of being produced in Italy and therefore of being the expression of its territories, with their authenticity and their capacity for fascination. The FORME project works on three sets of objectives:

- increase the perception of value of products through culture
- networking with the entire national dairy sector and related supply chains, starting with food and wine tourism
- promote the economic and social development of the territories

Since 2015 it has been networking the entire Italian dairy sector, to speak with a single voice to producers, institutions, opinion leaders and stakeholders, but also to the general public. FORME wants to be the **Italian cheese movement**, starting from a cultural approach from which to derive widespread knowledge and 360° enhancement of the extraordinary Italian dairy heritage.

The FORME schedule consists of a series of initiatives designed to involve the public in every respect, from **market exhibitions** with excellent cheeses, with a focus on those of the territory and the Unesco Creative Cities for Gastronomy (Alba, Bergamo and Parma), to **Cheese Labs**, masterclasses conducted by experts and famous faces of national and foreign cheese, **conferences, museum exhibitions**, the **Creative Gastronomy Club**, a market-bistro animated with the typical products of the Unesco Creative Cities for Gastronomy, up to the **Cheese Ambassador** program that directly involves restaurateurs for the enhancement of dairy products on their menus.

The vocation of the territory

Bergamo boasts the world record for dairy designations of origin, as many as **9 DOP cheeses**, to which are added numerous excellent productions.

- Since 2019 it has been a **UNESCO Creative City for Gastronomy**, thanks to the **Orobic Cheese Valleys** system: 4 provinces, 12 PDO cheeses, 62 traditional cheeses.
- Cheese has historically represented the backbone of Bergamo's agri-food economy.
- It is at the center of a series of **UNESCO** themes consistent with the **FORME** project, including **Transhumance**, Intangible Heritage of Humanity since 2019 and the closely connected **civilization of the Bergamini**.
- It is in the heart of Lombardy, a region that boasts the largest number of dairy PDOs (14) and produces over 50% of Italian milk.
- It has an excellent infrastructure system: Caravaggio international airport which will exceed 17 million travelers in 2024, A4 motorway and railway.



Cheese Lab al Circolino di Bergamo

The Shapes System

FORME is much more than an event, it is an **integrated model of supply chain promotion that is unique in Italy** in terms of depth and breadth: in fact, it embraces both cultural and business issues, develops local, interregional, national and international projects, and involves all related supply chains. In 10 years of history, it has generated a series of activities that have completed and enriched its mission.

2015/2023

- Museum exhibitions and events dedicated to dairy culture.
- **«Formae, Bonum Pulchrum Verum», Art and cheese exhibition.** Curator Massimo Donà, full professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy of the San Raffaele University of Milan. On display at the former Vallombrosan Monastery of Astino the PDO cheeses of Bergamo and the Princes of the Orobic together with masterpieces of modern art.

- **Cheese & Philosophy**, Themed evenings with cheese tastings and philosophy talks.
- «**Luxury Cheese**» exhibition of the rarest and most precious cheeses in the world set up at Palazzo della Ragione in Piazza Vecchia.
- «**The Origins**», museum exhibition of all Italian PDOs, set up in Palazzo della Ragione.
- «**And The Winner is...**» An unprecedented exhibition of the best cheeses in the world: all the winners of the previous World Cheese Awards.
- «**As good as cheese**» Gala and charity events.
- «**Typically unique**» exhibition with typical products from the three UNESCO Creative Cities for Gastronomy,

2019

- **B2Cheese – From milk to market**, the only international trade fair in Italy dedicated to dairy operators. A great success that brought 177 companies and over 3,500 professional visitors to Bergamo in 2024.
- **Bergamo UNESCO Creative City for Gastronomy with the Orobic Cheese Valleys**, recognition that has made it possible to project Bergamo into a circuit of 350 cities in the world that work to promote each other on the basis of what makes them unique, for Bergamo the dairy culture.
- **World Cheese Awards**, the most important international dairy competition, organized for the first and only time in Italy in over 35 years of history. A media and business event that brought the whole world of cheese to FORME, with attendance from all continents.



Mostra «Le Origini» con tutte le DOP casearie italiane, a Palazzo della Ragione

2020/2023

- **UNESCO Creative Cities Summit**, launched during FORME in collaboration with the Municipality of Bergamo, to stimulate the exchange of best practices. After the first edition, it has become an annual recurring event, always celebrated on the occasion of FORME.

2021

- **District of Italian Creative Cities for Gastronomy** with Alba and Parma, the other two UNESCO Creative Cities for Gastronomy.



Mostra «Luxury Cheese» a Palazzo della Ragione

2022/2024

- «**Typically Unique**» event, organized with the Confcommercio of Alba, Bergamo and Parma: an emblematic annual event, rotating in the three cities, with presentations, tastings, testimonies and market exhibition of typical products.
- «**Typically Unique Tours**», A tourist package that allows you to explore the culinary traditions of the three cities, through a travel package that connects them and enhances their cultural and food and wine heritage..
- Competition **Expo Queijo**, with the participation of FORME, in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais.

The results

Each edition of FORME has been a great success with the public, with an average attendance of about 40,000 people.

- Bergamo, a traditionally manufacturing province, has acquired thanks to the FORME project the awareness of the importance of the dairy sector, also as an attractor of tourism. Cheeses and their world are systematically part of the offer of the city and the

province.

- The "FORME system" has been able to create a network at every level, between the production world, institutional, local, interprovincial, regional, national and international associations.

The annual event

Starting from 2020, each edition of FORME has a specific focus. The theme chosen for 2024 is **Made in Italy**, hence the creative synthesis proposed by the title "**FORME IN ITALY**", where the word "Forme" ideally replaces the participle "Made" and declares the mission in the claim: "**Cheeses with Italy inside: rare, precious, unique**".



Edizione 2024: FORME IN ITALY

TRANSHUMANCE BETWEEN TRADITION AND INNOVATION

*Sportumanza for slow
and responsible tourism*

By Federica Burini



Enhancing ancient pastoral practices and leveraging slow and responsible tourism to stimulate the recovery of cultural heritage in mountain areas often subject to depopulation and abandonment can become a reality through project ideas born from the synergy between training, research and entrepreneurship. Transhumance, a thousand-year-old tradition that sees the seasonal transfer of herds between the plains and the mountains, is recognized today as an important cultural and landscape resource, as well as a sustainable practice for the management and care of the territory. It can also be enhanced through the University, with initiatives that see the involvement of students alongside farms, institutions, businesses and cultural and sports associations. This was precisely the meaning of Sportumanza – born from an initiative of students from the University of Bergamo – and which aims to combine sport and culture through an event that promotes responsible tourism in the Orobian valleys.

Transhumance as a strategy for landscape care

Transhumance is a practice that has shaped the landscape of many mountain areas around the world for centuries. Today, faced with the global challenges that lead mountain areas to face hydro-geological instability and the risk of depopulation due to the loss of their original functions, this practice can represent a strategy capable of responding to the eco-systemic, demographic and productive challenges of the territory, also triggering forms of slow and responsible tourism.

The shepherds, their herds and the paths that connect the mountain pastures with the plains represent a unique cultural heritage, which deserves to be protected and enhanced, not only as a traditional economic system, but as a resource that contributes to biodiversity and the care of the landscape. These are in fact the reasons why UNESCO recognized it as an Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2019.

In the Orobian valleys, as unfortunately happens in other mountain areas, this practice is threatened in its survival, due to the progressive abandonment of agro-forestry-pastoral activities, risking to "compromise" culture and landscapes. It therefore becomes urgent to promote projects that put young people at the center to recover local knowledge and skills, involving both local communities and visitors, with a view to territorial co-planning capable of overseeing these centuries-old practices of care.

The Sportumanza project

Sportumanza is an initiative born in 2021 from the collaboration between the University of Bergamo and various local institutions – Fassi Gru, Confindustria Bergamo, the University Sports Center – together with the territorial realities of the Seriana Valley. It has found the support of the Lombardy Region and other public, private and associative bodies, obtaining recognition in the national schedule Bergamo Brescia Italian Capital of Culture 2023. The project aimed to combine outdoor sports with the enhancement of pastoral culture, offering a sustainable tourism experience that involves visitors of all ages.



Photocredits: sportumanza.it

The idea behind the project consists in the realization of events along the traditional routes of transhumance combining traditional sports activities such as trekking, running, climbing, with cultural proposals such as seminars, workshops, photographic exhibitions, screenings of documentary films related to the themes of pastoralism and transhumance. In other words, an event capable of embracing sport and culture by promoting the rural identities of the Orobic valleys.

An innovative co-design model

Sportumanza was created starting from a multi-level governance model that involves universities, local businesses and public institutions in a co-design process that aims to create a stable network for the enhancement of mountain areas. Through the Summer & Spring School SPORTOUR, students of the University of Bergamo had the opportunity to work directly with shepherds, representatives of sector associations and local businesses, deepening the theme of transhumance and contributing to the definition of a sustainable tourism model.

The project was divided into several activities, including the Sportumanza Trail, a mountain race

organized together with the champion Mario Poletti, who followed the historical paths of transhumant shepherds, and other initiatives such as Pastorientering, a path for high schools that developed through the streets of the historic center of Clusone to discover places of identity and significance for pastoral life with quizzes on the theme of transhumance. The program also included farmers' markets, cultural workshops and meetings to promote food and wine tourism and local crafts.

Transhumance as an opportunity for international revival for the Orobian valleys

One of the main objectives of the project is to encourage the rediscovery of agro-forestry-pastoral traditions and the transmission of this heritage of knowledge to the new generations. Tourism here becomes a lever to facilitate this process and help create economic and social value for the Bergamo valleys. The involvement of university students as well as young local entrepreneurs has been essential to reinterpret and enhance this practice, avoiding its dispersion. In the medium term, a project like Sportumanza could have an important value in relation to the Milan-Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics. In fact, this world event, The world championship, focused on the winter months and on an exclusive relationship between Milan



Photocredits: sportumanza.it

and some mountain valleys in Lombardy and Veneto, could become an opportunity to start an enhancement of the outdoor sport of the Orobian mountains during all the other seasons and, at the same time, encourage the rediscovery of agro-forestry-pastoral knowledge, so as to start the foundations for a cultural and not only sporting discourse during the world event. This is even more true if we consider that 2026 has been declared by the UN as the International Year of Pastures and Pastoralists. Bergamo would therefore be a perfect candidate to replicate Sportumanza on a global scale.

THE CROCUS PROJECT

Innovation and Sustainability for Cross-border Tourism linked to the World of Cheese

By Roberta Garibaldi



Food and wine tourism represents a fundamental resource for the enhancement of rural areas. Funding from national and international bodies is an opportunity for the development of projects capable of strengthening the tourism sector through the enhancement of agri-food chains and local cultural heritage. These projects not only offer economic resources with positive effects on the territory, but allow local actors to collaborate at an international level, acquiring new skills and developing innovative and sustainable solutions for the local tourism sector.

A significant example of this type of intervention is represented by the European funds intended for cultural tourism. Programmes such as LEADER have promoted sustainable tourism initiatives in various regions of Italy, while the Interreg programme has supported cross-border cooperation to enhance typical productions, such as in the dairy sector in the Alpine regions.

The CROCUS (Cross-Border Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas) project, funded by the Horizon Europe programme (grant agreement no. 101132454), fits into this context. The aim of the project, which will last three years, is to address the socio-economic challenges of rural and remote areas – such as demographic ageing, depopulation and low competitiveness – through the promotion of cultural and creative tourism. In particular, it has as its main objectives:

- Identify new business models capable of enhancing the cultural and creative resources present in rural areas;
- Create cross-border living labs to test identified business models;
- Develop macro-regional policy scenarios, with particular attention to the needs of rural territories
- To synthesize the knowledge acquired to create tools and resources useful to Europe's rural areas.

The project, coordinated by the University of Aalborg (Denmark), involves ten partners from nine European countries: University of Bergamo (Italy), ATLAS – Association for Tourism and Leisure (Netherlands), University of Maribor (Slovenia), University of Oulu (Finland), Zangandor Research Institute (Bulgaria), University of Rijeka (Croatia), University of Tallinn (Estonia), University of Pannonia (Hungary) and Group NAO (Denmark).

In this context, the research unit of the University of Bergamo focuses its activities on the enhancement of tourism activities related to the world of cheese in the cross-border region between the province of Sondrio in Italy and the Canton of Graubünden in Switzerland. These areas, characterized by a rich and varied dairy heritage, show great potential to integrate these resources into sustainable tourism development strategies. Through the creation of a cross-border living lab, the University of Bergamo will collaborate with local producers and tour operators to develop and test new business models capable of enhancing the dairy supply chain and improving its integration into the tourist offer. CROCUS aims to improve the tourist enjoyment of the dairy world, enhancing cheese and the places



associated with it, with a cross-border vision that favors the exchange and comparison of skills. Through experimentation in living labs, the project will be able to develop new solutions to increase the tourist attractiveness of dairy areas, transforming them into a local development asset and at the same time promoting the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the sector.

The potential of these projects for local actors – dairy producers, tour operators and public administrators – is manifold. On the one hand, they can access international networks of knowledge and innovation, which foster the exchange of good practices and the adoption of innovative models. On the other hand, these projects can provide concrete tools to transform local resources into tourist assets, involving visitors in authentic experiences linked to the sustainable use of the cultural and food and wine heritage of the area.

Participating in projects such as Crocus can represent an opportunity for local actors to experiment with more resilient and sustainable business management models, addressing the challenges of rural areas. The living labs created within the project will provide a context of continuous experimentation, where producers and tour operators will be able to co-design and test innovative solutions to improve the tourist attractiveness of dairy areas, creating new sustainable business models. In addition, projects such as CROCUS can



develop sustainable tourism models that can be replicated in other Italian regions where dairy production is a key element of the local food and wine heritage.

For more information, visit the website: <https://crocuseurope.eu/>





WORKING GROUP

ROBERTA GARIBALDI

Author



- ▶ Roberta Garibaldi is a professor of Tourism Management at the University of Bergamo, she carries out training and research activities for the promotion of territories, food and wine and cultural tourism
- ▶ He is a director of projects applied at an international level, he has worked for multiple Ministries of Tourism and international bodies (from UN Tourism-World Tourism Organization to FAO).
- ▶ She was CEO of ENIT – National Tourism Agency during the Draghi government and Vice-President of the Tourism Commission of the OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- ▶ she is a keynote speaker at the main events on the theme of tourism.
- ▶ she holds numerous positions, including President of the Italian Food and Wine Tourism Association.
- ▶ She is the author of 23 books and over 60 scientific publications. There are 14 volumes of the Report on food and wine tourism.
- ▶ She is a Knight of the Order “of Merit of the Italian Republic”

WORKING GROUP & CONTRIBUTORS



Working Group


- **Maria Cristina Crucitti.** Graduated in international and diplomatic sciences, she decided to change sector: she became a dairy technician and started and ran her own farm with goat breeding and milk processing for a few years. In 2014 he founded "The Cheese Storyteller", a project to disseminate dairy culture. He creates and conducts cheese experiences in the field of food and wine tourism, writes about cheeses and the agricultural world on ilGusto of laRepubblica and la Stampa and on the thecheesestoryteller.it blog. She is a trainer for Slow Food, teacher and ONAF Master Taster and coordinates the marketing group for FACENetwork, a European network of dairy producer associations.
- **Andrea Pozzi.** Technical-scientific consultant for the Italian Association of Food and Wine Tourism, he is an adjunct professor of Marketing and Tourism & Hospitality Economics at the University of Bergamo and project Manager of the CREO-LAB Tourism and Creative Industries at the same university.
- **Dauro Mattia Zocchi.** Gastronome and expert in food and gastronomic heritage. He currently holds the position of Postdoc researcher at the University of Bergamo within the Horizon Europe CROCUS (Cross-Border Cultural and Creative Tourism in Rural and Remote Areas) project

Contributors

- **Federica Burini.** Professor of Geography at the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures of the University of Bergamo where she is scientific coordinator of the Imago Mundi Lab of the Center for Territorial Studies. She is Director of the specialization course SPORTOUR - Sport Management for the development of sustainable territorial ecosystems at SdM-School of Higher Education. Among his recent publications we can mention: Cartografia partecipativa. Mapping for environmental and urban governance (2016) and Tourism facing a pandemic, from crisis to recovery (2020).
- **Claudio Cecchinelli.** Graduated in economics and commerce, I have been working for over thirty years in local authorities in various roles. He is responsible for the Culture and UNESCO Service of the Municipality of Bergamo, Focal Point of Bergamo UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy, deputy coordinator of the world cluster of creative cities

of gastronomy and manages the Secretariat of the UNESCO transnational serial site «Venetian Defence Works between the XVI and XVII Centuries». As an official of the Province of Bergamo, he was involved, among other things, in Expo 2015 and education. He teaches and lectures in the areas of local history, the enhancement of environmental and cultural heritage, strategic planning in the field of tourism and territorial marketing. For over a dozen years he has been working as a volunteer in the FAI Delegation of Bergamo, of which he was responsible for 9 years.

- **Francesc Fusté-Forné.** He is a lecturer at the Department of Economics of the University of Girona (Spain) and holds a PhD in Tourism (University of Girona) and a PhD in Communication (Ramon Llull University). The research topics addressed in his studies concern marketing and food and wine and rural tourism; in particular, he has dealt with the relationships between authenticity, food and wine heritage and cultural identities, regional development, rurality and tourist experiences. He also carries out applied research on the role of food and wine as a driver of social change and in relation to the mass media.
- **Alberto Gottardi.** *Founder and CEO of the integrated communication agency PG&W and of the Particles project that aggregates hyper-vertical skills in the field of new digital disciplines, founder and co-organizer of the FORME project and partner of the B2Cheese fair, the only international exhibition dedicated to professionals in the dairy supply chain in Italy. He deals with national and international promotion projects of typical products, territorial and tourist marketing.*
- **Chiara Massacesi.** Chiara is a researcher at the University of Bolzano and a consultant. He deals with food and wine tourism and strategic marketing, with a particular interest in the world of cheeses. He has a PhD on these issues from New Zealand, where he lived for a decade. With the University of Bolzano he is carrying out research on authenticity in dairy tourism, working with the Capriz and Sesto Dairies. In Trentino he is a consultant for some dairies to build a tourist product around his cheese. The development of an authentic narrative that respects the values of producers is at the heart of these consultations.
- **Igino Morini.** He graduated in Agricultural Sciences at the Catholic University of Piacenza with a thesis on the evolution of the Italian food balance. After an assignment as a university collaborator, he began working at the Provincial Federation of Direct Farmers of Parma. Since 1996 he has been employed by the Parmigiano Consortium Reggiano,



as Secretary of the Parma Section, then as head of the Press Office and External Relations. Since 2017 he has been involved in the Territorial Promotion of the Consortium, promoting tourist visits to the dairies. He is a lecturer in training courses in the agricultural and dairy sector, and has obtained the qualification of both second-level taster from the Association of Parmigiano Reggiano Tasters (APR), and Master Cheese Taster from the National Organization of Cheese Tasters (ONAF).



- ❏ **The Associazione Italiana Turismo Enogastronomico**, a non-profit organization, was created with the **aim of spreading knowledge** about food and wine tourism and **raising awareness** among operators in the food and wine sector to open up to the sector, carry out **research activities** for innovation in the food and wine tourism sector; to **enhance the culture and knowledge of those territories** that respect and pass on the values of food; **to develop new professionals** in the sector, through the promotion of internships and scholarships; **expand knowledge** of agricultural, **culinary and tourist culture in general**.
- ❏ One of the Association's initiatives is the annual drafting of the "**Report on Gastronomy Tourism in Italy**": the most complete and authoritative research on the sector that provides a detailed picture of this tourism segment and outlines the main trends from the point of view of supply and demand.
- ❏ The **Association** aims to raise funds to continue **research and dissemination activities**, to support the growth process of **young people** and to make the goal sustainable over time.



www.associazioneitalianaturismoenogastronomico.it



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Methodological note

Demand-side analysis

The survey on the demand was carried out in two different periods (May 2023 and April 2024) on a representative sample of the Italian population using the CAWI (Computer Assisted Web Interview) method. The sample was drawn randomly from the panel of individuals and is representative of the internet population with quotas by gender, age and geographical area (regions). The quotas were calculated on the basis of the general population (Istat data) and the specific proportions of the population with access to the Internet. The reference universe consists of people who are over 18 years of age and who have traveled in the last 12 months that included at least one overnight stay. The number of valid interviews is 1,000 (survey 1) and 1,567 (survey 2). The maximum expected error of the survey is between $\pm 3\%$ with a 95% confidence interval.

Supply-side analysis

The case studies presented here are a reasoned selection of good practices resulting from qualitative analysis, comparison of literature and comparison between national and international experts. It should be remembered that all the contents have been created through the cross-checking of different documentary sources. However, as these sources are subject to modification and change, some content may contain incomplete information or may not reflect changes that have occurred since it was written. The information is reported as such without any express or tacit warranty of any kind.

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