



# Cultural Tourism

Conserving culture and cultural heritage through inclusive and sustainable development

Cultural tourism has the potential to regenerate and valorise cultural heritage and empower local communities by creating sustainable jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurial activity. EU-funded research projects demonstrate the EU's commitment to transitioning to a sustainable cultural tourism model, providing an authentic experience for visitors while supporting the local economy.



Sustainable cultural tourism puts cultural heritage and local communities at the centre of the decision-making process. This approach will lead to good conservation practices and provide authentic experiences for visitors, at the same time supporting the local economy.

By implementing a circular tourism approach, communities can work with tourism operators and other stakeholders to reduce negative environmental impacts. This is achieved through waste reduction, resource conservation, green transportation, and support for local products whilst promoting overall sustainability.

Acknowledging the evolving challenges within the tourism sector, the pursuit of ongoing research and innovation is crucial for creating sustainable strategies that enable the industry to adapt and flourish amidst shifting environmental landscapes. The EU's Research and Innovation agenda emphasises the significance of cultural tourism, and it is centred around generating new knowledge and concrete solutions that address these challenges and promote sustainability within the sector.

## 8 EU-funded projects

This Results Pack will help policymakers to better understand cultural tourism and develop evidence-based policy options, in addition to giving stakeholders greater insight into the latest research results. It will also help cultural tourism practitioners to fine-tune their activities based on the latest research and test new tools and solutions developed by the projects.

The pack will contribute to new perspectives on and insights into cultural tourism, making the target audience more aware of the opportunities that this form of tourism has to offer.

### Be.CULTOUR

Beyond CULTural TOURism: human-centred innovations for sustainable and circular cultural tourism  
Coordinated in Italy

Be.CULTOUR focused on Europe's remote, rural and less-known destinations, employing a circular tourism approach to reduce waste, conserve resources, promote green transportation and support local products.

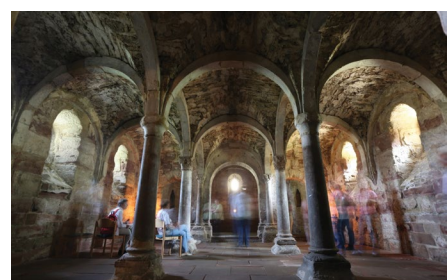


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### IMPACTOUR

IMproving Sustainable Development Policies and PrActices to assess, diversify and foster Cultural TOURism in European regions and areas  
Coordinated in Portugal

IMPACTOUR created a methodology and tool to measure and assess the impact of cultural tourism on regional European economic and social development.



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## INCULTUM

Visiting the Margins. INnovative CULtural ToUrisM in European peripheries  
Coordinated in Spain

INCULTUM worked with communities in out-of-the-way regions to pursue sustainable bottom-up strategies for social, cultural, and economic development that benefits both tourists and locals alike.



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## rurALLURE

Promotion of rural museums and heritage sites in the vicinity of European pilgrimage routes  
Coordinated in Spain

RurALLURE developed a platform that allows travellers along Europe's historic pilgrimage routes to customise their travel itineraries according to their interests and learn more about the surrounding cultural and natural heritage.



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## SmartCulTour

Smart Cultural Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development of European Regions  
Coordinated in Belgium

SmartCulTour conducted field tests in six living labs and identified which co-created sustainable practices have a positive impact, especially in rural peripheries and the urban fringe.



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## SMARTDEST

Cities as mobility hubs: tackling social exclusion through 'smart' citizen engagement  
Coordinated in Spain

SMARTDEST set up eight city labs to conduct in-depth analysis of the social impacts of tourism, give a voice to local communities, and contribute to a more just and inclusive social and economic model.



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## SPOT

Social and innovative Platform On cultural Tourism and its potential towards deepening Europeanisation  
Coordinated in the Czech Republic

SPOT explored emerging forms of cultural tourism, identifying opportunities and developing strategies that allow local people to gain benefits from their precious cultural assets.



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## TEXTOUR

Social Innovation and TEchnologies for sustainable growth through participative cultural TOURism  
Coordinated in Ireland

TEXTOUR conducted eight cultural tourism pilots in deprived areas of Europe and beyond to create a methodology that enables communities to develop sustainable tourism based on local heritage.



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### *On the path to circular cultural tourism*

The market for [cultural tourism](#) is significant, accounting for almost [40 % of all European tourism](#). Moreover, cultural tourists spend 38 % more per day and stay 22 % longer than other types of tourists in the destinations they visit. According to the [United Nations World Tourism Organisation](#), interest in cultural tourism will continue to grow and act as one of Europe's key markets.

Cultural tourism is marked by visitors' eagerness to discover, experience, and learn about a particular destination. An increasing number of tourists are searching for a more personal and authentic experience that connects them to a specific place and culture. In short, they seek out attractions, products and activities that are unique and cannot be found elsewhere.

This form of tourism also generates sources of income for local communities. In turn, it helps safeguard cultural treasures to support, strengthen and maintain cultural heritage, particularly in Europe's rural and less-known destinations.

However, as destinations become increasingly popular, unchecked mass tourism can present major challenges. Overcrowding, increased levels of noise and pollution, damage to the built environment and disruption to residents' way of life can rob destinations of their value and authentic character. The success of cultural tourism therefore largely depends on working with local communities to achieve benefits for everyone involved. Hence, there is a need to integrate cultural heritage, tourism activities and local communities in a sustainable way.

#### **Learn more about**

European Travel Commission: [bit.ly/4bYv70](https://bit.ly/4bYv70)

Work Plan for Culture: [bit.ly/3T0h9tQ](https://bit.ly/3T0h9tQ)

Publications Office of the European Union – Sustainable

Cultural Tourism report: [bit.ly/3TilaLu](https://bit.ly/3TilaLu)

European Destinations of Excellence: [bit.ly/3P24JAq](https://bit.ly/3P24JAq)

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