



## **Tourism and leisure spaces in the rural area of Teresina (PI): a proposal for sustainable development**

**Cândida Maria Barbosa Feitosa Silva Chaves**

Master in Analysis and Spatial Planning, IFPI, Brazil.  
candidambarbosa@gmail.com

**Laudenides Pontes dos Santos**

PhD Professor in Geography, IFPI, Brazil.  
laudenides.pontes@ifpi.edu.br

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**ABSTRACT**

Tourism in rural areas comprises all activities carried out in non-urban areas, which consists of leisure activities in rural areas in various modalities defined based on the offer: rural tourism, agritourism, ecological tourism, etc. This work aims to understand the dynamics of tourism and leisure spaces in the rural area of the municipality of Teresina, Piauí, and their contributions to sustainable rural development. To this end, exploratory, bibliographic, and documentary research was used. The time frame to be worked on is contemporary, with the use of data and information from the Municipality of Teresina (PMT) through the Municipal Secretariat for Economic Development and Tourism (SEMDEC), in addition to the enterprises that operate in the field. In 2022, PMT created the Teresina Sites Route with the aim of strengthening rural tourism in the municipality. The results demonstrate that, among the businesses that make up the route, there is a variety of services offered, with most of them focused on gastronomy and sports and/or recreational activities. There are few enterprises that aim to offer an approximation to activities traditionally related to rural areas, such as agriculture and livestock farming. When considering that tourism and leisure options in rural areas can bring economic, environmental, and cultural benefits, it is essential to ensure that the activity does not grow in a disorderly manner, since a lack of planning can cause environmental degradation, loss of cultural identity and increased cost of living due to the appreciation of the area in question.

**KEYWORDS:** Field. Restaurant. Route.

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Since the industrial revolution and the consequent growth and concentration of employment and income in urban areas, the countryside began to be represented by a stigma of a backward environment, without opportunities and without quality of life. Maziero et al. (2019) state that the rural area is seen in such a way that its only attribution is aimed at increasing productivity/income. Therefore, its activities are almost completely associated with agricultural production and the supply of raw materials for industry.

However, the rise of modernization, mechanization, and technological innovations in agricultural production, as well as the rise/popularization of the media and information technologies, helped to transform the reality of rural areas (Lindner; Ferreira; Souza, 2009).

Therefore, an inversion of values can be seen regarding the perception of the urban-rural dichotomy. From this perspective, while urban centers present problems related to socio-spatial inequality, violence, pollution, intense traffic, among others that contribute to the stress of city dwellers, rural areas reveal themselves as a locus of a peaceful lifestyle, associated with cultural traditions and gastronomy, contact with nature and environmental comfort (Galvão, 2019).

Furthermore, in this new configuration of a more modern rural space, rural residents seek new possibilities for socioeconomic development. In this way, many began to carry out, alongside traditional agricultural activities, other non-agricultural activities with the aim of remaining in that location. Among these new possibilities, leisure activities stand out, especially tourism in rural environments, which aims to offer greater contact with nature, the preservation of local traditions and the country lifestyle (Lindner; Ferreira; Souza, 2009).

From this perspective, it is important to highlight the contributions – in addition to economic development – that this experience of urban citizens in rural areas can bring, such as: environmental education, appreciation of rural space and sustainability (Metzner; Alhert, 2018).

This work aims to understand the dynamics of tourism and leisure spaces in the rural area of the municipality of Teresina and their contributions to sustainable rural development. To this end, exploratory, bibliographic, and documentary research was used with the Municipality of Teresina (PMT) and the enterprises that operate in the field.

Given the above, to achieve the proposed objective, the article was structured into five sections. After this introduction, two topics of theoretical/bibliographical reference were organized: Leisure spaces in Teresina; and Tourism and leisure in rural areas, with the aim of better understanding the main concepts and panoramas considered in the research and theoretically supporting the argument. Then, the results and discussion are presented in the Rural tourism in Teresina section. Finally, there are the final considerations, in which the main understandings provoked by the research are explained, in a synthetic way.

## **2 LEISURE SPACES IN TERESINA (PI)**

Teresina, capital of the state of Piauí, is the only one in the northeast region that is not located on the coast. 366 kilometers from the coast, it was the first Brazilian capital to be planned, still in the imperial period. The installation of the provincial headquarters in this region was due to its more central location than the old capital Oeiras, in addition to the navigability of the Parnaíba and Poti rivers (Teresina, w.d.).

Founded in 1852, its first leisure events were religious festivals, since 1860. The church greatly influenced the social life of the first inhabitants of the capital, whether in meetings at Sunday masses or at fairs (Vilarinho, 2002). As the city grew and developed, other attractions were implemented, such as 4 de Setembro Theater, founded in 1894 (Santos, 2015).

However, the shows presented at the Theater were restricted to the wealthier classes due to the tickets' high cost. From this perspective, the less favored classes saw leisure as something for every day, associated with neighborhood relations:

The popular classes' notion of fun was inseparable from work and was integrated into everyone's daily experience. These activities mixed spontaneously. They were also present at entertainment: June festivals, weddings or when their children were baptized (Araújo, 1995, p. 58).

In the first decades of the 20th century, more significant urban transformations began. The arrival of infrastructure (piped water, electricity, means of transport) led to the construction of public (squares and sidewalks) and private (bars, cinemas, and clubs) areas for coexistence and leisure (Lima, 2002; Santos, 2015). In this way, the richest population has always had access to more leisure options. Despite this, the poorest people tried other possibilities to have fun:

Until the beginning of the first decade of this century, the collective leisure of the population of Teresina was very spontaneous and simple. Support from public authorities was more present in open events, such as popular religious, cultural/regional festivals and civic-commemorative festivals. The population created its leisure alternatives in the form of soccer matches in squares and vacant lots, bathing in rivers, informal meetings in bars and taverns and in the few social clubs, which were very popular. There were also small gatherings of family, neighbors, or close friends, on weekends, on sidewalks, in backyards and on farms, to eat, drink and talk (Teresina, 2013, p. 50).

The population of the city of Teresina grew significantly from the 1950s onwards. In such a way that, between the years 1950 and 1960, the increase in population was around 91.24%, due to the natural growth of the population and migratory flows from smaller cities or rural areas (Lima, 2002; Lima, 2017). Consequently, the urban area and the number of households also increased:

[...] between the 1960s and 1970s, there was an increase in the number of households, going from 2,950 housing units (h.u.) to 7,004 h.u. In this range, the South zone leads both in terms of the number of complexes and the number of housing units. The significant growth in the Southeast zone stands out, going from 49 h.u., in 1960, to 3,040 h.u., although resulting from the construction of just one complex, Dirceu Arcoverde, in 1977 (Carvalho, 2018, p.79).

Such growth caused managers to devote greater attention to municipal planning and legislation to organize and qualify land use and occupation. From this perspective, in 1969 the Integrated Local Development Plan – ILDP was launched, comprising a diagnosis of the city's characteristics and problems, strategies, projects and actions related to the planning of the blocks, the occupation of lots, the restructuring of the commercial area, in addition to the recovery of squares and traffic organization (Resende, 2013; Rodrigues, 2013). In the document, parks were defined as “wooded and landscaped areas, of large dimensions, intersected or not by roads and intended for recreation” (Teresina, 1970).

Bueno and Costa (2021) attest that, although the ILDP considers urban parks to be an essential element for the city from the point of view of leisure, recreation and environmental quality, no new equipment was implemented because of the plan. In 1978, the I Structural Plan of Teresina – I SPT was published, with the intention of updating the ILDP. Regarding this document, it is important to highlight that:

(...) the I SPT does not provide specific treatment for public parks, nor any program or actions to be developed. In relation to leisure, it refers to squares and green areas as leisure spaces in the city, prioritizing the former. The problems of urban green areas also stand out, and, in relation to the distribution of equipment, the document recognizes inequality in quantitative and qualitative terms, reducing from the Center towards the urban periphery (Bueno; Costa, 2021, p. 33).

Until 1988, Teresina had only three public parks: two municipal (Teresina Environmental Park and City Park) and one state (Zoobotanical Park). Subsequently, influenced by the creation of Environmental Protection Zones, the number of parks grew considerably. Nessa perspectiva, em 2005 foram identificados 31 equipamentos desse tipo: 29 municipais e 2 estaduais (Potycabana Park and Zoobotanical Park) (Bueno; Costa, 2021; Kallas; Machado, 2005).

Later, Matos et al. (2014) counted a total of 40 urban parks in Teresina, of which 38 were municipal and 2 state. “This number of parks in the city becomes important given their functions in this space through their uses by the population, since they are spaces that have leisure as one of their main functions” (Bueno; Costa, 2021, p. 38).

Santos (2015) cataloged and mapped public leisure spaces in Teresina, considering the following typologies: soccer field (86), square (250), sports court (54), library (10), gymnasium/stadium (22), gym (14), urban park (34) and cultural spaces (13), totaling 485 public

leisure facilities. Despite this considerable quantity, the spatial distribution of such facilities does not occur in a balanced way:

(...) cultural facilities are concentrated in the Center, the urban parks with the best structure are in the East zone. And leisure spaces in general are concentrated in the largest or oldest neighborhoods in each area, with many neighborhoods still not having any type of leisure facility (Santos, 2015, p. 95).

From this perspective, some aspects were observed regarding public leisure facilities in Teresina: squares are less used as a leisure option; rivers are used less and less for this purpose, due to the lack of safety caused by mining and water quality; The urban parks most used by the population are those that manage to maintain their structure, activity schedule and security.

As a result of the inefficiency of leisure facilities in offering attractions to all social classes, age groups and locations, private leisure options have emerged. According to Santos (2015, p. 100), “Leisure presents a profitable market that creates spaces for people to enjoy these moments, especially in large cities where space is increasingly scarce and becomes a valued product”. In this sense, in recent years, there has been an increase in private leisure attractions in the rural area of the capital of Piauí.

### 3 TOURISM AND LEISURE IN RURAL SPACE

Firstly, it is necessary to clarify the definition of terms that, at first, could be seen as synonymous. To avoid conceptual misunderstandings, the Ministry of Tourism prepared the Glossary of terms for rural tourism and family farming, in which it established the meanings shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - Definitions of terms related to tourism in rural areas

<b>Termo</b>	<b>Definição</b>
Tourism in rural areas	All activities carried out in non-urban environments, which consist of leisure activities in rural areas in various modalities defined based on the offer: rural tourism, agritourism, ecological tourism, etc.
Rural tourism	Set of tourist activities developed in rural areas, committed to agricultural production, adding value to products and services, rescuing, and promoting the community's cultural and natural heritage.
Rural tourism in family farming	Tourist activity that takes place in the production unit of family farmers who maintain economic activities typical of family farming, willing to value, respect and share their way of life, cultural and natural heritage, offering quality products and services and providing well-being to those involved.
Agritourism	Tourism is practiced within rural properties, so that the tourist encounters the atmosphere of life on the property, integrating, in some way, with local habits.

Source: Brasil, 2022.

Therefore, following the definitions presented, it is clarified that this article will consider the widest one, therefore, tourism in rural areas, as it encompasses all other typologies.

Tourism in rural areas has been increasingly explored in Brazil since the 1980s, however it has been a successful practice in European countries since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this scenario, good results are based on the flow of visitors and the number of existing businesses.

Furthermore, there was a contribution from public policies to encourage its development (Brasil, 2010; Pulido Fernandez, 2008; Solha, 2019).

From this perspective, the Brazilian Ministry of Tourism also sought to provide information and technical support to qualify those interested in working with this segment. In this way, in 2010, the ministry launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the book “Rural Tourism: Basic Guidelines”, in which it lists the benefits that this economic activity can bring to the countryside, which are:

- Diversification of the regional economy, through the establishment of micro and small businesses.
- Generation of new job and income opportunities.
- Incorporation of women into paid work.
- Adding value to the primary product.
- Decrease in rural exodus.
- Improvement of transport, communication, and sanitation infrastructure in rural areas.
- Improvement of equipment, real estate and living conditions of rural families; Internalization of tourism.
- Conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage.
- Promotion of cultural exchange and cultural enrichment.
- Integration of rural properties and local community.
- Valuing rural practices, both social and work.
- Rescue of peasant self-esteem (Brasil, 2010, p. 15).

Furthermore, in 2021, the federal government, in a partnership between the ministries of Tourism and Agriculture, Livestock and Supply and the Federal Fluminense University (UFF), launched the Experiences of Rural Brazil Project with the aim of “boosting products and services from family farming associated with tourism, in order to provide innovative experiences for visitors, diversify the national tourist offer and generate alternative income in the countryside” (Brasil, 2021, w.p.).

For the project, 8 routes were selected in the North, Northeast, Southeast and South regions, involving a total of 33 municipalities and family farming enterprises that operate in agricultural and livestock production, agroindustry, extractivism, and tourism. In this way, entrepreneurs were offered technical support in “diagnosis, training and mentoring activities; workshops to create memorable tourist experiences; validation and support for commercialization” (Brasil, 2021, w.p.).

Government programs and initiatives, at national, state, or municipal level, that seek to promote and establish tourism in rural areas as a vector of sustainable development, are essential for the consolidation and improvement of this economic activity. However, Silva, Francisco, and Thomaz (2010) state that it is also of fundamental importance to create cooperation networks made up of entrepreneurs and other service providers involved in the activity, aiming to increase the number of attractions and reduce expenses.

#### **4 LEISURE AND RURAL TOURISM IN TERESINA (PI)**

In April 2022, the PMT sanctioned Law No. 5,743, which institutes the creation of the “Teresina Sites Route” program with the intention of “supporting Rural Tourism activity, domestic ecotourism and the generation of employment and income” (Teresina, 2022, p. 1). From then on, in November 2022, four routes were announced, through the Municipal Secretariat for Economic Development and Tourism – SEMDEC, comprising sixteen enterprises located in the Teresina’s rural area or in the city’s peripheral neighborhoods.

In this way, the following were established: the Ipês Route (table 2); the Hawk Route (table 3); the Lake Route (table 4); and the Union Route (table 5); incorporating duly registered enterprises and signatories of the program's Term of Adhesion. In 2023, PMT, through SEMDEC, updated the routes with the addition of six new projects, bringing the total to twenty-two signatories to the proposal.

Table 2 – Ipês Route: developments and attractions

<b>Ipês Route</b>	
Bernard’s Farm	Horse/pony ride, farm animal exhibition, restaurant with regional food, and lodging in a chalet.
Rags and Lint Factory	Understand and learn about the culture of looms and experience how they work.
Piauí Jockey Club	Water park, party room, games room, sports courts, and restaurant.
New Ranch Farm	Cuisine specializing in Gaucho barbecue and regional dishes, farm animals, catch and release, horse/pony rides, riding lessons.
Kitanda Petit	Typical food restaurant, space for events and lodging in chalets.
Eco-educational Kingo Park	Restaurant, swimming pool, playground, space for events, tree climbing, climbing, zip line, cyclo-kart, mini-golf, trail, soccer field, target shooting, archery, and slackline.
Mountains Bathhouse*	Restaurant, swimming pool and green living areas.
Arêa’s Tent*	Restaurant serving typical northeastern food.
Sunrise Small Farm*	Free area with soccer field, beach tennis court, futsal table and swimming pool. In addition, it offers events with an all-you-can-eat feijoada buffet and musical attractions.

Fonte: Teresina, 2023.

\*Enterprises added to the Route in 2023.

Bernard’s Farm is characterized as a recreational center that offers visitors the opportunity to have contact with the farm’s animals in a rural environment, in addition to offering other leisure options such as a swimming pool, children’s playground, restaurant and lodging. Access to the restaurant is free, with payment only for meals and drinks consumed. For access to the pools, animal visits and horse riding, there is a charge of R\$15.00 per person. During school holidays it also offers a summer camp service for children. Furthermore, it sells organic products produced on the farm: coalho cheese, green beans, free-range chicken, homemade sausage, cajá pulp, babassu coconut oil, cashew nuts (Bernard’s Farm, 2021; Teresina, 2023).

Rags and Lint Factory works with the artisanal production of rugs and other items for the home, such as placemats, cushions, and curtains. It developed with the contribution of artisans from the rural community Santa Rita, the region in which it is located, through weaving, using cotton and natural fibers from cattail and buriti. It joined the rural tourism route to spread the factory’s history and the looms’ culture. Entry is free (Rags and Lint, 2023; Teresina, 2023).

At the Piauí Jockey Club, despite the name, the main attractions are not related to equestrian activities, but rather recreational, sporting, and social activities. To access the club, an amount starting from R\$40.00 is charged (Teresina, 2023). New Ranch Farm, in addition to

offering a series of recreational options related to country life, also grows, and sells organic vegetables. To access the farm and enjoy the attractions, there is a charge of R\$20.00 on Saturdays and R\$30.00 on Sundays. Children up to 7 years old and seniors have free entry (New Ranch Farm, 2023).

Kitanda Petit has a service more focused on contemplation and relaxation, offering accommodation in chalets with a private pool and a restaurant with typical food from the region. Access to the restaurant is free for non-guests. This way, the visitor can also use the children's playground, however, to use the pool there is a charge of R\$15.00 (Kitanda Petit, 2023). Meanwhile, Eco-educational Kingo Park offers active leisure, with more playful programming, aimed at children's entertainment. Normally, it only opens on Sundays and public holidays, however, during school holidays it also opens on Saturdays. The entrance fee varies between R\$12.50 and R\$67.00, depending on the attractions one wishes to enjoy (Kingo Park, 2023).

Mountains Bathhouse is a leisure and relaxation space that has a restaurant and swimming pool open to visitors. Furthermore, it has other structures for children's leisure, while Arêa's Tent focuses on northeastern gastronomy, serving traditional dishes and regional preparations, both surrounded by green areas that predominate in the rural area (Mountains Bathhouse, 2023; Arêa's Tent, 2023).

Sunrise Site has an immense green area with landscape design and, in addition to offering sports and recreational attractions, it promotes events with an all-you-can-eat feijoada buffet and musical attractions. To use the structure, it is necessary to rent the space (Sunrise Small Farm, 2023).

Table 3 – Hawk Route: enterprises and attractions

<b>Hawk Route</b>	
Milk Valley Farm	Children's playground, event space, hanging house, baby zipline, breakfast and farm exploration, including contact with the animals.
Ninizo Stud farm	Breakfast buffet, events, horse/pony rides, swimming pool and children's games.
Araxá Bike Park	Restaurant with breakfast and lunch with regional cuisine, swimming pool, sports activities, kids' space, catch and release, bicycle rental and cycling trails in the park and around the region.
Titara Park	Water park, restaurant with typical food, beach tennis arena, fish and pay, pedal boat, soccer field, space for events.
Dreamer's Corner	Restaurant, swimming pool, playground, event space, fishing lake, camping.
Didi's Small Farm	Restaurant, swimming pool, playground, space for events, sports fishing, soccer field and volleyball court.
Joy Small Farm	Restaurant specializing in poultry (duck, chicken, and capote) with intimate service, peace, and rurality.
Mineiro's Small Farm*	Restaurant with swimming pool and sports fishing tank.

Source: Teresina, 2023.

\*Enterprises added to the Route in 2023.

In Hawk Route, the Milk Valley group initially already had a consolidated dairy factory in the state of Piauí, increasing its main economic activity with the offer of educational rural tourism, aimed especially at children, the Milk Valley Farm. In this way, it began to offer children, in addition to recreational activities, contact with farm animals and the experience of rural activities. Admission costs R\$30.00 to visit and explore the farm. It also offers summer camp services during school breaks, at a different price (Milk Valley Farm, 2023; Teresina, 2023).



Ninizo Stud Farm makes its infrastructure and landscape available for events and photo shoots. Furthermore, it has entered the rural tourism route because on Sundays it offers a breakfast buffet service and recreational activities aimed at children, for which it charges a fee of R\$60.00 for adults and R\$40.00 for children (Teresina, 2023). Araxá Bike Park, in turn, has the distinction of focusing on physical and sporting activities, offering, from this perspective, bicycle rental so that the public can travel trails inside and outside the park, in addition to hosting racing and CrossFit competition events. However, it also has a restaurant and children's playground. Access costs R\$10.00 (Araxá Bike Park, 2023; Teresina, 2023).

Titara Park differentiates itself from the others by having a private water park structure with two swimming pools and several attractions, in addition to offering other sports, recreational and restaurant options. The water park is open on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, and the passport fee to access the attractions costs R\$49.90 in low season and R\$59.90 in high season (holidays and school holidays) (Teresina, 2023).

Dreamer's Corner is a more contemplative leisure option, to be in contact with nature. The main attractions are the restaurant with typical food and the lake with sport fishing. In addition, it offers options for children's leisure and a camping service with a luau. Joy Small Farm follows a very similar proposal, more focused on offering the peace of a home-cooked meal immersed in the rural environment. What sets it apart is the menu specializing in poultry (duck, chicken, and capote) raised on the farm itself, in addition to selling eggs and artisanal seasoning. Didi's and Mineiro's Small Farms also follow the trend: a restaurant with a lake for sport fishing. However, the first also offers other sporting and recreational attractions, while the second is differentiated by its gastronomy, which offers regional cuisine with a Minas Gerais flavor, as well as traditional inputs manufactured in the state of Minas Gerais. In these four ventures there is no charge for access and visitors can enjoy the facilities offered when consuming in the restaurants (Dreamer's Corner, 2023; Globo, 2022; Joy Small Farm, 2023; Didi's Small Farm, 2023; Mineiro's Small Farm, 2023; Teresina, 2023).

Table 4 – Lake Route: enterprises and attractions

Lake Route	
Lake Viewpoint Small Farm Restaurant	Restaurant, swimming pool, space for events, space for sports, horse riding, fishing and pay, soccer field, kayaking.
Hotel Atlantic City Nautical Resort*	Lodging service, restaurant, water park, lake with fishing and pay and space for events.

Source: Teresina, 2023.

\*Enterprises added to the Route in 2023.

Lake Route initially consisted of a single enterprise, the Lake Viewpoint Small Farm Restaurant, which, in addition to the restaurant, offers several other recreational and sporting activities. Access is free for visitors, paying an individual fee to enjoy the available attractions (Teresina, 2023; Lake Viewpoint Small Farm Restaurant, 2023).

The Hotel Atlantic City Nautical Resort is a club with water and sports attractions and lodging services. To access the available structure, you must be a member or pay for the hosting service. The public can access fishing and pay for a fee of R\$20.00 (Hotel Atlantic City Resort, 2023).

Table 5 – Union Route: enterprises and attractions

Union Route	
Beiju House	Specialized in floured beiju. Possibility of experiencing the rustic production of the product.
Paradise Cable Park	Restaurant, space for events, wakeboarding, and beach tennis.
Zoobotanical Biopark of Teresina*	Area for the protection and conservation of fauna and flora. It also functions as a zoo housing wild and exotic species. It has leisure areas with an inflatable park, a picnic area, trails, and a lake with pedal boats.

Source: Teresina, 2023.

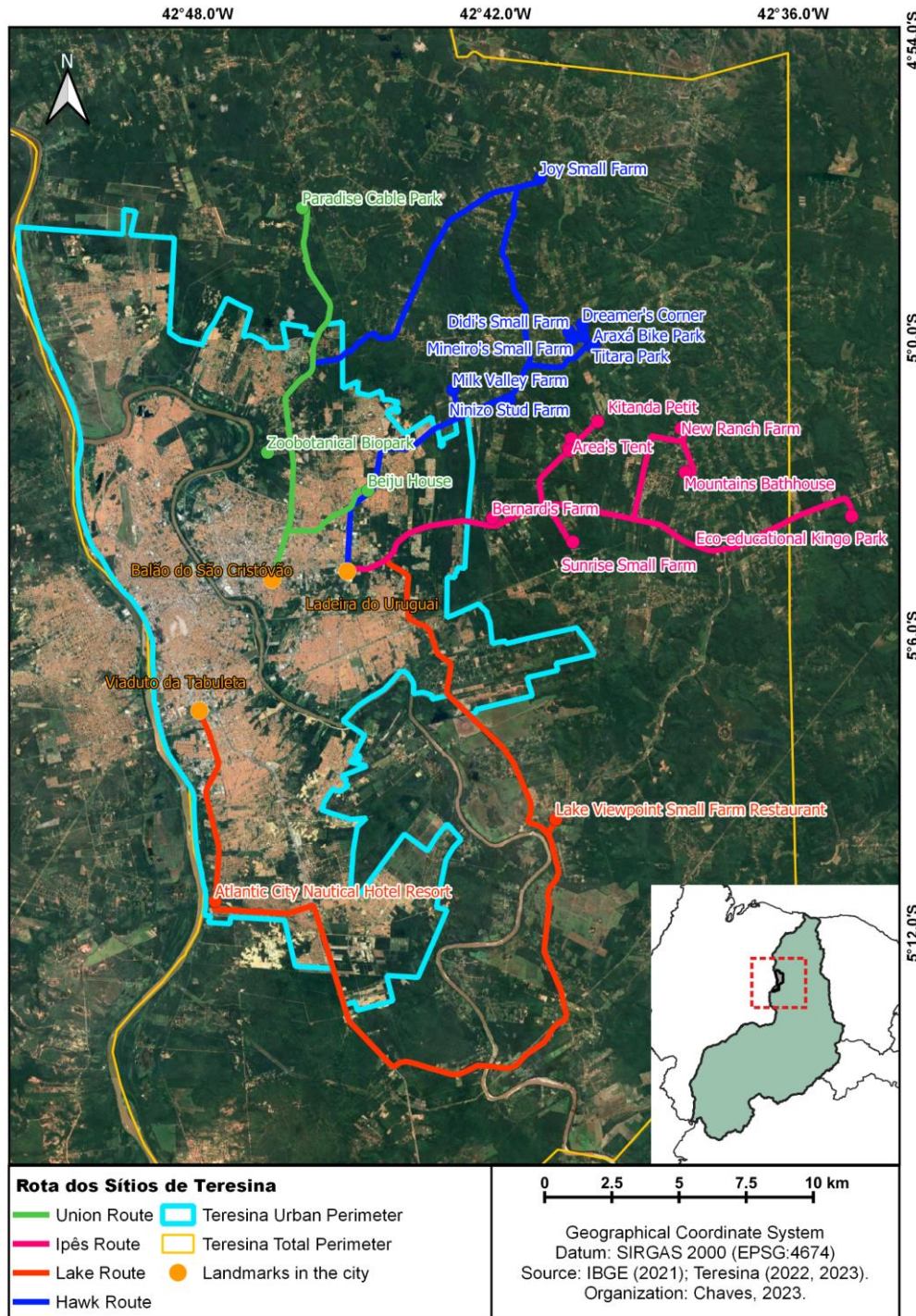
\*Enterprises added to the Route in 2023.

On the Union Route, Beiju House stands out for two factors: firstly because it is located in the urban area of the municipality of Teresina and secondly because it is not a small farm or land immersed in nature, but stands out for working exclusively with an activity that refers to rurality and the nostalgia of many generations who grew up in the countryside and lived with the help of subsistence agriculture: flour preparation, a place where, by hand, “the transformation of cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) into flour or into fresh or roasted starch” (Costa; Gondim Neto, 2016).

Paradise Cable Park's unique feature is a lake for wakeboarding, which can be defined as “a water sport practiced on a board in which the person is towed by a boat, with the help of a cable and a lever. Taking advantage of the two waves left by the boat, the athlete performs maneuvers while being pulled, jumping from one side to the other” (CBEAW, n.d.). In addition, it has a restaurant and other sports and leisure options such as: table tennis, snooker, slack line, tablefoot, volleyball, footvolley and beach tennis. Therefore, a fee of R\$10.00 is charged to access the park and enjoy its structure (Paradise Cable Park, 2023).

Finally, the Zoobotanical Biopark is an Integral Protection Conservation Unit that houses the Caatinga and Forest biomes (Dias *et al*, 2020). From this perspective, in addition to fulfilling the social and environmental function of protection, it offers the population options for active and contemplative leisure through contact with fauna and flora. Access to the park costs R\$10.00 or R\$5.00 for half price, with free entry for education professionals, elderly people, among others (Zoobotanical Biopark, 2023).

Figure 1 – Location of Teresina Site Routes



Source: Teresina, 2023; organized by the authors, 2023.

Figure 1 shows the location of the projects that make up the existing routes. It is interesting to note that not all projects are in the rural area of the municipality, such as Zoobotanical Biopark, Beiju House, and the Hotel Atlantic City Nautical Resort. Therefore, although Teresina Sites Route program was created to support Rural Tourism, domestic ecotourism and the generation of employment and income, it was not restricted to the limits of the urban perimeter. In fact, in the case of Zoobotanical Biopark and Hotel Atlantic City Nautical

Resort, it can be said that they are in an urban-rural transition area, in which the population density is much lower and urban voids predominate.

Furthermore, there is a variety of services offered, most of which are focused on gastronomy and sports and/or recreational activities. There are few enterprises that aim to offer an approximation to activities traditionally related to rural areas, such as agriculture and livestock. From this perspective, Bernard's Farm and New Ranch Farm, on Ipês Route, and Milk Valley Farm, on Hawk Route, stand out.

Also noteworthy is the type of water park/club that can be observed in the following developments: Piauí Jockey Club, on Ipês Route; Titara Park, on Hawk Route; and Hotel Atlantic City Nautical Resort, on Lake Route. Examples that do not necessarily explore attractions linked to rurality but become attractive to city dwellers by providing free areas, contact with nature and greater thermal comfort, since the distance from the urban area – more densely built and with compacted soil – reduces the surface temperature and, consequently, the thermal sensation.

It is interesting to note that Eco-educational Kingo Park is not located in the municipality of Teresina, but in Altos, a municipality neighboring the capital of the state of Piauí, which is part of the Integrated Development Region of Greater Teresina. From this perspective when programming the Teresina Sites Route, SEMDEC did not take a Cartesian position regarding location, nor even the type of enterprise and service offering, thus covering a diverse range of leisure options, capable of covering all ages, genders, and social classes.

Tourism and leisure options in rural areas can bring economic and environmental benefits, as they present themselves as low-carbon tourism alternatives capable of generating employment for a portion of the population that lives far from the opportunities offered in urban areas. Furthermore, they can promote environmental education and the appreciation of traditional local culture (De Lourdes, 2023).

Teresina, the only capital in the Brazilian Northeast that is not located on the coast, naturally lacks outdoor spaces for leisure and socializing compared to the others. After the most severe phases of the Covid-19 pandemic, between 2020 and 2021, when the population was forced to remain in social isolation, the public sector initiative to organize and disseminate the Sites Route as an option for Leisure, not only for visitors from other cities and states, but for the population itself, is a great contribution to the quality of life of its residents.

## **5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Regarding tourism in rural areas, a typology that covers all activities carried out in non-urban areas and comprises leisure practices in rural areas in various forms, it can be seen as an economic aspect that has the potential to bring environmental and social benefits, contributing as well as local and regional development. This is because, as Fernandes (2019) states, it can strengthen regional culture by rescuing traditions that restore local identity. Furthermore, they can reinforce the income of small producers and capitalize on areas that are not productive, thus supporting the permanence of men in the field.

However, Sanches and Schmidt (2016) and Fernandes (2019) warn that this activity should not grow in a disorderly manner, as a lack of planning can cause environmental

degradation, loss of cultural identity and increased cost of living due to appreciation of the area in question. For this reason, the work of PMT and SEMDEC, especially after the creation of the Teresina Sites Route, must be constant monitoring of the activities of the enterprises that signed the proposal. In this sense, the qualification of professionals and suppliers is essential.

Reinforcing that the main difference between these enterprises in rural areas, in relation to those in urban areas, is precisely the contact with nature, it is essential that entrepreneurs pay attention to ecological and sustainable issues to maintain environmental quality for future generations.

It is important to highlight that tourist activity in rural areas not only benefits entrepreneurs and workers in the sector, but also tourists and citizens of Teresina who are provided with a wide range of leisure options within the municipality, thus increasing social life and contact with nature.

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