

Venice Tourists Make the Gondola Paradise a Ghost Town



Venice is one of the world's unique cities. With a plethora of canals, bridges, and gondolas it has always been considered to be the Europe's romantic destination No 1. However, tourism has a drastic impact on the Adriatic city. The population has sunk from 140.000 to a mere 60.000 in the last 20 years. Indeed, the missing 80.000 is now accounted for by tourists.

The problem is that most of the tourists in Venice come on day trips and rarely spend much money. Most of them even bring their own sandwiches. As a result, the council has placed a \$500 tax on such tours in order to raise funds. As most of the tourists leave before nightfall, the city becomes a ghost town once all the bars are closed by 23:00. There are few tourists left and even less residents. As the price of a 2-bedroom flat in Venice is now over \$1 million, most locals have complained with their feet and moved to relatively inexpensive industrial town of Mestre. The army of 18 million tourists visiting Venice is not only making Italians here an endangered species, but also stripping Venice of its charm. Venice might change from being a unique Italian city to being a unique tourist lure by day, ghost town by night.

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