

MASS TOURISM ENDANGERS MAYA BAY

One of the most popular destinations in Southeast Asia, Maya Bay, will be closed to the public for a few months, in order to repair the environmental damage caused by irresponsible tourists and mass tourism.

Machu Picchu, Venice, the Taj Mahal... these are only a few destinations that have suffered the consequences of irresponsible tourism, and could soon disappear. **And now Maya Bay in Thailand joins this list; a tourist destination that will be closed for a few months in order to avert its further deterioration, which has been steadily increasing for years due to mass tourism.**

The paradise of the Phi Phi Leh island, with its white sands and spectacular transparent sea, attracts more than 4,000 tourists every day, arriving to the location by boat and causing damage to the reef, as well as the marine species found in the ocean that have slowly become endangered.

On many occasions, the authorities of this tourist destination, that has been a victim of mass tourism, had announced their intentions of suspending visitations and access for tourists to Maya Bay in order to repair and give a rest to the paradisiacal beach.

In 1999, the actor Leonardo DiCaprio starred in the movie 'The Beach', using Maya Bay as a filming location that, back then, wasn't as popular as it is today. It was then when this Thailand beach began to be part of many tourists' preferred destination, people eager to visit this idyllic paradise in the midst of a vast ocean.

The decision to close the area was made by the Thai government to prevent further deterioration to the natural heritage. The reason behind this sound measure is, according to the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation of Thailand, the indiscriminate number of tourists visiting the island for the last years.

The temporary closure of the beach will take place in the low season months for tourism, that is, between the months of June and October. This way, they'll be able to work on it without suffering great economic losses.

Those responsible for carrying out the laborious task will be certified biologists, who will try to recover the ecosystem that has been damaged by boats and ferries as they dock on the beach full of tourists, along with the boats' anchors that destroy the coral reefs, in addition to the plastic materials thrown into the sea by the visitors.

Currently, up to 80% of the barrier reef that surrounds the entire island is presumed to be endangered.

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