

FIGHT OVER-TOURISM AND TRAVEL OFF THE SEASON



The world of tourism has been tackling the issue of over-tourism for a couple of years now. It represents the rapid increase of mass tourism to prominent destinations throughout the world.

Today, there are no longer only travel wish lists, but also so-called “not-to-go lists”. Since many places are so seasonally overloaded, we call it over-tourism. A prime example is the old town of Venice. **The historical city is having difficulties resisting the tourism masses.** Other examples are Barcelona, Dubrovnik, or sites like Machu Picchu, Taj Mahal or countries like Iceland or Bhutan.

The main and obvious reason for this phenomenon is that there are more and more travelers. New visitors, such as China’s fast-growing middle class, are making a major contribution to this. Social media platforms such as Instagram also plays its role. Followers emulate the influencers and want to make a similar selfie of their own in the same destination.

Unrest in prime destinations

As a result of this phenomenon, local residents get increasingly irritated. For example, in Mallorca, locals are creating human chains to protect the community. Venetians hang signs with the imprint “Tourists, go away!” and call for an end to mass tourism. And in some places, tourists have even become the target of attacks, for example in Barcelona.

However, the displeasure of locals is by no means directed only against tourists. It is also connected to the so-called “Airbnb phenomenon”. Short-term rents to tourists deprive the local housing market of housing, causing rents to rise. The presence of so many tourists bothers the locals, but also the tourists themselves. There is a critical limit, and if it is exceeded, it will be too much.

Numerous solutions

The World Travel and Tourism Council recommends five strategies for regions affected by over-tourism. Firstly, it is necessary to distribute visitor numbers over a longer period of time.

Moreover, it is beneficial to dissolve tourist agglomerations, adjusting supply and demand prices, regulating overnight accommodations or even banishing tourism activities.

But not only the tourism authorities can be part of the solution. Also, every single tourist can contribute in a way to regulate the problem of over-tourism. Though it must be noted that the contribution is diminishable individually, because the issue is in the masses.

A common tip for travelers is to travel out of the season, where possible. It is also recommended to visit less prominent tourist destinations in view of a more sustainable industry. However, if one chooses a popular destination, he should focus on more remote sights to help fight over-tourism.

It remains to be seen whether improvements will be made, but the numbers do not look so bright.

According to the World Tourism Organization's estimates, **international arrivals will grow by another 50% by 2030, from the current \$1.2 billion per year to \$1.8 billion.** The problem is that the number of destinations is not growing and tourists will continue to focus on the already existing destinations.

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