

BALI'S ELEPHANT TOURISM - PROFITABLE YET UNETHICAL BUSINESS CONTINUES



The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the tourism industry worldwide, but some regions are affected more than others, for example, Indonesia and its much-desired island of Bali, a tropical paradise that attracted millions of foreigners before the current health crisis.

Today, the situation is radically different. **Between January and August this year, only a little more than one million foreigners visited Indonesia.**

During the month of August, 127 thousand foreign tourists arrived to the country. This amounts to a decrease of 21.19 % compared to the already negative numbers of August 2020 (161 thousand).

Bali Set to Reopen

To stimulate the growth of the sector, however, the island of Bali is set to reopen to international tourists from mid-October. However, the entry will be possible only for a limited number of guests and only from some countries, for example, China or Japan.

Moreover, people arriving at the reopened Ngurah Rai International Airport will be obliged to quarantine for 8 days without compensation.

Elephant Tourism Controversy

While Bali is known for its beautiful beaches and seaside resorts, there is also a controversial part of the product of the island: elephant tourism.

One of the most famous parks for this very profitable type of tourism is the Bali Elephant Camp, where businesses have been given the right to offer such services in exchange for giving the critically endangered Sumatran elephants a home.

However, it seems that the camp is not giving the elephants a sufficient home. A photograph exclusively published by Al Jazeera shows elephants who look extremely undernourished to the point where you can see their bones.

While this is mainly the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and due to the lack of income of the camp, this can by no means justify such animal abuse, also given the fact that the same animals have given the camp enormous profits in the past couple of years.

Unethical Nature of Elephant Tourism

While this particular story had a positive ending, with the government seizing the elephants at the park and relocating them to different zoos and parks which fed them accordingly, this case should shed light on an issue that needs to be addressed.

Reportedly there are still many parks in Bali that continue to underfeed and abuse elephants by chaining them, stabbing them, or forcing them to perform bizarre shows for

tourists.

In this context, experts are calling for more ethical tourism involving elephants. One that will not include chaining, riding, but which will give tourists the opportunity to observe and admire the animals from afar.

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