

THAILAND'S FAMOUS MAYA BAY RE-OPEN TO FOREIGN VISITORS



Maya Bay is probably one of the most iconic spots in Thailand. Funnily enough, despite the immense beauty of the bay, it gained its status mainly after featuring in the movie *The Beach* in 2000 which starred Leonardo DiCaprio.

Throughout the years, masses of tourists visited the bay to see its beauty with their own eyes. According to estimates, at some point the spot was visited by an astonishing 6000 people per day.

The effects of overtourism

Given the fact that the bay is not exactly huge, it is clear that this situation was far from sustainable. Authorities had to deal with plenty of issues with regards to overtourism in the bay, from garbage on the beach to damages to the ecosystem, including the coral.

At some point, locals decided that enough was enough and after they expressed their dissatisfaction with the gruesome situation, Maya Bay was closed to the public in 2018.

At first the plan was to ban the public from visiting the island for 4 months. However, given that there was a lot to do to restore the ecosystem and build the necessary infrastructure for the protection of it in the future, the closure lasted much longer.

But it must be said that this closure benefited the ecosystem of the bay greatly, as it is now in much better shape than almost 4 years ago, with many animals having returned to Maya Bay in the absence of people.

Bay reopens to foreign tourists

And almost four years after, [Maya Bay re-open to foreign visitors](#). The “doors” to the bay opened on January 1, 2022. However, visitors have to follow the introduced rules and restrictions. From the link above you can check what rules you should follow.

According to these regulations, boats are not allowed to enter the bay and tourists are dropped off at a pier behind the island. Only eight speedboats are allowed to dock here at the same time.

Moreover, tours are limited to one hour, with a maximum of 300 tourists allowed per tour. The bay “operates” from 10 am to 4 pm. Tourists are obliged to make a reservation to take part in these tours.

Finally, swimming in the seawaters of the bay is prohibited due to the fact that they are the home to 161 blacktip reef sharks. Local authorities want to preserve the population of this species whose number grew immensely since 2018 (an estimated 6 back then).

Thus, as Maya Bay re-open to foreign visitors after almost 4 years, Thailand is looking to implement a sustainable tourism model which could perhaps inspire many other destinations worldwide to follow the same path with the aim of the protection of the environment.

Date: 2022-01-03

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/maya-bay-reopens-to-foreign-visitors-under-restrictions-news12333>