

Locals Outnumbered by Foreign Tourists

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **tourism** (noun) /'tʊər.ɪ.zəm/ - The commercial organization and operation of vacations and visits to places of interest.
Example: The country's economy relies heavily on tourism.
2. **overtourism** (noun) /,oʊ.vər'tʊər.ɪ.zəm/ - The excessive number of tourists visiting a particular destination.
Example: Overtourism is a major problem for popular destinations like Venice and Amsterdam.
3. **infrastructure** (noun) /'ɪn.frə'strʌk.tʃər/ - The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (e.g., buildings, roads, power supplies) needed for the operation of a society or enterprise.
Example: The city is investing in its infrastructure to handle the increasing number of visitors.
4. **sustainable** (adjective) /sə'steɪ.nə.bəl/ - Able to be maintained at a certain rate or level.
Example: The city is exploring ways to promote sustainable tourism.
5. **cultural heritage** (noun) /'kʌl.tʃər.əl 'her.ɪ.tɪdʒ/ - The legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations.
Example: Protecting our cultural heritage is a key goal for the preservation society.
6. **authentic** (adjective) /ɔ:'θen.tɪk/ - Of undisputed origin; genuine.
Example: Tourists are often looking for an authentic experience, not a commercialized one.
7. **strain** (verb) /streɪn/ - To put a heavy burden on; to overtax.
Example: The large number of visitors can strain the local resources.



Some countries and small city-states are experiencing a unique phenomenon where the number of tourists on any given day can exceed the local population. Destinations like Vatican City, Monaco, and some Caribbean islands have become so popular that the constant influx of visitors is now a dominant feature of local life. This trend, often referred to as overtourism, presents a new set of challenges and opportunities for these small nations.

The economies of these destinations are heavily dependent on tourism, which brings significant revenue and jobs. However, the sheer volume of visitors can place an enormous strain on local infrastructure and resources, from water and electricity to public transportation. It can also lead to a loss of the area's authentic character, as local shops and restaurants are replaced by those catering specifically to tourists, altering the local way of life and cultural heritage.

In response, many destinations are now exploring ways to make their tourism more sustainable. Strategies include limiting the number of daily visitors to certain sites, imposing tourist taxes, and encouraging visitors to explore less crowded areas. The goal is to balance the economic benefits with the need to protect the environment and preserve the quality of life for local residents. This debate highlights the tension between economic growth and environmental and cultural preservation.

DISCUSSION

1. Do you think it's possible for a destination to be both a major tourist hub and still feel authentic? Why or why not?
2. What responsibilities, if any, do tourists have to the places they visit?
3. Imagine you are a mayor of a small town experiencing overtourism. What is the first policy you would introduce to manage the situation?
4. How does social media contribute to the problem of overtourism?
5. What are some examples of tourist behavior that can harm a local community or environment?
6. If you could travel to a place that is not heavily visited by tourists, where would you go and why?