

# Overtourism

On a hot September day in Croatia, I search for a guide who could share with me the history of Dubrovnik, the UNESCO heritage site with its magnificent old walled town from the 16th century. See the red keep the house of the undying, the Purple Wedding setting. The guides called out as I strolled among them checking prices and departure times. It meant nothing to me, but all of those sites they were offering were from Game of Thrones, **the fantasy TV series that hasn't been on my watch list**. Eventually, I joined it to have that takes us through the rabbit Warren, past an old Croatian woman dressed in black sitting on her steps, with her hands on her knees, muttering angrily in her native tongue. **I didn't need the language to know she was not happy**. The streets were packed cruise ships disgorged their passengers in the thousands and the sun beat down on tired heads. I heard her spit out the word Game of Thrones before she spat on the footpath as we walked by.

That was last year after the busy holiday month of August. How much she be feeling now. She may well have left town, **so many of the locals do to escape the rubbish, the noise, and most of all the tourists. It's been another boom year**. And in 2017 many locals in the favourite spots around Europe have said enough. It started in Barcelona where quiet neighbourhoods were transformed by tourists arriving to take up residence in rental flats, many of them through Airbnb. **It was driving up rents and forcing locals out**. Protest signs on the street read. This is in tourism. It's an invasion. **In English, of course**, so the tourists wouldn't miss the point. A protest group called ARAN released video footage with a punchy music track of their attack on an open-top two of us slashing its tires and splashing it with graffiti. Passengers thought they'd been caught up in a terrorist attack. One sign that was spotted seemed even more threatening a black silhouette and the words why to call it tourist season if we can't shoot them. in Venice, residents held a banner that read my future is **Venice as they marched through crowds of visitors**, and Rome is considering limiting visitor numbers. If you've ever tried to take a photo with the Trevi Fountain without a thousand other heads in the shot, you might understand why they may be popular tourism spots, but the people who call these places home have lost patience with the number of visitors and their behaviour. Eric Zelo is an associate professor of European history at the University of New England in America. And he's also the author of the history of **modern tourism**.

Growth will continue with essentially the same rate up until 2030 years so we were looking at something that continues to grow for good **historical** reason. Governments worked very hard after world war two to create this multinational

corporation or multinational organisations, I guess, what would eventually become the UN World Tourism organisation worked very hard to promote tourism and build it up because tourism was a way to build the economy. It was a way to prevent the spread of **communism**. It was a way to promote **world peace**.

How ironic that it's creating grief?

Yeah, right. That's absolutely right. It's kind of fascinating as a historian looking at this and, and seeing some of the commentators saying governments need to try and stop this almost like tourism is a **plague** sweeping across the globe like SARS, or swine flu or something. No, we built this, with good motives in mind.

Rome is now putting officials on patrol to stop people from swimming in the fountains. in Parma in Mallorca activists set off flares outside a restaurant and threw confetti at diners. harmless, perhaps, but scary for those involved. They're planning another protest in San Sebastian in a week, the Spanish Prime Minister has delivered a reminder that **tourism makes up a good deal of the country's economy**, and warning people off is not the best strategy. Numbers are higher this year because of terrorist attacks in Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia, where Britons and others used to flock it's a delicate balance for the places still in favour, put out the welcome mat and take the money that comes with it, while not creating an intolerable environment for those left behind. When their summer of discontent is over. This is Lisa Miller at work in London for a correspondents report.