

## Efforts by top travel destinations to manage and mitigate overtourism and touristification: Case of study (Venice, Italy Barcelona, Spain Bali, Indonesia Santorini, Greece)

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**Abstract---** This study explores the proactive measures adopted by top tourist destinations to manage and mitigate the negative impacts of overtourism and touristification, using Venice, Italy Barcelona, Spain Bali, Indonesia Santorini, Greece, as a case study. Based on statistical analysis theory, the analysis focuses on the economic, social and regional dynamics that influence the expansion of suspicious transaction reports and their contribution to rural tourism. By applying spatial and temporal indicators, the study identifies areas where suspicious transaction reports have intensified pressures on land use, housing and community life. The findings underscore the importance of coordinated planning policies and sustainable tourism strategies to address the uncontrolled spread of suspicious transaction reports, reduce housing market distortions, and protect rural environments. The case of Mallorca illustrates how local and national authorities have begun to adopt targeted regulations to control tourism flows and ensure that residents benefit from the development and long-term sustainability of the destination.

**Keywords---** Touristification, Overtourism, Travel Destinations, Venice, Italy Barcelona, Spain Bali, Indonesia Santorini, Greece.

### 1. Introduction

The limits to growth are not just an issue for travel and tourism as the Wall Street Journal has described tourism as currently “generating a global backlash”. Responsible Tourism is about using tourism to

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make better places for people to live in and to visit. Overtourism is the antithesis to this, tourism is using the place and degrading it.

Overtourism describes destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably. It is the opposite of Responsible Tourism which is about using tourism to make better places to live in and better places to visit. Often both visitors and guests experience the deterioration concurrently. The problem is not going to go away – we need to work out how to cope with it. The challenge for businesses and destination marketing organisations is that they no longer have a free hand to use the places that people live and work in to attract visitors. The residents, whose place it is, are beginning to rebel and consumers are all too aware that some destinations are not what they were. The challenge now is to develop ways of “Coping with Success”, addressing overtourism (Maya, 2025).

‘**Overtourism**’ is a relatively new term in the public and academic debate on negative consequences of tourism. However, the phenomenon itself is not a new one, as problematic forms of tourism crowding and their effects on local communities and environment have been studied for decades. Yet, there is much evidence that the character of tourism in many locations is changing rapidly. It is important to realise that overtourism is still at the very beginning of the policy cycle. The policy cycle theory states that policies develop through a range of stages, of which the first is the agenda setting stage. Overtourism has developed well into the agenda-setting stage, but did not enter the policy-making stage at the EU level, and only very rudimentarily at the destination level. Therefore, it is not possible, nor desirable, to describe precise and exact policy measures because there is scarce empirical evidence to found such measures on. (Paul, 2018).

The term touristification refers to the process of transformation of a place into a tourist space and its associated effects. This transformation operates at the level of both tourist attraction and destination. It implies an adaptation of the place to the visitor and to the interests of the tourism sector. The effects of the transformation process can be positive or negative, and they have a multidimensional character (environmental, landscape, economic, social, or cultural). In contrast to this broad and somewhat neutral meaning, the term has recently become popular with a much more limited meaning and negative connotations. In this sense, there are frequent works that refer to touristification as a process that particularly affects cities and deteriorates the living conditions of their inhabitants. According to this critical perspective, touristification is configured as a process of territorial specialization in the tourist function whose negative impacts far outweigh the positive ones. The academic production on touristification is extensive, although most of the contributions date from after the year 2000. Perhaps for this reason there is still a certain indeterminacy in the use of the term, often associated with other expressions, such as overtourism and tourist gentrification (María & Manuel de la Calle-Vaquero, 2023).

This study aims to uncover the underlying reasons behind the tendency of local residents to ignore the symptoms of overtourism within their communities. The theoretical framework of the article is based on social exchange theory and its connections to tourism-induced change. By focusing on real-life cases from several European countries and others around the world, the central question of this study revolves around the efforts made by top travel destinations to manage and mitigate overtourism and touristification. We posit that local attitudes toward overtourism are influenced by their involvement in providing tourism-related services and their motivation to secure continued future profits. We argue that their dependence on tourism has shaped and constrained their decision-making. Moreover, their sensitivity to overtourism is modulated by their expectations of maximizing future benefits and the availability of alternative solutions to manage the current situation—options which, unfortunately, they currently lack.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Overtourism and the problem on Top Travel Destinations

The term 'overtourism' was first used in the context of mass tourism in 2012 to describe a situation in which there are too many tourists in a tourist destination, causing discomfort for both locals and tourists. Peeters et al. defined overtourism as a 'situation where the impact of tourism exceeds the threshold of physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and/or political capacity'. This definition considers the socio-psychological and socio-political dimensions, as well as other relevant multidimensional elements, encompassed by the phenomenon. Overtourism has been identified as a significant problem that reduces the quality of life in local communities. However, the definition of overtourism had not been fully agreed upon academically and had various interpretations (Wayan, 2025).

Tourism can stimulate economic growth, foster cultural exchange, and support conservation efforts that protect the world's most remarkable places. However, when tourism development is poorly managed, unchecked growth can overwhelm destinations, and detrimentally impact the environment, local communities, and visitor experience. This issue, known as overtourism, is an urgent challenge for many of the world's most popular travel destinations, here this leads us to ask the following question: **What is Overtourism?**

Overtourism occurs when too many visitors flock to a destination, exceeding its ability to manage them sustainably and leading to negative impacts such as overcrowding, environmental degradation, strained infrastructure, reduced quality of life for residents, and a diminished visitor experience. In other words, it's when we love a destination to death. But how many visitors are too many? The answer isn't straightforward because each place has a different threshold. A destination's capacity to handle visitors is influenced by factors like infrastructure, natural resource availability, environmental resilience, physical space, and community perceptions. The tipping point occurs when the negative impacts of tourism outweigh its benefits, signaling the need for better management strategies (Kaitlyn, 2024).

### 2.2. The Resurgence of "Overtourism" and the Missed Opportunity to Rethink the Tourism Model

The term "overtourism" first garnered global attention in 2016 following an article published by Skift titled "Exploring the Coming Perils of Overtourism." This piece highlighted the dangers associated with excessive tourist numbers in popular destinations. In the years that followed, "overtourism" became a recurring theme in countless media headlines worldwide as international tourism experienced rapid and exponential growth, more than doubling between 2000 and 2019. The pressing need to manage this growth more responsibly became undeniable.

Just as it seemed that tourism was spiraling out of control, the industry faced an unprecedented downturn due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This disruption presented a unique opportunity to rethink the traditional tourism model. However, once travel restrictions were lifted, people's eagerness to travel led to a rapid rebound in tourism. By the end of 2024, international tourist arrivals are projected to surpass pre-pandemic levels. Unfortunately, the issues linked to overtourism have resurfaced, underscoring the urgent need to effectively manage visitor numbers and safeguard the integrity of popular destinations (Rafat, 2016).

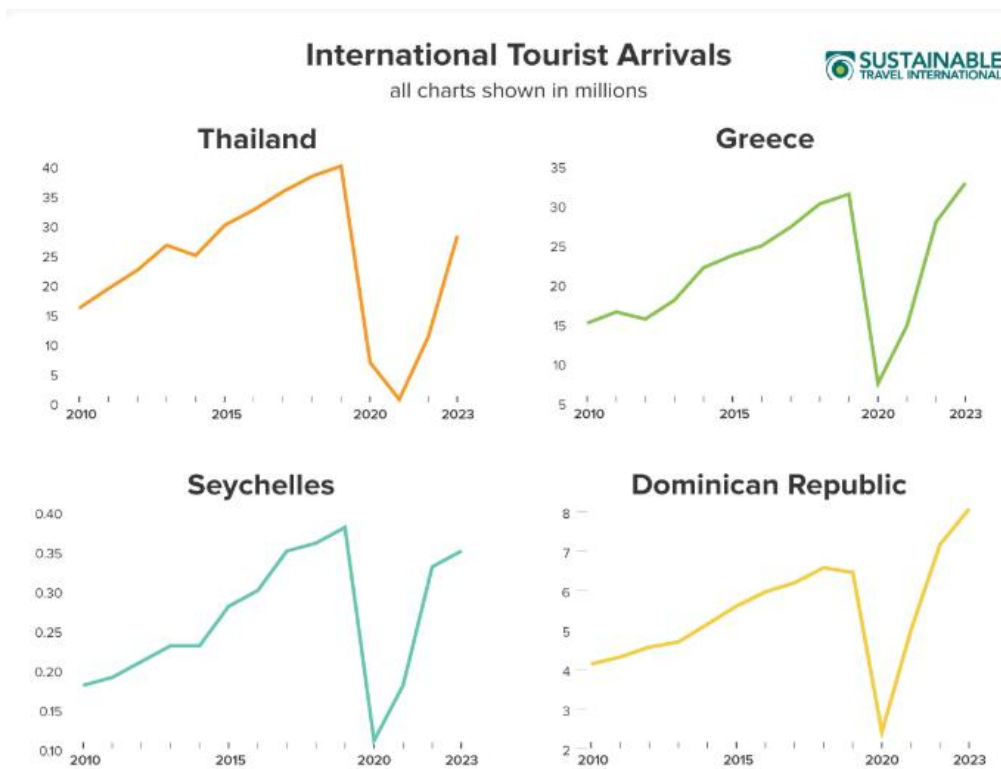


Figure 01: International Tourist Arrivals  
Source: (UN Tourism Data Dashboard, 2024).

Countries like Thailand, Seychelles, and Greece saw visitation drastically climb, with international tourist arrivals more than doubling in the decade pre-COVID. Some popular destinations like the Dominican Republic have already far surpassed pre-COVID numbers.

### 2.3. Touristification and the problem on Top Travel Destinations

The academic literature highlights the lack of a universally accepted definition of touristification, a concept frequently linked to notions such as overtourism and gentrification. Muselaers characterizes touristification as a phase in the transformation of a space, where a locality evolves from its original state into one predominantly shaped by tourism. Freytag and Bauder underscore the complexity and multidimensional nature of touristification, viewing it as the result of interactions among various actors and environmental contexts.

Broadly speaking, touristification represents one of the many societal impacts of tourism. Scholars like Körössy-Leite and Jover and Díaz-Parra define it as a spatial transformation process oriented toward tourism, often with adverse effects on local communities. According to Rio-Fernandes, this process is marked by urban planning strategies aimed at attracting tourists, which often reshape the physical and social fabric of a place in favor of tourism-related interests. Pickel-Chevalier emphasizes that touristification is not a theoretical abstraction but a concrete phenomenon shaped by identifiable actors and contextual variables that steer economies toward tourism. Its effects can be observed across various scales—from large regions and cities to more localized sites such as monuments, nature reserves, and archaeological areas. Pickel-Chevalier also stresses the need to analyze touristification within its specific territorial and historical context, as its manifestations differ across locations (Fernando , 2025).

Touristification refers to the transformation of a territory into a site of tourist consumption, accompanied by significant alterations in the landscape, environment, and the social, cultural, and economic dynamics of the area. One of its primary effects is the proliferation of consumer-oriented activities targeting tourists, particularly in the field of tourist accommodation. In rural settings, the dominant form of accommodation tends to be single-family homes or individual dwellings—a pattern that distinguishes rural areas from other types of tourist destinations. Hotels, by contrast, are relatively scarce and typically small in scale. As such, a defining characteristic of rural touristification is the growing prevalence of residential properties being adapted for tourist lodging. This trend has accelerated in recent years with the rise of digital marketing platforms like Airbnb, which have significantly expanded the availability of such accommodations in rural regions (Miquel Àngel, Fernando, Rafael, & Seyedasaad, 2023). In many instances, this process has been facilitated by lax urban planning and tourism regulations, which have allowed for the commercial use of residential properties with minimal oversight, often resulting in substantial urban and territorial disorder in rural areas.

#### **-What is Touristification?**

Touristification refers to the process by which a place becomes increasingly oriented toward tourism consumption, leading to significant transformations in its physical, social, economic, and environmental fabric. These changes often include rising housing prices, increased carbon emissions, overcrowding, and the degradation of local heritage and natural sites.

**-Why is Touristification Becoming a Pressing Issue?** In recent years, the process of touristification has intensified, largely due to the ease and affordability of travel. Technological advancements—such as discount travel platforms, real-time mapping applications, and online booking systems—have streamlined the travel experience, making it more accessible to a wider population. A particularly influential factor has been the growth of the peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation market, exemplified by platforms like Airbnb. These services have facilitated travel even to remote areas, transforming local housing markets and altering the character of many neighborhoods (bondora, 2019).

## **2.4. Touristification indicators**

Despite the vast academic body of work on touristification, a significant gap exists in its measurement and mapping. The literature rarely differentiates urban areas based on varying tourism intensities or degrees of touristification. Moreover, there's a notable absence of established indicators providing a holistic view of the phenomenon's reach. Existing indicators, as seen in works by Anguera-Torrel & Cerdan (2021) and Torres-Delgado et al. (2021, 2023), tend to focus primarily on sustainability or social consequences. At its core, an indicator is a piece of information, quantitative or qualitative, derived from various data such as figures, perceptions, events, beliefs, or measurements, that sheds light on a phenomenon. Theoretically, indicators allow us to quantify, assess the intensity, track the evolution, and forecast a phenomenon or process (María & Manuel de la Calle-Vaquero, 2023). Effective indicators should produce actionable information, be methodologically sound, scientifically validated, and easy to implement and communicate. Indicators fall into two main categories based on their data processing level: simple and complex (synthetic or index). Simple indicators offer raw, minimally processed data, often from secondary sources or direct collection. In contrast, complex indicators or indexes combine multiple simple indicators, typically using a weighted system to prioritize components. Some researchers also identify "indicator systems," which are collections of simple indicators whose results are interpreted collectively.

## **3. Methods**

We employed a qualitative approach, using a case study as the primary framework for this research. Utilising case studies requires the research to be grounded in a real-life phenomenon. This research design enabled us to delve into complex contexts, interaction dynamics, and the experiences of individuals or groups in a comprehensive manner, specifically relating to actual cases. Overtourism

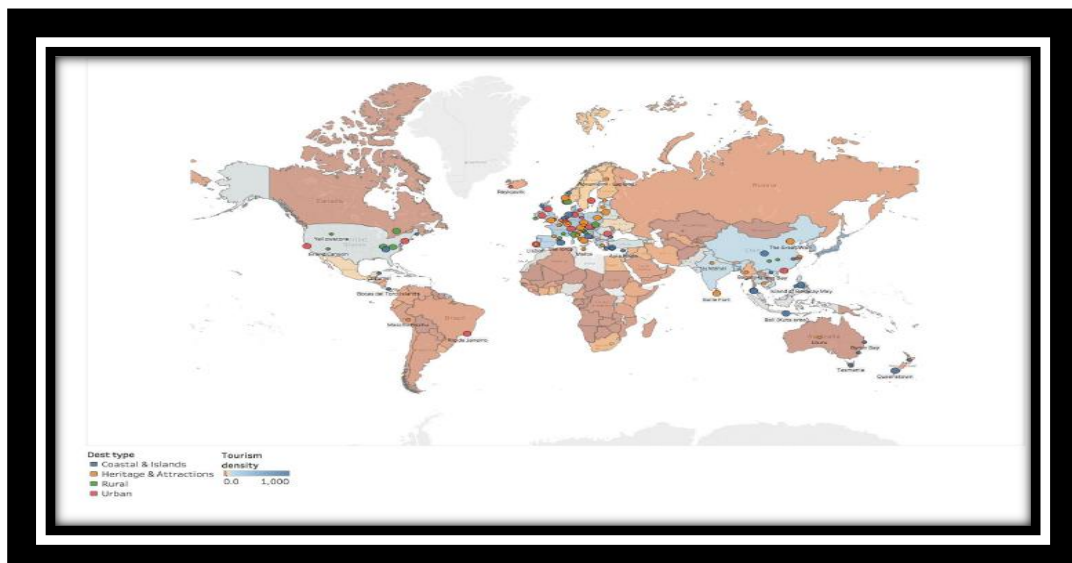
served as a case in point, characterised by an excess of tourist visits relative to the capacity of local tourist facilities (**Geraldine , 2025**). This study was conducted in some countries, has emerged as a prominent destination for individuals seeking for relaxation.

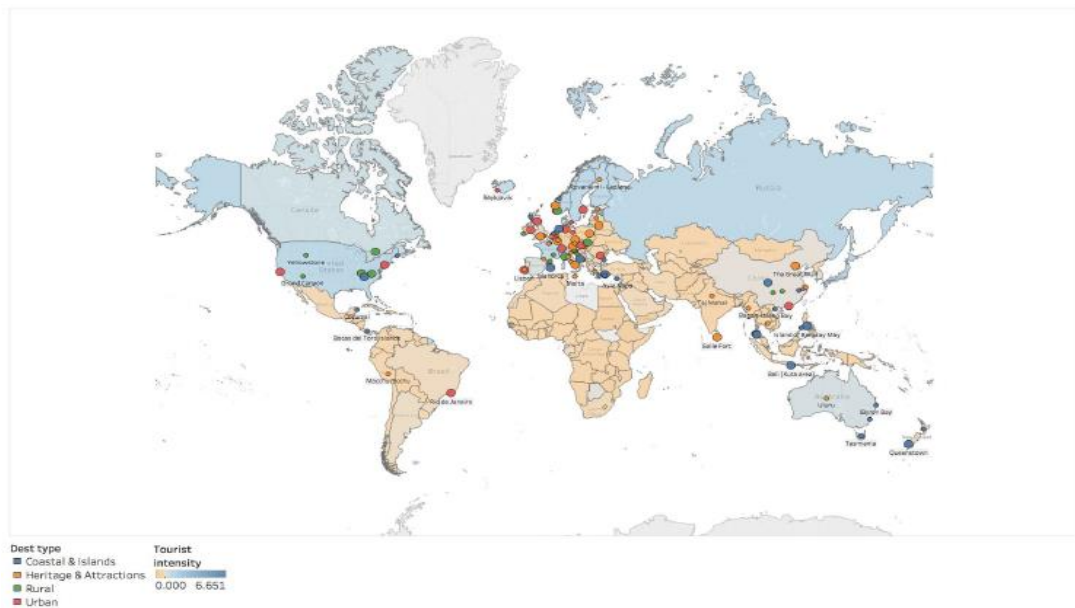
### 3.1. The extent of overtourism in the world

All over the world, a total of 105 destinations in a state of overtourism were identified that are divided more or less evenly over the four destination categories – Rural, Urban, Coastal & Islands, and Heritage & Attractions - with an emphasis on Europe and the EU. The list of destinations in a state of overtourism is certainly not exhaustive. As no systematic registration of destinations in a state of overtourism exists, it can only be assumed that those identified may provide a representative set of cases.

The two maps in **Map 1** plot all 105 destinations in a state of overtourism and the density per country for all tourism arrivals (domestic plus international). From the maps, one may conclude that density has a better relationship than intensity, which contrasts with the results of. However, the maps may be misleading due to the varying size of countries. For instance, the blue on the intensity map for Russia dominates the graphic representation despite representing only one point (one country, namely, Russia) in the database. The maps also show a concentration of overtourism cases in Europe and, to a much smaller extent, in the US, China, Australia and New Zealand. In other parts of the world, the phenomenon seems not to exist or is not discussed in the media (**Paul, 2018**).

**Map 1: Global tourism density (upper map; tourist arrivals per km<sup>2</sup>) and tourism intensity (lower map; tourist arrivals per inhabitant) for international plus domestic tourism in 2016**





**Sources:** adapted from international arrivals from UNWTO (2018a); country-area data from World Bank Group (2018); population data from United Nations (2018); and domestic tourism data (for 2005) based on P. M. Peeters and Eijgelaar (2014), with a correction for China (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2018).

Another way to examine the overtourism phenomenon is by analysing trends in related terms on social media. To this end, data were collected through a data mining exercise with the use of Coosto, a Dutch online social media monitoring platform. This platform was founded in 2010 and offers an integrated tool for delivering social media customer service, measuring social media, monitoring online reputation and performing analyses with social media data. It routinely collects and categorises social media messages and assigns sentiment scores to them. The infrastructure provided by Coosto monitors online channels in 150 languages and in 200 countries, including the large global social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest) as well as thousands of other sources, such as international review sites (e.g. Expedia, TripAdvisor), online communities (e.g. Reddit, Quora), and large Russian and Asian social networks (e.g. Vkontakte, Renren) (Paul, 2018). Strings related to overtourism were searched (i.e. overcrowding, overvisiting, visitor pressure, and hostility towards tourists) and also queries were tested that may be associated with overtourism such as waiting line(s), big crowd(s), wheeled suitcase. Unfortunately, this did not render enough and/or reliable results to draw substantiated conclusions. Only the monthly number of mentions of the term “overtourism” held some meaning and showed an increasing trend as of 2011.

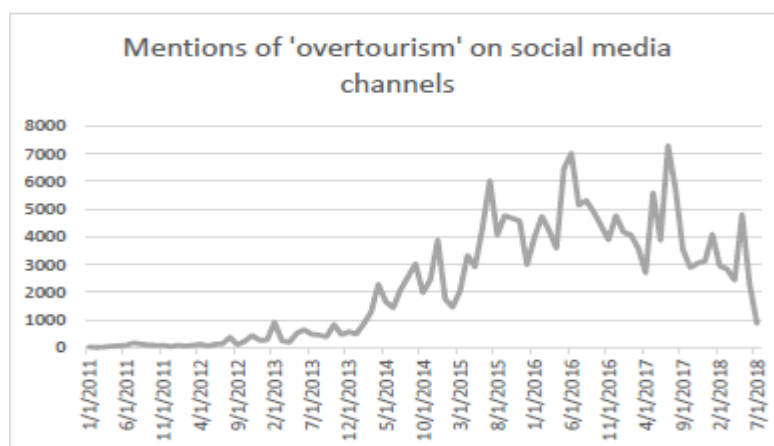


Figure 4: Monthly overview of 'overtourism' social media mentions on social media channels

Source: (Coosto, 2018)

Thus, since overtourism may be considered as a quite technical term, the majority of messages related to overtourism on social media channels were posted by media, news/press agencies or organisations/initiatives dealing with overtourism from a professional perspective and not from a consumer's perspective. For instance, the account *@overtourism* on Twitter started its activities in June 2017 and appears to have engaged in more than 1,100 tweets since then (please see <http://twitter.com/overtourism>). Consumer mentions on social media related to overtourism are not likely to contain the term itself, but are indirectly referred to with a wide variety of other wordings, such as the ones listed above (e.g., waiting line(s), big crowd(s), 'swarming with people', etc.). Moreover, these wordings are often used in other contexts than overtourism such as theme park visits, sports events or music festivals. As noted, the variety in these wordings in combination with different contexts hinders a reliable and thorough analysis of the overtourism phenomenon on social media from a consumer's perspective (Coosto, 2018).

### 3.2. Overtourism and destinations

Since the mid-1990s, countries like Spain, Italy, Malta, and France have witnessed growing opposition to mass tourism. Over the past two decades, "touristification" has joined traditional social issues—such as labor rights, social exclusion, and gender inequality—on the agendas of grassroots movements. Activists across Europe, particularly in Spain, France, Germany, and Italy, have voiced concerns about the rising influx of tourists. This unrest led to the creation of groups like the Assembly of Neighbourhoods for Sustainable Tourism (ABTS) in Barcelona and the Network of Southern European Cities against Touristification (SET). In January 2017, Lisbon's "Morar em Lisboa" movement, supported by over 30 local groups, publicly criticized the city's dependence on tourism and real estate speculation (Milano, 2019).

In Venice, the "No Grandi Navi" movement held a referendum in June 2017 to ban large cruise ships from key areas. The result was decisive—99% of the 17,874 voters opposed the ships. This concern intensified after the Costa Concordia disaster, with Venice alone receiving over 1.4 million cruise passengers in 2017. In May 2018, representatives from 16 southern European cities gathered in Barcelona for the "Tourism Reflections" forum, giving rise to the SET Network. These movements reflect growing discontent with unmanaged tourism. Although tourism initially brings economic benefits, unchecked growth can reduce residents' quality of life and provoke resentment. Protests have also sparked worry among local business owners, who fear both policy changes and backlash from



angry residents. In extreme cases, anti-tourism actions have turned violent, damaging property and threatening business more than regulatory limits ever could (Paul, 2018).

#### 4. Findings and discussion

##### 4.1. Destinations Most at Risk of Overtourism in 2024

Some of the world's most iconic destinations were already bearing the brunt of overtourism, and 2024 intensified the pressure because of the high tourist numbers. Below are a few key locations that are at significant risk of being overwhelmed by visitors this year:

###### 4.1.1. Venice, Italy

Venice is often hailed as one of the most beautiful cities in the world, with its winding canals, stunning architecture, and historic significance. However, its fragile ecosystem has long been threatened by overtourism.

Forbes [reported](#) (Prarthana, 2024) that the problem stems from the sheer number of visitors who flock to the city daily—over 20 million tourists a year for a city with just over 50,000 residents. Massive cruise ships used to dock close to the historic center, disgorging thousands of tourists at a time. Although new regulations have moved these ships further away, the city still struggles under the weight of tourists who visit for just a day, adding to overcrowding but contributing little to the local economy. The influx is so great that Venice now charges visitors an entry fee during peak times, part of a desperate attempt to manage crowd levels and [attract tourists](#) (Geraldine, 2025).

Overtourism in Venice is eroding the city's foundations, with frequent flooding (the infamous "acqua alta") exacerbated by climate change and human activity. Narrow streets and iconic spots like Piazza San Marco are often too congested to enjoy, leaving both locals and tourists frustrated.



Figure 5: Venice One of the most beautiful cities in the world (photo by ticketinghub.com).

###### 4.1.2. Barcelona, Spain

Barcelona is a city rich in history, art, and culture, but the immense popularity of landmarks like La Sagrada Família, Park Güell, and the Gothic Quarter has made it a victim of overtourism. The city's compact design, with its narrow streets and densely packed historic areas, can only handle so many visitors at once, and yet millions pour in each year. Locals have grown increasingly vocal about the disruption tourism causes. In neighborhoods like Barceloneta, residents have staged protests over the

skyrocketing housing prices, noise pollution, and loss of community caused by the flood of tourists. The proliferation of short-term rentals, like those on Airbnb, has driven housing costs through the roof, pushing locals out of the city center. This tension has led the city government to impose restrictions on new hotels and short-term rentals, but managing the overwhelming number of tourists remains a challenge. With tourism expected to soar again, Barcelona faces the risk of further erosion of its cultural identity, as overcrowded attractions and high traffic make it difficult for visitors to have a meaningful experience.



Figure 6: Barcelona is a city the enormous popularity of landmarks (photo by ticketinghub.com).

#### 4.1.3. Bali, Indonesia

Bali's allure is its natural beauty, spirituality, and laid-back atmosphere, but these qualities have drawn so many tourists that the island's environment and culture are suffering. Once known for its quiet beaches and serene landscapes, Bali is now plagued by traffic jams, waste management issues, and overdevelopment, particularly in popular spots like Ubud, Seminyak, and Kuta. The island receives more than 6 million visitors annually, and while tourism is vital to the economy, it comes at a cost. Bali's water resources are being depleted to cater to hotels, resorts, and pools, leaving locals with shortages.

Beaches, once pristine, are often littered with trash, and coral reefs are being damaged by overuse and pollution. As travelers return in droves, Bali faces a dilemma: how to balance its booming tourism industry with sustainable practices that preserve its natural and cultural heritage. Despite efforts to promote eco-friendly tourism, such as banning single-use plastics, the island's infrastructure struggles to keep up with the constant flow of tourists. Bali's beauty is undeniable, but if tourism continues at its current rate, the very things that make it special may be lost.



Figure 7: Bali's appeal (photo by ticketinghub.com)

#### 4.1.4. Santorini, Greece

Santorini's iconic blue-domed churches, white-washed buildings, and stunning sunsets make it one of the most photographed and visited islands in the world. But the small island is ill-equipped to handle the crowds that flock there each year, particularly during the summer months. Santorini's charm is in its quiet, picturesque villages and crystal-clear waters, but the flood of tourists—many arriving on large cruise ships has led to severe overcrowding. In peak season, visitors often outnumber the island's 15,000 residents several times over.

This has resulted in traffic jams, [overbooked](#) (Bibim , 2025) hotels, and overwhelmed restaurants. Popular spots like Oia, where tourists gather to watch the sunset, are packed to the point where it's nearly impossible to move through the narrow streets. Santorini's infrastructure struggles under the weight of so many visitors. There are concerns about the island's water supply, as well as the impact of constant construction to accommodate tourists. Santorini remains a high-risk destination for overtourism, with the island's natural beauty and traditional way of life increasingly at risk of being overshadowed by mass tourism.

These five destinations each tell a story of incredible beauty, culture, and history, but also of the challenges posed by overwhelming popularity. As more people flock to these locations, they face continued threats to their sustainability and charm. Fortunately, there are alternative destinations that offer similar experiences without the downside of overcrowding.



Figure 8: The famous churches of Santorini (photo by ticketinghub.com).

#### 4.2. What's Driving Overtourism?

Overtourism is primarily driven by a combination of economic, technological, and social factors that have made travel more accessible, affordable, and desirable than ever before. Here's a breakdown of the main drivers (Hepple, 2025):

**4.2.1 Post-Pandemic Travel Boom:** A major driver of 2024's overtourism is the surge of travel demand following years of COVID-19 restrictions. Millions of people, eager to vacation after lockdowns, have been booking trips in record numbers. This pent-up demand, or "revenge travel," led to crowded flights and fully booked hotels in top destinations.

**4.2.2 Social Media Influence:** Instagram, TikTok, and travel vlogs continue to fuel overtourism by popularizing specific sites at lightning speed. Iconic vistas or "hidden gems" can go viral and suddenly draw throngs of tourists seeking the same photo-op[4]. Influencers building their brands have played a part in this trend[2]. For example, locations like the turquoise lakes of Banff or the streets of Chefchaouen have seen spikes in visitors after trending on social media.

Geotagging and viral travel videos create "must-visit" spots, often without context for local capacity. The result is seasonal overcrowding at places ill-prepared for global fame. As Justin Francis of Responsible Travel notes, the rise of influencer culture has exacerbated tourist crowds in already popular areas. Social feeds filled with picture-perfect destinations create a fear of missing out, motivating millions to follow the same beaten path.

**4.2.3 Cheap Flights and Travel Accessibility:** The cost of international travel has dropped in recent years, making quick trips more feasible and frequent. Budget airlines and untaxed aviation fuel have kept airfare "artificially cheap," which encourages more weekend city-breaks and long-haul vacations. The proliferation of low-cost carriers in Europe and Asia, for instance, means that a flight to Prague or Bali can be bought for the price of a nice dinner. At the same time, accommodations via home-sharing apps are readily available, and package tours remain inexpensive. This affordability, combined with flexible booking platforms, has lowered barriers to travel. In short, policy gaps – such as tax exemptions on airline fuel – effectively subsidize mass tourism, allowing visitor numbers to balloon with little regard for sustainable limits.

**4.2.4 Relaxed Visas and Tourism Policies:** In 2024 many countries actively made travel easier to boost their economies, inadvertently contributing to tourist influxes. Visa requirements have been loosened or waived in various regions, opening the floodgates for more international visitors. For example, Vietnam introduced e-visas for all nationalities and saw a 58% jump in arrivals in early 2024.

Thailand temporarily waived visas for Chinese travelers (its largest market), helping foreign tourist visits surge by 26% in 2024. Likewise, Malaysia's visa-free entry for Chinese and Indian tourists led to a >150% increase from those countries in the first half of 2024. These pro-tourism policies – from streamlined e-visas to aggressive destination marketing campaigns – have swollen visitor numbers. While beneficial for economic recovery, they often did not coincide with capacity planning, leaving many destinations struggling to accommodate the sudden growth. Essentially, 2024's tourism boom has been accelerated by easier cross-border travel, which is a double-edged sword for destinations now confronting overcrowding.

**4.2.5 Other Drivers:** Additional factors have played into overtourism this year. The cruise industry, rebounding after pandemic pauses, has again brought massive crowds to small port cities. Cruise ships unloading thousands of day-trippers can overwhelm places like Dubrovnik's Old Town, where narrow streets fill shoulder-to-shoulder and even the stone pavement has been worn smooth by feet. Overtourism has also been fueled by tourism industry practices – tour operators and travel agencies relentlessly promote the same famous sights with little regard for local carrying capacity. “Overmarketing” of destinations, combined with insufficient local regulations, creates a scenario where tourism growth goes unchecked until negative impacts become undeniable. In summary, a confluence of post-pandemic fervor, social media hype, affordable access, and permissive policies ignited overtourism in 2024.

## 5. Conclusion

In response to the growing challenges of overtourism and touristification, leading travel destinations around the world have begun to implement innovative and sustainable strategies to protect their cultural, social, and environmental integrity. From regulating visitor numbers and promoting alternative destinations to involving local communities and embracing smart tourism technologies, these efforts reflect a shift toward more responsible tourism management. While the road to sustainable tourism is complex and requires continuous adaptation, the proactive measures taken by top destinations offer valuable lessons and highlight the importance of balancing tourism development with the well-being of residents and the preservation of local heritage. Ultimately, the success of these efforts depends on cooperation among governments, businesses, and tourists themselves in fostering a more respectful and sustainable global tourism industry.

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