



TOURISM POLLUTION

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Introduction

Is tourism a clean industry?

As tourists do we cause environmental issues?

Are there any areas in your country that have become ruined with tourism?

Reading

“This is my last visit to this place,” said Mark. “I won’t be coming back again.”

For legal reasons, we cannot say where Mark is for fear of being sued by the country's tourism association. But rest assured that Mark Jones is not happy with the people behind the tourist industry at all.

“The first time I came to this island was twenty years ago,” he said. “There were a lot of tourists then but it was still a quiet place. And there were much less than today. Now it’s just insane.”

Mark stops talking and takes in the view of the scene before him. We are in a small coffee shop on a road that goes towards the beach. The road is small, but it is packed with traffic. Cars and taxis honk their horns at each other and vie for space.

“I mean, this is supposed to be a quiet getaway,” says Mark. “A place to come and chill out and relax in the sun and tranquillity.” Another flurry of car horns disturbs the air. “I can't hear myself think here.”

Mark’s first trip to the island was a very different experience.

“There were none of those shops over there,” he says. “That ice-cream parlour was not here or the bar. In fact, I think it was just this coffee shop. There was nothing else here back then.”

But over the years the island has become more and more of a hot destination. Each year the number of tourists rose and as the industry grew so did all the shops, restaurants and bars.

All the beachfront is filled full of five-star resorts.

“Years ago they weren’t there,” says Mark. “The whole beach was just deserted. Just a few basic little hotels and hostels. It was much better.”

And with all the hotels and tourism came something else. Pollution.

“Well, it’s inevitable, isn’t it,” says Mark. “Where people are, so there is pollution.”

And it is true. The pollution levels are so high that the small island doesn’t know how to deal with it. Sewage waste from the hotels gets pumped out into the sea. And there is plastic trash floating around between the waves. In the tiny streets and roads, the air is thick with the toxic fumes from cars, taxis, tour buses and motorbikes.

The island’s infrastructure was not designed to cope with so

many people.

“And the authorities on the island don’t care,” says Mark. “All they care about is money. Years ago the whole place was poor. So now they are happy to see so many tourists coming here every year. It means jobs and money for the whole island. But look what they have done.”

A group of people march on to the small terrace of the coffee shop. They all start shouting loudly about what to eat and drink.

“This place is finished,” says Mark. “But then again, most of the nice tourist spots from years ago are all the same. Overcrowded and ruined. Noisy and filthy.”

Reading Comprehension Questions

How many times has Mark been to the island?

Where is the island?

How does Mark feel about the tourists on the island?

When was his first time to the island?

How does Mark describe the place back then?

Where is he sitting?

Describe what Mark can see in front of him.

What happened to the tourist industry on the island? Why did this happen?

What was the beach like twenty years ago? How about now?

What was the effect of so many tourists on the island? Give examples of this.

Why don't the local authorities do anything about this problem?

What do the local people like about tourism?

Describe Mark's feeling in the article.

Essential Vocabulary

legal reasons	for fear of being
sued	tourism association
rest assured	insane
takes in the view	the scene
packed	traffic
honk horn	vie for
getaway	chill out
tranquillity	flurry
ice-cream parlour	hot destination
rose	five-star resort
deserted	basic
hostels	pollution
sewage waste	pumped out
plastic trash	floating around
waves	tiny
the air is thick	toxic fumes
infrastructure	to cope
tourist spots	overcrowded
ruined	filthy

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary

notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

Island Life

Get into groups of six students.

You are a committee for a beautiful island that is becoming very popular with tourists.

You want to provide jobs and opportunities for local people and businesses but at the same time, you do not want to see the island ruined.

As a group, you have to come up with a list of rules and regulations regarding what is allowed and not allowed on the island.

For example:

- How many hotels will you allow to be built in the future and why?
- How many tour bus operators?
- How many taxi companies?
- What rules will there be for shops and restaurants?
- How will you deal with rubbish and sewage? Who will pay for the disposal of it?
- And how will you promote such a destination?
- What kind of tourists do you want?

Consider everything carefully. You have to keep many people happy — local business people, the residents and the people who want jobs. But mainly you want to keep the island clean.

When you are ready, present your information to the class as one group.

Discussion Questions

Do you think there are many destinations as described in the article? Why have they become like this? What can we do to correct this situation?

Are there any tourist destinations like this in your country? Describe these places to the class.

What about in your hometown or the city where you are studying? Is there a tourist industry in this place? What effect does it have on the city?

Do you think tourists respect the places they visit? Try to think of examples to tell the class.

How can we control the tourist industry? People have the right to travel where they want to. Can we stop them or limit the number of tourists?

Should companies and businesses involved in the tourism industry pay a higher tax? Think of the reasons why they should pay more tax. Do you think these companies would agree? State all your arguments for this for the class.

Is tourism spoiling the natural environment of some places? How is it doing this? What can we do to stop it?

Should tourist destinations not sell anything in a plastic container? Why/why not?

People need jobs. Is it only fair to let people work in a tourist destination? What kind of work could they find if there were no tourist destination in place?

When you travel somewhere and you are a tourist, how do you behave? Are you a good tourist or a bad one? State your reasons.

Have you seen any poorly behaved tourists when travelling? Provide examples.

Will all the beautiful places in the world get taken over by tourism eventually?

Writing

Imagine you are a local person in a part of the world that is a very popular destination.

You are furious that the local authorities have allowed what was once a very beautiful and natural environment to be taken over by the tourist industry.

The water is now not clean, the roads are filled with traffic and exhaust fumes and there is plastic waste in the sea.

There are other issues too.

Write a letter of complaint to the local authorities explaining why you are so angry and what you want the authorities to do about it.

Demand some serious action to make the place clean again and to make it quiet once more.

Use stories and examples in your letter.

Credits

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