

UNIT 1.4

IMPACT OF TOURISM

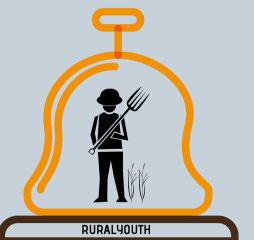
MODULE 1: RURAL TOURISM AWARENESS

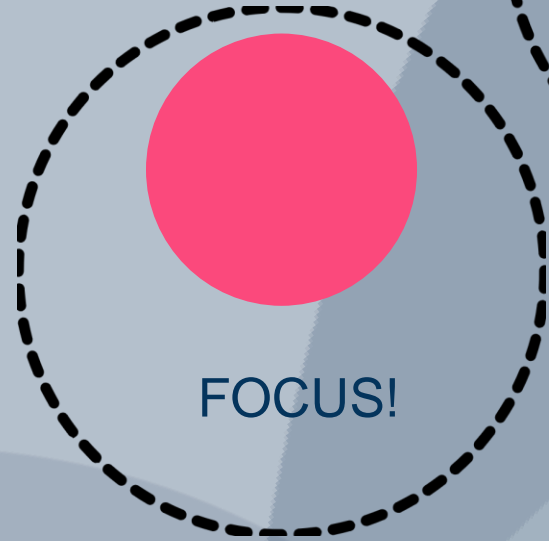
OBJECTIVES

In Unit 1.4 you will learn about the mass tourism and all negative impact it can bring to environment and society, that may result in anti-tourism movements. You will also learn about the existing alternatives to mass tourism.

Keywords:

- Mass tourism
- Alternative tourism
- Anti-tourism





TOPICS

1. Mass tourism
2. Alternative tourism
3. Antitourism

AT THE END OF THIS UNIT, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO...



...recognize the mass tourism features.



...understand the reasons for antitourism movements.



...understand the necessity to implement alternative tourism activities.



...know how to proceed in case you were a travel agency facing the similar situation.

Mass tourism versus alternative tourism



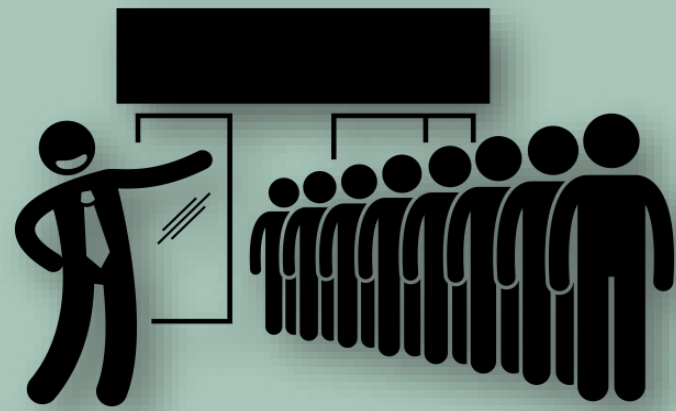
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Mass tourism has emerged in recent decades mainly as a result of the rise of the middle class, a general increase in paid leisure and the development of transport and accommodation. Over time, some countries gained popularity and became major tourist destinations. One of the most influential criteria for determining mass tourism is the inappropriate influx of travellers to the same place.



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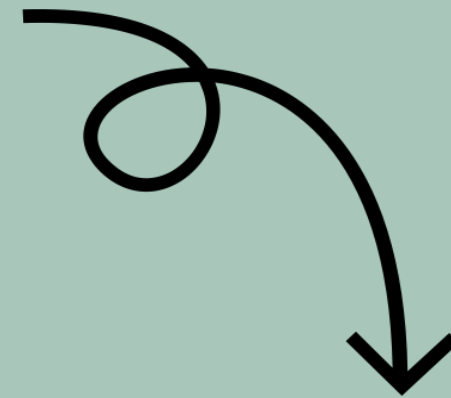
Overcrowding at a destination can have a negative impact on both visitors and visitor destinations, e.g. congestion of roads, services and tourist attractions, shortage of hotel and hostel accommodation leading to conversion of dwellings into holiday homes, significant increases in the cost of living, migration of residents from popular towns and cities and a heavy burden on local infrastructure and the surrounding countryside.



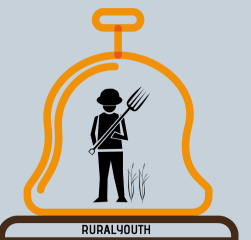
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Another characteristic of mass tourism is that travellers are not aware of the host city in economic, social, cultural and/or environmental terms, which can lead to polarisation of wealth, destruction of natural resources and hostility between locals and travellers.

Here are some of the most common forms of mass tourism.



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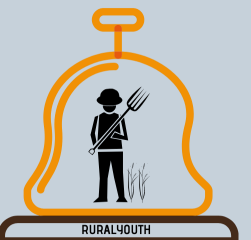
Cruises

Despite the fact that cruises are rising in popularity, their negative impact is no longer a secret.

First and foremost, it's the cruise ships' **ecological footprint** that mostly tarnishes their reputation. Cruise ships are also notorious for their **inadequate water treatment systems**, dumping on a daily base an alarming amount of inappropriately filtered water that can be damageable for marine life. Passengers, whose shore excursions are usually very short, tend to disrupt local life. Some concerns have been raised around the **quality of life of on-board staff**, who often comes from poor countries and accept to work relentlessly for a very low salary.



Photo by [Fernando Jorge](#) on [Unsplash](#)



All-Inclusive

By far one of the most popular types of travels, beach resorts also are one of the oldest tourism industries. Attractive for their all-inclusive formula, these hotel complexes provide travellers with total peace of mind, as they can find everything they need on site. However **tourism revenues all converge to one place**, which is often owned by a foreign company, preventing local communities from benefiting from the presence of tourists. Resorts sometimes privatize the most enjoyable beaches, forest and other natural attractions, granting exclusive access to their customers and **forbidding access to local residents**. The presence of masses of tourists at a same place can also have **negative impacts on the surrounding natural resources**.



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Overtourism

We talk about overtourism **when a destination is saturated by the amount of tourists**, which outnumbers the inhabitants and causes **negative consequences** on their daily life (congested roads, limited access to popular attractions, rise of the cost of living such as rentals, restaurants, activities, transportation, etc.). Travellers often visit major destinations during high seasons, causing **instability to business owners** who experience increases in revenues during these peaks and precarious decreases during low seasons. Residents can be bothered by the presence of too many tourists at once because they **encourage the folklorization** of their culture, hoping to witness exotic customs and theatricalizing their daily life.



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Organized Tours

Organized tours are not inherently wrong, but they can be problematic when mismanaged. Very **large groups can bother residents** and other travellers in many different ways; many people inside a restaurant limiting the access to others, traffic disruption when moving from one place to another, herds of tourists taking over popular attractions and gathering in large crowds to take selfies or use the restrooms... Travellers who hire foreign tour guides are **keeping local residents from earning much needed/deserved revenues.**



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Alternative tourism



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Alternative tourism is an umbrella term for all forms of travels opposed to mass tourism. A special attention is paid to economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations. **Alternative tourism aims to have a neutral or positive impact on its destinations.**

Although there are no rules defining it, beneficial tourism can take many different forms.



Sustainable or Responsible Tourism

Sustainable or responsible tourism considers all components of development (sociocultural, economic and environmental) to ensure that the tourist activities respect the residents and natural resources, for a **healthy and well-balanced growth.**

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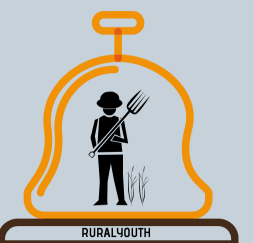


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Solidarity or Fair Tourism

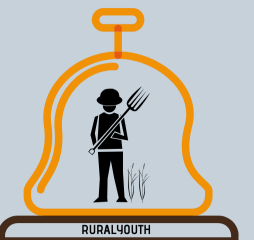
Solidarity tourism **focuses on the socioeconomic growth of the destination**; the revenues generated by the tourist activities are fairly distributed between the foreign and local businesses involved in the process and the profits are invested in neighbouring organizations and infrastructure.



Social Tourism

Social tourism's uses the travel industry as **a tool to either create economic growth or provide greater access to travels to a vulnerable group of the population** (i.e. a tour operator integrating marginalized youth to its workforce or a travel agency catering specifically to disabled people by offering adapted services for a more inclusive experience).

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Participative Tourism

A type of tourism that involves the local population in tourist activities or involves the travellers in community activities to **create bonds between visitors and visited**, for a genuine intercultural experience.



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Slow Travel

This movement values **quality over quantity** and invites travellers to visit fewer destinations, but to really immerse themselves and fully embrace the local cultures and lifestyles.

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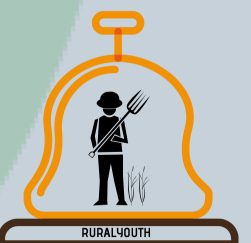


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Ecotourism

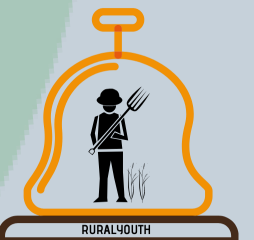
Ecotourism is **beneficial for the environment**; it doesn't only limit its ecological footprint, but it creates a positive impact on the local ecosystem by financing restoration operations or natural habitat conservation projects. There is also often an educational component in ecotourism.



Rural Tourism

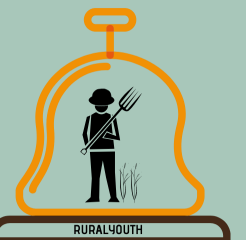
Rural tourism invites travellers to venture off the beaten path by residing outside of the metropolitan areas to **diversify the beneficiaries of tourism revenues and alleviate the big cities' overcrowding**.

Photo by [Sven Fischer](#) on [Unsplash](#)



“The crucial differences which distinguish human societies and human beings are not biological. They are cultural.”

- Ruth Benedict



Anti-tourism

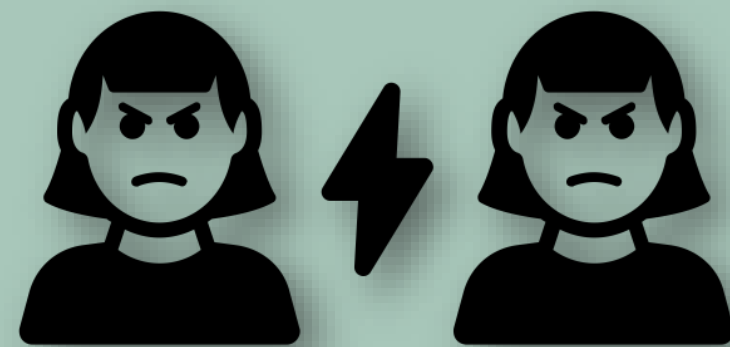


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Our appetite for bucket-list, crowdsourced and Instagrammable trips means that countless tourists end up in the same places. As a result, popular cities are overwhelmed by mass tourism, and popular places are so crowded that many find them not only less enjoyable, but also downright dangerous.

Residents of over-touristed cities such as Barcelona, Amsterdam and Venice are increasingly frustrated by mass tourism. Intimidating queues form outside must-see attractions such as the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, Gaudi's buildings in Barcelona and Michelangelo's David in Florence.

The growing unrest and issues around anti-tourism in Europe are not exclusively about locals not wanting tourists to visit their homes and towns anymore, it's what the visitors leave behind that's more the issue.



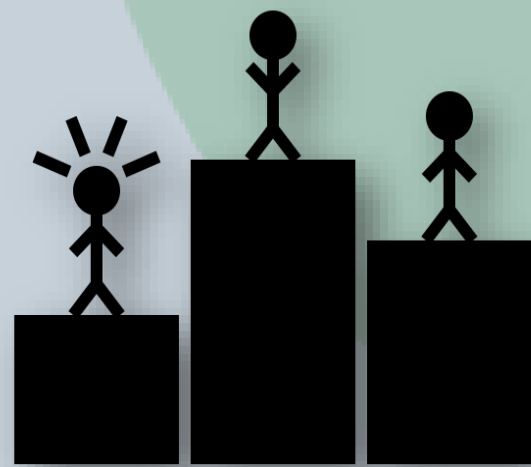
In Spain for example in 2016, some 75.3 million people visited, massively outnumbering the country's actual residents, of which there only are 46 million. Barcelona itself incredibly sees around 32 million visitors a year, including cruise passengers and day-trippers. That's an amazing 20 times the city's actual population of 1.6 million.



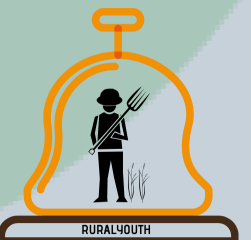
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And counting.

That alarming figure gives the issue some seriously worrying perspective. Spain's overall visitor numbers have in fact broken records consecutively for the last four years, making it the world's third most popular tourist destination according to the UNWTO (United Nation's World Tourism Organisation), ranking marginally behind the U.S. (75.6m) and France (82.6m).



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Imagine for a moment that you lived in a place where every year, millions of people from all over the world descended upon your beloved community.

All year round, an increasing army of individuals and groups arrived on buses, in cars, taxis, planes, bikes and even on ships. Overwhelming your neighbourhood, they choked up the local streets and the traffic and created long queues for services, disrupting your everyday routine and forcing you to endure lengthily delays.

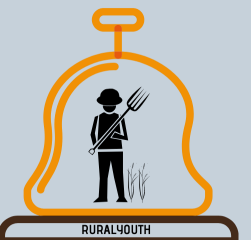


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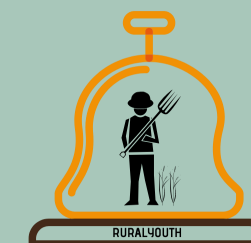
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The recent public protests in Barcelona, Venice, Rome, Paris, Dubrovnik and a number of other European cities have further highlighted locals' such plights against over tourism and at face value it looks ugly.



“The city has completely lost its identity...
Everyone should be able to come here but this
invasion creates real problems.”

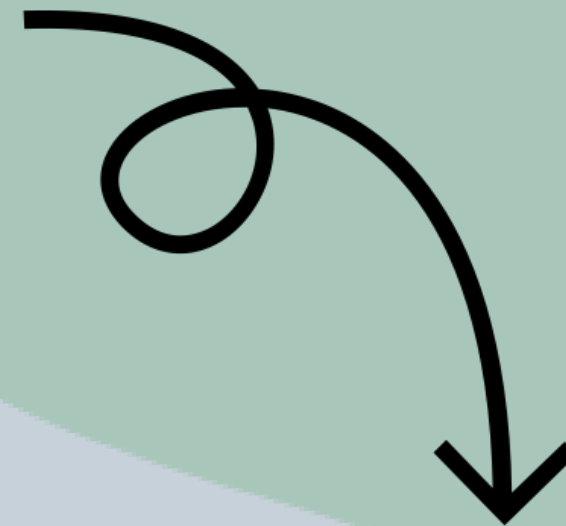
- Alessandro Bressanello, Mayor of Venice



Clearly this is a highly complex problem and a growing global phenomenon, so will the messages like this one above be enough to change behaviour and transform the mindset of the millions of people travelling annually to other people's homes?

It's unlikely.

SO WHAT CAN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY DO?



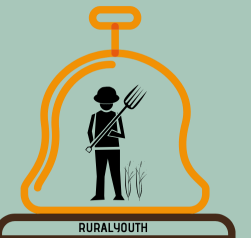
It's crucially important that travel specialists representing the wider travel industry sending many travellers overseas to the regions mentioned above and beyond do so with the careful consideration of their customer's impact in the destinations they visit.

It shouldn't be about *not* sending customers to popular places, it's more about educating people to literally tread carefully when they are there and make their own, well informed choices that will make a positive difference.

What could you do if you were a travel company?



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1. Choose your suppliers wisely

Where possible, work with supplier partners that you know are local to the area where you work, and involve communities commercially to ensure that all parties benefit in a sustainable way.



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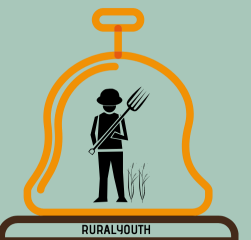
2. Minimise the impact

Give your clients helpful tips before their trip so they can minimize their impact on the places they visit. For example, you can advise them to eat and shop locally (i.e., in supermarkets rather than markets) in different places so they can share the love (and money) while they are there.

For example, encourage them to bring their own water bottles instead of buying different plastic bottles that end up in landfills (maybe you can even give them your own branded bottles?), and to use public transportation or bikes instead of cabs.



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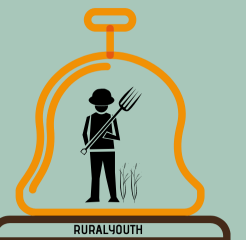
3. Report on your care and experiences

Have your clients traveled to the countries or places you are sending them? If not, give them useful information they can research, refer them to a conversation guide (you can also create your own brochure), and describe cultural languages and local issues.

Barcelona's current challenges are a real problem. Don't shy away from it, but talk to your visitors about the challenges the city faces and what they can do to help so they have a great vacation.

Everyone loves a positive story. Call your vendors and tell them about the great work they are doing in the places they visit.

All of us can play our part to help travel to change the world, which surely has to be a pretty good feeling.





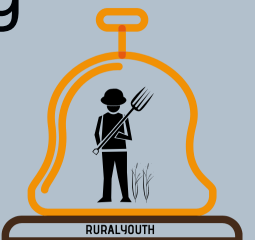
SURF TO FIND OUT MORE

➡ At a time where our global priority is to achieve sustainability, tourists are making a bad situation worse. City-centers are getting overcrowded and CO2 emissions increase due to tourists. Imagine if we could transform tourism into a force that would help humanity on a faster track towards sustainability. Imagine if your travel was also about being part of a movement for global sustainability.

➡ A researcher and promoter of sustainable tourism, Sumesh Mangalasseri is also an entrepreneur. From his experiences with the local communities in various places, he gained inspiration to work on tourism and its effects on the livelihood of the people. He talks about how tourism has played a major role in boosting the country's income.

➡ Read more about some anti-tourism protests across Europe.

➡ Doug Lansky is a travel writer turned tourism advisor who works with destinations around the world. He is considered a thought leader in the industry and speaks regularly at travel, hotel, airport, and tech conferences. Look at a new model for success in tourism that emphasizes sustainable growth, protecting local assets, and enhancing life for the locals while maximizing the local economic impact.



MATCH THE PARAGRAPHS!

Despite the fact that cruises are rising in popularity...

Resorts sometimes privatize the most enjoyable beaches, forest and other natural attractions...

The presence of masses of tourists at a same place...

Organized tours are not inherently wrong, but they can be...

Travellers who hire foreign tour guides are keeping local residents from...

...problematic when mismanaged.

... their negative impact is no longer a secret

...earning much needed/deserved revenues.

... can also have negative impacts on the surrounding natural resources.

... granting exclusive access to their customers and forbidding access to local residents.

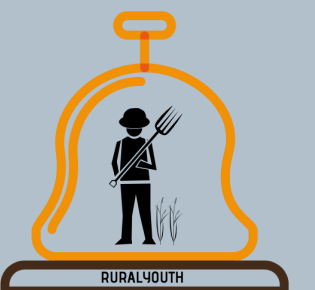
TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE!

1. Alternative tourism is an umbrella term for all forms of travels opposed to mass tourism. (T)
2. Alternative tourism aims to have only positive impact on its destinations. (F)
3. Solidarity tourism focuses on the ecological growth of the destination (F)
4. Social tourism's uses the travel industry as a tool to create economic growth or provide greater access to travels to a vulnerable group of the population (T)
5. Participative Tourism is a type of tourism that involves the travellers in community activities to create bonds between visitors and visited, for a genuine intercultural experience. (T)
6. Ecotourism creates a positive impact on the local ecosystem by financing restoration operations (T)
7. There is also often an educational component in ecotourism. (T)
8. Rural tourism invites travellers to venture off the beaten path by residing inside the metropolitan areas. (F)
9. Residents of over-touristed cities such as Barcelona, Amsterdam and Venice are exalted by mass tourism. (F)



DISCUSSION

1. Which kind of alternative tourism is closest to you and why?
2. Can you imagine a kind of alternative tourism that would suit all of your family members? Why so?



SUMMARY

- In this unit, you have discovered alternative tourism and its benefits. You have also learned about the opposing mass tourism and its negative effects and anti-tourism.
- Have you ever tried any type of alternative tourism? Think about a type that would suit you the most. What positive and negative effects would it have on you to travel this way for the rest of your life?
- In Unit 2.1 you will discover the typology of rural architecture that creates rural identity. You will learn about its importance as a tourism attractor in rural areas.

