

# TOURIST BEHAVIOR BECOMING WORSE THAN EVER

Tourist behavior around the world has been discussed extensively. Ancient rock formations are being toppled, obscene acts are being committed on statues, and sacrilege is occurring at holy sites with increasing frequency. It is difficult to avoid coming across examples of disrespectful behavior while scrolling through social media or reading the news. What motivates travelers to act in such a deplorable manner?

Various factors explain the decline in tourist behavior. These include the lack of knowledge about local norms, failure to consider the impact of one's behavior, and what is referred to as "the energy of the main character" by Kirsty Sedgman.

The latter theory suggests that many tourists view themselves as the main characters in their own stories, often downplaying the importance of others to supporting roles or extras. This self-centered attitude leads them to disregard rules and show disrespect towards the locals and the sites they visit.

## The Consequences of Disrespect

**Damage to historic sites:** Heritage sites suffer greatly from destructive tourist behavior. For example, in 2021, a visitor carved his name on petroglyphs over 4,000 years old in Big Bend National Park, Texas, causing irreversible damage.

**Cultural desecration:** Disregarding sacred symbols and places is often perceived as an attack on associated communities. For instance, acts of vandalism at African American historic sites reactivate generational trauma.

**Danger to wildlife:** Despite the prohibitions, tourists' approach to wild animals still needs to be solved. Tourists often attempt to get closer to take photos, putting the animals and themselves at risk.

## Why This Surge in Bad Behavior?

The rise of social media has intensified this trend. Tourists seek to capture unique moments to wow their followers, often at the expense of respect and safety. Social media prioritize staging; for some, this means taking reckless risks or disregarding rules to get the perfect shot.

Additionally, mass tourism exacerbates this issue. Popular destinations are often inundated with a constant influx of visitors, which can lead to overwhelming frustration among tourists and residents. This overwhelming feeling can result in dehumanized interactions, where tourists no longer view locals as individuals but as obstacles to their enjoyment.

## Solutions for More Respectful Tourism

Several initiatives aim to address these behaviors. For instance, Venice has introduced an entrance fee for visitors, while some regions, like Brittany, utilize Instagram to redirect tourist traffic and alleviate congestion in overcrowded areas.

**Education and Awareness:** Education in empathy and respect for cultures is essential. Conducting awareness campaigns can help tourists understand the importance of preserving the sites they visit.

**Enhanced Surveillance:** Increasing surveillance in tourist areas can help prevent vandalism and uncivil tourist behavior.

**Limit Mass Tourism:** Reducing the number of visitors to popular sites can help protect them and improve the experience for everyone.

Social media platforms can also play rather a positive role by highlighting exemplary behavior and denouncing disrespectful acts. Instagram accounts such as Tourons of Yellowstone or Welcome to Florence are good examples of this approach, exposing incivility and encouraging behavior change.

### **Encouraging Sustainable and Respectful tourism**

For tourism to be more sustainable and respectful, every traveler needs to be aware of the impact of their actions. Tourists must understand that they are guests in the places they visit and are responsible for preserving them for future generations. This includes being culturally sensitive and respectful. Adopting a respectful and empathetic attitude, learning about local customs before traveling, and following established rules are simple but essential behaviors. Travelers have the power to make a difference. By respecting local cultures and taking care of the sites they visit, they contribute to a more harmonious and sustainable tourism.

Date: 2024-09-02

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-tourist-behavior-has-become-serious-problem-article2829>