# Majorca protests and rising rents cause sharp drop in British tourists



The recent decline in British tourists visiting Majorca has brought renewed attention to the island's growing anti-tourism sentiment. Latest travel data indicate a significant drop in visitors from the UK, which has traditionally been one of the top sources of tourists for the Balearic Islands, contributing approximately 26% of total tourist numbers. Annually, Majorca attracts over 2.3 million British holidaymakers, yet recent trends suggest that discontent among locals and ongoing protests may be influencing holiday decisions.

Majorca has been the focal point of widespread protests against mass tourism, with demonstrations drawing participation from tens of thousands of residents. Activists argue that tourism is straining resources and damaging the environment, rendering everyday life “unbearable” for locals. Particularly vocal is the campaign group 'Menys Turisme, Mes Vida' (Less tourism, more life), which has announced plans for additional protests in June. This wave of activism is not isolated; similar movements have emerged across Spain, reflecting a broader dissatisfaction with the influx of tourists that locals feel is out of step with their daily needs.

Historically, cities like Barcelona and Venice have faced backlash for the impacts of booming tourism on local communities and infrastructure. In Barcelona, demonstrators have resorted to using water pistols against tourists as a symbolic protest against overcrowding and rising housing costs—issues that also plague Majorca. Reports indicate that rental prices in Majorca have soared by over 158% in the last decade, forcing some residents, like Pilar Hernando, to live in caravans due to financial pressure exacerbated by the tourism industry.

The Spanish government has acknowledged the challenges posed by mass tourism, stressing the need for regulation and a more sustainable tourism model. Recently, Spain's tourism minister condemned extreme protest actions like the water pistol incidents in Barcelona but also recognised that the current tourism paradigm requires significant reform. The push for change is echoed in the Canary Islands, where locals are also demanding a reconsideration of tourism dependency, highlighting rising rental prices and environmental concerns as key issues.

As the protests in Majorca coincide with an overall increase in foreign tourism—up by 13.5% in April—it becomes evident that the rising local discontent is influencing how potential tourists perceive their travels. The planned demonstrations in Palma, which will be synchronised with events in other major cities, underscore the urgency with which locals are calling for a re-evaluation of tourism’s role in their communities. With the tourism sector accounting for a significant portion of local GDP, the challenge lies in finding a balance where both residents and visitors can coexist harmoniously, ensuring that the beauty of Majorca is preserved for future generations.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2063931/majorca-number-uk-holidaymakers-drops), [[7]](https://news.sky.com/story/your-paradise-our-nightmare-thousands-attend-anti-tourism-protest-in-mallorca-13183160)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2063931/majorca-number-uk-holidaymakers-drops), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/de15a5a3-941d-4da0-b928-3da70b6e31ac), [[4]](https://time.com/6995756/barcelona-protesters-water-pistols-tourists/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/mallorcans-live-caravans-tourists-snap-up-housing-2024-07-23/), [[5]](https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/04/24/locals-fear-tourism-is-consuming-the-canary-islands_6669398_4.html), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spains-tourism-minister-condemns-spraying-barcelona-visitors-with-water-pistols-2024-07-11/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2063931/majorca-number-uk-holidaymakers-drops> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/de15a5a3-941d-4da0-b928-3da70b6e31ac> - This article discusses the intensifying backlash against mass tourism in Europe, highlighting protests in cities like Barcelona, Venice, and Amsterdam. In Barcelona, demonstrators used water pistols to target tourists, reflecting local frustration over overcrowding and its impact on housing and public services. Spain, heavily reliant on tourism, faces challenges balancing economic benefits with residents' quality of life. Proposed solutions include better regulatory oversight and promoting high-end tourism to mitigate the adverse effects of mass tourism.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/mallorcans-live-caravans-tourists-snap-up-housing-2024-07-23/> - This report highlights the housing crisis in Majorca, where locals like Pilar Hernando are resorting to living in caravans due to soaring rental prices driven by booming tourism. Over the past decade, rental prices have surged by 158%, making it unaffordable for residents as landlords prefer renting to tourists through platforms like Airbnb. Despite tourism contributing 45% to the local GDP, the influx has made living in city centers financially inaccessible for many, with limited governmental intervention.
4. <https://time.com/6995756/barcelona-protesters-water-pistols-tourists/> - This article covers the anti-tourism protests in Barcelona, where thousands of residents used water pistols to spray tourists in Las Ramblas, chanting 'tourists go home.' Protesters also cordoned off hotels and restaurants, displaying signs like 'tourism kills the city.' The protests, claiming 19,600 participants, highlight growing tensions over mass tourism's impact on housing costs and local quality of life. Similar demonstrations have occurred across Spain, including in the Canary Islands, Mallorca, and Málaga.
5. <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/04/24/locals-fear-tourism-is-consuming-the-canary-islands_6669398_4.html> - This article discusses the concerns of locals in the Canary Islands over the unsustainable impact of tourism. In 2023, Spain welcomed 85 million international travelers, with predictions for 91 million in 2024. The Canary Islands, with a resident population of 2.2 million, saw nearly 16 million tourists in 2023. Tourism accounts for 35% of their GDP and 40% of jobs. Locals face rising rental prices, loss of agriculture, and environmental damage, leading to significant demonstrations calling for a tourism model overhaul.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spains-tourism-minister-condemns-spraying-barcelona-visitors-with-water-pistols-2024-07-11/> - This article reports on Spain's tourism minister condemning protesters who sprayed tourists in Barcelona with water pistols, asserting that such actions do not reflect Spain's culture of hospitality. The protest highlighted growing tensions around mass tourism's impact on housing costs. The minister acknowledged the need for regulations and diversification in the tourism sector. Data showed a significant increase in tourists staying in holiday homes, exacerbating the housing crisis. Similar issues are emerging in other cities like Lisbon, where referendums on short-term rentals are being considered.
7. <https://news.sky.com/story/your-paradise-our-nightmare-thousands-attend-anti-tourism-protest-in-mallorca-13183160> - This article reports on a large anti-tourism protest in Majorca, where around 10,000 people marched in Palma de Mallorca against mass tourism. Protesters carried banners reading 'Your paradise, our nightmare' and 'Tourism yes - but not this much.' The demonstrations reflect growing concerns over the impact of mass tourism on local communities, including housing shortages and environmental degradation. Similar protests have occurred in other parts of Spain, including the Canary Islands and Barcelona.