# Protests in Spain escalate over tourism impact and housing crisis



Tensions are rising in Spain as protests against the impact of tourism evolve into a major movement, potentially disrupting the holiday plans of millions this summer. Amid a backdrop of soaring rents and a housing crisis exacerbated by a tourism boom, activists have warned of militant actions aimed at airports, beaches, and other popular tourist destinations if their grievances are not addressed.

The protests, which saw hundreds of thousands of participants across 40 cities over the weekend, were primarily aimed at raising awareness of increasing rents that have doubled on average and skyrocketing house prices, which have risen by over 44% in the last decade. The protests were organised by housing activists and backed by major trade unions, reflecting widespread discontent among locals who feel displaced by the burgeoning tourism industry following the lifting of pandemic restrictions.

In Madrid, the local tenants' union reported attendance of more than 150,000 demonstrators who marched through the capital, chanting slogans and carrying signs that condemned short-term rentals, with messages such as "Get Airbnb out of our neighbourhoods." Meanwhile, in Palma, the capital of Mallorca, protesters displayed placards declaring "Mallorca is not for sale" and demanded more affordable housing options for locals.

One protest leader, speaking anonymously to The Mirror, conveyed a sense of desperation among residents: “The general mood is one of growing frustration, indignation, and despair. People feel that they are being expelled from their own land,” they stated, emphasising the urgent need for action to address the housing crisis. This sentiment echoed throughout the protests, as demonstrators called for a shift in policies governing the tourism industry, which they say has only worsened their living conditions.

Local governments have begun implementing measures to combat the problem, such as Barcelona's commitment to phase out 10,000 permits for short-term rentals by 2028. However, protest leaders like Lucas have indicated that these actions are far from sufficient. He noted that the housing emergency “persists and affects more families,” indicating that many residents remain unable to compete with inflated property prices driven by deregulated real estate.

While the protests carry anti-tourist rhetoric, many organisers seek to clarify that they do not oppose tourism itself but rather advocate for a sustainable tourism model that prioritises local needs. Javier Barbero, a leader of the Banc de Temps collective in Mallorca, stated, “We have welcomed and will continue to welcome tourists to our land with great gratitude. Although it is true that we need a new tourism market model that is more sustainable for the environment and for the people of Mallorca.”

However, unrest is palpable, with reports of confrontational instances earlier this year, including graffiti denouncing tourists in Tenerife and access restrictions at popular sites like Es Vedra in Ibiza. The protest leaders have warned that the coming summer could see an increase in the scale and type of protests, with "creative and higher-impact actions" potentially emerging to exert pressure on authorities.

As Spain gears up for a peak summer tourist season, marked by a projected influx of 94 million visitors last year, including 17.5 million from Britain, activists are determined to make their voices heard. With frustrations mounting, they are prepared to escalate their actions if the necessary changes to improve their living conditions are not implemented, underscoring a volatile intersection of local resident needs and the demands of an ever-growing tourism sector.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_anti-tourism_protests_in_Spain> - Provides details about the 2024 anti-tourism protests in Spain, which were focused on combating overtourism and its effects on housing and the environment. This aligns with the article's description of protests driven by housing issues and environmental concerns.
3. <https://www.justice.gov/archives/sco/file/1373816/dl?inline=> - This source is unrelated to the article's topic; it pertains to a different subject altogether. However, it is included here to reflect that no direct URL could be found in the search results to support claims regarding Spanish protests and tourism.
4. <https://immigrantjustice.org/sites/default/files/content-type/resource/documents/2018-10/NIJC%20Asylum%20Manual_final%2007%202018.pdf> - Similar to the previous entry, this source does not pertain to the topic of protests and tourism in Spain. It is included for completeness but lacks relevance to the article's subject matter.
5. <https://www.businessinsider.com/spain-protests-overtourism-deterring-tourists-mallorca-barcelona-2024-10> - Supports the article's mention of protests against overtourism in Spain, highlighting how such protests continue despite a booming tourism industry. It provides specific examples of protests and their impact on public perception and government actions.
6. <https://www.noahwire.com> - The source article itself does not have a URL provided in the search results, but this URL is mentioned as the purported source of the information in the article. However, without additional context or content from this URL, it cannot independently corroborate the claims.
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