# Escalating tensions in Spain may disrupt British holidaymakers this summer



Millions of British holidaymakers could experience significant disruption this summer as escalating tensions toward tourism in Spain have prompted warnings from protest organisers. Lucas, a protest leader speaking anonymously, expressed concerns that radical groups may disrupt access to airports, beaches, and other popular tourist areas if local grievances continue to be overlooked. In an interview with The Mirror, Lucas described the growing frustration among residents, saying, "People feel that they are being expelled from their own land and that their fundamental rights are not being protected. People have had enough."

Recent protests, which saw hundreds of thousands of Spaniards take to the streets in 40 cities including Madrid, Barcelona, and Palma, have drawn attention to a severe housing crisis exacerbated by a surge in tourism. Over the past decade, average rents in Spain have reportedly doubled and house prices have surged by more than 44%, with many locals finding themselves priced out of their communities due to increasing short-term rental availability. Reports indicate that the supply of rental properties has halved since the onset of the pandemic in 2020.

In Madrid, demonstrators numbering over 150,000, according to local tenant unions, marched through the capital chanting against short-term letting platforms such as Airbnb, with slogans including "Get Airbnb out of our neighbourhoods." Likewise, protestors in Palma displayed signs like "Mallorca is not for sale," highlighting the community's plea for housing rights amid an overwhelming influx of tourists. The Spanish government reported that the nation welcomed 94 million visitors last year, with the UK being a significant contributor at 17.5 million.

Local authorities have begun to take action against the crisis, with cities like Barcelona setting targets to eliminate short-term rental licences, particularly those listed on platforms like Airbnb. However, despite such interventions, Lucas and other activists argue that the situation has not improved significantly since protests began in earnest last summer. He reflects, "The reality is that the housing emergency persists and affects more and more families."

Anti-tourist sentiment is increasingly manifesting across Spain. Earlier this year, a controversial sign threatening to "kill a tourist" appeared in Tenerife, while Ibiza's popular scenic viewpoints have faced obstructions due to growing hostility from residents who feel overwhelmed by the influx of visitors.

Despite these tensions, many protest leaders assert that their actions are not directed against tourists themselves but are instead focused on advocating for a sustainable tourism model that respects local communities and their needs. Javier Barbero, a leader of the Banc de Temps collective in Mallorca, expressed a welcoming attitude toward visitors: "In Mallorca, we have welcomed and will continue to welcome tourists to our land with great gratitude," while emphasising the necessity for a tourism model that supports local livelihoods.

The precarious balance between tourism and residential living conditions remains a primary concern in Majorca and other regions. Daniel Arenas, president of the Balearic National and International Real Estate Association, warned of a housing crisis reminiscent of Venice, stressing that urgent solutions are needed to prevent local communities from becoming overshadowed by tourism-focused developments. "Creating housing for residents is so important," he stated.

Recent statistics reveal that nearly 40% of families who rent in Majorca are allocating over 40% of their income to housing. With a limited number of affordable properties available for sale or rent, the housing situation continues to worsen; as of last week, there were only 854 flats for rent in Palma, with just ten under €1,000 per month.

As protests are expected to escalate this summer, Lucas cautioned that demonstrators may explore diverse and creative methods of expression if substantial changes are not observed from the authorities. He remarked, "People are increasingly aware and willing to explore different ways to make their voices heard," indicating that the quest for a more equitable housing model remains at the forefront of community efforts.

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

## Bibliography

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