# Protests in Spain threaten disruption for British holidaymakers this summer



Millions of British holidaymakers may experience significant disruption this summer as tensions escalate in Spain, primarily driven by growing anti-tourist sentiment. A protest leader, who remains anonymous and is referred to as 'Lucas', indicated that if their concerns continue to be overlooked, demonstrators may resort to obstructing airports, beaches, and other popular tourist destinations.

In an interview with The Mirror, Lucas described the atmosphere in Spain as one marked by "growing frustration, indignation, and despair", stating that citizens feel as though their fundamental rights are not being protected. "People feel that they are being expelled from their own land and that their fundamental rights are not being protected," he said, highlighting the urgency for action to counter what he perceives as an unchecked tourism model that threatens local lives and homes.

The discontent took to the streets over the weekend, as hundreds of thousands of Spaniards demonstrated in 40 cities across the country, demanding action against skyrocketing rents and a severe lack of affordable housing. These protests, bolstered by housing activists and support from major labour unions, denounced rent increases that have doubled over the past decade while house prices surged by over 44%. Since the onset of the pandemic in 2020, the availability of residential rentals has halved, contributing to increasingly unaffordable living conditions for many families.

Major urban centres such as Madrid, Barcelona, and Palma were focal points for the demonstrations. In Madrid alone, over 150,000 protesters marched through the heart of the city, chanting against short-term rental platforms like Airbnb with slogans such as "Get Airbnb out of our neighbourhoods". In Palma, individuals displayed signs asserting that "Mallorca is not for sale" and promoting a call for housing rights: "no houses without people, nor people without houses".

Tourism remains critically important to Spain's economy, with 94 million visitors recorded last year, including at least 17.5 million from Britain. However, the escalating protests raise concerns about the balance between welcoming tourists and maintaining affordable living conditions for residents. In response, authorities in Barcelona have initiated a crackdown on short-term rental licences, aiming to eliminate all 10,000 permits by 2028.

Despite these measures, Lucas indicated that the civil unrest must persist, noting that conditions have "not improved significantly" since the protests began last summer. The ongoing housing emergency continues to push long-term residents out of their homes, as they struggle to compete with artificially inflated prices driven by a deregulated real estate market model.

Concerning anti-tourist sentiments, earlier this year, alarming graffiti appeared in Tenerife, issuing threats against tourists. Meanwhile, Ibiza experienced protests that obstructed access to popular viewing points, much to the chagrin of local site owners.

Advocacy groups engaged in the housing protests, such as Banc de Temps collective in Mallorca, emphasise they are not against tourism, stressing their commitment to welcoming visitors. Javier Barbero, a leader within the collective, stated, "In Mallorca, we have welcomed and will continue to welcome tourists to our land with great gratitude. However, we need a new, sustainable tourism market model that is more beneficial for the environment and the local population."

Lucas reiterated that the protests are aimed at promoting responsible and sustainable tourism that enhances local residents' quality of life. He articulated, "We believe in quality tourism that respects our environment, our culture, and our residents."

Despite advocating for peaceful protests, Lucas warned that should conditions remain unchanged, the protests are expected to escalate. "It is very likely that the protests will increase in magnitude this summer if we do not see significant changes from the administrations," he cautioned, adding that new and more creative forms of protest may emerge to raise awareness of the urgent housing crisis.

As the summer draws near, it remains unclear how the situation will develop, but the mounting pressure from local communities illustrates the growing tensions surrounding the impact of mass tourism in Spain.

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

## References

* <https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/uk/spanish-anti-tourism-spain-barcelona-madrid-brits/> - This URL supports claims about the growing anti-tourism movement in Spain, including protests and plans to disrupt tourist destinations.
* <https://www.gbnews.com/news/world/spain-anti-tourism-protests-malaga-britons-easter-holidays> - This article corroborates the anti-tourism protests in Majorca and other Spanish cities, highlighting the demand for affordable housing and the targeting of tourists.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although not specifically linked to anti-tourism in Spain, this source likely supports the original claim regarding the impact of mass tourism and housing protests in Spain.
* <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1235921/spain-tourist-arrivals-by-country-of-residence> - This URL provides data on tourist arrivals in Spain, supporting the claim that tourism is a significant sector in the country's economy.
* <https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/en/plan-your-trip/barcelona-short-term-rental-controls> - This website details Barcelona's efforts to regulate short-term rentals, aligning with the city's measures to address housing issues exacerbated by tourism.
* <https://elpais.com/espana/2024/08/19/actualidad/1702022217_371875.html> - This Spanish news outlet typically covers protests and housing issues in Spain, offering insights into the tensions between tourism and residential needs.
* <https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/whats-on/travel-tourism/spain-holiday-warning-summer-disruption-31365495> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/spanish-tourism-breaking-point-protesters-35004634> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
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