# Bruges considers day-trip taxes amid rising anti-tourism backlash



Bruges, the picturesque medieval city in Belgium, is witnessing a notable rise in anti-tourism sentiment as it grapples with the challenges posed by an overwhelming influx of visitors. Annually, Bruges attracts approximately eight million tourists, alongside an additional 1.2 million shoppers, with a significant proportion—over half—coming from overseas. Notably, tourists from the United Kingdom constitute the largest foreign demographic.

The sheer volume of visitors has prompted local authorities to explore measures aimed at managing the impact of tourism on the historic town. Among the strategies being considered is the introduction of taxes specifically targeting day-trippers, particularly those arriving in large groups via cruise ships. The nearby port of Zeebrugge accommodates cruise vessels, and on busy days, the arrival of two ships can result in as many as 5,000 tourists flooding into Bruges in a single day.

The unique medieval charm of Bruges continues to be a major draw for visitors, many of whom are also inspired by the 2008 crime film "In Bruges," which stars Colin Farrell and Brendan Gleeson. However, tourism in the city has often devolved into brief visits characterised by quick stops at souvenir shops and sampling local delicacies, such as waffles, leaving little time for deeper engagement with its rich history.

The local economy reaps substantial benefits from this influx, with the tourism sector reportedly generating a turnover of €542 million last year alone. The city welcomed around 6.8 million day-trippers and an additional 1.1 million overnight guests, illustrating the significant dependence on tourism for economic stability. However, the increasing prevalence of souvenir shops has led to concerns about the diminishing uniqueness of local commerce, as traditional shops give way to retailers focusing on mass-produced goods.

In light of these developments, Bruges grapples with balancing the economic rewards of mass tourism against its potential detriments, seeking sustainable solutions to preserve the integrity of this historic city while accommodating its numerous visitors.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/belgium/articles/bruges-overtourism/> - This article discusses Bruges' annual influx of approximately eight million tourists and the challenges posed by overtourism, including the impact on local residents and the city's infrastructure.
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/16/bruges-crackdown-tourist-numbers> - This piece details Bruges' measures to manage tourism, such as limiting cruise ship arrivals to two per day and reducing advertising to day-trippers, aiming to prevent the city from becoming overcrowded.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/bruges-is-still-europes-big-overtourism-success-story/> - This article highlights Bruges' efforts to balance tourism and local life, including policies like the 'hotel-stop' to control the number of hotels and holiday rentals in the city center.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/belgium/articles/bruges-overtourism/> - This article discusses Bruges' annual influx of approximately eight million tourists and the challenges posed by overtourism, including the impact on local residents and the city's infrastructure.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/16/bruges-crackdown-tourist-numbers> - This piece details Bruges' measures to manage tourism, such as limiting cruise ship arrivals to two per day and reducing advertising to day-trippers, aiming to prevent the city from becoming overcrowded.
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