# UK tourist bookings rise despite record anti-tourism protests in Canary Islands



Amid widespread anti-tourism protests in the Canary Islands, UK tourist bookings to Spain have experienced a surprising uptick. The weekend saw a significant turnout of demonstrators, with estimates suggesting up to 123,000 participants took to the streets under the banner "The Canaries Have a Limit." Their grievances centre on issues including overcrowding, environmental degradation, and soaring housing costs—concerns that protesters argue threaten the islands' sustainability.

Despite the escalating tensions, many British holidaymakers report positive experiences. One recent traveller returning from Benidorm expressed, “No problems, Spanish people were great and had a great time.” This sentiment echoes that of others who remarked on the vibrancy and hospitality of Spain, suggesting that the ongoing unrest may not significantly deter tourists in the immediate future.

The protests, however, underscore a broader debate regarding the impact of mass tourism on local communities. In 2023, the Canary Islands welcomed approximately 13.9 million visitors—about six times the islands’ resident population of 2.2 million. The tourism industry supports around 40% of local jobs; UK tourists represent a substantial market alongside German visitors. Nonetheless, the recent protests highlight the urgent calls from local residents for a transition towards a tourism model that prioritises sustainability and community needs over unchecked growth and investor interests.

Historically, tourism has been a double-edged sword for the Canaries. Organised by a coalition of environmental groups, the demonstrations not only aim to limit tourist numbers but also seek to address the adverse effects of mass tourism, particularly in the areas of environmental preservation and housing costs. For example, activists have expressed concern over the high water usage and pollution linked to tourism activities. The local tourism minister has urged British holidaymakers not to cancel their trips, assuring them that the islands remain open for business and that local authorities continue to welcome visitors.

As tensions simmer, some Britons have suggested that a rethink of school holiday scheduling could reduce pressure on popular destinations during peak seasons, allowing for a more balanced spread of tourism throughout the year. This could alleviate some stress on local infrastructures while simultaneously benefitting families financially.

Comments from other social media users indicate a belief that the protests might be counterproductive, questioning the potential economic implications of a prolonged downturn in tourist numbers. Some note the need for local economies, heavily reliant on British visitors, to adapt and respond constructively to these challenges rather than alienate their traditional clientele.

Equipped with both optimism and concerns, UK travellers appear to remain undeterred by the backdrop of protest, suggesting a complex relationship that merits further examination as both sides navigate the pressures of tourism in an increasingly crowded global landscape. As protests continue, the future of tourism in the Canary Islands hangs in the balance, calling for a thoughtful dialogue between residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
2. Paragraphs 4, 5
3. Paragraphs 6, 7
4. Paragraph 8
5. Paragraph 9
6. Paragraph 10
7. Paragraph 11

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/travel/uk-tourists-fly-back-spain-31665107> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-68865755> - In April 2024, tens of thousands rallied in Spain's Canary Islands against mass tourism, demanding limits on tourist numbers and curbs on uncontrolled development. Protesters emphasized that they were not against tourism itself but against a model they felt was overwhelming the islands. In 2023, 13.9 million tourists visited the seven main islands, about six times more than the islands' population of 2.2 million. The tourism industry also accounts for 40% of the archipelago's jobs, with the UK and Germany being the biggest markets. The protests aimed to address concerns over environmental impact and housing affordability.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/20/thousands-protest-canary-islands-unsustainable-tourism> - In April 2024, thousands protested in Spain's Canary Islands against mass tourism, calling for a change in the tourism model. Demonstrations took place across the archipelago, with organizers estimating up to 50,000 participants. Protesters highlighted issues such as high housing costs, environmental degradation, and the dominance of large investors in the tourism sector. The protests were organized by environmental groups and aimed to address the negative impacts of mass tourism on local communities and the environment.
4. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20240420-mass-protests-in-canary-islands-decry-overtourism> - In April 2024, mass protests erupted in Spain's Canary Islands against overtourism, with demonstrators calling for limits on tourist numbers and curbs on uncontrolled development. The protests were organized by environmental groups and aimed to address concerns over environmental degradation and housing affordability. Protesters emphasized that they were not against tourism itself but against a model they felt was unsustainable for the islands. The demonstrations were part of a broader movement in Europe addressing the negative impacts of mass tourism on local communities and environments.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2024/04/19/canary-islands-tourism-protests-britons/> - In April 2024, the Canary Islands' tourism minister urged British holidaymakers not to cancel their holidays amid planned anti-tourism protests. Locals were preparing to hold protests across the archipelago, citing concerns over water usage, housing shortages, and pollution linked to overtourism. The tourism minister emphasized that the islands remained open for business and welcomed visitors. Despite the protests, the Canary Islands continued to be a popular destination for British tourists, with millions visiting annually.
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/2024-10-21/thousands-of-anti-tourism-protesters-swarm-holidaymakers-on-canary-islands> - In October 2024, thousands of anti-tourism protesters in Spain's Canary Islands surprised holidaymakers by swarming beaches and popular tourist spots. Under the slogan 'Canarias has a limit,' about 6,500 demonstrators descended on tourism hotspots in Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Playa de las Américas, and Maspalomas. Protesters highlighted issues such as overcrowding, environmental degradation, and the impact of mass tourism on local infrastructure. Some holidaymakers were shocked by the protests, while others expressed understanding of the locals' concerns.
7. <https://www.dw.com/en/spain-canary-islands-mass-protests-target-overtourism/a-68922697> - In April 2024, mass protests in Spain's Canary Islands targeted overtourism, with tens of thousands rallying against the negative impacts of mass tourism on local communities and the environment. Protesters called for limits on tourist numbers and curbs on uncontrolled development. The protests were organized by environmental groups and aimed to address concerns over housing affordability, environmental degradation, and the dominance of large investors in the tourism sector. The demonstrations were part of a broader movement in Europe addressing the challenges of mass tourism.