



AP Photo/Andrew Medichini

A cruise ship transits in the Giudecca canal in front of St. Mark's Square, in Venice, Italy. In cities around the world, a problem known as "overtourism" has become a year-round struggle.

4 WAYS TO BE A GOOD TRAVELER IN THE AGE OF 'OVERTOURISM'

By MELISSA RAYWORTH
Associated Press

In Paris, the Louvre Museum closed for a day this week because workers said the crowds were too big to handle. In the Himalayas, climbers at Mount Everest are concerned that the peak has gotten too crowded, contributing to the highest death toll in years.

In cities and destinations around the world, from Barcelona to Bali, "overtourism" has become a year-round problem.

When fields of wildflowers in Lake Elsinore, California, were overrun this spring by tourists seeking the perfect photo, the city tweeted bluntly about the impact of traffic jams and trampled hillsides: "We know it has been miserable and has caused unnecessary hardships for our entire community." Last summer, it was a sunflower field outside of Toronto that got trampled after becoming Instagram-famous.

A mashup of discount airlines, inexpensive Airbnb rooms and social media shares have brought the blessing of tourist dollars and the growing curse of noisy crowds and even dangerous conditions to places once known for off-the-beaten-path charm or idyllic silence.

"Tourists are trampling the very attraction they've come to witness," says Joel Deichmann, a global studies professor at Bentley University in Massachusetts.

Some communities have begun pushing back with regulations and public service announcements telling tourists to behave.

How do you visit these places without doing harm? Four tips from experts:

1. REMEMBER, IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU

Venturing far from home and experiencing an unfamiliar culture can be transformative, bringing a sense of freedom and even hedonism. But don't forget: This is already someone's culture, someone's home.

So beyond simply choosing a hotel, really



AP Photo/Thibault Camus

Tourists wait in line to visit the Louvre museum as it reopens in Paris. The world's most visited museum was closed on Monday after employees complained they were harassed by tourists waiting to see the Mona Lisa.

research the place you want to visit. What kind of behavior is appropriate there? What are the environmental policies? If you're booking through a travel service, ask them for guidance.

"This isn't Disney," says Rachel Dodds, founder of the consulting firm Sustaining Tourism.

Pavia Rosati, founder of the travel service Fathom and co-author of the book "Travel Anywhere" (Hardie Grant, 2019) reminds travelers going to exotic destinations: "You are not here to just add something foreign to your collection."

It might seem logical to put on a tank top and shorts in Thailand's 100-degree heat. But if you're going to visit Buddhist temples, it's considered disrespectful. "Err on the side of conservative dressing," Rosati says.

Deichmann, who frequently travels abroad with his students, advises them to be sensitive and take cues from local residents. For example, he says, on a subway or bus in European cities, locals are usually reading or sitting quietly. Follow their lead: Avoid loud conversations or getting up to snap photos.

The same goes for late-night partying: If you're at an all-inclusive resort on a few hundred acres of gated lands, party as you wish. But if you're staying in an Airbnb apartment, realize that the person on the other side of the wall might need to put their baby to sleep or get up for work early.

2. PUT PICTURE-TAKING IN PERSPECTIVE

With phone cameras, we've become accustomed to taking pictures constantly. But taking photos of people, their children and their homes can be invasive.

Also, respect the physical environment. It may seem obvious, but don't walk on the wildflowers to get the best photo.

And consider the risks: At Kaaterskill Falls in New York's Catskill Mountains, four tourist deaths in recent years have been attributed to attempts to take dramatic selfies.

You'll probably enjoy your experiences more fully if you spend less time snapping photos, says University of Denver assistant professor Gia Nardini, co-author of a study on the subject.

And showing restraint can help protect the place you're enjoying from overtourism.

"If you take that picture," Dodds asks, "will 1,000 people arrive the next day to take that same picture?"

3. GIVE BACK

When Rosati was planning a cruise along the Amazon River, she knew she'd be stopping in villages where children needed basics like pencils, crayons and paper. So "one-third of my suitcase was school supplies," she says. Once there, she gave them away and filled the space in her suitcase with local crafts. Consider spending money in the local economy rather than at international hotel chains, and seek out locally owned restaurants and bars.

To help the environment, use public transportation as much as possible. "You're going to have a better experience" too, says Dodds.

Finally, take your packaging with you when you leave a place. And never buy gifts made from endangered animals or other illegal materials.

4. SAY HELLO

"My dad used to say you need to learn to say, 'How can I get a cup of coffee' in the local language," says Dodds, author of a new book, "Overtourism: Issues, Realities and Solutions" (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019).

Even in places where many locals speak English, learning a few words in their language — please, thank you, yes, no — will earn you good will and a more authentic experience.

Also, be patient and respectful of those trying to manage the crowds. At the Louvre, union representatives had complained that renovation work around the Mona Lisa led to organizational problems, long lines and harassment of staff by tourists. They said staff numbers have diminished over the past decade even as the number of visitors rose 20%.

Amid the excitement of even bucket list-level travel, Deichmann says, keep in mind: "What if this were your village?"

As craft beer market grows, so do wild flavors

Today's brewers kick it up a notch trying to distinguish themselves

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
Associated Press

Anyone for steak and onion Kolsch? Or a macaroni and cheese pale ale?

Those were among the flavors at the Strange Brew Festival in Reno, Nevada, this month, where competition for attention has intensified as craft beers have boomed.

Brewers have always experimented, from the medieval Belgians who stirred sour cherries into their beer to newer varieties like the white IPA, a marriage of Belgian and American styles that was developed about a decade ago.

But today's brewers have kicked it up a notch as they try to distinguish themselves from everyone else trying to distinguish themselves.

Visitors at the festival in Reno could sample a pea-



AP photo by Haven Daley

Hal McConnellogue, cellar manager at Drake's Brewing Company, works on putting chipotle peppers into a cask used to infuse beer with unique flavors in San Leandro, Calif. As craft breweries have boomed, competition for attention has intensified and that has a lot of brewers looking for ways to differentiate themselves by introducing strange new flavors.

nut butter and pickle pilsner, a tamale and a smoked carrot stout. There were concoctions from big brewers like Sierra Nevada and smaller local brew pubs, sweet beers brewed with Jolly Ranchers and spicy ones that tasted like garlic bread or mango salsa.

The U.S. had 7,346 craft brewers last year, up 93% from 2014, according to the

Brewers Association, an industry trade group. Craft beer sales rose 7% to \$27.6 billion last year, about one-fourth of the total U.S. beer market.

"People are looking for ways to differentiate themselves and be the next big thing," said Jon Brandt, a beer aficionado who works for Washington-based distributor Madidus Importers.



AP photo by Haven Daley

A blue raspberry Jolly Rancher sour beer is poured at the Strange Brew Festival in Reno, Nevada.

"A lot of it is just about trying to get noticed."

A beer with head-turning labels or ingredients can do just that. Denver-based Wynkoop Brewing Co. lures a lot of customers with its Rocky Mountain Oyster Stout, which is made with roasted barley, seven different grains and grilled buffalo or bull testicles.

"It actually started as an April Fool's joke," said John Sims, Wynkoop's head brewer. "It's pretty popular."

Wynkoop has traditional ales and lagers on the menu, too. Sometimes, Brandt said, a wacky beer is a way to get people to look at the rest of a brewer's lineup.

"I'm making a beer for you to notice me, but I really want to sell you my IPA," he said. Among the oddest beers he has tasted is a Bloody Mary brew from Michigan's Short's Brewing Co. He liked it, but other tasters thought it went too far.

There are purists who decry the trend toward wacky ingredients.

"I personally am not a fan of ridiculous brews incorporating materials and gimmicks that have no historical provenance in brewing," said Charlie Bamforth, a distinguished professor emeritus in the food science and technology department of the University of California, Davis.

Bamforth said laws restricting ingredients — like Germany has — might be going a bit too far. But he would like to see some regulations defining what can and can't be called "beer."

"If someone wants to explore bizarre components, then I think they should do it under the umbrella of alternative beverages and not be allowed to sully the good

name of beer," he said.

Others say experiments that stray too far get weeded out quickly.

"It has to be flavorful. It has to taste like beer," said Hal McConnellogue, cellar manager at San Leandro, California-based Drake's Brewing Co., which had an IPA made with altar bread, grapes and terpenes at the festival. "It's got to make you want another one. If it doesn't, then it's just gimmicky and you're going to be out of the spotlight pretty fast."

Jess Lebow, the author of "The Beer Devotional" and "The United States of Craft Beer," says the high level of experimentation is what makes craft beer so special. Lebow said he might only try a steak and onion beer once. It might be great, but even if it's not, it might lead to a beer that's a big hit.

"There are really only so many flavors you can create with water, malt, barley and hops," he said. "At the end of the day, if the brewer is having fun trying new things, then I'm probably having fun trying their beer."