

A smiling woman with long brown hair, wearing a straw hat and a green patterned top, is looking up and to the right. In the background, the Colosseum in Rome is visible under a clear blue sky.

# Locals vs. Luggage

## Mediterranean Life Between Joyful Buzz and Tourist Mayhem

In an effort to understand the impact of tourism on local residents in Italy, Spain, Turkey, Croatia, Greece, and Egypt, we conducted a qualitative research project using our AI-powered tool, Quals.ai. Between 5 and 9 August, 2024, by interviewing 180 individuals from popular tourist destinations, we gathered insights into their experiences and perceptions of tourism in their cities.





Despite its benefits, tourism brings significant challenges that impact both residents and visitors. Overcrowding, increased prices, and strain on local infrastructure are common concerns leading to frustrations such as congestion and long queues at popular sites. In Istanbul and Cairo, these issues are compounded by the behavior of some tourists and the exploitation by local vendors, creating negative impressions.






"Tourism has led to higher prices and overcrowded public spaces." (Female, 45, Croatia)

"In Sevilla, the long queues and overcrowding at popular sites like the Giralda and Torre del Oro can be frustrating." (Female, 34, Spain)

"The biggest problem is the overcrowding, especially in popular areas like Sultanahmet and Taksim. It can be overwhelming." (Female, 41, Istanbul)





Tourism significantly impacts the daily routines of residents across Mediterranean cities, especially during peak seasons. Overcrowded public spaces, increased traffic, and longer wait times force many to adjust their schedules or avoid tourist-heavy areas altogether. Residents often navigate crowded beaches and transportation issues, simple errands become complicated and expensive. Despite these challenges, many locals adapt their routines to maintain a balance between their lives and the influx of visitors.






*"Tourism fills the beaches I visit for swimming."  
(Male, 64, Greece)*

*"I do my errands in the middle of the day when  
it's less crowded but extremely hot." (Female,  
38, Croatia)*

*"Living in the center of Sevilla, it can be very  
complicated and expensive to do simple things  
like having a coffee." (Female, 42, Spain)*



A photograph of two young women with long dark hair, smiling and looking towards the left. They are in an outdoor urban setting with a historic building featuring arched windows and a blue 'U' sign in the background. A white patio umbrella is also visible. The image has a semi-transparent dark blue overlay at the bottom where the text is located.

Positive interactions with tourists often leave residents with a sense of pride and connection to their city. Whether through simple gestures like giving directions or sharing cultural insights, these encounters can be uplifting.

These moments of appreciation and connection not only enhance the tourist experience but also deepen the residents' love for their city.





*"Once, I helped some French tourists find their way, and we ended up having lunch together. We still keep in touch." (Male, 59, Spain)*

*"Tourists often ask for recommendations, and it's nice to share my favorite spots with them. It makes me appreciate my city more." (Male, 30, Turkey)*

*"Seeing tourists enjoy our city and express their admiration makes me feel proud." (Female, 34, Egypt)*





Tourism has a complex impact on the sense of community among residents. While it can foster pride, cultural exchange, and economic growth, it also risks creating feelings of alienation and disruption in local traditions.

Overall, the effect of tourism on community bonds depends largely on how well it is managed.





*"Tourism makes us more connected to our heritage and proud of our city." (Female, 34, Egypt).*

*"Tourism brings money and jobs, but it can also make locals feel like outsiders in their own city." (Female, 41, Turkey).*





Tourism brings substantial financial benefits to Mediterranean cities, significantly boosting local economies through increased spending in hospitality, retail, and cultural sectors. Residents widely acknowledge the positive economic impact, noting that tourism brings in a lot of money and supports local businesses and creates jobs.



A young man with short brown hair and a light beard is smiling at the camera. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt under a denim jacket. He is in a restaurant or cafe, with shelves of jars and other people blurred in the background. Warm, bokeh-style lights are visible in the upper part of the image.

While tourism brings significant economic benefits many residents are concerned about the social and environmental costs, such as increased living expenses, overcrowding, and strain on infrastructure.

Many acknowledge that tourism is crucial for the local economy, supporting businesses and creating jobs. There are also concerns about the quality and sustainability of these jobs, as they are often low-paying and seasonal.





*"While tourism boosts local businesses, the jobs created are often low-paying and seasonal."  
(Female, 43, Spain)*

*"The economic benefits are important, but there needs to be a balance to ensure quality of life for residents." (Female, 42, Croatia)*

*"Tourism is good for the economy, but it shouldn't come at the expense of our city's character and livability." (Male, 30, Turkey)*





## Implications & Recommendations

*Balancing the benefits and drawbacks of tourism is crucial, and this balance can only be achieved by involving residents in policy-making and ensuring that the character of the city is preserved while welcoming visitors. Ultimately, with the right approach, tourism can be a positive force that benefits everyone, as long as it respects the needs of both residents and visitors alike.*





# Business questions. Answered.

Istanbul | London | New Delhi

