

WHY ARE HOLIDAY HOTSPOTS TURNING AGAINST BRITISH TOURISTS?

A wave of anti-tourism protests are spreading throughout Europe, with thousands of locals taking to the streets in popular destinations to warn off holiday makers. As well as the protests, water was sprayed on tourists in Barcelona, "stay away" graffitied in Greece, and new alcohol rules have been introduced in the Balearic Islands. Portugal is the latest country to be considering imposing restrictions...

The mile-long Albufeira Strip in the Algarve is a notorious party destination for Brits abroad. Lined with bars and nightclubs, with music blasting from every doorway and neon lights flashing, it's packed with revellers and it's a mecca for stag and hen nights. Drunken excess has become normalised to the extent that one taxi driver tells *Closer* reporter Mel Fallowfield, "These days I'm just grateful when they throw up into a bag rather than all over my cab – I've come to expect the worst, particularly from the British."

Last month, eight British men pushed beyond the boundaries of tolerance from the locals. They stripped naked in a club on the strip and crawled along a bar, simulating sex acts.



Closer's Mel braved Albufeira's Strip

Their debauched actions are currently being investigated by the police – who have a heavy presence on the street.

Their actions sparked a move from the Mayor, Jose Carlos Rolo, to tackle the problem – and he's creating a code of conduct for local bars and nightlife spots.

POPULAR

"The recent behaviour of foreign holidaymakers prompted an emergency meeting convened by the municipal council with all security forces and associations in the tourism sector," the local authority said, adding that "a meeting with the Minister of Internal Administration and the creation of a commission to develop a Code of Conduct" for local bars are the next steps to be taken.

He's following in the



Claudia is embarrassed by her fellow Brits abroad



Anti-tourist graffiti is popping up across the continent

footsteps of Spanish authorities who, led up with rowdy, drunk tourists, have brought in strict new alcohol bans.

Holidaymakers at some of the most popular resorts in Mallorca and Ibiza are barred from buying alcohol in shops between 9.30pm and 8am. Drinking in the streets in tourist hotspots in Ibiza and Mallorca – with an exception for terraces and other licensed areas – is also prohibited. Fines for breaking it can be over £2,500.

It's a move that would be welcomed by many of the people who speak to reporter Mel Fallowfield when she investigates the party scene in Albufeira. One local restaurateur from Albufeira's Old Town, which is considered the "gamer" part of

the Algarve town, tells *Closer*, "I've been spat at and sworn at while standing outside my restaurant. People throw bottles, vomit everywhere and fight. It's become a nightmare as people are so drunk. It's not just the English, but they are the worst. Something has to be done."

EMBARRASSED

Derek, a Dutch tourist, says, "We avoid the nightclubs where the British go. They're drunk and a lot of them are taking cocaine which makes them even more aggressive – it's readily available to buy. We don't want to be near them as it always feels as though something will kick off as they do everything to excess."

After witnessing a drunken

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stag party's antics, Claudia Lambert, 60, from Didcot, tells *Closer*, "It makes me embarrassed to be British. I was warned by numerous waiters not to go anywhere near the Strip as it can get so rough. This used to be a lovely old town, I feel so sorry for the locals."

This year over half of Brits are planning a foreign holiday, with 17 million heading to Spain – the most popular holiday destination. Tourism from the Brits brings around £15 billion to their economy, while last year tourism added £25 billion to the Portuguese economy, with Brits leading the way.

There have already been some high-profile arrests for drunken behaviour – in May eight men were arrested at a beach club

near Palma just days before attending a wedding. A brawl broke out and it's understood the drunk clubbers fought bar staff and hurled beer into the sea. A waiter was hit in the head and two off-duty cops were hurt in the fight. A further eight England fans were arrested in Frankfurt for drunken behaviour during the Euros, and a 45-year-old British man was arrested for attacking two restaurant workers after they refused him entry because he was so drunk.

ISSUES

Travel expert Linda Aitchison, who runs havealovelytime.com, explains, "This anti-tourist wave has been a long time coming. While tourism adds to the economy, it brings many

issues, such as pushing up house prices to make them unaffordable to locals as so many people turn to running Airbnbs, and thousands of tourists descending causes overcrowding in the streets and restaurants."

During the pandemic, locals appreciated the peace and feeling like they had their space back. Linda says, "Add in how some tourists behave, then it's no surprise there's been a bit of a clash. Brits unfortunately are among the worst, particularly in 'party places'. Many have no interest in culture or respect for tradition, vomiting on the steps of churches and not even bothering to learn how to say 'thank you' in the native language."

"But local bars have their part

to play – they offer extremely cheap alcohol and, in some instances, literally pour it down their throats. They need to play their part too, rather than fuelling people up when they're already paralytic."

STAGGERING

On the busy strip, *Closer*'s Mel witnessed many instances of this, including a man who was wearing a crash helmet having seven shots in the space of three minutes, and after each one he was hit on the head while his friends clapped and cheered. Female staff were dancing on bars, holding bottles of spirits and then tipping it into visitors' mouths, and there was even a whole bar dedicated to drinking games. And punters were staggering down the street, clearly already very drunk but still being welcomed into the next bars.

One reveller admits, "We've been here for five days and I can't remember getting back to my Airbnb on three of those nights. But it's all a big laugh. We haven't had any issues with the locals and I'm already looking forward to next year." But for many Brits, another holiday season of disruption could be ahead. By Mel Fallowfield & Bertie Atherbury



A protest in Barcelona spells out the locals' views