

1 in 3 Expats Living in Barcelona Criticise Mass Tourism

- **850 expats from 26 nations** that have lived in Barcelona for at least 3 months answer the question “What do you like least about Barcelona?”.
- **Mass Tourism was the most criticised** aspect (34%) followed by the local character (26%), pollution (19%) and then the economy (16%).
- The study analyses the problem of mass tourism in Barcelona and proposes **a new solution**.

Barcelona, 5 September 2016

OK Apartment Barcelona published today the **first opinion poll** of the expat population in **Barcelona**. 850 respondents from 26 different nations including Italy, France, Germany, Russia, Denmark, Argentina, Poland, United Kingdom, United States and 17 other nationalities.

To the question “What did you like least about Barcelona?” respondents answered with an **open-ended text**. Nine negative factors were identified and the most mentioned was mass tourism with just over **1 in 3 respondents** (34%) citing it.



Crowds populate Las Ramblas in Barcelona ([LINK](#))

The study highlights the **importance of the mass tourism problem** and analyses three aspects:

1. The statistics. Barcelona has fewer than 1.6 million inhabitants, but receives more than 8 million tourists each year. It is the fourth most visited city in Europe and 20% of its economic wealth is generated through tourism.

2. The problem. The study identifies four areas in Barcelona with a mass tourism problem. Tension between neighbours and mass tourism in these areas materialise in four ways:

1. The substitution of **local shops** with souvenir shops, bars and restaurants.
2. The increase in **house prices** as a result of foreign investment and using housing stock for tourist rentals.
3. **Disturbances generated** by the behaviour and foot-traffic of tourists.
4. The consequent **population exodus**.

3. The solution being employed. Local authorities are currently **regulating the supply of accommodation**:

- In **July 2015**, the granting of new accommodation licenses was suspended.
- On **23 February 2016** “*Pla Especial Urbanístic d’Alotjaments Turístics (PEUAT)*” or “*Special Urban Tourist Accommodation Plan*” was outlined, its aim is to reduce accommodation in the city centre, maintain it outside the centre, and increase it in the suburbs.

New solutions. In 2013, New York launched its “[Neighborhood x Neighborhood](#)” campaign and as a result managed to generate **economic activity** outside of the saturated tourist areas. The outlying Horta-Guinardó district in Barcelona already carried out a similar initiative, developing 10 routes featuring historical aspects and landscape viewpoints, but this material was only made available in Catalan.

The study **suggests to local authorities** that they develop a **promotion plan for “The Complete Barcelona”** in order to spread tourism outside of crowded areas and encourage a higher quality of tourism. The promoters of the study have worked with tourists for over 10 years and are aware that many of them are interested in a more authentic and less known Barcelona.

What other factors do expats criticise? The three other main negative factors are:

- 1 in 4 (26%) disliked the **character of locals** in Barcelona, although 80% rated the welcome from Catalans to be between satisfactory and excellent.
- 1 in 5 (19%) mentioned **pollution**, which – by order of importance – encapsulated noise, dirtiness of streets and air pollution.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 (16%) mentioned the **economy**. German expats mentioned this aspect less frequently, and Polish and Russian expats mentioned it most frequently.

Other minor factors included crime (8%) and difficulties between Catalonia and Spain (8%).

About the survey sample

Surveyed between **1 June and 31 December 2015**. General characteristics:

- Age: 18-24 years (18%), 25-34 years (48%), 35+ years (34%)
- Sex: Female (64%), Male (36%)
- Education: Secondary (6%), Pre-university (20%), University (53%), Postgraduate (21%)

The [original article](#) contains detailed information about the sample.

Images and video.

[This video](#) subtitled in English includes video interviews with expats on the streets of Barcelona. Images in [this album](#) can be used when writing about this press release.

About OK Apartment Barcelona: We are an apartment rental agency in Barcelona with over 10 years of experience. Our offices are in the city centre of Barcelona and we offer more than 1000 monthly and holiday rentals at reasonable prices in distinct parts of the city.



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Liked the Least

Mass tourism (34%)

"Excessive mass tourism" "Too much tourism all-year"
 "...Selling the 'BCN brand' has made the city into a theme park"
 "Many tourists. Too many promoters"
 "Tourists come and look at the city as their own."
 "Misbehaving tourists"

Locals (26%)

"...People with worried faces and sadness..."
 "The coldness of the people" "The stubbornness of people, which sometimes turns into obtuseness."
 "Closed minded people"
 "People are a bit closed, unwilling to welcome newcomers in their circles of friends."

Pollution (19%)

"Traffic and contamination" "Noise"
 "Too much dirt on the street or at garbage collection points!"
 "Noisy neighbours"
 "Sound pollution"

Economy (16%)

"The wages" "No jobs"
 "Work conditions" "Poverty"
 "Salaries, injustice for workers, and being treated like rubbish."

Crime (8%)

"Danger in some areas"
 "Pickpockets and bike thieves"
 "People are often robbed"

Food (3%)

"Food products at supermarkets"

Police (1%)
 "Police look at time than do something."

Catalonia vs Spain (8%)

"If I speak Spanish, I'd like that to be respected"
 "Nationalism" "Catalanism"

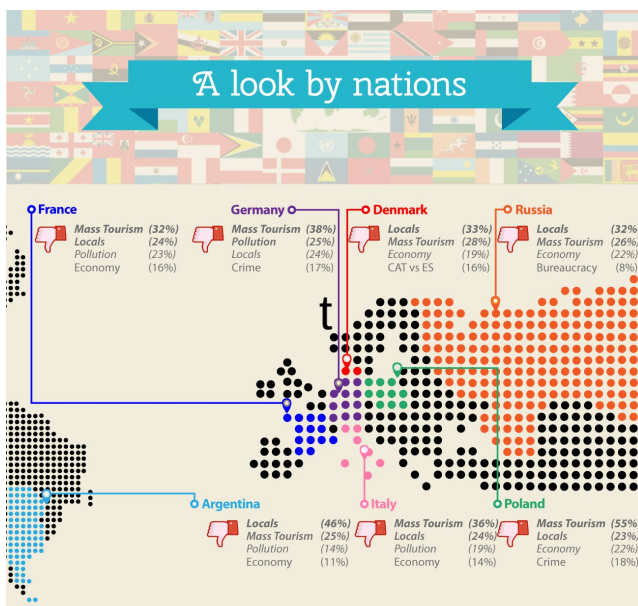
Bureaucracy(5%)

"Administration"
 "Difficulties dealing with paperwork."

Least liked about Barcelona

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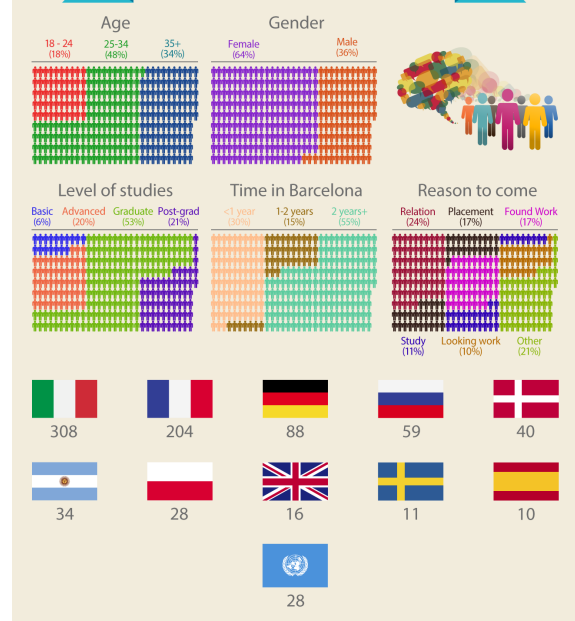
A look by nations



Results according to nationality

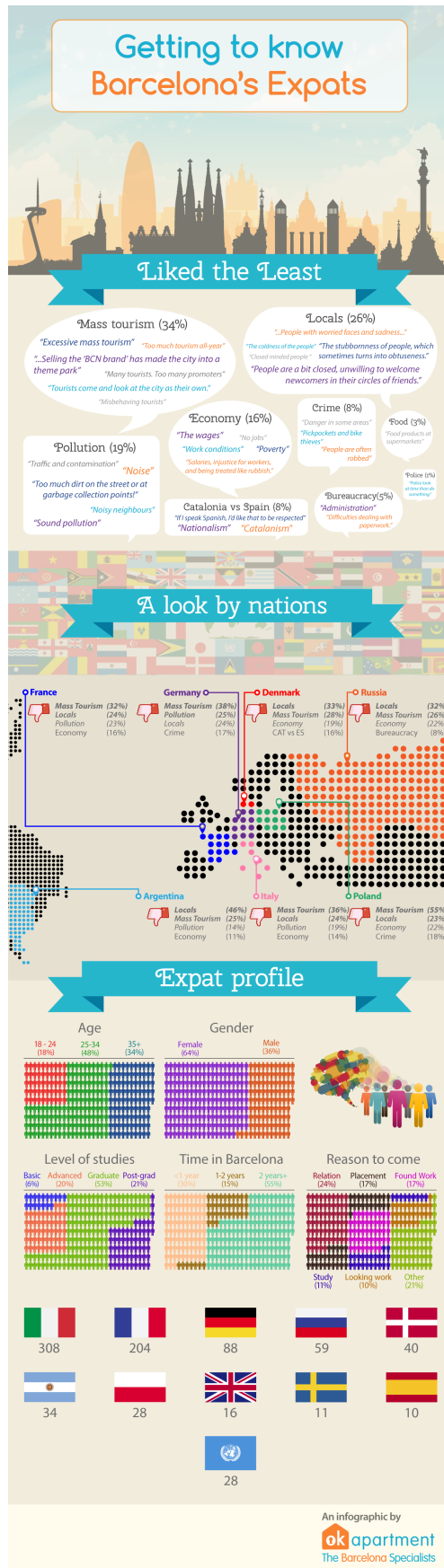
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Expat profile



Profile of the study sample

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Entire infographic
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