

Travelers struggle to prioritize sustainability

As travelers increasingly recognize the importance of sustainable tourism, new research reveals significant challenges in translating awareness into action.

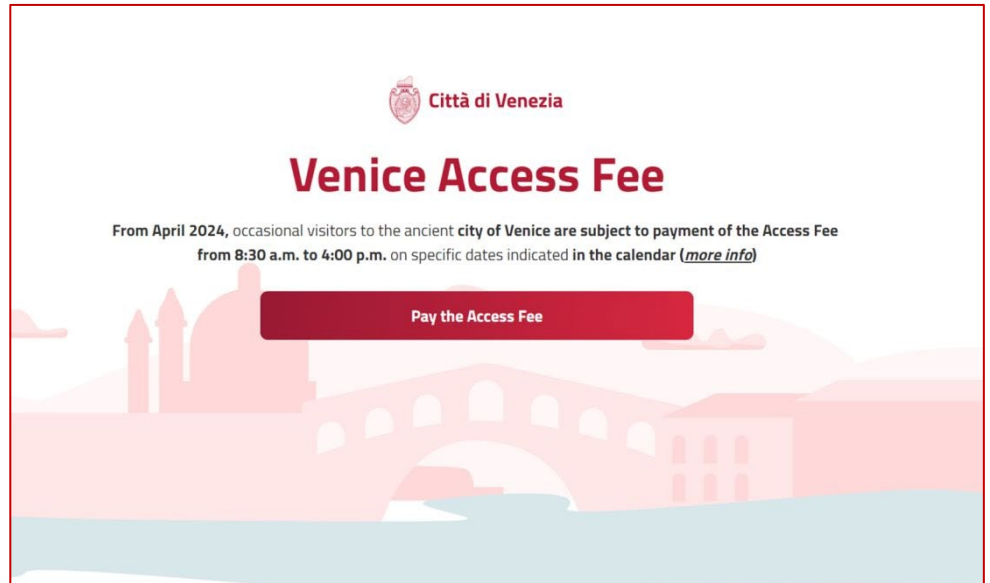
According to a new study by Booking.com of more than 31,000 travelers across 34 countries, 82% of American travelers confirm that sustainable travel is important to them. However, nearly half (48%) admit it is not a primary consideration when planning trips.

The data uncovered a sense of weariness, with 32% reporting fatigue from constant climate change messaging. Alarmingly, 26% feel the environmental damage that has already been done is irreversible, and that their choices won't make a difference. Furthermore, 25% don't believe climate change is as severe as portrayed.

"While the signals of consumer frustration should be a concern, it's also a reminder to maintain our focus on the impactful work we know can make a difference not only for travelers, but for communities and destinations everywhere," said Danielle D'Silva, head of sustainability at Booking.com.

The research sees differing views on responsibility. While 49% of Americans believe they can mitigate travel's social impacts, 32% see governments as key to addressing its economic effects.

— *travelagewest.com*



The council has created this online payment portal.

Comune di Venezia

Authorities propose entry fees, raise taxes

Visitor fees or taxes or penalties are in play across the world as destinations struggle to balance an influx of visitors, aging infrastructure, local resentment and sustainability.

Here are a few examples:

Venice late last month officially rolled out an entry fee for day trippers. This long-anticipated measure aims to ease the heavy toll of overtourism that the iconic city has struggled with for years.

Alongside cities like Barcelona and Amsterdam, Venice has become synonymous with the challenges of overtourism. With a staggering 30 million visitors in 2019, many of whom stayed for just one day, Venice is desperate to protect its fragile infrastructure and historic charm with the new so-called Venice Access Fee.

Local officials, including Mayor Luigi Brugnaro, have championed the fee as a "first-of-its-kind" experiment intended to make Venice more livable. However, not everyone's on board. The policy has sparked controversy, with protests from local committees

and activists throughout the city.

In **Hawaii**, the concept of charging a new fee for tourists to help offset their impact drew overwhelming support in the state legislature.

An effort to increase the state hotel tax by \$25 to offset the impact of visitors on the environment and climate change stalled this legislative session but the concept of a "green fee" remains alive and will likely return with a new funding plan next session.

The proposal would have added another \$25 to the state's transient accommodations tax that would go into a new Climate Health and Environmental Action Special Fund, "to minimize the impacts of, and respond to, climate crises," the administration wrote in support of the bill.

The fund would be available for a wide range of uses including, "wildfire prevention and response strategies, flood prevention, emergency drinking water supplies, shoreline restoration and coastal management, and

Continued on page 2



(National Park Service / Jacob W. Frank)

Study suggests foreign tourists should pay more to visit popular national parks like Yellowstone

Charging international tourists more to visit U.S. national parks has the potential to raise millions of dollars in fees that could help offset costs for park infrastructure, staffing and maintenance.

That's the gist of a new study written by Tate Watkins, a research fellow at the Bozeman-based Property and Environment Research Center. The center touts as its goal finding market solutions for conservation issues.

Based on his research, Watkins said about 14 million people from other countries visit a national park each year. If they paid a \$25 surcharge the parks system could raise around \$330

million annually, he calculated.

"At Yellowstone National Park, a modest surcharge on overseas visitation would likely double revenues from gate fees, while a higher one could triple current receipts," Watkins wrote.

Yellowstone and Glacier charge \$35 per private vehicle to enter the park. An annual pass is \$70 and an interagency pass, good at all national parks, costs \$80. Eighty-percent of entrance fees remain in the parks. Those fees generated an estimated \$12.1 million for Yellowstone.

— *spokesman.com*

Visitors to Mount Fuji will have to pay to climb

Mount Fuji, a UNESCO World Heritage site and an icon of Japan, is putting new regulations in place for climbers amid concerns about overcrowding.

Human traffic jams and foothills littered with garbage are among the issues plaguing the popular site.

To ease congestion on the mountain, the Yamanashi prefectural government, which manages Fuji, voted recently to charge 2,000 yen (\$13) per climber going forward and impose a daily limit of 4,000 hikers.

— *aol.com*

Authorities propose entry fees, raise taxes on visitors

Continued from page 1

preparation of climate crises prevention and response strategies and plans," according to testimony from the administration.

Tourism arrivals peaked at over 10 million before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, which led to widespread calls among island residents to limit visitors.

In **Turkey**, tourists can't visit Hagia Sophia for free anymore. Since January, foreign tourists have had to pay an admission fee of €25 (about \$27) to enter the mosque and UNESCO World Heritage Site, according to Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Hagia Sophia has admitted tourists free of charge since 2020 when the government designated it a mosque and restarted Muslim worship there. It was built nearly 1,500 years ago as a Byzantine cathedral and is one of Turkey's most popular attractions.

The government has separated how tourists and worshippers enter the building. Instead of the main entrance, tourists will now enter through a ramp and tunnel. They will have access only to the gallery floor.

"In some ways, it may be better to separate the crowds," said Alper Ertubey, founder of Hike n' Sail Turkey. "It was getting too chaotic in the lower area."

Muslim visitors wishing to worship can still enter the areas for worship for free.

— *lonelyplanet.com, aol.com, skift.com*