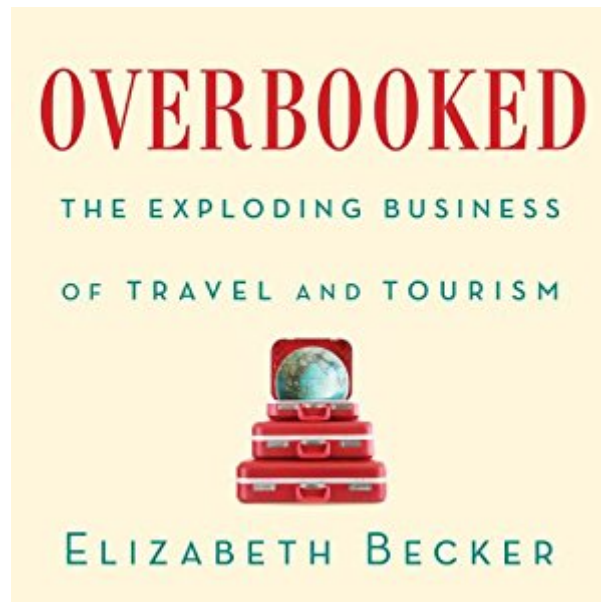




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Overbooked



Synopsis

Tourism, fast becoming the largest global business, employs one out of 12 persons and produces \$6.5 trillion of the world's economy. In a groundbreaking book, Elizabeth Becker uncovers how what was once a hobby has become a colossal enterprise with profound impact on countries, the environment, and cultural heritage. This invisible industry exploded at the end of the Cold War. In 2012 the number of tourists traveling the world reached one billion. Now everything can be packaged as a tour: with the high cost of medical care in the U.S., Americans are booking a vacation and an operation in countries like Turkey for a fraction of the cost at home. Becker travels the world to take the measure of the business: France invented the travel business and is still its leader; Venice is expiring of over-tourism. In Cambodia, tourists crawl over the temples of Angkor, jeopardizing precious cultural sites. Costa Rica rejected raising cattle for American fast-food restaurants to protect their wilderness for the more lucrative field of eco-tourism. Dubai has transformed a patch of desert in the Arabian Gulf into a mammoth shopping mall. Africa's safaris are thriving, even as its wildlife is threatened by foreign poachers. Large cruise ships are spoiling the oceans and ruining city ports as their American-based companies reap handsome profits through tax loopholes. China, the giant, is at last inviting tourists and sending its own out in droves. The United States, which invented some of the best of tourism, has lost its edge due to political battles. Becker reveals travel as product. Seeing the tourism industry from the inside out, through her eyes and ears, we experience a dizzying range of travel options though very few quiet getaways. Her investigation is a first examination of one of the largest and potentially most destructive enterprises in the world.

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Customer Reviews

Becker, like many of us, remembers a family vacation during which the new sights and experiences made a deep impression. One billion international tourist trips were taken last year. Tourism is the main source of income for more than a few cities and countries. Becker does an excellent job of elucidating travel as "one of the world's biggest businesses, an often cutthroat, high risk and high profit industry. However the profits of tourism go to large business, illegal organizations, and dictatorships. There are significant risks to the host country in ecological damage, property values inflated past the means of native citizens, exploited labor, and below board activities. For example, the sex tourism of Cambodia and Thailand is a true entity. In fact Cambodia is considering a "genocide trail" featuring the killing fields. Dubai has been built for tourists on the backs of "guest laborers". Travel is exhilarating and educational. I believe that the pressure of the numbers of tourists have created the "last person on Martha's Vineyard origin. Each person buying into that culture wants no one else accepted for fear of overcrowding. This is a well written book that points out the dangers of unregulated tourism without condemning it as an industry. I did find the writing slow moving at times, but I think this is because multiple nations have made similar mistakes. One of the amusing facts, to me, is that US tourism has gone flat and that Americans are known as the surliest and least welcoming of people. That fact actually never occurred to me. Overbooked is a comprehensive study of the state of tourism. She hails its successes and points out its failures. She also gives concrete solutions to some of the issues concerning recreational travel. She doesn't skip advise to the individual traveler and provides useful information on both enjoyment and on avoiding exploitive behavior. The prose is clear and well documented and as such, is well worth the time to read.

As an avid traveler, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I thought that it was very well researched and the information I received gave me the sense that I learned the inside scoop from a friend who knew the right people. Not only did I receive a history lesson about the major tourist destinations on the planet, I learned how our travels affect the local environment, its culture, and political systems. This is a must read for anyone in the tourism industry. I am just a world traveler and I found it extremely interesting. WELL DONE!

I have traveled all over the world and was really looking forward to the book, but she missed the mark. Where I was expecting more facts about the impact of travel on the environment, what I got was a travelogue with a couple examples of the negative effects of tourism, with no real solutions.

I am still wrapping my mind around everything Elizabeth Becker taught me. For sure, I will never see my travel (and I'm a travel writer/blogger) in the same way. Cruises? Not for me anymore. This book is a well-researched and thoughtfully written account of an industry that employs 1 of 11 people. A fascinating read! I'll be featuring it on my website at [www \(dot\) TravelSmart Woman \(dot\) com](http://www.TravelSmartWoman.com).

Living in Macau, I see the anger of the locals and the negative impact of the 'tourist boom' here. The same is in Hong Kong. Both locations are being overrun by mainland Chinese tourists. Macau has imported over 150,000 workers. So the question is, who is benefiting? Not the locals in Macau or Hong Kong. This book provides insights into this important aspect of tourism. Having visited Bhutan, I think they have it the best. They restrict the number of tourists. Overall, a fantastic and enlightening economics and social book.

An interesting and much needed study of the tourist industry. Some very clear insights, though it seems about twice as long as it should be. Stylistically reads like a collection of long form journalistic essays, which tend to make for tedious reading. But I learned a lot.

This a well written book. It is well-researched and also provides good anecdotes. It lets you see outcomes of the tourist industry that your rarely have in your mind. It also describes the importance of the tourist industry to countries and the need to have national policy on the industry and its role in the economy. It is a must read for those in the tourist industry.

I am in the travel business and she knows what she is talking about. I am in the midst of reading it but I do recommend it.

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