Day Trippers, It's Time to Break-Up

(Spec work)

By Grant Simms

The first time I heard about Venice's new entrance fee I was listening to a Vox podcast. The idea is something I'd imagine would happen eventually. To tell the truth, I was surprised it took this long. I walked and listened, expecting the fee to be something around 50 euros, maybe 80, but when I heard the actual amount I was shocked. They were charging a whopping 5 euros! 5. 5 euros...this was their big plan to curb over tourism in perhaps the most bucket listed city on earth that receives 10s of millions of people every year? Does the Italian government not think people have 5 euros? Surely they cannot be that ignorant. As expected, that 5 euro fee did nothing to dissuade people from visiting. It did generate some healthy extra revenue for the city, but Venice already makes tons of money every day from tourists, it's not like they're looking for more.

What I presume many citizens, who live in and around the famed city, want is some peace and quiet. They likely don't want to have to live in a place where people need to be directed through alleyways like cattle. A place where bridges, boats, squares, and streets are always packed. It must be infuriating to deal with that amount of people everyday. Especially when it comes to those tourists who are not as well mannered as they should be. As much as we preach being respectful to places like Venice, the people who would ever do it harm are still going to do so no matter what anybody says. Each year it only gets worse. More people show up, more Italians move away, and the city physically, economically, and culturally erodes. It's time to take drastic measures. No 5 euro entrance fee is going to quell the problems Venice has.

Being an opinionated person, I, of course, have my own solution to these issues. If someone were to make me travel emperor for a day, here's what I would do to give Venice back to its citizens.

Most importantly, we must get rid of the day trippers. No more cruise ships with people who pour into the city for only a day, and add little to any economic value. No more over inflating a city's population to a point it was never even remotely designed to handle. In order to enter Venice as a non Italian citizen/non Italian resident you should need one of three things: A reservation with a hotel inside the city limits, an invitation from a Venice resident, or be a part of a locally run tour group (no groups bigger than 20). Furthermore, every person wishing to enter Venice, who is a non Italian citizen, or a non Italian resident, who doesn't have an invitation from a Venice resident, must pay a flat fee of 100 euros to enter the city. Half of the fee will go to the upkeep of the city, and half should get distributed to the people who make Venice their home. They deserve it most for having to put up with the incredulous, disrespectful, and egregiously unaware masses that have stampeded throughout their city each year.

There would obviously be people very much opposed to my suggestions. There's a chance what I'm proposing wouldn't even work. But somebody needs to do something. Changes are needed now, and arguably we've reached the point that it's time something drastic was attempted. This is a city that has nearly become unlivable, and was almost listed as an endangered site by UNESCO. It's now or never for Venice. A solution is out there, it just needs to be found, and a 5 euro handshake ain't gonna cut it.