

SPANISH CITY BAN HOLIDAY RENTALS

Spain's Palma to ban vacation rentals after complaints from city residents

April 24th, 2018

1. Palma, on the island of Majorca, is to become the first Spanish city to ban apartment owners from renting their apartments to tourists.
2. The capital of the popular island decided to introduce the ban after complaints from residents about rising rents, mainly caused by the number of tourists renting apartments for a short time through websites and apps.
3. Palma's mayor says that the ban, which will start in July, will be a model for other cities that are struggling with the effects of tourism.
4. Studies show that the number of unlicensed tourist apartments in Spain grew by 50% between 2015 and 2017. In Palma, which is the eighth largest Spanish city by population, only 645 properties have the proper short-term holiday rental license.
5. Although city officials say that tourism is mainly responsible for rising rents, it is not the only cause. Workers who commute from mainland Spain are also a factor in the 40% rise in average rent since 2013. Prices have risen as there are not many apartments available to rent long-term, and more people that want them.
6. In contrast, business associations are warning that the ban will have a financial impact on many families. A local organization for small businesses said that vacation rentals had increased spending in the area, and were an "important source of income" for many apartment owners. Another organization said that it would affect not only owners, but also restaurants and shops, and warned that jobs might be lost.
7. José Hila, Palma's chief of urban planning, said that there was a clear connection between the growth in the number of vacation rentals and the rise in rental prices. He added: "There will be vacation rentals in Palma, but only where there needs to be."
8. Visitors will only be able to stay in detached single-family homes, as these will be exempt from the ban. However, people will not be allowed to offer apartments as vacation rentals if they are on protected farmland, are close to the airport, or are in non-residential areas. The city of Palma will be a "single zone", where the ban will apply in every part of town. Mayor Antoni Noguera said the decision is "to protect residents."
9. Studies show that 48% of tourist apartments are offered for rent for seven to nine months in a year, so few locals have the option to rent long-term.
10. In 2017, Palma banned people from advertising non-licensed apartments, and announced huge fines for owners and apps that broke the law. Barcelona took similar action.
11. A record 82 million foreign tourists visited Spain last year, with Catalonia and the Balearic Islands the most popular destinations.
12. The ban announcement was welcomed by Joan Forteza, the president of a Palma neighborhood federation, after a petition got more than 6,000 signatures.

Sources: BBC News, El Pais (English version)

READING FOR GENERAL UNDERSTANDING

Choose the correct option.

1. How many foreign tourists visited Spain in 2017?
 - a. 62 million
 - b. 82 million
 - c. 102 million

2. What was the growth in percentage of unlicensed tourist apartments in Spain from 2015 to 2017?
a. 10% b. 30% c. 50%
3. By what percentage have long-term rental costs risen in Palma since 2013?
a. 30% b. 40% c. 450%
4. Where will tourists still be allowed to stay after the ban?
a. in detached single-family homes
b. near the airport
c. in non-residential areas

CHECKING UNDERSTANDING

Put 'T' (true) or 'F' (false) next to the statements below. Say why the false answers are not true.

1. Other Spanish cities have banned residents from renting their homes to tourists.
☐
2. People that live in other parts of Spain also caused rental costs to rise on the island. ☐
3. Local business associations think that the ban won't have much impact on the city's economy. ☐
4. Almost half of the properties on the island can be rented any time during the year.
☐
5. The city of Barcelona banned advertising of illegal short-term vacation apartment rentals. ☐

FIND THE WORDS

Find a word or phrase in the article which means ...

1. increasing cost of paying to live somewhere (two-word phrase, P.2):

2. the biggest cause of something (two-word phrase, P.5):

3. travel somewhere everyday to go to work verb, P.5): _____
4. an essential way to make money (five-word phrase, P.6):

5. made people aware of a future problem (verb - ed, P.6):

6. a link that is easy to see (three-word phrase, P.7): _____
7. where there are offices and factories but no houses (adj., P.8):

8. kept safe by law (adj., P.8): _____
9. affect a person or thing (verb, P.8): _____