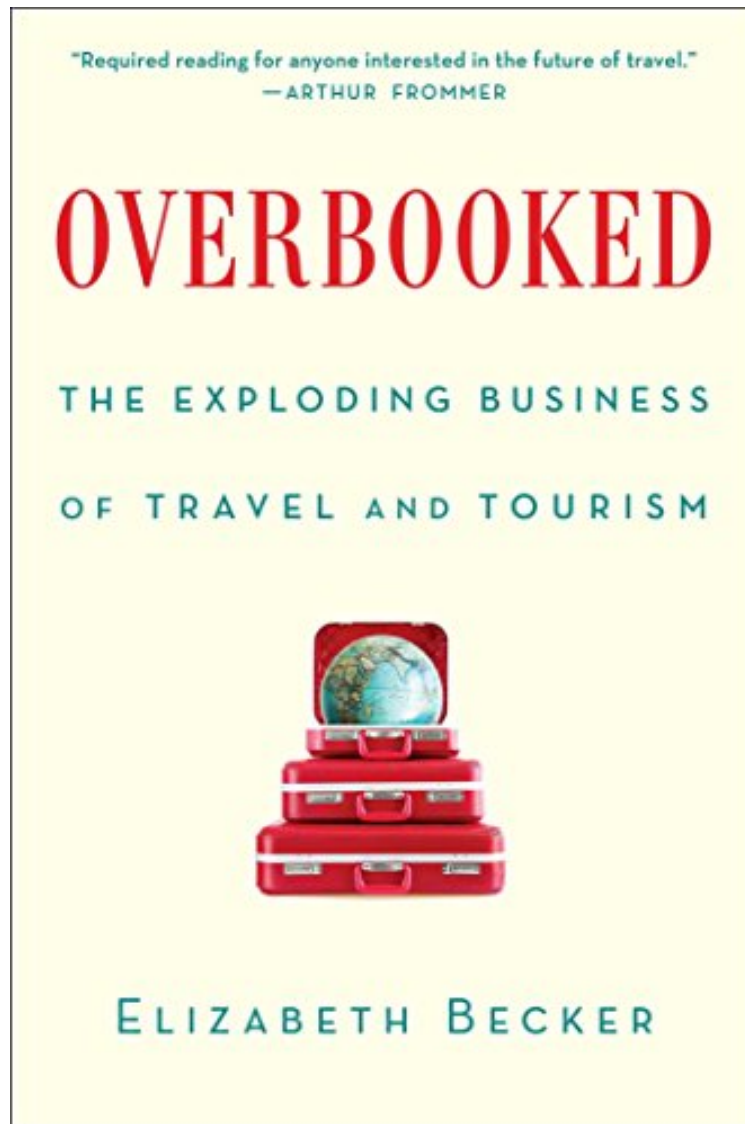


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## Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism

*Elizabeth Becker*

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**Elizabeth Becker : Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Overbooked: The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism:

21 of 22 people found the following review helpful. "Like any industry , tourism has winner and losers."By Amelia GremelspacherBecker, 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. 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Best book on the impacts of tourism and how it works! Very Interesting!!! By Anthony L. Porter 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! 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Missed the mark By Boom Boom 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.

Tourism, fast becoming the largest global business, employs one out of twelve 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.

.com An Best Book of the Month, April 2013: Tourism is on track to become the world's biggest business. In *Overbooked*, Elizabeth Becker, senior foreign editor at NPR and a former New York Times correspondent, uses tourism as a lens through which to explore the current geopolitical landscape. As much as *Overbooked* travels across countries, it also travels through time: Becker looks at tourism's past (popularized by the French in the '50s!), where it is today (the prevalence of resort and cultural travel), and its future (China's rise as both a destination and a source of tourists). As much economic development as tourism brings, Becker consistently sees a dark side to the industry's rapid growth. She writes, "Tourism is one of those double-edged swords that may look like an easy way to earn desperately needed money but can ravage wilderness areas and undermine native cultures to fit into package tours." -- Kevin Nguyen From Booklist Everyone needs a vacation, a time for carefree fun on a cruise, at a theme park, in a cultured city, or in nature. Even the Chinese government acknowledged this when it granted the right to annual paid "golden weeks" to its citizens in 2000 and let them travel in tour groups to approved countries. What many do not realize is that with over a billion people now visiting foreign countries, travel and tourism have become an international force that seriously affects cultures, economies, and the environment. Savvy countries can prosper by attracting ready-to-spend tourists, but inept or corrupt governments often squander opportunities. Having spent more than 30 years as a correspondent for the Washington Post, New York Times, and other publications, Becker has seen

tremendous change in foreign travel. In this timely and entertainingly personal report for serious travelers and policymakers, she features how tourism fares in France, Italy, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Dubai, Africa, China, and the U.S. --Rick Roche "Required reading for anyone interested in the future of travel." (Arthur Frommer ) "[A] meticulously reported and often disturbing exposeacute; of the travel industry." (The New York Times Book )ldquo;The definitive account of the rise of the modern tourism industry, from its beginnings as a small, fanciful pastime among elites, to its explosive growth after World War II, to its present as an economic engine valued at \$7 trillion.rdqquo; (Bloomberg BusinessWeek)ldquo;Elizabeth Becker has found a giant gap in journalistic coverage and stepped squarely into the middle of it. Even though itrsquo;s under our noses, beneath our feet, even in our happier dreams, rarely has the investigative story she recounts in her new book previously received the coverage it deserves: The rampant growth of travel and tourism.rdqquo; (National Geographic)ldquo;Ms. Becker is a skilled, critical writer delivering illuminating information, telling engaging stories, and advancing her own personal observations. Overbooked appeals to a wide audience: those who make the billion trips annually; those who have a stake in the places impacted, sometimes for better, but all too often for worse, by those travelersrsquo; visits; and all who have a stake in the global economy.rdqquo; (New York Journal of Books)ldquo;In the tourism industry, image is definitely everything, but Becker shows readers the flip side of all this luxury and play, exposing the seedy underbelly of a business gone haywire from Cambodia to the United States.rdqquo; (Kirkus s, Starred )ldquo;Travel is a huge global industry, rivaling oil and finance in economic value. Now, a terrific reporter gives us a full picture of its dimensions and its future. Elizabeth Becker does so, not by loading us down with statistics but by taking us around the world to match up the daunting numbers with places, adventures, and even pitfalls that will keep you reading.rdqquo; (Steven Brill, author of Class Warfare )ldquo;A comprehensive, often alarming, and sometimes puzzling examination of an oft-invisible powerhouse. . . . Overbooked succeeds in demonstrating the growing heft of the travel industry and the numerous problems that are associated with it.rdqquo; (The Weekly Standard)ldquo;Journalist Becker travels widely, experiencing and analyzing lsquo;the stealth industry of the twenty-first century.rsquo; . . . Impressively wide-ranging . . . intriguing and eye-opening, this book will leave few in doubt that tourism deserves more consideration than it has hitherto received in larger discussions of globalization and public policy.rdqquo; (Publishers Weekly)ldquo;Tourism is one of the world's largest ndash; and unexamined ndash; industries. Elizabeth Becker takes us on a compelling journey across continents to show us just how essential tourism is to global prosperity. You will never book a room, ascend the Eiffel Tower, or see the sites in quite the same way again.rdqquo; (Zachary Karabell, author of Superfusion )ldquo;Follow Elizabeth Becker on this trip around the world and become a more mindful traveler. She is not only an intrepid globetrotter, but a terrific reporter who asks all the right questions!rdquo; (Sylvia Nasar, author of Grand Pursuit and A Beautiful Mind )ldquo;Will tourism in America go the way of Venice and Cambodia, or France and Costa Rica? Elizabeth Beckerrsq's thoughtful, informed book should move that discussion along.rdqquo; (Seattle Times)