

INTERMEDIATE 2 – Leave only footprints

Track 1

Hi! I'm Matteo and I'm from the Italian city of Venice. I'm very proud of where I'm from. You've probably heard of it, it's a very famous city all around the world. We have the best food in the world and it's the most beautiful city anywhere in the world – really!

But because our city's so famous and beautiful, we get a lot of tourists coming to visit. Tourists usually visit in the summer, but it's getting busy all year round. It's great that our city's so popular, but it does cause a few challenges. You should know, the population of Venice is about 54,000, but we get about 30 million visitors every year. I mean, you must understand, Venice will always need tourists. Visitors are very important to bring money to our city. Many of my family members are employed in the tourism industry. In fact, I think most of the people who live in Venice are connected to tourism in one way or another. But the effects of having so many tourists are quite serious.

The biggest problem in my opinion is the big tourist ships, the cruise ships. They bring thousands of tourists to the city each day, from spring to autumn. For example, there were eight cruise ships in Venice yesterday. The tourists from these ships never stay in the city, though, and they don't often spend much money in the city. They make all the popular tourist sites very crowded. The ships also cause a lot of damage to the natural environment when they arrive in the city. There's been a lot of talk about making laws so fewer cruise ships are allowed to come. It hasn't happened yet, but we'll see in the future.

Another huge problem is that high levels of tourism can cause a change to the character and feel of the city. Venice is an old city with a very interesting history. It used to be full of art and culture, as well as a traditional way of living. But now it's very touristy, there aren't so many local businesses, just tourist shops and restaurants and cafes that are normally too expensive for local people to visit. And local people move out of the city every year because it's too expensive to live here. Too many houses and

apartments are being used for tourists, and not enough are available for local people. My family rents an apartment in a less touristy location in the city, but the rent's getting more and more expensive. It's hard to get around, and having so many tourists is causing a lot of rubbish and pollution, which is really spoiling the city. We often see rubbish in the canals.

There've been some ideas to help control the number of tourists coming. Some people want a maximum number of tourists to be allowed to visit the main locations at the same time, perhaps with a ticket system. Other people think we should reduce the number of hotels and holiday apartments for tourists, so there'll be more places for local people to live and houses won't be so expensive. Almost everyone agrees that cruise ships need to be controlled better. I'm not sure what the best solution is, but I know that something needs to be done so that Venice can be preserved for future generations. Let's hope that we can find a way to save our beautiful city.