



Venice is flooded with tourists—visit these floating cities instead

These historic harbors rival Italy's "City of Canals." Here's how to see them responsibly.

4 MINUTE READ

BY CAITLIN ETHERTON



Venice has captured travelers' hearts for hundreds of years. An artistic and architectural masterpiece, this city on the sea is home to the iconic Rialto Bridge, Grand Canal, and Saint Mark's Square. But what happens when people flood the canals faster than the rising water? Venice receives around 30 million visitors per year, and [overtourism](#) isn't just affecting the city's romantic vibe. Heavy foot, boat, and cruise traffic is polluting its delicate lagoon, and locals are leaving because of ballooning property values. ([Tourists could destroy Venice—if floods don't first.](#))

While Venice will always be a gem on the Adriatic, travelers can reduce their impact by seeking alternative, but equally spectacular, destinations. From China to Belgium, set sail to these bridge-woven harbors. ([How to turn overtourism into sustainable global travel.](#))

Suzhou, China

The ancient Chinese city of Suzhou, roughly 1.5 hours west of [Shanghai](#), has an extensive network of canals, water gardens, and boat-friendly neighborhoods. A [UNESCO World Heritage site](#), the Jing-Hang Grand Canal is more than 2,000 years old and stretches roughly 1,200 miles through the Yangtze River Delta, making it the world's longest and oldest canal. Stroll over ancient stone bridges to the sixth-century Hanshan Temple, take a gondola through the Mudu gardens, or cross Tongli's 49 symbolic bridges. **Sustainable travel tip:** Support the community's economy by stopping at a waterside teahouse to indulge in locally sourced fare.



SUZHOU, CHINA

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