

# The 100 Most Complained-About Beaches in the World: An Analysis of TripAdvisor Reviews

While those picture-perfect beach destinations might look stunning on Instagram, the reality can be far from idyllic. At Cloudwards, we wanted to uncover the truth behind postcard-worthy locations by analyzing what real travelers are saying. We meticulously examined TripAdvisor reviews for 200 of the world's most popular beaches to determine which sandy shores are leaving visitors feeling salty. .

Our research reveals a sobering reality check: many of the world's most famous beaches receive complaints for garbage, overwhelming crowds, frustrating queues and disruptive noise levels. From the shores of Southeast Asia to the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Caribbean, no region is immune. Let's dive in with some key findings.



## Key Findings

- **Waikiki Beach in Hawaii, USA** tops our overall complaint list with a score of 100/100, primarily due to extreme overcrowding.
- **Venice Beach in California, USA** ranks as the second most complained-about beach, with most complaints focused on cleanliness issues.
- **La Pelosa in Italy** received the highest percentage of overcrowding complaints, with a staggering number of negative reviews mentioning this issue.
- **Playa Delfines in Mexico** earned the dubious honor of worst queues, with over half of complaints mentioning long wait times.
- **Maho Beach in Sint Maarten** ranked as the noisiest beach destination, with a large chunk of complaints mentioning excessive noise, no doubt due to its famous position at the end of an airport runway.
- **Four American beaches (excluding U.S. territories)** feature in the top ten for overall complaints. U.S. states take 39 spots in total.

## Overall Rankings

To create the overall ranking, we analyzed TripAdvisor reviews for 200 of the most popular beaches worldwide. We used complaint-related keywords like "dirty", "overcrowded", "long queues", "noise" and "disruption" to filter the reviews, then looked at how frequently they were applied to each beach to calculate an overall "complaint score."

We explain our methodology in more detail further down but for now, take a look at how each beach stacked up:

Overall Ranking	Beach	Country	Complaint Score (0–100)	Dirty	Overcrowded	Long Queues	Noise/Disruption
1	Waikiki Beach	United States	100	15.9%	67.3%	7.6%	9.2%
2	Venice Beach	United States	89.7	60.6%	20.7%	6.8%	12%
3	Playa Manuel Antonio	Costa Rica	73.5	10.4%	56.2%	26%	7.4%
4	Clearwater Beach	United States	65.5	18.6%	64.6%	8.3%	8.5%

5	Bournemouth Beach	United Kingdom	65.1	31.7%	52.5%	10.2%	5.6%
6	La Jolla Cove	United States	64.3	57.9%	30.4%	6.7%	4.9%
7	Elafonissi Beach	Greece	60.3	9.8%	73.4%	14.4%	2.4%
8	Magens Bay Beach	U.S. Virgin Islands	58.1	12.4%	62.2%	16.9%	8.5%
9	Bondi Beach	Australia	57.1	13%	75.9%	7.8%	3.4%
10	Maho Beach	Sint Maarten	57	6.8%	43.8%	11.3%	38.2%
11	Akumal Beach	Mexico	55.6	17%	66.7%	13%	3.3%
12	White Beach	Philippines	54.9	25%	51.5%	6.2%	17.4%
13	Fort Myers Beach	United States	53.8	37.8%	43.4%	11.8%	7%
14	Medano Beach	Mexico	52.9	6.1%	58.1%	6.4%	29.5%
15	Bavaro Beach	Dominican Republic	51.7	38.5%	29.8%	15.2%	16.5%
16	Fort Lauderdale Beach	United States	51.5	26.2%	52.2%	7.7%	14%
17	Siesta Beach	United States	50.3	30.4%	52.3%	10.4%	7%
18	Santa Monica State Beach	United States	48.9	40.9%	45.8%	8.1%	5.1%
19	PhraNang Cave Beach	Thailand	47.7	20.3%	63.7%	7.1%	8.9%
20	Manly Beach	Australia	47.4	10.2%	76.5%	9.2%	4.1%
21	Playa Norte	Mexico	46.1	12.2%	59.4%	7%	21.5%
22	Panama City Beach	United States	44.3	40.4%	36.1%	8.2%	15.3%
23	Boulders Beach	South Africa	44.3	14.7%	62.7%	18.5%	4.1%
24	Orient Bay Beach	Saint Martin	43.1	14.1%	62.7%	11.4%	11.8%
25	Ocean City Beach	United States	42.9	30.1%	42.3%	10.3%	17.2%
26	Balos Lagoon	Greece	42.2	47.3%	40.4%	10.2%	2.1%
27	Beach at Daytona Beach	United States	42.2	36.7%	46%	6.9%	10.4%
28	Horseshoe Bay	Bermuda	41.8	5.6%	69.1%	18.8%	6.5%
29	Ka'anapali Beach	United States	40.7	8.7%	71.4%	13.5%	6.4%

30	Ka'anapali Beach	United States	40.7	8.4%	71.4%	13.5%	6.6%
31	Weymouth Beach	United Kingdom	39.5	23.3%	62.3%	8.1%	6.2%
32	Ipanema Beach	Brazil	39.4	27.4%	57.6%	5.4%	9.5%
33	Seven Mile Beach	Cayman Islands	39.3	18%	34.2%	14.5%	33.3%
34	Surfers Paradise Beach	South Pacific	37.7	15.8%	68.5%	7.7%	8%
35	Poipu Beach Park	United States	37.2	8.8%	83.2%	4.3%	3.7%
36	Poipu Beach Park	United States	37.2	8.6%	83.5%	4.3%	3.7%
37	Bahia Honda State Park	United States	37.2	51.8%	26.2%	17.1%	4.9%
38	Playa Varadero	Cuba	36.6	45.1%	28.4%	12.3%	14.2%
39	Baby Beach	Aruba	36.6	32.3%	46.2%	12.3%	9.2%
40	Cocoa Beach	United States	36	40.7%	46.3%	8.8%	4.2%
41	Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park	United States	35.7	27.8%	46.4%	21.9%	4%
42	Hollywood Beach	United States	35.4	40.9%	44.9%	5.4%	8.8%
43	Sombrero Beach	United States	35.3	49.3%	33.7%	7.8%	9.2%
44	Seven Mile Beach	Jamaica	35	10%	62.8%	16.9%	10.3%
45	Isla Pasion	Mexico	34.4	23.9%	9.3%	49.6%	17.1%
46	Freedom Beach	Thailand	34.4	52.1%	34.6%	6.8%	6.4%
47	The Baths	British Virgin Islands	34.1	8.7%	48.7%	36.7%	5.8%
48	Eagle Beach	Aruba	33.5	19.6%	53.6%	12.5%	14.3%
49	Anthony Quinn Bay	Greece	31.7	11.4%	77.2%	3%	8.4%
50	Haeundae Beach	South Korea	31.7	17.3%	63.3%	12.2%	7.2%

[See All](#)



When analyzing the complete rankings, certain beaches stand out as particularly problematic across multiple categories.

Waikiki Beach in Hawaii has earned the dubious distinction of most complained-about beach worldwide with a complaint score of 100/100. While its primary issue is overcrowding (67.3% of complaints), it also receives criticism for cleanliness (15.9%) and, to a lesser extent, long queues and noise.

Venice Beach in California follows closely behind with an 89.7/100 score, driven primarily by cleanliness concerns (60.6%). Playa Manuel Antonio in Costa Rica, which received a 56.2% score for overcrowding complaints, rounds out the top three with a 73.5/100 score.

American beaches dominate the top 10, claiming four spots including Clearwater Beach (65.5/100) and La Jolla Cove (64.3/100). Magens Bay Beach in the U.S. Virgin Islands scored 58.1/100. European destinations like Bournemouth Beach in the UK (65.1/100) and Elafonissi Beach in Greece (60.3/100) also rank high in overall complaints.

## Beach Destinations That Disappoint: The Complaint Categories

### Beaches That Fail the Cleanliness Test

Top 10 Dirtiest Beaches			
Ranking	Beaches	Country	Dirty %
1	Venice Beach	United States	60.6
2	La Jolla Cove	United States	57.9
3	Padre Island National Seashore	United States	55.7
4	Freedom Beach	Thailand	52.1
5	Bahia Honda State Park	United States	51.8
6	Sombrero Beach	United States	49.3
7	Bentota Beach	Sri Lanka	48.2
8	Balos Lagoon	Greece	47.3
9	Four Mile Beach	South Pacific	45.9
10	Playa Varadero	Cuba	45.1

What's worse than finding the perfect spot on a beautiful beach? Discovering it's surrounded by litter, polluted water or funky odors.

According to our analysis, U.S. beaches take up half of the "dirtiest" category based on complaints, with five of the top ten spots. Venice Beach in California tops the list with 60.6% of complaints mentioning cleanliness issues, followed by La Jolla Cove (57.9%) and Padre Island National Seashore (55.7%).

International destinations weren't immune to cleanliness problems either. Freedom Beach in Thailand (52.1%) and Bentota Beach in Sri Lanka (48.2%) rounded out the top seven beaches receiving complaints for lack of cleanliness. The complaints frequently mention improperly managed waste disposal systems, litter left by careless tourists, and in coastal areas with heavy development, urban runoff affecting water quality.

These cleanliness issues aren't just aesthetic problems — they represent serious environmental and public health concerns. Visitors often report disappointment at finding what should be natural paradises marred by human negligence.

One TripAdvisor reviewer at Venice Beach wrote that it "is dirty and some parts even smelled like urine," while another at Padre Island National Seashore lamented: "The amount of plastic that lingers around is astounding, and is augmented day by day by the visitors."



## The Overcrowding Crisis

Top 10 Most Overcrowded Beaches			
Ranking	Beaches	Country	Overcrowded %
1	La Pelosa	Italy	86.9
2	Spiaggia La Cinta	Italy	84.2
3	Praia da Falésia	Portugal	83.7
4	Poipu Beach Park	United States	83.5
5	Cala Comte	Spain	83.3
6	Poipu Beach Park	United States	83.2
7	Konnos Bay	Cyprus	82.1
8	La Concha Beach	Spain	81.8
9	Spiaggia La Cinta	Italy	81.6
10	Playa de Muro Beach	Spain	77.6

Finding your own piece of paradise can be challenging when you're sharing the beach with thousands of other visitors. European beaches dominate the overcrowding category, with Italian beaches claiming the top two spots.

La Pelosa (86.9%) and Spiaggia La Cinta (84.2%) in Italy received the highest percentage of complaints about overcrowding, followed by Praia da Falésia in Portugal (83.7%).

The United States isn't far behind, with Poipu Beach Park in Hawaii appearing twice in the top ten for overcrowding (83.5% and 83.2% — likely representing different sections of the beach). Spanish beaches also feature prominently, with Cala Comte (83.3%), La Concha Beach (81.8%), and Playa de Muro Beach (77.6%) all making the top ten.

The overcrowding issue directly impacts visitor experience, with bagging a parking spot or finding space for a towel becoming a competitive sport.

During peak season at these destinations, visitors report having to arrive extremely early to claim space, only to find themselves practically touching shoulders with strangers. As one visitor to La Pelosa wrote: "It was a weekday morning in mid-September yet the crowds resembled central London/New York/Sydney on New Year's Eve."





## Beaches With Nightmare Queues

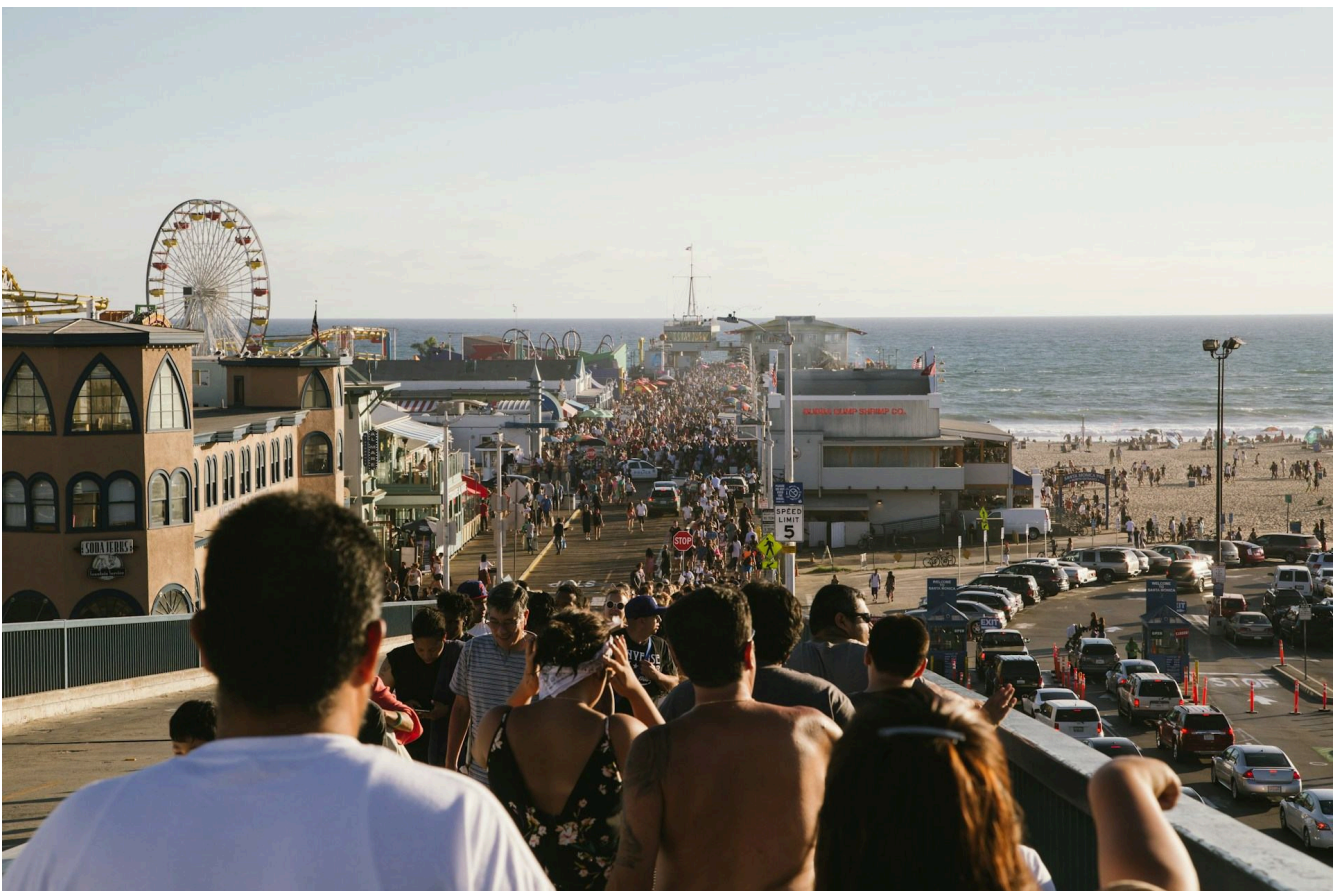
Top 10 Beaches With Worst Queues			
Ranking	Beaches	Country	Long Queues %
1	Playa Delfines	Mexico	57.9
2	Isla Pasion	Mexico	49.6
3	The Baths	British Virgin Islands	36.7
4	Kelingking Beach	Indonesia	28.6
5	Playa Manuel Antonio	Costa Rica	26
6	Cable Beach	South Pacific	23.6
7	Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park	United States	21.9
8	St. Andrews State Park	United States	19.8
9	Cas Abao Beach	Curaçao	19.4
10	Wai'anapanapa State Park	United States	18.9

Nothing ruins a beach day like standing in line. Whether waiting for facilities, food, transportation or simply finding parking, some beaches test visitors' patience as much as they reward it. Mexican beaches lead this category, with Playa Delfines topping the list at 57.9% of complaints mentioning long waits, followed by Isla Pasion at 49.6%.

Island destinations with limited access options frequently appear in this category. The Baths in the British Virgin Islands (36.7%), Kelingking Beach in Indonesia (28.6%), and beaches requiring park entrance like Playa Manuel Antonio in Costa Rica (26%) all suffer from bottleneck effects. Some visitors mention spending more time waiting than actually enjoying the beaches themselves.

At Playa Delfines, visitors report painfully long waits to take photos of the Cancun sign, while at The Baths, boat queues and narrow access paths create significant delays.

One visitor to Playa Manuel Antonio wrote: "The line to get in the park, where the beach is located, is crazy long, as it includes not only beach goers but people interested in the park, taking walking tours, etc."





## Rowdiest Beaches

Top 10 Beaches With Most Noise/Disruption Complaints			
Ranking	Beaches	Country	Noise/Disruption %
1	Maho Beach	Sint Maarten	38.2
2	Seven Mile Beach	Cayman Islands	33.3
3	Medano Beach	Mexico	29.5
4	Tobacco Bay Beach	Bermuda	27.8
5	Playa Norte	Mexico	21.5
6	Porto Katsiki	Greece	20.3
7	Mullet Bay	Sint Maarten	18.1
8	White Beach	Philippines	17.4
9	Ocean City Beach	United States	17.2
10	Isla Pasion	Mexico	17.1

A peaceful day at the beach can quickly turn unpleasant when disrupted by loud music, rowdy parties or excessive noise from nearby attractions.

Caribbean and North American beaches dominate this category, with Maho Beach in Sint Maarten leading at 38.2% of complaints mentioning noise issues. This is unsurprising given that the beach is quite the tourist attraction thanks to its location directly under an airport flight path where planes pass just meters above sunbathers' heads.

Seven Mile Beach in the Cayman Islands placed second (33.3%), followed by Medano Beach in Mexico (29.5%). The noise sources varied significantly across destinations, from aircraft at Maho Beach to party crowds at Tobacco Bay Beach in Bermuda (27.8%) and music from beachfront establishments at Playa Norte in Mexico (21.5%).

The nature of noise complaints often reflect each beach's particular character and surrounding development. Party destinations naturally generate complaints about music and rowdy behavior, while beaches near transportation hubs suffer from traffic and aircraft noise — and smells, according to some reviewers.

A visitor to Maho Beach noted: "The smell of jet fuel is sickening and the blast of sand in the face from the jets is painful and like standing in front of a sand blaster."



## Methodology & Sources

Our research team at Cloudwards conducted this study to provide travelers with insights beyond the typical travel brochure descriptions. Here's how we approached our analysis:

- 1 Beach Selection:** We identified 200 of the world's most popular beaches by analyzing multiple travel publications, tourism rankings, and social media popularity metrics. These beaches span six continents and represent diverse types of beach destinations, from urban beaches to remote island paradises.
- 2 Data Collection:** For each beach, we analyzed TripAdvisor reviews, focusing specifically on negative feedback.

- 3 **Complaint Categorization:** We filtered reviews by identifying keywords related to complaints in four major categories:
  - Dirtiness (keywords such as "garbage," "smell," "unclean," "trash," etc.)
  - Overcrowding (keywords such as "crowded," "packed," "busy," etc.)
  - Long queues (keywords such as "wait," "queue," "line," etc.)
  - Noise/disruption (keywords such as "loud," "noisy," "drunk," etc.)
- 4 **Scoring System:** Each beach received a 'Complaint Score' (0-100), based solely on the number of negative reviews or complaints, with higher numbers of complaints resulting in a higher score.
- 5 **Ranking:** Beaches were ranked overall from 1 to 100 and we created a top ten for each complaint category based on the scores.

## CEO Commentary

Cloudwards CEO Mauricio Preuss commented on the findings: *"For travelers, this research underscores the importance of looking beyond the highlight reel. The most rewarding beach experiences might be found at lesser-known destinations that haven't yet been overwhelmed by mass tourism. Sometimes the best paradise is the one that isn't trending on TikTok."*

### About Cloudwards

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