

Venice Canals Look Clearer Due to Italy's Coronavirus Lockdown



Although in the first place the coronavirus has a huge impact on our daily lives and poses a serious threat to many of us, the outbreak of the disease has some remarkable side effects. For example, due to a lack of debris from tourists and near-zero boat traffic under Italy's ongoing coronavirus lockdown, the city of Venice is enjoying crystal clear waters in its world-famous canals. Even dolphins have been spotted in the canals. The clear waters are a tiny bright spot in the city, whose economy has been virtually wiped out since tourists fled the area at the beginning of last month, spooked by the spread of coronavirus in the north of the country.

Since 9 March, the city – like the rest of Italy – has been a so-called red zone, with hotels, restaurants, cafés and most businesses shuttered, and residents ordered to stay inside

and avoid travel. That has had a drastic effect on Venice's normally polluted waters, where speedboats churn up mud, and discarded plastic and other garbage from tourists float in its canals, [France 24](#), the international news channel, reports.

"The water now looks clearer because there is less traffic on the canals, allowing the sediment to stay at the bottom," a spokesman from the Venice mayor's office told the American news agency [CNN](#). While the water quality has not improved, according to the spokesperson, the air quality probably has. "The air, however, is less polluted since there are fewer vaporetti (motorized canal boats) and there is less boat traffic than usual because of the restricted movement of residents."

Facebook Group Venezia Pulita

The side effect of the Italian lockdown has even been reported in Asia. CNA, [Channel News Asia](#), writes on its website, "Images of the welcome change were first posted on a Facebook group [Venezia Pulita](#) (Clean Venice), with residents sharing photos of tiny fish swimming in usually opaque waters, or cormorant, egrets and other birds enjoying the lack of boat traffic in the city's canals."

The 'acqua alta', or high water, has submerged a major part of the low-lying area of the city, including St Mark's Square, in up to 1.87 metres of water, the highest level since 1966. Venice is located in the Veneto region, which has the third-highest number of cases of infections from coronavirus, at 3,214, and the fourth-highest number of deaths, at 94. In Lombardy, Veneto's neighbour to the west that has been the hardest hit by the virus, 17,713 people have been infected and 1,959 people have died (facts and figures from 21 March 2020).

(Photo [Mustang Joe](#))