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Here's the Tax beat broadcast for November 12

Subject Line: Bone to Pick: Travelers Howl Over Italy's Dog Tax

If you ever thought vacationing with your dog was a walk in the park, Italy just tossed a new stick into the game. The Province of Bolzano in northern Italy is planning to charge visitors about €1.50 per day, or roughly two bucks, for the privilege of bringing along their pup. That's right: tourists are choking on a brand-new "dog tax." Sit. Stay. Pay.

Local officials say too many furry tourists are leaving behind landmines nobody signed up to step in. Parks and public areas are apparently a little doo-doo-overwhelmed, and somebody's got to foot the bill for cleanup. So, who better to fetch the tab than people who literally bring the problem with them?

If you live in the area, the bite gets bigger. Locals could pay more than \$100 a year unless they sign up for a DNA-tracking system to tie mystery droppings back to the right tail-holder. Yes, you heard that correctly — CSI: K9 Edition. Imagine McGruff, the crime fighting bloodhound, growling, "Enhance . . . yep, that's Cannoli from Apartment 4B." Think of 23andMe, but for poop.

As you might imagine, animal-rights groups aren't wagging their tails about this. Some call the tax disproportionate, complaining it treats dogs like luxury handbags rather than beloved family members. They argue that instead of treating responsible pet parents like ATMs, the government should just enforce existing cleanup rules and fine the people who don't pick up after their dogs. But apparently that solution didn't pass the smell test.

Before you shrug this off as just another fussy story from an idiosyncratic land, remember that governments everywhere are sniffing around for new revenue. An avocado tax? A flip-flop tax? A sunshine tax? You never know. Once lawmakers see fresh ways to put their paws in your wallet, they tend to keep scratching.

So, what does this all mean for real, regular humans just trying to enjoy life with a furry sidekick?

First, if you're planning a dream trip to the Dolomites with your goldendoodle, pad the budget. Your canine companion may need his own line item right next to airfare, Aperol spritzes, and that hotel with the tiny shower. Better yet, Fido might need a tax plan. (If he gets a 1099, things have gone too far.)

Second, this is a fun reminder that every place has its own rules, and travel-related taxes can get weird fast. Some places tax rental cars. Some tax hotel rooms. Now Bolzano is taxing zoomies. Don't assume your dog travels free just because the airline let him under the seat.

Third, this whole scheme is really about paper-training dog owners. Governments love using taxes to nudge you into doing what they want. Don't want to scoop your pup's poop? Pay up. Don't want to register his DNA? Pay more. Don't want to think about any of this and just want a peaceful walk with your schnauzer? Too bad! Roll over and pay.

Oh, and if you're hoping you can deduct the dog tax you pay on your vacation: probably not, unless your dog is a bona fide business expense. Unless your corgi is your actual coworker, the IRS is likely to say no.

So here's the takeaway. Governments everywhere are always prowling for new ideas to raise money, and when you travel, you're basically walking into their yard. The world is full of surprises—and occasional piles you don't want to step in.

If you're planning to travel with your pup, check ahead to make sure the only souvenirs you bring home are fridge magnets, not unexpected fees. And if a new tax seems ruff, get a second opinion. When in doubt, we're here to sniff it out

Kevin

