

## Lack of promotion and Airbnb bigger threat than sargassum: Cancún hoteliers

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### Plan to promote tourism through embassies called 'absurd;' Airbnb listings grew 53% last year

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A lack of tourism promotion and the rise in popularity of accommodation booking platforms such as Airbnb are hitting the Quintana Roo hotel sector harder than the arrival of sargassum, according to an industry representative.

“Sargassum is not an issue that is bringing reservations down,” said Roberto Cintrón Gómez, president of the Hotel Association of Cancún and Puerto Morelos.

“It’s definitely the lack of promotion and the vacation rental platforms . . . the rental platforms have had significant growth,” he explained.

The former is the result of the federal government’s decision to disband the Tourism Promotion Council (CPTM) and redirect its funding to the Maya Train project.

Some tourism businesses and local governments have [joined forces to fill the vacuum](#) left by the closure of the CPTM, while the federal government announced in April that marketing the nation as a tourism destination would become a responsibility of Mexico’s embassies and consulates.



There are worse things than sargassum, hotels say.

Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard said that [diplomatic staff will undertake short tourism marketing courses](#) that in most cases will be delivered online to avoid any detrimental effects on the day-day-day operations of overseas missions.

But tourism industry representative rejected the plan.

Sergio González Rubiera, president of the Mexican Travel Agency Association, described the idea as “absurd” and urged authorities to use revenue collected from the accommodation tax to carry out national and international tourism marketing campaigns.

Abelardo Vara Rivera of the Hotel Association of Cancún and Puerto Morelos charged that the use of “tourism diplomacy to promote the country is a big joke.”

“. . . After a few minutes on the internet they’re going to turn ambassadors and consuls into tourism marketing experts? It’s laughable . . . I don’t see any signs, plans or actions to visualize a flattering tourism future,” he said.

The second factor that Cintrón identified as a threat to the hotel sector in Quintana Roo is affecting hoteliers in popular tourism destinations across the country.



An Airbnb rental in Cancún, a bigger problem for hoteliers than sargassum.

There are now more Airbnb listings than hotel rooms in Mexico, research firm Americas Market Intelligence (AMI) said in a new study called *Disruption in Mexico's Hospitality Industry*.

"Airbnb has grown rapidly in Mexico in recent years, with listings expanding by 53% in 2018," said Ricardo Álvarez, a company director.

AMI found that 81% of Airbnb guests in Mexico are satisfied with their lodging experience whereas 74% expressed the same sentiment about hotel stays in the country.

It also determined that Mexican travelers are more likely to recommend specific Airbnb listings to friends than hotels (63% vs 47%) and that 56% of millennials prefer the former over the latter.

Álvarez said that while Airbnb has certain advantages over hotels that have helped it to disrupt the accommodation industry, "hotels also have advantages they can use to retain or expand their market share."

"They just need to understand them, and research like this could help," he added.

Source: [Reportur](#) (sp), [Travel Daily Media](#) (en)

