

THE LARGEST NORTH AMERICAN HOTEL CHAIN IN CUBA



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Legislation introduced in 2011 and 2014 allows Cuban homeowners to rent out their private houses to foreign tourists. This practice is proving a very popular source of accommodation in the southern part of the island where cultural tourism prevails over beach tourism and there is significant scarcity of hotel capacity.



Trinidad, Cuba

Meliá Hotels International and Iberostar Hotels & Resorts are already present in the south in the Trinidad area. Iberostar announced last May it will open a new 300-room 5-star property in Cienfuegos through a JV with state-owned hotel company Gran Caribe.

Since its arrival in Cuba in April, Airbnb features roughly 2,000 houses in this market, ahead of various Cuban competitors. Its top destinations are Havana (1,260 houses), Trinidad (158 houses) and Cienfuegos (128 houses). But the National Housing Department has more than 18,740 private residences registered for tourist accommodation rental use across the country. So Airbnb is only at 11% of its full capacity.

In 2014, 350,091 U.S. citizens arrived in Cuba. This was the second-largest nationality in terms of visitors after Canada. Actually, it is Canada's Blue Diamond Resorts that today ranks second as a foreign hotel operator in Cuba, with 8,064 rooms. However, Airbnb could quickly become the largest North American hotel company in Cuba.