

Chapter 9

The Impact of Platform Economy on Spanish Sun and Beach Destinations: A Case Study of Free Tours



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Abstract This chapter examines the impact of the platform economy on Spanish sun and beach destinations, focusing on free tours. As the collaborative economy reshapes tourism, platform-mediated free tours have gained attention but raised concerns about overcrowding and mass tourism in city centres. While much research on the platform economy centres on accommodation, studies on free tours remain scarce. This research addresses this gap by analysing the spatial impacts of free tours in mature sun and beach destinations and comparing the findings with previous studies. The analysis examines GuruWalk, Spain's largest free tour platform, investigating tour concentration in space and time and the regulatory frameworks in the selected destinations. The findings highlight how platform-mediated free tours contribute to overcrowding in already saturated areas. Additionally, the chapter underscores the importance of local governance in regulating free tours, though few national examples are noted. This chapter offers insights for destination management organisations and policymakers to address the challenges of the platform economy and promote sustainable tourism in sun and beach destinations.

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