

Volaris downplays impact from Mexico City airport cancellation

Mexico's Volaris has downplayed the impact of the cancellation of a new airport for Mexico City, saying its near-term growth is not tied to expansion out of the Mexican capital.

"In our five-year plan, we didn't have plans for expansion in Mexico City and the surrounding metropolitan area," Volaris chief executive Enrique Beltranena tells FlightGlobal. "Our concentration of capacity is not as high as the other Mexican airlines in Mexico City."

Volaris is by far the country's largest domestic carrier, with 38% of scheduled capacity within Mexico, FlightGlobal schedules data show. Aeromexico is in second place with a 23% share, followed by Viva Aerobus with 19% and Interjet with 17%.



At Mexico City, however, Volaris holds only a 9% share of the capacity originating from the capital's airport. The ultra

low-cost carrier is the third largest airline at the airport, after Aeromexico and Interjet with a 40% and 15% share, respectively.

“We are using our slots [at Mexico City] in the best way we can,” says Beltranena. “We are focused on punctuality and utilisation.”

A decision by Mexico’s new government to scrap a new airport for the country’s capital following a public referendum in October has attracted criticism from airline leaders in Latin America. The administration of Mexico’s new president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has proposed a three-airport system for Mexico City, instead of completing the construction of the new airport.

While airline chiefs in the region have said this alternative proposal is not feasible for operations, Mexican airlines themselves have been notably muted in their response. Among Mexico’s major carriers, only Interjet has publicly voiced support for the three-airport proposal following the referendum.

Beltranena, for his part, avoids criticising the outcome of the vote. Instead, he says Volaris is well-prepared to resume service at Toluca, a secondary airport outside Mexico City. Toluca is among the three airports that Mexico’s government has proposed as a solution, alongside the existing Mexico City airport and the Santa Lucia military air base.

“We are an airline that was born in Toluca,” says Beltranena. “If there’s an airline that knows Toluca well, it’s Volaris. We will go back and do what we know to do.”

He declines to comment on the feasibility of operating at Santa Lucia.

Volaris began service in 2006 from Toluca, which is about a 1h 20min drive from central Mexico City. However, it ceased

service there in June this year. The airport is currently served by only Interjet and Viva Aerobus.

While Toluca at one point was marketed as a secondary airport for Mexico City for low-cost carriers, the lack of transit links and its distance from the city had contributed to the airport's waning popularity in recent years. A plan for a rail link between Toluca and Mexico City has been delayed several times.

Capacity at Toluca has declined through the years, FlightGlobal schedules data show. ASMs originating from the airport will fall 23% this year, compared with 2017. Capacity is down almost 60% from five years ago, according to the data.

Besides Volaris, airlines including Aeromexico, [Spirit Airlines](#) and TAR Aerolineas have all ceased service in previous years.

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