

Press Release

DUBAI WELCOMES 4.1 MILLION OVERNIGHT VISITORS IN Q1 2016, UP 5.1% YEAR ON YEAR

Dubai, UAE; 25th April 2016: Dubai welcomed 4.1 million overnight visitors in the first three months of 2016, a 5.1% increase over the same period last year, backed by strong double digit growth from its top two proximity markets, the GCC and India, according to figures released by Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism).



The GCC continued to be the destination's leading feeder region, delivering 25% of all overnight visitation to Dubai in the first quarter. Visitors from Saudi Arabia grew 14% to 476,000 from January to March in 2016, making it the number one source country, followed by strong growth from Oman, which increased by 32% over the same period in 2015 with 322,000 visitors. Kuwait, which remained in the top 10 with 119,000 visitors, and Qatar, which saw 26% spike in visitor volumes, rounded off the high performing regional traffic with strong contributions.



The Subcontinent also remained a key driver of tourism volumes with India growing at 17% in the opening quarter to deliver 467,000 overnight visitors, making it the second largest feeder country, followed by Pakistan within the region, which swelled by 18% over the same period.

Despite challenging global market conditions, and a strong US Dollar, visitors from Western Europe continued to be second largest source region with a 23% visitor share overall in the opening quarter of 2016. This was led by 10% year-on-year quarter growth from the United Kingdom, which remained Dubai's third largest country contributor with 334,000 visitors. Rounding off the top 5 was Germany which brought in 171,000 visitors, rebounding strongly from a slow start in the new year. France, with 76,000 visitors, remained flat over Q1 2015, whilst Italy grew 5%, representing 69,000 visitors.

His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai Tourism, said: "Global travel in the first three months of this year has been impacted by geo-political, social and economic uncertainties, with most markets experiencing flat to negative growth. I see Dubai's highly agile, fragmented source market approach, the strength of our government, public and private sector partnerships, as well as our effective promotional and marketing outreach, as having been fundamental to fuelling overall growth.

"Markets within the four hour flight path, specifically the GCC and India, remain a critical focus for our on-going visitation attraction efforts as build towards our growth targets. With an expanded festivals and events calendar taking off extremely well in the first three months and the opening of a number of new retail destinations and attractions, we are constantly evolving our propositions to ensure that our markets have more reasons to return time and time again. This is only expected to increase in prevalence throughout the year as a number of flagship projects and initiatives come on line, adding more depth and diversity to the Dubai offering."

Other key countries in Dubai's top 10 source markets for the first quarter included the USA, which delivered 166,000 visitors; China, which was up by 4%; and Iran, which was the only market to see a decline. Rounding out the top 20, the Philippines saw 25% quarterly growth over the same period in 2015, Canadian visitors increased by 9%, countering declines across Egypt, Russia, Jordan, Australia and the Netherlands.

Dubai got off to an active start in 2016 with a host of projects, initiatives and events spearheading the destination's visitation attraction programme. January and February saw more additions to Dubai's annual festival calendar, following a reinvigorated Dubai Shopping Festival and Dubai Food Festival, along with the launch of the X Yoga Festival Dubai.



Beautification projects along the beaches, coastline, parks and green spaces, including the 14km-long Jumeirah Corniche; and development of Dubai's cultural and heritage attractions, led by the regeneration of the city's oldest neighbourhoods as part of the Dubai Historical District were among the key projects that gained momentum in the first quarter.

In tandem, Dubai's retail landscape continues to evolve, with numerous new shopping areas and international brands, such as City Walk 2, Box Park and The Beach complex in Jumeirah Beach Residence, adding to Dubai's already strong offering made up of over 95 malls as well as traditional Arabian souks. With close to 400,000 square metres of additional retail space scheduled to be completed in 2016 across Dubai, other major retail developments include the 1.9 million square Dragon Mart 2 extension as well as the upcoming Outlet Village which will feature alongside a number of theme parks opening and Dubai Mall - Phase 2, ensuring that tourism's contribution to the economy is further amplified.

Dubai's accommodation portfolio also saw growth with 676 establishments in operation as of March 2016, representing 98,949 rooms across all hotel and hotel apartment categories. New hotel openings, such as the Palazzo Versace and The St Regis Dubai, ensure the city maintains its reputation for luxury, while a host of new mid-market hotels – encouraged by Dubai Tourism-led incentives – are expanding options available to visitors.

Furthermore, Dubai Tourism continued to work across the travel and trade ecosystems, leveraging co-operative partnerships with key partners and players, including the signing of strategic partnerships in February with two of China's biggest industry players, Union Pay International and Tuniu, one of the country's largest online leisure travel service platforms.

His Excellency added: "Tourism-related infrastructure and capacity enhancement investment is expected to accelerate during 2016 through more segment-specific offerings such as culture and heritage attractions and family-oriented theme parks, in addition to continued focus on enhancing the business environment that underscores Dubai's pursuit of becoming the number one destination for travel, business and events. Dubai will be steadily implementing projects to develop, enhance and promote the core pillars of Dubai's destination offering that in turn feed into the agenda to not just attract more volumes but to further the sector's growing contribution to the emirate's GDP, and be a source of sustainable competitiveness for future growth.

"As we turn our immediate focus to the summer, we are heavily leveraging Dubai's value offering and diversity of activities and attractions that continue to be clear visitation drivers during this period. Year-on-year we continue to see positive gains in visitors choosing Dubai for the summer, with last year seeing



very robust numbers from UK and Saudi travellers specifically, which exemplify Dubai's growing appeal as a year round destination."

As part of a wider strategy aimed at increasing the emirate's profile through tailored events, attractions and experiences designed to appeal to a broad range of segments, the upcoming opening of a number of theme parks including Dubai Parks and Resorts, IMG Worlds of Adventure and Dubai Safari, as well as the iconic Dubai Opera House and the theatrical residency of La Perle by Dragoneat Al Habtoor City, will greatly enhance Dubai's global appeal among families and experience seekers when they open in the second half of the year.

A major addition to the city's tourism offering, all of these will be unique to the region and are expected to drive visitation significantly, particularly from core proximity markets. The expected increase in visitors generated by these attractions is helping to drive development within Dubai's tourism sector as a whole, across both private and public sectors, as new hospitality, retail and entertainment offerings come on line, as well as infrastructure projects designed to enhance the visitor experience from arrival to departure.

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About Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism)

With the ultimate vision of positioning Dubai as the world's leading tourism destination and commercial hub, Dubai Tourism's mission is to increase the awareness of Dubai to global audiences and to attract tourists and inward investment into the emirate.

Dubai Tourism is the principal authority for the planning, supervision, development and marketing of Dubai's tourism sector; markets and promotes the emirate's commerce sector; and is responsible for the licencing and classification of all tourism services, including hotels, tour operators and travel agents. Brands and departments within the Dubai Tourism portfolio include Dubai Convention and Events Bureau, Dubai Calendar, and Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (formerly known as Dubai Events and Promotions Establishment).

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