

Tourism growth in Dubai gathers pace with 4.88 million visitors between January - October 2021

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Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) revealed that the emirate welcomed 4.88 million visitors between January - October 2021 with international visitation during October alone reaching over one million. Reflecting the rising growth momentum and stability of the industry, strong international visitation was complemented by a robust domestic tourism market, further boosting the hospitality sector resulting in 9.4 million room nights sold between January - October 2021 in comparison to 7 million room nights sold in the same period in 2019.

The latest tourism figures were released at the second bi-annual City Briefing of 2021 held by the Department of Economy and Tourism to provide stakeholders with key updates on the tourism sector's positive growth and insights into current and future strategies and global marketing campaigns.

As Dubai continues to lead the global tourism rebound and stimulate international business growth, the forum featured a detailed presentation on domestic and global developments, including an overview of increasing visitor numbers, hotel occupancy, and activities in international markets, which have all reinforced Dubai's profile as a safe, must-visit destination and the world's best city to live, work and visit.

The meeting was presided by His Excellency Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, and was attended by over 1,150 representatives from leading establishments in the hospitality, travel, and tourism sectors. The forum was part of DET's regular dialogue with business leaders to encourage collaboration and exchange insights to ensure the industry is seamlessly aligned with tourism growth initiatives and strategies. Held at Ain Dubai, the forum discussed ways to further accelerate growth in the industry, leveraging the latest landmark attractions to open in Dubai.

HE Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General, Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism, commented: "Inspired by the visionary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of UAE, and Ruler of Dubai and strengthened by the success of Expo 2020 Dubai and the UAE's Golden Jubilee celebrations, Dubai has been at the vanguard of the world's tourism and economic rebound, setting the tone for sustained recovery and growth.

"Our multi-pronged strategy to combat the pandemic and deployment of wide-ranging initiatives to increase our global competitiveness and attractiveness is a hallmark of Dubai's highly progressive public-private partnership model, which has been a cornerstone of not only what was achieved in 2021 but what will be achieved in the next critical 12 to 24-month period. Expo 2020 also provides us a unique platform to engage with the global community as all hotels and tourism partners work closely to facilitate visits for their guests to maximise this opportunity.

"Through this highly energised and cohesive tourism and economic ecosystem, I am confident that Dubai will deliver on its vision of being the world's leading global centre for investment, business, talent, visitation and next-generation thinking."

Dubai's strong reputation for safe travel internationally has resulted in both domestic and international tourism growth, as seen by the improved hotel performance. In a year-to-date study in October 2021, occupancy was at almost 64%, while the length of stay showed a 12% increase from 4.1 nights to 4.6 nights. During this period, there were 24.74 million occupied rooms nights across the emirate at an average daily rate of AED384, in comparison to 15.66 million occupied room nights at an average daily rate of AED335. Room inventory is now 6% higher than 2019.

Taking a closer look at the profile of international visitors, research showed that in the first half of 2021,

Dubai visitors were balanced across genders with 52% male visitors and 48% female visitors. During this time, the emirate also attracted a higher first-time visitor's volume, reflecting the attractiveness of the city despite the pandemic, when compared to the first half of the previous year.

Issam Kazim, Chief Executive Officer, Dubai Corporation for Tourism and Commerce Marketing commented: "At Dubai's Department for Economy and Tourism, we are proud to be part of the success Dubai has achieved so far in 2021, which has been built on the vision and leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. Over the last five decades Dubai has transformed into a global tourism and business hub and through the effective citywide management of the pandemic, the city has strengthened its position as one of the safest destinations in the world. Dubai's ability to evolve and adapt, with the support of our stakeholders and partners, has been critical in ensuring that the city continues to retain its position at the forefront of the world's leading travel and business destinations. With our world-class infrastructure, one of the highest vaccination rates in the world and flexible working visas, Dubai is becoming the preferred business hub for conglomerates and start-ups alike. As part of our strategy, we have consistently used innovative global campaigns to further highlight the city's multi-faceted touristic appeal and reach our overseas markets, with the latest being Dubai Presents. This synergetic approach to showcasing Dubai's diverse offering involves the enlistment of celebrities, influencers and community personalities to create a steady stream of ambassadors and advocates to narrate Dubai's story across gastronomy, retail, tourism, leisure and events to showcase it as the best city to live, visit and work in."

To ensure that Dubai was top-of-mind and seen as the destination of choice for 2021, DET launched an integrated global marketing campaign via 'Dubai Presents' that broadcast over 3,500 assets across 25 languages and specifically targeted audiences that were seeking international travel, had engaged with previous campaigns or were searching for Dubai on digital channels. By creating Hollywood inspired trailers with A-list actors Jessica Alba and Zac Efron, DET simultaneously highlighted the emirates' multiplicity of offerings and reinstated its profile as 'the happening city'.

Dubai's ability to evolve and adapt, combined with its diversified multi-geographic approach to markets, was key in ensuring that Dubai retained its relevance and competitiveness as a global destination and creative hub. In the last year, the emirate built momentum in business tourism as Dubai gave more flexibility and options for talent to visit and stay by introducing new categories and programmes, which included the Golden Visa, the Property Investor Visa, the Entrepreneur Visa, the Retire in Dubai Visa and the Virtual Working Visa.

The focus for DET for the upcoming year is to continue to drive growth across all sectors. Initiatives will be introduced to further catalyse Expo 2020 visitor numbers, strengthen relationships with the travel trade and explore new channels to source visitors. By highlighting Dubai's versatility, DET plans to demonstrate its position as a thriving global hub for business and tourism, gastronomy, sustainability, weddings, retail and events.