

Abu Dhabi evolving into a distinctive global destination

In Mastercard's new [Global Cities Index Report](#), Abu Dhabi ranks as the fastest-growing destination in the Middle East and among the fastest-growing in the world. The UAE capital's compound annual growth rate of 19.81% in overnight visitors between 2009 and 2016, places the emirate in third place alongside major upcoming destinations such as Osaka, Japan and Chengdu in China, and above established hubs such as Tokyo, Riyadh and Taipei in Taiwan.



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The report is produced on an annual basis and features results gathered by field specialists through extensive research. The UAE capital was one of only three Arabian Gulf cities to make it into the top 50 overall rankings for destination cities in the world.

Record-breaking results

Abu Dhabi has already posted record-breaking results in 2016, with more than four million guests checking into the emirate's 168 hotel and hotel apartments in the first 11 months of the year.

The strong performance of the emirate was underpinned by the UAE capital hosting world-class events such as Abu Dhabi Summer Season, Abu Dhabi Food Festival, the Qasr Al Hosn Festival and a comprehensive programme of events to celebrate New Year in the city as well as successes in the MICE sector, with Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau - part of Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi) – having a record-breaking year by securing agreements to host 14 conferences, which are expected to attract more than 35,000 delegates to the emirate in upcoming years.

Other notable factors included the opening to the public of Al Ain Oasis World Heritage Site and impressive growth in Abu Dhabi's cruise sector following the opening of the city's permanent cruise terminal and the opening of the region's first-ever cruise beach.

The continued evolution of Abu Dhabi into a distinctive global destination

"The outstanding results offered in this year's Global Destination Cities Index Report reflect Abu Dhabi's ongoing successes in achieving global recognition as a leading international destination," said HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, director general, TCA Abu Dhabi.

“We remain resolute in fostering the continued evolution of Abu Dhabi into a distinctive global destination, leveraging diverse tourism and cultural assets, as well as extensive tourism infrastructure. Welcoming a growing number of overnight visitors over the course of 2016 conveys our emirate’s commitment to providing the highest standards of hospitality, coupled with internationally recognised business and leisure opportunities.”

The Global Destination Cities Index Report conducted by Mastercard covered 132 cities, investigating global cross-border travel and spending in order to speculate on the growth trajectories of the many increasingly dynamic global destinations cities that are on the rise around the world. Mastercard concluded that their study into the fastest-growing destination cities has revealed that there are strong and multi-faceted sources of momentum propelling cities such as Abu Dhabi into newly established positions as international hubs of business, tourism, and commerce.

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