

# Etihad airways named world's leading airline at World Travel Awards

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, has enjoyed stunning success at the World Travel Awards, taking the top honour for the third year in a row.



It was named the World's Leading Airline last night at a black-tie gala event in Doha, Qatar. The judges also presented Etihad Airways with awards for the World's Leading First Class and World's Leading Airline to the Middle East.

These three awards cap an extraordinary 12 months for the airline. Highlights included the launch of seven new international routes, a move into operating profitability and the purchase of a 29.2% stake in airberlin, a landmark deal that enables access to 33 million new passengers in Europe.

James Hogan, Etihad Airways' president and chief executive officer, said: "We are delighted to have been named World's Leading Airline at the World Travel Awards for

the third successive year.

"2011 was a fantastic year for Etihad Airways, during which we began to reap the full benefits of financial and operational strategies developed over the last five years.

"Nothing is as important to us as our guests and we work tirelessly to ensure their experience with Etihad Airways surpasses expectations. We are always looking to innovate, whether that is by introducing qualified chefs in our Diamond First Class or bringing industry-leading in-flight entertainment systems with mobile and internet connectivity to the sky.

## A simple vision

"Etihad Airways' vision is simple: to be the best airline in the world. These accolades from industry experts at the World Travel Awards demonstrate that we are meeting that goal."

The World Travel Awards - described as the "Oscars of the travel industry" by the *Wall Street Journal* - recognise the best airline, hospitality and tourism brands in the world. Judges look for excellence in categories such as customer relations, creativity, quality of service, product innovation and business acumen.

Etihad Airways' success in Doha follows recognition at the World Travel Awards Middle East in May, when the airline took home awards for Middle East's Leading Airline, Middle East's Leading Airline First Class, Middle East's Leading Cabin Staff and Middle East's Leading Airline In-flight Entertainment.

## Etihad Airways 2011 highlights:

- The purchase of a 29.2% stake in airberlin, Europe's sixth largest carrier
- The achievement of operating profitability for the first time in the third quarter
- A \$1bn deal with Panasonic Avionics to provide state-of-the-art in-flight entertainment systems and in-flight connectivity across the airline's entire wide-body fleet
- A \$1bn deal with Sabre Airline Solutions to integrate the airline's information technology processes



Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways' chief commercial officer, hoists the award for World's Leading Airline, at the 2011 World Travel Awards gala event held in Doha, Qatar. The airline also received recognition for World's Leading First Class and World's Leading Airline to the Middle East.

- The introduction of fully-qualified and classically-trained international chefs dedicated to food service excellence in its Diamond First Class cabins
- New routes announced to Bangalore, Maldives, Seychelles, Chengdu, Düsseldorf, Tripoli, Shanghai and Nairobi

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