

Abu Dhabi records significant growth in hotel guest arrivals

Abu Dhabi welcomed 1.6m guest arrivals year-to-end April, a 7% growth compared to the same period in 2016 according to new figures from Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi), with April recording a strong performance - posting a year-on-year increase of 15% in hotel guest arrivals.



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Domestic hotel guest numbers in April also grew impressively, numbering 130,000, with each of the emirate's three districts – Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Al Dhafra regions – all experiencing an upturn in arrivals. Each of the six international tier-one markets of China, India, UK, USA, Germany, and Saudi Arabia showed growth.

Growing international appeal

HE Saif Saeed Ghobash, director general, TCA Abu Dhabi, said: "Efforts to stimulate interest in our destination continue unabated and we are encouraged by our latest hotel guest arrival results which continue to show strong progress. As we expand our year-round programme of events and develop new cultural and family attractions, we expect even greater traction in enticing more people to explore the emirate".

"Our inaugural Culture Summit in April brought together leaders of the world's art, media, and cultural policy communities from 80 countries, while Abu Dhabi International Book Fair attracted more than 300,000 visitors. Both these events contributed to highlighting our vision of developing the emirate into a thriving cultural hub and a global cultural destination."

Adding to Abu Dhabi's growing international appeal is the recent accolade for Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, which was ranked by travellers as the world's second favourite landmark for the second year in a row by TripAdvisor. Last year, the mosque's total number of visitors reached 5.2m.

A surge from China

As far as the detail of April is concerned, China has maintained its position as the largest overseas source market with 131,253 hotel guest arrivals, followed by India with 104,436 and the UK with 86,529. The surge from China reflects the recent relaxation of entry visa rules, with Chinese visitors now given visas on arrival at Abu Dhabi International Airport or other points of entry into the UAE.

Your Extraordinary Story - regional and international roadshows

TCA Abu Dhabi-led delegations, working alongside the Authority's 11 overseas offices, have helped reinforce the *Your Extraordinary Story* destination campaign with a series of recent regional and international roadshows, including visits to Saudi Arabia, China, Germany and South Africa. Further delegations of Abu Dhabi's tourism proposition, including hotels, travel agents, destination management companies and attractions, will visit the US, India, and Europe as the year progresses.

Events

Added to the expanding list of year-round events, festivals and cultural programmes for residents and visitors this year is the inaugural edition of *Manarat Al Saadiyat Ramadan Evenings* which is set to take place from 4 to 17 June 2017, providing a wide range of unique cultural experiences during the Holy Month of Ramadan through a variety of culinary experiences, creative activities, retail opportunities, performances and workshops.

The emirate will again host its annual entertainment spectacle - Abu Dhabi Summer Season -which this year runs from 20 July to 20 August. As well as concerts, theatrical performances and children's shows held in venues across the emirate, there will be value for money promotions and offers at hotels and attractions encouraging visitors to spend their holidays in Abu Dhabi. Indian and GCC visitors will be specifically targeted through TCA Abu Dhabi's marketing and promotions campaign, held in conjunction with key stakeholders and partners.

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