Etihad tops world's safest full-service airlines for 2026

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Dhaka: Etihad Airways has been named the world's safest full-service airline for 2026, according to new rankings released by AirlineRatings.com, a global aviation safety and product assessment platform.

The annual list evaluates 320 airlines worldwide and highlights the top 25 full-service carriers that demonstrate the strongest overall safety performance. This year's results show an increasingly level playing field, with only narrow margins separating the top-ranked airlines.

AirlineRatings CEO Sharon Petersen said, the rankings reflect how far aviation safety standards have advanced. "The differences between the top airlines are now extremely small," she noted, adding that airlines ranked in the Top 25 should all be considered industry leaders rather than competitors with major safety gaps.

Etihad's rise to the top marks the first time a Gulf carrier has claimed the number-one position. The airline was recognized for its young fleet, advanced cockpit safety systems, strong turbulence-management procedures, a clean crash history, and the lowest incident rate per flight among full-service airlines assessed.

Following Etihad, Cathay Pacific ranked second, with Qantas, Qatar Airways, Emirates, and Air New Zealand rounding out the top six. Singapore Airlines returned to the list at number seven after being temporarily excluded last year following a serious turbulence-related incident. AirlineRatings said, the carrier's reinstatement followed a detailed review of its training facilities and safety operations.

Newcomers to the full-service ranking include Taiwan-based STARLUX Airlines and Fiji Airways. While STARLUX is relatively young, Petersen said its transparency, safety culture, and reputation among established airlines justified its inclusion.

Other airlines featured in the 2026 Top 25 include British Airways, Lufthansa, Delta Air Lines, American Airlines, ANA, Korean Air, and Virgin Atlantic.

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