

Emirates, Etihad launch interline agreement

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Emirates and Etihad have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to expand their interline agreement, in order to provide travelers with additional itinerary options when visiting the UAE. This partnership is intended to allow travelers to visit more than one destination in the UAE on a single itinerary.

For context, an interline agreement is the lowest level of cooperation between airlines, and is intended to simplify the booking and travel process when multiple airlines are involved. Just as an example, American and United also have an interline agreement, and they're otherwise the furthest thing from partners.

Starting this summer, customers of each airline will be able to purchase a single ticket to fly into either Dubai or Abu Dhabi, with a return from the other airport. This will allow travelers to book an "open jaw" itinerary, and save them time compared to having to fly into and out of the same airport.

For the initial stages of this agreement, each carrier will focus on attracting visitors to the UAE by developing inbound interline traffic from select points in Europe and China.

This new agreement is part of both carriers' commitment to support the UAE's objective of expanding tourism. By 2027, the UAE hopes that tourism will make up 5.4% of its GDP, amounting to \$31.6 billion annually.

This is the second time that the two airlines have collaborated. In 2018, the carriers partnered to strengthen aviation security, by sharing information and intelligence in operational areas both within and outside the UAE.

Bottom line

Emirates and Etihad are introducing an interline agreement, allowing passengers to book travel on Emirates and Etihad on a single ticket. This is intended to promote UAE tourism, for those who want to arrive in Dubai and depart from Abu Dhabi, or vice versa.

This is a nice development symbolically, though personally I've never found getting between the two airports to be much of a pain. Still, it's nice to see this change. Just don't expect that this is the first step to a merger between the two airlines.

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