

## **Etihad, China Eastern announce joint venture**

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Abu Dhabi: Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, and China Eastern Airlines, a top global airline, on Wednesday announce the signing of a Joint Venture (JV) to cement the strategic partnership between the two airlines.

This historic milestone, signed at Etihad Airways' headquarters in Abu Dhabi, marks the first commercial JV between a Middle Eastern airline and a Chinese airline.

The Etihad Airways - China Eastern Airlines JV will allow the airlines to jointly develop and grow the routes between the UAE and China, resulting in a stronger combined network. This JV signifies a commitment to offering expanded travel options and seamless travel experiences for passengers travelling between major Chinese cities like Shanghai, Beijing, Xi'an, and Kunming, and key cities in the UAE and across the Middle East and Africa regions.

Etihad and China Eastern Airlines will implement the joint venture cooperation in early 2025 when both teams secure all necessary regulatory clearances. Additionally, both airlines will introduce full reciprocity to their existing frequent flyer programmes in the final quarter of 2024, allowing passengers to seamlessly earn points and redeem rewards when flying with either airline.

Mohamed Ali Al Shorafa, Chairman of Etihad Aviation Group, lauded the agreement as a landmark achievement, stating: "This Joint Venture signifies a deep commitment to strengthening the bonds between the UAE and China, while fostering deeper cultural and economic ties. We look forward to welcoming a greater number of Chinese tourists to explore the rich cultural heritage and vibrant experiences that the UAE has to offer. This partnership is more than the expansion of routes; it is about creating lasting and meaningful connections between our two nations which will stand for decades to come."

Antonoaldo Neves, Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways, emphasised the significance of the partnership. He said: "This JV marks a significant milestone in our partnership with China Eastern. The JV will allow Etihad and China Eastern to offer travellers enhanced travel options and exceptional value. We are confident the JV will unlock a new era of travel opportunities, while also boosting the economic growth of Abu Dhabi and the UAE."

China Eastern Airlines Chairman Wang Zhiqing said: "This year marks the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and the UAE. Both countries continue to develop and strengthen the high-value, strategic collaboration on the Belt and Road Initiative, and this momentum creates opportunities and motivation for deepening cooperation between China Eastern Airlines and Etihad Airways."

The signing of this JV signifies a new level of collaboration, and China Eastern is eager to work with Etihad Airways to expand the cooperation in the various business areas, and thereby enhance the strategic partnership between both airlines."

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