

Hotels in UAE record world's second-highest occupancy rate

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Dubai: The United Arab Emirates recorded the world's second busiest hotel occupancy in 2020 after China following the government's efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus, encourage domestic tourism, and accelerate the industry's recovery, the Ministry of Economy announced.

The country hosted 14.8 million guests who spent an average of 3.7 nights at 1,089 establishments in 2020 for a hotel occupancy rate of 54.7 percent, according to the World Tourism Organisation and the Emirates Tourism Council.

"The UAE was able to quickly contain the outbreak's impact on the local tourism sector," said Belhoul Al Falasi, Chairman, Emirates Tourism Council and Minister of State for Entrepreneurship and SMEs.

"The country's success was a result of relying on innovation and agility in its efforts to provide incentives, launch initiatives and create opportunities to accelerate the recovery of the tourism sector and boost its contribution to gross domestic product."

The UAE – a regional tourism hub – outpaced the global average occupancy rate of 37 percent and the Middle East's 43 percent, according to WTO and ETC data.

Chinese hotels grabbed the top spot with an occupancy rate of 58 percent while the US was third at 37 percent.

Hotels in the UAE embarked on campaigns to promote domestic tourism, which contributed USD 11 billion to the national economy in 2020 – a figure that is expected to double over the next few years, the Ministry of Economy said.

The data also showed that the UAE suffered the smallest decline in tourist traffic last year, with activity falling by 45.2 percent. Thailand recorded the biggest drop (83 percent), followed by the UK (82 percent), Spain (78 percent), and the US at 77 percent.

The UAE's "world's coolest winter" campaign that began last year attracted about a million domestic tourists and generated Dh 1 billion in revenue. Now, it will focus on international tourists once global lockdowns are lifted.

The UAE is among the top countries in terms of Covid-19 vaccination rates and testing, which have helped to create a safe environment for tourists, he said.

The country had vaccinated 8,923,543 people, with a vaccine distribution rate of 90.22 doses for every 100 people as of April 9.