

School holidays boost December travel in UAE

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: With schools across the UAE closing for nearly a month from Dec. 8 to Jan. 4, residents are turning the extended winter break into a peak travel period.

Travel experts told media that December bookings have surged by around 35pc as families combine National Day, Christmas, and New Year holidays into one long escape.

“The period right after National Day has become the official start of the UAE's winter travel season,” said Raheesh Babu, COO of musafir.com. “This year, UAE residents aren't just travelling for leisure, but for experiences that stay with them.”

Travel agents report high early bookings to avoid soaring fares and limited seat availability later in the month. “Seats are filling fast for both National Day and the Christmas-New Year period,” said Mir Wasim

Raja, manager at Galadari International Travel.

Musafir.com data shows two key trends: long-haul cultural trips and short regional getaways. Popular long-haul destinations include Vietnam, Japan, and European cities such as Paris, Rome, Lisbon, Budapest, and Switzerland. Shorter regional trips are in demand for Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Egypt, driven in part by events like Riyadh Season and Qatar Winter Festival.

North African destinations such as Tunisia and Morocco, as well as Latvia and Uzbekistan, are increasingly popular among younger travellers. Cruises to Muscat, Khasab, Doha, and Bahrain, priced from Dh1,299 per person, are also gaining popularity.

Early planning has become essential due to visa processing times, particularly for Schengen countries. Around 30% of travellers have already booked their winter holidays, with 65pc preferring five- to seven-day trips. Families account for 35pc of bookings, followed by couples, groups of friends, and solo travellers.

Experts urge residents to book soon as demand remains strong and fares are already high. "At this point, it's late to wait. There are still options, but travellers should book as soon as possible," said Raja.

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