

UAE national carriers expanding destinations

- A Monitor Desk Report

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UAE: The UAE's national carriers are expanding their destinations, driven by the country's strong global tourism and business reputation and the resurgence in travel demand. The General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA) projects passenger traffic to reach 140 million, reflecting the ongoing growth and competitiveness of UAE airlines.

Official data indicates that UAE national carriers now serve approximately 606 destinations worldwide, including joint and cargo routes, marking a 3.4 per cent increase from the 586 destinations served at the end of 2023. The breakdown of destinations by carrier is as follows: Emirates with over 144 destinations, Etihad Airways with 79 destinations, flydubai with 125 destinations, Air Arabia with 218 destinations, and Wizz Air Abu Dhabi with 40 destinations.

Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways has been expanding its route network with the goal of

reaching 125 destinations by 2030. The airline aims to leverage its strategic location between Asia and Europe and increase its annual passenger count to 33 million.

Emirates

Emirates, with its network spanning 144 destinations across six continents, continues to enhance seat capacity to accommodate growing demand. The airline is also in the process of modernising 80 Boeing 777 aircraft as part of a \$3bn investment to elevate passenger experience.

Flydubai

Flydubai flies to 125 destinations in 58 countries across Africa, Central Asia, Central and South East Europe, the GCC, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent and South East Asia, served by a fleet of 88 Boeing 737 aircraft. Flydubai recently launched regular flights to EuroAirport Basel Mulhouse Freiburg, four times a week, becoming the first national airline to operate direct flights from Dubai to this destination, growing its network in Europe to 29 destinations, including Budapest, Catania, Krakow, Milan-Bergamo, Prague, Salzburg and Zagreb. The airline expects to take delivery of seven aircraft by the end of the year and plans to hire more than 130 new pilots to support its network expansion, adding Basel, Riga, Tallinn and Vilnius to its destinations.

Air Arabia

Air Arabia Group operates an extensive network with 218 destinations across six strategic hubs, including 113 from the UAE, as well as locations in Morocco, Egypt, and Pakistan. In the first half of 2024, the airline reported a net profit of Dh693 million and served 8.9 million passengers, marking a 16 per cent increase from the previous year. The seat occupancy rate remained strong at 81 per cent.

Wizz Air Abu Dhabi

Wizz Air Abu Dhabi has a portfolio of 40 destinations and continues to expand its operations to meet growing demand with a modern and sustainable fleet, supporting the airline's ambitious plans to launch flights to new destinations.

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