

# Dubai bounces back: Arabian Travel Market spotlights surging visitor numbers

By Katja Hamilton

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Dubai's swift recovery after floods has ensured a successful Arabian Travel Market with over 41,000 visitors.



Image by Katja Hamilton. Over 41,000 visitors attend the annual Arabian Travel Market in Dubai

Despite the recent floods which wreaked havoc on Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) three weeks ago, the city's stellar mop-up operations have ensured the esteemed Arabian Travel Market (ATM) was ready to welcome its more than 41,000 visitors.

The city's streets are open to traffic and its bustling trade is in full swing as over 2,300 exhibitors and representatives from more than 165 countries are present at the expo under the theme *Empowering Innovation: Transforming Travel Through Entrepreneurship*.

To officially mark the opening of the four-day gathering, UAE Minister of Economy, HE Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri addressed those present at the Global Stage emphasising the goal of transforming The Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) tourism industry into a hub of innovative growth and sustainable success.



This, he said, would build on the remarkable resurgence of the region's tourism sector, which is seeing airports and hotels experiencing unprecedented traffic and growth in the region's post Covid-19 recovery phase.

He highlighted plans for a unified GCC tourist visa and Emirates' expansions, including partnerships and new A350 destinations.

## **GCC tourism visa revolution**

The minister explained the GCC's decision to green-light a unified tourist visa for all six countries, set to roll out at year's end. This landmark decision is poised to revolutionise travel logistics, making it more convenient and affordable for tourists to explore the region's diverse offerings.

He also explained that introducing this visa aligns with the GCC's vision to enhance tourism activity and generate employment opportunities within the industry. It is a strategic move aimed at boosting tourism revenues and contributing significantly to the GDP of GCC economies.



Image by Katja Hamilton. Emirates made public its first set of destinations to be served by its new A350 aircraft entering service in September 2024 at the Arabian Travel Market is underway this week in

## **Emirates' strategic partnerships**

Yet another highlight on the first day of ATM was the official visit of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, chairman and chief executive of Emirates Airline and Group.

His visit saw him signing memorandums of understanding on Monday with Tourism Malaysia, Turkiye Tourism Promotion, and Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce, committed to attracting travellers to their more than 140 destinations.

Additionally, Emirates announced its partnership with the China Cultural Centre in the UAE to boost inbound traffic to China from the airline's extensive global network.

Emirates also made public its first set of destinations to be served by its new A350 aircraft entering service in September 2024.

With 10 A350s expected to join the fleet by 31 March 2025, the airline plans to deploy its latest aircraft type to nine destinations in the coming months. This expansion is set to serve short to medium-haul cities in the Emirates network, with Bahrain as its inaugural destination.

Other destinations include Kuwait, Muscat, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Colombo, Lyon, Bologna and Edinburgh.

"We are embarking on a voyage to fortify the GCC not just as a collection of destinations but a singular, dynamic hub for all travellers," the minister concluded.

## ABOUT KATJA HAMILTON

Katja is the Finance, Property and Healthcare Editor at Bizcommunity.

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