

# UAE and Saudi Arabia Inbound Visits to Grow During 2010-2015



The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia will experience some of the world's strongest inbound tourism growth over the next five years, reveals research unveiled today at WTM Vision Conference - Dubai.

Euromonitor International Travel and Tourism Industry Nadejda Popova revealed Saudi Arabia and UAE will see consistent growth

between 2010 and 2015.

The Travel and Tourism Global Overview report tips Saudi Arabia to have one of the largest compound annual growth rates in the world of 12.3% for arrivals over 2010-2015 which will result in an additional 9.3 million visitors to the country. This makes Saudi Arabia the fifth largest country in terms of absolute arrivals growth over the forecast review.

This growth is driven mainly by the religious tourism to Mecca and Medinah, supported by infrastructure developments in air transportation and travel accommodation. Saudi Arabia also continues to be one of the most economically stable markets in the Middle East thanks to its status as the world's leading oil exporter. It is investing heavily in economic development, including the creation of six mega cities that will help generate employment, attract investment and drive business tourism.

The United Arab Emirates will see an annual increase in arrivals during the forecast review period of 6.9%, resulting in 3.6 million new arrivals, being the 14th largest country in terms of absolute arrivals growth over 2010-2015.

Significant infrastructure developments are taking place in the United Arab Emirates which are expected to contribute significantly to the growing number of arrivals to the country. Dubai is also set to seal its position as a global air transportation hub upon the opening of the world's largest airport, Al Maktoum Airport, with a capacity of 160 million passengers a year.

Popova stated that in a climate of regional political and economic uncertainty, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have been capable of dealing with challenging external events as demonstrated by the resilience of their respective travel and tourism industries, partly thanks to intra-regional travel, with Saudi Arabia also benefiting from robust religious tourism demand.

Popova added the expansion of the hotel sector in the region could result in an oversupply as supply outpaces demand, which would impact rates and RevPAR. Positives for the region are its strong air transportation sector and the 2022 FIFA World Cup taking place in Qatar.

The "contagion of instability" and oil price rises are potential weaknesses, although Popova did point out that the UAE itself has remained "stable," during the region's recent political and civil unrest.

She also said there will be an absolute increase in outbound trips from the UAE of two million between 2010 and 2015.

World Travel Market Exhibition Director Simon Press said: "The Middle Eastern tourism industry should take heart from these generally positive findings.

“Euromonitor International’s research shows the region’s travel and tourism industry is a strong position and will grow in global importance.”

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World Travel Market, the leading global event for the travel industry, is the must-attend four-day business-to-business exhibition for the worldwide travel and tourism industry. Almost 48,000 senior travel industry professionals, government ministers and international press, embark on ExCeL - London every November to network, negotiate and discover the latest industry opinion and trends at WTM. WTM, now in its 32nd year, is the event where the travel industry conducts and concludes its deals. WTM 2010 generated £1,425 million of travel industry contracts, revealed independent research by Fusion Communications. WTM is owned by the world’s leading events organiser Reed Exhibitions (RE), which organises a portfolio of other travel industry events including Arabian Travel Market and International Luxury Travel Market. In 2010, RE held more than 460 events in 36 countries bringing together more than seven million people from around the world generating billions of dollars in business.

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