

# INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN DUBAI EXCEEDS PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS



Dubai welcomed 8.55 million international visitors during the first half of 2023, surpassing the 8.36 million visitors recorded in 2019 before the pandemic. This performance marks the destination's best-ever performance in six months.

## **Solid international tourism performance in key source markets**

During the first half of 2023, Western Europe became one of the top contributors to the number of tourists arriving, making up 20% of the total international visits. The GCC and MENA regions jointly contributed a 28% share of regional tourist arrivals, highlighting Dubai's attractiveness to visitors from the nearby areas.

## **Hospitality outperforms all other sectors**

Hospitality in Dubai has recovered remarkably, surpassing its pre-pandemic levels on every front. The average occupancy rate of hotels in Dubai, one of the highest in the world, has increased by 2.2% for the same period in the first half of 2019, reaching an impressive 78%. Notably, this growth has occurred despite a 13% increase in hotel establishments and a 26% increase in room capacity compared to the same period in 2019. By the end of H1 2023, visitors will choose 810 hotels with 148,689 rooms, a significant increase from the 714 hotels with 118,345 rooms available at the end of H1 2019.

During the first half of 2022, travelers' average length of stay increased to 3.9 nights from 3.5 nights in the same period the previous year. This increase highlights the city's appeal to travelers looking to stay longer. In addition, the total number of occupied room nights during this period was 20.73 million. This represents a 12% increase compared to the previous year and a 32% increase compared to the first half of 2019.

## **Focus on sustainable development**

In line with the UAE's Year of Sustainable Development in 2023, Dubai is intensifying its efforts to transform itself into a sustainable destination. It also supports the UAE's Net Zero 2050 Project, a nationwide initiative to achieve carbon-free emissions by 2050. Dubai recently launched the Sustainable Tourism Stamp initiative in line with the above. The initiative acknowledges hotels meeting 19 sustainability requirements, including energy efficiency, efficient water consumption, waste management, and staff education and engagement initiatives. This initiative is designed to provide recognition to hotels committed to achieving their sustainability goals and promoting durability.

## **Dubai's gastronomic sector shines**

Dubai has become a top destination for food lovers as it boasts 13,000 restaurants and cafes representing the cuisines of over 200 nationalities. The city has emerged as a culinary hub with the release of the second edition of the MICHELIN Guide Dubai. The guide features 90 restaurants,

three of which have made it to the World's Best Restaurants list for 2023. The annual Gault & Magaut Guide to the UAE also highlights Dubai's significance in the global culinary scene.

### **An international MICE destination**

Dubai is committed to promoting a diverse events sector. This commitment is reflected in the city hosting world-renowned festivals, leisure events, and business conferences. Dubai Food Festival 2023, Dubai Esports and Games Festival, and Dubai Summer Surprises are just a few events showcasing the city's vibrant culture. Events such as Gulfood have also helped establish Dubai as a preferred destination for business travelers. Looking ahead, Dubai is set to host the Dubai Fitness Challenge in October and the 28th edition of the Dubai Shopping Festival in December 2023.

### **Cruise and yachting center in the region**

Dubai is considered a top destination for cruising and yachting due to its numerous advantages. These include continuous investment in maritime infrastructure, a wide range of nautical events, luxury marinas, a rich maritime history, a picturesque coastline, and year-round sunshine. The emirate has successfully concluded its 2022/2023 cruise season, recording a 125% increase in cruise tourists and a 29% jump in cruise ship calls.

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