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Winner of the "Most Influential Tourism Newspaper in the Arab World 2026" Award by AFUSU

UK's Cheval Collection Expands in Dubai with 193 Hotel and Residential Units by 2030

Oman Air and GMF Inaugurate Aircraft Maintenance Facility in Muscat with Capacity for Six Aircraft

Morocco Records MAD 115.3 Billion in Tourism Revenue in Nine Months, Shifts Focus to Higher-Spending Visitors

Global Wellness Tourism Nears $1 Trillion as Middle East and North Africa Lead Growth at 21.5%



IBTM World 2026 to Bring Together 12,000 Professionals and 2,500 Organizations in Barcelona Next Week



30 startups to connect with more than 15 investors as an expanded AI and technology program explores the future of the meetings and events industry.

Barcelona – Spain | Al Rehla

Barcelona is preparing to host IBTM World 2026, one of the leading international gatherings for the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) industry, from November 17 to 19, with more than 12,000 professionals and over 2,500 participating organizations expected from the tourism, hospitality, event management, and technology sectors.

Taking place at Fira de Barcelona's Gran Via venue, the exhibition will feature an extensive program focusing on the transformations reshaping the business events industry, particularly artificial intelligence, innovation, sustainability, and the development of attendee experiences.

30 Startups to Connect with Investors

The exhibition will see the return of IBTM Ignite, organized in partnership with allpoints, to connect emerging businesses with potential investors in the events industry.

The initiative is expected to bring together 30 startups and more than 15 investors through live business pitches, professional networking sessions, and investment presentation training.

According to figures released by the organizers, the program has previously helped participating companies raise approximately £3.5 million in investment.

Artificial Intelligence Takes Center Stage

The 2026 edition will introduce AI for Events – Demo Day LIVE, developed in collaboration with Boldpush, showcasing practical artificial intelligence applications for event planning, management, and improving attendee experiences.

The exhibition will also feature an expanded technology and services area, the introduction of Braindate to facilitate professional networking, and a Skills Exchange program offering interactive learning sessions.

Growing Participation from Destinations and Hotel Groups



More than 85% of participating suppliers are returning to the exhibition, alongside an expanded presence from several international tourism destinations.

Scotland, Egypt, and Italy are among the destinations increasing their exhibition space, together with other European participants, reflecting continued interest among tourism authorities in attracting international meetings and conferences.

Under the theme "The Age of Disruption," the main conference program will examine the impact of economic, technological, and social transformations on the industry.

International speakers will include historian Eliza Filby, author Will Storr, and filmmaker Deeyah Khan.

Al Rehla Perspective | New Opportunities for Business Tourism

The significance of IBTM World extends beyond showcasing tourism destinations and hotel conference facilities. The event provides a platform for direct business negotiations between event organizers, hospitality companies, tourism authorities, and technology providers.

For participating Arab destinations, the exhibition offers an opportunity to strengthen relationships with international buyers and promote their capabilities to host major conferences and business events.

The investment and technology programs also reflect a broader shift in MICE industry competition toward delivering high-quality experiences, improving operational efficiency, and measuring returns on events, alongside traditional infrastructure and venue capacity.



UK’s Cheval Collection Expands in Dubai with 193 Hotel and Residential Units by 2030



Agreement with Dubai South covers 98 serviced apartments and 95 branded residences, bringing the group’s announced regional portfolio to more than 800 units.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Dubai South has signed an agreement with UK-based luxury hospitality group Cheval Collection to launch Cheval South Bay, a development comprising 193 hotel and residential units. The project marks another expansion of the international brand in the UAE’s hospitality market, with an anticipated opening in 2030.

In a statement issued on November 11, 2026, Dubai South confirmed that the development will feature 98 serviced apartments, ranging from studios to three-bedroom units, alongside 95 Cheval-branded residences, combining hotel-style hospitality services with branded residential accommodation.

Sixth Development in the Middle East

Cheval South Bay will represent the group’s fourth development in the UAE and sixth in the Middle East, bringing its regional portfolio, including announced projects, to more than 800 units.

Cheval Collection currently operates two properties in Dubai: Cheval Maison The Palm and Cheval Maison Expo City. The group has also announced its entry into the branded residences segment through a development on Dubai Islands, alongside planned expansion into Saudi Arabia.

Nabil Al Kindi, CEO of Dubai South, said the agreement supports efforts to attract international hospitality operators and develop services that meet the needs of businesses, residents, and visitors.

Mohammed Al Awadhi, CEO of Cheval Collection, emphasized that the Middle East remains a key focus of the group’s expansion strategy, with the new development strengthening its presence in Dubai, a major market for luxury hospitality and extended-stay accommodation.



"The agreement supports attracting international hospitality operators and developing services that meet the needs of the business community, residents and visitors."

Nabil Al Kindi
CEO of Dubai South Group



"The Middle East represents a key pillar of the company's expansion strategy, and the project strengthens its presence in Dubai, one of the leading markets for luxury hospitality and extended-stay accommodation."

Mohammed Al Awadhi
CEO of Cheval Collection



Serviced Apartments in a Waterfront Community

The project will be located within the South Bay community, featuring a one-kilometer artificial lagoon and planned direct access to South Bay Mall, in an area undergoing extensive residential, commercial, and infrastructure development.
The property is expected to offer fully furnished apartments with equipped kitchens and private balconies, alongside a swimming pool, fitness center, residents' lounges, and dining facilities.
Pet-friendly accommodation will also be available.

Cheval Collection expects sales of the residential units to begin in 2027. However, pricing, the total investment value, and details of the project's ownership structure have not yet been disclosed.

Al Rehla Perspective | Hospitality Designed for Extended-Stay Travelers

The project's tourism significance lies in the planned addition of 98 serviced apartments to Dubai South's future accommodation supply, providing options for business travelers, event visitors, and families seeking extended stays.

Cheval's expansion also reflects growing interest among international hospitality groups in developments combining professionally managed accommodation with branded residences, although the two segments differ in their operations, ownership models, and revenue structures.
The project could eventually benefit from expanding economic activity, improved transport connectivity across Dubai South, and its proximity to Al Maktoum International Airport.

However, projected demand, occupancy rates, and operating returns have not been disclosed.
The targeted 2030 opening also remains dependent on the progress of development and construction activities.

Oman Air and GMF Inaugurate Aircraft Maintenance Facility in Muscat with Capacity for Six Aircraft



Equal joint venture between Omani and Indonesian partners establishes a 3.85-hectare facility, targeting full operations in January 2027 and attracting regional and international airline customers.

Muscat – Sultanate of Oman | Al Rehla

Oman Air and Indonesia's GMF AeroAsia have inaugurated a joint aircraft maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) venture at Muscat International Airport under the name Oman GMF Technic, aiming to develop local aviation maintenance capabilities and attract business from regional and international airlines.

The facility was officially inaugurated on November 10, 2026, in the presence of senior Omani and Indonesian officials. The company is working to complete the necessary technical preparations and operational requirements ahead of its targeted full launch in January 2027.

Two Hangars Accommodating Six Aircraft

Covering an area of 3.85 hectares, the facility features two hangars capable of accommodating two wide-body and four narrow-body aircraft simultaneously.

Its infrastructure includes advanced aircraft access systems, automated equipment and spare parts storage facilities, and dedicated areas for ground engine testing.

The center is expected to provide base and heavy maintenance services, alongside line maintenance support, initially serving domestic airlines while targeting customers from regional and international markets.

Omani-Indonesian Joint Venture

Ownership of Oman GMF Technic is equally divided between Oman Air and GMF AeroAsia, a subsidiary of the Garuda Indonesia Group, with the Indonesian partner taking a leading role in technical and operational management.

The project operates under a 20-year agreement granting the venture the right to manage the maintenance facility at Muscat International Airport, providing a foundation for business development and long-term maintenance contracts.

Nasser Al Sharji, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Air, said the partnership would support the establishment of a world-class maintenance center while creating opportunities to develop national talent and attract aviation maintenance business from international markets.





"The partnership enables the development of a world-class maintenance centre, while creating an environment to develop national talent and attract aviation business from international markets."

Nasser Al Shurji
CEO of Oman Air

Andy Fahrurrozi, Chief Executive Officer of GMF AeroAsia, emphasized that the venture would strengthen the company's international expansion and facilitate the transfer of technical expertise into new markets.

International Certifications and Workforce Development

The venture is developing its technical capabilities and working toward obtaining relevant international approvals, including certifications from the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), to support its future ability to serve international carriers.
The project also prioritizes knowledge transfer, specialized technical training, and career development opportunities for Omani professionals in aircraft engineering and maintenance.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Does the Facility Mean for Oman's Aviation Sector?

The project's economic significance lies in establishing domestic aircraft maintenance capacity that could eventually reduce reliance on overseas service providers while creating new opportunities for Oman in the aviation services market.

Access to maintenance facilities closer to airline operations may also improve maintenance scheduling flexibility. However, any measurable impact on flight punctuality or operating costs has yet to be demonstrated through published data.

Neither the project's total investment value nor maintenance contracts with additional airlines have been disclosed. Its commercial performance will therefore depend on the commencement of full operations and its ability to attract customers in the coming years.

UAE and Japan Partner to Establish the Middle East's First Hot Air Balloon Museum



The Emirates Balloon Museum 7 will showcase the history of ballooning and its technologies, with Japan's Saga Balloon Museum supporting the development of a new cultural and educational attraction.

United Arab Emirates – Al Rehla

The Emirates Balloon Team has signed an international cooperation agreement with Japan's Saga Balloon Museum to establish the Middle East's first comprehensive museum dedicated to hot air balloons, aiming to introduce a distinctive cultural and tourism experience combining aviation history, education, and modern technology.

According to an announcement published by the Emirates News Agency (WAM) on November 11, 2026, the project will be named the Emirates Balloon Museum 7. It is expected to become the seventh specialized balloon museum worldwide, according to the project organizers, following similar institutions in the United States, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Japan.

Partnership with Japan's Saga Balloon Museum

The agreement was signed during a visit by an Emirates Balloon Team delegation to the Saga Balloon Museum, coinciding with the team's participation in the 39th Saga International Balloon Fiesta and the Pacific Cup.

The visit included an exchange of expertise on managing specialized museums, presenting the history of ballooning, and developing educational and training programs.

The museum is planned to be managed and operated by Emirati professionals, benefiting from Japanese expertise in exhibition presentation and the organization of specialized activities.

Exploring the History of Hot Air Ballooning



The museum aims to introduce visitors to the history of hot air balloons, advances in their manufacturing, and the technologies used in their operation.

It will also document the Emirates Balloon Team's participation in international festivals and events, highlighting its contributions to the development and promotion of ballooning.

A dedicated section will showcase initiatives promoting peace and tolerance, including the balloon carrying the message "The World Will Never Forget You, Zayed," honoring the legacy of the UAE's founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Captain Abdulaziz Nasser Al Mansouri, President of the Emirates Balloon Team, said the project would combine tourism and cultural experiences with educational and training programs, facilitating the transfer of international expertise to Emirati professionals.

Kiyoshi Mori, Deputy Director of the Saga Balloon Museum, welcomed the partnership and expressed the Japanese institution's support for the initiative.

Al Rehla Perspective | A Different Kind of Cultural Tourism Experience

The project's significance lies in presenting hot air ballooning as part of aviation history and technological heritage, rather than merely a recreational activity.

It could offer visitors an opportunity to explore the evolution of balloon flight, learn about the technologies behind it, and discover how ballooning has developed across different parts of the world.

The museum could eventually add a distinctive attraction to the UAE's cultural and educational tourism offerings, particularly for families, aviation enthusiasts, and visitors interested in specialized museums.

However, the authorities have not yet announced the museum's location, investment value, construction schedule, or expected opening date. The project therefore remains at the cooperation and planning stage rather than an operational tourist attraction.

New Hotel and Leisure Development on Minya's Nile Corniche Part of EGP 4 Billion Investment Project



Minya Governorate signs partnership agreements with Ebny Real Estate Development for a mixed-use complex, with plans to appoint a specialized management and operating company

Minya – Egypt | Al Rehla

Egypt's Minya Governorate has signed partnership agreements with Ebny Real Estate Development to develop a mixed-use project featuring hospitality, leisure, residential, and administrative facilities along the Nile Corniche in Minya, as part of a development with a total announced investment exceeding EGP 4 billion.

The project aims to redevelop a prime Nile waterfront site and introduce new hospitality, leisure, and commercial facilities to the city.

The agreements were signed on November 10, 2026, in the presence of Major General Emad Kadwany, Governor of Minya. The contracts were signed by Major General Dr. Mohamed Anis, Secretary-General of the Governorate, and Dr. Abdullah Kamel Hashem, Chairman and Managing Director of Ebny Real Estate Development.

The development will occupy a 2,601-square-metre site formerly used as the governor's residence. The agreements follow a cooperation protocol signed by both parties in September 2026, under a public-private partnership model.

Hospitality and Leisure Facilities Along the Nile Waterfront

The announced development plan includes hospitality and leisure facilities alongside residential and administrative components, potentially expanding accommodation and recreational services along Minya's Nile waterfront.

The developer has indicated plans to appoint a specialized company to manage and operate the development. However, the identity of the operator and any potential hotel brand have yet to be disclosed.

Details regarding the hospitality component's capacity, number of hotel rooms, and the proportion of the overall investment allocated specifically to tourism-related facilities have also not been announced.

More Than 1,500 Jobs Expected

According to the announced estimates, the project is expected to generate more than 1,500 direct and indirect jobs during its construction and operational phases.

Under the partnership arrangements, Minya Governorate will receive residential, commercial, and administrative units, along with additional entitlements, with a combined estimated value of approximately EGP 1 billion.

The arrangement forms part of efforts to unlock the economic value of government-owned real estate assets through partnerships with private-sector developers.



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Morocco Records MAD 115.3 Billion in Tourism Revenue in Nine Months, Shifts Focus to Higher-Spending Visitors





Tourist arrivals reach 17.4 million by the end of October, up 5%, as the government begins reviewing its 2023–2026 tourism roadmap ahead of a new strategy through 2030.

Rabat – Morocco | Al Rehla

Morocco's foreign currency tourism revenue reached MAD 115.3 billion during the first nine months of 2026, representing an increase of approximately 12% compared with the same period last year, as the country moves to reassess its tourism strategy and place greater emphasis on attracting higher-spending visitors.

Speaking before the House of Representatives' Committee on Productive Sectors on November 10, 2026, Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy Jalal Charaf revealed that Morocco welcomed 17.4 million tourists by the end of October, marking annual growth of 5%.

Meanwhile, overnight stays at classified accommodation establishments reached 34.8 million between January and September, an increase of 7%.

Tourist Arrivals Expected to Approach 21 Million in 2026

The minister projected that Morocco could welcome nearly 21 million tourists by the end of 2026, compared with approximately 20 million in 2025 and 13 million in 2019.

"The ministry has begun evaluating the outcomes of the 2023–2026 Tourism Roadmap, in consultation with industry professionals and partners, as a step towards preparing a new roadmap for 2027–2030."

Jalal Charaf
Minister of Tourism, Handicrafts and Social and Solidarity Economy



He noted that tourism revenue reached MAD 138.1 billion in 2025, up from MAD 78.6 billion in 2019, while the sector's contribution to gross domestic product stood at 7.5%.

Charaf also highlighted Morocco's improved position in an international ranking measuring tourism revenue growth, with the country moving to eighth place in the first half of 2026, compared with eighteenth place in the previous ranking.

New Tourism Strategy for 2027–2030

Charaf explained that the ministry has begun evaluating the results of the 2023–2026 tourism roadmap in consultation with industry professionals and stakeholders, in preparation for developing a new strategy covering 2027–2030.
The next phase will focus on improving the regulatory framework, developing industry skills, expanding tourism offerings through private investment, and strengthening international promotion and air connectivity.

Morocco's long-term tourism vision aims to attract 26 million visitors by 2030. However, the final details and implementation programmes of the new roadmap have not yet been approved.

From Visitor Numbers to Higher Tourism Value

The minister emphasised the importance of developing a tourism model that goes beyond increasing visitor numbers to place greater weight on spending levels and the economic value generated by each visit.

This approach signals growing attention to accommodation quality, service standards and tourism experiences, alongside efforts to maximise the economic benefits of international travel demand.

However, an increase in total tourism revenue does not, by itself, establish that average spending per visitor or length of stay has increased. These trends require separate monitoring of visitor expenditure, hotel occupancy and overnight stays.

The strategic review comes as Morocco prepares for major tourism and sporting events, culminating in its co-hosting of the 2030 FIFA World Cup alongside Spain and Portugal.

El Gouna Embraces Digital Room Keys as Casa Cook Goes Live, with Two More Resorts to Follow



New technology allows guests to unlock hotel rooms using smartphones and smartwatches without downloading a separate app, with expansion planned for Ancient Sands and Club Paradisio.

El Gouna – Egypt | Al Rehla

Hotels in Egypt's El Gouna have begun introducing digital room key technology, allowing guests to unlock their rooms using smartphones and smartwatches instead of traditional key cards. The service is now operational at Casa Cook El Gouna, with plans to expand it to two additional resorts managed by Orascom Hotels Management.

On November 11, 2026, Vingcard, part of the global access solutions group ASSA ABLOY, announced its collaboration with Orascom Hotels Management to introduce its Wallet Key technology across three El Gouna resorts, integrated with Hudini's digital hospitality platform.

The project includes Casa Cook El Gouna, where the service is currently available, alongside Ancient Sands Golf Resort and Club Paradisio, which are part of the planned expansion. However, guest availability at the latter two properties has not yet been confirmed.

How Does the Digital Key Work?

The technology allows guests to add their room keys directly to Apple Wallet or Google Wallet during online check-in or by scanning a QR code provided by reception staff.

Guests can then unlock their rooms simply by holding a compatible smartphone or smartwatch near the door lock, eliminating the need for a



"Our goal was not merely to adopt a new technology, but to elevate the guest experience by removing the friction associated with waiting for, carrying, and keeping track of a physical key."

Sanjay Sharma, Chief Technology Officer at Orascom Hotels Management



physical key card or a separate hotel application.

The system also enables hotels to manage access permissions digitally, including room changes, extended stays, and access to authorized facilities.

Sanjay Sharma, Chief Technology Officer at Orascom Hotels Management, explained that the objective extends beyond introducing new technology to enhancing the guest experience by removing the inconvenience of waiting for, carrying, and keeping track of traditional room keys.

Three Resorts Included in the Project

The rollout began at Casa Cook El Gouna, an adults-only hotel offering a contemporary, tranquil hospitality experience near the Red Sea.

The next phase includes Ancient Sands Golf Resort, which combines hotel accommodation and apartments with golf facilities, and Club Paradisio, a beachfront resort.

Expanding the system across different types of hospitality properties will provide an opportunity to assess its application in diverse accommodation environments.

Al Rehla Perspective | Are Traditional Hotel Key Cards Disappearing?

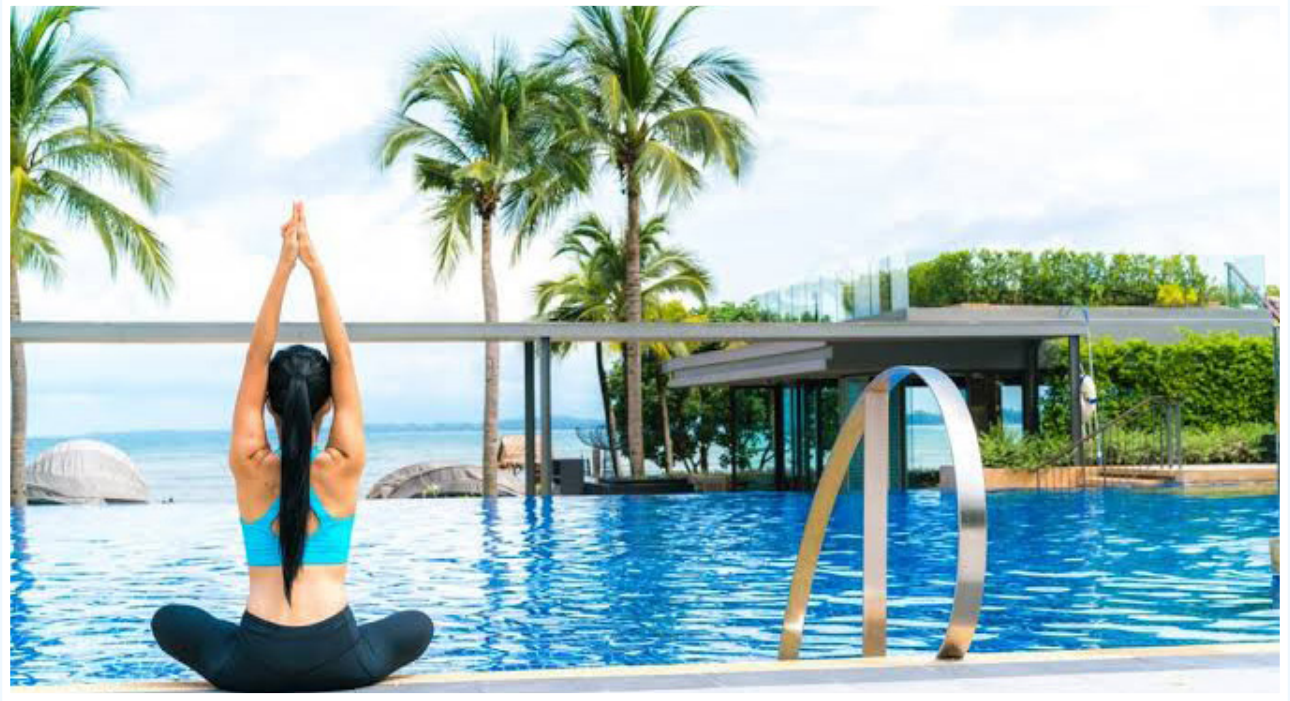
The initiative represents another step in the digital transformation of Egyptian hospitality, shifting part of the guest experience to personal devices and offering greater convenience without requiring additional applications.

Such systems could help hotels reduce their reliance on plastic key cards and simplify certain operational processes. However, no figures have been disclosed regarding financial savings or actual guest adoption rates.

The introduction of digital keys does not mean traditional cards will disappear entirely. Physical key cards remain available upon request, while digital access depends on device compatibility and service availability at each hotel.

The rollout in El Gouna illustrates a broader shift toward integrating smart access solutions with digital check-in and hotel management systems, making technology an increasingly seamless part of the everyday guest experience rather than simply an additional hotel amenity.

Global Wellness Tourism Nears $1 Trillion as Middle East and North Africa Lead Growth at 21.5%



International report reveals wellness tourism spending reached $982 billion in 2025, with the market projected to hit $1.38 trillion by 2030 amid rising demand for resorts and wellness experiences.

Miami – United States | Al Rehla

Global wellness tourism spending increased by 11.4% in 2025, reaching approximately $982 billion, while the Middle East and North Africa recorded the fastest regional growth at 21.5%, highlighting the expanding market for travel focused on relaxation, well-being, and improved quality of life.

According to the Global Wellness Institute's (GWI) Global Wellness Economy Monitor 2026, released on November 11, the broader wellness economy reached a record $7.5 trillion in 2025, representing an 8.9% increase over the previous year. The market is projected to grow to $8.2 trillion by the end of 2026 and approximately $10.9 trillion by 2030.

The wellness economy encompasses 11 sectors, including wellness tourism, spas, thermal and mineral springs, nutrition, physical activity, and wellness real estate, making it considerably broader than tourism alone.

Middle East and North Africa Record Fastest Growth

The report revealed that wellness tourism spending in the Middle East and North Africa rose by 21.5% between 2024 and 2025, outpacing Sub-Saharan Africa, which recorded 18.1% growth, and Asia, at 15.6%.

Although the United States accounts for 36% of global wellness tourism expenditure, regional growth rates indicate expanding demand in other markets, including Arab destinations. However, faster growth does not necessarily translate into a larger overall market share.

The spa sector also recorded growth



of 12.8%, while thermal and mineral springs expanded by 10.4%, reflecting increasing consumer interest in relaxation, preventive wellness, and nature-based experiences.

Market Projected to Exceed $1.3 Trillion

The institute forecasts that wellness tourism will continue expanding at an average annual rate of approximately 7.1% through 2030, reaching nearly $1.38 trillion in global spending, compared with approximately $882 billion in 2024.

Katherine Johnston, Senior Research Fellow at the Global Wellness Institute, explained that the wellness economy's sustained growth is driven by long-term demographic and social changes, including aging populations, rising psychological stress, and growing interest in prevention and improved quality of life, rather than a temporary consumer trend.

Al Rehla Perspective | New Opportunities for Arab Hospitality

These developments present opportunities for hotel and resort operators across the Arab world to develop tourism products extending beyond traditional accommodation by integrating wellness programs, fitness activities, healthy dining, and nature-based experiences into their offerings.

Coastal destinations, mountain retreats, and regions with natural thermal springs could benefit from growing demand for wellness experiences, particularly when tourism products build on local resources while preserving environmental sustainability and cultural identity.

However, rising regional expenditure does not necessarily indicate a comparable increase in tourist arrivals or hotel investment. Assessing the actual economic impact requires detailed, country-specific data.

Wellness tourism, which focuses on prevention, relaxation, and overall well-being, must also be distinguished from medical tourism, which involves traveling to receive specialized healthcare services. This distinction is essential when measuring market size and evaluating investment opportunities.

Storm Charles Disrupts Travel Across Portugal, Cancelling 360 Flight Movements and Public Services



Lisbon Airport records 310 cancellations by 11 a.m., as civil protection authorities report 538 weather-related incidents and warn of continued flooding risks.

Lisbon – Portugal | Al Rehla

Storm Charles has caused widespread disruption to air travel across Portugal, with 360 aircraft arrival and departure movements cancelled at four airports by 11 a.m. local time on Wednesday, November 11, 2026. The severe weather also prompted authorities to implement emergency measures, close schools, and suspend certain non-essential public services amid heavy rainfall and strong winds.

Portuguese airport operator ANA reported that Lisbon Airport was the hardest hit, recording 288 cancellations announced in advance and a further 22 during the operational period.
Madeira Airport reported 22 cancellations, followed by Faro with 16 and Porto with 12.

The airport operator urged passengers to check their flight status directly with their airlines before traveling to the airport, warning that access roads could also be affected by weather-related restrictions.

538 Incidents and Flood Warnings
Portugal's National Civil Protection Authority reported 538 weather-related incidents between midnight and noon, including flooding, fallen trees, localized landslides, and operations to clear blocked roads.

Civil protection commander Mário Silvestre confirmed that emergency services remained on high alert despite some forecasts indicating a possible reduction in wind intensity. He warned that heavy rainfall and localized flooding continued to pose significant risks in several areas.

Spain Faces Simultaneous Severe Weather
Neighboring Spain also experienced emergency conditions caused by heavy rainfall associated with a series of weather systems, including Storm Bruna.

Authorities evacuated residents of Piedralaves, in Ávila province, amid concerns over potential flooding from a nearby dam, while weather warnings remained in effect across other parts of the country.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Should Travelers Do?
Passengers traveling to Portugal or connecting through its airports are advised to monitor flight updates before leaving their accommodation and contact their airlines regarding rebooking or refund options if their flights are cancelled.

Travelers should also avoid non-essential journeys in areas covered by severe weather warnings and check road conditions and connecting flight schedules before departure.

Flight cancellation figures may change as weather conditions develop, while no official estimates have yet been released regarding the economic losses suffered by Portugal's tourism and hospitality sectors.

From Pastizzi to Michelin Stars: 6 Food Experiences in Malta and Gozo



Historic bakeries and markets, local olive oil and seasonal seafood, alongside fine dining and traditional cheesemaking heritage.

Malta – Al-Rehla

Malta offers a diverse range of culinary experiences, from traditional street food and locally sourced ingredients to fine dining. In a promotional guide released on 11 November, the Malta Tourism Authority highlighted six stops where visitors can discover the cuisine of Malta and Gozo, shaped by the Mediterranean and influenced by Italian, Arab and North African heritage.

In the Maltese town of Rabat, the journey begins at Is-Serkin bakery, better known as Crystal Palace, where visitors can sample pastizzi filled with ricotta or peas, alongside ftira bread and imqaret, date-filled pastries. In Valletta, the covered Is-Suq tal-Belt market, housed in a restored historic building, offers a selection of Maltese and international dishes.

In Malta's countryside, Malta Rural Tours offers visits to the Tal-Kanċillier olive mill, where visitors can learn about local olive oil production and enjoy a tasting session accompanied by products from the island. During the harvest season, visitors may also have the opportunity to watch the olive-pressing process.

In the fishing village of Marsaxlokk, seasonal lampuki takes centre stage. At Ir-Rizzu restaurant, the fish is served in different forms, including carpaccio and the traditional Maltese fish pie. Its availability varies depending on the season.

For a more refined dining experience, De Mondion restaurant is located in the town of Mdina, within The Xara Palace hotel. It serves contemporary Mediterranean cuisine against panoramic views of the island. The restaurant has been awarded one Michelin star in Malta's Michelin Guide.

On the island of Gozo, Magro Food Village offers tours of its food production and cheesemaking facilities, introducing visitors to local cheeses such as ġbejna and irkotta, alongside tastings of regional products. Advance booking is recommended, and visitors are advised to check tour schedules and the availability of seasonal dishes.

Airbus A380 Records Over 14,000 Movements Worldwide in 30 Days as Dubai, London and Singapore Lead



Industry report tracks superjumbo operations across nine major international airports, with Dubai accounting for 30.3% of global movements and Heathrow standing out for airline diversity.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Airbus A380 aircraft recorded 14,140 takeoff and landing movements worldwide over a 30-day period, equivalent to 7,070 individual flights, according to aircraft tracking data published by aviation industry platform Simple Flying. The figures reveal significant differences in the operational concentration of the double-decker aircraft across major international airports.

Covering the period from October 5 to November 3, 2026, the report ranked Dubai International Airport first with 4,285 movements, representing approximately 30.3% of the global total. London Heathrow followed with 1,162 movements, ahead of Singapore Changi Airport with 895 and Sydney Airport with 628.

The platform counts aircraft takeoffs and landings as separate movements, meaning the total number of recorded movements is twice the number of individual flights tracked worldwide.

Nine Airports Lead Superjumbo Operations

Bangkok Suvarnabhumi Airport ranked fifth with 356 movements, followed by Los Angeles International Airport with 342, Paris Charles de Gaulle with 333, New York John F. Kennedy with 284, and Manchester Airport with 167 movements. The findings highlight contrasting operational models among major aviation hubs.

At Dubai International, Emirates dominates A380 operations, supported by its fleet of 116 aircraft of this type. London Heathrow, meanwhile, stands out for the diversity of its operators, with six airlines deploying the A380: British Airways, Emirates, Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, Qantas, and Singapore Airlines.

Asia and Australia Maintain Strong Presence

Across Asia and the Pacific, Singapore and Sydney retained prominent positions, supported by international airlines operating the superjumbo on high-demand, long-haul routes.

Four carriers operate the aircraft through Singapore, while Sydney



receives A380 services from airlines including Qantas, Emirates, Singapore Airlines, and Asiana Airlines.

Bangkok accommodates A380 flights operated by five airlines, reflecting the diversity of international air connections serving Thailand's major tourism gateway.

Gulf Airlines Play a Major Role

The figures also underline the important role of Gulf carriers in sustaining global A380 operations, particularly Emirates, which maintains the world's largest fleet of the aircraft, alongside Qatar Airways and Etihad Airways.

These airlines operate the superjumbo across major European, Asian, and American airports, reinforcing its role in connecting long-haul passenger markets through international aviation hubs.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Does the Global A380 Network Reveal?

The findings demonstrate the continued importance of high-capacity aircraft in international aviation networks, despite Airbus ending A380 production in 2021. The aircraft remains particularly relevant on routes carrying large passenger volumes through major connecting hubs, where its seating capacity can support concentrated demand.

For travel agencies and tour operators, A380 services provide substantial seat capacity on selected international routes, potentially offering more options for group travel and long-haul itineraries.

However, higher aircraft movement volumes do not necessarily translate into lower airfares or increased tourism demand. These outcomes depend on several factors, including seasonal travel patterns, passenger load factors, airline pricing strategies, and market competition.

The figures provide a snapshot of the geographical distribution of A380 operations during a specific 30-day period and should not be interpreted as an overall ranking of the world's busiest airports by passenger traffic.

European Pilots Warn of Risks of Forcing Passenger Aircraft to Land at Military Airfields



Three pilot organizations call for respect for captains' authority following the interception of an Aer Lingus flight in France, warning that potential criminal prosecution could undermine .aviation safety

Brussels – Belgium | Al Rehla

Three European pilot organizations have warned of the risks associated with directing civilian aircraft to military airfields during security emergencies without adequately considering operational conditions and safe landing requirements. Their concerns follow an incident in which French fighter jets intercepted an Irish passenger aircraft and forced it to divert.

In a joint statement issued on November 10, 2026, the European Cockpit Association (ECA), the Irish Air Line Pilots' Association (IALPA), and France's National Union of Airline Pilots (SNPL) expressed concern over how certain authorities have handled bomb threats affecting commercial flights across Europe.

The organizations emphasized the importance of cooperation with military and security authorities while maintaining respect for the legal and operational responsibilities of aircraft commanders. The ECA alone represents more than 44,000 professional pilots across Europe.

Dublin–Rome Flight Intercepted

The warning followed an incident involving Aer Lingus flight EI402, traveling from Dublin to Rome on November 5, with 151 passengers and six crew members on board, after authorities received a bomb threat concerning the aircraft.

Two French fighter jets intercepted the flight and escorted it to Évreux military airbase in Normandy, where it landed safely. Subsequent security inspections found no explosives.

According to information received by the Irish pilots' association, the flight crew did not have the necessary aeronautical charts or operational information to conduct a safe landing at the military facility. The crew reportedly requested permission to divert to a more suitable airport, but the request was denied.

French authorities, however, stated that the aircraft commander had initially failed to comply with landing instructions and opened an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.



Aer Lingus maintained that its crew had acted professionally and cooperated with the relevant authorities.

Concerns Over Criminal Prosecution

Captain Paul Reuter, Vice President of the European Cockpit Association, stressed that responses to aviation security threats must respect the professional judgment, authority, and legal and operational responsibilities of aircraft commanders.

He emphasized that pilots should not find themselves treated as potential threats by the very authorities they rely upon for assistance and protection.

The three organizations warned that the possibility of criminal prosecution over decisions made to protect passengers and crew could undermine cooperation between flight crews and security authorities.

Security Alerts Disrupt European Flights

The developments follow a wave of security alerts affecting numerous flights across Europe during the first week of November, resulting in aircraft diversions and the deployment of military fighter jets to escort certain flights.

The pilot organizations called for a review of these incidents in cooperation with national and European authorities, with the aim of identifying lessons and improving emergency response procedures.

They stressed that effective responses to security threats must not compromise civil aviation safety requirements or the operational responsibilities of flight crews.



"Pilots must never find themselves treated as a threat by the very authorities whose assistance they need."

Captain Paul Reuter
Vice-President of the European Cockpit Association (ECA).

Qatar Airways Expands Pre-Select Dining to Flights as Short as Two Hours



First and Business Class passengers can choose their main courses up to 14 days before departure, with additional dining options available on selected routes.

Doha – Qatar | Al Rehla

Qatar Airways has expanded its pre-select dining service to eligible medium-haul flights lasting two hours or longer, allowing First and Business Class passengers to choose their meals before departure rather than making their selections exclusively on board.

The airline announced the expansion on November 10, 2026, extending the service to a wider range of international routes as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance onboard hospitality and offer passengers a more personalized travel experience.

How Can Passengers Pre-Select Their Meals?

Passengers with confirmed reservations can select their preferred main course from the available onboard menu between 14 days and 24 hours before departure.

Selections can be made through the "Manage Booking" or "My Trips" sections of the Qatar Airways website or mobile application, without needing to contact the airline directly.

On selected routes, passengers can also choose from additional dishes featured in the airline's exclusive "Flavours to Fly For" collection, designed to enhance its premium inflight dining experience.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Does This Mean for Travelers?

The expanded service allows premium passengers to plan their dining experience in advance, particularly on medium-haul flights where meal service takes place within a shorter timeframe than on long-haul journeys.

It also gives travelers an opportunity to review available menu options before departure and select meals that best suit their preferences.

However, the expansion does not include Economy Class passengers, and Qatar Airways has not published a comprehensive list of all eligible routes.

Travelers are therefore advised to check whether the pre-select dining option is available through their booking and complete their selections at least 24 hours before departure.

Air Tanzania Warns of Flight Disruptions Until November 14 Due to Airbus A220 Engine Issues



Potential schedule changes and aircraft substitutions expected, as aviation reports indicate three of the airline's four A220 aircraft are out of service.

Dar es Salaam – Tanzania | Al Rehla

Air Tanzania has warned passengers of potential flight disruptions until November 14, 2026, following the premature removal of engines from some of its Airbus A220 aircraft, prompting the national carrier to adjust flight schedules and deploy alternative aircraft.

In a public notice issued on November 7, the airline stated that flights scheduled between November 7 and 14 could experience delays, departure time changes, or aircraft substitutions.

However, it did not disclose the number of affected flights or provide detailed technical explanations for the engine removals.

The carrier confirmed that alternative travel arrangements would be offered to affected passengers when necessary, urging travelers to check their flight status before heading to the airport.

Three Aircraft Reportedly Out of Service

According to aviation news platform NewsAero, which cited aircraft tracking data, three of Air Tanzania's four Airbus A220-300 aircraft had recently been inactive, leaving only one aircraft operational.

Air Tanzania has not officially confirmed the number of grounded aircraft or announced when they are expected to return to service. Each A220-300 has a stated capacity of 132 passengers, including 12 Business Class and 120 Economy Class seats.

Air Tanzania became the first African operator of the Airbus A220 after receiving its first aircraft in December 2018.

Al Rehla Perspective | What Does This Mean for Travelers?

The disruptions are particularly relevant to passengers traveling to Tanzania's major tourism destinations, including Zanzibar and safari regions, who rely on the airline's domestic and international services.

Travelers are advised to verify their flight schedules through official airline channels, review connection times, and contact the carrier if any changes occur.

Air Tanzania has not released official figures on canceled or delayed flights, and no verified data currently indicates that ticket prices have increased as a result of the disruptions.

Etihad Airways Launches First McLaren-Liveried Dreamliner Flight to Madrid



Boeing 787 takes Formula 1 colors across the airline's global network, offering passengers an exclusive experience that connects aviation with sports tourism.

Abu Dhabi – UAE | Al Rehla

Etihad Airways has launched operations of its specially liveried Boeing 787 Dreamliner featuring the visual identity of McLaren Racing, completing its inaugural flight from Abu Dhabi to Madrid on November 10, 2026. The milestone brings the partnership between the airline and the Formula 1 team directly into the passenger experience.

The airline confirmed that flight EY103 marked the aircraft's operational debut, featuring McLaren's signature papaya orange alongside Etihad's branding. It is the first wide-body commercial aircraft to carry the livery of a Formula 1 racing team.

Exclusive Passenger Experience

To celebrate the inaugural flight, Etihad presented passengers with commemorative cards and branded confectionery, while Business Class guests received caps and cards featuring the signatures of McLaren drivers Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri.

The airline also introduced a limited-edition collection of co-branded loungewear for premium passengers on long-haul flights, with availability extending through the period surrounding the Abu Dhabi Formula 1 Grand Prix in December.

The aircraft's operational debut followed an unveiling ceremony in Abu Dhabi that set a Guinness World Record for the largest single-curtain reveal using the Kabuki technique.

The Dreamliner will carry its distinctive design across Etihad's international network, including destinations such as Dublin, Milan, Vienna, Bangkok, and Delhi.

Al Rehla Perspective | Aircraft as Global Tourism Promotion Platforms

Beyond its striking appearance, the initiative illustrates how airlines can integrate sports tourism into the travel experience, transforming commercial aircraft into mobile promotional platforms reaching international markets.

Abu Dhabi benefits from Etihad's longstanding association with Formula 1, including its title sponsorship of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix since 2009, strengthening the destination's visibility among motorsport audiences worldwide.

However, the initiative's actual impact on tourist arrivals or airline revenues has not been disclosed. Its demonstrated value therefore remains primarily promotional, with no published figures establishing a direct economic return.

Emirates Offers Premium Economy on 31 European Routes and Adds 31 Weekly Flights to Winter Schedule



An average of 78 daily flights between Dubai and Europe, with additional services to Cape Town, Phuket, Hanoi and Manila expanding winter travel options via Dubai.

Dubai – UAE | Al Rehla

Emirates has expanded its Premium Economy offering to flights serving 31 of its 41 destinations across Europe and the United Kingdom, alongside the addition of 31 weekly flights to international destinations during the 2026–2027 winter season.

In a statement issued on November 10, 2026, the airline said its winter schedule includes an average of 78 daily flights between Dubai and Europe, with additional services to Cape Town, Nairobi, Phuket, Hanoi, Manila, Tokyo Narita and Accra.

Expanding Premium Economy Services

Paris Charles de Gaulle became the latest European destination to offer Emirates Premium Economy on October 25, as part of an extensive cabin refurbishment programme that had covered 108 aircraft by the time of the announcement.

The cabin features wider seats, additional legroom and enhanced dining services, providing passengers with an option between Economy Class and Business Class.

Emirates also continues to operate its Airbus A380 aircraft to 21 European destinations, offering onward connections through Dubai to other destinations across Asia and Australia.

More Options for Winter Travel

The airline's network includes Helsinki, where services commenced in October 2026, while codeshare and interline agreements provide access to an additional 216 destinations across various regions.

The expansion aims to provide travellers from Europe with more options for reaching warm-weather destinations in Asia, Africa and the Indian Ocean via Dubai, particularly during the winter holiday season.

Al Rehla Travel Insight | How Do Travellers Benefit?

The wider availability of Premium Economy gives passengers additional comfort options on long-haul flights, while increased weekly frequencies provide greater flexibility when selecting travel dates and connecting flights through Dubai.

However, Premium Economy availability varies depending on the specific flight and aircraft type, and greater onboard comfort does not necessarily mean lower fares. Travellers are advised to compare fares across cabin classes, check connection times in Dubai and confirm seat availability before booking, particularly during peak winter travel periods.

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