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Marriott Expands Branded Residential Portfolio in EMEA to 115 Properties Following 25 New Agreements

NEVERA and Hassan Allam Sign Partnership to Develop Tourism Destination in Egypt with 6,000 Hotel Rooms

IHG Signs Agreements to Add 477 Hotel Rooms in Spain Across Three New Properties

Britain Allocates £3.38 Million to Develop Tourism Through Five Initiatives Connecting Destinations Across England



Marriott Expands Branded Residential Portfolio in EMEA to 115 Properties Following 25 New Agreements



36 properties open and approximately 80 under development across 23 markets, with the UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia among key expansion and upcoming opening destinations

Athens, Greece | Al Rehla

Marriott International announced on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, that its portfolio of operating and pipeline branded residential properties across Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) had reached 115 projects, supported by the signing of 25 new residential agreements since the beginning of the year.

The announcement, made during the Resort and Residential Hospitality Forum in Athens, highlights the group's continued expansion beyond traditional hotel operations.

Marriott said its regional portfolio includes 36 open properties and approximately 80 projects under development across 23 countries and territories.

Luxury Brands Drive Expansion

The number of open Marriott-branded residential properties in EMEA has increased by approximately 60% over the past three years, while the region now accounts for 37% of the group's global branded residential development pipeline.

Luxury brands represented approximately 75% of residential agreements signed during 2026, reflecting developers' growing interest in projects that combine private residential ownership with internationally recognised hospitality brands and services.

Jaidev Menezes, Marriott's Regional Vice President of Mixed-Use Development, said reaching 115 properties reflects the strength of the



"Reaching 115 projects reflects the strength of the brands, owners' confidence and growing demand for hotel-branded residences."

Jaidev Menezes
Regional Vice President, Mixed-Use Development, Marriott International



group's brands, owners' confidence and increasing demand for branded residences.

New Agreements in the UAE and Egypt

The latest agreements include JW Marriott Residences Abu Dhabi Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, alongside Westin Residences Dubai Creek Gardens and Renaissance Residences Dubai Creek Gardens in Dubai.

In Egypt, Marriott signed agreements for Autograph Collection Residences in Ras Al Hekma on the North Coast and Sixteen Eighteen, a Tribute Portfolio-branded residential development in Sheikh Zayed City, Cairo.

The group's expansion also includes luxury residential projects under the St. Regis and Luxury Collection brands in Cyprus and Spain.

Six Openings Expected Before the End of 2026

Marriott expects six branded residential projects to open across EMEA before the end of 2026.

These include The St. Regis Residences Financial Center Road and an expansion of Marriott Residences Al Barsha South in Dubai.

The list also features the first phase of Marriott Residences Heliopolis in Cairo, The Ritz-Carlton Residences in Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, and two additional developments in Belgrade, Serbia, and Sitges, Spain.

During the year, the group also expanded its branded residential presence into new markets, including Italy, France and Uzbekistan.

Al-Rehla Perspective | From Hotel Operations to Branded Residential Experiences

Marriott's expansion highlights a shift in the business models of international hospitality groups, whose activities increasingly extend beyond hotel management to brand licensing and the provision of residential services and facilities.

This model enables property developers to benefit from established hospitality brands and their operational expertise, while providing Marriott with opportunities to expand its commercial presence without necessarily adding conventional hotel rooms to the market.

The UAE, Egypt and Saudi Arabia stand out as important markets within this expansion, as developments associated with international hospitality brands continue to attract investor interest.

However, assessing the financial impact of these agreements requires information about project values and Marriott's share of management and licensing fees, details that were not disclosed in the announcement.

NEVERA and Hassan Allam Sign Partnership to Develop Tourism Destination in Egypt with 6,000 Hotel Rooms



The 36-million-square-metre project near the Pyramids of Giza and the Grand Egyptian Museum will begin with a 10-million-square-metre first phase

Cairo, Egypt | Al Rehla

NEVERA Egypt for Sustainable Development and Hassan Allam Holding signed a strategic partnership agreement on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, to develop NEVERA, a large-scale mixed-use destination west of Greater Cairo, covering a total area of 36 million square metres.

The project aims to create an integrated destination for tourism, hospitality, entertainment and business activities near the Pyramids of Giza and the Grand Egyptian Museum.

The signing ceremony was attended by Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Mostafa Madbouly, as part of broader efforts to develop the area surrounding Egypt's major archaeological attractions and expand hotel capacity and tourism services.

6,000 Hotel Rooms and Entertainment and Conference Facilities

The project's master plan targets approximately 6,000 hotel rooms across various categories, representing around 40% of the planned hotel capacity in the area surrounding the Pyramids and the Grand Egyptian Museum, according to the announced figures.

The development will also include a major entertainment destination, shopping and dining areas, an international conference and exhibition centre, alongside residential, commercial and service facilities.

Its location near Sphinx International Airport and major road networks provides opportunities to connect cultural tourism with leisure activities and business events.

First Phase Covers 10 Million Square Metres

Hassan Allam, Chairman and CEO of Hassan Allam Holding, announced the launch of the project's first development phase, covering 10 million square metres.

The group will participate in



developing the hospitality, real estate and commercial components through its subsidiary, Grova Developments, as part of a partnership aimed at attracting investors, developers and specialised operators for the project's various phases.

The total investment value, agreements with specific international hotel operators and opening dates for the planned facilities have not yet been disclosed.

Al-Rehla Perspective | 6,000 Hotel Rooms Could Reshape Supply in Western Cairo

NEVERA's tourism significance lies in its planned hotel capacity and proximity to two of Egypt's most prominent attractions: the Pyramids of Giza and the Grand Egyptian Museum.

If the proposed 6,000 rooms are delivered as planned, they would represent a substantial addition to Western Cairo's hotel supply, potentially creating opportunities for hotel operators, hospitality management companies and investors in tourism and entertainment facilities.

Combining hotels with exhibitions, conferences and leisure attractions could also help diversify demand beyond visitors primarily interested in archaeological sites.

However, the project's scale alone does not guarantee higher occupancy rates, longer tourist stays or increased visitor spending.

Its actual economic viability will depend on development progress, the timing of new hotel openings, market demand and the ability to attract established hotel operators and operational investment.

While the partnership agreement represents an important development milestone, it does not mean that construction has begun across all project components or that the planned hotel rooms are approaching operational readiness.



Hassan Allam
Chairman and CEO of Hassan Allam Holding



Scraps of a Traveller

When You Fall in Love with London for Its Culture, Not Its Cafés

BY:
Ali Yousef Al Saad

If London, to you, is just a stylish café, a cup with your name misspelled on it, and a photograph beside Big Ben, I'm afraid you may have bought an airline ticket to visit a very expensive backdrop. I have nothing against cafés. But London is a city worth reading before photographing.

Start at the British Museum. Its collection contains at least eight million objects, only a fraction of which can be displayed. You can travel from ancient Egypt to Asian civilisations in minutes, discovering that history is rather bigger than the chapter you memorised for an exam. Some objects also raise serious questions about ownership and how they came to Britain. Culture, after all, involves asking questions, not just admiring things.

Then head to the Natural History Museum. Its collections hold over 80 million specimens, from tiny insects to a blue whale skeleton suspended above visitors. Here, you can feel very small twice: once beside the whale, and again when you consider the age of our planet.

The British Library is a formidable answer to anyone claiming they have nothing to read. It holds more than 170 million items, with roughly 746 kilometres of shelving. Imagine searching for your favourite book and discovering that the distance involved deserves its own road-trip itinerary.

And here's a pleasant surprise: admission to the permanent collections of major institutions, including the British Museum and the National Gallery, is free. Not a bad deal in an expensive city!

At Shakespeare's Globe, an open-air theatre welcomes about 1,570 spectators, including 700 standing. Yes, standing is part of the experience, not punishment for booking late. Even stranger, its thatched roof required special permission because of restrictions introduced after the Great Fire of London in 1666.

For a touch of folklore, visit the Tower of London and ask about the ravens. Legend says the Tower and kingdom will fall if they leave. According to the palace, one raven, George, was actually dismissed for eating television aerials. Even the birds have disciplinary records here.

London is not opposed to coffee, and neither am I. Just make the café a break between a museum, a play and a book—not the entire purpose of your journey.

A photograph preserves a moment. Culture gives you a city you can keep revisiting long after you have flown home.



Airbus Prepares to Open Regional Aircraft Repair Facility at Dubai South in 2027



New facility at Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub to specialise in heavy structural modifications and major aircraft repairs as Airbus expands its regional support services

Dubai, UAE | Al Rehla

Airbus is preparing to open a new regional facility specialising in heavy structural modifications and major aircraft repairs at the Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub in Dubai South in 2027, as part of its efforts to expand technical support services for aircraft operators in the UAE, the Middle East and Africa.

The planned opening was highlighted during a high-level Airbus delegation's visit to Dubai South. The delegation included Thomas Toepfer, Chief Financial Officer of Airbus; Gabriel Semelas, President of Airbus Africa and Middle East; and Laurent Negre, Vice President and Head of Customer Services for the region.

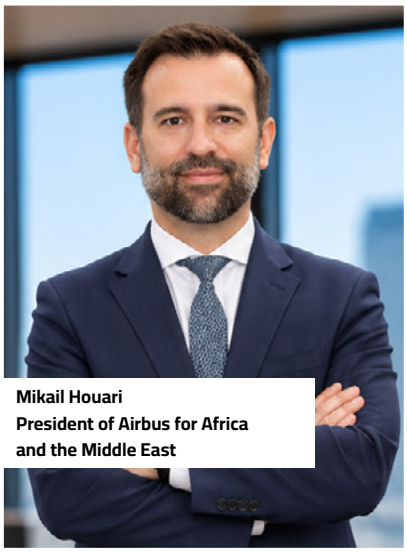
Specialised Aircraft Maintenance and Repair Services

The new facility is expected to leverage Airbus' existing maintenance organisation approval from the relevant local authorities to expand its capabilities in complex and heavy structural modifications and major aircraft repairs.

The project aims to bring Airbus' engineering expertise and specialised technical capabilities closer to aircraft operators across the region, strengthening access to maintenance and repair services.

Airbus has not yet disclosed the investment value or the facility's planned operational capacity.





Mikail Houari
President of Airbus for Africa and the Middle East



Khalifa Al Zaffin
CEO of Dubai Aviation City Corporation and Dubai South



Tahnoon Saif
Executive Director of the Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub

Strengthening Cooperation with Dubai South

The delegation was welcomed by Khalifa Al Zaffin, Executive Chairman of Dubai Aviation City Corporation and Dubai South; Nabil Al Kindi, Group CEO of Dubai South; and Tahnoon Saif, CEO of Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub, alongside senior officials from both organisations.

Al Zaffin emphasised that Airbus' investment reflects the confidence of global aviation companies in Dubai's aviation sector and supports the continued development of Mohammed Bin Rashid Aerospace Hub and its contribution to economic diversification.

Gabriel Semelas said the new facility represents an extension of Airbus' long-term commitment to the region, contributing to the development of specialised technical expertise while bringing the manufacturer's services closer to its customers.

Expanding Airbus' Regional Presence

The facility builds on Airbus' presence in the UAE since 1985 and will complement its existing commercial and industrial activities while expanding its regional technical services network.

The facility is scheduled to open in 2027, although Airbus has not yet announced a specific operational launch date or detailed investment figures for the project.

Britain Allocates £3.38 Million to Develop Tourism Through Five Initiatives Connecting Destinations Across England



Around £800,000 allocated to the first phase, involving 25 Local Visitor Economy Partnerships, with projects aimed at extending visitor stays and developing bookable travel experiences

London, United Kingdom | Al Rehla

VisitEngland announced on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, the selection of five regional tourism initiatives to receive funding from the Connected Destinations Fund, a £3.38 million programme running over three years.

The initiative aims to develop integrated tourism experiences linking cities, rural communities and coastal destinations across England.

Funded by the UK's Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the programme has allocated approximately £800,000 to the five projects in their first year, involving 25 Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs).

The initiative seeks to transform individual attractions and destinations into coordinated, bookable travel experiences marketed through travel agencies and tour operators, encouraging visitors to explore additional regions and extend their stays.

Five Projects Connecting Destinations Across England

The selected initiatives include Northern Saints: Ways of the North, led by Visit County Durham, which aims to develop six historic pilgrimage and walking routes across North East England into bookable cultural holidays, particularly targeting Germany, the Netherlands and North America.

In South West England, the Great West Way project builds on an existing 500-mile tourism route connecting London and Bristol, developing new themed experiences and travel itineraries for international markets.

Meanwhile, Manchester Gateway will connect Manchester, Liverpool, Cheshire, Lancashire, Cumbria and the Peak District through itineraries combining culture, heritage, nature and coastal experiences, with a particular focus on North American visitors.

Heritage, Culinary Tourism and a Tourism Trade Academy



England's Heartland will link destinations including Bath, Oxford, Birmingham, Stratford-upon-Avon and the Cotswolds, developing travel programmes centred on heritage, culture, gastronomy and literature.

In Yorkshire, the Yorkshire Connected initiative aims to establish a tourism trade academy and appoint a dedicated trade coordinator to help local businesses develop marketable tourism products and establish relationships with international tour operators.

The initiative will focus on European markets, including France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Extending Visitor Stays and Spreading Economic Benefits

Patricia Yates, Chief Executive Officer of VisitEngland and VisitBritain, said the fund encourages destinations to collaborate in developing connected visitor experiences that make it easier for travellers to explore more of England.

She explained that encouraging visitors to stay longer and travel between multiple destinations could support local businesses and distribute tourism's economic benefits more widely.

Al-Rehla Perspective | From Promoting Attractions to Selling Travel Experiences

The programme's significance lies in shifting public support from promoting individual destinations towards developing integrated tourism products that can be marketed and sold commercially.

This approach could create opportunities for tour operators, transport providers, accommodation businesses and small tourism enterprises.

For international travellers, the model could eventually make it easier to book itineraries covering several cities or regions within a single travel package, rather than limiting their visits to England's traditional tourism destinations.

However, the programme's economic impact will depend on the participating organisations successfully launching the proposed experiences, making them available through tourism distribution channels, attracting visitors and generating measurable increases in length of stay and visitor spending.

IHG Signs Agreements to Add 477 Hotel Rooms in Spain Across Three New Properties



Two hotels in Madrid and the group's first entry into Murcia under the Holiday Inn Express brand, with openings scheduled between 2028 and 2029

Madrid, Spain | Al Rehla

IHG Hotels & Resorts announced on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, the signing of three development agreements for new Holiday Inn Express hotels in Spain, adding a total of 477 rooms across two properties in Madrid and one in Murcia, as part of the group's continued expansion in the Spanish hospitality market.

The agreements mark Holiday Inn Express's first entry into Murcia, while the three hotels are expected to open progressively between the final quarter of 2028 and the second half of 2029.

357 New Rooms in Madrid

Holiday Inn Express Madrid – Las Tablas will feature 220 rooms in northern Madrid, near the business districts of Sanchinarro and Tres Cantos, which are home to major companies operating in technology, consulting, engineering and telecommunications.

Scheduled to open in the second half of 2029, the hotel is being developed through Selecto, the hotel investment platform launched by asset management firm Tikehau Capital in partnership with Quest Capital.

Meanwhile, Holiday Inn Express Madrid – Carabanchel will offer 137 rooms next to the Islazul shopping and entertainment centre, which houses approximately 180 stores and attracts around 12 million visitors annually.

The property is being developed by Grupo SALAS and owned by Hotel Collection International, with an opening anticipated in the first half of 2029.





IHG's First Hotel in Murcia

The expansion also includes the 120-room Holiday Inn Express Murcia – Thader, located in the Churra commercial district north of Murcia, near the Thader shopping centre and the A-7 motorway.

The project is being developed by Grupo Masa and will be operated by Spanish hospitality group Senator Hotels & Resorts, with an expected opening in the final quarter of 2028.

Development Pipeline Exceeds 1,300 Rooms

Spain is IHG's fourth-largest market in Europe, where the group currently operates 70 hotels, with another 17 properties under development.

Holiday Inn Express has 21 operating hotels across Spain, while the latest agreements bring the brand's development pipeline in the country to more than 1,300 rooms.

The expansion comes as Spain continues to attract strong international tourism demand, having welcomed 96.8 million international tourists in 2025, an increase of 3.2% year on year, according to the Spanish National Statistics Institute.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Expansion Beyond Traditional Tourist Destinations

The agreements reflect IHG's strategy of expanding its value-oriented and midscale hotel brands into residential and commercial districts, rather than focusing exclusively on established tourist centres.

The locations of the three new properties are designed to serve both business and leisure travellers, benefiting from local demand and connections to transport networks and airports.

However, the actual increase in hotel capacity will depend on the projects being completed and opening according to their announced schedules. IHG has not disclosed the combined investment value of the three agreements.

Hilton Chooses Dubai for First International Apartment Collection Project, Featuring 388 Units



Apartment Collection by Hilton is set to open its first project outside the United States in December 2026, with bookings available for stays from December 23.

Dubai, UAE | Al Rehla

Global hospitality group Hilton announced on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, that it had signed its first international expansion agreements for its "Apartment Collection by Hilton" brand, which specialises in serviced apartments for short- and extended-stay guests. Dubai has been selected to host the brand's first project outside the United States, scheduled to open in December.

The "Apartment Collection by Hilton, Dubai Downtown" project will feature approximately 388 serviced apartments in the Business Bay district, marking another step in the group's expansion into the managed residential accommodation sector.

388 Apartments Overlooking the Dubai Water Canal

Located on Marasi Drive in Business Bay, near the Dubai Water Canal and Downtown Dubai, the project will offer studios and one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments.

Its facilities will include an outdoor swimming pool, a fitness centre and a children's play area, with convenient access to Dubai Mall, Burj Khalifa and the surrounding business and entertainment districts.

The apartments will feature fully equipped kitchens, living spaces and laundry facilities, alongside 24-hour guest support and regular housekeeping services for extended stays. Guests will also be able to enjoy the benefits of the "Hilton Honors" loyalty programme.

December Bookings and a New Phase of International Expansion

Hilton has set December 2026 as the expected opening date, while its official website shows bookings available for stays starting December 23. The group has not announced a separate, definitive date for the official opening ceremony.

Alongside the Dubai agreement, Hilton announced the signing of another project in the Turks and Caicos Islands, which is expected to open in 2028.

The group also revealed that more than 60 agreements are at various stages of negotiation in the United States and international markets, as part of its expansion plans for the brand, launched in partnership with "Placemakr".

Last Edition Crowned

the Leaders of Hospitality...

Who Will Claim the Gold This Year?

Nominations Open Now



Dubai Approves Second Air Taxi Station, Paving the Way for Marina-to-Airport Flights in Under 10 Minutes



Dubai Marina station has an annual capacity of 84,000 passengers, while commercial operations await final approvals

Dubai, UAE | Al Rehla

Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) and Skyports Infrastructure announced on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, the completion and regulatory approval of the Dubai Marina electric air taxi station (VMR) by the UAE General Civil Aviation Authority (GCAA).

The facility becomes the second approved station in Dubai's air taxi network, following the Dubai International Airport station (VDX).

The approval paves the way for a permanent air taxi route connecting the two stations using electric aircraft operated by Joby Aviation. The service is expected to reduce journey times to under 10 minutes, compared with approximately 35 minutes by car.

Annual Capacity of 84,000 Passengers

Located next to the American University in Dubai and near Al Fardan Exchange Metro Station, the Dubai Marina facility offers connections to the city's public transport network and major tourism and business districts.

The station is designed to accommodate approximately 21,000 landings annually, with a passenger capacity of up to 84,000. Its facilities include a passenger terminal, an elevated take-off and landing area, electric aircraft charging infrastructure and dedicated aircraft parking spaces.

Joby's electric aircraft can carry four passengers and reach speeds of approximately 320 kilometres per hour, producing no direct carbon emissions during flight.

Expanding Dubai's Air Taxi Network

Skyports is also developing two additional stations in Downtown Dubai and Palm Jumeirah, aiming to connect major tourism and commercial destinations with the airport.

Despite the approval of the Marina and airport stations, commercial passenger services have not yet begun. Operations remain subject to final regulatory approvals and aircraft readiness, while ticket prices and an official launch date have not been announced.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A New Travel Experience Awaiting Launch

Electric air taxis could offer Dubai visitors a faster way to travel between the airport and major hotel and entertainment districts.

However, the service's tourism potential will depend on ticket prices, flight availability, ease of booking and integration with existing transport networks.

These factors will determine whether air taxis evolve from a premium travel experience into a practical urban mobility option.

The Philosophy of Travel: When We Wander Slowly Through Ancient City Streets, Do We Discover the City or Ourselves?



From Aristotle's footsteps in Athens to the winding alleys of historic cities, slowing down allows us to see places more deeply and listen to what travel awakens within us.

Imagine a morning in Athens, far from crowded tour buses and the endless list of landmarks waiting to be visited. You leave the broad avenue behind and enter a quiet green space in the heart of the city. A circular path stretches before you, shaded by olive, cypress and pomegranate trees, with aromatic herbs growing along its edges. This feels less like a brief escape from sightseeing and more like the beginning of a different way of understanding a place.

Here stands Aristotle's Lyceum, where the philosopher established his school and taught for approximately twelve years. According to the Greek authority responsible for the archaeological site, the tree-lined paths evoke Aristotle's practice of walking while teaching. It is as though an ancient idea still guides the modern visitor: sometimes a city is not discovered through a car window, but through footsteps that give the eyes time to observe and the mind space to question.

On World Philosophy Day, observed by UNESCO on the third Thursday of November, a question emerges that reaches far beyond books: Is there a philosophy of travel?

Perhaps the answer begins when the purpose of a journey is no longer to collect as many photographs as possible, but to understand what lies beyond the scenery: how people use their public squares, what the façades of their homes reveal, and how traces of the past coexist with the rhythms of modern life.

This is where the idea of slow travel comes in. It does not simply mean walking slowly. Rather, it involves deliberately easing the pace of a journey: staying longer, choosing one neighbourhood and exploring it on foot, returning to its market or café, and taking time to speak with people encountered along the way.

Tourism research describes this approach as a conscious decision to slow down the travel experience, while paying closer attention to the environment, local communities and the quality of the time spent in a destination.

Not every traveller can afford additional days, but the philosophy can be embraced even during a short holiday. It may mean reducing the number of stops, leaving unscheduled time in the itinerary, or giving a single neighbourhood enough hours to reveal its character.

The journey itself then becomes part of the experience: the aroma of freshly baked bread in the morning, the shade of a tree in a small square, or a bench overlooking everyday life, with no need to rush.

And when the time comes to leave, the reward may not be a longer list of landmarks visited, but a calmer, clearer understanding of the city.

Perhaps that is precisely where the philosophy of travel lies: in giving a place enough time to speak, and returning home knowing more about it than you merely saw.

Episode Two:

The Maya Civilization... A Historical Legacy the World Has Partly Lost



Prepared by: Azhar Youssef

In the first episode of our series, "What If Colonialism Had Never Happened?", we explored how colonialism reshaped the world's tourism map, leading to the disappearance of cities and landmarks and the destruction and looting of the heritage of ancient civilizations.

In this episode, we turn to Central America to explore the Maya civilization, one of the world's most advanced civilizations in mathematics, astronomy, writing and architecture. We ask: What did the world lose when parts of its historical memory were destroyed? And how did that loss affect cultural tourism?

An Advanced Civilization in Science and Architecture

The Maya civilization flourished across territories that include southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador. It was not a unified empire, but rather a collection of cities and kingdoms with sophisticated political and social systems.

The Maya excelled in astronomy, developed highly accurate calendars, and used a mathematical system based on the number twenty. They also created a hieroglyphic writing system to record historical events, religious rituals and matters concerning their rulers.

Cities such as Tikal in Guatemala, Palenque in Mexico, and Copán in Honduras remain enduring evidence of their architectural and urban planning achievements.

Manuscripts Burned and Knowledge Lost

With the arrival of the Spanish in Maya territories during the 16th century, a long period of conquest, resistance and religious and social transformation began. Not all Maya territories came under Spanish rule at the same time. Some Maya kingdoms continued to resist Spanish control for decades, until the fall of the last major independent Maya kingdom in 1697.

During this period, Maya manuscripts and religious symbols were subjected to destruction.

One of the most notorious incidents took place in 1562 in the town of Maní on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, when Spanish clergyman Diego de Landa oversaw the burning of a collection of Maya books and manuscripts,



considering them linked to religious beliefs he sought to eradicate.

These manuscripts contained knowledge of astronomy, history, calendars and social life. Today, only a very small number of ancient illustrated Maya manuscripts have survived.

What Did the Tourism World Lose?

The loss of these manuscripts extends beyond history to cultural and educational tourism.

The archaeological sites visited by tourists today reveal part of the Maya civilization's greatness, but they cannot convey the full picture of its people, knowledge and way of life.

Had these libraries survived into the present day, they could have served as valuable resources for museums, cultural centres and tourism experiences, offering visitors a deeper understanding of the civilization's sciences, arts and beliefs.

But one important truth must not be overlooked: the Maya are not simply an ancient civilization that disappeared. They are living peoples who continue to exist in Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and other countries, preserving their languages, traditions and identity.

For this reason, tourism development in their regions should not be limited to showcasing temples and ruins. It should also involve local communities in telling their own history, supporting their traditional crafts and ensuring that they benefit from tourism activity.

Heritage That Cannot Be Replaced

The story of the Maya shows that when heritage is destroyed, the world loses more than buildings and archaeological remains. It also loses knowledge, stories and human experiences that could have enriched its museums and tourist destinations.

Although we cannot say with certainty what might have happened had colonialism never taken place, what we do know is that a significant part of this civilization's historical memory has not survived.

Protecting heritage today means more than restoring temples. It also means safeguarding languages, knowledge and traditions, while giving the communities who own this heritage

the leading role in telling their history.

TIME Reveals World's Best Airlines for 2027: Gulf Carriers Take Top Two Spots as Europe Misses Top 10



Emirates ranks first, followed by Qatar Airways and Air New Zealand, in a global ranking combining passenger feedback with operational data from more than 30 million flights

Dubai, UAE | Al Rehla

TIME magazine, in partnership with global data and statistics company Statista, has unveiled the inaugural World's Best Airlines ranking for 2027, combining passenger evaluations with operational performance indicators.

The results highlight the strong performance of Gulf and Asian carriers, while no European airline secured a place among the world's top 10.

Emirates topped the ranking with a score of 94.29 points, narrowly ahead of Qatar Airways, which placed second with 94.16 points, a margin of just 0.13 points. Air New Zealand ranked third with 93.47 points.

The results were announced on November 18, 2026, based on surveys and operational data collected during earlier periods, despite the ranking carrying the 2027 designation.

Gulf and Asian Airlines Dominate the Leading Positions

Singapore Airlines secured fourth place with 93.32 points, followed by Hong Kong-based Cathay Pacific in fifth with 92.63 points.

US carrier Delta Air Lines ranked sixth, followed by South African Airways in seventh, China Southern Airlines in eighth, Air China in ninth and American Airlines in tenth.

Among Arab airlines, Etihad Airways of the United Arab Emirates ranked 20th globally with 91.23 points, making it the third Gulf carrier to feature among the top 25 airlines.

European Airlines Miss the Top 10

No European airline secured a position among the world's top 10.

Turkish Airlines ranked 14th, followed



World's Top 10 Airlines 2027

Emirates and Qatar Airways lead the TIME and Statista ranking

Rank	Airline	Country / Market	Score
1	Emirates	United Arab Emirates	94.29
2	Qatar Airways	Qatar	94.16
3	Air New Zealand	New Zealand	93.47
4	Singapore Airlines	Singapore	93.32
5	Cathay Pacific	Hong Kong	92.63
6	Delta Air Lines	United States	92.17
7	South African Airways	South Africa	92.16
8	China Southern Airlines	China	92.03
9	Air China	China	91.99
10	American Airlines	United States	91.89

Over 30 million flights
Operational data used in the assessment

16 countries
Covered by the passenger survey

The ranking combines passenger ratings and operational performance.

Al Rehla

Source: TIME and Statista | Results announced: 18 November 2026

by Finland's Finnair in 15th, LOT Polish Airlines in 16th and British Airways in 17th.

However, European carriers performed strongly in certain specialised categories, with Ryanair leading the operational reliability category and Virgin Atlantic ranking first for long-haul flight experience.

Qatar Airways Leads Travellers' Choice Category

The specialised category results differed from the overall ranking.

Qatar Airways secured first place in the Travellers' Choice category, which evaluates passenger satisfaction and willingness to recommend an airline, followed by Emirates.

Meanwhile, Emirates ranked first in both the Best Value for Money and Business Travel categories, highlighting how airline performance can vary depending on the assessment criteria.

More Than 30 Million Flights Included in the Assessment

TIME and Statista based the ranking on a passenger survey conducted between July 27 and September 4, 2026, across 16 countries.

Participants evaluated airlines they had flown with during the preceding three years.

The survey examined cabin comfort, service quality, food and beverages, entertainment, connectivity and value for money, alongside overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend the airline.

These findings were combined with operational data supplied by aviation analytics company OAG, covering more than 30 million flights between July 2025 and June 2026.

The operational assessment included on-time performance, flight cancellations, destinations served and passenger traffic.

To qualify, airlines were required to carry at least three million passengers annually and provide sufficient data for comparison.

The ranking offers a comparative assessment of qualifying airlines based on specific criteria and measurement periods, rather than a definitive judgment of every flight or individual passenger experience.

Saudi Arabia Launches Sixth Al-Urmah Season for Ecotourism, Running Until April 2027

Camping, safaris, stargazing and outdoor adventures await visitors at the Imam Abdulaziz bin Mohammed and King Khalid Royal Reserves near Riyadh

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

The Imam Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Royal Reserve Development Authority launched the sixth edition of Al-Urmah Season on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, offering a range of nature-based experiences, family activities and outdoor adventures until the end of April 2027.

The season takes place across the Imam Abdulaziz bin Mohammed Royal Reserve and the King Khalid Royal Reserve in the Riyadh region.

It aims to provide visitors with opportunities to explore Saudi Arabia's desert landscapes and biodiversity through organised activities that promote environmental conservation and wildlife protection.

Camping, Safaris and Stargazing

The programme features camping, desert safaris, nature walks and stargazing, alongside camel rides, cycling and outdoor sports.

Visitors can also experience traditional Bedouin life, local cuisine, family entertainment and educational workshops, combining recreation with opportunities to discover the region's natural and cultural heritage.

Guided ecotourism experiences allow visitors to explore desert landscapes, valleys and distinctive rock formations.

Royal Reserves Featuring Mountains, Valleys and Green Landscapes

The season includes natural attractions such as Rawdat Khuraim, Wadi Wuthailan, the Al-Urmah highlands and the Thumamah geological escarpment. These destinations feature a variety of landscapes, including sedimentary rock formations, valleys and native desert vegetation.

The sites are particularly appealing during autumn, winter and spring, when temperatures become milder and rainfall may encourage seasonal vegetation growth.

Organised Activities and Environmental Protection

Tourism activities within the two reserves are subject to environmental and operational regulations, including licensing requirements for operators and measures designed to protect natural habitats.

The authority provides an online guide to the season's experiences, including information about participating locations and available activities.

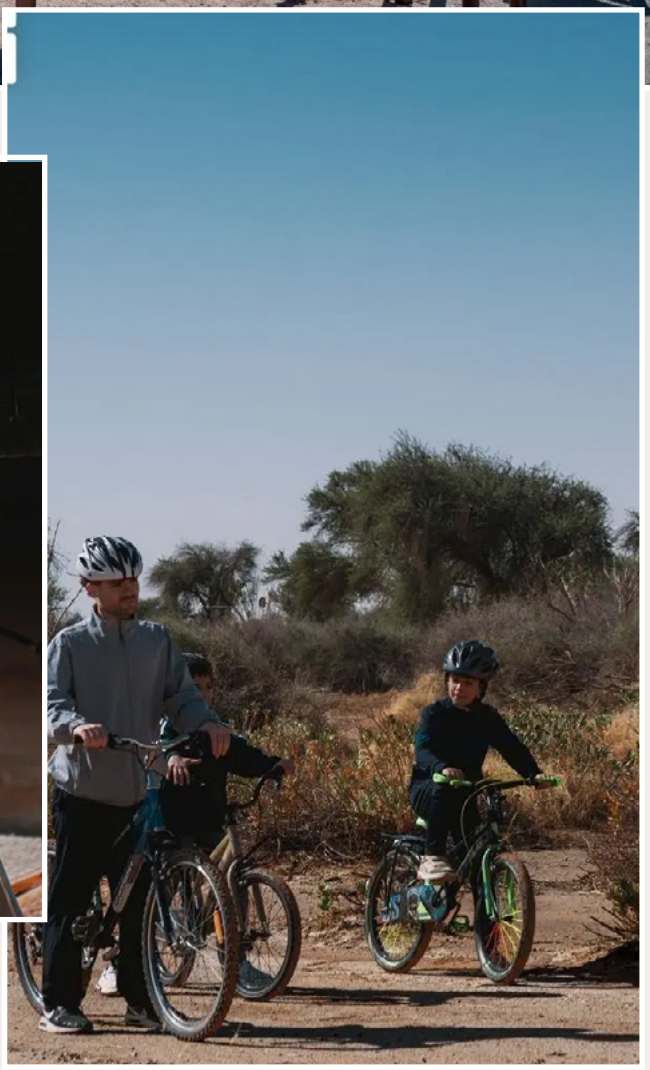
Al-Rehla Perspective | A Desert Escape Near Riyadh

Al-Urmah Season offers visitors to Riyadh an opportunity to incorporate outdoor experiences into their travel itineraries, from camping and hiking to stargazing away from the city's urban environment.

Visitors are advised to check authorised activity locations, booking arrangements and safety requirements before travelling, as the availability of experiences may vary depending on operators and weather conditions.







South West Brings the Wild West Back to Jeddah with Equestrian Shows and Family Experiences



The attraction runs until November 30 in Al Zahra District, featuring horse riding, traditional wagons, theatrical performances and interactive activities

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

South West has returned to Jeddah, offering an entertainment experience inspired by the towns of the American Old West, featuring themed architecture, live performances and interactive activities designed for families and children.

Taking place in Al Zahra District until November 30, 2026, according to local event listings, the attraction recreates the atmosphere of traditional frontier towns through wooden buildings, heritage-inspired façades and open squares.

Horse Riding and Traditional Wagons

Visitors can enjoy horse riding and traditional wagon experiences, alongside countryside-inspired activities and interactive challenges that recreate the spirit of the American Wild West.

The venue also features a main theatre hosting performances that combine dramatic scenes, stunt acts and comedy, along with roaming entertainment designed to engage visitors throughout the experience.

Children's Activities, Restaurants and Shops

The attraction includes dedicated areas for children, featuring puppet shows, acrobatic performances and introductory workshops, as well as activities related to horse riding and traditional crafts.

Restaurants serving Western-inspired cuisine and shops offering leather clothing and souvenirs are also available, allowing visitors to combine entertainment and shopping in one location.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A Different Entertainment Experience in Jeddah

South West offers families and tourists an alternative to traditional shopping and entertainment activities, with an immersive, story-driven experience inspired by the American Old West.

According to event listings, admission starts at SAR 35, with visiting hours from 5:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.
Visitors are advised to check ticket availability, additional activity fees and participation requirements for horse riding before planning their visit.



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Joint Archaeological Excavation at Bahrain Fort Explores Ancient Links Between Dilmun and Magan Civilisations



Six-week Bahrain–UAE archaeological project brings together researchers and museum specialists, with findings expected to contribute to a joint exhibition in Abu Dhabi and Manama

Manama, Bahrain | Al Rehla

A joint archaeological project between Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates has begun at Bahrain Fort under the title "Magan–Dilmun Dialogues: Archaeological Excavations at Qal'at al-Bahrain," aiming to explore the historical, cultural and economic connections between the two ancient civilisations during the Bronze Age.

Led by Zayed National Museum in collaboration with the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities and Bahrain National Museum, with support from the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, the project involves a six-week excavation programme bringing together archaeologists and museum specialists from both countries.

Exploring Ancient Dilmun Archaeological Layers

The research team is focusing on deeper archaeological layers associated with the Dilmun civilisation, documenting and scientifically analysing findings to uncover evidence of connections with Magan, historically associated with areas of the UAE and Oman.

The excavations are particularly significant given Bahrain Fort's status as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2005 and its importance as a major archaeological landmark reflecting Dilmun's historical role in regional trade.

Specialist Training and a Joint Exhibition

The project combines archaeological research with practical training for young professionals, covering stratigraphic excavation, artefact documentation, conservation and archaeological data analysis.

Research findings are expected to contribute to a temporary exhibition hosted jointly by Zayed National Museum in Abu Dhabi and Bahrain National Museum in Manama.

No specific archaeological discoveries from the current excavation season have been announced.

Al-Rehla Perspective | Unearthing the Gulf's Ancient History

The excavations add an educational dimension to Bahrain Fort, highlighting its importance in understanding ancient maritime trade routes and cultural connections across the Gulf.

Beyond the anticipated discoveries, the planned exhibition could offer visitors an opportunity to explore the shared history of Dilmun and Magan through archaeological evidence and scientific research, transforming historical knowledge into an engaging cultural experience in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi.

EgyptAir and Avis Sign Agreement to Offer Complimentary Chauffeur Service for Business Class Passengers in 11 Arab Countries



The service covers airport transfers on selected international flights, subject to the agreement's terms and conditions

Cairo, Egypt | Al Rehla

EgyptAir Airlines has signed a cooperation agreement with Avis Egypt, part of the Ezz El Arab Group, to provide complimentary chauffeur-driven transfers for eligible Business Class passengers on selected international flights, as part of efforts to enhance the travel experience and strengthen the national carrier's competitiveness.

Announced on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, the agreement initially covers 11 Arab countries, with access to the service subject to specific eligibility requirements and conditions.

Eleven Countries Included in the Initial Phase

The countries covered are Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Oman, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. The partnership aims to provide eligible passengers with complimentary ground transfers to and from selected airports, integrating air travel with ground transportation services.

However, the companies have not yet disclosed the full list of eligible airports and flights, the service launch date or the booking procedures.

Agreement Signed in the Presence of Senior Executives

The agreement was signed by Captain Mohamed Alyan, Chairman of EgyptAir Airlines, and Nevine El Labban, Chairperson and Managing Director of Avis Budget Egypt. The signing ceremony was attended by Captain Ahmed Adel, Chairman of EgyptAir Holding Company, and Hisham Ezz El Arab, Chairman of Ezz El Arab Group.

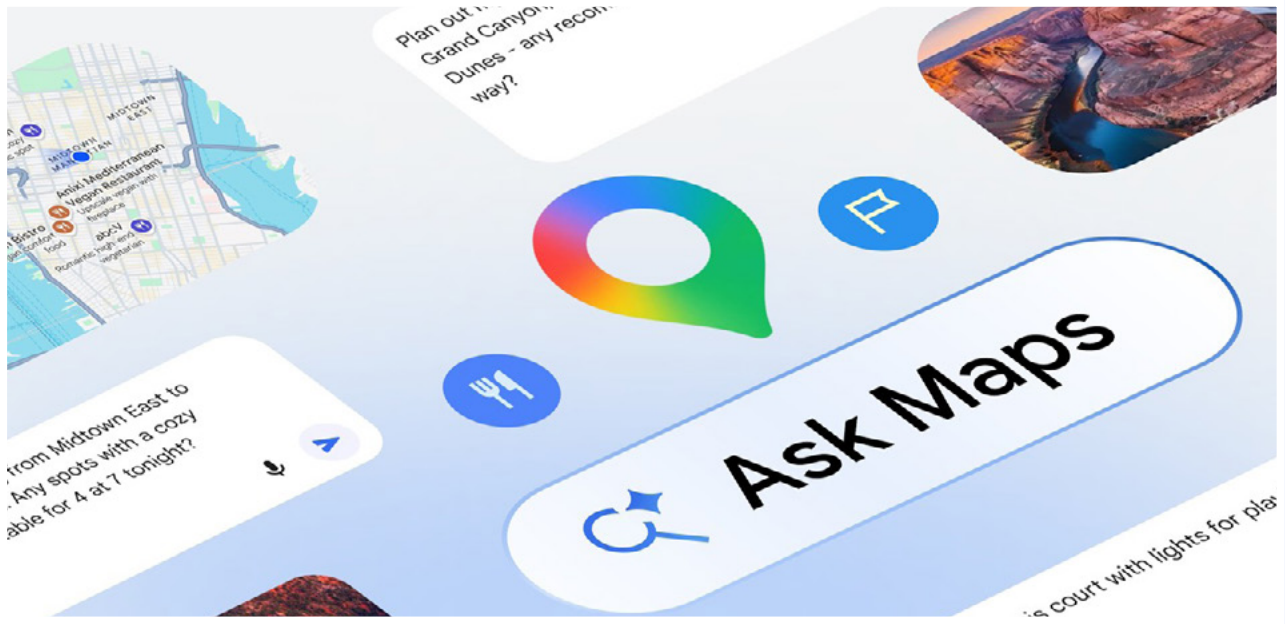
Ahmed Adel said the partnership aims to introduce additional services for Business Class passengers and improve comfort throughout their journeys.

Al-Rehla Perspective | A Competitive Advantage Dependent on Accessibility

Complimentary chauffeur-driven transfers could add value to EgyptAir's Business Class offering, particularly for passengers requiring convenient transportation between airports, hotels and business meeting locations.

However, the service's practical value will depend on booking convenience, the number of participating airports, transfer coverage and ticket eligibility conditions. Passengers are therefore advised to confirm their eligibility and service availability directly with EgyptAir before making travel arrangements.

Google Expands Ask Maps to Over 30 European Countries, Introducing AI-Powered Trip Planning



The service creates single-day and multi-day travel itineraries through interactive conversations and now covers more than 200 countries and territories worldwide

Europe – Al-Rehla

Google has announced the expansion of Ask Maps, powered by its Gemini AI models, to more than 30 European countries, introducing new features that allow users to create personalised travel itineraries through conversational prompts.

The update strengthens Google Maps' role as a travel planning tool, moving beyond traditional location searches and navigation.

According to Google, Ask Maps now covers more than 200 countries and territories, drawing on information about over 300 million places and reviews contributed by more than 500 million users.

Travel Itineraries Tailored to User Preferences

The service allows travellers to describe their plans in natural language, such as requesting a one-day itinerary or a three-day road trip featuring outdoor activities, restaurants and tourist attractions.

Ask Maps then generates a day-by-day itinerary with numbered stops displayed on a map and suggested places to visit.

Users can modify their itineraries, add destinations during their journey, share travel plans with others or export them to Google Docs on a computer.

Searching Saved Places

The new features also allow users to search within their saved places and ask questions about restaurants, attractions and other locations without manually browsing their lists.

The service provides travel-related information, including traffic conditions and opening hours.

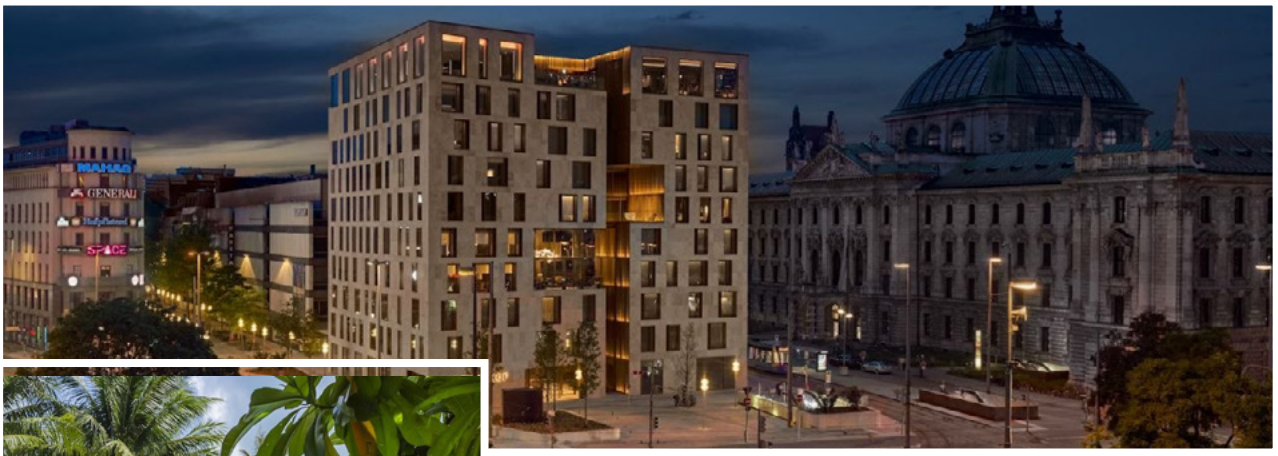
Additional features offering guidance on parking, electric vehicle charging, weather conditions and road tolls are initially launching in the United States, with expansion to other markets planned.

Gradual Expansion Across Europe

Google confirmed that Spain, Germany and the United Kingdom are among the European markets included in the rollout, although the company has not published a complete list of the countries covered.

The updates are being introduced gradually through the Google Maps app on Android and iOS devices.

UAE's 55th National Day Holiday: Tropical Beaches and European Cities Offer Diverse Travel Experiences







Abu Dhabi, UAE | Al Rehla

The UAE's 55th National Day holiday offers citizens and residents an opportunity to choose travel experiences that match their interests, from Indian Ocean beaches and family activities to wellness retreats and the winter charm of European cities. Hotels and resorts across several destinations are offering accommodation packages and additional benefits during the holiday season.

In the Maldives, Finolhu resort is offering a package featuring discounts of up to 40% on accommodation and daily breakfast, alongside marine excursions, opportunities to explore the marine life of Baa Atoll, yoga sessions and wellness experiences.

Meanwhile, .Here resort offers a 10% discount on three-night stays, increasing to 20% for stays of seven nights or longer. The resort features private villas and accommodation options suitable for families and groups, along with diving, kayaking and dolphin-watching excursions.

In Thailand, Barceló Coconut Island offers discounts of up to 25% for my Barceló loyalty programme members on stays through 31 March 2027, using promotional code BIGGET10.

On the coast of Cyprus, City of Dreams Mediterranean in Limassol offers a 15% discount on stays of at least two nights, including breakfast for two, a €50 resort credit and access to its adventure park. The offer applies to stays from Sunday to Thursday until 20 December 2026.

For travellers drawn to European cities, Koenigshof in Munich combines accommodation with a wellness programme featuring intermittent oxygen therapy, a massage session and breakfast.

In Paris and Vienna, World of Hyatt members can enjoy discounts of up to 20%, including breakfast, while non-members receive 15% off eligible stays booked by 8 December 2026.

Park Hyatt London River Thames also offers accommodation overlooking the River Thames, with convenient access to some of the British capital's leading attractions.

From relaxing beach escapes to cultural city breaks, these offers provide travellers with a variety of options for a holiday combining comfort, relaxation and new experiences.

Qatar and Dubai Sign Codeshare Arrangements to Strengthen Air Connectivity



Agreement between civil aviation authorities paves the way for designated airlines to expand travel options and connecting services

Doha, Qatar | Al Rehla

The Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) and the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority (DCAA) have signed a meeting record outlining codeshare arrangements between designated national carriers, aimed at strengthening air transport cooperation and expanding connectivity between airline networks, although no specific commercial agreements between airlines have been announced.

The signing took place on 18 November 2026, on the sidelines of the Seventh Worldwide Air Transport Conference, organised by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in Montreal, Canada, from 16 to 20 November.

The document was signed by Issa Abdullah Al Malki, Director of the Air Transport Department at QCAA, and Saud Abdulaziz Kankazar, Executive Director of Air Transport and International Affairs at DCAA, in the presence of Mohammed bin Faleh Al Hajri, Acting President of QCAA.

Arrangements to Expand Air Connectivity

Codeshare arrangements allow airlines, subject to the conclusion of the necessary commercial agreements, to market flights operated by partner carriers under their own flight codes.

Such partnerships can help coordinate connecting journeys and provide passengers with access to additional destinations across participating airline networks.

The initiative aims to strengthen regulatory cooperation and facilitate travel between destinations served by the designated carriers.

However, the announcement did not identify which airlines would implement the arrangements, the routes involved, or when codeshare services might become available.

Al-Rehla Perspective | What Does This Mean for Travellers?

Future codeshare agreements could allow passengers to book connecting flights involving multiple airlines, potentially benefiting from coordinated travel arrangements under a single reservation, depending on the terms of the partnerships.

However, signing the document does not mean that new flights or joint booking options are immediately available. Nor does it guarantee lower fares or increased seat capacity.

The practical benefits for travellers will become clearer once the participating airlines announce their commercial partnerships, covered destinations and applicable travel conditions.

Qatar Airways Cuts Nearly 600 Flights from Planned US Schedule for 2027



Schedule adjustments affect eight US destinations, reducing planned flights by 18%, with Los Angeles, Atlanta and Boston services dropping to four weekly frequencies

Doha, Qatar | Al Rehla

Qatar Airways has removed nearly 600 flights from its planned schedule between Doha and the United States for the period from April to October 2027, representing an approximately 18% reduction compared with its previously published operating plan, according to an analysis of Cirium Diio aviation schedule data.

The analysis, published by Thrifty Traveler on 16 November 2026, shows that the largest reductions are concentrated between April and June, when scheduled frequencies could fall by as much as 24% compared with the airline's initial plan.

Flight Reductions Across Eight US Destinations

The adjustments affect services to Los Angeles, Atlanta and Boston, with each destination scheduled to receive four weekly flights between April and October instead of the daily services originally planned.

On the Washington Dulles route, operations will decrease to one daily flight between May and August, compared with two daily flights in the previous schedule.

New York services will decline from 18 to 14 weekly flights between April and June, while Miami frequencies will fall from ten to seven flights per week between April and October.

Seattle will also see its services reduced from seven to five weekly flights between April and June, while San Francisco frequencies will decrease from four to three weekly flights between April and October.

Four Destinations Retain Planned Frequencies

Meanwhile, the published data indicates no changes to the Dallas–Fort Worth schedule, which remains at two daily flights, or to daily services serving Houston, Chicago and Philadelphia.

Following the adjustments, Qatar Airways is expected to operate between 83 and 95 weekly flights from the United States to Doha, compared with approximately 105 to 109 flights in its initial schedule.

Despite the reductions, the report indicates that the airline's planned flight frequencies for 2027 remain above 2026 levels, partly supported by expanded services on selected routes.

Türkiye's Pegasus Airlines Approves Share Buyback Programme Worth Up to TRY 3 Billion



The programme runs until November 2028 and covers up to 15 million shares, as the airline maintains its commitment to fleet investment and operational growth

Istanbul, Türkiye | Al Rehla

The Board of Directors of Pegasus Airlines, Türkiye's low-cost carrier, has approved a share buyback programme worth up to TRY 3 billion, aimed at addressing potential discrepancies between the airline's market valuation and expectations for its future financial performance.

According to a regulatory disclosure issued on November 16, 2026, the programme will remain in effect until November 12, 2028, allowing the company to repurchase up to 15 million shares, representing 3% of its share capital.

Share Buybacks Linked to Market Valuation

Pegasus explained that the programme provides an additional financial instrument that may be used when management identifies a clear and temporary gap between the company's market valuation and expectations for its underlying business performance.

Approval of the programme does not mean that the full amount will necessarily be spent, as TRY 3 billion represents the maximum authorised expenditure rather than completed share purchases.

Fleet Investment Remains a Priority

The airline emphasised that any share repurchase decisions will take into account its ongoing commitment to financing fleet investments, supporting profitable growth and maintaining a strong balance sheet.

This approach reflects the company's efforts to balance capital management with operational and investment requirements.
The announced amount is not earmarked for aircraft purchases or the launch of new routes.

Significance for Investors

Share buyback programmes are among the capital management tools available to publicly listed companies and may affect the number of outstanding shares and certain financial indicators, depending on the scale and terms of the transactions executed.

In the aviation industry, such decisions are particularly significant given the substantial capital requirements associated with fleet renewal, operational financing and route network expansion.

The programme's actual financial impact will depend on the number of shares Pegasus ultimately repurchases, the cost of those transactions and their implications for the airline's liquidity and overall financial position.

flynas Launches Integrated Umrah Booking Service Covering Flights, Hotels and Visas in 12 Countries



The new service, available through Nasholidays, enables digital Umrah travel planning, with expansion into additional markets planned

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | Al Rehla

flynas has launched a new digital service through its Nasholidays platform, allowing eligible international Umrah pilgrims to book flights, accommodation in Makkah and submit Umrah visa applications through a single booking process, aiming to simplify religious travel arrangements.

The airline announced that the service is initially available in 12 countries, with plans to gradually expand into additional markets. However, the countries included in the first phase have not been disclosed.

Integrated Booking and Flexible Options

The platform allows travellers to select their departure city, travel dates and length of stay before choosing flights and suitable hotel accommodation in Makkah.

Passengers can also customise certain additional services, including baggage allowances and seat selection.

The service builds on the existing Nasholidays platform by integrating Umrah visa applications into the online booking process.

Visa Issuance Subject to Official Approval

The visa application process requires travellers to enter their personal details and upload the necessary documents, including a passport copy and personal photograph.

Once payment is completed, the application is submitted for processing, and travellers receive electronic updates on its status.

The platform emphasises that visa issuance is not automatic and remains subject to approval by the relevant Saudi authorities. Requirements may vary depending on nationality and applicable regulations.

Supporting Digital Transformation in Umrah Travel

flynas stated that the initiative supports the objectives of Saudi Vision 2030 and the Pilgrim Experience Program by improving the Umrah journey and simplifying travel planning.

The launch also reflects the growing trend towards integrating flights, accommodation and visa services into unified digital travel platforms.

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