

Etihad Airways celebrates five years of Milan-Abu Dhabi

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Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), has celebrated five years of non-stop services between Milan and Abu Dhabi. The UAE flag carrier operates daily between the two cities.

Flights from Milan commenced in September 2007, and based on strong forward bookings and projections, Etihad Airways is on track to carry almost 140,000 passengers between the two cities in 2012, up 27 per cent on 2011.

Speaking at a media conference in Milan to mark the anniversary, Etihad Airways' President and Chief Executive Officer, James Hogan said: "The UAE is home to almost 7,000 Italians and 200 Italian companies, and as a result, the business and cultural ties between the two countries have never been stronger.

"In five years, the Abu Dhabi-Milan route has gone from strength to strength, being a catalyst for business and leisure traffic between the two countries and the wider Gulf region. We've carried 417,000 passengers and 71,000 tons of cargo in that time.

"Our strategy here in Italy, as elsewhere internationally, has been built on the premise of partnerships and we're proud to have teamed-up with many esteemed Italian names in the rollout of our award winning services."

Etihad Airways has partnered with fashion designer Ettore Bilotta in the design of its crew uniforms and Poltrona Frau for the leather upholstery in its multi-award winning First Class Suites and luxury seating in the airline's own signature premium lounges.

In addition, the airline has recently extended its partnership with Alitalia which will see the Italian carrier operate four weekly codeshare services between Rome and Abu Dhabi from December 1, 2012.

Mr Hogan added: "Extending our partnership agreement with Alitalia to cover direct Rome-Abu Dhabi flights was a natural next step in our close cooperation with this valued airline partner and we look forward to working together to promote the route at each end and beyond.

"Direct from Rome, Alitalia guests will now be able access the UAE capital, but also connect seamlessly with Etihad Airways destinations across the Gulf, Africa, Asia and Australia.

"The deal also gives Etihad Airways guests direct access into the Italian capital with strong flows predicted from the Gulf region, Australia and Asia."

Etihad Airways operates a mix of three and two-cabin Airbus A330s between Abu Dhabi and Milan, ensuring optimum connectivity over its Abu Dhabi hub to destinations across Africa, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent and Australasia.

The Milan route configuration means 3,500 seats a week; 56 Diamond First class, 360 Pearl Business class,

and 3,084 Coral Economy class seats.

Mr Hogan concluded: "By year end, Etihad Airways will be a US\$4.9 billion business, we'll have carried more 10 million passengers across our global network, and have 1.8 million Etihad Guest loyalty members.

"Working closely with our Italian partners, the travel industry, the business community and governments, we look forward to further cementing the Etihad Airways brand across Italy and deepening the strong relationship between Italy and the United Arab Emirates."

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About Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, began operations in 2003, and in 2011 carried 8.3 million passengers. From its hub at Abu Dhabi International Airport, Etihad Airways serves 84 passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and North America, including flights to Milan

(<http://www.etihadairways.com/sites/Etihad/global/en/home/Pages/flights-to-milan.aspx>), flights to India (<http://www.etihadairways.com/sites/Etihad/global/en/home/Pages/flights-to-india.aspx>), flights to Dubai (<http://www.etihadairways.com/sites/Etihad/global/en/home/Pages/flights-to-dubai.aspx>), flights to Melbourne (<http://www.etihadairways.com/sites/Etihad/global/en/home/Pages/flights-to-melbourne.aspx>) and flights to Singapore

(<http://www.etihadairways.com/sites/Etihad/global/en/home/Pages/flights-to-singapore.aspx>). Etihad Airways employs a fleet of 67 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, and over 90 aircraft on firm order, including 10 Airbus A380s, the world's largest passenger aircraft. Etihad Airways also hold equity investments in airberlin, Air Seychelles, Virgin Australia and Aer Lingus. For more information, please visit:

www.etihad.com

For more information contact:

Niall Doheny
Manager Corporate Communications
Etihad Airways
P.O. Box 35566
Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates
+971 50 642 59 13
www.etihadairways.com