

### **ETIHAD AIRWAYS AWARDED HIGHEST SKYTRAX 5-STAR RATING**

- **UAE's national airline recognised for exceptional guest experience, service and hospitality**
- **Extensive audits commend exemplary staff, fine dining approach, innovative seating and products in all classes and at signature airport lounges**
- **Airline committed to providing the world's best travel experiences throughout the guest journey**

Etihad Airways has received the Skytrax Certified 5-Star Airline Rating - the most coveted quality standard in the airline industry, further strengthening its position as a leader in innovative guest experience, service and hospitality.

The rating follows an exhaustive three month audit of the airline's global product and service offering by the London-based research consultancy. The announcement was made at a special event held today at Etihad Airways' Innovation Academy in Abu Dhabi.

The Skytrax Certified 5-Star Airline Rating is used to certify airline product and service, and is awarded to airlines achieving the highest overall quality performance, recognising excellence in product and front-line staff service across the customer journey. Airlines are assessed on criteria across all cabins including seating, safety procedures, inflight entertainment, cabin cleanliness, comfort amenities, catering, duty free sales, and reading materials.

Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways' Chief Executive Officer, said: "This rating marks the culmination of over a decade of hard work and continuous innovation – a milestone on the Etihad Airways journey. We are a company which challenges the norms of air travel by drawing inspiration from the finest hospitality establishments around the world. Today we are recognised as the airline which is reimagining flying, and doing it with style and flair.

"This could not have been achieved without the passion and commitment of our people – from frontline staff at airports, cabin crew in flight, to those who work behind the scenes in

## Media release



Abu Dhabi and around the world – all tirelessly delivering the very best products and service in the industry.”

In the comprehensive audit, high praise was reserved for the airline’s staff, noting their pride in their company and product. The researchers also noted the level of detail in the Etihad Airways service which few are able to achieve – combining discipline with spontaneity and a genuine interest in customer welfare.

Edward Plaisted, Chief Executive Officer of Skytrax, said: “Etihad Airways continues to be a leading player in commercial aviation. Achieving a 5-Star rating is testament to this airline’s dedication to innovation, high-quality service and comfort. Of particular note is Etihad’s attention to detail and a meticulous approach to design, which has brought us – amongst other unique products – the airline’s revolutionary Airbus A380 and Boeing 787 cabins, which are clearly best in class.”

Etihad Airways’ inflight and ground crews reflect the airline’s focus on intuitive care and hospitality, influenced by its strong Arabian heritage. The airline employs Savoy of London trained Butlers, who provide the ultimate in discerning service for guests staying in The Residence, the airline’s three-room cabin on its Airbus A380 fleet; qualified Inflight Chefs in First Class, who create the finest culinary experiences; hospitality trained Food and Beverage Managers in Business Class; and Norland College trained Flying Nannies to assist families on all long haul flights.

Etihad Airways has won numerous Skytrax awards for its First Class and Business Class products, most recently receiving the coveted accolades for the World’s Best First Class Airline, World’s Best First Class Onboard Catering, and World’s Best First Class Airline Seat for its Airbus A380 First Apartment at the annual Skytrax World Airline Awards announced in July 2016 at the Farnborough Airshow.

Skytrax researchers found the quality of Etihad Airways’ inflight dining to be world-leading, commending the airline for its multi-course tasting menu served in First Class. The Inflight Chef in First Class prepares a tailored dining experience using a specially provided larder of fresh ingredients. First and Business Class guests can dine on demand at a time of their choosing from imaginative, carefully created, à la carte and ‘dine anytime’ menus.

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The airline's new cabins were rated highly with particular attention given to the luxurious First Apartments on the Airbus A380, First Suites on the Boeing 787, and the new Business Studios and Economy Smart Seats on both aircraft types. The award winning cabins have set a new benchmark for space, comfort and privacy.

The researchers were also highly impressed by the new Economy Class product, highlighting recent innovations and enhancements such as the extendable 'fixed-wing' leather headrest, in seat power-point, USB facility conveniently located in front of the guest, and the video touchscreen handset at every seat in all Airbus A380 and Boeing 787 aircraft, allowing guests to multifunction with both their handset and individual seatback touchscreen.

On the ground, Etihad Airways operates a collection of 15 lounges around the world including its flagship lounges in Abu Dhabi (new dedicated signature First Class Lounge and Spa in Terminal 3; Premium Lounges in Terminals 1 and 3; a Premium Lounge within the unique US Preclearance facility, and the Premium Arrivals Lounge), Frankfurt, London, Manchester, Dublin, Paris, Washington D.C., New York JFK, Sydney, Melbourne and Los Angeles.

The lounges are more akin to those found at leading hotels and private members' clubs, and provide tranquil environments in which guests can relax, re-energise, be entertained, and enjoy the fine dining experiences and hospitality services for which the airline is renowned.

**-Ends-**

## **Photo captions**

Images can be downloaded at the following link: <https://we.tl/e8ixTb7lt5>

- 1 – Etihad Airways cabin crew with Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways' Chief Executive Officer, and Edward Plaisted, Chief Executive Officer of Skytrax, at today's announcement which was held in the airline's Innovation Academy in Abu Dhabi.
- 2 – Edward Plaisted of Skytrax (fifth from left) presents Etihad Airways staff with the Skytrax Certified 5-Star Airline Rating in Abu Dhabi.

## **About Etihad Aviation Group**

Etihad Aviation Group (EAG) is a diversified global aviation and travel group comprising four business divisions – Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, Etihad

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Airways Engineering, Hala Group and Airline Equity Partners. The group has minority investments in seven airlines: airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Jet Airways, Virgin Australia, and Swiss-based Darwin Airline, trading as Etihad Regional.

From its Abu Dhabi base, Etihad Airways flies to, or has announced plans to serve, 117 passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas. The airline has a fleet of 123 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, with 204 aircraft on firm order, including 71 Boeing 787s, 25 Boeing 777Xs, 62 Airbus A350s and 10 Airbus A380s. For more information, please visit: [etihad.com](http://etihad.com)