

ETIHAD AIRWAYS NAMED BEST FIRST CLASS AND BEST LONG HAUL AIRLINE MIDDLE-EAST AND AFRICA

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, has been named Best First Class and Best Long Haul Airline Middle-East and Africa at the AirlineRatings.com 2016 Airline Excellence Awards.

AirlineRatings.com, the world's only comprehensive safety and product rating portal, celebrates and promotes excellence in the airline industry. The pinnacle of these efforts is its annual Airline Excellence Awards, which are decided by AirlineRatings.com's editorial team.

AirlineRatings.com Editor-in-Chief and Publisher, Geoffrey Thomas, said the judging panel had been impressed by Etihad Airways' industry-leading innovation.

"Etihad's commitment to excellence appears to know no bounds. The airline's new First class and Business class offerings are breathtaking and have set a new benchmark in luxury travel.

"In its first 12 years, Etihad Airways has stamped itself not only as a major force in the airline industry but a trendsetter – an incredible achievement.

"Etihad Airways has an uncompromising attitude to excellence. For the airline, only the best will do."

Etihad Airways' Chief Commercial Officer, Peter Baumgartner, said the prestigious awards were a vote of confidence in the UAE flag carrier's innovation strategy and guest experience design and delivery.

"To be named Best First Class and Best Long Haul Airline Middle-East and Africa – two very competitive categories – is an honour.

"Over the past 12 months, Etihad Airways has completely reimagined the flying experience with the launch of our next-generation cabins on board the Airbus A380 and Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner.

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“These awards are further proof that the experience we offer in First Class, as well as in Business and Economy, has set a new global benchmark for air travel and that Etihad Airways is continuing to exceed travellers’ expectations.”

Etihad Airways’ success at the AirlineRatings.com Airline Excellence Awards follows a succession of accolades for Etihad Airways’ guest experience during 2015. These include the award for Best First Class at the annual Ultratravel Middle East Awards (ULTRAs) in November; Airline of the Year at the TTG awards in the UK in September; Best Airline, Best First Class and Best Arrivals Lounge at the Australian Business Traveller Awards in August; the World Travel Awards Middle East for Middle East’s Leading Airline, Middle East’s Leading Airline - First Class, and Middle East’s Leading Cabin Crew in May; the Crystal Cabin Award for its innovative A380 upper deck cabins at the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg; and the PAX International awards for Best New IFE/Connectivity Launch by an Airline and Best Inflight Duty Free Program.

- Ends -

About Etihad Airways

Etihad Airways began operations in 2003, and in 2014 carried 14.8 million passengers. From its Abu Dhabi base, Etihad Airways flies to or has announced plans to serve 113 passenger and cargo destinations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Americas. The airline has a fleet of 120 Airbus and Boeing aircraft, and more than 200 aircraft on firm order, including 66 Boeing 787s, 25 Boeing 777Xs, 62 Airbus A350s and five Airbus A380s.

Etihad Airways holds equity investments in airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Jet Airways, Virgin Australia, and Swiss-based Darwin Airline, trading as Etihad Regional. Etihad Airways, along with airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Etihad Regional, Jet Airways and NIKI, also participate in Etihad Airways Partners, a new brand that brings together like-minded airlines to offer customers more choice through improved networks and schedules and enhanced frequent flyer benefits. For more information, please visit: www.etihad.com

Notes to the editor: The world’s best First Class experience

The First Class cabin on Etihad Airways’ A380 boasts nine First Apartments – unique living spaces, which, at 39 square feet in area, are 74 per cent larger than the airline’s current award-



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winning First Class suites. They feature a Poltrona Frau leather armchair and a separate ottoman which converts into a full-length 80.5 inch long bed. A dedicated shower room is available for the exclusive use of First Class guests.

The B787 Dreamliners are equipped with eight private First Suites in a unique curved aisle setting, an airline industry first, with a 10 per cent increase in personal space. The forward and aft facing suites feature a large Poltrona Frau leather armchair which converts into an 80.5 inch fully flat bed. The suites feature 24 inch TV monitors, large dining tables for dual dining, personal wardrobes and privacy doors.

Inspired by the world's best hotels and restaurants, Etihad Airways' First Class service includes a personalised welcome letter from the Cabin Manager and an elegant reception with a drink of choice, fragrant hot towel, and traditional Arabic coffee service served with dates, presented on a silver platter.

First Class dining features a contemporary menu complemented by a selection of canapés, a palate cleanser served between appetiser and entrée, a pre-dessert course served by the Chef, coffee and tea from the 'Café Gourmand' brand accompanied by mini biscuits, cakes and pastries.

Guests can choose from an extensive haute cuisine a la Carte menu, or can select steaks and sides from The Grill menu, complemented by a choice of side dishes and sauces, and can also choose delicious meals and snacks throughout the flight from the All Day Dine menu.

The onboard Chefs, many of whom hail from fine dining establishments around the world including some Michelin Star restaurants, are provided with an onboard pantry of fresh ingredients including proteins and vegetables. These talented crew members can discuss made-to-order requests with the guest and prepare a bespoke dining experience tailored to their palate. A Chef is available in First Class on every Etihad Airways flight.

Meals are served on stylish new crockery from the famous Japanese manufacturer Nikko, and new 'Royal Oak' cutlery has been designed by the quintessentially British brand, Studio William.

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Fine wines from the Etihad Airways onboard cellar are served in crystal glasses, created for Etihad Airways by Lucaris. A special XO Cognac service is provided featuring signature glasses designed by Norman of Copenhagen.

First Class bedding includes a luxurious all-natural mattress pad, duvet and pillow set, produced exclusively for Etihad Airways by COCO-MAT, widely regarded as the providers of the world's best bedding. The First Class turndown service is accompanied by a 'sweet dreams' card, pillow mist, and aromatic pulse-point oil for the wrists.

Elegant loungewear is provided for comfort and relaxation, and guests are offered limited-edition Sougha amenity kits, inspired by the culture and colours of Abu Dhabi, and containing a selection of exclusive products by luxury New York-based brand, Le Labo.

Etihad Airways' three-class Boeing 777s and Airbus A330/A340 aircraft are configured with a private First Class suite.