

# TravelTrendz

International

May / June 2022

*a travel lifestyle publication*



**Azerbaijan**  
ATM Dubai 2022

**Czech Republic**  
Summer Holiday

**Austria**  
Europe In A Nutshell

**New Saudi**  
AlUla



Image : Azerbaijan Tourism Board





# ROYAL HOTEL

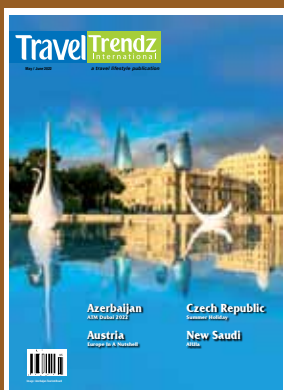
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The Arabian Travel Market is the global Travel event in Dubai which be attended by public physically with the hybrid option available again. The pandemic is still there but quite mild with resurfacing in some places like China. The entire industry is in trouble and travelling is not coming to the desired level with some geopolitical conflicts in Europe. The industry is still facing a huge challenges with the high fuel prices.

In this issue as always, we as always offer new and exciting options to our readers. The top destinations and Hotels are being introduced as never before. Do miss the article Austria which is ready to welcome the visitors with open arms. Learn more about the amazing heritage of Pakistan its mesmerizing north. We have featured the amazing Uganda and the enchanting Czech Republic. Do not miss our article on Azerbaijan, An eastern County with a western outlook. We have a very special article on AIUla which is the New Saudi.

We have covered the top notch hotels in this issue such as the Ciragan Palace Kempinski Istanbul. Learn more about Avani+ Mai Khao Phuket Suites & Villas. We have featured The Retreat Palm Dubai and Sofitel Dubai The Palm, two unique properties. The Emaar Hospitality resents the opportunities for Wellness travel. An interesting article on The Ritz Carlton Ras Al Khaimah Al Wadi is not to be missed.

As always, read about the news and views relating to the hospitality industry plus learn about what is happening in the Airlines and Aviation Industry.

So, have a good time reading...

**Ken Chapman**  
Editor

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Image: The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, Al Wadi

# AZERBAIJAN

## BACK AT ATM DUBAI 2022 LARGEST STAND EVER



This year, Azerbaijan Tourism Board (ATB) is preparing for its exceptional participation at ATM Dubai 2022 with its largest stand ever (230 m2), where the number of local industry players from Azerbaijan will reach about 30.

Having kept the Middle East, especially the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, on its key source market list, ATB has been showing its commitment to its stakeholders, from travellers to trade partners, through various activities. ATB actually restarted its physical participation at international exhibitions with ATM Dubai 2021 as soon as international borders started opening.

Continuing on from there, ATB held multiple activities and engagements within Expo 2020 Dubai with outstanding results. With three main directions, ATB managed to reach about 25 million people through media representatives while strengthening its ties with more than a hundred trade partners. Moreover, the Azerbaijan Pavilion proved to be an interactive platform for the visitors, with approximately 20,000 contact details of potential tourists gained for further promotion.

Perfectly positioned for different types of travellers, Azerbaijan will present many new experiences introduced over the last few months. The infinity swing at Tufandag Mountain Resort in Gabala and the mountain coaster at Shahdag Mountain Resort in Gusar are the two best examples of exciting activities with a perfect view





of the magnificent Caucasus Mountains, which are both safe for adults and children alike.

Speaking of families with kids, Deniz Mall on the Baku Boulevard is now home to a new Kinderland education and entertainment centre. While this small model of Baku with streets, shops, a bank, a hospital and even an airport entertains the kids, parents can enjoy the best shops and restaurants at the largest mall in the Caucasus

region. There is also a brand-new museum awaiting visitors. This is the world's first oil tanker museum, established in a ship that was long used to transport oil across the Caspian Sea with interactive exhibition halls and an excellent restaurant serving delicious seafood and national cuisine. Third on the list of what is new for children is Baku Zoo, which was reconstructed and reopened in early 2022. There are some very interesting species kept here, along with relaxing cafés and interesting gift shops.





Looking ahead in 2022, there are more plans to be realised in Azerbaijan. New hotels like Ritz Carlton Baku, Hotel Indigo and Wyndham Garden as well as the Mud Volcanoes Tourism Complex and arts and crafts settlement of Basgal village will open soon, while the Karabakh region is preparing for the best travel experiences. Infrastructure upgrades also continue, such as the installation of signs and information boards at the Diri Baba Mausoleum in Gobustan on the way to Shamakhi – a beautiful historic mausoleum dating back to the 15th century.

On a separate note, ATB remains committed to sustainable tourism development. While 100 kilometres of hiking trails have been added to the Transcaucasian Trail, the Slow Food travel experience

available in the north-western route is also being extended to the subtropical south of the country. Azerbaijan is also planning an international birdwatching festival in Shirvan National Park, located on the bird migration path along the Caspian coast.

In 2021, Azerbaijan received more than 17,000 travellers from the UAE, which is still placed in the top 10 source countries for the inbound tourism of Azerbaijan, with more than 7,500 arrivals in 2022 alone. The country is also seeing substantial increases from other GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia, whose arrival figures during the first quarter of the year increased by 20%, with 7,751 travellers compared to the same period of 2019 – the best tourism year for Azerbaijan with a record number of arrivals.





# Emaar Hospitality Group Wellness Travel



Wellness has undeniably become a powerful catalyst of the UAE's tourism industry and the country strives to become a wellness destination for tourists with its world-class infrastructure, strategic development policies, state-of-the-art technology, and unmatched standards of health and safety.

The rise in wellness travel has surely experienced an upward trend following the pandemic as travellers seek wellness and healthy experiences close to home and this accelerated domestic travel during the pandemic.

The segment's growth momentum is substantial as more and more individuals across the world resort to well-being retreats to overhaul their lifestyles and start over. This worldwide lifestyle revolution following the pandemic has also created significant opportunities in the wellness tourism sector with the new era of travellers.

The recent launch of our beachfront properties of Vida Umm Al Quwain and Address Beach Resort proved to be a success, and we will continue to provide more wellness retreats and experiences at our forthcoming beachfront locations in the region. Our beachfront properties are gaining high popularity amongst wellness travellers, and this will remain as our key focus as we plan our development pipeline of our brands into 2023.

We are also introducing healing and wellness to our premium spa services throughout the Address Hotels + Resorts to further enhance our customers' wellness experiences. With holistic and sophisticated





spa offerings that are redesigned to improve the state of wellness on each cellular level, our guests can unwind and enhance their well-being in a unique atmosphere. We have launched our new spa menu that is devoted to the well-being of our guests in the post-pandemic world. Not only this, but our wellness facilities are also tailor-made, catering to the wellness needs of our guest.

We have recently launched our dedicated wellness suites at Address Sky View that provide our guests with a special gym equipment in the comfort of their rooms. This experience is designed to ensure that guests can continue their wellness and healthy lifestyle during their stay with in-room fitness experience, healthy meals (on request) along with facilities like the spa, fitness centre and infinity pool that add to the overall wellness experience.

**Quote:**

"As UAE is set to become a global wellness destination in the new era of hospitality, Emaar Hospitality Group is setting new standards of wellness with specially designed experiences and retreats. From innovative wellness spa treatments to in-room fitness products, our hotel properties are well-equipped to meet the demands of the mindful and conscientious travelers. Additionally, our beachfront properties have been key in offering holistic wellness experiences and we will continue to expand our products and practices to match the needs of wellness travelers in the UAE and across the region."

**Mark Kirby**, Head of Emaar Hospitality Group





# Welcome to **AUSTRIA**

Austria is a small country, compact, easy to get to know, delightful to see. It boasts a spectacular scenery and a rich cultural heritage. In some way, one could say: Austria is Europe in a nutshell.

**A**ustria can pride itself with its outstanding natural beauty and spectacular scenery; crystal clear lakes with drinking water quality ringed by deep green hills and domineering mountains. Wooded hills rising out of lush farmland, Alpine peaks reaching for the sky, peaceful pastures and quaint villages resting at their feet as well as vineyards, ancient castles and grand abbeys.

The towns are as varied as the landscape; beautiful cities with architectural sights from the last six centuries, narrow, cobbled stone lanes, wide squares, market towns that have barely changed since the Middle Ages, mountain villages with neat little houses, and flowers overflowing from their balconies. Austria's richness of musical and cultural heritage has over the years produced an array of internationally acclaimed opera-, theatre- and music festivals throughout the year. Every January, the Mozart Festival is held in Salzburg; May/June sees the Vienna Festival and July/August, the Salzburger Festspiele and Bregenz Festival on the floating stage on Lake Constance take centre stage. The Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt, the Schubertiade Festival in Vorarlberg or various Palace Concerts in Innsbruck round off the season.

The Austrian Alps provide the perfect stage and setting for either a truly relaxing or a more active holiday experience. The several hundred lakes spread throughout the country convert to water sports eldorados during July and August with water temperatures regularly reaching up to 25C. Gentle rolling hills invite to pleasurable walks and the breathtaking alpine peaks with hundreds of marked hiking trails will take you away from the hectic everyday life to experience the holiday of your lifetime. Bikers will cycle along scenic paths while those seeking adventure will find excitement when rafting along raging mountain rivers or traversing wild canyons.

Have you ever thought of getting pampered in one of the many Austrian spas with state-of-the-art facilities and professional staff that offer many wellness and relaxation programmes? Finally, do not forget to experience the Austrian 'Gemütlichkeit'! Meet the locals – either in coffee houses (have you heard about Vienna's Café Sacher or Café Mozart?), beer gardens, wine taverns, restaurants or in one of the alpine huts. Savour the warm



**Mountain lake at Giggler Spitze**

Copyright © Österreich Werbung / Roman Huber



**Kitesurfen at Neusiedler lake**

Copyright © Burgenland Tourismus GmbH / Birgit Machtinger



welcome and cosiness of luxury hotels, neatly kept apartments, family run inns and atmospheric bed & breakfast places or campsites. And of course don't miss out on the delicious Austrian dishes: Sacher Torte, Wiener Schnitzel and Kaiser Schmarren are an absolute must!

Known for warm hospitality, love of après-ski, and passion for smooth pistes and deep powder, no one does skiing better than the Austrians. Austria's Alps are blessed with a long and lavish snow season and the country is widely recognised as one of the world's best snow-sure skiing destinations and therefore the perfect destination for a winter break. Austria, which looks back on a very deep and long tradition in skiing, has some of the very best winter sports infrastructure in Europe, and here you will find old integrated with the new and modernity with tradition. Come to Austria for a wealth of perfectly groomed pistes, top-of-the-range snowmaking facilities and ski-hire equipment, impressive viewing galleries and the most modern lift installations. Millions of Euros per year are invested into continuously improving and upgrading the country's already impressive lift and gondola network.

Thanks to the fantastic arena of mountains and lakes, snow and ice, Austria's winter wonderland offers up countless activities off the slopes. Owing to its extensive areas of natural thermal waters and fresh Alpine air, the country looks back on a long tradition of health and well-being with a wealth of superior spas just a stone's throw from the winter slopes, such as Zell am See-Kaprun's Tauern Spa resort.

Spectacular panoramic views, wild animals and winter flora can be experienced snowshoeing, and particularly impressive routes can be found in the Rauris Valley. Tobogganing slopes all over the country offer unbridled fun for the whole family, such as at Wildkogel, which prides itself as being the world's longest floodlit toboggan run. Take a Segway tour across snowy meadows, such as those offered in Serfaus in Tirol. Adrenaline junkies can get their fix scaling the dizzy heights of frozen waterfalls whilst ice climbing.

Put some magic into your winter adventure by taking a romantic horse-drawn-carriage or sleigh ride, sample local schnapps or taste hot doughnuts under the twinkling lights at one of Austria's internationally renowned Christmas markets all over the country or skate around a frozen lake.

The possibilities really are endless, and you're guaranteed never to have a dull moment on either your summer or winter holiday in Austria. Wherever you go and whatever you do – you will soon realise that apart from all the beauty, it is the Austrian people that make the difference: Austria welcomes you!

Website: [austria.info/ae](http://austria.info/ae)

Twitter: @zooralnemsa

Instagram: @zooralnemsa

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/feelaustriaAE/>

LinkedIn: @Austrian National Tourist Office Middle East



# Avani+ Mai Khao Phuket Suites & Villas

## Stylish Stay + Kids Play = Perfect Holiday



**A**vani+ Mai Khao Phuket Suites & Villas, a new tropical hideaway only 15 minutes from Phuket International Airport, is welcoming travellers to its collection of chic, family-friendly suites and villas in the northwest part of the popular Thai island.

Accentuated with breezy, beachy tones, 70 one, two, and three bedroom suites keep guests close to the buzz of the resort's main amenities including the large lagoon swimming pool, fitness centre and kids area while 30 one to four bedroom villas are private oases with outdoor living space, a kitchen, laundry and high-tech toys. For families, the generous sizes of the suites and villas mean having that extra room for the little ones to roam amid uncluttered spaces, natural finishes and muted colours that foster a welcoming, laidback island atmosphere.

Holidays are for kids too and at AvaniKids, the resort's colourful kids' club for ages 4-12, they've got a world of adventure waiting for them. Special activities including pizza making classes, tree planting, visiting a turtle sanctuary are

offered daily along with outdoor fun, with a climbing wall, kids yoga and even Muay Thai classes. Adults, in the meantime, will be drawn to the turquoise-tiled tropical lagoon pool with a swim-up bar serving up delicious concoctions to feel-good, chill-out music throughout the day.

Brand new dining concepts include Claws & Co, a casual-yet-chic seafood shack with a contemporary nautical theme, high-quality local seafood with a playful twist delights the palates. A one-of-a-kind concept for Phuket, the restaurant invites customers

to don aprons and roll up their sleeves for a decadent seafood feast, while friendly staff in Breton-style stripes serve up seafood delights alongside inventive cocktails and mocktails.

AVANIHOTELS.COM

[www.avanihotels.com/en/mai-khao-phuket/offers](http://www.avanihotels.com/en/mai-khao-phuket/offers).





# Uganda's Unbeatable Wildlife

## The Big 7

by: Hazel Saldanha

Artly termed the "The Pearl of Africa" Uganda is blessed with incredible natural beauty, brimming with thickly forested lands, vast expanses of savannahs and misty mountains that will satiate even the most discerning wildlife enthusiast, all whilst ensuring that every experience is framed from the ground up to minimize our human impact to ensure that generations to come fully enjoy the richness of its flora and fauna.

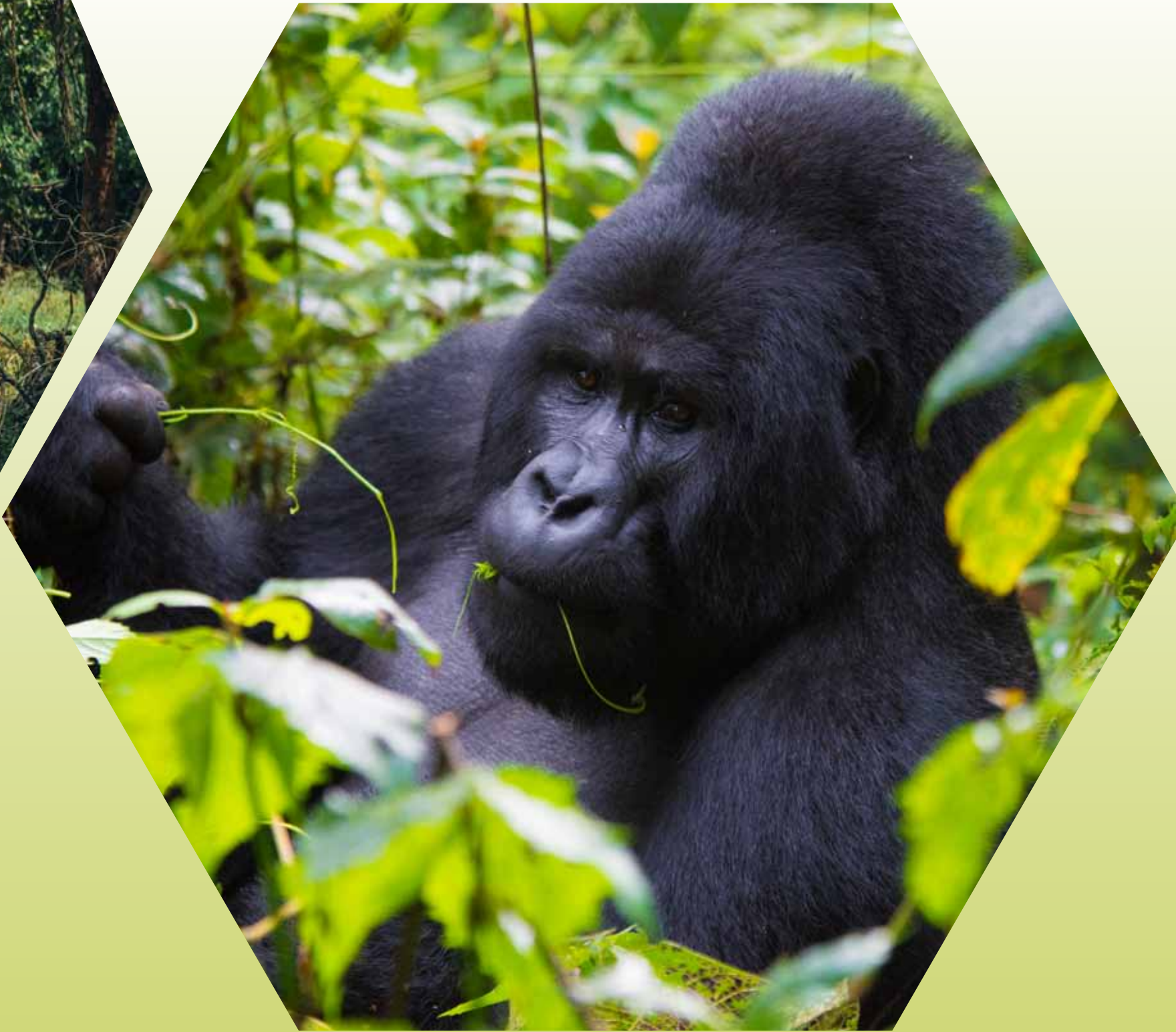
The "Big 5" a term coined in an age-old era indicated the 5 most challenging animals to track which were the African Lion, Leopard, Elephant, Rhinoceros and Cape buffalo. With the advent of modern transportation and experienced guides visitors are nearly guaranteed to spot the Big -5 in many of the country's 10 National Parks – the Queen Elizabeth Park amongst the most diverse of them all. The park's allure is drawn from its mix of habitats and eco-niches; the sight of majestic rare tree-climbing lions in the middle of a hunt is sharply contrasted with large buffalo and elephant herds that dominate the horizon. A number of options await visitors from walking safari's to a channel cruise along the game rich Kizanga river channel or a multi-night stay at one of the many riverside lodges that allow for sunset encounters with the majestic procession of wildlife that skirts its banks. Although Queen Elizabeth park is a fantastic primer for the new wildlife enthusiasts; far more awaits those who wish to experience the awe inspiring mountain gorilla and the wild chimpanzee – completing the "Big 7"

Uganda is home to almost half the world's surviving mountain gorillas; the Bwindi Impenetrable national parks – a UNESCO

world heritage site is where nearly 350 of the world's remaining 1100 gorillas live, amongst precipitous mountainous rainforests. Tracking gorillas is a truly challenging yet rewarding experience as these creatures live in dense undergrowth. Seasoned guides lead visitors up verges, across flowing rivers past thorny trees and vines in order to catch a glimpse of these creatures. In addition to these primates the park also hosts forest elephants, giant hogs and over 350 species of bird, including several seen nowhere else in the world which makes it a bird-watcher's dream come true.

North of Bwindi, Kibale National Park is believed to have the highest primate densities in Africa and the foremost destination to view wild chimpanzees – including the ultra-rare L'Hoest monkeys and the endangered red Colobus species. The park is a sensory feast with an amazing varied landscape, where grassland and swamps are interspersed with elevated plateaus. Incredibly it is said there are several groups of wild chimpanzees that are habituated to human contact for an intimate experience like no other. No visit is complete without a trip to yet another UNESCO heritage site the Rwenzori National Park a short trip east of Kibale. It is a haven for a number of rare plants, animals and birds some of which are still being discovered. The Rwenzori Mountains are a marvel in themselves with equatorial snow covered peaks along with lowlands blanketed in colourful mosses united with spectacular flora creating an idyllic dreamy ambience.

Learn more about Uganda's fantastic wildlife experience at [www.ugandawildlife.org](http://www.ugandawildlife.org)



# Czech Republic

## The destination for your Summer holiday

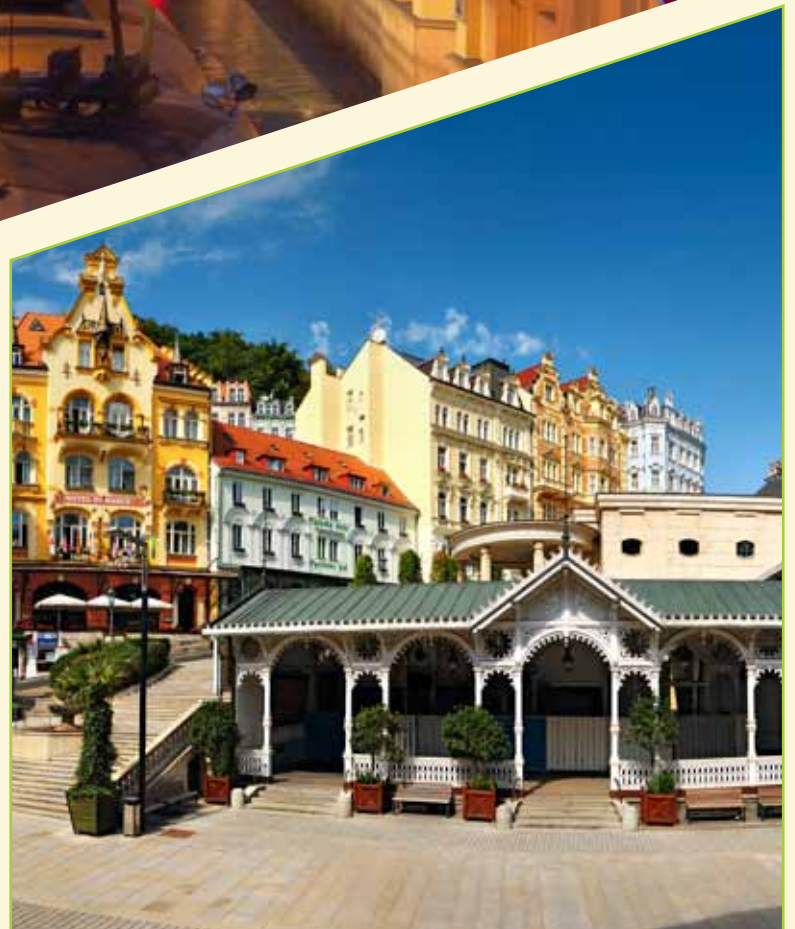


**Prague:** Prague is well known for being a romantic city full of life. It's been welcoming tourists with open hands for several centuries and people say it is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is majestic, but also a bit mysterious. The unique historic centre together with Prague Castle, Old Town Square, Charles Bridge and many churches, palaces and gardens is registered on the UNESCO List of World Cultural and Natural Heritage. Bask in the glory of summer in the Yellow spa (Žluté lázně), boat cruise along the waterfront of Vltava River, stroll around the beautiful gardens and parks like Letná Park. Follow the scent of freshly brewed coffee to one of Prague's famous cafés, just as Kafka and Einstein once did, and become acquainted with another one of the fascinating faces of the Czech capital.

**Karlovy Vary:** With the highest concentration of healing thermal springs, this rejuvenating spa town is a salve for the body and mind. Those looking for souvenirs can take a pick from world famous Moser glassworks, Thun Karlovy Vary porcelain, or the exceptional Becherovka herbal liqueur, which is often dubbed the town's 13th spring. You should also try the traditional & popular spa wafers, which come in interesting flavours. In addition to these, Europe's notable and one of the world's oldest Karlovy Vary International Film Festival is also hosted here.

**český Krumlov:** This picturesque town in the south bohemian region of the Czech Republic, in its entirety is an UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site. It also houses the most beautiful castle in all of the Czech Republic. The best way to explore this historical centre is to walk around its charming narrow lanes and soak in the multi-coloured facades of the town houses, wander into the traditional little shops or visit one of the many cultural events.





**Brno:** The second-largest city in the Czech Republic, is a young-and-trendy cultural sister to Prague. The South Moravian capital perfectly combines history, modern architecture, culture and vibrant nightlife. Some key places to visit here are Freedom Square – Náměstí Svobody, Moravian Square (Moravské náměstí), Hike Up to Špilberk Castle, walk around Brno's Old Town Hall and for a truly spectacular experience a hot air balloon ride over Brno on a clear and sunny day is a must have experience.

Summer in the Czech Republic is always a memorable experience – one can explore and see this beautiful destination the various choices available in the country to choose from based on your personal interests. Be it on bike or skates, on horseback, by the water, in the water, in the air or off for a round of golf? Choose your style and take a vacation to the Czech Republic.

# Sofitel Dubai The Palm

## Stay, dine, play and unwind

Sofitel Dubai The Palm is a Polynesian themed, luxury 5-star beach resort, sprawling over a long private beach on the East Crescent at the iconic Palm Jumeirah. Nestled amidst lush greenery on the idyllic shores of the Arabian Gulf, it offers a tropical and relaxing sanctuary, only a short distance away from the vibrant, buzzing metropolis of Dubai.

With magnifique touches of French elegance interlaced throughout, Sofitel invites you to indulge in excellence, offering a rejuvenating escape packed with some fantastic dining and entertainment options.

### Immerse in comfort and extravagance with Sofitel's stay options

Sofitel's large selection of accommodation options offer elegant rooms and suites to spacious family apartments and private villas, where you can truly relax, indulge, and revive.

The hotel's villas offer a truly marvellous experience where you can immerse yourself in the epitome of grandeur and opulence with unmatched Arabian hospitality and extraordinary comforts infused into every moment of your stay.

The recently renovated Lodge Villa 300 boasts incredible amenities inclusive of a private beach, a private swimming pool and jacuzzi, along with a fully equipped kitchen, private gym, soundproof cinema room, a freestanding soaking tub and separate walk-in rain showers. Set across two floors, each villa features a master suite with three bedrooms and two entertainment rooms with a dedicated 24-hour butler service.





### **Awaken your taste buds with Sofitel's culinary offerings**

Embark on a satisfying gastronomic journey by discovering all the enticing flavours at Sofitel. Building on centuries of the world's finest culinary traditions, the hotel invites guests to discover its restaurants, bars and lounges. Its restaurants – Manava, Porterhouse Steaks & Grills, Moana, The World Eatery, Maui, and Hong Loong – each offer delectable cuisines to awaken one's taste buds beyond compare. Casual or upscale, family-friendly or sophisticated, each experience is distinguished by its warm service, authentic flavors and bon goût. Whether you dine indoors or al fresco, enchanting views of the sea, sand and sky will surround you at all times.

### **Explore a world of wellness**

Indulge in Sofitel's wide range of wellness and fitness options that take holistic health and self-improvement to a whole new level. The hotel recently partnered with SPA L'OCCITANE to launch Sofitel SPA with L'Occitane – a new wellness concept that comprises of luxurious new spa treatments and therapies.

### **Relax and unwind with the best views at the Laguna Beach Lounge**

Sofitel recently reopened doors to the Laguna Lounge, a Mediterranean-inspired beach chic destination that effortlessly captures the coming together of ancient Greek agora and the French Riviera. At Laguna, guests can indulge in private luxury cabanas, dine al fresco in the lounge area or bask under the golden sun.

[www.sofitel-dubai-thepalm.com](http://www.sofitel-dubai-thepalm.com)





# Capital Group

## The largest independent travel agent of Maldives

Capital Group has been setting the standard for travel business in the Maldives for over two decades. As the Maldives's largest independent travel agent Capital Travel specialises in providing good value, quality holidays alongside excellent customer service.

As an independent private company, the staff are able to offer impartial advice and an extensive range of holiday experiences. The company works with over 25,000 suppliers and travel agents to promote its partner resorts worldwide.

Today, we are proud to be able to take care of everything for our clients and partners including flights, hotel reservations and local transportation. Furthermore, we are proud to provide solutions for our customers on a personal basis for every aspect of their travel.

In 2002, the Capital Group ventured into Hotels Supply business with the formation of ASTRABON Hotel and Resort Supply





business. Today, we are one of the leading companies in this arena with the largest collection of kitchen utensils and equipment showcased in the ASTRABON Showroom in the heart of Male'.

We are working tirelessly with our partners to continue our businesses sustainably with great vision, care and confidence. We are a reputable Group that works continuously to improve our services and provide the best deals for our clientele and business partners in the Maldives and across the Globe.

Capital Group provide versatility and a choice of services to suit goals of investors with access to exclusive acquisition and development opportunities and assist throughout the investment lifecycle, from planning and executing new developments through to exit.

In the investment process, we guide;

- \* Acquiring and leasing plots of land, private islands or an existing guest house or a resort.
- \* Save money and time on consultations.
- \* Designing your property. Make your property unique.
- \* Finding credible builders. Build durable and high-quality property with no stress.
- \* Promote your property through our global sales network of 25,000+ travel professionals.
- \* Boost your brand exposure and strengthen your market presence in Europe through our upcoming London Sales & Marketing office.

From obtaining needed permits to logistics to impact assessments to concept development, a liaison office from Capital Group will be attached to assist for a smooth execution.

Also, we can create effective print and digital presentations for our clients, and launch impactful promotional campaigns across. Also, of our strong sales partners network, we can secure bookings in advance of opening the property.



# A BESPOKE WELLNESS HOLIDAY AWAIT AT THE RETREAT PALM DUBAI

The hotel offers six curated wellness retreat packages inclusive of pre-arrival consultation, welcome rituals, signature treatments, customized healthy meals, and more



The Retreat Palm Dubai MGallery by Sofitel, officially recognized by the Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce (Dubai Tourism) as the first five-star wellness resort in the UAE, presents options for travellers looking for a unique holiday experience. Designed to provide holistic wellbeing benefits, the wellness retreats allow guests to de-stress and rejuvenate amidst a breathtaking landscape and without leaving the modern comforts and conveniences that the city provides.

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The hotel is offering six bespoke wellness retreats for holidaymakers to choose from, depending on what they aim to achieve at the end of their trips. The retreats named RENEW, RELAX, REVIVE, REVITALISE, RESHAPE, and REBUILD, range from three nights to 14 nights.

The hotel's wellness retreat packages will take guests on a comprehensive wellness journey, which will commence even before checking in. The wellness team will organize a pre-arrival consultation with a lead coach and pre-arrival nutrition assessment to create a personalized retreat for the duration of the stay.



During the check-in process, guests will be welcomed with an aroma and colour therapy by the wellness team and receive unique energy bracelets.

The guests will also have a one-to-one consultation and private wellness session, which includes a tailor-made itinerary of wellness and fitness activities that the guests will complete, depending on the retreat package that they have selected. They will also be invited to attend daily activities, including educational talks about improving one's wellbeing.

On top of the wellness and fitness itinerary, the guests will also have access to the hotel's health amenities, including the gym, sauna, steam bath, Jacuzzi, cold plunge pool, and oxygen therapy facilities.

For the nutritional aspects of the retreat, the guests will receive green detox shots every morning, served in their rooms alongside a vitalizing ritual to jumpstart the day. They will also savour curated breakfast, lunch, and dinner prepared by the hotel's wellness culinary chefs at Vibe Restaurant. The meals are complemented with either two detox drinks, super smoothies, soups, or broths per the guest's preference. In addition, they can attend a live cooking demonstration, including access to the herbal garden for fresh picks of ingredients.

The Retreat Palm Dubai will also provide a one-to-one consultation and evaluation after the check-out, followed by a wellness checklist that the guests can follow to maintain a healthy lifestyle and look after their wellbeing that will generate long-term positive results on their overall health.

[theretreatpalmdubai.com](http://theretreatpalmdubai.com)





# Pakistan

## KAILASH FESTIVALS

A unique Kailash Valley, the remaining minority of approximately 3500 people living in three isolated but beautiful valleys known as Bumburet, Rambur, and Berir. The people of Kailash have a rich culture and are very strong footed about their identity. These people stand out from the remaining tribes, cultures, and communities due to their distinct traditions, religious practices, and festivals.

The people of Kailash celebrate many festivals during the year but notable festivals are three, the spring feast Chilam Joshi, in May, Uchal or Utchal, in August and Choimus, in winter. Chilam Joshi is one the most important festival, this four-day festival is celebrated across all three valleys of Bumburet, Rambur, and Berir. Chilam Joshi begins with "Milk day" which, Kailash people store from household to offer their libation on the day of the festival. They ask for the blessing of God and pray for a prosperous year of agriculture, health, and safety of their herds. The main purpose of this festival is that Kailash men and women can find a spouse for themselves to get married. The women wear traditional attire with lively colors whereas, men wear traditional Shalwar Kameez with a waistcoat made of wool.

### Uchal or Utchal

Uchal, also known as Utchal is a summer Kailash festival. During

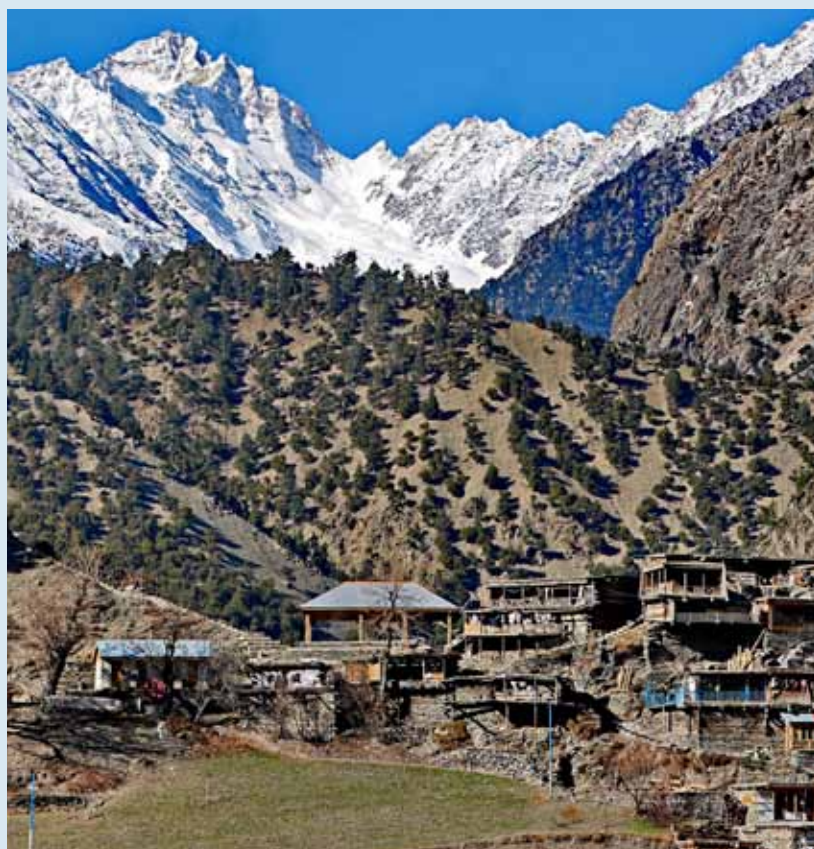






The festival celebrated in annual harvesting with singing, dancing and paying homage to the nature for blessing them with good food and fruits. It is marked in the barley and wheat harvest season every year in August. Kailash people prepare cornbread, buttermilk, and cheese to celebrate the festival. They wear their traditional black robes, ornate cowries shelled headdresses and adorned with coloured necklaces and dance in a circle. During the festival, prayers and processions are held at a high plateau outside the village in Balangkuru, where the long night of dancing begins. The Uchal festival continues for several days and moving on to different locations within the valley.

Choimus is the winter festival, from 8-21 December, the most important celebration of the winter solstice and the return of the sun. Everyone wears new clothes, dance, feasts, and offer sacrifices. The first week of Choimus is for the Kailash people only. It is celebrated by feasting until the elders, who sit on a hilltop, watching the sun reaching the orbit, declare the beginning of the New Year. In the second week of Choimus, people show gratitude to their god with dance, music, and the sacrifice of goats. This part of a festival is public. It is dedicated to the god Balimain who is believed to visit from the mythical homeland of the Kailash, Tsyam, for the duration of the feast. Food sacrifices are offered at the clans' Jeshtak shrines, dedicated to the ancestors.



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# ÇIRAĞAN PALACE

## Kempinski Istanbul

*A heritage that dates back to the 17th century*

The only Ottoman Imperial Palace and Hotel on the Bosphorus that once hosted Sultans, Çırağan Palace has a heritage that dates back to the 17th century. The building had different formations including a waterside summer villa and a marble palace. After a complete restoration and with the addition of a modern hotel building including elegant rooms, restaurants and meeting venues, the Hotel and Palace opened in 1991 as an accommodation and event venue managed by Kempinski, Europe's oldest luxury hotel group. Being a landmark, Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul has various rooms in the hotel building, including 11 private palace suites in the historical Çırağan Palace.

Moreover, it continues to be the iconic place to host the most prestigious and extravagant events, meetings, and weddings in Türkiye with having the beautiful indoor and outdoor venue alternatives. Since its opening, the royal-born continues to be the symbol of luxury combined with legendary Turkish hospitality and impeccable service dedicated to excellence. Çırağan Palace Kempinski Istanbul is also very proud to be appreciated and awarded via many leading local and international valuable authorities, publications, and guests.  
[kempinski.com/istanbul](http://kempinski.com/istanbul)





## Second A321neo aircraft



To facilitate and align with its growth strategy, SalamAir, the Sultanate's fastest-growing value-for-money airline, has taken delivery of its second A321neo aircraft. Expanding SalamAir reach to almost eight hours flight, the new aircraft will connect Muscat and Salalah further to East Europe, Far East, and African destinations. The new fleet mix will enable SalamAir to diversify its portfolio and support the Sultanate of Oman's tourism industry vision, especially during the Khareef season.

To offer a unique travel experience, A321neo will include the Luban class wherein the front row seats of the aircraft will be dedicated to the special seating class.

The next-generation A321neo aircraft has a new engine option (NEO) known for being fuel-efficient and environment friendly with one of the lowest carbon footprints in the industry. To elevate the passenger experience, it offers additional seating

capacity while allowing augmented use of cabin space and low noise levels. A redesigned cabin door configuration and supplementary exit limits lifts the comfort quotient of the aircraft. While the aircraft's extra range capability of eight hours meets the ambitious plans of the airline's expansion.

With the induction of the second A321neo, SalamAir has become the first airline in the country to have two aircraft from the brand in its fleet. In September 2021, SalamAir took delivery of the first A321neo.

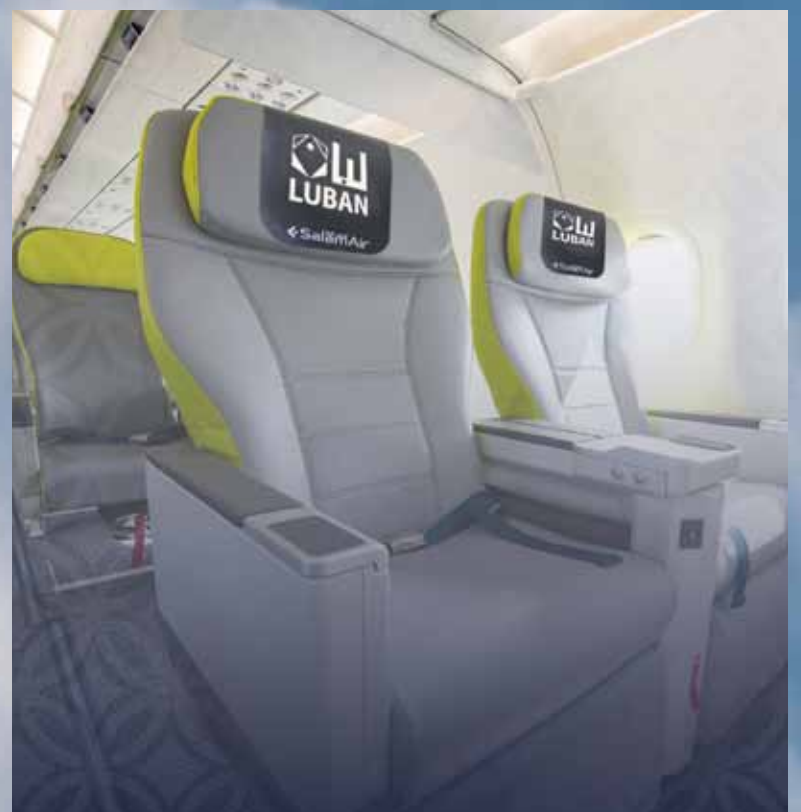
Captain Mohamed Ahmed, CEO of SalamAir, said: "We are excited to welcome the second A321neo aircraft, the newest addition in our growing fleet. The new aircraft guarantees operational boost, cost-benefit as well a drop in carbon footprint while enabling extra payload capacity and better fuel efficiency. By adding this aircraft to our fleet it will support the growth plans of our airline's



network and will make our youngest fleet in Asia even younger.”

SalamAir meets the nation's growing demand for affordable travel options and aims to generate further opportunities for employment and business creation in various Oman sectors. In a short span, SalamAir has achieved growth in its operations and has expanded its reach across the region.

With an intention to enhance the overall user experience for travellers during the last few months, SalamAir has been engaged in improving its online check-in, website, booking engine and travel agent portals. The airline has also been involved in additional training of ground operations and handling, in addition to cross-functional training aspects to boost productivity and readiness.



# AlJadidah in AlUla Opens the Door to 'The New Saudi'

A creative vibrant art and lifestyle hub for all is shaping up the cultural scene in 'The World's Masterpiece'



Opened earlier this year, the compact and walkable zone, AlJadidah -adjacent to the re-invigorated AlUla Old Town- has been one of the valuable additions to AlUla's culture and art scene in 2022.

Being the first pedestrian-only art, culture and dining destination in AlUla, the new open-air hub is a must-visit with a year-round offering of art curated attractions, galleries, entertainment, and exciting new eateries.

Beautifully sits on the edge of the AlUla Oasis, the creative precinct is centered around five distinct squares, each with their own unique atmosphere.

Art Square: A home to the Art & Design galleries and the exciting new seasonal activation of Cinema ElHoush, AlUla's first arthouse cinema. Here movie-goers can choose from a curated selection

of independent films from the Cannes and the Venice film festivals. The cinema also has available a selection of Saudi and Arabic films. AlJadidah's flourishing art scene, Art Square hosts the ATHR Gallery and the Design Gallery. People can stop here to see how AlUla is bringing together Saudi and international artists in celebration of art.

Muayada Square: visitors can enjoy here a diversity of dining experiences including a vegan restaurant specialising in healthy brunch bowls and smoothies. In the evening options include international street food for visitors to enjoy the outdoors and the ambiance. A fantastic array of food trucks serving a variety of tasty treats and delicious bites for all tastes.

Oasis Square: Overlooking the lush AlUla Oasis, this place might be the perfect hangout spot. It connects the new village with the old oasis. It's all sand and palms and features a stage where



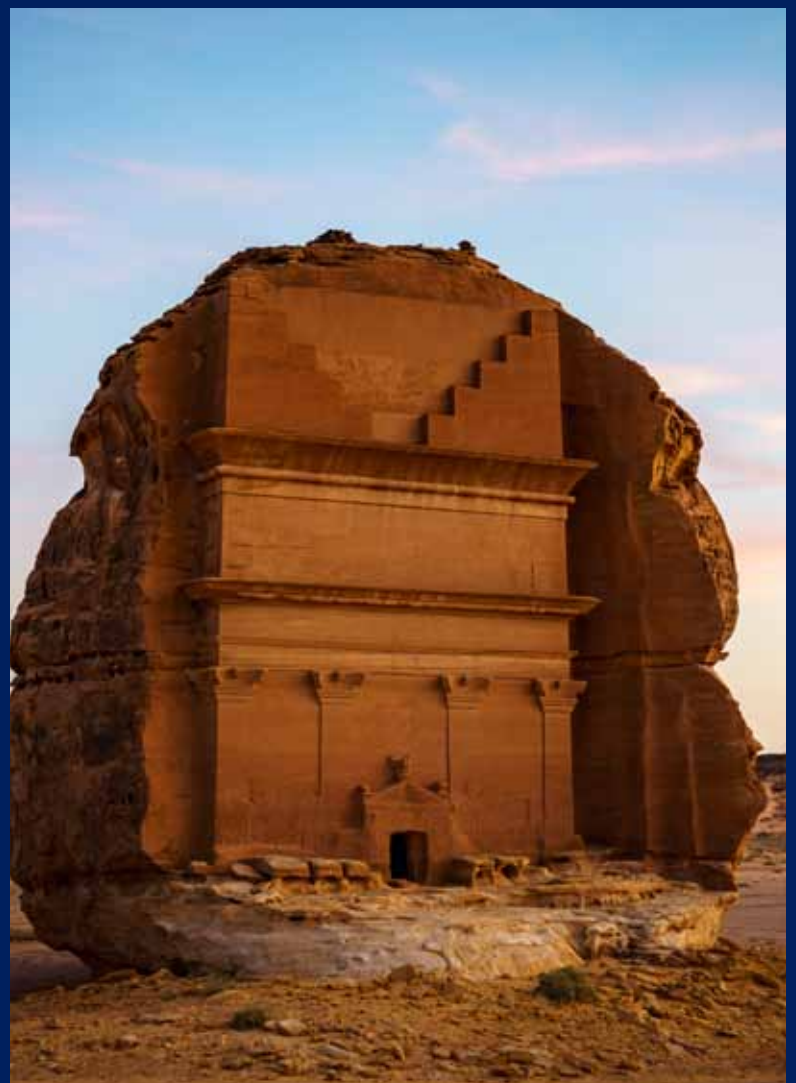
musicians entertain the crowds. Visitors to this square will find a Spa and the men's barber shop. people can take a seat under the shady trees of Oasis Square and enjoy the twinkling lights at night while live music is performed.

Gathering Square: With plenty of shaded seating, this place is perfect for friends and family. The square is located next to AlJadidah's premier nail and hair salon.

Qanat Square: This square offers the residents and visitors the opportunity to stock up on international designer goods with the introduction of international fashion brands, in addition to trying delicious food from the mixture of restaurants located here.

Earlier this year during the first AIUla Arts festival which ran from Feb 12th to the end of March 2022, AlJadidah played host for the first-ever AIUla Performing Arts festival with art performances spreading across AlJadidah, where people celebrated art along with their friends and loved ones in the presence of and the participation of international and local artists. AlJadidah hosted also for the first time in Saudi Arabia 'Cortona on The Move AIUla' documentary photograph art exhibition, where 18 exhibited international and Saudi artist works weaved seamlessly between Time, Life and Longing.

A vibrant new hub of art, restaurants, shops and more, AlJadidah is quickly becoming another must-visit new spot in AIUla. Beautiful murals bring an artistic touch to the new precinct where the world's largest hand-painted carpet lines the road for visitors.



# Arjaan Dubai Media City: Elegantly luxurious Centro Barsha: Modern and stylish

Timur Ilgaz, the Cluster General Manager at Arjaan Dubai Media City and Centro Barsha and the upcoming Damac Rotana. He oversees the 242-key Arjaan Dubai Media City, along with the 243-key Centro Barsha and will oversee 295 rooms Damac Rotana.

**W**e interviewed Mr. Ilgaz who has more than 38 years of experience in the industry having worked in Turkey, Czech Rep. Canada and Kazakhstan among other places. Previously, the General Manager at The Cove Rotana Resort, Al Ghurair Rayhaan and Arjaan by Rotana, Ilgaz has also overseen the pre-opening of Amwaj Rotana in JBR and the renovation of Jumeirah Rotana in Dubai. In his new position, he will focus on the commercial growth and leading the Rotana brand strategy.

The Arjaan is located in the heart of Dubai Media City which offers 242 elegantly luxurious hotel rooms and suites which caters to all Leisure and Business requirements and a luxury Office Tower with 154,000 sq. feet space. Centro is a very modern and stylish lifestyle luxury hotel. It is in the heart of vibrant Barsha, just meters away from the Mall of the Emirates. With 243 rooms and suites. Both properties offer extensive Banquets, F&B and facilities related to luxury stay over. Damac Rotana located in Dubai Hills 2 has 295 rooms, 3 meeting rooms and 1 all day dining restaurant. Target opening date will be in November 2022.

Mr. Timur Ilgaz informed us that his association with Rotana is over 15 years between different properties and different types from resorts to business hotels, hotel apartments.

He said that Rotana Hotel Management Corporation (Rotana) was founded in 1992. Rotana combines a unique understanding of the culture and communities of the Middle East with the collective expertise of an executive team. Rotana means a lot to him as he is with them since about 15 years and witnessed their growth and found opportunity to work as General Manager. He did successful openings at various locations.

Timur Said "I have started my hospitality journey in 1986. Since then, I have been working in the same field in different continents and countries with very reputable companies. Last 15 years of my career was with Rotana. I found the opportunity to work or open 8 properties in Rotana. Rotana is a very successful hotel management company existing for almost 30 years. I must admit that Rotana is my family now".

Mr. Timur highlighted the Centro Barsha as a contemporary, chic and effortlessly casual, Centro Barsha suits travellers seeking value-for-money accommodation when visiting Dubai. With a central city location in the heart of vibrant Barsha in Dubai and is also close to Media City.







Mr. Timur described Arjaan Dubai Media City as a modern style luxurious home away from home comforts with world-class hospitality services; part of a multi-functional complex that includes an upscale office tower. Arjaan by Rotana Dubai Media City is ideally located and offers totally new exhibition and convention facilities with 20 meeting rooms. All these meeting facilities are furnished with the latest technology to serve to the needs of the meeting clientele.

Elaborating on the UAE hospitality scenario after Expo 2020 especially Dubai, Mr Timur said "UAE tourism performance in 2021 was stronger than initially envisaged with strong pent-up demand being unlocked in both leisure and commercial tourism after the crippling headwinds of 2020. Hotel occupancy rates were trending steadily upwards with the Dubai Expo (2021-2022) supporting momentum in tandem with relaxing of overseas travel advisories in key source markets. Over the coming quarters, a number of factors will support. The UAE's hotel market posted a strong performance in the first quarter of the year on the back of the successful EXPO 2020 Dubai that and returning international visitors. Among the primary drivers of the momentum were the beachfront and luxury developments, thanks to stronger demand for leisure market, as well as upper-upmarket and midmarket hotels that posted higher average daily rates (ADRs). Additionally, Dubai is one of those very seldom cities that provide travellers coming from different cultures and segments a whole experience. Exhibition, Convention, Leisure, Corporate, Shopping, Sports Travel or Adventure Tourism. That's why I am confident to see the following years to be bright and promising"

Mr. Timur while answering us also said that a positive trend which is expected to continue throughout 2022 and beyond, the 2021 visitation figures underline the resilience and resurgence of the city's travel and tourism sector and reaffirm the role of tourism as a key driver of economic growth, while further validating Dubai's recent selection as the world's most popular destination. The demand will go back to the level of 2019 for AUE Latin America, South Africa and East Asia. He believes China will be back along with Israel, KSA, Gulf States including Oman.



# The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, Al Wadi Desert



*Inspired by Bedouin architecture with breathtaking desert views*

Just north of Dubai, The Ritz-Carlton Ras Al Khaimah, Al Wadi Desert invites guests to connect with nature and culture amid the beauty of a 1,235-acre protected reserve. The resort's Experience Concierge can arrange a desert trek on camel- or horseback, a private archery lesson or an evening of stargazing. And luxury villas, inspired by Bedouin architecture, feature private outdoor pools and breathtaking desert views.

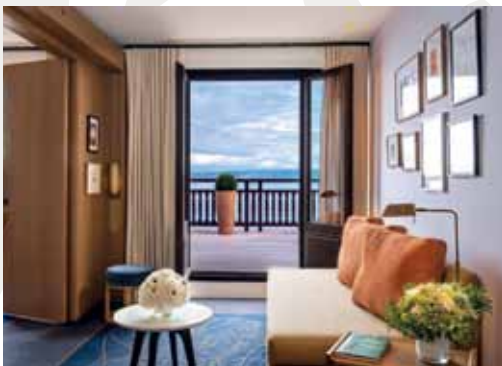
Experience tranquility, picturesque scenery and rich culture in the Bedouin-styled villas, which come with private pools and decks, lounge areas and breathtaking desert views. For the adventurous traveller, book a desert camel trek, a private archery lesson or bird-watching session, or just head out on a nature walk and soak in the surroundings. The desert resort boasts five dining venues including the newly opened Sonara Camp, farm-to-table Farmhouse, all-day dining at Kaheela, the open-sky Moon Bar and the relaxed Moorish lounge.



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