

# Tourism Breaking News

## Middle East celebrates Eid with outbound trips

The UAE government's announcement for a nine day holiday for Eid Al Fitr saw a great interest in travel bookings from the UAE to many destinations. Every year, Eid holiday travel has been the most popular with last minute bookings, this year it is even more important as it is the first time that travellers can once again travel during the break hassle free. Key travel, tourism and hospitality professionals share their insights about this year's holiday plans.

### First Eid holiday after ease of restrictions

**Sammy Musa, Chief Executive Officer at Gulf Reps**

"Eid Al Fitr is usually a last-minute booking decision and, as such, people normally travel to places which are easy to get to and they either already have visas or visas are not required. Given the fact that the UAE government has announced a 9-day holiday this year, travellers may decide to travel further afield, so I expect places in Western Europe such as London, France, Switzerland and Germany to perform quite well. On the other side, ease of visa applications for certain expatriate groups will mean that countries who accept either e-visa or visa on arrival to also see a string of arrivals from the region."



### Greece new destination for UAE travellers

**Eleni Mitraki, Director for Tourism Promotion at the Greek National Tourism Organisation**

"UAE travellers show great interest in what Greece has to offer: unique landscape and culture, complemented by culinary experiences and countless options when it comes to shopping and nightlife. As a result, Greece managed to cover significant ground in 2021, with the boost in international travellers placed the country among the most popular tourism destinations in Europe proving that the Greek tourism product remains resilient and attractive. This year, Greece aims to build on this further, with the UAE being one of the focus markets."

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### Azerbaijan top destination for UAE

**Florian Sengtschmid, Chief Executive Officer at Azerbaijan Tourism Board**

"The end of Ramadan is a true celebration in the UAE coupled with lengthy holidays, and we believe Azerbaijan will be among the top preferred destinations for UAE citizens and residents. An ideal destination for all types of travellers, Azerbaijan has seen a considerable increase in travel from this market since international borders started reopening. Overall, the GCC is one of the regions we see the most increase: up from 32,000+ visitors in 2021 to over 22,000 arrivals in the first quarter of 2022 alone. The main factors for this include frequent flights from Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah."



### London UAE's second home destination

**Anjana Pandya, Managing Director at St. James's Hotel & Club in Mayfair, London**

"What sets St. James's apart is our notoriety for warm, understated and discreet hospitality, matched with a very private location offering incredible gastronomy that in itself is very much a culinary destination in its own right. This Eid, we are very much expecting to welcome families from the UAE that seek one of the best locations in Mayfair as we are located right on the edge of Green Park, and steps away from the best shopping and restaurants. We are delighted to see business from the UAE start to re-bound to the levels from back in 2019, pre-pandemic."