

## Etihad Airways named Middle East's leading airline for sixth year

Etihad Airways has again cleaned up at the World Travel Awards Middle East. The carrier was named the Middle East's Leading Airline for the sixth year in a row in Dubai this week. The accolade was one of four awards won by the national airline of the United Arab Emirates. The airline has also announced it's taken a stake in Aer Lingus.



(Left to right) Etihad Airways' Michael Venus, vice president corporate affairs, Aubrey Tiedt, vice president guest services, Peter Baumgartner, chief commercial officer, Lee Shave, vice president guest experience, and Hareb Almuhairey, vice president UAE Sales, accept the World Travel Award for Middle East's Leading Airline 2012.

Etihad Airways was also recognised for the Middle East's Leading Airline First Class, Leading Airline Inflight Entertainment and Leading Cabin Staff.

The World Travel Awards (WTA), described by the *Wall Street Journal* as the "travel industry's equivalent to the Oscars," are voted for by passengers and travel agents from 160 countries.

"Winning a World Travel Award is the highest commendation in the travel and tourism industry and this triumph serves as a testament to Etihad Airways' hard work and commitment to excellence over the last 12 months," said Graham Cooke, WTA chairman and founder.

"Etihad Airways has become a global super-brand in just eight years. The past year has been particularly fruitful, as it reported its first full-year profit and continued its global expansion."

Etihad Airways president and chief executive officer, James Hogan, said the airline was honoured to be recognised yet again by such an esteemed organisation.

"This is also the sixth year in a row that we have taken home the regional honours for Leading Airline First Class and the third year in a row to be recognised for Leading Cabin Staff.

"Such accolades in our home market - a very competitive market - are a huge accomplishment. The Etihad Airways brand has now clearly been cemented among the world's best, and we are recognised for our commitment to providing inspiring experiences and the best of modern Arabian hospitality.

"It is rewarding to see our investment in crew training and product development paying off, as demonstrated by customer satisfaction. Being the airline of choice for our customers is our focus."

The success at the World Travel Awards follows another triumph for the airline this week. At the 2012 Business Traveller Middle East Awards on April 29, Etihad Airways took home the titles for Airline with the Best Economy Class and Airline with the Best Cabin Crew.



### **Highlights for 2011 included:**

- The achievement of profitability for the first time in the airline's history
- The purchase of a 29.21% stake in airberlin, Europe's sixth largest carrier
- A US\$1 billion deal with Panasonic Avionics to provide state-of-the-art in-flight entertainment systems and in-flight connectivity across the airline's entire wide-body fleet
- A US\$1 billion deal with Sabre Airline Solutions to integrate the airline's information technology processes
- The introduction of fully-qualified and classically-trained international chefs dedicated to food service excellence in its Diamond First Class cabins
- New routes announced to [Bangalore](#), [Maldives](#), [Seychelles](#), [Chengdu](#), [Düsseldorf](#), Tripoli, [Shanghai](#) and Nairobi

### **Etihad Airways confirms 2.987% stake in Aer Lingus**

Meanwhile, Etihad Airways has confirmed it had acquired a 2.987% stake in Aer Lingus. The airline said the purchase reflected its desire to forge a commercial partnership with the Irish national carrier.

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