

Dubai listed as one of the top 10 global tourism destinations

For year's residents of and visitors to the UAE city of Dubai knew that it was a force with which to be reckoned as a tourist destination. Not only does it boast world class tourist attractions, magnificent accommodation and a variety of activities, but also Dubai is a city that is centrally located and provides the perfect stopover for travel from Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Far East.



The Wild Wadi Water Park is situated in Jumeirah, an area in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Wild Wadi is an outdoor water park that features a heated/cooled wave pool, several water slides, and two artificial surfing machines. (Image: Wikimedia Commons)

Once again the city has not disappointed, by being ranked as one of the top 10 tourism destinations worldwide in the recent index released by credit card giant MasterCard.

The MasterCard index report analyses visitor traffic and cross-border travel spend in 132 major cities worldwide. Not only did Dubai improve its position within the top 10, but managed to surpass leading international cities such as New York, Amsterdam, Taipei and Rome.

Improving its position from ninth to eighth in terms of the number of inbound international visitors, Dubai features notably on the MasterCard's *Worldwide Index of Global Destination Cities*, where it is predicted that visitor spending in the city will increase by 18.9%, or US\$1.4bn in 2012 compared to the recorded US\$7.4bn in 2011.

Dubai holds the top spot

Dubai remains in top spot for two categories for the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region too, firstly as the most popular destination and secondly as the highest total average spend per visitor. The outlook for the MEA region as a whole is promising too, with visitor numbers for the top 10 cities set to grow by 7.2%, the total international spending predicted to show an increase of 10.4% and the average spend per visitor set to rise by 3%. In terms of Dubai specifically, it is forecast that visitors will spend more time in Dubai, since it is the fast growing of the cities within the top 10.

"Dubai's combination of sun, sea, surf, sand and shopping, along with amazing adventure and culture make it a wonderful destination for tourists worldwide and the South African market is no exception with more than 77 189 travelling to Dubai in 2011. Dubai is a city that is ever growing and changing to accommodate visitors, ensuring more attractions, more festivals and more enjoyment for everyone visiting the Emirate," commented Bailey Gorst, account manager for the Dubai, Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing (DTCM) in South Africa.

The UK capital city of London once again emerged victorious by securing global dominance in the global index survey, by being voted the world's top destination for the second year running. Making up the other places in the top ten were Paris, Bangkok, Singapore, Istanbul, Hong Kong, Madrid, Dubai, Frankfurt and Kuala Lumpur, with the cities of Seoul, Rome, New York, Shanghai, Barcelona, Milan, Amsterdam, Vienna, Beijing and Taipei completing positions 11 to 20 respectively.

For further information regarding Dubai, contact the DTCM on +27 (0) 11 702 9600 or email info@dubaitourism.co.za.

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