


Qatar Airways your gateway to the world



CEO of Qatar Airways, His Excellency Mr Akbar el Baker, makes no bones about it: Qatar Airways are excited to be here in Scotland, or at least they are excited at the prospect of the service from Edinburgh to Doha starting in May 2014. Although this was his first visit to Scotland, the airline boss has had the VIP treatment, meeting the First Minister last night and the Lord Provost at the airport yesterday and again for lunch later today. The airline is also holding a promotional event on Britannia later, and The Edinburgh Reporter was entertained to breakfast with them at the Balmoral Hotel this morning, along with other Scottish press.

“Qatar Airways has the vision of being the best and offering the finest five star service to our passengers. We fly to 126 destinations, using 131 types of aircraft with 300 planes. There are 30,000 people employed directly and over 18,000 employees among our contractors.

“We have recently announced a relationship with FC Barcelona and of course Qatar will host FIFA 2022. Qatar is uniquely placed between the east and the west so you can fly to or from anywhere in the world with just one stop in the Gulf. We have pristine beaches, 5 star hotels and events and activities throughout the year. Doha is a destination which has not been experienced by many tourists as yet but my country offers the tourist snorkelling in the clear Gulf waters as well as the best restaurants. We are home to the world famous Museum of Islamic Art and the famous Corniche which has over 14km of walkway around the sea.

 The CEO explained how his company differs from the

competition:-“We have the youngest and most modern fleet of any airline, and I should explain that the average age of our planes is around 4 years. We will be breaking the record of Airbus deliveries; we will take delivery of 3 Airbus A380 planes in June alone.

“We offer 5 star luxury on our flights including flat beds in business class and 1000 entertainment screens for all classes of travel. We have recently upgraded the A320 with flatbeds and we will offer Edinburgh passengers the most modern experience as we will use the Boeing 787 Dreamliner on this route. This will be the first time the Boeing 787 has landed in Edinburgh.

“So what is different about a flight on Qatar Airways? We have many onward connections, and we offer the shortest possible connection of any airline. We are rated 5 star by Skytrax and have held this rating for the last 8 years. In 2013 we were runners up, not because of the travel experience in the air, but because of the airport experience, but our new airport in Doha will put us head and shoulders above our competition providing excellent facilities.

“We offer the finest complimentary cuisine and three meal options in all classes. We have recently joined the One World Alliance, as the only Middle Eastern airline to do so. Why did we choose Edinburgh? – because there is a strong demand here for a five star carrier. This will be the first gateway connection to the Middle East, and will offer a one stop long haul connection to Melbourne and Perth where many Scots wish to travel.

“We span all the continents of the globe at the moment, and Scotland and Qatar have a strong, growing relationship. We see that there is a big demand for travel from here to Middle East and other destinations such as China and Japan. Qatar is of course home to many Scottish companies.

“Fifty per cent of inbound passengers will come from China, Australia, Japan and the Gulf all coming to Edinburgh. It will be a new travel experience travelling on the Boeing 787, which will introduce the world’s best business class to Scotland, with fully flat beds, 17 inch individual TV screen with a new system by which passengers can watch two programmes at once! They will be able to freeze one programme and watch the other on a handset which is Android based. Even in economy the TV screen is 10.6 inch but you still get champagne, a wide range of spirits and inflight wifi with 10kgs more luggage than our competitors.



“Qatar Airlines will be the first Middle Eastern Airline to link Edinburgh to Australia through the Middle East with journey times to Melbourne of around 20 hours cutting travel time by around 5 hours. Remember no domestic transfers will be required.

“Hamad International Airport will set standards for airports around the world with 10,000 square metres of shopping, a gym, spa and squash courts. The building is designed to handle 30m passengers per annum on opening day and this will be increased to 50million within the next three years.

“We started building the airport at the end of 2005 and it will be ready this year. It was built right next to the old one on largely reclaimed land. Departure Concourse C is nearly 1km long and will have the only internal people mover in the shape of a train. Most other airports move passengers outside the building, but our summertime temperatures are around 50 degrees Celsius, so it is best to move people inside with this specially designed train. There is a circular mosque within the building too.

” The maintenance hangar can take about 13 aircraft at any time for maintenance and is about 1 km long.

When asked by The Edinburgh Reporter who the VIP passengers might be on the first flight on 28 May Mr El Baker was sincere when he said:-“All my passengers are VIPs, so the plane will be full of VIPs!” Asked whether he himself will be travelling on the plane he explained that he will do his best to be on the flight:-“Even if I have to arrive and then leave on the same plane!” This would seem to be no difficulty to him, but then he does run the company!

Speaking after the press conference today Mike Cantlay, Chairman of VisitScotland said:

“We’re absolutely delighted to be working in partnership with Qatar Airways. This is an unbelievable opportunity to open up Scotland even further to our key long haul and emerging markets, targeting not only new luxury traveller and family segments from the Middle East, but also the valuable ancestral tourism market in Australasia – a major opportunity for the Scottish tourism industry during Homecoming Scotland 2014. The worldwide ancestral market is worth an estimated £2.4 billion to Scotland, with Australasia alone representing a potential value of around £60m.

“This new route will not only be the first from the Middle East direct to Edinburgh, but will also expand links to Scotland from Qatar Airways’ 136 destinations around the world. To have such an awe-inspiring new aircraft as the Boeing 787 Dreamliner landing on Scottish soil will heighten the excitement with the very latest in air travel comfort for our visitors.

“As Scotland welcomes the world to the Year of Homecoming, the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and The Ryder Cup, there has never been a better time to visit our stunning country and we look forward to welcoming visitors from Qatar and beyond to our shores to experience an unforgettable year”.

Flight details:

DOHA to/from EDINBURGH

Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

QR 027 departs Doha (DOH) at 08.00; arrives Edinburgh (EDI) at 13.15

QR028 departs Edinburgh (EDI) at 14.45; arrives Doha (DOH) at 23.40