

Etihad to fly the Edinburgh to Abu Dhabi route from next summer



Another new route from Edinburgh Airport has been announced today.

Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, will next year launch its first service from Scotland with the start of a non-stop daily flight from Edinburgh to its home base of Abu Dhabi, the UAE's capital city.

The new route, which will commence on 8th June, 2015, will be operated with a two-class Airbus A330-200 aircraft, offering a total of 22 seats in Business Class and 240 seats in Economy Class.

In addition to providing a direct connection between Edinburgh and Etihad Airways' Abu Dhabi hub, the forthcoming service will enable passengers and cargo from Scotland to connect conveniently to Etihad destinations across the Gulf region, Asia, Australia and Africa.

Edinburgh is Etihad Airways' first Scottish destination, and its third departure point from the UK. It currently offers triple-daily flights from London, and double-daily flights from Manchester.

James Hogan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Airways, said: "Scotland has been on our radar for some time and we are delighted that the first direct connection between its capital, Edinburgh, and the capital of the UAE, Abu Dhabi, will be operational from next year.

"The two cities share strong tourism links and the UAE is Scotland's primary trade partner in the Gulf region, which will fuel strong demand among business and leisure travellers on our non-stop service. Travellers will also benefit from convenient connections to many other destinations, both on our own global network and through our relationships with other airlines."

Speaking at the annual dinner of the Scottish Passenger Agents' Association in February this year, Mr Hogan pledged that Etihad Airways would start flights from Scotland in 2015. He added that a second service would be introduced from Scotland to Abu Dhabi in five years' time.

Scotland's Transport Minister, Keith Brown, said: "This new route between Edinburgh and Abu Dhabi is fantastic news for Scotland, building on our already strong links with the United Arab Emirates and providing a major boost to our international connectivity."

"By removing the need for extra connecting flights, we make Scotland a more attractive place to do business and make it even easier for visitors from around the globe to come and taste the fantastic tourist experience we have to offer. I look forward to this service taking off in the summer of 2015 and have no doubt it will prove a huge success for both Scotland and the UAE."

Gordon Dewar, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Airport, added: "We are delighted to welcome Etihad Airways to Edinburgh Airport from June 2015. The airline will fly direct to Abu Dhabi, giving the people of Scotland access to the United Arab Emirates and offering our passengers even more choice. With direct flights to over 100 destinations from Abu Dhabi, Etihad Airways increases our global connectivity, ensuring Edinburgh Airport truly is where Scotland meets the world."

Demand for the new route should be boosted by Edinburgh's

strong links with the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia and, in particular, Australia. Edinburgh is ranked as the second most visited city in the UK for Australians, as around eight per cent of Australians are of Scottish descent.

Mike Cantlay, Chairman of Visit Scotland: "The addition of an Abu Dhabi to Edinburgh direct service is exceptional news for Scotland as it unlocks Etihad Airways' worldwide network and allows us to further attract a wide mix of leisure and business travellers from right across the globe. Visit Scotland's strategy is to develop Scotland's air connectivity by working with global airlines.

"This exciting new direct route between the capitals of the UAE and Scotland continues to open up our wonderful tourism product to the Middle East, alongside Asia, Australia and Africa. As Scotland welcomes the world in 2014 and beyond, direct air connectivity is absolutely crucial if we are to play on the world stage, and we very much look forward to the arrival of the first flight in 2015."

The forthcoming Edinburgh service will offer a 168-tonne cargo capacity per week in both directions, supporting Edinburgh's position as the fourth largest finance centre in Europe and a global hub for the scientific research, food and drink, oil and gas, and chemical industries.

Etihad Airways has announced six new routes for the first half of 2015, starting with Kolkata in February, Madrid in March, Entebbe in May, and Edinburgh, Hong Kong and Algiers in June.

The airline's flights from Edinburgh can be booked from today onwards at etihad.com via travel agents, or by calling Etihad Airways on 0345 6081225.