

RAS AL KHAIMAH RECORDS THE HIGHEST EVER HALF-YEAR ARRIVAL NUMBERS, WELCOMING 600K VISITORS TO THE NATURE EMIRATE

Representing a 14.8% increase on H1 2022, results place the Emirate firmly on track to achieve its growth targets.

Report follows series of strategic moves to position Ras Al Khaimah as a destination of the future



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Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, 4 August 2023: Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) announces a record-breaking first six months, with the Emirate reporting its highest ever half-year arrival numbers.

The impressive performance saw Ras Al Khaimah welcome 600K visitors between January and June 2023, a total increase of **14.8%** versus H1 2022 and the highest ever tourism-related revenue achieved for a half-year period. Reinforcing its position as a destination of the future, the results follow a series of strategic investments, partnerships and initiatives to boost tourism, setting a path for continued growth in 2023 and beyond. First half achievements include:

- International tourism rebound accounting for over 52% of all visitor arrivals to the destination
- Took a step closer to becoming the regional leader in sustainable tourism by 2025, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority achieved Silver Certification, becoming the first EarthCheck certified tourism board in the Middle East
- Expanded its aviation strategy by partnering with Qatar Airways to leverage its 150+ country global network to provide direct access to the Emirate
- Signed an agreement with FTI GROUP, one of Europe's leading outbound tour operators, to drive inbound traffic from Germany and increase visitation from one of the Emirate's top five visitor source markets
- Unveiled the design vision for the USD \$3.9 billion Wynn Al Marjan Island, the largest foreign direct tourism investment project, set to open in early 2027



- Significant increase in demand (room nights) with year-on-year growth of +33.6, thanks to the addition of new hotel brands in the Emirate in 2022
- Announced the addition of Earth Hotels, Le Meridien and Nobu Hotels to its growing hotel portfolio, with plans to double the number of guest rooms over the coming years - one of the highest growth rates in the region
- Received six calls by four luxury cruise liners, welcoming over 2,500 passengers and crew
- Increased MICE room nights by 26% vs. H1 2022 driven by international incentive groups
- Hosted several key events including the 16th edition of the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon, Arab Aviation Summit, DP World Tour and Exotic Wedding Planners Conference (EWPC)
- Held the official draw for the region's first ever WMF Minifootball World Cup, taking place from October 26th to November 4th
- Introduced civil law marriage licenses, and new wedding incentive and certification programmes to bolster the Emirate's position as a wedding destination
- Raki Phillips, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority, named one of Forbes Middle East's Top 100 Travel & Tourism Leaders and Businessperson of the Year by Arabian Business earlier this year
- Launched 'Get More', a brand-new digital-first summer campaign, which generated more than half a billion impressions and over 2.5 million clicks, exceeding industry benchmarks.

*"2023 is shaping up to be the Emirate's best year to date, with our first half results proving the efficacy of moving fast, staying relevant and just getting things done," said **Raki Phillips, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority.** "It's essential we remain agile and continue to develop Ras Al Khaimah's tourism offering and create diverse and inspiring experiences for all. We have big ambitions and are confident that we will exceed our targets for 2023".*

Strong June performance

The impressive half-year figures follow a strong June performance in which the Emirate welcomed over **103,900** visitor arrivals, representing a **39.6%** increase versus June 2022. Tourism related revenue also grew by **64.7%**, while occupancy and Average Daily Rate (ADR) saw an uplift of **33.2%** and **6.7%** respectively.

Leading in responsible tourism

On a mission to not only protect its natural assets, but also engage the growing cohort of responsible travellers, the Authority has set its sights on the Emirate becoming a regional leader in Sustainable Tourism by 2025. Key to achieving this goal is its Sustainable Tourism Strategy Implementation Plan – Responsible RAK, created in partnership with EarthCheck, the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification, and advisory group for travel and tourism. This involves collecting clean data from hotels and attractions against 10 performance metrics, from



carbon offsets to landfill diversion, gender parity to Emirati employment, in order to assess where they are on their sustainability journey and establish actions to help them progress. Over 20 tourism businesses in the Responsible RAK program are expected to achieve Silver Certification by the second half of 2023. Recently, the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority was awarded Silver Certification, making it the first EarthCheck certified tourism authority in the region.

Enhancing global connectivity to the Emirate

Primed to deliver significant progress against the Emirate's vision, the Authority announced new Qatar Airways daily flights to Ras Al Khaimah International Airport, starting from 1st November 2023. Opening up one of the largest global networks of 150+ destinations, the new flights will provide a tourism boost for the nature Emirate and further strengthen its position as a destination of the future. Significantly strengthening air connectivity between Germany and the Emirate, the Authority also inked a new partnership with FTI GROUP, one of Europe's leading outbound tour operators, paving the way for the launch of twice-weekly flights from Munich to the Emirate from mid-October onwards. In a further boost to its visitor growth targets, Ras Al Khaimah received six calls by four luxury cruise liners in H1, including Azamara Quest, one of the largest ships ever to arrive in the Emirate. Another key feat was receiving both the Emerald Azzurra and super mega-yacht The World (Residences at Sea) on the same day - a historical moment for the Emirate's burgeoning cruise sector. Ras Al Khaimah has already confirmed 14 luxury cruise calls for next season, and expects to welcome 20 by 2025/2026 and 50 by 2030/2031.

Boosting its hospitality offering

Another key driver of the northern Emirate's rising visitor numbers is the continued expansion of its hotel portfolio. Ras Al Khaimah announced the addition of Nobu Al Marjan Island (165 keys) in 2026, Westin Resort (257 keys) in 2024, Le Méridien Al Marjan Island Resort (350 keys) and Earth Shore Al Marjan Island (265 keys) in 2025. With Anantara Mina Al Arab (174 keys) and Sofitel Al Hamra (300 keys) set to open this year plus several other global names in the near future, the Emirate plans to double the number of keys over the coming years. This includes the largest-of-its-kind foreign direct investment, the USD \$3.9 billion Wynn Al Marjan Island, which is set to transform and accelerate the Emirate's rise as a major global tourist destination. The integrated resort's design vision was unveiled earlier this year and will include 1,500+ rooms, suites and villas, shopping, gaming area, a state-of-the-art events center, wellness and spa facilities, 24 dining and lounge experiences and extensive entertainment choices.

Driving tourism through MICE

Ras Al Khaimah also focused on the fast-growing MICE market in H1 as part of its diversification strategy. Indicating a successful push to attract international markets for incentive groups with longer stays versus local corporate groups that tend to only stay for a couple of nights, the destination saw a 26% increase in MICE rooms nights



compared to the same period in 2022. It also hosted several major events between January and June 2023, including the RAK Half Marathon, Arab Aviation Summit, DP World Tour and Exotic Wedding Planning Conference (EWPC). Further establishing the Emirate as a unique and attractive wedding destination, the Authority chose EWPC as its platform to introduce an all-new Wedding Certification Programme that will enable seamless, quick, and easy wedding planning in Ras Al Khaimah. In H1 2023, Ras Al Khaimah saw a 300% increase in revenue from weddings which is expected to continue to grow into H2 with the launch of the programme in September. Those certified through the new Wedding Certification Programme will benefit from added ease and flexibility in obtaining necessary licenses, organising events, and gaining valuable business support from certified hotels via an e-portal. Planners will also gain a deeper understanding of the UAE's civil marriage process, receive fast-tracked permits, and have access to a network of resources to help them confidently navigate through local regulations, including a curated portfolio of unique venues. Never before has a tourism destination introduced such ease and flexibility for wedding planners and couples. In parallel, the Authority also announced a series of comprehensive incentive packages for couples, wedding planners, and certified venues.

To find out more about the wealth of experiences in Ras Al Khaimah, please visit visitrasalkhaimah.com and check out the Emirate's social platforms [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [Facebook](#).

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Notes to Editors:

[About Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority \(RAKTDA\)](#)

The Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) was established in May 2011 under the government of Ras Al Khaimah. RAKTDA aims to develop the Emirate's tourism infrastructure and establish Ras Al Khaimah as a world-class destination for leisure and business travel, creating sustainable investment opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for its residents. In order to achieve its goals, the Authority has a government mandate to license, regulate and monitor the Emirate's tourism and hospitality industry.

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