

RAS AL KHAIMAH CELEBRATES RECORD-BREAKING TOURISM YEAR WITH 1.28 MILLION VISITORS IN 2024



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This achievement represents a 12% increase in tourism revenues, underpinned by the opening of new hotels and resorts, exceptional events and expanded direct air connectivity.

Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, 14 January 2025: Building on a track record of remarkable achievements, Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA) reports its strongest year ever, welcoming a record-high 1.28 million overnight arrivals in 2024, marking 12% growth in tourism revenues and a notable 15% rise in MICE visitors. This success is a testament to the Emirate's strategic and sustainable growth vision to attract over 3.5 million annual visitors by 2030.

Commenting on the Emirate's achievements, **Raki Phillips, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority**, said: "2024 was a milestone year for Ras Al Khaimah, showcasing our commitment to sustainability, enhanced connectivity, and diverse experiences tailored to every traveller. Looking ahead, our vision extends beyond attracting more visitors; we aim to position Ras Al Khaimah as a destination of the future. With significant investments, world-class events, and groundbreaking developments on the horizon, 2025 is set to be another remarkable year.

Several factors contributed to this robust performance in 2024, including the opening new hotels and resorts, a growing calendar of international events, increased connectivity to Ras Al Khaimah International Airport, best-in-class marketing campaigns and over 2,200 international activities and market engagements across 70 cities.

Ras Al Khaimah's key achievements in 2024 include:



- **Record-breaking visitor numbers:** 1.28 million overnight arrivals, marking 12% growth of tourism revenues and 15% rise in MICE visitors.
- **Global recognition for sustainability:** RAKTDA's sustainability programme was named the '*Middle East's Most Sustainable Project*' at the Forbes Middle East 2024 Sustainability Leaders' Summit. This recognition underscores its status as the region's first destination to earn the EarthCheck Sustainable Destinations Silver Certification and its leadership in sustainable tourism through initiatives like Responsible RAK, its own certification programme for hotels and tourism business.
- **Enhanced connectivity:** Boosted accessibility to the Emirate with the introduction of new direct flights from key cities in Poland, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Romania, Czech Republic, Russia, Saudi Arabia and India, enhancing connectivity through Ras Al Khaimah International Airport.
- **Expanded hospitality offerings:** The opening of Sofitel Al Hamra Beach Resort and Anantara Mina Al Arab Resort introduced new luxury experiences, including the Emirate's first overwater villas.
- **Exceptional events:** From the third HIGHLANDER Adventure hiking challenge and Ras Al Khaimah Golf Championship to the Arab Aviation Summit and Global Citizen Forum held for four consecutive years, Ras Al Khaimah continues to host world-class events. Highlights also include the 16th Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon, the HUAWEI AppGallery Gamers Cup, and the launch of the Seven Wonders experiential concert series.
- **Record-breaking New Year's Eve celebrations:** The emirate ushered in 2025 with a spectacular fireworks and drone display, setting two new GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ titles: 'Largest aerial display of a tree formed by multi-rotor drones' and 'Largest aerial image of a seashell formed by drone'.
- **Workplace excellence:** For the fourth consecutive year, RAKTDA was certified as a Great Place to Work®, recognised in multiple categories: 'Best Workplaces in the Middle East', 'Best Workplaces in Hospitality™ in the GCC', and 'Best Workplaces for Women in the GCC'.
- **Empowering local talent:** RAKTDA's inaugural Emirati Hospitality Programme, in partnership with Career Lab and the Swiss University of Les Roches, graduated 18 Emirati youth, equipping them for leadership roles in the tourism sector, supporting nationalization efforts in the hospitality industry.

Driving growth in key markets

Ras Al Khaimah continues to diversify and expand its reach in both established and emerging markets, with the CIS, GCC, Europe, India and China remaining core to its strategy. In 2024, the Emirate achieved new milestones in market engagement, further solidifying its position as a global tourism destination.



New direct flights introduced enhanced connectivity to Ras Al Khaimah International Airport from nine cities including Moscow, Russia; Bucharest, Romania; Tashkent, Uzbekistan; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Prague, Czech Republic; Warsaw and Katowice, Poland; Almaty, Kazakhstan; and Hyderabad, India.

China has also emerged as a significant growth market. In 2024, RAKTDA boosted visibility in China through strategic initiatives including collaborations with Huawei Group and prominent Chinese travel platform Trip.com plus establishing a robust presence on Chinese social media platforms such as WeChat, Red, and Douyin. These efforts have earned RAKTDA notable recognitions, including *Best Global Partner* and *Outstanding Strategic Partner of the Year* by Trip.com, as well as the title of *Fastest-Growing Tourism Destination* from Huawei Petal Ads, reinforcing Ras Al Khaimah's position as a rising destination for Chinese travelers.

Expanding hospitality portfolio

Ras Al Khaimah's flourishing tourism sector is underpinned by its strategic focus on building a diverse hospitality portfolio with a well-balanced mix of internationally branded luxury hotels and family-friendly resorts. In 2024, the Emirate welcomed two new luxury properties, further establishing its reputation as a destination of choice. Anantara Mina Al Arab Resort, featuring the Emirate's first overwater villas, and the Sofitel Al Hamra Beach Resort opened their doors, adding to Ras Al Khaimah's world-class hospitality portfolio.

Additionally, existing properties underwent transformative enhancements. Rixos Al Mairid Ras Al Khaimah Resort and Pullman Marjan Island were rebranded and upgraded to meet the highest standards of hospitality, offering visitors elevated experiences.

A world-class destination for events

In 2024, Ras Al Khaimah experienced a remarkable 15% year-over-year growth in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) visitor numbers, reinforcing its status as a premier MICE destination. This success is attributed to several strategic initiatives by RAKTDA, including over 80 international MICE activities and market engagements across 20 markets. Key initiatives include a comprehensive MICE and Wedding incentive programs, the launch of an online training platform for MICE agents and Wedding Planners, and the introduction of the MICE playbook. The free visa initiative has also facilitated easier access for Indian MICE groups and wedding celebrations. Additionally, strategic partnerships with international Professional Congress Organizers (PCOs), Incentive Houses, Associations, Wedding Planners, and corporate travel agencies have been instrumental in this achievement.



Events tourism was another key pillar of Ras Al Khaimah's 2024 success. The Emirate hosted several internationally acclaimed events such as the third HIGHLANDER long-distance hiking challenge, the 16th Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon, the third Ras Al Khaimah Golf Championship, the fourth Global Citizen Forum and Arab Aviation Summit, the HUAWEI AppGallery Gamers Cup, and the launch event of the Seven Wonders experiential concert series, headlined by world-renowned DJ Armin Van Buuren. Building on this success, 2025 will see the Seven Wonders concert series continue, featuring seven international acts who will perform across seven iconic Ras Al Khaimah destinations over seven weeks. The immersive audio and visual platform will provide an experience unlike any other, further cementing Ras Al Khaimah status as a global events destination.

The year concluded with a spectacular New Year's Eve celebration, earning two GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ titles for its breathtaking fireworks and drone display: 'Largest aerial display of a tree formed by multi-rotor drones' and 'Largest aerial image of a seashell formed by drone'.

Building a sustainable future

In 2024, RAKTDA's initiatives earned the title of 'Middle East's Most Sustainable Project' at the Forbes Middle East Sustainability Leaders' Summit, highlighting the destination's achievement of the Middle East's first Silver Certification by EarthCheck and the Authority's pioneering efforts in responsible tourism.

Sustainability efforts extend to cultural preservation, with RAKTDA building its Cultural and Heritage Vision in 2024 – a road map that will preserve 20 of the Emirate's 80+ historical and archaeological sites that date back as far as the Bronze Age. By developing these sites as key attractions to provide more authentic experiences for visitors and empowering Emiratis to actively participate in tourism, Ras Al Khaimah will ensure its unique heritage is preserved for future generations.

Another focus area was accessible tourism with RAKTDA setting sights on ensuring Ras Al Khaimah becomes a truly accessible destination. The Authority partnered with Sage Inclusion, a global accessible travel expert, to undertake the largest accessibility assessment of its kind in the Middle East. A comprehensive 12-week audit took place end of 2024, covering over 40 hotels, 10 attractions, Ras Al Khaimah International Airport, and ground transportation, evaluating accessibility across various disability categories including mobility, vision, hearing, cognitive and allergy. The initiative aims to elevate Ras Al Khaimah as a flagship destination for accessible tourism, ensuring that every visitor can fully enjoy and explore the emirate.

Live, work, thrive: a holistic destination



Beyond attracting visitors, Ras Al Khaimah is committed to becoming an exceptional place to live and thrive. The Emirate's balanced approach to sustainable tourism ensures that growth is achieved without compromising its unique culture.

This vision has already garnered global recognition, with Ras Al Khaimah ranked among the top ten cities for expats in the InterNations City Ranking 2024. It was also named the world's best city for expats to get started abroad, second for working overseas, and fifth for ease of settling in. RAKTDA was also certified as a Great Place to Work® for the fourth consecutive year, with accolades in the categories of Best Workplaces in the Middle East, Best Workplaces in Hospitality™ in the GCC, and Best Workplaces for Women in the GCC. The success of its inaugural Emirati Hospitality Programme, in partnership with Career Lab and Les Roches University, which graduated 18 local talents, underscores the Emirate's dedication to nurturing future leaders in tourism.

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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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