

Etihad Airways throws down travel gauntlet with 48-hour stopover challenge

Etihad Airways has challenged the millions of travellers who transit through Abu Dhabi, as well as UAE residents, to experience as many once-in-a-lifetime activities as they can throughout the emirate in just two days - the city's many highlights can now be enjoyed through a series of exciting stopover programmes. The '48 Hour Challenge' is part of Etihad Airways' wider stopover campaign promoting Abu Dhabi as a 'holiday within a holiday' for transit travellers and a 'staycation' option for UAE residents wanting a relaxing short break.



Ricky Wilson takes on the Abu Dhabi desert dunes as part of his 48 Hour Challenge

To launch the campaign, Etihad Airways recently challenged Ricky Wilson, singer-songwriter, TV personality and frontman of British indie rock band Kaiser Chiefs, to spend 48 hours exploring the best Abu Dhabi has to offer. The video of his attempt is part of a global online promotional campaign and captures the excitement of the challenge visually to share with consumers on social media and across the airline's communications channels.

What a stopover should be

"For me, a stopover meant sitting in the airport or visiting duty-free, but this is not what a stopover should be," commented the singer. "It should be flying falcons across the desert, kayaking, visiting water parks... imbibing the culture of the place. Abu Dhabi has taught me that stopovers can be as relaxing as they are exhilarating. There is something incredibly refreshing about pushing yourself, getting out of your comfort zone and fully immersing yourself in a new city. I will never stay in the airport again during a stopover."

Peter Baumgartner, Etihad Airways' chief executive officer, said: "The launch of Etihad Airways' comprehensive stopover programme reinforces what we, who live in this wonderful city, have known for so long – that Abu Dhabi is a cosmopolitan, dynamic and thrilling destination packed with opportunities for all visitors, whether they are looking for adventure, culture, or a relaxing beach break."

Ricky Wilson successfully completed the following activities on his Abu Dhabi 48 Hour Challenge:

- A tour in a slingshot
- Racing in a supercar
- Cycling around the Formula 1 track
- Speeding down a waterslide at Yas Waterworld
- Boarding a superyacht
- Buying a suit
- Enjoying tea on the observation deck at Jumeirah at Etihad Towers
- Skiing the desert sands on a snowboard
- Tasting Black Truffle Pizza
- Camel trekking
- Taking a drive on the desert sand dunes
- Learning to belly dance
- Dining in the desert
- Sleeping under the stars
- Teeing off at Saadiyat Beach Golf Club
- Riding the Formula Rossa at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi
- Eating a local delicacy
- Kayaking through the mangroves
- Flying a falcon
- Haggling at the souk
- Visiting the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque
- Enjoying a gold leaf facial
- Partying at Iris Yas Island
- A stay at the Yas Viceroy

The airline will also launch a special competition to promote its stopover programme. From Friday 28 April until the end of 2017, Etihad Airways will be giving away 500 great prizes to members of the public who take up the 48 Hour Challenge and who post their experiences on Instagram using the hashtag #EtihadChallenge.

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