

Interview with Etihad Airways: Passenger-centric upgrades for comfort and sustainability



Etihad Airways new 787-9 Business Class at Dubai Airshow

In November 2023, Etihad, the UAE's national airline, celebrated its 20th anniversary in style with celebratory flypasts, parties and commemorative amenity gifts for passengers. It also lit up one of the world's tallest buildings, Burj Khalifa, to mark the occasion. But for the airline that operates out of the new Terminal A at [Zayed International Airport](#), which opened to coincide with Etihad's anniversary, the key to continued success is to never stop growing. And to do that, it lets passenger feedback guide the way.

"Over the past couple of years, we have actively listened to our guests and continued to significantly invest in the guest experience in all cabins on board," says Turkey Al Hammadi, Head of Product and Hospitality, [Etihad Airways](#).

With that in mind, Etihad has launched new products that not only elevate the traveller experience, but also promote efficiency and environmental sustainability. In Business Class, Etihad offers a range of dining ware and soft furnishings designed in collaboration with international designer [Armani/Casa](#).

"The Business Class experience now includes a memory foam mattress and bedroom slippers, and on flights above nine hours, luxuriously soft loungewear inspired by the traditional Emirati Kandura,"

adds Al Hammadi.



Dining ware and soft furnishings by Armani/Casa



In Economy, meals are served on high quality reusable tableware that is part of a closed-loop recycling system. “At the end of the lifecycle, the products are collected, washed and ground down. The ground product is reused to make replacements, ensuring zero waste,” he explains. The company has also improved Economy comfort by introducing larger pillows in a soft fabric cover, and plush fleece blankets made from recycled plastic bottles. Plus, its newest 787 Dreamliner aircraft feature a stylish new cabin interior with increased privacy.

Earlier this year, Etihad introduced new amenity kits for passengers in all cabins, in collaboration with Giorgio Armani and ESPA in its Premium cabins, and Beekman in Economy. The kits offer a range of comfort items, skincare products and inflight essentials. Giorgio Armani loungewear and slippers are provided as gifts in First Class, and an Etihad loungewear set complete with slippers are given on longer flights in Business. And with Etihad, the kids are alright, too. The airline has collaborated with Warner Bros World™ Abu Dhabi to delight youngsters with Looney Tunes-themed blankets, goody bags, activity kits, backpacks and board games, depending on age.

To keep passengers of all ages entertained, Etihad offers its signature entertainment system, E-Box, which features an extensive collection of programming in multiple languages. Besides movies and TV shows, passengers can enjoy live sporting events and news updates. Additionally, Etihad offers access to podcasts, audio channels and children’s programming.

“E-Box is complemented by our Wi-Fly service, giving all Etihad Guest Members, even those who have just joined, free Chat packages to keep in touch through popular social networking and messaging sites,” says Al Hammadi.

But Etihad cares just as much about its passengers’ comfort and convenience in flight as it does in the airport. The airline opened new Business and First Class lounges at Zayed International Airport. Spanning three floors, the expertly designed lounges offer warm hospitality.



Etihad's new 787-9 Business Class cabin at Dubai Airshow

The First Class lounge, located on the top floor, features an elevated dining experience with international cuisine and a curated beverage list, as well as afternoon tea, chocolates, pastries and Arabian delicacies. The lounge also includes luxury recliners in its semi-private cocoons, or in its private suites which also feature ensuite showers and on-call service. In its Business Class lounge, travellers can enjoy Emirati, Middle Eastern and international cuisine in an all-day restaurant, or dine at multiple buffets and snack bars. Here, travellers are invited to indulge in the lounge's relaxation rooms, which feature daybeds and Armani/Casa bedding.

To ensure families have a space to unwind, Etihad offers a multi-sensory family room that "promises to keep even our youngest travellers entertained," says Al Hammadi. "Both the young, and young-at-heart, will love the Games Room, featuring table football, air hockey and digital games."

Etihad currently flies 89 aircraft, including the 787 Dreamliner, 777 and A380, A350 and A320, to approximately 77 destinations, 15 of which were announced in the last year.