QATAR AIRWAYS CELEBRATES A SUCCESSFUL 2016

News / Airlines

Qatar Airways is celebrating a successful year of continued growth achieved in 2016 through strategic network, fleet and partnership expansions.

At a time when a number of airlines are downsizing, Qatar Airways continued to see strong growth and inaugurated 14 new destinations across its global network and welcomed 19 new aircraft to its fleet, taking the count to 192, as well as placing a record aircraft order to power future growth. Qatar Airways has made a number of strategic investments in other airlines and airline groups, while investing heavily in the continued evolution of its own passenger experience. Lauded for its success, Qatar Airways received a number of awards throughout the year, confirming it as one of the world's leading carriers for business and leisure travel. Fans or followers can enjoy a video created by the airline, highlighting it's most special moments here.

The airline also celebrated its strong financial performance, having finished the 2016 fiscal year with an operating profit of more than QAR 3 billion – the best yet for the Qatar Airways Group.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency, Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "I am extremely proud of the success that Qatar Airways has achieved together with our employees and partners

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in 2016. I'd like to extend my sincere gratitude to all staff for their discipline and tireless pursuit for excellence. I'd also like to extend my gratitude to our loyal passengers for their continued support. Our passengers will see a continuation of our commitment to providing the very best travel experiences in the year to come. This past year has truly been an exceptional year and, and as we turn to 2017 to celebrate Qatar Airways 20th Anniversary, I look forward to celebrating future successes with our employees, partners and passengers in the years to come as we go places together."

Route Expansion

Qatar Airways is one of the fastest growing airlines in aviation history, with the airline now serving over 150 destinations following the inauguration of 14 new destinations in 2016 alone. Providing even more choice for travellers, the airline introduced exciting destinations such as Adelaide (Australia), Atlanta (USA), Birmingham (UK), Boston (USA), Helsinki (Finland), Los Angeles (USA), Marrakech (Morocco), Pisa (Italy), Ras Al Khaimah (UAE), Sydney (Australia), Windhoek (Namibia), Yerevan (Armenia), Krabi (Thailand) and Mahe (Seychelles).

Fleet Expansion

Qatar Airways took delivery of 19 new aircraft in 2016, creating a total fleet of 192 aircraft. Having been the global launch customer of the A350, the most technologically advanced aircraft in the world, Qatar Airways now operates a fleet of 13 A350s, serving destinations as diverse as Boston, London and Adelaide.

Qatar Airways continued to deliver on its fleet expansion and renewal strategy, having placed a record US$11.7 billion order for 30 B787-9 Dreamliners and 10 777-300ERs, as well as signing a Letter of Intent for up to 60 737 Max 8s valued at US$6.9 billion. The landmark order, combined with previous orders results in a total of 350 Airbus and Boeing aircraft to be delivered to the airline over the coming years valued at more than US$90 billion. Qatar Airways enjoys one of the youngest fleets in the world, averaging just five years, and the combination of its short and long haul mixed fleet provides the airline with the operational agility to maximize efficiency and profit by putting the right aircraft on the right route – every time.

Qatar Airways' private jet arm, Qatar Executive, was the global launch customer for the Gulfstream G650ER, and placed an order for a further three G650ERs – the fastest and longest range private jet aircraft in the world – at the Farnborough Airshow in July. The latest order will make Qatar Executive the largest dedicated G650 operator globally.

Strategic Partnerships

Strategic partnerships form an important part of Qatar Airways' success, as the airline invests in airlines that have clear marketplace advantages or opportunities. Qatar Airways raised its stake in British Airways' parent company International Airlines Group (IAG) to 20 per cent, signed an agreement to acquire up to 10 per cent of LATAM Airlines Group, South America's largest consolidated carrier, and made significant progress towards the acquisition of a 49 per cent stake in Italian airline, Meridiana, in early 2017. The airline also formed a new a Joint Business Agreement with British Airways and celebrated its one-year anniversary of its joint business agreement with Royal Air Maroc. New code-share relationships with oneworld members Finnair and Sri Lankan were signed, along with oneworld affiliate member Comair, and Vueling and Air Botswana.

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Tourism

Qatar Airways continued its commitment to build its home, Doha, into a world-class destination for sport, entertainment and the arts, and marketing Doha as an excellent stopover destination to its millions of passengers. The airline hosted the first ever Qatar Airways Cup, welcoming FC Barcelona and Saudi's Al Ahli for a groundbreaking Match of Champions, while sponsoring other world-class events in tennis, squash and cycling. As title sponsor for the seventh year, the annual Qatar International Food Festival saw a record number of visitors and attendees to the world-stage event. Qatar Airways also lead the initiative to introduce a new transit visa scheme, opening up unprecedented access for travellers and new opportunity for the country's booming tourism industry.

Community

Qatar Airways' employees celebrated the launch of The Oryx International School; a primary educational institution dedicated to the children of the Qatar Airways Group's staff, as part of its continued investment in being a leading global employer. Corporate Social Responsibly remained an important part of Qatar Airways' values with its long standing partnership with Orbis, the Flying Eye Hospital, the Educate a Child programme and its partnership with the Sheikh Thani Bin Abdullah Foundation for Humanitarian Services (RAF) continuing through 2016. Underprivileged children in communities the airline serves were a focus for Qatar Airways, with Our Father's Kitchen feeding more than 200 children each day in Addis Ababa, along with the Al-Amal School in Djibouti. The airline heavily supported the blood donation campaign in Doha, in support of Hamad Medical Corporation Blood Bank – providing a framework for its staff to give back to the community.

Qatar Airways remains a valued member of IATA's Environment Committee, with its leadership in environmental responsibility and sustainability initiatives. This partnership saw the airline achieve the foundation level of IATA's Environmental Assessment certification scheme, delivered through optimising flight and ground handling operations. Qatar Airways remains on track to achieving full industry certification by the end of 2017.

Awards

Qatar Airways enjoyed a particularly illustrious year of recognition, joining the elite list of the most recognised brands in the world. The airline's passengers continually voted the airline's Business Class as being the best in the world, with the premium cabin acknowledged as Skytrax's World's Best Business Class and Best Business Class from the Business Traveller Awards. Business Traveller USA and Travel Weekly announced Qatar Airways Airline with the Best Business Class Service in the World and Best Airline in the Middle East respectively. Qatar Airways Al Mourjan Business Lounge was named Skytrax's Best Business Class Lounge while the airline's exclusive Al Safwa First Lounge was awarded the Seven Star First Class Lounge Award by the Seven Stars Luxury Hospitality and Lifestyle Awards – the first airline lounge in the world to ever receive the prestigious Seal of Excellence.

The Future

Qatar Airways has its eyes firmly set on the future, with the airline already announcing 14 new destinations for 2017-18; adding Canberra (Australia); Dublin (Ireland); Las Vegas (USA); Rio de Janeiro (Brazil); and Santiago (Chile) to name a few. In its pursuit for excellence, the airline is also preparing to launch a revolutionary Business Class seat in the first quarter of 2017 – building on

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what is already one of the most awarded premium cabins in the industry.

Prosperity, vision, resilience and operational excellence is a balanced yet successful recipe the airline confirms it will carry with it into 2017.

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