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HOW TOURISM IS TRANSFORMING THE UAE

Over the years, the UAE has become a global travel destination, renowned for its luxury and exceptional experiences. Tourism has become more than just an economic driver; it has also had a significant impact on the nation's identity.

The numbers underscore this progress: the UAE leads the region in tourism and ranks 18th in the world in the World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Development Index. This ranking reflects steady progress, with the index improving by 4.4% between 2019 and 2024. The steady influx of international visitors strengthens our position as a hub for global connectivity and cultural exchange.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi are key players in the UAE's growing tourism sector, achieving impressive results. In 2023, tourism contributed AED 220 billion to the country's GDP, representing 11.7% of the total. This figure is expected to increase to AED 236 billion in 2024.

The sector is projected to contribute AED 275.2 billion by 2034, driven by the UAE's exceptional infrastructure, world-class attractions and commitment to enhancing the visitor experience. These achievements reflect the success of the UAE's efforts to build a sustainable and forward-looking tourism industry, supported by modern infrastructure, diverse attractions and the National Tourism Strategy 2031. The ripple effect of this growth extends beyond tourism. Abu Dhabi Zayed International Airport recorded a 33.8% increase in global travellers in the first half of 2024, serving over 13.7 million passengers.

Meanwhile, Dubai welcomed 9.31 million foreign tourists who stayed overnight. This growing influx of travelers has created significant opportunities for the real estate sector, including hotels, short-term rentals and housing. As Dubai and Abu Dhabi

continue to expand their offerings, they are not only stimulating the economy but also creating long-term benefits for residents, visitors and businesses. Their success is a testament to the UAE's vision for growing tourism.

The UAE's booming tourism industry is creating waves of growth across multiple sectors, with real estate being one of the biggest impacts. The connection between tourism and real estate is clearly visible in the country's evolving skyline, filled with luxury hotels, short-term rental properties and mixed-use developments. These are not just places to stay – they are captivating spaces that reflect the UAE's luxurious lifestyle and cultural richness.

Branded residences are a prime example of how tourism is transforming the real estate market. With a projected global growth of 86% by 2031 and a 137% growth in Dubai alone by 2029, the growth trend for branded residences is unmistakable. Created through partnerships between global hotel brands and developers, these luxury homes offer a combination of world-class hospitality and premium living.

With amenities such as concierge services, private pools and state-of-the-art fitness centers, these residences provide a sophisticated lifestyle. Located close to iconic landmarks, they cater to the growing demand for exclusivity and convenience, serving to further the UAE's status as a leading global destination. This synergy between tourism and real estate also opens up exciting opportunities for investors.

From luxury hotels to holiday homes and mixed-use developments, the UAE offers attractive prospects for high returns. By integrating tourism into urban planning, these investments are designed to be not only profitable but also sustainable.

Looking ahead, the UAE's drive to diversify its economy and enhance its global standing will only deepen the connection between tourism and real estate. Major events and initiatives, from cultural festivals to groundbreaking infrastructure projects, will continue to attract visitors from around the world, further cementing the UAE's status as a global tourism hub.

Tourism has been and will continue to be at the forefront of the UAE's growth story. It's not just about numbers or development; it's about the transformative power of creating experiences that inspire, unite and uplift.