

Press release
For immediate release

German cities including Berlin ready to welcome GCC visitors in 2021



- *Germany will benefit from pent-up demand from high-spending GCC nationals once travel restrictions have been lifted*
- *Germany and Berlin in particular are popular destinations for GCC residents due to unique culture, craftsmanship, nature and culinary experiences*
- *Having vaccinated over 70% of the country's population, the UAE, plus Saudi Arabia top the list of target inbound nations*

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 17 May 2021: The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is participating at [Arabian Travel Market \(ATM\)](#) this week, which is taking place at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), the first international travel trade event to take place in-person since the outbreak.

The GNTB wanted to raise awareness of what Germany and in particular Berlin, has to offer city, nature and culture enthusiasts living in the GCC countries, by showcasing the

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exciting facets and flair of Germany such as customs, crafts, local food and drink, culture and architecture, and the varied countryside and nature on the doorstep of many German cities.

The German capital Berlin is also looking forward to welcoming visitors from across the GCC to discover a reinvented city that has something new to discover on every corner, space for free spirits and a fascinating mix of heritage and innovation.

Despite a difficult 12-months, this year has realised many landmark projects in the city, such as the opening of the reconstructed city palace, the prestigious Humboldt Forum, and the reopening of Berlin's leading art addresses, the Neue Nationalgalerie at the Kulturforum, underlining the intriguing nature of this ever-changing city.

The U5 metro line also has a new section connecting Berlin's many cultural attractions, and the new international Berlin airport (BER) is also now open, a positive signal for improved global connections at a difficult time for the tourism and congress industry.

Under the Berlin Health Excellence Initiative, launched by visitBerlin in early 2020, the city will also open its doors to medical tourists from the Middle East who visit Berlin in search of 'Made in Berlin' medical expertise and cutting-edge medical services that the city is renowned for.

With a recent YouGov survey revealing that nearly half of United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia residents are planning to make an international trip in 2021, the GNTB is eager to increase the GCC's share of the 89.9 million overnight stays by foreign visitors it welcomed in 2019.

Speaking at the press conference at Arabian Travel Market in Dubai, said Yamina Sofu, Director Sales & Marketing, German National Tourist Office Gulf Countries (GNTO),

"With the success of the national vaccination programmes in the GCC countries, particularly in the UAE where more than 11.5 million doses have been administered so far (over 70% of the UAE population have received vaccines and 40% are fully vaccinated), we remain optimistic that the pre-crisis level of incoming travel from the UAE to Germany can be regained by end of 2022.

"It gives us immense pleasure to be here, at ATM, to showcase our unique German culture to not only GCC travellers but outbound tourists across the Middle East. We hope to encourage demand for city and nature holidays coupled with sustainable tourism, which draws attention to the many different ways of discovering Destination Germany with its wide range of traditions and attractions," Sofu added.

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Germany is extremely popular with GCC visitors, it recorded 1.6 million overnight stays from the Gulf region in 2019 and has a goal of reaching 3.6 million overnight stays by 2030. Germany has a diverse tourism offering, which is centred around its unique culture, craftsmanship, nature and culinary experiences. German character is encapsulated in many cities, depicting half-timbered architecture one moment to contemporary street art the next, which complements its rich and varied traditions and customs, which in many cases were introduced centuries ago.

There is nothing that speaks louder about its culture than Germany's exceptional food and drink that is regional yet still cosmopolitan. Sustainability is often admired by Gulf visitors to Germany as well as the natural beauty of the countryside can be found on the doorstep of many German cities, offering fresh air, open spaces and spectacular views.

Commenting on Berlin's readiness for the return of inbound tourism, Burkhard Kieker, CEO, visitBerlin, said: "Like no other city, Berlin is poised for yet another new start in 2021 – off into the future – when we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic. Whatever the changes to our city, Berlin always retains an irresistible fascination and a multitude of possibilities – from big-city thrills to unwinding, from adventures to relaxation, and from inspiring culinary adventures to traditional food and drink.

"As a vibrant cosmopolitan city, you can explore living history, internationally renowned museums, unique galleries, UNESCO sites and major historical buildings. Still, there is also space for waterside activities and beautiful countryside to discover around the city," added Ralf Ostendorf, Director Market Management and Market & Media Relations Manager Asia, Australia, Middle East, visitBerlin.

ATM 2021 in-person event continues on 18th & 19th May at DWTC. It plays an integral role in Arabian Travel Week, which features exhibitions, conferences, breakfast briefings, awards, product launches and networking events. A virtual version of ATM will run a week later to complement and reach a wider audience than ever before.

To visit Germany at ATM 2021, go to stand EU2350.

Photo caption:

From left to right:

Burkhard Kieker, CEO, visitBerlin.

Yamina Sofu, Director Sales & Marketing, German National Tourist Office Gulf Countries (GNTO).

Ralf Ostendorf, Director Market Management and Market & Media Relations
Manager Asia, Australia & Middle East, visitBerlin

To register for ATM 2021, go to <https://www.wtm.com/atm/en-gb/enquire.html>

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Notes to editors:

About the GNTB

The German National Tourist Board (GNTB) is Germany's national tourism organisation. It works on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) to represent Germany as a tourist destination and is funded by the Ministry in accordance with a decision taken by the German Bundestag. Working closely with the German travel industry and private-sector partners and trade associations, the GNTB develops strategies and marketing campaigns to promote Germany's positive image abroad as a tourist destination and to encourage tourists to visit the country.

The GNTB has a three-pronged recovery strategy for overcoming the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Raising awareness of the Destination Germany brand and enhancing the brand profile
- Supporting the travel industry, which is dominated by small and medium-sized businesses, through relationship management and the sharing of knowledge
- Developing evidence-based action plans on the basis of targeted market research and ongoing analysis of the impact of coronavirus.

During this crisis, the GNTB is using countercyclical marketing to maintain dialogue with customers, it is reflecting changing preferences in its communications, and it is showing empathy and providing inspiration.

Focus on digitalisation and sustainability

The GNTB promotes forward-looking and sustainable tourism in line with the objectives of the German government. The focus here is on digitalisation and sustainability. The GNTB is a pioneer when it comes to using immersive technologies (virtual, augmented and mixed reality), voice assistants and other conversational interfaces, and artificial intelligence applications such as chatbots. To ensure that tourism offerings are visible on AI-based marketing platforms, the GNTB coordinates the German tourism industry's open-data project, which aims to develop a tourism knowledge graph.

Sustainability has been a core overarching topic for more than a decade and we engage with it as a strategic issue across all areas of the organisation. Our organisation follows a three-pillar strategy that combines the sharing of knowledge with external partners and a supporting communications strategy with our internal sustainability initiative. The GNTB promotes responsible tourism, a key growth area, by

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showcasing Germany as a sustainable and inclusive destination in the international travel market. This is particularly important as the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the global shift in travellers' values towards greater social and environmental responsibility.

The GNTB has 27 foreign agencies that cover more than 40 markets around the world. Its head office in Frankfurt, Germany, is home to strategic departments such as Business Intelligence, Business Development and Brand Communications for Destination Germany.

About visitBerlin

"Inspiring the world for Berlin." With this mission, Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH promotes Berlin's destination management as well as the city's tourism and congress marketing. Under the *visitBerlin* brand, the company is a partner, actor, source of creative ideas, and networker. Its remit is focused on sustainable product development and marketing city-compatible tourism services in all twelve Berlin boroughs with the aim of maintaining the life quality of local residents and harmoniously increasing experience value for visitors. As a tour operator, *visitBerlin* also issues the *Berlin WelcomeCard*, the city's official tourist ticket. The company also operates the Berlin Tourist Info Centres. On visitBerlin.de, Berlin's official tourism website, visitors can find all the information they need on every aspect of their trip to the city. Find out more about *visitBerlin* on about.visitBerlin.de

About Arabian Travel Market (ATM)

[Arabian Travel Market \(ATM\)](http://www.wtm.com/atm/en-gb.html), now on its 28th year, continues to be the focal point for the Middle East's resilient and ever-changing travel and tourism landscape and prides itself on being the hub of all travel and tourism ideas, providing a platform to discuss insights on the ever-changing industry, share innovations and unlock endless business opportunities. Arabian Travel Market is part of Arabian Travel Week. www.wtm.com/atm/en-gb.html #IdeasArriveHere

In-person event: Sunday 16 to Wednesday 19 May 2021, Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai

Virtual event: Monday 24 to Wednesday 26 May 2021

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