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DUBLIN FLIGHTS TO START IN JULY

Etihad Airways will launch its flights from Abu Dhabi to the Irish capital Dublin, on 2 July, a month ahead of schedule.

Dublin will be the airline's third new route in 2007, and by bringing the launch date forward from August will provide Etihad's customers with significantly increased summer holiday travel options.

Etihad will operate four flights-per-week between the UAE and Ireland, which will conveniently connect at Abu Dhabi with onward services to many of Etihad's growing network of destinations.

James Hogan, Etihad Airways' chief executive, said: "Since announcing that Etihad will operate flights between Abu Dhabi and Dublin demand has grown significantly, and by launching at the beginning of July we will be able to cater for the considerable summer traffic and establish Etihad in this new market."

The new flights are expected to increase trade between the UAE and Ireland which has risen significantly in recent years. This was underlined by an Irish trade visit in January 2007 led by Prime Minister Bertie Ahern.

Etihad will operate a three cabin Airbus A330-200 between Abu Dhabi and Dublin configured to carry 200 passengers, with 10 in diamond zone (first class), 26 in pearl zone (business) and 164 in coral zone (economy).

Starting on 2 July, Etihad flight EY045 will operate every Monday and Friday, departing Abu Dhabi at 2.05am and arriving at Dublin at 7.35am. The return flight EY042 departs from Dublin on the same day at 10.15am, arriving in Abu Dhabi at 8.35pm.

The second flight, EY041 will operate every Tuesday and Saturday, departing from Abu Dhabi at 1.55pm and arriving in Dublin at 7.25pm. The return flight, EY048, departs from Dublin at 9.10pm, arriving in Abu Dhabi at 7.30am the following day. All times are local.

Mr Hogan added: "One of the most popular aspects of the new service is that our customers will have the choice of morning or evening flights. This will be particularly important for passengers flying eastwards from Abu Dhabi to destinations like Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur or Sydney."