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Muslim Travel Shopping Index (MTSI 2015)

Dubai ranked number one in the 2015 MasterCard-CrescentRating Muslim Travel Shopping Index

- MasterCard and CrescentRating release new report highlighting shopping habits of Muslim travellers
- Dubai tops the MTSI 2015 ranking with overall score of 79.5 out of 100
- Sharjah ranked fifth highest MTSI destination in the Arab World
- Cities in the Arab World perform strongly with Manama, Doha, and Riyadh ranking highly in index
- Total expenditure of Muslim travellers visiting 40 cities amounted to US\$36 billion in 2014, of which 26 per cent was spent on shopping
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Dubai – September 29th, 2015: Dubai has been ranked the number one destination in the world for Muslims to travel to for shopping purposes, according to a new report released by MasterCard and CrescentRating ahead of the upcoming Global Islamic Summit to be held in Dubai.

The Muslim Travel Shopping Index 2015 (MTSI 2015) was released during MasterCard's Innovation Forum in Kuala Lumpur. It analyses the trends and preferences of the Muslim traveller shopping market based on the performance of 40 main international shopping destinations against a number of set criteria. Compiled by MasterCard and CrescentRating, the publication of the inaugural MTSI2015 Index ranked Dubai the leading destination with a weighted score of 79.5 out of 100.

Dubai tops the list of shopping destinations for Muslims outright, being recognised as the first-placed Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) MTSI 2015 destination as well as heading the list of non-OIC destinations. The city's next closest competitor is Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, with a score of 73.3, emphasising just how successfully Dubai has been able to market itself as a leading shopping destination. Sharjah ranked fifth highest MTSI destination in the Arab World, coming in 12th overall with a competitive score of 55.3.

Other cities from within the Arab World performed strongly on the MTSI 2015. Manama in Bahrain was the second highest ranked destination in the Arab World according MTSI Index for destinations within the OIC, coming in at seventh overall with a score of 59.6. Doha in Qatar was close behind with an overall ranking of eighth, and a score of 59.5. Riyadh in Saudi Arabia was the fourth highest ranked destination in the MTSI 2015 OIC list for the region, with an overall ranking of ninth and a weighted score of 59.3.

Commenting on the release of MTSI 2015, Raghu Malhotra, Division President, Middle East and North Africa, MasterCard said, “With 108 million Muslim travellers representing 10 per cent of the entire travel economy in 2014, and forecasted to grow even further to 150 million visitors by 2020, it is evident this segment of the travel market represents a huge opportunity for both public and private sector organisations. We are very pleased to publish this Index on the travel and shopping patterns of Muslim communities in order for organisations around the world to more effectively target and capture share of this lucrative travel sector.”

He added: “Earlier this year, Dubai was ranked amongst the top five most popular destination cities in the world in MasterCard’s 2015 Global Destination Cities Index and has consistently advanced its position since the annual index first launched in 2012. This further underlines the city’s dynamism and enduring positive reputation amongst international travellers.”

Fazal Bahardeen, CEO of CrescentRating & HalalTrip said: “The MTSI is a fascinating insight into the shopping habits of Muslim consumers and will prove to be an invaluable tool to the entire sector. The research looks at two of the most important expenditure components of Muslim travellers which is shopping and dining. It is a perfect complement to the GMTI2015 which we launched earlier this year and allows us to provide a complete picture of how Muslims spend their money when travelling.”

MTSI uses a comprehensive set of metrics to rank destinations including a city’s suitability as a shopping destination, its Muslim-friendly services and facilities, and its ease of travel and family friendliness. Collectively, these factors contribute to the overall score and ranking of each destination.

The report also provides valuable insight into the behaviour and preference of Muslim travel shoppers and diners.

Key findings of the MTSI 2015 report include:

- Total expenditure of Muslim travellers visiting the 40 cities included in the report amounted to US\$36 billion in 2014. Of this total expenditure, US\$9.3 billion (26 per cent) was spent on shopping.
- 56 per cent of respondents shop for souvenirs as typical purchases, while 45 per cent shop for local clothing brands. 40 per cent of respondents also purchase Islamic clothing and accessories, while 38 per cent chose traditional handicrafts to buy.
- Results of the study highlight that 27 per cent of respondents spend between US\$250 – 500 on shopping whilst travelling, while 24 per cent spend between US\$500 – 1,000, and 20 per cent spend over US\$1,000.



- When travelling, 55 per cent of the survey pool still prefers to use cash for purchases. 35 per cent on the other hand, prefer using credit cards for their purchases, while 6 per cent utilise debit cards.
- Singapore and London ranked among the top five destinations for Muslim shopping travellers, revealing that Muslims are becoming more adventurous and welcoming of new shopping and dining experiences.
- Although OIC destinations have an advantage due to possessing Muslim-friendly environments as a default, non-OIC destinations can successfully compete for Muslim travellers by proactively catering to this segment.

The full report is available here <http://mtsi.crescentrating.com>.

The top 10 OIC destinations in the MTSI 2015 are:

| Rank | MTSI Rank | City | Country | Score |
|------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|-------|
| 1 | 1 | Dubai | United Arab Emirates | 79.5 |
| 2 | 2 | Kuala Lumpur | Malaysia | 73.3 |
| 3 | 5 | Istanbul | Turkey | 64.2 |
| 4 | 6 | Antalya | Turkey | 61.2 |
| 5 | 7 | Manama | Bahrain | 59.6 |
| 6 | 8 | Doha | Qatar | 59.5 |
| 7 | 9 | Riyadh | Saudi Arabia | 59.3 |
| 8 | 10 | Bali | Indonesia | 58.2 |
| 9 | 11 | Penang | Malaysia | 56.9 |
| 10 | 12 | Sharjah | United Arab Emirates | 55.3 |

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About Crescentrating Pte Ltd

CrescentRating is the world's leading authority on halal-friendly travel. The company's vision is to lead, innovate and drive this segment through practical and deliverable solutions in what is regarded today as one of the fastest growing segment in the tourism sector. The company uses insight, industry intelligence, lifestyle, behaviour and research on the needs of the Muslim traveller to deliver guidance on all aspects of halal-friendly travel to organisations across the globe.

CrescentRating's services now include rating & accreditation, research & consultancy, workshops & training, ranking & indices, event support/partnerships and content provisioning.

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