

Here to stay(cation)

The hospitality industry's recovery has been driven by local demand. The popularity of domestic travel, or "staycations," has been supported by government-issued health and hygiene mandates. In fact, while international arrivals plummeted, the number of room nights sold to domestic tourists throughout the UAE surged from 2.74 million in 2019 to 5.68 million in 2020—an increase of 107%. Domestic room nights accounted for 78% in 2020 compared with just 19% in 2019. Domestic tourism spending stands at AED 41 billion.

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The domestic market will continue to be a critical driver in 2021 and beyond. Events held in Dubai during the winter—such as the Dubai Shopping Festival and Dubai Food Festival—will likely bolster demand, in line with the nation's newly-launched domestic tourism strategy. Hoteliers will play an important role in developing offerings, including activities, special resident rates and hospitality services.

