

Interview with Saudia's Rossen Dimitrov: Showcasing hospitality



H.E. Eng. Ibrahim bin Abdulrahman Al-Omar, Director General, Saudia Group

Saudi Arabia's goal of becoming a global tourism destination is on an ambitious trajectory, fueled by its commitment to both cultural heritage and modern innovation. Saudi Arabia is turning its attention to global tourism, inviting visitors to experience its landscapes, hospitality and urban marvels. At the heart of this shift is [Saudia](#), the nation's flagship airline, which is transforming its operations to support Saudi Arabia's new role on the world stage.

As Rossen Dimitrov, Chief Guest Experience Officer at Saudia, eloquently put it in a recent interview with *PAX International*, the airline is no longer just the carrier for Saudis but the airline that takes Saudi Arabia to the world and brings the world to Saudi Arabia.

This fundamental shift underscores the airline's renewed mission to be a global ambassador of Saudi culture, connecting international travellers with the burgeoning tourism destination.



Rossen Dimitrov, Chief Guest Experience Officer at Saudia (left) and *PAX International* Publisher Aijaz Khan at Global EXPO 2024

Hospitality reimagined

Dimitrov describes Saudi Arabia's renowned hospitality as one of the cornerstones of the airline's appeal. "What makes Saudia truly unique is that our guests experience authentic Saudi hospitality on board from Saudi nationals themselves," he notes. "Unlike our neighbouring airlines, our cabin crew proudly share their heritage, bringing a warmth and sincerity that only a Saudi can. From the moment guests board, they're welcomed into the heart of Saudi culture, creating a travel experience that's as genuine as it is memorable."

The airline's dining options offer both traditional Saudi and International menus. This includes options such as Saudi coffee, part of the airline's signature welcome service for First and Business Class passengers, presented in traditional Saudi Finjan cups designed in collaboration with the Kingdom's [Culinary Arts Commission](#) to symbolize the different regions of Saudi Arabia. Most passengers, Dimitrov observes, eagerly opt for the Saudi cuisine, reflecting a growing curiosity about the nation's culinary heritage.



Passengers enjoy cuisine inflight

The inflight experience has been elevated further by a nearly complete cabin retrofit, expected to take flight in late 2025. Saudia's updated fleet will feature exceptional Business Class seats in its A321 XLRs, along with advanced connectivity options through a combination of GEO, MEO, and LEO satellites to ensure reliable service.

"No matter where we are, no matter where the aircraft is going, we are always covered," Dimitrov says. This connectivity is vital for catering to the needs of modern travellers who expect seamless access to the internet, whether for leisure or work.

Luxury and innovation on the ground

Beyond the aircraft, Saudia is investing in premium lounges in major airports such as London Heathrow, Paris and Riyadh. These lounges, designed to rival the best in the industry, provide travellers with luxurious spaces to relax, work or experience Saudi hospitality pre-flight. Saudia inaugurated its First and business Class Check-In Lounge at King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah in September. It exudes exclusivity and comfort, setting the tone for a superior travel experience from start to finish.

Saudia's commitment to innovation aligns with Saudi Arabia's broader vision of becoming a digitally advanced nation. Under the leadership of H.E. Eng. Ibrahim bin Abdulrahman Al-Omar, the Director General of Saudia Group, the airline has invested in comprehensive digital upgrades, including its newly launched *Travel Companion*, an enhanced mobile app powered by AI that reflects the country's digital-forward mindset. The app allows travellers to plan and manage their journeys seamlessly while

adapting and learning from individual preferences.



Saudia's hospitality is one of the cornerstones of its appeal

Natural wonders and cultural riches

With each new flight and service upgrade, Saudia is amplifying the call for tourists to explore Saudi Arabia's lesser known but captivating landscapes and cultural gems. Dimitrov is enthusiastic about the diversity of the country's attractions, from scuba diving and snorkelling in the pristine waters of the Red Sea to the lush mountain landscapes in the south.

"With all eyes now turning to Saudi Arabia as a hub of the future, Saudia proudly serves as its ambassador" Dimitrov shares, expressing confidence that the world will soon recognize Saudi Arabia's potential as a financial centre, a hub for digital innovation and a premier travel destination.