

Issued by the Media Centre of Dubai Festivals and Retail Establishment
21 March 2016

Dubai Food Festival 2016 'serves up' best ever showing

- Record numbers attend DFF 2016 events and activities across the city
- Over 70,000 visited Etisalat Beach Canteen, the festival's unique hub, across 17 days
- Thousands of food enthusiasts enjoyed delectable dishes at the first-ever Dubai Restaurant Week

The third edition of Dubai Food Festival, which concluded recently was a resounding success with record numbers of people attending the various events and activities and enjoying Dubai's diverse culinary offerings during the 17-day citywide celebrations.



The festival attracted tens of thousands more food lovers this year, who engaged in the festival across 10 key activations and 750 participating restaurants and outlets, making it the largest and most diverse event of its type in the region.



DFF 2016 organisers, theDubai Festivals and Retail Establishment (DFRE), an agency of the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM),said they were particularly encouraged by the overwhelming response received from local restaurants and hotels, who joined in and offered mouth-wateringexperiences to foodies and families.



The festival further consolidated Dubai’s position as the regional gastronomy capital, an achievement that was largely built around a series of world class attractions and events such as the Etisalat Beach Canteen, Dubai Restaurant Week, ‘Dine With the Stars’ and the array of celebrity chefs, who participated in masterclasses presented by Al Islamiacross the calendar of events for the festival.



Commenting on the conclusion of DFF 2016, **H.E Laila Mohammed Suhail, Chief Executive Officer, DFRE**, said: “Dubai Food Festival 2016 was a success for both Dubai and the city’s bustling gastronomy scene, and is a real reflection of the emirate’s emergence as a vibrant and unique culinary capital. With DFF being a part of DFRE’s strategy to leverage the multi-faceted festivals and retail sector to support Dubai’s Tourism Vision 2020, we have also been fortunate to receive the wholehearted support of our partners in the private sector to help DFF 2016 become a platform to showcase and demonstrate our rapidly expanding food and restaurant sector, and to share Emirati culture, cuisine and hospitality with visitors from all over the world.

Debra Greenwood, Director of Dubai Food Festival, said: “Dubai Food Festival 2016 was in itself a



wonderful citywide restaurant that brought together food enthusiasts, residents and visitors alike to draw on the diversity, creativity and multicultural nature of Dubai’s culinary offerings. Anyone who was in Dubai during DFF 2016 had the opportunity to experience the festivities in one form or the other - be it through world class events, celebrity chef engagements, exceptional dishes created by restaurants or rewarding dining promotions. Most importantly, DFF 2016 satisfied the cravings of foodies, as they were able to ‘Celebrate Taste’ in the most exciting way”.

Etisalat Beach Canteen



The central hub of Dubai Food Festival 2016, the Etisalat Beach Canteen attracted 72,000 people with its success being made possible due to the support extended by sponsors Etisalat and Häagen-Dazs. The success of the Etisalat Beach Canteen also shows that DFRE's resolve to enrich the lives of people with such a beach dining concept has paid off, as it created a prominent platform that encourages, supports and showcases home-grown food vendors, promotes healthy living, local artisans, provides a learning experience for food enthusiasts, and supports emerging talent in other spheres like fashion and entertainment with the ultimate aim of creating a friendly family destination.

Fares Hamad Fares, Vice President of Corporate Communications at Etisalat said: "The Etisalat Beach Canteen concluded successfully and we are happy to have partnered the event, bringing a range of exciting activities for families and children in the UAE. It ties in with our commitment to focus on family entertainment events that align with the country's efforts to strengthen its appeal as a cultural and recreational destination, both locally and globally. It also helps bolster the UAE's position as a leading tourism destination for visitors from around the world."

Strong social media engagement



DFRE has always leveraged digital communications and social media platforms to raise the profile of its festivals and with DFF 2016 it was no different - the various online and social media tools engaged nearly four and a half million visitors alone during DFF 2016 this year.

One online activation that became a big hit was the 'Hidden Gems' campaign, which allowed the public to vote for their favourite unsung heroes of the local restaurant scene that are often located off the beaten track. 20 such restaurants were unearthed after being nominated in the online voting phase with the public also getting the chance to experience the food at these chosen 'Hidden Gems' through tours that were organised by Gulf Photo Plus and Frying Pan Adventures. The response was overwhelming with all the tours being fully booked.

Thousands of food lovers enjoy incredible offers at first ever Dubai Restaurant Week



A number of unique experiences encouraged festival goers to try out tantalising treats including the first ever **Dubai Restaurant Week** featuring 30 of the city's best fine dining restaurants that offered a three-course set menu at the incredible price of AED189 per person. This inaugural event celebrated the high-end dining scene in Dubai with thousands of people booking tables at the top spots.

Hundreds of people also attended the series of celebrity masterclasses and 'Local Greats' masterclasses with international and local chefs presented by Al Islami at Dubai's School of Culinary and Finishing Arts (SCAFA), as well as masterclasses run by leading restaurants. The celebrity masterclasses were all sold out.

The Dubai Chef's Table, an invitation only glass-fronted air conditioned restaurant-style room located at the top of a high structure along Sheikh Zayed Road, introduced VIP guests consisting of dignitaries, media personnel and bloggers to the major highlights of DFF 2016 by giving them a rare opportunity to enjoy an exclusive dining set up created by local and international top chefs including Chef Roland Puse, Chef Andy Bates, Chef Silvena Rowe, Chef Bader Najeeb, Chef Tim Read, Chef Nikita Ghandi, and Chef Himanshu Saini from countries such as UK, India and New Zealand.

AED 1.3 million spent on F & B in one weekend at 'Eat The World DXB'



More than 20,000 people crowded the 3-day **'Eat the World DXB'** at Burj Park with an estimated AED 1.3 million being spent in one weekend on food and beverages at this exciting event that featured international street food traders and food trucks.

DFF 2016 also saw many other events and activities reaping rich dividends including the annual **Taste of Dubai**, which welcomed 27,037 visitors; the second edition of **Fatafeat Kitchen**, organised by the popular Arabic language TV channel, which attracted thousands of foodies from the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait; and the **Street Nights Dubai Food Festival Edition** at Bay Avenue in Business Bay, which was visited by approximately 28,000 people.

Other highlights of DFF 2016 were The **'Dine With The Stars'** gala dinner events, which featured international celebrity chefs Gary Meighan, George Calombaris, Matt Moran, Manu Fieldel and Shannon Bennett; The **Dubai Long Table** presented by Dodge and organised by Emaar Hospitality that was enjoyed by 1,000 guests; **The Big Grill**; the **Street Food Celebrations** at Global Village; and the **Signature Tastes** promotion featuring hundreds of the city's restaurants.

The **DFF Signature Events** programme featured activities such as The Great British Garden Party at Reform Social; Full Moon Dinner at Pierchic; The Garden at Raffles at Raffles Dubai Hotel; Social Sunday at Marina Social; high tea experience at Fortnum & Mason; Wokyo™, an event that mesmerised guests with the noodles menu and Asian vibes plus Japanese hospitality, and the Century Village Street Carnival.

The DFF 2016 lineup also featured promotions such as the **Home Edition** that was run at six leading supermarket and hypermarket chains, giving 12 lucky shoppers the chance to win a prize of AED 50,000 in vouchers for them to shop for an entire year of groceries; the **Kids Dine Free** promotion, that offered a free three-course menu for children under 12 at 50 restaurants when accompanied by a paying adult; **Dubai International Airport 'Dine & Win'** that offered anyone spending over AED 49 at a participating restaurant in Dubai International Airport the chance to win a five-night stay at the newly opened luxury

hotel St. Regis Dubai. In addition, at an activation during the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships



2016 the renowned French, 3-Michelin-starred Chef, Jean-Georges' signature Pretzel Dusted Baby Squid, with homemade Spicy Marinara and Mustard Aioli was offered at a special price.



Culinary excitement was also stirred up by malls through promotions, demonstrations and family-oriented activities, which ensured that festival visitors enjoyed rewarding and memorable experiences. Highlights and videos can be seen on www.dubaifoodfestival.com

