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London-Dubai tops list of booming air routes

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Six of the 10 fastest-growing long-haul air routes involve London, it was revealed today.

Topping the list is London to Dubai, where the number of available seats on offer has tripled in the last 10 years. The second fastest-growing route is London-Chicago, followed by London-Hong Kong and Melbourne-Singapore, according to analysis from air information company Ascend.

Other routes in the top 10 include London-Singapore at sixth, London-Mumbai (Bombay) in seventh place and London-New York at ninth.

Ascend said the number of seats on offer for London to Dubai has risen from 405,433 in the first half of 1996 to 1.25m in the first half of 2006.

It said that the growth had been driven largely by the successful expansion of Dubai-based airline Emirates which now operates 62 flights a week between London and Dubai.

Sir Richard Branson's airline Virgin Atlantic started London-Dubai services earlier this year.

"The huge increase of passenger activity between London and Dubai has mirrored Dubai's growth as a substantial regional power in the areas of tourism, construction, finance and trade over the past decade," said Gehan Talwate, managing director of Ascend.

He went on: "Free trade zones, a shift towards a more service-orientated economy, a state-of-the-art international airport, and wide choice of luxury resorts are all making Dubai an increasingly attractive destination for tourists."

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