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Qatar Airways targets Chinese travelers with Alipay integration

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Travelers on Qatar Airways can now use Alipay to buy luxury goods at Qatar Duty Free. Image credit: Qatar Airways

By STAFF REPORTS

Qatar Airways is working with digital financial services company Wirecard to offer Alipay as a payment option at select duty-free stores.

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The partnership will allow customers, particularly Chinese travelers who are heavy luxury consumers, to purchase items from select stores at Hamad International Airport through Alipay. Alipay is the mobile payment option provided by Chinese ecommerce and retail giant Alibaba.

"HIA is a world-class shopping destination, and it's important to continue to provide our passengers with the best, most convenient shopping experience during their journey through the award-winning airport," said Thabet Musleh, head of [Qatar Duty Free](#), in a statement. "The Chinese market is very important.

"Thanks to our strong partnership with Wirecard, we are able to keep these high standards and fulfill the needs of our Chinese customers by offering them their domestic payment method," he said.

Alipay integration

Wealthy Chinese travelers are on the minds of nearly every luxury brand and retailer today.

As China's wealthy elite population has ballooned, its spending power and desire for luxury has grown as well.

Seeking to capture this lucrative demographic, Qatar Airways and Qatar Duty Free have partnered with Alibaba to become the first airport retailer in the Middle East to accept Alipay at its stores.

Alipay is incredibly popular in China, along with its competitor WeChat Pay, making it the perfect mobile payment option for retailers looking to attract wealthy Chinese travelers. Alipay currently makes up about 54 percent of China's total mobile payment market.



Alipay is immensely popular in China. Image credit: Alibaba

Qatar Airways notes in a statement that luxury goods such as handbags are one of the most sought-after products for affluent Chinese travelers and that this new partnership is meant explicitly to cater to that crowd.

"We are delighted to increase our long-term collaboration with Qatar Airways and we are looking forward to continue expanding it in the future," said Robert Gottinger, head of airline sales at **Wirecard**. "By offering Alipay as a new payment method, Qatar Duty Free benefits from a whole marketing platform to target arriving passengers from China even better.

"Our experience through the collaboration with other airport retailers have shown that in the first three months since the launch of the new payment method, the average amount spent by Chinese tourists has increased by 92 percent," he said.

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