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Emirates Air Line cable car opens to passengers

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London's new cable car opened to fare-paying passengers on Thursday (28 June) at midday with a two speed service designed to appeal to both commuters and tourists.

Described by the Mayor of London as the first of a series of new river crossings - and derided by critics as an expensive gimmick - the Emirates Air Line connects Greenwich Peninsula and the Royal Docks to provide a direct link between the O2 and ExCeL conference and event venues.

Thirty four gondolas cross the Thames up to 90 metres above the river with journey times normally taking around 10 minutes. However, services will be speeded up during the morning and evening peaks to provide a five minute crossing attractive to London's commuters. Cabins can be used by pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists and together have the capacity to carry up to 2,500 people per hour in each direction.

The cable car has taken just under a year to build with construction overseen by Mace, which will operate the new service as Mace Macro. Two terminals have been built on either side of the river and, with a short walk, offer connections to the Docklands Light Railway and London Underground Jubilee line.

Transport for London says the project cost is £62.6m with £36m secured from Emirates Airline under a 10 year sponsorship deal which gives the Middle East carrier branding on the London Underground map as well as naming rights to the cable car and cable car boarding stations on either side of the Thames. A further £8m contribution is expected from the European Regional Development Fund.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson said: "The Emirates Air Line is a stunning addition to London's transport network, providing a much needed new connection across the Thames. I am sure the Air Line is set to be a must-see destination in its own right, giving people the chance to drink in breath-taking panoramic views. Crucially, it supports my ambitious plans to revive the neighbouring areas, which have been neglected for decades, creating jobs for Londoners and stimulating growth."

Tim Clark, president of Emirates Airline, added: "It is exhilarating to see the Emirates Air Line take flight for the first time today. It reflects Emirates' philosophy of connecting people through exciting, innovative and shared experiences, and will provide residents, commuters and visitors alike with a unique perspective of London."

The cable car will be open seven days a week and passengers can buy their boarding passes from vending machines or the ticket offices at both terminals. Passengers will be able to touch in at the gates with their Oyster pay as you go cards and there is a 'frequent flyer' boarding pass for regular users, which will allow them to make 10 single journeys for £16, equating to £1.60 per single journey. Pay As You Go holders will receive a 25% discount on the adult fare and Oyster Travelcard holders will also get the discount but will need to purchase a boarding pass to travel.



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