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United Arab Emirates  
**Country Profile**

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## About Country Profiles

ECA's Country Profiles are in-depth briefing documents for individuals preparing to live and work in another country. Available for over 120 countries, they provide essential information for both IHR managers planning international assignments and for people going abroad to work, whether for one day or permanently.

In addition to coming as part of subscription and being available to buy individually, extranet versions of the profiles are available to supply directly to employees, and they can be customised.

- Orientation material on the country's geography and climate, major cities, demographics, language and social customs
- Immigration information on obtaining visas, work and residence permits, visas for spouses and dependants, and registration
- Travel guidance on how to get to and around the country, including travel from the airport, public transport and health and safety advice
- Customs and import regulations for household shipments, cars and pets, banking, advice on leasing arrangements, residential districts, schools and sports and social clubs
- Business etiquette, public holidays, suitable clothing, money, telecommunications, and city-level information on medical services, supermarkets, other shops and restaurants, as well as recreational highlights
- Background information on the country's history, government and economy
- Additional resources, such as country guides and links, cross-cultural and language training resources, and conversion tables

## Key facts

### At a glance



#### ESSENTIALS

Capital city: Abu Dhabi  
Currency: UAE dirham, AED (Dhs)  
Language: Arabic  
International dialling code: +971



#### FLAG



#### LOCAL TIME

Local time in Abu Dhabi is GMT+04:00  
No daylight savings are observed.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

The UAE is a loose federation of seven emirates which, before the provisional Constitution took effect in 1971, had previously been known as the Trucial States... Government

Alcohol is available for non-Muslims in hotel bars, but restrictions may apply during Ramadan... Local cuisine

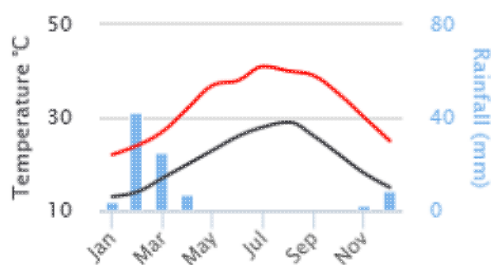
Foreign visitors are only permitted to drive in the UAE with a valid international driving permit (IDP), in conjunction with their national driving licence... Road



#### LOCAL WEATHER

##### FORECAST CLIMATE

Abu Dhabi



#### IN NUMBERS

Country population: 9 121 167 (2016)  
Population growth rate: 1.4%  
Geographic area: 83 600 km<sup>2</sup>  
GDP growth: 3.0% (2019 forecast)



## Context

## Territory

### Map of the United Arab Emirates



## Geography

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), formerly known as the Trucial States, lies along a 640 km coastline of shallow seas, offshore islands and coral reefs, from the base of the Qatar Peninsula in the west, to Oman and the Musandam Peninsula in the east.

The total area of 83 600 km<sup>2</sup> comprises the seven Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah. All are coastal settlements on the Persian (Arabian) Gulf except Fujairah which is on the Batinah coast of the Gulf of Oman.

Abu Dhabi is by far the largest emirate, though most of it is barren desert. The others, known as the Northern Emirates, have inland enclaves surrounded by one or more of the other Emirates.

The coastline of the lower Gulf consists mainly of salt-marshes (*sabkha*) which become a white, flat expanse in summer.

In the Musandam Peninsula the coast has several creeks and inlets traditionally providing natural harbours for Dubai, Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah.

Ras al-Khaimah lies at the foot of the northern range of the Hajar Mountains, which divide the Musandam Peninsula and extend through Oman to the eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Within the UAE, peaks rise to 2 500 m. The western interior of the country, most of which lies in Abu Dhabi, consists mainly of sand and gravel desert, interspersed with

oases, the largest of which are Al-Ain and Liwa. Some of the oases cover a wide area and contain ten or more villages, relying on underground reservoirs of water. To the south, huge moving sand dunes stretch to the Rub al-Khali desert, the Empty Quarter of Arabia.

Natural vegetation is sparse in most areas, with the exception of the oases and land close to the Hajar range. Abu Dhabi has undertaken a programme of afforestation in parts of the desert which could attract rain, leading to growth of further vegetation and an increase in wildlife.

## Time zone

Local time in Abu Dhabi is GMT+04:00. No daylight savings are observed.

## Climate

The climate is exceptionally hot and humid in the summer and mild in winter. Between May and October the heat is intense, the hottest months being July/August when midday temperatures may exceed 48°C (118°F) on the coast and humidity rises above 95%. At night the temperature can drop to 20°C (68°F) or lower. Inland temperatures are more extreme, higher during the day, but lower at night, and humidity is generally lower. Winds from the north (*shamal*) and the south-east help to reduce the heat, but are frequently laden with sand/dust.

In the winter months, from November to the end of March, midday temperatures range between 20°C and 35°C (68°F and 95°F). Rain is infrequent throughout most of the country and falls mainly in the winter. The annual average rainfall is about three inches, although higher in the mountain regions, as a result of which the land around Ras al-Khaimah and the narrow coastal plain on the Gulf of Oman are relatively fertile.

[National Center of Meteorology & Seismology](#)

Detailed worldwide, daily and long-range/five-day forecasts are available on-line from a number of organisations including:

[BBC Weather](#)  
[CNN](#)  
[Weatherbase](#)

## Capital city: Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi, the federal capital, has expanded rapidly since the Emirate became an important oil producer in the mid-1960s. Situated on a T-shaped island which juts into the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, the city is linked to the mainland by two road bridges and the ultramodern Sheikh Zayed Bridge. Although the settlement was founded in the 1760s, as recently as the early 1960s the site consisted of only a palace, huts, mosques and a single paved road.

Today the city is a modern metropolis of skyscrapers and gardens, businesses and tourist facilities and sites, alongside state broadcasting facilities and parliamentary buildings. Given Abu Dhabi's short history, classical architecture is rare, although the old Al Hosn Palace, commonly known as the White Fort, still survives after 200 years, with its beautiful courtyard and main gate. More representative of the city's character is The Corniche, a green, coastal boulevard which sweeps around the north edge of the city. This major street is the site of the [Emirates Palace Hotel](#), a multi-star hotel (managed by the Kempinski hotel chain) made to match Dubai's 'seven-star' Burj. A new [Central Business District](#) has been developed, with Al Maryah Island (formerly Sowwah island) at its core.

Most building construction in Abu Dhabi has catered for the top end of the market, with the result that many Baluchi and Iranian labourers live in enclaves of shanty homes which have arisen between the office buildings. Public transport is also somewhat lacking, with private cars and taxis preferred. The [Abu Dhabi Metro project](#) is included in the 'Abu Dhabi Master Transport Plan 2030'; after stalling for several years, it is yet unclear, at time of writing, when the project will be (commenced and) completed. Once operational, the metro rail will cover approximately 131 km of track and will mainly connect the new Central Business District on Al Maryah Island (formerly Sowwah Island), with Reem Island, Saadiyat Island, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi International Airport and Masdar, Capital City District, Emerald Gateway, Zayed Sports City and ADNEC.

Dubai is a constant reference point for descriptions of Abu Dhabi. The latter may be the political and business capital, but it cannot match the larger city's entertainment and nightlife facilities. However, the UAE government still hopes that tourism can elevate Abu Dhabi to 'Singaporean status' in the region. Aside from numerous beaches and 18 attractive city gardens, shopping is the city's main draw. Al Nasr Street offers antique shops and jewellery stores, while the Old Souk district is a maze of alleyways, with different goods sold at every turn. There is also an Abu Dhabi Shopping Festival, held annually in early March.

[Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry \(ADCCI\)](#)

[Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority](#)

## Dubai

Dubai is the Gulf's most vibrant city, despite possessing far fewer oil resources than Abu Dhabi. Originally a small fishing village, Dubai was occupied in the 1830s by the Bani Yas tribe, and specifically the Maktoum family, who still rule the emirate today. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Dubai came under the commercial control of Portugal, later becoming a protectorate of Britain. Commercial success and liberal attitudes also brought Indian and Iranian traders to the town at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Oil was discovered in 1966 and exported from 1969, with British withdrawal following in 1971.

The modern city has expanded along both banks of the Dubai Creek (*al-Khor*), a sea-water inlet which effectively cuts Dubai into two semi-cities, Deira to the north-east, and Bur Dubai to the south-west. The CBD is located within these two areas, which are linked by a tunnel and an increasing number of bridges. Beyond this centre, the city extends south and west through the districts of Satwa, Jumeirah (a residential area popular with expatriates), and Umm Suqeim, as well as northwards towards the emirate of Sharjah. Even further west is the free trade zone of Jebel Ali.

The city offers outstanding conference and exhibition facilities, including the 39-storey [Dubai World Trade Centre](#), home of the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre. Numerous modern buildings are found near the Dubai Creek and beside Maktoum Bridge, among which are the blue glass-faced [Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#) and the eye-catching Etisalat Tower (2). Topped by a telecommunication dome shaped as a giant golf-ball, the latter building seems particularly appropriate for a city with so many golf clubs. However, breaking all records to date, the 828 metre-tall [Burj Khalifa](#) is probably the most extravagant of buildings in the emirate. Opened in January 2010, it holds several world records, including ones for the world's tallest building and tallest man-made structure. The tower spreads over a staggering 160 floors and its spire can allegedly be seen 95 km away.

Offshore island developments include The Palm Islands – Jebel Ali, Jumeirah and Deira, and The World Islands, all under development by [Nakheel](#).

There are also a few historical sites. Sheikh Saeed's House was built in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, with a commanding view of the sea, in order to keep an eye on the shipping activity so vital to the local economy. The main mosque is the Jumeirah Mosque, a modern building designed according to medieval traditions, with twin minarets and a huge dome. A few traditional alleyways also survive on either side of the creek, while the Nahar Tower has been restored as one of the three watchtowers which originally guarded the city.

As in Abu Dhabi, a taxi or a private car is vital, even though the [Dubai Metro](#), operational since September 2009, also operates two services (the 'Red' and 'Green' Line), with three further lines ('Blue', 'Purple' and 'Gold') also proposed. The bus service remains crowded, despite recent expansion efforts. Roads are fairly congested, with accidents frequent.

[Dubai Department of Economic Development](#)

[Visit Dubai](#)

## Fujairah

Fujairah is situated due east of Dubai, on a coastal plain, with mountains and valleys inland. Some tobacco is grown, a new port has been opened and another harbour is under construction further north at Dibba. However, Fujairah's future is thought to lie in the development of the east coast's tourism potential, despite the fact that some beaches are beginning to suffer from oil pollution.

Fujairah's port has become important both for container traffic and as a fuelling centre due to its special location alongside the Gulf of Oman, rather than the Persian (Arabian) Gulf. Industry is also being developed.

The main business area is along Hamad bin Abdullah Road, between the Fujairah Trade Centre and the coast. Fujairah Fort is a 360-year-old, partially restored building, located next to the town's main court of law, while bullfighting – involving two bulls and no matador – is one of the Fujairah's more esoteric spectacles.

[Fujairah Free Zone Authority](#)

[Fujairah Municipality Government Portal](#)

## People

### Demography

At the end of 2016, the population was officially estimated at 9 121 167, of which 2.8 million were female and 6.3 million were male. The United Nations population estimate for 2020 is 9 813 170; by 2025, it is projected to rise to 10 435 287. The UAE has witnessed a significant population increase in the past decade. From a total population of 4 106 427 (including non-nationals) at the time of the 2005 census, it more than doubled to 8.4 million in 2010. Between 2005 and 2010, the population grew, on average, a staggering 11.8% per year, though this has normalised now with the average annual population growth rate between 2015 and 2020 an estimated 1.4%. Life expectancy is 76.8 years (males) and 79.0 years (females). In 2015, approximately 13.8% of the population were younger than 15 years of age, while only 2.0% were older than 60.

Around 85% of the population live in urban areas. Some semi-nomadic Bedouins still inhabit the interior of the country, but the vast majority of the people now live a settled life in the towns. In the coastal towns, particularly in Dubai, there are long-established communities of Iranians, Omanis, Indians, Pakistanis, Balochis and Zanzibaris.

Locals (*muwatiniin*) are far outnumbered by expatriates (*wafidiin*), who comprise nearly 80% of the population. The majority of expatriate workers are from South Asia (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Philippines), with significant numbers of Arab minorities and Iranians also present. There are smaller communities of Europeans and Americans, with the British expatriate community concentrated in Dubai.

[UAE Federal Competitiveness and Statistics Authority \(FCSA\)](#)

[Statistics Centre Abu Dhabi](#)

[Dubai Statistics Centre](#)

[Sharjah Department of Statistics and Community Development \(DSCD\)](#)

[Fujairah Statistics Center](#)

[Ajman Government's Department of Economic Development](#)

[Ras Al Khaimah's Government – Department of Economic Development](#)

### Distribution

Principal town	Population
Dubai	2 645 581
Abu Dhabi (capital)	1 266 189
Fujairah	86 512 <sup>1</sup>
<i>Source: Mid-2016 estimate</i>	

### Language

The official language is Arabic. Most businesspeople either speak English or have an English-speaking person on their staff. However, it is useful for those intending to remain in the area for any length of time to gain a knowledge of colloquial Arabic. Other widely used languages among the expatriate community include Urdu, Hindi, Malayalam and Farsi.

English	Arabic
Yes	<i>Na-a'am</i>
No	<i>La; mish</i>
Hello	<i>Al sa-lahm</i>
Goodbye	<i>Be-kha-trahk</i>
Please	<i>Min-fahd-lak (M) Min-fahd-lik (F)</i>
Thank you	<i>Shook-rah</i>
Pleased to meet you	<i>Sorirart biro'aitak</i>
Excuse me; I'm sorry	<i>Is-ma-leh</i>
My name is...	<i>'ismii...</i>
I don't understand	<i>An-na mish fahem</i>

## Religion

Islam is the religion of the UAE, but other religions are respected. Most of the indigenous population of the Emirates are Sunni Muslims, who have been strongly influenced by the conservative Wahhabism of neighbouring Saudi Arabia. There is freedom of worship throughout the Emirates.

There is an Anglican and a Roman Catholic church in Abu Dhabi, both with resident chaplains. In Dubai there is an interdenominational and a Roman Catholic church, together with other churches for the expatriate communities.

## Social customs and modes of address

Social customs vary between the Emirates, and between different areas; for example, modes of dress and behaviour which may be acceptable in Abu Dhabi and Dubai and in other towns frequented by foreign expatriates may be frowned upon in strict Muslim quarters. Dubai combines traditional Arab culture with a Western outlook and is much more liberal in its attitudes than Abu Dhabi. There are greater restrictions on the sale of alcohol in Sharjah than in the other Emirates. In general men and women should dress in a conventional manner throughout the Emirates, with formal dress (suits and ties for men) for business and social functions. Smoking is acceptable and quite common, although in some public places there are restrictions. The people are friendly and hospitable and visitors are welcomed.

Muslims are forbidden by their religion to drink alcohol. Alcohol should not be offered to Muslims and pork and pork products should not be eaten in their presence. Muslims are not permitted to eat, drink or smoke between dawn and dusk during the month of Ramadan (the month preceding Eid al-Fitr). Visitors should take particular care not to cause offence during this time, for example, by offering a visitor a cup of tea or by drinking or smoking in their presence.

All food and drink should be proffered, and accepted, with the right hand only. In business it is customary for visitors to be offered refreshment, usually coffee or tea. It is polite to accept at least one, and preferably two cups, before refusing a refill. Guests should shake their cups slightly with the right hand before returning them to the pourer if they do not want any more.

Visitors should remember always to keep their feet firmly on the ground (it is impolite to show the soles of the feet). If invited to dinner by an Arab (private house or hotel) it is customary for guests to leave as soon as they have drunk their tea or coffee. This often means that to prolong an evening, the meal is served very late.

Arab men and women shake hands with members of the same gender only. They may include a kiss on the cheek for close friends. Men rarely introduce their wives in public. Men shake hands far more frequently and for longer than do men in Europe or the United States.

N.B. Expatriates are advised to use social media, like Facebook and Twitter, with care. In March 2015, an American expatriate was arrested and spent ten days in jail before being freed on bail, after criticising his employer on Facebook. In July 2015, an Australian woman was also jailed for falling foul of the strict social media laws after having been convicted of 'writing bad words about a person' by an Abu Dhabi court; her offence was to post a picture of a car parked across two disabled spaces on her Facebook page.

Modes of address depend on the parties' gender, relationship, age and position. Friends and relatives of the same sex generally address one another by first name. Professional titles (e.g. Dr, Engineer, Mr, Mrs) are used with acquaintances or persons of the opposite gender. Note, Arabs generally address people by their first names, so that David Miller becomes Mr David. Honorific and/or professional titles such as 'Doctor' are highly prized and are sometimes applied to those who have not earned them professionally. It is customary to use Sheikh (chief) or Sheikha (for a woman), Sayed (Mr.), Sayeda (Mrs.), etc.

A common greeting is *Assalaam Alaykum* (Peace be upon you). The response to this greeting is *Wa alaykum assalaam* (And upon you be peace). There may follow a series of elaborate and often repetitive forms of 'How are you?'; these

include *Kayf halak?* to greet men and *Kayf halich?* to greet women. A common form of reply to such enquiries is *Bikhair al-hamdu lillah* (Good, thanks be to God).

## Immigration

### Travel restrictions

The UAE refuses admission and transit to nationals of Israel. Nationals of other states, travelling with passports carrying Israeli stamps or visas must obtain prior clearance by the Crime Investigation Department (CID) before arrival.

The UAE refuses admission to:

- stateless persons, even if holding a valid visa for the UAE (transit is permitted if continuing the journey on the same aircraft) – exempt from this travel restriction are wives of UAE nationals who hold valid visas;
- Palestinians holding documents issued by Iraq or Egypt;
- holders of Iraqi "S" series passports;
- holders of Kuwaiti passports containing an 'Article 17' stamp, unless issued to the wife of a UAE national; and,
- Qatari nationals (though this is likely to be a temporary measure only). N.B. In June 2017, a diplomatic crisis between Qatar and its Arab neighbours resulted in the UAE (amongst many other countries in the region, including Bahrain, Comoros, Egypt, Libya's eastern-based government, the Maldives, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Yemen) cutting ties with Qatar. At time of writing, in July 2018, the crisis was ongoing and the UAE even warned to expel Qatar from the GCC if it continued to undermine regional security.

### Health requirements

There are no compulsory vaccinations required for entry to the UAE.

However, all work and residence visa applicants (aged 18 years and older) must obtain a Medical Fitness Certificate at an authorised medical institution in the Emirates, and prospective (foreign) residents may be deported if testing positive for any of the following diseases: HIV, tuberculosis and, as of 2008, hepatitis B; the same applies to current residents, should they test positive for any of these diseases during their stay in the country.

### Passports and visas

All visitors to the UAE require valid visas with the following exceptions:

- nationals of the UAE;
- nationals of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar\* and Saudi Arabia;
- holders of UAE resident visas, provided their stay outside the UAE did not exceed six months; and
- transit passengers continuing their journey to a third country by the same or first connecting aircraft within 48 hours (since 13 June 2018, up from 24 hours) and holding tickets with confirmed seats, all documents required for their next destination and not leaving the airport transit area.\*\*

\*On 5 June 2017, a diplomatic crisis between Qatar and its Arab neighbours resulted in the UAE (amongst many other countries in the region, namely Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, the Maldives and Libya's eastern-based government) cutting ties with Qatar. At time of writing, in July 2018, the crisis was ongoing and the UAE even warned to expel Qatar from the GCC if it continued to undermine regional security.

\*\*Travellers passing through Dubai Airport on to a third country with transit times longer than eight hours, may apply for 96-hour transit visas, under guarantee from Emirates airline. At least one leg of the journey must be booked on Emirates Airlines and the transit passenger must hold a pre-booked hotel reservation or purchase a Dubai Stopover Package (at the 'Emirates Hotels and Visas for Dubai' counter). A similar offer is available to passengers of Etihad Airways, who qualify for free 96-hour transit visas when they book an Etihad Airways ticket with a stopover in Abu Dhabi, via Etihad's destination agency 'Hala Abu Dhabi'. The 96-hour transit visa facility is not applicable to nationals of Afghanistan, Iraq, Niger, Somalia or Yemen, female passengers under the age of 30 years – being nationals of C.I.S. states, or to passengers travelling on Singapore Airlines (SQ) flights.

Where onward journeys are made by connecting aircraft, it is advisable to arrange hotel accommodation prior to arrival. Hotel accommodation is available at both Abu Dhabi and Dubai airports.

**Visas on arrival:** Nationals of the following countries may apply for free visas on arrival without having made pre-arrangements:



- nationals of all EU/EEA member states – with the exception of the UK and Ireland (who have opted out of the protocols annexed to the EU treaties) – as well as Switzerland, are eligible for free multiple-entry 90-day visit visas that are valid for six months from the date of issue and for a stays of 90 days in total, for the purpose of any kind of activity (e.g. tourism, cultural visits, scientific activities, family visits, business etc.), provided it isn't paid. After their on-arrival visa has been used up, the EU/EEA/Swiss nationals may apply for a pre-arranged visit visa (normal fees apply);
- nationals of the Barbados (since 1 July 2018), Brazil (since 3 June 2018), Chile, Costa Rica (since 13 May 2018), Grenada (since 1 June 2018), Honduras (since 25 May 2018), Montenegro (since 31 May 2018), Seychelles, Ukraine, and Uruguay (since 29 April 2018) for stays of up to 90 days;
- nationals of the Andorra, Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, Hong Kong SAR, Ireland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea Republic, Malaysia, Monaco, New Zealand, Russia, San Marino, Singapore, UK, USA and Vatican City, for stays of up to 30 days (an extension of 30 days from the Immigration Headquarters is possible on payment of a fee); and
- Indian nationals holding US green cards or visas that are valid for at least six months (since May 2017), or those having a valid residence visa from the UK or an EU member state (since September 2017), for a stays of up to 14 days at a time.\*

\*Please note, Indian nationals on 14-day visas-on-arrival cannot change their status to another visa type (such as a tourist, business or employment visa) once they are in the UAE. Indian nationals travelling to the UAE for business or work should obtain a business or employment visa before travelling.

**Visas prior to arrival:** Visas are issued prior to arrival by diplomatic representations of the UAE outside the UAE, and on arrival, provided they have been pre-arranged; they are generally available for an original period of 96 hours (transit visa), 14 days (business visa), 30 days (tourist or business short-term visit visa), or 90 days (long-terms visit visa). Other than the 96-hour transit visa, which may be used at Dubai Airport only, pre-arranged visas are valid at all airports in the UAE and must be deposited by the sponsor at the Immigration Authorities in advance. Passengers must have an 'OK-to-Board' message from the airline. N.B. Effective 1 January 2015, the option of extending visit visas by 10 or 30 days has been cancelled.

The following types of visas are available:

- **Transit Visa:** they are issued to individuals mainly by the UAE airport authorities. The transit visa is valid for four days (96 hours) after entry, non-renewable and can only be issued if the visitor is holding a valid ticket for an onward flight. It is usually issued at a request made by an airline company for travellers staying in the country for not less than eight hours. Citizens of Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Niger and Yemen are not eligible for the transit visa on arrival facility.
- **Tourism Entry Visa:** tourists can get a visa through a hotel in the UAE, or even through some accredited travel agencies. The visa is valid for 30 days.
- **Visit Entry Visa:** A visit visa can be issued to a company operating in the UAE, a UAE national sponsor or an expatriate resident in the country who can sponsor his first and second degree family members. This type of visa is valid for 30 days (short term visits) and 90 days (long terms visits). While only UAE nationals can sponsor a private visitor, expatriates need to have a minimum monthly salary of AED 3 000 with accommodation or AED 4 000 without accommodation to sponsor their family members. Please note, a higher salary threshold is applicable to Egyptian and Syrian applicants for a family visit visa; they are required to earn a minimum monthly salary of AED 9 000 with accommodation or AED 10 000 without accommodation to sponsor their family members. The required paperwork includes proof of kinship and 30-day or 90-day health insurance for the visa beneficiary, in addition to the payment of a refundable financial guarantee of AED 1 000.
- **Temporary Work Visa:** Expatriates can enter the country on temporary work visas to take up a temporary work or complete a project. This visa is valid for 90 days and can be extended for a similar period.
- **Entry Visa for Attending Exhibition, Festival or Conference:** This visa allows those who wish to attend an exhibition or conference held in the country provided that they are sponsored by an entity licensed by Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA). This non-extendable permit is valid for 30 days only.
- **Multiple-entry Visa:** Multiple-entry visas are issued to business visitors who have a relationship with either a multinational or a local company, and who are visiting the UAE frequently. This type of non-renewable visa is valid for six months from the date of issue, and the duration of each stay is 14 consecutive days.
- **Employment Residence Visa:** The General Directorate of Residence and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA) of the respective emirate can give expatriates permission to enter the country for work, provided that the concerned authorities have provided their approval, such as an employment contract from a private or public organisation. The entry visa allows its holder to enter the country once within 60 days of the date of issuing and stay for a maximum period of 30 days from the date of entry during which the employer should approach GDRFA for processing the residence visa for the employee which is usually valid for two years.



To pre-arrange a visa, prospective travellers must contact their sponsor (a company, hotel or in the case of a 30-day tourist visa, also an individual person), provide them with their full passport details, with which the sponsor can then apply for a visa on their behalf. Upon receipt of the application, processing takes at least three days for a 14-day visa and at least seven days for a 30-day visa. Visas must be used within 60 days from the date of issue in the case of 30- and 90-day visas, and within 30 days in the case of 14-day visas. Fines apply if visa holders exceed their length of stay beyond the validity of their visa.

N.B. Pre-arranged visas are not available to female passengers under 30 years of age, being nationals of CIS member states, nationals of Afghanistan, Canada, Iraq, Niger, Somalia and Yemen, holders of hand-written passports issued to nationals of Pakistan, and holders of Palestinian travel documents, who must apply for visas prior to arrival. Journalists travelling on assignment to Dubai are also not eligible for visas on arrival. They require prior authorisation from the Ministry of Information in Dubai.

**GCC residence permit holders:** Effective 29 April 2016 (after much to-and-fro), GCC residence permit holders must apply for eVisa prior to arrival via the Ministry of Interior's new [eVisa portal](#), which also allows for online payments. The online visa application facility is intended to make travel for those foreign nationals already resident in the region easier. A GCC Residents Entry Permit is valid for 30 days between the date of issue and the date of entry and permits a stay period of up to 30 days, extendable by a further 30 days. A GCC Accompanied Entry Permit, available to family members of GCC residents, is valid for 60 days between the date of issue and the date of entry and permits a stay period of up to 60 days, extendable by a further 60 days. Please note though, applications for family members of GCC residents will not be approved if the sponsor is not traveling along with the family members. Once the visa is approved by the Ministry of Interior, the applicant will receive a copy via email. Applicants' GCC residency must be valid for at least three months beyond the arrival date in the UAE and their passport must have at least six months' validity beyond their arrival date.

**General entry requirements:** A visa for the UAE is valid for all seven Emirates. Visas included in expired passports, combined with newly-issued valid passports, will be accepted for entry. Those arriving via Dubai on Emirates flights may apply for, prior to arrival, electronic visas (e-Visas) online via the airline's online booking tool. Travellers should note that e-Visas are not accepted when entering the country through any other emirate.

Short-term visitors must hold documents and confirmed tickets required for their next destination and have sponsors in the UAE to cover their stay. Exempt are nationals of Andorra, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong SAR, Iceland, Irish Republic, Italy, Japan, Korea Republic, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Portugal, Qatar\*, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (except those with passports endorsed 'British Overseas Citizen'), United States and Vatican City.

\*On 5 June 2017, a diplomatic crisis between Qatar and its Arab neighbours resulted in the UAE (amongst many other countries in the region, namely Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, the Maldives and Libya's eastern-based government) cutting ties with Qatar. At time of writing, in July 2018, the crisis was ongoing and the UAE even warned to expel Qatar from the GCC if it continued to undermine regional security.

Passengers must be met by their sponsor on arrival. This is applicable at all airports in the UAE, even where a passenger holds proof that they will be met at the airport by the sponsor, deportation on the same flight will follow if the sponsor (or their representative) is not present at the time of the passenger's arrival. Immigration may waive this ruling and allow the passenger to depart on a later date or await a visa.

Minors named in a parent's passport being visa nationals must also be named in the parent's visa. If they are not covered by the visa they will be refused entry. They may only travel if accompanied by the holder of the passport.

N.B. In Dubai, as an added security measure, immigration authorities at Dubai International Airport are now conducting random eye screening for visitors to Dubai. Visitors asked to proceed for eye screening are required to present a hard copy of their visa or a printed version of the visa number confirmation page at the screening counter. Those not holding a copy of their visa are charged a fee of AED 30 per copy – payable only in AED.

Passports or passport-replacing travel documents must be valid for at least six months from date of entry. National of GCC countries may enter the UAE with their National Identity Cards.

Re-entry visas. Returning alien residents are required to hold valid residence visas stamped in their passports. Where alien residents have stayed outside the UAE for six months or more (unless holding a valid students' visa), their visas are no longer valid. Exceptions are holders of investor and partner visas issued by Abu Dhabi, who are permitted to stay outside of the UAE for a period of up to one year without having their visa invalidated.

[Abu Dhabi eGovernment Gateway](#)

[Dubai – General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Fujairah – General Directorate of Residence & Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Ras al-Khaimah \(RAK\) e-Government](#)

[Sharjah – General Directorate of Residency & Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Emirates Identity Authority](#)

#### Ministry of Interior

Ministry of Labour (MOL) – recently renamed the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation (MOHRE). N.B. Please take note of the fact that all relevant legislation and related reports continue to make references to the MOL.

## Visa agencies

Obtaining visas can be a complex and time-consuming process; a number of specialised agencies will undertake the task.

*Australia:* [CIBT VISALINK](#)

*Canada:* [CIBTvisas](#)

*France:* [Action-Visas.com](#), [CIBT Visas Express](#)

*Germany:* [CIBT VisumCentrale](#)

*Hong Kong:* [China Travel Service \(Hong Kong\) Ltd](#)

*Netherlands:* [CIBTvisas](#)

*South Africa:* [MDS VisaPak](#), [Easy Visas](#), [Visas & Passports Unlimited](#)

*Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway and Finland):* [Comet Consular Service](#)

*United Arab Emirates:* [VisaHQ](#)

*United Kingdom:* [CIBTvisas](#), [VisaHQ](#)

*United States:* [CIBTvisas](#), [PassportVisasExpress.com](#), [Travel Visa Pro](#), [Travisa](#), [VisaHQ](#)

## Embassies

Further information on foreign representative offices in and for United Arab Emirates is available from the [UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).

## Work permits

Foreign nationals wishing to take up employment in the UAE require work permits, which are issued by the [Ministry of Labour](#) (now more commonly referred to as the [Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation \(MoHRE\)](#)). In addition, residence visas are required; these are issued by the General Directorate of Residence and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA) of the respective emirate. The government will consider reciprocity and the local labour market when granting work visas. There is an Emiratisation policy in force aimed at replacing expatriates with local nationals after training. Holders of work visas may only take up employment in the UAE with a named employer who acts as their sponsor.

Foreign companies wishing to carry out work in the UAE should understand that they cannot hire employees in the country unless they have either set up a local entity through which to employ those people themselves, or have entered into a sub-contracting arrangement with a UAE-based company that can provide the required services through their own employees. There has been a recent clampdown on some of the more 'creative' methods that have been used to side-step this requirement, such as when foreign employers have asked another UAE-based company to act as the legal employer in order to secure residence and work visa, or have based an employee outside the UAE and had them fly in and out on tourist visas.

Visas are currently valid for three years, renewable for additional three-year periods. On 20 May 2018, the UAE government announced that investors and professionals will in future be granted ten-year residence visas. Planned to be operational by the end of 2018, ten-year residence visas will be granted to specialists, such as doctors and engineers, as well as to entrepreneurs and investors, together with their families. Five-year visas will be granted to international students, while highly achieving students may qualify for ten-year visas. The authorities will also extend the validity of dependent visas held by students who are sponsored by their parents, to encourage them to remain in the UAE after graduation.

**Emiratisation and Classification of Companies:** Since 2010, employers are required to pay a bank guarantee (AED 3 000) for each foreign worker they employ, as part of the work permit and visa application process; the amount depends on a company's [Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation \(MoHRE\)](#) classification, which is designed to incentivise employers to adhere to existing Emiratisation requirements. The system of classifications was initially introduced by Cabinet Resolution No 26 of 2010 and was recently updated by Cabinet Resolution No 11 of 2017. Work permit costs are higher for lower-skilled workers and higher overall in companies with lower diversity rates; a company's category and band, as well as their workers' skill level will all directly impact whether a bank guarantee is payable by the company, as well as any other fees payable for everyday MoHRE services, such as issuing and renewing work permits.

The criteria for each classification and the relevant bank guarantee minima and maxima to be paid are as follows:

Category	Percentage of skilled workers	Percentage of cultural diversity in the company	Bank guarantee minimum and maximum cap (AED)
1	N/A (this is the exempt category)	N/A	N/A
2 (A)	40% or more of total workforce	minimum of 50%	3 000 – 1 500 000
2 (B)	10%–40% of total workforce	minimum of 50%	3 000 – 3 000 000
2 (C)	5%–10% of total workforce	minimum of 50%	3 000 – 5 000 000
2 (D)	less than 5% of the total workforce	less than 50%	3 000 – 7 000 000
3	N/A (this is the punitive category)	N/A	3 000 – 10 000 000

Category 1 companies are exempt from paying bank guarantees. Exempt companies include:

- fishing boats owned by UAE nationals;
- compliant members of the Emiratization Partners Club;
- the newly established Tad-beer service centres (for domestic staff);
- certain small and medium-sized companies; and
- members of the Youth Entrepreneurship Support Institutions.

Resolution No 11 of 2017 has added to the list of exemptions:

- companies falling under Category 2 or 3 are exempt from paying the bank guarantees of any *skilled* foreign workers they hire.

Skilled workers are defined as those employed to perform a role which requires the worker to hold, at minimum, a legalised high education certificate that is superior to a general high school diploma, i.e. they must hold either a diploma or degree certificate (or equivalent).

Category 3 is reserved for companies who have violated the law, e.g. those who have been convicted of human trafficking offences; employed illegal workers; falsified Emiratization numbers; entered incorrect data in the Wage Protection System (WPS); failed to pay workers through WPS; or failed to report workplace injuries.

N.B. On 13 June 2018, the UAE government announced important changes to immigration and labour rules, including plans to replace the current AED 3 000–bank guarantee with a much cheaper annual insurance fee of AED 60 per expat employee, which is to cover the end of service benefits, vacation allowance, return air tickets, overtime allowance, unpaid wages, and, in the event of injury, insurance cover of up to AED 20 000 per worker. The new policies related to these changes are to be made effective as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2018, under the UAE cabinet directive.

**Work permits:** The employer needs to apply to the [Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization \(MoHRE\)](#) for the initial work permit. The MoHRE website provides a [list of requisite documents](#) and the conditions to be met before a permit may be issued.

Any new work permit applications must be submitted via a 'Tas'heel' service centre or through establishments participating in the Ministry's e-forms programme. Documents to be submitted with the work permit application include:

- a colour photograph with white background of the prospective employee;
- a copy of the employee's passport;
- if an academic qualification is required (a post-secondary diploma, university degree or equivalent), a duly authenticated copy thereof; and
- a letter of approval issued by the competent professional entity, if so required (e.g. for physicians, pharmacists, nurses, teachers, etc.)

N.B. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the point of contact for authenticating foreign documents, but before a UAE embassy/consulate can authenticate any documents these must first be legalised by the respective foreign office of the issuing country. Moreover, effective 4 February 2018, all supporting documents (including degree certificates, marriage certificates and birth certificates) submitted to government offices and free zone authorities must be submitted in Arabic; if these documents were issued in another language, a legal translation must be completed before they will be accepted for application purposes.

Conditions to be met before a work permit can be issued are the following:

- the employer must have an approval for a quota of electronic work permits;
- the worker to be employed must not already have a work permit or labour card;
- the worker's passport must be valid for at least six months;
- the worker must be 18 years and older;
- the worker's profession must be commensurate with the employer's business activities;
- the employer must have a valid licence and be clear of any violations; and
- the authorised signatory of the application must hold an e-signature card.

Provided all documents and conditions of issue are fulfilled, the employer may obtain a print-out of their approval notice from the [Ministry of Labour's website](#). The work permit is valid for 60 days, which may be extended for up to six times, and allows the worker to enter the UAE for work purposes.

**Work visas:** After the worker enters the UAE on the basis of the work permit, the sponsoring company must arrange to complete the formalities of medical testing, obtaining the UAE Resident Identity (Emirates ID) Card and a Labour Card and have the work residence permit stamped in their passport within 60 days. The authority for issuing work visas is the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA), under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior, which has offices in each emirate.

All foreign workers must register for biometric Emirates ID cards before taking medical tests to renew or apply for residence visas; these are issued by the [Emirates Identity Authority](#), which can provide further information, as well as online forms for registration.

All work and residence visa applicants (aged 18 years and older) must obtain a Medical Fitness Certificate at an authorised medical institution in the Emirates. Those testing positive for HIV, tuberculosis or hepatitis B will be refused and are subject to deportation. Prospective residents are advised to contact the relevant emirate's health authority, e.g. the [Dubai Health Authority](#) or the [Health Authority – Abu Dhabi \(HAAD\)](#), for further information.

As per the GCC's 'Expatriates Workforce Check-up Programme', prospective employees from certain Asian countries will have to undergo an extra set of medical fitness tests in their home countries before taking up work or residency in participating GCC countries, including, since May 2011, the UAE. The programme applies to foreign workers from India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Nepal, where more than 200 pre-approved health centres have been set up to carry out the required checks. Applicants are tested for infectious diseases including HIV, pulmonary tuberculosis and leprosy; certain categories of workers may also be tested for hepatitis and syphilis.

Once issued, the work residence visa in the worker's passport denotes that they are sponsored by the company they are employed by. After this process is complete and the employee's status is official, the employee may sponsor their family members and bring them into the country.

**Mandatory offer letter and the standard employment contract:** On 1 January 2016, three ministerial decrees (*No 764, 765 and 766*) became effective, with notable implications for the UAE labour market and local employment practices. Of these, *Ministerial Decree No 764* introduced a new mandatory offer letter that must be issued to prospective foreign employees, signed by both parties and submitted to the Labour Ministry. The decree also introduced a new 'Standard Employment Contract' which must reflect the terms set out in the originally signed and submitted offer letter (unless the contract contains, in fact, more favourable terms). Both the new form offer letter and 'Standard Employment Contract' come with annexes in which the rights and obligations of employers and employees are set out and which are expressly incorporated into the contract.

**Notice periods:** *Ministerial Decree No 765* set out new rules and conditions for the termination of employment, regardless of nationality. Notably, it sets minimum and maximum notice limits of one to three months; with respect to expatriate employees in leadership positions or with exceptional skills, the three-month limitation on notice periods should be something to keep in mind.

**Changing employers:** Finally, with the entry into force of *Ministerial Decree No 766* in January 2016, expatriates' ability to change employers in the UAE was significantly enhanced. Provided all relevant notice obligations are fulfilled, skilled employees are no longer subject to a temporary work ban between periods of employment with one employer and another; unskilled employees are equally free to switch employers now, provided they have completed at least six months' service for the initial employer. Most recently, on 13 June 2018, the government also announced the introduction of new six-month temporary visas for job-seekers, to increase the retention of professionals in the UAE. However, please note that changing employers (and thereby having to obtain a new work and residence visa) has repercussions for accompanying family members who will also have to apply new family visa (see 'Spouses and dependants' for more information).

N.B. All expatriate employees are advised that it is not legal for their employer to retain their passport. To this effect, in 2002, the UAE Ministry of Interior issued a circular that held that 'as the passport is a personal document that the law obliges its owner to keep and show when required by the governmental authorities, it is not allowed for any party to detain the passport except by the official parties with a judicial order and according to the law. Consequently it will be considered as an illegal action to detain the passport in the UAE except by the governmental parties.'

[Abu Dhabi eGovernment Gateway](#)

[Dubai – General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Fujairah – General Directorate of Residence & Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Ras al-Khaimah \(RAK\) e-Government](#)

[Sharjah – General Directorate of Residency & Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Emirates Identity Authority](#)

[Ministry of Interior](#)

The [Ministry of Labour \(MOL\)](#) was recently renamed the [Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation \(MOHRE\)](#). N.B. As all legislation and related reports continue to make references to the MOL, this report also, for the time being, reference the MOL, although the MOHRE appear the responsible authority now.

## Spouses and dependants

An expatriate who holds a valid residence visa as an employee or investor is entitled to sponsor his/her family members including their spouse, sons under the age of 18, unmarried daughters, and/or their father and mother if the sponsoring person is the sole provider for them; UAE nationals also have this right. The exception are foreign workers who fall into certain 'lower' categories, e.g. domestic staff and labourers, and who are not permitted to sponsor their families, even if they fulfil the minimum requirements applicable to other expatriate sponsors.

Eligible expatriate workers must satisfy criteria regarding income and status conditions; currently a minimum monthly salary of AED 4 000 or AED 3 000 plus family accommodation provided by the employer are required (in May 2014, there were several media reports that suggested that – in Dubai only – the salary threshold for family residence visa has been raised to AED 10 000 or AED 9 000 plus family accommodation, but this proved to be false). The non-employment residence visa allows the sponsored family member to live in the country for an undefined period as long as the employment visa of the sponsor is valid. Note, the spouse does not automatically receive a work visa; for this they would have to submit an independent application in their own right.

Accompanying family members must first be issued with entry visa (e.g. 30-Day Visit Entry Visas for Relatives or 90-Day Visit Entry Visas for Relatives), which entitle the holder to enter the UAE within 60 days of issue. Once in the country, the sponsor (i.e. the working expatriate spouse) has 30 days to apply for their relative's non-employment residence visa. The procedures start with obtaining a medical fitness certificate, after undergoing the mandatory health check-up for spouses and children aged over 18 years.

In May 2016, the law regarding family residence visa was changed, notably with regard to the documents that must be submitted (and attested) on application; these documents are as follows:

- original and copy of passport (spouse and accompanying children);
- passport size photographs on white background for each accompanying family member (up to 15);
- sponsor's original passport;
- sponsor's original Emirates ID Card\*;
- original marriage certificate from issuing authority, attested by the UAE embassy in the sponsor's country of origin and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in UAE;
- original birth certificate from issuing authority (for any accompanying children only), attested by the UAE embassy in the sponsor's country of origin and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in UAE;
- original [EJARI](#) rental certificate and the last paid electricity bill, which should be in the applicant's or sponsor's name (note, since October 2017, foreign nationals employed in Abu Dhabi who wish to sponsor family members for initial or renewal dependent residence permits must submit a *Tawtheeq* (a residential lease registered in Abu Dhabi) in support of the application;
- Original MOL contract showing compliance with the minimum salary requirements for the issue of family residence visa (N.B. An original MOL contract can be printed from any [TASHEEL Service Centre](#), for a charge of AED 53, and on submission of a copy of one's passport and the relevant contract number. No attestation is required);
- for government, semi government and free zone employees, an original salary certificate;
- IBAN (International Bank Account Number) of the sponsor;
- a bank account statement covering the last three months, with original stamp and signature; and
- for accompanying daughters that are older than 18 years, a confirmation letter in Arabic stating that she is



unmarried along with her father's signature.

\*In Abu Dhabi, effective November 2017, the original Emirates ID of the sponsor is now required in support of visa applications for dependent family members. The immigration authorities scan the original Emirates ID to check whether the sponsor is currently out of the country, and reject the application if the sponsor is not in the UAE at the time of application submission.

Residence visas are valid for two years and are renewable. The visa is automatically cancelled if its holder stays outside of the UAE for six consecutive months.

**Family members of sponsors changing jobs within the UAE:** Effective July 2016, when the principal (working) residence visa holder is changing jobs and has their original visa cancelled, the family visa of any accompanying family members will also be cancelled. Family members will then have 30 days to obtain a new family residence visa (based on their sponsor's new work visa) or have to leave the UAE (or risk overstay penalties). Previously, family visas could be put 'on hold' and 'reactivated' once their sponsor's new residence visa was issued. N.B. This change only affects family members of foreign workers who are transferring from one UAE employer to another outside of any of the UAE's many free zones. Principal visa holders who are employed with a UAE free zone and are changing employers within such a zone are not required to cancel their visa and obtain a new visa, i.e. their family members are not affected by the above changes.

[Permits Foundation](#) Promotes access of accompanying spouses and partners of international staff to employment through improvements to work permit regulations.

## Residence permits

Residence visas are issued by the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs of the respective emirate the expatriate is moving to. The following documents will be required: residency application (signed and stamped by the sponsor); original passport; original entry visa; two passport photographs; original medical certificate clearing the applicant of any communicable diseases; health insurance card; original and copy of the applicant's Emirates ID card or registration of the same; original local rental contract; and the original or certified copy of the valid commercial licence and establishment card of the sponsoring company/employer. Fees apply.

Since 1 June 2012, expatriates seeking to renew their residence visas must submit a copy of their local rental contract, as well as present valid utility bills in support of their contract across all Emirates (including Abu Dhabi). A new visa applications will also require the submission of an original tenancy agreement (in the name of the sponsor), attested by the relevant municipality, the latest utility bill or, in case of new contracts, the receipt of the rental deposit. Note, one cannot apply for a residency visa in one emirate, with a tenancy contract issued by another emirate.

In Abu Dhabi and Dubai expatriates must have local medical insurance and any residence visa renewal applications will need to be accompanied by proof of valid medical insurance.

The Emirates ID Card is a legal document which the holder is required to carry at all times. Any changes in details stored on the card have to be brought to the notice of the [Emirates Identity Authority](#) within a month from the date of change. Likewise, the timely renewal of the card, or the replacement of a damaged ID card lies within the duties of the card holder. In order to prevent identity theft and secure all information stored on the card, all card holders are legally required to report loss or theft of their ID cards as soon as possible.

UAE citizens and residents may also use their Emirates ID for travelling by adding the E-gate service to it. The service can be added by visiting any of the Residency and Foreigners Affairs departments across the UAE, UAE Airports, Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry, etc. All expatriates need is a valid Emirates ID card, with at least six months validity of the passport and valid residency visa. The service fee is AED 150 and facility is valid for two years from the date it is added to the card.

N.B. In July 2014, Dubai Emirate introduced electronic contracts ('e-contracts') and e-labour cards to replace paper contracts and plastic labour cards. Foreign workers are able to apply for initial work visa approval through the Ministry of Labour's online portal ('eNetwasal'), and after arrival (within 60 days) should apply online again for an e-card and e-contract that will be issued electronically and which the worker can print out. The Ministry forwards electronic copies to the [Emirates ID Authority](#) and [Dubai General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs](#). The e-card and e-contract are now required to obtain a residency visa or Emirates ID smart card.

[Abu Dhabi eGovernment Gateway](#)

[Dubai – General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Fujairah – General Directorate of Residence & Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Ras al-Khaimah \(RAK\) e-Government](#)

[Sharjah – General Directorate of Residency & Foreigners Affairs](#)

[Emirates Identity Authority](#)

Ministry of Interior

## Registration

Foreign nationals are advised to register with their own embassy or consulate and to notify them of any subsequent changes of address. In some cases this can be done online.

The UAE introduced a mandatory biometric identity card scheme in 2008. Obtaining a national identity card is mandatory for all residents, including the spouses and dependants of expatriates; ID cards are now the condition for obtaining a health card, as well as for a range of other public and government services, such as opening up a bank account, vehicle registration and driving licence renewals. The Emirates Identity Authority provides further information, as well as online forms for registration. Required documents will include the 'pre-registration' application form, valid passport and residence or entry visa, and the applicable fee, which is dependent on the length of the visa (currently AED 100 per year of residence (half of that for minors under 15 years of age, plus a AED 70 service fee). Expatriates also need to visit one of the registration centres of the authority (located across the country) to complete the recording of their biometrics (finger prints and photo) in case of applicants aged 15 years and old.

Foreign workers must register for Emirates ID cards before taking medical tests to renew or apply for residency visas. Dubai is the last of the seven emirates to require valid ID cards (since April 2012) before the visa process is begun. The aim is to integrate data from labour cards, visas, and other ID documents and to simplify government transactions. The cards are official identification and feature name, address, photo, date of birth, and fingerprints.

ID cards must be renewed within 30 days of their expiration. Expatriates who fail to renew their ID card in time are subject to fines (AED 20 per day past an ID card's expiry date, up to a maximum of AED 1 000).

Emirates Identity Authority

## Travel

### Getting there

#### Air

The main international airports for the United Arab Emirates are:

[Abu Dhabi International Airport](#) (AUH), 30 km east of the city centre.

[Dubai International Airport](#) (DXB), 4 km east of the city centre.

Other gateways to the country include:

[Al Ain International Airport](#) (AAN), 13 km west of the city centre.

[Dubai World Central / Al Maktoum International Airport](#) (DWC), 37 km south-west of the city centre.

[Ras Al Khaimah International Airport](#) (RKT), 15 km south of the city centre.

[Sharjah International Airport](#) (SHJ), 10 km east of the city centre.

Abu Dhabi and Dubai offer the greatest choice of international connections.

[Emirates Airline](#), operating from Dubai, and [Ethiad Airways](#), based in Abu Dhabi, serve an extensive international flight network. [Air Arabia](#), based in Sharjah, is a low-cost carrier that operates flights to/from over 100 destinations across the Middle East, North Africa, Asia and Europe. Bahrain-based [Gulf Air](#) also operates regular services to and from Europe and between major airports in the area.

N.B. Since the start of the diplomatic row with Qatar, in June 2017, land, air and sea traffic routes between the UAE and Qatar have been cut off. However, flights can still be taken via other countries (e.g. Oman and Kuwait, which have remained neutral in the conflict). Qatari nationals are currently banned from entering the country.

Dubai counts among the busiest airports in the world and is served by over 70 scheduled airlines; it is one of the region's major stopover points for long-haul flights between Europe and Asia/Australasia. A complementary airport, Al Maktoum International / Dubai World Central (DWC), in south-west Dubai, part of the massive [Dubai South](#) urban development project, became operational (for cargo only) in June 2010. The airport, which aims to become the world's largest passenger and cargo hub, became operational for passenger traffic in October 2013; a project to expand the existing passenger terminal is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2018.

#### Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi is served by [Abu Dhabi International Airport](#) (AUH), 30 km east of the city centre.

There is no train service from Abu Dhabi Airport. The only public transport option is an air conditioned bus service (No A1), operated by the [Department of Transport](#), which departs from all three terminals at the airport, calling at the bus stand at Muroor and Street 11 and terminating on Al Nasr Street in the centre (near NYU Abu Dhabi). The service runs every 30–60 minutes, 24 hours a day, and travel time is approximately 65–80 minutes (end to end) depending on traffic.

There is a taxi pick up area outside Terminal 1 and 2 (a short walk from Terminal 3) for metered taxis. Limousines are available from Terminals 1 and 3 and have fixed rates, which are controlled by Abu Dhabi International Airport. Journey time to Abu Dhabi city centre is approximately 30 minutes.



Average transport costs from ECA's Cost of Living Survey (all costs are quoted in local currency except where stated otherwise):

<b>Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi International)</b>	
Taxi – 2 miles/3 km within city, including tip:	9.1
Taxi – airport to city centre with luggage, including tip:	75.0
Bus – airport to city centre:	4.0

## Dubai

The main airport for Dubai is [Dubai International Airport](#) (DXB), 4 km east of the city centre.

Another gateway to the city is [Dubai World Central / Al Maktoum International Airport](#) (DWC), 37 km south-west of the city centre.

Route	Average flight duration
Sydney to Dubai	14 hours 35 minutes
New York NY to Dubai	15 hours 30 minutes (via London)
London to Dubai	7 hours 10 minutes
Hong Kong to Dubai	8 hours

At Dubai International Airport (DXB), both Terminals 1 and 3 have dedicated metro stations, with the Red Line of the [Dubai Metro](#) connecting passengers to the city centre and all the way to Jebel Ali Port in the south-west of the city. Services start 05.50 (05.30 on Thursday), and stop at midnight (01.00 on Thursday/Friday); there is no service on Friday mornings until 13.00. The trains run every ten minutes and commuters are allowed up to two pieces of luggage (one being hand luggage).

The bus stations are located opposite both Terminals 1 and 2. The [Dubai Road and Transport Authority \(RTA\)](#) offers a Sky Bus Service (Terhab) that covers 12 routes, providing direct connections to hotels across the city. Please note, passengers need to purchase a NOL card (an electronic smart card) to use this service (available at airport information kiosks); cash payments are not accepted.

The [Dubai Taxi Corporation](#) has a fleet of cars available at all three terminals, available 24 hours a day. Journey time to the city centre is approximately 20 minutes.

**Dubai World Central (DWC) / Al Maktoum International Airport:** The airport is linked to the city and Dubai International by buses operated by the [Dubai Roads and Transport Authority \(RTA\)](#).

Throughout the time the metro is operational, Bus No F55 travels between the airport and Ibn Battuta Metro Station (every hour); Bus No N55 travels between the airport and the Al Ghubaiba Bus Station when the metro is not in operation.

Average transport costs from ECA's Cost of Living Survey (all costs are quoted in local currency except where stated otherwise):

<b>Dubai (Dubai International)</b>	
Taxi – 2 miles/3 km within city, including tip:	15.0
Taxi – airport to city centre with luggage, including tip:	67.6
Bus – airport to city centre:	5.0

## Fujairah

Fujairah is served by [Dubai International Airport](#) (DXB), 125 km west of Fujairah city centre.

While there is a small airport in Fujairah, it has only very limited scheduled passenger services and only to/from Abu Dhabi. Dubai International Airport is the closest international airport to Fujairah, and can be accessed by either bus or taxi. There is a [Dubai Road and Transport Authority \(RTA\)](#) service, the E700 connecting Dubai to Fujairah, departing from the arrivals area at Terminal 1. The bus runs between 06.45 and 22.00 with services departing up to every 45 minutes with a journey time of approximately two hours to Fujairah centre.

Alternatively, passengers can hire a taxi from any of the terminals at Dubai airport and the journey time to Fujairah is approximately 1 hour 30 minutes, covering a distance of 125 km.

## International departure tax

No airport tax is levied on passengers upon embarkation at the airport.

## Road

There is a good road from Oman and one from Saudi Arabia, which connects to the Trans–Arabian Highway. There are daily buses connecting Abu Dhabi and Dubai to Oman. Other services connect the two cities with Saudi Arabia and there are bus links between Abu Dhabi and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

## Water

Cruise ships regularly dock at Abu Dhabi and the cruise terminal in Dubai. There are passenger services to Europe, the US, the Far East and Australia. In addition, there are regular sailings between Sharjah and Bandar–e–Abbas in Iran.

The main ports (*mina*) are Jebel Ali and Rashid ports in Dubai, Zayed in Abu Dhabi, Khalid in Sharjah, Saqr in Ras al Khaimah and Fujairah.

International cruise lines serving UAE ports include: [Princess Cruises](#), [Silversea](#), [Regent Seven Seas](#), and [Royal Caribbean International](#).

## Health and safety

### Personal safety

There is a general threat of terrorism in the UAE. Terrorists have issued threats to attack Western interests including residential compounds, oil, transport and aviation facilities. Attacks could be indiscriminate and could happen at any time, including in places frequented by foreign travellers and expatriates. Visitors should observe a high level of security awareness, especially in public places.

In 2018, in connection with the civil war in Yemen, in which the UAE is involved as part of Saudi–led coalition fighting a Houthi rebel insurgency, numerous missiles were launched into Saudi Arabia from Yemen. The vast majority of these were intercepted and destroyed but there have been a small number of casualties. Claims have been made in the public media suggesting that there may also be attempts to target missiles at the UAE. In the event of any incidents, visitors are advised to monitor local media reports and follow the advice of the authorities.

Events in the Middle East, including Iraq and the Middle East Peace Process, can impact on local public opinion. Foreign visitors are advised to follow news reports and be alert to local and regional developments, which might trigger public disturbances.

In June 2017, the UAE authorities (along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt) announced the suspension of diplomatic relations with Qatar and all air and sea points of entry between UAE and Qatar were closed on 6 June 2017. There are further restrictions on travel and residence affecting UAE and Qatar nationals. On 7 June 2017, the UAE authorities announced that showing sympathy for Qatar on social media or by any other means of communication is an offence. Offenders could be imprisoned and subject to a substantial fine. At time of writing, in July 2018, the blockade against Qatar continuous.

Anyone considering sea travel should note that many areas of the Gulf are highly sensitive, including near maritime boundaries and the islands of Abu Musa and the Tunbs in the southern Gulf. Vessels entering these areas have been detained and inspected.

Excursions to the desert can be dangerous without a properly equipped 4x4 vehicle. Visitors are advised to always travel in convoy with other cars, to take a supply of water and a mobile telephone, and to leave a copy of travel plans with friends or relatives. At beaches, rip currents can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea; visitors are advised to comply with warning signs (e.g. red flags) and only swim at approved beaches.

Equipment like satellite phones, listening or recording devices, radio transmitters, powerful cameras or binoculars, may require a licence for use in the UAE and visitors are advised to seek advice from their nearest UAE embassy.

There is zero tolerance for drugs–related offences. The penalties for drug trafficking, smuggling and possession, of even residual amounts, of drugs are severe. Sentences for drug trafficking can include the death penalty and possession of even the smallest amount of illegal drugs can lead to a minimum four–year jail sentence. The authorities count even the presence of drugs in the blood stream as possession. Visitors should take care over the import of prescription drugs, some over–the–counter drugs and certain substances known as herbal highs (e.g. Spice or Space), which can include synthetic cannabinoids. Many people stop off in UAE airports on their way to other destinations. Transiting passengers should note that UAE airports have excellent technology and security, and passengers carrying even residual amounts of drugs are arrested.

Personal attacks, including sexual assault and rape, are rare, but do happen. Female visitors should take care when walking or travelling alone and only use reputable taxi companies, particularly at night. Drinks should not be left unattended or accepted from strangers as they may be spiked.

Islamic religious values are greatly respected in the UAE. Showing any disrespect towards religious beliefs or practices is considered deeply offensive and very likely to result in a heavy fine and/or imprisonment. Especially during the holy month of Ramadan or when visiting religious sites, visitors are advised to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and not to cause offence. In 2019, the holy month of Ramadan is expected to start on 6 May and finish on 4 June.

**Sexual relationships in the UAE:** It is against the law to live together or to share the same hotel room with someone of the opposite sex to whom one is not married or closely related to. Public displays of affection are frowned upon, and there have been several arrests for kissing in public. Sex outside marriage is illegal and if any offenders are brought to the attention of the UAE authorities they run the risk of prosecution, imprisonment and/or a fine and deportation. In 2013, a Norwegian woman who reported her rape to Dubai police was instead convicted of sex outside marriage and illegal consumption of alcohol. Same-sex marriages and civil partnerships are not recognised and homosexual relationships are illegal. Cross-dressing is illegal.

Problems will be encountered if an unmarried woman gives birth in the UAE; these can range from a refusal to issue a birth certificate to arrest, imprisonment and deportation of both the mother and her partner. Doctors may ask for proof of marriage during ante-natal checks. To get a birth certificate from the UAE authorities, evidence of a marriage certificate must be provided. The registration authorities may compare the date of the marriage against the date of birth.

## Health risks

Colds and flu are fairly common, caused by the change in temperature between air-conditioned interiors and the heat outside. Absorbent clothing should be worn and additional liquids and salt taken. It is necessary to protect the skin from the sun. Visitors should take precautions against heat exhaustion and sunstroke. Drinking water in Abu Dhabi and Dubai is provided by distillation plants; in Dubai and Sharjah sweet well water is piped from inland and is considered safe. However, many people prefer to drink only bottled mineral water. Milk is pasteurised and safe to drink, though some dairy products may have been made from unpasteurised milk. Powdered and tinned milk is available. Meat, fish and vegetables should be well-cooked and fruit peeled.

In 2012, cases of respiratory illness caused by Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV), previously called 'novel coronavirus', were identified in multiple countries on the Arabian peninsula, including in the UAE. MERS-CoV causes severe human infections resulting in high mortality and has demonstrated the ability to transmit between humans. Dromedary camels have been identified as an important host species for MERS-CoV. According to a World Health Organisation (WHO) release at the end of May 2018, a total of 2 220 laboratory-confirmed cases of Mers-CoV infections had been reported globally since September 2012; at least 790 patients have died of the disease, with the majority of fatalities (716) in Saudi Arabia. The UAE last reported a case of MERS-CoV in May 2018. Travellers are strongly advised to seek medical attention without delay if they develop fever and symptoms of lower respiratory illness, such as a cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days of traveling from countries in or near the Arabian Peninsula.

All travellers are advised to update their tetanus vaccination. Immunisation against hepatitis A and hepatitis B is sometimes recommended; if staying in smaller cities or rural areas where good food and water hygiene is not possible, vaccination against typhoid may also be considered. Rabies is present close to the border with Oman. In general, only those working with animals and people who are taking long trips or moving to remote areas in the country are advised to consider vaccination. Tick-borne typhus can occur and visitors should take precautions against bites from sandflies and ticks. Shoes should be worn outdoors to avoid soil-borne parasites.

Routine vaccinations that all travellers are advised to be up-to-date on include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR), diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis, varicella (chickenpox), polio, and the annual flu shot. Expatriates should seek advice from their doctor/physician well in advance of departure, eight weeks being recommended time frame.

## Travel advisories

[Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#)  
[Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada](#)  
[German Federal Foreign Office](#)  
[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan \(MOFA\)](#)  
[Netherlands Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken](#)  
[New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade](#)  
[République Française Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes](#)  
[Spanish Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación](#)  
[United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office](#)  
[U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs](#)

## Travel money

Currency regulations relate to the import and export of currencies based on normal travel expenses and are subject to frequent change. Expatriates should consult with the appropriate national bank for details on current payments and capital payments.

## Entering

Local currency and foreign currencies may be imported. However, currency exceeding AED 100 000 (or equivalent) must be declared on arrival (for monitoring and statistical purposes).

## Leaving

Local currency and foreign currencies: no restrictions.

## Duty-free allowances

Visitors may import the following free of duty:

Alcohol: 4 litres of any kind of alcohol or 24 cans of beer (non-Muslims only).

Tobacco: 400 cigarettes worth up to AED 2 000, cigars up to a maximum value of AED 3 000, and 2 kg of loose tobacco (not applicable to snuff or chewing tobacco).

Perfumes: Perfumes or any other gifts provided for personal use, to a value of AED 3 000.

## Getting around

### Air

There are no direct commercial domestic flights. It is possible to fly from Abu Dhabi to Dubai via stop-over in a neighbouring country. However, internal flights can also be chartered, with small landing fields throughout the UAE. Charter companies include: [Air Charter International](#), which is Dubai-based, and [Royal Jet](#), an Abu Dhabi-based company.

### Domestic departure tax

No airport tax is levied on passengers upon embarkation at the airport.

### Rail

In March 2009, the Ministerial Council of Services approved a draft law regarding the establishment of a federal railway corporation, [Etihad Rail](#), with a mandate to develop, construct and operate the country's national railway.

On completion, Etihad Rail will cover a network of up to 1 200 km stretching across the Emirates and linking the principal centres of population and industry. The railway will connect the UAE to Saudi Arabia via Ghweifat in the west and Oman via Al Ain in the east. The initial section will cater for freight, but the completed network will carry passenger services. The first phase of the project (freight services from Shah and Habshan to Ruwais) was completed at the end of 2015.

[Etihad Rail](#)

[Federal Transport Authority](#)

## Road

An excellent network of roads has been constructed in the UAE with the capitals of all the Emirates connected, mostly by four-lane dual carriageways, and good tarmac roads linking the major towns and villages. Further roads are being built and planned.

Driving is on the right. Speed limits are 60–80 km/h in towns and 100–120 km/h elsewhere. There are fines for speeding and drink-drive penalties are severe: a jail sentence, a large fine and possible deportation. Mobile/cellular phone use whilst driving is prohibited. Minor expressions of 'road rage', such as rude gestures, can incur significant penalties and drivers are advised to display reasonable calm at all times. The wearing of seat belts is mandatory. Children under the age of 12 must sit in the backseat. More specific traffic rules can vary from one emirate to another.

Traffic congestion in the main cities is worst between the hours of 07.00 and 09.00, 13.00 and 14.00, and 18.00 and 20.00. Expatriates should note traffic accidents are common and driving can be erratic. Anyone involved in an accident on the road should follow the prescribed procedures of the relevant emirate they are in. It is generally illegal to leave the scene of an accident.

Petrol/gasoline types available include 95 ('special') and 98 ('super') octane, as well as diesel. Major petrol station chains in the UAE include [Emarat](#), [ADNOC](#) and [ENOC/EEPCO](#). While it used to be that most petrol stations accepted cash only, they now also accept debit cards and 'fuel cards' that can be loaded and topped-up with cash or a credit card (e.g. Emarat Cards, ADNOC Plus Cards and ENOC Cards). Both ADNOC and ENOC/EEPCO also recently (2016) launched 'smart tags' that can be installed in one's vehicle and allow for completely automated refuelling without any actual payment interaction at the petrol station.

N.B. Those wishing to go 'Wadi-bashing' will require a four-wheel drive vehicle and should always travel with at least one other vehicle in their party. It is strongly advised to carry a mobile phone at all times and to take a good supply of water. Travel plans should also be communicated to friends and/or relatives.

## Buses

A limited bus service connects the major towns but is little used by expatriates. Intercity buses are only available within the emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai, connecting the capitals of the latter two, as well as Al Ain and Muscat in Oman. Private buses can also be hired, e.g. from the [Arabian Transport Company](#).

## Taxis

Taxis, normally air-conditioned, are available in the towns and are generally metered in the major towns. A taxi fare will usually consist of the basic starting rate (which varies depending on whether the journey is during the day or night), and an additional charge per kilometre travelled.

Most taxi drivers do not speak English very well and are not always familiar with street names, so it helps to know where one is going (or have the address written down) and have a contact telephone number for one's destination in case of getting lost.

Shared or single-occupancy long-distance taxis are also available and can be picked up near the main bus stations.

## Car hire

Cars can be hired for use in the Emirates and the major international companies (including Avis, Budget, Europcar, Hertz and Thrifty) have offices at the international airports and hotels. Smaller, local firms also operate. There is a good choice of cars and rates are reasonable (although variable). Chauffeur-drive and delivery/collection services are available.

Driving licence regulations differ between emirates. When hiring a car, expatriates will need to present their national licence and international driving permit, valid passport and two passport photographs.

A number of car hire companies offer a worldwide booking and reservation service online. Companies include:

[Alamo](#)  
[Avis](#)  
[Budget](#)  
[Dollar](#)  
[easyCar](#)  
[Europcar](#)  
[Hertz](#)  
[Holiday Autos](#)  
[National](#)  
[Payless](#)  
[Sixt](#)  
[Thrifty](#)

## Motoring

Expatriate families will normally require at least one car, which can be bought locally. Many families buy a four-wheel drive vehicle for general safety and for driving in the desert. Due to the hot and humid climate, rust-proofing of cars is advisable; the average life of an unprotected car is three years. Frequent servicing is required.

The vast majority of cars available in the UAE are Japanese models, e.g. Honda, Toyota and Nissan, though other major makes, such as Peugeot, Ford, BMW and Mercedes are also readily available.

## Driving licence and car insurance

Expatriates will wish to drive themselves, since there is little in the way of satisfactory alternative forms of travel. It is advisable for all adult members of the family to learn to drive and to hold a valid national driving licence before leaving for the UAE.

Foreign visitors are only permitted to drive in the UAE with a valid international driving permit (IDP), in conjunction with their national driving licence. Car hire companies will require foreign customers to present their IDP and national licence, along with a valid passport and two passport photographs. Foreign short-term visitors planning to drive a private car will require temporary driving permits, which are valid throughout the UAE, regardless of which emirate the permit was issued in. For this, again, they will require their national licence and IDP, a valid passport and two passport photographs. Temporary licences are issued for a period of up to six months.

Expatriates who are relocating to the UAE should note that the IDP is only considered adequate for legally driving in the country up until the point that a residence visa has been issued. From that date onward, UAE residents must obtain a local (permanent) licence, which is issued (in Dubai) by the [Roads & Transport Authority \(RTA\)](#); for licence issue in Abu Dhabi, please see the 'Motoring and Travel' section in the [Abu Dhabi Government Portal](#).

Expatriates who are holding licences from countries whose licences are not recognised by the UAE or whose passport and licence were not issued by the same country, must undertake at least 20 driving sessions at a recognised driving centre and undergo an eye examination and an on-road driving test with an RTA examiner. Foreign residents will also require a No Objection Letter from their employer/sponsor, their original (foreign licence) and an affidavit from the relevant consulate stating that they do in fact have a valid licence from that country. Original documents must be presented, together with notarised translations in case of licences from non-English (or Arabic) speaking countries (GCC countries excepted). Permanent licences for residence visa-holders are issued for a period of up to ten years.

Nationals of the following countries may transfer their existing home country driving licence without having to take a driving test and/or lessons: Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea Republic, Kuwait, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States. N.B. Canadian licence holders must additionally provide a letter from their embassy/consulate verifying that their licence is genuine.

Prospective expatriates should note that passing the local driving test is not said to be easy or straightforward. Some expatriates have reported that it is common to fail the test several times.

Third Party insurance is compulsory for drivers of private cars; the cost is based on the cubic capacity of the vehicle. Comprehensive insurance is recommended.

## Average car prices

	1600 cc AED	2000 cc AED	3500 cc AED
<b>New car price</b>	81221	143636	187866

The quoted prices include the cost of air-conditioning.

New car price averages reflect models (among others) by the following manufacturers: Audi, Ford, Honda, Mazda, Peugeot, Toyota, Volkswagen and Volvo.



## Average running costs

All costs are given in local currency except where stated otherwise.

	1600 cc	2000 cc	3500 cc
<b>Insurance</b>	4853	5776	10156
<b>Road Tax</b>	340	340	340

Road tax figures listed here refer to annual car registration fee, which is handled by the car dealer for the first year of ownership. From the second year onwards, the annual car registration is the responsibility of the owner.

The average cost of two routine services, comprising ten hours in total, is AED 2036. Servicing costs will vary according to car size, model and age of vehicle.

## Motoring organisations

[Arabian Automobile Association](#)

## Abu Dhabi

The [Abu Dhabi Metro Project](#) is included in the 'Abu Dhabi Master Transport Plan 2030'; after stalling for several years, it is yet unclear, at time of writing, when the project will be (commenced and) completed. Once operational, the metro rail will cover approximately 131 km of track and will mainly connect the new Central Business District on Al Maryah Island (formerly Sowwah Island), with Reem Island, Saadiyat Island, Yas Island, Abu Dhabi International Airport and Masdar, Capital City District, Emerald Gateway, Zayed Sports City and ADNEC.

The [Department of Municipal Affairs and Transport](#) operates an extensive bus network for local and regional destinations around Abu Dhabi, serving areas including Al Marina, Al Mina Fish Market, Al Marryah Sowwah Square and Khalifa Park.

Travelling by taxi is very popular in Abu Dhabi due to the low metered fares. Taxis can be flagged down at the roadside or pre-booked, and are usually silver with a yellow roof sign. After 22.00 there is a minimum fare set which the passenger must pay even if the meter shows less.

## Dubai

A high-speed, driverless metro system is in operation in Dubai. The [Dubai Metro](#) currently has two lines serving the city. The Red Line runs from Al Rashidiya through to Jebel Ali, stopping at popular destinations including the airport (Terminals 1 and 3), Al Karama, Emirates Towers, and Dubai Marina. The Green Line travels from Etisalat in a semi-circle to Dubai Creek, calling at stations including Abu Hail, Union and Palm Deira. Operating hours are 06.00 to 23.00 on Saturdays to Thursdays and 14.00 to 24.00 on Fridays, with services every four minutes during peak hours and every seven minutes off-peak. Three further lines ('Blue', 'Purple' and 'Gold') are also proposed.

The bus service in Dubai is operated by the [Roads and Transport Authority \(RTA\)](#), overseen by the Government of Dubai.

All journeys on public transport (including the metro, trams, buses and the water bus) must be paid via the contactless NOL Card, onto which credits can be loaded. The city is split up into seven zones, which determine the price of one's journey.

Taxis are a popular mode of transport in Dubai and there are many ranks located across the city, mostly outside the malls and hotels. It is possible to hail a taxi in the street, although at peak times it is advisable to pre-book as the demand is high. Taxis are metered and the rates are the same across all of the companies. The [Dubai Taxi Corporation](#) operates metered cabs, publishes its fares online, and is a subsidiary of the Dubai RTA.

[Dubai Bus](#) has more information on all transport services in the city, including an online journey planner and network maps.

## Fujairah

There is no train service in Fujairah, and bus transport is mostly confined to private buses used for schools, colleges and company transport.

Taxis are plentiful in the city and are the best way to get around. They can be hailed in the street or found at one of the many ranks across the city. The majority of taxis are yellow with green stripes, the fares are metered and start at a low cost, both day and night.

## Hotels

All of the Emirates provide excellent hotel accommodation and international credit cards are accepted as standard.

N.B. In Abu Dhabi a standard 10% service charge, 6–10% municipality fee, and a 'tourism dirham fee' of AED 20 per night are applied in hotels.

In Dubai, hospitality services incur a 10% municipality tax, 10% service charge and a 'tourism dirham fee' of AED 7–AED 20 per night (depending on the type of accommodation), although these charges are often already included in the final bill.

Effective 1 January 2018, value added tax (VAT) of 5% is also applicable in all emirates.

Accommodation listed in this report is a sample selection of three, four and five star hotels available in the country. This is not an exhaustive list and other hotels are available.

★★★★★ Luxury    ★★★★ Business    ★★★ Tourist

### Abu Dhabi



InterContinental Abu Dhabi, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz / Al Saud Street, Abu Dhabi.

Located in the north–western Al Khubeirah district of the city, near the Central Bank of the UAE headquarters, and many embassies and international schools.



Shangri-La Hotel, Qaryat Al Beri, Khor Al Maqta, Qaryat al Beri, Abu Dhabi.

Located on a one–kilometre stretch of private beach overlooking the strait that separates Abu Dhabi Island from the mainland, 15 minutes' drive from the Corniche and the city centre, which are north–west of the hotel.



Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel & Resort, Corniche Rd East, Abu Dhabi.

Located between Al Markaziyah and the Tourist Club Area, overlooking the Corniche.



Crowne Plaza Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Hamdan St, Abu Dhabi.

This city–centre hotel is on Abu Dhabi's main street, surrounded by businesses, restaurants and shops. It is 5 minutes from the Corniche and less than 10 minutes from Abu Dhabi Mall and Marina.



Hilton Abu Dhabi Hotel, Corniche Rd West, Abu Dhabi.

Located on the waterfront, opposite Marina Shopping Mall, ten minutes from the city centre.



Mercure Abu Dhabi Centre Hotel, Sheikh Hamdan Bin Mohammed St / Muroor Rd, Abu Dhabi.

Located in Al Markaziyah, a popular shopping and business district, within walking distance of the Western Extension Corniche facing Lulu Island.

### Average hotel prices in Abu Dhabi

Prices are quoted in local currency unless otherwise stated.

Range of hotel prices from ECA's Daily Rates Report:

★★★★★	769 – 2400
★★★★	726 – 1062
★★★	330 – 839



## Ajman



[Kempinski Hotel Ajman](#), Sheikh Humaid Bin Rashid al-Nuaimi Street, Ajman.  
Situated at the end of the Ajman Corniche, 25 km from Dubai International Airport.



[Ramada Hotel and Suites Ajman](#), Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Rd, Al Rashidiya 1, Ajman.  
Located in downtown Ajman, near the Noor Al Kawthar Mall and the Ajman City Centre Mall.

## Dubai



[JW Marriott Hotel Dubai](#), Abu Baker al-Siddique Rd, Deira, Dubai.  
Located in the business district, adjacent to Hamarain Shopping Centre, ten minutes' drive from the airport.



[Sheraton Dubai Creek Hotel & Towers](#), Baniyas St/Creek Rd, Dubai.  
Located overlooking Dubai Creek, a short walk to Dubai's main shopping and commercial areas, 7km from the airport.



[Crowne Plaza Hotel Dubai](#), Sheikh Zayed Al Nahyan Rd, Dubai.  
Located opposite the World Trade Center, just steps from the Emirates Towers metro station; Dubai Mall and the Burj Khalifa are a seven-minute shuttle ride away.



[Hilton Dubai Creek Hotel](#), Baniyas St, Dubai.  
Located in the Deira Business District, ten minutes from the airport and the Airport Free Zone.



[Holiday Inn Express Dubai – Safa Park](#), Sheikh Zayed Rd and Al Wasl Rd, Al Wasl District, Dubai.  
Located in the city centre, between the Business Bay Metro Station (400m to the north) and Safa Park.



[Ibis World Trade Centre](#), Sheikh Zayed Rd, Dubai.  
Part of the Dubai Convention and Exhibition Centre; World Trade Centre metro station is just opposite the hotel.

## Average hotel prices in Dubai

Prices are quoted in local currency unless otherwise stated.

Range of hotel prices from ECA's Daily Rates Report:

	888 – 2436
	497 – 2051
	451 – 756

## Fujairah



[Concorde Hotel Fujairah](#), Hamad Bin Abdulla Rd, PO Box 3588, Fujairah.  
Located in downtown Fujairah, along the city's main road, five minutes' drive from the international airport and 15 minutes away from the port.



[Le Méridien Al Aqah Beach Resort](#), Dibba Rd, PO Box 3070, Fujairah.  
Located approximately 30 km north of Fujairah town, on its own private beach.



[Hotel Novotel Fujairah](#), Hamad Bin Abdulla Rd, PO Box 2751, Fujairah.  
Located in the city centre, in the heart of the business and commercial district.



[Al Diar Siji Hotel](#), Hamad Bin Abdulla Rd, PO Box 1199, Fujairah.  
Located in the heart of the city centre.

## Ras al Khaimah



[Cove Rotana Resort – Ras Al Khaimah](#), Sheikh Muhammad Bin Salem Rd (E11), Ras Al-Khaimah.  
Located on an idyllic water inlet on the Ras Al Khaimah beachfront overlooking the sea, 8 km from the city centre and 20 km from the airport.



[Hilton Ras Al Khaimah Hotel](#), Al Maareedh St, Ras Al-Khaimah.  
Centrally located, in the northern Al Maareedh area, overlooking the harbour; ca. 25 minutes' drive from the airport.

## Sharjah



[Radisson Blu Resort, Sharjah](#), Corniche Rd, Sharjah.  
Located just off the Corniche Rd (S101) and Ahmed Bin Darwish Square, near the city's cultural and historical attractions, as well as key business and shopping districts.



[Sharjah Carlton Hotel](#), Al Meena St / Al Khan St, Sharjah.  
Located on the seafront, in the Al Kaledia suburb, less than 500 m from the Al Khan Historic Area and the Sharjah Maritime Museum.

## Umm al Quwain



[Umm al Quwain Beach Hotel](#), Sheikh Saud Bin Rashid Al Mualla St, Al Maidan, Umm al Qaiwain.  
Located on the beach of Umm al Quwain.

## Relocation

### Shipping

#### Personal effects and household goods

Used household goods and personal effects are duty-free for foreign nationals coming for the first time as residents to the UAE. Owners must be present at customs clearance and shipments should arrive within one month of the expatriate's arrival in the country. All shipments are subject to inspection (additional charges can be incurred). New items and those for which an invoice cannot be produced are dutiable at 5% of their assessed cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value; the CIF value is determined by customs officials; for duty purposes the inventory should not state the value of new items. All printed matter, plus records, CDs, computer software, etc., is subject to censorship and must be packed separately for inspection and listed in detail in the inventory.

The following documents will be required: customs forms, passport copy stamped with valid residence permit/employment visa and entry stamp (first entry in Dubai upon initiating Residence Visa process); confirmation letter from the employer/sponsor in the UAE; detailed original inventory plus one copy, two original bills of lading plus one copy; and insurance policy. N.B. Failure to provide all relevant documentation can result in customs officials applying duty to a shipment.

[Abu Dhabi Customs Authority](#)

[Dubai Customs](#)

[Fujairah Customs Department](#)

[Sharjah Customs](#)

### Cars

There is an import restriction of one vehicle per adult person and vehicles may not be more than five years old on entry. Vehicles can only be registered if the owner is holding a valid UAE residence visa. If an expatriate family wishes to import two cars, they must register each vehicle under the name of a different family member. Cars must also be shipped in separate containers. All vehicles must meet UAE specifications, e.g. it is prohibited to import cars with tinted windows. On clearing customs, the customs authorities will issue a vehicle clearance certificate which expatriates must submit to their Local Traffic Authority in order to register the car in their name.

The importer/consignee must be present at time of customs clearance. The following documents will be required: passport; UAE residence permit; vehicle's original certificate of origin; original purchase invoice or proof of ownership; two original bills of lading (plus copies); export declaration and certificate from the customs authorities in the country of export; and a valid insurance certificate. The bill of lading should show the vehicle's chassis number, engine number, make, model, year and colour.

Expatriates are advised to supply an official estimate of the depreciated value of their used car at the time of import as all used vehicles are dutiable at 5% of the customs-assessed cost, insurance freight (CIF) value of the vehicle.

On payment of the applicable customs duty, the owner will be given a certificate of registration (*Vehicle Customs Certificate, VCC*), addressed to the local Traffic & Licensing Department.

N.B. A wide range of vehicles is available locally, together with necessary spare parts, so there is little need for expatriates to import their own cars.

[Abu Dhabi Customs Authority](#)

[Dubai Customs](#)

[Fujairah Customs Department](#)

[Sharjah Customs](#)

### Pets

Pet animals, by which is meant cats and dogs (older than four months), may be imported to the UAE duty-free if part of a removals shipment. For non-commercial imports, permits are issued for a maximum of two pets per person.

Imported pets must be micro-chipped for identification purposes and be accompanied by: a copy of the importer's passport; an import permit issued by the [United Arab Emirates Ministry of Climate Change & Environment \(UAE MOCCAE\)](#) (fee payable); airway bill of lading (AWB); veterinarian good health certificate (issued within ten days of travel); vaccination documentation, giving proof of a valid rabies vaccine record, with the most recent vaccine administered in the last 12 months; copy of analysis certificate, approved by an authorised laboratory in the country of origin, showing the results for a test for rabies infection. If the animal has received only one rabies vaccine in its lifetime, this must be administered more than 30 days before arrival (animals must be at least three months old for their first

rabies vaccination, which is why imported animals must be older than four months). Dogs should have also been vaccinated against DHPL, and cats against FHV-1, FPV, and feline calicivirus.

Import permits should be applied for at least two to three weeks before the animal's intended date of shipment. Health certificates may have to be obtained twice – once for the destination agent, in order for them to apply for the permit, and again for customs on arrival. N.B. The original import permit, along with a copy of the health certificate, should be attached to the AWB accompanying the pet. Animals may be imported as manifested cargo only. Import permits are not required from returning alien residents provided holding Re-entry permits.

The MOCCAE maintains a list of banned breeds of dogs. These include: Akita, American Bulldog, American Staffordshire Terrier, Dogo Argentino, Fila Brasileiro, Japanese Tosa, Neapolitan Mastiff, Pit Bull (including American Pit Bull Terriers), crosses of and between all of the above, as well as wolf dog hybrids.

The import of birds from Asian countries plus Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Tunisia is currently prohibited to prevent the spread of Avian Flu. Also banned, by separate legislation, are all kinds of living, tamed, wild birds and falcons, ornamental birds their products and their offal from Belgium, Czech Republic, Hungary, Indonesia, Kuwait, Laos, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain (Alava province), the UK (Oxfordshire), USA (Texas state) and Vietnam.

Non-compliance with import regulations can result in the deportation of the pet to country of origin at owner's expense or, in extreme cases, to the animal being destroyed. Any costs arising from a failure to comply with the import regulations (handling fees, animal shelter) are charged to the passenger accompanying the animal. Local veterinary service providers can offer assistance with pet relocations; e.g. in Dubai, the [Dubai Kennels & Cattery](#) and [The Dog House FZE](#), and in Abu Dhabi, the [American Veterinary Centre](#), the [British Veterinary Centre](#), with branches in central Abu Dhabi (Khalidya), in the Khalifa City suburb and Al Ain, and the [German Veterinary Clinic](#), located in Khalifa City.

N.B. Due to the extreme heat in the UAE, expatriates are generally not advised to bring their pets.

## Pet transport and insurance

[Air Animal](#) (United States) International pet moving services.

[International Pet and Animal Transportation Association \(IPATA\)](#) Links to pet shippers worldwide. Searchable database by IATA airport code or country.

[Petplan Ltd](#) (United Kingdom) Pet health insurance company with boarding kennel cover, worldwide transit cover and accident insurance.

## Prohibited and restricted items

### Prohibited imports

- Firearms, weapons and ammunition, as well as body protection and related items (e.g. cleaning kits, gun belts, etc.), require a special permit from the local authorities is required before transit or import can take place. Replica and toy guns are equally subject to confiscation.
- Fruits and vegetables and uncooked edible seafood from cholera infected areas.
- All fresh foods such as fruit, vegetables and dairy products, fish, seafood, meat and food stuffs from Japan, with a use-by date of less than two weeks. Foodstuffs, other than fresh foods, with validity exceeding two weeks, is permitted when accompanied by a Radiation Clearance Certificate issued by the Japanese Health Authorities.
- Narcotics and drugs. This includes prescription drugs, unless accompanied by a doctor's letter or the original prescription. N.B. This is a delicate area and regulations are particularly strict; even a few dried poppy seeds (e.g. in a dried flower arrangement) can lead to severe legal action, if not incur a lengthy prison sentence.
- Electronic cigarettes are illegal in the UAE and are likely to be confiscated at the border.
- Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited in the shipments of personal effects/household goods.
- Any erotic/pornographic material, including statues/figurines, as well as political and religious material, deemed offensive to the UAE government and to Islamic teachings and principles.
- Any items of Israeli origin (there is a blacklist).
- Pork and pork-derived products.
- Articles derived of endangered animals, including ivory.
- Cultivated pearls.
- Birds (live or dead), and bird-derived products are prohibited from all Asian countries, as well as Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, and any other countries that have been affected by Avian Flu. Birds in transit require a transit permit.

The following items are subject to censorship and confiscation (they must be packed separately and clearly marked on the inventory): printed matter, books, pictures, records, films, tapes, slides, movies, DVDs, CDs, computer software, etc.

## Restricted imports

- New items (duty charges may apply).
- Exposed film.
- Wireless instruments will require approval of the Police Department and the Ministry of Communication before they can be released by customs.
- Valuables, including coin and stamp collections of high value.
- Plant and plant materials require a phytosanitary certificate.
- Foodstuff (requires approval of and is subject to inspection by the Ministry of Health).
- Books and other media materials have to be approved by Ministry of Information before release. Political and religious material is especially scrutinised, even if inoffensive to the UAE and Islamic principles.
- Flammable and corrosive items. Chemical substances requires permission from Ministry of Health or Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, depending on the nature of the chemicals.
- Some prescribed and over-the-counter medicines that are available in other countries (e.g. the UK), are considered controlled/illegal substances in the UAE. When importing prescription medicines (a three-month supply may be taken by visitors; a 12-month supply in the case of residents), these must be accompanied by a doctor's letter or a copy of the original prescription. Visitors and prospective residents should contact the [Ministry of Health & Prevention](#) to check whether they will require prior permission before importing their medication; a list of currently (July 2018) prohibited and restricted substances that require prior approval is available [here](#).

## International removals and relocations

A number of companies will look after all removal problems. As well as organising the actual move, services include selling/managing property at home, finding suitable accommodation overseas and helping the expatriate family settle into a new environment. Companies include:

[AGS](#)

[AGS Expect Move Management Ltd](#)

[Arpin International Group](#)

[Crown Worldwide Group](#)

[IOR Global Services](#)

[North American Van Lines](#)

[Pickfords](#)

[Renmer International Movers](#)

[Santa Fe Relocation Services](#)

[Sterling Relocation](#)

[Team Relocations](#)

[TheMIGroup](#)

[TRC Global Solutions](#)

## Banking

As of November 2009, all workers in the UAE must be paid in the national currency (UAE Dirham), as part of the country's Wage Protection System (WPS). Pursuant to this legislation, all employees registered with the [Ministry of Labour \(MOL\)](#), irrespective of nationality, must be paid under the WPS. Payments are delivered through agents (banks, exchange houses and other third-party service providers), which are licensed by the Central Bank of the UAE. Once salaries have been received, funds can be remitted outside of the UAE using regulated channels.

Freezone companies and government entities may not be covered but these organisations should check directly with the MOL for clarification.

The [Central Bank of the UAE](#) may provide further information.

## Opening a bank account

Foreign nationals may open accounts in the United Arab Emirates. Applicants must provide their original passport, a valid residence visa and letter from their employer (also known as a 'salary certificate') stipulating salary and amount that will regularly be paid into the account. Some banks require a tenancy agreement to establish the residential address and identity photographs may also be required.

## Banking hours

08.00 to 13.00 Sunday to Thursday; 08.00 to 12.00 Friday.

## Central bank

[Central Bank of the UAE](#). Bank of issue.

## Commercial banks

[Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank \(ADCB\)](#)

[Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank \(ADIB\)](#)

[Ajman Bank](#)

[Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait \(ABK\)](#)

[Al Masraf](#)

[Arab African International Bank \(AAIB\)](#)

[Arab Bank](#)

[Bank of Baroda](#)

[Bank of Sharjah](#)

[Barclays Bank](#). Retail arm of Barclays has been sold to ADIB. Migration of customers by mid–November 2016.

[BLOM Bank](#)

[BNP Paribas](#)

[Citibank](#)

[Commercial Bank International](#)

[Commercial Bank of Dubai](#)

[Doha Bank](#)

[Dubai Islamic Bank](#)

[Emirates Islamic Bank](#)

[Emirates NBD](#)

[First Abu Dhabi Bank \(FAB\)](#)

[Habib Bank AG Zurich](#)

[HSBC](#)

[InvestBank](#)

[Mashreq](#)

[National Bank of Bahrain \(NBB\)](#)

[National Bank of Fujairah](#)

[National Bank of Ras al-Khaimah \(RAKBANK\)](#)

[National Bank of Umm Al Qaiwain \(NBQ\)](#)

[Noor Islamic Bank](#)

[Sharjah Islamic Bank](#)

[Standard Chartered Bank](#)

[Union National Bank](#)

[United Arab Bank](#)

## Insurance

Insurance can be taken out locally in the United Arab Emirates. Companies include:

[Abu Dhabi National Insurance Company \(ADNIC\)](#)

[Al Ain Ahlia Insurance Company](#)

[Al Dhafra Insurance Company](#)

[Al Fujairah National Insurance Company](#)

[Dubai National Insurance and Reinsurance](#)

[Dubai Insurance](#)

[Al Wathba National Insurance Company](#)

[Al Khazna Insurance Company](#)

[Emirates Insurance Company](#)

[National General Insurance \(NGI\)](#)

[Sharjah Insurance Company](#)

[Union Insurance Company](#)

[United Insurance Company](#)

## Finding a home

### Leasing arrangements

Tenancy agreements are typically for one year in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Fujairah, with an option to renew. The rent is usually payable six-monthly or annually in advance. Few landlords would agree to a lease of more than two years or less than one year. In Sharjah, tenancy agreements are usually for three years.

Occasionally, diplomatic clauses or 'break clauses' can be inserted in the contract, but this requires negotiation with the landlord and few will agree to this measure. If the rental contract is prematurely broken, it is difficult to get any refund as the rent is paid in advance. It is more common for diplomatic clauses to be allowed in Dubai, with two months' notice required and a typical penalty of 1–2 months' rent. Many landlords will insist that a replacement tenant must be found.

A lease renewal fee of AED 500 to AED 2 000 will typically be charged if an estate agent is used. It is important to verify and agree on this amount at the outset as some estate agents will try and charge much higher amounts. If the lease is renewed directly with the landlord, then there is generally no charge.

A refundable deposit is always required against any damage that may be caused to the property. These deposits are typically equivalent to 5% of the annual rent. In Fujairah and Sharjah, if the annual rent is less than AED 40 000, then there will typically be a fixed fee of AED 2 000.

The typical brokerage fee is equivalent to 5% of the annual rent plus 5% VAT, paid by the tenant. There is no legal maximum to the brokerage fee, though this is the standard amount charged by reputable agencies.

Rent is typically reviewed one month before the end of the lease.

Dubai's Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) periodically publishes a rental index as a guide to what levels rent should be and how much landlords are allowed to increase rent. This takes the form of a 'Rental Increase Calculator', which can be found [here](#); there are also rental index maps available from various sources.

Sharjah has legislation which prevents rental increases in the first three years of the contract, although this is not always observed.

### Estate agents and relocation agents

Branches across the United Arab Emirates:

[Asteco Property Management](#)

[Better Homes](#)

[Cluttons UAE](#)

#### Abu Dhabi

[CB Richard Ellis Abu Dhabi](#)

Sons of Darwish Building, Floor 2, Room 201, Zayed 1st Street, PO Box 53585, Abu Dhabi

[Crompton Partners](#)

International Tennis Stadium, Zayed Sports City, P.O. Box 94880, Abu Dhabi

[Exiles Real Estate Services](#)

PO Box 73009, Abu Dhabi

[Hayatt Real Estate](#)

PO Box 5574, Abu Dhabi

[LLJ Property](#)

First floor, West Wing, Al Jazira Sports and Cultural Club, Muroor Road, Abu Dhabi

[Silver Lake Property Management](#)

PO Box 47965, Abu Dhabi

#### Dubai

[Alpha Real Estate](#)

Pinnacle Tower Main Sheikh Zayad Road, AL-Barsha- 1, Dubai

[CB Richard Ellis Dubai](#)

Emaar Square Building 6, Floor 8, Downtown Burj Khalifa, P.O. Box 500529, Dubai

[Roots Land Real Estate Brokers](#)

Office 1310, Grosvenor Commercial Tower, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai

[The Specialists Dubai](#)

White Swan Building, Showroom 4, Ground Floor, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai

## **Fujairah**

[Fujairah National Properties](#)

White Village, Al Faseel, 1166 Fujairah

[Fujairah Real Estate Agency](#)

1st Floor, Al Rostamani Tower, Building No.3, Hamad Bin Abdullah Road, Fujairah

[Kings Real Estate](#)

Office 104, Bin Ghanim Building, Hamad Bin Abdullah Street, Marashid, Fujairah

## **Sharjah**

[Asteco Property Management Sharjah](#)

PO Box 60696, Dar Al Majaz Building, 1st Floor, Jamal Abdul Nasser, Sharjah

[Continental Real Estate Sharjah](#)

PO Box 21037, Al Mina Road, Sharjah

[Maverick Real Estate](#)

Suite 2009, Lake Central Tower, Business Bay, Downtown Dubai

## **Serviced and short-term accommodation**

Newly arrived expatriates may have the option of living in serviced apartments in apartment hotels while trying to find long-term accommodation. Serviced apartments are furnished and will usually have a weekly cleaning and laundry service. The rental cost is inclusive of all furnishings, television sets and cooking appliances. The monthly cost of serviced accommodation varies depending on length of stay, location, property size and time of year, and rates should be confirmed at time of booking. If available, serviced apartments are often a better option than hotels for expatriates on short-term assignments. However, many hotels offer suites or reduced rates for longer stays.

Branches across the United Arab Emirates:

[Rotana Suites](#)

### **Abu Dhabi**

[Al Manzel Hotel Apartments](#)

PO Box 129666, Zayed the First Street, Abu Dhabi

[Eclipse Boutique Suites](#)

PO Box 61221, Liwa Street, Abu Dhabi

[Grand Millennium Al Wahda](#)

Hazza Bin Zayed Street, Al Wahda Complex, Abu Dhabi

[Vision Apartments Abu Dhabi](#)

115 Dhafeer Street, Abu Dhabi

[Vision Hotel Apartments](#)

PO Box 52662, Old Mazda Road, Tourist Club Area, Abu Dhabi

### **Dubai**

[Ascott Park Place Dubai](#)

Park Place Tower, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai

[Dusit Residence Dubai Marina](#)

Roshana Tower, Al Emreef Street, Dubai

[Golden Sands Hotel Apartments](#)

PO Box 9168, Al Mankhool Street, Dubai

[Grosvenor House Dubai](#)

PO Box 118500, Dubai



### Nuran Marina Residences

PO Box 121600, Street H, District 4, Dubai Marina, Dubai

### **Fujairah**

#### Adagio Fujairah

Hamad Bin Abdullah Road, Fujairah

### **Sharjah**

#### Golden Tulip Sharjah

Al Fardan Center, Corniche Street, Sharjah

#### Ramada Hotel and Suites Sharjah

Al Nahda Street 115, Opposite Sahara Centre, Sharjah

#### Spark Residence

PO Box 5491, Al Nud, Sharjah

#### Swiss-Belhotel Sharjah

PO Box 5734, Al Arouba Street, Sharjah

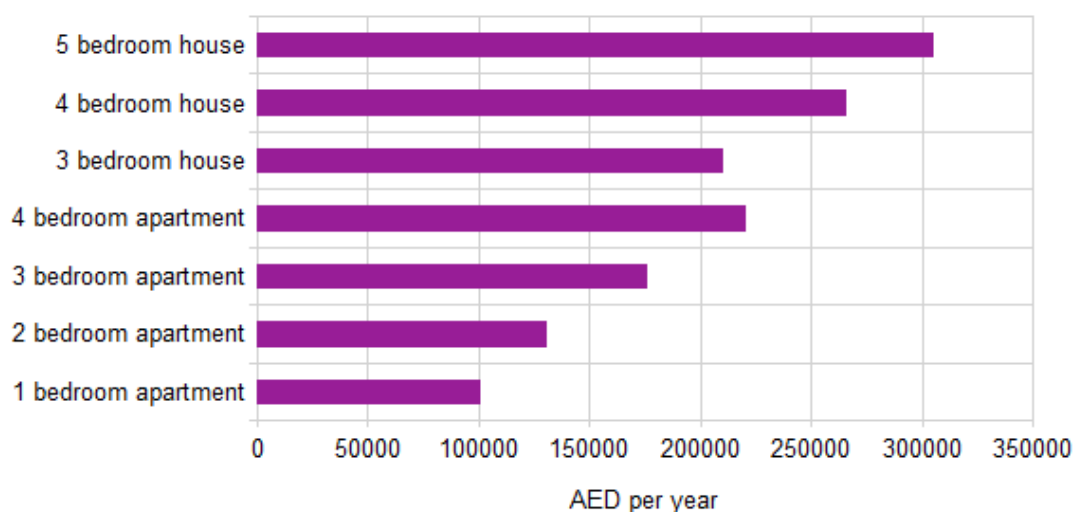
#### Time Ruby Hotel Apartments

PO Box 7041, Al Khan, Sharjah

## **Residential areas**

### **Abu Dhabi**

#### **Average accommodation rental costs in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates**



### **Corniche**

The Corniche extends along the seafront, stretching from the port area to the north-east of the city centre towards Khalidiya in the west. It is lined with luxury hotels and glass-fronted high-rise buildings, and looks across the sea to Lulu Island, a large, man-made island currently being developed as a luxury residential and commercial area. A scenic promenade stretches all along the waterfront, adjoining a popular public beach. Several large stretches of landscaped parkland give the Corniche a pleasant green aspect, and there is a wide range of outdoor recreational facilities on offer, including playgrounds, picnic areas, a cycle track, swimming areas and a yacht club. A selection of cafes and restaurants can be found along the waterfront. The two largest shopping centres in the Emirate, the Abu Dhabi Mall and the Marina Mall, are within easy reach. These malls play host to large supermarkets, cinemas, and a multitude of designer boutiques.

Public transport in the area is inadequate. Taxis and private cars are the main means of transportation. Car journeys to the city centre take around ten minutes, depending on location and the traffic.

Accommodation on the Corniche consists mainly of apartments in high-rise buildings, many of which have communal swimming pools, secure parking and other shared facilities. One-bedroom apartments are very rare. Availability is

reasonable.

## **Khalidiya**

Khalidiya is situated along the waterfront, within easy reach of the main commercial areas. It is popular with families, singles and couples alike due to its convenient location, high-quality housing, good local amenities and plentiful green spaces. Khalidiya Garden lies at the heart of the area and features manicured lawns, shady walking paths and playgrounds. There are also several smaller, peaceful parks dotted around the vicinity. The Abu Dhabi Public Beach, with its secure swimming areas, volleyball courts and pleasant waterfront gardens, is also close by. Unlike many parts of the city, Khalidiya is pedestrian-friendly, with several supermarkets, a good range of restaurants and takeaways, and the large, upmarket Khalidiya Mall accessible on foot. The Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation, which hosts concerts, lectures, film screenings and performing arts events, is also within easy reach, as is the expansive Marina Mall.

Public transport in the area is inadequate. Taxis and private cars are the main means of transportation. Car journeys to the city centre take 10–20 minutes, depending on traffic.

Rental accommodation in this area consists of apartments in high-rise and low-rise blocks, as well as houses in compounds. Availability is reasonable.

## **Al Bateen, Manasir, Rowdah and Karama**

These areas run from the seafront to the centre of the island and offer easy access to schools and commercial areas. They rank among the most prestigious parts of the city and are home to embassies and royal palaces. Al Bateen is situated on the waterfront, while Manasir, Rowdah and Karama are inland. All of the areas offer a tranquil living environment, with tree-lined streets and low-rise housing surrounded by landscaped greenery. Local shops and restaurants are easily accessible from all four areas. For more extensive shopping needs, the Al Wahda Mall is just east of Karama. These areas are also located conveniently close to the Abu Dhabi Country Club. Al Bateen features a small public beach and popular running and cycling paths, while Karama is adjacent to the Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation. Al Bateen Wharf provides a waterfront recreational area with a marina, a promenade, and a selection of shops and restaurants.

Public transport in the area is inadequate. Taxis and private cars are the main means of transportation. Car journeys to the centre typically take 10–20 minutes, depending on the area one is travelling from and traffic levels.

The housing in these areas is a mixture of low-rise apartment buildings, detached houses and a scattering of compound developments. Although availability is limited for all property types, houses are more readily available than apartments.

## **Muroor**

Located in the south-eastern part of the city, close to Al Bateen Airport, Muroor is a leafy residential area with a pleasant suburban atmosphere. Several international schools are located in the vicinity, making the area particularly popular with expatriate families. Although further away from the centre than the other districts covered, Muroor still offers a good range of local amenities. It is well served by local shops and small restaurants, while the expansive Al Wahda Mall is a short drive away. The area's relative distance from the centre is compensated by ease of parking, a community feel, and ample outdoor leisure options. The Eastern Corniche marks Muroor's eastern border and offers pleasant grassy picnic areas and a scenic walking and cycling route along the waterfront, while the large, tranquil mangroves which lie just off the coast can be explored by kayak.

Public transport in the area is inadequate. Taxis and private cars are the main means of transportation. Car journeys to the city centre take 20–30 minutes, depending on traffic.

The area contains mainly houses, along with some low-rise apartment buildings. Many of the houses are situated in compounds. Availability is reasonable.

## **Al Raha Beach**

Al Raha Beach is an elongated beachfront area adjacent to the main highway linking Abu Dhabi and Dubai. It is a mix of residential and commercial district, with cultural and entertainment facilities available, and is home to some of the most spectacular hotel resorts in Abu Dhabi. Its close proximity to the Abu Dhabi International Airport offers easy access to other international destinations.

Al Raha Beach is divided into eleven precincts, each with developments featuring their own distinct personalities and appeal, ranging from tranquil family villas among tree-lined neighbourhoods to vibrant upmarket apartments in a lively atmosphere with international boutiques and innovative galleries. Most properties and office towers enjoy picturesque sea views as Al Raha Beach stretches over 10 km of the waterfront.

A wide variety of amenities are available in Al Raha Beach, including world-class restaurants, cafes, banks, shops, fitness centres, and supermarkets such as Waitrose and Spinneys. The Al Raha Mall in the area provides shopping opportunities for residents, which also features a cinema, play zones for children, a supermarket and various restaurants

and cafes. This district is also an ideal location for marine sports and activities.

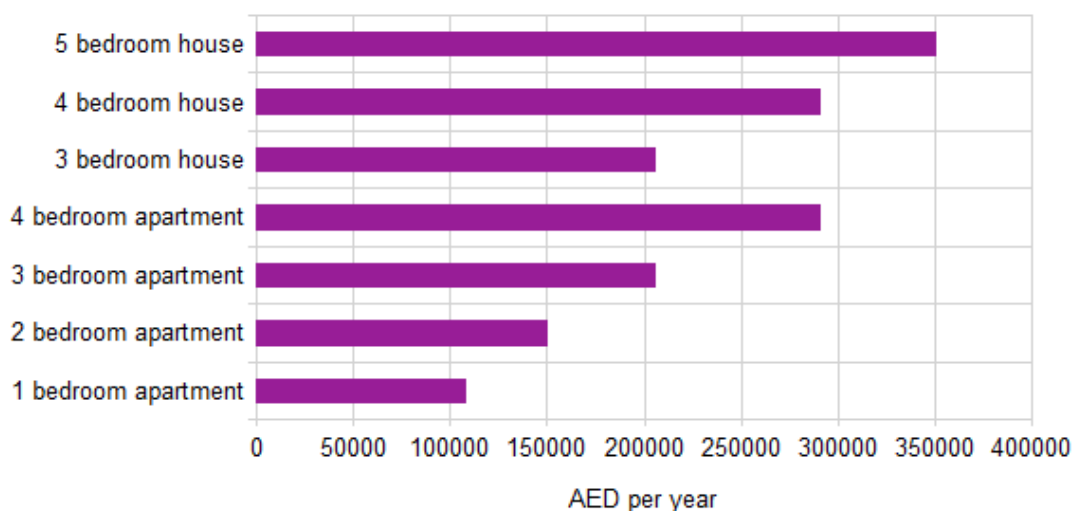
Al Raha Beach has become increasingly popular among expatriates over the past few years, partly due to expatriate movement from Dubai. However, properties are generally expensive to rent, as they can command rental prices similar to those in the Corniche area.

Public transport in the area is inadequate. Taxis and private cars are the main means of transportation. Car journeys to the city centre take around 30–40 minutes, depending on location and the traffic.

Rental accommodation in this area consists of apartments, duplexes, townhouses, and luxury villas with private courtyards and pools. Availability is reasonable. Part of the district is still undergoing development.

## Dubai

### Average accommodation rental costs in Dubai, United Arab Emirates



## Jumeirah and Umm Suqueim

Jumeirah and Umm Suqueim are modern, prestigious residential areas which occupy a long stretch of seafront to the south of the city centre. Jumeirah is made up of three sections. Jumeirah 1, approximately 6 km from Bur Dubai, is closest to the city centre, while Jumeirah 3, around 12 km from Bur Dubai, is the farthest away. Jumeirah 1 is adjacent to the Dubai World Trade Centre. Umm Suqueim is situated 13–17 km southwest of the centre, close to Dubai Internet and Media Cities.

Both areas are predominantly low-rise, with spacious, luxury homes on quiet residential streets, surrounded by landscaped greenery. There are many shopping centres within easy reach, several of them clustered around the main thoroughfare of Jumeirah Road (also known as Jumeirah Beach Road). The expansive Dubai Mall, arguably the Emirate's premiere shopping destination, is close by, and dining and nightlife options are plentiful and diverse. In addition to the excellent amenities, these areas prove popular with expatriates because of their close proximity to some of Dubai's finest beaches. Several beach resorts adorn the coastline, as do Jumeirah Beach Park and Umm Suqueim Park, containing landscaped gardens, playgrounds, public beaches and picnic areas. Safa Park is another large green space offering relaxation and play facilities within the city. There is a wide range of sporting facilities on offer, including fitness centres, playing fields, and ample opportunities for sailing and other water sports.

There are several Metro stations to the east of these areas, on Sheikh Zayed Road, with journeys to the main commercial areas taking between five and 25 minutes, depending on the route taken. These areas are also served by buses; however, these tend to be overcrowded at peak times. Most expatriates living in these areas prefer to travel by car, with journeys into the centre typically taking between five and 20 minutes, although they can take longer during peak times.

Jumeirah and Umm Suqueim both have houses as the predominant style of accommodation. Some suitable apartment blocks are also available nearby, along Sheikh Zayed Road. Availability is good.

## Garhoud and Mirdif

These sought-after residential areas are situated on the eastern side of Dubai Creek. They are both close to Dubai International Airport and offer good access to Sharjah and Deira. There are several schools in the vicinity, and the opening of two new bridges has facilitated the commute to offices and schools on the other side of the Creek. Both areas have a pleasant suburban atmosphere, with quiet streets and manicured lawns.

Garhoud is conveniently located adjacent to downtown Deira, within easy reach of the bridge to Oud Metha. There is a selection of local shops and small restaurants in the area, while the Deira City Centre mall is located just to the north-west. Just to the south, towards Mirdif, is Dubai Festival City, a development which includes housing, offices and a large shopping centre. There are also several stylish bars and upmarket restaurants within walking distance at the hotels near the airport. The hotels also feature a good range of sporting facilities. For additional recreational needs, Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club is close by, and there is a small, landscaped park in the area, featuring picnic areas, a football pitch and a playground.

Mirdif is a comparatively new area which lies just to the east of Dubai International Airport, approximately 13 km from the city centre. The expansive Mushrif Park marks the area's eastern border and features swimming pools, playgrounds and fairground rides, as well as a large network of walking paths through a varied landscape of desert and grassy parkland. The area is centred around Uptown Mirdif, a mixed-use residential and commercial development including a good range of shops and restaurants in a pleasant, piazza-style setting, as well as a large gym. There are also some small clusters of local shops which cater for everyday needs, and the Mirdif City Centre and Arabian Center malls are within easy reach.

Transport links in Mirdif are inadequate, and a private car is generally seen as a necessity. There are several Metro stations on the outskirts of Garhoud, situated at the airport and at Deira City Centre. Metro journeys to the main commercial areas typically take between five and 25 minutes, depending on the route taken. Car journeys to the city centre from both areas typically take 20–30 minutes, traffic depending.

Accommodation consists mainly of houses. Some apartments are available in Uptown Mirdif. Availability is good.

## **Dubai Marina**

Dubai Marina (also known as Marsa Dubai) is a modern, coastal residential area situated 25–30 km south-west of the city centre. It consists of new, high-rise apartment blocks, all surrounding a man-made cove. The area is still undergoing development; although many buildings have been completed, others are still in progress. In spite of this, the area offers a very high standard of living and excellent local amenities. The coast is dotted with hotels offering beach clubs, bars, restaurants and sporting facilities. The Marina Walk area is home to a sizeable collection of upmarket dining options, while shopping needs are met by a large supermarket, assorted local shops, and the expansive Dubai Marina Mall. Additional recreational facilities are provided by the Dubai Marina Yacht Club, while the Emirates Golf Club is also close by, on the other side of Sheikh Zayed Road. Dubai Marina is in an ideal position for those working in the Dubai Internet or Media City areas.

The Metro connects to the main commercial areas in 25–35 minutes. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 30 minutes, depending on traffic.

Accommodation consists exclusively of apartments. Availability is good.

## **Barsha**

Barsha is a sought-after inland area, situated approximately 20 km south-west of the city centre, between the Al Quoz Industrial Area and Jebel Ali. There has been considerable building activity here in recent years, with some construction still ongoing. The area is popular with expatriate families looking for modern, well spaced out villas with gardens, or those with children attending Dubai American Academy. The Mall of the Emirates is in Barsha; aside from hundreds of stores and a large food court, it also includes an arts centre, a multiplex cinema and a gaming arena, as well as an indoor ski slope. For additional entertainment needs, the restaurants, nightlife and beaches of Dubai Marina are a short drive or Metro journey away. The nearby Al Quoz industrial area is the unlikely home of a vibrant contemporary art scene, with several galleries set in warehouses. The Emirates Golf Club is also close by, and the Dubai Internet and Media City areas are within easy reach.

The Metro connects to the main commercial areas in 15–25 minutes, while car journeys to the city centre take approximately 25 minutes, depending on traffic.

Accommodation consists predominantly of houses, although some apartments are also being built. Availability is good.

## **Arabian Ranches**

Arabian Ranches is a modern, planned residential development situated around 22 km south of the city centre. It is a gated community with security on the gates and on patrol, and features spacious villas with gardens, all set around a golf course. The area is served by a small shopping centre, complete with a supermarket, a pharmacy, several food outlets and a range of other essential amenities. For additional shopping needs, the Mall of the Emirates is a short drive away. Recreational needs are served by the Arabian Ranches Golf Club and the nearby Dubai Polo and Equestrian Club, the latter of which features a gym and several restaurants. There are also facilities such as swimming pools, playgrounds, basketball hoops and tennis courts dotted around the area, as well as a number of small parks. A branch of Jumeirah English Speaking School is also located here.

Public transport is inadequate, with no Metro links in or near the area. Car journeys to the city centre typically take 25–30 minutes, traffic depending.

Accommodation consists exclusively of houses. Availability is good.

### **Emirates Hills, Meadows and The Springs**

These gated developments are adjacent to one another, and are bordered by Dubai Marina to the north–west and Barsha to the north–east. Situated approximately 24 km south–west of the city centre, these secure communities feature luxury properties surrounded by lush, landscaped greenery, interspersed with parks and tranquil lakes. These areas are close to Jebel Ali and the Dubai Internet and Media City areas, and may be of interest to those commuting to Abu Dhabi. Emirates Hills is centred around The Montgomerie golf course, which is overlooked by villas and features a gym, restaurants and a spa. For additional recreational needs, the Emirates Golf Club is also situated in the area, and the communities are served by swimming pools, gyms, tennis courts and playgrounds. A good range of local shops and dining outlets can be found locally, while for additional shopping needs, Ibn Battuta Mall and the Mall of the Emirates are within easy reach. Several schools are in close proximity, including the Dubai British School and the Dubai American Academy.

Public transport links are inadequate. The nearest Metro station is at Dubai Marina, with journeys to the main commercial areas in the city centre taking 25–35 minutes. A car journey to the city centre takes approximately 25 minutes, depending on traffic.

Accommodation consists predominantly of houses. Availability is good.

### **Jumeirah Islands**

Jumeirah Islands is a highly sought–after, modern, gated community located approximately 26 km south–west of the city centre, adjacent to the Emirates Hills community. It is convenient if commuting to Jebel Ali or Abu Dhabi, or if working in the Dubai Media or Internet Cities or Dubai Knowledge Village. The community consists of circular clusters of villas set on man–made islands, each with their own private garden and swimming pool. The villas are built to a very high specification, with quality fittings and state–of–the–art security systems. Recreational facilities include running paths, a fitness centre, tennis courts, parks and children's play areas. The community is served by restaurants, a coffee shop and a supermarket, and is within easy reach of the Montgomerie and Emirates golf clubs.

Public transport links are inadequate. The nearest Metro station is at Dubai Marina, with journeys to the main commercial areas in the centre taking 25–30 minutes. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 35 minutes, depending on traffic.

Villas are the sole type of property found here, although there are a few different styles from which to choose. Availability is reasonable.

### **The Greens**

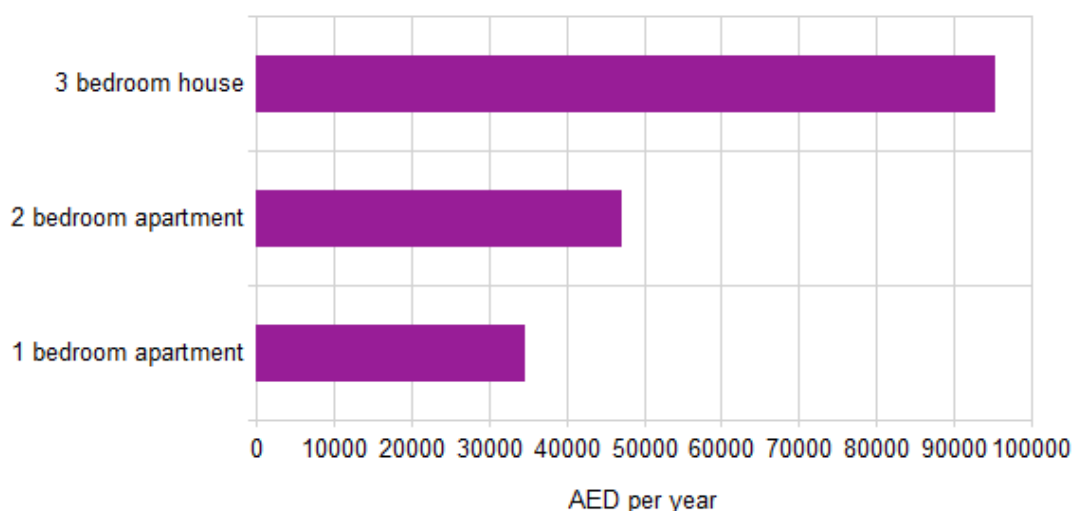
This tranquil, family–friendly development consisting exclusively of apartments is situated just off Sheikh Zayed Road, opposite Dubai Internet City, around 22 km south–west of the city centre. The low–rise apartment buildings are surrounded by landscaped gardens and clustered together in groups of four, each group enclosing a private courtyard. All apartments have access to a swimming pool, a gym and a play area. For additional recreational needs, the Emirates Golf Club is within walking distance, just to the west. The Greens is served by a small shopping complex comprising a supermarket, pharmacy and several food outlets, and there are a few cafes and restaurants dotted around the community. For additional retail and entertainment needs, Dubai Marina and the Mall of the Emirates are a short drive or Metro journey away. The community's popularity is mainly as a result of its close proximity to both the Dubai Media and Internet City business parks, as well as a number of international schools.

There is a metro station at Dubai Internet City, with journeys to the main commercial areas in the centre taking 20–30 minutes. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 20 minutes, depending on traffic.

Only apartments are available in this development. Availability is good.

## Fujairah

### Average accommodation rental costs in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates



## Al Faseel

Al Faseel is located along the coast, to the east of the city centre. Thanks to its location, this peaceful neighbourhood enjoys a slightly cooler climate than the rest of the city. This is a popular district among expatriate families as it contains Our Own English High School and has a better availability of villas than the rest of the city (villas are relatively difficult to find throughout Fujairah). White Village, a popular compound, is located in Al Faseel.

Public transport is not recommended for use by expatriates. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 10 minutes.

Accommodation consists of apartments and villas, some of which are located in compounds. Availability is limited.

## Hamad Bin Abdullah Road

Hamad Bin Abdullah Road is located right in the heart of Fujairah. This district has excellent access to restaurants, bars and hotels as well as the three main shopping centres in Fujairah: City Centre Fujairah, LuLu Mall and Fujairah Mall. The stunning Grand Sheikh Zayed Mosque, the second largest mosque in the UAE, is just a few minutes' walk away and is the perfect spot for a walk at sunset.

Public transport is not recommended for use by expatriates. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 5 minutes.

Accommodation mainly consists of high-rise apartment blocks. Availability is limited.

## Sakamkam

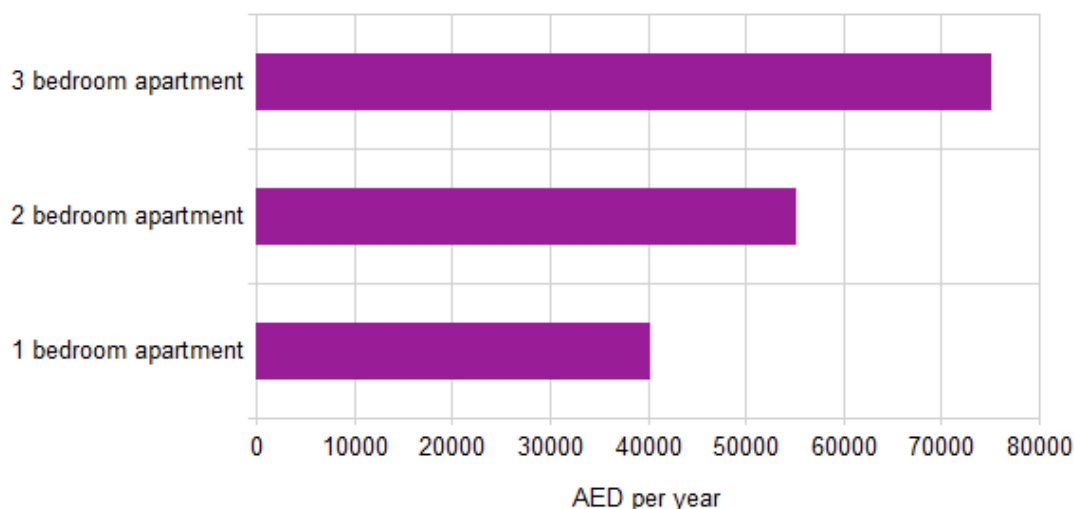
Sakamkam is located just to the north of Al Faseel. This district has good access to a number of amenities including the Carrefour Hypermarket and Century Mall. Al Hilal Residential Tower is a popular apartment block located in this district, offering spectacular views over the surrounding areas.

Public transport is not recommended for use by expatriates. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 10–15 minutes.

Accommodation mainly consists of high-rise apartments blocks. Availability is limited.

## Sharjah

### Average accommodation rental costs in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates



### Buheira Corniche and Al Majaz

Buheira Corniche is an exclusive waterfront area that encompasses the Khalid Lagoon and is located within the popular district of Al Majaz. An abundance of amenities are located here including upmarket cafés, restaurants, hotels, banks and the Sharjah City Centre, a popular shopping mall with a wide selection of stores and entertainment facilities. This is one of the greenest districts in Sharjah, boasting many parks. Al Majaz Waterfront, in particular, is one of the main attractions of this district. Launched in 2010, this project covers 230 000 square feet and features stunning scenery overlooking the lagoon as well as an impressive variety of recreational facilities. Attractions include the spectacular Sharjah Musical Fountain, international restaurants and cafés, a jogging track, a Splash Park for kids with a children's playground and mini golf for all ages.

Popular apartment blocks include Eissal Al Youssifi Tower, Robot Park Tower, Al Majaz Tower and Canal Star Tower.

Public transport is not recommended for use by expatriates. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 5–10 minutes.

Accommodation mainly consists of high-rise apartment blocks. Availability is reasonable, although some time may be needed to find a suitable property.

### Al Nahda

Al Nahda is conveniently located on the border with Dubai, making it a popular location for those expatriates choosing to commute to Dubai for work. It has excellent access to amenities including restaurants, supermarkets, gyms and the best shopping mall in the area, Sahara Center. Al Nahda Pond Park is the perfect spot to go to relax, exercise or take the children to. This family-friendly park features a large pond, jogging and cycling track, gazebos for picnics and play areas for kids. The American International School is also located just to the south of this district.

Popular apartment buildings include Golden Sands Tower and Al Nahda Tower.

Public transport is not recommended for use by expatriates. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 10–15 minutes.

Accommodation mainly consists of high-rise apartment blocks. Availability is reasonable, although some time may be needed to find a suitable property.

### Al Khan and Al Mamzar

Al Khan and Al Mamzar are two residential areas located along the coast, near the border of Dubai. Al Khan is home to many popular landmarks including Al Khan Beach, a favourite spot among tourists and residents alike. Various amenities designed for sports enthusiasts can be found here including volleyball and beach tennis courts, various water sports and an aquapark for kids. Al Qasba, Sharjah's premier tourism, cultural, business and entertainment landmark, is located on the east side of Al Khan Lagoon. This development is great for all the family and features a mix of cafes, carousels, boat rides, shops and a 60-metre-high Ferris wheel. Al Khan is also home to plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants and residents can enjoy a pleasant stroll or jog on the wide, palm tree-lined pathway that encircles the lagoon.



Al Mamzar is a quiet district situated to the west of Al Khan, bordering Dubai. Many properties here have fantastic views overlooking Al Mamzar Lake and several popular shopping malls are located nearby including Al Arab Mall and Ansar Mall. Al Mamzar Beach is a quiet, family-friendly beach offering spectacular views of Dubai and Sharjah as well as a running and jogging track. Victoria International School is also located here, making it a popular district among expatriates.

Popular apartment buildings include Al Ghazal Tower, SIB Tower, Al Sondos Tower, Majestic Towers, Manazil Tower 3 and Al Mamzar Tower.

Public transport is not recommended for use by expatriates. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 10–15 minutes.

Accommodation mainly consists of high-rise apartment blocks. Availability is reasonable, although some time may be needed to find a suitable property.

## **Al Sharq, Al Heera and Halwan**

Al Sharq and Al Heera are well established adjoining areas located within 2 km of the city centre, facing the waterfront. Al Sharq is just north of the centre, while Al Heera is to the north-east. Both areas are within easy reach of a multitude of shopping and entertainment options. Al Sharq in particular is also close to several hotels, offering access to facilities such as restaurants and fitness centres. Both areas are ideally located close to some of Sharjah's finest beaches. There are also several small, pleasant parks dotted around both areas.

The area of Halwan is situated immediately east of Al Sharq and is particularly popular with families due to its proximity to several international schools. It is close to the Cultural Square roundabout, home to an impressive complex of government buildings and the Sharjah Science and Archaeology museums. The area is also close to the Cultural Palace, which hosts a variety of performing arts events, as well as the large Green Belt Park, which comprises landscaped gardens, fountains and an open-air theatre.

Public transport is not recommended for use by expatriates. Car journeys to the city centre take approximately 5–15 minutes.

Accommodation mainly consists of villas. Availability is limited.

## **Household costs**

### **Furniture and household goods**

The majority of properties in the UAE are rented unfurnished. Apartments can sometimes be rented with furnishings, whereas villas are rarely rented furnished. Unfurnished accommodation will have lighting fixtures, kitchen units or cabinets, built-in wardrobes and bathroom units. Unfurnished apartments commonly have some kitchen appliances included. Partly furnished accommodation will also have some basic furniture and appliances. Fully furnished accommodation will include all furniture, appliances, linens and kitchen utensils.

Good quality furniture can be bought locally, or rented through [Home Essentials](#). It is sometimes possible to buy furniture and household equipment from expatriate families who are returning home at the end of an assignment. In some cases, furniture is 'inherited' from previous expatriates in the same company. The transient nature of the UAE's expatriate population ensures that there is a constant supply of household items for sale advertised in newspapers.

To rent a full furniture package for a 2–4 bedroom property from Home Essentials will vary from USD 400 to USD 900 per month.

To purchase a furniture package suitable for a single assignee or couple would cost approximately AED 14 500. This package includes the following items: one sofa and two armchairs, one table and six chairs, one bookcase, one double bedframe and mattress, one wardrobe, one chest of drawers, two bedside tables and two lamps.

To purchase a furniture package suitable for a child would cost approximately AED 3 800. This package includes the following items: one single bedframe and mattress, one wardrobe or one chest of drawers, one study table and chair, and one desk lamp.

Branches across the United Arab Emirates:

[Home Centre Abu Dhabi](#)

### **Abu Dhabi**

[2XL Abu Dhabi](#)

Branches available all over Abu Dhabi

[IKEA Abu Dhabi](#)

PO Box 52718, Yas Mall, Abu Dhabi

[THE One Abu Dhabi](#)

Branches available all over Abu Dhabi

## Dubai

[Home Centre Dubai](#)

Branches available all over Dubai

[IKEA Dubai](#)

PO Box 50618, Festival City, Dubai

[THE One Dubai](#)

Branches available all over Dubai

## Fujairah

[2XL Fujairah](#)

Fujairah Mall, Maliha Fujairah Rd, Fujairah

[Home Box](#)

Centerpoint, Dana Plaza, Fujairah

[Home Centre Fujairah](#)

Mohammed Bin Matar Road, Fujairah

## Sharjah

[2XL Sharjah](#)

Branches available all over Sharjah

[Home Centre Sharjah](#)

Branches available all over Sharjah

[THE One Sharjah](#)

PO Box 510105, Sahara Centre, Sharjah

## Utilities

The tenant is typically responsible for payment of utilities consumed.

Air-conditioning is standard in the United Arab Emirates. Accommodation in villas will incur higher electricity and water costs, especially during the summer months, due to greater use of air-conditioning units and the need to maintain the garden. Sewerage costs are included in the electricity and water bill, although some older villas and apartments still have a septic tank.

In Abu Dhabi, a refundable security deposit of AED 1 000 is typically charged by the ADDC (Abu Dhabi Distribution Company). In Dubai, deposits are paid to the DEWA (Dubai Electricity and Water Authority) and amount to AED 2 000 for apartments and AED 4 000 for houses. In Sharjah, deposits are paid to the SEWA (Sharjah Electricity and Water Authority). Deposits for apartments range from AED 2 000 to AED 4 000, while deposits for houses are determined by the size of the house and are likely to be more than AED 4 000. In Fujairah, deposits of AED 1 500 to AED 2 000 are paid to the FEWA (Federal Electricity and Water Authority).

## Average cost of utilities

The average cost of utilities equivalent to the expenditure of a four-person household for all types of accommodation in United Arab Emirates is:

Utilities	AED per annum
Heat & Lighting	18 433
Water	5 322
Telephone	4 558
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>28 313</b>

## Electricity

The supply of electricity is reliable.

The domestic supply is 220 V AC, 50Hz. Plug fittings are usually the British 13 amp square pin (Type G).

[What Plug](#) Information regarding various country-specific voltage types and electrical fittings.

## Gas

There is no mains supply of gas, but butane bottles are delivered and normally used for cooking. For security and fire reasons some apartments do not permit gas bottles.

## Water

Power cuts and water shortages occur frequently in the poorer northern Emirates especially in the summer months. This situation is, however, being addressed. Dubai and Abu Dhabi have no frequent interruptions to the water supply.

Mains water is considered safe in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, but can be highly chlorinated and have a salty taste. Elsewhere it is advised to filter and boil all drinking water. Bottled mineral water from a number of local sources is readily available and is considerably cheaper than imported brands.

## Refuse collection

All areas including those that are rural have access to waste collection services. Household waste is collected regularly and frequently in the areas covered.

Efforts have been made recently to try and increase recycling in the country and reduce the amount of waste being produced, including plans to phase out plastic bags and a major recycling centre being developed in Dubai. In addition, incentives are being offered as part of an effort to increasing recycling rates through a 'recycle and win' scheme. Despite this, households still do not regularly separate different types of waste.

## Domestic staff

Issues to consider prior to hiring domestic staff include: salary and benefits (e.g. airfare, transport subsidy, food subsidies/meals, uniform, medical expenses), probationary periods, working hours and flexibility, sick days and annual leave, salary advances/loan requests, notification of absence and contact details, daily working schedule, specific cleaning instructions/training, hygiene (e.g. illness, food preparation), limits on staff access to the property and limits and procedures for allowing access to visitors.

## Average rates of pay

Costs for each employee are shown in the currency quoted by the majority of respondents to ECA's Cost of Living Survey. This is AED unless stated otherwise. Where more than one currency was quoted, costs have been converted at the survey exchange rate.

Type of employee	Hourly wage	Typical employee		Annual bonus
		Hours per week	Lives in or out?	
Cleaner	33	8	Out	400
Driver	28	40	Out	500
Gardener	20	5	Out	400
Maid/Housekeeper	21	40	In	2039
Nanny	18	36	Out	500

Babysitters are available and typically cost AED 43 per hour.

## Education

Because of the large and varied expatriate communities in the Emirates, there is a long-established system of community schools, both at primary and secondary level. Several schools offer 'A' levels for British pupils, and one or two now offer the International Baccalaureate. International schools generally have an American curriculum plus UK and/or international syllabus. All the schools are well subscribed and expatriates seeking places in them need to contact the school's registrar well in advance. Many schools require a uniform to be worn.

Where applicable, all costs are quoted in local currency except where stated otherwise.

## Abu Dhabi

### Abu Dhabi Indian School

PO Box 46492, Muroor Road, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: Indian

Fees (day pupils) up to: 10234 payable per annum

### Abu Dhabi International Private School

PO Box 25898, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 48800 payable per annum

### Al Bateen Secondary School

PO Box 128484, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 11 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 62844 payable per annum

### Al Muna Primary School

Hamadan Bin Mohammad Street, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 10

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 41580 payable per annum

Al Nahda National School for Boys

PO Box 815, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK, US

Al Nahda National School for Girls

PO Box 815, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK, US

Al Yasmina School

PO Box 128484, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 57330 payable per annum

American Community School of Abu Dhabi

PO Box 42114, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 83000 payable per annum

American International School

PO Box 5992 , 29th Street, Airport Road, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 55500 payable per annum

Brighton College

PO Box 129444, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 74100 payable per annum

British School – Al Khubairat

PO Box 4001, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 65400 payable per annum

Cranleigh Abu Dhabi

PO BOX 126888, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 96333 payable per annum

Deutsche Internationale Schule in Abu Dhabi

PO Box 4150, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: German, Arabic

Curriculum: German

Emirates National School

PO Box 44321, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English, French, Arabic

Curriculum: International, Local/national, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 55920 payable per annum

GEMS Cambridge International School

PO Box 56825, Baniyas City, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 34900 payable per annum

GEMS Winchester School

PO Box 110273, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 13

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 23100 payable per annum

International Community School

PO Box 55022, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, UK

International School of Choueifat Abu Dhabi

PO Box 7212, Mushrif Area, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 19

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 34600 payable per annum

Lycee Francais Theodore Monod

PO Box 59646 , Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 14

Languages: French

Curriculum: French

Fees (day pupils) up to: 28600 payable per annum

Lycee Louis Massignon

PO Box 2314, New Airport East Road, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: French, Arabic

Curriculum: French

Fees (day pupils) up to: 41940 payable per annum

Raha International School

PO Box 34150, Al Raha Gardens Development, Khalifa City A, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 56900 payable per annum

Repton School

Al Reem Island, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 74000 payable per annum

The Pearl Primary School

PO Box 128484, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 10

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 40400 payable per annum

The Sheikh Zayed Private Academy

PO Box 42989, Abu Dhabi

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, Local/national, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 66900 payable per annum

## Al Ain

Emirates National School

PO Box 69392, Al Ain

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, Local/national

Fees (day pupils) up to: 53770 payable per annum

## Dubai

Al Mawakeb School

PO Box 35001, Al Barsha , Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, French, Arabic

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 43950 payable per annum

American Academy in Al Mizhar

Corner Street 11A and 4A, Mirdif Area, Al Mizhar 1, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 62176 payable per annum

American School of Dubai

PO Box 71188, Al Barsha, Dubai

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 93844 payable per annum

Arab Unity School

PO Box 10563, Rashidiya, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 9790 payable per annum

Brandenton Preparatory Academy

PO Box 111123, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 79258 payable per annum



Cambridge International School

PO Box 60835, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 24202 payable per annum

Deira International School

PO Box 79043, Dubai Festival City, near the Garhoud Bridge, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 80465 payable per annum

Deutsche Internationale Schule Dubai

PO Box 391162, Al Quoz, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, German

Curriculum: International, German

Fees (day pupils) up to: 69652 payable per annum

Dubai American Academy

PO Box 32762, Al Barsha, Dubai

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 84511 payable per annum

Dubai British School

PO Box 37828, Springs 3, Emirates Hills, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: Local/national, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 69145 payable per annum

Dubai College

PO Box 837, Dubai

Ages: 11 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 91503 payable per annum

Dubai English Speaking College

PO Box 125814, Dubai

Ages: 11 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 83601 payable per annum

Dubai English Speaking School

PO Box 2002, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 11

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 44813 payable per annum

Dubai International Academy

First Al Khail Street, Emirates Hills, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 71152 payable per annum

Emirates International School, Jumeirah

PO Box 6446, Dubai

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 74283 payable per annum

Emirates International School, Meadows

PO Box 120118, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 79488 payable per annum

GEMS Jumeirah Primary School

Al Safa 1, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 11

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 50466 payable per annum

GEMs Wellington Academy – Silicon Oasis

PO Box 49746, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 82511 payable per annum

GEMS Wellington International School

PO Box 37486, Al Sufouh Area, Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 93658 payable per annum

GEMS World Academy

PO Box 126260, Al Barsha South, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, Local/national

Fees (day pupils) up to: 111813 payable per annum

Greenfield Community School

PO Box 282627, Dubai Investments Park, Green Community, Dubai

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 76315 payable per annum

Horizon School

PO Box 6749, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 11

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 53570 payable per annum

International School of Choueifat Dubai

PO Box 21935, Al Sufouh Road near Dubai College, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, Local/national

Jebel Ali School

PO Box 17111, Jebel Ali Village, Dubai

Ages: 4 to 14

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 79000 payable per annum

Jumeira Baccalaureate School

53B Street, Off Al Wasl Road, Jumeira 1, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 84197 payable per annum

Jumeirah College

PO Box 74856, Dubai

Ages: 11 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 89385 payable per annum

Jumeirah English Speaking School

PO Box 24942, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 91950 payable per annum

Kings' Dubai

PO Box 38199, Dubai

Ages: 4 to 16

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 97798 payable per annum

Ladybird Nursery

PO Box 215093, 25A Al Wasl Road, Jumeirah 1, Dubai

Ages: 1 to 6

Languages: English

Curriculum: Montessori

Lycee Francais International de Dubai

PO Box 22626, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 11

Languages: French

Curriculum: French

Fees (day pupils) up to: 55781 payable per annum

Mirdif Private School

Algeria Street 11A , Mizhar 1, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 15

Languages: English

Curriculum: US

Repton School

Nad Al Sheba 3, PO Box 300331, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Boarding: Yes

Fees (day pupils) up to: 103325 payable per annum

Safa School

PO Box 71091, Meydan Street, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 11

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 40115 payable per annum

The Children's Garden Kindergarten

PO Box 211336, Green Community, Dubai

Ages: 2 to 5

Languages: English, French, German, Arabic

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 50000 payable per annum

The English College Dubai

PO Box 11812, Dubai

Ages: 11 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 61765 payable per annum

The School of Research Science

PO Box 27463, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 73769 payable per annum

The Westminster School

PO Box 27016, Al Ghusais School Zone, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 15243 payable per annum

Universal American School Dubai

PO Box 79133, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 76670 payable per annum

Uptown School

Corner Tripoli Street and Algeria Road, Dubai

Ages: 3 to 16

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Fees (day pupils) up to: 87374 payable per annum

## **Fujairah**

Fujairah Private Academy

PO Box 797, Fujairah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, UK

Our Own English High School

Al Basara Road, Al Faseel , Fujairah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK, Indian

Fees (day pupils) up to: 12300 payable per annum

## Ras al–Khaimah

GEMS Westminster

PO Box 12975, Ras al–Khaimah

Ages: 3 to 17

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 18000 payable per annum

Ras Al–Khaimah English Speaking School

PO Box 975, Ras al–Khaimah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 38000 payable per annum

## Sharjah

Al Ansar International School

PO Box 43114, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 24800 payable per annum

Al Ma'arifa International School

PO Box 7190, Al Yarmook, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, Local/national, UK, US

Fees (day pupils) up to: 22050 payable per annum

Australian International School

Maliha – Kalba Road, PO Box 43364, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, Australian

Fees (day pupils) up to: 66300 payable per annum

Deutsche Schule Sharjah

PO Box 1465, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 16

Languages: German, Arabic

Curriculum: Local/national, German

Fees (day pupils) up to: 48500 payable per annum

International School of Choueifat

University Road, Al Shahba, Industrial Area 6, Sharjah, UAE

Ages: 3 to 19

Languages: English

Curriculum: International

Lycee Francais International Georges Pompidou

PO Box 294471, Sharjah, Dubai, UAE

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: French

Curriculum: French

Fees (day pupils) up to: 48090 payable per annum

Our Own English High School Sharjah

PO Box 2676, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: Indian

Fees (day pupils) up to: 12990 payable per annum

Scholars International Academy

PO Box 47425, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 16

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 36000 payable per annum

Sharjah American International School

PO Box 5201, Al Ramaqia, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, US

Sharjah British School

Ages: 4 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 34500 payable per annum

Sharjah English School

PO Box 1600, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 19

Languages: English

Curriculum: UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 66300 payable per annum

Sharjah Indian School

PO Box 2324, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: Indian

Victoria International School of Sharjah

PO Box 68600, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English

Curriculum: International, Australian

Fees (day pupils) up to: 72000 payable per annum

Wesgreen International School

PO Box 40658, Sharjah

Ages: 3 to 18

Languages: English, Arabic

Curriculum: International, UK

Fees (day pupils) up to: 47465 payable per annum

## International schools networks

Finding the right school can be an important part of planning for going on assignment. The following organisations offer educational support for expatriates:

[Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Étranger \(AEFE\)](#) Serves and promotes a worldwide network of over 500 French schools.

[Association of International Schools in Africa \(AISA\)](#) Membership organisation.

[British Schools in the Middle East \(BSME\)](#) Organisation for English medium, British curriculum schools.

[Comité pour Ecoles suisses à l'étranger](#) (Switzerland) Swiss overseas schools.

[Council of British International Schools \(COBIS\)](#) A membership association of British schools worldwide.

[European Council of International Schools \(ECIS\)](#) Publishes the annual ECIS International Schools Directory.

[Good Schools Guide International \(GSGI\)](#) Provides independent reviews of English–language international schools worldwide.

[Independent Schools Council \(ISC\)](#) (UK) Independent schools in the United Kingdom.

[International Baccalaureate Organization \(IBO\)](#) Offers IB programmes in over 130 countries worldwide.

[Mission laïque française](#) Worldwide network of non–religious French schools.

[Stichting Nederlands Onderwijs in het Buitenland \(NOB\)](#) (Netherlands) Schooling for Dutch children temporarily overseas.

[The International Montessori Index](#) Provides detailed comparative information to assist in the selection of schools and training centres.

[Weltverband Deutscher Auslandsschulen \(WDA\)](#) Global association of German foreign schools.

## Distance learning

In some assignment locations, the difficulties associated with children's education can be such that distance learning is a more feasible option. This method of teaching uses a combination of internet and paper sources to enable students to follow a set curriculum without being physically present in a classroom.

Distance learning can be used as an alternative to traditional education when local schools do not offer a suitable curriculum and international schools are unavailable. It allows expatriate children to maintain the educational standards of their home country.

This method of education may also be considered when international schools are either oversubscribed, too expensive or require debentures to secure a place.

It can help prevent gaps in the education of children who are often moving to different locations by allowing them to follow a set curriculum without the upheaval of moving schools. It can also assist with reintegration once an assignment is complete, as children can re–join schools in their home countries more easily, having not fallen behind or been studying a different curriculum.

The following organisations provide distance learning services (curriculum):

[Distance Education ACT](#) (Australian)

[Distance Education Centre Victoria](#) (Australian)

[Distance Education Queensland](#) (Australian)

[External Education SA](#) (Australian)

[Northern Territory Distance Learning](#) (Australian)

[NSW Rural and Distant Education](#) (Australian)

[SIDE WA](#) (Australian)

[Tasmanian eSchool](#) (Australian)

[Alberta Distance Learning Centre](#) (Canadian)

[Fraser Valley Distance Education School](#) (Canadian)

[CNED](#) (French)

[Cours Hattermer à Distance](#) (French)

[Cours Llegendre](#) (French)

[Cours Sainte Anne](#) (French)

[Deutsche Fernschule](#) (German)



[Forum–DistanceE–Learning](#) (Germany)

[Wereldschool](#) (Netherlands)

[Globalskolen](#) (Norwegian)

[Briteschool](#) (UK)

[First College](#) (UK)

[ICS](#) (UK)

[InterHigh Education](#) (UK)

[Primary Home Education UK](#) (UK)

[Worldwide Education Service](#) (UK)

[Ablaze Academy](#) (US)

[American School](#) (US)

[Calvert Homeschool](#) (US)

[Citizens' High School](#) (US)

[Laurel Springs School](#) (US)

[The Keystone School](#) (US)

## Sports and social clubs

There are many sports and social clubs that are frequented by expatriates and their families.

Where applicable, all costs are quoted in local currency except where stated otherwise.

### Abu Dhabi

#### [Abu Dhabi Country Club](#)

PO Box 47776, Al–Sada Street, Abu Dhabi

Sports facilities: basketball, gym, squash, swimming, tennis, aerobics, bowling, football, volleyball, padel

Social facilities: restaurant, sauna, cafe, Jacuzzi, massage, steam room, internet cafe, creche

Single: 10000 (membership fee)

Couple: 14000 (membership fee)

Family: 15000 (membership fee)

Family membership fee: Includes up to four children up to the age of 17 years.

Single membership fee: Applies to men. Women are charged AED 5 000.

#### [Abu Dhabi Golf Club](#)

PO Box 51234, Sask Al Nakhl, Abu Dhabi

#### [Fairmont Bab Al Bahr Health Club](#)

PO Box 114304, Khor Al Maqta, Abu Dhabi

Sports facilities: badminton, gym, swimming, football, table tennis, volleyball, water sports, personal trainer

Social facilities: bar, restaurant, sauna, Jacuzzi

Single: 8785 (membership fee)

Couple: 15000 (membership fee)

Family: 21200 (membership fee)

Family membership fee: Applies to two adults and two children.

#### [Le Meridien Health Club](#)

Tourist Club Area , Abu Dhabi 46066

Sheraton Fitness

Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel and Resort, PO Box 640, Corniche Road, Abu Dhabi

The Club

PO Box 658, Abu Dhabi

Sports facilities: badminton, gym, sailing, squash, swimming, tennis, aerobics, yoga, rock climbing, diving, football, kayaking

Social facilities: bar, library, restaurant, sauna, beauty salon, snooker, massage, steam room, TV/media lounge, creche, children's playroom

Single: 4043 (initial fee) 4673 (membership fee)

Couple: 8085 (initial fee) 9345 (membership fee)

Child: 1418 (initial fee) 1654 (membership fee)

Initial fee: one-off payment

Child initial fee: Child fees apply to ages 14–17.

## Dubai

Al Badia Golf Club by InterContinental Dubai Festival City

P.O. Box 79126

Arabian Ranches Golf Club

PO Box 36700, Arabian Ranches, Emirates Road 311, Dubai

Club Olympus Fitness & Spa

Hyatt Regency Dubai, Deira, PO Box 5588, Dubai

Dubai Marine Beach Resort & Spa

P.O. Box 5182, Jumeirah, Dubai

Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club

Al Qudra Road, Opposite Arabian Ranches, next to Studio City, PO Box 7477, Dubai

Sports facilities: gym, horse riding, swimming, polo

Social facilities: bar, playground, restaurant, sauna, spa

Single: 4725 (membership fee)

Couple: 7875 (membership fee)

Family: 11025 (membership fee)

Child: 1050 (membership fee)

Child membership fee: Applies to children below 18 years.

Family membership fee: Applies to two adults and two children below 18 years.

Elixir Spa and Health Club

PO Box 24454, Habtoor Grand Resort and Spa, Dubai

Sports facilities: gym, squash, swimming, tennis, football, volleyball

Social facilities: bar, restaurant, spa, Jacuzzi, creche, children's group

Single: 21000 (membership fee)

Couple: 24150 (membership fee)

Family: 27300 (membership fee)

Fitness First Town Centre

Emirates Hills, Dubai

Hilton Beach and Health Club

Hilton Dubai Jumeirah, PO Box 2431, Dubai

Pavilion Marina Sports Club

Jumeirah Beach Hotel, PO Box 11416, Dubai

Pharaohs' Club

Wafi City, Dubai

Sports facilities: gym, squash, swimming, tennis, rock climbing

Social facilities: sauna, Jacuzzi

Single: 7800 (membership fee)

Couple: 12480 (membership fee)

Family: 14430 (membership fee)

Family membership fee: Applies to two adults and two children.

Wild Wadi Water Park

Jumeirah Beach Road, Dubai

Sports facilities: swimming

Social facilities: restaurant

Single: 999 (membership fee)

## Fujairah

Fujairah Tennis and Country Club

PO Box 3070, Fujairah

Sports facilities: gym, squash, swimming, tennis, spinning, fitness classes

Social facilities: bar, playground, restaurant, cafe

Single: 4200 (membership fee)

Couple: 6300 (membership fee)

Family: 7850 (membership fee)

Family membership fee: Applies to two adults and two children.

## Sharjah

Coral Beach Resort

PO Box 5524, Sharjah

Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club

PO Box 12, Emirates Road, Sharjah

Sports facilities: basketball, golf, gym, swimming, tennis, aerobics, archery, shooting

Social facilities: restaurant, beauty salon, cafe

Single: 14700 (membership fee)

Couple: 25200 (membership fee)

## Everyday

### The workplace

### Public holidays

#### 2018

**1 January, Monday**

New Year's Day

**13 April, Friday**

Al Isra Wal Miraj (The Prophet's Ascension)

**14 June, Thursday**

Eid al Fitr Holiday (Last Day of Ramadan) (Government)

**15 June, Friday**

Eid al Fitr (End of Ramadan)

**16 June, Saturday**

Eid al Fitr Holiday

**17 June, Sunday**

Eid al Fitr Holiday (Government)

**20 August, Monday**

Arafat Day

**21 August, Tuesday**

Eid al Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)

**22 August, Wednesday**

Eid al Adha Holiday

**23 August, Thursday**

Eid al Adha Holiday (Government)

**11 September, Tuesday**

Islamic New Year

**20 November, Tuesday**

The Prophet's Birthday

**30 November, Friday**

Martyrs' Day / Commemoration Day

**2 December, Sunday**

National Day

**3 December, Monday**

National Day Holiday (Government)

#### 2019

**1 January, Tuesday**

New Year's Day

**3 April, Wednesday**

Al Isra Wal Miraj (The Prophet's Ascension)

**3 June, Monday**

Eid al Fitr Holiday (Last Day of Ramadan) (Government)

**4 June, Tuesday**

Eid al Fitr (End of Ramadan)

**5 June, Wednesday**

Eid al Fitr Holiday

**6 June, Thursday**

Eid al Fitr Holiday (Government)

**10 August, Saturday**

Arafat Day

**11 August, Sunday**

Eid al Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)

**12 August, Monday**

Eid al Adha Holiday

**13 August, Tuesday**

Eid al Adha Holiday (Government)

**31 August, Saturday**

Islamic New Year

**9 November, Saturday**

The Prophet's Birthday

**30 November, Saturday**

Martyrs' Day / Commemoration Day

**2 December, Monday**

National Day

**3 December, Tuesday**

National Day Holiday (Government)

Embassies usually observe the local holidays, together with their own national holidays.

Muslim festivals are calculated according to local sightings of various phases of the moon – the dates given are approximate. During the lunar month of Ramadan preceding Eid al-Fitr, normal business may be disrupted as Muslims fast during the day and feast at night. This may continue into Eid al-Fitr itself. The festivals of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha may last between two and ten days, depending on the region.

### Office hours

08.00 to 13.00 and 16.00 to 19.00 Sunday to Thursday; 08.00 to 12.00 Friday (07.30 to 15.00 Sunday to Thursday in case of government offices).

### Business practices

The working week generally is Sunday through Thursday. It is essential for business visitors to arrange appointments well in advance and to be punctual. However, as elsewhere in the Middle East it is wise to expect to be kept waiting and for a meeting to be interrupted by incoming telephone calls, etc. Visiting cards, which should be printed in Arabic on one side, are usually exchanged. When meeting and taking leave men should shake hands but this must be done with the right hand as the left hand is considered to be unclean.

English is widely spoken in business but knowledge of the more common Arab greetings is useful, especially as a preliminary to business meetings. As in all Arab countries, marks of respect, however phrased, are greatly appreciated and readily reciprocated. The Arabic language abounds in suitable phrases, which sound very 'flowery' to foreign ears in translation.

As in the rest of the Middle East, hospitality is held in high regard and people will take great pride in lavish displays of their hospitality, refusal of which may cause offense. Meetings are almost always accompanied by coffee and pastries. Arabic coffee (*qahwa*) may be offered in a small cup; it is polite to accept a refill or two and then shake the cup slightly to indicate to the server that one has finished.

It is important to greet and acknowledge the most senior person in the room first. Special respect is paid to older people in many circumstances, e.g. standing when older people enter a room, greeting older people first, standing when speaking to one's elders, and serving older people first at a meal. Status is important and must be recognized by using the correct title when addressing someone.

Men are expected to wear suits when attending meetings, particularly with government officials; at other times they usually wear casual trousers and long-sleeved shirts, with or without a tie. In deference to Muslim customs, women are expected to dress modestly and conservatively, with long-sleeved dresses; figure-hugging clothes, low necklines and short skirts should be avoided.

## Trade organisations

[Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce & Industry](#)

[Ajman Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

[American Business Council of Dubai](#)

[Arab British Chamber of Commerce \(ABCC\)](#) Supported by Arab League governments. Provides information and other services for members including a fast and reliable visa service and direct certification of export documents.

[British Business Group Abu Dhabi](#)

[British Business Group Dubai & Northern Emirates](#)

[Dubai Business Women Council](#)

[Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

[Dubai Outsource City](#)

[Federation of UAE Chamber of Commerce & Industry](#)

[Free Zone Dubai – Jebel Ali Free Zone Authority \(JAFZA\)](#)

[Fujairah Chamber of Commerce & Industry](#)

[International Chamber of Commerce UAE \(ICC UAE\)](#)

[Ras El-Khaimah Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

[Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)

## Clothing

Tropical-weight clothing will be required during the very hot summer months; many people wear summer clothing all year round, but autumn weights are more suitable between November and March. Although winter temperatures are not low it can feel extremely chilly after the long, very hot summer.

In a business context, men are expected to wear suits when attending meetings, particularly with government officials; at other times they usually wear casual trousers and long-sleeved shirts, with or without a tie. In deference to Muslim customs, men and women are expected to dress modestly and conservatively; figure-hugging clothes, low necklines and short skirts and shorts should certainly be avoided.

Women will find loose fitting cotton or silk dresses the most comfortable to wear from April to the end of November. In the cooler months the weather is similar to a temperate summer climate so cotton or light woollen clothes will be needed during the day, with sweaters and wraps for evening functions and long dresses for more formal occasions.

Underwear should be made of cotton or silk (synthetic fabrics are not suitable). Good sunglasses are essential during the summer months, and useful at other times to combat glare. A sun hat is also useful.

## Money

### Currency unit and exchange rates

The unit of currency is the UAE dirham (AED), divided into 100 fils. The following denominations are in circulation:

Coins: 5, 10, 25 and 50 fils; 1 AED. The lower denominations (i.e. 5, 10 and 25 fils) are rarely used.

Notes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1 000 AED.

The dirham is pegged to the US dollar.

Exchange rates as of 16 July 2018:

	<b>AED</b>
Australia (AUD 1.000 =)	2.720
Brazil (BRL 1.000 =)	0.948
Canada (CAD 1.000 =)	2.788
China (CNY 1.000 =)	0.549
Denmark (DKK 1.000 =)	0.574
Euro-zone (EUR 1.000 =)	4.282
Hong Kong (HKD 1.000 =)	0.468
India (INR 1.000 =)	0.054
Japan (JPY 1.000 =)	0.033
Malaysia (MYR 1.000 =)	0.908
New Zealand (NZD 1.000 =)	2.482
Norway (NOK 1.000 =)	0.452
Russia (RUB 1.000 =)	0.059
Saudi Arabia (SAR 1.000 =)	0.979
Singapore (SGD 1.000 =)	2.689
South Africa (ZAR 1.000 =)	0.276
Sweden (SEK 1.000 =)	0.413
Switzerland (CHF 1.000 =)	3.661
Thailand (THB 1.000 =)	0.110
United Kingdom (GBP 1.000 =)	4.842
United States of America (USD 1.000 =)	3.673

## Latest market rates

[OANDA](#)

## Credit cards and ATM services

All the major credit cards, including MasterCard and Visa, American Express and Diners Club (the last two to a lesser extent), are widely accepted at leading hotels and shops. A cash advance is available on MasterCard and Visa at many locations.

The following links provide useful information for locating ATMs/banks throughout the world:

[American Express](#)

[MasterCard](#)

[Visa](#)

## Tipping

*Hairdressers:* 10% percent.

*Hotel staff:* Though a service charge is normally added to the bill, in Abu Dhabi it is usual to give AED 10 for a night, or AED 20–30 for a longer stay. Visitors are advised to ask friends and colleagues about tipping practices in the individual Emirates.

*Restaurants:* In Abu Dhabi, most catering establishments add a service charge and no additional tip is required; otherwise, if a service charge is not levied, 10% of the bill would be paid on top. In other emirates, although service charge and tax are added to the bill, it is normal to add a further small tip.

*Taxi drivers:* No tip is necessary, though many passengers round the fare up to the next AED 5.

*Valet-parking assistant:* AED 5 to 10.

*Bellboy:* AED 5 to 10.

*Supermarket bag-packer:* A couple of coins, up to AED 5.

## Communications

### Post

There are no postal deliveries in the UAE and it is necessary either to rent a Post Office Box or to use the PO Box of a sponsor or employer. Express postal services are available at premium rates (known as *Mumtaz Post*). Post offices are generally open every day except Friday and on public holidays. from 8.00 to 20.00/22.00.

The standard format to be used when writing an address in the UAE is as follows:

- When sending post to personal P.O Box: title and name of the recipient, P.O Box, relevant emirate, UAE.
- When sending post to a corporate P.O Box: title and name of recipient, company name, department name, P.O Box, relevant emirate, UAE.
- When sending Express Mail: title and name of the recipient, company name, department name, P.O Box, physical address (building name, street name, flat number), relevant emirate, UAE, recipient's telephone number.

Some streets have a popular/common name, as well as an official name. Streets in Abu Dhabi are also numbered; for example, Lulu Street is Fourth Street. Taxi drivers generally navigate by means of well-known landmarks rather than by street names.

[Emirates Post](#). Official postal service of the UAE.

[Yellow Pages](#). N.B. Hard copies of yellow page directories are also available for each emirate and can be purchased at [Etisalat](#) offices (the UAE's main telecommunications provider).

International courier services are an alternative to the national post service. Companies include:

[Aramex](#)

[DHL](#)

[FedEx](#)

[TNT](#)

[UPS](#)

### Telephone

There are efficient telephone systems connecting each of the seven Emirates, plus a good international service to most countries. Local and national calls between landlines are free. Public call boxes take either coins or phonecards.

To apply for a telephone line, expatriates will need to complete an application form from [Etisalat](#), the UAE's main telecommunications provider.

### Cellular phones

Mobile/cellular phones operate on GSM 900/1 800, 3G 2 100 and 4G 1 800 LTE networks.

[du](#)

[Etisalat](#)



## Emergency and useful numbers

Ambulance	999
Fire	997
Police	999
International access code (to call abroad from the United Arab Emirates)	00
Country code for the United Arab Emirates	971
National directory enquiries	181 (Etisalat); 800 155 (du – from any UAE phone); 155 (direct from a du mobile)

## Internal dialling codes

Abu Dhabi	2
Ajman	6
Al Ain	3
Dubai	4
Fujairah	9
Khor Fakkan	9
Ras al Khaimah	7
Sharjah	6
Umm al Quwain	6

## Internet

The UAE has one of the highest internet penetration rates in the Arab world with 9.4 million users (98.4%) counted in December 2017.

Foreign visitors should note that local legislation bans the dissemination of online material that is considered a threat to 'public order', and provides for prison terms for those who 'deride or damage' the reputation of the state and 'display contempt' for religion. N.B. Social media, like Facebook and Twitter, should also be used with care. In March 2015, an American expatriate was arrested and spent ten days in jail before being freed on bail while awaiting trial, after criticising his employer on Facebook. In July 2015, an Australian woman was also jailed for falling foul of the strict social media laws after having been convicted of 'writing bad words about a person' by an Abu Dhabi court; her offence was to post a picture of a car parked across two disabled spaces on her Facebook page.

Internet domain for the United Arab Emirates: .ae.

## Internet service providers

[du](#)  
[Etisalat](#)

## Local media

### Television

Most television stations are government owned and conform to government guidelines. Networks, many dedicated to a particular emirate, include: [Abu Dhabi TV](#), [Ajman TV](#), [Al-Arabiya](#), [Dubai Media Inc \(DMI\)](#), [MBC](#) and [Sharjah TV](#).

Digital satellite television is available in the form of telephone–internet–television packages offered by both [Etisalat](#) and [du](#). Smaller subscription TV networks broadcasting international channels and/or content include the [OSN – Orbit Showtime Network](#), and [Star](#).

## Newspapers

*Al-Bayan* is a popular Arabic daily, published in Dubai where there are also two English-language daily newspapers printed: the *Khaleej Times* and the *Gulf News*. *The National* is available in Abu Dhabi. *Emirates Business 24/7* is an English-language business daily.

*Abu Dhabi World* is a popular weekly lifestyle magazine. *Time Out Abu Dhabi* and *Time Out Dubai* are available monthly and provide extensive information on upcoming events, bar and restaurant reviews, etc. *What's On* is another useful publication with listings of entertainment and cultural events in Abu Dhabi and Dubai, aimed mainly at expatriates.

Foreign newspapers, both daily and Sunday editions are freely available, as is the *International Herald Tribune* and *Le Figaro*. Weeklies such as *The Economist* and *Time* are also on sale.

[Emirates News Agency \(WAM\)](#)

## Health

### Medical facilities

There are government-run hospitals and clinics in all the major centres of population and private institutions, both clinics and hospitals, are also widely available. Hospital facilities are very good for most purposes. In Dubai there are about half a dozen quality hospitals from which to choose. In addition there are over 20 clinics, some for general, others for specialised treatment. Facilities are limited at present at hospitals in other centres and visitors are advised that Dubai and Sharjah are preferred locations for treatment. In general, standards of care are excellent, with modern equipment and well-trained specialists, doctors and nurses. However, for highly specialised or prolonged treatment, the majority of expatriates would opt to return home. Treatment is extremely expensive and a private health care plan is essential.

In case of serious or life threatening emergencies, due to the lack of street addresses, emergency callers should provide directions to their residences based on prominent landmarks and be prepared to meet the ambulance upon arrival. Expatriates should ensure that the emergency operator understands the directions provided; directions should be prepared and kept by the phone. In Abu Dhabi, the Sheikh Khalifa Medical City (SKMC), located on Al Karamah Street, between Al Falah (9th Street) and Hazaa bin Zayed Street, is the leading trauma centre. Its equivalent in Dubai is the Rashid Hospital (Oud Metha Road).

Since 2007, all employers and sponsors residing in Abu Dhabi are responsible for the procurement of health insurance coverage and possession of valid health insurance at all times for their employees and their families (up to one spouse and three children under the age of 18), inclusive of registration fees, as well as the cost of the policy and for the cost of all health care services that are provided to persons on their sponsorship in the event that such a person is not covered by a valid health insurance policy. Obtaining or renewing sponsorship of any resident expatriate will not be permitted without submitting evidence of a valid health insurance policy for the sponsored person to the relevant governmental organisations. The law restricts the employer or sponsor from passing on the cost of providing health insurance to their employees and dependents, and such an act will be considered a violation of the law. The Health Insurance Scheme replaced the requirement for resident expatriates to be in possession of a health card issued from the Health Authority as of the effective date. For more information, please refer to the website of the [Department of Health – Abu Dhabi](#).

A similar law was approved in Dubai Emirate in November 2013, when Sheikh Bin Rashid Al Maktoum approved a new Health Insurance Law which stipulates that every national, resident and visitor in Dubai must have essential health insurance coverage and access to essential health services. The law was rolled out in phases between 2014 and mid-2016. Phase one of the scheme required companies with 1 000 or more employees to provide their workers with health insurance by October 2013. In phase two, companies with 100 to 999 employees had until the end of July 2015 to comply; finally companies with fewer than 100 workers had until the end of June 2016 to provide coverage. For more information, please refer to the website of the [Dubai Health Authority](#).

Medical supplies are sold in pharmacies, several of which are open 24-hours in the major cities. The names of pharmacies open all night are announced by the Ministry of Health in the local press. N.B. When importing prescription medicines (a three-month supply may be taken by visitors; a 12-month supply in the case of residents), these must be accompanied by a doctor's letter or a copy of the original prescription. In addition, some prescribed and over-the-counter medicines that are available in other countries (e.g. the UK), are considered controlled/illegal substances in the UAE. Visitors and prospective residents should contact the [Ministry of Health's Drug Control & Licenses Department](#) to check whether they will require prior permission before importing their medication.

## Hospitals and clinics

Branches across the United Arab Emirates:

[Mediclinic Middle East](#) Six hospitals and 20+ medical clinics in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Al Ain.

[NMC Healthcare](#) Private healthcare group with hospitals in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Al Ain, and medical centres in Dubai and Sharjah.

[Zulekha Healthcare Group](#) Private healthcare group with hospitals in Dubai and Sharjah.

### Abu Dhabi

[Burjeel Hospital](#), Al Najdah St, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 5085555). Largest private hospital in Abu Dhabi.

[Corniche Hospital](#), Corniche Road, behind the Sheraton Hotels and Resort, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 6724900). Hospital specialised in obstetric and gynaecological services.

[NMC Specialty Hospital Abu Dhabi](#), Zayed the First Street, Near Sama Tower, Madinat Zayed, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 6332255). Located in downtown Abu Dhabi, in the Madinat Zayed area.

[Sheikh Khalifa Medical City](#), Al Karamah St, betw Al Falah (9th St) and Hazaa Bin Zayed St, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 8190000). Managed by Cleveland Clinic, Sheikh Khalifa Medical City serves as the flagship institution for SEHA's healthcare system and consists of a 586 bed Acute Care Hospital, 14 Outpatient Specialty Clinics and a blood bank.

### Al Ain

[NMC Specialty Hospital Al Ain](#), Shakhboot Bin Sultan St (131st St), opposite Baladiya Park, Al Ain (tel: (3) 7030300). Located in central Al Ain, near Baladiya Park.

### Dubai

[Al Zahra Hospital Dubai](#), Sheikh Zayed Rd, Al Barsha 1, Dubai (tel: (4) 3786666). In the Al Sufouh area; the closest metro station is Dubai Internet City.

[American Hospital Dubai](#), 19th St, Oud Metha Rd, Dubai (tel: (4) 3367777). Located opposite the Moevenpick Hotel, near the Lamcy Plaza shopping centre and Al-Maktoum Stadium.

[Belhoul European Hospital](#), 8 A St, off 2nd of December St, Al Satwa, near Jumeirah Rotana, Dubai (tel: (4) 3454000). Located next to the Dune Centre shopping mall, near the Jumeira Rotana Hotel.

[Belhoul Speciality Hospital](#), 2nd St, off Al Khaleej Rd, Dubai (tel: (4) 2733333). Located in Al Baraha (Deira), the hospital offers a wide spectrum of specialised diagnostic and surgical clinics under one roof.

[Cedars – Jebel Ali International Hospital](#), Dugas Rd, just off Sheik Zayed Rd (Exit 22), Dubai (tel: (4) 8818816). Major 24-hour hospital in the Jebel Ali area, with two satellite clinics and a pharmacy attached to it.

[Dubai London Specialty Hospital \(part of Dubai London Clinic\)](#), Jumeirah Beach Rd, betw 27A St and 31A St, Umm Suqueim 2, Dubai (tel: (4) 800352). New, 24-hour hospital facility with dedicated emergency services and the latest in surgical technologies.

[Emirates Hospital](#), Jumeirah Beach Road, opposite Jumeirah Park, Dubai (tel: (4) 5200500). State-of-the-art hospital with four associated medical clinics in other parts of the city, as well as medical clinics in Abu Dhabi, Fujairah and RAK.

[Lifeline Hospital, Jebel Ali](#), Sheikh Zayed Road, 6th Interchange (Exit 25), Al Muntazah, next to The Gardens and Ibn Battuta Mall, Dubai (tel: (4) 8845666). Fifty-bed, boutique hospital in New Dubai.

[Medcare Hospital](#), Al Hadiqa St, cnr 12 A St, Al Safa Park, Dubai (tel: (4) 4079100). Small, new premium private general medical facility located in Jumeriah adjacent to Safa Park; part of a wider regional premium healthcare group with 12+ medical clinics in the Dubai area.

[Mediclinic Welcare Hospital](#), 2nd Street, Al Garhoud, Dubai (tel: (4) 2827788). Modern, multi-speciality hospital, located near Dubai Airport.

[Neuro Spinal Hospital](#), Jumeirah Beach Rd, opposite Jumeirah Beach Park, Dubai (tel: (4) 3420000). Premier, 39-bed neuroscience healthcare provider.

[NMC Specialty Hospital Dubai](#), Amman St / cnr 7 A St, next to Bait Al Khair Bldg, Al Nahda, Dubai (tel: (4) 2679999). Located in the Al Nahda area.

[Rashid Hospital](#), Oud Metha, Dubai (tel: (4) 2192000). Main public trauma and emergency hospital, under the auspices of the Department of Health. Located by Oud Metha metro station, near the British Council.

[Zuleka Hospital – Dubai](#), 204 Rd / 19 A St, Al Nahda 2, Al Qusais, Dubai (tel: (4) 2678866). Located opposite Al Nahda Park; the nearest metro station is Dubai Airport Free Zone.

## Fujairah

[Al Sharq Medical Centre \(Al Faseel\)](#), Corniche Rd, near Umbrella Beach, Fujairah (tel: (9) 2249999). One of four 'Al Sharq' medical centres on the East Coast.

[Thumbay Hospital – Fujairah](#), Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Bin Rd / Al Nakheel Rd, next to Fujairah Football Club & Stadium, Fujairah (tel: (9) 2244233). Located next to Fujairah Football Club and Stadium.

## Sharjah

[Al Zahra Hospital Sharjah](#), Al Zahra St (S 105) / Arabian Gulf Rd (S 124), Clock Tower Roundabout, Al Rolla, Sharjah (tel: (6) 5168902). Located in downtown Sharjah, near Sharjah Creek.

[Zulekha Hospital – Sharjah](#), Al Zahra St (S 105), Sharjah (tel: (6) 5658866). Located diagonally opposite Sharjah Clinic, near the intersection with Al Qasimi St (S 126).

## Umm al Quwain

[Sheikh Khalifa General Hospital \(NMC Hospitals\)](#), off Al Ittihad Road, opposite Ministry of Social Affairs, Al Salamah, Umm al Quwain Only opened in 2012, the hospital is located just off the E11 highway.

## Dentists

### Abu Dhabi

[British Dental Clinic](#), Bin Ham Building, 3rd Floor, Hamdan Street, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 6773308).

[Dubai Smile – Abu Dhabi Branch](#), Dalma Street, Villa 103, opposite Al Bahr Palace, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 6650555).

### Dubai

[Dr Michael's Dental Clinic](#), Branches available all over Dubai

[Dubai London Clinic Dental Centre](#), Al Wasl Rd, Villa 440A, Jumeirah 2, Dubai (tel: (4) 3782921).

[Versailles Dental Clinic](#), District No. 1 Al Razi Building, Block A, 1st Floor, Suite 1006, Dubai Healthcare City, Dubai (tel: (4) 4298288).

### Fujairah

[Majesty Medical Centre](#), Hamed Bin Abdullah Street, Emirates Islamic Bank Building, 8th Floor, Fujairah (tel: (9) 2227888).

[Well Dent Dental Centre](#), Al Sharqi Road, Fujairah (tel: (9) 2238070).

## Pharmacies

Branches across the United Arab Emirates:

[Aster Pharmacy](#)

[Boots \(M.H. Alshaya Co.\)](#)

### Abu Dhabi

[Al Manara Pharmacy – Marina Mall](#), Marina Mall, Ground Level, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 6817977).

[Boots Abu Dhabi Mall](#), Abu Dhabi Mall, 1st Floor, 10th Street, Tourist Club Area, Abu Dhabi (tel: (2) 6958119).

### Dubai

[Aster New Mariam Pharmacy](#), Umm Suqeim 1, Jumeirah Beach Road, Jumeirah, Dubai (tel: (4) 39522123).

[Boots – Dubai Mall](#), Dubai Mall, Unit FF–257, Doha Street, Dubai (tel: (4) 4190301).

## Fujairah

Al Zaytoon Pharmacy, E89 Road, West of the 1st roundabout off Corniche Road, Fujairah (tel: (9) 2235445).

## Medical and repatriation insurance

A number of companies offer worldwide medical insurance cover (including repatriation cover) for expatriates and their families overseas. The majority also offer group schemes for companies and organisations with employees working abroad. Companies include:

[Aetna International](#)

[ALC Global Health Insurance](#)

[AVIVA International Solutions](#)

[AXA PPP healthcare](#)

[BUPA Global](#)

[CIGNA](#)

[Clements Worldwide](#)

[Expacare](#)

[Mondassur](#) Compares travel health insurance policies for expatriates and those travelling abroad.

## Shopping

### Online shopping

- [Kingsouq.com](#) – fashion, consumer electronics, sports and outdoors, etc.
- [Mumzworld](#) – mother, baby and child products.
- [Namshi](#) – fashion, sports, beauty, home and lifestyle.
- [Souq](#) – owned by Amazon; groceries, fashion, electronics, home and kitchen, etc.
- [Wadi](#) – electronics, watches, beauty products, home and kitchenware, games, etc.

## Abu Dhabi

### Quality and availability

A broad range of goods and services can be obtained in Abu Dhabi.

### Where expats shop

All information below is from expats living in the city or ECA's own researchers who visit it regularly.

### Shopping districts

Abu Dhabi may have inferior shopping facilities to Dubai, but the city is quickly catching up, with new, luxury malls springing up everywhere, commingling with traditional souks. Going to the mall is a family activity (especially on weekends), and restaurants and entertainment venues compete for attention as much as the retailers.

### Malls

- [Abu Dhabi Mall](#) (10th Street, near the Rotana Beach Hotel) – 200+ stores.
- [Al Raha Mall](#) (Channel Street/E10, Al Raha Beach)
- [Al-Wahda Mall](#) (Hazza Bin Zayed Street/Sheik Rashid Bin Said Street, Al Wahdah)
- [Dalma Mall](#) (off Abu Dhabi – Al Ain Truck Road, ICAD 1)
- [Deerfields Mall](#) (Abu Dhabi Al Shahama Road, Old Al Bahya)
- [Fotouh Al Khair Shopping Mall](#) (Hamdan Bin Bohammed Street/Sheik Rashid Bin Said Street, E3–01) – also known as the 'Marks & Spencer mall'.
- [The Galleria](#) (Al Falah Street, Al Maryah Island) – many high-end shops.
- [Khalidiyah Mall](#) (Mubarak Bin Mohammed Street, Khalidiyah)
- [Marina Mall](#) (18th Street, Marina Breakwater, across from the Corniche) – probably the most popular of the long-established malls; 400 outlets, including a large Carrefour hypermarket.

- [Mushrif Mall](#) (Sheik Rashid Bin Said Street, Al Mushrif)
- [World Trade Center Mall](#) (Khalifa Bin Zayed Street, Al Markaziyah) – over 150 shops and restaurants; connected to the World Trade Centre Souk, a 'contemporary interpretation of a traditional Abu Dhabi market', with traditional artefacts, jewellery, Arabian perfumes and clothing.
- [Yas Mall](#) (off Abu Dhabi – Al Falah Road (E12), [Yas Island](#)) – 400 high–end fashion and food outlets, including a 20–screen cinema.

#### Department stores

- [Centerpoint](#) – budget department store; multiple branches.
- [House of Fraser](#) (Yas Mall)
- [Matalan Middle East](#) (Dalma Mall; Mushrif Mall; Khalidiyah Mall) – budget department store.
- [Tryano](#) (Yas Mall)– concept luxury department store.

#### Supermarkets

- [Abu Dhabi Coop](#)
- [Carrefour](#)
- [Choithrams](#)
- [Lulu's Hypermarket](#)
- [SPAR](#)
- [Spinneys](#)
- [Waitrose](#) – four stores in Abu Dhabi.

#### Specialist outlets

- [African & Eastern \(A&E\)](#) – alcoholic drinks retailer; several outlets in Abu Dhabi.
- [Better Life](#) – home appliances.
- [Jumbo](#) – electronics.
- [Madinat Zayed Shopping Centre & Gold Centre](#) (between Jawasat Road, Airport Road, Electra Road and Muroor Road) – more than 70 stores offering jewellery from across the globe.
- [Mina Markets](#) (Mina Zayed) – includes the Fish Souk, the Al Mina Fruit and Vegetable Souk, and the Carpet Souk.
- [PLUG INS](#) – electronics and home appliances.
- [Sharaf DG](#) – electronics and home appliances.
- [Spinneys Abu Dhabi LLC](#) – alcoholic drinks retailer; multiple branches.

#### Shopping guides

- [TimeOut Abu Dhabi: Shopping](#)
- [Visit Abu Dhabi: Shopping & Lifestyle](#)

## Dubai

#### Quality and availability

A broad range of goods and services can be obtained in Dubai.

#### Where expats shop

All information below is from expats living in the city or ECA's own researchers who visit it regularly.

## Shopping districts

For many, Dubai is synonymous with shopping; this one-time fishing village has become a world-famous shopping destination. Going to the mall is a family activity (especially on weekends), and restaurants and entertainment venues compete for attention as much as retailers.

### Malls

- [Al Bustan Centre](#) (Al Nahda Road)
- [Al Ghurair Centre](#) (Al Riqqa Street Road, Deira)
- [BurJuman Centre](#) (Khalid Bin Al Waleed Road, Al Mankhool)
- [Deira City Centre](#) (Baniyas Road/Sheikh Rashid Road, Deira)
- [Dubai Mall](#) (Financial Centre Road, next to the Burj Khalifa) – largest shopping mall in the world by area; includes a Waitrose supermarket, the Dubai Fountain, a waterfall, ice rink, cinemas, the Dubai Aquarium, and a breath-taking observation deck.
- [Dubai Marina Mall](#) (Sheikh Zayed Road/Al Marsa Street, Dubai Marina)
- [Festival City Mall](#) (Festival Blvd, Dubai Festival City)
- [Ibn Battuta Mall](#) (Sheikh Zayed Road, between Interchanges 5 and 6) – world's largest themed shopping mall, celebrating the world travels of the famous Arabic Explorer Ibn Battuta.
- [Mall of the Emirates](#) (Sheikh Zayed Road, Interchange 4) – 560 international brands, including a large Carrefour and the popular [Ski Dubai](#), the first indoor ski resort in the Middle East.
- [Mercato Mall](#) (Jumeirah Beach Road, between 69A and 73A Streets, Jumeirah)
- [Mirdif City Centre](#) (Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Road/Tripoli Street, Mirdif)
- [Wafi City Mall](#) (Sheikh Rashid Road, Dubai Healthcare City)

### Department stores

- [Bloomingdale's](#) (Dubai Mall)
- [Centerpoint](#) – budget department store; multiple branches.
- [Galleries Lafayette](#) (Dubai Mall)
- [Harvey Nichols](#) (Mall of the Emirates)
- [Matalan Middle East](#) (Arabian Centre; Mirdif City Centre, Al Ghurair Centre; Wafi Mall) – budget department store.

### Supermarkets

- [Carrefour](#)
- [Choithrams](#)
- [Nesto Hypermarket](#)
- [Spinney's](#)
- [SuperMart.ae](#) – Dubai's only upmarket online supermarket.
- [Waitrose](#) – six branches.

### Specialist outlets

- [African & Eastern \(A&E\)](#) – alcoholic drinks retailer; 16 branches in Dubai.
- [Better Life](#) – home appliances.
- [Dubai Shopping Festival \(DSF\)](#) – annual shopping event in Dubai, running from December to January, with over 2 300 participating retail outlets.



- [Gold Souk](#) (off Al Khor Street, parallel to Baniyas Road, Al Ras, Deira) – traditional gold market; very popular with tourists.
- [Jumbo](#) – electronics.
- [MMI Dubai](#) – alcoholic drinks retailer; 16 branches in Dubai.
- [PLUG INS](#) – electronics and home appliances.
- [Sharaf DG](#) – electronics and home appliances.
- [Souk Madinat Jumeirah](#) (King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Street/Umm Suqeim Street, Al Sufouh) – combines traditional Middle Eastern shopping culture of stands, barrows and stalls with a mix of boutique brands, souvenir gift shops, luxury fashion and jewellery.

### Shopping guides

- [Dubai Shopping Guide](#)
- [Free Tours By Foot: Dubai Shopping Guide](#)
- [Visit Dubai: Shopping Malls Guide](#)

## Fujairah

### Quality and availability

A broad range of goods and services can be obtained in Fujairah.

### Where expats shop

All information below is from expats living in the city or ECA's own researchers who visit it regularly.

### Shopping districts

Most shopping in Fujairah is done in the city's malls. Many people prefer to travel to Dubai (approximately two hours by car) or Sharjah for special purchases, but Fujairah is well-equipped for day-to-day needs.

### Malls

- [Century Mall](#) (Kuwait Road/Corniche Road (E99))
- [Fujairah City Centre](#) (Masafi Road/Fujairah–Dubai Highway) – over 100 mid-range international brands, an international food court and a large Carrefour supermarket.
- [Fujairah Mall](#) (Maliha Fujairah Road, Near Fujairah Hospital) – opened in late 2015; includes a Nesto hypermarket and six-screen cinema.
- [Lulu Mall](#) (Al Khortabha Road, opposite the airport)

### Department stores

- [Centerpoint](#) (Dana Plaza; Fujairah City Centre) – budget department store.
- [Matalan Middle East](#) (Century Mall) – budget department store.

### Supermarkets

- [Carrefour](#) (City Centre Mall; Century Mall)
- [Choithrams](#) (Hamad Bin Abdullah Road) – stocks a good selection of imported groceries (although rarer items may require a trip to Dubai).
- [Lulu Hypermarket](#) (Al Khortabha Road, opposite the airport, next to Lulu Mall)
- [Nesto Hypermarket](#) (Fujairah Mall)

### Specialist outlets

- [The Cellars](#) (next to [Tennis & Country Club](#), Fujairah City Centre) – alcoholic drinks retailer.



- [Masafi Friday Market/Souq al Juma'a](#) (Masafi Village, Dubai–Fujairah Highway (E88), ca. 30 km north–east of Fujairah) – roadside market selling fresh produce, plants, fabrics, carpets, earthenware, crafts and souvenirs; daily, not on Friday only, as its name suggests; bargaining recommended.
- [Sharaf DG](#) (Century Mall) – electronics goods and home appliances.

## Shopping hours

09.00 to 13.00 and 16.00 to 21.00 (shops in larger cities and shopping malls operate longer hours and are often open all day).

Some shops open Friday afternoons although most are closed); malls are usually open on Fridays, either all day or from 14.00.

## Typical costs

Prices from ECA's Cost of Living survey:

Shopping basket items	Average price in AED	Average price in USD
Bread: white loaf (1 kg)	8.69	2.37
Rice: long grain (1 kg)	14.00	3.81
Infant milk powder/formula (1 kg)	90.39	24.61
Bar of chocolate (100 g)	9.48	2.58
Soft drink: can (50 cl)	3.58	0.98
Milk: fresh, pasteurised (1 l)	5.79	1.58
Eggs (twelve)	14.79	4.03
Fresh or chilled chicken (1 kg)	21.15	5.76
Apples (1 kg)	11.72	3.19
Tomatoes (1 kg)	16.88	4.60
Cinema ticket	36.75	10.01
Red wine: good quality (75 cl)	95.03	25.88
Men's business shirt	445.02	121.18
Women's jeans	396.25	107.90
Flat screen TV	1 985.17	540.56
Alcoholic drink at bar	50.01	13.62
Coffee at cafe or bar	17.45	4.75

AED 1 = USD 0.2723

## Sales tax

Effective 1 January 2018, the UAE has introduced value added tax (VAT) at a rate of 5%. However, the following designated free zones have been exempt from VAT:

**Abu Dhabi:** Free Trade Zone of Khalifa Port; Abu Dhabi Airport Free Zone; and Khalifa Industrial Zone;

**Dubai:** Jebel Ali Free Zone (North–South); Dubai Cars and Automotive Zone (DUCAMZ); Dubai Textile City; Free Zone Area in Al Quoz; Free Zone Area in Al Qusais; Dubai Aviation City; and Dubai Airport Free Zone;

**Sharjah:** Hamriyah Free Zone; Sharjah Airport International Free Zone;

**Ajman:** Ajman Free Zone;

**Umm al Quwain:** Umm al Quwain Free Trade Zone in Ahmed Bin Rashid Port; Umm al Quwain Free Trade Zone on Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Road;

**Ras al Khaimah (RAK):** RAK Free Trade Zone; RAK Maritime City Free Zone; RAK Airport Free Zone; and

**Fujairah:** Fujairah Free Zone; Fujairah Oil Industry Zone (FOIZ).

## Eating out

### Local cuisine

Modern Emirati cuisine is often confused with Levantine dishes but traditional cuisine is designed to cope with the harsh desert conditions, so includes many meat, cereal and dairy products, often cooked in a single clay pot. Spices such as saffron, cardamom and turmeric are often used for flavour. Traditional dishes include *Al Harees*, a dish of meat and wheat slow-cooked in a clay oven or pot, popular during celebrations and festivals, and *Al Majboos*, spiced meat boiled with dried limes and saffron rice. Seafood is a staple food, especially the local fish *hammour*, while chicken and goat are the most common meats, with camel reserved for special occasions. Strong and spiced Arabic coffee, *gahwa*, is a local specialty.

N.B. Alcohol is available for non-Muslims in hotel bars, but restrictions may apply during Ramadan. Restaurants are generally only licensed to sell alcoholic drinks to visitors in the hotels. Restaurants also require a special licence to sell and handle non-halal pork products, and pork is not normally available in local restaurants.

During the holy month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from dawn to sunset, a number of restaurants apply for special licences permitting them to stay open for business during the day, serving lunch for the non-Muslim expatriate population. These few outlets will offer eat-in options in curtained-off sections of the restaurant or cater for takeaway only during the Ramadan period. Visitors are advised to be mindful that they should not eat or drink in public during this time.

### Abu Dhabi

#### Where expats eat

With a majority expat population, Abu Dhabi has a vibrant, diverse and well-established restaurant scene. Most of the popular expatriate restaurants are attached to hotels.

#### International food

There are many excellent restaurants and an enormous variety of different kinds of cuisine on offer, including Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Japanese, Lebanese, Mexican, Thai and many more. There are also numerous Indian and Pakistani restaurants, many of which cater for takeaway customers.

#### Expat recommendations

- [Angar](#) (Yas Hotel Abu Dhabi, Yas Island) – modern Indian fine-dining.
- [Asia de Cuba](#) (St Regis Hotel, Nation Riviera Beach Club, Corniche Road) – Japanese-Cuban fusion restaurant.
- [Bocca](#) (Hilton Abu Dhabi, Corniche Road) – Italian fine-dining.
- [Bord Eau](#) (Shangri-La, Qaryat Al Beri) – French fine-dining.
- [Hakkasan Abu Dhabi](#) (Emirates Palace Hotel, Corniche Road) – Michelin-starred Cantonese fine-dining.
- [KOI Abu Dhabi](#) (The Collection, St Regis Saadiyat Island Resort) – most highly-rated Japanese restaurant in the city.
- [Li Beirut](#) (Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, West Corniche Road) – award-winning Lebanese restaurant.
- [Market Kitchen](#) (Le Royal Méridien, Sheikh Khalifa Street) – modern American cuisine.
- [McGettigans AUH](#) (Al Raha Beach Hotel, Channel Street, Al Raha Creek) – Irish bar chain, serving traditional pub food classics; crowned 'Bar of the Year' by Time Out Magazine and 'Best Irish Pub Food' by Irish Pubs Global.
- [The Meat Co](#) (Souk Qaryat Al Beri, Al Maqta, near Shangri-La Hotel) – elite brand of South African steakhouse.
- [Roberto's](#) (Rosewood Hotel, Al Maryah Island) – Italian fine-dining.
- [Trader Vic's](#) (Beach Rotana Hotel, 10th Street, Al Zahiyah) – French-Polynesian island cuisine and cocktails.

#### Restaurant guides

- [FooDiva: Abu Dhabi](#) – food features and restaurant reviews, covering mainly Dubai, but there is also a section on Abu Dhabi.
- [Time Out Abu Dhabi – Restaurants](#) – excellent and up-to-date restaurant reviews and features on the local dining scene.

## Dubai

### Where expats eat

Excellent restaurants can be found in most parts of the city, but are especially numerous around the Dubai Marina. Most of the popular expatriate restaurants are attached to hotels or malls. Al Dhiyafah Road is known for its cheap eats, specialising in Lebanese, Iranian and Indian restaurants.

The annual [Dubai Food Festival](#) takes place in February.

### International food

Like Abu Dhabi, with a majority expat population Dubai has an extensive and diverse restaurant scene, catering to all tastes and budgets. There are also numerous Indian and Pakistani restaurants, many of which cater for takeaway customers, and Lebanese cuisine is very popular among locals and expatriates alike.

### Expat recommendations

- [Atelier M Restaurant & Lounge](#) (Pier 7, Dubai Marina) – Mediterranean fine-dining.
- [Al Fanar Restaurant & Cafe](#) (Town Center, Jumeirah) – authentic Emirati food.
- [Al Safadi](#) (127 Sheikh Zayed Road, DIFC) – fine Lebanese cuisine.
- [Benjarong Restaurant](#) (Dusit Thani Dubai, 133 Sheikh Zayed Road) – award-winning Thai cuisine.
- [Brasserie Quartier \(BQ\)](#) (St Regis Dubai, Sheikh Zayed Road/Dubai Creek) – French fine-dining.
- [Buddha Bar](#) (Grosvenor House Dubai, Al Emreef Street, Dubai Marina) – Asian fine-dining.
- [Jean-Georges Dubai](#) (Four Seasons Resort, Jumeirah Beach Road) – international fine-dining.
- [Bombay Brasserie](#) (Taj Dubai, Burj Khalifa Street, Business Bay) – Indian fine dining.
- [Maison Mathis](#) (Arabian Ranches Gold Club, Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Road) – European cuisine.
- [McGettigans](#) – Irish bar chain, serving traditional pub food; multiple branches.
- [Senara](#) (Palm Views West, Palm Jumeirah) – relaxed all-day eatery serving quality international standard dishes, including burgers, steaks, salads, etc.
- [Toro Toro](#) (Grosvenor House Dubai, Al Emreef Street, Dubai Marina) – award-winning Latin American cuisine.

### Restaurant guides

- [FooDiva](#) – extensive reviews of the Dubai restaurant scene.
- [Time Out Dubai– Restaurants](#)

## Fujairah

### Where expats eat

Many of the most frequented restaurants by expatriates are found in hotels.

### International food

While Fujairah has a distinctly quieter restaurant scene than Abu Dhabi or Dubai, it is possible to get most types of cuisine here, although Arabic, Lebanese, Indian and Chinese restaurants are the most common.

### Expat recommendations

- [Biker's Café](#) (Fujairah International Marine Club, East 99/Corniche Road) – all-day motorcycle-themed restaurant, serving international cuisine in a convivial atmosphere.
- [Freddy's RestroBar](#) (Fortune Royal Hotel, Al Ghorfa Road) – choice of Indian, Arabic, Continental and Chinese cuisines; casual.
- [Gonu Bar & Grill](#) – (Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Dibba Road) – high-quality beach bar and restaurant, serving grilled meats, seafood, light meals and cocktails.
- [Murjan Café & Restaurant](#) (Nour Arjan by Rotana, Hamad Bin Abdullah Road, by Grand Sheikh Zayed Mosque) – international and local cuisine.

- [McGettigans](#) (Fujairah Tennis & Country Club, near Ajman University) – Irish bar chain, serving traditional pub food.
- [Al Meshwar](#) (Hamad Bin Abdullah Road, near Etisalat Bldg) – traditional Lebanese and Middle Eastern cuisine; imposing building.
- [Oriental Restaurant](#) (Salam Street/Al Sharq Road) – Chinese cuisine.
- [Sapore](#) (Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Dibba Road) – Italian fine-dining.
- [Senasia](#) (Miramar Al Aqa Beach Resort) – sophisticated Asian fusion cuisine.
- [Shakespeare & Co](#) (Century Mall) – all-day restaurant chain, serving international cuisine; customised cakes; very kitsch décor.
- [Swaad](#) (Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Dibba Road) – Indian fine-dining.
- [Taste](#) (Le Meridien Al Aqah Beach Resort, Dibba Road) – Thai fine-dining.

## Average meal prices

Prices from ECA's Cost of Living survey:

Meal	Average price per head in AED	Average price per head in USD
Take-away meal	22.50	6.13
Lunch at cafe	98.00	26.69
Dinner at restaurant	266.95	72.69
Business dinner	491.23	133.76

AED 1 = USD 0.2723

## Leisure

### Abu Dhabi

The cultural heart of the city is Saadiyat Island, home to world-class museums and galleries. Yas Island is excellent for thrill seekers and home to three major theme parks. Nearby Al Ain is where many historical landmarks and sights can be found. Though known as a more conservative emirate than Dubai, Abu Dhabi has plenty of nightclubs and bars in addition to its many good restaurants.

#### Expat clubs and cultural institutes

The following organisations arrange regular concerts, film screenings, exhibitions and socials:

- [Abu Dhabi Hash House Harriers](#) – casual amateur running club with a big social component.
- [Abu Dhabi Irish Society](#)
- [Abu Dhabi Women's Group \(ADWG\)](#)
- [Abu Dhabi Striders](#) – amateur running club.
- [American Women's Network of Abu Dhabi \(AWN\)](#)
- [Aussies Abroad Abu Dhabi](#)
- [German Ladies of Abu Dhabi \(GLADIES\)](#)
- [Goethe Institut Abu Dhabi](#) (Al Qasbah Street, between Al Bateen and Bainunah Streets)
- [Institut français UAE](#)

#### Film, theatre and music

- [Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Company \(ADNEC\)](#) (Khaleej Al Arabi Street, Capital Centre) – premier performance and exhibition space.
- [Abu Dhabi Performing Arts Centre](#) (Cultural District, Saadiyat Island) – Zaha Hadid-designed, ultra-modern performing arts centre for opera and drama, including a museum; under construction.
- Al Raha Beach Theatre (Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Street, Al Raha Beach) – waterfront theatre; 2 100 seats.

- [Bait Al Oud](#) (Villa No 72, Malqatah Street, Al Nahyan) – dedicated to the *oud* and other traditional instruments and music; hosts performances and music lessons.
- [du Forum and du Arena](#) (Yas Leisure Drive, Yas Island) – premier performance and exhibition spaces, one indoor, the other open-air, hosting large-scale international acts.
- [Emirates Palace Auditorium](#) (West Corniche Road) – 1 100 seats.
- [National Theatre](#) (Fatima Bint Mubarak Street (4<sup>th</sup> Street), off Sheik Rashid Bin Saeed Street, Al Etihad) – premier venue for theatre, cinema, conferences and exhibitions; 2 250 seats.
- [Novo Cinemas](#) (The Mall at World Trade Centre; and Bawabat Al Sharq Mall, Baniyas)
- [Star Cinemas Abu Dhabi – National Cinema](#)
- [VOX Cinemas](#) (Marina Mall; Nation Towers; and Yas Mall)
- [Warehouse421](#) (Mina Zayed) – new multi-arts centre in Abu Dhabi's port area; exhibitions, film screenings, performances, talks and workshops.

### Museums and galleries

- [Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital](#) (Sweihan Road, Al Shamka, near Abu Dhabi International Airport) – world's largest falcon hospital, with museum and displays.
- [Al Ain Palace Museum](#) (Al Jahili area, Hessa bint Mohamed Street, Al Ain) – once the home of a sheikh, the 1937 estate displays historic furniture and art.
- [Al Ain National Museum](#) (Zayed Bin Sultan Street/1<sup>st</sup> Street, Al Ain) – oldest museum in the UAE (since 1969); charts the history of Al Ain from the Stone Age through the foundation of the UAE in 1971.
- [Al Qattara Arts Centre](#) (near Al Qattara Qasis and the Friday market, Al Ain) – art gallery and educational centre.
- [Emirates National Auto Museum](#) (Hamim Road, off E11, 45 km south of Abu Dhabi) – vast collection of off-road vehicles and classic American cars, the Sheikh's Mercedes rainbow collection and the world's largest truck.
- [Guggenheim Museum](#) (Cultural District, Saadiyat Island) – Frank Gehry-designed museum, currently under construction.
- [Louvre Abu Dhabi](#) (Cultural District, Saadiyat Island) – designed by Jean Nouvel; opened in 2018.
- [Manarat Al Saadiyat](#) (Cultural District, Saadiyat Island) – major exhibition space for fine art; three galleries.
- [Maritime Museum](#) (Cultural District, Saadiyat Island) – magnificent Tadao Ando-designed building, in the form of a sail full of wind; dedicated to Abu Dhabi's seafaring history and maritime environment; under construction.
- [Qasr al-Hosn](#) (behind the Cultural Foundation building, next to Sheikh Khalifa Mosque) – the White Fort or Old Fort, oldest stone building in Abu Dhabi. The original structure was constructed in 1793 as the official residence of Abu Dhabi's rulers.
- [UAE Pavilion](#) (Cultural District, Saadiyat Island) – its shape inspired by desert dunes, the Foster + Partners-designed pavilion is a unique exhibition and event space.
- [Zayed National Museum](#) (Cultural District, Saadiyat Island) – Norman Foster-designed; dedicated to the memory of the late Sheik Zayed (1919–2004); under construction.

### Parks and recreation

- [Al Ain Camel Market](#) (east of Jebel Hafeet, Al Ain) – the last souk of its kind in the UAE; entry is free.
- [Al Ain Sportplex](#) (Khatm Alsheklah Street, Al Ain) – facilities for go-karting, cricket, paintball, horse-riding, radio-controlled cars and planes and kite-flying, plus a Heritage Village.
- [Al Ain Oasis](#) (1.5 hours' drive from Abu Dhabi) – also known as the Garden City, is home to some six oases, which form a designated [UNESCO World Heritage site](#).
- [Al Ain Zoo](#) (Nahyan The First Street, Al Ain) – formerly 'Arabian Wildlife Park'; huge zoo and conservation centre, with over 10 000 free-roaming animals.
- [Desert Islands \(Jozor Al Sahra'a\)](#) (Al Gharbia, 2.5 hours' drive west of Abu Dhabi) – consisting of Sir Bani Yas Island, Dalma Island and six Discovery Islands; rich in wildlife; popular retreat.
- [Emirates Park Zoo](#) (12th Street, Al Bahia, 35 km from Abu Dhabi) – exotic wildlife park geared towards children.

- [Ferrari World Abu Dhabi](#) (Yas Island) – theme park.
- [Hili Archaeological Park](#) – monuments from the Umm an-Nar period (2 500 BCE to 2 000 BCE); the centrepiece is Hili Grand Tomb, dating to ca. 2 000 BCE.
- [Jebel Hafeet Tombs](#) – 5 000-year-old tombs that mark the beginning of the Bronze Age.
- [Umm Al Emarat Park](#) – formerly Mushrif Park.
- [Warner Bros World Abu Dhabi](#) (Yas Island) – theme park; grand opening on 25 July 2018.
- [Yas Waterworld](#) (Yas Island) – water park with over 40 rides and attractions.

### Events and festivals

- [Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge](#) – part of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies; in March.
- [Abu Dhabi Grand Prix](#) (Yas Marina Circuit, Yas Island) – annual Formula 1 race; in November.
- [Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition \(ADIHEX\)](#) – five days in late September.
- [Abu Dhabi Festival](#) – the UAE's premier classical arts event; at the end of March/beginning of April.
- [Abu Dhabi Summer Season](#) – mid-June to mid-August.
- [Al Dhafra Heritage Festival](#) (Madinat Zayed, Al Dhafra Region) – celebration of Bedouin life, including camel beauty contests, camel milking competitions, etc.; second half of December.
- [Al Dhafra Water Festival](#) (Al Mirfa Beach, Al Dhafra Region) – ten days of water sports, competitions and beach concerts; in April.
- [GITEX Technology Week](#) – largest technology fair in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia.
- [Mother of the Nation Festival](#) – 'celebrating the values of Her Highness Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak'; ten-day-long festival with live street performers, entertainment, dining, markets and more; in March.
- [Sheikh Zayed Heritage Festival](#) (UAE Heritage District) – exhibitions, events and popular markets reflecting traditional Emirati life; also camel races, falconry shows, competitions and fireworks; throughout December and January.

### LGBT

Homosexuality is criminalised in the UAE, the maximum penalty being ten years in prison and deportation for expats. Cross-dressing is also illegal.

- [Being Gay in the UAE](#)

### Leisure guides

- [Abu Dhabi Culture](#)
- [Abu Dhabi Events](#)
- [Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority](#)
- [The Capital List](#)
- [Cultural Programs & Heritage Festivals Committee – Abu Dhabi](#)
- [Time Out Abu Dhabi](#)
- [Visit Abu Dhabi](#)

## Dubai

Dubai is home to a growing number of world-class cultural, entertainment and recreational facilities; sports facilities in particular are excellent. There is a lively nightlife and for newcomers, the Souk Madinat in Jumeirah district – a complex of some 45 bars and restaurants – provides a good starting point. [Al Bastakiya / Al Fahidi Historical District](#) (Souk Al Kabir) is one of the original trading districts of old Dubai, full of atmospheric narrow alleyways, with many of the houses now converted into art galleries.

### Expat clubs and cultural institutes

The following organisations arrange regular concerts, film screenings, exhibitions and socials:

- [Alliance Française Dubai](#)
- [Australian New Zealand Association \(ANZA\) UAE](#) – Dubai-based community organisation providing support for local Australians and New Zealanders.
- [Belgian Club Dubai](#)
- [BilgiDubai](#) – Turkish expat group.
- [Dubai Irish Society Club](#)
- [Dubai Roadsters Cycling Group](#) – 5 000-strong cycling club with a large expat component.
- [Dubai Rowing Club](#) (Dubai International Maritime Club)
- [Goethe Institut Dubai](#) (Aghadir/Sharaf DG Building, Mankhool Road/Kuwait Street)
- [India Club Dubai](#)
- [Ranches Ladies](#) – multi-national women's social group, meeting weekly at the Arabian Ranches Golf Club.
- [Scots in Dubai](#)
- [Swiss Ladies Dubai](#)

### Film, theatre and music

- [Autism Rocks Arena](#) (Dubai–Al Ain Road, next to Dubai Outlet Mall) – outdoor concert venue owned by UK charity 'Autism Rocks'; major international pop–music acts.
- [Courtyard Playhouse](#) (around the corner from Times Square Centre, Al Quoz 1) – performing–arts theatre.
- [Dubai Opera](#) (Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Blvd, Dubai Fountain)
- [Global Village](#) (Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Road (Exit 37)/Emirates Road) – concerts and other shows, plus dining and retail options.
- [Junction Theatre](#) (Alserkal Avenue, Al Quoz) – independent black box theatre.
- [Madinat Theatre](#) (Souk Madinat Jumeirah) – major performance space.
- [Novo Cinemas](#) (Dubai Festival City Mall; Dragon Mart 2; Ibn Battuta Mall)
- [Reel Cinemas](#) – four branches.
- [VOX Cinemas](#) – multiple branches.

### Museums and galleries

- [Alserkal Avenue](#) (Sheikh Zayed Road/Al Manara Exit No 43, Al Quoz) – the region's foremost contemporary arts hub; houses art galleries in over 20 warehouses.
- [Coffee Museum](#) (Al Fahidi Historical Area; Bastakiya) – quaint museum for coffee lovers.
- [Cuadro Art Gallery](#) (Building 10, Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Gate Village) – contemporary art gallery and art platform.
- [Dubai Museum and Al Fahidi Fort](#) (Al Fahidi Street/Ali Bin Abi Taleb Street) – the oldest building in Dubai (built in 1787); the museum exhibits local antiquities, as well as artefacts from African and Asian countries that traded with Dubai.
- [Etihad Museum](#) (Jumeirah Street/Al Dyafah Street) – tells the story of the UAE's founding in 1971.
- [Hatta Heritage Village](#) (Hatta, 100 km south–east of Dubai) – 2 000 to 3 000 year–old village and open–air museum.
- [Lawrie Shabibi](#) (Unit 21, Alskeral Avenue, Al Quoz 1) – modern art gallery.
- [Saruq Al–Hadid Archaeology Museum](#) (Al Shindagha Historic District, Al Ghubaiba) – explores Saruq Al–Hadid – 'the Way of Iron' – a remote desert site that was a centre for metalworking 3 000 years ago.
- [Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum House](#) (Al Shindagha Historic District, Al Ghubaiba) – residence of Dubai's monarch during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



- [Tashkeel](#) – multi-disciplinary art studios, work spaces and galleries, at two sites, Nad Al Sheba and in Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood.
- [Women's Museum](#) (Gold Souq, Deira)
- [XVA Gallery](#) (Al Fahidi Neighbourhood, Bur Dubai) – major contemporary art gallery.

### Parks and recreation

- [Al Khazzan Park](#) (Al Safa Street, Satwa) – small urban park, popular with families.
- [Burj Khalifa](#) (1 Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard, downtown Dubai) – currently the world's tallest man-made structure, at 828 m tall, with 160 floors.
- [Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo](#) (Dubai Mall, Doha Street, off Sheikh Zayed Road, 1<sup>st</sup> Interchange)
- [Dubai Creek Park](#) (Umm Hurair 2, near Garhoud Bridge) – waterside park with swimming pool, children's' play areas, a cable car, amphitheatre and restaurant.
- [Dubai Fountain](#) (Dubai Mall, Financial Centre Road/Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Blvd) – world's largest choreographed fountain system; water jets stream water up to 150 metres high; daily shows.
- [Dubai Park and Resorts](#) (Jebel Ali) – includes three theme parks (Legoland Dubai, Motiongate Dubai and Bollywood Dubai), one water park (Legoland Water Park), the dining and retail quarter Riverland Dubai, and the Lapita hotel resort.
- [Dubai Zoo](#) (Jumeirah Street/55 A Street, Jumeirah 1)
- [Mushrif Park](#) (off the Airport Road in Deria, near Uptown Mirdif and Khawaneej) – municipal park, featuring a public swimming pool and facilities for horse and camel riding (e.g. see [Mushrif Equestrian & Polo Club](#)).
- [Safa Park](#) (between Sheikh Zayed Road and Wasl Road, Al Safa) – large urban park with a boating lake and the Dubai Canal running through it.
- [Ski Dubai Snow Park](#) (part of the Mall of the Emirates, Sheikh Zayed Road) – indoor ski resort.
- [Wild Wadi Water Park](#) (next to Burj Al Arab, Jumeirah) – water-based theme park.

### Events and festivals

- [Art Dubai](#) – four days in March.
- [Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships](#) – two-week tournament; February to March.
- [Dubai Food Festival](#) – mid-February to mid-March.
- [Dubai International Baja](#) – part of the FIA World Cup for Cross Country Rallies; in March.
- [Dubai International Film Festival](#) – one week in December.
- [Dubai International Jazz Festival](#) – three days in February.
- [Dubai Marathon](#) – last weekend in January.
- [Dubai Rugby Sevens](#) – three days of rugby competition between 16 international teams; end of November/beginning of December.
- [Dubai Shopping Festival](#) – month-long event; in December/January.
- [Dubai World Cup](#) – the world's richest horse race, with a USD 10 million prize fund; the most prestigious event in Dubai every year; in March.
- [Taste of Dubai](#) (Dubai Media City) – three-day food, drink and music festival; in March.

### LGBT

Homosexuality is criminalised in the UAE, the maximum penalty being ten years in prison and deportation for expats. Cross-dressing is also illegal. However, there is a small underground gay scene in expat areas.

- [Being Gay in the UAE](#)

### Leisure guides



- [Dubai Culture](#)
- [Time out Dubai](#)
- [The Dubai Explorer](#)
- [Visit Dubai](#)
- [What's On](#)

## Fujairah

Fujairah is home to some of the best sandy beaches in the UAE and recreational facilities for expatriates centre around beachside sports and social clubs. All the major five–star hotels have at least one nightclub. Other cultural/recreational facilities are fairly limited and social life tends to revolve around private entertaining within the foreign community.

### Expat clubs and cultural institutes

The following organisations arrange regular concerts, film screenings, exhibitions and socials:

- [Indian Social Club Fujairah](#)

### Film, theatre and music

- [Fujairah Culture Centre](#) – contains a theatre, multi–purpose halls and libraries.
- [Star Cinemas Fujairah](#) (Century Mall; and Dana Cinema, Al Ittihad Road)
- [VOX Cinemas](#) (Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Rd/E89)

### Museums and galleries

- [Al Bidya Mosque / Ottoman Mosque](#) (Al Bidya Village, 35 km north of Fujairah) – oldest mosque in the UAE (from the 15<sup>th</sup> century), still in daily use; unique architectural design.
- [Al Bithnah Fort](#) (Al Bithnah, 13 km west of Fujairah) – defensive fortress built in 1735; good viewpoint from which to survey the surrounding landscape.
- [Fujairah Fort](#) – large, historically significant 17<sup>th</sup>–century fort that has served as a defensive building and home to the ruling family; popular site for festivals and competitions.
- Fujairah's Heritage Village (Madhab tourist area) – dedicated to Arabic customs and traditional Bedouin ways of life.
- [Fujairah Museum](#) (Al–Nakheel Road/Al–Salam Road) – collection of artefacts from surrounding archaeological sites; the heritage section features traditional instruments and tools.
- [Al Hail Fort](#) (Wadi Al Hail, ca. 13 km west of Fujairah) – old castle and watchtower in an enclosed compound; archaeological remains indicate that the area was settled as far back as the Iron Age (1 300 BC to 300 BC).

### Parks and recreation

- [Al Hajar Mountains](#) – the highest mountain range in the region, running parallel with the eastern coast of the UAE; note, most of the mountains are located in neighbouring Oman; excellent for trekking and rock climbing.
- [Fun City](#) (Century Mall, Al Qasar Road /Corniche Road (E99), near Umbrella Beach) – indoor children's entertainment centre.
- [Khor Kalba](#) (Kalba Creek, ca. 15 km south of Fujairah) – tidal estuary and oldest mangrove forest in Arabia; home to a variety of endemic plant, marine and birdlife not found elsewhere in the UAE; good for kayaking.
- Mahdahb Sulphuric Spring Park (just off Al Qasar Road (F19), west of the city centre) – small park with two swimming pools (one for men, one for women), fed by the local hot springs, and a children's play area.
- Snoopy Island (off the coast of Al Aqah Beach, also known as Sandy Beach) – small rock island, surrounded by a coral reef teeming with sea life; excellent for diving and snorkelling.
- [Tennis & Country Club](#) (off E89 Road, near Ajman University, Fujairah city centre) – tennis courts and a large outdoor pool, plus [McGettigan's Irish Pub–Restaurant](#).

- [Wadi Shakwa Park/Shawka Dam](#) (ca. 35 km west of Fujairah, RAK) – excellent for hiking and camping; currently being 'upgraded' to a 'green tourist destination' with improved facilities.
- [Wadi Wurayah](#) (between Masafi, Khor Fakkan and Bidiyah; 35 km north of Fujairah) – national park; designated Ramsar Wetland of International Importance.

### Events and festivals

- [Fujairah International Arts Festival](#) – music, performing arts, drama, traditional Emirati/Arabic arts etc.; hosted by the Fujairah Culture and Media Authority (FCMA); ten days in February.
- Fujairah Terry Fox Run – annual fundraising event that has participants running, skating and cycling along the 8.5 km track on the Corniche; in January.
- [Maktoum Championship](#) – annual sports tournament; football, chess, taekwondo and swimming competitions, as well as interactive games; held during Ramadan.
- [Al Saif \(Sword\) Championship](#) (Fujairah Fort) – annual traditional sword championship, held under the patronage of the Crown Prince of Fujairah; mid-November to mid-December.
- [UNESCO World Heritage Day](#) – normally celebrated at the foot of Fujairah Fort, with dancing troupes, food stalls, live music and a cultural programme; 18 April.

### LGBT

Homosexuality is criminalised in the UAE, the maximum penalty being ten years in prison and deportation for expats. Cross-dressing is also illegal. Moreover, Fujairah is known as a much more conservative emirate than Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

- [Being Gay in the UAE](#)

### Leisure guides

- [Fujairah Culture and Media Authority \(FCMA\)](#)
- [Fujairah Tourism & Antiquities Authority](#)

## Background

### History

3000 BC: The first evidence of human habitation in Abu Dhabi, Al-Ain and Sharjah dates from this period.

17<sup>th</sup> century: By this time, Arab tribal confederations had established themselves in the area.

1820: Britain signed a treaty with local rulers to end piracy along the Gulf coast. The area later became known as the Trucial Coast.

1892: A series of exclusive agreements between the Trucial States and Britain gave each emirate control of its internal affairs whilst control of foreign policy passed to Britain.

1948: Sheikh Saqr Bin-Muhammad al-Qasimi became Ruler of Ra's al-Khaimah.

1950s: Oil was first discovered in the Trucial States.

1952: The seven emirates formed a Trucial Council to increase cooperation between themselves.

1962: The first oil was exported from Abu Dhabi.

1966: In August, Sheikh Zayed Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan became Ruler of Abu Dhabi.

1968: The states of Bahrain and Qatar joined with the Trucial States prior to independence.

1971: Differing objectives led to the breakup of the union with Bahrain and Qatar. In November, Iran occupied the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. In December, following independence from Britain, the six remaining states of Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Sharjah and Umm al-Qaiwain formed the federation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Sheikh Zayed Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan was elected president of the federation. The UAE joined the Arab League.

1972: Ra's al-Khaimah joined the federation. In January, Sheikh Sultan Bin-Muhammad al-Qasimi became Ruler of Sharjah. In February, a 40-member consultative body, the Federal National Council (FNC), was founded by the seven rulers.

1974: In September, Sheikh Hamad Bin-Muhammad Bin-Hamad al-Sharqi became Ruler of Fujairah.

1981: In February, Sheikh Rashid Bin-Ahmad al-Mualla became Ruler of Umm al-Qaiwain. In May, the UAE became a founding member state of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and hosted its first meeting in Abu Dhabi. In September, Sheikh Humayd Bin-Rashid al-Nuaymi became Ruler of Ajman.

1986: In October, Sheikh Zayed Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan was re-elected president for a fourth term.

1987: In June, an attempted coup took place in Sharjah. Sheikh Sultan Bin-Muhammad al-Qasimi abdicated to make way for his brother following an admission of financial mismanagement, but was reinstated by the Supreme Council of Rulers.

1990: In October, Sheikh Rashid Bin-Said Al Maktum died and was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Maktum Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, as Ruler of Dubai and Vice-President of the UAE.

1991: Following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, UAE forces fought alongside the allies against Iraq.

1992: Relations between the UAE and Iran deteriorated after Iran required visas for visitors to the islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb.

1996: Iran further antagonised the UAE by building an airport on Abu Musa and a power station on Greater Tunb.

1998: UAE restored diplomatic relations, broken at the outset of the Gulf War, with Iraq.

1999: In November, the GCC restated its support for the UAE in its dispute with Iran over the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

2001: In November, the UAE froze the assets of over 60 individuals and organisations suspected by the United States of funding terrorism.

2004: In November, the UAE President, Sheikh Zayed Bin-Sultan Al Nahyan, died and was succeeded by his eldest son, Sheikh Khalifa.

2005: In December, Sheikh Khalifa outlined plans for the UAE's first elections in which half of the members of the consultative Federal National Council are to be elected by a limited number of citizens.

2006: In January, the UAE prime minister and vice-president and ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid al-Maktoum, died aged 62 while visiting Australia. He was succeeded by his brother, Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum as ruler of Dubai. During March-June, the days of the UAE official weekend were altered to improve international business contacts and labour laws were amended to reduce dependence on foreign workers and to allow labourers to form trade unions. In December, the UAE's first national elections were held. A small number of selected voters were able to choose half the members of the Federal National Council, an advisory body.

2007: In April, the UAE announced a national development strategy aimed at making the country internationally competitive. In September, Dubai and Qatar became the two largest shareholders in the London Stock Exchange.

2008: In July, the UAE cancelled the entirety of Iraq's debt to it – USD 7 billion.

2009: In February, in order to ease liquidity problems, the Emirate of Dubai sold USD 10 billion in bonds to the UAE. In the same month, the country gave cause for international outcry, when it denied Israeli tennis player Shahar Peer a visa for the Dubai Tennis Championships, on grounds that her presence might incite anger over the Gaza conflict. In March, a rival of Chechen President Ramzan Kyrrov died in Dubai after an apparent assassination attempt. In May, a blow was dealt to further economic integration in the region when the UAE withdrew from plans for a Gulf monetary union. The same month, a member of the ruling family, Issa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, was detained by the Abu Dhabi prosecutor when a video was circulated, apparently showing him torturing another man. In November, Dubai World, the enormous government-owned investment conglomerate, prompted fears in world markets that it might default on billions of dollars of debt held abroad, when it asked for a moratorium on its debt repayments. In December, Dubai received a USD 10 billion bailout from Abu Dhabi for it to pay off its debts; of this money, USD 4.1 billion were earmarked for Dubai World's struggling investment arm.

2010: In January, the Burj Khalifa tower, the world's tallest building and man-made structure, was opened in Dubai. Originally named the Burj Dubai, the tower was renamed on completion after UAE President Sheikh Khalifa al-Nahyan, also neighbouring Abu Dhabi's ruler, in recognition of the emirate's substantial financial support in the previous year. The same month, Sheikh Issa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, brother of Sheikh Khalifa, was cleared of the charges that he tortured a business associate, as had been suggested by a video circulating in 2009. Also in January, a senior Hamas official, Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, was assassinated in Dubai by an alleged Israeli Mossad squad that had entered the country using fake Australian, British, French, German and Irish passports. The Dubai authorities' investigation caused a minor diplomatic fall-out between Israel and the countries whose passports had been abused, culminating in the expulsion, in March, of an Israeli diplomat from the UK.

2011: In March, the UAE joined the international military effort in support of the rebel uprising in Libya against Col Muammar al-Gaddafi and his forces. In April, five political activists were arrested in the UAE for 'opposing the government' and 'insulting top officials', after they had called for democratic and economic reforms; the arrests were condemned by international NGO Human Rights Watch. The same month, a member of the ruling family in Ras al-Khaimah was put under house arrest after calling for more political openness.

2012: In July, the UAE began operating a key overland oil pipeline, crucially bypassing the Strait of Hormuz – a vital oil-trade route at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, which Iran had repeatedly threatened to close in the past. In November, the UAE outlawed the online mockery of its own government, as well as attempts to organise public protests through social networking media, in response to public protests in nearby Bahrain. Since March, the authorities had detained more than 60 activists without charge, some of whom were supporters of the Islah Islamic group, which was aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood in other Arab countries.

2013: In March, the trial of 96 Islamists, accused of belonging to a secret organisation and plotting to seize power in the country, commenced. In July, 68 people were jailed for their alleged attempt to overthrow the government. In November, several Egyptians and Emiratis were put on trial, accused of starting a branch of the outlawed (in the UAE) Muslim Brotherhood.

2014: In January, the President of the UAE Federal Council and ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Kalifa, underwent surgery after suffering a stroke. In March, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain withdrew their ambassadors to Qatar in protest against Qatar's alleged interference in the countries' internal affairs. In July, the UAE announced plans to send an unmanned spacecraft to Mars. In August, US officials reported that the UAE had intervened in the conflict in Libya with airstrikes against the Islamist militants. In September, the UAE, together with four other Arab states participated in US-led air strikes on Islamic State militants in Syria. In November, human rights NGO Amnesty International accused the UAE of having carried out an unprecedented clamp down on dissent, with more than 100 political activists either jailed or prosecuted since 2011. The same month, the UAE published its list of 'terrorist organisations', including among them numerous Islamist groups and charities.

2015: In February, the UAE pulled out of further air strikes from the US-led coalition against Islamic State in Libya (Isil), following the murder of Jordanian pilot Lt Moaz al-Kasaesbeh. In March, the UAE, together with four other GCC states, took part in Saudi-led air strikes on Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. In September, the air strikes on Houthi rebels in Sana'a intensified after the massacre of 45 Emirati soldiers, five Bahrainis, ten Saudis and four Yemenis.

2016: In February, as part of a cabinet reshuffle, appointments were also made for new ministries of 'tolerance' and 'happiness'. In August, the US sent 15 Guantanamo inmates for resettlement to the UAE in the single largest transfer of these detainees during President Barack Obama's administration. In October, a UAE court sentenced seven people to up to life in prison for establishing a cell in the country with links to the Lebanese Shia militant group Hezbollah.

2017: In June, the UAE, along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt, cut diplomatic ties with Qatar, sparking a major diplomatic row in the region; the Saudi-led coalition cited Qatar's alleged support for terrorism as the main reason for their actions. In July, the Washington Post – citing US intelligence officials – reported that it was the UAE who had arranged for Qatari government social media and news sites to be hacked in late May, in order to post incendiary but false quotes linked to Qatar's emir; the UAE dismissed the report as fabrication.

2018: In July, the Saudi-led coalition against Iran-aligned Houthi rebels in Yemen announced a pause in its military campaign for control of Yemen's main port city of Hodeida, to support UN efforts to reach a political solution; the Houthis

have offered to hand over management of Hodeida port to the UN as part of an overall ceasefire in the governorate.

## Government

The UAE is a loose federation of seven emirates which, before the provisional Constitution took effect in 1971, had previously been known as the Trucial States. The highest UAE federal authority is the Supreme Council of Rulers. This body comprises the hereditary rulers of the seven emirates, each of whom is virtually an absolute monarch in his own domain. Decisions made by the Supreme Council require the approval of at least five members, including the rulers of both Abu Dhabi and Dubai. From amongst its seven members, the Supreme Council elects both a President (currently Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed al-Nahyan, ruler of Abu Dhabi) and a Vice-President (Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid al-Maktoum, ruler of Dubai). The President appoints the Prime Minister (a post also held by Sheikh Muhammad bin Rashid al-Maktoum, ruler of Dubai) and the Federal Council of Ministers, responsible to the Supreme Council, to hold executive authority. The legislature is the Federal National Council, a consultative assembly (comprising 40 members appointed for two years by the emirates) which considers laws proposed by the Council of Ministers. There are no political parties.

The seven emirates comprising the federation are (in order of population size): Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras al Khaimah, Fujairah, and Umm Al Quwain.

The dominance of the federation's ruling families and a lack of opposition means that there are few sources of instability. The federation's structure and the wealth of Abu Dhabi and Dubai have precluded widespread calls from the local population for political reform; a handful of Emirati activists campaigning for political reform in April 2011 were initially jailed for several years but were then pardoned by the president.

The most important succession issue facing the federation was resolved smoothly in November 2004, when Sheikh Khalifa al-Nahyan took over as UAE president and ruler of Abu Dhabi following the death of Sheikh Zayed al-Nahyan. Sheikh Khalifa's crown prince, his half-brother Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed, was named heir apparent in late 2003; he is widely regarded as wielding effective power behind the scenes, with Sheikh Khalifa's own sons largely side-lined.

[Abu Dhabi Government Portal](#)

[Ajman Government Portal](#)

[Dubai Government Portal](#)

[Fujairah Government Portal](#)

[Ras al Khaimah \(RAK\) Government Portal](#)

[Sharjah Government Portal](#)

[UAE Federal e-Government Portal](#)

## Economy

### Economic growth

*Gross domestic product (GDP), 2016: 3.0%, 2017: 0.5%; IMF forecasts (Apr 18), 2018: 2.0%, 2019: 3.0%.*

The United Arab Emirates' introduction of VAT on 1 January 2018 brought instant complaints about higher prices, but the move will boost government revenues and enable further development away from the old tax-free economic model. Having made progress diversifying from an over-reliance on hydrocarbons, UAE's economy has been held back of late by years of lower oil prices, OPEC-wide production limits, weak productivity growth, insufficient innovation and the joint blockade (with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Bahrain) of Qatar, which has arguably harmed the protagonists more than the victim.

Economic expansion has continued, though, boosted by substantial government stimulus, especially in Abu Dhabi. Growth in tourism and hospitality has been notable, while technology has been embraced. Foreign investment has increased and should benefit further from Dubai's hosting of Expo 2020. Lightly-regulated free zones attract many foreign companies as does the best business environment and infrastructure in the region.

### Cost of living

*Inflation, 2016: 1.6%, 2017: 2.0%; IMF forecasts (Apr 18), 2018: 4.2%, 2019: 2.5%.*

Price indices jumped with the introduction of 5% VAT on 1 January 2018. Official annual inflation was given as 3.5% to the end of May 2018.

The UAE dirham is pegged to the US dollar at a rate of USD 1 = AED 3.67. During the 12 months to 16 July 2018, the currency fell 2% against the euro and 1% against the British pound, while being unchanged overall against the Japanese yen.

## Labour market

*No IMF unemployment data available.*

There remains heavy reliance on a huge foreign workforce, with UAE (especially Dubai) being the primary destination for expatriates in the region. The government runs a policy of 'Emiratisation' to improve local nationals' skills so they can fill more jobs, but pressures on employers because of this are currently moderate. Demand for skilled talent is high, but the Middle East is fast increasing its supply.

Reliable data are too sparsely available to report on general wage inflation for the economy as a whole.

## Resources

### Country guides and links for the United Arab Emirates

*Culture Shock! United Arab Emirates – A Survival Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, by Gina Crocetti Benesh, published by Marshall Cavendish Corp., 2013.

*Culture Smart! UAE – A Quick Guide to Customs and Etiquette*, by John Walsh, published by Kuperard, Kindle Edition, 2010.

*Explorer Abu Dhabi Residents' Guide*, published by Explorer Publishing, 12<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017.

*Explorer Abu Dhabi Visitors' Guide*, published by Explorer Publishing, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017.

*Explorer Dubai Residents' Guide*, published by Explorer Publishing, 20<sup>th</sup> Edition (Kindle), 2016.

*Explorer UAE Visitors' Guide*, published by Explorer Publishing, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2017.

Online resources include:

[Abu Dhabi WN Bookings & City Guide](#)

[Desert Speak](#). Dubai and UAE expatriate forum.

[Dubai WN City Guide](#). Dubai travel guide and bookings website.

[Emirates Greeks](#). Forum focused on the needs of the Greek and Cypriot expatriate community in the UAE.

[Sharjah Wanderers Sports Club \(SWSC\)](#). Expatriate sports and social club in Sharjah with over 700 active members.

[Time Out Abu Dhabi](#). Monthly print and online guide to restaurants, nightlife, films and cultural events taking place in the city.

[Time Out Dubai](#). Monthly print and online guide to restaurants, nightlife, films and cultural events taking place in the city.

[UAE Federal e-Government Portal](#)

[UAE Interact](#). UAE news and information portal, supported by the UAE National Media Council.

### Cross-cultural training

Effective preparation and planning can increase the chances of a successful assignment. The following organisations offer language tuition and training to prepare assignees for the cross-cultural challenges they may face during their assignment:

[Babel Language and Cultural Training](#) (UK) Translations, language training and tailored cultural briefings.

[Carl Duisberg](#) (Germany) Language and intercultural training.

[Communicaid](#) (UK) Culture and communication skills consultancy specialising in language and cultural awareness training.

[Dwellworks](#) Global consultancy (formerly known as 'dfa Intercultural Global Solutions') specialising in cross-cultural information, training and research.

[Farnham Castle Intercultural Training](#) (UK) Providers of bespoke 'global mobility programmes' for expatriates and business travellers, ranging from half day to two days in duration, and 'intensive language training' covering any language.

[International House World Organisation \(IHWO\)](#) Worldwide network of language schools.

[IOR Global Services](#) Global relocation services.

[Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen/Royal Tropical Institute \(KIT\)](#) (Netherlands) Cross-cultural training programmes, intensive language tuition and country orientation briefings for expatriates and businesses.

[Language Studies International \(LSI\)](#) Language and cultural training.

[Linguarama](#) Tailored language training and cultural awareness programmes to businesses and individuals.

[Richard Lewis Communications](#) (UK) Language courses, communication skills, and cross-cultural executive training services, with offices across Europe, Argentina and Chile, as well as Hong Kong and Japan.

[TMA World](#) International business training.



## Language resources

In London, amongst other places, language and briefing courses are available from the [School of Oriental and African Studies \(SOAS\)](#).

Arabic language resources include:

*Arabic Demystified*, by Usama Soltan, published by McGraw–Hill Education, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2017. Includes audio CD.

*Colloquial Arabic of the Gulf, The Complete Course for Beginners*, by Clive Holes, published by Routledge, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2015.

*Survival Arabic: How to Communicate without Fuss or Fear – Instantly!*, by Fethi Mansouri et al., published by Tuttle Publishing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, forthcoming in November 2018.

## Conversion tables

### Weights and measures

Although the metric system is officially in use, imperial and local systems are still used widely.

Metric/Imperial		Imperial/Metric	
1 cm	0.39 in	1 in	2.54 cm
1 m	3.28 ft	1 ft	0.3048 m
1 m	1.09 yd	1 yd	0.9144 m
1 km	0.62 miles	1 mile	1.6093 km
1 g	0.035 oz	1 oz	28.35 g
1 kg	2.204 lb	1 lb	0.45 kg
1 kg	0.157 st	1 st	6.35 kg
1 ml	0.034 fl oz	1 fl oz	28.41 ml
1 litre	1.759 imp pint	1 imp pint	0.56 litres
1 litre	0.219 imp gal	1 imp gal	4.54 litres

### Clothing sizes

Women's clothing sizes						
Australia	France	Germany	Italy	Japan	UK	US
10	36	34	40	9	8	6
12	38	36	42	11	10	8
14	40	38	44	13	12	10
16	42	40	46	15	14	12
18	44	42	48	17	16	14
20	46	44	50	19	18	16
22	50	46	52	21	20	18
24	52	48	54	23	22	20
26	54	50	56	25	24	22



Men's clothing sizes				
Suits			Shirts	
Europe	Japan	UK/US	Europe/Japan	UK/US
42	–	32	36	14
44	S	34	37	14.5
46	–	36	38	15
48	M	38	39	15.5
50	L	40	41	16
52	–	42	42	16.5
54	LL	44	43	17
56	–	46	44	17.5

Women's shoe sizes				
Australia	Europe	Japan	UK	US/Canada
5	37	22.5	4	6.5
5.5	37.5	23	4.5	7
6	38	23.5	5	7.5
6.5	38.5	24	5.5	8
7	39	24.5	6	8.5
7.5	40	25	6.5	9
8	41	25.5	7	9.5
8.5	42	26	7.5	10
9	43	27	8	10.5

Men's shoe sizes				
Europe	France	Japan	UK/Australia	US/Canada
42	43.5	26.5	8	8.5
43	44	27	8.5	9
43.5	44.5	27.5	9	9.5
44	45	28	9.5	10
44.5	45.5	28.5	10	10.5
45	46	29	10.5	11
45.5	46.5	29.5	11	11.5
46	47	30	11.5	12
46.5	47.5	30.5	12	12.5

## Home country rights and duties

### Voting rights of expatriates

Each country has its own laws governing the voting rights of its citizens who are working/resident abroad and, where expatriates are permitted to vote, the electoral arrangements vary (e.g. in some cases polling stations are installed at the embassy while other countries require their nationals to appoint a proxy). Information is available from district electoral registrars in the home country, from embassies and consulates and from the expatriates' organisations.

### Military service

If military service is compulsory in the home country, expatriates are advised to check which regulations apply to them and their families while abroad; in some instances failure to register and/or to fulfil the required service can result in severe penalties.

### Children born abroad

Children born abroad to expatriate parents may find their citizenship rights affected, either by the laws in the country of assignment or by those of the home country. It is therefore very important to check on both sets of regulations well before the child is born.

## Notes

## Updates

This report was last updated on 17 July 2018.

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- Accommodation
- Benefits for International Assignments Survey
- Country Profiles
- Daily Rates
- Expatriate Salary Management Survey
- Global Mobility Organisation Survey
- International Business Trips Survey
- Managing Mobility Survey
- Permanent Transfers Survey
- Salary Trends
- Tax

### Calculations

- Assignment salary/build-up
- Assignment cost projections
- Location Allowance
- Net-to-Net
- Short-term Assignment
- Tax

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### Reports

- Accommodation
- Benefits
- Cost of Living
- Country Profiles
- Country Security
- Daily Rates

### Calculators & tools

- Accommodation
- Build-up
- Cost of Living
- Daily Rates
- Exchange Rates
- Inflation

- Expatriate Market Pay
- Labour Law
- Location Ratings
- Social Security
- Tax
- Location Allowances
- Net-to-Net
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- Assignment cost projections
- Assignment salary calculations
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- Policy workshops
- Assignment letter templates
- Assignee and HR checklists
- Decision maps and process flows
- Customised data

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London	+44 (0)20 7351 5000	Hong Kong	+852 2121 2388
New York	+1 212 582 2333	Sydney	+61 (0)2 8923 5400

## **ECA International**

London +44 (0)20 7351 5000

Hong Kong +852 2121 2388

New York +1 212 582 2333

Sydney +61 (0)2 8923 5400