



## Dubai - The United Arab Emirates

Dubai is truly a unique destination. Situated in the UAE, the world's 31st popular tourism destination and the Arab World's most popular, Dubai is both a dynamic business hub and a tourist's paradise. The emirate offers more attractions, shopping, fine dining and quality hotels than virtually any other destination on the planet. In 2012, Dubai welcomed over 10 million visitors from around the world, which is an increase of 9.3% from the previous year. It also ranked 8th place globally in terms of tourist spending in the same year.

---

From the timeless tranquility of the desert to the lively bustle of the souks, the city presents a fantastic ensemble of attractions and activities for its visitors and residents. In a single day, one can experience everything from rugged mountains and breathtaking dunes to white sandy beaches and lush, beautifully landscaped parks, from dated villages to luxurious residential districts, and from traditional houses with wind towers to ultra-modern shopping centres.

The emirate's scoring points lie in its entrepreneurial abilities to create the inconceivable found in its tourist attractions, landmarks, shopping centres, nightlife and hotels. Although it strictly safeguards its traditional practices, it allows space for other religions to breathe, a rare quality amongst the conservative Arab world. Thankfully, it has been successful in shielding itself from extremism, much-needed for it to survive. Today, Dubai has emerged as a cosmopolitan metropolis that has grown steadily to become a global city and a business and cultural hub of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf region.

---

### Dubai Geography

Dubai is unarguably located in one of the most strategic spots on the globe— halfway between Europe and Asia. Few destinations require more than eight hours of flying to Dubai. Just seven hours from London, four hours from Malta, three hours from Mumbai, seven hours from Hong Kong and direct, but lengthier, flights from many major cities in the US, Canada or Australasia. Dubai is definitely a destination of choice for vacationing, living and doing business.

Dubai is situated on the Persian Gulf coast of the United Arab Emirates and is roughly at sea level (16 m or 52 ft above). The emirate of Dubai shares borders with Abu Dhabi in the south, Sharjah in the northeast, and the Sultanate of Oman in the southeast. Hatta, a minor exclave of the emirate, is surrounded on three sides by Oman and by the emirates of Ajman (in the west) and Ras Al Khaimah (in the north).

The Persian Gulf borders the western coast of the emirate. Dubai is positioned at 25.2697°N 55.3095°E and covers an area of 1,588 sq mi (4,110 km<sup>2</sup>), which represents a significant expansion beyond its initial 1,500 sq mi (3,900 km<sup>2</sup>) designation due to land reclamation from the sea.

Dubai has a hot desert climate. Summers in Dubai are extremely hot, windy, and humid, with an average high around 41 °C (106 °F) and overnight lows around 30 °C (86 °F) in the hottest month, August. Most days are sunny throughout the year. Winters are warm with an average high of 24 °C (75 °F) and overnight lows of 14 °C (57 °F) in January, the coldest month. Precipitation, however, has been increasing in the last few decades, with accumulated rain reaching 94.3 mm (3.71 in) per year.[42] Dubai summers are also known for the high humidity level, which can make it uncomfortable for many

UAE Facts	
<b>Full country name:</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>Area:</b>	4,114 sq. km
<b>Population:</b>	2,106,177
<b>People:</b>	53% Indian    17% Emirati    13.3% Pakistani    7.5% Bangladeshi    2.5% Filipino 1.5% Sri Lankan    0.3% American    5.7% other countries
<b>Language:</b>	Arabic, English, Urdu, Hindi, Persian, Bengali, Malayalam, Tulu,[79] Tamil, Kannada, Sinhala, Marathi, Telugu, Tagalog and Chinese
<b>Religion:</b>	Article 7 of the UAE's Provisional Constitution declares Islam the official state religion of the UAE. The government subsidises almost 95% of mosques and employs all Imams; approximately 5% of mosques are entirely private, and several large mosques have large private endowments  Dubai also has large Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Bahá'í, Buddhist & other religious communities residing in the city.
<b>Government:</b>	Constitutional monarchy
<b>Ruler:</b>	Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
<b>Crown Prince:</b>	Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
<b>Major industries:</b>	Although Dubai's economy was historically built on the oil industry, the emirate's Western-style model of business drives its economy with the main revenues now coming from tourism, aviation, real estate, and financial services
<b>Major trading partners:</b>	US, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan
<b>Health risks:</b>	None
<b>Time:</b>	UAE standard time (UTC+4)
<b>Electricity:</b>	220 volts. Sockets suitable for three-pin 13 amp plugs of British standard design are the norm
<b>County code:</b>	+ 97
<b>Mobile Phone network:</b>	GSM
<b>Weights &amp; measures:</b>	Metric with local variations

## UAE / Dubai Culture

Dubai is a modern city that welcomes visitors from around the world. However, as it is also a Muslim city, there are certain factors to take into consideration in terms of dress code and behaviour.

Religion plays a significant role in the culture of Dubai. Mosques can be found throughout the city and at sunset the call to prayer can be heard across the rooftops. It is possible for non-Muslim tourists to visit certain mosques in Dubai; perhaps the most impressive is the Jumeirah Mosque, tours of which can be booked through the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding. Ramadan is a popular time of year to visit Dubai; although all residents and visitors must refrain from eating or drinking in public in daylight hours, it is a wonderful time to experience the local culture and strong religious heritage of the city. Non-Muslims may eat and drink in designated areas, and many hotels and shopping malls will have various outlets that remain open during Ramadan.

Visitors to Dubai should dress modestly, particularly in conservative areas and public places. Swimwear is acceptable at the beach or around the swimming pool, but visitors should cover up elsewhere. Shorts and T-shirts are suitable attire in many places, although when visiting mosques, religious sites or older parts of the city, both men and women may feel more comfortable wearing loose-fitting clothes that cover shoulders, arms and legs. Women will usually be required to wear a headscarf when entering mosques.

Courtesy and hospitality are important virtues in the Arab world, and visitors will enjoy the friendliness and warm welcome provided by locals. If you are invited to a majlis, remove your shoes at the entrance. Males and females will probably be escorted to different sections. If you are sharing a meal with your host, accept food and refreshment before moving on to matters of business. It is important to stand up for new guests and older or higher-ranking people, and men are expected to stand when a woman enters the room. When greeting a member of the opposite sex who is Muslim, it is important not to offer to shake hands unless they extend their hand first – both men and women (more commonly women) may prefer not to shake hands with the opposite sex due to religious reasons.

It is customary to accept food and drink with your right hand; this is also the hand you should eat with. Avoid showing the soles of your feet, or pointing your foot at anyone. If you are sitting in front of an important guest, it is considered rude to cross your legs. Do not beckon or point with your finger; if you need to use a hand gesture, use the whole hand. If you are hosting Muslim guests, do not offer those alcoholic beverages or pork.

Alcoholic beverages are available in licensed bars and restaurants in Dubai. In order to get a licence, an outlet must be attached to a hotel or sports centre, and therefore, most bars, pubs and licensed restaurants can be found inside Dubai's hotels. Visitors may also purchase alcohol from Duty Free shops at Dubai International Airport, as long as they observe the limits set by Dubai Customs. Drinking and driving is strictly prohibited, and Dubai Police take a zero tolerance approach – in other words, it is not safe to have even one drink if you are driving.

Visitors should remember that, as Dubai is a Muslim city, a more modest code of behaviour is required. Being drunk and disorderly in public is unacceptable, and may result in a fine or worse. Public displays of affection should be minimal – holding hands is acceptable but kissing and hugging in public is not. Noise disruptions, bad language, making obscene gestures and showing disrespect in any way to Dubai's religion or its leaders are all forbidden and may land you in legal trouble. The following are also considered illegal in Dubai: use or possession of drugs, cohabitation, sex outside of marriage, having a baby out of wedlock, adultery and homosexuality.

## Religion in the UAE

Article 7 of the UAE's Provisional Constitution declares Islam the official state religion of the UAE. The government subsidises almost 95% of mosques and employs all Imams; approximately 5% of mosques are entirely private, and several large mosques have large private endowments. All mosques in Dubai are managed by the Government of Dubai, and all Imams are also appointed by the Government. Any Imam caught preaching racial or religious hatred or caught promoting Islamic extremism is usually jailed and deported.

Dubai also has large Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Bahá'í, Buddhist and other religious communities residing in the city. Non-Muslim groups can own their own houses of worship, where they can practice their religion freely, by requesting a land grant and permission to build a compound. Groups that do not have their own buildings must use the facilities of other religious organisations or worship in private homes.

Non-Muslim religious groups are permitted to advertise group functions openly and distribute various religious literatures; however, outright proselytising is strictly prohibited under penalty of criminal prosecution, imprisonment, and deportation for engaging in behaviour offensive to Islam.[81] Strict prohibition extends to small Muslim groups such as the Ahmadiyya.

## Language in the UAE

Arabic is the national and official language of the United Arab Emirates. The Gulf dialect of Arabic is spoken natively by the Emirati people. English is used as a second language. Other languages spoken in Dubai, due to immigration, are Urdu, Hindi, Persian, Bengali, Malayalam, Tulu, Tamil, Kannada, Sinhala, Marathi, Telugu, Tagalog and Chinese, in addition to many other languages.

## Events and Public Holidays

Since Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of phases of the moon, the dates outlined below for Islamic religious holidays are approximate. The precise dates are not announced until a day or so before they occur. If a public holiday falls on a weekend, the holiday is usually taken at the beginning of the next working week.

A three-day mourning period is usually announced when a member of the ruling families or a government minister or the head of a neighbouring state dies. Government offices and some private companies will close for the period.

Public Holidays		
Date	Holiday name	Holiday type
Jan 1	New Year's Day	Local holiday
Dec 2	National Day	Local holiday
	Al-Hijra	Islamic New Year
	Mouloud	Birth of the Prophet
	Leilat al-Meiraj	Ascension of the Prophet
	Eid al-Fitr	End of Ramadan
	Eid al-Adha	Feast of the Sacrifice

## General Information

### **Mobile phones**

Gsm services are available and the mobile phone code within the uae is 050. "Speak easy" is a gsm mobile service for those visitors and tourists who cannot use their own mobile phones in the uae. You can either buy a new mobile phone and purchase a temporary sim card or use your own handset with a temporary card. Contact etisalat for details.

### **Internet**

Most five-star hotels offer guests internet access. Email cheap rates are from 7 p.M. To 7 a.M. At the time of writing public internet access kiosks were being established in the uae, initially at the major airports. The minimum charge for public access is dh2 and 60 fils per minute. Payment can be made by credit card.

If you have brought your laptop with you, along with a modem and browsing software, you can dial 500 5333 to get connected to the internet. A charge of 15 fils per minute is billed to the telephone to which you are connected. For more details call 800 5244.

### **Post**

The general postal authority runs an efficient postal system with red post collection boxes dotted throughout the cities and towns. Mail is usually collected morning and evening. Stamps can be purchased and post mailed from your hotel. Express postal facilities are also available at post offices.

In general, post office opening hours are from 8 a.M.- 1 P.M. And 4 p.M. - 7 P.M. Saturday to wednesday. Closed thursdays and fridays. 8 A.M. - 12 Noon on public holidays, but closed on the first day of eid holidays. Note that there are no telephones or fax facilities at post offices in the uae and poste restante facilities are not available.

The main post office in dubai is on zaisabeel road, bur dubai (8 a.M. - 11.30 P.M. Saturday to wednesday, 8 a.M. - 1 P.M. And 4 p.M. - 8 P.M. Thursday and closed fridays). There is also a smaller post office in deira on al sabkha road. Other post offices are located in satwa, karama and jumeirah.

### **Opening hours and holidays**

Normal shopping hours are from 9.00 A.M. - 1 P.M. And 4.00 - 9.00 P.M. However many shops, particularly in dubai and abu dhabi stay open all day. Most shopping centres open from 10 a.M to 10 p.M - frequently later. Some supermarkets are open for 24 hours. Although shops and shopping centres are fully air conditioned, the cool of the evening is a favourite time for shopping. Shopping centres and most shops are open on friday, the islamic day of rest, but they all close for juma (friday) prayers from 11.30 A.M. To 1.30 P.M.

All shops are required to close at prayer times in raï's al-khaimah.

### **Offices**

Government offices open at 7.30 A.M. And close at 3.00 P.M. But you would be wise to visit in the morning. Private offices tend to keep longer hours, coming back to work in the evening after an extended mid-day break. Some private businesses open from 8 a.M. To 5 p.M.

All government offices close for the weekend at mid-day on thursday and do not open again until saturday morning. Some offices outside the public sector are open on thursday and close on friday and saturday.

### **Tipping**

Tipping is not expected, but is common practice. Gratuities to staff at hotels are at your discretion. Most restaurants add service charges to the bill (abu dhabi 16 per cent; sharjah 15 per cent; dubai 10 per cent). If this charge is not included, add 10 per cent of the total to the bill. Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped. Supermarket baggers, bag carriers and windscreen washers at petrol stations are generally given dh2.

### **Photography**

Film is readily available, so too are processing facilities and colour prints are produced in record time. Ask permission before photographing people in general. Avoid photographing muslim women and do not photograph airports, docks, and telecommunications equipment, and government buildings, military and industrial installations.

### **Time**

The uae is four hours ahead of gmt. The time does not change during the summer. This means that there is a three hour difference between uk and uae local times in summer and a four hour difference in winter.

### **Electricity**

Domestic supply is 220 volts. Sockets suitable for three-pin 13 amp plugs of british standard design are the norm, however it is a good idea to bring an adapter with you just in case. Adapters can be purchased in local supermarkets. Appliances purchased in the uae will generally have two-pin plugs attached.

### **Weights and Measures**

The uae uses the metric system, although british and us standard weights and measures are understood.

### **Clothing**

Lightweight summer clothing is ideal with a wrap, sweater or jacket for cooler winter nights and air-conditioned premises. Although the dress code in the uae is generally casual, guests in the larger hotels do tend to dress more formally in the evening. Since you are visiting a muslim country, bikinis, swimsuits, shorts and revealing tops should be confined to beach resorts.

Women are usually advised not to wear short skirts and to keep their shoulders covered. Note that in sharjah women are prohibited from wearing swimsuits on public beaches.

### **Toilets**

Most shopping centres, public gardens, museums etc have clean, well-maintained public toilets. Public toilets in souqs and bus stations are usually just for men. Outside of the cities, you can find public toilets at restaurants and petrol stations; however they may not be in good condition and will generally lack toilet paper.

### **Food and Water**

The standard of food hygiene and water quality is extremely high, especially in all of the larger centres, as is evidenced by the survey. You should take the time to investigate conditions in smaller cafés in remote areas, although again standards are usually good. Raw salads and shawarmas (meat cooked on a spit and served in a pitta bread sandwich) are to be avoided if you have any doubts.

Water is usually produced by desalination so it is normally safe to drink, nevertheless you may prefer the taste of bottled water. In any case it is advisable to drink plenty of water in the heat so carry a bottle with you at all times.