

# DUBAI AND ABU DHABI

TWO ULTRA MODERN INTERNATIONAL CITIES  
EMBEDDED IN TRADITION



All-year sunshine, a 6 hour flight from western Europe, and a time difference of only 2-4 hours (the country has no daylight saving) - United Arab Emirates (UAE) is an accessible destination for sun worshipers as well as business travelers and cultural explorers.

The UAE is a tolerant society that may feel Western, but it is important to remember that it is a Muslim country and there are certain traditions and ways of conduct that visitors should be aware of. Media often turn traditional customs into something strange, but the foundation of life in the UAE is respect for one another.

With the right attitude when it comes to etiquette, dress code and behavior, tourists can enjoy all the wonderful experiences that the country has to offer without the risk of offending anyone or breaking the law.

The population in the UAE is made up of 90% immigrants from all over the world, and the average age is a mere 33.5 years. This means that everyone speaks the second language in the country, English.



## BEFORE DEPARTURE

**Passport and visa** Most European citizens do not need a visa. The passport must have at least 6 months validity from the expected return date. Temporary passports are not allowed.

**Climate** A warm and tropical climate all year round. December-March 24-29°C and June-August around 40°C. The temperature in the sea is 21-38°C depending on the season.

**Clothing** Summer clothes such as dresses, knee-length shorts and airy cotton garments work well, but dress conservatively in government buildings. As a woman it is handy to have a scarf to cover your shoulders, it can also be nice inside air-conditioned buildings. Swimwear is only OK by the beach and pool. When visiting a mosque, loose, full-coverage clothing, including women's hair, is required.

## ON ARRIVAL

**Dubai International Airport, DXB, and Abu Dhabi International Airport, AUH,** are modern airports with good signage in English and helpful staff. You can pay for extra assistance and be met at the aircraft, escorted through passport control, assisted with luggage, and put in a taxi.

**Getting to the hotel** The easiest way to get from the airport is by taxi. Most taxis accept credit cards, but bring some cash in the local currency AED (dirham) as an extra precaution. There are special pink ladies' taxis with female drivers. All taxis run on taximeter.

**Getting around** Grabbing a cab in the UAE is cheap and fast. It is easiest to use the Uber or Careem apps where you order a regular taxi or a nicer Lexus with a well-dressed driver. A Lexus costs a bit more than a taxi but is still quite affordable. The advantage of ordering through the apps is that you can pinpoint both the pick-up location and the destination on a map. Dubai also has a modern metro

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TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VISIT

**Money** The currency in the UAE is AED, also called Dirham. ATMs are available throughout the country. Credit cards are accepted in most places but it is handy to have some dirhams in your pocket for tipping.

**Alcohol** Alcohol is served in hotels and many restaurants. You can buy alcohol at the airport upon arrival, after immigration. It is forbidden to be drunk in public, so always take a taxi home after a night out.

**Electricity** The power sockets have the same three pins as in the UK.

**Photography** Normal tourist photography is OK but be sure to get permission when it comes to government buildings, mosques or strangers, especially covered women.

**Mobile and WiFi** FaceTime, Skype & Messenger have previously been blocked for video calls but now sometimes work with a VPN network. You can chat as usual. Both Etisalat and DU sell affordable SIM cards and data packages at the airport upon arrival. WiFi is free at most hotels.

**Tips** Gratuity and taxes are included on the bill at all cafes and restaurants. If you have received extra good service and want to give something extra then it is obviously appreciated. Taxi drivers and service staff often send all their money home to their family, so an extra 5-10 dirhams are always welcome.

## THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

**The UAE is a federation of seven independent states** in the southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. The seven states are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras al Khaimah and Umm al Quwain.

**The total population** in 1995 was 2.41 million, in 2024 it is 10.2 million. The capital is Abu Dhabi.

**The UAE is located in Southwest Asia.** The country has a flat, barren coastline leading into the large desert covering over 90% of the country, with mountains to the east.

**About 10% of the population are Emiratis.** Two thirds of immigrants are Asians, mainly from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Philippines. The rest are Arabs, Europeans and American

## WHEN IN ROME...

**Accept coffee when offered** Offering coffee at business meetings is seen as extending hospitality. By accepting the coffee you acknowledge and appreciate this hospitality.

**Titles on business cards** Without the correct title it can sometimes be difficult to get in touch with the decision maker. Managerial titles are very important.

**Dress decently** Above all, avoid showing shoulders, knees or cleavage. Smart casual dress code for dinner is common. Public display of affection is not allowed.

**Religion** The UAE is a Muslim country and religion is important to local residents. Respect this by dressing modestly. The call to prayer can be heard 5 times a day.

**First through the door** The most important person goes through the door first. The guest is more important than the host. Women are more important than men. The customer is more important than the supplier.

**Respect** Always respect people in official positions, for example in customs, hotel security guards and the police