

# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

## COUNTRY INFORMATION

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES** (UAE) is a young country, formed in 1971 from seven formerly independent states, situated from west to east: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah.

The years since their unification have seen remarkable progress. Where there were few proper roads, there are now modern highways; where health and medical facilities were limited, there are now hospitals and universities; where there was bare desert, there are now fields of crops and beautiful cities.

The pace of change has been staggering, and the effect more so. But the people of UAE have adapted to, adopted, and improved the new influences, successfully incorporating them into a deep-rooted culture that stretches back over thousands of years.

**Dubai** is a city of contrasts, a land where the old and the new, traditional and modern, East and West blend seamlessly to produce a fascinating, mysterious, exciting place with a distinct personality. Dubai is a welcoming city with an enchanting ambience rooted in traditional Arabic hospitality and topped with an ultra-modern flourish.

### Passport and Visa Information

- A valid passport is required to enter UAE. Passports must have a **minimum of three months validity from date of arrival remaining** for tourists.
- For stays of less than 60 days, U.S. citizens holding valid passports may obtain visitor visas at the port of entry for no fee.
- For a longer stay, a traveler must obtain a visa before arrival in the UAE.
- Unlike other countries in the region that accept U.S. military ID cards as valid travel documents, the UAE requires U.S. military personnel to present a valid passport for entry/exit.

**Note:** Please be aware that although Ker & Downey will advise you of the current information concerning visas and other requirements, it is your responsibility to reconfirm the information and obtain all necessary documents for entry to countries listed on your itinerary. Visa requirements change frequently.

### Health Requirements and Information

#### Immunizations:

There are no immunizations required for entry into the UAE.

#### Bilharzia:

Bilharzia has been found in fresh water in neighboring countries. Avoid swimming in fresh water, and do not come in contact with stagnant water.

#### Other concerns:

- Insect-borne diseases such as West Nile virus can be found in the region. Please take appropriate precautions against insect bites such as using insect repellent and wearing long sleeves and pants.

- There have been reported cases H5N1 Avian Influenza in poultry in Middle Eastern countries. Avoid all direct contact with birds, including domesticated poultry and wild birds, and avoid places such as poultry farms and bird markets where live birds are raised or kept.

## **Customs**

Travelers are allowed free import of:

- 400 cigarettes and cigars to a max value of AED 3000 and 2 kg of tobacco (not applicable to snuffing of chewing tobacco)
- Perfumes or other gifts provided for personal use to a value of AED 3000
- In Abu Dhabi and Fujairah, 4 liters of any alcohol, provided you are non-Muslim
- In Dubai, 24 cans of beer or 4 liters of any other alcohol
- In Sharjah, 2 liters of alcohol and one case of beer

A permit from local authorities is required for firearms.

You may import any amount of local or foreign currency, but any amount over AED 40,000 or the equivalent must be declared on arrival. You may export any amount of local or foreign currency.

## **Airport Information**

Dubai International Airport is located 2.5 miles southeast of Dubai. There are three working terminals and an airport shuttle service between them. It takes about 10 minutes to travel between terminals. The airport has ATMs, banking, money exchange, shopping, restaurants, car rental, and luggage storage facilities.

## **Airport Departure Tax:**

The departure tax is included in the price of your ticket.

## **Safety**

Crime is generally not a problem in UAE, but general safety precautions should still be taken, such as not leaving your personal belongings unattended.

It is advisable to avoid sailing near the island of Abu Musa as Iran and the UAE have a long-standing dispute over jurisdiction in the area.

## **Photographic Etiquette**

“Taking photographs of potentially-sensitive UAE military and civilian sites, or foreign diplomatic missions, including the U.S. Embassy, may result in arrest, detention, and/or prosecution by local authorities.” [<http://travel.state.gov>]

## **Climate**

- Warm, sunny days and pleasantly cool evenings are the norm from October to May.
- Evenings in January and February can be comparatively chilly.
- June to September is hot and humid.
- There is air-conditioning in virtually all buildings and vehicles.

| Dubai, UAE                | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Ave. Max Temperature (°F) | 75  | 77  | 82  | 90  | 99  | 103 | 105 | 106 | 102 | 95  | 87  | 79  |
| Ave. Min Temperature (°F) | 58  | 60  | 64  | 70  | 76  | 81  | 86  | 87  | 82  | 75  | 68  | 62  |
| Ave. Precipitation (in)   | .45 | .73 | .46 | .15 | 0   | 0   | .02 | 0   | 0   | .02 | .09 | .7  |

*Weather may vary depending on location in UAE.*

## Clothing Suggestions

- Cotton, or a predominantly cotton mix, is ideal. A light jacket, sweater or shawl may be needed in the evening and early morning.
- Comfortable shoes are essential for sightseeing.
- Business dress is often formal.
- Tourists may take a more relaxed approach, and beachwear is acceptable at clubs and hotels.
- In towns, ladies are advised to wear trousers or skirts of a reasonable length and modest tops that cover the shoulders.
- In rural districts, a slightly greater degree of modesty will be appreciated.
- Men may wear shorts in the UAE, but many hotels will refuse to serve men in shorts in bars and restaurants.

## Currency:

- Dirham, divided into 100 fils.
- Coins issued in denominations of 10, 25, 50 fils and 1 dirham.
- Notes in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 dirhams.

## Gratuities

In United Arab Emirates, tipping is acceptable in USD.

- Restaurants: 10% of total bill
- Hotel porters: \$2.00 per bag
- Transfers to airport and hotel: \$5.00 per transfer
- Resort staff: \$10.00 per person per night
- Sightseeing guide: \$5.00 for half day tour; \$10.00 full day tour
- Sightseeing driver: \$ 3.00 for half day tour; \$6.00 full day tour

**Note:** Tipping is a personal decision based on the service received. Please remember, there is no obligation to tip and American standards for tipping are some of the highest in the world. The above is only a suggestion for your convenience.

## Food

Traditional Arabic cuisine offers a great variety of dishes. Just about every other style of food is also available, and there is a particularly wide choice in Dubai. It is actually more common to eat international cuisine in Dubai due to the multicultural nature of the city. However, though it is unlikely you will find yourself partaking of the legendary stuffed camel served at a Bedouin wedding, if you are interested in Arabic food, there are many restaurants that serve traditional fare from other Middle Eastern and North African countries. Meals at these types of restaurants are not served in typical Western fashion with several courses coming one at a time. Instead, many dishes from appetizers to main courses will be served all at once, creating a relaxed atmosphere among those who partake.

## Shopping

Goods available include exotic spices and perfumes, exquisitely worked robes and materials, traditional brass coffee pots, and heavy Bedu silver jewelry. The gold souk is famous for its range of styles and quality of workmanship. Bargaining is acceptable in some places for intricately worked pieces. Most major centers have air-conditioned shopping malls which also house restaurants and coffee shops. At Dubai International Airport, the duty free shop carries an enormous range of items.

## Time Zone

GMT + 4

## Language

- Arabic is the national language but English, Hindi and Urdu are widely spoken.
- Most shopkeepers and hotel staff speak English, and the telephone services employ English-speaking staff.

## Voltage

- 220V, 50 Hz, AC

## Emergency Numbers

Police/Ambulance: 999

Ambulance: 998

Fire: 997

## International Calling

To call Argentina from the U.S. or Canada, dial (011 + 971) before the number.

To call the U.S. or Canada from Argentina, dial (00 + 1) before the number.

## Telephone communication

- The national telecommunication company provides excellent international direct dialing services.
- Most hotels have direct dialing facilities in guest rooms, and fax and telex services in their business centers.
- Telephone cards, which may be used at most public telephones, can be readily purchased at various outlets.

## Suggested Reading

Daab. *Dubai Architecture and Design*. Presents an overview of Dubai through its architectural achievements.

Walker, Jenny. *Oman, UAE and Arabian Peninsula (Multi Country Guide)*. A practical guide to the Arabian Peninsula.

Vlahides, John and Matthew Lee. *Dubai (City Guide)*. An overview of this fast growing city.