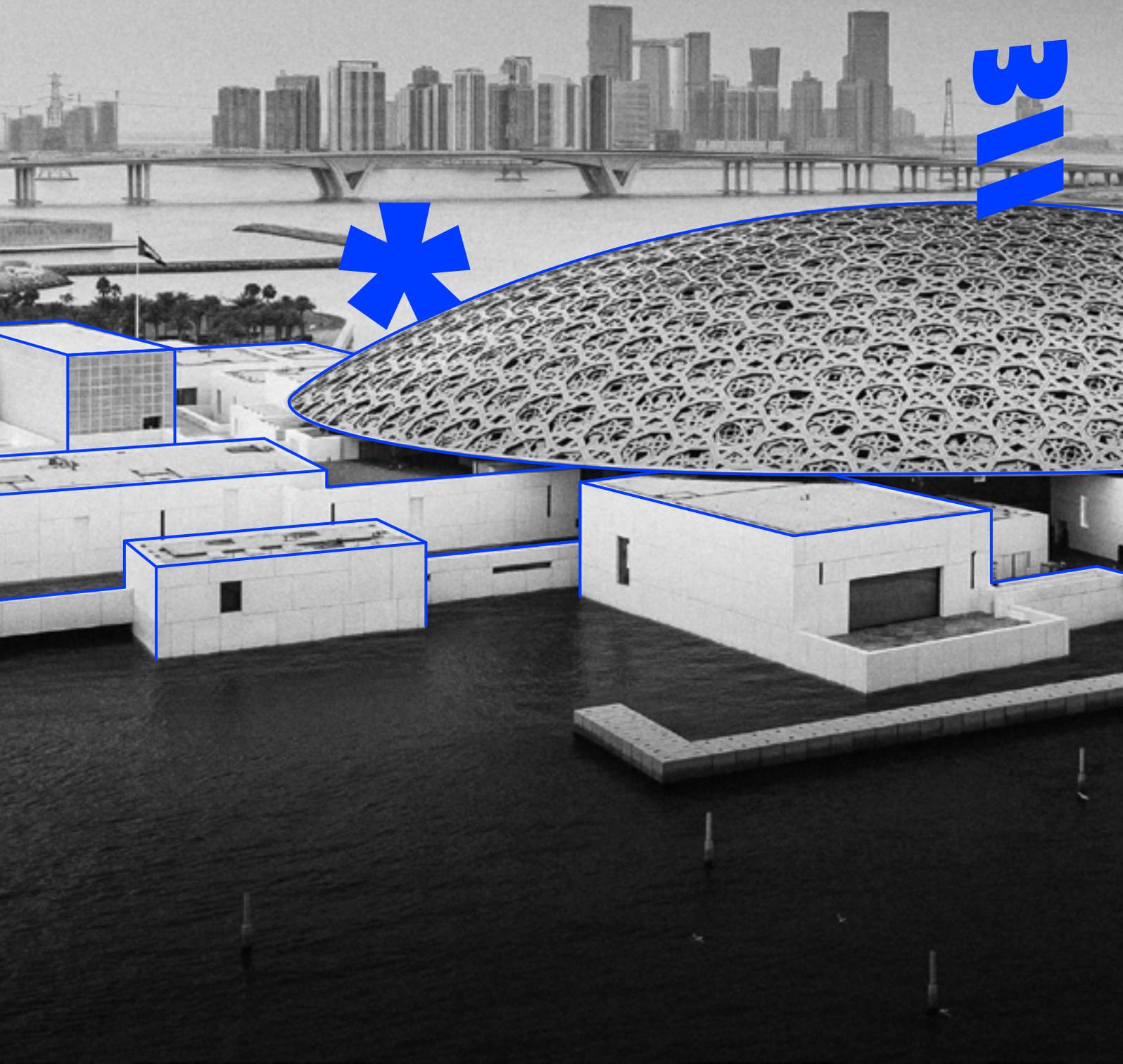




WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME!

WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME!



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WELCOME TO THE UAE, ABU DHABI AND YOUR NEW SCHOOL!



This guide was designed to make your transition easier as you navigate a new work environment while making a new home for yourself.

A career within the Abu Dhabi education system is challenging yet rewarding. It offers exciting career paths and the opportunity to improve education standards. There is a particular focus on developing social and emotional skills, critical to entering the workforce across the emirate.

You are joining a varied and inclusive community that provides services to a very diverse student population of over 200 nationalities. 14 curricula on offer ensure no student is excluded or left behind.

We count on you to help us develop lifelong learners and multi-faceted students equipped with 21st century skills and can compete globally by increasing their acceptance into the world's leading universities. On the local front, we look forward to your expertise and contributions to help us rank in the global Top 10 for mathematics, science and reading by 2041.

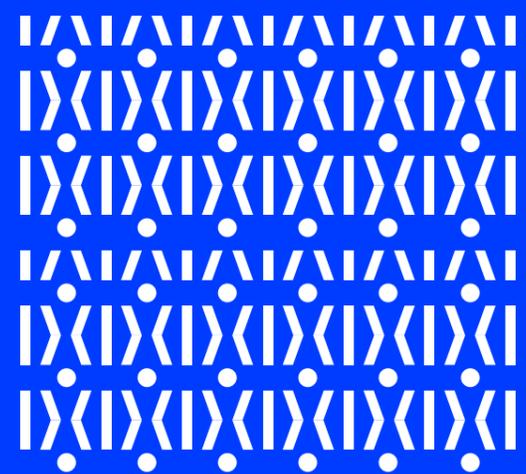
This guide provides a brief overview of Abu Dhabi's education landscape, system and our aspirations, after which we take you on an exploratory journey of Abu Dhabi where you will find a lot of practical information. We start off with what we consider "basic essentials or information", such as most important contacts, how to get a UAE mobile, open a bank account and getting around, before moving to longer-term needs with finding new accommodation and sightseeing tips. We recommend you browse this guide based on the local knowledge you bring with you and your personal interests.

All in all, we hope this guide will assist you in getting settled and contribute to making you feel comfortable and at home, so that you can enjoy and embrace our hospitable culture, our Emirate and the UAE.

Once again, welcome to a long and rewarding career – we are delighted to have you on board!

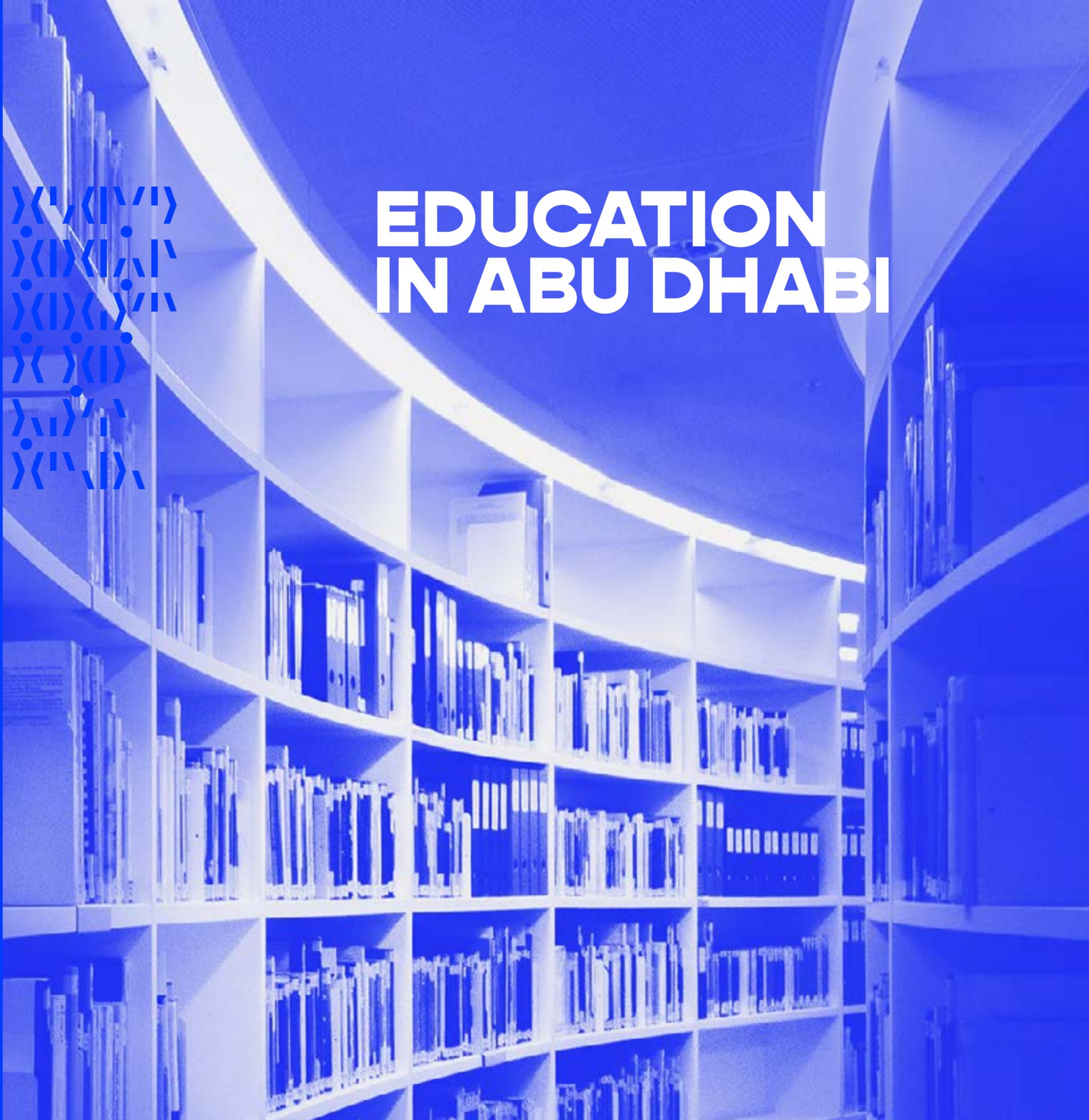
** The information in this guide is accurate at the time of publishing on 1 October 2021 and will be revised periodically. Kindly refer to official sources to stay updated with the latest news.*

SECTION 1



الكتاب
هو
أحد
أهم
أدوات
التعليم
والثقافة
في
المدن
العصرية

EDUCATION IN ABU DHABI



OVERVIEW



Abu Dhabi's dynamic education sector offers a wide range of education institutions and contributes to the continuous advancement of the Emirate. This diversity has created a society recognized as a beacon of tolerance and inclusion where people of different ethnicities, faiths, backgrounds and learning abilities live in harmony and mutual respect. These values heavily guide our approach to empowering education.

Abu Dhabi's education ecosystem currently boasts **205 private schools** providing **14 different curricula** (*American, Bangladeshi, British, Canadian, French, German, Indian, International Baccalaureate (IB), Japanese, Pakistani, Philippine Curriculum, SABIS®, Spanish, UAE Ministry of Education*) to approximately **243,000 students**, in addition to public and Charter schools.

[Click here](#) to access the curriculums' information.



In addition to private and public schools, Abu Dhabi's **Charter Schools** are the outcome of a unique partnership between the government and the private sector. This strategic partnership stimulates an exceptional exchange of global experiences and supports the national agenda to create a sustainable, knowledge-based and competitive economy.

Abu Dhabi's private and Charter schools focus on ensuring children in Abu Dhabi - irrespective of their socio-economic background and the type of school they attend - are equipped with key skills such as digital literacy, critical thinking, and collaborative and communicative capabilities.



ADEK also requires all schools to provide appropriate educational support to **Students of Determination** in the general education classroom, which includes matching the curriculum to meet the different learning needs of each student.

ABOUT ADEK



We are the local or Emirate-level regulator of the education sector in Abu Dhabi. We oversee and provide services throughout a learner's journey from early education to university and beyond. However, we go beyond regulating to empowering education by partnering with our stakeholders to enable a great education system to flourish. With a mandate to foster the best education ecosystem that enables every Abu Dhabi learner to actively contribute and compete on a global stage, we also seek to empower minds by recognizing that every learner is different and a diversity of teaching methods are essential for students to succeed. And we do the above to ensure we empower the future of Abu Dhabi with future-ready graduates who have the 21st century skills required to sustain and carry-forward our Emirate's vision.

ADEK touches upon every stage of a learner's journey from early education to university and beyond:



EARLY EDUCATION

Licensing and regulating over 250 nurseries and promoting the importance of early education for children's brain development in line with the Early Childhood Authority's directives.

THE SCHOOL YEARS (K-12)

Licensing and regulating over 200 private schools operating in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi with a diversity of 14 curricula.

- Private schools who follow the Ministry of Education curriculum report to the Ministry of Education while ADEK implements directives and supports these schools where required.



- ADEK also owns, legislates and manages its own schools:
 - Charter Schools: Publicly funded and privately operated by the top school operators in the Emirate, these schools aim to put **Students First** and deliver a quality education for every child.
 - Al Karamah School and the Mohamad Bin Rashid Center for students with autism: These two specialized schools provide much needed support for children on the autism spectrum. ADEK also launched Al Karamah Vocational Institute to enable 12th graders to gain the necessary skills required to join the workforce.



UNIVERSITY PREPARATION & CAREER GUIDANCE



Through Rize University Preparation and Career Guidance program (Rize UPCG), ADEK readies students for university by preparing them for mandatory examinations and helping them with university applications. It also provides career guidance through aptitude testing and internship opportunities.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN ABU DHABI

While the licensing of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is the mandate of the Ministry of Education, ADEK helps shape the HEI landscape in the Emirate. We audit and enhance the delivery of higher education in Abu Dhabi, attract the required HEIs to open the required programs or schools to serve Abu Dhabi's needs, and champion the creation of a student and faculty friendly ecosystem. Special projects under this sector include the launch of 42 Abu Dhabi coding school, which boasts a revolutionary disruptive learning methodology set to graduate tech savvy talent to serve all industries.



ABU DHABI SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DISTINGUISHED STUDENTS



ADEK annually provides up to 80 distinguished Emirati students with full scholarships and support to study at the best universities around the world. Abu Dhabi Scholarship students are taken care of throughout their journey: Before they leave home, during their higher education journey abroad and upon their return.



ADEK STAKEHOLDERS & PARTNERSHIPS



Our stakeholders include school owners, investors and operators, other local and federal government entities, parents and students, teachers, principals, faculty and staff at educational institutions, academic researchers and higher education institutions.

We take the lead in bridging the gap between industry and academia by partnering with prime multi-sector public and private sector organizations that can help open up a huge range of personal and career development opportunities for students. This partnership program is aligned to Abu Dhabi's developmental goals, which herald the start of a new co-operation paradigm between leadership and citizens.

Our strategic partners offer comprehensive opportunities for students, including skills and knowledge competitions, workshops, career guidance, internships and scholarships, training, summer school challenges and curriculum development, as well as future job openings and placements. These exciting partnerships help develop competencies and foster learning as a way of life, helping students acquire the skills and experiences necessary to seize new opportunities and lead fulfilling lives according to their talents, capabilities and ambitions.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Founded in 2018, this performance-based partnership between the public and the private sector offers a third education model in Abu Dhabi and has now grown to include 22 schools.

Charter Schools are unique within the region and offer an American-based curriculum to kindergarten and cycle one, with more grades set to be introduced as the student body progresses their educational journeys.

Our Charter Schools across the Emirate prioritize the needs of close to 20,000 students and deliver a quality education tailored to each student's capabilities.



STUDENTS OF DETERMINATION

The UAE refers to people with special needs or disabilities as "People of Determination" in recognition of their achievements in different fields. In 2020, a comprehensive strategy for 'People of Determination' was launched in Abu Dhabi. His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, said the strategy "re-affirms our commitment to inclusion, equality and empowerment for all members of UAE society."

Along with providing a tailored approach, we champion the inclusion of Students of Determination into mainstream schools, in addition to providing specialized schools.



We have developed a highly proactive inclusion strategy through which students of determination can access quality education ensure their full integration into the educational system. Our role is to constantly explore ways to tailor our support, deliver inclusive education, and foster deeper partnerships with communities and businesses in order to develop their skillsets, celebrate their achievements and facilitate their progression from education to employment.

Consequently, we implemented the ADEK Autism Inclusion Project, which sees students of determination enrol in and receive special academic services at mainstream schools, helping them learn among their age-group peers as well as enabling their educational journey to shift from supported inclusion to independence in mainstream education.

In addition, we have established and currently oversee specialized education facilities for students of determination: [The Mohammed bin Rashid Center for Special Education – NECC](#), [Al Karamah School](#), and Al Karamah Training Institute.

The Mohammed bin Rashid Center for Special Education opened in 2007 and is operated by NECC. It provides UAE national children with autism and related disorders with intensive educational services utilizing the proven principles of Applied Behavior Analysis.

Al Karamah School opened its doors in 2019 and is operated by the UK's Priory Group. It is the first school in the region dedicated to children with autism and associated learning difficulties and offers cutting-edge facilities, a differentiated curriculum and highly-skilled staff for students with autism to ensure the best educational environment for lifelong success.

Al Karamah Training Institute opened in 2021 and is designed to empower students of determination on the autism spectrum with career-oriented skills and future pathways for independent living and employment. A tailored education center provides access to post-graduation vocational and professional training in eight main areas of specialization. Students can gain recognized qualifications from UK awarding bodies including the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network and the National Open College Network.

ABU DHABI SCHOLARSHIPS

We provide several scholarship programs for distinguished Emiratis, to facilitate high-quality education for the national workforce and support the development efforts in the UAE. The aim is to support them to specialize in majors of priority that meet the Emirate's labor market needs, in top ranked universities nationally and internationally. Students, accepted in any of ADEK's scholarship programs, will receive a holistic support system, to help them achieve the highest results.

[Click here](#) to learn more about scholarships.

INTERNATIONAL & STANDARDIZED BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS

Our schools participate in a range of objective standardized tests and assessments, which measure student learning and are essential in gathering invaluable data for continuous improvement.

International assessment tests we participate in include PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS.

Standardized benchmark assessments are mandated by ADEK and are based on the school's curriculum. Those include the NWEA MAP, GL Progress, EI ASSET, ACER IBT and ACER ISA test series.

Through these tests, assessments and collected data, we can identify what is working and what is not. The generated data help us identify and close gaps, raise standards and attain goals. These tests and assessments are also useful in holding education stakeholders to account for success or failure.



CAREER GUIDANCE & ENRICHMENTS PROGRAMS

The Rize Program supports students from early stages to graduation and is split into three different pathways. The first comprises intervention programs to support students most in need and to help them upskill. The second includes enrichment programs for skill development, while the third helps with university preparation and career guidance, so students can explore their options as they transition from school to university.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

Our Rize after-school enrichment program provides students with project-based learning opportunities to develop, apply and transfer future skills. It follows three main themes – Rize Tech, Rize Arts and Culture, as well as Rize Math. By focusing on STEAM subjects including Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics, we prepare students for whatever the future may hold. The initiative exposes students to new 21st century-relevant subjects such as AI and strengthens their core capabilities in foundation subjects such as math, and culturally significant subjects like the Arabic language.

Through the Rize University Preparation and Career Guidance Program (Rize UPCG), we prepare public school students in grades 9-12 for the next step in their academic and pre-professional journeys. The program provides students with core academic and standardized test preparation in mathematics and English and helps them explore various career and post-secondary pathways. It also helps their preparation to attend leading domestic and international higher education institutions and identifies best-in-class local talent for our international scholarship opportunities. Registered students, who we call Rizers, can take advantage of courses to improve core academic skills, improve their standardized testing skills, receive university application guidance and attend webinars and workshops led by elite international universities and speakers from leading international private and public organizations.

EDUCATION EVENTS & KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



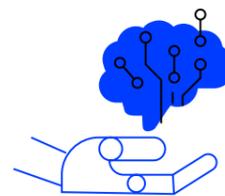
In addition to public holidays, there are lots of other events that take place throughout the school year. We have summarized the most important ones for you below, be sure to check the links for the latest updates!

WRO: UAE NATIONAL ROBOT OLYMPIAD

This is the national version of the international World Robot Olympiad, an exciting technology event for students to showcase their technical skills through engaging, yet challenging, robotics competitions.

ADEK is the national organizer of WRO, which also helps students develop their creativity and problem-solving skills. The event encourages them to be the future scientists, engineers, makers and inventors and introduces the concept of modern science into educational activities.

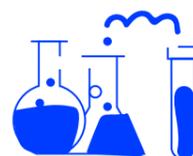
[Click here](#) to learn more.



ABU DHABI SCIENCE FESTIVAL

This 10-day event is the largest of its kind and in previous years has attracted more than 100,000 visitors. Open to all ages, it provided fun educational activities for the whole family through workshops, exhibits and shows. The festival is normally held during February's Innovation Month, in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.

[Click here](#) to learn more.



LEMA? INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS

lema?

“Lema?” Arabic for ‘why’ offers numerous classroom workshops to inspire future leaders and strengthen science, technology, engineering and math skills. From radio workshops to exploring the secrets of space and the extraordinary world of robotics, Lema? has reached more than 150,000 students in public and private schools across the Emirate since its launch in 2012.

[Click here](#) to learn more.

ABU DHABI TALENT SHOW

Launched in December 2020, this talent show showcases and celebrates our students’ many impressive skills. The show presents a wonderful opportunity for students to build their confidence, spot talent and bring the school community together. A fun-filled event, not to be missed!



IMPORTANT SCHOOL DATES

ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/22



Start of the new Academic Year (for most schools)	29 August 2021
Winter Break	12 December 2021 – 1 January 2022
UAE Innovation Month	February 2022
Spring Break	27 March – 7 April 2022
Summer Break	Last day of school starting 3 July 2022

A total of **182** school days shape the Academic Year 2021/22. The academic calendar is subject to change and the duration of spring break may differ from school to school.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/23



Start of the new Academic Year (for most schools)	28 August 2021
Winter Break	11 December 2022 – 1 January 2023
UAE Innovation Month	February 2023
Spring Break	26 March – 6 April 2023
Summer Break	Last day of school starting 28 June 2023

A total of **182** school days shape the Academic Year 2022/23. The academic calendar is subject to change and the duration of spring break may differ from school to school.

UAE NATIONAL DAY & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Celebrated each year on 2 December, the UAE National Day is one of the country's most anticipated holidays. In 2021, the country marks its golden anniversary of 50 years, in remembrance of the creation of the union. This marks the birth of the United Arab Emirates.

On National Day, public celebrations take place around the country and include firework displays, a national show which takes pride of place.

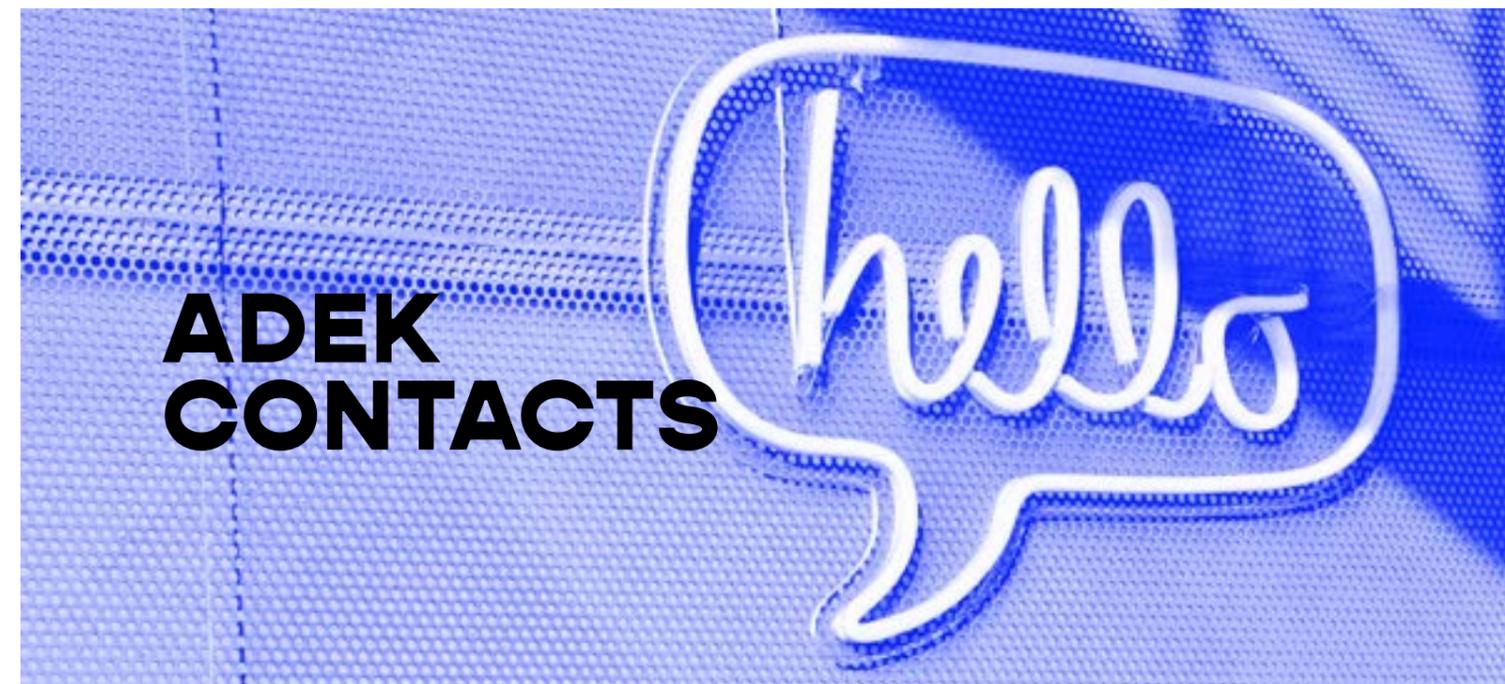


MAJOR UAE PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN 2022 INCLUDE



Gregorian New Year	1 January (1 day)
Eid Al Fitr*	2 - 5 May (4 days)
Arafah Day and Eid Al Adha*	8 - 12 July (Feast of Sacrifice - 4 days)
Hijri New Year*	29 July (Islamic New Year - 1 day)
Prophet Mohammed's Birthday*	7 October (1 day)
Commemoration Day (In memoriam and to honor the fallen)	30 November (1 day)
National Day	2 December (1 day)

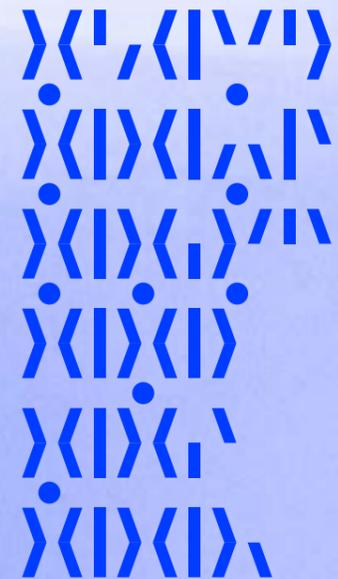
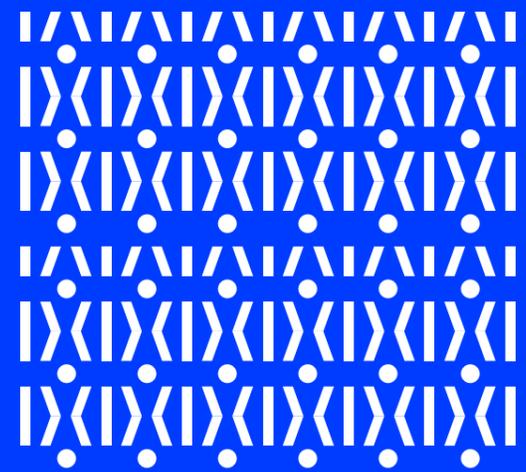
* Approximate dates. These are Islamic holidays, which are determined according to the moon sighting.



ADEK CONTACTS

Teacher Hotline **800ADEK – 8002335 (extension 2)**
 ADEK Counselors adekcounselors@adek.gov.ae
 Enrichment Team rize-upcg@adek.gov.ae

SECTION 2



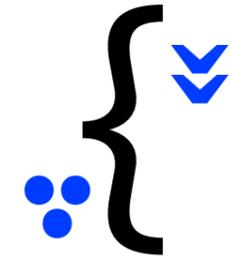
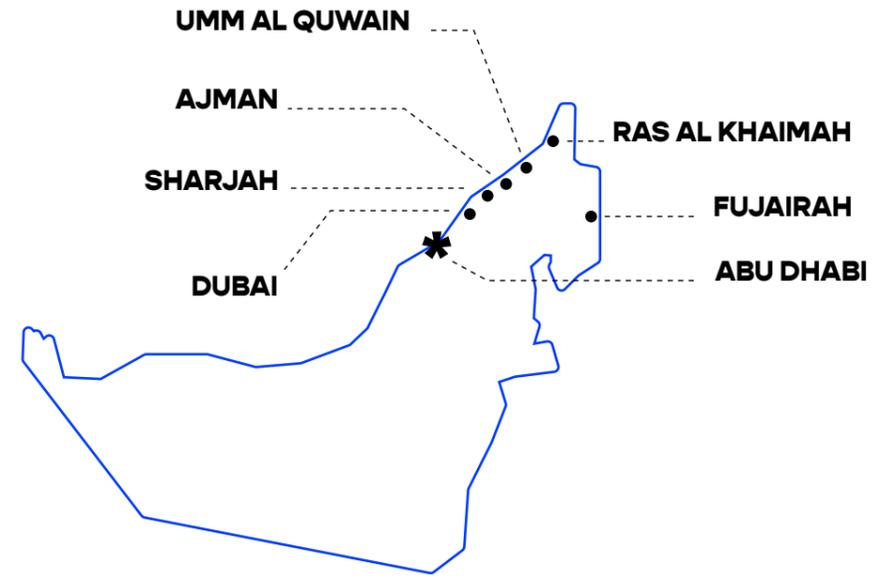
EMIRATI CULTURE



Abu Dhabi aerial view of the Corniche and main island | image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)



Al Dhafra, Western region | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)



Abu Dhabi Corniche city view | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

The United Arab Emirates is made up of seven emirates including Abu Dhabi, which is the largest and also the capital city. Recognized as a tolerant country, the UAE hosts more than 200 nationalities who enjoy doing business, living, learning and exploring the country. Abu Dhabi is home to over 80% of the UAE's landmass and has the second largest population amongst the seven emirates. The official national language of Abu Dhabi is Arabic, although, English, Hindi and Urdu are also widely spoken in and around the city.

Boasting beautiful desert and marine landscapes, this emirate is made up of three main regions – Abu Dhabi, Al Ain (Eastern Region) and Al Dhafra (Western Region). Thanks to its geographically diverse scenery and rich culture and history, the Emirate is a dream to explore.

It is difficult to trace the origins of Abu Dhabi's name because the history was traditionally passed down by word of mouth through folklore and poetry. We know that "Abu" is Arabic for father, and "Dhabi" is the Arabic word for gazelle. It is thought that this name came about because of the abundance of gazelles in the area.

Over recent years, Abu Dhabi has been transformed into a modern, cosmopolitan, high-rise capital. The gorgeous archipelago offers a mix of ancient history, rich culture and heritage, stunning nature, beautiful beaches, high-end luxury, surprising wildlife, family-friendly adventure, world-class shopping, renowned golf courses and a welcoming atmosphere.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS



Emirati Henna | image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

Emirati people descend from the Bani Yas tribe, the most significant tribe of the UAE, and still maintain many of the customs and traditions of those times. The Bani Yas tribe is made up of approximately 20 subsections, originally centered in the Liwa oasis. Traditionally the members spent the winter with their camels in the desert, and many of them went pearling during the summer. The Bani Yas is one of the most highly regarded tribes of Southern Arabia.

HOSPITALITY

Emirati hospitality is centered around providing a warm and personal welcome. This is a principle deeply entrenched in Emirati culture, reflecting their historical reputation for generosity, courtesy and love of community. Emirati households, for instance, ensure the majlis (reception area) is prepared for guests at all times. It is also perfumed with Oud and Dukhoon (incense) to welcome guests, who are invited to sit in places of honor within the room.

These relatively small gestures speak volumes about the hospitality of the hosts and the genuine warmth towards visitors. They embrace you no matter your age, religion or ethnicity and welcome you into their tribe, adhering to a vision of a united and inclusive community.

The Arabic coffee pot (dallah) is strongly present in home decor, on fabric, in gardens and sculptures. You can even find it at the center of the 1 Dirham coin.



Arabic coffee pot commonly referred to as dallah

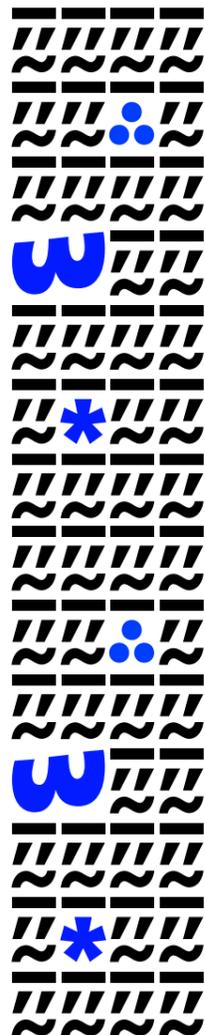
BUT FIRST COFFEE...

If you are invited into an Emirati's home, you will more than likely be offered refreshments which could include multiple helpings of luqaimat (a traditional Emirati dessert) - you just can't say no to - and cups of Arabic coffee, an important part of Emirati hospitality and considered a ceremonial act of generosity.

It is tradition for the person serving the coffee in a majlis, to hold the dallah in their left hand. If there is an important person in the majlis, they should be served first. The server (muqahwi) should then serve others, starting with the person on their right. After drinking, it is customary to gently shake the small cup to show the muqahwi you have finished and ensure no offence is given.



Emirati Henna | image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)



EMIRATI TRADITIONAL DRESS

The Emirati traditional dress is an important part of its history and culture and is worn in public with pride. It suits the weather and offers protection from the sun and heat.

Women wear a long, loose, black robe called an Abaya over the top of their normal clothes. Abayas are flowing garments with intricate embroidery and beadwork at the wrists and hem. Traditional Abayas are plain and black. However, modern-styled Abayas are given a contemporary touch through embroideries and artwork on dark fabric. There are now several more colors such as grey, brown and beige which give a modern twist to the traditional dress.

The Shayla (headscarf) covers the head and is becoming more elaborate and somewhat a statement of individuality, particularly among the young.

Emirati men wear the Kandura – a white full-length shirt-like robe, which is sometimes called a Thawb, Thobe or Dishdasha. The matching embroidery on the collar and the sleeves is a major feature differentiating Emirati Kandura from other Kanduras worn in the Arabian Gulf.

Kanduras are designed following the season in terms of fabric and color. Summer Kanduras are mainly white and made from a noticeably lighter fabric. In contrast, during the winter, there is an increase in darker colored robes, especially brown and grey, made from thicker fabric materials. Men wear a white or red and white rectangular cotton headdress, known as a Ghutra. The Agal (black cord) secures the Ghutra onto the head.

On more important occasions, Sheikhs and businessmen will wear a more formal garment. The Bisht is a thin gold-trimmed flowing robe that is worn over the Kandura.

Perfumes are also an essential part of the traditional dress of UAE for both men and women. Oud (agarwood) and rose are the most famous and expensive scents that Emiratis use. Traditionally, they also burn Bakhoor (wood chips soaked in fragrant oils) to enhance the fragrance to their garments before leaving the house.

UAE women are very fond of earrings, bracelets and rings which are an integral part of the national dress. Modesty is important, however Emirati ladies enjoy wearing makeup such as kohl to highlight features. The henna beauty ritual of painting the hands and feet with henna dye is also a part of their rich culture.

Women wear henna any time but especially at weddings and special occasions. It is widely available in traditional salons around UAE and provides a great opportunity to connect with the local culture.



Culture and tradition in Al Ain | image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

As a foreigner, although your dress code is at your discretion, it is advisable to be respectful of the culture, wear longer lengths and cover sensitive parts of the body.



الثقافة والتراث

EMIRATI TRADITIONAL POETRY, SONG AND DANCE

POETRY

Poetry is considered a key art form and the style of ancient poetry in the UAE was strongly influenced by the 8th century Arab scholar, Al Khalil bin Ahmed.

Abu Dhabi-based Million's Poet is a special TV talent show that has revolutionized a traditional art form for the modern era, revitalizing Nabati poetry for a young Arab generation and reconnecting them with a heritage that stretches back five centuries. The program attracts audiences not just in the UAE but all over the world.



Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)



Al Ayyalah | image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

DANCE

Dance is very important to the people of the UAE and there are seven main types which are performed at special occasions such as weddings, festivals and parties. Some dances are performed in large groups of up to 200 such as **Al Ayyalah** and other dances like the **Haban** are smaller in size. Dance dates back to the old days when people lived in the heart of the desert and is seen as an act of celebration.

The most famous and traditional Emirati dance is called **Al Ayyalah** or “stick dance” which is the national dance of the UAE. It is performed by local men and plays a prominent part in major celebrations and events, including national ceremonies and weddings.

This performance is accompanied by traditional Arabic music and drums, and is a privilege to observe. Dancers face each other in two rows signifying the unity and co-operation amongst tribal people. They sing and chant while twirling thin sticks up, over and around.

Sometimes women can be seen performing the **Raqs sha'ar** dance. The ladies move slowly in unison, swaying their hair while keeping their hips still. Their dresses, brightly colored and intricately embroidered, are the most important aspect of the dance.

الثقافة والتراث



EMIRATI CUISINE

A reflection of the UAE's trading heritage, Emirati food is infused with spices and ingredients from throughout Asia and the Middle East. Think cinnamon, saffron, cardamom, turmeric, nuts, limes and dried fruit. Emirati cuisine is a blend of Middle Eastern and Asian influences, but the modern-day diet has become more cosmopolitan given the influx of expats from around the world.

Emirati dishes are flavorful and aromatic. Some of the most popular dishes include Harees, a showcase of meat and wheat slow-cooked in a clay oven or pot and served with ghee (clarified butter) and Machboos, a mix of rice, meat, onions, various spices, and dried lime (or loomi). Being a coastal city, fish is the star of many local dishes, with Madrooba, a mix of salted fish, spices and thick sauce, being one of the most popular. Rice is ever-present and most often served with saffron, nuts and spices.

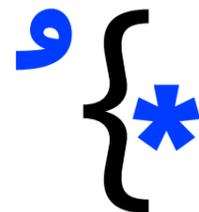
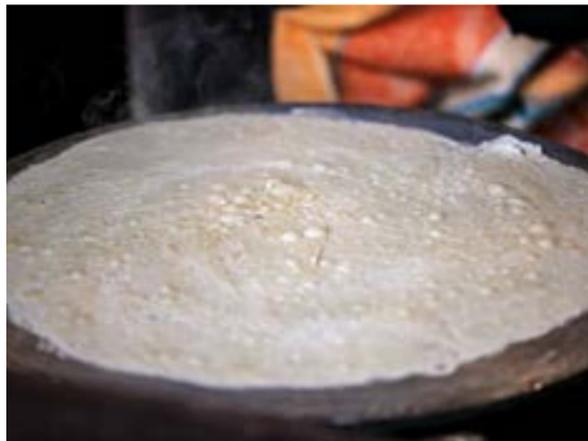


Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)



SOCIAL ETIQUETTE

Given that the UAE is an Islamic country, certain protocols exist to ensure respect for the people, customs and traditions. Here are a couple pointers to keep in mind:

- ✓ It is polite to ask permission before taking photos of people in the UAE, particularly women. In public areas designated for women and children only, there may even be a camera ban in place.
- ✓ Avoid taking photographs of government buildings, military installations, ports and airports, which could get you into serious trouble.
- ✓ Avoid public displays of affection with your partner or spouse, it is uncommon to do so in the UAE.
- ✓ Dress sensibly and appropriately for the context you are in. A bathing suit belongs on the beach, not the mall.
- ✓ Use a taxi service when spending an evening out on the town (if you plan to drink alcohol) and be mindful of excessive consumption and behavior.
- ✓ Always remember that respect is a core value of the UAE. Swearing is considered highly offensive and is punishable by law.

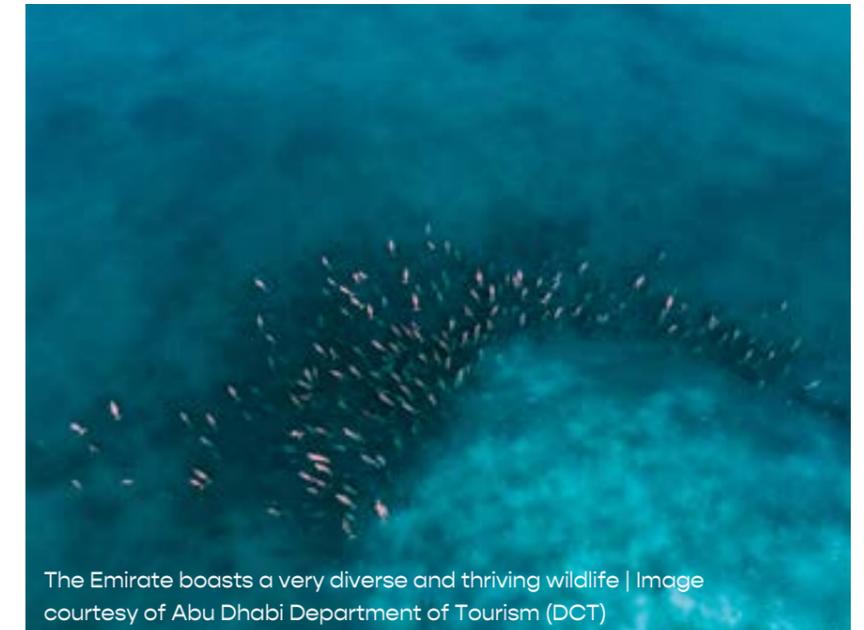
NATURE & WILDLIFE



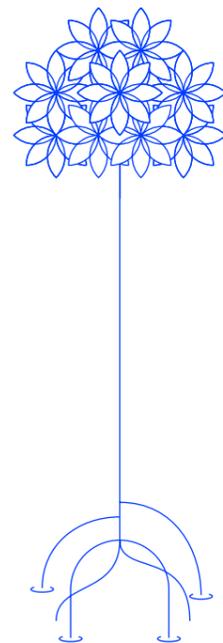
Kayaking within the mangroves | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

The biodiversity in Abu Dhabi is mind-blowing. Beyond Abu Dhabi's glittering glass and steel skylines lies land and waters teeming with biodiversity. Lush mangroves, flamingos, turtles, Dugongs, Arabian leopards, Arabian Oryx, falcons and camels. [Click here](#) to discover Abu Dhabi's desert and marine ecosystems.

[Click here](#) for more inspiration on places to see and explore in Abu Dhabi and beyond.

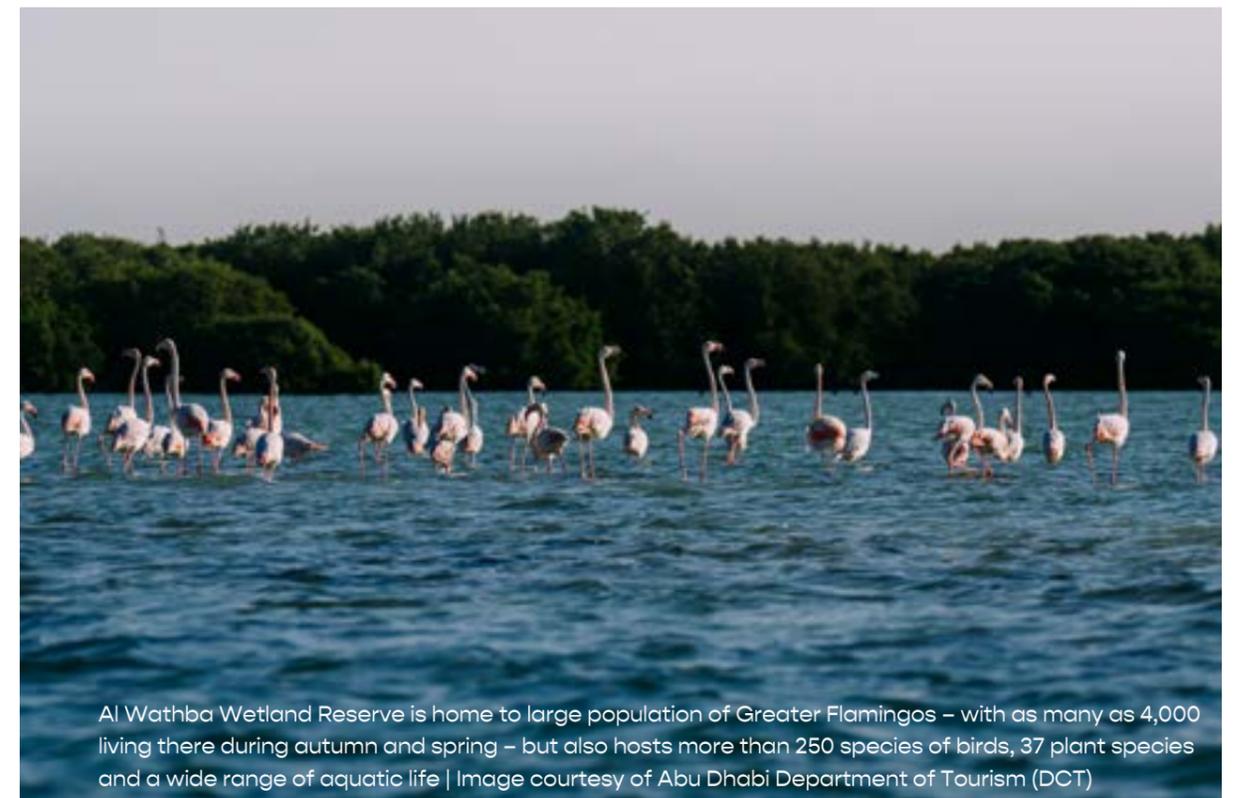


The Emirate boasts a very diverse and thriving wildlife | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)



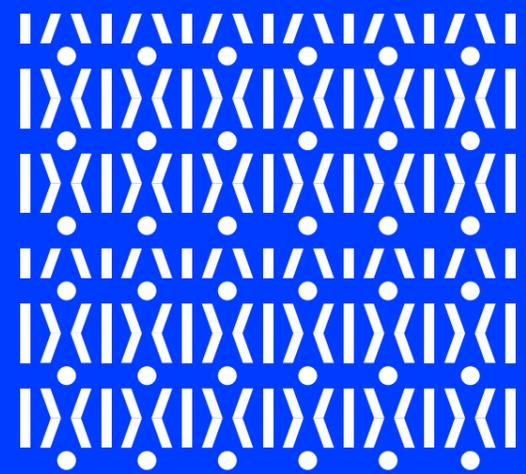
Abu Dhabi is home to diverse terrains and natural wonders - mesmerizing deserts, fertile oases, archipelago islands, stunning beaches, mysterious mangrove forests and impressive wildlife reserves. These can be enjoyed through experiences catering to all activity levels, from walking and mountain biking to scuba diving, free diving, kayaking, 4x4 safaris, horse rides, fossil finding and much more.

Abu Dhabi's natural resources have always been key to its prosperity, so they're vigilantly protected. In keeping with the vision of the late UAE founder, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Abu Dhabi is deeply committed to preserving the Emirate's environment and ecology. The Sheikh Zayed Protected Areas Network, for example, is made up of 19 protected areas. Some of these - such as Bu Tinah island within the Marawah Marine Biosphere Reserve, the region's largest UNESCO-designated marine biosphere reserve - is only open to researchers. Others - such as Al Wathba Wetland Reserve, Mangrove National Park and Jebel Hafit - are open to the public. Check out [Visit Abu Dhabi](#) for more information.



Al Wathba Wetland Reserve is home to large population of Greater Flamingos - with as many as 4,000 living there during autumn and spring - but also hosts more than 250 species of birds, 37 plant species and a wide range of aquatic life | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

SECTION 3



لَا يَكْفُرُ
بِأَعْيُنِنَا
وَنُفِخُ
بِالسُّورِ
وَنُفِخُ
بِالسُّورِ
وَنُفِخُ
بِالسُّورِ
وَنُفِخُ
بِالسُّورِ

LIVING IN ABU DHABI



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police (Emergency)	999
Ambulance	998
Fire Department (Civil Defense)	997
Saeed Road Assist Services	80072233
Coastguard	996
Electricity Failure	991
Water Failure	992
Emergency Office, Municipality of Abu Dhabi	993
Weather Condition & Earthquakes Emergencies	026667776
Consumer Protection	800555

USEFUL APPS & LINKS

The following pages are a comprehensive showcase of the most commonly used applications, services and useful links.



COVID-19 SPECIAL

The first app you want to download is [Alhosn](#) - the official COVID-19 testing and vaccination channel of the UAE.

With the COVID-19 situation remaining fluid, the UAE and Abu Dhabi are constantly adjusting related requirements and protocols to ensure everybody is kept safe while economic activity resumes. To stay abreast of these updates, we recommend you follow these channels:

- * [Abu Dhabi Government Media Office](#) (ADGMO)
- * [The Ministry of Health and Prevention](#) (MOHAP)
- * [Department of Health](#) (DOH)
- * [National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority](#) (NCEMA)

Being a new resident, you have a grace period of 60 days to be vaccinated, from the date your residency permit was issued.

If you haven't yet been vaccinated:

[Click here](#) to locate the nearest vaccination center to you. Appointments are not required, though students below the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Residents must present their Emirates ID at registration, while new arrivals to the school community will need to show a passport and residency entry permit with UID, in addition to presenting an employee ID, employment or enrolment letter from a school, and displaying green or grey status on the Alhosn app.

The Unified Identification Number (UID) is a six-digit number automatically assigned to anyone who enters the UAE. This six-digit number is used to identify a person entering the UAE for any reason (employment, tourist, dependent, etc.) for immigration records.



If you already received your vaccination in your home country:

Before leaving home, complete the [“Register Arrivals and Vaccination certificates Attestation”](#) through the Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship (ICA) website or app and upload your international vaccination certificate. You will then receive an SMS including a link to download Alhosn app.

On arrival in Abu Dhabi, you will receive a Unified Identification Number (UID) either at the airport or via the ICA app or website.

You then need to download and register on the Alhosn app, using the UID and phone number used for ICA registration or when taking a PCR test in the UAE. You will receive a one-time password (OTP) to complete the Alhosn app registration process.

Vaccinated individuals receive a “green status” on the Alhosn app. To maintain the vaccinated status on the Alhosn app, a booster dose must be taken 6 months after receiving the second dose per the medical protocol for each vaccine.

How does Alhosn work for you?

Alhosn will generate a unique personal QR code following a colour-coding system to determine your COVID-19 test status.

The Ministry of Health and Prevention approves protocol for green pass using Alhosn app
Alhosn's new colour-coding system reflects vaccination status and PCR test validity

Category	Status on Alhosn when test result is negative	Turns grey
Vaccinated Those who received their second dose at least 28 days earlier or volunteers in vaccine trials	Green colour remains for 30 days After a PCR test Green colour remains for 7 days	Green means you have been tested and you are healthy.
2nd dose recipients Who didn't finish 28 days since second dose	14 days	Grey means that you have no test results that are currently available.
1st dose recipients A who received the first dose and waiting for their second dose appointment	7 days	
1st dose recipients B who received the first dose and are late to their second dose appointment by 43 days	3 days	
Vaccine exempted Those with vaccine exemption certificates as per approved processes	7 days	
Non-Vaccinated Those who are not exempt from vaccination	3 days	Red means your most recent test returned positive and you must seek the advice of the local health authority.

Green means you have been tested and you are healthy.

Grey means that you have no test results that are currently available.

Red means your most recent test returned positive and you must seek the advice of the local health authority.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES



Alhosn UAE

This application is the official COVID-19 testing channel in the UAE, by the Ministry of Health and Prevention. Install this app which displays your recent COVID-19 test results and vaccination status.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Abu Dhabi Police

Download the app and create an account using your Emirates ID. You can then access useful services online instead of visiting a police station. Manage your traffic documents, pay fines and get a police report for minor traffic accidents.

[Click here](#) to visit their website.



Ministry of Interior

This is a very handy website and app which enables you to carry out a number of important services. Need a police clearance letter? Traffic fines to pay? Or perhaps you need to complete a vehicle renewal, you can do all of this and more!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



UAE Pass

Download this application to easily access government services through one smartphone-based authentication. UAE Pass also enables users to sign documents digitally with a high level of security.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Abu Dhabi Health Authority

Nobody plans to be sick but keeping this government app on your phone ensures you are prepared. Search for doctors, learn about medication, make appointments, payments or verify your sick leave.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS



UAE Government Apps

There are many government services in the UAE which can be accessed through smartphones. This app bundles useful applications together which have been developed by UAE federal and local government entities. Access their services, call customer service, find the office locations and more.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



SEHA

The Abu Dhabi Health Services Company (SEHA) is the largest health services network in the UAE. Book appointments, request lab and medical reports and prescriptions, plus pay for them through safe and secure gateways. It also allows you to access family members' medical records.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



TAMM - Abu Dhabi Government Services

Access key government services easily and conveniently, anytime, anywhere. As part of the Abu Dhabi Government's efforts to deliver effective digital services to everyone, the existing government digital service channels have been extended to smart mobile channels.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



City Guard

Your city, your community, your app! You can report any incident or register a complaint directly with the Abu Dhabi government. Take a photo, shoot a video or record an audio clip and send it to City Guard. Your case will be automatically assigned to the appropriate government entity for immediate action.

Available on the app store.



Etisalat

If Etisalat is your telecommunication provider, then this is the app for you. It's a convenient hub for paying bills, checking account balances, updating details and even tracking down Wi-Fi hotspots so that you can save your data.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



du

If you have a mobile, landline or TV package with du, this app should find a space on your smartphone. Whether you pre- or post-pay your du bills, you can settle your account, analyze usage and even arrange appointments with the du team direct from the app.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Virgin

Find competitive rates for mobile data, local minutes, international minutes, SMS and roaming. Virgin offers a free SIM card delivery wherever you are in the UAE. You can also manage your international roaming packages.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



BOTIM

As WhatsApp call and Skype video calls are not activated in the UAE, you can make free voice and video calls to your friends and family members abroad over 4G, 5G or Wi-Fi connection. You can also share photos, videos, voice messages and more.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

BANKING



First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB)

The FAB mobile banking app allows customers to manage accounts and credit cards, transfer money and pay their bills directly from mobile devices.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank (ADIB)

The ADIB Mobile Banking app gives you the freedom to manage your money on the go. View accounts at a glance, pay bills, send money to family and friends, recharge phone and Salik credit, apply for finance and more!

[Click here](#) to visit the bank's website.



Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB)

The ADCB mobile app enables you to access account details, make credit card and bill payments and transfer money instantly, pay your child's school and college fees through your phone.

[Click here](#) to visit the bank's website.



Al Maryah island overlooking the city | | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

CAR RENTAL



Thrifty

Thrifty UAE offers economy car rental in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah and Umm Al Quwain. Get the Thrifty app for low rates, enjoy saving money on the go and make travel planning easier than ever.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Dollar

With the Dollar car rental app, you can make, modify, or cancel reservations in all locations. Store your preferences and info so you can check out in seconds. Instantly find the most convenient rental locations near you.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Europcar

Use the Europcar app to select and book a vehicle in just a few seconds, anytime, anywhere. Download the app to receive 10% off on app bookings.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Rentalcars

The app gives you access to every rental car at 60,000 locations worldwide. It compares the best deals and allows you to manage all your bookings, including drivers & payment cards.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

E-SHOPPING



Amazon

Enjoy the best shopping delivered to your door and get free shipping on millions of items with Amazon Prime! Low prices and great deals on everyday essentials from fashion, home, beauty, electronics, sporting goods, musical instruments, office supplies and more!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Noon

A one-stop-shop for your groceries, electronics, fashion, home décor and more. Shipping fees start from AED 10 although most orders over AED 100 ship for free!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



IKEA UAE

Located on Yas island, buy all your ready-to-assemble furniture for the bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and lounge! Browse the home accessories and other essential goods to kit your new place out.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Dubizzle Abu Dhabi

Sell your sofa, buy a car, chat and negotiate directly with a vendor, save customized searches (handy when looking for property) or share your sale items directly on Facebook. This app is like having a giant souq in your pocket at all times.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Groupon

Groupon offers discounts, and two-for-one deals and is free to access. From pool days to spa treatments to cleaning deals, you'll never need to pay full price (if you're flexible on retailers).

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

FOOD DELIVERY & SERVICES



Talabat

Talabat prides itself on fast delivery, exclusive offers and amazing choices. They also offer fabulous lunch deals. Ideal when you are short of time!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Zomato

In addition to ordering food to your doorstep, you can browse menus, read reviews and check the opening times for your next dining adventure. Upgrading to Zomato Gold gets you even more offers.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Deliveroo

Within just a few seconds and a couple of swipes on your smartphone, you can get food delivered to your door from swanky restaurants. You can also monitor the progress on your phone the whole way!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Hello Chef

Home cooking made easy. First, sign-up and select from 20 exciting, easy to cook recipes. Hello Chef will bring you the freshest, highest quality ingredients straight to your door. You then will cook tasty, inspiring meals you're proud to share with the people you love.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Carriage

Order your favorite cuisine by simply downloading Carriage's app on your mobile or tablet. Get ready for one of the fastest and easiest online food ordering and delivery services in the region.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Kibsons

Discover online shopping at wholesale prices. Just download the app and choose from fresh produce, meats, beverages and healthy food items. Freshly handpicked and delivered from the market to your door.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Carrefour

Order online anytime, anywhere and get your shopping delivered to your door. Shop for everything from groceries, electronics, beauty products and more!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

GOING OUT & SOCIALIZING



Time Out Abu Dhabi

Your weekly guide to life in the UAE capital – featuring restaurant reviews, party previews, cinema listings, hotel profiles, spa guides, art gallery tours and more!

Packed with new ideas, deals, promotions and listings for the best hotels, restaurants, nightclubs, it's an intelligent guide to life in the city.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Entertainer

Read Time Out Abu Dhabi to discover the best restaurants and things to do in the city, then check the Entertainer app to see if you can score a buy-one-get-one free deal or discount. The subscription starts from AED 495.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Meetup

Consider this the 21st century method of making friends. Meetup is a global platform for "finding and building local communities." Meetup is a fantastic and efficient way to connect with people you might not otherwise cross paths with.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

REAL ESTATE



Bayut

Browse the largest inventory of residential properties and commercial real estate for sale and to rent in the UAE. Filter results, search for preferred areas and explore future homes through videos and 360 technology!

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Property Finder

Considered one of the leading real estate marketplaces, choose from a wide range of properties for sale or for rent from top real estate agencies. Search over 100K listings, browse building reviews and find out which neighborhoods and buildings are most popular or best suitable for you.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Betterhomes.

Find and save homes based on the characteristics most important to you in terms of bedrooms and bathrooms, price, square footage, neighborhood and more. You can also get new listing alerts whenever new homes that meet your selected criteria hit the market.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



houza

houza is the UAE's biggest agency-owned real estate website. Find your next home through their wide range of residential and commercial offers for sale and for rent.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

TRANSPORTATION & NAVIGATION



Abu Dhabi Taxi

Get a cab in minutes with this user-friendly app! It allows you to not just book a taxi anytime from Abu Dhabi and Al Ain but also track its journey till it reaches your door. For taxi booking call 025542231 or 600535353.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Careem

Careem is a hassle-free, one stop solution for your daily needs. Ride, order food or shop with Careem's affordable, chauffeured car booking service. Book through the app in seconds.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Uber

This international car booking service has been a significant factor in streamlining taxi-ordering. Track your driver's progress and don't worry about having to give directions once in the car, with the precise details of your location synced from the app booking. You don't even have to remember to get cash out either.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Darbi

This app gives real-time information on traffic jams, accidents and road work besides bus and flight timings. The app also enables you to book a cab, pay for on-street parking and obtain ferry schedules.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Mawaqif

Park in any of the public parking spaces and pay for parking from this app. You don't need cash in your pocket – just punch in your details and money is simply deducted from your phone credit.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Salik

Similar to Abu Dhabi's road toll system (which is called Darb), Dubai has its own version. If you plan to take your car to Dubai, you must buy a Salik tag and charge your account. The app allows you to check your balance, recharge your account, add and remove vehicles, check your trips and violations, update your profile information and more.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



ADNOC Distribution

Need to find your way to the nearest ADNOC gas station, Salama vehicle inspection center, Autoserv, Oasis 365 or Rahal cards service center? The ADNOC Distribution mobile app is easy and friendly to use! Get vital information sent straight to your phone. The mobile pay function allows you to pay your gas and purchases through your wallet account.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Onwani My address

You will never be lost in Abu Dhabi if you have Onwani. The Abu Dhabi Municipality app allows users to scan building QR codes and share them via social media. Scanning a QR code gives the user immediate access to details about the location and points of interest. So the next time the pizza delivery man asks your location, simply scan your building number and send it to him.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Etihad Airways

Buy tickets, choose your seats, monitor your air miles and even track flights and luggage directly on your smartphone. Having the nifty app on your phone makes airport visits and travel plans easier than ever, so all you have to do is pack and hail that taxi.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Wizz Air

Book low-cost flights to Europe and beyond and get the best prices on affordable flights to more than 140 destinations.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

UTILITIES



ADDG Anywhere

The Abu Dhabi Distribution Company (ADDG) provides public utility services in Abu Dhabi city and its surroundings. The app is the quickest and easiest way to pay for your water and electricity services, whenever you like and wherever you are.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Tasleem

Tasleem is the cooling services provider for residential, retail and commercial developments. Through the app, you can view your account, access a consumption overview, make payments or update your contact details.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



Royal Gas

Royal Gas is the major provider for residential cooking gas. Find out about the company, contact the customer service team and manage your own accounts, all through the app.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



ADNOC Distribution

They are the suppliers of LPG cylinders across Abu Dhabi, Al Ain and the Al Dhafra Region. Download the app to find your nearest LPG station. Browse their easy-to-navigate map and get directions to the closest Rahal Center or discover what other services are available.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

USEFUL LOCAL RESOURCES AND MEDIA TO FOLLOW



ADEK

Stay up-to-date with latest news, developments and anything else that's important for Abu Dhabi's private education sector and make sure to subscribe to our social media channels on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn.

[Click here](#) to visit our website.



Abu Dhabi Government Media Office (ADGMO)

ADGMO is responsible for communicating the vision and news of the Abu Dhabi government and its leadership locally, regionally and internationally – it therefore is a great source to stay up to date with what's happening in the Emirate.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



The Ministry of Education (MOE)

MOE regulates public education and is also responsible for the general planning of education in the UAE. Their mandate is to develop an innovative education system for a knowledge and global competitive society that includes all age groups to meet future labor market demand.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



The National

The National is a private English language daily newspaper published in Abu Dhabi. Catch up on breaking news, opinion and analysis from the Middle East and around the world. Download it on iPhone and Android and be the first to know as news breaks.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.



UAE Barq

Stay informed and find all the latest news from around the region. The newswire covers technology, entertainment, sports, the economy and weather updates.

[Click here](#) to visit the website.

A LITTLE BIT OF RED TAPE



Moving to the UAE is exciting but when you arrive, you'll need to take care of some essential life admin. The good news is, your employer will help you with the vast majority. They will arrange your visa medical and take care of your paperwork for your residence visa, Emirates ID, health insurance and even housing.

Your Emirates ID is very important, remember to keep it with you at all times. It's your lifeline to access the city's services and certain buildings - you will find you are frequently asked to produce it so keep your card handy!



You will, however need to take care of a few things yourself, such as opening a bank account, setting up a mobile phone, plus internet and TV packages for your home. Here's a quick guide to help you!

BANKING

Opening a bank account in Abu Dhabi is pretty simple. Before you start, it may be worth asking at your school if they recommend a specific bank that offers preferred conditions.

To open an account, you will need:



- * UAE Residence visa
- * Emirates ID
- * Passport
- * Salary certificate from your employer

While we provide you with the names and links of Abu Dhabi's most prominent banks in the "[Useful apps & links](#)" section of this document, you can find a list of all UAE financial institutions on the website of the [UAE Central Bank](#).

SIM CARDS & MOBILE SERVICES

You may have been provided with a SIM card by your employer (in case you haven't, it may be worth asking them if there are special plans or packages available for you). This section offers handy information so you can explore all available options before committing to a plan.

There are three service providers: [Etisalat](#), [du](#) and [Virgin Mobile](#). You may find one suits your needs better than the other. We recommend researching on their websites.

Etisalat offers an all-in-one pack called [visitor line](#), which costs AED 100. It includes a local SIM for your phone and is valid for up to 60 days. It can be further extended, but most new arrivals will have their residency visas and accommodation settled by then and will probably want to move to something more comprehensive (and cheaper) for the longer term use.



Du also offers pretty much the same service, it's called the [visitor mobile line](#). This costs just AED 35 and is valid for 7 days. It can also be renewed/topped up, so you'd need to do the math on which of the two deals above is best/cheapest for your personal needs.

Regardless of which company you choose, you'll come under pressure when you visit the shops to buy a "combo" package (mobile, landline, internet and television) for a single monthly fee and for a contractual period between 1-2 years.

If that's what you're looking for, then go ahead and sign on the line. But it may save you heartache further down the line if you do your research first.

PREPAID VS POSTPAID

Operators may offer more data or discounts when you sign up for 12 months or 24 months contract. There may be penalties for breaking a contract though, so do your research before you sign up. For reference, you will need to choose between **prepaid** (bill is paid in advance) or **postpaid** (bill paid at end of the month).

Please find a snapshot comparison on the following page (subject to change anytime):

	PREPAID	POSTPAID
Etisalat	<p>Etisalat has three postpaid lines: Wasel, Wasel Premium and Visitor</p> <p>The Wasel line costs AED 57.75 to activate, while the Wasel Premium line, which comes with a personal number of your choice and 3 GB data free per month for the first six months, costs AED 1,050.</p> <p>The Visitor line costs AED 105 and includes benefits such as a free AED 100 Careem ride and discount vouchers.</p> <p>Prepaid packages include combo plans; one-day, one-week or one-month packs; local calling packages; and international calling packages.</p> <p>Prices range from AED 36.75 to AED 205/month.</p>	<p>Post-paid plans, which cost AED 131.25 to activate, include Freedom, Emirati, Smart, new postpaid and premium postpaid.</p> <p>Prices range from AED 52.50 to AED 1,260 per month.</p> <p>Some favor flexible minutes over local minutes, or the opposite, and most include more data when you sign a contract.</p>
du	<p>du's prices for activation are the same as Etisalat, but it has an online exclusive prepaid offer that waives the activation fee of AED 52.50 for a package that includes 30 flex minutes and 750 MB data.</p> <p>Within prepaid, there is a choice between voice and data or data only, and daily or monthly recharge.</p> <p>A tourist line is as cheap as AED 26.25 for 3 days of 10 flex minutes and 150 MB data, up to AED 115.50 for 14 days of 40 flex minutes and 2 GB data.</p>	<p>du also waives postpaid line activation fees for customers who sign up for auto payments.</p> <p>Within postpaid, there are choices between national or flexible calling and light, medium or heavy data. The range of prices is similar to Etisalat.</p>
Virgin Mobile	<p>Virgin Mobile's distribution model is easy - simply download the app, have the SIM card delivered within an hour and activate it on the spot. You can customize data, local and international minutes from more than 125 different options and choose a commitment for 1 month, 6 months or 12 months.</p> <p>The app is used to track usage, make amendments, set up monthly spend limits and add additional minutes, data or roaming packs.</p> <p>There are many ongoing promo codes giving discounts for first-time customers (for example, WEB79 currently gives AED 79 off). Customers who want to switch from Etisalat or du can keep their existing number.</p>	

Check out the websites here: [Etisalat's Mobile Plans](#), [du's Mobile Plans](#) and [Virgin Mobile Plans](#). You can also use [yallacompare](#) to compare different plan options. If we had just one piece of advice to offer, it would be this: err on the side of caution.

If you need more minutes or extra mobile data, it's always easier to upgrade your package than downgrade it! 

GOOD TO KNOW

UAE phone service providers will be happy to sell you a new phone. Some of their packages include the newest models plus minutes/texts/data. So, over the 12 or 24 months contract period, you can pay off the cost of the phone as well as paying for the services you are using.

FACETIME, VIBER, WHATSAPP, AND VOIP

All UAE internet usage is regulated by the [Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority](#) (TRA). Many sites deemed offensive, either religiously, culturally or politically, are blocked. Facetime is not included on iPads and iPhones bought in the UAE and won't work if you try to install or use the app.

There are no restrictions on the use of WhatsApp, Viber, or Messenger for text messaging. However, the free phone calling function is blocked. The same applies to Skype. The good news is that UAE residents can legally use the following VoIP apps, approved by the government:

BOTIM - Available on Google Play and Apple App Stores. Anybody can use it to make VoIP calls, but it requires a monthly subscription of AED 50. Users can also include it in their internet calling plan with Etisalat or du.

Hiu Messenger - This is a VoIP app that is officially supported by both du and Etisalat. Users who pay for unlimited data with an internet calling plan subscription can use Hiu Messenger.

C'Me - This is a VoIP app that is officially supported by both the du and Etisalat networks. Users who pay for unlimited data with an internet calling pack subscription can use C'Me Messenger.

Microsoft Teams - The restrictions on this app have been lifted to allow employees, students and teachers to communicate during lock down.

Zoom - This popular, free app has been unblocked to allow companies to conduct meetings of up to 100 people (or more with a large meeting license).

Google Hangouts - This popular app has also been unblocked due to COVID-19. Users can voice and video call as well as group chats.

Voico UAE - This is a UAE based VoIP service that is currently available for voice and video calls. The service is freely available on the Google Play and Apple app stores. However, some users have reported that it only works when connected to WiFi.

The list above is subject to change.

2020 © Virgin Mobile UAE

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

While anybody can buy a pre-paid SIM card with an official identity document, such as a passport, the below documents are needed for a resident to sign-up for a post-paid residential plan:

- * Original Emirates ID
- * Any one of the following:
 - Stamped salary certificate (minimum salary: AED 2,500)
 - Vehicle license
 - 3-month bank/online bank statement
 - Last month's utility bill with physical address
 - Tenancy or ownership contract
 - Ministry of Labour contract (minimum salary: AED 2,500)

HOME INTERNET, LANDLINE AND TV

If you're moving into company accommodation, this may be provided. However, here is an overview in case you would like to change/upgrade your existing arrangements or set up your own package.

Most new developments are pre-wired to service [du](#) internet, landline and television, whereas apartments and villas in non-freehold parts of the city are almost all serviced by [Etisalat](#). Both companies provide similar home services and offer a number of packages and bundles to suit different budgets.

While the package prices of both companies are also similar, costs vary greatly depending on the internet speed, plan and add-ons you choose. Those add-ons could include a phone landline and TV packages.

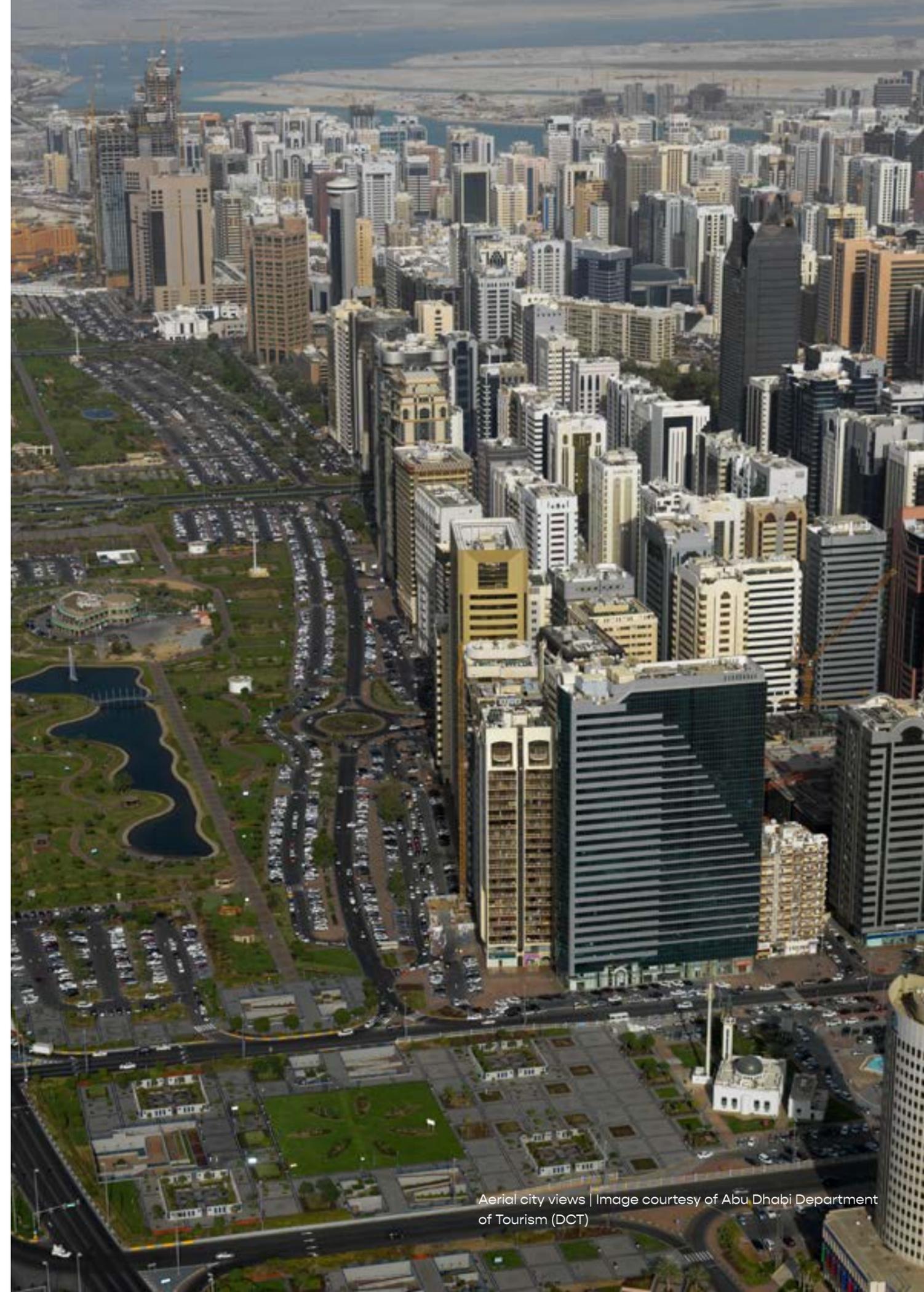
Although there are some free TV channels in Abu Dhabi, the choices are limited. Paying for a package offers more channels, in different languages. The main providers – [OSN](#), [Etisalat](#) and [du](#) – offer packages and home installation services at competitive rates.

You can make your request and complete the application process through the websites, provided you are:

- * A UAE resident
- * Aged 18* (Etisalat) or 21 (du). du will accept an NOC from someone aged 21 or older agreeing to be responsible for your account
- * Earn a minimum salary of AED 2,500 (if opting for a post-paid account)

Once you decided on your preferred provider, selected your desired packages and add-ons, all you need to subscribe is:

- * A scan of your passport
- * A scan of your Emirates ID
- * A scan of your tenancy contract or title deed (if applicable)
- * A scan of your salary certificate (depends on the package you choose)
- * A credit card to make required payments



Aerial city views | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

GETTING AROUND



DRIVING IN ABU DHABI

OBTAINING YOUR UAE DRIVER'S LICENSE

The good news is that your driver's license from your home country may be transferable, however some additional steps, including an eye test, may be necessary.

IF YOU HAVE A LICENSE FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY

If you're on a visit visa, it is possible to use your international license from home, please check with your rental car company before hiring a car. However, as soon as you get your UAE resident's visa, you can't just hit the road, you will need a UAE driver's license.

If you're a resident and you have a license from one of the countries listed below, you're in luck, as it's a relatively simple process to transfer your license:

Australia	Denmark	Germany	Italy	Norway	South Africa	Switzerland
Austria	Finland	Greece	Japan	Poland	Spain	Turkey
Belgium	France	Hong Kong	Netherlands	Portugal	South Korea	UK
Canada	GCC countries	Ireland	New Zealand	Romania	Sweden	USA

The driving license must be valid (or within one year of expiry) and you must be a citizen of the country where the license was registered.

If the license you hold is from a country not featured on the previous list, you will be required to pass the theory and practical driving tests here in the UAE. More information on eligibility can also be found [here](#).

STEPS TO TRANSFER YOUR INTERNATIONAL LICENSE

First, you'll have to get your printed driving license translated into Arabic. You can do that at any official typing or translation center in the city.

Before paying for translation services, check if the translation center you visit is licensed and recognized by the Ministry of Interior. For more information, please [visit this website](#).

Next, visit the [Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Department](#), located in Mussafah CAD (phone: 800 3333), with the following documents:

- * A passport photo
- * Original and one copy of your passport
- * Emirates ID
- * Original and one copy of your foreign driving license
- * One copy of your valid Abu Dhabi residency visa
- * A letter of no objection from your current employer or your visa sponsor
- * An Arabic translation of your existing license

When you visit the licensing center, you will need to take an eye test in a nearby building. If that's successful you'll pay AED 100 before being sent to collect your Abu Dhabi license. The whole process (including eye test and translation fees) will cost around AED 800.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE NO LICENSE AT ALL?

If you're starting from square one, you will need to obtain a learning permit before you can get your motoring career into first gear.

First, visit the [Emirates Driving Company](#) (phone: 02 551 1911) and open a driving file. You will need:

- * A copy of your passport and residence visa page
- * A copy and original Emirates ID card
- * Two photographs
- * An eye test report
- * No objection letter from your sponsor (employer)

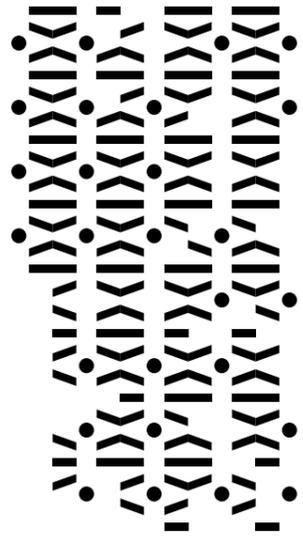
The Emirates Driving School courses are split into theory and practical classes. In order to start practical sessions, the applicants must complete eight theory classes and pass the theory test. After successfully passing the theory test, you can begin practical training sessions with an instructor.

Learner drivers generally require between 10-30 hours of lessons, depending on previous experience. Once you are ready to take the practical test, your instructor will give you a 'certificate of readiness.' This must be presented to EDC before booking the practical test.

Once you pass your practical driving test on the roads, you'll get a certificate, then you can take that to the [Drivers and Vehicles Licensing Department](#) in Mussafah as proof of your completion.

Once there, you'll be able to get your license as described in the previous section. UAE and GCC citizens can renew their license every 10 years. For foreign expats, the license renewal term is after five years and can be applied for online [here](#).

BASIC TRAFFIC RULES



MANDATORY SEAT BELTS FOR ALL

All passengers in a car must wear seat belts, including those sitting in the rear seat, failing which the driver of the vehicle will be fined AED 400 and slapped with four black points.

Children up to four years of age must be provided with a child safety seat. Violators will be fined AED 400 and slapped with four black points.

The front seat passenger should also be at least 145 cm tall and not younger than 10 years old.

RECKLESS DRIVING

Reckless driving will incur a fine of AED 2,000, 23 black points and impounding of the vehicle for 60 days.

The same punishment and fine will apply to drivers who endanger the lives of others.

Other violations cover: blocking traffic, jumping red signals, sudden swerving and driving without a number plate.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Motorcycle riders and motorists who ignore traffic lights will be fined AED 1,000, incur a penalty of 12 points and vehicles can be seized for a month.

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Drivers caught under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will have their license suspended for one year, starting from the day of the verdict. The court will decide the fine and/or jail term.

DRIVER'S BEHAVIOR

Violations include:

- Throwing garbage
- Not leaving a safe distance between vehicles
- Overtaking on the hard shoulder
- Crowding around accident sites
- Using quad-bikes on road
- Jaywalking

DISTRACTIONS

Using phones while driving or any other distractions will result in an AED 400 fine and four black points.

SPEEDING

Those exceeding the speed limit by 80 kmph will be fined AED 3,000, slapped with 23 black points and have their car impounded for 60 days.

- Violating technical and safety issues
- Failing to fasten seat belts
- Using expired tires
- Driving without insurance/car registration
- Driving noisy vehicles
- Transporting passengers illegally

[Click here to download a complete list of traffic offenses and violations.](#)



RENTING A CAR

While owning a car is the dream for most of us, the high maintenance cost and loan repayments can be a drawback. So you might wish to rent a car instead, especially if you don't want the burden of having to sell a car when you leave the UAE.

Here are the things to keep in mind when renting a car in the UAE to ensure you get the best deal.

REQUIREMENTS AND RATES

To rent a car in the UAE, you must be at least 21 years old with a valid UAE driver's license. Other required documents include a copy of your passport, resident visa and Emirates ID.

Rental rates range approximately between AED 70 to AED 120 per day or less (subject to change), depending on the car model.

You only need to pay the amount covering the period – daily, weekly or monthly – in which the car will be hired. There's no need to place a down payment. But some long-term lease deals usually require three months' advance for brand new cars.

Most car rental companies require a refundable deposit amount of at least AED 1,000. This will allow the company to automatically deduct from the customer when needed, particularly when it comes to traffic-related fines.

CAR RENTAL COMPANIES

There are many companies to choose from in Abu Dhabi for both short- and long-term rental options.

The companies listed below, in addition to the ones in the [“Useful apps & links”](#) section, only represent a small and popular selection of what's available:

[Progress](#)

Al Otaiba Tower,
Zayed the Second Street (next to KM Trading).
Contact: 02 622 9943

[Europcar](#)

Mushrif Mall, 25th Street, Airport Road.
Contact: 02 650 0109

[Dollar](#)

Novotel Abu Dhabi Al Bustan, corner of
Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed and Rabdan Streets.
Contact: 02 641 9002

[Thrifty](#)

Khalidiyah Mall,
Mubarak Bin Mohammed Street.
Contact: 02 658 2795

[Hertz](#)

Al Raha Etihad Plaza, Khalifa City.
Contact: 02 556 9130

[German Rent A Car](#)

Al Raha Etihad Plaza, Khalifa City.
Contact: 02 556 9130

THINGS TO KEEP AN EYE ON

Renting a car means you don't have to worry about tedious paperwork, registering, insuring and servicing the vehicle – all these are taken care of by the rental company. It's a great option while you work out if you want to buy a car or not.

Carefully read the car rental contract before signing to gain a clear understanding of extra charges that might apply



- Look out for mileage restrictions which outline the number of kilometers you're allowed to drive the car without additional charges. Some companies offer unlimited mileage, so it's worth asking around.
- Basic comprehensive insurance should be automatically included in your rental rate. But in addition to that, there's an excess insurance coverage stipulated in the contract should the car incur major damages. This is necessary so that the car rental company can make insurance claims if needed.
- Keep in mind that it is the renter's responsibility to pay the excess insurance in the event of any damage. For luxury vehicles, the excess amount may range from AED 1,000 to AED 3,000, normal saloon cars from AED 600, while SUVs are usually around AED 1,000. The excess insurance applies per damage and per police report and applies for damage at fault or without a third party involved.
- Some companies offer CDW, or collision damage waiver, to select customers, particularly repeat customers who have a good track record. The CDW is optional damage insurance that minimizes the financial liability of the customer.
- In case of an accident, you must obtain a police report. In case of black point charges, you need to visit the police station within 48 hours from the time of notification.
- Car rental companies discourage, and in some cases contractually prevent, clients from using leased vehicles for off-road driving which can leave the car susceptible to damage. In general, driving off-road must be done with private cars and not with rented models.
- Only the registered person is allowed to drive the leased vehicle. An additional driver can be registered by submitting necessary documents including a valid license, visa copy and by paying a registration fee.
- Again, car rental companies differ in their policies so it's best to scout for options to compare prices, conditions and guidelines. The most important thing is to know the stipulations in the contract and ask questions.

BUYING A CAR

Probably one of the first decisions you have to make is if you would like to buy a new car, a second-hand or pre-owned car instead. Online portals like [Dubicars](#) make the buying process easier by showing you new and used cars for sale.

There are pros and cons either way. New cars are more expensive and come with a higher insurance premium, they may require less maintenance cost, may be more fuel-efficient and can be customized. Pre-owned or used cars are comparatively much cheaper but may require more maintenance.

Car dealers for new and used cars, regardless if they are represented online or physical, usually sort out all the required paperwork and processes, such as finance, insurance and registration. If you buy a used car from a private individual, you'd need to take care of these things yourself.

However this shouldn't discourage you from a private purchase. The process can mainly be completed online with a couple button clicks. However, a physical car inspection at an authorized testing center will still be required (please refer to "[Vehicle Inspection](#)" in the "[Registering a car](#)" section for more registration details).



A FEW TOP TIPS

RESEARCH

Before sealing the deal, do your research. Look into:

- * Reliability
- * Known problems
- * Overall value
- * Is it the right car for you and your family?

Take your time and don't rush into a purchase even if it screams "AMAZING DEAL, CHANCE OF A LIFETIME, DON'T MISS OUT!" as you could face issues further down the line. Be sure to check out reviews as well to get a deeper insight into the vehicle.



SHOP AROUND

You may have found the perfect car, but that shouldn't stop you from shopping around. Always look for an alternative or two just in case there is a better deal out there. A listing of all authorized car dealers can be found here. In addition, these resources may be helpful when purchasing a second-hand vehicle in the UAE:

[Al Futtaim AutoMall](#)

10th street, M-4, Mussafah. Sat-Thu 9:00 am - 8:00 pm.
Contact: 600 567 005

[Auto Trader UAE](#)

[Carmudi](#)

[Car Report](#)

[Dubizzle](#)

[Motor World](#)

Sweihan Road, near Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital, Al Shamkha.
Sat-Thu 9:00 am - 1:00 pm and 5:00 pm - 9:00 pm.

[We Wash Any Car](#)

[Yalla Motor](#)



GET YOUR FINANCES IN ORDER

Before you take this forward, first ask yourself, “can I afford this car?” Buying a car is not a small purchase. Different banks, dealers or online sellers offer an online finance calculator you can use to calculate how much the car will cost over a certain amount of years. Budget yourself correctly, and don’t overspend to avoid regrets further down the line.

GET A FEEL

Before making a down payment, go and check the car out. Sit inside and feel if it fits you and your needs. You don’t want an uncomfortable car, especially if you plan to use it a lot and on long journeys.

Check out other features. Are they in the right place? Do they all make sense? And most importantly, does it have what you want? If you’re shopping around for a car for your family, make sure your family fits in and won’t outgrow it in a matter of months. It is also advisable to take the car for a test drive in the city and possibly on the highway.

If you are purchasing a used car from a private individual and want to make sure there are no hidden defects or non-disclosed accidents, you may want to consider agreeing with the current vehicle owner to take the car to one of the authorized car inspection centers to have it tested at your own cost (please refer to “[Vehicle Inspection](#)” in the “[Registering a car](#)” section for more registration details).

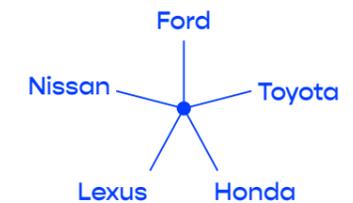
NEGOTIATE

Don’t be afraid to haggle. Just don’t offer the seller half of what they are asking. If you’re buying from a dealership, ask them about any current car promotions they have running. They may not be able to lower the price, but can offer possible freebies including warranty and even deferred payments adding value to purchasing a car. Haggling is normal when buying a car in the UAE.



DEPRECIATION

Depreciation is something you should always consider when buying a car. As soon as you buy a car and put a few 100 km on the clock, the value of the vehicle drops. In general, a vehicle that costs less to buy will depreciate slower compared to more expensive rides. Here is a list of vehicles with slower depreciation in UAE:



Cars that do not depreciate do exist but are rather expensive even when new. These tend to be hypercars, enthusiast's cars and cars with short or capped production runs.

RUNNING COSTS

Petrol is still relatively cheap in the UAE but doesn’t mean you should go out and buy a 5.7-litre V8 SUV. Keep in mind that filling up is a weekly occurrence and can add up. Maintenance is also something to think about. While maintenance prices for most standard cars aren’t as high as in many other countries due to parts being easier to find, they can add up even if they are cheap. Oil changes, tyre rotation, wheel balance, A/C repair and tyre changing are all services that need to be addressed during car ownership. European cars tend to be more expensive to maintain, followed by American cars. Japanese, Korean and Chinese are the cheapest. In addition, you need to bear in mind insurance costs and regular vehicle registration renewal fees.



Emirati Experiences | Image courtesy of Abu Dhabi Department of Tourism (DCT)

CAR INSURANCE

Every car must have car insurance in the UAE. In case of any natural damage or accidents, your car is protected financially. Basically, if there is any damage caused to your car, the bill will be paid by the insurance company. Car insurance generally lasts for a year. However, most insurers offer the 13th month free.

A FEW TOP TIPS

REPUTATION

The reputation of a company really matters. Always look for an insurer with a good reputation.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT RELIABILITY

Contact customer support and see how they deal with customers. That will give you a good idea of how customer support is going to respond to you in case of an accident.

FEEDBACK FROM FRIENDS

You can ask around and see what people think of the insurer. Those close to you will not sugarcoat the insurer as they don't gain anything from it.

CAR INSURANCE TYPES

There are two types of car insurance in the UAE: comprehensive car insurance and third-party insurance.

Comprehensive insurance ...

offers wide protection on the car. It takes care of any damage caused to the car by the owner or a third party. It also covers the car in case of theft, natural disaster, fire, etc. As it offers a wider range of coverage on the car, the comprehensive insurance premium is also higher compared to third party insurances.

Third party insurance...

does not cover the car of the insurance holder. It only covers the other party involved in the accident. So the you would have to pay for the damage to your own car which could be more expensive in the long run. The premium on this insurance is therefore much less than comprehensive car insurance.

You can find car insurance companies [here](#). You may either contact them directly or go through one of the comparison portals [insurancemarket.ae](#), [policybazaar.ae](#), [yallacompare.com](#), [souqalmal.com](#).

Some lesser known but good providers include:

[Adamjee](#) [Watania](#)
[Oriental](#) [Salama](#)

If you feel the insurance premium is too high, you may be able to reduce it by:

- Getting a “no claim” certificate
- Pay higher deductibles or excess fee
- Only include the add-ons that are essential for your needs

REGISTERING A CAR

Your car cannot be on the road until it is registered however, the Abu Dhabi authorities have made this process pretty easy.

FIRST-TIME REGISTRATION

Registration of a new car in Abu Dhabi is usually the responsibility of the agency or dealership from which you buy the vehicle. Even if it's a second-hand car you are registering for the first time in Abu Dhabi the process is fairly similar. There are multiple outlets available to start the process:

- MOI smart application or [website](#)
- [Emirates Vehicle Gate](#)

To register a new car in your name, you will have to follow these steps:

1. You will need to get your vehicle inspected at an authorized testing center. This can be skipped if your car was produced in the last three years before the date of registration. Car registration in Abu Dhabi is only possible if you get a positive inspection result (see “Vehicle Inspection” on the next spread for more information).
2. Get vehicle insurance from an authorized insurer.
3. Pay any pending fines (if applicable).
4. Apply for your Abu Dhabi car registration through the above-mentioned registration channels.
5. Pay the registration fees.
6. Collect the plate number, expiry date sticker and vehicle ownership card.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The new car registration fee is AED 400 and requires the following documents:

- Proof of ownership (vehicle clearance certificate (VCC), export certificate, transfer certificate, possession certificate or possession transfer certificate)
- Emirates ID, passport copy, copy of residence visa
- Car insurance
- Mortgage (if applicable)

Your car registration is usually valid for 12 months. A 30-day grace period starts after these 12 months, where one can get the car repaired (if needed), inspected and insured. All insurance policies remain valid for thirteen months, hence, your grace period is also covered.

The penalty for driving a car with expired registration is AED 500 and four black points. In some cases, cars can be impounded for a week and drivers can lose their license.

REGISTRATION RENEWAL

The annual car registration renewal fee is AED 350 and can be paid online or in person. The documents required are quite similar to those needed for the initial registration:

- Emirates ID and driving license
- Renewed motor vehicle insurance
- Old registration card
- New cars are exempt from inspection testing for the first 2 years. From the third year, you will have to visit the vehicle testing center to get an assessment and get the required certification.
- Payment of fines

Once you have all the required documents, there are two ways you can submit them for car registration renewal in Abu Dhabi. You can visit the registration center of the [Abu Dhabi Police General Headquarters](#). Once the process is complete you will be given a new registration sticker. Place the new sticker on your rear number plate – directly on the old one.

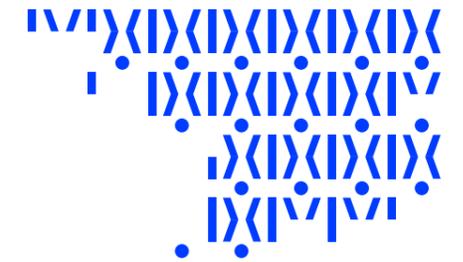
Alternatively, you can renew your car registration online. Visit the [Abu Dhabi Police e-services portal](#). After logging in, select the registration tab, enter all required details, submit documents and confirm your preferred delivery method. Within five working days, the process will be completed. Similarly, the [MOI website](#) and [Emirates Vehicle Gate](#) can also be used. The process would be the same.

VEHICLE INSPECTION

The cost of the inspection is AED 170 and it takes about 30 to 45 minutes on average. If the car fails once, you need to get the problem resolved. All tests are charged individually, so it might be wise to eradicate all the issues before going for the test.

Here's a list of some of the areas where you will find car inspection centers:

Al Dhafra	Samha Rest Area (Sout-West)
Muroor	Baniyas South-West
Yas	Mahawi
Musaffah	Al Istiqlal



Aerial view of Abu Dhabi corniche at night | Image courtesy of DCT

PARKING PAYMENT (MAWAQIF)

The Department of Transport launched the Mawaqif Program to establish a world-class car parking management system. Public parking areas are classified into two categories, standard and premium.

	PREMIUM	STANDARD
Parking Time	Maximum 4 hours	24 hours
Fees	AED 3 per hour	AED 2 per hour AED 15 per day
Curbstone color	Turquoise and white	Turquoise and black

The parking fees are applicable from 8:00 am to 12:00 am from Saturday to Thursday. Parking is free on Fridays, public holidays and for people with special needs. Parking bays in the vicinity of a mosque are free for 45 minutes starting from the call for prayer (Adhan).

MAWAQIF PAYMENT METHODS

CASH PAYMENT

Buy a ticket from any Mawaqif Pay & Display machines identified by the Mawaqif logo and painted in turquoise, corresponding to the color of the curbstone. The ticket must be visibly displayed inside the car on the front dashboard.

RECHARGEABLE CARDS

These are available at Mawaqif customer service centres for AED 50 (the balance will be added to your Mawaqif Account once the card is activated). The card can be activated and linked to your online account through the [Mawaqif website](#) or by sending an SMS in the following format to 3009:

REQUIRED FORMAT	EXAMPLE
LINK<SPACE>CARD NO<SPACE>CVC	LINK 0001010010000054 123

You can recharge your card:

- Through the Mawaqif website using a credit card
- At any Mawaqif customer service centers using cash or a credit card
- At any self-service kiosk that provides Mawaqif services
- using cash or a credit card



City views at dusk | Image courtesy of DCT

MOBILE PAYMENT

This method enables you to pay your Mawaqif fees via SMS, which is extremely handy. You can choose between two user types:

	NON-REGISTERED USER (VEHICLE)	REGISTERED USER (VEHICLE) YOU CAN SET UP AN ACCOUNT, REGISTER YOUR VEHICLE HERE
Step 1	<p>Send an SMS to 3009 in the following format:</p> <p>PlateCategory<SPACE>PlateNumber<SPACE>Tariff<SPACE>Duration in hrs</p> <p>Example: Red5 12345 S 4 (for 4 hours) or Red5 12345 S (for 1 hour)</p>	<p>Send an SMS to 3009 in the following format:</p> <p>NickName<SPACE>Tariff<SPACE>Duration in hrs</p> <p>Example: Hamad S 4(for 4 hours) or Hamad S(for 1 hour)</p> <p>The nickname is the name you created when registering your vehicle</p>
Step 2	<p>Note: The tariff code will be on parking signage and is either S or P. You can also make it out by the curbstone color (click here for details).</p>	
Step 3	<p>You will receive an SMS confirmation message with m-mawaqif permit details. This message is also considered a payment receipt.</p>	
Step 4	<p>10 minutes before your m-mawaqif permit expires, the system will send you a SMS reminder.</p>	
Step 4	<p>If you wish to extend for another hour, simply reply with the letter "E".</p>	

RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMITS

APARTMENT AREAS

If you are in company accommodation, check if your parking is included. Residential permits allow you to park in paid parking areas that are located within the same area you live in without paying the hourly or daily rates. Residential permits can be obtained from any Mawaqif customer service center.

Areas designated for residents can be easily identified through Mawaqif signs marked with "Resident Permit Only" non-resident permit holders are not allowed to use these areas from 9:00 pm to 8:00 am, however, they can use them otherwise after paying the relevant fees.

Every expatriate resident living in an apartment can get two parking permits in their area, at a cost of AED 800 for the first permit and AED 1,200 for the second permit (fees are indicative and subject to change, please visit the [Mawaqif website](#) for up-to-date information).

VILLA AREAS

Villa resident permits help you find car parking in your villa neighborhood. Areas designated for villa residents can be easily identified through Mawaqif signs marked with "Villa Resident Permit Only" non-villa resident permit holders are not allowed to park their cars in these areas at any time.

Every resident family living in a villa is allotted two residential permits only. The annual fees are AED 800 for the first permit and AED 1,200 for the second permit (fees are indicative and subject to change, please visit the [Mawaqif website](#) for up-to-date information).

REQUIRED RESIDENT PERMIT DOCUMENTS

- Passport copy with a valid residency visa
- Copy of tenancy contract "Tawtheeq" or proof of residence ownership
- Electricity and water bill for the last 3 months
- Vehicle registration card
- Proof of first-degree relationship of the vehicle owner with the tenant of the property owner (if the applicant is not the tenant or property-owner)

Permits can be obtained at any of the Mawaqif Customer Service Centres:

- Hamdan bin Mohammed Street
- Sultan bin Zayed the First Street
- Abu Dhabi Main Bus Station
- Abu Dhabi Municipality Head office and its branches (Marina Mall and Al Bateen Mall)
- Department of Urban Planning and Municipalities in Al Maqtaa area

Alternatively, customers can reach the Mawaqif Contact Centre 24/7 on this free number **800 3009**, or via email to: Mawaqif@dot.abudhabi.ae



MAWAQIF VIOLATIONS

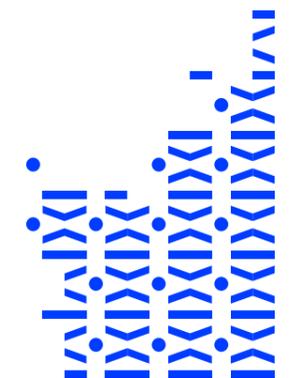
Illegally parked vehicles will be fined with charges ranging from AED 100 to AED 1,000 depending on the severity of the violation.

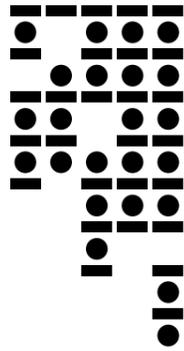
If a violation notification is ignored, your vehicle will be removed within 24-48 hours.

If vehicles park in areas where the curbstone is colored with yellow and black, block designated escape routes, spaces reserved for people with special needs, vehicles of the fire department and ambulances or for commercial use, they will be towed away immediately.

MAWAQIF FINES PAYMENT

Parking related fines can be paid through any Mawaqif Customer Service Centre or online through the [Mawaqif website](#).





PUBLIC TRANSPORT

ABRA WATER HOPPING SERVICE

Take a ride along the stunning waters of Khor Al Maqta by stepping in a wooden abra (water taxi) from the Souk Qaryat Al Beri (found between the Shangri-La Abu Dhabi, Qaryat Al Beri hotel and Traders Hotel). The various routes take you along to The Ritz-Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal, Eastern Mangroves and Yas Island. Sights include the Shaikh Zayed Grand Mosque and some of the Grand Canal's fanciest hotels, lush mangroves, the original Maqta fort and the fancy yachts of Yas Island.

AED 25 (one-way), free (for children under six).
Sunday - Thursday: 04:00 pm – 10:30 pm
Friday - Saturday: 10:00 am – 11:00 pm

BUSES

LOCAL BUSES

Abu Dhabi's modern air-conditioned buses operate around the clock. Use the [DARB](#) app to plan your journey and pick up a Hafilat card from the Al Wahda Central Bus Station or at any Hafilat card outlet (in shopping malls, at bus stations, ticket vending machines and customer care centers). You can load the card with credit at any of these locations or [online](#). Journeys start from AED 2.

INTERCITY BUSES

Head to Dubai, Sharjah, Al Ain, Liwa or Ruwais from the [central bus station at Al Wadha Mall on Hazza Bin Zayed Street](#). Intercity buses are more comfortable than you might think, however they can take double the time of a car journey.

Intercity public buses are operated by:

[Integrated Transport Centre](#)
in the emirate of Abu Dhabi

[Roads and Transport Authority](#)
in the emirate of Dubai

[Roads and Transport Authority](#)
in the emirate of Sharjah

[Transport Authority](#)
in the emirate of Ajman

[RAK Transport Authority](#)
in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah

Special cards are used for payment in different Emirates:

[Hafilat smart card](#)
in Abu Dhabi

[Nol card](#)
in Dubai

[Sayer card](#)
in Sharjah

CAREEM

Download the app, [sign up](#), add a payment method and away you go! This ride-hailing app connects you with private hire drivers who can take you anywhere in the city. They cost slightly more than the local taxis, but the drivers have GPS and the cars are often more modern.

E-SCOOTERS

E-scooter company Circ has scooters up for grabs on the Corniche, Yas Island and Masdar City, and they are super easy to use. All you need to do is download the [Circ app](#), set up an account, buy credit and you're ready to go. E-scooter company [Lime](#) has also just arrived in Abu Dhabi with 300 scooters available to rent across the 8km stretch of the Corniche. A great way to explore!

CYCLING

The Careem bike-share scheme is akin to London's "Boris Bikes." You can casually pick up any of the bikes or [sign up](#) to become a member. There are 300 bikes and more than 55,000 users in Abu Dhabi and prices start from AED 20 for a day. Pick one up from one of the dozens of stations between Yas Island and Emirates Palace, take a ride and drop it off when you're done. Simple.

AED 20 (one day), AED 50 (three days),
AED 99 (one month).



Cycling | Image courtesy of DCT

FERRY

If you are interested in visiting Dalma Island, you can get there by ferry from Jabal al Dhanna, a small port town west of Abu Dhabi city. Ferries run three times a day (in both directions) between Saturday and Thursday and twice on Fridays. One-way tickets are 20 AED for adults and free for children younger than 12. If you are traveling in a car, you will need to pay an additional 100 AED to bring it on board. [Click here](#) for more information.

ONAK

This is another ride-hailing and concierge app similar to [Careem](#) and [Uber](#). As well as rides you can also use the service to grab shopping for you, book a cleaner, arrange wedding photography or fix your computer. There are different membership options, from pay-per-ride to monthly memberships. For more information, visit onak.ae

TAXIS

It's easy to hail a taxi while out and about in the city. But for more remote areas you should book one in advance using [The TransAD app](#) or call the hotline (600 535 353).

The starting fare from 6:00 am - 10:00 pm is AED 5 and for every kilometer up to 50 kilometers it's AED 1.82. The minimum fare is AED 12 per journey and the starting fare from the airport is AED 20 for small vehicles. Fares after 10:00 pm start at AED 5.50.

There aren't more affordable ways to get around the city. Most drivers are friendly and know their way around the city, but be sure to keep an eye out as some might say they know where they're going but are new to Abu Dhabi and will benefit from some guidance.

Always ask for a receipt from your taxi driver. Receipts have all the driver and car details on. Handy if you realize you have left your phone or jacket in the cab!

If you plan to pay cash, try to make sure you have small notes rather than AED 100 or AED 200 notes, as drivers will probably not be able to give you change from notes of that size.

UBER

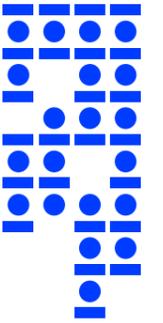
Probably the biggest ride-hailing service in the world. [Uber](#) offers the same range of services you find elsewhere. Cars that come to you, use GPS, the ability to pay direct from the app and a choice of vehicles that cost different amounts depending on the size of the car. It's also good to keep an eye out for regular discount codes sent to users, especially as the base price is a little more than the local taxis.

U-DRIVE

This handy service lets you rent cars by the minute and pick up and drop off the cars from any standard Mawaqif public parking or free parking areas in Abu Dhabi. If you don't want to commit to buying a car or renting one out long term, this scheme could be just what you need. Sign up on the [U-Drive website](#), and download the app to locate, reserve and open a car parked near you.



Cycling on Abu Dhabi Corniche | Image courtesy of DCT



FINDING NEW ACCOMMODATION



Aerial city views | Image courtesy of DCT

Even though company accommodation is provided, you may wish to opt-out and move into a place of your choice. You may find something closer to your school or in another area that suits your lifestyle. In this case, your employer substitutes your rent up to the amount of your housing allowance, which is stated in your employment contract. Please speak to your employer about this for more details.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Abu Dhabi is ranked high among the best cities to live in the region for its quality of life and safety. The same international real estate considerations, such as location, cost (of rent, utilities, maintenance, etc.), condition, property management and amenities, apply when looking for a rental in Abu Dhabi.

It's easy to forget that Abu Dhabi city is in actual fact on an island. Hence residential neighborhoods in Abu Dhabi are categorized as either "[Abu Dhabi island](#)" or "[Abu Dhabi mainland](#)".

There are plenty of "best places to live" for expats based on what you are looking for. Each area or neighborhood of Abu Dhabi has its own appeal and there are plenty of options to choose from!

The main island still has much of its original charm. Buildings such as the Emirates Palace, Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and the more traditional low-rise buildings, wide avenues surrounded by greenery and numerous cultural icons attest to Abu Dhabi's authenticity.



Abu Dhabi's city center is a vibrant collection of shops, shisha bars, malls, five-star hotels and restaurants. The neighborhoods that make up this capital city heartland are home to young singles and families.

Expats who crave the frantic energy of city life will find that downtown is just the ticket; every imaginable amenity is within reach and there are countless opportunities to socialize, entertain and dine out. There are also good school and healthcare options in this part of the city. However, residents will have to sacrifice space and learn to deal with traffic.

Abu Dhabi's mainland areas, such as Al Raha Beach, Khalifa City and Yas Island are becoming increasingly popular. Most of the buildings are new and there is a vast range of types and rents available. Schools and other local facilities (including shopping malls) are developing rapidly. Many of these areas are originally traditional Emirati areas and there is a much greater degree of integration as a result. These areas do not have the charm of Abu Dhabi Island but do tend to have modern facilities and good transport links with schools located within the communities they serve.

ABU DHABI ISLAND



AL KHALIDIYA

Al Khalidiya is a bustling area with a large Western community and offers some of the best apartment living. Here, everything is close by, and residents enjoy city living. Apartments come with superb waterfront views and the Corniche is within walking distance for those who want to visit the popular waterfront.

Parents who consider living in the apartments for rent in Al Khalidiyah will have a plethora of options for schools and nurseries to choose from. For the older kids, there is the American Community School of Abu Dhabi and Al Mashreq Private School. For little ones, the closest nursery is Tiny Dreams, and the well-known British Orchard Nursery is also nearby. There are also various recreational activities that parents can do with their kids here. Beach days at Al Sahil Beach or picnics at Al Khalidiya Park are popular options.

The go-to grocery shopping destination is the Lulu Hypermarket located in central Khalidiyah Mall. There are several supermarkets in Khalidiyah such as Abu Dhabi Co-operative Society and Al Maya. Residents can also pick up day-to-day essentials from one of the many corner shops located around the community.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

AL MARKAZIYA

Residential properties in Al Markaziya include low to high-rise buildings. The fact that tenants have a variety of apartments to choose from makes this community attractive to those looking to settle here.

Known as a key area in Abu Dhabi's busy downtown district, Al Markaziya is home to a selection of malls, offices, schools, hospitals, parks and attractive fountains. It is surrounded by some well-known locations: Union Square to the east and Corniche, Madinat Zayed and Tourist Club Area sharing borders from the north, south and west respectively.

Apart from this, fascinating heritage sites amp up the community's vibe. Al Markaziya is close to many business centers and has access to the beach, public parks and much more.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

AL WAHDA

Al Wahda is slightly further out than Madinat Zayed, the traffic is lighter and parking easier to find. Al Wahdah is a bustling district located in Abu Dhabi's city center. The best thing about the area is its prime location. Every amenity is close to the area, commuting to and from Al Wahdah is also easy. This densely populated locality in the capital city stands out amongst other real estate properties due to its affordability. At a glance, one will find a cluster of buildings in the area, many of which feature modern infrastructure.

Al Wahdah is best known for Al Wahda Sports Club, Al Nahyan Stadium and Al Wahda Mall. This community is home to several mid and high-rise buildings along with a few residential villas. It offers a buzzing lifestyle to its residents because of its central location in the capital city. Apart from residential properties, Al Wahdah is home to numerous commercial properties, restaurants, shops and cafes.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

AL KARAMAH

Al Karamah is located in the heart of the city and is close to Abu Dhabi's business hubs. Yet, Al Karamah is quiet, with villa compounds that house a large expat community.

The compounds come complete with gyms, swimming pools, and additional facilities. Standalone villas and low-rise apartments are also available. Al Karamah also boasts numerous schools and nurseries.

Al Wahda Mall is just a few minutes away. There are also many retail shops, restaurants, and grocery shops dotted around the area, so you won't have to worry about long commutes; you can get everything you need in one place.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.



Overlooking Reem Island | Image courtesy of DCT

AL BATEEN

Close to the gulf and filled with landscaped gardens, this community is just minutes away from restaurants, bars and hotels.

Surrounded by lush greenery and sea views, Al Bateen features a mix of stylish properties including villas and apartments.

With a number of amenities available, the neighborhood proves to be well-integrated and sustainable. It is, indeed, a coveted location for renting luxury apartments in Abu Dhabi.

Home to the island city's main fishing ports, Al Bateen has earned a strong maritime identity due to its seafaring traditions that thrive on the channel between the mainland and the harbored land. The area is home to Al Bateen Palace, one of the residences of the ruler of Abu Dhabi. Besides tons of entertainment places, art galleries, the beach, restaurants and hotels, there is the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC). Therefore, it is an active community with people flocking in often for work or leisure.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

AL MUSHRIF

Al Mushrif is a quiet suburban area perfect for family living. Living here, you would never know that the high-rise buildings are so close. It is also in close proximity to some of the best schools in Abu Dhabi and has grocery shops dotted all around.

Al Mushrif is located in the city's center, making it ideal for working parents too. It is also home to the Mushrif Palace and the Umm Al Emarat Park which is a great place to visit over the weekend for a picnic with the whole family. Residents can also get some retail therapy at the Mushrif Mall which is located close by.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.



Abu Dhabi Corniche city views| Image courtesy of DCT

AL MUROOR

Al Muroor is a mixed-use community with affordable mid and high-rise apartment towers and decently priced villas close to good schools. This makes Al Muroor a family-oriented neighborhood, while it is popular with singles, expats, and youngsters.

Al Muroor is conveniently connected to the main road network and the area is generously loaded with restaurants, shops, schools, and healthcare facilities.

The Health and Fitness Center and the Equestrian club are both in the area – perks for expats who want easy access to a gym or swimming pool. These sports clubs also offer activities, such as tennis, squash and martial arts lessons.

The Corniche is within walking distance and offers a great stretch for anyone keen to go running or cycling. This part of Abu Dhabi is also quite green, making it ideal for picnics and outdoor activities.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

REEM ISLAND & AL MARYAH ISLAND

Adjacent to each other, these 2 islands allow you to experience the city at its most dynamic. They feature a cluster of high-rises with pedestrian-friendly walkways and waterfront views.

The apartments for rent come with luxurious amenities and state-of-the-art facilities making it one of the best places to live in Abu Dhabi for those who are looking for a modern lifestyle. You would also be centrally located with quick access to Galleria Mall and the Abu Dhabi Global Market Square, home to various blue-chip companies as well as local, regional and international institutions.

Parents can choose from any of the reputable schools on Al Reem Island, which include Repton and Mosaic Nursery. All these factors combined make it the best place for families in Abu Dhabi.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.



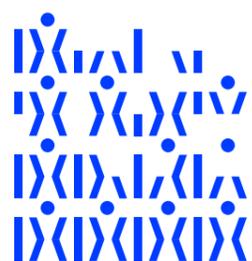
Reem island embraced by clouds| Image courtesy of DCT

SAADIYAT ISLAND

Saadiyat Island has become the new go-to area for those wanting to live close to Abu Dhabi island and all its charms, but in modern housing. It is perfect for culture vultures who enjoy art fairs, museums and gorgeous architecture, set on the backdrop of the beautiful blue waters of the beach. Al Saadiyat is close to the numerous cultural developments on the island, including NYU Abu Dhabi, the Guggenheim and Louvre Abu Dhabi.

The upscale neighborhood is home to a mix of expats. While the general perception is that the island is a villa community, several low-rise apartment buildings offer residents all the luxuries of villa living but are more suited to couples and young families. Don't expect this housing to be cheap, but a variety of accommodation is available, and good deals can be found.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.



A relaxing afternoon on Saadiyat Beach| Image courtesy of DCT

ABU DHABI MAINLAND



AL RAHA

Al Raha is a mixed-use development and a popular leisure destination in Abu Dhabi and a self-contained city.

It has two precincts, Al Raha Beach and Al Raha Gardens. Among the two, Al Raha Beach is towards the shoreline on a public beach along Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Street, E10 connecting the capital to Dubai.

Most importantly, it is one of the popular areas to rent luxury apartments.

There are three main sub-communities within Al Raha Beach: Al Bandar, Al Muneera and Al Zeina. Offering luxury amenities and a rich community lifestyle leads the area to be one of the most popular in Abu Dhabi.

The area is also home to the top-favorite tourist attraction, Al Raha Beach Hotel. It offers a balanced lifestyle to those seeking an upscale community that's complete with entertainment, culture and world-class amenities.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

KHALIFA CITY

Originally consisting of Khalifa City A and Khalifa City B, the residential areas are commonly known as Khalifa City and Shakhbout City. It's easy to see that living in this area is a popular option, because it is located along the highway to Dubai.

This suburb is known for housing the prominent head offices of Etihad Airways, which can be seen from both sides of the highway when driving into Abu Dhabi from Dubai. Moreover, Khalifa City A is famous for housing the Abu Dhabi Golf Club and Al Forsan International Sports Resort, both huge attractions to investors and renters alike.

Living in this area is a popular choice due to the number of top schools and also because the city is home to what is locally known as pink shops; where you can find supermarkets and other amenities.

Houses are well spaced. While rental prices are rising, it's still possible to get good deals on villa rentals. Streets are quiet and parking spaces and taxis are plentiful. The only downside is that it takes roughly 40 minutes to get to town by car.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.



Family afternoon fun| Image courtesy of DCT

YAS ISLAND

The Yas Island life is perfect for people who like to paint the town red. Easily recognizable because of the impressive Yas Marina, Ferrari World and the W Hotel, the island is a haven for tourists, renters and investors in Abu Dhabi. This man-made island is, in fact, a popular favorite for renting luxury villas.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

Living on Yas Island is an experience unlike any other - the area is a hot spot of activity brimming with trendy restaurants, clubs and hotels.



MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED CITY (MBZ)

The MBZ development is amongst the newer family-friendly areas in Abu Dhabi, which feature some amazing villas equipped with the best facilities and amenities.

Mohammed Bin Zayed City allows you to enjoy a peaceful environment that is far away from the noise of an urban neighborhood, and since it is more on the outskirts, you won't have to worry about traffic and cars zipping in front of your home, providing a safe haven for families with kids.

The villas for rent in Mohammed Bin Zayed City are the most affordable villas for families in Abu Dhabi and are close to some amazing schools such as The Cambridge High School.

[Click here](#) for more information about this area and indicative rent rates.

SEARCHING FOR A PROPERTY

You can search for available accommodation using local newspapers and magazines, or through registered real estate brokers (agents) or through private property websites. You can also find properties rented directly from the owner.

Related links: [Search for a property in Abu Dhabi](#)

[Mybayut](#)

[Betterhomes](#)

[Property Finder](#)

[Houza](#)

RENT RATES

You will find the rents vary and depend on the location and size of the property. It's pretty common to pay a year's rent in one payment or multiple payments can be negotiated with the broker or landlord. In addition, some brokers may require a commission fee, up to 5% of the total amount of rent.

To secure a lease contract, you need to provide:

- * Passport copy
- * Emirates ID card
- * Valid residence visa
- * Post-dated cheques to cover payments for rental period

REGISTERING LEASE AGREEMENTS

Lease agreements between landlords and tenants must be registered in the Tawtheeq system. Once the lease contract has been registered, a housing fee (3% of the annual rent value) will be charged in equal installments across 12 months. This amount will be added to the tenant's monthly water and electricity bill.

Once the lease agreement is registered in Tawtheeq, it is compulsory to connect the utility services such as: water, electricity and gas (please refer to the next section) and telecommunications services (see the previous section for more information).

CONNECTING UTILITIES

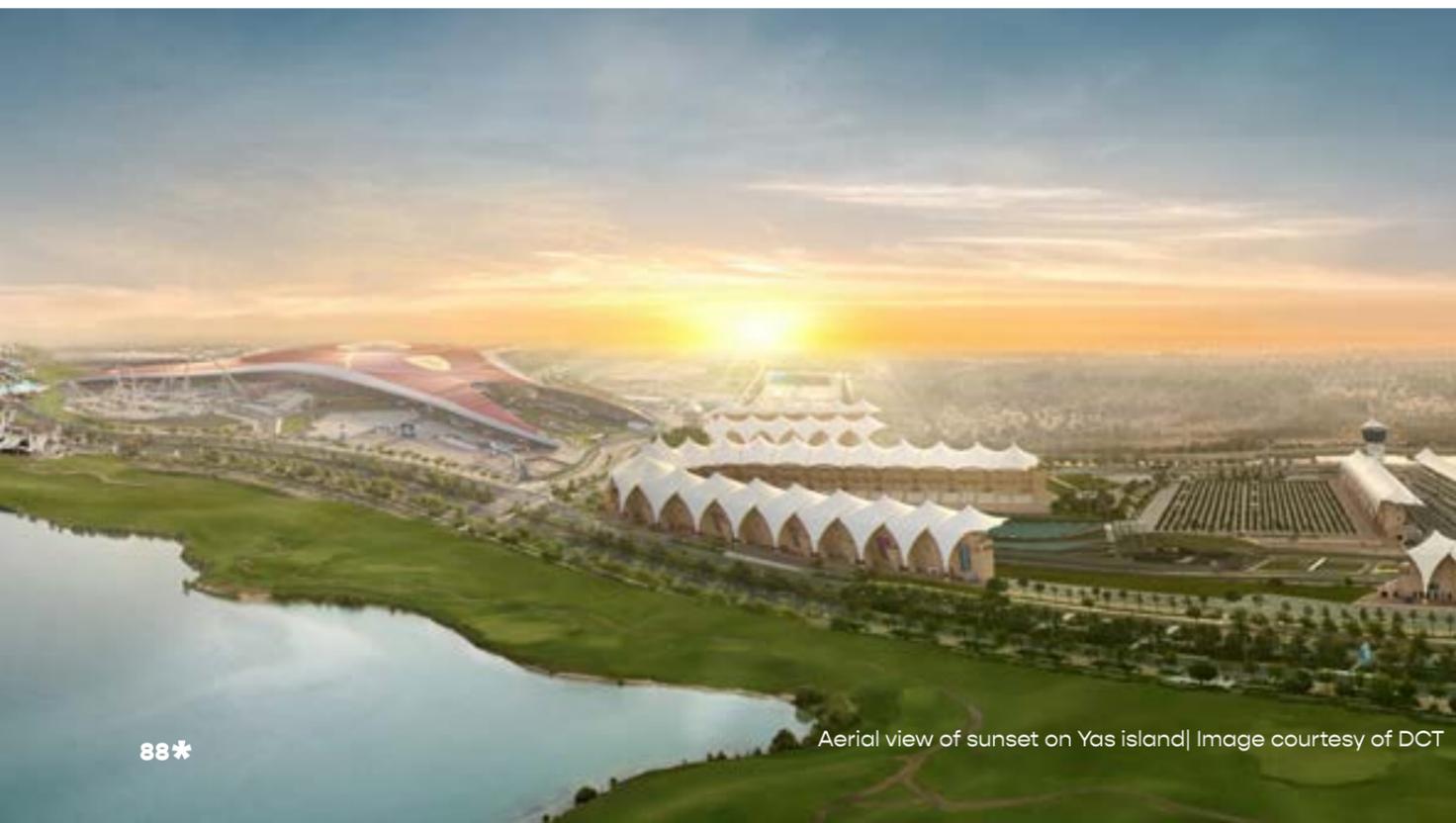
The Abu Dhabi Distribution Company is responsible for providing public utility services in Abu Dhabi city and its surroundings. To connect water and electricity services, you must apply through the website.

You need to provide:

- * Passport copy
- * Emirates ID card
- * Tenancy contract
- * Account closing letter (from the previous tenant for the property you are moving into)

You can find more details and information in the [ADDC moving in guide](#).

You may also need to register with one of the local cooling (A/C) and/or residential gas providers. Please ask your landlord if any extra services are needed for your chosen property and which company is responsible. These could include, but are not limited to [Tasleem](#), [Tabreed](#), [Royal Gas](#), etc.



EXPLORING ABU DHABI



Al Ain Museum| Image courtesy of DCT

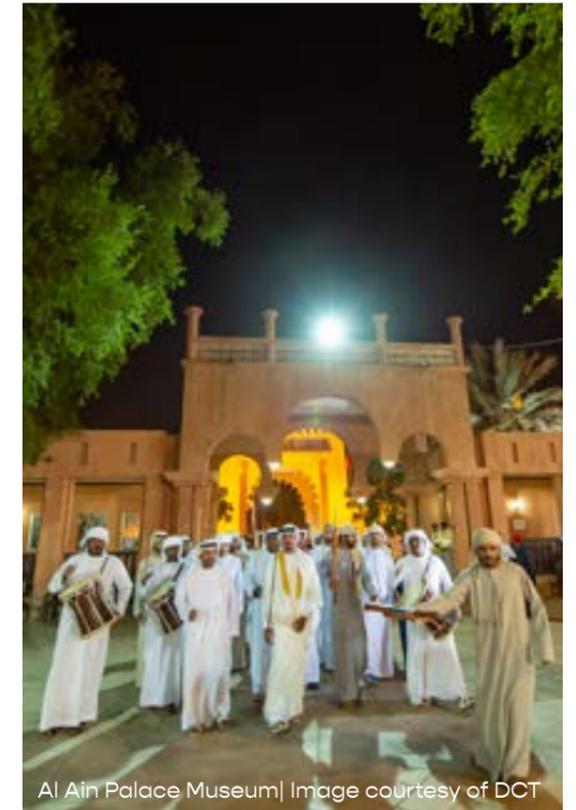
HISTORICAL & CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

AL AIN PALACE MUSEUM

Qasr Al Ain or Al Ain Palace is one of the best-reinstated forts in Abu Dhabi and an important historical site in the UAE. It was home to the Founding Father of the UAE and the country's first president, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, who lived here with his family until 1966, the family later moved to Abu Dhabi.

Inside the museum, the palace and private residence provide insights into the lives and culture of the ruling family and the community until the country's transformation after the discovery of petroleum. The Bedouin-style architecture (Bedouins are the nomadic Arab people from the region) dates back to 1937. The structure was converted into a museum in 1998 as a key cultural and tourist attraction. The museum opened its doors to visitors in 2001 and continues to celebrate the UAE's history, preserving its links to the past, present and future.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Al Ain Palace Museum| Image courtesy of DCT

AL AIN MUSEUM

History buffs will fall in love with this charming museum that tells the story of the UAE's [ancient history](#). This is the oldest museum in the UAE, established in 1969 under the leadership of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founder of the UAE and affectionately known as Father of the Nation. Built to chart the history of [Al Ain](#) from the Stone Age through to the foundation of the UAE in 1971, the museum houses artifacts recovered from the many archaeological sites scattered across the region, including flint tools and arrowheads dating back to the sixth millennium BCE.

Divided into three main sections – Archaeology, Ethnography and Gifts – Al Ain Museum offers insights into the local traditions and culture that have defined the region.

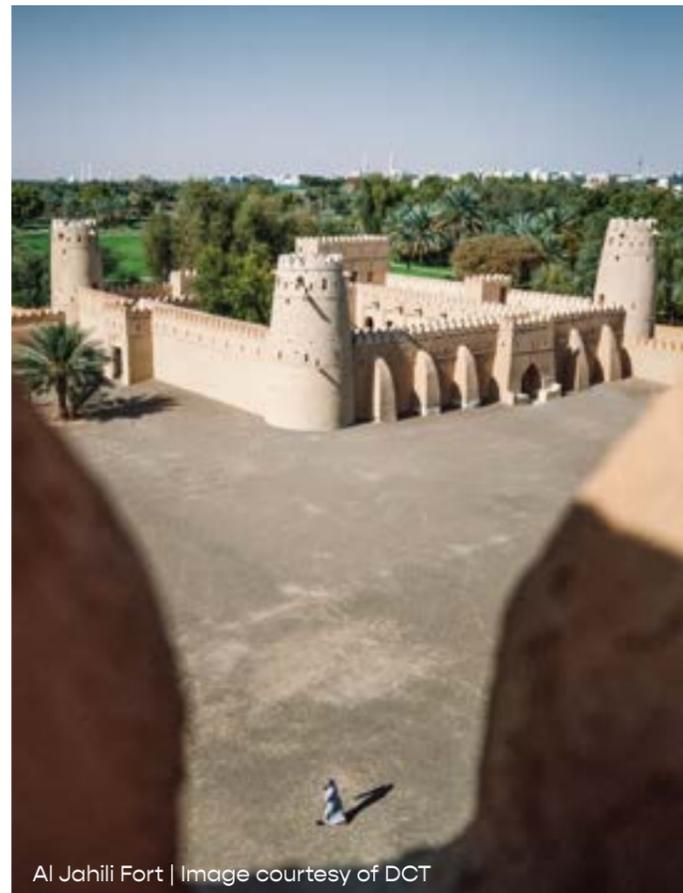
[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

AL JAHILI FORT

Al Jahili is one of the largest forts in the UAE, built in the 1890s on the orders of Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa Al Nahyan, also known as Zayed the First, as the home to members of the ruling Al Nahyan family. Since opening in 2008, Al Jahili Fort – set in Abu Dhabi's lush garden city of [Al Ain](#), about an hour and a half away from the capital – has been a focal point of activities associated with the philosophy, culture and heritage of Abu Dhabi.

It houses a permanent exhibition devoted to Sir Wilfred Thesiger, the intrepid explorer, travel writer and photographer who, with his Emirati and Omani companions, crossed the world's largest sand mass, the Empty Quarter (Rub' al Khali), twice in the 1940s. Al Jahili Fort is also home to a temporary exhibition gallery. Surrounded by a lush park, this enchanting fort won the prestigious Terra Award for Internal Design and Layout in 2016.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



AL REEF HANDICRAFTS TRAINING CENTER

Immerse yourself in UAE heritage at the Al Ain Sportplex. You can learn to make traditional handicrafts in a welcoming space that encourages residents and visiting travelers alike. Training sessions are held by specialized staff who are on hand to answer any questions. It's recommended to register before attending to ensure a space.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

AL QATTARA ARTS CENTRE

Opened in 2011, Al Qattara Arts Centre was developed around the historic Bayt Bin Ati al-Darmaki fort, also known as the Al Qattara Fort. Situated in [Al Ain](#), this traditional mud-brick tower and house is located on a mound overlooking the date-palm gardens of Qattara Oasis, which it was built to protect.

Showcasing carefully restored traditional local architecture, the center aims to provide a family-friendly venue where arts and culture can be studied, practiced and developed by the entire UAE community and visiting travelers.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



BAIT AL OUD

If you love music, you'll enjoy this place which plays a key role in preserving and sharing Arabic musical instruments. It is dedicated to teaching the oud, a short-neck, lute-type, pear-shaped stringed instrument. The oud is thought to date back to the Akkadian Empire in ancient Mesopotamia, which is now modern-day Iraq.

Bait Al Oud is a center of both teaching and research. It offers music lessons and courses, continuing the tradition of crafting ouds by hand and outreach programs to spread awareness and appreciation of the oud and other Arabic musical instruments.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



EMIRATES NATIONAL AUTO MUSEUM

Head to this gem if you're looking for a quirky place to take some impressive photographs for your Instagram account. A great place to stop on the way to or from Liwa, and some 45 kilometers south of Abu Dhabi city, this 'pyramid' houses around 200 cars belonging to His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Hamdan Al Nahyan.

You'll find an impressive collection of off-road vehicles and classic American cars, the Sheikh's Mercedes rainbow collection and the world's largest truck. Some of the vehicles have even featured on the BBC television program, Top Gear.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

MIRAJ ISLAMIC CENTRE

This fascinating center is home to an extensive collection of museum-like displays featuring Islamic art pieces from Egypt, Syria, Iran, India, Iraq, Kashmir and Russia. Displays include meticulously hand-woven pictorial and bejeweled carpets, silk textiles and royal robes, jewelry, jewel-encrusted ceremonial objects, finely crafted weapons, marble pieces, Arabic calligraphy-engraved vases and miniature paintings.

A stunning, world-class museum, this marina-side center features a rooftop café with panoramic views of the iconic Emirates Palace hotel and the beautiful waters of the gleaming Arabian Gulf. The center and its café are open daily from 9am to 6pm and entry is free.

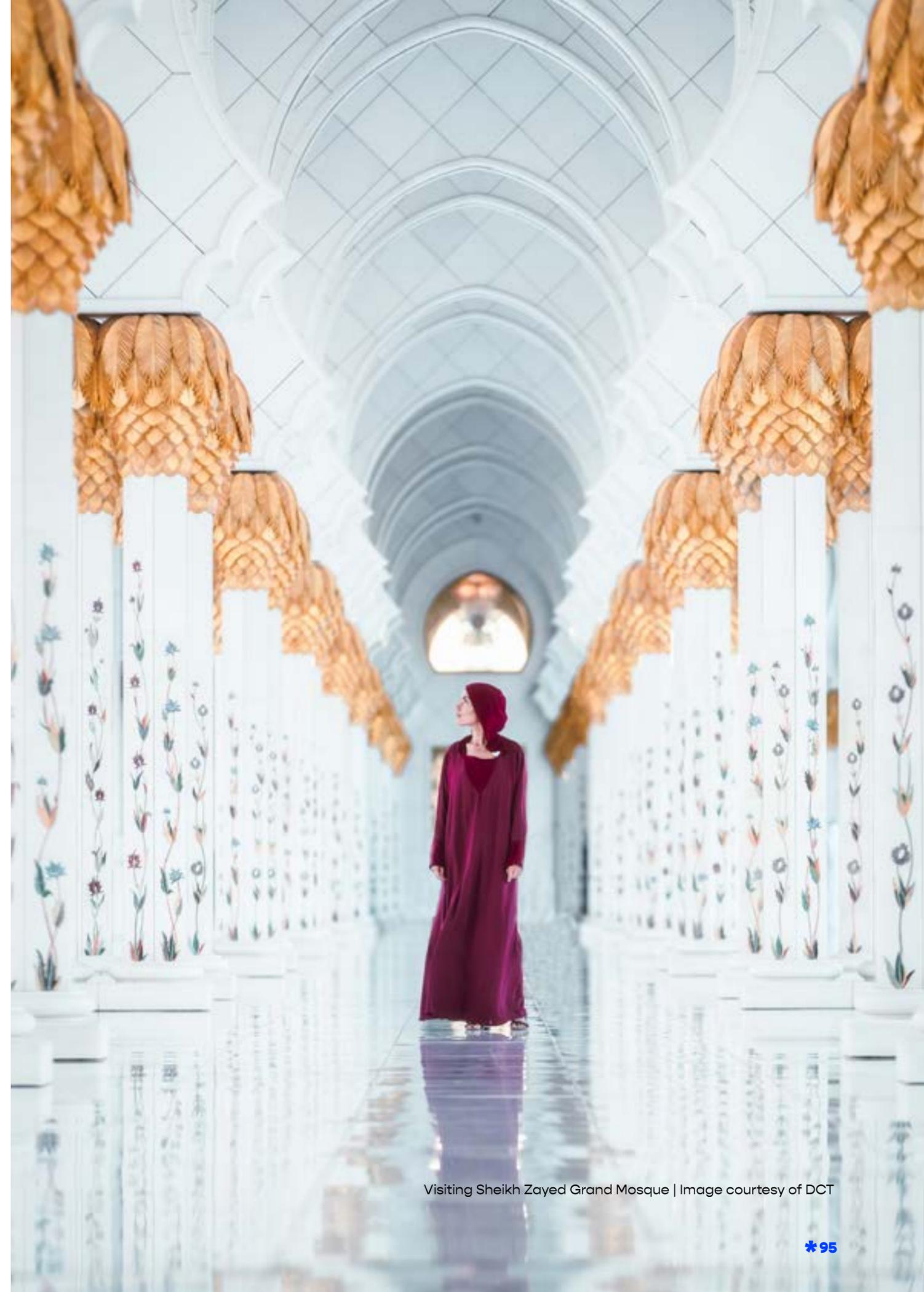
[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

SHEIKH ZAYED GRAND MOSQUE

Sheikh Zayed Grand mosque is one of the world's largest captures the unique interactions between Islam and other world cultures. Take a guided tour and learn all about this this spectacular and inspiring landmark. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Founder of the UAE, had a specific vision for this mosque: to incorporate architectural styles from different Muslim civilizations and celebrate cultural diversity by creating a truly welcoming and inspirational haven in its foundation.

The welcoming mosque's open-door policy encourages visitors from around the world to witness its beauty and gain a deeper understanding of the emirate's cultural beliefs in a space that encourages an open dialogue. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque can welcome up to 55,000 worshippers and visitors every day. Completed in just over a decade, the mosque was built to embody Islam's central message of peace and tolerance and welcome people of all beliefs.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Visiting Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque | Image courtesy of DCT

SHEIKH ZAYED MAJLIS AT AL AIN OASIS HOSPITAL

Learn about the history of [Al Ain](#) and the start of modern healthcare in the UAE. The Oasis Hospital played a vital role in the history of Abu Dhabi, particularly in Al Ain. Founded by doctors Pat and Marian Kennedy, who were invited to Al Ain in 1960 by Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan and his brother Sheikh Shakhbut. During that time, the mortality rate in the region was quite high and the population was in decline. The Kennedy's team provided the first modern medical care program for the region, focusing on improving obstetric and pediatric care.

A rare collection of photos on display tells a vivid story of how Al Ain has progressed through the ages. Learn about the challenges people faced and the vast difference between what the region looks like now versus 50 years ago.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

UAE CURRENCY MUSEUM

This exhibition explains the history of currency in the region. Opened in 2013 to mark 40 years of the UAE Central Bank, the UAE Currency Museum occupies part of the Central Bank's headquarters in Abu Dhabi. Learn about the Dirham's introduction in 1973 when it became the official national currency and explore exhibits that date back to long before the nation's union in 1971.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

QARYAT AL TORATH HERITAGE VILLAGE

Nestled in the Ain Al Fayda district, the family-friendly Qaryat Al Torath Heritage Village features 32 souk (market) stalls – a fantastic place to buy traditional Emirati handicrafts and food.

Visitors can watch Bedouin (nomadic Arab people) women at work creating beautiful craft pieces while also exploring traditional clothing, spices, perfumes, date palm products and accessories. Sample authentic Emirati fare from several kitchens selling traditional tea, Arabic dishes and moreish sweets. If you're on a diet, we suggest you ditch it while you're here!

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Qasr Al Watan | Image courtesy of DCT

QASR AL WATAN

Qasr Al Watan is a working Presidential palace and a majestic cultural landmark. Step inside and discover the rich legacy of knowledge and tradition that has shaped the UAE. One of the palace's most impressive attractions is the family-friendly Palace In Motion event. This spectacular light and sound show celebrates the UAE's journey in three breathtaking acts. You can catch them in front of the main palace every 30 minutes after sundown. Timings are subject to change.

The palace places a strong emphasis on learning and knowledge sharing. Visitors can learn about the formation of the UAE, the country's governing traditions and values. The palace also houses the Qasr Al Watan Library and House of Knowledge, where history, culture buffs and scholars, can explore a collection of books, manuscripts and other resources about the UAE to learn about the nation's progressive journey.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

WAHAT AL KARAMA

Located directly opposite Abu Dhabi's world-famous [Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque](#), Wahat Al Karama is a timeless tribute that honors the Emirati martyrs who sacrificed their lives in service of the country. Wahat Al Karama is home to a permanent memorial commemorating the UAE's heroes, including soldiers, police, diplomats and civilians, since 1971.

An imposing public art structure made up of 31 massive leaning tablets clad in aluminum, the symbolism behind the Memorial is clear. Each tablet leans against the other, portraying the unity, solidarity and mutual support that bind the leadership of the UAE with its citizens, residents and the servicemen and women who protect them.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

ZAYED CENTRE

This museum, housed in an Emirati heritage-style village complete with camels, is an incredible homage to the man who shaped the nation. A photo gallery of Sheikh Zayed and many visiting regional and international royalty and dignitaries line the museum's walls, which is also full of personal memorabilia such as his favorite hunting rifles.

Taking center stage are the late President's vehicles - which he often drove through the city without a bodyguard - and gifts he received from all over the world, including taxidermied lions and cheetahs.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Wahat Al Karama | Image courtesy of DCT

ICONIC BUILDINGS



Al Dar HQ | Image courtesy of DCT

ALDAR HQ

Thanks to its striking circular design, visual impact and functionality, the 23-storey, 110 meter-high structure has been named one of the world's most dazzling corporate offices. Set on an elevated peninsula with spectacular city and sea views, this is Arabia's first circular building. It was also awarded Best Futuristic Design at the 2008 Building Exchange Conference, get your camera ready!

[Click here](#) for more images and location map.



Capital Gate, marina view | Image courtesy of DCT

CAPITAL GATE

Drive down Khaleej Al Arabi Street and you'll see a contemporary glass building that rivals the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Capital Gate, developed by [Abu Dhabi Convention and Exhibition Bureau](#), has been certified as the World's Furthest Leaning Manmade Tower by the Guinness World Records. Leaning 18 degrees westwards (that's more than four times that of Pisa's famous tower) the modern, 160-meter, 35-storey tower is definitely worth a photograph.

If you'd rather enjoy stunning views from the inside, head to the modern Andaz Capital Gate hotel, a five-star property situated in the tower.

[Click here](#) for location map.

ETIHAD TOWERS

A dramatic architectural statement on the Abu Dhabi Corniche, this five-tower complex welcomes residents and travelers to live, work, stay, shop and dine in one destination offering stunning panoramic city and Arabian Gulf views. The complex includes three residential towers, one business tower, and the 280-meter tall, five-star Conrad Abu Dhabi Etihad Towers hotel. On the hotel's 74th floor, the [Observation Deck](#) offers some of the city's best views.

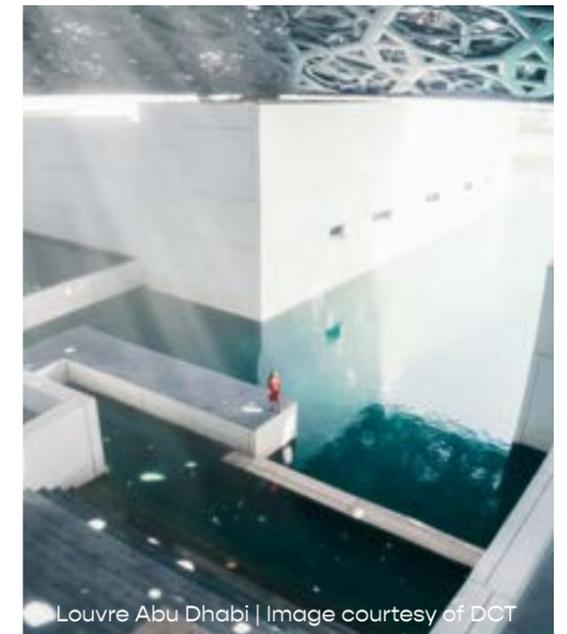
[Click here](#) for more images and location map.



LOUVRE ABU DHABI

Considered one of the modern urban wonders of the world, Louvre Abu Dhabi is the Arab world's first universal museum and a powerful symbol of the United Arab Emirates' ambition and achievement. As one of the premier cultural institutions located in the heart of the Saadiyat Cultural District on [Saadiyat Island](#), this art-lovers' dream displays works of historical, cultural and sociological significance, from ancient times to the contemporary era.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and take a virtual tour.



W ABU DHABI – YAS ISLAND

The only hotel in the world to be located atop a [Grand Prix racetrack](#), the iconic W Abu Dhabi is situated on [Yas Island](#), Abu Dhabi's entertainment destination that's home to several theme parks and adventure parks, the beautiful Yas Beach, the state-of-the-art Yas Marina, award-winning Kyle Phillips-designed Yas Links Abu Dhabi golf course, Yas Marina Circuit, and much more.

[Click here](#) for a virtual tour and location map.

MARINA EYE

One of the most eye-catching features on the Corniche Breakwater, the huge Marina Eye Ferris wheel dominates the skyline in front of one of the capital's favorite shopping centers, [Marina Mall](#).

Offering a fresh perspective of Abu Dhabi and giving those onboard wonderful views of the city and [Corniche](#), the Marina Eye observation wheel has 42 capsules, as well as a selection of luxurious VIP capsules for those wanting to take the ride to new heights.

[Click here](#) for more information such as opening hours and location map.





SHEIKH ZAYED BRIDGE

Designed by British female architect and Pritzker Prize winner, Dame Zaha Hadid, the striking 842m long and 64m high Sheikh Zayed Bridge is said to be the most complex bridge ever built.

Its curved arches evoke undulating sand dunes and it features a dynamic lighting design, with subtle colors that flow across its spine. Its road decks are suspended from symmetrical steel arches, creating a wave-form with a fluid silhouette.

[Click here](#) for location map.



Sheikh Zayed Bridge, designed by Zaha Hadid | Image courtesy of DCT



The Founder's memorial welcome center | Image courtesy of DCT

THE FOUNDER'S MEMORIAL

Spread over 3.3 hectares of beautifully landscaped public space boasting indigenous flora, the memorial features a Sanctuary Garden including seating areas and a traditional falaj (ancient irrigation system), a Heritage Garden rich with medicinal desert plants, and an elevated walkway offering captivating views of the Arabian Gulf, the city's dazzling skyline, and the centrepiece of The Founder's Memorial, The Constellation.

This incredible and monumental public artwork features a three-dimensional portrait of Sheikh Zayed. Housed in a 30-metre-high pavilion, The Constellation contains 1,327 geometric shapes suspended on 1,110 cables to create a series of evolving personal encounters with Sheikh Zayed's image. By night, the suspended shapes shine like stars, a reminder of Sheikh Zayed's role as a guiding light for the UAE and its people. This celestial display evokes the timelessness of Sheikh Zayed's vision, which continues to guide the UAE along a path to progress and prosperity.

[Click here](#) for more information such as opening hours and location map.



The Founder's memorial welcome center | Image courtesy of DCT

NATURE & WILDLIFE

ECO-CENTRE

Situated at the lush [Al Ain Oasis](#), the Eco-Centre is a wonderful place to learn more about the emirate's history. Al Ain Oasis is a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) featuring a traditional falaj (ancient irrigation system) and meandering pathways shaded beneath a thick canopy of 147,000 date palms. It's the perfect place to bring family or friends and see what agriculture in this region has looked like for millennia. If you're keen to try exploring, follow [UAE Trekkers](#) on Instagram.

The Eco-Centre takes this experience to the next level, offering an immersive and curated experience, with interactive installations telling you all about the oases in the area, and educational games explaining their creation.

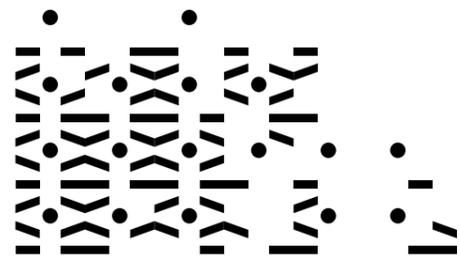
[Click here](#) for a location map.

JEBEL HAFEET

For incredible sunrise and sunset photos, as well as majestic views of Al Ain, head to the top of Jebel Hafit mountain. Rising to a height of 1,249 meters, this skyline-dominating peak is Abu Dhabi's highest, and the UAE's second tallest. The habitat boasts an incredibly rich biodiversity: Some 238 species of invertebrates, which were earlier not known, have been recorded in Abu Dhabi in the last few years. A total of 320 insect species listed under 93 scientific families have so far been recorded in Jebel Hafeet. These comprise of 18 insect orders and a few other invertebrates including scorpions, camel spiders, spiders, pill bugs and centipedes that constitute the major invertebrate fauna. The mountain is also home to the rare Persian horned viper.

Reach the summit of this rocky mountain by car, motorbike or, if you have the stamina, bicycle. Once described as being "among the world's greatest driving roads" once you've reached the top and soaked up the breathtaking views, you can head over to the nearby Mercure Grand Jebel Hafeet Al Ain Hotel for a meal.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



The magnificent winding roads of Jebel Hafeet | Image courtesy of DCT



Al Ain Oasis | Image courtesy of DCT

OASIS GARDEN

The Oasis Garden is in the Al Ain Oasis, a UNESCO World Heritage site comprising three separate sub-gardens that represent the oasis ecosystem.

PRE-OASIS GARDEN

This tier, represents an oasis at the time of its creation, with crops from arid areas and small palm trees providing shade while they grow. Discover sacred plants and desert flora with therapeutic uses, such as henna, indigo and aloe, all cultivated in small agricultural plots.

ORCHARD GARDEN

This second tier comprises trees growing figs, pomegranates, lemons, bananas and olives. From the Mediterranean to Africa and China, civilizations have developed by cultivating these trees.

SYMBOLIC GARDEN

The third plantation tier, comprises tall plant foliage which combats the sun's heat by creating shade, allowing all the other plants to grow in the desert. In hotter oases, the palm tree plays a major role in providing shade.



Stunning desert elevations in Al Dhafra region | Image courtesy of DCT

TEL MOREEB

Situated in Abu Dhabi's majestic [Al Dhafra](#) region, Tel Moreeb is considered by many to be the world's tallest dune, at over 300 meters high, with its 50-degree incline making it a prime destination for motorsports enthusiasts.

Every February, the region's most powerful four-wheel drives, quad bikes and dirt bikes compete in the Moreeb Hill Climb event, part of the Liwa International Festival. It's well worth the trip to Al Dhafra to check this out, especially if you're looking for an authentic Abu Dhabi experience. The large flat area at the dune's base is dedicated to competitors and spectators.

[Click here](#) for a location map.

THEME PARKS & ACTIVITIES

BOUNCE ABU DHABI

Bounce Abu Dhabi in Marina Mall is a spring-loaded urban playground! Explore more than 100 interconnected trampolines housed in huge, vibrant spaces, a giant 40-meter slide, a zip line and the ultimate adrenaline rush with the Quick Drop, a freefall experience. There's also an oversized Super Tramp, two Dodgeball courts, two giant airbags, a large performance area with a 5.5-meter Infinity Wall for aspiring wall runners, a 19-meter fast-track trampoline and five party rooms for birthdays or private events.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Bounce Abu Dhabi | Image courtesy of DCT

CLYMB™

If a day spent free falling and wall climbing appeals to you, you'll love this indoor destination. Clymb™ is home to the world's biggest indoor skydiving flight chamber and the world's tallest indoor climbing wall, both under one roof. This building houses a flight chamber spanning 10 meters wide and 25 meters high. Whether you're a first-time 'flyer' or an expert skydiver, Clymb™ Abu Dhabi's flight instructors ensure a fun and safe experience suitable. Beginners can enjoy gentle climbing options while more advanced climbers can push their limits at The Summyt™, the world's tallest indoor climbing wall, towering 43 meters high.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Clymb at Yas Mall | Image courtesy of DCT

WARNER BROS. WORLD™ ABU DHABI

The world's biggest and fully air-conditioned indoor theme park, Warner Bros World™ Abu Dhabi brings all the legendary characters from this famous studio to life. The theme park offers 29 rides, interactive family-friendly attractions, live entertainment, dining options to suit all tastes, and exclusive shopping outlets.

This nostalgic experience transports you to six magical and immersive worlds made up of action, adventure and eccentricity. Deep dive into Bedrock, Dynamite Gulch, Cartoon Junction, Gotham City, Metropolis and Warner Bros. Plaza, with each of these magical lands featuring its own detailed scenic backdrops and authentically themed restaurants.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi | Image courtesy of DCT

FERRARI WORLD ABU DHABI

Open 365 days a year, the world's first Ferrari-branded theme park showcases more than 20 exhilarating and educational rides and attractions, incredible shopping, and authentic Italian dining experiences.

The Formula Rossa is the world's fastest roller-coaster: Go from 0 to 240km/h in 4.9 seconds, while soaring to heights of 52 meters!



The Flying Aces comes with the world's highest roller-coaster loop. Climb 63 meters at a 51-degree angle. F1 fans will love the Tyre Change Experience, see if you can match the pace of F1™ pit crews. For the brave, the Turbo Track offers an epic zero-gravity fall. Those who enjoy a more relaxed experience will love Bell'Italia, explore a mini Italy in a Ferrari 250 California, circa 1958.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Turbo Track at Ferrari World | Image courtesy of DCT

Hudayriyat island | Image courtesy of DCT



HUDAYRIYAT ISLAND

Hudayriyat Island — a natural haven that a long line of Arabian pearl divers once called home — has quickly become one of the emirate's most thrilling sporting destinations.

It boasts a range of high-end sporting facilities that add fitness-themed fun to its picturesque surroundings while promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

As the perfect place to exercise, have fun, and meet new people, Hudayriyat Leisure and Entertainment District's modern facilities and outdoor attractions make it the perfect destination for friends and families.

[Click here](#) to visit their website and get an overview of the many activities offered.

WADI ADVENTURE

Adrenaline junkies will love Wadi Adventure, a fantastic family-friendly adventure park at the base of the [Jebel Hafit](#) mountain in Al Ain. Home to the Middle East's first man-made white water rafting channels, measuring 1,100 meters in length, it's perfect for rafting and kayaking. Wadi Adventure also has a surfing wall, wakeboarding, swimming pool and splash pool. Action fans will love the park's exhilarating aerial adventure course, including an 18-obstacle, two-level airpark, 1,200-meter long zip line, vertical climb line, and 14-meter high giant swing.

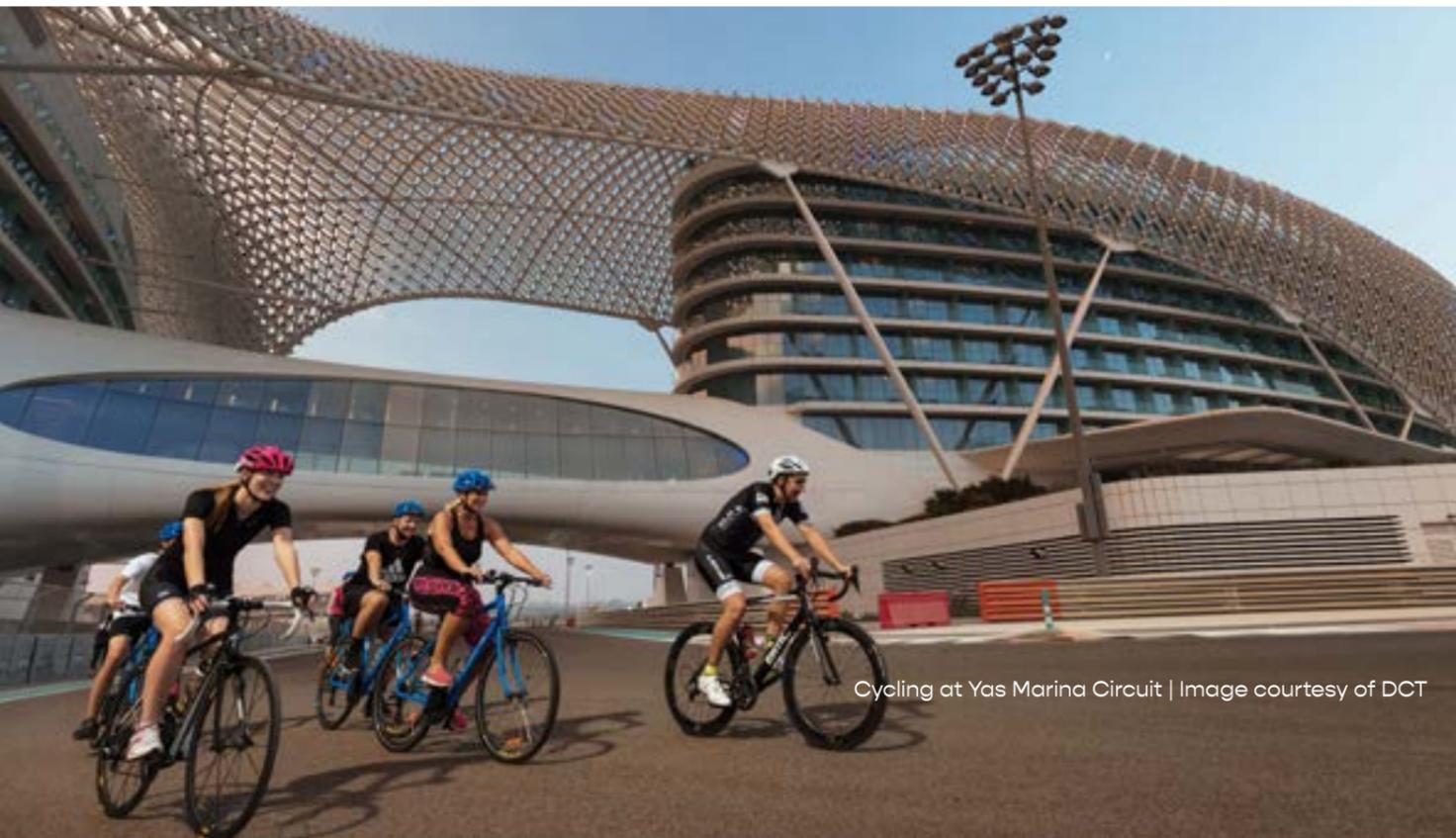
[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

You can find a few more nature and wildlife inspirations in our [sample itinerary suggestions](#).

YAS CYCLES

Created out of a passion for cycling and an opportunity to fulfill the cycling community needs in Abu Dhabi, Yas cycles caters to novices right through to enthusiasts. It provides exclusive and bespoke services, so if you looking to get involved in cycling, definitely pop into one of their five outlets to find out more. They offer exceptional customer service and an impressive range of products. Yas Cycles caters to all levels, families and youngsters.

[Click here](#) for more information.



Cycling at Yas Marina Circuit | Image courtesy of DCT



Yas Links | Image courtesy of DCT

YAS LINKS

Yas Links Abu Dhabi represents the first true Links Golf Course in the Middle East region, designed by Kyle Phillips – one of the world's leading golf course designers.

The Championship Links course is located on the west shores of Yas Island, Abu Dhabi's Island of Entertainment, and offers a luxurious clubhouse, gym, swimming pool, male spa and world-class, floodlit practice ranges plus state of the art Toptracer range technology and Golf Academy.

[Click here](#) for more information.



Yas Links | Image courtesy of DCT



YAS MARINA CIRCUIT

Launched in 2009 to host the Formula 1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, Yas Marina Circuit is still one of the UAE's most epic motorsports, sporting and business venues. Winding its way around the beautiful [Yas Marina](#), this ultramodern racetrack offers a bespoke and captivating racing spectacle, extensive year-round professional and grassroots motorsports, plus other sporting events and experiences. Think kart racing at [Yas Kartzone](#), drag racing at Yas Drag Night, walking, running and cycling as part of the TrainYAS and GoYAS by Daman ActiveLife programs.

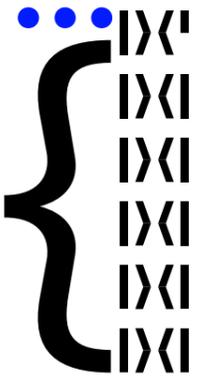
[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.



Yas Marina Circuit | Image courtesy of DCT



Yas Waterworld | Image courtesy of DCT



YAS WATERWORLD ABU DHABI

This amazing park spans 15 football pitches and is packed with over 40 rides, slides and attractions – five of which are one-of-a-kind – you're sure to make lifelong memories here. Try the world-first, largest hydromagnetic-powered, 238-meter long, six-person tornado waterslide, Dawwamma, or check out three-meter waves on Bubble's Barrel, which offers the world's largest surfable sheet wave for flow boards and bodyboards.

[Click here](#) for more information, opening hours and location map.

SAMPLE ITINERARIES

To better get to know your new home turf, the Department of Tourism and Culture (visitabudhabi.ae) has some suggestions and inspirations on how to best spend a couple of hours, an afternoon, a day off or a weekend getaway.

IF YOU'VE ONLY GOT A COUPLE OF HOURS...

Looking for a quick nature stop between school and lesson planning? Try the zoo, falcon hospital or an adventure in the Arabian Gulf. The [Emirates Park Zoo](#) is one of the top places to visit. Admire hundreds of animals – including a 300kg-plus Siberian bear and a majestic pair of white tigers – while staying cool, thanks to a park-wide misting system. To learn more about the UAE's national bird, visit the [Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital](#), a 45-minute drive from the city.

This veterinary and research facility is an award-winning tourism center where you can see the majestic birds swoop through a free-flight aviary. Love submerging yourself in the mysterious depths beneath the sea? [Snorkel or dive](#) in Abu Dhabi's warm waters all year round. Explore wrecks and reefs, and marvel at the emirate's abundant marine life, including spotted eagle rays, stingrays and more. Prefer your head above water? The archipelago is ideal for [kayaking](#) or Stand-up paddleboarding [SUP](#), [sailing](#) or jet skiing, whether you're a beginner or pro.



Snorkel at Sir Baniyas | Image courtesy of DCT

Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital | Image courtesy of DCT



IF YOU'VE GOT AN AFTERNOON...

Got a few hours to explore? Abu Dhabi's mangrove forests are worth meandering on foot, boat or kayak. The indigenous mangroves serve key ecological functions – acting as windbreakers, purifying surrounding water, protecting against tidal surges and removing carbon monoxide from the atmosphere.

Abu Dhabi's mangrove forests are habitats for fascinating land and marine creatures – spot crabs, turtles, herons, flamingos, foxes, gazelle, dolphins and fish – a treasure trove for nature-lovers!



[The Mangrove National Park](#), a biodiversity hotspot making up about 75% of the total mangrove forest area in the UAE, is at the city's edge. Head to luxury hotel [Anantara Eastern Mangroves Abu Dhabi](#) for kayaking, tours and boat cruises, so you can fully appreciate the flora and fauna found in the park's salt marshes, mudflats and algal communities.

Birdwatchers, nature-lovers and photographers will swoon at the [Jubail Mangrove Park](#), the first self-contained educational, nature and leisure destination of its kind in the Emirate. Pack binoculars to spot some of 80-odd avian species, including the 'vulnerable to extinction' greater spotted eagle, from resting nodes, viewpoints, floating platforms, boardwalks or kayaks

Top tip: High tide is the best time to go.

Jubail Mangrove Park | Image courtesy of DCT



IF YOU WANT A DAY OUT...

Head to [Saadiyat Island](#) for sea-side beauty or Al Wathba Fossil Dunes and wetlands for landscapes that look out of this world.

Geology enthusiasts and movie fans will love the eerie formations of the Al Wathba Fossil Dunes, where scenes from [Star Wars: The Force Awakens](#), were filmed.



These wind-whipped ancient structures seem like something from another planet. The area's Al Wathba Wetland Reserve, on the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, was once a coastal salt flat (sabkha) and is now a series of natural and man-made lakes. Walking trails and bird-hides let you discover the reserve's large population of Greater Flamingos, over 250 bird species, 37 plant species and interesting aquatic life. Top tip: There aren't any cafes on site, so bring snacks and refreshments.



Al Wathba Fossil Dunes | Image courtesy of DCT

STAYCATION TIME...

If you fancy a road trip, there are plenty of hotels to choose from. For a trip of a lifetime, head to [Sir Bani Yas Island](#), the largest island off the coast of Abu Dhabi. Famous for wildlife, it scooped the World's Leading Sustainable Tourism Destination award in 2014 and 2018. The late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan turned his private island into a nature reserve in 1977. Thanks to ongoing conservation, the [Arabian Wildlife Park](#) is full of lush plants, birds and free-roaming animals - such as the Arabian Oryx, Somali ostrich, gazelle and giraffes. Experience nature through 4x4 safaris, kayaking, mountain biking, hiking and snorkeling. After all that action, enjoy luxurious accommodation at one of three five-star Anantara retreats on the island.



Horseback riding at Sir Baniyas Island | Image courtesy of DCT

[Saadiyat Island](#), the world-class leisure, residential, business and cultural hub is just a seven-minute drive from downtown Abu Dhabi. The eco island's beaches are part of protected habitat, and its waters and green spaces offer plenty of outdoor activities. There's something for everyone at the pristine [Saadiyat Beach](#) and nearby [Saadiyat Beach Club](#). The dunes here are protected, as are the critically endangered Hawksbill turtles use them as their nesting ground.

Thanks to the Hawksbill Turtle Conservation Program, some 650 eggs have hatched successfully on Saadiyat since 2010.



Keep an eye out for dolphins frolicking in the bay.

Golfers will adore the stunning sea views from the [Saadiyat Beach Golf Club](#). This Gary-Player-designed masterpiece respectfully harnesses the natural splendor of Saadiyat Island's magnificent beaches for a memorable playing experience.



Saadiyat Beach Club | Image courtesy of DCT



DISCOVER THE DESERT...

If the magical desert calls to your nature-loving soul, head to the Rub' al Khali, also known as the [Empty Quarter](#). The epic landscapes here have formed the backdrop to many a film, including *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. The desert's harsh, hypnotic terrain is home to hardy creatures and plants that have long fascinated scientists and explorers. The Ghaf tree, for instance, grows roots as long as 30 meters to reach waters beneath the sand, while its branches are where Desert Eagle Owls roost and breed. Desert animals include the Sand Cat, Rupell's Fox, Sand Gazelle and Arabian Oryx.

The best way to experience the desert is from a comfortable base. Check out the magnificent [Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara](#) which offers [falconry](#) and [Saluki](#) shows. Falconry is a traditional Emirati sport passed down the generations for 4,000 years and was once a form of hunting in a resource-scarce land. Guided by their Bedouin (desert nomad) handlers, falcons hunted together with Salukis – one of the oldest known breeds of domesticated dog, which has been a hunting and guard dog for the desert people of the Arabian Peninsula for 5,000 years.



Qasr Al Sarab | Image courtesy of DCT



ENJOY AN ECO-CONSCIOUS AFRICAN SAFARI (AND A DINNER WITH LIONS)...

Another must-see destination is the [Al Ain Zoo](#), set in Abu Dhabi's lush garden city of Al Ain, about one and a half hours away from the capital. Magnificently positioned against the imposing backdrop of Jebel Hafit, Abu Dhabi's tallest peak, the Al Ain Safari is situated in an incredible 217-hectare park carefully crafted out of the desert environment. It's home to African animals – including lions, white rhinos, zebra and wildebeest – and around 2,500 plants. Safari options include Emirati tour guides who have extensive knowledge of the local fauna and flora. Enjoy "Dinner with the Lions" for a sumptuous meal on the edge of the park's lion territory. If you'd like to stay nearby, consider Jebel Hafit Desert Park. It offers camping for all budgets, from DIY to glamping under the stars.



Al Ain Zoo | Image courtesy of DCT

EXPLORING THE UAE



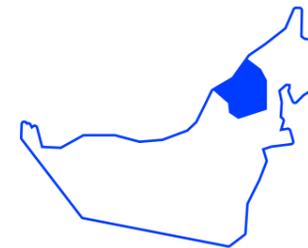
DUBAI

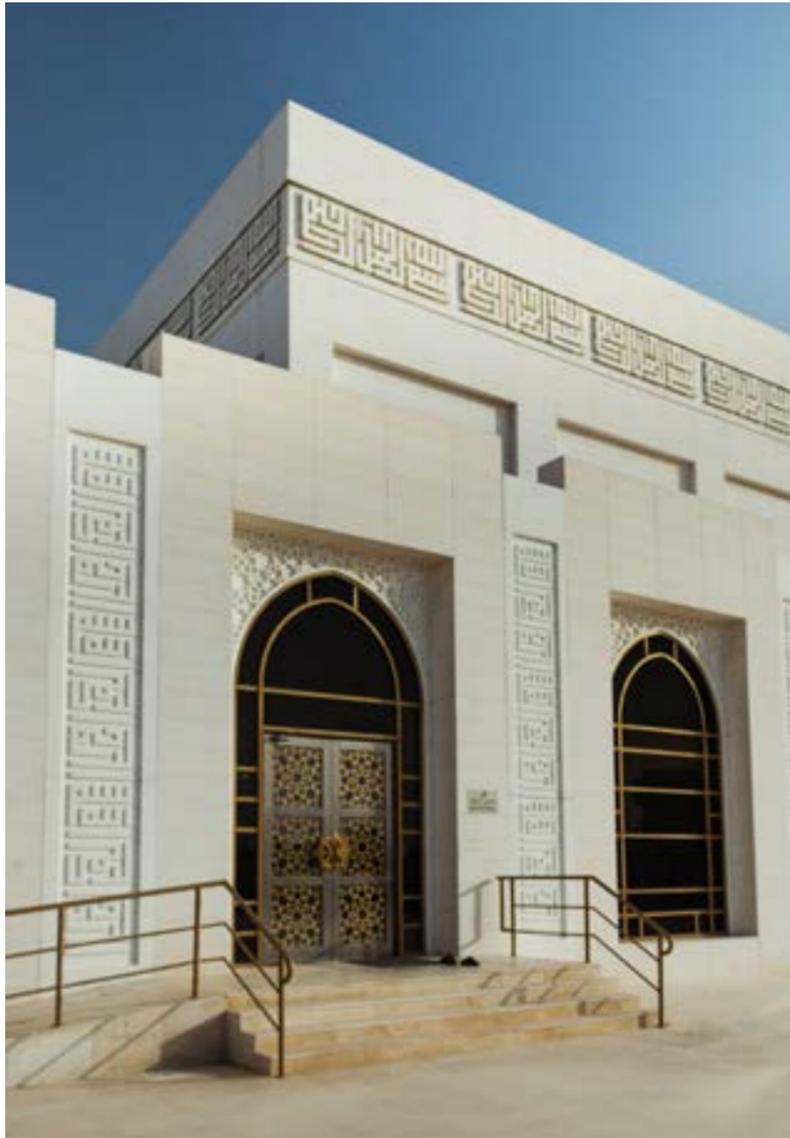
“Discover Dubai – a city and emirate where anything is possible. Once a small fishing village in the Arabian Gulf, Dubai is today one of the world’s most cosmopolitan cities.”

Dubai is one of the most visited destinations in the world and home to a number of record-breakers, from the world’s tallest tower Burj Khalifa to the busiest international airport on the planet. Home to nearly 200 nationalities, Dubai lives and breathes a sense of possibility and innovation. And with an outstanding coastline, beautiful desert and magnificent cityscapes, memories are just waiting to be made.

Yet for all the city’s accolades, there is so much more to explore. Discover the warm hospitality, rich culinary heritage and proud traditions that make up the city’s vibrant culture.

[Click here](#) to check out upcoming events, find out what to see and do, where to dine and to take advantage of the latest deals and discounts.



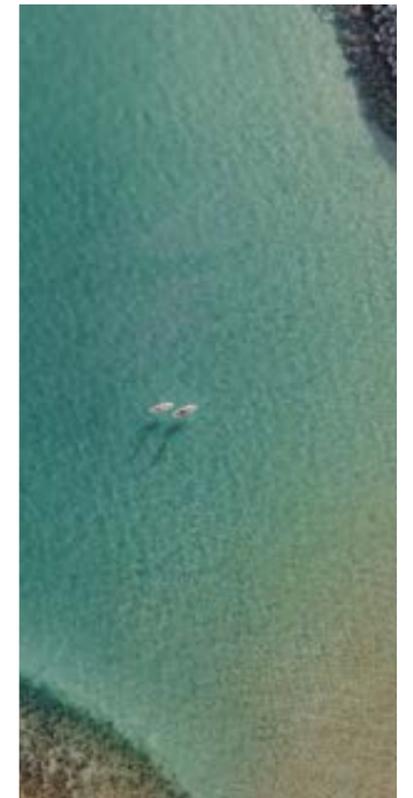
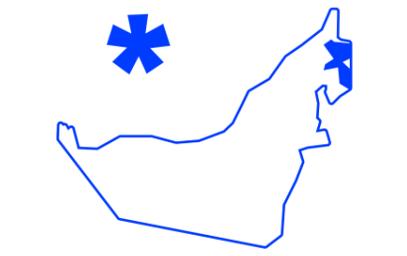


FUJAIRAH

Fujairah is the only emirate on the eastern side of the UAE, along the Gulf of Oman (part of the Indian Ocean) while the other six emirates are along the Arabian Gulf. The emirate derives its name from a spring of water located beneath one of the mountains. The Hajar mountain range that divides the UAE in two, from Ras Al Khaimah to Al Ain, has kept Fujairah separated from the rest of the UAE.

Sun-kissed beaches, majestic mountain ranges and pleasant weather conditions conspire to present Fujairah as an exotic land, ripe for discovery. Perfect for water sports all year round, you can swim, go yachting, surfing and deep-sea fishing. Fujairah is rightly known as the jewel of Middle East. Its location offers free access to the major shipping routes, making it the pick of ports for entrepreneurs around the world.

[Click here](#) to learn more about its must-see attractions, on- and offshore activities, as well as places to eat and stay.



AJMAN

Ajman is a small, laid-back, sun-drenched destination with white-sand beaches, rolling desert dunes, craggy mountain backdrops and thriving mangrove forests. In Ajman, neighbors still celebrate life together and sincere generosity is evident throughout everyday life. Yet, it is also a modern city where the tradition of welcoming strangers is ancient and ingrained. Guests are offered cardamom-infused coffee and fresh dates, and greetings are often delivered with a hand over the heart.

While its soul evokes a sense of old Arabia, Ajman is a forward-thinking city-state brimming with exciting new leisure developments. So whether you're looking to relax and unwind, or stir your sense of wanderlust and adventure, we know you'll be delighted by what you discover in this small and enchanting emirate.

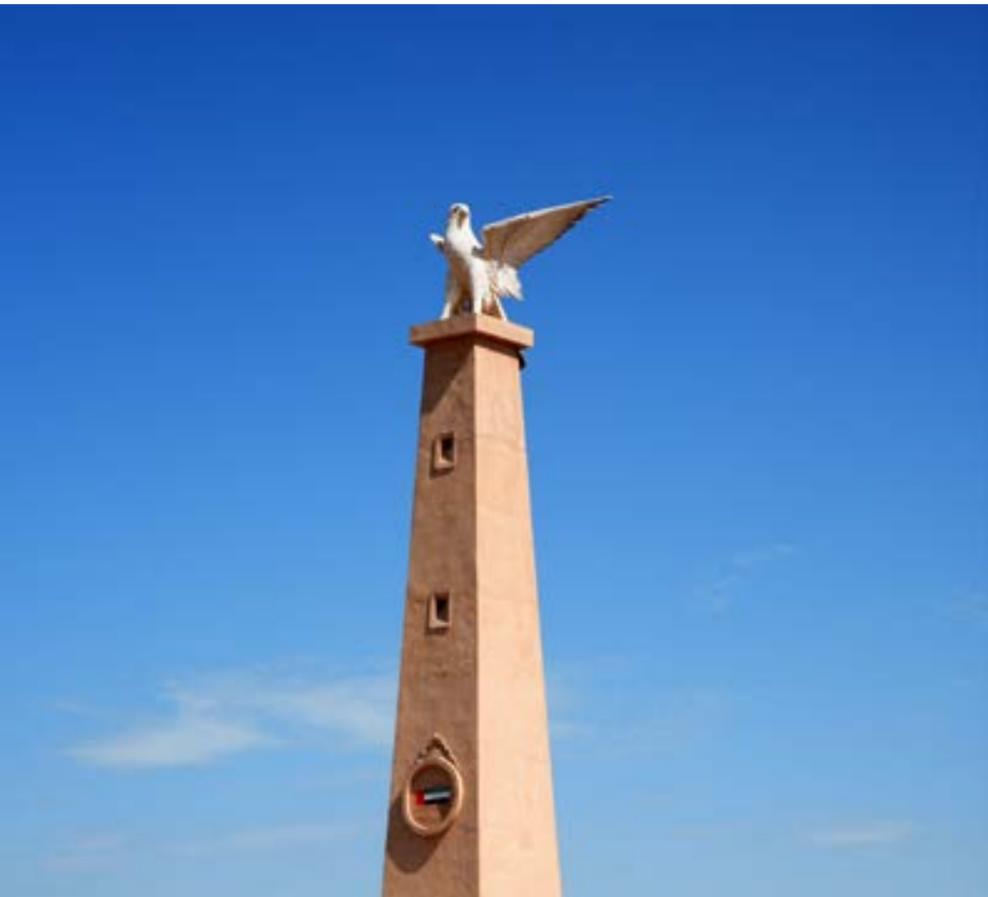
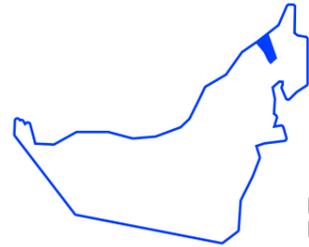
[Click here](#) to explore the emirate of Ajman and its urban, natural and historical sites.

UMM AL QUWAIN

Located between the Ajman and Ras Al Khaimah, UAQ has the smallest population in the country. Its economy is based mainly on fishing, pearl diving, livestock raising, and agriculture. Recently, the Umm Al Quwain government has been developing the area by establishing more roads, buildings, parks and other infrastructure.

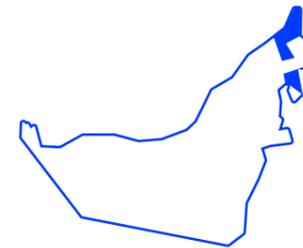
Umm Al Quwain may not be as “urbanized” as other emirates, but that is what makes it special. If you need a thrilling yet serene break from the crowded cities in the UAE, Umm Al Quwain is the place to be! The emirate has plenty of attractions that are especially of interest to nature-lovers. Besides its signature retro vibes, it has several historic attractions and water sports on offer.

[Click here](#) to learn more about places to visit and [check out](#) this list of 10 things to do in Umm Al Quwain.



SHARJAH

Sharjah offers traditional markets (souks), modern shopping malls, heritage sites and museums. Along with the must-do activities in the UAE, like going on a desert safari or taking a dhow cruise, Sharjah hosts several opportunities for adventure, leisure and inspiration. Go shopping in traditional souks, or scuba dive and discover coral rock formations and entire underwater ecosystems off the coast. For trekking, consider going to an archaeological site like Mleiha and delve into the history of the UAE. Or, make the best of Sharjah weather on land with a picnic on the sand, a popular activity in Arab culture.



[Click here](#) for an overview of Sharjah and its activities to find the perfect one for you.

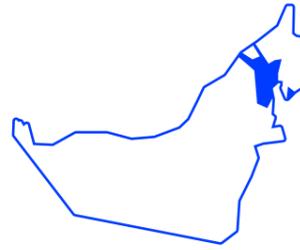


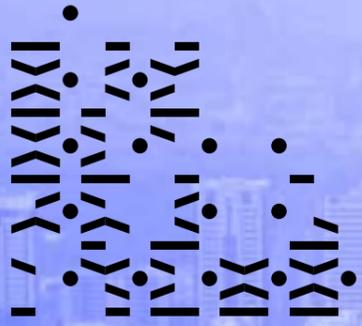
RAS AL KHAIMAH

With over 7,000 years of fascinating history and culture, Ras Al Khaimah (affectionally known as RAK) is the perfect getaway from everyday life. Offering magnificent landscapes, breathtaking coastlines and rich, terracotta desert planes, the emirate has firmly established itself as one of the Middle East's most authentic destinations.

It has 64km of mesmerizing coastline – from white beaches to lush green mangroves, creeks and lagoons. Marvel at endless views of terracotta desert sand and explore spectacular mountain regions with a guide. Inland, there are plenty of other leisure opportunities, from golf and authentic desert camp experiences to mountain adventure – including the world's longest zip line.

[Click here](#) to check out Ras Al Khaimah's many adventures, accommodation and culinary options.





**THANK YOU, AND WELCOME
TO YOUR NEW HOME!**

