



Dubai - City Business Guide

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Overview

Dubai is one of the seven emirates which constitute the United Arab Emirates. It is a place of fascinating contrasts, a distinctive blend of modern city and timeless desert, East and West, old and new. The major part of the Dubai emirate consists of rolling sand dunes lapping the foothills of the arid Hajar mountains in the East. Known in the region as the "city of merchants", Dubai has, for generations, welcomed seafarers and traders to its shores. The city has become the most populous city in the UAE. An estimated one million people live in this city, almost half the population of Abu Dhabi, the capital. Dubai has facilities for sports, shopping, dining and entertainment. Unlike Abu Dhabi or Sharjah, Dubai has only one substantial town. This has enhanced the popularity of a number of oases which provide a welcome break at weekends from the competitive commercial life of the city. The twin oases of Khawanij and Awir, which lie in attractively wooded dune lands, can be reached in 25 minutes from the town center.

Business Etiquette

* In the West, there is a belief in the separation between Church and state. In United Arab Emirates, however, religion has a deep influence on politics, social behaviour, and business. There is a prevailing belief that solutions to all problems can be found in the correct interpretation and application of divine law.

* In the West, status is earned through achievement ; in the Arab world, status is determined by social class.

* It is an asset for all business travellers to try to praise rather than critic others.

In order to do so, you may learn about the basic tenets of Islam, dress well, show respect for elders, and be very accommodating and relaxed at all times.

* Business meetings start smoothly, each one asking a few questions regarding your health, family and journey.

* Eye contact is extremely important when speaking : you may look people straight in the eye.

* Most Western countries have tried to promote equality between men and women. Arab countries, however, believe that the two sexes are completely different entities. Public life is the exclusive domain of men. Women do not participate in the mainstream business world. For a female business traveller, the limitations on permissible behaviour are extremely stringent; even if granted a visa, she may not be able to accomplish very much.

* In the Arabic culture, people tend to speak in a verbose and almost aggressive manner to make a point. Loudness of voice, rising pitch and tone are perceived as signs of sincerity.

Chamber of Commerce

Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry , P.O. Box 1457 Dubai, U.A.E. Tel. +971 4 2280000/2221181

The German Industry & Commerce Office , PO Box 7480 Dubai ; Tel : + 971 4 397 0001

Embassies and Consulates

Most embassies and consulates are situated in Abu Dhabi.

France General Consulate , P.O. Box 3314, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel.: + 971 4 332 9040

Canada Consulate Bank Street Building, Suite 701, Khalid bin Al Waleed Road; Tel. : + 971 4 314 5555

German General Consulate , P.O. BOX 2247, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel.: + 971 4 397 2333

Japan General Consulate , P.O. Box 9336, 28th Floor, Dubai World Trade Centre Building, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel.: + 971 4 331 9191

Netherlands Consulate , P.O. Box 7726 Dubai , United Arab Emirates. Tel: 971 4 3528700

Business Centers

Le Meridien , PO Box 10 001 Airport road. Tel.: + 971 4 282 4040 (toll free)

Mayfair Hotel , Dubai P.O.Box 33315, Rigga, Al Buteen, Deira, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The Metropolitan Palace Hotel , Al Maktoum Street, Dubai. PO BOX 56262, United Arab Emirates. Tel.: + 971 4 227 0000 (toll free)

Jumeira Rotana Hotel P.O. Box 33640, Al Diyafah Road, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel.: + 971 4 345 5888 (toll free)

Sheraton Dubai Hotel & Towers P.O.Box 4250, Baniyas Street, Creek Road, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel.: + 971 4 228 1111 (toll free)

Best Western Avari Dubai Al Riqqa Road, P.O. Box 50400, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ; Tel. : + 971 4 295 6666

Conference and Exhibition Centers

Dubai Conference Bureau Crowne Plaza, Sheikh Zayed Road, P.O. Box 23215, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ; Tel. : + 971 4 331 1111

Dubai World Trade Center , P.O Box 9292. Tel : + 971 4 332 1000

Translation Offices

Eman Translation Services Nasser Square, P.O. Box 27750, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ; Tel. : + 971 4 224 7066

Courier/Messenger Services

Universal Express , P.O. Box 825, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Tel.: + 971 4 352 5050

UPS Sheikh Zayed Road, PO Box 26026, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ; Tel. : + 971 4 339 1939

Internet Connection Place

Al Jalssa Internet C@fé , P.O Box 5128. Tel + 971 4 3515617

Broadway Internet Cafe P.O. Box: 62945. Tel. : + 971 4 398 3335

C@fe Net Al Sharafi Centre, Karama, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ; Tel. : + 971 4 396 9111

Digital Office , Sheikh Zayed Road, Al Moussa Tower I, PO Box 62864, Dubai Tel.: +971 4 3328880

Browse House Internet Cafe Ground Floor, Sky Tower Bldg., Sheikh Zayed Rd. Tel : + 971 4 343 9817

Internet Cafe ,Al Diyafah Street, Satwa, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ; Tel. : + 971 4 345 3441

The BackStreetCafé , Metropolitan Palace Hotel, Al Maktoum Street, Dubai Tel.: +971 4 2276248

Visas & Customs

Travelers to the United Arab Emirates must have passports valid for at least three months after date of entry. Visas are also required by all, except citizens of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and British nationals for stays up to 30 days. Transit passengers with valid onward travel documents who do not leave the airport do not require a visa. Israeli nationals are not allowed to enter into the United Arab Emirates.

Duty-free allowances : 2000 cigarettes, 400 cigars, 2kg of tobacco, 2 litres of spirits and 2 litres of wine (non-Muslim adults only), a reasonable amount of perfume. No customs duty is levied on personal effects entering Dubai. Dubai Duty Free has a sales outlet in the Arrivals Hall (but alcohol may only be purchased on departure).

Phone Information

For domestic calls, all phone numbers have nine digits, including the area code (04 for a local call).

To call Dubai from abroad, dial the access code (00), wait for a new dialling tone, then dial the UAE's country code (971), Dubai's code (4), followed by this with the full nine-digit number.

Emergency Phone Numbers

Police 999

Police of Dubai +971 4 2292222

Ambulance 999

Fire 997

Tips and Rules for Use of Phone in Country

Telephone calls within Dubai city are free. Direct dialling is available to most countries.

The Emirates Telecommunications Corporation provides businessmen, commercial and industrial establishments with radio phone services in aircraft during their flights and with ships while sailing as well as telefax services, double telex systems and mobile telephone services.

Tips and Rules for Use and Rental of Mobile Phones

GSM services are available and the mobile phone code within the UAE is 050. 'Speak Easy' is a GSM mobile service for those visitors and tourists who cannot use their own mobile phones in the UAE. You can either buy a new mobile phone and purchase a temporary SIM card or use your own handset with a temporary card.

Money

The currency in United Arab Emirates is the UAE Dirham (Dh).

A Dirham = 100 fils, 1 Dirham = 0.25€

Notes are in denominations of Dh1000, 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of Dh1, and 50, 25, 10, 5 and 1 fils.

Most banks, hotels and legal moneychangers will handle the exchange of foreign currency. Banks offer the best rates.

American Express, Diners Club, Visa and MasterCard and Travellers Cheques are widely accepted.

The import and export of both local and foreign currency are unrestricted.

Tipping

Tipping is not a widely established practice in the UAE, as restaurants prefer to include a 10 % service charge. Given the low salary of many waiters however, tips are greatly appreciated.

Generally, hotel porters are tipped a couple of dirhams per luggage. Cab drivers do not need to be tipped.

Time Difference

Dubai is on + 4 hours GMT, or 4 hours ahead of the Greenwich Mean Time.



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VAT & Taxes

There is no corporate tax in Dubai. The only exceptions to this are oil producing companies and branches of foreign banks. Likewise, there are no personal taxes. Direct taxation is against the traditions of the UAE and it is highly unlikely that it will be introduced in the near future.

Voltage

The electricity supply is 220/240 vAC, 50Hz. Square three-pin plugs are widespread.

Local Transportation

Taxis are the most common way of getting around. Metered taxis from Dubai Transport Corporation, recognised by their cream colour, are efficient, with well trained and courteous drivers. The fare is Dh2 for pickup, followed by Dh1 per kilometre. A fixed scale of charges is applied to trips outside the city boundaries.

Self-drive cars are available in Dubai airport and the rental company will arrange temporary local driving licences for visitors.

An interesting way to travel between Dubai and Deira is by water taxi (abra) across the Creek. The cost of this experience is 50 fils.

Health Info

Medical certificates are not required to enter Dubai, unless you come from areas infected with cholera or yellow fever. Malaria and cholera are not particularly considered health risks in Dubai and other cities of the UAE.

In Dubai, hospitals are well equipped.

Tap water is safe for drinking, but in rural areas you may stick to bottled or boiled water.

Always choose well cooked meats and avoid dairy products, which may be made from unpasteurized milk.

Climate

Dubai has a sub-tropical and arid climate. It is sunny, hot and dry most of the year. June to September are particularly hot months, with little or no rainfall. Temperatures may shoot up to 45° C. The most pleasant months to visit Dubai are from November to March, when temperatures are more comfortable (around 10 to 30° C). The winter months of January and February may bring rain showers, cooling down the area's temperatures.

Public Holidays

Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice) : February 12,

Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year) : March 5

Mouloud (Birth of the Prophet) : May 14

Accession of HH Sheikh Zayed : August 6

Leilat al-Meiraj (Ascension of the Prophet) : September 24

Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan) : November 26-28

National Day : December 2nd

New Year's Day : January 1st

NOTE : Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the dates given above are only right for 2004.

During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Eid al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Many restaurants are closed during the day and there may be restrictions on smoking and drinking.

Where to Eat

At the top of the hotel Burj al Arab, **Al Muntaha**-restaurant has fantastic views over the Arabian Gulf and offers excellent mixed dishes such as lobster Caesar salad or seared scallops. Located in the Seashell Inn Hotel, the **American Dream** has a wide selection of Continental fresh meats and vegetables. For Mediterranean food amateurs, you will be treated at **The Splendido**, one of the finest restaurants in Dubai, at the Ritz Carlton. Lastly, an excellent Rajasthani cooking is provided at the **India Palace**, (Hotel Bur Dubai). Housed in Le Méridien, **Al Mijana** is the perfect introduction to the joys of Lebanese dining, with the set menu concept allowing newcomers to savour every corner of this diverse cuisine. **Andiamo**, at the Grand Hyatt, offers a four-course Italian brunch with delicious antipasti. **Al Iwan** is one of the most fashionable places to eat in Dubai.

Local Gift Ideas

Local ethnic items include brass coffee pots, silver and wooden dhows, khanjars (short curved knives in elaborately carved sheaths), ancient rifles, muzzle loading guns, miniatures of camels etc. Prices and quality vary but the souks often offer the best buys.

Leisure Time

Thought to be the city's oldest building, the Dubai Museum, occupying the Al-Fahidi Fort on the Bur Dubai side of Dubai Creek, is not to be missed, just like the Grand Mosque in Bur Dubai which is home to the city's tallest minaret. If you do only one touristy thing in Dubai, make sure to visit Dubai Creek. The best way to see the grand trading port is from the water. You can book a pricey cruise or hire an "abra" (small boat) for an hour or so.

Another interesting place is the house of Shaikh Saeed, which has been restored as a museum of the pre-oil era. For many years, this 30-rooms house served as a communal residence for the ruling Al-Maktoum family. It was built using traditional methods, with coral quarried in the Gulf.

Lastly, you cannot go to Dubai without visiting one of its many souqs : the Deira covered Souq with folks hawking textiles, spices, kitchen wares, clothes and henna, the Gold Souq, the Perfume Souq, or even the Electronics Souq...

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