



## Fact Sheet

### Dubai: Top Tips for Travellers

Dubai is one of the world's fastest growing cities located at the heart of the Middle East. The emirate, which has a population of around 1.8 million, is the second largest of seven that comprise the United Arab Emirates. Dubai is just a **seven hour flight from the UK**, which places it at a very manageable **UTC +4 hours** and close enough to avoid jet lag.

#### Getting to Dubai

Located at the crossroads between East and West, Dubai enjoys **unrivalled accessibility** from all four corners of the globe. Due to the continuing popularity of the emirate as a destination for UK travellers, the number of flights has been increasing, currently with **133 direct flights** per week between many cities in the UK and Dubai. The destination is served directly by many airlines including the award winning national carrier Emirates, as well as British Airways, Royal Brunei and Virgin Atlantic Airways.

Citizens of **33 countries**, including the UK and Ireland, are granted a 30-day visa, free of charge, on arrival in Dubai. Visitors must have a full passport with **at least six months' validity** from the end of their stay.

Many people visiting Dubai are keen to take advantage of the emirate's Duty-Free allowances which permit:

- 400 x cigarettes; 400 x cigars; 500 grammes tobacco
- Perfume (a reasonable amount)

In addition, **no customs duty** is levied upon personal effects entering Dubai. Nor is there any value-added tax on items sold in the emirate, enabling shoppers to pick up the very best bargains!

#### Climate

Dubai's location means that it benefits from year-round sunshine and a subtropical climate where rain is rare. The summer months – from June-September – are the hottest with high levels of humidity. During this time, visitors to the emirate can take advantage of the state-of-the-art air conditioning systems that have been introduced throughout the shopping malls, vehicles, hotels and entertainment facilities. The rest of the year maintains a more manageable temperature which enables visitors to experience the multitude of outdoor and indoor activities that Dubai has to offer.

#### Currency

The currency in Dubai is the **United Arab Emirate Dirham**, which is divided into 100 fils. The currency is held constant against the US dollar at a rate of approximately 1\$ = 3.67dhs. Many international banks are represented in Dubai, they operate six days a week and are closed on Fridays. Opening hours tend to be



8am-1pm Saturday to Thursday. Exchange houses are open 8.30am-1pm and 4.30pm-8.30pm. All major credit cards are generally accepted in hotels and shopping malls.

### Getting around Dubai

Dubai can be navigated by **car**, **boat**, **bus** and even **bicycle**. Furthermore, around 150 **abras** (small motorboats) cross the Creek from early morning until around midnight. Each abra holds around 20 passengers and leave when full, which usually takes a matter of minutes. A trip costs just 1 dirham.

**Hiring cars or motorbikes** is another popular way to see the city, though many visitors prefer to use some of the readily available metered **taxis**. Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority is currently investing around £11 billion in the emirate's transport infrastructure to reduce congestion. Dubai also has **five creek crossing bridges** with a sixth in the pipeline. The new mega-bridge, which will measure 1,600 metres with an arch 205 metres high and 667 metres long, will also include a Metro station and an abra station. A **toll system**, 'Salik', was also introduced in 2007 to ensure smooth traffic flow on Sheikh Zayed Road, reducing congestion and allowing for better traffic management.

In September 2009 the Dubai Metro launched the longest automatic driverless rail transport system in the world. The creation of the Dubai Metro means that getting around the emirate is even easier. Providing an alternative mode of transport, the Metro will ease traffic congestion, reducing the travelling time, and improving air quality to create a better environment.

### Health Matters

Dubai is committed to providing the **highest level of care** to its residents and visitors through a network of public and private hospitals. Emergency care for all UAE nationals, expats and visitors is provided free of charge at the Al Wasl, New Dubai and Rashid hospitals. All other treatment is chargeable, so it is advisable to have travel insurance. In addition, many of the big hotels have **in-house doctors** who can be called upon and there is no shortage of extremely **well-stocked pharmacies**.

### Language – Useful Phrases

**Arabic** is the official language of the United Arab Emirates, though the use and comprehension of English is widespread in both business and tourism sectors. That said, it is always useful to know a selection of Arabic phrases, and many Emirati will appreciate visitors who try to understand their culture by speaking their language.

Useful Arabic phrases include:



<i>Hello/Welcome</i>	MarHuba
<i>Goodbye</i>	Ma'assalaama
<i>Please</i>	min fadlak (to a man); min fadliki (to a woman)
<i>Thank you</i>	shukran
<i>Yes</i>	na'am
<i>No</i>	la'
<i>Do you speak English?</i>	tatakullum ingleezi?
<i>I don't speak Arabic</i>	ma-atkallam arabi
<i>I don't understand</i>	ana maa afham
<i>How much is that?</i>	Bekam?
<i>Could you please repeat that?</i>	mumkin min fadhlak a'id Hatha
<i>Could you please speak more slowly?</i>	mumkin min fadhlak takalam shwai shwai
<i>Could you please write it down?</i>	mumkin min fadhlak iktbHa lee
<i>I want to change money</i>	ana areed an asref beezat
<i>I want to buy a stamp</i>	ana areed an ashtaree tab'eh bareed
<i>I'd like an adaptor plug</i>	ana areed maakhas tawseel
<i>Where's the nearest doctor?</i>	wayn aghrab tabeeb
<i>I have a pain</i>	ana andee alam or ana andee waja'

## Customs

Dubai is a fun and exciting destination, attracting international visitors and priding itself on a reputation of being one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. It is hoped that everyone enjoys their time in Dubai, and as such people are expected to behave responsibly and respect the culture, traditions and local laws of the emirate.

- It is customary for men to **shake hands** as a form of greeting. However, local women tend not to offer their hands to men, and some local men would prefer not to shake hands with a woman. It is best to wait until a hand is offered when meeting someone for the first time.
- Visitors – particularly men – should **avoid staring** at local women or attempting to make eye contact. And permission should be sought before any photographs are taken of locals, especially women. Photography of government buildings and any petroleum or military installations is also to be avoided.
- Upon entering a home, it is customary to **remove shoes**. Visitors should offer to do this. However, showing the soles of feet can be considered rude or offensive; care should be taken when crossing legs to ensure that the soles of feet are not pointing towards anyone.



- Visitors are free to dress according to their personal choice – but it is best to wear conservative items, **avoiding wearing revealing clothes** in public places or places of worship. Swimwear is appropriate at beaches and swimming pools. Public displays of affection between couples should be avoided as they can be considered offensive.
- As with the vast majority of countries around the world – including the UK – **drugs are illegal** in Dubai. Along with the international community, Dubai has a very clear policy regarding drug trafficking, smuggling and possession, which is one of the reasons why the emirate has one of the lowest crime rates in the world. Very **clear guidelines** are issued to visitors regarding bringing certain medicines into Dubai: to travel with various over-the-counter medicines such as Codeine, it is necessary to carry an accompanying doctor's note or prescription to authenticate its use. It is advised to take the medicines in their original packaging and an appropriate quantity for the length of stay. **For a full list of restricted and controlled medicines in Dubai visit the following Government of the United Arab Emirates, Ministry of Health website:**  
[www.moh.gov.ae/admincp/assetsmanager/files/pharmacusts/updated%20controlled%20medical%20list%20seperated%202007.pdf](http://www.moh.gov.ae/admincp/assetsmanager/files/pharmacusts/updated%20controlled%20medical%20list%20seperated%202007.pdf)
- Dubai features a **wide range of world-class dining and entertainment facilities**, catering for an international audience, and alcohol consumption is widely accepted within these licensed premises (most hotels, restaurants and sports clubs). As with many destinations around the world, the abuse of alcohol in public spaces is not tolerated and in this respect Dubai is no different. The legal drinking age is 21 and it is an offence for anyone to buy alcohol from an off-license without an alcohol licence (which is only issued to non-Muslims).
- When dining at one of the emirate's many top hotels and restaurants, a **15 per cent service charge** is usually included in the bill. If this isn't the case, adding 10 per cent is customary, if not obligatory. Similarly it is usual to round up taxi fares to the nearest five dirham and to give a couple of dirhams to bag carriers, petrol pump attendants, hotel valets etc.

### Other Information for travellers

Dubai's **weekend** is Friday and Saturday.



The **electricity** supply in Dubai is 220-240 volts at 50 cycles. Plug points are the same as in the United Kingdom / Ireland so US and European plugs may need adaptors and/or transformers.

Dubai's **water supply** is desalinated and is safe to drink. However, many people choose to drink mineral water, which is readily available at competitive prices. **Food** hygiene is generally exceptionally high in the emirate.

More information about visiting Dubai can be found using the following websites:

[www.dubaiupdate.co.uk](http://www.dubaiupdate.co.uk)

[www.dubaitourism.ae](http://www.dubaitourism.ae)

[www.dubaitravelmarket.co.uk](http://www.dubaitravelmarket.co.uk)

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

