



# Leisure activities

Since you are already within the enclave of the desert, why not take a tour to discover a range of activities you can enjoy amongst the endless dunes.

## Desert Safaris

A visit to the desert is incomplete without a safari that starts with a roller-coaster ride across the dunes in powerful 4x4s. Hold on to your seatbelt while the expert driver slowly climbs a tall mountain of sand, suddenly accelerates at the top and takes a sharp dive down the dune cliff. Dangerous as it may sound, it's absolutely safe and the adrenaline rush you feel through your body makes it all worthwhile. If you have a taste for speed and an enthusiasm for an unusual sport like sand skiing, then strap on your skis and enjoy the descent down the steep but harmless sand dunes.

## Exploring the Wadis

Go on a special tour to visit the *Hajjar* Mountains. Along the way, explore the *wadis* (dry river valleys) that are formed by streams flowing down from mountains. Then move on for an excursion to Fossil Rock and ancient archaeological sites like Camel Rock. If you further wish to explore Arabian heritage, then request a visit to Hatta, a 200-year-old village, and Al Ain, which is popularly known as the Garden City.

## Falconry

The art of falconry dates back to 13th century BC. Enjoy the splendour of this traditional Bedouin activity as you observe different species of falcons in action.

## Horse and Camel Safaris

Take a ride on 'the ship of the desert' and experience how the Bedouins travelled in ancient times. While atop the camel, watch the evening sun cast its orange glow on the picturesque rippling sands, which indeed is an unforgettable sight. If you'd like to gallop on a horse, there are fine Arabian steeds awaiting you.

## Archery

At certain designated areas, you can test your aim with traditional weapons and improve your concentration levels.

So whether you want to experience true Arabian hospitality or discover a beautiful desert hideaway, you're sure to find it all in the multifaceted city of Dubai.

## United Arab Emirates

Dubai is the second largest of the seven emirates that form the United Arab Emirates and ranks as the country's leading commercial centre. The other six emirates are Abu Dhabi - the federal capital, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah.

## Location and Area

Dubai is located on the southern shore of the Gulf in the south-eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It lies between 55°16 East and 25°16 North. The total area of the Emirate is 3,885 sq. km.

## Visas

- **AGCC Citizens** - Citizens of the Arab Gulf Co-operation Council member states (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia) do not need a visa.
- **AGCC Residents** - AGCC expatriate residents who meet certain conditions may obtain a non-renewable 30-day visa upon arrival at the approved ports of entry.
- **Citizens of Western Europe and the Pacific Rim** - Citizens of UK (with the right of abode in the United Kingdom), France, Italy, Germany, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Finland, Spain, Monaco, Vatican City, Iceland, Andorra, San Marino, Liechtenstein, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea and holders of Hong Kong SAR passports will be granted a free One Entry Visit visa on arrival in the UAE. Currently, it has been decided to postpone the implementation of the new regulation as far as Cyprus is concerned. The visa enables them to stay for 60 days. The visa is renewable for a total stay of 90 days for a fee of AED 500.
- **German Citizens** - German citizens (tourists and business people) may apply to the UAE embassy in Germany for a one or two year multiple-entry visa. No sponsor is required. The maximum duration of stay of visa holders should not exceed three months a year. The visa fee is AED 1,500.
- **US Citizens** - US citizens (tourists and business people) may apply to the UAE embassies in the US for one to ten year multiple-entry visas. A sponsor is required and the visa will be granted free of charge. The maximum duration of stay should not exceed six months a visit.
- **Entry Service Permit** - An Entry Service Permit applies to the following categories and their families accompanying them: company manager's representatives, sales managers, account auditors, delegations from companies or establishments to carry out a commercial activity in the UAE, enquirers requested by any of the establishments/companies operating in the UAE assumed to carry out an urgent task. Such visa is also granted to nationalities authorised to obtain a tourist visa, as per the Ministerial Council's decision. This visa is valid for use within 14 days from the date of issue.
- **Tourist Visa** - A special category of visas under the Visit Visa type is a Tourist Visa, which can be obtained for individual tourists from: East and West Europe, Turkey, Bulgaria, Poland, Ukraine, Albania, Russia, the Hellenic Republic, St Kitts-Nevis, St Lucia, Mexico, Cuba, Bermuda, Belize, Guyana, French Guiana, Martinique, Antigua and Barbuda, St Vincent, Kingston, Palao other non-defined American nationalities, Thailand, South Africa, Singapore, China, Malta, Cyprus. The Tourist Visa entitles its holder to a 30-day stay and is non-renewable.

- **Multiple-entry Visa** - Multiple-entry Visas are granted to business visitors who have a relationship with either a multinational or other reputable local establishments, and who are frequent visitors to the UAE. This type of visa is valid for six months from the date of issue and the duration of each stay is 30 days. The validity is non-renewable. The cost of this visa is AED 1,000. The visitor must enter the UAE on a visit visa and obtain the multiple entry visa while in the country. The visa would be stamped on the passport.
  - **96-hour Visa for Transit Passengers** - Transit passengers stopping at Dubai International Airport for a minimum of 8 hours are eligible for obtaining a 96-hour transit visa.
  - **Transit Visas** - This is a special type of visa, which applies to passengers passing through UAE airports. For those who travel with Emirates Airlines, transit visas can be arranged by the Airline itself. But those flying through other Airlines have to contact the Marhaba Services directly. For transit passengers or those holding special permits, or for visit or mission, the passport or the document must be valid for at least three months.
  - Nationals of Israel may not enter the UAE.
  - A penalty charge of AED 100 per day is imposed on visitors who overstay.
- For further information visit [www.dnrd.gov.ae](http://www.dnrd.gov.ae) or e-mail: [dxbimmig@emirates.net.ae](mailto:dxbimmig@emirates.net.ae)

## Climate

Dubai has a sub-tropical arid climate. May to September is summer, when temperatures range between 40°C and 48°C. However, during the winter months, temperatures range from 10°C to 30°C in winter. Rainfall is predominantly in winter and amounts to some 13cm annually.

## Clothing

Summer clothing may be worn for most of the year but the temperature can drop during the winter. At the pool or on the private beaches, swimwear is quite acceptable, but when in the city and public areas, care should be taken not to give offence by wearing clothing that may be considered revealing.

## Language

The national language is Arabic but English is widely used.

## Currency

The monetary unit is the Dirham (AED) which is divided into 100 fils. The official exchange rate is US\$1 = AED 3.675.

## Banks

Many international banks are represented by branches in Dubai. Bank hours are 0800 to 1300, Saturday to Wednesday and 0800 1200, Thursday.

## Credit Cards

American Express, Diners Club, Visa, MasterCard, etc. are generally accepted in the main hotels and shops.

## Tipping

Tipping practices are similar to most parts of the world.

## Working Hours

**Business:** 0800 - 1300 and 1600 - 1930, Saturday to Thursday. Most of the multinational companies work from 0900 - 1800 with a one hour lunch break.  
**Government offices:** 0730 - 1430, Saturday to Wednesday.  
**Exchange houses:** 0830 - 1300 and 1630 - 2030, Saturday to Thursday.  
**Shopping malls:** 1000 - 2200, Saturday to Thursday and 1600 - 2200, Friday. Thursday afternoon and Friday is the weekend in the Islamic world.

## Photography

Normal tourist photography is acceptable but it is considered offensive to photograph Muslim women. It is also courteous to request permission before photographing men.

## Bargaining

Bargaining is expected in the souq and is quite usual elsewhere. Vendors will usually drop the price and often quite substantially, particularly for a cash sale.

## Communications

Telecommunications in Dubai are excellent. Telephones have international direct dialling to most countries in the world. Full telex, telefax, and electronic mail facilities are widely available. There is an efficient and reliable postal service. The General Postal Authority also offers a courier service. Muntaz Post delivers to most parts in the world and commercial courier services are widely used.

## Media

There are three English language newspapers published in Dubai - Gulf News, Khaleej Times and Emirates Today. International newspapers, magazines and journals can be bought at bookshops and supermarkets. Dubai has both Arabic and English commercial radio and television stations, as well as access to international satellite TV programming.

## Medical Care

Medical services in Dubai are of an international standard.

## Electricity

The electricity supply in Dubai is 220/240 volts at 50 cycles. US-made appliances may need a transformer.

## Water

Tap water is quite safe to drink. But locally bottled mineral water is generally served in hotels and restaurants.

For complaints about your Dubai experience or the Department of Tourism, please contact Business Development Department on DTCM address below or e-mail [ecomplaints@dubaitourism.ae](mailto:ecomplaints@dubaitourism.ae).

For further information on DTCM's overseas offices in Australia, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, South Africa, USA and UK, please contact DTCM on the address below.

Deserts in **DUBAI**

Where hospitality meets hideaway.



GOVERNMENT OF DUBAI  
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND COMMERCE MARKETING  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM AND COMMERCE MARKETING  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES





Sheikh Zayed Road - 2006



Sheikh Zayed Road -1980s



# Timeless deserts

*"A true conservationist knows that the world is not given by the previous generation but borrowed from the next." - Adapted from quotation by John James Audubon.*

After taking a tour of Dubai's breathtaking skyscrapers and world-class shopping malls, escape into the dreamlike surrounding of the desert. Discover the exotic wildlife while you experience the thrills amongst the endless dunes. Also take this unique opportunity to enjoy a traditional welcome at the majestic Arabian resorts that are situated at the outskirts of the city.

## Dubai – The Rising Metropolis

From its humble beginnings as a small Bedouin settlement in the 1950s, at a time when pearl diving, fishing and trading were the staple of the economy, Dubai has evolved at a dramatic pace. Spurred on by the oil wealth of the 1970s and the vision of the late Ruler Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the economy diversified, encouraging inward investment from around the world.

There was considerable government spending on infrastructure, education and healthcare, all part of a long-term plan to turn Dubai into a thriving cosmopolitan centre for business and tourism. In more recent years, the vision has been reinforced with the creation of numerous world-class luxury hotels, business free zones, parks and a relentless commitment to raising awareness of the Dubai brand internationally.

It is an inescapable fact that most visitors to Dubai, as well as residents, want to experience the unique desert environment. Surveys indicate the most common reasons for selecting a holiday destination are heritage, culture and the opportunity to experience nature. But when desert trip visitor figures show such great increases over such a short period of time, the impact

on this environment cannot be ignored. With this in mind, the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (DDCR) and Emirates Al Maha's management team drew up a blueprint that will form the basis for controlling and nurturing Dubai's wildlife and natural habitats in the years to come.

## Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (DDCR)

As Dubai was primarily a desert, the Dubai government and Emirates Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa initiated the DDCR to preserve its natural habitat. This reserve is set on 225 sq km, which accounts for nearly 5% of Dubai's total land area. Since the opening, Al Maha reinvested five per cent of its turnover to nurture the key components of the ecosystem, from flora and fauna to water supplies.

One of the most important conservation projects of DDCR was to set off an extensive wildlife reintroduction programme. In the 1960s, the Ruler of Dubai and architect of the modern emirate, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, was concerned by the rapid disappearance of much of the region's wildlife, largely due to hunting. Over a period of time, herds of Arabian oryx and other species were captured and removed to the safety of a small wildlife reserve in Arizona, USA (a region that shares a similar climate to Dubai). More than 35 years later, under the personal sponsorship of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, more than

90 descendants of these Arabian oryx were flown in from their American sanctuary. Together with other indigenous species drawn from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed's own personal breeding and conservation programmes, most of the exotic wildlife of Dubai was reintroduced to its natural habitat. Today, DDCR contains over 300 Arabian oryx and 250 gazelle which can be viewed on the official excursions set up with the members of DDCR.

The first wildlife was released into the Reserve from Al Maha on 25th March 2004, an event which was attended by the late Lord Patrick Lichfield, and covered by the BBC crew.

In fact, Al Maha was awarded the prestigious World Legacy Award 2004 (Nature Travel) by the National Geographic Traveler and Conservation International. In line with international conservation practices, the Reserve is segregated into four zones, each with a prescribed utilisation plan - from complete exclusion zones, which can be visited only on foot by researchers, to limited vehicle access zones for safari groups, excursions and desert campsites. The number of safari operators into this area has been restricted to four: Arabian Adventures, Alpha Tours, Travco and Lama Tours.

# Exotic wildlife

*"We are increasingly aware of the urgent need to take good care of our priceless natural heritage, all the more as Dubai is expanding so fast. The reserve protects our last unspoiled desert and unique Arabian way of life for future generations to enjoy." - H.H. Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum - Chairman of Emirates and the Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve (DDCR).*

