



Magnificent sites

Majlis Um-Al Sheif

Built around 1955, the *Majlis* Um-Al Sheif was attended by Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who was widely known as the 'Father of Dubai'. Here he would listen to people's complaints, grievances and ideas. The *majlis* also was a summer retreat and features a traditional palm tree garden with a *falaj* irrigation system.

The Bastakiya

At the Bastakiya, push open the old wooden doors of the traditional courtyard houses with wind towers to get a rare and enthralling glimpse of yesteryear. Wind towers are a traditional and unique form of air-conditioning structures whereby cool air is funnelled down into the house.

Hatta Heritage Village

Nestled among the *Hajjar* Mountains and overlooking a fertile oasis, the 16th century Hatta Heritage village is worth a visit. Observe the village architecture that embraces the Hatta Fort, two watchtowers, a mosque and some houses constructed of stone, mud, reeds and palm tree trunks.

Burj Nahar

Built around 1870, the Burj Nahar was one of the many watchtowers that guarded the old city of Dubai. Restored in 1992 with picturesque gardens, this is truly a photographer's delight.

Bait Al Wakeel

Built in 1934 by Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Bait Al Wakeel was the first office building in Dubai. Situated by the Creek, the building has been completely restored and now houses a museum that is dedicated to Dubai's fishing and maritime traditions.

Bur Dubai Creek

Take in the splendid architecture of the old buildings lining the Bur Dubai side of the Creek. The traditional façades of these buildings have been restored to their original glory with wooden windows, decorative gypsum panels and screens.

Age-old Souqs

Wander through the narrow lanes of the traditional *souqs* situated in Bur Dubai and Deira. Take in the

aromas of spices, nuts and dry fruits at Deira's Spice *Souq* and then go on to the glittering Gold *Souq* nearby. If you are looking for quality fabrics, then the Textile *Souq* at Bur Dubai is the best place to stop by and complete your shopping needs.

Archaeological sites

There are four main excavation sites in Dubai at Al Qusais, Al Sufooh, Jumeirah and Hatta. The first two are graveyards dating back more than 2,000 years. These sites are not open to the public. However, if you are interested in visiting them, you must obtain a special permit from the Dubai Museum.

Union House

Located in Jumeirah, visit the impressive replica of the Union House, which was constructed to honour the site where historic documents forming the UAE were signed in 1972, thus heralding a new beginning of growth and prosperity.

So from age-old heritage of the past to modern architecture of the present, 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 or e-mail: dximmig@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. Mumtaz 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.

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.

Heritage & Culture in **DUBAI**

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Rich heritage

After taking a tour of the breathtaking modern wonders of Dubai, step back in time and discover the city's rich heritage and culture. You'll be surprised to see how Dubai has transformed drastically and yet maintained its strong foundations of the past. In fact, the city's customs are firmly rooted in Islamic traditions, providing strength and inspiration to all aspects of everyday life.

Early history

Little is known about the first settlers in Dubai. However, archaeological discoveries prove that as long as 4,000 years ago, small fishing communities lived along the coast of the Arabian Gulf.

Records dating back to the 18th century show that Dubai was a small fishing and trading village inhabited by members of the Bani Yas tribe, one of the most renowned tribes of Southern Arabia.

In 1833, Sheikh Maktoum bin Buti began the reign of the Maktoum family as rulers of Dubai and transformed this small town into a flourishing coastal city. By the late 1870s, Dubai became the principal port on the Gulf coast, and by the turn of the century, it was reputed to have had the largest *souqs* in Arabia.

Arabian culture

The famed nomadic tribes of the Bedouins travelled on camels, which were rightly called the 'ships of the desert'. Falconry, camel racing and horse riding were some of the traditional pastimes for men, which are still popular today. The main occupational activities that were undertaken in this era included camel herding, date farming, fishing, dhow building and pearl diving.

Traditional wear

For over hundred years, Dubai's national dress has suitably adapted to the region's climate. The white

ankle-length, loose-fitting garment worn by men is known as the *kandoura*. Local women, on the other hand, wear a long-sleeved, full-length, black *abayah*, and underneath wear a *kandoura*, which is skillfully embroidered in gold, silver or coloured thread. They are very fond of jewellery and customarily adorn themselves with gold and silver necklaces, forehead decorations, earrings, bracelets, anklets and rings.

Mosque insights

Every neighbourhood has its own mosque where the faithful gather for prayer, five times every day. One of the largest and most beautiful mosques is the Jumeirah Mosque, which is a spectacular example of modern Islamic architecture. A special tour of the mosque is organised once a week by the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding. Visit this mosque to learn about rituals and customs. Beautifully crafted in medieval *Fatimid* style, the mosque is particularly attractive at night with its soft lighting.

Take a tour of the many historic buildings and sites, which will give you a stunning glimpse into the grandeur of the past.

Dubai Museum

Start with the Dubai Museum, which is situated in Al Fahidi Fort. The Fort was built in the early 19th century and is thought to be the oldest building in Dubai. Walk past the impressive front door and take a look at the magnificent display of aerial photographs showing the city's growth over the years. Peek into the traditional Arabian houses called *barasti*, which were made from the trunk and leaves of palm trees. Step back in time as you stroll through the narrow corridors that innovatively re-create the scenes of a typical *souq*, mosque, school, marine life and activities of the pearl divers. After that, take a look at the galleries that exhibit traditional weapons, flora and fauna, and various artefacts recovered from graves dating back to the third millennium BC.

Heritage and Diving Village

As you walk through Heritage Village in Al Shindagha, observe the traditional Bedouin and coastal village life,

which has been re-created, right down to the *barasti* homes and traditional coffee house. Try the delicious, fresh *ragaag* (flat, grilled bread made of flour and water) prepared by the local women. Don't forget to buy some traditional handicrafts, Bedouin jewellery and pottery, which make excellent souvenirs.

Adjacent to the Heritage Village is the Diving Village, which has remarkable displays of pearl diving and authentic models of various types of dhows and pearling boats.

Sheikh Saeed's House

Enter the official residence of Sheikh Saeed Al Maktoum, who was a former Ruler of Dubai from 1912 to 1958. This 30-room house was built in 1896 during the reign of Sheikh Maktoum bin Hasher Al Maktoum. For many years it served as a communal residence for the Maktoum family. Sheikh Saeed lived here from 1888 until his death in 1958. The house was reopened as a museum in 1986 and displays a rare collection of historic photographs, coins, stamps and documents that record the city's significant history.

Sheikh Obaid bin Thani House

Built in 1916, the Sheikh Obaid bin Thani House is located in Al Shindagha area near Sheikh Saeed's House. Spanning an area of 1,250 sq m, this two-storey house is made of stone and mud with traditional style windows, doors and façades.

Al Ahmadiya School

March down to the first school of Dubai - Al Ahmadiya School, located in Al Ras area of Deira. This two-storey building was attended by Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum. Turned into a museum detailing early education in the city, note how the classrooms of the school lead to a central courtyard, and verses of the Noble *Quran* are inscribed above each doorway.

Heritage House

Just a few steps away from Al Ahmadiya School, stands the Heritage House. Built in the 1890s, this was once home to a wealthy Iranian merchant. Inside, find yourself in a large courtyard surrounded by more than ten large rooms and a traditional wind tower.

Historic architecture

