



## DESTINATION GUIDE

# Dubai Visitor Essentials

Dubai is among the world's premier destinations for hosting meetings, conferences and exhibitions, and is the business capital of the Middle East. As a major tourism hub, the city is well set-up for visitors, has an international outlook, and most people you encounter will speak English. However, getting your bearings in any new city can be a challenge.

Here is some useful information to help your visit to Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) go as smoothly as possible

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DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE

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## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Dubai works hard to make it easy to visit the city. There are flight options from an extremely wide range of cities worldwide, including low-cost carriers within the region, and the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) visa system is geared to encouraging tourism.



### GETTING TO DUBAI

Dubai International airport (DXB) is the world's second busiest airport by volume of international passengers, mainly due to its development as a transit and transfer point on many long-haul routes. The airport is the home base of Emirates, with routes to all continents, and around 150 other airlines also offer direct links to the city. In some cases this includes low-cost carriers. More recently, passenger flights have

also started landing at Al Maktoum Airport, which is likely to increase the number of low-cost carriers serving the emirate. Other airports for arrivals in the UAE include Abu Dhabi and to a lesser extent Sharjah.

### VISAS AND PASSPORTS

Visa requirements for Dubai vary depending on nationality, so check the requirements for your passport when planning your visit. There are around 45 countries that

receive a 30-day tourist visa free-of-charge on arrival. Others will need to apply for a visa, which can usually be arranged via hotels or tour operators.

Visit the UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs website [www.mofa.ae](http://www.mofa.ae) for more information.

### PASSPORT VALIDITY

Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of six months from the date of entry into the UAE.



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# ARRIVING IN DUBAI

Most visitors will land at Dubai International airport (DXB), with easy connections to Dubai World Trade Centre and the city at large.



#### DUBAI AIRPORT DXB

Dubai International airport (DXB) has three terminals. Terminal 3 is the newest and is used by Emirates and QANTAS at the time of writing; Terminal 1 is the main terminal for other long-haul carriers; Terminal 2 is significantly smaller and is mainly used by smaller aircraft servicing destinations relatively close to the UAE.

The immigration process can take time when arriving in Dubai. Queues are often long so build a cushion into your planning at peak times. The introduction of smart gates for machine-readable passports aims to reduce waiting times – the system is mainly for residents, but should also make the queues at passport control shorter for everyone. At the time of writing, smart gates had been installed at Terminal 3, with other terminals to follow.

#### CUSTOMS

Like all countries, there are rules about what you can and can't bring with you. Unlike many countries, however, customs officers scan all hand luggage on arrival – and some

passengers will have their luggage opened and checked – so it is imperative that visitors understand any restrictions beforehand. Where an illegal item is found, it will be confiscated, and in some cases can result in fines or even imprisonment. See [www.dubaicustoms.gov.ae](http://www.dubaicustoms.gov.ae) for details. There are duty-free shops for inbound passengers located near the baggage carousels, immediately before exiting the airport.

#### MEDICATION

Some prescribed and over-the-counter medicines that are available in other countries are considered controlled substances within the UAE. Therefore, it is best to procure a prescription or prior permission from the UAE's Ministry of Health before travelling with medicine such as psychotropic drugs or anything

containing codeine. Failure to do this may lead to prosecution under UAE law. See [www.moh.gov.ae](http://www.moh.gov.ae) for current information, or consult your local UAE consulate or embassy.

#### ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

E-cigarettes are prohibited in the UAE, and neither the devices nor the nicotine juice they use are available for sale. E-cigarettes found in an arriving passenger's luggage may be confiscated by customs.

#### LEAVING THE AIRPORT

A good supply of taxis will be available outside the terminal, with staff on hand to keep the queue orderly and to help with luggage. Dubai Metro has stations at Terminals 1 and 3 on the 'Red Line', which connects directly to Dubai World Trade Centre.

#### PERSONAL DUTY-FREE ALLOWANCES

Gifts not exceeding AED 3,000  
Cash above AED 100,000 must be declared  
Maximum of 400 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 500 grams of tobacco  
Maximum of 4 litres alcohol, 48 cans of beer

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# DAILY PRACTICALITIES

The UAE has seen rapid development in recent decades, and boasts a stable currency as well as day-to-day services that are designed to meet international standards.



#### MONEY

The local currency is the UAE dirham, abbreviated as AED officially – although unofficial abbreviations such as Dhs are also widely used. The dirham is divided into 100 fils and pegged to the US dollar at AED 3.67. Coins in common use are 25 fils, 50 fils and 1 dirham, with notes for 5, 10, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 dirhams. It is sensible to make a point of breaking larger notes into smaller ones, as small retailers and taxis may be reluctant to give change. Currency exchanges are easy to find, often as part of the money transfer kiosks that expatriates use to send money home. Credit and debit cards are widely used and ATMs are plentiful, although you should check what fees you'll encounter when you do use them. It is also wise to let your card provider know in advance that you'll be travelling to Dubai to avoid having them block transactions.

#### ELECTRICITY

Mains electricity in Dubai is 220 to 240 volts, and the standard sockets are for the large, square three-pin plugs also used in the United Kingdom. Adaptors are very widely available in local supermarkets and stores, including multi-socket extension cables that will take a

variety of plug designs – which are extremely useful if you have several devices to charge.

#### MOBILE PHONES

Business travellers may find using a local mobile phone number in the UAE will save them a considerable amount of money compared with roaming on their number from home. This is particularly true for those needing a mobile data connection.

The two service providers are Etisalat and du, which have shops at Dubai Airport Arrivals as well as around the city. The airport outlets may have shorter queues than other stores. To buy a UAE phone, you will need to provide your passport with a valid visit visa. Pay-as-you-go SIMs are available for use in an unlocked phone from outside the country. Note that although there are many shops selling mobile phones, only the phone companies' own outlets will sell SIMs. Credit top-ups are available from convenience stores or supermarkets if needed.

#### WIFI

Most of the major malls, cafes and restaurants have free WiFi, as do hotels. Some hotels will charge extra for the in-room connection, but as a guest you can usually use the internal

business centres to surf for free. With a local SIM in your smartphone, it should also be possible to turn a mobile data package into a personal WiFi hotspot.

#### WATER

Domestic water supplies in Dubai come from desalinated seawater. This is safe to drink straight from the tap, but most residents prefer to drink bottled water. Water used for gardening is recycled waste and definitely not safe to drink. Never drink from a garden tap, and avoid walking through the path of a sprinkler. The same may apply to outdoor fountains, so unless it's been clearly designed for people to 'play' in, the fountain is probably not a good place to cool off.

#### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police  
999 (emergency)  
901 (non-emergency)

Ambulance  
998 or 999

Fire Service  
997



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## WHERE TO STAY

Dubai has a large range of hotels catering to all markets, from the most basic to the extravagantly luxurious. Popular booking engines such as booking.com and tripadvisor.com feature extensive listings at all price points, but some local knowledge will help narrow down the selection to something that fits your needs. The best options are on-site at, or adjacent to, DWTC for convenience; neighbourhoods close by on the Metro, which can be more interesting outside working hours; and a couple of locations close to the beach if you want to mix business with relaxing in the sun.



### AT DUBAI WORLD TRADE CENTRE

There are three options on-site at Dubai World Trade Centre itself: Ibis, Novotel and The Apartments. They are competitively priced for business travellers, but also very popular and heavily booked during major events. Several other business-class hotels are either within walking distance or a Metro stop away. These include major international groups such as Sheraton, Fairmont, Conrad, Crowne Plaza, Millenium, Rotana, Shangri-La and Dusit Thani.

### NEARBY AREAS

For those who prefer to be a little further away from 'work' in the evening, hotels in Downtown Dubai

– adjacent to The Dubai Mall and Burj Khalifa – are still only a short commute and offer a more dynamic environment after-hours. Many of the best deals are found in Deira and Bur Dubai, the two halves of 'old' Dubai on either side of the Creek. These will put you close to Dubai's buzzing souks in the evening and are just a few short stops away on the Metro. There are also many lower-priced hotels in the Al Barsha area, near Mall of the Emirates, although this will be a significant commute from DWTC.

### CLOSE TO THE BEACH

Dubai has some stunning beachfront hotels, but they will generally require

taxi transport to Dubai World Trade Centre and are more likely to be priced for high-end tourists than for business visitors. One exception is the Dubai Marine Beach Resort and Spa, located on Jumeirah Beach Road, about 15 to 20 minutes from DWTC by taxi. This is one of the lower priced 5-star options, and a popular and lively dining and entertainment destination. There are some 4-star options nearby that are close to public beaches. The best area for combining public beach and dining/entertainment is around Dubai Marina and Jumeirah Beach Walk, but this is a significant distance from Dubai World Trade Centre by either public transport or taxi.

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# GETTING AROUND

Dubai is an easy city to navigate, with plenty of taxis and an extensive public transport network, comprised of a Metro system, bus routes and, since November 2014, a limited tram service. A NOL travel card purchased at Metro stations can be charged with as much credit as you need, will work on all modes of transport (even long-distance buses to other parts of the UAE) and any unused money can be refunded at the end of your stay. All signage is in English as well as Arabic, and taxi drivers and public transport customer service staff will speak English.



#### TAXIS

Taxis are efficient, metered and reasonably priced, and there are plenty waiting 24/7 at the airport. Fares start at AED 3.00 when hailed from the street and AED 20.00 from the airport. When catching a taxi, try to make sure you have a selection of smaller notes and coins to avoid asking the driver to break a larger denomination. As well as the standard taxis, there are also 'luxury' or 'limousine' taxis. These are comfortable, and are metered, but they operate according to a considerably higher fare: AED 50.00 starting fare, plus AED 2.00 per kilometre. To book a standard taxi by phone, call 04-2080808.

#### METRO

The Dubai Metro is inexpensive, clean, air-conditioned, and very modern. Dubai World Trade Centre has its own stop and trains run roughly every five minutes during peak times, and every eight minutes off-peak. There are two lines: the Red Line runs the length of Dubai,

connecting to many significant landmarks along the way, while the Green Line primarily serves 'old' Dubai, including the Creek area and the souks of Bur Dubai and Deira. Stations are open 6.00am to 11.00pm Sunday to Thursday, or 1.00pm to midnight on Friday. Depending on the station and direction you want to travel, however, the first train may leave up to an hour after the station opens, and the last train up to an hour before it closes. Check with station staff if you are planning to use the Metro before 7.00am or after 10.00pm.

#### BUS

Dubai has a comprehensive bus network, complete with air-conditioned bus stops on some routes. Google Maps can be set to show bus routes with reasonable accuracy, including bus stops and the route numbers of buses that stop there. Buses are not, however, as frequent as Metro or tram, and have the disadvantage of getting stuck in traffic.

#### TRAM

Dubai's first tramlines opened in November 2014, running for a little over 10km and with 11 stops in and around the Dubai Marina area. The tram will not be an essential transport link for visitors attending Dubai World Trade Centre, but does offer useful connections for those wanting to visit some of Dubai's popular waterside and beachfront areas during their time off, including a link between the Metro and the monorail that runs to the end of the Palm Jumeirah.

#### CAR HIRE

While taxis and public transport are the best day-to-day options for visitors' transport around Dubai, hiring a car can be a worthwhile option for those who have some time off during their stay and want to explore what lies outside the city. Be warned, however, that traffic in the UAE can be fast, chaotic and a little aggressive compared with what many people will be accustomed to.



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## **LOCAL CULTURE**

Dubai is an ethnically mixed city, where residents from dozens of different countries live side-by-side. Most of the people you will come into contact with will be expatriates, including many from the broader Arab world, although Dubai World Trade Centre does have a large proportion of Emirati employees and visitors. It is important to bear in mind that this is, ultimately, a fairly conservative Islamic society. Emiratis are generally very tolerant of visitors' cultures, but they do expect visitors to be respectful to the local society in return.



### **LANGUAGE**

Arabic is the official language of the UAE, but with the resident population composed of a vast number of expatriates it's not universally spoken. English is widely spoken and understood, and is commonly used in most service industries, including by those working in retail sales, customer service, and by taxi drivers. That said, a few polite words of Arabic will make a good impression for those whose time in Dubai will include working with Emiratis. Some useful phrases include:

Hello - As-salām 'alaykum/Marhaba  
How are you? - Kayfa hālak  
Thank you - Shukran  
No thank you - La Shukran  
My name is... - Ismee...  
I am from... - Anā min...

Goodbye - Ma'a salama  
I understand - Ana afham  
I don't understand - Lā afham  
Congratulations - Mabrook  
What is the time - Kam Alsaa'a  
Come on/Let's go - Yallah  
No problem - Mafi Mushkil  
If God wills it - Inshallah

### **DRESSING APPROPRIATELY**

Dubai has a fairly relaxed attitude towards attire, however visitors should remember they are visiting a Muslim country. All visitors to Dubai World Trade Centre are requested to dress modestly and most of the events hosted at the premises adopt a dress code of business formal or business casual. During free time, short and revealing clothing can still be considered disrespectful, particularly in public places such as on the street and in

mall. As a general rule, if something is considered slightly revealing in a Western country, it may be extremely revealing to many people living in Dubai, and can make them feel uncomfortable.

The details of what is and isn't appropriate do, however, vary according to circumstance. What is not acceptable in public during the day may be fine if going out in the evening, particularly to a venue catering to Westerners. A bikini is acceptable for the beach, but not for walking back to a hotel. The point about dressing appropriately should be considered as applying to men as well as women. Dubai's warm weather should never be seen as a reason for a male visitor to be in a public place with his shirt unbuttoned, and certainly not to take his shirt off in public.

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#### **PERSONAL SAFETY**

The UAE is generally considered to be one of the safest destinations in the world to visit, with low levels of violent crime and street crime. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to take out travel insurance and to take the normal precautions to safeguard yourself and your valuables. A greater safety risk comes from accidental injury. Traffic accidents are common, so wear a seatbelt at all times when travelling in a car or taxi, and many drivers do not give way at pedestrian crossings, so be sure any vehicle is definitely coming to a stop before stepping away from the pavement. Also, sidewalks can have trip hazards, so watch your feet while walking.

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY**

Ask permission before photographing people in general.

Avoid photographing Muslim women and do not take pictures of airports, docks, telecommunications equipment, government buildings, and military or industrial installations.

#### **ALCOHOL**

The consumption of alcohol is strictly controlled in Dubai. Visitors can only buy alcohol at licensed restaurants, bars and hotels, or from Dubai Duty Free on arrival. Only permanent non-Muslim residents may purchase alcohol within the emirate for consumption at home, and to do this they require a special permit. The UAE adopts a zero-tolerance policy to drinking or being drunk in public. However, while drinking in a permitted location such as a hotel bar is generally seen as acceptable, a strict

interpretation of the law is that any alcohol consumption requires a licence. There have been incidents where visitors and residents who are arrested for their behaviour while under the influence have also been charged for drinking without a licence.

#### **OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

Good manners are essential in Dubai, and displays of offensiveness can have consequences. Avoid angry outbursts, getting into heated arguments, using foul or abusive language, or making obscene gestures. Displays of temper are likely to have you marched out of the building by security guards, or in some cases even detained by the police, and people have been arrested for raising their middle finger at others.