Introduction about Dubai & the UAE

Dubai is one of the seven Emirates (states) that joined together in 1971 to form the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The other members are Abu Dhabi (the capital), Ajman, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain (each Emirate is named after its main city).

Favourable business conditions and shrewd investment decisions have led to Dubai becoming one of the Gulf's most successful and rapidly expanding economic environments and Dubai is now firmly established as the business, financial and commercial hub of the region. It is a prosperous and diverse market and the employment growth required to match its expansion provides excellent opportunities for both clients and candidates.

Indeed, Dubai has the fastest growing population in the world and is home to an exciting, diverse, multi-cultural blend of young, dynamic, professional people all enjoying the unrivalled quality of life the Emirate has to offer. People are drawn to the City as much for lifestyle reasons as for the outstanding employment prospects on offer.

Climate

The climate in Dubai is dry, subtropical and rain is very rare. The hottest months are between June and September when the temperature often tops 45 to 50°C during the day and the humidity is very high. The temperature of the ocean can reach 37°C at the hottest part of the summer. Hotel pools are cooled in the summer and heated in the winter. The weather in October, November and April offer more reasonable temperatures of between 30°C and 35°C, but the best time to visit Dubai is between the months of December and March, when the temperature is pleasurable and the warm waters and sybaritic spas are sure to have the greatest effect, when the average temperature is 24°C.

Currency

The dirham (Arabic: درهم (AED) sign: د.إ; code: AED) is the currency of the United Arab Emirates. The ISO 4217 code (currency abbreviation) for the United Arab Emirates dirham is AED. Unofficial abbreviations include DH or Dhs. The dirham is subdivided into 100 fils (فلس).

Custom duties

Getting your personal belongings confiscated at Dubai Airport isn’t a pleasant experience. To avoid such a situation, you need to know what you are allowed and what you are not allowed to bring in with you. Below, you’ll find a comprehensive list of rules regarding customs in Dubai. If you need more information or would like to contact the Dubai customs authority, visit www.dxbcustoms.gov.ae

Permitted Items

Passengers are permitted to bring the following items into Dubai International Airport without paying customs duty: Gifts whose value does not exceed AED 3,000, The Number of cigarettes shall not exceed 400 cigarettes, 50 cigars, 500 grams of tobacco (minced or pressed for pipes), minced or pressed tobacco for smoking, tobacco or mild-tasting tobacco, The amount of alcoholic beverage and beer shall not exceed 4 litres for alcohol beverages; or 2 cartons of beer (each consisting of 24 cans, not exceeding 355 ml for each can or its equivalent), Still and moving image video cameras with their appropriate tapes, films and accessories, Projectors for displaying slides and films including accessories and agreeable quantities of slides and films, Telescopes, Portable music equipments, Radio systems, combined broadcasting apparatus, CD and DVD players with agreeable quantities, Mobile telephone Portable TV sets, Portable typing sets, Computers including laptops, Portable calculators, Baby cars, Disabled wheelchairs and cars, Sports equipment, Cash money, currencies and travellers cheques less than AED 40,000; and the passenger’s age shall not be less than 18 years old.
Exemption Conditions:
Exemption shall be subject to the following conditions and controls: The baggage and gifts must be of a personal nature and not in commercial quantities. The passenger must not enter the country with goods on a regular basis, be a trader in what he possesses or a member of the respective conveyance crew. Passengers below 18 years of age may not bring cigarettes or alcoholic beverages into the country. Prohibition and restriction procedures shall be applicable to items or belongings accompanying passengers.

Duty Free Allowances: Same as Above

Items that must be declared, Narcotics of all kinds, Weapons, ammunition and military equipment, Radios, striking appliances, self-defence equipment and cold steel, Domestic and endangered animals subject to CITES Convention (hides, ivory & stuffed animals), Currencies (more than USD 10,000 or AED 40,000 or the equivalent in other currencies), Goods of commercial value (exceeding AED 3,000 in value), Trees, plants & soil, Films, Books, Visual & Compact discs, Fire works & explosives, Medicines of all kinds

Medicine: Passengers cannot carry medicines in bulk quantity, even if it is for personal use. It may be impounded and can result in a criminal case. To bring prescriptive drugs into Dubai, a prescription from the passenger’s doctor is required for the period the passenger will be staying in Dubai. Special permission from the Ministry of Health may be required in order to bring more than a convincible quantity of medicine into Dubai. As per customs rule, all types of medicines are subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

Recommended clothing

In general, most "normal" clothing is tolerated as long as it is not too outrageous, however to be respectful of the UAE culture, it is better to cover knees and shoulders and everything in between. For example, t-shirts are fine but spaghetti tops for women might be frowned upon in more public areas (and on men will probably get you arrested). Very tight and/or low-cut tee-shirts are also more likely to offend some people. Females wearing strappy tops in Dubai shopping malls might get a warning although you'll see it's commonplace depending a bit on the shopping center. Mall of the Emirates seems to be more conservative than The Dubai Mall for example.

Women do not have to cover their hair, faces, heads with a scarf or similar in public. Some Muslim women do cover their hair and/or face, especially Gulf Arabs, but that is because of cultural and religious reasons, not because UAE law requires them to. However, when visiting a mosque, females do have to cover their hair, but it's not necessary for the face to be covered.

It is also not required for women to cover their bodies to hide their figure, such as in Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Skirt length below or too the knee is fine. As skirts get shorter, the potential to cause offence increases. If short enough to reveal underwear (or that no underwear is being worn), the risk of male attention, police attention, arrest and fine increases.

Men wearing normal shorts might get an odd look in some places but are unlikely to get into trouble. Ideally, shorts should be down to the knee to be sure of causing no offence.
Credit cards

You can of course use a foreign credit card in the Gulf and you might benefit from delayed charging, but not if you withdraw cash, for which charging starts immediately. You might, however, find it more convenient to receive your bills in local currency and pay from local funds, rather than to be subject to fluctuating currency conversion rates. The western practice of major department stores issuing their own credit cards is uncommon in Dubai, largely because of the cash culture that still prevails in the region.

All credit and charge cards allow you to access cash from ATMs and you might gain some advantage from the rate of exchange between the tourist or commercial rate, although you’re likely to incur a charge for a cash transaction. There are also occasions when a credit card isn’t only useful but a necessity, for example when renting a car or booking into a hotel.

If your card is lost or stolen, make sure that you report it immediately by telephone to the issuing company or bank and confirm it in writing or in person. It’s important to keep the telephone number of the card company to hand for speedy notification. Your liability is usually limited until you report the loss; after that, no liability applies. In the case of theft, you should also report the matter to the police.

Business hours

According to the UAE Labour Law the maximum working hours in Dubai are eight hours per day, or 48 hours per week (the maximum for those working in hotels, restaurants, and certain other industries is 9 hours per day).

Any work over this time is classified as overtime, and should be paid at rate of 1.25 times the regular hourly rate.

The law also states that working hours be reduced by 2 hours during Ramadan.

The working week for both the private and public sectors runs from Sunday to Thursday, although many private companies work 6 (or 5½) days taking only Friday off. Under the Labour Law only Friday is an official day off.

Public sector employees usually work from 7.30 am to 2.30 pm, while hours for those in the private sector vary.

Annual leave is usually 22 working days or 30 calendar days.

Language

Language is the most important marker of identity for a country and the National Language in Dubai is Arabic which speaks a lot about the country and its people. Although according to the Constitution of the country the official language in Dubai is Arabic, yet English is widely spoken and different regional languages are also often used.

Languages in Dubai have never been an issue and most of the schools in Dubai teach English along with Arabic. The medium of instruction is usually English but crossing the barrier of language in Dubai there are a number of schools in Dubai that teach foreign languages including French and Russian to children.

The cosmopolitan culture and the importance of the tourism industry are the two most important reasons for the existence of such wide variety of languages in Dubai. Dubai has a flourishing tourism industry that require a multi lingual knowledge and therefore languages in Dubai are many.
Heritage & culture

The United Arab Emirates is home to a rich cultural heritage that has been strongly influenced by the resourcefulness of its people who exploited the harsh environment of the region to the limit. This resilience in the face of extreme hardship was supported by society’s tribal structure, which has bound peoples together since successive waves of migration, beginning over 2,500 years ago, brought Arab tribes to the region. The varied terrain that these peoples inhabited, i.e. desert, oasis, mountains and coast, dictated the traditional lifestyles that evolved over the centuries. Under an age-old social structure each family was traditionally bound by obligations of mutual assistance to his immediate relatives and to the tribe as a whole. Among the tribe an individual's selfless hospitality was the source of his honour and pride. A common religion, Islam, also provided the cement that held the society together.

Dining

The restaurants are in the city various enclaves that provide hubs of varying restaurants and one of these is 'Century Village' which is an absolute must-see on any visitor's list and is located right next door to the 'Irish village'. It is a small oasis of fine dining restaurants in a relaxing atmosphere of fountains and greenery. For Indian cuisine perhaps no better choice could be made than by visiting 'Ashiana'. It is one of the most famous and most highly respected Indian restaurant and provides Northern Indian specialities. Situated in the Sheraton Dubai Hotel and Towers, it offers a very convivial ambience, whether for business or pleasure, service is excellent and waiters are more than willing to recommend speciality dishes. The evening sees the appearance of the equally famous Ashiana resident band which enhances the ambience with the enchanting sound of classic Indian music. For a languorous meal of Lebanese and middle Eastern cuisine the visitor must indulge his taste buds with a visit to 'AL Qasr' found in Dubai Marine Beach Resort and Spa, its privileged position overlooks beautifully landscaped garden, swimming pools, and the beach. The culinary delights are accompanied by belly dancers and Arabic music, providing the perfect Arabian dream.

Shopping

Shopping centers in Dubai form a major portion of the city's skyline. You can see a plethora of skyscrapers vying for their own little space in the all-encompassing sky. Most tourists from across the globe come here lured by the thrill and amusement of shopping in Dubai. Dubai's shopping centers are perpetually swarming with locals and tourists on Dubai tours. Sprinkled all across the emirate, Dubai shopping centers have been giving strong competition to the prime shopping destinations like Singapore, New York, Paris, etc. Second to none in their architectural magnificence, these Dubai shopping market have become some of the biggest tourist attractions of Dubai.

Hotels

Dubai offers a range of hotels to suit every taste, whim and budget! From the glitzy, opulent and of the most expensive and only seven star hotel in the world all the way through to the very affordable. Then there are the resorts in the desert where tourists can experience unmatched peace and tranquillity. Whatever the choice, it will definitely be an unforgettable stay as a tourist or business traveller.