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MOVING ON AND EVERYTHING  
IN BETWEEN, THIS IS THE  
COMPLETE RESIDENTS' GUIDE.

- Visas, Work & UAE Law
- Where To Live & Setting Up Home
- Parenting & Education
- Health, Fitness & Well-being
- Attractions, Sports & Activities
- Shopping
- Dining & Nightlife
- Short Breaks & Day Trips



*Navigate your way like a local with the Dubai city map inside.*

Whether you're considering making the move, you're fresh off the plane, or you're now a seasoned local, this is the one resource that you won't ever want to be without. From finding work to finding a school for the kids; from getting a visa to getting a driving licence; from making friends to making a great choice of restaurant to dine in; and from discovering new hobbies to discovering new places... it's all covered in these information-packed pages.

## Dubai Residents' Guide

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# Dubai Residents' Guide



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Marsa Dubai

# LIVING IN DUBAI

Deciding to move to Dubai is the first step, now discover all you need to know to start a new life in the sun.

Dubai is for most people a wonderful place to live, with excellent career opportunities, a network of social contacts, unique activities and, apart from a few sweaty months in summer, brilliant weather. Most expats tell you their standard of living is better than it was back home, they travel more, spend more time with family, enjoy outdoor living and make more friends.

## Erasing The Myths

Dubai does have a reputation for being bold and brash – it likes to have the biggest and best of everything – but there’s far more to the city than that. Think of Dubai’s showy attitude as the persona it likes to reveal to the rest of the world, while on the inside it can actually be quite down to earth. You just have

to take time to get to know the city’s personality. Yes, there are plenty of glitzy clubs and outrageously expensive restaurants, and people do dress up to the extreme, but there are also loads of low-key hidden corners, eclectic nightlife options and bars to satisfy the grungiest hippy.

The art and culture scene is growing, with new theatres, galleries and even Dubai’s answer to jam sessions for aspiring musicians, as well as indie movie nights and artist groups. Life here is not just about showing off; it’s not obligatory to get a flash 4WD and a Rolex, live on the Palm, and to dine in the Burj Khalifa every weekend.

Hopefully, this book, and this chapter in particular, will provide you with useful information about how to get settled in Dubai, deal with the paperwork, and eventually meet like-minded people.

## CITY PROFILE

There are certain descriptions of Dubai that are frequently used: pearl of the Gulf, sleepy fishing village transformed into modern metropolis, tax-free expat haven, headquarters of luxury living, and so on. There’s more than a grain of truth in these cliches, but Dubai offers so much more.

### On The Up

Living in Dubai is becoming more affordable, according to the 2013 Worldwide Cost Of Living survey. The emirate is ranked number 96 in the index – published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) – falling two places since 2012.

## City Of Dreams

This chapter can help you, whether you are making the decision to move, if you’ve just arrived and don’t know where to start, or if you find yourself faced with an overwhelming amount of red tape. Procedures and laws do change regularly, often in quite major ways. Changes are generally announced in newspapers, but they are often implemented quickly so it’s a good idea to be prepared for the unexpected.

If you’re still trying to make up your mind if Dubai is for you, then think about the sunny days, great shopping, outdoor living and tax-free salaries.

Economically, you’ll probably find yourself slightly better off than back home, which is the draw for most expats. Prices have begun to climb again – especially rent – and salaries haven’t climbed as much, but it’s still affordable to live here, and if you’re careful, you can also save some money each month.

The best way to make the move is to contact potential employers prior to your first visit and set up interviews and appointments to coincide with a short trip. Then head over and get a feel for the place whilst knocking a few job interviews on the head in the process. Dubai is an expensive to live without a job, so finding the right job should be your first priority. Plus, your employer is usually the one who sponsors you and thus gets you a residence visa – you can’t live in Dubai long term without this visa.

Now that Dubai will be hosting the Expo 2020, new projects are popping up all over the city, and more tourists are being tempted to visit – by the year of the Expo, Dubai hopes to host 20 million visitors annually.

## BEFORE YOU ARRIVE

There are several things you can do before arriving in Dubai to help you get prepared. Be sure to run through this checklist a few weeks ahead of your planned trip:

### Checklist

- Qualification certificates and important documents attested (see below)
- Inform banks, building societies and the tax office about your move to Dubai
- Speak to your pension company to see if moving to Dubai affects your pension plan
- Research schools for children well in advance and get your child’s name on the waiting list
- Get information about different neighbourhoods you might want to live in
- If accommodation is not provided by your employer, arrange temporary accommodation for when you arrive
- Bring at least 10 passport-sized photos with you for the visa applications
- Organise a shipping company to move your goods over, and bear in mind it can take two-three months

### Attesting Certificates

To be accepted by the authorities here, your education certificates must be verified by a solicitor or public notary in your home country, then by your foreign office to verify the solicitor as bona fide, and finally by the UAE embassy. It’s a good idea to have this done before you come to Dubai. There are private attestation companies in Dubai offering a verification service, but this is likely to take a minimum two weeks.

### Customs

Before you fly into Dubai, be aware that several prescription medications are banned, especially anything containing codeine or temazepam. The UAE maintains a zero-tolerance policy on recreational drugs, and even microscopic amounts could land you in jail. Your bags will be scanned on arrival to ensure you have no offending magazines or DVDs. Each passenger is allowed to bring in 400 cigarettes, 2kg of loose tobacco or cigars worth up to Dhs.3,000. Non-Muslims are also allowed five bottles of wine, four bottles of liquor or 24 cans of beer and there is a value limit of Dhs.3,000 on gifts being brought into Dubai by travellers.

## WHEN YOU ARRIVE

As you would expect during an international move to any new city, you're very likely to find a long 'to do' list waiting for you when you arrive in Dubai. You'll be doing a lot of driving around, form filling, and waiting in queues in government departments. Just keep your sense of humour handy, bear in mind that language barriers can sometimes delay things, and soon all the boring red tape will be a distant memory.

### Tax-Free Shopping

Take this opportunity before you exit the airport to do any last-minute shopping at Dubai Duty Free (dubaidutyfree.com), located in Arrivals and Departures at Dubai International Airport, where you can purchase limited quantities of duty free goods such as cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, wine, spirits and perfumes.

### Checklist

To get you started, here's a checklist of everything you need to do to become 'legal' in Dubai – and read on to find out exactly what to do to achieve each of the points below. Easy!

- Apply for a residence visa through your employer: you cannot live or work in Dubai without one
- Sponsor any family members who are not working for a residence visa: they also cannot live in Dubai without one
- Go for a medical test
- Apply for an Resident Identity Card: this is compulsory as part of the residence visa process
- Get a UAE driving licence: this is compulsory once you have a residence visa
- Apply for a liquor licence: this is compulsory if you plan to drink alcohol in Dubai
- Open a bank account

### Arrive In Style

For a hassle-free arrival into Dubai you can book the Marhaba Meet & Greet Service (marhabaservices.com). You'll be met at arrivals before immigration, assisted through airport clearance and escorted with your baggage to the exit. A Gold package offers priority buggy car transfer, and the Family service is ideal for mothers travelling alone with children.

### Visit Visa

Everyone entering the UAE needs a visit visa (also known as an entry permit) except for citizens of GCC countries; this must then be transferred to a residence visa if you plan to live and work here. The procedures for obtaining a visit visa vary depending on your nationality. Always check the regulations before travelling as details can change.

GCC citizens do not require a visa, while nationalities from 33 other countries can obtain a 30 day visa on arrival at no cost. The 30 day visa can be renewed for a further 30 days at a cost of Dhs.625, but it works out a lot cheaper to do a 'visa run' to the border of Oman, where you leave the country and re-enter on a new visit visa.

All other nationalities can apply for a visit visa in advance, sponsored by a hotel or tour operator, or by someone who is resident in Dubai. The fee is Dhs.620 for a 30 day visa, and Dhs.1,120 for 90 days. Also, a Dhs.1,000 deposit should be paid by a local sponsor and can be reimbursed after the visitor has left the country.

Expats resident in other GCC countries, who do not belong to one of the 33 visa-on-arrival nationalities, but who do meet certain criteria (professions such as managers, doctors and engineers), can get a non-renewable 30 day visa on arrival – check with your airline before flying.

All visitors to the UAE must have an eye scan upon arrival at immigration, except citizens of the GCC and anyone from the countries listed below.

### Visa On Arrival

Citizens of the following countries receive an automatic visit visa on arrival: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States and Vatican City.

Business travellers can get multiple entry visas, which are issued by the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs, the UAE's Consular offices abroad, or applied for after arrival on a visit visa. The visa is valid for 14 days at a time, for six months from the date of issue and costs Dhs.2,100. For an additional Dhs.200, a multiple-entry visa holder is eligible to use the airport e-Gates. Cruise tourists and property investors can also apply for a multi-entry permit; conditions apply and see the government website, dnrd.ae, for details.



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There are numerous companies that will arrange visas for you for a fee of up to Dh50, such as dnata. For further advice on visas, contact the government's toll free AMER service on 800 5111.

The General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA) is rolling out new technology that will enable visitors to apply for, cancel and renew a tourist visa through their smartphones – by the end of 2014.

## Residence Visas

To live in Dubai, you need a residence visa, and there are three main types: employment, family and domestic worker. You either need to have a job in the UAE and be sponsored by an employer, or be married to, or related to (son/daughter) someone who has a job here and they will sponsor you. As part of any residence visa process you will need to take a medical test and apply for your Resident Identity Card (formerly known as the Emirates ID). Once you have your visa – and this process can be completed in less than a month if your employer is on the ball – you can legally live and work in the UAE. Well, for two years at least (or three years if working in some free zones and government jobs).

Once you initially enter the UAE, you have 60 days to complete the visa application process – but it's unlikely to take that long. While your visa is being processed you should be able to leave the country as long as you have the visit visa that was stamped in your passport when you first entered. Citizens of the visa on arrival countries may need to do a 'visa run' to get a new visit visa after 30 days.

The residence visa permits you to live anywhere in the UAE, and you can live and work in different emirates. It is valid for two or three years (depending on where you are working), after which you'll need to re-apply.

Visa renewal is a simpler procedure, usually looked after by your PRO, although you will need another medical. If you are out of the country for longer than six months, your residence visa will be cancelled.

See Explorer's *Dubai How-To* guide and visit [askexplorer.com](http://askexplorer.com) for detailed step by step procedures for all residency applications, renewals and transfers.

## Passport Photos

If you need passport photos (and you will need them) then you also need to know where to go. Grand Stores ([grandstores.com](http://grandstores.com)) has branches throughout the city and can take your picture and provide the correct size photos. Look out for Kodak outlets in all shopping malls which can shoot a passport picture or print passport-sized photos from your own snaps.

## Employment Visa

To work in the UAE you need be under 65 years of age and pass the medical test. For those being sponsored by an employer for their residence visa, the majority of the legwork will be done by the company or their Public Relations Officer (PRO). Your company PRO will submit your medical certificate, passport, Resident ID application form, and attested education certificates to the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA), and pay the required fees. At the same time, they will also apply for your labour card or free zone ID; the Ministry of Labour website ([mol.go.ae](http://mol.go.ae)) has a facility to check the status of your labour card application online. Your employer will typically start the visa application process during your probation period. They will also be responsible for renewing the card when needed.

Your residence visa will be valid for two or three years, and to renew it you will need to complete another medical and re-apply for both the visa and your Resident ID at the same time; once again your PRO will help with this.

## Free Zones

If you are an employee of a company in a free zone, the free zone authority will process your residence visa directly through the GDRFA without having to get employment approval from the Ministry of Labour. This speeds up the process significantly, and visas can sometimes be granted in a matter of hours.

## Labour Card

If you are sponsored by your employer, the company will apply for your labour card (or free zone ID), which is technically a permit to work. If you are on a family sponsorship and decide to work, your employer and not your visa sponsor, will need to apply for a labour card. You'll need to give your employer a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from your sponsor, your passport with residence visa, attested education certificates, passport photos, and a copy of your sponsor's passport. All labour cards must be renewed every two or three years in line with your residence visa; eventually, the Resident ID will replace this card.

## PROs & NOCs

A PRO (Public Relations Officer) is the person in your company who liaises with various government departments and carries out admin procedures. The PRO will take care of all visa, residency, health card, and labour card applications.

An NOC (No Objection Certificate) is a letter stating that the person in question permits you to carry out a procedure. You'll need one of these in a variety of situations: your employer allowing you to switch jobs, or your own NOC permitting a family member to work.

## 10 REASONS TO LIVE HERE

Dubai is – simply put – a great place to live. Have a look at our top 10 reasons to live here.

1. **It's ready-made for outside living** Sunshine all year. There are more than 850 hectares of parks and in excess of 22,500 hectares of conservation areas. Nine Blue Flag beaches to lounge on.
2. **High standard of living** Spacious villa/apartment lifestyle, with private/shared pool in the garden. Live-in nanny or maid an affordable option. Access to world-class restaurants, attractions and hotels.
3. **It's all about the money, money, money** Competitive, tax-free salaries. Expat packages including housing, education and health allowances, if you're lucky. Cheap-as-chips fuel.
4. **Very low crime rate** It's a safe place to live and raise a family.
5. **It's a melting pot of old and new** Middle Eastern traditions are well and truly alive in the local food, architecture, dress and museums. Where else can you watch camel racing and the international golf and tennis in one weekend?
6. **Access to world-class education** Highly rated public schools and universities.
7. **Developing arts and cultural centre** The region will be home to the Dubai Modern Art Museum and Opera House District – it doesn't get artier than that. International superstars, the likes of Bruno Mars, The Killers and Florence and the Machine, come to town – and you can get tickets!
8. **Meet and work with many nationalities** Explore new cuisines and learn about different cultures.
9. **You're at the centre of everything – literally** It's only a 30 minute drive at most to any attraction, restaurant or beach from home. Dubai airports are less than a five-hour flight away from Goa, the Seychelles, parts of Africa and Europe, and the Maldives. Depending on the traffic, it's a one-hour drive to Abu Dhabi.
10. **It's the future** Forward-thinking companies. Fast-developing landscape. Growing economy.



Most expats find they enjoy a higher quality of living in Dubai than back home, but it's worth calculating how far that salary can take you.

## Housing

Property prices and rents are on the increase, but you should still be able to keep the cost of your accommodation to a maximum of a third of your income. If you want to rent, as most expats initially do, spend a couple of months searching because you have to sift through some less desirable properties and prices before you find what you want. You'll need to search for newly advertised abodes on a daily basis to find the best deals because they get snapped up the same day (especially if you're looking to rent a room in a shared house). Be aware that many landlords ask for quarterly, half-yearly or annual rent up front – so you'll need some savings to get started. For a more detailed breakdown of property prices see the Housing section.

## Transport costs

The good news is that taxis are dirt cheap and readily available. A 15 minute journey comes in at around Dh.25. Likewise, the metro and buses are also affordable and you can expect to pay in the range of Dh.2 and Dh.7 for a single journey, depending on the distance travelled and the type of card purchased.

## Special Deals

Residents soon learn that there are many ways to get discounts on everything from restaurant meals, to beauty treatments and holidays. There are several online companies offering special deals, such as [groupon.ae](#) and [cobone.com](#) as well as The Entertainer books full of vouchers, available to buy at most supermarkets and bookshops.

## Food and drink

Depending on your tastes, eating out can be cheap as chips if you visit some of the authentic Indian eateries in Bur Dubai, or you can pay top dollar for a Michelin-star meal at a number of the city's poshest restaurants. Every weekend, many restaurants offer all you can eat and drink brunch for a fixed price, which is a good way to dine out cheaply as the best-priced deals begin at Dh.150 per person. See the Going Out section for our pick of budget eateries.

As with restaurants, supermarkets also vary – the most affordable include stores such as Choithrams and LuLu, and the more upscale stores are Spinneys and Waitrose. Much of the fruit and veg have to be imported and so costs slightly more than back home, but other groceries are comparable in price what you are used to. A family of four will need about Dh.2,400 to buy monthly groceries.

As alcohol is taxed it's advisable to set a budget for your social tipples because otherwise those nights on the town can end up putting a big hole in your pocket. Girls should look out for special 'ladies nights' where females get free or discounted drinks, while everyone should check which bar is holding a happy hour. Full price, it can cost as much as Dh.50 for a pint of beer.

## Petrol

An added bonus is that fuel is extremely affordable and it generally costs no more than Dh.100 for a full tank in a mid-range family car. A Jeep Liberty 4WD costs about Dh.120 to fill up, a Mazda 2 hatchback about Dh.60 – and don't forget to tip the petrol pump attendant.

## Renting a car

Many new arrivals choose to rent a car, and it's worth haggling over prices as rental companies will negotiate. For an older saloon-type car you can find deals starting at Dh.1,300 per month if you commit to six months or more. Renting a new family sized saloon will set you back about Dh.1,800 monthly. Make sure you opt for the best insurance package you can to help put your mind at ease when you find new dents along the side from inconsiderate door-openers in neighbouring parking spaces.

## Buying a car

If you've always dreamed of owning an expensive sports car or 4WD, living in the UAE might be your opportunity. Many expats find the cost of cars is much lower in the UAE than in their home country. Try test driving one of the latest sports models or 4WDs at one of the dealers or in the city centre. You'll also find good quality second-hand cars with low mileage being sold by expats who are packing up and moving on. Visit a dealer or check out the used vehicles for sale on websites such as [dubizzle.com](#).

## Maids and nannies

A maid may cost Dh.1,600 to Dh.3,000 a month plus a food, clothes and toiletries allowance. You'll also need to cover their flight home at least every two years, their annual visa costs and basic health insurance.

## Education

For a good school you can expect to pay Dh.25,000 plus per year for the nursery years, Dh.30,000 and up for the middle primary years, and as much as Dh.60,000 per year for secondary school. Ouch! On top of this you will usually need to pay around Dh.500 to put your child's name on a school's waiting list, and a registration fee (around Dh.2,000), which comes off the fees.

## Health insurance

By 2016, all employers must provide employees with basic health insurance. However, you may want to pay extra for more comprehensive health insurance, with extra cover for dental, maternity etc. This can cost about Dh.180 a month. Without insurance, a medical consultation will cost you around Dh.150-300, a dental check-up Dh.250, and a hip replacement Dh.50,000.

## Additional costs

Consider also the expense of travelling on your annual holidays and back home to visit family and friends. Most employers provide one flight per year back home for expat employees, but the whole family is not always covered. The good news is that Dubai is surrounded by countries where you can enjoy very cheap holidays, such as India, Sri Lanka or SE Asia.

## Average Prices

Cappuccino (regular)	Dhs.15
Water (small bottle)	Dhs.1
Milk (regular, 1 litre)	Dhs.5.50
Glass of wine	Dhs.40
Pint of beer	Dhs.35
Eggs (12)	Dhs.9
Average monthly utility bills for one-bed apartment	Dhs.500
Taxi (5km trip)	Dhs.10
Monthly internet bill	Dhs.250
Monthly gym membership	Dhs.300
Cinema ticket	Dhs.40
Fuel	Dhs.1.72 per litre



## Family Visa

If you have a UAE residence visa (employment) you should be able to sponsor your family members (wife, husband, children), allowing them to stay in the country as long as you are here. If the family member is already in the country on a visit visa you can still apply for their residency. You'll need to pay Dh5,680 to have the visa swapped. If the family member ends up getting a job, they don't need to change to employer sponsorship, but the company will need to apply for a labour card for them.

You will need a minimum monthly salary of Dh3,000 plus accommodation, or a minimum all-inclusive salary of Dh4,000. Only what is printed on your labour contract will be accepted as proof of your earnings, so make sure you're happy with this before starting the job.

## Visa Procedures

Everything related to your visa is handled at the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA), also known as the Department of Naturalisation and Residency Dubai – DNRD (dnrd.ae/en). There are GDRFA branches across Dubai in Umm Suqeim, Deira, Karama and Dubai International Airport (T3), and the HQ is in Al Jafiliya.

If that's all in place, you'll need to take your passport, the passports of the family member(s), their Resident ID application form certified by the EIDA, your labour contract, attested marriage and/or birth certificates for spouse/child, and their medical test results if over 18. You will also need copies of your Ejari-registered tenancy contract – see the Renting section in this chapter for further information – and a copy of a DEWA utilities bill (which covers your gas, electricity and water) in the sponsor's name. Take all documents to the Family Entry Permit counter at the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA). Your company PRO may help, but in most cases you will need to do it (and pay for it) on your own.

The family member's passport with residence visa stamp can be collected within three to five days, or you can pay Dh15 to have it couriered to you. You will be responsible for renewing their visas; they will be valid for two or three years in line with your employment visa. If switching jobs, and therefore sponsorship, you can avoid having to cancel your spouse and/or children's visas by paying Dh5,000 to the GDRFA; this will be refunded once your new visa is issued.

Renewing a visa is a relatively simple process that requires another medical test. Expat residents in Dubai are now required to renew and show their Resident

Identity Card for residence visa renewal. For further information on all procedures related to visas, see Explorer's *Dubai How-To* guide.

## Sponsoring Your Husband

A working woman can sponsor her husband if she meets the minimum salary requirements; in this scenario, the spouse's visa must be renewed annually. If a husband sponsors his wife, the visa need only be renewed every two or three years, depending on whether he works in the private or public sector.

## Older Children

For parents sponsoring children, difficulties arise when sons (not daughters) turn 18. Unless they are enrolled in full-time education at a recognised institution in the UAE, they must transfer their visa to an employer. Or, the parents can pay a one-off Dh5,000 deposit and apply for an annual visa, which must be renewed yearly and is valid until the son turns 21. Daughters can stay on their father's sponsorship until they marry.

## Property Owners

Property owners and investors (and sometimes their family) can apply for a six-month multiple-entry permit, which is renewable for Dh2,000 provided the owner leaves and then re-enters the country. This is a permit, and doesn't give the holder as many rights as residency, such as being able to apply for a UAE driving licence, bank account etc. The property value must be a minimum of Dh1 million.

## Sponsoring Your Parents

There are constraints when Dubai residents want to sponsor their parents – a new ruling at the end of 2013 states that individuals must earn a minimum monthly salary of Dh20,000 or Dh19,000 and live in a two-bedroom accommodation before they can sponsor their parents. The tenancy contract must be Ejari-registered, as must the proof of salary certificate (by the Ministry of Labour).

Upon applying to sponsor a parent a Dh2,000 deposit per parent is charged. In addition, you also need a letter stating that your parents are dependent on you and have no one at home to look after them, and this letter must be verified by the embassy in your home country. Contact the GDRFA for more information (dnrd.ae).

## Domestic Worker Visa

It's not unusual in Dubai to have a live-in maid or nanny, and if you choose to do so you will need to organise and pay for her immigration, labour



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and health documents. She must be a national of Bangladesh, India, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Philippines or Sri Lanka, and be under 58 years.

To sponsor a domestic worker (a maid or a nanny) you must have a salary above Dh\$6,000 per month, and be able to provide the maid with housing and the usual benefits, including an airfare home at least once every two years. The process is very similar to sponsoring a family member, although you'll also be asked to sign a contract stating the domestic worker's salary (typically around Dh\$1,600-2,500 per month). You will need copies of your Ejari-registered tenancy contract and a DEWA utilities bill. You will also need to apply for her Resident ID card, labour card and government health card (unless you choose to pay for private healthcare). The residence visa is then valid for one year, and allows a maid/nanny to legally live and work in Dubai. From 2016 however, all employers have to provide private health insurance under the new government scheme – Insurance System for Advancing Healthcare in Dubai (ISAHD – meaning 'happiness in Arabic').

There are additional costs involved – you have to pay a 'maid tax' of around Dh\$5,080 per year (to the GDRFA), as well as a refundable deposit of Dh\$2,030. The maid/nanny will need to pass a medical test, as well be tested for pregnancy. Additionally, there's a one-off Dh\$50 fee for a compulsory Hepatitis B vaccination. There will also be a small typing fee and Dh\$130 payment to have the employment contract attested if the maid is a private sector employee outside of a free zone.

See Explorer's *Dubai How-To* guide for a step-by-step guide to renewing, cancelling and transferring a domestic worker visa.



A medical test must be passed to get a residence visa

## Medical Test

Any expat over the age of 18 must pass a medical test in order to get any type of residence visa. You will be tested for communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV; if your tests are positive you will be deported to your home country. You will also need to have a chest x-ray to test for TB.

If you are sponsored by your employer, your PRO will arrange for you to take the medical test. Otherwise, it's up to you to get yourself to a Dubai Health Authority medical fitness centre with the following: test form completed in Arabic (there are typing offices near the medical centres that can do this for you for around Dh\$20), passport and visit visa, proof that your Resident ID Card application is underway, and the test fee of Dh\$250.

Once you have taken the required tests (expect to wait for around one to three hours, although you can pay Dh\$500 for a VIP/same-day service) you will be given a receipt, which will tell you when to collect your medical certificate (usually three days later).

See Dubai Health Authority ([dha.gov.ae](http://dha.gov.ae)) for a full list of medical centres; some offer complete medical tests for all applicants, others are dedicated to female, executive employees or domestic workers. They also offer varying services: normal, 24 or 48 hours, and VIP. Free zones including JAFZA and DIFC have their own medical centres, as does Emirates airline.

## Executive Medical Test

If you want to avoid the queues and are happy to splash that extra cash for convenience, visit Al Safa Health Centre. Arrive at 8am with your documents at the ready and there are hardly any queues. You'll be fast-tracked through the medical process and will be able to collect your medical forms that same afternoon. The executive medical test costs Dh\$690.

As with nannies and maids, all female domestic workers must also take a pregnancy test as part of the medical exam. Those working at nurseries, salons and health clubs, must also complete a course of Hepatitis B vaccinations, which costs Dh\$50; this is then valid for 10 years, so keep the certificate as proof.

You will need to take a medical test every two or three years depending on when you need to renew your residence visa; domestic workers must take the test annually in line with their visa.

You may find the government testing centres chaotic, which can be a little bit scary if this is your first experience of Dubai's healthcare system. Rest assured that, despite appearances, medical hygiene standards are followed and test results are processed efficiently. A good tip is to go wearing a plain, pale-coloured

T-shirt: this way you should not have to remove your clothes and wear a hospital gown (which may have been used by someone else before you) for your x-ray.

## Online Applications

You can complete the necessary paperwork, submit required documents and pay the fees online at [dha.gov.ae](http://dha.gov.ae) – a big time saver. To apply online you'll need a health card number; you can apply for a temporary one at [dha.gov.ae](http://dha.gov.ae) if you don't already have one. After attending the DHA centre you will receive your test results via SMS, and then you just need to collect the test certificate. Once you have the results you will be able to proceed with the residence visa procedure.

## Health Card

Once you have passed your medical test and obtained your residence visa, you are able to get a DHA health card. If you are not covered by a company or private medical insurance, it is advisable to apply for a health card as it entitles residents to low cost medical treatment at public hospitals and clinics. See Health, later in this chapter. The health card must be renewed each year (this can be done online at [dha.gov.ae](http://dha.gov.ae)), but you only need to take a new medical test when your visa is up for renewal.

## Digital Age

The Department of Health & Medical Services is embracing the digital age; online booking is now available at government health clinics and health cards can be renewed using the Express HC service. Register at [dha.gov.ae](http://dha.gov.ae) to use these services.

## Resident Identity Card

All expats living in Dubai need to register with the Emirates Identity Authority (EIDA) for a Resident Identity Card (previously called Emirates ID) before applying for their residence visa. Without a card you won't be able to complete the medical tests required for the visa. Additionally, if you fail to sign up you'll also face daily fines of Dh\$20, up to a total of Dh\$1,000.

Each card contains the holder's address, photo, date of birth and fingerprints, and is now an official source of identification in the UAE. It will eventually replace all other cards, such as health cards and labour cards, and can already be used at the e-Gate service at Dubai International Airport if the user pays the Dh\$150 activation fee. Great for frequent flyers!

UAE nationals must pay Dh\$100 for their ID cards; expat residents pay Dh\$100 per year of validity on their residence visa (two years on the visa equals Dh\$200), plus a small delivery fee. Children under the age of 15 also need one, but the fee is halved.

To register for your card, take your passport with your visit or residence visa, ID fee and a typing fee of Dh\$30 to an authorised typing centre, where your application will be filled in and translated into Arabic. Then, take the completed form to a registration centre, with your fee receipt, where you'll be fingerprinted and have your photo taken. You will then need your Resident ID application form, certified by the EIDA, to process your residence visa. Once your residence visa is approved and stamped you will receive a confirmation SMS that your Resident ID card is ready for collection; alternatively, it can be delivered to you (for an additional fee of Dh\$20).

A fast-track service at the Al Barsha centre allows applicants to obtain their Resident ID within just 24 hours.

For new residents this process is wrapped up in the visa application process and your company PRO will look after the whole process. If you're already a resident and need to apply, a list of registration centres and further details can be found at [id.gov.ae](http://id.gov.ae). If you're registering yourself you'll need to take your passport to an authorised typing centre to get the forms processed. You'll then receive a SMS confirmation of your appointment to get your fingerprints and photograph taken (a step everyone must go through), then receive your ID card a few weeks later.

## Apply Online

You can apply online at [id.gov.ae](http://id.gov.ae) and pay by credit card for first-time registration, renewals and replacement ID cards. This not only speeds up the process, it saves the need to visit a typing centre. If applying for a new card, you'll then be able to reserve an appointment to visit a Resident ID registration centre where your fingerprints and a photograph will be taken. Once it's time to renew your ID, you should be able to complete the entire process online. A list of authorised typing and registration centres, plus up-to-date information, can be found at [id.gov.ae](http://id.gov.ae).

For a step-by-step guide to applying for or renewing a Resident ID, see Explorer's *Dubai How-To* guide.

## Bank On It

Plans are in the pipeline for the Resident ID to be used as a bank card. The pilot phase with UAE Central Bank will be launched during the second quarter of 2014. If successful, bank cards will be integrated with ID cards, meaning that you can use them at ATMs. This service is optional for all Resident ID card holders.



## Driving Licence

If you're in Dubai on a visit visa you can drive a rental car so long as you have a valid driving licence from your home country or an International Driving Permit (IDP). Once you have your residence visa, however, you must apply for a UAE driving licence (apart from GCC nationals who are allowed to drive on their existing GCC licences). This licence is then valid for 10 years. Many countries are given the option of an automatic licence transfer (see below). However, if you are not eligible, you will have to completely re-sit a theory and practical driving test. Obtaining a motorcycle licence follows the same procedure.

If you are a resident with a UAE driving licence and you cancel your visa and leave Dubai, and then return later on another visa, your UAE driving licence will still be valid (as long as it hasn't reached the expiry date on the licence).

## Traffic Police

**Traffic Police HQ:** Al Quds St, Al Twar 1 (04 269 4444)

**Bur Dubai Police Station:** Nr Trade Centre

Roundabout, Al Jafliya (04 398 1111)

**Al Quoz Police Station:** Umm Suqeim St, Al Quoz Industrial 3 (04 347 2222)

## Automatic Licence Transfer

Citizens with licences from the following countries are eligible for automatic driving licence transfers: Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States.

Licence holders from some countries require translation or consulate letters: Canada, Greece, Cyprus, Poland, Turkey, Japan and South Korea.

You can read about the exact procedure to follow to get your UAE driving licence in Explorer's step-by-step *Dubai How-To* guide. In short, you need to take an eye test and submit the following documents to the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA): existing foreign licence, passport with residence visa, resident ID, No Objection Certificate (NOC) from your sponsor or employer, and Dh5.410. The licence is produced within minutes and is valid for 10 years.

## Eye Test

To get a UAE driving licence, you'll need to take an eye test at an RTA/government-approved opticians. Just go to an optician and tell them you need the driving licence eye test; most will do it there and then for around Dh5.100. You'll need two passport photos.

Once passed, you'll receive a stamped form that can be used in your licence application.

## Online services

These opticians are approved to upload eye test results electronically to the RTA and renew driver licences: Barakat Optical, Grand Optics, Magrabi Optical, Yateem Optician and Al Jaber. Driving fines and fees can also be paid online, through the RTA call centre, or at an RTA office.

## Liquor Licence

Dubai has a relatively liberal attitude towards alcohol. You can't buy alcohol in supermarkets, but you can buy it from licensed liquor shops for home consumption if you have a liquor licence. Independent restaurants cannot serve alcohol, but hotels, sports clubs and areas with special dispensation (Festival City and Wafi, for example) are permitted to serve alcoholic drinks in their bars and restaurants.

There's some confusion about what the legal situation really is, so let's clear a few things up. To drink in a bar or restaurant you need to be 21 or older. Visitors do not require a licence to drink alcohol, but they will not be able to buy it from licensed stores.

You need a liquor licence to buy alcohol from a liquor store in Dubai or Abu Dhabi. Residents can travel to other emirates and purchase alcohol without a liquor licence from licensed booze shops such as Barracuda Beach Resort in Umm Al Quwain or Al Hamra Cellar in Ras Al Khaimah, and can also purchase a limited amount at the airport Duty Free when passing through. However, you are legally required to have a licence in order to transport alcohol or consume it outside of licensed premises, such as at home. The reality is that it's very rare for people to be stopped and searched, and as long as you're driving carefully you should be OK. Have an accident though and it's likely to be a very different story.

The law states that UAE residents (i.e. anyone who has a visa) should be in possession of a liquor licence when drinking in licensed premises, such as bars, restaurants and clubs. In reality, it's unheard of for the police to enter a bar or sports event and check.

At home, as long as you're not throwing raucous parties and causing a drunken disturbance, it's unlikely that the police will call on you to justify that glass of red you sip with your dinner at the weekend.

## Liquor Stores

There are two licensed liquor chains operating in Dubai: African + Eastern ([africaneastern.com](http://africaneastern.com)) and MMI ([mmidubai.com](http://mmidubai.com)), and you do need a licence to buy from these. They have branches throughout the city and, once you have your licence, you can buy

# NEW TO DUBAI?



## GET OFF TO AN **EASY** START BY APPLYING FOR YOUR BEVERAGE LICENCE WITH US!

Some things in life are sent to try us and make our life seem like hard work! We believe in making life EASY!

Whether you are applying for a new beverage licence or renewing your existing one, African + Eastern helps you get it done in **3 easy, hassle free steps!** Visit any one of our stores conveniently located all over Dubai to pick up an application form, get expert advice and have all your questions answered. **It's as EASY as that!**

If you have any queries, please ask our staff in-store or call **800 CHEERS** (243377)

Al Wasl Road\* · Arabian Ranches\* · Bur Dubai\* · Burj Views\* · Deira\* · Dubai Marina Mall\*  
Dubai Marina Walk\* · Green Community\*\* · Jumeirah\* · Karama · Le Méridien Dubai\*\* · Mirdif · TECOM\*

\*Stores also open on Fridays from 2:00pm - 9:00pm

\*\*Green Community and Le Méridien Dubai stores open Saturday to Thursday from 2:00pm - 9:00pm

[www.africaneastern.com](http://www.africaneastern.com)



**african + eastern**  
INSPIRING GREAT BLENDS

alcohol from any branch. They can work out expensive thanks to a 30% tax but the range and service is excellent. And they're extremely convenient. Plus, it's always better to be safe than sorry. You can also take advantage of special offers and events run by the liquor stores and even join the wine club.

### Getting Your Licence

Applying for a liquor licence is straightforward, as long as you are non-Muslim and a resident of Dubai. The whole process can be carried out online at [africaneastern.com](http://africaneastern.com) or in any branch of MMI or African & Eastern. You must be 21 or older, in possession of a resident's visa, and earn more than Dhs.3,000 per month. You'll need to get the application form stamped by your employer, and then submit it along with a passport photo, copy of your passport with residence visa, copy of your Ejari-attested tenancy contract, (or a letter from your employer if you're in company accommodation), plus copies of your official Ministry of Labour contract in both Arabic and English, or salary certificate if you work in a free zone. The application costs Dhs.160, which the store typically gives you back in vouchers or credit.

If you want your spouse to use your liquor licence, you will need their photo, and a copy of their passport and residence visa.

The liquor licence, an easily identifiable red card, should be ready in around 10 days.

### Using The Red Card

With your licence you get a monthly allowance, which is based on your salary and will be enough to keep one person in drinks for the month. However, you can't save up an unused allowance and use it the following month; so, for big parties, start to stock up a few months in advance. Alternatively, pay a visit to Barracuda or Al Hamra where you can buy in bulk.

## Temporary Accommodation

When you first arrive in Dubai for work, usually your employer will have arranged accommodation for you for a week or more. If you find that you need more time to search for a home, then you may want to consider staying in a cheap hotel once you move out of the digs your company has paid for. Or perhaps you're just heading to Dubai for a look-see and need a good-value room to lay your head.

**Al Bustan Residence Hotel Apartments** Al Qusais 1, 04 263 0000, [al-bustan.com](http://al-bustan.com)

**Al Waleed Palace Hotel Apartments** Nr Lamcy Plaza, Oud Metha, 04 336 0004, [alwaleedhotels.com](http://alwaleedhotels.com)

**Arjaan By Rotana Dubai Media City** Nr MBC, Media City, Al Sufouh 2, 04 436 0000, [rotana.com](http://rotana.com)

**Ascott Park Place Dubai** Shk Zayed Rd, Trade Center 1, 04 310 8555, [the-ascott.com](http://the-ascott.com)

**Chelsea Tower Hotel Apartments** Shk Zayed Rd, Trade Center 1, 04 343 4347, [chelseatowerdubai.com](http://chelseatowerdubai.com)

**Dusit Residence Dubai Marina** Marsa Dubai, 04 425 9999, [dusit.com](http://dusit.com)

**Gloria Hotel** Al Sufouh 2, 04 399 6666, [gloriahoteldubai.com](http://gloriahoteldubai.com)

**Grand Belle Vue Hotel** Nr Carrefour Express, TECOM, Al Thanyah 1, 04 449 9444, [bellevue-hotels.com](http://bellevue-hotels.com)

**Grand Hyatt Residence** Shk Rashid Rd, Umm Hurair 2, 04 317 1234, [dubai.grand.hyatt.com](http://dubai.grand.hyatt.com)

**JA Oasis Beach Tower** The Walk at Jumeirah Beach Residence, JBR, Marsa Dubai, 04 8145 700, [jaresortshotels.com](http://jaresortshotels.com)

**Lotus Hotel Apartments & Spa Marina** Nr Trident Waterfront, Marsa Dubai, 04 440 2888, [lotus-hospitality.com](http://lotus-hospitality.com)

### Budget Hotels

Aside from the fancy hotels Dubai is famed for, there are plenty of alternative options where visitors can rest their heads. Radisson Blu ([radissonblu.com](http://radissonblu.com)), Rotana ([rotana.com](http://rotana.com)) and Holiday Inn ([holidayinn.com](http://holidayinn.com)) all have several outlets in Dubai. Al Barsha is home to a number of decent, less spectacular but well-priced hotels, while in Bur Dubai and Deira you'll find a number of places that offer good facilities and a central location, such as the Dhow Palace Hotel ([dhowpalacedubai.com](http://dhowpalacedubai.com)) and Park Regis Kris Kin Hotel ([parkregishotels.com](http://parkregishotels.com)).

Guest houses are also becoming more popular in Dubai. While smaller in size, B&Bs offer a homely feel and are ideal for guests who want to see more of the 'real Dubai'. Located in residential areas, they won't have access to private beaches, but there is no shortage of good public beaches to enjoy. Some will have their own pool and benefit from intimate surroundings, while owners will be only too happy to give personal recommendations on what to see and do.

Villa 47 (04 286 8239, [villa47.com](http://villa47.com)) has only two guest rooms, but is located close to the airport in Garhoud. Other establishments that receive good reviews are The Jumeirah Garden Guesthouse – a villa that features 10 rooms, peaceful gardens and a good restaurant – book through the usual online portals.

### Hotels & Serviced Apartments

Hotel apartments are expensive, but ideal if you need temporary, furnished accommodation. There's a large concentration in Bur Dubai, but more and more are cropping up around town, especially in Al Barsha. They can be rented on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Water and electricity are also included in the rent.

# How to Advert

## SETTLING IN

Relocating to a new country is a major upheaval, especially if your support network of family and friends is left behind. It's important to meet new people as soon as possible – start looking online for groups that share your interests before you arrive, and that way you can schedule to meet people as soon as you get here. Your new friends will be an invaluable source of information regarding the best restaurants, hairdressers, schools and more, and as they've already made the move themselves, they'll totally understand how it feels to be new in town. Dubai is a transient society, but consequently those who are here are more open and friendly. You'll find it easy to meet new people, and most likely many of them will end up as life-long friends.



Jumeirah Lakes Towers

## National Groups

Dubai presents numerous opportunities to meet people from all over the world, but it's also important to have a network of friends from your own country. Sharing banter with someone from home is a good tonic for culture shock and will help you adapt quicker to your new environment. There are several groups formed by individual nationalities, where members enjoy reminiscing about home. Below are just a few of the nationality-based groups in Dubai:

**Anza UAE:** Australians and New Zealanders' social and community group with regular events. [anzauae.org](http://anzauae.org)  
**BilgiDubai:** A large, sociable network for the Turkish community, with regular activities and meet-ups. [anzauae.org](http://anzauae.org)

**Dubai Caledonian Society:** A social network for Scottish expats with several annual events including the St Andrew's Ball in November and the Chieftain's Ball in May. [dubaicaledoniansociety.com](http://dubaicaledoniansociety.com)

**Dubai Toastmasters Club:** The Dubai branch of this worldwide, non-profit organisation provides a supportive environment that promotes self-confidence and personal growth. <http://7492.toastmastersclubs.org>

**Dubai St George's Society:** Serving the British expat community, the DSGS focuses mainly on fun and social activities, but also raises money for various charities. [dsgs.org](http://dsgs.org)

**South African Women's Association:** SAWA is dedicated to bringing together South African women in Dubai through various networking and social events. [sawa-uae.org](http://sawa-uae.org)

## Social Networks

These social networking groups are great for meeting like-minded people in a friendly, social setting.

**Ranches Ladies:** A multinational ladies group which organises coffee mornings, social nights, activities and fundraising events. [arabianranchesladies.com](http://arabianranchesladies.com)

**Social Circles UAE:** A well-organised social community that focuses on meeting new people and networking for business or pleasure. [socialcircles.me](http://socialcircles.me)

**Speak Dating:** Foreign language speakers can find 'language exchange' partners who help you practise your foreign language in return for you helping them to learn your native tongue. [shelter.ae](http://shelter.ae)

## Online forums

Websites like [abudhabiwoman.com](http://abudhabiwoman.com) and [expatwoman.com](http://expatwoman.com) are great places for women to meet other women through the forums. You might also find job opportunities, chances for group days out and advice on problems you're encountering in the city. [expatwoman.com](http://expatwoman.com) is like a permanent virtual coffee morning for women to chat about issues ranging from irritating husbands and cookery tips, to more serious problems. The group organises real life coffee mornings too, so be careful not to write anything derogatory about fellow members in case you meet them face-to-face.

[meetup.com](http://meetup.com) is a popular forum for finding friends with similar hobbies where you can arrange times for sessions in an easy-going manner, rather than having to stick to a rigid routine.

## Places Of Worship

The UAE has a fairly liberal and welcoming attitude to other religions and, as a result, various places of worship also act as good community hubs, even if you're not a regular worshiper. In addition to the churches below, there is a Hindu temple complex in Bur Dubai, near Dubai Museum.

**Christ Church Jebel Ali,** [christchurchjebelali.com](http://christchurchjebelali.com)  
**Dubai Evangelical Church Centre,** [deccc.com](http://deccc.com)  
**Emirates Baptist Church International,** [ebci.org](http://ebci.org)  
**Fellowship Of The Emirates,** [fellowshipoftheemirates.org](http://fellowshipoftheemirates.org)  
**Holy Trinity Church Dubai,** [holyltrinitychurchdubai.org](http://holyltrinitychurchdubai.org)  
**New Covenant Church Dubai,** [nccuae.org](http://nccuae.org)  
**St Francis of Assisi Church,** [stfrancisjebelali.ae](http://stfrancisjebelali.ae)  
**St Mary's Catholic Church Dubai,** [saintmarysdubai.com](http://saintmarysdubai.com)  
**Well Of Life Church Dubai,** [wolhome.com](http://wolhome.com)

## BEFORE YOU LEAVE

If your time in Dubai has come to a close, there are a few things you should see to before leaving. To begin, get your electricity, water and other utilities disconnected. Most providers (DEWA, Etisalat, du) will need at least two days' notice to take a final reading and return any security deposits you have paid. You'll need to settle the final bill before you get your deposit, and make sure you keep hold of the original deposit receipt to smooth the process.

You'll also need to close any bank accounts you have here. Banks have been known to freeze an individual's account once they have been informed by the sponsor of a visa cancellation, or continue to charge you a monthly fee once you stop paying your salary into the account – bad news if you ever plan to return to the UAE.

Settle your debts – you can get into serious trouble if you try to leave the country without paying off all your loans and outstanding bills. You should also cancel all credit cards before you leave.

If you are leaving rented accommodation, make sure the place is spick and span so that you can reclaim your security deposit. The landlord may also require a clearance certificate from DEWA to prove you've paid all your bills, so leave enough time for the administration involved. If you own a property you may choose to either sell or rent out your home – see [dubai.ae](http://dubai.ae) for more information.

Sell your car – but be prepared to take a financial knock if you need to offload it quickly with a dealer. Make sure you transfer ownership to the new owner and keep a copy of their new registration card; fail to do this and you will remain liable for any fines on the vehicle. It's also a good idea to cancel your Salik, although you won't be able to claim a refund on any credit not used.

Organise your shipping: give as much notice as possible to the shipping company. Sell the stuff you're not taking with you. Have a garage sale, list your items on [dubizzle.com](http://dubizzle.com) or [expatwoman.com](http://expatwoman.com), or put photos up on supermarket noticeboards. Dubai Flea Market is a good option for last-minute clearouts.

If you're taking pets with you, you will need to make sure their vaccinations are up to date, particularly rabies. There are other procedures to be followed when exporting pets, and ideally you need around six months to prepare. If you can't take your pets with you, find them a new family home, ask friends and family, or advertise online – Dubai has a dreadful problem with abandoned pets.

If you're feeling overwhelmed, Crown Relocations ([crownrelo.com](http://crownrelo.com)) can assist with many aspects of these procedures.

## Cancelling Visas

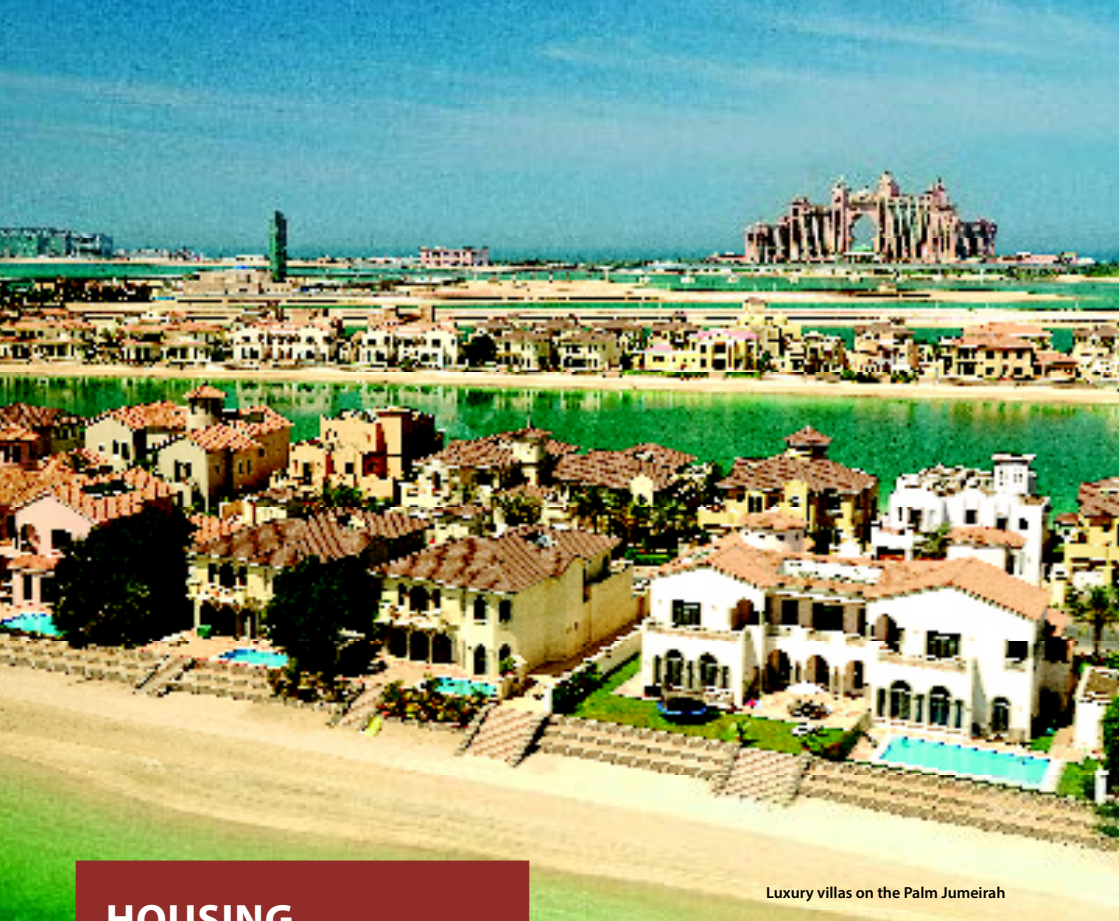
Different visa types require slightly different cancellation procedures. If your residence visa was sponsored by your employer, then they will be responsible for cancelling it once you cease to work for them. It's a simple process – you'll have to submit your passport and sometimes sign a document saying you've received all monies owed to you. You will also need to hand in your Resident ID.

The visa should only take about five days to be cancelled (longer during Ramadan), and your employer can pay to have the process fast-tracked if you need your passport back in a hurry.

Once the visa is cancelled you have 30 days before you have to leave the country – if you stay after this, you'll be fined at a rate of Dh5.25 per day for the first six months, Dh5.50 per day for the next six months, and Dh5.100 after that.

If you are in Dubai on a spousal visa and have separated, or need to leave, your husband or wife will need to help with the visa cancellation. If your spouse's company completed the paperwork, they will need your husband or wife to sign the cancellation papers.

You will also need to cancel your maid's visa, in which case, you must also arrange for her flight home. Alternatively, if she finds another employer in the emirate you can transfer the visa to her new sponsor. There is no notice period and you can cancel her visa at any time within the 12-month contract.



Luxury villas on the Palm Jumeirah

## HOUSING

Housing is one of the great challenges about setting up in Dubai. Expat packages either include housing or an allowance to cover at least part of your accommodation costs, although the amounts are much smaller than in the boom days so it's likely that you'll need to top up from your own pocket to cover the rent or mortgage.

The first question to answer is: to rent or to buy? Most expats opt for renting as it gives you more flexibility, particularly when you first arrive in Dubai and are unsure of the best location to live in. Also, you need to have lived in Dubai for a minimum of six months before you can apply for a mortgage with a UAE bank, so your first year at least is likely to be in rented accommodation.

However, an increasing number of expats living in Dubai are now choosing to buy rather than rent property as they plan to put down longer term roots.

Unfortunately, the days of getting a 90% mortgage are over, and at the end of 2013 Central Bank announced a new ruling to cap mortgages. As restrictive as it sounds the good news for those wanting to buy a home is banks have dropped interest rates to attract borrowers.

### Property Search

All your property questions are answered in this section, from which utilities you need to set up to some of the legalities regarding housing in the UAE. Like any major city, there is a varying scale of property: from labour camps for lower-paid workers and maid's rooms for domestic workers to modern high-rise apartments and spacious villas in affluent or up-and-coming areas across the emirate. And, whether you're single or moving here with a family in tow; whether you're living on a budget or got cash to splash, there is a place for you to call home.

## ACCOMMODATION

### When You Arrive

Apart from securing your new job, getting your accommodation satisfactorily sorted out is probably the most crucial factor in making your move to Dubai a success. Most expats will rent at first, although there are selected areas around the city where expats can buy property; this section covers the procedures and practicalities involved in both the rental and ownership markets.

Companies are legally obliged to provide employees with either accommodation or an accommodation allowance. This really varies as there are no official guidelines as to how much this should be. Some large organisations have complexes for employees, other companies have arrangements with particular developments and reserve a percentage of their properties for workers. It's worth checking your job offer though as often the housing allowance is included in your salary, so you won't get any additional help; your actual salary will only be a percentage of your monthly pay packet. You can use your housing allowance on either rent or a mortgage; if your company gives you the option of accommodation they may let you have the money to find your own place instead.

In previous years, Dubai has been home for many people working in Abu Dhabi; since 2013, however, public sector employees working in Abu Dhabi are now required by law to also live in the emirate, or forfeit their housing allowance.

### Apartments

Apartments in Dubai are generally quite spacious, with everything from studios to seven bedrooms available. Master bedrooms in new builds can even come with an en-suite bathroom, walk-in wardrobe and lounge space. Newer apartments usually have central air conditioning, while older buildings can have noisier air conditioning (AC) units built into the walls. Some are linked up to district cooling, a system where all buildings in an area receive cold water from a central cooling plant. In this scenario, residents sign an agreement with the cooling company and pay monthly instalments. In winter, you won't need air conditioning much, so make sure it's possible to turn it off. Chilled water costs can creep up in the hotter months too.

Top of the range apartments generally come with white goods, have 24-hour security, covered parking (check if you get a space), a gym and a pool. Expats from some parts of the world tend to prefer villas to apartments, especially when they have families, but some of the facilities in the larger apartment complexes make for fun, comfortable and safe family living.

### No Place To Park

Many apartments charge an additional rental fee for covered or underground parking. In some areas, this is essential, as finding parking outside your apartment can be nearly impossible, particularly if you live in the city centre, JBR or Marsa Dubai.

### Villas

The villa lifestyle doesn't come cheap, and smart villas are snapped up pretty quickly. The good news is that if you look hard enough and use the grapevine, you might find the perfect villa that won't break the budget. Depending on the location, size and age of the property, it may be cheaper than some apartments, even if air-conditioning costs will be higher. Villas differ greatly in quality and facilities. Independent ones often have bigger gardens, while compound villas are usually newer and most have shared facilities like a pool or gym.

### One Villa, One Family

Dubai bylaws prevent more than one family sharing a villa, although there are no restrictions on the number of members of the same family sharing. Children under 18 and maids are not included. The aim is to stop illegal villa sharing that can see dangerous overcrowding, as unauthorised partition walls turn a villa meant for a family to one housing up to 60 people in some cases.

### Home Address

Traditionally, addresses in Dubai have not been as straightforward as you might be used to at home. Often your house would have two numbers, there's no postcode, and streets have traditionally only been labelled with numbers or letters – resulting in a dearth of streets with the exact same 'name', such as Street 1B.

Things are changing however. Dubai is introducing a new integrated address system, and the city has been divided into several districts, with each district further sub-divided into communities.

## LIVING IN DUBAI ACCOMMODATION

Communities include Burj Khalifa (including Downtown); Al Thanyah Third (including The Greens and The Gardens); and Marsa Dubai, which is the new name for Dubai Marina. The project will see more than 22,000 Dubai streets renamed over the next five years, so that each address will have a building number, street name and sector. So far 430 streets in the Jumeira and Umm Suqeim areas have been renamed with actual street names.

Many names used for Dubai roads reflect the heritage and culture; for example, Jumeira will have street names reflecting the marine environment like the names of fish, traditional boats and ships as well as other elements of the sea. Similarly, street names in the Financial District reflect various currencies.

In terms of giving directions to your abode, it's best to note nearby landmarks. When receiving post, many people rent a PO Box or use their company's address and PO Box, though this is slowly changing as the post office rolls out new services (see Postal Services).

## RERA

When buying or selling a property, it is important to check that the real estate agent is registered with the government's Real Estate Regulatory Agency (RERA), which is there to safeguard and protect your rights.

An arm of the Dubai Land Department, the agency's responsibilities include the following: licensing all real estate activities; regulating and registering rental agreements, owners' associations, and real estate advertisements in the media; regulating and licensing real estate exhibitions; and publishing official research and studies for the sector.

Any potential property dispute can be taken to RERA; there are comprehensive rules on issues such as payments, escrow accounts and more. For more information, visit [dubailand.gov.ae](http://dubailand.gov.ae).

## Real Estate Agents

**Better Homes** Jumeira 1, 600 522 212, [bhomes.com](http://bhomes.com)

**Deyaar** > p.53 Jumeira 1, 04 395 7700, [deyaar.ae](http://deyaar.ae)

**Hamptons International** > p.57

Emaar Business Park The Greens, Al Thanyah 3, 800 4267 8667, [hamptons.ae](http://hamptons.ae)

**Landmark Properties**

Best Homes Business Center Al Kouz 3, 04 350 2888, [landmark-dubai.com](http://landmark-dubai.com)

**Pacific Ventures** > p.55 Bayswater Tower, Business Bay, 04 451 9771, [pacificworld.ae](http://pacificworld.ae)

**Premier Habitat** Smart Heights Tower TECOM, Al Thanyah 1, 04 435 7433, [premierhabitat.com](http://premierhabitat.com)

**Propertyfinder** Shatha Tower Media City, Al Sufouh 2, 04 454 8464, [propertyfinder.ae](http://propertyfinder.ae)

## Renting A Home

Paying for rental accommodation in Dubai may be very different to what you're used to. Most landlords demand one cheque, and if you manage to negotiate two or three cheques expect to pay a slightly higher rent. Some landlords accept post-dated cheques that are cashed on their due date, while some employers will arrange to pay your rent payments directly from your salary, which can save a lot of hassle. Rental contracts are typically one year, and 90 days' notice must be given if you or the landlord want to cancel the contract rather than renew it. There is usually a fine of two months' rent if you break the lease early.

With a UAE residence visa you can rent a home in any emirate; the rapid increase in Dubai rents during 2013 has led to many expats seeking cheaper accommodation in the neighbouring emirate of Sharjah, although the downside to this are the hellish traffic jams if you commute.

## Finding A Rental Home

Using a real estate agent is the easiest and often best option, although they will charge you for their services, usually around 5% of the annual rent, Dhs.5,000 or whichever is higher. Only ever deal with a RERA-registered broker or agent (see [dubailand.ae](http://dubailand.ae) for full list). All registered agents are given a Broker's Register card, with photo ID, which verifies that their office is licensed by RERA to manage, rent and sell real estate. If you do not use a registered agent, you will not be covered by the housing watchdog, RERA, or the Dubai Municipality's Rent Committee.

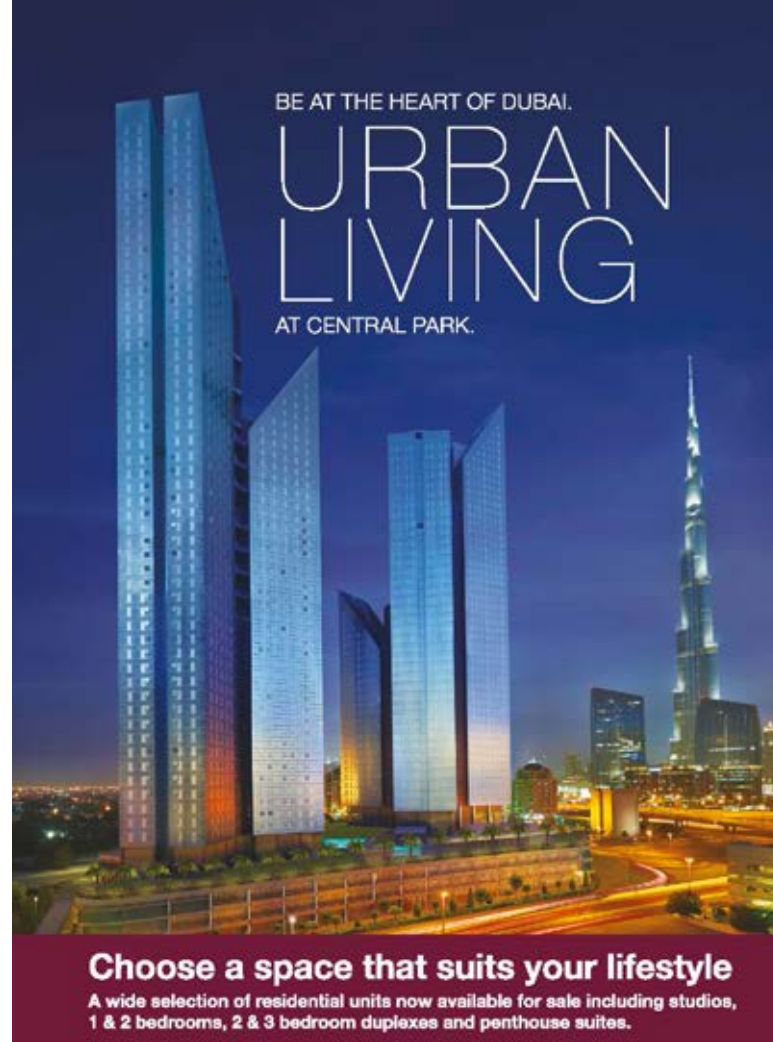
Alternatively, check out classified adverts in local newspapers or websites like [dubizzle.com](http://dubizzle.com) or [propertyfinder.ae](http://propertyfinder.ae). It can also be useful to drive around the areas you fancy living in. Often there will be 'To Let' signs on vacant villas; if you like a certain complex ask the security guard if they know of any that are available.

Once you find a property, ask for proof of ownership of the property being rented out; a licensed agent will be able to present the owner's documents (including a copy of the landlord's passport and title deed). Also, always demand a receipt for any payments made by cash or cheque.

## Rental Costs

Extra costs to be considered when renting a home are:

- Water and electricity deposit (Dhs.2,000 for villas, Dhs.1,000 for apartments) paid directly to Dubai Electricity & Water Authority (DEWA) and fully refundable on cancellation of the lease
- If your accommodation is in an area that uses district cooling, you will need to pay a deposit to the cooling company (usually Palm District Cooling, [palmutilities.com](http://palmutilities.com)). The deposit amount varies depending on the size and location of the property.



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RESIDENCES

## LIVING IN DUBAI ACCOMMODATION

- Real estate commission is around 5% of annual rent and is a one-off payment
  - Maintenance charges vary, but could be around 5% of annual rent, and are sometimes included
  - A housing fee of 5% of your yearly rent is charged through your DEWA bill, spread across 12 months
- If you're renting a villa, don't forget that you may have to maintain a garden and pay for extra water. It's worth asking the landlord what the average DEWA bills are for a particular property.

### Renting A Room

When you first arrive, if you're alone, it works out cheaper just to rent a room because the rental payments are usually monthly (as opposed to quarterly, half-yearly or annually if you get your own place). In this scenario though, there is no guarantee that you will get a rental contract, which means that you can't get a liquor licence. The advantage is that you can usually leave your room with just one month's notice, so it gives you more flexibility. Also, the price will probably include all bills, so you can budget more easily knowing that your living costs are fixed.

### Sharing

Let's clarify the issue of unrelated singles of the opposite sex sharing accommodation. There have been stories of people being evicted, but Dubai Municipality stated in the press at the time that the evictions were done to avoid overcrowding. Officially, under UAE law, it is illegal for unmarried or unrelated people of the opposite sex to live together. In reality, the police don't investigate who is living with whom



Many expats share villas

unless they have need to visit you in relation to an official complaint. Do bear in mind that you are more likely to be frowned upon for sharing with someone of the opposite sex (who you are not married to or related to) if you're living in a family designated area such as Al Barsha or Jumeira where there is a high concentration of local families. Many expats share accommodation, but the issue should always be approached with caution.

### Ejari

Meaning 'my rent' in Arabic, Ejari is an online system set up by RERA to oversee the rental market and its procedures. Its main purpose is to legalise the relationship between landlord and tenant, and all rental contracts must be registered with RERA, through Ejari.

### Tenancy Contract

So, once you have found a property, you'll need to sign a tenancy contract and pay the 5% deposit required to secure the property; an official RERA template can be downloaded at ejari.ae, although your agent or landlord is ultimately responsible for this. Only a Dubai resident can sign a tenancy contract, so you cannot rent a property if you are still on a visit visa; however, by this stage you should have your residence visa stamped.

All tenancy/rental contracts must be registered through RERA's online Ejari service; this is required by law to safeguard the rights of both the tenant and the landlord. You will need an Ejari-registered contract in case you need to dispute a rent increase, eviction etc. For a lease to be registered with Ejari, the landlord must have an official title deed for the property – so always check this before handing over your deposit.

Once you have the keys to the property you can register the tenancy contract. Visit any Ejari typing centre with your tenancy contract (see ejari.ae for locations), Resident ID or passport copy for landlord, a copy of the security deposit receipt, and your Resident ID and passport. Pay the fee of Dhs.195 and your Ejari-registered contract (called a Tenancy Contract Registration Certificate) will be ready for collection within three days.

Your rental contract will cover the financial terms, the length of the rental and who is responsible for maintenance; since payments are usually made through post-dated cheques, make sure that payment terms are clearly stated. Before signing on the dotted line, you should also check the following:

- **Maintenance:** Some rents might be fully inclusive of all maintenance and repairs, while you could negotiate a much cheaper rent (particularly on older properties) if you agree to carry out any maintenance work



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- **Utilities:** While not common, some landlords will include DEWA/utility expenses in the rent
- **Security deposit:** This can sometimes be negotiated, but Dhs.5,000 to Dhs.10,000 is standard
- **Parking:** Landlords do not have to provide parking, so check first if there is an additional fee for underground or covered parking
- **Home improvements:** Is DIY and decorating allowed in the property?
- **Pets:** Are they permitted and are there any restrictions on the type of pet? In some apartments, cats are permitted but dogs are not; there are seldom such restrictions in villas
- **Gardens:** If in a villa, are you responsible for the maintenance? This can become costly due to arid conditions and the amount of water needed. A well and pump can be installed for between Dhs.1,500 and Dhs.3,000, which may work out more cost effective in the long run

Once you have your tenancy contract, and only then, you will be able to apply for services, such as DEWA water and gas utilities, internet, and TV.

### Renewals & Rent Rises

Rental contracts are valid for one year, after which they can be renewed for another year or terminated. A tenancy contract does not terminate automatically. Instead, it renews on the same terms until you or the landlord agree to change the terms or end it. If the landlord wants to evict you or increase the rent, he must give you 90 days' notice before the end of the contract; likewise, if you want to move out of the property you must give 90 days' notice. You will need to re-register your lease with Ejari when you renew your contract every year.

There are four circumstances under which a landlord can serve a notice for eviction on expiry of the tenancy contract: to demolish or add to the premises, making it unliveable; for repair or maintenance; to recover the premises for personal use or for a next of kin; or to sell the property.

Landlords can now raise rents annually based on prevailing market conditions, since the government removed the 5% rent cap at the end of 2013; landlords are able to increase rents by up to 20%, which overrides the previous 5% rental cap. There are restrictions though: the maximum increase is 10% if the property falls 21-30% below market rates and 15% if the property is 31-40% under average rents.

If your landlord does try to increase the rent unfairly then you can raise a dispute through the Dubai Municipality's Rent Committee (DMRC). Check the rent cap calculator at [ejari.ae](http://ejari.ae) to receive the increase cap and average rental for your requested area and unit. If you, or the landlord, cannot reach an agreement either of you can take the case to the DMRC, whose decision is final and binding.

### Buying A Home

The property market in Dubai grew at the fastest pace in the world in the year up to the end of June 2013, financed primarily from cash buyers. Mortgage lending is increasing though, and so buying a home is a viable option for well-paid expats planning to stay long-term or for those wanting to buy-to-let and make a return on their investment – especially as rents are rising each quarter. Interest rates on mortgages have dropped since 2010 from 9% to 4.5% per year, and banks are also offering incentives to would-be homeowners, such as discounts on processing and valuation fees, and reduced interest rates during the first year. Talk of another property bubble has been rejected by those in real estate, and the recent mortgage cap is an attempt to stabilise the market.

To buy a property in Dubai you need to have a UAE bank account, and have a 25% down payment/deposit (or 15% of the property value). Typically, you need to be salaried or self-employed with a minimum monthly salary of Dhs.15,000, and aged 21 or over; mortgages are available to both UAE and non-UAE residents.

For an in-depth step-by-step guide, see Explorer's *Dubai How-To* guide to buying and selling property in the UAE.

### Freehold Or Leasehold?

Most property in Dubai available for purchase by expats is freehold. Maintenance fees are payable by the property owner and cover the cost to the developer of maintaining all the shared facilities. Fees are typically paid annually, though some developers will accept quarterly payments. If you buy leasehold your lease will stipulate who is responsible for maintenance and repairs, and any other conditions you should meet. There is also a small, annual ground rent fee payable to the owner of the land (the freeholder). Check that the seller is up to date on ground rent payments before you take over the contract.

### House Hunting

The list of real estate agents earlier in this section is a great place to start, but it's often better to trawl through the property listings in *Gulf News* ([gnads4u.com](http://gnads4u.com)) or on [dubizzle.com](http://dubizzle.com) to find out which properties are listed with which agent. Always deal with a RERA-registered agent or broker. In general, expect to pay a flat fee of around 2-5% of the purchase price to the agent upon completion of sale.

One key point is that non-UAE nationals can only buy in specially designated areas for expatriate freehold or leasehold (typically 99 years) sales. Property in some areas is only available for purchase by Emiratis or GCC nationals; such areas include Jumeira, Umm Suqeim, Al Barsha and most parts of Old Dubai.

# Thinking of buying or renting a new home in Dubai?



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[hamptons.ae](http://hamptons.ae)



If you're buying a new development in an apartment building in Marsa Dubai, Jumeirah Lakes Towers (JLT) or Business Bay, be aware that many are built by sub-contractors and consequently the finished standard and management capability will vary. For peace of mind, stick with reputable companies.

You can choose to buy off-plan – though few UAE banks provide mortgages for this. This option means you get a good price for your property, but you have to be prepared for the possibility that the construction could be delayed, so check regularly on progress.

Likewise if you buy a completed property, the handover could be subject to delays due to rent or mortgage issues, which could delay your moving-in date. When buying or selling a property, always check that the real estate agent is registered with RERA, which is there to safeguard and protect your rights.

## Developers

### Arady Developers

**SJ Tower, Shk Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum St**  
Al Karamah, Abu Dhabi  
**02 447 2542**  
arady.com

With a sturdy reputation, Arady Developers is a Shariah-compliant investment company focused on real estate, real estate related investment and private equity. Their operations span the GCC, and they have several developments in Dubai.

### Damac Properties

**Executive Heights Bldg TECOM, Al Thanyah 1**  
**04 373 1000**  
damacproperties.com

**Map 1 N6 Metro Dubai Internet City**  
Develops apartment buildings and commercial office towers, including Ocean Heights, Marina Terrace and The Waves in Marsa Dubai, Palm Islands, and Lake View and Lake Terrace in Jumeirah Lakes Towers.

### Dubai Properties Group

**Vision Tower Business Bay 04 435 2117**  
dubai-properties.ae

**Map 2 E6 Metro Business Bay**  
Its flagship freehold properties are Jumeirah Beach Residence and Business Bay. It also has a big residential development called The Villa and is the master developer behind the Dubailand project.

### Emaar Properties PJSC

**Emaar Business Park The Greens, Al Thanyah 3**  
**04 367 3333**  
emaar.com

**Map 1 N5 Metro Nakheel**  
Emaar's flagship property is Burj Khalifa; its portfolio of freehold real estate projects includes: Marsa Dubai,

Arabian Ranches, Emirates Living (The Views, The Meadows, The Springs, The Lakes and The Greens), Emaar Towers and Downtown Dubai (Burj Khalifa, Burj Residence, Burj Views, Old Town, South Ridge).

### Nakheel Properties

**Nr Knowledge Village Al Sufouh 2 04 390 3333**  
nakheel.com

**Map 1 N5 Metro Dubai Internet City**  
Builds, sells and is responsible for maintaining several large developments, including: Palm Jumeirah, Jumeirah Islands, International City, Discovery Gardens, Jumeirah Village, Palm Jebel Ali, Palm Deira, The World and Al Furjan Community.

### Meraas Development

**Emaar, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 511 4500**  
meraas.com

**Map 2 F6 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**  
Meraas has numerous projects in Dubai, including the hugely popular, low-rise Wasl Square development, which is made up of apartments and townhouses and is within walking distance of Safa Park. There's actually a waiting list to be able to rent a Wasl Square apartment.

## Real Estate Law

The Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) is a government organisation that, aside from setting the rental index, regulates the real estate market and aims to maintain healthy property investment in Dubai.

The agency's responsibilities include the following: licensing all real estate activities; regulating and registering owners' associations, and real estate advertisements in the media; regulating and licensing real estate exhibitions; and publishing official research and studies for the sector.

Any potential property dispute can be taken to RERA; there are comprehensive rules on issues such as payments, escrow accounts and more. To find out more about RERA, visit [dubailand.gov.ae](http://dubailand.gov.ae) or call 04 222 1112.

### Homeowners' Associations

Dubai Strata Law, better known locally as the Jointly Owned Property (JOP) Law, was implemented by RERA in Dubai in April 2007. This recognised Homeowners' Associations as democratic authorities, which enable people who own units in a development to decide the financial governance and service levels provided to the community's occupants. Dubai Strata Law is designed to remove ambiguities about who is responsible for common property management. It helps settle disputes over issues such as parking, pets that disturb neighbours, privacy and maintenance of common areas. There are numerous such associations registered with RERA, mostly in 'new' areas such

as Marsa Dubai, Jumeirah Lakes Towers and Palm Jumeirah. If you are thinking of buying property in Dubai, it's worth checking whether your chosen development offers a Homeowners' Association; it can provide you with an extra level of security.

Check out the government's official website for information on laws, fees and general facts related to property purchases in the emirate: [dubailand.gov.ae](http://dubailand.gov.ae) (Dubai Land Department).

## Mortgages

Before you go house hunting, it's advisable to get a mortgage in place, or pre-approval, so you're in a position to make an offer should you find the place of your dreams. A 10% deposit is required to secure a property and this could be money wasted should you then find nobody is willing to lend to you.

At the end of 2013, the UAE Central Bank announced a new ruling to cap mortgages (also known as home loans here). For properties valued at less than Dh5.5 million, expat first-time buyers can get a mortgage of 75%. For properties valued above Dh5.5 million, expats can only get a mortgage of 65%. Expats taking out a 'home loan' for a second, third, fourth or subsequent property will be able to get a 60% mortgage. Financing for off-plan property is restricted to 50% regardless of the value of the property or the nationality of the applicant.

A mortgage can be calculated on more than one salary, providing they are listed as co-borrowers in the loan contract. Central Bank rules also state that your monthly mortgage instalments and other debts should not consume more than 50% of your income. Expats may also find it more difficult to get a mortgage if they are single and have been here less than six months. If you have a family, a stable job and been in the country for a few years then they presume you are committed to the country and are happier to lend you money.

The amount financed by the lender also varies and depends on whether the property is a villa or an apartment, where they are and who built them. It's also worth noting that some banks and lenders will only provide mortgages for select developments. Additionally, they may also have different acceptance criteria and mortgage processes, which change frequently, so it's advisable to do your homework.

There are international names such as HSBC, Barclays, Standard Chartered and Citibank alongside local financial houses in Dubai, including Emirates NBD and Mashreq.

Fortunately, interest rates are currently much lower than the 9% highs of the pre-financial crisis era, with fixed rate deals available at around 3.99-4.99% depending on the term.

To help you get started, try some of the new price-compare websites such as Souqalmal.com or Moneycamel.com. Here you can compare rates from various national banks as well as international banks with UAE branches.

Lenders will only provide mortgages on a select number of developments, which varies from institution to institution. You'll probably be expected to take out a life insurance policy to cover the amount of the loan, and this should be done well in advance of the transfer date in order to avoid delays getting the mortgage though. Equity release and mortgage transfers have recently been introduced to the market, offering investors the opportunity to release equity and secure better rates. To combat price sensitive customers moving their loans, most banks have introduced exit fees but there are still completely flexible mortgages available. More recent innovations also include international mortgages, which offer loans in currency denominations other than dirhams. This offers clients the ability to structure their loan in a preferred currency, with the ability to switch if they choose to.

## Islamic Mortgages

Shariah-compliant or Islamic mortgages are alternative financing options available to non-Muslims. The term 'home finance' is used as opposed to mortgage.

Complying with Islamic beliefs, the bank purchases the asset on behalf of the buyer who then effectively leases it back from the institution at a marked-up price, but with zero interest. The bank owns the title deeds of the purchased property until the full amount is repaid.

## Mortgage Application

The first step towards getting a mortgage is to get a pre-approval before beginning your property search – that way you can find out how much the banks are willing to lend you. The documents needed for this process are: the original and copies of your passport, six months of bank statements, salary confirmation from your employer and six months of salary slips.

The 'approval in principle' should come through in four working days. Generally, employed applicants will be able to borrow a higher percentage of their income than the self-employed. The amount is approximately 50% of disposable monthly income – and the calculations will take into account all your financial commitments. If you're able to pay a large deposit the terms are likely to improve. Mortgages are usually granted for 25 years and lenders will generally finance individuals up to 65 years of age.

The next step is for the lender to provide an unconditional approval on the basis that any conditions noted in the pre-approval are satisfied.



## Purchase Costs

Make sure you budget for the additional costs associated with buying a house, as they can add up. The obligatory amounts equate to around 6% of the purchase price, not including any cash deposit.

**Solicitor fees:** By law there is no requirement to have a solicitor act for you when buying property in Dubai, but you may wish to employ legal help to see you through the process. Legal costs will vary depending on whose services you use.

**Real estate agent/broker's fee:** The flat fee to the agent is usually 2-5% of the purchase price, upon completion of sale.

**Mortgage broker fee:** Often 0.5% of the purchase price or a pre-determined flat fee.

**Arrangement fee:** Dhs.3,000, but can often be offset against the processing fee.

**Processing fee:** Often around 1.5% of purchase fee, but minimum amounts of around Dhs.3,000 are common.

**Valuation fee:** Expect to pay around Dhs.3,000.

**Life and household insurance:** Life insurance to the value of the property is mandatory for a mortgage. Shop around for the best deal.

**Land registry:** Payable to the Dubai Land Department (600 666 556, [dubailand.gov.ae](http://dubailand.gov.ae)). The fee is 2% of the property value, plus a Dhs.10 surcharge, and establishes legal ownership of the property. The buyer also pays Dhs.250 fees (plus Dhs.10 surcharge) for the title deed and a Dhs.100 map issuance fee (plus Dhs.10 surcharge).

## Buying Process

Once your offer has been accepted, a Sales & Purchase Agreement (SPA) will be drawn up by the real estate agency, which defines all the terms and conditions for the transfer of property. If you require a mortgage, the lender will issue an unconditional offer letter, which states the terms and conditions of the mortgage.

To process the mortgage, you need your passport plus copies, six months of bank statements, salary confirmation from your employer and six months of salary slips. Once the paperwork is signed and sent back to the lender, the settlement process begins. This is when the lender transfers the mortgage payment to either the seller or to the existing lender who has the first charge over the property. This usually occurs on the day of the transfer. Equal instalments are then taken from your bank every month. For the full transfer of ownership to take place, you will need to register the property and your mortgage with the Dubai Land Department. And then? Collect your keys and call the removal van.

## Sales & Purchase Agreement

When you buy a property, a Sales & Purchase Agreement (SPA) will be drawn up by the real estate agency, which defines all the terms and conditions for the transfer or property. It is advisable to consult a lawyer so that you make sure you understand all the terms. When selling a property, you will need to provide this agreement, along with the title deeds, floorplans, location map and liability letter from the bank you have the mortgage with.

## Land Registry

When you buy a property, in order for the full transfer of ownership to take place, you will need to register the property with the Dubai Land Department – the central agency for all transactional processes related to freehold and leasehold purchases.

This establishes legal ownership of the land or property, thus safeguarding the owner from future dispute, and provides the owner with the title deeds to their property or land. Fees levied by the Dubai Land Department are dependent on whether the property purchase is covered by a conventional mortgage, an Islamic (Shariah-compliant) mortgage or a cash purchase. All fees are payable by the buyer.

## Fast-track service

Sign up to the e-Smart Travel Estate Pack (E-STEP) and the department will come to you, register your transaction and even issue the title deed – all in less than one hour. This service costs Dhs.4,000, and both the buyer and the seller need to be present at the same time.

## Selling A Home

Selling a property in the UAE can be a simple process, but takes around six weeks to complete. Before putting up the 'For Sale' sign, sort out any maintenance issues and redecorate if needed. Then, you should market the property across a range of property websites. Most real estate agents can assist you with this by drawing floorplans, arranging viewings and giving you a free valuation based on market trends; you may also want to advertise the property on sites such as [dubizzle.com](http://dubizzle.com).

Property transactions in Dubai can be viewed at their actual selling value on the Real Estate Regulatory Agency's (RERA) site, [dubailand.gov.ae](http://dubailand.gov.ae). Finding a good agent to help you sell your home is important, as private property sales here are rare. Agents can charge up to 2% of the property price to cover the costs of marketing your property. It shouldn't take long to find a buyer – Dubai's real estate market is the world's top performer according to a survey compiled by the Global Property Guide.

# Rental & Property Prices

**The price of renting and the cost of buying are hot topics for expats seeking a home in Dubai. It's no secret that the real estate sector is booming. Here's a look at the figures from the past year.**

## Going up

The economic crisis is now a distant memory in Dubai. CBRE Middle East, a global commercial real estate advisor reports that Dubai continues to see strong economic growth and the total value of residential transactions reached Dhs.11.1 billion in Q3 of 2013. Figures show that roughly 75% of residential sales were cash transactions in 2013.

The rental market is booming too, and the average residential rentals grew by more than 30% in the 12 months preceding Q2 2013. CBRE reported that the residential sector is showing signs of overheating with lease and sale rates rising too quickly – significantly outpacing growth in wage levels. However, it is still possible to find affordable accommodation as rents have not reached extortionate highs.

## Transport links

Proximity to metro stations and the soon-to-be-opened tram are factors that are affecting popularity – currently the tramline is still under construction, but once it is up and running in November 2014 it will provide a much-needed public transport link for residents on The Palm and JBR.

## What you'll pay

If you're single and looking to rent a one-bedroom apartment in a central location such as Marsa Dubai, prices start at about Dhs.70,000 per year for an unfurnished place. To rent a three-bedroom villa prices start

at around Dhs.220,000 annually for an unfurnished property somewhere a little further out such as Arabian Ranches.

The cost of renting a room in a central area or near the beach (in JBR for example) starts at around Dhs.5,000 per month for a furnished room with an en-suite bathroom.

## Going down

Prices haven't gone up everywhere. Studios in Palm Jumeirah dropped in price by 7% in 2013. Though one-bedroom apartments saw a hike of 14% over the year, according to [propertyfinder.ae](http://propertyfinder.ae), the property search portal.

Dubai Sports City has seen a 30% rise in rental prices over 2013, as the community becomes more developed.

## Booming sales

The Expo 2020 win is expected to lead to a rise in asking price for both plots and ready villas/apartments in developments close to the Expo site and Jabal Ali area; rents have already seen an increase.

Buying an apartment in Dubai can cost from Dhs.850,000 for a 986 sq ft one-bedroom apartment near the beach in Marsa Dubai. A 1,900 sq ft three-bedroom villa with a garden about 15 minutes' drive from the beach in The Springs starts at approximately Dhs.1,900,000.

However, if you search further away from the seafloor or in the Bur Dubai area and older parts of Dubai, the cost of renting and buying is less.

## Popular Places

Leading real estate portal [propertyfinder.ae](http://propertyfinder.ae) announced at the end of 2013 that Marsa Dubai has held its position as the most-searched neighbourhood on the [propertyfinder](http://propertyfinder.ae) website since 2012. The price of rent in the area increased 36% over the course of 2013.

However, the nearby JLT development only saw a 6% increase in rental prices over the year.





Lakeside villas at Jumeirah Islands

## RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Dubai has plenty of residential areas to choose from, ranging from family villas, to snazzy high-rise apartments. More developments are springing up all the time and each, when finished, will have its own shops and restaurants, and usually, access to a school.

Some areas are more popular with local families, such as Al Warqa (south of Mirdif), or Al Sufouh (near Umm Suqeim) while others are so well-established that it's challenging to even find available accommodation, as is the case in Garhoud – although it benefits from being very near the airport and having a metro stop. The Gardens near Ibn Battuta Mall has virtually nothing available – the low-rise buildings here are set in an oasis of green and were snapped up long ago.

Select areas that appeal to you from our guide and then spend a few days driving to each place you are interested in – so you can see if the development

is well established or still under construction, what facilities are there and what the traffic is like.

We've provided a price guide, with prices being for unfurnished properties – if you want to rent a furnished place, anticipate adding Dhs.10,000 or more a year to the rental price.

You'll find these icons (below) throughout the following section. They're a handy way to understand at a glance the main differences between housing developments in the same areas, or to quickly compare the dominant housing type in different areas of the city. Also see the Residential Areas Map for locations.



By the beach



Family friendly



High-rise living



On a budget

## Marsa Dubai & JBR

### Map 1 K5 Metro Dubai Marina

The high-rise apartment towers of Marsa Dubai and Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR) are a popular choice for expats. The many hotels are home to numerous restaurants and bars and The Walk at JBR is packed every evening with people socialising and strolling. Roads in and out do get congested due to the construction of the new tram line, which is due to be completed in late 2014. The narrow road running alongside The Walk is where people come to cruise with their expensive cars, resulting in additional traffic at weekends and evenings.

Several new buildings are being constructed on the beach, which means that JBR residents do have to put up with construction noise and excess dust for the foreseeable future.

Much of the neighbourhood is walkable with easy access to amenities. If you have a car check if the property you want comes with a parking space.

### Schools

None, but the Wellington International School and the International School of Choueifat in Al Sufouh are both just five minutes' drive away. There are a few nurseries in the marina.

### Healthcare

Medcare Hospital near Al Safa Park has the closest emergency room. The Cedars Jebel Ali International Hospital offers 24-hour care. JBR has a medical centre and Al Sufouh and Knowledge Village also house medical and dental clinics.

### Shops

Dubai Marina Mall – not huge, but has Waitrose and a number of high-street shops. Marina Walk has a Spinneys supermarket, a pharmacy, a bookshop, a florist and a liquor store, plus numerous ATMs. The Walk along JBR has clothing boutiques and furniture stores and the Mall of the Emirates and Ibn Battuta Mall are a short drive away.

### Bars & Restaurants

The Walk below JBR is teeming with places to eat, many of which are open until the early hours. Marina Walk also has a number of popular restaurants, including The Rupee Room. The hotels along the beach all have bars and restaurants too, including the popular Mai Tai bar and Frankie's Italian restaurant at Oasis Beach Tower.

### Attractions

Open sandy beach and marina. Currently under construction – the world's largest Ferris wheel and a beachfront shopping mall.

## Marsa Dubai

Apartments here vary in quality. Most have a pool and amenities in the pedestrianised Marina Walk are a stone's throw away.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom from Dhs.70,000. Three-bedroom from Dhs.140,000



### JBR

JBR consists of several identical towers of around 40 storeys high, with communal pools, grassed areas and amenities. Most buildings are owned by expats.

**Annual rental prices:** One bedroom from Dhs.70,000. Three-bedroom from Dhs.135,000



### Neighbouring Community: JLT

Jumeirah Lakes Towers (JLT) is comprised of 79 towers across Sheikh Zayed Road from the marina. There are lakes flanked by a promenade with cafes, shops and a park. Access to the area by car can be quite tedious due to the one-way system, but there are two adjacent metro stations. There is still some ongoing construction. Build quality is similar to Marsa Dubai.

**Annual rental prices:** One bedroom from Dhs.70,000. Three bedroom from Dhs.96,000.



Jumeirah Lakes Towers



## Palm Jumeirah

### Map 1 N1 Metro Nakheel

The Palm Jumeirah (also referred to by its Arabic name of Nakhlāt Jumeira) is synonymous with Dubai's extravagance, and the rental prices on the man-made island match its reputation. In a recent survey, local estate agents said The Palm is one of the most sought-after areas for families due to its wide range of facilities and the fact it's away from the hustle and bustle.

There is a monorail system linking areas on The Palm and an extension linking the monorail to the metro is being constructed and should be functioning by the end of 2014.

### Schools

Al Sufouh is 10-15 minutes' drive and has several popular expat schools.

### Healthcare

Medical centres at JBR and Al Sufouh are within a 15 minute drive.

### Shops

Construction is due to start on a huge mall, The Pointe, due to be completed by 2016. Dubai Marina Mall is a 15 minute drive.

### Bars & Restaurants

Several high-class hotels are now open on the Palm including Sofitel The Palm, Atlantis and Rixos The Palm, all offering an array of superb restaurants and

bars. There are also a few licensed restaurants and bars in the Shoreline Apartments on the trunk – The Palm is becoming a high-class hub for dining and partying. Also, the marina and Madinat Jumeirah are five minutes away by car.

### Attractions

The Atlantis hotel houses several attractions including a waterpark and dolphinarium. This is also the home of the hugely popular Sandance festival, which sees world famous rock and dance groups perform on the adjacent beach.

The Palm has its own yacht marina, and the calm waters make it excellent for hiring watersports gear from the area's hotels – Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP) is becoming more and more popular here.

### Palm Jumeirah

The trunk of the island is made up of large one to four-bedroom apartments, and a one-bedroom and the fronds are covered in nearly identical three to six-bedroom villas. Traffic onto the island isn't a problem (unless there's a large event) and there is plenty of parking underneath the apartment buildings and next to the villas.

Despite the Palm's obviously engineered shape when viewed from above, once you've got your feet planted on it, it doesn't appear quite so symmetrical. **Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom from Dhs.95,000. Three-bedroom townhouse from Dhs.240,000.



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## Jumeira

### Map 2 G4 Metro Business Bay

The actual area of Jumeira occupies a prime nine-kilometre strip of coastline stretching south-west from the port area, but the name has been hijacked to such an extent that new residential and commercial developments bearing the Jumeira tag are cropping up for miles around. Even The Palm Jumeirah doesn't connect with Jumeira, but actually extends from the area of Al Sufouh. Jumeira itself is characterised by quiet streets lined with sophisticated villas, golden beaches, and good access to lots of shopping. Traffic and parking on the back streets is never a problem, but Al Wasl Road and Jumeira Road can get clogged during peak hours.

Within the same stretch of land between the beach and Sheikh Zayed Road are the areas of Al Wasl, Al Safa and Umm Suqeim. All these areas contain mostly villas and share the same facilities. Al Wasl and Al Safa are further from the beach, between Al Wasl Road and Sheikh Zayed Road.

### Jumeirah or Jumeira?

According to the 'official' spelling used by Dubai Municipality, it's Jumeira, so that's what we use when referring to this area. However, many hotels, parks, clubs, schools, and residential developments have added an 'h' to the end, so don't be surprised if you see the two different spellings side by side throughout the book.

### Schools

There are several schools including Jumeirah English Speaking School, Horizon School, Jumeirah College and GEMS Jumeirah Primary School, as well as an assortment of nurseries that includes Jumeirah International Nursery School and Blossom Village. The proximity to Sheikh Zayed Road makes GEMS Wellington International School a popular choice. The largest secondary school in Umm Suqeim is Emirates International School and the area is home to two Raffles International campuses.

### Healthcare

Al Wasl Road and nearby Jumeira Road (Beach Road) have plenty of private medical centres, specialist doctors and dentists. The private Medicare Hospital near Safa Park has an emergency room, and the excellent value Iranian Hospital is just down Al Wasl Road towards Satwa.

### Shops

Jumeira Road (also known as Beach Road) is home to art and fashion boutiques. For groceries, there are two Spinneys, a Union Co-op, two Choithrams and other

supermarkets. There is also the popular Mercato Mall on Jumeira Road, along with several smaller shopping centres. Wasl Square, next to Safa Park, is a new retail hotspot with a variety of shops and eateries.

### Bars & Restaurants

Jumeira Road hosts several independent restaurants and takeaways, as well as many fast food joints. The Jumeirah Beach Hotel and Madinat Jumeirah are both packed with impressive licensed restaurants and bars and the restaurant-filled hotels that line Sheikh Zayed Road are nearby as well.

### Attractions

The city's most popular beaches are all within walking distance of Jumeira and Umm Suqeim. Safa Park and Jumeira Beach Park.

### Jumeira

Jumeira villas still attract some of the highest rents in the city. There's a mixture of huge 'palaces', independent villas, and villas in compounds with shared facilities. You can pick up a cheaper rental if you are prepared to take care of the maintenance yourself.

**Annual rental prices:** Three-bedroom villa from Dhs.150,000.



### Neighbouring Community: Satwa

Despite having large sections demolished for the now-on-hold Jumeirah Garden City project, Satwa is still a desirable place to live. The main 2nd December Street buzzes with pedestrians and is home to several of the city's favourite Arabic restaurants as well as plenty of fast food venues. There are a number of low-rise apartment blocks on 2nd December Street and Al Hudeiba Street (Plant Street), popular with singles looking for a vibrant area. There are also villas on the outskirts of the area, in Al Bada'a that are popular with families. Chelsea Plaza and Jumeirah Rotana have long been nightlife hubs and there are several three-star hotels in the area that are home to intimate licensed restaurants and bars.

Shoppers will be able to find everything they need along 2nd December Street and Plant Street, and supermarkets include two Carrefour Expresses and a Westzone. Traffic can be bad at rush hour and street parking is hard to come by, but it's an easy neighbourhood to walk around. Residents have easy access to the same facilities in the Jumeira area.

**Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom apartment from Dhs.95,000. Three-bedroom villa from Dhs.170,000.



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## Emirates Living

### Map 1 L6 Metro Nakheel

Rated by property experts as one of the top five neighbourhoods to raise a family in Dubai, Emirates Living is a desirable address with a range of villa-style houses in The Springs, The Lakes, The Meadows and the exclusive Emirates Hills. Tree-lined streets and pathways, attractively landscaped lakes, gardens and recreation areas make it perfect for those who want to enjoy the peace and quiet of suburbia. Located between Sheikh Zayed Road and Al Khail Road, each individual zone of Emirates Living (for example Springs 6, Meadows 5) has its own gated security entrance. The gated-community feel runs throughout each neighbourhood, as kids play in the streets and parks, while adults jog the pavements. Traffic within each community is not a problem, though intersections near the highways can get busy at rush hour.

Of a similar style is the adjacent Jumeirah Islands community. There's a well-established community there (see Jumeirah Island Club page on Facebook) and good health and leisure facilities.

The nearby apartments at The Greens are convenient for those working in Media or Internet City, as there is a flyover connecting the two sides of Sheikh Zayed Road.

## Schools

Waiting lists for a place in the most sought-after schools and nurseries are long, and it is best to sign up well in advance. Schools include Emirates International School in The Meadows, Dubai British School, Dubai International Academy in The Springs, and Dubai American Academy at the Emirates Living entrance near The Lakes. As for nurseries, Raffles International School (04 427 1200) operates several nurseries in The Springs, Springs Town Centre, Emirates Hills and The Lakes.

## Healthcare

The Rosary Medical Centre is located at Springs Town Centre in Springs 7, while nearby facilities include a private medical centre in Al Barsha, Medical Specialist Centre (04 340 9495), the Cedars Jebel Ali International Hospital, and Mediclinic Al Sufouh in Knowledge Village (04 366 1030). There's also the Saudi German Hospital, close to The Greens.

## Shops

There are supermarkets within the various compounds. There's a Choithrams at The Springs end, a large Spinneys at Springs Town Centre and a Spinneys Market in the Meadows. The Greens also has a Choithrams and a small shopping centre. There are also beauty salons, pharmacies and ATMs. Both Ibn Battuta and Mall of the Emirates are only 10 minutes away.

## Bars & Restaurants

Fitness First in The Lakes has a licensed restaurant and bar, The Reform Club, and the Mongomerie Golf Club also has a licensed restaurant. Other than that, you'll have to venture to the marina or Al Barsha for a better selection of dining venues.

## Attractions

The Montgomerie Golf Club, and three Fitness Firsts with outdoor pools at Lakes, Springs and Meadows.

## Emirates Living

Generally, the style and quality of all houses in Emirates Living is good. The smallest villas available are located in The Springs, the larger properties are in The Meadows and Emirates Hills.

**Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom townhouse from Dhs.115,000. Six-bedroom mansion from Dhs.350,000.



## Neighbouring Community: Jumeirah Islands

Jumeirah Islands is made up of small artificial islands, each home to 16 villas, sitting in a man-made lake.

**Annual rental prices:** Four-bedroom villa is from Dhs.295,000.



## Neighbouring Community: The Greens

The Greens offers a range of one to four-bedroom apartments, which are well appointed but a bit small for the money. There are small lakes and pathways lined with trees and flowers.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom apartment from Dhs.80,000. Three-bedroom from Dhs.140,000.



## Neighbouring Community: Jumeirah Park

Its prime location – next to Meadows, Lakes and Springs – is a draw. The three-, four- and five-bedroom villas are great for families. There's a children's day-care centre, play area, and kindergarten through to secondary school, as well as shops and restaurants.

**Annual rental prices:** Three-bedroom villa from Dhs.170,000.



## Downtown Dubai

### Map 2 F6 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

Downtown has a community feel: children's play areas, cafes and restaurants, souks and swimming pools. The wide promenades, Arabian passageways and palm-lined streets that link the different residential quarters encourage residents to get around on foot.

The adjacent Sheikh Zayed Road is Dubai's busiest motorway, but if traffic doesn't bother try the strip between Trade Centre Roundabout and Interchange One, which is home to some of Dubai's biggest towers.

### Schools

There are nurseries (Old Town Nursery, Kangaroo Kids' and Cello Kids Club) but no schools in Downtown Dubai, but those in Jumeira and Al Qouz are close.

### Healthcare

Apart from pharmacies dotted round the Old Town, The Dubai Mall and the Residences, there is the large Mediclinic Dubai Mall. The closest hospitals are Medcare Hospital (04 407 9100) in Al Safa and the Iranian Hospital (04 344 0250) on Al Wasl Road in Satwa. On Sheikh Zayed Road is also Al Zahra Medical Centre (04 331 5000) in Al Safa Tower.

### Shops

Downtown Dubai is a shopper's dream with both The Dubai Mall and Souk Al Bahar within walking distance. Dubai Mall has a Waitrose and there are Spinneys stores and Al Maya outlets scattered around. Several banks are on the ground floor of Dubai Mall, along with pharmacies, money exchanges and opticians. Next to the mall, Souk Al Bahar houses boutique shops.

Sheikh Zayed Road also has Mazaya Centre and the supermarkets of Jumeira nearby. Both sides of Sheikh Zayed Road have pharmacies and smaller shops.

### Bars & Restaurants

Souk Al Bahar is a nightlife hub with several licensed bars and restaurants. Dubai Mall has a few unlicensed restaurants along with two huge food courts. Also, there's the two Address hotels, home to Neos sky bar on the 63rd floor of the Downtown hotel, and Cabana, the funky pool bar at The Dubai Mall hotel.

Sheikh Zayed Road has plenty of takeaway restaurants and the strip is full of nightlife in the Shangri-La, Fairmont, Crowne Plaza and Towers Rotana.

### Attractions

The Burj Khalifa is on your doorstep, as is Dubai Mall (with its aquarium) and the dancing fountains.

### Downtown Dubai

The massive Downtown Dubai development is made up of high and low-rise residential units, with



Downtown

landmark buildings – The Address (Dubai Mall and Downtown), The Palace Hotel, Emaar Square and the Burj Khalifa – as the cornerstones. At one end, near to the Burj, are the Burj Residence towers, The Lofts and 8 Boulevard Walk, while at the opposite end, on the border with the Business Bay development, are the South Ridge and Burj Views high-rises. In between is the Arabian architecture of Old Town. There is plenty of parking within each of the residential complexes, and the Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall Metro stop is walking distance from some apartments and a short feeder bus ride from the others.

Options range from tiny studios to expansive four-bedroom townhouses, and the finishing in most buildings is of a high spec. Most residential towers come with facilities including games rooms, libraries, barbecue areas, gyms, pools and sports courts.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom from Dhs.90,000 in the Old Town or Dhs.160,000 in the Burj Khalifa.



### Neighbouring Community: Sheikh Zayed Road

On the high-rise strip along Sheikh Zayed Road you'll find a mix of residential and commercial buildings alongside impressive hotels. It's a popular area.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom from Dhs.85,000. Three-bedroom from Dhs.150,000.



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## Al Barsha

Map 1 Q6 Metro Mall of the Emirates

Al Barsha has two distinct zones. The main area offers large villas with big gardens popular with local families. Some of the older apartment blocks offer competitively priced options, while the new apartment blocks, closer to Mall of the Emirates, are popular with Media and Internet City workers.

New villas are being built on the other side of Al Khail Road (called Al Barsha South).

### Schools

The Dubai American Academy and Al Mawakeb are located in Al Barsha, and Wellington International School, Dubai College and Jumeirah English Speaking School are nearby.

### Healthcare

There is a GP and paediatrician at the Medical Specialist Centre (04 340 9495), in the Khoury Building near Sheikh Zayed Road, but the nearest emergency room is in the Medcare Hospital in Al Safa.

### Shops

The nearby Mall of the Emirates has a Carrefour, a multi-screen cinema, and restaurants.

### Bars & Restaurants

The Kempinski and Pullman hotels at Mall of the Emirates have licensed restaurants and bars, as do a handful of other business hotels nearby, plus Al Barsha is the other side of Sheikh Zayed Road from Madinat Jumeirah and a short drive from the marina.

### Attractions

Mall of the Emirates and its indoor ski slope.

### Al Barsha

Accommodation is mainly in the form of fairly new, three to five-bedroom villas. Around 75% of the houses are locally owned and inhabited. Al Barsha 1, near the Mall of the Emirates offers apartments.

**Annual rental prices:** Three-bedroom villa from Dhs.160,000.



### Neighbouring Community: TECOM

TECOM is made up primarily of residential towers. There is still a lot of construction going on, and although the roads have all been finished, there are no pedestrian pavements. So, rents tend to be a bit cheaper than in neighbouring Al Barsha or The Greens.

The quality of apartments varies, and traffic in and out of the neighbourhood can get busy during

peak hours. There is a Metro stop in front of the area, which is useful for anyone working on Sheikh Zayed Road, and there are small Geant and Park n Shop supermarkets, with the Choithrams and other amenities in The Greens just a stone's throw away. Nightlife destinations such as the marina and Al Sufouh are just across Sheikh Zayed Road and the Media Rotana in TECOM is home to local pub Nelson's. **Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom apartment from Dhs.100,000.



### Up & Coming Areas

When buildings in brand new developments are completed, shops and services, and the gym and pool within the building, tend to follow a few steps behind. Until amenities are in place, prices are cheaper, and so while you may have to travel further for shops, chemists, schools and clinics, and you may find your balcony regularly inch-deep in construction dust, a brand new apartment can be a bargain.

Some up and coming areas include: Business Bay (particularly Executive Towers), Dubai Studio City, and The Crescent in International Media Production Zone. For a bargain new villa try The Plantation, Equestrian & Polo Club in Dubailand or one of Meydan City's developments, due to be completed in 2015. If you don't mind living on a building site with few facilities, you can pick up a bargain at the Mediterranean-themed Jumeirah Village. A one-bedroom apartment here starts at Dhs.45,000 (unfurnished).



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## Discovery Gardens

Map 1 H7 Metro Nakheel

Made up of clusters of Mediterranean style low-rise apartment blocks, Discovery Gardens is surprisingly green. Traffic bottlenecks can be a problem during rush hours, but there is plenty of parking around the buildings. There is also a Red Line Metro stop outside Ibn Battuta, but you need to take the F43 feeder bus to access it.

The neighbouring development Al Furjan is designed with families in mind.

### Schools

Al Furjan has two schools. Jebel Ali Primary School and the Winchester School are both in the Jabal Ali vicinity approximately 15-20 minutes' drive away.

### Healthcare

Discovery Gardens has the Aster Medical Centre. The Cedars Jebel Ali International Hospital is near to both Discovery Gardens and Al Furjan.

### Shops

Although there aren't any major shops within the Discovery Gardens development, Ibn Battuta mall is conveniently close and contains a large Géant hypermarket. Al Furjan has the Village Centre with several shops and supermarkets.

### Bars & Restaurants

Heading to Marsa Dubai and Al Barsha for a drink or a nice dinner isn't much of a hassle, and the Movenpick

Ibn Battuta Gate Hotel is a welcome addition to the immediate area's dining and bar scene. Ibn Battuta Mall houses a cinema and several restaurants.

### Attractions

Al Furjan has 50 hectares of park and outdoor spaces as well as cycling and jogging tracks.

### Discovery Gardens

Rents tend to be lower here and apartments easy to come by. The buildings only contain studios and one-bedroom apartments. It's one of the few places where landlords will still accept quarterly rental payments as opposed to six months or a year upfront.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom apartment from Dhs.55,000.



### Neighbouring Community: Al Furjan

Al Furjan is a low-rise development with four communities of apartments, three- to six-bedroom villas and three-bedroom terraced houses. The whole area is designed to promote outdoor living. It's a peaceful and pleasant area, but a little out of town and so is better for families and those seeking a peaceful existence.

**Annual rental prices:** Three-bedroom villa from Dhs.150,000.



## Dubailand

Dubailand is a vast development encompassing several varied communities within it. It stretches along Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Road (formerly known as the Emirates Road) and will include sporting attractions as well as entertainment facilities, retail outlets and residential areas of villas and apartment blocks. Developments that are already built, or under construction are detailed below, but there are many more still to come.

### Schools

Both JESS Arabian Ranches (jess.sch.ae) and the giant GEMS World Academy (04 373 6373) are a stone's throw away. The Jumeirah English Speaking School is in the Ranches, and there are options in Al Barsha and Emirates Living. Greenfield Community School and the International School of Choueifat are both in the nearby Dubai Investment Park, and Building Blocks Nursery in MotorCity takes infants and toddlers.

### Healthcare

There's a Medicentre clinic (04 360 8866) in Uptown MotorCity, along with a couple of pharmacies. The Mediclinic Arabian Ranches (04 453 4020) offers general practice and a range of medical specialities. The nearest emergency room is Cedars Jebel Ali International Hospital.

### Shops

MotorCity has a nice strip of cafes and shops, and Arabian Ranches has the Village Community Centre, which houses Le Marche supermarket, a chemist, liquor store and several cafes, restaurants and takeaways.

### Bars & Restaurants

The Arabian Ranches Golf Course is home to a restaurant and bar. The licensed Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club are just a couple of minutes away from Arabian Ranches.

### Attractions

Arabian Ranches Golf Course, The Els Club and Dubai Polo Club are all close at hand, plus it's just 20 minutes to Mall of the Emirates, Marsa Dubai and Madinat Jumeirah.

### Jumeirah Golf Estates

Lots of people dream of living on a golf course. But now you can put on your Callaways, step out your front door and you're ready to sneak in a quick nine holes before dinner. Anyone looking to garner a slice of the residential golfing lifestyle could do a lot worse than moving into one of the villas at Jumeirah Golf Estates, home to the DP World Tour Championship.



There are many things to love about living on a golf course: the stunning vistas, an expanse of manicured grass fairways, and unlimited access to first-class golf courses designed by the pros. There's a range of villa types, from four-bedrooms upwards, all oozing style and luxury. At the heart of this exclusive development is the Norman Country Club, with a leisure centre, bar and restaurants (including one by Jamie Oliver), tennis academy, lap pool and leisure lagoon.

**Annual rental prices:** Four-bedroom villa from Dhs.290,000.



### Dubai Sports City

The world's first integrated sports city is not quite completed, but there are now a handful of occupied towers. The prices are competitive when you consider that facilities in each tower include underground parking, a gym, barbecue area, Jacuzzi, steam room and sauna, and free internet.

**Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom apartment from Dhs.75,000. Four-bedroom townhouse from Dhs.180,000.



The area also includes the Victory Heights development – Spanish-style villas and townhouses all within a stone's throw of the Els Golf Club, and use of the same facilities as Dubai Sports City.

## Dubai MotorCity

Built around the Dubai Autodrome, MotorCity has access to first-class race car action. The development is completed and consists of pretty, medium-rise apartments finished to a high standard with cobbled streets and a pleasing amount of greenery around.

The buildings have English-sounding names in the vein of 'Dickens Circus' and 'Sherlock House', which adds to the quaint feel of this community. A good array of services make it an attractive place to live for couples and singles after a slice of suburbia.

You may be able to hear the sound of cars racing around the Autodrome circuit if the wind is blowing towards the residential area though.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom apartments from Dhs.65,000.



## Arabian Ranches

The quiet, curving, grass-lined lanes of the Arabian Ranches development are home to several swimming pools, basketball and tennis courts, barbecue pits and grassy areas.

This is an all-villa project set among lush greenery, lakes and the Arabian Ranches Golf Course, with a range of luxury facilities that all add up to some pretty fine suburban living. It was one of the first freehold residential areas to be completed and there is certainly a homely and mature neighbourhood feel to the place. Most of the people who bought villas in the development still live in them, so finding one that suits your needs can be difficult.

**Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom villa from Dhs.140,000.



## The Villa

The Villa offers residents spacious villas – many with pools – meaning luxury living at an affordable price. Due to its location further out in Dubailand, and the lack of facilities as yet, most people who move here are large families looking for luxury and space. Prices are competitive, but be prepared to foot the bill for landscaping if you are the first to move in. For shops, schools and other amenities, Dubai Silicon Oasis, Dubai Autodrome, International Media Production Zone and Arabian Ranches are all only a short drive away.

**Annual rental prices:** Five-bedroom villa from Dhs.190,000.



## Neighbouring Development: Green Community

An oasis of green in the desert, this modern and established development is good for families, and homes are hard to come by. The area is made up of high-quality villas with gardens, as well as spacious, low-rise apartment blocks set among small lakes and green parks. There's plenty of room for kids to play in and the place has quietly developed a strong community feel. It's a bit out of the city, but a good choice for people working in the Jebel Ali Free Zone. Its location away from the rest of Dubai means that taxis can be expensive for nights when the car needs to be left at home. However, the development of the site for the Expo 2020 is nearby and so access and facilities in the area are bound to improve over the coming years.

The original Green Community was so well received that the developer built a new phase – Green Community West. It's in the same style, with villas surrounded by greenery with meandering cobbles streets.

**Schools:** The Children's Garden (04 885 3484) offers a primary bilingual curriculum in English/German or English/French, and there are various primary and secondary schools in Emirates Living and Jabal Ali.

**Healthcare:** The private Green Community Medical Centre (04 885 3225) is upstairs in The Market, while the nearest government-run clinic is at Jabal Ali. For emergencies, the Cedars Jebel Ali International Hospital is nearest. For government A&E care, it's quite a trip to Rashid Hospital.

**Shops:** The area is serviced by The Market shopping centre, which houses a large Choithrams supermarket, as well as a jewellers, clothes shops, and home furnishing outlets. There's also a pharmacy, a florist, a dry cleaners, an optician, and a branch of ACE Hardware. If that's not enough, Ibn Battuta Mall is not far away.

**Bars and restaurants:** There are a few good licensed restaurants within the Courtyard by Marriott, and The Market is home to a number of coffee shops and good unlicensed restaurants. For a better selection, Marsa Dubai is about 15 minutes by car.

**Attractions:** The golf course at Jumeirah Golf Estates is nearby.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom apartment from Dhs.65,000. Four-bedroom villa from Dhs.230,000.



## Old Dubai

Encompassing Bur Dubai, Deira and Karama, this older, traffic-laden area is a concrete jungle, with mid-size apartment blocks and virtually no green spaces. Newer apartments have excellent facilities, and the area is always humming with activity. The dense population means traffic and parking can be a problem, and it also means the streets are full of people. Women may get stared at in the street at night – but it's not dangerous.

### Schools

There's a wide choice of nurseries, and plenty of choice for schools nearby including the Dubai English Speaking School (DESS) in Oud Metha.

### Healthcare

Bur Dubai and Karama have small medical centres. The emergency room at Rashid Hospital is near, as is the private American Hospital. Healthcare City, which has two hospitals and more than 100 outpatient medical centres, is a few minutes' drive.

### Shops

The area has corner shops, supermarkets, banks and more as well as BurJuman Mall. The souk area of Bur Dubai and the markets in Karama are good for picking up funky gifts. Close to the bus station, there's the fish and fruit and vegetable markets. Karama Market sells imitation handbags and a wide range of goods.

### Bars & Restaurants

There are great 'dive bars' around Khalid bin Al Waleed Road and for cheap eats, also check Al Rigga Street.

### Attractions

There are some pleasant walking areas by the creek and along the corniche. Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood (formerly called Bastakiya), is the original old heart of Dubai with cafes and art galleries. Stroll around Zabeel Park in Karama with its lake and landscaped gardens, or Creek Park in Bur Dubai. BurJuman Mall is currently undergoing renovations and by the end of 2014 will feature a 14-screen VOX cinema and a Carrefour hypermarket.

### Bur Dubai

The area is dominated by apartments in a mix of new and old medium-rise buildings. Some of the larger apartments are used as company flats.

**Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom apartment from Dhs.70,000.



Apartments in the BurJuman area, Bur Dubai

### Deira

Deira is not very popular with expats in higher income brackets; the centre is densely built up with old apartments, but nearer the creek there are more modern apartments, many with spectacular views across the water. Rents are relatively low in some of the more built-up areas, while the creekside dwellings cost more. Not so good for cars, but easy to walk around.

**Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom apartment from Dhs.60,000.



### Karama

Mostly low-rise blocks with apartments ranging from studios to three-bedrooms. Karama has large Filipino and Indian communities, which means a great selection of affordable Eastern eateries on your doorstep.

**Annual rental prices:** Two-bedroom apartment from Dhs.75,000.



### Falling Out Of Favour

Some areas are no longer as popular with expats. They are far from the centre, have a reputation for shoddy maintenance, or are looking a little jaded. International City, Qusais and districts neighbouring Bur Dubai tend to be eschewed by expats these days.

## Mirdif

Map 2 Q 12 Metro **Rashidiya**

Mirdif is perceived to be a bit out in the sticks, but airport workers find it ideal. The development includes villas and newer buildings such as the Uptown Mirdif complex, the upmarket Shorooq community villas and the low-cost Ghoroob apartments. There's everything you need within the area.

### Schools

There is a choice of nurseries in Mirdif including Small Steps (04 288 3347), Super Kids and Emirates British Nursery. Uptown Primary is recommended. Other new schools include Star International School in Mirdif, the Sharjah American International School (04 280 1111) in Al Warqa, Royal Dubai School in Muhaisanah, and the American Academy in Al Mizhar.

### Healthcare

Mediclinic Mirdif (04 288 1302) is in Uptown Mirdif, as well as Drs Nicolas & Asp Dental Clinic (04 288 4411).

### Shops

The Mirdif City Centre mall offers a central point for residents to shop. Small convenience stores are also scattered throughout the area along with all the other facilities you could need.

### Bars & Restaurants

Though there are no licensed bars in the area (Festival City provides the nearest watering holes), there are plenty of dining options without booze.



Mirdif

## Attractions

The massive Mirdif City Centre houses a cinema and Playnation, so there's plenty for the little ones. Further down Airport Road is the smaller Arabian Centre shopping mall which has a World Mart and a Cinecity cinema.

### Mirdif

It's a great area for families and has developed into a bustling community with a well-established feel. Take your time with your search as the quality of the buildings varies greatly, and some areas are under the flight path to the airport.

**Annual rental prices:** One-bedroom apartment from Dhs.60,000. Three-bedroom villas from Dhs.95,000.



### Out On A Limb

Silicon Oasis, off the Academic City Road, is a development containing hundreds of high-standard villas with gardens and apartment blocks. People say it's far out of town, although it is just a 10 minute drive from Mirdif. As new facilities open, it's starting to develop an identity and community feel.

The Outlet Mall is just a quick trip over the other side of the Dubai-Al Ain Road too. If you work locally, or are happy with a longer commute, you can find some bargains here, with two-bed apartments available for Dhs.65,000. For more information, see [siliconoasis.org](http://siliconoasis.org).



A furnished apartment in Dubai

## SETTING UP HOME

Keys in hand and foot through the door; now the fun really begins. There's a fantastic selection of places that can supply furnishings for your new place and expats often find some unusual styles to try out that they can't get back home. However, there are familiar companies like IKEA, as well as many other furniture stores, that can give that modern feel to your new apartment or villa. See the Shopping chapter for more.

### First Things First

For all the joy of moving in, there's also an array of phone calls to make and services to set up. Rarely does anything happen quickly or easily when it comes to this sort of thing, but being armed with the right information and approaching it all with a calm attitude can certainly help.

Don't forget that once you've moved in, the regular utility bills will need to be paid on time or you risk

being cut off. No notice is given, you'll simply find your internet has stopped working or there's no water coming from the taps. Often you can get these reconnected quite quickly, but it can depend on the provider. Direct debits are only just starting to be employed in the country, so it can sometimes mean a one-off monthly payment and even a trip to a counter to pay the bill in person.

However, there isn't much else that you should be too worried about, aside from the slowness at which things can take to get done. For everything else, this chapter should point you in the right direction. Once you're settled in you'll find domestic life in Dubai is likely to be remarkably similar to the one that you left back at home. The dining, nightlife, sunshine and vast array of activities you'll be enjoying may be different, but you'll probably still find time to slouch on the sofa and catch up with your favourite TV shows.

## Moving Services

If you're arriving with more than a suitcase, you'll need to send your belongings by air or by sea. Air freight is faster but more expensive. Sea freight takes longer but it's cheaper, and containers can hold a huge amount.

Most relocation companies will take care of the paperwork for you and also deal with the procedures at customs and so you don't need to be present when your goods arrive. Just be sure that you have booked and paid for a 'door-to-door' service and your boxes will be brought directly to your new home. Many companies specify that the quote they provide only covers your move to the first floor – the likelihood is in Dubai you could be on a much higher floor, but if there's elevator access then you shouldn't be charged any extra. Advise your security guard and check for any parking restrictions. One popular relocation company is Al Futtaim Logistics, who are specialists in international removals, with more than 80 years' experience.

### Relocation Expertise

Map 2 N6 Metro Deira City Centre

Crown Relocations is a global removal company that does far more than just physically moving your belongings. They offer storage facilities, pet relocations and maid and handyman services, as well as help with administrative procedures and advice on integrating into new cultures. Their 'settling in' service includes a preview trip, post-arrival orientations and repatriation services. Assistance doesn't stop there; they offer employment and family support services including education assistance and language training to help you make a positive start in your new country. See the listing to the right for their contact details.

If you have only paid for delivery of your belongings as far as Dubai customs, then you'll need to go to Cargo Village in Garhoud to collect air freight, or Jebel Ali Port to pick up sea freight. Take a copy of the inventory so you know what is in each box. And be patient.

Once at Cargo Village, head to the warehouse and fill out the customs information, and pay any applicable fees. You will then have to go across to Customs where you will pay any duty, plus a processing fee. Once this has been done, you can go back to the warehouse and collect your shipment. Before you can leave, you will have to head back over to Customs to have your goods x-rayed.

The process for sea freight is a little longer. Once your sea freight is ready for collection (you'll get a call or letter), go to the agent's office and pay the administration and handling charges. Keep these documents. The Bill of Lading number must be marked on all paperwork and entered into the customs computer system.

Then go to Dubai Customs House, on Al Mina Road. The staff are helpful and the procedure is straightforward. Ignore the touts outside. When the papers have been stamped and the Port Clearance received (there are fees) head to Jebel Ali Port.

## Relocation & Removal Companies

**Acorn Movers** 04 323 6920, [acornmovers.com](http://acornmovers.com)

**AGS Movers** > p.75 Jumeirah Business Centre, Al Thanyah 5, 04 454 1531, [agsmovers.com](http://agsmovers.com)

**Al Futtaim Logistics** > p.67 Jabal Ali Port, Mena Jabal Ali, 04 881 8288, [aflogistics.com](http://aflogistics.com)

**Allied Pickfords** One Business Bay, Jumeira 1, 04 818 0400, [alliedpickfords.com](http://alliedpickfords.com)

**Crown Relocations** > p.ii-iii, 35, 41, 85, 204, 237 Dutco House, Al Itihad Rd, Port Saeed, 04 230 5300, [crownrelo.com](http://crownrelo.com)

**Inchape Shipping Services** Office Court Bldg, Oud Metha, 04 303 8500, [iss-shipping.com](http://iss-shipping.com)

**Interem** > p.73 Nr Lipton R/A 13, Jabal Ali Port, Mena Jabal Ali, 04 807 0584, [interem.ae](http://interem.ae)

**Santa Fe Relocations** > p.69 Warsan Bldg, Al Thanyah 1, 04 454 2724, [santaferelo.com](http://santaferelo.com)

**STORALL** Jabal Ali Ind. 1, 04 880 3644, [storall.ae](http://storall.ae)

### Smooth Moves

- Get more than one quote – some companies will match lower quotes to get the job
- Make sure all items are covered by insurance
- Ensure you have a copy of the inventory and that each item is listed
- Don't be shy about requesting packers to repack items if you are not satisfied
- Take photos of the packing process to use for evidence if you need to make a claim
- Carry customs-restricted goods (DVDs, books) with you; it's easier to open a suitcase at the airport than empty a box outside in the sun

### Local Move

If you are moving within Dubai and have valuable possessions, you can hire an insured company to do the packing and moving for you. If not, you may benefit from packing your belongings yourself and hiring an uninsured 'man with a van'. There are several trucks-for-hire companies in the city – just ask a friend or colleague. Make sure the driver is clear about where you are heading to and doesn't get lost.

Otherwise, go to large furniture places such as Dragon Mart or IKEA where these unlicensed movers often congregate. A quick drive through an industrial area such as Al Quoz will also turn up some results. The trucks will usually have a mobile number written on the side of the door. Call the number and try to negotiate a good price (usually around Dhs.60 an hour) for the truck, driver and moving labour.

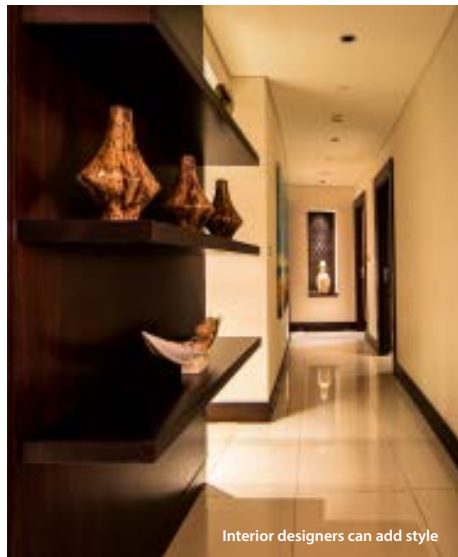
## Storage

Whether you're making the move to Dubai and haven't yet found the perfect home for all that furniture you've had shipped over, you've downsized a little and have possessions that simply won't fit between your current four walls, or you're moving on for a few months but don't want to take all your worldly goods with you quite yet, storage can be an excellent option. STORALL (storall.ae) based in Jabal Ali, for example, is a good facility with space rentable on a monthly basis and accessible seven days a week. Sentinel Storage (sentinelme.com) is another option, while the bigger removal and delivery firms may also be able to offer storage services.

## Furnishing Accommodation

Most properties, including rentals (unless you're renting a room), come unfurnished, and don't even have basic white goods such as a cooker or fridge. Not all villas have fitted cupboards and wardrobes, although most apartments do. Dubai is home to a wide range of furniture shops offering different types of furnishings, from Swedish simplicity at IKEA and modern design at Home Centre and Dogtas (dogtasuae.com) to rich Indian teak at Marina Gulf Trading. Alternatively, head to one of the carpentry workshops on Naif Road or in Satwa.

Second-hand furniture is easy to come by thanks to the transitory nature of Dubai's population. You'll find small shops in Karama, Naif Road and Satwa and online classifieds should turn up good results. Try



Interior designers can add style

dubizzle.com, expatwoman.com, websouq.com or askexplorer.com. Or try supermarket noticeboards, or Dubai Flea Market (dubai-fleamarket.com). It's even possible to furnish an entire apartment in one fell swoop if you're lucky enough to find someone who is leaving in a hurry and selling everything they own – you could get everything from the cooker and fridge to the bedroom furniture at once.

See the Buyers' Guide for more information on where to buy furniture and white goods.

Renting furniture is an option worth considering. Indigo Living (indigo-living.com) provides rentals on a short and long-term basis – perfect for new arrivals and those who are in town on a short working contract.

## Curtains & Blinds

Finding the right blinds or curtains can add a finishing touch to your room, ensure privacy if the house is overlooked, or stop you waking up with the sun. Some properties have windows built to standard sizes, which means you can buy ready-made options from shops such as IKEA and THE One. If these don't measure up, there are several companies that will tailor and install curtains and blinds to fit your property. Curtain specialist Dubai Blinds can bring swatches to your home to help you ensure the curtains or blinds match your decor, and they'll also take measurements for tailor-made finishes.

Swanky new curtains don't always come cheap though, so if you're looking for something more affordable, try your regular tailor, or look on community noticeboards for second-hand blinds or curtains that were made to fit the strange window sizes found in many freehold developments.

## Interior Design

When you get your first place in Dubai, starting with an empty apartment can be a great opportunity to create a home from scratch. Whether you need help with choosing colours for the walls, decorative art to hang on them, or the furnishings throughout, there are an increasing number of specialists just a phone call away. A good interior designer will pick options that suit your lifestyle best, so it can be a good option to help you get settled, especially if you're busy with that new job.

**3 Square** 04 346 3872, [3squareinteriors.com](http://3squareinteriors.com)  
**Cecilia Clason** 04 362 6261, [ceciliaclason.com](http://ceciliaclason.com)  
**Cottage Chic** 04 437 0268, [cottagechic.ae](http://cottagechic.ae)  
**Elan Interiors** 04 338 7417, [elaninteriorsdubai.com](http://elaninteriorsdubai.com)  
**Emirates Decor & Furniture Directory** 04 267 4274, [emiratesdecor.com](http://emiratesdecor.com)  
**Indigo Living** 04 339 7705, [indigo-living.com](http://indigo-living.com)  
**Jadis Interiors** 04 347 4233, [jadisuae.com](http://jadisuae.com)  
**OX Interior Design** 04 257 3330, [oxinterior.com](http://oxinterior.com)  
**WA International** 04 266 3050, [wa-international.com](http://wa-international.com)



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RELOCATIONS

## Utilities & Services

### Electricity & Water

Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) provides electricity and water products and services for the entire emirate of Dubai. You can easily sign up for a new connection for your new premises at one of the 15 conveniently located DEWA customer care centres or online at [dewa.gov.ae](http://dewa.gov.ae). A deposit (calculated based on supplied load), is required when you sign up for DEWA services; this will be refundable when you close your account and leave the property.

Standard DEWA charges are applicable as per its slab system with a fixed rate (fils per kWh and fils per gallon) in each slab, and rates will change based on your consumption. There will be an additional variable fuel surcharge of fils per kWh and fils per gallon, which will be added to the bill. For more information on the slab rate and other charges, visit [dewa.gov.ae/tariff/newtariff.aspx](http://dewa.gov.ae/tariff/newtariff.aspx).

### Electricity

The electricity supply in Dubai is 220/240 volts and 50 cycles. The socket type is identical to the three-point UK system but most appliances here are sold with two-pin plugs. Adaptors can be bought from any grocery or hardware shop.

In line with global objectives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, DEWA has an active campaign to encourage everyone to moderate their use of electricity and water (which will also help you save on bills). You'll find helpful advice and tips on the website, as well as a range of online services; for example, use the consumption calculator to help you manage and conserve your consumption. And, once you register, it's easy to pay your bills from your new home through one of DEWA's 20 payment methods.

Your DEWA bill also includes a housing charge from Dubai Municipality; this adds up to approximately 5% of the rental value of your property divided over the course of 12 months.

Failing to pay your DEWA bill by its due date will most likely result in the disconnection of your home's electricity and water services – often without warning; you will then have to pay a reconnection fee.

### Clearance Certificate

In order to prove to your landlord that you have settled your DEWA account before moving out – or if you are looking to sell your own property – you need to obtain a clearance certificate from DEWA. This procedure is fairly simple and hassle-free, and you can obtain it the same day you disconnect your service.

### Drinking Water

Bottled water is cheap, but most people end up buying a water cooler or pump (available from most large supermarkets), or leasing one from a water supplier and using the four or five-gallon bottles of purified water to drink at home. Prices vary per company; some charge a deposit of around Dhs.50 for each re-useable bottle, and then Dhs.7 per refill, while Masafi recycles its bottles rather than re-using them and charges Dhs.12 per new bottle. Companies will deliver the bottles straight to your door, and then collect your empties.

**Al Shalal** 800 4342, [alshalalwaters.com](http://alshalalwaters.com)

**Culligan International** Nr Federal Foods, Al Qouz Ind. 2, 800 4945, [culligan.com](http://culligan.com)

**Desert Springs** 800 6650, [desertspringswateruae.com](http://desertspringswateruae.com)

**Falcon Spring Drinking Water** 04 396 6072, [falconspringwater.com](http://falconspringwater.com)

**Masafi** Nr Dubai Garden Centre, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 3465 959, [masafi.com](http://masafi.com)

**Nestle Waters Management & Technology** Nr Wafi City, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 324 0800, [nestle-waters.com](http://nestle-waters.com)

**Oasis Water** 600 522 261, [oasiscome2life.com](http://oasiscome2life.com)

### Gas

There's no mains gas in Dubai, and individual gas canisters need to be purchased and attached to cookers. There are gas suppliers that will deliver the canisters and connect up the supply. Supply companies tend to slip stickers or flyers under doors on a regular basis and they're all essentially the same in terms of both service and price. A few of the largest companies include Al Fahidi Gas (04 351 6452), Oasis Gas (04 396 1812) and New City Gas (04 351 8282).

Gas bottles come in three sizes: most houses use the medium size, the small are better in apartments and the large are really only for industrial use – they are enormous. The canisters initially cost around Dhs.350 and refills are usually Dhs.75 (keep your receipt so that you can get some of your deposit back). There is usually a gas van operating around each area at all times; chances are that if you run out of gas in the middle of cooking your chips, one call to your local gas man and he can be with you in less than 20 minutes.

### Sewerage

Much of Dubai now has mains sewers but there are areas where houses and apartment buildings are still serviced by septic tanks. These are emptied by municipality contractors, but should you have a problem, contact your landlord or local municipality office. All sewage has to be treated, hence the charges on the DEWA bill even for houses not on the main sewer network.



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## Rubbish Disposal

Dubai's per capita domestic waste rate is extremely high, with some estimates saying that each household generates over 1,000kg of rubbish per year – one of the worst offenders in the world. Fortunately, rubbish disposal is efficient, with municipality trucks driving around each area and emptying skips daily. Just empty your household bins into the skips (there is usually one on every street). If you don't have a skip on your street, then contact the municipality on 800 900 to request one. Certain areas, such as Emirates Living, have wheelie bins outside each house, where waste is regularly collected from. Recycling efforts are poor but slowly improving.

## Telecommunications

There are two home phone providers in the UAE, Etisalat and du. Both are government-owned. The majority of homes in Dubai will have an Etisalat landline, but several new developments and du provides services to many Emaar and Nakheel properties, both business and residential (such as Marsa Dubai, Arabian Ranches, Emirates Living, the Greens/Springs/Lakes, and International City). Villas and apartments in these areas are equipped with multiple sockets for telephone, internet and TV signals. You can subscribe to du's call packages and internet services if you have an Etisalat landline (and vice versa), but you still have to pay the du (or Etisalat) line rental charge. Etisalat offers two landlines per property; installation of the second landline is free, you just pay the extra rental charges. du offers an unlimited number of landlines and extensions; each additional landline comes with a new subscription, a new phone number and a new handset. Additional extensions are added onto your existing landline subscription. Both Etisalat's Home Landline packages and du's Homephone packages include free local calls.

## Additional Services

Etisalat's Najma 7 Services in 1 bundle includes call waiting, barring and forwarding and costs Dhs.50 installation, and Dhs.25 per month rental. du offers call barring for Dhs.50 (activation fee) plus Dhs.10 per month (rental).

## Installing A Landline

To install a landline with Etisalat or du you must apply directly with a completed application form, the original and a copy of your passport and residence visa, and your Resident ID. Etisalat charges Dhs.180 for installation and Dhs.39 per month for line rental. du charges Dhs.200 for installation and Dhs.15 per

month for line rental, as well as a Panasonic handset. (Anyone with an Etisalat landline can sign up to du's Homephone calls package, which costs Dhs.50 to activate). You will then be charged monthly for all calls to international and any mobile numbers. When applying, taking the number of the landline closest to your house can help pinpoint your location. The tariffs for international calls vary by country but there is some variation in peak timings, depending on country. For more information see etisalat.ae or du.ae.

## Closing A Landline

A landline may be cancelled at any time, but it must be done in person at either an Etisalat or du office. You will be charged an early termination fee of Dhs.100 if you cancel within the first month.

## Codes & prefixes

Abu Dhabi	02	Ajman	06
Al Ain	03	Dubai	04
Fujairah	09	Ras Al Khaimah	07
Sharjah	06	Umm Al Quwain	06
UAE Country Code	971		

## Pre-paid Mobile

Mobile phone users can choose between du (prefix 055 and 052) and Etisalat (prefixes 050 or 056). Both providers offer monthly or pay-as-you-go packages.

Anyone visiting or living in Dubai, and above the age of 18, can apply for a pre-paid mobile phone account – you just need to buy a SIM card and then you can pay as you go by purchasing phone cards. Newcomers to Dubai and short-term visitors often opt for a pre-paid service: there are no monthly bills, you don't sign a contract, you can cancel at any time, and you do not need a residence visa. Etisalat's pre-paid Wasel card and du's Pay As You Go cards can be topped up with credit to use on calls, SMS and internet. Recharge cards are available in denominations ranging from Dhs.20-500 from fuel stations, supermarkets and electrical stores. You do not need to renew the line as long as you keep using it, and for du you get lifetime validity if you recharge the phone more than 20 times in four months.

## Post-paid Mobile

Both companies also offer monthly post-paid services. To sign up for a post-paid plan through du or Etisalat, you will need to bring your passport and residence visa as well as either a UAE credit card, a recent utility bill with your physical address, your tenancy agreement, or a salary certificate that shows a minimum salary of Dhs.2,500 per month.

A new du post-paid line costs from Dhs.25 monthly plus a Dhs.125 connection fee, while an Etisalat line costs from Dhs.50 per month plus a Dhs.125 connection fee (covered by a Dhs.125 welcome credit).

You can complete the application form online at shop.du.ae/en/mobilePlans or at etisalat.ae, or visit any phone outlet.

## That's My Number

All mobile phone customers now have to register their SIM card with Etisalat or du. Wait until you receive an SMS asking you to register, then take along your Resident ID or a passport with your residency visa to the nearest service provider outlet. You have three months to register your details, after which any unregistered SIM cards will be cancelled. Registration is free and once only.

## Mobile Services

Lost your mobile? For Etisalat, call 101, or for du call customer care on 055 567 8155 to temporarily disconnect your number (you will need to know your passport number for security). Your SIM card can be replaced and you can keep the same number, but you'll lose the numbers you had saved in your phone's memory. To replace a lost SIM card, du charges a flat rate of Dhs.55. Etisalat charges Dhs.25 to replace a lost SIM. You can also cancel your number permanently by simply filling out and submitting a cancellation form.

Etisalat and du launched a mobile phone number portability service at the end of 2013, which allows customers to switch between the two network operators while retaining their phone number. Enquiries about switching to du can be made on 800 242 643, and for Etisalat on 800 99.

## Internet

Internet services in the UAE are provided by either Etisalat or du. You should note, however, that all internet usage, is regulated by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA). This means that any sites that are deemed to be offensive, either religiously, culturally or politically, are blocked and can't be accessed.

Etisalat is the main Internet Service Provider (ISP), but du primarily serves the newly developed areas and free zones in the emirate. Currently, residents don't get to choose their service provider; rather you must go with whoever your home is pre-wired to, although there are plans to broaden the network to each ISP. Etisalat services range from a basic Al Shamil broadband connection to an eLife bundle that includes internet, TV and landline. For a 1mbps broadband connection with unlimited usage you pay a Dhs.199 installation fee plus Dhs.259 per month. Or, you can opt for an eLife landline, TV and internet bundle, which starts from Dhs.299 per month for 10mpbs plus Dhs.199 installation fee.

du services range from the Talk & Surf internet and landline packages to Talk, Surf and Watch packages, which also include digital TV. Packages range from 8mbps (Dhs.335 per month) to 100mbps (Dhs.810 per month). There is a Dhs.200 installation fee. You can also add on digital TV with packages starting from Dhs.279. Visit any Etisalat or du store to sign up and arrange for a home installation. The whole process takes at least one week.

## Skype

Downloading voice over internet protocol (VoIP) services such as Skype can be difficult within the UAE due to the sites being blocked here. However, if you have downloaded it in a different country, or within an area where the restriction is lifted, such as in some free zones, it will work when calling another computer, but not when calling landlines or mobiles.

## Wi-fi

When out and about, look out for Etisalat's wi-fi hotspots to get online. These are located all over town at various malls, cafes and restaurants and you can connect by purchasing a pre-paid card at the venue. See izeone.ae for listings. Existing broadband customers can get a period of free time in these hotspots, depending on their package.

## Postal Services

Previously, there was no postal delivery service to home addresses, and everyone had their mail delivered to a PO Box. In January 2012, Empost rolled out a new system that more closely resembles the traditional postal services in western countries. If you live in a villa, you can sign up to the My Home service which will see post delivered direct to your home three times a week – or six for an additional payment. My Building is the option for apartment residents, with post delivered to a PO Box in the lobby or basement. My Box sees your mail delivered to a PO Box at a post office, and finally there's My Zone, where post is delivered to local shelters that contain a large number of boxes, with the idea that you get a box close to your place of work or home. Visit empostuae.com for more details and rates. Alternatively, many people have personal mail delivered to their company's PO Box; this traditional method still works and, for many, may be the best option.

Letters and packages do occasionally go missing and, if the item has not been registered, there's little that you can do apart from wait – some turn up months after they are expected, although this happens less and less frequently.

Empost offers a courier service, while registered mail is a relatively inexpensive alternative and

can be tracked via a reference number. The major international courier services also deliver and have a presence in Dubai, including DHL (04 299 5333), FedEx (04 218 3860), UPS (800 4774) and Aramex (600 544 000). If you're expecting a package, ensure the person sending it has included your phone number, as that is often the only way for the courier to find your location.

## Sending Gifts Home

If you would rather not chance the post, Gift Express provides a selection of gifts that can be sent to most countries ([giftexpressinternational.com](http://giftexpressinternational.com)).

## Television

There are a number of free television channels, but non-Arabic language channels are limited. Most expats opt for paid TV from one of the satellite services like Orbit Showtime Network (OSN), but if you don't fancy a satellite dish or your rental terms don't allow one, then Etisalat and du offer digital TV. Digital TV providers can also provide your broadband and landline phone services, with bundles offering various levels of broadband speed, call time and channel choice. It can get expensive for the best of each.

High Definition (HD) channels are now commonplace and there are plenty of the 'on demand' options available that many expats are used to. For example, OSN customers can purchase a Showbox (a recordable digital receiver) that allows them to pause live television and record favourite shows and they can also watch movies and series online through OSN Play, which is free to subscribers. Digital TV subscribers also get the benefits of recording and pausing live television. Etisalat is launching its eLife TV iPad App to let subscribers watch on their tablet via wi-fi or Etisalat's super-fast mobile internet.

## Football Fans

If you're after English Premier League, Spanish La Liga, French Ligue 1, Italian Serie A or the UEFA Champions League then you'll need to subscribe to Al Jazeera Sports package with access to channels +1 to +10. If you're an existing Etisalat or du subscriber you can do this through them for Dhs.58 or Dhs.70 respectively.

## Free To View

Local free-to-air English language channels in Dubai include:

**Dubai One:** 24 hour entertainment specialising in various US series

**MBC 4:** primarily US series targeted at women

**MBC Action:** US action series, targeted at men

**MBC Max:** latest Hollywood films

**MBC 2:** mainly Western movies

**City 7 TV:** independent Dubai-based broadcaster. News, business, lifestyle, drama and comedy shows

## Maids & Cleaners

### Domestic Help

Domestic help is readily available in Dubai, both full and part-time. Legally, a live-in or out maid can only be employed by the individual who sponsors her and organises her residence visa, but in practice many maids take on extra cleaning or babysitting for other families; if you are caught you face a hefty fine and the maid may be deported. If you are looking for someone part-time, but want to stay within the law, there are many companies in Dubai that provide cleaners and maids on an hourly basis, and for around Dhs.35 per hour they'll take care of all your sweeping, mopping, dusting, washing, and ironing. Most companies stipulate a minimum number of hours, usually two or three per visit.

**City Sky Maid Services** Al Tayer Bldg, Al Wasl, 04 332 4600, [cityskymaid.com](http://cityskymaid.com)

**Dubai Carpet Cleaning** G1 Deira Tower, Al Rigga, 04 221 9800, [dubai-carpet-cleaning.com](http://dubai-carpet-cleaning.com)

**Ecomaid Middle East** Nr Mazaya Shopping Centre, Al Wasl, 04 388 1292, [ecomaidme.com](http://ecomaidme.com)

**Home Help** Emirates Islamic Bank Bldg, Al Mankhool, 04 380 5111, [homehelp.ae](http://homehelp.ae)

**Housekeeping Co** 04 221 1996, [housekeepingco.com](http://housekeepingco.com)

**Howdra** 04 238 0088, [howdra.ae](http://howdra.ae)

**Molly Maid** Al Qouz 3, 04 339 7799, [mollymaidme.com](http://mollymaidme.com)

**Ready Maids** Nasser Lootah Bldg, Umm Hurair 1, 04 396 6779, [readymaids.ae](http://readymaids.ae)

### Laundry Services

Wall-to-wall carpets are rare in this part of the world, but many homes do sport loose rugs and carpets. When they're looking a bit grubby, the companies listed below can pay you a visit, give you a quote, and take the rugs away to be cleaned, returning them a couple of days later.

**Alpha Cleaning Services** 800 2737, [alphaserves.com](http://alphaserves.com)

**Churchill** Business Bay, 04 323 6863, [churchill-gulf.com](http://churchill-gulf.com)

**Dubai Maids** Jabal Ali Ind. 1, 04 880 4670, [dubai-maids.com](http://dubai-maids.com)

**Modern Cleaning Methods** Nr Al Amani Spare Parts, Al Rashidiya, 04 285 1668, [modernmethodsco.com](http://modernmethodsco.com)

There are no self-service laundrettes, but laundry shops are everywhere. Some of the largest chains in the city include Butler's (04 347 2106) and Champion Cleaners (04 366 3359). As well as dry cleaning and laundry, they all offer ironing services. If you have specific instructions, make sure these are noted when you drop off your laundry – creases in trousers are standard, so if you don't want them, speak up.

Compensation policies for lost or damaged items vary, but losses are rare, even in the places that look most disorganised. Large chains normally have a free pick-up and delivery service.

As a guide to prices, you can expect to pay around Dhs.19 for a shirt, Dhs.60 for a suit and Dhs.27 for a double quilt cover.

## Home Improvements

### Builders

Exact regulations are constantly changing when it comes to making alterations to your property, but so far they have always been extremely restrictive. In Nakheel and Emaar developments, for example, you are not allowed to build any higher than your perimeter wall.

To build an extension, you need to apply for permission via your master developer, and you then need to wait while they approve the plans. Following that, you have to pay a deposit of Dhs.5,000.

Once the works have begun, an inspector will make a site visit, and on completion of the building,



Apartments near Downtown

a final assessment will be carried out. After this, your deposit will be returned if you have met all the guidelines. These guidelines are very stringent as developers seek to protect the look and feel of communities. They can determine the colour of the paint you may use on the exterior of your property and also the particular design and style of any doors, gates or decorative iron fencing.

All this may change though as the Planning & Engineering Department of Dubai Municipality is currently working to centralise all structural work carried out on residential buildings in Dubai, effectively taking the responsibility out of the hands of the developers. The anticipation is that when the new laws are passed, rules on extension plans and designs will be more lenient. See [dm.gov.ae](http://dm.gov.ae) for more information.

If you are intending to make some structural changes to your property, you should always use a licensed and experienced contractor. There are a number of options, including Kalandoor Contracting (04 884 9426), Al Baraha Land Building Contracting and General Maintenance (04 272 2999), and Danube Buildmart (800 3131).

### Interior Decorating

Once you own your property you are free to paint the inside in any style you choose. If you rent, the likelihood is that your landlord will not mind on the basis that he has your deposit, and will be happy to keep hold of it should you not leave the villa or apartment in its original state. Many Dubai landlords do not need much of a reason to hold back security deposits though, so it's worth checking and getting something in writing before you get the roller out.

An excellent range of paints can be found at Jotun Paints and ACE Hardware (800 275 223). Companies like Alpha Services (800 2737) offer painting services, and artists such as MacKenzie Art ([mackenzieart.com](http://mackenzieart.com), 04 341 9803) can be commissioned for children's murals and original artwork. The cost of internally painting a whole villa can vary between Dhs.3,000 and Dhs.8,000, depending on size.

### Maintenance

Whether you're a homeowner or live in rental property, are responsible for your property's general maintenance or have an assigned company, housing in Dubai requires constant maintenance due to the climate. Air-conditioning units can be temperamental and need regular servicing, plumbing problems aren't uncommon, electricians can go haywire and creepy crawlies like to pay a visit.

Most homeowners and tenants employ the services of a maintenance company. Annual contracts don't come cheap, but the benefit is it will cover you for most of your maintenance needs. The contract should include regular scheduled servicing of



air-conditioning units and boilers, seasonal pest control protection, basic masonry works and 24 hour emergency call out services. Most companies offer extra services such as swimming pool maintenance and gardening for an add-on fee.

Contracts ideal for tenants that cover emergency call-outs only can start from Dhs.59 per month, or for more comprehensive cover, prices increase to Dhs.250 per month and up. Companies that offer maintenance services include Emrill (covering Emaar Properties, emrill.com), Howdra (howdra.ae), and Hitches & Glitches (hitchesandglitches.com); Green Facilities Management (green-fms.com) prides itself on its environmental and sustainability credentials, offers a 24/7 emergency call-out service, can assess your home for energy efficiency, and sources environmentally sound maintenance products. You'll also hear adverts on local radio stations for maintenance companies – as there are so many, prices should be competitive.

For more specialist services, try Under One Roof (04 323 2722, underoneroof.ae); Floorworld (800 35667, floorworld.ae) and Alomi Real Wood Flooring (04 885 8825, alomirealwoodflooringllc.ae).

Whichever community you live in, your developer will have standard rules and regulations relating to noise, parking, and general upkeep of your property. These will be detailed on the developer's website and local security guards perform regular checks. If you live in a villa, a dirty or messy garage may be frowned upon, and you could be fined for such things as parking on the street rather than in a designated bay, so it's worth making yourself aware of what is required of you as either a tenant or homeowner.

## Gardens

For a city on the edge of the desert, Dubai boasts a surprising amount of lush greenery – but, with very little annual rainfall and rapidly diminishing groundwater, plenty of artificial hydration is required if you want to create your very own garden oasis. Gardens need watering twice a day ideally – as green can turn to brown within just a matter of days. You can install a timed irrigation system or employ the services of a gardener, while boring a well in your garden to access natural water supplies is also an option. For houses further in from the coast, you'll need to drill down approximately 25 metres before you hit groundwater, whereas houses in areas nearer to the coast, will access water after just a couple of metres. The level of salt in the water can vary considerably, and it is possible to pump the water into a mixed tank to desalinate it for your domestic use. The cost for drilling and finding should start from approximately Dhs.1,800 if you secure the expertise of any of the landscaping companies found in the Plant Street area of Satwa. Alternatively, opt for AstroTurf – all you need to do is hose it down every few weeks. You can buy AstroTurf in ACE Hardware (800 275 223), while Clearview (clearview.ae) and Cape Reed (capereed.com) both install fake lawns. Another option is to go for block paving or decking. You can purchase various qualities of decking in ACE Hardware.

## Landscaping

To buy pot plants, trees and shrubs head to the Dubai Municipality Nursery in the Jadaf area, next

to Business Bay Crossing. Prices are reasonable and discounts based on quantity will be given. Dubai Garden Centre (04 340 0006) sells pretty much everything you could ever need for your outdoor space; prices here are often at the higher end of the spectrum, but you can expect excellent service and expertise, as well as delivery for large orders. Plant Street in Satwa has a number of basic nurseries, but choice here can be limited.

Larger retailers such as Spinneys, Carrefour and IKEA sell plants, pots and smaller sized gardening implements, while ACE Hardware is a one-stop-shop for the outdoor enthusiast, selling everything from flora to furniture, tools to trees and pergolas.

If you are buying a brand new house, the developers may have left you with no more than a sandpit plot, so you will need to start your garden from scratch, which can be somewhat challenging. Equally, landlords are not obliged to landscape the gardens of new villas before they rent them to you, so don't assume that the 'work in progress' you see upon viewing a property will be an outdoor oasis by the time you move in.

If the green-fingered DIY is not for you, Dubai Garden Centre offers a full landscaping service, while Royal Gardenscape (royalgardenscape.com) provides all you need in the way of paving and gravel. Plant Street is a great place to start for cheap labour and materials, while Terraverde (terraverde.ae), Toscana Landscaping & Pools (toscanalandscape.com) and Bespoke Concept (bespokeconcept.com) all offer full service design and installation for gardens. For more information on garden furniture see Shopping.

## Swimming Pools

A lot of properties in Dubai have private pools or access to a shared pool. If you don't have one in your villa, you can always pay to have one installed – but it doesn't come cheap. One option is to have a custom-made, free-form fibre glass and ceramic tiled pool fitted. As tough and durable as a concrete version, these are effectively portable. Delivery takes around four weeks, with an onsite installation period of approximately 10 days. Prices for such a pool start at around Dhs.110,000 including labour, pumps and filtration. Try Pools by Design (poolsdesign.net).

Aside from cleaning, your pool will also need the water to be changed and chemical levels balanced on a regular basis. MAK Pools (makpools.com) offers a full range of swimming pool cleaning and maintenance services. Those Pool Guys (thosepoolguys.com), Al Wasel Swimming Pools Maintenance (alwaselswimmingpools.com) and Pools r Us (poolsrusdubai.com) are also well established in Dubai.

If you have a young family, then take a look at Aqua-Net (aquanet.ae), which creates custom safety netting that quickly and easily covers your pool.

## Home Insurance

Crime and natural disasters are not generally a big concern for Dubai's residents – though the minor earth tremors of April 2013 did shake people up a bit, there was no substantial damage to property.

However, insuring your household goods against theft or damage is still wise. To create a policy, the insurance provider will need your home address, a list of household items and valuation, and invoices for anything worth more than Dhs.2,500. Cover usually includes theft, fire and storm damage. You can also insure personal items outside the home.

As a guideline you can expect to pay around Dhs.1,500 per 1.2 sq m for building insurance, Dhs.250 for up to Dhs.60,000 worth of home contents and Dhs.850 for up to Dhs.60,000 worth of personal possessions.

Established in 2001, Greenshield Insurance (greenshield.ae, 04 388 2200) offers some good insurance packages for your home (as well as medical, life, motor and travel insurance and more), and has a good reputation and high client retention rates of 98%. You can visit their website and submit an online query, or find their offices in Bur Dubai.

Animal lovers will also need to insure their pet(s). It's best to do so while he or she is still young and healthy, as prices can rise steeply over a certain age.

For peace of mind, register your home in the Dubai Police Home Security Programme, a free service that provides round-the-clock protection for houses while residents are away. Register at any Dubai Police station.

**AFIA Insurance Brokerage Services LLC** Kanoo Group Bldg, Al Karama, 04 337 9987, [afia.ae](http://afia.ae)

**AXA Insurance (Gulf)** > p.105 Umm Hurair 2, 04 324 3434, [axa-gulf.com](http://axa-gulf.com)

**Emirates Insurance Company** Al Ittihad St, Port Saeed, 04 294 2949, [eminsco.com](http://eminsco.com)

**Greenshield Insurance Brokers** > p.107, 119 Al Musalla Towers, Al Hamriya, 04 388 2200, [greenshield.ae](http://greenshield.ae)

**National General Insurance Co** Al Ittihad Rd, Port Saeed, 04 222 2772, [ngi.ae](http://ngi.ae)

**Nexus Insurance** Emaar Square, Burj Khalifa, 04 323 1111, [nexusadvice.com](http://nexusadvice.com)

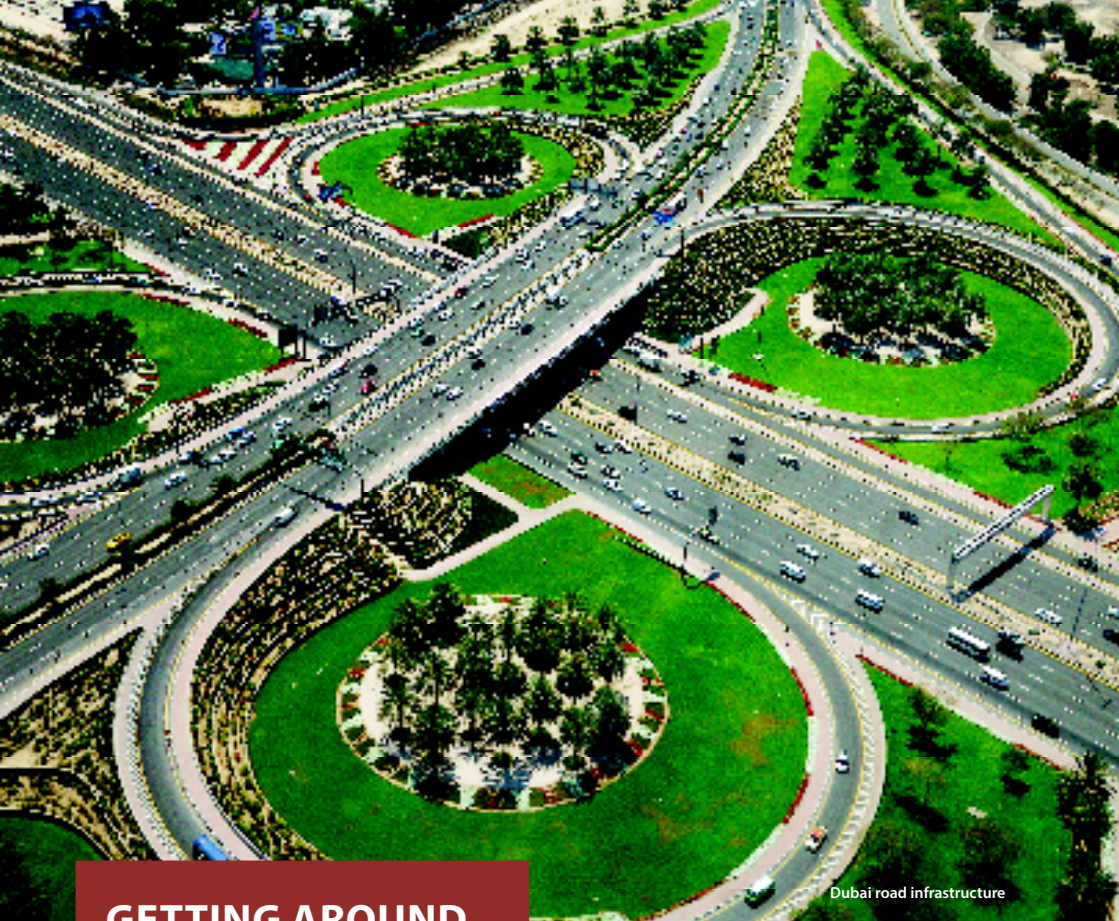
**RSA Insurance** Office Court Bldg, Oud Metha, 800 772, [rsadirect.ae](http://rsadirect.ae)

**Zurich Insurance** 800 4560, [zurich.ae](http://zurich.ae)

## Additional Insurance

Insurance companies cover more than just your home – AXA, for example, also provides health insurance. There are even companies starting to provide pet insurance, such as Pet Secure, 04 252 2570, [petsecure.ae](http://petsecure.ae).





Dubai road infrastructure

## GETTING AROUND

Dubai is a city geared up for cars, and has a good and continuously improving infrastructure. With a grid-like street system it shouldn't take you too long to find your way around either. However, if you're planning on using satellite navigation systems they won't help you much due to a lack of official addresses in the city at the moment; so you'll have to get your Explorer map out if you get lost.

There are some good public transport options but most people travel by car, whether that's driving themselves or using the generally excellent and inexpensive taxi service. Getting behind the wheel of a car is probably the best way to get the measure of the city's numerous districts though.

Traffic during rush hours can get heavy, especially if there's even a minor accident, but you'll soon learn where the hotspots are and either avoid or leave for your destination at an appropriate time. There

are other idiosyncrasies you'll find too; traffic lights spring up everywhere and you can find yourself sat at a red light in an empty building site for ages. You'll also encounter plenty of speed bumps, that even the largest 4WDs will take at crawling pace.

Other sights you may find unusual at first are the number of cars that pull over and stop on the hard shoulders of the highways. This is particularly obvious at sunset when some drivers will stop to answer the call to prayer by the side of the road. And once it's dark, watch out for workers who loiter by the side of roads waiting for lifts back to their camp. Sometimes they can be quite close to the road and difficult to spot. People sometimes try to cross highways on foot too.

While there are government guidelines on driving, don't count on other road users being aware of them or choosing to obey them. Cautious driving is the best approach to stay incident free.

## Dubai Road Network

When you arrive, the extensive, expanding network of roads can be intimidating, but once you find your bearings things become easier. The creek divides Bur Dubai (to the south) and Deira (to the north), and has five main crossing points: Shindagha Tunnel, Maktoum Bridge, Garhoud Bridge, Business Bay Bridge and the Floating Bridge. The Floating Bridge is due to be replaced by the Dubai 'Smile' Bridge in late 2014.

The main thoroughfare through the city is Sheikh Zayed Road, which runs from Sharjah, parallel to the sea, all the way to Abu Dhabi. Three bypass roads have been constructed inland towards the desert to ease the city's congestion problems. All run parallel to the coast and Sheikh Zayed Road.

Al Khail Road (E44) is the closest bypass to the coast and runs from Sports City to Ras Al Khor, where it turns east and heads towards Hatta and Oman. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Road (E311), formerly Emirates Road, is the next furthest from the coast and connects Abu Dhabi directly to Sharjah and the northern emirates.

The Outer Ring Road (E611) sits outside of the E311 and runs roughly from the southern border of Dubai all the way to the Sharjah-Umm Al Quwain border, although it is still being expanded. There are also a few main east-west roads, including Umm Suqeim Road (D63), the Dubai-Al Ain Road (E66), Financial Centre Road (D71), and Muscat Street (D69). Despite all the road expansions, traffic is still a problem in Dubai, especially at the creek crossings.

Within the city, the roads in older parts of town, such as Bur Dubai and Deira, are smaller and more congested, while the road networks in newer developments such as Downtown Dubai tend to accommodate greater traffic flow.

## Address System

As part of Dubai's new District Addressing project, which will cover the entire city by 2016, the city has been divided into several districts, and each district further sub-divided into communities. The project will see more than 22,000 Dubai streets renamed over the next two years, with the address system featuring the building number, street name, community and district. This replaces the rather confusing system of street numbers.

New districts to be aware of include Marsa Dubai, which is the new name for Dubai Marina; and Nakhlat Jumeira, which is the new name for Palm Jumeirah. 'Marsa' is Arabic for 'marina' and 'nakhlat' is Arabic for 'palm'. Another new district is Burj Khalifa, which includes the Downtown community (and of course, the Burj Khalifa building); and the old district Al Souk Al Kabeer, which includes Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood (formerly known as Bastakiya).

Although all roads in the city have an official name or number, several roads are referred to by a different moniker. For instance, Jumeira Road is often known as Beach Road, and Interchange One, on Sheikh Zayed Road, is invariably called Defence Roundabout. Dubai Municipality has started a more formal road-naming process to help eliminate confusion, and many of the city's main roads have been given the names of prominent Arab cities, such as Marrakech Road. Street signs now also include the direction of travel, so you know whether you are travelling north or south. This lack of consistency makes locating an address difficult. Companies often only list their building name, road and nearest landmark when writing their address. Explorer's *Dubai Street Atlas* features an index of over 13,000 roads and building. Also, you can search for a business, product or service on [localsearch.ae](http://localsearch.ae), which lists information for around 110,000 companies such as telephone number, email and website address.

## Finding Your Way Around

When you start driving it's pretty much a given that you'll need to schedule an extra 20 minutes for getting lost. Dubai is famed for its U-turns, which are used instead of allowing cars to turn across oncoming traffic. Many times you'll see the building you are aiming for, but will have to navigate a spaghetti-like tangle of roads to get to it – or drive for some distance in the opposite direction before you can link to the road that takes you to your destination. Once you get the hang of the thinking behind the road system it gets much easier, and once you have done a journey for the first time, repeating it is simple. Taxi drivers quite often get confused too – usually if they are new – so it's a good idea to have some specific directions or a simple map with you if you aren't sure how to get to your destination. When giving instructions to a taxi driver, remember that a traffic light is commonly referred to as a 'signal'.

## Maps

With new roads popping up on a weekly basis, finding your way around Dubai can be difficult. Explorer produces several of the most up-to-date street maps available, including the fully indexed *Dubai Street Atlas* and the pocket-sized *Dubai Mini Map*. Newly released is the Dubai Map app, one of a series of GCC map apps.

## Road Signs

Signposting in Dubai is generally good once you understand the system. Blue or green signs indicate the roads, exits or locations out of the city, and brown signs show heritage sites, places of interest and hospitals. Dubai's new signage system relies more heavily on street names and compass directions,

compared to the older system which featured local area names. If the signage gets confusing, remember that Abu Dhabi is south of Dubai, Sharjah is north, the beach is to the west and the desert is to the east.

## Driving in Dubai

While the infrastructure is superb, the general standard of driving is not. You'll see drivers displaying all manner of dangerous driving habits and, as a result, you must take extra care when driving. Once you're behind the wheel, it isn't as scary as it looks, and you'll soon learn to drive defensively and safely.

You drive on the right side of the road in Dubai, and you should overtake on the left – people often ignore this rule but if you are caught you could receive a fine. Speed limits are usually 60 to 80kph in town, while on main roads and roads to other emirates they are 100 to 120kph. The limit is clearly indicated on signs. Both fixed and movable radar traps, and Dubai Traffic Police, are there to catch the unwary violator. Be warned – you can be fined for gesticulating at another driver, and using the offensive middle finger can mean jail.



### Automatic Licence Transfer

Citizens with licences from the following countries are eligible for automatic driving licence transfers: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States. Citizens of GCC countries do not need to apply for a licence transfer.

### Roads & Transport Authority (RTA)

The RTA was launched by the government in 2005 and has taken over the responsibility for most procedures described in this chapter. Among other things the RTA deals with all transport and traffic projects in Dubai and enforcing transport legislation. The RTA is also a great source of information on Dubai's driving and licensing laws. Visit [rta.ae](http://rta.ae) for up-to-date information and all the latest traffic news.

### Licence To Drive

Tourists can drive hire cars on their domestic licence or International Driving Permit. If you have a residence visa then you must have a UAE driving licence – it is illegal to drive without one. Some nationals qualify for an automatic licence transfer, so long as their original licence has not expired. See Getting Started. Always keep your driving licence in the vehicle, along with the vehicle registration card – you could be fined if stopped by the police otherwise.

## Parking

Most street parking in Dubai is now governed by parking meters. After feeding your coins into the machine, you get a ticket to display on your dashboard. The minimum fare is Dhs.2 for one hour. The price increases steeply the longer you park in a spot, so you'll pay Dhs.4 or Dhs.5 for two hours, Dhs.8 for three hours, and Dhs.11 for four hours (the maximum). Parking is free from 1pm to 4pm and 9pm to 8am daily, and on Fridays and public holidays.

Several areas support the mParking system ([mpark.rta.ae](http://mpark.rta.ae)), which allows drivers to pay parking tolls through SMS (non-Dubai registered vehicles must register online first). Areas where mParking is supported have an orange sign displaying the parking code and a guide on how to use the system. To use mParking, send an SMS to PARK (7275) with your car licence plate number (including the first letter), a space, the area parking code listed on the sign, a space, and the number of hours you wish to pay for (one to four). The system will then send you a confirmation SMS, and the parking fee plus a 30 fils service charge will be deducted from your Etisalat or du phone credit. Ten minutes before your time has expired, the system will send an SMS reminder and ask if you'd like to add more time. Commuters can also use their Nol Metro card to pay for parking at many machines, with the appropriate fee being deducted from the card's credit.

Parking at Dubai's shopping malls used to be mostly free, but since the opening of the metro several shopping centres that are adjacent or near to metro

stations have introduced parking charges for stays over a certain length of time. Both Mall of the Emirates and Deira City Centre have free parking for the first four hours, and then charges that rise steeply from Dhs.20 for four to five hours up to Dhs.150 for eight hours or over and Dhs.350 for overnight (Fridays and public holidays are free).

Disabled parking spaces do exist, though are sometimes taken by ignorant drivers who don't need the facility; however, police do monitor these spaces and hand out fines to offenders.

### Pre-paid Parking

Pre-paid parking cards are divided into two sections A and B. An A-card holder has the right to park in all car parks. A B-card holder has the right to park only in B-marked car parks. Just take a copy of your car registration card to Al Twar Centre, Dubai Municipality – Al Karama branch, or the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority HQ, and pay the required fee – from Dhs.450 for three months. The card is not valid in car parks at Dubai International Airport, Dubai Media City and Dubai Internet City.

## Road Tolls

Salik is an automated toll system for Dubai's roads. There are currently six gates: one at Garhoud Bridge, another on the Sheikh Zayed Road after Mall of the Emirates, one at Safa Park on Sheikh Zayed Road (between interchanges one and two), another on Maktoum Bridge, one on Al Ittihad Rd and another near Dubai Airport Tunnel.

The Maktoum Bridge crossing is free between 10pm and 6am Saturday to Thursday, and 10pm and 9am on Fridays, when the Floating Bridge is closed. There are no booths, and no need to stop as you drive through. Instead, drivers stick a tag to their windscreen, which is read by radio frequency as they pass through.

### Salik Tag

Drivers must initially buy a 'welcome pack' costing Dhs.100: Dhs.50 for the tag and Dhs.50 credit. It costs Dhs.4 each time you pass a toll gate (rental car drivers can be charged Dhs.5), but if you travel between the Al Barsha toll gate and the Al Safa toll gate during one trip (and in the space of an hour) you will only be charged once. If your Salik card is out of credit you will be fined Dhs.50 for each gate you pass through.

The Salik system will send you an SMS when your account balance runs low or when you pass through a gate without any balance. The kit can be bought from Emarat, EPPCO, ENOC, and ADNOC petrol stations, Dubai Islamic Bank and Emirates NBD. For more information about the toll gates, visit the Salik

website, [salik.gov.ae](http://salik.gov.ae), or call 800 72545 (800 SALIK). The Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) has proposed that the toll be increased to Dhs.5 in 2014, but the proposal has yet to be approved.

## Traffic Offences

In an effort to help combat bad driving, the Dubai Police initiated a black points system to go along with the existing fines system. You are issued a certain number of black points against your licence according to the particular violation. For example, the fine for allowing a child under 10 years of age to sit in the front of a car is Dhs.400 and the driver will be given four black points. If you get 24 points you will lose your licence for a year, but any points you acquire will expire 12 months after they are issued.

The white points system came into operation in 2013, and it 'rewards' law-abiding drivers with one white point every month; motorists will be given incentives to collect white points, ranging from raffle prizes to exemption from traffic fines.

### Check Online For Fines

You can check whether you have any outstanding traffic fines against your vehicle by entering your registration plate number at [dubaipolice.gov.ae](http://dubaipolice.gov.ae). There is no time limit to pay your fines – but you will have to pay them at the end of each year in order to re-register and insure your vehicle.

Bad drivers can choose to eradicate some of their black points by electing to take a driving course costing Dhs.200 per session (there are three sessions in a course). They can also cancel out black points by gaining white points in some cases.

### Fines

Parking fines start at Dhs.200, and speeding fines start at Dhs.400 for driving up to 10kph over the speed limit and go up from there. Driving in a reckless manner or racing will earn you six points, as will parking in a handicapped zone or in front of a fire hydrant.

There are numerous speed cameras on Dubai's roads; drivers caught racing can face a fine of up to Dhs.2,000 as well as 12 black points and confiscation of their licence for 30 days. To see all the possible penalties for bad driving go to [dubaitrafficfines.org](http://dubaitrafficfines.org) or check [dubaipolice.gov.ae](http://dubaipolice.gov.ae) for more information.

Be careful to avoid driving in the dedicated bus and taxi lanes, which have recently been added to some major roads. The lanes are clearly marked, and you are liable to a fine of Dhs.600 if you enter one without

authorisation. The only exception is if you need to cross the lane to enter or exit the thoroughfare.

Average-speed and stopping-distance traps have recently been introduced to try to catch speeding drivers who only slow down when they see speed cameras, and to discourage tailgating. On-the-spot traffic fines for certain offences have been introduced, but in most cases you won't know you've received a fine until you check on the Dubai Police website or renew your vehicle registration.

Most fines are paid when you renew your annual car registration. However, parking tickets that appear on your windscreen must be paid within a week, or the fine increases.

## Blood Money

By law, the family of a pedestrian killed in a road accident is entitled to Dhs.200,000 *diya* (blood) money. The money is usually paid by the insurance company unless there's any whiff of the driver having been under the influence of alcohol. However, an amendment to the law is being considered to put a stop to the terrible trend among desperate lower-income workers of killing themselves to provide for their family. This will mean blood money is not automatically due if the victim was walking across a road not intended for use by pedestrians, such as Sheikh Zayed Road.

## Drinking & Driving

Dubai Police exercises a strict zero-tolerance policy on drinking and driving. If you get into an accident, whether it is your fault or not, and you fail a blood-alcohol test, you could find yourself spending a night in a cell before a trial in Dubai Courts, after which you'll most likely be jailed. In addition, your insurance is automatically void. Police have increased the number of random drink-driving checks.

## Breakdowns

In the event of your vehicle breaking down, you will usually find that passing police cars will stop to help, or at least to check your documents. It's important that you keep water in your car at all times so you don't get dehydrated while waiting, especially during the hotter months. Dubai Traffic officers recommend, if possible, that you pull your car over to a safe spot. If you are on the hard shoulder of a highway you should pull your car as far away from the yellow line as possible and step away from the road until help arrives.

As an added safety measure, make sure you've got a red warning triangle and reflective jacket stored in your car, for use in case you have to stop by the side of the road.

## Recovery Services

The Arabian Automobile Association – the AAA – (04 266 9989 or 800 4900, [aaauae.com](http://aaauae.com)) offers a 24 hour roadside breakdown service for an annual charge. This includes help in minor mechanical repairs, battery boosting, or help if you run out of petrol, have a flat tyre or lock yourself out. Mashreq Bank Visa card holders receive free AAA membership. The more advanced service includes off-road recovery, vehicle registration and a rent-a-car service. Other breakdown services that will be able to help you out without membership include IATC ([iatcuae.com](http://iatcuae.com)), Dubai Auto Towing Services (04 359 4424) and AKT Recovery (04 263 6217). Some dealers and insurance companies offer a free breakdown and recovery service for the first few years after buying a new car. Be sure to ask the dealership about this option when purchasing a new car.

## Traffic Accidents

If you are involved in an accident call 999. If the accident is minor and no one has been hurt you need to agree with the other driver where the blame lies and move your cars to the side of the road to avoid obstructing the flow of traffic. You can be fined Dhs.100 for failing to do so even if the accident wasn't your fault. If blame has been clearly decided and the accident is minor, the 999 dispatcher may ask you to drive yourself to the nearest Traffic Police station to fill out the necessary paperwork. The Dubai Police Information Line (800 7777, Arabic and English) gives the numbers of police stations around the emirate.

If blame cannot be decided without police intervention, an officer will be dispatched to assess the accident and apportion blame. The officer will then give you a copy of the accident report; if it is green then the other party is at fault but if it is pink then you are to blame for the accident and you will receive a Dhs.200 fine from the attending officer. You will need to submit the accident report to the insurance company in order to process the claim, or to the garage for repairs. Keep in mind that garages rarely repair vehicles without a police report.

Stray animals are something to avoid on desert roads. If the animal hits your vehicle and causes damage or injury, the animal's owner should pay compensation, but if you are found to have been speeding, you must compensate the animal's owner.

Be sure to keep your licence on you at all times. If you are pulled over by the police or are involved in an accident you'll need to show your driving licence or risk being fined. You will be given a grace period in which to present your licence at the police station; if you fail to do so, you risk having your car impounded and facing a court appearance.

## Petrol Stations

Petrol is subsidised in the UAE and generally inexpensive. Within Dubai, you will find Emarat, ENOC and EPPCO stations, and the price of unleaded petrol (around Dhs.1.75 per litre) is the same at all of them. The octane rating of unleaded petrol in the UAE is high – 'Special' is rated at 95 octane and 'Super' at 98 octane. Many of the stations have convenience stores and some have small cafes or fast food restaurants attached to them; Tim Hortons and Costa have opened at several fuel stations across the emirate.

Every station is manned by attendants who will pump your petrol for you, and often clean your windscreen too; it's commonplace to give them a Dhs.5 tip. Most petrol stations offer other services such as car washes, oil changes and even tyre replacement.

Some petrol stations only accept cash, though there is usually an ATM if you are caught short.

## Learning To Drive

Emirates Driving Institute (EDI) is one choice of driving school. You do 40 lessons – each for 30 minutes in two blocks of two hours per week. So it should only take 10 weeks to complete your practical training.

You'll also need to attend eight one-hour lectures – the first two must be attended before you can begin your practical lessons – to prepare for the theory test. After 20 lessons there's also a parking test. After 36 lessons, you will have an assessment test which you



need to pass before you can register for your final practical test. The final four lessons include highway training on Al Khail Road.

The final driving test should last around 20 minutes. There could be two or three passengers in the car – other students taking their tests too. After you've each had a turn behind the wheel, the instructor will take you all back to the centre and reveal who has passed.

Women learning to drive will be given a female instructor unless they specifically request a male, which they can do on the condition that they produce an NOC and pay a Dhs.10 fee. Regardless of the instructor you have for your 40 lessons, women will have a female instructor for their parking, assessment and final tests.

If you fail the test, you'll have to take another set of lessons before you can take the test again.

## Pre-booked Driving Lessons

Some driving schools insist that you pay for a set of pre-booked lessons. The package can include 40 lessons and cost up to Dhs.3,000, although the cost can be paid in instalments. Lessons usually last 30 minutes and must be taken on consecutive days.

**Al Ahli Driving Center** Nr Atlas Marine Services, Al Qouz Ind. 4, 04 341 1500, [alahlidubai.ae](http://alahlidubai.ae)

**Belhasa Driving Center** Nr Latifa Hospital, Sama Al Jadaf, Al Jadaf, 04 324 3535, [bdc.ae](http://bdc.ae)

**Dubai Driving Center** Nr Dubai Dry Docks, Al Qouz Ind. 4, 04 345 5855, [dubaidrivingcenter.net](http://dubaidrivingcenter.net)

**Emirates Driving Institute** Nr Al Bustan Centre, Al Qusais 1, 04 263 1100, [edi-uae.com](http://edi-uae.com)

**Galadari Motor Driving Center** Amman St, Al Qusais Ind. 4, 04 267 6166, [gmdc.ae](http://gmdc.ae)

## Hiring A Car

New arrivals to Dubai often find that they have no other option than to hire a vehicle until their residence visa goes through. Most leasing companies include the following in their rates: registration, maintenance, replacement, 24 hour assistance and insurance. All the main car rental companies, plus a few extra, can be found in Dubai.

It is best to shop around as the rates vary considerably. The larger, reputable firms generally have more reliable vehicles and a greater capacity to help in an emergency (an important factor when dealing with the aftermath of an accident). Find out which car hire agent your company uses, as you might qualify for a corporate rate. Most rental companies will keep track of how many times you pass through Salik gates and charge you at the end of the month, along with a Salik service charge.

Leasing is generally weekly, monthly or yearly. Monthly lease prices start at around Dhs.1,800 for

a small vehicle such as a Toyota Yaris, and go up from there. As the lease period increases, the price decreases, so if you're considering keeping the car for a long period, it may not work out that much more expensive than buying.

Before you take possession of your leased car, check for any dents or bumps. To hire any vehicle you will need to provide a passport copy, credit card and a valid driving licence. Those with a residence visa must have a UAE driving licence to drive a hired car, while those on a visit visa can use a licence from their home country as long as it is at least one year old. Comprehensive insurance is essential; make sure that it includes personal accident coverage, and perhaps Oman cover if you're planning on exploring.

### Car Hire Companies

- Autolease Rent A Car** Nr Millennium Airport Hotel, Al Garhoud, 04 282 6565, [autolease-uae.com](http://autolease-uae.com)
- Avis** Al Maktoum Rd, Al Rigga, 04 295 7121, [avisuae.ae](http://avisuae.ae)
- Bettercar Rentals** Damascus Rd, Al Qusais Ind. 1, 04 258 6331, [bettercardubai.com](http://bettercardubai.com)
- Budget Car & Van Rental UAE** > p.101 Lehabab Rd, Dubai Investment Park 2, 800 2722, [budget-uae.com](http://budget-uae.com)
- Diamondlease Car Rental** Kharbash Bldg, Trade Center 1, 04 885 2677, [diamondlease.com](http://diamondlease.com)
- DRC Rent A Car** Shk Zayed Rd, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 338 9070, [discountcardubai.com](http://discountcardubai.com)
- Dubai Exotic Limo** Nr Chili's Restaurant, Al Rigga, 04 286 8635, [dubaiocticlino.com](http://dubaiocticlino.com)
- Euroline Rent A Car** 052 999 5555, [euroline-rent.com](http://euroline-rent.com)
- EuroStar Rent A Car** Al Wuheida Rd, Hor Al Anz East, 04 266 1117, [eurostarrental.com](http://eurostarrental.com)
- Green Car Rental** Dubai World Trade Centre, Trade Center 1, 04 358 8488, [greencardubai.com](http://greencardubai.com)
- Hertz UAE** Airport Rd, Umm Ramoul, 800 43789, [hertzuae.com](http://hertzuae.com)
- Shift Car Rental & Leasing** Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 3393 722, [shiftleasing.com](http://shiftleasing.com)

### Buying A Car

Aside from the horrendous traffic, the UAE is a motorist's dream. Petrol is cheap, big engines are considered cool and the wide motorways stretching across the country are perfect for weekend drives.

Most of the major car makes are available through franchised dealerships in Dubai, especially big Japanese and American brands. New vehicles are surprisingly affordable too. A new BMW 3-series in Dubai is likely to cost around 20% less than the same car in the UK.

There is a large second-hand car market in the UAE. Dealers are scattered around town but good areas to start are Sheikh Zayed Road and Warsan, behind

Ras Al Khor. Expect to pay a premium of between Dhs.5,000 and Dhs.10,000 for buying through a dealer (as opposed to buying from a private seller), since they also offer a limited warranty, insurance, finance and vehicle registration.

The Al Awir complex houses several smaller used-car dealers and it's easy to spend a whole day walking around the lots speaking with salesmen. Al Awir is also the location for Golden Bell Auctions ([goldenbellauctions.com](http://goldenbellauctions.com)), with sales held each Wednesday evening. All cars up for auction have to undergo a test at the nearby Eppco Tasjeel garage, and all outstanding fines will have been cleared. There's a Traffic Department office on the site so buyers can register their new vehicles on the spot.

For private sales, check the classifieds in *Gulf News* and *Khaleej Times* and supermarket noticeboards. Online sites such as [dubizzle.com](http://dubizzle.com) and expat forums such as [expatwoman.com](http://expatwoman.com) are also useful.

### Tinted Windows

Currently, the government allows you to avoid the sun somewhat by tinting your vehicle's windows up to 30%. Some areas have facilities where you can get your car windows tinted but don't get carried away – remember to stick to the limit. Random checks take place and fines are handed out to those caught in the dark. Tinting in Sharjah is allowed for a fee of Dhs.100 and Ajman residents may tint for Dhs.200 per annum, but only if they are women. Company cars are banned from having tinted windows.

### Second-hand Sales

As well as getting the vehicle tested, check that the engine plate number on the car corresponds with that given on the vehicle registration card. Also, check with the Dubai Traffic Police that the vehicle is neither stolen nor has any fines; visit [dubaipolice.gov.ae](http://dubaipolice.gov.ae).

After you have purchased the vehicle, you will need to insure it, then transfer ownership/vehicle registration, and purchase a Salik tag, if required.

### Transferring Ownership

If you buy a second-hand vehicle, you will need to transfer ownership to your name. If you fail to do this, you are liable to pay a Dhs.3,000 fine by Dubai Police. You will need to collect an application form from the Traffic Police and submit it, along with a no objection certificate from the finance company (if using one), the original licence plates, the previous owner's valid registration card, your new insurance certificate, your UAE driving licence and Dhs.100 transfer fee. The previous owner must also be present to sign the form. The new registration card will then be issued within five to 10 minutes.



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## Importing A Car

It is possible to import or export your car, but be prepared for lots of paperwork. If you're keen to hang onto your chosen four wheels, contact Kanoosh Shipping (kanooshshipping.com) for help.

If you're buying a car within the UAE but from outside of Dubai you will need to complete export and import procedures. Both buyer and seller will need to be present at the traffic licensing department in the seller's emirate. The department will ask for copies of a passport and driving licence, the vehicle registration card, an insurance policy in the new owner's name (three day policies can be available at the site) and a technical inspection certificate. The seller may also need a no objection letter from their bank if there is an outstanding loan amount. In all emirates aside from Dubai you will be issued with export plates to drive the car home on. You will then have to register it in Dubai. Midland Cars in Karama (04 396 7521, midlandcarsdubai.com) can help you import a vehicle to Dubai from another emirate.

## Vehicle Finance

Many new and second-hand car dealers will be able to arrange finance for you, often through a deal with a preferred banking partner. Most official dealers and main financial establishments should be able to sort out monthly automatic payments for you too. Alternatively a personal loan can often have lower interest rates and better terms (plus it's difficult to get an auto loan on cars of a certain age) so it's worth checking. If you go with the bank that receives your salary, the application is often easier. Just make sure you can afford the payments as bad debt is not good news.

## Second Opinion

When buying a used car it's well worth having it checked over by a garage or mechanic. Eppco Tasjeel, AAA and Max Garage offer a checking service. Alternatively, speak to the service department at the dealership where the car was originally bought. A thorough inspection will cost about Dh.250.

## New Car Dealers

**Bentley** Al Habtoor Motors, Port Saeed, 04 294 4492, [emirates.bentleymotors.com](http://emirates.bentleymotors.com)

**Bugatti** Al Habtoor Motors, Port Saeed, 04 294 4492, [bugatti.com](http://bugatti.com)

**Cadillac** Liberty Automobiles, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 341 9341, [cadillacarabia.com](http://cadillacarabia.com)

**Chevrolet** Al Ghandi Auto, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 231 0800, [chevroletarabia.com](http://chevroletarabia.com)

**Chrysler** Trading Enterprises, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 340 2445, [mideast.chrysler.com](http://mideast.chrysler.com)

**Dodge** Trading Enterprises, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 340 2445, [tradingenterprises.ae](http://tradingenterprises.ae)

**Ferrari** Al Tayer Motors, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 303 7878, [dubai.ferrari dealers.com](http://dubai.ferrari dealers.com)

**Ford** Al Tayer Motors, Al Garhoud, 04 201 1002, [me.ford.com](http://me.ford.com)

**Honda** Al Futtaim Motors, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 347 2212, [honda.ae](http://honda.ae)

**Jaguar** Al Tayer Motors, Al Garhoud, 800 668 6777, [jaguar.com](http://jaguar.com)

**Jeep** Trading Enterprises, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 340 2445, [mideast.jeep.com](http://mideast.jeep.com)

**Land Rover** Al Tayer Motors, Al Garhoud, 800 668 6777, [landrover.com](http://landrover.com)

**Lexus** Al Futtaim Motors, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 507 6300, [lexus.ae](http://lexus.ae)

**Lincoln** Al Tayer Motors, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 303 7777, [me.lincoln.com](http://me.lincoln.com)

**Maserati** Al Tayer Motors, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 303 7878, [maserati.com](http://maserati.com)

**McLaren Dubai** The Lofts, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 382 7500, [dubai.mclarenretailers.com](http://dubai.mclarenretailers.com)

**Mercedes-Benz** Gargash Enterprises, Al Khabaisi, 04 209 9777, [gargash.mercedes-benz.com](http://gargash.mercedes-benz.com)

**Mitsubishi Motors** Al Habtoor Motors, Port Saeed, 04 608 4000, [mitsubishi-uae.com](http://mitsubishi-uae.com)

**Opel** Liberty Automobiles, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 341 9341, [cadillacarabia.com](http://cadillacarabia.com)

**Peugeot** Swaidan Trading, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 347 9000, [swaidanpeugeot.com](http://swaidanpeugeot.com)

**Ram** Trading Enterprises, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 340 2445, [tradingenterprises.ae](http://tradingenterprises.ae)

**Saab** Gargash Motors, Al Khabaisi, 04 340 3333, [gargashme.com](http://gargashme.com)

**Toyota** Al Futtaim Motors, Dubai Festival City, Al Kheeran, 04 206 6000, [toyota.ae](http://toyota.ae)

**Volkswagen** Al Naboodah Automobiles, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 705 3333, [volkswagen-dubai.com](http://volkswagen-dubai.com)

**Volvo** Trading Enterprises, Dubai Festival City, Al Kheeran, 04 206 6400, [volvocars.com](http://volvocars.com)

## Used Car Dealers

**4x4 Motors** Al Aweer Auto Market Phase 1, Ras Al Khor Ind. 3, 04 333 2757, [4x4motors.com](http://4x4motors.com)

**Al Futtaim Automall** Nr Times Square, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 340 8029, [automalluae.com](http://automalluae.com)

**Al Naboodah Automobiles** Al Wasl, 04 310 5300, [nabooda-auto.com](http://nabooda-auto.com)

**Al Tayer Motors** Al Ittihad Rd, Al Khabaisi, 04 266 6489, [altayermotors.com](http://altayermotors.com)

**House Of Cars** > p.103 Nr Mazaya Centre, Al Wasl, 04 343 5060, [houseofcarsgroup.com](http://houseofcarsgroup.com)

**Liberty Automobiles** Shk Zayed Rd, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 341 9341, [libertyautos.com](http://libertyautos.com)

**Reem Automobiles** Nr Mazaya Centre, Al Wasl, 04 343 6333, [reemauto.ae](http://reemauto.ae)



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We recognise that "you are our customer and have a choice" we invite you to choose wisely.



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## Insurance

Before you can register your car you must have car insurance. The insurers will need to know the usual details such as year of manufacture, and value, as well as the chassis number. If you got a real bargain of a car, make sure you instruct the insurance company to cover it at the market value.

Annual insurance policies last for 13 months (allowing a one-month grace period for when registration expires). It's best to get fully comprehensive cover with personal accident cover, and advisable to be covered for 'blood money'. Rates depend on age and model of your car and your previous insurance history, although no-claims bonuses accrued in your home country are rarely recognised. Expect to pay between 4-7% of the vehicle's value, or a flat rate of 5% for cars over five years old. If you feel your car is worth more than you paid for it, make sure the insurance company covers it at the market value. Insurers will need to see copies of your UAE driving licence, passport and vehicle registration form.

Most insurance agencies now let you request a quote online, and there's a multitude of choice out there from local companies such as Awnic (awnic.com) to international favourites, AXA (axa-gulf.com), RSA (rsadirect.ae) and Zurich (zurich.ae). If you're driving to Oman you will need additional cover, which can be part of your annual insurance or purchased ad hoc. Also see the UAE's online car insurance comparison websites, which will save you time and are a good starting point; try [insurancemarket.ae](http://insurancemarket.ae) or [insureme.ae](http://insureme.ae).

Fully comprehensive cover with personal accident insurance is highly advisable, and you are strongly advised to make sure the policy covers you for 'blood money'. For more adventurous 4WD drivers, insurance for off-roading accidents is also recommended.

### To Oman & Back

It is wise to check whether your insurance covers you for Oman as you may find yourself driving through small Oman enclaves when exploring the UAE (especially if you are off road, near Hatta, through Wadi Bih and in Dibba). Insurance for visit to Oman can be arranged in a short-term basis, usually for no extra cost.

## Registering A Vehicle

All cars must be registered annually with the Dubai Police department; if you're buying new, then the dealer should do this for you. All cars over three years old must also have an annual vehicle inspection test, which is part of the registration process.

Vehicle registration, vehicle testing and the renewal of annual car insurance generally take place at the same time. To start the process, first check you have no outstanding traffic offence and fines against your car at [dubaipolice.gov.ae](http://dubaipolice.gov.ae) as registration renewal can't be completed until they are cleared. Then, renew your insurance as you will be asked to show a valid 13 months certificate. With this done, take your vehicle to a Vehicle Licensing Department-approved service centre.

Pay the Dh.120 test fee, wait for around 20-30 minutes for the test, and hopefully it should pass and you'll receive a test certificate. If your vehicle fails the inspection, have it repaired and retested within 30 days for no additional fee. Some insurance companies offer to collect your vehicle and handle the test and registration for you – often within a couple of hours.

Once passed and with test certificate in hand, go to a registration office and submit your insurance certificate, current registration card (or that of the previous owner if you are transferring ownership), UAE driving licence and Resident ID, plus the Dh.100 fee. You'll receive a new registration card plus a new sticker for your vehicle's rear plate. Now you're all legal to drive the vehicle for another year.

You have one month's grace for renewal of your car registration, hence the 13 month insurance policy. This keeps you legal if it's inconvenient to get the car registration renewed at the specified time. After that month though, you will incur fines of Dh.10 for each month you delay. If renewal hasn't happened for over a year, the charge for re-registration is Dh.325.

Both EPPCO Tasjeel and Emarat Shamil offer VIP pick-up and drop-off registration services for an extra charge, usually around Dh.200. Call 800 4258 to make an appointment with Tasjeel or 800 4559 for Shamil. The RTA also recently launched a service enabling owners to carry out vehicle registration online; to sign up to the service, visit [rta.ae](http://rta.ae). Usually a dealer will take care of registering a new car for you.

## Vehicle Repairs

By law, no vehicle can be accepted for major 'collision' repairs without an accident report from the Traffic Police, although very minor dents can be repaired without one. Your insurance company will usually have an agreement with a particular garage to which they will refer you. The garage will carry out the repair work and the insurance company will settle the claim. Generally, there is Dh.500 deductible for all claims, but check your policy details.

If you purchase a new vehicle your insurance should cover you for 'agency repairs'; that is, repairs at the workshop of the dealer selling the car, although this is not a guarantee and you may have to pay a

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premium. It's worth it though as your car's warranty (two to three years) may become invalid if you have non-agency repairs done on it. Even if you buy a fairly new second-hand car (less than three years old) it may be beneficial to opt for agency repairs in order to protect the value of the car.

Besides accidents and bumps, you may also have to deal with the usual running repairs associated with any car. Common problems in this part of the world can include the air-conditioning malfunctioning, batteries suddenly giving up and tyres blowing out. With the air-con it may just be a case of having the system topped up, which is a fairly straightforward procedure. Car batteries don't tend to last too long in the hot conditions, and you may not get much warning (one day your car just won't start), so it's always handy to keep a set of jump leads in the boot.

If you do manage to get your car started then it's worth taking a trip to Satwa; before you know it, your car will be surrounded by people offering to fix anything. Haggle hard and you can get a bargain for simple repairs and spares – including a new battery.

When buying a used vehicle, many shoppers like to see a history of agency maintenance, especially for relatively new cars. It may seem ridiculous to have your oil changed at the dealership every 5,000km, but it often pays in the long run when selling your car.

**4x4 Garage** Nr Oasis Centre, Al Qouz 3, 04 323 2100, [4x4motors.com](http://4x4motors.com)

**Al Saeedi Automotive Trading** Nr Civil Defence, Dubai Investment Park 1, 04 889 5455, [alsaeedi.com](http://alsaeedi.com)

**Al Wataniya Workshop** Third Interchange, Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 340 8546, [awww.ae](http://awww.ae)

**Bosch Service Centre** Nr RAK Bank, Al Qouz 3, 04 338 6000, [cmeuae.ae](http://cmeuae.ae)

**Central Motors & Equipment** Shk Zayed Rd, Al Qouz 3, 04 338 6000, [cmeuae.ae](http://cmeuae.ae)

**House Of Cars** > p.103 Shk Zayed Rd, Al Qouz Ind 1, 04 339 3466, [houseofcarsgroup.com](http://houseofcarsgroup.com)

**Icon Auto Garage** 8th Street, Al Qouz 3, 04 338 2744, [icon-auto.com](http://icon-auto.com)

**Max Garage** Umm Suqeim Rd, Al Qouz Ind. 3, 04 340 8200, [maxgaragedubai.com](http://maxgaragedubai.com)

**Octane** Al Qouz Ind. 1, 04 341 4511

## Cycling

The RTA has often talked about the benefits of cycling in the city's most congested districts, and it is working to promote this form of transportation with its 850km Dubai Bicycle Master Plan. You cannot cycle on Dubai's highways and even riding within city neighbourhoods can be dangerous. Also, summer temperatures can reach 45°C, which makes riding to work a very sweaty option. There are, however, a number of places where

you can cycle safely for pleasure (See Activities and below). If you do decide to take to two wheels, you are required to wear a helmet and a high visibility jacket, or you could face a fine of Dh500.

The RTA has completed various cycling tracks in neighbourhoods across the emirate. There is a 23km-long track along Jumeirah Street, 1.4km track along Street No 7 which links Jumeirah Street with Al Mankhool Street, and a 1.6km track at the Mall of the Emirates station. Also included in the project is the 67km track spanning Seih Assalam Road and Al Qudra Road as well as the 11km track at the centre of Bur Dubai covering Al Fuhaidi, Al Falah, Al Ghubaiba and Al Hisn Roads.

Future plans include tracks in Al Barsha, Al Khawaneej, Al Warqa, Al Qouz 3, Al Sufouh Street, Al Mamzar Park, Mushrif Park, and Hor Al Anz East.

## Jumeirah Corniche

Joggers and cyclists will have a new outdoor area to enjoy once the Jumeirah Corniche is built at the end of 2014. Linking six residential areas, the 14km long zone will incorporate jogging and cycling tracks all the way from Dubai Marine Beach Resort down to the Burj Al Arab hotel.

## Bike-sharing

For the cooler months, there are now public bike-sharing schemes available. In Downtown Dubai, the Emaar-sponsored bikes are available at docking stations in Mohammed Bin Rashid Boulevard, The Dubai Mall/Burj Khalifa metro station, Emaar Square, Burj Park, Burj Plaza, and next to The Dubai Mall. On the Palm Jumeirah, there are six locations: the Park, the Fairmont, the Shoreline side and three on the outer crescent at Atlantis, Zabeel Saray and Anantara.

You first need to register online at [bykystations.com](http://bykystations.com) and then you can use your mobile phone to retrieve your registration details once you arrive at a bike station. Bikes can be rented for any time from 30 minutes to 24 hours. The bikes are also available in Marsa Dubai from Marina Walk, Marina Mall and Dubai Marina Yacht Club.

## Walking

Cities in the UAE are generally very car-oriented and not designed to encourage walking. Additionally, searing summer temperatures are not conducive to spending any length of time outdoors – within minutes you'll be sweating buckets.

The winter months, however, make walking a pleasant way to get around and people can be found strolling through the streets, especially in the



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evenings. Most streets are lined with pavements and there are pedestrian paths either side of the creek, along the seafront in Deira and Jumeira, at The Walk at JBR, and around Marsa Dubai, as well as in the city's parks.

Despite the pavements, it's pretty common to end up with sandy shoes as many car parking spaces are on dusty vacant lots, so if you're off to an important business meeting, take a cloth to clean your shoes. There are also plans underway to build an extra 17 footbridges by 2016, at key locations including Emirates Towers and Al Khail Road. Police are cracking down on jaywalking, and you can be fined Dhs.200 for crossing the road in an undesignated area, so always use the pedestrian crossings available.

### Creek Park

**Nr Al Garhoud Bridge Umm Hurair 2 04 336 7633**  
dm.gov.ae

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

It may be in the heart of the city but Creek Park is a welcome slice of green with expansive gardens, fishing piers, jogging tracks, barbecue sites, children's play areas, restaurants and kiosks. Rest your legs and take the cable car that runs the 2.3km length of the park. Alternatively, four-wheel cycles can be hired from Gate 2 for Dhs.20 per hour. Admission costs Dhs.5.

### Down By The Creek

Al Souk Al Kabeer

From the embassy area, stroll along the creek to take photos of the much-loved NBD building opposite. Explore Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, where hidden alleyways, secret shops and tiny cafes abound. From here, walk towards the Majlis Gallery, stopping for a much needed juice at XVA Gallery. Continue past the Dubai Museum, through the textile souk and down towards the creek. Take an abra across the creek and you will find yourself at the entrance to the spice souk. You can then wander through the packed streets of Deira towards the gold souk. Fridays are the quietest, as are the early afternoons when stores often close for a break.

### Downtown Dubai

**Nr The Dubai Mall** Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa  
mydowntowndubai.com

Map 2 F6 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

Wander along wide promenades, linger by the lake or get lost in the narrow passageways of the Old Town. This is one of Dubai's trendiest residential communities and was designed for getting around on foot. With cafes, restaurants and coffee shops at every turn, there are plenty of pit-stop possibilities as well as interesting streets to explore. There's also a public bike-sharing scheme available in the area.

### The Els Club

**Shk Mohammed Bin Zayed Rd Sports City,**  
Al Hebiah 4 04 425 1010  
elsclubdubai.com

Map 1 L11

Inspired by links golf, the beautiful Ernie Els Club golf course has an excellent 10km pedestrian path around its exterior. The Els Club golf course stretches almost 7,000 metres and incorporates natural dunes and plants native to the UAE.

### Jumeira Open Beach Running Track

Jumeira 1

Map 2 H4

An early morning walk on the beach got easier (and less sandy) when the 1.5km track on Jumeira Open Beach opened. With running and cycling lanes, distance markers and regular maintenance, it offers a fun and free way to get active while enjoying some people watching and sunshine. The track starts near Dubai Marine Resort and is open 24 hours.

### Jumeirah Beach Residence

Marsa Dubai 04 390 0094

jumeirahbeachresidences.com

Map 1 K4 Metro **Dubai Marina**

An evening stroll could quickly turn into a shopping spree here along the shorefront development which stretches for 1.7km but there are fountains, grassy areas and benches, plus many eateries. Come evening, this is where people bring their expensive, diamond-encrusted (we're not kidding) cars, to sit in a slow-moving traffic jam and rev their engines in the hope of impressing those strolling by.

### Mirdif

Tripoli St Mirdif

Map 2 Q13 Metro **Rashidiya**

Mirdif residential area has two community parks with sprung walking tracks and swings for the kids. Uptown Mirdif shopping centre also makes for a nice outdoor stroll.

### Safa Park

**Off Shk Zayed Rd Al Wasl 04 349 2111**

dm.gov.ae

Map 2 D5 Metro **Business Bay**

This huge park is a great place to exercise and escape the hustle and bustle of the city, or simply to enjoy the boating lake, a multitude of play areas, the maze or The Archive library and cafe. Entry costs Dhs.3 (free for children under three years old). There's a great 3km spongy running track around the park's perimeter, not to mention the countless paths that criss-cross the grassy space. On Friday mornings, check out the Ripe Foodie Market. Tuesday is ladies' day, and there is also a permanent ladies' garden within the park.

### Mall Walkers

If outdoor activities aren't your thing, or if it's so hot you could fry an egg on the pavement, then combine window shopping at Mall of the Emirates with a brisk walk. To make sure you don't get distracted, the Mall Walkers group will guide you along. Register at the customer service desk on the ground floor near parking area A and turn up at Gate 1 on the ground floor at 8am daily (in suitable shoes).

## Public Transport

In an effort to ease the city's congestion problems, the government's Roads & Transport Authority (rta.ae) has made a serious commitment to improving public transport. The Metro is the centrepiece of its efforts and, since its opening in September 2009, has helped to reduce the overall number of daily drivers. Dubai's bus system has also seen major improvements over the past few years with the introduction of air-conditioned bus stops, new buses and an increase in routes. The RTA's fleet of water buses offers commuters and travellers an expanding network of routes along Dubai's waterways; alternatively, there is a more costly water taxi service – operating from Deira across to Jabal Ali.

### Nol Card

Nol cards are used to pay for public transport and street car parking. They are rechargeable and can be used on the metro, bus, and water buses, with fares calculated depending on how many zones your journey takes you through. Single journeys start at Dhs.1.80 for up to 3km, rising to Dhs.5.80 for travel across two or more zones. The red Nol card is a paper ticket aimed at tourists. It can be charged for up to 10 journeys, but is only valid on one type of transport – bus, metro or water bus. The silver Nol card costs Dhs.20, including Dhs.14 credit. It can be recharged up to Dhs.500 and can be used across all forms of transport and for street parking. The gold Nol card is identical to the silver, except that holders are charged first-class prices (usually double the standard fare) and can travel in the Gold Class cabins on the metro. There are daily and monthly Nol passes available. A daily unlimited travel pass costs Dhs.14, while the monthly passes range from Dhs.100 to Dhs.270. Student and senior discounts are available on most ticket types. Nol cards can be purchased and topped up at metro and bus stations and at selected supermarkets including Carrefour and Spinneys. Information on the Nol fare structure and a map of the different zones can be found at nol.ae.

As from September 2013, smartphone users can swipe in and out at metro stations, public bus and water bus stations if they have a NFC (Near Field



Communication) enabled phone. You can buy NFC SIM cards from Etisalat and du business centres. Transport is free for disabled people on Dubai's metro and buses.

### Boat

Crossing Dubai Creek by abra is a common mode of transport for many people. The fare for a single journey across the creek is Dhs.1, and the abras run from 5am to midnight. There are four abra stations, two on the Deira side near the souks and two on the Bur Dubai side near the Ruler's Court. The RTA manages a fleet of air-conditioned water buses costing Dhs.4 per round trip. There are two routes across the creek and four stations. Route 2 between Al Sabkha Station and Dubai Old Souk Station operates 24 hours a day. A route opened in February 2013 between the Festival City Station and Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary.

### Abra Ka Dabra

An abra is a wooden, single engine boat used to carry passengers across the creek. Abras have long been the primary method of crossing the creek. Each one can carry around 20 seated passengers. They tend to depart as soon as all of their seats have been filled.

There is also the Dubai ferry service – two excellent value sightseeing trips aimed at tourists. The first Dubai ferry makes the round trip from Al Ghubaiba station in Bur Dubai to Burj Al Arab and back and the second goes from Dubai Marina Mall and turns around

near Atlantis The Palm. Each journey lasts around an hour and cost Dhs.50 for silver class and Dhs.75 for gold class, with four trips per day.

The RTA launched the first phase of a new water taxi project in mid-2010. An initial five luxury 10-seater boats shuttle passengers between 26 stops, stretching from JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort to Festival City. Fares range from Dhs.50 to travel one stop, up to a hefty Dhs.570 to travel the whole route. Water taxis are available between 10am and 10pm and some routes are available for families to book at a reduced price.

Tourists can also book a water taxi for an hour for Dhs.400; the number to call is 800 9090. For information about the stops that are open see rta.ae. The RTA has also announced future marine transport stations for the Palm Jumeirah and Dubai Marina – check the RTA website for up-to-date information.

## Bus

There are currently around 88 bus routes servicing the main residential and commercial areas of Dubai. While all of the buses and most of the bus shelters are air conditioned and modern, they can be rather crowded during rush hour. Many of the buses from Dubai to Abu Dhabi, Sharjah and Fujairah also have free wi-fi – although there is talk of charging for the wi-fi in the future. There are also on-board catering services on the Bur Dubai to Abu Dhabi bus.

The main bus stations are near the Gold Souk in Deira and on Al Ghubaiba Road in Bur Dubai. Buses run at regular intervals, starting between 5am and 6am and running until midnight or so, and a handful of Nightliner buses operate from 11.30pm till 6am. The front three rows of seats are reserved for women and children only. Cash is not accepted so you need to purchase a Nol card before boarding. For a complete list of the RTA's inter-emirate routes, see rta.ae.

## Metro

Dubai's driverless metro currently has two lines. The Red Line, which runs from Rashidiyah to Dubai International Airport, and down Sheikh Zayed Road – passing the financial district, Downtown, Al Barsha and Marsa Dubai – before terminating at Jabal Ali. The Green Line runs from Al Qusais on the Sharjah border to Jaddaf. Most of the stations along the existing lines are now open – you can check dubaimetro.eu for updates. Blue, Gold and Purple Lines are planned to be running by 2030 and the current Red and Green Lines will be further expanded.

Trains run from 5.50am to midnight Saturday to Wednesday; 5.50am to 1am on Thursdays; and 1pm to 1am on Fridays. The frequency is every 3.45 minutes during peak times, and every seven minutes during off-peak hours. Each train has a section for women and children only, and a first or Gold Class cabin. The fare structure operates as a pay-as-you-go

system, in which you scan your pre-paid Nol card in and out of stations.

Commuters can also take advantage of du wi-fi at stations and on the trains themselves. Access cards are available for Dhs.20 per hour, or you can pay via credit card at a rate of Dhs.10 per hour.

There is a feeder bus system to transport passengers from stations to local destinations. The buses are free if boarded within 30 minutes of exiting the metro. Each station also has a taxi rank outside the exit to help you reach destinations that aren't accessible by bus.

## Monorail

A monorail runs the length of Palm Jumeirah from the Gateway Towers station on the mainland to the Atlantis hotel. Trains run daily from 10am to 10pm and cost Dhs.15 for a single fare or Dhs.25 for a return. Work has also begun on the Al Sufouh Tram which is being designed as a key link for the Dubai Metro and the Palm Monorail. The tram will run along Al Sufouh Road, linking Mall of the Emirates, Marsa Dubai, and Jumeirah Lakes Towers. Construction is underway and the tram is due for completion at the end of 2014.

## Plan Your Trip

The best way to work out your public transport options is to use the Roads & Transport Authority's (RTA) online journey planner ([wojhati.rta.ae](http://wojhati.rta.ae)). For further assistance, call the RTA on 800 9090.



Dubai Metro

## Taxi

If you don't have a car, taxis are still the most common way of getting around. There are nearly 7,000 metered taxis in Dubai with a fixed fare structure. The cars are beige with different coloured roofs. A fleet of 'ladies taxis' with pink roofs have female drivers and are meant for women or family groups only; In-Safe Hands caters to women, children, students, families and people with special needs; and there is a luxury VIP taxi fleet.

## Another World Record

In February 2012, Dubai Metro entered the Guinness World Records Book as the longest driverless metro network in the world, spanning 74.69km

Taxis can be flagged down by the side of the road or you can call 04 208 0808. If you make a booking, you will pay a slightly higher starting fare. The Dubai Taxi automated phone system stores your address after the first time you call. Each subsequent time you ring from that number, listen to the prompts, hit 1, and a taxi will be dispatched automatically, (or hit 2, then enter a later time using the phone's keypad). Unfortunately, the dispatch centre never gives waiting times, so the taxi could arrive in five minutes or 30. Waits are longer at weekends.

The minimum taxi fare is Dhs.10, and the pick-up fare ranges from Dhs.3 to Dhs.7, depending on the time of day, and whether or not you ordered by phone. The starting fare inside the airport area is Dhs.20. Specialist services charge higher rates. Taxis are no longer exempt from Salik tolls, and crossing the border into Sharjah adds another Dhs.20 to the fare. The rate for stoppage or waiting is 50 fils per minute, so don't be surprised when the meter keeps running in standstill traffic. Taxis can be hired for six hours for Dhs.500 or for 12 hours for Dhs.800.

Finding a taxi in congested areas can be difficult, and in their frustration, many people are using illegal cabs. Be warned though that unlicensed taxis haven't had to meet the same vehicle safety standards that legal cabs do. As these cabs are difficult to trace, there have also been cases where drivers have either been the victim of crimes or have perpetrated them.

The Dubai Taxi fleet also now includes several hybrid taxis – Toyota Camrys – that consume a third less fuel and produce a third less carbon. The fleet also has a few specially modified taxis for people with wheelchairs travelling from the airport and around town.

The Hala Taxi fleet is the newest fleet in Dubai. You can't flag them down as they only respond to telephone or online bookings. The cars are black or white, and equipped with wi-fi, Nol and NFC payment systems (for smartphones).

## Chauffeur Service

A new app called Uber enables you to summon a chauffeur through your smartphone. Download and input your credit card details and a photo. When you call, the driver can see your location, and, you can track his progress through your phone. There's no need to call to give directions. The app shows your driver's name, type of car, estimated time of arrival and a rating. Once in the car, you will be offered water and a choice of music. The service costs almost double that of a taxi, but for pick-ups in remote or difficult to find areas, it makes sense.

## Air Travel

Currently, about 107 airlines take advantage of Dubai's open skies policy, operating to and from over 220 destinations. Dubai International Airport's three terminals are a 15 to 30 minute taxi ride apart, depending on the traffic, and there's also a shuttle bus. All terminals offer car rental, hotel reservations and exchange services. Most of the better-known airlines use Terminal 1, while Terminal 2 is used primarily by flydubai and airlines serving former Soviet countries and central Asia. Terminal 3, which opened in 2008, is the newest and most luxurious of the three and exclusively dedicated to Emirates Airlines. By comparison, Terminal 2 has limited facilities and, invariably, extensive queues, while both Terminal 1 and Terminal 3 have a vast selection of drinking and dining venues, plus a large duty free shopping section. For up-to-date flight information from Dubai International Airport, call 04 216 6666. In addition, Dubai International Airport's Concourse D project is due to open in early 2015.

All three terminals have both short and long-term parking facilities, as well as busy taxi ranks. There are metro stations at both Terminal 1 and Terminal 3 that any traveller can access. The stations are part of the Red Line, which runs throughout Deira, under the creek and along Sheikh Zayed Road all the way to Jabal Ali. Keep in mind that luggage larger than a large holdall or standard case is not permitted on the metro. Airport buses operate to and from the airport. Call 800 9090 or visit rta.ae.

## Dubai World Central

A second airport, Dubai World Central – Al Maktoum International opened in 2011 for cargo flights. The airport, which is located at the Jabal Ali end of town, will eventually be the world's largest, with five runways handling passenger flights too. Phase 2 of the airport opened for passenger traffic in October 2013, prior to hosting the Dubai Air Show in December 2013. Budget airline Wizz Air was the first to take off from the airport, flying to various European

destinations, with new carriers due to be added throughout 2014.

## Airlines

There's an ever-increasing choice of budget airlines based in the UAE including Rotana Jet, flydubai and Air Arabia, each offering no-frills, cheap flights to a wide variety of international destinations. flydubai now offers business class seats that won't break the bank.

Other airlines include Etihad operating out of Abu Dhabi, low-cost carriers Air Arabia in Sharjah and flydubai in Dubai, and RAK Airways. Air Arabia offers a city terminal check-in at Lamcy Plaza. Rotana Jet, the UAE's first domestic airline, connects Abu Dhabi with Al Ain, Fujairah and Sir Bani Yas Island for a reasonable fee.

Abu Dhabi airport is a 90 minute drive from Dubai, and Sharjah airport is 45 minutes away. Etihad also runs its own private bus service, which is free for those with a boarding pass and makes the journey between Abu Dhabi International Airport and Dubai.

**Air Arabia** 06 558 0000, [airarabia.com](http://airarabia.com)  
**Air France** 800 23 823, [airfrance.ae](http://airfrance.ae)  
**Air India** 04 227 6787, [airindia.com](http://airindia.com)  
**Air Mauritius** 04 221 4455, [airmauritius.com](http://airmauritius.com)  
**Air Seychelles** 04 286 8008, [airseychelles.com](http://airseychelles.com)  
**American Airlines** 04 316 6116, [aa.com](http://aa.com)  
**Austrian Airlines** 04 211 2538, [austrian.com](http://austrian.com)  
**Bahrain Air** 04 239 9921, [enbahrainair.net](http://enbahrainair.net)  
**British Airways** 800 0441 3322, [britishairways.com](http://britishairways.com)  
**Cathay Pacific** 04 204 2888, [cathaypacific.com](http://cathaypacific.com)  
**China Airlines** 04 286 8008, [china-airlines.com](http://china-airlines.com)  
**Cyprus Airways** 04 221 4455, [cyprusair.com](http://cyprusair.com)  
**Delta Air Lines** 04 397 0118, [delta.com](http://delta.com)  
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**Gulf Air** 04 271 6207, [gulfair.com](http://gulfair.com)  
**IranAir** 04 224 0200, [iranair.com](http://iranair.com)  
**Japan Airlines** 04 217 7501, [jal.com](http://jal.com)  
**Jazeera Airways** 04 224 4464, [jazeeraairways.com](http://jazeeraairways.com)  
**KLM Royal Dutch Airlines** 800 556, [klm.com](http://klm.com)  
**Kuwait Airways** 04 228 5896  
**Lufthansa** 04 373 9100, [lufthansa.com](http://lufthansa.com)  
**Malaysia Airlines** 04 325 4411, [malaysiaairlines.com](http://malaysiaairlines.com)  
**Middle East Airlines** 04 223 7080, [mea.com.lb](http://mea.com.lb)  
**Oman Air** 04 351 8080, [omanair.com](http://omanair.com)  
**Qantas** 04 316 6652, [qantas.com](http://qantas.com)  
**Qatar Airways** 04 231 9921, [qatarairways.com](http://qatarairways.com)  
**RAK Airways** 04 294 5666, [rakairways.com](http://rakairways.com)  
**Rotana Jet** 02 444 3366, [rotanajet.com](http://rotanajet.com)  
**Royal Air Maroc** 04 286 9499, [royalairmaroc.com](http://royalairmaroc.com)  
**Royal Brunei Airlines** 04 334 4884, [flyroyalbrunei.com](http://flyroyalbrunei.com)  
**Royal Jet** 02 505 5177, [royaljetgroup.com](http://royaljetgroup.com)  
**Royal Jordanian** 04 294 4288, [rj.com](http://rj.com)  
**Saudi Arabian Airlines** 04 229 6227, [saudiairlines.com](http://saudiairlines.com)  
**Singapore Airlines** 04 316 6888, [singaporeair.com](http://singaporeair.com)

**South African Airways** 04 397 0766, [flysaa.com](http://flysaa.com)  
**SpiceJet** 04 396 5186, [spicejet.com](http://spicejet.com)  
**SriLankan Airlines** 04 316 6711, [srilankan.aero](http://srilankan.aero)  
**Swiss International Air Lines** 04 381 6100, [swiss.com](http://swiss.com)  
**Thai Airways** 04 268 1701, [thaiair.com](http://thaiair.com)  
**Tunisair** 04 221 1176, [tunisair.com](http://tunisair.com)  
**Turkish Airlines** 04 444 0999, [turkishairlines.com](http://turkishairlines.com)  
**United Airlines** 800 0441 5492, [united.com](http://united.com)  
**Virgin Atlantic** 04 406 0600, [virgin-atlantic.com](http://virgin-atlantic.com)

## e-Gate

Once you have your residence visa you can apply for a smart card to use at the airport e-Gates. Simply swipe the smart card and pass through the gates. Applications for a card are processed within minutes at Dubai International Airport, in the dnata buildings (one on Sheikh Zayed Road and one in Deira near Deira City Centre), or the GDRFA office on Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Road. You'll need your passport, with residence visa, and you will be fingerprinted and photographed. The e-Gate card costs Dhs.200 and is valid for two years; however, you can now activate the e-Gate service on your Resident ID and pay just Dhs.150 for two years. Payment can be made by cash or credit card.

For further information, contact 04 316 6966 or see [dubai.ae](http://dubai.ae). Better still, you can now check in and out through passport control without having to apply for an e-Gate card. All holders of modern passports with barcodes, including children above the age of seven, can use the new e-Gate service, which has been rolled out across Dubai International Airport.

## The Future

The UAE has big expansion plans for its public transport network. Etihad Rail is working on installing a rail network linking the Emirates, and sections of the track are already in place and being utilised by freight trains. The overall plan will see a high-speed passenger rail connection linking Dubai and Abu Dhabi by 2017. Initially this will be aimed at freight transport, but a passenger service between Abu Dhabi and Dubai is likely by 2018. Etihad Rail also plans to extend train lines into other GCC countries and is even looking at expanding its reach as far as Turkey. Once the planned Blue, Gold and Purple metro lines are added to the network by 2030, it could eventually cover 421km with 197 stations – though the size of the expansion will be linked to the official population size. The plan will also see the metro connecting to the Etihad rail network across the Gulf countries. The Al Sufouh Dubai Tram System is another RTA public transport initiative; it will run between Mall of the Emirates and Dubai Marina Mall and is due to open in November 2014.



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## THE REGION'S BEST-SELLING MAPS



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DIFC – The Gate

## FINANCE

Money is a big reason for expats to be in Dubai, so it makes sense to be smart with it when those first tax-free pay cheques come in. From setting up a bank account to credit cards and debt, this chapter will give you the information you need to know in order to watch those dirhams grow.

### Main Banks

To open an account in most banks, you will need a residence visa or to have your residence visa application underway. To apply, you will need to submit your original passport, copies of your passport (personal details and visa pages) and an NOC from your sponsor. Some banks set a minimum account limit – this can be anything from Dhs.2,000 for a deposit account and as much as Dhs.10,000 for a current account.

This means at some point during each month your account balance must be over the minimum limit; but if your wages are paid into this account then for most expats that shouldn't be a problem.

There are plenty of ATMs (cash points) available in Dubai, and most cards are compatible with the Central Bank network, though you may pay a small fee if you have to use another bank's ATM. Even if you use your bank card from your home country, you shouldn't have too many issues using an ATM, although the exchange rate given may not always be favourable.

Banks are open from 8am to 1.30pm, Saturday to Wednesday, and 8am to noon on Thursday. Some branches, especially in the malls, stay open until later, even as late as 10pm. All banks are closed on Fridays.

There are also numerous money exchanges; try Al Fardan Exchange (600 522 265, [alfardanexchange.com](http://alfardanexchange.com)) if you want to buy or sell currency.

Banks that operate internationally rarely have connections with their counterparts in other parts of the world, so you won't be able to manage accounts held in other countries through your Dubai account.

**ABN AMRO Bank** DIFC, Zaa'beel 2, 04 440 9400, [abnamroprivatebanking.com](http://abnamroprivatebanking.com)

**Barclays** Nr Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 438 1038, [barclays.ae](http://barclays.ae)

**Citibank** Nr BurJuman Centre, Al Mankhool, 04 507 4104, [citi.com](http://citi.com)

**Commercial Bank Of Dubai** Al Ittihad Rd, Port Saeed, 04 211 2700, [cbd.ae](http://cbd.ae)

**Dubai Bank** Sunshine Bldg, Al Garhoud, 04 282 9778, [dubaibank.ae](http://dubaibank.ae)

**Dubai Islamic Bank** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 340 1823, [dib.ae](http://dib.ae)

**Emirates NBD** Jabal Ali 1, 04 60054 0000, [emiratesnbd.com](http://emiratesnbd.com)

**First Gulf Bank** Al Yamamah Tower, Al Khabaisi, 04 294 1234, [fgb.ae](http://fgb.ae)

**HSBC Bank Middle East** Al Wasl Rd, Al Souk Al Kabeer, 600 554 722, [hsbc.ae](http://hsbc.ae)

**Mashreq Bank** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 511 8601, [mashreqbank.com](http://mashreqbank.com)

**RAK Bank** Nr Lamcy Plaza, Al Qouz 3, 04 213 0000, [rakbank.ae](http://rakbank.ae)

**Standard Chartered Bank – Middle East** Al Fardan Bldg, Al Mankhool, 600 522 288, [standardchartered.ae](http://standardchartered.ae)

**Union National Bank** Omeir Bin Katab Rd, Al Mankhool, 600 566 665, [unb.co.ae](http://unb.co.ae)

depends on a minimum salary, a salary certificate detailing your earnings (provided by your employer) and a copy of your passport with your residence visa and work permit. Once you have your card you'll find it's accepted at most shops, hotels and restaurants – though smaller retailers may not always have the facility for credit card payments, or they may charge 5% for processing, even though that is a contravention of the card company rules. However, if you are paying cash you may get a discount! Dubai is relatively safe but the same security measures apply regarding credit cards as anywhere: report lost or stolen cards to your bank immediately, and change your PIN frequently. There will be a limit to the amount of cash that you can withdraw in one day, but you should be able to change this either in your online settings or by contacting your bank.

### Pre-paid Cards

Pre-paid cards are available from a number of national banks. These are great for under 18s, as they can shop safely online, can stop the card if it's lost which means they don't lose the money, and parents can track online what they've been spending money on. Using pre-paid cards can mean two for one deals in some eateries can be taken advantage of too.

### Cheques

Previously post-dated cheques have mainly been used to secure finances and pay rent, with a year's rent being 'paid' up front in several cheques. The country's first direct debit system came into force in October 2013, with the aim of reducing the need for post-dated cheques in order to guarantee loans.

Bear in mind that if you do write a post-dated cheque, it is a criminal offence if the cheque bounces. More than four bounced cheques in one year will get you blacklisted by the UAE Central Bank, and your account may be closed. Remember too that a cheque cannot be cancelled unless it is lost or stolen, and so think ahead when writing post-dated cheques. In some cases you can be prosecuted, lose your visa or even face a few years in jail.

### Financial Planning

Many expats are attracted to Dubai for the tax-free salary and the opportunity to put a something away for the future. However, Dubai's alluring lifestyle can quickly steer you away from your goal. It is often necessary for residents to get credit cards and bank loans to finance their life in Dubai and it is easy to

### Mobile Banking

Most banks now offer banking by SMS. You can access your account balance, see your last five transactions, or request a chequebook, simply by sending a text. You'll also get SMS messages to your phone whenever money is paid in or leaves your account.

### Online Banking

Banks in the UAE offer online facilities where you can send a transfer, set daily withdrawal limits, check your balance and apply for a loan. It's easy to set up and usually works in conjunction with your mobile phone, in that any security codes required for online transactions will be sent to your mobile for you to then input online.

### Credit Cards

It's quite easy to get a credit card and if you're eligible your bank will probably call you to offer you a Visa or MasterCard. For American Express visit [americanexpress.ae](http://americanexpress.ae) or call 800 4013. Eligibility usually

slip further into debt – you'll find there is little or no support if you do. It is important to plan your finances and arrange a safeguard in case your finances take a turn for the worse.

When choosing a financial planner in Dubai, you should ensure that they are licensed by the Central Bank of the UAE ([centralbank.ae](http://centralbank.ae)), so that you have some recourse in the event of a dispute. You should also consider the company's international presence – you'll still want the same access to advice and your investments if you return home. It may be better to use an independent company or advisor who is not tied to a specific bank, and will objectively offer you the full range of savings products on the market.

Before leaving your home country you should contact the tax authorities to ensure that you are complying with the financial laws there. Most countries will consider you not liable for income tax once you prove you're a UAE resident (a contract of employment is normally a good starting point). However, you may still have to fulfil certain criteria, so do some research before you come (if you are already here, check with your embassy). You may be liable for tax on any income you receive from back home (for example if you are renting out your property).

If you have a pension scheme in your home country, it may not be worth continuing your contributions once you come to Dubai, but rather to set up a tax-free, offshore savings plan. It is always advisable to speak to your financial adviser about such matters before you make any big move.

## Financial Advice

There seems to be an overabundance of financial advisors in the city who may contact you over the phone and advertise their services. Most advisors won't ask for money initially; however, they may ask you for contact details of your friends and family members so that they can continue to spread the word.

## Pensions

The UAE's first pension scheme for expatriates was launched by the NBAD Trust Company (Jersey) Limited – a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Bank of Abu Dhabi (NBAD). The Wealth Builder Plan is a corporate trust solution that allows employers to offer expat staff greater rewards through corporate savings – the first service of its kinds to be offered by a UAE bank.

The Wealth Builder Plan is underpinned by a range of investment fund options that employees can choose based on their risk appetite. The schemes are tailored for each client, and regular investments can be made solely by the company or by both employer and employee.



Dubai has several international banks

## Financial Advisors

These companies are experienced in providing financial advice to expats.

**6 Sigma Financial Consultancy** Liberty House, DIFC, DIFC, Zaa'beel 2, 04 325 9159, [6sigmagrp.com](http://6sigmagrp.com)

**Acuma Wealth Management** 703 API World Tower, Al Souk Al Kabeer, 04 332 8582, [acuma.ae](http://acuma.ae)

**Ernst & Young** Al Attar Business Tower, Trade Center 2, 04 332 4000, [ey.com](http://ey.com)

**Globaleye** Villa 801, Al Thanya St, Umm Suqeim 3, 04 404 3700, [globaleye.com](http://globaleye.com)

**Guardian Life Management** Saba Tower 1, JLT, Al Thanyah 5, 04 436 2322,

[guardianwealthmanagement.com](http://guardianwealthmanagement.com)

**Holborn Assets** Al Shafar Tower, Al Thanyah 1, 04 457 3800, [holbornassets.com](http://holbornassets.com)

**KPMG** Emirates Towers, Trade Center 2, 04 403 0300, [kpmg.com](http://kpmg.com)

**Mondial (Dubai)** Pinnacle Bldg, Al Barsha 1, 04 399 6601, [mondialdubai.com](http://mondialdubai.com)

**Nexus Insurance** Emaar Square, Burj Khalifa, 04 323 1111, [nexusadvice.com](http://nexusadvice.com)

**PIC Middle East** 414 Emarat Atrium Bldg, Al Wasl, 04 343 3470, [pic-uae.com](http://pic-uae.com)

## Insurance Companies

Contact one of these companies for insurance advice.

**Abu Dhabi National Takaful Company** 04 210 8700, [takaful.ae](http://takaful.ae)

**Aetna Global Benefits (Middle East)** 04 438 7500, [aetnainternational.com](http://aetnainternational.com)

# FIVE DECADES OF TRUST AND EXPERTISE



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**AFIA Insurance Brokerage Services** 04 337 9987, [afia.ae](http://afia.ae)  
**Al Ain Ahlia Insurance Company** 04 272 5500, [alaininsurance.com](http://alaininsurance.com)  
**Al Khazna Insurance Company** 04 217 3333, [alkhazna.com](http://alkhazna.com)  
**Alfred's Insurance Market** 04 337 9987, [insurancemarket.ae](http://insurancemarket.ae)  
**Alliance Insurance** 04 605 1111, [alliance-uae.com](http://alliance-uae.com)  
**Allianz SE** 04 702 6666, [allianz.com](http://allianz.com)  
**Arab Orient Insurance Company** 04 253 1300, [insuranceuae.com](http://insuranceuae.com)  
**AXA Insurance (Gulf)** > p.105 04 324 3434, [axa-gulf.com](http://axa-gulf.com)  
**Daman National Health Insurance Company** 04 436 0222, [damanhealth.ae](http://damanhealth.ae)  
**Emirates Insurance Company** 04 294 2949, [eminsco.com](http://eminsco.com)  
**Gargash Insurance** 04 337 9800, [gargashinsurance.com](http://gargashinsurance.com)  
**Greenshield Insurance Broker** > p.107, 119 04 388 2200, [greenshield.ae](http://greenshield.ae)  
**Lifecare International** 04 331 8688, [lifecareinternational.com](http://lifecareinternational.com)  
**MedNet UAE** 800 4882, [mednet-uae.com](http://mednet-uae.com)  
**MetLife Alico** 04 360 0555, [metlifealico.ae](http://metlifealico.ae)  
**Nasco Karaoglan** 04 352 3133, [nascodubai.com](http://nascodubai.com)  
**National General Insurance Co (NGI)** 04 211 5800, [ngi.ae](http://ngi.ae)  
**Neuron** 04 399 6779, [neuron.ae](http://neuron.ae)  
**Nexus** 04 323 1111, [nexusadvice.com](http://nexusadvice.com)  
**Oman Insurance Company** 04 233 7777, [tameen.ae](http://tameen.ae)  
**Qatar General Insurance & Reinsurance Co** 04 268 8688, [qgirco.com](http://qgirco.com)  
**Qatar Insurance Company** 04 222 4045, [qatarinsurance.com](http://qatarinsurance.com)  
**RSA** 800 772, [rsagroup.ae](http://rsagroup.ae)  
**Zurich International Life** 04 425 2300, [zurich.com](http://zurich.com)

## Debt

Despite the city's reliance on credit, harsh penalties are dealt for late or missed payments. It can be expensive to initially set up here and you may need sizeable loans to purchase a car or cover rent – but if you suddenly lose your job there's no safety net to cover your expenses. However, banks do generally require that you have received six salary payments into your account before they will grant you a loan.

Unlike some countries, where you will receive several reminders for missed payments, if you are late paying for basic household bills such as electricity or water, your services may be disconnected without much warning. Missed payments on credit cards bills will often incur fines or restrictions to services. There are no bankruptcy laws in the UAE and so if you fall into difficulties you are fully liable for your debt. If your bank files a complaint, you could face a visa ban or jail.

## Tax

The UAE levies no personal income taxes or withholding taxes. The only noticeable taxes you pay as an expat are a 5% municipality tax on local accommodation, a 30% tax on alcohol bought at Dubai liquor stores and 50% tax on tobacco (although cigarettes are still comparatively cheap). A municipality tax is included in your DEWA bill, and if you don't pay this your utilities will be cut off. This has resulted in some complaints – the tax is meant to cover refuse collection, street lighting and community road networks, but people renting freehold properties also pay maintenance to cover these things. There is also a 10% municipality tax and a 10% service charge in hotel food and beverage outlets, but you'll find that these are usually incorporated into the displayed price.

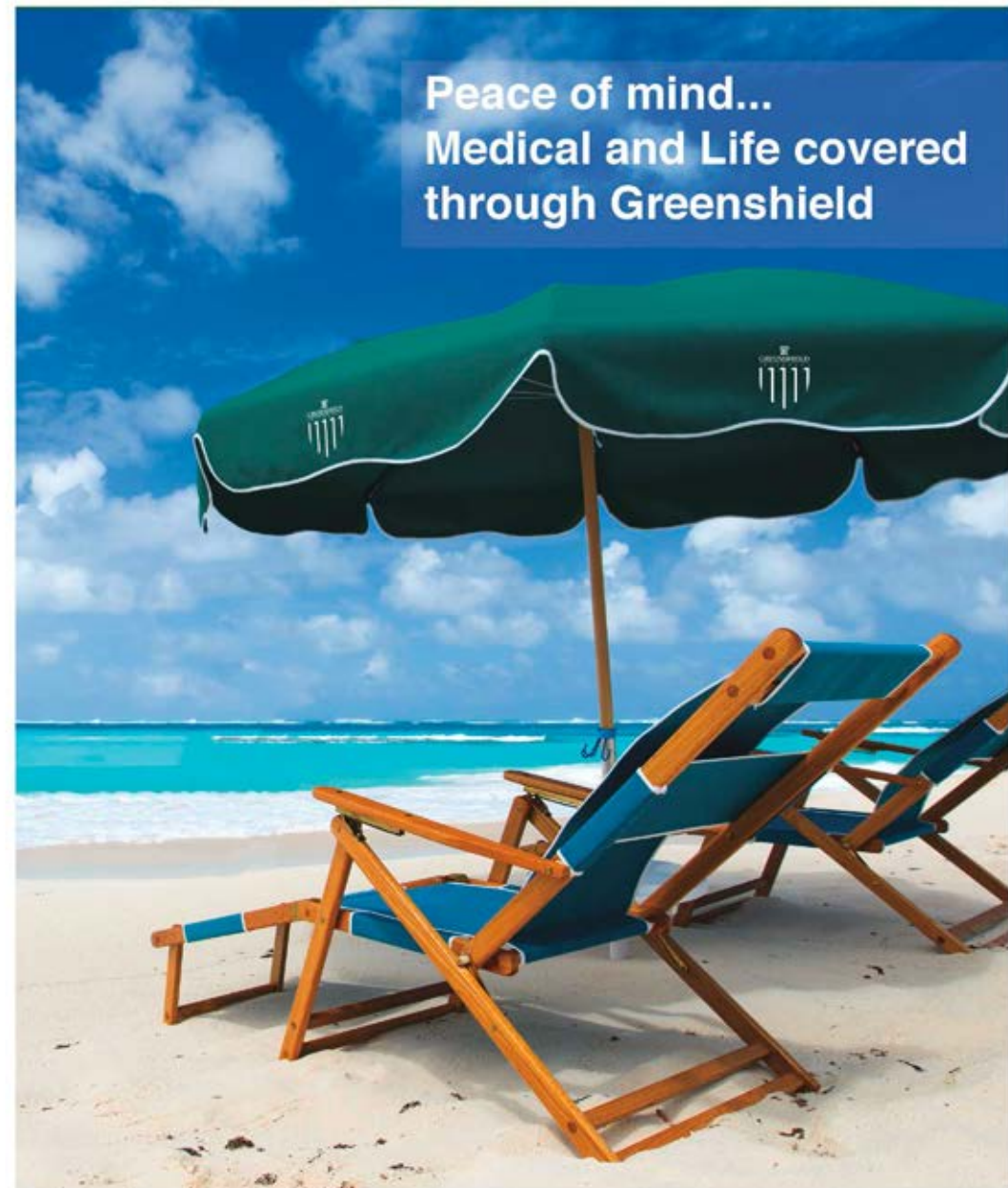
## Taxing Issues

You may need to register your residency in the UAE with the government in your home country to avoid paying income tax or capital gains tax. It's best to check with your consulate for exact details. British expats can visit the Inland Revenue's website at [hmrc.gov.uk/international/abroad.htm](http://hmrc.gov.uk/international/abroad.htm) for comprehensive advice on tax and National Insurance payments. If you still spend time working in your home country, check with an accountant to see if you are still liable to pay tax at home.

## Offshore Accounts

An offshore account works in the same way as a conventional account, but with additional flexibility. Money can be moved where it will produce the best rewards, and cash accessed whenever you need it, in your desired currency. Offshore accounts allow for management through the internet and over the phone, in a range of currencies (commonly in US dollars, euros or pounds sterling). If you are travelling outside the UAE, make sure your account comes with 24 hour banking, internationally recognised debit cards, and the ability to write cheques in your preferred currency.

To open an account, there is usually a minimum balance of around \$10,000. Do some thorough research before opening an account, and check the potential tax implications in your home country. It is important to seek independent financial advice, and not just the opinion of the bank offering you an account. To open your account, you may have to produce certain reports or documents from your chosen country. However, for those willing to do the research and undertake the admin, offshore banking can prove to be a lucrative investment.



Once in a while, life throws us a curve ball. While there's no way of protecting ourselves from the unforeseen, we can plan ahead. With medical coverage options including local & international plans, inpatient & outpatient care, emergency evacuation/repatriation and optional dental & maternity benefits, your insurance can cover you when and under which circumstances you desire. Greenshield Insurance removes the financial burden, so you can focus on life. For a free consultation, contact Toll Free on 800 GIB (442) or +971 4 388 2200. Email: [contact@greenshield.ae](mailto:contact@greenshield.ae) (Ref: DXBE) | [www.greenshield.ae](http://www.greenshield.ae)





Dubai Healthcare City

## HEALTH

Both private and public healthcare services are available in the UAE. General standards are high, with English speaking staff and internationally trained medical staff in most facilities, the main difference being personal service and dorm style rooms rather than private hotel-style rooms (and food!).

Historically, an employer in Dubai can choose to provide access to healthcare for its employees: either the employer pays for a private medical insurance policy, or it pays the cost of obtaining a health card for each employee, which can be used to receive healthcare at any government hospital.

Under a new law introduced in January 2014 (Insurance System for Advancing Healthcare in Dubai – ISAHD), Dubai companies with 1,000 or more employees must cover their staff with private health insurance before the end of October 2014; smaller companies with 100-999 employees will have until the end of July 2015, and companies below 100 employees

have until end of June 2016 to cover their employees. Health insurance packages, which must come from a government approved provider, cover all essential health services including emergency care, access to GPs, referral to specialists, tests and investigations, surgical procedures and maternity care.

The new legislation also states that employee's spouses and children must also have health cover – but this may be at the employee's own expense. It is also mandatory for sponsors to provide domestic workers – nannies and maids – with health insurance.

Healthcare in Dubai is managed by the Dubai Health Authority (DHA). As well as introducing compulsory health insurance in 2014, there are plans underway to expand the Rashid Hospital trauma centre, and introduce electronic medical records; all patients will be assigned a password and any doctor in Dubai – whether at a private or public hospital – will be able to access your medical records.

## Government Healthcare

In Dubai, the Department of Health & Medical Services ([dohms.gov.ae](http://dohms.gov.ae)) runs Dubai, Rashid and Latifa hospitals. Dubai Hospital is renowned as one of the best medical centres in the Middle East, while Latifa is a specialised maternity and paediatric hospital. DOHMS also operates a number of outpatient clinics. Al Baraha Hospital is run by the Ministry of Health. The Iranian Hospital, while not a government hospital, provides healthcare subsidised by the Iranian Red Crescent Society. With the exception of emergency care, you will need a health card to access government health services.

### Health Card

The Dubai Health Authority issues a health card, which entitles any UAE resident to receive healthcare at a government hospital or clinic. The card costs Dhs.500 and can be applied for at Rashid, Latifa or Dubai hospitals; you will need your residence visa, Resident ID, two passport photos and an application form typed in Arabic. You can also apply online at [dha.gov.ae](http://dha.gov.ae). Even if you already have access to private health insurance, it is perhaps sensible to have a health card as well, as not all policies will cover you for certain treatments and it may be cheaper to go to a government hospital or clinic.

## Private Healthcare

If you have private health insurance, you will have access to a network of private hospitals and clinics. Levels of cover vary depending on the policy, so check what you're entitled to. Dental care, maternity and screening tests aren't usually covered as standard, and you may need to have been on the policy for a year before you can receive maternity cover.

Before making an appointment to see a healthcare professional, always check whether the clinic or hospital is part of your insurer's network to avoid being landed with the full costs yourself. Your insurer will also provide details about its payment policy; some companies offer direct billing, which means the insurer pays the hospital or clinic directly and you only pay a nominal fee each time you access medical services, while others require you to pay the cost of the consultation, treatment and medication up front and then file a claim to the insurer.

If your employer is paying for your medical insurance, your employment contract will state whether your spouse and dependants are included in the policy. If you plan to cover the cost of insuring your family yourself, you may need to purchase a separate policy for them as it's not always possible to extend existing policies.

Private hospitals, medical centres and specialist clinics are located across Dubai, and there are over 120 medical facilities in Healthcare City alone, including two hospitals.

## Accidents & Emergencies

If you witness an accident or need an ambulance in an emergency situation, the number to call is 999. Anyone can receive emergency treatment in government hospitals but charges apply to anyone without a health card. Some private hospitals have accident and emergency (A&E) departments but unless you have private medical insurance, you'll be landed with a large bill. Your best bet is to check with your insurer that you are covered for treatment in a particular hospital before heading there.

Of the government hospitals, Rashid Hospital (04 219 1000) deals with most emergency cases as it has a well-equipped A&E department. Dubai Hospital also has an emergency unit. Latifa Hospital offers emergency services to children under the age of 12 and women with maternity or gynaecological emergencies; it does not deal with trauma cases. The Iranian Hospital has a busy A&E.

### Who You Gonna Call?

Need a doctor urgently? Our customers have access to Mobile Doctors, a round-the-clock medical helpline. Licensed and experienced physicians from Dubai Healthcare City are standing by day and night to advise you over the phone and help you make an appointment with leading hospitals, clinics, pharmacies and other health services across the UAE. To subscribe, SMS 'MD' to 2470. For more information and to subscribe online, visit [mobiledoctors24-7.com](http://mobiledoctors24-7.com) or call 800 63247; there is a daily fee of Dhs.29, and monthly subscriptions are also available.

While finding a place to get emergency treatment is easy, Dubai's paramedic services are somewhat under-developed. Ambulance response times are below those in most western cities but in recent years, a large number of well-equipped response vehicles have been added and times have come down.

When you call 999 (which goes through to Dubai Police) an ambulance will be dispatched to take the patient to the relevant hospital depending on the type of medical treatment needed. Rashid Hospital receives all trauma patients; all other medical emergencies are transported to Dubai Hospital with the exception of cardiac, neurological and gastrointestinal patients, who are taken to Rashid or a speciality hospital.

## General Medical Care

There are a few different options available for general, non-emergency medical care. Most hospitals have a walk-in clinic where you can simply turn up, present your health or insurance card, register and queue to see a general practitioner. It's commonplace to be seen by a triage nurse who will take down the details of your medical history and ailment before you see a doctor. These departments usually operate on a first-come, first-served basis. It's advisable to call the hospital prior to visiting to make sure that they have a walk-in service and when it's open. If you are on a private healthcare plan, check in advance that the hospital is on your insurer's network.

### Doctor On Call

800 Doctor (800doctor.com, 800 362867) offers a 24/7 doctor on call service. Its team of certified doctors can visit your home, work or business, normally within an hour of your call. They can help with eye infections, sore throat, common viral infections, tonsillitis, asthma, bronchitis, vaccinations and more. A house call will cost Dhs.500 plus medications.

Many hospitals and smaller clinics offer family medicine as part of their outpatient services. You can usually call to make an appointment but there are no guarantees you'll get an appointment on the same day. If your usual family medicine department has no appointments available but you need immediate non-emergency medical care, they may admit you through the A&E department, but they will advise you of this when you call. American Hospital offers a fast-track service through its A&E department for people needing immediate medical attention.

While some people like the convenience of walk-in clinics, others prefer to register with a practice where they are familiar with the administrative procedures and can see the same doctor on return visits. There are countless clinics in Dubai which offer general practice and family medicine. Standards are generally high but it's worth asking friends, neighbours and colleagues for recommendations. Most parts of the city have a local medical centre, so if proximity to your home or office is important, you should be able to find something nearby.

A number of clinics and hospitals offer Well Man, Well Woman and Well Child packages. These care packages involve medical examinations, screenings for common diseases, and routine tests, and offer well-being advice. You can even get your holiday vaccinations topped up as part of some packages. The package that you opt for will depend on factors such as age, gender and medical history.

**Al Diyafa Modern Medical Centre** 2nd December St, Al Bada', 04 345 4945

**Al Mousa Medical Centre** Al Wasl Rd, Jumeira 1, 04 345 2999

**Al Noor Polyclinic** Saif Center, Naif, 04 223 3324, [alnoorpolyclinic.ae](http://alnoorpolyclinic.ae)

**Amber Clinics** Rigga Business Centre, Al Muraqqabat, 04 230 9100, [amber-clinics.com](http://amber-clinics.com)

**Aster Medical Centre** Icon Towers, TECOM, Al Thanyah 1, 04 453 4830, [astermedicalcentre.com](http://astermedicalcentre.com)

**Belgium Medical Services** Ibn Sina Bldg, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 362 4711

**Belhoul European Hospital** Al Satwa, 04 345 4000, [belhouleuropean.com](http://belhouleuropean.com)

**Canadian Specialist Hospital** Nr Abjar Grand Hotel, Hor Al Anz East, 04 707 2222, [csh.ae](http://csh.ae)

**Crescent Cosmetic Medical Center** Villa 39, Nr Mercato, Jumeira 1, 04 342 2288, [crescentmc.ae](http://crescentmc.ae)

**Drs Nicolas & Asp** Villa 446, Nr Jumeira Beach Park, Jumeira 3, 04 394 7777, [nicolasandasp.com](http://nicolasandasp.com)

**Dubai London Specialty Hospital** Jumeira 4, Umm Suqeim 2, 04 800 352, [dubailondonclinic.com](http://dubailondonclinic.com)

**Family First Medical Center** Al Wasl Rd, Umm Al Sheif, 04 380 5430, [familyfirst.ae](http://familyfirst.ae)

**General Medical Centre** > p.123 Nr Market Shopping Mall, Dubai Investment Park 1, 04 885 3225, [gmclinics.com](http://gmclinics.com)

**General Medical Centre** > p.123 Trade Centre Apartments, Trade Center 2, 04 331 3544, [gmclinics.com](http://gmclinics.com)

**Health Call** Ibn Sina Bldg, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 363 5343, [health-call.com](http://health-call.com)

**Infinity Health Clinic** Nr Park n Shop, Jumeira 3, 04 394 8994, [ihcdubai.com](http://ihcdubai.com)

**JTS Medical Centre** Jumeirah Terrace, Jumeira 1, 04 379 9954, [jtsmedicalcentre.com](http://jtsmedicalcentre.com)

**kidsFIRST Medical Centre** Villa 1171A, Al Wasl Rd, Umm Al Sheif, 04 348 5437, [kidsfirstmc.com](http://kidsfirstmc.com)

**Lifeline Medical Centre Dubai Marina** Al Fattan Marine Tower 2, Marsa Dubai, 04 399 1119, [lifeline.ae](http://lifeline.ae)

**Manchester Clinic** Jumeira Rd, Jumeira 1, 04 344 0300, [manchester-clinic.com](http://manchester-clinic.com)

**Medcare Medical Centre** Al Barajeel Oasis Complex Bldg, Mirdif, 04 284 7199, [medcarehospital.com](http://medcarehospital.com)

**Mediclinic Dubai Mall** > p.iv-v Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 449 5111, [mediclinic.ae](http://mediclinic.ae)

**Mercato Family Clinic** Nr Mercato Shopping Centre, Jumeira 1, 04 344 8844

### Medical History

Be sure to give a copy of your medical history to your new clinic. Most insurance policies don't cover holiday vaccinations; you can save yourself a lot of money if you have a record of which jabs you've already had.



**GMC JUMEIRAH - MEDICAL**  
04 349 4880

**GMC JUMEIRAH - DENTAL**  
04 344 9150

**GMC GREEN COMMUNITY**  
MEDICAL | DENTAL - 04 885 3225

**GMC TRADE CENTRE APTS.**  
MEDICAL | DENTAL - 04 331 3544

**GMC TECOM**  
MEDICAL | DENTAL - 04 567 6888

**GMC TECOM - LABORATORY**  
04 567 6800

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- Internal Medicine
- Obstetrics
- Ophthalmology
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- School Medicine
- Sports Medicine
- Travel Medicine
- Vaccinations



## Government Hospitals

There are four main government hospitals in Dubai that you may need to visit.

### Al Baraha Hospital

Nr Dubai Hospital Al Baraha 04 271 0000

Map 2 P4 Metro Palm Deira

This government hospital is commonly referred to as the Kuwaiti Hospital and is one of Dubai's older medical centres. It is on the Deira side of the Shindagha Tunnel. You're unlikely to use this hospital for treatment, but you might need to come here for your blood test when processing your residence visa or for a birth or death certificate.

### Dubai Hospital

Nr Baraha Hospital Al Baraha 04 219 5000

dohms.gov.ae

Map 2 P5 Metro Palm Deira

Dubai Hospital is one of the best government hospitals in the UAE. Having opened in 1983, it is one of the oldest, but it's clean and well maintained. The hospital offers a full range of medical, dentistry and general surgical services. It is large and usually busy but has a very efficient emergency department.

### Latifa Hospital

Oud Metha Rd Sama Al Jadaf, Al Jadaf 04 219 3000

dha.gov.ae

Map 2 K7 Metro Dubai Healthcare City

The Latifa Hospital specialises in obstetrics, gynaecology and paediatric. Its emergency department provides 24 hour care seven days a week. It cares for children up to the age of 12 with medical, surgical and non-trauma cases, and women with serious problems relating to pregnancy and gynaecology. It's the only hospital to deal with emergency pregnancies and has a special unit for premature and sick neonates. Expat residents admitted in an emergency without a health card are charged Dhs.250 a day plus any medication costs.

### Rashid Hospital

Nr Maktoum Bridge Umm Hurair 2 04 219 1000

dha.gov.ae

Map 2 L6 Metro Oud Metha

Rashid is the main government hospital for A&E, trauma, intensive care and paramedic services. It's likely that you'll be brought here if you have a road accident. It also offers diagnostics, surgery, maternity, paediatrics, physiotherapy and a social affairs unit. The standard of care is good, but it is busy, so seek non-emergency treatment in another government hospital. The hospital is currently undergoing a Dhs.3bn redevelopment; there will be state-of-the-art medical facilities, along with two hotels, residences and a lake.

## Private Hospitals

In general private hospitals deliver high standards of care in Dubai. Most hospitals offer a comprehensive range of inpatient and outpatient facilities, so if you like a particular hospital but need to see a specific specialist, the chances are the hospital will be able to cater to your needs. Once you have registered with your chosen hospital it is easier and faster to return for further treatment.

For very specialist treatment you'll be referred to somewhere else in the city. Many of the services offered in hospitals are also offered in clinics and small practices, so if you have a hospital phobia, these might be a better option for non-emergency treatment. See Specialist Clinics & Practitioners. It is worth having a look around the main hospitals to see which one suits you – especially if you are intending to have a baby in Dubai. For more information on Having a Baby in Dubai see Family & Parenting.

### Al Garhoud Private Hospital

Nr Millennium Hotel Al Garhoud 04 454 5000

gph.ae

Map 2 N7 Metro GGICO

Almost all areas of medical care are offered at this 52 bed multi-specialty private hospital which offers emergency care, plus general surgery, and obstetrics and gynaecology. There is also an ENT department, plastic aesthetic surgery and physiotherapy.

## Private Medical Insurance

Private medical cover in Dubai is available from several providers. Greenshield Insurance (greenshield.ae, 04 388 2200) offers comprehensive medical cover for expats. Their website contains a well-explained guide as to how their policies work. You'll need insurance cover when using private hospitals and clinics; otherwise you'll be landed with the entire bill for your treatment. Using an insurance provider such as Greenshield gives you peace of mind because medical treatment in Dubai can be expensive.

### American Hospital Dubai > p.125

Nr Movenpick Hotel Oud Metha 04 336 7777

ahdubai.com

Map 2 K6 Metro Oud Metha

American Hospital is usually pretty busy with its excellent in and outpatient facilities and a fast-track A&E unit. The hospital has top-of-the-range diagnostic equipment and a number of dedicated units including a heart centre and cancer care centre. Its maternity unit is a popular choice, with packages for prenatal care and delivery and private rooms on the labour ward. You can book appointments online.

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The first private laboratory to be certified by the College of American Pathologists (CAP)

**Belhoul Speciality Hospital****Al Khaleej Rd Al Baraha 04 273 3333**  
belhoulspeciality.com

Map 2 N4

Belhoul Speciality Hospital's nephrology department offers state-of-the-art dialysis machines for kidney disorders. It also has advanced diagnostic technology and health check packages. It has an emergency room and a range of in and outpatient services. The service is efficient as is its customer service.

**Cedars Jebel Ali International Hospital****Off Exit 22, Shk Zayed Rd Jabal Ali Port, Mena Jabal Ali 04 881 4000**

cedars-jaih.com

Map 1 D5 Metro **Danube**

Cedars Jebel Ali International Hospital is a private healthcare centre near Jebel Ali Free Zone. Services include a 24 hour emergency clinic and dedicated ambulance (04 881 4000 and 04 881 8816). It specialises in trauma and occupational medicine. A hospital extension is currently under construction.

**Healthcare City**

Dubai Healthcare City is a centre of excellence dedicated to hospitals and healthcare facilities. There are more than 120 medical facilities and 4,000 doctors spanning all specialities. It's a hub for pioneering research and cutting edge technology. You can find everything from eye doctors to Ayurveda treatments. For more information see dhcc.ae.

**Dubai London Specialty Hospital****Jumeira Rd Umm Suqeim 2 04 80 0352**

dubailondonclinic.com

Map 1 T4 Metro **Noor Bank**

The Dubai London Specialty Hospital is a part of Dubai London Clinic, a well-established clinic with fairly new medical and surgical premises in Umm Suqeim. Another branch is at Festival City (04 232 5751). The Dubai London Dental Centre is on Al Wasl Road. The hospital offers round-the-clock emergency services, inpatient surgery, cosmetic surgery and comprehensive outpatient care.

**Emirates Hospital****Nr Jumeirah Beach Park Jumeira 2 04 349 6666**  
emirateshospital.aeMap 2 D4 Metro **Business Bay**

This small private hospital on Jumeira Road may not be the newest of Dubai's private medical facilities but it delivers a high standard of care. It is primarily a surgical hospital but it also runs outpatient services including a 24 hour walk-in clinic, though the number of doctors available at weekends is limited.

**Iranian Hospital****Al Wasl Rd Al Bada' 04 344 0250**  
ihd.aeMap 2 H4 Metro **World Trade Centre**

This mosaic-fronted hospital is affiliated with the Red Crescent Society of Iran, so it isn't strictly a UAE government hospital. It offers its own health card and the fee is reasonable. The card, which costs Dhs.300, offers 20% discount on in and outpatient services, but even without a card, the prices are still affordable. In addition, some of the medicines which they prescribe are free. On the downside the hospital is rather busy, particularly at the walk-in clinic during peak hours.

**Medcare Hospital****Nr Safa Park Al Safa 1 04 407 9100**

medcarehospital.com

Map 2 D5 Metro **Business Bay**

Medcare Hospital is a modern 60 bed private hospital. It offers emergency services and advanced medical care with a particularly strong maternity department. A satellite clinic, Medcare Medical Centre, recently opened in Uptown Mirdiff and takes walk-ins. There is also a multi-speciality clinic on The Walk at JBR.

**Medcare Medical Centre****Nr Umm Suqeim Municipality Umm Suqeim 1 04 395 3115**

medcarehospital.com

Map 2 A5 Metro **Noor Bank**

Offering primary, secondary and tertiary medical services including surgery, dentistry, family medicine, rheumatology, diagnostics, psychiatry, endocrinology, urology and paediatrics. There are also branches at Mirdif, Mirdif City Centre and The Walk at JBR.

**Medcare Orthopaedics & Spine Hospital****Off Shk Zayed Rd Al Safa 1 04 376 8400**

medcareorthopaedics.com

Map 2 C6 Metro **Business Bay**

Medcare Orthopaedics & Spine Hospital, or MOSH, exclusively caters to orthopaedic and spine patients. It specialises in joint replacement, paediatric orthopaedic cases, foot and ankle ailments, sports-related injuries, and hand and spine ailments. It boasts one of the largest and most comprehensive associations of private orthopaedic surgeons in the emirate.

**Mediclinic Al Sufouh > p.iv-v**Knowledge Village, Al Sufouh 2 04 366 1030  
mediclinic.aeMap 1 N5 Metro **Dubai Internet City**

Has everything from its own ambulance services to an operating theatre and 25 outpatient and speciality clinics including day-care surgery, gastroenterology, paediatrics and urgent care. Open 8am to 10.30pm, Saturday to Thursday, 11.30am to 8.30pm on Friday.

**Mediclinic City Hospital > p.iv-v****Building 37 Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2 04 435 9999**

mediclinic.ae

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Mediclinic City Hospital is a modern, multi-disciplinary hospital delivering world-class healthcare services with the most advanced equipment available. The 229 bed premium facility offers specialised treatment in areas such as cardiology, neurology and neurosurgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, general surgery and radiology. Patient care units provide sophisticated diagnosis and treatments in hand surgery, eye care, kidney stones and breast care. The maternity unit has a dedicated operating theatre for caesarean sections and a neonatal intensive care unit, which is one of the largest in the UAE.

**Mediclinic Welcare Hospital > p.iv-v****Nr Dubai Aviation Club Al Garhoud 04 282 7788**

mediclinic.ae

Map 2 N7 Metro **GGICO**

Welcare Hospital's special services include a contact lens clinic, diabetic clinic, holiday dialysis and home call consultations (specialist and GP). Its prenatal and delivery care is considered to be among the best in Dubai. Welcare offers postnatal packages for parents and newborns, which is a nice way for mums to meet. Welcare also operates primary healthcare clinics in Mirdif (04 288 1302) and Al Qusais (04 258 6466) and an ambulatory care unit in Knowledge Village (04 366 1030) that comes highly recommended. Appointments can be booked online.



Emirates Hospital

**Neuro Spinal Hospital****Nr Jumeira Beach Park Jumeira 2 04 342 0000**  
nshdubai.comMap 2 D4 Metro **Business Bay**

The Neuro Spinal Hospital's emergency room is open around the clock and treats all kinds of spinal, neurosurgical and neurological emergencies. The hospital has 40 beds and a multinational team of specialists, doctors and nurses. As well as spinal treatment facilities, the hospital has a stroke centre for treatment of acute cerebro-vascular accidents and its own ambulance, which can be dispatched by calling 04 315 7777.

**NMC Hospital****Salahuddin Rd Hor Al Anz 04 268 9800**

nmc.ae

Map 2 Q6 Metro **Abu Hail**

NMC Private Hospital in Deira has a 24 hour walk-in general practice clinic so advance appointments are not necessary. The levels of service are high and the staff are generally efficient. The hospital has an emergency room and its own ambulance with attendant doctors. There is an NMC Specialty Hospital in Al Nahda (04 267 9999), with specialist clinics for allergies, reconstructive surgery, paediatrics and more. Other branches are located in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

**Saudi German Hospital****Al Hessa Rd Al Barsha 3 04 389 0000**

sghgroup.ae

Map 1 P6 Metro **Dubai Internet City**

SGH has numerous healthcare establishments located across the MENA region. The Dubai facility is an impressively state-of-the-art 300 bed speciality tertiary care hospital that is extremely convenient for many residents in new Dubai. It offers medical and surgical specialities and subspecialities including cardiac surgery, neurosurgery, oncology, maxillofacial surgery, orthopaedics, and vascular surgery.

**Zulekha Hospital****Nr HCT-Dubai Women's College Al Nahda 2 04 267 8866**

zulekha-hospitals.com

Map 2 T8 Metro **Stadium**

Zulekha is a multi-speciality hospital offering care in fields from cardiology to urology, as well as 24 hour emergency services. The Zulekha Hospital also has a branch in Sharjah and a medical centre in Dubai. In 2012 it was awarded the coveted Dubai Quality Award. It offers health packages to assess your current well-being. Choose from Basic, Executive, Cardiac or Well Woman packages. An initial consultation, followed by blood and urine analysis, analysis of organ functionality and other tests are typically included in the various packages.

## Specialist Hospitals & Clinics

Whatever your ailment, the chances are you'll find at least one relevant specialist in Dubai. You don't need a referral to be seen by a specialist so you are free to seek whatever medical advice is relevant to your condition. If you are not sure what is wrong with you, or which kind of specialist you should consult, ask your doctor or seek advice from a hospital. Most places will advise you over the phone to save you the hassle of trying to make an appointment. The majority of hospitals also offer a range of outpatient medical specialities, although many people prefer the more personalised environment of smaller practices for long-term medical care. In addition, many general practice clinics offer a range of medical services so it's worth checking at your local clinic before going elsewhere.

### Al Borj Medical Center

Al Wasl **04 321 2220**

alborjclinicdubai.com

Map 2 F6 Metro **Business Bay**

Specialises in endocrinology, dermatology, plastic surgery, gynaecology, paediatrics and general surgery.

### Al Shifa Al Khaleeji Medical Centre

**Abu Baker Al Siddique Rd** Al Rigga **04 294 0786**

alshifaalkhaleeji.com

Map 2 N6 Metro **Al Rigga**

This clinic offers paediatrics, gynaecology, dentistry, internal medicine and orthopaedic medical services.

### Allied Diagnostics

**2nd December St** Al Satwa **04 332 8111**

alliediagnostics.net

Map 2 J5 Metro **World Trade Centre**

Provides diagnostic services for clinics that do not have on-site facilities. You may be referred here for investigative procedures.

### Amber Clinics

**Rigga Business Centre** Al Muraqqabat **04 230 9100**

amber-clinics.com

Map 2 N5 Metro **Al Rigga**

One of a number of Amber establishments in Dubai, the Al Rigga clinic is a large, one-stop 'polyclinic' with numerous specialty departments and laboratories under one roof.

### Atlas Star Medical Center

**Khalid Bin Al Waleed Rd** Al Raffa **04 359 6662**

atlasstar.co

Map 2 L4 Metro **Al Fahidi**

Offers general practice, general surgery, ENT, gynaecology and dental services.

### British Medical Consulting Centre

**Nr Mercato** Jumeira 1 **04 344 2633**

bmccdubai.com

Map 2 F4 Metro **Financial Centre**

Western-trained medical staff specialising in cosmetic surgery, psychotherapy, psychology, dentistry, hair transplantation and marriage counselling. The initial consultation is usually free. Plus they offer psychological support for people with a fear of dentists and dental treatment.

### The Diabetes & Endocrine Center

**Building 64** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2

**04 375 2345**

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Screening and treatment clinic for diabetes and thyroid problems.

### Dr Al Rustom's Medical & Day Care Surgery Centre

**Villa 41, Nr Jumeira Plaza** Jumeira 1 **04 349 8800**

skin-and-laser.com

Map 2 H4 Metro **Al Jafiliya**

A specialist dermatology clinic offering cancer services, laser surgery and cosmetic procedures.

### Dr Mahaveer Mehta Skin Medical

Al Muraqqabat **04 221 9300**

skinlaserdubai.com

Map 2 N5 Metro **Baniyas Square**

A laser surgery clinic offering treatment for dermatological conditions and cosmetic procedures.

### Dr Mohamed Al Zubaidy Clinic

**Burger King Bldg, Al Rigga St** Al Rigga **04 227 7533**

Map 2 N6 Metro **Union**

Dr Al Zubaidy offers dermatology and venereology investigations and treatments.

### Dr Taher H Khalil Clinic

**A 22 St, Al Safa 1** **04 268 7655**

Map 2 C6 Metro **Business Bay**

A general medical clinic specialising in hormone therapy including treatment for low fertility, diabetes and thyroid irregularities.

### Dubai London Specialty Hospital

**Jumeira Rd** Umm Suqeim 2 **800 352**

dubailondonclinic.com

Map 1 T4 Metro **Noor Bank**

This is a long-established clinic with brand new medical and surgical premises in Umm Suqeim. Another branch is located at Festival City (04 232 5751) and Dubai London Dental Centre is on Al Wasl Road (see Dentists). The Umm Suqeim branch offers round-the-clock emergency services, inpatient surgery, cosmetic surgery and comprehensive outpatient care.

### German Heart Centre Bremen

**Building 39** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2

**04 362 4797**

german-heart-centre.com

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Cardiac treatment, investigation and intervention services, and after treatment care from Germany's most renowned cardiology clinic.

### German Medical Center

**Ibn Sina Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2

**04 362 2929**

gmcindhcc.com

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Offering medical specialities including urology, andrology, infertility, gynaecology, obstetrics, internal medicine, general and orthopaedic surgeries and ENT.

### Health Care Medical Centre

**Jumeirah Centre** Jumeira 1 **04 344 5550**

Map 2 H4 Metro **Emirates Towers**

A small practice offering ENT, dentistry and ophthalmology.

### iCARE Clinics

**Oasis Centre** Al Qouz 1 **04 384 7272**

icare-clinics.com

Map 2 C6

The first of 20 proposed iCARE Clinics is now open at the Oasis Centre on Sheikh Zayed Road. The clinics offer a wide range of medical services, including paediatrics, gynaecology, dental, radiology, pathology, family medicine, as well as general practitioner services.

### Lifeline Hospital

**Nr Jebel Ali Primary School** Al Muntazah Complex,

Jabal Ali 1 **04 884 5666**

lifeline.ae

Map 1 F6 Metro **Ibn Battuta**

A boutique hospital offering luxury healthcare with chauffeur-driven transfers and private suites. It also has an excellent maternity wing.

### Medic Polyclinic

**Khalid Bin Al Waleed Rd** Al Mankhool **04 355 4111**

Map 2 L5 Metro **BurJuman**

A medical clinic and a diagnostics centre.

### Mediclinic Al Qusais > p.iv-v

**Dubai Residential Oasis** Al Qusais Ind. 2 **04 258 6466**

mediclinic.ae

Map 2 T8 Metro **Dubai Airport Freezone**

This Al Qusais clinic offers patients a wide range of services, from a team of highly experienced staff, including inpatient treatment at the renowned Mediclinic Welcare hospital.

### Mediclinic Al Sufouh > p.iv-v

**Knowledge Village**, Al Sufouh 2 **04 366 1030**

mediclinic.ae

Map 1 N5 Metro **Dubai Internet City**

Has everything from onsite ambulance services to an operation theatre and 25 outpatient and specialty clinics that include day-care surgery, gastroenterology, paediatrics and urgent care.

### Mediclinic Arabian Ranches > p.iv-v

**Nr Arabian Ranches Community Centre**

Arabian Ranches, Wadi Al Safa 6 **04 453 4020**

mediclinic.ae

Map 1 Q13

An 'ambulatory care centre' with excellent facilities and services. General medicine and day surgery are provided along with specialities such as dentistry, gynaecology, ophthalmology and dermatology.

### Mediclinic Beach Road > p.iv-v

**Shk Hamdan Awards Complex** Madinat Dubai Al

Melaheyah **04 379 7711**

mediclinic.ae

Map 2 J4 Metro **Al Jafiliya**

Located in Sheikh Hamdan Complex in Jumeira, this newly-opened medical centre offers a range of specialist services, with facilities including an observation unit and its own in-house laboratory.

### Mediclinic Dubai Mall > p.iv-v

**Dubai Mall** Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa

**04 449 5111**

mediclinic.ae

Map 2 F6 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

Offering the full range of general and specialty medicine, from cardiology to urology, this is the region's largest outpatient facility and has the latest facilities to boot.

### Mediclinic Ibn Battuta > p.iv-v

**Ibn Battuta** Jabal Ali 1 **04 440 9000**

mediclinic.ae

Map 1 G5 Metro **Ibn Battuta**

An ultra-modern, fully equipped multi-specialty clinic with its location in Ibn Battuta Mall, making it ideal for residents in the surrounding communities. Has support services like labs and x-rays.

### Mediclinic Meadows > p.iv-v

**Nr Emirates International School** Emirates Living,

Al Thanyah 4 **04 453 4040**

mediclinic.ae

Map 1 K6 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Combines advanced medical equipment, an onsite laboratory and diagnostic imaging centre, and a vast range of specialist medical services, including paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology.

### Mediclinic Mirdif > p.iv-v

Uptown Mirdiff Mirdif 04 288 1302

mediclinic.ae

Map 2 Q13 Metro Rashidiya

Family healthcare clinic specialising in primary medical care, and a wide range of specialised services. Has a direct link to the Welcare Hospital and The Mediclinic City Hospital.

### Men's Health Clinic

Al Muhaisnah Medical Fitness Centre Muhaisnah 2 04 502 3939

dha.gov.ae

Map 2 R11 Metro Etisalat

The region's first men-only clinic specialises in male-related diseases and health concerns such as heart disease, infertility and prostate cancer. The Ministry of Health is due to open more such clinics at its medical centres across the emirate.

### Neuro Spinal Centre

Jumeira Rd Jumeira 2 04 342 0000

nshdubai.com

Map 2 D4 Metro Business Bay

A 40 bed neurosurgical, neurological, spinal and orthopaedic specialist facility offering superior diagnostic, rehabilitative and curative services. Located opposite Jumeirah Beach Park, the centre's facilities include emergency room, operating suite and radiology department.

### Panacea Medical & Wellness Centre

Easa Saleh Al Gurg Bldg Al Karama 04 358 2020

panacea.ae

Map 2 L6 Metro BurJuman

A modern clinic that offers everything from the more traditional internal medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics, gynaecology, diagnostics and chiropractics to dietetics and homeopathy. Even has a dentistry department and an emergency department.

### Prime Medical Center > p.131

Nr Jumeirah Plaza Al Qouz Ind. 1 04 349 4545

pmcdubai.com

Map 2 A6 Metro Noor Bank

The Prime Healthcare Group runs six clinics throughout Dubai, offering a wide range of outpatient services, as well as a diagnostics centre in Deira (04 272 0720).

### Wooidul Spine Centre

Shk Zayed Rd Al Safa 2 04 304 6767

wsc.ae

Map 2 A6 Metro Noor Bank

Provides patients with full spinal treatment programmes, from radiological and lab investigations to pain management, physiotherapy and complete surgical plans.

## Maternity

The standard of maternity care in Dubai is excellent. Among expats, the most popular maternity hospitals are Welcare, American and Latifa Hospitals (see Hospitals). Latifa Hospital may lack some of the private hospital frills but it has an excellent reputation for maternity care and paediatrics.

Before you decide on a government hospital, check its policy regarding husbands and family members in the labour ward. Some hospitals may not allow husbands in the labour ward (although they can be present at delivery and often, if you are persuasive and there are no local ladies admitted, they will allow access).

All government hospitals now charge expats for maternity services and delivery, and costs vary depending on the package you choose. Private hospitals will be more expensive, but if you shop around you may be surprised to find that sometimes the difference between government and private is not as great as you expected. No matter which you choose, if you have medical insurance check it covers maternity costs. Some have a limitation clause which means you need to have been with the insurer for at least 12 months before conception, and some may not cover any costs at all.

Private hospitals offer maternity packages that include prenatal care, delivery and postnatal care for you and the baby. But remember, the price you are quoted by the hospital is usually for the most basic 'best case scenario' delivery. Should you have additional requirements, such as an epidural (when the anaesthetist must be present) or an assisted delivery (when the paediatrician must be present), you will be charged extra.

If you give birth by caesarean section, for example, the cost is usually significantly higher and the hospital stay is notably longer (five days, compared to just two days for a standard delivery). If you go to an independent gynaecologist for your prenatal care, you will usually be offered a choice of hospitals and delivery packages, where your doctor can attend for the birth. For more information on the practicalities of having a baby in Dubai, see Family & Parenting.

Below is a list of hospitals offering maternity care. For more information on each hospital see the main Hospitals section of this chapter.

### Al Zahra Private Medical Centre

Al Safa Tower, Shk Zayed Rd Trade Center 1

04 331 5000

alzahra.com

Map 2 H5 Metro Financial Centre

A large medical facility offering wellness packages, maternity care and diagnostics in addition to a full range of outpatient services.



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Prime Medical Store • MediPrime Pharmacies • Prime Econocare • Prime Hospital

www.primehealth.ae

**American Hospital Dubai** > p.125

Nr **Movenpick Hotel Oud Metha** 04 336 7777  
ahdubai.com

Map 2 K6 Metro **Oud Metha**

This hospital's maternity unit is a popular choice, with packages for prenatal care and delivery and private rooms on the labour ward.

**Fetal Medicine & Genetic Center**

Building 39 Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2 04 360 4040  
my-baby.net

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

The Fetal Medicine & Genetic Center specialises in foetal care, offering first trimester screening tests, prenatal diagnostics, pregnancy assessment and patient care.

**Health Bay Clinic**

Villa 977, Al Wasl Rd Al Manara 04 348 7140  
healthbayclinic.com

Map 1 U5 Metro **Noor Bank**

This family clinic is known for its high standards of care in several fields including gynaecology and midwifery. Its western-trained physicians also specialise in internal medicine, gastroenterology, dermatology, podiatry and allergies.

**Latifa Hospital**

Oud Metha Rd Sama Al Jadaf, Al Jadaf 04 219 3000  
dha.gov.ae

Map 2 K7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Latifa Hospital is a government facility specialising in obstetrics, gynaecology, paediatrics and paediatric surgery. It cares for women with serious problems relating to pregnancy and gynaecology. It is the only hospital in Dubai that deals with emergency pregnancies and has a special baby care unit for premature and sick neonates.

**Medcare Hospital**

Nr **Safa Park Al Safa 1** 04 407 9100  
medcarehospital.com

Map 2 D5 Metro **Business Bay**

Medcare Hospital has a particularly strong maternity department, and staff are qualified to international standards.

**Mediclinic City Hospital** > p.iv-v

Building 37 Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
04 435 9999  
mediclinic.ae

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Mediclinic City Hospital is a modern, multi-disciplinary hospital. Its maternity unit has a dedicated operating theatre for caesarean sections and a neonatal intensive care unit, which is one of the largest in the UAE.

**Mediclinic Welcare Hospital** > p.iv-v

Nr **Dubai Aviation Club Al Garhoud** 04 282 7788  
mediclinic.ae

Map 2 N7 Metro **GGICO**

Welcare Hospital's prenatal and delivery care is considered to be among the best in Dubai. Welcare offers postnatal packages for parents and newborns. Welcare also operates primary healthcare clinics in Mirdif (04 288 1302) and Al Qusais (04 258 6466) and an ambulatory care unit in Knowledge Village (04 366 1030) that comes highly recommended.

**NMC Speciality Hospital**

Nr **HCT-Dubai Women's College Al Nahda 2**  
04 267 9999  
nmc.ae

Map 2 S7 Metro **Stadium**

The NMC Specialty Hospital has a maternity ward, as well as other departments.

**Rashid Hospital**

Nr **Maktoum Bridge Umm Hurair 2** 04 219 1000  
dha.gov.ae

Map 2 L6 Metro **Oud Metha**

Amongst other things, the government-run Rashid Hospital offers maternity care.

**Obstetrics & Gynaecology**

Most hospitals and general practice clinics in Dubai offer gynaecological and obstetrics medical services. In your home country you may be used to receiving reminders when you are due for a smear test or mammogram; in the UAE, you'll need to be more proactive, and while a gynaecologist can advise you on how frequently you should have check-ups, it will be up to you to remember when the time comes. If you are looking for a long-term gynaecologist, try Health Bay Clinic (04 348 7140), which has a gynaecology department. Many clinics offer well woman check-ups that can be done regularly (usually annually) and offer the chance to get all your checks done in one go, at the same time as a general health review. Latifa Hospital (04 219 3000) and Mediclinic City Hospital (04 435 9999) also have gynaecology departments.

Most contraceptives are available in Dubai (the morning after pill is not) and a gynaecologist can advise you on the most suitable form of contraception for you. If you take oral contraceptives, a variety of brands are available over the counter without prescription. Because of the risk of thrombosis, you should make a point of going to your doctor to have your blood pressure checked every six months, just to make sure everything is okay. Note that, while rarely enforced, the law is that you should be married in order to be prescribed or purchase contraceptives.



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Dubai: P.O. Box 65650, T: +971 4 457 9255, E: office-dubai@msf.org

### Bourn Hall Clinic

**Shk Hamdan Award Complex** Madinat Dubai  
Al Melaheyah **04 705 5055**  
bournhall-clinic.ae

Map 2 J4 Metro **Al Jafiliya**

A state-of-the-art IVF clinic equipped with the latest technology and staffed by expert physicians, nurses and scientists working in the field of Assisted Reproductive Technology.

### Dr Leila Soudah Clinic

**Villa 467B, Jumeira Rd** Jumeira 3 **04 395 5591**  
Map 2 C4 Metro **Business Bay**

An independent gynaecology clinic offering pre and post-natal care. Dr Leila is affiliated with American Hospital, so most of her patients deliver there.

### Dubai Gynaecology & Fertility Centre

**Building 64** Umm Hurair 2 **04 439 3800**  
dgfc.ae

Map 2 L6 Metro **Oud Metha**

This clinic specialises in assisted reproductive technology. It is one of the few facilities in Dubai that offers IVF treatment. A range of gynaecological services are also available.

### Fakih IVF

**Villa 37, Al Wasl Rd** Jumeira 1 **04 349 7600**  
fakihivf.com

Map 2 F5 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

One of the leading fertility centres in the region, it specialises in IVF and assisted reproductive technology. Dr. Michael Fakih is a recognised leader in the field of assisted reproduction and is responsible for over 10,000 IVF deliveries. His clinic provides infertility treatments as well as PGD for gender selection, PGD for single gene disorders, preserving fertility in cancer patients, and more.

### German Clinic

**Al Razi Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 429 8346**

germanclinic-dubai.com

Map 2 K7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

A specialist gynaecology, obstetrics and paediatrics clinic designed to meet German standards of healthcare, based in Dubai Healthcare City. Wellness, fertility and antenatal packages are also available.

### Mitera Clinic

**Al Razi Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 363 5464**

miteraclinic.com

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Dr Rihab Awad has a number of long term patients who have followed her from American Hospital to her new clinic. She is progressive in terms of stem

cell technology and also teaches breast examinations when you have a check-up. If you're looking for a long-term gynaecologist and obstetrician then it's worth getting on her patient list.

### Primavera Medical Centre

**Al Razi Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 375 4669**

primaveraclinic.com

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

This clinic is run by highly recommended obstetrician, gynaecologist and fertility specialist Dr Rosalie Sant.

## Orthopaedics

For orthopaedic treatment there are several places to choose from, including Medcare Orthopaedics & Spine Hospital (04 376 8400) in Al Safa, off Sheikh Zayed Road; and the Prime Healthcare Group (042 720 720) hospital in Deira has an orthopaedic unit.

## Paediatrics

Most public and private hospitals and medical centres in Dubai have full-time paediatricians on staff, and a growing number have devoted paediatric departments. American Hospital and Mediclinic Welcare Hospital (both private) have teams of specialist paediatric doctors, while Latifa Hospital (government) has dedicated paediatric surgeons and neurodevelopment therapists who care for children with special needs and learning difficulties. Dr Anil Gupta at American Hospital, Dr Zuhair Mahmandar at Emirates Hospital and Dr Loubser at Infinity Clinic (04 394 8994) are popular paediatricians among expat parents. The GMC Clinic in Jumeira has friendly paediatricians who will take the trauma out of doctor's appointments for your child, and who specialise in allergies (04 3494 880). Health Call sends doctors for home visits 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is a handy service if your child is too sick to take to a surgery or hospital (04 363 5343, health-call.com).

### Cooper Health Clinic

**Nr Choithrams, Al Wasl Rd** Umm Suqeim 2  
**04 348 6344**

cooperhealthclinic.com

Map 1 T5 Metro **Noor Bank**

This family medicine clinic offers paediatric, obstetric and gynaecology specialities including pioneering procedures in laser vaginal rejuvenation – popular with women who have given birth. There are also antenatal classes, infant massage and a hypnobirthing course to help pregnant women relax. Dr Khan at the clinic is a popular paediatrician.

### Isis The French Clinic

**Al Razi Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 429 8450**

isisclinicdubai.com

Map 2 L7 Metro **Oud Metha**

Located close to the Alliance Francaise and the Ecole George Pompidou (04 337 4161) this practice offers specialist paediatric pulmonary care in addition to asthma, allergies, paediatric general practice and neonatal clinics. Standards are monitored by Dubai Healthcare City and the Harvard Medical School.

### Keith Nicholl Medical Centre

**Villa 610B, Jumeira Rd** Umm Suqeim 1 **04 394 1000**  
keithnicholl.com

Map 2 A4 Metro **Noor Bank**

A child-friendly practice in Jumeira staffed by a paediatrician, paediatric nurses and a parent counsellor and educator. In addition to standard paediatric services, there's also a Well Baby Clinic that offers well baby check-ups, immunisations, development checks, as well as first aid courses for parents, nannies and other caregivers.

### kidsFIRST Medical Center

**Villa 1171A, Al Wasl Rd** Umm Al Sheif **04 348 5437**  
kidsfirstmc.com

Map 1 S5 Metro **Mall of the Emirates**

In addition to paediatric medicine, kidsFIRST offers occupational therapy, speech therapy and physiotherapy for kids. The kidsFIRST team serves children across a full range of special needs, such as autism, ADHD, cerebral palsy and dyslexia.



## Physiotherapy

Many Dubai residents lead an active lifestyle, working hard and then playing harder. But accidents and injuries do happen, so whether you get roughed up playing rugby, pull something in the gym or put your back out moving a wardrobe you'll be pleased to hear that the city has some excellent facilities with specialists from all around the world to help you on the road to recovery.

Popular with expats, Drs Nicolas & Asp offer sports medicine and physiotherapy, as well as a range of other exercises that can help prevent further injury.

Pilates is said to be the safest form of neuromuscular reconditioning and back strengthening available and is often provided by qualified physiotherapists. Classes are offered by a number of gyms as part of their group exercise schedules.

### California Chiropractic & Sports Medicine Center

**Al Razi Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 429 8292**

californiachiropracticcenter.com

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Partnering a number of the UAE's major sports teams, groups and events, this clinic is a real sports specialist with experts who know their golf, running and cycling every bit as well as they know their bones, tendons and muscles.

### Canadian Chiropractic & Natural Health Centre

**Al Wasl Rd** Jumeira 2 **04 342 0900**

Map 2 E5

This clinic offers chiropractic treatments and acupuncture as well as reflexology. They also treat sports injuries and give advice for people with long term back problems.

### Chiropractic Health & Physio Polyclinic

**Villa 967, Al Wasl Rd** Al Manara **04 348 8262**  
dubaichiropractor.net

Map 1 U5 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

This health clinic treats a range of health problems and sports injuries including ADHD, headaches, stress, scoliosis, neck pain, asthma and pain following accidents. A number of physiotherapists and a nutritionist are also based at the clinic.

### Dubai Bone & Joint Center

**Al Razi Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 423 1400**

dbaj.ae

Map 2 L7 Metro **Oud Metha**

Focuses on research into and treatment of musculo-skeletal problems. Well-equipped with diagnostic

technologies, the centre offers rehabilitative services including physiotherapy and sports medicine, and has a very high standard of facilities for joint replacements, orthopaedic, and back and neck surgeries.

### Dubai Physiotherapy & Family Medicine Clinic

Town Centre Jumeirah Jumeira 1 04 349 6333

dubaiphysio.com

Map 2 F4 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

Open since 1992, this is one of Dubai's most established clinics. Specialising in physiotherapy for musculoskeletal disorders and sports injuries, it also offers family medicine, sports therapy, osteopathy, acupuncture, nutrition, speech therapy, orthotics, podiatry and psychology.

### Emirates European Medical Centre

Villa 119, Al Thanya Rd Umm Suqeim 2 04 348 1166

chiropracticdubai.com

Map 1 T5 Metro First Gulf Bank

Located in the Emirates European Medical Centre is Chiropractic Dubai, which has a team of experienced chiropractors and physiotherapists who can diagnose all manner of injuries and create a treatment plan to fit the individual's needs. Chiropractor Dr. Samuel Saukkonen is especially skilled in the treatment of lumbar disc herniation.

### Orthosports Medical Center

Jumeira Rd Jumeira 1 04 345 0601

orthosp.com

Map 2 H4 Metro Al Jafiliya

Specialises in orthopaedics and sports medicine, offering physiotherapy, hydrotherapy and orthopaedic surgery to international standards. Sports therapy for fitness and injury rehabilitation and hydrotherapy for a range of conditions including obesity, arthritis, back pain and joint replacements are also available.

### Osteopathic Health Centre > p.137

Al Wasl Rd Umm Suqeim 2 04 348 7366

osteopathydubai.com

Map 1 T5 Metro Noor Bank

The serene Osteopathic Health Centre has a number of therapists practising osteopathy in addition to physiotherapy, exercise, sports and massage therapy, chiropractic treatments, homeopathy and counselling.

Specialists at the centre have years' of experience helping clients develop a system of self-help, and giving support to people in pain. The effective, holistic approach of therapists can help reduce muscle tension and relieve pain rapidly and the therapists' bedside manner is sympathetic, friendly and understanding. Centres are also at: Uptown Mirdif (04 288 8525) and Dubai Healthcare City (04 423 2096).

### Up & Running Integrated Sports Medical Center

Al Wasl Rd Al Manara 04 328 4600

upandrunningdubai.com

Map 1 U5 Metro Noor Bank

Another sports medicine and rehabilitation centre that you'll find teaming up with major events and local teams, staff here are mainly UK and Australia-trained with extensive backgrounds in treating sports and occupational injuries. Also offers VO2 max testing, sports massage and sessions such as clinical pilates.

## Pharmacies

The UAE has a more relaxed policy on prescription drugs than many other countries and most can be bought over the counter, such as antibiotics (though it is best to seek a doctor's advice before taking antibiotics as over-use can result in a reduction in their ability to cure symptoms).

If you know what you need, it cuts out the hassle of having to see a doctor just to get a prescription. Pharmacists are willing to offer advice, but bear in mind that they don't know your medical history. Always tell the pharmacist if you have any pre-existing conditions and allergies or are taking other medication, and make sure that you understand the administration instructions in case these aren't available in English. You might find it frustrating that certain common medications from your home country are not available here (such as Gaviscon for infants and Pepto Bismol). But there are similar products (such as Infacol instead of infant Gaviscon). There are pharmacies all over the city with some open 24 hours a day, such as Life Pharmacy on Al Wasl Road in Jumeira (04 344 1122). Supermarkets and petrol station convenience stores sell basic medications and first aid equipment.

## Medication

Certain medications do require a prescription, and there are some medications (such as codeine, diazepam and temazepam) that are actually banned here in the UAE, even though they are widely available on prescription in other countries. It is a crime to have these medicines in your possession or to take them, unless you can produce an official prescription from your doctor in your home country. The complete list of banned drugs can change regularly, so it is best to check with the Registration & Drug Control Department at the Ministry of Health (moh.gov.ae) before travelling with any medication.

If you have private cover, you'll find that most prescriptions are covered by your insurance, so always be sure to have your card with you as proof.



## OSTEOPATHIC HEALTH CENTRE

Uptown Mirdif 04 288 8525

Dubai Healthcare City 04 423 20 96

Umm Suqeim 04 348 7366

www.osteopathydubai.com

## Treatment for :

- Back pain
- Neck pain
- Headaches
- Sports Injuries
- Physiotherapy
- Postural Correction
- Ante-natal and Post-natal exercise
- Rehabilitation
- Stress Management



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## Dentists

Dentistry in Dubai is, like most other medical services, of a high standard with prices to match. Standard health insurance packages don't generally cover dentistry, unless it's for emergency treatment brought about by an accident. You may be able to pay an additional premium to cover dentistry, but the insurer may first want proof that you've had regular, six-monthly check-ups for the previous two or three years.

If you have insurance, you're entitled to basic dentistry at your assigned hospital, and if your hospital doesn't have a dental section, they'll refer you to a public hospital that does, such as Rashid Hospital. You will be charged Dh.100 for the visit, as well as for any other services that are performed, such as cleaning and filling. Service is generally good, but the rates may not be any lower than at a private dental clinic.

For a standard filling you could be looking at paying anywhere between Dh.100 and Dh.1,000. If it is root canal treatment that you need, expect to part with anything from Dh.600 to Dh.3,000.

As well as routine and surgical dental treatment, cosmetic dentistry is also big business in Dubai, so if you're looking for a smile make-over, there is plenty of choice.

The clinics listed below are specialist dental clinics. Many primary healthcare clinics and hospitals also offer dental services. For a full listing of dental practices and surgeons in Dubai, visit [askexplorer.com](http://askexplorer.com).

### American Dental Clinic

**Villa 54 JMR, Nr Dubai Zoo** Jumeira 1 **04 344 0668**  
[americandentalclinic.com](http://americandentalclinic.com)

Map 2 G4 Metro **Financial Centre**

The surgery has a wide range of cutting edge dental services available, and even offers virtual reality movie glasses so patients can watch a film during treatment – while seated in a massage chair!

### British Dental Clinic

**Nr Emirates NBD** Jumeira 1 **04 342 1318**  
[britishdentalclinic.com](http://britishdentalclinic.com)

Map 2 F5 Metro **Financial Centre**

The clinic specialises in the most modern dental treatments, cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics, periodontics and implantology. Dentists are from Europe and Canada.

### Charly Polyclinic

**Sana Fashions Bldg** Al Karama **04 337 9191**  
[charlypolyclinic.com](http://charlypolyclinic.com)

Map 2 K5 Metro **Al Jafiliya**

This practice offers a range in dental services including cosmetic, laser, implant and general dentistry, orthodontics and oral surgery. They also have an ophthalmologist, gynaecologist and two homeopaths.

### The Dental Center

**Al Razi Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 375 2175**

[dentalhealthdubai.com](http://dentalhealthdubai.com)

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

This bright and modern clinic in Healthcare City offers cutting edge dentistry. Routine dentistry and cosmetic procedures, including dental make-overs, are available.

### The Dental SPA

**Jumeira Rd** Jumeira 3 **04 395 2005**

[thedentalspa.org](http://thedentalspa.org)

Map 2 B4 Metro **Business Bay**

This clinic offers spa-like surroundings with calming mood music and aromatherapy pillows for your general or cosmetic dental treatment. You can also opt for foot and hand massages during your check-up.

### The Dental Studio

**Villa 61, Umm Al Sheif Rd** Jumeira 3 **04 395 5095**

[thedentalstudio.ae](http://thedentalstudio.ae)

Map 2 B5 Metro **Noor Bank**

This sleek, modern clinic is great to go to if you suffer from fear of the dentist as they are 'dental phobia certified' and will put you at ease. They offer a wide range of treatments, including child dentistry, bridal make-overs and speciality services.

### Dr Michael's Dental Clinic

**Villa 418** Jumeira 2 **04 349 5900**

[drmichaels.com](http://drmichaels.com)

Map 2 F5 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

This clinic prides itself on its personalised service, high safety standards, state-of-the-art dental equipment and an international team of dentists at its two branches in Jumeira and Umm Suqeim (04 394 9433).

### Drs Nicolas & Asp

**Villa 446, Nr Jumeirah Beach Park** Jumeira 3

**04 394 7777**

[nicolasandasp.com](http://nicolasandasp.com)

Map 2 D4 Metro **Business Bay**

In addition to regular services, Drs Nicolas & Asp offers a state-of-the-art dental lab for creating implants, veneers and crowns on site. Additionally, cosmetic dentistry, advanced brace fitting and oral maxillofacial surgery are available at its various dental clinics.

### Dubai London Clinic Dental Centre

**Al Wasl Rd** Jumeira 2 **04 378 2921**

[dubailondonclinic.com](http://dubailondonclinic.com)

Map 2 E5 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

In addition to routine dental care and cosmetic treatment, the clinic has a periodontics specialist. One treatment available is 'clear braces' – a method of straightening teeth using clear aligner trays.

### Dubai School Of Dental Medicine

**Building 34** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2  
**04 424 8777**

[dsdm.ac.ae](http://dsdm.ac.ae)

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

A specialist clinic offering a complete range of dental services including fillings, crowns and bridges, cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics, root canal treatment, oral surgery and periodontal treatment. There is also a paediatric dentistry department.

### Dubai Sky Clinic

**BurJuman Business Tower** Al Mankhool **04 355 8808**  
[dubaiskyclinic.com](http://dubaiskyclinic.com)

Map 2 L5 Metro **Al Fahidi**

Dubai Sky Clinic offers a full range of dental services from its high-tech clinic on the 21st floor of BurJuman Business Tower. Treatment rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows, and patients can watch DVDs or plug in their MP3 players.

### GMC Clinics

**Magrudy's Mall, Jumeira Rd** Jumeira 1 **04 344 9150**

[gmcclinics.com](http://gmcclinics.com)

Map 2 B5 Metro **Al Jafiliya**

There are several clinics around Dubai, and each houses a variety of specialists doctors as well as dentists. The clinics' philosophy is to care for the whole family, and they make an extra special effort to make children feel comfortable.

### Park Dental Centre

**Al Mardoof Bldg, Shk Zayed Rd** Al Safa 1

**04 346 6111**

[parkdentalcenter.ae](http://parkdentalcenter.ae)

Map 2 C6 Metro **Business Bay**

Offers a comprehensive list of treatments including orthodontics, implantology, teeth whitening and oral surgery. The practice also offers the latest in root canal therapies and bridge and denture technology, as well as general and cosmetic dentistry.

### Sansaya Clinic

**Villa 795, Al Wasl Rd** Al Safa 2 **04 394 0044**

[sansayaclinic.com](http://sansayaclinic.com)

Map 2 A5 Metro **Noor Bank**

Services include general, cosmetic and periodontal dentistry, as well as orthodontics and paediatric dental care. The practice also offers specialist restorative procedures, and anxiety-free dentistry.

### Seven Dental Centre

**Nr HSBC, Jumeira Rd** Jumeira 3 **04 395 2177**

[seven dentalcentre.com](http://seven dentalcentre.com)

Map 2 C4 Metro **Business Bay**

Dentists at this practice speak French, English and Arabic and offer a 'no pain' policy. Cosmetic

reconstruction, prosthetic and orthodontic procedures available plus routine and children's dentistry.

### Swedish Dental Clinic

**Nasa Travel Bldg, Al Maktoum St** Al Muraqqabat  
**04 223 1297**

Map 2 N5 Metro **Baniyas Square**

This experienced practice, established in Deira back in 1985, offers dental and orthodontic care for patients of all ages. Dr. Nabil Mockbil qualified in Sweden.

### Swiss Dental Clinic

**Crowne Plaza Trade Center 1** **04 332 1444**

[swissdentalclinic.com](http://swissdentalclinic.com)

Map 2 H5 Metro **Emirates Towers**

Dr Marco Fedele seeks to soothe a patient's anxieties by thoroughly explaining the procedure. General and aesthetic dentistry is available, as well as orthodontic treatments. He speaks English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

### Talass Orthodontic & Dental Center

**Villa 114, Nr Dubai Zoo** Jumeira 1 **04 349 2220**

[talass.com](http://talass.com)

Map 2 G4 Metro **Financial Centre**

Dr. M. F. Talass and his team of Western-educated, multilingual dental specialists offer family and general dentistry as well as cosmetic dentistry, orthodontics, root canal therapy and TMJ (jaw joint) treatments.

### Tower Clinic

**Ibn Sina Bldg** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2

**04 362 2939**

[towerclinic.com](http://towerclinic.com)

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**

Tower Clinic is one of the UAE's largest private dental clinics. It offers general dentistry and orthodontics plus oral surgery and Zoom!, a one-hour, in-office tooth whitening treatment.

## Opticians

You're never far from an optician in Dubai, with most malls and shopping centres having at least one outlet.

The dry, dusty environment in Dubai can cause problems for eyes, even if you've had no trouble in the past. Natural tear or refresher eye drops can increase eye comfort and are available in most opticians and pharmacies. Spending lengthy periods in air-conditioned environments can cause problems for contact lens wearers. Opticians can advise on the most suitable lenses. Sunglasses are an essential accessory in Dubai and prescription lenses are widely available.

For eye problems requiring specialist treatment, many hospitals and clinics, including Moorfields Eye Hospital ([moorfields.ae](http://moorfields.ae)) and The American



Hospital Dubai (ahdubai.com), have well-equipped ophthalmology departments. If you want to ditch the glasses, a number of clinics and medical centres offer laser eye surgery. Prices start from around Dhs.4,000 per eye. All good laser surgery packages should include a complete year's follow-up care.

Even if you've never had an eye test in your life, you will need to undergo one in order to get a driving licence. This test can be carried out at most opticians for a minimal fee, sometimes free of charge.

**Al Jaber Optical** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 341 1322, [aljaberoptical.com](http://aljaberoptical.com)

**Anna by Top Vision Optics** Nr Dune Centre, Al Satwa, 04 398 4888, [annabytopvisionoptics.com](http://annabytopvisionoptics.com)

**Atlanta Vision Clinic** Nr Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Umm Suqeim 3, 04 348 6233, [dubailasik.com](http://dubailasik.com)

**Barakat Optical** The Walk at JBR, Marsa Dubai, 04 427 0565, [barakatoptical.com](http://barakatoptical.com)

**Grand Optics** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 341 0350, [grandoptics.com](http://grandoptics.com)

**Gulf Eye Center** Fairmont, Trade Center 1, 04 329 1977, [gulfeyecenter.com](http://gulfeyecenter.com)

**Lunettes House of Quality Optics** Jumeira 1, 04 349 2270

**Lutfi Optical Centre** Umm Hurair 2, 04 324 1865, [lutfioptical.com](http://lutfioptical.com)

**Magrabi Optical** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 341 0445, [magrabioptical.com](http://magrabioptical.com)

**Moorfields Eye Hospital** > p.141 Al Razi Bldg, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 429 7888, [moorfields.ae](http://moorfields.ae)

**Optic Center** Al Mizhar 1, 04 284 5550, [opticcentre.com](http://opticcentre.com)

**Optivision** Ibn Battuta, Jabal Ali 1, 04 368 5540, [dubaioptical.com](http://dubaioptical.com)

**Sharif Eye Center** Ibn Sina Bldg, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 423 3664, [sharifeyecenter.com](http://sharifeyecenter.com)

**Vasan Eye Care** Zabeel Plaza, Zabeel Rd, Dubai International Airport, 04 357 9444, [vasaneyeyecare.com](http://vasaneyeyecare.com)

**Vision Express** Ibn Battuta, 04 368 5926, [alshaya.com](http://alshaya.com)

**Yateem Optician** Al Mizhar 1, 04 284 5505, [yateemgroup.com](http://yateemgroup.com)

## Alternative Therapies

The Ministry of Health grants licences to and administrates qualified practitioners of alternative medicine through its dedicated department for Traditional, Complementary & Alternative Medicine. Natural medicine can be very specialised, so when consulting with someone, do make sure that you ask questions and explain your needs and expectations. This will ensure that practitioners can indeed help with your situation. Prices vary greatly but are generally comparable to western medicine, however

most insurance companies will not cover the costs of alternative therapies. As always, word of mouth is the best way of establishing who might offer the most appropriate treatment.

Yoga and pilates are available at a number of studios and health clubs. Fitness-focused, clinical and classic, meditative forms of yoga are available. There is also a range of clinics that provide 'well-being' services, such as U Concept, which combines personal fitness, a balanced nutrition plan and numerous relaxation techniques, in order to help you achieve the healthy lifestyle you're looking for.

Dubai Herbal & Treatment Centre (04 335 1200) in Oud Metha offers a range of treatments and diagnostic procedures from conventional and alternative medical schools of thought. You can get everything from a tailor-made detox plan, to ozone therapy and allergy testing, as well as massage and a myriad of other complimentary medicines. See [dubaihtc.com](http://dubaihtc.com) for more information.

Talise Spa & Wellness Polyclinic at Madinat Jumeirah ([jumeirah.com/mjtalise](http://jumeirah.com/mjtalise)) is a haven of tranquillity that houses a bona fide medical centre, directed by the multilingual Dr Elizabeth Makk. Dr Makk is also qualified in homeopathy and nutrition and offers holistic treatments as well as focusing on disease prevention. Call 04 366 6810 for an appointment.

## Cosmetic Treatment & Surgery

Dubai is becoming established as a luxury healthcare destination. Cosmetic surgery is at the heart of this growing industry and the city now boasts a mass of clinics that specialise in reducing, reshaping, removing and enlarging various parts of your anatomy. The clinics listed below are exclusively cosmetic practices, but many of the private hospitals and independent clinics offer cosmetic services including aesthetic and reconstructive surgery. As with all medical facilities, standards are generally high, but it's worth checking out a few different clinics before you go under the knife. If you want a bit of sprucing and don't fancy being sliced into, a lot of the cosmetic clinics will do Botox and other non-surgical treatments.

**Aesthetica Clinic** Building 39, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 429 8533, [aestheticaclinic.com](http://aestheticaclinic.com)

**American Academy Of Cosmetic Surgery Hospital** Building 73, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 423 7600, [aacsh.com](http://aacsh.com)

**Biolite Aesthetic Clinic** Villa 57, Al Thanya Rd, Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 346 6641, [biolitedubai.com](http://biolitedubai.com)

**CosmeSurge** Nr Emirates Hospital, Jumeira 2, 04 344 5915, [cosmesurge.com](http://cosmesurge.com)

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



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**Dermalase Clinic** Nr Jumeirah Beach Park, Jumeira 2, 04 349 7880, [dermalaseclinic.com](http://dermalaseclinic.com)

**Dubai Cosmetic Surgery** Nr Choithrams, Al Wasl Rd, Al Manara, 04 348 5575, [dubaicosmeticsurgery.com](http://dubaicosmeticsurgery.com)

**Dubai Medical Village** Nr Sunset Mall, Jumeira 3, 04 346 9999, [medicalvillage.ae](http://medicalvillage.ae)

**EuroMed Clinic** Villa 611, Jumeirah Rd, Umm Suqeim 04 394 5422, [euromedclinicdubai.com](http://euromedclinicdubai.com)

**General Medical Centre** > p.123 Trade Centre Apartments, Trade Center 2, 04 331 3544, [gmclinics.com](http://gmclinics.com)

**Gulf Speciality Hospital** Hamarain Centre, Al Muraqqabat, 04 269 9717, [gshdubai.net](http://gshdubai.net)

**Imperial Healthcare Institute** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 439 3737, [imperialhealth.org](http://imperialhealth.org)

**Kaya Skin Clinic** Mirdif, 04 283 9200, [kayaskinclinic.me](http://kayaskinclinic.me)

**London Centre For Aesthetic Surgery** Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2, 04 375 2393, [lcas.com](http://lcas.com)

**Rebecca Treston Aesthetics At EuroMed** Jumeira 3, 04 394 5422, [euromedclinicdubai.com](http://euromedclinicdubai.com)

## Nutritionists & Slimming

Slimming clubs offer nutritional advice and hospitals can perform weight loss surgery. Dietary advice for diabetes, allergies, menopause, pregnancy and digestive disorders such as coeliac disease is on hand.

Mediclinic Welcare Hospital provides a dietary counselling service and unique diet plan. The American Hospital offers a food and nutrition service managed and provided by ADN Compass. The hospital also runs a Diabetic Centre of Excellence. Emirates Hospital has a weight reduction programme that uses liquid supplements and a very low calorie diet. The hospital also has experts who specialise in medically supervised weight reduction, obesity in children, obesity in diabetic patients and patients with high blood pressure or cholesterol. It also offers gastric band fitting.

For a more holistic approach to nutrition, the Osteopathic Health Centre offers a complete nutritionist service. You'll find dietitians at Cooper Health Clinic, Dubai London Clinic Medical & Surgical Centre and Drs Nicolas & Asp. The Organic Foods and Cafe sells fresh organic and biodynamic food and supplements, and a nutritionist is on hand at all its stores to give tailor-made advice on supplements and vitamins, detox, weight loss and aromatherapy.

### BiteRite

**Lotus Apartments** Marsa Dubai 04 292 8888 [biterite.ae](http://biterite.ae)

Map 1 J5 Metro **Nakheel**

Eat a nutritionally balanced meal in the cafe or use its tailor-made healthy eating service. Healthy meals are delivered to your door. The BiteRite Plan offers an online menu with over 100 varieties of meals.

### BodySmart

**Meadows Town Centre** Al Thanyah 3 04 363 8318 [bodysmart.ae](http://bodysmart.ae)

Map 1 K13 Metro **Nakheel**

Hypoxi combines cardiovascular exercise with applied pressure to increase blood flow to fatty problem areas. Improvements are within four weeks and goals achieved by week 12. You wear what feels like a wet suit and speed walk on a treadmill or cycle inside a vacuum pod. Results are felt in reduced inches (and each session the trainer will measure your chest, waist and hips). Weight loss can also occur. There's also a Hypoxi studio at the Aviation Club (04 282 4122, [aviationclub.ae](http://aviationclub.ae)).

### Eternal MedSpa

**Villa 397, Jumeira Rd** Jumeira 2 04 344 0008 [eternelmedspa.com](http://eternelmedspa.com)

Map 2 D4 Metro **Business Bay**

Offers mesotherapy for cellulite treatment, Botox, laser hair removal, slimming treatments as well as general wellness coaching. Mesotherapy involves administering microinjections of conventional or homeopathic medicines, vitamins, minerals or amino acids into the middle layer of skin.

### Good Habits

04 344 9692 [goodhabitsuae.com](http://goodhabitsuae.com)

Meetings focused on healthy eating are held every week across Dubai, and often include food tasting and cookery demos. Exercise classes are also organised and individual programmes are offered.

### Health Factory

**Warehouse 26** Al Qouz Ind. 3 04 347 3808 [healthfactory.com](http://healthfactory.com)

Map 1 T7 Metro **First Gulf Bank**

After a consultation you'll be sent three meals a day to help you lose weight or get healthy according to your needs. There's also a diet plan for mothers-to-be, a diabetic meal plan, and healthy eating for kids.

### Live'ly

**Nr Dubai Cosmetic Surgery** Al Manara 04 348 1008 [lively.ae](http://lively.ae)

Map 1 U5 Metro **Noor Bank**

This new centre specialises in nutritional, educational and catering services to help people to manage their weight and live healthier lives.

### Perfect Figure

**Aviation Club** Al Garhoud 050 255 9402 [allbodysolutions.com](http://allbodysolutions.com)

Map 2 M8 Metro **GGICO**

This studio creates personal weight loss and toning programmes, which combine exercise using Hypoxi and Vacunaut machines with nutritional advice.

### Right Bite

**Shk Hamdan Award Complex** Madinat Dubai Al Melaheyah 04 338 8763

[right-bite.com](http://right-bite.com)

Map 2 J4 Metro **Al Jafiliya**

Right Bite offers a tailor-made healthy eating service. Tasty, low calorie, low fat and low cholesterol meals, devised by their own dietitians, are freshly prepared and delivered to your door.

### Slim Spa

**Al Attar Tower, Shk Zayed Rd** Trade Center 2 04 343 7987

[slimspa.ae](http://slimspa.ae)

Map 2 G6 Metro **Financial Centre**

There's a wide range of non-invasive treatments for weight and inch-loss, cellulite reduction, body sculpting, anti-ageing and rejuvenation. Slim Spa also offers personalised programmes, four and eight-week packages, massages and facial treatments.

### VLCC

**Indigo Central 2** Al Safa 2 04 338 7897 [vlccwellness.com](http://vlccwellness.com)

Map 1 V6 Metro **Noor Bank**

VLCC offers hair removal, beauty services and customised weight loss programmes which combine dietary advice, exercise and toning and detox therapies. There are women-only centres at Marsa Dubai (04 447 1488) and Uptown Mirdif (04 288 4880).

## Counselling & Therapy

Starting a new life in a different country can be a stressful process, and sometimes it can help just to talk through the emotional aspects. Mental health services in the UAE are not as developed as in some other countries; Al Amal is Dubai's only psychiatric hospital, and Rashid Hospital has a dedicated psychiatric ward.

There are however a number of well-regarded therapy centres offering services including counselling, psychodynamic therapy, family and couples' therapy, paediatric psychiatry, treatment of mental health disorders and learning difficulties support. Dubai Community Health Centre offers a range of counselling and psychiatric services and provides space for support group meetings; it comes highly recommended, as does the Counselling & Development Clinic. In addition to the clinics and centres listed, the British Medical Consulting Centre and Drs Nicolas & Asp have counsellors, family therapists and psychiatrists on staff. Dubai Herbal & Treatment Centre has a psychodynamic counsellor, a psychologist and a learning specialist, and is recommended for child counselling services.

In the neighbouring emirate of Sharjah, Al Tamimi Stables offers Animal Assisted Therapy to help provide people with a positive outlook ([tamimistables.com](http://tamimistables.com)).

### Counselling & Development Clinic

**Nr Jumeirah Beach Park** Jumeira 3 04 394 6122 [drmcarrthypsychologyclinic.com](http://drmcarrthypsychologyclinic.com)

Map 2 D4 Metro **Business Bay**

This centre caters to adults and children. As well as assessing and treating psychological disorders, the clinic offers counselling, family therapy and couples' clinics. It is well regarded for the treatment and management of bipolar disorder (manic depression), obsessive-compulsive disorder and panic attacks.

### Dubai Community Health Centre

**Nr Al Nasr Leisureland** Oud Metha 04 507 8000 [dubaicomunityhealthcentre.org](http://dubaicomunityhealthcentre.org)

Map 2 C4 Metro **Oud Metha**

A private, non-profit facility with counselling, family and marriage therapy, psychology, speech therapy and parenting courses. It also offers occupational therapy, dietetics and special needs education.

### Health Psychology UAE

**Well Woman Clinic** Al Satwa 04 332 7117 [healthpsychuae.com](http://healthpsychuae.com)

Map 2 J5 Metro **World Trade Centre**

Dr Melanie C Schlatter is a health psychologist helping people to learn to manage the psychological impact of illnesses and medical conditions that they have. She also offers preventative health psychology in the form of stress management and coping with anxiety, phobias, depression, grief and anger. Her website covers some of the main questions people have about receiving psychological help.

### Human Relations Institute & Clinics

**Jumeirah Business Center 3** Al Thanyah 5 04 365 8498 [hridubai.com](http://hridubai.com)

Map 1 L5 Metro **Dubai Marina**

The HRI's services include clinical, forensic, organisational, educational and domestic psychology. It offers counselling, life coaching, psychotherapy and workshops for conditions including anxiety, phobias, addiction, behavioural and eating disorders, stress, low self-confidence and depression.

### LifeWorks Counselling & Development

**996 Al Wasl Rd** Umm Suqeim 1 04 394 2464 [counsellingdubai.com](http://counsellingdubai.com)

Map 1 V5 Metro **Noor Bank**

Whether you need self-confidence, personal insight, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, marriage counselling, help with phobias or would like to join a workshop, this centre can help. Therapists are experienced in treating people from diverse backgrounds.



Al Barsha Pond Park

## FAMILY & PARENTING

Bringing your family out to Dubai, or starting one while you're here, can be a fantastic experience. There's plenty of help, great education facilities and a whole range of activities for the kids. This section covers much of that, but also takes a look at some of the more sobering topics like bereavement and divorce; issues that you may be faced with during your time here.

### Marriage

When living in the UAE under Shariah law, marriage is the only legal bond for a man and a woman to establish a relationship and have children. It is illegal to live together as a couple if you are unmarried and you cannot have children out of wedlock.

If you're Christian or Catholic, you can marry in a church; if you'd prefer a non-religious marriage, you

may be able to tie the knot at your embassy. Muslim weddings take place before a Shariah court; the man must be a Muslim while the woman can be non-Muslim, and a Muslim woman cannot marry a non-Muslim man in the UAE. Whatever your nationality, you should contact your embassy to notify them of your intent to get married and find out the exact process and paperwork necessary. Once wed, you will need to register the marriage with your embassy to get it validated internationally.

### The Big Day

This chapter outlines the basics to get you started organising your wedding and reception. For step-by-step procedures, including specifics on which documents to take where, see *Explorer's Dubai How-To* guide, which covers Christian, Catholic, Muslim and Hindu weddings.

### The Ceremony

While the wedding must be conducted in either a church, court or at your embassy, you have a large choice of where to have a wedding blessing and the reception. Many couples choose to have a small church ceremony and then celebrate at one of the luxury hotels, on the beach or even aboard a yacht.

Anglican wedding ceremonies can take place at the Holy Trinity Church, Dubai at Christ Church in Jabal Ali, Dubai, St Andrew's Church in Abu Dhabi or St Martin's Church in Sharjah, all of which are recognised by the UAE government. Ministers from the Anglican Church can also marry people at other approved locations.

Roman Catholic marriages can take place at St Mary's Catholic Church in Dubai (saintmarysdubai.com). To marry in a Roman Catholic church, at least one of the partners must be Roman Catholic, and both of them must be resident in Dubai. Women must be at least 18, men must be over 21.

Hindu marriages are conducted by the maharaj at Dubai's Hindu Temple in Bur Dubai. The Hindu Temple is run in conjunction with the Indian consulate who solemnise the marriage. Both parties must be Hindi and at least one of the couple should be an Indian citizen with a Dubai residence visa; there should also be three witnesses who have a UAE residence visa.

People of other religions (Buddhist, Sikh or Bahai) may be able to get married at their embassies or consulates. A Muslim marrying another Muslim can apply at the marriage section of the Dubai Courts, next to Maktoum Bridge.

Fees for a church wedding are around Dhs.2,000 and you can get married on any day of the week if a minister/vicar is available. You will typically need two or three witnesses who are UAE residents.

#### There are certain conditions for a church wedding:

- At least one member of the couple has to have been baptised (or equivalent)
- At least one of the couple must have a UAE residence visa; expats on a visit visa cannot get married in the UAE
- Both people must be aged 18 or over

Depending on your faith and denomination, you may have to go for counselling sessions and regular church services. You will also need to register certain documents including birth and christening certificates, and written evidence that each is single and free to marry (divorce papers or a letter from your embassy). You will need a Banns certificate or certificate of no impediment, which takes up to three weeks to process and needs to be applied for at your home embassy. For example, the British embassy will display a notice of marriage for 21 days and, assuming no one objects, you are then free to tie the knot.

### The Paperwork

In order to register the marriage, your wedding certificate has to be translated into Arabic by a court-approved legal translator. Take this, and the original, along with your essential documents to the Notary Public Office at the Dubai Courts. They will certify the documents for a fee of about Dhs.80. Next you will need to go to the Ministry of Justice (ejustice.gov.ae) to authenticate the signature and the Notary Public seal. Just when you think it's all over, you still have to go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (behind the distinctive Etisalat building in Deira) to authenticate the seal of the Ministry of Justice. Now you just need to pop back to your embassy for final legal verification.

### In Preparation

Get organised! Visit the Dubai Bride Show (thebrideshow.com/dubai), held every April at the Dubai International Exhibition Centre; it covers everything you'll need for your big day.

### The Reception

When it comes to your reception, any one of Dubai's stunning hotels would make the perfect venue and they will assist you with everything from the music and menus to floorplans and florists.

#### Arabian Ranches Golf Club

**Shk Mohd Bin Zayed Rd Arabian Ranches, Wadi Al Safa 6 04 366 3000**

arabianranchesgolfdubai.com

Map 1 Q13

Choose between the spacious Baker-Finch indoor venue or one of the magnificent terraces featuring stunning views of the golf course. Packages start from Dhs.270 per person.

#### Atlantis The Palm > p.275

**Crescent Rd Nakhlal Jumeira 04 426 0376**

atlantisthepalm.com

Map 1 N1 Metro Nakheel

Choose from various unique venues, from the private tent at Asateer, or the grand luxurious Atlantis Ballroom, or a personalised venue such as the idyllic Dolphin Bay Beach for a more unique touch, The Lost Chambers Aquarium, or even the picture perfect Palm Grove for an intimate setting.

#### Bateaux Dubai

**Nr British Embassy Al Hamriya 04 814 5553**

bateauxdubai.com

Map 2 M5 Metro Baniyas Square

Opt for a unique and tasteful reception on the water, where the wedding planner will take care of every last detail from floral arrangements to signature menus.



### Park Hyatt Dubai

Nr Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club Port Saeed  
04 602 1234

dubai.park.hyatt.com

Map 2 M7 Metro GGICO

Packages including catering, floral arrangements and special guest room rates are available in the ballroom and garden, for an indoor or outdoor day to remember.

### The Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina

Al Sufouh Rd Marsa Dubai 04 399 4141

westinminaseyahi.com

Map 1 M5 Metro Nakheel

The Serdaal Ballroom can accommodate up to 450 guests in gala dinner set-up style, while the outdoor Arabian Terrace offers breathtaking views of the Gulf and the Palm Jumeirah.

### XVA Art Hotel

Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood Al Souk Al Kabeer 04 353 5383

xvahotel.com

Map 2 M4 Metro Al Fahidi

This boutique hotel in the heart of the historical Al Fahidi neighbourhood makes for a stylish setting for a reception – the alfresco courtyard is relaxed, casual and stunning when candlelit at night.

### All the Frills

One of the challenges of getting married outside your country of origin is being far away from your support

network; if this is the case, a wedding planner can provide invaluable assistance and ensure that the big day runs smoothly.

Try C'est La Vie (clvweddings.com), wedding.ae or Fonoon (fonoon-uae.com) or check out Couture Events who will help you every step of the way – from the paperwork to the seating plan (coutureevents.ae). Upscale & Posh offers a tailored service for flowers and wedding reception decorations (upscaleandposh.com). Brides needn't worry about missing out on the princess treatment since most spas offer tailor-made services for them.

Try the following photographers for your big day: Sue Johnston (imageoasisdubai.com) or Charlotte Simpson (hotshotsdubai.com).

### Wedding Ideas

There are numerous resources available in Dubai to help you plan your wedding and provide inspirational ideas. Bride Club ME (brideclubme.com) is an online portal with a comprehensive list of vendors (offering everything from dresses, to food, to venues), as well as features, forums and photos of weddings they've helped organise. If you want to wow your guests with a stunning, otherworldly theatrical wedding venue design, check out Ali Bakhtiar Designs LLC (alibakhtiardesigns.com).

### Family Law

All matters of family law, from divorce and child custody cases through to wills and inheritance, are generally dealt with under Shariah (Islamic) law or by the laws of your home country. In any instance it is best to contact your embassy for an approved list of law firms to assist you, and then deal with a company that is familiar with both the law in your home country and here in Dubai.

**Afridi & Angell** Emirates Towers, Trade Center 2, 04 330 3900, [afridi-angell.com](http://afridi-angell.com)

**Al Tamimi & Company** DIFC, Zaa'beel 2, 04 364 1641, [tamimi.com](http://tamimi.com)

**Bayat Legal Services** Canadian Consulate Bldg, Al Souk Al Kabeer, 04 355 4646, [ilsgroup.com](http://ilsgroup.com)

**The Rights Lawyers** Building 8, Media City, Al Sufouh 2, 04 390 3646, [therightslawyers.com](http://therightslawyers.com)

**Trench & Associates** Alwardy Bldg, Al Mankhool, 04 355 3146, [trenchlaw.com](http://trenchlaw.com)

### Wills

It is essential that you have a will in place, and it's especially important to seek legal advice if you become a property owner in Dubai. That's because,

under Shariah law, the rules for who inherits property after someone's death differ from those in other countries. For example, in the event of your death, it may be that your sons (or brother, if you don't have any sons) are first in line for inheritance and your wife could end up with nothing.

The UAE does claim to guarantee a woman's right to inherit property, but it's worth making your will watertight to this. Also, if a family member dies, the government can freeze his/her accounts until all liabilities of your husband are cleared such as loans, credit cards and business debts; this can happen very quickly but can easily be overturned if a UAE will is in place. Providing each other with a 'Power of Attorney' document in addition to a will is also recommended to prevent this.

A Dubai-based lawyer can assist you with a locally viable will (do check that they are authorised by the government to write wills), or contact The Wills Specialists (willsuae.com), or Just Wills (just-wills.net), part of a UK-based estate planning organisation with a UAE presence.

### Making A Will

Firstly, make an appointment with a licensed estate planner, preferably one with knowledge of the law of your home country; you'll need passport copies, contact details of executors and proof of assets. A will can be drawn up, and needs to be attested at your embassy or consulate. Have this attested document translated at an authorised typing centre, and then attested by a notary public in the emirate you live in.

### Divorce

Divorce, like other matters of family law, is either governed by UAE law, Shariah law, or by the laws of the individuals' originating country. If the parties are from different countries, the applicable law is that from where the marriage was solemnised.

The first step in any divorce hearing is to look at reconciliation with the aid of the Family Guidance and Reformation Centre, which functions under the Department of Justice at Dubai Courts (04 334 7777). Anyone experiencing marital problems or family disputes can use this service, and you can file a complaint against your spouse by simply providing the centre with copies of your ID (passport or Resident Identity Card) and your marriage certificate.

If counsellors at the centre are unable to help a couple to reach an amicable settlement then the case may get referred to the Court of First Instance, Dubai Courts for legal proceedings to take place. This is when you need to seek legal advice. At this stage you will need the services of an expat law firm, who can advise you which 'jurisdiction' (either UAE or your home country) is the most appropriate for you in terms of cost, timescale and outcome.

If the case is straightforward and uncontested you may not even need to attend court, and you can expect to pay around Dhs.10,000, inclusive of all court fees and other expenses. The procedure is fairly standard for Christian, Roman Catholic and Hindu religions: the couple apply to the court for a decree nisi, stating their reasons for divorce, and if the judge finds the reasons to be convincing, the divorce will be granted.

In cases of child custody, the paramount concern of the court is the child's welfare. In Shariah law, the custody of a child classed as a minor, will be the mother's unless there are compelling reasons to decide otherwise.

### Death

There's never a more tragic time than when a friend or relative dies. While there is a lot of bureaucracy surrounding a death here, there are companies who can take care of the practical matters and advise you on all aspects of the mourning process.

In the event of a death outside a hospital, notify the police by dialling 999. The police will then file a report and the body will be taken to Rashid Hospital where a doctor will determine the cause of death and produce a report; this usually takes three to seven days.

If the death occurs in a hospital, that hospital will be responsible for completing the initial death report and transferring the deceased to the mortuary.

The first administrative step is to get a death certificate, which is needed before you can arrange a local burial or cremation, or send the body home. Thereafter, the process for registering a death will vary depending on the deceased's religion and whether he or she was an expat or not.

It's best to get in touch with the relevant embassy for guidelines on what the next steps are. To help guide you through the process, contact the private company, Middle East Funeral Services (mefs.ae).

### Helping Hand

Middle East Funeral Services (mefs.ae) has partnered up with a network of Worldwide Repatriation Specialists, and are able to manage the entire process, from the initial stages (including obtaining death certificates and registrations) until the deceased is at the funeral home of choice.

### Death Certificate

On receipt of the doctor's report, the hospital will issue a death certificate declaration (not to be confused with the actual death certificate). Take this, along with the deceased's passport, to the nearest police department, which will issue a No Objection

Certificate (NOC) addressed to Al Baraha Hospital. You should also request NOCs addressed to the mortuary for embalming, the airport for transportation and the hospital for the release of the body. This letter, plus the death declaration certificate, original passport and copies should be taken to the Department of Preventative Medicine at Al Baraha Hospital, where the death certificate will be issued in Arabic. This must be translated into the appropriate language if the body is being sent home.

The certificate must then be attested for by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and registered at the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs (GDRFA). You will also need to cancel the deceased's visa at the GDRFA. Since Islam requires that the body be buried immediately, the death certificate and registration procedures for deceased Muslims can be performed after the burial.

You will also need to inform the embassy of the deceased's home country – the embassy will register the death, issue an embassy death certificate and cancel the passport. This can cost up to Dhs.1,000 depending on which country's embassy you are dealing with.

### Local Burial Or Cremation

Before the deceased can be buried or cremated locally, you will need the following documentation: cancelled passport, death certificate, proof that the visa was cancelled and an NOC from the sponsor stating that all debts have been settled.

For a Hindu cremation, you must also provide written permission from the next of kin, as well as that person's passport. The procedure for local cremation and burial can be complicated and changes often, so you will need to contact the Dubai Municipality (04 221 5555, dm.gov.ae), the Christian Cemetery (04 337 0247), or the Hindu Temple in Bur Dubai (04 353 5334) for the latest information.

If you want to arrange a local burial it can be done at the Muslim or Christian cemeteries in Dubai. The cost of a burial is Dhs.1,100 for an adult and Dhs.350 for a child. You will need to get a coffin made, as well as organise transport to the burial site. Cremation is also possible, but the deceased must have had a valid Dubai residence visa, and a cremation permit must be obtained from the municipality, which costs Dhs.1,100. It's also a Dhs.2,500 fee for the cremation

### Transporting Ashes Back Home

If the deceased has been cremated in Dubai, you might want to send their ashes back to their home country. The best people to contact are at the dnata Export Office, Cargo Village. Call them on 04 211 1111. They can provide further assistance and information.

### Returning The Deceased Home

To return the deceased to his or her country of origin, you will need to book your own ticket with the airline of your choosing (if you want to travel with the body) as well as make shipping arrangements through dnata (04 211 1111), which will handle the body at Cargo Village and process any required documentation.

The deceased will need to be embalmed before reaching Cargo Village, and you will need the original death certificates (both the local certificate and the embassy certificate), the NOC from Dubai Police, an NOC from the embassy of the deceased (which must be the same as the destination to which they are being sent), the cancelled passport and visa and a copy of the air tickets specifying flight details.

You will also need to purchase a coffin. Embalming can be arranged through the Dubai Health Authority and will cost around Dhs.1,000, which includes the embalming certificate. The body must be identified before and after embalming, after which it should be transferred to Cargo Village for shipping.

Cargo fees are calculated by the kilo and distance travelled. The total charge can be anywhere between Dhs.1,500 to Dhs.30,000. A coffin costs upwards of Dhs.1,200. When preparing the documentation, remember that dnata will require seven copies of each document and the translation.

You'll also need to arrange for a funeral company to receive the body when it reaches its destination. It is not obligatory for anyone to accompany the body during the flight home.

### Having A Baby

The standard of maternity healthcare in Dubai, either private or government, is excellent. As long as you have insurance or the means to pay, there is no reason to return to your home country to give birth. It's also easier to get by with one income in Dubai, meaning that many mothers get to stay at home with their new babies rather than having to return to work. And, you will have access to cheap childcare and babysitting services here.

However, there are a few disadvantages to be aware of. Maternity leave is paltry: just 45 days paid leave, and no paternity leave. You can take another month unpaid, provided your employer agrees. If you need extra time for medical reasons, you can take up to 100 days, although this is only granted upon production of a medical certificate from your doctor. Plus, there's also the absence of the family support network you may have had back home. Fortunately, there are strong networks of other parents who meet up regularly and offer plenty of support to each other; for example, see dubaimums.com and expatwoman.com.

# Registering Your New Baby

**If you're planning to have a baby in Dubai, the following is an essential checklist to ensure your child is properly registered once born.**

### Get a UAE birth certificate

You have 30 days after the birth to get your newborn's UAE birth certificate, which is needed to apply for a passport and residence visa.

After the baby is born, the hospital will issue a notification of birth upon receipt of copies of both parents' passports, the attested marriage certificate, and a fee of Dhs.50.

To get the actual UAE birth certificate, take the birth notification and the above documents to the Mediexpress office (04 272 7190) at Al Baraha Hospital. For a fee of Dhs.490, they will issue the English birth certificate and the Arabic birth certificate, and have both attested by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### Register the birth with your embassy

Once you have the UAE birth certificate, you can register the birth with your embassy. They will issue you with a registration of birth certificate that can be used to apply for the passport. (Note that this is not the birth certificate from your home country; that will need to be applied for separately). The fees and process will vary depending on nationality. Visit your

embassy's website to download the application form and find out more about the procedure.

### Apply for your baby's passport

Once the birth is registered with your embassy, you can apply for the passport. You'll need to provide the birth certificate (UAE or home nationality), the registration of birth certificate (issued by your embassy), one parent's birth certificate and two passport-sized photos of your child. The fees for the passport and courier service will vary depending on nationality. The procedure should take four to six weeks.

### Apply for a birth certificate from your home country

Depending on your nationality, you may have to wait up to six months from registering the birth with your embassy to request a birth certificate, either at your embassy or in some cases, online. The certificate will then be couriered to you.

### Get a residence visa for your baby

You have 120 days from the birth to get a UAE residence visa for your newborn or risk being fined Dhs.100 a day. To qualify, the parent (sponsor) must earn at least Dhs.4,000 (or Dhs.3,000 plus accommodation) per month. You'll need the following documents (originals and copies unless otherwise specified):

- Typed application form
- Baby's passport

- Baby's attested birth certificates (both in English and Arabic)
- Three passport-sized photos of the baby
- Attested marriage certificate
- Sponsor (parent)'s passport (copy)
- Mother's passport and visa page (copy)
- Sponsor's attested salary certificate (copy)
- Ejari tenancy contract
- Resident ID of the sponsor
- Last three months' bank statements (not printed online statements)
- Dhs.310 application fee and typing fee

Pick up an application form from a typing office and have them complete it for you. Then, visit the residency section of the General Directorate of Residency & Foreigners Affairs. Hand in the completed form and supporting documents at the Family Entry Permit counter. The residence visa will be sent to you through a courier service or can be collected.

### Born Back Home

Babies born abroad to expat mums with UAE residency are required to have a residence visa or visit visa of their own to enter the UAE. The application should be filed by the father or family provider, along with the essential documents, a salary certificate and a copy of the newly born child's birth certificate.

Let's just clear up some of the misunderstandings and urban myths about having a baby in Dubai.

Here we go:

- Your baby will have an Arabic birth certificate
- You/she will not have UAE citizenship or a passport
- Breastfeeding is allowed in the UAE, just be discreet
- Home births are not permitted in the UAE
- You must be married before giving birth
- The husband is allowed to be present at the birth at most private hospitals

## Overseas Births

If you have your baby back in your home country, you will need to organise their residence or visit visa before entering the UAE. The application should be filed by the father along with his passport and residence visa, salary certificate, and a copy of the birth certificate.

## Pregnant Out Of Wedlock

If you fall pregnant but are not married then there is no reason to panic, but there are several decisions that you will need to make fairly quickly. It is illegal to have a baby out of wedlock while you are a resident in the UAE and if you deliver your baby at any hospital here, private or public, and can't produce a marriage certificate, you will most likely face a prison sentence. Therefore, as soon as you see the blue lines on the pregnancy test, you need to sort a few things out.

The easiest solution is to have a quick wedding, after which you can go on to have antenatal care in a government or private hospital without any fear of punishment. If this is not an option, you can stay in Dubai until a reasonable time before you are due to give birth, and even have your antenatal check-ups in a private hospital. But you will need to ensure that you return to your home country to actually deliver the baby. Once you have delivered you can return to Dubai with the baby: there are no rules against being a single mother here.

## From Bump To Birth

As soon as you find out that you're going to have a baby, you need to choose where to go for your maternity care. Most expecting expat mothers opt for a private hospital rather than a government hospital, and as long as you have private health insurance this should be affordable, if not free. Bear in mind that some hospitals may charge extra for certain procedures, such as caesarean sections, costing around Dhs.20,000, and epidurals, which normally cost about Dhs.2,000. Having twins, triplets or more will cost you more, too. There are also additional costs for resuscitation after the birth, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), your husband staying overnight in the

room with you, and, in some hospitals, baby's nappies and wet wipes.

Unlike some other countries, in the UAE the delivery will be performed by the doctor who treats you throughout your pregnancy, rather than a midwife. Therefore, it's important to find a doctor that you are comfortable with from the beginning, as he or she will be with you 'from bump to birth'. You can choose to have all your antenatal care at a local clinic, as many obstetricians are then authorised to deliver at a certain hospital. It's also more than likely that you will be able to receive more frequent check-ups and scans in the run up to the birth as part of your care, including a 4D scan.

See the Health section for listings of maternity clinics; Mediclinic City Hospital, which has one of the largest Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) in the UAE, and American Hospital are by far the most popular. There is also a NICU at the government-run Latifa Hospital; this is the largest NICU facility in the Middle East and provides treatment for babies from 24 weeks onwards.

## Water Births

While water births are not available in Dubai, you can go to the Al Ain Cromwell Women and Children's Hospital ([alaincromwell.com](http://alaincromwell.com)). However, you'll need to sign up to their whole delivery package which will cost you between Dhs.12,000 and Dhs.14,000 if you don't have insurance, or if your insurance won't cover it.

## Healthy Pregnancy

To prepare you for parenthood why not sign up to an antenatal class. Health Bay Polyclinic in Umm Suqeim ([healthbayclinic.com](http://healthbayclinic.com)) runs classes costing Dhs.1,500 for four hour-long sessions; Mediclinic City Hospital has an antenatal programme (Dhs.1,725 for eight classes or Dhs.250 per class); and Cooper Clinic ([cooperhealthclinic.com](http://cooperhealthclinic.com)) offers one-day courses including an introduction to baby massage.

## Compulsory Vaccinations

By law, parents are required to ensure that their baby's immunisation shots are up to date. While the first vaccines are given as soon as your baby is born, you will be required to return to your hospital or clinic every two months until the baby is one year old. At 18 months, babies receive three booster shots and then do not have any more until they are aged five.

The UAE's national immunisation programme includes Hepatitis A + B, polio, MMR (measles, mumps and German measles), chicken pox, Hib and whooping cough. Do bring copies of your child's vaccination records from your home country with you when moving to Dubai.

## Adoption

While you can't adopt a UAE National baby, many couples in Dubai adopt children from Africa, Asia and Far Eastern countries. Adoption regulations vary according to which country the child comes from, but once you clear the requirements of that country, and complete the adoption process, you will have no problems bringing your new child into the UAE on your sponsorship. Check with your embassy about the procedure for applying for citizenship of your home country for your new child.

You are advised to go through the Hague Adoption Convention, an internationally recognised process. You'll be required to provide a file of essential documents, undergo a police check, and complete a 12 hour home-study programme – which involves psychological analysis and parental preparation. After a home visit and final interview, you will receive 'approval', and your home study file can be handed over to any international adoption agency recognised by the UAE, and your name added to their adoption list. It is then a matter of waiting for the phone to ring. If you are considering adopting a child, a good place to start is the Adoption Support Group Dubai. Join the Yahoo group ([groups.yahoo.com/group/asgdubai](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/asgdubai)), or email [asgdubai@yahoo.com](mailto:asgdubai@yahoo.com).

## Single Parents

It is possible to live in Dubai and sponsor your children as a single parent, even if you are a woman. There will, however, be a number of extra requirements that you need to meet, including a minimum salary level and a letter of no objection from the other parent (or a death certificate, in the case of a deceased spouse). You may also need to show your divorce certificate but it is best to visit the Immigration Department to find out the exact requirements, as these may change.

Being a working single parent in Dubai may seem daunting for a number of reasons. Firstly, as an expat, your support system may not be as great as back home, where friends and family can help out, and, secondly, in a country where marriage and family are so important you may feel a little like the 'odd one out'. However, once you get used to people enquiring where your husband is (if you have a child with you, people assume you're married), there are actually lots of advantages of living in Dubai as a working single parent. For one thing, there's the standard of childcare: the nurseries in Dubai are very good and a few offer full day-care; they are also generally much more affordable than in your home country. There is also the option of having a live-in nanny, which means that you cannot only work as a single parent but can enjoy an active social life too.

## Mother & Baby Groups

Dubai is a great place for young families because it is safe, has great weather and close-knit expat communities. While you may not have the helpful hand of family close by, there are lots of mother and baby groups to keep you and your baby happy. The city's parks make great spots for mothers to meet, and many of them have walking tracks which are excellent for a bit of pram pushing exercise. As pavements are rare in Dubai, going for a stroll with your pushchair may be a challenge – malls are of course an option, The Walk at Jumeirah Beach Residence has nice wide walkways and Uptown Mirdif's pedestrianised area provides traffic-free space, as does much of the Downtown Dubai area.

### Dubai Mums Club

[dubaimumsclub.com](http://dubaimumsclub.com)

This group operates via its online site and through meet-ups. Registered members have access to the club forum, as well as special discounts. Members can also consult an online paediatrician and fitness instructor.

### Mirdif Mums Dubai

Mirdif 055 735 4759

[mirdifmums.webs.com](http://mirdifmums.webs.com)

Metro Rashidiya

As Mirdif has a strong family population it is only fitting that the mums get together to share coffee mornings, afternoons in the park and various activity days. The group also has some social outings without the kids, which is a great way to make new friends.

### Mumcierge

050 640 8322

[mumcierge.com](http://mumcierge.com)

An online concierge club for busy parents wanting to set up activities for their children. The group has weekly coffee meetings at Lime Tree Cafe & Kitchen in Al Qouz.

## Hiring A Nanny

Many families choose to hire live-in, full-time maids (nannies) to assist them with childcare and babysitting. It is a relatively simple process, detailed in Explorer's *Dubai How-To* guide, which explains all the documents you will need and procedures to follow to organise a domestic worker visa.

If both you and your spouse work full time then a live-in maid is really your best option as there is no official network of childminders. Your maid can also help with cleaning, washing, cooking and other household jobs.

Finding the right live-in person can certainly be a challenge. There are a number of registered agencies in Dubai, which organise everything from interviews through to airfares and the visa; they will charge an agency fee of around Dhs.3,500. It is preferable to recruit someone who is already in Dubai, and therefore your best bet would be to find an expat who is leaving the country and no longer needs their maid. Speak to other parents and check/put up notices on Spinneys and community noticeboards, as check the ads on expatwoman.com and dubizzle.com.

## Residence Visa

If you employ a full-time live-in maid you will need to sponsor her for a residence visa. You can only sponsor a maid from the following countries: India, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Indonesia. You must have a salary above Dhs.6,000 per month and be able to provide her with housing (many apartments and villas have a maid's room inside or outside), medical insurance and benefits, which include an airfare back to her home country at least once every two years, food, clothing and toiletries. Depending upon the nationality of your live-in maid (and whether or not you need to organise her entry permit into the UAE) you may have to visit their local embassy to get a contract drawn up before beginning the sponsorship process (see When You Arrive).

## Can You Afford It?

Once you've made the decision to employ a nanny, you'll need to work out if you can actually afford to do so. The average monthly wage is around Dhs.2,000 although you should allow an extra Dhs.400 for things like phone credit, food, clothes and toiletries. One of the prerequisites is an airfare to her home country, which is likely to cost about Dhs.3,500. The residence visa is Dhs.5,080 a year and her annual medical will cost Dhs.325. You'll also need to make a few one-off payments: Dhs.600 for health insurance, Dhs.140 for a Resident ID card and a refundable residence visa deposit of Dhs.2,030.

## First Aid Courses

Make sure that you and your maid are able to cope with minor medical emergencies and take a first aid course. The Perfect Help (thepperfecthelp.com) run a number of training courses for maids, including first aid. Back To Basics also run courses in several languages (backtobasicsme.com).

## Pros & Cons

There are plenty of advantages to having a live-in nanny. Not only is it relatively inexpensive, but having someone to look after your child means that

you have reliable childcare support as and when you need it, and can enjoy the odd night out!

On the other hand, you should keep in mind that first aid and childcare qualifications are not legally required for your babysitters or childcare workers in the UAE, so it's worth doing your research to find someone with experience. Networking and word of mouth can pay dividends as many parents with young children will be in the same boat as you.

## Babysitting

Domestic help agencies can provide part-time babysitters, although there is no guarantee that you will get the same babysitter every time.

Ask around your neighbourhood to see if any of the local maids or teenagers are available for ad hoc evening babysitting, or try your child's nursery, as classroom assistants are often up for a bit of extra work and they will already have a rapport with your children. If you do manage to find someone for part-time babysitting, the rate ranges from Dhs.30 to Dhs.40 per hour. Western childminders are most likely to charge more than this.

## Activities For Kids

During the cooler months (October to May), kids can enjoy the parks and beaches around Dubai, which house playgrounds for varying ages, as well as tennis and basketball courts. Try the boating lake in Safa Park, the petting zoo in Mushrif Park, and the camel and pony rides in Creek Park. There are also water parks in and around the city; however, while swimming is obviously popular, there are few public pools. Mushrif Park has separate women's and men's pools but, outside the hotels and health clubs, the only other options are villa compound pools or the beach. See Things to See & Do for more information.

During the warmer months (June to September) the many amusement centres and kids' play areas keep your brood from getting bored. Fun Corner is a soft play centre with a few arcade games and small rides located in Bin Sougat Centre, Al Ghurair City, and the Spinneys Centre on Al Wasl Road. Fun City (funcity.ae) offers similar facilities, plus scheduled classes, and can be found in the Arabian Center, Oasis Centre, Reef Mall, Ibn Battuta, Mercato, Lamcy Plaza and Century Mall. Located near Dubai Garden Centre along Sheikh Zayed Road, Mini Monsters (minimonsters.ae) is the UAE's largest indoor soft play venue.

There are various sports and activity clubs that run after-school activities and summer camps, plus some great kids' attractions such as KidZania. The Activities chapter covers a range of hobbies for children. Visit uae4kidz.biz for up-to-date information on family events and activities.

Keep an eye on the local press too as, most months, there's something going on for families whether that's shows on the ice, exhibitions or one-off entertainment. Many malls have specific kiddie entertainment during Eid, DSF and other popular calendar events.

## After-School Activities

Many schools will run ECAs (Extra Curricular Activities) from kindergarten onwards. Generally, the younger years only have one ECA a week for around 30-60 minutes directly after school, while the older years may have multiple classes at various times. School-run ECAs are often included in the school fees, however, independent companies also hold classes at schools during the afternoons and evenings and charge term fees (which are far from cheap), as well as at weekends and holidays.

Turning Pointe runs ballet classes for all ages in various schools around Dubai, as does Kids' Theatre Works, and Active Sports Academy has a range of sports classes. If your kids are sports players (or you want them to be) there are a number of academies that can develop their talents – would-be Federers should sign up with the Clark Francis Tennis Academy, budding Beckhams can hone their skills with the International Football Academy or UAE English Soccer School of Excellence, wanna-be Olympic gold medalists should dive in with Australian International Swim Schools and potential Bruce Lees can kick it with various clubs around Dubai (see Martial Arts). Many parents get together in the parks (in the winter) and play centres (in the summer) around Dubai for their own impromptu after-school activities, so new families shouldn't worry about long afternoons and bored kids.

## Keep The Kids Happy

For a taste of the past, and guaranteed to get the little ones excited, flag down the Desert Chill ice cream van. Complete with melodic tinkling tunes, this classic van travels around several communities in Dubai all week long. See desertchill.ae for the schedule or call 050 612 2108.

## Indoor

From around May to September, having fun in air-conditioned venues like these is often the best option.

## Aquaplay

Mirdif 04 231 6307

theplaymania.com

Map 2 P12 Metro Rashidiya

An indoor play centre dedicated to water fun, this gem in Mirdif City Centre boasts a swinging pirate ship, log flume ride, water guns and bumper boats.

It's a child-friendly change from the usual outdoor water parks and available at a fraction of the cost. Plus, the fact that it's indoors makes it perfect for the summer months.

## Cheeky Monkeys Playland

Al Barsha Mall Al Barsha 2 04 385 0875

cheekymonkeys.ae

Map 1 Q7 Metro Sharaf DG

This hugely popular play centre is well suited to little ones, thanks to its toddler-friendly soft play areas as well as Art Garden, Sports Room and Princess Room. It's a great spot for hosting birthday parties, and there's a cafe selling snacks and freshly squeezed juices where mums and dads can relax while the kids play.

## Children's City

Gate 1, Creek Park Umm Hurair 2 04 334 0808

childrencity.ae

Map 2 L7 Metro Dubai Healthcare City

An edutainment venue in Creek Park with hands-on interactive displays and learning zones where kids have fun and can swot up on subjects like science, geography and even astronomy at the planetarium. In addition to the permanent displays, there are regular events such as drum shows and light displays.

## Favourite Things

Marsa Dubai 04 434 1984

favouritethings.com

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

The perfect place to leave your kids happily playing for an hour or two, Favourite Things, in Dubai Marina Mall,



has more than enough activities to keep the rug rats happy. There's everything from toddlers' soft play area to a mini race track, jungle gym and dressing up area. Parents can join in, watch from the comfort of the cafe, or even leave the tots in the centre's capable hands while they go shopping.

### Kids Connection

**Wafi Umm Hurair 2 04 327 9011**

Map 2 L7 Metro **Dubai Health Care City**

Located on the first floor of Wafi Mall, this bright, colourful attraction brings the outside in with a variety of wooden park attractions in a very green, woodland inspired setting. Kids can climb, swing, seesaw and slide while mum and dad enjoy a coffee in the Cafe Court – or burn off some energy on the trampolines, bouncy castle and climbing wall. The soft play area with a ball pool is great for toddlers too. Prices range from Dhs.3 to Dhs.27.

### Kidz Venture

**Ibn Battuta Jabal Ali 1 04 368 4130**

[kidzventure.ae](http://kidzventure.ae)

Map 1 G5 Metro **Ibn Battuta**

Open seven days a week, from 7am to 10pm, Kidz Venture offers a variety of childcare options as and when you need them. From nursery and after-school programmes, to drop 'n' shop babysitting, birthday parties, and arts and crafts activities, there is always something to keep your little one amused.

### Le Petit Palais

**Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa 04 382 7333**

Map 2 F7 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

Located in the ever-sophisticated Galeries Lafayette in The Dubai Mall, the French-themed play centre is the perfect place for kids to have fun while parents shop. It's like a miniature city where children can play at being grown-ups, with a mini supermarket, salon and even a karaoke room, as well as other games and soft play areas to keep them entertained.

### Little Explorers

**Mirdif City Center Mirdif**

Map 2 P12 Metro **Rashidiya**

Little Explorers at Playnation Mirdif City Centre is an edutainment centre for children from two to seven years old. Focused on acquiring skills in a fun and safe environment, this venue is set out in five distinctly themed zones offering plenty of variety to keep kids interested; there's everything from seeing how fast you can run, to scientific experiments that investigate the natural environment. With games and activities spanning over 97 different exhibits that get the brain ticking and stimulate the senses, children can discover hidden talents and new skills. There are also a variety of birthday party packages available.

### Magic Planet

**Mall of the Emirates Al Barsha 1 04 341 4444**

[magicplanet.ae](http://magicplanet.ae)

Map 1 R6 Metro **Mall of the Emirates**

A blaring and boisterous play centre that's a huge hit with families, Magic Planet's many attractions include bowling lanes, bumper cars and video games. Play the arcade games and collect tickets to exchange for prizes or, for a more exhilarating game experience, check out the XD Theatre with its interactive 3D and 4D cinema effects.

### Peekaboo Creative Play Centre

**The Village Jumeira 1 04 344 7122**

[peekaboo.ae](http://peekaboo.ae)

Map 2 H4 Metro **Emirates Towers**

Here there's a packed schedule of organised activities, which aim to be fun while developing the children's creativity and providing an educational experience. Children aged zero to seven can join in with cooking, nursery rhymes, yoga, arts, crafts and more. Kids under three-and-a-half must be accompanied by an adult. The centre operates an hourly fee structure with memberships also available. Also at Mall of the Emirates and Ibn Battuta.

### Play A Round @ Some Place Nice

**Jewels Tower Marsa Dubai 04 457 0455**

[playaround.ae](http://playaround.ae)

Map 1 J5 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Play A Round @ Some Place Nice provides fun for all the family, with its neon, nine-hole mini golf course, soft play areas and party room. Once you're done competing on the glow-in-the-dark course, grab a bite to eat at the on-site cafe or try some arts and crafts. There's a special area for tots aged one to three.

### Quay Skillz Youth Facility

**Madinat Jumeirah Al Sufouh 1 050 480 7670**

[skillz.ae](http://skillz.ae)

Map 1 R5 Metro **Mall of the Emirates**

Dedicated children's gym with secure entry and specialised trainers who provide an environment for kids aged seven to 16 to exercise, while adults can use the extensive club facilities. Includes running machines, spinning bikes, cross trainers, fitness trampolines and rowing machines all tailored to the needs and interests of the younger gym-goer.

### Zebra Crossing

**Nr Noor Islamic Bank MS Al Qouz Ind. 1 050 559 4903**

[zebra-crossing.com](http://zebra-crossing.com)

Map 2 A6 Metro **Noor Bank**

Join Ziggi the Zebra at this play centre, which boasts a host of soft play areas and bouncy castles. It's the perfect spot for a party, with activities ranging from arts and crafts and face painting to magic shows and

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puppet shows. There's even the option to host a spa party at the Zebra Lounge, where little princesses can enjoy mini mani-pedis.

## Classes

Keep the grey matter working and learn something new or perfect an existing skill with classes and courses from these clubs and service providers.

### Apple Seeds

Al Qouz Ind. 3 **04 380 6064**

[appleseedsdubai.com](http://appleseedsdubai.com)

Map 1 S6 Metro **Mall of the Emirates**

This New-York themed indoor playground has some innovative ideas and features an NYC taxi cab and apartment, yoga block skyscraper, shape sorter garden, deli with play foods, Lego table, magnet wall and even more. There are also classes covering everything from science to ballet, cooking to art – so lots to keep the little ones amused. They also have character and confidence building programmes for four to 13 year olds.

### Desert Sport Services

Palace Tower 2 Nadd Hessa **056 644 1742**

[desertsportservices.com](http://desertsportservices.com)

Desert Sport Services runs swimming programmes for all ages, from parent & baby/toddler through to learn to swim and stroke development; sessions are held at various sites including Emirates International School, English College Primary, Jebel Ali Club and Horizon School. The club also organises pool parties for children, staffed by fully qualified lifeguards.

### DuGym Gymnastics Club

**050 553 6283**

[dugym.com](http://dugym.com)

DuGym offers gymnastics and trampoline coaching to children of all ages and abilities. Established in 2000, the club now operates at 15 locations including Wellington International School, Jumeirah English Speaking School and Emirates International School. Classes are held from Sunday to Thursday. Contact Suzanne on the above number for more details.

### Kids' Theatre Works

DUCTAC Al Barsha 1 **050 158 5653**

[kidstheatreworks.com](http://kidstheatreworks.com)

Map 1 R6 Metro **Mall of the Emirates**

This club holds classes in creative drama, musical theatre, acting, dance, youth theatre, music and scene work for children aged three and over; if your kids are budding superstars, Kids' Theatre Works is a good start. It runs classes at DUCTAC (the theatre inside Mall of the Emirates), Uptown Mirdiff Primary, Jabal Ali, Gems Academies and the American School of Dubai.

### Kidville

The Walk at JBR Marsa Dubai **04 440 1220**

[mykidville.ae](http://mykidville.ae)

Map 1 K4 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Based on an innovative concept pioneered in New York, Kidville offers newborns to six year olds a unique range of classes that include musical journeys on the Rockin' Railroad, building 3D art projects in Construction Junction, and exploring a variety of paints, dough, crayons, chalk and collage in My Big Messy Art Class. There's also the Kidville University, an alternative programme for pre-schoolers. Other branches include MotorCity (04 454 2760) and Uptown Mirdiff (04 236 3648).

### My Gym UAE

Villa 520, Jumeira Rd Jumeira 3 **04 394 3962**

[mygymuae.com](http://mygymuae.com)

Map 2 B4 Metro **Noor Bank**

Offering a wide range of programmes for kids up to 13 years old, the expert staff lead classes that combine increases in strength, agility, coordination and flexibility with the development of social skills and self-esteem.

### Tickles & Giggles

The Walk at JBR Marsa Dubai **04 432 8681**

[ticklesandgiggles.com](http://ticklesandgiggles.com)

Map 1 K4 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Tickles & Giggles has a kids' salon and spa, and offers unique classes such as baby yoga, etiquette classes, arts and crafts and nursery rhymes. It also hosts ultra-trendy parties for kids (no bears or tank engines in sight), and will match decorations and the menu to your chosen theme. You can become a member on the website, where you can order party supplies as well as make online bookings.

### Scouts & Guides

Girls can join the Girl Guides, Brownies or Rainbows clubs in Dubai. Email [girlguidingdubai@gmail.com](mailto:girlguidingdubai@gmail.com) for more information about meeting times and places. Scout groups operate too. Contact [gasplampke@msn.com](mailto:gasplampke@msn.com) for information on Cub Scouts and [hoytjk2@aol.com](mailto:hoytjk2@aol.com) for information on Boy Scouts of America.

The majority of Scout and Guide groups in Dubai are held at schools, so check with your child's school. With each new group comes a need for adult volunteers. If you have experience with Scout or Guide groups, or your child was once a member, contact Mary Dunn ([alistair@emirates.net.ae](mailto:alistair@emirates.net.ae)) to get involved.

### British Guides In Foreign Countries

[girlguidingdubai.wordpress.com](http://girlguidingdubai.wordpress.com)

Groups for girls of various ages include Rainbows (five to seven years), Brownies (seven to 10), Guides (10 to 14), and Senior Section (14 to 25) with groups in Al

Safa, Jabal Ali, Dubai Investment Park, Mirdif, Silicon Oasis, Emirates Living and Arabian Ranches.

### The Scouts Association (British Scouting Overseas)

[britishscoutingoverseas.org.uk](http://britishscoutingoverseas.org.uk)

The Scouts Association encourages the development of youngsters through weekly activities and outings for ages six to 18 and 18-25. Contact Steve Sutton ([dc\\_middle-east@bsomail.org.uk](mailto:dc_middle-east@bsomail.org.uk)) for more information.

### Scouts Abroad

From April 2012, the existing Scout Areas of British Scouts in Western Europe (BSWE) and British Groups Abroad (BGA) were merged into a new Scout Area referred to as 'British Scouting Overseas' (BSO), which functions to support UK Scouting based outside the UK. The area is classed as an independent educational UK charity.

### Summer Camps

Soaring temperatures that have everyone cooped up indoors can make summer a challenging time to entertain the kids. To help keep boredom at bay, various organisations throughout Dubai run summer camps during the hottest months, while several nurseries also offer summer day-care for young children.

While many activities will be inside air-conditioned buildings there are plenty that will have your little ones getting a good dose of fresh air. Most language schools run summer courses for kids (see Language Courses), or if you'd rather see them having fun over the holidays, many leisure clubs offer summer camps that focus on sports, arts and crafts. Alternatively, contact Active Sports Academy, which arranges sporty summer camps at various venues around the city.

Another option is to sign them up for sailing lessons – if there's a breeze, then being out on the water can be significantly cooler than on land, and that way, they're still getting some fresh air. Clubs such as Dubai Offshore Sailing Club (DOSC – [dosc.ae](http://dosc.ae)) run dinghy sailing courses for kids.

### Active Sports Academy

106 Corner City Al Kheeran **050 559 7055**

[activeuae.com](http://activeuae.com)

Map 2 M9 Metro **Emirates**

In operation for 14 years, Active Sports Academy organises various coaching classes in multiple venues around Dubai, including at campuses after school. It teaches tennis, soccer, cricket, basketball, swimming and gymnastics and runs various tournaments, as well as holiday camps through all school break periods, including spring, Eid, Christmas and summer.

### Blossom Village Nursery

Villa 43, Street 21C Umm Suqeim 1 **04 394 8837**

[theblossomnursery.com](http://theblossomnursery.com)

Map 2 A5 Metro **Noor Bank**

This vibrant nursery will give your child plenty of stimulation as it emphasises creativity, play and personal development – and its summer camp, Passports, is no different. Based on the British Early Years Foundation Stage and aimed at children aged two and older, it's an imaginative summer adventure that includes arts and crafts, mini Olympics, swimming, baking and more. Flexible enrolment and pick up at 1pm, 3pm, 5pm or 6pm are available, making it a good choice if both parents work full time.

### Dubai Holiday Camps

Grosvenor House Business Tower Al Thanyah 1

**04 420 3732**

[dubaiholidaycamps.com](http://dubaiholidaycamps.com)

Map 1 P6 Metro **Dubai Internet City**

One of the longest established camps in the UAE, Dubai Holiday Camps has been provides a range of holiday activities for children aged three to 14 since its inception in 1998. Juniors take part in classroom-based fun like arts and crafts, storytelling, movie time and face painting, while older kids (those aged five to 14) can try their hands at a range of sports as well as talent shows, dance, drama and cooking classes. The experienced staff are English speakers with additional languages and trained to handle large groups of kids.

### E-Sports

Al Garhoud **04 282 4540**

[esportsuae.com](http://esportsuae.com)

Map 2 M8 Metro **GGICO**

Each day follows a set structure at E-Sports Holiday Camps – there are around 20 activities to choose from that are rotated throughout the week with kids taking part in five activities a day. (Guaranteed to tire them out!) These range from sports like football, tennis and swimming to arts and crafts, and dodgeball. Led by professional, enthusiastic teachers and assistants, E-Sports camps are a firm favourite with youngsters and a popular choice for busy parents.

### Gulf Star Sports

**050 429 4860**

[gulfstarsports.com](http://gulfstarsports.com)

These action-packed, multi-activity camps are targeted at children aged from two to 17. There's a strong focus on sports and children and teens can try their hands (and feet) at everything from football, cricket and basketball to martial arts, dance, and water polo, as well as drama and crafts. Professional, enthusiastic staff and top notch facilities make for an unforgettable experience. Staff are happy to meet with parents to discuss their children's needs.

## PETS

Having a pet is always a comfort, and Dubai has no shortage of abandoned animals in need of homes. If you're not sure you can commit for the long term, there are also options to foster animals as cat and dog homes especially are overcrowded.

You should check with your landlord what the pet policy is before you move in. In many cases it is not permitted to keep a pet, particularly in apartments. Some landlords will be amenable if you negotiate, but it is advisable to get any permission in writing to avoid difficult situations further down the line.

Pets are banned from parks and beaches, and popular walkways such as The Walk at JBR are also off limits, so finding a place for a good long walk can be a challenge. Paws Pet Planet ([pawspetplanet.com](http://pawspetplanet.com)) has a 20,000 square feet outdoor and indoor dog park, where you can let your pooch run off the leash.

When walking your dog, keep it on a short leash. Remember that dogs are considered by many conservative Muslims as unclean and are traditionally only kept for guarding property, so just be mindful of these attitudes when you are out in public. Be sure to keep your pet indoors or within your garden to avoid contact with strays and to prevent any problems with frightened neighbours. Dubai has a significant problem with strays, although both Feline Friends (050 451 0058) and K9 Friends (04 887 8739) are hard-working animal charities that take in as many as they can. The Dubai Municipality is also helping to fix the stray problem.

In addition to having dogs kept on leads at all times when walking, certain dogs have to be muzzled in Dubai when walked in public (see [dkc.ae](http://dkc.ae) for details). All cats and dogs must be registered, microchipped and vaccinated, or you could face fines and confiscation.

### Hot Dogs

The summer heat in Dubai is a serious health risk for cats, dogs and other pets. They cannot sweat to regulate body temperature as humans can, and so are at risk from heat-related issues, which can be fatal. Never walk your dog in the summer sun – be prepared to get up at dawn to ensure your dog gets the exercise it needs in a bearable temperature. Remember too that hot pavements will burn your pooch's paws. If your dog is bred for colder climes, think very carefully before you subject your pet to desert heat. Keeping the animal penned up inside with the air conditioning on is not a healthy option either; a dog needs regular exercise.

While rare, there have been reports of dogs being stolen, either to be sold to unscrupulous pet shops or for dog fighting. Ensure your garden is secure and don't let your dog roam around on the street. If you witness animal abuse see [dm.gov.ae](http://dm.gov.ae) for advice or call 04 289 1114.

### Sleek Salukis

The saluki is the breed of dog most commonly associated with the region; they are used in traditional forms of hunting and resemble a greyhound in many ways. The Arabian Saluki Centre (02 575 5330) offers a wealth of information and care for these thoroughbred dogs and even welcomes visitors to learn about them.

### Moving Your Pet

Pets may be brought into the UAE without quarantine as long as they are microchipped and vaccinated with verifying documentation, including a government health certificate from the country of origin; however, you'll also need an import permit. You cannot import cats and dogs under four months old and all pets must arrive as manifest cargo with a valid rabies vaccination more than 21 days before their arrival. Imports from some countries will also be subjected to a rabies test. For more information visit [petimport.moew.gov.ae](http://petimport.moew.gov.ae) and create an account.

There are certain breeds of dog that are banned from being imported into the UAE: pit bull terriers, Argentinean and Brazilian mastiffs, Japanese tosa inu, American Staffordshire terriers, Rottweilers and any wolf hybrids; the UAE also bans any dogs crossed with any of the banned breeds listed. There are other breeds which, while not banned outright, have restrictions on them too. Make sure you check with the municipality before you embark on the process. Dubai Kennels & Cattery provides a detailed guide to importing and exporting pets.

The international removal company Crown Relocations ([crownrelo.com/uae](http://crownrelo.com/uae), 04 230 5300) offers a pet relocation service and can provide useful information on how best to transport your pet.

### Buying a Pet

If you want to buy a pet it makes sense to start by visiting some of the rescue centres in Dubai – there are many abandoned animals in need of a home. K9 Friends (04 887 8739) helps to rehome stray and injured dogs, many of which are abandoned family pets looking for a second chance. See [k9friends.com](http://k9friends.com) for more information. Another useful website for



**Dubai Kennels & Cattery**  
Animal Care • Animal Relocations • *By Animal People*  
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pet owners in the Emirates is [petdubai.com](http://petdubai.com). Feline Friends (050 451 0058) is a non-profit organisation, aiming to improve the lives of cats by rescuing and rehoming stray cats and kittens. It has a 24 hour telephone answering service as well as a useful website, [felinefriendsdubai.com](http://felinefriendsdubai.com). The saluki is a breed of dog most commonly associated with the region; they are used in traditional forms of hunting. The Arabian Saluki Center (02 575 5330) can provide information on all aspects of the care of these animals. Many 'desert dogs' descend from the saluki. If you'd like to adopt your own desert dog, contact K9 Friends ([k9friends.com](http://k9friends.com)).

## Vaccinations & Registration

You should inoculate dogs annually against rabies, distemper, canine hepatitis, leptospirosis, parainfluenza virus and parvovirus. There is an optional vaccination against kennel cough which is recommended for all dogs going to kennels, doggy day-care or dog-training in mixed classes. Cats have to be vaccinated against rabies, feline rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia. You must also register your pet with the Dubai Municipality (04 289 1114); this is an annual registration which requires all cats and dogs to have the above vaccinations. They are then microchipped and given a plastic neck tag (there's a different colour for each year), as well as normal ID tags. If the municipality picks up an animal without a tag and chip, it is treated as a stray and there is a strong chance it will be put down. Registration can all be done at any vets or at Dubai Municipality Veterinary Services, and costs approximately Dhs.1,000.

## Taking Care Of Turtles

Turtles are native to the waters off Dubai, but with more construction, boats and pollution, they are having a tough time. Luckily, there are organisations doing their bit to help save the turtles. One such rehabilitation project is a collaboration between the Jumeirah Group and the Wildlife Protection Office, with veterinary support provided by Dubai Falcon Clinic & Central Veterinary Research Laboratory. To see how you can help, go to [facebook.com/turtle.rehabilitation](http://facebook.com/turtle.rehabilitation).

## Taking Your Pet Home

To take your pet home contact the airline you will be using – the animal may be able to travel with you or as unaccompanied cargo. Many boarding kennels and vets offer an export service, including Dubai Kennels & Cattery and The Doghouse ([dubaidoghouse.com](http://dubaidoghouse.com)).

## Vets, Kennels & Boarding

Standards of care at Dubai's veterinary clinics are reasonably high. Prices do not vary dramatically, but the Deira Veterinary Clinic (04 258 1881) and Al Barsha Veterinary Clinic (04 340 8601) are a little cheaper than the rest. Dubai Municipality has a veterinary services department (04 289 1114) next to Mushrif Park that only vaccinates animals.

There are also several new seven-star pet resorts such as Urban Tails, with luxury suites, landscaped gardens, a pet gym with treadmills, a doggie bootcamp, an outdoor swimming pool and fountains. Paws Pet Planet is another posh pad for pooches (see Where To Walk Your Dog). The Nad Al Shiba Veterinary Hospital (04 323 4412) also treats more exotic animals and birds. Kennels are generally of a good standard, although spaces are limited during peak times (summer and Christmas) – try Dubai Kennels & Cattery (see below).

An alternative is to use an at-home pet-sitting service – someone will come into your house at least once a day to feed and exercise your pet for a reasonable fee (for a bit extra they might even water your plants). For further information on pet shops see Shopping. There are a number of firms that offer a variety of grooming treatments from the basic (shampooing, medicated baths and nail clipping) to the more indulgent, like fashion advice.

Below is our pick of just some of the many vets and boarding and training schools.

For more listings see [askexplorer.com](http://askexplorer.com)

**Al Barsha Veterinary Clinic** Nr Centro Rotana, Al Barsha 1, 04 340 8601, [abvc.ae](http://abvc.ae)

**Doggies Palace** Nr Al Quoz Cemetery, Al Quoz 1, 04 339 3737, [doggiespalace.com](http://doggiespalace.com)

**Dubai Kennels & Cattery** > p.159 34th Street, Umm Ramoul, 04 285 1646, [dkc.ae](http://dkc.ae)

**Energetic Panacea** Al Wasl Rd, Jumeira 2, 04 344 7812, [pets-uae.com](http://pets-uae.com)

**European Veterinary Centre** Villa 63, Umm Al Sheif St, Al Rigga, 04 380 4415, [evc.ae](http://evc.ae)

**Jumeirah Veterinary Clinic** 35A Street, Jumeira 3, 04 394 2276

**Modern Veterinary Clinic** Al Wasl Rd, Al Rigga, 04 395 3131, [vetdubai.com](http://vetdubai.com)

**Pampered Pets** Dreams Tower 2, Marsa Dubai, 04 447 5330, [pamperedpets.ae](http://pamperedpets.ae)

**Poshpaws Kennels & Cattery** The Animal Care House, Sharjah, 050 273 0973, [poshpawsdubai.com](http://poshpawsdubai.com)

**Positive Paws** Umm Suqeim Rd, Al Quoz Ind. 4, 04 379 0996, [positivepaws.ae](http://positivepaws.ae)

**Urban Tails Pet Resort** > p.163 Nr Green Community, Dubai Investments Park 2, 04 884 8847, [urbantailsdubai.com](http://urbantailsdubai.com)

**World of Pets** Jumeira Rd, Jumeira 3, 04 395 5701, [worldofpetsme.com](http://worldofpetsme.com)

# homes for life



We are a voluntary organisation that rescues and rehomes stray & abandoned dogs in the UAE. Our finances are solely dependent on fundraising and donations.

This is how you can help:

- Give a dog a home
- Foster a dog
- Volunteer at the kennel
- Sponsor a kennel or a dog on an annual basis
- Help with fundraising, marketing or organising events

T: 04 887 8739

E: [info@k9friends.com](mailto:info@k9friends.com)

[www.k9friends.com](http://www.k9friends.com)

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# Where To Walk Your Dog



Dogs are not as widely accepted in Dubai as they are back home, and there are far more restrictions on dog-walking here. But we've sniffed out some places where your pet can stretch his paws.

Dogs are banned from many areas including Jumeirah Beach Residence (JBR) waterfront, and are frowned upon along Marina Walk and some areas on Palm Jumeirah. Walking a dog off-leash is not permitted and many beaches and parks have large signs up clearly stating these rules. Dubai Municipality will slap you with a Dhs.200 on-the-spot fine (per dog) if you flout the law. Fortunately, you do have a few options when it comes to pooch-friendly spots.

## Doggy day-care

This safe, sociable dog park in Dubai, Paws Pet Planet ([pawspetplanet.com](http://pawspetplanet.com)) is ideal for letting your dog play with other dogs. A first of its kind in the Middle East, the park welcomes all sizes, ages and breeds of dogs and puppies; there are individual dog areas depending on size and the dog's nature. The 2,000 sq m indoor arena is climate-controlled with splash pools, bridges, tunnels and obstacles. All dogs are supervised and if you are unable to be there, the park also runs a doggy day-care centre. To attend, all dogs must have a prior assessment and have up-to-date vaccinations (including kennel cough). Dogs must also pass a mandatory temperament assessment. See website for timetable and prices.

## Desert and beach walks

As long as you're vigilant that a snake or scorpion doesn't bite your dog, you can walk your pet in the desert. For a long off-the-lead run, dog-owners get

together to organise doggy play dates at various locations. Head out to the open desert behind Arabian Ranches, in Mirdif and Al Barsha 1 (behind the Mall of the Emirates).

In Nadd Al Shiba, there is also a popular area behind the camel market, which is safe, and far away from main roads. Meanwhile, in Al Warqa there is a large area for long walks, only a seven-minute drive from Mirdif.

In Jabal Ali, many people walk dogs on the beach next to the JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort & Spa, while other dog owners drive to Abu Dhabi where dogs are permitted in 'open water' beaches, away from the public and any shops. Also try Shahama Harbour and the beach club and bungalows at the Al Jazira Hotel near Ghantoot.

## Dog-walking groups

Find fellow dog owners on the following websites: [dubaidogclub.com](http://dubaidogclub.com), [k9friends.com](http://k9friends.com) and [petwatchdubai.com](http://petwatchdubai.com). [Expatwoman.com](http://Expatwoman.com) is also a great forum for sharing local dog knowledge and news.

## Dog-Friendly Cafes

Some cafes do welcome well-behaved dogs. The Lime Tree Café, on Jumeira Road and the new Tim Horton's and Coffeel cafes at Al Wasl Square don't seem to mind dogs passing through with their owners. There are even some trees close by for some much-needed shade in the summer months.

# URBANtail

PET RESORT



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[www.urbantailsdubai.com](http://www.urbantailsdubai.com)



Gyms are of a high standard in Dubai

## FITNESS

### Gyms & Fitness Clubs

While the Dubai lifestyle can be conducive to inactivity and overindulgence, the good weather throughout most of the year means that it's a pretty good place to be active too. So, whether you need to shift that 'Dubai stone' or want to hit the beach bootcamp-style to ramp up your endurance, you'll find plenty of ways to get off your sofa and on your feet.

If it's a new sport you're after there's a wide variety of team sports to choose from (see also Activities & Hobbies). If you prefer to hit the treadmill or cross-trainer, you may be lucky to find accommodation with its own gym, particularly in apartment blocks and new housing complexes.

There are also plenty of gyms to join, and hotels offer health club memberships if your complex doesn't have facilities. Independent gyms usually offer day

passes for Dhs.100, or monthly membership from Dhs.350-1,000. With 27 branches across the UAE, Fitness First is one of the leading gym brands in the region; standard membership costs Dhs.4,199 per year including all exercise classes and two free personal training sessions, after which you will receive a personalised programme.

Fitness 360 offers unusual fitness classes such as dancing in heels and partner yoga; U Concept is a boutique gym with DJ decks, art on the walls and a UFC cage in the basement; Engine offers a class-only package at Dhs.450 per month (including suspended yoga using a padded hammock); and Symmetry Gym offers personalised workouts in a small gym environment. The Circuit Factory (circuitfactory.ae) sets the four-week challenge of circuit sessions and a diet. So, there is plenty of choice and no excuse to fester on the sofa or in the bar!

**American Fitness** Umm Suqeim 1, 056 103 5581, [americanfitness.me](http://americanfitness.me)

**The Aviation Club** Jumeirah Creekside, Al Garhoud, 04 230 8560, [jumeirah.com](http://jumeirah.com)

**Bodylines Health & Fitness Centre** Trade Center 1, 04 312 2556

**Cleopatra's Spa & Wellness** Umm Hurair 2, 04 324 7700, [cleopatraspaandwellness.com](http://cleopatraspaandwellness.com)

**Core Fit** Dreams Tower 2, Marsa Dubai, 050 922 6247, [coredirection.com](http://coredirection.com)

**Crowne Fitness** Crowne Plaza, Trade Center 1, 04 3311111, [crowneplaza.com](http://crowneplaza.com)

**Dubai Ladies Club** Jumeira Rd, Jumeira 2, 04 349 9922, [dubailadiesclub.com](http://dubailadiesclub.com)

**Exhale** Marsa Dubai, 04 424 3777, [exhaledubai.com](http://exhaledubai.com)

**Fidelity Fitness Club** Almas Tower, Al Thanyah 5, 04 451 1133, [fidelityfitnessclub.com](http://fidelityfitnessclub.com)

**Fitness First** DIFC, DIFC, Zaa'beel 2, 04 363 7444, [fitnessfirstme.com](http://fitnessfirstme.com)

**Fitness O2** Nr Mall of the Emirates, Al Barsha 1, 04 379 2757, [fitness02.com](http://fitness02.com)

**Goal Attained** 056 693 9258, [goalattained.com](http://goalattained.com)

**The Health Club** Emirates Towers, Trade Center 2, 04 319 8888, [jumeirahemiratestowers.com](http://jumeirahemiratestowers.com)

**In Shape Ladies Fitness Club** Al Joud Bldg, Al Quoz Ind 1, 04 395 5718, [inshapeme.com](http://inshapeme.com)

**India Club** Nr Indian High School, Oud Metha, 04 337 1112, [indiaclubdubai.com](http://indiaclubdubai.com)

**Inspartz Club** Nr Dubai Garden Centre, Al Quoz Ind. 3, 04 347 5833, [inspartzclub.com](http://inspartzclub.com)

**Motion Fitness Center** Villa 24, Street 25, Umm Suqeim 3, 04 328 2538, [motionfitnesscenter.com](http://motionfitnesscenter.com)

**Original Fitness** Fairmont, Trade Center 1, 04 311 6571, [originalfitnessco.com](http://originalfitnessco.com)

**The Pavilion Marina & Sports Club** Jumeira Beach, Umm Suqeim 3, 04 406 8800, [jumeirahbeachhotel.com](http://jumeirahbeachhotel.com)

**The Quay Health club** Madinat Jumeirah, Al Sufouh 1, 04 366 6821

**Sharjah Wanderers Sports Club** Nr Sharjah English School, Sharjah, 06 566 2105, [sharjahwanderers.com](http://sharjahwanderers.com)

**ShuiQi Spa & Fitness** Atlantis, Nakhlal Jumeira, 04 426 1020

**Sports Fit** Al Mizhar 1, 04 236 2111

**Spring Dubai** 050 378 7367, [springdubai.com](http://springdubai.com)

**Symmetry Gym** Gold & Diamond Park, Al Quoz Industrial 3, 050 887 4707, [symmetrygymdubai.com](http://symmetrygymdubai.com)

**Synergy Fitness** Al Samrey Bldg, Al Barsha 1, 04 454 1471

**Talise Fitness** Trade Center 2, 04 319 8660, [jumeirah.com](http://jumeirah.com)

**U Energy** Gate Village, DIFC, Zaa'beel 2, 04 422 8721, [uenergy.me](http://uenergy.me)

### Mother & Child

If you want to give your kid a mind, body and soul workout, then My Gym ([mygym.com/dubai](http://mygym.com/dubai)) is the place to go for gymnastics and Mommy & Me sessions.

The Little Gym ([thelittlegym.com](http://thelittlegym.com)) runs gym classes from four months to 12 years. Urban Energy runs prenatal fitness classes in the park using weights and gentle exercises. And for mums looking to get back into shape, Pure Fitness ([purefitnessuae.com](http://purefitnessuae.com)) offers BuggyFit Bootcamp and a baby-friendly, four-week Results programme.

### Ladies Only

There are several ladies-only gyms and fitness clubs in Dubai including Fitness 360 at J3 Mall, the Dubai Ladies Club, and Curves, which is based around a circuit of machines, both cardio and toning, which, along with stretching, is completed twice in 30 minutes. Dance Fit is a ladies-only centre running classes in Zumba, hip-hop, tap-dancing and Bootylicious, as well as a six-week course in the flirty Burlesque.

### Yoga & Pilates

If pumping iron or running a marathon isn't for you, the ancient art of yoga and the ever more popular pilates method are gentle yet effective alternatives to help you get and stay in shape. Pilates is said to be the safest form of neuromuscular reconditioning and back strengthening available and is often delivered by trained physiotherapists. The method can help you become stronger, fitter, more toned and more flexible – either as a means to treat a problem, or as an exercise regime in small groups or one-on-one sessions. Classes are offered by a number of gyms as part of their group exercise schedules.

Yoga is a low-impact (but deceptively challenging) form of holistic exercise which has been practised for thousands of years. It involves holding sequences of poses or 'asanas' that, combined with breathing exercises, gently but powerfully help your body become stronger and more flexible. Many health and fitness clubs and dance schools offer yoga as part of their weekly schedule, as do some alternative therapy centres.

### Club Stretch

**Nr Mercure Hotel, Al Mina Rd Al Hudaiba 04 345 2131** [clubstretch.ae](http://clubstretch.ae)

**Map 2 J4 Metro Al Jafiliya**

Club Stretch offers reformer pilates classes taught by highly qualified instructors who also teach Bikram yoga at the studio.

### Exhale

**Marsa Dubai 04 424 3777**

[exhaledubai.com](http://exhaledubai.com)

**Map 1 K4 Metro Dubai Marina**

This ladies-only centre specialises in pilates and yoga. Prices start at Dhs.80 for a single pilates reformer class.

A set of 10 Exhale classes costs Dhs.750 and is valid for two months. Exhale has another studio in Dubai MotorCity (04 447 4220).

### The Hundred Pilates Studio

Healthcare City, Umm Hurair 2 04 429 8433  
thehundred.ae

Map 2 L7 Metro Dubai Healthcare City

Personalised pilates sessions are available, as well as small group classes with a maximum four participants. Prices start at Dhs.90 for a single class.

### Real Pilates

Palm Strip Mall, Jumeira Rd, Jumeira 1 04 345 3228  
real-pilates.com

Map 2 H4 Metro Emirates Towers

At its bright studio, Real Pilates focuses on STOTT pilates and has high-quality equipment and well qualified instructors. Single sessions start at Dhs.65 with block booking offers available; mat and reformer pilates are on offer. There's also a studio at JLT (nearest metro: Dubai Marina).

### Zen Yoga

BBC Bldg Emirates Living, Al Thanyah 4 04 367 0435  
yoga.ae

Map 1 K8 Metro Dubai Marina

Mat and reformer pilates (using a machine to increase intensity) are available, with yogilates also offered. Expectant mums can join prenatal pilates classes. A trial lesson costs Dhs.90, with five classes for Dhs.450. Emirates Living (04 422 4643), Dubai Media City (04 367 0435), Town Centre Jumeirah (04 349 2933).



## Personal Training

Whether your goal is a rippling six pack, to run a marathon, or just to feel fitter, the support, encouragement and expertise of a good personal trainer might be just the shot.

A personal trainer will assess your fitness, design the perfect regime for you – and motivate you to show up. There are a number of indoor and outdoor personal trainers in Dubai, some attached to gyms or health and fitness centres, others employed by fitness companies, and some working for themselves. Make sure your trainer is properly qualified with an internationally recognised certificate and registered with the International Register of Exercise Professionals.

### Quick Fix

Exercise will relax you, provide you with that vital mental break from stress, and give you the physical strength to power on when you don't feel like it. Research shows that even if you only have time for 10-15 minutes activity at a time, the benefits can still be significant. So even a 10 minute run on the beach after work is worth the effort.

### Original Fitness

Fairmont Trade Center 1 04 311 6571  
originalfitnessco.com

Map 2 J5 Metro World Trade Centre

All ages and fitness levels are catered for by the trainers at Original Fitness. They also run bootcamps on the beach for those who like to push themselves.

### Regime Fitness

Marina Yacht Club Marsa Dubai 04 366 3234  
regime.ae

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

Regime Fitness offer a free initial personal training consultation, and also provide wellness programmes for companies.

### UAE Active

Abu Dhabi 055 348 6377  
uaeactive.com

With the philosophy that 'your body is your gym', UAE Active trainers are a dab hand at helping you figure out how to train in almost any environment – so even if you can't get to the gym, or have no equipment at home, they'll design a programme to suit you.

### WPT Dubai Women Personal Training

04 452 0194  
wptfitness.com

Personal trainers just for women, who are specialised in women's needs. Several training programmes are available including pre-natal and post-natal.

# Exercise Your Options



Getting fit in Dubai is easy. There are several types of exercise classes available.

### Military style

If you like a really good, hard workout in a gym or outdoors, then try bootcamp, a demanding regime of sprints, boxing, pushups, squats and bicep curls designed for military recruits. It will dramatically and quickly increase your strength and fitness levels but be warned. You're going to be shouted at. A lot. Down a megaphone. At dawn. Original Fitness runs camps on the beach at JBR, in Safa Park and in Downtown Dubai – both early mornings and evenings.

### Martial arts

Martial arts have been a form of self defence for thousands of years. The idea was to use physical and mental discipline to take control of your attacker without doing harm. Try Muay Thai boxing (dubaikarate.com), jiu jitsu and kickboxing (mmafitcenter.com), or capoeira (capoeiradubai.com), a Brazilian blend of martial arts, dance and acrobatics set to music.

### Gym classes

A well air-conditioned gym is a lifesaver during the Dubai summer. Good gyms offer an array of classes with almost countless combinations of aerobics and floor exercises, weights, circuit training, and cycling, all set to a great sound track. They're a fun and effective way to burn fat, build muscle, lose weight, and improve heart health. Ask about joining discounts. In addition, many hotels offer memberships to

their in-house gyms. They're often more expensive but can be quieter and include access to the hotel spa. Some of the more popular ones are Le Meridien Mina Seyahi, the Grand Hyatt and JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort.

### Dance

So you think you can't dance? Try Irish, tango, salsa, ballet, African or flamenco at a Dubai dance school (jamesandalex.com), gym, or even a meetup group. Other classes blend dance and aerobics such as Zumba, or Fitness First's Dance Mania. Xtend Barre borrows elements from ballet training (real-pilates.com).

### Yoga & pilates

For a subtle yet powerful exercise try yoga, a holistic form of exercise in which holding a series of asanas, or poses, will make you stronger and more supple, as well as helping to balance emotions. Pilates classes are designed to build core strength, or try water aerobics. Bikram yoga takes yoga and adds a heated room to make things even tougher, which you can take part in at Raw Yoga (rawryoga.com). Real Pilates runs Xtend Barre classes, combining pilates with ballet.

### Cross Fit

This is a really demanding workout that pushes the super fit to their physical limit and it's booming in Dubai. Check out Fitness First at Knowledge Village and Reebok CrossFit LifeSpark at Jumeirah Lakes Towers, if you think you're up to the challenge.



SensAsia Urban Spa

## WELL-BEING

### Beauty Salons & Nail Bars

Beauty is big business in Dubai, and you're never far from a salon where you can pop in for a quick mani-pedi, massage or facial. You can expect to pay around Dhs.60 for a manicure and Dhs.80 for a pedicure. Fridays tend to be the busiest day for salons, with customers prepping for the weekend ahead, so book in advance. Keep an eye out for discounts for spas on websites such as [groupon.ae](http://groupon.ae), which can offer surprisingly big savings on a variety of treatments.

Branches of Mary Foot Spa, a pleasant, no-frills spa, are located throughout the city, where you can expect to be pampered by therapists who really know their stuff, within a calm, candlelit, soothing atmosphere.

Branches of N.Bar and Nail Lounges can be found pretty much all over Dubai and they're a popular spot for waxing, threading, massages and mani-pedis, and the chain of Tips & Toes offers everything from gelish

mani-pedis to Turkish and Moroccan hammams. Most nail salons now offer in the chair head, neck and shoulder massages too.

Unbelievably, there are also a number of spas specifically aimed at children, such as Hello Kitty Spa and Tickles & Giggles (800 82634). Increasingly, men's spas such as Urban Male Lounge are popping up in the city to provide metrosexual gents with some pampering too.

Many beauty salons and spas offer the traditional art of henna or mehndi, for special occasions or a fun experience for visitors. A design is drawn on your skin with henna paste that dries, flakes off, and leaves a stain that darkens, then fades after two or three weeks. Prices vary depending on the complexity of the design you choose. Try Rachna on Jumeira Rd (04 394 4489) that has designs from Dhs.100, or Aroushi on Oud Metha Rd (04 336 2794), with prices from Dhs.40.

- Aroushi Beauty Salon** Nr Lamcy Plaza, Oud Metha, 04 336 2794, [aroushibeautysalon.com](http://aroushibeautysalon.com)  
**Chez Toi** 04 369 5338, [cheztoibeauty.com](http://cheztoibeauty.com)  
**Clarins Boutique** Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 434 0522, [clarins.com](http://clarins.com)  
**Color Nail Beauty Lounge** Al Quoz Ind. 1, 04 341 8848  
**Dermalogica** Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 339 8250, [dermalogica.com](http://dermalogica.com)  
**Elyazia Beauty Center** Nr Uptown Mirdif, Mirdif, 04 288 8300, [elyaziabeautycenter.com](http://elyaziabeautycenter.com)  
**Essentials Hair & Beauty Salon** Nr Al Safa Centre, Jumeira 3, 04 395 5909, [essentialsdubai.com](http://essentialsdubai.com)  
**Hello Kitty Beauty Spa** Jumeira 1, 04 344 9598, [hellokittybeautyspa.com](http://hellokittybeautyspa.com)  
**Mary Foot Spa** The Walk at JBR, Marsa Dubai, 04 440 4888, [maryfootspa.com](http://maryfootspa.com)  
**N Bar** Jumeira 1, 04 346 1100, [thegroomingcompany.com](http://thegroomingcompany.com)  
**Nail Moda** Umm Hurair 2, 04 327 9088, [nailmoda.com](http://nailmoda.com)  
**The Nail Spa** Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 339 9078, [thenailspa.com](http://thenailspa.com)  
**Nail Station** Jumeira 1, 04 349 0123  
**Nail Zone** Nr Jumeirah Beach Park, Jumeira 2, 04 344 6969  
**Nails At Home** 04 298 0707, [nailsathome.ae](http://nailsathome.ae)  
**Natalie Beauty Saloon JLT** Gold Crest Views -1, JLT, Al Thanyah 5, 04 435 8066, [nataliebeautysalon.com](http://nataliebeautysalon.com)  
**NStyle Nail Lounge** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 341 3300, [nstyleintl.com](http://nstyleintl.com)  
**The Organic Glow Beauty Lounge** Nr Safa Park, Al Wasl Rd, Jumeira 3, 04 380 4666  
**Pastels** Nr Choithrams, Al Wasl Rd, Umm Suqeim 2, 04 388 3534, [pastels-salon.com](http://pastels-salon.com)  
**Sisters Beauty Lounge** Jumeira 1, 04 342 0787, [sistersbeautylounge.com](http://sistersbeautylounge.com)  
**Tilia & Finn** The Walk at JBR, Marsa Dubai, 04 438 0636, [tiliaandfinn.ae](http://tiliaandfinn.ae)  
**Tips & Toes** JBR, Marsa Dubai, 04 429 3477, [tipsandtoes.com](http://tipsandtoes.com)  
**Version Francaise** Marina Heights Tower, Marsa Dubai, 04 360 5360, [version-francaise.com](http://version-francaise.com)

### Organic

These salons use natural toxin-free ingredients.

- Nails** Trident Tower, Marsa Dubai, 04 447 3688, [nailsorganicspa.com](http://nailsorganicspa.com)  
**The Organic Glow Beauty Lounge** Nr Safa Park, Al Wasl Rd, Jumeira 3, 04 380 4666

### Kids

Spas for children are growing ever-popular, particularly for birthday parties. Here tots to tweens can enjoy a manicure, pedicure, nail design, hair style, temporary hair colour, braiding, body sprays, body glitter, body tattoos, make-up and more.

## Hairdressers

In Dubai, you'll find ladies and gents hairdressers to suit every budget, from small salons where fellas could pay as little as Dhs.30 for a simple wet cut to larger, branded salons where prices start at around Dhs.165 (with a junior stylist). For higher quality styling and colouring prices start at Dhs.350. Straightening treatments can cost upwards of Dhs.1,000) and extensions will set you back from Dhs.500. Recommendations from friends and colleagues are a good way to find a stylist that you like; Salon Ink, Ted Morgan and Pastels are all popular spots with the city's expats. Men in search of something more than a simple barbershop should try male spas Man/Age or Urban Male Lounge.

- Alain & Milad** CNBC Bldg, Media City, Al Sufouh 2, 04 390 2815  
**Amaya Salon & Spa** Oud Metha, 04 335 1101, [idm.ae](http://idm.ae)  
**Baré Gents Salon** Ibn Battuta, Jabal Ali 1, 04 368 5111, [baresalongroup.com](http://baresalongroup.com)  
**Bilal Le Salon** Dubai Marine Beach Resort, Jumeira 1, 04 346 1111  
**Camille Albane** Al Badia, Al Kheeran, 04 232 8550, [camillealbane.com](http://camillealbane.com)  
**Carla K Styling** Nr Mazaya Centre, Al Wasl, 04 343 8544, [carla-k.com](http://carla-k.com)  
**Code Men's Salon** Shk Hamdan Award Complex, Madinat Dubai Al Melaheyah, 04 386 9909  
**De La Mer Day Spa** Al Wasl Rd, Al Manara, 04 328 2775, [delamerspa.com](http://delamerspa.com)  
**The Edge Hair & Beauty Salon** Wafi Residence, Umm Hurair 2, 04 324 0024  
**Elyazia Beauty Center** Nr Uptown Mirdif, Mirdif, 04 288 8300, [elyaziabeautycenter.com](http://elyaziabeautycenter.com)  
**Essentials Hair & Beauty Salon** Nr Al Safa Centre, Jumeira 3, 04 395 5909, [essentialsdubai.com](http://essentialsdubai.com)  
**Franck Provost** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 341 3245, [franckprovostdubai.com](http://franckprovostdubai.com)  
**The Gold Salon** Al Attar Tower, Shk Zayed Rd, Trade Center 2, 04 321 1423, [goldsalondubai.com](http://goldsalondubai.com)  
**The Hair Corridor** Al Safa Centre, Al Wasl Rd, Al Safa 1, 04 394 5622, [thehaircorridor.com](http://thehaircorridor.com)  
**The Hair Shop** Capitol, Madinat Dubai Al Melaheyah, 04 345 8566, [hairshop-uae.com](http://hairshop-uae.com)  
**Hair Station** Mirdif, 04 288 6483, [hairstationladiessalon.com](http://hairstationladiessalon.com)  
**Hair@Pyramids** Umm Hurair 2, 04 324 0000, [pyramidsrestaurantsatwafi.com](http://pyramidsrestaurantsatwafi.com)  
**Jen's Hair Studio** White Crown Bldg, Trade Center 1, 04 800 5367, [jenshairstudio.com](http://jenshairstudio.com)  
**JetSet** Grosvenor, Marsa Dubai, 04 399 5005  
**Juan Hair Salon** Indigo Tower, JLT, Al Thanyah 5, 04 438 9570, [juansalon.com](http://juansalon.com)  
**Maison de Joelle** Kempinski Mall of the Emirates, Al Barsha 1, 04 323 6011, [maisondejoelle.com](http://maisondejoelle.com)

**Maria Dowling** Nr Capitol Hotel, Al Hudaiba, 04 345 4225, [mariadowling.com](http://mariadowling.com)  
**Pace e Luce** Al Manzil Mall, Burj Khalifa, 04 420 1165, [paceeluce.com](http://paceeluce.com)  
**Pastels** Nr Choithrams, Al Wasl Rd, Umm Suqeim 2, 04 388 3534, [pastels-salon.com](http://pastels-salon.com)  
**Patsi Collins Hair Beauty Nails** Nr RTA, Al Garhoud, 04 286 9923, [dubaibeautysalon.com](http://dubaibeautysalon.com)  
**Reflection Hair & Beauty Centre** Umm Suqeim 1, 04 394 4595, [reflectionhairandbeautycentre.com](http://reflectionhairandbeautycentre.com)  
**Roots Salon** Nr Jumeirah Beach Park, Jumeira 2, 04 344 4040, [rootssalons.com](http://rootssalons.com)  
**Saks Hair Salon** Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 430 8572, [saks.co.uk](http://saks.co.uk)  
**Salon Ink** Jumeira 2, 04 385 4402, [saloninkdubai.com](http://saloninkdubai.com)  
**ShuiQi Salon** Atlantis, Nakhlal Jumeira, 04 426 1020, [atlantisthepalm.com](http://atlantisthepalm.com)  
**Sisters Beauty Lounge** Jumeira 1, 04 342 0787, [sistersbeautylounge.com](http://sistersbeautylounge.com)  
**SOS Beauty Salon** Jumeira 1, 04 349 1144  
**Ted Morgan Hair** Shoreline Apartments, Nakhlal Jumeira, 04 430 8190, [tedmorganhair.com](http://tedmorganhair.com)  
**Toni & Guy** The Gate, Marble Walk, DIFC, Zaa'beel 2, 04 330 3345, [toniandguy.com](http://toniandguy.com)  
**Top Style Hair Salon** Aviation Club, Al Garhoud, 04 282 9663, [topstylesalon.com](http://topstylesalon.com)  
**Top Style Salon** Nr Grand Millennium Hotel, Al Thanyah 1, 04 422 5633, [topstylesalon.com](http://topstylesalon.com)  
**VOG Color Your Life** Jumeira 3, 04 380 8960, [vog.ae](http://vog.ae)  
**Youngsters Hair & Spa** Cluster T 1 Lake Plaza, JLT, Al Thanyah 5, 04 434 3911  
**Zouari Hair Salon** Palace At One&Only Royal Mirage, Al Sufouh 2, 04 399 9999, [oneandonlyresorts.com](http://oneandonlyresorts.com)

## Barbers & Male Salons

**Caractere Gents Saloon** Jumeira 3, 04 380 4188, [caracteresalongroup.com](http://caracteresalongroup.com)  
**Chill Salon** Loft Office 1, Media City, Al Sufouh 2, 04 446 2991, [chill-salon.com](http://chill-salon.com)  
**Julian Hairdressing** Jumeira 1, 04 344 9006  
**Man/Age** Al Barsha 2, 04 385 0350, [managespa.com](http://managespa.com)  
**Urban Male Lounge (UML)** MoE, Al Barsha 1, 04 395 1103, [nstyleintl.com/uml](http://nstyleintl.com/uml)  
**Y12** Ritz-Carlton DIFC, DIFC, Zaa'beel 2, 04 372 2712, [y12salons.com](http://y12salons.com)

## Kids

**Caboodle Pamper & Play** Dubai Mall, Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa, 04 325 3367, [caboodle.ae](http://caboodle.ae)  
**Fun City** Jumeira 1, 04 349 9976, [funcity.ae](http://funcity.ae)  
**Hello Kitty Beauty Spa** Jumeira 1, 04 344 9598, [hellokittybeautyspa.com](http://hellokittybeautyspa.com)  
**Kiddo Cuts** Al Manara, 052 909 9164, [kiddocuts.ae](http://kiddocuts.ae)  
**Kids Cuts** Marsa Dubai, 04 434 1984, [favouritethings.com](http://favouritethings.com)  
**Tickles & Giggles** The Walk at JBR, Marsa Dubai, 04 432 8681, [ticklesandgiggles.com](http://ticklesandgiggles.com)

## Spas

Whatever your pampering budget, you'll find a spa to suit you in Dubai. The city is blessed with world-class luxury spas within five-star hotels as well as small, independent establishments that offer fewer bells and whistles but better value for money. As well as the usual massages, body scrubs and wraps, you'll also find more unusual treatments such as the ancient practice of Ayurvedic massage, reflexology and traditional hammams. Budget and mid-range spas are perfect for regular indulgence, but if you want to splash your cash for a special occasion, there are some amazing treatments – think royal hammams and 24 carat gold facials – to leave you feeling like a million bucks. Expect to pay around Dhs.700 for a 90 minute treatment at a hotel spa or around Dhs.300 at smaller spas.

## Relaxing Prices

Certain spas will offer special treatments at certain times of year such as Ramadan, as well as reductions on packages. If you're thinking about indulging yourself check out sites like [groupon.com](http://groupon.com), which often has discounts on spa treatments. Also, get the Entertainer Body book or app and enjoy BOGOF deals year-round.

## Budget

There are spas of all sizes and styles ready to rub, scrub and knead you into relaxation. And here are handful of the more independent places that offer better value for money, but you may have to forego some of the most luxurious facilities.

## Kalm Beauty

**Riva Beach Club Nakhlal Jumeira 04 451 9988**  
[kalmbeauty.com](http://kalmbeauty.com)  
**Map 1 N3 Metro Nakheel**

Located on the Shoreline of Palm Jumeirah, Kalm is a firm favourite among local residents wanting a soothing aromatherapy massage, relaxing mani-pedi or reviving facial, all of which are reasonably priced. Kalm also has monthly specials on discounted packages such as Keratin hair treatments and full body massages.

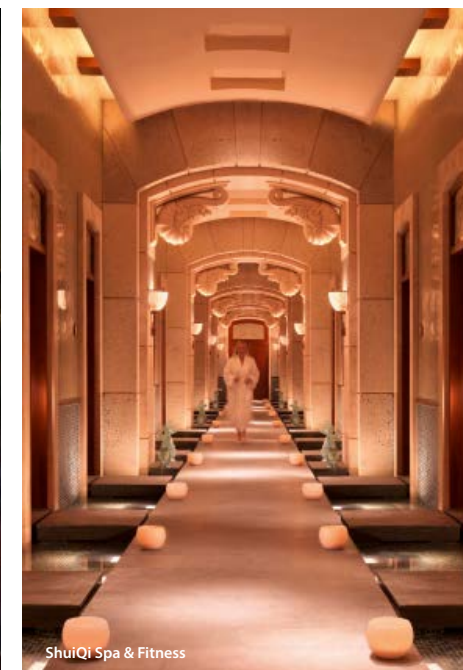
## Lotus Salon

**Lotus Apartments Marsa Dubai 04 440 2805**  
[lotus-hospitality.com](http://lotus-hospitality.com)  
**Map 1 J5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

This no-frills spa in the lobby of Lotus Hotel Apartments has a more casual, relaxed mood and a relatively minimalist menu. Its massages include hot stone, Thai, deep tissue, anti-cellulite and chakra balance. There are also reasonably priced grooming treatments including threading, waxing and mani-pedis.



B/Attitude Spa



ShuiQi Spa & Fitness



Talise Ottoman Spa



### The Nail Spa

**Dubai Mall** Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa  
04 339 9078  
thenailspa.com

Map 2 F7 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**  
With branches located throughout the UAE, the Nail Spa is the perfect spot for some reasonably priced pampering. Try the Minty Chocolate Sole Scrub or the Lavender Heel Peel as add-ons to your pedicure. For the ultimate pick-me-up, opt for a blissful shoulder massage along with your mani-pedi.

### SpaDunya Club

**The Walk at JBR** Marsa Dubai 04 439 3669  
spadunyaclub.com

Map 1 K4 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**  
This wallet-friendly spa specialises in colour therapies that harmonise the body's energy levels. You'll find a range of treatments including face reflexology and a Body Harmonising Colour Treatment that includes a colour consultation, scrub, wrap and massage. There's also a hammam, steam room, sauna and beauty rooms.

### Tips & Toes

**209 Pinnacle Bldg** Al Barsha 1 04 399 0550  
tipsntoeshaven.com

Map 1 Q6 Metro **Sharaf DG**  
This popular pampering chain has branches all over Dubai and has a menu of manicures, pedicures, waxing, threading and massages. Visit the larger Al Barsha branch and try the Turkish hammam, a combination of being scrubbed, steamed and massaged that will leave you squeaky clean and relaxed.



Tips & Toes

### Mid-range

Plenty of hotels and boutique spas dotted around Dubai have pitched mind and body treatments somewhere in the middle – affordable but with extra personal touches.

### Amara Spa

**Park Hyatt Port Saeed** 04  
Map 2 M7 Metro **GGICO**

Amara boasts amazing private treatment rooms with all the facilities of a changing room, as well as a relaxation corner. After your scrub or wrap, you can rinse off in the lovely private outdoor shower, then dry off and soak up some rays in the secluded relaxation area.

### Cleopatra's Spa & Wellness

**Pyramids at Wafi** Umm Hurair 2 04 324 7700  
cleopatraspaandwellness.com

Map 2 K7 Metro **Dubai Healthcare City**  
While the entrance and changing facilities may lack the opulence of some hotel spas, Cleopatra's plush relaxation area is a lovely ancient Egypt-themed affair with drapes, silk cushions and majlis-style seats. There is also a small plunge pool with a Jacuzzi and sauna. Enjoy facials, body wraps and anti-ageing miracles.

### The Cure

**Building 10** Media City, Al Sufouh 2 04 391 6485  
thecure.ae

Map 1 M5 Metro **Nakheel**  
A friendly haven in the heart of Media City, the Cure is the answer to whatever ails you, whether you're in need of a rejuvenating facial or a relaxing massage. The menu is extensive, the therapists are highly knowledgeable and well trained, and the quality of the treatments is exceptional given the reasonable prices.

### Dreamworks Spa & Massage

**Shoreline Apartments** Nakhlal Jumeira 04 447 5511  
dreamworks.ae

Map 1 N3 Metro **Nakheel**  
If it's a massage you're after, then you can't go wrong with a trip to Dreamworks Spa, which specialises in kneading out your knots. Let go of your daily stresses by treating yourself to some foot reflexology, a Balinese head massage or even an exquisite four hands massage. There's also a home service option, so you can get pampered in the comfort of your own place.

### Perfect Shape Up Beauty Centre

**Villa 160A, Off Al Wasl Rd** Jumeira 3 04 342 7722  
perfectshapeup.com

Map 2 F5 Metro **Noor Bank**  
This spa bridges the gap between five-star luxury and a neighbourhood salon – the quality is just that little bit higher, the ambiance just that little bit more

relaxing. Behind the doors of this unassuming villa you'll find a world of beauty services delivered by friendly and knowledgeable staff, including tanning, waxing, nails and hair care.

### Hammam

The Oriental hammam is a traditional pampering experience in the Middle East, which shares similarities with Turkish baths. It involves being bathed, steamed, washed with black soap, scrubbed with a loofa and massaged on a hot marble table – an intense treatment that leaves your skin squeaky clean and glowing. Try the hammam at the One&Only Royal Mirage (04 315 2130, royalmirage.oneandonlyresorts.com) for a real treat.

### Spaces Spa & Salon

**Oasis Centre** Al Qouz 1 04 515 4400  
spacessalon.com

Map 2 C6 Metro **Noor Bank**  
This small salon is split into gents' and ladies' quarters and offers massages that are just as good as a premium spa's, but without the exorbitant five-star hotel prices. Service is polite and exceptionally friendly. Offering a range of services from a deep tissue massage and facials to hair and nail treatments, Spaces is a nice, affordable option. And not breaking the bank makes it all the more relaxing.

### Thai Elite Spa

**Mercure Gold** Madinat Dubai Al Melaheyah  
04 345 9992 thailitespa.com

Map 2 J4 Metro **Al Jafiliya**  
This quaint spa on the upper level of the Gold Swiss-Belhotel may lack the facilities you'll find in some of the city's other spas, but its laid-back approach is refreshing. All the usual therapies are on offer, with the full-body scrub followed by a Thai oil massage a particularly relaxing and yet invigorating choice. Long opening hours and reasonable prices also make it attractive.

### Luxury

These spas will customise every detail of your treatment for a blissful experience – and a massage or facial at one of these havens usually means you can wallow in Jacuzzis, saunas and steam rooms before and after your treatment – but you'll often pay top dollar.

### Angsana Spa Arabian Ranches

**Arabian Ranches, Al Hebiah** 2 04 361 8251  
angsanaspaspa.com

Map 1 N13  
Minimalist decor, exotic oils and soft music set the tone for relaxation at Angsana Spa. The impeccably trained staff work wonders, turning tight muscles to putty and sending overworked minds to cloud nine.

The massage menu includes Balinese, Hawaiian and Thai, and you get a heated massage table.

### Armani/Spa

**Armani** Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa 04 8883888  
dubai.armanihotels.com

Map 2 F6 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**  
Armani/Spa is modern, elegant and sleek. There are three categories of treatment – Stillness (relaxing), Freedom (rejuvenating) and Fluidity (detoxifying), encompassing massages, facials and body wraps. The pod-like treatment rooms create a feeling of being truly cocooned from the stress of the outside world.

### Assawan Spa & Health Club

**Burj Al Arab** Umm Suqeim 3 04 301 7338  
jumeirah.com

Map 1 S4 Metro **First Gulf Bank**  
Assawan is an elaborate affair. There are saunas, steam rooms, plunge pools and two relaxing infinity pools decorated in mosaic and gold leaf tiles – swim to the edge, put your nose to the window, and enjoy the amazing views of Dubai. For pure unadulterated indulgence, try the caviar body treatment.

### B/Attitude Spa

**Grosvenor House** Dubai Marsa Dubai  
04 399 8888 battitudespa-dubai.com

Map 1 L5 Metro **Dubai Marina**  
An Asian-inspired spa with treatments ranging from Eastern massages to Ayurvedic facials, exotic body wraps and Swiss Bellefontaine treatments. The overall vibe is Oriental chic – think Tibetan relaxation techniques, sacred stones and Ayurveda, all delivered in treatment rooms that are named after the chakras.

### Residence&Spa At One&Only Royal Mirage

**Al Sufouh Rd** Al Sufouh 2 04 399 9999  
oneandonlyroyalmirage.com

Map 1 M4 Metro **Nakheel**  
Understated decor, natural light and soft music create a serene effect in the treatment rooms of this spa. There are a variety of treatments including Swedish lymphatic drainage, slimming and sports massages, as well as an energy-balancing massage using warm and cool stones 'charged' in the moonlight and cleansed with salt. The hammam is not to be missed. Alternatively, opt for a peel, wrap or oil bath, exclusively with Espa products.

### Rixos Royal Spa

**Rixos The Palm** Nakhlal Jumeira 04 4575 555  
rixos.com

Map 1 P3 Metro **Nakheel**  
Treatments at this white and ice-blue spa vary from facials to traditional massages, and the signature packages offer a complete head-to-toe experience for extravagant pampering. The spa promises a relaxing

experience from start to finish, with well-trained therapists who are friendly and attentive, and an indulgent fruit platter to give you an energy boost after your treatment.

### Saray Spa

**Marriott Harbour** Marsa Dubai **04 319 4630**  
marriott.com

Map 1 L5 Metro **Dubai Marina**

The treatments at the stunning Saray Spa are inspired by the ancient healing and beautifying rituals of the Arabic world, with the highlight of the menu undoubtedly being the Signature Dead Sea Journey. This treatment is over two hours long and incorporates a salt scrub, mud mask wrap and a soothing soak in a heated flotation tank, salinated to imitate the Dead Sea itself.

### Satori Spa

**Bab Al Shams** Mugatrah **04 809 6232**  
meydanhotels.com

This spa makes the most of its desert location – the treatment rooms feature a window with a blind; unusual for spas in Dubai, which are usually cosseted away in the heart of a hotel. The sense of being close to the desert wilderness seeps into the gently lit room, and the quiet music empties your mind of everything but the rhythmic strokes of the therapist. Aromatherapy Associates is the oil of choice here, and a beguiling scent surrounds you as you are kneaded and massaged into a state of semi-conscious bliss.

### ShuiQi Spa & Fitness

**Atlantis** Nakhlal Jumeira **04 426 1020**  
Map 1 N1 Metro **Nakheel**

This spectacular spa has around 27 treatment rooms set over two floors, and offers a personal touch. Whether you choose a simple massage and facial to the intricate Japanese ritual Shiseido spa journey, you can expect the undivided attention of expertly trained therapists. Be sure to stock up on spa goodies in the boutique area at the entrance.

### Softouch Spa

**Kempinski Mall of the Emirates** Al Barsha 1  
**04 409 5909**  
softouchspa.com

Map 1 R6 Metro **Mall of the Emirates**

You wouldn't expect to find such a sanctuary of calm in the midst of a mall, but the Softouch Spa is a true haven. Specialising in treatments based on Ayurveda, it's one of the few spas in the UAE with therapists that are fully trained in this tradition. It's also open 24 hours. Try the detoxifying warm Aromatic Moor Mud Wrap followed by a bliss-inducing massage with lavender essential oils.

### The Spa At The Palace Downtown Dubai

**The Palace Downtown** Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa  
**04 428 7805**  
theadress.com

Map 2 F6 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

This spa truly makes the most of its enviable location with its lakeside spa cabanas. These luxurious treatment beds directly overlook Burj Khalifa lake, providing gorgeous views of the world's tallest building and the Dubai Fountain, while ensuring the utmost privacy despite the glamorous outdoor setting. Attentive therapists ensure that your treatment is personalised to meet your needs.

### Talise Ottoman Spa

**Jumeirah Zabeel Saray** Nakhlal Jumeira **04 453 0456**  
jumeirah.com

Map 1 L3 Metro **Nakheel**

With 50 treatment rooms, mineral pools, majlis areas, saunas, ice chambers, couples' suites, gyms and stunning hammams, Talise Ottoman Spa is one of the biggest in the Middle East and amongst the largest in the world. Relax with an indulgent massage in a private outdoor cabana, or splash out on the authentic Turkish hammam for true top to toe pampering.

### Talise Spa At Jumeirah Emirates Towers

**Hotel Tower** Trade Center 2 **04 319 8181**  
jumeirah.com

Map 2 H6 Metro **Financial Centre**

This compact spa is a suitably suave affair for the prestigious address in one of Dubai's most established five-star hotels. The menu features a handful of facials, but the real emphasis is on the body treatments. Massages range from Swedish to Hawaiian Lomi Lomi and reflexology; however, the real stars of the show are the signature spa rituals, many of which include flotation in the spa's fantastic salt water pool.

### Day Spas

If you fancy more than a quick treatment, these places can help you make a day of it. Most spas will actually offer some kind of day-long service which generally involves use of pool areas, saunas and steam rooms.

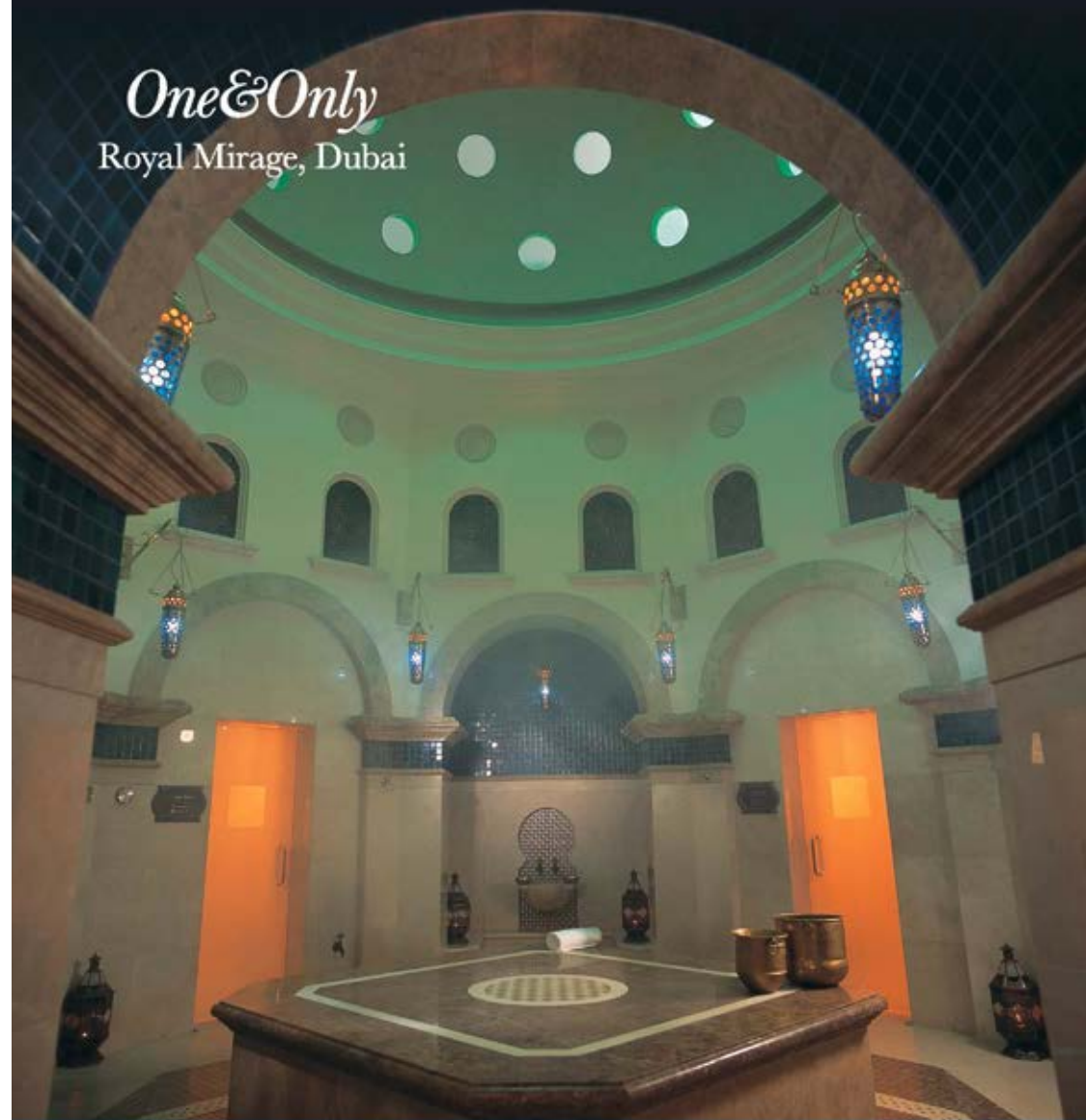
### De La Mer Day Spa

**Al Wasl Rd** Al Manara **04 328 2775**  
delamerspa.com

Map 1 U5 Metro **Noor Bank**

This spa is perfect for a day-long girly gathering with body wraps, facials, massages, manicures and pedicures. Soak up some sun in the secluded garden, which has a swimming pool and Jacuzzi. The spa is great for occasions such as hen parties, birthdays and baby showers – you can book the VIP suite and bring your own food, drink and decorations.

## One&Only Royal Mirage, Dubai



## Oriental Hammam

The traditional Hammam, has long played a part in the cultural and social life of eastern cities. An 'oasis of retreat' from daily stresses entering the Hammam is akin to a journey.

Located at **Residence & Spa, One&Only Royal Mirage**

Open daily 9.30am - 10pm

Ladies only 9.30am - 2pm, Gentlemen only 8pm - 10pm

Telephone +971 4 399 99 99 [oneandonlyroyalmirage.com](http://oneandonlyroyalmirage.com)

### Lime Spa

**Desert Palm** Warsan 2 04 323 8888  
desertpalm.ae

More of a retreat than a spa; with any treatment you get use of the facilities for the day. Six stunning treatment rooms are all naturally lit by large windows overlooking the polo fields. The couples' room has its own plunge pool and private relaxation area.

### Raffles Spa

**Raffles Umm Hurair 2** 04 314 9870  
raffles.com

**Map 2 K7 Metro Dubai Healthcare City**  
Raffles Spa is pure lavish indulgence. Try the Dubai Decadence treatment – a full six hours of head-to-toe pampering including a steam bath, body scrub, hot stone massage, facial, manicure and pedicure. There's also a gym, pool, sauna and steam room if you wish to delay your departure even further.

### Talise Spa Madinat Jumeirah

**Madinat Jumeirah Al Sufouh 1** 04 366 6818  
madinatjumeirah.com

**Map 1 R5 Metro Mall of the Emirates**  
This is a true destination spa, with a wonderful steam room, sauna and plunge pools. Indoor sunbeds provide lazing-around space, and there's even a lounge with sofas to chill on. There's an extensive range of therapies, with a strong focus on using natural oils, and the expertly trained staff ensure that your treatment is meticulously tailored to your needs. Yoga, including the popular classes held under the stars, is also available.

### Kids' Spas

It's not just grown-ups that can be pampered. Other spas may accommodate kids too, if asked nicely.

### Caboodle Pamper & Play

**Dubai Mall** Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa  
04 325 3367

**Map 2 F7 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**  
A lovely spot for some mother-daughter pampering, Caboodle Pamper & Play uses organic, chemical free products. It's also a great place for kids' haircuts, as little ones get DVDs, games and toys while they sit in the styling chair.

### Hello Kitty Beauty Spa

**Town Centre** Jumeira 1 04 344 9598  
hellokittybeautyspa.com

**Map 2 F4 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**  
Girls can get a 'kitty-cure' to match their mum's manicure and have their nails painted with stars and flowers. Facials use organic ingredients such as oatmeal, honey and chocolate.

### Tickles & Giggles

**The Walk at JBR** Marsa Dubai 04 432 8681  
ticklesandgiggles.com

**Map 1 K4 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers**  
A salon and spa aimed at little ones, offering child-friendly face masks using natural ingredients and non-toxic, water-based polishes for mini mani-pedis. There's more to this venue than pint-sized pampering – it also hosts fun classes such as arts and craft as well as ultra-trendy parties for mini stylistas.

### Male Spas

Damaging sun, skin-drying air conditioning and usual daily stresses can make the world of massages, facials and spas start looking like a good idea, even for men.

### 1847

**Grosvenor** Marsa Dubai 04 399 8989  
thegroomingcompany.com

**Map 1 L5 Metro Dubai Marina**  
Men are the centre of attention at 1847, which was the first dedicated 'grooming lounge' for men in the Middle East. Skilled therapists offer traditional shaves, beard styling, facials, massages, manicures and pedicures, and simple haircuts.

### Kalm Grooming Lounge

**Riva Beach Club** Nakhlat Jumeira 04 451 9888  
kalmgrooming.com

**Map 1 N3 Metro Nakheel**  
Located on Shoreline of Palm Jumeirah, above Riva Beach Club, Kalm Grooming Lounge has a good range of treatments on offer, from express manicures to haircuts, waxing and massages. Try the unusual Hot Lava Shell Massage, which uses warmed shells to melt the tension from your muscles.

### Man/Age

**Media City Arjaan** Media City, Al Sufouh 2  
04 437 0868

**Map 1 M5 Metro Nakheel**  
This luxury men's spa offers male grooming including haircuts and shaving, manicures, massages and facials. It also has a Moroccan bath. All the treatments on offer are very reasonably priced and there are annual and six month memberships.

### Urban Male Lounge (UML)

**Precinct Building 2** DIFC, Zaa'beel 2 04 425 0350  
nstyleintl.com/uml

**Map 2 G6 Metro Financial Centre**  
This award-winning male-centric spa offers a chic, relaxed setting. With locations in the DIFC and the Mall of the Emirates, Urban Male Lounge is the perfect spot for gents to indulge in a massage or sharpen up their look with a hip new cut.

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Is there more to Dubai than brunches and ladies' nights?

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What concerts are on in Abu Dhabi?



askexplorer.com





Bikers join the National Day parade

## CLUBS & GROUPS

All the different cultures converging in Dubai bring a diverse range of activities with them. Everything from jumping out of an airplane to scrapbooking is covered in this section and, for every traditional pursuit such as tennis, running or football, there is the opportunity to try something you never even dreamed of doing back home, such as kitesurfing, sandboarding, yogilates or even caving. For the adventurous, the UAE's topography lends itself to outdoor pursuits including rock climbing, mountain biking, dune bashing, wadi driving and skydiving. Thanks to the miles of coastline, watersports are popular, with scuba diving, snorkelling, sailing, surfing and water-skiing all firm favourites. You need not leave behind those hobbies you enjoyed back home either. From dance classes to photography, there are like-minded people in the city who will be more than happy to hear from you. How these activities are organised varies from regular

meetings and paid-for classes to forum or social media based groups. If one of your interests isn't catered for, there's nothing to stop you from starting your own group or club – and you're likely to find plenty of takers in this active city. Alternatively, a trip to Abu Dhabi can often help you find clubs and groups that aren't available in Dubai.

### Team Spirit

More than 10,000 members are signed up for Duplays recreational sports leagues in the UAE – a phenomenal number given that the organisation was set up by expats in 2009. What better way to keep fit, meet new people and settle in to a new city. Players of all skill levels are welcome. Get stuck into five- or seven-a-side football, beach volleyball, kickball or badminton, to name a few. Individuals joining can be assigned a team. For details visit duplays.com.

## Sport

### American Football

The Emirates American Football League offers full-contact American football in the UAE for players of all skill levels, from beginner to experienced. There are adult and youth teams, as well as recreational flag league teams. Contact info@eafl.ae for info. To find out how to join the Duplays Mighty Eagle I flag football league, as an individual or a team, visit duplays.com.

### Active Sports

A fun sports club for kids offering everything from swimming, football and tennis, to cheerleading, basketball and gymnastics. There are several venues across the city, which are detailed on the website (activeuae.com). Co-founder, Cees Valk has previously coached tennis stars, Stefan Edberg and Emile Sanchez.

### Badminton

#### Badeemonz Badminton Club Dubai

[facebook.com/](#)

[BadeemonzBadmintonClubUaeDubai](#)

Founded in 2008, the club also organises tournaments. Check their Facebook page for more information.

#### Badmintown

[Al Safa Sports Centre Al Wasl](#) 050 770 6711

[Map 2 E5 Metro Business Bay](#)

A group of badminton players who meet to play and take part in tournaments. They also offer coaching and discounted Yonex items.

#### Emirates Badminton Club

[Muhaisanah 2](#) 04 204 3491

[emiratesbadminton.com](#)

[Map 2 S10 Metro Etisalat](#)

The club was formed in 1986 and practises every day at the Etisalat Academy in Muhaisanah. Members take part in international tournaments (representing the UAE) in countries including Saudi Arabia, Iran and Malaysia.

#### India Club

[Nr Indian High School Oud Metha](#) 04 337 1112

[indiaclubdubai.com](#)

[Map 2 L6 Metro Oud Metha](#)

This members club has been in existence since 1964 and offers a range of sports and entertainment activities including badminton (four courts), basketball, squash, bowling, tennis, a gym and table tennis. Experienced coaches are on hand and the club hosts numerous tournaments throughout the year.

## Baseball

### Dubai Little League

[Nr Al Qouz Pond Park, Off Al Khail Rd Al Qouz 2](#) 050 293 3855

[eteamz.com/DubaiLittleLeague](#)

[Map 2 D7 Metro Business Bay](#)

Parent volunteers field more than 20 baseball teams for boys and girls aged five to 16. Beginners welcome. Dhs.1,200 registration includes season fees, team picture, uniform and year-end trophy.

### Basketball

Dubai has a number of public basketball courts but getting a game on them in the evenings can be tricky because they're so popular. There are courts near the Canadian University of Dubai, at Hamriya Park in Abu Hail and on 2nd December St in Satwa, next to Chelsea Plaza Hotel. You can also go to Safa Park and Al Barsha Pond Park and get regular pick-up games on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings. Air-conditioned indoor courts can be hired for Dhs.35 per person per hour at Chevrolet Insportz (insportzclub.com), behind Dubai Garden Centre in Al Qouz 3. Duplays organises men's and women's recreational and competitive leagues (duplays.com).

### Basketball Academy Of Dubai

[Umm Suqeim 3](#) 050 731 6745

[badubai.com](#)

[Map 1 S5 Metro First Gulf Bank](#)

Children can learn everything there is to know about basketball at this academy, from slam dunking for beginners to clinics, camps, leagues and pick-up sessions. Highly qualified staff are properly trained to teach children. Call Academy Director, Marc Roberts, on 056 683 0665 for more info.

## Boxing

### Al Nasr Leisureland

[Nr American Hospital Oud Metha](#) 04 337 1234

[alnasrll.com](#)

[Map 2 L6 Metro Oud Metha](#)

Boxing classes are Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays from 8.30pm to 10.30pm. A 12 lesson package costs Dhs.550. For more information on the different weight classes, contact the coach, Iraj Dortalouee, on the above number.

### Colosseum Muay Thai Health & Fitness Club

[Zaabeel Rd Al Karama](#) 04 337 2755

[colosseumuuae.com](#)

[Map 2 L6 Metro BurJuman](#)

Gym specialising in boxing, Muay Thai (Thai boxing), kickboxing and street fighting. Group classes meet daily between 8.30pm to 10pm. Costs Dhs.75 per session.

## Dubai Fight Academy

Nr **ACE Hardware** Al Qouz Ind. 1 **050 712 9333**  
fightacademy.ae

Map 1 **U6 Metro Noor Bank**

The academy offers Thai boxing lessons and holds tournaments. Membership is Dhs.1,500 for six months including use of gym and pool. Another branch is in Jumeira (050 650 1184).

## Climbing

See Activities, Things To See & Do.

## Cricket

On weekends you'll see informal cricket games springing up on scratchy patches of open space on the outskirts of the city. Zabeel and Safa parks are favourite spots if you prefer a little more green for your stumps. There are also several small-scale training centres, such as the Emirates Cricket Training Centre (050 497 3461). International matches are regularly hosted in the United Arab Emirates, particularly at the state-of-the-art cricket ground in Dubai Sports City (dubaisportscity.ae) where it's possible to see some of the world's best teams in action.

## ICC Global Cricket Academy

Nr **Autodrome Sports City**, Al Hebiah 4 **04 448 1355**  
iccglobalcricketacademy.com

Map 1 **M11**

The ICC cricket Dubai Sports City offers cricket coaching for all ages with ICC-affiliated coaches and some of the most advanced facilities in the cricketing world.

## Inspartz Club

Nr **Dubai Garden Centre** Al Qouz Ind. 3 **04 347 5833**  
inspartzclub.com

Map 1 **S6 Metro First Gulf Bank**

Inspartz has three main net courts with a scoreboard and one side court, available for social games as part of a league, or just for practice.

## Last Man Stands

Al Kifaf  
lastmanstands.com

Map 2 **K6 Metro Al Jafiliya**

Amateur T20 cricket league with several Dubai teams taking part. Registration fees are Dhs.640 per year. Matches are played at Zabeel Park.

## Cycling & Mountain Biking

Dubai is not a particularly bicycle-friendly city, but there are pleasant areas where you can ride such as along both sides of the creek and Jumeira Road, and on the cycle tracks at Mamzar Park and Jumeirah Open Beach. Also, try out the Meydan Cycle Park, a converted camel racing track with varying distances (4km, 6km and



The mountains offer many biking routes

8km), and the Dubai Autodrome. Dubai Autodrome and Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi host weekly track cycling sessions. Check the CycleSafeDubai Facebook page discussion threads for the next event.

Wolfi's Bike Shop and Probike offer equipment, advice on technique and recommend weekly riding groups. For cycling as a mode of transport in Dubai, see Getting Around.

Away from the cities, the UAE has a lot to offer outdoor enthusiasts, especially mountain bikers. On a mountain bike it's possible to see the most remote and untouched places that are not even accessible in 4WDs. For hardcore, experienced bikers there is some good terrain, from super-technical rocky trails in areas like Fili and Siji, to mountain routes like Wadi Bih, which climb to over 1,000m and can be descended in minutes. The riding is mainly rocky, technical and challenging.

Even if you are experienced, always be sensible and go prepared – the sun is strong, you will need far more water than you think, and it's easy to get lost. Wide, knobby tires work much better on the loose, sharp rocks. For further information on mountain biking in the UAE, including details of possible routes, refer to the *UAE Off-Road Explorer*.

## The Cycle Hub

**Dubai MotorCity Grandstand** MotorCity, Al Hebiah 1  
**04 425 6555**

thecyclehub.com

Map 1 **N12**

Organises numerous trails and weekly group rides for mountain bikers and also offers a rider development programme for beginners to elite. You can also get your bike serviced here and buy new bikes and spare parts.

## Cycle Safe Dubai

**050 680 4528**  
cyclesafedubai.com

A road biking club that organises races including the Spinneys Dubai 92 Cycle Challenge, Friday morning rides between 35km and 100km and the Saturday morning Bab Al Shams coffee ride. It is also the brains behind the Wednesday cycle nights at the Dubai Autodrome, where expert cyclists are on hand to teach beginners the basics. For Dhs.500 a year, you can join Team CSD and get a range of services and discounts (as well as a team jersey) but membership is not mandatory to join in the rides.

## Dubai Mountain Bikers UAE

facebook.com/pages/Dubai-Mountain-Bikers-UAE-Dubikers

Also known as Dubikers, this mountain-biking club aims to encourage more people to the sport and is best for those who don't yet have elite technical riding experience. They regularly organise rides – see their facebook page for more information.

## Dubai Roadsters

**04 339 4453**  
dubairoadsters.com

Possibly the more serious of the organised road-biking groups and rides, the Friday ride offers options of 80km, 120km and, occasionally, 140km. Weekday rides range from 30km to 50km. There are also special events, from the epic twice-yearly 240km coast-to-coast ride to group training rides in the Hatta hills. The group's socials are a great place to meet like-minded people.

## Hot-Cog Mountain Bike Club

**056 170 8087**  
hot-cog.com

An active group of enthusiasts who organise weekend trips all over the country and midweek off-road mountain-biking night rides. They also camp, hike and barbecue, and new riders are always welcome.

## Dragon Boat Racing

Training sessions in the ancient eastern sport of dragon boat racing are held most mornings and evenings at either Dubai Festival City or Le Meridien Mina Seyahi. There are several teams in Dubai which compete against each other and teams from Abu Dhabi. Most are more than happy to accept new members with little or no experience. Dragon boats are low-lying vessels that are paddled along by hardworking teams (hence why the sport is also referred to as 'paddling').

The UAE Dragon Boat Association lists all of the country's teams. For details and a history of the sport visit dubaidragonboat.com.

## Dubai Dawn Patrol

**The Westin** Marsa Dubai **050 879 5645**  
dubaidawnpatrol.org

Map 1 **M5**

Dawn Patrol members make up a diverse group which started in 2008. They combine serious sporting dedication with a fun environment and general love of the water and the outdoors. Training takes place on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (5.45pm to 7pm) and Saturday evenings (4.30pm to 6pm) in the Dubai marina area. The first three sessions are free and then there's an annual membership fee of Dhs.1,000.

## Dubai Diggers

**Jumeirah Beach Hotel** Umm Suqeim 3 **050 718 5104**  
dubai-diggers.com

Map 1 **S4 Metro First Gulf Bank**

Dubai Diggers are coached by Nick Hando, who founded Australia's Bondi Diggers team. The Dubai Diggers train three times a week. Beginners can attend any session, although the sessions held from 7.30am to 9.30am on Friday mornings at Jumeirah Beach Hotel (which include circuit training) are recommended for a first taste of the sport. Other sessions are Mondays and Wednesdays between 6am and 7am.

## Dubai Flying Dragons

**Le Meridien Mina Seyahi** Marsa Dubai **050 640 9017**  
dubaidragonboat.com

Map 1 **M4 Metro Nakheel**

Holds training sessions at Le Meridien Mina Seyahi. Beginners' sessions are on Saturdays at 4pm – email info@dubaidragons.com for more information. The first Saturday of every month is 'social Saturday' where members can get to know each other better.

## Dragon Warriors Dubai

**056 174 0305**  
dragonwarriorsdubai.com

Dubai's first all-Filipino dragon-boat race team trains on weekday evenings and weekend mornings and are aiming to join the 2014 Club Crew World Championship in Italy. New paddlers of any age or ability are welcome.

## Dubai Sea Dragons

**Le Meridien Mina Seyahi** Marsa Dubai **050 354 9193**  
dubaiseadragons.net

Map 1 **M4 Metro Nakheel**

An independent dragon boating club, affiliated with the International Dragon Boat Federation and DBA Federation. The Sea Dragons participate in local and international competitions. Newcomers are welcome. The one-hour training sessions take place Mondays and Wednesdays (8am and 5pm), and Saturday mornings at 8am. All are on the beach at Mina Seyahi and cost Dhs.50 per session.

## Fencing

### MK Fencing Academy

Umm Suqeim 3 050 794 4190

[mkfencingacademy.com](http://mkfencingacademy.com)

Map 1 S5 Metro **First Gulf Bank**

Offers individual (Dhs.200) and group (Dhs.55) training in épée (épée is French for sword) and foil for all levels. Fencers receive masks, gloves and weapons, with three fencing paths. Electrical scoring and weapons are available for advanced levels.

### UAE Fencing Federation

Nr **Ramada Hotel** Al Mankhool 04 269 9866

[dubaifencingclub.com](http://dubaifencingclub.com)

Map 1 D5 Metro **Al Fahidi**

This body organises and supervises fencing in the UAE and has affiliations with local competition organisers and the UAE national team.

## Fishing

The Dubai government has introduced regulations to protect fish stocks but you can still fish as long as you have the right permit or you charter a licensed tour guide. The best fishing is from September to April, although it is still possible to catch sailfish and queen fish in the summer.

Fish commonly caught in the region include king mackerel, tuna, trevally, bonito, kingfish, cobia and dorado. Beach or surf fishing is popular along the coast and, in season, you can even catch barracuda from the shore. The local hammour, however, is being over-fished, and so anglers are advised not to pluck this species from the sea.

The creek front in Creekside Park is a popular spot. On a Friday, you can hire an abra for the morning at the Bur Dubai or Deira landing steps and ask your driver to take you to the mouth of the creek. You could also consider a deep-sea fishing trip with one of the charter companies listed under Tours.

For more competitive anglers, the UAQ Marine Club ([uaqmarineclub.com](http://uaqmarineclub.com)) sponsors a fishing competition twice a year, in April and October. Call 06 766 6644 for more details. A good selection of fishing rods, tackle and equipment is available at Barracuda Dubai ([barracudadubai.com](http://barracudadubai.com)). You can even post your catch of the day on their website.

## Licence To Krill

To throw a fishing line into the water you'll first need a fishing licence from Dubai government. Either that or go with a registered fishing charter. There are different permits for leisure boats and offshore fishing. Both are free and can be applied for through the government portal, [dm.gov.ae](http://dm.gov.ae).

### Club Joumana

JA **Jebel Ali Golf Resort** Mena Jabal Ali 04 8836000

[jaresortshotels.com](http://jaresortshotels.com)

Metro **Jebel Ali**

Budding fishermen will soon be reeling them in by chartering one of these fully-equipped fishing boats complete with experienced crew and refreshments. Serious contenders can fish under IGFA rules.

### Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club

Nr **Deira City Centre** Port Saeed 04 295 6000

[dubaigolf.com](http://dubaigolf.com)

Map 2 M7 Metro **Deira City Centre**

Charter the club's yacht, Sneak Away, and head out into the Arabian Gulf for big game sport fishing. The 32 foot Hatteras carries up to six passengers and the Dhs.3,500 hire fee includes four hours at sea (or Dhs.4,500 for eight hours) plus tackle, bait, ice, fuel and a friendly crew.

### Ocean Active

Al Quoz Ind. 3 050 502 2924

[oceanactive.com](http://oceanactive.com)

Map 1 S6 Metro **First Gulf Bank**

This experienced boat charter company offers live-aboard and day fishing trips to locations in the UAE and Oman. Fishing charters across the Middle East are also available.

### Soolyman Sport Fishing

**Jumeirah Beach** Umm Suqeim 2 050 886 6227

[soolymansportfishing.com](http://soolymansportfishing.com)

Map 1 T4 Metro **First Gulf Bank**

Operates a fleet of fishing boats captained by an experienced South African crew. Costs Dhs.2,300 for four hours, Dhs.2,800 for six hours or Dhs.3,300 for eight hours.

### Xclusive Yachts Sport Fishing & Yacht Charter

**Marina Yacht Club** Marsa Dubai 04 432 7233

[xclusiveyachts.com](http://xclusiveyachts.com)

Map 1 K5 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Two-hour cruises and four-hour fishing trips are available. An impressive 37 foot sport fishing boat operates from the Dubai Marina Yacht Club.

## Football

Football (or soccer) is much loved here in the UAE. Teams train and compete on a regular basis and you'll see plenty of impromptu kickabouts in parks. Insportz ([insportzclub.com](http://insportzclub.com)) in Al Quoz has five indoor five-a-side pitches, and some universities and schools rent out their outdoor and five-a-side pitches. If you'd rather watch than play, the UAE league has regular fixtures in Dubai. Gaelic Football fans should contact Dubai Celts GAA.

### Dubai Amateur Football League

[dubaifootball.leaguerepublic.com](http://dubaifootball.leaguerepublic.com)

The 'Expat League' hosts two divisions of 12 teams. It runs an 11-a-side league and cup games between September and April at various locations, and seven-a-side games during the summer.

### Dubai Football Academy

04 282 4540

[esportsdubai.com](http://esportsdubai.com)

Provides comprehensive training for youngsters at various locations. Players are encouraged to join one of the teams competing in the Dubai Junior Football League. A 15-week course costs Dhs.1,400 for one session a week or Dhs.2,500 for two sessions a week.

### Dubai Schools Football League

04 296 6804

[dsfl.leaguerepublic.com](http://dsfl.leaguerepublic.com)

This is the umbrella organisation that oversees league football for girls and boys in Dubai. Children wishing to participate in school league football should do so through their schools, but questions about league set-up, results and fixtures can usually be answered here.

### Dubai Women's Football Association

Hessyan 1 050 659 8767

[dubaiwfa.com](http://dubaiwfa.com)

Features 15 women's teams that compete across two divisions. Players train once a week, and play weekly matches. Matches take place at the Jebel Ali Centre of Excellence, in the Jebel Ali Shooting Club.

### Duplays

**Indigo Icon Tower** JLT, Al Thanyah 5 04 447 2394

[duplays.com](http://duplays.com)

Map 1 K5 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Duplays runs competitive and recreational five-a-side indoor and seven-a-side outdoor leagues, and has recently added a women's five-a-side league as well as the Mighty Eagles, an outdoor flag football league.

### International Football Academy

04 454 1683

[ifasport.com](http://ifasport.com)

Offers training for four- to 16-year-olds from internationally qualified coaches. Provides tailored coaching to schools, as well as existing teams. Teams play in several leagues. Pitch hire also available and the academy can organise birthday parties packed full of events.

### It's Just Football

**JA Centre of Excellence** Hessyan 2 055 296 2963

[itsjustfootball.com](http://itsjustfootball.com)

Metro **Jebel Ali**

The club welcome beginners through to elite players with sessions running throughout the week. The dedicated UEFA, A & B licensed coaches have all played and coached at the highest levels and bring years' of experience to their training. The club also hosts tournaments, social events and fitness training and runs English Football Association Coach Education courses for men and women over the age of 16 looking to become coaches.

Dubai has many football camps for kids



### McGettigan Irish Football Club

[dubairish.leaguerepublic.com](http://dubairish.leaguerepublic.com)

Dubai Irish consists of players of all nationalities and participates in the Dubai Amateur Football League. Despite competing in the more competitive division one, the team welcomes players of all skill levels.

### Socatots

Sports City, Al Hebiah 4 **04 425 1111**

[footballacademydubai.com](http://footballacademydubai.com)

Map 1 M12

This is a fun, musical, soccer play programme for toddlers from walking age to five years. It covers aspects of physical, mental and social development and involves parent participation. Sessions, held from Thursdays to Saturdays, also take place at Emirates International School.

### Soccer Circus Dubai

Mirdif City Centre Mirdif **800 586**

[soccercircusme.com](http://soccercircusme.com)

Map 2 P12 Metro **Rashidiya**

Playnation is where you'll find this fun football activity which is a big hit with families and groups of youths. It's also a fantastic place for boys' birthday parties. Participants undergo a series of challenges to improve skills. If the Training Academy and Powerplay simulated stadium experience whet the appetite, there's a huge indoor multisports pitch that can be hired for matches.

### UAE English Soccer School Of Excellence

**050 476 4877**

[soccerkidsdubai.com](http://soccerkidsdubai.com)

Soccer Kids Dubai offers soccer training in locations across Dubai for ages three to 16 years. Soccer camps during the school holidays are also available. The school also offers children's parties.

### Gaelic Games

#### Dubai Celts GAA

**055 660 8357**

[dubaicelts.com](http://dubaicelts.com)

Dubai Celts GAA holds games and organises training in men's and ladies' Gaelic football, hurling and camogie. Monthly matches are played within the UAE, and international tournaments are held in Bahrain (November) and Dubai (March) each year. Training sessions are held every Monday and Wednesday at 7pm. To join, call the above number.

### Gymnastics

Whether you're looking for professional coaching, something to keep the kids active or to just try out a new activity, there are gymnastics classes for every skill level.

### Dubai Olympic Gymnastics Club

Nr Jumeira Post Office, Off Al Wasl Rd Al Wasl

**050 765 1515**

[dubai-gymnastics.com](http://dubai-gymnastics.com)

Map 2 F5 Metro **Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

UK gymnastics champion Dean Johnstone runs this club which offers courses for gymnasts of all levels. Classes correspond with school terms as they are geared towards children.

### DuGym Gymnastics Club

**050 553 6283**

[dugym.com](http://dugym.com)

Gymnastics and trampoline coaching for children of all abilities is offered during classes from Sunday to Thursday. DuGym runs gym tots lessons as well as club competitions throughout the year at locations including the GEMS World Academy, the Jumeirah English Speaking School and Emirates International School. Contact Suzanne for more info.

### GymnastEx

Prism Tower Business Bay **04 445 8244**

[gymnast-ex.com](http://gymnast-ex.com)

Map 2 E6 Metro **Business Bay**

GymnastEx combo classes blend three disciplines – rhythmic, arobatics and sports aerobics – in one session. Martial arts instruction for boys and yoga for parents is also available, as well as classes for babies and educational gymnastics.

### Hashing

Billed as 'drinking clubs with a running problem', Hash House Harriers is a global network of clubs with an emphasis on taking part and socialising afterwards, rather than serious running. A fun way to get fit and meet people.

### Creek Hash House Harriers

Al Qouz 2 **050 451 5847**

[creekhash.net](http://creekhash.net)

Map 2 B8 Metro **Noor Bank**

This men-only group meets every Tuesday, and runs take pace in the desert around sunset for around 45 minutes. They then gather around a camp fire to socialise. They also hold regular curry nights and spit-roast dinners.

### Desert Hash House Harriers

**050 614 6621**

[deserthash.org](http://deserthash.org)

This group runs every Sunday, an hour before sunset. Prior to the run, one or more members, the Hares, set a trail using straws, paint, chalk or flour. This trail is then followed by the remainder of the group. The fee is Dhs.50 including refreshments. There's no need to worry if you're not an athlete – everyone is welcome.

### Hockey

#### Dubai Hockey Club

Nr Cricket Stadium Sports City, Al Hebiah 4

**055 917 0622**

[dubaihockeyclub.com](http://dubaihockeyclub.com)

Map 1 L11

The club plays in local tournaments on grass and takes part in friendly games. Club training sessions are every Sunday and Wednesday evening. All abilities are welcome. Men and women can join. International tours to locations such as Singapore, Hong Kong and the UK are organised fairly regularly.

### Horse Riding

There are a number of excellent stables and equestrian clubs in Dubai. While keeping your own horse can be very expensive, you may find that riding lessons cost less here than in your home country. Though there may be a waiting lists for lessons. There are a few places, such as The Desert Palm Riding School, where you can take your kids for a 10 minute horse ride around the track. If you are a dressage rider and would like to get involved in shows in the UAE contact stables such as Godolphin ([godolphin.com](http://godolphin.com)), the Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club ([emiratesracing.com](http://emiratesracing.com)), or Al Zobair Stud Farm in Sharjah ([alzobairstud.com](http://alzobairstud.com)). Horse racing in Dubai is extremely popular. Most races, including the Dubai World Cup – the richest horse race in the world – take place at the Meydan racetrack.

### Al Ahli Horse Riding Club

Nr LuLu Hypermarket Al Nahda 1 **04 298 8408**

[alahliclub.info](http://alahliclub.info)

Map 2 R7 Metro **Stadium**

A well-established club offering a wide range of activities including bare back lessons, dressage and jumping. There's also pony clubs and horsemanship clubs for riders aged four and up.

### Al Jiyad Stables

Nr Dubai International Endurance City Al Yalaisy 2

**050 599 5866**

[aljiyyad.com](http://aljiyyad.com)

Offers lessons for riders of all levels of experience. It also runs individual or group desert hacks. The excellent stables are home to more than 60 horses.

### Al Sahara Desert Resort Equestrian Centre

Al Sahara Desert Resort Heritage Vision, Al Yufrah 1

**04 427 4055**

[jaresortshotels.com](http://jaresortshotels.com)

Horse riding for individuals and groups is available at this eco-tourism resort in the Dubai desert. Private livery is also offered for a limited number of horses, and corporate team-building exercises are available.

### The Desert Equestrian Club

Wadi Al Amardi Wadi Al Amardi **050 309 9770**

If you have your own horse, the Desert Equestrian Club offers livery services for Dhs.1,500 a month. Accomplished riders can pay Dhs.100 to use one of the stable's horses. Private lessons are Dhs.80 for adults and Dhs.50 for children under 16.

### The Desert Palm Riding School

Desert Palm Warsan 2 **050 451 7773**

[desertpalm.ae](http://desertpalm.ae)

This state-of-the-art riding school offers group or semi-private classes for all ages, and one-to-one sessions. Prices are Dhs.95 per 30 minutes for child beginners and Dhs.175 per hour for adults, including all equipment. Relax after riding in the club's Lime Spa, or enjoy dinner at the Arabian-influenced restaurant.

### Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club

Al Qudra Rd Arabian Ranches, Al Hebiah 2

**04 361 8111**

[poloclubdubai.com](http://poloclubdubai.com)

Map 1 N13

This top-notch centre features a sandplast arena (one of the best surfaces to ride on), a riding school and a polo club. Horsriding lessons are available for all abilities. Beginners' courses start at Dhs.1,400 for 10 lessons. Enjoy a picnic pitchside during chukkas, held every weekend during the winter. Bring your own sandwiches or order bespoke picnics through the website. The club also houses several top-quality restaurants and a branch of Angsana Spa, and the venue is available for weddings and conferences.

### Emirates Equestrian Centre

Nr Bab Al Shams Desert Resort & Spa Al Yalaisy 2

**050 553 7986**

[emiratesequestriancentre.com](http://emiratesequestriancentre.com)

This centre is home to more than 80 horses. Facilities include an international size floodlit arena, a riding school, and dressage and lunging rings. It can cater to very small children and hosts regular competitions, gymkhanas and shows. The centre also has regular clinics and stable management courses.

### Hoofbeatz

Arabian Ranches, Al Hebiah 2 **050 181 0401**

[hoofbeatz.com](http://hoofbeatz.com)

Map 1 N13

The Hoofbeatz Horsemanship Club runs every Friday and Saturday, from 4pm until 6pm, for beginner and novice horse lovers aged eight to 18 years. The centre also runs an all-round horsemanship course covering stable management and caring for horses. If you're unfamiliar with horses, then try the two-hour 'Meet the Horse' experience. Also on offer are birthday parties, educational visits for schools, and holiday camps.

### JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort

Nr Palm Jebel Ali Mena Jabal Ali 04 814 5555  
jaresortshotels.com

Metro **Jebel Ali**

The riding centre has nine horses and air-conditioned stables. Instructors give private lessons from Tuesday to Sunday, while experienced riders can tackle one-hour desert rides. Half-hour lessons cost Dhs.200 (private) and Dhs.150 (semi-private).

### Jebel Ali Equestrian Club

Nr Jebel Ali Hospital Al Thanyah 2 04 884 5101  
Map 1 N7 Metro **Dubai Internet City**

Qualified instructors teach all levels of dressage, jumping, gymkhana games and hacking. Newcomers can try one lesson, after which a 10-lesson package costs Dhs.800 for children and Dhs.1,000 for adults, plus a Dhs.120 annual registration fee.

### Riding For The Disabled Association Of Dubai

Desert Palm Warsan 2rdad.ae

A charity that uses horseriding and hippotherapy (physical and speech therapy using the movement of a horse) to achieve therapeutic goals for those suffering from autism, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome, spina bifida and learning disabilities. The aim is to improve poise, posture, strength and flexibility while boosting confidence. Classes last around 45 minutes.

### Ice Hockey

Ice hockey has been a fixture on the local sports scene ever since Al Nasr Leisureland opened in 1979. With the opening of Dubai Ice Rink, teams now have two Dubai venues. The Skate Shop next to the ice rink at The Dubai Mall stocks hockey kit including skates, sticks, body armour, jerseys and helmets for children and adults. Call Dubai Ice Rink for stock details (04 448 5111).

### Dubai Mighty Camels Ice Hockey Club

Al Nasr Leisureland Oud Metha  
dubaimightycamels.com

Map 2 L6 Metro **Oud Metha**

This amateur ice hockey league has more than 120 members and competes in the Emirates Hockey League (EHL). The club also hosts an annual tournament in April, which attracts up to 20 teams from the Gulf, Europe and the Far East.

### Dubai Sandstorms Ice Hockey Club

Oud Metha 050 775 8713  
eteamz.com/dubaisandstorm

Map 2 L6 Metro **Oud Metha**

Practice sessions are held twice a week for youngsters aged four to 18. The emphasis is on teamwork and sportsmanship. Matches are played against teams from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Al Ain Oman and Qatar. The

Sandstorms website has a noticeboard for buying and selling ice hockey equipment.

### Kayaking

See Activities, Things To See & Do.

### Kitesurfing

See Activities, Things To See & Do.

### Martial Arts

Aspiring Bruce Lees are well catered for with many centres offering courses in judo, aikido, karate, kickboxing and other martial arts. In addition, many fitness clubs and gyms offer Thai boxing, kung fu, self-defence alongside their group exercise programmes. For kids, the Active Sports Academy has an excellent range of disciplines for all ages and runs after-school classes as well as holiday camps.

### Colosseum Muay Thai Health & Fitness Club

Zaabeel Rd Al Karama 04 337 2755  
colosseumuae.com

Map 2 L6 Metro **BurJuman**

Classes are daily from 8.30pm to 10pm, except Fridays (Dhs.50). Personal training is available for those over eight years old. Colosseum organises competitions with area clubs.

### Dubai Karate Centre

Nr Safa Park Al Safa 1 04 344 7797  
dubaikarate.com

Map 2 C5

This club is a member of the Japanese Karate Association (JKA) and has a team of black belt, JKA qualified instructors who teach a range of martial arts that include shotokan karate, taekwondo, aikido, Muay Thai, judo, kudo, iado, laido and wingtzun. This centre also runs regular self-defence courses. Registration Dhs.100. Monthly memberships from Dhs.380.

### Dubai Kendo Club

050 900 2661

The focus here is on a martial art based on the ancient Japanese swordsmanship traditions. The club meets Wednesdays at 7.45pm and Saturdays at 4pm at Emirates International School Jumeirah. The two-hour classes cost Dhs.50 for adults, Dhs.30 for children.

### EBMAS School Of Self Defense

DUCTAC Al Barsha 1 055 605 8128  
ebmas-selfdefense.com

Map 1 R6 Metro **Mall of the Emirates**

Emin Boztepe Martial Arts System (EBMAS) is a popular form of self-defence that has become so popular it is now taught in more than 40 countries. This school teaches armed and unarmed forms of

EBMAS. Classes are held on Sundays and Wednesdays from 8.30pm to 9.45pm.

### Golden Falcon Karate Centre

Nr Choithrams Al Karama 04 336 0243  
goldenfalconkarate.com

Map 2 L5 Metro **Al Karama**

Established in 1990, the centre is affiliated with the International Karate Budokan and the UAE Judo, Taekwondo & Karate Federation. The centre is open throughout the week. Training costs Dhs.150 for two classes per week. Classes are also taught at Jabal Ali, Meadows, Oud Metha and JLT.

### Golden Fist Karate Club

Al Riffa Plaza Al Riffa 04 452 5599  
goldenfistkarate.net

Map 2 L4 Metro **Al Riffa**

This club is popular for the flexible times it provides for training in martial arts including karate and kung fu. A nine-month black belt crash course is available too. Two and six classes a week, from Dhs.150 to Dhs.320 per month (plus a Dhs.50 admission fee). For those of a more gentle disposition, yoga, swimming and aerobics classes are also offered.

### Raifet N Shawe

Trade Center 2 050 495 4446

Map 2 H6 Metro **Financial Centre**

A black belt teacher in karate, kickboxing, judo and Muay Thai holds classes at Emirates Towers (04 319 8660) on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 5.30pm to 6.30pm.

### Zanshinkan Aikido Club Dubai

Al Raizi Boys School Al Safa 1 050 795 2716  
aikido.ae

Map 2 C5 Metro **Business Bay**

Classes for children and adults are held throughout the week at the Dubai Karate Centre. Once-only registration Dhs.100. Kids' classes are Dhs.350 for eight classes a month and adult training costs Dhs.500 for 12 sessions a month.

## Motorsports

### Automobile & Touring Club Of The UAE

Nr Century Mall Al Mamzar 04 296 1122  
atcuae.ae

Map 2 R6 Metro **Al Qiyadah**

The club is the UAE's FIM (Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme) representative. Regular motocross and off-road enduros are held between September and April, and activity centres at the DMX Club and in Umm Al Quwain host quad and drag races. It organises the Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge, and the opening round of the FIA Cross Country Rally.

### Dubai Autodrome

Shk Mohammed Bin Zayed Rd MotorCity,  
Al Hebiah 1 04 367 8700

dubaiautodrome.com

Map 1 N12

Dubai's motorsport home has six track configurations, including a 5.39km FIA-sanctioned GP circuit, state-of-the-art pit facilities and a 7,000 seat grandstand. Events hosted include rounds of the FIA GT Championship.

### Dubai Motocross Club (DMX)

Nr Jebel Ali Go Kart Track Hessyan 1 050 452 6489  
dubaimotocross.com

Metro **Jebel Ali**

Dubai Motocross (DMX) runs classes for cadets, juniors, 65cc, 85cc, 125cc and adults. The facility features two tracks, one for juniors and one for seniors, and organises eight championship events per year. The entry fee is Dhs.150 for members and starts at Dhs.250 for non-members. Practice fees for members are Dhs.50 during the week and Dhs.75 at weekends. Non-members pay Dhs.100 or Dhs.150.

### Emirates Motor Sports Federation

Villa 1, Casablanca Rd Al Garhoud 04 282 7111  
emsf.ae

Map 2 M8 Metro **GGICO**

Emirates Motor Sports Federation organises events throughout the year, such as the 4WD 1000 Dunes Rally, the Champions Rally for saloon cars, road safety campaigns and classic car exhibitions. Membership including competition licence is Dhs.500 per year; non-members can race for a fee.



The Chase street-racing festival at Dubai Autodrome



### Harley Owners Group Dubai Chapter

04 339 1909

hoguae.com

The group meets at various locations for rides across the region, including the Middle East HOG Rally in Fujairah. See its website for a full events calendar and map links to meet locations.

### Royal Enfield Dubai

Nr Times Square Al Qouz Ind. 1 04 340 1855

royalenfielduae.com

Map 1 U6 Metro Noor Bank

The social club organises city rides, long-distance trips and informal gatherings, as well as an annual gala. Although the club is named Royal Enfield Dubai, riders of any bikes are welcome.

### Netball

Netball is not just for school girls – here in Dubai it's alive and kicking for all age groups, and is a well-established sport. Even if you've no prior experience, you'll be welcomed by Dubai's teams if you want to give it a try.

### Dubai Netball League

The Sevens Al Marmoom 055 817 6624

dubainetballleague.com

Four divisions compete between September and May. Training is on Sundays or Mondays. League nights are on Wednesdays. Players also have the chance to be selected for the annual inter-Gulf championship. New players of all levels are welcome.



Netball

### Duplays

Indigo Icon Tower JLT, Al Thanyah 5 04 447 2394

duplays.com

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

Duplays' competitive women's league plays Sunday evenings, and games in the recreational league take place on Monday evenings. Players can sign up as individuals and be allocated to a team for Dhs.450. Enter a full team for Dhs.3,900 per season.

### Polo

#### Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club

Al Qudra Rd Arabian Ranches, Al Hebiah 2

04 361 8111

poloclubdubai.com

Map 1 N13

The very best players in the world are attracted to this venue's regular local and international polo competitions held on its two full-sized pitches. Coaching is offered for all levels, from 40 minute lessons to six-day courses. An introductory 1.5 hour lesson is Dhs.800.

### Polo

For a fun twist on the game, head to the Dubai polo and Equestrian Club for a spot of camel polo. It's not as fast-paced as the real thing but you'll come away with plenty of good stories. Any group of eight or more is welcome to book a session. Call 04 404 5880 for reservations or for more details email camelpolo@gulfventures.com.

### Rugby

#### Dubai Exiles Rugby Football Club

dubaixiles.com

The Exiles is Dubai's most serious rugby club and has a 1st and 2nd XV that competes in the AGRFU leagues. It also has a veterans, U19s, ladies', girls' U17s and a minis and youth section. The Exiles club also hosts a tournament alongside the annual Dubai IRB Sevens Tournament.

#### Dubai Hurricanes Rugby Football Club

The Sevens Al Marmoom 050 288 1491

dubaihurricanes.com

Having started as a social outfit, the Hurricanes now compete in the Dubai Sevens. The club also has a ladies' team and players aged from four to over 50 and abilities are welcome. Training is on Mondays and Wednesdays at 6.30pm. Touring is a key activity of the club and is used to develop the Midi and Youth sections – tours to date include Australia, Japan, Spain and more.

### Running

For more than half the year, Dubai's weather is perfect for running. There are lots of groups to try and a number of events to train for, such as the excellent Creek Striders Half Marathon (dubaicreekstriders@gmail.com), the Dubai Marathon (dubaimarathon.org), and the Wadi Bih Race (wadibih.com). For suggestions of places to run, see askexplorer.com.

#### Dubai Creek Striders

dubaicreekstriders.org

The Striders meet Friday mornings (on the road opposite the Novotel next to the Trade Centre) for a long-distance run. This club started in 1995 and training is designed for members to take part in the 42.2km Dubai Marathon in January. For more info email them on dubai.creek.striders@gmail.com.

#### Dubai Road Runners

Safa Park Al Wasi 050 624 3213

dubai-road-runners.com

Map 2 D5 Metro Business Bay

Meet up with the Road Runners on Saturdays at 6.30pm by gate 4 of Safa Park to run between 3.4km and 7km (the park charges Dhs.5 entrance fee). For fun, runners predict their times, with a prize for the winner.

#### Nike+ Run Club

werundubai.com

Beginners or intermediates are best suited to these sessions at Festival City (Tuesday evenings) and Downtown (Friday mornings) and are expertly coached, not to mention free.

#### Reebok Running Club

Marsa Dubai 055 369 5664

urbanenergyfitness.com

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

Ignite your passion for running with this club for all abilities and fitness levels. Members meet twice a week at Dubai Marina Mall to run in a fun, motivating atmosphere and share advice on training, nutrition and health tips. Organised in partnership with fitness experts Urban Energy.

#### Stride For Life

050 657 7057

strideforlife.com

Stride for Life offers aerobic walking and running for people of all ages and abilities. Anyone interested in joining should first undergo a fitness assessment. Following this, a thrice-weekly programme is recommended. Stride for Life also does Nordic and mall walking, and 'training journeys' for novices preparing for long distance events. Fees are Dhs.1,600 for a one-year membership.



Ski Dubai

### Sailing

See Activities, Things To See & Do.

### Skating & Rollerblading

See Activities, Things To See & Do.

### Skiing

#### Dubai Ski Club

Al Barsha 1

dubaiskiclub.com

Map 1 R6 Metro Mall of the Emirates

The club has over 1,400 members and meets at 6pm on the last Saturday of every month, next to Ski Dubai's ticket counter, for social skiing or snowboarding, race training and races, followed by apres ski. Membership benefits include a reduced fee for the slope pass and use of the 'advance booking' lane when purchasing tickets, plus special offers on equipment, clothing, accessories and holidays. Membership is Dhs.300.

### Softball

#### Dubai Softball League

Shk Zayed Rd Business Bay 050 651 4970

dubaisoftball.com

Map 2 D6 Metro Business Bay

Over 16s can join one of more than 20 teams in three leagues (two for men, one mixed) and take part in the Middle East Softball Championships in April. The season runs from September to December and from January to May.

## Duplays

**Indigo Icon Tower JLT, Al Thanyah 5 04 447 2394**  
duplays.com

Map 1 K5 Metro **Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Duplays runs a mixed recreational softball league on Wednesdays. Matches are held at the sports field near Business Bay on Sheikh Zayed Road.

## Squash

### Dubai Squash

**The Greens, Al Thanyah 3**  
dubaisquash.com

Map 1 M6 Metro **Nakheel**

The league has been active in Dubai and Sharjah since the 1970s and is run by the UAE Squash Association. Around 250 competitors in 25 teams play three 10 week seasons. Teams meet on Mondays at 7.30pm and each team fields four players.

## Surfing

See Activities, Things To See & Do.

## Swimming

Dubai has some great swimming spots at various public beaches, private pools, at beach clubs or one of the beach parks. The water temperature rarely dips below 20°C in winter, although during the summer it can feel like stepping into a bath. Be aware that rip tides and undertows in the sea can catch out even the strongest swimmer, so never ignore flags or signs ordering you not to swim.

You might also run into quite a lot of jellyfish towards the end of the summer. Around the UAE there are occasional outbreaks of red tide, a naturally occurring algal bloom which turns the water red and gives it an unpleasant smell. These generally affect the east coast and are relatively uncommon in Dubai.

Many hotels, beach clubs and health clubs have swimming pools open to the public for a day entrance fee. Swimming lessons are available from health and beach clubs too. For children's lessons, check with your school. Keen swimmers can sign up for the Wild Wadi Swim Around the Burj annual challenge, held each February in aid of Medecins Sans Frontieres (swim.msf-me.org). There are two distances to choose from – an 800m swim and a 1,600m swim – and swimmers are given plenty of encouragement from spectators watching from the beach.

### Active Sports Academy

**106 Corner City Al Kheeran 050 559 7055**  
activeuae.com

Map 2 M9 Metro **Emirates**

Classes, held in various locations, include water babies, parent and toddlers, and lessons for beginners to advanced swimmers.

### Aqua Sports Academy

**King's Dubai Umm Suqeim 3 050 574 7942**  
aquaswim.ae

Map 1 S5 Metro **First Gulf Bank**

Aqua Sports runs mainly from the 25m pool at Kings' School in Umm Suqeim. Sessions include everything from parent-and-baby sessions, kids' swim lessons and one-to-one clinics, competitive squads and holiday camps. It also runs the city's most popular masters' swim programme for swimmers aged 16 and up. Casual, keep-fit swimmers and competitive age-group swimmers and triathletes all welcome. See the website for session times and special events.

### Australian International Swim Schools (AISS) > p.191

**Al Shafar Tower 1 Trade Center 1 04 368 9226**  
aiss.ae

Map 2 J5 Metro **World Trade Centre**

AUSTSWIM-certified instructors provide swimming lessons at pools throughout Dubai. This company also runs many of the schools' swimming programmes. Swimming training is provided at all levels, from classes for parents and babies, to adult triathlon swimming squads. Lessons are available in Al Quoz, Jumeira, The Lakes, Emirate Hills, Springs, Victory Heights, Sharjah, Mirdif and Al Twar.

### Desert Sport Services

**Palace Tower 2 Nadd Hessa 056 644 1742**  
desertsportservices.com

The swimming programme offers classes for parents and babies, learn-to-swim, stroke development, and competitive training sessions. There is also a full adult swimming programme. Instructors are all Swimming Teacher Association (STA) qualified, and conduct classes based on the Total Immersion philosophy.

### Excel Sports

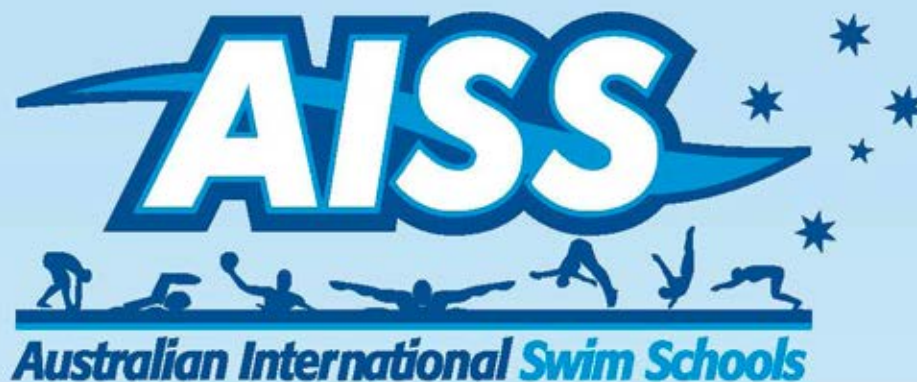
**050 223 9235**  
excelsportsuae.com

Excel Sports offers coaching in swimming, cricket, soccer and gymnastics. The emphasis is firmly on having fun and being confident in the water. The company also runs holiday camps that include swimming in the programme, as well as other activities such as tennis, soccer and softball.

### Hamdan bin Mohammed Sports Complex

**Nr Emirates Rd Umm Nahad 2 04 306 2666**  
hamdansc.com

The HSC is the largest sports Aquatic Sports Centre in the world. It houses three swimming pools and specialises in swimming, diving, water polo and synchronised swimming. It also offers track and field sports and hosts events. A monthly swimming pass is Dhs.200 – see the website for further prices.



**SWIM TIME**  
LEARN TO SWIM CENTRE

Dubai's First dedicated specialised Learn to Swim Centre Programs for Babies to Adults and has Full Disabled Access.

### AREAS COVERED INCLUDE

Al Quoz , Jumeirah, Al Sufouh, Umm Suqeim and Al Barsha.

Located between Times Square and Limetree Cafe  
Street 4b Al Quoz 1 Phone: 043233388 Email: swim@aiss.ae



### CLASSES AT VARIOUS VENUES INCLUDE

Learn to Swim Classes, Parent and Child Classes, Infants Swimming Stroke Development, Stroke Correction, Mini Swim Squads, Junior Squads, Adult Learn to Swim, Adult Fitness Squads.

### PROGRAMS COVERING

Al Barsha, JBR, The Lakes, Emirate Hills, Al Twar, Sharjah, Mirdif, Al Quoz, Al Sufouh, Jumeirah, Umm Suqeim, Tecom, The Greens, Motor City, Sports City, Victory Heights, Media City and The Springs.



Office: +971 43689226 Mobile: +971 556014549 Email: swim@aiss.ae

### Hamilton Aquatics

04 450 8832

hamiltonaquaticsdubai.com

Hamilton Aquatics is currently one of the largest swimming academies in the Middle East. Hamilton's Learn to Swim Academy develops children and adults from non-swimmers to advanced swimmers with over 210 classes and 1,200 spaces a week for every level of swimmer. Operating across numerous locations in Dubai, it runs a swim development programme to enhance swimming skills and a dedicated Squad Academy for elite swim training.

### Speedo Swim Squads

Arabian Ranches, Wadi Al Safa 6 04 354 9525

speedodubai.net

Map 1 Q13

This private club offers tuition for all ages and abilities, from 'duckling' to squad training. It also offers ASA teacher training and water polo classes. Lessons take place at a number of locations including Horizon School, Uptown High School, Dubai International Academy and Emirates International School.

### Synquatics

Raffles International School

Umm Suqeim 3 055 448 5381

synquatics.com

Map 1 S5 Metro First Gulf Bank

Opened in 2012 by former Olympian sisters, Sarah and Hebel Abdel Gawad, this club teaches synchronised swimming; a hybrid of swimming, dance and

gymnastics. Locations include Safa School, Raffles and Fitness First (Meadows). Swimmers can choose to train either once, twice or three times a week in 60 minute sessions, though during term time only block bookings are accepted.

### Table Tennis

Table tennis can be played for Dh.40 per hour, including equipment, at InSportz just behind Dubai Garden Centre on Sheikh Zayed Road. Booking is required. Several of the older leisure clubs provide table tennis, although the equipment is usually a bit rusty. The UAE Table Tennis Association is in Dubai (04 254 7111), and can provide information on how to get into leagues and high level competitions, but unfortunately most of the local clubs only accept UAE Nationals.

### Tennis

Dubai is firmly established on the international tennis circuit, with the annual Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships attracting the best players in the world. There are plenty of venues to enjoy a game. Outdoor courts are available at most health and beach clubs, many of which are floodlit. There are indoor courts for hire at InSports (04 347 5833).

### Ace Sports Academy

Emirates Grand Trade Center 2 04 55452 2066

acesportsacademy.com

Map 2 G6 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

This tennis school offers everything from tots' tennis and junior development to ladies' mornings, adult

lessons and tournaments. Private, semi-private and family lessons are available, and ball machines can be hired. Membership and lesson costs vary. Check the website for details. Also at Mirdif Tennis Courts, near Mirdif City Centre.

### The Atlantis Tennis Academy

Atlantis Nakhlal Jumeira 04 426 1433

Map 1 N1 Metro Nakheel

Provides world-class coaching for players of all ages and levels. The state-of-the-art facilities include the latest court surfaces plus video technology for technique analysis. The academy also organises social events and tournament afternoons for members.

### Clark Francis Tennis Academy

04 282 4540

clarkfrancistennis.com

This tennis school offers group and individual tennis coaching for children and adults. A ladies' morning is held at the Grand Hyatt on Mondays from 8.15am. Cardio Tennis classes (a cross between tennis and circuit training) are every Tuesday from 6.45pm at the Aviation Club. It also organises competitive leagues in a variety of categories including juniors. Ball kid training (for the Dubai Tennis Championships) is available, and the service centre can have your racket restrung and returned to you within 12 hours.

### Dubai Tennis Academy

American University Al Sufouh 2 04 399 1125

dubaitennisacademy.com

Map 1 M5 Metro Nakheel

Provides training for all levels, with internationally qualified coaches, at American University Dubai, and the five-star Grand Hyatt hotel Dubai (which has four courts). Programmes include private lessons, group clinics, competitions, ladies' tennis mornings and school holiday camps. Check the website for prices for members and non-members. The academy sometimes offers discounts and promotions on its website.

### DUET Sports Club

Dubai Men's College Academic City, Al Rowaiyah 2 055 881 1974

This club has thousands of members and so you are sure to find your hitting partner, tennis coach or tennis buddy among DUET's more than 1,200 registered members. This active social tennis group has a good website about the sport in the region, and can provide players with partners, organise tennis events, and offer professional coaching to all ages and levels. The club has branched out to offer other sports including football leagues, and basketball and swimming lessons.

### Emirates Golf Club

Shk Zayed Rd The Greens, Al Thanyah 3 04 417 9999

dubaigolf.com

Map 1 M6 Metro Nakheel

Open to non-members of all levels for coaching by qualified USPTP professionals. The centre has four courts. Two teams play in the ladies' Spinneys League and one in the men's Prince League.

### Triathlon

#### SuperTRI

050 873 1989

supertridubai.com

If you fancy getting really fit this year then train with certified triathlon coach, Trace Rogers, who can help you gain the skills and techniques you need to perform in a triathlon and reach your best ever time. Training focuses on all areas of swimming, running and biking and programmes are offered to suit your lifestyle and budget.

#### TriDubai

tridubai.org

Support for everyone from complete beginners to world-class athletes; for those training for sprint distance to Ironman races (or just training for the love of it); for those starting out, starting again or wanting to break records. The club welcomes new members and training sessions are free of charge.

### Ultimate Frisbee

#### Duplays

Indigo Icon Tower JLT, Al Thanyah 5 04 447 2394

duplays.com

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

Duplays (duplays.com) organises a friendly league which you can enter as a team or individual and be placed in a team. Games are on Monday nights on the field near Business Bay. Pickup games are held in Safa Park on Saturday afternoons.

### Volleyball

#### EK Volleyball Club

050 358 1603

ekvolleyballclub.com

Organises various events around Dubai including pickup nights, indoor and beach volleyball. Prices vary but a two-hour community game starts from Dh.25. Many players play at Kite Beach/Beach Volleyball Park on Fridays and Saturdays after 10am.

### Watersports

For information on diving, kayaking, kitesurfing and other watersports, see Activities, Things To See & Do.



Emirates Golf Club

## Hobbies

### Arts & Crafts

There's a thriving arts and crafts scene in Dubai with classes available for beginners and children. During the hot summer months, an arty activity could be just what you need to keep occupied. And, if you need to buy supplies, see our Shopping section for listings.

### Art Labs

04 374 6208  
artlabs.me

Courses are held at Dubai Ladies Club and The Pavillion Downtown on everything from *sospeso trasparente* and sugar wires to jewellery making and decorating techniques. There's also an online store to buy supplies. The group creates beautiful, glitzy accessories for weddings and corporate events, as well as invites – some of which are decorated with Swarovski crystals.

### Cafe Ceramique

Dubai Festival City Mall Al Badia, Al Kheeran  
04 232 8616

cafe-ceramique.com

Map 2 L9 Metro Emirates

Paint your own teapot or a whole dinner set. Choose your piece of blank pottery, which the cafe will glaze and fire for you after you decorate it. Events include Art4fun Workshops and the Kidz4art Summer Camp. The cafe also serves a great selection of healthy breakfasts, lunches and snacks to keep you energised while you get creative.



### Craft Land

Town Centre Jumeirah Jumeira 1 04 342 2237  
mycraftland.com

Map 2 F4 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

Everything you'd like to learn about machine sewing, quilting, hand embroidery, knitting and crocheting is taught here. There are needlecraft workshops, courses, clubs and clinics. Classes are for beginners and the more experienced. Most sessions last around 90 minutes. Some are charged per class (roughly Dhs.40) while for others you pay for a full course (prices vary). Club meetings are Tuesday mornings and Saturday afternoons and membership is Dhs.50.

### Creative Hands

Mayfair Bldg Dubai Investment Park 1 04 884 9343  
creativehandsdubai.com

Map 1 G10 Metro Ibn Battuta

Creative Hands has a store in The Green Community and another online. The company also offers workshops and sessions in crafts such as scrapbooking and card making.

### Dubai Community Theatre & Arts Centre > p.437

Mall of the Emirates Al Barsha 1 04 341 4777  
ductac.org

Map 1 R6 Metro Mall of the Emirates

Decorative arts, drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, paper craft and the performing arts are just some of classes DUCTAC runs for adults and children. Details are listed online and updated regularly. DUCTAC also has a theatre, art galleries and studios for exhibitions and performances. There's a cafe, art supplies shop and The Old Library, an English language lending library run by volunteers. DUCTAC is open daily 9am to 10pm and 2pm to 10pm on Fridays.

### Dubai International Art Centre

Villa 27, Street 75B Jumeira 1 04 344 4398  
artdubai.com

Map 2 F4 Metro Financial Centre

Villa-based art centre offering six- to eight-week courses in more than 70 subjects, including painting, drawing, dressmaking, etching, pottery and photography. Annual membership starts from Dhs.350 for adults, Dhs.450 for families and Dhs.120 for under 18s.

### Ikebana Sogetsu Group

Villa 13, 132 Street 15 Al Wuheida 04 262 0282  
Map 2 Q5 Metro Al Qiyadah

Ikebana is the intricate and beautiful Japanese art of flower arranging. This Dubai group attempts to deepen cultural understanding among the city's multinational society with exhibitions, demonstrations and workshops. Classes are taught by a qualified teacher from Japan.

### the jamjar

Nr Dubai Garden Centre Al Qouz Ind. 3 04 341 7303  
thejamjardubai.com

Map 1 S6 Metro First Gulf Bank

A canvas, paints and the obligatory jam jar are yours starting at Dhs.195 for four hours of self-inspired creativity. All you need to bring is your inspiration. The 'Jam-To-Go' service brings the experience to you – a novel idea for a party or corporate event. Open weekdays from 10am to 8pm; Fridays 2pm to 8pm; closed on Sundays.

### Objects & Elements

Street 8 Al Qouz Ind. 1 04 323 6182  
objectsandelementsgroup.com

Map 1 U6 Metro Noor Bank

A sewing group where you can get your 'sewing machine driving licence' and learn how to make everything from ironing board covers to retro soft toy owls. They also teach embroidery.

### Paper At Artisans of the Emirates

Time Square Center Al Qouz Ind. 1 arte.ae  
Map 1 T6 Metro Noor Bank

Paper@ARTE is part of ARTE Souk, held at the Times Square Center or Festival Centre most Fridays. All scrapbookers can join the workshops.

### Paper Lane

Town Centre Jumeirah Jumeira 1 04 344 3633  
mypaperlane.com

Map 2 F4 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

One of the city's biggest scrapbooking shops, Paper Lane carries all the materials you'll need to create a memorable album. It also runs classes for all ages and levels. Families welcome.

## Birdwatching

### Emirates Bird Records Committee

uaebirding.com

Local and visiting birders are invited to submit details of sightings to this committee which collates information on birds in the UAE and on request. A weekly roundup of bird sightings and a monthly report are available via email from Tommy Pedersen at 777sandman@gmail.com.

## Bridge

### Dubai Ladies Bridge Club

Jumeira 1 050 659 1300

Map 2 F4 Metro Business Bay

The sociable females of Dubai meet for ladies-only bridge mornings at 9am on Sundays and Wednesdays. Contact Marzie Polad on the number above or Jan Irvine on 050 645 4395.

## Chess

### Dubai Chess & Culture Club

Nr Century Mall Al Mamzar 04 296 6664  
dubaichess.ae

Map 2 R6 Metro Al Qiyadah

The home of the UAE's national chess team. Members can play at the club seven nights a week, and competitions are organised on a regular basis. The club also promotes international competitions, including the Dubai International Open, Emirates Open and Dubai Junior Open. Membership costs Dhs.100 a year.

## Cooking Classes

Many hotels run cookery classes by special request if you particularly like one of their dishes, or as an organised series of classes. There are also wine tasting classes and courses for budding oenophiles or those just wanting to up their dinner party game.

### Armani Hotel Dubai

Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa 04 888 3888  
dubai.armanihotels.com

Map 2 F6 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

The teams of chefs at several of the Armani Hotel's most popular restaurants teach willing students how to make some of their specialities at home. Between Saturdays and Wednesdays, 4.30pm to 6pm, you can learn to prepare a classic three-course Italian meal, master Indian cuisine or perfect the intricacies of Japanese fare. Classes range in price from Dhs.1,100 to Dhs.1,300.

### The Balance Cafe Cookery School

Al Qouz 1 04 384 7010

balance-wellness-centre.com

Map 2 C6

Award-winning chefs from restaurants across Dubai, including Carluccio's, Ushna and Mango Tree offer hands-on training in a variety of cuisines such as Thai, Italian, sushi and Indian, all with a focus on healthy eating. The Balance Cafe cookery courses are designed for everyone from amateurs to professionals, with prices starting at Dhs.250 per class and Dhs.800 for any four classes.

### Blue Flame

Jumeirah Creekside Al Garhoud 04 230 8459  
jumeirah.com

Map 2 M8 Metro GGICO

Learn the secrets of preparing gourmet dishes such as brick baby chicken and seafood papillote at the Blue Flame cookery school. Classes are held every day at 7pm in a state-of-the-art cooking pod. Prices start at Dhs.300, which includes a signed copy of the menu and Blue Flame apron.

## Cooking At Home

056 244 5082

Learn how to prepare traditional Italian family recipes, with two-hour weekly classes for Dhs.150 or weekend courses for Dhs.180. Private classes are also available.

## Children's Classes

Kids can learn to cook at several places including Sway 2the Heart (sway2the.heart.net, Dhs.80 per class) or Le Meridien Dubai's Little Pastry Chef sessions at L'atelier des Chefs (atelierdeschefs.dubai.com, Dhs.150. They also teach adults).

## De Dietrich Cuisine Academy

Dubai Ladies Club Jumeira 2 050 550 1612

de-dietrich-academy.ae

Map 2 D4 Metro Business Bay

Brush up on your culinary skills with courses in French, Italian, Asian, sushi and special pastries. Learn how to make the perfect seasonal menu, prepare mocktails, cook fresh and healthy cuisine, or make special meals for kids. Classes cost from Dhs.130 to Dhs.350, and special packages for birthdays, baby showers and bridal parties are also available.

## International Centre For Culinary Arts Dubai

Al Jafiliya 04 398 9745

iccadubai.ae

Map 2 J5 Metro Al Jafiliya

There's a wide range of cookery classes available, from industry training for professionals to cooking for fun courses for amateurs. This culinary training centre is accredited by City & Guilds London.

## Jones The Grocer

Indigo Central 8 Al Manara 04 346 6886

jonesthegrocer.com

Map 1 T6 Metro First Gulf Bank

Australia's gourmet deli and cafe hosts weekly cooking classes where you can master the art of pastries and breads, learn how to make pasta, or create your own soups – and then enjoy what you've cooked with selected beverages and desserts. A chocolate masterclass is also held once a month. Classes start at 6pm and cost Dhs.375, and prior booking is necessary.

## L'atelier des Chefs

Le Meridien Al Garhoud 056 690 0480

atelierdeschefs.dubai.com

Map 2 N8 Metro Airport Terminal 1

This French cooking school offers a wide range of classes including Arabic, Indian and French cuisine, plus sushi, seafood and pastry making. Classes cost from Dhs.120 for half an hour to Dhs.350 for two hours, depending on the type of class.

## Nobu

Atlantis Nakhat Jumeira 04 426 2626

atlantisthepalm.com

Map 1 N1 Metro Nakheel

Learn how to cook like the master chef Nobu Matsuhisa at Nobu's three-hour class on the first Saturday of every month. Costs Dhs.1,250 per person with lunch.

## Prego's

TECOM, Al Thanyah 1 04 435 0201

rotana.com

Map 1 P6 Metro Dubai Internet City

Cooking has been in Chef Mauro's family for generations, and he makes for a charismatic and easy guide through some of his kitchen's most famous Italian dishes.

## Rococo

Sofitel Jumeirah JBR, Marsa Dubai 04 448 4848

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

These two-and-a-half hour Italian cookery classes can be privately organised for groups of eight or more and offer great value at Dhs.250 per person, including dinner.

## Spice & Aroma

Al Wasl Plaza Al Wasl 04 349 2577

spiceandaroma.com

Map 2 E5 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

Learn the art of spice-friendly cooking at this master class in Indian and oriental cuisine. Costs Dhs.150-Dhs.200 (inclusive of meal).

## Tavola

Jumeira 1 04 344 5624

tavolashop.com

Map 2 H4 Metro Al Jafiliya

Cake decoration, with an authorised Wilton method instructor. A course consists of four three-hour sessions and costs Dhs.750.

## Thai at the Blue Elephant

Al Bustan Rotana Al Garhoud 04 282 0000

blueelephant.com

Map 2 N8 Metro Airport Terminal 1

Al Bustan Rotana offers Thai cookery classes at the Blue Elephant on the first Saturday of the month. Cost is Dhs.199.

## Thiptara

The Palace Downtown Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa 04 888 3444

Map 2 F6 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall

Culinary classes with Chef Mac cost Dhs.295, including the two-hour demonstration, some hands-on practice, lunch and a diploma in Thai cuisine.

## Zuma

Gate Village DIFC, Zaa'beel 2 04 425 5660

zumarestaurant.com

Map 2 G6 Metro Financial Centre

As the man behind arguably the city's best sushi counter, Zuma's Masaharu Kondo is the perfect host for these two-hour sushi masterclasses which cost Dhs.500 and allow for plenty of delicious sampling.

## Dance

Whether you prefer to tap your feet to classical or contemporary rhythms, all dancing tastes are catered for in Dubai. Dancing schools, health clubs, restaurants and even bars hold weekly sessions in flamenco, salsa, samba, jazz dance, ballroom and so much more.

## Belly Dancing

The ancient art of belly dancing is a great way to keep fit. The Ballet Centre (04 344 9776) holds lessons for Dhs.40 on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Milla Tenorio teaches at the Rotana Towers on Sundays and Tuesdays at 6pm; classes cost from Dhs.50 (050 395 5983). Nora Dance Group also offers belly dancing classes and Exhale Fitness offers belly dance fitness classes (exhaledubai.com).

## The Address Dubai Marina

Nr Dubai Marina Mall Marsa Dubai 04 436 7777

theaddress.com

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

Every Wednesday is Havana Night at Blends with instructor Aloy Junco. Cuban-Latino sounds and complimentary Cuban salsa classes and beverages for the ladies, from 7pm till midnight.

## Arthur Murray Dance Centre

201 Reef Tower JLT, Al Thanyah 5 04 448 6458

arthurmurraydubai.com

Map 1 K5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers

Teaches rhythm and Latin, smooth and standard, country western and speciality dances in line with the Arthur Murray method. There's a second branch at Souk Al Bahar (04 450 8648).

## The Ballet Centre

Nr Jumeira Plaza Jumeira 1 04 344 9776

balletcentre.com

Map 2 H4 Metro World Trade Centre

Study ballet, tap, modern, salsa, Irish, jazz and belly dancing. Classes are for adults, and children three years and over. Training for the Imperial Society for Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) and the Royal Academy of Dance examinations is encouraged. There are seven dance studios situated inside two villas and also a cafe and clothing shop.

## Cello Music & Ballet Centre

Oasis Centre Al Quoz 1 04 380 8282

cellodubai.com

Map 2 C6 Metro Noor Bank

Offering dance and music classes to children and adults of all ages at eight locations across Dubai: Springs, Lakes, Arabian Ranches, JBR, Umm Suqeim, Marsa Dubai, Palm Jumeirah, Al Quoz and Sheikh Zayed. There are also classes in belly dance, jazz, modern, tap dance, Irish dance, hip-hop and martial arts.

## Ceroc Arabia

Trade Center 1 050 514 4603

Map 2 G5 Metro Financial Centre

This modern jive is easy to learn and similar to salsa but without the fancy footwork. It can be danced to all kinds of different music, including club and chart hits, classics, swing, Latin and rock 'n' roll. Classes, socials and private tuition are available.

## Dance Horizons 1

Al Wasl 04 360 7691

dancehorizons.ae

Map 2 D5 Metro Business Bay

A specialist ballet school that offers the Royal Academy of Dance Examination syllabus for beginners and advanced dancers, and a specialised music and movement programme for age three and older. Classes are at Horizon School near Safa Park and Safa School on Meydan Road in fully equipped ballet studios with sprung floors, barres and mirrors, and are led by highly qualified, RAD-registered teaching staff.

## Disco Dance Dubai

Umm Suqeim 3 050 289 6735

Map 1 S5 Metro Financial Centre

Dance routines to Hannah Montana, Mamma Mia and songs from High School Musical are taught by RAD and IDTA trained director, Becky Kerrigan. Contact Becky for times and prices.

## Dubai Liners

Al Satwa 050 654 5960

Map 2 G5 Metro Financial Centre

It's not all country and western. Line dance to disco, rock 'n' roll, salsa, jazz, R&B and waltzes. Beginners' classes are held on Saturdays from 9.30am to 11.30am, and intermediates dance from 11am to 1pm, with another class on Wednesdays from 7pm to 8.30pm.

## El Firulete BNF Dance Company Dubai

Al Sufouh 2 04 364 4882

elfiruletebnf.com

Map 1 N5 Metro Dubai Internet City

The BNF is a celebrated Columbian dance school and the Dubai branch offers private and group instruction in tango, salsa and belly dancing, among other styles.

### El Malecon

**Dubai Marine Beach Resort** Jumeira 1 **04 346 1111**  
dxbmarine.com

Map 2 **H4 Metro Emirates Towers**

Salsa dancing every Saturday night from 10pm onwards for Dhs.40. Dancing is free if you order food.

### Familia De La Salsa

**050 277 7475**

familiadelasalsa.com

Salsa dancing lessons for beginners and enthusiastic salsaeros/salseras in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere at locations across Dubai. There are also children's dancing classes at the Dubai Ballet Centre every Saturday. Classes start from Dhs.40.

### First International Dance Studio

**One Lake Plaza** Al Thanyah 5 **04 252 5080**

firstids.com

Map 1 **L5 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Hip-hop and breakdance are the main disciplines offered at this school, but other modern and classical styles are also available. Dhs.800 per month for three group classes a week; get a taster with a free introductory lesson. Classes are for kids, teenagers and adults.

### Highland Dance Dubai

**Dubai Lagoon, Dubai Investments Park 1**

**050 765 8007**

highlanddancedubai.com

Map 1 **F12**

Certified instructor, Clarissa Crowley, teaches traditional Scottish dancing to male and female students of all ages and abilities. The first class is free, so you can try before you buy. Further classes cost Dhs.35-50 per hour, depending on your level. Visit the website for timings and more information.

### James & Alex Dance Studios

**Media City, Al Sufouh 2 04 447 0773**

jamesandalex.com

Map 1 **M5 Metro Nakheel**

Salsa-dancing partners James and Alex offer a variety of classes for adults and children from ballet and jazz to belly dance and salsa. There's also pole fitness classes for beginners and intermediates, as well as private classes for one-on-one tuition.

### Nora Dance Group

**050 875 0111**

noradancegroup.com

Learn hip-hop, ballet, jazz, tango and modern freestyle, as well as belly dancing and Bollywood. Classes are held at Knowledge Village, DUCTAC and Dubai Marina Mall. Available for adults and children, group lessons or private instruction.

### Prima Performing Arts

**Dubai Investments Park 1 055 771 4526**

primauae.com

Map 1 **F9**

Prima Performing Arts offers a fun way for children to learn to dance and get fit. There's classes for all ages, with Dinky Dances for babies aged 18 months, fun movement classes for mums and toddlers, and ballet classes for three to 18 year-olds. The dance academy also holds annual exams and performances in hip-hop, contemporary, dance/gymnastics, musical theatre, jazz and tap.

### Ritmo De Havana

**DUCTAC Al Barsha 1 050 696 3520**

ritmo-de-havana.com

Map 1 **R6 Metro Mall of the Emirates**

Del Piero is a certified instructor. His courses start from Dhs.600 per person and run in batches so check the website for the most up-to-date timings.

### Salsa Dubai

**Umm Hurair 2 050 565 6420**

Map 2 **L7 Metro Dubai Healthcare City**

Instructor Phil has 13 years' experience in Cuban, New York and Spanish dance styles. Classes are tailored to the individual, and members can learn the famous La Rueda Cuban dance. Find schedules on 'The Original Salsa Dubai' Facebook page.

### Savage Garden

**Capitol Madinat Dubai Al Melaheyah 04 346 0111**

Map 2 **J4 Metro Al Jafliya**

On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday nights, this Latin American restaurant and nightclub serves up Latino food with a side order of salsa and merengue classes. Beginners' lessons are from 8pm to 9pm and intermediate and advanced dancers take to the floor from 9pm to 10pm. Classes cost Dhs.40 a pop. Contact George or Tatiana on 050 597 5058 for more details.

### Solid Rock

**Pinnacle Bldg Al Barsha 1 04 395 7808**

solidrockdubai.com

Map 1 **Q6 Metro Sharaf DG**

A complete performing arts studio offers music and dance, with hip-hop, salsa and jazz on the menu. The first group lesson is free, so you can try before you buy. Classes are available from beginners through to advanced dancers.

### Tango Dubai

**DUCTAC Al Barsha 1 050 451 6281**

tangodubai.com

Map 1 **R6 Metro Mall of the Emirates**

Tuesday classes are held for beginners and advanced dancers at Evory Bar, Kempinski Hotel and at DUCTAC,

Mall of the Emirates. Call Eleanor on the number listed, or Maya on 050 622 3679. Lessons cost Dhs.200 for four beginners' classes and Dhs.240 for advanced. Tango Dubai also runs dance nights at Sezzam and Pachanga restaurants.

### Turning Pointe Music

**Russia Cluster Warsaw 1 04 422 1592**

turningpointe.ae

Metro **Rashidiya**

Turning Pointe has over 35 studios throughout the UAE, offering everything from ballet for children aged three and over (with Royal Academy of Dance Syllabus and Examinations). There's also hip-hop, street jazz and Jazz2Pop, plus the popular TP Glee Club! All teachers fully qualified and recruited from the UK.

### Salsa

If you fancy a bit of salsa there are a number of places you can learn seriously, or just have a bit of fun. Check out dubaisalsa.com for more information.

### Drama

#### Drama Dubai

**DUCTAC Al Barsha 1 050 986 1761**

dramaworkshopsdubai.com

Map 1 **R6 Metro Mall of the Emirates**

This very active drama school runs classes for children and adults on the elements and techniques of acting. School workshops include circus fighting, comedy and Shakespeare. Private tuition and corporate training can be arranged.



### Dubai Drama Group

**DUCTAC Al Barsha 1**

dubaidramagroup.com

Map 1 **R6 Metro Mall of the Emirates**

Members of this group include actors, directors, singers, dancers and backstage crew. Dubai Drama Group stages four productions a year, and there are workshops, socials and an internet forum. Annual membership is Dhs.100.

### Manhattan Film Academy

**Al Sufouh 2**

mfacademy.com

Map 1 **N5 Metro Dubai Internet City**

The Dubai branch of this world-famous New York film school offers workshops in screenwriting, directing and acting.

### Flying

#### Al Jazirah Aviation Club

**Jazirah Airport Ras Al Khaimah 07 244 6416**

jac-uae.net

Dedicated solely to microlight/ultralight flying.

The club also offers training and pleasure flights. A Microlight Pilot's Licence course, with around 25 hours flying time, costs Dhs.500 per hour.

#### Emirates Flying School

**Dubai International Airport 04 299 5155**

emiratesaviationservices.com

Map 2 **N8 Metro Airport Terminal 1**

The only approved flight training institution in Dubai offers private and commercial licences, and will convert international licences to the UAE equivalent. A Private Pilot's Licence course costs upwards of Dhs.48,720.

### Environment

In recent years, the determined clamour of environmentally conscious campaigners and groups has begun to make an impact in a country where concepts like carbon-offsetting, recycling and re-using are still nascent. In 1998, HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, then Crown Prince of Dubai, established an environmental award which recognises an individual or organisation for work carried out on behalf of the environment. At an everyday level, there are increasing numbers of glass, plastic and paper recycling points around the city, mainly around shopping centres. However, overall, little seems to be done to persuade the average citizen to be more environmentally active, for instance by encouraging the reduction of littering. If you want to take action, there are a couple of groups, including Emirates Environmental Group, who always need volunteers and funds.

### Dubai Natural History Group

Umm Suqeim 3 **04 282 3952**  
dnhg.org

Map 1 **S5 Metro First Gulf Bank**

Learn more about the UAE's fascinating natural history at monthly meetings where experts lecture about flora, fauna, geology, and archaeology. Members go on regular field trips and can borrow from a library of natural history publications. Annual membership is Dhs.100 for a family and Dhs.50 for individuals. Contact chairman Gary Feulner (04 306 5570; grfeulner@gmail.com).

### Emirates Environmental Group

Villa **JMR 68-117A** Jumeira 1 **04 344 8622**  
eeg-uae.org

Map 2 **G4 Metro Emirates Towers**

A voluntary organisation devoted to helping protect the environment through education, action programmes and community involvement. Activities include evening lectures and special events such as recycling collections and clean-up campaigns. Annual membership costs Dhs.300 for adults and Dhs.100 for college students.

### Music

There are a number of specialist music schools in Dubai where you and your kids can have lessons. In addition, you may find that some schools offer extra-curricular music programmes (for a fee) for students.

### Centre For Musical Arts

Al Qouz Ind. 3 **04 341 8872**  
cmadubai.com

Map 1 **S6 Metro Mall of the Emirates**

Budding musicians can get instruction in string, woodwind and brass instruments, as well as piano. Group lessons start at Dhs.975 and individual lessons from Dhs.1,625 per term. Visit the website for details of their popular Saturday Sessions.

### Dubai Music School

Stalco Bldg, Zabeel Rd Al Karama **04 396 4834**  
dubaimusicschool.com

Map 2 **L6 Metro Al Karama**

This school offers one-hour lessons in guitar, piano, organ, violin, brass, drums, singing and composing, leading to Trinity College of Music examinations.

### Juli Music Center

Nr Mazaya Shopping Centre Al Wasl **04 321 2588**  
imi-jmc.net

Map 2 **F6 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

Juli Music Center offers lessons in various instruments from Dhs.180 per hour. They also sell a variety of musical instruments including new and used pianos, brass, woodwind, strings, and percussion.

### Jumeirah Music Centre

Jumeirah Plaza Jumeira 1 **04 349 2662**  
jumeirah-music.com

Map 2 **H4 Metro Emirates Towers**

Lessons in piano, guitar, flute, violin, drums and voice for all ages at Dhs.90 per half hour. All children are welcome to audition for the choir, which puts on a concert every year.

### Little Musicians

**055 364 9421**  
littlemusiciansdubai.com

Holds classes all over Dubai (Arabian Ranches, Jumeirah Ballet Centre, Dubai Marina Yacht Club, Dubai Marina Mall and Indigo Icon Office Tower JLT) with all manner of fun and brightly coloured instruments. The emphasis is very much on making music enjoyable and achievable.

### The Music Chamber

Time Square Center Al Qouz Ind. 1 **04 346 8056**  
musicchamber.net

Map 1 **T6 Metro Noor Bank**

The Music Chamber gives lessons in all instruments, from electric and classical guitar to cello, piano and percussion. The school is recognised by the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music in London. It boasts a large variety of instruments, accessories and books. It also offers vocal training and theory lessons.

### The Music Institute

The Walk at JBR Marsa Dubai **04 424 3818**  
tmi.ae

Map 1 **K4 Metro Jumeirah Lakes Towers**

Piano, violin, guitar and drum lessons with musical theory for all ages, plus group guitar and violin lessons. Practice rooms available to hire. Recitals are also held.

### Popular Music Institute

Umm Hurair 2 **04 324 2626**  
thomsunpuremusic.com

Map 2 **L7 Metro Dubai Healthcare City**

Thomsun Pure Music is in Wafi and runs the Popular Music Institute and the Sing & Swing Training Centre. Students learn instruments, musicianship, theory and performance, and prepare for music exams.

### Solid Rock

Pinnacle Bldg Al Barsha 1 **04 395 7808**  
solidrockdubai.com

Map 1 **Q6 Metro Sharaf DG**

Teaches modern music and dance at its Al Barsha studios. There is a particular focus on piano, guitar and drums – the staples of rock music. Private and group classes are available, and the school offers the first group session for free, so you can check it out before you sign up.

## Orchestras & Bands

### Centre For Musical Arts

Al Qouz Ind. 3 **04 341 8872**  
cmadubai.com

Map 1 **S6 Metro First Gulf Bank**

The centre is home to a number of adult and children's musical groups, including ensembles for string, flute, saxophone and guitar players. It also offers instrumental and choral tuition and has an instrument hire and repair service.

### Dubai Chamber Orchestra

**04 349 0423**

The chamber orchestra practises every Wednesday evening and gives three public performances a year. It was founded by an international group of musicians now residing in the UAE. There are currently more than 40 members hailing from more than 15 countries and more are always welcome. Its varied programme includes chamber and modern orchestral pieces.

### Dubai Classical Guitar Orchestra

DUCTAC Al Barsha 1 **04 341 4666**  
dcgo.ae

Map 1 **R6 Metro Mall of the Emirates**

This classical guitar ensemble rehearses at DUCTAC every Tuesday from 6pm to 8pm. People of all ages and levels of skill are welcome to join or learn. Regular performances are also staged.

### Dubai Drums

Building 8 Media City, Al Sufouh 2 **04 347 4790**  
dubaidrums.com

Map 1 **M5 Metro Nakheel**

Dubai Drums runs African Djembe drumming circles every Monday. A leader guides the group from simple rhythms right through to more complex performances. Classes cost Dhs.50 with drums provided. On Saturdays, Kidz Drum Club is held at DUCTAC, from 10.15am to 11.15am. Cost Dhs.50. Dubai Drums organises other events throughout the year, such as Full Moon and Desert Drumming.

## Gardening

### Dubai Gardening Group

Villa **97, Street 16D** Jumeira 1 **04 344 5999**  
Map 2 **G4 Metro Emirates Towers**

This group shares its communal gardening know-how in a friendly and informal atmosphere, with seminars and practical demonstrations from experts, trips to garden nurseries and members' gardens also arranged. If you want advice on how to improve your gardening skills, or just want to mingle with other green-fingered Dubaians and chat plants, then this group is for you.

## Photography & Film

Photography and film are increasingly popular in the region. Although three film festivals, DIFF, ADFF and Gulf Film Festival shine an encouraging spotlight on the region's film-making, there is still a dearth of serious funding. For amateur film fans, there are groups that bring the filmmaking community together for screenings, workshops and presentations.

### Photography

For photographers, Emirates Photography Club ([meetup.com/emiratesphotoclub](http://meetup.com/emiratesphotoclub)) is a web-based community where local photography enthusiasts can exchange tips and ideas. The group meets twice a month on alternating Tuesdays.

### Gulf Photo Plus

Alserkal Avenue Al Qouz Ind. 1 **04 380 8545**  
gulffotoplus.com

Map 1 **U6 Metro Noor Bank**

Digital photography classes for beginner to intermediate photographers, and workshops and events with master photographers. Introductory classes to Photoshop are also available. Check out their store selling lenses, lights and literature.

### the jamjar

Nr Dubai Garden Centre Al Qouz Ind. 3 **04 341 7303**  
thejamjardubai.com

Map 1 **S6 Metro First Gulf Bank**

The award-winning filmmaker, Mahmood Kabour, holds a film series called Mahmovies! at the jamjar (an art studio space). He screens art house offerings for the general public in an informal atmosphere; totally free of charge and encourages discussion amongst viewers. Mahmood is the director of the documentary Champ of the Camp – a film about life in the UAE's labour camps. Further details are available on the Mahmovies! group Facebook page ([facebook.com/mahmovies](http://facebook.com/mahmovies)).

### Lightform

[lightform.ae](http://lightform.ae)  
An International Filipino Photographer's Guild photographic society, it organises regular workshops, field trips and events for members. Members must complete a basic class to join.

### The Picturehouse

Dubai Mall Downtown Dubai, Burj Khalifa  
[reelcinemas.ae](http://reelcinemas.ae)

Map 2 **F7 Metro Burj Khalifa/Dubai Mall**

The Picturehouse at Reel Cinemas in Dubai Mall screens arthouse films and documentaries that don't make it onto the main screens.

### SAE Institute Dubai

Knowledge Village, Al Sufouh 2 **04 361 6173**  
sae.edu

Map 1 **N5 Metro Dubai Internet City**

The world's largest private college for film and audio production, animation and multimedia offers a degree in filmmaking, as well as photography bootcamps.

### The Scene Club

Building 2 Media City, Al Sufouh 2 **04 391 0051**  
thesceneclub.com

Map 1 **M5 Metro Nakheel**

Dubai's first film club for true movie buffs offers workshops as well as screenings of films and documentaries that may not make box office history but are felt to be culturally significant. Screenings generally take place once a month.

### Shelter Dubai

Alserkal Ave Al Qouz Ind. 4 **04 380 9040**  
shelter.ae

Map 1 **S7 Metro First Gulf Bank**

Shelter (shelter.ae) has a small screening room and holds regular film nights which are open to non-members. Visit their website for schedules.

### Scrabble

#### Dubai Scrabble League

**050 653 7992**

Meets once a month for friendly games between players of all levels. Regular competitions are held, and players also attend competitions overseas. The UAE Open is the qualifier for the Gulf Open in Bahrain. For more information, contact Selwyn Lobo.

### Singing

#### Dubai Chamber Choir

dubaichamberchoir.com

Established in 2003, the choir provides choral education and training, and performs concerts throughout the year. The seasonal Christmas series is a highlight. Contact the choir if you're interested in joining up. There are a limited number of members, therefore, auditions are held for all new members, and re-auditions for the full choir take place on a biennial basis.

#### Dubai Harmony

Al Safa 1 **056 690 7052**  
dubai-harmony.com

Map 2 **C5 Metro Noor Bank**

A barbershop quartet-style group with an all-female ensemble. New members are always welcome and previous musical training is not required – just the desire to sing with enthusiasm.

### Dubai Singers

Kindermusik, 15B Street Umm Suqeim 3 **04 344 8883**  
dubaisingers.info

Map 1 **S5 Metro First Gulf Bank**

This is a group of amateur singers who meet regularly to create music in a variety of styles. Repertoire includes requiems, choral works, Christmas carols, musicals and variety shows. Membership is open to everyone; sheet music is provided.

### Snooker

#### Dubai Snooker Club

Nr Karama Post Office Al Karama **04 337 5338**  
dubaisnooker.com

Map 2 **L6 Metro Oud Metha**

The club's facilities include 12 tournament-class snooker tables, 13 pool tables, two private snooker rooms and a private pool room. Table charges are Dhs.30 per hour, and food is available. You don't have to be a member to play.

### Take A Shot

Knight Shot (04 343 5678), near the Mazaya Centre, sells all manner of pool and billiards equipment and, as one of the main sponsors of the games in the region, it's a good place to chat to staff and find out about local tournaments.

### Yoga

A low-impact (but deceptively challenging) form of holistic exercise, yoga involves holding sequences of poses or 'asanas' that, combined with breathing exercises, gently but powerfully help your body become stronger and more flexible. Many health and fitness clubs offer yoga as part of their weekly schedule, as do some alternative therapy centres.

#### Bharat Thakur's Artistic Yoga

**800 9642**

artisticyoga.com

The latest twist in this flexible form of inner and outer exercise combines ancient yogic techniques with modern cardio training. Morning and evening classes, from Dhs.65, are held at Angsana Spa, Body & Soul Spa Al Ghusais and Al Hana Centre.

#### Club Stretch

Nr Mercure Hotel, Al Mina Rd Al Hudaiba **04 345 2131**  
clubstretch.ae

Map 2 **J4 Metro Al Jafiliya**

A popular studio offering Bikram yoga, which is practised in a hot room to aid muscle warming and stretching. Pilates is also offered. An unlimited 10 day introduction pass costs Dhs.120.



Advanced yoga

#### Exhale

Marsa Dubai **04 424 3777**  
exhaledubai.com

Map 1 **K4 Metro Dubai Marina**

This ladies-only fitness offering vinyasa, ashtanga and power yoga, as well as yoga for pregnant women. The cost per session is Dhs.75, with packages of 10 costing Dhs.650 and valid for two months.

#### Fitness First

DIFC DIFC, Zaa'beel 2 **04 363 7444**  
fitnessfirstme.com

Map 2 **G6 Metro Financial Centre**

Great for yoga newbies, hatha classes are held most days of the week, with power yoga also available. Prices start at Dhs.100 for non members. Other studios at The Meadows and Lakes.

#### Gems Of Yoga

White Crown Bldg, Shk Zayed Rd Trade Center 1  
**04 331 5161**

gemsofyogadubai.com

Map 2 **H5 Metro Emirates Towers**

Hatha, ashtanga and power yoga as well as classes for ladies, children and the elderly. Dhs.650 for 10 classes.

#### Rawr Yoga

Concord Tower Media City, Al Sufouh 2 **04 423 2808**  
rawryoga.com

Map 1 **N5 Metro Nakheel**

A stylish, state-of-the-art Bikram yoga studio in the heart of Media City. Offers 90 minute Bikram yoga classes, as well as hour-long express classes and a few

other types of yoga. Open to all ages and levels of fitness, with a range of membership packages from its Dhs.125 introductory offer to Dhs.700 for unlimited monthly membership.

#### Yoga Room

Swiss Tower JLT, Al Thanyah 5 **050 518 9966**  
yogaroom.ae

Map 1 **L6 Metro Dubai Marina**

Ashtanga and vinyasa yoga for all levels and workshops hosted by visiting yoga experts. Packages start from Dhs.80 for a single class.

#### Yogalates Bliss

Fraser Suites Al Sufouh 2 **050 328 9642**  
yogalatesblissindubai.com

Map 1 **P5 Metro Dubai Internet City**

Yogalates is a fusion of yoga and pilates to relieve muscular tension, improve core and pelvic floor strength and inspire balance. Classes are on an outdoor terrace. There's also Funky Fireflies kids yoga, as well as yoga teacher training workshops.

#### Zen Yoga

BBC Bldg Dubai Media City, Al Sufouh 2 **04 367 0435**  
yoga.ae

Map 1 **P5 Metro Dubai Internet City**

Zen Yoga is a yoga and pilates specialist. Its three modern centres have mirrored walls to help you check your posture. A one-month unlimited yoga trial costs Dhs.750 and regular classes are Dhs.80. The studios are in Emirates Hills (04 422 4643), Dubai Media City (04 367 0435), and Town Centre Jumeirah (04 349 2933).



# CHARTERHOUSE

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# WORKING IN DUBAI

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The Gate building with Emirates Towers in the background

## WORKING IN DUBAI

Dubai is a land of opportunity for skilled professionals with plenty of rewards on offer.

Expat workers come to Dubai for a number of reasons: to advance their career, enjoy a higher standard of living, or to take advantage of new opportunities. Whatever the reason, there are various advantages to making the move.

While the biggest bonus of working in Dubai may seem to be tax-free salaries, the cost of living (or your newly acquired lifestyle) can somewhat balance out this benefit. All-inclusive packages with accommodation and education allowances are not as common as they once were, although basic benefits still apply (such as annual flights home, health insurance and around 22 calendar days of annual leave). That said, Dubai is still very much a land of opportunities for skilled professionals. It is comparatively easier to change industries, as skill sets are less 'pigeon-holed' than in other countries, and

jobs in certain industries (such as construction and property) are more readily available.

Expats can work in either the public (government) or private sectors; many companies in the private sector operate within Free Trade Zones (FTZs), where foreigners can work, trade or establish their business under more relaxed laws.

To work anywhere in Dubai you need to be aged 18 to 65 years, be sponsored by an employer, and have a residence visa. The visa permits you to live and work anywhere in the UAE; it is valid for two years (or three years for those working in some free zones or in government jobs). All companies are governed by UAE Labour Law, although there is a noticeable difference in salaries, benefits, holidays, annual leave, and end of service payments between the public (government) and private sectors.

## EMPLOYMENT

### Getting Started

If you're looking to live and work in Dubai you have three options. You can search for jobs while in your home country; you'll often be interviewed by phone or Skype, rather than here in the UAE. Once you have a job offer, your employer will start to process your residence visa. Depending on your contract, your employer may pay for your flight to Dubai (and often tickets for any family members), one month's temporary accommodation, shipping costs, vehicle hire, and the services of a relocation company to help you find a new home. Alternatively, you can arrive in Dubai on a visit visa, which means that you have 30 days (or up to 60 days if you renew it) to legally look for work and live in the country. Or, you may already be living and working in the UAE and looking to transfer jobs. In this instance, you will need to cancel your existing residence visa; your new employer will then sponsor you on a new residence visa.

### Job Hunting

Start by registering with a recruitment agency in Dubai. The agency will then set up an interview where you are usually required to fill out a form summarising your CV; you will also need a few passport photos. The agency takes its fee from the registered company once the position has been filled. It is illegal for a recruitment company to levy fees on candidates for this service, although be warned that some might try.

### Boutique Recruitment Services

If your field is office support, but you are looking for an executive position, then Miller Hay ([millerhay.com](http://millerhay.com)) could be the best recruitment company for you to contact. They specialise in finding high-calibre secretarial and office support staff.

Employers also use local newspapers and headhunters (also known as executive search companies) to advertise job opportunities, as well as their own websites. It is easier to look for a job once you are in Dubai. Get your hands on the Gulf News appointments supplement ([gncareers.com](http://gncareers.com)), published every day except Fridays and Saturdays, or the Khaleej Times Appointments ([khaleejtimes.com](http://khaleejtimes.com)) every day except Friday. The National has a careers section that is available to those who subscribe online.

Also, check listings on online versions of international newspapers as companies within the UAE often post jobs on these sites. Websites for The Guardian ([guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk)) and The Times ([timesonline.co.uk](http://timesonline.co.uk)) newspapers in the UK and The Washington Post ([washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com)) in the US are often a good resource. You can also upload your CV to sites like [monstergulf.com](http://monstergulf.com), [naukrigulf.com](http://naukrigulf.com), [bayt.com](http://bayt.com) and [gulftalent.com](http://gulftalent.com). Job advertisements are posted on [dubizzle.com](http://dubizzle.com) and [expatwoman.com](http://expatwoman.com). Also try contacting companies directly and start networking, using sites such as [linkedin.com](http://linkedin.com).

### What To Expect

According to the Bayt.com Job Index Survey (August 2013), the time is ripe for many jobseekers. There is a demand for qualified professionals in the UAE, as engineering (27%), business management (24%) and commerce (23%) top the list of most desirable qualifications among UAE employers. The most attractive industries in the UAE for jobs are perceived to be banking and finance (34%), construction (33%) and oil, gas and petrochemicals (33%). Recruitment agency Charterhouse lists the following average monthly salaries for key sectors:

HR Manager: Dhs.25,000  
 Head Of Corporate Bank: Dhs.60,000  
 Senior Civil/Structural Engineer: Dhs.35,000  
 Financial Accountant: Dhs.20,000  
 Finance Director: Dhs.50,000  
 Senior Project Engineer: Dhs.55,000  
 Senior Architect: Dhs.30,000  
 Legal Secretary: Dhs.20,000  
 General Manager (Construction): Dhs.75,000  
 Designer: Dhs.18,000  
 Key Account Manager: Dhs.20,000  
 Head of IT: Dhs.20,000-30,000  
 Communications Manager: Dhs.22,000-35,000  
 Marketing Manager: Dhs.25,000  
 Partner (Law Firm): Dhs.60,000-70,000 plus

### Recruitment Agencies

**BAC Middle East** Liberty House, Zaa'beel 2, 04 439 8500, [bacme.com](http://bacme.com)

**Bayt.com** Grosvenor Business Tower, Al Thanyah 1, 04 449 3100, [bayt.com](http://bayt.com)

**Charterhouse Middle East** > p.202, 213 Maze Tower, Shk Zayed Rd, Trade Center 1, 04 372 3500, [charterhouseme.ae](http://charterhouseme.ae)

**Hays Middle East** Dubai Knowledge Village, Al Sufouh 2, 04 361 2882, [hays.ae](http://hays.ae)

**Manpower Middle East** Dubai Internet City Bldg 1, Al Sufouh 2, 04 391 0460, [manpower-me.com](http://manpower-me.com)

**Parsons Brinckerhoff** The H Dubai Office Tower, Trade Center 1, 04 376 7222, [pbworld.com](http://pbworld.com)

## Permit To Work

Once you receive a job offer, your employer, and sponsor, will start to process your residence visa with the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA). All the paperwork should be taken care of by your PRO (see Getting Started); you will need to take a medical test and hand over your passport and attested education certificates. Your labour card or free zone ID – your permit to work – will be processed at the same time. Your PRO should also help with your application for your Resident ID.

## Labour Card

Employees working outside a free zone will receive a labour card, processed by the Ministry of Labour. If you work in a free zone, however, you will receive a free zone ID, which is processed by the free zone authority and can be ready in as little as 24 hours. Both cards feature your photo and details of your employer. The labour card costs Dh.1,000 (paid for by your company) and is valid for as long as your residence visa is. A free zone ID is valid for either one, two or three years.

You will need to sign your labour contract before the labour card/free zone ID is issued. This contract is printed in both Arabic and English. The plan is for labour cards to be phased out in favour of the Resident ID, but, for now, the labour card is still required. There is now an electronic e-labour card, which is designed to replace the tangible cards. However, it is only available to companies on the mainland and not those residing in free zones.

## Family Sponsored

If you are sponsored by your husband or wife on a family visa, you can still legally work. Your employer will simply need to apply for your labour card; you will need an NOC from your sponsor as well as your passport with residence visa, your sponsor's passport and your attested education certificates.

## Temporary Work Permits

Non-GCC nationals who are above 18 years of age can now enter the UAE on a short-term work permit which is valid for 60 days; these can be extended/renewed up to six times (subject to a fee and bank guarantee).

## Employment Contracts

Once you have accepted a job offer you will be asked to sign an employment contract; this should list the starting date, type of employment, location, terms and conditions, duration and the salary. This is a legally binding agreement that should be written in both Arabic and English. You can check or print your labour contract and card online at mol.gov.ae. There is often

confusion over the offer letter and the contract. An offer letter should give details of the terms of the job you are being offered, such as salary, leave, hours and other benefits; if you accept the terms of this offer, it becomes a legally binding contract.

An employment contract can be terminated if both parties agree, provided that the employee's written consent is given; the employer will then need to cancel your residence visa. See Changing Jobs.

## Probation

Probation periods can be set for a maximum of six months. Some companies delay the residency process until the probation period is up, which can make settling in difficult – no residency means you can't sponsor family members, buy a car or get a bank loan.

By law, employees are not entitled to paid sick leave during probation and most firms do not grant paid annual leave to be taken during this time – you will continue to accrue annual leave though that you can take over the course of the year.

## Leave

While on sick leave, the first 15 days are with full pay, the next 30 days are with half pay, and any subsequent days are unpaid. Annual holiday starts at one calendar month per year, roughly 22 working days.

## Working Hours

Working hours differ dramatically between companies; straight shifts vary from 7am to 2.30pm for government organisations to the common 9am to 6pm for private companies. Most retail outlets tend to be open from 10am to 10pm but often operate shifts. Teachers start early at around 7.30am and classes finish around 2.30pm, although their hours aren't as predetermined as other roles. Although less common nowadays, some offices and shops operate split shifts, which allow for a longer break in the afternoon (hours are usually 8am to 1pm and 4pm to 7pm).

The maximum number of hours permitted per week according to UAE Labour Law is 48, although some industries, such as hospitality and retail, have longer stipulated hours. Annual holiday allowance starts at one calendar month per year, or roughly 22 working days. Some employees, especially those in management, have more than this and long service usually adds to holiday allowance.

Friday is the Islamic holy day and therefore a universal day off for offices and schools. Consumer demand means that the hospitality and retail industries are open seven days a week. Saturday is the second day of the weekend; some companies work five and a half days a week and some operate a six-day week, taking only Friday as a rest day. Public holidays are set by the government, while the timing of religious holidays depends on the sighting of

the moon. This can mean that it is difficult to plan holidays, as confirmation of public holidays can come just days before the event. All employees (even non-Muslims) are entitled to a shorter working day during Ramadan, although lawyers would advise you not to insist on this if you are not fasting.

## Health Insurance

A new health insurance law (Insurance System for Advancing Healthcare in Dubai – ISAHD) is currently being rolled out in Dubai, which makes it compulsory for employers to provide all workers, and their spouses and dependants, with basic health insurance; this covers all businesses in the emirate including those in free zones. Under the law, employers must pay for private health cover with any insurance company holding a health insurance permit from the DHA. This mandatory health cover also applies to domestic workers such as maids and nannies. The first stage was implemented in October 2014, requiring 200 or so companies in Dubai's mainland and freezone with more than 1,000 employees to provide health cover for workers.

## Gratuity Payments

An employee on a fixed-term contract, who has completed one or more years of continuous service, will be entitled to 21 days pay for each of the first five years of service, and 30 days pay for each additional year as an end-of-service gratuity payment; this compensates for the lack of a pension system. This is based on your basic salary (not including basic housing, transport and utilities). The total end-of-service gratuity should not exceed the salary of two years. Leaving before the end of your fixed-term contract or being fired for breaking UAE Labour Law could result in the loss of your gratuity payment.

## Maternity Leave

Under UAE Labour Law, women are entitled to 45 days maternity leave, on full pay, once they've completed one year of continuous service. Fathers are not entitled to paternity leave. If you've been with your employer for less than a year you can claim 45 days on half pay.

## UAE Labour Law

The UAE Labour Law outlines information on employee entitlements, employment contracts and disciplinary rules. The law is employer friendly, but it also clearly outlines employee rights. You can download a copy of the document from the Ministry of Labour website (mol.gov.ae); the document has not been fully updated for some time but amendments and additions are often posted on the site.

If you find yourself in the situation where you have not been paid (including women on maternity leave), you can file a case with the UAE Labour Department which will take the necessary action. You could also get a lawyer to deal with the claim on your behalf. Although lawyers are expensive in Dubai, the employer will have to bear the cost if the case is settled in your favour.

## Changing Jobs

If you decide to leave a company before the end of your contract you will require permission from your existing employer in the form of an NOC. Your employer will also need to cancel your residence visa. You will then be able to switch to a new job and your new employer will process a new residence visa and labour card.

Officially, anyone working in the private sector who breaks their contract could face a six month ban from working for any other company in the UAE (if you are working in a free zone, this ban may be restricted to jobs within that free zone only). However, banning rules are increasingly relaxed and job transfers have become much more flexible. Stay on good terms with your employer, and you shouldn't face a problem. If you complete your contract period, either two or three years, you can legally move jobs without an NOC.

Always check if there is a non-compete clause in your contract, particularly if your new role is with a direct competitor to your current employer.

There are some exceptions where you can transfer your sponsorship without the approval of your current sponsor; such as death of your sponsor, change of company ownership, company closure and cancellation of your company's trade licence.

## Transferring A Visa

If you are planning to transfer your visa, your new employer will first need to gain permission from your previous employer, after getting approval from the Ministry of Labour. Free zone visas can usually be transferred from one employer to the next. However, the previous employer needs to agree to the transfer and may need to provide a no objection certificate (NOC). Keep in mind that this NOC may also need to be translated into Arabic, on headed notepaper, and signed by the local sponsor.

Non-free zone visas need to be cancelled before you can apply for a new one. You should also sign a document instructive of a six-month work ban. This ban can be lifted with an NOC from a previous employer. When a non-free zone visa is cancelled, the new employer may have to pay a fine for the duration of the remainder of the visa, if the employee has not completed a specified period of work.

## Absconding

Anyone leaving the country or their job permanently without informing their employer and cancelling the

residence visa with their sponsor will be classed as 'absconding' and may receive a ban; employers or sponsors have to report absconders who have left the country within 10 days, not within three months as was previously the case.

Absconders are reported to the Ministry of Labour, who then pass information on to the GDRFA and the Dubai police. If a ban is on your computer file, any applications from a new employer for a residence visa and labour card will be refused. Also, if you leave the country or are unaccountable for seven days in a row or 20 days in total, your company can terminate your employment contract without awarding you gratuity pay or any outstanding benefits.

## Company Closure

If the company you work for closes, you are still entitled to outstanding holiday pay and gratuity. The Ministry of Labour would need to be involved though. You are allowed to transfer sponsorship to a new employer; but if you can't find a new job your visa will be cancelled and you will have to leave the country (though some nationalities are allowed to re-enter on a tourist visa straight away). To transfer the visa you'll need an attested certificate of closure, issued by the court and submitted to the Ministry of Labour. If your company were to close without cancelling their trade licence, you could receive a short-term ban from taking a new role with a new employer. Consult the appropriate government offices to get your paperwork right, or consider investing in the services of a specialist labour lawyer.

## Redundancy

If you are made redundant, the first thing to discuss with your employer is whether they are prepared to be flexible with your visa status. If you have a good relationship with your company, you should have room to negotiate the terms under which you are leaving, and it's a good idea to request a few months leeway so that you have the opportunity to find a new employer and sponsor. If this is not possible and your company wishes to cancel your visa immediately, you have a standard 30 day grace period within which to leave the country before incurring any fines for overstaying your visa. Similarly, if you are in company accommodation, try to negotiate the date on which you need to move out. If your company has paid for your villa or apartment up front, they may let you stay for a fixed period.

It is always a good idea to plan for every eventuality by putting money aside to act as a buffer should you lose your job; rather than incur large debts, this money can help pay for key bills like rent and car loans.

## FREE ZONES

Dubai is home to more than 20 free zones, which service a wide range of industries, including healthcare, education, commodities and technology

companies. Unique laws regarding taxation, recruitment of labour, and income apply to these areas. Various benefits make free zones an ideal option for companies wishing to establish a distribution, manufacturing and service base for trade outside of the UAE.

Free zones in the UAE work on a 'one-stop shop' principle – so, as an employer or company owner, you'll only have one authority to deal with. This should simplify the process of running your business considerably. If you want to work as a consultant or you wish to set up a small business, free zones are your best bet. The process and fees for getting a visa varies between each free zone. Note that the cost of commercial property can be quite high in popular free zones, such as Dubai Media City and the Jebel Ali Free Zone.

Employees of companies in free zones have different sponsorship options to choose from, depending on which free zone they inhabit. For example, in the Jebel Ali Free Zone you can either be sponsored by an individual company or by the free zone authority itself.

Whether you are in the Jebel Ali Free Zone, Dubai Internet City, Dubai Media City, Knowledge Village, Healthcare City or any other free zone, the respective authority will process your residence visa directly through the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA), without having to get employment approval from the Ministry of Labour. This speeds up the process significantly, and residence visas can sometimes be granted in a matter of hours.

Once the GDRFA has stamped your residence visa in your passport, the free zone will issue your free zone ID – this also acts as your security pass for entry to the free zone. A big advantage of working in a free zone is the lack of red tape encountered if you move jobs to another free zone company. This is because the free zone itself is actually your sponsor, so when you switch jobs to another employer you won't be switching sponsors.

The validity of a free zone residence visa permit will depend on how long the labour card is valid for (either one, two or three years, depending on the zone).

Designed to encourage investment from overseas, free zones allow 100% foreign ownership and exemption from taxes and customs duties. There are plenty to choose from in Dubai: the most well-known being Dubai Media City and Jebel Ali Free Zone.

## Choosing A Free Zone

If the idea of working for yourself in a free zone appeals to you, then begin by checking out the Dubai free zones' individual websites or see [uae.freezones.com](http://uae.freezones.com), which provides a fact sheet on each zone. This will give you a good idea of which zone is best suited to your business plan, as well as the conditions to fulfil to obtain a licence. Licences

for businesses vary from Dhs.5,500 in the Jebel Ali Free Zone to Dhs.20,000 in JLT.

## Freelance Work

Freelancers can apply for a work permit and residence visa from a select number of free zones in Dubai, including International Media Production Zone, Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone, Dubai Media City and Knowledge Village. Your profession needs to be related to these free zones' activities, which are predominantly media-related: artists, editors, directors, writers, engineers, producers, photographers, camera operators and technicians in the fields of film, TV, music, radio and print media.

Freelancers are granted a freelance permit, which identifies you as a sole practitioner and enables you to conduct your business in your birth name as opposed to a brand name. You will also be given a UAE residence visa, and have access to a 'hot desk' and business facilities (including a PO Box address) within the free zone that sponsored you. Both the permit and visa are valid for one year. This costs between Dhs.20,000-30,000. The process varies between free zones, and check individual websites for specific requirements and to download forms.

An alternative option, depending on your line of work, may be to set up or register your own Dubai-based company. This has become a little easier to do than it used to be (check out *Explorer's Dubai How-To* guide for step-by-step information on setting up a company). Or, contact the Department of Economic Development ([dubaied.gov.ae](http://dubaied.gov.ae)) to get started. See also Part-time work in this chapter for other options.

## Virtuzone

Virtuzone is officially part of Fujairah Creative City free zone, and was set up with the express aim of helping those who want to either set up a small company or relocate it to the UAE while keeping costs as low as possible. Start-up costs begin at around Dhs.10,000 and Virtuzone looks after the whole process; significantly, there's no need for a UAE sponsor, companies can be 100% foreign owned and there are no corporate or income taxes. Also, there's no requirement to take commercial premises – something that really drives up the price of setting up in other free zones.

If you're looking to move your small business from your home country or are thinking about taking a skill and going solo, it's probably the easiest and cheapest way to set up. Visit [vz.ae](http://vz.ae) or the physical office on The Walk at JBR.

## Dubai Media City

Media professionals in the following categories are eligible to apply for a freelance permit and visa in



Dubai Media City

Dubai Media City: artists, editors, directors, writers, engineers, producers, photographers, camera operators and technicians in the fields of film, TV, music, radio or print media. They will be subject to the conditions listed below:

- The freelance permit includes a residence visa, access to 10 shared work stations, and a shared PO Box address and fax line
- A minimum of three hours per week and no more than three hours per day must be spent at the hot desk
- A business plan, CV, bank reference letter and portfolio must be submitted along with your application

Costs at DMC include:

- Dhs.5,000 security deposit (refundable)
- Dhs.5,000 joining fee (one-off payment)
- Dhs.8,000 annual freelance permit fee
- Dhs.4,000 annual membership fee

## Working On The Move

MAKE Business Hub (makebusinesshub.com) near JBR at The Walk offers freelancers a workspace and a cafe rolled into one; there are work stations, work pods for private meetings and a tasty menu serving breakfast through to dinner.

## Part-time Work

In the past, it has been extremely difficult to organise part-time work. What little there is has been offered 'off the books' to those already in Dubai under their partner's sponsorship. But new legislation now allows residents to take on work part-time in Dubai.

Since January 2011, teenagers from 15 to 18 years of age can find jobs in the UAE upon obtaining a teenage work permit from the Ministry of Labour. Part-time work permits can also be issued for any of the following: workers below the age of 65 with valid residence visas who are registered with the Ministry of Labour; government workers; or women living with their parents, husbands, sons or daughters with valid residence visas.

However, part-time work is still a relatively new concept in Dubai and it may be a while until there's the wide variety of casual work available that you'll find in most other countries, but there are an increasing number of opportunities. For more information, contact the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners (dnrd.ae).

It is up to the employer to pay for the part-time work permit (which costs Dhs.500) rather than the employee. It's also essential that both sign a contract which explicitly states the wage before the permit can be issued. To request a part-time work permit, visit the

Ministry of Labour website (mol.gov.ae). You will need to provide a number of documents including copies of the company's trade licence, a photo of the employee as well as a copy of his passport and his education certificates attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## BUSINESS

### Business Culture

Like anywhere in the world, doing business in the UAE has its own unique idiosyncrasies. Even if you work for a western company, the chances are that some of your business transactions will be with Emiratis, whether on a customer or client basis.

One of the key aspects to realise is that family ties, friendship, honour and trust are crucial. So much so that those who have built good relationships can often see rules bent; the system of favours being given and not forgotten is an integral, if unspoken, part of things. Age, money and social connections are also significant in establishing your status, and older people are treated with respect. Often elders in a room are greeted first and served first at meals.

All of this can mean that things can take longer to get done than expats are used to; which can, in turn, lead to frustrations and difficulties meeting expected deadlines if you work for a western company.



Networking is important

# Entrepreneurs' Guide



Dubai is one of the most exciting cities in the world for entrepreneurs and start-up companies. The fast-changing nature of the region means that opportunities abound for small business ventures here. It is advisable to do your market research before you arrive and then come along with endless endurance to tackle the bureaucratic procedures that will need to be followed.

### Getting started

All companies setting up outside a free zone in Dubai must have a trade licence, which determines which business activities you are permitted to practise. One of your first points of call should be the Department of Economic Development (DED) which issues trade licences and is the integral authority for business in the UAE.

You will need sponsorship from a UAE national (who will have a 51% stake in your business) if setting up a Limited Liability Company (LLC) or public/private shareholding company. Alternatively, you will need sponsorship from a local service agent if setting up a branch company, sole proprietorship or civil business.

### Applying for a trade licence

This is a multi-step process that requires you to register your trade name, apply for an Initial Approval Certificate, rent/buy commercial premises, and obtain special licensing approvals (if required). These procedures are dealt with by the DED and Ministry of Economy. Only then will you receive a full trade licence. This is usually valid for one year.

### Getting a PO Box

You will need to organise a company PO Box as part of the set-up procedure. All mail is then sent to a PO Box address, registered at your company premises. See [emiratespost.ae](http://emiratespost.ae) for details.

### DCCI

All commercial and industrial businesses in Dubai must be registered with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry (DCCI), responsible for registering and attesting members, and recording information on companies.

### Setting up in a free zone

Free zones offer business licences to companies 100% owned by foreign nationals. This negates the need for a UAE national sponsor or local service agent; you simply apply to the relevant Free Zone Authority (FZA) – there are more than 20 to choose from in Dubai, each designed around one or more industries. While the initial minimum capital requirement to set up in a free zone can be substantial, there are plenty of benefits.

### Get, set, go!

The following companies can assist you in setting up a business, dealing with licensing, start-up and free zone applications, as well as offering ongoing services such as audits and accounting, HR and recruitment:

**Commitbiz** [commitbiz.com](http://commitbiz.com)  
**Healy Consultants** [healyconsultants.com](http://healyconsultants.com)  
**HLB Hamt Chartered Accountants** [hlbhamt.com](http://hlbhamt.com)  
**Middle East and Africa Monitor** [meamonitor.com](http://meamonitor.com)

**For the full procedure of how to set up your business, see Explorer's Dubai How-To guide.**

## WORKING IN DUBAI STARTING A BUSINESS

Warm greetings are commonplace, with long handshakes, effusive compliments and enquiries about the health of families. Avoid enquiring after female family members though, as this is kept extremely private. Similarly, when meeting someone of the opposite sex, it's likely that a handshake will not be given and is best to refrain unless they extend their hand to you. Always use your right hand to meet, eat or hand over items as Muslims reserve the left hand for bodily hygiene and consider it unclean. Avoid showing the bottom of your shoes in meetings too, as this is considered an insult.

If you're attending a business meeting at an Arab-owned company, it's likely that you'll be served traditional Arabic coffee, or *kahwa*. Sharing coffee is an important social ritual in the Middle East so you should drink some when offered. Cups should be taken in the right hand and if there is a waiter standing by, replenishing your cup, there are two ways to signal that you have had enough: either leave a small amount of coffee in the bottom of your cup or gently tip the cup from side to side.

## Networking & Events

With Dubai still being a relatively small city, made up of communities that are smaller still, networking is critical, even across industries. Everyone seems to know everyone else and getting in with the corporate 'in-crowd' definitely has its plus points.

Business acumen here can, at times, be more important than specific industry knowledge so it pays to attend business events and trade shows. Make friends in government departments and this will often land you in the front line for opportunities.

Likewise, bad news is rarely made public here, so staying in tune with the grapevine can help prevent wrong decisions. Social networking sites such as LinkedIn (linkedin.com) are a great resource when looking for new jobs or contacts, whilst Eleqt.com is an exclusive social networking site for high-level executives and entrepreneurs willing to pay the Dhs.18,000 joining fee.

## Business Councils

**American Business Council of Dubai & The Northern Emirates** 04 379 1414, [abcdubai.com](http://abcdubai.com)  
**Arab Business Club** 04 358 3000, [arabbusinessclub.org](http://arabbusinessclub.org)  
**Australian Business Council Dubai** 04 390 0467, [abcduae.com](http://abcduae.com)  
**British Business Group** 04 397 0303, [britbiz-uae.com](http://britbiz-uae.com)  
**Canadian Business Council** 04 359 2625, [cbc-dubai.com](http://cbc-dubai.com)  
**Danish Business Council Dubai** 050 625 0092, [danishbusinessdubai.com](http://danishbusinessdubai.com)

**French Business Council Dubai & The Northern Emirates** 04 312 6700, [fbcubai.com](http://fbcubai.com)  
**German Emirati Joint Council For Industry & Commerce** 04 447 0100, [vae.ahk.de](http://vae.ahk.de)  
**Indian Business & Professional Council** 04 332 4300, [ibpcdubai.com](http://ibpcdubai.com)  
**Iranian Business Council** 04 335 9220, [ibc.ae](http://ibc.ae)  
**Italian Business Council** 04 321 3082, [italianbusinesscouncil.com](http://italianbusinesscouncil.com)  
**Malaysia Business Council** 04 335 5528, [mbc-uae.com](http://mbc-uae.com)  
**Netherlands Business Council** 050 559 2272, [nbcubai.com](http://nbcubai.com)  
**Pakistan Business Council Dubai** 056 109 3017, [pbcdubai.com](http://pbcdubai.com)  
**Singapore Business Council** [sbcauae.com](http://sbcauae.com)  
**South African Business Council** 050 259 4280, [sabco-uae.org](http://sabco-uae.org)  
**Spanish Business Council** 04 330 0110, [spanishbusinesscouncil.ae](http://spanishbusinesscouncil.ae)  
**Swedish Business Council** 056 114 5395, [sbcauae.se](http://sbcauae.se)  
**Swiss Business Council** 04 368 7702, [swissbcauae.com](http://swissbcauae.com)

## STARTING A BUSINESS

Starting a business requires meticulous market research, a strict and realistic business plan and responsive action to take advantage of fleeting openings in the market. Bankruptcy laws are not as defined as in other countries and mismanagement of funds could result in harsh repercussions, including deportation or even jail time.

These days there is legislation which aids the start-up process – for example, there is no minimum capital requirement to start a business, unless you opt for a Limited Liability Company, in which case the capital requirement is Dhs.300,000.

One of the main hesitations that entrepreneurs have about starting a business here is the traditional requirement of having a local sponsor control a majority stake of the company. An eagerly awaited revamp of the commercial companies' law is in the drafting, although clauses removing the requirement for a local sponsor or a local service agent have already been rejected by the Federal National Council.

The exception to the above are free zones, where full private foreign ownership is already permitted. The licensing process for opening a business in a free zone is also more streamlined and helped by the free zone organisation. Government and privately sponsored initiatives are also helping

# CHARTERHOUSE

Do you know what's on the other side?



## STRATEGIC CAREER DEVELOPMENT

PO Box 75972  
Suite 903 Maze Tower  
Sheikh Zayed Road  
Dubai, UAE  
Tel No: +971 4 372 3500  
Fax No: +971 4 332 8062

PO Box 113100  
1st Floor Regus,  
Al Bateen Business Centre  
Bainunah Street, Al Bateen C6  
Abu Dhabi, UAE  
Tel No: +971 2 406 9819

PO Box 27774  
Level 22 Tornado Tower  
West Bay  
Doha, Qatar  
Licensed by the QFCA  
Tel No: +974 4 429 2555

CHARTERHOUSE  
[www.charterhouseme.ae](http://www.charterhouseme.ae)

to spur growth and educate potential business owners. The Mohammed Bin Rashid Establishment for SME Development ([sme.ae](http://sme.ae)) was set up to help entrepreneurs understand the procedures and potential costs of setting up in Dubai. The organisation provides guidance and information to Emiratis and expats hoping to start their own business. If you want someone to handle all of the red tape for you, companies like Sentinel Business Centres ([sentinelbusinesscentres.com](http://sentinelbusinesscentres.com)) and Creative Zone ([creativezone.ae](http://creativezone.ae)) can help you set up in a free zone or even help find a local sponsor for your business.

There are various business groups in Dubai that help facilitate investments and provide opportunities for networking. Some provide information on trade with their respective countries, as well as business opportunities in Dubai and internationally. Most arrange social and networking events. Before you set up, contact the Dubai Chamber of Commerce & Industry ([dubaichamber.com](http://dubaichamber.com)) and the Ministry of Economy ([economy.gov.ae](http://economy.gov.ae)). Both can offer excellent advice. Embassies or consulates can also be a good business resource and may be able to offer contact lists for the UAE and the country of representation. For further information, refer to Explorer's *UAE Business Guide*, the Dubai Commercial Directory or the Hawk Business Pages.

## Business Domain Name

You can register your domain name through Etisalat ([etisalat.ae](http://etisalat.ae)) which handles domain name registration through UAEnic (United Arab Emirates Network Information Center), or through du ([du.ae](http://du.ae)) which is an accredited registrar of the .ae Domain Administration (.aeDA). It can also register other top-level domains such as those ending with .com and .net.

## Consultants & Chartered Accountants

It pays in the long run to get professional advice if you want to set up your own business or become a freelancer. Listed below are just some of the consultants who can help and advise. For more, see [askexplorer.com](http://askexplorer.com).

**Commitbiz** Dubai World Trade Centre, Trade Center 2, 04 386 7444, [commitbiz.com](http://commitbiz.com)  
**Future Way Business Services** LLP, Golden Motor Building, Frej Al Murrar Deira, [www.futurewbs.com](http://www.futurewbs.com)  
**Healy Consultants** Dubai World Trade Center, Trade Center 2, [healyconsultants.com](http://healyconsultants.com)  
**HLB Hamt Chartered Accountants** City Tower 2, Trade Center 1, 04 327 7775, [hlbhamt.com](http://hlbhamt.com)  
**LLC Licence Set Up**, 401 Al Zarouni Business Centre Sheikh Zayed Road, [cigdubai.ae](http://cigdubai.ae)  
**Middle East & Africa Monitor** [meamonitor.com](http://meamonitor.com)

## VOLUNTARY & CHARITY WORK

There are a number of opportunities to do voluntary or charity work in Dubai and the organisations listed below are always looking for committed volunteers. The Dubai Volunteering Centre, run by the Community Development Authority (CDA), regulates, promotes and encourages people to get involved in voluntary work. To register as a volunteer, call the CDA on 800 2121 or visit the website at [cda.gov.ae](http://cda.gov.ae).

If you're not entirely sure which charity you'd like to help, or want to volunteer for more than one charity, check out [volunteerindubai.com](http://volunteerindubai.com) – the website matches volunteers with the needs of specific drives or events.

### All As One

**Fairmont Dubai Trade Center 1 04 311 6707**  
[allasone.org](http://allasone.org)

### Map 2 H5 Metro World Trade Centre

A non-profit organisation that cares for abandoned, disabled, abused and destitute children of Sierra Leone at the All As One Children's Centre. Operating costs are funded through donations, child sponsorship and charity events.

### Breast Cancer Arabia

**055 147 6435**  
[breastcancerarabia.com](http://breastcancerarabia.com)

A charity that raises money to pay for breast cancer treatment for women who cannot afford it. Monies are raised at events such as golf days organised by the Breast Cancer Arabia Foundation, as well as through donations. Email [foundation@breastcancerarabia.com](mailto:foundation@breastcancerarabia.com) for further information.

### Feline Friends Dubai

**050 451 0058**  
[felinefriendsdubai.com](http://felinefriendsdubai.com)

This non-profit organisation, with volunteers who rescue and re-home stray cats and kittens, promotes the control of street cats by sterilisation and provides care and relief to sick and injured cats. Rescue volunteers and foster homes are always needed.

### Gulf for Good

**Century Village Al Garhoud 04 368 0222**  
[gulf4good.org](http://gulf4good.org)  
**Metro Jebel Ali**

This organisation raises funds for selected worthy causes around the world by organising sponsored expeditions and treks to locations across the globe.

Challenges include hikes in the Himalayan foothills and a trek through Palestine's remote highlands, wadis and deserts.

### K9 Friends > p.155

**04 887 8739**  
[k9friends.com](http://k9friends.com)

A group of volunteers who rescue, care for and re-home unwanted dogs from all over the UAE. Running costs are met entirely through public donations and corporate sponsors. Assistance is always welcome.

### Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)

**Al Shafar Bldg, Shk Zayed Rd Al Thanyah 1**  
**04 457 9255**  
[msf-me.org](http://msf-me.org)

### Map 1 N6 Metro Dubai Internet City

An international, non-profit emergency medical relief organisation. Volunteers can become involved locally with fundraising and awareness campaigns. Annual events include the Dubai Vertical Marathon, where participants climb the Emirates Towers' 1,334 steps, and Wild Wadi's Swim Burj Al Arab.

### Riding for the Disabled Association of Dubai

**Desert Palm Retreat Warsan 2**  
[rdad.ae](http://rdad.ae)

Launched by HH Sheikha Hassa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the association provides therapeutic benefits for children with special needs through gentle horse riding. Reliable volunteers are always needed to lead the horses and assist riders.

### Women for Women International

**050 342 4949**  
[womenforwomen.org](http://womenforwomen.org)

Informal charity events organised by a group of ladies to help Women for Women International, a charity giving aid to war survivors. Contact Julie Wilkinson for details on 050 342 4949 or at [jwilkinson@valleyforge.com](mailto:jwilkinson@valleyforge.com).

## Environmental Groups

The UAE government and local municipalities have started making efforts towards reducing waste and consumption and raising environmental awareness. Masdar City in Abu Dhabi is being hailed as a groundbreaking green project and will be one of the world's most sustainable places to live, powered by renewable energy sources ([masdarcity.ae](http://masdarcity.ae)).

In Dubai, The Change Initiative is a flagship store in Al Barsha for environmentally friendly services and products. The first company of its type in the region, it specialises in eco-friendly goods including sustainable

cleaning products, solar panels, household appliances and building solutions.

Dubai's Emirates Environment Group ([eeg-uae.org](http://eeg-uae.org)) is devoted to environmental protection through education, action and community involvement. It also has a recycling centre. Call 04 344 8622.

Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve ([ddcr.org](http://ddcr.org)) allows visits and sometimes accepts volunteer workers to help with the monitoring of endangered species.

In neighbouring Abu Dhabi the government effort is being accelerated by various environmental organisations who aim to protect the environment, as well as to educate the population about environmental issues. The Environment Agency Abu Dhabi ([ead.ae](http://ead.ae)) assists the Abu Dhabi government in the conservation and management of the emirate's natural environment, resources, wildlife and biological diversity.

Sir Bani Yas Island, which is part of the Abu Dhabi emirate, is home to an internationally acclaimed breeding programme for endangered wildlife. Created as a private wildlife sanctuary by the late Sheikh Zayed, it is now an exclusive eco-resort (call 02 801 5400 or visit [anantara.com](http://anantara.com)).

Emirates Wildlife Society is a national environmental NGO that operates in association with the WWF ([panda.org](http://panda.org)). In addition, The Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife (06 531 1212) at Sharjah Desert Park has a successful breeding programme for wildlife under threat, particularly the Arabian leopard. The breeding centre is off-limits to visitors but the Arabian Wildlife Centre (06 531 1999), also at the Desert Park, is open to the public.



Several environmental groups help native wildlife

# Shows & Exhibitions

The MICE industry in Dubai is growing rapidly, as both local and international companies choose to host events in the emirate.

With its vast transport hub, Dubai is an increasingly popular location for international trade fairs and conferences. The emirate's central location and abundance of five-star accommodation options means worldwide organisations are likely to choose Dubai as their meeting point.

There are a growing number of industry and trade events in Dubai that are lucrative for companies – or a fantastic day of entertainment for local families.

The Dubai World Trade Centre hosts more than 500 events every year, receiving more than 1.4 million visitors and about 6,000 exhibitors.

Each year the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC) also stages more than 100 events, which bring millions of dollars to the UAE capital.

## The Big Three

### Gitex Shopper

Residents wait for Gitex Shopper so they can purchase electronics or IT goods. This is where manufacturers release their latest products and retailers offer them at discounted prices. In 2014, there were two events, one in April and another at the end of September. Gitex Shopper retailers reported sales in excess of Dhs.101 million at the April event alone; an increase of 10% on sales in 2013.

### Arabian Travel Market (ATM)

The leading international travel and tourism event in the Middle East for inbound and outbound tourism professionals from across the globe. Residents also flock to see what travel promotions are running in tandem with the exhibition. With Dubai winning the right to host the World Expo 2020, this event is even more important as a way for the city to market itself to visiting tourism authorities.

### Big Boys Toys

If it's fast, powerful or expensive, you'll find it at Big Boys Toys – the showcase of sleek and luxurious products. Check out the latest Lamborghini or the biggest from Bang and Olufsen. Other interesting products previously showcased include the smallest folding electric bike in the world.

## 2015 Highlights

### March

**Dubai International Boat Show** 3-7 March  
*boatshowdubai.com*

**Cabsat Mena** 10-12 March *cabsat.com*

**Dubai International Horse Championship** 19-21 March *dihf.ae*

**ARABLAB** 23-26 March *arablab.com*

**The Bride Show Dubai** 25-28 March  
*thebrideshow.com*

**International Property Show** 30 March-1 April  
*internationalpropertyshow.ae*

### April

**GITEX Shopper** 1-4 April  
*gitexshopperdubai.com*

**Gulf Education & Training Exhibition** 15-17 April  
*mygetex.com*

**Cityscape Abu Dhabi** 21-23 April  
*cityscapeabudhabi.com*

### May

**Arabian Travel Market (ATM)** 4-7 May  
*arabiantravelmarket.com*

**INDEX International Design Exhibition** 18-21 May  
*indexexhibition.com*

**Beauty World Middle East** 26-28 May  
*gulfbeautyexpo.com*

### June

**Dubai Summer Surprises** June and July  
*mydsf.ae*

**Middle East Event Show** 2-3 June  
*me-eventshow.com*

### October

**GITEX Technology Week** 18-22 October *gitex.com*

**Big Boys Toys** (Exact date TBC) *bigboystoysuae.com*

### November

**Dubai Airshow** 8-12 November *dubaiairshow.aero*

## MICE Venues

Aside from the Dubai World Trade Centre, Dubai has many hotels that offer conference and event facilities, which are suitable for events ranging from 20 people in a boardroom meeting, to 500-plus at a company conference.

The Fairmont ([fairmont.com](http://fairmont.com)) in Dubai offers 'sustainable meetings' packages for socially and environmentally conscious delegates, or you could arrange a seminar in JA Jebel Ali Golf Resort's ([jaresortshotels.com](http://jaresortshotels.com)) bio garden.



Sheikh Zayed Rd skyline