

Official Visitors' Guide



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Dear Visitor,

Whether you are making your first trip to Abu Dhabi, or are on a return visit, I hope you find in this guide a host of experiences to engage and entertain you.

Abu Dhabi's tourism offering, which is intertwined with our rich culture and heritage and an increasingly flourishing local and regional arts scene, is constantly being refined and expanded and all with the underlying theme of delivering experiences which enrich the lives of our residents and valued visitors alike.

We in Abu Dhabi have been blessed with a geographic diversity that allows us to introduce you to a destination of true distinction. Whether exploring our many natural islands, visiting the Arabian Wildlife Park in Sir Bani Yas Island in our Al Gharbia (Western) region, relaxing under the stars of a desert safari, shopping in modern, air-conditioned malls or bargaining for handicrafts in our traditional souks, you will discover a destination where hospitality and respect abound. You can experience the architectural prowess of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, enjoy the peace and tranquillity of a stroll through Al Ain's cooling oases, or marvel at the history of an emirate dotted with ancient forts and historic sites – several of which have been listed as official UNESCO World Heritage Sites.



Abu Dhabi is a genuine leisure haven and you can take to the lush fairways

of three championship-standard golf courses in Abu Dhabi, or enjoy the five-star facilities of the emirate's numerous pristine beachfront and dazzling desert resorts. This is a destination that will intrigue, captivate and entice you to return again and again. Throughout the emirate, we are working to preserve and maintain our cherished desert and seafaring traditions and unique environment, while at the same time looking to engage and nurture a greater understanding of other cultures well beyond our shores. So you will discover a host of cultural activities, from museums charting our forefathers' rich history, to modern art exhibitions, and world-class sporting and gourmet events. You can kayak through abundant mangrove forests, experience the popular desert sport of falconry, and visit a centre dedicated to the Saluki - the Arabian hunting dog. Whatever the purpose of your visit, I believe we have much to enhance it and I am confident that wherever you go in the emirate you will experience the traditional hospitality that ensures that throughout Abu Dhabi, travellers are truly welcome.

Mubarak Al Muhairi

Director General

Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority

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TRADITIONAL SAILING DHOW



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CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	1
Discover a Destination Apart	4
Ruling Family	5
Facts & Figures	8
Climate	9
Culture & Lifestyle	12
Getting Around	13
Useful Phrases	19
Money	20
Essential Info	21
Exploring Abu Dhabi	25
ABU DHABI	29
Abu Dhabi City Attractions	31
Abu Dhabi Experiences	35
Heritage	42
The Islands	46
Family	51
Sports & Recreation	55
Shopping	68
A Day Out in Abu Dhabi	79
AL AIN	83
Al Ain Attractions	85
Parks & Gardens	89
Heritage	89
Sports & Recreation	92
Al Ain Shopping Malls	93
A Day Out in Al Ain	96
AL GHARBIA	99
Al Gharbia Attractions	101
Heritage	105
Sports & Recreation	105
A Day Out in Al Gharbia	107
ABU DHABI EVENTS	109
FOREIGN EMBASSIES IN UAE	117
INDEX	119

THE CORNICHE



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THE WHAT, WHERE & WHY OUR WAYFARER GUIDE



A true destination of distinction, Abu Dhabi is developing at a significant rate while keeping a watchful eye on its intriguing past. The emirate abounds with compelling heritage sites, engaging attractions and idyllic touches of luxury.

PDF Editor



JEBEL HAFEET
Por editor



DISCOVER A DESTINATION APART

A relatively short time ago, Abu Dhabi Emirate was little more than an empty, albeit beautiful, desert inhabited by nomadic tribes, with a sprinkling of villages around the more fertile oasis areas. The economy was based around pearl diving, fishing and date palm cultivation. Meaning 'Father of the Gazelle' in Arabic, Abu Dhabi was founded when a young antelope led a wandering tribe to fresh water, on an island with no more than 300 palm ('barasti') huts, a few coral buildings and the Ruler's fort. This simple island settlement has since been transformed into the modern, cosmopolitan city of Abu Dhabi and the highrise capital of the United Arab Emirates. The discovery of oil in 1958 brought radical change to the emirate and its population. Oil and gas revenue was wisely invested and led to a complete turnaround in Abu Dhabi's fortunes. Thanks to this new found wealth and the strong leadership of the late UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the emirate prospered and developed, with an infrastructure built virtually from scratch.

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Growth

While recognising the success of the oil sector, Abu Dhabi is working hard to reduce its reliance on hydrocarbons and to broaden the emirate's economy. Investment in infrastructure, tourism, transport, health and education is ongoing and in line with the government's 2030 urban plan. Tourism is playing an integral role in this economic transition, with the emirate targeting 2.5 million hotel guests per year by the end of 2012. Major new attractions are being progressed along with luxury resorts, desert retreats and business centre hotels.

Tourism

With over 200 natural islands, more than 400 kilometres of pristine coastline, tranquil oases, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, modern cityscapes, rocky, mountain-like heights, and awe-inspiring deserts, Abu Dhabi offers a diversity of visitor experiences. It is also preserving and leveraging its rich cultural heritage so that visitors can share in a centuries-old history and its traditions, many of which continue today. Visitors can tour former palaces, forts, one of the world's largest mosques, renovated oases, desert camps and experience falconry, camel trekking and Arabia's famed hospitality.

Abu Dhabi's attractions are equally diverse. The emirate's tourism industry is managed, regulated and promoted by the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA) which operates a world-class hotel and hotel apartment classification system that ensures visitors' accommodation expectations are met. It also certifies and trains tourist guides to deliver memorable and informative guest experiences. Abu Dhabi also hosts many major international events, with a significant number being initiated and organised by ADTA. These range from an international aerobatics show, a PGA golf tournament, a desert rally, a gourmet food festival and a summer-long family carnival. Enquiries about ADTA's services and events can be made by calling toll free 800-555 in the United Arab Emirates.

RULING FAMILY

The Al Nahyan family has ruled Abu Dhabi since 1793 and has transformed the desert sheikhdom into a modern society, which maintains respect for its roots and preserves its natural and cultural heritage. The Ruler of Abu Dhabi is His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who is also the current UAE President. Sheikh Khalifa is ably supported by his brother, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

H.H. SHEIKH ZAYED BIN
SULTAN AL NAHYAN



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ABU DHABI CITY



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FACTS & FIGURES

With respect for its own culture and that of others underpinning Abu Dhabi's character, the emirate is emerging as a global cultural hub.

Population

Abu Dhabi is the largest and most populated of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, with over 80% of its landmass. The emirate's population, now over 1.6 million, is expected to reach 3 million by 2030. Across the UAE, emirati citizens make up nearly 20% of the total population; the other 80% are expatriates from Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe and North America.

Local Time

The UAE is four hours ahead of UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time -formerly known as GMT) and there is no daylight saving. Hence, when it is 12.00 midday in Abu Dhabi, it is 3am in New York, 8am in London, 10am in Johannesburg, 1.30pm in New Delhi, and 6pm in Sydney (not allowing for any summer time saving in those countries).

Social & Business Hours

Generally speaking, government departments, embassies and consulates work from 8am to 4pm. Embassies and consulates may designate specific times of day for processing certain requests (such as passport applications) so always call before you visit. The Islamic holy day is Friday and most organisations operate a Friday / Saturday weekend. Shops and visitor attractions are open on both days, though usually towards the end of the day or in the early evening on Fridays.

Ramadan Hours

During the holy month of Ramadan-shops often change their hours by closing during the day, re-opening an hour or two after sunset, and staying open later at night. Food outlets and restaurants generally remain closed or offer takeaway services only during the day and then open up for Iftar after sunset.



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CLIMATE

This is a destination with almost year round sunshine, little rainfall and near perfect winter temperatures.

Climate

Abu Dhabi has a sub-tropical, arid climate. Sunny blue skies and high temperatures can be expected most of the year. Rainfall is sporadic, falling mainly in winter (November to March) and averaging 12 cm per year in most of the emirate. Rain is more common in the Oasis City of Al Ain, the emirate's second largest city, due to its proximity to the Hajar mountains. Temperatures range from a low of around 13°C (50°F) on a winter's night, to a high of around 42°C (118°F) on a summer's day. The cooler months, November to April, are the most pleasant time to visit, when temperatures are around 24°C (75°F) during the day and 13°C (56°F) at night.

Flora & Fauna

For an emirate with such an arid climate and little rainfall, Abu Dhabi has surprisingly diverse indigenous flora and fauna. The emirate is home to about 3,500 native plants despite its high soil salinity and harsh environment. The date palm is the most widely cultivated of the indigenous flora, providing wonderful seas of green, especially in the oases.

Heading towards the mountains, flat-topped acacia trees and wild grasses

make the terrain feel more like savannah than desert. Indigenous fauna includes the highly endangered Arabian leopard and the ibex, but sightings of both are extremely rare. Realistically, the only large animals you will see are camels and goats (often roaming close to the roads). Other desert life includes the sand cat, sand fox and desert hare, as well as gerbils, hedgehogs and geckos. Recent studies have shown that the number of bird species is increasing, due in part to the emirate's increasing lushness. This is most apparent in the parks in spring and autumn, as the emirate lies on the route for birds migrating between Central Asia and East Africa.

Marine life is also abundant with coastal waters being home to tropical fish, coral, dolphins, the dugong (sea cow) and turtles. Eight species of whales and seven dolphin species have been recorded in UAE waters. Four or five of the world's seven turtle species are indigenous, including the hawksbill and leatherback. All are endangered, but can be seen offshore. Throughout Abu Dhabi emirate, local municipalities have established extensive 'greening' programmes. Roadsides are incredibly lush, with grass, palm trees and flowers lining main streets. Within Abu Dhabi city, there are more than 20 manicured public parks.





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AL AIN OASIS



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TRADITIONAL WEAVING

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

The combination of international influences and a strong commitment to local heritage has created an intriguing mix of new and old.

Culture

Abu Dhabi's culture is firmly rooted in Arabia's Islamic traditions. Islam is more than a religion; it is a way of life that governs everyday events from what to wear to what to eat and drink. The UAE's culture and heritage is inextricably linked to its religion, and it is a shining example of Islam's true commitment to tolerance and hospitality. Foreigners are free to practise their own religion and the dress code is liberal. Women are able to drive and walk around unescorted. Among the most highly prized virtues are courtesy and hospitality, and visitors are sure to be charmed by the genuine friendliness of the people. Despite the speed of economic development over the last 30 years, Abu Dhabi continues to promote traditional cultural and sporting events, such as falconry, camel racing and traditional dhow sailing.

Language

Arabic is the official language, although English is widely spoken and most road and shop signs and restaurant menus are in both languages. The further out of town you go, the more Arabic you will find, both written and spoken. Arabic isn't the easiest language to pick up, or to

pronounce, but if you can throw in a couple of Arabic words here and there they will be warmly received.

Religion

Islam is the official religion of the UAE, and is widely practised. The basis of Islam is the belief that there is only one God and the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) is his messenger. The Islamic holy day is Friday and there are five pillars of Islam, which all Muslims must follow: the Profession of Faith, Prayer, Charity, Fasting, and the Pilgrimage to Makkah. Additionally, a Muslim is required to pray (facing Makkah) five times a day. The times vary according to the position of the sun, when the modern day call to prayer is transmitted through loudspeakers on mosque minarets.

The UAE Constitution provides for freedom of religion in accordance with established customs. Abu Dhabi is tolerant of other religions with people being free to practise their religious beliefs, so long as they do not interfere with Islam. Non-Muslims can get an insight into Islam through complimentary guided tours of the spectacular Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, one of the world's largest. The Tours run at different times during the week.

For more information,
Visit: www.szgmc.ae
email: tour@szgmc.ae

Ramadan

Ramadan is the holy month in which Muslims commemorate the revelation of the Holy Quran (Islam's holy book). It's a time of fasting and Muslims abstain from all food, drink, smoking and unclean thoughts (or activities) between dawn and dusk. At sunset, the fast is broken with the Iftar feast, the timings of which are published in all daily newspapers. All over the city, festive Ramadan tents are filled to the brim each evening with people of all nationalities and religions enjoying traditional Arabic mezze and sweets. The dates of Ramadan change each year following the Islamic lunar calendar. Non-Muslims are respectfully required to refrain from eating, drinking or smoking in public places during daylight hours. Failure to do so could upset people or lead to an official complaint. During Ramadan, the sale of alcohol is restricted to after dusk, while shops and parks usually open and close later. In addition, no live music or dancing is allowed (so nightclubs tend to close for the entire month) and cinemas limit daytime screenings. Ramadan ends with a three-day celebration and holiday called Eid Al Fitr, which is characterised by gifts being given amongst families, friends, neighbours and charities.

National Dress

UAE nationals usually wear traditional dress in public. For men, this is the kandura, a full-length shirt-like garment, which is worn with a white or red checkered headdress,

known as a ghutra. This is secured with a black cord (agal). Sheikhs and important businessmen may also wear a thin, gold-trimmed robe (bisht) over their kandura at important events. In public, women wear a long, loose black robe (abaya) that covers their normal clothes, plus a headscarf (sheyla). The abaya is often of very sheer, flowing fabric with intricate embroidery and beadwork along the wrists and hemline. Sheylas are also becoming more elaborate and a statement of individuality, particularly among the young. Headwear varies with some women wearing a thin black veil covering their face and others, generally older women, wearing a leather veil (burka), which covers the nose, brow, cheekbones and lips.

GETTING AROUND

Cheap taxis, a well planned road system and plenty of sidewalk space make Abu Dhabi easy and pleasant to navigate. Due to the relative ease of getting around, visitors may opt to rent a vehicle. People often rely on landmarks to give directions. Abu Dhabi city is linked to the mainland by four bridges -Al Maqtaa, Sheikh Khalifa, Sheikh Zayed and Mussafah, and it has a New York style grid road system.



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AL MAQTA BRIDGE

Taxis

Taxis are reasonably priced and plentiful and can be flagged down at the roadside or booked by phone through companies such as Al Ghazal and the National Transport Company (NTC). Street taxis are easily recognised either by their white and gold livery with a green roof sign, or by their silver livery and yellow roof sign. Daytime (6am -10pm) metered fares in the city start at AED 3 for flagged cabs, AED 8 for cabs booked by phone, and increase by an additional AED 1 for every 750 metres. Night fares are slightly more, starting at AED 3.60 and increasing by AED 1.20 per 750 metres. A tip is not expected but always welcome. Many taxi drivers do not speak fluent English, and are not always familiar with street names, so it helps to know exactly where you are going. It's also helpful to take the phone number of your destination with you in case you get lost.

All taxi companies service the airport in addition to specially registered airport taxis. The journey into town from the airport costs AED 70 -80 (approx US\$30).

Taxi Service

	Abu Dhabi
Al Arabia Taxi	+971 2 558 8099
Cars Taxi	+971 2 551 6164
National Taxi	+971 2 555 2212
National Transport Company (NTC)	+971 2 622 3300
Trans	+971 2 417 3888

Al Ain

+971 3 7211011
+971 3 7228927
-
-
-

Car Rental

You will find all major car rental companies in Abu Dhabi, plus a few extra, and it's worth remembering that the larger, more reputable firms generally have more reliable vehicles and a greater capacity to help in an emergency (an important factor when handling the trying times following an accident). All services are provided inclusive of registration, maintenance, replacement, 24-hour assistance and insurance (comprehensive insurance with personal accident cover is advisable). For short-term rental, many companies offer daily rates and there are booths at the airport and most of the major hotels, and numerous shops dotted throughout the city.

It's worth ringing around for rates, although usually the most competitive rates can be found online. To hire any vehicle you will need a passport copy, credit card and a valid driving licence from your home country, or a valid international  If you have a residence visa, you will need to have a valid UAE driving licence.

Mawaqif – Paid Parking System

The paid parking system in Abu Dhabi city is enforced round the clock, excluding Fridays and public holidays. Parking meters set time limits for use of public parking spaces, which helps organise parking and prevent illegal parking. At premium parking lots on main streets, vehicles can park for up to four hours at AED 3 per hour. In standard spaces, the rate is AED 2 per hour for a maximum of 24 hours. Drivers who park outside the designated spaces; indicated by turquoise and white or blue and black markings, can be fined from AED 200 -AED 1,000 (US\$54 - 273).

CAR HIRE COMPANIES

Abu Dhabi

Al Ghazal Transport Co	+971 2 634 2200	www.adnh.com
ALLO Rent	+971 2 575 7232	www.allorent.com
Avis Rent A Car	+971 2 621 5400	www.avisuae.ae
Budget Rent A Car	+971 2 443 8430	www.budget.com
Diamond Lease	+971 2 622 2028	www.diamondlease.com
Dollar Rent A Car	+971 2 641 9002	www.dollaruae.com
Emco Rent A Car	+971 2 633 8933	
Europcar	+971 2 626 1441	www.europcar-uae.com
FAST Rent A Car	+971 2 632 4000	www.fastuae.com
Hertz Rent A Car	+971 2 672 0060	www.hertzuae.com
National Car Rental	+971 2 800 3130	www.national-me.com
Thrifty Car Rental	+971 2 676 7649	www.thrifty.com

Al Ain

Avis Rent A Car (Al Ain)	+971 3 766 7330	www.avisuae.ae
FAST Rent A Car (Al Ain)	+971 3 766 7330	www.fastuae.com



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USEFUL PHRASES

Greetings

Hi	Salam
Good morning	Sabah el kheer
Good evening	Masaa el kheer
Welcome! (to greet someone)	Marhaba
How are you?	Kaifa alhal
I'm fine, thanks	Ana behair, shokran
And you?	Wa ant?
Thank you (very much)!	Shukran (jazeelan)
You're welcome! (for thank you)	Afwan
Good night	Tosbeho ala khair
Goodbye	Maía salama

Asking for Help and Directions

I'm lost	Adaítu tareeqi
Can you help me?	Momkin mosaádati?
Straight/left/ right	Ala tool/yisar/yameen
How much is this?	B kam hatha? (th as in bath)
Excuse me...! (to ask for something or to pass by)	Law samaht

MONEY

Local Currency

The UAE's monetary unit is the dirham (AED), which is divided into 100 fils.

Money

Cash is still the UAE's preferred payment method, although credit and debit cards are widely accepted. Foreign currencies and travellers' cheques can be exchanged in licensed exchange offices, banks and hotels - a passport is required. Personal cheques can be a bit trickier and many places won't accept them. If you're shopping in the souks (markets) or in smaller shops, cash is the best, and often the only option.

Banks

A well structured and expansive network of local and international banks, strictly controlled by the UAE Central Bank, offers a full range of commercial and personal services. Transfers can be made easily as there is no exchange control and the dirham is freely convertible. Banking hours are generally Saturday to Thursday, 8am - 1pm (some banks also keep later hours).

ATMs

Most banks operate ATMs, which accept a range of cards. Most ATMs, although linked to a specific bank, are part of a central network so you can transact with a bank card for a nominal charge. Common systems accepted around Abu Dhabi include American Express, Cirrus, Global Access, MasterCard, Plus System and VISA.

ATMs can be found in all shopping malls, major supermarkets, most petrol stations and the airport. For international cards, the exchange rates used in transactions are normally competitive and the process is faster and far less hassle than using traditional travellers' cheques.

Money Exchanges

Bureau de Changes are all over Abu Dhabi and offer rates often better than the banks. You'll find them in all major malls and popular shopping districts. They are usually open Saturday to Thursday, from 8am - 1pm and 4.30pm to 8.30pm, and on Friday evenings. Many hotels will also exchange money and travellers' cheques at standard (non-competitive) rates.



ESSENTIAL INFO

Abu Dhabi's virtually crime free environment and well organised emergency services will bring you peace of mind and a relaxing stay.

In Emergency

The emergency phone number for Abu Dhabi Police is 999. Whether you need police assistance, an ambulance or the fire department, this is the number to call. If you are involved in a traffic accident, it's important to contact the police immediately.

In case of a minor incident, move your car to the side of the road, as there are fines for obstructing traffic. You cannot file an insurance claim without a police report.

For other enquiries, Abu Dhabi Police operates a dedicated Tourism Police section which will advise and guide you on a range of matters. You can contact them on +971 2 699 9999. In a medical emergency, Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Khalifa Medical City (+971 2 610 2000) and Al Noor Hospital (+971 2 626 5265) both have Accident and Emergency units. If you are injured in a traffic accident, you will automatically be taken to Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, as it has the best A&E treatment facilities.

Women

Women should face no problems while travelling in the UAE. The police are helpful and respectful; call them at any time if you face any unwanted attention. It is courteous to dress with a little modesty, particularly in outlying areas where people tend to be more conservative.





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Children

Abu Dhabi is a safe and entertaining place for children of all ages. There are plenty of parks, some great sandy beaches, and kids' zones and crèche facilities in all major shopping malls.

The majority of hotels cater well for children and offer everything from babysitting services to child friendly activities and children's swimming pools. Restaurants vary; some welcome children more than others.

People With Disabilities

Most of Abu Dhabi's five-star hotels, malls and heritage attractions have wheelchair facilities. Wheelchair ramps often have steep angles. When asking if a location has wheelchair access, make sure it really does as an escalator is considered wheelchair access to some. Abu Dhabi International Airport is well equipped for physically challenged travellers and it is easily accessible. There is a special check-in gate with direct access from the car park, as well as dedicated lifts, and a meet and assist service.

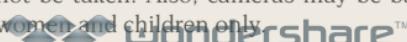
What To Wear

Lightweight summer clothing is suitable for most of the year, but something slightly warmer may be needed for the winter months. Be sure to take some sort of jacket or sweater when visiting hotels or the cinema, as the air conditioning can be fierce. Although the attitude towards dress is fairly liberal throughout the emirates, a healthy amount of respect for local customs doesn't go amiss, especially when shopping or sightseeing.

Short or tight clothing may be worn, but it will attract attention -most of it unwelcome. Malls, health clubs and resort facilities are generally more accepting of what's fashionable, but when visiting government offices it is best to cover your shoulders and legs. It is especially recommended that you dress more conservatively during Ramadan. In the evenings, restaurants and clubs usually have a mixture of styles -western, Arabic and Asian. Again, ladies are advised to take a pashmina or jacket because of cold air-conditioning.

Photography

While normal tourist photography is acceptable, it is polite to ask permission before taking photos of people, particularly women. Photographs of government buildings, military installations and ports and airports should not be taken. Also, cameras may be banned in public areas designated for women and children only.



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EXPLORING ABU DHABI

From Abu Dhabi city's famous Corniche to the 'Oasis City' of Al Ain and the massive dunes of the western region's Empty Quarter desert in Al Gharbia, local tour operators will help you explore and discover this intriguing emirate.

Tour Operators

Almost all tour operators offer city tours and desert safaris, while some specialise in more diverse activities such as tours of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, rounds of golf, fishing or diving expeditions, kayaking trips through mangrove forests, helicopter tours and desert driving courses or visits to the Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital or Saluki (desert hunting dogs) Centre. Check out the list for some ideas.

Desert Safaris

Starting with an exciting ride up and down some of the desert's biggest dunes, you can try sand skiing before watching the sun set. After driving a short distance further to a permanent desert camp, you are treated to a sumptuous barbecue, followed by shisha, camel rides, falconry displays and henna painting. You can choose to stay overnight or combine it with a trip into the mountains. Costs vary.

Abu Dhabi Tour

A tour of the UAE capital usually takes in everything from the evolving skyline to sandy shores and iconic buildings. A stroll along the Corniche will give you a glimpse of everyday Abu Dhabi life and the chance to savour some picturesque scenes. A half-day tour will include the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the Abu Dhabi Corniche, the Saadiyat Island Cultural District Exhibition at Emirates Palace and the Heritage Village.

Al Ain Tour

Al Ain was once a vital oasis on the caravan route from the UAE to Oman. The history of the Oasis City, the emirate's heritage heartland and one of the world's oldest permanently inhabited settlements, can be explored through visits to the 175 year-old Al Nahyan family fort, the Al Ain National Museum and a trip to the prehistoric tombs at Hili Fort - known to be over 4,000 years old. Other attractions include the Al Ain oases, Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort, the camel market - one of the last few remaining, and the world's most advanced go-karting facilities, for a taste of the fast track. For family fun, try the newly renovated Hili Fun City, the Gulf's oldest theme park, which now offers one of the cheapest days out around, with entry no more than AED 40 (US\$11).

Al Gharbia Tour

A great reason to start exploring this vast region is the drive to Liwa -a historic oasis town at the entry to the Rub Al Khali (Empty Quarter) the world's largest uninterrupted sand mass. Liwa will blow you away with massive expanses of awesome desert and the biggest dunes this side of the Sahara. Prepare for the UAE's most adventurous off-road driving and some of its most incredible scenery. Al Gharbia's history is encompassed in the myriad of ancient forts, which dot the landscape, and together present a snapshot of this region's fascinating history -all set against dramatic landscapes. To get a real taste of Al Gharbia's authenticheritage, visit one of the many festivals throughout the year such as January's Tel Moreeb Festival, the pinnacle hill climb event for desert driving enthusiasts, April's Al Gharbia Watersports Festival, fast becoming a highlight on the international sporting calendar, July's Liwa Date Festival, a showcase for this valued desert fruit, and January's Al Dhafrah Camel Festival, which includes the world's only camel beauty contest.





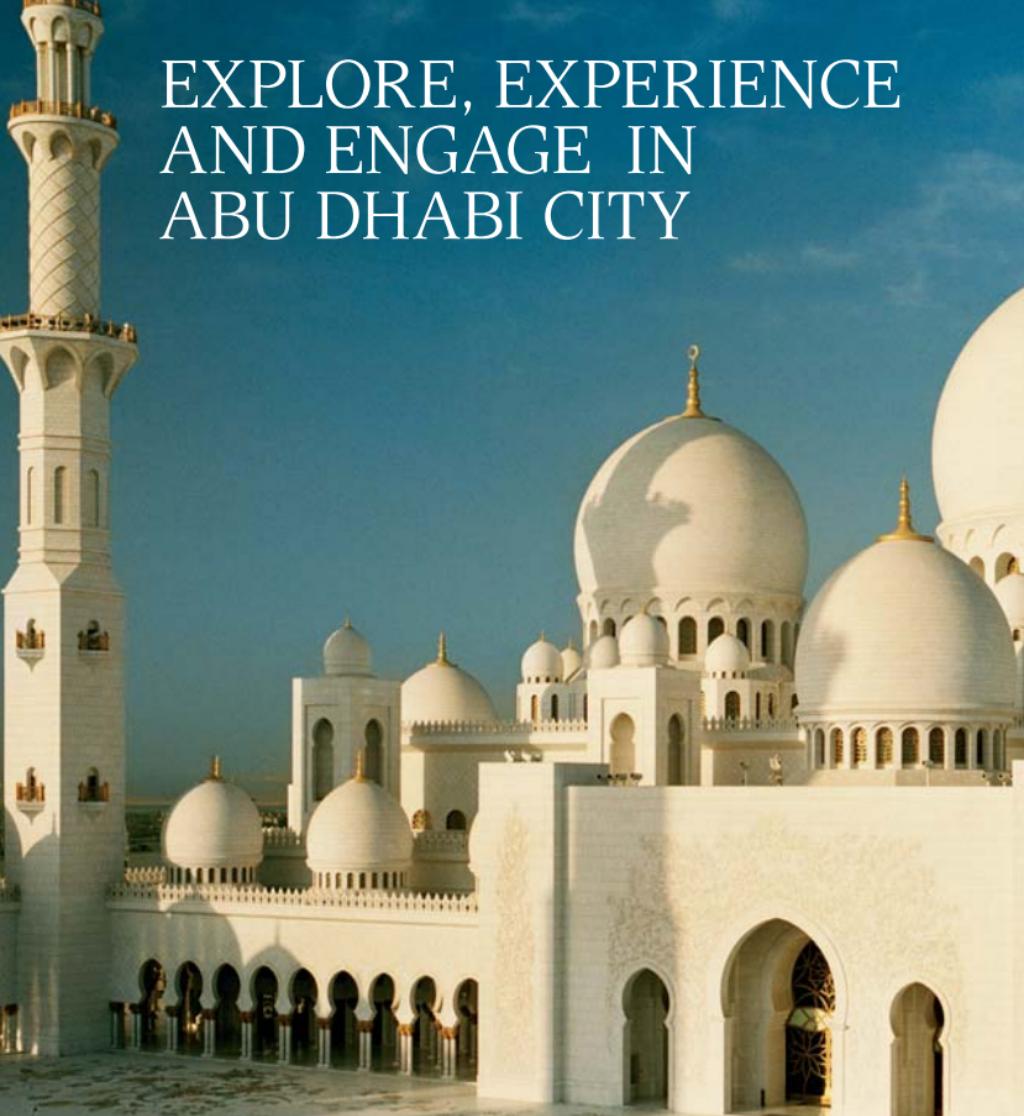
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ABU DHABI TOUR OPERATORS

Abu Dhabi Travel Bureau	+971 2 622 1100
Advanced Travel & Tourism	+971 2 634 7900
Al Ain Travel Bureau	+971 3 754 1159
Al Badeyah Eyes Tourism	+971 2 556 6723
Al Etihad Travel & Tourism	+971 2 765 5223
Arabian Adventures	+971 2 691 1711
Arabian Odyssey	+971 2 621 0101
Cyclone Travel & Tours	+971 2 627 6275
Desert Adventures Tourism	+971 2 556 6155
Emirates Adventure	+971 2 6445117
Emirates Travel Express	+971 2 765 0777
Hala Abu Dhabi	+971 2 617 7810
Kurban Travel & Tourism	+971 2 555 0566
Net Tours (Abu Dhabi)	+971 2 679 4656
Net Tours (Al Ain)	+971 3 768 7400
Omeir Travel Agency	+971 2 612 3456
Orient Tours	+971 2 667 5609
Safar Travel & Tourism	+971 2 418 0888
Salem Travel Agency	+971 2 621 8000
SNTTA Tours & Travel	+971 2 444 6856
The Vision Tourism	+971 2 294 2290
Travco	+971 2 677 1484

EXPLORE, EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGE IN ABU DHABI CITY



Experience Abu Dhabi's diverse and enticing attractions: whether it's zooming to the pace of a speedboat tour of the city's coastline, taking in the UAE capital's signature Corniche on a bicycle, or hopping on an open topped Big Bus for a guided tour, you're sure to find attractions to suit every taste.

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ABU DHABI



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SHEIKH ZAYED GRAND MOSQUE

ABU DHABI CITY ATTRACTIONS

Culture, history and adventure are encapsulated in one of the Arabian Gulf's greatest cities. Abu Dhabi's wealth of museums, heritage sites and natural wonders are complemented by a wide variety of new tours and attractions, all offering exciting ways to see the capital-by air, land or sea.

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi

It's fast and furious fun for all ages at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi -the world's first Ferrari theme park and the largest attraction of its kind. Telling the Ferrari story with passion and excitement through more than 20 exhilarating and educational rides and attractions, interactive shopping and authentic Italian dining experiences, this park is a must-see destination for fans and families. Beneath its huge, iconic red roof, attractions include Formula Rossa, the world's fastest roller coaster, reaching speeds of 240 kmph, Galleria Ferrari, the world's largest Ferrari gallery outside Maranello with an interactive display of cars from 1947 through to the present, Speed of Magic, a fantastic 4-D adventure through deep green jungles, icy caves and ravines and to the mouth of a fiery volcano. Those wanting to start their Ferrari World Abu Dhabi experience in top gear will get their adrenaline fix at G-Force blasting through the red roof, before dropping down sharing height of 62m. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi has a range of Ferrari inspired

restaurants and cafés serving exclusive Italian dishes, including Mamma Rossella, a traditional family style trattoria and Cavallino, an elegant dining à la carte restaurant.

The theme park houses the world's largest Ferrari store and a unique 'past and present' store, complete with a recreation of Enzo Ferrari's first garage. The products on offer range from custom made remote control Ferrari cars to exotic gifts handcrafted by Italian artisans. Guests can also enjoy the unique Ferrari boutique where they can create their personalised souvenirs at innovative interactive zones.

www.ferrariworldabudhabi.com
+971 2 496 8001

World's Furthest Leaning Man Made Tower

Drive down Khaleej Al Arabi Street and you will see a modern day challenger to the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Capital Gate, developed by Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company, has been certified as the 'World's Furthest Leaning Man Made Tower' by Guinness World Records. It leans 18 degrees westwards -more than four times that of Pisa's famous Leaning Tower. The 160 metre (524.9 ft), 35 storey tower is fast becoming a postcard image of Abu Dhabi and makes a great holiday snap. From September 2011, Capital Gate houses the five star Hyatt Capital Gate hotel.



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FERRARI WORLD



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Abu Dhabi Corniche

Corniche Road now has an impressive eight kilometres of manicured waterfront that includes children's play areas, separate cycle and pedestrian pathways, cafés, a wake boarding park and restaurants, and the Corniche Beach -a new life guarded beach park. Individual parks are themed and signposted accordingly. The Family Park near King Khalid Bin Abdul Aziz Street (26th Street), is noted for its creative climbing structures, The Urban Park near Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum Street has beautiful gardens. Lake Park near Muroor Street is known for its 'lake' while Formal Park by Baniyas Street is noted for its architecture and maze.

Off Corniche Road,
Central Abu Dhabi

The Easy Way to See the Corniche

EZ Taxis is a taxi service using ecofriendly electric vehicles. Ideal for the elderly, handicapped, young children and the foot sore, the open air taxis can carry up to four adults and two children at any time and all for the bargain price of AED 15 (US\$ 4) per journey. Operating for three kilometres along the Corniche, the service is available from 4pm until 11pm on weekdays, and from 4pm to midnight on weekends. You can hail the taxi as you see it or to request the service with a driver, simply call +971 56 145 4242.

 **For more information**
easytaxi@hotmail.com

Corniche Beach Park

This lengthy stretch of beach extends along Corniche Road from near the Hilton Hotel to beyond Al Khaleej Al Arabi Street, where you'll find its main entrance. During the week you can usually find a beach umbrella, but during the weekend they may all go quickly. The park has separate family and men's areas, and there's plenty of space for everyone. You can't swim out very far; floating fences keep you within 40 metres of the beach, and there are plenty of lifeguards around. There is a dedicated parking area further along the Corniche with a complimentary bus service to the beach. Ticket booths are all along the beach. Admission is AED 5 for families and AED 10 for single males.

Corniche Road West, Al Khubeirah

Corniche Pedal Power

A fun and healthy way to tour the Corniche is to hire a bicycle from FunRideSports. With four accessible rental stations along the Corniche boardwalk and its main station outside The Hiltonia Beach Club, bike hire starts at AED 20 (US\$5) per hour for adults and AED 15 (US\$4) for children. Voucher booklets for 15 hours of cycling are also available for AED 200 (US\$54). FunRideSports has a selection of bikes for hire -from mountain bikes for the more adventurous to city bikes which can fit two or three passengers on the back, and even specially designed bikes for ladies wearing abayas.

The company is also planning to bring Pedicabs to Abu Dhabi -a fun and environmentally friendly version

PDF Editor

of 'bicycle taxi' which will take visitors to the Heritage Village and points of interest along the Corniche. This service will become increasingly relevant as the Corniche continues to develop as an interactive beachfront with new events, festivals and restaurants filling the boardwalk.

For more information or to book in advance call +971 2 556 6113 or email info@funridesports.com
www.funridesports.com

Get Boarding!

Also on the Corniche is a permanent wakeboarding 'Beginners Park' developed by Abu Dhabi Municipality in conjunction with Flash Entertainment. This state-of-the-art park is open to the public daily from 12pm to 6pm and is free to use. Wakeboarding experts are on hand to assist enthusiasts with taster lessons and top tips for catching the waves.

Al Bateen Beach

This beach is popular with locals and is used for fishing and swimming. It's great for waterfront picnics, but if you venture into the water keep an eye out for jet skis. To get there, head west on 19th Street (Saeed Bin Tahnoon St) and turn left onto 16th Street when it ends. After 200 metres, you'll see the beach.

Al Bateen Beach Road, Al Bateen

The Eastern Corniche

Not to be confused with the Corniche on the extreme north of the island, the Eastern Corniche, or New Corniche as it is also known,

has a pristine stretch of immaculate lawns, dotted with ornate shelters and large wooden tables, and comes alive as families gather for evening and weekend picnics. Well lit and clean, it is especially busy on winter nights. This is a great place for bird watching and fishing, with the waterway and mangroves bordering one side of the park.

Eastern Ring Road, Al Muroor

ABU DHABI EXPERIENCES

Balloon Expedition into the Desert
Leave the glitz and glamour of the city behind and join a one-hour balloon expedition into the heart of the desert. Enjoy a magical ride over the giant red sand dunes, emerald green oases, gazelles and wandering camels. The balloon adventure, takes off at approximately 4:30am from a desert oasis north of Al Ain, transportation from Abu Dhabi is provided free of charge. At a cost of AED 950 (US\$260) for adults and AED 800 (US\$219) for children (5 -12 years), you will experience unlimited fun and memories for a lifetime! Balloon expeditions are from September to May.

For more information and bookings please visit www.ballooning.ae or email info@ballooning.ae

Big Bus Tour

Famous for its traditional open top double decker red buses, The Big Bus Company has carefully designed tours

**THE BIG
BUS
COMPANY.**

TOUR OF ABU DHABI



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which take visitors to all the major Abu Dhabi landmarks -from the magnificent Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque and the luxurious Emirates Palace hotel, to the Heritage Village and traditional souks. Personal commentary comes in a choice of eight languages (Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Mandarin and Russian) and provides a fascinating insight into Abu Dhabi's history and culture. The tickets are valid for 24 hours and give access to all the Big Bus Tour routes, with 11 stops throughout the city enabling guests to hop on and hop off at their leisure.

Tickets are available from individual hotels or the Big Bus sales desk at Marina Mall and can also be bought online.

800 BIG BUS (800 244 287)
www.bigbustours.com

Helicopter Tours

Get a bird's eye view of the capital's landmarks and heritage sites with a Falcon Aviation Services (FAS) helicopter sightseeing tour in a luxurious six seater Eurocopter EC130.

The tour flies over the Corniche and city as well as Lulu, Saadiyat and Yas Islands. Operating out of Falcon Aviation's Marina Mall terminal, you can take to the skies on a 10 minute Joy Flight for AED 490 (US\$133) per person with a 20 minute coastal tour for AED 830 (US\$225) per person and a 30 minute in-depth islands tour for AED 1250 (US\$340) per person which will see you soaring over Yas Marina Circuit and Sheikh Zayed Grand

Mosque. Tours can be taken on a sharing or exclusive base (per seat or per helicopter).

For reservations:
sales@falconaviation.ae or call the
24/7 hotline +971 2 444 0007
www.falconaviation.ae

Kayaking Tours

Noukhada's kayaking tours take you through the natural mangrove forests dotted around the plethora of islands in view of the rising Abu Dhabi city skyline. Try either a Low or High Tide 2-hour kayaking tour to explore the mangroves, or for something special book the monthly Full Moon Tour - all for only AED 150 (US\$40) per person. Noukhada also offers half-day island exploring tours for AED 200 (US\$54) per person, where you can opt for a beach BBQ AED 300 (US\$81) per person or an overnight camping stay AED 500 (US\$136) per person.

To book, email info@noukhada.ae or find them on Facebook.
www.noukhada.ae

Saadiyat Island

Cultural District Exhibition

Open daily from 10am until 10pm at Emirates Palace, this exhibition charts the plans for the renowned Cultural District of Saadiyat Island -a 27 square kilometre island offshore Abu Dhabi city, which is being transformed into a signature leisure, residential and cultural destination. The exhibition traces the plans for the Zayed National Museum, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, a performing arts centre and maritime museum which,

combined, will make up the world's largest single concentration of premier cultural institutions. All these prestigious cultural assets have been designed by architectural luminaries such as Lord Norman Foster, Frank Gehry, Jean Nouvel, Zaha Hadid and Tado Andao respectively. Their designs are on display.

Entry is free. Emirates Palace

Corniche Road West

www.emiratespalace.com

Gallery One

Another space at Emirates Palace that serves as a platform of ongoing programmes of art exhibitions and cultural events in the lead up to the Saadiyat Island Cultural District is Gallery One. Exhibitions are accompanied by a series of workshops for all ages, which take place at the Education Room of Gallery One. A recent addition to Gallery One is the Zayed National Museum model designed by award winning British architect Norman Foster and scheduled for completion in 2014.

+971 2 690 8207

www.artsabudhabi.ae

Al Badeyah Eyes Tourism

This desert camp, nestled in the desert dunes of Al Khaznah, gives visitors a unique insight into UAE traditions and customs as the guest of a local family. Offering different desert safari services, Al Badeyah camp boasts five permanent tents with beds, an original majlis tent for evening activities, two permanent bathroom facilities, along with a

children's playground, trampoline and a petting zoo of goats and sheep.

www.abet-uae.com

Sea Cruiser Boat Tours

A business venture from a young emirati with a passion for sharing his love of the sea, Sea Cruiser operates two ADTA tourism licensed GulfCraft boats, which each hold 18 passengers, two crew members, a professional pilot and lifeguard. Each boat has covered cabins with large glass windows for sightseeing and is specially designed to accommodate divers. Each boat also comes equipped with GPS navigation, tracking equipment and DSC VHF radios which automatically transmit the boat's position in an emergency.

Individual life jackets and safety equipment are provided. Sea Cruiser tours are aimed at providing guests with the best Abu Dhabi has to offer; from a two-hour tour of the capital city's famous Corniche to diving, snorkelling and fishing trips and all day cruises of Abu Dhabi's stunning natural islands and emerald green ocean. All tours begin at the Fish Market pier at the end of the Corniche, just before Mina Zayed. They are available at pre-booked times from 8:30am to 8pm, seven days a week.

To book a tour or to find out more, contact Yaser on +971 50 800 9495

or

info@seacruiser.ae

www.seacruiser.ae

DHOW HARBOUR



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Speedboat Tours

Experience the thrill of 'The Yellow Boats' tours, the UAE's first speedboat tours and a unique way to explore Abu Dhabi's headline grabbing new developments and stunning coastline. Offering guided tours of signature attractions such as the Corniche and Emirates Palace, it's a front row seat to some truly stunning vistas. The Yellow Boats can tailor corporate tours for a variety of occasions, including client hospitality evenings, product launches and team building. Imagine arriving at Yas Marina Circuit, dining at the Shangri-La Qaryat Al Beri or visiting the new Manarat Al Saadiyat exhibition centre on Saadiyat Island by boat, truly one of the most spectacular ways of reaching your destination!

To arrange a corporate tour or private charter, call 800 4034 or visit www.theyellowboats.com

Explore Our Waters

Whether it's chartering boats, hiring a jet ski, embarking on a fishing or diving trip, Empros water sports has the answer. The company also provides a range of family fun activities with banana boat and donut rides, water skiing and wakeboarding instruction and diving courses. Tours begin at the Corniche next to InterContinental Hotel.

+971 2 667 9776

www.empros.ae

Pearl Boats

Whether you are looking for a relaxing and peaceful escape or an exhilarating activity at sea, Pearl Boats is your choice. They can plan a day-to-day itinerary, select the best places to visit, and provide all the hints and tips to ensure the perfect trip.

To book a tour or to find out more, contact Humaid on +971 50 642 9777 or info@luluboats.com

ABU DHABI FALCON HOSPITAL

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HERITAGE

Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital

Guided tours of this award winning specialist hospital, the most advanced of its kind in the world, are available. You can visit the luxurious wards where the birds are kept, explore the museum, which gives an insight into the noble desert sport of falconry, or try your hand at the pursuit in the hospital's lush gardens. Open Sunday to Thursday from 8am to 4pm.

Near Abu Dhabi International
Airport, Al Raha
+971 2 575 5155
www.falconhospital.com

Al Maqtaa Fort

Your first glimpse of this 200 year old fort, which houses an ADTA visitor information centre, will be as you approach Al Maqtaa Bridge towards Abu Dhabi Island. Standing on the edge of the island, the fort was built to fend off bandits and provides a wonderful contrast to the modern bridge next to it. Be careful when taking photographs here, as it is a sensitive military zone. .

Near Al Maqtaa Bridge, Al Maqtaa

Heritage Village

Run by the Emirates Heritage Club, this reconstruction of a traditional oasis village provides an interesting glimpse into the country's past. Traditional aspects of the desert way of life, including a campfire with coffee pots, a goats' hair tent and a falaj irrigation system, are attractively displayed in the open museum. There are workshops where craftsmen demonstrate

traditional skills, such as metal work and pottery, while women sit weaving and spinning. The craftsmen are happy to share their skills, and may occasionally give you the chance to try them out. The little spice shop is a treat; you can get a range of dried herbs, handmade soap and plenty of chatter.

Near Marina Mall, Breakwater
+971 2 681 4455

Miraj Islamic Centre

The Miraj Islamic Art Centre is in a two-storey villa behind the upscale Abu Dhabi Marina area. The centre features museum-like displays of unique Islamic art pieces sourced from around the Muslim world from places like Egypt, Syria, Iran, India, Iraq, Kashmir and Russia. Displays include meticulously hand woven pictorial and bejewelled carpets, silk textiles, jewellery, marble pieces, Arabic calligraphy engraved vases, miniature paintings and experienced staff is on hand to brief visitors on the history and origin of the pieces and the techniques used in making them. Miraj offers visitors a complementary pick-up and drop-off service from their hotels as well as welcome refreshments, Arabic Qahwah (cardamom coffee) and dates to groups of over 50 guests. The centre features a rooftop café with panoramic views of Emirates Palace and the Arabian Gulf, is open daily from 9am-7pm. Entrance is free.

www.mirajislamicartcentre.com
+971 50 2503950

Saluki Centre

This centre honours the desert traditions of hunting, training and breeding Salukis -a distinctive breed of dog found in desert regions. The centre invites visitors to learn more about the unique traits and care of this type of dog.

+971 2 575 5330

www.arabiansaluki.com

discourse and interaction by showcasing the powerful continuity and traditions inherent in books spanning Arabic and Islamic eras. With approximately 5000 titles, highlights include rare Arabic calligraphy collections and copies of the Holy Quran printed in Europe between the years 1537-1857.

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque,

North Minaret, Floor 4

Open Sunday to Wednesday 8am -

8pm and Thursday 8am - 4pm

www.szgmc.ae

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

This architectural work of art is one the world's largest mosques, with a capacity for an astonishing 40,000 worshippers. The mosque's first ceremony was the funeral of its namesake, Sheikh Zayed, who is buried at the site. It features 80 domes, approximately 1000 columns, 24 carat gold plated chandeliers and the world's largest hand woven carpet. Unlike other mosques in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is open daily to all from 9am - 8pm, except on Friday morning for worshippers only. Complimentary one hour guided tours run during the entire week.

Tip: Why not finish work, shopping or sight-seeing for the day and take the 5pm 'Sunset Tour'? Get to the mosque around 4:30pm – a wonderful time to take photos – to wind down and chill out for 20 minutes in the lovely, afternoon breeze before taking the tour.

www.szgmc.ae

tour@szgmc.ae

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Centre Library

The Library at Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque promotes intercultural

Women's Handicraft Centre

This creative initiative is run by the Abu Dhabi Women's Association as a showcase for local arts and crafts. The small museum within is the chance to examine and learn about local artists' handiwork. There is also a shop on site. The round buildings near the museum are workshops where female artists display distinctive Arabian oils, handmade souvenirs, incense, local dress, silver thread work, and weaving. You should remove your shoes before entering each hut, and ask for photography permission. You can get a simple henna design painted on your hand, which will last about two weeks.

Women's Association Complex

Karama St, Al Mushrif, +971 2 447 6645

Zayed Centre

For a fascinating sneak peek into the life of the late Sheikh Zayed, affectionately known as the 'Father of the Nation' visit the Zayed Centre in

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The Library at Sheikh Zayed Grand
Mosque promotes intercultural
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Abu Dhabi's Al Bateen district. This museum, housed in an Emirati heritage village replete with camels, is an incredible homage to the man who shaped the nation. A photo gallery of Sheikh Zayed and many visiting regional and international royalty and dignitaries lines the walls of the museum, which is also full of personal memorabilia such as his favourite hunting rifles. Taking centre stage are the late President's cherished vehicles -which he often drove through the city without a bodyguard - and gifts he received from all over the world such as stuffed lions and cheetahs. Zayed Centre is open Sundays to Thursdays (closed over the weekend Friday/ Saturday). Guided tours in English and Arabic are available, however you need to book at least one week in advance.

Contact Juma Al Damarki
Manager of the Zayed Centre
+971 2 665 9555 or www.juma@torath.ae



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SHEIKH ZAYED GRAND MOSQUE



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THE YAS HOTEL

THE ISLANDS

Exploring Abu Dhabi needn't be confined to the capital's streets. You can also take to the sea and view some of the more than 200 islands that are scattered in the waters around the main island. The majority of the islands are flat, sandy and uninhabited, but each has its own character. Futaisi Island, a 10-minute boat ride south of Abu Dhabi, has a long history and is packed with interesting flora and fauna. Both **Saadiyat** and **Yas islands** have a range of exciting facilities and attractions.

Yas Island

Just off Abu Dhabi city, this emerging entertainment destination is within a 30-minute drive of the UAE capital and 50 minutes from Dubai. Here you'll find the fabulous Yas Marina Circuit

-the world class motor sports race track which hosts the annual Formula 1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the stunning Yas Marina with its superb yacht club, the Yas Links Abu Dhabi Golf Course, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi and seven new hotels, including the breathtaking signature Yas Hotel - the only one in the world straddling an F1™ race track.

www.yasisland.ae

Yas Marina Circuit

The state-of-the-art Yas Marina Circuit is home to the annual Formula 1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Forming the centrepiece of Yas Marina Circuit is The Yas Hotel, a five star, iconic hotel breathtakingly built half on land and half over the Yas Marina.

It is 365 days of action at Yas Marina Circuit, as year round the track plays host to some of the world's top motor racing series. A full calendar of motorsports and entertainment events include the future champions of Formula 1™ in the GP2 Asia Series and, Australia's legendary motor racing series, the V8 Supercars. Top fuel dragsters made their Middle East debut at the International Drag Racing Festival and the world's top sports car series, the FIA GT Championship. Opportunities at Yas Marina Circuit extend well beyond the Grand Prix, with the Circuit being a state-of-the-art mixed use venue that can be adapted to meet any event, exhibition or conference.

www.yasmarinacircuit.com

Yas Marina and Yacht Club

After attracting Super Yachts from as far away as Australia for the first F1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and playing host to the annual Abu Dhabi Yacht Show, Yas Marina and Yacht Club are the jewels in the crown of Abu Dhabi's ambitions of becoming a strong rival to traditional yachting grounds such as the Mediterranean and Caribbean.

The 143-berth marina, overlooking the F1™ circuit and neighbouring Yas Links Golf Course, has been designed specifically as a Super and MegaYacht venue. It also has a 400 metre long visitor and event pontoon and can accommodate up to 25 yachts (dependent on size).

Cipriani is set in the stunning Yas Marina & Yacht Club, and overlooking the stunning Yas Marina F1™ Circuit, featuring signature dishes from Harry's Bar in Venice and classic Italian favourites.

yasisland@cipriani.com or
www.aldarmarinas.com

Yas Links Abu Dhabi

On the west shores of Yas Island, the Yas Links Abu Dhabi golf course is designed by Kyle Phillips, one of the world's leading golf course designers, in line with the traditional form of links golf commonly associated with the coastal towns of Scotland and Ireland. The Yas Links was voted among the 'Top 10 New International Golf Courses' by the influential US publication Golf Magazine. The Yas Links features a 7,450 yard par 72 course, utilising five teeing grounds per hole, with all 18 benefiting from ocean views. It has a clubhouse and world class, floodlit practise ranges. More information is in the golfing section.

www.yaslinks.com

Saadiyat Island

Just 500 metres off the coast of Abu Dhabi city, the 27 square kilometre Saadiyat Island is undergoing remarkable transformation to become

a world class leisure, residential, business and cultural hub of global proportions, housing the world's largest single concentration of premier cultural assets. These will include the Zayed National Museum, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, a performing arts centre, and a maritime museum - all designed by Pritzker prize winners. Saadiyat, a natural island, is a multifaceted destination. It is zoned into seven different districts, each featuring diverse offerings. Saadiyat will boast a range of hotels and resorts such as the Shangri-La, Rotana and St. Regis as well as a number of restaurants and shopping malls. It will also include schools and the New York University-Abu Dhabi campus. Saadiyat will be a relaxed waterfront home for residents, a cultural magnet for art lovers, the home of dazzling architectural icons, a pristine beachfront tourism destination and a focal point for compelling sporting experiences. Saadiyat Island is just seven minutes from downtown Abu Dhabi, 20 minutes from Abu Dhabi International Airport and 50 minutes from Dubai.

www.saadiyat.ae

Manarat Al Saadiyat

This purpose built visitor centre - Manarat Al Saadiyat (which translates from Arabic as 'a place that provides enlightenment'), brings the island's vision to life. It currently has two galleries open to the public. The state-of-the-art Saadiyat Island exhibition, 'The Saadiyat Story', is on permanent display and gives visitors



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YAS MARINA CIRCUIT



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SAADIYAT BEACH GOLF CLUB



an interactive narrative on the history and cultural vision behind the island and the Zayed National Museum model. Additionally, the 'Arts Abu Dhabi Gallery' is a permanent space for a series of exhibitions and educational programmes organised by Tourism Development & Investment Company (TDIC). Manarat also boasts the fully-licensed Al Fanr restaurant for snacks, lunch and dinner.

+971 2 643 5781

www.saadiyat.ae / www.artسابدhabi.ae

Saadiyat Beach Golf Club

The magnificent 18 hole 'ocean' masterpiece Saadiyat Beach Golf Club, designed by golfing legend Gary Player, reinforces the emirate's fast rising status as a world class golfing destination of distinction. More information is in the golfing section.

www.sbgolfclub.ae

Monte Carlo Beach Club, Saadiyat

With its own unique style, Monte Carlo Beach Club celebrates the elegance of its renowned sister club on the Riviera. Leisure services include, outdoor swimming pool, workout room with fitness and wellness programmes, spa facilities, sauna and steam rooms, kids' pool and playing areas, and private cabanas and loungers set on the stunning, white beach. There's also The Library Lounge, a shop, three lounges and restaurants.

+971 2 656 3500

www.montecarlobeachclub.ae

FAMILY

Abu Dhabi Wildlife Centre

This is a rehabilitation and breeding centre for endangered species, operating as a non-profit agency. The centre is open for educational visits and can be contacted through its website. Call ahead for the exact location, as it can be a little tricky to find.

Al Ain Road, Near Al Wathba

+971 50 614 4024

www.abudhabiwildlifecentre.com

Al Mushrif Children's Garden

This large park near Airport Road is a wonderful place to take the kids and have a bit of fun. It has amusement park rides (with varying fees), swings, fountains and ample car parking. It's a popular 'ladies only' facility so photography is not allowed. The garden is open from 3pm to 10pm (3pm to 9.30pm on Fridays). On public holidays it is open from 9am to 12pm and 3pm to 10pm. The garden is to the south of Old Airport Road, and its entrance is opposite the National Theatre.

Near Choueifat School, Al Mushrif

Al Nahyan Garden

This well maintained and compact park near the Sheraton Khalidiya ensures your little ones can't get up to too much trouble. Simple play equipment helps the kids let off steam.

Sh Zayed the 1st St, Al Khalidiyah



This refurbished park is a welcome patch of green in the middle of the city.

Each little garden cove has a small selection of climbing frames, swings and slides. A large pond in the middle erupts periodically with bursts from the stunning fountains. Vending machines and an enclosed cafeteria provide refreshment.

Opposite NBAD, Al Markaziyah

Khalidiyah Garden

Taking up a whole block, this large park is popular with families. It has a variety of play areas, with equipment for toddlers and older children. Its lovely grassy areas are great for picnics, with a number of large trees providing shade.

Al Khaleej Al Arabi St, Al Khalidiyah

Kids Park

This is a petting zoo some 35 kilometres outside the city on the road to Dubai. Kids' Park Zoo lets children get up close to their favourite animals and combines learning with touch. There are lots of animals in this five acre farm, including peacocks, ostriches, ibex, camels, horses, raccoons, ferrets, and exotic fish and birds. There's a play park for children aged ten and under with a small train and bouncy castles for a fee of less than AED 10 (US\$3), and the good news is that the whole park is covered by a fog system for outdoor cooling to keep the temperatures down. A recent addition is the ocean park with sharks, rays, corals and fresh water fish.



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KHALIFA PARK
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The park is open every day (timings vary); visit the website for more details.

*Al Bahya, 35km from Abu Dhabi
+971 2 563 3100, www.kidsparkuae.com*

Old Airport Garden

This is a quiet park and an ideal place if you want to relax after taking the kids ice-skating at the adjacent rink. One side of the park has swings and small tidy gardens, while the other side is more ornamental, with plenty of trees for shade.

Near Sheikh Zayed Sport Centre

Al Madina Al Riyadiya

Khalifa Park

Just off the Eastern Ring Road, this is one of the city's larger parks and a major landmark. Inspiration for the gardens has been drawn from Arabic and Islamic architecture and from the world's great gardens. The landscape boasts canals, fountains, lakes and waterfalls. You can tour by hopping on the miniature railway. With play equipment for children, picnic facilities and an outdoor auditorium, it's a popular spot in the cooler evenings and during weekends and there's the Murjan Splash Park, which is great value-for-money fun for the little ones. There are four water slides,

a giant tipping bucket, a water umbrella, water guns, a water wheel and a 257-metre long lazy river, with a depth of 0.6 metres and four trampolines. Youngsters can also pilot their own dhow around obstacles, through tunnels and past other boats in the radio-controlled Dhow Derby.

Opening timings of Murjan Splash Park

4pm-11pm daily in September

10am – 6pm on weekdays & 10am -7pm on weekends from October to April

Entry: AED 40 (US \$11). Children under three go free.

Opening timings of Khalifa Park

3pm -10pm daily

www.adm.gov.ae

Play at the Malls

Get out of the heat and enjoy indoor parks at all malls in Abu Dhabi. Differently themed, these parks usually have an array of computer and video games, carousels and other funfair facilities. From traditional dhow sailing to playing on some of the region's best golf courses, Abu Dhabi is a city that needs to be experienced first person.

SPORTS & RECREATION

From traditional dhow sailing to playing on some of the region's best golf courses, Abu Dhabi is a city that needs to be experienced personally.

WATERSPORTS SAILING

ADNH Travco

The sunset dhow cruise is an hour long scenic journey along the Corniche, with Arabic coffee and dates served. The average price is AED 80 (US\$20) per person, including coach transfer. Cruises are flexible and can be suited to fit everyone's tastes and budget.

+971 2 444 9914, www.adnh.com

Blue Dolphin Company

Sindbad is a traditional Arabian dhow that departs from the Breakwater at 5:30pm every evening and then every hour, on the hour, for the rest of the evening. However, it is advisable to check sailing times as occasionally the dhow is chartered for private parties. The fare AED 10 (US\$3) for adults and AED 5 (US\$1.50) for children includes tea, coffee and soft drinks.

+971 50 685 8305

bluedolphinco@hotmail.com

Dinner Cruises

An evening spent sailing along Abu Dhabi Corniche, while enjoying fine cuisine, is a great dinner alternative. Dinner cruises are available through Al Dhafra and Le Royal Meridien's Shuja Yacht.

www.aldhafra.net

www.leroyalmeridien-abudhabi.com

Marine Racing

Abu Dhabi was the first Middle Eastern city to organise a UIM Formula One Powerboat Race. Powerboat racing now attracts a large, appreciative audience. At this event, 20 to 24 boats representing 12 nations compete at high speed along the narrow, twisting course off the Corniche. The Abu Dhabi International Marine Sports Club organises the annual President's Cup F2000 Powerboat Championship, the National Regatta, the National Jet Ski Championship, and the UAE Wooden Powerboat Championship, all of which are designed to encourage young Emiratis to remain close to their marine heritage. Each season also sees two open regattas for modern sailing boats (including catamarans, lasers and windsurfers), which are open to all ages and nationalities.

Near Marina Mall
+971 2 681 5566

DIVING

Many good dive sites are easily accessible from Abu Dhabi, including wreck or deep water dives and reef dives. It is possible to dive year round in the warm seas, and there is a rich abundance of marine life, including barracuda, spotted eagle rays, stingrays, and much more. The following companies offer guided dives from Abu Dhabi.





Freediving UAE

Is the only company specialising in freediving training and courses in the United Arab Emirates. Freediving UAE currently runs a basic 'Discover Freediving' course; tailored to introducing newcomers, of those 18 years and older, to freediving and requiring no open water diving, and three AIDA accredited courses for the more advanced divers. Costs for one day introductory 'Discover Freediving' course is AED 800 (US\$218), the two day AIDA Foundation course is AED 1,850 (US\$506) and the three day Intermediate and Advanced courses are AED 2,881/3,344 (US\$790/916) respectively.

100% wondershare

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contactus@freedivinguae.com www.freedivinguae.com



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DIVING CENTRES

Alex Boultng AIDA Master Instructor
alex@freedivinguae.com or
www.freedivinguae.com

Abu Dhabi Sub Aqua Club
+971 2 673 1111
www.abudhabisubaqua.com

Al Jazira Dive Centre
+971 2 562 9100
www.goldentulipaljazira.com

Arabian Divers & Sportfishing Charters
+971 50 614 6931
www.fishabudhabi.com

Sea Cruisers
+971 50 800 9495
www.seacruiser.ae

Sea Tourism
+971 2 681 3064
www.seatourism.net

FISHING

September to April is best for fishing in Abu Dhabi, although it is possible to catch certain species of fish throughout the summer. Commonly caught fish include dorado, kingfish, queenfish, sailfish and tuna. The more adventurous may prefer to try deep sea fishing or trawling. The following companies offer fishing excursions from Abu Dhabi.

Arabian Divers & Sport Fishing Charters
+971 50 614 6931
www.fishabudhabi.com

Beach Rotana Hotel & Towers
+971 2 697 9000
www.rotana.com

Empros Watersports
+971 2 6289704
www.empros.ae

Lulu Boats
Humaid Al Qubaisi +971 50 642 9777
www.luluboats.com

Sheraton Resort Health Club
+971 2 677 3333
www.sheraton.com/abudhabi

Sea Cruiser
+971 50 800 9495
www.seacruiser.ae

Sea Tourism
+971 2 681 3064
www.seatourism.net

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Al Forsan International Sports Resort

This is a truly unique, world-class sports and leisure destination within 10 minutes of Abu Dhabi International Airport. The resort, which has five international restaurants and cafés, caters to a wide range of sporting, leisure, and meeting activities. Guests can experience shooting, wakeboarding and waterskiing, horse riding, motorsports, paintball and other leisure activities. The resort is ideal for people of all ages for international sporting events, special occasions and family days out.

Khalifa City A
+971 2 556 8555
www.alforsan.com

Al Fataisi Club

Fataisi Island has various water sport activities to offer, such as beach volleyball, jet skiing, and fishing trips. The island also offers magnificent pure bred Arabian horses for all ages and skills riders. The Island is also a shelter for a diverse variety of flora and fauna.

+971 2 666 6601
www.futaisi.com

CAMEL RACING

Camel racing is a spectacular sport and a trip to the races can be one of the most memorable highlights of a visit to Abu Dhabi. Cheer on the camels as they gallop around a specially made track, and marvel at how these seemingly ungainly creatures can reach such high speeds.

Races normally take place on weekend mornings, with additional races on public holidays. For a taste of this sport, head to the Al Wathba Camel Race Track (about 45km east of Abu Dhabi on the Al Ain Road), or to the Al Maqam Track near Al Ain. Try to get to the racetracks as early as possible to soak up the atmosphere. Entrance to the races is free.

More information from The Camel Racing Federation at Al Wathba
+971 2 583 9200

CRICKET

Cricket is a passion shared across many communities in Abu Dhabi. Car parks, rough land, and the city's many grassy parks all sprout stumps during evenings and weekends when people of all ages come out to play.

Abu Dhabi Cricket Council +971 50 827 1646
Al Ain Cricket Association +971 3 703 6942
www.uaecricket.com

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ABU DHABI GOLF CLUB

FOOTBALL

The Dome@rawdhat is a football facility open seven days a week, with two indoor (temperature controlled) and outdoor FIFA Grade 1 artificial grass pitches for all-year-round play. They can also be used for cricket, rugby, American football, etc. The facility stretches over 24,000 square feet and has male and female changing facilities, a prayer room, and a cafe.

Airport Road, Near Carrefour
+971 2 449 8480
www.thedome.ae

GOLF

With some of the biggest names in golf appearing every January, the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship is the European PGA Tour curtain raiser which is held at the Abu Dhabi Golf Club. Away from the action on the greens, there is children's entertainment, competitions and an array of food and beverage outlets, all of which make it a fantastic family day out.

www.abudhabigolfchampionship.com

Those interested in playing golf, rather than watching it, can get in touch with any of the following clubs in Abu Dhabi.

Abu Dhabi City Golf Club

This nine-hole golf course offers a challenging game, with water coming into play at more than half of the holes, and only two Par 3s. Set within the circumference of both grass and sand horseracing tracks, this is an intriguing course of nine holes that offers nightly flood lighting and different tee positions, creating an 18 hole, par 70, 6,395 yard little gem.

Water challenges come into play on five of the holes, with testing dog legs left and right and an enormous par five, 630 yard eighth hole, where skilfully designed water hazards cross the fairway. With Night Golf and tee times as late as 8:30pm, and the UAE's first 2-tiered driving range, featuring 36 individual bays, this golf club is open to members and visitors alike.

www.adcitygolf.ae

Abu Dhabi Golf Club

Abu Dhabi Golf Club is home to the annual PGA European Tour backed Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship and is managed by Troon Golf, one of the sport's foremost luxury brands. The iconic clubhouse is built in the shape of a falcon overlooking sweeping fairways. Just 30 minutes from the centre of Abu Dhabi, the club's excellent facilities include two par 72 world class 18-hole courses, a driving range, putting and pitching greens and a golf academy that holds lessons for children. State-of-the-art lighting to provide optimum playing conditions without natural daylight.

Umm Al Nar St, Umm Al Nar
+971 2 558 8990
www.adgolfclub.com

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Al Ghazal Golf Club

This purpose-built 18-hole Par 71, 6,724 yards championship standard 'sand' golf course has a 30-bay driving range, teaching academy, function facilities and licensed clubhouse, and is just two minutes from the capital's international airport. Famous for its friendly and hospitable ambience, Al Ghazal is home to the World Sand Golf Championship. Anyone can play here, including transit passengers with a just a few hours to spare, however, it's recommended to call ahead and reserve.

Near Abu Dhabi International
Airport
+971 2 575 8040
www.alghazalgolf.ae

beach and sand dunes, the course has been designed with strict environmental guidelines and sensitivity to the surrounding natural environment. Operated by Troon Golf, the Saadiyat Beach Golf Club -which has the Player designed course at its heart -incorporates a distinguished practice range, as well as a Golf Academy, which boasts a full service restaurant, locker rooms, a fully stocked golf shop and diverse meeting facilities. With features for all levels of golfers, the club offers a true 'Member for the Day' experience for UAE residents, holiday-makers and guests from surrounding hotels on a pay-and-play basis.

www.sbgolfclub.ae

Saadiyat Beach Golf Club

The magnificent 18-hole masterpiece Saadiyat Beach Golf Club, designed by Gary Player, is the Arabian Gulf's first and only 'ocean' course with several beach-front holes on the iconic Saadiyat Island. The amphitheatre style Par 72 Saadiyat Beach Golf Club features spectacular views of the glittering, crystal blue Arabian Gulf, with over a third of the course having views of the Saadiyat coastline where dolphins are regularly spotted. The imaginative golf course routing provides a spectacular variety of golf experiences, with every hole having its own unique character.

From the creation of an aquatic habitat, to the introduction of salt water lagoons and restoration of the

Yas Links Abu Dhabi

Voted among the 'Top 10 New International Golf Courses' by the influential US publication Golf Magazine, Yas Links Abu Dhabi is the region's first true links golf course on the west shores of Yas Island. Designed by Kyle Phillips, one of the world's leading course architects, the Yas Links Abu Dhabi Golf Course is in line with the traditional form of links golf commonly associated with the coastal towns of Scotland and Ireland.

The Andalucia style Yas Links Golf Club has opened to rave acclaim, featuring glamorous open terraces with sea views, sports lounge and Barranca fine dining restaurant which has access to two outdoor terraces and a private dining room. The green lawned terraces can cater for up to

SAADIYAT BEACH GOLF CLUB



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300 people overlooking natural mangroves, with a pontoon that can accommodate 20-seater vessels and is ideal for corporate events. Hickory's all day dining sports lounge also has a private function room with access to an outdoor terrace. Additional clubhouse features include a swimming pool, steam room with rain showers and a pro-shop. The Yas Links Golf Course is open to members and 'pay & play' guests.

www.yaslinks.com

HORSE RACING

Horses are of great heritage significance in Abu Dhabi, which has a wealth of equestrian talent.

Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club

This is the home of horse racing in the capital with around 16 race meetings a year, usually held in the afternoons or evenings throughout the cooler season, and admission is free. The race night atmosphere is hard to beat, with six races per evening, starting at 30 minute intervals. There is no betting, but the Tri Cast Competition invites race goers to pick the first three finishers in each race, with prizes for the winners.

www.adec-web.com

MOTORSPORTS

Warm up on the Yas Marina Circuit, which annually hosts the Formula 1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix and learn how to end one of the world's most famous racing circuits.

the most exciting tracks around. Expert tuition is available in a variety of cars at the Yas Racing School, prices from AED 950 (US\$260). Or bring your own car and drive the full Grand Prix circuit on the Yas track day. The Yas Racing School's qualified instructors will provide driving tips and tuition if required. Prices from AED 650 (US\$180). In season, there is action almost weekly on the drag strip at the Yas Drag Racing Centre, with spectator entry from AED 30 (US\$11).

*For information and bookings, call
800 YAS (927), +971 2 659 9544 or
+971 2 446 0384*
www.yasmarinacircuit.com

Yas Kartzone

Experience the thrills and excitement of karting at Yas Kartzone. The kart fleet consists of Cadet Karts for youngsters aged 8 to 12, and Senior Karts for people aged 13 years and above. Yas Kartzone also offers an array of karting options for groups of 15 or more. Open from Tuesday to Saturday from 2pm to 10pm fees are AED 80 (US\$22) for cadets and AED 100 (US\$27) for seniors.

For information call 800 YAS (927)

TENNIS

The International Tennis Complex, an ATP standard facility with six training courts and a centre court with a spectator capacity of 5,000, hosts the annual Capitala Tennis Tournament.

INDOOR ACTIVITIES

BOWLING

A number of malls have ten-pin bowling facilities for family entertainment. Bowling City (bowling-city.com) has three alleys in Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi Mall, Khalidiyah Mall and Al Mariah Mall), and one in Al Ain (Al Ain Mall). Abu Dhabi Country Club in Al Mushrif (02 443 6333) has a four-lane facility. The biggest bowling alley in Abu Dhabi is Khalifa International Bowling Centre (02 403 4648), which has 40 lanes and is one of the world's most modern alleys, there is also a bowling facility at the Armed Forces Officers Club & Hotel.

ICE SKATING

The Abu Dhabi Ice Rink (02 4034333), near Zayed Sports City, is an excellent way to escape the heat for a few hours. Apart from the ice rink, there is a video arcade, bumper cars and a restaurant.

Lessons are available. Marina Mall's Snow World has a smaller 'fun' rink for just a taste of the ice.

+971 2 681 0814

SQUASH

Visitors can play squash in many hotels and sports clubs throughout the emirate. Squash courts are available for hire at Abu Dhabi Golf Club (+971 2 558 8990), Beach Rotana Hotel & Towers (+971 2 697 9000),

Le Meridien Abu Dhabi (+971 2 644 6666), Sheraton Abu Dhabi Hotel & Resort (+971 2 677 3333) and Officers Club & Hotel (+971 2 441 4900).

ZAYED SPORTS CITY

This huge complex dedicated to sports has a very affordable bowling alley and an ice rink open to visitors.

+971 2 403 4200

www.zsc.ae





SHOPPING

Shopping is something of a national pastime in Abu Dhabi, perhaps because it's so diverse - everything from ultramodern malls with the latest brands, to small, souk like outlets where you can buy traditional perfumes, handicrafts, spices and carpets. You can spend thousands of dollars on a bejewelled designer watch, or pick up a basic timepiece in a supermarket. You can splash out on an haute-couture designer outfit or buy fabric and have a local tailor make up your very own creation for a bargain price. You can buy a treasured Arabian antique, or a technology busting super modern home entertainment system. Prices are often excellent in comparison to those abroad, especially for carpets, textiles and gold. If you are a good bargainer, you can get even better deals. Shops open at around 10am to 10pm or later on weekends. Although most malls work straight through, some independent shops close for an extended lunch break, usually from 1pm to 4pm. Hours usually change during Ramadan and Eid, with many shops closing for the afternoon and reopening from 7pm until midnight or later.

BEST BUYS

Shopping for souvenirs? Get into a historical habit. Ornate wooden carvings, local art, gold jewellery and carpets reflect the beauty and intrigue of Abu Dhabi's Arabian heritage. From the smallest silver pillbox to a large hand-woven carpet, souvenirs come in all shapes and sizes, and can be bought in Abu Dhabi often at a fraction of the cost elsewhere. The trick is to avoid the tourist trap and know where to find authentic items that you will treasure for a lifetime.

PDF Editor

ART

Abu Dhabi is home to several reputable galleries featuring interesting exhibitions of local art and traditional Arabian artefacts. The Folklore Gallery on Khalidiya Street (+971 2 666 0361) is a great place to browse displays of local pottery and art, and has an excellent framing service. Hemisphere Design Studio & Gallery (Khalifa Street, +971 2 676 8614) is an independent gallery showcasing works by local artists. Gallery One, inside Qaryat Al Beri, has a range of beautiful photographs and artwork that can be printed onto canvas and mounted, or rolled up into a suitcase friendly tube (+971 2 558 1822).

Barakat Gallery

Barakat specialises in ancient art with genuine antiquities from China, Egypt, the Near East, Africa, Greece and Rome. Items vary widely and include statues, jewellery, coins, necklaces and pottery.

*Emirates Palace, Al Ras Al Akhdar
+971 2 690 8950
www.barakatgallery.com*

Ghof Art Gallery

The funky Ghaf Art Gallery stages exhibitions showcasing local and also sometimes international artists, with new talent regularly exhibiting. The gallery is near Khalidiyah Gardens.

Al Khaleej Al Arabi St, Al Khalidiyah

 **wondershare** +971 2 665 5332
www.ghafgallery.com

Salwa Zeidan Gallery

This gallery serves as a contemporary art space for international and Middle Eastern artists and emerging talents. Open Sunday through Thursday from 9am to 7pm.

*Al Khaleej Al Arabi St, Al Khalidiyah
+971 2 666 9656
www.salwazeidangallery.com*

CARPETS

Buying a carpet can be a fascinating experience; most carpets found in Abu Dhabi originate from Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, China and Central Asia, and come in an exquisite array of designs and colours. To ensure you are buying the genuine article at a good price, it is advisable to learn a bit about carpets before making your final decision. Visit a number of shops to get a feel for price, quality and traditional designs. As a very rough guide, the higher the number of knots per square inch, the higher the price and the better the quality. Silk is more expensive than wool, and rugs from Iran are generally more valuable than the equivalent from Turkey or Kashmir.

Check also whether the carpet was made by machine or hand; hand made carpets are never quite perfect and the pile is uneven, yet they are more valuable than their machine made counterparts. Carpet salesmen will happily offer plenty of advice and can usually be trusted; just don't feel pressured into buying simply because he has unrolled over 30 carpets for you. Most importantly, don't forget to bargain - it's all part of the game and

PDF Editor



is expected. A good starting point is the Carpet Souk at the port end of Mina Road. Mina Souk is similarly well stocked. Most malls also have well-stocked carpet shops.

GOLD JEWELLERY

Gold jewellery is in abundant supply, whatever your taste. Gold is priced according to the international daily gold rate, and is available in 18, 21, 22 or 24 carats. Shopping for gold is a fascinating activity, due to the wide range of styles available, from clean and classic western designs to opulent, ornate Arabian wedding jewellery. You can also buy gold ingots in varying sizes, either for investment or to have moulded into your own design. In addition to the weight price, a small charge is added for craftsmanship, which varies according to the intricacy of design. The Gold Souk on 4th Street in Madinat Zayed has many jewellers, including some of the Gulf's largest.

Apart from the souk, you'll also find some big name jewellers in the shopping malls, such as Cartier, Chopard and Tiffany & Co. Regional jewellers to look out for include Damas, Pure Gold and Rivoli. Genuine traditional items, such as wooden chests, can be very expensive and increasingly difficult to find, although 'antique' copies are widely available. Traditional wooden doors are also popular, and can be hung as works of art or transformed into furniture, usually as tables with glass tops. Specialty outlets that sell these large items can arrange shipping back to your home country. Other items with a local theme include the Arabian coffee pot and cups (a symbol of local hospitality), prayer beads in a multitude of colours, and woodcarvings in the form of dhows,

falconry equipment and canes (traditionally used in emirati dancing exhibitions). Ancient looking rifles, muzzle loading guns and the functional yet decorative 'khanjar' (a short, curved dagger in an elaborately wrought sheath) are also popular buys. If you intend to purchase these, check first with your airline on procedures for transporting them.

Traditional wedding jewellery made of heavy silver or later on gold and crafted into necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings are coveted forms of historic art, and make beautiful displays when mounted into glass box frames. Once valued more highly than gold, the dried resin from the frankincense tree of southern Oman has been traded for centuries, and nowadays is often sold with a small wooden chest and charcoal burner as incense kits. Ghitra headscarves, the distinctive white garment worn traditionally as headdresses by men in the Middle East, have become a popular fashion accessory worldwide. You will find a huge range of ghitra in Abu Dhabi's souks and malls -aside from the standard white, they come in a multitude of different colours and patterns such as chequered red and white, worn in the cooler months.

MADE IN UAE

Made in UAE Souvenirs was founded in 2007 in Abu Dhabi by the emirati artist Azza Al Qubaisi, and is the first local 100% non-profit project to develop and promote UAE handicrafts and artworks. It is also home to a cultural exchange programme by

showcasing handicrafts from different parts of the world. Discover beautiful creations of local artists and talents beside a wide collection of UAE traditional and silver souvenirs.

*Locations: Marina Mall and Women's Union -Abu Dhabi +971 55 493 6308
janice@muaes.com, www.muaes.com*

SOUVENIRS YOU CAN EAT

Edible souvenirs; include delicious Lebanese sweets (most often made from pastry, honey, ground nuts and dates). Iranian caviar is widely available and good value for money, as it is sold without import duty or any added tax. Chocolate made from camels' milk is a luxurious treat with a smooth texture and a unique flavour that comes from blending camel milk with vanilla, honey and cocoa beans. It is sold in bars, pralines and as camel shaped figurines, and is available from many souvenir shops, as well as supermarkets such as Abu Dhabi Co-operative Society, Lulu and Emirates General Market. Perhaps the most classic edible souvenir is dates; this distinctive fruit holds an important place in Arabian heritage as a vital source of nutrition. Today, dates are available in many modern varieties, with each having its own distinct colour and flavour. They are even available dipped in chocolate or stuffed with almonds or candied orange peel. Bateel, the renowned dates delicatessen, has an amazing selection of luxury dates and date produce, sparkling date juice, date jams and preserves and even balsamic vinegar from dates.



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Shops with the Arabian Experience

One of the great things about shopping in Abu Dhabi is that many of the shops offer so much more than the goods they sell - they also offer a unique Arabian experience.

Yas Perfumes

Made from the resin of the agarwood tree, oud was historically a valuable commodity and today is still a sought after luxury item. Various types of oud have different aromas, but all have a strong, deep scent when burned. You can purchase oud as blocks or chips, along with a special burner. Oud oil, however, is the result of a complex extraction process, and is popular with emiratis who use it as a distinctive, long lasting perfume.

Yas Perfumes, an emirati company, specialises in oud, oud oils and dukhoons, all of which are traditional regional scents used as perfume and incense, with a selection of French blended perfumes as well. Once you have selected a fragrance, browse through the incredible selection of ornate perfume bottles to store it in. There are numerous branches of Yas Perfumes in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, including Marina Mall, Abu Dhabi Mall, Emirates Palace and another in Al Ain Mall.

Arjmst

A private atelier founded in 2006 in Abu Dhabi, showcases the work of the first emirati designer Azza Al Qubaisi. Her work combines the

beauty of nature, deep rooted tradition and the awareness of present and future issues in her fabulous collections and sculptures. She also draws attention to many subjects, from the history of pearl diving (represented in Angel Tears collection), to present environmental issues represented in the Sustainability collection. Skillful combinations of diamond, gold, silver and other materials give each piece of art its identity and character. Find both exclusive one-off pieces and affordable souvenirs to remember your Abu Dhabi experience.

+971 2 644 1575

+971 55 471 0080

www.arjmst.com

Bateel Dates

The date palm has been a symbol of life and hospitality in the region for centuries, and Bateel Dates has long been one of the most respected names in the date trade. Bateel sells every kind of date imaginable, in every form - from the hard, unripened balah date to the soft, fully ripe tamr. Bateel outlets are like luxurious delicatessens; not only can you buy a wide range of dates, but they also sell some fascinating date products such as juice, Turkish delight, cakes, balsamic vinegar and syrup, all of which make excellent souvenirs. Find branches of Bateel at the Souk at Qaryat Al Beri, Khalidiyah Mall and Abu Dhabi Mall.

www.bateel.ae

SHOPPING MALLS

Spacious, modern and air-conditioned, Abu Dhabi's malls are a welcome escape from the summer heat and a world of choice when it comes to shopping. In Abu Dhabi, malls are a place to catch up with friends or for a family outing -and the fun can go on until late at night. With their imaginative designs and wide range of outlets, shopping malls are perennially popular. The bigger malls buzz with activity as people meet, eat, pose and parade. During festive occasions such as Eid or Ramadan, malls are venues. For special events such as dance or cultural shows, often featuring international acts. They also hold numerous raffles, often with huge prizes such as luxury cars or cash.

Abu Dhabi Mall

With over 200 shops and upwards of 25,000 visitors a day, restaurants on every floor, a children's play area and a Cineplex, this is more than just a shopping destination. Look out for big name outlets like Paris Gallery (perfumes, cosmetics, sunglasses, handbags and jewellery), Jashanmal, Grand Stores and Salam Stores (all department stores).

+971 2 645 4858

www.abudhabi-mall.com

Al Raha Mall

Al Raha houses a mixture of entertainment, leisure and shopping (including fashion). Two cinemas show the latest movies and a number of cafés, restaurants and a food court offer a choice of dining. There is also a kids' entertainment area.

+971 2 556 2229

www.al-rahahmall.com

Al Wahda Mall

This mall has an inviting, spacious sun roofed design and a myriad of side passages to satisfy curious shoppers. It has a wide range of stores, large and small, local and international, as well as a large supermarket and plenty of dining choices.

+971 2 443 7000

www.alwahda-mall.com

Dalma Mall

Dalma Mall is moments away from Maqta Bridge and Abu Dhabi International Airport. This mall is a good shopping and entertainment destination, with stores offering the latest fashion brands and entertainment facilities for all ages.

+971 2 5506111

www.dalmamall.ae

Fotouh Al Khair Centre

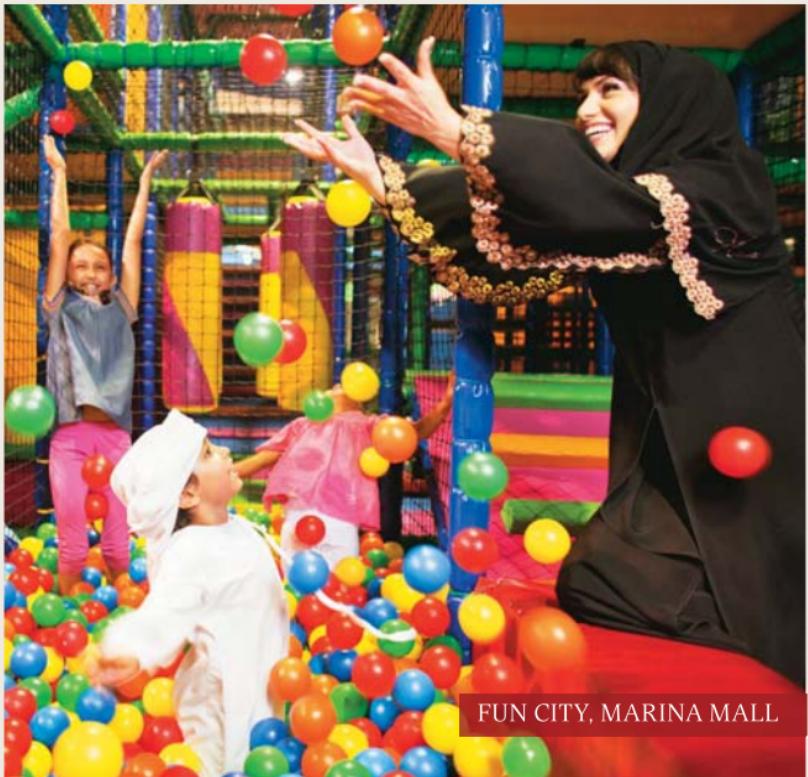
Several of the world's favourite brands are jammed into this spacious mall: Marks & Spencer, Adams, Monsoon, Nine West, and more. Also worth visiting is Falcon Gallery -great for household decorations, candles, flower arranging materials and fancy goods.

+971 2 681 1130

www.fotouhalkhair.com

Khalidiyah Mall

This mall on Al Nahyan Street features distinctive Islamic architecture and over 160 shops. Highlights include UK department stores Debenhams and BHS, its many cafés and restaurants, and a large food court. There is also an



FUN CITY, MARINA MALL

amusement centre with arcade games, a brand new dedicated 3D cinema and a bowling alley.

+971 2 635 4000

www.khalidiyahmall.com

Marina Mall

Located on the Breakwater, this mall features a 100 metre high viewing platform, an ice rink, a bowling alley, a Cineplex, musical fountains and hundreds of big name brands and stores. A true Abu Dhabi landmark, Marina Mall's many restaurants and

coffee shops make it possible to spend a full day here. Watch out for the huge annual sale period from mid-January to the end of February. A new addition to the mall is CityStore which is the region's first standalone store of an English Premium League team. The Manchester City FC store features a full range of Club merchandise, including a shirt printing service to create personalized items.

+971 2 681 8300

www.marinamall.ae

MARKETS/SOUKS

Traditional markets have evolved into bustling tourist attractions selling a fascinating collection of goods. Souk is Arabic for 'marketplace'. Historically, dhows from the Far East and India would offload their cargo and the goods would be haggled over in the nearby souks. Over the years the goods on sale have diversified dramatically; today alongside the spices, silks and perfumes you'll find electronic goods, souvenirs, clothing and household items. Abu Dhabi's souks are worth a visit for their bustling atmosphere, eclectic variety of goods, and to observe the traditional way of doing business.

Al Mina Fruit & Vegetable Souk

Across the road from the Fish Souk, this fruit and vegetable market is bursting with colour as each seller arranges his produce outside the shops. The choice is amazing, and you can buy by the kilo or the box. Even if you are not buying, this area provides excellent photo opportunities.

Carpet Souk

Yemeni mattresses and machine made carpets dominate this souk, but bargains can be found if you know what you are looking for. Some of the sellers will make up Arabic majlis style cushions for a very reasonable price. You'll find it on Mina Road, near the main port area.

Fish Souk

Every morning, fishermen load their catch on to the quayside and prepare for a day of haggling; it is a fascinating insight into the way traditional business is done. The fish souk is in Mina Zayed Free Port.

Souk Qaryat Al Beri

This contemporary adaptation of a typical Arabian souk is home to local and international retail brands, coffee shops and a diverse range of restaurants. Abras (water taxis) take you around the souk via meandering man-made canals, and the stunning waterside complex offers alfresco dining in beautiful architectural surroundings.

+971 2 558 1670

www.soukqaryatalberi.com

The Souk at Central Market

When fully opened, The Souk at Central Market will offer more than 250 shops. Opened recently as a soft opening, this traditional Arabian souk is a must visit destination for residents and tourists with the emphasis on displaying and selling traditional and regional products ranging from jewellery, carpets, antiques to traditional tailoring, fashion and diverse restaurants.

+971 2 499 8444

www.centralmarket.ae



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CENTRES & BARGAIN OUTLETS

Abu Dhabi Co-operative Society Complex

This older shopping centre still buzzes, especially during weekends and evenings. Its main draws are now Splash (trendy, inexpensive fashion), Shoe Mart (huge range of shoes), Lifestyle (funky gifts and much more) and The Baby Shop. Other smaller shops include computer suppliers and ladies' fashion outlets.

+971 2 644 0808

www.adcoops.com

Hamdan Centre

Something of an institution on Abu Dhabi's shopping scene, this vibrant centre in the heart of the city is a good place to buy leather goods, shoes, sports equipment and touristy knick-knacks, all at bargain prices. It also has a pharmacy.

+971 2 632 8555

Khalifa Centre

This ethnic mall is teeming with craft and souvenir shops, as well as shops selling Iranian carpets - a great place for souvenirs.

+971 2 667 9900

kcenter@eim.ae

Liwa Centre

This is where to head on Sheikh Hamdan Street for designer jewellery, clothes, makeup, perfume, bookshops and more. Be sure to visit the vibrant food court on the second level or relax in the coffee shop, which is open until midnight.

Madinat Zayed Shopping Centre & Gold Centre

This down-town centre has over 400 stores including a big textile market, a substantial market specialising in UAE traditional dress and an accessories and cosmetic market. It is home to Abu Dhabi's gold souk with 85 stores selling a range of traditional and modern jewellery.

mzm@lineinvestments.ae.



PDF Editor

A DAY OUT IN ABU DHABI CITY

ITINERARY ONE

A Dose of Culture and Cruising through Dinner.

Morning

Learn all about Islam and some UAE traditions with a visit to one of the world's most impressive mosques, the stunning Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. This architectural marvel features 80 domes, 1,000 columns, gold plated chandeliers, the world's largest hand woven carpet with the most knots and space for 40,000 worshippers. Take a one hour, complimentary guided tour at 10am, 11am or 5pm every Saturday to Thursday.

Afternoon

Visit the Saadiyat Island Cultural District exhibition at the opulent Emirates Palace hotel and get an insight into what will be the world's largest single concentration of premier cultural institutions, including the Louvre Abu Dhabi and Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. It's free of charge and From 4pm, partake in the ultimate luxury tradition of afternoon tea at Emirates Palace with platters of dainty sandwiches, petit fours and fluffy scones and a pot of expertly brewed tea. Catch a cab up to the Heritage Village on the Corniche Breakwater and step back in time to a traditional desert lifestyle. Bargain with souvenir sellers and watch craftsmen at work producing pottery, weaving and metal work.

Evening

Enjoy an Arabian feast whilst cruising along the Corniche on a traditional dhow (sailing boat) converted into a restaurant. Be enthralled by the glittering lights of Abu Dhabi's Manhattan style skyline.

PDF Editor





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PDF Editor

ITINERARY TWO

Fishy Tales of Arabia

Morning

Rise early to catch the action at the Fish Market in the Mina Area. Be astounded at the astonishing array of fish, including shark, and be ready to snap up photographs. If you're self catering, choose your favourite seafood and get it cleaned on site ready for a lunch or evening barbecue. The hustle and bustle of the market brings you wide awake.

Afternoon

Head off for a day's fishing and how you should easily be able to recognise your catch. Take a fishing tour with Sea Cruisers and get to know all about Abu Dhabi's rich maritime heritage whilst taking in its stunning coastline.

Evening

Head to one of the city's fabulous seafood restaurants for a gourmet experience that you will savour long after the meal is over.

ITINERARY THREE

Islands in the Sun

Morning

Set sail with the Noukhada Adventure Company (www.noukhada.ae, Tel: +971 50 721 8928) for a bright and early eco-tour, kayaking through Abu Dhabi natural eastern mangrove forests dotted around the plethora of islands in view of the rising city skyline. You'll spend 1.5 hours with an experienced guide who can share details on natural wildlife habitats and point out some of the iconic buildings transforming the horizon, stopping for refreshments on one of the pristine islands.

Arrange for Sea Cruiser Boat Tours (www.seacruiser.ae, Tel: +971 50 800 9495) to pick you up from an agreed destination on the water, and transfer you to Abu Dhabi's signature entertainment destination, Yas Island (www.yasisland.ae). You'll arrive in style, and air-conditioned comfort, to the 143 berth Yas Marina which overlooks the Yas Marina Formula 1™ Circuit. Experience one of the world's most technologically advanced motorsport's circuits by taking the official Yas Marina Circuit Venue Tour (www.yasmarinacircuit.ae, Tel: 800 927). Escorted track tours in an air-conditioned coach with a trained tour guide provide an inside view of the pits, team garages and the working environments of the F1™ teams in the Paddock Club's team villas. The tour ends with a photo finish opportunity on the Main Straight podium.

Lunch

Delight in the art of cuisine at one of the fine dining restaurants at the extraordinary The Yas Hotel (www.theyashotel.com, Tel: +971 656 0600), the only one in the world to straddle an F1™ circuit.

Afternoon

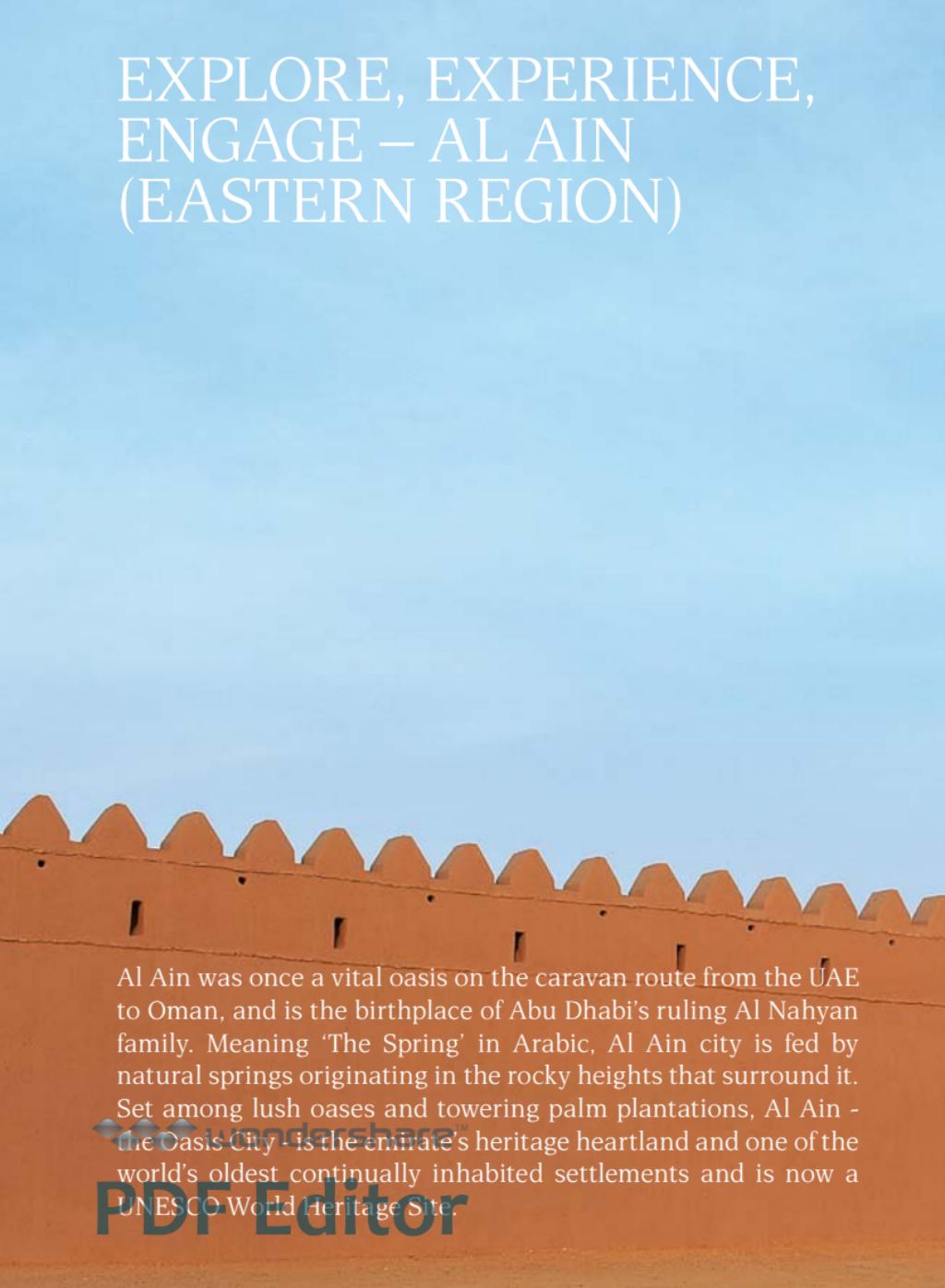
Transfer from Yas Island along the incredible Sheikh Khalifa Highway, connecting to the 27 sqm Saadiyat Island (www.saadiyat.ae) which is undergoing a remarkable transformation to become a world class leisure, business and cultural hub. Saadiyat Island will eventually house the world's largest single concentration of premier cultural assets, including the Zayed National Museum, the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, a performing arts centre and a maritime museum.

A permanent interactive display, 'The Saadiyat Story' at the island's dedicated exhibition centre Manarat Al Saadiyat (www.saadiyat.ae or email manaratalsadiyat@tdic.ae), brings the history and cultural vision of Saadiyat to life. Take an afternoon break in the centre's Al Fanr restaurant.

Evening

Finish your perfect island day with a visit to Saadiyat Beach Golf Club (www.sbgolfclub.ae, Tel: +971 2 557 8000), a magnificent 18-hole 'ocean' masterpiece designed by golfing legend Gary Player. Squeeze in a game of golf or kick back and relax at the club's signature Hawksbill Restaurant with its sweeping views overlooking the rolling cascades of the course.

EXPLORE, EXPERIENCE, ENGAGE – AL AIN (EASTERN REGION)



Al Ain was once a vital oasis on the caravan route from the UAE to Oman, and is the birthplace of Abu Dhabi's ruling Al Nahyan family. Meaning 'The Spring' in Arabic, Al Ain city is fed by natural springs originating in the rocky heights that surround it. Set among lush oases and towering palm plantations, Al Ain - the Oasis City is the emirate's heritage heartland and one of the world's oldest continually inhabited settlements and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



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PDF Editor

AL JAHILI FORT

AL AIN ATTRACTIONS

Al Ain Centre Market

This is the last souk of its kind in the UAE and is an excellent opportunity to see camels up close, and to see and hear the traders discussing the price and merits of their animals. There are some excellent photo opportunities, but be careful where you point your lens and always ask permission first. People will try to sell you a tour around the pens, but feel free to walk around on your own. In the livestock section, watch locals arrive in pickups laden with goats and sheep, ready to do some hard bargaining.

East of Jebel Hafeet

Al Ain Oasis

In the heart of the city, this impressive oasis is filled with palm plantations, many of which are still working farms. The cool, shady walkways transport you from the heat and noise of the city to a tranquil haven; all you'll hear is birdsong and the rustle of the palm fronds. Picnic tables are available at the main entrance to the oasis, and there is a restaurant in the centre of the plantation. You are welcome to wander through the plantations, but it's best to stick to the paved areas, which will take you on a relaxing meander through the trees.

Farms occasionally have signs welcoming tourists to walk around. The farms have plenty of working examples of the falaj, the UAE's traditional irrigation system, which has been used for centuries to tap into underground wells. There are eight different entrances, some of which have arched gates, and entry is free.

Near Al Ain Museum, +971 3 763 0155

Al Jahili Fort

The picturesque Al Jahili Fort is one of the UAE's most historic forts and is the birthplace of the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. It was erected in 1891 to defend the city and protect precious palm groves. The former headquarters of the Oman Trucial Scouts, the force that protected the mountain passes and kept inter-tribal peace, it also served as a residence for the local governor. It is set in beautifully landscaped gardens, and visitors are encouraged to explore it. It has been carefully restored and now houses a permanent exhibition of the work of British adventurer Sir Wilfred Thesiger (whom the locals affectionately refer to as Mubarak Bin London) and his 1940s crossings of the Rub Al Khali (The Empty Quarter) desert.

*Near Public Garden, close to the centre of town
www.adach.ae*



Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort

This is home to over 4,000 animals, and at least 30% of its 180 species are considered endangered. Conservation efforts have been strengthened by partnerships with San Diego Zoo, the Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden in Miami, and the World Association of Zoos & Aquariums. The park covers 900 hectares near the base of Jebel Hafeet. Visitors can see the large animal collection in enclosures that resemble their natural habitats as closely as possible. Giraffes, zebras and rhinoceroses co-exist in the mixed African exhibit, while wildlife typical of the local region, such as the indigenous Arabian Oryx and sand gazelle also share a habitat. There are plenty of green public spaces ideal for picnics and also playgrounds, a cafeteria and a train tour of the wildlife area. In summer, the park is also open nightly from 4pm to 10pm, with a special bird show at 7:30pm.

Near Traffic Police, Jebel Hafeet, 800 2977

www.awpr.ae

Al Qattara Arts Centre

This historic renovated fort now houses the Al Qattara Arts Centre whilst carefully maintaining a blend of the traditional architecture with state-of-the-art facilities. The centre has a comprehensive culture programme with strong emphasis on local and Arab art, UAE heritage and culture and advanced facilities for studying and improving art skills.

PDF Editor



JEBEL HAFEET

With excellent classrooms, including a dry studio for a variety of activities such as music classes and art crafting, a wet studio for drawing and painting, a fully-equipped pottery studio, a digital room suitable for photography and computer classes, a spacious calligraphy studio as well as an exhibition hall, cafe and library.

www.adach.ae

Classic Cars Museum at Al Ain Sportplex

This museum is an educational facility that collects, preserves, interprets and exhibits vehicles related to the evolution of transportation in the UAE. You can find informative books with valuable information about old transportation in the UAE. Open Saturday to Thursday from 9.30am-1pm and 5pm-10.30pm. Friday from 4pm -10.30pm.

+971 5 623 1323

www.alainclassiccarsmuseum.com

Green Mubazzarah Hot Springs

At the bottom of Jebel Hafeet, Abu Dhabi's highest peak, lies one of the UAE's most surprising sights. Green Mubazzarah is a park of undulating rocky terrain that has been landscaped, giving the impression of rolling grassy hillsides with streams, hot springs and waterfalls. Accommodation is available in chalets. Advance reservations are taken.

Near the base of Jebel Hafeet

+971 3 783 9555

www.emiratesresidence.com

Hili Archaeological Garden

Just 10 kilometres outside Al Ain (on the road to Dubai) are the Hili Archaeological Gardens. Combining both a public garden and the archaeological site, this is a popular place for tourists and residents alike. The archaeological site has remnants of a Bronze Age settlement (2,500,2,000 BC), which was excavated and restored in 1995. It is

the source of some of the richest finds in the area, many of which are believed to be over 4,000 years old. There are other archaeological structures around the park, but it is chiefly a garden with plants, fountains, and a small children's play area. Hili is near Fossil Valley, an area rich in a variety of fossils dating back many thousands of years to when it was covered by sea.

Mohammed Bin Khalifa St



www.visitabudhabi.ae

Hili Fun City

This flagship family entertainment destination has been a firm favourite since opening in 1985 when it became the Gulf's first theme park. Now renovated, the expansive park boasts 28 attractions for all ages, a family show amphitheatre, picnic and play areas. The all inclusive price of AED 40 / AED 35 Mondays and Tuesdays (US\$11/9.50) for adults and children of 0.89m and above covers entry to the park and 25 rides. The park is open from 10am to 10pm on Fridays and Public Holidays and from 12pm until 10pm on Saturdays. Weekday timings are 4pm to 10pm. Wednesdays are reserved for ladies only and the park is closed on Sundays.

+971 3 784 5542

www.hilifuncity.ae

Jebel Hafeet

This towering rocky height, which stands guard over Al Ain and borders Oman, is forged out of craggy limestone that has been weathered over millions of years. Significant fossil discoveries have been made in the area, which are vital pieces in the jigsaw of the city's ancient history. Over 500 ancient burial tombs dating back 5,000 years have also been found in the foothills of Jebel Hafeet. Rising 1,240 metres, Jebel Hafeet is the UAE's second highest peak. You can drive, or if you have the stamina, cycle to the top via a winding highway, which edmunds.com (the automotive information online source) described as among the world's greatest driving roads. Once you reach the top, you'll be rewarded with magnificent views over Al Ain, where you can take a break at the Mercure Jebel Hafeet hotel near the Jebel's peak.

WADI ADVENTURE **wondershare™**
PDF Editor

www.tamouh.com

PARKS & GARDENS

Al Ain Ladies Park

Commonly known as Basra Park, this quiet and attractive garden is for women and children only (boys under the age of 10). If you are looking for somewhere to sit and enjoy the peace, there are plenty of benches under the shady trees. Play areas with swings, slides and climbing frames are sure to keep the kids busy. A dry wadi, crossed by wooden bridges, runs through the middle of the park and there is also a small snack bar to satisfy the day's cravings.

Al Ain Paradise Garden

This expansive park – the size of four football pitches – is home to approximately 10 million flowers, a 12 metre tall replica of the Eiffel Tower and it holds the Guinness World Record for the most hanging baskets, having 2,968 in total. Entrance is free. On Nahyan Al Awal Street at the Zakher roundabout.

On Nahyan Al Awal Street at the

Zakher roundabout.

www.alainparadise.com

Al Ain Public Garden

The main park in Al Ain, is a tranquil spot amid the hustle and bustle. Walkways meander under shady trees, fountains are attractively lit at night and a large playground for children have a variety of play equipment. For the older kids, there is a small

amusement arcade tucked away near the back entrance.

Zayed Bin Sultan St,
+971 3 708 4832

Children's Garden

New at the Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort (AWPR) is the fun-filled, outdoor learning scheme 'Children's Garden'. Designed to inspire children of all ages with a love for biodiversity, the new garden showcases the beauty of plants. Already up and running are a flower garden, rolling hill, mixed use play areas, picnic spots, a native plant garden with species indigenous to the UAE, a recycling garden and a vegetable, fruit and herb garden. With spectacular African Baobab trees framing the area, the towering trunks offer a genuine horticulture lesson in how specific plants can adapt to dry soil conditions.

www.awpr.ae

HERITAGE

Al Ain National Museum

The archaeology displays are extensive, and include many artefacts from the nearby Hili Gardens (p.85) so it is helpful to visit the museum before the gardens. Some of the displays, such as the one from Garn Bint Saud (12 kilometres north of Hili), date back to the first millennium BC. The gifts



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AL JAHILI FORT

Muraijib Fort

section houses an unusual collection of gifts that Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan received during his lifetime. It includes golden swords, silver daggers and a golden palm tree, among others. The labelling on all displays is in English and Arabic. Hours of operation are generous, from 8am to 7:30pm every day except Monday (closed) and Friday, when the hours are 3pm to 5:30pm.

Near Al Ain Oasis, +971 3 764 1595

www.aam.gov.ae

Al Ain Palace Museum

The Al Ain Palace Museum (also known as the Qasr Al Ain Museum) is near the commercial area on the road to Sinaiyya. Built in 1910, the museum was once the home of the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan and was also a hub of the city's political life. The palace was turned into a museum in 1998 and now holds a large collection of material concerning the ruling family. The museum is open from 8:30am to 7:30pm Tuesday to Sunday and between 2:30pm to 7:30pm on Friday.

Al Ain St, +971 3 751 7755

www.aam.gov.ae

Al Ain University Natural History Museum

For those interested in the UAE's flora and fauna, this museum is a small but informative centre run by the university. It includes a herbarium and collections of various species of animals and birds. A collection of rocks, minerals and fossils is also on display.

Built in 1816, Muraijib Fort is the oldest in Al Ain. It is on Al Jimi Street and its restored remains are within beautifully landscaped gardens, which are reserved for women and children..

Al Jimi St

Al Reef handicrafts training centre

This educational centre at Al Ain Sportplex gives you the chance to learn how to make traditional handicrafts of various types. The centre encourages residents and tourists to know more about the UAE heritage during the training sessions held by specialised staff. The sessions are classified according to age group and gender and kids can attend if they are above five years old. You must register before attending! Open Saturday to Thursday from 9.30am -1pm and 5pm -10pm and on Friday from 4pm -10.30pm

+971 5 623 1323

www.alreeftc.com

Heritage Village at Al Ain Sportplex

Here you can journey to the past and experience UAE's traditional life. The village includes an old café, popular market, and two theatres where you can enjoy watching art shows and listening to poet artists and music concerts. Open Saturday to Thursday from 9.30am-1pm and 5pm -10pm and on Friday from 4pm -10.30pm

+971 5 623 1323

www.alainsportplex.ae

SPORTS & RECREATION

Al Ain offers a wealth of indoor and outdoor active pursuits. Here's a selection:

GOLF

Al Ain Sportplex

Aside from motorsports, cricket, soccer, paintball and other attractions, the Al Ain Sportplex is home to the 1.4 km Al Ain Raceway go-karting track - the largest of its kind in the Middle East.

Kattam Al Shaklah Street
+971 3 768 8888
www.alainsportplex.com

Al Ain Golf Club

Near the Danat Al Ain Resort, this club boasts an 18 hole sand course, a clubhouse and a floodlit driving range. Handicaps gained here are valid internationally. Visitors are welcome, but should phone ahead.

Near Danat Al Ain Resort
+971 3 706 7051
aagc0071@yahoo.com

Go-Karting

The state-of-the-art Al Ain Raceway is ranked as one of the world's top three go-karting tracks and is host to major international events such as the Rotax Max Challenge Grand Finals, the biggest annual event on the global karting calendar. The fully floodlit circuit features three distinctive configurations, providing an exhilarating challenge for drivers of all abilities.

Open to the public, drivers can hone their skills on top-of-the-line Intrepid brand rental karts. The Al Ain Raceway also boasts a restaurant, shisha lounge and meeting rooms equipped with the latest technology and is an ideal venue for team building and corporate events. Exclusive use of the circuit needs to be booked in advance.

Al Ain Sportplex , Kattam Al Shaklah St
+971 3 768 6662
 **wondershare**TM
www.alainraceway.com

Hilton Al Ain Golf Club

This par three course has an average distance of about 80 yards between each hole and, although short in length, it can play tough. The course has nearly 30 bunkers and very small quick greens. It is open to non-members, and lessons are available.

Hilton Al Ain , +971 3 768 6666
www.al-ain.hilton.com

Al Ain Equestrian, Shooting, and Golf Club

This has an 18-hole, all-grass golf course under the shadow of Jebel Hafeet, first class equestrian facilities and a stunning clubhouse with an excellent restaurant signposted from the Horse Roundabout.

+971 3 768 4888
www.palmsportsresort.com
www.aesgc.ae

PDF Editor

AL AIN SHOPPING MALLS

HIKING

The areas surrounding Al Ain are perfect for day hikes or long walks. The plantations scattered around the city provide gorgeous, shaded settings for long walks and quiet picnics. More experienced hikers shouldn't miss the Hanging Gardens hike, which showcases some of the most unusual and unexpected rock formations and plant life in the country.

HORSE RIDING

The Al Ain Equestrian, Shooting, and Golf Club has excellent facilities for the equestrian. Whether it's learning to ride, looking to take part in competitions or be a spectator at regular races, this is the resort for you.

+971 3 702 6405

www.palmsportsresort.com

www.aesgc.ae

Shooting Club

For beginners, corporate groups and experienced shooters. The club is also a good resource for information on shooting tips, equipments advice, gun tips, and competition opportunities for registered members. Open 2pm -10pm and closed on Sunday



Al Ain Mall

This bright, modern mall has over 175 stores selling everything from greeting cards to gold jewellery. Anchor stores include Grand Stores, Home Centre and Paris Gallery.

+971 3 766 0333

www.alainmall.ae

Al Jimi Mall

Offers hundreds of shopping options in over 70 shops, including Women's Secret, Early Learning Centre, Nine West, Areej and Body Shop.

+971 3 763 8883

www.aljimimall.com

Bawadi Mall

The largest mall in Al Ain, Bawadi Mall has over 400 shops, representing both international and regional brands, and a range of high street and designer names, a food court and many casual dining outlets. Family entertainment includes a ski village, rollercoaster, an eight screen cinema and a bowling alley.

The Heritage Village features beautiful Islamic architecture and shops selling classic souvenirs like gold, carpets and handicrafts in a traditional souk environment. There are also two outdoor markets, Bawadi and Al Qaws.

+971 3 784 000

www.bawadimall.com



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Emirates Commercial Complex

Nearly 50 shops line the pavements of this mixed use complex that is particularly handy if you're looking for souvenirs. One of the most popular outlets is Odel Style, where you can buy fabrics and readymade garments with a distinct Arabian feel.

Foah Mall

This is Al Ain's newest entertainment and shopping centre. From fashion to accessories, books to toys, home ware to restaurants, and a kids' entertainment area everything is under one roof. You can see in the 12 multiplex screen theatre.



+971 3 751 2111

www.alfaoahmall.com

+971 3 766 3 560

Safeer Mall

Revolving around the popular supermarket of the same name, Safeer Mall is on the way to Hili Archaeological Park. There are plenty of clothing and accessory shops to satisfy every shopper.

+971 3 763 3215

AL AIN SOUKS

Al Ain Souk

Also known as the Central or Old Souk, this is a great place to explore, savour the local atmosphere and practise your bargaining skills. The souk itself is a rather ramshackle affair but it is certainly different from many of the modern, air-conditioned markets found elsewhere.

Muwajei Souk

This modern souk is a long strip of handy shops, including big guns like Choithram, Shoe Mart and The Body Shop. There is also a bakery, a baby shop, a butchery and a toy shop; even more outlets can be found across the road.

Souk Al Bawadi & Souk Al Qaws

Both of these outdoor markets are attached to the huge Bawadi Mall. Souk Al Qaws features shops of a practical nature set among unique architecture, with over 40 service outlets including banks, money exchanges and travel agents. Souk Al Bawadi has more of a heritage feel, with over 50 shops selling traditional items and souvenirs.

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Souk Al Zafarana

This is a jewel of a find which reflects true emirati culture and tradition while being new. Whether you're looking for traditional garments, incense or spices, henna or oud, or dallah (Arabian coffee pots) this is the marketplace for you.

This is the new home of Al Ain's old souk and features Mubdia Village, a section exclusively for women that is staffed by female shopkeepers. Open 10am to 1pm and 8pm until midnight.

Around the corner from Al Jimi Mall

+971 3 762 1868

A DAY OUT IN AL AIN

ITINERARY ONE

Excite, Relax and Take a Walk on the Wild Side

Morning

Wake up at around 5:30am to catch the action at the Maqam camel racetrack outside Al Ain. Catch the excitement as owners follow their prize animals in 4x4s from the safety of the inner enclosure. Feel the pride as the trophies are awarded.

Back for breakfast and pool at the hotel.

Afternoon

Wander through the ancient Al Ain Oasis and feel the cares of the world drain away. Be cooled by the wafting palms and see the traditional falaj

irrigation system in action. Let your imagination take you back to the days when this was one of the most welcome sights on the Silk Route.

Evening

Take a night time guided tour through the Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort with its night safari. Since many of its animals are nocturnal you get to see species that are hidden from you during the day.

ITINERARY TWO

History & New Horizon Views

Morning

Become immersed in Al Ain's history by visiting its many forts. First, head to the impressive Al Jahili Fort -birthplace of the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan -and see the permanent display of the work of British explorer Wilfred Thesiger. Next head to the landscaped gardens of Al Ain's oldest fort - Muraijib Fort - built in 1816. The more adventurous may cross the Omani border into Buraimi to explore Hili Fort.

Afternoon

Al Ain National Museum is varied enough to take up a full afternoon. Start your tour with a look through the archaeology section, which contains several artefacts from the nearby forts that you will have visited in the morning. Next head to the museum's gifts section to see a collection of gifts given to the late Sheikh Zayed.

End with the ethnography section which has a huge collection of Bedouin jewellery, musical instruments, weapons and a reconstruction of a traditional majlis.

Evening

Set out late afternoon and head towards the towering Jebel Hafeet. If you time it well, you can enjoy the sunset while driving up one of the world's most incredible roads. Before you reach the top, turn off for a break at the Mercure Hotel.

ITINERARY THREE

Hot Souvenirs, Warm Springs, Cool Golf and a Chilled Out Dinner

Morning

Wake up early to catch traders at the country's last remaining camel market near the base of Jebel Hafeet and get up close to the desert way of life. Although you won't buy a camel, take your wallet to buy some handmade camel accessories as they make great souvenir gifts. Later travel to the other side of Jebel Hafeet to explore the bizarre landscape of Green Mubazzarah and its hot springs.

Afternoon

Enjoy 18 holes of golf on the all-grass course at Al Ain Equestrian, Shooting & Golf Club.

Evening

The live entertainment and great food at Min Zaman in Al Ain Rotana attracts a large crowd so reserve a table before hand.



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EXPLORE, EXPERIENCE, ENGAGE – AL GHARBIA (WESTERN REGION)

AL GHARBIA



'Where the desert meets the sea', Al Gharbia makes up over two thirds of Abu Dhabi emirate. Along its hundreds of kilometres of coastline are stunning beaches and islands, which are gradually being developed for visitors.

Al Gharbia is home to Liwa, a historic oasis town that sits at the entry to the Rub Al Khali (Empty Quarter) - the world's largest sand desert. Prepare for the UAE's most adventurous off-road driving and some of its most incredible scenery.

AL GHARBIA ATTRACTIOnS

Al Gharbia Watersports Festival

Approximately 120 kilometres from Abu Dhabi, the picturesque harbour town of Al Mirfa boasts a stunning coastline and hosts the annual Al Gharbia Watersports Festival, which is focused on encouraging visitors to explore this pristine and undiscovered area. The festival gathers together champions from across the globe and enthusiasts keen to take part in adrenaline inducing competitions such as kiteboarding, wake boarding and surf-ski kayaking. The 10-day festival is a family event, where visitors are encouraged to kick back and relax. Camping facilities are provided for participants and visitors, with live evening entertainment, kids play areas and a magical 'Sunset Souk', a traditional market that opens as the sun goes down every day. Professional trainers and instructors are on hand, offering free sessions for those wanting to learn more about watersport activities.

www.algharbiafestivals.com

Al Mirfa Public Beach

Home to the Al Gharbia Watersports Festival, this is Al Gharbia's only developed beach.

It's almost never crowded and there is a small town nearby where you can buy supplies for a night of camping or a day of enjoying the turquoise waters. It's one of the region's best kept secrets.

Arabian Wildlife Park

On Sir Bani Yas Island -the core component of the planned Desert Island multi-experiential destination 240 kilometres west of Abu Dhabi - the Arabian Wildlife Park, which is home to more than 10,000 free roaming animals, takes up more than half of the island. Guests at the boutique Desert Islands Resort & Spa by Anantara can take 4x4 Nature & Wildlife Drives of the park in specially made vehicles accompanied by expert island staff. Alternatively, guests of the Danat Resort Jebel Dhanna can book a three hour tour. There are many Arabian Oryx, gazelles and giraffes, along with the newest arrivals, hyenas and cheetahs. Seaplane flight transfers are available from Abu Dhabi and a ferry service from Jebel Dhanna.

Sir Bani Yas Island, Jebel Dhanna

+971 2 801 5400

www.desertislands.com

Archeological Site on Sir Bani Yas Island

Open to the public, this is the UAE's only discovered Christian monastery. Believed to have been built around 600 AD, it was initially discovered on the island during excavations in 1992. Almost two decades since its discovery, and more than a thousand years since it was built, the public can visit the site and experience another piece of the



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PDF Editor

SIR BANI YAS ISLAND



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PDF Editor

LIWA DUNES

rich tapestry that makes up the UAE's fascinating history. A new phase of work is currently underway by archaeologists, and treasures are still being unearthed, making the site a significant focal point for history enthusiasts worldwide.

Sir Bani Yas Island, Jebel Dhanna

+971 2 406 1400

www.desertislands.com

Delma Island

Inhabited for over 7,000 years, Delma Island was once one of the Gulf's most important pearl diving centres, and it still maintains strong links to its maritime heritage. Located just 30 kilometres off the mainland, it can be visited by ferries from Jebel Dhanna. With a good supply of fresh water, the island is surprisingly fertile, with many farms and plantations growing a wide variety of produce.

Dune Bashing

The vast expanse of desert that lies outside the Liwa oasis is perfect for adrenaline fuelled off-road driving. With 300 metre dunes and long sand valleys, you'll never get bored with desert driving. Rent a four-wheel-drive from Abu Dhabi, get a good map and explore to your heart's content.

Emirates National Auto Museum

Some 45 kilometres south of Abu Dhabi city, this impressive pyramid houses an assortment of cars from one dedicated collector: Sheikh Hamad Bin Hamdan Al Nahyan. The museum, home to almost 200 cars, including a vast collection of off-road vehicles and classic American cars, the Sheikh's

rainbow collection of Mercedes and the world's largest truck. Some of this impressive collection was featured in the BBC television programme Top Gear. Even if you're not particularly interested in cars, this is a fascinating collection and a great place to stop on the way to or from Liwa. Opening times are 9am to 6pm seven days a week, but are subject to change. Entry is AED 10.

*South of Abu Dhabi
Hamim Road, Off E11
+971 50 829 3952
www.enam.ae*

Tel Moreeb

Considered by many to be the world's tallest sand dune, Tel Moreeb is over 300 metres high and the 50 degree incline to the top makes it a prime destination for motorsports' enthusiasts. Each year, the region's most powerful four wheel drives, quad bikes and dirt bikes compete in the Moreeb Hill Climb event, which is part of the Liwa International Festival in February. It's well worth the trip if you think you can handle the constant humming of super modified engines and loud Arabic music. The large flat area at the base of the dune acts as the base camp for competitors and spectators of the annual Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge cross country rally.

HERITAGE

Al Dhafra Camel Festival

Featuring nearly 24,000 camels and attracting several thousand spectators every January, this is one of the world's largest desert heritage events. Camel breeders come from throughout the region to compete in this massive camel beauty pageant that celebrates local culture. The event takes place on a huge, barren plain that transforms into a lively city of tents, four wheel drives, handicraft shops and, of course, camels.

Zayed City
+971 2 621 5300
www.algharbiafestivals.ae
www.adach.ae

Liwa Date Festival

Held each year in July, the Liwa Date Festival promotes and celebrates the symbolic and historic role that the date palm plays in emirati culture. The festival revolves around the date competition, in which emirati farms vie for the title of best date grower. Non-locals can attend and it's an incredible way to experience emirati culture up close. Prizes are given away for the top dates in each category and there is a live date auction where some dates sell for over AED 6,000 (US\$1,650) per kilo.

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www.algharbiafestivals.ae
www.adach.ae

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SPORTS & RECREATION

Off-Road Driving

The massive Empty Quarter dunes present an awesome driving challenge. If you're in the country during the cooler months and you like adventure, rent a four-wheel-drive, find a group of eager drivers (you'll need at least three vehicles; never drive alone in the desert) and set out for the sand. Be sure that your vehicle is insured for off-road use and that you have the proper equipment. If you've never driven off-road, you should first learn the ropes with one of the several tour companies in Abu Dhabi.

Camping

A trip to the desert isn't complete without a night under the stars. You can arrange camping adventures with a tour company or rent a four-wheel-drive and buy the equipment yourself. Camping supplies are surprisingly cheap in the emirates and there is no need to buy high quality equipment. In fact, you could probably buy a tent and two sleeping bags from a hypermarket for less than a guided tour.



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A DAY OUT IN AL GHARBIA

Guests at the growing number of hotels in Al Gharbia have a host of adventure activities to keep them occupied:

ITINERARY ONE

Sunbathe, Swim and Dine

make sure you are prepared, and that there is more than one vehicle on your part; never venture into the desert alone. Once past the Liwa Oasis, you'll quickly be blown away by the sheer size of the dunes. Find yourselves an area to camp and pitch your tents.

Morning

Head off to the public beach at the picturesque harbour town of Mirfa. The water is practically untouched, perfect for a morning in the sun and for swimming or activities with the Western Marine Sports Club.

Evening

Make a reservation at the Zaitoun restaurant at the Danat Resort Jebel Dhanna for a masterful menu of Middle Eastern and North African dishes.

ITINERARY TWO

Desert Driving, Dune Barbecues and Moonlit Campfires.

Morning

Head towards the Liwa Oasis at dawn and prepare for one of the most incredible landscapes you'll ever witness. Once you reach the crescent shaped Liwa Oasis, take some time to drive between the small towns that populate this little area. You'll be your last stop for supplies before heading into the massive dunes, so

Afternoon

Fire up barbecues, cook yourselves a meal and get ready to blast through the dunes. If you're camping with a guided tour, hold on tight while the experienced drivers take you on a drive you'll never forget. You should also try your hand at sand boarding, the desert equivalent of snow boarding.

Evening

There's nothing like sitting around a campfire with good friends and great food. Start preparing your evening feast, heat up the barbecue and put some wood in the fire pit. As you wait for the coals to heat up, climb the highest sand dune you can and watch what might be the most majestic sunset of your life; the long shadows cast by the dunes only magnify their incredible size. Head back to camp, feast like a king, then sit back and enjoy the company of good friends and endless stars.



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FORMULA 1™ ETIHAD AIRWAYS
ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX



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ABU DHABI EVENTS



The emirate's packed events calendar means visitors can enjoy a host of world class experiences all year round.

A host of music concerts, exhibitions and performances are held emirate wide throughout the year. Check out the websites - www.abudhabievents.ae and www.visitabudhabi.ae - to find out what is on during your stay.

PDI

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

ADNEC Exhibitions

Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC), near Zayed Sports City, is the region's largest and most modern facility of its kind. Throughout the year it hosts a variety of exhibitions, and the new ADNEC complex includes luxury hotels, restaurants, a marina, the iconic Capital Gate, the world's most inclined tower and Abu Dhabi Hall, the emirate's largest indoor venue which can accommodate up to 6,000 seated and 8,000 standing.

www.adnec.ae

Arts Abu Dhabi

Runs throughout the year, and is the platform of art exhibitions which creates cultural awareness to the public. Organized by the Tourism Development & Investment Company's (TDIC) Cultural Department, it promotes cultural appreciation through a variety of expansive educational programmes. The exhibitions are divided between Gallery One at Emirates Palace and Arts Abu Dhabi Gallery at Manarat Al Saadiyat, Saadiyat Island.

www.artsabudhabi.ae

JANUARY

Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship

Featuring some of the biggest names in golf, the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship is the European PGA Tour curtain-raiser. Held at the Abu Dhabi Golf Club, the event has an engaging spectator village and great after play live entertainment.

www.abudhabigolfchampionship.com

Al Dhafrah Camel Festival

Held in Al Gharbia's capital of Madinat Zayed, this annual festival celebrates the cherished 'ship of the desert' and the role it plays in the lives of UAE nationals. An intriguing insight into the relationship of this crucial desert animal and man, the festival is a visitor experience with a difference and includes the world's only camel beauty contest.

www.algharbiafestivals.com

www.adach.ae

FEBRUARY

Gourmet Abu Dhabi

Gourmet Abu Dhabi is a 'lifestyle gastronomic extravaganza' featuring a star-studded cast of Michelin chefs and special guests, free master classes, industry insights from hospitality experts, and chateau and gourmet dinners hosted by a range of the city's top hotels.

www.gourmetabudhabi.ae

Tel Moreeb International Festival

The pinnacle hill climb event for desert driving enthusiasts eager to climb 300 metre sand dunes with powerful four wheel drives, quad bikes and dirt bikes.

www.algharbiafestivals.com

Terry Fox Run

This is a charity event for walkers, runners, roller bladers and cyclists. The eight kilometre route runs along Abu Dhabi Corniche.

For more information, email
abudhabiterryfoxrun@gmail.com
www.terryfoxrun.org



GOURMET ABU DHABI

MARCH

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

This is the Middle East's fastest growing book show with in excess of 600,000 titles on display. This joint venture between KITAB, the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage and the Frankfurt Book Fair is held at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre.

 **wondershare**™ www.adbookfair.com, www.adach.ae

Abu Dhabi International Triathlon

Abu Dhabi International Triathlon boasts a testing 223km 'pure power' course



and a shorter 111.5km route, both of which make this race the only one of its kind outside of Europe in terms of length and discipline distances. With the route taking in a host of Abu Dhabi city landmarks, this adrenaline pumping event is a top tier fixture on the annual global triathlon racing calendar.

www.abudhabitriathlon.com

MARCH/APRIL

Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

One of the world's most prestigious international cross country rallies, this five day motor sport spectacle is entirely staged across Abu Dhabi's diverse landscape under the auspices of Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority, with the Automobile and Touring Club of the UAE (ATCUAE) acting as event organiser. This is the season opening round of both the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup and the FIM Cross Country Rallies World Championship.

www.abudhabidesertchallenge.com

Abu Dhabi Festival

This is the UAE's premier classical arts event. The festival programme is filled with world premieres, new commissions and the Middle Eastern debut of many acclaimed artists[®] and performers. The culturally rich and diverse Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation (ADMAF) concerts are held in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain.

www.abudhabifestival.ae

APRIL

Al Gharbia Watersports Festival

This 10-day festival is held in the picturesque harbour town of Al Mirfa in Al Gharbia (Western Region). Gathering champions from across the globe, the festival attracts enthusiasts to adrenaline inducing competitions such as kite boarding, wake boarding and surf ski kayaking. Camping facilities are provided for participants and visitors, with live evening entertainment, kids play areas and a 'Sunset Souk'.

www.algharbiafestivals.com

WOMAD (World of Music and Dance)

The free to attend WOMAD Abu Dhabi festival brings the city's diverse community together to celebrate the world of music with a spectacular and eclectic roster of internationally renowned artists. The three day open air festival takes place on the Corniche beach, with a special selection of entertainment also performed in Al Ain's Jahili Fort. Special musical workshops, children's activities and cooking classes are also featured.

www.womadabudhabi.ae

www.adach.ae

JULY

Liwa Date Festival

This annual event explores the intricacies of date production and the varied products in which the desert fruit is a key ingredient. A fascinating insight into many desert traditions, the festival includes a date auction and educational sessions on how to care for palm trees.

www.algharbiafestivals.com

JULY/AUGUST

Summer in Abu Dhabi

An annual six-week family carnival takes place in a variety of venues throughout Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, including Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre. Packed full of fun, entertainment, action packed activities and shows, this festival provides a welcome escape from rising temperatures. Check out the many two-for-one entertainment offers which are part of the festival.

www.summerinabudhabi.com

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Abu Dhabi International Hunting & Equestrian Exhibition

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This annual event at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Centre is a window to the Emirate's culture and heritage. Showcasing Abu Dhabi's distinctive traditions, visitors can get up close to desert pursuits including falconry, camel raising, equestrianism, and the training of salukis - the cherished breed of desert hunting dog. Fishing, arts and crafts are also explored. An engaging visitor experience, highlights include a unique indoor camel auction.

www.adihex.net

OCTOBER - MAY

Abu Dhabi Classics

Abu Dhabi Classics concerts take place at venues across the emirate and have become an indispensable part of the cultural scene. The festival gets bigger, lasts longer, and becomes more adventurous every year.

www.abudhabiclassics.com

OCTOBER

Abu Dhabi Film Festival

This festival has grown rapidly with each event bringing more films, more awards, and more stars to the UAE capital. Ten days of cinema screenings and events are held at various Abu Dhabi venues, while feature and short films from all over the world compete for the Abu Dhabi Film Festival.

www.abudhabifilmfestival.ae

NOVEMBER

Formula 1™ Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

The highlight of Abu Dhabi's annual motorsport calendar, the Grand Prix is held at the state of the art Yas Marina Circuit, although the entire city catches race fever. A fan zone on the Corniche takes the event beyond the racetrack, while nightly circuit concerts by international stars bring added value for race goers.

www.yasmarinacircuit.ae

Abu Dhabi Art

Hosting 40 exclusive selections of high level art galleries and innovative emerging galleries from Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the United States, some of them making their Middle East debut. Now taking place in the former

 **UAE pavilion created for the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai which has now been re-erected on Saadiyat Island.**

www.abudhabiartfair.ae

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DECEMBER

UAE National Day - 2 December

This annual two day festival on Abu Dhabi's Corniche features live concerts and entertainment as the city literally comes alive with joyful and exuberant celebration. Buildings are decorated with thousands of lights, which illuminate the city with brilliant colour.

Al Ain Aerobatic Show

Held at Al Ain Airport, this international event attracts over 150,000 spectators. It features some incredible aerobatic and stunt flying with model aircraft, helicopters, wing walkers and gliders, military and civilian planes, and exhibitions, all with the backdrop of the red dunes and Jebel Hafeet. There is a festival atmosphere, with tents and displays related to flying. Children are also well catered for with a play area, bouncy castles and, of course, much to see in the air.

www.alainaerobaticshow.com

Abu Dhabi World Tennis Championship

The International Tennis Complex, Zayed Sports City Presented by Flash Entertainment, this championship is one of the Gulf region's fastest-growing and most popular sporting events attracting close to 15,000 fans and the world's best players who battle it out for US\$ 250,000 in prize money.

www.thinkflash.ae

Foreign Embassies in UAE

Country	Telephone number
Algeria	02- 4448949
Argentina	02- 4436838
Republic of Armenia	02- 4444196
Australia	02- 6346100
Austria	02- 6766611
Bahrain	02- 6657500
Bangladesh	02- 4465100
Belarus	02- 4453399
Belgium	02- 6319449
Belize	02- 6333554
Bosnia and Herzegovina	02- 6444164
Brazil	02- 6320606
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Eritrea	02- 6331838
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Kuwait	02- 4477146	Sweden	02- 6210162
Lebanon	02- 4492100	Switzerland	02- 6274636
Libya	02- 4450030	Syria	02- 4448768
Malaysia	02- 4482775	Tanzania	02- 6313088
Mauritania	02- 4462724	Thailand	02- 6421772
Morocco	02- 4433973/74	Tunisia	02- 6811331
Netherlands	02- 6958000	Turkey	02- 4460941
Norway	02- 6211221	Ukraine	02- 6327586
Oman	02- 4463333	United Kingdom	02- 6101100
Pakistan	02- 4447800	USA	02- 4142200
Palestine	02- 4471440	Yemen	02- 4448457
Philippines	02- 6345664 / 665		
Poland	02- 4465200		
Qatar	02- 4493300		
Romania	02- 4459919		
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PDF Editor

Index

A

A Day Out In

...Abu Dhabi

...Al Ain

...Al Gharbia

Abu Dhabi

...Attractions

...Bowling

...Camel Racing

...Corniche

...Cricket

...Diving

...Events

...Family

...Fishing

...Getting Around

...Golf

...Heritage

...Ice Skating

...Indoor Activities

...Itineraries

...Malls

...Markets & Souks

...Motorsports

...Outdoor Activities

...Sailing

...Shopping

...Squash

...Tennis

...Tour

...Tour Operators

...Watersports

Abu Dhabi Classics

Abu Dhabi Co-Operative

Society Complex

Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

Abu Dhabi Events

Abu Dhabi Experiences

Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club

Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital

Abu Dhabi International Hunting

& Equestrian Exhibition

79

96-97

107

31

67

59

34

59

55

110

51

58

13

62

42

67

67

79

75

77

66

59

55

68

67

66

25

28

55

28

110

35

66

41

113

110

35

66

111

111

111

111

111

111

Abu Dhabi Classics

Abu Dhabi Golf Club

Abu Dhabi International Hunting

& Equestrian Exhibition

Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

Abu Dhabi

International Triathlon

Abu Dhabi Sub Aqua Club

Abu Dhabi Art

111,115

Abu Dhabi Mall

75

Abu Dhabi Festival

113

Abu Dhabi Wildlife Centre

51

Abu Dhabi World

Tennis Championship

116

ADNEC Exhibitions

111

ADTA Overseas Offices Contacts

117

Al Ain

...Attractions

85

...Golf

92

Al Ain Equestrian Shooting &

Golf Club

92

...Heritage

89

...Hiking

93

...Itineraries

96-98

...Malls

93

...Markets & Souks

96

...Tour

25

Al Ain Aerobic Show

116

Al Ain Center Market

85

Al Ain Golf Club

92

Al Ain Ladies Park

89

Al Ain Mall

93

Al Ain National Museum

89

Al Ain Oasis

85

Al Ain Palace Museum

91

Al Ain Paradise Garden

89

Al Ain Public Garden

89

Al Ain Souk

96

Al Ain Sportplex

92

Al Ain University

91

Natural History Museum

Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort

86

Al Badayah Eyes Tourism

39

Al Bateen Beach

35

Al Dhafra Camel Festival

111

Al Forsan International

59

Al Reef Hand Craft Sports Resort	91	Bowling	67
Al Ain Public Garden	89	Big Bus Tour	35
Al Futaisi Club	59	C	
Al Jazira Dive Centre	58	Camel Racing	59
Al Gharbia		Camping	105
...Attractions	101	Capital Gardens	51
...Heritage	101	Car Hire Companies	17
...Itineraries	107	Car Rental	16
...Sports & Recreation	105	Carpet Souk	77
...Tour	25	Carpets	24
Al Gharbia Watersports Festival	114	Children	21
Al Ghazal Golf Club	63	Climate	9
Al Jahili Fort & Park	85	Corniche Beach Park	34
Al Jimi Mall	93	Corniche Pedal Power	34
Al Maqtaa Fort	42	Cricket	59
Al Mina Fruit & Vegetable Souk	77	Culture & Lifestyle	12
Al Mirfa Public Beach	101	City Centre	31
Al Mushrif Children's Garden	51	Public Beaches & Parks	
Al Nahyan Garden	51	Classic Cars Museum	87
Al Raha Mall	75	D	
Al Wahda Mall	75	Delma Island	104
Arabian Wildlife Park	101	Desert Safaris	25
Archeological Site on Sir Bani Yas Island	101	Dinner Cruises	55
Arabian Divers & Sport Fishing Charters	58	Diving	55
Art	69	Dune Bashing	104
Arjmst	74	E	
Arts Abu Dhabi	111	Eastern Corniche, The	35
ATMs	20	Empros Watersports	58
Attractions		Emirates Commercial Complex	95
...Abu Dhabi	31	Emirates National Auto Museum	104
...Al Ain	85	Essential Info	21
...Al Gharbia	101	Explore Our Waters	41
B		F	
Banks	20	Facts & Figures	8
Balloon Expedition into the Desert	35	Ferrari World Abu Dhabi	31
Barakat Gallery	69	Fish Souk	77
Beteel Dates	74	Fishing	58
Bawadi Mall	93	Flora & Fauna	9
Beach Rotana Hotel & Towers	58	Football	62
Best Buys	68	Formula 1™ Etihad Airways	115
Blue Dolphin Company	55	Abu Dhabi Grand Prix	
		Free Diving	56
		Fotouh Al Khair Centre	75

Fun City	51
Foah Mall	95
G	
Gallery One	39
Getting Around	13
Get Boarding	35
Ghof Art Gallery	69
Gold Jewellery	70
Go-Karting	92
Golf	62
...Abu Dhabi	62
...Al Ain	92
Gourmet Abu Dhabi	111
Grand Mosque	43
Green Mubazzarah Park	87
Growth	5
H	
Hamdan Centre	78
Helicopter Tours	38
Heritage	42
...Abu Dhabi	42
...Al Ain	89
...Al Gharbia	105
Heritage Village	42
Hiking	93
Hili Archaeological Garden	87
Hili Fun City	88
Hilton Al Ain Golf Club	91
Horse Racing	66
Hunting & Equestrian Exhibition	115
Horse Riding	93
Heritage Village Al Ain	91
I	
Ice Skating	67
In Emergency	21
Indoor Activities	67
Itineraries	
...Abu Dhabi	79
...Al Gharbia	105
The Islands	46
J	
Jebel Hafeet	88
K	
Kayaking Tours	38
Khalidiyah Garden	51
Khalidiyah Mall	75
Khalifa Centre	78
Khalifa Park	54
Kids Park	51
L	
Language	12
Liwa Date Festival	106,114
Local Currency	20
Local Time	8
Liwa Centre	78
M	
Madinat Zayed	78
Shopping Centre & Gold Centre	
Marina Mall	76
Marine Racing	55
Markets & Souks	96
Mawaqif – Paid Parking System	16
...Abu Dhabi	77
...Al Ain	91
Made in UAE	71
Manarat Al Saadiyat	47
Malls	
...Abu Dhabi	75
...Al Ain	90
Money	19
Money Exchanges	20
Motorsports	66
Muwajei Souk	96
Muraijib Fort	91
Monte Carlo	50
Miraj Islamic	42
N	
National Dress	13
O	
Off-Road Driving	105
Old Airport Garden	54
Outdoor Activities	59

P			
People With Disabilities	24	Squash	67
Pearl Boats	42	Summer in Abu Dhabi	114
Photography	24	T	
Play at the Malls	54	Taxi Service	16
Population	8	Taxis	13
		Tel Moreeb	104
		Tennis	66
R		Terry Fox Run	111
Ramadan	8, 13	Tour Operators	25
Religion	12	Tourism	5
Ruling Family	5	The Souk at Central Market	77
		The Easy Way to See the Corniche	34
S		The Eastern Corniche	35
Saadiyat Island	47	U	
Saadiyat Beach Golf Club	50,63	UAE National Day	115
Saadiyat Island Cultural	38	Useful Phrases	17
District Exhibition		W	
Safeer Mall	96	Watersports	34, 38, 55
Sailing	55	What To Wear	24
Saluki Centre	43	WOMAD	114
Sea Cruiser	58	Women	21
Sea Cruiser Boat Tours	39	Women's Handicraft Centre	43
Sea Tourism	58	World's Furthest Leaning	31
Sheraton Resort Health Club	58	Man Made Tower	
Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque	43	Wadi Adventure	88
Centre Library		Y	
Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque	43	Yas Island	46
Shopping	68	Yas Links Abu Dhabi	47,63
Shopping Malls	75	Yas Marina	46
...Abu Dhabi	75	Yas Perfumes	74
...Al Ain	93	Yas Kartzone	66
Shops With The Arabian Experience	74	Z	
Silmi Garden	87	Zayed Centre	44
Social & Business Hours	8	Zayed Sports City	67
Souk Al Bawadi & Souk Al Qaws	96		
Souk Al Zafarana	96		
Souk Qaryat Al Beri	77		
Souks	74		
Souvenirs	71		
Souvenirs you can Eat	71		
Speedboat Tours	41		
Spots & Recreations	57		
...Abu Dhabi	55		
...Al Ain	92		
...Al Gharbia	103		

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www.visitabudhabi.ae

The United Arab Emirates is on the Arabian Peninsula



Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, with over 80% of its land mass. It is also home to the country's capital city, Abu Dhabi.



www.visitabudhabi.ae

Contact Centre from inside UAE 800 555
From outside UAE +971 2 666 4442

