





Bronze and iron alloy dagger, Saruq Al Hadid archaeological site (1100 BC)

The area was covered with sand about 5,000 years ago as the coast retreated inland, becoming part of the city's present coastline.<sup>[27]</sup> Pre-Islamic ceramics have been found from the 3rd and 4th centuries.<sup>[28]</sup> Prior to the introduction of Islam to the area, the people in this region worshiped *Bajir* (or *Bajar*).<sup>[28]</sup> After the spread of Islam in the region, the Umayyad Caliph of the eastern Islamic world conquered south-east Arabia and drove out the Sassanians. Excavations by the Dubai Museum in the region of *Al-Jumayra* (*Jumeirah*) found several artefacts from the Umayyad period.<sup>[29]</sup>

An early mention of Dubai in 1095 is in the *Book of Geography* by the Andalusian-Arab geographer Abu Abdullah al-Bakri. The Venetian pearl merchant Gasparo Balbi visited the area in 1580 and mentioned Dubai (*Dibei*) for its pearling industry.<sup>[29]</sup>

## Establishment of modern Dubai



Al Fahidi fort in the 1950s

Dubai is thought to have been established as a fishing village in the early 18th century<sup>[30]</sup> and was, by 1822, a town of some 700–800 members of the Bani Yas tribe and subject to the rule of Sheikh Tahnun bin Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi.<sup>[31]</sup> In 1822, a British naval surveyor noted that Dubai was at that time populated

with a thousand people living in an oval-shaped town surrounded by a mud wall, scattered with goats and camels. The main footpath out of the village led to a reedy creek while another trailed off into the desert and merged into caravan routes.<sup>[32]:17</sup>

In 1833, following tribal feuding, members of the Al Bu Falasah tribe seceded from Abu Dhabi and established themselves in Dubai. The exodus from Abu Dhabi was led by Obeid bin Saeed and Maktoum bin Butti, who became joint leaders of Dubai until Ubaid died in 1836, leaving Maktoum to establish the Maktoum dynasty.<sup>[30]</sup>

Dubai signed the General Maritime Treaty of 1820 with the British government along with other Trucial States, following the British campaign in 1819 against Ras Al Khaimah. This led to the 1853 Perpetual Maritime Truce. Dubai also – like its neighbours on the Trucial Coast – entered into an exclusivity agreement in which the United Kingdom took responsibility for the emirate's security in 1892.

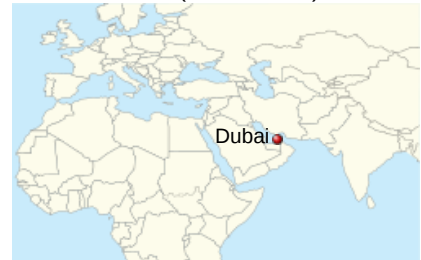


Al Fahidi Fort, built in 1787, houses the Dubai Museum.

In 1841, a smallpox epidemic broke out in the Bur Dubai locality, forcing residents to relocate east to Deira.<sup>[33]</sup> In 1896, fire broke out in Dubai, a disastrous occurrence in a town where many family homes were still constructed from *barasti* – palm fronds. The conflagration consumed half the houses of Bur Dubai, while the



Dubai (Persian Gulf)



Dubai (Middle East)



Dubai (Asia)

Coordinates: 25°15′47″N 55°17′50″E﻿ / ﻿25.26306°N 55.29722°E﻿ / 25.26306; 55.29722

<b>Country</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> United Arab Emirates
<b>Emirate</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Dubai
<b>Founded by</b>	Obeid bin Said & Maktoum bin Butti Al Maktoum
<b>Government</b>	
• <b>Type</b>	Absolute monarchy
• <b>Director General of Dubai Municipality</b>	Dawoud Al Hajri
<b>Area</b> <sup>[1]</sup>	
• <b>Total</b>	35 <span> </span> km <sup>2</sup> (14 <span> </span> sq <span> </span> mi)
<b>Population</b> (2024) <sup>[2]</sup>	
• <b>Total</b>	3,790,000
• <b>Density</b>	110,000/km <sup>2</sup> (280,000/sq <span> </span> mi)
<b>Demonym</b>	Dubaian
<b>GDP</b> <sup>[3]</sup>	
• <b>Metropolis</b>	US\$ 134.6 billion (2023)
• <b>Metro</b>	US\$ 202.8 billion (2023)
<b>Time zone</b>	UTC+04:00 (UAE Standard Time)
<b>Website</b>	<span>dm.gov.ae</span> ( <span>https://www.dm.gov.ae</span> )

district of Deira was said to have been totally destroyed. The following year, more fires broke out. A female slave was caught in the act of starting one such blaze and was subsequently put to death.<sup>[34]</sup>

In 1901, Maktoum bin Hasher Al Maktoum established Dubai as a free port with no taxation on imports or exports and also gave merchants parcels of land and guarantees of protection and tolerance. These policies saw a movement of merchants not only directly from Lingeh,<sup>[35]</sup> but also those who had settled in Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah (which had historical links with Lingeh through the Al Qawasim tribe) to Dubai. An indicator of the growing importance of the port of Dubai can be gained from the movements of the steamer of the Bombay and Persia Steam Navigation Company, which from 1899 to 1901 paid five visits annually to Dubai. In 1902 the company's vessels made 21 visits to Dubai and from 1904 on,<sup>[36]</sup> the steamers called fortnightly – in 1906, trading 70,000 tones of cargo.<sup>[37]</sup> The frequency of these vessels only helped to accelerate Dubai's role as an emerging port and trading hub of preference. Lorimer notes the transfer from Lingeh "bids fair to become complete and permanent",<sup>[35]</sup> and also that the town had by 1906 supplanted Lingeh as the chief entrepôt of the Trucial States.<sup>[38]</sup>



A watchtower in Bur Dubai,  
c. 19th century

The "great storm" of 1908 struck the pearling boats of Dubai and the coastal emirates towards the end of the pearling season that year, resulting in the loss of a dozen boats and over 100 men. The disaster was a major setback for Dubai, with many families losing their breadwinners and merchants facing financial ruin. These losses came at a time when the tribes of the interior were also experiencing poverty. In a letter to the Sultan of Muscat in 1911, Butti laments, "Misery and poverty are raging among them, with the result that they are struggling, looting and killing among themselves."<sup>[39]</sup>

In 1910, in the Hyacinth incident, the town was bombarded by HMS Hyacinth, with 37 people killed.

## Pre-oil Dubai

As well as undergoing growth and expansion in its regional trade links, Dubai was also an important regional centre for the collection, sale and trade of pearls. The collapse of the pearling industry saw the city fall into a deep depression and many residents lived in poverty or migrated to other parts of the Persian Gulf.<sup>[27]</sup>

In 1937 an oil exploration contract was signed which guaranteed royalty rights for Dubai and concessionary payments to Sheikh Saeed bin Maktoum. However, due to World War II, oil would not be struck until 1966.<sup>[32]:36–37</sup>

In the early days since its inception, Dubai was constantly at odds with Abu Dhabi. In 1947, a border dispute between Dubai and Abu Dhabi on the northern sector of their mutual border escalated into war.<sup>[40]</sup> Arbitration by the British government resulted in a cessation of hostilities.<sup>[41]</sup>

Despite a lack of oil, Dubai's ruler from 1958, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, used revenue from trading activities to build infrastructure. Private companies were established to build and operate infrastructure, including electricity, telephone services, and both the ports and airport operators.<sup>[42]</sup> An airport of sorts (a runway built on salt flats) was established in Dubai in the 1950s and, in 1959, the emirate's first hotel, the Airlines Hotel, was constructed. This was followed by the Ambassador and Carlton Hotels in 1968.<sup>[43]</sup>

Sheikh Rashid commissioned John Harris from British architectural construction firm Halcrow, to create the city's first master plan in 1959. Harris imagined a Dubai that would rise from the historic centre on Dubai Creek, with an extensive road system, organised zones, and a town centre, all of which could feasibly be built with the limited financial resources at the time.<sup>[44]</sup>



The Al Ras district in Deira and Dubai Creek in the mid 1960s

1959 saw the establishment of Dubai's first telephone company, 51% owned by IAL (International Aeradio Ltd) and 49% by Sheikh Rashid and local businessmen and in 1961 both the electricity company and telephone company had rolled out operational networks.<sup>[45]</sup> The water company (Sheikh Rashid was chairman and



majority shareholder) constructed a pipeline from wells at Awir and a series of storage tanks and, by 1968, Dubai had a reliable supply of piped water.<sup>[45]</sup>

On 7 April 1961, the Dubai-based MV *Dara*, a five thousand ton British flagged vessel that plied the route between Basra (Iraq), Kuwait, and Bombay (Mumbai, India), was caught in unusually high winds off Dubai. Early the next morning in heavy seas off Umm al-Quwain, an explosion tore out the second class cabins and started fires. The captain gave the order to abandon ship but two lifeboats capsized and a second explosion occurred. A flotilla of small boats from Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, and Umm al-Quwain picked up survivors, but 238 of the 819 persons on board were lost in the disaster.<sup>[46]</sup>

The construction of Dubai's first airport was started on the northern edge of the town in 1959 and the terminal building opened for business in September 1960. The airport was initially serviced by Gulf Aviation (flying Dakotas, Hérons, and Viscounts) but Iran Air commenced services to Shiraz in 1961.<sup>[45]</sup>

In 1962 the British Political Agent noted that "Many new houses and blocks of offices and flats are being built... the Ruler is determined, against advice [from the British authorities] to press on with the construction of a jet airport... More and more European and Arab firms are opening up and the future looks bright."<sup>[43]</sup>

In 1962, with expenditure on infrastructure projects already approaching levels some thought imprudent, Sheikh Rashid approached his brother-in-law, the Ruler of Qatar, for a loan to build the first bridge crossing Dubai Creek. This crossing was finished in May 1963 and was paid for by a toll levied on the crossing from the Dubai side of the creek to the Deira side.<sup>[42]</sup>

BOAC was originally reluctant to start regular flights between Bombay and Dubai, fearing a lack of demand for seats. However, by the time the asphalt runway of Dubai Airport was constructed in 1965, opening Dubai to both regional and long haul traffic, a number of foreign airlines were competing for landing rights.<sup>[42]</sup> In 1970, a new airport terminal building was constructed which included Dubai's first duty-free shops.<sup>[47]</sup>

Throughout the 1960s Dubai was the centre of a lively gold trade, with 1968 imports of gold at some £56 million. This gold was, in the vast majority, re-exported – mainly to customers who took delivery in international waters off India. The import of gold to India had been banned and so the trade was characterized as smuggling, although Dubai's merchants were quick to point out that they were making legal deliveries of gold and that it was up to the customer where they took it.<sup>[48]</sup>

In 1966, more gold was shipped from London to Dubai than almost anywhere else in the world (only France and Switzerland took more), at 4 million ounces. Dubai also took delivery of over \$15 million worth of watches and over 5 million ounces of silver. The 1967 price of gold was \$35 an ounce but its market price in India was \$68 an ounce – a healthy markup. Estimates at the time put the volume of gold imports from Dubai to India at around 75% of the total market.<sup>[49]</sup>

## Oil era

After years of exploration following large finds in neighbouring Abu Dhabi, oil was eventually discovered in territorial waters off Dubai in 1966, albeit in far smaller quantities. The first field was named "Fateh" or "good fortune". This led to an acceleration of Sheikh Rashid's infrastructure development plans and a construction boom that brought a massive influx of foreign workers, mainly Asians and Middle Easterners. Between 1968 and 1975, the city's population grew by over 300%.<sup>[50]</sup>

As part of the infrastructure for pumping and transporting oil from the Fateh field, located offshore of the Jebel Ali area of Dubai, two 500,000-gallon storage tanks were built, known locally as "Kazzans",<sup>[51]</sup> by welding them together on the beach and then digging them out and floating them to drop onto the seabed at the Fateh field. These were constructed by the Chicago Bridge & Iron Company, which gave the beach its local name (Chicago Beach), which was transferred to the Chicago Beach Hotel, which was demolished and replaced by the Jumeirah Beach Hotel in the late 1990s. The Kazzans were an innovative oil storage solution which meant supertankers could moor offshore even in bad weather and avoided the need to pipe oil onshore from Fateh, which is some 60 miles out to sea.<sup>[52]</sup>



View of Business Bay

Dubai had already embarked on a period of infrastructural development and expansion. Oil revenue flowing from 1969 onwards supported a period of growth with Sheikh Rashid embarking on a policy of building infrastructure and a diversified trading economy before the emirate's limited reserves were depleted. Oil accounted for 24% of GDP in 1990 but had fallen to 7% of GDP by 2004.<sup>[19]</sup>

Critically, one of the first major projects Sheikh Rashid embarked upon when oil revenue started to flow was the construction of Port Rashid, a deep-water free port constructed by British company Halcrow. Originally intended to be a four-berth port, it was extended to sixteen berths as construction was ongoing.<sup>[53]</sup> The project was an outstanding success, with shipping queuing to access the new facilities. The port was inaugurated on 5 October 1972, although its berths were each pressed into use as soon as they had been built. Port Rashid was to be further expanded in 1975 to add a further 35 berths before the larger port of Jebel Ali were constructed.<sup>[19]</sup>

Port Rashid was the first of a swath of projects designed to create a modern trading infrastructure, including roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals.<sup>[54]</sup>

## Reaching the UAE's Act of Union



Adi Bitar in a meeting with Sheiks  
Rashid Al Maktoum, Mohammad Al  
Maktoum, and Maktoum Al  
Maktoum in Dubai, 1968

Dubai and the other "Trucial States" had long been a British protectorate where the British government took care of foreign policy and defence, as well as arbitrating between the rulers of the Eastern Gulf, the result of a treaty signed in 1892 named the "Exclusive Agreement". This was to change with Prime Minister Harold Wilson's announcement, on 16 January 1968, that all British troops were to be withdrawn from "East of Aden". The decision was to pitch the coastal emirates, together with Qatar and Bahrain, into fevered negotiations to fill the political vacuum that the British withdrawal would leave behind.<sup>[55]</sup>

The principle of union was first agreed upon between the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, and Sheikh Rashid of Dubai on 18 February 1968 meeting in an encampment at Argoub Al Sedirah, near Al Semeih, a desert stop between the two emirates.<sup>[56]</sup> The two agreed to work towards bringing the other emirates, including Qatar and Bahrain, into the union. Over the next two years, negotiations and meetings of the rulers followed—often stormy—as a form of union was thrashed out. The nine-state union

was never to recover from the October 1969 meeting where British intervention against aggressive activities by two of the Emirates resulted in a walk-out by Bahrain and Qatar. They dropped out of talks, leaving six of the seven "trucial" emirates to agree on union on 18 July 1971.<sup>[57]</sup>

On 2 December 1971, Dubai, together with Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, and Fujairah joined in the Act of Union to form the United Arab Emirates. The seventh emirate, Ras Al Khaimah, joined the UAE on 10 February 1972, following Iran's annexation of the RAK-claimed Tunbs islands.<sup>[58]</sup>

In 1973, Dubai joined the other emirates to adopt a uniform currency: the UAE dirham.<sup>[59]</sup> In that same year, the prior monetary union with Qatar was dissolved and the UAE dirham was introduced throughout the Emirates.<sup>[60]</sup>

## Modern Dubai

Throughout the 1970s, Dubai experienced continued growth fueled by revenues generated from oil and trade, even as the city witnessed an influx of immigrants fleeing the Lebanese civil war.<sup>[61]</sup> Border disputes between the emirates persisted even after the formation of the UAE; it was only in 1979 that a formal compromise was reached, putting an end to disagreements.<sup>[62]</sup> In 1979, the establishment of the Jebel Ali port, a deep-water port accommodating larger ships, marked a significant development. Initially facing challenges, Sheikh Mohammed initiated the JAFZA (Jebel Ali Free Zone) around the port in 1985, facilitating unrestricted import of labour and export of capital for foreign companies.<sup>[63]</sup> Simultaneously, Dubai airport and the aviation industry continued their expansion.



Dubai Palm Jumeirah and Marina in  
2011

The Gulf War in early 1991 had a negative financial impact on the city, with depositors and traders withdrawing money and trade. However, Dubai rebounded in a changing political climate and prospered. In the late 1990s, various foreign trading communities—initially from Kuwait, during the Gulf War, and later from Bahrain, amidst the Shia unrest—relocated their businesses to Dubai.<sup>[64]</sup> Dubai served as refuelling base for allied forces at the Jebel Ali Free Zone during the Gulf War and again during the 2003 Invasion of Iraq. Subsequent significant increases in oil prices prompted Dubai to maintain its focus on free trade and tourism.<sup>[65]</sup>

In the early 2000s, construction of artificial islands on the coast of Dubai, known as the Palm Islands and The World Islands, began. The Burj Khalifa was opened in Dubai in 2010, surpassing the Taipei 101 and officially gaining its title as the tallest skyscraper in the world.

Dubai's smart city initiatives, which include smart tourism, play a key role in advancing the city's growth ambitions, primarily through its Smart Dubai project.<sup>[66]</sup> In 2016, the world's first functioning 3D-printed office building was opened in Dubai,<sup>[67]</sup> having taken 17 days to build.<sup>[68]</sup> Its architect, Killa Design, was the same architect that designed the Museum of the Future.<sup>[69]</sup>

## Geography

Dubai is situated on the Persian Gulf coast of the United Arab Emirates and is roughly at sea level (16 m or 52 ft above). The emirate of Dubai shares borders with Abu Dhabi in the south, Sharjah in the northeast, and the Sultanate of Oman in the southeast. Hatta, a minor exclave of the emirate, is surrounded on three sides by Oman and by the emirates of Ajman (in the west) and Ras Al Khaimah (in the north). The Persian Gulf borders the western coast of the emirate. Dubai is positioned at 25.2697°N 55.3095°E﻿ / ﻿25.2697; 55.3095 and covers an area of 1,588 sq mi (4,110 km<sup>2</sup>), which represents a significant expansion beyond its initial 1,500 sq mi (3,900 km<sup>2</sup>) designation due to land reclamation from the sea.<sup>[70][71]</sup>

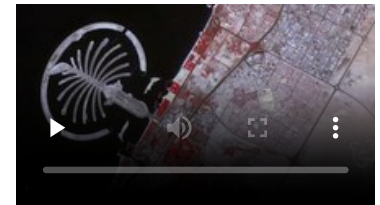
Dubai lies directly within the Arabian Desert. However, the topography of Dubai is significantly different from that of the southern portion of the UAE in that much of Dubai's landscape is highlighted by sandy desert patterns, while gravel deserts dominate much of the southern region of the country.<sup>[72]</sup> The sand consists mostly of crushed shell and coral and is fine, clean and white. East of the city, the salt-crusted coastal plains, known as *sabkha*, give way to a north–south running line of dunes. Farther east, the dunes grow larger and are tinged red with iron oxide.<sup>[50]</sup>

The flat sandy desert gives way to the Western Hajar Mountains, which run alongside Dubai's border with Oman at Hatta. The Western Hajar chain has an arid, jagged and shattered landscape, whose mountains rise to about 1,300 metres (4,265 feet) in some places. Dubai has no natural river bodies or oases; however, Dubai does have a natural inlet, Dubai Creek, which has been dredged to make it deep enough for large vessels to pass through. Dubai also has multiple gorges and waterholes, which dot the base of the Western Al Hajar mountains. A vast sea of sand dunes covers much of southern Dubai and eventually leads into the desert known as The Empty Quarter. Seismically, Dubai is in a very stable zone—the nearest seismic fault line, the Zagros Fault, is 200 kilometres (124 miles) from the UAE and is unlikely to have any seismic impact on Dubai.<sup>[73]</sup> Experts also predict that the possibility of a tsunami in the region is minimal because the Persian Gulf waters are not deep enough to trigger a tsunami.<sup>[73]</sup>

The sandy desert surrounding the city supports wild grasses and occasional date palms. Desert hyacinths grow in the *sabkha* plains east of the city, while acacia and ghaf trees grow in the flat plains within the proximity of the Western Al Hajar mountains. Several indigenous trees such as the date palm and neem as well as imported trees such as the eucalyptus grow in Dubai's natural parks. The MacQueen's bustard, striped hyena, caracal, desert fox, falcon, and Arabian oryx are common in Dubai's desert. Dubai is on the migration path between Europe, Asia, and Africa, and more than 320 migratory bird species pass through the emirate in spring and autumn. The waters of Dubai are home to more than 300 species of fish, including the hammour. The typical marine life off the Dubai coast includes tropical fish, jellyfish, coral, dugong, dolphins, whales, and sharks. Various types of turtles can also be found in the area including the hawksbill turtle and green turtle, which are listed as endangered species.<sup>[74][75]</sup>

## Climate

Dubai features a tropical,<sup>[76]</sup> hot desert climate (Köppen BWh). Summers in Dubai are extremely hot, prolonged, windy, and humid, with an average high around 40 °C (104 °F) and overnight lows around 30 °C (86 °F) in the hottest month, August. Most days are sunny throughout the year. Winters are mild to warm, with an average high of 24 °C (75 °F) and overnight lows of 14 °C (57 °F) in January, the coolest month.



This time-lapse video shows the rate of Dubai's growth at one frame per year from 2000 through 2011. In the false-colour satellite images making up the video, bare desert is tan, plant-covered land is red, water is black and urban areas are silver.



Dune bashing in one of the deserts of Dubai



Dubai by Copernicus Sentinel-2 satellite in false-colour in 2024

Dubai summers are also known for the very high humidity level, which can make it very uncomfortable for many with exceptionally high dew points, which can exceed 30 °C (86 °F) in summer. Heat index values can reach over 60 °C (140 °F) at the height of summer.<sup>[77]</sup> The highest recorded temperature in Dubai is 49.0 °C (120.2 °F).

Very dry, Dubai's average annual precipitation is 79.2 mm (3.12 in). However, precipitation has been increasing in the last few decades, with accumulated rain reaching 110.7 mm (4.36 in) per year.<sup>[78]</sup> Record-setting flooding inundated Dubai in April 2024, demonstrating a lack of appropriate drainage to deal with the immense challenges precipitated by climate change.<sup>[79]</sup>

Climate data for Dubai (1991–2020)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Record high °C (°F)	31.8 (89.2)	37.5 (99.5)	41.3 (106.3)	43.5 (110.3)	47.0 (116.6)	47.9 (118.2)	49.0 (120.2)	48.8 (119.8)	45.1 (113.2)	42.4 (108.3)	38.1 (100.6)	33.2 (91.8)	49.0 (120.2)
Mean daily maximum °C (°F)	23.9 (75.0)	25.4 (77.7)	28.9 (84.0)	33.3 (91.9)	37.7 (99.9)	39.8 (103.6)	40.9 (105.6)	41.3 (106.3)	38.9 (102.0)	35.4 (95.7)	30.6 (87.1)	26.2 (79.2)	33.5 (92.3)
Daily mean °C (°F)	19.1 (66.4)	20.5 (68.9)	23.6 (74.5)	27.5 (81.5)	31.4 (88.5)	33.4 (92.1)	35.5 (95.9)	35.9 (96.6)	33.3 (91.9)	29.8 (85.6)	25.4 (77.7)	21.2 (70.2)	28.1 (82.5)
Mean daily minimum °C (°F)	14.3 (57.7)	15.5 (59.9)	18.3 (64.9)	21.7 (71.1)	25.1 (77.2)	26.9 (80.4)	30.0 (86.0)	30.4 (86.7)	27.7 (81.9)	24.1 (75.4)	20.1 (68.2)	16.3 (61.3)	22.5 (72.6)
Record low °C (°F)	7.7 (45.9)	7.4 (45.3)	11.0 (51.8)	13.7 (56.7)	15.7 (60.3)	19.6 (67.3)	24.1 (75.4)	24.0 (75.2)	22.0 (71.6)	15.0 (59.0)	10.8 (51.4)	8.2 (46.8)	7.4 (45.3)
Average precipitation mm (inches)	20.8 (0.82)	9.9 (0.39)	21.7 (0.85)	3.3 (0.13)	0.1 (0.00)	0.02 (0.00)	1.1 (0.04)	0.003 (0.00)	0.04 (0.00)	1.5 (0.06)	5.9 (0.23)	14.8 (0.58)	79.2 (3.12)
Average precipitation days (≥ 1 mm)	2.8	2.4	3.4	1.5	0.4	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.3	1.3	3.8	17.2
Average relative humidity (%)	65	64	61	54	50	55	55	53	59	60	61	65	58.7
Mean monthly sunshine hours	253.1	250.8	288.0	315.6	350.0	344.5	340.3	333.9	307.8	300.0	268.1	256.9	3,608.9
Mean daily sunshine hours	8.1	8.6	8.7	10.2	11.3	11.5	10.7	10.5	10.3	9.9	9.3	8.2	9.8
Average ultraviolet index	5	7	9	11	12	12	12	12	11	9	6	5	9
Source 1: NOAA (humidity 1981-2010), <sup>[80][81]</sup> Dubai Meteorological Office (daily sun 1974-2009) <sup>[82]</sup>													
Source 2: UAE National Center of Meteorology <sup>[83]</sup>													

## Government

Dubai has been ruled by the Al Maktoum family since 1833; the emirate is an absolute monarchy. Dubai citizens participate in the electoral college to vote representatives to the Federal National Council of the 'UAE'. The ruler, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, is also the vice-president and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and a member of the Supreme Council of the Union (SCU). Dubai appoints 8 members in two-term periods to the Federal National Council (FNC) of the UAE, the supreme federal legislative body.<sup>[84]</sup>

The Dubai Municipality (DM) was established by the then ruler of Dubai, Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, in 1954 for purposes of city planning, citizen services, and upkeep of local facilities.<sup>[85]</sup> It has since then evolved into an autonomous subnational authority, collectively known as the Government of Dubai which is responsible for both the city of Dubai and the greater emirate.<sup>[86]</sup> The Government of Dubai has over 58 governmental departments responsible for security, economic policy, education, transportations, immigration, and is only one of the three emirates to have a separate judicial system independent from the federal





Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Prime Minister and Vice President of the United Arab Emirates and the Ruler of Dubai

judiciary of the UAE.<sup>[87]</sup> The Ruler of Dubai is the head of government and emir (head of state) and laws, decrees, and court judgements are issued in his name, however, since 2003, executive authority of managing and overseeing Dubai Governmental agencies has been delegated to the Dubai Executive Council, led by the Crown Prince of Dubai Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum. Although no legislative assembly exists, the traditional open majlis (council) where citizens and representatives of the Ruler meet are often used for feedback on certain domestic issues.<sup>[88][89]</sup>

## Law enforcement and crime

The Dubai Police Force, founded in 1956 in the locality of Naif, has law enforcement jurisdiction over the emirate. The force is under direct command of Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum.<sup>[90]</sup> Dubai and Ras al Khaimah are the only emirates that do not conform to the federal judicial system of the United Arab Emirates.<sup>[91]</sup> The emirate's judicial courts comprise the Court of First Instance, the Court of Appeal, and the Court of Cassation. The Court of First Instance consists of the Civil Court, which hears all civil claims; the Criminal Court, which hears claims originating from police complaints; and Sharia Court, which is responsible for matters between Muslims. Non-Muslims do not appear before the Sharia Court. The Court of Cassation is the supreme court of the emirate and hears disputes on matters of law only.<sup>[92]</sup> Alcohol sale and consumption, though legal, is regulated. Adult non-Muslims are allowed to consume alcohol in licensed venues, typically within hotels or at home with the possession of an alcohol license. Places other than hotels, clubs, and specially designated areas are typically not permitted to sell alcohol.<sup>[93]</sup> In 2024, Dubai authorities charged an Irish woman for consuming alcohol.<sup>[94][95]</sup>



Dubai Police operates a fleet of exotic cars in addition to the normal cars.

As in other parts of the world, drinking and driving is illegal, with 21 being the legal drinking age in the Emirate of Dubai.<sup>[96]</sup>

## International crime hub and criminal haven

Dubai is a notorious global centre and sanctuary for money launderers, drug lords, corrupt political figures, and sanctioned businessmen.<sup>[16]</sup> It has been called a 'gangster's paradise'.<sup>[97]</sup> This includes money laundering by major crime syndicates.

This state of affairs has been enabled by a complex range of factors: the lack of extradition treaties with many countries, banking secrecy, liberal visa policies, low taxes, a large expatriate community in which shady figures are easily absorbed and welcomed, a non-transparent real estate market that readily enables money laundering, and not least, the monarchical dictatorship of the Maktoum family which facilitates it through deliberately lax legislation and policy.<sup>[98][99]</sup>

Examples include Amit Gupta, who bribed Nauru politicians in an attempt to stage a coup that would give him control of that island's mining rights <sup>[100]</sup> and Ahmed Al Hamza, a transnational crime figure and one of Melbourne's most powerful gangsters.<sup>[101]</sup>

*Dubai's Role in Facilitating Corruption and Global Illicit Financial Flows*, a 2020 report from influential Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, stated: "part of what underpins Dubai's prosperity is a steady stream of illicit proceeds borne from corruption and crime...Meanwhile, both Emirati leaders and the international community continue to turn a blind eye to the problematic behaviours, administrative loopholes, and weak enforcement practices that make Dubai a globally attractive destination for dirty money."<sup>[102]</sup>

Dubai is an investment base for the international drug trade by Balkan criminal groups, while Belgian criminals are notably active in its real estate market on behalf of Russian oligarchs and politicians, who seek to launder their ill-gotten gains.<sup>[99]</sup> In 2022, a data leak obtained by the U.S. Center for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS), exposed just some of this activity.<sup>[103]</sup> Dubai is under observation by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is likely to bring greater international scrutiny and pressure on its government.<sup>[102]</sup>

Ireland's Kinahan Cartel had been undertaking its operations from Dubai, which was becoming a safe haven for organized crime gangs. The cartel is run by the founder Christy Kinahan and his sons, Daniel and Christopher Kinahan. Although they are regular visitors to Dubai, their exact whereabouts remain unknown. The crime group maintains connections with powerful Emirati families and the regime.<sup>[104]</sup> Using their Emirati partners, the Kinahan family has established multiple companies in the Emirates to trade in clothing, textiles, and food, along with management in aviation consultancies in free zones.<sup>[105]</sup> With Dubai becoming a



refuge for criminals, the Kinahan cartel held regular meetings with their criminal associates in the city.<sup>[106]</sup> The US, UK, and Europol targeted the organized crime group and imposed sanctions on the Kinahan family and seven of their associates.<sup>[107][108]</sup> On 11 October 2024, the Interpol issued a red notice against a cartel member, Sean McGovern, who was arrested by the Dubai police.<sup>[109]</sup> The Kinahan cartel was planning an escape from the Emirates, in case of extradition request from Ireland. The group had detailed plan to move to Russia.<sup>[110][111]</sup> On 21 October, an extradition treaty was also signed between Ireland and the UAE.<sup>[112]</sup>

Human rights



Latifa, daughter of Dubai's ruler, escaped Dubai in February 2018 but was captured in the Indian Ocean.<sup>[113]</sup>

Companies in Dubai have in the past been criticised for human rights violations against labourers.<sup>[114]</sup> Some of the 250,000 foreign labourers in the city have been alleged to live in conditions described by Human Rights Watch as "less than humane".<sup>[115][116]</sup> The mistreatment of foreign workers was a subject of the difficult-to-make documentary, *Slaves in Dubai* (2009).<sup>[117]</sup> The Dubai government has denied labour injustices and stated that the watchdogs' (Human Rights Watch) accusations were "misguided". The filmmaker explained in interviews how it was necessary to go undercover to avoid discovery by the authorities, who impose high fines on reporters attempting to document human rights abuses, including the conditions of construction workers.

Towards the end of March 2006, the government had announced steps to allow construction unions. UAE labour minister Ali al-Kaabi said: "Labourers will be allowed to form unions."<sup>[118]</sup> As of 2020, the federal public prosecution has clarified that "it is an offense when at least three public employees collectively leave work or one of the duties to achieve an unlawful purpose. Each employee will be punished with not less than 6 months in prison and not more than a year, as the imprisonment will be for leaving the job or duties that affect the health or the security of the people

or affect other public services of public benefit." Any act of spreading discord among employees will be punishable by imprisonment, and in all cases, foreigners will be deported.<sup>[119]</sup>

Homosexual acts are illegal under UAE law.<sup>[120]</sup> Freedom of speech in Dubai is limited, with both residents and citizens facing severe sanctions from the government for speaking out against the royal family or local laws and culture.<sup>[121]</sup> Some of the labourers lured by the higher pay available in Dubai are victims of human trafficking or forced labour while some women are even forced into the growing sex trade in Dubai, a centre of human trafficking and prostitution.<sup>[122]</sup>

Defamation on social media is a punishable offence in Dubai with fines up to half a million dirhams and jail term for up to 2 years. In January 2020, three Sri Lankan expats were fined 500,000 dirhams (US\$136,000) each for posting defamatory Islamophobic Facebook posts.<sup>[123]</sup>

A victim of domestic violence, Tori Towey faced abuse since getting married in March 2024. She lived in Dubai and was working as a flight attendant for the Emirates Airlines. When she attempted to seek help for the first time in Dubai, Towey was mocked by an Emirati police officer. The authorities charged her of attempt to suicide and illegal consumption of alcohol, along with banning her from leaving Dubai. Towey was assisted by Radha Sterling, who questioned Ireland's travel advice, claiming it is "insufficient" to assist visitors, particularly women, in understanding how to attend to officials in the UAE. Sterling said it is difficult to explain to foreign travellers about how they can stay safe in the Emirates.<sup>[124]</sup>

Demographics

Ethnicity and languages

As of September 2019, the population is 3,331,420 – an annual increase of 177,020 people which represents a growth rate of 5.64%.<sup>[134]</sup> The region covers 1,287.5 square kilometres (497.1 sq mi). The population density is 408.18/km<sup>2</sup> – more than eight times that of the entire country. Dubai is the second most expensive city in the region and 20th most expensive city in the world.<sup>[135]</sup>

As of 2013, only about 15% of the emirate's population was made up of UAE nationals,<sup>[136]</sup> with the rest comprising expatriates, many of whom either have been in the country for generations or were born in the UAE.<sup>[137][138]</sup> Approximately 85% of the expatriate population (and 71% of the emirate's total population) was Asian, chiefly Indian (51%) and

Historical population		
Year	Pop.	±%
1822 <sup>[33]</sup>	1,200	—
1900 <sup>[125]</sup>	10,000	+733.3%
1930 <sup>[126]</sup>	20,000	+100.0%
1940 <sup>[33]</sup>	38,000	+90.0%
1960 <sup>[127]</sup>	40,000	+5.3%
1968 <sup>[128]</sup>	58,971	+47.4%
1975 <sup>[129]</sup>	183,000	+210.3%
1985 <sup>[130]</sup>	370,800	+102.6%
1995 <sup>[130]</sup>	674,000	+81.8%

Pakistani (16%); other significant Asian groups include Bangladeshis (9%) and Filipinos (3%).<sup>[139]</sup> A quarter of the population (local and foreign) reportedly traces their origins to Iran.<sup>[140]</sup> In addition, 16% of the population (or 288,000 persons) living in collective labour accommodation were not identified by ethnicity or nationality, but were thought to be primarily Asian.<sup>[141]</sup> 461,000 Westerners live in the United Arab Emirates, making up 5.1% of its total population.<sup>[142][143]</sup> There are over 100,000 British expatriates in Dubai, by far the largest group of Western expatriates in the city.<sup>[144]</sup> The median age in the emirate was about 27 years. In 2014, there were estimated to be 15.54 births and 1.99 deaths per 1,000 people.<sup>[145]</sup> There are other Arab nationals, including GCC nationals.

<b>2005</b>	1,204,000	+78.6%
<b>2010</b> <sup>[131]</sup>	1,905,476	+58.3%
<b>2015</b> <sup>[132]</sup>	2,446,675	+28.4%
<b>2019</b> <sup>[133]</sup>	3,355,900	+37.2%
c-census; e-estimate		

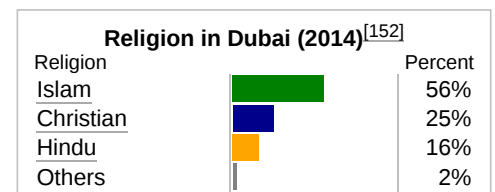
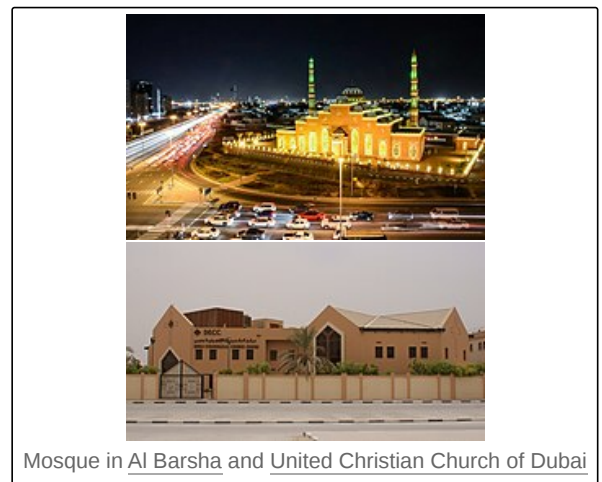
Arabic is the national and official language of the United Arab Emirates. The Gulf dialect of Arabic is spoken natively by the Emirati people.<sup>[146]</sup> English is used as a second language. Other major languages spoken in Dubai due to immigration are Malayalam, Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Persian, Sindhi, Tamil, Punjabi, Pashto, Bengali, Balochi, Tulu,<sup>[147]</sup> Kannada, Sinhala, Marathi, Telugu, Tagalog, and Chinese, in addition to many other languages.<sup>[148]</sup>

## Religion

Article 7 of the UAE's Provisional Constitution declares Islam the official state religion of the UAE. The government subsidises almost 95% of mosques and employs all Imams; approximately 5% of mosques are entirely private, and several large mosques have large private endowments.<sup>[149]</sup> All mosques in Dubai are managed by the Islamic Affairs and Charitable Activities Department also known as "Awqaf" under the Government of Dubai and all Imams are appointed by the Government.<sup>[150]</sup> The Constitution of the United Arab Emirates provides for freedom of religion. Expats held to be preaching religious hatred or promoting religious extremism are usually jailed and deported.<sup>[151]</sup>

Dubai has large Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Bahá'í, Buddhist, and other religious communities residing in the city, as well as a small but growing Jewish community.<sup>[153]</sup> In 2014, more than 56% of Dubai residents were Muslims, while 25% of the Dubai residents were Christians and 16% were Hindus. While around 2% of the Dubai residents were adherent of other religions.<sup>[152]</sup> The Churches Complex in Jebel Ali Village is an area for a number of churches and temples of different religious denominations, especially Christian denominations.<sup>[154]</sup>

Non-Muslim groups can own their own houses of worship, where they can practice their religion freely, by requesting a land grant and permission to build a compound. Groups that do not have their own buildings are allowed to use the facilities of other religious organisations or worship in private homes.<sup>[155]</sup> Non-Muslim religious groups are also permitted to advertise group functions openly and distribute various religious literature. Catholics are served pastorally by the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia. British preacher Reverend Andrew Thompson claimed that the United Arab Emirates is one of the most tolerant places in the world towards Christians and that it is easier to be a Christian in the UAE than in the UK.<sup>[156]</sup> On 5 April 2020, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced the building of one of their temples in Dubai. As part of the announcement, church President Russell M. Nelson said that, "The plan for a temple in Dubai comes in response to their gracious invitation, which we gratefully acknowledge."<sup>[157]</sup>



## Economy

One of the world's fastest growing economies,<sup>[158]</sup> Dubai's gross domestic product is projected at over US\$177 billion in 2021, with a growth rate of 6.1% in 2014.<sup>[159]</sup> Although a number of core elements of Dubai's trading infrastructure were built on the back of the oil industry,<sup>[160]</sup> revenues from oil and natural gas account for less than 5% of the emirate's revenues.<sup>[11]</sup> It is estimated that Dubai produces 50,000 to 70,000 barrels (7,900 to 11,100 m<sup>3</sup>) of oil a day<sup>[161]</sup> and substantial quantities of gas from offshore fields. The emirate's share in the UAE's total gas revenues is about 2%. Dubai's oil reserves have diminished significantly and are expected to be exhausted in 20 years.<sup>[162]</sup> Real estate and construction (22.6%),<sup>[13]</sup> trade (16%), *entrepôt* (15%), and financial services (11%) are the largest contributors to Dubai's economy.<sup>[163]</sup>



Burj Khalifa and Downtown Dubai

Dubai's non-oil foreign trade stood at \$362 billion in 2014. Of the overall trade volumes, imports had the biggest share with a value of \$230 billion while exports and re-exports to the emirate stood at \$31 billion and \$101 billion respectively.<sup>[164]</sup>

By 2014, China had emerged as Dubai's largest international trading partner, with a total of \$47.7 billion in trade flows, up 29% from 2013. India was second among Dubai's key trading partners with a trade of \$29.7 billion, followed by the United States

at \$22.62 billion. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was Dubai's fourth trading partner globally and first in the GCC and Arab world with a total trade value of \$14.2 billion. Trade with Germany in 2014 totaled \$12.3 billion, Switzerland and Japan both at \$11.72 billion, and UK trade totaled \$10.9 billion.<sup>[164]</sup>

Historically, Dubai and its twin across Dubai Creek, Deira (independent of Dubai City at that time), were important ports of call for Western manufacturers. Most of the new city's banking and financial centres were headquartered in the port area. Dubai maintained its importance as a trade route through the 1970s and 1980s. Dubai has a free trade in gold and, until the 1990s, was the hub of a "brisk smuggling trade"<sup>[59]</sup> of gold ingots to India, where gold import was restricted. Dubai's Jebel Ali port, constructed in the 1970s, has the largest human-made harbour in the world and was ranked seventh globally for the volume of container traffic it supports.<sup>[165]</sup> Dubai is also a hub for service industries such as information technology and finance, with industry-specific free zones throughout the city.<sup>[166]</sup> Dubai Internet City, combined with Dubai Media City as part of TECOM (Dubai Technology, Electronic Commerce and Media Free Zone Authority), is one such enclave, whose members include IT firms such as Hewlett Packard Enterprise, HP Inc., Halliburton, Google, EMC Corporation, Oracle Corporation, Microsoft, Dell, and IBM, and media organisations such as MBC, CNN, BBC, Reuters, Sky News, and AP.<sup>[167]</sup> Various programmes, resources, and value-added services support the growth of startups in Dubai and help them connect to new business opportunities.<sup>[168]</sup>

The Dubai Financial Market (DFM) was established in March 2000 as a secondary market for trading securities and bonds, both local and foreign. As of the fourth quarter of 2006, its trading volume stood at about 400 billion shares, worth \$95 billion in total. The DFM had a market capitalisation of about \$87 billion.<sup>[141]</sup> The other Dubai-based stock exchange is NASDAQ Dubai, which is the international stock exchange in the Middle East. It enables a range of companies, including UAE and regional small and medium-sized enterprises, to trade on an exchange with an international brand name, with access by both regional and international investors.<sup>[169]</sup>

DMCC (Dubai Multi Commodities Centre) was established in 2002. It is the world's fastest-growing free zone and been nominated as "Global Free Zone of the Year 2016" by The *Financial Times* Magazine.

Dubai is also known as the City of Gold because a major part of the economy is based on gold trades, with Dubai's total gold trading volumes in H1 2011 reaching 580 tonnes, with an average price of US\$1,455 per troy ounce.<sup>[170]</sup>

A *City Mayors* survey ranked Dubai 44th among the world's best financial cities in 2007,<sup>[171]</sup> while another report by *City Mayors* indicated that Dubai was the world's 27th richest city in 2012, in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP).<sup>[172]</sup> Dubai is also an international financial centre (IFC) and has been ranked 37th within the top 50 global financial cities as surveyed by the MasterCard Worldwide Centres of Commerce Index (2007),<sup>[173]</sup> and first within the Middle East. Since it opened in September 2004, the Dubai IFC has attracted, as a regional hub, leading international firms and set-up the NASDAQ Dubai which lists equity, derivatives, structured products, Islamic bonds (sukuk), and other bonds. The Dubai IFC model is an independent risk-based regulator with a legislative system consistent with English common law.<sup>[174]</sup>



Sheikh Zayed Road



Dubai Marina



Port of Jebel Ali



National Bank of Dubai

In 2012, the Global City Competitiveness Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit ranked Dubai at No. 40 with a total score of 55.9. According to its 2013 research report on the future competitiveness of cities, in 2025, Dubai will have moved up to 23rd place overall in the Index.<sup>[175]</sup> Indians, followed by Britons and Pakistanis are the top foreign investors in Dubai real estate.<sup>[176]</sup>

Dubai has launched several major projects to support its economy and develop different sectors. These include Dubai Fashion 2020<sup>[177]</sup> and Dubai Design District,<sup>[178]</sup> which is expected to become a home to leading local and international designers. The AED 4 billion first phase of the project was completed in 2015.<sup>[179]</sup>

As of March 2024, Dubai began operating the world's biggest waste-to-energy facility, that will power approximately 135,000 homes.<sup>[180]</sup>

In July 2024, Dubai signed an agreement to develop a logistic hub for food, fruits, and vegetables that is planned to be the largest of its kind in the world. UAE Minister of Finance Sheikh Maktoum bin Mohammed was present at the signing.<sup>[181]</sup>

In 2024, the city of Dubai ranked 12 out of 142 cities in the Smart City Index.<sup>[182]</sup>

## Real estate and property

In September 2019, Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum ordered the establishment of the Higher Committee for Real Estate Planning to study and evaluate future real estate construction projects, in order to achieve a balance between supply and demand,<sup>[183]</sup> which is seen as a move to curb the pace of construction projects following a decline in property prices.<sup>[184]</sup>

The government's decision to diversify from a trade-based, oil-reliant economy to one that is service- and tourism-oriented made property more valuable, resulting in property appreciation from 2004 to 2006. A longer-term assessment of Dubai's property market, however, showed depreciation; some properties lost as much as 64% of their value from 2001 to November 2008.<sup>[185]</sup> The large-scale real estate development projects have led to the construction of some of the tallest skyscrapers and largest projects in the world such as the Emirates Towers, the Burj Khalifa, the Palm Islands, and the most expensive hotel, the Burj Al Arab.<sup>[186]</sup> Dubai's property market experienced a major downturn in 2008<sup>[187]</sup> and 2009 as a result of the slowing economic climate.<sup>[188]</sup> By early 2009, the situation had worsened with the Great Recession taking a heavy toll on property values, construction, and employment.<sup>[189]</sup> This has had a major impact on property investors in the region, some of whom were unable to release funds from investments made in property developments.<sup>[190]</sup> As of February 2009, Dubai's foreign debt was estimated at \$80 billion, although this is a tiny fraction of the sovereign debt worldwide.<sup>[191]</sup>



Dubai Creek, which separates Deira from Bur Dubai, played a vital role in the economic development of the city.

In Dubai, many of the property owners are residents or genuine investors. However, the 2020 Data from the Centre for Advanced Defense Studies (C4ADS) exposed that a number of real estate owners in the city were either facing international sanctions or were involved in criminal activities. Some others were public officials, with a minimal possibility of purchasing it with their known incomes. The report "Dubai Uncovered" mentioned names of 100 Russian oligarchs, public officials, and Europeans involved in money laundering. Benefiting from Dubai's lack of proper real estate regulations, a number of corrupt people owned a house away from home, laundered their illicit money, and invested to store their wealth. Names of some of such questionable figures included Daniel Kinahan, Alexander Borodai, Roman Lyabikhov, Tibor Bokor, Ruslan Baisarov, Miroslav Výboh, and others.<sup>[192]</sup>

For years, Dubai has been labeled as a major hub for laundering illicit cash, primarily through its real estate market. Due to the UAE's lack of proper regulations and extradition treaties with many countries, fugitives found it to be a perfect hideout. The "Dubai Unlocked" investigation by journalists from 75 media outlets, in coordination with OCCRP and E24, revealed how Dubai's real estate market became a haven for criminals, money launderers, drug lords, fugitives, political figures accused of corruption, and sanctioned individuals to hide their money in Dubai. The investigation was based on 2020 and 2022 data leaks, primarily from the Dubai Land Department and publicly owned utility companies. The EU Tax Observatory and Norway's Centre for Tax Research evaluated that in 2022, the foreign ownership in Dubai's real estate market was worth approximately \$160 billion. Until 2022, there was no obligation on real estate agents, brokers, and lawyers in Dubai to report large cash or cryptocurrency transactions to authorities.<sup>[193]</sup>

In September 2024, Dubai has tightened its crypto regulation by implementing stricter rules for companies promoting digital assets in the region. These regulations require firms to provide a disclaimer and disclose the risks involved in trading crypto in their promotional materials.<sup>[194]</sup>



Following February 2022, the property prices in Dubai increased significantly, as wealthy Russians started investing in the UAE's real estate after the Ukraine invasion. Since 2020, property prices in Dubai increased by 124%. Meanwhile, the EU Tax Observatory and Norway's Centre for Tax Research revealed that Russians invested around \$6.3 billion in Dubai's existing and in-developed properties, since 2022. The increase in property prices pushed out the British expatriates, and forced them to look for property outside Dubai in cities like Ras Al Khaimah.<sup>[195]</sup>

## Tourism and retail



Hotel Atlantis in Dubai

Tourism is an important part of the Dubai government's strategy to maintain the flow of foreign cash into the emirate. Dubai's lure for tourists is based mainly on shopping,<sup>[196][197]</sup> but also on its possession of other ancient and modern attractions.<sup>[198]</sup> As of 2018, Dubai is the fourth most-visited city in the world based on the number of international visitors and the fastest growing, increasing by a 10.7% rate.<sup>[199]</sup> The city hosted 14.9

million overnight visitors in 2016, and is expected to reach 20 million tourists by 2020.<sup>[200]</sup> A great tourist attraction in Dubai is the Burj Khalifa, currently the tallest building in the world, although Jeddah Tower in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia is aiming to be taller.



The Dubai Mall Aquarium

Dubai has been called the "shopping capital of the Middle East".<sup>[201]</sup> Dubai alone has more than 70 shopping centres, including the world's second largest shopping centre, The Dubai Mall. As of June 2024 the Emirate real estate developer Emaar Properties, announced plans to expand the 12-million-square-foot mall, at a cost of 1.5 billion dirham (\$408 million), adding a further 240 luxury stores, along with new food outlets.<sup>[202]</sup> Dubai is also known for the historical souk districts located

on either side of its creek. Traditionally, dhows from East Asia, China, Sri Lanka, and India would discharge their cargo and the goods would be bargained over in the souks adjacent to the docks. Dubai Creek played a vital role in sustaining the life of the community in the city and was the resource which originally drove the economic boom in Dubai.<sup>[203]</sup> As of September 2013, Dubai Creek has been proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.<sup>[204]</sup> Many boutiques and jeweler stores are also found in the city. Dubai is also referred to as "the City of Gold" as the Gold Souk in Deira houses nearly 250 gold retail shops.<sup>[205]</sup>

Dubai Creek Park in Dubai Creek also plays a vital role in Dubai tourism as it showcases some of the most famous tourist attractions in Dubai such as Dolphinarium, Cable Car, Camel Ride, Horse Carriage, and Exotic Birds Shows.<sup>[206]</sup>

Dubai has a wide range of parks like Safa Park, Mushrif Park, and Hamriya Park. Each park is uniquely distinct from the others. Mushrif Park showcases different houses from around the world. A visitor can check out the architectural features of the outside as well as the inside of each house.

Some of the most popular beaches in Dubai are Umm Suqeim Beach, Al Mamzar Beach Park, JBR Open Beach, Kite Beach, Black Palace Beach, and Royal Island Beach Club. Mastercard's Global Destination Cities Index 2019 found that tourists spend more in Dubai than in any other country. In 2018, the country topped the list for the fourth year in a row with a total spend of \$30.82 billion. The average spend per day was found to be \$553.<sup>[207]</sup>

In October 2019, Dubai loosened its liquor laws for the first time, under which it allowed tourists to purchase alcohol from state-controlled stores. Previously, alcohol was accessible only for locals with special licences. The crucial policy shift came as the United Arab Emirates witnessed a severe economic crisis that led to a drop in alcohol sales by volume.<sup>[208]</sup>



Ain Dubai



The Dubai Fountain in Burj Khalifa lake, Downtown Dubai



View of the Palm Jumeirah and Burj Al Arab

In 2021, the UAE was ranked amongst the 20 most dangerous places for LGBTQ tourists to visit.<sup>[209]</sup> In 2022, there were cases where a number of LGBTQ tourists who travelled to Dubai faced issues and were deported. In March 2022, Thai transgender model Rachaya Noppakaroon visited Dubai for her performance at the Expo 2020, but was sent back because her passport stated her gender as male.<sup>[210]</sup> In another case, a French influencer on TikTok and Snapchat, Ibrahim Godin, was sent back from Dubai because the authorities assumed his male friend travelling with him was his boyfriend. Ibrahim filed a complaint for "public defamation because of sexual orientation" and an investigation was opened by the Vesoul police. He said, "Dubai is not all pretty, all rosy as we see on social networks."<sup>[211][212]</sup>

Dubai has a jewelry manufacturing company called Aquae Jewels.

## Expo 2020

On 2 November 2011, four cities had their bids for Expo 2020<sup>[10]</sup> already lodged, with Dubai making a last-minute entry. The delegation from the Bureau International des Expositions, which visited Dubai in February 2013 to examine the Emirate's readiness for the largest exposition, was impressed by the infrastructure and the level of national support. In May 2013, Dubai Expo 2020 Master Plan was revealed.<sup>[213]</sup> Dubai then won the right to host Expo 2020 on 27 November 2013.<sup>[214]</sup>



Sign of Expo 2020 Dubai UAE at Dubai International Airport

The main site of Dubai Expo 2020 was planned to be a 438-hectare area (1,083 acres), part of the new *Dubai Trade Centre Jebel Ali* urban development, located midway between Dubai and Abu Dhabi.<sup>[215]</sup> Moreover, the Expo 2020 also created various social enlistment projects and monetary boons to the city targeting the year 2020, such as initiating the world's largest solar power project.<sup>[216]</sup>

The Dubai Expo 2020 was scheduled to take place from 20 October 2020 until 10 April 2021 for 173 days where there would be 192 country pavilions featuring narratives from every part of the globe, have different thematic districts that would promote learning the wildlife in the forest exhibit too many other experiences.<sup>[217]</sup>

Due to the impact of COVID-19 the organisers of Expo 2020 postponed the Expo by one year to begin in 2021 (the new dates are 1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022).<sup>[218][219]</sup>

Dubai has targets to build an inclusive, barrier-free, and disabled-friendly city, which opened as Expo City Dubai. The city has already brought in changes by introducing wheelchair-friendly taxis, pavements with slopes, and tactile indicators on the floor for the visually impaired at all the metro stations.<sup>[220]</sup>

## Architecture

Dubai has a rich collection of buildings and structures of various architectural styles. Many modern interpretations of Islamic architecture can be found here, due to a boom in construction and architectural innovation in the Arab World in general, and in Dubai in particular, supported not only by top Arab or international architectural and engineering design firms such as Al Hashemi and Aedas, but also by top firms of New York and Chicago.<sup>[33]</sup> As a result of this boom, modern Islamic – and world – architecture has literally been taken to new levels in skyscraper building design and technology. Dubai now has more completed or topped-out skyscrapers higher than  $\frac{2}{3}$  km (2,200 ft),  $\frac{1}{3}$  km (1,100 ft), or  $\frac{1}{4}$  km (820 ft) than any other city. A culmination point was reached in 2010 with the completion of the Burj Khalifa (Khalifa Tower), now by far the world's tallest building at 829.8 m (2,722 ft). The Burj Khalifa's design is derived from the patterning systems embodied in Islamic architecture, with the triple-lobed footprint of the building based on an abstracted version of the desert flower hymenocallis which is native to the Dubai region.<sup>[221]</sup>



Skyline of Downtown Dubai from a helicopter in 2015

The completion of the Khalifa Tower, following the construction boom that began in the 1980s, accelerated in the 1990s, and took on a rapid pace of construction during the decade of the 2000s, leaves Dubai with the world's tallest skyline as of 4 January 2010.<sup>[222][223]</sup> At the top, Burj Khalifa, the world's second highest observatory deck after the Shanghai Tower with an outdoor terrace, is one of Dubai's most popular tourist attractions, with over 1.87 million visitors in 2013.<sup>[224]</sup>

The Creek Tower had been planned in the 2010s to keep Dubai atop the list of tallest buildings.<sup>[225]</sup> However, construction was placed on indefinite hold during the coronavirus pandemic and no date has been announced for the project to continue.<sup>[226]</sup>

## Burj Al Arab

The Burj Al Arab (Arabic: برج العرب, *Tower of the Arabs*), a luxury hotel, is frequently described as "the world's only 7-star", though its management has never made that claim but has claimed to be a "five-star deluxe property." The term "7-star hotel" was coined by a British journalist to describe their initial experience of the hotel.<sup>[227]</sup> A Jumeirah Group spokesperson is quoted as saying: "There's not a lot we can do to stop it. We're not encouraging the use of the term. We've never used it in our advertising."<sup>[227]</sup> The hotel opened in December 1999.

## Burj Khalifa

Burj Khalifa, known as the Burj Dubai before its inauguration, is a 828 metres (2,717 ft) high<sup>[228]</sup> skyscraper in Dubai, and the tallest building in the world. The tower was inspired by the structure of the desert flower *Hymenocallis*. It was constructed by more than 30 contracting companies around the world with workers of a hundred nationalities. It is an architectural icon, named after Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.<sup>[229]</sup> The building opened on 4 January 2010.<sup>[230]</sup>

## Palm Jumeirah

The Palm Jumeirah is an artificial archipelago, created using land reclamation by Nakheel Properties, a company owned by the Dubai government, and designed and developed by Helman Hurley Charvat Peacock/Architects, Inc. It is one of three planned islands called the Palm Islands which extend into the Persian Gulf. The Palm Jumeirah is the smallest and the original of the three Palm Islands, and it is located on the Jumeirah coastal area of Dubai. It was built between 2001 and 2006.<sup>[231]</sup>

## The World Islands

The World Islands is an archipelago of small artificial islands constructed in the shape of a world map, located in the waters of the Persian Gulf, 4.0 kilometres (2.5 mi) off the coast of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.<sup>[232]</sup> The World islands are composed mainly of sand dredged from Dubai's shallow coastal waters, and are one of several artificial island developments in Dubai. The area of each island varies from 250,000 to 900,000 square feet. The islands are arranged in the shape of the world map and the archipelago covers around 9 km in width.<sup>[233]</sup>

## Dubai Miracle Garden

On 14 February 2013, the Dubai Miracle Garden, a 72,000-metre (236,000-foot) flower garden, opened in Dubailand. It is the world's largest flower garden. The garden displays more than 50 million flowers with more than 70 species of flowering plants.<sup>[234]</sup> The garden uses retreated waste water from city's municipality and utilises drip irrigation method for watering the plants. During the summer seasons from late May to September when the climate can get extremely hot with an average high of about 40 °C (104 °F), the garden stays closed.<sup>[235][236]</sup>

## The Aeternitas Tower

In early January 2024, Dubai announced its intentions to build The Aeternitas Tower, which will become the world's tallest residential clock tower at a height of 450 m (1,480 ft). That is 4 times the height of London's Big Ben. The tallest clock tower to date is Makkah clock Royal Tower in Mecca. The tower's name "Aeternitas" comes from the ancient Roman religion; she was the



Interior of a Dubai Metro station



Museum of the Future



Dubai Police Agusta A-109K-2 in flight near Burj Khalifa



The Palm Jumeirah



divine personification of eternity. The project is a joint venture between Dubai-based real estate developer London Gate and Swiss luxury watch manufacturer Franck Muller.<sup>[237]</sup> The tower offers luxury apartments, including 1 to 4-bedroom units, as well as Sky Villas and Sky Mansions, with interiors inspired by Franck Muller's signature craftsmanship and elegance.<sup>[238]</sup>

## Dubai Marina

Dubai Marina is an artificial canal city, built along a 3-kilometre (2 mi) stretch of Persian Gulf shoreline. As of 2018, it had a population of 55,052.<sup>[239]</sup> When the entire development is complete, it will accommodate more than 120,000 people in residential towers and villas.<sup>[240]</sup> The 50 million square feet area of the Dubai Marina boasts a centrepiece that includes a 3.5-kilometer water canal which is the heart of the development and which provides dual access to the sea which makes Dubai Marina a foremost sailing destination.<sup>[241]</sup> It is located on Interchange 5 between Jebel Ali Port and the area which hosts Dubai Internet City, Dubai Media City, and the American University in Dubai. The first phase of this project has been completed. Dubai Marina was inspired by the Concord Pacific Place development along False Creek in Vancouver, BC, Canada.<sup>[242]</sup> There have been many instances of marine wildlife (especially whales and sharks) entering the marina because of its proximity to the open sea.<sup>[243]</sup>



Dubai Marina

## Address Beach Resort and Address Beach Residences

The structure is a set of two towers connected at the bottom and with a sky bridge at the top which connects the 63rd through to the 77th levels. The sky bridge houses luxury apartments on the world's highest occupiable sky bridge floor, at 294.36 metres. Known as Jumeirah Gate, it opened in December 2020 and is situated along the beach. The towers have the world's highest infinity pool in a building, on the roof, at a height of 293.906 metres.<sup>[244]</sup>

## Transportation

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Transport in Dubai is controlled by the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA), an agency of the government of Dubai, formed by a royal decree in 2005.<sup>[245]</sup> The public transport network has in the past faced congestion and reliability issues which a large investment programme has addressed, including over AED 70 billion of improvements planned for completion by 2020, when the population of the city is projected to exceed 3.5 million.<sup>[246]</sup> In 2009, according to Dubai Municipality statistics, there were an estimated 1,021,880 cars in Dubai.<sup>[247]</sup> In January 2010, the proportion of Dubai residents who use public transport stood at 6%.<sup>[248]</sup>

## Road



Tolerance Bridge of Business Bay

Five main routes – E 11 (Sheikh Zayed Road), E 311 (Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Road), E 44 (Dubai-Hatta Highway), E 77 (Dubai-Al Habab Road), and E 66 (Oud Metha Road, Dubai-Al Ain Road, or Tahnoun Bin Mohammad Al Nahyan Road)<sup>[249]</sup> – run through Dubai, connecting the city to other towns and emirates. Additionally, several important intra-city routes, such as D 89 (Al Maktoum Road/Airport Road), D 85 (Baniyas Road), D 75 (Sheikh Rashid Road), D 73 (Al Dhiyafa Road now named as 2 December street), D 94



E 11 Road

(Jumeirah Road), and D 92 (Al Khaleej/Al Wasl Road) connect the various localities in the city. The eastern and western sections of the city are connected by Al Maktoum Bridge, Al Garhoud Bridge, Al Shindagha Tunnel, Business Bay Crossing, and Floating Bridge.<sup>[250]</sup>

The public bus transport system in Dubai is run by the RTA. The bus system services 140 routes and transported over 109 million people in 2008. By the end of 2010, there will be 2,100 buses in service across the city.<sup>[251]</sup> In 2006, the transport authority announced the construction of 500 air-conditioned passenger bus shelters, and planned for 1,000 more across the emirates in a move to encourage the use of public buses.<sup>[252]</sup>



All taxi services are licensed by the RTA. Dubai licensed taxis are easily identifiable by their cream bodywork colour, with varied roof colours identifying the operator. Dubai Taxi Corporation, a division of the RTA, is the largest operator and has taxis with red roofs. There are five private operators: Metro Taxis (orange roofs); Network Taxis (yellow roofs); Cars Taxis (blue roofs); Arabia Taxis (green roofs); and City Taxis (purple roof). In addition, there is a Ladies and Families taxi service (pink roofs) with female drivers, which caters exclusively for women and children. More than 3,000 taxis are operating within the emirate, making an average of 192,000 trips daily, carrying about 385,000 people. In 2009, taxi trips exceeded 70 million trips, serving around 140.45 million passengers.<sup>[253][254][255]</sup>

## Air



Dubai International Airport is the busiest airport in the world by international passenger traffic.<sup>[256]</sup>

Dubai International Airport (IATA: DXB), the hub for the Emirates airline, serves the city of Dubai and other emirates in the country. The airport is the third-busiest airport in the world by passenger traffic and the world's busiest airport by international passenger traffic.<sup>[257]</sup> In addition to being an important passenger traffic hub, the airport is the sixth-busiest cargo airport in world, handling 2.37 million tons of cargo in 2014.<sup>[258]</sup> Emirates is the national airline of Dubai. As of 2018, it operated internationally, serving over 150 destinations in over 70 countries across six continents.<sup>[259]</sup>

The development of Al Maktoum International Airport (IATA: DWC) was announced in 2004. The first phase of the airport, featuring one A380 capable runway, 64 remote stands, one cargo terminal with an annual capacity for 250,000 tonnes of cargo, and a passenger terminal building designed to accommodate five million passengers per year, has been opened.<sup>[260]</sup> When completed, Dubai World Central-Al Maktoum International will be the largest airport in the world with five runways, four terminal buildings, and capacity for 160 million passengers and 12 million tons of cargo.<sup>[261][262]</sup>

## Rail



Dubai Metro is the first kind of rail transportation in the UAE, and is the Arabian Peninsula's first urban train network.<sup>[263]</sup>

Dubai Metro consists of two lines (Red line and Green line) which run through the financial and residential areas of the city. It was opened in September 2009.<sup>[265]</sup> UK-based international service company Serco is responsible for operating the metro. The Red Line is the major backbone, with 29 stations (4 underground, 24 elevated, and 1 at ground level) running from Rashidiya Station to UAE Xchange Station in Jebel Ali. The Green Line, running from the Etisalat Station to the Creek Station, has 20 stations (8 underground, 12 elevated). An extension to the Red Line connecting the EXPO 2020 site opened on June 1, 2021. A Blue



Dubai Tram is one of the first completely ground-level power supply-based tram networks in the world.<sup>[264]</sup>

and a Purple Line have also been planned. The Dubai Metro is the first urban train network in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>[263]</sup> The trains are fully automated and driverless.<sup>[266]</sup>

A monorail line connecting the Palm Jumeirah to the mainland opened on 30 April 2009.<sup>[267]</sup> It is the first monorail in the Middle East.<sup>[268]</sup> An extension to connect to the Red Line of the Dubai Metro is planned.<sup>[269]</sup>

A tramway located in Al Sufouh will run for 14.5 km (9.0 mi) along Al Sufouh Road from Dubai Marina to the Burj Al Arab and the Mall of the Emirates with two interchanges with Dubai Metro's Red Line. The first section, a 10.6 km (6.6 mi) long tram line which serves 11 stations, was opened in 2014.<sup>[270]</sup>

Dubai has announced it will complete a link of the UAE high-speed rail system which is planned to link with the whole GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council, also known as Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf), and then possibly Europe. The high-speed rail will support passengers and cargo.<sup>[271]</sup>

## Waterways

There are two major commercial ports in Dubai, Port Rashid and Port Jebel Ali. Port Jebel Ali is the world's largest human-made harbour, the biggest port in the Middle East,<sup>[272]</sup> and the 7th-busiest port in the world.<sup>[165]</sup> One of the more traditional methods of getting across Bur Dubai to Deira is by abras, small boats that ferry passengers across the Dubai Creek, between abra stations in

Bastakiya and Baniyas Road.<sup>[273]</sup> The Marine Transport Agency has also implemented the Dubai Water Bus System. Water bus is a fully air conditioned boat service across selected destinations across the creek. One can also avail oneself of the tourist water bus facility in Dubai. Latest addition to the water transport system is the Water Taxi.<sup>[274]</sup> The Water-Taxis can transport a maximum of 20 passengers at a time which provide a smooth journey along Al Mamzar and Dubai Marina via Dubai Creek. It has 40 pick-up points all over Dubai.<sup>[275]</sup>



*Abras and dhows are traditional modes of waterway transport.*

Dubai is increasingly activating its logistics and ports in order to participate in trade between Europe and China or Africa in addition to oil transport. For this purpose, ports such as Port of Jebel Ali or Mina Rashid are rapidly expanded and investments are made in their technology. The country is historically and currently part of the Maritime Silk Road that runs from the Chinese coast to the south via the southern tip of India to Mombasa, from there through the Red Sea via the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean, there to the Upper Adriatic region to the northern Italian hub of Trieste with its rail connections to Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the North Sea.<sup>[276][277][278]</sup>

## Culture



Museum of the Future and interior, showing the annual Dubai Future Forum (2024)

The UAE's culture mainly reflects traditional Arab culture. The influence of Arab and Islamic culture on its architecture, music, attire, cuisine, and lifestyle is very prominent as well. Five times every day, Muslims are called to prayer from the minarets of mosques that are scattered around the country. Major holidays in Dubai include Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, and National Day (2 December), which marks the formation of the United Arab Emirates.<sup>[279]</sup>

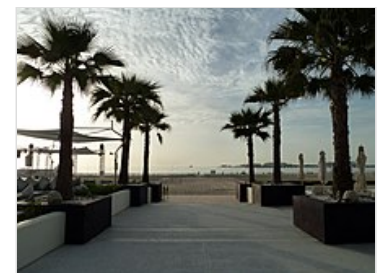
The city's cultural imprint as a small, ethnically homogeneous pearling community was changed with the arrival of other ethnic groups and nationals—first by the Iranians in the early 1900s, and later by Indians and Pakistanis in the 1960s. In 2005, 84% of the population of metropolitan Dubai was foreign-born, about half of them from India.<sup>[139]</sup>

From 2006 to 2022, the weekend had been Friday and Saturday, as a compromise between Friday's holiness to Muslims and the Western

weekend of Saturday and Sunday.<sup>[280]</sup> Prior to 2006, the weekend was Thursday-Friday. On 1 January 2022, Dubai moved to a four-and-a-half day working week, with the weekend comprising Friday afternoon, Saturday, and Sunday.<sup>[281]</sup>

Because of the touristic approach of many Dubaites in the entrepreneurial sector and the high standard of living, Dubai's culture has gradually evolved towards one of luxury, opulence, and lavishness with a high regard for leisure-related extravagance.<sup>[282][283][284]</sup> Dubai is known for its nightlife. Clubs and bars are found mostly in hotels because of liquor laws. *The New York Times* described Dubai as "the kind of city where you might run into Michael Jordan at the Buddha Bar or stumble across Naomi Campbell celebrating her birthday with a multiday bash".<sup>[285]</sup>

Annual entertainment events such as the Dubai Shopping Festival<sup>[286]</sup> (DSF) and Dubai Summer Surprises (DSS) attract over 4 million visitors from across the region and generate revenues in excess of \$2.7 billion.<sup>[287][288]</sup> The International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA), the world's leading events trade association, has crowned Dubai as *IFEA World Festival and Event City, 2012* in the cities category with a population of more than one million.<sup>[289][290]</sup>



Meydan Beach Club, Jumeirah

Large shopping malls in the city, such as Deira City Centre, Mirdiff City Centre, BurJuman, Mall of the Emirates, Dubai Mall (the world's second largest), Dubai Marina Mall, Dubai Hills Mall, Dragon Mart, Dubai Festival City Mall, and Ibn Battuta Mall as well as traditional Dubai Gold Souk, Al Souk Al Kabir (known as Meena Bazaar), and other *souks* attract shoppers from the region.<sup>[291]</sup>

## Cuisine

Arabic cuisine is very popular and is available everywhere in the city, from the small *shawarma* diners in Deira and Al Karama to the restaurants in Dubai's hotels. Fast food, South Asian, and Chinese cuisines are also very popular and are widely available. The sale and consumption of pork is regulated and is legally permitted to be sold only to non-Muslims, in designated areas of supermarkets and airports.<sup>[292]</sup> Similarly, the sale of alcoholic beverages is also regulated. A liquor permit is required to purchase alcohol; however, alcohol is available in bars and restaurants within hotels.<sup>[293]</sup> *Shisha* and *qahwa* boutiques are also popular in Dubai. Biryani is also a popular cuisine across Dubai with it being the most popular among the Indians and Pakistanis present in Dubai.<sup>[294]</sup>



Traditional Middle Eastern spices at the Dubai Spice Souk in Deira, Old Dubai

The inaugural Dubai Food Festival was held between 21 February to 15 March 2014.<sup>[295]</sup>

According to Vision magazine, the event was aimed at enhancing and celebrating Dubai's position as the gastronomic capital of the region. The festival was designed to showcase the variety of flavours and cuisines on offer in Dubai, featuring the cuisines of over 200 nationalities at the festival.<sup>[296]</sup> The next food festival was held between 23 February 2017 to 11 March 2017.<sup>[297]</sup>

## Entertainment



Dubai Opera

Dubai Opera opened its door on 31 August 2016 in Downtown Dubai with a performance by Plácido Domingo. The venue is a 2000-seat, multifunctional performing arts centre which is able to host not only theatrical shows, concerts, and operas, but also weddings, gala dinners, banquets, and conferences. Arabic movies are popular in Dubai and the UAE. Since 2004, the city has hosted the annual Dubai International Film Festival which serves as a showcase for Arab and Middle Eastern film making talent.<sup>[298]</sup> The Dubai Desert Rock Festival was also another major festival consisting of heavy metal and rock artists but is no longer held in Dubai.

One of the lesser-known sides of Dubai is the importance of its young contemporary art gallery scene. Since 2008, the leading contemporary art galleries such as Carbon 12 Dubai,<sup>[299]</sup> Green Art, gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, and The Third Line have brought the city onto the international art map. Art Dubai, the growing and reputable art fair of the region is as well a major contributor of the contemporary art scene's development.<sup>[300]</sup> The Theatre of Digital Art Dubai (ToDA) opened in 2020 and presents immersive digital art, including contemporary work.<sup>[301]</sup>

## Media

Many international news agencies such as Reuters, APTN, Bloomberg L.P., and Middle East Broadcasting centre (MBC) operate in Dubai Media City and Dubai Internet City. Additionally, several local network television channels such as Dubai One (formerly Channel 33) and Dubai TV (EDTV) provide programming in English and Arabic respectively. Dubai is also the headquarters for several print media outlets. *Dar Al Khaleej*, *Al Bayan*, and *Al Ittihad* are the city's largest circulating Arabic language newspapers,<sup>[302]</sup> while *Gulf News*, *Khaleej Times*, *Khaleej Mag*, and *7days* are the largest circulating English newspapers.<sup>[303]</sup>

Etisalat, the government-owned telecommunications provider, held a virtual monopoly over telecommunication services in Dubai prior to the establishment of other, smaller telecommunications companies such as Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (EITC—better known as Du) in 2006. Internet was introduced into the UAE (and therefore Dubai) in 1995. The network has an Internet bandwidth of 7.5 Gbit/s with capacity of 49 STM1 links.<sup>[304]</sup> Dubai houses two of four Domain Name System (DNS) data centres in the country (DXBNIC1, DXBNIC2).<sup>[305]</sup> Censorship is common in Dubai and used by the government to control content that it believes violates the cultural and political sensitivities of Emirates.<sup>[306]</sup> Homosexuality, drugs, and the theory of evolution are generally considered taboo.<sup>[293][307]</sup>



Internet content is regulated in Dubai. Etisalat uses a proxy server to filter Internet content that the government deems to be inconsistent with the values of the country, such as sites that provide information on how to bypass the proxy; sites pertaining to dating, gay and lesbian networks, and pornography; and previously, sites originating from Israel.<sup>[308]</sup> Emirates Media and Internet (a division of Etisalat) notes that as of 2002, 76% of Internet users are male. About 60% of Internet users were Asian, while 25% of users were Arab. Dubai enacted an Electronic Transactions and Commerce Law in 2002 which deals with digital signatures and electronic registers. It prohibits Internet Service Providers (ISPs) from disclosing information gathered in providing services.<sup>[309]</sup> The penal code contains official provisions that prohibit digital access to pornography; however, it does not address cyber crime or data protection.<sup>[310]</sup> In 2019 the Italian artist Princess Bee produced "Hi Dubai", the first cross media format revealing the "soul of the city" through the life and work experience of 25 Emirati and expat women. The series also promoted the Emirate's lifestyle and main events to attract young people to visit and to live in Dubai. "Hi Dubai" was on air on the national channel Dubai One TV, in prime time, after the National News during the U.A.E. National Day's week; then distributed online on Dubai Post and in-flight on ICE in all Emirates Airlines flights.<sup>[311]</sup>



Etisalat's headquarters in Dubai

## Sports

Football and cricket are the most popular sports in Dubai. Headquarters of International Cricket Council is in Dubai. Three football teams (Al Wasl FC, Shabab Al-Ahli Dubai FC, and Al Nasr SC) represent Dubai in UAE Pro-League.<sup>[293]</sup> Al-Wasl have the second-most championships in the UAE League, after Al Ain. Dubai also hosts both the annual Dubai Tennis Championships and The Legends Rock Dubai tennis tournaments, as well as the Dubai Desert Classic golf tournament and the DP World Tour Championship, all of which attract sports stars from around the world. The Dubai World Cup, a thoroughbred horse race, is held annually at the Meydan Racecourse. The city's top basketball team has traditionally been Shabab Al Ahli Basket. Dubai also hosts the traditional rugby union tournament Dubai Sevens, part of the Sevens World Series Event pictures of Rugby 7 Dubai 2015. In 2009, Dubai hosted the 2009 Rugby World Cup Sevens. Auto racing is also a big sport in Dubai; the Dubai Autodrome is home to many auto racing events throughout the year. Other sporting event in Dubai is the Dubai Run, which is part of the Dubai Fitness Challenge, the world's largest free fun run and one of the main highlights of the Dubai Fitness Challenge Since 2017.<sup>[312]</sup> It also features a state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor Kartdrome (<http://www.dubaiautodrome.com/kartdrome-main/racing/>), popular among racing enthusiasts and recreational riders. The Indian Premier League cricket competition was held in UAE in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On June 12, Tommy Fleetwood, 7-time DP-world Tour winner was declared World Global Ambassador.<sup>[313]</sup>



Dubai Tennis Stadium

## Dress code

The Emirati attire is typical of several countries in the Arabian Peninsula. Women usually wear the "abaya", a long black robe with a hijab (the head-scarf which covers the neck and part of the head-all of the hair and ears). Some women may add a niqab which cover the mouth and nose and only leaves the eyes exposed. Men wear the "kandurah" also referred to as "dishdasha" or even "thawb" (long white robe) and the headscarf (ghotrah). The UAE traditional ghutrah is white and is held in place by an accessory called "egal", which resembles a black cord. The younger Emiratis prefer to wear red and white ghutrah and tie it around their head like a turban.<sup>[314]</sup>



Men wearing the kandurah and the traditional ghotrah, held in place by an egal

The above dress code is never compulsory and many people wear western or other eastern clothing without any problems, but prohibitions on wearing "indecent clothing" or revealing too much skin are aspects of the UAE to which Dubai's visitors are expected to conform, and are encoded in Dubai's criminal law.<sup>[315]</sup> The UAE has enforced decency regulations in most public places, aside from waterparks, beaches, clubs, and bars.<sup>[316]</sup>

## Education

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The school system in Dubai follows that of the United Arab Emirates. As of 2009, there are 79 public schools run by the Ministry of Education that serve Emiratis and expatriate Arab people as well as 207 private schools.<sup>[317]</sup> The medium of instruction in public schools is Arabic with emphasis on English as a second language, while most of the private schools use English as their medium of instruction. Currently only the Swiss International Scientific School in Dubai claims to offer parallel streams in different languages – bilingual English/French or English/German.<sup>[318]</sup> Most private schools cater to one or more expatriate communities.<sup>[319]</sup>



University of Wollongong in Dubai

Some 36 schools offer international education using one or more of the four International Baccalaureate Programmes for students aged 3–19.<sup>[320]</sup> Currently, 15 schools<sup>[321]</sup> have introduced the IB Career-related Programme that can be combined with a vocational qualification such as a BTEC.<sup>[322]</sup>

While there are more UK-curriculum-based schools in Dubai than any other, more students attend an Indian-curriculum school, which tend to be considerably larger and cost less to attend. There are 34 Indian-curriculum schools in the emirate,<sup>[323]</sup> most of which offer the CBSE, and just a handful the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) Indian syllabus. Examples of Indian-curriculum schools include IHS, DPS, and DMHS. There are a small number of Pakistani schools offering the FBISE curriculum for expatriate children in Dubai.

A total of 18 schools offer British primary education up to the age of 11.<sup>[324]</sup> There are 64 schools that offer a variation of a UK curriculum style secondary education,<sup>[325]</sup> either a pure GCSE and A-Level offering, or increasingly I/GCSE up to 16, and then the IB Diploma post-16. Currently, no school in the UAE offers the choice of IB or A-Level at 16, but several schools have said they will do so in the future. British style eleven-to-eighteen secondary schools offering General Certificate of Secondary Education and A-Levels include Dubai College, Dubai British School, and English Language School Pvt. Some schools, such as The American School of Dubai, also offer the curriculum of the United States.<sup>[326]</sup>

Dubai has a very active education regulator, the KHDA, which is best known for its school ratings, but actually has a wide mandate<sup>[327]</sup> when it comes to school improvement in the emirate. Its inspections truly matter, and there is no doubt that school quality has improved as a result of its implementation. A total of 17 schools are currently rated Outstanding (2020), and a further 40 rated Very Good. Parents in general rate schools highly.<sup>[328]</sup>

The top 10 largest universities by student numbers in Dubai according to the KHDA (2024)<sup>[329]</sup> are Middlesex University Dubai, Heriot-Watt University Dubai, University of Wollongong in Dubai, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Dubai, American University in Dubai, S P Jain School of Global Management, Rochester Institute of Technology of Dubai, Amity University Dubai, University of Birmingham Dubai, and Birla Institute of Technology and Science Pilani Dubai. They offer courses in all major subjects with the most popular subject areas being Business, followed by Information Technology, then Engineering.<sup>[329]</sup> Most Universities in Dubai are located in the two Educational Zones (Knowledge Village or Academic City). In 2013, Synergy University Dubai Campus<sup>[330]</sup> opened its campus in Jumeirah Lakes Towers being a first University in Dubai to be located outside of Educational Zones (Knowledge Village or Academic City).<sup>[331]</sup>

Only 4 Dubai Universities are present in the QS World University Rankings 2024/2025.<sup>[332]</sup> To allow the assessment of more UAE Universities, the Ministry of Education launched The National Higher Education Institutions Classification Framework<sup>[333]</sup> which classifies UAE Universities based on their research and teaching. Of the top 10 largest Dubai universities University of Wollongong in Dubai, American University in Dubai, and Rochester Institute of Technology of Dubai, were all classified as "Very Good" within The National Higher Education Institutions Classification Framework.<sup>[333]</sup>

## Healthcare

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Healthcare in Dubai can be divided into two different sectors: public and private. Each Emirate is able to dictate healthcare standards according to their internal laws, although the standards and regulations rarely have extreme differences. Public hospitals in Dubai were first built in the late 1950s and continued to grow with public health initiatives. There are now 28 hospitals in Dubai, 6 public and 22 private, with 3 more major hospitals scheduled to be built by 2025.<sup>[334]</sup>

By the end of 2012, there were also a total of 1,348 medical clinics, 97% of which are operated privately.<sup>[335]</sup> In 2015, Dubai phased in mandatory health insurance for all inhabitants, thereby leading to increased demand for medical services.<sup>[336]</sup>

Dubai Hospital is a public hospital in Dubai and is part of Dubai Department of Health and Medical Services. Although the decision to construct Dubai Hospital was made in 1977, it did not begin admitting patients until March, 1983.<sup>[337]</sup> The hospital consists of 14 stories, with the lower two for Accident & Emergency and outpatients, and the upper ten for wards.



The Dubai Hospital

## Notable people

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## Twin towns – sister cities

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Dubai is twinned with:<sup>[338]</sup>

- |                                                        |                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| ▪ <u>Amman</u> , Jordan                                | ▪ <u>Gold Coast</u> , Australia (2001)                   |
| ▪ <u>Beirut</u> , Lebanon                              | ▪ <u>Guangzhou</u> , China <sup>[341]</sup>              |
| ▪ <u>Busan</u> , South Korea (2006)                    | ▪ <u>Istanbul</u> , Turkey (1997)                        |
| ▪ <u>Cape Town</u> , South Africa                      | ▪ <u>Kuala Lumpur</u> , Malaysia (2010) <sup>[342]</sup> |
| ▪ <u>Casablanca</u> , Morocco                          | ▪ <u>Moscow</u> , Russia <sup>[343]</sup>                |
| ▪ <u>Kish Island</u> , Iran                            | ▪ <u>Mumbai</u> , India                                  |
| ▪ <u>Damascus</u> , Syria                              | ▪ <u>Osaka Prefecture</u> , Japan (2002)                 |
| ▪ <u>Dundee</u> , Scotland, UK (2004) <sup>[339]</sup> | ▪ <u>Pyongyang</u> , North Korea <sup>[344]</sup>        |
| ▪ <u>Detroit</u> , USA (2003)                          | ▪ <u>San Juan</u> , Puerto Rico                          |
| ▪ <u>Frankfurt</u> , Germany (2005)                    | ▪ <u>San Salvador</u> , El Salvador                      |
| ▪ <u>Gaza City</u> , Palestine <sup>[340]</sup>        | ▪ <u>Shanghai</u> , China                                |

## See also

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*Cities portal*



*United Arab Emirates portal*

- Archaeology of the United Arab Emirates
- Al Sufouh Archaeological Site
- Dubai Desert Conservation Reserve
- List of buildings in Dubai
- Outline of Dubai
- Sanitation in Dubai
- Sustainability in Dubai

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## Notes

- a. (/ˈduːˈbaɪ/, doo-BYE; Arabic: دبي, romanized: *Dubayy*, IPA: [d̪ʊˈbajj], Gulf Arabic pronunciation: [d̪əˈbæj])

## Further reading

- Syed Ali. *Dubai: Gilded Cage* (Yale University Press; 2010) 240 pages. Focuses on the Arab emirate's treatment of foreign workers.
- Heiko Schmid: *Economy of Fascination: Dubai and Chicago as Themed Urban Landscapes*, Berlin, Stuttgart, 2009, ISBN 978-3-443-37014-5.
- John M. Smith: *Dubai The Maktoum Story*, Norderstedt, 2007, ISBN 3-8334-4660-9.

## External links

- دبي.إمارات (<http://xn--ngbn6f.xn--mgbam7a8h/en/Pages/default.aspx>) (Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20201129071827/http://xn--ngbn6f.xn--mgbam7a8h/en/Pages/default.aspx>) 29 November 2020 at the Wayback Machine) – official government portal
- www.dm.gov.ae (<https://www.dm.gov.ae/>) – Dubai Municipality website

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