

Title:

The Life Of Luxury In Dubai

Word Count:

574

Summary:

The United Arab Emirates are a prime tourist destination because they stand out as a remarkable example of how petrodollars can be used to improve the lives of Arabs. In contrast to the poverty for which so much of Arabia is renowned, Dubai features skyscrapers and futuristic amusement parks. Modern Dubai is the product of 20 years of intensive planned development; prior to this, it was a small fishing port of little importance.

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Article Body:

The United Arab Emirates are a prime tourist destination because they stand out as a remarkable example of how petrodollars can be used to improve the lives of Arabs. In contrast to the poverty for which so much of Arabia is renowned, Dubai features skyscrapers and futuristic amusement parks. Modern Dubai is the product of 20 years of intensive planned development; prior to this, it was a small fishing port of little importance.

The United Arab Emirates, or UAE, is 32,000 square mile political union of seven sheikhdoms, formed when the British left the Gulf region in 1971. The total area of Dubai is approximately 1000 square miles, and it is the second largest emirate in the UAE, after Abu Dhabi. In addition to a federal president and prime minister, each emirate has a separate ruler who oversees the local government. Dubai, a small fishing settlement, was taken over around 1830 by a group of Bani Yas tribesmen from the Liwa oasis, led by the Maktoum family which still rules the tiny nation today. For most of its history, main economic activities were agriculture, fishing and pearl production.

The ruling clan of Dubai was exceptionally progressive, and did their best to make their tiny nation attractive to traders from nations including India and Persia. These businessmen settled in the growing city of Dubai and made it a leading entry port for trade goods. In 1971, the independent emirate joined with

the other small sheikhdoms of Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Umm Al Quwain, Fujairah and, in 1972, Ras Al Khaimah to create the federation of United Arab Emirates.

The discovery of oil in 1966 transformed the region by providing funds for the development of a modern, western infrastructure. The Maktoum family, unlike many middle eastern rulers who hoard oil wealth for their private use alone, ensured that the oil revenue was deployed in national development. Much of the modernization is due to the efforts of Sheikh Rasid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who ruled from 1958 to 1990.

Well informed of the risks of oil-dependency, Sheikh Rashid actively promoted industrial ventures to build his nation's infrastructure. The Aluminium and Cement factory are the result of this endeavour. He also established the Jebel Ali Free Trade Zone, the fifth largest free trade zone in the world. Within 10 years of its inception, it attracted over 900 international companies that include global giants such as General Motors, AEG, Aiwa, BP, Ciba, Geigy, Daewoo and Heinz.

Dubai is appealing to tourists as well as business executives. Like the rest of the U.A.E., it has also been actively promoting itself as a vacation destination. In June 1996 World Travel prizes ceremony held in Las Vegas, USA, it won the gold prize for the best destination in the Middle East.

Dubai features the annual Dubai Shopping Festival, the Dubai World Trade Center which hosts innumerable international events and fairs, the Dubai Air Show, the Dubai Summer Surprises, the world's tallest skyscraper, an undersea hotel and even indoor alpine skiing at the Ski Dubai Dome.

The Dubai International Airport is reputed to be the world's second best transit airport. It currently handles 7.3 million passengers per year with a growth rate of 12% that is double that of any other airport in the world. The emirates, which will begin receiving Airbus A380 superjumbos starting April 2007, will hire 8,000 new staff members as cabin crew for its rapidly expanding air fleet. It is investing \$20 million to expand its crew training facility at the Emirates Training Center in Garhoud.