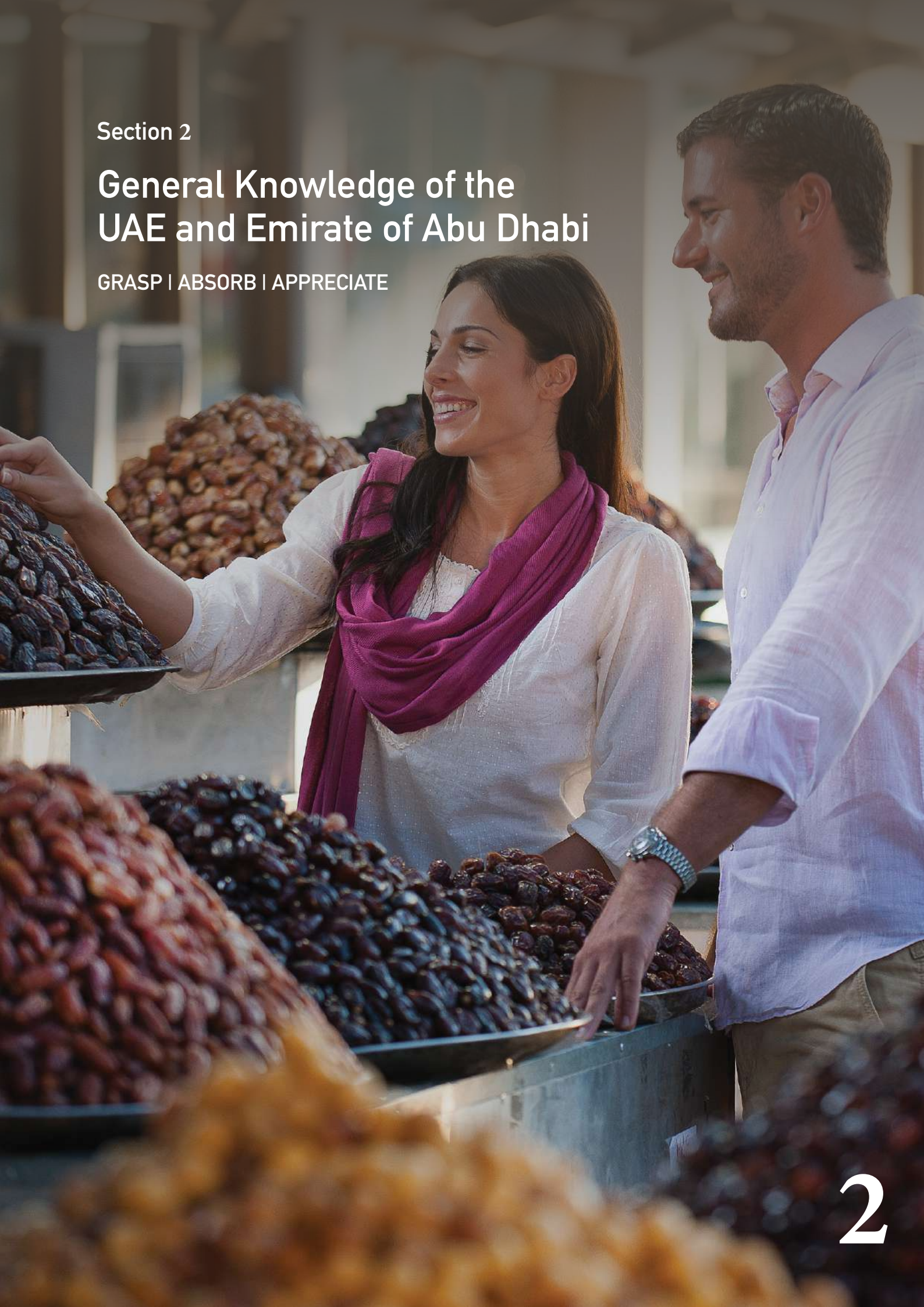


Section 2

# General Knowledge of the UAE and Emirate of Abu Dhabi

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## Section 2: General Knowledge of the UAE and Emirate of Abu Dhabi

This section begins to introduce you to some general knowledge about the United Arab Emirates as a whole and Abu Dhabi in particular. Some of the themes in this section will be expanded upon as you work through the remaining sections of module one enabling you to gather facts and stories to help you to become a knowledgeable and informative Abu Dhabi tourist guide. Through your work on this section you will be gaining the following Abu Dhabi knowledge:

- The Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the UAE
- The history and origin of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi
- Arabic words and phrases

You will also be able to evidence elements of the following learning outcomes:

- LO3 Give an overview of the history of the UAE and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, including the late Sheikh Zayed and his legacy
- LO6 Name and locate and give basic information about the main culture and heritage sites and attractions in Abu Dhabi
- LO8 Name and give basic information on the main regular festivals and events

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# 1.1 The United Arab Emirates

## a) Overview

The United Arab Emirates sits on the Arabian Peninsula and is bordered by Saudi Arabia (south and west) and the Sultanate of Oman (southeast).

In the UAE, one monarch, usually a Sheikh, rules as part of hereditary absolute monarchs.

The UAE is governed by a Federal Supreme Council and is made up of seven Emirates of:

- Abu Dhabi
- Dubai
- Ajman
- Fujairah
- Sharjah
- Ras al-Khaimah
- Umm al-Qaiwain

The following map gives more information on each of the Emirates.



### Abu Dhabi

The largest of the Emirates, Abu Dhabi is the country's capital and the seat of federal government. Some of the world's largest producers of oil, the most luxurious hotels and some of the greatest sporting facilities in the world can be found in Abu Dhabi.

### Dubai

The second largest of the Emirates, Dubai is considered to be the country's commercial capital. Many large companies have set up their regional headquarters in Dubai over the years.

## Ajman

Ajman is the smallest of the seven Emirates. It has a defined coastal destination and healthy ecosystem, with a new seaside community called Al Zorah in the planning stages. Ajman is not as well known as Abu Dhabi or Dubai so offers a value-for-money option for visitors. Ajman hosts one of the few remaining dhow-building yards in the region.

## Fujairah

Separated from the rest of the Emirates by the Hajar Mountains, there are a small number of historic sites to see in Fujairah. It is best known, however, for its beautiful beaches, and locals tend to escape for weekend breaks to the beaches of Fujairah.

## Sharjah

Sharjah is known as the country's Islamic cultural capital where there are several museums and heritage sites.

## Ras al Khaimah

You will see on the map on page 5, that Ras al Khaimah (also known as 'RAK') is the most northern Emirate in the UAE. Those with a love of the outdoors will like Ras al Khaimah, which offers scenery, from sandy beaches, hot springs to rugged mountains.

## Umm al-Qaiwain

For those interested in nature and culture, Umm al-Qaiwain has a beautiful coastline, mountains, archaeological sites and agricultural land.

## b) Quick UAE facts

- The combined population of all seven Emirates is 9.27 million (2016)
- The UAE has a mainland surface area of 77,700 square kilometres <sup>1</sup>
- The official language is Arabic
- Islam is the main religion
- The average life expectancy for the population generally in the UAE is 75.9 years for males and 79.5 years females <sup>2</sup>
- The currency of the United Arab Emirates is the UAE Dirham (abbreviated as AED)

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<sup>1</sup> Source: [http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries\\_regions/ARE/](http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/ARE/)

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://scad.ae/en/pages/statistics.aspx?topicid=25>

### c) Key events in the history of the UAE

Timeline of events:

**1820**

Britain and local rulers sign a treaty to combat piracy along the Gulf coast. From this, and later agreements, the area becomes known as the Trucial Coast <sup>3</sup>

**1952**

The seven Emirates form a Trucial Council

**1968**

Bahrain and Qatar join the Trucial States.

**1972**

Ras al-Khaimah joins the Federation. The FNC (Federal National Council) is created. The FNC is a consultative body which has 40 members appointed by the seven rulers

**1986**

Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan is re-elected for a fourth term as UAE President <sup>4</sup>

**2007**

UAE unveils a national development strategy aimed at making it a world leader

**1950s**

Oil is discovered

**1962**

Abu Dhabi starts exporting oil

**1971**

The UAE is formed after independence from Britain

**1981**

UAE is a founder member of the Gulf Cooperation Council whose first summit is held in Abu Dhabi

**2006**

A small number of carefully selected voters choose half of the members of the FNC during the first-ever national elections

See Section 3: History and formation of the UAE for a more detailed history of the region and Section 4: Abu Dhabi Rulers and Government.

<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://emiratesnationalday.weebly.com/information-about-uae.html>

<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://www.timetoast.com/timelines/united-arab-emirates-ddd2cd1b-a3be-4208-8e3b-4f97175b31b7>

#### d) UAE flag

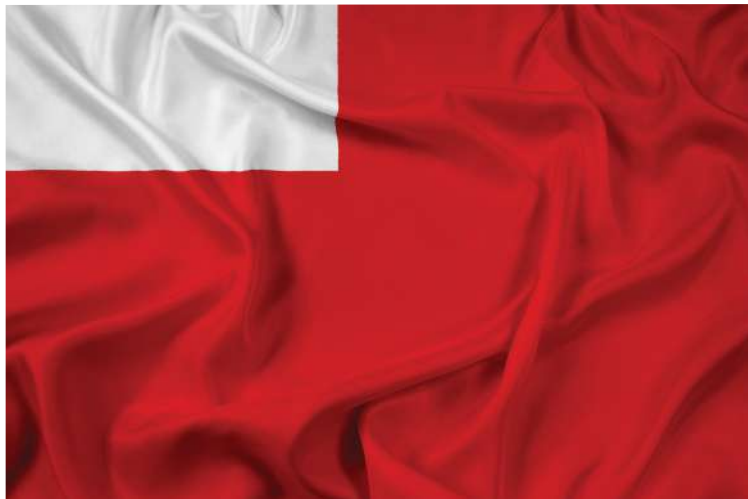
The flag of the United Arab Emirates contains the pan-Arab colours of red, green, white and black, which represent Arabian unity. It was introduced on December 2, 1971 when the UAE was established. The designer of the flag is Abdullah Mohammad Al Maainah.<sup>5</sup>

The design features three horizontal colours of green, white and black with a red vertical border along the left-hand side. It is felt that each colour in the flag has a meaning: red represents bravery; green is the country's prosperity; white symbolises peace and black represents the defeat of enemies.



Six of the seven Emirates have their own flag, apart from Fujairah, which also uses the UAE flag as its state flag.

Abu Dhabi's flag is mainly plain red. It has a small white section in the top left corner. This white section is known as a canton. This flag is no longer used officially in government buildings or celebrations.



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<sup>5</sup> Source: <https://www.thenational.ae/uae/teen-who-designed-uae-s-national-flag-was-in-a-flutter-1.585290>

## e) Money in the UAE

The currency used in all seven UAE Emirates is the Arab Emirate Dirham (AED), more commonly known as the Dirham. Sometimes, the Dirham is abbreviated to DH or Dhs. One Dirham, which is minted in coins, consists of 100 fils.<sup>6</sup>

- It is thought that the word 'dirham' comes from the Greek word 'Drachmae'
- The UAE Dirham replaced the Bahraini Dinar in Abu Dhabi and the Qatari Riyal in Dubai. It was then put into circulation on the 19th May 1973
- The UAE Dirham has no official symbol like the euro €, the US Dollar (\$) or the UK Pound (£)
- Dirham bank notes are available in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000. The value of the note is indicated on one side of the note only in both Arabic and English
- The Dirham is issued by the Central Bank of the UAE
- The AED 50 note has Al Jahili fort on the rear, a landmark of the Emirate



As well as carrying cash, visitors can use a variety of credit and debit cards throughout the Emirate to pay for goods and services. Digital wallets such as Apple Pay, Google Wallet, Samsung Pay and others are available to use in UAE where a visitor can pay for items using smartphones. Visitors are advised to use their cards instead of carrying a large amount of cash on their person. Visitors can exchange travellers' cheques and foreign currency in the airport, hotels, banks and currency exchange bureaux. Visitors are advised to shop around for the best rates.

Not many places in the UAE will accept a personal cheque from a foreign bank so it is advisable for visitors to use an alternative form of payment.

Stores in large shopping malls will take cash and cards, but when visitors are shopping at smaller souks and markets, the money they use should be in lower denomination notes and coins so that shop staff can provide change easily.

ATMs/cash machines are widely available throughout Abu Dhabi. Most major cards are accepted. Visitors should check their own bank's charges on withdrawing money as well as the individual bank's rates in Abu Dhabi.

### Banks

If visitors need to visit a bank during their stay, they will find a network of local and international banks in and around Abu Dhabi. The UAE Central Bank closely controls these banks and visitors can make transfers easily as the Dirham is freely convertible with no exchange restrictions.

Visitors will find most banks open from 08.00am - 1.00pm from Saturday to Thursday although smaller mall-based branches are open in the evenings too.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: <http://www.xe.com/currency/aed-emirati-dirham>



## **f) Taxes, duties, and tipping**

In Abu Dhabi, most restaurants, hotels, apartments and resorts, etc may charge the following taxes to visitors. Other Emirates apply differing rates.

- 10% service charge
- Municipality fees
- 6% tourism fee

Since May 2016, hotels in Abu Dhabi charge an additional municipality fee of AED 15 per room per night. <sup>7</sup>

Visitors to Abu Dhabi are allowed to carry personal luggage and gifts valued up to AED 3,000, or its corresponding value in foreign currency, without having to pay any customs duties. Visitors who carry more than AED 40,000 in cash, travellers' cheques or the equivalent in foreign currency must declare to the customs officers at the airport, the amount together with what it is intended to be used for.

In line with the objectives of the GCC Economic Agreement of 2001, which seeks to reach advanced stages of economic integration, and develop similar economic and financial legislation and legal foundations amongst Member States, and with a desire to promote the GCC economy and proceed with the measures that have been taken to establish economic unity amongst Member States; with respect to the common imposition by the GCC States of VAT at a rate of 5%.

The Federal Tax Authority (FTA) introduced Valued Added Tax (VAT) in the UAE in 2018 which reaffirmed that any person conducting business in any economic or commercial sector in the UAE must register for VAT if their taxable supplies exceeded AED 375,000 annually in value. Taxable Supplies are identified as all supplies of goods and services made by a person that are not explicitly exempt in the law, in addition to imported goods and services.

For further information visit

<https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/finance-and-investment/taxation/valueaddedtaxvat>

## **g) UAE strategies towards non-oil economy growth**

Since oil was discovered in the UAE, the focus has been on drilling for, producing and exporting oil which has helped the economy. Recently, there has been a move to consider how the UAE could maintain its economy without relying on oil quite as much. Vision 2021 is a strategy for economic growth, without reliance on the production or export of oil, for all seven Emirates.

## **h) UAE Vision 2021**

Launched in 2010, Vision 2021 is a plan to make the UAE one of the best countries in the world.

The federal government has set out six national priorities which represent the key focus sectors of government action in the coming years. They are:

1. A cohesive society and preserved identity
2. Safe public and fair judiciary
3. A competitive knowledge economy
4. A first-rate education system
5. World-class healthcare
6. Sustainable environment and infrastructure

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<sup>7</sup> Source: <https://government.ae/en/information-and-services/visiting-and-exploring-the-uae/where-to-stay-in-the-uae/taxes-in-tourist-facilities>

## i) Arabic phrases

Here are some popular Arabic words and phrases which you will have the opportunity to practise during your tourist guide practical training.

English	The English Pronunciation	Arabic
Hello (formal)	<i>Assalamu Alaykom</i>	السلام عليكم
Hi (informal)	<i>Marhaba</i>	مرحبا
Welcome	<i>Ahlan wa sahlán</i>	أهلا وسهلا
How are you?	<i>Kayfa halok?</i>	كيف حالك؟
How is your family?	<i>Kayfa halu a-elatak?</i>	كيف حال عائلتك؟
I'm fine, thank you	<i>Ana bekhayr shoukran</i>	أنا بخير، شكرا
Do you speak English?	<i>Hal tatakallam al-ingleezeyyah?</i>	هل تتكلم الانجليزية؟
I understand	<i>Ana afham</i>	أنا أفهم
I don't understand	<i>Ana la afham</i>	أنا لا أفهم
Do you understand?	<i>Hal tafham?</i>	هل تفهم؟
I know	<i>Ana a'aref</i>	أنا أعرف
I don't know	<i>Ana la a'aref</i>	أنا لا أعرف
Do you know?	<i>Hal ta'aref?</i>	هل تعرف؟
I want	<i>Ana oreed</i>	أنا أريد
I don't want	<i>Ana la oreed</i>	أنا لا أريد
Do you want?	<i>Hal toreed?</i>	هل تريد؟
My name is ...	<i>Esmee ...</i>	اسمي.....
What is your name?	<i>Ma howa esmok?</i>	ما هو اسمك؟
Where are you from?	<i>Min ayna ant?</i>	من أين أنت؟
Where is....?	<i>Ayna yakoon ...?</i>	أين يكون...؟
Good morning	<i>Sabah al-khayr</i>	صباح الخير
Good evening	<i>Masa al-khayr</i>	مساء الخير
Goodnight	<i>Tosbeh ala khayr</i>	تصبح على خير
See you	<i>Elaa al-leqa-a</i>	إلى اللقاء
Good-bye	<i>Ma assalama</i>	مع السلامة
Excuse me	<i>Law samahat</i>	لو سمحت
I beg your pardon	<i>Afwan</i>	عفوا
Nice to meet you	<i>Sorerto beleqa-ek</i>	سررت بلقائك
Happy birthday	<i>Eid meelad sa'eed</i>	عيد ميلاد سعيد
Congratulations	<i>Mabrook</i>	مبروك
With pleasure	<i>Bikol sorrer</i>	بكل سرور
Thank you	<i>Shokran</i>	شكرا
Forgive me	<i>Samehnee</i>	سامحني
Thanks for coming	<i>Shoukran liquodoomik</i>	شكرا لقدومك
Thank you for your concern	<i>Ashkouroka ala ihtimamika</i>	شكرا لاهتمامك
Be patient	<i>Essbur</i>	اصبر
Have a good trip	<i>Rehlah sa'eeda</i>	رحلة سعيدة
Thanks for your present	<i>Shoukran ala hydiyyatika</i>	شكرا على هديتك
You are a kind person	<i>Innaka shakhson lateef</i>	إنك شخص لطيف
When can we meet?	<i>Mata naltaqee?</i>	متى نلتقي؟
Sorry I am late	<i>Aatathir laqad ta-akhart</i>	أعتذر لقد تأخرت
See you later	<i>Araka laheqan</i>	أراك لاحقا
See you soon	<i>Araka qareeban</i>	أراك قريبا

English	The English Pronunciation	Arabic
See you tomorrow	<i>Araka ghadan</i>	أراك غدا
Day	<i>Yauom</i>	يوم
Today	<i>Alyauom</i>	اليوم
Tomorrow	<i>Ghadan/bookra</i>	غدا/بكرة
Yesterday	<i>Ams</i>	أمس
Week	<i>Esboo'a</i>	أسبوع
Month	<i>Shahar</i>	شهر
Year	<i>Sanna</i>	سنة
What did you say?	<i>Matha qolt?</i>	ماذا قلت؟
Is this the way?	<i>Hal at-tareeq men hona?</i>	هل الطريق من هنا؟
I don't see it	<i>Ana la arah</i>	أنا لا أراه
I need help	<i>Ana oreedo mosa'adah</i>	أنا أريد مساعدة
Tourist	<i>sa'eh / Mosafer</i>	سائح/ مسافر
Country	<i>Balad</i>	بلد
Town	<i>Baldah</i>	بلدة
City	<i>Madeenah</i>	مدينة
Tired	<i>Ta'eb</i>	تعب
Sad	<i>Hazeen</i>	حزين
Happy	<i>Sa'eed</i>	سعيد
Sick	<i>Mareed</i>	مريض
Pregnant	<i>Hamel</i>	حامل
Danger	<i>Khatar</i>	خطر
Bus stop	<i>Mawqaf hafelah</i>	موقف حافلة
Station	<i>Mahatta</i>	محطة
Shop	<i>Mahal/Mattjar</i>	محل/ متجر
Map	<i>Khareeta</i>	خريطة
Location	<i>Mawqe-a</i>	موقع
Ambulance	<i>Essa'af/ Taware-a</i>	إسعاف/طوارئ
Police	<i>Shorta</i>	شرطة
Police Station	<i>Markaz Al Shorta</i>	مركز شرطة
Civil defence	<i>Mataafi</i>	مطافي
Phone number	<i>Raqqam</i>	رقم
Car	<i>Sayyara</i>	سيارة
Hire a car	<i>Esste'ajar Sayyara</i>	استئجار سيارة
Ticket	<i>Tathkara</i>	تذكرة

## 2.2 The Emirate of Abu Dhabi

### a) Overview

Abu Dhabi, meaning 'father of the gazelle' is the capital and largest of the seven Emirates. It occupies more than 80% of the country's total land mass and features a coastline that stretches over 700 kilometres and includes over 200 islands.

There are three distinct regions within the Emirate:

- The city of Abu Dhabi is located on a low-lying island and is surrounded by the Arabian Gulf
- The Oasis City of Al Ain - near to the Omani border
- Al Dhafra - located at the west part of the Emirate, where greenery and water resources are plenty, lies the Liwa Oasis. It takes approximately two and a half hours to drive from Abu Dhabi to Al Dhafra's Liwa but it is worthwhile as Liwa provides visitors with a beautiful view of some of the largest sand dunes in the world

Topography and major geographical landmarks in Abu Dhabi:

- **Mountains:** The isolated mountain of Jebel Hafeet lies to the south of the city of Al Ain and is shared with Oman. The mountain has the highest peak in the Emirate
- **Oasis:** The natural oases at Al Ain and Liwa are the largest in the Emirate. They continue to expand with irrigation
- **Lakes:** There is an artificial lake located at Al Mubazzarah or Green Mubazzarah (part of eco-tourism projects in the Emirate's Eastern Region)
- **Rivers:** Abu Dhabi has no permanent river, but has one permanent spring, at Ain bu Sukhanah (at Ayn Al Fayda), in Al Ain
- **Caves:** There are several caves in Jebel Hafeet which are of archaeological importance. There is also a cave network in the Hajar Mountains, beyond Buraimi, near Al Ain. The largest and most impressive of these cave systems is the Magharet Qasir Hafee, which has 450 metres of shafts, passages and chambers
- **Islands:** There are more than 200 islands of which the largest is Abu al-Abyadh
- **Desert:** Rub Al Khali (Empty Quarter) is the world's largest uninterrupted sand mass, with a huge expanse of stunning desert and enormous dunes <sup>8</sup>

### b) Climate and local time

Abu Dhabi has a sub-tropical, dry climate. Blue skies and high temperatures are normal most of the year. Rainfall mainly comes in the winter months (November to March) and is more common in the City of Al Ain.

The lowest temperature is about 13°C on a winter's night. The warmest temperature can be as high as 47°C on a summer's day. A pleasant time to visit is from November to April, when temperatures are an average of 24°C (75°F) during the day and 13°C (56°F) at night.

Abu Dhabi is four hours ahead of UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time – formerly known as GMT).

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<sup>8</sup> Source: <https://visitabudhabi.ae/en/explore/desert/the.empty.quarter.aspx>

## c) Language

Arabic is the official language of Abu Dhabi, although English is widely spoken. The further out of the city centre visitors go, the more written and spoken Arabic they will find. Abu Dhabi locals speak Emirati, a dialect which varies slightly from city to city.

## d) Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030

Governments within the seven Emirates have responded to Vision 2021 and launched several local strategies and plans in various fields to develop their Emirate on a local level and the nation as a whole.

**Vision 2030** is an economic growth plan for Abu Dhabi. Its aim is to ensure:

*“Abu Dhabi as a sustainable, diversified, high value-added economy that encourages enterprises and entrepreneurship and is well integrated in the global economy leading to better opportunities for all”*<sup>9</sup>

The government of Abu Dhabi has identified seven areas of ongoing economic policy focus:<sup>10</sup>

1. Build an open, efficient, effective and globally integrated business environment
2. Adopt a disciplined fiscal policy that is responsive to economic cycles
3. Establish a resilient monetary and financial market environment with manageable levels of inflation
4. Drive significant improvement in the efficiency of the labour market
5. Develop a sufficient and resilient infrastructure capable of supporting the anticipated economic growth
6. Develop a highly-skilled and productive workforce
7. Enable financial markets to become the key financiers of economic sectors and projects

## e) Department of Culture & Tourism (DCT)

The Department of Culture & Tourism regulates and promotes tourism and cultural heritage in Abu Dhabi. For this reason, their website and materials should be the first stop for your own official up-to-date information as well as your visitors'. The Department of Culture & Tourism website address is:

<https://visitabudhabi.ae/en/>

The Department of Culture & Tourism's **Visit Abu Dhabi** website contains all the information a visitor to Abu Dhabi will need or want to know about the Emirate, with a great 'essential information' section to get them started. The website gives useful information on all sites, attractions, activities and experiences in Abu Dhabi as well where to shop, eat, get some pampering and play sports.

If you need to provide visitors with details of events or festivals or they would like to find out for themselves, you can check the events calendar area of the website:

<https://abudhabievents.ae/en/Pages/default.aspx>

A useful tool for visitors to download if they have smartphones and devices that support either iOS or Android platforms is the **Visit Abu Dhabi app**. The app provides visitors with information on sites, attractions, activities, experiences, leisure and dining as well as events around Abu Dhabi.

Download the Visit Abu Dhabi app here:

<https://visitabudhabi.ae/en/plan-your-trip/essential-info/useful-apps>

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<sup>9</sup> Source: The Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030, Government of Abu Dhabi

<sup>10</sup> Source: [https://www.zawya.com/story/Manufacturing\\_boosts\\_UAE\\_GDP-ZAWYA20140323115442/](https://www.zawya.com/story/Manufacturing_boosts_UAE_GDP-ZAWYA20140323115442/)

## f) Cultural heritage

Historic monuments, ancient buildings, oases and natural heritage are important parts of Abu Dhabi's historic environment and tangible heritage. It is part of the Department of Culture & Tourism's aim to uncover traces of the Emirate's ancient civilisations, as well as to document, preserve and ensure the maintenance of historic buildings. The Department of Culture & Tourism is also responsible for the management and development of culturally-significant locations.

Classified by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, Al Ain world heritage locations include its six oases and the archaeological sites of:

- Hili
- Hafeet
- Bida Bint Saud

This classification is a testament to the cultural significance these locations hold in showcasing local values and cultural heritage.

Find out more about the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Section 10: UNESCO World Heritage sites.

## g) Intangible heritage

The Department of Culture & Tourism's responsibility is to collect, safeguard and document the intangible cultural heritage and history of the citizens of Abu Dhabi.

But what exactly is intangible heritage?

According to UNESCO,

*"Cultural heritage does not end at monuments and collections of objects. It also includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts."*

UNESCO <sup>11</sup>



Hili Archaeological Park

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<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>

# What's on in Abu Dhabi? Events and festivals

Event(s)	Where	When	Details for visitors
Abu Dhabi Classics			
Abu Dhabi Art			
Abu Dhabi Summer Season			
Abu Dhabi International Book Fair			

<b>Event(s)</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Details for visitors</b>
<b>Traditional Handicrafts Festival</b>			
<b>Abu Dhabi Food Festival</b>			
<b>Abu Dhabi Festival</b>			
<b>Al Ain Book Fair</b>			
<b>Mother of the Nation Festival</b>			



Event(s)	Where	When	Details for visitors
<b>Formula 1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix</b>			
<b>Sheikh Zayed Heritage Festival</b>			
<b>Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition</b>			
<b>Al Dhafra Watersports Festival</b>			
<b>Liwa Date Festival</b>			

<b>Event(s)</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Details for visitors</b>
<b>Al Dhafra Festival</b>			
<b>Al Qattara Festival</b>			
<b>Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship</b>			

## 2.3 Education

### a) Overview

When the UAE was established in 1971, the traditional education system gradually changed into formal education. The UAE federation was declared and the Ministry of Education and Youth was formed. Since then, considerable investment has been made to meet the educational needs of the expanding population. Today, the UAE generally and Abu Dhabi specifically offers a free, comprehensive education to every male and female student. Several thousand students take higher education courses overseas sponsored by the UAE Government. There is also a growing private education sector.

Education became compulsory over all seven Emirates as recently as July 2012, when the UAE Cabinet approved a new law in which education became a fundamental right of every citizen of the UAE. Now the UAE Government has to provide free education to every citizen from six years of age to school-leaving age or until the age of 18.

An increasing range of private institutions, including branches of internationally-acclaimed universities, add to the public-sector offer, making the UAE a very attractive place to study for thousands of students from neighbouring countries.

All public schools are government-funded and free for all citizens of the UAE, however, 40% of pupils attend private schools. All UAE citizens of school age are obliged to attend primary and secondary education and this law applies to both Arab nationals as well as expatriates. Arabic is the language used within public schools and English is used as a second language.

### Further your knowledge

Department of Education and Knowledge website:

<https://www.adek.gov.ae/>

### b) UAE education facts

- Around 2002, there were fewer than one million pupils and students and, in 2017, there are over 2.75 million pupils and students UAE-wide
- 95% of girls and 80% of boys who complete their secondary education enrol in a higher education institution in the UAE or travel abroad to study under government-sponsored schemes <sup>12</sup>
- Emirati women account for approximately half of students in private higher education

### c) Vision 2021 National Education Agenda

The UAE-wide Vision 2021 National Agenda emphasises the development of a first-rate education system. This involves large improvements in the current system and a review of teaching methods. The vision sets out to equip every school, university and its students with smart systems and devices which will form the platform for all teaching methods, projects and research. Targets have been set to place schoolchildren among the best in the world in reading, mathematics and sciences by 2021 while having a strong command of the Arabic language.

### Further your knowledge

Vision 2021 on education:

<https://www.vision2021.ae/en/national-agenda-2021/list/first-rate-circle>

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<sup>12</sup> Source: <http://www.uaeinteract.com/society/education.asp>

## **d) Notable universities in Abu Dhabi**

- United Arab Emirates University, based in Al Ain
- Zayed University, Abu Dhabi and Dubai
- The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), with campuses across the UAE offering a more technically-oriented education
- Masdar Institute, based in Abu Dhabi
- Abu Dhabi University
- Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi

In addition, there are new campuses of international institutions such as Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi and New York University Abu Dhabi.

### **Paris-Sorbonne University, Abu Dhabi**

Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi (PSUAD) is a French- and English-speaking university. Its campus is on Reem Island off the east coast of the capital. An agreement between Paris-Sorbonne and the Abu Dhabi government was signed in 2006 to bring best international standards in higher education to the Emirate. The establishment of the university in 2006, together with the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum in 2007, highlights the importance Abu Dhabi places on creating an international centre of culture and education.

PSUAD follows the same methods of teaching used in Paris, with lecturers from Paris who teach exclusively in French. Students of the university receive French degrees.

### **Further your knowledge**

PSUAD website:

<https://www.sorbonne.ae/>

### **New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD)**

NYUAD opened in August 2014 on a specially-designed campus on Saadiyat Island. The design of the campus reflects the relationship between living and learning, between the staff and the students and between research activities and actual teaching. The main academic areas within the university are arts and humanities, engineering, science, social science and multi-disciplinary. In addition, NYUAD has a large physical education department with excellent facilities, including a swimming pool, well-equipped fitness centres, a 200-metre indoor running track, a multi-use performance gym for basketball, hockey, netball etc, squash courts, climbing wall and sports performance lab. In addition, the outdoor facilities include tennis courts, a 400-metre track and sports fields for a range of activities.

### **Further your knowledge**

<http://nyuad.nyu.edu/en/about.html>

## 2.4 Healthcare

*"[The] UAE has seen remarkable progress in health care. This progress is clearly reflected in the positive changes in health statistics which indicate that the UAE has taken its place among the developed nations of the world."*

World Health Organisation <sup>13</sup>

### a) Overview

The development of modern healthcare in the UAE began with the opening of the Oasis Hospital in Al Ain in 1965 by founder doctors, Pat and Marian Kennedy, who were invited by HH Sheikh Zayed to the region. Together they laid the foundation of the world-class health care system now in place UAE-wide.

The Emirati Ministry of Health and Prevention controls healthcare services across the seven Emirates within the UAE. The UAE government provides a free health service for Emiratis who live and work in Abu Dhabi and, together with a rapidly-developing private health sector, a high standard of health care is delivered. Visitors and expats, including those from other Emirates, should have medical insurance as they may incur fees when being treated in both public and private healthcare facilities while staying in Abu Dhabi.

### Further your knowledge

To find out more information about health insurance and the Patients' Charter, visit Department of Health Abu Dhabi's website as follows:

Health insurance:

<https://www.doh.gov.ae/en/eservices/#Public4>

### b) Vision 2021 National Healthcare Agenda

The National Agenda's aim is to achieve a world-class healthcare system. All hospitals go through a quality process to ensure government-set standards are met.

The National Agenda also wishes to focus on preventative medicine to reduce cancer cases and lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The reduction of smoking throughout the Emirates is a strong focal point of the Agenda. Some of the priorities and goals for the vision include:

- Cardiovascular disease prevention and management
- Reduce smoking
- Disease prevention and control
- Occupational and environmental health
- Mother, infant and school children's health
- Cancer control and prevention
- Reduction of road traffic-related injuries and deaths
- Quality of life improvements for people with chronic conditions

Current health care in Abu Dhabi is provided by 51 hospitals, 629 healthcare centres and 362 clinics.<sup>14</sup> The Cleveland Clinic is the latest international star in the healthcare field to extend its offer in the Gulf.

<sup>13</sup> Source: <http://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/documents/s17313e/s17313e.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://www.abudhabi.ae/portal/public/en/abu-dhabi-emirate/abu-dhabi-emirate-facts-and-figures>

## c) Common health problems in the UAE

The five most common health problems in the UAE are:

- **Obesity:** The obesity rate in the UAE is double the world average
- **Diabetes:** One in four Emiratis have either type 1 or type 2 diabetes
- **Cardiovascular disease:** a high number of those resident in the UAE are at risk of cardiovascular disease
- **Cancer:** Cancer is one of the biggest killers in the UAE with the four most common being breast, colorectal, lung and cervical cancer
- **Mental health:** Mental health is a top priority

## d) Medical tourism

People who travel to a country other than their own to obtain medical treatment are known as medical tourists. Residents of the United Kingdom who incur high private dental costs are now travelling to Abu Dhabi to get dental implants much cheaper, while having a holiday at the same time! The UAE is the world's fastest growing hub for medical tourism.

## e) Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi

US-based Cleveland Clinic opened in Abu Dhabi in 2015. The clinic supports the government's goal to bring the highest standard of patient care to the citizens of Abu Dhabi. The clinic has 364 beds with the ability to increase this to 490. Guests of Abu Dhabi's Rosewood Hotel have direct access to the hospital, while guests at Beach Rotana hotel will clearly see the Cleveland Clinic across the water.

Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi has five areas of expertise:

- Heart and Vascular
- Neurological
- Digestive Disease
- Eye and Respiratory
- Critical Care

### Further your knowledge

The official website for The Cleveland Clinic, Abu Dhabi:

[www.clevelandclinicabudhabi.ae](http://www.clevelandclinicabudhabi.ae)

## f) Johns Hopkins Medicine International

Located in the United States, Johns Hopkins Medicine International (JHI) provides personalised medical care and works with organisations globally to improve health care. The Johns Hopkins organisation has a number of international collaborations including in Europe, Asia, the Central Americas, the Middle East and Europe. Through a partnership arrangement with the UAE, JHI manage Tawam Hospital, the largest hospital in the UAE with 469 beds, situated in Al Ain, and in 2003 opened Al Rahba Hospital, situated 30km from Abu Dhabi City.

### Further your knowledge

The official websites for Johns Hopkins Medicine International (Abu Dhabi):

[http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/international/international\\_affiliations/middle\\_east/al\\_rahba\\_hospital.html](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/international/international_affiliations/middle_east/al_rahba_hospital.html)

[http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/international/international\\_affiliations/middle\\_east/tawam\\_hospital.html](http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/international/international_affiliations/middle_east/tawam_hospital.html)

## g) Health advice for tourists

- The standard of medical care in the UAE is high, but can be expensive.  
Recommended clinics:
  - Mediclinic Hospital +971 2 626 5265
  - Aster Medical Centre +971 2 626 6672
- Visitors should see their healthcare provider at least 4–6 weeks before to ensure inoculations and vaccinations are up-to-date. While there are no compulsory vaccinations required for the UAE, travel agencies in the US and UK sometimes recommend vaccinations against tuberculosis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, polio, measles and diphtheria. Emergency vaccinations are available from the Gulf Diagnostic Centre Hospital [www.gdc-hospital.com](http://www.gdc-hospital.com). Fees may apply
- Visitors on medication are strongly advised to carry their prescription with them at all times
- The following drugs are banned:
  - Codeine – often found in cold and flu remedies
  - Lithium
  - Diazepam – found in Valium
  - Methadone
  - Alprazolam – found in Xanax

Visitors are advised to check websites for other banned substances. The World Travel Guide website is a useful reference:

<https://www.worldtravelguide.net/guides/middle-east/united-arab-emirates/health/>

- There is zero tolerance for importing illegal drugs in the UAE and penalties are severe
- MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) is a viral illness which was first reported in Saudi Arabia in 2012. Symptoms of MERS may include high temperature, coughing and a shortness of breath. All travellers should follow a good hygiene routine to help prevent the spread of germs and protect against colds, flu, and other illnesses.
  - Wash hands often with soap and water
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
  - Avoid close contact with sick people
- **Food and drink** - tap water is safe to drink but is likely to taste different
  - Bottled water is cheap. Both visitors and many locals choose to drink this instead
  - Food standards in restaurants is very high in Abu Dhabi
- **Other risks** – If visitors are scuba diving, they should be aware that if they get a coral cut, they should treat the affected area immediately with disinfectant as coral contains a high level of bacteria

## **In an emergency**

Visitors needing emergency medical assistance during their trip should dial 999 and ask for an ambulance. They should be advised to contact their insurance/medical assistance company promptly if they are referred to a medical facility for treatment.

Abu Dhabi's Sheikh Khalifa Medical City (+971 2 610 2000) and Mediclinic Hospital (+971 2 626 5265) both have Accident and Emergency units.

Visitors injured in road traffic accidents will automatically be taken to Sheikh Khalifa Medical City.

A list of 24-hour pharmacies and medical facilities is kept up to date on the Abu Dhabi Government's website <http://www.abudhabicityguide.com/m/residents/pharmacies.asp?pagenum=2#.YREYVYgzbD4>



# Knowledge Bank: General knowledge of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the UAE

## 2.1 The United Arab Emirates

- The UAE is governed by a Federal Supreme Council made up of seven Emirates. The seven Emirates are:
  - Abu Dhabi
  - Dubai
  - Ajman
  - Fujairah
  - Sharjah
  - Ras al-Khaimah
  - Umm al-Qaiwain
- The combined population of all seven Emirates is 9.27 million (2016)
- The UAE has a mainland surface area of 77,700 square kilometres
- The language spoken by Emiratis is Arabic
- Islam is the main religion
- The flag of the United Arab Emirates contains the pan-Arab colours of red, green, white, and black
- The currency used in all seven UAE Emirates is the Arab Emirate Dirham (AED), more commonly known as the Dirham
- Since May 2016, hotels in Abu Dhabi have charged an additional fee of 20% of the entire hotel bill as well as an extra municipality fee of AED 15 per room per night
- “The Federal Tax Authority (FTA) introduced Valued Added Tax (VAT) in the UAE in 2018 which 5% on goods and services across the UAE”
- Launched in 2010, Vision 2021 wants to make the UAE one of the best countries in the world
- Vision 2021 is a strategy for all seven Emirates for economic growth which does not rely on the production or export of oil
- 15 Arabic phrases with English pronunciation that you will need to know are:

	English	The English Pronunciation
1	Hello (formal)	<i>Assalamu Alaykom</i>
2	Hi (informal)	<i>Marhaba</i>
3	Welcome	<i>Ahlan wa sahan</i>
4	How are you?	<i>Kayfa halok?</i>
5	I'm fine, thank you	<i>Ana bekhayr shoukran</i>
6	My name is ...	<i>Esmee ...</i>
7	What is your name?	<i>Ma howa esmok?</i>
8	Where is....?	<i>Ayna yakoon ...?</i>
9	Good morning	<i>Sabah al-khayr</i>
10	Good evening	<i>Masa al-khayr</i>
11	Good night	<i>Tosbeh ala khayr</i>
12	Good-bye	<i>Ma assalama</i>
13	Excuse me	<i>Law samahat</i>
14	Thank you	<i>Shokran</i>
15	Have a good trip	<i>Rehlah sa'eeda</i>

## 2.2 The Emirate of Abu Dhabi

- **UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in Abu Dhabi**
  - **Falconry**, a living human heritage
  - **Arabic coffee**, a symbol of generosity
  - **Majlis**, a cultural and social space
  - **Al-Razfa**, a traditional performing art featuring dance and poetry
  - **Al-Ayyala**, a traditional performing art featuring dance and poetry
  - **Al-Taghrooda**, traditional Bedouin chanted poetry in the United Arab Emirates and the Sultanate of Oman
  - **Al Sadu**, traditional weaving skills in the United Arab Emirates
- Abu Dhabi means 'father of the gazelle'
- Abu Dhabi is the capital and largest of the seven Emirates
- Abu Dhabi occupies more than 80% of the country's total land mass
- Abu Dhabi's coastline stretches over 700 kilometres and includes over 200 islands
- The three distinct regions within the Emirate are: the city of Abu Dhabi, the Garden City of Al Ain and Al Dhafra
- The lowest temperature is about 13°C on a winter's night
- The warmest temperature can be as much as 47°C on a summer's day
- Abu Dhabi is four hours ahead of UTC
- Arabic is the official language of Abu Dhabi, although English is widely spoken
- Vision 2030 is an economic growth plan for Abu Dhabi
- The Department of Culture & Tourism (DCT) regulates and promotes tourism and cultural heritage in Abu Dhabi
- Classified by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites, Al Ain world heritage locations include its six oases and the archaeological sites of:
  - Hili
  - Hafeet
  - Bida bin Saud

## 2.3 Education

- Public schools are government-funded and free for all citizens of the UAE
- 40% of pupils attend private schools
- Around 2002, there were fewer than one million pupils and students and, in 2017, there are over 2.75 million pupils and students UAE-wide
- Notable higher education institutions in Abu Dhabi:
  - United Arab Emirates University, based in Al Ain
  - Zayed University, Abu Dhabi and Dubai,
  - The Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT), with campuses across the UAE offering a more technically-oriented education
  - Masdar Institute, a graduate-level institution based in Abu Dhabi
  - Abu Dhabi University
  - Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi

## 2.4 Healthcare

- Healthcare is regulated
- Abu Dhabi's public and private healthcare is free for Emiratis who live and work in Abu Dhabi but expatriates and tourists need to have private medical insurance
- Across all seven Emirates, pre-natal and post-natal care is on par with the world's most developed countries
  - The new-born (neonate) mortality rate has been reduced to 5.54 per 1000 and infant mortality to 7 per 1000
  - Maternal mortality rates have dropped to 0.01 for every 100,000 deaths
- Most infectious diseases like malaria, measles and poliomyelitis that were once prevalent in the UAE have been eradicated
- New vaccination campaigns are taking place to protect against chicken pox, pertussis (whooping cough) and the rotavirus
- Access to clean water in urban and rural areas is assured for 100% of the population
- Close to 100% of the population use modern sanitation facilities
- Life expectancy in the UAE is 76.8 years (figures for men and women combined)
- MERS is a viral illness. Symptoms of MERS are respiratory and include high temperature, coughing and a shortness of breath
- Banned drugs include:
  - Codeine
  - Lithium
  - Diazepam
  - Methadone
  - Alprazolam