

FREE DESTINATION GUIDE

DUBAI

United Arab Emirates



The future, the old creek, and a desert sunset, all in one long weekend.

SAFETY: US State Dept: Level 2

Travelling with ActorTonyB & Nala The Shih Tzu

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Top Sights

- **Burj Khalifa and Dubai Fountain.** Book At The Top tickets for sunset and watch the fountain show from the lake promenade after dark.
- **Old Dubai and the Creek.** Ride a wooden abra across Dubai Creek for a few dirhams, then explore Al Fahidi's wind tower lanes.
- **Gold and Spice Souks.** Deira's markets glow at night; polite bargaining is expected and part of the fun.
- **Palm Jumeirah and Atlantis.** Ride the monorail out the palm, then beach club or aquarium for the afternoon.
- **Desert Safari.** Dune drive, camel stop, and dinner under the stars; pick an operator with strong reviews.
- **Museum of the Future.** The calligraphy covered torus on Sheikh Zayed Road; tickets book out, reserve early.
- **JBR and Dubai Marina.** Beach, boardwalk dining, and a skyline walk at blue hour.
- **Abu Dhabi Day Trip.** The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is one of the world's great buildings; dress code is strict, plan ahead.

Local Tips

- Time your trip November to March. Summer heat passes 110 F and the city moves indoors.
- Burj Khalifa and Museum of the Future tickets sell out days ahead; book before you fly.
- The Metro is spotless, cheap, and air conditioned; a Nol card covers Metro, tram, and buses.
- Alcohol is served only in licensed hotel and club venues; public drunkenness is a serious offense.
- Taxis are plentiful, metered, and honest; ride hailing apps work well too.
- Friday prayers and the Saturday to Sunday weekend shape opening hours; big malls run late every night.

Customs & Etiquette

Do

- Dress modestly in malls, old town, and religious sites: covered shoulders and knees keep everyone comfortable.
- Ask before photographing local people, especially women; a smile and a gesture usually settles it.
- Use your right hand for greetings, eating, and handing things over.
- During Ramadan, be discreet about eating and drinking in public during daylight hours.

Please Don't

- Do not show public displays of affection beyond a quick hug; it can draw official attention.
- Do not photograph government buildings, airports, or military sites.
- Do not use rude gestures or profanity in public; both carry real legal penalties.
- Do not bring restricted medications without checking the UAE list; some common prescriptions need approval.

Things to Know Before You Go

Currency. UAE dirham (AED), pegged near 3.67 per US dollar, so prices are easy to convert. Cards accepted everywhere.

Language. Arabic is official; English is the everyday language of business, hotels, and taxis.

Best time to visit. November to March for beach weather in the 70s and 80s F and outdoor dining season.

Getting around. Metro Red and Green lines link the airport, old town, and Marina. Taxis fill the gaps cheaply; traffic on Sheikh Zayed Road is the tax.

Five phrases that open doors

Marhaba	Hello
Shukran	Thank you
Min fadlik	Please
Afwan	Excuse me
Kam al-thaman?	How much is this?

What to Bring

- Modest clothing options: covered shoulders and knees for malls, old town, and any mosque visit; a scarf for women visiting mosques.
- Serious sun protection and sunglasses; the glare off sand and glass is intense year round.
- A UK style plug adapter (Type G) for your chargers.
- A light jacket: malls, restaurants, and the Metro run the air conditioning at full blast.
- Copies of any prescriptions, in their original pharmacy packaging.
- A swimsuit for hotel pools and beach clubs; public beaches call for modest swimwear choices.

What to Expect

Weather: November to March is glorious, 75 to 85 F. May to September passes 110 F and life moves indoors or after dark.

Pace: modern, polished, and late. Malls open until 10 pm or later, dinner at 9 is normal, and service is fast and formal.

Costs in practice: taxis and the Metro are cheap, alcohol and beach clubs are expensive, and Friday brunch is a beloved budget event of its own.

How tourists are received: extremely well. Dubai runs on hospitality and hosts the whole world; English works everywhere.

What NOT to Bring

- Any recreational drugs, including CBD products and cannabis in any form, even with a foreign prescription; UAE penalties are severe and products are confiscated at the airport.
- Prescription medicines on the UAE restricted list without prior approval; check the official list and carry your prescription and approval if needed.
- E-cigarettes are legal to buy locally for adults, but rules change; never bring cannabis related vaping products of any kind.
- Alcohol to drink outside licensed venues, and any pork products beyond small personal amounts if you are unsure of current customs rules.
- A camera pointed at government or military sites; leave those subjects alone entirely.

Safety Rating

US State Dept advisory level: Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution

The UAE is rated Level 2 by the US State Department, citing regional tensions and terrorism risk. Inside Dubai, street crime is very low and the city is heavily monitored; the bigger risks for visitors are legal ones, since local laws on conduct, alcohol, and photography are stricter than at home.

Three practical safety moves

- Learn the local rules before you land: conduct that is a shrug at home can be an offense here.
- Keep ID copies on your phone and leave passports in the hotel safe.
- Enroll in the free STEP program at step.state.gov and monitor regional news during your trip.

Advisory levels change. Check the current rating for your destination at travel.state.gov before you book and again before you fly. Summary reflects the advisory in effect in October 2026.

Budget Snapshot

Rough per person daily ranges in US dollars, including lodging, food, local transport, and activities. Airfare not included. Treat these as planning estimates, not quotes.

Tier	Per day (USD)	What it looks like
Budget traveler	\$120 to \$170 per day	Hotel in Deira or Bur Dubai, Metro days, souk snacks, one paid attraction.
Mid range	\$250 to \$350 per day	Marina or Downtown hotel, desert safari, Burj sunset slot, beach club day.
Comfort	\$450 plus per day	Palm resort, private driver, fine dining, and a yacht hour at sunset.

Ready to Go?

You have the sights, the tips, the customs, and the budget. Now put dates on it. Compare flights, stays, cars, and activities for Dubai in one place, with live prices and traveler reviews.

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