



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Overall risk level

Low Take normal safety precautions	Moderate Take normal safety precautions	Medium Exercise caution	High Reconsider travel	Extreme Defer non-essential travel
--	---	-----------------------------------	----------------------------------	--

The Overall Risk Level will be determined by the higher of the Security Risk Level and Covid-19 Risk Level.

Security risk level

Low Take normal safety precautions	Moderate Take normal safety precautions	Medium Exercise caution	High Reconsider travel	Extreme Defer non-essential travel
Safe, with few security risks	Generally safe, with some predictable security risks	Not completely safe, but typically presents predictable security risks	Can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks	Extremely dangerous and presents unpredictable security risks
Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Chaotic; travel impossible

Covid-19 risk level

Low Take normal safety precautions	Moderate Take normal safety precautions	Medium Exercise caution	High Reconsider travel	Extreme Defer non-essential travel
Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to Low Risk locations, which have limited or no restrictions on international travel and domestic activities.	Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to Moderate Risk locations, which have few restrictions on international travel and limited or no restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should exercise caution when travelling to Medium Risk locations, and vaccinated travellers should take normal precautions. These locations may have some restrictions on international travel, but few restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should reconsider their need to travel to High Risk locations, and vaccinated travellers should exercise caution. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and partially restricted domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should defer non-essential travel to Extreme Risk locations, and vaccinated travellers should reconsider their travel. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and domestic activities.

Overview

Upcoming Events

There are no upcoming events scheduled

Travel Advisories

● **Moderate risk:** Increased risk of protests and attacks targeting Western interests in Middle East, North Africa and parts of Asia

Exercise caution for travel across parts of the Middle East, North Africa and Asia, including Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Türkiye, Lebanon, Syria, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Indonesia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Yemen, Somalia, Malaysia and Pakistan, due to the risk of demonstrations and attacks against interests perceived to be aligned with Israel amid heightened tensions related to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Following the Hamas attack into southern Israel on 7 October and Israel's subsequent strikes in the Gaza Strip, political and religious tensions have been heightened in Arab and Muslim countries. Groups or individuals may use the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas to justify attacks on individuals or businesses perceived to be aligned with Israel or the United States (US). Several branches of McDonald's and Starbucks have already been boycotted and attacked, and the risk of further attacks will be elevated for the duration of the conflict. Pro-Palestine demonstrations have also taken place frequently, including outside diplomatic representations of the United States (US) and other governments supporting Israel's operations in Gaza and the West Bank.

Since mid-October, McDonald's and Starbucks have been boycotted by consumers in several countries across the Middle East and Asia due to their perceived bias towards Israel, despite the fact that the vast majority of branches are operated by local franchise owners. While the boycott poses no direct threat to travellers, several branches have been attacked directly. On 13 December, a gunman opened fire at a Starbucks on **Turgut Özal Street** in the **Güzelyalı district** of **Çukurova, Adana province, Türkiye**, after vocalising support for Palestine; there were no injuries reported following the shooting. In Lebanon, several branches of McDonald's and Starbucks have been vandalised during pro-Palestine protests, including in the **Raouche** and **Ain al-Mraieh** areas of **Beirut** as well as in **Saida** and **Tyre**. The **American University of Beirut (AUB)** was also vandalised by pro-Palestine demonstrators to denounce US support for Israel.

Demonstrations have also been frequently held in major cities, notably outside

embassies and consulates of the US, Israel and France, including in **Tunis, Amman, Beirut, Rabat, Casablanca, Doha, Istanbul, Adana** and **Baghdad**. Pro-Palestine demonstrators have attempted to storm the **US Embassy** in **Awkar, Lebanon**, the **Israeli Embassy** in **Amman, Jordan**, and the **Incirlik Air Base (UAB/LTAG)**, which is used by the United States Air Force in **Turkiye's Adana province**, resulting in clashes with local security forces. Localised disruptions and road closures are likely during demonstrations, which will continue on a regular basis in the near-term. On 8 December, several rockets were fired towards the **US Embassy** in **Baghdad's Green Zone** amid an uptick in attacks on US targets by pro-Iranian militias in Iraq and Syria. Although there have been no reported similar attacks in the wider region to date, future attacks targeting US and other Western interests by proxy forces and militant groups cannot be ruled out for the duration of the conflict.

Anticipate heightened security and associated travel disruptions across major urban hubs on protest days in the near- to medium-term. Remain vigilant at all times and report suspicious behaviour and objects to local authorities. Remain indoors in areas where police operations are ongoing and comply with all instructions from authorities. Ensure all necessary travel documents are updated and ready to be displayed should authorities request them. Exercise general caution near all places of worship, foreign embassies and businesses which could be perceived as being pro-Israel.

Summary

Overall ● Moderate Risk

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a **Moderate Risk** destination: take normal safety precautions.

Security ● Moderate Risk

Moderate Risk locations are generally safe, with some predictable security risks. Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays.

Covid ● Low Risk

The UAE initially kept cases and fatalities low after imposing stringent curfews and lockdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Vaccination rate is high in the country. Authorities have lifted remaining travel and domestic restrictions.

Political Instability ● Moderate Risk

The country is run as a federal monarchy of seven emirates, with very limited political freedom in exchange for expansive domestic subsidies and social benefits derived from high oil revenues. Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MBZ), the crown prince of **Abu Dhabi**, is the country's de facto leader and has overseen domestic and regional crackdowns against Islamist movements.

Conflict ● Moderate Risk

The UAE's military is active in the Yemeni Civil War, with violence sometimes spilling over in the form of missile and drone attacks on Emirati infrastructure. There is an ongoing conflict with Iran over control of **Abu Mousa** and the **Greater** and **Lesser Tunbs** islands but escalation is unlikely.

Terrorism ● Moderate Risk

The UAE's closeness to the United States (US) and Israel along with its campaign against political Islam has made it an explicit target of terror threats. The Emirati contributions to the war against Houthi rebels in Yemen have also made it a target for drone and missile attacks. The country is, however, heavily policed with strong anti-missile defences, and emergency response services meet international standards.

Unrest ● Moderate Risk

Protests are uncommon across the country. The only people likely to attempt to hold strikes are low-paid foreign workers over poor working conditions and delayed wages. However, the authorities closely monitor these communities and are always on the hunt for possible organisers, making strike actions unlikely.

Crime ● Low Risk

Crime rates are low across the country. Visitors are unlikely to experience anything beyond petty theft. Although gang violence is possible, it is still unlikely to occur.

Natural and Environmental ● Moderate Risk

Sandstorms and heatwaves are common during summer from July to September. The country is somewhat vulnerable to flash floods during rainy seasons and to earthquakes, but they occur rarely. Emergency response services meet international standards.

Local Travel ● Moderate Risk

Although road conditions are of good quality across the country, speeding and reckless driving cause the UAE to have one of the highest rates of road deaths in the world. While public transport services are limited outside **Dubai** and **Abu Dhabi**, they are reliable and safe. Taxis are safer and more readily available.

Health and Medical ● Low Risk

Medical care across the country meets international standards. Virtually all doctors and nurses are highly trained and speak English. Some common medicines, including sleeping pills, are banned in the UAE, or require a prescription.

Political Overview : ● Moderate Risk

Administratively, the UAE is a federation of seven emirates (**Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Fujairah, Sharjah, Dubai, Ras al-Khaimah** and **Umm al-Qaiwain**), each with its own hereditary ruler. Federal powers have developed slowly and each emirate reserves control over mineral rights and revenues. The relative oil wealth and financial influence of each emirate is reflected in the allocation of positions in the federal government.

By custom, the presidency and position of head of state are de facto hereditary to the Al-Nahyan clan of **Abu Dhabi**, the UAE's largest oil producer, while the premiership and position of head of government is hereditary to the Al-Maktoom clan of **Dubai**, the UAE's commercial centre and a significant oil producer itself. With the death of his brother in May 2022, Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan (MBZ) became President of the UAE, a role he was already fulfilling de facto since 2014 due to his brother's ill health. MBZ has sought to increase the UAE's regional and international presence through an active foreign policy. High oil revenues allow for very low rates of taxation and at the same time subsidise primary commodities, free health care and free education for Emirati citizens. As a result, there is very little civil unrest in the UAE.

The commercial production of oil in the UAE, home to the world's fifth largest reserves of conventional crude, triggered a dependence on expatriate labour that has produced one of the most diverse populations in the Middle East. Emirati nationals account for only about 20 percent of the population, with the remainder made up of foreign nationals. South Asians alone account for around 50 percent of the country's population of 10 million. Though non-UAE citizens are strictly banned from forming political parties and associations, the last several years have seen a spike in workers' protests and strikes. Disgruntled labourers calling for pay rises during these strikes have increasingly taken their grievances to the streets. Strikes in **Burj Dubai** and **Sharjah** have fuelled support for proposals that seek to alter the demographic balance of the UAE such that members of no single foreign nationality can constitute more than 25 percent of the total population.

The country plays a large role in Middle East politics, using its wealth and small but active military to counter Islamist movements in Iran, Libya, Tunisia, Syria, Egypt, Sudan and Yemen. Houthi militants in Yemen have fired ballistic missiles and drones into the UAE, primarily targeting **Abu Dhabi International Airport (AUH/OMAA)**, and there remains a threat of other Iranian-backed groups launching attacks on critical

infrastructure and commercial shipping in the **Strait of Hormuz**.

Recent incidents

09 December 2023 - 11 December 2023

● **Medium risk:** Sudanese and Emirati diplomats ordered to leave amid tensions

Local sources reported on 10 December that the Sudanese Foreign Ministry ordered 15 Emirati diplomats to leave the country within 48-hours; no reason was provided for the expulsion but reports indicate the move follows the expulsion of three Sudanese diplomats from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 9 December amid accusations that UAE was supporting the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) militia amid the ongoing conflict with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).

19 June 2023 - 20 June 2023

● **Low risk:** Embassies reopen as Qatar and UAE resume full diplomatic relations - Update

Sources from the Qatari foreign ministry announced that its embassy was reopened in United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Emirati sources indicated the opening of its embassy in Qatar, marking the full resumption of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Conflict : ● Moderate Risk

Border Conflicts: Iranian settlement construction and sovereignty claims in the territorial waters, airspace and economic zones of several occupied islands off **Sharjah** are regularly denounced as gross violations of UAE sovereignty and territorial integrity. The contested islands of **Abu Mousa** and the **Greater** and **Lesser Tunbs** are commonly referred to as "occupied Arab territories" by UAE authorities and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which has openly condemned Iranian construction on **Abu Mousa**. Iranian coastal authorities continue to arrest fishermen who venture onto the islands, a policy that risks destabilising diplomatic relations.

Muslim Brotherhood: Even though the Muslim Brotherhood has no presence in the UAE, Emirati leaders consider it a terror group and will arrest dissidents on charges of belonging to it. The animosity stems from the fact that the group is popular in the region and it regularly denounces the monarchies of the Arabian Gulf. The government's anti-Brotherhood policies manifest across the region in the form of influence campaigns and direct military intervention against hostile Islamists.

Partly due to Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood (and close ties to Iran), Emirati leaders, with their Saudi counterparts, executed a blockade on Qatar in 2017 to bring it to heel. While the blockade ended in January 2021, tensions remain high as the underlying causes of the dispute remain.

Conflict in Yemen: The UAE has been a key member of the Saudi-led coalition against Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. In recent years, it has scaled down its role in the coalition following tensions with Saudi Arabia over its efforts to develop independent ties with tribes in southern Yemen, which seek to reestablish an independent South Yemen centred on Aden. In January 2022, **Abu Dhabi** was subject to drone and missile strikes from Yemen-based Houthi militants, resulting in three fatalities. These attacks have raised concerns about the country losing its long-held reputation as one of the safest and most stable business hubs in the world.

The uptick in Houthi attacks came after Emirati leaders accused Iran of supplying the rebels with sophisticated weapons. In response to the attacks, the United States (US) also stepped up its military support to the UAE, sending advanced fighter jets and guided missile destroyers. Houthi attacks were reported in **Jizan province** amidst an escalation in hostilities triggered by the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

International Forces on Territory: The UAE provides extensive port facilities and ship repair facilities for the United States Navy (USN) at the **Ports of Jebel Ali** and **Fujairah**. The **Fujairah** to **Jebel Ali** land link is the USN's logistics pipeline to the Gulf should the **Strait of Hormuz** be closed in any conflict with Iran. Cargo unloaded at **Fujairah**, on the **Gulf of Oman**, can be subsequently transported via highway to destinations on the Arabian Gulf and hence bypass the need for transit through the **Strait of Hormuz**. The US Air Force maintains tankers, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft at **al-Dhafra Air Base**.

France has a military base in **Abu Dhabi**, the country's first military facility in the Gulf region. The camp serves as a naval and air base. The French personnel stationed there are intended to serve in a training and support capacity rather than provide operational support.

Strength of Military Forces: The confluence of regional security imperatives and immediate wealth has positioned the UAE to maintain a credible deterrent force as a procurer, not a producer, of arms. The country's military, with its estimated 63,000 troops, has gained fighting experience in recent years with aerial, tactical and financial support, as well as intelligence.

Terrorism

Yemeni Civil War: The UAE has been almost entirely free from terror-related and political violence despite having an active role in global politics. However, this lull ended on 17 January 2022 when Iran-backed Houthi rebels launched a series of missile and drone attacks on **Abu Dhabi**. Although only one of these attacks was successful, as the country is equipped with strong anti-missile defences, Houthi attacks may escalate as the rebels have received more sophisticated weaponry from Iran.

Prior to January 2022, missile and drone targeting from Houthi rebels in Yemen were almost exclusively limited to Saudi Arabia. The 17 January attack, which was carried out by an armed drone, struck the **ICAD 3 area of Mussafah, Abu Dhabi**, killing three foreigners, including one Pakistani national and two Indians. One week later, similar attacks targeted **Al Bateen Executive (AZI/OMAD), Abu Dhabi International (AUH/OMAA) airports** but failed to cause any damage. The Houthis, who are known to exaggerate their capabilities and the impact of their missile and drone attacks, have also claimed to target the **Barakah Nuclear Power Plant** but have yet to inflict any damage on it. As the Houthis' military capabilities grow, further attacks are expected to continue, with growing risk to the emirate of **Dubai**.

International Terrorism: Terror attacks by groups such as the Islamic State (IS) and al-Qaeda remain a threat, especially to **Abu Dhabi** and **Dubai**, due to their importance as international transport and banking hubs. Pro-Western foreign policies coupled with the abundance of economic targets in the emirates leaves the UAE vulnerable to attacks targeting Western interests. Westerners in the UAE, especially in **Abu Dhabi** and **Dubai**, are advised to keep a low profile and register with consular authorities. Additionally, the UAE's recent establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel might make it more vulnerable to attacks from anti-Israel groups. Beware of unattended baggage or packages left in any location and limit exposure in public places, including hotel lobbies, restaurants, shopping malls and busy markets. Closely track local media and monitor embassy warnings for news of upcoming events that may present a risk to travellers.

Recent incidents

24 November 2023 - 25 November 2023

● **Medium risk:** Emirates extends suspension of flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport until further notice - Update

Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB)-based Emirates extended its suspension of all flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV/LLBG) in Israel until further notice, due to the conflict between Hamas and Israeli forces in Israel and the Gaza Strip.

15 November 2023 - 16 November 2023

● **Low risk:** Flydubai resumes flights between UAE's Dubai and Afghanistan's Kabul

Aviation authorities indicated that Flydubai resumed flights between Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kabul International Airport (KBL/OAKB) in Afghanistan with immediate effect, following a two-year hiatus due to the Taliban takeover of the latter country.

01 November 2023 - 01 December 2023

● **Medium risk:** Emirates extends suspension of flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport through 30 November - Update

Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB)-based Emirates extended its suspension of all flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV/LLBG) in Israel through at least 30 November, due to the conflict between Hamas and Israeli forces in Israel and the Gaza Strip.

24 October 2023 - 15 November 2023

● **Medium risk:** Emirates extends suspension of flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport through 14 November - Update

Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB)-based Emirates extended its suspension of all flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV/LLBG) in Israel through at least 14 November, due to the conflict between Hamas and Israeli forces in Israel and the Gaza Strip.

Unrest : ● Moderate Risk

Strikes and Violent Unrest: Inexpensive foreign labour, primarily from India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, form the underpinnings of a spectacular building boom in the UAE. Abuses committed against these migrant workers include nonpayment of wages, extended working hours without overtime compensation, unsafe working environments resulting in death and injury, squalid living conditions in labour camps and withholding of passports and travel documents by employers. Rising costs of living have exacerbated concerns among foreign workers and inspired an increasing number of protests and illegal strikes. Unrest within the South Asian construction worker community has previously escalated to violent confrontation, with riot police responding to the destruction of property on labour camps and construction sites. Those suspected of organising a strike action or participating in one are promptly deported.

Protests and Demonstrations: Political demonstrations are rare in the UAE and only take place with the official sanction of relevant authorities. Sporadic solidarity protests in reaction to international developments in the Palestinian Territories and Iraq do not have a history of escalating to violence and they are extremely rare.

There are no recent incidents

Crime : ● Moderate Risk

Petty Crime: Petty crime, including pick-pocketing and bag-snatching, is rare but may occur.

Beware of your surroundings, do not leave your belongings unattended and exercise general personal safety for travel. Only carry what is needed, do not flash expensive valuables or large sums of money, and keep cash, identification and mobile phones in front pockets, or in a zipped or concealed pocket or pouch rather than in a bag. Secure belongings when using public transport or when frequenting markets and other crowded public areas; secure bags diagonally across the body against the chest, keep bags within sight and away from the street. Refrain from using mobile phones or laptops in congested public places; avoid putting bags containing valuables on the ground. Avoid walking in poorly lit and isolated areas. Stay in groups. Reject rides or drinks from strangers and never leave drinks unattended. Exercise extreme caution when purchasing and consuming alcohol in public venues. Do not accept pamphlets in the street or shopping centres; these could be impregnated with potent and disorienting drugs, which permeate the skin. If you start to feel unwell, tell staff or close friends and do not leave the venue alone or with strangers. Shout to attract attention, if needed.

Violent Crime: Violent crime is rare throughout the country, but the **Bur Dubai area** of **Dubai**, populated entirely by migrant workers, has gained notoriety for the presence of youth gangs. These gangs occasionally engage in violent clashes that may impact unsuspecting visitors. Incidents of assault targeting foreign accountants, cashiers and businessmen have been previously reported in the area. Perpetrators are known to trip their victims before grabbing their money and running.

Commonsense measures are best kept to ensure against becoming the victim of a violent crime. Travellers are advised to remain vigilant at all times and exercise general personal safety for travel: avoid walking alone at night, do not venture down roads with poor lighting and few access points. Be careful when using taxis and public transport and plot route bypasses around rowdy crowds. Seek local advice for areas to avoid. If you are held-up by an armed robber do not become confrontational as any resistive behaviour may cause more violence by the attackers.

Kidnapping: Kidnappings are not a particular concern in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Isolated instances may occur, but they are not considered to be representative

of a wider trend targeting travellers or foreign nationals. In the event of a kidnapping, law enforcement officials' response is likely to be reliable. The UAE police forces are generally professional and efficient. Response times are adequate.

Travellers should remain aware of their surroundings and follow the latest advisories for their destination. Maintain communications and your itinerary with local contacts, authorities or embassy staff, especially in locations with a higher risk of kidnapping. Consider a local guide or security escort for the highest risk locations.

There are no recent incidents

Law

Overview

Despite recent relaxing of conservative laws, each of the emirates' penal codes are derived to varying degrees from Shari'a. Many laws and regulations can also differ between the emirates. For instance, the sale, consumption and distribution of alcohol is illegal in **Sharjah** but is legal under certain conditions in **Abu Dhabi** and **Dubai**.

Corruption

Corruption: Residents are unlikely to come into contact with any form of corruption. Never offer a bribe to speed up bureaucratic procedures. There are effective anti-corruption laws in place in the UAE and corruption in business is rare. Under no circumstances should bribes be proffered for services. Where solicited, report the circumstances to higher authorities immediately.

Security Services

Security Services: It is crucial to remember that certain laws in the emirates differ by degree from those in the West and the penalties can be stiff for all violations. This is particularly true of issues associated with public morality, such as drinking, drugs and sex. Response times for emergency services in the UAE are adequate. Uniformed police generally try to respond to traffic accidents and violent crimes within 10-20 minutes. Response times to other calls can range from 45 minutes to two hours in rural areas. Sophisticated equipment is available to the UAE police services for investigative purposes.

Natural Risks : ● Moderate Risk

Sandstorms and heatwaves are common during summer from July to September. The country is somewhat vulnerable to flash floods during rainy seasons and to earthquakes, but they occur rarely. Emergency response services meet international standards.

Earthquakes

An earthquake is the sudden, rapid shaking of the earth, caused by the breaking and shifting of subterranean rock as it releases strain that has accumulated over a long period. Initial mild shaking may worsen and become extremely violent within a matter of seconds. Additional earthquakes, called aftershocks, may follow the initial earthquake.

Infrastructure in the United Arab Emirates is vulnerable to the effects of tectonic collisions between the Arabian and Eurasian or Iranian plateaus. Iran's south eastern Zagros fault line, approximately 140km (87 miles) north of **Ras Al Khaimah**, regularly produces seismic events of magnitudes in excess of 5.5, most of which can be felt across the UAE.

When shaking begins, drop to the ground and take cover under, and hold on to, a sturdy piece of furniture, such as a heavy desk or table that can provide you with air space if the building collapses. If you're not near a strong piece of furniture, crouch down and protect your head and face in an inner corner of a building; only stand in a doorway if you know it is strongly supported. Stay away from windows or glass panels. Most deaths and injuries in an earthquake are caused by collapsing building materials and heavy falling objects. Stay indoors until the tremors stop and you are sure it is safe to exit. Avoid all areas in the vicinity of outer walls and doorways, as these are most prone to falling debris. In a high-rise building, the electricity may go out and the sprinkler systems may come on. Do not use the elevators. If the lights go out, avoid using candles, matches or lighters during or after the earthquake; if there is a gas leak, an explosion could result. If outdoors, move to an open space away from buildings, electric poles and street lights which are prone to collapse. Do not travel on roads and bridges which may have been damaged by the earthquake. Be prepared for secondary earth movements that follow the initial earthquake; some of these may be large

enough to cause additional damage or bring down weakened structures.

Dust/Sand Storms

Dust storms occur when a gust front or other strong wind system blows loose sand and dirt from a dry surface. As such, dust storms normally only occur in arid and semi-arid regions.

Dust storms or sandstorms are common in arid and semi-arid regions often forming spontaneously with the passage of a gust front. High winds lift dirt particles or, in the case of sandstorms, sand, into the air, unleashing a turbulent, suffocating cloud of particulates and reducing visibility to zero in a matter of seconds. During the late summer months (July to September), the country is prone to occasional, violent dust storms with speeds reaching up to 52 kph (32 mph). Nearly all of these are capable of causing property damage, injury and death by reducing visibility affecting aircraft and road transportation and negatively impacting chronic respiratory conditions.

Because meteorologists can commonly predict the likely onset of a storm, the most effective way to mitigate physical risk is to monitor local weather updates and consider deferring travel in the event of a storm alert. If you see a dust storm from some distance and you are in a vehicle you may be able to outrun or detour around it. Some dust storms can travel at more than 120 kph (75 mph), but they frequently travel much slower. Those in transit when a storm catches up to them are advised to roll up windows and turn off vents before pulling off the road, setting the parking brake and turning on headlights, brake lights and turn signals. If stuck outside, seek out a large rock or other landform offering at least partial protection. Avoid breaking rank with your group to mitigate the risk of becoming lost in zero visibility conditions. Carry a mask designed to filter small particulates and a pair of airtight goggles to protect your eyes. As an alternative, wrap a wet bandana or strip of cloth around your nose and mouth. Store loose fitting clothing for use as a protective layer against the effects of sandblasting. In addition, air travel may also likely be disrupted during sand storms.

Heat Waves

A heat wave is characterised by temperatures that hover at 10 degrees or more above the average high for the region over a period of several weeks. Parallel weather systems may include temperature inversions and katabatic winds.

The summer months (May to September) are exceptionally hot, with August temperatures climbing to highs of 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit) on the coastal plain.

In hot weather, you will need to increase fluid intake (non-alcoholic), regardless of activity level. Stay indoors in an air-conditioned room. This is the primary means of protection against heat-related illness and possibly death. If a home is not air-conditioned, identify public facilities that are. Wear lightweight, light-coloured, loose-fitting clothing. If you must be out in the heat, limit outdoor activity to early morning and late evening hours. Those at greatest risk of suffering heat-related illness include infants, young children and adults aged 65 or older.

Flooding

A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. It is normally triggered by an extended period of heavy rainfall and can be exacerbated by poor drainage systems in the affected area.

Sudden torrential cloudbursts are common in the winter months and can produce flash flooding in ordinarily dry wadi beds or river canyons.

If instructed of the possibility that flash-flooding may affect the area you are in, monitor local updates and move immediately to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Though flash-flooding is commonly attributable to excess upstream precipitation, be aware that flooding can occur without typical warning signs of rain clouds or heavy rain. This is especially true near streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. If you happen across a flooded road in your car, turn around and drive in the opposite direction. When trapped on a flooded road, vacate your vehicle immediately and climb to higher ground.

Recent incidents

17 November 2023 - 18 November 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Heavy rainfall disrupts flights at Dubai Airport

Local sources reported that heavy rainfall has disrupted a number of flights at Dubai Airport (DXB/OMDB) since morning hours local time. At least 13 inbound flights were diverted and six outbound flights were cancelled.

Health and Medical: ● Low Risk

Overview

Medical care across the country meets international standards. Virtually all doctors and nurses are highly trained and speak English. Some common medicines, including sleeping pills, are banned in the UAE, or require a prescription.

Before you travel

Consult your doctor or a healthcare provider who specialises in travel medicine at least six weeks before your departure. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with your doctor.

Outbreaks and Other Diseases

Malaria

There is no risk of malaria transmission.

Yellow Fever

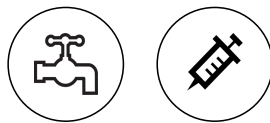
There is no risk of Yellow Fever infection.

Vaccinations, Medicines and Documentation

Note: Requirements and recommendations for vaccines and other medicines as well as Yellow Fever vaccine are based on guidelines from the United States Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Yellow Book 2024. All other entry requirements are based on Riskline research.

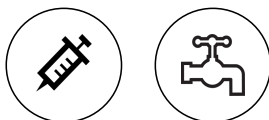
Routine vaccines



Make sure you are up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include

- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Flu (influenza)
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Shingles

COVID-19



All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

Hepatitis A



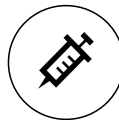
Recommended for unvaccinated travellers one year old or older going to the United Arab Emirates.

Infants 6 to 11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series.

Travellers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given.

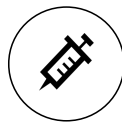
Unvaccinated travellers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.

Hepatitis B



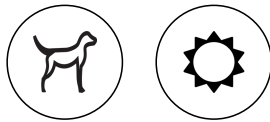
Recommended for unvaccinated travellers younger than 60 years old traveling to the United Arab Emirates. Unvaccinated travellers 60 years and older may get vaccinated before traveling to the United Arab Emirates.

Measles



Infants 6 to 11 months old traveling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.

Rabies



Rabid dogs are commonly found in the United Arab Emirates. However, if you are bitten or scratched by a dog or other mammal while in the United Arab Emirates, rabies treatment is often available.

Consider rabies vaccination before your trip if your activities mean you will be around dogs or wildlife.

Travellers more likely to encounter rabid animals include

- Campers, adventure travellers, or cave explorers (spelunkers)
- Veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers handling animal specimens
- Visitors to rural areas

Since children are more likely to be bitten or scratched by a dog or other animals, consider rabies vaccination for children traveling to the United Arab Emirates.

Typhoid



Recommended for most travellers, especially those staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities or rural areas.

Required documentation

Yellow Fever entry requirement (Source: USA CDC):

Required for travellers nine months and older arriving from countries with risk for YF virus transmission; this includes longer than 12-hour airport transits or layovers in countries with risk for YF virus transmission.

Other entry requirements:

None

Note: Documentation requirements are subject to change. Consult your destination embassy or consulate prior to departure for confirmation.

While you are there

Emergency Numbers

Medical	998	
---------	-----	--

Emergency services

Government and private ambulances and other emergency services are readily available across urban and rural areas. Staff are well-trained and ambulances are well equipped. Response times are good. Ambulances will usually take foreign nationals to private hospitals, unless immediate emergency treatment is required.

Evacuation

Medical evacuation is unlikely to be required.

Routine care

Medical facilities are of an excellent standard, with well-stocked pharmacies and modern equipment. Clinics and walk-in centres are easily accessible across urban areas. Doctors and other staff are highly trained and professional, and many speak English as well as Arabic. However, facilities in rural areas are significantly less well-

equipped, and standards of training among staff are far lower than in urban areas. Travellers should be aware that foreign nationals are likely to be refused treatment at public facilities, unless emergency treatment is required.

Medicine

Most essential and prescription medicines are available in pharmacies nationwide. Many medicines that would usually be available over the counter in other countries may require a prescription in the UAE, and some drugs – such as sleeping pills – are banned. Ensure that the medication you are carrying when you enter the UAE is legally allowed in the country.

Payment

Private facilities may require proof of insurance or ability to pay prior to treatment.

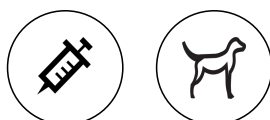
Ailments

Traveller's diarrhoea (TD)



Traveller's diarrhoea (TD) is a catch-all term for a number of minor or moderate bacterial, viral and parasitic infections, generally transmitted through infected food or water. In the majority of cases antibiotics or anti-diarrhoeal medication is unnecessary; travellers experiencing TD should ensure that they remain hydrated and well rested until their symptoms dissipate. Most cases of TD last less than three days; if diarrhoea continues for longer periods, travellers should consider consulting a medical professional.

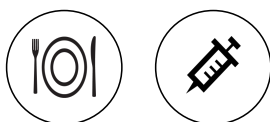
Rabies



Rabies is present in animals in the UAE.

Rabies is a serious viral infection, transmitted through close contact with saliva from infected animals (i.e. bites, scratches or licks on broken skin and mucous membranes). Travellers who suspect they may have come into contact with a rabies-infected animal should seek immediate emergency attention: post-exposure treatment has a high success rate if administered early. Late-stage rabies (when symptoms begin to occur) is untreatable and fatal.

Typhoid



Typhoid has been reported in the UAE.

Typhoid is a highly contagious bacterial infection, transmitted by the ingestion of food and water contaminated with infected faeces. Symptoms include a high temperature, a rash made up of small red spots, headaches, stomach pain and diarrhoea; serious complications, including internal bleeding and becoming comatose, are possible. While a typhoid vaccine is available, it does not guarantee immunity.

Hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E)



Hepatitis poses a risk to travellers in the UAE.

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. The three main variations (A, B and C) are caused by infections from parasites, bacteria or viruses, but are transmitted by different means.

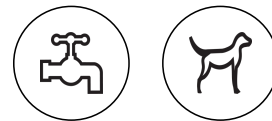
Leishmaniasis



Although rare across the country, leishmaniasis has been reported infrequently in rural regions of the UAE.

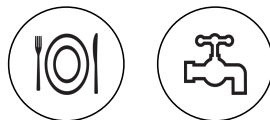
Leishmaniasis is a parasitic infection transmitted by the bite of sand flies, which are most active during early morning and late evening hours. Symptoms of cutaneous leishmaniasis include swollen glands and sores; symptoms of visceral leishmaniasis include fever, swelling of the liver or spleen and weight loss. Leishmaniasis can be treated with a course of Amphotericin B, an antifungal.

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)



Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a viral infection transmitted by close physical contact with an infected person or animal or via the coughing and sneezing of infected persons. Symptoms include breathing difficulties, coughing and fever and – in severe cases – pneumonia or kidney failure. There is no treatment for MERS, beyond supportive hospital care and bed rest.

Schistosomiasis



Schistosomiasis has been reported in bodies of freshwater in rural areas of the UAE.

Schistosomiasis (also known as bilharzia or katayama fever) is a parasitic infection, transmitted through contact with infected water sources, usually freshwater lakes or rivers. Saltwater and chlorinated pools are not affected by schistosomiasis. Symptoms include a rash, fever, muscle pain, abdominal pain and the enlargement of the spleen and/or liver. The disease can be treated via the administration of praziquantel. If left untreated, schistosomiasis can cause serious chronic gastrointestinal or central nervous system diseases.

Recent incidents

10 July 2023 - 11 July 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Authorities confirm MERS-CoV case in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi emirate

Health authorities reported on 10 July that one case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) was detected in a 28-year-old man in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi emirate. The patient, who was hospitalised on 8 June, had no history of contact with dromedaries, goats or sheep. No secondary cases have been reported thus far.

Covid-19: ● Low Risk



Summary

The UAE initially kept cases and fatalities low after imposing stringent curfews and lockdowns to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Vaccination rate is high in the country. Authorities have lifted remaining travel and domestic restrictions.

What is the current nationwide Policy?: None

Policy starts: 07 November 2022

Policy ends: indef

Policy explanation:

COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.

Policy source: <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/handling-the-covid-19-outbreak>

Last update: 13 October 2023



Infection

Infection Level: Low

Infection rate: 0.0 cases per 100k in the last 14 days

As of date: 09 November 2023

Hotspots: -



International Travel

International Flights

Is there a ban on international commercial flights? Partial
Through what date? indef

Flight Ban Explanation:

Emirates and Etihad Airways flights are operating to all other international destinations in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and North and South America.

Last Update: 23 November 2023

Entry and Borders

Is there a ban on entry for any travellers? Partial
Through what date? indef

Travellers from where are banned? Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Dominican Republic, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Uganda

Land border: Partially Open

Maritime border: Partially Open

Entry Rules Explanation:

Travellers are allowed entry without restrictions. PCR tests and vaccination certificates are no longer required for entry.

The issuance of 30-day tourist visas for travellers from Uganda, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Cameroon, Liberia, Burundi, Republic of Guinea, Gambia, Togo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Benin, Ivory Coast, Congo, Rwanda,

Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Comoros, and the Dominican Republic to Dubai has been suspended until further notice.

The issuance of visitor, residence and tourist permits for all other travellers across all Emirates has resumed.

Cruise ships are allowed to dock at the Zayed Port and Sir Bani Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, Port Rashid in Dubai and Port Khalid in Sharjah.

Land borders have been reopened to travellers from Oman. Some crossings with Saudi Arabia have reopened but remain exclusive to GCC citizens.

Entry Rules: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/united-arab-emirates/entry-requirements>
<https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/passports-and-traveling/modes-of-travel>

Last Update:

Testing

Do travellers need to take a COVID-19 test No

When?

Is it mandatory or optional?

Test Type:

Minimum age requirement:

Pre-travel test validity, in hours:

After arrival test days:

Testing Explanation:

Testing Rules: -

Last Update: 23 November 2023



Health and Travel Documentations

Do arriving travellers need any health and/or travel documentation? No

Documentation Explanation:

Last Update: 13 November 2023



Tracing App

Do travellers need to use a contact tracing app after arriving? No

Tracing App Explanation:

There is no mandatory national contact tracing app at this time.

Last Update: 23 November 2023



Quarantine on Arrival

Who needs to quarantine on arrival Some travellers

Travellers from where need to quarantine?

How many days is quarantine? 10

Is it self-quarantine or operated by the government? Self

Quarantine Explanation:

Quarantine Rules: <https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/justice-safety-and-the-law/handling-the-covid-19-outbreak/quarantining-to-fight-covid-19>
Last Update: 2023-11-23

Exit

Is there a ban on exit for any travellers? No

Are there special requirements to exit? No

Exit Requirements Explanation:

There are no specific requirements for foreign nationals to exit the country, but travellers must comply with testing rules of their destination.

Exit Requirements (URL): <https://www.emirates.com/uk/english/help/covid-19/dubai-travel-requirements/tourists/>
Last Update: 23 November 2023

Vaccination

Percent vaccinated with at least one dose: 101.018 as of 06 Jul 2022

Percent fully vaccinated: 103.72 as of 20 Jun 2022

Is vaccination mandatory for entry? No

Fully vaccinated are exempt from: -

Minimum age for vaccine requirements for travel:

Exemptions for vaccine requirements for travel:

"Fully vaccinated" is defined by the destination as:

Accepted vaccines, validity and special age restrictions:

Is mixing of vaccine doses authorised? N/A

Are specific combinations of mixed doses required?

"Boosted" is defined by the destination as:

Accepted boosters:

"Recently recovered" is defined by the destination as:

Recovery status is valid from days until after .

Vaccination certificates accepted:

Vaccination certificates accepted in the following languages:

Recent recovery document required:

Recent recovery document accepted in the following languages:

Explanation:

Travellers are allowed entry without restrictions.

Sources:

<https://ae.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>

Last change to vaccination policy:

07 November 2022

Last Update:

13 November 2023

Other International Travel Restrictions

Exit Requirements Explanation:

Last Update:



Domestic Situation



Areas on Lockdown

Last Update:



Areas under Curfew

Last Update:



Domestic Travel

Domestic Travel Explanation:

Last Update:



Other Domestic Restrictions

There are no domestic restrictions in place.

Last Update: 13 October 2023

Resources

Government COVID Site: <https://covid19.ncema.gov.ae/en>

Health Dept COVID Site: <https://mohap.gov.ae/en/covid-19>

There are no recent incidents

Local Travel : ● Moderate Risk

Travel Safety

Air Travel: The UAE's main international airports are located in **Dubai** and **Abu Dhabi**, though a growing number of carriers have begun servicing **Sharjah** as well. Smaller international airports are **Ras al-Khaimah (RKT/OMRK)**, **Fujairah (FJR/OMFJ)** and **Al Ain (AAN/OMAL)**. There is no intercity air service between the seven emirates, though taxi and bus services are available.

Dubai International Airport (DXB/OMDB), situated approximately four kilometres (2.5 miles) southeast of **Dubai city centre**, serves as the principal hub for **Dubai's** flagship Emirates airline and a sub-hub for a number of large carriers. **Dubai International Airport** is one of the focal points of a uniquely severe zero tolerance national drug strategy and has seen a build-up of security in recent years. Dubai authorities have been known to stop tourists on layovers at the airport and are now using extremely sensitive electronic detection equipment and testing bodily fluids to screen for traces of illegal substances.

Efficient and safe public transport alternatives servicing the city include the Dubai Metro, Dubai International Airport Buses and fixed-fare airport taxis. Dubai Metro trains run at 10-minute intervals between stations located across the city. Bus stations are located opposite both terminals and serve the most popular corridors in the city centre. Airport buses take around 20 minutes to the city centre. Airport taxis booked at the arrivals hall are a more expensive option.

Abu Dhabi International Airport (AUH/OMAA), situated approximately 30 km (19 miles) east of **Abu Dhabi city centre**, is an important hub for Etihad Airways. Though airport security lacks the same emphasis on contraband detection found in other Emirati hubs, baggage handling systems are equipped with online security screening, and security surveillance is designed to respond to suspicious behaviour. The airport has a biometric face scan system.

Several public bus routes arrive outside the arrivals halls of **Terminals 1 and 2** and offer efficient and reliable service between the airport and the city centre at 40-60 minute intervals. Taxis also offer safe and reliable intra- and inter-city service from the arrivals halls of **Terminals 1 and 2**.

Sharjah International Airport (SHJ/OMSJ), situated approximately 10km (6.2 miles)

from **Sharjah city centre** and about 15km (nine miles) from **Dubai**, has begun taking on an increasing number of international flights. The conservative character of **Sharjah** is reflected in a strictly enforced ban on obscene publications (subject to variable interpretation), as well as a restriction on the import and export of alcohol, though only for Muslim passengers.

Airport taxis are readily available outside the arrival dome. Travel fare from **Sharjah International Airport** to the **Sharjah city centre** is around AED50 (USD13) depending on time of day and specific destination. Taxi fares from **Sharjah** to **Dubai** range from AED50-100 (USD13-28). Passengers are advised to settle on a price before hiring the taxi or ensure the taxi has a functioning meter. Airport buses are available for transfers to the city centre at a nominal charge.

Airspace: Emirates and Etihad Airways flights are operating to all other international destinations in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Southeast Asia and North and South America.

Borders and Entry: Travellers are allowed entry without restrictions. PCR tests and vaccination certificates are no longer required for entry.

The issuance of 30-day tourist visas for travellers from Uganda, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Cameroon, Liberia, Burundi, Republic of Guinea, Gambia, Togo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Benin, Ivory Coast, Congo, Rwanda, Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Comoros, and the Dominican Republic to Dubai has been suspended until further notice.

The issuance of visitor, residence and tourist permits for all other travellers across all Emirates has resumed.

Cruise ships are allowed to dock at the Zayed Port and Sir Bani Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, Port Rashid in Dubai and Port Khalid in Sharjah.

Land borders have been reopened to travellers from Oman. Some crossings with Saudi Arabia have reopened but remain exclusive to GCC citizens.

Exit: There are no specific requirements for foreign nationals to exit the country, but travellers must comply with testing rules of their destination.

Road Travel: Traffic in the UAE moves on the right. Roads in the urban areas, particularly in **Dubai** and **Abu Dhabi**, are in excellent condition, but motorists often drive recklessly. The UAE has one of the world's highest accident rates and driving death rates. Remain alert for unexpected moves from other vehicles on the road.

An International Driver's Permit (IDP) is required along with your own driving licence. Expatriates living in the UAE need to get a local licence. Authorities operate a zero-tolerance policy towards drink-driving. Failure to heed this warning could result in expulsion or incarceration. Emirati criminal law prohibits obscene language and gestures in public. Each year, foreign nationals are fined and/or detained for up to 30 days on allegations of having disrespected other motorists. Always show respect and composure while driving in the UAE. Driving while on a mobile phone is illegal.

Desert driving should only be done with a 4x4 vehicle in excellent condition. Do not venture into the desert alone: desert driving expeditions should always involve more than one vehicle. Take plenty of water, carry an up-to-date map or GPS, appropriate clothing, a telephone and emergency kit and plan their route prior to departure. Always make sure someone in the city knows when you plan to go and when you intend to return.

Public Transport

Ferries and Boats: In **Dubai**, small ferries (abra) carry passengers across the **Creek** that separates the districts of **Deira** and **Bur Dubai**. The **Creek** is rarely rough enough to raise fears of falling overboard even though there are no guard rails and the boats may fill up beyond official capacity. Men usually avoid sitting next to a woman on a full-size abra. A ferry service also operates to ports in Iran from Sharjah, though timetables can be erratic.

Buses: Bus companies across the UAE vary in maintenance standards. Clearly marked vehicles in the major cities will have been subject to the scrutiny of government quality control inspectors and guaranteed road safety. Protect bags and valuables from risk of petty theft at bus stations. Dubai Inter Emirate Bus Service connects **Dubai** with the other emirates from multiple stations throughout the city. Bus connections between **Abu Dhabi** and **Dubai** can be found at **Ibn Battuta Bus Station** in **Dubai** or **Al Ghubaiba Bus Station** in **Bur Dubai** and the **Main Bus Station** in **Abu Dhabi**. Buses run almost every 30 minutes except on Thursdays, when buses start at 6:00 local time. Long-haul public buses also service smaller towns including **Sha'am**, **Jazeerah-al-Hamra** and **Rams**.

The Dubai municipality operates a network with more than 60 different bus routes that reach most points in the city. The bus system is almost exclusively used by the large population of migrant workers. Unaccompanied women may feel uncomfortable travelling alone in the predominantly male crowds. Men should not take seats in the three front rows, as these are reserved for women.

Metro: The Dubai Metro is modern and safe. It is monitored by more than 3,000 CCTV cameras and a dedicated police force. Most Dubai metros have a marked women's carriage. Service runs from 05:00-00:00 local time Monday-Thursday and Saturdays, 05:00-01:00 on Fridays and 08:00-00:00 on Sundays.

Taxis: Most foreign nationals use taxis exclusively. In **Dubai** and **Abu Dhabi** taxis can be hailed in the street or found at taxi stands off major arteries. Rates are usually set at a fixed price for travel within the city, with separate rates for transport between cities. In the smaller centres such as **Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah, Fujairah** and **Sharjah** public transportation is often nonexistent and taxis must be used. Non-metered taxis are often available and allow room for negotiation but haggling can be difficult. Ask in advance at your hotel or a local guide about what to pay as a fair price and pay when you exit. Hotel taxis generally charge much more than taxis hailed in the street. Taxis are generally safe but visitors, particularly women, should avoid sitting in the front seat and should be sensitive that "small talk" can be misinterpreted as over-friendliness or even a form of propositioning by some taxi drivers. It is also available to book a taxi via various ride-hailing apps.

Taxis are allowed to pick up passengers only in the emirate in which they are licensed so it is possible to take a taxi from one emirate to another, but the same driver will not be able to drive you back.

Vehicle Hire: Rental cars are a common way for visitors to move about the country. Rental vehicles are predominantly recent models and are well maintained.

Recent incidents

21 December 2023 - 23 December 2023

● **Moderate risk:** Immigration enforcement operation triggers disruptions at Châlons Vatry Airport

The Air Transport Gendarmerie Brigade (BGTA) indicated that Châlons Vatry Airport (XCR/LFOK) in the Marne department was closed since evening hours local time on 21 December, due to an immigration enforcement operation on board a Legend Airlines charter flight from Fujairah Airport (SHJ/OMSJ) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Managua Airport (MGA/MNMG) in Nicaragua. At least two passengers were detained.

16 December 2023 - 17 December 2023

- **Moderate risk:** Road closures announced for Abu Dhabi marathon on 16 December

Road closures will be in effect across Abu Dhabi from 00:00-14:00 local time on 16 December (20:00 GMT, 15 December-10:00 GMT, 16 December) for the Abu Dhabi Marathon (ADNOC). Affected roads include King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Street between 00:00-07:30, Corniche Street between 02:00-14:00 and Sheikh Rashid Bin Saaed Street between 04:00-12:00, among others.

14 December 2023 - 15 December 2023

- **Low risk:** Iranian officials to allow visa-free entry for nationals of select countries

Iranian officials announced that nationals of select countries will be allowed to enter visa-free as part of policies aimed at boosting tourism arrivals and attracting more visitors from countries around the world. Further details, such as the start date of this policy, were not immediately available.

04 December 2023 - 05 December 2023

- **Low risk:** Fijian and Emirati officials allow mutual visa-free entry

Fijian and Emirati officials allowed 90-day visa-free entry for each other's nationals, effective until further notice, as part of efforts to promote tourism and business opportunities.

Destination Hotspots

Cities, Towns, Villages: In the **Bur Dubai area** of **Dubai**, west of the creek, take special precautions when visiting the **Satwa area** at night. The danger until is mostly limited to enduring harassment, mostly aimed at women, including touching and grabbing, but their behaviour could easily become more violent. Expatriate females have been sexually assaulted while walking alone through underground pedestrian walkways near the **Abu Dhabi Corniche**.

General Areas: Most areas of the UAE are generally free of petty crime. There have, however, been specific threats that al-Qaeda intended to attack the UAE. Remain alert to suspicious behaviour and heed warnings issued by Riskline, local officials, and diplomatic personnel in the area. The UAE is close to Iraq and Saudi Arabia, two hotspots of Islamist militant activity. Be mindful of the fact that terrorists have shown a preference for targeting locations with large concentrations of people, especially foreign nationals.

Photography of bridges, sensitive civil infrastructure, government buildings, embassies and military personnel is prohibited. Violations may incur penalties ranging from confiscation of photographic equipment to arbitrary detention.

Safety

Emergency Numbers

Hazards	922	Water Failure
Hazards	911	Electricity Failure
Other	996	Coast guard
Fire	997	
Medical	998	
Police	999	

Beaches and Public Areas: The beaches frequented by guests of Dubai's many five star hotels in **Jumeirah** and **Jebel Ali** are crowded with visitors, many of them Western women wearing bikini-style swimsuits. Under no circumstance should women go topless on the beach. Bikinis and swimwear can be worn on public and private beaches, but travellers are recommended to cover up knees and shoulders once they leave the beaches.

Undercover police patrols on the beaches of **Dubai** were initiated several years ago. Floodlights expose misbehaviour at night. Couples kissing or touching, men watching women or taking photographs, people swimming fully clothed or in their underwear and topless sunbathers can be stopped, questioned and even charged if they are repeat offenders. Strong currents can occasionally make **Ajman Beach** dangerous. Ask for local advice about water safety when choosing where to swim.

Behaviour: Officials decriminalised the cohabitation of unmarried couples, but it is uncertain if this provision was also made available for Emirati nationals or only for foreigners; extramarital sex remains punishable by up to six months in prison. Travellers are still advised to avoid public displays of affection as it is still likely to attract unwanted attention and offend the locals. Homosexuality and prostitution are illegal; offenders are subject to severe penalties, including prison time and deportation.

Corruption: Residents are unlikely to come into contact with any form of corruption. Never offer a bribe to speed up bureaucratic procedures. There are effective anti-corruption laws in place in the UAE and corruption in business is rare. Under no

circumstances should bribes be proffered for services. Where solicited, report the circumstances to higher authorities immediately.

Drugs and Alcohol: Since 2021, authorities have significantly relaxed many of the country's notoriously conservative laws with respect to alcohol consumption and drug use. Officials decriminalised the act of consuming or selling alcohol without a licence even for Muslims. Drinking is only allowed, however, in private or in licensed establishments. The age for drinking in **Abu Dhabi** is 18, but it is 21 in all other emirates, excluding **Sharjah**, the most conservative emirate, where drinking is still banned. Hotels cannot legally serve alcohol to anyone under 21. Although the country continues to have a tough policy on drugs (possession of poppy seeds could land a traveller four years in prison), officials announced that they will not take legal action against travellers arriving with food, drinks or other goods that contain THC. They will simply confiscate and destroy the products.

Import and Export: The importation of narcotics, pork products (illegal in Sharjah) and pornographic material is forbidden. A permit is required from local authorities to import firearms and fireworks. Offenders are subject to jail sentences and fines.

Photography: Photographing government buildings and military installations is strictly forbidden. Also note that engaging in mapping activities involving the use of GPS equipment may result in detention.

Security Services: It is crucial to remember that certain laws in the emirates differ by degree from those in the West and the penalties can be stiff for all violations. This is particularly true of issues associated with public morality, such as drinking, drugs and sex. Response times for emergency services in the UAE are adequate. Uniformed police generally try to respond to traffic accidents and violent crimes within 10-20 minutes. Response times to other calls can range from 45 minutes to two hours in rural areas. Sophisticated equipment is available to the UAE police services for investigative purposes.

Culture

Religious and Cultural Sensitivities: Islam is the official religion of all of the seven emirates. Adherence and enforcement of Shari'a, however, varies from one emirate to the other. In general, the UAE is relatively tolerant of other religions but does not tolerate certain practices and proselytising is strictly prohibited. Therefore, it is advisable to refrain from discussing your own religious beliefs. Someone may interpret the conversation as an effort to convert them. **Dubai** tends to have the most lax enforcement of religious rules, especially for visitors, while **Sharjah** is the strictest. There are several low-key Christian churches that hold religious services in **Dubai**.

Political Sensitivities: Foreign visitors should tread lightly on the subject of democracy, remaining mindful of the fact that criticising the system of inherited rule can produce awkward reactions. Sensitive topics include tensions between Sunnis and Shi'as and the ongoing Israel/Palestinian question, despite the UAE's recently established diplomatic relations with Israel. Another delicate topic is the status of migrant workers. The UAE has been harshly criticised for what some view as exploitation and mistreatment of workers. The subject of guest workers might cause some individuals to react with discomfort.

Specific Traveller Advice

Female Travellers

Local Customs and Laws: There are some local customs and laws that a female traveller should take into consideration in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where the legal system is based on Islamic law. Physical contact between men and women is not socially acceptable and can be grounds for arrest; in a private setting do not shake hands with local men unless they initiate it. When using public transport, sit in women's only sections, which are located in the front rows. Avoid sitting next to the driver on taxis, unless the driver is a woman. It is advisable for couples that have Arab or Muslim names to carry a copy of a marriage certificate. While standards for women's dress are more relaxed in major cities, resorts, private beaches and other areas frequented by tourists, female visitors are advised to wear loose-fitting and concealing clothing with high necks, skirts worn well below the knee and sleeves below the elbow. Attire considered too revealing may lead to arrest, particularly in more conservative Muslim regions of **Sharjah** and **Ajman**. Women entering mosques are expected to cover their hair with a traditional headscarf (hijab). Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel and be respectful and mindful of any cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussions.

Safety: There are some safety concerns female travellers should take into consideration in the UAE. Crime levels are low, but sexual harassment, usually in the form of looks and comments, are common in public spaces. Although the authorities recently decided to revoke laws permitting "honour crimes," law enforcement officials remain deeply conservative and extramarital affairs remains punishable by up to six months in prison. Women who report rape are often arrested, convicted and imprisoned for extramarital sex. Female travellers are advised to contact their home consulate/embassy for legal advice prior to reporting crimes that are sexual in nature to local police. Exercise personal safety awareness if walking alone at night. Stick to main, well-lit streets and avoid walking through desolate areas, beaches or unfamiliar neighbourhoods. Refrain from wearing headphones while walking in the evening.

Health and Wellness: Women have some access to some specialised gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in the UAE. While menstrual pads are widely available, tampons are sold at large supermarkets and pharmacies. Abortion is illegal except in cases of severe foetal defects or when a woman's life is at risk. Pregnancy outside marriage may lead to arrest, as it is considered evidence of

extramarital sex. Emergency contraceptives are not available. Bring an adequate supply of oral contraceptives and feminine hygiene products, which may not be available locally.

LGBT+

Homosexuality is illegal in the United Arab Emirates. It is a criminal and punishable offence and persons found guilty may be sentenced to fines, public lashings and imprisonment for women or death in the case of men. There are no legal protections for LGBT+ persons in the country. Same-sex marriage is illegal. LGBT+ activity and persons are not socially accepted. LGBT+ travellers are advised to keep their sexual orientation and gender identities private. Prior to travel, review your privacy settings on social media platforms and reconsider the use of dating applications due to the risk of harassment and possible entrapment by local authorities. Refrain from engaging in any conversations about sexuality or LGBT+ issues. Avoid all public displays of affection, including hand-holding. Book separate hotel rooms. Transgender travellers are advised to have a passport and identification changed to reflect their new gender before travelling.

Technology & Communication Risk

Travellers are likely to face risks related to information and communication technology (ICT) in the United Arab Emirates.

Internet access and social media have some restrictions. Skype is blocked and popular Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) services, such as those offered by Whatsapp, Facebook and Viber, are restricted on mobile connections. Internet and social media content that are deemed to be anti-government or anti-Islam cannot be accessed freely; any associated social media posting can be unlawful and users are subject to arrest and jail sentences.

There are some concerns related to device searches or sensitive technology. Device searches and inspections at the border are unlikely. There are some restrictions in relation to bringing or operating sensitive equipment, which may include photo cameras, satellite phones, listening or recording devices, radio transmitters and other GPS systems, in the country. State or criminal penetration of private data is certain. Authorities implement pervasive state surveillance of ICT networks in the country.

Travellers should ensure that their ICT usage is compliant with local laws and regulations during their stay in the country. Travellers should expect possible restrictions in accessing specific internet websites/platforms and/or digital services. Posting specific content online may also be regulated.

Travellers should note that ICT laws and practices are subject to change on short notice, and travellers are recommended to confirm the legality/appropriateness of their specific ICT needs prior to departure.

Travellers should be prepared for possible device searches at the border and should ensure that their ICT devices are compliant with local laws and regulations prior to their arrival to the country. The country is known for its surveillance of telephone and electronic communications and travellers should assume that communication is monitored all the time. Hotel rooms may also be subject to surveillance and even accessed without the consent of the guest. Cyber criminal groups may be present in the country. Travellers should avoid bringing sensitive data into the country, unless robust hardware and software data security measures are in place; all computers should be equipped with an up-to-date, reliable, anti-virus system. Devices should never be left out of sight unguarded; if leaving your computer in a hotel room, make use of a safe box for storing it. It is also recommended to refrain from accessing or storing sensitive information in computers and other electronic devices during their stay in the country.

Legal notice

Any use of this document and its content is subject to the following terms and conditions, which you accept by using the document from Riskline. If you do not accept these terms and conditions, you are not allowed to use the document.

All written and graphic content belong to Riskline. Such content is provided by Riskline to customers, employees, and the general public for lawful purposes only. The document is subject to change at any time at the discretion of Riskline and without prior written notice. You may not modify the document or any Riskline printed matter or images in any way.

No warranty. All information is provided by Riskline on an 'as is' basis only, and does not constitute a warranty of any kind, neither express nor implied. Riskline provides no representations and warranties, express or implied, including the implied warranties of suitability for a particular purpose, merchantability, and no infringement.

Limitation of liability. In no event will Riskline be liable to any party for any direct, indirect, special or other consequential damages for any use of this Document, or on any other hyper linked website, including, without limitation, any lost profits, business interruption, loss of programs or other data on your information handling system or otherwise, even if we are expressly advised of the possibility of such damages.

© Riskline 2023