



My Drift

Title: Dubai

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I have never been to Dubai and until about 2 years ago I had never met anybody from there. At one of the bars I used to go to on a regular basis, there was this guy who was always alone, quiet, and sit at the end of the bar. He seemed out-of-place and I was pretty sure he was an Arab. Since I'm quiet, usually alone, and sat at the other end of the bar, we never spoke to each other. That is until one day when the only empty bar stool was next to him. Well, the bartender knew both of us and she introduced me to him and we started talking. He spoke good English and was an Arab Muslim from Dubai. He was an Engineer working on a 2-year contract at Schofield Barracks. The thing he liked best about the United States was the beer! We became a very unlikely friends. He told me several stories about the mid-east, Dubai, and places he had worked including Pakistan. When he found out that I write about things, he asked me to write about, "The Chinese Presence in the Province of Balochistan, Pakistan." I told him I would do that if he promised not to blow up the bar.



Dubai is a city in the Emirate of Dubai in The United Arab Emirates (UAE). This country is a federal absolute monarchy sovereign state in Western Asia at the southeast end of the Arabian Peninsula on the Persian Gulf, bordering Oman to the east and Saudi Arabia to the south, as well as sharing maritime borders with Qatar to the west and Iran to the north. In 2016, the UAE's population was 9.3 million, of which 1.5 million are Emirati citizens and 7.8 million are expatriates. To clarify, Emirati citizens are actual citizens of the UAE and all those expatriates have citizenship in another country but are living in the UAE. Most expatriates only stay for a period of time and plan to return to their home country eventually, although there are many who never return to their country of citizenship.

The country is a federation of seven emirates that was established on 2 December 1971. The constituent emirates are Abu Dhabi (which serves as the capital), Ajman, **Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah, and Umm al-Quwain. Each emirate is governed by an absolute monarch; together, they jointly form the Federal Supreme Council. One of the monarchs (traditionally always the Emir of Abu Dhabi) is selected as the President of the United Arab Emirates.**

So, Dubai is an emirate and a city. What the heck is an emirate? An emirate is a political territory that is ruled by a dynastic Arabic or Islamic monarch styled emir. To make it easy to understand, UAE is a country like the United States and it consists of seven smaller 'emirates' which are similar to states. Dubai and Abu Dhabi are 2 of those 7 states. In the Emirate of Dubai is the city of Dubai.

The UAE's oil reserves are the seventh-largest in the world while its natural gas reserves are the world's seventeenth-largest. Sheikh Zayed, ruler of Abu Dhabi and the first President of the UAE, oversaw the development of the Emirates and steered oil revenues into healthcare, education, and infrastructure. The UAE's economy is the most diversified in the middle east, while its most populous city of Dubai is an important global city and an international aviation hub. Nevertheless, the country is much less reliant on oil and gas than in previous years and is economically focusing on tourism and business.

The UAE's rising international profile has led some analysts to identify it as a regional and middle power. It is a member of the United Nations, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, OPEC, the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.



Dubai Sunset

Now that we know a little bit about The United Arab Emirates, let's focus on the city of Dubai – one of the most interesting places on earth.

Fun Facts About Dubai

Located on the southeast coast of the Persian Gulf with a population of about 2,500,000 residents, Dubai is the most populous city in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Although English is widely used, Arabic is the official language of Dubai. Islam is the official religion of Dubai.

Emirati citizens make up only 15 percent of the Dubai population. The other 85 percent of residents are expatriates. This population is mostly Asian, chiefly Indian (51%), Pakistani (16%), Bangladeshis (9%) and Filipinos (3%.)



While most of The UAE is black (no lights), Dubai is lit up like a Christmas tree as this night photo from space shows.

Dubai is approximately 52 feet above sea level and covers an area of 1,588 sq. miles. About 88 sq. miles of Dubai are the result of land reclaimed from the sea.

The currency of Dubai is the dirham. Currently, 1 US Dollar equals 3.67 United Arab Emirates Dirham.

Dubai lies directly within the Arabian Desert. The flat sandy desert gives way to the Western Hajar Mountains, which run alongside Dubai's border with Oman at Hatta. As a desert climate, most days in Dubai are sunny year-around. During January, the coldest month, daytime high temperatures average 75 °F while overnight low temperatures average 57 °F. Summers in Dubai are extremely hot, windy, and humid, with high temperatures averaging 106 °F and overnight lows around 86 °F in August. Rainfall averages 3.71 inches per year.

There are two main sources of water in Dubai: Desalinated seawater and groundwater. While groundwater is used for agriculture, drinking water is provided almost entirely from desalinated seawater across the Emirate. You might be better off drinking bottled water.

Dubai has one of the world's fastest growing economies, with a growth rate of 6.1% and a projected GNP of \$108 billion U.S. dollars.



Dubai's Burj Khalifa – rising to a height of 2,722 feet – is the world's tallest building. Burj Khalifa was designed by Adrian Smith then of the Chicago-headquartered Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. Opened in 2010 as part of the new development called Downtown Dubai, the Burj Khalifa building was named in honor of the ruler of Abu Dhabi and president of the United Arab Emirates, Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The Top Sky observation deck at 1,601 feet is the world's highest observation deck. If you ever get to Dubai, you can visit the Top Sky for approximately \$136 U.S. dollars.

Real estate and construction, trade and financial services are the largest contributors to Dubai's economy. Revenues from oil and natural gas account for less than 5% of the emirate's revenues.

China is Dubai's largest international trading partner, followed by India, followed by the United States.

Tourism is an important part of the Dubai government's strategy to maintain the flow of foreign cash into the emirate. Based on air traffic, Dubai as the fourth most popular destination city for tourism worldwide.



Dubai International Airport

The Dubai International Airport (DXB) was the seventh busiest airport in the world by passenger traffic in 2014 with 70.4 million passengers. Dubai is the hub for Emirates Airlines, the national airline of Dubai. As of 2014, it flew to 142 destinations in more 70 countries across six continents.

Kissing in public in Dubai is strictly illegal and can result in deportation. Visitors to Dubai are prohibited from wearing “indecent clothing” that reveals too much skin. The UAE has enforced anti-indecency prohibitions in all public places (aside from beaches, clubs, and bars.)



Dubai has no natural rivers; however, Dubai does have a natural inlet, Dubai Creek, which has been dredged to make it deep enough for large vessels to pass through. Dubai Creek runs northeast-southwest through the city.

More than 3,000 taxis operate within Dubai making an average of daily 192,000 trips, carrying about 385,000 passengers. All Dubai taxi services are licensed and are easily identifiable by their cream-colored bodies and varied roof colors. The Dubai Taxi Corporation has a Ladies Taxi service, with pink roofs, exclusively for female passengers, using female drivers.



The Dubai Metro is a rapid transit rail network in Dubai. The Red Line and Green Line are operational, with four further lines planned (Blue, Purple, Pink and Gold Lines). These first two lines run underground in the city center and on elevated viaducts elsewhere (elevated railway). All trains are fully automated and driverless, and, together with stations, are air conditioned. Hey, this looks like the Oahu Rail (if it ever gets built).





Burg AI Arab

Dubai's hotel rooms were rated as the second most expensive in the world, after Geneva, Switzerland, making it a good place to visit via a cruise ship. The average rates for a Standard Room is \$1,248 - \$2,419. More than a half a million cruise passengers dock at the luxurious Dubai Cruise Terminal at Port Rashid each year.

Seven of the 10 world's tallest hotels are located in Dubai. The third tallest but most iconic is the Burg Al Arab, a luxury hotel designed to mimic the sail of a ship. A British travel writer called it "The world's only 7-Star Hotel." The Burj Al Arab stands on an artificial island 920 ft. from Jumeirah beach, connected to the city by a private curving bridge. It has a helipad near the roof at 689 ft. above ground.



Dubai Miracle Garden

The world's largest flower garden opened in Dubai on Valentine's Day in 2013. The Dubai Miracle Garden has 45 million flowers grown with drip irrigation.



Dubai Mall

With more than 70 shopping centers, Dubai has been called the "shopping capital of the Middle East." Home to 1,200 shops, the Dubai Mall is the world's largest shopping center based on total area.

Also referred to as "the City of Gold," Dubai is home to the Gold Souk that houses more than 300 retail shops dedicated to gold. It is estimated that the souk contains 10 tons of gold at any given time. In 2017, 40 percent of the world's physical gold trade occurred in Dubai.

Dubai celebrates two major holidays including Eid al Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan, and the December 2 National Day, which celebrates the formation of the United Arab Emirates.

While the sale and consumption of pork is legal in Dubai for non-Muslims, it is available only in designated areas of supermarkets and airports.

Internet content is regulated throughout the UAE, and a proxy server filters content that the government deems to be inconsistent with the values of the country, such as sites pertaining to dating, gay and lesbian networks, and pornography.

Football (soccer to Americans) and cricket are the most popular sports in Dubai.



The Dubai police fleet includes a Lamborghini, Ferrari and Bentley. To catch speeders who can outrun other cars.



Even though Dubai is in the middle of a desert, you can snow ski indoors at the Mall of the Emirates.



There is much more going on in this international city such as golf tournaments, auto racing, etc. but I think you get the idea. Dubai is not like other cities in Middle East Countries. In fact, there are hundreds of bars and nightclubs in Dubai where people drink beer, wine, other alcoholic drinks, and actually have fun. Doing that in Saudi Arabia and most other Middle East Countries could get you time in prison and/or a public flogging. Those who supply alcohol to Saudis are liable to the harshest penalties including the death penalty.

With the possible exception of Dubai, I don't know why anybody in their right mind would want to visit a Middle East Muslim country or city. Currently, alcohol prohibition is enforced as follows:

Mid-East Country	Alcoholic Drinking Rules
Afghanistan	No alcohol allowed – Period
Bangladesh	Non-Muslims can drink
India	Alcoholic drinks are legal in most states and territories
Iran	Non-Muslims can drink
Iraq	No alcohol allowed – Period
Kuwait	No alcohol allowed – Period
Libya	No alcohol allowed – Period
Pakistan	Non-Muslims can drink
Qatar	No alcohol allowed – Period
Saudi Arabia	No alcohol allowed – Period
Sri Lanka	Liquor is prohibited for women but okay for men
United Arab Emirates	Non-Muslims can drink except in the emirate of Sharjah
Yemen	No alcohol allowed – Period



Dubai Bars and Nightclubs

Yes, you can have fun in Dubai but there are rules, especially if you are a Muslim.

Here is Everything You Need to Know About Drinking in Dubai

One of the biggest misconceptions about Dubai is that you can't drink. And if you do there are strict repercussions. This isn't the case, but it's also not a 24-hour booze-fueled party.

The city of Dubai is the hub of tourism for the United Arab Emirates. For this reason, and because of the large population of expats living in Dubai, drinking is allowed for non-Muslims.

That said, the city is still a Muslim city that follows the rule of Sharia Law (the religious legal system for the Islamic faith). So, while Dubai tolerates alcohol consumption by non-Muslims it still imposes strict rules.

Tourists are permitted to drink in licensed restaurants, nightclubs, bars, and private clubs attached to licensed hotels. It is unacceptable and punishable to drink in public places—even beaches. Dubai is incredibly strict about public drunkenness and has zero tolerance for drinking and driving.

You Need a License to Buy Booze (But There's a Way Around It)

To purchase alcohol at a store, both residents and tourists require a license. But there is a loophole: To avoid having to obtain a license, visitors can purchase alcohol at Duty Free in the airport and bring it back to their hotel. But, if you do want to apply for a license, you must be over the age of 21 and earn an excess of 3,000 AED a month (just over \$800).

The Police Are Always Watching

While in Dubai, you might notice the absence of police officers in public areas and think it's okay to crack open a beer. Be advised, the police are there, blending in, dressed as civilians. Being drunk in public can lead to sentences of six months in jail and hefty fines, so wait on the beer.

Strict punishments aside, Dubai understands that its visitors and non-Muslim residents want a good cocktail every once in a while. The wine, beer and cocktail programs at hotels and restaurants are exceptional, with cutting-edge mixology, jaw-dropping wine lists and expertly curated liquor selections. The four and five-star hotels (and, of course, that extra-exclusive seven-star hotel) pride themselves on bringing in some of the best champagne, bartenders, servers, and sommeliers in the world.

The average price of a beer is about 40 Dirhams (or \$11 US dollars) and about 70 Dirhams (\$19 US) for a cocktail.



Dubai Bartender

So, how do they keep Muslims from drinking in Dubai?

In theory, Muslims obey the Islamic faith and have no desire to have a cold beer on a hot day.

Non-Muslim residents must get a liquor license to drink alcohol at home and in licensed bars and nightclubs.

Non-Muslim visitors can drink at the licensed hotel bars and nightclubs they are staying at. They can also drink at most other licensed bars and nightclubs by showing their passport and visa.

So, what does my Muslim friend say about drinking in Dubai?

He says that most of his friends and co-workers drink. He has no trouble obtaining booze in Dubai since he has many non-Muslim friends who can buy it for him. The only problem is finding a place to drink it. He usually has to drink his beer at home or at a friend's place. He doesn't want to get in trouble with the Muslim police.

With that said, he goes on to say that Dubai is the playground for "rich" Middle East Muslims. Hundreds of Muslims come to Dubai everyday to drink alcohol and party. He says that there are an estimated 30,000 prostitutes in Dubai. Every time they put a prostitute in jail or deport her, two more find their way into the city. There are many rich Muslims especially from Saudi Arabia who stay at 5-star hotels and payoff the staff and the police. They drink and fool around with the strippers/prostitutes and nobody bothers them. Yes, many Muslims drink alcohol and many more would like to drink alcohol if they could.

My friend says he is not rich enough to buy off the police or rent one of those prostitutes. But, he said that he was lucky to have a great job that allowed him to travel to Hawaii and other places in the world. The last email I received from him said he was back in Dubai getting ready for a new contract in Australia.

Before leaving Hawaii, he promised not to blow up any bars!

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