

ONE WAY AMERICA

Your Guide to United Arab Emirates

TELEPHONE: Country code (+971). Area codes vary by emirate and telecommunications service.

STANDARD TIME: GMT +4 hours throughout the year. The United Arab Emirates does not observe daylight saving time.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES: Metric.

ELECTRICITY: 230v AC, 50Hz. The UAE generally uses British-style Type G three-pin electrical sockets. U.S. appliances designed only for 110–120v will require a suitable voltage converter or transformer as well as a plug adapter. Many modern electronic devices are dual voltage, but the manufacturer's specifications should always be checked before use.

INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS: No routine vaccinations are required for entry from the United States. The U.S. Department of State currently lists vaccinations as "None" for entry to the UAE. Routine vaccinations should nevertheless be up to date, and travellers should check current health advice before departure. U.S. Travel Information

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: New Year's Day – 1 January; Eid Al Fitr – dates vary according to the Islamic calendar; Arafah Day and Eid Al Adha – dates vary; Islamic New Year – date varies; Prophet Mohammed's Birthday – date varies; UAE National Day – 2 and 3 December. Islamic holidays are determined according to the lunar calendar and may vary each year. u.ae

OFFICE HOURS: The UAE working week is generally Monday to Friday. Federal government offices operate eight hours per day from Monday to Thursday, with shorter hours on Friday. Private-sector working hours are generally up to 8 hours per day or 48 hours per week, although individual employers and industries may have different arrangements. Working hours are commonly reduced during Ramadan. u.ae+1

BANK HOURS: Generally Monday to Friday, with opening hours varying between banks and branches. Many branches in shopping centres have extended hours. Friday and weekend arrangements vary.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 999 – Police; 998 – Ambulance; 997 – Fire/Civil Defence. u.ae

U.S. EMBASSY IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

U.S. Embassy Abu Dhabi
Embassies District

Plot 38, Sector W59-02
Street No. 4
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Telephone: +971 2 414 2200
Emergency after-hours: +971 2 414 2200

The U.S. Embassy in Abu Dhabi provides consular assistance to U.S. citizens living or travelling in the UAE.

The United States also maintains a Consulate General in Dubai:

U.S. Consulate General Dubai
Corner of Al Seef Road and Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Road
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Telephone: +971 4 309 4000
Emergency: +971 4 309 4000

For current U.S. government information and consular services, visit the [U.S. Embassy & Consulate in the United Arab Emirates](#). U.S. Travel Information+1

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES IN THE UNITED STATES

Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
3522 International Court NW, Suite #400
Washington, DC 20008
USA

Telephone: +1 202 243 2400
Email: WashingtonEMB@mofa.gov.ae

The Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in Washington, D.C. provides diplomatic and consular services for the UAE in the United States.

The UAE also maintains Consulates General in New York, Houston and Los Angeles. Foreign Affairs Ministry

For current information, visit the [UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#).

Part 1 – Background Information on the United Arab Emirates

Background

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federation of seven emirates located in the Arabian Peninsula on the southeastern coast of the Arabian Gulf.

The seven emirates are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah.

The federation was established on 2 December 1971, when six emirates joined together. Ras Al Khaimah joined the federation in February 1972.

Abu Dhabi is the federal capital and the largest emirate by area. Dubai is the UAE's largest international business and tourism centre and is widely recognised as a major regional hub for finance, trade, aviation and logistics.

The UAE has developed rapidly over the past several decades, moving from an economy traditionally based on fishing, pearl diving, agriculture and trade to a highly diversified modern economy.

Oil and gas remain important, particularly to Abu Dhabi, while Dubai and the other emirates have developed substantial non-oil sectors including tourism, real estate, financial services, logistics, aviation, manufacturing and technology.

The UAE has a large expatriate population and is one of the most internationally diverse countries in the region.

Geography

The UAE occupies the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula and shares land borders with Saudi Arabia and Oman.

The country has an extensive coastline along the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

Much of the UAE consists of desert, with extensive sand dunes particularly in the interior.

The Hajar Mountains extend through parts of the eastern UAE, particularly around Fujairah and Ras Al Khaimah.

Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven emirates and includes numerous offshore islands.

Dubai is situated on the Arabian Gulf and is centred around a highly developed urban and commercial area.

The UAE's strategic position between Europe, Asia and Africa has contributed significantly to its development as an international transport, logistics and commercial hub.

Population

The UAE has a population of several million people, with expatriates making up the majority of the population.

The country has communities from around the world, including large populations from South Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe, North America and other parts of the Middle East.

The largest population centres include Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah.

English is widely used in business, commerce, education and everyday life, making the UAE relatively accessible for English-speaking expatriates.

Climate

The UAE has a hot desert climate.

Summers are extremely hot and humid, particularly in coastal areas, with temperatures frequently exceeding 40°C.

Winters are considerably milder and are generally regarded as the most comfortable time of year.

Rainfall is limited and irregular, although heavier rain can occasionally occur during the cooler months.

Humidity can be high along the coast, particularly during the summer.

Air conditioning is standard in homes, offices, schools, shopping centres and most public buildings.

Sand and dust storms can occasionally reduce visibility and affect transport.

Economy

The UAE has one of the most diversified and developed economies in the Middle East.

Abu Dhabi has substantial oil and gas resources, while Dubai has developed a particularly diverse economy.

Major sectors include:

- Oil and gas.
- Financial services.
- Real estate and construction.
- Tourism and hospitality.
- Aviation.
- Logistics and shipping.
- International trade.

- Retail.
- Manufacturing.
- Technology.
- Healthcare.
- Education.
- Professional and business services.

Dubai International Airport and the UAE's major ports contribute to the country's position as a global transportation and logistics centre.

The UAE continues to invest heavily in infrastructure, technology, renewable energy, tourism and other non-oil industries.

Language

Arabic is the official language of the UAE.

English is extremely widely spoken and is commonly used in business, education, tourism, healthcare and everyday commercial transactions.

Many other languages are spoken because of the UAE's large expatriate population.

Religion

Islam is the official religion of the UAE.

The country is predominantly Muslim, but the UAE also has substantial Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist and other religious communities.

The UAE permits a number of non-Muslim religious communities to practise their faith in designated places of worship.

Expats should familiarise themselves with local laws and customs concerning religion, public behaviour, dress and alcohol.

Education

The UAE has a mixture of government schools, private schools and international schools.

Public education generally follows the UAE national curriculum, while private and international schools may offer British, American, International Baccalaureate, Indian and other curricula.

There are numerous international schools in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and other major expatriate centres.

Families relocating from the United States should investigate school availability, curriculum, fees, admissions requirements and school locations before choosing accommodation.

American-curriculum schools are available in several emirates.

Healthcare

The UAE has a modern healthcare system with both public and private hospitals and clinics.

Healthcare provision is regulated at federal and emirate level, and the exact arrangements differ between Abu Dhabi, Dubai and the other emirates.

Private medical insurance is commonly provided by employers or arranged privately by residents.

Expats should ensure that they have appropriate health insurance before relocating and should confirm what is covered, including hospitals, specialists, prescriptions and emergency treatment.

The UAE has a number of internationally recognised private hospitals and specialist medical centres, particularly in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Currency

The official currency is the United Arab Emirates dirham (AED), commonly written as AED or Dh.

The dirham is divided into 100 fils.

Banknotes are issued in denominations including AED 5, AED 10, AED 20, AED 50, AED 100, AED 200, AED 500 and AED 1,000.

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted throughout the UAE.

ATMs are readily available in cities, shopping centres, hotels, airports and other commercial areas.

Utilities

The UAE uses a 230v, 50Hz electrical supply.

This differs from the 120v supply normally used in the United States.

U.S. appliances designed only for 110–120v should not be connected directly to a UAE electrical outlet.

Dual-voltage equipment marked 100–240v, 50/60Hz can generally be used with a suitable plug adapter.

Large U.S. appliances should be checked carefully before shipment because voltage, frequency, plug configuration and physical dimensions may differ.

The UAE has separate electricity and water authorities operating across the different emirates. Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) supplies Dubai, while other authorities serve Abu Dhabi and the northern emirates. [u.ae+1](#)

Television and Electronics

U.S. televisions and other electrical equipment should be checked before being shipped to the UAE.

Modern laptops, mobile phones, tablets, cameras and chargers are often dual voltage.

Older U.S. equipment may require a voltage transformer or may not be compatible with local broadcasting or electrical standards.

Check the manufacturer's voltage and frequency specifications before including electrical appliances in your household shipment.

Driving

The UAE drives on the right-hand side of the road, as in the United States.

Distances and speed limits are measured in kilometres.

The UAE has an extensive and generally well-maintained road network.

Driving conditions in major cities can be busy, particularly during commuting hours.

Residents should ensure that they have the appropriate UAE driving licence or recognised licence arrangement for their circumstances.

Vehicle registration, insurance and licensing requirements differ from those applicable in the United States.

Part 2 – United Arab Emirates Import Customs Regulations

To the best of our knowledge, the following information applies to the importation of household goods and personal effects from the United States into the United Arab Emirates.

Customs procedures can vary between emirates and ports of entry. The following information is particularly relevant to shipments entering through Dubai.

Regulations may change without notice and restricted goods may require additional permits or approvals.

Household Goods

Personal effects and used household goods brought into the UAE by foreigners coming to the country for the first time to establish residence can qualify for customs-duty exemption, subject to the applicable conditions.

Dubai Customs states that used personal effects and household goods brought by foreigners coming to the UAE for the first time for residence may be exempt from customs duty.

The exemption is subject to conditions including:

- The goods must be used.
- The importer must be a foreigner intending to reside in the UAE.
- Proof of work and residence in the UAE must be provided.
- The goods must be imported in the name of the person intending to reside in the UAE.
- The quantity must be appropriate for furnishing a home.
- A packing list showing the full contents must be provided.

New household goods do not qualify for this exemption and applicable customs duty may be charged. Dubai Customs

Customs Documentation

For personal effects imported through Dubai, Dubai Customs lists the following documents:

- Copy of passport.
- Copy of UAE residence visa.
- Written list of imported goods.

A detailed packing list should be prepared for the shipment, showing the contents of each package as clearly as possible. Dubai Customs¹

For a professional relocation shipment, we recommend preparing a comprehensive inventory before packing begins.

Inventory

The inventory should provide clear descriptions of the goods.

For example:

- 2 x sofas.
- 1 x dining table.
- 6 x dining chairs.
- 4 x cartons books.
- 6 x cartons clothing.

- 1 x television – make/model.
- 1 x refrigerator – make/model/serial number.
- 1 x computer – make/model.

Avoid descriptions such as "miscellaneous", "household goods" or "electrical items" where a more specific description is possible.

Valuable, new or restricted items should be identified separately.

New Goods

New household goods are treated differently from used household goods.

Dubai Customs states that new personal effects and household items do not qualify for the relocation duty exemption and applicable customs duty will be collected. Dubai Customs

Where possible, retain invoices and receipts for recently purchased items.

Large quantities of identical new goods may be treated as commercial rather than personal shipments.

Personal Effects

Ordinary personal effects such as clothing, books, furniture, normal household appliances, personal computers and other possessions may generally be imported for personal use.

Dubai Customs states that personal-use goods and used household goods are exempt from customs tax and duties after inspection, provided they are not considered commercial quantities. Dubai Customs

Food

Food products can be subject to UAE import controls.

Small quantities of ordinary food for personal use may be permitted, but food should be packed carefully and should not include prohibited or restricted products.

Commercial quantities, meat and animal products, fresh produce and other controlled foodstuffs may require additional permits or inspections.

For relocation shipments, we recommend avoiding unnecessary quantities of food.

Alcohol

Alcohol is subject to specific UAE regulations and customs allowances.

Rules can differ according to the emirate and the circumstances of importation.

For passengers entering Dubai, Dubai Customs currently lists an allowance of up to four litres of alcoholic beverages or two cartons of beer, each containing 24 cans of no more than 355ml, subject to applicable rules. Dubai Customs

Household shipments containing alcohol may be subject to additional customs procedures, duties, permits or restrictions.

For this reason, alcohol should not be included in a household shipment without obtaining prior confirmation from the relevant customs authority and shipping agent.

Tobacco

Tobacco products are subject to specific quantity restrictions and customs regulations.

Dubai Customs currently lists passenger allowances including up to 400 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 500 grams of tobacco, subject to the applicable conditions. Dubai Customs

Commercial quantities or quantities exceeding the applicable allowance may be subject to duty or other action.

Prescription Medicines

Particular care should be taken when bringing medicines into the UAE.

Some medicines that are legally prescribed in the United States may be controlled or restricted in the UAE.

Prescription medicines should remain in their original packaging and travellers should carry appropriate medical documentation.

Controlled, narcotic and psychotropic medicines may require prior approval.

The Dubai Customs guidance states that personal-use medicines are subject to specific requirements and that certain psychotropic medicines require prior approval. Dubai Customs+1

Anyone taking controlled medication should confirm the current UAE requirements before travelling or shipping the medication.

Plants and Seeds

Plants, seeds, soil and agricultural materials may be subject to restrictions, inspection or phytosanitary requirements.

They should not be included in a household shipment without prior confirmation that they can legally be imported.

Pets

Dogs, cats and other domestic animals can be imported into the UAE, but prior approval and veterinary documentation are required.

Pet owners should allow sufficient time to complete:

- Microchipping.
- Vaccinations.
- Veterinary certification.
- Import permits where applicable.
- Airline requirements.
- Health certificates.
- Quarantine or inspection requirements where applicable.

Dubai Customs guidance indicates that importing pets or domestic animals requires prior authorisation from the relevant UAE authority. Dubai Customs

Professional pet-relocation assistance is recommended for international moves.

Motor Vehicles

New and used vehicles can be imported into the UAE subject to customs, registration and technical requirements.

Dubai Customs states that imported vehicles are inspected and evaluated and that customs duty of 5% is imposed on the assessed value of each vehicle. Dubai Customs+1

Documents can include:

- Passport copy.
- Original vehicle invoice.
- Packing list where applicable.
- Bill of lading for vehicles imported through a shipping company.
- Vehicle registration documents.
- Proof of ownership.

U.S.-specification vehicles should be checked carefully before shipment because they may need to meet UAE/GCC technical, safety and emissions requirements.

Importing a vehicle can also involve registration, testing, insurance and other charges after customs clearance.

Firearms and Weapons

Firearms, ammunition and weapons are strictly regulated in the UAE.

They should not be included with household goods unless all required approvals, licences and permits have been obtained in advance.

Certain knives, weapons and other items can also be restricted.

Dubai Customs lists firearms, weapons and related restricted goods among items requiring declaration or control. Dubai Customs

Drones and Communications Equipment

Drones and certain communications equipment may be subject to registration, licensing or import restrictions.

Dubai Customs specifically identifies drones and satellite phones among items that may need to be declared. Dubai Customs

Do not include specialist communications equipment, satellite phones or drones in a shipment without checking the current requirements.

Endangered Species and CITES

The UAE regulates the importation of protected animals, plants and products derived from endangered species.

Potentially restricted items include:

- Ivory.
- Certain animal skins.
- Coral.
- Protected woods.
- Animal trophies.
- Certain feathers.
- Products made from protected wildlife.

Old pianos and antiques should be checked carefully because some may contain ivory.

Where applicable, CITES documentation may be required.

Antiques and Works of Art

Antiques, valuable works of art and cultural objects may be subject to additional customs controls.

The importer should retain documentation showing ownership, origin, age and value.

Commercial quantities or items of significant cultural importance may require additional approvals.

Cash and Monetary Instruments

Passengers entering the UAE must declare cash and other bearer monetary instruments above the applicable threshold.

Dubai Customs currently states that amounts exceeding AED 100,000, or the equivalent in other currencies and traveller's cheques, must be declared. Dubai Customs+1

U.S. citizens should also consider U.S. reporting requirements when travelling internationally with substantial amounts of cash or monetary instruments.

Jewellery, Gold and Precious Metals

Jewellery, gold, silver and other precious metals can be subject to declaration requirements, particularly where the value or quantity is significant.

Dubai Customs specifically includes jewellery, gold, silver and other precious metals among items that may need to be declared. Dubai Customs

Valuable jewellery should be documented carefully, including photographs, receipts and valuations where available.

Prohibited and Restricted Items

Items that may be prohibited, restricted or subject to prior approval include:

- Narcotic and controlled drugs.
- Certain prescription medicines.
- Firearms and ammunition.
- Weapons.
- Drones.
- Satellite phones and specialist communications equipment.
- Certain plants and seeds.
- Wildlife and endangered-species products.

- Commercial quantities of goods.
- Certain food and agricultural products.
- Counterfeit goods.
- Pornographic or otherwise prohibited materials.
- Certain chemicals and hazardous materials.

Dubai Customs provides a declaration facility specifically identifying medicines, illegal pornography, firearms, weapons, drugs, drones, satellite phones, plants, seeds, animals and wildlife products among goods requiring attention. Dubai Customs

Customs Inspection

Customs authorities have the right to inspect household goods and personal effects.

Dubai Customs states that personal effects and household goods can be subject to inspection, and that goods found to be commercial quantities may lose the personal-use exemption and become subject to customs duty. Dubai Customs+1

The importer may be responsible for costs associated with moving, unpacking, repacking or examining goods where an inspection is required.

Customs Duty

For qualifying used household goods belonging to a foreigner coming to the UAE for the first time to establish residence, Dubai Customs provides a customs-duty exemption subject to the stated conditions.

New goods and goods considered commercial quantities can be subject to customs duty.

Dubai Customs states that a 5% customs duty can be imposed on goods found by customs inspectors to be in commercial quantities. Dubai Customs+1

Other goods, including vehicles and restricted or taxable products, may be subject to separate rates and procedures.

Disclaimer

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in this Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date, One Way America cannot accept liability for any inaccuracies, omissions or changes in UAE, U.S. or international regulations.

Customs, immigration, taxation, health, vehicle, pet and import requirements can change without notice.

The information contained in this guide is intended as general relocation information only and should not be treated as legal, immigration, tax or customs advice.

Anyone relocating from the United States to the UAE should confirm the current requirements with the relevant UAE customs authority, the Federal Authority for Identity, Citizenship, Customs & Port Security, the relevant emirate authority, the UAE Embassy or Consulate and the U.S. Embassy before shipping household goods.

For current Dubai customs information, consult [Dubai Customs](#).

For current UAE government information, consult the [UAE Government Portal](#).

For current U.S. citizen information and consular assistance, consult the [U.S. Embassy in the UAE](#).

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More info on our website: <https://onewayamerica.com>.