

Tourism in Dubai

Due to its location the UAE has been able to act as a connecting link between Europe and the Indian subcontinent, the Far East and Africa since time immemorial. It is still playing the role of intermediary between these vastly different cultures, the only difference being that air travel has significantly increased the number of visitors who come to the UAE. Traditional Arab hospitality and a delightful winter climate complemented by a highly sophisticated infrastructure and crime-free environment, have also contributed in recent years to creating an ideal atmosphere for the development of tourism.

The UAE is also endowed with an extensive coastline, sandy beaches and varied landscape, where a wide variety of activities can be indulged, ranging from powerboat races to sand-skiing. Manicured golf courses provide ready enjoyment and for the less active shopping opportunities abound. In addition, the country's deep-rooted cultural heritage, accessible in the many cultural centers and at traditional sports such as falconry, camel-racing and horse-racing, has been a powerful attraction for tourists. The UAE has also become a much sought after venue for conferences, regional and international exhibitions and major sports events such as the Dubai World Cup, the Dubai Desert Classic Golf Tournament, and polo and cricket competitions. It also has one of the best selections of Dubai property available for investors.

The growth of the tourism industry in Dubai in the past few years is generally described in superlatives: incredible, phenomenal, outstanding, stellar, inspiring, triumphant and just about any other laudatory adjective you can think of. Although one might be tempted to pass this off as marketing hype, in Dubai's case, it may well be warranted. Tourism in the area is booming.

Independent studies show that the tourism industry has accounted for a steadily increasing percentage of Dubai's GDP (Gross domestic product), with some estimates putting it as high as 20 per cent. In fact tourism is expected to over take oil exports as an important source of revenue in the near future. Dubai's 255 hotels have a total of 17,253 rooms and occupancy in 1998 averaged 49.3 per cent. Since January 1997 when the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) took over from the Tourism and Trade Promotion Council, there has been renewed focus on worldwide promotion of Dubai as an ideal tourist destination and a thriving commercial and business center, very attractive for [Dubai property](#) investors. This has involved setting up the DTCM representative offices in many countries across the globe as well as participation in numerous international tourism fairs. In addition, the DTCM has launched very successful advertising campaigns worldwide. The DTCM also organizes tourism-related exhibitions in Dubai. Early in 1999 it hosted the Arabian Marine Tourism Conference, the first of its kind to be held in the region. In May more than 500 exhibitors from 40 countries participated in the Arab Travel Market 99, which was also held under the auspices of the DTCM. Not surprisingly, since the number of tourists is expected to reach three million by the end of the year 2000, Dubai has a number of major tourism-related projects coming on-stream.

Tourism in Dubai is an important part of the Dubai government's strategy to maintain the flow of foreign dollars into the emirate. Since the formation of the United Arab Emirates in 1971, Dubai has developed rapidly from oil and gas based state to a broadly based market economy. A 30-year development plan provided for substantial investment in [property in Dubai](#), education and infrastructure (transport and telecommunications) and has led to rapid growth in trade and inward investment.

About the Author

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