



# Dubai

## Relocation Guide

salt™



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# An introduction to living in Dubai

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a whole is a truly modern metropolis with a vibrant culture and rapidly growing infrastructure.

Dubai is often celebrated for its futuristic approach, whether it be driverless flying taxis which could be cheaper than Uber rates, autonomous metro systems or the world's busiest airport. The city is constantly pushing the boundaries on what is possible in an effort to help fuel innovation.

Today Dubai is regarded as the hub of the digital revolution in the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) region and many large-scale digital employers have significant operations in the city. Are you planning to relocate for work in 2023? Have you been thinking about working in Dubai? We've compiled a complete checklist to everything there is to know when moving to Dubai.

## About Dubai

<b>Population:</b>	3.55 million
<b>Size:</b>	3,900 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Time zone:</b>	Gulf Standard Time, GMT +3 (Summer) / GMT + 4 (Winter)
<b>Official languages:</b>	Standard Arabic and English
<b>Currency:</b>	UAE Dirham (AED)
<b>Government:</b>	Monarchy run by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum





## The economy and work culture

Dubai's economy has grown rapidly in recent years as investments in infrastructure, tourism, and the digital economy have paid off handsomely for the Emirate. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts 3.8% growth for the UAE as a whole, in 2023 and beyond.

Work culture in Dubai is often described as 'work hard, play hard,' with Friday being the weekly day of rest. Many companies choose to work from Sunday to Thursday with Friday and Saturday nominated as their official weekend. During the holy month of Ramadan, working hours are reduced to no more than six hours on a working day.

While Arabic remains the official language of the UAE, English is widely spoken in business and around 99% of companies now conduct operations in English to accommodate the multitude of cultures presently living in the city.







## Cost of living

If you're currently considering moving to Dubai, the good news is that the cost of living is extremely attractive when compared to other international locations. Numbeo, a cost of living comparison site, suggests that consumer prices in Dubai are 4.2% lower than in London.

Minimal tax combined with a lower cost of living means people can look forward to enjoying an increase to their disposable income compared to other countries abroad.

**For individuals living in Dubai the only tax will include:**

- Paying tax on alcohol purchased from an off-licence store
- 5% municipality tax applies on rented accommodation
- 10% municipality tax plus a 10% service charge on restaurant and hotel bills.  
Not to worry though as this price is usually included in the final price displayed on your bill.
- Customs duties on any imported goods that are over the duty-free limits

It is estimated that a family of four will average monthly costs of around 13,370 AED while a single person living on their own will experience monthly costs of around 3,830 AED.







## Accommodation

From large family homes in suburban communities to studio apartments located in the centre of town, there are several options available for newcomers who are considering moving to Dubai.

In the past it was common practice for landlords to demand one year's rent in advance, however payment arrangements are now available for 4, 6, or 12 months.

The cost of utilities for one month which includes heating, electricity and gas averages around 750 AED for two people living in an apartment.

Dubai offers a range of housing options that differ in price according to the area, size, utilities, and additional services required.

### **Average monthly rent:**

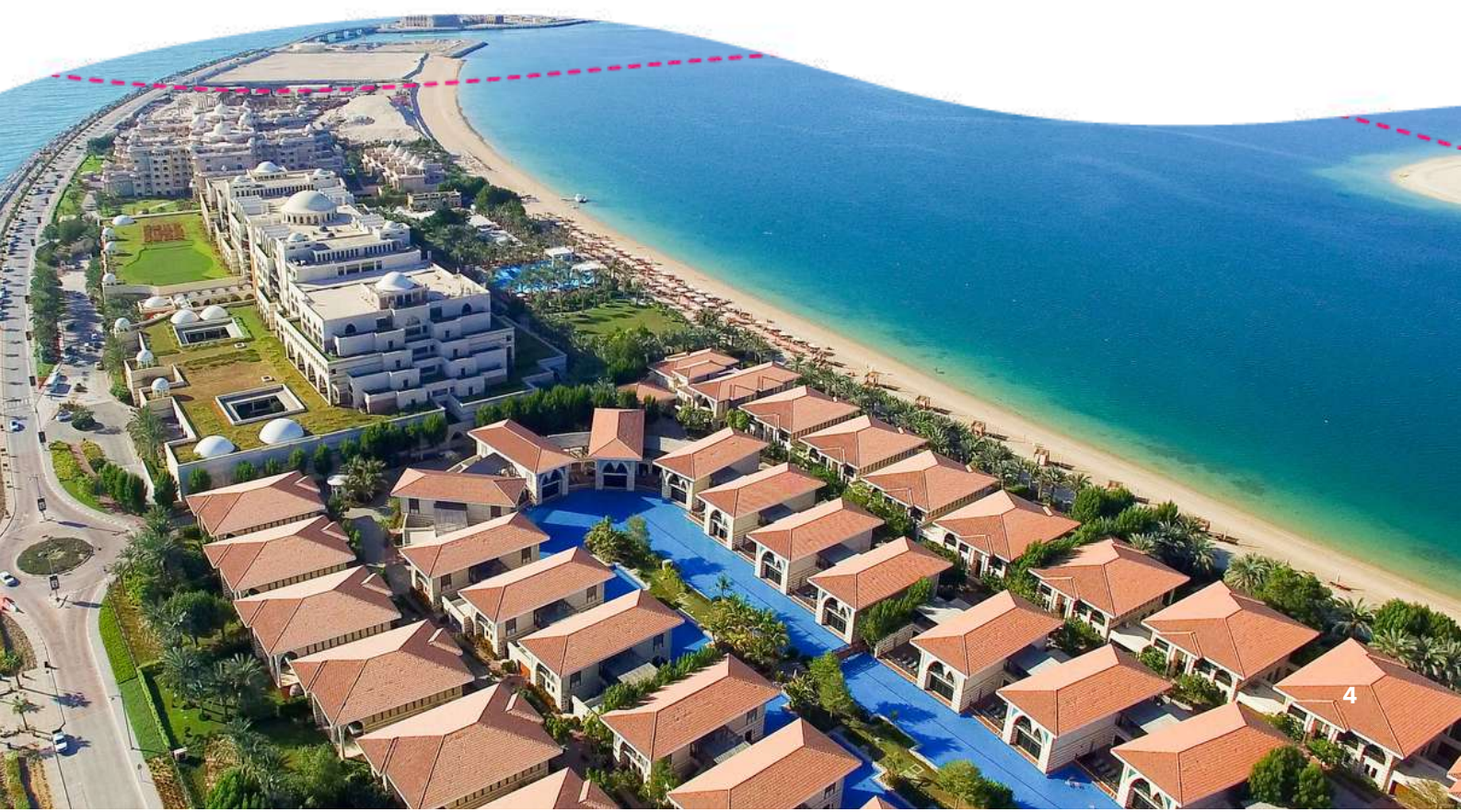
Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre: 7,000 AED

Apartment (1 bedroom) Outside of Centre: 4,000 AED

Apartment (3 bedrooms) in City Centre: 12,950 AED

Apartment (3 bedrooms) Outside of Centre: 7,900 AED

**Salt is partnered with some of the best accommodation providers in the Emirates - share your details here to start working with us!**





## Education

All education in the UAE is provided by private institutions, typically following well-regarded, international curriculums.

Tuition fees for schooling can seem expensive compared to state schooling in other countries and cities, however, costs compare favourably with other private schools abroad. Salt can provide more specific details of suitable schools and associated costs for any candidate considering moving a young family to Dubai.

With the different education curriculums in the UAE, it's possible to find schools with affordable tuition fees, and the average price ranges of children education in Dubai is:

Preschool or Kindergarten, Full Day, Private, Monthly for 1 Child: 1,000 - 4,000 AED

International Primary School "Yearly for 1 Child": 25,700 - 77,400 AED

School is mandatory for all children between 6–18 years of age and this applies to expat children as well as locals. Government schools are free for Emirati nationals, but expats will have to pay a fee for both public and private schools.



## Transport

If you're looking for comfort and convenience while travelling around the city, a great option to consider is their public transport services. This includes the metro as well as tram, buses and local taxis. Private cars are also an option and can be easily rented or bought.

The Dubai Tram is a great transport of choice and perfect for exploring areas such as Al Sufouh, Jumeriah Beach Residence and the Dubai Marina.

The Board of Directors of the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) offer a Nol card which is a rechargeable travel pass that can be used on the city's trams, buses, and metro. A 50% discount is now offered to students.







## Food and household goods

Supermarkets in Dubai are reasonably priced compared to other major cities such as London. However, imported branded products are known to be a bit more pricey. Expats tend to be spoiled for choice in Dubai with several malls offering international brands alongside local shopping boutiques. There are also several large supermarkets from France, the UK, India, and the USA that can be found across the Emirate.

Eating out in Dubai is generally affordable and there is a range of restaurants to choose from. To drive custom, many bars and restaurants run special promotions and through apps such as 'The Entertainer' to promote their offerings. The Islamic culture of Dubai has led the government to tax alcohol; however, it is readily available in the Emirate's restaurants and bars across the city.





## Safety and Security

Dubai has an impeccable record of safety and security with exceptionally low crime rates. As a result, it is one of the safest countries in the world. There is almost zero unemployment in the city as employment is required for residency and crime rates have been kept to a minimum.

## Banking

Dirhams (AED) are the official currency of the United Arab Emirates.

Banking in Dubai is similar to its Western equivalents, featuring a standard range of bank accounts and access to ATMs across the city. Online banking is easily available as well. Transferring funds overseas is a simple process with a number of major banks available including HSBC, Standard Chartered, and Emirates NBD.

There are around 45 UAE-based commercial banks to choose from, making opening a bank account in Dubai for both non-residents and locals a simple process.

Some banks such as Mashreq or GlobalBanks will allow non-UAE residents to open a savings account. You'll also need to have copies of your passport, any residency or work permits, and if you have an employer, a letter confirming your salary to apply.







## Healthcare

In Dubai, health insurance is mandatory for all residents and expats living in Dubai. Employers are required to provide health insurance for their employees while sponsors are required to provide access to healthcare systems for their resident dependents. UAE medical insurance prices vary and are dependent on the type of cover you choose.

Travel insurance is advised for non-EU residents as it will help to cover any additional expenses incurred for an ambulance service or repatriation costs.

There are a few public hospitals which offer free or low-cost services to Dubai residents. You'll need to have a health card to receive treatment at one of these hospitals which is available from the Department of Health and Medical Services.





## Fun things to do

From water sports to retail therapy and global food tasting, there is something to suit everyone on a day off in Dubai.

If you're looking to visit an historic area of Dubai look no further than the Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood. Simply follow the charming streets to discover a diverse range of museums, art galleries and the chance to indulge in some traditional food.

Hidden beneath the scrawling skyscrapers of Dubai you'll find a few recreational parks for a chance to reconnect with nature. Or if you prefer to see the red dunes up close and personal there's an opportunity to hire an ATV (an all-terrain vehicle).

If you'd like a bird's eye view of the magical city, we recommend an afternoon of skydiving or the chance to escape the desert heat by skiing in the largest indoor ski slope in the world.

## Shopping

The city is renowned for being a retail hub offering endless shopping opportunities. Let's not forget Dubai is home to the world's largest retail space at over 1 m sqm with the Dubai Mall! Here you can shop to your heart's content with international brands. In addition to the mega malls there are also quaint local stores located in the old town (Bastakia) where you can find gold, textiles, and an array of spices.





## Dining

Dubai has restaurants to suit all tastes, with more than 1000 restaurants in the city alone. They serve everything from German sausages paired with sauerkraut to Indonesian beef stews and Greek pastries.

Whether you want to try the local Emirati cuisine of shawarma, tabbouleh, and kuboos (flatbread) or sample food from an international restaurant, the choice is yours. Popular hotspots such as the Marina, Madinat Jumeirah and the Jumeirah beachfront offer a great selection of both local cafes and fast-food outlets.





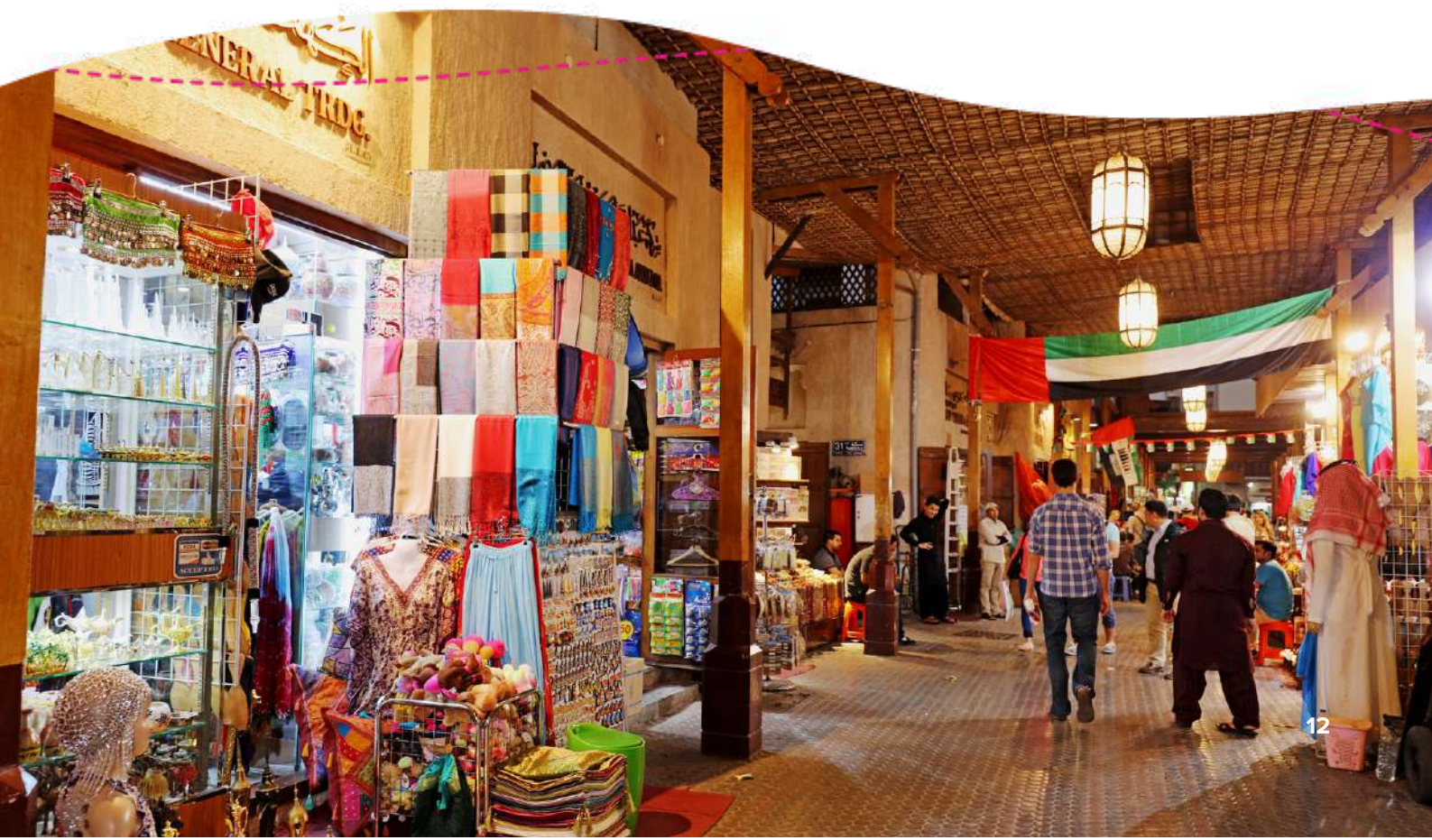
## Dress code

Dress code in the Middle East is similar to most cosmopolitan cities featuring a significant Western influence. All fashions are welcomed however local residents often choose to wear traditional pieces and dress more conservatively.

The dress code is largely dependent on the venue itself. Public places such as shopping malls, souks, or museums are treated quite differently from a resort or water park.

Both residents and tourists are encouraged to dress more modestly to respect the local culture. This means avoiding revealing clothing, such as tank tops or mini-skirts. This especially applies to entering any religious or government buildings.

For women, carrying a shawl or pashmina in your handbag is a great way to cover up if a situation presents itself and it can also help offer protection from the desert sun as an added bonus.





## Visas for working and living in Dubai

If you wish to relocate to Dubai, you will need to secure a residence visa that allows you to both take employment and reside long-term in the Emirate.

In most cases, the residence visa is valid for two years which can then be renewed. Since around 90% of the population in the UAE is expatriate the government has made the process of obtaining a visa as seamless as possible. Very few nationalities are restricted from moving and working in the UAE.

Usually, the company employing the individual will be responsible for securing the visa and the associated administrative costs.

Our team of expert consultants will be able to take you through all of the steps that are associated with securing a visa.

### Obtaining a residency visa for Dubai:

Documents required for a residency visa in Dubai can vary but the standard requirements include:

- A completed application form
- A scanned copy of your passport (original document will be required after initial approval is given)
- A signed employment contract
- A short medical test (chest X-ray and blood sample) is taken after initial approval is given
- An attested degree certificate is required for more senior visa designations but is usually optional



## Sponsoring your family members:

Once you have your residence visa there is the option of sponsoring spouses and dependents. Your package will depend on your employer – some will provide full support whilst other policies will only sponsor the employee. In this instance, employers will give the employee the option of sponsoring the visa themselves and then the employee will need to pay the associated charges.

## Obtaining a ‘remote work’ visa:

Dubai has also launched a ‘remote work’ visa programme which allows freelancers or contractors to travel to Dubai and stay there for up to one year. This includes either working as a self-employed freelancer or contractor or for your employer abroad.

The visa will also allow you to rent accommodation in Dubai and grant you access to schools if you have children living with you. While you are legally allowed to work in Dubai you will not be able to get a job in Dubai, as the visa requires that you are working remotely. The application for this visa will cost you around 1,100 AED and you will need to have health insurance in Dubai.







## Moving to Dubai is easy with Salt

Thinking of a new adventure in Dubai?

Reach out to our specialist digital recruitment team at [rsmith@welovesalt.com](mailto:rsmith@welovesalt.com) to find out how we can help you find your ideal career in Dubai.



**Richard Smith**  
Regional Director

# Creating Futures™

 Dubai