

Dubai - By Ted Churchman - (A valued Customer & Friend)

Dubai is a member of the United Arab Emirates located on the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula and on the Persian Gulf. It is a stable, though autocratic, Arab kingdom which, in the absence of oil wealth, has promoted tourism as a source of national income. The weather helps with yearlong sunshine but beware June to September when temperatures can exceed 40°C and in recent years there has been the occasional rain.

Arabic is the national language with English second and so appears on all official signs on the road, air terminals, malls and, most importantly, on menus! It is a Moslem country but, due to the encouragement of tourism, has taken a relatively relaxed attitude to western ways and manners - but respect is expected. Although wives are not required to wear a burkah and walk 6 paces behind their lord and master, over the top of displays of affection can be the cause of complaint. Beachwear is restricted to the beach but for women's dress arms and shoulders can be bare - men should be modest at least.

Similarly with wining and dining. Alcohol is available in licensed premises, i.e. hotels, bars and restaurants...binging is not recommended!

There is no need to worry about which hand to use when scrabbling in the rice pot for the sheep's eyeball! There are places where you can get Arab cuisine but the many hotel and outside restaurants, cafes etc. all feature international dishes to a high standard.

But pork and related products do not feature - so no bacon for breakfast then!

There is a metro and public bus service but not always readily available from your hotel. The quickest and most efficient way to get from place to place is by taxi. They are licensed, relatively cheap and have easy to read meters. The chances of being spirited away into white slavery will be a disappointingly zero for some! Also available is the "hop on hop off" tourist open top bus now familiar in many major cities. A 1 or 2 day ticket allows you to cover the lower "Blue" route covering the malls and Khalifa Tower while the Red route concentrates on the inlet known as "The Creek" where the pearl and fishing village of Dubai originated in the early 19th Century. The Red route includes an hours dhow trip around said Creek.



The waterfall, some 80 metres high, inside the Dubai Mall. (The World's biggest mall)



Burg Khalifa - tallest building in the world really leaves you "gob smacked" and was too big for our camera

There is much to see in Dubai, the world's biggest Mall - the Dubai Mall with over 1200 outlets, an indoor Olympic ice rink and other spectacles, the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building and an indoor Ski Slope with real snow! Include the leisure facilities at the hotels, swimming pools, spas, private beaches for some and then consider desert safaris, hot air ballooning, golf and horse racing.

Dubai is well worth the visit even if limited to 3-5 days for just a look see. And you will be made very welcome by all staff at the hotels, restaurants, malls, attractions etc.



Inside the Dubai Mall was a "Ferrero Rocher" version of Burg Khalifa.