



Welcome to Abu Dhabi!

### Frequently Asked Questions – FAQs

ICA Congress Abu Dhabi 2020  
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

*Empowering Knowledge Societies*

## About the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE is a constitutional federation of seven emirates. Abu Dhabi city is the capital of the UAE. The UAE is a politically and economically stable country and holds the 25th position globally in [Global Competitiveness Report 2019](#) by the World Economic Forum. The country's soft policy earned the UAE first rank in the [Passport Index](#). In addition, it stands out as one of the 10 largest donor states for [official development aid](#) (ODA). Recognised as a [tolerant country](#), the UAE hosts more than 200 nationalities doing business, living, learning and touring the UAE. Residents enjoy freedom of civil rights and practice of religion. For full information about the UAE, visit the official website [www.government.ae/en/about-the-uae](http://www.government.ae/en/about-the-uae).

**Capital of UAE:** Abu Dhabi

**National Day:** 2 December

**Religion:** Islam

**Official Working Days:** Sunday -Thursday

**Official Weekends:** Friday-Saturday

**Time Zone:** GMT+4

### National Flag:

The flag comprises three equal horizontal lines with green at the top, white in the middle and black at the base. There is also a wider vertical red ribbon in the direction of the flagpole. Green represents hope, joy, optimism and love. It can also symbolise the country's prosperity. White represents peace and honesty. White is the purest colour, and is interpreted by some to symbolise cleanliness. Black stands for the defeat of enemies and also strength of mind. Red represents hardiness, bravery, strength and courage. The vertical red band can also be interpreted as binding all the other meanings together in unity.



### President

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan is the second President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the 16th Ruler of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the seven Emirates which comprise the UAE.

### Population and demographic mix

The UAE has more expatriate residents than UAE nationals. The Government aims to balance the demographic mix between Emiratis and expatriates by 2021.

One of the KPIs set for maintaining a cohesive society and preserving identity to achieve the National Agenda is the National Identity Index. This composite indicator measures the sense of belonging and national identity of citizens. The index, as of 2014, stands at 90.8 per cent and is targeted to be 100 per cent by 2021.

### Foreign policy

The UAE follows a moderate foreign policy that reinforces balanced relationships with the international community. It adheres to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and the pursuit of dialogue and, whenever possible, peaceful resolution of disputes, together with support for international institutions, such as the United Nations. The UAE is a leading player in the global campaign against human trafficking, terrorism and in maintaining human rights.

### Foreign aid

The UAE supports developmental, humanitarian and charitable programmes in a number of developing countries. In 2018, the assistance reached AED 28.62 billion (USD 7.79 billion). In terms of official development assistance (ODA), since 2012, the UAE has contributed in excess of 0.7 per cent of its Gross National Income, a target set by the United Nations for all countries. In 2018, the UAE contributed 0.93 per cent of its GNI. Read the [UAE's annual foreign aid reports](#).

### Official language

The official language of the UAE is Arabic. Positioned as a global commercial hub and top tourist destination, English is widely spoken. All road and traffic signs and signs on commercial outlets are in Arabic and English.

### Religion

Islam is the official religion in the UAE; the practice of other religions is allowed. Besides mosques, the UAE is also home to several churches and temples where worshippers practise their religions in an atmosphere of safety, security and mutual respect.

### Location

The UAE is located in Asia. It is situated in the south-eastern region of the Asian continent, and in the eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It overlooks the Arabian Gulf on the north and northwest, borders the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west and south and the Sultanate of Oman to the southeast.

### Area

The UAE area is approximately 71,023.6sq km of land, including some islands in the Arab Gulf, in addition to 27,624.9sq km of territorial water. Abu Dhabi accounts for 84 per cent of the country's total landmass.

### Time

The UAE is 4 hours ahead of GMT.

### Climate

The UAE has a desert climate. It is warm and sunny in the winter and during the summer, it is hot and humid. It is generally cooler in the eastern mountains.

### Monetary unit/currency

The Emirati Dirham is the official currency of the UAE, abbreviated officially as AED. Unofficial abbreviations include Dh and Dhs. Coins are in the following denomination: AED 1, 50 fils and 25 fils. Notes or bills are in the denominations of AED 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000.

### Exchange rate

Since February 2002, the Arab Emirati Dirham (AED) has been pegged to the US dollar (USD). 1 USD = AED 3.6725.

### GDP

According to Annual Economic Report 2019 (PDF, 18.5 MB), GDP at constant prices was AED 1,442.5 billion, while GDP at current prices was AED 1,521.1 billion in 2018.

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## About the official symbol of the ICA Congress Abu Dhabi 2020 – Al Sadu



### Embracing authentic tradition and culture – Al Sadu

*The versatile handicraft behind the Congress event symbol*

#### 1. History

From tents to carpets to belts for camel saddles, this traditional weaving technique is central to the culture and lifestyle of the Bedouin.

In the resource-scarce lands of the Arabian Peninsula, from Bedouin ingenuity emerged the craft of Al-Sadu, the traditional technique of weaving the hair of camels and the wool of goats and sheep into fabric for blankets, carpets, pillows, tents and the decoration of camel saddles and belts.

Al-Sadu holds a place of particular honour in Emirati society, recognised for its essential role in Bedouin life and as a tangible example of adaptation and creativity. Al-Sadu also played a central role in the social lives of traditional Emirati women.

Traditionally, weavers would gather in small groups to spin and weave, exchanging family news and occasionally chanting or reciting poetry, such as Al-Taghrooda.

Because of Al-Sadu's significance, it was inscribed in 2011 on the UNESCO 'List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding'.

## 2. Process

The Al-Sadu process begins with the cutting of wool and goat hair, and the collecting of camel hair. The wool or hair is then sorted according to colour and length. The cleaning process begins with the hair being blown and shaken to rid it of any plant matter, thorns, dust or soil. It is then combed. The process continues with cleaning with hot or cold water three or more times using clay, ash, soap or special Al-Sadu powder as detergent. Next, the hair or wool is spun into yarn using a drop spindle, then dyed – often in bright colours – using local plants and spices available in the United Arab Emirates, such as henna, turmeric, saffron, cactus and indigo. Traditional Al-Sadu colours are black, white, brown, beige and red. The yarn is then woven on a floor loom made of palm or jujube wood.

When a large amount of Al-Sadu material is required, such as for a tent or use at a wedding, multiple looms are used.

## 3. Designs and motifs

Elements of the desert environment and other important aspects of Bedouin life are often incorporated into the Al-Sadu decorations, symbols, shapes and inscriptions.

Common motifs include geometric patterns evocative of the region's undulating grasslands and sand dunes; palm trees and flowers; camels, sheep and falcons; Koranic verses; mosques and the names of tribes. These motifs can symbolise specific ideals. For example, a chain with overlapping rings symbolises the unity and cohesion among members of a tribe.

The names of the most frequently used Al-Sadu motifs are: The Masters' Design, the Tree Design, Al Owerayan Pattern, Spotted Leather Skin Design, Ammunition Passer Design, Grain Design, Asnan Al Khail (Horse Teeth) Design, Scissors Design and Ain Al Ghadeer pattern.

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## About the organisers – Congress support team

If you have any queries not answered, please contact the 2020 Congress support team by email [info@icaabudhabi2020.ae](mailto:info@icaabudhabi2020.ae) or phone on +971 (0)2 304 3204.

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## Section 1. General Information

### 1. What are the conference dates?

- ICA Governance: 13 – 15 November 2020
- Professional Programme: 16 – 20 November 2020
- Tours: 20 November 2020

ICA Governance meetings such as the Executive Board, Programme Commission, and Forum of National Archivists Steering Committee will take place from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 November 2020.

The Professional Programme, with panels, keynotes, and workshops, will take place from Monday, 16 to Thursday, 19 November 2020.

On Friday 20 November, the week will end with tours offered to Expo Dubai (with no additional rate) See the ICA Congress Abu Dhabi 2020 detailed programme for more information.

## 2. Where is the conference venue?

The venue for ICA Abu Dhabi 2020, ADNEC, is the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre. It is a world-class exhibition and conference hub in the heart of the city, surrounded by urban architecture and international hotel chains.

The contemporary spaces feature purpose-built conference halls offering a superior environment for business functions, with premium facilities and stylish modern interiors.

## 3. How can I reserve a booth in the conference information fair/exhibition area?

The Partnerships Brochure is available in English, French and Arabic from here.

For any question concerning those Sponsorship opportunities, please contact the 2020 Congress Support Team by email [impact@abudhabi2020.ae](mailto:impact@abudhabi2020.ae) or phone +971 (0)4 554 1434. If you have any other requests or if you want to propose any other partnerships, please contact Christine Trembleau [trembleau@ica.org](mailto:trembleau@ica.org) or T: +33 (0)1 81 70 55 66.

### Section 2. Getting there

## 4. International Flights

Main carrier of Abu Dhabi - [Etihad Airways](#)

Etihad Airways is the national airline of the United Arab Emirates. As an airline, Etihad has come a long way in a short time – just like its home Abu Dhabi. Discounted special rates will be made available to Congress attendees with a selection of airlines, including Etihad Airways.

Main carrier of Dubai – [Emirates](#)

Emirates is a state-owned airline based in Garhoud, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. As a commercial and touristic hub in the UAE, this airline welcomed 59 million passengers between 2018-2019, connecting 159 destinations. Emirates Airline was recognised by the Guinness World Records™ title with EK2019, the world's most multicultural flight with 145 nationalities onboard. This special one-off A380 flight marked the celebration of the 48th UAE National Day and 'Year of Tolerance'.

More international travel information for the Congress in Abu Dhabi will be made available closer to the event.

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## Section 3. Visa requirements

### 5. Do I need a visa to travel to Abu Dhabi?

Citizens of [Gulf Cooperation Council \(GCC\) countries](#) do not require a visa or permit or to be sponsored by a national or resident in the UAE. They need to produce their GCC country passport or national ID card at the point of entry into the UAE.

*30-day and 90-day visa on arrival*

Citizens of [these countries](#) do not require advance visa arrangements to enter the UAE and can obtain a visa upon arrival for 30 days with a 10-day grace period for extension.

Note: Passports must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry into the UAE. Lists of countries eligible for visa on arrival may vary from time to time; therefore, please check with the UAE embassy in your country before travelling to the UAE.

To attend the Congress, travellers will require a Tourist Visa Long-term visa for 60 days or short-term visa from the date of entry, depending on your visa application country. Validity is 60 days from date of issue. A pre-requisite of sponsorship from a hotel or tour operator may be requested. To learn about the application process, please access details here: [www.emirates.com/english/before-you-fly/visa-passport-information/uae-visa-information](http://www.emirates.com/english/before-you-fly/visa-passport-information/uae-visa-information).

## 6. How can I get an invitation letter in order to secure a visa?

For the ICA Abu Dhabi 2020 Congress, our official travel partner Nirvana Travel and Tourism will facilitate attendees with all Visa proceedings for a convenient experience - [info@abudhabi2020.ae](mailto:info@abudhabi2020.ae). Please request an invitation letter from the ICA Abu Dhabi 2020 Congress Support Team by email only once your registration is complete and paid in full.

## 7. Do I need travel insurance?

We recommend the purchase of adequate travel insurance for all overseas travel. Immunisation may be recommended or required for your destination or stopover points—you can [use the IATA vaccination requirements search](#), or check with your physician.

General cover of travel insurance: The travel insurance policy, which is offered by subsidiaries or affiliates of American International Group, Inc. (AIG), provides coverage in case of unforeseen circumstances that may force you to cancel or shorten your trip or seek emergency medical treatment while travelling. Your travel insurance also offers coverage for the loss or delay of your baggage, in addition to many other benefits described in the policy, which you can review before making your purchase. All coverage is subject to policy terms and conditions.

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## Section 4: Lodgings and accommodation

### 8. Where should I stay?

A range of fantastic accommodation options will be available at discounted special rates from the Congress website. Alternative options may be explored online according to your preference. Abu Dhabi offers an extensive range of luxurious accommodation ranging from budget hotels to 5-star alternatives, and serviced apartments, AirBnB and bed and breakfast options are limited but optional. The Congress venue (ADNEC) is centrally located in the city and therefore easily accessible from all parts of the city. You can conveniently compare hotel rates for Abu Dhabi [here](#).

### 9. Will transportation from the airport be organised?

Periodic shuttle buses will be organised for the benefit and convenience of all delegates travelling to Abu Dhabi for the Congress. More information on this service will be made available closer to the event, the officials will provide full information to support your travel planning.

Delegates are also welcome to arrange their own transportation from airport to hotel accommodations. Both the Abu Dhabi and Dubai airports offer high-quality airport to hotel transfer services. You can even reserve

your transport ahead of travel online by managing your booking or hire a taxi on arrival. Google Maps operates fully in the UAE and you are free to use the location service to keep track when getting around.

## 10. Getting around Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi also has a well-planned road system and getting around Abu Dhabi is easy.

Taxis are reasonably priced and plentiful and can be flagged down at the roadside or booked by phone through the TransAD hotline 600 535353. Public transport buses are modern, clean, air-conditioned reliable and highly cost-effective. Visitors who choose to rent a vehicle will find all major car rental companies in Abu Dhabi, plus a few extra. For more comprehensive Travel and Transportation information, please [click here](#).

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## Section 5: Practical considerations

### 11. Can I use international currencies to make payments in the UAE?

The recommended currency for all transactions in cash is the local currency – AED.

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted throughout Abu Dhabi and the wider UAE. Foreign currencies and travellers' cheques can be exchanged in licenced exchange offices, banks and hotels, where a passport is required. Personal cheques will not be accepted. If you're shopping in the souks (markets) or in smaller shops, carrying cash is recommended.

#### ATMs

Most banks operate ATMs, which accept a range of cards. Most ATMs, although linked to a specific bank, are part of a central network so you can transact with a bank card for a nominal charge. Common systems accepted around Abu Dhabi include American Express, Cirrus, Global Access, MasterCard, Plus System and VISA. ATMs can be found in all shopping malls, major supermarkets, most petrol stations and the airport. For international cards, the exchange rates used in transactions are normally competitive and the process is faster and far less hassle than using traditional travellers' cheques.

#### Money Exchange

'Bureau de Change' offices are all over Abu Dhabi and offer rates often better than the banks. You'll find them in all major malls and popular [shopping districts](#). They are usually open Saturday to Thursday, from 8am - 1pm and 4.30pm to 8.30pm, and on Friday evenings. Many [hotels](#) will also exchange money and travellers' cheques at standard (non-competitive) rates.

#### Currency Converter

Use the official currency converter from the Abu Dhabi Tourism Board, [click here](#).

### 12. What is the electrical voltage standard?

Single-phase voltage (volts): 230 V

Frequency (hertz): 50 Hz

Plug type: G

Comparisons: To compare the voltage standards of your home country and the UAE, [see here](#).

Solutions: It is recommended that you request your hotel concierge for an adapter or pick one up from the airport or at any of the city's numerous supermarkets and electronics stores.

### 13. Do I need a travel adapter for my electrical devices?

Within United Arab Emirates the associated plug type is G, which is the plug that has three rectangular pins in a triangular pattern. Electrical appliances and devices made for the United States, Canada and South America will require an adapter/power socket for adaptability in the UAE, unless your products are dual voltage compliant.

### 14. What is the time zone in Abu Dhabi?

Time zone in Abu Dhabi (GMT+4)

### 15. Which languages are spoken in Abu Dhabi?

The official language of the UAE is Arabic. Positioned as a global commercial hub and top tourist destination, English is widely spoken. All road and traffic signs and signs on commercial outlets are in both Arabic and English.

The most popularly spoken language across all of the Emirates, including Abu Dhabi, is English. The United Arab Emirates has one of the most diverse populations in the world. The country is endowed with numerous languages spoken by the broad range of immigrants. This diversity of languages has made the country a cultural hub, and tourists flock to the country to sample the different cultures available there. Additionally, the diversity of languages makes the country an attractive location for business people.

### 16. What is the weather like in November?

#### Temperature

November is still hot in Abu Dhabi with consistent sunshine. The average temperature in November is 25°C, made up of daytime averages of 31°C and night averages of 18°C.

#### Rainfall

Abu Dhabi on average gets one day of measurable rain in November, but the rain total is still less than 10mm. The chance of precipitation averages 2% and climbs slightly towards the end of November.

#### Sunshine Hours

Abu Dhabi gets an average of ten hours of sunshine every day in November. This is mostly just due to the length of the day decreasing to 10 hours 45 minutes by the end of the month. The chance of a cloudy sky is 14% in the beginning of the month, increasing to 21% by the end of the month.

#### Humidity

The average relative humidity in Abu Dhabi in November is 65% like October, with falling temperatures. It will still be considered one of the cooler months as the start of winter season in the country, and is preferred over the hotter months of August and September.

#### Wind

The average wind speed in Abu Dhabi climbs slightly throughout November. The beginning of November has winds averaging 3.5 m/s while they increase to 3.8 m/s by the end of the month. Winds are mostly from the north but westerly winds will start to return going into December.

#### Sea Temperature

The average sea temperature drops drastically to 28°C in November, though many people will still consider this to be quite warm and pleasant.



## 18. What is the dress code and social etiquette?

The UAE is a tourist-friendly country with more expatriates residing in the country than nationals/Emiratis. A country that welcomes visitors from all over the world is world-renowned for its social and modern environment. It is recommended that we respect the Muslim values of the local community and follow certain etiquette rules which will be appreciated. Visitors to the UAE are encouraged to dress modestly, particularly in conservative areas such as places of worship i.e. mosques. Read all about the official dress code and etiquette under [social responsibility](#) page of the government website.

## 19. VAT refund for tourists

Tourists and visitors can claim refund on VAT paid on purchases they made during their stay in the UAE. Recovery of payment will be done through a fully integrated electronic system which connects retailers registered in the 'Tax Refund for Tourists Scheme' with all ports of entry and exit from the UAE. [Read the details here](#).

## 20. Mobile and internet services

[Etisalat](#) and [du](#) provide mobile and internet services; they have special packages for visitors. Visitors need to provide a copy of their passport and UAE visa in order to obtain a local SIM card – which can be purchased either as you exit the airport or from service centres in the malls, and telecommunication stores.

Du tourist offers information, [see here](#).

Etisalat tourist offers information, [see here](#).

## 21. Wi-Fi in the UAE

Both local providers, Etisalat and du, provide Wi-Fi service in the UAE in many locations. Most hotels offer free Wi-Fi to their guests. Most malls and public places also provide complimentary Wi-Fi.

Find Wi-Fi hotspots on the pages below:

[Wi-Fi hotspots - Etisalat](#)

[Wi-Fi hotspots - du](#)

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## Dispelling stereotypes about the United Arab Emirates

### Safety

#### Abu Dhabi named safest city in the world in 2019

The Numbeo crowd-sourced global database revealed that the safest city for 2019 is Abu Dhabi, scoring top marks on the safety index with 89.3 points. Lt General Dahi Khalfan Tamim, Deputy Chairman of Police and Public Security in Dubai, said, *“Despite the sense of a drop in safety across the world, the UAE has become a safety oasis. Many security initiatives and projects helped to achieve this”*.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi are the safest cities to live in the Middle East, while Dubai has maintained its top rank for having highest quality of living standards across the region, closely followed by Abu Dhabi, according to Mercer's 21st annual Quality of Living Survey for 2019. [Read more here on Gulf News](#), national newspaper.

### General distinctions

The UAE is an ideal tourist destination in many ways. Some of its distinct features that contribute to making it an ideal tourist destination are:

- Economic and political stability
- Strategic location connecting the East and the West

- Well-connected by major airlines of the world
- Robust infrastructure supporting tourism
- A range of accommodation to choose from for all budgets and fancies
- A range of events and activities that cater to all age groups and people with varied interests
- Unique biodiversity - the UAE has deserts, oases, mountains, valleys, salt plains, mangroves, beaches and a very rich terrestrial and marine flora and fauna
- Religiously and culturally tolerant population - the UAE is home to more than 200 nationalities from different religious and cultural backgrounds living peacefully
- Low crime rate - the rate of premeditated murders in the UAE is 0.3 per cent for every 100,000 people as of January 2018.

### Photography

As a heavily tourist-driven hub in the Middle East, media and coverage of social activities and public sites is commonplace. Photography of government buildings and military installations is restricted. Photography of aircraft and plane spotting is illegal as in most countries due to safety precautions and policies for all residents and tourists. While you are welcome to capture touristic sites and the numerous world-renowned iconic infrastructures of man-made and natural wonders, we recommend that you avoid taking photographs of people without their permission as a social responsibility.

### Alcohol consumption

There is an extensive range of licensed restaurants and bars serving alcohol in the UAE. It is only a punishable offence to drink alcohol without a licence and/or if you are under the influence in public causing disruption to the general public. At the airport's Duty-Free, 4 litres of alcohol beverages may be purchased per person.

There is zero tolerance to driving under the influence. In the emirate of Sharjah, the country's cultural hub, drinking alcohol is entirely illegal. To read further about code of conduct when travelling to a Muslim country, [click here to read recommendations](#) directly from the UAE embassy.

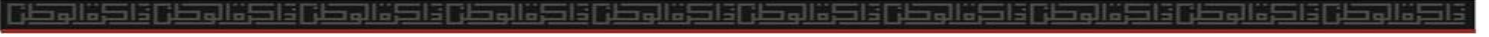
### Women

Women in the UAE enjoy the same constitutional rights as men. They have access to education, jobs, social and health benefits and holding government offices. The UAE ranked 1st out of 132 countries in the 'Women Treated with Respect' indicator in the Social Progress Index 2014 report and ranked 2nd highest among Arab countries in World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2017 (PDF). The UAE has set special policies, laws and initiatives to protect women and promote gender equality in all aspects of the society.

Women in the UAE are empowered and supported through services and facilities in the areas of education, health, jobs and more. Additional care and safety precautions such as dedicated travel cabins in the (Dubai) metro and public buses, female-driven taxis are notable examples.

According to World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2016, the UAE's global rank is as follows:  
8th rank for the sub-index of wage equality for similar work  
1st rank for the sub-index of literacy rate  
1st rank for the sub-index of enrolment in secondary education  
1st rank for the sub-index of sex ratio at birth (female/male)

To learn more about the role of women in the country, [click here to be directed to the official government website](#) about women.



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Read more FAQs relating to visiting and exploring the UAE on:

- [the government portal](#)
- [the website of Visit Abu Dhabi](#)