Dear Visitor

On behalf of the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to ‘my destination’, the Emirate of Sharjah, the Cultural Capital of the Arab World in 1998, the Islamic Culture Capital in 2014 and also the Capital of Arab Tourism for 2015.

Sharjah is one of the seven United Arab Emirates. It is the heart of the UAE and as such has retained its traditions, culture and heritage.

Sharjah is a unique destination full of fascinating contrasts, where the old and the modern meet in a cosmopolitan fusion.

More visitors are discovering Sharjah’s delights year on year, and in 2014 around two million guests stayed here from around the world. It’s the perfect place, whether your visit is for business, education or pleasure, with excellent hotels, beautiful beaches, year-round sunshine, leading museums and a whole host of activities including riding, golf and diving.

If you’re looking for shopping you can choose between haggling in old souks for everything from jewellery to carpets, or visiting the modern malls full of designer names at competitive prices. If it’s adrenaline you’re after, why not try your hand at dune bashing or take a day to travel along the wadis that wind their way across our beautiful Emirate.

Whatever you do while you are here you will find a living tradition of courtesy and hospitality, and by the end of your stay I am sure you will agree that there is no other destination like Sharjah.

With so much to pack into one trip, I hope you’ll return for a second time!

Enjoy your stay and “Ahnlan wa sahlan” - “welcome to Sharjah”.

Chairman
Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority
Marhaba and welcome to Sharjah, an emirate of contrasts; a land of souks, museums, modern skyscrapers and stunning minarets, mountains, splendid sand dunes and a beautiful east coast. This magazine will give you an insight into our unique emirate and provide you with all the information you need for your stay, whether it’s a cultural trip or family holiday you’re after.

One of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sharjah (Ash-Shāriqah in Arabic) is the third largest emirate and the only one to have land on both the Arabian Gulf Coast and the Gulf of Oman.

The Federation of the UAE was formed on December 2, 1971 and comprises the sheikhdoms of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain and Ajman. The President of the UAE is His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who is also the ruler of the Emirates’ capital, Abu Dhabi.

Since 1972, the Ruler of Sharjah and Member of the UAE Supreme Council, is His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi. Under his wise rule, leadership and visionary insight our emirate has become a proud preserver of the country’s cultural heritage. This achievement was recognised in 1998 when UNESCO named Sharjah the Cultural Capital of the Arab World of the year, and again in 2014, when ISESCO, the Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation selected Sharjah as the Islamic Culture Capital for the Arab region, in recognition of its long history of promoting Islamic culture and creation of a full array of academic, cultural, intellectual and scientific institutions.

Throughout the years our emirate has also developed a special reputation as a family tourist destination, providing visitors with the ideal getaway at any time of the year. It is therefore no surprise that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States announced the nomination of Sharjah as the Capital of Arab Tourism for 2015. This award is a great opportunity to promote our emirate in all its rich diversity and as a distinctive tourism destination recognised regionally and internationally for its cultural heritage and attractions. In celebration, we have planned several special events and celebrations, including cultural and tourist festivals, forums, workshops, and family entertainment events throughout 2015.
c. 85,000 BCE: The earliest dated evidence for human subsistence in the UAE comes from Jebel Faya, Sharjah.

7,000 years ago: Excavations reveal evidence for nomadic groups of people hunting, herding and fishing across Sharjah’s landscape from this time.

1823 – 1954: Britain’s political representative for the region is based in Sharjah.

1903: Taimiyah, the earliest school in Sharjah opens, based on traditional Islamic teaching.

1927: Oman, the first newspaper in the UAE (known as the Trucial Oman States at the time), is launched by Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Al Midfaa, a Sharjah national.

1932: The British government establishes the first airport in the region in Sharjah.

1963: The first post office in Sharjah opens.

Early 1960s: Sarah Hosman Hospital, specialising in gynaecology, is the first hospital to open in Sharjah.

1972: Oil is struck in Sharjah’s offshore Mubarak field.

1981: Sharjah Cricket Stadium opens, the first venue in the region to host International cricket in the Middle East.

1997: University City is inaugurated.

1998: UNESCO announces Sharjah as the 'Cultural Capital of the Arab World' for the year.

2014: Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) names Sharjah the 'Capital of Islamic Culture'.

2015: Sharjah is nominated the 'Capital of Arab Tourism for 2015' by the Arab Council of Tourism Ministers in Cairo, Egypt.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The first evidence of human life in the UAE was discovered on Jebel Faya in Sharjah and dates back to around 85,000 BCE. Since the first settlement began, about 7,000 years ago, the Emirate of Sharjah has always been at the core of regional development. It was the most important port on the lower Arabian Gulf from the time of the early trading with the East to the first half of the 19th century. The first international airport on this coast was established in 1932, followed by the opening of the first school building three years later.
ECONOMY

Uniquely located on world trade routes our city has developed from a small trading town, relying on fishing and pearl diving, to one of the most modern, dynamic commercial and trade centres, as well as one of the leading tourist destinations in the Arabian Gulf.

Sharjah was also the first place in the region to develop tourism and has been a growing destination in the Middle East since 1932, when international flights from Sharjah’s airport were launched. The subsequent flow and revenue from oil and gas have continued to fuel this tremendous growth.

Crude oil and gas are Sharjah’s primary economic resources, and the chemical industries are the most important industrial sub-sector in the emirate’s economy. Sharjah is a main supplier of gas to power stations and desalination plants due to its vast resources.

Sharjah has maintained a solid growth rate driven principally by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which have interests across the manufacturing, real estate and business services sectors. The emirate currently accounts for a third of the UAE’s manufacturing sectors and is among the top 10 business cities in the Gulf region. It also boasts 18 industrial zones and two highly successful free zones. In 2011, the transport and service sectors’ net worth stood at Dhs 3.1 billion, a figure that is expected to double to reach Dhs 6.23 billion in 2016.

Sharjah Airport International Free Zone (SAIF-Zone) is the centrepiece of the Sharjah Government’s commitment to free trade and provides a vital strategic advantage for business establishments. Located next to Sharjah International Airport, a few minutes from Sharjah city and the major seaports of the UAE, SAIF-Zone was initially a hub for 55 companies in 1995, but now has over 5,500 companies registered. These include some of the biggest names in the fields of IT services, media, trading and manufacturing.

Designed to encourage foreign investment, the free zone offers 100% foreign ownership, repatriation of capital and profits; import and export tax exemption and exemption from corporate and personal income taxes; a 25-year extendable lease; sponsorship and visas for all staff and much more. SAIF-Zone extends over an area of 6.1 million square metres and houses state-of-the-art facilities, air-conditioned and furnished executive offices, pre-built warehouses with adjacent office space, staff accommodation (male and female), leased land for unrestricted developments, a container parking area, temporary storage space, restaurants, supermarkets and other retail service outlets.

True to its vision of creating an affordable yet world-class free zone, Hamriyah Free Zone Authority (HFZA) has formulated policies and designed special programmes to strengthen the SME sector. Hamriyah SME Zone offers seven strategic clusters comprising of the Oil & Gas Zone, Timber Land, Maritime City, Petrochemical Zone, Construction World, Perfume Land and Steel City, complemented by e-office packages and a 14-metre-deep water port. This innovative approach has already attracted over 5,700 companies from across the globe, who have used HFZA as the launch pad for their business success.

Sharjah’s three seaports have contributed significantly to the unprecedented growth of Sharjah as a prime cargo hub, and reflect the emirate’s long-standing reputation as a major maritime trading centre. Port Khalid in Sharjah city opened in 1975 and was the first port in the Middle East to establish a purpose-built and fully equipped modern container terminal. Today the port has a total of 21 berths and can handle a wide variety of tonnage, ranging from tankers, container vessels, car carriers, passenger ships, heavy-lift ships and bulk carriers to many small vessels such as supply boats, tugs and barges.

Twenty kilometres north of Port Khalid is Hamriyah Port, part of HFZA, a flourishing and expanding port and industrial centre. Port Khorfakkan on the east coast is connected by a modern highway to the industrial and urban centres of the UAE’s Gulf Coast and has a dedicated container port and trans-shipment hub. The port has been frequently listed as one of the top-performing container terminals in the world. Cruise liners such as Costa Classica and Costa Favolosa have started running routes through Khorfakkan.

Sharjah continues to witness a considerable amount of urban development in all sectors of property from residential and commercial to leisure and tourism. The opening up of investment opportunities has attracted international investors and a number of new projects are in the pipeline.

The first established trade exhibition centre in the UAE, Expo Centre Sharjah, opened in Sharjah in the 1970s. Today the latest exhibition and meeting complex is the centrepiece a planned ‘Expo City’. Over US$ 50 million has been invested to give the international exhibitions, conferences and events industry a state-of-the-art facility in the heart of the Middle East, with easy access to the developing sub-continent and CIS economies. Bordering Al Khan Lagoon and covering 128,000 square metres, the visually striking centre is one of the most technically advanced complexes within the Middle East. Expo Centre Sharjah is set to host the inaugural World Islamic Tourism Summit & Exhibition, incorporating the second OIC Tourism Fair, in 2015.
ENVIRONMENT

Although Sharjah is in a desert region it is rich in fauna and flora. The coastal and marine environments are full of sea life and a surprising number of creatures inhabit the mountains, wetlands, tropical plains, savannas and dunes. Inland, the desert is characterised by impressive red sand dunes. The east coast consists of the spectacular, rugged Al Hajar Mountains, rising in places to 2,000 metres and intersected by sheer-sided wadis (dry valleys). Beautiful sandy beaches and the clear blue seas of the Gulf of Oman have made this coast a haven for water sports and relaxing. Khor Kalba, the southernmost tip of the UAE’s Gulf of Oman coastline, ends in an extensive mangrove marsh.

The Ruler of Sharjah takes a keen interest in the preservation of the natural flora and fauna and created the Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife for this purpose. Located at Sharjah Desert Park, this is a modern conservation, research and captive breeding facility specialising in the unique fauna of the Arabian Peninsula.

Whilst the centre is not open to the public the animals are on display next door in Arabia’s Wildlife Centre, where visitors can see the rare Arabian leopard, Arabian oryx, Houbara bustards, Brandt’s hedgehog, blind cave fish, camel spiders and many other indigenous species.

Preservation of the environment and environmentally sustainable practices are taking priority in the development of the emirate, as can be seen in various conservation projects, such as the Kalba Eco-Tourism project and the Sir Bu Nair island project.

Sharjah is also home to the UAE’s largest waste management and treatment factory, making it an ideal market for environmental technology and equipment, in addition to self-innovation in the area of green technology.

EDUCATION

Sharjah is one of the most important learning centres in the Middle East and you only have to visit the impressive University City complex to see why. Founded in 1997, University City covers an area of over 6.5 square kilometres, with pristine lawns, stately arches and domes. It includes campuses for the American University of Sharjah (AUS), University of Sharjah (UOS), the Sharjah Higher College of Technology (HCT) for Men (Sharjah Men’s College), and the Sharjah Higher College of Technology (HCT) for Women (Sharjah Women’s College), and a number of other notable academies and colleges. The success of the University Hospital Sharjah is paving the way for Sharjah to become a regional hub for medical treatment.

Rising up in front of University City is a majestic 42-metre-high monument made of green granite and capped with a golden dome. This artistic landmark celebrates Sharjah’s crowning as the Cultural Capital of Islamic Culture 2014; its location representing our emirate’s contribution to preserving Islamic culture and disseminating Islamic knowledge.
TOURISM

Sharjah continues to invest in its tourism industry, with the development of new hotels, shopping centres, tourism projects and family events. Our tourism sector has maintained a steady annual growth rate of 11% over the last five years, with tourist numbers doubling during the same period, and demand for hotel rooms is expected to grow at a rate of 6.2% between now and 2016. The emirate is within easy reach of Europe, South Africa and the Far East, with a flying time of seven to eight hours. New York is 14 hours away and Sydney 15 hours.

Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), established in 1996, promotes the emirate internationally through its overseas’ offices and a strong international tourism exhibition programme. Early in December the Authority organises and sponsors the hugely popular water festival with fantastic stage shows, world-class fireworks displays, carnivals and children’s entertainment, culminating in the final round of the prestigious international World Championship Formula 1 Powerboat, Sharjah Grand Prix. The Authority also organises the nine-day Sharjah Light Festival that annually illuminates the city’s landmarks, streets and parks in a stunning show for the senses.

In 2009 Sharjah Investment and Development Authority (Shurooq), was established to evaluate tourism-related infrastructure projects in the emirate. Shurooq is also responsible for overseeing upcoming tourist, architectural and cultural projects locally and internationally to support Sharjah’s status as a leader in tourism.

The Sir Bu Nair island development is Shurooq’s largest project to date, with an investment of Dh500m to turn the island into a paradise for real estate, eco-tourism and leisure. An area of outstanding natural beauty, the island development includes a marina, turtle beach, airport, luxury hotel, 9,693-square-metre village and a variety of retail, cultural and leisure facilities. Situated 65 kilometres off the coast, a flight from Sharjah to the island will take just 40 minutes.

GEOGRAPHY

Sharjah covers approximately 2,600 square kilometres, with a population of 1,311,070 (2014 census), 85% of whom reside in the city. The three enclaves of Dibba Al Hisn, Khorfakkan and Kalba situated on the east coast belong to Sharjah, along with the central town of Al Dhaid and the islands of Abu Moussa and Sir Bu Nair.

With Sharjah’s modern infrastructure and multi-lane highways criss-crossing the emirate, it is easy to access neighbouring emirates and the east coast, either for a day or a longer visit.
TRAVEL

Sharjah International Airport is the third largest airport in the UAE and the second largest Middle East airfreight hub in terms of cargo tonnage. It is increasingly popular worldwide as a transit, departure and arrival point for passengers, with over 8.5 million in 2013, and expected growth to 9.4 million by 2020. The first airport opened over 82 years ago, in 1932, when it was used as a stopover point by Imperial Airways, the precursor to British Airways. In 1977 the airport was relocated to its present position.

Today, the airport is conveniently situated just 15 kilometres from Sharjah city centre, centrally placed between Dubai and the Northern Emirates. Special services staff offer round-the-clock assistance and many traveller-friendly facilities: the ‘Hala’ meet and greet service; all travel-related services through Sharjah Air Travel Agency (SATA); full communications and postal services; banks and exchange centres; duty free shopping; restaurants and cafés; car rental; medical facilities; all airport handling services; and special assistance to unaccompanied, elderly or disabled passengers. Centred on efficiency, the airport boasts a 20-minute passenger check-in and checkout time.

Sharjah International Airport is home to Air Arabia, the first and leading low-cost carrier in the Middle East and North Africa. Established in 2003, Air Arabia, listed on the Dubai Financial Market, currently flies to over 90 destinations across the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and the Indian Subcontinent from four operation hubs in Sharjah, Alexandria in Egypt, Casablanca in Morocco and Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE.

Locally, Air Arabia offers passengers a choice of exclusive coach service transfers from Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Al Ain and Ras Al Khaimah, providing transportation to and from Sharjah International Airport. Tickets can be booked online, through Air Arabia’s UAE Call Centre, at the Air Arabia walk-in sales station at Sharjah Airport, or at many Air Arabia sales offices and appointed travel agents across the world.

For further details please contact Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority on +971 6 556 6777, call 8008000 or visit www.sharjahmydestination.ae

Don’t miss the UAE’s own internationally acclaimed Sharjah Biennial. Every two years Sharjah welcomes artists from all over the world for this major exhibition that takes place in the SAF Art Spaces, streets, courtyards and sites across the Emirate of Sharjah.

Year round activities Exhibitions • Performances • Music • Film Screenings • Education Programme (for Children and Adults) • Community Garden. All activities are open to the public and free of charge. Opening Hours Saturday - Thursday: 10am - 10pm, Friday: 4pm - 10pm

SHARJAHART.ORG +971 52 695 8517
Sharjah has a unique charisma. The emirate has carefully balanced the past and the present, gracefully combining cutting-edge technology with Arabian hospitality and authentic charm. Crowned the Islamic Culture Capital for 2014, Sharjah is home to some of the greatest museums and art galleries in the region.

You will experience Islamic culture in the beautifully restored heritage sites, delight in the Sharjah Creek area with its traditional activities of fishing and trading, and see splendid mosques and charismatic old souks. In this section, find out about traditional festivals and practices, and the wealth of museums and arts on offer in Sharjah.

At the sixth conference of the Organization of Islamic Countries in Azerbaijan, Sharjah was chosen as the Islamic Culture Capital of the Arab Region for 2014. This accolade is a tribute to Sharjah’s Islamic cultural panorama and has provided a boost to Sharjah’s development. A host of events were held especially in 2014 and a number of parks and monuments erected in celebration, as well as the impressive Al Majaz Amphitheatre and the up and coming Al Qasimia University for Islamic Faculties.
Women usually wear a black cloak or abaya over their clothes. Nowadays younger women opt to wear the latest fashions underneath. Traditionally, ladies wear trousers (sirwal) under the abaya, that fit tightly at the ankles. A jalabiya (floor-length dress), often decorated with embroidery or beautiful beadwork, is worn over the sirwal. Almost all women cover their hair with a scarf or shaila and some of the older women wear a canvas mask called a burqa that covers the eyebrows, nose and mouth. Women are also very fond of henna, a herbal powder, which when applied on hands and feet, often in elaborate patterns, leaves a rich reddish-brown colour.

Hospitality is a highly prized virtue of the Arab world and you will encounter a warm welcome. The serving of freshly ground Arabic coffee flavoured with cardamom is a traditional sign of greeting. Coffee is poured from the long-spouted Arabian coffee pot into small handle-less cups. You can accept one, two or three cups and then to signal you have had enough, shake the cup gently from side to side and return to the server.

Dates are often served with coffee but not many years ago the date palm was prized not just for its fruit, but vital for survival in a land of scarcity. Date palms are indigenous to the region, and for hundreds of years they have grown along the coastline. Known as the ‘tree of life’ no part of the palm was wasted. They provide shade from the hot sun. Dates can be eaten raw, cooked, baked or pressed into syrup. Coastal dwellers of long ago used to weave the palm fronds to make baskets, mats and building materials for their homes, and the trunk was hollowed out to form a boat.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

Islam is an integral part of life in the emirate. The values of Islam include honesty, courtesy and hospitality, qualities by which you will find yourself charmed during your stay.

Ramadan is the Holy Month during which Muslims commemorate God’s revelation of the Holy Qu’ran to the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH). Whenever the Prophet is referred to by name, it is customary to say “Peace be Upon Him”. Ramadan is a month of fasting when Muslims refrain from eating, drinking and smoking in public from dawn until dusk. As a mark of respect, visitors are also required to refrain from consuming these items in public during daylight hours. The start of Ramadan goes back by 11 days each year as it is based on the lunar calendar, not the fixed Gregorian calendar.

The sighting of the new moon and the start of Eid Al Fitr (Festival of the Breaking of the Fast) mark the end of Ramadan. This three-day celebration is followed about 70 days later by Eid Al Adha or Festival of the Sacrifice, a four-day holiday, which marks the end of Haj (Pilgrimage to Makkah). With over 600 mosques to be found in the city, Sharjah’s skyline is distinctive with its many tall minarets rising above the buildings. To commemorate this emirate being named Capital of Islamic Culture 2014, more mosques will be built, to reach a total of 1,000 minarets by 2015. On a drive around town you will see many spectacular mosques, examples of modern Islamic architecture characterised by intricate and striking designs. The most popular and frequently photographed mosques include Al Hoda Mosque in Al Khan, Al Maghferah Mosque by the creek in Al Seef, Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal Mosque by Cultural Square, Al Khuz Mosque on Al Sharq Road, Al Bara bin Azeb Mosque in Al Mirgab, Noor Mosque, Al Buheirah Corniche and King Faisal Mosque in Al Soor Square.

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Nationals in the UAE continue to wear their traditional costume, which remains a symbol of national pride and identity. You will see men wearing the spotless, white ankle robes called kandura. A small skull cap (gahfia) is worn under the white headcloth (gutrah) and this is held in place by the twisted black coil or agal. On special occasions and for men of standing, a flowing black or brown cloak (bisht) edged with gold braid is worn over the kandura.

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If you go into the desert you will see another famous tree, often with all the bottom branches levelled out by nibbling camels. It’s called a Ghaf tree and it is highly respected because it was one of the few sources of nutrition and medication in the desert. In fact, it is illegal to fell these trees.

**Sharjah Creek** has for centuries been a focal point for life in Sharjah - as the site of the original settlement and for fishing, pearling and trading. A stroll along its banks from the Central Souq to the Radisson Blu Resort will give you an insight into the history and age-old traditions of the emirate. Admire the dhows, graceful ships that are working reminders of the long tradition of maritime trade in the area. Centuries ago boats like these made voyages to places as far away as China. Today most of the dhows sail between the UAE, Iran, Pakistan and India, trading in a variety of goods. Amidst the colourful hustle and bustle alongside the creek, men sit quietly making large wire fishing traps, often seen piled high on the dhows.

Dhows were also used in the **pearling industry**. In the early days before the discovery of oil in the 1960s, the export of pearls formed the backbone of the economy. Between 1830 and 1900 pearls overtook stones including diamonds in popularity and became the favoured jewels of the nobility, and so their price rocketed. Coastal tribes operated the industry and fished different areas in the Gulf waters according to the season. Divers would hold their breath as they hunted for oysters at depths of between 15 and 40 metres. A bone peg clipped over the nose was the only aide to prevent inhaling water while diving. The oysters would be gathered from the seabed by hand and placed in a basket held by a line to another worker up on deck. A tug on the line indicated that the pearl diver was ready to return to the surface.

**Windtowers** are unique to this region and are one of the earliest forms of air-conditioning. With their two, three or four triangular shafts, the towers catch any passing breeze, channeling the air down one side of the tower and forcing it up and out again through another, creating air circulation below and much needed cooling in the summer.

Visit the Heart of Sharjah to see examples of windtowers, including the only round windtower in the UAE. Tucked in behind the high-rise buildings lining the creek are three fascinating traditional souks. See artisans at work at Al Sanasiya Souk; buy antiques and souvenirs for friends in Souk Al Arsah; and find traditional clothing, incense, herbs and spices in Souk Saqr.

Much of the land on the other side of the creek is utilised by the port. The deep-water port opened in 1975 and today has 21 berths. Prior to this, from the late 19th century, cargo was landed by barge from ships on the anchorage offshore. These days, tugs, barges, landing craft and other working boats are moored here, and you may see an oil rig with its legs towering over the creek, in for routine maintenance.

Whilst in Arabia you can experience the **traditional sports and pastimes** practiced for centuries. The Arab Thoroughbred horse is famous worldwide and it is believed that the first horse racing in Sharjah took place along Al Arouba Road in front of Al Hisn (Sharjah Fort). Nowadays you can see these magnificent animals in action at Sharjah Equestrian & Racing Club.

Camels, popularly known as 'Ships of the Desert', have competed in races in Arabia for centuries. Trade in racing camels is a source of income for those who maintain a Bedouin (traditional) lifestyle. These ungainly creatures maintain speeds of up to 20 kilometres per hour and attending a race is a memorable experience.

Today **falconry** is a sport in which wild falcons are trained to attack small prey and to bring the prey back for the evening meal. Originally this was a primary means of obtaining fresh meat in the barren environment. The Peregrine is the most popular falcon due to its great speed and finesse.
Uncover the stories of Sharjah’s very early history in the Sharjah Archaeology Museum. In this informative museum you can explore the changing environments experienced by the region’s inhabitants from the Stone Age to the present day, through displays of artefacts, coins, jewellery, pottery and ancient weapons. The museum holds regular seminars and talks about the emirate’s early history and archaeological discoveries.

When it comes to history, nature, science and the arts Sharjah’s museums offer more to see and do than any other emirate, and cater for all ages and interests. Families are welcomed into the museums for a fun-filled learning experience. A small admission fee is charged and family tickets and special group rates apply. Most museums are open from 8am to 8pm, except on Fridays when they open from 4pm. Times may alter according to the season, on Public Holidays and during Ramadan so please check ahead of visiting. Phone numbers are listed in the ‘Useful Contacts’ section, or check out www.sharjahmuseums.ae
THE ARTS

Sharjah is renowned in the region for its contribution to the art scene worldwide and is a popular destination for art enthusiasts and visitors in general. A trip to the Art Museum, located in the Arts Area and the Calligraphy Museum in the Heart of Sharjah is a must for all art buffs. Several working galleries can be found in both these areas, where artists work in a traditional setting. Explore the quaint studios set around enclosed courtyards in houses that date back to the late 18th century, nestled amidst winding alleyways with lime-washed walls.

Sharjah Art Museum (Arts Area) is one of the largest galleries in the Middle East, offering gallery after gallery of stunning landscapes, cityscapes and portraits painted in oil, watercolours and acrylics. Explore the history of the region through the Orientalist painters of the 18th and 19th centuries, as well as the modern creations in its Contemporary Arab Art wing.

For a fascinating journey of discovery across centuries of Arabian heritage visit the Sharjah Calligraphy Museum in the Heart of Sharjah and be inspired by the palpable energy flowing through the beautifully written script. Significant works of art from the Arab world, created by local and renowned international calligraphers, are on display.

Throughout the year both museums host several solo and group exhibitions covering all forms of art, displays by students and internationally renowned artists, cultural weeks and photographic competitions.

SHARJAH BIENNIAL 12: THE PAST, THE PRESENT, THE POSSIBLE
(March 5 - June 5, 2015)

The Sharjah Biennial is one of the Middle East’s principal art events and has been held every other year since its inception in 1993, intended both for art connoisseurs and the general public. The 2015 biennial was curated by Eungie Joo, who previously served as Director and Curator of Education and Public Programmes at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York. Over 50 artists and cultural practitioners participate, creatively explored ideas of the event’s theme in their work. The Sharjah Biennial has launched several initiatives with artists and art organisations, engaging them in joint productions and long-term collaborations such as the Sharjah Biennial Production Programme, the March Meeting and the Artist-in-Residence Programme. Sharjah also hosts a Children’s Biennial and Film Festival and Sharjah Theatre Days. Visit www.sharjahbiennial.org for more information.

The seventh Sharjah Biennial for the Art of Arabic Calligraphy will be held from April to June 2016 and will exhibit many historical scripts from Muslim cultures. The biennial will be accompanied by workshops and lectures on the art of Arabic calligraphy, and a collection of masterpieces from around the world will be on view for all to admire.

Another popular event is the Islamic Arts Festival, held every Ramadan in various locations around the city.

SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION (SAF)

This dynamic foundation was established in 2009 and has built on the history of cultural cooperation and exchange that began with the first Sharjah Biennial in 1993. Today, in addition to the Biennial, the foundation brings a broad range of contemporary art and cultural programmes to the region, including the annual March Meeting, residencies, production grants, commissions, exhibitions, research, publications and a growing collection. Education and public programmes are also a focus for SAF and the foundation provides studio spaces for artists to rent.

SAF art spaces and exhibitions are located in the Heart of Sharjah and are well worth a visit, not just for the magnificent art on display, but to admire the perfectly blended mix of renovated old and new buildings.

Maraya Art Centre, a three-storey artistic hub is located at Al Qasba (Block E) and is a stage for creative experimentation and contemporary visual arts. Visitors are invited to attend exhibitions and lectures by featured artists, to enrol in specialised workshops for all ages, or simply to enjoy a tour of the centre (open daily from 10am to 10pm, Friday 4pm to 10pm). For more information visit www.maraya.ae

Barjeel Art Foundation is also located in Al Qasba and is an independent, locally based initiative established to manage, preserve and exhibit the personal art collection of Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi. The foundation provides a publicly accessible art collection as well as in-house exhibitions, with the aim of furthering the art scene in the region. Educational programmes are also being devised for the local community. Go to www.barjeelartfoundation.org for more details.
Old Sharjah was divided into four main districts, protected by a high wall and defensive towers. Each district was also divided into one or two neighbourhoods (freej). The fort, majestically located in the centre of the old town, was the seat of the governing Al Qasimi family.

Take a walk around this historic precinct and you will be transported back in time by the sights and sounds that surround you.

Admire the impressive Sharjah Hisn (fort), once home to the ruling Al Qasimi family. This museum is presently closed due to renovation work but can be admired from the exterior.

Visit Sharjah Heritage Museum to see handcrafted works of art and objects that date back to a time when local people relied solely on fishing and pearling for income. Nearby, Al Eslah School Museum was the first formal educational institute in the area and the Majlis Al Midfaa has the only round windtower to be seen in the UAE.

Walk around the exterior of the houses that belonged to the pearl merchant families of Khalid bin Ibrahim Al Yousef and Al Shamsi (Bait Al Naboodah) and visit the Sharjah Art Foundation galleries.

Our heritage museums are not limited to the city. Cross the Al Hajar Mountains and visit the traditional fishing village of Kalba, where you will find a charismatic old fort, Al Hisn, and the prominent beachside residence of HE Sheikh Saeed bin Hamed Al Qasimi, now restored as a museum displaying items of Islamic heritage and lifestyle.
The Sharjah Aquarium takes you on a journey under the sea for a close-up look at the incredible marine life surrounding the emirate. Over 250 species can be seen in the secret world under the ocean and the coral reefs, rock pools and mangroves come to life in front of your eyes. With hands-on displays, information touch screens, educational programmes and special events the Aquarium is a fun-filled, informative and stimulating experience for all the family.

Sharjah Desert Park is located on the road to Al Dhaid, just 28 kilometres from Sharjah city and is one of the most popular attractions in the UAE, offering four venues in one.

At the Sharjah Natural History & Botanical Museum prehistoric and living creatures are brought to life in the interactive exhibits with films, dioramas, collections and games. Learn about the formation of the land, enjoy the beauty and diversity of the fauna and flora, and understand the impact of man on our planet. In the botanical section you will unearth the amazing secrets of plant life and discover why we depend on them. From the smallest to the tallest, the weirdest to the most wonderful, explore the beauty and diversity of the flora around us.

Recently opened, the Islamic Park features 50 varieties of plants and trees mentioned in the Holy Qur’an and Sunnah (teachings) of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) including fig, pomegranate, olive, corn, leek, garlic, onion, lentil, barley, wheat, ginger, pumpkin, watermelon, tamarind, cedar, banana, cucumber, basil and vineyards.

An amazing display of Arabian animals can be seen in Arabia’s Wildlife Centre. Walk on the wild side and see eye to eye with the endangered Arabian Leopard. Get up close with a venomous viper and discover life after dark in the nocturnal display house. Younger visitors will enjoy a stroll around the Children’s Farm, where they can pet and feed their favourite domesticated animals. Pony and camel rides are available at the weekend.

The Birds of Prey Centre in Al Ghail, Kalba (on Sharjah’s east coast) offers visitors the chance to see the traditional art of falconry, as well as many resident and migratory raptors. In fact, the centre is home to 46 species of diurnal and nocturnal hunting birds. Live demonstrations and breathtaking shows are held twice a day (six days a week) and focus on the hunting characteristics and habitats of these magnificent creatures. This is a great diversion to make during an outing to the east coast.
TRANSPORT
From man’s first attempts to fly to landing on the moon, investigate the history of flight and the development of aviation in this region at the Al Mahatta Museum. In 1932 the first airport in the Arabian Gulf opened in Sharjah. Wander through the hangar and galleries and experience this fascinating period of Sharjah’s history.
Sharjah’s Maritime Museum explores the many roles the sea has played in the lives of those who have lived and worked in Sharjah. Take a fascinating voyage of discovery to learn about boat building techniques, types of fishing, the dangers and hardships of pearl fishing as well as the variety of pearls and their trade, the history of navigation, and trading from merchant to magnate. Hear first-hand the accounts of the captain who describes his passage, and the merchant who tells of a shipwreck.
Sharjah Old Cars Club and Museum, located next to Sharjah International Airport, takes you on a trip down memory lane with over a hundred classic models of vintage vehicles, mainly American in origin and built between 1917 and 1960. Visitors can learn about the parts of an engine and how they function.

SCIENCE
Step into the Sharjah Science Museum and have fun discovering science with hands-on experiments and illusions, exploring colour, aerodynamics, cryogenics and physiology. Participate in electrifying demonstrations, probe the secrets of space and test your reactions and strength. This museum is very child-friendly, as is the Sharjah Discovery Centre, situated opposite the airport; a bright and colourful museum full of hands-on fun and entertainment for the young and young at heart.

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUMS DAY
This is a celebration of museums across the globe, held annually around May 18. Sharjah’s museums open their doors and invite you to join in with their festivities free of charge. A host of activities take place including special exhibitions, lectures and competitions for children.

SHARJAH HERITAGE DAYS
Held annually in April in the Heart of Sharjah, this colourful carnival celebrates the cultural heritage of our people. Featuring a variety of traditional events and representation from the coastal, agricultural, mountain and Bedouin environments, visitors can participate in the various activities and taste the local fare.
Sharjah is renowned in the Middle East as a centre for excellence in education, thanks to the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah.
The establishment of a formal education system in the region was pioneered by Sharjah at the beginning of the 20th century. In the late 1800s, there were no ‘schools’ as such. Small groups of children would meet in the home of a Motawaw (or Ulama), a religious scholar, to receive informal lessons based on traditional Islamic teaching. By 1903 Taniyyah Al Mahmoudia, the earliest informal ‘school’ recorded in Sharjah, was offering a common base for instruction on the Holy Qur'an. With the opening of Al Eslah Al Qasimya School in 1953, Sharjah became one of the first emirates to introduce a new system with a formal curriculum and classroom setting.

If you would like to see an early educational institute, visit the first Al Eslah School, founded in 1938 and located in the heart of Sharjah. The school has been preserved as a museum and is open daily to visitors. Our Ruler attended this school as a junior.

Today, through increased financial allocations from the government, Sharjah’s schools and colleges are experiencing double-digit growth in enrolments and the emirate has a high literacy rate of 92 per cent. Boys and girls attend Government and International schools, followed by higher education at colleges or universities, such as the American University of Sharjah, or universities overseas.

University City is a popular tourist destination, located just 15 kilometres from central Sharjah and opposite Sharjah International Airport. This educational oasis, with lush green landscaped lawns and stunning Islamic architecture, houses the campuses of the American University of Sharjah, the University of Sharjah, the Sharjah Police Academy, the Institute of Training and Judicial Studies, the Sharjah Higher Colleges of Technology and Al Qassimia University which have separate facilities for men and women. Also located on the campus is the first purpose-built University Hospital in the UAE, a centre of medical education and research, providing cutting-edge professional healthcare to the community and further afield. His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi is President of both the University of Sharjah and the American University of Sharjah.

Nearby the University City complex is an area specially designed for junior and senior schools, home to Sharjah English School, the Australian International School, the Scholars International Academy and Wesgreen International School, to mention a few.

The emirate enjoys an array of cultural events and projects and several magnificent museums. It also hosts the annual Sharjah International Book Fair, which attracts hundreds of publishers globally to showcase their new titles and published works. Another big-name event is the Sharjah Children's Reading Festival – a prime educational and entertainment attraction that is hugely popular.
American University of Sharjah

The American University of Sharjah (AUS) was founded in 1997 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi, whose vision it was that AUS should be a leading educational institution in the Gulf region. AUS is currently ranked as one of the world's top 400 universities, according to London-based Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), and it attracts students from all over the world. Independent, non-profit and coeducational, the AUS is licenced in both the US, by the Department of Education of the State of Delaware, accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; and in the UAE, by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Although consciously modelled on American institutions of higher education, the AUS is also thoroughly grounded in Arab culture and one of its central roles is the revitalisation of intellectual life in the Middle East. The AUS offers 26 majors and 53 minors at the undergraduate level and 14 master’s degrees programmes. All undergraduate and graduate programmes have been awarded either accreditation or accreditation eligible status. Nearly 6,000 students from the UAE and neighbouring countries and the USA are enrolled in programmes covering a variety of disciplines through the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Engineering, School of Architecture and Design, and School of Business and Administration. Arabic is the official language of the country, all classes and administrative functions are conducted in English.

Higher Colleges of Technology

Founded in 1988, the Higher Colleges of Technology (HCT) form one of the largest institutions of higher learning in the UAE, with over 20,000 students based on 17 campuses throughout the country. HCT in Sharjah are ideally located at University City and provide post-secondary education in business, education, engineering technology, information technology, communications technology and health sciences. HCT place a strong emphasis on an innovative, project-driven and student-centred curriculum. The teaching language is English and the staff are recruited from around the world. HCT have formal alliances with a number of international education and training institutions, and corporate partnerships with local and multinational companies. Some courses have international accreditation: for example, the HCT’s Bachelor of Education degree was developed with, and is certified by, the University of Melbourne.

The CERT (Centre of Excellence for Applied Research and Training) is the commercial arm of the Higher Colleges of Technology, developing and providing education, training and applied technology for public and private sector clients.

University of Sharjah

Built upon an Islamic design, the University of Sharjah (UOS) was established in October 1997 as a non-profit institution for higher education. In less than a decade, the university achieved academic accreditation for most of its programmes at the bachelor’s and master’s levels.

The university boasts undergraduate and graduate degree programmes in many disciplines, including the humanities, liberal arts and culture, social sciences, communication, engineering and architecture, business administration, applied sciences, Islamic law, common law, fine art and design, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and health sciences. Tuition is conducted in Arabic.

The UOS is also home to the Colleges of Medicine and Health Sciences, which include the Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy, medical research laboratories, a comprehensive medical teaching hospital, and a Medical Sciences library, in addition to other facilities. The University also offers a large number of programmes through its Community College, which prepare students for careers in community services and technical professions. In addition to its main campus in Sharjah city, there are campuses providing hands-on training programmes among communities throughout the emirate.

Al Qassimia University

Opened in April 2015, as one of the projects to mark the occasion of the Sharjah Islamic Culture Capital 2014 celebrations. Covering one million square metres the university will have several Islamic-related faculties such as Theology, the Sharia and Law faculty, Islamic economy, engineering and architecture, as well as preaching and the media.
**DR SULTAN AL QASIMI CENTRE OF GULF STUDIES**

Located by the airport-side entrance to the University City, the centre is an intellectual resource that traces the history and heritage of life in the Gulf through original collectors’ maps and the very first images of the region, some of which come from His Highness’ private collection. Various types of traditional dhow are on display alongside maritime vessels from around the world.

**CREATIVE LEARNING**

Sharjah Museums Department runs specific programmes to educate all ages and sectors of the community in local culture and heritage, through its Department of Interpretation and Education. Programmes are organised annually and are individually designed to meet the learning objectives of specific course modules for schools and universities, and the requirements of special care centres. The programmes offer in-depth workshops and interactive in-gallery activities. In addition, Teachers’ Corner offers resources, tips and discussion-based sessions. These aid teachers planning student trips to the museums, ensuring each visit is an enriching and successful experience. For visitors, families and the rest of the community, weekly sessions provide education for children in a fun environment, and workshops for adults in the arts, archaeology, traditional crafts and much more.

**INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SHOW**

*February 10 to 12, 2016*

Sharjah hosts an annual education show, which is the UAE’s most comprehensive and premier platform for higher education studies. It is aimed at showcasing opportunities for UAE-based students wishing to pursue undergraduate, postgraduate and vocational courses in some of the leading educational institutes, both here and overseas.

Held at Expo Centre Sharjah, the International Education Show is jointly organised by the Expo Centre and Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). The event enables participating educational institutions to talk directly to a large number of school leavers, undergraduates, working professionals and executives, and others who wish to pursue higher education, within the country and abroad. It also provides an opportunity for participants, particularly the foreign-based educational institutions, to network and to appoint local partners and agents.

**SHARJAH CITY FOR HUMANITARIAN SERVICES**

Under the umbrella of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs, Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services (SCHS) is a local charitable organization operating services for more than 3,000 people of all ages and nationalities with special needs and disabilities. SCHS aims to provide a better future for both mentally and physically challenged children, instilling them with confidence and the chance to live in an equal society, and through education, rehabilitation and job placement, to empower adults to be independent and self-reliant.
From floating down lazy rivers and riding bright blue aqua slides, discovering impressive museums and charming cultural areas, and shopping in traditional souks and busy modern malls, to strolling along the dhow wharf, snorkelling, horse riding, or relaxing on a sunny beach, there is something for everyone, all year round in Sharjah.

To help you discover more of our emirate, you can book standard or tailor-made tours and excursions through your hotel, or directly with the Sharjah travel and tour operators. Trips range from half and full-day scenic bus tours, camel riding, desert/dune buggy driving, sand boarding, theme and water park visits, and excursions to other emirates; to one or two-night desert and mountain safaris or east coast stays, all of which can be arranged to suit your needs. Special interest packages including bird watching, golf, fishing, archaeology and cultural tours are also available.

Telephone numbers and websites for all the places mentioned here can be found in the Useful Contacts section.
2015 Events In Sharjah

JANUARY & FEBRUARY
International Education Show
Sharjah Festival for Arabic Poetry
Sharjah Light Festival
Sharjah Spring Promotions

MARCH & APRIL
Middle East Motor Tuning Show
Sharjah International Arts Biennial
The Perfect Wedding Show
Sharjah Children’s Reading Festival
Children’s Book Fair
Sharjah Cup (International cricket)
Sharjah Festival Days
Sharjah Heritage Days
Sharjah Theatre Days
Sharjah Biennial

MAY & JUNE
International Museum Day
Sharjah International Arts Biennial
Middle East Watch & Jewellery Show

JULY & AUGUST
Sharjah Summer Promotions, with events throughout the city

OCTOBER
Sharjah International Children’s Film Festival

NOVEMBER
Sharjah International Book Fair
International Automobile Show

DECEMBER
Arabian Horse Festival
F1 World Championships Powerboat Races & Sharjah Water Festival
UAE National Day Celebrations

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR
Al Majaz Waterfront - events and shows
Al Qasba - art exhibitions and cultural events at Maraya Art Centre
American University of Sharjah - music, film, dance and theatrical performances
Expo Centre Sharjah - trade and industry exhibitions
Horse racing - from November to April
Ramadan Islamic Arts Festival
Sharjah Biennial of the Art of Calligraphy - every even year
Sharjah Holy Month of Ramadan Festivals and Eid Fairs
Special Events For 2015

SHARJAH LIGHT FESTIVAL (5th ANNIVERSARY YEAR)
The Light Festival illuminates the city’s landmarks with spectacular music and light shows, using the latest techniques in lighting, graphics, 3-D and video mapping technology. Attracting hundreds of thousands of spectators across nine performances early in the year, this is one of the events of which we’re most proud.

SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL ARTS BIENNIAL 2015
Founded in 1993 and taking place every other year, Sharjah Biennial has grown from a traditional and regionally focused exhibition into one of the most established and prominent cultural events in the Middle East. It encompasses a range of venues, including the Sharjah Art Foundation Art Spaces, the Sharjah Art Museum, and the nearby traditional buildings and courtyards of the Arts and Heritage areas. Sharjah Biennial 12 ‘The past, the present, the possible’ was from March 5 to June 5, 2015.

SHARJAH HERITAGE DAYS (SHARJAH & KALBA)
This busy, annual carnival is usually held in April and highlights traditional events that celebrate our cultural heritage and national identity. Browse and shop at stalls and marketplaces, see a variety of cultural and art activities and folk dancing, and listen to traditional music.

SHARJAH SUMMER PROMOTIONS
Sharjah offers 10 weeks of fun and family entertainment, with a large number of summer promotional activities and surprises, during July and August. These include attractive discounts on merchandise, deals, raffles and grand entertainment and fireworks shows across the city.

SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR - EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH
This remarkable 11-day event, launched in 1982 by our Ruler, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qasimi takes place annually in November in the pavilions of our beautifully landscaped Expo Centre and attracts over a million visitors. Hundreds of publishers from all over the world come here to showcase their books and there are children’s activities, seminars and workshops for visitors of all ages, designed to share cultures and traditions from across the world.

SHARJAH RAMADAN FESTIVALS & EID FAIRS
Ramadan is the holiest month in the Islamic calendar. Cultural, social, religious and health-related events around the festival are organised all over town, in shopping malls, souks and markets. These festivities are some of the most established and growing economic activities in the region. The dates of Ramadan change each year, but it falls about 10 days earlier year on year.

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS POWERBOAT RACES & SHARJAH WATER FESTIVAL
With an action-packed programme of family fun, extravaganza and water sport, the Sharjah Water Festival celebrates the marine heritage of our Emirate. The Festival has activities for every type of fun on, in and near water, with musical shows, magical entertainers, fireworks and children’s activities. The grand finale of the week-long December festival is the final round of the prestigious U.I.M. World Championship (Powerboats), held on the Khaled Lagoon in the centre of the city. Now in its 17th year, the race sees drivers from around the world skim their powerboats across the water at amazing speeds.

SHARJAH SUMMER PROMOTIONS

SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL ARTS BIENNIAL 2015

SHARJAH HERITAGE DAYS (SHARJAH & KALBA)

SHARJAH SUMMER PROMOTIONS

SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL ARTS BIENNIAL 2015

SHARJAH HERITAGE DAYS (SHARJAH & KALBA)
What To Do

Whether you are still planning your trip, or already here and unpacking, you can enjoy an easy, exciting and relaxing holiday in Sharjah.

AL MAJAZ AMPHITHEATRE
This splendid open-air, Roman-style amphitheatre, set on an island in Khaled Lagoon, was constructed in 2014 in celebration of Sharjah’s appointment as the Islamic Culture Capital 2014. It now hosts other international cultural and arts events.

CULTURAL NEIGHBOURHOODS
Discover the special character of old Sharjah by visiting the historic neighbourhoods of Al Merraija and Al Shuwaiheen (Arts Area) in the Heart of Sharjah. Here the breezes of the past are felt in the narrow corridors and traditions are relived in the old houses that retain the architecture of former times, with decorated gypsum arches and traditional mashrabiya (Arabic wooden or stone lattice screens) overlooking the courtyards.

EXHIBITIONS & TRADE FAIRS
Visit Expo Centre Sharjah, the region’s premier exhibition organiser and events venue, located in the heart of the city, where you will find exhibitions and shows of cars, furniture and interiors, jewellery, wedding services, watches and books, as well as technical and industrial trade fairs and conferences.

PHOTOGRAPHY
For keen photographers Sharjah offers many picturesque opportunities: from the intricate architecture found around Cultural Roundabout, the Heart of Sharjah, our ornate mosques, University City, Al Jubail Market, Flag Island and the museums; the landscapes of Fossil Rock, Khor Kalba mangroves, Al Hajar Mountains, Khorfakkan, Dibba and the east coast; colourful and traditional souks and ancient and modern lifestyles from the dhows on the Creek, to the 21st-century Al Buheirah Corniche, The Palm Oasis, Al Khan Beach and Mamzar Corniche. Please remember that normal tourist photography is acceptable, but it is courteous always to ask permission before photographing people.

MUSEUMS
We have more museums than any other emirate, and some of the oldest historical and “cultural” neighbourhoods to discover.

AL NOOR MOSQUE
This majestic building with domes and minarets was inspired by the great architectural beauty of Sultan Ahmed’s Blue Mosque in Istanbul. It is open to visitors every Monday at 10am (apart from Public Holidays). The one-hour tour includes an insight into Islam and local culture, and a question and answer session. Private visits can also be arranged in advance. Photography is permitted.

UNIVERSITY CITY
Located to the east of the city opposite Sharjah International Airport, this educational complex has positioned Sharjah as the leader of education in the region. Several magnificent buildings form this campus and it is well worth a drive through the beautifully landscaped gardens to see the American University of Sharjah, Sharjah University and the many other higher educational colleges.
CITY SIGHTSEEING BUS
A double-decker red bus service with an audio guide in five languages takes passengers to many cultural destinations across the city, with night tours at the weekend and several routes daily. The full tour lasts between one and two hours and a ticket allows you to hop on and off as many times as you wish during a 24-hour period. This is a great way to discover the city and then explore at your leisure. And why not stop and hire a Byky? These hop-on, hop-off bikes are available at designated places around the Khaled Lagoon and Al Khan Corniche.

AL QASBA
Live it up at the ‘Venice of Sharjah’. Al Qasba combines heritage and leisure activities – and the 300-seat home of the Maraya Art Centre – one of the UAE’s best venues for contemporary visual arts – and the majestic Highest wheel in the region, which reaches 60 metres and provides breathtaking panoramic views of Sharjah and Dubai in air-conditioned cabins. Al Qasba is also the home of the Maraya Art Centre – one of the UAE’s best venues for contemporary visual arts – and the 300-seat Masrah Al Qasba Theatre.

FLAG ISLAND
Look across the Khaled Lagoon and you cannot miss the seventh tallest flagpole in the world. The 123-metre-high flag was first erected in celebration of the United Arab Emirates’ 41st National Day. Officially adopted on December 2, 1971, the flag of the UAE features the pan-Arab colours, each with their own meaning: red represents power, green stands for prosperity, white symbolises transparency and peace, and black is for dignity, authority and elegance. Flag Island is now being developed for visitors.

DESERT ADVENTURES
For the outdoor adventurer our weather is perfect for hiking, camping, desert driving and wadi bashing. If you fancy a desert adventure you can book a thrilling dune drive across the red sands of Fossil Rock or take a wadi bash (full-day safari) through the Al Hajar Mountains to discover beautiful oases with hidden rock pools. Rent a quad bike in the Fossil Rock area and zoom over the dunes, or hire a four-wheel drive vehicle from the many car rental companies – though make sure you have some experience before venturing into the desert. Contact a tour operator to organise evening trips for star gazing or an overnight camp in the desert.

CAMEL RACING
Heading for a morning out at a camel race is a memorable experience for all ages and an opportunity to see a truly traditional sport. During the winter months, races take place at the track in Al Dhaid, usually on Friday mornings from 7am. Admission to the races is free. Al Dhaid, another historic attraction of our emirate, is located about 48 kilometres to the east of Sharjah and is distinguished by its fertile land and numerous farms. Check the local press for information on dates and times of the races or enquire at your hotel, who will also be able to help with transport.

DIVING & SNORKELLING
The rich, deep and colourful underwater world on the east coast offers coral reefs and a rich marine life, with the chance to see turtles, sharks, moray eels and exotic tropical fish. Wreck diving is more popular in the Arabian Gulf waters. The water temperature varies from 22 to 33°C, depending on the season. Sharjah’s dive centres are well equipped, providing a comprehensive range of equipment for hire and courses run by internationally qualified instructors. There are shallow-reef, deep-wreck and night dives, catering for all. Divers will need to present their dive card before booking a dive. The coastline on both shores is rich in marine life, providing good beach and surf fishing. Visiting fishermen can hire fully equipped boats, with crew, for deep sea fishing trips.

THE EAST COAST
For nature lovers, Sharjah’s east coast is close at hand. It’s one of the most beautiful areas in the UAE, with a range of landscapes from mountains and mangroves to sandy white bays. The warm clear blue waters are perfect for swimming, snorkelling, water sports and diving. Scheduled for completion in 2017, the Kalba Eco-Tourism Project is being developed to provide new ways for visitors to enjoy nature in a peaceful setting and to discover Sharjah’s east coast’s rich array of wildlife.

OTHER WATER SPORTS
For other water sports activities - jet skiing, sailing, water skiing and windsurfing - some hotels have boats and boards available for hire. Jet skis can also be rented from the lagoons between Sharjah and Dubai.

BEACHES
Don’t worry if you’re not staying at a beachfront hotel, Sharjah has several public beaches on both coasts where you can make the most of the fabulous weather all year long. Al Khan Beach, Al Khan Lagoon and the Corniche Beach are the easiest to reach in-town locations (dress restrictions apply and ladies should be suitably attired). On the east coast, with its impressively steep rocky mountains, you will find scenic bays lined with golden sand beaches and clear blue waters, renowned for water sports, snorkelling and diving. The Oceanic Khorfakkan Resort & Spa has a beautiful pristine beach that non-guests can use for a nominal fee.
to the Coral Beach Resort. The Radisson Blue Resort and along the Corniche Beach Market and the Fish Souq, past the Heart of Sharjah to our beautiful city along the Sharjah Creek from Al Jubail scenery; and you can experience the everyday life of admire the extensive Khaled Lagoon with its stunning A stroll around Al Buheirah Corniche allows you to Central Souq, Al Qasba and Al Majaz Waterfront. landmarks: our famous fountains, the stunning domes relaxing walks around Sharjah's fascinating sights and CCTV allows people outside the field to watch the games unfold live from the safety of a television screen. SHARJAH EQUESTRIAN & RACING CLUB Just 20 minutes from the city centre, the club offers both horse racing and riding. The club has the largest indoor arena in the Middle East and a racecourse with grandstand seating for 1,500 people, providing outstanding spectator facilities. The horse racing season runs from November to April and visitors are welcome to attend the Friday race meetings. Hacks through the desert can be arranged during the cooler months. WALKING An excellent way to explore our city is on foot. Enjoy relaxing walks around Sharjah's fascinating sights and landmarks: our famous fountains, the stunning domes of Al Noor Mosque, Mamzar and Al Khan lagoons, the Central Souq, Al Qasba and Al Majaz Waterfront. A stroll around Al Buheirah Corniche allows you to admire the extensive Khaled Lagoon with its stunning scenery; and you can experience the everyday life of our beautiful city along the Sharjah Creek from Al Jubail Market and the Fish Souq, past the Heart of Sharjah to the Radisson Blue Resort and along the Corniche Beach to the Coral Beach Resort. SHARJAH GOLF & SHOOTING CLUB On the fringe of the city, Sharjah Golf & Shooting Club is an oasis of activity with a purpose-built Golf Academy and a nine-hole floodlit, 3,740 yard, par 36 wall to wall grass golf course. Non-members are welcome to play a round of golf and dine in the club's fine dining restaurants. The club also has 10 fully computerised indoor pistol/revolver ranges and indoor archery. You can spend an action-packed afternoon or evening with your family and compete against each other at Sharjah Paintball Park, located in the grounds of the golf club. Considered to be one of the best in the Middle East, the park can accommodate up to 170 players in one session and a maximum of 20 players per team. One indoor field is a replica of the city of London, with landmarks such as Harrods and The Ritz, and the outdoor jungle phase covers 5,000 square metres with bunkers, huts, trees, aircraft, cars, hills and trenches, and is open for night play as well. A high-tech sound system and CCTV allows people outside the field to watch the games unfold live from the safety of a television screen. SCENIC FLIGHTS The Seawings Heritage Arabia Tour takes off over Dubai's iconic landmarks on an aerial sightseeing trip to Sharjah. The seaplane lands in the Khaled Lagoon, opposite Al Majaz Waterfront, so passengers can enjoy the Waterfront facilities. As part of the tour, an open-air bus ride takes passengers to attend the Friday race meetings. Hacks through the desert can be arranged during the cooler months. AL MONTAZAH WATER PARK Warm up and cool down with fun for the whole family at Al Montazah, Sharjah’s first ever entertainment attraction with a water and amusement park, guaranteed to thrill and amuse the whole family over and over again. The aquatic adventure park is home to amazing rides, the wet and wild water slides, river rides, meandering lazy rivers, floating tubes and tempting tunnels, with separate pools to suit all ages and private cabanas for families to rent. There is also a family train ride, bumper cars and go-karts plus restaurants, green areas and picnic spots, and the views are breathtaking. Your kids will love it and ask to go again. The park is open daily from 10am until late. Every Tuesday from 3pm to midnight it is reserved for ladies and their children only (boys must be under 80 centimetres). PARKS Our public green parks have plenty of open spaces, seating and play areas with swings and slides, sports pitches for basketball, volleyball and football and in some parks, multi-speed pedal-powered carts for rent. Most public parks open after 4pm. The Palm Oasis on Al Buheirah Lagoon is open 24 hours and is a stunning buffer of greenery between the water and the high-rise buildings. This is one of the most popular family places, where parents and children come to relax in the late afternoons during the cooler months. The hundreds of palm trees you see here are the ‘real thing’ and play a very important role in our culture and heritage. AL MAJAZ WATERFRONT Fun can be found all year long at this area overlooking the Khaled Lagoon. It’s one of our favourite family destinations, with fine dining, a host of child-friendly activities and free fountain shows each evening, with lights and music. Within safe landscaped gardens youngsters can enjoy their very own Kids Play Area and Splash Park and challenge each other on the mini-golf course; rent a Byky (special bike); and then enjoy a family meal together at one of the many popular welcoming restaurants and cafés. Don’t forget to pay a visit to the ‘I love Sharjah’ kiosk selling all kinds of Sharjah souvenirs and meet the Jerboa, one of Sharjah’s special characters. WATER TAXI TOUR Board an abra and cruise around our lagoons sitting on Arabian-style cushions for a panoramic view of the city. These wooden boats can be hired from several areas on the Al Buheirah Corniche for trips around Khaled Lagoon, or in the evenings from next to the giant wheel at Al Qasba for trips around Al Khan Lagoon or the Sharjah Creek. Charges are reasonable. Other local cruises are organised by the tour operators.
CHILDREN’S ACTIVITIES
Our city is very much a family destination, providing a host of indoor and outdoor activities for children of all ages. Amusement and play centres are found in the malls and other areas, offering rides and attractions, video games, laser ‘shootouts’, roller coasters, bike rides, children’s cinemas, mini-golf and soft play areas. Some of the best destinations are: Adventureland, Antic’s Land, Magic Planet, Sky 24, Space City, Fun City for Kids at Al Shaab Village, Al Majaz Waterfront and Al Qasba’s Fun Zone; Sharjah Discovery Centre, located opposite the airport, provides a great day’s outing for the whole family. Filled with action and entertainment, this colourful arena explores the dynamics of water, the five senses, the art of travel and the mechanism of building and movement and is a hands-on activity centre for children.

ACTIVITY PARKS
The larger activity parks include Sharjah National Park, located on the Sharjah-Al Dhaid road about 15 kilometres from the city centre, with models of Sharjah malls and tourist destinations, walking trails and play areas; and the extensive, out-of-town Sharjah Desert Park and Arabia’s Wildlife Centre, which exhibits one of the largest collections of Arabian wildlife and is also one of the most popular zoological parks in the Middle East.

CUISINE
Sharjah offers a wonderful diversity of culinary delights with countless food outlets from cafés and coffee shops to fine dining, speciality restaurants, food courts, excellent bakeries and local food markets. The international and regional cuisines on offer include Lebanese, Moroccan, Chinese, Iranian, Turkish and Japanese. While independent restaurants and street cafés are spread throughout the city, many are located around Al Buheirah Corniche, Al Majaz Waterfront, Al Qasba canal, at Sharjah Aquarium in Al Khan and in the shopping malls. The larger hotels’ restaurants and coffee shops offer Arabic and international cuisine, with buffets and theme nights of the finest quality. Walk into most bakeries and you will see large metal trays with impressive multi-tiered displays of the most delicious Middle Eastern sweet pastries, sold by weight. Tempt your taste buds with baklava (sweet crisp swirls) or kanafa (small shortbread-type biscuits filled with pistachios, dates or walnuts).

TRADITIONAL COFFEE SHOP
At Al Gahwa Al Shaabiya, built from sea rocks, coral and gypsum, you can savour a cup of gahwa (coffee) flavoured with cardamom. Traditionally, only men could visit this traditional coffee shop and late-night restaurant, but today women are welcome, and there is even a section for families. The coffee house serves beverages like mint tea, local coffee, ginger milk, Arabic snacks and grilled food, as well as traditional Emirati dishes.

SHOPPING
Take out your wallet and ‘shop ‘till you drop’ in our air-conditioned malls and souks. Shopping in Sharjah offers an exciting and vast choice of products from around the world. Shuttle bus services to the larger shopping malls are available from several hotels (ask your concierge for details) and the largest malls provide all kinds of additional services and facilities, from wheelchairs and children’s pushchairs to ATMs and foreign language assistance. All malls have amusement centres for children. Our busy souks, bustling bazaars and traditional markets are extremely popular among visitors and residents alike and will entice you with their unique eclectic shopping and dining experiences. You can spend an entire day within a single shopping mall or in our renowned Central Souk. The shopping section in this publication is packed with all the information you need.

BEAUTY
In the Middle East beauty treatments and personal care are a serious affair and part of the Arabian charm of looking and feeling good. Put your feet up, relax and be pampered. Sharjah has a wide range of hair and beauty salons and spas scattered around town, as well as in the shopping malls. The salons offer treatments from massage therapy, facials, manicures, pedicures, waxing and threading, henna and bridal preparation to haircuts, styling and colouring. Gents’ barbers offer haircuts with a shave and head massage. Several hotels have their own salon and spa to cater to their guests’ requirements. Sharjah Ladies Club offers its own purpose-built Thalassotherapy pool with treatments and therapies at Al Dalouk Spa, and welcomes non-members with prior bookings.

ICE SKATING
Cool down and go ice skating at one of three rinks. Sharjah Ladies Club offers a national-sized rink for ladies and children (boys under nine only); Sky 24 is on the 24th floor of Al Durrah Tower, overlooking the Khaled Lagoon and is open to all, as is Skate Gate, at Al Shaab Village in the Al Hazana area.

BOWLING & CINEMAS
Go bowling at the Ewan Hotel (10 lanes) or Sky 24 (three lanes) for a fun-filled, indoor family activity or relax in the cool comfort of one of Sharjah’s many cinemas: the Grand Sahara (Sahara Centre), Grand Mega Mall (Mega Mall Sharjah) or Novo Cinemas Buheirah (Al Buheirah Corniche) and enjoy the latest blockbusters. Tickets are reasonably priced and there are several screenings throughout the day.
Tourism in Sharjah is on the rise and is set for remarkable growth during 2015, its year as the elected Capital of Arab Tourism. The government has invested heavily in developing tourism, and sees it as vital to the emirate’s economy.

Currently nearly two million tourists visit Sharjah annually. In 2014, the European visitors formed the largest group, accounting for 37% of the total tourists in the first half of the year. Sharjah also proved popular with travellers from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which made up 34% of the total, with a further 12% from other Arab countries. Approximately 13% of tourists were from Asia, whilst nationals from the Americas, Africa and the Pacific accounted for the final 4%.

According to the SCTDA, Sharjah’s hotels enjoyed a record 80% average occupancy during the first six months of 2014, with a 6% increase in occupancy during the low season.

Presently, the total number of hotel facilities in Sharjah stands at 106 (50 hotels and 56 hotel apartments), with a total of 10,000 hotel rooms. SCTDA confidently expects 4,000 additional hotel rooms to be added over the next three years, as 30 new hotels are due to open in the emirate. Amongst these will be the Chedi Khorfakkan, the first five-star resort on the east coast and the development of an eco-tourism project at Kalba offering hotel and chalet accommodation; and in the city, the opening of Al Bait Hotel in the Heart of Sharjah heritage area and the Sheraton Sharjah on the Corniche Beach.

This section contains an alphabetical listing of Sharjah’s beach and city hotels and hotel apartments, according to their star rating. SCTDA implements a hotel classification system following international star rating standards.
Hotels & Hotel Apartments

Hotels in Sharjah offer a wide range of facilities and services for destination tourists, visitors and business travellers. The beach resorts are mainly located along Al Khan beach and on the sea front towards Ajman Emirate. The city hotels are spread around the town, on the Al Buheirah Corniche and around the Heart of Sharjah, the Corniche Beach and King Faisal Road. On the east coast, the Oceanic Khorfakkan Resort & Spa offers beachfront accommodation.

Many hotel apartments offer good accommodation and are usually fully furnished right down to the cutlery, providing a more homely and less expensive alternative to a hotel room. Bookings can be made on a short-term basis (daily or weekly) or for longer periods. Some offer excellent sports facilities, such as a gym and swimming pool, as well as spas and food outlets.

Al Bait Hotel is part of the region’s biggest heritage project to date, the Heart of Sharjah development. It will be the first traditional Emirati hotel to be constructed from the restored foundations of the old houses that once belonged to important national families. This unique boutique hotel will offer 54 luxury rooms located in a historic inner-city precinct and overlooking Sharjah Creek.

HIGH SEASON

The most popular time to visit coincides with the best weather conditions, from mid-October to mid-May. Nevertheless, nowadays even the hotter summer months are popular, and with air-conditioned facilities everywhere, it’s still possible to enjoy all the leisure and shopping opportunities that Sharjah has to offer. There are also good value for money packages and special deals throughout the summer.

ROOMS & RATES

As you would expect, the hotels at the top end of the market offer first-rate facilities and beautiful surroundings, while those at the less expensive end offer fewer amenities and services. Hotel rates vary considerably, from those costing under Dhs 200 a night, to those with a published rack rate of over Dhs 900 per night for a standard double room. One-bedroom apartments range in price from Dhs 150 per night up to Dhs 500 or more. Rates can change at peak times. Remember that for most hotels you will have to pay room tax – currently 20% of the total bill (10 per cent municipality tax and 10% service charge) – on top of the published rate. Breakfast is not normally included.

It is common practice for discounts and bargain breaks to be given, subject to the length of stay, time of year and whether it is an individual or a corporate booking. Some hotels make discount arrangements with travel agents abroad, so it is worth enquiring at home well in advance of your trip. Online booking is becoming popular and discounts on the rack rate can often be obtained over the internet.

Confirmation of a reservation by email is necessary and most hotels require you to leave a credit card authorisation equivalent to the amount of one night’s stay, and a copy of your passport.

TRANSPORTATION

The large and medium-sized hotels all offer free airport shuttle bus transportation as well as a minibus service to the city centre, main tourist locations, Dubai and the other Emirates. Beach and city hotels are well located, with journeys from the local airports taking 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the time of day and the traffic. A taxi ride from Sharjah airport to most hotels costs Dhs 45 to 65, with the meter starting at Dhs 20. A trip into the city centre takes around 15 to 20 minutes. Taxis can be ordered or are usually found waiting outside the hotels (for more costs, see ‘A Visitor’s Guide’ section).

The larger hotels have representatives of tour operators and international car hire companies on site.

For additional information visit Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority’s website: www.sharjahmydestination.ae or call (+971) 06 556 6777 (8am – 2.30pm) or 800 80000.

Please call directory enquiries on +971 181, or locally on 181 if you have any difficulties in reaching the numbers listed in this section (charges may apply).

While adequate care has been taken to ensure the accuracy and validity of all details, this information may be subject to change at any time.
### Hotels

#### BEACH HOTELS

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Number of Rooms</th>
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#### CITY HOTELS

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**OCEANIC KHORFAKKAN RESORT & SPA**

- **RADISSON BLU RESORT**
  - Number of rooms: 306
  - Tel: 06 565 7777

- **ROYAL BEACH & SPA RESORT**
  - Number of rooms: 85
  - Tel: 06 536 5550

- **SHARJAH GRAND HOTEL**
  - Number of rooms: 92
  - Tel: 06 528 3711

- **CORAL BEACH RESORT**
  - Number of rooms: 156
  - Tel: 06 528 657

- **AL SEEF BEACH HOTEL**
  - Number of rooms: 92
  - Tel: 06 528 0099

- **LAVENDER SHARJAH HOTEL**
  - Number of rooms: 100
  - Tel: 06 528 6555

- **MARHAHA HOTEL**
  - Number of rooms: 79
  - Tel: 06 528 1311

- **CITY HOTELS**
  - Number of rooms: 172
  - Tel: 06 528 0111

- **SHARJAH PREMIERE HOTEL & RESORT**
  - Number of rooms: 86
  - Tel: 06 528 2777

- **GRAND EXCELSIOR**
  - Number of rooms: 80
  - Tel: 06 528 0111

- **RAYAN HOTEL**
  - Number of rooms: 196
  - Tel: 06 528 0111

- **RAYAN HOTEL CORNICHE**
  - Number of rooms: 18
  - Tel: 06 528 2777

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**BEACH HOTELS 5 STAR *******

- **RADISSON BLU RESORT**
  - Number of rooms: 306
  - Tel: 06 565 7777

- **ROYAL BEACH & SPA RESORT**
  - Number of rooms: 85
  - Tel: 06 536 5550

- **SHARJAH GRAND HOTEL**
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  - Tel: 06 528 3711

- **CORAL BEACH RESORT**
  - Number of rooms: 156
  - Tel: 06 528 657

- **AL SEEF BEACH HOTEL**
  - Number of rooms: 92
  - Tel: 06 528 0099
**BASIC**

**AL BISHR HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 28
www.panemirateshotel.com
Tel: 06 556 4044

**AL BUHERIA HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 43
www.buhairahotel.com
Tel: 06 556 2818

**AL DIYAR TOWER HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 42
www.diyarhotels.com
Tel: 06 562 3326

**AL FERDOUS HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 43
Tel: 06 564 5111

**AL GHADeer HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 28
www.alghadeerhotel.com
Tel: 06 563 4433

**AL MAHA REGENCY SUITES**
Number of rooms: 137
www.almaharegencey.ae
Tel: 06 573 8999

**AL MAJARA RESIDENCE 1**
Number of rooms: 56
www.almajararesidence.com
Tel: 06 565 6222

**AL MAJARA RESIDENCE 2**
Number of rooms: 40
www.almajararesidence.com
Tel: 06 565 5558

**AL MAMLaKAH HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 38
www.mamlakahotel.com
Tel: 06 569 6663

**AL RAHA HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 33
www.alarahotelapartments.com
Tel: 06 522 7601

**AL RAWDHA HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 19
Tel: 06 565 6512

**AL REEM HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 35
www.alreemhotel.com
Tel: 06 564 7700

**AL SALAM INN HOTEL SUITES**
Number of rooms: 55
www.alsalaminnhotels.com
Tel: 06 564 1333

**AL SHARQ HOTEL SUITES**
Number of rooms: 27
www.sharqhotel.com
Tel: 06 565 2000

**AL ZARKA HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 42
www.alzarkahotel.com
Tel: 06 563 9888

**AMWAJ HOTEL SUITE**
Number of rooms: 40
www.amwahotelsuites.com
Tel: 06 554 0111

**ARCADIA HOTEL SUITES**
Number of rooms: 36
www.arcadiahotelsuites.com
Tel: 06 565 9888

**BAITI HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 40
www.baitihotels.com
Tel: 06 562 3133

**BAITIK HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 52
www.baytakhotel.com
Tel: 06 539 9595

**BASMA RESIDENCE**
Number of rooms: 67
www.basmaa.com
Tel: 06 559 7759

**EMIRATES PALACE HOTEL SUITES**
Number of rooms: 99
www.emiratespalace.ae
Tel: 06 556 6778

**EMIRATES STARS 1 HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 29
www.emiratesstars.ae
Tel: 06 528 2525

**EMIRATES STARS 2 HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 29
www.emiratesstars.ae
Tel: 06 528 2525

**EVEREST HOTEL APARTMENT**
Number of rooms: 18
www.everesthotelapartments.com
Tel: 06 561 8222

**FALCON HOTEL APARTMENT**
Number of rooms: 14
www.falconflats.com
Tel: 06 572 0055

**GREEN HOUSE RESORT**
Number of rooms: 42
Tel: 06 522 4260

**HALA HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 44
Tel: 06 564 7555

**HOST PALACE HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 63
www.ealafgroup.com
Tel: 06 565 9777

**KHORAFKANN HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 5
Tel: 09 238 4500

**MINA HOUSE HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 25
Tel: 06 569 1212

**PALM LAND HOTEL SUITES**
Number of rooms: 21
www.palmlandhotel.com
Tel: 06 563 3400

**PAN EMIRATES HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 21
www.panemirateshotel.com
Tel: 06 562 8885

**SUMMER LAND HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 106
www.albustangroup.com
Tel: 06 528 1321

**SUN RISE HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 24
sarathsunrise@gmail.com
Tel: 06 573 7774

**TEBAH HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 30
Tel: 06 565 0077

**THE SUITES HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 30
Tel: 06 565 5533

**SAHARA HOTEL APARTMENTS**
Number of rooms: 28
Tel: 06 544 4267

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**Copthorne Hotel Sharjah**
Located in the heart of Sharjah, the Copthorne Hotel Sharjah is a striking landmark on the Corniche Road, overlooking Khalid Lagoon, with 255 guest rooms, while being 20 minutes away from both Dubai and Sharjah International airports.
A Member of Millennium Hotels and Resorts

For reservation please contact
00971 6 5930555
Escape from the city and spend a day or more discovering Sharjah's east coast.

Sharjah is the only emirate with land on both the sandy Arabian Gulf coast and the sun-drenched shores of the Indian Ocean. Just over one hour’s drive from the city, the scenic journey will first take you through undulating red sand dunes to the inland palm oasis town of Al Dhaid. From here you rise up and over the rugged Al Hajar mountain range to the port town of Khorfakkan and the fishing villages of Dibba Al Hisn and Kalba. Finally you reach the clear blue waters of the Indian Ocean.
You will see the oldest mangroves in Arabia; historical landmarks such as Badiyah Mosque, the Friday Market, old forts and beautiful wadis; and enjoy leisure time sunbathing on some of the region's top beaches. The inviting waters of the Indian Ocean are perfect for swimming, snorkelling and diving with turtles and colourful coral reef fish.

The bare and craggy mountain backdrop that gives this coast its unique character is sparsely populated and intersected by wadis (dry valleys) with scattered hamlets and towns. Not only is the temperature often cooler here in the summer than on the west coast, but the climate is also more humid, allowing for cultivation all along the narrow coastal strip. Up in the mountains, you will see small stone settlements with terraces, where the inhabitants once grew subsistence crops such as wheat, fodder for the animals, vegetables, mangos and limes.

The landscape is full of archaeological sites dating as far back as the second millennium BCE. A vast cemetery on the outskirts of Dibba marks the site of one of the early Islamic battles in 633 CE, in which 10,000 rebels died during the reconquest of the Arabian Peninsula by the Muslim armies. In the 16th century the Portuguese took command of the east coast in order to control the spice trade and they built forts in Khorfakkan, Kalba and Dibba.

From the mangrove marshes to the mountains, much of this stunning coast is still unexplored, waiting to charm and captivate the curious visitor with its many treasures, both above and below the sea. Most tour operators will organise day trips or you can rent your own vehicle to explore the area. It can be covered in a day but it is recommended that you break your stay at the Oceanic Khorfakkan Resort & Spa.

HOW TO GET THERE

There are two main routes out of Sharjah that will take you to the east coast, both on dual carriageways. The most popular road is the E88 (Sharjah/Al Dhaid highway) that runs to Masafi and splits left to Dibba and right to Fujairah on the E89.

The other direct road is the S112 (joins E102) that runs from the back of University City, past Fossil Rock and via a 1-kilometre tunnel cutting through the Al Hajar Mountains and down to Kalba. Alternatively, exit the E102 after the Meliha crossroads to join Highway E84, which cuts through the Al Hajar Mountains ending up in Fujairah.

If returning via Dibba, it’s also possible to cut through the mountains to join the Ras Al Khaimah/Manama Road. In addition, there are various routes through wadis across to the east coast, providing a thrilling drive with breathtaking views in areas that have remained unchanged for centuries.

STOP AT THE FRIDAY MARKET

Despite its name, the Friday Market is open every day and is well worth a stop for its local ambience. The roadside market is a short distance from Masafi and sells a variety of goods such as rugs, Emirati pottery, earthenware souvenirs and incense burners, alongside mounds of fruit and vegetables, plants and blow-up toys.
A Tour From North To South

DIBBA
Dibba is a sleepy set of three seaside villages owned by the Sultanate of Oman (Dibba Bayah), Fujairah (Dibba Mu'llalat) and Sharjah (Dibba Al Hsni). These fishing communities share a beautiful bay and it’s worth taking a late-afternoon stroll around the harbour in Dibba Al Hsni to see the fishermen hauling in their catch. Fishing boats and dhows can be chartered from the harbours for short trips up and down the coast. Green palms, brightly painted metal doorways and the background of the old fort bring character and colour to this area. The mountains rise to an impressive 2,000 metres into the Musandam Peninsula.

KHORFAKKAN
The name Khourfakkan translates as ‘Creek of the Two Jaws’, reflecting its setting in a splendid bay flanked by two headlands. This is Sharjah’s largest town on the east coast, found halfway between Dibba and Fujairah, and it’s a popular place for day trips and weekend breaks, as well as the cruise liners that visit the region. A long stretch of sandy beach backed by a promenade with leafy palm trees and lush gardens runs alongside the bay and is a pleasant place to wander, with play and barbecue areas. The town has prospered mainly due to Port Khourfakkan, one of the world’s leading container transhipment hubs.

The Oceanic Khourfakkan Resort & Spa is a well-known hotel set at one end of the bay, with its own private beach and pool, a dive centre and water sports facilities. Attractive rooms and luxury villas make it the perfect place for a family break with the sun, sea and spa providing activities and relaxation for all ages. The hotel’s facilities can be used by non-resident guests on a daily fee basis.

For those who want to discover the underwater sights, good diving and snorkelling can be found within a few minutes’ ride by boat from Khorfakkan or at other rocky outcrops along the coast. Martini Rock, Shark Island, the Anemone and Coral Gardens, the Car Cemetery, Snoopy Island and Dibba Island are all popular diving destinations, and the last two are also great for snorkelling. They provide the chance to see a multitude of exotic reef fish, rays, reef sharks, moray eels, barracuda, squid, cuttlefish, turtles, larger fish including barracuda, and colourful hard and soft corals. These beautiful rocky outcrops all have pristine sandy beaches, so if you don’t fancy diving or snorkelling, you can while away a day swimming and sunbathing, or enjoying a barbecue.

KALBA
This is a delightful fishing town, the most southerly settlement before the border with Oman. Whilst driving along the coastal road you may see traditional fishing boats and fisherman hauling in their nets. Stop off at Bai‘ Shéis Shis bin Hamed Al Qasim. The house is located at the end of a large grassy expanse and has been renovated as a museum displaying items of Islamic heritage and traditional lifestyle. On the opposite side of the road is Al Hsni, or Kalba Fort, of historic interest.

KHOR KALBA
(Khor means creek, so ‘the tidal creek’) A few kilometers south of Kalba is home to the oldest mangrove forest of Arabia and it is an important conservation area for the White-collared Kingfisher and Sykes’s warbler. Various species of crabs and mudskippers also live in this peaceful nature reserve. The mangroves in the Al Hafiya area are part of the ongoing Kalba Eco-Tourism Project undertaken by Shurooq (Sharjah Investment and Development Authority), a six-year project that will preserve and reintroduce wildlife to the area and develop the Creek to include recreational spaces and eco-sporting activities as well as commercial complexes and hotels.

DIBBA

Kalba

Kalba Bay

Kalba Fort

Kalba Eco-Tourism Project

Shurooq

Sharjah Investment and Development Authority

A Tour From North To South

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AL RIFAISA DAM
Set up in the mountains above the town of Khorfakkan, the dam is a holding centre to contain floodwater and serve the settlements below. Local legend has it that when the water is clear, a lost village can be seen at the bottom of the dam.

LADYNA FORT
This ancient fort, set inland about 12 kilometres from Fujairah, once controlled the main pass through the mountains from east to west and is still an impressive sight.

BULL BUTTING
The ancient Portuguese sport of 'bull butting', in which bulls lock horns and head butt, is a popular spectator event located between Fujairah and Kalba, and held on Friday afternoons during the winter months. Owners bring bulls from all over the UAE, hoping theirs will be the strongest.

WADI WURRAYAH
Located about 10 kilometres from Khorfakkan and accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles, this is a natural beauty spot famous for its deep all-year-round pool and seasonal waterfall.

AL RIFIYA MOSQUE
Just north of Khorfakkan at Badiyah is the site of the oldest mosque in the UAE, dating back to the middle of the 15th century. The mosque is a small, simple structure made from mud bricks, adorned with four pointed domes and resting on an internal pillar. The village of Badiyah is believed to have been inhabited since 3000 BCE, making it one of the first settlements on the east coast.

VISIT AN EMIRATI HOUSE
As part of Sharjah's cultural awareness programme you have the rare opportunity to visit a local house in Khorfakkan to learn first-hand about local customs, etiquette, dress, traditions and even to taste traditional Emirati food.

KALBA BIRDS OF PREY CENTRE
An unmissable chance to experience the traditional art of falconry in the land where falcons were once used to hunt down food. 46 species of raptors live in the Birds of Prey Centre in Al Ghail, situated on a hilltop overlooking the mangroves. Live demonstrations and breathtaking shows are held twice a day. Shows last for about an hour and focus on the hunting characteristics and habits of these magnificent creatures.

KALBA HERITAGE VILLAGE
The Heritage Village in Kalba comes to life on special occasions and anniversaries, with traditional markets and events that highlight Islamic culture in the UAE.

The East Coast’s Top Attractions
East Coast Leisure

BEACH
A coast of many charms - from white beaches with rocky bays and crystal clear, blue seas to dip into, this beautiful shoreline is a delight for all ages.

- Banana boat rides
- Beach volleyball
- Swimming
- Building sand castles

NATURE
Discover stunning scenery and the rich diversity of wildlife to be found in the mountains and mangroves of the Kalba nature reserve including the White-collared Kingfisher, one of the world’s rarest birds.

- Birdwatching
- Bird of prey shows
- Hiking trips
- Nature trails

RECREATION
Action-packed adventures are never ending on the east coast. Hike and bike on mountain trails, discover the scenic coast by dhow or enjoy a variety of sunny beach activities and watersports.

- Deep sea fishing
- Scuba diving
- Snorkelling
- Wakeboarding
- Sea kayaking
- Mountain biking
- Dhow cruising
- Water skiing
- Bull butting

RELAXING
Take time out away from the hustle and bustle of city life and unwind in this peaceful paradise. Sit back, chill out and spoil yourself with a spot of pampering at the spa.

- Spa treatments
- Sunbathing
- Enjoying beautiful sunsets
Forthcoming Developments

The Kalba Eco-Tourism Project is an ambitious programme that will conserve the rich and diverse habitats found on Sharjah’s east coast, as well as educating visitors.

A key component of the project is a turtle rehabilitation centre for green, loggerhead and hawksbill sea turtles. Kalba beach is a major nesting site for the hawksbill sea turtle in particular and visitors will be able to observe these turtles digging nests and laying eggs.

The Birds of Prey Centre is already open, and a Visitors’ Centre is also planned, which will display some of the area’s mountain wildlife such as reptiles and foxes.

Outdoor adventurers will be in their element. Imagine kayaking through the oldest mangroves in Arabia, trekking or mountain biking in stunning, rugged and challenging terrain and then after a day in the outdoors winding down in the accommodation of your choice, from lodges to rustic campsites.

2016 welcomes the Al Jabal Resort, The Chedi Khorfakkan. Situated on a natural hillside next to a private cove with a white, sandy beach, Al Jabal Resort is a five-star hotel inspired by the region’s traditional architecture and way of life, offering the perfect break for those seeking to get away from the city.

The resort will feature a wide range of sporting and relaxing activities, with diving and snorkelling, high-end restaurants and a destination spa. Located on the hilltop, the Heritage Fort will have spectacular views across the entire bay and the Town Square, with a variety of cafes, will provide another perfect meeting place.
In the Emirates you can shop almost 24 hours a day and buy anything and everything from gold and diamonds to oriental carpets, tropical fruits, gifts and handcrafted souvenirs, exotic furniture, local and designer fashions, delectable goodies from all over the Middle East, top-of-the-range electronics, household goods and so much more.

Sharjah city offers something for everyone in its myriad of shopping malls, department stores, stylish boutiques and outlet shops, traditional souks, markets and bazaars. The choice is overwhelming and prices are competitive so come, shop, spend and soak up the atmosphere – you’re sure to find yourself coming back for more!

Shopping festivals and fairs are organised during the Holy Month of Ramadan and along with the Sharjah Spring and Summer Promotions you can find fantastic discounts and good bargains coupled with family activities all year round.

If gastronomy and discovering new dishes is more your thing, there’s an array of local and international restaurants and eateries to try while you leave your family to shop!

Prices are fixed in malls and department stores, but bargaining is a time-honoured tradition in the souks. As a rule all major credit cards and US dollars are accepted. Smaller traders may only take cash. Please see the end of this section for a guide to opening hours.
What To Buy

FASHION & ACCESSORIES
The malls are overflowing with designer stores selling the latest looks and labels from around the world - clothes, shoes, bags and accessories, at prices to suit all budgets. There are many clothes and textile outlets in the souks, as well as sports shops. A wide selection of abayas (traditional women’s black robes), dishdashas (traditional men’s shirt-dresses), headgear, sandals and accessories, intricately embroidered dresses and scarves are also readily available, especially along the creek, in Sarah Shopping Centre and Souk Saqr.

PASHMINAS & SHAWLS GALORE
Beaded, plain, checked, striped, embroidered… you’ll find every kind of shawl you could possibly want in the Central Souk and Souk Al Arsah. They come in a range of weights to suit all seasons, and are very reasonably priced - so it’s worth stocking up your present cupboard!

FABRICS
From exclusive beaded material, heavy lace, the finest saris and silks to ‘designer’ fabrics, there is a treasure trove of high-quality textiles from all over the world. It’s worth investigating fabric shops alongside the Creek in Al Shuwaiheen area, Rolla Square, in the Central Souk, Souk Al Soor textile centre opposite King Faisal Mosque, and the shopping centres.

GOLD, SILVER & STONES
If you’re after some sparkle, head to the Gold Centre, Rolla Gold Market or Central Souk, where you’ll find a dazzling variety of jewellery. Gold of 18, 21 to 22 and 24 carat is available, as well as precious gems, semi-precious stones and pearls, and at competitive rates, the temptation is irresistible! There are plenty of skilled goldsmiths on hand so it’s also possible to have a piece custom-made or altered. Check the daily gold prices in the local press before making a purchase.

ETHNIC JEWELLERY
A fabulous range of Afghani, Indian, Thai and Turkish silver, semi-precious jewellery, amber and coral necklaces, rings, earrings and bracelets can be found in the souks. Traditional, genuine Bedouin silver jewellery from Oman and Yemen is also available.

UNIQUE FRAGRANCES
In the souks, shopping malls and department stores you will find an enticing array of perfumes and oils from around the world, and an array of traditional Arabian incense. Oudh is a very expensive musky-smelling wood, usually imported from Cambodia, India or Malaysia. The wood is either burnt or the oil extracted and used for incense. There are more than 2,000 varieties of oudh in the world. Hand-blown ornate glass perfume bottles are also on sale, and make luxurious gifts.

ELECTRONIC GOODS
If clothes and jewellery aren’t really your thing, then why not while away a few hours in electronics shops instead? Shops are stacked ceiling-high with the newest products from the world’s leading manufacturers, and they’re generally regarded as good value for money. From the latest gadgets to cameras and television sets, you will find whatever you need.

HANDICRAFTS
When it comes to handicrafts, Sharjah is a melting pot of cultures, and there is incredible variety at Central Souk and Souk Al Arsah. Local ethnic products include hand-beaten copper dallahs (coffee pots); silver, brass and wooden dhows; old rifles; miniature wooden or leather camels; and silver-embellished frames with symbols representing the Emirates or the seven sands of the UAE. Treasures from further afield include ornamental silver khanjars (daggers) from Yemen and the Sultanate of Oman, beautiful Turkish lanterns, Afghani beads and sumptuous antique textiles, and Suzani embroideries. Other antiques and their reproductions from all over the Middle East, Africa, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Far East make great gifts, including intricate jewellery boxes; silver ornaments; misbahahs (prayer beads); inlaid rosewood items; and chess and backgammon boards featuring mother-of-pearl inlay and wooden, bone or silver-plated playing pieces.

FURNITURE
There are many reasonably priced furniture and home accessories stores, showrooms and warehouses in Sharjah. You will usually find what you’re looking for on Al Wahda Street, whether it’s a designer or unique ethnic piece.
CARPETS, KILMS & RUGS
The Central Souk has one of the best selections in the UAE of ancient and modern oriental carpets, kilims, carpetbags and cotton dhurries. All sorts of colours, materials and weaves from Afghanistan, India, Iran, Kashmir, Pakistan, Turkey, Central Asia and China are on display.

LINENS
Embroidered cotton and silk tablecloths, tapestries, table runners, beaded curtains, cushions and bedspreads are widely found in the Central Souk. At very affordable prices, they add a touch of luxury to all interiors. Contemporary throws can be found in the malls.

EMBROIDERED TREASURES
National women still practise traditional needlework and date-palm weaving, and clothes and woven mats, baskets, bags and bowls are sold in Souk Al Arsah and in and around Souk Saqr along the creek.

MISBAHABS
This is the Arabic name for worry beads, a string of either 33 or 99 prayer beads, which many Muslims carry around daily, wrapped around their wrists. They are made from many different materials, including exotic hardwoods, mother-of-pearl, amber, coral, plastic, glass and semi-precious stones.

FUN STUFF
Inexpensive souvenirs like fridge magnets, brass camels, silver key rings, beaded trinkets, flags, sequined and gilded outfits, fossils, seashells, beaded slippers, old stamps and coins, decorative tissue box covers, stickers, coasters and T-shirts can be bought in all the souks and in the greeting card shops found in the larger malls.

MIDDLE EASTERN DELIGHTS
For foodies there are many exotic delicacies available: Oriental spices, dates from Oman, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, the best honey from Yemen, the finest pastries from Lebanon and Syria, sweets and nuts from Iran and genuine Arabic coffee. Everything is presented in exquisite packaging, making even the most modest purchase look fit for a king - and your friends and family back home.

DATEs
The UAE has many varieties of dates because the fruit has been cultivated here since ancient times. It is said that there are 40 million date palm trees here, of which 40 per cent are in Al Ain. You can purchase delicious dates to eat or to take home as gifts in the Fruit & Vegetable Market alongside the Creek and in most supermarkets and specialized shops. Dates are sold plain or packed with fillings such as nuts, dried fruits or dipped in chocolate.

SPICES & HERBS
Explore the old hessian sacks found in the narrow alleyways of the souks, brimming over with all sorts of fresh and dried spices, herbs and pulses. Paid for by the weight (and at local rather than tourist prices!), you’re able to purchase small quantities of loumi (dried limes used to add a citrus flavour to dishes), cumin for curries, sumac for salads, rose petals, saffron (considered to be the most expensive spice in the world), vanilla pods, cinnamon sticks in bundles or ground, cardamom, dried garlic and chilli powder, red beans, brown lentils, fresh cloves, turmeric, rosewater and orange blossom water, herbal remedies and loofahs, and other exotic ingredients like frankincense, myrrh and shisha tobacco.
The Best Shopping Areas

**AL NAHDA**
A maze of high-rise residential buildings including Ansar Mall, Safeer Mall, Sahara Centre and many smaller shopping centres, fast food outlets, restaurants, pharmacies and grocery shops. Close to Al Taawun Road not far from Arab Mall and overlooking the sea is Expo Centre Sharjah, an exhibition and convention centre, which hosts interesting and varied monthly trade exhibitions.

**AL WAHDA STREET**
The longest shopping road in Sharjah, boasting shoe shops, department stores, electrical shops, car and furniture showrooms, supermarkets and shopping centres, including City Centre Sharjah, a popular destination in itself. There’s also a host of restaurants and fast food outlets.

**AL QASBA**
An upmarket cluster alongside the Al Qasba Canal with a vibrant atmosphere. Excellent local and international restaurants and cafés with open-air terraces are combined with exciting recreational facilities and cultural events throughout the year.

**JAMAL ABDUL NASSER STREET**
Parallel to Al Wahda Street and flanked by Al Majaz Park, this popular residential area gives easy access to the Khaled Lagoon. There are cafés, bars and oriental bakeries; shops selling mobile telephones, musical instruments and clothes; photographic studios, florists, grocery stores, pharmacies and supermarkets.

**AL BUHEIRAH CORNICHE**
A family-friendly neighbourhood and a waterfront destination with breathtaking panoramic views around the Khaled Lagoon. It's known for its busy cafés, coffee shops and restaurants, the famous Central Souk, Al Fardan Centre, sweet and chocolate shops, local sandal shops and a cinema.

**AL MAJAZ WATERFRONT**
Situated between Jamal Abdul Nasser Street and the Khaled Lagoon, this area was redeveloped in 2011 to include leisure and recreational facilities. The Waterfront has a small kiosk selling colourful 'I love Sharjah' souvenirs, brightly coloured lanterns and toy jerboas (Sharjah's special character).

**KING FAISAL STREET**
Joining Al Wahda Street and leading directly to the renowned popular Central Souk, this street is home to banks, money exchanges, restaurants, outlet stores, supermarkets, computer and stationery suppliers.

**SHEIKH SAQR BIN KHALED AL QASSIMI STREET**
A popular area, with large showrooms selling a vast choice of furniture, household items, adult and children’s clothes. Mega Mall Sharjah in the neighbouring Bu Daniq area provides thrills for ‘fashionistas’, family entertainment and a large food court. The Gold Centre at the intersection of Sheikh Humaid Bin Saqr Al Qasimi Street in Al Yarmook, which opened in 1996, houses shops selling local and international gold and silver jewellery brands, watches and precious metals. Mobile phone shops with competitive deals are found around Al Estiqlal Square.

**AL CORNICHE ROAD ALONG THE CREEK**
Follow the creek and explore a more traditional area with interesting museums, old souks and markets, banks, money changers, textile outlets and shops selling perfume, local crafts, traditional dresses, scarves, sewing accessories, buttons and ribbons and much more. The Heart of Sharjah, the region’s largest heritage project, is ongoing and will change this area dramatically over the coming years.

**AL AROUBA STREET**
A diverse ethnic area for those who like to explore, including the Rolla Gold Centre, Lulu Centre, Atlas Mall, and a variety of outlets selling something for everyone, from fabrics to household appliances, electrical goods, bags and suitcases, general hardware items and gardening equipment. The Rolla Gold Centre specialises in 22 and 24 carat gold and offers a good selection of jewellery from India and Italy.

**INDUSTRIAL AREAS**
These are very busy areas with reputed car showrooms, garages, tyre repair shops, upholstery centres, bathroom showrooms, ceramic shops, carpenters and wrought iron manufacturers.

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HISTORIC SOUKS, TRADITIONAL MARKETS & BUSTLING BAZAARS
Think of ‘shopping in Sharjah’ and the Central Souk springs to mind. Situated beside the Khaled Lagoon, this popular souk is one of Sharjah’s most photographed buildings and it even features on the Dhs 5 UAE bank note. Since it was built in 1978 it has become the most famous market in Sharjah, and it’s worth visiting again and again.

Discover an extraordinary array of exotic handicrafts as you delve into a maze of more than 600 shops over two levels, with spacious corridors taking you from store to store. You will find gold, silver and authentic Bedouin jewellery; precious stones; Oriental carpets and rugs; arts, crafts and curios; CDs; ornaments; cameras and other photographic materials; silver and brass models of Arabian dhows; Indian, Pakistani, Indonesian and African hand-carved furniture; precious Arabic oils, perfumes and cosmetics; textiles; bridal wear; beaded bags; Rajasthani embroideries, shawls and pashminas in brilliant colours; embroidered Syrian tablecloths, throws and colourful patchwork bed quilts; Afghani jewellery and exquisite embroideries; leather jackets; antiques and pseudo antiques; candelabras and lanterns; hand-painted glass; and brass and copper trays.

Upstairs many shops specialise in carpets, from Afghanistan, Kashmir, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and anywhere between Central Asia and China. Discover brightly coloured kilims, elegant silk carpets, carpetbags, wall hangings and other decorative items that can add vibrant colours and patterns, warmth and texture to your home. Most of the carpet sellers are knowledgeable about their trade and they will order you a traditional cup of tea or coffee and happily unroll carpet after carpet until you find the one you want - a very civilized way of shopping!

Don’t miss a visit to the gold and diamond shops, mainly located in the side of the souk closest to the Khaled Lagoon, where you will find all kinds of exquisite jewellery and goldsmiths. Marked by excellent workmanship and intricate designs, there are thousands of rings, bracelets, earrings and necklaces of traditional and modern styles. Many outlets can recreate an original design based on a photo or sketch. Most European and Arab expatriates buy 18k gold but the local and Asian communities prefer 22 or 24k. Gold jewellery is sold by the weight plus the workmanship. In between shopping, relax and enjoy a snack in the welcoming cafés, followed by a walk around the scenic Khaled Lagoon.
Located near Sharjah’s fish market, behind the bus station, the traditional Date Souk boasts tonnes of fresh dates. Traders give shoppers free samples as well as the opportunity to learn about this delicious fruit, which can cost as little as Dh25 per kilogram or as much as Dh500, depending on the variety. Date lovers flock to the souk, especially during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

HISTORIC SOUKS

As early as the 1900s, the stretch of open souks along the Corniche Road was a popular marketplace for gold and spices, and one could see carpet traders and pearl divers sitting around, sipping Arabic coffee or tea and nibbling dates. Trays holding very precious stones would be left unguarded on the counter as the shop owner went off to serve another customer! The markets were not covered at all and trust was foremost. Coffee shops were set up near palm trees that provided the necessary shade. These open souks in the Heritage Area weathered the waves of Indian, Persian and Arab merchandisers during centuries of maritime trading, and they’ve now become two covered markets: Souk Saqr and Souk Al Arsah. Step back in time and visit the peaceful air-conditioned alleyways of these markets, built using the original local materials, with solid wooden doors, beautiful coral brick walls and hanging lanterns.
**SOUK AL ARSAH / SOUK AL MASQOOF**

Arsah means a large open space. This bazaar, also known as Souk Al Masqoof, is probably the oldest marketplace in the UAE and was the meeting place for the Bedouins and their camels in the old days. Charcoal from the desert was traded here for rice and materials brought in by the seafaring merchants of Iran and India. Set in the Heritage Area, today it is an enclave of serenity, where you can purchase brass, silver, handicrafts, palm-leaf baskets, jewellery, local garments, medical herbs, traditional wooden and ivory items, and Yemeni and Afghani crafts. There is even a real Halwa (sweets) shop tempting passersby to taste these indigenous delights. Traditional weapons like swords and daggers, genuine antiques and bric-a-brac, old coins and photographs and models of old ships and boats are also on display. The shopkeepers are friendly, helpful and more than happy to relate stories about their particular craft or business.

Al Arsah Public Coffee Shop, a favourite place for older Emiratis and Indian settlers living in Sharjah, serves Arabian coffee and tea, boiled chick peas and beans, and other Arabic and Indian food.

**AL SANASIYA SOUK**

Once a working souk that fell into disrepair, this wonderful old street has now been renovated, and the traditional crafts and trades brought back to the area. Running parallel to Corniche Street and the Sharjah Creek, in the Heart of Sharjah, each shop is divided in two, with the artisans busy at work on one side, and selling their wears in the adjacent shop. This is a truly unique shopping destination.

**SOUK SAQR**

Also known as Souk Al Bahar (the Souk by the Sea), this is an old neighbourhood running parallel to the Creek and a historic trading centre. In the past, this bustling waterfront had dhows moored three or four abreast, laden with goods destined for Iran, Pakistan and India. Explore the shops along the winding streets and alleys, which offer an assortment of products at very reasonable prices: spices and herbs, henna, clothes and textiles, abayas (black local dresses), shemis (scarves), serwals (loose-fitting trousers) with embroidered anklets, textile shops, perfumes and oils, frankincense and incense burners, spices and fragrances, palm-leaf baskets, metal trunks, sheshas (water pipes) and flavoured tobaccos. This area is also particularly photogenic and ideal for those in search of an authentic ambience.
MALLS & SHOPPING CENTRES

Sharjah’s souks are great fun to explore, and a chance to experience the traditional UAE, but today shopping malls are also a part of daily life, conveniently offering everything under one roof. During the hot summer months especially, the fully air-conditioned modern malls are a welcome retreat, where you can shop, eat, socialise and relax. International and local brands are on sale, as well as children’s entertainment centres, recreational activities, multi-screen cinemas and numerous food outlets.

Take time to discover the malls; Ansar Mall and Safeer Mall on Al Ittihad Road, City Centre Sharjah on Al Wahda Road, Mega Mall Sharjah on Al Estiqlal Road, and last but not least Sahara Centre on Al Nahda Road, to name a few. Some malls offer a shuttle bus service to certain hotels. You will find contact details in the Useful Contacts section.

New malls are under construction in Al Khan and close to Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club, and neighbourhood centres like Matajer and My City Centre are opening all over the city and in its outskirts. These popular destinations include a range of outlets, usually including a supermarket, bank, pharmacy, dry cleaner/laundry service, card and accessory gift shop, popular cafés, and restaurants that also provide take away/home delivery service. All have ample indoor and outdoor parking, and taxis are readily available at the main entrances. Most are Wi-Fi enabled.

In addition there are plenty more stand-alone department stores and small boutiques spread around town, with new stores and attractions opening all the time so that residents and visitors alike are endlessly spoilt for choice.

Sharjah Ramadan Festival is a major cultural and entertainment event that starts a few days before Ramadan and lasts for several weeks. The festival includes lots of family activities and allows consumers to shop at bargain prices and take part in raffles. Many shopping malls also have separate promotions running at the same time.

SHOPPING HOURS

- Large malls & department stores
  10am - 11pm/midnight

- Supermarkets & grocery stores
  8am - 10pm/midnight

- Souks
  9.30am - 1.30pm and 4.30pm - 10.30pm

- Weekends
  Most malls and outlets open for longer in the evening.

- Fridays
  Shops remain closed until after the midday prayers but maintain regular opening hours in the afternoon. Malls open from 2pm - midnight or later.

- Holy Month of Ramadan
  All timings change; most shops are closed in the afternoon and open after sunset until very late at night.
Welcome to Sharjah, a culturally and environmentally rich emirate, which we hope you will enjoy experiencing for yourself. Here’s all the information you’ll need for your trip.
THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES AND SHARJAH
FACTS & FIGURES

Name: In Arabic, the UAE is called: 
Al Imarat al Arabiyah al Muttahidah.

Size: The Emirates, in order of size, are: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain and Ajman.

Area: Sharjah emirate covers 2,600 square kilometres and is the only emirate with two coasts. The UAE covers 83,600 square kilometres.

Population: 85% of Sharjah’s estimated 1,311,070 (2014 census) residents live in Sharjah city. Overall the emirate is home to about 19% of the people living in the UAE (9.206 million according to the 2012 World Bank).

Capital of the UAE: Abu Dhabi city

Official Religion: Islam, which is central to all aspects of everyday life and lies at the heart of Sharjah’s living heritage.

Official Language: Arabic, although English is widely spoken, as well as Hindi, Urdu and Farsi.

Local Time: The UAE is four hours ahead of UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time – formerly known as GMT) all year round.

National Dress: The national costume is very distinctive and unique to the region. The local dress includes the dishdasha, the long immaculate white robe worn by men with the gutra (headdress), skullcap and the agal, the twisted black woollen braid. Women wear the abaya (black cloak) that covers the body from head to toe and cover their hair with a sheyla (scarf), and some, predominantly older, women wear the burqa (canvas mask), covering the area from the mouth to the eyebrows.

Flag: The flag of the UAE was officially adopted on December 2, 1971 and features the Pan-Arab colors of red, green, white and black.
HISTORY
The first evidence of human life in the UAE was found on Jebel (meaning ‘mountain’) Faya in Sharjah and dates back to around 85,000 BC. About 7,000 years ago the milder climate and increased rainfall transformed the barren desert into fertile plains on which the nomadic fishing, hunting and herding communities thrived.

Historically, Sarcoa (as Sharjah is first thought to have been called) was one of the wealthiest towns in the region. It was the most important port on the lower Arabian Gulf from the time of early trading with the East into the first half of the 19th century. Alongside fishing and trading, pearlining was a primary income, generating industry that lasted into the late 1940s.

The UAE was formed in 1971 as a six-member independent state, with the unification of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain and Ajman. Ras Al Khaimah joined in 1972 to complete the seven-emirate Dubai, Sharjah, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain and Ajman. Ras Al Khaimah joined in 1972 to complete the seven-emirate UAE was formed in 1971 as a six-member

GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT
Sharjah is the only state in the UAE with land on both the Arabian Gulf Coast and along the Gulf of Oman. The three enclaves of Dibba Al Hisan, Khorfakkan and Kalba on the east coast belong to Sharjah, along with the central town of Al Dhaid and the islands of Abu Moussa and Sir Bu Nair.

Although Sharjah is in a desert region, it has a surprising number of habitats, from the mountains and wetlands to humid tropical plants, savannah and dune land, as well as rich coastal and marine environments. There are some 3,500 endemic plants, over 100 species of birds and a vast variety of insects and reptiles. Mammals, such as the almost extinct Arabian leopard and oryx, and the more common foxes, mongooses and rodents are rarely sighted, while camels and goats are common. The marine world is rich in sea life and spans both the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

The Ruler of Sharjah takes special interest in the preservation of the natural flora and fauna. As part of the ongoing Kalba Eco-Tourism Project undertaken by Sharjah Investment and Development Authority the mangrove forest in Al Hafya, thought to contain the oldest mangroves in Arabia, is now protected under the Ramsar Convention, an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable utilisation of wetlands.

Another element of the project, the Kalba Birds of Prey Centre, recently opened in the Al Ghaid natural reserve. It is home to 46 species, from the barn owl and long-legged buzzard, to the short-toed snake eagle and lapett-faced vulture. This is managed by the Environment Protected Areas Authority (EPAA), which is working in collaboration with Shurooq to protect the emirate’s natural resources and rare biodiversity.

ECONOMY
Sharjah’s industrial and manufacturing sectors have always been strong, exerting a stabilising effect over the emirate. The local economy goes from strength to strength, as the government is proactive in developing the emirate through new initiatives to attract more local and foreign investors. Over the last few years the leisure and tourism sector has received substantial investment as the government seeks to diversify the local economy, encourage the growth of the hospitality sector and boost tourism.

PLANNING A TRIP TO SHARJAH
WHEN TO COME:
Sharjah has a sub-tropical climate with infrequent rainfall and sunny skies during most of the year. The most pleasant time to visit is from November to May when the average daytime temperature is 26°C, falling to 15°C at night, but nowadays people visit the UAE all year round. It is hot from June to August, with highs of 40-45°C and humidity levels averaging 50-65%. These conditions are bearable with air conditioning in vehicles and buildings, and chilled swimming pools to cool off in. With the influence of the mountains, the east coast temperatures can be cooler during the summer.

VISAS:
Before travelling to the UAE, it is important to choose the correct type of visa depending on your nationality, the purpose of entry and planned duration of stay. Visit and transit visas only allow you to remain for a limited time. If you are entering on a more permanent basis then you need either a residence visa or an employment visa.

Passports must have a minimum validity of at least 6 months when applying for an entry permit. All photographs should be recent and in colour (Polaroid photos are not accepted). Passports are not required for minors registered in their parent’s or guardian’s passport, provided the minors are travelling with the passport holder and the holder’s passport contains photos of the minors.

The citizens and resident visa holders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia do not require a visa to travel to the UAE.

The following passport holders can obtain a 30-day Visit Visa free on arrival. This visa can be extended for a further 30 days for a fee of Dhs 640: Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, United Kingdom, United States of America, and the Vatican.

Other nationalities can enter on a Visit Visa sponsored by a local entity or someone who is resident in the UAE, or on a Tourist Visa when sponsored by a hotel, an airline, a travel agency or a tour operator and obtained prior to entry (allow at least 10 days). The visa cost between Dhs 450 to Dhs 1,200 or more, depending on the length of stay. It is valid for 30 days from date of issue. Israeli nationals may not enter the UAE.

Certain nationalities need to provide proof of health insurance. Check with your travel agent before travelling.

Visitors’ visas are single entry visas. Once a person leaves the country the visa is automatically cancelled. A daily penalty charge of Dhs 100 is imposed on visitors who overstay the validity of the visa.

Business travellers, property investors and cruise passengers can obtain a Multiple-Entry Visa. It is valid for 6 months from the date of issue. However, each visit must not exceed 30 days. The fee is Dhs 1,000 and the visitor must enter the UAE on a Visit Visa and obtain the Multiple-Entry Visa once in the country. Conditions apply.

For some travellers transiting through UAE airports, a 96-Hour Visa is issued for this time period. It is non-extendable, must be sponsored by an airline operating in the UAE, and the visitor must have a valid ticket for an onward flight. The fee is between Dhs 200 to Dhs 250.

Visitors not holding return/onward tickets could be refused entry.

Sponsors, hotels and tour operators will usually charge a nominal processing fee for arranging visas for visitors.

It is important to remember that visa laws and requirements can change at any time with little or no notice, therefore it is advisable to double check entry requirements with your nearest UAE embassy or consulate in your home country before travelling to the UAE.

Visit www.sharjahairport.ae or www.uaetourist.com/travel/visas.asp for details on the type of visa obtainable and updated information. You can also contact the 24-hour toll free AMER Service on www.amer.ae or call on 800 5111 for inquiries about visas for any of the emirates.

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TOLERANCE FOR DRINKING AND DRIVING.

DRIVING:

Vehicles are driven on the right-hand side of the road and it is compulsory for the driver and all the passengers to wear seat belts. The speed limit in built-up areas is 60 kmph and on highways, 100 - 120 kmph. Many areas have zero tolerance for drinking and driving. Those on a visit visa can drive a hire vehicle provided they hold a valid licence from: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK or the USA. Other visitors can drive a rented vehicle provided they hold an International Driving Licence issued by their home country.

Most of the large car hire firms are represented at airports and hotels and some local firms also operate car hire services. Rates can vary so it is best to shop around. The minimum age for renting is usually 21. If you rent through an International company, the hire rate per day for a small vehicle, including insurance, starts at around Dh200. A valid credit card, driving licence (copy of International License, along with country of origin licence or UAE licence not less than one year old) and original passport with visa page are required for the rental procedure. Salik (meaning “clear and moving” in Arabic) is the name given to the road toll system implemented in Dubai by the Roads and Transport Authority. Car rental companies charge the driver Dh5 every time you pass under the Salik toll gates in Dubai.

AGCC nationals may drive on their respective licences within the UAE. Residents can hire cars on their UAE licences and visitors can rent a self-drive car provided they hold either a valid International Driving Licence issued by their home country or a temporary UAE licence issued by the Sharjah Police Traffic & Licensing Department. All licence requirements are as per UAE laws in force and are subject to change so check in advance with your car hire firm.

CUSTOMS:

Personal effects: Free of charge.

Duty Free allowances: 2,000 cigarettes, 400 cigars, 2 kgs of loose tobacco, a reasonable quantity of perfume, non-Muslim adults may bring in 2 litres of both wine and spirits.

Commercial imports: 4% of the invoice value of goods.

There is no export duty or limit on goods leaving the country.

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS:

No specific immunisations are required for entry but it is advisable to check before departure as health restrictions may vary depending upon the situation at the time of travel (visit the World Health Organisation at www.who.int/ith/en).

Restricted medications. The complete list of controlled drugs can change regularly, so it is best to check with the Regulation & Drug Control Department at the Ministry of Health before travelling with any medication, www.uaeinteract.com/travel/drug.asp

TRAVELLING AROUND SHARJAH:

There is a good road network system in and around Sharjah, with impressive multi-lane highways linking to other emirates. The drive from Sharjah city to the east coast takes under two hours.

Vehicles are driven on the right-hand side of the road and it is compulsory for the driver and all the passengers to wear seat belts. The speed limit in built-up areas is 60 kmph and on highways, 100 - 120 kmph. Many areas are controlled by radar and fines are high. There is zero tolerance for drinking and driving.

PETROL:

Unleaded petrol costs Dh1.92 per litre and Super Dh2.07 per litre. Petrol stations are open 24 hours and most have excellent convenience stores on site, plus car washing and lube service. Payment is by cash or credit card.

PARKING METERS:

Parking is paid in Sharjah from 8am to 1pm and 5pm to 10pm, Saturday to Thursday (free on Friday), and costs Dh2 for the first hour.

AIRPORT TRANSFERS:

Most hotels provide a free shuttle bus service to and from the airports. A taxi from Sharjah International Airport into Sharjah city starts the meter running at Dh20 and will cost between Dh45 and Dh65 to the centre of town. An airport taxi from Dubai Airport to Sharjah starts with Dh20 on the meter, with an additional Dh20 added as you enter Sharjah, and it can easily clock up to Dh100 by the time you reach the border with Ajman, the next emirate.

TAXIS:

All taxis are metered. A trip into the city centre will take on average 15 to 20 minutes, depending on the traffic. Taxis can be ordered or usually flagged down outside the hotels. The starting fare is Dh3 from 6am to 10pm, and Dh3.50 from 10pm to 6am, plus the running meter to your destination. Trips within Sharjah cost between Dh10 and Dh45. A starting charge of Dh20 is made on top of the fare if you are travelling to Dubai.

In-country distances from Sharjah (in kms):

Abu Dhabi: 185
Ajman: 10
Al Ain: 152
Al Dhaid: 50
Dibba Al Hissn: 122
Dubai: 20
Fujairah: 111
Hatta: 132
Kalba: 117
Khorfakkan: 137
Ras Al Khaimah: 80
Umm Al Quwain: 35

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR TRAVELLERS:

CURRENCY & EXCHANGE:

The monetary unit is the ‘dirham’ (Dhs), also known as the Arab Emirate Dirham (AED), which is divided into 100 fils. 1 US$ = Dhs 3.67. At the time of going to press:

One UK £ = Dhs 5.495, One Euro = Dhs 3.975, One Chinese Yuan = 0.603, One Rouble = 0.0592. Coins include Dhs 1, 50 and 25 fils. Notes are of Dhs 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1,000 denominations. There are no currency restrictions on import or export of local or foreign currency.

Most hotels, shops and restaurants accept credit cards. Exchange of traveller’s cheques and foreign currencies can be made through international banks and exchange houses. The latter offer better rates than banks and are generally open from Saturday to Thursday 8.30am to 1pm and 4.30pm to 8.30pm (although some stay open all day and on Friday afternoons). Exchange rates of all major currencies are published daily in the newspapers. Automatic Teller Machines (ATM) are found in banks, shopping malls and several supermarkets.

WHAT TO WEAR & ETIQUETTE:

Lightweight summer clothing is suitable to wear for most of the year, with shawls and light sweaters for the cooler winter nights or at times in air-conditioned places. In order to respect the national customs, conservative dress is advised and etiquette is important. Actions should not offend other cultures or religious beliefs, particularly during the Holy Month of Ramadan.
**MOBILE TELEPHONES:**
Mobile phone reception is excellent throughout the UAE. Overseas roaming charges from your home provider can be expensive so visitors with mobile phones can save money by buying a local SIM card from Etisalat (Emirates Telecommunications Corporation) (www.etisalat.ae) or from du (www.du.ae). Bring your passport along to register the SIM card and to get it activated.

**DIALLING CODES:**
Outside the UAE
Sharjah: +971 6
Etisalat Mobile Number: +971 50 or +971 56
du Mobile Number: +971 55 or +971 52

Within the UAE
Abu Dhabi: 02
Ajman: 06
Al Ain: 03
Dubai: 04
Khorfakkan/Dibba/Kalba: 09
Fujeirah: 09
Ras Al Khaimah: 07
Sharjah City: 06
Umm Al Quwain: 06
For calls made within Sharjah drop: +06

**INTERNET:**
The larger hotels and several internet cafés provide internet access, with many outlets offering free wireless internet connectivity.

**ELECTRICITY:**
220/240 volts and 50 cycles. UK-style, 3-pin plugs are the norm.

**WEIGHT & MEASURES:**
The metric system is followed but British and American standard weights and measures are generally understood.

**SAFETY:**
The UAE has a low crime rate; however normal precautions are always advisable. In the case of loss or theft, contact the Sharjah Police Headquarters (06 536 1111).

**HOSPITALS:**
The standard of medical care and facilities in Sharjah is generally regarded as high, and visitors can easily obtain treatment from either the privately run hospitals, or from the government hospitals in an emergency. Hospitals accept payment in cash or credit card, as well as selected insurance plans. Emergency medical treatment may be expensive for tourists, hence it is advisable to ensure adequate travel health insurance and other accessible funds to cover the cost of potential medical expenses.

**PHARMACIES:**
Sharjah has plenty of well-stocked pharmacies, many of which are open 24 hours a day. Locations and telephone numbers are listed in the daily newspapers.

**NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES & TV:**
The Gulf Today, Khaleej Times, Gulf News and The National are the four English daily newspapers, while the main Arabic newspapers include Al Khaleej, Al Ittihad, Al Bayan and Akhbar Al Rabab. Many foreign newspapers and hobby magazines as well as local magazines are readily available in bookshops and the larger supermarkets. Entertainment magazines include Time Out, Visitor and What's On. Satellite and local TV channels are available in most hotels.

**RADIO:**
Popular English language radio stations include Channel 4 (104.8FM); Dubai Eye (103.8FM - a talk radio station); Emirates Radio 1FM (99.3FM & 100.5FM) and Emirates Radio 2FM (90.5FM & 98.5FM); and Virgin Radio (104.6FM). Hum FM (106.2FM) and Pulse (FM95.3) broadcast mainly in Hindi; and you can tune into 93.9 FM and 99.9 FM for popular Arabic music.

**POST & COURIER SERVICES:**
Stamps can be bought from post offices, certain card shops, supermarkets and Emarat petrol stations. Plenty of courier companies operate both locally and internationally - check with your hotel for details.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**
Normal tourist photography is generally permitted, apart from photographing military installations, ports and airports. It can be offensive to photograph Muslim women and it is generally courteous to ask permission before photographing people in general.

**DRINKING WATER:**
Most people prefer to drink the locally bottled mineral water, which is affordable and available in all supermarkets and petrol stations.

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The Gulf Today, Khaleej Times, Gulf News and The National are the four English daily newspapers, while the main Arabic newspapers include Al Khaleej, Al Ittihad, Al Bayan and Akhbar Al Rabab. Many foreign newspapers and hobby magazines as well as local magazines are readily available in bookshops and the larger supermarkets. Entertainment magazines include Time Out, Visitor and What’s On. Satellite and local TV channels are available in most hotels.

**RADIO:**
Popular English language radio stations include Channel 4 (104.8FM); Dubai Eye (103.8FM - a talk radio station); Emirates Radio 1FM (99.3FM & 100.5FM) and Emirates Radio 2FM (90.5FM & 98.5FM); and Virgin Radio (104.6FM). Hum FM (106.2FM) and Pulse (FM95.3) broadcast mainly in Hindi; and you can tune into 93.9 FM and 99.9 FM for popular Arabic music.

**POST & COURIER SERVICES:**
Stamps can be bought from post offices, certain card shops, supermarkets and Emarat petrol stations. Plenty of courier companies operate both locally and internationally - check with your hotel for details.

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**
Normal tourist photography is generally permitted, apart from photographing military installations, ports and airports. It can be offensive to photograph Muslim women and it is generally courteous to ask permission before photographing people in general.
USEFUL CONTACTS
ALL THE ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS YOU MIGHT NEED

You will find opening hours, useful numbers and main contact details of places mentioned in the publication listed in this section.

- This is not a comprehensive listing.
- Listings are alphabetical within each category.
- Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that numbers are correct, some may be subject to change.
OPENING HOURS
(it is advisable to call before you visit)

Friday is the weekly official holiday and most organisations operate a Friday/Saturday weekend.

All shops in Sharjah close for Prayer Time between 11.30am and 1.30pm.

Government
Sunday - Thursday 7.30am to 2.30pm.
Closed Friday, Saturday and public holidays.

Private Sector
Either a split shift 8am to 1pm and 3/4pm to 6/7pm, or straight through from 9am to 6pm.

Banks
Saturday to Thursday 8am to 2/3pm.
Closed Fridays and public holidays.

Embassies & Consulates
From 8.30am to 1.30pm. Closed Fridays and Saturdays, although an emergency contact number is usually provided on the answering service. Embassies are based in Abu Dhabi and Consulates are in Dubai.

Museums
Daily 8am to 8pm.
Friday 4pm to 8pm.

Post Office
Daily 8 am to 8pm.
Friday 4 pm to 8pm.

Shops
Shopping malls usually open daily from 10am to 11pm, closing later over weekends and public holidays
Other shops open from around 9am to 1pm and 4/4.30pm to 10pm.

Supermarkets & Grocery Shops
Daily, usually from 8 am to late at night.

Ramadan
During the Holy Month of Ramadan, shops close during the afternoon, reopening an hour or two after sunset, and staying open until late at night. Food outlets and restaurants generally remain closed or only offer takeaway services during the day, and then open after sunset.

SHARJAH COMMERCE AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (SCTDA)
PO Box: 26661, Sharjah
Crescent Tower, Al Majaz 3
Tel: 06 556 6777
Fax: 06 556 3000
Email: info@sharjahtourism.ae
www.sharjahmydestination.ae

EMERGENCY NUMBERS
Ambulance: 998
Antivenom (Al Qassimi Hospital): 06 538 6444
Child Helpline: 800700
Civil Defence: 997
Coastguard: 996 or 06 528 2999
Fire: 997
Police (from anywhere in the UAE): 999
Sharjah Met Office: 06 508 4680

SHARJAH POLICE
Loss & Theft
Police Headquarters: 06 563 1111 or 06 563 3333
Sharjah Police Traffic & Licencing Department: 06 538 1111
Traffic Police (Anjad): 06 5634444
Directory Enquiries (24hrs): 181
Sharjah Call Centre: 800 800 00
Speaking Clock: 141
Yellow Pages: 700 017 000 (charges apply)

AIRPORT / FLIGHT INFORMATION
Sharjah International Airport
Tel: 06 558 1111
Flight Enquiry: 06 558 1000
www.sharjahairport.ae

Dubai International Airport
Tel: 04 224 5555
Flight Enquiry: 04 216 6666
www.dubaiairport.com

Air Arabia (Sharjah based budget airline)
Head Office: 06 508 8888
Call Centre: 06 558 0000
www.airarabia.com

CAR HIRE
Aurolease
Tel: 06 575 5333
www.aurolease-uae.com

Avis
Tel: 06 558 0655
www.avis.com

Budget
Tel: 06 572 7600
www.budget-uae.com

Europcar
Tel: 06 556 9600
www.europcar-dubai.com

Hertz
Tel: 800 437 89
www.hertz-uae.com

Speed
Tel: 06 533 3222
www.speed-uae.com

Thrifty
Tel: 06 558 1946
www.thrifty.com
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### USEFUL WEBSITES

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<th><strong>Absolute Adventure</strong></th>
<th><a href="http://www.adventure.ae">www.adventure.ae</a></th>
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<td><strong>Air Arabia</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bee’ah, The Sharjah Environment Company</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.beeah-uae.com">www.beeah-uae.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Emirates Telecommunication Corporation - Etisalat</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Entry permits, residence visas, visit visas</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Environment &amp; Protected Areas Authority</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Expo Centre Sharjah</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fauna – research &amp; breeding</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.breedingcentresharjah.com">www.breedingcentresharjah.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Fauna &amp; Flora of the UAE</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.arabianwildlife.com">www.arabianwildlife.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Interactive map of Sharjah</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Online applications for permits</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sharjah Equestrian &amp; Racing Club</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sharjah International Children’s Festival</strong></td>
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