

Do You Feel Like ...

... seeing the desert, Islamic architecture, Arabian cafés, camels or wandering through a souk? Discover the seven Emirates according to your own personal tastes.



DESERT

- **Across the Dunes**
150m/492ft high, glowing red and gold under the sun. Big Red, not far from Dubai, attracts romantics and adventurers alike.
page 130
- **With a Hot Air Balloon over the Desert of Al Ain**
Enjoy the serenity and beauty of the desert and oases in a hot air balloon – take to the skies at daybreak.
page 169
- **At the Desert Hotel**
(▶see above)
The Qasr al-Sarab on the edge of the Liwa Oasis in Abu Dhabi blends 21st-century luxury with the romance of a Bedouin tent.
pages 73, 179

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

- **A Traditional Home**
Courtyard, arcades, a fountain – Heritage House in Dubai reveals all of the aspects of erstwhile Arabian life.
page 205
- **An Old Administrative Building**
Bait Al-Wakeel in Dubai is a popular café-restaurant mit a terrace on the bank of the Creek.
page 208
- **Bait al-Naboodah in Sharjah**
Walls of coral limestone and ornate carving, a vast courtyard and a wind tower.
page 265
- **An Islamic Palace**
the former Al-Majarrah Souk houses the Museum of Islamic Civilization in Sharjah.
page 270

ARABIAN CAFÉS

- **Water Pipes on the Corniche**
After sunset, every plastic seat at the Al-Masa Cafeteria, opposite the mosque in Ajman, is quickly occupied.
page 187
- **Coffeshop in the Souk**
Cardamom and rosewater waft through the air. the coffee shop in the Souk al-Arsah is a popular meeting point for the menfolk.
page 268



CAMELS

- **Market Trade**
Breeders and traders congregate at the only camel market in the emirates.
page 172
- **Famous Race Track**
The Al-Wathba Camel Race Track in Al Ain plays host to famous camel races.
page 177
- **Traditional Circuit**
Few tourists but big on tradition: the camel race circuit of Ras al-Khaimah in Digdagma.
page 259

SOUKS

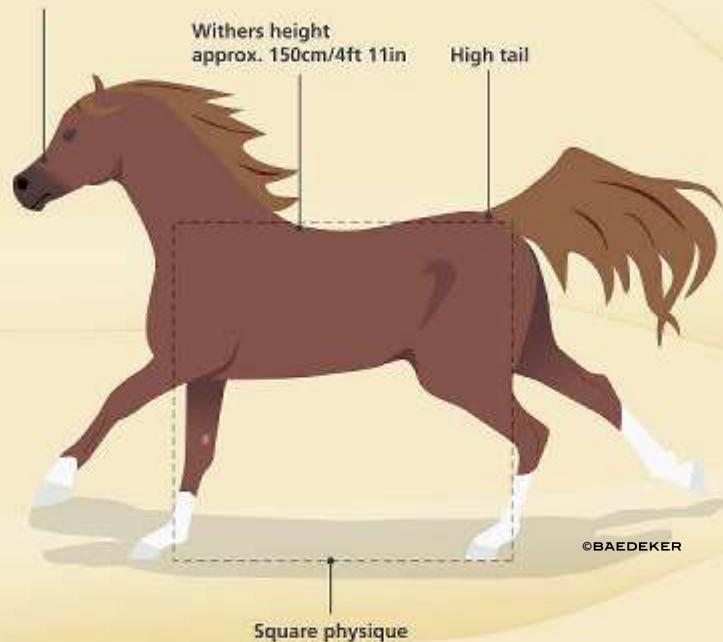
- **Oriental Souk**
Souk Khan Murjan on the lower level of the Wafi Mall in Dubai is quite a discovery.
page 213
page 268
- **Old Arab Style**
Historical souk with arches and ornamentation: the Souk al-Bahar is actually a replica.
page 226
- **Traditional Souk**
(▶see above)
The Souk al-Arsah in Sharjah has retained its authentic atmosphere.
- **Most Famous Souk**
and the most photographed building in the UAE: the Blue Souk in Sharjah in the style of a Belle Époque train station.
page 270



King of the Desert

The Arabian thoroughbred, the oldest pure-bred horse in the world, embodies power, stamina, beauty and physical perfection, coupled with nigh indestructible health. Horse races in the emirates provide an opportunity to admire these magnificent specimens in action.

Small head, broad forehead, deep-set eyes, concave «dished head».



▶ Arabian breeds

Asil Arabian

A thoroughbred Arabian whose lineage can be traced back to the Arab horses bred by Bedouins on the Arabian Peninsula. The original, authentic Arabian.



Pure-bred Arabian

The pure-bred Arabian has, as the description suggests, no foreign, crossbred blood whatsoever. German breeders add the ox suffix to its name.

Arab

Arab horses are labelled thus to distinguish them from actual thoroughbreds on the one hand and the Shagya or Anglo-Arabs on the other, that is they are neither pure-bred, nor half-bloods.



Shagya Arabian

The Shagya Arabian's origins go back to the k.u.k. monarchy, pure-bred for over 200 years. It is recognized as a distinct breeding type amongst Arabian horses and is generally stronger than a thoroughbred Arabian, with greater bone strength and calibre.

Anglo Arab

The Anglo-Arab comes from France and is a crossbreed between an Arabian and English thoroughbred. These horses must have at least 25% Arabian ancestry in the fourth generation.

▶ Emirates Racing Authority race tracks



Meydan (Dubai)



Jebel Ali



Sharjah



Abu Dhabi

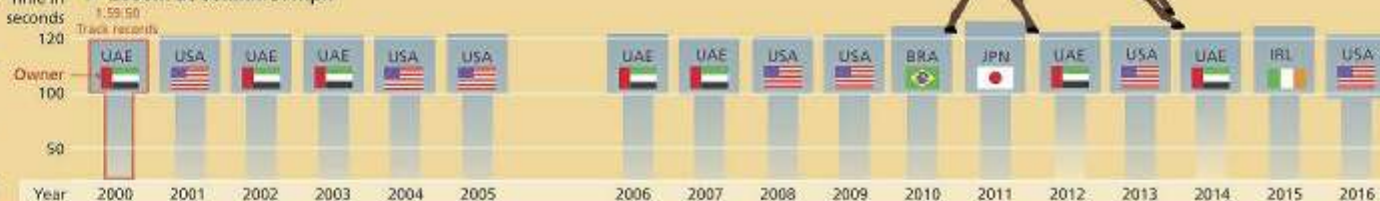


Starting positions vary according to length of the race

▶ Millionaire in two minutes

The Dubai World Cup is the most valuable horse race in the world in terms of prize money. It is staged by the Dubai Racing Club every year in March. The winner can look forward to collecting \$10 million.

▶ 2000m at 60kmh/37mph



Tour 1 Dubai by Metro

Length of the tour: 50km/31mi

Tour duration: 1 day, including various sightseeing points

Whether in a hire car or a taxi, driving on Dubai's roads can be a rather stressful experience due to heavy traffic and a proliferation of roadworks. The Metro, which opened in 2009, is a far more relaxing prospect.

Four metres / thirteen feet high The Dubai Metro was designed as a sky train, running for long stretches on viaducts high above the streets of the metropolis. It is thus a great way to tour the city. Air-conditioned stations in futuristic glass and steel are equipped with small shops and refreshment stands, cash machines and toilets. Tickets can be purchased at the counter prior to boarding the Mitsubishi trains, each with five carriages. VIPs, local residents and middle class expatriates can travel Gold Class (twice the price), whilst other passengers can use the Silver Class compartments. There are also separate sections for women and children.

Start: Rashidya The Red Line begins at **1 Rashidya station**, south of Dubai International Airport. Trains leave every ten minutes and it is a good idea to avoid rush hour when setting off. The next stations are Terminal 3 and Terminal 1. Not many passengers use these stations to reach the airport, as heavy luggage is not permitted on board the train. Alight at **2 Deira City Centre**, an older shopping mall with a fine city location. The Park Hyatt Hotel stands here like a palace overlooking the Creek. Wander through the park-like grounds to reach the yachts of the adjacent Dubai Creek Golf & Yacht Club and stop at one of the cafés for a drink at the water's edge.

Under the Creek Return to Deira City Centre station and continue underground to Union Square - which claims to be the largest underground station



in the world. Get off at the next stop, **3 Burjuman**, to visit the traditional district of Bastayika and the Dubai Museum located there.

The Metro runs parallel to Sheikh Zayed Road on this stretch of the journey, affording a breathtaking view of the skyscrapers and tower blocks which line Dubai's most important thoroughfare and business zone. It is tempting to alight at the next two stations, **4 Dubai World Trade Centre and Emirates Towers**. A lot of passengers leave the train when they hear **5 Burj Khalifa** announced via the tannoy. Attractions abound at the foot of the gigantic structure in this charming district with Arabian flair, including Dubai Lake and the largest mall in the Emirate, enough to entertain visitors for hours. Heading south now, the ride reaches the **6 Mall of the Emirates** station, with the Ski Dubai indoor arena as its unmistakable landmark. Alpine atmosphere is reflected in the design of the neighbouring Kempinski Hotel. A few stops before the Red Line comes to an end in **Jebel Ali**, there is a chance to see the **7 Ibn Battuta Mall**, named after and inspired by the great seafarer Ibn Battuta (Famous people).

Along Sheikh Zayed Road

Passing oil fields and drilling rigs, the E 12 highway leads through sandy and scree desert terrain, arriving 46km/28.5mi later at Madinat Zayed, a Bedouin settlement with a large park founded by Sheikh Zayed.

Liwa Oases

Dubai by Metro

Tickets

A single fare without a prepaid card (standard paper ticket) costs between 4 Dh (1 zone, approx. 3km/2mi, valid for 90 minutes) and 8.50 Dh (5 zones, valid for 3 hours). Prepaid tickets (Nol Card) are better value. The most sensible purchase is a Nol Silver Card for 16 Dh (1 day pass) which is valid for all zones and can be reloaded the following day (14 Dh). Tickets are scanned electronically at the entrance and exit. Rides with the Nol Gold Card (business class, in a manner of speaking) cost twice as much. Children up to the age of five travel for free.

Some technical detail

Opened in 2009, the Dubai Metro became the fourth underground in the Middle East (following Haifa in 1959, Cairo in 1987 and Tehran in 1999). The Red Line is 52km/32mi long, 4.7km/2.9mi of which run underground. Riding from one end of the line (Rashidya) to the other (Jebel Ali) takes 66 minutes. The Green Line was opened in 2011, some 24km/15mi in length. 2014 saw the Dubai Tram (p.196) begin to run along its ten kilometres/6 miles of track. Trains are driverless and run on Sat-Wed 6am-midnight, Thursday until 2am, Friday only from 10am; further information p.198 and www.rta.ae (Metro) and www.alsufouhtram.com (Dubai Tram).