

ARCHITECTURE COMPETITION

HOUSE OF THE FUTURE

EDITION #2 - 2024/25

COMPETITION CONDITIONS



BUILDNER
Architecture Competitions



برنامج الشيخ زايد للإسكان
Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme

مركز محمد بن راشد
للابتكار الحكومي
MOHAMMED BIN RASHID CENTRE
FOR GOVERNMENT INNOVATION



Contents

3	IGNITING ARCHITECTURAL INNOVATION
4	INTRODUCTION
5	THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
6	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
7	GEOGRAPHY
8	DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESS
9	CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS
12	EMIRATI CULTURE
<hr/>	
13	THE COMPETITION
	HOUSE OF THE FUTURE
	Edition #2 - 2024/25
14	THE COMPETITION ASSIGNMENT
15	THE BUILDING PROGRAMME
16	THE COMPETITION SITE
17	PROJECT PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

18	PRIZES
19	PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN
	<i>Media</i>
20	PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN
	<i>Interview & Movie</i>
21	COMPETITION SCHEDULE
22	REGISTRATION FEES
22	DISCOUNTS FOR ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS
23	SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
25	PRESENTATION DELIVERABLES SET
26	RECOMMENDED SUBMISSION CONTENT
27	PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION REVIEWS
28	JURY
29	MEDIA PARTNERS
29	ELIGIBILITY
30	APPENDIX
	<i>UAE Cultural insight</i>

Buildner Architecture Competition Organisers
in partnership with
Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme
have prepared this document for
the purpose of arranging the
House of the Future
Edition #2 - 2024/25
architecture competition.

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contact@buildner.com
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Igniting architectural innovation

BUILDNER is the global leader in organizing architecture competitions, we invite you to embark on a transformative journey of design excellence.

With our unwavering commitment to pushing boundaries and inspiring creativity, **BUILDNER** provides a platform for talented architects and designers to showcase their visionary ideas and shape the future of the built environment.

Join us as we unlock extraordinary possibilities and set new standards in architectural innovation.

buildner.com

10+

years of experience

140+

successfully completed
competitions

400+

guest jury members

Introduction

A house and a home aren't always the same thing. While the aspects that make a place your home aren't limited to physical attributes, architecture can still have a huge impact. Cultural differences, location, resources, and the format of your family will all influence what you look for in a home. And in a world that seems to be changing faster than ever, can architects and designers anticipate the needs of new-age homes?

As the second competition in the series following the success of the House of the Future Edition #1 2023/24, we continue our exploration into the future of living spaces for Emirati citizens. This year, we are expanding our ambitions to cover the entire United Arab Emirates (UAE) instead of just Dubai. In collaboration with the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme and the Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Government Innovation, we remain steadfast in our mission: to find innovative designs that resonate with the architectural aesthetic of the UAE and address the functional needs of its people. The assignment does not change; we are still looking for visionary concepts that offer a fresh take on the Emirati home, balancing tradition with modernity.

Winning entries will not only be considered for construction by the UAE Government but will also share in the 250,000 EUR prize fund, making this a coveted opportunity for architects and designers worldwide. Open to all levels of expertise from any location, the House of the Future Edition #2 2024/25 encourages creativity within the parameters of practicality, with a budget cap of 1.2 million Emirati Dirhams for expanded and upgraded designs.

A photograph of the Abu Dhabi skyline at sunset, featuring several prominent skyscrapers illuminated against a twilight sky. The buildings are reflected in the water in the foreground. A large blue rectangular overlay covers the right side of the image, containing text.

The United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) was founded in 1971 and consists of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras Al-Khaimah, Fujairah, and Umm al-Quwain. Each emirate contributes its unique flavor to the cultural and social fabric of the country, which is rich in heritage and reflects traditional Arab and Islamic values. Distinct features of UAE's heritage include hospitality, tolerance, family cohesion, and solidarity among society members.



Historical background

The UAE's formation in 1971 marked the unification of the Trucial States after gaining independence from British protection. Since its inception, the UAE has rapidly progressed from a collection of small desert communities to a leading global player in various sectors including business, tourism, and culture.

Geography

Located in the southeast of the Arabian Peninsula, the UAE is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south and west, and Oman to the east. The country boasts a diverse landscape ranging from vast desert dunes to lush oases, rugged mountains, and pristine coastlines along the Arabian Gulf.

Development and success

From its early days, the UAE has leveraged its natural oil and gas resources to fuel its development, leading to significant economic prosperity. Abu Dhabi, the capital, is the largest and wealthiest emirate, known for its vast oil reserves and modern skyline. Dubai, once a small fishing village, has transformed into the most populous city in the UAE and a global metropolitan hub renowned for its futuristic architecture and luxury shopping.

Today, the UAE is celebrated for its rapid modernization and urbanization. It is home to over 200 nationalities, reflecting a rich cultural diversity. The country's strategic vision and investment in infrastructure, tourism, and innovation have positioned it as one of the safest and fastest-growing places in the world.



Climate and environmental considerations

The climate of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is characterized by high temperatures and low precipitation, posing unique challenges for architectural design. The country experiences two main seasons: summer and winter.

Climate overview:

- Summer (June to September):

Temperatures can soar up to 50°C, with a mean temperature ranging from 32°C to 37.2°C. This season is marked by intense heat and humidity.

- Winter (December to March):

The weather is milder, with mean temperatures ranging from 16.4°C to 24°C. Rainfall is rare, occurring primarily during the winter months, averaging about 25 days of rain per year.

- Sunshine:

The UAE enjoys an average of 8 to 10 hours of sunshine daily, ensuring blue skies and warm to hot weather throughout the year.

- Humidity:

The humidity levels in the UAE can be particularly high, especially during the summer months, often exceeding 90%. This creates additional challenges for maintaining indoor comfort and preventing moisture-related issues.



Architectural considerations:

Given the extreme climate, architectural design in the UAE must prioritize strategies to mitigate heat and maximize energy efficiency. This includes:

- **Building materials:**

Selection of materials that reflect heat and provide insulation to keep interiors cool.

- **Design techniques:**

Incorporation of features such as shaded areas, ventilation systems, and reflective surfaces to combat high temperatures.

- **Sustainable practices:**

Use of innovative and sustainable materials to reduce the environmental impact and enhance energy efficiency.

Climate change adaptation:

Recent years have seen increasing variability in the UAE's climate, with notable changes in weather patterns. There have been instances of unexpected heavy rainfall and flooding, which caused disruptions and highlighted the need for resilient infrastructure. These events underscore the necessity for new homes to be designed with adaptability in mind.

- Changing weather patterns:

Increased instances of extreme weather, such as heavy rains and floods, are becoming more common due to climate change. This has implications for infrastructure and housing design.

- Flooding risks:

Urban areas, especially those with inadequate drainage systems, are more susceptible to flooding. The recent floods have emphasized the need for homes that can withstand such events.

- Heatwaves:

Prolonged heatwaves are becoming more frequent, necessitating designs that enhance cooling efficiency and reduce reliance on air conditioning.

These considerations are vital for creating homes that are not only comfortable and functional but also sustainable and resilient in the face of a shifting climate.

Emirati culture

To learn about Emirati culture, find an extensive description in the appendix, which provides insights into the nation's rich heritage and traditions. This appendix includes detailed information on key cultural values such as hospitality, generosity, and religious tolerance. It covers traditional practices, including the significance of Islamic customs, traditional attire, and the central role of family and language in Emirati society. Additionally, the appendix highlights the UAE's architectural heritage, traditional sports like falconry and camel racing, crafts such as Al-Sadu weaving, and the unique flavors of Emirati cuisine. This section serves as a valuable resource for understanding the cultural fabric that defines Emirati identity.



The competition

HOUSE OF THE FUTURE

EDITION #2 - 2024/25

The UAE Government, in collaboration with the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme and the Mohammed bin Rashid Centre for Government Innovation, in partnership with Buildner architecture competition organizers, is launching a global competition for all architects and designers around the world to design a revolutionary, new-age, innovative house suited to the needs of Emiratis living across the United Arab Emirates.

The House of the Future Edition #2 2024/25 competition seeks to update and revolutionize the way in which the UAE government offers housing to its citizens. Winning designs from this competition will be added to the current list of housing options for Emirati citizens to choose from when building their future home. Participants are encouraged to use innovative and disruptive materials and should not exceed the budget of 800,000 Emirati Dirhams, with the possibility of expansions up to 1.2 million Emirati Dirhams.


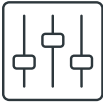




The UAE Government has several policies in place to ensure all its citizens have access to housing, including allocating land to eligible Emiratis, providing free housing or a housing loan, and offering residential facilities and maintenance. The Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme (SZHP), established in 1999, provides interest-free loans repayable over a 25-year period to citizens with low incomes. The programme ensures that those with the greatest need are given the most support, with priority given to orphans, widows, aged people, and people with special needs.

The House of the Future Edition #2 2024/25 competition is seeking ideas and submissions from architecture and design enthusiasts from all backgrounds and levels of experience. Winning designs have the potential to be utilized as part of the government's development project. These projects may be included in the Sheikh Zayed Housing Programme's design list, from which citizens will select their future homes. With thousands of applicants for these homes annually, this competition represents an unparalleled opportunity for architects and designers to make a lasting impact on the housing landscape of the UAE.

The House of the Future 2024 competition is looking for ideas and submissions from architecture and design enthusiasts from all backgrounds and all levels of experience.

The competition assignment

Design a home for Emirati nationals that can accommodate a family of 4 to 6 members. Submitted projects will need to consider the following criteria:

					
Overall design aesthetic	Harmony in design and function	Innovation in materials	Expandability	Sustainability	Innovation in design
<p>The overall design aesthetic, including materials used and color combinations, should be in keeping with those showcased in the Emirati Pinterest boards and in the insight documents provided.</p>	<p>How well did the architect designed around the user's needs and if they utilized the spaces within the home efficiently. The jury will be looking for projects with design features that encourage positive habits and behaviors, with the house's necessary functions designed in a seamless manner that does not take away from the overall aesthetic.</p>	<p>The utilization of sustainable, locally sourced materials should be included in submitted projects, with extra attention given to those designs that use said materials to reduce costs and energy requirements during construction and maintenance of the house.</p>	<p>Projects should have the ability to affordably expand and build additions to the property, while not taking away from the function and aesthetic of the initial design.</p>	<p>Designs should be power efficient in order to keep running costs low and reduce the impact on the environment, all while in keeping with the overall aesthetic.</p>	<p>For this competition, the jury is looking for innovative designs for the house of the future, incorporating some of the methods used to construct houses in the region. Those that challenge the norms and create a new standard for building homes in the region will be judged more favorably.</p>

The building programme



Resident zone

"Must have" areas:

Bedrooms - 3 bedrooms, with expandability up to 5 bedrooms if necessary
Car Parking - 2 cars minimum
Garden
Pantry (Indoor preparation kitchen)
Living room
Washroom + WC (for each bedroom and for living room)

"Optional but recommended" areas:

Dining area
Office
Majlis (social hosting area, with privacy from the rest of the villa)
Driver room + washroom (Segregated from house, for privacy reasons)
Dressing area for each bedroom or a common storage unit for the whole family.



Service block

Service block can be attached or detached from the resident's house and must include the following:

Laundry & ironing room
Maid room + washroom
Kitchen
Storage

Note: Most Emiratis have the driver room as part of the external service block and the maids room part of the house.

The BUILDING PROGRAMME is flexible, open for modifications and improved development strategies.

The competition site

For this competition, there is no defined site. Participants are asked to focus on a land plot based in the UAE with a size no larger than 450 m². Recommended site proportions are 15m x 30m, with the 15m side facing the street. The house is expected to have neighbors on all sides.

According to UAE building codes, there is a required setback of approximately 3 meters from the front and back, and 1.5 meters from the sides*. Participants are suggested to follow these setbacks. However, as this competition aims to challenge norms, participants may choose to break the rules if they have a strong rationale for doing so.

Projects should have the ability to affordably expand and build additions to the property while not taking away from the function and aesthetic of the initial design.



Project proposal requirements

	Building height: Minimum G + 1 (ground floor plus one upper floor), maximum G + 2 (ground floor plus two upper floors).
	Cost: Should not exceed 800,000 AED, with the possibility of expansions up to 1.2 million AED. This should be an estimate; participants are not required to submit a detailed cost list.
	Recommended total building floor area: 300 m ²
	Recommended plot size: 15 m x 30 m (450 m ²). 15 m facing the street.
	Comply with insurance standards: The design should comply with insurance standards and requirements in the UAE.
	Climatic and environmental changes: Consider the UAE's climatic and environmental changes to ensure durability and comfort.
	Innovative and sustainable materials: Use innovative and sustainable materials to enhance efficiency and longevity.
	Key factors: Balance quality, sustainability, flexibility, speed of construction, and cost-effectiveness.
	Cultural and environmental suitability: Provide innovative designs that meet international standards and suit the environment and societal culture of the UAE.

The jury may choose to reward projects that show extreme creativity even if they breach any of the rules, as long as it's justified.

Prizes

Monetary awards

COMPETITION PRIZES

250,000 €

A total of 250,000 EUR will be awarded to competition winners.

Four winning proposals and six honorable mentions will be selected. The prize distribution is as follows:

1ST PRIZE

140,000 €

2ND PRIZE

45,000 €

3RD PRIZE

20,000 €

INNOVATION AWARD
(USING INNOVATIVE AND SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS)

45,000 €

Additionally, projects demonstrating exceptional innovation and sustainability in house design will be recognized through this prize structure, reflecting the competition's emphasis on creative and sustainable solutions.



Publicity campaign

Media

Buildner's publicity campaign offers extensive exposure to the architectural community, ensuring that the results of the competition are seen by a vast audience:

BUILDNER'S TWO MILLION

The results are published on buildner.com, a leading website in the architecture industry, attracting over one million unique visitors annually. Additionally, the campaign extends to Buildner's social networks, which boast over 800,000 followers combined, and through newsletter campaigns reaching over 200,000 subscribers.



FEATURE

As part of the collaboration between Buildner and ArchDaily, the competition winners will be showcased on ArchDaily, a leading architecture news platform.

This feature will greatly boost the winners' visibility to millions of architecture professionals and enthusiasts worldwide, increasing their chances for new opportunities, attracting new clients, and establishing their reputation in the industry.

BUILDNER EXTENSIVE MEDIA NETWORK

Buildner leverages an extensive network of media industry leaders to publish the competition results. This broadens the audience further, ensuring that participants' work is showcased across multiple platforms known for their influence and reach in the architecture and design sectors.

Publicity campaign

Interview & Movie

After participants submit their project, they have the opportunity to upload a questionnaire (in writing) and a video about themselves **on the Buildner project upload panel**, up to five days before the results announcement. The specific submission deadline is indicated in the project upload panel.

These submissions are **OPTIONAL** but highly recommended in case the project is selected amongst the winners to maximize the publicity and media attention their work will receive.

Questionnaires and videos will be published for winners and honorable mentions with the competition results on Buildner's website.

Videos will be published for all participants, including winners, on Buildner's YouTube channel.

Read more about:



The interview – architecturecompetitions.com/interview



The video submission – architecturecompetitions.com/submit-movie

Explore the movies received from Buildner Architecture Competition winners and honorable mentions here - youtube.com/@buildner

Competition schedule

Preliminary registration deadlines

- 🚩 Early Bird Registration
NOVEMBER 7 – DECEMBER 19
- 🚩 Advance Registration
DECEMBER 20 – FEBRUARY 26
- 🚩 Last Minute Registration
FEBRUARY 27 – APRIL 30

It is still possible to participate in this competition after the preliminary deadlines, however, a higher late registration fee will be charged.



Closing date for questions & answers
MAY 5, 2025

In order to guarantee equal opportunities to all competition participants, no new questions will be answered after this deadline!



Closing date for registration
APRIL 30, 2025



Closing date for submission
JUNE 2, 2025 (11:59 P.M. LONDON TIME)



Announcement of the winners
JULY 15, 2025

Registration fees



Please find registration fees listed on the competition website
architecturecompetitions.com/houseofthefuture2

Discounts for architecture students

Buildner Architecture Competition Organisers would like to hear from representatives of universities, schools, and colleges offering architecture/design studies.

Contact us to receive special student rates for group registration (discount applies for 3+ registrations from one university/school), as well as further information and support to get your students involved in architecture competitions.

Send us a request from your university email address along with basic information about you and your university/school. Please note that only recognized university staff can apply for the reduced student rate.

Buildner Architecture University rankings

Explore the Buildner's list of the world's 1000+ most competitive architecture universities –

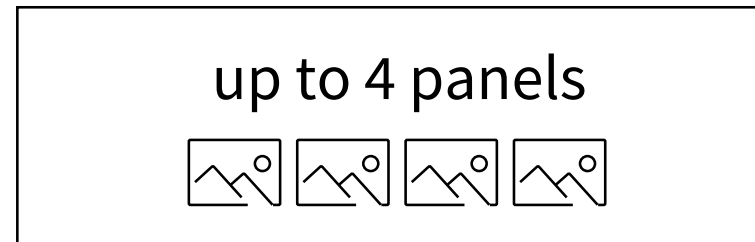
architecturecompetitions.com/architecture-university-rankings

Submission requirements

Project submission

- Participants are required to **upload four (4) A2 landscape-orientated presentation boards** (each board must not exceed 10MB per jpg) with sketches, renderings, plans, sections, elevations, diagrams, and/or other presentation tools to explain their proposal.

Even though this is an ideas competition, participants should demonstrate sufficient information on buildability, all sides/parts of the building, and materiality. All plans and sections should be detailed enough to reduce questions and uncertainties for the next development stage of the design before proceeding to construction. Participants should strive to deliver the maximum amount of relevant information to smooth the way to construction.



- No video files are accepted.
- All information provided in writing must be in English.
- All submissions must be uploaded via the architecturecompetitions.com upload panel. Access information and instructions on how to upload the presentation board will be issued to participants via email immediately after successful registration.
- Presentation boards must not indicate any information related to individual's/team's identity.

Participants who do not comply with the requirements will be disqualified without refund.

Your project in the media

Participants are required to submit a cover image and a project description in the project upload panel. These will be used for publication purposes and will not be seen by the jury. The image and text need to be submitted in the project upload panel at the time of project upload.

Cover image

Participants can choose and upload **one project preview image from their presentation** that best describes their project.

- The project preview image would need to be at least 2000x1680 pixels large, orientated horizontally, no more than 10 MB in size, and in jpg/jpeg format.
- The project preview image will be used for promotional materials to showcase the project in case the project is selected as the winner.
- Please note: the competition jury will not see the selected project preview image.

Project description

In the project upload panel, participants will be asked to add their project description. Please note that this will not be seen by the jury but will be used mainly for publication purposes. In the project description, please include the following:

- **Project overview:**
Provide a brief summary of the project.
- **Assignment:**
Explain the task or problem you were assigned to solve.
- **Objectives:**
Outline the main goals and objectives of the project.
- **Design concept:**
Describe the design concept and the inspiration behind it.

- **Approach and strategy:**

Detail the approach and strategy you used to tackle the project.

- **Key Features:**

Highlight the key features and unique aspects of the design.

- **Materials and techniques:**

Mention the materials and techniques used in the project.

- **Challenges:**

Discuss any challenges you faced and how you overcame them.

- **Results:**

Share the outcomes and results of the project.

Presentation deliverables set

- Elevations (suggested scale 1:50)
- Sections (suggested scale 1:50)
- Floor plans (suggested scale 1:50)
- Enlarged sections and elevations highlighting key spaces or relationships (suggested scale 1:10)
- Details (suggested scale 1:5):
 - Envelope
 - Key materials
 - Site or landscape

- Axonometrics providing information on building systems or illustrating key architectural concepts
- Perspectives
 - Primary interior spaces
 - Primary site locations

Please note, the Presentation Deliverables Set listed above is a suggestion only. Participants can choose to use the entire list, a selection from it, or propose a completely different set that would explain their design in the most efficient manner.



While this is an open-ended ideas competition, we encourage participants to provide plans, sections, and details that are clear in terms of dimensions, accurate wall thicknesses, and information about what the structure and walls are intended to be made of to help convey the buildability of the design.

Recommended submission content

- **Visualizations:**

Include artist's impressions to illustrate how the proposal fits in with the quality, value, and significance of both historical and modern UAE contexts.

- **Concept designs:**

Highlight that all aspects of the design are of the highest quality and in keeping with the design brief, ensuring that the vision is clear and compelling.

- **Detailed plans and sections:**

Present the main points of proposed plans and sections, along with multiple internal and external perspectives. Demonstrate the spatial quality of the building, as well as operational needs and accessibility requirements.

- **Feasibility demonstration:**

Show the feasibility of the project in terms of environmental impact, climate conditions, lifecycle, and the responsible use of materials

- **Construction and materials:**

Detail the approach to project construction, including materials, functions, management, and maintenance. Emphasize considerations for the environment, energy and sustainability, indoor environment, and logistics

- **Buildability and practicality:**

Participants should strive to deliver the maximum amount of relevant information to demonstrate how their design can be practically realized. This includes clear explanations of construction methods and materials, ensuring that there are minimal questions and uncertainties in the next development stage before proceeding to construction.

Presentation preliminary review

For more than ten years, Buildner has analyzed and rated thousands of architecture competition project submissions. Trust us when we say — the quality of your presentation is vital to convince a jury team of your design intent, and there are several graphic and representational factors that can make it or break it. We can help you make it right!

Buildner can review your presentation and give you valuable feedback!

Participants are welcome to submit their competition presentation draft panel/s **before submitting it/them as a final competition entry for a preliminary review.**

Within 1–3 days, our team will analyze your presentation panel/s and rate them on predefined criteria points, as well as add valuable written feedback on how you can improve your final competition submission.

Find out more here – architecturecompetitions.com/reviews



Jury

House of the Future Edition #2 2024/25 is a project competition, which encourages participants to test or redefine the boundaries of architecture. The jury may choose to reward projects that show a high degree of creativity, even if they breach competition guidelines, as long as this is justified.

Buildner is committed to selecting the most qualified industry professionals to comprise its jury panels. Jury panels consist of architects, in addition to professionals from other professional backgrounds that are relevant to the competition topic, to guarantee the most objective competition results.

Jury members shall under no circumstances be contacted by competition participants or their representatives. Participants who attempt to contact jury members shall be disqualified.

**All competition-related communications should be carried out solely with Buildner staff.
For any questions, please contact us at contact@buildner.com**

The most up to date jury panel members list and biographies are published at:
architecturecompetitions.com/houseofthefuture2

Eligibility

The competition is open to all. No professional qualifications are required. Design proposals can be developed individually or by teams (4 team members maximum).

People who have direct personal or professional relationships with jury panel members or organisers may not participate in this competition.

Media partners

A full list of media partners who have committed to present the competition winners in their publications can be found at **architecturecompetitions.com/houseofthefuture2**

For potential media partners who are also interested in covering the present competition and its winners, please contact us at contact@buildner.com

*Competition press kit (in English) and banners are available at **architecturecompetitions.com/houseofthefuture2/press***

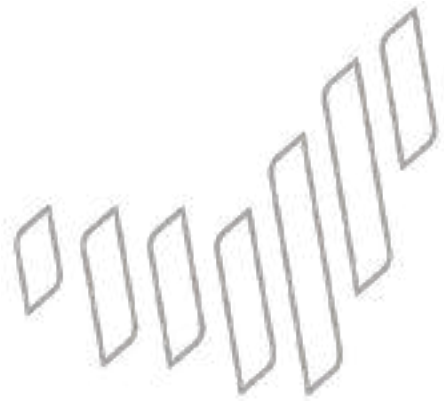
HOUSE OF THE FUTURE

EDITION #2 - 2024/25

APPENDIX

UAE Cultural insight





Cultural package



“
إن حجم الدول لا يقاس بمساحتها على الخريطة بل بتراثها
وحضارتها

المغفور له بإذن الله الشيخ زايد بن سلطان آل نهيان

A country is not measured by the size of its area on the
map. A country is truly measured by its heritage & culture.”

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

The United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates consists of seven Emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah.

In 1971, the late President His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan unified the seven Emirates into a federation.

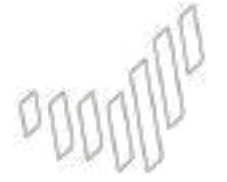
The UAE has a rich culture and heritage that reflects traditional and Islamic values. Hospitality and generosity are two very important values in the UAE.

The UAE is known for its welcoming people, who are interested in learning about their guests and welcome them to experience their culture.

Religious, Cultural Tolerance, and Coexistence reflected in the UAE embracing people of over 200 nationalities from different religious and cultural backgrounds who live in harmony and peace.



UAE Cultural insight



The culture of the United Arab Emirates is a rich balance of traditional values, customs and modern influences due to the country's rapid development and international exposure.

Islam is the predominant religion and significantly influences daily life, and social norms. Prayer times, fasting during Ramadan, and Islamic festivals like Eid are integral to UAE culture.

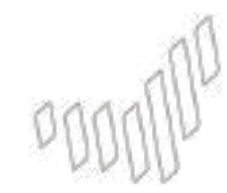


Sharjah Mosque Largest Masjid in Dubai © Sarath maroli

Hospitality, Emiratis are known for their hospitality. Welcoming guests with coffee and dates is a common practice.



Arabic men gather together and drink coffee seating in traditional Bedouin tent. Arabic hospitality concept © Elena Tolmach



Generosity is a fundamental aspect of Emirati culture, and it is deeply ingrained in the values and way of life.



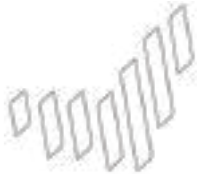
Old man presents basket of dates in Al Dhafra Festival © Ali A Suliman

Tolerance

The UAE is known for its tolerance and coexistence of various religions. It is home to more than 40 churches, two Hindu temples, a Sikh temple and a Buddhist temple. The Abrahamic Family House feature a mosque, church and synagogue side-by-side.



The Mosque at the The Abrahamic Family House © Heinrich van Tonder



National Identity refers to the sense of belonging and allegiance that concerns the citizens of the UAE, and the residents living on it by balancing between preserving traditional values and embracing modernity and globalization.

Family is central to UAE society. Extended families often live close together, and respect for elders is deeply ingrained.



Language

Arabic is the official language. But English and Arabic are the two most widely spoken languages in the UAE. However, the UAE's diverse population means you may also hear other languages like Urdu, Hindi or Pashtu.

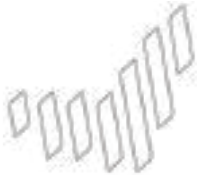
Some basic phrases you might need to know, such as:

- Salaamu aleikum ("Peace be upon you," used like "Hello"). The response: "Wa aleikum a-salaam" ("And unto you peace")
- Ahlan wa sahlan ("Welcome," very common of Arab hosts)
- Traditional Attire

Men typically wear a "kandura," a long white cloth, and a head covering called a "ghutra".

Women often wear a "abaya," a long black cloak, over their clothes, and cover their hair with a "shayla"

Emirati heritage



The UAE is blessed with a rich heritage that encompasses architecture, sports, occupations, traditions, arts, crafts, food, places of historical and archaeological importance, and lifestyle.

Wind Towers (Barjeel): Traditional homes featured wind towers to provide natural ventilation.

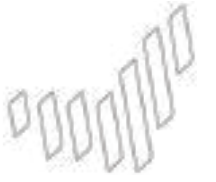


A traditional windtower or barjeel in the Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood, also known as Al Bastakiya © Glen Berlin

Forts and Watchtowers: Historical buildings are significant landmarks.



Tiered tower at Al Jahili Fort in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates © Matyas Rehak



Modern Heritage: Refers to cultural significant examples of architecture and urbanism that narrate the significant historical, socio-cultural, and economic changes that took place in the UAE as symbols of integrating modernization with tradition in the last 50 years.



Falconry and Equestrianism

- Falconry is a traditional sport and a symbol of heritage.
- Camel and Hoarse Racing are popular sports with deep historical roots.





Pearl Diving: Historically, It was a significant economic activity before the discovery of oil.



A traditional Arabic wooden Boat used for pearl diving and transportation © Vinod V Chandran



Arabian pearl diver showing how to open a shell to find salt water pearls © Joerg-Drescher

Emirati crafts

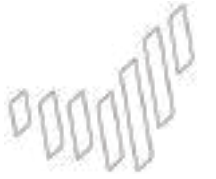


Emirati Crafts celebrate the creative and artistic relationship between the people and the locally available natural resources. It has been shared from generation to generation, we preserve not only the practical skills but also, we shared social values associated with Emirati identity.

Al-Sadu is a traditional form of weaving practiced by Emirati women using the wool of sheep, camels and goats.

Khoos is practiced by both men and women, and it involves the weaving or braiding together of date palm fronds to form an object.





Talli is a traditional form of decorative embroidery practiced by Emirati women. Cotton or silk threads, intertwined with gold and silver threads are used to decorate the collars, sleeves and hems of the thawb (traditional women's robes) with intricate designs and vibrant colours.



Emirati woman is making traditional embroidery talli, hands in frame © Vinnikava Viktoryia

Sea craft: The people of the UAE have found ingenious ways to both understand and benefit from the richness of the sea.

Traditional Performing Art comprising poetry and rhythm that is deeply rooted in the UAE culture traditional. It's performed by individuals and groups who perform across disciplines, such as Al-Ayyala, Al-Razfa, Wanna, Shilla, AL-Azi, AL-Rzfa, and AL-Taghrooda.



Arab traditional dhows in the shore during the sunrise in Qatar © SLSK Photography

Emirati hospitality



Hosting a guest is an opportunity to demonstrate a sign of warmth and generosity.

Greetings: The way in which people greet each other in the UAE reflects the cultural heritage of the region. When men greet each other, handshakes or nose-rubbing are commonplace. When relatives greet an elderly family member, it is common to kiss the forehead as a sign of respect of their status within the family. When women greet each other, physical touch such as handshaking and cheek kissing also demonstrate friendship and indicates trust and respect.

Coffee: Hospitality offered to guests always includes coffee (gahwa), with the cup being refilled until the guest indicates they have had enough.

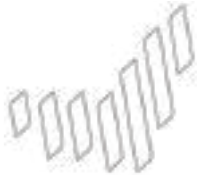
The guest shakes the cup (finjan) side to side when they have had enough.

Dates is served at the same time and later, perfumed incense named Bukhoor may be passed around the guests to freshen up.

The traditional Majlis forum provides Emiratis with an opportunity to debate, deliberate and share information about the issues of the day. And Majlis is a meeting place where hospitality will be offered, and discussions will take place with guests.



Traditional arabic coffee jugs or qahwa in Dubai with table and couch on oriental carpet with hot coals © Steve Heap



Emirati Cuisine is characterized by its use of spices, dates, and seafood, reflecting the country's desert and coastal environment. It offers a unique blend of flavors and textures that are both comforting and flavorful. It often incorporates elements from other cultures, creating unique fusion dishes.

Communal eating with shared dishes is common practice in the UAE and is highly recognized as an expression of friendship.

Hand-to-mouth eating is an important custom in the UAE. However, guests should not eat with their left hand.

When inviting you into their home, Emirati hosts will always offer tea and coffee.

Culinary Diversity

Due to its diverse population, the UAE offers a wide range of international cuisines, from Indian and Mexican to Italian and Japanese.



A variety of fragrances and spices, herbs, United Arab Emirates © Curioso.Photography

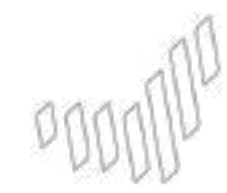
Cultural Offering



The best way to understand the history, culture and social fabric of any country is to visit its museums and cultural centers. These great institutions house not only the artwork and cultural artefacts of a country but also their values and vision.

Here is a list to visit in the UAE:

1. Louvre Abu Dhabi
2. Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre
3. Qasr Al Hosn
4. Cultural Foundation
5. Manarat Al Saadiyat
6. Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital
7. Al Ain Palace Museum
8. Emirates National Auto Museum
9. Dubai Museum
10. Etihad Museum
11. Museum of the Future
12. Al Shindagha Museum
13. Alserkal Avenue
14. Dubai Opera
15. Coffee Museum
16. Jameel Arts Centre
17. Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization
18. Sharjah Art Foundation
19. Sharjah Heritage Museum
20. Sharjah Archaeology Museum
21. Sharjah Science Museum
22. Sharjah Calligraphy Museum
23. Hisn Khor Fakkan
24. Ajman Museum
25. Ras Al Khaimah National Museum
26. Fujairah Museum
27. Umm Al Quwain Museum



Louvre, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates © Pandora Pictures



Museum of the Future, Dubai. Arabic text meaning "The future belongs to those who can imagine it, design it and execute it" © AY Amazefoto



Dubai Opera, United Arab Emirates © Sarath maroli



Al Ain, United Arab Emirates © trabantos

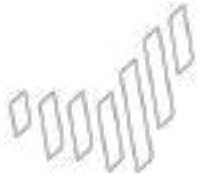


Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates © LizCoughlan



The Etihad Museum, Dubai, United Arab Emirates © Lal Nallath

The UAE's Culture of Generosity



Giving, charity, and helping others are values deeply inherent in Emirati society, established by the country's Founding Fathers, who fostered a culture rooted in tolerance and love for others which aims to enhance the social quality of life. Generosity is from essential qualities that are part of the DNA of the UAE and make us who we are.

The UAE has played a critical role in providing urgent assistance to countries affected by natural disasters demonstrating the country's commitment to humanitarianism and sustainability.

The UAE's contribution to the conservation of the world's heritage treasures which includes the Dome of the Rock, the Mosque of Omar bin Al Khattab, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, the Great Mosque of Al Nouri, the Church of the Pure and the Church of the Clock in Mosul, the Museum of Islamic Art in Egypt, the McMillan Historical Library in Nairobi, and many other landmarks and sites.



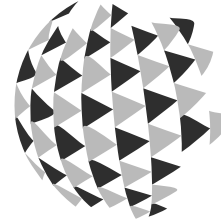
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