United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Location
United Arab Emirates (UAE) is located in the southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula and has an area of 32,300 sq. miles. The country measures about 420 miles north to south and 480 miles east to west. The Persian Gulf borders the country to the north and Saudi Arabia borders the country south and west. The Oman and the Gulf of Oman border the country to the east.

Geography
Most of the county is desert and consist of flat plains. The coast of the country are marked by salt flats, while the north and east regions consist of grass and trees. The country slopes down from the highest point at 8,200 feet, the Al Hajar al Gharbi mountain range in the northeast to a desert plateau. The plateau slopes northward to the coast and westward to the Sabkhat Matti, a desert which spreads into Saudi Arabia.

Climate
The United Arab Emirates’ s weather is moderately cool throughout the year. The temperatures are between 20 C and 35 C. During the months of May to October, the temperature usually reach its’ highest around 49 C. The annual rainfall varies from year to year. The average, though, is 1.7 inches in the Abu Dhabi, to 5.1 inches in the Ra’s al Khaymah. The country experiences frequent sandstorms though.
Important Dates

Important dates on the UAE’s calendar are New Year’s Day, January 1, and National Day, December 1. Religious holidays are also important, but their dates vary because of the Islamic Hijra calendar. They are Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan), Eid al-Adnal (Pilgrimage), Lailat al-mi’raj (Ascension of the Prophet), and the Prophet’s birthday.

Population

The Population of the United Arab Emirates has an estimated 2,262,309 people, with 70 people per square mile. Eighty-five percent of the country’s population is urban. The capital of Abu Dhabi contains 40 percent of the population. Due to recently improved medical care and the lack of infant mortality the county has a young population.

Currency

The official currency of the country is the dirham. Since November of 1980, 3.671 dirhams equal one U.S. dollar. The UAE is not a low-budget country, so the average US dollars spent is $50.

Education

In 1995, Literacy rates were 79 percent. This is a huge increase since the introduction of universal public education under the 1971 constitution. To help increase that percentage, the government provides free primary and secondary education. Education for children between 6 and 12 is enforced.

The United Arab Emirate University was opened in 1977, in which there were only 519 students enrolled. Since the mid-90’s, the student population has reached about 12,000
students. The government pays study abroad programs and males are a majority of the participants.

**Language**

Arabic is the official language of the country, though English, Hindi, Urdu, and Persian are widely spoken also.

**Trade**

The major trading partners of the country are Japan, United Kingdom, United States, France, Italy, and South Korea. Oil and gas exports amount to half of the country’s export earnings. It also exports aluminum, paint, and various fruits and vegetables.

**Food**

Rice and fish make up the staple of the UAE diet. There are three meals in a day, with fualah meals eaten in between. The right hand is used to eat and drink. The fualah meal is a ritual meal in which neighbors offer each other food, coffee, perfume, and incense. The main meal of the day is lunch and usually consists of rice and fish salvanah (tomato paste).

**Agriculture**

Agriculture and livestock make up only 2 percent of the GDP. The country has achieved a significant level of self-sufficiency in food categories such as vegetables, eggs, and dairy products. The main livestock consist of goats, sheep, and camels. The country is also a major date producer for both domestic consumption and exportation. Many of the farms are small and agriculture is supported by government assistance. Dairy farming is being developed with the help of Japan, France, and Denmark.
Land Marks

There are many places to visit in the UAE. In Abu Dhabi, the Al-Husn Palace, known as the Old Fort, is over 300 years old. It was built by the first ruler of the Al-Nahyann dynasty. The Al-Fahaidi Fort, built in the early 19th century, is the oldest building in Dubai. It served as the residence of Dubai’s rulers and the government seat. The Al Ain museum contains exhibits on weaponry and musical instruments. The country also has golf courses and camel-racing.

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