

ABU DHABI

YOUR
EXTRAORDINARY
STORY



TRAVEL WEEKLY ASIA 

Abu Dhabi 

INTRODUCTION

The capital city and the largest of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Abu Dhabi is a magical place. It blends a storied history with a bold and innovative present, backed by an incredibly diverse natural environment, from its glittering blue waters, pristine beaches and lush mangroves, to the spectacular dunes of the Empty Quarter – the largest body of sand in the world.

The city itself lies on one of the emirate's 200 islands, barely 250 metres from the mainland and the wider Abu Dhabi region, a sparsely populated expanse of desert with a 700-kilometre-long coastline skirting the warm waters of the Arabian Gulf. The elegant corniche, with its tree-lined beach on one side and sleek skyscrapers on the other, provides a dramatic introduction to Abu Dhabi, beckoning visitors to explore further and learn more about this alluring destination.

While modern Abu Dhabi and the prosperity it enjoys today stem from the discovery of oil in the late 1950s, evidence of human activity in the region dates back thousands of years. In fact, Al Ain, an oasis town close to the border with Oman in the east, recently became the first UNESCO World Heritage Site in the UAE, with many archaeological discoveries dating back to the Bronze Age.

Culturally, Abu Dhabi is inextricably linked with its ethnic Bedouin population. Traditionally nomadic and tight-knit communities, Bedouin tribes – or “people of the desert” – were responsible for much of the trade in the early days of the UAE. Indeed, many of their customs and traditions remain alive today, from camel breeding and herding, to falconry. This rich heritage can be incorporated into any event held in the emirate, creating experiences that will not be soon forgotten.

MAP OF ABU DHABI

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WHY ABU DHABI

With a modern, cosmopolitan capital, protected heritage sites and a stunning desert-meets-the-sea landscape, Abu Dhabi has plenty to offer visitors looking for a unique holiday experience.

Culture

As the capital of the UAE and the largest of the emirates, there's a greater variety of authentic Emirati experiences – from the markets and souks of Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, to Qasr Al Muwaiji, the birthplace of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the UAE president. This contrasts nicely with some of the more contemporary cultural attractions Abu Dhabi has to offer, such as the Saadiyat Cultural District, which is home to Louvre Abu Dhabi.

Luxury

Abu Dhabi is well known for its selection of sophisticated, high-end hotels and resorts. The iconic Emirates Palace, for example, features a design that takes its cues from traditional Islamic architecture and sits majestically in its own fabulous grounds at one end of the Corniche.

Family

Abu Dhabi is incredibly family-friendly. The beach along the Corniche -- awarded the coveted blue flag status -- features an abundance of food options for kids, as well as go-karts and bikes for hire. Yas Island, a 20-minute drive from downtown, features a huge water park and the fastest rollercoaster in the world.

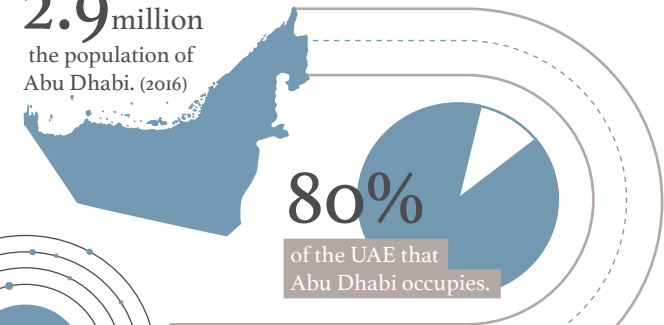
Adventure

Abu Dhabi is the perfect destination for the sporty and adventurous. The Eastern Mangrove National Park is a great place to kayak through forests of mangrove trees teeming with wildlife, while the warm gulf breezes and sweeping bays make it a paradise for kite-surfing and wind-surfing.



ABU DHABI IN NUMBERS

2.9 million
the population of
Abu Dhabi. (2016)



1

Yas Links
the first true Links
coastal golf course
in the Middle
East, boasts a
magnificent
18-hole
course.

200

the number of islands dotted
along Abu Dhabi's coast

700 km
the length of Abu Dhabi's
coastline in kilometers

It was ranked

#2

in the Middle East and

#44

in the world by Golf
Digest in 2018

76,000

the quantity, in
tonnes, of dates
produced in Abu
Dhabi each year



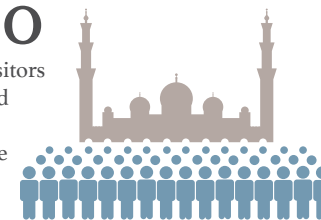
378,000

the estimated number of camels in
the UAE, according to a 2008 study by
Khartoum-based Arab Organization
for Agricultural Development (AOAD).



41,000

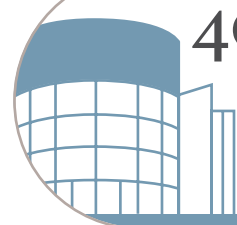
the number of visitors
that Sheikh Zayed
Grand Mosque
can accommodate
during Eid and
Ramadan



400

the number of
stores at Yas Mall

This 250,000sqm
retail, dining, and
entertainment
destination is Abu
Dhabi's largest
shopping destination.



33,042

total number of hotels
rooms in Abu Dhabi, Al
Ain and AlDafrah region

ranging from affordable three-
star comfort to sophisticated
five-star luxury with a variety of
services at different price-points.

1 Abu Dhabi ranked as the first safest city in the world with
lowest crime index and overall safety based on Numbeo's scale



CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Connect with Abu Dhabi's past and present



PAST



Qasr Al Hosn

The oldest and most significant building in Abu Dhabi, this is the ancestral home of the ruling Al Nahyan family. Initially constructed as a watchtower and fort in the 1760s, Sheikh Dhiyab Bin Isa of the powerful Bani Yas tribe wanted to control access to the island on which the capital now sits. It would eventually be expanded to become the seat of government.

It now comprises two main buildings: the fort and the palace – the latter was built between 1939 and 1945. Last year, following more than a decade of restoration work, it was unveiled as a museum that chronicles Abu Dhabi's development from small fishing settlement to major global city.

Al Ain

Once a vital green oasis on the caravan route from the UAE to Oman, Al Ain – which translates as “The Spring” – is Abu Dhabi's heritage heartland and one of the world's oldest continually inhabited settlements, as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

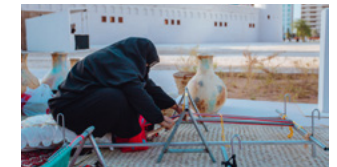
An hour and half's drive east from Abu Dhabi city, Al Ain is a fascinating counterpoint to the sleek modernity of the capital. The oasis is home to vast gardens of date palms maintained by an ancient irrigation system that uses gravity to distribute water from underground wells and wadis.

Its many sites of cultural interest include Al Jahili Fort, built in the 1890s as the summer residence of Sheikh Zayed I; Qasr Al Muwajji, another restored fort and birthplace of UAE founder Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan; and the city's dusty but lively camel market, which is one of the most authentic experiences a visitor can have. Here traders spend the morning haggling over the attributes of particular camels they are considering buying, from calves to thoroughbreds.



Falconry

For more than 4,000 years, the Bedouin have practised falconry for hunting prey across barren desert. The sport has become inextricably linked with Arab values and enjoys the patronage of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the current president of the UAE. In December, Al Ain will host the 2nd International Festival Of Falconry, with experts and enthusiasts expected to visit from more than 75 countries. Some falcons are valued at up to USD20,000.



Al Sadu

Al Sadu is a traditional form of embroidery practised by Bedouin women in rural areas to produce soft furnishings and other decorative goods. Often a social occasion as much as a craft, women traditionally sat in a circle trading gossip as they worked on the hair taken from sheep, goats, and camels. This raw wool is spun, dyed, and then woven into beautiful patterns on a loom.

In 2011, it was included on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.



PRESENT

◀ Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Opened in 2007 and commissioned by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan – who is buried on the grounds – to unite the cultural diversity of the Islamic world with the historical and modern values of architecture and art, this is one of the largest mosques in the world, able to accommodate 41,000 worshippers at one time. The stunning structure is covered by the largest dome of its kind – one of 82 white domes across the whole building – and features the world’s largest hand-woven carpet.

While a visit by day is an unforgettable experience, the mosque is visually stunning at night when it is beautifully lit. Its majesty and scale can be seen across the city, particularly during the drive in to the city from the airport. This must-see venue is free to visit daily, except Friday mornings, although modest dress is essential.

▲ Louvre Abu Dhabi

Opened in 2017 as part of an agreement between the Abu Dhabi and French governments, the spectacular Jean Nouvel-designed gallery and museum in the Saadiyat Island Cultural District is the largest on the Arabian peninsula. It features art from the east and west, some on loan from France as part of the agreement.

A diverse programme of events and exhibitions in the coming year includes Cinem’Art, a five-week season of international film screenings curated by Emirati artist Hind Mezaina aimed at “creating a dialogue between cinema and specific artworks from Louvre Abu Dhabi’s permanent exhibitions”. It’s also a fantastic destination for families, with the newly renovated Children’s Museum offering kid-friendly exhibitions and interactive workshops in both Arabic and English.

▶ Manarat Al Saadiyat

Housed in another architecturally distinct building in Saadiyat island cultural district, this multipurpose art and culture hub offers hosts everything from contemporary art exhibitions and film screenings, to music and stand-up comedy nights.

It also features a permanent display that tells the story of Saadiyat Island and its incredible transformation in recent years.



A LIFE WELL LIVED

Abu Dhabi's luxury escapes

RESORTS

St Regis Saadiyat

Located on Saadiyat Island some 10 minutes from downtown Abu Dhabi, this luxurious Mediterranean-style property offers everything you'd expect from a five-star resort. It has its own private beach, five swimming pools, tennis courts and a spa with a dozen treatment rooms.

It is also a popular choice for dining, with six restaurants and bars across the property offering an array of cuisine from Southeast Asian to Mediterranean. This is an equally good choice for a couples' getaway or a family break.

Zaya Nurai Island

A breathtaking location, this private island resort offers villas with stunning views and design intended to blend in with the pristine landscape. The 12-minute boat ride from Saadiyat Island brings visitors to paradise, with the lush vegetation of the island ringed by the powder-white sand of its beaches.

Health-conscious guests can enjoy the resort's spa or personalised fitness and yoga sessions, before eating fresh, locally sourced produce at Frangipani or the catch of the day at Hooked.

While the romance of the island is palpable, families aren't forgotten either. The resort has a kid's club as well as a babysitting service for parents looking to catch the sunset over a romantic dinner.

Park Hyatt Hotel & Villas

This stunning beachfront property offers everything you'd expect from such a high-end brand, from sleek rooms with enormous bathrooms, to high-quality dining experiences catering to Asian and European tastes.

Also based at Saadiyat along a nine-kilometre stretch of beach, there's no shortage of things to do for every traveller, from a health club with a 25-metre lap pool, to the Atarmia Spa, which offers massages and various beauty treatments.

Shangri-La, Qaryat al Beri

a sophisticated waterfront hotel with private beach, spa and traditional market, or souk, it also has one of the best views in Abu Dhabi of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.

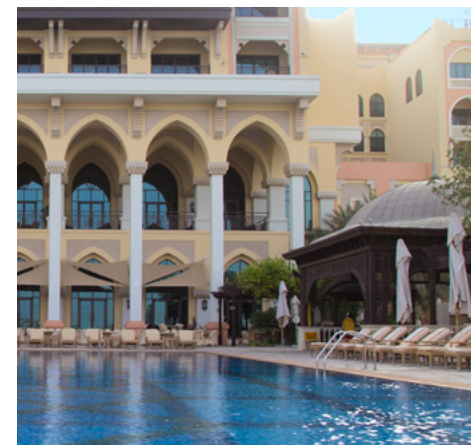
The stunning lobby with its imposing staircases on either side makes for quite a first impression. And it doesn't disappoint thereafter. The décor is distinctly middle eastern and each of the 210 or so rooms and suites are fitted to the same high standard, from private terraces to the large bathrooms with their gorgeous mosaic tiles.

Jumeirah At Saadiyat

the minimalist design and strong eco-credentials – it has banned single-use plastics and guests are given refillable water bottles – of this 300-room resort will appeal to yet another tourism segment in Abu Dhabi.

This new property is also more private, located away from many of Saadiyat's other resorts. Rooms are spacious and continue with the minimalist theme, with options for guests with different requirements, from ocean-front rooms for couples, to family suites.

Food options include Arabic, Levantine and Italian, while the hotel also boasts a pool bar, rooftop bar and cigar lounge. For parents, there's a kid's club and babysitting service to provide a little respite.



IN THE CITY



Emirates Palace

Situated at one end of the elegant Corniche, this is arguably Abu Dhabi's most iconic luxury hotel. Built in the style of a majestic palace with a nod to local traditions, this Kempinski-operated property is a magical sight, set as it is in its own lush gardens overlooking the waters of the Arabian Gulf.

The interior is unsurprisingly dominated by gold and crystal – it has more than a thousand chandeliers – and features almost 500 rooms and suits, the most expensive coming in at a cool USD15,000 per night.



Four Seasons

Located on Al Maryah Island at the opposite end of the Corniche from the Emirates Palace hotel, this fairly new property offers expansive views of Abu Dhabi's modern skyline and the Arabian gulf beyond.

The area has become a destination for high-end business travelers and people shopping for luxury goods at the uber-stylish Galleria mall, making the Four Seasons an attractive option.



Abu Dhabi EDITION

Situated at the Al Bateen Marina downtown, this brand-new 198-room hotel has multiple pools, restaurants and a three-floor entertainment space where DJs spin tunes as you sip cocktails.

Its edgy design and boutique feel is different from the other luxury properties Abu Dhabi is known for. The structure itself is divided into two futuristic wings – hotel and residences -- joined by a bridge. The designers continue to push the envelope with the interior – the centrepiece of a slick, stylish lobby is an impressive moving art installation by world-renowned art collective, Studio Drift.

Crowne Plaza Abu Dhabi

Situated in the heart of Abu Dhabi's central business district, guests can enjoy spacious rooms with spectacular views out across the Arabian Gulf. However, the real selling point of this property is the number of dining options, from Cho Gao, which specializes in Asian food, to Spaccanapoli, which serves Italian cuisine. The hotel also features The Level Lounge, a stunning rooftop bar and pool.

Marriott Hotel Al Forsan, Abu Dhabi

Located within Abu Dhabi's Al Forsan International Sports Resort, this immaculate property is just a short drive from Abu Dhabi International Airport. The rooms are elegantly minimalist, using simple colors – very much in keeping with the tastes of higher-end business travellers. The facilities are second-to-none, with two outdoor swimming pools and a spa.



SHOPPING

From traditional marketplaces to chic malls, Abu Dhabi has some fantastic retail options.

Yas Mall

Situated some 20 minutes from the city on Yas Island, which is home to Abu Dhabi's Formula 1 racetrack, this enormous mall has more than 400 international stores, as well as a whole world of family-friendly entertainment, from the adjoining Ferrari World theme park, to a multiplex cinema and bowling alley.

Mina Market

This famed fish marketplace is a must-see for visitors to Abu Dhabi. The smell of the produce combined with the clamour of vendors and buyers is a far cry from the pristine malls across the city. The experience is authentic and the bargaining across the stalls almost poetic. But get up early to experience the bustle at its best. The bonus is the small canteens nearby whose proprietors will happily cook your sea bounty.

Avenue at Etihad

A must for shoppers seeking a quality boutique-store experience, with A to Z of the world's most exclusive luxury brands, from fashion to jewelry, located here. Many of the stores cater to VIPs, offering personalised shopping experiences. It's located at the Etihad Towers, five imposing skyscrapers that sit opposite the Emirates Palace hotel and house offices, restaurants, apartments and shops.

Abu Dhabi Mall

Opened in 2001, this retail mall boasts some 200 shops, as well as numerous restaurants and a cinema. It also has outlets that deal in regional specialties, from perfumes to Arabian sweets.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Make every day unforgettable

BEST BEACHES



Abu Dhabi Corniche

A sweeping 8-kilometre long stretch of gardens, paths, cycle lanes and pristine sands along the western edge of Abu Dhabi's island. The crystal-clear waters that lead from the long beach explain why it has coveted blue-flag status. The beach also features numerous food and beverage options for the whole family.



Saadiyat Public Beach

A gorgeous stretch of beach on Saadiyat Island within touching distance of downtown Abu Dhabi. It's well serviced, with a café, parking, male and female showers and changing rooms, life guards and a range of water sports available.



Yas Beach

Extremely popular with couples as well as families, with Yas beach club offering a range of water sports by day and an awesome spot to have drinks at sunset. While there's a charge for access to the beach, kids under 8 go free. Guests at any of the nearby hotels and apartments also enjoy complimentary access.



Ferrari World Abu Dhabi

Featuring the world's fastest roller coaster. But it's so much more. Set mostly indoors, this is the first Ferrari-themed park in the world and is an unadulterated celebration of the iconic Italian carmaker. While the Formula Rossa roller coaster is all about speed, another ride, the Flying Aces, boasts the world's highest roller coaster loop! Other attractions include the Tyre Change Challenge, a race against the clock to show you have what it takes to join the Ferrari pit crew, and the Scuderia Challenge, a simulator to test your mettle as an F1 driver.

THEME PARKS

Go no further than Yas Island



Yas Waterworld

A fun-filled park featuring more than 40 rides and slides, including the Middle East's longest suspended roller coaster. Adrenaline junkies can also try riding Bubble's Barrel, with its three-metre-high waves and the world's largest surf sheet wave for flow boards and body boards.



Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi

An indoor wonderland divided into six fictional worlds inhabited by classic characters such as Batman and Superman, and offering some unique experiences, such as the Riddler Revolution, which will leave you feeling like you've been in a tumble-dryer for a couple of minutes. There's also plenty of live entertainment and delicious Warner-themed food options, from the old Hollywood charm of Starlight, to Gotham City's Finest, where you may even bump into Commissioner Gordon.



WILDLIFE

Arabian Wildlife Park

Located more than 100 miles southwest of Abu Dhabi city, this park is based on Sir Bani Yas Island, the largest natural island in the UAE. In the 1970s, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan established a nature reserve on the island to protect this stunning habitat. And after decades of conservation work, it is now home to more than 10,000 free-roaming animals – including the endangered Arabian Oryx, magnificent giraffes and Sudanese cheetahs.

Emirates Park Zoo

With hundreds of animals, including rare white tigers and lions, this impressive zoo started life as a private endeavor before opening up as an “edutainment” destination, with plenty of interactive options to keep the kids happy, such as elephant and giraffe-feeding sessions with their keepers.

Eastern Mangrove Lagoon National Park

A mangrove forest located along the coast, minutes from downtown Abu Dhabi, this watery sanctuary is home to numerous species of birds. Visitors to the park can kayak, paddleboard and boat through the maze of tree-lined channels that criss-cross this fascinating natural world.

Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital

Considered the world’s leading falcon welfare institution, the hospital deals with around 6,000 birds per year, with many used for sports falconry brought in for check-ups and treatment. The guided tour offers a truly unique experience.



Qasr Al Sarab

For the more adventurous family, this hotel is located in the “Empty Quarter,” a vast expanse of desert that covers most of Abu Dhabi. It offers authentic Bedouin experiences such as camel-trekking and falconry. The rooms are styled like an Arabian palace.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACCOMMODATION



Jumeirah at Etihad Towers

Located at the western end of Abu Dhabi’s Corniche near to the Emirates Palace hotel, this property offers massive rooms and family suites, a fantastic kid-friendly pool and a decent number of dining options. They also offer family services such as babysitting.



Yas Hotel

At the epicentre of Abu Dhabi’s entertainment hub on Yas Island, the hotel, with its amazing futuristic design, overlooks the Formula One race track. It’s very well set up for families with educational and fun activities such as wall climbing and the Generation V kid zone for 4-12-year-olds.



ALL ABOUT ADVENTURE

High-octane Abu Dhabi

ON WATER

▲ Kiteboarding

Along the coast, you can often see clusters of colourful kites in the skies offshore, with boarders jumping the waves below as they're pulled along. This is kite-boarding and there's a growing community of enthusiasts in Abu Dhabi. While not for the faint-hearted, there are a few kiteboarding schools along the coast offering lessons and equipment hire.

Sailing

We're not talking about lounging on a super yacht with a cool drink in hand – though that's also possible – but real sailing on sail boats, with schools such as the Abu Dhabi Sailing Academy offering courses in seafaring, setting up and handling boats and navigation skills for all levels.

Snorkelling

With pristine blue waters, this is a perfect place to explore with fins, mask and a snorkel, especially if you go out on a boat and explore Abu Dhabi's mangroves or the waters around many of the small islands offshore.

Kayaking

Another popular activity, especially in the Eastern Mangroves Lagoon, which offers an amazing network of channels to explore in warm, gentle waters.

Stand-up paddle-boarding

The most laid-back of board sports, stand-up paddling is one of the fastest growing sports in the region. You can race, take guided tours and even practice on yoga on a board! Many of the beaches offer boards for rental, with hourly and daily rates available.

Pearl-diving

One the most lucrative profession in the UAE, diving for pearls dates back centuries and ingrained in the region's culture. The warm, shallow waters of the Arabian Gulf provided an ideal environment for "pearling," because oyster beds were accessible to divers without the modern scuba equipment of today. Today, there are operators offering an authentic pearl-diving experience. For example, the Serdal Pearl Diving Expedition takes divers from Yas Marina, via a traditional dhow, to a dive site three times a week. From there, guides will offer unique insights into traditional pearling techniques, from swimming for the oysters to actually opening them to reveal the hidden treasure inside.

◀ Speedboats, jet skis and flyboards

For those who favour a more high-octane approach to their water sports, there are Yellow Boats – fast motorised speed boats that give a thrilling 30-minute tour of Abu Dhabi. If you want to take control yourself and race around the city's gentle waters, there's also the option of renting a jet ski. For the really adventurous, there's flyboarding – something that will really grab the attention of everyone on the beach. The rider stands on a board, not dissimilar to a snowboard, attached to a pair of boots. Underneath the boots are jet nozzles connected by a hose to a jet ski. The pressure of the water from the jet nozzles, as the jet ski is revved up, thrusts the rider up in the air as high as 15 metres. As the rider hovers in the air, the jet ski follows his trail so that it can keep on pumping water into the hose attached to the device.

▼ Whitewater rafting

Abu Dhabi doesn't have many rivers, does it? No, but Wadi Adventure has created a man-made whitewater course around three quarters of a mile long, complete with three rapids of increasing intensity. Located in Al Ain, it also offers activities such as kayaking, surfing and wake-boarding, as well as a family-friendly pool and kids' splash area. Such is the quality of the whitewater course, Olympic kayakers are known to train here.





ON LAND

Desert Safari

No trip to Abu Dhabi would be complete without hurtling across the sand dunes in a powerful 4x4 or on a quad bike. And with some of the dunes as high as 300 metres across the Empty Quarter, you can even stop and indulge in a little sand boarding, which, as the name suggests, involves surfing down the face of a dune on a board. Less extreme, but no less fun, is the opportunity to go camel-trekking through the desert, before returning to camp and enjoying a meal and refreshments under the clear night sky. There is an abundance of different packages offering various activities, depending on the season.



Cycling

Jebel Hafeet, which lies inside Al Ain, is a mountainous region with dramatic winding roads. If you're a serious road biker, it's a fantastic experience. The 90-minute drive from Abu Dhabi city will be worth it for those advanced – or fearless – cyclists. Park your car in the Green Mubazarah and ascend the 1,200-metre Jebel Hafeet road. The incline is as steep as 30 percent in parts and even by Tour de France standards, it's as gruelling as it is spectacular. Back in Abu Dhabi, the 8-kilometre long Corniche provides a fantastic cycle route for the whole family.

Abu Dhabi F1 Grand Prix

If you prefer watching your favourite adrenaline sport, then there's no better place than Yas Marina, home to the F1 Etihad Airways Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Each November – for four days through practice, qualifying and then race day – you can watch the likes of Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel battle for supremacy on the track. However, you can also take to the track yourself at other times of the year in a sports car with Yas Driving Experience. Instructors will show you how to drive like a pro in an Aston Martin GT4 or a Mercedes-AMG GTS.



Action & Adventure

First Day

9:30 am - 10:00 am
Arriving in Abu Dhabi, check in the hotel and rest time to relax and to have a bite.
10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Eastern Mangroves for kayaking including Lunch
2:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Head to Safari for desert adventure pick up point 2:00pm - activities including Dune bashing for 45 min at 3 Pm and Enjoy activities e.g. camel riding and arabic and Sandboarding and Hand Henna art. After enjoying these activities, there will be Entertainment programme such mixture of Arabic dances and dinner.
9:30 pm
Drive back to the hotel

Second Day

11:00 am - 1:00 pm
Head to Ferrari World Abu Dhabi to enjoy unique ferrari rides e.g. exclusive packages.
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm
Lunch time at Yas mall with a variety of food options to let tourist explore more many cuisines.
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Karting at Yas Marina Circuit
5:00 pm - 7:00 pm
Serdal Pearl Diving Expedition in Yas Marina
7:30 pm - 8:00 pm
Dinner at Yas Marina and enjoy the view of YAS hotel building lights at night.
8:30 pm
Heading back to Abu Dhabi & to airport



Family

First Day

9:30 am - 10:00am
Arriving in Abu Dhabi, check in the hotel and rest time to relax and to have a bite.
10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Enjoy Corniche area and activities such as restaurant, bikes for families and access to the beach.
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Emirates Palace visit
3:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Visit Marina Mall to check out BOUNCE Abu Dhabi Trampoline Park
5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Al Forsan visit to enjoy activities such as Water sport, horse riding and paintball.

Second Day

10:00 am - 12:00 pm
WB world Abu Dhabi Visit
12:15 pm - 3:00 pm
Ferrari including lunch in Yas Mall
3:15 pm - 6:30 pm
Yas Waterworld
7:00 pm
Heading to airport

48 HOURS IN ABU DHABI



Culture & Heritage

First Day

9:30 am - 10:00 am
Arriving in Abu Dhabi, check in the hotel and rest time to relax and to have a bite.
10:30 am - 12:00 pm
First stop will be Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque
3:10 pm - 5:00 pm
Louvre Abu Dhabi, enjoy unique coffee experience under the dome of LAD.
5:15 pm - 6:00 pm
Manart Saadiyat - Enjoy artwork and exhibition depend on the season (AD Events Calendar)
6:40 pm - 8:15 pm
Qasr Al Watan visit to enjoy Light show at 8

Second Day

10:00 am
Head off to Al Ain city
11:45 pm - 12:45 pm
Visit Oasis City in Al Ain (Considered as one of the world oldest UNESCO heritage site) - two hours' drive from drive through desert, complete with Camels, is a perfect day trip. Al Ain oasis is fascinating of the world's oldest permanently inherited settlements, the oasis is a fascinating proposition of verdant palm groves and traditional architecture. Taste fresh dates and enjoy fresh arabic hospitality.
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
Lunch at Al fanar restaurant to taste authentic Emirati cuisine
2:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Al Ain Archeological site such as Hili (Considered as one of the world oldest UNESCO heritage site) where all testimonies of sedentary human occupation of a desert region since the Neolithic period.
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Enjoy the sunset in Jebel Hafeet, which is the emirate's highest peak and UAE's second.
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Heading back to Abu Dhabi & to airport

BE A YAS EXPERIENCE PARTNER

Through its network of regional and international offices, Experience Hub works with travel industry partners to design vacation packages that provide the best entertainment value for travellers to the UAE. Travel Weekly Asia spoke to Marina Cipriano, General Manager, Experience Hub.



What is Experience Hub?

Experience Hub is the official trade and promotion arm of Yas Island Abu Dhabi. Our group was formed last year and we've been super active since in promoting Yas Island and in building and expanding our trade network in key markets. Today and in addition to our headquarters in Abu Dhabi, we are present with offices and teams in 10 cities across our priority markets in Asia and Europe.

Most people in Asia, whether consumers or tour operators, would think of the F1 race or Ferrari World when considering Yas, but there's much more here. How would you sell Yas to this audience?

Yas Island has indeed long been a destination for enthusiasts that appreciate Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's rollercoasters or the Formula 1 Races. Those attractions, which were the first to open on the Island, contributed to placing our destination on the global map. Now, a decade on, Yas Island has grown into a thriving leisure and entertainment hub with numerous indoor and outdoor attractions for holidaymakers to enjoy all year round. From the World's Leading Waterpark (World Travel Awards 2018), Yas Waterworld, and the world's largest WB-branded indoor theme park, Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi, to the beach, marina, golf links course, more than 160 restaurants and Abu Dhabi's largest mall, we have a portfolio of unrivalled attractions to provide an unparalleled holiday experience in the UAE capital.

With so much choice and competition across all tourism groups (families, luxury etc.), what steps are you taking to keep Yas Island - and by extension Abu Dhabi - top of mind for tour operators?

We have a unique leisure and entertainment proposition here on Yas Island Abu Dhabi, and we focus on educating and collaborating as core parts of our approach to keeping our destination top of mind for tour operators. Our team works to continuously cultivate opportunities with the travel trade from around the globe and by nurturing these relationships with lucrative commercial schemes, we are able to make sure that tour operators truly understand what makes us a destination like nowhere else so that they can in turn advocate for us in their respective markets.

It's important to mention here that we also work with stakeholders all around the UAE and our product portfolio reflects such collaborations. For example, the holiday packages available on our booking portals today offer a selection of hotels not only on Yas Island, but also on Saadiyat Island and in Abu Dhabi city, packaged with our signature Yas experiences. Tour operators booking through our portals also have the option of adding experiences within Abu Dhabi, such as Louvre Abu Dhabi and Qasr Al Watan, to include a bit of cultural flavour in the itineraries that they provide to their groups.

Other than competition, what challenges are you facing and how are you addressing them?

I believe one of the biggest challenges is keeping up in a fast-paced industry when our own destination is evolving just as quickly. Yas is one of the world's fastest growing destinations, and we place a lot of effort to ensure that our partners are up to date on our offerings and initiatives. We carry out regular roadshows and our overseas offices help keep us consistently in touch with tour operators in each of our markets. Our trade portal is also a great platform for us to stay connected with them.

What are you most proud of at Yas?

I am most proud of how far we've come as a destination. Yas Marina Circuit turned ten at the end of last year, and it's incredible to think of all the attractions that have followed since, leading up to the opening of Warner Bros. World™ Abu Dhabi just last year, and the upcoming CLYMB opening early next year, which will feature the world's tallest indoor climbing wall and widest indoor flying chamber... and many more to come. These offerings, coupled with our extensive events calendar have contributed to Yas Island's growth and positioning as a top global destination in a relatively short period of time. It's definitely an exciting time to be part of the Yas Island Abu Dhabi team!

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