

Sharjah

Photo: zohaib anjum/Shutterstock.com



Laborant/Shutterstock.com

Sharjah, the not-so-obvious UAE destination for many, unjustly remains in the shadows of its glistening immediate neighbor of Dubai. In the meantime, few are aware Sharjah was named Capital of Islamic Culture (2014) and Cultural Capital of the Arab World by UNESCO sixteen years prior - and for good reason. Sharjah's Heritage Area is home to multiple historic sites and museums, and the Emirate itself boasts recent, modern additions to its art and entertainment scenes enough to compensate for the strict "no-alcohol" regulations.

NOTE: This Guide has been limited to 20 points of interest per section. For the full guide, please visit ArrivalGuides.com



Philip Lange/Shutterstock.com



yykkaa/Shutterstock.com

Go where no one has
VENTURED BEFORE!

5 Off the Beaten Track
Destinations in Asia

ArrivalGuides

Foto: WhitefoxChen / Shutterstock

Top 5



Al Majaz Waterfront

Best explored after sundown, the Al Majaz waterfront area draws visitors to ...



Sharjah Museum of Islamic ...

With over five thousand exhibits, the Museum of Islamic Civilization offers ...



Sharjah Aquarium

An amazing experience for the whole family, the Sharjah Aquarium ranks among...



Sharjah Heritage Area

The historic neighborhoods of Al Sheyukh and Al Maraja constitute Sharjah'...



Al Hisn Fort Museum

Formerly the residence of Al Qawasim ruling family and the seat of Sharjah's...



THE EMIRATE



Laborant/Shutterstock.com

The Emirate of Sharjah has received worldwide acclaim as the one that best preserves Emirati culture and traditions, which rings out loudly through the city's Heritage Area packed with sights and museums. The possible downside to such deep-rooted connection to the past might be the ban on alcohol sale and consumption (allowed for "alcohol license" holders only, which have to be non-Muslim, locally employed and relatively well-paid). Unlike in other Emirates, drinks cannot be served even at some of the most upscale hotel bars, and modest clothing is required for both men and women.

However, Sharjah has managed to embrace modernity while still firmly holding on to its heritage, which makes up for some of its shortcomings on the nightlife front. Unique new cultural centers, such as the Al Noor Island project, are turning Sharjah into an entertainment hub in its own right. The Corniche and waterfront areas come alive after sundown, and the multiple modern shopping centers and traditional souqs offer unlimited shopping opportunities.

The Sharjah Emirate is not geographically restricted to the North of Dubai - it reaches to the Gulf of Oman on the eastern coast of the UAE via its seaside territories of Dibba Al Hisn, Khor Fakkan and Kalba.

DO & SEE



Philip Lange/Shutterstock.com

Tradition meets modernity in Sharjah, where museums and architectural monuments compete for visitors' attention with modern high-tech venues such as the recently inaugurated Al Noor Island. The Sharjah Heritage Area is where most museums and historic sights are concentrated. Sharjah also boasts a few places where one can get close to nature - marine life is best observed at the local Aquarium, and the Arabian Wildlife Center allows for close contact with and observation of animals native to the area.

Al Majaz Waterfront



Best explored after sundown, the Al Majaz waterfront area draws visitors to its multiple restaurants and cafés which offer front-row

seats to the colorful fountain shows that happen several times a night. During the daylight hours, visitors are free to enjoy the public park, recreation areas, mini-golf course and well-equipped children's playgrounds.

Photo: Basil D Soufi (image cropped)

Address: Al Majaz, Sharjah

Internet: www.almajaz.ae

Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization



With over five thousand exhibits, the Museum of Islamic Civilization offers visitors an extensive overview of Islamic historical and cultural

artifacts, while also providing educating insights into the scientific discoveries and achievements of Arabic scholars over the ages.

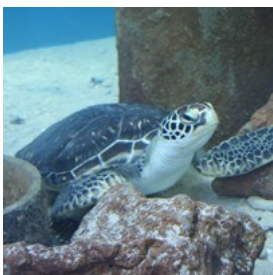
Photo: Shahid Ahmed Siddiqi (image cropped)

Address: Corniche Street, Sharjah

Phone: + 971 6 565 5455

Internet: www.islamicmuseum.ae

Sharjah Aquarium



An amazing experience for the whole family, the Sharjah Aquarium ranks among the finest in the UAE, arguably outshining its Dubai competitors.

The aquarium contains a variety of marine animals and creatures (including giant stingrays and sharks dashing through the water close enough to touch) separated from viewers by transparent walls only.

Photo: Sakena (image cropped)

Address: Al Meena Street, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 528 5288

Tickets: Tickets include entry to the nearby Maritime Museum

Internet: www.sharjahaquarium.ae

Sharjah Heritage Area



The historic neighborhoods of Al Sheyoukh and Al Maraija constitute Sharjah's main Heritage Area. The neighborhoods are

compact in size, very walkable and contain a number of small museums that make for short educational and entertaining pit stops along the way.

Photo: yeowatzup (image cropped)

Address: Al Maraija, Sharjah

Al Hisn Fort Museum



Formerly the residence of Al Qawasim ruling family and the seat of Sharjah's local government, the Sharjah Fort today functions as a museum,

and houses a vast array of exhibits, as well as the old Al Muhalwasa jail, war cannons and defense watchtowers.

Photo: Philip Lange/Shutterstock.com

Address: Al Hisn Ave, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 568 5500

Al Noor Mosque



The elegant white-stone Al Noor Mosque defines the Corniche, and is, perhaps, Sharjah's most famous (of Sharjah's more than 600). It is a

place of religious worship and a sight not to miss both inside and out - the mosque is currently the only one open to tourists, offering guided tours to the general public every Monday.

Photo: alex7370/Shutterstock.com

Address: Al Buhairah Corniche, Sharjah

Phone: +971 65680055

More Info: Guided tours Mondays at 10am

Al-Qasba & Eye of the Emirates Wheel



The Al-Qasba neighborhood packs a punch with its many inviting restaurants and cafés, along with a few entertainment venues

(such as the Maraya Art Centre - a gallery containing modern art). Water taxis offer trips around the lagoon, and the legendary Eye of the Emirates wheel ride makes for a fascinating journey into the skies above Sharjah.

Photo: Zhukov Oleg/Shutterstock.com

Address: Al-Qasba, Sharjah

Classic Car Museum



The Sharjah Classic Car Museum is a must-see for old-timer car lovers. With its impressive collection of over 100 cars manufactured in the early

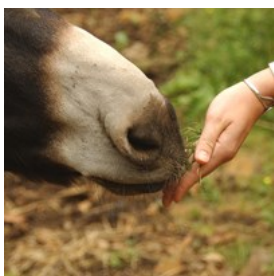
years of the 20th century, the museum attracts enthusiasts from all over the globe, and is of interest to visitors of all ages.

Photo: Mateusz Gzik/Shutterstock.com

Address: Al Dhaid Road, Sharjah

Phone: +971 65580222

Arabian Wildlife Center



The Arabian Wildlife Center houses several venues, such as a Children's farm (where little ones can feed and ride horses and donkeys),

a Botanical garden and the Wildlife Center itself. Multiple species of animals are on display, from carnivorous leopards to birds and harmless small rodents.

Photo: janet carr/Shutterstock.com

Address: Al Dhaid Road, Sharjah

Phone: +971 65311999

Al Noor Island

Sharjah's newest attraction, the artificial Noor Island was opened to the public in 2015. It contains a Butterfly House with over 500 butterflies roaming free under the hall's ornate roof, and a Literature Pavillion, with plenty of quiet reading spots. There is a long walkway running through the island that takes visitors through it's key pavilions, scenic areas and multi-media installations.

Address: Al Noor Island, Sharjah

Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9am-11pm, Sat-Sun 9am-12am

More Info: The island is accessible via a bridge from the mainland (next to Al Noor Mosque).

Sharjah Heritage Museum

Despite its compact size, the Sharjah Heritage Museum offers visitors a comprehensive insight into the Emirate's history, culture and traditions - and how those transformed over the past ages. Clothing, musical instruments, coins, pottery and various other artifacts are on display.

Address: Al Marejja, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 569 3999

DINING



Christina J Hauri/Shutterstock.com

Modern Emirati cuisine is quite cosmopolitan, and contains elements of a whole variety of Middle Eastern and Asian culinary traditions. Dishes traditionally include a grain (rice is most common) and some variety of meat (often chicken or lamb, no pork) or seafood (which is abundant). Alcohol is not served anywhere in Sharjah, so meals are normally followed by hot drinks (spiced coffee or tea) or fruit juices.

Gazebo

A top contender for being one of best Indian restaurants in town, Gazebo serves authentic North Indian cuisine. Patrons favor the biryanis, but a large variety of beloved classics is on offer as well (both meat and vegetarian dish options available).

Address: King Faisal Street, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 553 2999

Internet: www.gazebo.ae

More Info: Opposite HSBC Bank

El Manza

El Manza is a Moroccan restaurant located on the Al Majaz Waterfront - one of Sharjah's favorite recreation areas. Apart from the traditional Moroccan-style "couscous" and "tagines", the establishment boasts a few specials, such as the "Tanjia Marrakeshia" - lamb cooked with spices and served in a clay pot.

Address: Khalid Lagoon, Al Majaz Waterfront, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 552 1882

Internet: www.elmanza.ae

Zahr el Laymoun

Zahr el Laymoun, another local favorite on the Al Majaz Waterfront, creates a fusion of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern flavors with a special emphasis on Lebanese food. The menu is extensive, and includes hot (grilled kebbeh, sausages, meats) and cold (salads, hummus, eggplant and more) dishes.

Address: Al Majaz Waterfront, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 552 1144

Internet: www.zahrellymoun.com

Fish Corner Restaurant

The restaurant specializes on seafood, and offer diners the option of taking their very own pick from the display of the day's catch. You are free to select the way your fish is cooked, too. Complementary snacks (such as a plate of olives, for example) are served pre-meal.

Address: Al Khan, Sharjah

Opening hours: Daily 10am-10pm

Phone: +971 50 853 1214

Bangkok Town

Bangkok Town is a Thai restaurant serving many of the old familiar Thai classics (curries and soups) in a large dining room area fit to accommodate big parties and families. The service is above average, and the food quality to price ratio one of the best in the area.

Address: Al Majaz 3, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 556 8282

Internet: www.bangkoktownrestaurant.com

CAFÉS



Vladlena Azima/Shutterstock.com

Due to a sizeable expat presence in Sharjah, Western-style cafés serving foods like burgers, salads and pizza are not uncommon. There are, however, quite a few traditional establishments that function as evening venues for locals, where coffee, teas and juices are served instead of alcoholic drinks, and backgammon is played in the outdoor seating areas.

Shakespeare and Co.

Located on the scenic Al Majaz Waterfront, this Sharjah installment of an Emirates-wide chain is beloved by locals and visitors alike. The food is superb (with seafood being one of the main culinary foci), and can be enjoyed in the outdoor patio with a view.

Address: Corniche Street, Al Majaz waterfront, Sharjah

Opening hours: Daily 7am-1am

Phone: +971 6 574 7574

Internet: www.shakespeare-and-co.com

Al Gahwa al-Shaabiya

Located on the Buheira Corniche, this traditional local café is always busy with customers. Hot drinks, such as mint tea and coffee, are served along with a few traditional snacks and sweets. Seating outdoors is available, and provides a nice view over the water.

Address: Buheirah Corniche, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 572 3788

Al Mukhtar Bakery

Al Mukhtar is a sit-down bakery operating 24 hours a day. It serves a large variety of Arabic sweet and savory goods, such as meat and cheese pies, stuffed pastries, Arabic mini-pizzas and layered dough custard cakes. The place buzzes with locals on weekends.

Address: Al Ithihad Road, Sharjah

More Info: Near Safeer Mall

Café at the Falls

This tropical paradise café is located at the Radisson Blu Resort, and serves quality buffet-style breakfast, lunch and dinner. The place's ambiance is truly unique, with leafy greenery and the sounds of artificial indoor waterfalls accompanying patrons' every meal.

Address: Corniche Street, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 565 7777

More Info: At the Radisson Blu Resort

Ratios Coffee

This hip little coffee shop located on Corniche Street very close to the Heritage Area serves a large variety of drinks, including the now popular matcha lattes and cold brews. Savory foods and desserts are on the menu as well. Both in- and outdoor seating available.

Address: Corniche Street, Sharjah

Opening hours: Daily 8am-10pm

Internet: www.ratios.coffee

BARS & NIGHTLIFE



Zhukov Oleg/Shutterstock.com

One will not find much in the way of bars and clubs in Sharjah, since alcohol sale and consumption is banned in all of the Emirate. Most visitors looking for vibrant nightlife head to neighboring Dubai, where alcohol regulations are much more lax and party venues are aplenty.

Evenings in Sharjah itself are mostly spent at restaurants or outdoor cafés, enjoying a meal accompanied by freshly squeezed juices. One of the most popular after-sundown spots in the city is the Al Majaz Waterfront, where quite a few establishments located right by the water offer unobstructed views of the daily fountain light show in the lagoon.

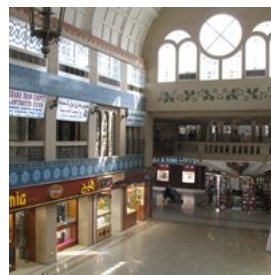
SHOPPING



Fedor Selivanov/Shutterstock.com

The unmissable shopping venue in Sharjah is the covered Central Souq, also called "Blue Souq" for the sky-blue color of its domes. This souq is Sharjah's largest and busiest, and sells a variety of items ranging from local handicrafts and rugs to gold and jewelry. There are, however, quite a few modern malls in and around Sharjah. These sell items at a fixed price, and often house entertainment centers and even amusement parks.

Blue Souq



The Blue Souq (also known as Central Souq or Souq Al Markazi) is Sharjah's biggest and busiest, with a variety of shops and stalls selling all sorts of handicrafts, clothing, carpets, jewelry and souvenirs. For those not shy to haggle, the souq is a great place to go for bargains - original prices may often be brought down significantly with the right level of persistence.

Photo: Denise Chan (image cropped)

Address: King Faisal Road, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 572 3876

Sahara Center



A mall frequented by young and old, Sahara Center entices with its "Adventure land" theme park designed to entertain children while parents enjoy the vast variety of shops and stores. There is a cinema, large supermarket and food court with a solid selection of eateries inside.

Photo: Martin Lewison (image cropped)

Address: Al Nahda Street, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 531 6611

Internet: www.saharacentre.com

Souq Al Arsah



Souq Al Arsah is an atmospheric shopping venue in the heart of Sharjah's main Heritage Area. Items one may expect to find range from traditional handicrafts, jewelry and souvenirs to spices and local treats. Haggling is welcome and oftentimes expected.

Photo: Zhukov Oleg/Shutterstock.com

Address: Heritage Area, Sharjah

Joyalukkas Centre



Joyalukkas Centre is one of the places to shop for gold and jewelry in Sharjah. It is a reputable chain with international presence, which means that prices are fixed (the Gold Souq might be a better choice for haggling opportunities) and the quality of products on sale guaranteed.

Photo: zeljkodan/Shutterstock.com

Address: Rolla, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 563 4441

Internet: www.joyalukkas.com

Mega Mall



The multi-storey, modern Sharjah Mega Mall houses a family-friendly indoor theme park, as well as over 150 stores and boutiques, a supermarket (open 24 hours), cinema, along with multiple restaurants and coffee shops. The mall tends to get busy during peak hours.

Photo: Basil D Soufi (image cropped)

Address: Istiqlal St, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 574 2574

Internet: www.megamall.ae

ACCOMODATION



Serge Bystro (image cropped)

There are plenty of accommodation options in Sharjah, ranging from high-end resorts to more affordable inns and hotels. Competitive pricing often brings visitors to Dubai who do not mind the commute to Sharjah, located only an hour's drive north of Dubai (outside of rush hours).

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



Sergei Afanasev/Shutterstock.com

Sharjah International Airport



Sharjah International Airport is often the point of entry into the UAE for visitors from the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent. The airport

serves other worldwide destinations, but the majority of tourists usually land in the nearby Emirate of Dubai, making their way to Sharjah from there.

The airport is well-connected to both Sharjah itself and Dubai. A shuttle bus that runs every half hour connects the airport to central Sharjah (Rolla). To get to Dubai, travelers can use the public bus number 111, which runs every hour and stops at Al Qusais Bus station, its final destination being Rashidiya Metro Station in Dubai. Taxi services available to both destinations.

Photo: Juan Garces

Address: Al Dhaid Road, Sharjah

Phone: +971 6 558 1111

Internet: www.sharjahairport.ae

Dubai International Airport



Most visitors to Sharjah will probably be entering through the Dubai International Airport if arriving by air. The airport is located in the

neighboring Emirate of Dubai, but getting there from Sharjah is possible with public transport. First, travelers may use the inter-Emirate bus line that departs from Al Jabal bus station (next to the Sharjah Fish market and the Sharjah Fruit and Vegetable market, near the Blue Souq). The bus may leave you at Union Square Bus Station, Deira City Centre or Al Gubaiba. The trip lasts about one hour when traffic is low, but may take up to 3 hours during rush hour, so planning ahead is advised.

Once in Dubai, travelers can choose between bus and metro to get to the airport. Buses 4, 11, 15, 33, 44 go to Terminal 1, while bus line 2 goes to Terminal 2. Buses stop at multiple locations around Dubai. The Dubai Municipality Public buses 401 and 402 also run to the airport. Bus Shuttle buses link the airport to the Ibn Batutta metro station.

Public transportation tickets must be bought in advance prior to boarding.

Taxi services are widely available both at the airport and from the city.

Photo: Juan Garces

Phone: +971 4 224 5555

Internet: www.dubaiairports.ae

Public Transport



Sharjah boasts a relatively new public bus system, with bus lines connecting most of the city's key locations to one another. Bright-orange

buses stop at designated bus stops (wave to the driver to make sure he does make a stop).

Tickets may be bought directly from the driver, but an electronic pre-paid "Sayer Card" is now available to purchase at bus stations around the city.

Consult the website for details on specific routes and timetables.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair
Internet: www.mowasalat.ae

Taxi



Taxis are widely available, and most licensed taxis are now equipped with meters. Sharjah Taxi +971 6 535 6111 Emirates taxi +971

6 539 6666

Union Taxi
+971 6 532 5555

Post Office



There are a few post offices around town. Most are closed on Fridays and public holidays, and may have shorter working hours during Ramadan.

Mail in the UAE is usually not delivered to the physical address but to a P.O. box, which have to be paid rent for (a service not normally available to tourists). Mail can be sent to worldwide destination via Emirates Post (red post boxes).

Sharjah Central Post Office

Photo: Andy Fuchs
Address: Government House Square, Sharjah
Opening hours: Sat-Thurs 7.30am-9pm

Phone: +971 600 599999
More Info: City Centre Mall

Pharmacy



Pharmacies can be found throughout the city, and there is often one in any large shopping mall.

Some locations include:
Alia Pharmacy (open 24

hours)

+971 6 565 0597

Al Arouba St (next to Lulu Centre)

Bin Sina Pharmacy (open 24 hours)

+971 6 556 7662

Buhaira, Al Majaz 3

Photo: Gemma Garner
Address: Al Arouba St, Sharjah
Phone: +971 6 565 0597

Telephone



+971 - UAE country code
6 - Sharjah city code

Photo: Jardson Almeida

Electricity



220-240 Volts, plugs used are European, British and Indian (may vary by establishment).

Photo: Stirling Tschan

Population

1.4 million (2015)

Currency

Dirham (1 UAE Dirham = 0.24 Euro)

Opening hours

Government offices and local businesses open and close early, often 7.30am-2.30pm. Shops are normally open from 9am to 1pm and from 4pm to 9pm, but shopping centers stay open all through the day, and often later into the night, with extended working hours on weekends (Friday and Saturday). Most businesses close for Juma prayers on Friday (11.30am to 1.30pm).

Newspapers

The Gulf Today
The Gulf News
Khaleej Times

Emergency numbers

Fire 997
Police 999
Ambulance 998

Tourist information

Sharjah Commerce & Tourism Development Authority
+971 6 556 6777
info@sharjahtourism.ae

Crescent Tower, 9th Floor
Buhaira Corniche Street
Al Malaz Area
26661
UAE