

# SHARJAH VISITOR'S GUIDE



SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION



# **SHARJAH VISITOR'S GUIDE**

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**SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION  
HAS COMPILED AN INSIDER'S  
GUIDE TO SHARJAH. THIS  
INCLUDES CONTRIBUTIONS  
FROM STAFF, VISITING  
ARTISTS AND CURATORS.  
WE HOPE YOU ENJOY IT.**

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# THE GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF SHARJAH

With coastline on both the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman, Sharjah is the third largest emirate in the United Arab Emirates, with an area of approximately 2,650 km<sup>2</sup>. Important geographic features include the two coastal areas, interior desert and rocky mountains in the eastern part of the emirate. Temperatures in the most pleasant months of the year (November to April) generally range from 16.4°C (61.5°F) at night to 34°C (92.2°F) in the daytime. From May through October, temperatures can vary from 25°C (77°F) at night to 40°C (104°F) or above during the day. The humidity is often very high during the warmer months, and rainfall is a rare occurrence.

Sharjah has a long history as a geographic entity, with archaeological evidence of human civilisation reaching back at least 10,000 years. Excavations in the Mleiha area of Sharjah indicate that humans were already living in the area during the Neolithic Period, the Bronze Age and particularly the Iron Age (1200-400 BCE). Almost 600 years later, the Greek geographer Ptolemy included Sarcoa (Sharjah) on one of his maps, demonstrating international recognition of the Sharjah area. From the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, European powers such as Portugal, Holland and Britain became interested in Sharjah as they vied to control trade routes between the Mediterranean Sea and India. References to Sharjah can be found on a 1666 Dutch map, which accurately indicates the locations of Sharjah towns Calba (Kalba), Gorfocaaan (Khorfakkan) and Dabba (Dibba), and an 1820 British Royal Navy map of the walled city of 'Shargah'. In 1820, a treaty between Britain and local sheikhs gave the British control of Arabian Gulf trade routes. The relationship between the British and the Trucial States, the former name of the United Arab Emirates, continued until 1971, when the country gained its independence. His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi has been the ruler of Sharjah since 1972.

Sharjah's strategic location and rich natural resources have been major factors in the emirate's economic development. Sharjah had the first international airport in the Arabian Gulf, built by the British in 1932, and the first container port, constructed in 1976. In addition to the general trading activities, both fishing and pearling have played an important role in the Sharjah economy, but the pearling industry fell victim to strong competition from Japanese cultured pearls in the 1940s and lost its prominence. The discovery of oil in 1972 and beginning of natural gas drilling in 1990 brought Sharjah new sources of income, allowing the emirate to develop rapidly into the successful cultural and business hub that it is today. However, since Sharjah's oil and gas resources are limited, the economy has been diversified to include manufacturing, health care, environmental protection, tourism, transport and logistics as well. In recent years, the Sharjah government has established two economic free zones and increased investment opportunities in the emirate.

As a result of the important cultural initiatives of His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Mohammed Al Qasimi, member of the Federal Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, Sharjah is recognised internationally as a cultural destination. In 1998, it was named UNESCO Cultural Capital of the Arab World, and in 2014, the ISESCO Islamic Culture Capital. Both of these designations celebrate Sharjah's leading role not only in supporting the arts, but also in furthering knowledge and appreciation of the emirate's history, architecture, traditional culture and Islamic roots.



# SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION AND SAF NEIGHBOURHOOD

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In response to a growing interest in contemporary art, Sharjah Art Foundation (SAF) was created in 2009 as an institution that would ensure the continuity of the Sharjah Biennial, the UAE's longest-running contemporary art event, while also building on that strong foundation to offer a year-round programme of exhibitions and events. These exhibitions and events are now presented in restored and converted traditional buildings across the emirate. The exhibition and event spaces closest to SAF offices are surrounded by a thriving commercial and residential district with links to the early history of Sharjah. SAF calls this area SAF neighbourhood, and it is this heritage area in Al Shuwaiheen and Al Mureijah that is the focus of this section of the **Sharjah Visitor's Guide**.

Pay phone هاتف عمومي



# Al Shuwaiheen Area

**Sharjah Art Foundation buildings**, Arts Square  
Saturday – Thursday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
+971 6 568 5050  
sharjahart.org

## **Sharjah Art Foundation Office**

Converted and restored from three traditional local houses, the Sharjah Art Foundation office building was also the former home of a café and special needs centres.

## **Bait Al Serkal**

A three-storey house built in the nineteenth century, Bait Al Serkal was once the residence of the British Commissioner for the Arabian Gulf and members of the ruling Al Qasimi family. In the early 1960s, the house was transformed into the first hospital in Sharjah, where many prominent residents of the city were born. The house was restored in the early 1990s and is now used for Sharjah Art Foundation exhibitions, the Sharjah Biennial and other public and private events.

## **Collections Building**

The Collections Building used to house the Orientalist painting collection of His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Al Qasimi, part of which has now been moved to the second floor of the Sharjah Art Museum on Arts Square. Currently, the Collections Building is used mostly for SAF workshops and events, but some exhibitions are held there as well.

## **Arts Square**

This exterior area, surrounded by Sharjah Art Foundation buildings and other cultural institutions, is used extensively as an exhibition area, particularly for installations and performance works.

## **Sharjah Art Museum**

Sharjah Art Museum, one of the main landmarks in Arts Square, was inaugurated during Sharjah Biennial 3 in April 1997. Housing both permanent collections and temporary exhibitions, the museum presents works by international and Arab artists who have explored the history and culture of the region. Artists with works in the permanent collection include Abdulqader Al Rais, Louay Kayali, Bashir Sinwar, Faiq Hassan, Mohammed Yusuf and Ismail Fatah Al Turk.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 8:00 pm  
Admission free  
+971 6 568 8222  
sharjahmuseums.ae

## **Bait Al Shamsi**

Located across from the Sharjah Art Museum, Bait Al Shamsi is a historic creekside house built around 1845 and partially restored in 1997. With excellent views of the neighbourhood and the nearby creek, the house has been used for artist studios and residency spaces. As of March 2017, the house is undergoing further restoration.

heartofsharjah.ae

## **Emirates Fine Arts Society**

Established as a non-profit organisation in 1980, the Emirates Fine Arts Society has been instrumental in nurturing Emirati artists, representing artists at local and international art events and providing media support. The Society, which is located next to the Sharjah Art Foundation offices, also promotes art education and art appreciation with a focus on Emirati artists. In addition, the Society organises courses and produces a range of fine arts publications.

Saturday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm, Sunday – Thursday: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm. Closed on Friday  
+971 6 568 4488  
artsuae.ae

### **Sharjah Art Institute**

The Sharjah Art Institute, located between the Collections Building and Bait Al Serkal, offers specialised courses in drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphics and the history of art.

+971 6 568 8800  
heartofsharjah.ae

### **Sharjah Al Hisn Museum**

Located on Bank Street (also called Al Hisn Street) on the dividing line between Al Shuwaiheen and Al Mureijah, the Sharjah Al Hisn Museum is housed in an 1823 fort that has served as the seat of Sharjah government, the residence of the ruling Al Qasimi family, a jail and now a heritage museum. Visitors can see a variety of historic photographs and objects such as traditional weapons that offer insight into Sharjah's daily life and governance over the last two centuries.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 8:00 pm  
Admission fees: Children (2-12 years) AED 5, Adults (13+ years) AED 10  
+971 6 568 5500  
sharjahmuseums.ae

## **AL MUREIJAH AREA**

**Sharjah Art Foundation buildings**, Close to the intersection between Al Mureijah Street and Corniche Street  
Saturday – Thursday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
+971 6 568 5050  
sharjahart.org

### **Al Mureijah Square**

In 2013, five new gallery spaces constructed on the foundations of original heritage buildings opened in the area now called Al Mureijah Square. The scale and historical context of the historic buildings were taken into account as the new art spaces were integrated into the existing area.

### **The Urban Garden**

Often called the 'secret garden' by community members, The Urban Garden is located within Al Mureijah Square. Community members are invited to use the garden for social and educational events as well as planting and harvesting. Both creative workshops and workshops for garden enthusiasts are offered.



### **Bait Al Naboodah**

This two-storey house dates back to 1845 and pays tribute to traditional Gulf architecture and building materials. The family home of a successful pearl trader was reconstructed as it would have been in the mid-eighteenth century to show how several generations of an extended family all lived together. True to tradition, all the rooms are constructed around a central courtyard, featuring walls built with pieces of local coral, traditional methods of air conditioning and decorative carvings in both plaster and wood. The rooms display items relating to everyday life, including Arabic chests and four-poster beds, traditional children's toys and kitchen utensils. Bait Al Naboodah is currently closed but will reopen when maintenance and renovations have been completed.

sharjahmuseums.ae

### **Sharjah Calligraphy Museum**

Located in the historic house of Hamad Al Midfaa, the Sharjah Calligraphy Museum is the only museum in the Arab world devoted entirely to calligraphy. The museum, located in Calligraphy Square, features works by local artists and well-known international calligraphers. The mission of the museum is to inspire an appreciation for Arabic calligraphy and preserve the cultural heritage.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 8:00 pm  
Admission fees: Children (2-12 years) AED 5, Adults (13+ years) AED 10  
+971 6 569 4561  
sharjahmuseums.ae

### **Ceramics House**

Established in 2001, Ceramics House provides exhibition space and a meeting place for artists. The facility comprises nine rooms and also makes use of the adjacent exterior space in Calligraphy Square to offer workshops, discussions, film programmes and exhibitions.

+971 6 353 5123  
heartofsharjah.ae

### **Sharjah Heritage Museum**

Opened originally in 2003 and expanded for a 2012 reopening, the Sharjah Heritage Museum consists of six galleries covering the landscape, lifestyle, celebrations, livelihoods, traditional knowledge and oral traditions of Sharjah.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 8:00 pm  
Admission fees: Children (2-12 years) AED 5, Adults (13+ years) AED 10  
+971 6 568 0006  
sharjahmuseums.ae

### **Sharjah National Theatre**

In Sharjah, theatre is valued as one of the most important contributors to the development of culture and public opinion. The Sharjah National Theatre was established in 1975 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi to produce meaningful plays and further the development of theatre in Sharjah. The Sharjah National Theatre hosts theatrical, cultural and intellectual forums as well as a number of lectures, seminars and workshops. It has also participated in theatre festivals in the UAE and internationally.

+971 6 568 6600  
heartofsharjah.ae

### **Sharjah Institute of Theatrical Arts**

Home of two state-of-the-art proscenium theatres, one that seats 209 and one accommodating 266, the Sharjah Institute of Theatrical Arts promotes the culture of theatre in Sharjah by providing a stage for theatre, drama training, theatrical workshops and academic studies. The institute also hosts conferences and school productions.

+971 6 568 1333  
heartofsharjah.ae

### **Emirates Handcraft Centre**

Under the supervision of the Sharjah Institute of Heritage, the Emirates Handcraft Centre includes informational displays about local architecture and food and handcrafts related to the date palm. Of great interest is the traditional house that hosts the Emirates Handcraft Centre, which is called Bait Al Mazroo'a. Located on the edge of Al Mureijah next to the Corniche, the house has 17 rooms built around a courtyard.

+971 6 509 2666  
sharjah-heritage.ae

### **Sharjah City Walls**

The remaining sections of the Sharjah city wall, which dates from the 16th century, enclose the side of Al Mureijah furthest away from the Corniche. The wall, like the traditional houses, was built from coral and gypsum.

# **BEYOND SAF NEIGHBOURHOOD**

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## **IN SHARJAH CITY**

### **Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation [Al Majarrah area]**

Arranged across seven spacious galleries and display areas, the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation houses more than five thousand artefacts related to science, coinage, maps and art from around the Islamic world. The museum opened in a renovated house in the Heritage Area in 1996 and then moved in 2008 to its current home in a converted Middle Eastern souq on the Corniche, a short distance from the Sharjah Art Museum.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
Admission fees: Children (2-12 years) AED 5, Adults (13+ years) AED 10  
+971 6 565 5455  
islamicmuseum.ae

### **Al Mahatta Museum [Al Manakh area]**

This museum is dedicated to aviation history, with a particular focus on the UAE. Named after the first airport in the Gulf region, the museum explores flight development and aviation history from the 1930s to the present. One of the main attractions is the collection of fully restored propeller planes and the original refuelling tanker used at the Sharjah airport.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 8:00 pm  
Admission fees: Children (2-12 years) AED 5, Adults (13+ years) AED 10  
+971 6 573 3079  
sharjahmuseums.ae

### **Khalid Lagoon [Al Majaz areas 1, 2 and 3]**

Khalid Lagoon, also known by its Arabic name **Al Buhairah**, is located on the site of one of the earliest known Arabian Gulf settlements, and some of its current residents can trace their ancestry to that early period. Now an artificial lagoon spread over 1,720,000 square hectares of water surface, it is always a favourite place for evening strolls, family picnics, **abra** boat trips and Sharjah Fountain light and music shows. Also located in the Khalid Lagoon area are Al Montazah Amusement and Water Park, Al Majaz Amphitheatre and Flag Island, which has the seventh tallest flagpole in the world, design spaces and a restaurant.

### **Al Majaz Waterfront [Between Al Majaz areas 1 and 2]**

Located on the Khalid Lagoon close to the Sharjah Fountain, Al Majaz Waterfront features a lakefront garden, jogging path, children's playground, train and boat rides and miniature golf as well as a mosque and restaurants. On display in the Maraya Art Park is Wafaa Bilal's **The Hierarchy of Being**, a domed sculpture designed to recreate the camera obscura effect.

+971 6 552 1552  
almajaz.ae

### **Al Noor Island [Al Majaz 1]**

Covering 45,470 square metres, Noor Island merges art and nature to create a quiet sanctuary in the middle of Sharjah. Included in the artworks are the OVO, Torus and Edgar Tezak sculptures and light paintings, all joined together by a 3,500-metre walkway bordered by light installations and gardens containing plants from around the world. The island is also home to a Butterfly House and Literature Pavilion.

Saturday – Wednesday: 9:00 am – 11:00 pm  
Thursday – Friday: 9:00 am – midnight  
Admission fees: Children (under 3 years) free,  
Children (3-11 years) AED 30, Adults (12+ years) AED 50  
+971 6 506 7000  
alnoorisland.ae

### **Sharjah Centre for Cultural Communication (SCCC) and Al Noor Mosque [Al Majaz 1]**

The best known of Sharjah's over 600 mosques is Al Noor Mosque. Located next to the Khalid Lagoon on the Buhairah Corniche, Al Noor Mosque is an example of traditional Islamic architecture. Completed in 2005, the mosque features an intricate framework, sweeping curves and soaring spires. Under the auspices of the Sharjah Centre for Cultural Communication, Al Noor Mosque is the first mosque in Sharjah to open its doors to the expatriate community and Sharjah visitors so that they may learn about the UAE national culture and religion. Visitors can join a special one-hour tour of Al Noor Mosque every Monday at 10:00 am. Registration is required. Private visits can also be arranged upon request.

SCCC office in Souq Al Arsah open on Sunday, Tuesday,  
Wednesday and Thursday: 8:00 am – 2:00 pm  
+971 6 568 0055  
shjculture.com

### **Al Qasba [Al Khan area]**

A centre for art, tourist and business activities, Al Qasba is located along a one-kilometre-long manmade canal and features pedestrian bridges, a 250-seat theatre, a 60-metre-high Ferris wheel and the Maraya Art Centre, a three-storey creative space with exhibition areas, multimedia facilities, a video archive and library. The Barjeel Art Foundation is also located in the Maraya building. Visitors to Al Qasba can find restaurants serving local and international food, boats for hire and activities for children.

+971 6 525 2444  
alqasba.ae



### **Sharjah Maritime Museum [Al Khan area]**

The Maritime Museum features information about the role of the sea in the development of Sharjah life from 6,000 years ago until modern times. Special exhibits focus on wooden seafaring dhows and pearling and fishing in the Gulf. Ships, pearls and tools used for seafaring activities are displayed.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 10:00 pm  
Admission fees: Children (2-12 years) AED 5, Adults (13+ years) AED 10  
+971 6 522 2002  
sharjahmuseums.ae

### **Sharjah Aquarium [Al Khan area]**

The Sharjah Aquarium, a marine nature reserve, has an impressive display of more than 150 species, including small fish, rare eels and reef sharks. The aquarium aims to increase awareness of the importance of the marine environment and the means to protect it.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 10:00 pm  
Closed on Sundays  
Admission fees (a joint ticket with the Maritime Museum):  
Children (under 2 years) free, Children (2-12) AED 15,  
Adults (13+ years) AED 25  
+971 6 528 5288  
sharjahmuseums.ae

### **Sharjah Art Foundation Off-Site Venue: The Flying Saucer [Dasman area]**

A Sharjah landmark since its opening in 1978 because of its circular structure and pointed, domed roof, The Flying Saucer has served many purposes, from fast food restaurant to pharmacy and grocery store. The building is currently a SAF exhibition space, lending itself to both experimental and traditional approaches to art.

+971 6 568 5050  
sharjahart.org

### **Sharjah Archaeology Museum [Halwan/Al Abar area]**

The Sharjah Archaeology Museum houses collections of artefacts that bear witness to human habitation in Sharjah from the Stone Age until the rise of Islam. Significant pieces in the collection are an ivory comb inside an alabaster bowl (2200-2000 BCE), a ceramic dome and camel statue (900-600 BCE) and a golden bridle (150 BCE-200 CE). The museum has also exhibited artefacts from Petra in Jordan.

Saturday – Thursday: 8:00 am – 8:00 pm, Friday: 4:00 – 8:00 pm  
Admission fees: Children (2-12 years) AED 5, Adults (13+ years) AED 10  
+971 6 566 5466  
sharjahmuseums.ae

### **Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club [Mohamed bin Zayed Road near Ajman]**

The Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club has a nine-hole, fully floodlit golf course designed by architect Peter Harradine and hosts many tournaments throughout the year. The club also offers a number of other activities and facilities, including a paintball park; hi-tech shooting range for pistols, revolvers and rifles; swimming pool; tennis and basketball courts; gym; hair salon and Italian and Asian restaurants.

+971 6 548 7777  
golfandshootingshj.com

### **University City**

Established in 1997 by His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, member of the Federal Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, University City is home to more than 10 educational institutions and over 22,000 students. Covering 11 square kilometres and situated along a wide landscaped boulevard, the various university buildings feature a range of architectural styles, including ornate entrance gates and great domed libraries and classroom buildings.

sharjahmydestination.ae

### **Dr Sultan Al Qasimi Centre for Gulf Studies\* [University City]**

Dr Sultan Al Qasimi Centre for Gulf Studies provides researchers with integrated and comprehensive historical and geographical research materials that trace the development, history and heritage of life in the Arabian Gulf. The centre exhibits artefacts and publications from the private collection of His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Al Qasimi. Included are original and historical collectors' maps, the first images of the region and rare coins with special relevance to the Gulf as well as His Highness's published works, degrees, awards and documentation of his early life. In addition to His Highness's private collection, the centre houses a library and archive with more than one and a half million historical documents, maps and records, some of which are rare.

Sunday – Thursday: 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Closed on Friday and Saturday

Free admission

+971 6 558 5855

dsqc.ae

\* The Centre is relocating to the opposite end of University City. Some exhibits may be closed.

### **Sharjah Center for Astronomy and Space Sciences [University City]**

The Sharjah Center for Astronomy and Space Sciences (SCASS), located in University City, opened its doors on 7 May 2015. SCASS seeks to develop and promote education about astronomy and space sciences in the Arab world in general, and the UAE in particular. Its objective is to become a recognised destination for science, research, education, heritage and tourism for school students, university students, researchers and families of all ages. SCASS has many attractions, most important of which are the Planetarium, Astronomy Exhibition, Space Exhibition, Exhibition of the Universe in the Holy Qur'an, Astronomical Observatory and Cosmic Park. SCASS also has other facilities, including a cafeteria and a gift shop for astronomical and scientific souvenirs.

Visiting hours for the planetarium: Saturday: 3:00 am – 8:00 pm

Sunday – Wednesday: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Show timings: Saturday: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, Sunday –

Wednesday: 1:00 pm (Public). 9:00 am & 11:00 am (Schools)

Admission: Children (4-11 years) AED 10 (no entry for children under 4), Adults (12+ years) AED 20. Only cash accepted.

+971 6 51 66 000

scass.ae



## OUTSIDE SHARJAH CITY

### Sharjah Art Foundation Off-Site Venues

Excursions to these venues outside the city of Sharjah are sometimes organised by SAF.

+971 6 568 5050

sharjahart.org

#### **Kalba Ice Factory**

SAF's East Coast outpost, the Kalba Ice Factory, is located in the city of Kalba near the Kalba campus of the University of Sharjah and Al Qurm mangrove swamp, an important protected nature reserve. Once operated as an ice factory, the large open structure now hosts exhibitions such as the Sharjah Biennial 12 installation by artist Adrian Villar Rojas. Located near the ice factory is the Fen Restaurant, known for its seafood and barbecue (+971 50 162 5295, +971 9 277 0020).

#### **Khorfakkan Cinema**

One of SAF's off-site projects is the renovation and activation of an old cinema in Khorfakkan. In 2011, the cinema was used as the basis for a Sharjah Biennial 12 work by Shahzia Sikander, and it is also a public film school.

#### **Al Hamriyah Studios**

Inaugurated in February 2017, Al Hamriyah Studios houses artist workspaces and communal exhibition areas designed by Dubai-based architect Khaled Al Najjar. His design combines avant-garde and modern architectural technologies with regionally-inspired customs and traditions of the built environment. In keeping with SAF's other urban development projects, which have readapted historic architectural elements to new uses, Al Hamriyah Studios was constructed on the site of a former souq.

### **Art Centres in Central and Eastern Sharjah**

Six art centres across the central and eastern regions of the emirate became part of Sharjah Art Foundation in 2016. Al Madam Art Centre, Al Dhaid Art Centre, Al Hamriyah Art Centre, Kalba Art Centre, Khorfakkan Art Centre and Dibba Al Hisn Art Centre all focus on education and community outreach, offering painting, sculpture, calligraphy, ceramics and photography classes throughout the year as well as a broad range of other programmes and activities.

### **Other Off-Site Venues**

SAF continues to acquire historic buildings threatened with demolition and other culturally significant sites, which are being converted into exhibition and/or education spaces. A 1970s prototype kindergarten building in Kalba and a farm in Al Madam are sites currently undergoing renovation.

### **Desert Park Centre**

Located on Al Dhaid Road, approximately 40 minutes from Arts Square, the Desert Park Centre is host to six different entities: the Arabian Wildlife Centre, Breeding Centre for Endangered Arabian Wildlife, Children's Farm, Natural History and Botanical Museum, Islamic Botanical Gardens and Botanical Gardens.

**The Arabian Wildlife Centre** houses the largest collection of Arabian wildlife in the Middle East, including such animals as the Arabian Leopard and Arabian Oryx. The centre also includes an aviary, a nocturnal animal house and a reptile and insect house in a climate-controlled environment, ensuring the comfort of animals and visitors alike.

**The Children's Farm** familiarises children with the characteristics of local domestic animals and allows visitors to interact with the animals and birds under the supervision of guides.

**The Natural History and Botanical Museum** exhibits trace the geological history of Sharjah and the development of plant and animal life from a million years ago until today. In the Botanical Garden section, 91 species of local plants are on display to show different environments in Sharjah.

**The Islamic Botanical Garden** contains 52 plants, 30 of which are mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. The purpose of the garden is to focus on the link between the Qur'an and preservation of the environment. Exhibits explain the significance of the plants referenced in Qur'anic verses, the Hadith and the Sunnah.

Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday: 9:00 am – 5:30 pm  
Friday: 2:00 – 5:30 pm, Saturday: 11:00 am – 5:30 pm  
Café and picnic facilities available  
+971 6 531 1999  
epaashj.ae

### **Archaeological Sites in Sharjah**

Archaeological sites bearing witness to ancient civilisations in Sharjah can be found all across the emirate. Only some are regularly open to the public; others can be visited by appointment only. Three examples are presented below. Information about the others can be found on the website of the Sharjah Archaeology Authority, which is located within the Sharjah Archaeology Museum in the Halwan area of the city.

+971 6 566 8001  
sharjaharchaeology.com

### **Mleiha Archaeological Centre**

Located about 45 minutes from SAF offices, the Mleiha Archaeological Centre offers both a natural history gallery experience and guided eco-tourism activities, such as star-gazing, cycling, off-road drives, desert treks and rock climbing. Archaeological sites range from the Palaeolithic to the modern age. Interesting sites include Fossil Rock, Um an-Nar Tomb and the Mleiha Fort. An on-site restaurant serves food from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm.

Saturday – Wednesday: 9:00 am – 7:00 pm  
Thursday – Friday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm  
Admission varies according to activities undertaken  
+971 6 883 1111  
discovermleiha.ae

## **Kalba**

The eastern coast city of Kalba boasts a range of archaeological sites, including ruins of a large settlement showing signs of occupation since 2500 BCE and a walled settlement from 1300 BCE. Pottery finds indicate contact with the northern Gulf region, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan. Rock art with images of animal and human forms presented in different styles can also be seen on rock faces at Khatmat Malaha. A more recent but interesting heritage site is the Fort of Kalba, dating from the beginning of the 17th century. Also in the area is Khor Kalba, the oldest mangrove forest in this area of southeastern Arabia. All sites are open for visits, but no interpretive commentary is currently available.

## **Muweilah**

Under excavation since 1994, Muweilah is an Iron Age settlement located in Al Jurainah near University City. Archaeologists have discovered the remains of a flourishing settlement and evidence of trade with Iran, Mesopotamia and Yemen around 1000 BCE. Visits are by appointment only. Contact the Sharjah Archaeological Authority.

## **Historic Mosque in Khorfakkan: Imam Salem**

### **Al Mutawa Mosque**

Pictured on one side of the UAE five-dirham note, the Imam Salem Al Mutawa Mosque is the oldest landmark in the city of Khorfakkan. Located on the Corniche, this 200-year-old mosque was renovated and reopened to the public in 2011. The mosque, accommodating 70 to 100 worshippers, was constructed with an open-air, arched minaret and star- and moon-shaped holes in the walls, both of which promote the flow of cooling air.



## 🕒 GENERAL DO'S AND DON'TS

- Sharjah is a fairly conservative emirate. Non-revealing clothing for both men and women, with shoulders and knees covered, is recommended.
- There is a very strict drug policy in the UAE. Recreational drugs are prohibited.
- The Emirate of Sharjah is a dry emirate. Alcohol is prohibited. Visitors who wish to drink can go to hotels in Ajman or Dubai. It is advisable to go by taxi or have a designated driver. Penalties for drink driving are severe.
- Bottled water is recommended. Tap water is desalinated and can be safe, but it is not usually recommended as drinking water.

## ✈️ AIRPORTS

### Sharjah International Airport

sharjahairport.ae

### Dubai International Airport

dubaiairports.ae

## 🎫 TRAVEL AGENCIES AND TOURS

### Skyline Travel

Um Al Tarafa Area  
Arouba Street  
+971 6 563 6923  
skylineuae.com

### Arabian Adventures (sightseeing tours across the UAE)

800 272 2426  
arabian-adventures.com

### Al Faisal Travel, Tourism & Cargo Agency L.L.C.

Al Mureijah Street  
(aka Al Meena Road)  
+971 6 5683333  
aftta.com

### City Sightseeing Sharjah

Block D, Entrance 2  
(first floor), Al Qasba  
+971 6 525 5200  
citysightseeingsharjah.ae

### Sharjah Boat Tours

Tours on traditional boats called **abras** are available from several sites in Sharjah, such as Al Majaz Waterfront, Al Qasba and docks on the Khalid Lagoon. Visitors can also join workers who use **abras** to go from the Corniche in the Al Mureijah area (a short walk from SAF offices) to the industrial and port area across the creek, where one can get an excellent panoramic view of the heritage areas.

Timings and prices for boat tours vary.

+971 6 573 3030  
sharjahboats.ae  
almajaz.ae  
alqasba.ae



## LOCAL TRANSPORT

### **Driving licences**

Visitors with a valid driving licence from any of the following countries are permitted to drive a private or hired vehicle in the UAE: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and US. Other visitors must hold an International Driving Permit (IDP) issued by their home country. GCC nationals may drive on their respective licences within the UAE.

Visitors on a visit visa can obtain a Temporary Driving Licence, which is issued at the Sharjah Traffic & Licensing Department, Al Ramtha (+971 6 538 1111) at a cost of AED 80. The licence is valid for one month and renewable for a further month at a cost of AED 30.

For more information about driving licences, see [sharjah.ae](http://sharjah.ae).

### **Car hire**

Sharjah has a number of local and international agencies. The hire rate per day for smaller vehicles, including insurance, starts at AED 80, but prices vary. The minimum age for car rental is 21. To hire a car, visitors must produce their passport, two photos and a national or international driving licence.

### **Autolease Rent A Car**

Sharjah International Airport and DHL Building,  
King Faisal Street, Al Majaz 1 (near Spinneys supermarket)  
+971 6 573 5333  
[autolease-uae.com](http://autolease-uae.com)

### **Fast Rent A Car**

Sharjah International Airport and Al Wahda Street  
+971 6 533 8877  
[fastuae.com](http://fastuae.com)

### **Hertz**

Sharjah International Airport and Al Wahda Street  
+971 6 552 8290  
+971 6 553 0964  
[hertz.ae](http://hertz.ae)

### **Maximum**

Sharjah International Airport, Radisson Blu Resort  
and Al Khan Street  
+971 6 550 1515  
+971 6 556 0601  
[maximumcarrentals.com](http://maximumcarrentals.com)

## Taxis

Taxis operating in Sharjah are metred. The starting fare is AED 3.50 in the daytime and AED 4 at night. The minimum fare for a trip in a Sharjah taxi is AED 11.50. For trips within Sharjah, the cost ranges from AED 11.50 to AED 30. Visitors should expect to pay AED 50–70 (with an additional AED 20 surcharge added) to travel to Dubai and around AED 300 to go to Abu Dhabi. A Ladies or Family Taxi with a female driver is available upon request. Visitors should note that there is heavy traffic going from Sharjah to Dubai between 6:00 and 10:00 am and from Dubai to Sharjah between 4:00 and 8:00 pm.

A few taxi companies with telephone numbers are listed below. For online booking for Sharjah government taxis, visit [srta.gov.ae](http://srta.gov.ae).

A smart taxi service called Careem ([careem.com](http://careem.com)) also operates in Sharjah. Accessed through a free smart phone app, the service determines the location of the prospective passenger and sends a car. Careem accepts both cash and credit cards.

### Sharjah Taxi

+971 6 535 6111

Toll free number: 600 52 52 52

### Emirates Cab

+971 6 539 6666

### Citi Taxi

+971 6 533 3550

### Union Taxi

+971 6 532 5555

## MONEY

### Currency and exchange

The monetary unit is the dirham, which is divided into 100 fils. It is also known as the Arab Emirate Dirham (AED). The dirham is freely convertible, making exchange of travellers cheques and currency easy. The local currency index is linked to the US dollar (1 USD= AED 3.67). The best rate of exchange is usually found in licensed exchange offices although banks and hotels also offer this service. Offices are generally open on weekdays 8:00 am–10:30 pm. On Friday, most offices are open 2:00 pm–10:00 pm, but some may be open 9:00 am - 11:30 pm. The exchange office closest to SAF offices is Al Ansari Exchange.

### Al Ansari Exchange

Al Arouba Street

+971 6 562 8778

### ATM machines

ATM machines can be found in various banks on Bank Street, in Atlas Mall across the street from the Swiss-Belhotel Sharjah and next to the Corniche Post Office. All ATM locations are a five- to ten-minute walk from SAF offices.

## POSTAL SERVICES

The Old Souq or Al Corniche Post Office (+971 6 568 2427) is located within a short walking distance from SAF offices. The Sharjah Central Post Office is located in Al Soor (toll free 600 5 99999). Both offer all the usual postal services and are open from Saturday till Thursday, 7:30 am–9:00 pm. Additionally, most hotels will arrange to send mail anywhere in the world. Postcards mailed to countries outside the Middle East cost AED 2. Mail to Europe, India and the US takes 5–10 days, and mail sent to Australia takes 8–10 days. The UAE is also well served by local and international courier companies. Visitors can check with their hotels for details.



# TELEPHONES

## **Visitor lines for mobile phones**

It is possible to obtain a Visitor Line from one of the two mobile telephone companies: Etisalat or du.

The initial Etisalat Visitor Line costs AED 100 and individual packages for various combinations of talking, texting and surfing cost AED 75 each. The Visitor Line number is valid for 90 days, and the individual packages are good for 14 days and can be renewed for an additional AED 75 each. The Visitor Line SIM card is available at the airports, Etisalat business offices and some hotels as well as WH Smith, Jumbo and Emax stores in the local malls.

etisalat.ae

The initial cost of the du Visitor Mobile Line is AED 35 and includes 20 minutes of calls and 200 MB of data, all prepaid for seven days. The Visitor Mobile Line is valid for 90 days, but du do not offer the same kind of packages as Etisalat. Callers can just top up the prepaid credit for their mobile phones and pay per call, text or data usage according to a tariff list. The du Visitor Mobile Line is available at the airports, du offices and authorised dealers.

du.ae

Etisalat directory service: 181

du directory service: 199

## **Emergency numbers**

Police: 999

Ambulance: 998

## **Country code and codes for individual emirates**

To call a UAE number from outside the country, use the country code (+971), the code for the individual emirate or mobile phone and then the local phone number. Please note that if a call is made inside the UAE, it is necessary to add a zero before the code for the emirate or mobile phone. For example, the telephone number for Sharjah Art Foundation with the country code is +971 6 568 5050. Locally, the number is 06 568 5050.

UAE country code: +971

Codes for individual emirates:

- Abu Dhabi (0)2
- Al Ain (0)3
- Dubai (0)4
- Sharjah, Ajman and Umm Al Qaiwain: (0)6
- Ras Al Khaimah (0)7
- Fujairah, Khorfakkan (0)9

Mobile phone codes vary. The most common codes are (0)50, (0)55 and (0)56.

# HEALTH INSURANCE AND TRAVEL INSURANCE

Health insurance is mandatory for all visitors who require a visa for entry to the UAE. Companies and tour operators that sponsor visitors should arrange for the health insurance coverage. For those visitors who can enter the UAE without a visa, it is recommended that they purchase travel insurance or local insurance to cover any unexpected visits to doctors during their stay in the country. Local insurance starts at AED 40 for thirty days. In the event of an emergency, medical care is available to all in the local hospitals.

No vaccines are required to enter the UAE. However, it is recommended that all visitors' vaccinations be up to date.

## **Oman Insurance Company**

Toll free: 8004746  
tameen.ae

## **AIG Travel Guard Insurance**

Toll free: 8001244  
aig.ae

# HOSPITALS

## **Al Zahra Hospital**

Clock Tower Roundabout  
+971 6 561 9999  
alzahra.com

## **Zulekha Hospital**

Al Zahra Street  
+971 6 506 0000  
zulekha-hospitals.com

## **Central Private Hospital**

Sheikh Zayed Street, Mysaloon area  
+971 6 516 9221  
centralprivatehospital.ae

# PHARMACIES

## **Millennium Pharmacy**

Arouba Street, north side of Al Mureijah area  
+971 6 568 9416

## **Lamia Pharmacy**

Behind Al Corniche Post Office, Al Shuwaiheen area  
Next to Bait Al Bahar Trading  
+971 6 568 0781



## **MOSQUES**

### **Al Daleel Mosque**

Built in 1919, one of the oldest mosques in Sharjah  
Across from the Collections Building, Arts Square  
Next to Sharjah Art Museum  
Ladies section available

### **Al Maghfirah Mosque**

Corniche Street, Al Seef area. Next to Radisson Blu Resort  
Ladies section available

### **Al Noor Mosque**

Near Khalid Lagoon, Majaz 1 area. On Al Buhairah Corniche  
Ladies section available

### **King Faisal Mosque**

Largest mosque in Sharjah  
King Faisal Street, Al Soor area. Between Sharjah Central Post  
Office and Central Souq  
Ladies section available

## **HOTELS**

### **Radisson Blu Resort**

Corniche Street, P.O. Box 3527, Sharjah  
+971 6 565 7777  
radissonblu.com

### **Swiss-Belhotel Sharjah**

Al Arouba Street, P.O. Box 5734, Sharjah  
+971 6 563 7777  
swiss-belhotel.com

### **Hilton Sharjah**

Corniche Street, Al Majaz 3, Sharjah  
+971 6 519 2222  
www3.hilton.com

### **Copthorne Hotel Sharjah**

Corniche Street, Al Majaz 3, P.O. Box 39887, Sharjah  
+971 6 593 0555  
millenniumhotels.com

### **Sheraton Sharjah Beach Resort and Spa**

Al Muntazah Street, Sharjah  
+971 6 563 0000  
sheratonsharjah.com

## **BEACHES**

Public beaches in Sharjah are located across the city of Sharjah as well as in the eastern regions of the emirate. Please note that Sharjah is a conservative emirate, and the dress code (i.e. shoulders and knees covered) applies in all public areas. In beach areas that are privately owned or operated, standard swimwear is acceptable.

### **Public beaches**

The area from **Al Khan Lagoon** to **Al Mamzar Lagoon**, situated on the border between Dubai and Sharjah, is an active location for motorised water sports.

**Al Corniche Beach** is a peaceful beach area with palm trees stretching from the Sharjah Ladies Club to the Coral Beach Resort.

**Al Khan Beach**, located in the historic Al Khan area close to the Sharjah Aquarium, offers both beach sports activities and areas for sunbathing. Managed by G20, the 600-metre beach area can be booked for private and corporate events.

### **Private beaches in hotels and clubs (fees charged)**

#### **Kempinski Ajman**

Weekdays: Children (under age 12) AED 50, Adults (12+ years) AED 150. Weekends and public holidays: Children (under age 12) AED 75, Adults (12+ years) AED 200

Prices include pool access.

+971 6 714 5555

kempinski.com

#### **Coral Beach Resort Sharjah**

Weekdays: AED 75. Weekends and public holidays: AED 150

+ 971 6 522 9999

hmhhotelgroup.com

#### **Radisson Blu Resort Bay Club**

Weekdays: Children (under 5 years) free, Children (5-16 years) AED 60, Adults (12+ years) AED 100. Weekends and public holidays: Children (under 5 years) free, Children (5-16 years) AED 75, Adults (12+ years) AED 150

+971 6 565 7777

radissonblu.com

#### **Sharjah Ladies Club**

(For women only)

Weekdays: Children (under 4 years) free, Children (4-12 years) AED 50, Adults (12+ years) AED 100. Weekends and public

holidays: Children (under 4 years) free, Children (4-12 years) AED 60, Adults (12+ years) AED 200

+971 6 506 7777

slc.ae

#### **Ajman Saray**

Weekdays: AED 175. Weekends: AED 250

+971 6 714 2222

ajmansaray.com

#### **Al Montazah Amusement and Water Park, Flag Island**

(Amusement park open only in the afternoon and evening)

Saturday, Monday, Wednesday: 10:00 am – 7:00 pm, Tuesday (Ladies only): 10:00 am – 10:00 pm, Thursday-Friday: 10:00 am – 10:00 pm  
Children (under 80 cm) free, Visitors (80-110 cm) AED 75, Visitors (110 cm and above) AED 120

+971 6 511 0555

almontazah.ae

## RESTAURANTS AND CAFES

For lists and reviews of local restaurants, see [www.zomato.com](http://www.zomato.com)

### SAF NEIGHBOURHOOD

#### **Afrina Iranian Sweets**

Cost: ~AED 15-25 per person  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road)  
+971 6 569 2692, +971 6 574 7272

#### **Al Kabab Al Afghani Al Jadeed**

Cost: ~AED 25-35 per person  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road)  
+971 6 569 0083, +971 6 569 0084

#### **Al Maskoof Al Iraqi**

Iraqi cuisine  
Cost: ~AED 50-70 per person  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road)  
+971 6 569 0222

#### **Al Murjan Sweets**

Traditional sweets, a kind of 'childhood candy museum' with a sign in Arabic saying, 'Come and remember your childhood.'  
Souq Saqr, Al Shuwaiheen area. Just beyond Bait Al Serkal  
+971 6 568 4432

#### **Al Saroud Al Turathi**

Emirati and Middle Eastern cuisine, good for breakfast and lunch  
Cost: ~AED 40 per person  
Souq Al Shanasiyah, between Al Shuwaiheen and Al Mureijah near Corniche Street  
+971 6 544 4454, +971 50 369 8880

#### **Azza Cafeteria**

Local café with samboosa and parata  
Souq Saqr, Al Shuwaiheen area, behind SAF offices in a little white cube building

#### **Chettagong Fresh Cool**

Wide selection of freshly squeezed juices.  
Cost: ~AED 5-15 per person  
Open 24 hours  
Al Qasimi Street, opposite Radisson Blu Resort  
+971 56 716 8082

#### **Diplomat**

Palestinian cuisine  
Cost: ~AED 40-50 per person  
Abu Rehima Building, Old Sharjah Cinema, Al Mureijah area  
+971 6 569 6944

#### **Fen Café**

Coffee, soft drinks and pastries  
Cost: ~AED 10-30 per person  
Majlis Sheikh Mohammed, next to SAF offices in Arts Square

#### **Fen Café**

Coffee, soft drinks and pastries  
Cost: ~AED 10-30 per person  
Bait Hussein Abdul Rasoul, Al Mureijah Square

#### **Fen Restaurant**

Coffee, pastries, sandwiches, salads and grills  
Cost: ~AED 10-50 per person  
Bait Hassan Mukhtar, Al Mureijah Square

#### **Ghawa Gahwa**

Variety of Gulf-inspired coffees. Desserts, sandwiches and specialty pancakes.  
Cost: ~AED 30-45 per person  
Souq Al Shanasiyah, Al Mureijah area, Al Corniche Street  
+971 6 569 0028

#### **Ghazi Bakery**

Afghani bread  
Cost: ~AED 2-3  
Opposite Corniche Post Office, Al Shuwaiheen area

### **Jabal Tariq Restaurant**

Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi cuisine, excellent baked samosas and golden pastries  
Cost: ~AED 20-25 per person  
Just off Arouba Street, Al Shuwaiheen area, next to NEC National Exchange  
+971 6 568 2097

### **Karachi Darbar**

Pakistani cuisine  
Cost: ~AED 20-25 per person  
Opposite Sharjah Rotana Hotel, Al Shuwaiheen area  
+971 6 569 4447  
karachidarbargroup.com

### **Najmat Lahore**

Pakistani cuisine  
Cost: ~AED 40-60 per person  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road)  
+971 6 568 2202  
najmatlahore.com

### **Pak Ghazi Restaurant & Sweets**

Pakistani cuisine (breakfast, lunch and dinner)  
Cost: ~AED 20-30 per person  
Beside Al Kabayel Centre, near Bank Street, opposite Rolla Park  
+971 6 568 2199

### **Ratios**

Specialty coffee, pastry and sandwiches  
Cost: ~AED 20-40 per person  
Souq Al Shanasiyah, Al Shuwaiheen Heritage Area  
Corniche Street  
ratios.coffee

### **Sadaf Restaurant**

Iranian cuisine  
Cost: ~AED 50-70 per person  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road)  
+971 6 569 3344  
sadafrestaurantsuae.com

### **Souq Al Arsah Café**

Emirati cuisine  
Cost: ~AED 15-25 per person  
Souq Al Arsah, Al Mureijah Heritage Area

### **Tutti Frutti**

Middle Eastern food, particularly good for breakfast and **manakeesh** [Lebanese flatbread sandwiches]  
Cost: ~AED 40 per person  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road), opposite the Animal Market  
+971 6 569 2666

### **Zam Zam Restaurant**

Pakistani and Indian food  
Cost: ~AED 20 per person  
Al Arouba Street, Al Mureijah area, opposite old Sharjah cinema  
+971 6 568 3921 or +971 6 568 2940



## OTHER RESTAURANTS IN THE CITY OF SHARJAH

### **Al Kalha Restaurant**

Palestinian cuisine

Cost: ~AED 25-30 per person

Jamal Abdul Nasser Street, Al Majaz area, Al Buhairah Corniche, near HSBC Bank.

+971 6 553 7735

### **Al Majaz Waterfront Restaurants**

Selection of restaurants and coffee shops serving Lebanese, Moroccan, Turkish and Italian cuisine.

+971 6 552 1552

almajaz.ae

### **Al Sheraa Fisheries Centre Restaurant**

Seafood

Cost: ~AED 75 per person

University City Road, Abu Shagara area, near Mega Mall (10- to 15-minute taxi ride from SAF offices)

+971 6 572 4417

### **Arous Dimashq**

Syrian cuisine

Cost: ~AED 30-50 per person

King Abdul Aziz Street, opposite Emirates NBD Bank

+971 6 573 9900

### **Al Shaab Cafeteria**

Famous for the Gold Souq Sandwich, one-of-a-kind spicy vegetable and cheese sandwich

Cost: ~AED 15-25 per person

Upper level, gold souq side of the Sharjah Central Souq (aka Blue Souq)

+971 6 572 7309

### **Bait El Mandi**

Gulf/Yemeni cuisine

Cost: ~AED 40-50 per person

Off Arouba Street in Al Khan area, close to Sharjah Cooperative Society (10-minute taxi ride from SAF offices)

+971 6 528 1798

### **Bangkok Town**

Thai cuisine

Cost: ~AED 50-70 per person

Behind Novo Cinemas, Al Majaz 3 area, Al Buhairah Corniche

+971 6 556 8282

bangkoktownrestaurant.com

### **Canton Chinese Restaurant**

Chinese and Filipino cuisine

Cost: ~AED 50 per person

University City Road, Al Yarmouk area, near Mega Mall and Al Estiqlal Square

+971 6 567 6310

### **Chai Al Fakhar**

Take-away tea shop serving unusual teas, including **karak**, in clay pots that customers can take home with them

Cost: ~AED 3 per person

Close to Radisson Blu Resort

### **Emirates Sea**

Seafood and Arabian, Moroccan and Indian cuisine

Cost: ~AED 40-50 per person

Street 43, Nasseriya area, behind Zulekha Hospital

+971 6 564 5757

emiratessearestaurant.com

### **Fenyaal Cafe**

Light Emirati cuisine,

Cost: ~AED 30 per person

Block A, Al Qasba area

**Gazebo**

Wide variety of flavourful Indian cuisine, good service

Cost: ~AED 40-60 per person

King Faisal Street, Abu Shagara area, opposite Safeer Market

+971 6 553 2999

gazebo.ae

**Kamat**

Wide variety of flavourful vegetarian Indian cuisine, good service

Cost: ~AED 40-60 per person

King Faisal Street, Abu Shagara area, opposite HSBC, near Emax

+971 6 559 9044

kamat.ae

**Madfoon Al Khaimah**

Yemeni cuisine (open till midnight)

Cost: ~AED 45-50 per person

Al Buhairah Corniche, Al Majaz 2 area, close to Al Noor Mosque

+971 6 574 1144

**Moulin d'Or**

Lebanese fast food

Cost: ~AED 50 per person

Al Buhairah Corniche, Al Majaz 1 area, opposite Hotel

Holiday International

+971 6 574 9797

**Paper Fig**

Emirati and international cuisine, specialists in desserts, breakfast and catering

Cost: ~AED 50-75 per person

Three blocks from University City Road, Muweilah area near

University City, turn at intersection after Adnoc station

+971 600 560601

paperfig.ae

**Sammach**

Seafood

Cost: ~AED 100 per person

Rear entrance, Sharjah Aquarium, Al Khan area

+971 6 528 0095

binhendi.com

**Sealand Seafood**

Cost: ~AED 75 per person

Just off the Corniche, Al Fisht area, behind Hira Police Station, beyond Sharjah Ladies Club

+971 6 522 5100

**Shababeek Restaurant**

Lebanese cuisine

Cost: ~AED 55-80 per person

Block B, Al Qasba, Al Khan area

+971 6 554 0444

shababeek.ae

**SOL**

Fusion fast food with an Arabian flavour. Soft potato buns recommended.

Cost: ~AED 35-40 per person

Al Corniche Street, near Copthorne Hotel, Al Majaz 3

+971 6 556 6686



## SHOPPING

The traditional shopping hours – 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and then 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm – are still applicable in the older shopping areas, but newer shopping centres and malls often remain open all day, from 10:00 am until 10:00 or 11:00 pm. Some supermarkets are open 24 hours. Most shopping areas are open on Friday, but in Sharjah they are all closed for **Jumu'ah** [Friday] prayer between approximately 11:30 am and 1:30 pm. Many shops have only afternoon and evening hours on Fridays.

Haggling over the price of goods is still the custom in the older shops and markets, but in the department stores and malls, prices are generally considered to be fixed.

### SOUQS AND TRADITIONAL SHOPS

#### **Ajmal Perfumes**

High-quality **oud** [Arabian incense], other types of incense and well-crafted perfumes reflecting both Eastern and Western tastes can be purchased in this store.

Al Hisn Avenue (Bank Street), Al Shuwaiheen area  
+971 6 568 6432  
ajmalperfume.com

#### **Al Baar & Al Bahar Roastery**

A local landmark for over 40 years, this shop sells a range of nuts and spices.

Near Al Corniche Post Office, Al Shuwaiheen area  
In Dr Mohammed Ibrahim Building  
+971 6 568 1565

#### **Al Mu'tamad Precious Stone Jewellery**

Precious stones and jewellery can be found at great prices.

Opening times: 10:00 am – 3:00 pm, 5:00 pm – 11:00 pm  
Heritage Area, near Obeid Bin Issa Mosque, from Sharjah Art Museum, right immediately after crossing Bank Street and before Souq Al Arsah.  
+971 55 768 6890

#### **Al Souq Al Markazi [Central Souq, also called the Blue Souq because of blue tiles on the exterior]**

One of most well-known landmarks in Sharjah, the Islamic-style souq sells gold, silver, jewellery, antiques, clothes, carpets and electronics. As the gold shops are owned by many of the old gold traders in the region, the traders can share a wealth of information about the history of the gold designs and gold trade. For those interested in silver, the bridge that connects the two long wings of the Central Souq has shops specialising in silverwork. Some shops will also do ear or nose piercing for customers.

Near Al Majaz Waterfront at southern end of Al Buhairah Corniche  
sharjah.com

#### **Old Souq**

Despite its name, this 25-year-old souq is not as old as others, but one of the oldest mosques in Sharjah, Al Daleel Mosque (1919), and good shops for perfume, clothing and food are located here.

Behind the Sharjah Art Museum, Al Shuwaiheen area  
heartofsharjah.ae

#### **Qasr Paris Household and Electric Ware**

This shop sells a variety of kitchenware and household products. Highlights are cooking pots and traditionally styled cups, glasses and thermos jugs for coffee and tea.

Al Corniche Street, Al Shuwaiheen area, around the corner from the SAF offices  
+971 6 568 0871

### **Souq Al Arsah**

One of the oldest souqs in the UAE, Souq Al Arsah deals in antiques, pashminas, traditional dresses, hijabs, Indian costume jewellery and traditional Emirati household items. Of interest is Gulf Antiques, one of the oldest antique shops in Sharjah. Opened in the 1960s, its inventory includes vintage radios, telephones, barber tools and police badges.

Next to Al Mureijah Square  
heartofsharjah.ae

### **Souq Al Jubail**

Inaugurated in 2015, Sharjah's largest marketplace in terms of area and services is divided into three sections: fruits and vegetables, meat and fish. Fish auctions are held twice a day, at 6:00 am and around 4:00 pm (after Al Asr prayer). Storytelling sessions and art workshops are presented during the month of Ramadan.

Open daily 7:00 am – 10:30 pm  
Near Sharjah's Central Souq and government departments  
+971 6 597 2222  
souqaljubail.com

### **Souq Al Shanasiyah**

Part of the Heart of Sharjah restoration project, this souq has been rebuilt on the foundations of one of the earliest Sharjah souqs, which used to link directly to Souq Al Arsah. The businesses here today are generally clothing, design and perfume boutiques as well as cafes and restaurants such as Ratios, Ghawa Gahwa and Al Saroud Al Turathi. A highlight for those interested in UAE cultural history is Dukan Namlet, which sells the first type of UAE soft drinks in five flavours and traditional snack foods. Also of interest is Jasaria, which offers handmade natural perfumes, aromatherapy oils and a Himalayan salt lamp.

Al Corniche Street, between Al Mureijah and Al Shuwaiheen areas, near Al Hisn [the fort]  
heartofsharjah.ae

### **Souq Saqr**

Known in the past for clothes and gold trading, this traditional souq now specialises in spices and herbs, henna, palm leaf baskets, traditional Emirati household items, perfumes, oils, sheesha and flavoured tobaccos as well as the clothes. The gold market trade shifted elsewhere. To find gold nowadays, visit Al Souq Al Markazi (see above).

Behind the Sharjah Art Foundation offices, Al Shuwaiheen area  
heartofsharjah.ae



## USEFUL SERVICES AND ART SUPPLIES

### **Al Jubail Mobile Phone Trading**

This shop repairs mobile phones.  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road)  
Opening times: 8:30 am – 11:30 pm  
+971 52 734 7738

### **Al Mutanabbi Bookstore**

This store has a good range of books, art supplies and stationery.  
Off Al Mureijah Street, behind old Sharjah cinema, Al Mureijah area  
+971 6 568 3499

### **Dar Al Hayat Bookstore**

This store sells art supplies and stationery.  
Near Sharjah Central Post Office  
+971 6 572 3736

### **New Century Computer LLC**

This organisation works with both companies and individuals.  
They sell hardware and software and offer services such as  
computer repair and data recovery.  
Al Mureijah Street (aka Al Meena Road)  
Opening times: 9:00 am – 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
+971 6 569 3939  
newcenturycomputers.com

### **Tanya Typing & Photocopy Centre**

This company photocopies documents and provides typing  
services for legal documents.  
Al Arouba Street near Rolla Square  
+971 6 561 3021

## MALLS AND CINEMAS

### **City Centre Sharjah**

Al Wahda Road, Industrial Area 1  
+971 6 532 7700  
citycentresharjah.com

### **Mega Mall (with cinema)**

Istaqlal Street, Al Bu Daniq area, near the immigration office  
+971 6 574 2574  
megamall.ae

### **Sahara Centre (with cinema)**

Al Nahda Street, near Ramada Sharjah  
+971 6 531 6611  
saharacentre.com

## SALONS AND SPAS

Note: Salons and spas in Sharjah are gender-specific, and many more salons and spas are available for women than for men. Hotels can usually provide hairdressing and salon services for men, however.

### **Amouage**

A modest ladies-only beauty spa, best known for their AED 250 package: two and a half hours of treatments, including Moroccan bath, mini-facial, massage, manicure and pedicure

5:30 pm – 11:00 pm

Next to Carlton Hotel, Al Khan area

+971 6 528 4888

### **Moon Beauty Parlor**

'Go-to' place for ladies' henna tattoos

Average cost: AED 60 for both hands, front and back (Prices may vary according to design.)

9:00 am – 9:00 pm

Al Shuwaiheen area, across from the SAF Collections Building (a few minutes' walk from SAF offices)

+971 6 568 4502

### **Dalouk Spa**

Similar to five-star hotel experience, extensive facial menu

Saturday – Thursday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm

Friday: 3:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Sharjah Ladies Club, Corniche Street

Near Radisson Blu Hotel

+971 6 506 7880

slc.ae

### **Orchid Beauty Boutique**

Top of its kind in the UAE in terms of service excellence and interior sophistication. High-end brands and products for hair, nails and skin. Experienced team of beauty professionals.

Saturday – Thursday: 9:00 am – 9:00 pm. Friday: 3:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Sharjah Ladies Club, Corniche Street

Near Radisson Blu Hotel

+971 6 506 7878

+971 6 506 7879

slc.ae

### **Saga Spa for Men**

This spa offers a range of spa services for men only.

Ground floor, Al Maha Building, University City

10:00 am – 10:00 pm

+971 6 544 3344

## NEWSPAPERS

The National: [thenational.ae](http://thenational.ae)

Gulf News: [gulfnews.com](http://gulfnews.com)

Khaleej Times: [khaleejtimes.com](http://khaleejtimes.com)

The Gulf Today: [gulftoday.ae](http://gulftoday.ae)

Al Bayan (Arabic): [albayan.ae](http://albayan.ae)

Al Khaleej (Arabic): [alkhaleej.ae](http://alkhaleej.ae)

## WEB RESOURCES ABOUT SHARJAH

Further information about contemporary art and cultural heritage in Sharjah:

[sdci.gov.ae](http://sdci.gov.ae)

[sharjah-heritage.ae](http://sharjah-heritage.ae)

Further information about the emirate of Sharjah and its tourist sites:

[sharjahmydestination.ae](http://sharjahmydestination.ae)

[sharjahmuseums.ae](http://sharjahmuseums.ae)

[sharjah.com](http://sharjah.com)

[sharjah-welcome.com](http://sharjah-welcome.com)

[shjlibrary.ae](http://shjlibrary.ae)

● SHARJAH ART FOUNDATION  
HEAD OFFICES

● SAF VENUES

RESTAURANTS

- A. SHARJAH ART MUSEUM
- B. BAIT AL SHAMSI
- C. EMIRATES FINE ARTS SOCIETY
- D. BAIT AL SERKAL
- E. COLLECTIONS BUILDING
- F. DAR AL NADWA
- G. CALLIGRAPHY MUSEUM
- H. CERAMICS HOUSE
- I. CALLIGRAPHY SQUARE
- J. SHARJAH INSTITUTE OF THEATRICAL ARTS
- K. AL MUREIJAH SQUARE

- 1. GHAZI BAKERY
- 2. FEN CAFÉ
- 3. GHAWA GAHWA
- 4. RATIOS
- 5. SADAF
- 6. NAJMAT LAHORE
- 7. AL KABAB AL AFGHANI
- 8. AL JADEED
- 9. TOOTI FRUTTI
- 10. AL MASKOOF AL IRAQI
- 11. AFRINA IRANIAN SWEETS
- 11. DIPLOMAT





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