



Abu Dhabi

Al Markaziyah p130

With the White Fort (Qasr al Hosn) and the World Trade Centre built on the city's earliest souq, this is the heart of Downtown.

Breakwater & Around p136

Fine dining at the Emirates Palace, a 360-degree view from the Etihad Towers and blue-flagged beaches – welcome to the glamorous end of town.

Al Zahiyah & Al Maryah Island p146

Go shopping in the corner of the city built on trading and watch the new central business district evolve on the island opposite.

Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque & Around p150

Take a tour of the magnificent Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, revered resting place of the 'father of the nation'.

Al Mina & Saadiyat Island p156

Learn how the city founders are building the nation's future at Manarat al Saadiyat.

Yas Island & Around p160

Home to the UAE's Yas Marina Circuit, Yas Island offers an adrenalin rush at Ferrari World or gentler pursuits in the neighbouring mangroves.

Explore

The world's largest hand-loomed carpet, the fastest roller coaster, the highest high tea, the tower with the greatest lean, the largest cluster of cultural buildings of the 21st century – Abu Dhabi is not afraid to challenge world records. Welcome to an exciting city where nothing stands still... except perhaps the herons in the capital's protected mangroves.

For those looking to engage with Gulf culture, Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), offers opportunities to understand this desert nation's human and natural heritage through museums, exhibitions and tours. But thankfully Emirati heritage here isn't boxed and mothballed, it is also experienced through strolls around the dhow harbour, haggling in markets and absorbing the atmosphere at *sheesha* (water pipe) cafes and family picnics in the city's many parks.

The Best...

- **Sights** Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque (p151), Emirates Palace (p137), Abu Dhabi Heritage Village (p137)
- **Places to Eat** Al Arish Restaurant (p158), Café Arabia (p134), Vasco's (p141)
- **Activities** Cycling the Corniche (p145), kayaking through mangroves (p166), Ferrari World (p165)

Top Tips

- **Safety** Walkable day and night.
- **Key areas** Breakwater, the Corniche and two blocks inland.
- **Navigation** Easy grid system despite confusing road names.
- **Bus** Big Bus Tour links main sights in suburbs and islands.

Getting There & Away

- **Air** Abu Dhabi International Airport is one of the biggest and best airports in the world and the national carrier, Etihad, is a multiple-award-winning airline.
- **Bus** Buses between Abu Dhabi's main bus terminal and Dubai's Al Ghubaiba station leave every 40 minutes (single/return Dh20/40, two hours). Intercity buses connect the capital with most Emirati destinations.
- **Car** Abu Dhabi is approximately two

hours' drive from Dubai. Sheikh Zayed Road (Hwy E11) links the two cities.

- **Taxi** A shared/private taxi between Abu Dhabi and Dubai costs around Dh50/250. Al Ghazal (p216) takes advance bookings.

Getting Around

- **Bus** There is a modern, air-con bus network that travels along set routes throughout the day and night. Download a map from **Abu Dhabi Bus Services** (☎800 55 555; dot.abudhabi.ae; within Abu Dhabi Dh2) website.
- **Big Bus Tour** Linking all the major sites in the city and connecting with Yas Island, the double-decker, air-con Big Bus (p144) provides an informative alternative to the public bus service.
- **Big Bus Shuttle** This audio-guided **shuttle service** (☎toll free 800 244 287; www.bigbustours.com; ☎9am-5.30pm) takes in the main points of interest on Yas Island and connects with Masdar City. It intersects with the main Big Bus Tour outside Manarat Al Saadiyat on Saadiyat Island.
- **Bicycle** Funride (p145) cycle-hire stations are scattered about the city.
- **Yas Express** This complimentary shuttle bus links all the main attractions and amenities on Yas Island. The **Yas Express** (☎02-496 8110; www.yasisland.ae; ☎9am-9pm) **FREE** also links Yas with Saadiyat Island.
- **Water Taxi** Traditional water taxis (p156), called *abras*, ply the waters of Khor Al Maqta and link to the Eastern Mangroves Hotel & Spa.

Need to Know

- **Area Code** ☎02
- **Tourist Office** ☎02-444 0444
- **Police/Ambulance** ☎999
- **Tourist Police** ☎02-699 9999

Al Markaziyah

Although Abu Dhabi has many vibrant districts, if you had to put your finger on the one that represents the city centre then the area around the city's oldest building, Qasr Al Hosn, is surely it. At the beating heart of this central district, and built on the former