



*Pocket*  
**ABU DHABI**  
TOP SIGHTS • LOCAL LIFE • MADE EASY

**Jenny Walker**

# In This Book

## QuickStart Guide

Your keys to understanding the city – we help you decide what to do and how to do it



**Need to Know**  
Tips for a smooth trip



**Neighbourhoods**  
What's where

## Explore Abu Dhabi

The best things to see and do, neighbourhood by neighbourhood



**Top Sights**  
Make the most of your visit



**Local Life**  
The insider's city

## The Best of Abu Dhabi

The city's highlights in handy lists to help you plan



**Best Walks**  
See the city on foot



**Abu Dhabi's Best...**  
The best experiences

## Survival Guide

Tips and tricks for a seamless, hassle-free city experience



**Getting Around**  
Travel like a local



**Essential Information**  
Including where to stay

Our selection of the city's best places to eat, drink and experience:

 **Sights**

 **Eating**

 **Drinking**

 **Entertainment**

 **Shopping**

These symbols give you the vital information for each listing:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Telephone Numbers     |  Family-Friendly |
|  Opening Hours         |  Pet-Friendly    |
|  Parking               |  Bus             |
|  Nonsmoking            |  Ferry           |
|  Internet Access       |  Subway          |
|  Wi-Fi Access          |  Tram            |
|  Vegetarian Selection  |  Train           |
|  English-Language Menu |   |

Find each listing quickly on maps for each neighbourhood:



### Bar Hemingway

 Map p233, B2

Legend has it that Hemingway, wielding a machine gun, frequented this timber-paneled bar during his stay in Abu Dhabi. The bar's showpiece is a painting of Hemingway by Papa Hemingway. Open daily from 6.30pm-2a. For more information, visit [www.barhemingway.com](http://www.barhemingway.com); Hôtel Ritzy, Abu Dhabi. ☎ +971 2 451 6300

## Lonely Planet's Abu Dhabi

Lonely Planet Pocket Guides are designed to get you straight to the heart of the city.

Inside you'll find all the must-see sights, plus tips to make your visit to each one really memorable. We've split the city into easy-to-navigate neighbourhoods and provided clear maps so you'll find your way around with ease. Our expert authors have searched out the best of the city: walks, food, nightlife and shopping, to name a few. Because you want to explore, our 'Local Life' pages will take you to some of the most exciting areas to experience the real Abu Dhabi.

And of course you'll find all the practical tips you need for a smooth trip: itineraries for short visits, how to get around, and how much to tip the guy who serves you a drink at the end of a long day's exploration.

It's your guarantee of a really great experience.

## Our Promise

You can trust our travel information because Lonely Planet authors visit the places we write about, each and every edition. We never accept freebies for positive coverage, so you can rely on us to tell it like it is.

## QuickStart Guide 7

Abu Dhabi Top Sights.....	8
Abu Dhabi Local Life.....	12
Abu Dhabi Day Planner.....	14
Need to Know.....	16
Abu Dhabi Neighbourhoods.....	18

## Explore Abu Dhabi 21

22	Al Markaziyah
38	Breakwater & Around
62	Al Zahiya (Tourist Club Area) & Around
74	Al Mina & Saadiyat Island
88	Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque & Around
102	Yas Island & Around

### Worth a Trip:

Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital .....	118
Arabian Saluki Centre .....	120



## The Best of Abu Dhabi 123

### Abu Dhabi's Best Walks

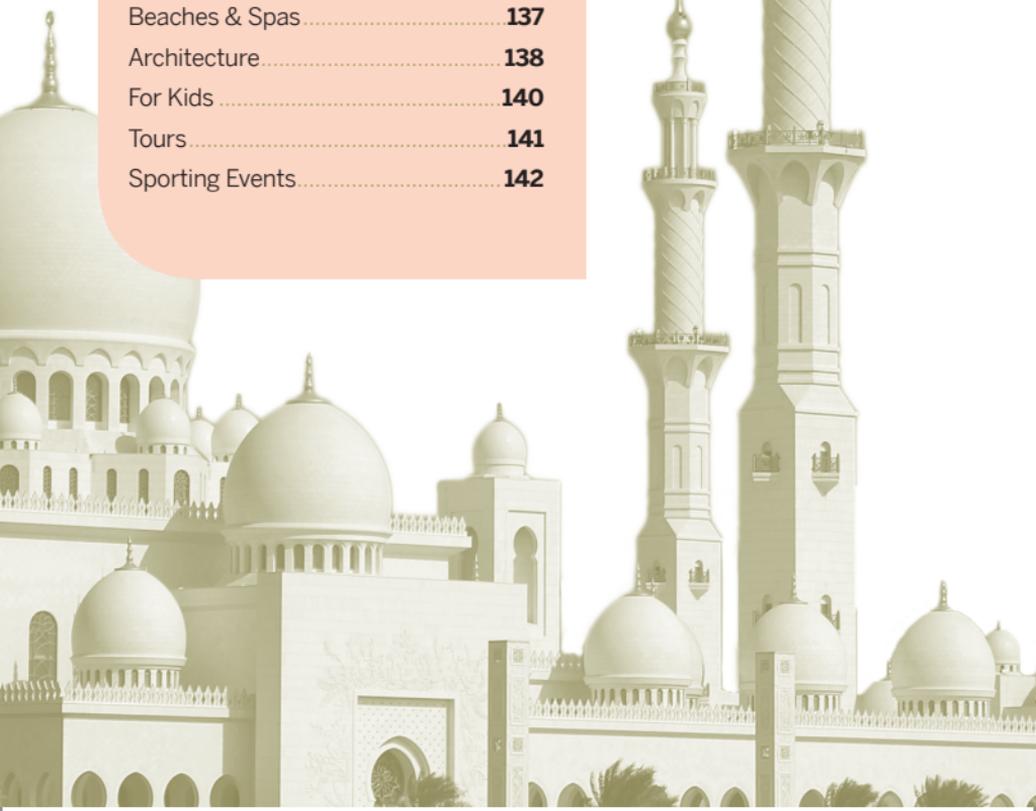
Walking the Abu Dhabi Corniche .....	124
Markets & Malls .....	126

### Abu Dhabi's Best...

Eating .....	128
Nightlife .....	130
Entertainment .....	132
Shopping .....	133
Activities .....	134
Arts & Crafts .....	136
Beaches & Spas .....	137
Architecture .....	138
For Kids .....	140
Tours .....	141
Sporting Events .....	142

## Survival Guide 143

Before You Go .....	144
Arriving in Abu Dhabi .....	146
Getting Around .....	147
Essential Information .....	148
Language .....	151







# Quick Start Guide

Abu Dhabi Top Sights .....	8
Abu Dhabi Local Life .....	12
Abu Dhabi Day Planner .....	14
Need to Know .....	16
Abu Dhabi Neighbourhoods .....	18

## Welcome to Abu Dhabi

The 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, a heron in the capital's protected mangroves.



# Abu Dhabi Top Sights

## Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque (p90)

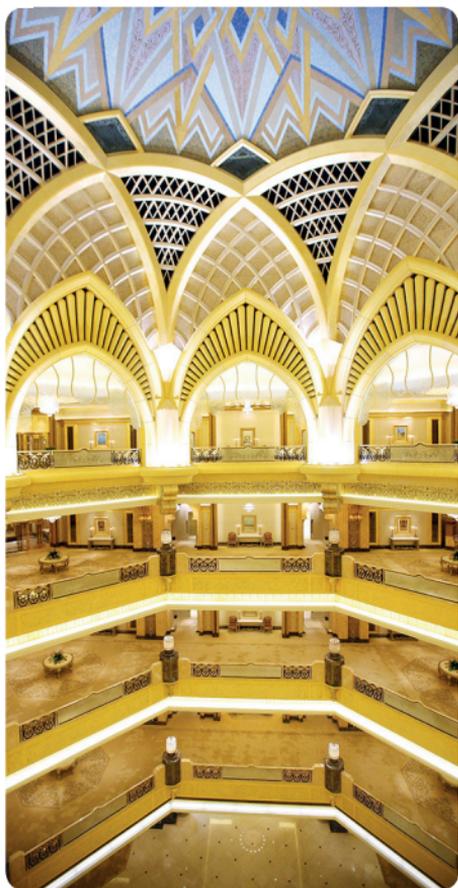
One of Arabia's most magnificent mosques and a symbol of welcome to the city, it's open to non-Muslims.



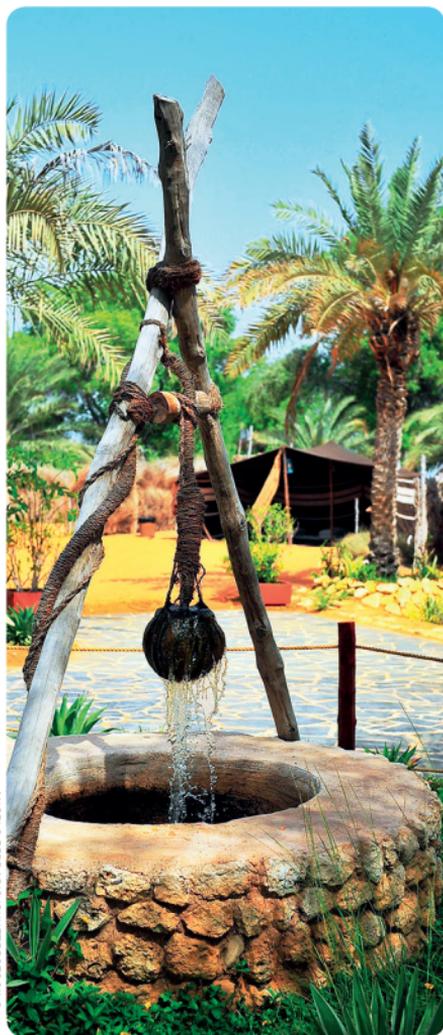
MATTEO COLOMBO/GETTY IMAGES ©

## Emirates Palace (p40)

You know you're somewhere uniquely Gulf when the burger is made of camel, the coffee is scattered with gold leaf and the ATM dispenses ingots.



JOEHEN TACK/GETTY IMAGES ©



ANGELO FERRARIS/SHUTTERSTOCK ©

## Abu Dhabi Heritage Village (p42)

Watch Emirati visitors enjoy the Bedouin part of the village and Abu Dhabi's heritage is quickly revealed. Dhows passing the towering skyline opposite highlight the city's rapid pace of change.



FRANK FELL/GETTY IMAGES ©

## Abu Dhabi Corniche (p24)

Reclaimed from the sea, planted with scented trees and made accessible through walking and cycling paths, the Corniche and its public beaches are the jewel in the crown of this green capital.

## 10 Top Sights

### Manarat Al Saadiyat (p76)

Few modern cities can match the cultural ambitions of Abu Dhabi, which claims the only branch of the Louvre outside France. This exhibition explores the planned cultural district and the inspiration behind the award-winning architecture.



URBANM/TALAMY ©

### Yas Marina Circuit (p104)

Home of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, set beside the spectacular Yas Viceroy hotel and marina, the circuit offers year-round activities. The ride at nearby Ferrari World gives the Formula One cars a run for their money.



LATITUDE STOCK/FRANK FELD/GETTY IMAGES ©

### Abu Dhabi Falcon Hospital (p118)

Falcons occupy a special place in the heart of Emiratis, as witnessed in the waiting rooms of this specialist clinic. Tours help visitors understand the close bond between bird and owner.



FABIAN VON POSER/ROBERT HARDING ©



KARIM SAHIB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES ©

## Arabian Saluki Centre (p120)

Shaggy-eared or smooth-tailed, fast-paced salukis have been the Bedouin's best friends for centuries. This breeding and training centre allows visitors to come nose to nose with the affectionate hounds and their puppies.



IAN MASTERTON/GETTY IMAGES ©

## Sowwah Square (p64)

With some of the most exciting buildings in the newest part of town, this square is the focus of developments on Al Maryah Island. The Galleria adds glamour to the city's new business district.



PHILIPUS/ALAMY ©

## Masdar City (p106)

Built as an experimental project to explore environmentally sustainable urbanisation, Masdar City is powered by solar energy and encompasses a host of other green features. A self-guided tour leads around the key sights.



## Abu Dhabi Local Life

*Insider tips to help you find the real city*

There's pleasure in rooting out the city's heritage, browsing old souqs and exploring mangrove forests. Overlook Abu Dhabi's modern core, however, and you'll miss the point. The city has embraced the 21st century and invites visitors to do the same.

### **A Walk in the Park** (p26)

- ▶ **City life**
- ▶ **Cafes**

In a city of 50°C temperatures, life is often lived in air-conditioned interiors. Town planners, however, have provided many opportunities to stray outdoors. Grab a hat and see how residents connect with the earth in a city of concrete and steel.

### **Markets of Al Mina** (p78)

- ▶ **Tradition**
- ▶ **Shopping**

The mania for malls in Abu Dhabi is regionally shared, and for good reason. Collecting items for trade, which are

organised by kind, sheltered under one roof and accessible on foot, is an ancient practice. Browse Al Mina's markets and the mall's origin becomes apparent.

### **A Nation of Seafarers** (p44)

- ▶ **Beaches**
- ▶ **Sea views**

To understand Abu Dhabi's psyche, you have to engage with the water. Pearls once powered the economy and respect for the sea remains deeply engrained. Ride a dhow, eat fish, enjoy sundowners on a catamaran and see how the coast defines the capital.

### **The Gentler Side of Yas** (p108)

- ▶ **Watersports**
- ▶ **Nature**

Yas Island is the place to go for high-octane motoring excitement, but surprisingly there's a more measured pace to be enjoyed as well. Think cycling and kayaking, or better still, don't think at all as you paddle off into the cloudless sunset.



Gold jewellery for sale  
The beach at Abu Dhabi Corniche (p24)



**Other great ways to  
experience the city  
like a local:**

Corniche Beach (p24)

Abu Dhabi Pearl  
Journey (p96)

Café Arabia (p98)

Qasr Al Hosn Festival  
(p30)

Du Forum (p117)

Women's Handicraft  
Centre (p86)

Grand Stores (p73)

Saudi Cuisine VIP  
(p54)

Centre of Original Ira-  
nian Carpets (p58)