

### **Abu Dhabi cultural expectations**

Abu Dhabi's culture is conservative and based in the Islamic traditions of Arabia. We encourage our attendees to be aware and respectful of this culture. Courtesy and hospitality are among the most highly prized of virtues, and the people are known for warmth and friendliness. The culture also values privacy.

### **Alcohol**

Alcohol is served in hotels and hotel restaurants, although moderation is expected.

### **Behavior**

Conservative, respectful behavior is the cultural expectation. Outside of hotels or conference venue, couples should avoid overt public displays of affection, as that is considered private and inappropriate in public. It is considered offensive to photograph Muslim women.

### **Clothing and dress**

Emiratis wear traditional Islamic attire and head coverings. Visitors should expect to encounter locals in Arab dress. Provided reasonable discretion is shown, the visitor dress code is liberal. As a sign of respect for local culture and customs, all visitors (men and women) are advised not to wear excessively revealing clothing in public places. If visiting mosques or other religious sites, visitors should honor the dress code expectations. Avoid shorts, tank tops, caps, or athletic shoes in these instances.

### **Crime**

The crime rate in Abu Dhabi is very low. Foreigners are able to walk safely in all public areas.

<https://www.numbeo.com/crime/in/Abu-Dhabi>

### **LGBTQ additional considerations and links**

Although there is a lot of misinformation regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer persons in Abu Dhabi, the culture is tolerant of visitors' privacy and different lifestyles. Although homosexuality is illegal in the UAE, in a recent Amnesty International report, the organization said it had no record of anyone being sentenced to death or executed in the UAE for homosexuality. Some individuals have faced detention and fines, in most instances for sexual acts in public.

Approximately 80 percent of Abu Dhabi's population is expatriates, including LGBTQ individuals from other nations; this includes employees of Etihad Airways as well as multiple global companies and medical institutions.

LGBTQ individuals may consider taking additional precautions:

- If traveling with a same-sex partner or companion, consider booking a hotel room with double beds.
- Outside of conference venues and private rooms, avoid public displays of affection.
- Transgender individuals may have additional concerns and considerations, and uncomfortable situations may occur during security screenings, passport control, etc.

For additional information on LGBTQ travel to the UAE, consider visiting the following travel blogs\*. Note: Some information may be sensitive in nature.

<https://queerintheworld.com/gay-abu-dhabi-uae-travel-guide/>

<https://nomadicboys.com/is-abu-dhabi-safe-for-gay-travellers/>

<https://www.wolfyy.com/travel-guide-gay-abu-dhabi/>

### **Passports**

Passports are required for travel to Abu Dhabi. In addition, the passport must be valid for six additional months from the time of travel. Please plan accordingly. Please note: The UAE does not have diplomatic relations with Israel, and citizens with Israeli passports may not enter the country.

### **Photography**

Normal tourist photos are permitted; however, it is considered offensive to photograph Muslim women.

### **Safety information and links**

According to the [United States Department of State](#), American travelers to Abu Dhabi are advised only to take normal precautions. This is a normal travel advisory and is currently lower than that for London, Paris, and every other country in the Middle East except neighboring Dubai.

Travelers from many other countries will find UAE travel is considered safe as well.

Here are some additional safety links that may be helpful\*:

<https://safearound.com/asia/united-arab-emirates/abu-dhabi/>

<https://www.travelsafe-abroad.com/united-arab-emirates/abu-dhabi/>

### **Women's additional considerations and links**

Women are not required to cover their hair or faces and may drive and walk unescorted. As a sign of respect for local culture and customs, women are advised not to wear revealing clothing in public places.

Loose-fitting, conservative, lightweight summer clothing is a good, all-purpose choice. Most clothing appropriate for a business conference is appropriate in public.

If visiting mosques or other religious sites, women should honor the dress code expectations just as at religious locations elsewhere. In these locations, women must be covered from above the shoulders to below the knees and cover their hair. If you intend to visit a mosque, pack accordingly. Many mosques provide shawls and wraps for visitors that can be used while in the mosque and then returned.

For additional information on women traveling the UAE, consider visiting the following travel blogs\*. Note: some information may be sensitive or personal in nature.

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/united-arab-emirates/women-travellers>

<http://magsonthemove.com/uae/>

### **Visa information**

Citizens of Australia, Andorra, Austria, Brunei, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland,

United Kingdom, United States of America, and the Vatican State can get a free-of-charge entry visa upon arrival at Abu Dhabi International Airport.

GCC citizens do not need a visa to enter the UAE.

The UAE does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Citizens of all other countries will need to apply for a Tourist, Transit or Visit Visa prior to their trip. Sigma will have more visa information available prior to congress registration opening.

\*Sigma provides the blogs and links above solely as additional resources but is not responsible for and does not own or endorse the material within.