

Teaching Nomad

Limitations on Lifestyle in the UAE



Limitations on Lifestyle in the United Arab Emirates

When moving to the United Arab Emirates, one of the most important considerations is their more conservative culture in comparison with that of the United States.

While this doesn't necessarily have to be a turn-off, it's essential to be prepared. In the case of the UAE, 95% of the population are Muslim. Respecting the culture and their rules will ensure that you have a more meaningful - and safe - experience in the UAE.

Dress Code

Women

- You do not have to wear a headscarf at all times, but you will need to wear one if you visit any holy sites.
- Don't wear tight-fitting clothing.
- Don't wear spaghetti straps or low v-necks.
- Don't wear sports clothes off the sports field - that includes cycling shorts.
- Bikinis at the beach are okay as long as they are reasonably modest.

- Speedos are allowed at the beach, but swimming shorts are much more acceptable.
- Wear shorts that go below your knees.
- Don't wear women's clothing in public (see below section).

Crimes

In the United Arab Emirates, common law relationships, homosexuality, cross-dressing, and adultery are all illegal and can result in imprisonment. In some emirates, you are not permitted to live with a partner if you aren't married, and extramarital sex is illegal throughout the country.



Things to Keep in Mind

Public displays of affection are socially unacceptable. They have even, in the past, resulted in arrest.

Alcohol is heavily restricted. You can only buy it if you have a liquor license that you get from your employer, and you can only consume alcohol at home and not in public spaces. There are hotels and restaurants which have gotten liquor licenses, but not as many as in the United States.

Ramadan

Be respectful of Ramadan. If you aren't Muslim, you don't have to participate in the fast during Ramadan, which lasts from sunrise to sunset every day. But because it's important to be respectful during this month, don't eat and drink in public during the day. You may still find some cafes and restaurants that will serve you, but this food should still be consumed at home.

If you keep your wits about you and remember to follow the cultural guidelines, you can have a truly rewarding experience in the United Arab Emirates!

