

**OFFICIAL NAME:** United Arab Emirates

**CAPITAL:** Abu Dhabi

**SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT:** Confederate of Absolute Monarchies

**AREA:** 83,600 Sq Km (32,278 Sq Mi)

**ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION:** 2,195,600

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**LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY:** The United Arab Emirates is located on the southeastern end of the Arabian Peninsula and consists of seven emirates, which are Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubayy, Al Fujayrah, Ra's al Khaymah, Shariqah and Umm al Qaywayn. It is bound by the Persian Gulf to the north, Oman to the east, Saudi Arabia to the west and south as well as Qatar to the northwest. The country is an inhospitable desert while the Trucial coast is characterized by shallow seas, reefs, sandbars and islets. To the west the salt flats or Sabkha extend southward for 112 km (70 miles). The only mountainous area is in the Al Fujayrah emirate where the Hajar Mountains are the country's highest point. Major Cities (pop. est.); Dubayy 585,200, Abu Dhabi 363,400, al-Ayn 176,400 (1989). Land Use; pastures 2%, agricultural-cultivated 0.5%, desert and other 97.5% (1993).

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**CLIMATE:** The United Arab Emirates has an arid subtropical climate with humidity exceeding 85% on the coast. Rainfall is limited and erratic with an annual average precipitation ranging from 25 mm (1 inch) to 925 mm (5 inches) and droughts are also common. The wettest months are February and March while the prevailing winds include the cool Shamal from the northeast and the Khamsin from the south which produces sandstorms. Average temperature ranges in Sharjah are from 12 to 23 degrees Celsius (54 to 73 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 28 to 38 degrees Celsius (82 to 102 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

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**PEOPLE:** The principal ethnic majority are the Arabs who account for 87% of the population while Indians and Pakistanis account for 9%. Other groups of non-United Arab Emirate Arabs include Palestinians, Egyptians, Iraqis and Lebanese.

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**DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS:** Density; 25 persons per sq km (65 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 77.8% urban, 22.2% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 67.4% male, 32.6% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 69.8 years male, 74.1 years female (1993). Age Breakdown; 30% under 15, 20% 15 to 29, 34% 30 to 44, 12% 45 to 59, 3% 60 to 74, 1% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 20.3 per 1,000 (1993). Death Rate; 3.9 per 1,000 (1993). Increase Rate; 16.4 per 1,000 (1993). Infant Mortality Rate; 12.0 per 1,000 live births (1991).

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**RELIGIONS:** The official religion is Islam with 80% of the population Sunni Muslims while Christians account for less than 4% of the population.

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**LANGUAGES:** The official language is Arabic while English is widely used for commerce and administrative purposes.

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**EDUCATION:** Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 72.2%, primary 5.2%, secondary 16.6%, higher 6.0% (1975). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 858,149 or 73.0% (1986).

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**MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993:** In 1958 oil was discovered in Abu Dhabi and the emirate began to export crude oil in 1962. In 1966 large oil deposits were found in Dubai and oil production began in Sharjah in 1974. In 1971 the Trucial emirates gained full independence from Britain and all the emirates, except Ras al Khaymah which joined in early 1972, formed the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Dec. 1, 1971. In the same year UAE became a member of the Arab League and the UN. The rulers of the seven emirates form the Federal Supreme Council (FSC) and are responsible for the approval of the President's nominated members of the consultative council or Federal National Council (FNC). Since independence Sheik Zaid of Abu Dhabi has been President with Sheik Rashid of Dubai as Vice President and Prime Minister. In 1981 UAE and other East Arabian countries formed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). In Oct. 1990 Sheik Rashid of Dubai died and was succeeded by his eldest son Sheik Maktum. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait Pres. Sheik Zaid agreed to the deployment of US-led coalition forces on his territory. On July 5, 1991 the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) in which the government had a 74% share holding collapsed, following which the government arrested a number of BCCI executives. Also in 1991 Pres. Sheik Zaid along with other emirate leaders supported the US and UK during operation Desert Storm. The government provided some USD \$500 million to the UK and \$2.8 billion to the US to assist in the liberation of Kuwait. In April 1992 tensions between the UAE and Iran increased over Iran's refusal to allow several hundred expatriates to return to the Abu Musa, an island near the Strait of Hormuz under joint administration with Iran following a 1971 accord. Following which Iran annexed Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb into its Hormozgan province fearing that a US military base was going to be established there. In Jan. 1993 Pres. Sheik Zaid reestablished the appointed Federal National Council and announced that plans to establish a permanent capital on the Abu Dhabi-Dubai border. In 1993 UAE insisted that the situation over the annexation be submitted to international arbitration. In May 1993 the Iranian Foreign Minister met with UAE officials, following which an announcement was made that talks would resume. On Oct. 19, 1993 the BCCI executives arrested over the collapse of the bank went on trial on charges of forgery and false accounting.

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**CURRENCY:** The official currency is the Dirham (Dh) divided into 100 Fils.

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**ECONOMY:** Gross National Product; USD \$38,720,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$1,067,000,000 (1991). Imports; USD \$23,883,000,000 (1994). Exports; USD \$20,906,000,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; N/A. Balance of Trade; USD -\$2,977,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 733,500 or 36.9% of total population (1992). Unemployed; N/A.

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**MAIN TRADING PARTNERS:** Its main trading partners are Japan, France, the Netherlands, the USA, Spain, the UK, Italy and the Netherlands Antilles.

**MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS:** Camels, Cattle, Fish, Fruit and Vegetables, Goats, Oil and Natural Gas, Sheep.

**MAJOR INDUSTRIES:** Aluminum Smelting, Cement, Fish Processing, Fish Meal, Natural Gas Liquefaction, Oil Production, Steel Milling.

**MAIN EXPORTS:** Crude Oil, Fish Meal, Natural Gas, Prawns, Shrimps.

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**TRANSPORT:** Railroads; nil. Roads; length 4,360 km (2,709 mi) (1984). Vehicles; cars 61,146 (1984), trucks and buses 16,618 (1984). Merchant Marine; vessels 253 (1990), deadweight tonnage 1,157,786 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 3,876,000,000 (2,408,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 145,097,000 (99,377,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

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**COMMUNICATIONS:** Daily Newspapers; total of 11 with a partial circulation of 335,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 490,000 (1994). Television; receivers 170,000 (1994). Telephones; lines 623,800 (1993).

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**MILITARY:** 70,000 (1995) total active duty personnel with 92.8% army, 2.1% navy and 5.1% air force while military expenditure accounts for 5.7% (1994) of the Gross National Product (GNP).