

Local Culture and Traditions

What is the official religion in Abu Dhabi?

Islam is the official religion of the UAE, which is widely practised by Emirati nationals as well as expatriates originating from other Arab countries, Pakistan, Africa and India, amongst others.

Are non-Muslims welcome in Abu Dhabi?

Absolutely. Abu Dhabi, as is the entire UAE, is tolerant of other religions. Residents and visitors who profess a different faith are allowed to perform their religious duties such as attending worship services or mass in churches or chapels.

What might be considered appropriate in terms of clothing for males and females visiting Abu Dhabi?

The dress code in Abu Dhabi is generally relaxed although it is recommended for visitors to avoid wearing very revealing clothes (e.g sleeveless tops or very short skirts or shorts) whenever they are in public places, out of respect to local culture and traditions.

When is Ramadan and how is it observed in Abu Dhabi?

Ramadan generally falls on the ninth month of the Islamic calendar year (Al Hijri), where observant Muslims not only abstain from food, drinking and smoking from dawn to dusk, but in general practise restraint from all activities or behaviours that are not compatible with Islamic values. During Ramadan eating, smoking and drinking any beverage in public areas are not allowed until the fast is broken (iftaar) at dusk. For 2008, Ramadan is expected to begin on September 1, subject to moon sighting. Ramadan is observed by Muslims for 29 or 30 days.

Why are there certain days of the week when some parks and recreation centres are allocated only for ladies and children?

This practice is in line with the local custom where some Muslim women prefer not to be seen in public by men who are not their relatives.