



Learn Your World: United Arab Emirates

Skills and Professional Development



To support your global practice, ACC Docket offers country-specific fun facts from your peers who've been there — literally.



**Economy
Population
Corruption**

Additional Resources

GDP (US\$) \$272 billion
9,205,621 (2013 estimate)
According to Transparency International's "2013 Corruption Perception Index," the United Arab Emirates is the 26th "cleanest" (i.e., least corrupt) country out of the 177 that were scored.
United Arab Emirates Council of Tourism & Antiquities

If you're an executive on your first-ever visit to the region, these are among the questions you would inevitably ask: What am I supposed to wear? Can I shake hands with a Middle Easterner of the opposite sex?

Generally, you can wear whatever you wear back home in a professional setting, bearing in mind the need to remain modest. Unless you work in a business-conservative office (rare here), business casual is pretty much the norm. If you have Arab colleagues in the office from the UAE or the surrounding Gulf states, it is very common to see them resplendent in their national dress – the white thobe for men and the black abaya for women – for work.

For men, wearing what you wear in the office back home should be acceptable, but of course bring a suit and tie in case you have business dinners, meetings or conferences to attend. For ladies, as a general rule, it's a good idea to wear something that covers your shoulders and knees. Unless you're visiting a mosque, you do not need an abaya and are not expected to cover your hair.

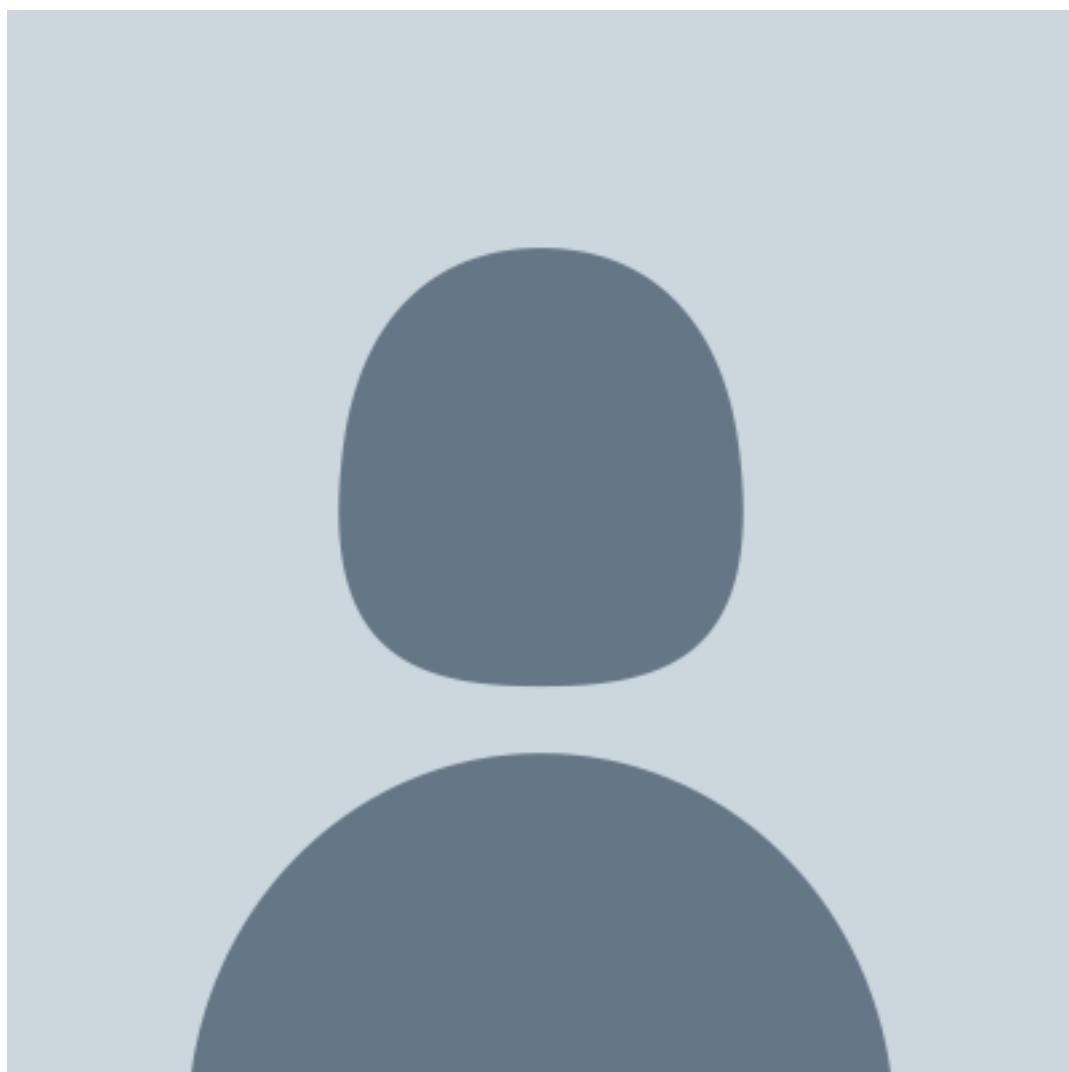
One tip: Bring a cardigan or jacket. It may be a desert outside, but the temperatures indoors reach levels that would make a polar bear comfortable. It's also a good idea to make an effort to look well

put together – people in this part of the world take special pride in looking (and smelling) their best. If you need a new outfit or a new perfume, no problem; you can shop to your heart's content here. Plan your trip accordingly, though, because the weekend in the UAE falls on Friday and Saturday, and malls are open until midnight Thursday through Saturday.

If you arrive in the office and realize you are meeting with business associates of the opposite sex, especially if they are Middle Eastern, it's sensible to wait until the other person extends his or her hand to you. Pious Muslims do not shake hands with or touch persons of the opposite sex, so do not be offended if one or more people refuse to shake your hand. You may instead see them put their right hand over their left hand and nod their head to acknowledge you. While we're on the topic of hands – avoid using your left hand to accept or give items or to eat as the left hand is considered unclean.

I hope these tips help you on your upcoming trip. As we say here, *ahlan wa sahlan* (welcome).

[Farida Alkaff](#)



Legal Counsel & Regional Compliance Officer

Aptec – an Ingram Micro Company

Dubai, UAE