



United Arab Emirates



Country Overview:

Location: Middle east, bordering the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf, between Oman and Saudi Arabia

Size: 83,600 sq. km.

Population: 5,148,664

Capital: Abu Dhabi

Export-commodities: crude oil 45%, natural gas, reexports, dried fish, dates

Import-commodities: machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, food

Religion: Muslim 96% (Shia 16%), other (includes Christian, Hindu) 4%

Ethnic groups: Emirati 19%, other Arab and Iranian 23%, South Asian 50%, other expatriates (includes Westerners and East Asians) 8%

Government type: federation with specified powers delegated to the UAE federal government and other powers reserved to member emirates

Chief of State: President KHALIFA bin Zayid Al-Nuhayyan (since Nov. 2004)

Head of Government: Prime Minister and Vice President MUHAMMAD bin Rashid Al-Maktum (since Jan. 2006)

Language: Arabic (official), Persian, English, Hindi, Urdu

United Arab Emirates is the 53rd largest economy in the world.



United Arab Emirates / Al Imarat al Arabiyah al

Meetings and Negotiations

- Be **punctual**, and **confirm** date and time prior to meeting.

- When addressing your Emirati business partner you may find names to be confusing, so it is best to use their names in **English**. Be sure to know full names and the appropriate way to address them (including title).

- A customary greeting is *salaam alaikum* 'əs-sə-läm-ə-lī-kum' [*peace be upon you*] . Shaking hands and saying alaikum as-salam [and upon you be peace] comes next.

- When greeting **shake hands** with the most senior person first. A more **traditional** greeting between men involves grasping each other's right hand, placing the left hand on the other's right shoulder and exchanging kisses on each cheek. A business woman should wait for the man to initiate the greeting.

- Carry multiple **business cards** because they will be exchanged often.

Business Attire

- Emiratis are very conservative regarding wardrobe; the chest, shoulders, stomach, calves, and thighs should be covered.

- Men wear a long sleeve jacket and shirt with a collar, tie and pants. **Avoid** wearing jewelry; specifically around the neck.

- Women dress modestly with loose clothing.

Behavior

- Alcohol and pork are **not consumed** by those that observe the Muslim religion.

- The left hand is considered **unclean** and used for hygiene purposes; **avoid** using it to eat, hand or touch things.

- The thumbs up hand gesture is considered **offensive**.

- **Avoid** crossing your legs while sitting or showing the bottoms of your feet!

- Whenever two men arrive at a doorway, the one on the right always enters first, regardless of respective rank.

Gift Giving

- When giving a gift use discretion and modesty.

- Emirati's greatly appreciate a gift that is of good **quality** and make.

- The gift will be opened in private by the receiver.

Appropriate Gifts:

- Perfume/cologne (**not** for an Egyptian), or food items from your country

Gifts to Avoid:

- **Alcohol**, perfumes containing alcohol, pigskin products, personal items, sharp objects, toy dogs or gifts of pictures of dogs

Business Tips continued

Conversation

-The majority of Emiratis speak Arabic, but within international business companies there should be an English speaker on staff.

-An Emirati may want to discuss controversial topics, such as religion and politics. Give your opinion, but always let them have time for rebuttal.

-Conversation and debate should

not be a win or lose situation, but instead an **exchange of ideas** and learning for both parties.

-Intelligent argument is admired and welcome, but only when it is courteous and reasoned.

-At a meeting, the person who asks the most questions is likely to be the least important. The decision maker is likely a silent observer.

-Do not feel obligated to speak during a moment of silence. Loud speech and raucous laughter are considered **vulgar**.

Topics to Discuss:

-Sports, international politics, religion

Topics to Avoid:

-Women (even when regarding female family members), Israel