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For people with a passion for travel

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In memory of co-founder & publisher **Paul Morrison**

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US DISTRIBUTION

Wanderlust, ISSN 1351-4733, is published monthly except Dec/Jan and Jul/Aug combined issues and is distributed in the USA by Pitney Bowes International Mailing Services Inc as mailing agent. Periodicals postage paid at Kearny, NJ and additional mailing offices.

CONTRIBUTIONS & WORK EXPERIENCE

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♦ Bruce Sawford, Bruce Sawford Licensing
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Printing Wyndeham Roche, Victoria Business Park Roche, St Austell, Cornwall PL26 8LX

Newstrade distribution COMAG Specialist: 01895 433800

Footnotes maps Digital Mapping (Tel: 02920 912192)

Office camera Nikon D80

Video camera Sony DCR-SR72

Office binoculars Swarovski EL 8x32s

Staff travel insurance InsureandGo

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KHAIREL ANUAR

Winner of the Visitors' Vote in the 2015 *Wanderlust* Travel Photo of the Year competition

The amateur snapper wowed you with his shot of Indonesian girls waiting to perform at Bali's Melasti Festival, with visitors to the London Destinations Travel Show 2016 voting it their favourite – see Khairrel's winning image on p10

Mountain, desert, ocean or jungle... which are you?

I'm a jungle man who loves the ocean, desert and mountains for photography.

First great travel experience?

Travelling on a tight budget for 28 days through Burma.

Favourite journey?

Travelling across India for 45 days, covering Delhi, Varanasi, Agra, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Pushkar.

Top five places worldwide?

Pushkar, India; Bagan, Burma; Varanasi, India; Nepal; Bali, Indonesia.

Passport stamp you're proudest of?

India.

Passport stamp you'd most like to have?

Any from Mongolia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Patagonia, Svalbard, Kenya or Papua New Guinea for my photography.

Guilty travel pleasure?

I enjoy local Indian street food – ignore its bad reputation!



DAVID MILLAR

Author and UAE expert

Author of *Beyond Dubai: Seeking Lost Cities in the Emirates*, David looks past the United Arab Emirates' modern metropolises to share the country's secret spots worth visiting (p74)

Mountain, desert, ocean or jungle... which are you?

Deserts with mountains.

First great travel experience?

When I was 21, I spent a month flying around the Antarctic for my PhD. Then, on the way home, I travelled around New Zealand for a month.

The experience changed my perspective on the world forever.

Favourite journey?

The journey of life. OK, seriously, along the north Norfolk coast by bicycle.

Top five places worldwide?

Haida Gwaii islands, Canada; Oman; the UK; New Zealand; Antarctica.

Passport stamp you're proudest of?

It has to be Scott Base in Antarctica.

Passport stamp you'd most like to have?

I would love to have had Mesopotamia – ie Iraq before 1920.

Guilty travel pleasure?

Noise-cancelling headphones. You arrive much less tired.



EMILY CHAPPELL

Author and cyclist

Emily is crazy about two-wheeled travel and used to work as a cycle courier in London in between adventures. She shares tips on how to cycle in extreme winter, learnt from cycling from Anchorage to Seattle, on p77.

Mountain, desert, ocean or jungle... which are you?

Mountains, definitely.

First great travel experience?

Cycling from Wales to Japan.

Favourite journey?

My recent winter ride from Anchorage to Seattle – snowy mountains and solitude all the way.

Top five places worldwide?

Northern Pakistan; western Canada; Japan; Slovenia; and home, wherever it happens to be.

Passport stamp you're proudest of?

The exit stamp that shows I managed to cycle over 1,600km through China in 11 days, to beat a tight visa deadline.

Passport stamp you'd most like to have?

One that will guarantee me entry into the US – since I've been to Iran in the last five years, it's no longer certain they'll let me in.

Guilty travel pleasure?

Binge-reading murder mysteries I find on hostel bookshelves.

Wanderlust Mission Statement

Wanderlust aims to inform and inspire all your travel adventures. We strive to bring you the most trusted and reliable information in the world. That's why we are always upfront about whether our writers have travelled independently or with a tour company. When a tour operator has been used we always try to use those who've scored a minimum satisfaction rating of 85% from readers in our annual awards and we never guarantee positive coverage. Responsible and sustainable travel is at the heart of everything we do.



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■ The Wanderlust Masterclass

Know your.. United Arab Emirates

All of us have heard of Dubai. Mainly as the glittery playground of the super rich packed with towering skyscrapers, city-sized malls and man-made islands. A few may also know of Abu Dhabi, albeit largely as a stopover en route to Asia or Australasia. But what about Fujairah, Sharjah or Ras al-Khaimah?

Seven emirates make up the UAE (United Arab Emirates), but do any of them hold any interest for serious travellers? Read on to see another side to this oft misunderstood nation, beyond the glitz and glamour of Dubai...

DUBAI

Despite its relatively small share of the UAE's oil wealth, Dubai spent big and grew likewise. Today, it's a land of superlatives: the tallest building in the world (the 830m-high Burj Khalifa), the largest shopping mall (Dubai Mall), the busiest airport. For many it's a transit stop, but away from the malls and waterparks there is a gleam of authenticity.

"Dubai was built on trade," said David Millar, author of *Beyond Dubai: Seeking Lost Cities in the Emirates*, "and its creek still bustles with *dhow*s carrying cargo." Head to Al Fahidi Fort, the emirate's oldest building, which doubles as a heritage museum.

If you look, there's plenty of culture to be found. "Soak up Arabic art in Bastakiya, or wander the gold and spice souks of Bur Dubai and Deira, and then visit Jumeirah Mosque," advises *Wanderlust's* web editor and former Dubai resident Hazel Plush.

Elsewhere, just a mile from the vertiginous Burj lie the 9th-century Jumeirah ruins – a former trading post linking Iraq and Oman. There's even wildlife to be found in the city-centre wetland reserve of Ras Al Khor, a haven for flamingos and other birdlife. Proof that Dubai isn't *all* about the money.

HOW TO GET THERE: Flights depart from many UK airports to Dubai; flight time from 7hrs.

'There is plenty of culture if you look for it in Dubai. Soak up Arabic art in Bastakiya, or wander the gold and spice souks of Bur Dubai and Deira, and then visit Jumeirah Mosque'

ABU DHABI

This emirate accounts for nearly 90% of the country (and its oil), but much is desert: the famed Empty Quarter. Its capital (and that of the UAE) is the antithesis of Dubai: where one spent on commerce, the other went for culture, with the Louvre Abu Dhabi opening this year and a Guggenheim to follow.

On local culture, the giant Sheikh Zayed Mosque is a modern wonder in itself. Be sure to also stroll the corniche to its dhow harbour, before visiting the city's oldest building, the 18th-century Qasr Al Hosn Fort.

Elsewhere in the emirate, the 'garden city' of Al Ain is very different. "Its Jebel Hafeet is a stone monolith that rises to 1,249m and gives great views," said David. Also head for Sheikh Zayed Palace Museum, the former ruler's residence, and Al Jahili Fort, which was erected to defend its palm groves.

Another splash of desert greenery is Liwa Oasis, a series of villages in a 100km arc. The towering Moreeb Dune, one of the planet's tallest, is only 25km away, but the standout is the island of Sir Bani Yas, a nature reserve that is home to endangered Arabian oryx and the ruins of a Christian monastery.

HOW TO GET THERE: Flights depart from many UK airports to Abu Dhabi; from 7hrs.

RAS AL-KHAIMAH

Nestled against the Hajar Mountains, Ras al-Khaimah is actually a lot older than Dubai and Abu Dhabi having once been a major world trading centre some 1,000 years ago. "It also has real natural beauty," explained Hazel. "Think sweeping desert, mountain-scapes and an untouched coastline."

Climb Jebal Al Jais, the UAE's highest mountain, in the Hajar peaks - also home to the UNESCO-listed prehistoric settlements of Bat, Al Khutm and Al Ayn. Elsewhere, Jazirat Al Hamra, an abandoned coral-blocked fishing village, and 16th-century Dhayah Fort, which now rewards visitors with panoramic vistas, are well worth a visit.

HOW TO GET THERE: Fly to Dubai; Ras al-Khaimah is a 2hr drive from there.

FUJAIRAH

East-coast Fujairah has a very different feel to the rest of the UAE. David calls it a "hidden jewel", and it is visited far less by travellers. Its namesake fort - the country's oldest - has also just reopened after renovations.

"The UAE's oldest mosque, Al Badiyah, is in Fujairah, too," adds Middle East expert Matthew Teller. But the emirate's main draw is its reefs, which are perfect for snorkelling and diving. Swim in the shallow waters of Martini and Sharm Rock to spot rays, reef sharks and turtles near Shark Island and Snoopy Island (named after the cartoon dog).

HOW TO GET THERE: Fly to Dubai; Fujairah is around a 2hr drive from there.

SHARJAH

Sharjah is Dubai's near-neighbour - though very different. It brims with history: a rich combination of forts and souks. Its 'heritage centre' is also sprinkled with museums, including the 19th-century Al Hisn Fort, which reopened in 2015 with a number of exhibits exploring its ruling family's history.

The retail-heavy Blue Souk is the city's most famous landmark, but try Souq Al Arsah instead - one of the UAE's oldest. Out of the city: dune safaris are popular, while fragments of the emirate lie on the country's east coast - a snorkelling hotspot.

HOW TO GET THERE: Fly to Dubai; Sharjah is around a 20min drive from there.

UMM AL-QUWAIN & AJMAN

Little Umm al-Quwain has stuck to its traditional roots since it began life as a fishing village. It is home to two important archaeological sites, though: Al Dur, a huge 2,000-year-old coastal city, and Tell Abraq, a desert city dating from around 2,000BC.

Ajman is even tinier, and apart from its namesake fort, its main claim to fame is its traditional dhow building yard, the largest one still operating in the world.

HOW TO GET THERE: Fly to Dubai; Ajman is around a 45min drive from there; Umm al-Quwain is about 1.5hrs.

DID YOU KNOW?
 Train travel is about to take off in the UAE. Around 1,200km of passenger and freight lines are currently under construction.

■ Case study

HAZEL PLUSH

Wanderlust's web editor spent two years in Dubai and shares her UAE insights



Did your original perception of the UAE change after you lived there?

I was definitely surprised. The UAE is the victim of snobbery among travellers - it's too rich, too fake, too showy. But that's not the case. It doesn't have the carefully-preserved relics that we're used to in European cities, or the ancient monuments you'll find in Asia or South America - so you have to realign your expectations if you're expecting historical treasures. But Emirati traditions live on in everyday life: the coffee and date hospitality, the elaborate haggling dance in the souks, the camel races, the woven date palms, the waft of incense on a warm desert breeze. Once I'd opened my mind to that, I could see there was a lot more to the Emirates than I'd been led to believe. **I'm in Dubai, what can I visit away from the shopping malls?**

Seek out the criminally under-visited historical spots in the city, such as Bastakiya and the gold and spice souks. During Ramadan they host *iftar* (meals to break the fast) at Jumeirah Mosque - an excellent way to learn about Muslim culture and UAE life.

Best way to get around the UAE? Base yourself in Dubai or Abu Dhabi and start exploring from there. Group tours leave from both, as do long-distance buses to the other Emirates. But to really explore, you can't beat hiring a car.

Best things about Emirati culture? Emirati culture is warm, welcoming, but rather elusive. The Emirati are private people, mostly traditional (although liberal when they fancy) and incredibly proud of their fascinating culture. In the cities they're happy to splash their newfound wealth with abandon. But you'll probably only encounter Emiratis at passport control - although, venturing further afield, you'll meet locals who still dedicate their lives to their land and animals. **W**