

Soak up the sun at 11 of Abu Dhabi's best beaches

Abu Dhabi has a beach type to suit every traveller, whether you're after a laid-back stretch of powder-soft white sand near the city, a family-friendly escape on a remote island home to 17,000 free-roaming animals, or a luxury break on a lush boutique private island with swings that soar over the sea. Many of the emirate's world-class hotels boast their own pristine beachfront facilities, but the UAE capital's public beaches are gorgeous too. Whichever you prefer, you'll soon find a refreshing way to escape the bustle of life, soaking up Abu Dhabi's year-round sunshine before cooling off in the shimmering turquoise waters of the Arabian Gulf.

ARTICLE

1 Saadiyat Beach

With pristine white sands stretching along a generous shore, the public [Saadiyat Beach](#) is one of the most desirable beach locations in the UAE. And if you love a beautiful beach with a side of eco-conscious savvy, this one's for you.

Local authorities here are dedicated to preserving the natural environment, with a dune-protection zone and restrictions on development in place. Access to the beach is via a wooden boardwalk, so the area is rich with wildlife, including critically endangered Hawksbill turtles that use the beach as their nesting ground. Hatching sites are protected by strict environmental measures and patrolled by trained personnel. When you're not turtle watching, this beach is home to everything from beach yoga to eco-friendly watersports activities such as windsurfing and sailing.



2 Saadiyat Beach Club

Luxury meets natural simplicity at the [Saadiyat Beach Club](#), where you can while away a whole day or go for a magical sunset and meal. Enjoy breathtaking beauty

on a lounge set on a 9km stretch of Blue Flag-certified beach. Look out for dolphins playing in the bay or for Hawksbill turtles, as the club is part of the protected habitat where these critically endangered creatures have nested for years. After, take a refreshing dip in the 650-square-metre outdoor chilled pool, surrounded by gorgeous private cabanas that appear to float magically above the shimmering water. After all this activity, you certainly won't go hungry. The club features a range of top-notch restaurants and hosts regular foodie events, including a Friday bunch.

3 Corniche Beach

There are many reasons this city beach is so popular with locals and tourists. The turquoise sea, view of Lulu Island, swaying palm trees and gardens make this spotlessly maintained Blue Flag public beach an unexpected gem in the heart of the UAE capital. [Corniche Beach](#) boasts a seaside boardwalk, manicured gardens, walking and cycling pathways, a children's play area, and several restaurants and cafes. The 2km beach is divided into three sections: Al Sahil (Gate 4, free entry) is perfect for singles and larger groups, while Gate 2 (which has its own quiet zone) and Gate 3 are great for families. Showers, changing rooms and cabanas are available, and sun loungers and umbrellas can be hired. Free sports facilities include volleyball courts, football pitches and playing fields. To get out on the water, rent a speedboat or go snorkelling.

4 Yas Beach

Yas Island, Abu Dhabi's family-friendly entertainment hub just a 30-minute drive from the city, is home to a F1™ race track, theme parks, a links golf course, stunning hotels, an impressive mall – and the beautiful [Yas Beach](#).

On the island's tranquil southern shore, Yas Beach is a great spot to relax and enjoy the gorgeous sun on soft sand beside a sparkling sea. There are stunning beach cabanas and loungers available, as well as moreish food and refreshments at the beach's restaurant and food stalls. Guests staying at Yas Plaza hotels have complimentary beach access on presentation of their room card or hotel voucher.



5 Al Bateen Beach

This gorgeous, free Blue Flag beach covers 800 metres of picturesque waterfront in one of the city's quieter areas. It overlooks Hudariyat Island and Hudariyat Bridge, so it offers unique views. Pack a picnic and pick a gazebo, sun lounger or day bed to settle in for the day. The beach's two main areas are constantly kept safe by on-duty security and lifeguards. There's a playground to keep kids busy, as well as a restaurant to satiate your appetite if you're not picnicking. Activities include football, volleyball and tennis, or rent a kayak or paddleboard from the water-sports centre.

6 Al Bateen Beach for Women

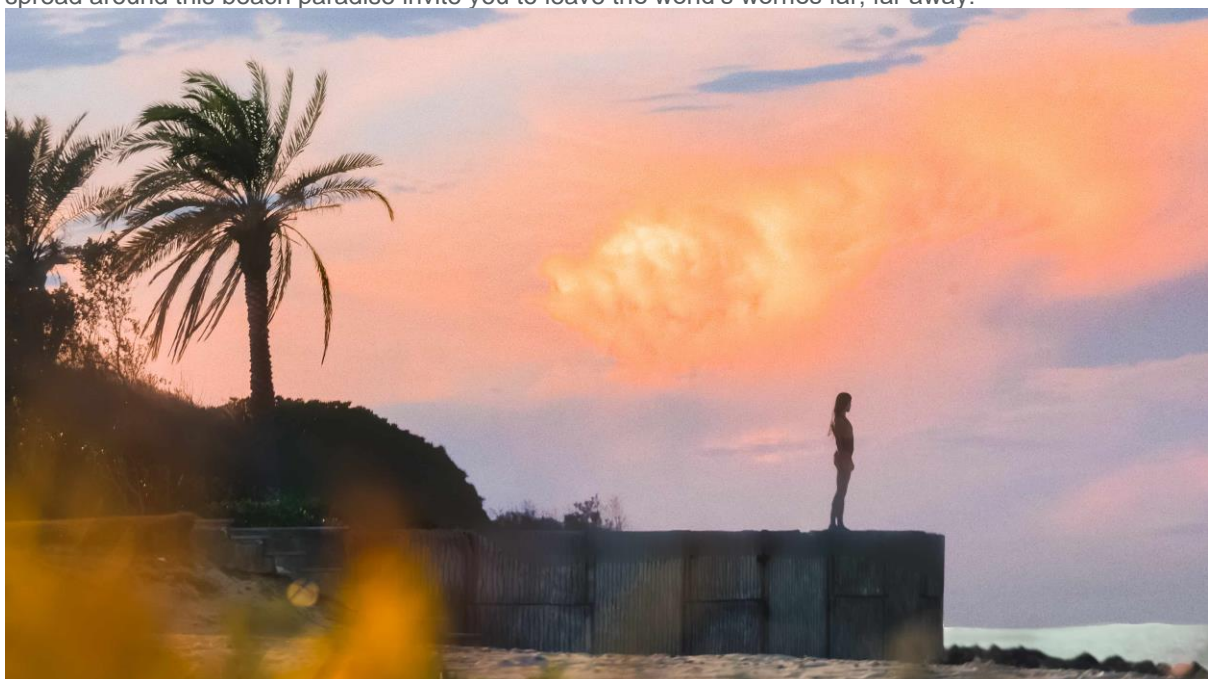
For a laid-back beach experience, [Al Bateen Beach for Women](#) is a private space valued by ladies. Awarded Blue Flag status for its clean beach, water and impeccable environmental and safety standards, this dedicated ladies-only beach accommodates up to 1,100 women and children in its waters, while the shoreline can welcome nearly 5,000 visitors to sunbathe, relax and enjoy the beach. The lifeguards are women and fences and barriers ensure privacy, with cameras, animals, fishing and camping strictly prohibited. Open from 8am to 9pm, the beach allows swimming only until sunset.

7 Zaya Nurai Island

For barefoot luxury, head to this boutique private island resort – just a 12-minute boat ride from Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island and an hour from downtown Abu Dhabi.

This [island](#) escape is popular with those wanting the complete 'beach retreat' experience, from luxurious villas with calming plunge-pools and a range of restaurants, to tee-pees on the soft sand and swings suspended over the sea.

Everything here is designed to ease stress. Wellness enthusiasts can do some sunset yoga, the Nurai Spa offers a range of rejuvenating treatments right next to the sea, while the range of hammocks and day beds spread around this beach paradise invite you to leave the world's worries far, far away.



8 Nation Riviera Beach Club

This exclusive beachfront retreat and fitness centre is connected to The St. Regis Abu Dhabi on the Corniche. It's open to the hotel's guests as well as members and day visitors. If working out and staying fit is important to you even while you're on holiday, you'll be spoilt for choice here as there are many ways you can get active while enjoying sea views. Think swimming pools, personal trainers, beach volleyball, boot camps, and indoor or beach-circuit training. [The beach club's](#) watersports centre also offers kayaking, paddleboarding and more. Prefer something more leisurely? The club's 200-metre stretch of pristine beach is perfect for a few hours of peace. After, savour a memorable beach-side meal at the club's Cabana Bar and Grill.

9 Intercontinental Bayshore

The InterContinental Abu Dhabi is something of an institution, as it's one of the oldest in the city. The hotel is home to a private marina with several eateries overlooking it, as well as the [InterContinental Abu Dhabi Bayshore](#) Beach Club. This beach and health club boasts a 300-metre beachfront, lush grass areas, infinity pool, separate children's pool and play areas, premium health and sports facilities, a day spa and restaurant. Relax on sun loungers on the white, sandy beach, in private cabanas complete with butler service, or in the large outdoor Jacuzzi. Enjoy refreshments at the cool infinity pool with its swim-up bar overlooking the Arabian Gulf. Play squash or tennis at the club's courts, or discover a whole host of watersports at the beachfront.

10 Mirfa Beach

This stunning spot, about an hour and a half away from the city in the village of Mirfa in Al Dhafra, is something of a well-kept secret. Come April every year, it hosts the annual ten-day Al Dhafra Watersports Festival. For the rest of the year, this hidden gem offers a tranquil, uncrowded beach escape. Camping facilities, as well as the nearby Mirfa Hotel, make this an ideal destination for a family beach getaway. You can fish, enjoy watersports including stand-up paddleboarding or kiteboarding, or kayak to explore the mangrove forest on the western side of the [beach](#).

11 Sir Bani Yas Island

One of the desert islands of Al Dhafra, this unique desert, beach and wildlife paradise is the Arabian Gulf's only dedicated cruise beach stopover.

[Sir Bani Yas Island](#) is home to ancient heritage attractions and the Arabian Wildlife Park, one of the region's largest wildlife reserves where more than 17,000 animals, including Arabian oryx, giraffes and cheetahs, roam freely. So, the island is ideal for a family adventure holiday.

On the beach, enjoy beach sports, such as snorkelling, kayaking and paddleboarding. For a high-end stay, there are three Anantara luxury beach resorts on the island.

