



FUTURE HORIZONS OF FUNDAMENTAL PHYSICS WORKSHOP

JANUARY 12-14, 2010

NOTES FOR TRAVELERS

Marhaban—welcome to the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute! We are excited to have you join us at an Institute program. In the following notes, you will find information that will prepare you for your trip to Abu Dhabi, and help make your visit more organized and your stay more comfortable. We trust that your stay in Abu Dhabi will be an enjoyable and productive one and we look forward to seeing you soon!

Travel

Protravel International will contact you by e-mail in order to begin the booking process. Please review the details carefully and respond in a timely way, in order to expedite the bookings.

Arrival and departure airport transportation will be arranged by Protravel International in accordance with approved NYUAD travel guidelines. Protravel International will electronically send your final itinerary, which includes information about flights, as well as ground transportation and car pickup times. Please print out this final itinerary and bring it with you to Abu Dhabi.

Protravel International's team of agents can be reached at 247@Protravelinc.com.

Passports and Visas

Please consult your Program Organizer for procedures regarding special visas.

Law does not prohibit individuals who have Israeli stamps in their passports from entering the UAE.

Accommodations

NYU Abu Dhabi will pay for accommodations at the approved hotel during the program, but *you will need a personal credit card to check in, in case you have incidentals, or if you have made additional arrangements for an extended stay at your own expense*. When you check in, you will find a “welcome packet” that will make your stay more comfortable and informed; it will contain various information regarding sites of local interest, and about current NYUAD Institute programs.

Transportation

NYUADI will provide local transportation to and from program venues in Abu Dhabi. Event participants will be expected to rely exclusively upon the NYUADI-provided transportation for all scheduled events. NYUADI will not be responsible for providing transportation for personal use (e.g., for leisure activities, shopping or touring).

For personal excursions, be aware that you are rarely able to hail a cab in Abu Dhabi, except at the hotels. Because street addresses are little-used, it is crucial to provide your destination, as precisely as possible, using landmarks or nearby businesses. Also, be mindful that you may encounter heavy traffic traveling from one part of the city to another. Plan accordingly. The public transportation system is evolving so we suggest taxis and private cars, which can be booked through your hotel concierge. By law, taxi drivers are required to use their meters.

Currency and Credit Cards

Local currency is the Dirham (AED or *Dhs*), which has been pegged to the US dollar at a mid-rate of \$1 equaling *Dhs* 3.6725. You can change currencies at hotels or banks. There are also money exchanges and ATMs throughout Abu Dhabi in malls, hotels, etc.

Most shops, hotels and restaurants accept major credit cards.

Tipping

Restaurant bills may show an additional charge of 16 percent which includes a 10 percent service charge and 6 percent tourism fee. Therefore, tipping is not necessary. Tipping for taxis is optional, but it is fairly standard to round up the fare to the nearest denomination of 5 or 10 *Dhs*.

Location, Climate and Time

Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven emirates that comprise the UAE. The country lies on the southeastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by Saudi Arabia to the south and west, the Sultanate of Oman to the southeast, and Qatar to the northwest. The UAE's federal government is located in Abu Dhabi, which serves as the country's capital.

Abu Dhabi's climate is subtropical, featuring temperatures that range from mild to hot. Sunny skies can be expected throughout the year, though minimal amounts of rainfall may be recorded from December to March.

April through September are generally hot with temperatures often above 40° C (104° F). May through September bring high humidity in addition to the heat. The weather is cooler from November to March, with a low of approximately 13.4° C (56° F) in January. Dense fog may occur during the winter months.

Abu Dhabi is ahead of New York by nine hours when the US is observing Standard Time, and eight hours during Daylight Savings Time. Time is expressed using the military-style, 24-hour clock.

Acculturation

The majority of the inhabitants of Abu Dhabi are expatriates, so travelers will encounter a mixture of Westerners, Africans, Asians, South Asians, and residents from all over the Arab world. Due to this mixture of cultures, English is widely and proficiently spoken, and most signs are bilingual, in Arabic and English. You may want to learn a few Arabic phrases, though be aware that many of the people you will interact with as a tourist may not speak Arabic. Please visit the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority's site for [Basic Phrases](http://www.visitabudhabi.ae/en/practical.information.aspx) (www.visitabudhabi.ae/en/practical.information.aspx).

Many chain stores, restaurants, and brands will be familiar to Westerners.

Guidebooks and conversations with colleagues offer many suggestions for polite and hospitable behavior in Abu Dhabi. When you are seated, make sure the sole of your foot is not pointing directly at anyone, as this would be insulting. Since the left hand is thought to be reserved for hygiene, use your right hand to shake hands, eat and to offer an item, such as a business card, to another person, or to receive an item.

Please note that the work week in Abu Dhabi is Sunday through Thursday; Friday and Saturday make up the weekend.

Ramadan is the name of the month of fasting in the Islamic calendar. The exact timing is determined by the sighting of the moon and varies with the lunar calendar, so it begins earlier each year. In 2009, Ramadan and the subsequent holiday of Eid al Fitr was observed in Abu Dhabi from August 21st to September 22nd. Because daylight hours during Ramadan are a time of fasting from all food and drink, restaurants are closed during the day, though some of the larger hotels will have restaurant facilities for non-fasting guests hidden from public view. After sunset, there is a ritual breaking of the fast, and shops open.

Attire

Sensitivity to cultural codes of modesty dictates a conservatism with regards to dress for both men and women. Though allowances for Western standards of dress are made at hotels, bathing attire, shorts, and sleeveless or revealing tops should not be worn publicly. Short sleeves for men and women are permitted. Women may wear pants but should avoid excessively revealing tops or skirts. Veils for women are only necessary in mosques, where, if visitors are allowed, veils are often provided.

Air conditioning is ubiquitous in Abu Dhabi, and often turned up high, even in the cool winter months. Pack jackets, sweaters or wraps to prepare for the variation between indoor and outdoor temperatures, and keep in mind that the evenings may become cool and breezy.

Status of Women

Women, both native-born and visitors, experience no special restrictions in daily life. They may drive cars, for example, and move about freely without the company of a man.

The UAE's Constitution guarantees equal rights for both men and women in terms of legal status, honorary titles, education, health and social welfare, and the right to practice professions.

The United Arab Emirates are also safe for women travelling on their own.

Photography

Politely ask people, particularly women, if they want their pictures taken. Do not attempt photographs of government buildings, military installations, ports, and airports. Cameras are banned in public areas designed for women and children only.

Business Cards

Abu Dhabi is a culture where the exchange of business cards is prevalent, so be sure to bring an adequate supply. Offer your business card with your right hand; receive one also with your right hand.

Alcohol

For cultural reasons, alcohol is not served in Abu Dhabi restaurants, unless they are affiliated with tourist hotels. NYU Abu Dhabi will not provide alcohol at official events, and will not reimburse for it if travelers choose to purchase it.

Water

Tap water is safe to drink in Abu Dhabi. If you prefer bottled water, locally bottled mineral water is available in supermarkets and grocery stores.

Voltage is 220/240 volts at 50 Hz

High end electronics (computers, cell phones, Blackberries) all have voltage converters built in to them. Electric shavers, hair dryers and so on have been known to break with the higher voltage. Physical plug adapters are needed for American electronics. Hotels keep a good stock of these at the front desk and some hotels even include them standard in a drawer in guest hotel rooms. Many hotels include hair dryers.

Safety

Abu Dhabi enjoys a low crime rate, significantly lower than that of most similarly-sized cities. Random acts of violence are rare.

Emergencies

Should you need to call an emergency number it is important to give your location using landmarks, as noted above. Hotels post emergency procedures in each room.

The emergency phone numbers in Abu Dhabi are as follows:

Fire Department: 997

Ambulance: 998

Police: 999

Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Hospital (SKMC) is a first choice for medical care and Al Noor Hospital is a second.

Health Insurance for NYU Employees

NYU faculty and administrators who are eligible have Aetna Global Benefits World Traveler coverage while visiting NYU Abu Dhabi on NYUAD business. Please contact the NYUAD Manager at NYU Human Resources at 212-998-1252 to be assured you have coverage.

Prescriptions

To be cautious, bring a doctor's note authorizing the use of medication, particularly codeine. Medications should be carried in the original container. Most medications available in the US are also available by doctors' prescription through hospitals and pharmacies in the UAE.