



5 TIPS FOR UNIQUE EXPERIENCE IN ABU DHABI

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The Latvian airline *airBaltic* in cooperation with *Etihad Airways* on October 29, 2017 launched a direct service between Riga and Abu Dhabi. *airBaltic*'s service to Abu Dhabi has been popular among travelers from Latvia as well as outside of it.

The Latvian airline will continue to perform regular flights between the two cities also during the next winter season, with flights restarting on October 28, 2018. The most attractive prices for the tickets on next winter's flights are now available on www.airbaltic.com. *airBaltic* has gathered five tips that will inspire you to plan a trip to Abu Dhabi.

Abu Dhabi, perched between the stunning clear waters of the Arabian sea and the ever-changing orange sands of the Western deserts, is known far and wide for its brilliant shopping opportunities, Ferrari World, the most exhilarating water parks, exquisite restaurants and, of course, the Formula 1 itself. However, it hasn't always been glitzy and modern – Abu Dhabi started out from very humble beginnings. *airBaltic* introduces the taste of the traditional side of Abu Dhabi with these five amazing experiences when visiting Abu Dhabi.

1. **Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.** Visiting the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is a great place to begin your trip to Abu Dhabi and learn a little its culture, heritage, history and traditions. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is one of Abu Dhabi's most iconic buildings: 82 domes, 1000 columns, 24-carat gold chandeliers and a capacity of 40 000 worshippers make it one of the largest in the world. The mosque bears the name of the founder of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed, who was also laid to rest here. If you're keen on exploring this truly traditional highlight of Abu Dhabi, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is open to visitors daily from 9am to 10pm (except Friday mornings).
2. **An Oasis in the desert.** A day trip to the Oasis city of Al Ain is well worth the effort. Al Ain is fed by natural springs and set among a date palm oasis, just a 2-hour drive from Abu Dhabi. The garden city is also Sheikh Zayed's hometown, and you can visit his childhood home, Al Jahili fort. Constructed in 1890 to defend the city and protect the palm groves within, set in beautifully landscaped gardens, it houses a tourist centre and a terrific photo exhibition by the British explorer Sir Wilfred Thesiger that offers a fascinating insight into the UAE life in the 1940s.
3. **Abu Dhabi's special home for Falcons.** Falconry is close to the heart and heritage of many Emiratis, and is still a popular pastime for many. Traditionally, falcons were an important part of the desert life, as these birds were trained to become excellent hunters. Today, it's just a recreational sport, but the skills and training of the birds are the same as in the past and are passed down through generations. Having said that, a stop at the Abu Dhabi Falcon hospital is a must. Opened in 1999, it has cared for over 42 000 falcons. Join a two-hour tour to see the falcons up close, visit the hospital to see where the injured birds are treated or have come to receive a falcon pedicure, watch these majestic birds soar in the open air aviary and take home a souvenir photo with a falcon perched on your arm.
4. **Desert Dune Bashing.** Locals will tell you that you should never miss the chance to go on a safari through the vast empty Western Desert. This is one of the most popular adventures for tourists and locals, a mixture of fun and adventure, plus it serves as a lesson on the local culture. You can choose to travel through the sands on a camel or in an air-conditioned 4x4. Various safari options are available for half and full day tours, and staying the night in a luxury desert camp is also a brilliant way to enjoy the Arabic hospitality and gaze at the most amazing sky you have ever seen.
5. **Have a Pearl of a Time.** A great way to explore the warm clear waters of the Arabian Sea is to set off on a pearling journey aboard the Jalboot, a traditional sailing vessel known in Arabia as a Dhow. Once on the boat, you'll be overwhelmed by the local hospitality and begin your journey with a leisurely cruise along the coast of Abu Dhabi, with superb views of the city. Watch out for herons, flamingos and other sea birds that make this unique area their home. While comfortably seated on traditional cushions enjoying locally made Arabic coffee and dates, your Emirati guide will tell you stories of how their forefathers spent their days diving for oysters in the hope of finding the elusive and valuable pearls to trade. After a diving demonstration, you'll be encouraged to try your hand at opening a few oyster shells. Then search the oyster for a pearl, which of course will be yours as a memory of your day if you are lucky enough to find it. The pearling journey takes about two hours and departs daily.

airBaltic operates the Riga – Abu Dhabi route 4 times weekly. Passengers board a *Bombardier CS300* aircraft for a flight that lasts 6 hours and 15 minutes. One-way ticket prices start at 129 EUR, including airport fees and transaction costs. A full schedule of *airBaltic* flights can be found on the company's homepage at www.airbaltic.com.

Route	Flight frequency	Price*, Basic	Price*, Premium	Price*, Business
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*Lowest fare (one way), including taxes, fees and service charges, on www.airBaltic.com , subject to availability	Riga - Abu Dhabi	4 flights weekly	129 EUR	249 EUR	799 EUR
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airBaltic serves over 60 destinations from its home base in Riga, Latvia. From every one of these locations, *airBaltic* offers convenient connections via Riga to its network spanning Europe, Scandinavia, CIS and the Middle East. In addition, *airBaltic* also offers direct flights from Tallinn and Vilnius.

***airBaltic* in brief:**

airBaltic (AIR BALTIC CORPORATION) is the world's most punctual airlines connecting the Baltic region with 60 destinations in Europe, the Middle East, and the CIS. *airBaltic* is a joint stock company that was established in 1995. Its primary shareholder is the Latvian state, which holds 80.05% of the stock, while Lars Thuesen holds around 20% through his fully-owned Aircraft Leasing 1 SIA. The *airBaltic* fleet consists of 30 aircraft – 7 *Bombardier* CS300, 11 Boeing 737 and 12 *Bombardier* Q400Next Gen. *airBaltic* has received numerous international awards for excellence, innovative services, and achievements in reshaping its business. In 2012, *airBaltic* was ranked by Airlinetrends among the Top 10 airlines globally for innovations. *airBaltic* achieved the best on-time performance globally for three years running in 2014, 2015 and 2017.

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