# How to do Dubai without getting done (as a gay man)!



Dubai has established itself as a prominent destination for UK holidaymakers, with a record 92.3 million passengers passing through Dubai International Airport in 2024. The allure of the city's scorching temperatures, desert adventures, and striking skyline draws many seeking winter sun and opportunities to relocate. However, as with any international travel, awareness of local laws and customs is crucial to avoid legal troubles in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Radha Stirling, CEO of London-based legal group Detained in Dubai, emphasized the importance of understanding these local regulations. Speaking to The Independent, Stirling remarked, “Common behaviour doesn’t mean lawful behaviour. It may be common to drink alcohol in Dubai, but it’s also unlawful to possess alcohol in your bloodstream or be drunk. A mere allegation is sufficient to warrant an arrest, and people can weaponise the system to have you prosecuted if they so wish.”

The Foreign Office (FCDO) further cautions incoming tourists, asserting, “The UAE is a Muslim country. Respect local traditions, customs, laws, and religions.” Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in severe penalties, which can differ markedly from what is considered acceptable in the UK.

Among the significant local laws highlighted are those pertaining to alcohol consumption and public behaviour. Drinking alcohol in public is prohibited throughout the UAE, particularly in Sharjah, where any form of alcohol possession is illegal. Tourists are generally required to acquire a temporary liquor licence for private consumption, while hotel bars and licensed venues are exempt from this rule.

Further prohibitions include the use of arrogant language or offensive gestures, both of which are illegal within the UAE. The FCDO notes that such “obscene acts” can lead to jail time or deportation. Similarly, the consumption of food and beverages on public transport is prohibited, with fines in place to uphold cleanliness.

During the holy month of Ramadan, special care should be taken, particularly concerning eating, drinking, and public displays of affection. The FCDO advises that actions deemed disrespectful could have serious repercussions, especially in religious contexts.

Of particular note to LGBTQ+ travellers, it is essential to be aware that same-sex sexual activity is illegal in the UAE. The FCDO acknowledges that while the UAE maintains a level of tolerance within private life settings, punishments can be enforced for public displays of affection or any activities that might be perceived as offensive. Tourists must navigate these laws thoughtfully to avoid legal complications during their stay.

Further laws to consider include restrictions regarding the possession of certain medications, regulations governing travel with pets, and the obligation to maintain modest dress in public spaces. Women are encouraged to wear outfits that cover the shoulders and knees, and behaviours such as cross-dressing may lead to legal challenges.

In summary, while Dubai presents a wealth of opportunities for tourists, understanding the intricate local laws and cultural sensitivities is paramount for a safe and enjoyable visit. Observing regulations prohibiting drug usage, financial crimes, and inappropriate public behaviour can significantly mitigate the risks associated with travel in the UAE.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://globalagents.uk/news/dubai-international-airport-sees-record-92-3-million-passengers-in-2024> - This URL corroborates the record number of passengers passing through Dubai International Airport in 2024, highlighting Dubai's popularity as a travel destination.
* <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/united-arab-emirates/local-laws-and-customs> - This URL provides information from the UK Foreign Office on local laws and customs in the UAE, emphasizing the importance of respecting these regulations to avoid legal issues.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/middle-east/dubai-laws-tourists-rules-a9152456.html> - This URL supports Radha Stirling's remarks about the importance of understanding local laws in Dubai, particularly regarding alcohol consumption and public behavior.
* <https://www.visitdubai.com/en/articles/dubai-laws-and-regulations> - This URL explains various laws and regulations in Dubai, including those related to alcohol consumption, public behavior, and Ramadan observances.