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MOVING IN DUBAI

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Welcome



....to your new home. Dubai's enduring appeal as a vibrant, dynamic hub for business and leisure continues to attract people from around the world, and it's no surprise that The Economist ranked the city in the top three in its 2023 global best cities survey. Whether you're a long-term resident or recent arrival, Dubai ticks the lifestyle boxes for single professionals, couples, and families, and is consistently heralded as one of the top 10 safest cities in the world. Under the ambitious Dubai Economic Agenda D33, the government aims to double the size of the emirate's economy over the next decade and the city is a globally acknowledged springboard for expats, entrepreneurs and businesses, backed by attractive government incentives and anchored by its strategically advantageous geographical location. With the real estate

market booming and international investors flocking to the city, our practical guide is designed to help you seamlessly settle into your new home. From getting your utilities connected (pg12) to home maintenance tips (pg24), it's all here. Plus, the essential contacts list (pg52) is a handy reference for when you need to find a reputable cleaner, handyman, delivery service - and more - for when you need to get things done.. pronto! We've also got the inside track on how to tie up admin loose ends when you do decide to move on (pg46). Or, if you're looking to stay for the long-haul and invest in any of Dubai's lifestyle exciting off-plan projects or in the secondary market, we'll take you through all the important details when it comes to making the switch from renting to buying (pg50).

Enjoy your new home and this incredible city!

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Contents

11 **MOVE-IN READY**

The scoop on moving permits, setting up utilities, Ejari, and more

22 **CLEAN SWEEP**

Get your home spick and span from a deep clean to fresh paint

24 **MAINTENANCE MUST-DOS**

Why regular home maintenance makes good sense

26 **RENOVATION 1,2,3**

Revamp your living spaces, from kitchen and bathroom to garden makeovers

42 **SHOP YOUR HOME**

Design your dream home with a little help from top retailers

46 **ON THE MOVE**

Dot the i's and cross the t's for a hassle-free move or relocation

50 **READY TO BUY**

If settling down in Dubai is on the cards, here's why you should buy

52 **ESSENTIAL CONTACTS**

Dubai's in-demand services and home essentials providers

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MOVING IN

Move-in ready

You're ready to close the door on your old place but a room-by-room inspection of your new home is a must-do to avoid any unexpected maintenance issues



HOMEOWNER: New build properties invariably come with snagging issues and the developer will arrange access prior to collecting the keys (and handing over final payment). Check, check and check again before the contractor is sent back in to make good on any minor or major defects under the Defect Liability Period. Buying an older home? Make sure there's an inspection contingency clause included in the purchase contract. If not, you can file a case in person or online at the Dubai Land Department Amicable Settlement Centre (DLD-ASC) for expert mediation. Worst case scenario, given the time and costs involved, a case can be filed with DLD/Dubai Property Court.

TENANT: Landlords are legally obliged to hand over a property

in full working order. A thorough inspection is recommended before taking possession, from checking that the toilets flush and the A/C cools properly to seeing that the place has been given a fresh coat of paint. It's also worth requesting a 48-hour window tenancy clause to report any maintenance issues after moving in, to ensure swift repairs. Double check there are no outstanding DEWA bills or service charges owed by the last tenant before signing the lease. If you do face issues, the DLD Rental Disputes Settlement Centre (800 4488) is there for advice and case filing assistance.

Price check

Accessible by tenants and landlords, the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) Rental Increase Calendar can

confirm whether or not the price you are paying – or the increase to be applied – is a fair rental rate for the location, property, number of rooms and current market value. dubailand.gov.ae/en/eservices/rental-index

REST EASY

Download the free Dubai REST (Real Estate Self Transaction) app for smart access to a host of real-time real estate services including the Rental Increase Calculator, lease management, Ejari registration, submission of rental dispute cases, and more. Available from the App Store or Google Play.

First things first

No one wants to unpack boxes by candlelight, so registering your tenancy and getting utilities connected is a priority before moving in



How to register your tenancy

Ejari (My Rent) is the mandatory registration of your tenancy contract and is designed to offer full protection of rights to all parties covered within the tenancy agreement.

The easiest way to register, once all approved paperwork is in hand, is via the Dubai REST (Dubai Real Estate Self Transaction) app or online at dubailand.gov.ae/services where you simply need to register, upload the required documents, and pay. Alternatively, you can visit one of the Dubai REST/Ejari centres dotted around the city to complete the process in person.

Required documents: original tenancy contract, security deposit receipt, Emirates ID, passport copy with residency visa, copy of the landlord's passport (signature must be visible), copy of a valid Power of Attorney document if relevant, title deed and nine-digit DEWA premises number.

Fees: Dh\$120 online/via the app or Dh\$215 in person (excl. VAT).

Timeline: Immediately via the app/website and within 10 minutes if application is made at one of the Dubai REST/Ejari centres. If you don't mind waiting three or four days, your real estate agent at Betterhomes can register your Ejari for you online.

FLIP THE SWITCH

Activate your Dubai Electricity & Water Authority (DEWA) account online at dewa.gov.ae, via the DEWA app, or visit one of the self-service kiosks at any DEWA Customer Happiness Centre.

1. Documents

You will need your Ejari number, property title deed (for owners) or tenancy contract (for renters), Emirates ID and passport copy along with your DEWA number (if you're an existing customer) and nine-digit premises number (which

is located on a mounted wall plate next to your front door).

2. Fees

Activation charges are Dh\$130 for a small metre connection (Dh\$330 for large metre). You will also need to pay a security deposit of Dh\$2,000 for an apartment or Dh\$4,000 for a villa.

3. Timeline

Your account will be activated within 15 hours of registration and security deposit payment.

4. App+

The DEWA smart app allows you to register your connection, monitor usage and pay your bill. Plus, the Hayak option allows you to live chat with customer support.

5. Account transfer

The 'DEWA Move-To' service lets you transfer your account – including the deposit – to your new home and can be done online at



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dewa.gov.ae or via the DEWA app. Submit your new Ejari contract details, the contract account number of your former home and settle any outstanding dues to register the transfer. Moving to a bigger home? You'll need to pay the security deposit difference.

EMPOWER need to know

If you live in a community where Empower chiller services registration is required, this can be done online at e-services.empower.ae.

Step 1: Register as a new customer (landlord or tenant) by entering your contact details

Step 2: Create a username and

password then initiate a new registration request

Step 3: Enter your DEWA account number, building name and unit number

Step 4: Upload the required documents for a tenant (tenancy contract, Ejari, Emirates ID, residence visa copy) or landlord (title deed, passport copy with signature page)

Registration charges are based on the project and building location plus a security deposit of Dh\$2,000 (apartment) or Dh\$3,000 (villa). If you're a first-time landlord, onetime connection fees and administration charges will also be applied. Processing time is one to three days.

Gas and water to your door

Dubai doesn't have mains gas supply and many high-rise apartment buildings do not allow gas cylinders (although some newer buildings have centralised supply systems). Villa residents can order individual gas cylinders for home delivery from local suppliers who will also connect or replace empty cylinders.

A one-off connection fee/refundable deposit (cost varies) will apply, with full cylinders costing anywhere from , while cylinders cost from around Dh\$70-300 depending on size.

Tap water in Dubai is safe to drink although it's not the tastiest. The main UAE produced water brands will come to your home to install a water cooler for a fee (see page 50, Essential Contacts) while Liquid of Life (liquidoflife.net) is one of several companies that install under-the-sink water filtration systems.

For fresh filtered hot and chilled water direct from the tap, Quooker's Hi-Flow three-stage system purifies Dubai tap water through a worktop faucet linked to a small tank tucked away in the kitchen cupboard to deliver 108°C water plus chilled and sparkling options.

On the move

Packing an entire home into endless boxes is a daunting task and takes genius organisational skills. From choosing a removals company to relocation insurance, we help you navigate the big move



Pack an overnight bag so that after an exhausting day on the move, your favourite pyjamas, a clean towel and essential toiletries are close at hand. And don't forget your phone and laptop charger.

Crossing borders

International moves can be daunting so do your research to secure a reputable global relocations company, ideally one with offices in Dubai. Door-to-door service begins with a house survey to assess container space requirements. There's plenty of paperwork to complete (plus insurance), after which your life will be professionally packed and loaded on a Dubai-bound vessel. Your relocations liaison should complete the necessary customs formalities this end, with doorstep delivery and unpacking included. For most international relocations insurance is a must-do but be sure to select shipment protection that gives you complete peace of mind.

ON THE CLOCK

Allow an eight to 12-week window to give you enough time to organise your move down to the smallest detail. With plenty of relocation companies all eager for your business, shop around for quotes while also looking at online customer reviews or seeking recommendations from trusted friends and colleagues. A valid trade license and insurance are non-negotiables.

GREEN LIGHT

Before moving day dawns it's essential to obtain any required move-out and move-in permits. Regulations and access/egress timings vary so contact your real estate agent, building manager or building/community security to get this sorted in advance. You will invariably need to complete a form and provide documentation including tenancy contract copy

or title deed, passport, visa, etc., along with the moving company's trade licence, insurance and movers' Emirates ID copies. Factor in up to five days to get the permit(s).

IT'S A WRAP

Bubble wrap and protective felt are the basic toolkit of a quality mover and Dubai's finest will carefully pack every last item, down to an egg cup in a matter of hours. Clothes get end-to-end treatment with entire closets transferred in handy hanging wardrobe cartons.

NUMBERS GAME

The bigger your home, the more people you'll need to expedite the process. For a two-bedroom apartment we're talking a team of four with a four-bed villa requiring up to 15 master movers. Allow one to two full days to get you packed up, shifted and unpacked the other end.



Safe storage

Need to source temporary storage while you sort your new home setup? Dubai has a number of secure air-conditioned self-storage or assisted storage facilities offering secure spaces in all sizes

SIZE IT UP

Storage units and lockers range from minipods and 10-sqft boxes up to 500 sqft (apartment-size) units. These are housed in air-conditioned warehouses to prevent deterioration or damage.

STORAGE NO-GO

Fill your space with everything from an (empty) fridge freezer to a year's supply of canned goods and your entire wardrobe, but perishables, plants and flammable items are a no-no.

DO IT YOURSELF

Self-storage is a breeze. Drop off

your items at a standard storage locker set-up in a 24/7-accessible warehouse to having a storage pod delivered to your door for you to load before being transported to a drive-up warehouse facility. Mega move? Book a team of expert packers to help with the packing.

LOCK AND GO

Most facilities have 24/7 security in place but do double check before dropping off your worldly possessions. Individual units often come with built-in locks that allow you to create your own passcode or you may need to provide a padlock.

SUITS YOU

With units leasable from 30 days up to six months, or longer, shop around to find an arrangement that suits your timeline and space requirements. A security deposit is standard.

FULLY COVERED

It's super important to check whether insurance is included in your storage agreement, as not all facilities offer this as part of the package. If the amount is less than the value of your possessions, additional cover may be required.

See page 48 for storage solutions.



ASK THE EXPERT

Adriana Kostic, Head of Marketing and Interior Expert at Pan Home, shares her top tips for a smooth move, and more

Map your move

Before moving in, take room measurements and map out how you want to arrange your furniture or download one of the readily available handy design apps. This will help you visualise the space and ensure a well organised and comfortable living area.

Measure up

Easily overlooked, it's critical to measure the width of your new apartment or villa doors so that you can give the movers a heads up if that heirloom kitchen dresser won't fit through. If you're moving into an apartment block, it's also a wise move to check the elevator capacity and, if available, ask to use the service elevator to move for extra-large furniture pieces.

Plan, plan, plan

If you've ordered brand new furniture, don't forget to confirm the delivery date with the company well in advance and make sure someone is present to oversee the delivery and any required assembly.

Clean slate

The whole moving process can be extremely messy. Book a cleaning team for the move and have them deep clean your new home from top to bottom before you arrive, and also clean your old place before handing the keys back.

Handyman on call

Have a trusted electrician, plumber and handyman on standby to help with any lighting installation,

washing machine plumbing and general odd jobs that may crop up.

ID check

Things can easily get lost during a home move so protect important documents by packing them separately and transferring them personally between houses.

DESIGN NOTES

Consider your home's orientation when making décor decisions with north-facing rooms tending to be cooler and benefiting from warmer toned furnishings while south-facing rooms offer more natural light. Paint or wallpaper your walls to complement your furniture to create a cohesive interior.

PICTURE PROOF

Leaving a rental property or moving into a new build, it's a sensible idea to take pictures of each empty room as proof of good order or as record of any obvious issues/defects. Keep on file in the event of any deposit return snafus or snagging follow-up.



Get online

Etisalat and Du are the two main telecommunications companies in the UAE for your broadband, TV, mobile and fixed-line package set-up. Some residential buildings may only offer one provider so it's wise to check before you sign on the dotted line

Etisalat (etisalat.ae)

- Step 1.** Submit a request online, or via the My Etisalat UAE app.
 - 2.** A technician will visit your home within four to seven days to scan the required documents and install your chosen services.
 - 3.** Alternatively, you can visit any one of Etisalat's customer service centres.
- Documents:** Emirates ID and passport with residency visa; valid Ejari-registered tenancy; or title deed if you're the homeowner.
- Good to know:** You can only apply

for services once you have a UAE residency visa and you need to know your full building address and Makani number for the application.

Du (du.ae)

- Step 1.** Submit a request online or visit one of Du's customer service centres located in major malls.
 - 2.** Schedule a technician visit online as part of the application process.
 - 3.** Upload the required documents.
 - 4.** A technician will visit your home to install your chosen services within seven days.
- Documents:** Emirates ID, valid Ejari-registered tenancy or title deed if you're the homeowner.
- Good to know:** You can only apply for services once you have a UAE residency visa.
- Call me**
- Both Etisalat and Du offer different international calling packages for fixed line and mobile, and regularly offer promotional deals. Virgin Mobile (part of the Du family) is another

option (virginmobile.ae). Skype and FaceTime are currently unavailable in the UAE, but Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Chat are all popular alternatives. Screen time is also possible with other VoIP apps, including BOTIM, C'Me, HiU Messenger and Voico, which you can access via Etisalat and du (fixed monthly fee may apply).

Good to know: Local and national landline to landline calls are free in Dubai.

You've got mail

The UAE has a system of private and business PO boxes located either at your nearest post office with 24/7 collection or situated within some local communities/ apartment buildings. PO boxes can also be installed on request at villas in selected areas.

Register online to rent a private PO box through Emirates Post (emiratespost.ae). Different options are available including access to a smart management service (epbox.ae) for shipment requests, registered document handling, courier services, and on-demand delivery.

The 'My Home' package also offers weekly home delivery and entrepreneurs can set up a business PO box. Registration is online with annual rental fees starting from Dhs300.

MAKANI

Makani ('my location' in Arabic) is a unique 10-digit number assigned to each building or villa and linked to a GPS coordinate. You'll find it on a plaque posted in your building lobby or at the building/ villa main entrance.



MOVING IN ESSENTIALS



Live: Leather or fabric modular padded sofa



Dine: Solid wood double extendable dining table



Sleep: Contemporary teak Calypso bed



Relax: Durable outdoor Luxembourg table



Accessorise: Nesting tray coffee table



SET UP YOUR NEW HOME AT SOUL & TABLES

Quality, timeless design and convenience come together under one roof at this one-stop furniture destination

Moving house is stressful enough without having to think about furnishing your new place from top to bottom. Thankfully, the philosophy of Soul & Tables is more brand curation than cookie cutter, with an extensive selection of high-quality, timeless furniture pieces for every room – and outdoor spaces as well.

For shoppers who love to see, touch and feel pieces of furniture before they buy, a visit to Soul & Tables' showroom provides endless inspiration. Or, if time is of the essence, then a browse through the user-friendly website has you covered.

The cherry on the cake is the brand's legendary customer service, with the friendly, knowledgeable team on hand – or online – to provide expert advice. Add to that, complimentary delivery, assembly and aftersales maintenance, and you can see why Dubai residents choose Soul & Tables for their most precious home purchases.

With diverse collections crafted from solid wood and other high-end, you are guaranteed to find pieces that perfectly complement your unique taste and lifestyle.

Find more design inspiration at soulandtables.ae or visit the showroom at The Curve Building, Sheikh Zayed Road.

SETTLE IN
Home help

Dubai is awash in pay-by-the-hour maid service companies who can add some sparkle to your home on a regular basis. If your preference is live-in help then you will need to legally sponsor them and arrange for a UAE residency visa. On top of salary, costs include a medical fitness test, a deposit and nonrefundable fee for the visa, Emirates ID, health insurance and an air ticket home as per the contract. Depending on nationality, a refundable security deposit payable to the embassy of the maid's home country may be required as well as recruiter fees. You can also hire a maid who remains under the sponsorship of the licensing authority. See tadbeervisa.com

Click and ship

If you're a fan of Amazon Prime, you'll be happy to hear that the same service is available with amazon.ae. and costs Dh\$16 per month. The Prime service includes free delivery on items ordered from amazon.com and amazon.ae, with same day or one-day delivery available on thousands of items. Aramex also offers a shop & ship service (shopandship.com) with access to 33

personalised global mailing addresses and affordable shipping rates from over 80 international destinations.

Aperitivo hour

As a (non-Muslim) resident in the UAE aged 21+ years a liquor licence is required if you want to purchase or possess alcohol in Dubai. African & Eastern (africaneastern.com) and MMI (mmidubai.com) are the two government-authorised beverage companies permitted to process alcohol licences. If you apply through the online portal, all you need to do is upload a scanned copy of your Emirates ID. Once the licence is approved, you can collect it from the preselected store. The application process takes about 2-3 weeks.

Alternatively...

1. Head to one of the MMI or A&E stores across Dubai
2. Present your Emirates ID for scanning to start the application process
3. Cost? Free!

Good to know: Order for home delivery via mmihomedelivery.ae or africaneastern.dxb.com



UAE PASS
Downloadable from the App Store or Google Play, UAE PASS is a national digital identity and signature solution that lets you access over 5,000 e-government services. Using your registered digital signature, you can legally complete transactions such as buying a car, paying government bills and renting a house. Account set-up only takes a couple of minutes; use your mobile to scan your Emirates ID, fill in your contact details, choose a user code and password, and submit a biometric face scan to go live. Alternatively, to complete the process, pop into a UAE PASS kiosk (locations are listed at digitaldubai.ae) to complete the final verification process using your Emirates ID and fingerprint.



LEAVE IT TO THE EXPERTS

Need some help with window interiors for your home? We caught up with Sedar Global's design team for top window treatment tips when living in a warm climate.

Who are Sedar Global?

Sedar Global have been catering to the window and wall décor industry for over 130 years and are one of the world's leading companies offering a unique one-stop-shop experience that can cater to a range of budgets and needs from measurement taking, through to design, manufacture and installation of window, wall and furniture upholstery interiors.

Personalised Service

Sedar Global meet the highest in international retail standards to produce bespoke tailored products for customers. From custom made curtains, blinds, awnings, wallpapers and pillows to newly launched furniture upholstery fabrics and services. Fabric and wallpaper collections include house brand options as well as international labels; Missoni Home, Jannelli & Volpi, Armani/Casa and Roberto Cavalli amongst many others.

Lower your Energy Bills

Homeowners often dress up their windows for beauty rather than function,

but when living in a hot climate instead of blasting the air conditioning with the right materials and proper placement clever window interiors can help to significantly reduce energy bills.

Specialist Installation Teams

Whether you prefer drapes or roman blinds Sedar's specialist teams assess fabric weight and colour as well as practice instalment techniques to minimise heat gain. Mounting shades as close to the glass as possible and close to adjacent walls to create a tight seal. Medium-colour palette drapes with a white reflective backing can reduce solar heat gain by as much as 33% if left drawn during hot months.

Best In Smart Window

Sedar offer the best in smart window control solutions, installing Somfy sun sensors that control the opening and closing of curtains according to the intensity of the sun. Perfect for when homeowners are out of the country reducing AC, protecting plants and furniture.

Style Consultancy

Other factors in window design include maintaining light, style and privacy. Sedar integrate experience with CAD technology to guide on all elements of design. Such as using mould resistant fabrics in bathrooms, specific fabrics and colours to create texture and ambience. Through to how to create the illusion of height in low ceiling rooms.



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Clean sweep

Moving home is a dirty business. Get your house gleaming from top to bottom in a jiffy from an exhaustive deep clean to on-demand DIY for all those niggly little jobs

ADDED SPARKLE

An empty house is a blank canvas opportunity to scrub, mop, wash and polish every corner. Urban Housekeeping (050 184 9266 or WhatsApp 055 558 8614; urbanhousekeeping.com) offers a chemical-free heat-based steam cleaning service and can also sanitise everything from carpets and sofas to mattresses and curtains. For a top to bottom deep clean, BusyBees Dubai also does outdoor areas and uses eco-friendly detergent products throughout (04 315 9930/050 709 0626; busybeesdubai.com). Hand over tedious everyday chores such as vacuuming, dusting and ironing to the team at Helping UAE (800 989; helping.ae). Their easy-to-use online booking system lets you find a maid at short notice or lock in a long-term cleaner, however big or small your residence.

(DON'T) DO IT YOURSELF

Dubai is home to a number of qualified on-call handyman and maintenance companies, so put that electric drill away! One call is all it takes, and that leaking tap will be back in business, and your artworks hung perfectly. We Will Fix It (04 807 3295; wewillfixit.com) has been helping residents sort out their maintenance niggles for 15 years and the qualified team of friendly professionals can turn their hand to most things from a water tank deep clean to plug wiring

and a/c cleaning. Download the Urban Company app (available on the App Store or Google Play) to search for an approved electrician, plumber, handyman, a/c expert or pest control service and simply select from a full menu of available services, which also indicate approximate costs. Toolboys (800 8289; toolboys.ae) also offers furniture assembly and repair as well as carpentry services along with socket replacement, drain cleaning, and more. Most firms have emergency callout support for an extra charge.

PAINT JOB

Replace standard magnolia on your walls with a splash of colour or a standout feature wall. If renting, it's worth noting that if you decide to go full colour then you are required to repaint in the original shade before moving out. Go wild and create your own custom colour or choose from a rainbow of options by downloading the Jotun ColourDesign app (available on the App Store and Google Play; jotun.com). Upload a photo of your space, select the desired colour and see your living spaces transformed. A professional painting service can also be booked through the website. For a professional finish, the experts at TipTop Technical Services (04 422 8198/ 055 271 9291; tiptop.ae) can also paint or colour treat walls, ceilings, doors

and banisters to your specific requirements.

CLOSING ACT

Poorly hung curtains or substandard blinds can completely spoil the aesthetic of a room and it's a job best left to the professionals. While there are endless off-the-shelf options to choose from, Dubai has plenty of custom-made curtain services. The Satwa area has long been a hotspot for tailor shops while the Al Quoz district is home to a growing community of talented tailors ready to press pedal to the sewing machine metal. Alternatively, Blinds & Curtains (blindsandcurtains.ae) is an easy-to-book online service with a reputation for quality and affordability. International brand Sedar (800 73327, sedarglobal.com) has showrooms across the UAE with a full catalogue of curtains, drapes and blinds, plus a free installation service. Most will come to you to measure up and can often turn around your chosen designs in as little as a week.

LIGHT IT UP

The right light fittings can make or break the ambience of any room by adding a sense of drama, creating cosy spots to relax in, or making a grand statement. IKEA (800 4532; ikea.com) is the international go-to for affordable lighting solutions, from fun kids' room lamps and

home office solutions to smart integrated kitchen lighting. For something uniquely desirable, Luxxe Home (04 229 9322; luxxelighting.com) is a repository of stunning lighting design from contemporary chandeliers to retro wall sconces. Another Dubai favourite is Huda Lighting (04 341 1301, hudalighting.com), which stocks the latest collections and lighting solutions from some of the world's most sought-after brands. Or, for bespoke illumination, Victoria Cronin (056 163 3621; victoriacronin.com).retails exquisite Uzbek silk lampshades and hand-painted designs.

WHITE GOODS

Tape measure at the ready, make sure to do your homework before committing to a white goods purchase as not all homes are necessarily designed to fit 'standard' sized refrigerators, dishwashers, etc. For your big-ticket items, Miele (800 64353 miele.ae) brings a century of European excellence and sleek hi-tech design to its Sheikh Zayed Road 'experience centre' while Sweden's Electrolux brand (electroluxarabia.com) is known for affordable, sustainable quality appliances.

Go green

There are recycling bins located in most residential communities and close to the big, local supermarkets but, if you're short on time, get in touch with Green Truck (greentruck.ae) or Planet Green (planetgreen.ae). Dubai Municipality (800 900) also offers a free collection service bulky items including home furniture, electrical and electronic waste in many, but not all, areas.



Must-do maintenance

Tenant or homeowner, ensure your home has a clean bill of health by booking in regular maintenance check-ups to keep everything in good working order

Poor a/c performance or breakdowns, leaking taps and pipes, clogged drains, badly fitted or damaged cabinets and chipped paintwork top the list of maintenance complaints.

Regular a/c filter cleaning is critical to reduce unit stress as blocked filters can restrict airflow, which can lead to a breakdown. Water heaters and pumps are also heavy usage systems and need to be periodically checked as water damage in the event of a breakdown can be catastrophic, affecting surrounding areas in the home. Electrical distribution boards and electrical systems should also be checked regularly

to spot any degradation, which occurs over time. For villas, drain cleaning and flushing every six months is a hygiene imperative and helps avoid the possibility of an airborne bug infestations. The checking of internal and external pipe leaks to avoid huge water utility bills should also be factored in. If you're travelling for the summer, book a pre-trip a/c check to avoid any nasty surprises upon your return. Water tanks should also be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected in line with local authority standards as water and heat create the perfect breeding ground for harmful bacteria, diseases and parasites.

DON'T:

- Rely on third party and outsourced companies who sell your leads
- Be tempted by one-time marketing led offers
- Take service provider apps at face value, do some research
- Go with a company that doesn't have its own in-house team

DO:

- Go direct and speak to different maintenance companies
- Look for licensed technicians
- Look for uniformed technicians, it's a good sign of a reputable outfit!
- Check out customer testimonials and longevity in the market

ASK THE EXPERT: ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

Why commit to an annual contract?

Preventive maintenance means that potential issues can be caught early, before they become an expensive problem. It also helps to prolong the lifespan of high-cost systems like air-conditioning units. Emergency breakdowns are also automatically covered for callouts.

What do I need to know before signing?

Always check if the company has local community experience, particularly the areas that may require regular checks. Ask your neighbours for recommendations and look at online reviews. A good company will always follow strict guidelines regarding process safety and have a team of well-trained, qualified technicians who also provide great customer service.

What services are usually included?

Regular a/c unit servicing (x3 annually) and annual plumbing and electrical check-ups. The contract should also specify emergency response times.

As a tenant, what should my landlord cover?

Standard terms currently state the landlord should cover any costs of major repairs and the tenant covers minor works, but the details can be left open to interpretation, and often vary. Always read the small print! Many non-Dubai resident landlords opt to pay for an annual maintenance contract, which can benefit both landlords and tenants, particularly regarding an emergency response to any major or unforeseen problems.



Homeland security

There's no place like home and Reiner Kaltenbach of Hartmann Tresore (hartmann-safes.com) shares his insider tips to help keep yours safe and secure

Homeowner: Make sure to re-key or replace the locks on exterior doors as you never know who may still be holding an old set of keys. It's worth upgrading your door security by installing solid doors with deadbolt locks and reinforced strike plates or consider smart locks for added security. The same applies to windows, which should have functioning locks and, for ground floor locations, be fitted with security film or bars. Outside the home deserves equal attention with adequate lighting to deter intruders (including motion-activated) and a security system that offers monitoring services. Don't forget to secure garage doors as well, as these often have access to the home.

Tenant: Discuss security with your landlord and check what measures are in place (locks, lighting, door

and window condition) before signing the lease. Ask for dodgy locks to be re-keyed or replaced; consider temporary door wedges for added security; or invest in additional locks. If you live in an apartment building, be mindful of common entry points like the main entrance, lobby, and stairwells and report any security concerns to building management.



Why invest in a home safe here?

As well as the obvious protection from fire, flood, theft, etc., in some instances it can lead to reduced insurance premiums for your homeowner's insurance, as it demonstrates a commitment to security. Safes also offer relatively quick, easy and organised access to important items when you need them. They can similarly be used to secure sensitive information, such as financial records and digital storage devices.

What kind of safe should I buy?

- Look for safes that have been internationally tested and certified.
- Check the fire resistance ratings.

These are usually measures in 30, 60 or 120-minute exposure protection time blocks.

- Typically made of steel, look for safes with a strong, tamper-resistant build.
- Consider safes with shelves, drawers, or compartments for optimal organisation.
- Choose a lock that works for you: electronic (biometric-fingerprint recognition or digital keypad, mechanical combination dial, or traditional key. Some safes have lockout features that temporarily disable the locking mechanism after multiple failed attempts.
- Safes should be anchored to the floor or wall to prevent removal. Check if the safe has pre-drilled holes for secure attachment.
- Check the manufacturer warranty and defect or malfunction cover.
- Last but not least, determine your budget and balance it against your security needs.





Renovation 1,2,3

Ready to give your new home a style makeover and add some unique personality? From back-to-brick renovations to subtle styling, our resident experts share their insider secrets

THE BIG PICTURE

Finding the right design team to bring your interior dream to life can be tricky. Mihir Sangane, Co-founder and Creative Director at Designsmith (designsmith.ae), helps you navigate the decision-making process.

What should you look for when considering a potential interior designer/contractor?

Past experience: Ask about their previous projects and experience in the field to ensure they have a track record of successful designs and renovations. Check online reviews and testimonials from previous clients to gauge their reputation and client satisfaction.

Portfolio: Review their company profile to get a sense of their style,

creativity, and whether their previous work aligns with your vision.

Team strength: Get the lowdown on the size and expertise of the team to make sure they have the right resources to handle your project efficiently, expertly and with genuine passion.

Design and build or only design?

Double check whether they offer both design and construction services or just design, which could sway your decision depending on your project requirements.

Capabilities: Discuss their portfolio of capabilities, taking into account design styles, materials, and the technologies they use that could be incorporated into your project.

Facilities: Enquire about their workspace and resources, as

a well-equipped firm will be able to deliver better results.

Why hire a design firm rather than self-manage the project?

Timelines are critical, and a professional designer will help streamline the project and, potentially, reduce the time it takes to complete, which is especially important for homeowners with tight schedules. They are also skilled budget managers and are by your side to help you make informed choices to avoid overspending. An obvious advantage is access to years of design expertise and a wide range of design and material options that individual homeowners might not be aware of, which adds to the uniqueness of the finished project. Problem-solving is part of

the designer toolkit, with an ability to troubleshoot ideas without compromising aesthetics. And, for ultimate client convenience, dealing with a single dedicated point of contact makes life so much easier rather than juggling multiple contractors and suppliers.

Which rooms should you renovate first, and why?

When allocating renovation budgets, it's essential to consider personal preferences before deciding which room to redo first. Areas that often deserve higher budgets, due to their impact on daily living and resale value, include the kitchen. Investing in a well-designed kitchen can significantly enhance everyday function and add value. High-quality bathroom renovations are

another hotspot with the twin benefits of improved personal comfort and a house value boost. Thirdly, the living room, which is often the heart of the home, is considered a priority by homeowners eager to have an inviting and functional space.

Any potential hidden costs that homeowners may not be aware of?

Prices for building materials can vary significantly, so be prepared for potential cost fluctuations. Permit and approvals fees from relevant local authorities can hit hard cost-wise - and are often overlooked. Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) works can be complex and costly, so it's essential to budget for these critical services.



RENOVATION QUICK FIXES THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK...

- Change your furniture or update the upholstery to instantly transform the look and feel of a room, giving it fresh character.
- Adding artwork infuses personality and style into any space; making it feel unique and inviting.
- Changing up lighting fixtures creates ambience and changes the mood of a room with the flick of a switch. Consider pendant lights, floor lamps, or dimmer switches for versatility.
- One of our favourite tips is to go with a consistent colour palette using paints or wallpapers to tie a room together and deliver cohesive design without the need for extensive renovation.

Style your space

Anu Kewalram (@akewalram), winner of Dubai's Top 50 Homes' Best Interior Styling Award, on creating a stylish and beautiful home

BACK TO BASICS

Start from the bottom up by sprucing up your floors, kitchen and bathroom tiles and painted walls. A fresh lick of paint, a deep floor clean or new accent tiles are just as important as furnishings because they lay the groundwork for styling the rest of your home.

GET RID OF CLUTTER

I've seen potentially amazing homes that simply don't flow because rooms are filled with unnecessary clutter and gorgeous pieces of furniture don't have the opportunity to shine. Clutter-free spaces naturally appear larger and more inviting, so find ways to get rid of things you really don't need to showcase the beautiful pieces you do have.

MAKE A COLOUR STATEMENT

Although I'm a big fan of neutrals and whitewashed walls, there's something about adding a splash of colour that makes a room feel like it's right out of a slick interiors magazine spread. A simple yet tasteful pop of colour can instantly elevate your living space to the next level. From the bathroom to your living room, colour is an easy addition in every space and immediately makes things feel fresh and new.

TIME FOR REFLECTION

I call mirrors my 'magic wand' when styling a home. A simple decorating technique that makes any room feel larger, lighter and more open, mirrors can be used to stunning effect. Place a large mirror diagonally or directly opposite a window to reflect more natural light into a room.



The placement of a piece of art in front of a mirror will also reflect the art itself from another angle.

EMBRACE NATURAL LIGHT

A dark home can feel oppressive so any opportunity to utilise natural light will only add to the feeling of openness – and do wonders for your endorphins! If you're lucky enough to have floor-to-ceiling windows then make them the focal point and let everything else sit around this. Rooms can also be transformed with the right choice of curtains or blinds.

GREEN YOUR INTERIORS

Bring the natural world inside by introducing plants and floral elements into the home. These can be real or else opt for high-quality faux pieces or arrangements. Placing some green foliage in a gorgeous pot into an empty nook is also a cost-effective way to dress a space and can really pull the whole look together. Bright, eye-catching floral table arrangements matched with simple accessories will also create interesting visual moments.



SMART ACCESSORISING

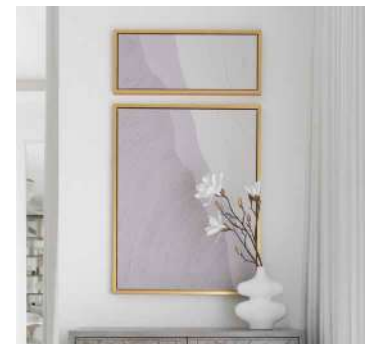
From artwork and mirrors to table lamps, books, sculptures and vases, it's amazing how small decorative items can make a huge impact in any room. However, it's important to choose quality over quantity and, in my experience, less is definitely more. A top style tip is to ensure the scale and proportion is right for the room or space.

ADD SOME TEXTURE

From area rugs and throw pillows to cosy blankets, layering different textiles in the living room and bedroom is a good way help break up the space and add visual interest. The use of texture is also linked to emotions. There's nothing better than the feel of a soft rug under our feet, for example, or snuggling up on the sofa surrounded by different textured cushions that you can easily switch out every season.

EXPERIMENT WITH ACCENT PIECES

We all want our homes to have their own unique style, so let your imagination take the lead in every space. One way to add personality is to create an area that showcases your personality. This could be a gallery wall of beautiful memories or a shelving unit with accent pieces you've collected on your travels.



A kitchen oasis

How Innerspace Dubai gave this Arabian Ranches kitchen an exotic makeover

Case study



“This stunning kitchen, with its playful tiling and bold colours, impresses immediately,” says senior designer, Rohit Patel. The challenging yet exciting brief was to create a striking design for the space, which plays a central role as a focal point for the entire family. “The clients requested a fusion of eastern and western design to evoke a sensation of relaxed, tropical whimsy, while avoiding clichéd trends,” he adds. In addition, the space needed to be functional and large enough to accommodate a multi-generational family. Rohit worked closely with the family and the appointed contractor, The Big Fitout, to create a kitchen that met their culinary needs and would also serve as a comfortable space - without compromising on the well-travelled style they envisioned. The starting point was creation of an extension to add space for much-needed storage as well as



THE VERDICT

Through the clever use of materials, the thoughtful placement of appliances and storage solutions, and extensive research into the desired style, Häcker was able to bring to life an exotic oasis at the heart of this family home. You can almost feel the palm trees swaying in the breeze...
Rohit Patel, Senior Designer



Before

an extra-large seating area. Häcker fronts were selected in high gloss white and cognac vintage oak with a polished silestone Arden blue quartz worktop. Says Rohit: "The contrast of dark and light colours and infusion of wooden fronts helped achieve the desired sleek yet modern tropical aesthetic." A culinary oasis, the extensive workspace also takes into account the family's children, who are active participants in the kitchen and needed extra room to experiment and create. A separate sink was also fitted with a Quooker tap for instantly available filtered drinking and cooking water. Step stools are tucked away inside the units and can be pulled out whenever the younger family members want to get creative. A "functional dream", the space is fully fitted with Siemens appliances, including a six-ring gas hob on the central island - to accommodate large-scale stovetop cooking. Internal storage solutions are plentiful and designed to provide a clear purpose for each unit in the room. A break in the cabinetry was also added to create a zone perfectly suited to seated cooking preparation or to simply sit and think about recipe ideas. In addition, the expansive breakfast bar serves multiple purposes as a casual dining space or comfortable work hub. "The pop-up socket on the island allows for uninterrupted work and the use of tabletop appliances as well," notes Rohit.



RENO THE RIGHT WAY

Pressing the button on a kitchen renovation is a major undertaking with numerous considerations, touchpoints and decisions. Innerspace Dubai (innerspacedxb.com) smooths the way with these top tips.

Consider how you live

The kitchen is the heart of the home, but every family uses the space differently. A central gathering area, entertainment hub, or purely a place to prepare delicious family meals, think about how your family lives and share that with your kitchen designer so they can create the best layout for you.

Figure out your style

A highly personal decision, knowing what style appeals to you is an excellent starting point for your kitchen designer. Specialised kitchen studios have extensive ranges on show so your designer is there to recommend material combinations that will help narrow down the endless possibilities. Browse the internet for inspiration and share images that align with your vision to guide your designer.

Maximise space

A well-designed kitchen should have a place for everything. Start planning by listing must-haves, such as the number of cabinets, drawers, and shelves you need to store kitchen essentials. Think about the types of items you will be storing in each area, from utensils and cookware to small appliances and pantry items. This will help you determine the size and placement of each area.

Inside matters

While most of us dream about how the finished kitchen will look,

it's how the kitchen functions that will make the design dream come true. When planning your kitchen don't underestimate how innovative internal mechanisms can make your life easier. Ask your kitchen designer about options for storage mechanisms such as pullouts, hidden drawers, LeMans shelves, and more.

Avoid following trends

A kitchen is an investment that should last at least 20 years. If you create your design based on current trends, this may quickly become dated. Instead, incorporate trends into your styling choices so you can dress the kitchen once completed and still be free to restyle as new trends come along.

Choose a specialised kitchen studio

Nobody knows kitchens better than a kitchen designer. By choosing to work with a specialised studio that manufactures in Europe rather than a general carpenter or contractor you are guaranteeing the use of high-end material and expertise in design and execution.

Plan in advance

Home renovations are hectic and time-heavy so plan the fitout based on when you want key elements to be finalised. As the highest footfall area in your home, the kitchen is usually a top priority. All European kitchen brands will have a minimum lead time of three months for manufacturing and delivery. Designing a kitchen can take as little as one day if you know exactly what you want, but most families spend at least two to three weeks making final design decisions. Factor both the planning and execution stage into your timeline to ensure you can get that high-quality kitchen you have your heart set on.

CAN'T CARRY OUT A FULL RENOVATION? HERE'S THREE WAYS TO REFRESH YOUR SPACE

Restyle

It's amazing how the addition of well-placed plants or small decorative items can influence the look of a kitchen. Simply changing up the décor can totally refresh its look without a big price tag.

All change

Kitchen cupboard handles are relatively inexpensive and have a big impact on kitchen design. Go on the hunt for new handles and you'll be amazed at how a quick change can uplift the look.

Fresh coat

Tired of dark or dreary colours? Hire a specialised technical team to spray cupboard doors to brighten the space. This isn't necessarily the cheapest of options, but it delivers high-value impact.





Case study

Take the plunge

Discover how this Damac Hills homeowner created a spa sanctuary

Relaxed open-plan living was the end goal for the transformation of this four-bed, five-bath Damac Hills villa and bathroom remodelling was a priority for husband-and-wife team Jessica and Kyle Reilly.

Owner of fitout company Rare Renovations, Kyle drew on his extensive experience to reimagine the different spaces with the couple keen to integrate smart-home supported features to create an ultra-modern home.

Responsible for interior curation, Jessica's personal love for interior design and impeccable eye for



detail is evident throughout, but what really sets this stunning home apart is the ground floor spa. This exquisitely designed space features a bespoke sauna, steam room and thermostatic-controlled rain shower with body jets from the M-Line Zanzibar range at BAGNODESIGN. And the vision doesn't end there, with a superbly designed bathroom in the upstairs master bedroom.

Says Jessica: "The luxury element of the master suite is a result of the relocation of both the bathtub and walk-in wardrobes from what would have been the fifth bedroom. This allowed us to create a huge suite overlooking the golf course with ample storage and an island unit."

The bathtub was repositioned in front of the floor-to-ceiling window

overlooking the golf course to provide "an outstanding bathing experience" with the added bonus of being able to watch your favourite show on a TV inset flush into the wall.

"Sorting out the drainage and electrics to make this a reality was incredibly challenging but completely worth it. And with the bath relocation we ended up with additional space in which to extend the master en suite and create a huge walk-in shower which is flooded with natural light from the adjacent master bedroom glass wall," she elaborates.

As well as a strong aesthetic,

Best Bathroom category winner at the 2023 Prime by Betterhomes Dubai's Top 50 Homes awards

designing an upgraded smart home that delivers on functionality to make everyday tasks that bit easier, was critical and included the integration of Alexa-compatible technology and mobile applications.

Says Jessica: "This came with a host of benefits. For example, when relaxing in the bath, the smart home blinds come down in response to a single Alexa command. And if you want extra privacy but don't feel like moving the Nest a/c system is mobile app controlled, so you can turn the temperature up or down at the touch of a button."





Bathrooms by design

Make your bathroom a haven for relaxation with award-winning design insight from Roberto Palomba, Chief Design Officer at Ideal Standard

“The bathroom isn’t only all about function and deserves to be a well-designed space, whether you want to create a room that works for all the family, reimagine a five-star hotel experience from your travels, or step into a spa-inspired retreat.

To start things off, it’s important to prioritise and plan the layout. If your bathroom is a compact space, think about the essential elements first before layering in other design features. For a bigger space, you have free rein to look beyond the basics and let your imagination run wild.

If you love a spa experience then consider a shower that comes with integrated colour-changing lights for the ultimate customisable mood enhancer. If bath time is your way to destress then a grey stone effect extra-long bath adds instant drama and delivers a luxury bathing experience.

Quality is paramount. Bathrooms are high usage areas and require an appropriate budget. Take the time to search for high-quality brands and products that offer guaranteed high performance and durability, as well as meet the design criteria you are looking for. After all, there has to be a balance between functionality and design, as you want this to be a room that you enjoy using and one that performs on every level.

One aspect of bathroom design that is often forgotten is adequate storage. Accessibility and practicality are critical, from sleek vanity units with built in shelving to floating shelves and over-door solutions for small spaces. Above all, you want to maximise space and incorporate clever storage ideas that blend seamlessly with the overall design and aesthetic.

Colour and material choices are just as important to bring the

space together. You can’t go wrong with timeless materials, a neutral colour palette and classic designs.

The finishing touch is to add your own personality into the space with thoughtful accessories and touches that complement you dream bathroom design.”

More than a showroom

Head to the Ideal Standard Design & Specification Centre in Dubai’s vibrant City Walk district. A one-stop bathroom solutions destination, see the latest product designs and innovations and pick up some inspiration for your remodelling project. Speak to the experienced team who can offer a wealth of advice on planning and design and talk you through the latest trends and technologies.



ON TREND BUT EVERGREEN

Bathroom design trends evolve, but some elements stand the test of time.

1. Natural inspiration. Incorporate natural materials such as stone, wood, and greenery to create a calming, spa-like vibe.
2. Neutral colours.

Timeless white, beige, grey and other neutral tones are the perfect blank canvas on which to introduce different design styles. Plus, they are less likely to quickly feel dated.

3. Minimalist fixtures. Opt for streamlined,

minimalist fixtures with timeless appeal that also help maximise available space.

4. Smart technology. Consider integrating smart technology like smart taps that can dispense both water and soap.

[idealstandardgulf.com](https://www.idealstandardgulf.com)

The great outdoors

Look beyond four walls and lavish some love on your al fresco spaces. Sayed Habib, director of indoor and outdoor specialist Danube Home, (danubehome.com) answers your questions on how to design the perfect Dubai garden



Q What are the major considerations for outdoor renovations?

A Firstly, how big is the outdoor space and how do you plan to use it? Is it for entertaining family and friends? A space for your children to play? Or simply a cozy area to relax in after a long day? With this in mind, next step is to decide what furniture and décor pieces are needed. For entertaining you'll want more seating options and a barbecue or outdoor kitchen setup, whereas for a kid-friendly space, consider outdoor toys such as swing sets, slides or a trampoline. And, for lounging, a comfy swing set or outdoor sofa bed are essential. For larger gatherings, add a dining set for grand hosting occasions, or a gazebo for a touch of glam. For smaller spaces, a top tip is to invest in multifunctional furniture.

Al fresco entertainment

The perfect party host needs an entertainment zone. Bar and grill counters are a must-have and no garden get-together is complete without a barbecue sizzling and smoking in the background.



Finishing touches

Enhance the look of your garden with ornaments to elevate the mood, add unique charm and make the space more inviting. And who doesn't love the calming tinkling sound and sophistication of a fountain? They don't have to be an expensive purchase with wallet-friendly options available in different styles and sizes.

Q What key elements create the perfect Dubai outdoor space?

A Ideally, you want to be able to enjoy your outdoor space all year round. The basic requirement is comfortable seating coupled with an outdoor umbrella or gazebo that offers shade and protection from the sun. Adding outdoor air coolers is also a great way to enjoy your garden in every season. For families, a kids' play area is a fantastic way to swap screen time for outdoor play.

Q Renovations can be costly, which areas should be prioritised?

A The amount you spend on outdoor furniture and décor all depends on the desired

functionality of the space – and your personal priorities. If relaxation and 'me time' is at the top of the list, then investing in a comfy single seater swing or sofa and adding calming décor elements, like a fountain, is the way to go. If entertaining is your thing and you don't want to blow the budget, then look at a three-in-one barbecue set that includes ample counter space and a built-in sink. Sofa sets that double up as dining spots are another smart investment. Similarly, gazebos with built-in seating are a multipurpose, value-for-money purchase. It's important to always select good quality pieces that will last the distance, even if it means paying a premium.

Landscaping matters

No one likes an unkempt lawn or badly maintained pool. There's no point investing in top quality furniture and décor if the setting is not well maintained. Work with a reputable landscaper and pool company to bring out the best in your outdoor space.



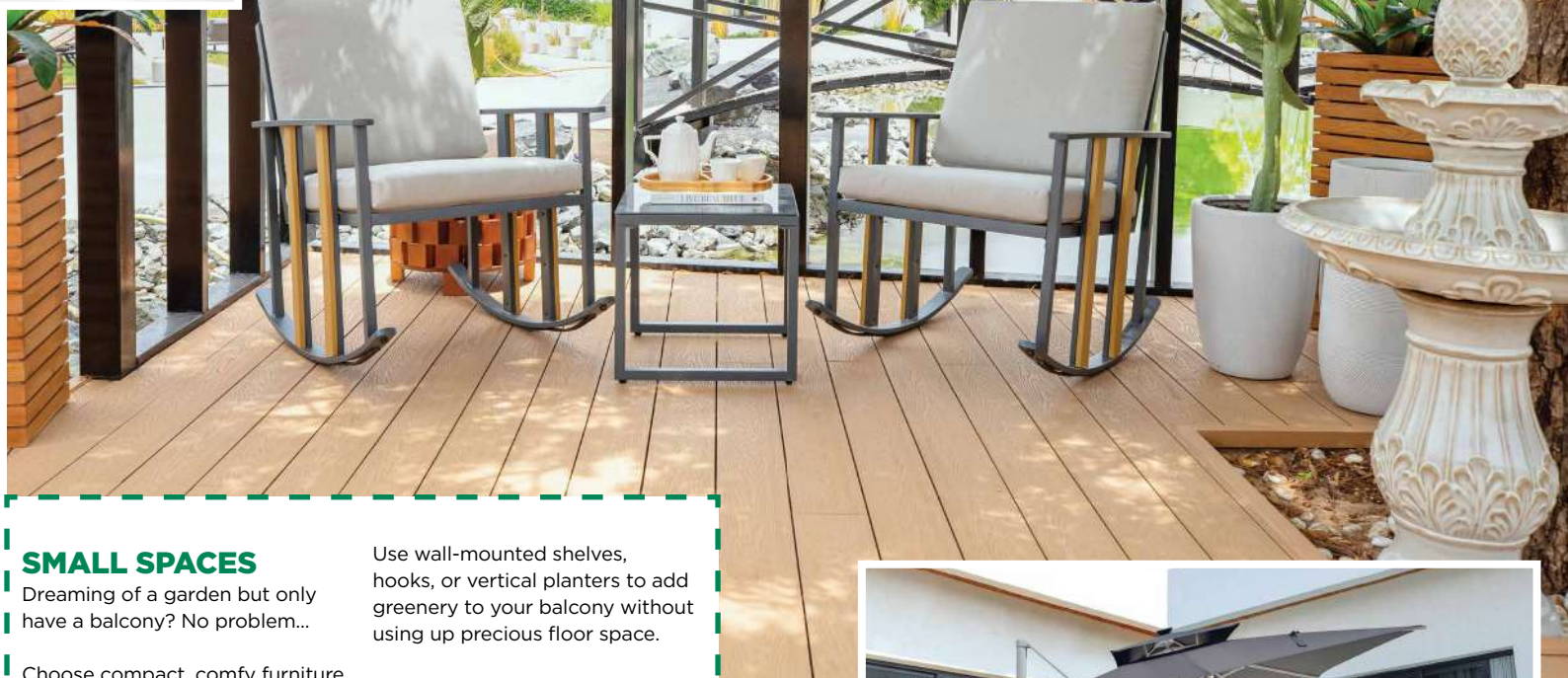


Q Dubai's long summers can be tough on outdoor furniture – any tips?

A Aluminium and stainless steel are two materials that fare well in harsh weather conditions. Commonly used as frames for sofa and dining sets, as well as gazebos, they are treated with rust and water-resistant solutions that make them extremely durable. Adding outdoor umbrellas or gazebos can also protect your seating from the harsh sun and provide you with a comfortable space to lounge. This can also extend the life of cushions and throws, as well as prevent overheating of metal or plastic surfaces.

Good quality wood is also great for outdoor spaces and creates a feeling of being at one with nature, while still being durable and weatherproof. A handy tip is to protect items with furniture covers if you're going on vacation or don't use the garden for an extended period of time.

For additional peace of mind, the majority of Danube Home garden products now come with a warranty of up to five years. The majority of Danube Home garden products come with a warranty of up to five years, ensuring customer peace of mind.



SMALL SPACES

Dreaming of a garden but only have a balcony? No problem...

Choose compact, comfy furniture pieces that will sit cozily in a smaller outdoor area. Avoid cluttering the area with an overwhelm of furniture or décor pieces.

Investing in multifunctional or easily portable pieces is a great solution when space is at a premium.

Use wall-mounted shelves, hooks, or vertical planters to add greenery to your balcony without using up precious floor space.

Artificial plant fences are another practical solution that add privacy and create a beautiful green area that makes you feel close with nature.

Opt for light colours to make your balcony feel more spacious, open and inviting. Adding pops of colour also adds instant vibrancy and personality.



5 GARDEN FUNDAMENTALS

1. Are you dreaming of a relaxing haven, al fresco entertainment area, green retreat, or a mix of everything? Decide on the primary purpose of the space to gain clarity on how you want to design it.

2. When it comes to outdoor spaces, lighting plays a crucial role in not just creating ambience but also enhancing functionality – so think carefully when making lighting choices.

3. Landscaping is critical and you can go with real plants, high-quality artificial options, or a mix of both. Calculate the ratio based on your ability to maintain the space. If you're not blessed with green fingers, we recommend using artificial greenery to keep your garden looking fresh and verdant all year round.

4. Garden accessories and soft furnishings such as cushions and throws, are a great way to add personality and pop of colour, print, and texture to your outdoor space. They can also be swapped out seasonally to create distinctive looks you love.

5. Invest in superior quality furniture that is, above all, comfortable. Look for materials like aluminum and olefin fabric detailing that have been specially created to withstand and thrive in all weather conditions.

Shop your home

The stores to help you go from blank space to a true sense of place



Casa Milano

Elevate your bathroom experience with high-end Italian inspiration. This homegrown UAE company designs sanitaryware sanctuaries that scream opulent luxury with a contemporary twist; from freestanding bathtubs and recessed vanity units right down to tiles, lighting and the ubiquitous soap dish.

We love: OTT bathtub chic casamilanoitaly.com

CB2

Part of the Crate and Barrel family, CB2 is the go-to for sophisticated, high-quality design at an approachable price. Timeless meets edgy across seasonally changing beautifully curated collections that speak to whatever your brand of personal style. This is where the likes of Kravitz Design meets chic homespun comfort.

We love: The cool collaborations cb2.ae

Danube Home

Affordable quality across more than 50,000 homeware products means you can kit your entire house out and feel good about it. With 16 product categories on offer, pick up a sofa, dining set, wardrobe, sunlounger, and more; or make a date with the interior design team for some style advice.

We love: Awesome seating selection danubehome.com

Dubai Garden Centre

A green Aladdin's cave, this is where those in the know not only go to pick up a perennial or pot plant but also custom-made planters, pergolas, benches, bird houses as well as a third-party conservatory design service.

We love: Hand-carpentered kids' playhouses dubaigardencentre.ae



IKEA

This global homeware icon is where you go to do up your home on a budget. The Swedish brand offers its simple yet stylish products at two branches: Dubai Festival City and Festival Plaza Mall, Jebel Ali. Perfect for homes of every size, you'll find lots of options for clean, uncluttered living.

We love: Scandi storage solutions ikea.com/ae



**Kaiser**

Dream kitchen design meets German-engineered excellence. Whether you're looking for a high-end family-friendly space or a professional chef-quality kitchen, Kaiser offers contemporary tailored design from A to Z. The result? A gorgeous kitchen that ticks all your boxes.

We love: Custom design options
kaiser.ae

Marina Home

A three-decade-long legacy and reputation for an eclectic handcrafted offering that draws on design inspiration from around the world, ensures that every visit is an adventure. Discover a treasure trove of unique pieces spanning mid-century, Japandi rustic, and much more; with everything you need for stylish indoor and al fresco living.

We love: Endless styling opportunities
marinahomeinteriors.com

Pottery Barn

Manhattan vibes and some serious design credentials anchor this popular homeware store. Handcrafted, fair trade and organic collections sit alongside on-trend yet timeless pieces that will sit pretty in your Dubai Hills home.

We love: Handcrafted accessories galore
potterybarn.ae

Rattan House

Your go-to for contemporary designed, highly durable and weather-resistant outdoor furnishings, this is a popular one-stop destination for everything

from sun loungers, rattan garden sofa sets and parasols to fire pits and outdoor rugs.

We love: 5-yr warranty on own brand furniture
rattanhouse.com

Sanipex Group

Cover all the home styling bases with Bagnodesign showrooms for dream bathroom design, and Sanipex Gallery dedicated to exclusive brands spanning bathroom, wellness, kitchen and outdoor living. You can even try before you buy with 'The Visualiser' online room design tool.

We love: Trending tile designs
sanipexgroup.com

Soul & Tables

A one-stop repository for all your home setup needs, browse curated collections of contemporary and eco-friendly furniture designed to stand the test of time. Lifetime warranty on own brand pieces, free delivery and installation, and aftersales maintenance support make this a winning experience all the way.

We love: Ethically sourced designs
soulandtables.ae

THE One

A sought-after staple of the home furnishings scene since 1996, this UAE-born brand is a go-to for home interiors inspiration. A sense of adventure and eccentricity is fused with classic style across its seasonally inventive collections for unique room-to-room experiences that delight and excite.

We love: Sumptuous bedroom feels
theone.com

West Elm

Modern design enthusiasts go wild for the Brooklyn studio-based furniture and home décor company. Strong sustainability values resonate throughout its collections with a commitment to delivering solidly made, ethically produced Fair Trade certified pieces.

We love: Sustainable ceiling to floor solutions
westelm.ae



On the move

Time to exit the UAE for new adventures or simply relocating in Dubai? Here's how to ensure a hassle-free exit



TENANT CHECKLIST

If your tenancy contract is coming to an end and you're unsure about next steps, it's the legal responsibility of the renter to give notice or confirm contract renewal 90 days in advance. Most landlords and management companies will send a renewal notice (with updated terms) well before the deadline but mark it on the calendar anyway. If you do decide to move on, then here's some tips for a smooth move...

Make good. Normal wear and tear aside, you're legally required to hand over your apartment or villa in good condition. This includes repainting walls to their original colour, filling in any holes from picture hooks, wall-mounted TVs, etc., and leaving the place in general good working order. Can't be bothered or out of time? This may land you with an unexpected maintenance invoice or the loss of your security deposit.

Ready for inspection. The landlord, management company or appointed agent will inspect the property to make sure everything is in order. The final step is to hand back the keys, at which point your deposit should be returned, although this often takes time to be credited to your bank account.

Switch off. On the actual day your tenancy expires (or ahead of time if you move out early), you will need to file an online DEWA 'Moveout' request. This usually takes 24 hours, and the final bill will be sent to your email. There's a Dh\$100-300 disconnection charge (excluding VAT), plus final bill amount. Any DEWA deposit will be refunded if leaving or transferred to your new property. If you already have a new

home sorted, you can transfer your account through the online 'Move To' service. With Empower, it's a similar process but you'll also need to visit their offices in person to make the final payment, retrieve your deposit and get the clearance certificate.

Cut the connection. To cancel your Du phone/internet package, either submit a cancellation request online (du.ae), via the app or call the customer care line (800 155) at least three days prior to moving out. You will receive a call-back within 72 hours to walk you through the final steps of the process after which you pay your final bill online or in person (and collect any monies owed). Etisalat is a similar story (800 101). If you have a long-term package, don't forget to check the small print as you'll probably be locked into a contracted period with penalties for early cancellation, plus there's a standard 30-day cancellation notice period.

Local transfer. Du and Etisalat accounts can easily be transferred by making an online request or calling the customer helpline. Get the ball rolling at least four working days before you relocate, and make sure you have your full (new) address details and proof of residency documents for uploading. A technician appointment at your new location will then be scheduled (fees of Dhs100-300 apply). Same as moving in, some communities will require you to obtain a moving out permit or, for apartment buildings, a landlord no-objection certificate/letter.

LOVE OR LEAVE?

There's no place like home, but are you getting a good deal or paying over the odds? Current rental rates for your community or area can



be checked using the RERA Rental Increase Calculator. Type in your location and residence basics to check what the going annual rental rates are like. Find it at dubailand.gov.ae/en/eservices/rental-index. Paying more than you should? The first step is obviously to negotiate, but this must be done at least 90 days before your contract expires. If the situation isn't resolved and the RERA Rental Increase Calculator is in your favour, consider filing a complaint with the Dubai Land Department's Rental Dispute Settlement Centre. A 3.5% fee (based on total annual rent) is payable, but if you win the case, this is refunded. Additional admin fees apply.

Check the small print of your existing rental agreement and negotiate on some of the finer points to secure a better deal. This could be payment in multiple cheques, an upfront payment discount, or asking for an additional parking space.

SIGNED AND SEALED

The sales process explained... If you're a landlord who is selling and are ready to accept a buyer

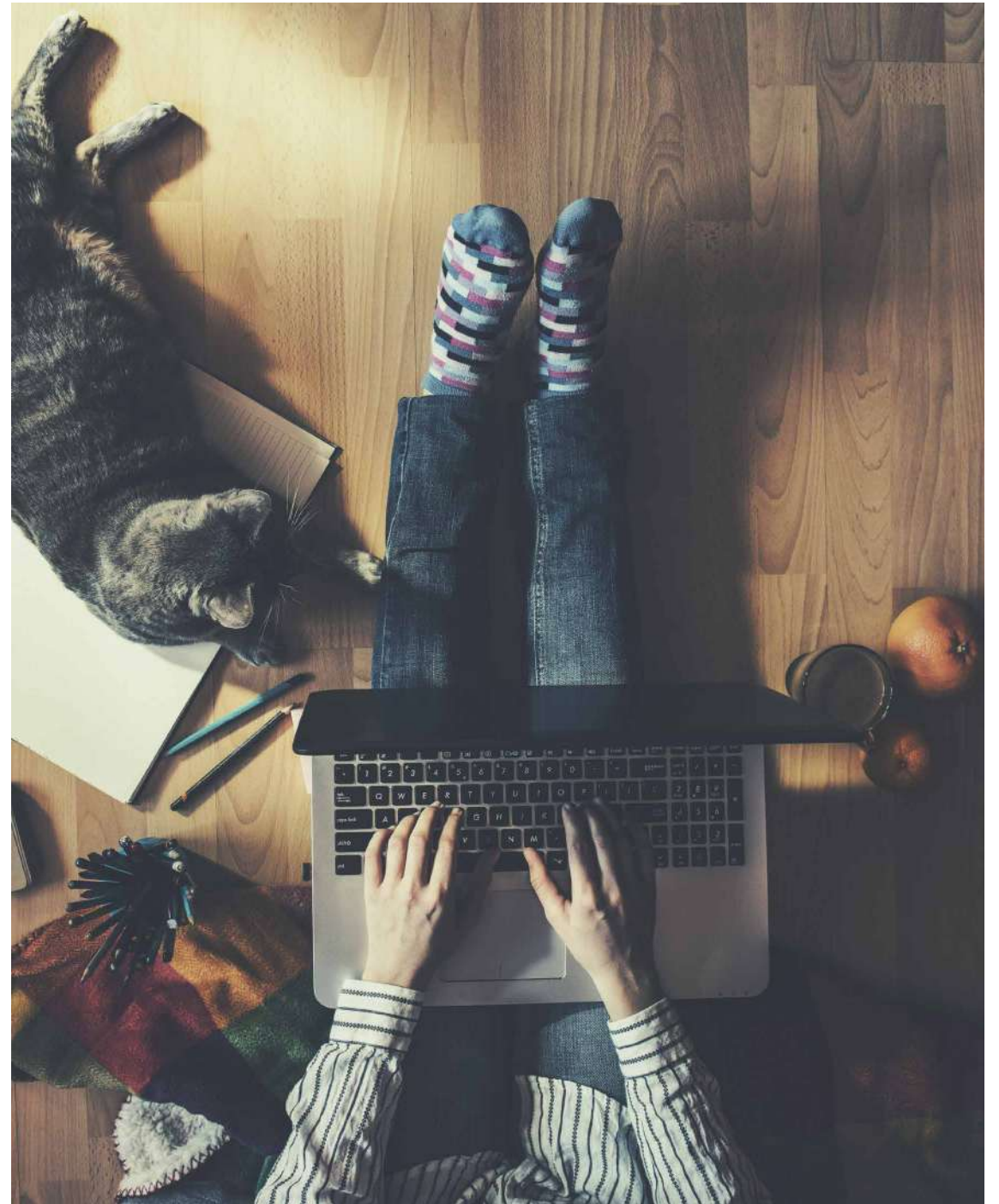
offer, your agent is on hand to help you agree terms and prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or Form F to be signed by both parties. Note: this locks you into the deal. Next step is for the buyer and seller to meet at the offices of the developer to apply for a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to sell the property (this is usually paid for by the seller). Any outstanding service charges owed by the seller must be settled at this point. Once the NOC is issued, both parties make a trip to the Dubai Land Department to transfer ownership. Payment must be made by manager's cheque on the day of the transfer. Once completed, the new title deed will be issued in the name of the buyer.

EVICITION NOTICE

Receiving an unexpected eviction notice can be overwhelming, so it's good to be in the know when it comes to your legal rights as a tenant. If your landlord wants to move into the property themselves, or sell it, a written 12-month notice period is required and can only be sent via registered mail or via the notary public. Eviction (upon expiration of current contract) is only possible if the landlord plans to demolish the property, is selling, has immediate family moving in, or if it needs serious maintenance/renovation (Dubai Municipality technical report required).

EARLY EXIT

Need or want to cut short your tenancy contract? Check the terms and conditions regarding early exit penalty clauses. In addition, your current Ejari contract remains live until all issues are resolved. If you have issued post-dated cheques, ask for them to be returned or for written confirmation of non-encashment.



Ready to buy

If you can see yourself settling in Dubai, investing in property may be the way to go. But is now a good time to buy? We asked the experts at Betterhomes



KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Connor Manning, Dubai Hills Area Manager at Betterhomes, on the top four things to consider when looking to buy

- 1. Location.** Find a home in an area you will enjoy and close to amenities that are important to you - for example, kids' school, work etc.
- 2. Price.** Ensure you clearly communicate your budget with your agent to avoid viewing properties outside your price range. Additionally, an experienced real estate agent makes all the difference, as they will know the market and be able to assess if the property price is reasonable or overpriced.
- 3. Size.** Carefully consider short and long-term size needs, as these may change over the years.
- 4. Cost of living.** The cost of living differs throughout Dubai, depending on where you want to buy. Take time to consider your monthly expenses and whether you will be financially comfortable.

Dubai's property market has been flying high in the last couple of years, with June 2023 witnessing a record 10-year high in terms of total transaction value. This has been fuelled by surging demand from both local and overseas investors and backed by a buoyant economy, perennially appealing lifestyle benefits, high-profile project launches and pro-investor government initiatives such as the UAE Golden Visa programme.

For those here for the long haul, the question to ask yourself is 'do I want to keep paying rent when I can own?' And though making that switch from tenant to homeowner is both a significant financial and emotional step, if you are planning to stay for a good few years, then buying could be the best decision you ever take.

"Over the last three years, the Dubai market has gone from strength to strength, fuelled by a growing population and renewed interest from overseas buyers. Dubai has become the go-to destination for high net-worth individuals (HNWIs) looking for a safe and welcoming destination to raise their families and grow their businesses," says Richard Waind, Chief Executive Officer of Betterhomes. "As an asset class, Dubai real estate has outperformed almost all other options, with in excess of 6% gross yields and double-digit year-on-year capital appreciation. That, and the increasingly transparent nature of the market - with the advent of Open Data from the DLD - has seen foreign investment into Dubai property reach an all-time high. Domestically, residents have continued to enter the sales market, despite rising interest rates. Rising rental costs and fear of eviction have made purchasing an attractive option. Finally, supply in the secondary market remains tight, and high-quality new launches are routinely over-subscribed. With the likelihood of increased HNWI migration in the coming years, in the face of an increasingly polarised world as well as more frequent climate challenges, it is likely that Dubai will continue to grow, and the market alongside it."

Prices aren't the only thing to have increased in the city's property market. "Over the last year, mortgage interest rates have increased significantly, and we have seen a sharp upturn in the EIBOR rate," says Jeffrey De Souza, Head Of Mortgages at Betterhomes. "The three-month EIBOR rate fluctuated between 5% to 5.3% in September 2023, up from 2.6-3% the year prior. While this makes monthly repayments more expensive, they are still typically lower than the rental payments for a like-for-like property. In addition, buying allows individuals to build

their net worth through home ownership and gives them the security that they aren't at risk of receiving a rent increase or eviction notice from their landlord. Therefore, demand for mortgages remains strong in spite of the perceived high interest rates."

With a profusion of property launches and favourable payment plans to choose from, the off-plan market also continues to attract prospective homeowners. "Recently, off-plan sales have comprised more than 50% of all market transactions," explains Wassim Abdallah, Head of Off-Plan and Investments at Betterhomes. "It is a great option, as it allows you to choose the layout, the view, and where you want to live, at a lower price than for a brand-new property." "A "hassle-free process" with zero payable commission and DLD waiver, Abdallah notes that there is also usually greater price appreciation compared to built properties. "Another hugely beneficial factor with off-plan options is the payment plan. For example, the California Village development has a seven-year payment structure, which allows investors to get a return on their investment after an initial down payment of only 30%. It also benefits end-users as they don't need to borrow as much from the bank, with the down payment split into three 10% payments for the first three years."

FEE BREAKDOWN

"There are several costs that clients are required to pay, apart from the purchasing price, that can be overlooked or forgotten," cautions Connor Manning, Dubai Hills Area Manager at Betterhomes. "Usually, these fees can be around 7% of the total property value, and include but are not limited to:

- 2% (+VAT) agency commission
- Conveyancing fee
- 4% DLD + AED 580 admin fee. This is not always applicable if buying through an agent or from the developer
- AED 4,200 trustee fee
- 0.25% mortgage registration fee (on loan amount)
- Service fees
- Any renovation fees

Essential contacts

All those handy numbers you need, at your fingertips



EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police 999

Al Ameen Service
(Dubai Police)
800 4888

For reporting crimes
anonymously

Al Ameen SMS service
050 189 4444

Ambulance 998

Fire 997

Electricity failure 911

Water failure 922

FOR OFFICIAL PAPERWORK

Al Manara Center

For Ejari registration
(for Ejari typing centre
list go to dubailand.gov.ae),
DEWA and telecoms
connections, UAE driving

licence applications, visa
and real estate services.
800 900, dm.gov.ae

Dubai Land Department
Homeowner real estate
services, Ejari registration,
Dubai Rental Dispute
Settlement Centre. 800
4488, dubailand.gov.ae
Real Estate Regulatory
Authority (RERA)
04 203 0555, dubailand.gov.ae

UTILITIES

DEWA 04 601 9999, dewa.gov.ae/en

Empower 04 375 5555,
empower.ae

PHONE, TV & INTERNET PACKAGES

Du 800 155
All Du mobile customers
(postpaid/prepaid) are
welcome to sign up to

Amazon Prime as an
add-on subscription with
certain packages including
12 months free access.
du.ae

Etisalat

101 (24/7) for callers within
the UAE.
etisalat.ae

OSN

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user-interest TV packages.
New customer 04 247
3536; existing customer
04 367 78888, osn.com

Netflix

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documentaries, and more.
netflix.com

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solutions, from deep
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and can also sanitise
your carpets, sofas,
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urbanhousekeeping.com

Helping

Offload time-consuming
everyday chores
and book online for
shortnotice cleans or to
request long-term home
help. 800 989,
helping.ae

PEST CONTROL

Rentokil Boecker

Pest control experts with
emirate-wide coverage,
offering the latest tools
and techniques to keep
your home bug free. 800
73787/04 449 7730

National Pest Control

Well established company
with a highly professional
team and pest control
expertise. Part of the
Rentokil group. 04 324
2342, natpest.com

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One of Dubai's original
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things, from a water tank
deep clean to plug wiring.
04 807 3295, wewillfixit.com

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A full A to Z of services
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to furniture assembly
and mosquito net
fitting. 056 662 3611,
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Ultra-efficient and just
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your prized 65-inch TV
wall mounted, smoke
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toolboys.ae

Hitches & Glitches

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independent home
maintenance company
in the UAE. Also
offers renovation
and refurbishment
services. 800 42634,
hitchesglitches.com

VFix Maintenance

Provides painting, a/c,
electrical, tiling and
plumbing services.
Get a speedy estimate
by filling in the online
form. 054 767 0077,
vfixmaintenance.com

Octopus

24/7 support with a
wide range of solutions
to cover all your home
maintenance and repair
needs. 800 3993,
octopus.ae

GAS DELIVERY

For villa residents who
require a gas cylinder,
there are around 55 gas
distributors that deliver
to your door in Dubai.
Order your preferred
cylinder size through
Emirates Gas. 800 36427,
emiratesgas.com

WATER DELIVERY

To save multiple trips to
the supermarket, most
residents have a fivegallon
bottle water cooler
at home. Numerous
companies offer doorstep
delivery, including: Mai
Dubai 800 6243 8224,
Masafi 600 525 256,Oasis
Water 600 522 261 For
an eco-friendly solution,
install the Quooker tap,
which dispenses hot,
chilled and sparkling

filtered water. 04 330
3063, quooker.ae

SAFETY & SECURITY ACE

Go-to DIY and hardware
store with large selection
of security lighting,
window and patio locks,
door deadbolts, smoke
alarms and more. 800 275
223, aceuae.com

Hartmann Tresore

German-manufactured,
tested, certified and
customised safes and
high-quality door locks.
04 380 8099, safes.ae

Locksmith Dubai

Promises to reach you
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whether you've lost
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or need extra keys cut
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locksmithdubai.ae

Safety Screens

Australian-owned
company with door and
window screen solutions
for residential properties
across the UAE. 056 129
6944, safetyscreens.ae

HOME UPGRADES

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architecture, interior
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company with extensive
residential experience.
050 485 2970,
designsmith.ae

Innerspace Dubai

Award-winning interior
design team with

specialist kitchen
renovation expertise.
Official distributor for
high-end German
Häcker and Kaiser
kitchens. 04 252 6500,
innerspacedxb.com

The Big Fitout

Specialists in European
style residential
kitchen and bathroom
renovations, this British-
owned renovation
company only takes on
projects within select
communities. 058 5050
200, thebigfitout.com

Pools by Design

A bespoke pool
design and installation
company that can build
your dream swimming
pool. 050 754 6852,
poolsbydesign.net

GROCERY DELIVERY

Carrefour

Free grocery delivery
service for orders over
Dhs150, and large kitchen
appliances. 800 73232,
carrefouruae.com

Instashop

Offers fast online
delivery from a range
of supermarkets and
shops, including organic
specialists. instashop.com

Kibsons

Online grocery delivery
service that also stocks
brands like Sainsbury's
and M&S Food products,
plus fresh flowers and
kids' essentials. kibsons.com



MOVING & STORAGE

Allied Moving Services

A leading global mover with 600 locations in 40 countries and a multilingual team with over two decades' market experience. 04 818 0400, allied.com/ae

Crown Relocations

International moving company with a portfolio of services including a shared container service and settling-in services. 04 230 5300, crownrelo.com

Santa Fe Relocations

Global relocation and

storage specialists across 47 countries. Obtain a free online quote. 04 332 1595, santaferelo.com

Storall

Offers safe and secure storage units for anything and everything that won't fit in your house or apartment. 04 880 3644/054 757 5390, storall.ae

The Box

Self-storage and mini warehousing services provider with around-the-clock availability and choice of flexible storage options. Check out the handy 'move packs' that

come in all shapes and sizes, available through the online store. 800 843 269, theboxme.com

COOL HOME DELIVERIES

Dubai is known for delivering an ultra-easy lifestyle. In a city where you can get almost everything delivered to your door, make the most of these cool home delivery options:

Cafu

No time to get to the petrol station? Fret not, as you can get fuel delivered straight to your door 24/7 - and no delivery fee. Simply download the app, place

an order and a man in a van will come to fill you up, wash your vehicle, and more. 800 692238, cafu.com

Hello Chef

Pre-portioned ingredients and recipe cards for the week's dinner delivered to your door. 04 383 9399, hellochef.me

Pets Lounge

Treat your furry friends to an at home (or in-van, as is usually the case) spa treatment with a mobile grooming service that pulls up outside your door. 052 216 6773, petsloungeuae.com



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