

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY ABU DHABI

HORIZONS

At home in Abu Dhabi

جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي



NYU ABU DHABI



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NYU ABU DHABI



WELCOME

#myNYUAD

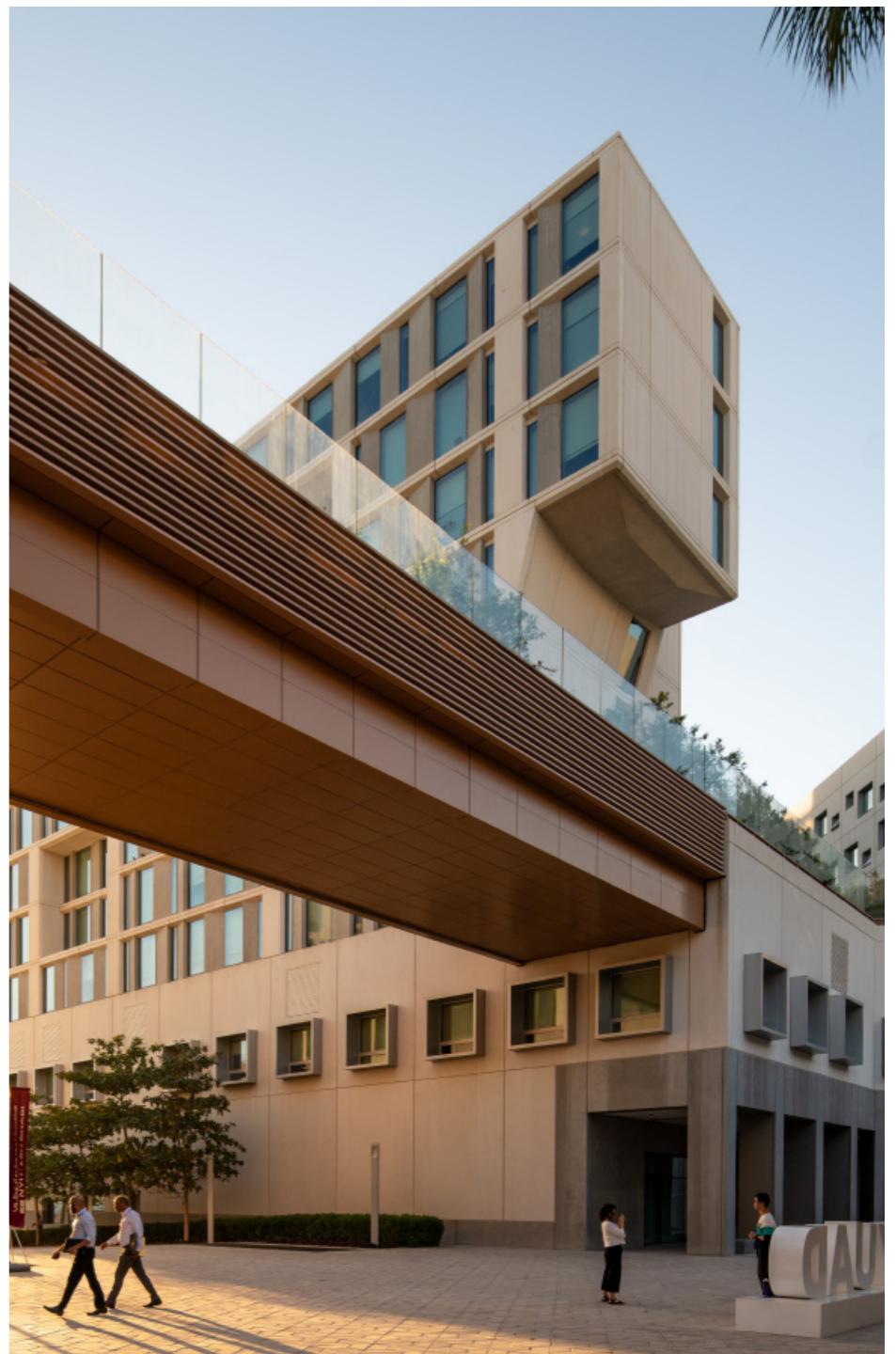
WELCOME

At a crossroads of today's changing world, Abu Dhabi as a city is a hub for diversity, creativity, knowledge development, and cultural exchange. Since 2010, New York University Abu Dhabi — founded in partnership between NYU and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi — has enjoyed and contributed to the rich mix of perspectives and the passion for innovation unique to this city.

Our faculty, staff, and students are a microcosm of Abu Dhabi itself, coming from across the globe to add their own flavor into this fertile cultural mix, united in a common belief in the value of a liberal arts education, of the benefits a research university brings to society, a conviction that interaction with new ideas and people who are different is valuable and necessary, and a commitment to educating true citizens of the world. As a center for scholarly thought, advanced research, and knowledge creation and exchange, there are few places like it.

The city makes it easy to deliver this vision — it's a beautiful, cosmopolitan place to live, that's safe and clean, offering excellent amenities, and a warm welcome to the many people who move here. Whether on our purpose-built campus on Saadiyat Island or in the bustle of the city center, this is an exceptional place for exceptional people.

Welcome to the city we call home.



THE CITY



THE CITY

Abu Dhabi is the largest emirate of the United Arab Emirates. It makes up nearly 87 percent of the country's total landmass and includes the capital – the city of Abu Dhabi. Home to more than 1.3 million people, the majority of the people who live in the emirate are expatriates. Established in 1971, the UAE is a federation of seven emirates with two separate levels of government. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the ruler of Abu Dhabi, is also the president of the UAE.

The Emirate of Abu Dhabi holds nine percent of the world's proven oil reserves and almost five percent of the world's natural gas supplies. Nevertheless, the government of Abu Dhabi has an ambitious plan to diversify the local economy to make sure the emirate continues to grow in a sustainable way.

Established in 2010 as a partnership between NYU and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, NYU Abu Dhabi already has an international reputation for excellence in research and teaching and this translates into benefits to the local community as well as the society that sustains it.

ABU DHABI

Established:	1761
Meaning:	<i>Father of the Gazelle</i>
President:	His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Official languages:	Arabic, English, Hindi
Time zone:	Gulf Standard Time UTC+4
UAE population:	2,908,173 (as of 2016)
National holidays:	Eid al-Fitr, Arafat Day, Eid al-Adha, Hijri New Year, Commemoration Day, UAE National Day

FOUR QUICK ABU DHABI FAQS

A guide to some of the most commonly asked questions

What's the weather like?

Due to its subtropical, arid climate, Abu Dhabi has almost year-round sunshine, very little rain, and is wonderfully warm in winter. Temperatures range between winter night lows of 10°C to summer day highs of 48°C.

What should I wear?

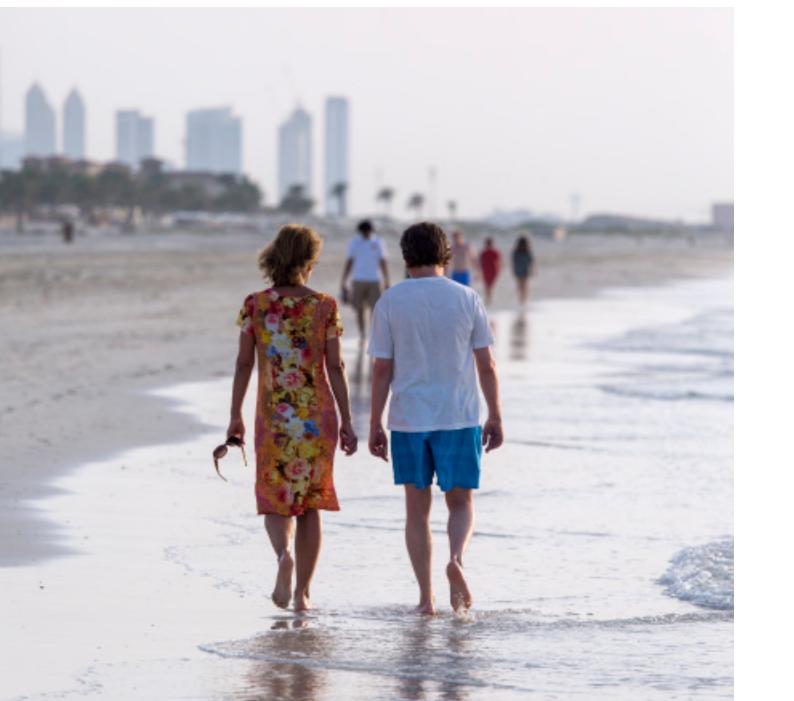
People are generally free to dress as they would at home. It is a good idea to be respectful of local culture and to refrain from wearing overly revealing clothing and to dress more conservatively when visiting mosques and during Ramadan.

How safe is it?

The UAE is considered one of the safest countries in the world, with extremely low crime rates. However, appropriate alertness and safety measures should be taken as you would anywhere else in the world.

How easy is it to drive?

Cars drive on the right. Expats need either a residence visa so they can obtain a UAE license, or an International Driving License to drive.





JUST LIKE HOME

NYU Abu Dhabi's purpose-built campus can be the perfect place to start your life in the emirate. Take a quick tour of what's on site to see why it's a great base for a beginning.

JUST LIKE HOME

Designed by the prestigious group Rafael Viñoly Architects, NYU Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island campus is more than a teaching and research site — it's a hub of culture, a buzzy social space, and for many, home.

At its front is the NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, which is both free and open to the public, featuring regularly changing exhibitions by renowned artists from the region and around the world. The Art Gallery also oversees The Project Space, a non-commercial gallery located in the University's Arts Center dedicated to Abu Dhabi community projects. Meanwhile, the Arts Center itself is a multi-purpose complex of theaters and performance venues, as well as rehearsal rooms, studios, and workshops.

Beautiful palm trees create a peaceful and shaded entrance to the Campus Center, the focal point on campus. With classrooms, meeting rooms, study spaces, and restaurants, it's a gathering point for community life. It's also where you'll find the University's competition-size indoor swimming pool, performance gym, 200 meter, four-lane indoor running track, courts for racket sports, climbing wall, and combative studio for martial arts practice.

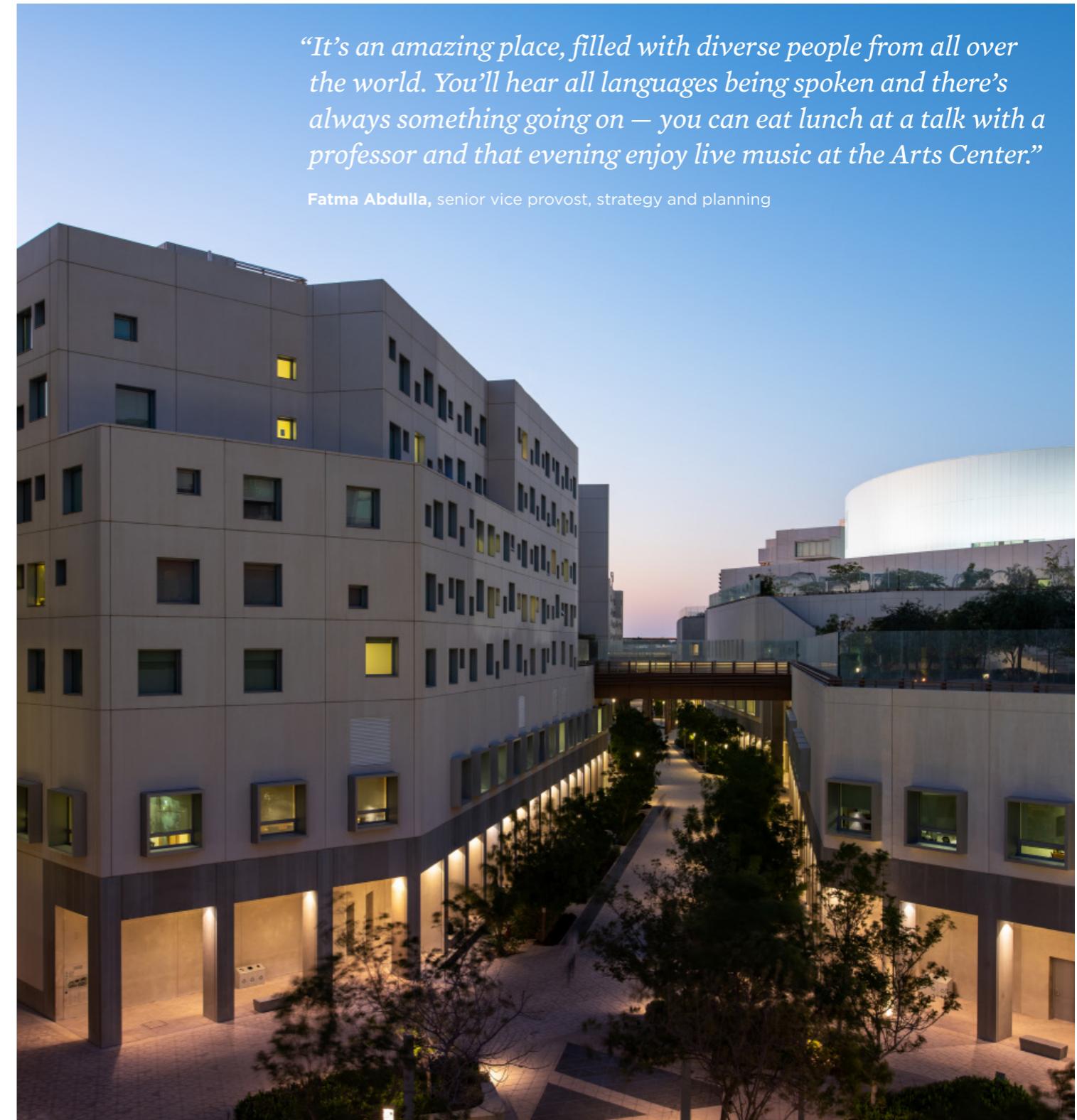
THE CAMPUS IN NUMBERS

- 300+** faculty members
- 1,450** undergraduate students
- 80+** PhD students
- 115** countries represented among the student body
- 115** languages spoken
- 700**-seat Red Theater in The Arts Center
- 300**-seat Lecture Hall in the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute Conference Center
- 150**-seat Recital Hall in the Arts Center
- 400** meter outdoor track
- 200** meter indoor track
- 50** meter indoor pool
- 6** on-site food halls, restaurants, and cafes
- 2** prayer rooms (male and female)



"It's an amazing place, filled with diverse people from all over the world. You'll hear all languages being spoken and there's always something going on — you can eat lunch at a talk with a professor and that evening enjoy live music at the Arts Center."

Fatma Abdulla, senior vice provost, strategy and planning





The Library, at the top of the Campus Center is a bright, open space, technologically sophisticated, flexible and modern – designed to serve the needs of a progressive, 21st century, world-class higher education institute. With 60,000 books, 5,000 DVDs and access to 100,000 e journals online as well as 1,135 databases and 1.54 million e-books, it's a remarkable resource space well-equipped for research and teaching.



The Marketplace is a large dining area not unlike one you might find in New York, serving cuisines from around the world: noodles, sandwiches, smoothies, burgers, it's all here. There are also diverse offerings on site where you can find coffee, Japanese food, and pizza, plus for faculty and staff there's The Torch Club, modeled after NYU New York's restaurant of the same name, a spacious and bright table-service restaurant with an outdoor terrace.

Taking the strands of identity and heritage the University represents – Abu Dhabi, New York, and the world – as its motif, the design incorporates elements of NYU's Greenwich Village environment with traditional Islamic architecture.

The campus covers nearly 40 acres, and is completely pedestrianized, filled with trees and quiet spaces, designed with room for people, community, and interaction in mind. It's why people choose not just to study and work here, but also to call it home.

Then there's the Health Center, providing comprehensive medical care for students, with a multidisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, counselors, and other personnel to ensure students remain at their best.

“Our beautiful campus on Saadiyat Island is compact enough for us to collaborate with colleagues across all the divisions. It's unique in the way it fosters interaction between disciplines.”

Sehamuddin Galadari, senior vice provost of research outreach, managing director of NYU Abu Dhabi research institute, and professor of biology





ALTA THORNTON MAURO IS ASSISTANT DEAN OF STUDENTS AND DIRECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY'S SPIRITUAL LIFE AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION (SLICE) PROGRAM. SHE TELLS THE STORY OF HOW SHE CAME TO NYU ABU DHABI IN 2014, AND WHY SHE AND HER FAMILY HAVE DECIDED TO STAY.

THE NEW NORMAL

Moving to Abu Dhabi was serendipitous for me: I received an email saying NYU had established NYU Abu Dhabi and were looking to shape up their intercultural work. They wanted to talk to people who did similar work to get some feedback. I agreed to a conversation, and about 20 minutes into the call, I realized I was being recruited!

Still, I considered it. I was really excited by the newness of the University, the opportunity to shape and build the office from scratch, and a chance to challenge myself professionally. Taking this job was a chance for me to see if I could really walk the walk, to see if all my years of doing diversity, equity, and inclusion work could be applied in a really new, diverse, intercultural setting.

Originally, I thought I'd be here, you know, maybe two to three years. Then I arrived and thought, maybe three or four. This is my fifth year. I remember when I first arrived thinking it was a really beautiful place — passing the Grand Mosque, going over bridges, driving with the mangroves on the right side and palaces on the left. It really is gorgeous.

Moving here people get support to transition and then it's expected that people will develop their own friendship groups and communities just as they would with any other move. I say this to students all the time — if you moved here from somewhere else in the world, you've made quite a transition. But if you moved here [Saadiyat Island] from Al Mushrif, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Abu Dhabi, you might find that this is also a world away from the rest of Abu Dhabi. It's not just that this is a transition for expats and this is what makes NYU Abu Dhabi unique.

I'm a part of the University's diversity, equity, and inclusion committee, and we have active plans in place, not only to continue to make sure we're diverse, but also to think about diversity beyond someone's passport, and to make sure we're inclusive at every level — faculty, student, and staff recruitment and retention — and that we're thinking about ability, gender, among other considerations as well.

This is a very diverse place and my hope is for it to evolve as a truly inclusive place. NYU Abu Dhabi as an institution takes diversity and inclusion really seriously. There are many different ways that people want to be shown respect. So you

end up showing multiple sides of yourself and that's a beautiful thing to be: flexible, culturally competent, and socially fluid.

In terms of infrastructure, lots of things were simple. I got a driver's license really easily and there's some comfort in being able to slip into some things straight away — a regular apartment and car. It's very technologically savvy here too. Working within the NYU global network helped as well — it felt really familiar, even though NYU Abu Dhabi is contextualized for the UAE. Our primary competencies and learning outcomes, the ways we expect students to grow and develop all felt like work I was familiar with, and that was really grounding and felt comfortable.

Nevertheless, there were other things like getting my utilities turned on, which were more challenging because the processes are different! But even then, I think that initial struggle helps you to have an immediate reframe, to recognize you're in a new place, and to focus on the things that are most important to you. You've got to be open minded. If you're going to move halfway across the world, you have to be a certain kind of person to have an openness and a curiosity about people, and an interest in how people have organized their own lives, as a baseline.

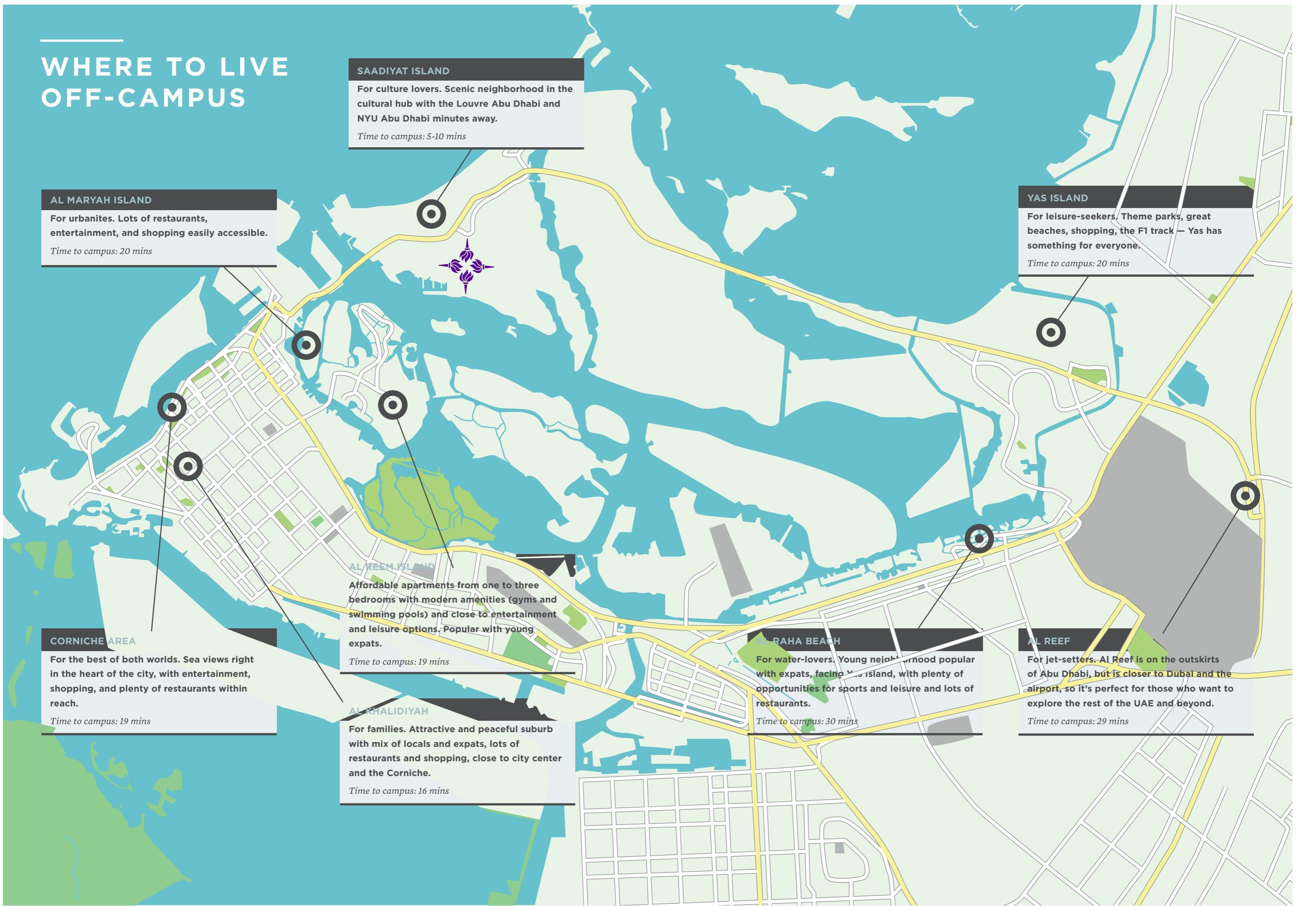
There are things I miss, but I live in a neighborhood with thousands of people and every now and then someone will put out a call for something from back home — "Is anybody going to the UK anytime soon? Will you please bring me back real Cadbury chocolate?" — if there are things you miss, somebody can bring it for you.

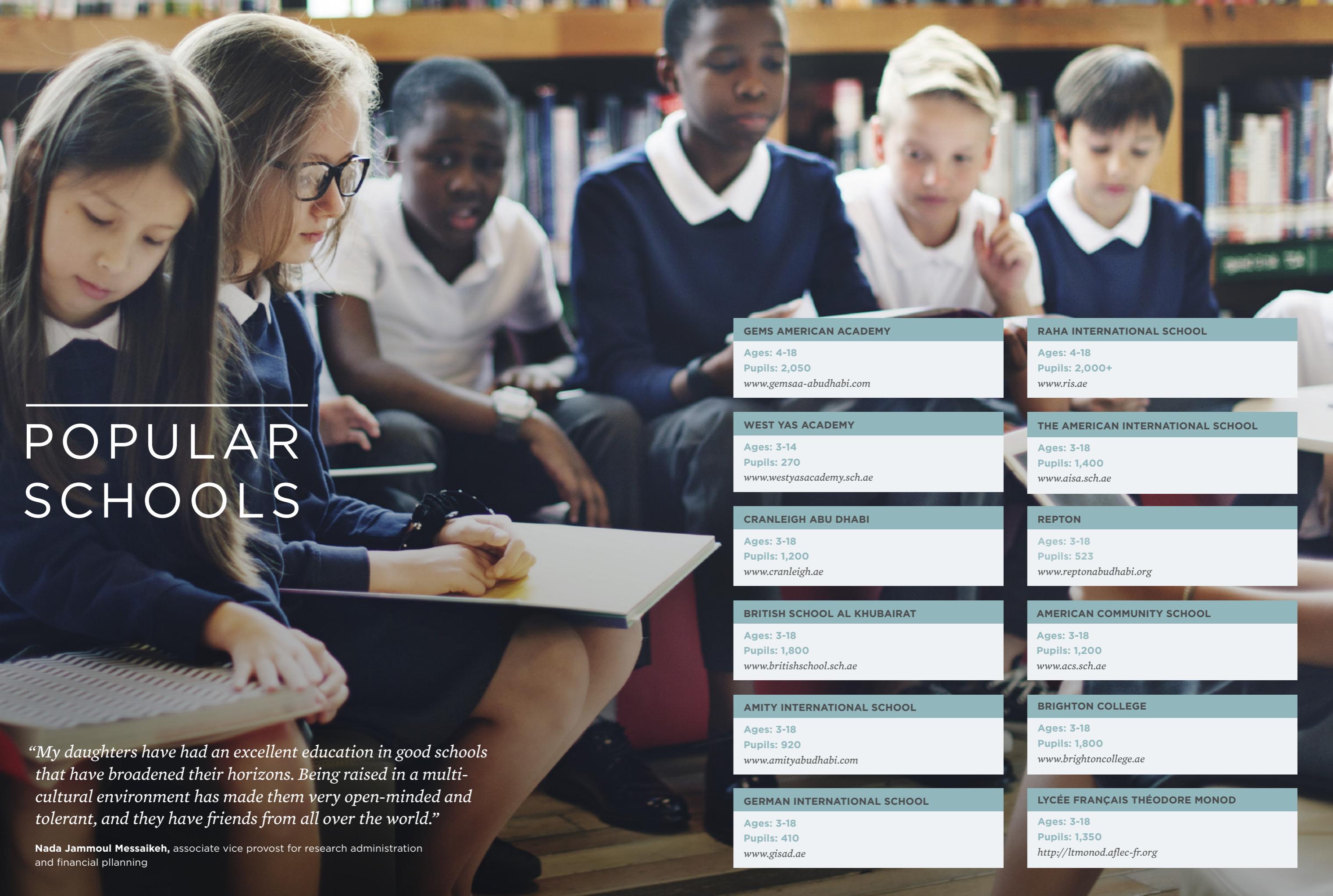
Abu Dhabi is the cleanest place I've ever lived and it's the safest place I've ever lived in terms of crime. Frankly, financially I'm able to do well for myself and my family here and that's a real draw too. I wouldn't be able to live the way I do if I were doing similar work in the US.

Finally, there's a great focus on family here. There are very few places I feel it's unacceptable to turn up with your children. Rich diversity is normal; people looking different, eating different things, and using different languages, is all very normal, and I'm grateful for the cultural awareness that's giving my children. I'm able to give them a new normal, different to my own childhood and upbringing. For me, that was a compelling reason to come, and it continues to be a pretty good reason to stay.



WHERE TO LIVE OFF-CAMPUS





POPULAR SCHOOLS

“My daughters have had an excellent education in good schools that have broadened their horizons. Being raised in a multi-cultural environment has made them very open-minded and tolerant, and they have friends from all over the world.”

Nada Jammoul Messaikeh, associate vice provost for research administration and financial planning

GEMS AMERICAN ACADEMY
Ages: 4-18
Pupils: 2,050
www.gemsaa-abudhabi.com

RAHA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
Ages: 4-18
Pupils: 2,000+
www.ris.ae

WEST YAS ACADEMY
Ages: 3-14
Pupils: 270
www.westyasacademy.sch.ae

THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
Ages: 3-18
Pupils: 1,400
www.aisa.sch.ae

CRANLEIGH ABU DHABI
Ages: 3-18
Pupils: 1,200
www.cranleigh.ae

REPTON
Ages: 3-18
Pupils: 523
www.reptonabudhabi.org

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL
Ages: 3-18
Pupils: 1,200
www.acs.sch.ae

BRIGHTON COLLEGE
Ages: 3-18
Pupils: 1,800
www.brightoncollege.ae

GERMAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
Ages: 3-18
Pupils: 410
www.gisad.ae

LYCÉE FRANÇAIS THÉODORE MONOD
Ages: 3-18
Pupils: 1,350
<http://ltmonod.aflec-fr.org>



My Abu Dhabi

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY
DIPESH CHAUDHURY'S ABU DHABI



Hi there, please introduce yourself...

I'm Dipesh Chaudhury, assistant professor of biology. I've been a part of the Science Division here since 2015.

Where do you call home?

I live with my wife and daughter on campus on Saadiyat Island. I grew up in Malaysia and the UK and have lived in several countries so I consider the world my home.

What's it like living on campus?

We live in faculty housing, which happens to be just above my office so I literally come downstairs to get to work. I don't waste time traveling, and if I need to work on the weekend, I still have time to be with my family. We all enjoy using the campus facilities such as the pool and the fantastic gym. Our daughter goes to school at Cranleigh, which is just five minutes away, and you can get to the city in a few minutes.

Do you have a favorite spot in the city?

As a family we like going to the Corniche. It's amazing because it's all built on reclaimed land. It runs along the length of Abu Dhabi and it's a lovely walk, with restaurants and shops, and sometimes festivals.

What can you get in Abu Dhabi you couldn't find anywhere else?

Walking around the city it feels to me like a fusion of Asian and Arabian culture and I love that. There's such a mix of people here from around the world and even though you get a diverse range of people in big cities, something about Abu Dhabi makes it easier for everyone to mix. It's easy to travel to other places such as Asia, Africa, or Europe but you don't need to, everything and everyone is here.

How do you get your culture fix?

We've got season tickets for the Louvre, which is great for us, but also for our daughter, as they do lots of wonderful activities for kids in the school holidays. At the Arts Center on campus too there's a real mix – the last thing we saw was *Footloose*; before that we saw a French hip-hop group.

There are often concerts and we've seen classical music there. The Indian actor Naseeruddin Shah did a one man show here, which we went to see. And we've also seen Bon Jovi! We were living in New York before we moved here and access to culture was one of the things we wondered about. We needn't have worried – there's just as much and it's way more international than we could have ever imagined.

Where do you go to eat out?

Contrary to what people may think, in addition to high-end restaurants there are also a lot of good inexpensive places. What's great is that you can eat somewhere fancy or find a street food place and either way the food is amazing. We like Tamba in the World Trade Center, which is Asian fusion, and Zuma which is high end Japanese food. But I like to find the small places. At my local gas station, for example, there's a Malaysian food store – I spent my formative life in Malaysia and they do the mamak-style food I remember from my childhood.

Let us in on an Abu Dhabi secret...

Al Mina Fish Market – there's this Filipino fish place we recently discovered where they serve the food in a bag, for you to mix up and eat with your hands. It's delicious.

Tell us three of the best things about Abu Dhabi...

It's really family-friendly. There's lots for our daughter to do – from the water parks to Warner Bros – and the schools are great. We're geographically closer to lots of places – we can get to our families in the UK, India, and Malaysia really easily, to Europe if we like, and also around the region – oases, deserts, and the other emirates are all incredible. And it's a really international place, integrating East and West, with culture and food from all over the world. The city's openness was the best surprise.





EXPLORING ABU DHABI



NYU Abu Dhabi's purpose-built campus can be the perfect place to start your life in the emirate. Take a quick tour of what's on site to see why it's a great base for a beginning.

YOUR CULTURAL DESTINATION

The University's campus on Saadiyat Island is at the heart of Abu Dhabi's cultural scene, contributing to the city as a hub of creative energy. There's plenty to discover in Abu Dhabi - exciting museums, galleries, and performance spaces are spread across the capital. Here's where to begin.



NYU ABU DHABI ART GALLERY

The NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery is an intimate museum space with an ever-changing program of exhibitions featuring work that is both internationally significant and locally relevant. The curatorial mix of scholarly, non-commercial, and experimental exhibitions makes it an important addition to the region's cultural ecosystem as well as a valuable asset to the life of the University and the city.

DIANA AL-HADID'S
"PHANTOM LIMB" EXHIBITION



SCULPTURE BY HASSAN SHARIF IN THE
EXHIBITION WAYS OF SEEING, 2018



THE ARTS CENTER AT NYU ABU DHABI

A hub of creativity at the University, this complex of theaters and performance venues is a vibrant space enriching both the campus and the city with its programs, as well as providing educational artistic resources with its Project Space gallery, its rehearsal rooms, film-editing studios, and classrooms.

LOUVRE ABU DHABI

This is the first universal art and civilization museum in the Middle East, where artifacts are curated by theme rather than culture. Witness Jean Nouvel's remarkable geometric dome, designed to create a 'rain of light' – it's truly something to behold.





MANARAT AL SAADIYAT

The name of this gallery translates to 'place of enlightenment' and showcases a thriving ongoing program of interactive workshops, comedy nights, yoga classes, theater, live music, and exhibitions.



WAREHOUSE 421

Housed inside a converted warehouse at Mina Port, this gallery is all about championing Emirati artists and the creativity of the UAE, with changing themes and a program of talks, workshops, film screenings, and performances.

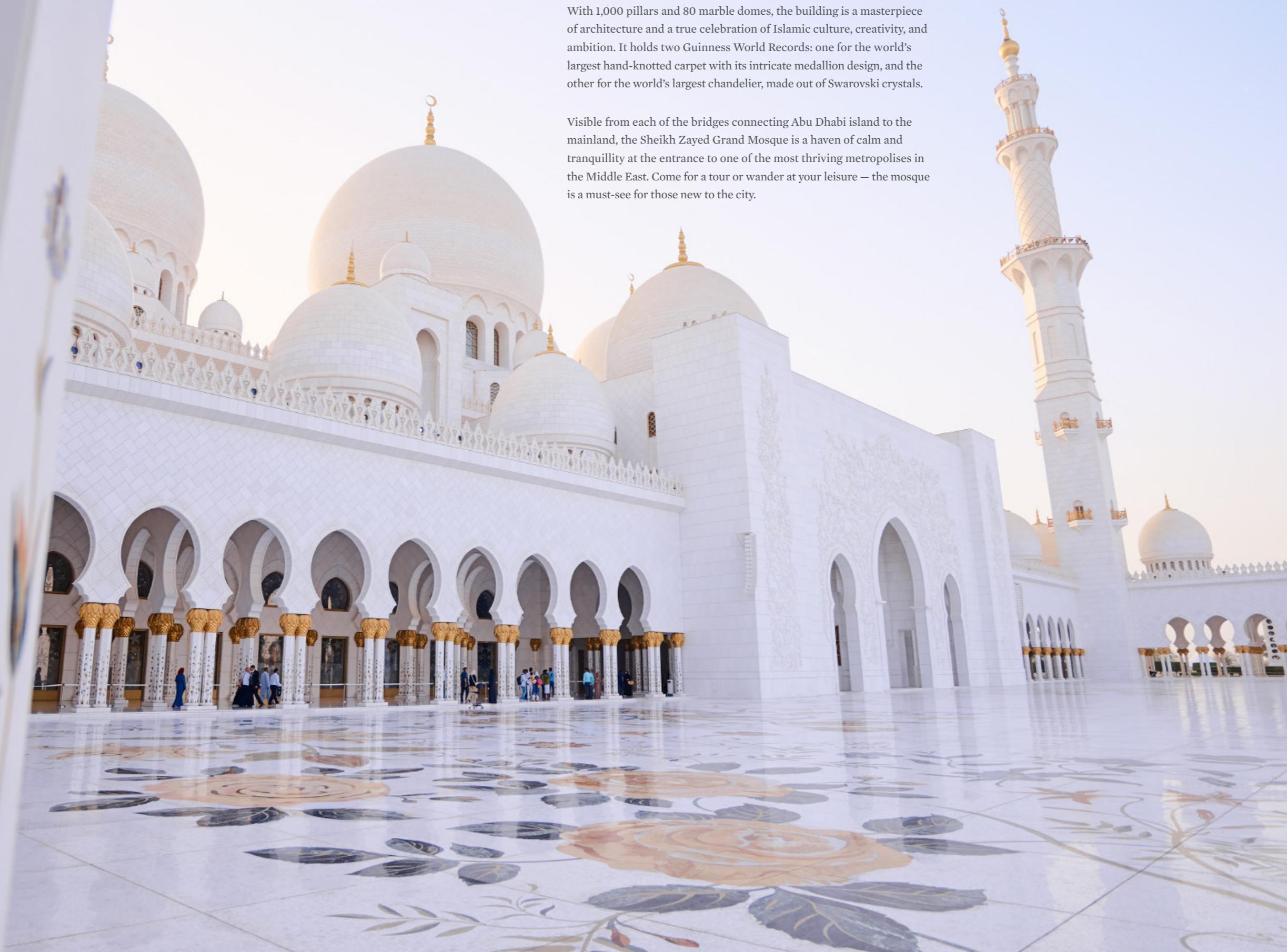




No journey through Abu Dhabi's cultural highlights would be complete without a stop at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. Envisioned as a fusion of styles from different Muslim civilizations and a celebration of cultures across the world, the mosque is a symbol of Abu Dhabi's commitment to tolerance and diversity.

With 1,000 pillars and 80 marble domes, the building is a masterpiece of architecture and a true celebration of Islamic culture, creativity, and ambition. It holds two Guinness World Records: one for the world's largest hand-knotted carpet with its intricate medallion design, and the other for the world's largest chandelier, made out of Swarovski crystals.

Visible from each of the bridges connecting Abu Dhabi island to the mainland, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is a haven of calm and tranquillity at the entrance to one of the most thriving metropolises in the Middle East. Come for a tour or wander at your leisure – the mosque is a must-see for those new to the city.



OTHER HIGHLIGHTS NOT TO MISS...

Qasr Al Hosn

Qasr Al Hosn is a national monument that encapsulates the development of Abu Dhabi from a settlement reliant on fishing and pearlting in the 18th century, to a modern, global metropolis, with displays of artifacts and archival materials dating back to as far as 6000 BC.

Cultural Foundation

An arts center dedicated to celebrating Emirati culture and craft.

Qasr Al Watan

A new palace designed as a tribute to Arabic architectural heritage, currently home to the Supreme Council and the Federal Cabinet.



YAS WATERWORLD

Featuring the Middle East's longest suspended rollercoaster, Yas Waterworld also has static surfing waves, freefall waterslides, shopping, and dining. With more than 40 rides to keep the kids entertained, this is a day out everyone can enjoy.



EXPLORING ABU DHABI

THREE FAMILY FAVORITES

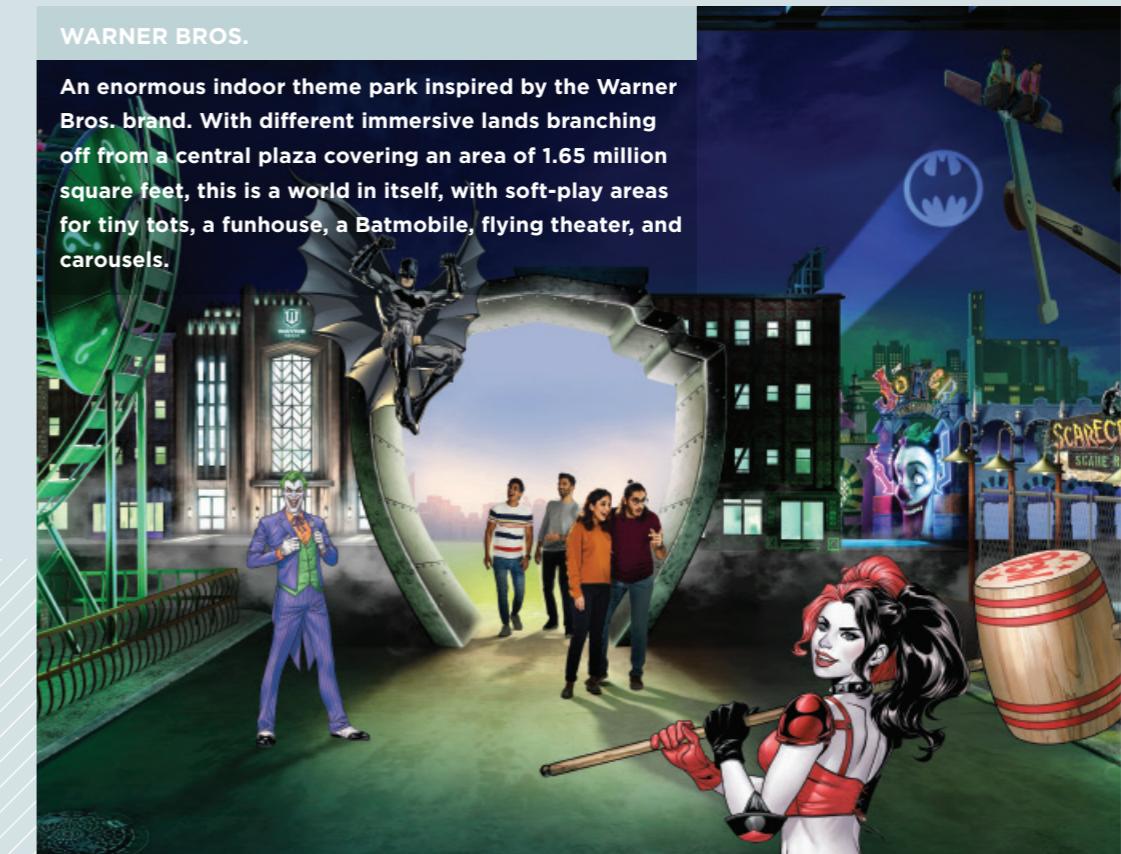
FERRARI WORLD

This indoor amusement park plays host to the world's fastest rollercoaster, which can reach a speed of 240km/h in just 4.9 seconds. With plenty of other things to do including acrobatic performances and optical illusions, this place is great for fast-paced, adrenalin-fueled fun.



WARNER BROS.

An enormous indoor theme park inspired by the Warner Bros. brand. With different immersive lands branching off from a central plaza covering an area of 1.65 million square feet, this is a world in itself, with soft-play areas for tiny tots, a funhouse, a Batmobile, flying theater, and carousels.



A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE CITY

The eight not-to-be-missed cultural and sporting highlights of the Abu Dhabi calendar

JAN

The **Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship** is an annual European Tour golf tournament featuring some of the biggest names in the sport.



FEB

A 17-day-long extravaganza, **Abu Dhabi Food Festival** brings together restaurants, chefs, and cuisines from all over the world in a series of events and one-off menus.



JUL

The **Red Bull Air Race World Championship** comes to the city every year, as pilots fly along the breakwater of the Corniche.



Celebrating the region's renowned desert fruit, the **Liwa Date Festival** includes events and competitions highlighting the significance of the UAE's iconic fruit.



NOV

More food — this time care of **Taste of Abu Dhabi** at du Arena on Yas Island, where celebrity chefs do cooking demos and hot restaurants open pop-ups.



Presenting innovative and established galleries from around the world, the **Abu Dhabi Art Fair** is a chance to admire and buy pieces suited to all aesthetic tastes.



DEC

It's the last race on the F1 calendar and the competition is always fierce at the **Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix**.



Played on outdoor hard courts, the **Mubadala World Tennis Championship** is the chance to see some of the best men's single professional tennis in the game today.

Have a longing for traditional home-cooked meals? Or keen to try something new? With so many nationalities living and working in Abu Dhabi, whatever your tastebuds desire, you can satisfy them here.

WORLD ON A PLATE

For splashing out there's a whole variety of gastronomic delights to be found at the city's high-end restaurants: top quality steak – whether it be top of-the-line US grain-fed dry-aged beef, Australian Blackmore wagyu, or Japanese master kobe cuts – Michelin starred Cantonese cuisine, refined French food, or healthy and delicious vegan and vegetarian dishes, among others.

Whether it's quick eats from a street food stall or a full sit down meal, you'll easily find all kinds of Eastern cuisine – Malaysian, Indian, Japanese and more – on offer across the city.

Yas Mall is a good place to start if you want to explore the city's street food scene without being overwhelmed. You'll also find food from all corners – Mexican, Italian, Peruvian, and simple straight down-the-line burgers.

And of course, it's good to explore local cuisine every now and then too – there are plenty of places to get your fill of classic, local dishes like majboos, maqluba, and camel meat.

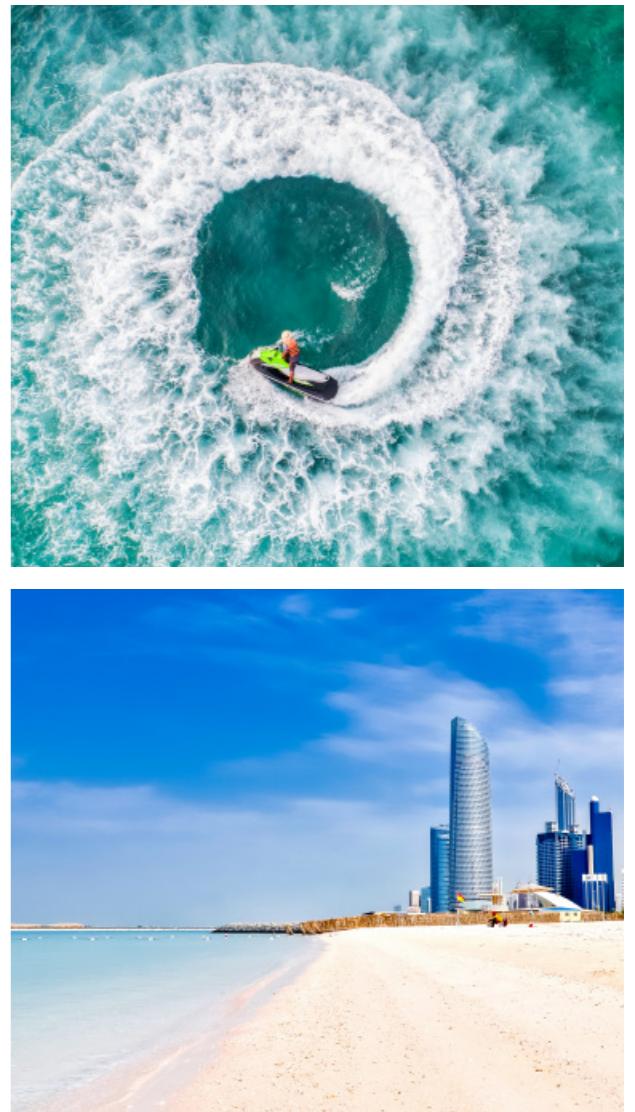
In short, whatever the cuisine, craving, or the compass point, in Abu Dhabi there's something for everyone.



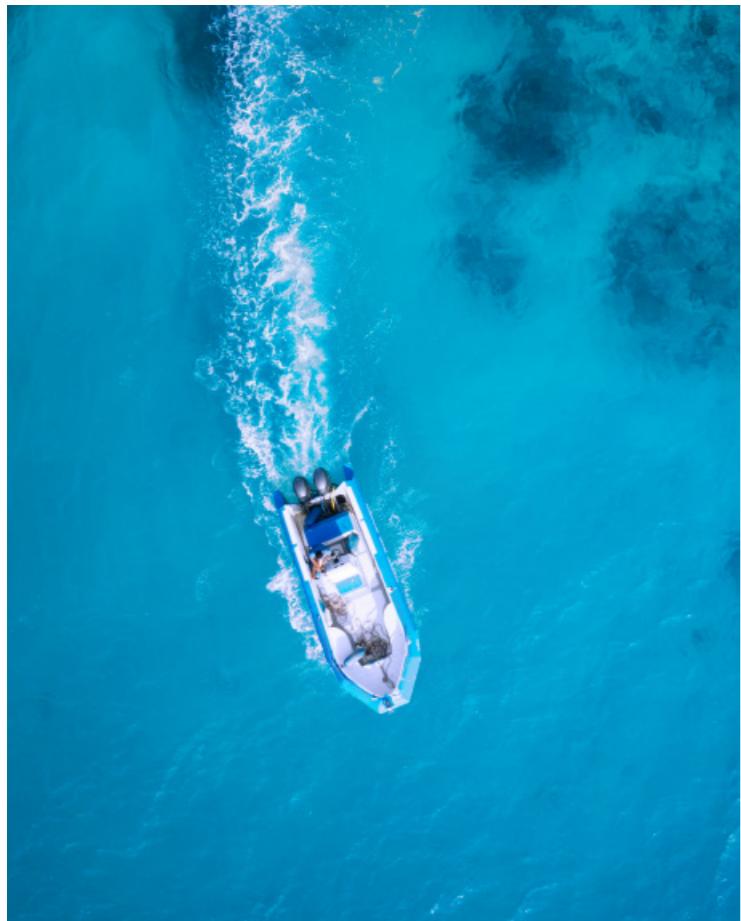
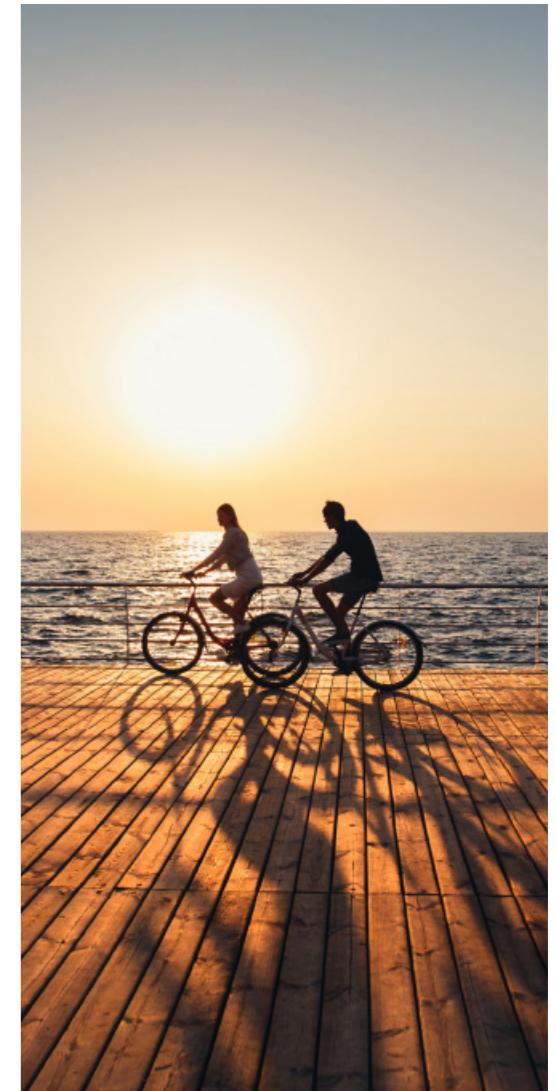


EXPLORE THE BLUE YONDER

Abu Dhabi is a watery paradise for those who love the sea. For a start, the turquoise waters of the emirate's seas are warm most of the year, and it's easy to go for a swim, whether using the beachfront facilities of one of Abu Dhabi's world-class hotels, through a beach club, or at one of the public beaches like that next to the iconic Corniche.



More than 200 islands lie within reach of the coastline, and one of the best ways to explore them is by taking to the perfect blue waters of the Gulf. Or, for the adventurous, Abu Dhabi has an exciting wakeboarding park, made-made whitewater rafting, kayak, and surf facilities.



For many, Abu Dhabi's mangrove forests are what lure them onto the water. Take a kayaking trip through the forest, sign up to a family-friendly excursion, a full moon kayak tour, or set out on an overnight island trip. The non-fishing zone of Sir Bani Yas Island is also worth exploring by water and is one of the best places to see the area's wildlife.

Whether high-octane or gentle, inland or island, there's a way to take to the water for any and all who want to. And with seas so alluringly blue, why resist?

Meanwhile, back on dry land, leap on your bike or pull on some sneakers

Yas Marina Formula 1 circuit

Hire both bike and helmet to cycle the track from 6-10pm every Sunday and Tuesday.

Mina Port Zayed to Marina Mall

A dedicated 12km cycle path from Mina Port Zayed to Marina Mall along the Corniche.

Al Wathba Cycling Track

A short drive from Al Maqta.

Green routes

Get from A to B around Mohammad Bin Zayed City, Khalifa City, Al Raha, and Yas Island.

Lake Park along to Hilton Abu Dhabi on the Corniche

A dedicated softer surface running track.

Al Zeina to Al Raha Beach Hotel

A canalside run through the city.

Eastern mangroves

A waterside path through an iconic landscape.

THREE OF THE BEST....
BEACHES



**SAADIYAT
BEACH**

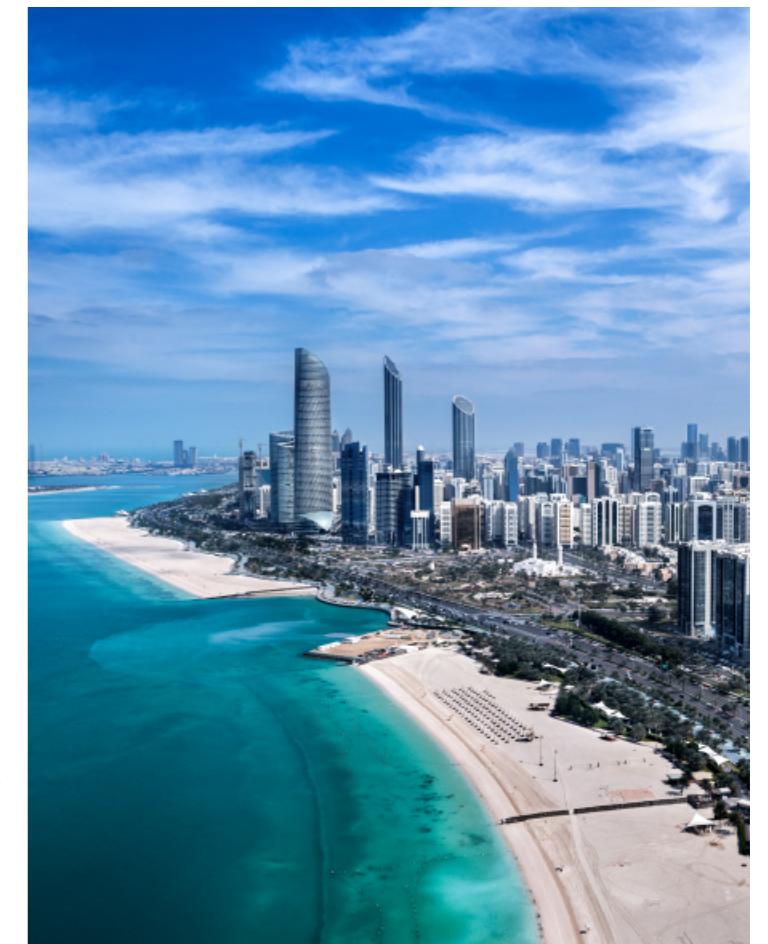
This pristine shoreline near the University is a nature lover's paradise where conservation initiatives have allowed the local wildlife to thrive, and Hawksbill turtles use it as a nesting site. With beach yoga classes, eco-friendly water sports, and luminous blue waters, this is the place to come if you want to leave nothing but footprints.

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**NURAI
ISLAND**

Only 10 minutes from the Saadiyat Island campus by boat, this secluded island is the place to go if you want a break from the city. With day passes on offer, you can luxuriate in the spa, have a go at one of the many water sports on offer, or just unwind in peace on the unspoiled sands.



**THE
CORNICHE**

Stretching for 8km with a wide promenade and perfect white sands, the Corniche is the most popular beach in Abu Dhabi for a reason. Here you can relax, cycle, and wander at your leisure, all under the glittering heights of the city skyline, with different zones to suit all visitors and plenty of dining options and facilities.

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LET'S EXPLORE

In addition to the abundance of sights in the capital, NYU Abu Dhabi is perfectly placed for exploring the region and beyond. From mangrove forests to luxury desert resorts or fast-paced city breaks, there are options for everyone within easy reach. Your weekends will be booked up in no time.

For adventures by road, start off by taking a break from the hustle and bustle of urban life and beat a retreat to Qasr Al Sarab. This resort by Anantara is located at an oasis in the Empty Quarter, the world's largest sand desert, and is only a couple hours drive from Abu Dhabi. Explore the dunes on camel, or bicycle, and watch the sunset as you dine surrounded by the orange sands, stretching far into the distance.



MUSANDAM, OMAN

In fact there's a host of easily-accessible destinations to satisfy everyone. Take a trip to Al Ain, known as the Garden City for the green oasis it's built around. The city, bordering Oman, has a wealth of UNESCO world heritage sites — six oases and a number of archaeological and cultural sites around the oasis itself, the desert, and Jebel Hafeet mountain. For those with a child or two in tow, there's the Wadi Adventure Park, the first man-made whitewater rafting park in the Middle East. Also less than two hours' drive away is the Emirate of Sharjah, with its fort and Heritage Area situated on the creek, and a little further beyond that, Ras Al Khaimah which has famously golden beaches, regional history galore, and a mountain-top fort.

If seeing local wildlife is more your thing, a trip to Sir Bani Yas Island has to make the cut. Originally a private retreat, Sheikh Zayed's love of animals prompted him to turn this desert island into a wildlife reserve, bringing many species back from the brink of extinction. It's home to gazelles, giraffes, oryxes, cheetahs, flamingos, and more, as well as three resorts, and has countless activities to keep you busy, from horse-riding to a 4X4 safari drive. This is a natural paradise you won't want to leave.

Further afield is the Musandam in Oman. This mountainous peninsula features coastal inlets that teem with marine life making it an ideal destination for a diving trip or a dhow cruise. There's also a 17th century fort for your dry time. The Emirate of Fujairah is another must-see, with great diving and snorkeling, and the looming Al Hajar mountains, the highest range in Eastern Arabia.

If you've come this far, you can't head home until you've seen Khor Kalba, the oldest mangrove forest in Arabia, known for its rare wildlife, including the white-collared kingfisher, found nowhere else in the world. Here there's guided kayaking, a turtle sanctuary, and incredible views of the Indian Ocean. There's also a spa and lots of dining options.

With all this in driving distance it's tempting to never contemplate flying again. Yet, there's plenty worth taking a short flight for too. Amman, the historic capital of Jordan, has ancient ruins galore, a Roman amphitheater and a citadel, as well as a lively modern city with all the conveniences necessary for a mini-break. The Lebanese capital of Beirut is another great weekend destination. Renowned for its frenetic energy and bustling nightlife, the city also has numerous museums and a gorgeous waterfront. Oman's capital, Muscat, is also worth the trip offering historic forts, opulent palaces, an opera house, and turtle nesting sites. At little more than an hour's flight away, it's a great place to see traditional Omani culture up close, whether searching through museums or soaking up the atmosphere of the souks.

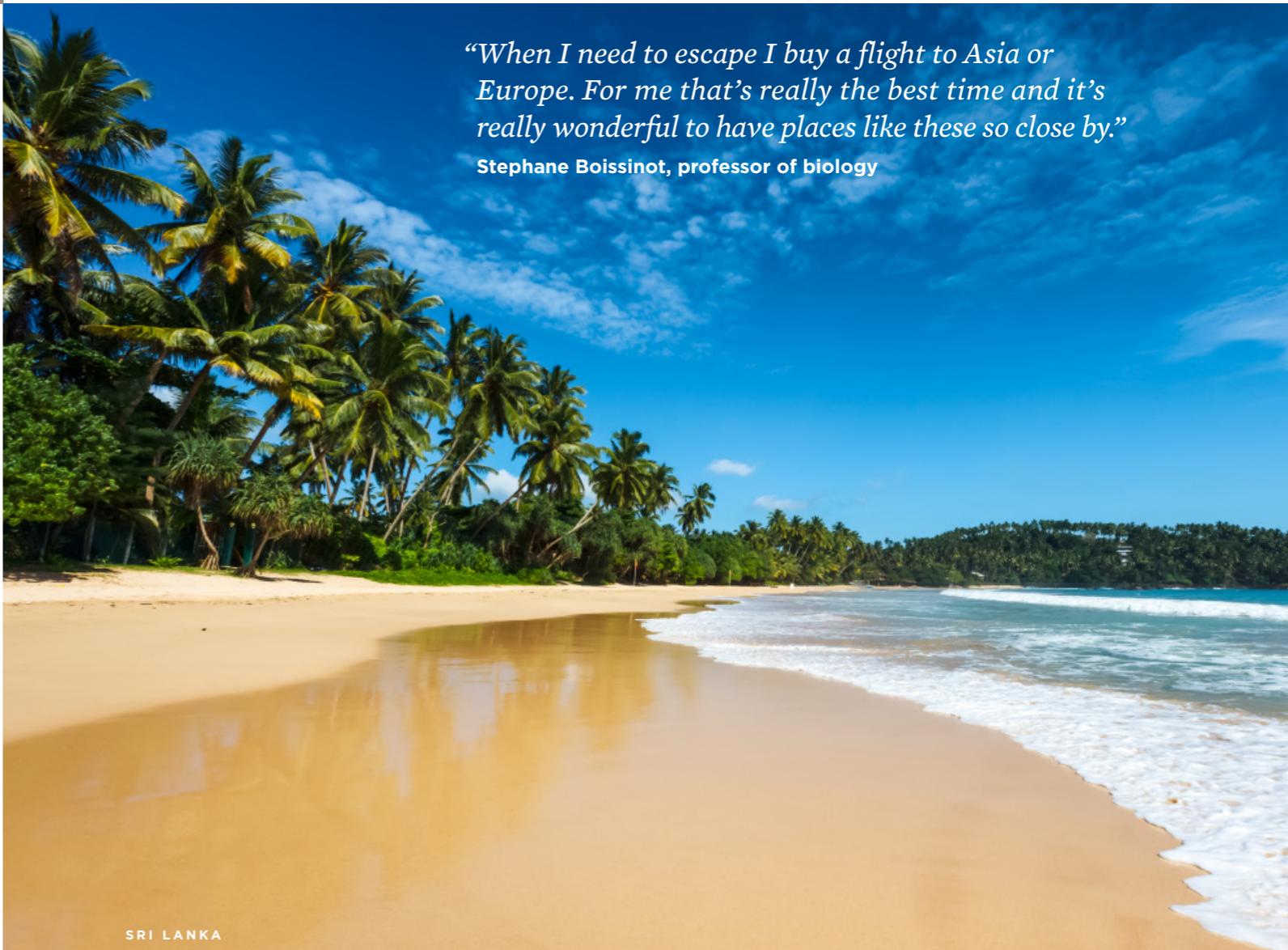
And of course, you can't miss Abu Dhabi's famous neighbor, Dubai. Head 124 floors up to the observation deck of the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa, and explore the man-made islands of the coast. As a center for shopping and dining, ultramodern architecture, and lively nightlife, it's a must-visit for anyone living or visiting the region.

Finally, Abu Dhabi International Airport runs multiple direct flights to various locations in India. Whether you want to explore action-packed Mumbai, or find serenity in palm-fringed Kerala, it's easy to get there.



“When I need to escape I buy a flight to Asia or Europe. For me that's really the best time and it's really wonderful to have places like these so close by.”

Stephane Boissinot, professor of biology



SRI LANKA



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