How to Choose the Right Taxi Service Between Abu Dhabi and Dubai

Understanding Your Options for Inter-Emirate Travel

Traveling between Abu Dhabi and Dubai is a common journey for residents and visitors alike. The distance of roughly 140 kilometers means you have several taxi options, each with its own trade-offs in cost, convenience, and comfort. Knowing how to pick the right one can save you time, money, and hassle.

Step 1: Decide Between a Shared Taxi and a Private Taxi

The first major choice is whether you want a shared taxi or a private taxi. Shared taxis operate from designated taxi ranks and will pick up additional passengers along the route until the vehicle is full. This makes them significantly cheaper than a private hire, but you will share the ride with strangers and may have to wait for the taxi to fill up before departing.

Private taxis, on the other hand, are booked exclusively for you and your party. You pay for the full vehicle, which means a higher fare, but you get direct travel without detours or waiting for other passengers. If you are traveling with family or have luggage, a private taxi is often the more comfortable choice.

Step 2: Check Whether You Need an Airport Taxi

If your journey starts or ends at one of the airports, Abu Dhabi International or Dubai International (DXB) or Al Maktoum International (DWC), you will find dedicated airport taxis waiting at the taxi ranks outside arrivals. These are metered taxis with a starting fare that includes an airport surcharge. They are a reliable option if you land and want to head straight to the other city without pre-booking.

However, if you are arriving during peak hours or late at night, the queue at the taxi rank can be long. In that case, a pre-booked private transfer might save you waiting time. Many travelers check options like dubaiairporttransfer.net for a smooth booking experience before they land.



Step 3: Understand Metered Taxi Fares vs. Fixed Rates

Metered taxis charge based on distance and time, and the fare between Abu Dhabi and Dubai typically runs from around 250 to 350 AED depending on the exact route and traffic. The meter starts when you get in, and tolls (like Salik gates) are added to the final amount.

Some private taxi companies and booking platforms offer a fixed rate for the inter-emirate trip. This can be helpful if you want certainty on the cost, especially if you are traveling during peak traffic when the meter would tick higher. Compare the fixed rate with the expected metered fare to see which works better for your budget. A fixed rate is often a little higher than the average metered fare but protects you from surge pricing.

Step 4: Choose a Booking Method That Suits Your Style

You can hail a taxi from a rank, flag one down on the street (rare between cities), or use a booking app. The main ride-hailing apps in the UAE are Uber and Careem, both of which offer inter-emirate trips. They provide upfront pricing, driver details, and cashless payment. This is convenient if you are not near a taxi rank or prefer to have everything arranged through your phone.

Alternatively, you can call a local taxi company directly or use an online booking service. Some travelers prefer to book through a specialized platform that focuses on airport transfers and inter-city trips, as these services often have drivers familiar with the route and the best times to travel.

Step 5: Consider Timing and Traffic

The drive between Abu Dhabi and Dubai usually takes about 1 hour 15 minutes without traffic, but during peak hours (7-9 AM and 5-8 PM on weekdays) it can stretch to over 2 hours. If you are taking a metered taxi, sitting in traffic means a higher fare. A shared taxi will also take longer as it may stop to drop off other passengers.

If you have flexibility, aim to travel outside peak times. Early morning before 6 AM or late evening after 9 PM are usually smoother. If you must travel during peak hours, a pre-booked private taxi with a fixed rate can protect you from the meter running while you are stuck in traffic.



Step 6: Know What to Expect at the Taxi Rank

If you choose a shared taxi, you will find them at designated taxi ranks in both cities. In Abu Dhabi, the main rank for inter-emirate taxis is near the main bus station. In Dubai, ranks are located at various points including the main bus station in Al Ghubaiba and near some metro stations. The shared taxis usually leave when full, so you may wait a few minutes or up to half an hour depending on demand.

Private taxis can also be found at these ranks, but you will be paying the full fare. Make sure the driver agrees to use the meter or confirms the fixed rate before you start. It is always wise to have the fare range in mind so you can spot if something seems off.

Step 7: Evaluate Comfort and Amenities

For a trip of over an hour, comfort matters. Private taxis and airport taxis are usually modern, air-conditioned cars with enough space for luggage. Shared taxis may be slightly older models and can feel cramped if the vehicle is full. If you are prone to motion sickness, sitting in the front seat of a shared taxi might be better, but availability depends on how many passengers board.

If you are traveling with young children, you might want to bring a car seat, as taxis in the UAE are not required to provide them. Not all taxis have seat belts in the rear that fit child seats properly, so check in advance if this is a concern.

Step 8: Check for Extra Charges

Be aware of additional costs that can apply. If you cross a Salik toll gate during your trip, that charge (typically 4 AED per gate) is added to the metered fare. Some taxi companies also charge a booking fee if you reserve by phone or app. If you are traveling from the airport, there is an airport surcharge (usually around 20-25 AED). Shared taxis have a set per-person fare that already includes these costs, so you do not have to worry about extras.

Step 9: Plan for the Return Trip

If you are going for a day trip, think about how you will get back. You can book a round trip with a private taxi company, which often gives a slight discount compared to two one-way bookings. Alternatively, you can rely on the taxi ranks in the city you are visiting. In both Abu Dhabi and Dubai, you will find ranks near major shopping centers, hotels, and transport hubs.



If you are using a booking app, you can schedule a ride for later in the day, which gives you peace of mind. For those who prefer to keep things simple, a service like dubaiairporttransfer.net offers an easy way to arrange a return transfer without needing to find a taxi on the street.

Making the Final Choice

The right taxi between Abu Dhabi and Dubai depends on your priorities: cost, convenience, speed, and comfort. Shared taxis are the budget-friendly option but require patience and flexibility. Private taxis offer direct, comfortable travel at a higher price. Metered taxis give you pay-as-you-go transparency, while fixed-rate bookings provide cost certainty.

For most travelers, a private taxi booked in advance offers the best balance of convenience and predictability, especially if you are on a schedule or have luggage. Whatever you choose, understanding the options and planning ahead will make the journey smooth and stress-free.