

Abu Dhabi Pub Guide

An idiosyncratic guide to the pubs
and clubs of Abu Dhabi.

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Author's note:

This booklet is an attempt to fill a gap in the Abu Dhabi tourist guides which lack a comprehensive pub guide.

Information has been gathered from a variety of sources, particularly the Time Out website which has been an invaluable help.

I have tried to limit the listings to pubs and clubs and exclude restaurants, in this part of the world there is something of an overlap.

This foreword wouldn't be complete without acknowledging the immense contribution of NW, whose dedication in researching the local drinking establishments puts us all in awe.

KR
Abu Dhabi

The rating system

I have only rated bars that I have actually been in.

The ratings go from zero to five stars. A few bars have scored zero. That really means wild camels couldn't drag me back. I rarely voluntarily go to a bar scoring less than three stars.

The rating is based more on atmosphere and ambience than on the level of facilities.

The fact that a bar provides music doesn't increase its score if the music is bad, or is played at a volume likely to damage your hearing.

Inevitably I have scored bars on the basis of places that I actually like to go. That means places where you are likely to get a seat, where the food is good, where you can hold a conversation, where the music tends towards jazz/blues, and where you are unlikely to be harassed by friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin score the most highly.

If you disagree then so be it. Write your own pub guide!

Some advice

Read between the lines. Bars which score zero and are noted as having large numbers of friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin are not good places to go on your own. If you are male the assumption will be that you are looking for company, if you are female that you are hoping to provide it - and the other girls won't like the competition. Either way, unless that's what you want you'd be better off going somewhere else.

The bands in town range from a couple of very good ones, a few average ones, and many really awful ones. I haven't rated the bands (maybe in a later edition - difficult as the bands change fairly often). Don't expect to be hugely entertained by the music. A few exceptions are the jazz bars and the African bars - if you like that kind of music.

Some of the bars with live bands charge a nominal fee after 10pm - typically between Dh15 and Dh40 and with one or two drinks included. Where I know a bar charges I have noted it in the write up - however there are other bars which charge and I am not aware of it (either because I visited before 10pm or they weren't charging on the night I went).

Table of Contents

<i>Al Ain Palace Hotel</i>	6
<i>Al Raha Beach Hotel</i>	8
<i>Beach Rotana</i>	9
<i>Capital Hotel</i>	10
<i>Dana Hotel</i>	11
<i>Emirates Palace</i>	13
<i>Emirates Plaza</i>	14
<i>Grand Continental – Bars Closed</i>	15
<i>Hilton International</i>	16
<i>Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza</i>	18
<i>Howard Johnson</i>	20
<i>Intercontinental</i>	23
<i>International Rotana</i>	24
<i>Le Meridien</i>	25
<i>Le Royal Meridien</i>	28
<i>Marina Club</i>	30
<i>Millennium Hotel</i>	31
<i>Novotel</i>	32
<i>Oryx Hotel</i>	34
<i>Regency Hotel</i>	35
<i>Saba Hotel</i>	37
<i>Sands Hotel</i>	39
<i>Sheraton Hotel & Resort</i>	41
<i>Sheraton Khalidiya</i>	43

<i>The Club</i>	44
<i>Zakher Hotel - Closed</i>	45
<i>Index</i>	46

Al Ain Palace Hotel

Location: Eastern end of the Corniche - immediately north of Le Royal Meridien. Main entrance faces the Corniche.

Ally Pally Corner: They have introduced a door charge of Dh30 after 4pm - no free drink included. Décor very traditional English pub style, varnished woodwork, proper bar, pub tables etc. Pool table, darts boards, TV screen or two showing sport. Lively atmosphere and busy. Good traditional pub food. Crowd mostly western expats. Most nights the friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin outnumber the patrons. Don't go here on your own unless you are looking for trouble. Access through the lobby and to the right.

O/a rating			
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Cheers: American-themed bar that bears no relation to the Boston original. Bit dark and dingy - long narrow room - stage in middle. Largely Filipino crowd, friendly enough. Menu looks OK - mix of Filipino, Thai and pub grub. The band seem to enjoy themselves - pity they can't play and sing a bit better. Access outside and to the left of the main hotel entrance as you face the hotel.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Tambayan: Weird little bar. Dark and decorated with car parts - very odd. Hendrix and other similar posters on the walls. Filipino karaoke bar - karaoke every night. Current band a Filipino three piece - keyboards and two vocalists - not great. Menu looks good - Filipino. Entrance next door to Ally Pally Corner.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Al Raha Beach Hotel

Location: Slightly out of town so you really need to be in a car to get to it, a bit far for a taxi ride. Drive off Abu Dhabi Island via the Makta bridge, take the Dubai Road (ie second exit after the bridge), and shortly after filter right following the signs for Al Raha Beach. After looping around, coming to a roundabout and taking a right you will end up on a 2 lane dual carriageway running parallel to the Dubai Road with the sea on your left hand side and the Dubai road on your right. Travel along here for about 4 to 5 km and the Al Raha Beach Hotel will appear on your left. You have to pass it and take a U-turn to gain access.

Black Pearl: A very up market bar in a very up market hotel. Good for cocktails. Live music - usually a pop/jazz band. Lots of comfy seating. If it wasn't so far out of town this would be direct competition for Hemingways or The Jazz Bar.

O/a rating	☆☆☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Footnote: Not a bar but the foyer café (left hand side as you go in) does excellent snack food and coffee at remarkably low prices.

Beach Rotana

Location: Tourist Club Area at the southern end of Abu Dhabi Mall.

Brauhaus: Traditional German restaurant and bar with rustic decoration and cosy atmosphere. Lots of german beers. Food excellent. Friendly staff. Tables outside overlooking the sea, very nice when the weather's not too hot. Through the hotel lobby, bear right through the restaurant area and the entrance to the Brauhaus is in front of you and to the left (next to the entrance to the excellent Tepenyaki restaurant).

O/a rating	☆☆☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

The LAB: **Closed** - Converted into an Indian Restaurant (Indigo).

Capital Hotel

Location: On the south side of the road leading to Mina Zayed port area.

Mardi Gras: Nice up market jazz bar. Menu in the bar fairly standard pub grub. Vaguely theatrical décor - recently refurbished (Sept 2007). Mixed crowd, pleasant enough. Plenty of seating, comfy chairs, bar stools, tables. Current singer guitarist very good in a Cat Stevens/Eric Clapton style. Through the lobby and to the left.

O/a rating	★ ★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Rock Bottom: Décor in the general style of Rockwell, Ratskey and Blitz (matt black walls and ceiling, fluorescent additions here and there, dark, the odd guitar hanging on the wall). Current band a mix of westerners and Filipinos - not great. Lively atmosphere. Predominantly western expat clientele. Usually a number of friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin. Pool table. Through the lobby and take lift to 2nd floor.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Dana Hotel

Location: Across the road from the Abu Dhabi Mall and near Le Meridien (if you stand outside the main entrance of Le Meridien and look across the roundabout you can see the Dana).

49ers: Spacious Wild West saloon style décor, timber clad floor walls and ceiling, barrels for tables, bar stools, stetsons, whips and horseshoes on the walls. Big screen TV. Live music. Couple of dart boards. Great views over Le Meridien and beyond. BBQ style kitchen offering steaks weighed and grilled to your choice. Popular haunt of friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin. Through the hotel lobby and take lift to Penthouse level.

O/a rating	☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

MRI: Entrance next door to The Trap. Small pokey smoky bar playing Arabic music. Seemed to be occupied by a disproportionate number of well toned young men.

O/a rating			
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

The Trap: Dark dismal and small English-style pub. Comfy chairs with tables. Gets very crowded - predominantly with friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin. Current band a trio of girl singers with keyboard accompanist belting out Tina Turner or similar. OK but too loud for the venue. Don't go on your own unless you are looking for trouble. Through the lobby and up one flight of stairs.

O/a rating			
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Emirates Palace

Location: Luxurious hotel on the North West tip of Abu Dhabi Island. Follow the Corniche in a westerly direction and you really can't miss it.

Havana: Atmosphere of a traditional gentleman's club. Leather chairs and wood finishes. Well stocked with more than 20 different cigars and over 50 types of whisky. If you intend to smoke a cigar with your whisky in grand style then this is the place to do it. Jazz duo playing every evening. Expensive!!! Too hard to explain where - go into the hotel main entrance and ask.

O/a rating	☆☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Emirates Plaza

Location: Located in the block between Mina Road and Hamdan Street to the East of Salam Street - quite near to the Capital Hotel.

Maharaja Indian: Fairly typical Indian club. Dancing girls, garlands, formica topped tables and a bored looking clientele. Plate of Pakoras for Dh20. Entrance from the outside of the hotel to the rear.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✘
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Grand Continental – Bars Closed

Location: All of the bars in the Grand Continental were closed on the 31st May 2007 - apparently the owner of the property decided he didn't want to sell alcohol any longer. Write ups included for posterity.

Le Senat: **Closed.** Disco. 21st floor. Arabic club style - occupied whole floor. Dark with bar, dance floor etc. Very quiet early in the evening.

Ratskeys: **Closed.** Bar with live music later in the evening, dart boards, dark and noisy. Friendly enough. Nightclub style décor - all matt black paint, fluorescent highlights and neon lights - decorated with guitar memorabilia. Final band enthusiastic but that's all. The regular crowd were mostly Filipinos. Through the lobby, lifts to the right, 2nd floor.

Sherlock Holmes: **Closed.** Closed some years ago and converted to Ratskeys (see above).

The Clansman: **Closed.** Strange little bar squeezed into an apex of the Grand's triangular floor plan. Sports bar style but not quite (two screens). Dartboard. Usual range of drinks. Décor a bit odd, the columns were clad in large fake trees. Menu fairly average pub grub. Usually very quiet.

Hilton International

Location: Western end of the Corniche

Hemingway's: Classy sports bar with a restaurant feel to it. Live music - not too loud - usually jazz duo. Good food - well above the usual pub grub standards. Lots of TV screens. Holds quizzes. Dress code - no shorts. Access outside to the rear of the hotel - west side.

O/a rating	★ ★ ★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✓	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Jazz Bar: Tables with comfy seats and plenty of them. The jazz band (current band from Cape Town and very good) plays from a raised stage above the stylish bar. Very up market and relaxing. Food excellent. Access through Hemingways. Closed on Saturdays.

O/a rating	★ ★ ★ ★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Tequilana: Links directly to Hemingway's and The Jazz Bar - effectively all part of the same complex. Big screen sports bar, and disco. Both can get very loud and lively later in the evening. The sports bar can get very crowded for major events. Closed on Saturdays.

O/a rating	☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

The Fridge: Club with live music. Not yet reviewed.

Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza

Location: Hamdan Street. South side between 4th Street and 6th Street.

Cappuccino: Not strictly a bar, more of a lobby café. However they do serve alcohol, and if you're looking for a quiet spot where you can get a seat, bar snacks well above average, and waitress service, then this is the place for you. 1st floor by reception.

Heroes: Sports bar with regular entertainment. Karaoke every Sunday night. Gets very busy for major sporting events. Popular with western expats. Bit of a dive. Food not bad, traditional pub grub reasonably priced with generous portions. Occasional comedy nights with entrance fee. Access from the lobby entrance and down the spiral staircase to the basement. Operates a membership scheme - join for free and get discount on all drinks.

O/a rating	☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✓	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✓	Membership	✓

Level Lounge: Rooftop club/bar - open air next to the swimming pool. Open Wed/Thur/Fri. No food. Seating on floor cushions and low tables. Might be OK when the weather's right for sitting outside.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Vincents: Up market cocktail bar, small, wood panelled walls and leather seats. Only Heineken on tap but all the usual bottled beers and a good range of malts. Live music, currently a jazz duo. Nice bar for this part of town. Take lift to 9th floor - access through Wok (good buffet style restaurant).

O/a rating	★ ★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Howard Johnson

Location: Behind (to the south of) Le Royal Meridien.

Note: The Howard Johnson gets the accolade for the greatest number of terrible bars in one location. Worth a visit for that alone.

Marjina: Arabic bar with live Arabic music and dancing girls. No official dress code but probably quite careful about who they allow in. We weren't allowed to sit in the front seats. Fairly empty but I guess gets lively later. 17th floor, turn left as you exit the lift.

O/a rating	☆☆		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Nepali Bar: Small dim and dingy bar. 2nd Floor facing the lifts.

O/a rating			
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Orient: Very strange bar. Décor looks unfinished and bar looks temporary. Serves mostly bottled beers, only two beers on tap (Heineken and Fosters). Walls painted turquoise. Two pool tables. Doesn't appear to serve food. Crowd mostly Indian and Chinese. Many friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin. Dancing girls. On the 17th floor, turn right as you exit the lift.

O/a rating			
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Safari Bar: Strange décor. Fake trees and foliage hanging from the ceiling. Frescoes of African animals on the walls. Rather spectacular stained glass African scenes behind the bar. Limited beers on tap. Menu looks above average pub grub. Current Filipino band terrible. 18th Floor. Take lift to 17th floor and then up a flight of stairs.

O/a rating			
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Seiseban: Sudanese bar. Small with mostly bottled beers. Good atmosphere. Excellent live music - duo - keyboards plus girl singer. 2nd floor - turn left as you exit the lifts and on your right.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

The Cellar Bar: Small bar accessed from outside the hotel to the right. Perversely given the bar's name you climb a short flight of stairs to get to the door. Dim, dingy and depressing, small and an odd layout (almost U-shaped wrapped around the bar). Live music some nights. Because the bar is so small the music makes conversation impossible.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Zanzibar: Locals bar. Not yet reviewed. 2nd floor - left as you exit the lifts and left again.

Intercontinental

Location: North western end of Abu Dhabi Island. - near the Emirates Palace and the Hilton.

The Yacht Club: Very up market. More of a club feel to it than a bar. Catering to a young crowd. Overlooks the marina - large screens showing old movies on the night I was there. Modern decor - chrome and glass. Good menu. Expensive.

O/a rating	* *		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

International Rotana

Location: North east corner of intersection of Hamdan and Salam.

Al Sahara: Bit of a locals bar. Dark and smoky. Laid out with table seating. Only Heineken on tap. Stage at one end. Entrance from the street outside at the back of the hotel and up a flight of stairs.

O/a rating			
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Southern Comfort: Strange cramped little bar laid out more like a restaurant. Entrance from street level outside at the back of the hotel.

O/a rating			
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

The Red Lion: Small and cosy bar. Décor very traditional English pub style. Dart board and couple of TV screens. Crowd friendly enough - the regulars are Somali. Rather smoky atmosphere. Through the hotel lobby and on the first floor.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Le Meridien

Location Immediately north of Abu Dhabi Marina and Abu Dhabi Mall.

Individually not all of the bars here score that highly, but collectively this is the best group of bars and restaurants in town.

Captain's Arms: One of the few venues in Abu Dhabi where you can drink in the open air in the cooler weather. Inside you could be in a typical English pub, outside picnic style tables. Nice atmosphere, generally western expat crowd. Food good in "pub grub" style. Gets pretty busy most weekends. Access through the lobby of the hotel and to the right, or straight over the wooden bridge to the right of the main hotel entrance.

O/a rating	☆☆☆☆☆		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Gauloises: Nightclub, dark, lots of lights and audio gear - has a high tech feel to it. All black and chrome with "Saturday Night Fever" dance floor. Quiet early in the evening. Frequented by high class friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin. To the rear and left of the bar and restaurant area.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

NRG: Chrome and glass sports bar on two floors with large screens showing live matches. Tables outside. Good menu better than your average pub grub. Pool tables. You can often get a seat here when "The Captain's" is full. Access to the right on the way to "The Captain's".

O/a rating	★ ★ ★		
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Opus Bar: A comfortable lobby bar with a pianist on Friday. OK if you like lobby bars - too much like being in a railway station for me. Through the lobby.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

WakaTaua**Terrace:**

Nice outside terrace where you can relax and enjoy some beachside drinks in the cooler weather. Past "The Captain's" at the end of the path.

O/a rating	☆☆		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✘
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Le Royal Meridien

Location Eastern end of the Corniche.

Illusions: Nightclub. Not yet reviewed.

Oceans: Bit of a chameleon. Lunchtime and early evening an up market seafood restaurant with a nice bar area. Transforms itself into a nightclub later at night. Décor vaguely African - masks, shields etc on walls. Dark, candle lit, comfy seating. Also seating on balcony outside. Limited beers on tap but lots of cocktails. Jazz background music early in evening - dance music later. Attentive staff. Expensive. Through main lobby and to the left - take lift to first floor.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✘
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

P J O'Reilly's: Irish themed pub. Has monthly comedy night. Food is good - pub grub style, cheap, big portions. The bar is a bit dark and noisy but OK if you like that sort of thing. Access at street level from the outside in the lane to the right of the hotel.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✓	Membership	✘

Sax Live music and cocktails. Dress code - no
Restaurant t-shirts etc. Through main lobby and to the left
Club: - take lift to first floor.

Soba: Japanese bar and restaurant. Not yet reviewed.

Marina Club

Location In between Le Meridien and Abu Dhabi Mall. Walk through the entrance and there are a number of bars, clubs and restaurants.

Bluebay: Rectangular room with bar and stage. Hard matt black and neon décor. Bit of a shed really. Dark and loud. Band fairly typical Filipino style - four guys on instruments, three scantily clad girls singing - nothing special. Only two beers on tap. Menu standard Filipino pub grub. Straight through main entrance and slightly to left.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Colosseum: Night club decorated in Roman style. Doesn't get busy till late. Straight through main entrance and to the left.

Danik: Very strange bar floating on pontoons in the marina. Dark and small. Two rooms on different levels. One with comfy seating and TV screen. The other full of gaming machines. Clientele predominantly male and local. Access through main entrance, past the swimming pool and onto the marina - signs show the way.

O/a rating			
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Millennium Hotel

Location North side of the east end of Khalifa Street
(near intersection with 6th Street).

Cristal: Very up market bar with a colonial flavour. Somehow doesn't feel quite right - it's as if you're drinking in the hotel lobby. Live music - typically jazz style duo - current duo not bad. Good spot for pre-dinner drinks at one of the Millennium's excellent restaurants. Dress code - strict - no T-shirts, shorts, sandals etc. On the mezzanine level.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Novotel

Location: Hamdan Street (south side between 2nd street and 4th street)

Blitz: Another matt black painted bar a bit like Ratskey or Rockwell (strange that they're so close together). TV screens showing sports coverage, two pool tables. Live music later in the evening. Can get quite lively with largely Filipino crowd. Menu definitely at the bottom end of the pub grub range and very limited. Entrance to the right of the Novotel main entrance (around the side) and up four flights of stairs.

O/a rating	☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Cactus: Indian bar with the usual stage, live and loud Indian music, mirrors, dancing girls and garlands of flowers. Quite lively. On the night I was there one of the audience started an impromptu dance in the aisles - much to the amusement of the girls. Entrance to the rear of the hotel and up a short flight of stairs.

O/a rating	☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

La Pergola: Covered sports bar on the roof of the hotel by the swimming pool and gym. Wide-screen TV, darts and a juke box. OK if you like that sort of thing and the weather's not too hot. Through the labyrinthine lobby and take the lift to the 5th floor.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Mood Indigo: Piano bar. Western expat crowd. Couple of TV screens plus occasional big screen for major events. Quiet. Fairly up market as these things go. Music during the week fairly ordinary, but the jazz quartet on a Friday night are very good. Good bar menu. Through the lobby and up one flight of stairs.

O/a rating	★ ★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Oryx Hotel

Location: On the corner of Khalidya and Zayed - tucked behind the Adnoc station and near to the prestige car showroom. Fairly new so not all taxi drivers know where it is.

Blue Line: Very up market small jazz/piano bar, nice décor, comfy seats. One of the best in town. Stunning views looking south over Abu Dhabi island and over the hotel pool. Menu looks good. Dress code (no t-shirts without collar). Through the lobby, lift to penthouse level and then up one flight of stairs. No live music on Saturdays.

O/a rating	☆☆☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Regency Hotel

Location: On the north side of the road returning from Mina Zayed port area. Across the road from the Sheraton.

Bugsies: Dh40 door charge including 2 free beers - partly offset by the free bar snacks which are well above average. Horrible bar - polished wood floor, mirror ball etc - vaguely 80's disco style décor. Small square room. Only Foster's on tap. Live music later. Very quiet and dingy. Access from outside to right of hotel and up two flights of stairs.

O/a rating			
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Fun Pub: Dh40 door charge including 2 free beers. Doesn't live up to its name. Strange shaped bar - long and thin - stage at the narrow point in the middle. More one armed bandits than any other bar I've seen here. Only Foster's on tap. Access from outside to right of hotel and up two flights of stairs.

O/a rating			
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

The Buzz: Filipino karaoke bar. Dark and tiny bar typical of its type. Lively crowd singing Filipino and western hits - some good - some terrible. OK if you like that sort of thing - otherwise stay away. Access on the corner of the building outside and to the right.

O/a rating	☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Saba Hotel

Location Quite difficult to find and not all taxi drivers know where it is. Just off the west side of Salam Street near the City Airport Terminal - but a couple of buildings back from the street.

Note: A bit like the (now closed) club building next to the Zakher this hotel has a number of clubs.

Bangali Nightclub: Fairly typical Indian/Pakistani style nightclub. Traditional indian music - recorded but with a live drummer. Four dancing girls looking bored out of their minds. The usual garlands of flowers strewn around. Through lobby and down the stairs.

O/a rating			
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Blue Nile: Dh25 door charge after 10pm. Dark smoky (shisha) lively bar with big stage area. African style murals on the walls. Music decidedly African with a touch of Bob Marley. Band excellent in African/reggae style. At least 5 musicians plus 6 girls in skin tight outfits dancing and singing. Like most of these bars not much happens before 10pm. Staff very friendly. Food looked authentic north African, although cockroach walking across my table was a bit off putting. Through the hotel lobby and level M2.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Iranian Club: Live music and singer. Great if you like Iranian music and singing (although an Iranian friend tells me not in the least authentic)! Typical night club layout - room with tables and stage. Later in the evening fills up with friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin. Level 6.

O/a rating			
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

North Indian Club: Live music and dancers. Music and dancers not bad for this type of place. Limited beers but nibbles excellent - raw carrot and nuts. Level M1.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Sands Hotel

Location Sheikh Zayed the First Street (South side between 4th Street and 6th Street)

Bollywood: **Closed.** Indian bar with dancing girls dancing to live music. Garlands of flowers etc. Canned Heineken. Entrance was from outside the rear of the hotel and down a flight of stairs.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Harvesters: Typical expat pub style. Some friendly young single ladies of Chinese or Russian ethnic origin - although you will be left alone if you want to be. Live music later in the evening, usually classic pop - gets very loud later on. The food not bad in a "pub grub" style. Dress code - bizarrely for such a down market venue no sandals after 7pm - strictly enforced. Access through the lobby of the hotel and to the left in the basement.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Chequers: Surprisingly up market wine bar. Quiet. The food is very good (vaguely bistro style) although menu a bit limited. Live music every evening - the current group perform like a bad act at a holiday camp talent show - can't sing, can't dance, which is probably why they wear such short skirts! Nice place for a quiet meal. 2nd floor.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✓
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Rangeela: **Closed.** Typical Indian bar with dancing girls. Recorded music, garlands of flowers etc. Entrance was from outside the rear of the hotel and down a flight of stairs.

O/a rating	★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✗
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Sheraton Hotel & Resort

Location Eastern end of the Corniche.

Bravos Tapas Bar: Quiet bar serving tapas. Overlooks the beach and pool area. Food good. More of a restaurant than a bar. Access from the outside to the left of the main hotel building.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✘	TV Screens	✘
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

Cloud Nine: Fairly traditional cigar bar. Dark, comfy chairs, attentive staff etc. Gentlemen's club type atmosphere. Access through lobby and up to first floor.

O/a rating	★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✘	Dress code	✘
Comedy night	✘	Membership	✘

F1 Tavern: Traditional English pub style bar. Plenty of seating. Predominantly western crowd. Very crowded on a Thursday evening. Reminiscent of "The Captain's" without the terrace. Good food. Live music - currently jazz style duo. Access from the outside to the east of the main lobby.

O/a rating	☆☆☆☆		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Sheraton Khalidiya

Location Western end of Zayed the First (Elektra) on the Northern side.

Downtown: Up market steak bar - menu looks good as long as you are a meat eater - choose your own steak etc. Décor a bit like a coffee bar. Couple of screens showing sports. Staff friendly. A bit unusual as one side is windows overlooking the street. Access through the lobby, to the left and up a short flight of stairs.

O/a rating	★ ★ ★		
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

Third Avenue: Traditional bar, name suggests American style but décor more like traditional English pub. Sports bar with 2 large screens plus a number of smaller ones. Live music. Reasonable food. Access directly from the street to the left of the main hotel entrance.

O/a rating	★ ★ ★		
Live music	✓	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✗

The Club

Location Mina Zayed - you need a map or go with someone who's been before. Taxi drivers know it as "The Club" or "The British Club".

"The Club" is something of an institution in Abu Dhabi. It was originally "The British Club" and is located on land gifted by Sheikh Zayed specifically to create a social facility for the western expats in the early sixties. It has become something of an icon. It is now called "The Club" and membership is open to all nationalities. To visit any of the bars or excellent restaurants you need to be a member - or be signed in by a member (a fee applies which is waived if you are pre-booked into a restaurant).

Club Bar: Traditional style bar with the cheapest beer in town. Can be quiet during the week except for quiz nights (Wednesday). Gets busy if there is an event on at The Club. Food is excellent and very reasonably priced.

O/a rating	☆☆☆☆		
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✓	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✓

Sports Bar: Small bar overlooking the tennis courts. Bottled beers only. Usually very quiet. Can be a good spot to see live sports on TV without a crowd. Not always open.

O/a rating	☆☆		
Live music	✗	TV Screens	✓
Quiz night	✗	Dress code	✗
Comedy night	✗	Membership	✓

Zakher Hotel - Closed

Location The Zakher signalled the end of an era when it closed all of its bars on the 31st May 2007 for demolition and replacement with who knows what - time will tell. They included an interesting mix. The write ups are included here for posterity.

Rockwell: **Closed.** Sports and music bar. Décor the typical matt black splashed with fluorescent paint. Live music later in the evening - got loud and lively - final band very good. Pool table and darts board. Menu was OK - pub grub style.

The Africa Club: **Closed.** Very large rectangular room, dark with small tables, one wall painted with a scene from Africa (elephants etc.). Small bar at one end, stage in the middle, pool table at the other end. Only two beers on tap. Live band later in the evening - Sudanese I think - made a refreshing change to see a band playing music they liked and not the usual covers of old standards.

Troilka: **Closed.** Supposedly Russian bar and restaurant. Décor rather like a dungeon in an old castle. Final band were seven (Russian?) bimbos dressed like Abba at their worst, dancing and singing badly to terrible music. Food menu up market pub grub - only concession to Russian theme was Borsch. Was worth one visit just to see the band.

Index

49ers	11
Al Sahara	24
Ally Pally Corner	6
Bangali Nightclub	37
Black Pearl	8
Blitz	32
Blue Line	34
Blue Nile	37
Bluebay	30
Bollywood	39
Brauhaus	9
Bravos Tapas Bar	41
Bugsies	35
Cactus	32
Cappuccino	18
Captain's Arms	25
Cheers	7
Chequers	40
Cloud Nine	41
Club Bar	44
Colosseum	30
Cristal	31
Danik	30
Downtown	43
F1 Tavern	42
Fun Pub	35
Gauloises	26
Harvesters	39
Havana	13
Hemingway's	16
Heroes	18
Illusions	28
Iranian Club	38
Jazz Bar	16

La Pergola.....	33
Le Senat	15
Level Lounge	19
Maharaja Indian.....	14
Mardi Gras.....	10
Marjina.....	20
Mood Indigo.....	33
MRI	11
Nepali Bar	20
North Indian Club.....	38
NRG.....	26
Oceans.....	28
Opus Bar.....	26
Orient	21
P J O'Reilly's	28
Rangeela.....	40
Ratskeys	15
Rock Bottom	10
Rockwell.....	45
Safari Bar.....	21
Sax Restaurant Club.....	29
Seiseban.....	22
Sherlock Holmes.....	15
Soba.....	29
Southern Comfort.....	24
Sports Bar	44
Tambayan	7
Tequilana.....	17
The Africa Club.....	45
The Buzz.....	36
The Cellar Bar.....	22
The Clansman	15
The Fridge	17
The LAB.....	9
The Red Lion.....	24
The Trap	12

The Yacht Club	23
Third Avenue	43
Troilka	45
Vincent's	19
WakaTua Terrace	27
Zanzibar	22

To add/research:

Al Raha Beach Hotel	Enigma
Capital Hotel	Indian Bar
Emirates Plaza	Manila Bar
	Africa Bar
	Sargam
Hilton International	Balcony Bar
	The Fridge
International Rotana	Indian Club?
	Scorpio Disco
Le Royal Meridien	Illusions
	Sax Restaurant Club
	Soba
Mina Hotel	Hollywood
Mafrag Hotel	Hunter's Pub, Sahara Pool Bar
Marina Club	Chennai South Indian Bar
	Colosseum
	Pakheel & Mehfil Nightclub
Musaffah Hotel	????
Regency Hotel	Indian night club
Sheraton Hotel Resort	Zenith
Tulip Inn, Shaharma	????