

Every month a new trip will be uploaded to this site: enjoy!

“Let’s go beach camping,” exclaims my 11-year-old, with the enthusiasm – and volume – of an eager child ready to jump into the massive Hummer H3 with her boogie board and fins. Sure, but where? It used to be that the public had access to the marvelous beaches of the Arabian Gulf, and as a family we have wonderful memories of swimming and camping on unspoilt beaches – but, alas, construction of hotels, resorts and private weekend villas has almost completely closed access to the beautiful natural beaches of the region, which affects all in the UAE – citizens, residents, visitors and especially future generations.



Luckily, all is not lost, and a few very nice public beaches remain, such as this one in the Al Dibbeiya area, west of Abu Dhabi.

“Dead Turtle Beach”, as we now call it since chancing across a dead sea turtle there, is a pristine wilderness site, sandwiched between an oil installation to its west and a private island to its east. It should be a smelly, decaying mangrove swamp, filled with all sorts of bloodsucking insects and with a tidal flat beach stretching several hundred metres that would leave salty mud during low tide.

However, a fortunate stroke of engineering development for once has made a positive difference to the entire
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area.



A narrow and deep channel has been dredged right through the swamp and along the mudflats all the way to Abu Dhabi city, around 30km away, helping to disperse the stagnant water. This has resulted in a constant flow of seawater, which feeds the mangrove forests and circulates the water. Owned by the tides, this channel is like a river within the sea, running through a shallow saltwater lake and making ideal conditions for both nature and man.

The clear blue waters are shallow and calm enough for children to play in safely, and further out this deep-blue canal is ideal for swimming.





But I'm also not one to forego a little driving fun on the beach!



Behind the wheel of the Hummer H3, with a 295hp, 5.3L V8 engine, and differential lockers, there is more than enough power and traction for us to deal with the soft sand by the sea as we explored the area - photo by Melissa Royle-Guimaraes.



The flat waters are also ideal for water sports - in the photo my daughter wakeboards UAE-style pulled behind a 4x4!

We reach Dead Turtle Beach by leaving Abu Dhabi on the E11 motorway that leads westward to Sila, Al Ruwais and Liwa, and the turn-off to your right is clearly signposted to Al Dibbeiya and is at waypoint 1. Follow the GPS track and the map I provide, as the road may seem to enter an industrial oil area, which is off-limits, but actually you can skirt around it.

Download the KML file for your GPS by clicking [here](#). Once downloaded, you can import the file into your GPS device and take it on the road, or double-click that file and it will open automatically in Google Earth if you have that installed (all adventurers should! [Google Earth](#)).

And here is an interactive map of the route.

View [Dibbeiya Beach](#) in a larger map



With a little organization, beach camping is a fun activity for the whole family, and an excellent way to unwind over the weekend.



There is nothing better than relaxing by a natural beach - developing concrete beach resorts is not the way to maintain the ecology and provide areas for weekend relaxation.



A Sea Eagle with its dinner on Dead Turtle Beach



A Desert Hyacinth in bloom



Fellow camper Rui Guimaraes manages the campfire as the moon rises over the mangroves.



And when you leave, please make sure that there is no trace of your visit.



On the way out follow the GPS route I provided, and stop by the white salt flats for a landscape a little different than usual.

Please read the original article: [Finding the best beach camping spots in the UAE](#). Published by The National, Mar 20, 2010.

Or view a pdf file of the original article [here](#), as published in The National.

Please make sure you read the [Disclaimer](#) and plan your trips with due care.