

*It has two wheels, and they spin. And you'll die. Such is the two-liner I received from my daughter as I talked about the upcoming trip. Fully correct, I suppose, including the last chilling premonition, one day as far away as possible, hopefully; but what struck me was the stark contrast with the comment of a biker friend at the news I would be test-riding the KTM 990 Adventure along the back roads to Hatta: "Awesome freedom road."*

It is true; it is a feeling one must experience: flying on a mechanical dragon. Wind in the ears, side-scenery a blur, mountains towering over the thin strip of windy tarmac, g-forces leaning you over, right hand controlling the dragon's pace – riding the big KTM enduro that weekend was both exhilarating and unforgettable. Bikers, I understand you. Drivers, I sympathise with your confinement. Let's see how the trip pans out. Starting from the Al Ain-Buraimi border, up on well-maintained tarmac through the mountains to the tiny village of Al Ruwayf (for a refreshing splash in the wadi if you're lucky enough to be riding an enduro and not a bike restricted only to pavement), and then farther north on twisty smooth tarmac to join the motorway to Hatta, ending up sipping tea overlooking the imposing lake created by the Hatta Dam – incredible scenery, especially in this arid region.





When riding a motorbike, dress properly - it's just as important as wearing a safety belt in a car. At minimum: helmet, gloves, jacket, and good boots. If you come off, you'll know why.





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](#)).

View [Hatta Dam](#) in a larger map







On the way up, though you will be on tarmac, one of the reasons I prefer an enduro bike for touring is that if at any point you see a promising trail heading off into the distance – follow it!

The 990 Adventure is a big and tall bike, but it excels on hard-packed dirt tracks like those in the mountains on the way between Mahda and Hatta.





Besides enjoying the exploration, often you will come across what is most precious in this region: water!













A lively terracotta industry feeds a number of market stalls along the highway to Hatta.



View a pdf file of [the original article](#), as published in February 2012, or read the archived newspaper article on The National website [here](#).

My disclaimer is [here](#).