AIRPORT EXIT

Al Maktoum International Airport (Dubai World Central) (DWC)

Verified Oct 2026 · airportexit.guide — offline one-pager

THE ANSWER

Al Maktoum - where Etihad, Air Arabia and other new Dubai traffic now lands - still has no metro station: the honest cheap way in is the RTA F55 bus to Expo 2020 Metro Station, every 30 minutes, for AED 3-7.50 on a Silver nol card (zone fare), then hop the Red Line toward the city.

One bus puts you on the same Red Line that serves Ibn Battuta, Dubai Marina and Downtown, and the RTA zone grid means the ride costs pocket change - while a taxi at the rank opens its meter at AED 20-25 before moving.
Metro closed (or a very late landing)? The N55 night bus runs DWC -> Ibn Battuta bus/metro station every 30 min as well. Four people or late to a Marina hotel? A metered Dubai Taxi (AED 2.62/km after the airport start) is a real option with a receipt - just don't expect Etihad's free coach to be here; it only serves Abu Dhabi's airport.

EVERY WAY OUT — REAL PRICES

RTA bus F55 -> Expo 2020 Metro Station (Red Line) *BEST FOR MOST* **AED 3 / 5 / 7.50 by zones on Silver/Personal nol (red single-trip ticket 4 / 6 / 8.50)**
Dubai Airports' own DWC page: 'The F55 route links DWC with the EXPO Metro Station... every 30 minutes'. At Expo 2020 join the Metro Red Line north to Ibn Battuta, Marina, Financial Centre and Downtown. RTA's published nol fare grid prices buses and metro together: within 1 zone AED 3, 2 adjacent zones AED 5, more than 2 zones AED 7.50 with a Silver card (+AED 1.50 premium on the red paper ticket) - the DWC-Expo leg is generally read as two adjacent zones (AED 5), but RTA doesn't publish the zone pair for this route, so budget the AED 7.50 worst case. Cash is NOT accepted; buy/top up nol at metro stations and select bus stops.

RTA night bus N55 -> Ibn Battuta bus & metro station **same RTA zone fare: AED 3-7.50 Silver / 4-8.50 red ticket**
The second line on the airport's own page: 'the N55 route connects DWC to Ibn Battuta bus and metro stations. Both routes operate every 30 minutes'. This is the public option when the metro has stopped for the night (metro ends around midnight/01:00) - Ibn Battuta is already on the Red Line toward Marina and Downtown for early-morning arrivals, otherwise it's your overnight anchor with taxi/app cars at the rank.

Metered Dubai Taxi from the rank **meter opens AED 20 (normal) / AED 25 (van) - the DWC page says 'starting fare from the airport is AED 25'; AED 2.62/km**
Dubai Taxi Company is the exclusive taxi provider at both Dubai airports, ranks staffed 24/7, payment by cash, card or even nol. The published Airport Taxi tariff: flag-fall AED 20 saloon / 25 van, AED 2.62 per km, 50 fils/min waiting, Salik toll gates added to the fare, and an extra AED 20 when the trip passes through Sharjah. Typical all-in totals to Downtown/Marina are NOT published (travel sites quote ~AED 100-200 for the ~37-45 km); expect 45-60 minutes in traffic.

App-dispatched taxis - Bolt / S'hail / Careem **airport tariff applies (AED 20/25 start); DTC e-hail city base is AED 9-13 + 2.45/km**
Dubai Airports tells DWC arrivals to 'simply download the Bolt app and choose the taxi option' - because the cars dispatched are official Dubai Taxi Company vehicles (DTC names Bolt, S'hail and Careem as its booking apps; the app fare is quoted up front, minimum AED 13 for e-hail). Uber operating at DWC could not be confirmed on any official page this check, so don't count on it.

THE TRAPS — WALK PAST THESE

Etihad's famous free coach does NOT stop at DWC
Etihad's official shuttle connects Zayed International (Abu Dhabi) with Dubai (Al Wasl Centre on Sheikh Zayed Road, ~75 min) and Al Ain - not Dubai World Central. Travellers who followed Etihad's January 2024 move to DWC and expect an airline bus at arrivals find nobody, usually at 1 AM with a large bag. **Do this:** budget the F55/taxi yourself when landing at DWC; the free Etihad Shuttle only helps on Abu Dhabi-side itineraries booked at etihad.com/manage

No metro at DWC - 'take the train' advice online is wrong today
Dubai Airports' own metro page says guests 'connect to DWC via RTA buses or taxis from Ibn Battuta and Expo 2020 Metro Stations'. The rail you see in expansion talk - a 'new express metro line' and an Etihad Rail station - belongs to the AED 128 billion terminal build (media reports point at the early 2030s), not service today. **Do this:** plan bus-to-Expo-station or bus-to-Ibn-Battuta, then metro - and treat every older guide mentioning a DWC metro as fiction until Dubai Airports changes that page

Cash is refused on every DWC bus
'A Nol card is essential for bus travel, as cash payments are not accepted' - Dubai Airports, verbatim. RTA also requires a minimum AED 7.5 balance on Silver cards, and the single-trip red ticket adds ~AED 1.50 per stage (4/6/8.50 instead of 3/5/7.50). **Do this:** buy or top up a nol (or grab the red ticket) at Expo 2020/Ibn Battuta or an RTA counter before boarding, keeping at least AED 7.50 loaded

The airport meter start is 4-5x the street one
A street-hailed Dubai taxi opens at AED 5 (5.50 after 22:00); at the DWC rank the meter opens at AED 20 (saloon) or AED 25 (van/Hatch/DWC page figure) per DTC's published tariff, then 2.62/km, 50 fils/min waiting, Salik gates on top, and +AED 20 for anything routed via Sharjah.
Peak/event/New-Year pricing is also flagged as variable. **Do this:** watch the meter read 20-25 at departure, take the receipt, and compare with a Bolt/S'hail quote before joining the rank queue

DWC is far from everything - including DXB
Jebel Ali-side Dubai South sits ~40+ km southwest of the old city: Marina is close-ish, Deira and DXB are not. There is no airside or free shuttle between the two Dubai airports - a DXBDWC self-transfer eats 45-90 minutes of road time plus UAE entry formalities if you must re-clear immigration. **Do this:** book 2.5-3+ hours between flights at different Dubai airports, and never assume a connecting carrier moves you ground-wise

KNOW BEFORE YOU WALK

- The whole city-side trip by public transport (F55 bus + Red Line) costs roughly AED 8-12 on RTA's zone logic and takes about 1h15-1h30 to Downtown (time is a common estimate, not an official figure) - the only cheap answer at an airport with no train.
- Both DWC bus lines run every 30 minutes day and night per Dubai Airports, but the airport itself says frequencies vary by time of day - check the RTA/s'hail app before you rely on the next departure.
- DWC's location flips westward: it sits on the Abu Dhabi road, so Marina/JBR/Jebel Ali hotels and onward runs toward Abu Dhabi are the genuinely closer deals - Deira/Sharjah-side stays are not.
- DTC airport taxis take cash, card or nol - no exchange-desk detour needed before you can pay for the ride.
- Pink-roofed cars at the rank are Ladies & Family taxis (women and families only) - the saloon queue beside them is the general one.
- The AED 128bn expansion means DWC keeps changing: new terminal phases and (someday) its own metro are official plans - re-check the Dubai Airports transport page close to your travel date.

Verified October 2026 against Dubai Airports' DWC transport pages (F55/N55 every 30 min; Nol required, no cash; 'starting fare from the airport is AED 25'), Dubai Taxi Company's published Airport Taxi tariff (AED 20 normal / 25 van flag-fall, 2.62/km, 50 fils/min, Salik, +AED 20 via Sharjah, e-hail channels Bolt/S'hail/Careem), RTA's nol fare grid (3/5/7.50 Silver; 4/6/8.50 red ticket) and etihad.com's coach page (shuttle = AUHDubai/Al Ain only). Typical total cab fares to Downtown/Marina and all journey times are estimates - no official all-in price is published; Uber at DWC is unconfirmed.
No ads. No affiliate rankings. Wrong price? Report it on the guide page — reviewed and merged before it appears.