

OFFICIAL VISIT GUIDE 2026

the Abu Dhabi Natural History Museum

Abu Dhabi · From 16.37€

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History & Experience

ORIGIN & HISTORY

A Cosmic Journey Through Time

GOOGLE 4.7 ★★★★★ 1 307 {pdf_label(lang, 'reviews')}

TIQETS 5.0 ★★★★★ 5 {pdf_label(lang, 'reviews')}

The Abu Dhabi Natural History Museum stands as a monumental testament to human curiosity, inaugurated on **November 22, 2025**. Designed by the renowned Dutch firm **Mecanoo**, this 35,000 m² architectural marvel is situated on the prestigious Saadiyat Island. It joins the cultural district alongside the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the future Guggenheim, creating a unique synergy between art, history, and science. The project, officially launched in March 2022, aims not only to attract tourists but also to serve as a premier center for scientific research and education in the Middle East.

Spanning a staggering **13.8 billion years**, the museum's narrative begins with the Big Bang and concludes with projections for Earth's future. This comprehensive scope distinguishes it from traditional natural history museums, offering a continuous story that links quantum physics to biological evolution. The collections emphasize the geological past, prehistoric fauna, and the unique ecosystems of the Arabian Peninsula, providing a localized context to universal scientific principles. It is the largest natural history museum in the region, reflecting Abu Dhabi's ambition to become a global hub for knowledge.

A centerpiece of this scientific ambition is **Stan the T. rex**, one of the most complete and well-preserved Tyrannosaurus rex skeletons ever discovered. Acquired at auction for a record-breaking **$31.8 million**, Stan symbolizes the museum's commitment to acquiring world-class specimens. This 67-million-year-old predator is not just a display piece but a focal point for paleontological study, allowing researchers and visitors alike to examine the anatomy of one of history's most famous carnivores in unprecedented detail.

Beyond dinosaurs, the museum highlights the rich biodiversity of the Arabian Peninsula, showcasing species like the **Stegotetrabelodon**, a prehistoric elephant that once roamed these lands. This focus on local paleontology contextualizes the region's natural history, revealing a past far more diverse than the modern desert landscape suggests. The museum also houses the **Murchison meteorite**, containing presolar grains 7 billion years old, offering a tangible connection to the organic matter that preceded the formation of our solar system.

THE EXPERIENCE

Stepping into the museum is like entering a cathedral of science, where light and space converge to inspire awe. The architecture by **Mecanoo** creates a bright, airy atmosphere that contrasts with the ancient origins of the exhibits. As you enter the main atrium, the sheer scale of the **five sauropods** arranged in a dynamic formation immediately captures your imagination. The morning light filters through the structure, illuminating these giants and allowing visitors to visualize how these colossi might have moved in herds millions of years ago.

The journey through the galleries is both educational and emotionally resonant. Visitors are guided from the cosmic origins of the universe to the intricate details of local ecosystems. The presence of **Stan the T. rex** in the central hall serves as a powerful anchor, drawing guests into a deeper exploration of evolution and extinction. The interactive **PaléoLab** adds a tactile dimension, engaging children and adults alike in the hands-on discovery of fossils, making the abstract concepts of deep time feel immediate and personal.



PREPARING FOR YOUR VISIT

Practical Information

ADDRESS

Saadiyat Island · Access: Car or taxi recommended. No direct metro, but shuttles are available from downtown.

OPENING HOURS

Hours vary by season and local holidays. Always check available slots on the official website before heading out.

PRICES

Children under 4 years old free. {promo}. Book online to guarantee your entry.

VISIT DURATION

Allow 2 to 3 hours for a complete visit including the spectacular sauropod atrium and detailed thematic galleries.

PHOTOS

Personal photography is allowed without flash and without a tripod. Avoid flash to protect sensitive specimens, such as the skeleton of Stan, and the comfort of

AUDIENCE

Ideal for families thanks to the interactive PaléoLab, but also for science and architecture enthusiasts due to the depth of scientific content and the 35,000 m

LOCALISATION

Où se trouve the Abu Dhabi Natural History Museum ?



📍 Natural History Museum — Abu Dhabi

🌐 24°31.717′ N, 54°24.201′ E



ORGANIZATION

Organization

Level 0 (Ground Floor)

The entrance level welcomes visitors with the spectacular **sauropod atrium**, featuring five towering dinosaurs arranged in a realistic herd formation. This space sets the tone for the visit, offering immediate visual impact and photo opportunities. The **PaléoLab** is also located here, providing an interactive zone for children to handle fossil replicas and engage with paleontology through tactile learning.

Level 1

This level houses the core thematic galleries, including the **History of Earth** and **Evolution of the World**. Here, you will encounter **Stan the T. rex**, the museum's iconic centerpiece, displayed in a central position for maximum visibility. The galleries also feature the **Arab Paleontology** section, highlighting local species like the Stegotetrabelodon, and the **Murchison meteorite**, offering insights into the origins of the solar system.

Level 2

The upper level focuses on contemporary issues and future projections, including the **Future of Earth** gallery. This section encourages reflection on **climate change** and the resilience of our planet, linking geological past to current challenges. The **blue whale skeleton**, a 25-meter-long specimen, is prominently displayed here, offering a dizzying perspective on marine giants and the biological complexity of life in the oceans.

ACCESSIBILITY

♿ **Accessibility for people with reduced mobility**

Full wheelchair access in a modern building designed by Mecanoo.

Families

Interactive spaces like the PaléoLab and visual exhibitions tailored for children.

🎧 **Audio guide**

French, English, Arabic



Must-sees

SELECTION

Unmissable Scientific Marvels

01 Central Atrium

Stan the T. rex

Stan is one of the most complete **Tyrannosaurus rex** skeletons ever found, estimated at 67 million years old. His nearly intact bones allow for detailed study of the dinosaur's anatomy and movement. The skeleton is displayed centrally, making it the focal point of the museum's ground floor.

> 💡 Acquired for a record **$31.8 million** at auction, Stan represents one of the most expensive dinosaur specimens in history, symbolizing the museum's scientific ambition.

02 Level 2

Blue Whale Skeleton

This **25-meter-long** skeleton of a female **Balaenoptera musculus** offers a breathtaking view of marine life's scale. Visitors can observe the intricate structure of the vertebrae and the massive rib cage. It serves as a powerful reminder of the ocean's giants and the biological complexity of filter-feeding whales.

> 💡 The skeleton is one of the museum's permanent highlights, illustrating the immense size and **biological engineering** of the largest animal to ever live on Earth.

03 Entrance Hall

Sauropod Atrium

An unprecedented display of **five sauropods** arranged in a dynamic, realistic formation. This scenography allows visitors to visualize how these colossi moved in groups, offering a rare glimpse into herd behavior. The morning light perfectly illuminates the giants, making it a highly photogenic spot.

> 💡 This is a **world-first** exhibition format, designed to show sauropods not as isolated specimens but as social animals interacting in their environment.

04

Cosmic Origins Gallery

Murchison Meteorite

A fragment of the meteorite that fell in Australia in **1969**, containing presolar grains **7 billion years old**. This exhibit offers a unique glimpse into the organic matter that preceded the formation of our solar system. It connects visitors to the very beginnings of cosmic history.

> 💡 The meteorite contains **presolar grains** that are older than our sun, providing tangible evidence of the universe's ancient origins.

05

Arab Paleontology Gallery

Stegotetrabelodon

A life-size model of a prehistoric elephant that once roamed the Arabian Peninsula. This exhibit highlights the **local biodiversity** of the region long before the desert landscape formed. It contextualizes the natural history of the UAE, showing a past rich in diverse fauna.

> 💡 The **Stegotetrabelodon** is a fascinating local discovery, proving that the Arabian Peninsula was once a lush habitat for large mammals.

06

Ground Floor

PaléoLab

An interactive educational space designed for children and families. Visitors can **handle fossil replicas** and engage in tactile experiences that bring paleontology to life. This hands-on approach makes complex scientific concepts accessible and engaging for young minds.

> 💡 The PaléoLab is a favorite among families, with children often spending over an hour **touching fossils** and learning about excavation techniques.

07

Level 2

Future of Earth Gallery

This section explores the impact of **climate change** on our planet's future. It links the geological past to current environmental challenges, encouraging visitors to think about sustainability. The gallery offers a reflective space to consider the resilience of Earth and human responsibility.

> 💡 The gallery serves as a **call to action**, connecting the deep history of the Earth with the urgent need for environmental protection today.

08

Dinosaur Exhibition

T. rex vs. Triceratops

A dramatic display featuring two **Tyrannosaurus rex** fighting over a **Triceratops**. This dynamic scene captures a moment of prehistoric conflict, bringing the violence and drama of the Cretaceous period to life. It is one of the most visually striking exhibits in the museum.

> 💡 This display is based on **scientific reconstructions** of predator-prey interactions, offering a realistic glimpse into the lives of these ancient giants.

TIPS

Essential Visitor Tips

TIMING

Arrive early at opening time to avoid crowds in the **sauropod atrium** and capture clear photos with the morning light.

BILLET

Book tickets **online in advance** to guarantee entry, especially on weekends and during school holidays.

PARCOURS

Start with the **atrium and PaléoLab** to engage children early, then move to the upper galleries for a more reflective experience.

PHOTO

Find the best angle for **Stan the T. rex** by framing him with the complete skeleton in the background; avoid flash to protect specimens.

PAUSE

Combine the visit with lunch at **Saadiyat Beach Café** for a relaxing break with ocean views after an intense cultural day.

ENFANTS

Don't miss the **PaléoLab** for an interactive tactile experience that captivates children and makes learning fun.

AUDIOGUIDE

The audioguide is available in **French, English, and Arabic**; it provides essential context for the scientific exhibits and is highly recommended.

CONFORT

Wear comfortable shoes as the museum is large; allow **2 to 3 hours** for a complete and relaxed visit.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQ

Do I need to book Natural History Museum tickets in advance?

Yes, online booking is strongly recommended, especially on weekends and during school holidays. This guarantees your entry and avoids queues at reception. Time slots may be limited during major cultural events on Saadiya

Are there discounted rates for students or seniors?

Preferential rates are generally available for Emirati or resident students and seniors. Check the specific conditions when booking online. Children under 4 years often enjoy free entry.

Can I cancel or modify my booking?

The cancellation policy depends on the ticket purchased. Most standard tickets allow free cancellation up to 24 hours before the visit. Please consult the terms and conditions at purchase for exact details.

Is there a combined pass with the Louvre Abu Dhabi?

Yes, 'Saadiyat Island' combined passes are often available, offering access to the island's main museums. This is a cost-effective option if you plan to visit multiple sites like the Louvre Abu Dhabi. Check the availabil

How long does it take to visit the Natural History Museum?

Allow 2 to 3 hours for a complete and relaxed visit. This includes admiring the sauropod atrium, discovering Stan the T. rex, and reading the panels in the thematic galleries. Families with young children may take longer

DID YOU KNOW?

Anecdotes & curiosities

The Most Expensive Dinosaur

Stan the T. rex was acquired for a record **$31.8 million**, making it one of the most expensive dinosaur specimens ever sold. This investment underscores the museum's commitment to housing world-class scientific assets.

Ancient Stardust

The Murchison meteorite contains **presolar grains** that are 7 billion years old, predating our solar system. These grains offer a direct link to the cosmic dust that formed the universe.

Architectural Synergy

Designed by **Mecanoo**, the museum's 35,000 m² building is part of Saadiyat Island's cultural district. It sits near the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the future Guggenheim, creating a unique cultural hub.

Local Prehistoric Life

The **Stegotetrabelodon** exhibit reveals that the Arabian Peninsula was once home to diverse prehistoric fauna. This challenges the modern perception of the region as solely a desert environment.

AROUND THE MUSEUM

Located on the cultural heart of **Saadiyat Island**, the museum is part of a vibrant district that blends high culture with natural beauty. Just a short walk away lies the **Louvre Abu Dhabi**, where you can stroll under its iconic domes and explore universal history, making it perfect to combine both visits in one day. For a relaxing break, head to the **Saadiyat Beach Café** for lunch with a view of the Indian Ocean, or enjoy a peaceful family stroll along the white sands of **Saadiyat Beach Park**. The area also features the majestic **Zayed National Museum** and the futuristic façade of the upcoming **Guggenheim Abu Dhabi**, offering a diverse range of cultural experiences within a compact, scenic environment.



Visiting the Abu Dhabi Natural History Museum is more than a tour; it is a journey through the entirety of existence. From the **Big Bang** to the future of our planet, every exhibit invites reflection on our place in the universe. Whether you are captivated by the majestic **blue whale skeleton** or fascinated by the ancient grains of the Murchison meteorite, you leave with a profound sense of wonder and a renewed appreciation for the natural world. This is a place where science becomes art, and history comes alive.