

THE FIRST BREWERY AUTHORIZED TO OPEN IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



The Emirati government has authorized opening the first brewery in Abu Dhabi as part of their continued efforts to westernize the Arabian Peninsula.

Unlike many Middle Eastern countries where the sale and consumption of alcohol are largely prohibited, the Emirates allows it. Although Islam is the religion of the federated state, **90% of its population is made up of immigrants from neighboring regions where alcohol is prohibited.** However, the international economic centers of Abu Dhabi and Dubai attract Western expatriates and tourists worldwide.

Like Qatar and Saudi Arabia, the Emirates wants to increase its influence and representation in the international community. Economic growth, mainly driven by tourism, justifies some of the contradictions that exist within the country. Although the regulations on alcohol consumption have recently been relaxed, with the requirement of a license until 2020, the Emirates are determined to capitalize on the financial benefits of the culture they struggle to tolerate.

In February of next year, Side Hustle Brews & Spirits will lead the first Emirati brewing adventure behind the scenes of a restaurant bar on the island of Al Maryah in Abu Dhabi. This initiative dates back to when it was forbidden to brew or distill alcohol in the Emirates. Although the wine and spirits market has flourished for several years in the large megacities of the seven emirates that make up the federation, the trade was then strictly limited to the purchase and consumption of alcohol, which was mostly reserved for the lobbies of international hotels and airport duty-free.

However, the law has now changed, and licensed establishments are allowed to produce alcohol, which is seen as a way to "develop the quality of tourism" by attracting an upscale clientele that appreciates local and craft beers. **Side Hustle Brews & Spirits understands this request well and will open the first brewery in the UAE next February**, whose products will be intended for local consumption. If successful, the Al Maryah brewery will pave the way for many Emirati counterparts, considering the business understanding demonstrated by the petromonarchies.

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