

Al Zorah Golf Club: a natural beauty



Jeroen Korving - January 6, 2016

After six years the United Arab Emirates finally have a new golf facility. Al Zorah Golf Club opened this year in Ajman, the smallest state of the UAE and at this point in time absolutely not comparable with Dubai for tourism (note: for some people that is a bonus). Tourism in Ajman is still in its infancy, but with the construction of the Al Zorah project it has taken a step forwards.

Ajman, an upcoming region

Ajman is quite unknown to most people, but Al Zorah is only a 25-minute drive from Dubai International Airport and 20 minutes from Sharjah International Airport. The Al Zorah project is still being developed and will include some world-class hotels and resorts, residences, commercial space and leisure facilities. The 18-hole Al Zorah golf course just recently opened its doors. The Al Zorah golf course is currently the only course in the Emirate of Ajman. This is not really a problem, as there are plenty of other courses close to Al Zorah, like the Sharjah Golf and Shooting Club, the Sharjah Wanderers Golf Club and the Dubai Creek Golf and Yacht Club. All these golf courses are within a 30 km reach of Al Zorah.

Ajman is the smallest of the United Arab Emirates, covering only 260 square kilometres (100 sq mi). The city lies on the coast of the Persian Gulf and is home to some 95% of the emirate's population. The emirate has been ruled by members of the Al Nuaimi family (or tribe) since 1810.

When you visit Ajman, places to visit are the Ajman Fort, The Red Fort (gravel and red plaster were used in the construction of the walls of the fort, hence its name: the Red Fort) and the Manama museum, which opened on 2 December 2012.



Ajman's busy corniche is a popular evening and weekend destination for families and features a number of fast food outlets, coffee shops and stalls. It is home to the 'Outside Inn', a popular watering hole with expatriates, as well as to a number of hotels, including the Ramada, Ajman Palace, the Kempinski and the luxurious Ajman Saray.

If you are looking for a nice place to stay in Ajman, then check out the [hotels in Ajman](#) on our site. You can see ratings, photos and amenities.

Al Zorah: natural beauty

Al Zorah is set in a natural environment of sandy areas and mangroves and this makes the course different. Occupying some 5.4 million square meters of lush coastal land, the lagoons and mangrove forests of Al Zorah are home to an astonishing variety of native marine and plant life, and also shelter flocks of resident and migratory birds. Carefully developed to protect its rich natural heritage, Al Zorah is designed to permit residents to enjoy its bounty, and pathways through the mangroves allow residents and their guests to explore the beauties of the site.



The Nicklaus Design Group has designed the course, which ensures a course and lay-out of a high quality. On many holes you are surrounded by mangroves and while playing you will be able to see flamingos and a lot of other birds.

The level of personalized service delivered is high. Al Zorah has a team of so-called ‘player attendants’ who will be awaiting your arrival where they will ensure every detail of your day is explained. The golf course itself is managed and operated by Troon Golf.

If you need equipment, then that can be hired at Al Zorah. They have Taylormade golf clubs and Adidas golf shoes. You will also find a drivingrange, a proshop, a clubhouse and golf pro’s at Al Zorah Golf Club. The club has also invested in the very latest in golf cart and GPSi technology. This will help you to enjoy your round even more.

Quick facts of the Al Zorah golf course:

- Golf course opened in December 2015
- Par 72 Championship golf course featuring 2 lakes and 88 bunkers
- Designed by Nicklaus Design (Dirk Bouts)
- Tees: Black ~ 7,169 yards, Gold ~ 6,522 yards, Silver ~ 6,071 yards, Jade ~ 5,283 yards
- Grass: Platinum Paspalum



One of the attractions of Al Zorah is the tidal lagoon, or “khor”, an inland creek that extends over 2 square kilometers of biologically and ecologically rich wetland. Home to the fish nursery of the coast, the creek and mangrove are designated as conservation areas and Al Zorah commits to preserving their ecosystems and promoting their magnificence. The species of mangrove found in Al Zorah is *Avicennia marina*, commonly known as the gray or white mangrove. The trees grow to a height of 3-10 meters and have bark that can appear gray or white. A large variety of rare or migratory bird species can be found in the various parts of Al Zorah lagoon and mangroves. Close to 58 different species of birds inhabit this ecosystem.

“Khor: used in the late 19th century: representing a pronunciation of Arabic *kawr*, meaning ‘low land between two stretches of higher ground’. In Sudan and neighbouring regions it indicates a dry watercourse or ravine.”

The tide gives an extra dimension to the Al Zorah golf course. In the afternoon you will see a lot of water around the tees and fairways, while in the morning these areas will be completely dry. Our advice would be to play the course at least twice at different tee-times (early morning and early in the evening) as the course will ‘feel’ quite different.

New kid on the block: Paspalum grass

On the course paspalum grass has been used, which is a obvious choice. Seashore paspalum is a very salt tolerant warm-season grass with desirable turfgrass characteristics. This specialty grass is used in warm-season areas where either the soil or irrigation water has a high salt content. It does well near the ocean where it is subject to saltwater. Paspalum grass is not often used on courses; Bermuda grass is more common and especially tour players are more used to that type of grass. Paspalum grass is more heartier, drains better, but is also a bit slower than Bermuda grass.

More course owners and architects are interested in adding paspalum. The advantage is it can flourish in both fresh water and salt water, sort of like a hybrid car engine that performs with gas and electricity. But, is everyone happy with this type of grass? Although seashore paspalum is pretty, Zoysia grass for instance is pretty too. And Zoysia matrella has a finer leaf blade than seashore paspalum and is easier to maintain.

Some golfers don’t like to play from seashore paspalum fairways. Their complaint is that the ball sits too low. Sometimes the seashore paspalum just doesn’t want to grow and when that happens the ball sits down a lot more on paspalum than it does on bermuda or zoysia. Time will tell if the choice for paspalum grass at Al Zorah was a good one!

Competitive pricing

In November 2015, the captain of the European Ryder Cup team, Darren Clarke, visited the course at Al Zorah and he was very enthusiastic about the layout and quality.

We also believe that The Al Zorah Golf Club is an asset to the Emirates and with its interesting green fee rates – half as expensive as the courses in Dubai and Abu Dhabi – a visit is certainly more than worthwhile. If you want to prepare yourself going to Ajman and if you want to see if the Al Zorah course is your cup of tea, then we suggest to [read the reviews of other golfers of Al Zorah Golf](#) on our site!