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The Dubai Real Estate Scorecard 2026

How Dubai scores against London, Singapore and New York across the eight criteria institutional investors actually use, not just price and yield.

Most investors compare markets on price per square foot alone. Score Dubai on all eight institutional criteria and the case sharpens. Every figure sourced and linked.

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THE FRAMEWORK

Eight Criteria. The Ones That Matter.

Most retail investors pick a property market the way they pick a hotel: location, price, how it looks in photos. Institutional capital, the sovereign funds, family offices and private equity firms allocating billions, uses a different lens. Eight criteria determine whether a market deserves serious capital. Score a market across all eight and the picture sharpens considerably.

01 **Rental yield**
Gross income return on invested capital.

02 **Capital growth**
Trajectory of price appreciation over the cycle.

03 **Currency stability**
FX risk borne by an overseas investor.

04 **Regulation quality**
Investor protection and legal certainty.

05 **Transparency**
Availability of reliable market data.

06 **Tax environment**
Income, capital gains and inheritance burden.

07 **Population growth**
Structural demand for housing and rentals.

08 **Exit liquidity**
Ease and speed of selling at fair value.

> *The investors who outperform over a decade are not smarter about individual deals. They are smarter about which market they are operating in.*
>
> BRADLEY JAMES · M&M REAL ESTATE

THE SCORECARD

Dubai vs London, Singapore, New York

	DUBAI	LONDON	SINGAPORE	NEW YORK
Rental yield	**6-9%**	3-4%	3-4%	3-5%
Price / sqft *	**$460**	$2,300	$2,100	$3,700
Currency	**28yr peg**	Floating	Managed	USD base
Capital Gains Tax	**0%**	24%	0%	20%+
Tax on rent	**0%**	45%	24%	37%+
Transparency	**Transparent**	High	Transparent	High
Population growth	**+200k/yr**	Flat	Managed	Slow
10yr property visa	**Yes**	No	No	No

* Dubai is the citywide average (ValuStrat); the others are prime-district values, so the gap is directional, not exact. Across the eight institutional criteria, one column still reads differently from the rest.

READING THE SCORECARD

What the Numbers Mean for Your Capital

On rental yield, Dubai delivers 6-9% gross in good locations versus 3-4% in London and Singapore. On an AED 2 million investment that is roughly AED 120,000 to 180,000 of annual income versus AED 60,000 to 80,000, before tax. Which brings us to the tax column.

A UK investor pays income tax up to 45% on rental yield; in Dubai, zero. At exit, UK CGT is 24%; in Dubai, zero. For an investor modelling a ten-year hold, that difference is not marginal. It is the core of the case.

6-9%	0%	Discount	28 yr
DUBAI GROSS YIELD VS 3-4% PEERS	INCOME, CGT AND INHERITANCE TAX	TO PEER-CITY PRIME VALUES	AED PEGGED TO USD, UNBROKEN

INVESTOR TAKEAWAY

No single criterion makes the case; the combination does. A higher yield, zero tax, a stable currency and a residency visa rarely sit together in one market. Dubai is the outlier on the scorecard, not on any one line.

CRITERIA DEEP DIVE

Where Dubai Leads, and Where It Develops

RENTAL YIELD · STRONG

6-9% gross

Driven by tenant demand, population growth and an undersupplied quality rental market. Net yield after service charges still sits materially above comparable prime markets, though you must judge on net, not gross.

CURRENCY · UNIQUE

28-year USD peg

The dirham has held its peg to the dollar at 3.6725 since 1997, so USD-based investors carry no AED currency risk, and UK or European investors are effectively exposed to the dollar, not the dirham.

TAX · DECISIVE

Zero on all counts

No income tax on rent, no capital gains tax at exit, no inheritance tax on UAE assets and no wealth tax. For high earners in the UK or Europe, this alone reframes the entire calculation.

TRANSPARENCY · IMPROVING

Transparent tier

JLL's Global Real Estate Transparency Index now places Dubai in the 'Transparent' tier, a marked rise over the decade, backed by real-time DLD data, RERA regulation and mandatory developer escrow.

INVESTOR TAKEAWAY

Dubai leads decisively on tax, yield and currency, and has improved sharply on transparency and regulation. It still trails the most mature markets on secondary-market depth, so plan a three-to-seven-year hold rather than a quick flip.

VERIFY EVERY FIGURE

Sources & References

Every figure is drawn from the sources below. Links are live: tap any URL to open the original.

01 **UAE residential prices: Dubai citywide weighted-average ~AED 1,689 per sqft (ValuStrat)** — GLOBAL PROPERTY GUIDE · 2026
https://www.globalpropertyguide.com/middle-east/united-arab-emirates/price-history

02 **The Wealth Report: prime yields and capital values by global city** — KNIGHT FRANK
https://www.knightfrank.com/wealthreport

03 **Global Real Estate Transparency Index (Dubai in the 'Transparent' tier)** — JLL
https://www.jll.com/en/trends-and-insights/research/global-real-estate-transparency-index

04 **UK Capital Gains Tax (24%) and income tax rates** — HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS (GOV.UK)
https://www.gov.uk/capital-gains-tax/rates

05 **UAE taxation: no income, capital gains or inheritance tax; AED pegged to USD since 1997** — UAE GOVERNMENT (U.AE)
https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/finance-and-investment/taxation

06 **Golden Visa: 10-year residence via AED 2M property** — UAE GOVERNMENT (U.AE)
https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/visa-and-emirates-id/residence-visas/golden-visa

WORK WITH BRADLEY JAMES

The Scorecard Has a Winner. The Question Is Your Entry.

The data here is a starting point, not a conclusion. Tax residency, structure, timeline and asset type all change the numbers. In a private market overview I apply the scorecard to your specific situation and show you what it actually means for your capital, including where Dubai is not the right answer.

Thirty minutes, no sales pitch: a structured conversation about whether Dubai fits you, and what the right entry looks like.

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