

United Arab Emirates Payment - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts (2026 - 2031)

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Report description:

United Arab Emirates Payment Market Analysis

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Payment Market was valued at USD 202.60 billion in 2025 and estimated to grow from USD 213.16 billion in 2026 to reach USD 274.73 billion by 2031, at a CAGR of 5.21% during the forecast period (2026-2031). Rapid digital-first initiatives, the Central Bank's Financial Infrastructure Transformation Programme, and the forthcoming retail launch of the Digital Dirham CBDC together strengthened consumer confidence, reinforced merchant acceptance, and attracted new fintech entrants. Domestic schemes such as Jaywan and the AANI real-time rail retained interchange income inside national borders, lifting operating margins for local issuers and acquirers while lowering acceptance costs for merchants. Tourism-driven cross-border QR acceptance increased turnover for merchants serving India's 2.1 million annual visitors, deepening bilateral payment ties and reducing FX-linked friction. Meanwhile, buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) integrations at point-of-sale upgraded conversion for high-ticket discretionary purchases, particularly in luxury retail and consumer electronics channels. Heightened cybersecurity requirements, open-finance API mandates, and data-residency obligations created compliance overheads but simultaneously opened white-space opportunities for cloud-native processors and specialized fraud-analytics vendors.

United Arab Emirates Payment Market Trends and Insights

Domestic Jaywan card-scheme routing keeps interchange in-country

The Jaywan scheme routed domestic debit and prepaid transactions through Al Etihad Payments rather than global networks,

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allowing issuers to retain nearly AED 2.5 billion in annual interchange income and enabling merchants to benefit from lower acceptance costs. Emirates NBD rolled out the first Jaywan cards in 2024, quickly followed by Dubai Islamic Bank and Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank, propelling top-tier issuance volumes. Merchants gained immediate cost advantages because Jaywan's interchange was almost 30 basis points below prevailing dual-message rates applied by international schemes. A Sharia-compliant cashback structure broadened appeal among consumers who preferred interest-free loyalty programs, reinforcing adoption among the country's majority Muslim population. By end-2025, the Central Bank required all licensed banks to enable Jaywan issuance, guaranteeing ubiquity across physical and digital points of acceptance. That mandate created an embedded network effect that cemented payment sovereignty while preserving global scheme optionality for cross-border usage.

AANI real-time rail unlocks SME instant settlement and bill-pay

AANI processed in excess of 100,000 daily transactions within 18 months of its launch, a milestone that shortened typical settlement cycles from T+1 to real-time and released working capital previously trapped in float for small merchants. Digital-first lenders such as Al Maryah Community Bank leveraged mobile-number and e-mail proxy addressing to simplify account look-up, attracting unbanked micro-retailers and household service providers. The platform's built-in bill-split function addressed hospitality use-cases where group settlement complexity had traditionally favored cash. More than 57 licensed institutions connected to the rail by June 2025, creating a positive feedback loop that extended network density across retail, utility, and government bill-pay corridors. Ongoing development sprints prepared modules for AI-driven spend analytics, expected to generate data-monetization opportunities for participating banks once privacy regulations are finalized.

Persistent cash usage in Northern Emirates limits digital uptake

Network International's merchant surveys revealed that 40-50% of transactions in the rural Northern Emirates still settled in cash, compared with 15-20% in Dubai and Abu Dhabi urban corridors. Demographic preference, informal labor structures, and lower smartphone penetration formed structural barriers that slowed terminal rollout despite recent fee waivers offered by acquirers. The Federal Electricity and Water Authority extended its Quick Pay platform across Ajman, Fujairah, and Ras Al Khaimah, yet usage lagged because many households still preferred kiosk payments or cash collection agents. Rural retailers cited interchange swelling of 200-250 basis points on foreign cards as a deterrent, reinforcing notes-based transactions for low-margin SKUs. The Central Bank's financial-literacy roadshows sought to shift attitudes, but habit-forming outcomes were projected to materialize only beyond the long-term horizon, pressing on the UAE payment market's rural digitization score.

Other drivers and restraints analyzed in the detailed report include:

Tourist-driven cross-border QR payments capture visitor spend
Digital Dirham CBDC reduces cash-handling overheads
Cybersecurity threats elevate acquirer risk budgets

For complete list of drivers and restraints, kindly check the Table Of Contents.

Segment Analysis

Point-of-sale transactions represented 80.02% of UAE payment market share in 2025, maintaining headline supremacy even as online counterparts advanced at a 6.43% CAGR through 2031. That outcome underscored resilient in-person retail traditions, particularly in grocery, fuel, and luxury-goods verticals frequented by tourists and residents alike. Debit cards anchored POS flows because expatriate users preferred controlled spending mechanisms that aligned with monthly pay cycles, while credit cards clustered in premium hospitality and duty-free outlets offering loyalty accelerators. BNPL integrations, first piloted online, migrated to N-Genius terminals, turning installments into an in-store norm that lifted basket sizes by up to 18% for electronics merchants. Contactless NFC uptake surged after acquirers began shipping dual-interface terminals for no incremental monthly

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rental, a move that helped digital wallets achieve strong double-digit growth, though absolute wallet share at manned checkouts still trailed card tap routines.

Online payments, conversely, rode the e-commerce surge that followed logistical upgrades at last-mile operators and expanded same-day delivery promises from major marketplaces. Digital wallets captured 72% penetration among banked consumers early in 2025, signaling a psychological shift from card-on-file paradigms to tokenized push-payments. Cash-on-delivery nevertheless persisted at a material 25-30% of e-commerce orders, driven by customer hesitancy over product quality and refund turnaround. Direct account-to-account (A2A) flows via AANI gained ground in bill-pay, airtime top-ups, and government-service fees, highlighting sustained appetite for fee-light rails that bypassed card interchange. Over the forecast window, PSP roadmaps suggested that omnichannel orchestration layers would converge wallet, tokenized card, and A2A rails into single checkout modules, allowing merchants to manage routing logic dynamically and minimize blended cost of acceptance.

The United Arab Emirates Payment Market Report is Segmented by Mode of Payment (Point-Of-Sale [Debit Card Payment, Credit Card Payment, A2A Payment, Digital Wallet, Cash, and More], and Online [Debit Card Payment, Credit Card Payment, A2A Payment, Digital Wallet, Cash-On-Delivery, and More]), and End-User Industry (Retail, Entertainment, Healthcare, Hospitality, and More). The Market Forecasts are Provided in Terms of Value (USD).

List of Companies Covered in this Report:

Network International Holdings plc First Abu Dhabi Bank PJSC Emirates NBD Bank PJSC Mashreqbank PSC (NEOPAY) Checkout FZ-LLC (Checkout.com) Telr Pte Ltd PayBy Technology Projects LLC Amazon Payment Services Middle East FZ-LLC Infibeam Avenues Ltd - CCAvenue UAE ADCB Payments LLC Dubai Islamic Bank PJSC Tabby Electronic Payments L.L.C. Tamara Electronic Payments L.L.C. PayTabs Payment Solutions LLC NowMoney Ltd Payit (First Abu Dhabi Bank) Etisalat by e& - eWallet Stripe Middle East FZ-LLC PayPal (PayPal MENA) Lyve Global Payments LLC

Additional Benefits:

The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format
3 months of analyst support

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