



**Euromonitor
International**

Financial Cards and Payments in the United Arab Emirates

January 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The number of cards in circulation rises healthily and steadily

KEY DATA FINDINGS

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Credit cards and pre-paid cards gain momentum while debit cards remain popular

Stronger fintech activity spurs usage

Leading players leverage ecosystems as smaller players struggle

WHAT'S NEXT?

Bright outlook for most types of financial cards

Company and government activities to increase the penetration of financial cards

E-commerce to hasten financial card use

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

RTA benefits from strong integration and tourism recovery to consolidate its position as the leading issuer

Visa benefits from strong growth in financial cards and partnerships

MARKET INDICATORS

Table 1 - Number of POS Terminals: Units 2020-2025

Table 2 - Number of ATMs: Units 2020-2025

Table 3 - Value Lost to Fraud 2020-2025

Table 4 - Card Expenditure by Location 2025

Table 5 - Financial Cards in Circulation by Type: % Number of Cards 2020-2025

Table 6 - Domestic versus Foreign Spend 2025

MARKET DATA

Table 7 - Financial Cards by Category: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025

Table 8 - Financial Cards by Category: Number of Accounts 2020-2025

Table 9 - Financial Cards Transactions by Category: Value 2020-2025

Table 10 - Financial Cards by Category: Number of Transactions 2020-2025

Table 11 - Consumer Payments by Category: Value 2020-2025

Table 12 - Consumer Payments by Category: Number of Transactions 2020-2025

Table 13 - M-Commerce by Category: Value 2020-2025

Table 14 - M-Commerce by Category: % Value Growth 2020-2025

Table 15 - Financial Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 16 - Financial Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024

Table 17 - Financial Cards: Card Payment Transactions Value by Operator 2020-2024

Table 18 - Financial Cards: Card Payment Transactions Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 19 - Forecast Financial Cards by Category: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030

Table 20 - Forecast Financial Cards by Category: Number of Accounts 2025-2030

Table 21 - Forecast Financial Cards Transactions by Category: Value 2025-2030

Table 22 - Forecast Financial Cards by Category: Number of Transactions 2025-2030

Table 23 - Forecast Consumer Payments by Category: Value 2025-2030

Table 24 - Forecast Consumer Payments by Category: Number of Transactions 2025-2030

Table 25 - Forecast M-Commerce by Category: Value 2025-2030

Table 26 - Forecast M-Commerce by Category: % Value Growth 2025-2030

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SOURCES

Charge Cards in the United Arab Emirates - Category analysis

KEY DATA FINDINGS

2025 DEVELOPMENTS

Charge cards continues to face challenges

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Shift to credit cards hits the use of personal charge cards

Commercial charge cards lead the category

WHAT'S NEXT?

Charge cards in circulation and transaction volumes to fall amidst a shift to credit cards

American Express to continue to shape the competitive landscape

Players to employ strategic positioning to sustain growth

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

American Express is streets ahead of rivals

Majid Al Futtaim Finance's cobranded cards gain traction

CATEGORY DATA

Table 27 - Charge Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025
Table 28 - Charge Cards Transactions 2020-2025
Table 29 - Charge Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 30 - Charge Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 31 - Commercial Charge Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025
Table 32 - Commercial Charge Cards Transactions 2020-2025
Table 33 - Commercial Charge Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 34 - Commercial Charge Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 35 - Personal Charge Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025
Table 36 - Personal Charge Cards Transactions 2020-2025
Table 37 - Personal Charge Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 38 - Personal Charge Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 39 - Charge Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 40 - Charge Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024
Table 41 - Charge Cards Payment Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 42 - Charge Cards Payment Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024
Table 43 - Commercial Charge Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 44 - Commercial Charge Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024
Table 45 - Commercial Charge Cards Payment Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 46 - Commercial Charge Cards Payment Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024
Table 47 - Personal Charge Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 48 - Personal Charge Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024
Table 49 - Personal Charge Cards Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 50 - Personal Charge Cards Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024
Table 51 - Forecast Charge Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030
Table 52 - Forecast Charge Cards Transactions 2025-2030
Table 53 - Forecast Charge Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 54 - Forecast Charge Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 55 - Forecast Commercial Charge Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030
Table 56 - Forecast Commercial Charge Cards Transactions 2025-2030
Table 57 - Forecast Commercial Charge Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030

Table 58 - Forecast Commercial Charge Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

Table 59 - Forecast Personal Charge Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030

Table 60 - Forecast Personal Charge Cards Transactions 2025-2030

Table 61 - Forecast Personal Charge Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030

Table 62 - Forecast Personal Charge Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

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Credit Cards in the United Arab Emirates - Category analysis

KEY DATA FINDINGS

2025 DEVELOPMENTS

Targeted activities help to widen the base of credit card users

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Lifestyle spending stimulates credit card use

Fertile ground for credit cards in the United Arab Emirates

WHAT'S NEXT?

Ongoing shift to cashless society, rising consumer confidence and incentives to grow the possession and use of credit cards

Innovations and lifestyle-linked products to drive growth opportunities

Regulatory changes may impact credit card use

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Visa and First Abu Dhabi Bank invest in their credit card portfolios

Mastercard International innovates while Emirates NBD leverages a strong and diversified offer

CATEGORY DATA

Table 63 - Credit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025

Table 64 - Credit Cards Transactions 2020-2025

Table 65 - Credit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 66 - Credit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 67 - Commercial Credit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025

Table 68 - Commercial Credit Cards Transactions 2020-2025

Table 69 - Commercial Credit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 70 - Commercial Credit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 71 - Personal Credit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025

Table 72 - Personal Credit Cards Transactions 2020-2025

Table 73 - Personal Credit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 74 - Personal Credit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 75 - Credit Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 76 - Credit Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024

Table 77 - Credit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 78 - Credit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024

Table 79 - Commercial Credit Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 80 - Commercial Credit Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024

Table 81 - Commercial Credit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 82 - Commercial Credit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024

Table 83 - Personal Credit Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 84 - Personal Credit Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024

Table 85 - Personal Credit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 86 - Personal Credit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024

Table 87 - Forecast Credit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030

Table 88 - Forecast Credit Cards Transactions 2025-2030
Table 89 - Forecast Credit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 90 - Forecast Credit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 91 - Forecast Commercial Credit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030
Table 92 - Forecast Commercial Credit Cards Transactions 2025-2030
Table 93 - Forecast Commercial Credit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 94 - Forecast Commercial Credit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 95 - Forecast Personal Credit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030
Table 96 - Forecast Personal Credit Cards Transactions 2025-2030
Table 97 - Forecast Personal Credit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 98 - Forecast Personal Credit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

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[Debit Cards in the United Arab Emirates - Category analysis](#)

KEY DATA FINDINGS

2025 DEVELOPMENTS

Demographic, digital and infrastructure developments boost debit cards

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Digitalisation spurs debit card usage

A strong share of the population remains unbanked or underserved

WHAT'S NEXT?

Debit card usage is set to rise over the forecast period

Transaction value per card may slow as frequency increases

Banks to invest in security, digital features and loyalty to stay competitive

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Visa and First Abu Dhabi Bank enjoy wide coverage to lead

Emirates NBD and Mastercard International invest in strategic direction

CATEGORY DATA

Table 99 - Debit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025
Table 100 - Debit Cards Transactions 2020-2025
Table 101 - Debit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 102 - Debit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025
Table 103 - Debit Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 104 - Debit Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024
Table 105 - Debit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024
Table 106 - Debit Cards Payment Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024
Table 107 - Forecast Debit Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030
Table 108 - Forecast Debit Cards Transactions 2025-2030
Table 109 - Forecast Debit Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030
Table 110 - Forecast Debit Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

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[Pre-Paid Cards in the United Arab Emirates - Category analysis](#)

KEY DATA FINDINGS

2025 DEVELOPMENTS

Pre-paid cards cater to a wide range of needs

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Greater uptake and use of closed loop and open loop pre-paid cards

Pre-paid integration through digitalisation

WHAT'S NEXT?

Closed and open loop pre-paid cards to gain momentum as daily payment tools

Focus on micro pre-paid card transactions

Learning the pre-paid function early

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

RTA dominates closed loop pre-paid cards with transportation cards

Visa leverages wide acceptance and partner networks while First Abu Dhabi Bank's strong offer appeals to personal and commercial users

CATEGORY DATA

Table 111 - Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025

Table 112 - Pre-paid Cards Transactions 2020-2025

Table 113 - Pre-paid Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 114 - Pre-paid Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 115 - Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions 2020-2025

Table 116 - Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 117 - Open Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions 2020-2025

Table 118 - Open Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 119 - Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 120 - Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024

Table 121 - Pre-paid Cards Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 122 - Pre-paid Cards Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024

Table 123 - Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 124 - Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024

Table 125 - Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 126 - Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024

Table 127 - Open Loop Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 128 - Open Loop Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards by Operator 2020-2024

Table 129 - Open Loop Pre-paid Cards Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 130 - Open Loop Pre-paid Cards Transaction Value by Operator 2020-2024

Table 131 - Forecast Pre-paid Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030

Table 132 - Forecast Pre-paid Cards Transactions 2025-2030

Table 133 - Forecast Pre-paid Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030

Table 134 - Forecast Pre-paid Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

Table 135 - Forecast Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions 2025-2030

Table 136 - Forecast Closed Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

Table 137 - Forecast Open Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions 2025-2030

Table 138 - Forecast Open Loop Pre-paid Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

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[Store Cards in the United Arab Emirates - Category analysis](#)

2025 DEVELOPMENTS

Store cards is beset by weak circulation

INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE

Some call for store cards but usage fragments and falls further

Large retailers continue to invest in store cards

WHAT'S NEXT?

Ongoing shift to payment alternatives to dampen store card use

Store cards to remain characterised by small-ticket purchases

Focus on digitalisation and loyalty to maintain interest in store cards

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Retail is the bedrock of store cards

CATEGORY DATA

Table 139 - Store Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2020-2025

Table 140 - Store Cards Transactions 2020-2025

Table 141 - Store Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 142 - Store Cards Transactions: % Growth 2020-2025

Table 143 - Store Cards: Number of Cards by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 144 - Store Cards: Payment Transaction Value by Issuer 2020-2024

Table 145 - Forecast Store Cards: Number of Cards in Circulation 2025-2030

Table 146 - Forecast Store Cards Transactions 2025-2030

Table 147 - Forecast Store Cards in Circulation: % Growth 2025-2030

Table 148 - Forecast Store Cards Transactions: % Growth 2025-2030

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