

MARKET ANALYSIS · NOVEMBER 2026

Off-plan vs ready in Dubai: *which made more money?*

Five years of Dubai Land Department data on prices, premiums and rents, and what it means for your next purchase.

Two out of three homes sold in Dubai today are off-plan. But over the last five years, **ready homes rose faster per square foot**, while off-plan buyers paid far less cash upfront. Here is what the Dubai Land Department (DLD) numbers show, area by area, and how the two compare on the money you actually put in.

The numbers *at a glance*

+84.6%	+47.7%	68%	+40%
READY HOMES, PRICE PER SQ FT, 2020 – 2025	OFF-PLAN, PRICE PER SQ FT, 2020 – 2025	SHARE OF 2025 SALES THAT WERE OFF-PLAN	RENT PER SQ FT, 2020 – 2025

Five years of prices: *ready grew faster*

YEAR	OFF-PLAN (AED/SQ FT)	READY (AED/SQ FT)	OFF-PLAN PREMIUM
2020	1,211	758	+60%
2021	1,211	889	+36%
2022	1,524	1,033	+48%

2023	1,584	1,144	+38%
2024	1,662	1,297	+28%
2025	1,789	1,399	+28%
2026 (to date)	1,783	1,460	+22%

Ready prices compounded at **13.0% a year** between 2020 and 2025, against **8.1% a year** for off-plan. The gap between them has narrowed from 60% to 22%: new launches still sell at a premium, but resale homes have been catching up. In 2026 so far, ready prices are up 4.4% per sq ft while off-plan is flat.

City-wide medians mix areas and building types: off-plan sales lean towards newer, higher-spec projects, so part of the premium is quality, not just timing.

Area by area: *the off-plan premium today*

Median price per sq ft over the last 12 months, off-plan against ready, in three of Dubai's busiest areas.

AREA	OFF-PLAN (AED/SQ FT)	READY (AED/SQ FT)	PREMIUM	GROSS YIELD (READY)
Jumeirah Village Circle	1,590	1,300	+22%	8%
Business Bay	2,850	1,910	+49%	7%
Dubai Hills Estate	2,380	2,330	+2%	7%

The premium matters. In Dubai Hills Estate, new and ready homes cost almost the same per sq ft, so a new launch carries little risk of overpaying. In Business Bay, new towers cost nearly half as much again as resale, so the project, view and developer need to justify it.

Which made more *on your cash?*

Price growth is only half the story. A ready buyer pays the full price upfront and collects rent from day one. An off-plan buyer pays in instalments and collects no rent until handover. Here is an illustration on an AED 1.5M home held for four years, using the 2020 – 2025 averages above.

	READY, BOUGHT WITH CASH	OFF-PLAN, 40% PAID BEFORE HANDOVER
Cash put in (incl. 4% DLD)	AED 1.56M	AED 660,000
Value after 4 years	about AED 2.45M (13.0% a year)	about AED 2.05M (8.1% a year)
Price gain	about AED 949,000	about AED 550,000
Rent collected (gross, 7%)	about AED 420,000	none
Return on cash	**about 88%**	**about 83%**

The two end up close. The ready buyer earns more in total, but needs more than twice the cash. The off-plan buyer earns almost as much on each dirham invested, while keeping the rest of their money free. This is an illustration, not a forecast: rents are gross (before service charges), and the off-plan buyer still has to pay the remaining 60% at handover, by cash or mortgage.

See our payment plans guide and the full cost of buying in Dubai, and for ready homes, our best areas for rental yield.

Project picked *for investment*

Our pick for buyers who want the off-plan advantage, a low entry with most of the price paid later, in an area where prices are still affordable.



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REEF 995

334 studios and 1 to 3-bedroom homes above a neighbourhood mall, each with REEF's patented outdoor-cooled sunken balcony. Pay 60% during construction and the rest on handover, or over 2.5 years after handover.

AED 696,777 STUDIO FROM	Q4 2028 EXPECTED HANDOVER
20% down 60/40 PAYMENT PLAN	Studio – 3 bed 334 RESIDENCES

VIEW REEF 995

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Not sure which is right *for you?*

Tell me your budget and timeline, and I will show you the best off-plan and ready options side by side.

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Methodology and sources

- Prices: Dubai Land Department registered sales via DXBinteract. City-wide median price per sq ft by year, off-plan and ready, 2020 to 2026 (to early November). Growth rates are compound annual rates over the complete years 2020 – 2025.
- Area comparison: median price per sq ft for off-plan and ready sales over the 12 months to early November 2026; gross yields are DLD-based for each area.
- Rents: DLD-registered rent contracts, median annual rent per sq ft, 2020 – 2025.
- Return on cash: illustration only, using the 2020 – 2025 city-wide growth rates, a 7% gross yield and 40% paid before handover. It ignores service charges, mortgage costs and agent fees.

This report is for information only and is not financial or investment advice. Past price growth does not guarantee future returns.

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