

The Palm Island

The Palm Island is a man-made island in the shape of a palm tree, on the coast of Dubai in the UAE.

Why build an island?

Dubai was becoming very popular with visitors. His Highness, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, realised they did not have enough coastline. They wanted a greater beach area and more hotels for visitors. He wanted it to blend in with its surroundings, so it is made completely from sand and rock.

Protecting the Island

The first stage was to build a breakwater.

Building an island out at sea had many challenges, like the effect of extreme weather on the island. The following things had to be considered:

- powerful storms
- the height of waves crashing down on the shore
- erosion from the sea
- raising sea levels

To build the breakwater, they first built up the seafloor using sand. Then, they dumped rubble over it. After that, large rocks were placed on top.

Building the Island

Next, they used sand and rock to make the island. The island is 5.5 km long. Desert sand was not the correct type of sand to use to make the island so they had to scoop up sand from the seabed using dredgers.

Designers only used natural materials like sand and rock, so they would not harm the animals and other sea life around. Many fish and marine creatures made the breakwater rocks their home, so it actually helped them!



Questions

1. What shape was the island?

2. What materials did they use to make the island?

3. Why did they build an island?

4. Why did they need to make a breakwater?

5. How did the breakwater help the wildlife around the area?

6. Why did they use sand from the seabed to make the island?

7. Why do you think they chose to make the island in the shape of a palm?

Answers

1. What shape was the island?
It was the shape of a palm tree.
2. What materials did they use to make the island?
They used sand and rock.
3. Why did they build an island?
They needed more coastline for visitors.
4. Why did they need to make a breakwater?
To protect the island from extreme weather and erosion.
5. How did the breakwater help the wildlife around the area?
Many fish and marine creatures made the breakwater rocks their home, so it actually helped them!
6. Why did they use sand from the seabed to make the island?
They used seabed sand because the sand in the desert was not the right type of sand to make the island.
7. Why do you think they chose to make the island in the shape of a palm?
Palm trees are everywhere in the UAE and they are a national symbol.