

# HOME FROM ABU DHABI

*Claire Gorman*

AS I PACKED my bags to return home, it seemed more daunting than moving there in the first place.

Lured by promises of tax free wages and year round sunshine, I decided to take the plunge in August 2011 and go to work in Abu Dhabi. I could no longer deal with dark, dreary Ireland and it was time for a change of scenery—and pay packet. I exchanged the cold, wet, and rain for scorching temperatures and a jam packed social calendar.

The list of possible activities was endless when there was no chance of even a spit of rain—concerts on the beach, kayaking, camping, desert safaris and more. But after a year of living in luxury and tearing my hair out teaching, it was time to go home. Patience is a virtue—one that God sprinkled on me sparingly—and teaching just wasn't for me.

More suited to chasing stories than hounding children for homework, I had to return to Ireland in the hope that some—any—newspaper or media establishment would give me work. I had quickly become accustomed to spending my weekends at the beach or pool, having my house cleaned for next to nothing, and taking taxis everywhere for even less than that.

Making the move on my own was difficult and daunting in the first place. But somehow coming home with no job, house or car of my own, almost seemed worse

"You're mad to be coming home," my friends constantly told me. "There's nothing here." But I stubbornly returned despite warnings of no work and sub zero temperatures. I wondered if there was anyone even left at home—would I have enough friends or would I have to start hanging out with my mother?

I arrived home at the end of June with the



## ■ The ICC at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre (ADNEC)

contents of my life in the UAE tossed into an oversized suitcase and a back up plan of fleeing to Australia if things really were as bad as everyone claimed.

Having settled back into life in Dublin, I have to say that even though the economy is in shatters, it really is great to be home. Obviously the lifestyle is completely different and I'm struggling to cope with the weather, but there's nothing like having your family and friends close by.

I still have to battle with the occasional county Leitrim urge to hop on a plane back to

## ■ Abu Dhabi



Abu Dhabi but having a job that I love in Ireland has kept me sane.

Emigration is an unfortunate reality for many people young and old in Ireland at the moment. We hear constant reports of the brain drain and families being forced to move abroad.

But in my experience living abroad for a year was a positive experience—one I count myself lucky for having. I got to explore an entirely different culture, make a whole new group of friends for life and—most importantly—I realised my priorities in life.